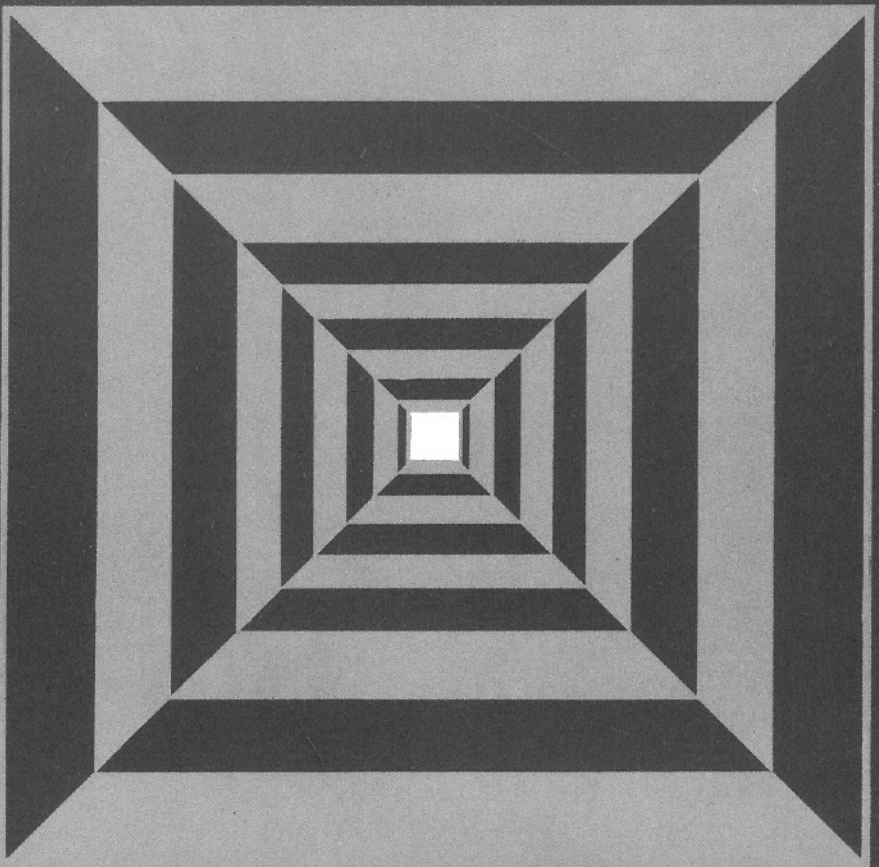


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Loyalists. He left before the end of the conflict and 1939 found him in Finland, as a Red Cross worker during the Russo-Finnish War.

Another German veteran to reach the limelight in post-war Germany was Wilhelm Zaisser, commander of the XIIIth International Brigade under the name of General Gomez.<sup>40</sup> He reappeared in July 1948 when the Russians ordered the raising of para-military *Bereitschaften* in the five districts of their zone. These alert-squads, which came to be called the *Kasernierte Volkspolizei*, or People's Police in Barracks, numbered 48,000 men and were placed under Zaisser's command. In 1950 he was appointed Minister of State Security, and under his direction the *Bereitschaften* were expanded to 55,000. Zaisser was assisted by another Spanish Civil War veteran, Karl Heinz Hoffmann,<sup>41</sup> with whose help he was soon able to forge this East German People's Police into a formidable army of 110,000 men. Zaisser was dismissed from his post in the political purge which followed the East German uprising in June 1953. Another veteran, Richard Staimer, one-time commander of the Thaelmann battalion and later of the Brigade, is at present Chief of Police in Brandenburg.<sup>42</sup>

Towards the end of the 1950s another Spanish veteran reached the public limelight by his flight to the West. Alfred Kantorowicz, former information officer to the Chapaev battalion and perhaps, together with Ludwig Renn, the most prolific chronicler of the Spanish conflict, spent 18 months in a French detention camp following the Spanish war. In 1941 he made his way to the United States where he spent the war years as a foreign consultant for the Columbia Broadcasting Corporation. He returned to Germany in

<sup>40</sup> The XIIIth Brigade, while predominantly French and Polish, contained about eighty German volunteers – members of a catch-all unit called the Chapaev battalion. During its short existence, it was extensively used as a shock troop and guerrilla unit, and suffered heavy losses. It was disbanded in July 1937, and the few survivors were assigned to the XIth Brigade. Zaisser had been active in the Soviet revolutionary movement since the early 1920s, and before appearing in Spain had been on missions in China and Manchuria as a member of the Intelligence Staff of the Red Army.

<sup>41</sup> Hoffmann, former political commissar of the XIth Brigade, left France for the Soviet Union directly after the Spanish War and attended the Moscow Military Academy during the war years. In 1945 he returned to Germany and worked closely with Zaisser until the latter's removal in 1953, after which he assumed control of the *Bereitschaften* units. In 1954 he was elected to the Central Committee of the SED, and by 1956 was in command of the National People's Army. He was awarded the Hans Beimler Medal for meritorious service! *Wer ist Wer in der SBZ*, 107.

<sup>42</sup> Kantorowicz, *Spanisches Tagebuch*, 534.

1946 and soon became a leading figure in the SED. Between 1947 and 1949 he edited the periodical *Ost und West*, and spent the next five years teaching at the Humboldt University in Berlin. In 1957 he sought asylum in the West.

While it is not the purpose of this paper to debate the issues or morals of the Spanish conflict, it is certainly clear that its repercussions have lasted to the present day, not only in the present activities of the surviving participants, but also in prevailing political attitudes. Certainly the Spanish war was a pivotal point in the European political scene of the 1930s. When the rebels entered Madrid without firing a shot on 28 March 1939, the German invasion of Poland which officially opened the second World War was only six months away; it is widely held that if the German and Italian armies had been denied their experience in Spain, the course of the war which followed would have been radically different.

The German and Austrian political refugees who volunteered to fight for the Spanish Republic were not only answering an appeal for aid, but were transforming the character of their opposition to national-socialism. The volunteers of the Thaelmann, Edgar André, Hans Beimler, and 12th of February battalions were the first nationals of the Third Reich to oppose Hitler on the field of battle.

#### COMMANDERS AND COMMISSARS OF THE XIth BRIGADE

##### *Brigade commanders:*

Hans Kahle (German)	Oberstleutnant	To March 1937
Richard Staimer (German)	Major	April–December 1937
Heinrich Rau (German)	Major	January–March 1938
Gustav Szinda (German)	Major	March 1938
Otto Flatter (Hungarian) (Ferenc Munnich)	Major	April–August 1938
Adolf Reiner (Austrian)	Major	September 1938–January 1939

##### *Brigade commissars:*

Hans Beimler (German)	To December 1936
Di-Vittorio (Italian)	December 1936–January 1937
Artur Dorf (German)	February–April 1937
Heinrich Rau (German)	May–September 1937
Kurt Frank (German)	September 1937–January 1938
Richard Schenk (German)	February–March 1938
Ernest Blank (German)	March 1938–January 1939

## CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

### Chiefs of Staff:

Ludwig Renn (German)	Major	December 1936–June 1937
Gustav Szinda (German)	Major	July–September 1937
Heinrich Rau (German)	Major	October–December 1937

### ERNST THAELMANN BATTALION

#### Commanders:

Ludwig Renn (German)	Major	November–December 1936
Richard Staimer (German)	Captain	December 1936–February 1937
Franz Raab (German)	Major	February–May 1937
Georg Elsner (German)	Major	May–August 1937
Anton Shichanovsky (German)	Captain	August–October 1937
Max Doppler (Swiss)	Captain	October–December 1937
Fritz Klamm (German)	Captain	December 1937–January 1938
Paul Horning (German)	Lieutenant	January–March 1938
Willy Hackbarth (German)	Captain	March–April 1938
Jupp Goppel (German)	Captain	April–July 1938
Franz Raab (German)	Major	July 1938–January 1939

#### Commissars:

Louis Schuster (German)		November–December 1936
Paul Wolf (German)		December 1936–February 1937
Franz Strunk (German)		February–March 1937
(Hermann Streit)		
Toni Meinel (German)		March–April 1937
Robert Weinland (German)		April–July 1937
Willi Bredel (German)		August–October 1937
Richard Schenk (German)		October 1937–January 1938
Bernabe (Spanish)		January–April 1938
Achuteguie (Spanish)		April–August 1938
Modesta Ojeda (Spanish)		August–October 1938

### EDGAR ANDRÉ BATTALION

#### Commanders:

Hans Kahle (German)	Major	October 1936
Wilhelm Folkel (German)	Major	November 1936–January 1937
Miguel Szalway (Hungarian)	Major	January–February 1937
Gustav Szinda (German)	Major	February–July 1937
Willy Benz (German)	Major	January–April 1938
Hugo Wittmann (German)	Major	April 1938–January 1939
(Ernst Buschmann)		

#### Commissars:

Artur Dorf (German)		October 1936–January 1937
Josef Zettler (German)		January–March 1937
Karl Schmidt (Polish)		March–May 1937
Willy Herr (German)		May–June 1937
Josef Zeuner (German)		June–August 1937
Wilhelm Pinneke (German)		August 1937–March 1938
Unknown (Spanish)		April–October 1938

## GERMANS AGAINST HITLER

### HANS BEIMLER BATTALION

#### Commanders:

Heinz Schramm (German)	Major	May–July 1937
Willy Schwarz (German)	Captain	July–November 1937
Fritz Klamm (German)	Captain	November–December 1937
Max Doppler (Swiss)	Captain	December 1937–January 1938
Francisco Delgado (Spanish)	Captain	January–April 1938
Miquoel (Spanish)	Captain	April–May 1938
Mirales (Spanish)	Captain	May–October 1938

#### Commissars:

Ernst Braun (German)		April–May 1937
Heinz Roth (German)		May–July 1937
(Heinz Hoffmann)		
Robert Weinand (German)		July–September 1937
Otto Kuhne (German)		September–December 1937
Hans Golz (German)		December 1937–January 1938
Otto Kuhne (German)		January–February 1938
Ole Kjile Karlson (Norwegian)		February–August 1937
Dominguez (Spanish)		August–October 1938

### 12TH OF FEBRUARY BATTALION

#### Commanders:

Harry Hellfeld (German)	Captain	July–August 1937
Karl Bauer (Austrian)	Major	August–October 1937
Emil Reuter (Austrian)	Major	October 1937–March 1938
Karl Rimbach (Austrian)	Captain	March–April 1938
Adolf Reiner (Austrian)	Major	April–August 1938
Willy Benz (German)	Major	August 1938–January 1939

#### Commissars:

Walter Knobloch (German)		June–August 1937
Leo Wurzel (Austrian)		August–September 1937
Paul Steiner (Austrian)		October 1937–July 1938
Vincente S. Bordes (Spanish)		July–October 1938