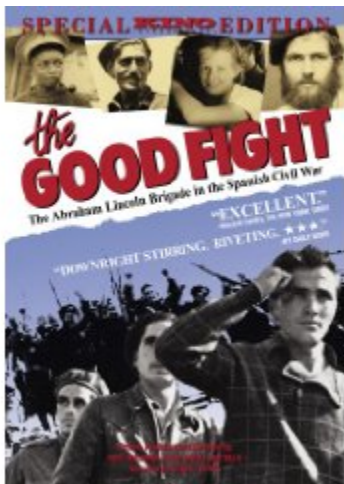


The Abraham Lincoln Brigade  
Tampa ALBA Institute for Education: Summer 2009

The Spanish Civil War and International Involvement  
Lesson Plan

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- I. Lesson Plan with links to Essays, Posters and Letters from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Volunteers
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Ross Webster  
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Lesson Plan: Spanish Civil War and International Involvement

Ross Webster, Spoto HS

Objective: To introduce the Spanish Civil War in the context of International involvement with an emphasis on the International Brigades and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Materials Needed: (all highlighted materials are hyperlinked). All **bolded materials** are contained in this packet.

I. Letters from participants in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade:

James Lardner, [5/3/1938](#)

Harry Molofsky, [2/24/1937](#), [5/27/1937](#), [10/10/1937](#)

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**Canute Frankson, July 6, 1937**

**Hyman (Chaim)Katz ,11/25/1937**

II. Readings and Documents Worksheets Packet:

A. Readings detailing international involvement (or non-involvement) in the Spanish Civil War. Includes 2 page essays on:

- [Britain and the Spanish Civil War](#)
- [Non-Intervention Agreement](#)
- [The Neutrality Acts](#)
- [France and the Spanish Civil War](#)
- [The Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the Spanish Civil War](#)

**B. Document Student Worksheets: (Available below in this packet)**

- Document Worksheet
- Peace in Our Time Assignment
- Totalitarian Rulers of World War II Worksheet and Teachers Key
- International Involvement in the Spanish Civil War
- Spanish Civil War FRQ

III. [Children's drawings from the Spanish Civil War](#) (ALBA on-line exhibit)

IV. Posters and descriptions of posters:

[The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from the USCD Southworth Collection](#)

Lesson details:

Day 1: As a homework assignment, distribute the materials (letters, readings, drawings, and posters) to the students. Distribute copies of the **Document Worksheet** (see below) for the students to complete using their given document.

\*Create groups based on number of students and amount of children's drawings and propaganda posters that you want to use/reference

Day 2: -As the students enter the room, play the video "[L Internationale](#)" (available on the ABLB website under "online video and film on the Spanish Civil War" on [WWW.ALBA-VALB.ORG](http://WWW.ALBA-VALB.ORG)

-Distribute the **International Involvement in the Spanish Civil War Worksheet** (see below).

-Have the students break into groups of like documents and give them 5-10 minutes to compare and share ideas about their documents.

-Teacher generated, but student run discussion/completion of the document worksheet. Include the poster "[Los Nacionales Cartoon](#)" in a wrap up discussion of the international involvement.

-Homework (wrap up) Complete the **FRQ Question Worksheet** (see below) about the Spanish Civil War as a primer to WWII.

Day 3: -Discuss the student writings in the FRQ.

-Distribute and complete the "**Totalitarian Rulers of WWII**" **Worksheet** (see below) as a lead in to teaching WWII (**Teacher Key Included**). Additional assignment: Peace in our Time Worksheet- A writing activity based on differing views of the Munich Pact. (See Below).

### **Primary Document: Hyman (Chaim) Katz**

Hyman Katz was a volunteer from New York. He went to Spain without telling his mother because he did not want to upset her. But when he was wounded in action in 1937, the young volunteer decided to explain to his mother why he had enlisted against her wishes.

His letter home reveals the motives of many other Jewish volunteers.

**Citation:**

Aaron Katz, "Letter from the Front in Spain," *Jewish Currents*, XL (February 1979), pp. 4-6, 16-17.

11/25/37

Dear Ma,

It's quite difficult for me to write this letter, but it must be done; Claire writes me that you know I'm in Spain. Of course, you know that the reason I didn't tell you where I was, is that I didn't want to hurt you. I realize that I was foolish for not understanding that you would have to find out.

I came to Spain because I felt I had to. Look at the world situation. We didn't worry when Mussolini came to power in Italy. We felt bad when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, but what could we do? We felt--though we tried to help and sympathize--that it was their problem and wouldn't affect us. Then the fascist governments sent out agents and began to gain power in other countries. Remember the anti-Semitic troubles in Austria only about a year ago. Look at what is happening in Poland; and see how the fascists are increasing their power in the Balkans--and Greece--and how the Italians are trying to play up to the Arab leaders.

Seeing all these things--how fascism is grasping power in many countries (including the U.S., where there are many Nazi organizations and Nazi agents and spies)--can't you see that fascism is our problem--that it may come to us as it came in other countries? And don't you realize that we Jews will be the first to suffer if fascism comes?

But if we didn't see clearly the hand of Mussolini and Hitler in all these countries, in Spain we can't help seeing it. Together with their agent, Franco, they are trying to set up the same anti-progressive, anti-Semitic regime in Spain, as they have in Italy and Germany.

If we sit by and let them grow stronger by taking Spain, they will move on to France and will not stop there; and it won't be long before they get to America. Realizing this, can I sit by and wait until the beasts get to my very door--until it is too late, and there is no one I can call on for help? And would I even deserve help from others when the trouble comes upon me, if I were to refuse help to those who need it today? If I permitted such a time to come--as a Jew and a progressive, I would be among the first to fall under the axe of the fascists;--all I could do then would be to curse myself and say, "Why didn't I wake up when the alarm-clock rang?"

But then it would be too late--just as it was too late for the Jews in Germany to find out in 1933 that they were wrong in believing that Hitler would never rule Germany.

I know that you are worried about me; but how often is the operation which worries us, most necessary to save us? Many mothers here, in places not close to the battle-front, would not let their children go to fight, until the fascist bombing planes came along; and then it was too late. Many mothers here have been crippled or killed, or their husbands and children maimed or killed; yet some of these mothers did not want to send their sons and husbands to the war, until the fascist bombs taught them in such a horrible manner--what common sense could not teach them.

Yes, Ma, this is a case where sons must go against their mothers' wishes for the sake of their mothers themselves. So I took up arms against the persecutors of my people--the Jews--and my class--the Oppressed. I am fighting against those who establish an inquisition like that of their ideological ancestors several centuries ago, in Spain. Are these traits which you admire so much in a Prophet Jeremiah or a Judas Maccabeus, bad when your son exhibits them? Of course, I am not a Jeremiah or a Judas; but I'm trying with my own meager capabilities, to do what they did with their great capabilities, in the struggle for Liberty, well-being, and Peace....

Lovingly,  
Chaim

### **Primary Document: Canute Frankson**

Frankson was born in the Parish of St. Catherine, Old Harbor, Jamaica on April 13, 1890. In 1917, together with his wife, Rachel, he emigrated to Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, where Frankson worked as a machinist. Frankson eventually settled in Detroit, where he worked in the auto industry. Frankson joined the Communist Party in 1934. He sailed for Europe aboard the Queen Mary on April 21, 1937.

In Spain, skilled machinists were scarce and Frankson with his proven ability was rapidly promoted. He was appointed Head Mechanic at the International Garage in Albacete. Fellow International Garage veteran, Marion Noble, noted that Frankson's fluency in Spanish was a great asset and that many hours of his free time were spent teaching engine repair classes to young Spaniards.

Frankson returned to the United States aboard the President Harding on September 24, 1938. Frankson was killed in an auto accident in either 1939 or 1940.

#### **Citation:**

Cary Nelson and Jefferson Hendricks, *Madrid 1937* (New York, 1996), pp. 33-35.

*Excerpts from letter*

Albacete, Spain  
July 6, 1937

My Dear Friend,

I'm sure that by this time you are still waiting for a detailed explanation of what has this international struggle to do with my being here. Since this is a war between whites who for centuries have held us in slavery, and have heaped every kind of insult and abuse upon us, segregated and jim-crowed us; why I, a Negro who have fought through these years for the rights of my people, am here in Spain today?

Because we are no longer an isolated minority group fighting hopelessly against an immense giant. Because, my dear, we have joined with, and become an active part of, a great progressive force on whose shoulders rests the responsibility of saving human civilization from the planned destruction of a small group of degenerates gone mad in their lust for power. Because if we crush Fascism here we'll save our people in America, and in other parts of the world from the vicious persecution, wholesale imprisonment, and slaughter which the Jewish people suffered and are suffering under Hitler's Fascist heels. All we have to do is to think of the lynching of our people. We can but look back at the pages of American history stained with the blood of Negroes; stink with the burning bodies of our people hanging from trees; bitter with the groans of our tortured loved ones from whose living bodies ears, fingers, toes have been cut for souvenirs<sup>3/4</sup> living bodies into which red-hot poker have been thrust. All because of a hate created in the minds of men and women by their masters who keep us all under their heels while they suck our blood, while they live in their bed of ease by exploiting us....

...We will crush them. We will build us a new society - a society of peace and plenty. There will be no color line, no jim-crow trains, no lynching. That is why, my dear, I'm here in Spain.

On the battlefields of Spain we fight for the preservation of democracy. Here, we're laying the foundation for world peace, and for the liberation of my people, and of the human race. Here, where we're engaged in one of the most bitter struggles of human history, there is no color line, no discrimination, no race hatred. There's only one hate, and that is the hate for Fascism. We know why our enemies are. The Spanish people are very sympathetic towards us. They are lovely people. I'll tell you about them later....

Don't think for one moment that the strain of this terrible war or the many miles between us has changed my feelings towards you. Our friendship has meant a great deal to me, and still means much to me. I appreciate it because it has always been a friendship of devoted and mutual interest. And I'll do whatever is within my power to maintain it.

No one knows the time he'll die, even under the most favorable conditions. So I, a soldier in active service, must know far less about how far or how close is death. But as long as I hold out I'll keep you in touch with events. Sometimes when I go to the fronts the shells drop pretty close. Then I think it's only a matter of minutes. After I return here to the base I seem to see life from a new angle. Somehow it seems to be more beautiful. I'd think of you, home and all my friends, then get to working more feverishly than ever. Each of us must give all we have if this Fascist beast is to be destroyed.

After this is over I hope to share my happiness with you....

So long. Until some future date. One never knows when there'll be time to write. There's so much to do and so little time in which to do it. Love,

Salud, Canute

Student Worksheet: Documents  
Spanish Civil War

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Period \_\_\_\_\_

Name of document(s)

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Author and date of document (if available)

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Is this a primary or secondary source?

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What is the connection between this document and the Spanish Civil War

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Is this document pro-involvement **or** ant-involvement in the Spanish Civil War?

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Please explain your answer to the previous question:

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## Student Worksheet: Peace in our Time

In 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain created the Munich Pact that allowed Hitler's invasion of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia.

By adopting the policy of appeasement, Chamberlain declared to the world that he had achieved "peace for our time".

That same year, Winston Churchill, who would soon replace Chamberlain as Prime Minister, said the following: "Britain and France had to choose between war and dishonor. They chose dishonor. They will have war."

### Assignment:

Write **two** paragraphs:

1. Write a paragraph supporting Chamberlain's plan for appeasement and explain why he thought this was the best plan of action against Hitler in 1938.
2. Write a paragraph supporting Churchill's statement that, by choosing appeasement, Britain and France will have war.

Student Worksheet: Totalitarian Rulers of World War II

<u>Totalitarian Ruler</u>	Joseph Stalin	Benito Mussolini	Adolf Hitler
Country			
Political Movement			
<u>Aggressive actions</u> taken in the 1920's and 1930's			

Totalitarian Ruler	Japanese Militarists	Francisco Franco
<u>Country</u>		
<u>Political Movement</u>		
<u>Aggressive actions</u> taken in the 1920's and 1930's		

Totalitarian Rulers of World War II: Teachers Key

<u>Totalitarian Ruler</u>	Joseph Stalin	Benito Mussolini	Adolf Hitler
Country	The Soviet Union	Italy	Germany
Political Movement	Communism	Fascism	Nazism
<u>Aggressive actions taken in the 1920's and 1930's</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Massive campaigns to collectivize agriculture <u>and</u> to industrialize the nation</li> <li>-The Great Purge (1934-1938)</li> <li>8-13 million killed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-March on Rome (1922)</li> <li>-Rome/Berlin Pact</li> <li>-Invasion of Ethiopia (1935)</li> <li>-Annexed Albania (1939)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Established the Third Reich</li> <li>-Quit the League of Nations</li> <li>-Rebuilt the German military (1935)</li> <li>-Sent troops into the Rhineland (1936)</li> <li>-Rome/Berlin Pact</li> </ul>

Totalitarian Ruler	Japanese Militarists	Francisco Franco
<u>Country</u>	Japan	Spain
<u>Political Movement</u>	Shinto -Extreme nationalism -Militaristic expansionism	Fascism
<u>Aggressive actions</u> taken in the 1920's and 1930's	-Invasion of Manchuria (1931) -Quit the League of Nations -Invaded China (1937)	-Led an uprising against the elected government (1936) -Fought a civil war (1936-39)

Student Worksheet: International Involvement in the Spanish Civil War

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

1. The Neutrality Acts

2. The Non-Intervention Agreement

3. Britain and the Spanish Civil War

4. France and the Spanish Civil War

5. The Abraham Lincoln Brigade

6. Propaganda

7. Children's Drawings

**Student Worksheet: Spanish Civil War FRO**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

“The Spanish Civil War has been called a dress rehearsal for WWII”

Assess the validity of this statement using details from the readings and class discussions.

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