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## How can Franco be forgotten so soon?



**Published: 7 July, 2011**  
 by **JOHN GULLIVER**

A CROWD came in their hundreds on Saturday afternoon for a special anniversary – it had been 75 years since thousands of volunteers set off from Britain to join the war in Spain against the fascist General Franco. Among them were two of the only surviving International Brigaders – David Lomom and Thomas Watters who laid wreaths at the South Bank at the foot of a celebrated statue sculpted in honour of the Brigaders.

But it was a remark by Paul Preston, a famous historian on the Spanish Civil War, that made me think. Preston said too many people in Spain today still didn't realise the brutal nature of Franco's dictatorship, under which hundreds of thousands had been killed – teachers, trade unionists, political opponents.

With a mixture of sadness and bitterness, he said the only person being brought before the courts in Spain today was a critic of Franco, the well known Judge Garzon.

• An anniversary concert will take place at St Brides Institute, off Fleet Street, on July 16.

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