



# REPORT *from* Labour International Costa Blanca

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## Alicante Republican History tour

On Thursday 26 February 2015 some 20 members of Labour International met with Rafael Garcia, Luis Pesquera & Pedro Olivares of the Comisión Civica de Alicante para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica in Alicante. The Comisión is reviving the memories of the hundreds of Alicante's Republican supporters who suffered under Franco's fascist regime.



*LI members in front of the memorial to the Stanbrook. Pedro & Luis from the Comisión Civica de Alicante are on the right hand side. 3rd right is visitor, Mary Greening, Membership Secretary of IBMT, whose father was a Brigader.*

LI members were taken on a tour of Republican monuments erected by the Comisión in and around Alicante. The tour started in Alicante port at the monument to the British cargo ship *Stanbrook* which, under Captain Archibald Dickson, rescued just under 3000 people from Franco's advancing Italian and Moroccan support troops at Alicante port in March 1939, and took them to Orán in Algeria.



*Memorial at the Alicante Market - red lights come on at 12.10 each day.*

Members of the Comisión Civica explained the significance of each of the monuments and locations. The tour included El Campo de Almendros prison camp, the Central Market where 315 people died in a Nationalist bombing raid. The route passed by the former prison where poet Miguel Hernandez died and visited the monuments at the mass grave of Francoist repression in Alicante cemetery. The final trip was to the location, near Monóvar, of the airfield from which Prime Minister Juan Negrín and Dolores Ibárruri (la Pasionara) left Spain in 1939 after the Republican defeat. There we met José Ramón Valero, a Professor from Alicante University, who explained the history of significant buildings and the airfield.

Malcolm Hardy, Chair of LI Costa Blanca said

"This was a moving experience highlighting the dreadful consequences of fascist movements, now on the rise in Europe again, trampling on democracy. The Comisión Civica are to be congratulated for not allowing the awful crimes committed during the period of the Civil War to be forgotten, which is of great value to the descendants of the victims of the repression in Alicante province."

Following their success in getting several memorials erected in Alicante, the Comisión Civica approached Labour International to assist them in presenting a memorial to the City of Cardiff in respect of the heroism of Cardiff-born Captain Dickson and his crew. This event will take place in Cardiff in April 2015.

Lorraine Hardy  
LI Costa Blanca