

“...and that government of the people,
by the people, and for the people,
shall not perish from the earth.”
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The Volunteer

JOURNAL OF THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

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September 2003



Veterans and friends with banners in Corbera. Photo courtesy of Bob Coale and Len Tsou. See “Return to the Ebro,” page 3.

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Letters

Dear Friends:

The obituary of Bill Susman is a reminder of how neglect and procrastination negate the best of intentions.

I met Bill and was associated with him for a period during the time when we both served on the board of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives. I remember getting down beside his chair in a noisy, crowded conference room to talk, and his admonishing, "Please Rick, you don't have to genuflect to me!" Bill was very friendly, outgoing, and accepting of my really non-qualifications to be on the ALBA board.

Since it involved Spanish Civil War aviation, of course I talked to him about the incident of his being made a courier in the purchase of a German airplane for use of the Spanish loyalists. I think we decided that the airplane was probably a commercial version of the Messerschmidt 108, but Bill could not recall the name of the German purveyor, nor that of the Spanish agent who arranged the sale, probably at Villacoublay.

This was certainly an unusual occurrence, entrusting such a transaction to a brash young American volunteer, just arrived in France. (But it seemed to me, 50 years later, from his confident, easy manner and continuing enthusiasm "for the cause," that Bill was probably just the right ALBA volunteer to choose to finagle the sale of the German airplane.)

Bill said he would write down everything he could recall about the incident and send it to me. I often thought to write and pester him about it but never did, and now it's too late. Worse yet, I cannot find the notes I made (if any) concerning the incident, and it doesn't seem to be mentioned elsewhere.

So, if any of you diligent and discerning SCW aviation historical researchers have ANYTHING concerning Bill Susman's sale of an ME 108 to the Spanish republicans early in 1937, I'd appreciate it if you would clue me in.

It seems like a minor, but highly interesting, footnote to Spanish Civil War aviation history, and I regret to have fumbled the ball.

Viva la brigada!

Richard (Rick) Sanders Allen
831A Stewart Avenue
Lewiston, ID 83501

Dear Volunteer,

I'm writing to ask you to correct a misspelling in vol.xxv' #2, under contributions, you listed my donation to

Erratum

The photo of Abe Osheroff that appeared in the last issue of *The Volunteer*, page 4 credited to photographer Jose Moreno should have been credited to Jaffe.

Seeking World War II Letters

To document the role of the veterans of the Lincoln Brigade during World War II, ALBA is seeking privately held correspondence written by vets in the military or from the home front. Such material will be indexed and added to the ALBA archives at New York University's Tamiment Library for the use of students and scholars. These letters may also be published in a forthcoming volume.

Such gifts to ALBA are tax deductible. If you have such material, please contact Julia Newman, Executive Secretary, ALBA—Room 227, 799 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; 212-674-5398; exemplaryone@aol.com.

the memory of Norman as NORMAL Perlman, not NORMAN PERLMAN. A small thing, maybe, but a correction in the next *Volunteer* will be much appreciated.

Thanks,
Polly Perlman

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The Volunteer

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Return to the Ebro

By Bob Coale

The International Brigades returned to the Ebro battlefields of 1938 to commemorate the 65th anniversary in a four-day reunion from July 3-6. The initiative was organized by Terre de Germanor, an association of some 21 municipalities on both sides of the Pyrenees that are working to preserve the historic memory of those who fought for freedom in the Spanish Civil War and World War II.

The events attracted about 20 IB veterans, as well as 350 friends and family members, from 22 countries, from as close as France and as far as Estonia and Costa Rica. There were about 10 veterans from the 15th Brigade including, from the United States, Moe Fishman, Jack Shafran, and Clarence Kailin. The latter two carried with them not only memories, but also scars, from the Ebro Battle.

The commemoration included the customary speeches, dinners, Spanish Republican songs, and flags. Ceremonies were organized in towns central to International Brigade history.



Jack Shafran and Moe Fishman are about to cross the Ebro.

In Miravet veterans and friends recrossed the river, throwing red carnations into the water in homage to fallen comrades.

Farther upstream, in Flix, where many men of the 11th, 13th and 15th Brigades crossed in 1938, there was a

gathering around the monument erected by Italian veterans. This beautiful memorial sits on an overhang with a vista of the valley with the Ebro running through it. Giovanni Pesce, an Italian Iber, gave a rededication speech. Standing up front holding one end of the VALB banner, Moe Fishman witnessed a white-haired woman weeping all through the ceremony, caressing the concrete base of the monument. We learned later that her husband died in this action in 1938.

One of the most memorable events took place in Marsa. This town is unique in Spain; in a nearby field rests John Cookson, whose gravesite is the only one to survive Francoist vandalism. In a moving talk in the local auditorium, Clarence Kailin, whose book on his friend and fellow Wisconsinite will be published shortly in Spain, thanked the townspeople for preserving the site and spoke to them about Cookson. Recently

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Bob Coale is assistant professor of Hispanic studies at the Universite Paris 8 - Saint Denis.

Vet Pees Homage

Jack Shafran had a personal anecdote to tell reporter Jerome Socolovsky, who covered this summer's memorial events for National Public Radio. He explained that soldiers sometimes make promises that haunt them for their entire lives. While facing bombardments on Hill 666, Jack swore that if he survived the war he'd return someday to piss on Franco's grave. At least that is what Jack remembers today. But, like many vets, Jack refused to return to Spain while Franco remained in power.

Not until 1986 did he have the opportunity to come clean with his conscience. With his son Seth, Jack visited the huge Franco tomb in the Cathedral of the Valley of the Fallen. Before stepping inside, Jack told the reporter from NPR, he entered a pharmacy and purchased a glass vial, which he took to his hotel room. He filled the vial with urine, returned to the cathedral, and emptied it on Franco's grave. The story was broadcast on July 6.

Apparently Jack wasn't the only person with such ideas. A recent visitor to the cathedral found that a guardrail has since been installed at the dictator's last resting place. It is not so easy to pee homage these days, but some, so we are told, still manage. ▀

Return to Ebro

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Veterans and friends in Corbera.

Clarence has been in close contact with the town authorities to guarantee the preservation of the site and to erect a monument. Later, with his son and daughter, Clarence visited his friend's grave for the first time.

The next day, brigadistas and friends converged on Corbera de Ebro for the official ceremony of remembrance. Several International Brigaders fought for and passed through this small agricultural town on numerous occasions from April to September 1938. There, surrounded by the ruins of the old town—which remain as a reminder of the horrors of war and a monument to peace—and under the hot summer sun, brigadistas, former Spanish political prisoners, several associations of friends of the IB, and local and regional authorities paid homage to veterans and their endless struggles for democracy and

international peace. The main address was given jointly by Ana Perez, President of the Asociación de Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales of Spain, and her counterpart, Sr. Luis Bielsa, President of the Amigos of Barcelona. A rousing message from Lise London, herself an Iber as well as spokesperson for the French Resistance to fascism, closed the ceremony.

Following lunch, another U.S. veteran made his own personal homage. Jack Shafran, escorted by his son-in-law and a British filmmaker, once again made his way to the top of the



Vet Moe Fishman (r) talks with the mayor of Barcelona.

infamous Hill 666. With the backdrop of Gadesa and Corbera across the valley, Jack shared his memories of the struggle on that bare rock in 1938 for an upcoming documentary movie.

Following three days of official

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Chicago Lauds Activist Vets



Jamie O'Reilly sang and hosted the event.

By Marta R. Nicholas

The Chicago Friends of the Lincoln Brigade honored the local vets with a program of music and poetry, "Forever Activists for Truth and Justice," on June 7 at Roosevelt University's Ganz Hall, thanks to the support of the university's Center for New Deal Studies.

Jamie O'Reilly, creator of the cabaret review "Pasiones," hosted and sang throughout the program, accompanied by her niece Katrina O'Reilly. The opener was the Spanish folk song "Asturias," which was followed by Jenny Magnus reading Genevieve Taggard's poem "To the Abraham Lincoln Brigade."

After comments by CFLB Chair vet Charles Hall, Henry Garcia (whose family emigrated to Cuba from Spain) read a message of support, in Spanish and English, from Francisco Moreno, Director of Instituto Cervantes in Chicago. Jamie read special remarks honoring Commander Oliver Law, the first Afro-American to lead an integrated company of American troops; his daughter, Eunice Maynes, was unable to attend due to illness.

Ralph Nicholas of the CFLB introduced Cary Nelson (Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Science at University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, and Vice-Chair of ALBA), who gave a moving keynote address, reading poems from his volume *The Wound and the Dream: Sixty Years of American Poems about the Spanish Civil War*.

Chicago poet Cranston Knight followed. Identifying strongly with both his African and his Latin background (one of his grandfathers fled Spain for Puerto Rico), he spoke about teaching history to working-class students in a Chicago community college, where refugees and minorities hoping to get ahead in America often ask what history has to do with them. He engages them through poetry.

Cranston read poems—about Lorca, about Paul Robeson, about an Afro-American woman reporter covering the Spanish Civil War—from his book, *La Brigada: Spain (1936-39)*, soon to be published by Chicago's Third World Press.

Fred Katz's song "Beloved Comrade" preceded remembrances of recently deceased local vets Bill Sennett, Art Harrison, Paul Lutka, and Robert Klonsky (whose granddaughter Jo Jo Klonsky talked of her memories and read excerpts from his letters from Spain). Chuck Hall, Al Weinerman, and Aaron Hilkovich are the remaining vets in the Chicago area.

The audience was invited to look at photos and other memorabilia assembled for the occasion. All joined in singing "Sweet Cookhouse/Young Man from Alcalá" and "Jarama."

The final item of the program was a call and response: Several people read short statements expressing contemporary causes. At the end of each, the participant said, "We continue to pursue," and the audience replied, "Truth and Justice," in the language of their choice (for example, "Verdad y Justicia!" in Spanish or "Emes und Gerektikeyt!" in Yiddish).

CFLB now launches an exciting new project. With generous grants from the Puffin Foundation and Columbia College Office of Community Arts Partners Urban Missions, CFLB will support a major collaboration between Free Street Programs (urban young people's drama and musical theater groups), Columbia College Theater Department, and Proyecto hACE (bilingual high-school students) to develop a performance piece based on how young people relate to the Spanish Civil War and its relevance to issues of our age. After being performed several times in the Chicago

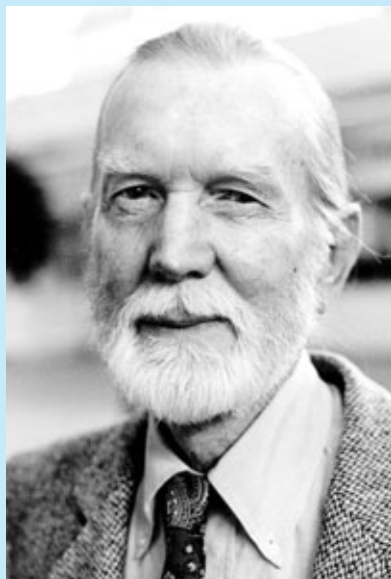


Bill Sennett (center), one of the activists honored in the program, at a civil rights demonstration in 1946.

area, the program will travel to other locations. In addition to providing resources for the young people to learn about the SCW, the CFLB will help arrange productions—including some of the financing. Anyone interested in more information about and/or contributing to this project can contact Yolanda Hall at yfhall@mind-spring.com, (708) 488-9552, or Marta Nicholas at mnichol16@earthlink.net, (773) 288-1538. ■

Marta R. Nicholas is active in Chicago Friends of the Lincoln Brigade, ALBA's midwest Associates.

In Brief



The Vermont International Film Foundation

will honor the memory of one of its founders, **Lincoln vet George Cullinen**, during this year's events, October 16-18, in Burlington, Vermont. Cullinen died last spring.

Photo Show in Argentina

ALBA's traveling exhibition of black and white photographs, "The Aura of the Cause," curated by Cary Nelson, will be shown at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from September through November 2003, thanks to the support of The Puffin Foundation, Ltd. The same grant will enable vet Moe Fishman to participate in public events there with Argentine vets of the Spanish Civil War.

Vet Artist Irving Norman on the Web

An introduction to the paintings of Lincoln vet Irving Norman is now available under the title "The Artist and the Human Predicament." The web-site address is www.irvingnorman.com. A longtime California resident, the self-educated artist has works hanging in museums around the country.



Dave Smith Turns 90

Neighbors, friends and members of the Bay Area Post came together in June to celebrate Dave Smith's 90th birthday at his daughter's and son-in-law's (Linda & Steve Lustig) home in Berkeley, California. Much food, Spanish wine, and camaraderie prevailed. In Dave's short remarks, he said that the gathering was a tribute to all the vets.

Because for many years Dave has celebrated birthdays at 5-year intervals, all were invited back in 2008! In good health and a member of the Sierra Club, he takes a weekly 3-4 mile hike with a group of seniors in the hills and around the lakes of the area. He's the oldest male hiker of the group. And Dave keeps on "fighting the good fight," as we all need to do.

PRISON LABOR IN THE BUILDING OF THE VALLEY OF THE FALLEN

By Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz
Translated by Anthony Geist

Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz, a long-time member of ALBA's Board of Governors, is professor emeritus of history at NYU. Born in Madrid in 1926, he was arrested in 1947 for student activism in the University of Madrid and sentenced to seven years hard labor in the Cuelgamuros prison camp. He was one of thousands of Republican political prisoners forced to work on the construction of the Valley of the Fallen, destined to be Franco's tomb. He served six months before escaping with two other prisoners, aided by a young American student, Barbara Probst Solomon. She has made a documentary about the experience, When the War was Over. The author is one of four survivors from his labor camp. He has sworn not to visit the Valley of the Fallen until Franco is exhumed or a urinal is installed directly over his grave.

In Franco Spain during the 1940s and 50s, being in prison or in freedom differed only in degree. All of Spain was a great prison in which everyone's movements were restricted. Only exceptionally were Spaniards able to travel outside the country. Gibraltar and Portugal returned fugitives who crossed their borders. The Pyrenees remained closed after France broke relations with Spain. The area near the border on the Spanish side was heavily patrolled after guerrillas based in France tried to invade the Aran Valley. To circulate in that zone required a special permit, signed by no less than the captain general of the military region. To travel elsewhere in Spain one needed a safe-conduct pass issued by the police upon presentation (this is not invented by Buñuel) of a certificate signed by a parish priest that the bearer had taken communion. Since I traveled frequently between



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Monument at the Valley of the Fallen. Digital manipulation from photos by Galen R Frysinger.

VALLEY OF THE FALLEN

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Ávila and Madrid, I took communion annually in San Vicente in order to get my certificate. Police checked train cars asking for papers and the Guardia Civil patrolled highways and foot tracks. Homes were subject to impromptu searches without warrants. A network of informants helped keep an eye on all those suspected of political crimes. Virtually the only option left to those who were pursued was to become topos (moles) and literally wall themselves up in their homes.

I am often asked if Franco's camps were extermination camps in the same sense as the Nazis' were. In Spain there were of course camps, colonies and battalions where prisoners died of mistreatment without facing the firing squad. This happened less frequently in Cuelgamuros and similar work camps. Excavation of the crypt was often bloodied by accidents with explosives, and deaths occurred during the construction of the monastery. The roadwork was extenuating. Additionally there was never enough food. Hygiene was precarious. I still remember summer nights when the bedbugs crawled in our nostrils and ears and sucked out buckets of blood. Life in the work details was only benign by comparison with prison.

Concentration camps, work battalions, disciplinary labor battalions for Republican soldiers, colonies, workshops, penal detachments—the entire string of penal institutions did not have a single or permanent character over the first 25 years of the Franco regime. Their evolution over time can be likened to a funnel, wide enough in 1939 to accommodate an enormous mass of prisoners, narrowing to a point in the early 60s. The Cuelgamuros penal detachments occupy just a fraction of that process, and the point I am referring to in the late 40s is about half way through, when the early brutal repression had slackened somewhat and the work details had become an important business for the State.



The first work camps were under military command. Prisoners dug trenches, built fortifications, or cleared rubble under the watchful eye of soldiers and officers. Within a year the fascists added to this primary exploitation of political prisoners and prisoners of war a more perverse punishment. I cannot resist quoting part of the preamble to Decree 281, issued May 28, 1937, exactly as Buchenwald was being built. This decree began the systematic exploitation of Republican labor:

The right to work enjoyed by all Spaniards must not be denied by the New State to Red prisoners... The concession of this right ... could be taken as simply another ineffectual concession in the face of the passivity of those entitled to it, leaving unfulfilled the goals the declaration of this right entails, that is that they can support themselves by their own effort, aid their families appropriately, and not constitute a drain on the public treasury. Said right to work is governed by the concept of a 'right-function' or 'right-duty' and is, to be precise, a 'right-obligation'.

Rarely does one encounter a text both as convoluted and at the same time as obvious as this. It does not give the impression of having been written by a bloodthirsty beast or a cold-blooded Nazi convinced of the superiority of the chosen race. What the text reveals is the voice of a priest well versed in verbal manipulation. The decree, inspired in the Jesuit Pérez del Pulgar, grants prisoners the right to work but leaves them no option. If they do not cooperate they are forced to comply. The distortion of the concept of right reveals its true purpose. Its intention is to make the prisoner responsible for the cost of his confinement. A few lines farther on, which I have not transcribed, the decree distinguishes between prisoners accused of serious crimes, who are given no rights at all, and the large group that has no specific charges hanging over them but who the State prefers to keep locked up. This decree confirms that prison labor was an important resource to increase repression to unjustifiable levels without extra costs and without removing laborers from the circuit of production. The system reached its greatest

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George Watt Awards 2003

By Daniel Czitrom

We are pleased to announce the winners of this year's George Watt Awards, established to honor the memory of this Lincoln vet, author, activist and leading figure in creating and supporting ALBA. The competition encourages student research and writing on the American experience in Spain, as well as related topics in the Spanish Civil War and the larger history of anti-fascism.

This year, we received essays from the widest geographical range yet. The 22 undergraduate and four graduate entries came from students from all over the United States, as well as Canada, England, France, Pakistan, Cameroon, and Zaire. The quality of the undergraduate essays was especially impressive, and the judges decided to award two prizes of \$500 each in that category, but none for graduate level work. This year's committee consisted of Shirley Mangini (California State University at Long Beach), Mel Small (Wayne State University), and Daniel Czitrom (Mount Holyoke College).

And the 2003 winners are:

Kathleen Rose Halper, Wesleyan University, for "Voices From the Valley: El Valle de los Caidos in History And Memory"

Andrey Shlyakhter, Brandeis University, for "The Good Fight On Trial: The Subversive Activities Control Board on the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in 1955"

We extend our warmest congratulations to both.

Daniel Czitrom, former chair of the ALBA Board of Governors, is co-author of *Red Bessie*, a new historical drama with songs, inspired by the letters, experiences, and family of Lincoln vets Joe and Leo Gordon.

Voices From the Valley: El Valle de los Caidos in History and Memory by Kathleen Rose Halper

The Valley of the Fallen, the largest monument in Spain, was built by political prisoners and dedicated to the victors of the Spanish Civil War. Buried in its Basilica are the bodies of José Antonio Primo de Rivera and Francisco Franco. The monument's political identity seems clear, glorifying one side and punishing the other. Yet despite this, the Valley provokes opposing interpretations and understandings. The same monument that symbolizes division and war to some represents reconciliation and peace to others.

How is it that one monument can have such contrary meanings? Much of the answer lies in the history of Spain under Franco. The notoriously pragmatic and flexible Franco presented different faces to different people at different times. In Franco's terms, prison labor in general, and at the Valley, was both charitable and punitive, for the benefit of the prisoner and for the benefit of all of Spain. Depending on the time and the audience, Franco used the Valley of the Fallen to glorify the war or to exalt his peace.

The language of reconciliation and peace associated with the Valley increased as the population of people who had not lived through the Civil War grew and as the regime began to cater to an increasingly accepting international community. But Franco never abandoned the belligerent and one-sided tone of his earlier rhetoric, so that the two opposing messages were simultaneous.

Yet the question remains why, almost 30 years after the death of Franco, does the Valley of the Fallen continue to mean such different things to different people? To answer that question we must look at Spain after Franco. The governments since Franco entered into a "pact of silence," a tacit

agreement to leave the past alone for the sake of a stable democracy. They have, for the most part, de-politicized the monument as much as possible. Today there are no Franco or José Antonio memorabilia in the Valley of the Fallen gift shop, and guidebooks ignore or barely mention the detail that prison labor was used to build the Valley. This leaves partisans on both the right and the left frustrated, as both sides see their understanding of history silenced. Yet this silencing favors a Francoist interpretation in that it does not expose an alternative understanding of the monument, one that has never been presented officially. For years Franco presented this monument in his own language, articulating an interpretation still held by his supporters. Today this message is no longer as loud. Yet the victims of the war have never had their message articulated through official channels.

This project is based on primary sources, as well as oral histories I conducted in Spain with former political prisoners who worked on the monument, a sculptor who worked on the Valley of the Fallen, *Falangistas*, *Franquistas*, and a former Minister of Housing under Franco. I argue that the idea of the Valley of the Fallen as a place of peace and reconciliation is the result of the manipulation of the regime and of regime supporters' attempts to rewrite history.

This history has been left unchallenged and uncorrected by post-war governments in an attempt to maintain peace and reconciliation achieved during the transition from dictatorship to democracy. Yet many have begun to question and challenge this history, demanding the exhumation of Republicans who had been buried in mass graves during and after the war, thus literally and figuratively confronting the ghosts of the past. I hope this essay will contribute to this process by bringing the opinions expressed in private interviews into public conversation.

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The Good Fight On Trial: The Subversive Activities Control Board on the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in 1955

by Andrey Shlyakhter

"The Good Fight on Trial" addresses the singular case of a government agency passing judgment on matters of history. In its 1954 hearing of *The Attorney General vs. Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB) determined that the VALB constituted a "Communist-front" organization. In presenting their case, the Attorney General's lawyers sought to show that the VALB's predecessor, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, was already controlled by Communists and served the interests of the Soviet Union. As a result, the truth of what took place in Spain between 1936 and 1939 became the subject of debate in a Washington courtroom.

Although the SACB denied passing judgment on the history of the Spanish Civil War, 60 pages of its *Recommended Decision* are devoted to the activities of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade rather than the veterans' organization. Under "Findings of Fact," the decision includes sections with such titles as "Character and Function of ALB in Spain," "Communist Leadership of the ALB," and "Soviet Interests Advanced in Spain by CPUSA and CPS Through the United Front." Given recent scholarship on the subject (e.g., R. Radosh, M. Habeck, and G. Sevostianov, *Spain Betrayed: the Soviet Union in the Spanish Civil War* [Yale, 2001]) such claims cannot be dismissed simply as excesses of their time but must be evaluated seriously for their historical accuracy.

Two such "historical" claims made by the SACB are particularly compelling. One is the allegation, con-

tained in a section of the decision entitled "Political Commissars and Communist Indoctrination," that "a political commissar system ... completely dominated by Communists functioned throughout the International Brigades, including the ALB, for the purpose ... of dispensing Communist indoctrination." The implication was that Spain became a breeding ground for Communist revolutionary cadres, who would lead a "fight for world revolution when they returned to the United States." A still more serious allegation, contained in the section titled "ALB Members Trained as Soviet Agents," asserted: "Political Commissars ... turned over ... men who were then sent to the diversionary school where they were taught sabotage and commando tactics by Russian experts, such persons becoming members of the CPSU for

evaluations of commissars by brigade party leaders clearly indicate that they were expected to disseminate communist propaganda. On the other hand, the extent to which the commissars were able to shape the Lincolns' political outlook is debatable, and the volunteers' varying experiences with "communist indoctrination" lead one to conclude that the commissars were never able to attain the status of "intellectual policemen" ascribed to them by the SACB.

"This above all is the highest treason/To do the right thing for the wrong reason," wrote T. S. Eliot in *Murder in the Cathedral*. In its dogged pursuit of subversion, the SACB itself became guilty of such treason. Although history has vindicated its judgment that members of the Lincoln Brigade had trained as "Soviet agents" in Spain (e.g., Morris Cohen), they

"[T]he volunteers' varying experiences with 'communist indoctrination' lead one to conclude that the commissars were never able to attain the status of 'intellectual policemen' ascribed to them by the SACB."

use in the future wherever the Soviet Union directed." By demonstrating that the Lincolns in Spain were not only subjected to "Communist indoctrination," but that some of them were trained as "Soviet agents," the SACB fulfilled its mandate of finding subversion. Or had it?

My paper shows that the SACB was right about some things and wrong about others. After reconstructing the stories of Lincoln commissars John Gates, Joe Dallett, Archie Brown, Carl Geiser, Harold Smith, and Oscar Hunter, I concluded that most commissars were indeed committed Communists who used their position to promote communist ideology among the volunteers. Moreover,

were not the volunteers named by the Board itself—Irving Goff and Bill Aalto, neither of whom had ever worked for Soviet intelligence. Their guerrilla training under Soviet instructors enabled them to serve their country in World War II, but to the SACB this training became evidence of "subversion" once their skills were no longer needed. The facts of their biographies had not changed, but the evaluation of those facts became subject to a new, Cold War way of thinking. That was treason indeed.

I would like to thank my advisor at Brandeis University, David Engerman, and the Brandeis University Undergraduate Research Program for funding this project. ■

Tamiment Library Acquires Robert Colodny Papers

By Michael Nash

This spring the Tamiment Library acquired the papers of Robert Garland Colodny (1915- 1997).

Colodny was a brave veteran of the Lincoln Brigade who, in the summer of 1937, while fighting near Madrid, was struck above the right eye by a sniper's bullet. Colodny woke up in a hospital in the Palace Hotel in Madrid. He had gangrene of the brain and was not expected to live, but proceeded to make a miraculous recovery. The injury left him partially paralyzed and blind on his left side. Nevertheless, four months later, in November 1937, he volunteered to be sent to an anti-gas school in Madrid because he had been a chemistry major at Columbia University before volunteering to go to Spain. After a brief return to the front, Colodny found that he was too weak to fight, and he returned to the United States in April 1938.

Despite his continuing disability, Colodny joined the United States Army in 1941. He served for four years, becoming a staff sergeant with the army intelligence unit that was stationed in Alaska's Aleutian Islands. Here he worked with fellow intelligence officer Dashiell Hammett publishing the legendary newsletter *The Adakian*. Colodny and Hammett also co-authored *The Battle for the Aleuthians*, which was published by the United States Army in 1944.

Hammett and Colodny arrived in the Aleutian Islands, on Adak, sometime in late 1943. Hammett was a veteran of World War I and Colodny of the Spanish Civil War. The mission, which involved 50,000 men dug into the icy Arctic wilderness in the Bering Sea, was to root out the Japanese from their last remaining foothold on U.S. territory and to prepare bases for the invasion of the Japanese home islands. Not surprisingly given the location and climate, there were serious morale issues in the Aleutians. Hammett and



Colodny's newsletters and occasional radio programs were designed to raise morale by providing the soldiers with news from the home front and a sense of mission.

Their writings contain a vivid description of this northern front written from a broad international perspective. They often included analyses of the news from occupied France and Fascist Spain. According to Colodny, "We reported the war in real time. The generals gave us carte blanche to tell the story as we saw fit. The North Pacific fighting men were perhaps the first to get the full story of the Partisan armies of the International Brigade veterans commanding resistance forces, [and how] Spanish Republic exiles contributed to allied victory." The Colodny Papers contain a nearly complete run of *The Adakian* and scripts from the radio broadcasts.

After the war, Colodny earned a doctorate in history and philosophy from the University of California at Berkeley. He then taught at San Francisco State College and the University of Kansas. In 1959 he joined the faculty of the University of Pittsburgh, where he taught until his retirement in 1986. He was one of the most prominent historians of science in the United States, influencing at least three generations of scholars. He was an early proponent of the so-called externalist approach.

His work demonstrated that the history of science needs to be studied within a broad social and cultural context, because is very much part of the society that produced it. Throughout his career Colodny was interested in the relationship between

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Return to Ebro

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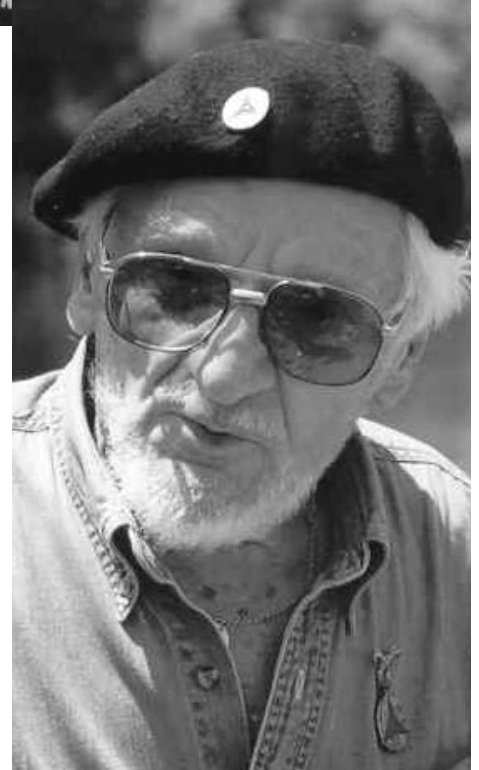


ceremonies, while most visitors began their trek home, several IB delegations returned to Barcelona, where they were received in both the town hall and the regional parliament.

This commemoration of the Ebro is the largest such gathering in recent years in Catalonia, attracting many

local friends of the IB and students of the Spanish Civil War. The regional press of Catalonia widely covered these events, including interviews with several IBers. In the United States, National Public Radio reporter Jerome Socolovsky broadcast an interview with Lincoln vet Jack Shafran.

In a unique coincidence with historic relevance, over the same weekend, in northern Catalonia, close to the border with France, a monument was inaugurated in memory of the hundreds of thousands of Spanish Republicans who were forced to flee the country in 1939. The monument in Vajol marks the spot where Lluís Companys and José Antonio Aguirre, presidents respectively of Catalanian and Basque governments during the war, went into exile. ▀



Photos clockwise from top: Clarence Kailin, vets at Corbera, George Sossenko, vets crossing the Ebro River, and rally in front of church at Corbera.



success when it joined with private enterprise.

This system is worthy of a much lengthier study, which will have to wait for another occasion, but I would like to turn my attention to two factors fundamental to this regime of redemption: vengeance and class. When the military rose up in arms against the government of the Republic, they expected immediate victory and that the country would be intact. The resistance of the working class put down the rebellion in the major urban centers and took them by surprise. The rules of the game, as played in the 19th and early 20th centuries, had been broken. A show of arms did not guarantee the immediate imposition of the goals of the army in the face of general public passivity. The partial success of the fascist uprising escalated into a lengthy war of attrition. Military victory was finally achieved in the midst of the desolation of the country.

Rather than accept responsibility for their actions and miscalculations, the army decided to take revenge on those who had dared to defy their superiority and defend their government by taking up arms, accusing them of military insurrection. The military shamelessly used the codes intended to regulate its own behavior to sentence and execute civilians and comrades in arms who had defended the government. This argument was the justification for mass executions and arrests for years following the war. Concerning material damages suffered, two laws—one of political responsibilities and the other of redemption of sentences through labor—were conceived no less strangely as economic revenge. The first law punished the pocketbook of the Republican middle class; the concept of redemption put the weight of the reconstruction of the country on the shoulders of the working class.

The imposition of forced labor fit perfectly with the concept of class

shared by the victors and their mentors. The working class was, in the final analysis, the usual object of exploitation. What was new was the cruder form of exploitation. The concept of class finally prevailed over the gas chambers and their equivalents. Prisoners were more valuable digging ditches than dead. The State preferred the role of supplier of labor to the private sector. The importance that I attribute to class consciousness in this process has less to do with a Marxist analysis than with the facts. The Franco regime followed a Marxist formula, but inverted it. Eleven years after the decree took effect, when I was sentenced, the regime of prison labor remained virtually unchanged. Because I was a student and not affiliated with any particular political party I was assigned to the office of the work detail. I learned from the documents I had access to at that time that the State charged the Molán Construction Company, which had the contract for the construction of the monastery, 10.50 pesetas per day for each prisoner it supplied, more than one-third less than the base wage of “free” labor. The State, as employment agency, sold labor at a modest price and made a great profit. By the same token the construction company reduced its labor costs and increased its profits. For Franco-era construction companies, prison labor represented a primitive source of capital accumulation. By the end of this extortion of political prisoners the accumulated wealth reached its logical conclusion, baptizing a new resort on the Costa del Sol with the name of the company responsible for building the road to the Valley of the Fallen: Puerto Banús. A doubly lucrative business built on the backs of the prisoners.

The profits that the State made renting prisoners can be broken down as follows. Of the 10.50 pesetas charged per day, half a peseta went into an account in the prisoner’s name, which he received when



released from prison. For each year worked the prisoner earned some 150 pesetas, which represented little purchasing power. Twelve hundred pesetas for eight years’ hard labor was a cruel joke. Of the remaining 10 pesetas, five were what the administration budgeted for room and board. For the price of renting prison labor the State covered the cost of feeding and clothing the prisoners. Hence prisoners cost the State nothing. Additionally, the other five pesetas went to cover the costs of infrastructure, guards, police and the military. The State did not need to release prisoners to save money. On the contrary, as the prison population increased, so did profits.

In the light of documents and budgets of the Ministry of Justice and the Army in those years, future historians will decide if the regime of prison labor constituted an accidental source of income or if, as I maintain, it financed the enormous repressive apparatus of the Franco regime. Franco’s refusal to seek reconciliation after the war surely has its roots in ideology and its emotions, but Franco also had economic reasons to avoid reconciliation.

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To give a more complete picture, the research I propose should also include the construction cost of the Valley of the Fallen, not only direct but indirect costs, including the damage caused to the rebuilding and development of a country that lay in ruins by diverting scarce resources (including labor) to the erection of a monument to the vanity of the dictator. Economic historians have the floor.

Studies like these are feasible, for the bureaucracy of the regime, both the Army and the Ministry of Justice and other branches of the government, produced mountains of documents. I personally witnessed the variety of memos, statements, accounts and other documents that issued from the offices of a modest penal detachment like mine that worked on the construction of the monastery. By the time I was serving my sentence, the camps were no longer under military jurisdiction. Correspondence was sent daily to the General Office of Prisons, to the Office of Prison Labor, to other prisons and to the Guardia Civil. For example, prisoners were counted seven times a day and the results were sent immediately. They were then followed by weekly and monthly reports. One kind of memo we produced gave an inventory of the amount of food theoretically consumed in the camp. These documents, moldering in the archives, give both a statistical account and a picture of many of the tensions experienced in the camps.

The documents from the penal detachments require, some more than others, a critical reading. The primary lists of prisoners are reliable. No prison official would have dared to cover up the disappearance of a prisoner. The economic documents are another matter. The profits the State was making on high invited embezzlement below. The Franco regime set the example for generalized corruption, as I shall show.

One of my duties in the office was

to draw up a daily menu with a balanced calorie count of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins within given guidelines. The tables had to balance the number of prisoners and the food on stock in the warehouse, gradually consuming the monthly allotments sent by the General Office of Prisons. These tables were not worked out ahead of time and did not follow a set order, but were drawn up only when they had to be sent to the Ministry. They were a justification and had nothing to do with the food on stock or with what went through the kitchen. The months I prepared them I never once consulted with the cook or set foot in the pantry. It was a theoretical exercise to comply with an administrative requirement, and represented the dietary conception of the doctors who invented it.

That these calculations said one thing and the storeroom another was no accident. In theory not an ounce of food should have gone astray. But what made the numbers doubly hypothetical was that the supplies accounted for either had never entered the storeroom or had entered in quantities less than those declared. Trucks arrived at our detachment from time to time. We all saw them unload a sack or two and then leave nearly as heavy as they arrived. It was rumored that the Madrid black-market was supplied mainly by food diverted from prisons and barracks. We were unable to determine where the trucks and the profits wound up. It seems likely that there was a chain of supply to better cover their tracks. The prisoners had no doubt that the warden of our detachment got his share.

The shortage of food did not have the consequences you might expect. Prisoners worked overtime for direct pay from the company. This minimal extra income was sufficient to buy cigarettes, wine and a little food. In point of fact, prisoners paid twice for their food: on the food line and in the canteen. In this world of misery the prisoners were free of moral indi-

gence, which fell fully on the shoulders of the repressor-criminals, who grew rich at their expense.

Despite the particular ideology of some wardens and prison officials, the regime of the Franco concentration camps did not follow a Nazi model. Control of the camps did not lie with the Falangist party, nor was their population chosen by the same phobias as in Germany: Jews, undesirables, and Communists. The origin of the Spanish camps has an unmistakable military stamp that goes back to the Spanish-American war of 1898. Thus the concept did not need to be imported from northern Europe and its totalitarian doctrines but derives from a home-grown colonial model. At the beginning of the war, the camps were improvised. Their systematization, which happened almost immediately, was the responsibility, as we have seen, not of the Party, but of the Church, which brought the camps out of a phase of blind repression to give them a dehumanized rationality, which is difficult for us to share, but which responded to the objectives of the regime. These were, as I have suggested above, to avenge the military's frustration and to assure the long-term domination of one class over another, all within an organic vision of society. Class and revenge complemented each other perfectly.

The Franco labor camps were not a necessity of war. They were complex devices designed to keep great sectors of the population under control after the war without incurring enormous deficits that would have forced the regime to loosen its grip. The Army is normally not concerned with the supply chain intended to keep it marching. Professional economists, virtually unknown at that time, didn't have responsibility for the supply chain either. It was the clergy, with greater social and doctrinaire concern than the bankers.

continued next page



Sculpture at the Valley of the Fallen.
Photos by Galen R Frysinger.

The fact that I have chosen to study Franco's concentration camps from the perspective of my own personal experience does not exclude recognition of the material and moral suffering of the prisoners and their families; rather, it is a way of trying to understand the extreme dimensions and longevity that the system achieved, greater than those achieved by Nazi Germany, the paradigm of persecution, cut short by the Allied victory. The Nazi camps were cruel instruments of war; Franco's camps were that and more. They were tools of repression in a blood-drenched country. As the repression lasted, vengeful fury gave way over time to business and corruption. I believe it was Sir Samuel Hoare, the English ambassador in Madrid, who defined the Franco regime as "a dictatorship tempered by corruption." This corruption tempered the penal regime as well, though it never lost its punitive integrity.

In conclusion, it is rather surprising that Franco, whose awareness of the power of symbols led him to parade under an ecclesiastical canopy (like the Pope) or to conceive of the Valley of the Fallen, did not understand the significance of building his mausoleum with the forced labor of political prisoners. With a little more money, which he had in abundance, he could have hired free labor and not left the stamp of vengeance on the vanquished or the shame of trafficking in prison labor. He was betrayed by his arrogance. Today his mortal remains lie in a monument to revenge and corruption. ■

Robert Colodny Papers

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scientific revolutions and political change.

Colodny remained committed to progressive causes throughout his lifetime and was active in the peace and civil rights movements. During the Vietnam War he was a member of the group Veterans for Peace and was often seen at anti-war demonstrations with Abraham Lincoln Brigade veterans. Colodny was an active member of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (VALB) and a founding member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA). He wrote vividly about the Spanish Civil War in two major books, *The Struggle for Madrid* (1958) and *Spain, the Glory and the Tragedy* (1970). During the Vietnam War he published a very influential pamphlet, *Spain and Vietnam: An Historical Perspective* (1967), that was

questioning. The University of Pittsburgh conducted its own six-month investigation, and Colodny retained his teaching position. University Chancellor Edward H. Litchfield announced Professor Colodny's vindication with a broad and moving statement endorsing the idea of academic freedom. The Colodny proceedings were one of the last of the national witch hunt cases of the so-called McCarthy period. The Colodny Papers contain correspondence files, hearing transcripts, and newspaper clippings describing this important academic freedom case.

After his retirement from the University of Pittsburgh, Colodny continued to devote himself to ALBA's work and the preservation of historical memory of the Spanish Civil War. He served as an historical con-

He was one of the most prominent historians of science in the United States, . . . His work demonstrated that the history of science needs to be studied within a broad social and cultural context, because is very much part of the society that produced it.

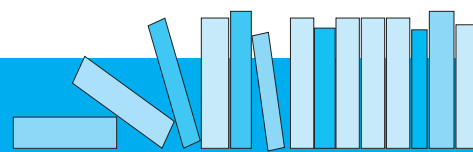
based on an address that he delivered before the Historical Commission of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. In this pamphlet he argued that the war in Spain, like the war in Vietnam, was a war of national liberation; both were "people's wars for social justice."

In 1961 Colodny became involved in a national controversy when Pennsylvania State Representative John T. Walsh of McKeesport accused him of being a Communist sympathizer. This incident followed the publication of a story in the Pittsburgh press that quoted him as saying that the Cuban revolution represented "agrarian reform." Colodny was called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), where he was subjected to intense

sultant to the National Public Broadcasting System program "Corpus Duende: Echoes of the Spanish Civil War." He was a regular contributor to *The Volunteer* and spoke about his experiences in Spain on college campuses throughout the United States.

The Tamiment Library at New York University is continuing its efforts to build the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives. Veterans and their families who have materials to contribute, please contact Julia Newman, Executive Secretary, ALBA—Room 227, 799 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; 212-674-5398; exemplaryone@aol.com. ■

Michael Nash is director of the Tamiment Library at New York University.



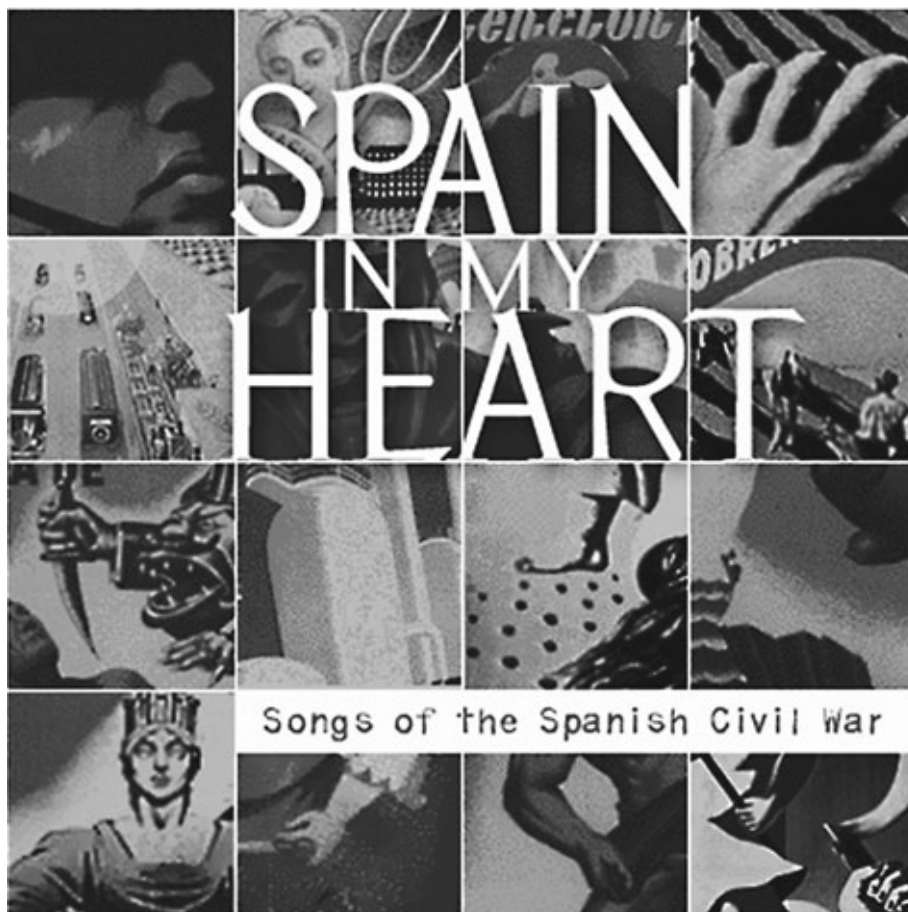
Singing the Spanish Civil War

En La Plaza De Mi Pueblo, Spain in My Heart: Songs of the Spanish Civil War
(Appleseed Recordings)

By Peter Glazer

We owe gratitude to Heather Bridger and her coproducer Joe Weed for their beautiful new CD, *Spain in My Heart: Songs of the Spanish Civil War*, to be released this month. It is an essential addition to the small "canon" of recordings that arose from the Spanish conflict. Though not all of the 17 tracks are successful, the vast majority are, some bordering on the transcendent. The liner notes with posters and photographs will make this a very appealing package for anyone with an interest in the war's music and the ways the story has been reinterpreted in the decades since. More than half of the tracks are sung in Spanish without translation, but that shouldn't dissuade non-Spanish speakers. In fact, it is only a few of the English interpretations that fail to capture the complex emotions of the event.

One reason the project is so successful is the unusually broad spectrum of songs and performers Bridger has gathered: from Pete Seeger, who has been singing some of these songs longer than anyone but the veterans themselves, to Bay area bluegrass star Laurie Lewis, to the brilliant contemporary Spanish singer-songwriter Uxía and Aoife Clancy, daughter of Bobby Clancy of the Clancy Brothers. Thanks to solid, straightforward production, Weed's beautiful guitar and string playing,



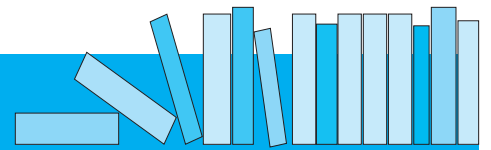
Kenny Stahl's flutes and the same rhythm section on most tracks, the featured artists are well supported.

The CD opens with Arlo Guthrie, in his rough, expressive baritone, singing a version of "Jarama Valley," probably the best known of the English language songs. It is intercut with Pete Seeger's recollections of his participation in the first American recording of Spanish Civil War songs. This segues beautifully into "En La Plaza De Mi Pueblo," which begins with sounds of a Spanish plaza underscoring an arrhythmic bass line, percussion, hand claps and flute, setting up Michele Green's strong vocal. It creates a beautiful transition to the Spanish landscape, where the events that inspired these songs tore a country apart. "With my hoe I write pages of misery and sweat upon the land,"

the lyric reads, reminding us how central issues of land reform were to the people of Spain.

Most of the famous songs are here: "El Quinto Regimiento" sung by Lila Downs, a nearly danceable version of "Si Me Quieres Escribir" by Quezta's lead singers Gabriel and Martha González, and Laurie Lewis's sad and pretty "Peat Bog Soldiers." The brother-sister duo Guardabarranco, Katia and Salvador Cardenal, have two gorgeous tracks, "Asturias" and "Noche Nochera," the latter Salvador Cardenal's magnificent setting of Garcia Lorca's "Romance de la Guardia Espanola," composed specifically for this project. Its sinuous melodic turns from minor to major chords lift the heart.

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Why the Spaniards Fought

Republic of Egos: A Social History of the Spanish Civil War.

by Michael Seidman, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002

By Joshua Goode

Over the past decade, historical revision of the conflagrations of the 1930s and 1940s, especially World War II and the Holocaust, has focused on the individual, exploring individual acts, small groups, the platoon rather than the battalion, and “the Pianist” rather than the orchestra. These works set out to prove that understanding past events needs to be more intricate and complicated. We know why states go to war; why do people so willingly fight in them? We need to know why people did what they did in war, how they became killers, or worse, genocidal killers.

Michael Seidman, a history professor at the University of North Carolina/Wilmington, brings this kind of analysis to the Spanish Civil War. As Seidman writes, his goal is to replace this view of the great battle of “isms” by “bringing back the individual” to study the war “from the bottom up.”

What did Seidman discover by studying individuals and their motives in the Spanish Civil War? Spaniards (by which he means the citizens of Spain, rather than the volunteers who flocked to Spain, an important point to which I will return) fought or did not fight, fired their guns or deserted their positions, donated their possessions or hoarded material necessary for the war effort, for very personal reasons. These reasons usually related to the

preservation of their families, their towns, or themselves. Such personal reasons often conflicted with and damaged the collective interests of class, gender, party, or union. Seidman says that the Spanish Second Republic was filled with egos first, republicans second.

Seidman skillfully demonstrates that these individuals were not merely callous and selfish, but rather were, in a sense, abetted or forced into selfishness by structural defects in the Republican management of the war. Stated simply, the Republican government failed to convince its loyalists to sacrifice and die for the war. The failure grew more acute as the conflict devolved into protracted trench warfare that tested the skills of state bureaucrats and military quartermasters to feed, clothe, motivate and arm a fighting force as supplies dwindled, foreign aid was minimal, and graft ran rampant. For Seidman, these pressures on the individual soldier were far more explanatory of the Loyalists’ failures to maintain a committed fighting force than were politics, culture, or ideology.

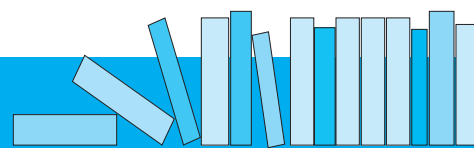
Using a range of evidence to show this lack of commitment, Seidman details pillaging and looting that Republican troops engaged in throughout the Republican zone that hampered state efforts to feed all of its forces. He describes the live and let live system of trench warfare (a term first coined to describe World War I), where opposing soldiers did not fire to kill but to keep up appearances, even engaging in soccer games and newspaper exchanges, as symbols of a lack of commitment on both sides. This “egoism” born of frustration,

fear, and pessimism was the fundamental source of Republican failure. While Seidman is careful to show similar “selfishness” among the Francoist ranks, their efficient organization on the front lines and in the rear-guard and the maintenance of non-combat populations mattered far more than the numerical superiority of the Republican forces. Seidman writes that if “a soldier’s valor depends on his stomach,” then one side clearly succeeded in filling those stomachs—albeit with far more international support—while the other failed.

Seidman’s work is particularly valuable for the detailed portrait of the Spanish Civil War gleaned from energetic archival work and secondary reading. Seidman makes reference to letters, front-line reports, requisition and quartermaster requests, minutes from meetings, telegrams, regulations, and medical records that capture the war in all of its noisome smell, hunger pangs, pettiness, confusion, and surprising camaraderie. He brings us to local meetings, lets us see particular instances of looting, tells us what was in the soldiers’ mess plates, what kinds of pastimes they engaged in and what they screamed to the enemy across the no man’s land. In the way that a good movie adds flesh and bone to past events, Seidman’s efforts give us insight into the varied minds of the soldier and civilian. Given the range of documentation, one cannot quibble lightly with Seidman’s arguments. His work is a revealing portrait of the war.

Yet, oddly, as a result of Seidman’s focus on Spanish citizens, he seems to draw an unintentional and perhaps contradictory conclusion. There were exceptions to Seidman’s emphasis on egoism, especially among the international volunteers that came to Spain beginning in November 1936. According to

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Spanish Terrorism

Dirty War. Clean Hands. ETA, the GAL and Spanish Democracy.

Paddy Woodworth. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

By Shirley Mangini

Paddy Woodworth, an Irish freelance writer, has recently published a revised edition of *Dirty War. Clean Hands* (first published by Cork University Press in 2001). The book deals with the riveting, grizzly story of how Felipe González' socialist government created an underground terrorist organization, the Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL), to combat the Basque terrorist group ETA.

Woodworth's passionate interest in this theme—he covered Spanish affairs for *The Irish Times* and the BBC for over 20 years—originated from a personal connection to one of the main players in the GAL affair, Julián Sancristobal. As the story unfolds, we find that Woodworth was motivated by a commitment to justice, condemning violence by describing how terrorism begets more terrorism.

"Reprehensible as ETA's terrorism has been," he says, "I do not believe that the democratic state has any mandate to use terror against terrorism, however much it has been provoked." And he aims to prove his convictions through a dramatic narration of the events that led up to the creation of GAL and that culminated in endless investigations and trials.

Paddy Woodworth has made a major contribution to the study of Spanish history on a subject that has been masked and manipulated for 20 years. His dedication to his material, his need to get to the bottom of things in a personal, yet objective, style, makes *Dirty War. Clean Hands* a book

that should be read by all of those interested in Spanish politics.

The text begins by introducing the reader to the mysterious history of the Basques, whose origins are still disputed today. Inhabitants of the peninsula for some 2000 years, with their own culture, language and distinctive physical characteristics, the fiercely independent Basque people have preserved a distinct spirit through the centuries.

When Sabino Arana founded the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) in the late 19th century and declared his nation a race, rather than an ethnic group, his ideas were embraced by his people. Six decades later, after years of enduring repression under the Franco regime, the younger members of PNV—repulsed by the older generation's apathy—created ETA. But it was not until 1968 that ETA launched its politics of violence, an armed struggle against the regime that was supported or at least condoned by many of Spain's dissidents.

When the regime ended and the referendum on the Constitution took place in 1978, the majority of Spaniards were elated, but not the Basques. Thus began the contention between the new democracy and Basque nationalism. When Felipe González became Prime Minister in 1982, it took only a few days for ETA to show its dissent through a new wave of terrorism. The next year, mysterious killings of suspected Basque terrorists and a number of innocent bystanders began in border towns—many of the members of ETA lived in France, a safe haven in those years—and continued until 1987. ETA reciprocated by stepping up its own violence. (As Woodworth notes: "In the 1980s, ETA would get no better

recruiting sergeant than the GAL.")

In 1983, Judge Baltazar Garzón began his investigations, and eventually, several key GAL figures were sentenced to prison. Felipe González' complicity in the GAL affair was never proven, but in 1996 he lost the elections to José María Aznar. From his consistently ethical stance, Woodworth praises the attempt to execute justice, but faults the former socialist government for continuing to evade the moral issues of the dirty war and for oscillating between the denial of and justification for the existence of GAL. ■

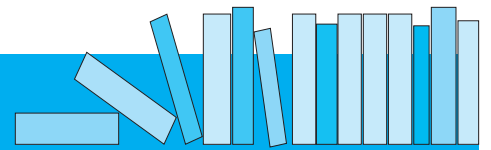
Shirley Mangini is Professor of Spanish at California State University, Long Beach, and author of *Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War*.

Why they Fought

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Seidman, these volunteers clearly distinguished themselves from Spaniards with their skill and bravado precisely because they were fighting for ideals rather than personal gain. The International Brigades were the heroes of the defense of the Republic because of, rather than despite, their ideological commitment. In the end, Seidman does not seem to dispute what meaning the war had for those outside Spain—as the first great contest of "isms" in the 20th century. Unfortunately, the loyalist soldiers and citizenry of Spain, who were forged within a Spanish historical context that gave them higher personal expectations, and, ultimately, the most to gain and the most to lose, did not share this view with their international colleagues. ■

Joshua Goode teaches in the History Department at Occidental College.



Mysteries of the Spanish Civil War

The Fifth Column.

By James Garcia Woods. Madrid: Noche Flug, 2002. (nocheflug@qure.net)

Death of a Nationalist. By Rebecca C. Pawel. New York: Soho Press, 2003.

By Martha Olson Jarocki

In two new mystery novels, the Spanish Civil War provides the background for crime and punishment.

The Fifth Column is set in San Antonio de la Jara, a small village near Albacete, where the Abraham Lincoln Brigade rests and prepares to face the fascists once again. It is a setting made to order for a VALB aficionado. To peer down those dusty streets and hang around the Lincolns while they oiled ancient rifles, talked trade unions, or made supply runs to Albacete are pleasures to savor. The novel inhabits a place and a time so clearly realized (at least for one who was never there) that the hands that grip the page begin to smell of garlic.

In *The Fifth Column* Inspector Paco Ruiz, a Republican soldier, is pressed into service to solve a mystery because his past as a Madrid homicide inspector comes back to haunt him. The victim was a member of the Lincolns and suspicions threaten morale in a unit desperately needed to defend Madrid. Paco enlists his U.S. fiancé as translator and wrestles his Spanish sensibility around a series of interesting characters so deeply rooted in 1930's left wing politics that *The Daily Worker* echoes in their voices. A classy but unbelievable woman war correspondent twists the plot as it deliciously unfolds.

Inspector Ruiz is confronted with

the murder of an African-American volunteer, a man so admired and competent that many think it must have been an act of sabotage. Yet the novel never fully realizes the U.S. racial divide, despite its place at the center of the plot, and the inspector wears a macho sensibility that is probably authentic, but hard to take for a feminist reader with even small knowledge of the role of women in the Republic.

The Fifth Column is a mixed bag, delightful and frustrating at once. It is the third Inspector Ruiz Civil War mystery; the others are *A Murder of No Consequence* and *The General's Dog*. (Guess which ones are set in the fascist camp.) The title, which refers to an enemy from within, has a dab of irony all its own; the author is not himself.

Memories of the Spanish Struggle

To Make the People Smile Again: A Memoir of the Spanish Civil War. By George Wheeler. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Zymurgy, 2003.

By Dolly Westshaer

*We came to sunny Spain
To make the people smile again
And to drive the Fascist bastard
From the hill and from the plain*
A British Battalion marching song.

This paperback is very different from most of those written about what I would prefer to call the Spanish Anti-Fascist War.

George Wheeler was raised as a socialist in Battersea, London. He was 24 when he went to Spain on the same

James Garcia Woods is a pen name for Sally Spencer, a prolific writer of English language mysteries and historical sagas who lives in Spain. Amazon.com has a Sally Spencer/James Garcia Woods page that reveals all.

Rebecca C. Pawel's *Death of a Nationalist* is set in Madrid at the end of the war. Pawel, a Brooklyn high school teacher, places a reluctant homicide inspector at the helm of another murder investigation. This time the victim and the inspector are both members of the Guardia Civil, Franco's feared police force. But the inspector has second thoughts about his position and increasingly finds his morality and humanity at odds with what is expected of him. This novel's setting is more problematic, but ultimately more satisfying.

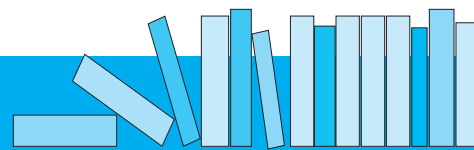
This is a story that hinges on the

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boat as Jack Jones (who has written the book's forward) via France. He was fired by a speech by Aneurin Bevan in Trafalgar Square. As George says, he never had been further south than Margate, and the whole experience of different cultures, languages, and the war had a strong effect on him.

The book is divided into three sections: first, why Wheeler went, how he got there, and his introduction to the Internationals; then the training and fighting; and, finally, his journey to and imprisonment for seven months in the concentration camps of San Pedro de Cardenas and San Sebastian. George explains that he was and is an anti-fascist. He and the rest of the Labour Movement had seen

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Smiles

Continued from page 19

the rise of Hitler and Mussolini and the attack on the legitimate government of Spain by Franco and the fascists. He had seen the effects of non-interventionist policies of Western Europe and, like the other 2,400 or so who went from Britain (of whom 526 were killed), saw the need to defend democracy and defend Spain.

Wheeler describes the journey through France, the horrendous climb over the Pyrenees, and then on to the training camps and finally on to the battlefields. During the journeys he describes the friendships of the Brigaders and the warm welcome of the Spanish peasants who greeted them with clenched fist salutes. His first battle was at the Ebro on July 25, 1938, and the fight for Hill 481. George's last battle was in September 1938, still on the Ebro. (He had a short break in a hospital because he had

what seems to have been a carbuncle on his arm.) It was at the end of this last battle that he was taken prisoner.

Wheeler then describes the concentration camps and the fascists' attempts to denigrate and dehumanize the prisoners with all the psychological and physical means at their disposal.

George finally left Spain in April 1939, traveling the last part of the journey by bus. He was welcomed home by his family, who were having a party, with the words, "Where the bloody hell have you been?"

This book is important to me, especially because George was taken prisoner with my father, Frank West, and released at the same time. I learned more about Dad in prison and what happened to them. There are names of some of the guards that are familiar to me.

But the important thing about this book is that it is not a detailed military account of what happened. It is the reactions and observations of a socialist working-class anti-fascist young man from Battersea. It reveals the loss of his naivety, his anger at the deaths of his comrades, the warmth and generosity of the Spanish people, and his class consciousness.

In all this he is still today an anti-fascist. I can tell because I know him.

Read this book. Give it to members of the Labor Movement and tell them about it. Above all give it to young people who, as we see, are becoming more politically aware. ■

Mysteries

Continued from page 19

disappointment of the Civil War. It is set among Spaniards who fought for the Republic and are now underground, hiding from a vengeful and unrestrained Guardia Civil that lives high on the hog in the midst of widespread starvation. The women at the heart of the story struggle to survive at the same time they're reeling from the cultural nosedive back into Catholicism and sexism that the Francoists seek to enforce. Pavel's characters take on a luminous life, proud of their political choices and tinged with regret as they deal with what they thought was an impossible future.

Both of these novels reveal a time in which ordinary people struggled in extraordinary circumstances. For this alone, they are a keen read. At a time when the U.S. imperialist tide runs high, Republican Spain is a fine talisman. No Pasaran! ■

Martha Olson Jarocki is the daughter of Lincoln vet Leonard Olson and an associate in the Bay Area Veterans and Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Spain in My Heart

Continued from page 16

Two of the newer songs in English deserve mention: Christy Moore's "Viva La Quinte Brigada" is touchingly sung by Shay Black and Aoife Clancy. It suffers only from the loss of one harrowing verse, describing the Irish priests who supported Franco. For Moore, "The men of cloth failed yet again/When the bishops blessed the blueshirts in Dun Laoghaire/As they sailed beneath the swastika to Spain." The CD closes with Bruce Barthol's 1986 "Taste of Ashes," whose title captures perfectly the bitter defeat in Spain. Laurie Lewis's rendition is faithful to this great song, but anyone who has heard Velina Brown's deeply felt and shattering version under Barthol's musical direction at the veterans' annual events may have trouble with Lewis' understated delivery.

The one major disappointment for me is Joel and Jamaica Rafael's "Los Cuatro Generales." The jaunty arrangement and cheerful vocals just don't fit the spirit of the song. It's not surprising that they excised its darkest lyric, which imagines a just end for Franco's henchmen: "At Christmas, holy evening/Mamita mia/They'll all be hanging, they'll all be hanging." Like Catholics sailing under the Nazi flag, images such as these are crucial in portraying the brutal war. They would add specificity, tension and complication to all this inspiring music. ■

Peter Glazer, director of many ALBA-VALB reunion events, teaches in the Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.



Dr. Edward Barsky



Memory's Roster



Vita Barsky

We note with sadness the death of Vita Barsky, widow of Dr. Edward Barsky, who founded and led the American Medical Bureau during the Spanish Civil War. She was feisty and indefatigable, even at age 92, and a devoted friend of the Lincoln Brigade and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives.

THEY ALSO FELL

Arthur Harrison

John Rossen

Joseph Lafayette Young

Letters

Continued from page 2

Dear Volunteer,

As you noted in The Volunteer, my father, Lincoln Brigade member Robert Klonsky, died in September of 2003 at the age of 84. We discovered among his papers many letters that he had written to his family from his time in Spain. I would like to share a letter he wrote in March 1937.

—Fred Klonsky

Chicago

Dear Mom, Pop and Family—

This past Friday was my 19th birthday—and was I proud! I'm one of the youngest men up here—that is, excluding the Spanish boys themselves. One feels very old when he sees children of 14 and 15 years going to the front lines to fight. And one feels very proud to be part of it all—I can't really find the words suitable to describe the country! Acres and acres of olive groves and orange groves cover the country. Spain is a very rich country in natural resources—especially agriculture. But the people—the poor Spanish people! One wonders what has kept the workers and peasants in ignorance and subjugation until now. The worst slum sections of Brooklyn are a paradise compared to the living quarters of the working people here. But those things are coming to an end! They have begun to realize that the labor and sweat that they have put into the soil and the factory entitle them to the right of self-rule,

and the right to profit from their labor—and at the present time they are heroically fighting and laying down their lives so that the generations to come will have that right, in a free, happy and rich Spain. When I get home I'll be able to tell many interesting stories. But meanwhile that will have to wait....

I imagine that this letter will reach you in time for the Passover holidays. I'm taking this opportunity of wishing all of you a really happy Pesach, and I promise you that next Passover I'll be back home with all of you, and I'll drink a toast to you with Papa's wine that I miss very much. Meanwhile, my place, I believe, is here, doing my bit to make sure that in the future no race of people, whether Jew or gentile, will have cause for mourning their dead. I know that you will agree with me, when I say that I'm doing more for my race and my class, here in Spain, helping in the fight against Fascism, than I could possibly do at home. Still in all, I'm going to miss it all, since this is the first Passover in my life that I have not been at home with all of you. As a matter of fact, this is the first time that I have been away from home for such a long period of time, and I feel sort of homesick—You can help a lot by writing as often as possible, and please tell me everything—Make the letters long.

—Your son, brother, brother-in-law, uncle and comrade,
Bob

Dear Editor,

In your book review of *Fighting Fascism in Europe* by Lawrence Cane, as printed in the June 2003 *Volunteer*, you state: "Of the 400 ALB veterans who fought during WW II, Lawrence Cane was the only one to participate in the D-Day Normandy invasion." My husband, Alfred L. (Al) Tanz, who had been recruited by Bill Donovan, head of the OSS, parachuted into France prior to D-Day. He was secreted in a farmhouse in the village of Saint-Mere-Eglise, where his mission was to cut electrical wires overlooking the beach, in anticipation of the invasion. Saint-Mere-Eglise was the first village liberated on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Al eventually attained the rank of Captain in the U.S. Army.

Sincerely,

Freda Tanz

1926 Francisco Street

Berkeley, CA 94709, (510) 540-9870

Editor:

We have exciting news about plans to build a large monument to the International Brigades near the town of Marca, Catalonia. This note is an appeal for you to contribute funds to assist in the project.

Here is located the grave of John Cookson, who was killed at the Ebro Front in the last days of the Brigades' fight against Franco. By good fortune, this gravesite, one of the few, if not the only remaining one in Spain, was not

Continued on page 22



Contributions



In Memory of a Veteran

Jack Shafran *in memory of Harry Fisher*
\$100

Reeann Halonen *in memory of Oiva Halonen* **\$60**

Leona Feyer *in memory of Al Prago and Ruth & Harry Fisher* **\$100**

Thelma Frye *in memory of Peter Frye*
\$100

Ulrich Bodek *in memory of Dr. Günter Boder, Thaelmann Brigade Veteran* **\$100**

Jeannette Dean *in memory of Wilfred Mendelson* **\$50**

Moe Fishman *in memory of Gerry Cook, Dave Gordon, Herman (Gabby) Rosenstein, Don Thayer, Al Warren* **\$25**

When drafting your will, please consider making a bequest to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA).

For information contact: Executive Director, ALBA-Room 227, 799 Broadway, New York, NY 10003 212-674-5398.

From the estate of **Sana Goldblatt** **\$500**

From the estate of **William (Bill) Van Felix** **\$5,000**

Dr. Louis Kroll *in memory of Dr. Zachary Stadt* **\$50**

In Memory of

Marcus Raijer *in memory of my father*
\$75

Contributions

Mary Boyer **\$20**

Letters

Continued from page 21

seen by the Franco marauders, who made every attempt to destroy all evidence of the volunteers.

Different generations of local residents kept the grave hidden and cared for over the years. Harry Fisher's son-in-law Geoff then traced it down a few years back and found a dedicated group of local residents who had undertaken to rehabilitate the site. They posted a sign with a moving obituary and John's photograph.

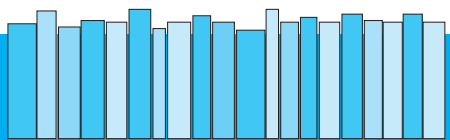
Recently a dear friend from Barcelona, Juan Maria Gómez Ortiz, translated into Spanish the collection of John's letters that I self-published in 1992 under the title "Remembering John Cookson: a Wisconsin Anti-Fascist in the Spanish Civil War." Juan Maria coordinated with the Marca leaders to hold a commemoration at the site in July 2002 and wrote a detailed report that appeared in *The Volunteer*. My daughter, Julie Kailin, and son, John Kailin, attended that commemoration.

The Wisconsin Friends of the Lincoln Brigade pledged \$1,000 seed money last year to the monument project. Our friends in Spain were heartened to learn that their small community of several hundred was being joined by friends far away.

Your contribution will be important to keeping that spirit going. Needs might include site acquisition, design of the site and of the monument, construction of both, and on-going care. The first weekend in November an association in Catalonia called "No Jubilem La Memoria" (roughly: "They Can't Erase Memory") will unveil the monument during a weekend of commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the "Farewell" to the Brigades with an exhibition and a conference.

Please make out checks to Wisconsin Friends of the Lincoln Brigade and mail to Clarence Kailin, 501 Evergreen Ave., Madison, WI 53704. You can call me at (608) 241-2829.

Comradely,
Clarence Kailin, VALB



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BOOKS ABOUT THE LINCOLN BRIGADE

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The Wound and the Dream: Sixty Years of American Poems about the Spanish Civil War
by Cary Nelson

Passing the Torch: The Abraham Lincoln Brigade and its Legacy of Hope
by Anthony Geist and Jose Moreno

Another Hill
by Milton Wolff

Our Fight—Writings by Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Spain 1936-1939
edited by Alvah Bessie & Albert Prago

Spain's Cause Was Mine
by Hank Rubin

Comrades
by Harry Fisher

The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade
by Peter Carroll

The Triumph of Democracy in Spain
by Paul Preston

The Lincoln Brigade, a Picture History
by William Katz and Marc Crawford

EXHIBIT CATALOGS

They Still Draw Pictures: Children's Art in Wartime
by Anthony Geist and Peter Carroll

The Aura of the Cause, a photo album
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VIDEOS

Into the Fire: Women and the Spanish Civil War
Julia Newman

Art in the Struggle for Freedom
Abe Osheroff

Dreams and Nightmares
Abe Osheroff

The Good Fight
Sills/Dore/Bruckner

Forever Activists
Judith Montell

You Are History, You Are Legend
Judith Montell

ALBA'S TRAVELING EXHIBITION

THE AURA OF THE CAUSE

ALBA's photographic exhibit, "The Aura of the Cause," has been shown at the Puffin Room in New York City, the University of California-San Diego, the Salvador Dali Museum in St. Petersburg, FL, the Fonda Del Sol Visual Center in Washington DC, and the University of Illinois. This exhibit, curated by Professor Cary Nelson of the University of Illinois, consists of hundreds of photographs of the Lincoln Brigaders, other international volunteers and their Spanish comrades, in training and at rest, among the Spanish villages and in battle.

For further information about "The Aura of the Cause" exhibit, contact ALBA's executive secretary, Diane Fraher, 212-598-0968; Fax: 212-529-4603; e-mail amerinda@amerinda.org. The exhibit is available for museum and art gallery showings.

BRING THIS EXHIBIT TO YOUR LOCALITY.

☐ Yes, I wish to become an ALBA Associate, and I enclose a check for \$25 made out to ALBA. Please send me *The Volunteer*.

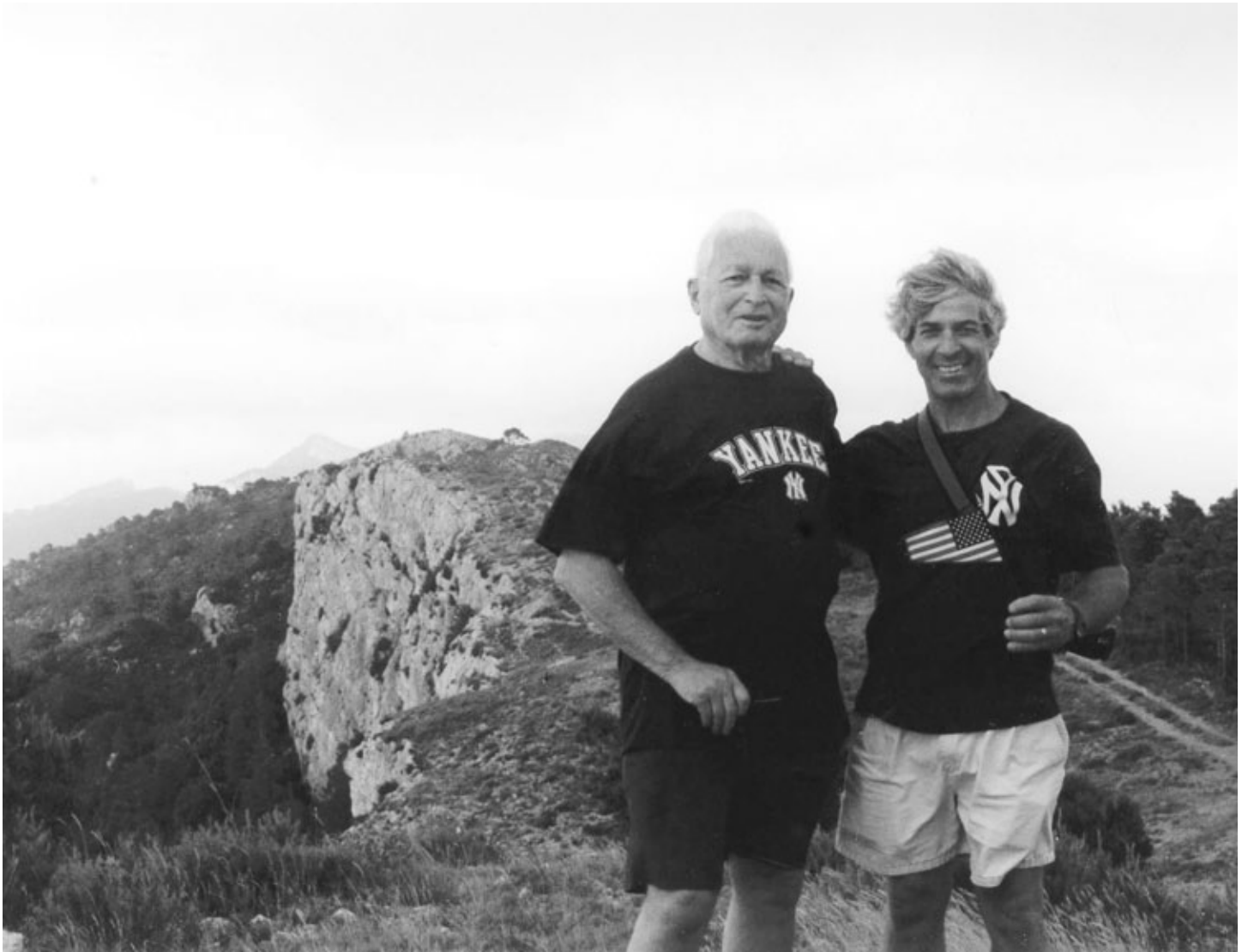
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☐ I've enclosed an additional donation of _____. I wish ☐ do not wish ☐ to have this donation acknowledged in *The Volunteer*.

Please mail to: ALBA, 799 Broadway, Room 227, New York, NY 10003



Jack Shafran and his son-in-law Bill Thom standing on Hill 666. While in Spain Shafran recounted one of his long-time ambitions, to visit Franco's tomb and pay a special homage. See page 3.

The Volunteer

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