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The Volunteer

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

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

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

**Vets Get Spanish
Citizenship**

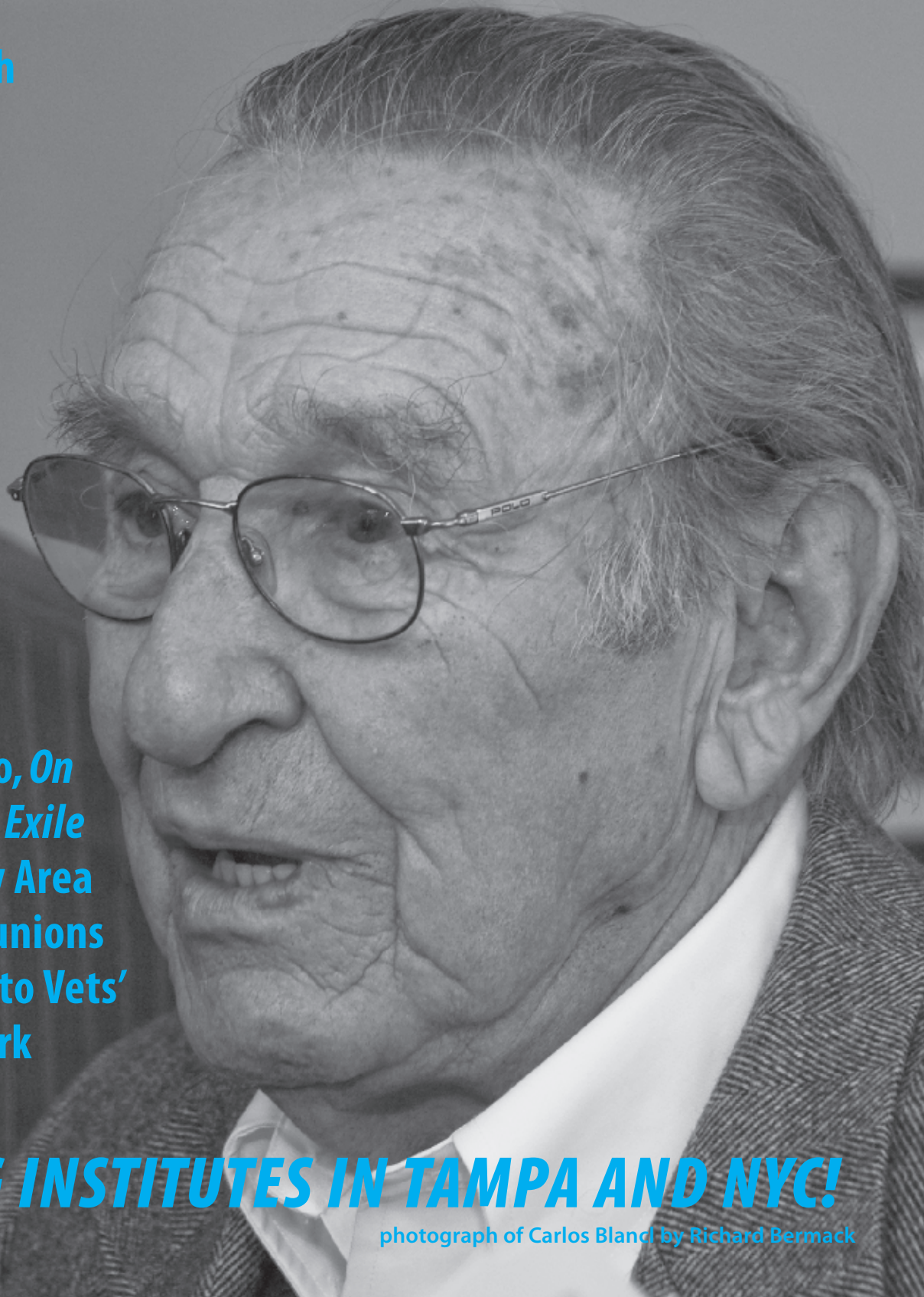
**New Plaque
Coming to
New York**

**Watt Award
Winners**

**Carlos Blanco, *On
the Spanish Exile
of 1939*. Bay Area
and NYC Reunions
Pay Tribute to Vets'
Refugee Work**

TEACHING INSTITUTES IN TAMPA AND NYC!

photograph of Carlos Blanco by Richard Bermack



ALBA'S TEACHING INSTITUTES: A+!

ALBA's Teaching Institutes, which are designed to bring a Spanish Civil War curriculum to high school students around the country, have passed their second year with flying colors.

In northern California, Tampa, Florida, and New York City, selected teachers voiced their gratitude for the opportunity to learn about the ALBA archives and how they can be used in high school classrooms—and then put their words into action by producing unit and lesson plans to ensure that their learning experience would have an immediate impact on their own students starting in September.

This is an amazing achievement, though our work has just begun.

In California, ALBA collaborated with the Alameda County Office of Education to produce two Saturday teaching seminars with 16 selected teachers, focusing on key issues of the Spanish Civil War and exploring how they can be taught in high school classrooms. Among topics considered were the reasons why U.S. citizens volunteered to enlist in a foreign war to save democracy in Spain, the social composition of the International Brigades, and how this aspect of U.S. history interfaces with world history courses.

ALBA then opened its first Institute at the University of South Florida in Tampa, where ALBA's team, led by Fraser Ottanelli, and 18 teachers used electronically scanned archival material to explore a series of related subjects (see page 3). Two weeks later, James Fernandez's group offered the second annual New York Institute to 18 teachers from six local high schools, each represented by a teacher of social studies, Spanish, and art (see page 4).

The feedback from teachers, in all cases, is exceptionally positive. In Tampa, we received A+ from every teacher in response to every evaluation question! They have already made unit and lesson plans that will go into curricula as soon as schools open in September.

The implications of this program's success are immense.

Here's why: We think it's important for young people to know about the Spanish Civil War because a new generation of citizens needs to know just how precarious an elected democratic government can be. They need to know why it's important for all citizens to remain active and vigilant, with a burning respect for our progressive democratic principles and traditions. They need to understand why U.S. intervention overseas needs to be selective and focused on protecting democratic peoples, not authoritarian regimes. They need to understand that the defense of democracy requires both activism and courage. These are essential principles for a democratic future.

The teachers in our Institutes agree. After immersing them in the history, literature, art, and music of the Spanish Civil War, we listened to their suggestions about how best to reach their students. In turn, we showed them how our unique archives can be integrated into their curricula for the coming year and shared the thrill of using original documents for research and teaching. We also promised to provide additional support throughout the year.

No surprise: many of our teachers are already using our material in their classes. And with every teacher we

reach, we bring our lessons to more young people.

Based on our success, we expect to expand the Institutes around the country in the coming year. We are planning briefer "development days" to greatly increase the number of teachers we introduce to our curricula. We are also planning to collaborate with teachers in publishing their lessons in professional journals to reach even more teachers. By any standard, this is an amazing opportunity!

Please help us promote the Institutes by using the enclosed envelope to make a contribution.

Cheers to all!

The Editors

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U.S. Vets Get Spanish Citizenship

With the new Spanish law for the recovery of historical memory passed in 2008, allowing volunteers of the International Brigades to apply for full Spanish citizenship without relinquishing their existing national status, two veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade successfully completed the process of application and approval and now hold naturalized Spanish citizenship.

On April 6, 2009, Clarence Kailin, 95, of Madison, Wisconsin, became the first veteran of the Lincoln Brigade to become a full citizen of Spain. His new Spanish/E.U. passport and Spanish birth certificate read "Clarence Kailin Schwid," following the Spanish custom by using his mother Stella's maiden name.

In July, John Hovan, 93, a resident of Providence, Rhode Island, became the second vet to gain Spanish citizenship.

"It was a difficult moment in the world and they risked their lives," said Spain's consul general in Boston, Carlos Robles, who traveled to Hovan's home with the official papers. "We respect that and would like to honor that in a small way."

Hovan worked with unemployment rights groups and the American League Against War and Fascism before departing for Spain. He had left school at age 15 to work in his father's shoe repair shop during the Great Depression, but he lost that job when his father couldn't get work.

"I saw the war clouds hovering over Europe," Hovan said. "I felt it was very important that fascism be stopped."

"I remember many wonderful people [in Spain]," Hovan told a reporter from the *Providence Journal*.



Spanish Consul Carlos Robles (left) with John Hovan. Photo by Francisco Fernandez de Alba.

He remembers "the warmth of the Spanish people in spite of the suffering."

Both Kailin and Hovan have remained lifelong activists.

Kailin was responsible for organizing the construction of the monument honoring the Lincoln Brigade in Madison, the second in the U.S. He and the Madison Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade also raised seed money for the monument to the Brigadas Internacionales that now stands in Marça, Priorat, Catalunya. The site is near the grave of Kailin's friend, John Cookson, who was killed during the war.

Kailin is widely known as a one-man progressive institution in Wisconsin, frequently cited at public events for leading battles for labor, human rights, social benefits, and civil

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New York Monument

More U.S. volunteers in the Spanish Civil War came from New York City than from anywhere else. Nearly all Brigadistas sailed for Spain from the west side wharves. Manhattan served as headquarters for almost all home-front support groups, as well as for the national Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

At last, New York City will install a memorial plaque to the U.S. volunteers, thanks to an agreement reached this spring between the Museum of the City of New York, the Puffin Foundation, Ltd., and ALBA. Perry Rosenstein, president of the New Jersey-based Puffin Foundation, announced the project at the annual reunion meeting in May.

As part of a unique endowment gift to create and support a permanent gallery at the museum dedicated to

the history of social activism in New York, the museum will install a permanent plaque honoring the men and women who departed from the city to fight against fascism and to save democracy in the Spanish Republic.

The exact design of the plaque, which will be part of the permanent gallery, is still in development as *The Volunteer* goes to press. ■

IN HONOR OF THE MEN AND
WOMEN WHO, AS VOLUNTEERS
IN THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN
BRIGADE, SAILED FROM NEW
YORK TO STAND BESIDE THE
SPANISH REPUBLICANS AND
FIGHT FASCISM IN THE SPANISH
CIVIL WAR (1936-1939)

ALBA Plaque in Madrid

By Soledad Fox

Marking the 70th anniversary of the exile of Spanish Republicans, the Asociación de Descendientes del Exilio Español held events on May 6-7, highlighted by an “Homage to the International Brigades, Russian Volunteers, and Spaniards who Died Defending Europe’s Liberty,” at the Fuencarral Cemetery in Madrid. Spain’s Ministry of Defense unveiled a new monument to honor the Spaniards who fought against fascism in World War II. The event also featured various official speakers.

One of the most moving speeches was written by Jean-Marie Bockel, France’s Secretary of State for Defense, and was read to the audience by Bruno Delaye, the French Ambassador to Spain. In Bockel’s words, “France has not forgotten the glorious Spanish fighters who entered Paris in 1944 astride tanks with names such as Guernica, Madrid, or Don Quijote. ...



These images will always be engraved on our national memory.”

The large audience included Spanish survivors of Mauthausen, Dachau, and Buchenwald; diplomatic officials from Germany, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, and the United States; and members of the press. They witnessed a floral tribute offered at the Spanish Monument. The crowd then moved to the Monument for the Russian Volunteers for a moment of silence.

Events at the cemetery culminated with the dedication of the plaque donated by supporters of the British

Battalion and the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. I unveiled the plaque with British Ambassador Denise Holt, and Jim Jump spoke on behalf of the British Battalion. Then I said a few words about ALBA’s history and current activities and acknowledged the presence of Thomas Genton, Counselor for Public Affairs at the United States Embassy in Spain. Amaya Ruiz Ibárruri, the daughter of la Pasionaria (Dolores Ibárruri), gave an impassioned closing speech evoking her mother’s farewell address to the International Brigades in 1938 in Barcelona.

The plaque dedication was mentioned in two articles in Spain’s leading newspaper, *El País*, that ran with the headlines “Madrid Pays Tribute to Anti-Fascist Fighters” and “The United States Joins the Homage to the International Brigades.”

The anniversary events also included a colloquium in which Spaniards who fought in World War II and survived Nazi camps spoke about their experiences and an homage to the deportees, both at the Universidad Complutense. ■

ALBA board member Soledad Fox represented the American donors of the new monument in Madrid.

Dear Editor,

Justin Byrne’s excellent article in your March 2009 issue reminds us of how torturous—yet critical—the journey to re-examine a nation’s painful Fascist past can be. His “History Wars in Spain” shows us the Spanish people—some 70 years after the Civil War and the start of dictator Franco’s reign of terror—have the courage to confront an ugly and reactionary past. Even more relevant to our own situation in the U.S. today, the American people have the opportunity and the duty to remind the Obama Administration that blindly “moving forward” without an objective review of a shameful past is not an option. We must strongly demand and insist that the nation must fully investigate the crimes committed in the eight long years of torture and imperial wars, and to make those responsible for such heinous atrocities fully accountable to both the U.S. Constitution and international law. Thank you for highlighting the Spanish example of how a responsible nation can begin to heal its wounded past. Perhaps you can send each of our 535 Congressional reps a copy of the apropos article.

Peace & Solidarity,

Danny Li (MidPac Peace Activist)

Tampa Teachers Respond to USF Workshop with Important Lesson Plans



By Robert Alicea

Photos by Jeannette Ferrary

ALBA's five-day workshop in Tampa, Florida, in mid-June sparked local high school social science teachers to recognize the vitality of Spanish Civil War history for their classes in the upcoming school year. Co-sponsored with the History Department of the University of South Florida and members of the School of Education, the program aroused widespread interest among teachers who previously knew little about the Spanish conflict and certainly had not devoted classroom time to the issues the war raised.

Preliminary reading assignments were mailed to 18 selected attendees three weeks prior to the event. By the time Peter Carroll, Fraser Ottanelli, Sherman Dorn and I welcomed them to the opening session, they were prepared in modest measure to discuss a story to which most admitted of only a cursory prior awareness.

Since our objective was the transfer of content knowledge about the

Spanish Civil War, in particular, the involvement of Americans, the first four days focused on constructing schema necessary for preparation of professional lesson plans. The teachers unanimously manifested a strong appetite for just such a content-laden agenda. The program called for a variety of activities, including large and small group discussions about assigned readings, individual immersion in primary documents provided by ALBA, and a field trip to the Centro Asturiano in Ybor City for roundtable discussions with citizens who actually participated in Tampa's response to

the rebellion against the Republic during the 1930s.

On the fifth day, our teachers entered a computer lab confident and enthusiastic. They crafted an array of extraordinary lessons. The following examples are indicative of their collective contribution. An American government teacher created a three-day unit plan on "Motivations for Political Activism," based on letters from ALBA's collection. "Why would United States citizens fight in this war?" is a documents-based question central to a five-day unit

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Robert Alicea is a retired social science and language arts teacher and currently works as an adjunct instructor of U.S. history at the University of South Florida.



Teaching Institute in NY

By James Fernández

Why did Hitler and Mussolini come to the aid of Franco? How was the bombing of Guernica perceived and talked about before Picasso's masterpiece? What role did art and literature play in the worldwide mobilizations in support of Spain's Second Republic?

What were the motivations of the men and women who joined the Lincoln Brigade? Why were there so many creative people among their

"This was an amazing seminar that was a perfect blend of historical context and classroom application..."

ranks? How did these American volunteers interact with the Spanish people?

These are just some of the questions pondered in depth by the 18 New York City public high school teachers who participated in the second summer Teaching Institute at NYU. Six schools were represented, each by a teacher of art, history and Spanish. This group of educators explored ALBA's collections of manuscripts, posters, postcards and

Steinhardt's Director of Field Projects, Lee Frissell, coordinated the outreach to the public schools, which yielded a wonderfully diverse and dynamic group of teachers from these New York City high schools:

- Midwood High School
- Grover Cleveland High School
- Fashion Institute High School
- Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies
- Clara Barton High School
- Secondary School for Research

"I am left inspired and overwhelmed, motivated and eager to go back to my classroom and share this very touching and moving experience."

photographs, with guidance from Professor Robert Cohen (Chair, Dept. of Teaching and Learning, NYU's Steinhardt), Gail Malmgreen (Head Archivist, Tamiment), Michael Nash (Director of Tamiment), Michael Stoll (PhD candidate, Steinhardt), Juan Salas (PhD candidate, Tisch School of

as Director of the Institute. Their ultimate goals: to increase teachers' understanding of the Spanish Civil War and to find ways to incorporate the war and the resources of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives into their high school curricula.

Each participant developed a lesson plan or curricular unit based on the Institute experience. Throughout the summer and during the upcoming academic year, ALBA, in collaboration with Steinhardt, will work with the teachers to help them present their lessons in their regular classes. ■

the Arts), Peter N. Carroll (ALBA), and James D. Fernández (Chair, Spanish and Portuguese, at NYU), who served

Tampa

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in an advanced placement U.S. history course. Another week-long unit involves tying an analysis of Guernica to a lab assignment on ALBA's website to forge an understanding of "The Rise of Fascism and the Spanish Civil War." An American history teacher wrote a short skit for Readers Theatre, "Meeting of the Comité del Frente Popular," with nine speaking parts in which Tampa men and women discuss responsibilities

and possibilities for action in the summer of 1936. The current issue regarding excavations of "Franco's Graves" is the topic of a week-long unit for an anthropology class.

The tangible success of this workshop is augmented by the sharing of these innovative lessons with colleagues on the district's website. The expected result: more teachers, more students. ■

Watt Prizes Announced

By Sebastiaan Faber

ALBA's George Watt Memorial Essay Prize is awarded annually to a graduate and an undergraduate student who has written an outstanding essay or thesis chapter about any aspect of the Spanish Civil War, the global political or cultural struggles against fascism in the 1920s and 1930s, or the lifetime histories and contributions of the Americans who fought in support of the Spanish Republic.

We received 24 submissions for both categories combined; nine essays were in Spanish, 15 in English. Because this year's participants included a good number of strong contenders, we decided to grant one Honorable Mention in each category. The jury, consisting of Gina Herrmann, Rob Snyder, and Sebastiaan Faber, is pleased to announce the results for this year's contest.

The winner for the undergraduate category is Anna Kendrick, at Harvard, who submitted a chapter of her senior thesis on "Ewart Milne and Irish Literary Dissent in the Spanish Civil War." Matthew Skiba, a graduate student at UNC Wilmington, won the graduate prize with "The Role of Republican Spain and the Spanish Civil War in Reaffirming Mexican Hispano-American Identity, 1931-39."

James Stout, at Cambridge (UK), receives an Honorable Mention for his undergraduate thesis on "Anarchism and Attitudes within the Ramo de Construcción, Barcelona 1933." Aelwen Wetherby, at Oxford, receives an Honorable Mention in the graduate category with a chapter from a dissertation on "The American Medical

Bureau: American Medical Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War and the Politics of Humanitarianism."

Both winners receive a prize of \$500. Their essays are available in full on the ALBA website, at <www.alba-valb.org/participate/essay-contest>.

ABSTRACTS:

Irish Poet in Spain

By Anna Kendrick

"On Guard with the Junipers: Ewart Milne and Irish Literary Dissent in the Spanish Civil War" examines work by the little-known poet Ewart Milne (1903-1987), drawn primarily from his 1940 collection, *Letter from Ireland*, showing how his experience as a medical courier in Spain influenced an Anglo-Irish writer. Publishing poetry that bridged a divided, isolated Ireland with wider European anti-fascist currents through World War II, Milne's writing offers a critical entry into the intellectual protests that surrounded Irish public life in the years surrounding the Spanish Civil War.

As a contributor to the short-lived journal *Ireland Today*, Milne became part of a circle of disaffected artists whose protests and causes

encompassed all areas of Irish affairs. Left-leaning, opposed to the institutionalization of religion in public life, and open to British, Spanish, and other international literary influences, *Ireland Today* assembled Ireland's most prominent intellectuals, poets, and essayists in a broad project of national

renewal. This magazine seems to have acted as a conscious counterpoint to Ireland's prevailing moral conservatism, which was manifest in literary censorship, clerical and popular support for Franco, and the widespread flight of left-leaning activists and artists—such as Milne—from Ireland's shores.

Hispano-American Identity

By Matthew Skiba

The Spanish Civil War was a domestic and foreign policy issue in each of the Spanish-speaking nations of the Western hemisphere, but in none more so than Mexico. By 1936 it was the only Latin American country to have had a social revolution. Under leftist president Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40), Mexico was the only country in the region to give military aid and diplomatic support to the Spanish Republic. Paradoxically, it was also the setting for the most developed challenge to hispanismo at the national level in Latin America since independence. One expression of this was indigenismo—the championing of the indigenous half of mestizo identity over the Hispanic half. When the Republic was established, it changed

The winning essays are available in full on the ALBA website at: www.alba-valb.org/participate/essay-contest

the negative image many Mexicans had of Spain. Through defense of the Republic, "Spain" was re-conceptualized as a valuable part of Mexican identity. Mexicans now identified progressive Spain as a source of many of their values. ■

Bay Area and NYC Reunions Pay *Hundreds Gather for First-Hand Stories*



Sebastiaan Faber presents a slide show featuring the Mexican Suitcase images at the the Bay Area reunion. Photos by Richard Bermack.



Emotions ran high in New York and San Francisco on May 3 and 31, where ALBA's annual reunions attracted a combined audience of almost 500. Both programs focused on the hardships endured by the hundreds of thousands of Spanish people who were forced to flee their homeland during and after the Civil War and the important role played by the vets and other sympathizers of the Republic in providing refugee relief, helping to create the basis for refugee aid as we know it today.

Two Spanish refugees, Angela Giral and Carlos Blanco, told their gripping personal stories of suffering,

Tribute to Vets' Refugee Work *and Preview of Capa's Suitcase*

survival, and ultimate success in Mexican and American exile. Lincoln vet Matti Mattson addressed the New York gathering; Hilda Roberts and Nate Thornton attended the event at the Delancey Street Screening Room in San Francisco. Bruce Barthol and his ensemble filled the second half of both programs with songs from the Civil War.

ALBA Board Chair Peter Carroll pointed out that the past year had been both exhilarating and devastating. In March 2008, ALBA inaugurated the beautiful national monument in San Francisco and finalized negotiations for a permanent commemorative plaque to the Lincoln Brigade in the Museum of the City of New York. In the past two summers we initiated a series of tremendously successful and effective Teachers Institutes in New York, Tampa, and the Bay Area. On the other hand, we lost the largest proportion of vets since ALBA's founding and are facing financial challenges during the current recession.

At both reunions, ALBA's Sebastiaan Faber presented scores of rare images of the massive Republican



Lenore Veltfort



Bonnie Weiss (left) and Sabina Ubell, members of the Bay Area Paul Robeson Centennial Committee.

exodus from Spain, including fragments from two films and more than a dozen refugee images from the "Mexican Suitcase," a recently recovered cache of more than 4,000 Spanish Civil War photographs taken by Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, and David "Chim" Seymour.

As "concerned photographers," Faber explained, Capa, Taro, and Seymour were interested not only in the battlefield, but also in the humanitarian consequences of the war, and their photos did much to raise awareness of the Spaniards' suffering around the world. "We are so used now to refugee crises," Faber said, "that it is hard to imagine the sheer shock caused worldwide by the massive Spanish Republican exodus. *Life*, *Picture Post*, and the newsreels revealed half a million men, women, and children—professors and politicians, officers and soldiers, toddlers, housewives, and the elderly—being strafed by German fighters, crossing the Pyrenees, freezing in the snow, starving in camps."

Capa, Taro and Seymour, Faber explained, had much in common with the International Brigadiers. In their own way, they were all "border crossers": displaced, stateless internationalists who refused to distinguish between reporting and solidarity work, or between politics and humanitarianism. "They were the embodiment of international solidarity, of the fact that loyalty, courage, and sacrifice could be meaningful—in fact, were really only meaningful—if they went beyond nationalism." ▀



Jeanne Houck and John Sayles. Photo by Jeannette Ferrary.

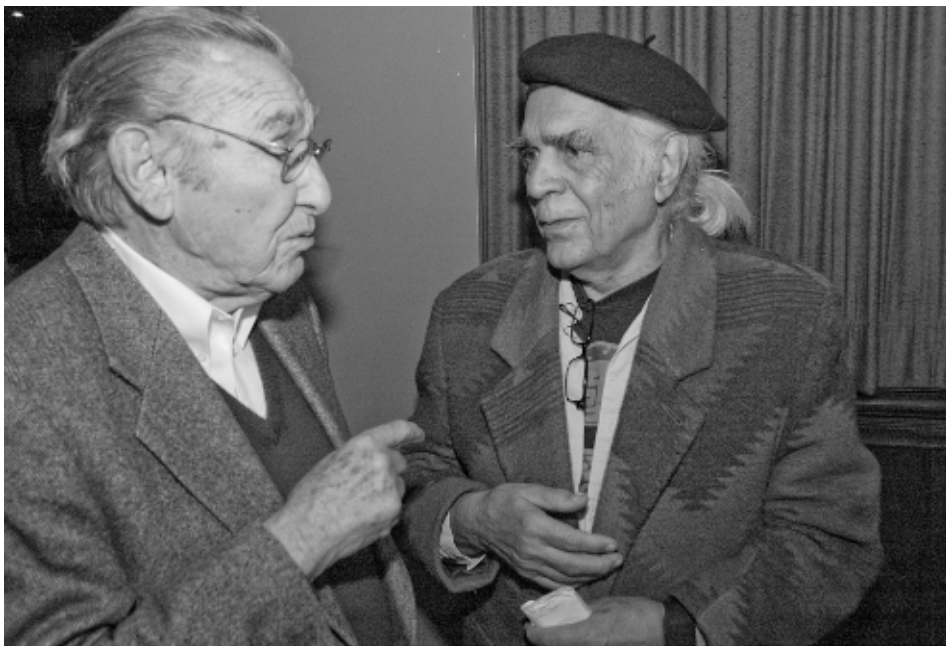
On the Spanish Exile of 1939:

By Carlos Blanco Aguinaga

Between the fall of 1937, when Franco's troops occupied the Basque Country, and February/March 1939, when they occupied the Mediterranean coast and, finally, Madrid, over 500,000 people left Spain. Some ended up in the Soviet Union and a few in England, but most of us ended up in France, while many of those who had been defending Madrid managed almost miraculously to reach the North African coast from Alicante.

Of the 500,000 refugees, about one third ended up going back to Spain, hoping for the best. But Franco was merciless, and a large number of those who went back, as well as those who had not been able to escape his armies, were jailed and/or shot. As Count Ciano, Italy's ambassador to Franco's Spain, cheerfully reported to Mussolini, by June 1939 tens of thousands had been executed. And in December 1939 there were over a quarter of a million political prisoners in jails and concentration camps all over Spain, while the rest of the population suffered very serious deprivations and persecutions. So by comparison, to be in exile was to be lucky.

Except, of course, that innumerable children were separated from their mothers and their mothers from their husbands, while some 250,000 men who had taken refuge in France or in North Africa were put in concentration camps and soon became so-called "compulsory workers" for the French army and then for the Nazis, who sent many of them to German labor camps, and 7,200 of them were sent to Mauthausen's concentration camp, where about 5,000 of them died.



Carlos Blanco (left) speaking with fellow Spanish exile Ramon Sender at SF reunion. Photo by Richard Bermack.

But several thousands of them joined the French underground or De Gaulles' army, for which they fought in France, in Italy, and even in Norway. And in North Africa, they famously fought in General Leclerc's Second Armored Division, which was later moved to France on D-Day and which, disobeying General Patton's order, directly attacked Paris. And, in fact, it was the Spaniards of Leclerc's 9th Company (popularly called "La Nueve," "The Ninth," commanded by Amado Granell) that first entered Paris on August 25, 1944, waving the Spanish republican flag atop their light tanks named "Brunete," "Guadalajara," "Guernica," "Teruel," "Madrid," or "Don Quijote." And it was members of "La Nueve" who, at the insistence of General Leclerc, led the victory parade along the Champs Elisées.

But even that significant participation in one of the most joyful moments in French history was not enough to

alleviate the plight of the Spanish refugees in France. To be sure, they were now free to move in liberated France, but they lived pretty miserable lives for many years. My maternal uncle Segundo Aguinaga, for instance, survived by collecting trash and selling whatever was salvageable in it until he died in Paris in 1958.

The more fortunate exiles

Some Spanish refugees were fortunate, in particular the 30,000 or so who ended up in Latin America, and very especially the over 20,000 of us who went to Mexico between 1939 and 1942. No government in the world was ever so friendly and generous to Spanish refugees as the Mexican government (led then by General Lázaro Cárdenas) was with us. But let me remind you of part of the context to this generosity.

During the Civil War only two countries had openly supported the

Remarks at the S.F. Reunion

Spanish Republic: the Soviet Union and Mexico. And Mexico not only sent food to Spain, but even some war material. This was done mostly by very complicated smuggling procedures in order to fool the Non-Intervention powers (Great Britain and France) that all along were allowing Germany and Italy to directly arm Franco. Of course, when we consider the military help Franco received from the Nazis and the Fascists, or the help the Republic received from the Soviet Union, the Mexican help may seem insignificant; but it had considerable symbolic value, and it foretold Mexico's later generosity towards us.

It must be understood that the relationship between Spain and Mexico has historically been more than very complex since Hernán Cortés defeated the Aztecs and conquered Mexico in the early 16th century. And although that happened a long time ago and there are no "Aztecs" left, the Mexican people tend to resent Spaniards. But General Cárdenas was, in his peculiar way, a socialist, and for him, Republican Spain was not the country of Cortés, but a nation where the people were fighting Fascism. And so, after the war, after our defeat, he opened the door to us. This was done, first, by helping the Spanish Republic get ships to take us to Mexico, and then by allowing agencies of the Spanish Government in exile to help us in a variety of ways: finding jobs for our elders, opening schools for us, and even allowing us to become Mexican citizens if we so wanted.

Let us not underestimate this last point, especially these days when there is so much conflict concerning

so-called "illegal immigrants." Bertolt Brecht, whose cynical realism is still crucial for an understanding of the 1920s and 1930s put it simply and bluntly: A passport is the essence of a person's dignity. A passport, that is, as against those pieces of paper common in France (and in other parts of Europe) at the time that simply said: *Laissez passer*, "allow to pass" (or to move about); pieces of paper that through the years became wrinkled and torn and dirty and almost unreadable.

And so my parents, my sister, and I became Mexican, which, for instance, allowed me to obtain a passport and to come to the United States as a scholarship student at the age of 16.

But I cannot only emphasize Mexico here. The Soviet Union was also generous towards Spanish exiles. Except, of course, that when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, many of the Spanish exiles fought (and died) against the Nazis, while all of them had to bear the same suffering as the rest of the Soviet population. By comparison, Mexico was paradise: we were welcomed, there was no war, and no Nazis were attacking us.

Yet exile is exile, and our elders suffered their condition from day one to the day of their death, a death that for the greatest majority came there, in Mexico. Very few went back to reside in Spain. By the late 1960s some of those who had good jobs, and therefore some money, would go to visit Spain; but, as I say, very few returned permanently.

But what about the children and the adolescents who arrived in Mexico with them, the refugees of my generation?

As I have said, we had schools opened for us by agencies of the government of the Republic in exile in which, together with some Mexican teachers, the very best exiled Spanish teachers taught us. Our math and science classes did not create any problems out of the ordinary for us, but Spanish history or literature classes were somewhat confusing and mystifying. Very few of us really knew anything about Spain, except about the Civil War, and therefore, most of what we were taught in those classes always seemed remote and somewhat foreign. After all, what could we care about the Goths and Visigoths, or about the seven centuries long "Reconquest" of Muslim Spain by the Christians, when outside of school we were surrounded by daily Mexican reality (including the memory of the Aztecs)? And even if our parents (mine, for instance) had little or no money to speak of (our cheap furniture, for instance, was repossessed a couple of times because we could not meet the monthly payments), we were living in an extraordinarily lively city larger than Madrid and Barcelona combined, we read Mexican comics, we sometimes managed to find a few cents to go to the movies, we played soccer with Mexican kids all over the place, we began to speak like Mexicans, we started having girlfriends and boyfriends, and when I was home doing homework, while my parents were listening obsessively to the radio to see how World War II was going in Europe, my mind used to wander. I like to think I understood my parent's anguish and despair, but somehow I was living a life different

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Spanish Exile

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from theirs, a life that, in the end, has made me a Spanish-Mexican, or a Mexican-Spaniard, and probably neither of the two. Add to this that, as I say, at the age of 16 I received a scholarship to come to the USA. At the university here I worked as a waiter five days a week, while in the summers I worked as a lathe operator in a factory in Indiana. But hey! No sweat. I was living my own life, and when I went back to Mexico, I rejoined my friends, my generation's life. So our elders suffered, and for them the pain of exile never ended. But we were living a different reality. Perhaps I was especially superficial and/or carefree, but I think my experience matches quite well with that of my contemporaries.

With time, of course, my generation began to have children. Mexican or French or Chilean or Russian children. And I have to suppose that most of those children know something about Spain and the Civil War. My children certainly do. Although it may well happen, as in my case, that my children's mother is not Spanish, but Mexican.

But the grandchildren are a somewhat different story. And I have known some Mexicans who have proudly told me that their grandfather was a Spaniard, but then could not tell me when he arrived in Mexico. "Some time in the late thirties, I think," they may say. And I am left vaguely wondering whether that person's life has anything fundamental to do with what happened during the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath.

But of course it does. No Spaniards came to Mexico "in the late thirties" who were not refugees from the Civil War. Only that, as I

have come to think, in its generational evolution, exile tends to resemble migration. Your grandparents came here (to the USA or wherever) some time ago and you are what you are here, wherever that "here" is located. To be sure, original roots are a fine thing to remember, and so the Irish-Americans have a parade in New York on Saint Patrick's Day, the Italians have their Columbus Day, and so on.

But those are mythified celebrations of identity having nothing to do with the struggle against fascism, and we are not here today to consider how the pains and sorrows of the past are cured by Time and Distance; that is to say, by changing generations. We are here to remember the "enduring legacy" of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, as the program well indicates. And that, like the Spanish exile of 1939, is a

political legacy that must be remembered, and studied, and taught to the descendents of the men and women who, in the 1930's, fought for Liberty and Democracy against Fascism.

Correspondingly, I believe, we must ultimately distinguish between exile and migration, inasmuch as exile is always a consequence of very specific political conditions. And I think those of us who were children during the Spanish Civil War have an obligation to remember the dangers of fascism and to pass that memory on, among those of our own tribe and for the enlightenment of others.

So I welcome this celebration. And I cannot but say: Long live the International Brigades who fought Fascism in Spain! Long live the memory of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade! ▀

Spanish Citizenship

Continued from page 1

rights and against U.S. wars of aggression. He is featured in the video *Long Shadows—Veterans Paths to Peace*, produced by the Clarence Kailin Chapter of Veterans for Peace.

Hovan also remains on the front lines of social change. When he moved to an assisted-living facility in Providence six years ago, he began agitating among the residents to improve the quality of their food. They no longer have to eat pasta twice a day, Hovan said.

A third vet, Matti Mattson of Brooklyn, NY, has begun the process of applying for Spanish citizenship.

The rites of Spanish citizenship complete the circle promised by Dolores Ibarruri at the farewell parade of the International Brigades



Clarence Kailin signing Spanish citizenship papers.

in 1938. "We shall not forget you," she said, "and when the olive tree of peace puts forth its leaves again... come back!...and all of you will find the love and gratitude of the whole Spanish people." ▀

Book Reviews



Spies in Madrid

The Maze of Cadiz. By Aly Monroe.
John Murray Publishers, 292 pp.

By Charles Oberndorf

Over the past decade or so, Alan Furst has rejuvenated the spy novel by setting it in the turbulent 1930's and 1940's, where the morality seems clear, but the politics and allegiances are not. Post-Civil War Spain poses a particular attraction: the Allies woo Spain to reject Hitler, but doing so supports a repressive government that has assisted Hitler and Mussolini. C.J. Sansom's *Winter in Madrid* did a fine job of capturing that tension, and the reader felt a palpable sense of the postwar poverty, the rampant hunger, and the brutality of the camps set up for former Republican soldiers.

Just out in England is another novel set in a similar vein, *The Maze of Cadiz*. It's 1944, and Franco is quietly switching allegiance from Germany to Britain. Peter Cotton is a wounded war vet drafted into military intelligence. Cotton's father was a banker in Latin America, so Cotton's command of Spanish makes him ready-made for a simple assignment: head to Cadiz, Spain, and relieve Roland May, an ineffectual agent, of his duties. Unfortunately, May turns out to have drowned, fallen from an embankment, though it's not clear if he fell, jumped, or was pushed.

I would like to say at this point that Cotton begins some kind of investigation, but mostly he meets various

people who manage to offer unintended clues.

The author's politics aren't as clear as those of Sansom, who was trying to give a history lesson: the Republic was good, many communists were bad (but some could be real idealists), and most fascists made Spain a very bad place. In Monroe's universe, we discover the suffering of the Spanish through stories told to Cotton. He doesn't meet the right people or go to the right places for us to experience those burdens firsthand, so the political issues, which have an emotional resonance in Sansom, here feel like anecdotes in a history text. Nor does Monroe have Sansom's sense of place; we get more a map of Cadiz than an actual feel for the city.

Fortunately, Monroe has a much better feel for her Spanish characters. She captures the social attitudes and the rhythms of the language. In fact, it's the Spaniards who make the novel engaging. The best scenes are those featuring the Spanish police chief and an antiquarian book dealer.

Unfortunately, the plot doesn't begin to thicken until the book is almost over. The last sections are compelling and build to a climax that should feel morally complex. Cotton takes a course of action of which most readers of *The Volunteer* would

disapprove, but there's no sense of tragedy as there is in John le Carré when a character commits some moral evil in order to preserve the status quo.

Book News

Paul Preston's latest book, *We Saw Spain Die: Foreign Correspondents in the Spanish Civil War* (Skyhorse Publishing) is now available in a U.S. paperback edition. Among the writers discussed are Ernest Hemingway, Jay Allen, John Dos Passos, and Louis Fischer.

Mark Derby has edited the first account of the role of New Zealanders in the Spanish Civil War: *Kiwi Campañeros: New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War* (Christchurch, NZ: Canterbury University Press).

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ALBA FALL PROGRAMS

Wednesday, October 7, 6:30-8:30 pm

At Home in Utopia (Living in the "Coops") (2008)

Screening and discussion with filmmaker Michal Goldman

KJCC, 53 Washington Square South, NYC; free to the public

Sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, the Gotham Center for NYC History/CUNY and the King Juan Carlos Center

Monday, October 26, 7 pm

Into the Fire: American Women in the Spanish Civil War

Discussion with filmmaker Julia Newman

Global Sisterhood: The Women's Media Group Film Series, 2009-2010

1517 W. Fullerton, Chicago

\$10 donation; call the box office at (773) 281-9075 ext 4 or order tickets online at www.facets.org.

Presented by Women's Media Group (www.wmgchicago.com), in collaboration with Facets Multimedia and ALBA.

Tuesday, October 27, 8 pm

The Good Fight: The Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the Spanish Civil War (1984)

25th anniversary screening and reception with filmmakers Noel Buckner, Mary Dore and Sam Sills

Stranger than Fiction Series: IFC Center

323 Sixth Ave. @ 3rd St. NYC.

\$15; order tickets on-line at <http://STFdocs.com>.

Wednesday, December 2, 5:30 pm

Screening and Discussion Double Feature!

5:30-7:30 Feature Film: *Spain Again* (1969). Directed by Jaime Camino, written by Román Gubern and Jaime Camino. Guest speaker: Román Gubern.

7:30-9:30 Documentary: *A War in Hollywood* (2008). Directed by Oriol Porta. Guest Speakers: Oriol Porta and Román Gubern

KJCC, 53 Washington Square South, NYC.

Cosponsored by ALBA and the King Juan Carlos Center.