

Aftermath of the Civil War in Spain Refugees in France

The largest contingent of International Brigades fighters comprised German anti-fascists, many of whom were disillusioned former Nazi storm troopers. Volunteers from most countries eventually returned to their home countries after the Republican defeat in Spain, but German and Italian anti-fascists would have been executed by their governments if captured, so they remained in French internment camps along with the exiled Spaniards. After northern France fell to Germany in 1940, those refugee inmates became slave laborers for the Vichy regime that governed southern France.

Camp de Gurs was the largest of the refugee camps in southern France. The January 14, 1941, registered cover was sent by a German (probably Jewish) internee to a relative in Memphis, Tennessee. Below: A July 1, 1942, censored registered letter from Barcelona, Spain, to a Spanish refugee interned at Oradour-sur-Glane, who had been transferred to a military slave labor detail, denoted by the "Groupe de Travailleurs Espagnols" (Spanish Labor Group) and "XII^e Division Militaire, 405^e Groupe" (12th Military Division, 405th Group) cachets.

Bisected 50-centime French stamp paid the forwarding fee on the cover from Spain.

