



Barcelona-based artist Rob MacDonald

During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) thousands of International volunteers from around the world joined the fight to stop Franco and the fascists who rebelled against the democratically elected Republican government.

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English
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International Brigade Memorial

Rugby-born and Barcelona-based artist Rob MacDonald wants to create a memorial to honour International brigadistas who died in 1937 when their ship was sunk by a fascist torpedo. ECP coach John Hird spoke with him recently.

bigotry: intolerance to those who hold different views.

the Internationale: song of socialism and the international working class.

namesake a person or thing that has the same name as another.

As luck would have it: expression meaning 'fortunately matched': be the same as

nodded: a movement up and down with the head

carved: cut to produce an artistic design.

portholes: to small exterior windows on a ship.

The brigadistas stood for solidarity, justice and freedom; for an equal world for all humanity. In this time when right wing populism is achieving large votes in various places around the world, it is more important than ever that we combat **bigotry** and blame towards foreigners, immigrants and refugees.

The International Brigadistas came from across the globe in the late 1930s to stand alongside Republican Spain in the civil war, united to stop the rise of the fascist far right. On 30th May 1937, the Ciudad de Barcelona, a ship bringing around 300 brigadistas from France, was sunk by a fascist torpedo just off the coast of Malgrat de Mar, Catalonia.

In this the 80th anniversary historical research is still being carried out as the ship was sailing in clandestine conditions. At least 45 people died that day, many unknown, lost in the sea. Local people in Malgrat de Mar rescued many but still more more were trapped in the ship. Rob MacDonald describes these people as heroes. "These heroes gave their lives for the dream of a better world for all. They were not defending a country, they were fighting for an idea: Complete equality for all humanity."

"We must not forget them or the local people they came to stand with," he explains, "What they all fought for are

valuable lessons in today's world. We want to create a memorial to honour both those brigadistas and the local people of Malgrat de Mar and we believe the best way is by bringing the local and international communities together once again. That is what the project Solidarity Park is about!"

The artist's inspiration was taken from the reports of the Brigadistas singing **the Internationale** as the boat sank. This includes accounts of the artist's **namesake** "Rob MacDonald".

Solidarity Park is visualised to be a place of use where people can sit, interact and contemplate on these valuable lessons of the past.

The art work consists of 60 sculpted figures depicted singing aboard a conceptual ship, which has seating designed as waves. Each sculpted figure will be identical in form, representing the unity of the struggle of the Brigadistas, but each will have individual **carved** features thus expressing the diversity of us all.

Included on the sides of the sculpted monument will be "community **portholes**". These will be stone carved windows to the past, telling the story of the wider events of the day. It is intended that these will be designed by local secondary school students.

MacDonald ends by saying: "The real ship may have sunk, but this conceptual ship will not. Instead, it will be riding high across a stone patio map of the world, thus making it a symbol of the resilience of human solidarity."

"Let's chat about that!"

Write your answers in an email and send them to your ECP coach!

- There are two 'Rob MacDonalds' mentioned in the text. Who are they?
- Had you ever heard of the Ciudad de Barcelona before reading the article?
- Are you surprised that International Brigadistas came to Spain to fight fascism?
- Do you think the victims of fascism should be remembered or should we forgive and forget?
- Would you be prepared to fight for a cause?
- "If we don't learn from the past we are doomed to repeat it.' Do you agree?
- What would you build a memorial to?



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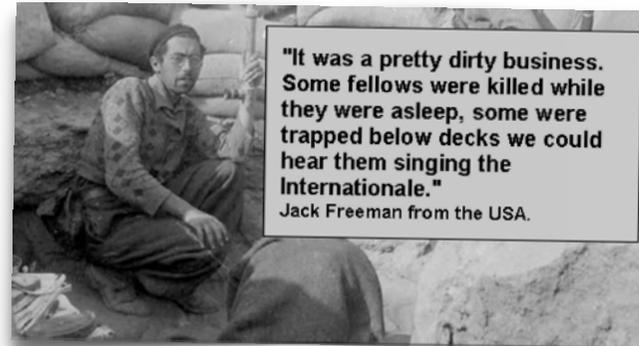
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Eric Faulkner, ex-member of the 1970s group the Bay City Rollers, has written a song about the International Brigadistas of the Ciudad de Barcelona.

Watch an extract here: <https://youtu.be/vMrQNsLqsul>

Rob MacDonald, the Barcelona-based artist, is hoping to release an album of Spanish Civil War songs to help raise money for the ‘Solidarity Park’ project.



"It was a pretty dirty business. Some fellows were killed while they were asleep, some were trapped below decks we could hear them singing the Internationale."
Jack Freeman from the USA.



Join the **Facebook** group “Ciudad de Barcelona 1937 Memorial” - www.facebook.com/groups/1613273978897986

Website of Campaign - <https://ciudadbcn37.wordpress.com>

Further information on the events of the day

<https://ciudadbcn37.wordpress.com/history-links/>

Interview with artist - <http://badartworld.net/index.php/2017/05/22/heroic-volunteers-of-freedom/>

Gallery of images - <https://ciudadbcn37.wordpress.com/images/>

More information on the artist - www.robmac.eu

For **campaign resources and contact** email - ciudadbcn37@gmail.com

Have a great summer!!

Thank you for being part of English Coaching Projects this year 😊

See you again in October (but don't worry, we'll be in touch in September!).

Rob, John, Kez, Ali & Darren

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