



SPAIN AND IRELAND 'THE SAME FIGHT'

Mick Healy Reports

Another Irish hero of the Spanish Civil War was remembered in Kildare during December 2012 when the Frank Conroy Committee held its first commemorative event.

On December 16th a large crowd gathered at the Republican memorial in Kildare Town to remember local man Frank Conroy who died on 28th December 1936 fighting with the International Brigade defending the Spanish Republic.

Addressing the event historian, Harry Owens, said: "After the sudden financial collapse of the great 1920s boom, with banks and share prices collapsing, the American and European Governments cut back on welfare and the tiny dole payments, while employers cut wages and jobs. Here in Ireland, the Right, controlling state power, fought against worker's right to join unions. The Left, and those

Republicans who stood with them, united in defending tenants from eviction, the unemployed and the underpaid.

"Why did these Irish Republicans and the Leftists, such as Frank Conroy, go to fight in Spain? Frank Ryan was asked this by the Gestapo when he was captured in March 1937. "Because it's the same fight in both places", Ryan had replied.

Conroy was among a number of Irishmen who went into action as part of the French International Battalion at Lopera in Cordoba on Christmas Eve 1936. On 28th December they were bombed by enemy planes and heavily machine-gunned by the Fascists. Among the many killed were Irishmen Frank Conroy (Kildare), Johnny Meehan (Galway), Henry Boner, Jim Foley, Tony Fox, Leo Green, Michael Nolan, Michael May, Tommy Woods (Dublin).



Owens added: "Today, Frank Conroy's body, and those of his dead comrades, still lie somewhere in the hills around Lopera."

After the oration wreaths were then laid in honour of Vol. Frank Conroy by the Communist Party of Ireland, Workers Solidarity Movement, the Workers' Party, the Labour Party, eirigi, Tus Nue and Anti-Fascist Action.

IN THE AREA Siobhan Mitchell Reports

Derry Anti-Facit Action was launched on 12th January at a meeting of around 30 activists in the upstairs of Sandinos Bar.

The new group brings together activists from a range of political backgrounds with the shared aim of confronting fascism.

An Antifa Derry spokesman said: "In Derry recently there has been a skinhead/mod revival among local young people. Antifa Derry seeks to ensure that the true

values of this culture of working class unity no matter what race of religion are to the fore."

In the coming months Antifa Derry will be organising Ska against Racism nights and events to commemorate local activists who fought with the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War.

Follow Derry Antifa on <http://www.facebook.com/DerryAntiFascists>