

A bullseye for the Bay Area annual VALB dinner

The day after the annual dinner of the Bay Area Post, the phone line of the New York VALB office was clogged by callers from the West Coast who unanimously pronounced the celebration a thrilling event. The Volunteer asked Roby Newman, son of Veteran Bob Colodny, to write-up the event. As a contributor to the script, his personalized account, which follows, captures not only the enthusiasm of those who attended the affair but the quality of the multi-generational effort that created and carried it out.

The Bay Area Post of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade held its 58th annual dinner at San Francisco's Parc Oakland Hotel on February 27. It was attended by a capacity crowd of 750 who contributed over \$9,000 in the collection that concluded the memorable afternoon.

The focus of the dinner was a staged dramatic reading, *Postscript to a War*. It told the story of the Lincoln veterans from crossing the Pyrenees to present-day activism. Those of us who collaborated in the selection and editing of the material wanted to honor the Vets, living and deceased. As Associate

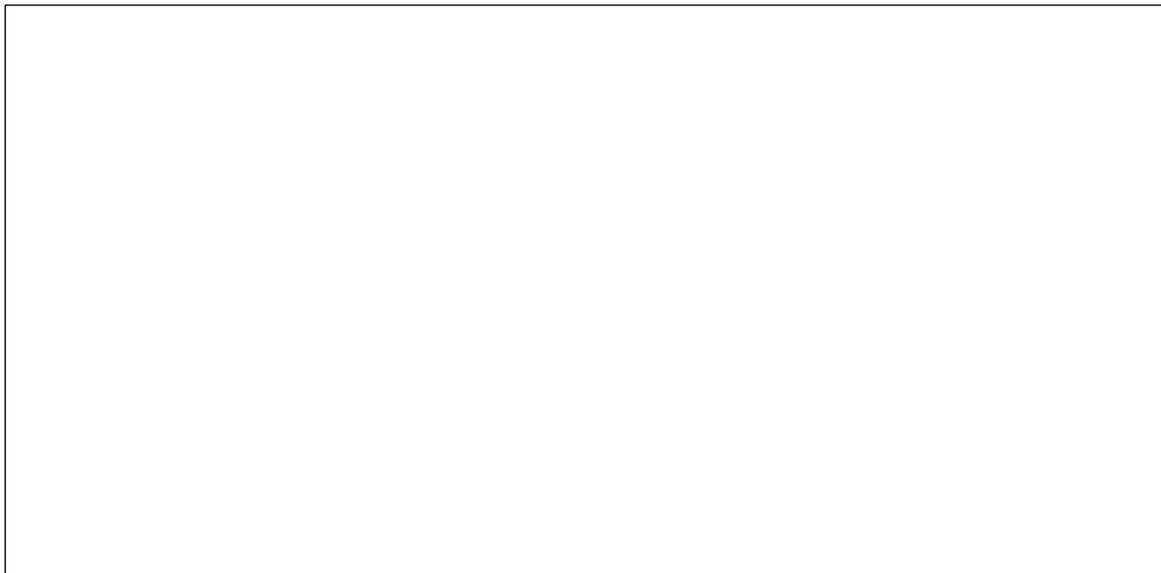
Members, we saw this tribute in the context of our unflagging ongoing work.

With Peter Carroll, author of the recently published *Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, acting as MC, and Hannah Creighton, daughter of Veteran Leonard Olson, as "pitchperson," the younger generation of Associates consciously took a greater part in the dinner – literally from "soup to nuts," as the old saying goes.

Peter Carroll's brief opening reminded us of the greater family formed by the Vets and their supporters. Keith Carson, Alameda County Supervisor, 5th District,

expounded this vision. He spoke of "pendulum shifts" from Galileo's scientific study to the recent Republican onslaught in Washington and the need for us to remain strong in our convictions and aware that future shifts are possible if we persist in the Good Fight.

Following Keith's speech, Milt Wolff, Post Commander, asked the



Photos of the day photo will list by Michaela Bernick

At the Bay Area dinner — L-R: Douglas Morton, David Laub, Claudia Paige, Velina Brown, Arthur Holden, Barrett Nelson, Barbara Jepperson, Michael Sullivan and Rebecca Klinger.

Spain in the winter of '95

by Gabriel Jackson

Gabriel Jackson, historian, journalist and long-time friend of the Lincoln veterans, has graciously consented to write a regular newsletter from Barcelona for this occasionally published journal.

I'm sorry that my first newsletter coincides with mostly bad news, but the unfortunate fact is that Spain for the moment is mired in a really deep economic-political crisis. The main factors in that crisis – heavy unemployment, inefficient economic organization, and widespread political corruption – are characteristic also of France and Italy, but, in some ways the economic mess is worse in Spain than in the other European countries, and I will begin with that aspect.

The mid-1980's witnessed lots of new foreign investment and a favorable international attitude toward Spain on account of the recently adopted democratic constitution and the stabilization of democracy under the first civilian, moderately leftist government that had ever been allowed to function without military interference. However, the new money was mostly invested in short-term projects: government bonds paying high interest, real estate which was rising rapidly in value, beach houses to be occupied a few weeks a year, etc., rather than in productive industries which would make the best use of the country's natural and human resources.

The peseta rose, and was maintained at artificially high rates, on the theory that a "strong" currency would show the world what Spain had done several times in the past – buy the best foreign technology and finished goods rather than learn to produce such wealth domestically. The high peseta also meant that tourist receipts declined, that Spanish beaches were more expensive than Greek or Tunisian beaches where the sun shone just as brightly. Madrid and Barcelona, according to State Department per diem allowances, became more expensive than New York and Washington.

At the same time, tariff barriers came down as a result of Spain's integration into the Common Market. French butter and cheeses began to replace Spanish dairy products in their own home market (with French investors also developing and controlling new supermarkets). And French farmers who had not heard about the virtues of free trade did not hesitate to destroy Spanish trucks carrying Spanish fruits across France to Switzerland and Germany, with much uncompensated loss to one of the few sectors in which the Spanish economy was competitive.

Also, during the years of massive capital imports and a high peseta, relatively little was done to improve the road and railroad infrastructure. Untold millions were spent on the beautiful high speed train between

Madrid and Seville, principal fief and city of origin of the main Socialist Party leaders of the 1980's. But the high speed train starved the rest of the national rail network, which has been running immense annual deficits, and which lacks essential maintenance and new equipment. Iberia Airlines, during the fat years, decided to invest in Argentine airlines, and the deficits resulting from that error have become a large factor in the present threatened bankruptcy of the national airline.

Official unemployment remains at about 20 percent, but that figure can be taken with a grain of salt because of the widespread unofficial economy. There is no doubt that Spain has at least 50 percent more unemployment than the European average of 11 percent, and, as in all the "advanced" countries, a certain economic recovery is occurring now without, however, reducing structural unemployment.

The country has also, for about three years, been living through an extended political crisis. First there was the problem of the unofficial financing of all the political parties through such picturesque methods as the payment of hundreds of millions of pesetas for "technical studies" for various banks and industries, studies which were never made; or the exchange, between friends, of samsonite cash containers. Then, within the past twelve months, three major financial scandals.

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The Volunteer

Journal of the
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The Jarama monument is dedicated

An impressive monument was dedicated in Madrid's Morata de Tajuña cemetery on October 8, 1994. It commemorates the thousands of Spanish Republican soldiers and International Brigaders who died in the Jarama valley battle that raged throughout the month of February 1937. After Madrid fell in 1939, their graves at Tajuña had been dug up by the fascists and thrown into a common unmarked pit.

Jarama, following the defense of Madrid in December 1936, was the Republic's next great military victory. It preserved Spain's democracy for two years longer until the weight of fascist arms and men, bulwarked by the western democracies' "neutrality," began Franco's bloody thirty-year rule. Jarama was also the baptism under fire of the Abraham Lincoln battalion and the British battalion.

The Morata ceremony was attended by several score IBers, mainly from the Brigade associations in Britain and Ireland, and by over a thousand Madrileños. The event culminated a 15-year campaign waged by broad committees of IB veterans and supporters in Britain and Ireland. It was doggedly fought for in Spain by three anti-fascist alliances representing veterans of the Republican army – the wounded, the political prisoners and those who served with the International Brigades.

Wider geographic representation at the Tajuña dedication was curtailed by a too-brief, ten-day advance notice from the Madrid authorities. Lincoln and Jarama veteran Jack Bjoze, within a time crunch of five days, managed to make travel arrangements. He delivered a brief tribute at the ceremony, bringing warmest greetings from the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Among the distinguished guests and speakers was Amaya Ibàrruri, daughter of La Pasionaria, who spoke again the immortal Despidida



The plaque at the Morata de Tajuña Cemetery. The inscription reads: "In memory of the heroic fighters, anti-fascist Spaniards and of the International Brigades that, in the battle of Jarama, February 1937, offered their lives for the cause of liberty — of Spain, of Europe and of the world." Draped across the top are the flags of the countries of the International Brigade. Jud Coleman, British volunteer from Manchester, a Jarama survivor, is in the foreground.

(Farewell) delivered by her mother at the Barcelona farewell parade of the IB in 1939; General Enrique Lister, who died several weeks later [See page 17-Ed], and representatives of the Cuban and Irish embassies.

BRITAIN — Reporting to the International Brigade Association, Bill Alexander wrote:

For all of us the memorial is a profound emotional symbol marking the strong, firm ties of solidarity between the anti-fascist people of

Spain and of Britain. It honors all who gave their lives for liberty and peace, 1936-39.

There was detailed press coverage of the dedication in the *Guardian*, the *Morning Star* by Bill Alexander and the *New Worker* by veteran Maurice Levitas.

IRELAND — A November 10th communication to *The Volunteer* from Manus O'Riordan, son of Irish veteran Michael O'Riordan, enclosed press clippings from nine Irish papers that covered the event. Excerpts from his letter read:

It was a privilege for me to be present at the graveside in Morata de Tajuña to honor the Jarama dead in the company of my father, (Ebro vet Michael O'Riordan), Maurice Levitas and Peter O'Connor (the sole surviving Irish veteran of Jarama), two other Irish vets, Bob Doyle and Maurice Levitas (both former prisoners in San Pedro de Cardeñas).





Added to Memory's Roster



Bill Bailey

Bill Bailey, whose craggy face, imposing stature and gravel voice well suited his legendary career, died in San Francisco on February 27 after a long pulmonary illness. He was 84.

Bill first won celebrity in anti-fascist circles in 1935 when he ripped a swastika flag from the bow of the passenger liner Bremen at a dock in New York City. Several months later, Bill upgraded his anti-fascism to the battlefields of the Spanish Civil War where, as an International Brigader, he became commissar of the Lincoln Battalion's machine gun company.

Bailey grew up in extreme poverty – his mother sent him barefoot to first grade and he was sentenced to two stretches in reform school, before shipping out at age 15. In his 1993 autobiography, *The Kid from Hoboken* (Smyrna Press, Union City, NJ) Bailey brings to life the Irish slums, where he grew up, his life at sea, his experiences in the Communist Party, which he quit in 1956, and the ups and downs of his trade union career.

Bailey joined the Marine Workers Industrial Union in 1934, attended the Communist Party's national training school, and was dispatched to a succession of difficult organizing posts, including Norfolk, Virginia, and a sugar cane plantation in Hawaii.

During World War II, Bailey served as business agent for the Marine Firemen, Oilers and Water-tenders Union (MFOU), until he couldn't stand sending out any more men to risk death. He shipped out himself, taking part in the invasion of the Philippines.

Expelled from the MFOU in the McCarthy years of the 1950s, he edited a dissenting rank-and-file newspaper, *The Black Gang News*,

before switching over to longshore work. He was elected dispatcher at ILWU Local 10 in San Francisco.

Bailey became a celebrity again in his '70s, nearly running away with the documentaries, *Seeing Red* and *The Good Fight*. He was invited to speak at Harvard University and college campuses across the United States, and was interviewed by Studs Terkel for *The Good War*. He played dramatic roles in the Hollywood feature films *On the Edge* and *Guilty by Suspicion*.

Bill was extremely generous with his time, was supportive of activists, young and old, seeking to make a better world. Like Eugene Debs – “a warmer heart ne'er beat, betwixt here and the Judgment Seat.” ☞

Bill's own postscript

This is the text, undated and unedited, of a letter in Bill's handwriting that he had asked his son Michael to send to The Volunteer after he passed away.

Dear _____,

My dad, Bill Bailey, often told me that his telephone book contains the names of some of the best people in the world – people who in their lifetime have done much to improve the lot of the working man & woman to achieve a better life as well as bring peace in this world and a safer and longer life for the children yet to come.

I thought that in this aspect it would interest you to know that he died on — after battling a long complication of lung problems. For some 21 years he worked in the engine room of our merchant marine, being around and handling asbestos – long before anyone would dare admit it was dangerous or even permit safety precautions to be used. For

22 years he worked in longshore, until he retired, again working around and with dusty and dangerous cargoes.

I know he tried to remain active in helping achieve those political and trade union objectives and if he experienced any bad days it was because he could not be active enough. He was loyal to his many friends and was in pain when they were in trouble & he could not help.

In respecting his wishes I know he would have liked to have his ashes alongside of those brave comrades he helped bury in Spain but knowing this was not possible – his ashes will join those of the rest of his family by being sprinkled at sea. Like he would say, “May my ashes wash up on the shores of the world,” and thank you for enriching his life by friendship over the years. ☞

March 2, 1995

Seymour Klein

Seymour Klein was one of the last volunteers to arrive in Spain (April 1938) and was also one of the last Lincoln Battalion soldiers to be wounded – September 15, 1938, on the Sierra Pandols. He died June 5, 1994, in San Diego, his home. He was 78.

As an NMU organizer, in June of 1940 Sy led a strike, in Buffalo, against the Saginaw Dock and Terminal Corporation. As a merchant seaman in World War II he sailed the Murmansk run to Russia. Before the war's end, he was awarded a lieutenant's commission in the Naval Reserve and acquired honorable service ribbons that included commendation stars for the Asiatic-Pacific theater and the Philippine liberation. In the 1970's Sy served as commander of the San Diego VALB post. ☞



Added to Memory's Roster



Ben Kotler

Ben was born on June 12, 1915. He went to school in Newark, New Jersey, and then to Brooklyn College where he was graduated summa cum laude. He left for Spain in June 1938, and served with the Lincoln Battalion until the IB was withdrawn for repatriation in 1938.

For 33 years, 1951-1984, Ben worked in the accounting department of the United Electrical workers union. When he retired, the UE national leadership honored him as "among those who hold no prominent position in the labor movement but whose services are of utmost importance in its functioning." Ben, responding, expressed his gratitude for having been able to contribute to the UE's rank-and-file principles. His widow, Ida, and daughter, Judith, attended the VALB memorial meeting in February. ☞

Leonard Lamb

Lennie Lamb was born on September 1, 1910, and died on October 21, 1994. Throughout his long and constructive life, his participation in the history of that time, there was a consistency of common sense, courage and leadership.

I first met Lennie in 1936. We were in the Works Progress Administration. He was in its Youth Division which was responsible for reaching local social clubs that had been set up by thousands of young people as havens from the seeming hopelessness of their lives. The clubhouses were in improvised quarters – sometimes just a storefront, sometimes a tenement basement.

As Lennie and the group members would get to know one another, he won their friendship with his patience and straightforwardness. Many of them came to know why they were in such dire straits. Above all, Lennie Lennie directed

their attention and energy to practicalities. They became involved in struggles that sought special relief measures for jobless youth and they became part of the national movement for Social Security.

It was with this experience under his belt that Lennie went to Spain. That was, of course, the fundamental struggle for social justice writ large.

From Brunete on, Lennie was in every battle. To recall them now – Quinto, Belchite, Teruel, Seguro de Los Baños, Gandesa, the Ebro – is to be reminded of Hemingway's phrase in *A Farewell to Arms*, "There comes a time when the names of places communicate dignity."

Lennie was wounded three times. Each time he deserted from the hospital to rejoin the Lincolns. I remember him walking past a group of us with a bandage around his neck where a bullet had miraculously avoided a vital spot. Two hardened Brits were there. They looked at each other, shook their heads and one observed, "That Lamb, he is a tough man." This was in the Sierra Pandols, after we had crossed the Ebro and were holding on to the ground we had gained. Lennie, by then, had earned the battlefield commission of captain. Under the harshest conditions, whether in advance or retreat, everyone he commanded knew him as a reassuring, calming presence.

After Spain, Lennie shipped out. As a member of the National Maritime Union, he sailed the North Atlantic bombing runs. After D-Day he became a member of the Brewery Workers Union.

Spain was a constant factor in his life. In 1979, he joined the first Executive Board of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives. In that role he spoke to and engaged in discussion with a wide variety of audiences.

I particularly remember Lennie at Dartmouth College, in April 1981. The occasion was a weekend celebration of the 50th anniversary

of the Second Spanish Republic, hosted by the prestigious Ivy League institution. Lennie joined such luminaries as Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel Jackson and Ronald Fraser, in bringing home the meaning of the Spanish Revolution to 1,500 students and guests.

Lennie was a thoughtful person. Walking was his recreation. In recent years I would sometimes accompany him for miles throughout Manhattan. On those outings, he would talk, not so much about his own experiences, rich as they were, as about general conclusions – those formed by his life, observations and reading.

When the past figured in Lennie's thoughts, it was not something in which he was imprisoned. It was simply a part of history to be viewed and judged in a current perspective.

He was a compassionate comrade. While few of us knew of his own terminal cancer, he unfailingly visited bedridden comrades. He would perform acts of kindness in the quietest way. During my wife's illness, he showed up at our home one Sunday morning and drove us for an excursion to Bear Mountain. He did innumerable such kindnesses and made no great show of them.

We have lost a fine and noble comrade. ☞

Irving Weissman

Carl Marzani

The following tribute to Carl Marzani, who died December 11, 1994, was written for the VALB memorial meeting in New York on February 19, 1995. Carl, like John Cornford, had served briefly with the Anarchists in Spain. He was a member of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. A fine biographical tribute to Carl by his friend Percy Brazil appeared in the

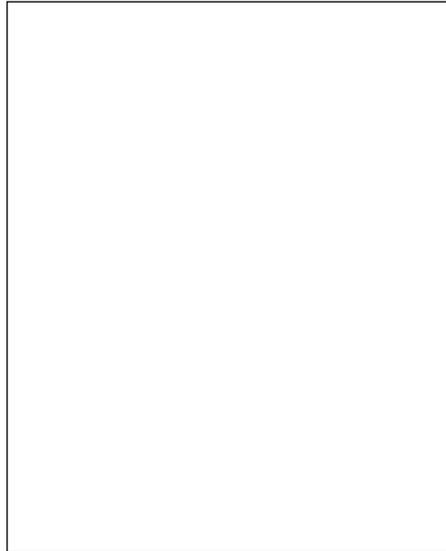
Bullseye for the Bay Area VALB dinner

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Vets in the audience to stand and be recognized. About two dozen rose and were applauded. Milt then followed the annual sad tradition and announced the names of the Lincoln veterans who had died in the past year. A moment of silence was observed in their memory. It is a moving ritual, this acknowledgment of the living and the dead, one that underscores the continuity, in flesh and spirit, that marks our organization.

The dinner – chicken-with-vegetables and strawberry mousse, etc., followed. Peter Carroll then introduced the focus of the afternoon, the docudrama, *Postscript to a War*. The musicians and musical director Bruce Barthol took their position at the rear of the stage, fronted by the actors seated in a row of stools.

Under the direction of co-author Peter Glazer, the actors, most of them members of the San Francisco Mime Troupe, had spent long rehearsals with the “characters” (our Brigade comrades) and preparing the songs of the Spanish Civil War. With a dedication, certainly not motivated by the token stipend



Hannah Olson Creighton

they received, they had perfected their pronunciation of *Venga Jaleo*, *Jaleo* and *Los Cuatro Generales*, and endured the necessary tinkering with the script.

From seven in the morning to a little past noon, a crew of volunteers had helped the sound and lighting designers set up the equipment needed to transform the hotel dining hall into a site amenable to theater magic. At a few minutes past 2:30 pm, the houselights were dimmed and the trumpet strains of *Si Me Quieres Escribir* tensed the

audience for the drama that followed.

Given my close involvement with *Postscript*, it is impossible for me to be completely objective; but having spoken with a number of people afterwards, including several Vets whose words were featured in the script, I can attest to the powerful effect the production had on both the audience and the performers.

The story of the Lincolns was eloquently told by the narrator/actor with the understated eloquence and occasional biting humor of the Lincolns – crossing the Pyrenees into Spain (“We are now walking in six inches of snow and a few of our men were slipping and falling,” – Bill Bailey); the anguish of combat (“Cross-fire from many machine guns made an impenetrable steel wall against advance” – John Tisa at Jarama).

Postscript also depicted the vital role of the nurses attending to the carnage at Brunete, Quinto, Teruel and the Ebro (“...all our lives we have hated white moonlight because it means the birds of death are busy nearby” – Fredericka Martin).

The interweaving of excerpts from the letters of Fredericka, Lini Fuhr and Rose Freed movingly depicted the sense of purpose and

Happy 80th for one of the Fort Point Walkers

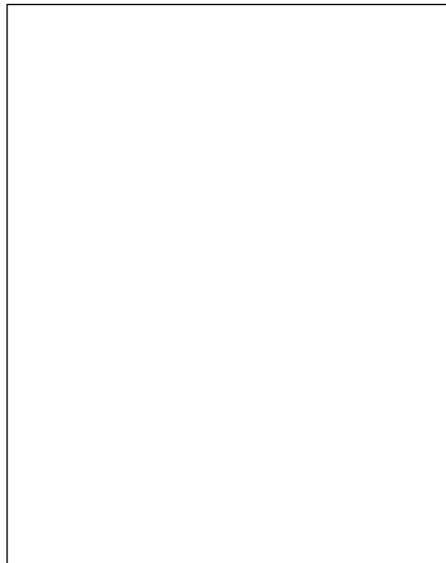


The “Fort Point Walking Group” at Bill Sennett’s 80th birthday party, last October 6. L-R: Earl Harju, Corinne Thornton, Nate Thornton, the late Bill Bailey, Bill Sennett, Peter Carroll, Ed Bender and Hon Brown.

sacrifice that was so fundamental to the involvement of the International Brigades in Spain. A particularly poignant moment in the script for me and many others was Marion Merriman's diary entry – "And so tonight I sit alone at midnight in a cold room, drinking tea to warm my spirits. ..." – with her hope of reuniting with her Bob, then commander of the Lincoln Battalion, who, five months later, would be killed in the Ebro retreat.

In putting together *Postscript*, we thought it important to show the long history of the struggle in which VALB has been, and still is, involved. We therefore made narrative reference to the many decorations won by Lincoln vets as GIs in World War II, even while they were accumulating FBI dossiers and entries in the Attorney General's list of subversives.

The McCarthy period was examined soberly ("The jurors filed in, and I suddenly knew there was no hope," Steve Nelson in his Sedition trial), but also with the survivor's humor of defiance and contempt in the poem by the late Ramon Durem, African American Lincoln vet: "Award – A Gold Watch to the FBI Man Who has Followed Me for Twenty-Five Years."



Keith Carson

I was very proud to have an excerpt read from a speech that my father, Robert Colodny, gave against the war in Vietnam, in 1969: "That was a horrible wound carved not only on the face of Spain, but on the flesh of humanity. It has never healed; it is raw, it bleeds."

As people cheered, I felt for a few seconds that the calendar had advanced 25 years and another generation was being roused to resist the invasion of Vietnam. It was the kind of moment that filled *Postscript* because the lives of the

Vets have been so rich.

We ended with more recent testimonies, including one by VALB nurse Hilda Roberts, who joined a hunger strike in Laredo, Texas, on a bus that was interned during a Caravan for Peace en route to Cuba – "I gave them [her companions on the bus] the feeling of the greatness of people who had struggled and unfortunately lost."

We concluded with a quote from nurse Ruth Davidow: "The question you always ask me, 'How do you keep active after fifty years?' and I say, 'How do you not?' The cast then recited Edwin Rolfe's *Postscript to a War* (The drama had opened with his *Bon Voyage*). The finale was a rousing version of *Viva La Quince Brigada* which had the audience on their feet cheering, as the lights came up.

Hannah Olson Creighton's warm collection speech that followed, literally capitalized on the impact of the play. She spoke of the extended VALB family seated around the tables and the need to dig deeper and give more. As the band played on, people began their final mingling and the 58th Anniversary which will, I think, always retain a special glow, was history. ☺



Added to Memory's Roster



Continued from page 5

Monthly Review, March 1995.

Carl Marzani exemplified the finest characteristics of the soldier-scholar. His generation was called upon to exhibit courage not only on the battlefields of Spain and beyond, but also in the civic area where political bigots and cruel inquisitors backed by the powers of the state sought to silence the voices of dissent. Carl never trimmed his sails to the prevailing winds of orthodoxy. He never recanted, he never flinched. Withal, he wore his virtues modestly. His example lights the way for our children and their grandchildren until, as the poet said,

the last syllable of recorded time.

As our final salute to Carl we can repeat with the old Romans: Ave atque vale – Hail and farewell. ☺

Robert G. Colodny

Morris Sennett

About my brother Maury – he was a year-and-a-half older than I and died last year at the age of 81. We lived in Chicago, both of us being natives of that city.

He volunteered to go to Spain in April or May of 1937. I had gone earlier in February. I was already in the First Regiment de Tren and he was added to that outfit as one of

the truck drivers. In addition to his duties as a driver, because of his knowledge and flair for languages, he often served as the oral and written translator for the Regiment. He interpreted and spoke in English, French, German and Yiddish.

When Maury returned to the United States, he remarried and became the father of Richard Sennett, now a professor at New York University and a well known progressive author.

Following a divorce, Maury moved to Detroit, and later the family settled in California. At the time of his death, Maury lived in Desert Hot Springs. ☺

Bill Sennett

Spain in the winter of '95

Continued from page 2

Mario Conde, ex-president of one of the principal banks, Banesto, stands accused of creaming hundreds of millions from his own investors by buying and reselling, at enormous profits, various businesses under his control. The debts are in Spain, owed to thousands of Spaniards, and much of the money is in Switzerland, assuring us that Conde will not starve.

A second whiz kid financier, Javier de la Rosa, lost millions for a Spanish bank in the mid-80's, then lost more millions for Kuwaiti investors, and finally is in prison for losing millions in private and public money in Catalonia. The question none of my Catalan friends can answer for me is why the regional authorities ever trusted de la Rosa with a cent after his previous known, indeed well-publicized, previous failures.

More important from an institutional point of view, the governor of the bank of Spain, once truly respected as a financial statesman à la Voelcker or Greenspan, turns out to have enriched himself on the basis of inside information while he was governor. And the chief of the

Civil Guard, the elite police force of the last century and a half, has fled to no one knows where with hundreds of millions of pesetas extracted from the "reserved funds" of his department – after having collected fat illegal commissions for years on the construction contracts for civil guard barracks.

These two scandals are especially serious because they call in question the good judgment of the Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez (not himself accused of any personal corruption), in having named those gentlemen to their posts.

Finally, a CIA-like operation of the early 1980's has come home to roost. Some officials, not yet fully identified, evidently used public money to subsidize the assassinations and attempted assassinations of about twenty Basque terrorists. Since the terrorists were managing to kill an average of one person a week, women and children included, and the official police seemed unable to capture them, some desperate government personnel decided that secret state-subsidized terrorism was the only answer to the problem. The activities this group, known by

the initials GAL, were concentrated in the years 1983-4, and have been an open secret ever since 1983. But only recently have journalistic investigations led to a judicial investigation which now threatens to expose and discredit a number of well-known political figures.

Having related so much bad news, I also want to assure the readers of this letter that, in my opinion, fundamental Spanish democracy is not threatened by these scandals. On the contrary, it is a sign of health that swindlers can be imprisoned, and that police abuses can be investigated by independent judges and by a free press. Such correctives were not available either during the Franco dictatorship of 1939-75 (where lots of such economic and police crimes occurred) nor during the superficially democratic but actually oligarchical system of the Spanish monarchy between 1875 and 1931. However, both the economic sloppiness and the political scandals show that while Spain has become a free country, with democratic institutions, it is still a country with too little experience of economic efficiency and democratic practice. ☺

The Jarama Monument is dedicated

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John McGrotty, brother of Eamon McGrotty, who fell at Jarama, was brief and to the point. He simply said, "On behalf of the families of the dead, a thousand thanks for keeping their memories alive. May they rest in peace." Whereupon he produced a bottle of "Paddy" whiskey," poured some into the cap to sprinkle on what he referred to as "hallowed ground," and then passed the bottle around for a 57-years' delayed Irish wake!

In Morata itself I was delighted to make the acquaintance of Lincoln vet Jack Bjoze. Jack's long hair led him to be mistaken for the great

anti-fascist poet Rafael Aberti, and it was to his advantage when drinks were being served.

Peter O'Conner, on behalf of the union at Waterford Glass presented the sponsoring Spanish organizations with a crystal vase inscribed with a salute to "our Spanish comrades who fought in the anti-fascist struggle, 1936-1939. No Pasaran."

WALES — From a letter by Wendy Lewis, niece of Lincoln Brigadier Sidney Shosteck, Bob Merri-man's aide killed at Belchite, and her husband Ray Davies, nephew of Harold Davies, a Welch volunteer in the British battalion, killed at

Jarama:

It was a moving experience to be at Morata for the Jarama memorial unveiling and to see so many International Brigaders from around the world receive some kind of recognition at last for the anti-fascists' fight. (Incidentally, the fight goes on here in Wales as well; not only did the socialist choir Ray and I are in sing to collect money to repair a bookshop attacked by racists, but just before we left for Spain a group called Combat 18 (Hitler's initials) set fire to the International Brigade memorial in Cardiff, and the plaques have been removed for cleaning." ☺



Rebels Without a Pause



Seminar on Spanish Civil War at Univ. of Washington

From wide awake Seattle, we learn that the University of Washington recently instituted a series of seminars to specially interest new students. Veteran Abe Osheroff, professor in the Romance Language Department, is leading one on the Spanish Civil War. He reports:

"We are now in the 4th week of the Winter Quarter, and it is an exciting experience. In addition to selected readings, we will employ film, poetry, music and a slide show of Spanish Civil War posters.

"There are two objectives in the course, one – to make history come alive and be exciting; and two – to demonstrate the continuing relevancy of that Good Fight. What a great way to spend your old age!" ☞

Union paper features bio of Van Felix

The newsletter of New York City Local 210, Technical Office and Professional Union, UAW, Issue No. 3, Winter, 1995, devotes half of its four pages to a biography of veteran Bill Van Felix. Under the title "60 years of labor activism," its lead paragraph quotes Bill:

People ask me all the time why, at the age of 80, I'm still active in so many things. I guess it's because I can't imagine living any other way."

Activism is a life-long habit for Bill, a teacher at Technical Career

Institutes (TCI) in midtown Manhattan. He serves as unit chairperson for the college, representing 250 of his co-workers. ...

Asked about the union today, he said, "I really support the efforts of the UAW to involve its members politically." He is also active in his neighborhood Democratic club, the Village Independent Democrats, where he is chair of the labor committee. He believes political action is critical for the labor movement. ☞

A Davidow/Montell health film project

Health Education Media, Inc., headed by Ruth Davidow, VALB nurse/veteran, is producing a documentary film targeted on the growing worldwide rise of homelessness and neo-fascism. Judith Montell will direct the film. Her *Forever Activists* earned an Academy Award nomination for its portrayal of the after-Spain life of the Lincoln Brigade veterans and their organization.

The planned film is about and by activists and it will serve as a "how to," demonstrating that an understanding of history contributes to one's ability to halt the ravages of greed and reaction.

The address to which financial support and queries may be sent is: Health Education Media, Inc., 1207 De Haro, San Francisco, CA 94107. ☞

Vet artists at work

Both Ralph Fasanella and Anthony Toney, Lincoln veterans with long and acclaimed careers as painters, remain hard at work.

Ralph was recently commissioned by the *Smithsonian Magazine* to do a painting about the South Bronx area of New York City. It will appear in the April issue of the magazine.

Tony had a retrospective exhibit last Fall at his alma mater, the Columbia University School of Education. He has donated two paintings to the Brandeis archives. One is of Toledo, motivated by a visit there by Tony and his late wife Edna.

He writes: "Edna and I visited Toledo during the 1986 50th anniversary trip to Spain by the IB veterans. Toledo fascinated me as an inner island, made immemorial by El Greco – a painter I've always loved.

"I ended up doing several Toledo paintings. Included was the largest, given to the Vets and now to Brandeis. Naturally, I put Pasionaria in a prominent place and also a reference to the machine gunners defending democracy against fascism [Tony was wounded while serving with the Special Machinegun Battalion of the 15th Army Corps – Ed.]

"The second painting deals with the Lincoln vets' anniversary march in New York City, celebrating our own effort to aid the unending struggle against fascism, abroad and at home."

Tony also had a laudatory review of *Siquieros: His Life and Works*, published in the *People's Weekly World*. The lengthy biography by Philip Stein, copiously illustrated, has a chapter dealing with the renowned artist's service in Spain.* That career had a storybook range – from frontline Lieutenant Colonel in the famous Fifth Regiment commanded by Lister and Modesto, to diplomatic missions in Mexico, and espionage in fascist Italy. ☞

**Siquieros, His Life and Works*, by Philip Stein. New York: International Publishers, 416 pp. text, plus 72 pp illustrations, color and b&w, \$49.50, cloth; \$29.95 paper.

John Bernard Fisher, the composer of *The Last American Heroes*, is the son of Veteran Harry Fisher and the late Ruth Fisher. He is a triple namesake of the VALB – added to the Fisher birthright, “John” was bestowed in honor of John Murra, and the “Bernard” for Bernard Entin, killed in the battle of Jarama.

Book Reviews

Another brownie pointer

**HEROIC VICTIMS:
Stalin's Foreign Legion in
the Spanish Civil War**

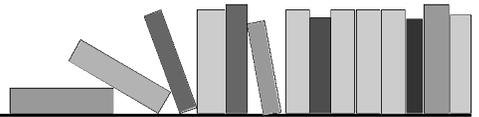
by Herbert Romerstein.
The Council for the Defense of
Freedom, Washington, DC, 1994.
\$7.95. Paper. 118 pp.

As an optimist, I had thought that with the end of the Cold War there would be an end to the deliberate distortion of historical

reality in order to win petty, ideological brownie points.

Now comes a long-time "investigator" for the United States House of Representatives who purports to be an expert on the KGB, terrorism and nefarious Soviet activities. In this booklet, Romerstein, who has worked in the Soviet archives concerning the International Brigades, is committed to portraying the International Brigades during and after the Spanish conflict as mere puppets of the Soviet Union.

The very title of the book is a gratuitous insult to the 40,000 volunteers from 53 countries who went to die in defense of the Spanish Republic. This is the kind of little verbal stinkbomb that those emi-



nent citizens Roy Cohn and David Schine might have concocted in order to put a smirk on the face of Senator Joseph McCarthy. The author asserts, with reference to the 2,800 Americans, that they were untrained, poorly armed, led mainly by incompetents, so that the outcome was never in doubt. There is the implication that the same tags could be applied to all the Brigades.

There is no question about the wretched armament of all the elements of the Spanish Republican armies. But whose fault was this? Our investigator should go to the Public Record Office in London where the files of the London-based Non-Intervention Committee are now open. There he will be able to

An exchange on The Odyssey and Oliver Law

Peter Carroll's treatment of Oliver Law in *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade* tends to undercut Law as a man of historic proportions. Commanding the Lincoln Battalion, he was the first African American to lead white soldiers in a unit of that size.

I was a battalion runner attached to Law's command post and was no more than thirty feet from him on July 9, 1937, when he was struck down by a bullet. He was leading the attack on Mosquito Hill during the Brunete offensive. I saw him fall and then the effort of his runner, Jerry Weinberg, to drag him to safety. That's the essence of Law's performance in his martyrdom.

A false trail of slander against Law, which the *Odyssey* regrettably avoids blasting, began over 25 years ago. Its start was a novel, *Hermanos*, written in the mid-1960s, about the Americans in Spain. The author was an IB volunteer turned informer – William Herrick. Among other pure fictions, it describes the shooting by an American of a commander whose stupidity was always getting his men killed in battle.

In 1969, this tale was incorporated in a putative history, *Between the Bullet and the Lie*, which repeated the Herrick concoction and specified Oliver Law as the commander. Cecil Eby was the author and his Spanish work was financed by a Fulbright fellowship, a conduit in those days not free of McCarthyite influence. Eby (the historian?) described his source as a vet who was "still living, but not available for an interview."

Herrick's lie festered on library shelves for another 17 years. On June 22, 1986, it emerged from the woodwork in a three-page *Village Voice* interview by Paul Berman. It had been enhanced by incorporating the Herrick slander that Law had been mortally wounded by his own men who, before he died, "...pissed on him. Later on they refused to bury him."

After VALB's repeated protests and picketing that demanded confirmation, Herrick tossed in the names of two long dead Lincoln Brigade heroes: Doug Roach an African American, dead for half a century, and Joe Gordon, a Merchant Marine casualty of World War II. Berman, with a short

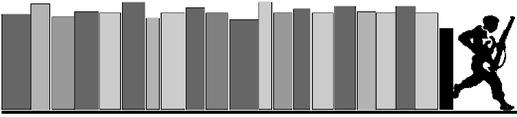
tongue in an unreachable cheek, explained that "since both men are dead, we will never be able to confirm the story."

In two lengthy interviews with Peter Carroll I told him everything I knew of Oliver Law, whom I had greatly admired. In a 1991 letter to me he wrote:

... I've found another vet who saw Oliver Law killed and completely confirms your story. Plus, I've found another who attests to Law's courage and competence at Jarama. So I think we can put an end to all those lies and rumors once and for all.

There's one other item in *The Odyssey* that I'd like to see changed. Attributed to Law, addressing Merriman, it reads:

... a row of Italian bombers appeared. Seeing a metallic glint, the black volunteer Oliver Law, a six-year veteran of the U.S. Army, shouted in his southern accent to Merriman, "Lookeee boss, they're dropping propaganda leaflets." ... After the raid and a long, long silence, the unabashed Law



reconstruct the obscene ballet of all the Western world's diplomats, who, under the pretense of preventing the spread of the Spanish conflict, maintained an iron embargo against armaments for the Republic while Germany and Italy, whose representatives sat on this Committee, carried out a veritable invasion of Spain. This was the Committee, at one of whose sessions the Italian representative said, "The Italian troops who are now in Spain will not leave until they have assured the victory of General Franco!" This was gallows humor that will be remembered long after the wretches who listened in silence have been forgotten.

It should be remembered that whenever the Republic achieved any parity in armament, its amateur forces could carry the field. At Guadalajara, where four mechanized Italian divisions and two of the best fascist divisions attempted to seize Madrid, they were crushed by two Spanish divisions (Lister and Campesino) and two of the International Brigades, the 11th and 12th. This came about because for the first and last time, the Republic, thanks to Soviet shipments, could put over the battlefield 40 bombers and 60 fighter planes. It goes without saying that if the same ratio of armament had been maintained, the Republic could have triumphed, and world history thereafter might not have taken the tragic turn that it did.

As to the competence of military leadership, there is no question but that the Americans and Canadians were more amateur outfits than the other Brigades. But then one must recall that the embattled farmers at Lexington and Concord were civilians with guns. One might say the same thing about the ragged Sans Culottes who stopped the feudal invaders of revolutionary France.

Romerstein seeks to indict the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade for their response to the

German-Soviet pact of August 1939. There is no question but that there was a certain degree of historical blindness that distorted the vision, not only of the Spanish Civil War veterans, but of large parts of the population of the western world. It is important to recall some of the indisputable facts of the case. The Polish government, in whose defense England and France declared war against Germany, was a semi-fascist state that had participated with the Nazis in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. It was a state notorious for its mistreatment of its Jewish, Russian and Ukrainian populations. The political figures in the west, who had been passive while the Rhineland was occupied, Austria grabbed, Czechoslovakia betrayed, were now at the helm of governments supposedly committed to an anti-fascist struggle. These were the same politicians, in the main, who had refused an alliance with the Soviet Union and had been virtual co-conspirators in the expansion of the power of the nascent international fascist axis. They had accepted Japan's claim that its marauding in China was "to suppress Red bandits." In the Ethiopian crisis, Leopold Amery, speaking in the House of Commons, said, "His majesty's government is not disposed to give modern weapons to black Africans."

Before the Germans invaded Poland, the highest reaches of French society had been penetrated by local fascists and secret agents of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. There were two results of this political rot: the Spanish refugees who crossed the Pyrenees in flight from Franco were treated with extreme brutality. They were herded onto beaches, with little water and no sanitation. They were ringed with barbed wire and guarded by Senegalese troops who spoke neither Spanish nor French. Of course the American veterans protested.

And the second consequence was that, about a year later, the broken fragments of the French army were in flight towards what was now a hostile frontier. When the great moral challenge came in Spain, it became clear that the British elite, in and out of government, preferred Franco to the Republic. When the United States Congress, under pressure from right-wing and Catholic forces, passed the Neutrality Act, the isolation of the Spanish Republic was complete. The Nobel Laureate poet Pablo Neruda, who had been in Spain, and saw the prophetic quality of its struggle, wrote the following:

*Spain tore the earth with her nails
When Paris was most beautiful.
Spain poured out her enormous
tree of blood
When London tended its garden
and its lake of swans.*

The American volunteers along with their embattled brethren of the other International Brigades, contributed generously to this enormous tree. That is why, when they left Spain, they were told, "You can go proudly; you are history, you are legend." There is nothing in any archive, anywhere in the world, that can falsify that sad farewell, or that a Romerstein can distort out of context.

Of course the nature of the war changed when the Axis attacked the Soviet Union. It changed again when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the European Axis declared war against the United States. Then, and only then, did World War II assume the character of a people's crusade against fascism.

Of course the veterans advocated a second front in Europe, a front to be opened as soon as material means were available. We had not been a military kindergarten in Spain. We realized the terrible consequences for Americans, above all, if the eastern front collapsed. It was



News From Abroad



Russia

Percy Ludwick's latest Moscow missive [Dec. 30, 1994] reports that he examined an interesting IB archive document. Dated October 23, 1938, and addressed to the Army of the Ebro, his letter describes it as:

"... a 'List of distinguished comrades in the 15th Internationals, 'signed by John Gates as the 'Commissar, of Internationals of the 15th Brigade':

"The numbered names are:

'1. Major, Sam Wild, British; 2. Commissar, John Gates, American; 3. Malcolm Dunbar, Major, British; 4. Captain, James Ruskin, British; 5. Captain, Owen Smith, American; 6. Captain, George Fletcher, British; 7. Commissar, Robert Cooney, British; 8. Captain, John Power, Irish; 9. Major, Milton Wolff, American; 10. Commissar, George Watt, American; 11. Major, E. C. Smith, Canadian; 12. Commissar, Frank Rogers, American; 13. Soldier, George Murray, British; 14. Alvah Bessie, American; 15. Teniente, William Matvenko, Canadian; 16. Captain Robert Walker, British; 17. Soldado, Tony Martin, Canada; 18. Teniente, Percy Ludwick, British; 19. Soldado, Jim Bourne, American; 20. Teniente, Manuel Estevez, [no country given]."

More currently, Percy continues:

"Things with us seem to be going from bad to worse. This December alone, food prices in Moscow have grown by fifty percent. Rents, electricity and telephone bills have also risen steeply, and nobody knows when all this anarchy is going to stop. Sober-minded people understand that the socialism built in the Soviet Union has proved itself inadequate, that capitalism is inevitable in Russia. But the trouble is that the cost of the economic reform is not being

shared equally. Wages and pensions are lagging far behind living costs. The final result is that the newly-rich are becoming richer, and the poor, poorer. As regards Sasha [Percy's wife] and myself personally, we have privileges. As Second World War veterans, we have a fifty percent discount on rents, electricity, telephone bills, free drugs and transport, and above-the-average pensions...

"Spain and the International Brigades arouse little interest now with us. Our work among the schools has come to an end. Idealism is not to the taste of our youngsters today. They are very pragmatic.

"Some 'historians' call the International Brigaders 'soldiers of fortune' who went to Spain to become rich and have a fine time. Even the decisive role of the Soviet Union in overthrowing Nazi Germany during the Second World War is being questioned.

"Things with us, as usual, go to extremes. Seventy years of Soviet rule have brought nothing but disaster. But many people, however, do not agree with this.

"Although our numbers are dwindling, our Spanish bureau is still functioning, thanks to a handful of enthusiasts. Pasionaria's centenary next year will hardly be marked officially.

"I'm sorry to end my letter on such a pessimistic note. Sasha and I send you and all the American vets our regards and best wishes for a happy New Year. Salud!" ☺

Canada

From Etobicoke (Toronto) The Association of Veterans and Friends of the MacKenzie-Papineau Battalion, in a communication signed by Paul Skup, informs that: "There has been some continuing progress, thanks to the dedicated

work of a few, towards achieving the erection of a memorial monument and the unveiling of plaques to honor the Mac-Paps. ... The selected rock [from Gandeses] is finally in Toronto.. The unveiling will not take place until the Spring.

"With the Gandeses Memorial Rock bedded down for the winter, awaiting resurrection in the spring, attention was directed to our major ambition – the erection of a commemorative monument in Ottawa, a decision voted by the Mac-Pap veterans several years ago. The Mac-Paps also voted in favor of engraving on the monument the names of all Canadian volunteers. ... Sculptors will be invited to submit designs from which a committee of judges would select the winning sculpture." ☺

England

From London, Bill Alexander writes:

"Thank you for sending me the photocopies of Bernard Knox's reviews in the *N.Y. Review of Books* – actually he had sent them to me. I am in correspondence with him over his comments on Laurie Lee's *A Moment of War*, which is a complete fantasy – Laurie did not get nearer the front than Barcelona.

"Our members for many reasons – old age, poverty, etc. – could not join us in Madrid in October. The decisive thing is that the memorial went up." ☺

Sweden

From Stockholm, our Swedish comrades inform us that their organization has been dissolved. Reduced now to only a few survivors, they are unable to continue functioning. Arrangements have

News From Abroad

been made for maintenance of their records and archives.

Nearly 500 Swedish volunteers served in Spain. They fought in all the IB campaigns, as well as the guerrilla forces of the Republic – 162 died in battle. ☞

France

A French film crew, back in 1993, on location in the USA, taped interviews with a number of Lincoln brigadiers for a projected government-sponsored TV docu-

mentary on the veterans of the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War.

The authors of the film are Emil Weiss and Jorge Amat, who was its director. Their finished work, a three-hour long documentary, was telecast serially last year. A copy brought here in January was eagerly and appreciatively previewed by the VALB staff in New York, as well as Veteran film experts Milt Felsen and Bill Susman in Florida.

The exciting core of the picture consists of much wartime footage and contemporary interviews with IB veterans of many European countries. Many English-speaking

vets from the USA, Britain and Ireland are seen and heard. Among them are Steve Nelson, George Watt, Milt Wolff, Bill Bailey, Bill Alexander, Bernard Knox, Bill Susman, Milt Felsen, Charlie Nusser, and Bill Alexander.

Full critical evaluation of the film's storyline was hindered by the lack of English subtitles. However, our VALB and ALBA cinema experts are aiding the director-author's representative, Laura Barton, to obtain a showing at a U.S. film festival. They are strongly urging the producers that it be shortened to increase its chances for the documentary market in the USA. ☞

Thanks from Cuba

Havana City,
November 18, 1994

Dear Friends,

It was with great pleasure that we received in our Cardiocenter at the William Soler Pediatric Hospital in Havana, your donation of a Dinamap Vital Signs Monitor which enables us to measure the arterial pressure of our patients through a non-invasive method. We are moved by your valuable contribution and the gesture of solidarity that it represents.

This was the first pediatric hospital inaugurated by the Cuban Revolution over 30 years ago and it bears the name of William Soler, a child who, at the age of 14, was killed in the City of Santiago de Cuba, struggling against the tyrannical regime of Fulgencio Batista.

Over these years, our hospital has turned into one of the most important multi-disciplinary pediatric centers in the country, and its Cardiocenter provides medical attention to pediatric patients with congenital heart disease who are referred to us by a national cardiopediatric network across the country. At the same time, hundreds of children from Latin America and Africa who have needed such services have been operated on in our Cardiocenter.

In spite of the difficult economic situation that our country is facing at present, we have been able to continue providing such high cost service and medical attention to these patients and their families, thanks to the efforts of our government and the solidarity of friends from all over the world.

With our very best wishes,

Dr. Felipe Cárdenas

8 Books on the IB reviewed in NYRB

An omnibus two-part review of eight books by and about International brigadiers appeared in successive issues (December 1 and 15, 1994) of the prestigious *New York Review of Books* (NYRB). They were written by Bernard Knox, himself a veteran of the International Brigades' British Battalion and World War II.

The earlier NYR issue dealt with five titles: *Fallen Sparrows: The International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War*, by Michael Jackson; *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln brigade*, by Peter N. Carroll; *The Prisoners of the Good Fight*, by Carl Geiser; *Remembering Spain: Hemingway's Civil War Eulogy*, and the *Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, essays by Milton Wolff and Cary Nelson (includes a tape of hemingway's recording of the eulogy); and *Another Hill*, An Autobiographical Novel by Milton Wolff.

The second set of Knox's reviews included: *Edwin Rolfe: Collected Poems*, edited by Cary Nelson and Jefferson Hendricks; *Edwin Rolfe: A Biographical Essay*, by Cary Nelson and Jefferson Hendricks, and *A Moment of War: A memoir of the Spanish Civil War*, by Laurie Lee. ☞

By arrangement with the NYRB publisher, readers of *The Volunteer* may obtain a photocopied set of the Knox reviews by sending \$5 to the VALB at 799 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-6811, requesting "NYRB reviews," and, of course, including the sender's address.

Another brownie pointer

Continued from page 13

one thing to go from the beaches of Normandy to meet the Red Army on the banks of the Elbe River. It would have been infinitely worse to go from that point of departure to meet them on the Volga or in the foothills of the Ural mountains.

So the premature anti-fascists of Spain then embarked to meet their old enemy on all the far-flung battlefields of World War II. Romerstein asserts that in Spain we were incompetently led. He finds in the archives the mordant gripes of the foot soldier. This was probably true of the Greek infantry at Marathon and for soldiers ever since. Romerstein would probably be shocked if he heard what soldiers in the Pacific had to say about General MacArthur or Admiral Nimitz. The Americans of the Spanish war offered their services to the American government and its military officials. Where we were accepted, we did as well as any unit.

As to the competency of our officers, look at the World War II record of Thompson, Wellman, Bottcher, Watt, inter alia.

This response to Romerstein's diatribe would not be complete without mentioning the World War II achievements of our foreign brothers. Colonel Rol of the 14th International Brigade commanded the insurrection that liberated Paris. Tito's partisans, who pinned down more German troops than were deployed against the Fifth and Eighth Armies in Italy, were led by 13 generals, twelve of them came from the 13th International Brigade. General Walter of the 13th International Brigade commanded one of the Polish armies that marched from Warsaw to Berlin. Colonel Pacciardi of the 12th International Brigade became the first minister of defense in the post-war World War II Italian government. Captain Wintringham of the 15th International Brigade organized the home guard for

Winston Churchill.

The Soviet officers who gave tactical and strategic advice to the Spanish Republican forces went on to command the armies that destroyed the Wehrmacht. Let us note particularly the turning point at Stalingrad, where the field commander, Eremenko, the four divisional commanders, and the sector commanders, including Rodimtsev and Chuikov, were all veterans of the Spanish front. It wasn't lack of military skill that made us victims. It was the crushing superiority, often ten- and twelve-to-one in modern weapons, that made our sacrifice both unnecessary and tragic.

Next year, the world will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the triumph of the Allies over fascist barbarism. We are certain that during those festivities the premature anti-fascists will be well remembered. ☞

Robert G. Colodny
Professor Emeritus
of History, University of
Pittsburgh; VALB

An exchange on *The Odyssey* and *Oliver Law*

Continued from page 12

exclaimed, "*Boss Merriman, them was sure powerful leaflets.*" (p. 99)

It is unthinkable that this "minstrel show" performance in a "southern" accent was put on by Law in any setting worth quoting seriously. Even the sources cited are most suspect – Herrick for one, an insensitive turncoat and proven informer, and Millie Bennett, a reporter, who was not at the scene.

Pete Carroll, in a recent letter to me, quotes an "unnamed battalion officer," who attributes cowardice and inexperience to Law at Brunete. On the charge of cowardice – I've refuted that above, and "inexperience" quite accurately describes a characteristic possessed by all the early Lincoln Brigade commanders. ☞

Harry Fisher

Peter Carroll responds

I do not disagree fundamentally with Harry Fisher's assessment of *Oliver Law*. But there are a couple of points that may be of interest to your readers. Herrick's novel was not the first fictional account of the assassination of a "Negro" commander of the Lincoln Battalion. In 1959, a novelist named Bernard Wolfe published *The Great Prince Died*, in which an African American named "Sheridan Justice" is savagely tortured and killed by his own men. I suspect (although I cannot prove the point) that Herrick's version was inspired by Wolfe's *Prince*. One reason I make that claim is that both of the veterans Herrick claimed had informed him of the assassination, as I explain in my book, vigorously denied his charges. That does leave open the question of

whether Wolfe made the story up completely or was influenced by someone else's "information." In any case, my research supports Harry's views about the death of *Oliver Law*.

The question of the "powerful leaflets" should not be taken literally. As Harry points out, I found two totally independent sources saying exactly the same thing. Herrick assured me he had not heard it from someone else, but "with his own ears." And Millie Bennett, a very close friend of Robert Merriman, recorded the story as if she had heard it from him. But so what? After a terrific bomb explosion, a soldier like Law might well crack a joke to ease the tension. And the story was repeated not to show Law's ignorance, but the human quality of his humor. ☞

Culling the mail sack

☞ Ronald V. Dellums, Member of Congress, writes to the Bay Area Post from **Washington, D.C.**:

"Dear Milt and Friends of the VALB: I regret that I am unable to join you for the annual dinner. I understand this will be a special event commemorating historical art and photos, songs and other testimonials.

"As always, I wish you the best. I especially enjoy the times I have had the opportunity to join in these celebrations because I always receive inspiration from all of you. Your ongoing work to support the work of local and international activities to achieve a better world is more important than ever. I look forward to continuing to work with you."

☞ A comprehensive, compact history of the nurses who served in the Spanish Civil War appears in the *Nursing History Review*, Volume 3, 1995, under the title *Heroines of the Good Fight*. The author is Frances Patai, **New York** associate of the VALB, and Adjunct Lecturer at Manhattan Community College of the City University of New York.

Within a carefully annotated 25 pages, Patai presents a concise and moving study of the cadre and the caliber of nurses who served in the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy.

Their history and their heroism, paralleling that of the frontline soldiers, is described and documented by the testimony – oral and written, contemporary and retrospective – of the women Volunteers themselves.

☞ We have a West Coast aviso from Herman and Mildred Rosenstein that their son Paul was elected mayor of the city of **Santa Monica**, California, in December.

☞ Further proving that the electoral climate of Southern California is indeed very special, Raven B. Earlygrow, mayor of **Point Arena**, CA, writes:

"My father George (Auvan) Chaikin brought back a fairly significant collection of posters, postcards and calendars from Spain. Following his death several years ago, I had them mounted and they had their first public showing last month in conjunction with a stage perfor-

mance by Luis Oropeza of his play, *The Assassination of Federico Garcia Lorca*. They will be exhibited later this year at the Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art alongside a show of works of Picasso."

☞ From **London**, Thelma Frye (stage name Thelma Ruby) writes (in part):

"I enclose a contribution and would like it to be recorded as being "in memory of my beloved husband Peter Frye and our friends Charlie Nusser, Al Prago and Steve Nelson." It is so tough to lose a bunch of friends and even more tough when they die at the same time. I can't tell you how much I miss Charlie's wonderful, frequent letters and his cuttings from the *New York Times*. As I read the biographies of the vets who have recently died, it reinforces my belief that you are a unique and great bunch of human beings and I am very privileged to know you.

"As for me, it has been a mixed year. I did a very good comedy TV series. It has been bought by the U.S. – called *So Haunt Me*. I am in three episodes of the 2nd series and 4 episodes of the 3rd. It's about a Jewish ghost!

"I am going on a trip to China, and when I get back, I go into *Fiddler on the Roof*, playing Goldie opposite Topol's Tevye. It will be the fourth time I have done the part and the third opposite Topol. The only certain dates are Eastbourne and Birmingham here in England, but there is a strong probability that afterward we will go to Dublin, Oslo, Hong Kong, the U.S. and Israel."

☞ Bill Wheeler has moved diagonally cross-country from **Mission Hills**, California, to **Athens**, Georgia. He reports that George Sossenko, his VALB neighbor in Atlanta, has already booked him to lecture at a Unitarian Church, free-for-all discussion group.

☞ From **Kansas City, Kansas**, Fred Whitehead's journal, *People's Culture* (new Series #24/25) plugs the VALB and *The Volunteer*. This occasionally published critical/cultural newsletter deserves some hearty reciprocity – a year's supply (6 issues) may be had for \$15 from: People's Culture, Box 5224, Kansas City, KS 66119.

Added to Memory's Roster Abroad

Enrique Lister (Spain)

W^{ithin} a few weeks after attending the dedication of the Morata de Tajuña monument at Jarama, Enrique Lister died in a Madrid hospital on December 9, 1994. He was a commandante of

the legendary 5th Regiment that saved Madrid in the winter of 1936-37, Lister rose to become a division and army corps commander whose units were always in action alongside the International Brigades.

When the Republic fell, Lister's army group retreated into France. He found exile in the Soviet Union, where he joined the Red Army at

the outbreak of World War II. As a general, he commanded a division in the Nazi rout at Stalingrad.

The Lincoln vets and friends who participated in the 1986 50th anniversary trip to Spain will vividly recall Lister's host role at the major events in Madrid and Barcelona. ☞

Continued on page 18

Book on VALB letters from Spain nearly done; more material sought

The first book-length collection of letters written by American volunteers in Spain is nearly done. It will be about 500 pages and will include letters, diaries and photographs. We've signed a contract with a New York publisher, Routledge; they are excited about the book and plan to work hard to get it in bookstores across the country. We expect the book to be in print in January of 1996.

Veterans and their family members across the country have been generous in sharing their precious and irreplaceable documents with us. Both the New York office and the Bay Area Vets have worked hard and successfully not only to gather letters for the book but also to collect a series of extraordinary testimonials from prominent Americans to place on the book's jacket.

The collections at Brandeis and Berkeley have been an important and essential resource. The quality

of the letters we are using could not be higher. Many of you will be surprised by the detailed and often unique stories people were able to write home from time to time. Even those of you who were in Spain may discover things you did not know before, especially as some of the volunteers who lost their lives in Spain will tell their stories for the first time.

The book is divided into eleven chapters: *Why We Went - On the Way to Spain - In Training - In Spanish Villages and Cities - In Battle: 1937 - In Battle - 1938 - From Madrid to Barcelona - The Medical Services - The Regiment de Tren - Politics - On the Way Home.*

It includes letters by soldiers,

nurses, doctors and social workers. We have tried to represent all the Americans who came to the defense of the Spanish Republic.

Those of you who have letters, diaries or photographs you would like to have considered for the book can call Cary Nelson at 217-256-0649 or send them to his home address: 808 South Lynn St., Champaign, IL 61820. Time, however, is very short. If you would send original letters or photos we will copy them and return them to you. We are especially interested in letters about Jarama and letters from African American volunteers. ☺

**Cary Nelson
and Jeff Hendricks**

Memory's Roster

Continued from page 17

Lloyd Edmonds (Australia)

A mirah Inglis writes with the news of the death of Lloyd Edmonds, veteran of the International Brigades, who served in the Transport section. Lloyd died on September 18, 1994, of a heart attack. He was buried privately but there will be a public memorial service for him in Melbourne.

Inglis included an obit which noted that Lloyd unveiled the IB memorial in Canberra almost a year ago, and this year, on the anniversary of the unveiling, a group of vets will gather at a picnic where "We will think of Lloyd and drink a toast to the memory of a fine man." ☺

ALBA-George Watt Memorial Essay Contest

To encourage the study of the Lincoln Brigade and the Spanish Civil War, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA) announces establishment of the ALBA-George Watt memorial prizes for the best college student essays about the Spanish war, the anti-fascist struggles of the 1930s, or the lifetime histories of the Americans who participated in the Spanish war.

Two prizes of \$500 will be awarded each year - one to the best undergraduate paper, one to the best graduate student paper; runner-up awards of \$250 may be presented if the papers submitted merit them. Papers will be judged on the basis of originality, effectiveness of argument and quality of writing. Papers must use both primary and secondary sources and must have been written to fulfill a course or degree requirement.

The deadline for the first

awards is **April 1, 1996** For the inaugural year, essays written in 1994-1996 will be eligible. Essays must be at least 5,000 words. Applicants should submit 5 copies of the essay, typed, double spaced, with an SASE for return. Entries should be mailed to:

**Peter Carroll, Chair
Abraham Lincoln Brigade
Archives
Box LII, Brandeis University
Waltham MA 02254**

The first awards will be announced on June 1, 1996. The judges will be appointed by the ALBA executive committee.

Funding for this generous award came from private donors who wished to commemorate the memory of veteran George Watt (1914-1994). With additional donations, ALBA hopes to enlarge the awards to include prizes for high school students as well. ☺

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Contributors



Zelda Alberti for Tony, \$25 ☞ Al Amery in memory of Rudy Haber, \$10 ☞ Isabel Auerbach, \$10 ☞ Andres Avellaneda, \$20 ☞ Mark, with Jeanette Alper, in memory of my brother Ben, \$50 ☞ John Bandres, \$10 ☞ Irving Barr, \$50 ☞ Chris Brooks for Charlie Nusser, Harry Levine and Paul Wendorf, \$25 ☞ Leila C. Broughton, \$25 ☞ Megan Cogswell in memory of my father Theodore Cogswell, \$50 ☞ Joe Differding for Mel Anderson and Frank Madigan, \$30 ☞ Sophie Fitzgerald, \$15 ☞ Dr. P.A. Freeman, \$25 ☞ Thelma Frye in memory of my beloved husband Peter Frye and our friends Charlie Nusser, Al Prago and Steve Nelson, \$200 ☞ Irving Gold, \$10 ☞ Alan Gonzales, \$50 ☞ Herbert Grossman, \$10 ☞ H. David Hammond, \$10 ☞ Marianne Iceland for Ben, \$45 ☞ Martin Jacobs, \$30 ☞ Clarence Kailin, \$20 ☞ Charles Kaufman, \$20 ☞ Lillian Kaufman for Sid Kauman, \$200 ☞ Thomas Keenan for Felix Kusman, \$50 ☞ Karel Kiliminik, \$20 ☞ Hazel Klein in memory of Sy Klein, \$10 ☞ Irene and Irving Kohn in memory of Sophie Saloff, \$100 ☞ David Kolodoff, \$10 ☞ Al Koslow, \$10 ☞ Dana Lehman, \$50 ☞ Clara Levine, \$20 ☞ Betty Marion, \$20 ☞ Aurelia Masarsky for Charles Nusser, \$20 ☞ Chris McFail, \$20 ☞ Thelma Mielke, \$25 ☞ Annie Moy in memory of George Chaikin ☞ Ruth E. Neri in memory of my father, Dino Neri, \$50 ☞ Edith and Sol Newman, \$20 ☞ Warren Nusser for Charlie Nusser, \$25 ☞ Perley B. Payne for Tom O'Flaherty and Luke Hinman, \$100 ☞ Blas Padrino for Steve Nelson, \$25 ☞ John Penrod, \$25 ☞ David Rafiel, \$50 ☞ Jeffrey Lee Rocket, \$20 ☞ Adolph and Lillian Ross, \$50 ☞ Lillian Ross, \$10 ☞ Samuel Schiff for the Americans who served with the Garibaldis, \$35 ☞ Rosemarie Schober in memory of Hans Beimler, \$100 ☞ Lou and Ev Schwartz, Janet Schwartz and Howard Spivak, Karen and Sarah Schwartz, on Herb Freeman's birthday in memory of Jack Freeman, \$200 ☞ Roy Selby, MD, for all the Lincolns, \$50 ☞ Max Shufer, \$50 ☞ Sam Sills, \$25 ☞ Roberta Soules, \$10 ☞ Birdie and George Sossenko in memory of Carl Einstein, \$30 ☞ Sonia Stolman in honor of Moe Fishman, \$30 ☞ Vivian Stromberg in honor of Norma Becker, \$65 ☞ Loretta Szelich for Ann Reel and Lenny Lamb, \$10 ☞ S. Savilla Teiger for the 80th birthday of David Goldberg ☞ Corinne Thornton for Bill Bailey and Rudy Valuch, \$40 ☞ Arendje Visser for Bill Bailey, \$25 ☞ Lise Vogel, \$50 ☞ S.C. Volinsky, \$10 ☞ Al Warren in memory of Maury Colow and Steve Nelson, \$100 ☞

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