



"...and that government of the people,
by the people, and for the people,
shall not perish from the earth."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The Volunteer

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

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Letter from ALBA

Dear Friends,

The beginning of 2009 has been a busy time for ALBA. This year's program schedule at NYU's King Juan Carlos Center began with the opening of an exhibition of the newly acquired Spanish refugee photographs by Walter Rosenblum. (See page 3.) It was a wonderful event, and it was good to see many of you there. We have several additional programs and screenings planned for New York in the next months, but ALBA is also dedicated this year to working with our community throughout the United States and internationally.

Our education initiatives this spring will reach out to the San Francisco Bay Area, with workshops planned for teachers of high school social studies and Spanish. We will also offer a summer institute for teachers in Tampa, Florida. We continue with our plans for reunion events in New York and San Francisco in the spring. We'll be in touch very soon with details.

The easiest way to keep posted is to sign up for our monthly email newsletter online at www.alba-valb.org to get the very latest ALBA schedule of events and news.

On the international front, ALBA is also participating in the commemoration of a new plaque at the cemetery of Fuencarral, Madrid, in May to honor the U.S. and British volunteers in the Spanish Civil War.

Portions of our new publication, *War is Beautiful: The Journal of an American Ambulance Driver*, by James Neugass (New Press, 2008), will appear in the winter issue of the journal *Military History*. Visit the ALBA website to order copies.

Finally, the ALBA Board and I would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to all of you who responded so generously to our December fundraising letter. As your contributions, along with notes and comments, arrived in our offices each day throughout January, I especially felt the process gave me a wonderful way to connect with so many of you. I was impressed with the individual outpouring of support that added up to an affirmative collective "we," dedicated to the history and legacy of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

All My Best for the New Year,

Jeanne Houck, PhD

Executive Director

jhouck@alba-valb.org

Special Issue Coming

The next issue of *The Volunteer* will be a special issue devoted to Paul Robeson in Spain, illustrated by Joshua Brown and co-authored with Peter N. Carroll. This publication is part of ALBA's educational program and includes the final installment in the long-running series, as well as additional features about African Americans in the Spanish Civil War. The special issue will appear in mid-summer.

For budgetary reasons, we will publish three issues of *The Volunteer* this year.

There are several ways you can support our journal through the hard times that all non-profit organizations are currently facing:

- Subscribe
- Advertise (for a business or in honor of a person)
- Adopt-a-page
- Make a donation

As Moe Fishman liked to say, if you've already donated, please consider doing it again.

For more information on these different ways to support the Volunteer, contact Jeanne Houck: jhouck@alba-valb.org; 212-674-5398

More of our readers are using ALBA's new e-newsletter to get prompt information about our activities and public events. If you're not signed up, please do so now at the website: www.alba-valb.org

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ALBA's Educational Initiatives: A Dream Coming True

By James D. Fernández

One of the dreams of the Lincoln vets, when they chose to place their archives at NYU's Tamiment Library, was to have droves of young students visiting and using the collections. Thanks to the partnership between ALBA, Tamiment, NYU, the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, and the Puffin Foundation, that dream is coming true, slowly but surely. During the course of the past eight months, an impressive array of educational activities has been organized on the NYU campus, allowing scores of high school and college students to become acquainted with the antifascist legacy preserved in the folders and boxes of the ALBA collection.

Visual Culture in ALBA

Thanks to a special grant from NYU's Visual Culture Initiative, Professors Jordana Mendelson (Spanish and Portuguese), Miriam Basilio (Museum Studies and Art History), and Michael Nash (Tamiment) have organized a year-long, monthly series of seminars focusing on the visual aspects of the Spanish Civil War collections. Fall sessions, featuring distinguished guests from NYU and other institutions, focused on ALBA's posters, postcards, and objects. The highlight of the fall term was Juan Salas's presentation, in which he revealed that a copy of Cartier-Bresson's third documentary about the Spanish Civil War—a film considered "lost" for decades—has



actually been sitting in a box in the ALBA collection all these years.

Cross-listed Spanish and History Course

A grant from NYU's Curriculum Development Fund enabled Professors Fernández and Nash to co-teach a course centered on ALBA and cross-listed between the History and the Spanish Departments. Eight undergraduates—four Spanish majors and four history majors—took the course "Historical Memory in Spain and the US: The Case of the Lincoln Brigade," which met in the Archive. The focus of student research projects ran the gamut from notions of Jewish masculinity among the volunteers to the trajectories of the Puerto Rican brigadistas; from networks of solidarity among Franco's female prisoners of war to tensions in New York's Spanish colony between Loyalists and Francoists.

Steinhardt School

In the fall semester, the students in Professor Robert Cohen's undergraduate social studies seminar at NYU's Steinhardt School of Education, who

are soon going to be student teaching in high school, did their final papers on the U.S. response to the Spanish Civil War. Their task was to write an alternative to the traditional high school American history textbook chapters covering the 1930s, which barely mention the Spanish conflict or the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. To insure that students had powerful stories and rich primary sources for this assignment, the seminar held two sessions at the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archive, where the students learned to use the archival materials on dozens of Lincoln Brigade members. The students were then able to take the stories of these Lincoln volunteers and use them for their papers, bringing out the ways in which the anti-fascist cause inspired the volunteers and challenged old isolationist assumptions.

The students learned valuable lessons about how archival sources and vivid story telling can bring history to life for high school students, knowledge that will be helpful in their future work as history teachers. Most of them had never used an historical archive before. Even though

James D. Fernández is a Vice Chair of ALBA and Chair of the Spanish and Portuguese Department at NYU.

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they had taken many history courses, they felt that this was the first time they got to experience and practice the ways professional historians use archival sources to construct narratives and write history, and they found this an exhilarating experience.

Summer Institute and Its Offshoots

Last June, the highly successful ALBA Summer Institute for High School Teachers brought a group of 17 teachers into the archive for



a week, where they learned about the archive contents and explored ways of incorporating the archive's themes and treasures into their teaching of history and Spanish.

In December and January, one of our institute alumni, Oscar Góngora, organized a special program for nine of his students from New York's High School of Business and Finance. On five Wednesday afternoons, they visited the archive, where they were introduced to the collection and to the practice of archival research by Mike Nash, Gail Malmgreen, and James D. Fernández. Oscar is already making plans to bring another group of students to ALBA next semester, this time students enrolled in his AP Spanish class.



In June 2009, the institute will be offered to a new set of teachers in New York. We will also inaugurate a new institute site in Tampa, Florida, led by Fraser Ottanelli.

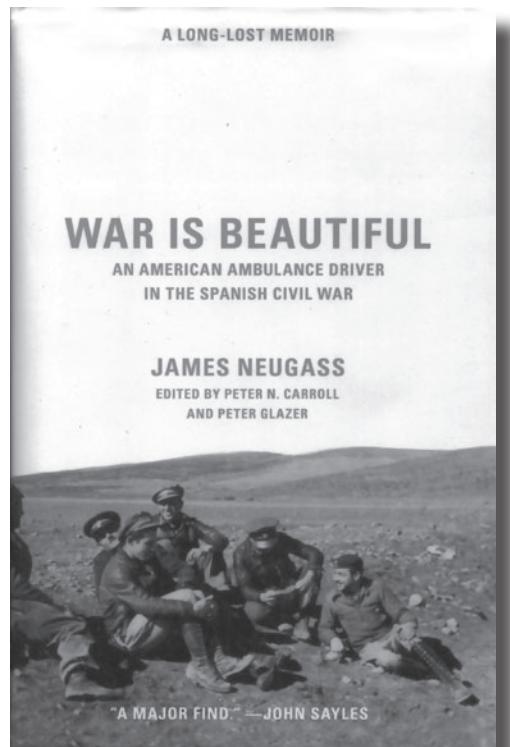
ALBA is now the most consulted collection housed at NYU's Tamiment Library. In addition to the scores of seasoned researchers from all over the world who come to consult the ALBA materials, thanks to our new educational initiatives, we now have dozens of young people—high school and college students—visiting the archive, giving new meaning to the acronym "ALBA": A Living, Breathing Archive. We think the vets would be pleased. □

The newly discovered journal of an award-winning poet's experience on the front lines as a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade—*All Quiet on the Western Front* for the Spanish Civil War

In 1937, James Neugass, a poet and novelist praised in the *New York Times*, joined 2,800 other passionate young Americans who traveled to Spain as part of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade—an unlikely mix of artists, journalists, industrial workers, and students united in their desire to combat European fascism.

War is Beautiful was one of the fall picks from *Library Journal*.

The book is currently available through our website, www.alba-valb.org/books, and the ALBA office, 212-674-5398. Hardcover: \$26.95



Scenes of Bravery and Determination: Walter Rosenblum's Homage to the Spanish Republicans

Photography Exhibit, King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, January 22-May 10, 2009

By Sebastiaan Faber

In the spring of 1946, the Unitarian Service Committee (USC) in Boston hired the American photographer Walter Rosenblum to document its extensive refugee relief work in Europe. Only 26 years old, Rosenblum had returned to New York less than a year before as one of the most decorated photographers of World War II.

Drafted in 1943 as a U.S. Army Signal Corp combat photographer, he had landed on a Normandy beach on D-Day morning, after which he had joined an anti-tank battalion in its liberation drive through France, Germany and Austria. He took the first motion picture footage of the Dachau concentration camp.

Born in 1919 into a poor Jewish immigrant family living on New York's Lower East Side, Rosenblum had begun to photograph his neighborhood as a teenager, using a borrowed camera. In 1937 he joined the Photo League, a vibrant community of New York photographers, where he met Lewis Hine, Berenice Abbott and Elizabeth McCausland; studied with Paul Strand (who became a life-long friend); and worked on his first major project, the Pitt Street series.

Rosenblum embarked on his USC assignment in the late spring of 1946.

Sebastiaan Faber is chair of Hispanic Studies at Oberlin College. His newest book is *Anglo-American Hispanists and the Spanish Civil War. Hispanophilia, Commitment, and Discipline* (Palgrave, 2008). He is currently working on a photographic exhibition focusing on Spanish refugees.



Photographs in this article were taken by Walter Rosenblum in France in 1946. Courtesy of the Tamiment Library and the Rosenblum family.

He spent several months traveling through France and Czechoslovakia, where the USC had a number of projects. In France, Rosenblum visited the USC rest home at St. Goin (Aquitane); the Walter B. Cannon Memorial Hospital and recreation center in Toulouse; the Camp Clairac (Lot-et-Garonne) for underprivileged French and Spanish children; the Meillon Rest Home in Pau, which housed Spanish Nazi victims; and a summer camp and canteen in Les Andelys (Normandie). Starting in October, his photos began appearing regularly in the Unitarians' monthly magazine, the *Christian Register*, which, under the editorship of Rosenblum's friend Stephen Fritchman, had emerged as an important venue not just for religious liberals, but also for more radical

voices of the Left. (Its contributors included Howard Fast, W.E.B. DuBois, Earl Browder, and Paul Robeson.)

At the annual meeting of the American Unitarian Association in May the next year, Rosenblum reported on his trip. "I can say that you have produced an epic story in the field of European relief, and history will judge it so," he stated. "[Y]ou are giving help to the finest elements of society, those people who began to fight back when we didn't even know the meaning of the word." By then, his photos had been picked up by mainstream media outlets such as the *New York Times* and *Liberty* magazine.

Established in 1940 by the American Unitarian Association (AUA), the USC was one of the

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Rosenblum

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most important U.S.-based refugee organizations working in Europe during and following World War II, assisting numerous refugee communities throughout the continent. At its height, the USC had an operating budget of more than a million dollars. This money came from a variety of sources, not only the National War Fund, the War Refugee Board, and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, but also the Spanish Refugee Appeal of Dr. Edward Barsky's Joint Antifascist Refugee Committee, which contributed close to \$300,000 over several years.

Two factors made Rosenblum's assignment especially timely and important. First, it would help remind the American public of the Spanish refugees and their cause. After Germany invaded France in 1940, thousands of exiled Spaniards had been killed and deported to German concentration camps. More important, Spanish guerrillas and veterans of the Civil War had been a key component in the Resistance and Free French movement. By the end of World War II, hundreds of thousands of surviving Spaniards remained in France. But they could not return home as long as Franco remained in the saddle. (The logic of the Cold War would quickly strengthen the dictator's hold on power, culminating in the admission of Franco's Spain to the United Nations in 1955.)

Second, Rosenblum's work would help improve the public image of the Unitarian Service Committee itself. As it turns out, the years following World War II were challenging

ones for the organization, which found itself at the heart of intense political conflict. When, at the end of 1945, the Joint Antifascist Refugee Committee became a target of the House Un-American Activities Committee, the USC, as the sole distributor of JAFRC funds in Europe, soon found itself in the spotlight as well. In October 1946, a seven-man USC delegation testified in a closed session before the HUAC, stating that they helped all refugees in need,



Rosenblum's photos in *Liberty* magazine, March 1947

regardless of their political affiliation, "as long as there was no attempt to make use of the relief for political purposes." At the same time, they were forced to admit that they had no policy preventing the hiring of Communists as personnel. (One of the exhibits at the hearing was an

issue of the *Register*, whose cover featured one of Rosenblum's photos.)

To make things worse, around the time Rosenblum was in Europe, a representative of the rival International Rescue Committee wrote a letter that accused the two central USC figures in Europe, Jo Tempi and Noel Field, of giving Communists preferential treatment, of being CP-members themselves, and of working for the Soviet secret police. Similar accusations emerged from non-Communist

Spanish organizations in Toulouse. Although a special investigation by a delegation of three Unitarian leaders in 1946 found no evidence to support these charges, the allegations were not entirely fictitious. Jo Tempi was indeed a Communist, as was Noel Field. And many of the USC's beneficiaries were affiliated with the Party, simply because many antifascists were. Field had assisted the OSS during the war in establishing contact with Communist leaders in the Resistance. Meanwhile, political conflict erupted within the American Unitarian Association, focusing on the Service Committee and the *Christian Register*, whose leftist slant had long irritated more conservative groups in the organization.

After his return from Europe, Rosenblum documented several domestic USC projects. By the middle of 1947, however, his closest contacts among the Unitarians—USC director Charles Joy, the *Register*'s editor Stephen Fritchman, and Jo Tempi, who headed up the Paris office—had been fired or forced to resign. While political controversy hampered fundraising, federal funds for relief

work were drying up fast. By 1948, the number of USC-run programs had dropped by more than half. In early 1949, Noel Field, who had left the USC in December 1947, mysteriously disappeared, and over the following three years his name was prominently featured at a series of show trials in Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia, where he was branded as an American spymaster. Rosenblum himself, meanwhile, had accepted a position at Brooklyn College, where he taught from 1947 until his retirement in 1986.

refugees are unlike any of the images that had been published until then. The photographs and films documenting displaced Spaniards early in the war, the mass exodus into France, and life in the concentration camps had invariably portrayed the Spaniards as helpless and hapless victims. Even in Robert Capa's most gripping shots, the refugees appear as anonymous, almost generic, representatives of collective suffering. Not so in Rosenblum's work. Whether his subjects look directly into the camera or not, and regardless of their age and



"My love affair with the Spanish people goes back to my childhood," Rosenblum wrote in 2003. "When I was a youngster, I distributed leaflets on the streets of New York in support of the struggles of the Spanish Republicans in their fight against Franco." In France, he writes, "I had expected to find dejected and tired people, but instead discovered bravery and determination."

Rosenblum's portraits of Spanish

their obviously dire circumstances, they appear strong, confident, dignified. Some of the domestic scenes—a family eating, a mother washing clothes—show their subjects' determination to carry on with daily life. There are smiles, although they are always a bit wary. The lighting and composition, along with the unusually large depth of field, emphasize detail, line, and contour. Some portraits have the intense chiaroscuro of



Walter and Naomi Rosenblum receive the ICP Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998.

a renaissance painting. Other photos exude health and happiness, such as the group shot of children posing on a winding staircase at the USC rest home in St. Goin (an image used on the cover of a fundraising booklet from the Joint Antifascist Refugee Committee under the slogan "Help Us Climb the Stairway to Life"). The portrait of a doctor examining a child at the USC dispensary in Toulouse, published in the November 1946 issue of the *Christian Register*, looks like an ad for a drug company. (Interestingly, medical advertising was among the few commercial assignments that Rosenblum ever took on.)

The Rosenblum archives hold 46 photos of Spanish refugees. Two were first published on the covers of the December 1946 issue of the *Christian Register* and the 1946 holiday issue of the *New York Times Magazine*. A wider selection appeared in the March 1, 1947, issue of *Liberty*. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Rosenblum's images were used in fundraising materials for the USC, the Joint Antifascist Refugee Committee, and UNESCO refugee campaigns. Starting in the late 1940s, Rosenblum included them sporadically in exhibits. In 2001, the Reina

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A Mother Visits Her Son in a Spanish Refugee Camp
In the camp at Argelès, on the French side of the Pyrenees, 60,000 Spanish refugees are interned. Many of them still sleep in holes in the sand; a few have bare huts. Argelès is the camp to which they went when the first wave of refugees came into France, and they are now gradually being removed to better camps. Only near relatives may visit them, and they may not go inside the wire setting.

The Forgotten Army



SPANIARDS FLEE TO FRANCE IN GREATEST MASS EXODUS OF MODERN TIMES



Coverage of the Spanish refugee crisis in *Life* and *Picture Post*, February–March 1939. Photos by Robert Capa.

Images of Displa

The Spanish Civil War and the Modern Refugee

By Sebastiaan Faber

The 20th century was the century of the refugee. In 1999, the UN reported that one in 214 people on the planet—50 million in total—had been forced to flee violence and persecution. The massive displacement of 500,000 Spanish Republicans in 1939, spurring years' worth of intense relief work by Lincoln vets and other Republican sympathizers, was the first major refugee crisis in the world to be widely covered by the visual media.

The heart-wrenching images first delivered to the western public by Robert Capa, "Chim" Seymour, Jean-Paul LeChanois, and others have by now become all too familiar. But the questions they raised have remained. How should we read images of suffering? Should refugees be portrayed as innocent victims or political actors? What should be done to help them? And is it possible to distinguish between humanitarian relief and political work? This spring, ALBA is sponsoring a series of events around these topics, culminating in a symposium on May 1 featuring seven speakers, more than an hour's worth of rare documentary footage, and scores of previously unseen images of Spanish refugees from the recently recovered archives of Capa, Gerda Taro, and Seymour.

The cause of Republican Spain did not die when Franco declared victory on April 1, 1939—far from it. It lived on in the hopes and despair of millions of people around the world: the surviving Republicans in Spain who were bracing themselves for whole-scale repression; the 500,000 Spaniards who by then had fled their homeland in fear of reprisals, and most of whom had been herded into French concentration camps; the tens of thousands who had gone to Spain from all corners of the globe to help the Republic and lived to tell the tale; and the hundreds of thousands more who, for three long years, had sympathized with

the Spaniards' struggle against fascism and generously given their time, energy, and money to support it in whatever way they could.

All these people experienced the Republic's long-feared defeat as a tremendous blow. Personal reactions varied. Some got depressed; others turned away from politics altogether. Given the divisions among the Left, it was hard to avoid the blame game. Still, the overwhelming attitude was one of determination. This was not the time to give up: there was work to be done. The Spanish defeat made the struggle against fascism more critical than ever. Governments needed to be convinced that Franco's regime was illegitimate.

cement the Birth of

Most importantly, the hundreds of thousands of Spanish refugees needed help, and urgently so.

The images and reports coming from southern France were alarming. French authorities had only reluctantly opened the border to the fleeing Spaniards. Upon entering France, refugees were treated like criminals. Possessions were confiscated, families separated. Most men, women, and children—weak, wounded, sick, demoralized—ended up in improvised camps where living conditions were dismal. In the first months some 15,000 died.

In February, *Life* featured a large photo of seven hunched-over Spanish women crossing a mountain pass in the Pyrenees, trudging through the snow, dragging their possessions. Another photo showed a cold, slushy road with a column of refugees walking next to horse- and oxen-drawn carts. Robert Capa's chilling images of an old woman on the road between Tarragona and Barcelona allowed readers to see what havoc was wrought by the persistent Nationalist strafing and shelling of fleeing civilians. The camera caught her walking in a daze around her half-destroyed cart, useless because her horse, mule, dog, and donkey had just been machine-gunned to death.

The birth of the modern refugee

As Susan Sontag wrote in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, the Spanish Civil War was the first “media war,” the first armed conflict “to be witnessed (‘covered’) in the modern sense: by a corps of professional photographers at the lines of military engagement and in the towns under bombardment, whose work was immediately seen in newspapers and magazines in Spain and abroad.” The Spanish conflict was also the first time that the human consequences of war—of a new kind of war, moreover, with city bombardments and large-scale civilian casualties—became the subject of extensive visual press coverage. Capa, Chim, and others shot more than just battle scenes: from the very beginning, they felt the need to register the conflict’s many civilian victims. And few images proved as heart-wrenching as those of the thousands of Spanish men, women, and children who were forced to flee their homes, beginning with the Nationalist advances in Andalusia in the first months of the war (among Capa’s and Taro’s first photos from Spain are their portraits of refugees from Málaga, published in September 1936), leading up to the mass exodus into France of early 1939. Scenes that would later become sadly familiar to news readers around the globe—long columns of displaced people carrying their belongings; emaciated but combative men being herded into makeshift camps; anonymous victims looking into the camera from behind a barbed-wire fence—were widely distributed for the first time in 1936-39 by photographers covering Spain. If the 20th century saw the emergence of the

“That was all the West had done for [the refugees], to take photographs. … [P]ortraits of Spaniards in cages like monkeys at a zoo. The men of Barcarès detested the photographers, and yet they were quick to humor them with a docility that was only apparent. … [W]hen someone realized that a camera was ready to shoot, he’d yell photo! and then everyone would get to their feet, stand up straight, and lift up their fists and chins in the same direction. From the outside, it may have seemed an angry and useless gesture, but for them it was different, a furious affirmation of identity, of will, which allowed them to yell out to the world that they were still alive, …”

—Almudena Grandes,
El corazón helado, 2006.

Mr. Adamson: “As I understand you, your organization has nothing to do with politics; is that right?”

Rev. Brooks: “Sure. That is sort of a trick question. Politics is something that pervades the whole of life, as we think religion pervades the whole of life. It impinges on you here and there and you cannot escape it. If you mean political activity, we do not have any political activity.”

—Testimony of Rev. Howard L. Brooks, acting Executive Director of the Unitarian Service Committee before the House Un-American Activities Committee, Oct. 21, 1946.

modern refugee, the Spanish Civil War marks his visual birth.

“It’s difficult to work under such a gaze.”

As Paul Preston has shown in his recent book, *We Saw Spain Die*,

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the Modern Refugee

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reporting on the Spanish Civil War was a job fraught with emotional and political tensions. Several prominent journalists abandoned neutral objectivity in favor of a deeply-felt commitment to the Republican cause. Photographers, too, had a hard time distinguishing reporting from advocacy and the moral imperative to provide immediate help.

In January 1939, Capa was in Catalonia covering the exodus toward the French border. On the 15th, his camera frames a young girl laying exhausted on a couple of sacks at a refugee transit center in Barcelona. "She must be very tired," he notes, "since she does not play with the other children; she does not stir. But her eye follows me, one large dark eye follows my every movement. It is difficult to work under such a gaze. It is not easy to be in such a place and not be able to do anything except record the

suffering that others must endure." Capa—a displaced leftist Jew himself, after all—has a hard time accepting his passive role; but it is also clear that he hopes his images will sway someone else to take action. If the girl's gaze made him uncomfortable, he knew that a photograph of that gaze could move thousands of viewers.

Given their sympathy for the Republican cause, it is not surprising that photographers and filmmakers were quite willing to let relief organizations use their images of refugees to raise awareness and relief funds among the public. In the framework of a leaflet or ad campaign, the moral dimension of the images, often left fuzzy in the press coverage, was suddenly crystal clear: right next to them was a direct appeal to the viewer's conscience and a clear recipe for action. "80,000 children look to us," says an early leaflet from

the Social Workers Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, entitled "Children in Concentration Camps." The text leaves little room for ambiguity: "What you do today makes their world tomorrow," "They have suffered too much," "Send your check, your money, or money-order today."

Fundraising materials like these show that their editors fully realized the power of images. And they clearly preferred those that combined notions of innocence and suffering—women, children and families—with the kind of gaze that sent a chill up Capa's spine. In fact, the Social Workers leaflet features some of the Hungarian's most touching refugee portraits: a mother in a French camp blowing her son's nose; a dark-haired girl of about 10, a sleeping baby in her lap, looking earnestly, almost defiantly, into the camera, while a boy lies at her feet. Their misery was palpable, but helping them was easy: a donation of \$1.50 buys a Play and Work Package with crayons and a drawing book; \$400 will bring a child to the Americas.

Rosenblum

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Sofía museum in Madrid purchased a set of 30; in 2005 they were part of a Rosenblum retrospective at PhotoEspaña in Madrid. The 25 photographs displayed at the King Juan Carlos Center until May were given as a gift to the Tamiment Library by the Rosenblum family. It is the first time a large set from the series has been shown in the United States.

Rosenblum's photographs for the USC form an integral part of his career. Following in Hine's footsteps, he recorded the impact on ordinary people—particularly children—of some of the major events of the 20th century, from economic depression to colonialism and armed conflict.



Working in East Harlem, Haiti, Europe, and the South Bronx, he was drawn to situations that revealed the experiences of immigrants and the poor. Early on, he made an important discovery. "I realized," he said, "that I worked best when I was photographing something or someone I loved and that through my photographs I could pay them homage." □

Human suffering above and beyond politics

Capa's work is a good example of the blurring border between news coverage and relief efforts in the wake of the Spanish conflict. Although he had left Spain on January 28 and gone on North, Capa returned to southern France in March to visit the camps at Argelès-sur-mer, Bram, and Le Barcarès, in part as an assignment for the Comité international de coordination et d'information pour l'aide à l'Espagne républicaine, the French counterpart to the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. As soon as the North American

Committee in New York received a set of prints, they incorporated them into their own publicity. But they also sent them on to the American media, alerting them to the Committee's one-million-dollar relief campaign.

Capa's photos from his March trip are as powerful as ever: famished Spaniards wrapped in blankets in front of improvised tents and huts in the sand; a corpulent French gendarme impassively contemplating a long row of identical wooden crosses on what can only be fresh graves; five squatting men with their trousers on their ankles in an endless, feces-covered expanse of beach. The Committee's efforts paid off: on April 16, the *New York Times* printed three of Capa's images in its Sunday photo section on a full page dedicated to Spain, mentioning the campaign. In May, the *New Masses* did a full-page photo spread on the Spanish "heroes": "These refugees, tempered in the blast furnace of fascism, are 400,000 living witnesses to the crimes of Franco. They are the most important refugees in the world." The large cache of negatives from Capa, Taro, and Seymour that were recently recovered includes 10 rolls covering the French camps. A selection will be shown at the symposium on May 1.

Throughout 1939, the New York office of the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign (SRRC)—headed up by Herman Reissig, with Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, serving as honorary chairman—undertook a number of projects involving its more than 100 chapters throughout the country. In addition to leaflets and photos, their most ambitious program that summer was a screening campaign of a new

half-hour documentary on the French camps. The film, entitled *Refuge*, was a dubbed-over and shortened version of *Un people attend*. This documentary, directed earlier that year by Jean-Paul LeChanois, alias Jean-Paul Dreyfus, and edited by Irving Lerner, combined newsreel with original footage, including sequences shot in the camps with a camera hidden in a grocery bag. Long thought lost, a 16mm print of *Refuge* has recently surfaced among ALBA's collection and will be screened at the symposium on May 1, along with other rare footage.

The politics of humanitarianism

Refuge was the SRRC's last large fundraising project before it succumbed to the political tensions undermining the Left's relief efforts in

hundreds of organizations in many countries had drummed up support for Spain. Although from the beginning much of the fundraising had been geared toward humanitarian aid (in part because other forms of support were prohibited by legislation demanding neutrality or non-intervention), almost all of the organizations involved were clearly identified with either the Republicans or the Nationalists. (The main exceptions were the Quakers and the Red Cross.) During the war, most groups had focused on political work, particularly mobilizing public opinion in favor of one side or the other. Franco's victory confronted these organizations with a different reality. Pro-Franco groups could tranquilly disband. But most of those supporting the Republic recognized that, even if they

The large cache of negatives from Capa, Taro, and Seymour that were recently recovered includes 10 rolls covering the French camps; a selection will be shown at the symposium on May 1.

the wake of the Spanish war. The Refugee Relief Campaign had initially come out of the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. But while the Committee's goals were political in nature (as its name clearly indicated), the SRRC explicitly profiled itself as purely humanitarian—a "non-political relief organization made up of hundreds of individuals who are interested in aiding the Spanish refugees." "This," an informational handout emphasized, "is its sole purpose. It has no connection with any political group and does not engage in any other activity."

It was an important distinction. During the previous three years,

refused to give up the fight against fascism, the new situation in Spain called for different tactics and priorities. To be sure, the political struggle continued after April 1939—the goal now was to block international recognition of the Franco regime—but humanitarian work took center stage.

The decision to scale down political profiles and to focus on humanitarian aid was as tactical as it was pragmatic. Of course it was overwhelmingly clear that the hundreds of thousands of Spaniards in France—among whom were also some former International Brigadiers—required urgent help. What was needed more

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National Court judge Baltasar Garzón opened an investigation into the disappearance of victims of Franco.

Photo by Richard Bermack

Spaniards today are engaged as never before in debating the “historical memory” of the Civil War and Francoist dictatorship. Although the term is nebulous and open to differing interpretations, what is at stake is not so much history itself, but how these past events should be treated, remembered, and transmitted in the present. The problems involved are complex and manifold, but revolve around two core issues: on the one hand, the victims and their rights to the truth, reparation, and even justice with respect to political crimes committed during the war and dictatorship; on the other, public policies of history and how the history of the period should be remembered and transmitted for current and future generations. That this debate is at its most intense now, 70 years after the

end of the war and 30 since the return to democracy, is not explained by the evident complexity of the issues involved, but rather by the way in which the tragedy of the war and dictatorship have been treated under Franco and successive democratic governments.

From its very first days, the Francoist state commemorated its victory. Victims of repression in Republican Spain

were given dignified funerals, monuments were raised in every village to those who had fallen for “God and for the motherland,” and on April 1, 1940, Franco ordered the construction of the huge fascist monolith of the Valley of the Fallen, built to “defy time and oblivion” and honor “the heroes and martyrs of the Crusade.” These “sites of memory” were matched by a whole new calendar celebrating the military victory that spawned the regime. Throughout the almost 40 years of dictatorship, July 18 (Day of the Uprising), October 1 (Day of the Caudillo), and April 1 (Day of Victory) were the key dates in the official memory of a regime that imposed total silence on the vanquished in the conflict.

The Transition to Democracy in the late 1970s broke the Francoist

monopoly of the past. This radically transformed the approach to history in academia and popular culture. Contrary to what is sometimes suggested, since the return to democracy, the Second Spanish Republic and the Civil War have always been a favorite subject of historians, film directors, and novelists who, with a few notable exceptions, are almost all broadly sympathetic to the Republican cause. In the social, political, and legal spheres, however, the break with the past was much more muted. The “pact of silence” of the Transition, which enjoyed widespread support among both the political elites and Spaniards themselves, rested on a largely tacit agreement not to rake over the past or investigate the repression unleashed during the war or the dictatorship, as well as a legal amnesty for perpetrators.

The price for an agreement that undoubtedly facilitated the return to

History Wars

By Justin Byrne

democracy was paid by the victims of Francoism. While pensions were eventually granted to those who had served in the Republican forces, and essentially symbolic compensation was paid to political prisoners of Franco, successive democratic governments failed to institute any public policy of reparation for the victims of Francoism or recognition of the place of the Republic in Spain’s democratic tradition. Nor were there significant demands for them to do so.

All this changed in the 1990s, as a series of developments put the Civil War and dictatorship back on the

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political agenda. In the international arena, the truth commissions, human rights investigations, and in some cases trials of perpetrators of other oppressive regimes showed what could, and some feel should, be done in Spain. Some commentators point to a significant change of strategy on the part of the Spanish Socialists, who, faced with the electoral advances of the conservative Partido Popular (PP), broke the unwritten agreement not to use the past as a political weapon and presented a series of legislative initiatives designed to tar the PP with the Francoist brush.

Almost all agree that the new attitude towards the past also reflected a broader social and cultural shift led by a younger generation of Spaniards, the grandchildren of the victims, who, free of responsibility for war, as well as of any fear of an authoritarian backlash, feel an urgent need to render homage to their elders before their

victory in March 2004 gave José Luis Rodríguez, himself the grandson of a Republican army officer executed during the war, the opportunity to fulfil his campaign promise to legislate on historical memory. The consultative committee of jurists, historians and politicians took almost two years to present its conclusions, and parliament a further year to debate the bill. Tortuously entitled the "Act recognizing or extending rights and establishing measures in favor of those who suffered persecution and violence during the civil war and dictatorship," but universally known as the "Law of Historical Memory," the new law was passed in December 2007 with the votes of all the political parties except the PP and the Catalan Left Nationalists.

Along with a formal condemnation of all ideologically motivated violence and specifically of the Francoist dictatorship, the "Law of Historical Memory" introduces a wide range of measures relating to the two core issues mentioned above. The law brought new moral and material reparation for the victims of Francoist repression, including the right to a formal certificate of recognition of their status and the declaration of the illegitimacy of politically motivated sentences dictated by Francoist courts. Broadening the concept of victims, the children and grandchildren of Spanish exiles have been given the right to Spanish citizenship and, more symbolically, International Brigaders who wish to exercise their right to citizenship (granted in 1996) no longer have to renounce their own. The law also commits the State to facilitating the exhumation of the mass graves of victims of Francoist repression.

The law establishes new principles for public history and memorialization, requiring the elimination of Francoist symbols and monuments from all public spaces and buildings, with the significant exception of those deemed of ill-defined artistic or religious significance, and prohibiting the use of the Valley of the Fallen for acts of nationalist exaltation. At the same time, the law includes a commitment "to promoting historical understanding of the conflict and of Spain's democratic memory," most tangibly by ensuring easier access to archives as well as the creation of a national Documentation Center for Historical Memory.

The 2007 law has drawn criticism from both the Right and the Left. Repeating their longstanding opposition to legislation on historical memory, the PP and rightwing media brand the law as unnecessary, sectarian, and divisive, a threat to the foundational consensus of the Transition; they maintain that rather than serving to heal wounds, it threatens to reopen them. For many others, above all those on the Left, the problem with the law is that it does not go far enough. Victims and memory and human rights organizations argue that it manifestly fails to guarantee the rights of victims to truth, justice, and reparation. They criticize the decision to declare the sentences dictated by Francoist courts legally null, rather than just illegitimate. Even more significantly, they criticize the State's failure to assume responsibility for exhuming mass graves rather than just for facilitating and assisting the families of victims, who are still responsible for organizing and covering the costs of these

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in Spain

death. This is the profile of many of the "memory activists" who founded the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARMH) in 2000. While the efforts of the ARMH have focused on identifying and digging up corpses of Republican victims of repression still lying in hundreds of unmarked graves around the country, it and other similar organizations have played a crucial role in mobilizing demands for reparation for the victims of Francoism and recognition of Republican memory more generally.

While these came to little under the PP, the Socialists' electoral

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initiatives. In practice, 18 months after the law came into effect, tens of thousands of Spaniards are still lying in mass, unmarked graves, and their families are little nearer to being able to recover their bodies and to honor their dead, or to the closure which this might bring. As for public history, many on the Left want stronger identification with the Second Republic (which is not even mentioned in the text) and its values, as well as a more complete ban on pro-nationalist memorials; while the last public statue of Franco in mainland Spain was finally removed in December, thousands of churches in Spain still display plaques to the nationalist war dead.

The most recent initiatives with respect to the historical memory have come despite, rather than as a result of, the 2007 law. In October 2008, controversial National Court judge Baltasar Garzón opened an investigation into the disappearance of victims of Francoist repression between July 1936 and 1951 (when the maqui abandoned their armed resistance to the regime). Using legal argumentation, Garzón maintained that insofar as thousands of victims of the repression have never been found, they should be treated as disappeared, with their cases open, and so not covered by the 1977 amnesty. At the same time, as Garzón had done in the past with respect to the Argentine Junta and Pinochet in Chile, he invoked international law as the basis for his claims to jurisdiction.

Defining the Francoist uprising and repression as crimes against humanity, Garzón denied the perpetrators' claims to immunity from prosecution, because crimes against humanity are not entitled to amnesty.

As part of his investigation, he required the Church and civil authorities to open their archives to help clarify the fate of over 110,000 victims of Francoist repression identified by historians, historical memory organizations and relatives; ordered the exhumation of 19 mass graves; and appointed a committee of experts to compile, for the first time, a complete map of the hundreds, possibly thousands, of mass graves. The judge later extended his investigation to include a less well-known dimension of the repression, the seizure of thousands of children of "reds" for re-education by the Church or State, and in many cases, adoption by families sympathetic to the regime. In these ways, Garzón's preliminary

investigation has served to deepen understanding of the scale and systematic character of Francoist violence both during and after the war, as well as to generate new and exhaustive, if not definitive, information about the number and identity of the victims.

There is little likelihood of these investigations prospering. This is not only because the majority of the perpetrators, including the 35 named by Garzón and headed by General Franco, are long dead, but also because of the opposition of the Attorney General and the majority of the judiciary to any idea of reopening cases that they consider proscribed and, in any event, covered by the 1977 Amnesty. It was in response to this

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Swiss Settle With History

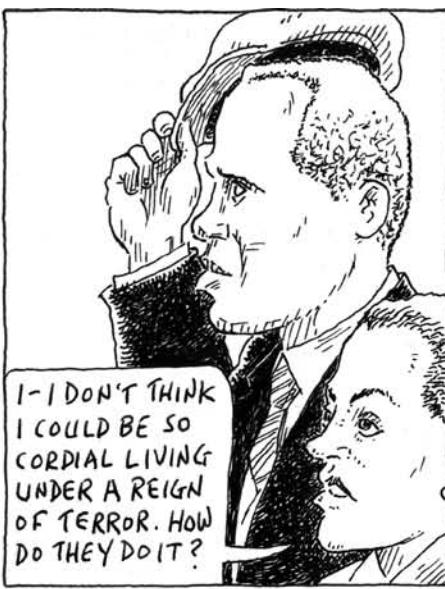
On December 2, 2008, in the Federal Council of Switzerland (equivalent of the U.S. House of Representatives), parties across the political spectrum, with the notable exception of the right-wing nationalist party, voted to rehabilitate Swiss volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. Eight years ago, a similar bill had been unsuccessful (see *The Volunteer*, Summer 2000). Thus ends a stigma that the five surviving veterans had carried with them for 70 years.

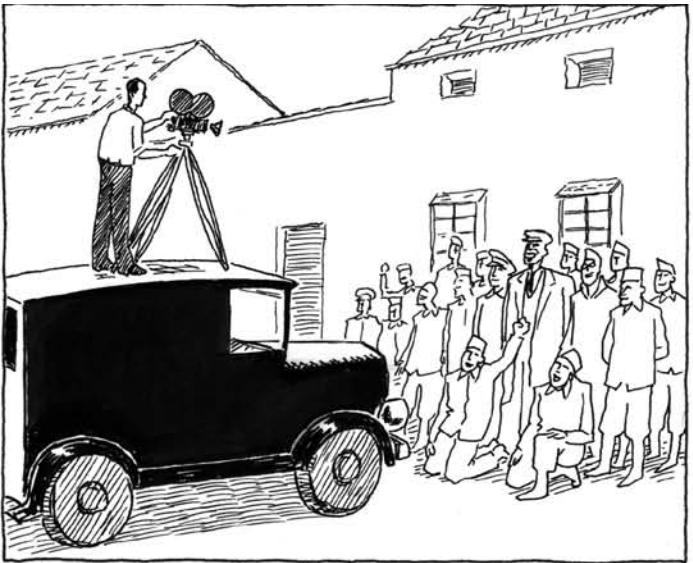
Switzerland imprisoned returning International Brigade veterans for fighting in a foreign army, breaking the country's neutrality laws. A few years later, however, once the tide had turned, the same standard was not applied to the Swiss who volunteered for the Foreign Legion or the French Resistance.

Eolo Morenzeni, a former Italian volunteer, said he was arrested the day after he returned from Spain in April 1938. He spent a week in jail, followed by 45 days of solitary confinement. He and other returning veterans were ostracized in their home country as "dangerous leftists." In Switzerland in the 1930s, the Communist Party was outlawed, as was any antifascist activity. Morenzeni does not hesitate to accuse the Bern government of the period of being "filonazi sympathizers."

The law is a complete political and moral rehabilitation, which nullifies all previous criminal sentences. "With this vote, Switzerland has turned a black page of its history," according to the Socialist Carlo Sommaruga, who mentioned the profound emotion in the aisles of parliament on the day of the vote. □







NEXT:
CONCLUSION

BROWN + CARROLL 2009

"Old Movie With the Sound Turned Off"

By Robert Hass

The hatchet girl wears a gown that glows;
The cigarette girl in the black fishnet stockings
And a skirt of black, gauzy, bunched-up tulle
That bobs above the pert muffin of her bottom—
She must be twenty-two—would look like a dancer
In Degas except for the tray of cigarettes that rests
Against her—tummy might have been the decade's word,
And the thin black strap which binds it to her neck
And makes the whiteness of her skin seem swan's-down
White. Some quality in the film stock that they used
Made everything so shiny that the films could not
Not make the whole world look like lingerie, like
Phosphorescent milk with winking shadows in it.
All over the world the working poor put down their coins,
Poured into theaters on Friday nights. The manager raffled—
"Raffled off," we used to say in San Rafael in my postwar
Childhood into which the custom had persisted—
Sets of dishes in the intermission of the double feature—
Of the kind they called Fiestaware. And now
The gangster has come in, surrounded by an entourage
Of prize fighters and character actors, all in tuxedo
And black overcoats—except for him. His coat is camel
(Was it the material or the color?—my mind wanders
To earth-colored villages in Samara or Afghanistan).
He is also wearing a white scarf which seems to shimmer
As he takes it off, after he takes off the gray fedora
And hands it to the hatchet girl. The singer,
In a gown of black taffeta that throws off light
In starbursts, wears black gloves to her elbows

And as she sings, you sense she is afraid.
Not only have I seen this film before—the singer
Shoots the gangster just when he thinks he's been delivered
From a nemesis involving his brother, the district attorney,
And a rival mob—I know the grandson of the cigarette girl,
Who became a screenwriter and was blackballed later
Because she raised money for the Spanish Civil War.
Or at least that's the story as I remember it, so that,
When the gangster is clutching his wounded gut
And delivering a last soundless quip and his scarf
Is still looking like the linen in Heaven, I realize
That it is for them a working day and that the dead
Will rise uncorrupted and change into flannel slacks,
Hawaiian shirts; the women will put on summer smocks
Made from the material superior dish towels are made of
Now, and they'll all drive up to Malibu for drinks.
All the dead actors were pretty in their day. Why
Am I watching this movie? you may ask. Well, my beloved,
Down the hall, is probably laboring over a poem
And is not to be disturbed. And look! I have rediscovered
The sweetness and the immortality of art. The actress
Wrote under a pseudonym, died, I think, of cancer of the lungs.
So many of them did. Far better for me to be doing this
(A last lurid patch of fog out of which the phrase "The End"
Comes swimming; the music I can't hear surging now
Like fate) than reading with actual attention my field guides
Which inform me that the flower of the incense cedar
I saw this morning by the creek is "unisexual, solitary, and terminal."

Reprinted from Time and Materials (New York: HarperCollins, 2007) with the permission of Robert Hass. He is a MacArthur Fellow and former Poet Laureate of the United States.

the Modern Refugee

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than anything else was money: massive funds for food, supplies, legal fees, and travel. More than ever, the relief organizations realized that they should make the broadest possible appeal among the general population. Everyone knew that explicit political affiliations would scare off large sections of the public, particularly the gift-prone church communities. But who wouldn't donate money for purely humanitarian work devoid of politics, especially if their gift was tax-deductible? Similarly, de-politicization was necessary to qualify for the increasing amounts of government funds for overseas refugee relief made available by the United States and other countries through the National War Fund (1943-47) and the War Refugee Board (1944-45). In the face of these realities, several pro-Republican organizations changed their identity, while others merged into new entities. But even organizations that did not change their names shifted their priorities in an attempt to lower their political profiles and increase their fundraising appeal. The VALB, which from 1939 on concentrated on helping the refugees, decrying their dismal treatment by French and Spanish authorities and putting political pressure on Washington to isolate Franco internationally, was conscious in the extreme about its need to avoid negative publicity.

Refugee aid organizations divided

Still, as the years following the Spanish war saw the emergence of a dizzying variety of refugee relief organizations, conflict was rife. In the United States alone, there were the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign;

the International Relief Association and the Emergency Rescue Committee, which later fused into the International Rescue Committee; the Joint Antifascist Refugee Committee; the American Friends Service Committee; the Unitarian Service Committee; and dozens of smaller organizations. While all



Dr. Edward Barsky, leader of the Joint Antifascist Refugee Committee, was persecuted by the U.S. government for his activities. Photo from the ALBA archives.

claimed—and many aimed—to be humanitarian in nature, and while many cooperated with each other to different extents, their work and their mutual relationships were hampered by clashing political views.

Conflicts arose at two different levels: the stated or suspected political beliefs and interest of the organizations' leaders and members; and the political identity of their beneficiaries. As usual, the hottest point of contention was the role of, and relation to, the Communist Party. And as usual, local conflicts were largely a function of developments in international politics, which radically altered the connotations and values associated with the Republican cause, Communism, anti-fascism, or opposition to the Franco regime.

Unsurprisingly, the main chapters in this story were the Spanish Civil War, the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact (August 1939-June 1941), the years of the anti-Axis alliance (1941-1945), and the Cold War that followed.

The first years read like a leftist soap opera. The Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign began as an initiative from Herman Reissig's North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy and the Medical Bureau, led by Edward Barsky, a prominent New York surgeon and Spanish Civil War veteran. Like most Popular Front organizations, the SRRC did not survive the fallout from the Hitler-Stalin pact. In March 1940, a conflict between Communists and non-Communists caused a split; Barsky and several prominent Lincoln vets broke away to form a rival organization. The mortally weakened remains of the SRRC eventually joined with the Emergency Rescue Committee, which was run from France by Varian Fry.

Continuing conflicts and governmental barriers thwarted an ambitious plan by Barsky and others to charter a ship that would bring Spanish refugees to Latin America. In early 1942, the United American Spanish Aid Committee, the Rescue Ship Mission, and the American Committee to Save Refugees merged into the Joint Antifascist Refugee Committee (JAFRC), led by Barsky. Because the JAFRC had no license to expend funds in Europe, it channeled its fundraising to the Unitarian Service Committee (USC), with specific conditions on use of the funds.

Ominous Cold-War clouds had been gathering throughout World War II, and the Axis powers had barely

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the Modern Refugee

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capitulated when the first drops started to fall. From the beginning, sympathizers of Republican Spain were singled out for anti-Communist investigations. In mid-1945, accusations arose that the JAFRC and the USC were not only dominated by Communist Party members and sympathizers, but they were using funds to help Communists over other refugees. The House Un-American Activities Committee asked the JAFRC to hand over its records; the refusal of Barsky and his board to do so led to a long legal battle that ended in prison sentences for 11 board members. The USC, meanwhile, had hurriedly purged the radicals from its ranks in an attempt to save its reputation. In the early 1950s, the belief that the CP-dominated organizations had long neglected the fate of non-Communist refugees spurred Nancy and Dwight MacDonald, both Trotskyites, to found the Spanish Refugee Aid (SRA), whose incorporation papers explicitly excluded Communists as beneficiaries. (Several years ago, ALBA helped negotiate the transfer of the extensive SRA archives to NYU's Tamiment library.)

As Peter Carroll has shown in *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, the ripples of the JAFRC court battle soon extended to the VALB, which had been harassed by the FBI and HUAC since the late 1930s and which, like the JAFRC, had been included in the 1947 Attorney General's List of Subversive Organizations. With the Cold War in full swing, even refugee relief, however humanitarian, could be considered a potential act of subversion. "Among the few palpable 'exhibits' of political views" at the Rosenberg trial, Carroll writes, "was a cardboard collection can that read 'Save a Spanish Republican Child.'" "The American warmongers,"

Milt Wolff wrote in 1951, "are trying to implant the idea that it is un-American to be anti-Franco." Needless to say, fundraising for the Spaniards became nearly impossible. Franco, meanwhile, continued to strengthen his position, and he remained in power until his death from old age in 1975.

"Premature refugees"

Three times the western democracies left the Spanish Republicans out in the cold: after the attempted coup in 1936; at the end of the Civil War in 1939; and again after the end of World War II. Ironically, this was precisely the moment when the political refugee became recognized as a legal category. The foundation of the United Nations in 1945 spurred the creation, five years later, of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the

1951 convention regulating the legal status of refugees, which included the crucial stipulation that no refugees should be returned to their homelands if they are at risk of persecution. For the Spanish Republicans, the new laws and institutions came too late. (If the Lincoln vets were labeled "premature antifascists," one could say that the Spanish Republicans were "premature refugees.") In practice, of course, the UNHCR could not prevent the intensely politicized treatment and representation of the millions of displaced peoples—from Palestine to Cuba to Vietnam to southern Africa to the former Yugoslavia—whose collective suffering cast a dark shadow over the second half of the 20th century, and whose fate and imagery largely mirrored the Spaniards', sometimes to an uncanny degree. □

History Wars

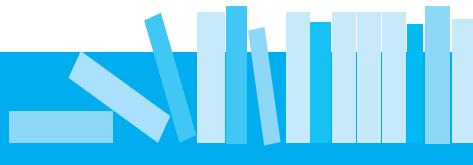
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opposition that, in November 2008, to the disappointment of activists, Garzón withdrew from the investigation, putting it into the hands of the courts in the various provinces in which the mass graves are located, which must now declare whether they are competent to judge these cases. Most are unlikely to do so, but will instead follow the example of the National Court in declaring that it, and hence Garzón, is not competent to investigate these crimes.

There are no signs, however, that the pressure for truth, reparation, and justice will go away. The Law of Historical Memory represents a major unprecedented step forward both for victims' rights to reparation and in terms of public recognition of the

Republican struggle for democracy during and after the war. However, it is difficult not to agree with those who criticize the law, and above all its failure to resolve the problems of the mass graves. The inevitable existence of not one, but various, conflicting collective memories of what happened in Spain between 1936 and 1975 means that, in the short term at least, the recovery of historical memory will continue to be a source of conflict rather than consensus. But until the bodies of these Republicans are recovered, the injustice is perpetuated, and there would appear to be little likelihood of Spanish society as a whole achieving any sort of collective closure with respect to its traumatic past. □

Book Reviews



Franco's World War II

Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany and World War II. By Stanley G. Payne. New Haven: Yale University Press. 328 pp.

By Daniel Kowalsky

Gradually of Loyalist defenders for nearly six decades, Stanley Payne is the historian of Spain the Left loves to hate. His rational, deeply-informed defense of Franquista positions and his career-long refusal to cave in to the groundswell of support for the lost cause of the Spanish Republic have exasperated all those who still mourn Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War. Payne may have raised political incorrectness to the level of subversion, but no serious student of modern Spain can afford to ignore him; he is without a doubt the most prolific Hispanist working on either side of the Atlantic, with an output easily surpassing one book per year. Payne has now turned his attention to Franco's supposed neutrality in World War II. The result is a book that, while reflecting the author's well-established ideological tendencies, brings new insights to a fascinating subject.

The book opens in the first days of the Civil War. Stranded with his troops in Spanish Morocco, the Generalissimo appealed to the

fascist dictators for assistance. While Mussolini sent the greater numbers of ground troops, Hitler delivered the better hardware, together with well-trained advisors and the mercilessly effective Condor Legion. As the author correctly shows, German participation was a vital determinant in Franco's eventual victory. Hitler's concentrated intervention in Spain resulted from his keen awareness of the strategic advantages of having a close ally on the Iberian peninsula. Yet Hitler's recompense for his steadfast support of the Caudillo was delivered only in fits and starts, complicating Germany's campaign for European hegemony.

In the global war, when most states lined up alongside either the Allied or the Axis camp, Franco pursued the most ambivalent position of any neutral power. Franco declared Spain a "non-belligerent ally" of Germany, though this was disingenuous. As Payne demonstrates with impressive detail, Franco's assistance to the Nazi cause was wide-ranging and included extensive maritime support; regular delivery of vital minerals, raw materials and foodstuffs; unprecedented political favors, such as the reception onto Spanish soil of several thousand Nazi agents; and the belated dispatch of the Blue Division, whose doomed volunteers fought alongside the Germans until the fall of Berlin. The Allies rued but also exploited Franco's loyalty to Hitler, as evidenced in Operation Mincemeat, when fake invasion plans planted on a corpse were translated and sent to

the Germans. According to Payne, the deception convinced the Axis of an imminent strike in the Aegean and thus "greatly facilitated the [Allied] invasion of Sicily," though he offers but thin support for that thesis.

That Franco never contributed more directly to the Nazi war effort was less a consequence of the Caudillo's savvy diplomacy than of Hitler's refusal to accept Spain's conditions for abandoning neutrality. If this book contains a bombshell, it is that Madrid strongly favored entering the war, but Berlin continually balked at the concessions the Spaniards demanded up-front. As negotiations dragged on, the Axis position across Europe steadily weakened. By the end of 1942, a better deal for Franco was taking shape with the surging Allies, who quickly forgave the dictator his bloody excesses and earlier fascist associations.

Some readers will be especially interested in what Payne has to say about Franco and the Holocaust. For many years, the Nationalist regime's official historians made much of Spain's supposed magnanimity towards Jewish refugees, and the heroic and risky efforts of Franco's diplomats in France, Greece and Hungary have often been cited as evidence of philo-Semitism. It is true that at least 30,000 Jews successfully crossed into Spain by 1942, but Spanish attempts at rescue once the Final Solution was implemented were tardy, half-hearted and ineffective. Payne correctly concludes that, overall, Hitler's

Daniel Kowalsky teaches modern Spanish history at Queen's University, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He is author of *La Unión Soviética y la Guerra Civil Española* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2003) and *Stalin and the Spanish Civil War* (Columbia UP, 2004).

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Added to Memory's Roster



photo by Richard Bermack

Virginia Malbin (1913-2008)

"You've got to fight back. Once you begin to feel that way about the world, you never stop."

Virginia Malbin, proud veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and lifelong activist in progressive grassroots politics, died December 10 in Portland, Oregon. She was a youthful 95.

In 1937, committed to defending a government that was succeeding against enormous odds at improving the lives of the poor, Virginia joined the international effort to aid the Spanish Republic, which was under siege by Fascist forces. She was in her early 20s, a recent Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Chicago, already a seasoned community organizer, social worker, and unionist. Her main task was to aid Spanish social services in

resettling refugee children, many of whom had been traumatized and orphaned by the war. In that capacity, she encouraged Spanish children to describe their own wartime experiences as a form of creative therapy.

Returning to the United States, Virginia went on a speaking tour to inform Americans about the situation in Spain and to raise funds for relief efforts. In 1938 she returned to Spain, joining her husband Barney, a physician working near the front. Virginia assisted with evacuating wounded internationals, many from lands already under Nazi domination, to countries that would protect them. With the defeat of the Republic and the start of World War II, the couple returned to the United States. Barney served as an Air Force flight surgeon; Virginia cared for her two young children and continued her work in anti-Fascist organizations.

After the war, the Malbins moved to Vancouver, Washington, then to Portland. During the 1950s, they were part of a vibrant community of labor organizers, artists, educators, and left-leaning people from all walks of life, making a good life in defiance of the ravages of the McCarthy era.

Virginia worked for Child Welfare in Portland. Soon after her husband's death in 1959, she left for graduate school at the University of Southern California. After obtaining a masters degree in social work, Virginia won a grant for a project that challenged San Francisco's practice of incarcerating indigent elderly in state mental hospitals. Her research and advocacy resulted in the funding of appropriate housing and services. From 1967 until retiring in 1977,

Virginia taught community organizing and grant writing in the social work department of San Francisco State University. She was involved in campus politics, most importantly in support of the historic student strike that ended in the creation of the first school of ethnic studies in the nation.

During the 30 years that she lived in Berkeley, Virginia traveled the world with friends, hiked with the Sierra Club and the Berkeley Hiking Club, sailed in the Caribbean and the San Juans, rafted the Middle Fork of the Salmon and the Colorado (the last time when she was 90), and was active in Women for Peace. In 1993, she returned to Portland to be near family. Until the final weeks of her life, Virginia led a full life. She marched against the war in Iraq just weeks after hip surgery, maintained membership in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, enjoyed Portland's cultural offerings, went to water aerobics classes, and studied Greek philosophers with the Inquiring Minds group at Terwilliger Plaza.

Virginia was preceded in death by her husband and her daughter Linda. She is survived by her son Edward, his wife Diane, and three generations of nieces, nephews, and cousins. She is remembered by an extended family of relatives and friends as a lively, tough, impassioned intellectual, who inspired them to work for the same causes that shaped her life: economic justice, equal rights, civil liberties, peace.

"When people have a vision and they know what they are struggling for and they work together to accomplish it—I think that it is still the most important thing for people to learn."

—Diane Nowicki



Added to Memory's Roster



Bob Doyle (1916-2009)

One of the last surviving Irish International Brigaders, Bob Doyle, has died, just short of his 93rd birthday.

Born into poverty in Dublin in 1916, Bob grew up with a hatred of injustice that pushed him towards left-wing politics. When civil war broke out in Spain, Bob saw the struggle as an extension of his own street battles with the fascist Blueshirts. In December 1937, he joined the International Brigades.

Bob fought with the British Battalion, which was involved in a desperate attempt to defend Belchite in March 1938. During the retreats he was captured, and he spent the next

year in the concentration camp of San Pedro de Cardeña. In February 1939, he was released as part of a prisoner exchange deal.

During World War II, Bob served in the merchant navy before becoming a firewatcher in London. After the war, he undertook dangerous clandestine work, travelling to Franco's Spain to help organise underground trade-unions.

Over the years, Bob continued to return to Spain, resolutely carrying a banner with "International Brigades" inscribed over the

More information about Bob Doyle and news coverage of his memorial can be found at the following websites:

www.geocities.com/irelandscw/ibvol-BD-Feb.

www.rte.ie/news/2009/0214/6news.html

www.indymedia.ie/article/91124

Spanish tricolour. In 2006 his memoir, *Brigadista*, was released, and he cheerfully accepted his duty as one of the few surviving brigaders to travel and speak extensively in Spain, Ireland and Britain. Bob delivered his last speech at the rededication of Belfast's International Brigade memorial on November 8, 2008.

Bob is survived by his sons Bob and Julian, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

—Richard Baxell

Remembering Virginia Malbin: The Woman Who Never Seemed to Age

When I first met Virginia Malbin at a meeting in the 1970s, she told me she was a Lincoln Brigade vet. I didn't believe her; she just didn't look old enough. When she spoke, she put things in the perspective of the current historical moment with an intellectual depth that was both eloquent and not always appropriate for the meeting's agenda. That was Virginia. She was known for her eternal youthful looks and her professorial intellect.

The last time I visited Virginia, a few years ago, she had recently moved into a senior housing complex owned by a teachers association in Portland. When I asked how it was

living there, she replied, "We have the whole place organized. There are only a few people who are voting Republican, and we're working on them. We also found some issues with how management treats the janitorial staff, so we are going to talk to them about that. We have a great community, with discussion groups on politics, philosophy, literature, and of course I have my group, Women for Peace." As we walked to the lunch room, various elderly residents tapped her on the shoulder. "Virginia, I have to talk to you later," they said. And I realized how she stayed so young.

—Richard Bermack

Franco's WWII

Continued from page 19

policy towards the Jews was viewed from Madrid with benevolence.

Payne has always been the master synthesizer, and here again he skillfully culls recent secondary studies, from numerous languages, to produce a welcome addition to the bibliography of Spain's international relations. It is perhaps unfortunate that some of the secondary studies on whom the author relies are Payne's earlier works, and those readers who know his books on the Franco regime, the Second Republic or the civil war will detect a whiff of self-plagiarism. ■

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