



# The **V**olunteer

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

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

JOURNAL OF THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

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Vet Clarence Kailin at the New York Reunion. Photo by Juan Salas. See page 1.

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## Letter From the Editor

There's a new, spirited interest in the Spanish Civil War, no doubt about it.

Maybe it's the result of the round number 70: 70 years since German bombers paid a morning call on the Basque village of Guernica; 70 years since Pablo Picasso indelibly painted the town on the human map.

Seventy years since the first U.S. volunteers landed in Spain, left their bodies in Spanish earth.

Seventy years since President Franklin D. Roosevelt adopted a policy of non-intervention that sank democratic hopes for peace; and 70 years since the same president pleaded to "quarantine" the aggressors and no one listened.

Perhaps our own despair at tragic bombings, civilian casualties, presidential error, and the failure of dissident leadership explains the current interest in a part of American history that virtually disappeared during the Cold War and remains obscured by Joe McCarthyist rhetoric.

But the drift is now clear.

The New York audience that attended the annual Lincoln Brigade reunion at the Teatro del Barrio in April had no sooner finished cheering the passionate, hopeful speech of Harry Belafonte and applauding James Fernandez's multimedia assault on government cynicism when the Lincoln Brigade—and the courage of activism it represents—was the subject of Amy Goodman's national network broadcast *Democracy Now!* Phone calls and emails of support flooded the ALBA offices.

Meanwhile, the monument in San Francisco to honor all the volunteers of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade moves forward. The artist-designers, Ann Chamberlain and Walter Hood, are looking toward a Fall 2007 inauguration. Fundraising for the monument, as you'll see in the back pages, is also continuing.

We are in the home stretch, still about \$50,000 shy of our goal, and plead earnestly again for your contributions!

Our exhibition "Facing Fascism: New York & the Spanish Civil War" will hang at the Museum of the City of New York into August before heading to Spain. Don't miss it. And check the new ALBA website—[www.alba-valb.org](http://www.alba-valb.org)—for ongoing events.

"They Still Draw Pictures: Children's Art in Wartime" appears at the Instituto Cervantes in New York through August. This exhibition is now available for rentals in your community (details on the web).

Salud.

Peter N. Carroll

## The Volunteer

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Anne Taibleson, long-time member of the ALBA Board, was appointed to a full-time position as Executive Director. She previously served as Director of Development at Citizens Committee for New York City, a grassroots volunteer organization that supports and sustains thousands of neighborhood groups in the five boroughs of New York.

During her tenure there, Anne led CCNYC's fundraising programs to record highs in both individual giving levels and number of new major donors. Prior to her work at CCNYC, she was Director of Individual Gifts and Special Events at Boys & Girls Harbor. She has also held development and consulting positions in non-profits throughout the New York metropolitan area. Anne has a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice from Indiana University and resides in New York City.

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# NY Reunion: *The Writing is (Still) on the Wall*



Harry Belafonte addresses the reunion. Vets Matti Mattson, Maynard Goldstein, and Clarence Kailin (below). Photos by Juan Salas.

## By Soledad Fox

**T**he setting and program of the 71st Anniversary of the Volunteers for Liberty seemed to have a particular relevance this year as the memory of the Spanish Civil War took over a couple of New York City blocks on upper Fifth Avenue. The reunion was held at the beautifully restored Teatro Hecksher of El Museo del Barrio, an institution that is fittingly run by Julián Zugazagoitia, the grandson of a hero of the Spanish Republic. Following the program at the Teatro, the audience of 600 people, including Amy Goodman of *Democracy Now!*, crossed the street to the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY) to see the exhibit “Facing Fascism: New

York and the Spanish Civil War.”

After opening remarks by Peter Carroll and Sarah Henry, chief curator of the exhibition, MC Henry Foner reminded us of the special meaning of having the reunion in East Harlem, historically one of the city’s most active anti-fascist neighborhoods. Moe Fishman introduced veterans Clarence Kailin, Matty Mattson, and Maynard Goldstein and the guest

speaker, Harry Belafonte. Evoking his mentors, Paul Robeson, W.E.B. Dubois, and Martin Luther King, Belafonte thanked the members of the Lincoln Brigade for their gifts to his and subsequent generations: their example, courage, and legacy.

The main event was an extraordinary multimedia performance piece, *The Writing on the Wall*, by James D. Fernández. Through songs, dialogue, documentary interviews, music, and images, including Picasso’s “Guernica” and newspaper headlines about the Spanish Civil War, the piece is an homage to everyone, especially New Yorkers, who rallied to the cause of the Spanish Republic. The performance humorously indicted the anti-anti-fascist side of American culture past and present, including a spoof of the FBI’s pursuit of “premature anti-fascists” and their progeny and a jab at a contemporary New York “journalist” who, in writing about the late 1930s today, puts “international fascism” in scare quotes.

Sunday’s events highlighted the enduring legacy of New Yorkers and Spaniards united, across the Atlantic and generations, for the cause of liberty. ▣

Soledad Fox is the author of a new book, *Constancia de la Mora in War and Exile*, and teaches at Amherst College.





# FACING FASCISM

## A Season for Remembering

By Robert W. Snyder

During a symposium to mark the opening of the exhibit “Facing Fascism: New York and the Spanish Civil War in New York City,” a grey-haired man rose in the back of the audience. In the tones of his native Barcelona, he identified himself as the son of a soldier for the Spanish Republic. Then he thanked the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the people of New York for fighting for his country’s freedom.

It was one of the most moving moments in the many public events that marked the launch of the exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York. Together they made the

spring of 2007 a season for remembering, debating, and exploring the relationship between the Spanish Civil War and the City of New York.

The symposium, held March 24 before a full crowd in an auditorium at New York Academy of Medicine, explored the place of the war in New York City past and present. In response to a *New York Times* review that found the exhibit insufficiently critical of communist and pro-Republican forces, Peter N. Carroll of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives set the show in the context of historical thinking that transcends Cold War categories. Mike Wallace, history professor at John Jay College

of the City University of New York, analyzed reactions to the war in light of the political and ethnic conflicts that defined New York in the Thirties. Peter Glazer, associate professor in the Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, examined responses to the war in the city’s performing arts. Robert Snyder, a historian and journalism professor at Rutgers-Newark, discussed reactions to the war in the New York press.

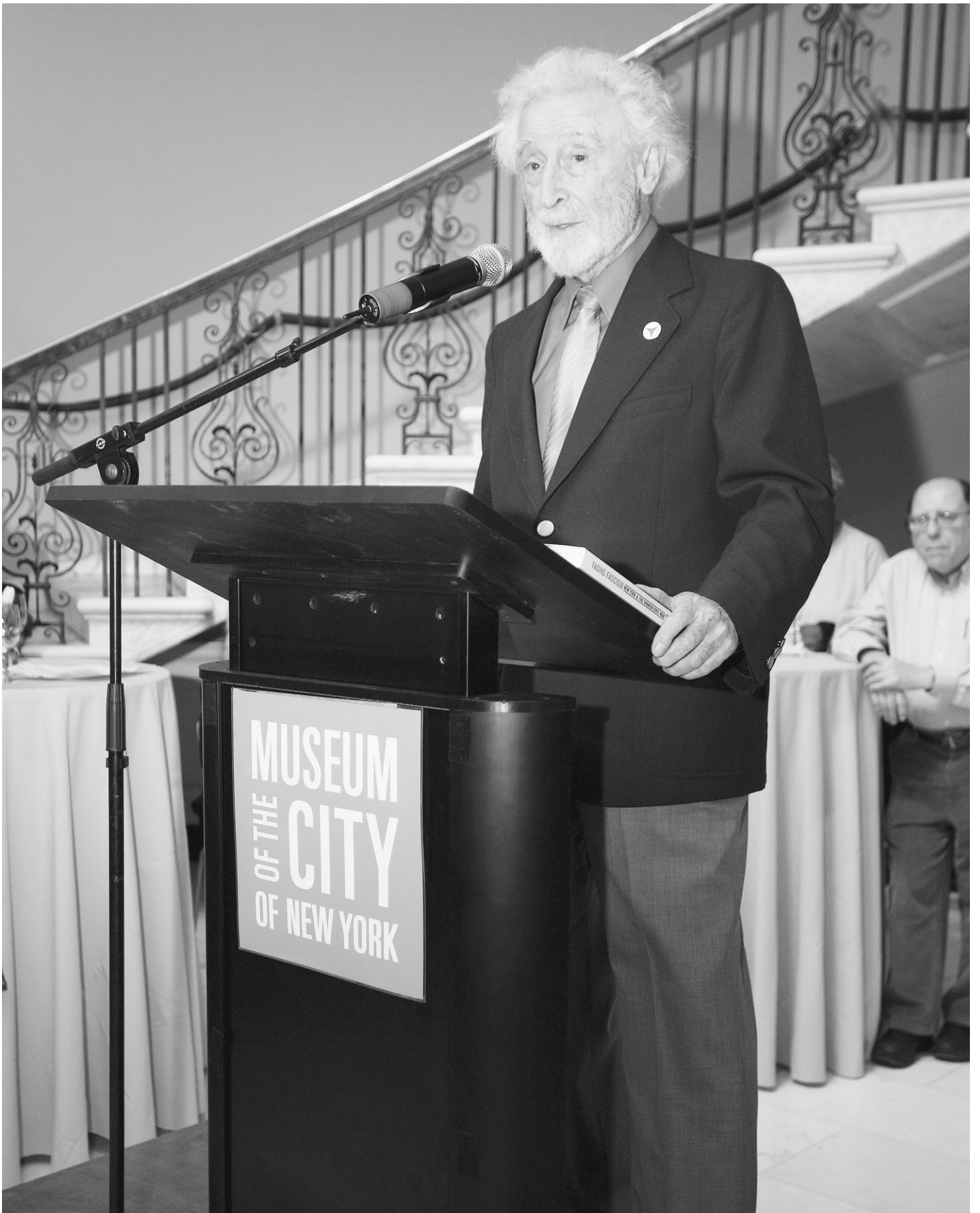
Discussions continued at the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center of New York University on March 26, where a panel marked the publication of *Facing Fascism: New York and the Spanish Civil War*, edited by Carroll and James D. Fernandez and co-published by the Museum of the City of New York and the NYU Press. Fernandez, chair of NYU’s Department of Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Literatures, examined responses to the war in New York’s Spanish-speaking community. Juan Salas, a visual historian, explored photographs of the war published in New York City. Carroll raised more ideas on the place of the war in current historical thinking, while Snyder examined how ideological conflicts in the New York press obscured the widespread support for the Spanish Republic in the city.

April saw more events. At NYU, a colloquium held April 11 with Thomas Bender, NYU history professor, and Arthur Simon, film

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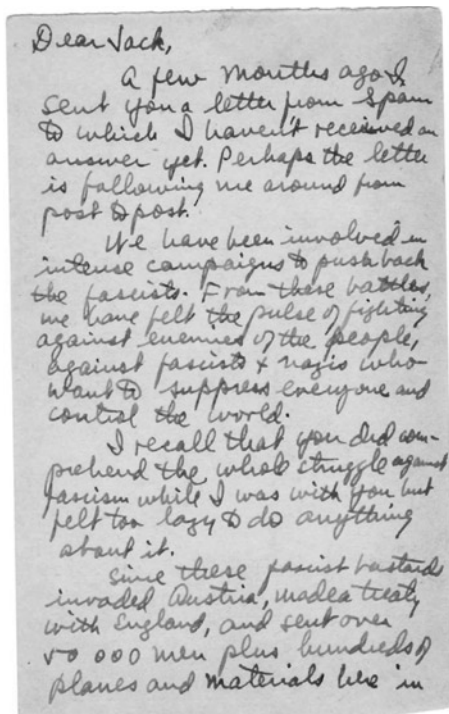
Robert Snyder is a member of the ALBA Board of Governors.



Vet Moe Fishman



# ALBA Acquires Rare Let



**By Peter N. Carroll**

Among the recent gifts from an anonymous donor to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives is a letter addressed from Albacete in 1938 that begins, "When you write to me: Use Israel Altman," the nom de guerre of a Lincoln volunteer from the Bronx whose real name was Morris Cohen.

The letter, printed below in its entirety for the first time, expresses the strong convictions of a frontline soldier, wounded at Fuentes de Ebro, who solicits support for the Spanish Republic from the U.S. home front, specifically from his Bronx friend Jack Diamond. Describing the threat of fascists and Nazis "who want to suppress everyone and control the world," and reminding Diamond of the battlefield death of their friend Daniel Hutner, he urges the young man to get involved, to take action, to join the protests against U.S. neutrality and non-intervention.

"This action," he writes, "does not

require war by the democratic nations, including the Soviet Union but a withholding of arms from the fascists and their sale, as international law provides, to democratic Spain & China which have been invaded by the fascists." He pleads, "You as a Jew are in double danger," and concludes, don't let yourself become "just a money-bags."

At the time he wrote the letter, Cohen was working with a special detachment of Lincoln volunteers training to become guerrilla fighters. It is unclear whether he saw action in that capacity in Spain, but Cohen returned to New York and soon became an intelligence agent of the Soviet Union. He and his wife, Lona, took credit for acting as couriers in transmitting information related to the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union. When I interviewed him in a Moscow hospital in 1993, the year before his death, Cohen justified his activities: "It was unthinkable to me that one country could have a monopoly of such a terrible weapon."

Although the Cohens disappeared at the time the U.S. government arrested Julius and Ethel Rosenberg on charges of atomic espionage, they re-surfaced a decade later as spies in a nuclear submarine case in England. After serving part of a criminal sentence for espionage, the couple was exchanged for a captured British spy and spent the remainder of their lives in the Soviet Union.

Cohen's letter to Diamond is one of only two known surviving documents relating to his service in Spain. The other is his response to a questionnaire completed by many Lincoln volunteers that is reprinted in *The Secret World of American Communism*, edited by Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Fridrikh Igorevich Firsov (1995). Although the editors claim that Cohen's

distinctive response to questions "illustrates why Soviet intelligence officers spotted him as a potential recruit," the truth is much simpler: Cohen was recruited for the special detachment because in New York he had been a close personal friend of the Lincoln brigade officer assigned to creating the group.

Indeed, both the questionnaire and the letter that follows could have been written by almost any of the Lincoln volunteers then engaged in a deadly, violent war that included the indiscriminate bombing of civilians, "thousands of innocent women and children who were not carrying any arms at all." Cohen's plea for assistance in 1938—the year of the Austrian Anschluss, the Munich Pact, and the withdrawal of the International Brigades from Spain—is a desperate plea from someone who understood the fascist menace and tried to arouse his lethargic country.

Mr. Jack Diamond  
849 Freeman St.  
Bronx, N.Y.  
U.S.A.

When you write to me:  
Use Israel Altman  
Socorro Rojo Internacional  
Plaza del Altozano  
Albacete, Spain

Dear Jack,

A few months ago I sent you a letter from Spain to which I haven't received an answer yet. Perhaps the letter is following me around from post to post.

We have been involved in intense campaigns to push back the fascists. From these battles, we have felt the pulse of fighting against en-

# ter from Future Spy

emies of the people, against fascists and Nazis who want to suppress everyone and control the world.

I recall that you did comprehend the whole struggle against fascism while I was with you but felt too lazy to do anything about it.

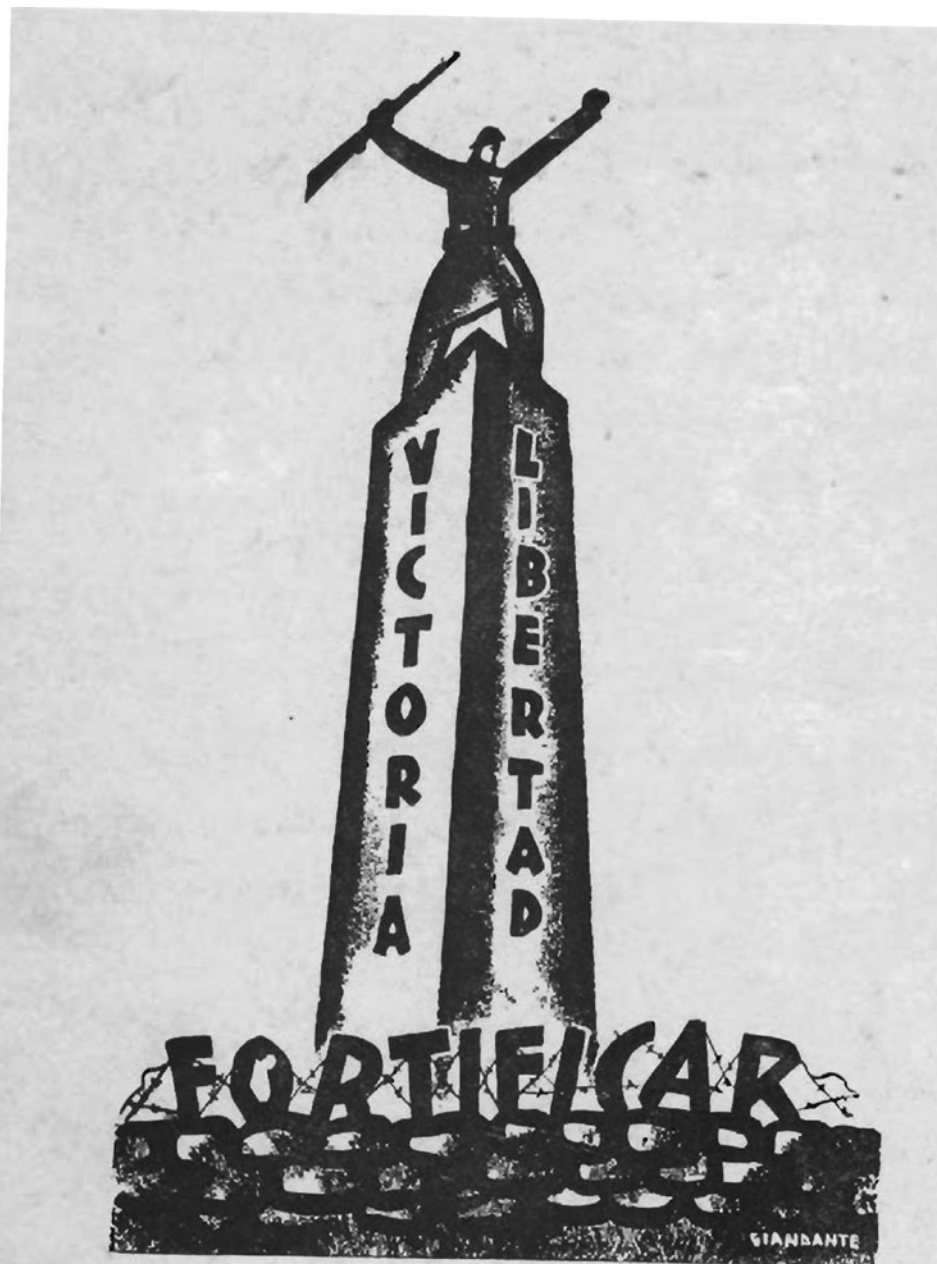
Since these fascist bastards invaded Austria, made a treaty with England, and sent over 50,000 men plus hundreds of planes and materials here in the month of March which raised havoc over our heads for days on end and killed thousands of innocent women and children who were not carrying any arms at all, you must have come to the conclusion that direct action is necessary to stop them.

One form of direct action is our presence here in Spain. You know that we are not adventurers, judging by men like Danny Hutner and his brother, and the C.C.N.Y. wrestling coach and myself, fellows whom you know. Danny was killed in battle here. At a memorial meeting in his honor in the U.S.A. during March, Coach Van Elling spoke. An international vanguard is necessary to stop the fascists.

But we require arms which the fascists can buy, but we, by the insidious use of the neutrality law in the U.S.A. cannot. This law must be changed. Roosevelt, Hull, Ickes & Jackson of the gov't gave the lead with their speeches directed against the fascist bloc—Japan, Germany, & Italy, and calling for international concerted action against them. 5000 leading lawyers of America wrote a collective letter to the gov't demanding this change.

This action does not require war

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A When you write to me:  
ISRAEL ALTMAN  
SOCORRO ROJO INTERNACIONAL  
PLAZA DEL ALTOZANO  
ALBACETE, SPAIN



# “They Still Draw Pictures” on Exhibit

By Jane Canova

It is only fitting that nearly 70 years after the first exhibit of children’s drawings from the Spanish Civil War opened in New York City, “They Still Draw Pictures” should make its way to Williams College in April 2007.

Barton Carter abandoned his studies at the college in 1936 to travel to England, where he became involved in humanitarian causes raising funds for the children of war-torn Spain through the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief, then became an administrator of a children’s colony in Puigcerdá, and finally joined the International Brigades briefly before he was killed in ambush in April 1938. A display of letters and news clips document his involvement in the Spanish Civil War and complement the 80 children’s drawings from “They Still Draw Pictures,” on exhibit at Williams College.

The genesis of the exhibit and the path from dusty university archives to public venues was explained by Anthony Geist at the related panel discussion, “Children and War.” Unearthing a box of long-forgotten children’s drawings turned into an ambitious project that encapsulates the historical memory of Spain and resulted in the exhibit “They Still Draw Pictures.”

For Marysa Navarro, one of the children lost in the shuffle of the war, the drawings have provided a means of recovering her past. She recognizes herself in the drawings, though she can’t recall the war in detail. Her project is to write about her long journey into exile.

Testimonials by several authors of the Spanish drawings corroborate



the excitement and terror of the war and tell the story behind their drawings, as seen in the documentary *The War in Drawings* (*La guerra dibujada*, 2006). For all, it was a means to recover their voice lost in childhood.

The artistic urge that mobilizes expression and builds resiliency has been the focus of Dr. Roberta Apfel’s and Dr. Bennett Simon’s 10-year study of drawings by Israeli and Palestinian children. The force of fire, bombs, and fighter planes appears to dominate the depictions of the child’s experience of war in any time period.

The exhibit and panel discussion followed other events brought to Williams in connection with Professor Soledad Fox’s teaching and research

on contemporary Spanish literature and culture, including Moe Fishman’s talk after a showing of Judith Montell’s documentary *The Good Fight* and Julia Newman’s presentation of her film, *Into the Fire: American Women in the Spanish Civil War*. ▀

Jane Canova is Administrative Director of the Center for Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at Williams College.

“They Still Draw Pictures” will be at the Instituto Cervantes in New York from May to August 2007 (211-215 East 49th Street near 3rd Avenue). For more information, call (212) 308-7720.



# Finding Emotions in the Archives

By Jo Labanyi

**A**t a conference in London in 2003, the keynote speaker, Ann Laura Stoler, a specialist in the history of subjectivity in the former Dutch East Indies, was asked by a member of the audience: "How do we get the emotions out of the archive?" This essay is an attempt to read the contents of one file in the ALBA archives with this question in mind: the file is that of the volunteer nurse Toby Jensky. Her papers include her own letters and photographic collection, the letters of her brother-in-law Philip Schachter (an ALB volunteer presumed killed during the battle of Brunete in July 1937), and the correspondence of Philip's siblings Max and Rose trying to trace him.

I didn't initially take to Toby's letters, but I found myself changing my mind about her as I looked at more documents. For what is fascinating about Toby's letters home to her sister Jenks and Jenks' husband Max is what she doesn't say. It's not just a matter of reading between the lines of what is said, but of recognizing that there may be various reasons why the most important things are not said. There are many things that one doesn't want one's family to know, especially if one is a young, single woman (Toby was 26) away from home in a dangerous, foreign country. In addressing these letters to her sister and Max (Philip's brother), Toby has to be careful not to mention anything that might upset or worry two families: her own and that

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Jo Labanyi, professor of Spanish at New York University, presented a longer version of this essay at a conference at the City University of New York in September 2006.



Toby Jensky (right) with Pat Gurney and Sara Goldblatt

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# Emotions in the Archives

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of Philip, serving on the front.

The jokey tone of Toby's letters to Jenks and Max gives the impression of a flighty, fun-loving girl who is interested only in a succession of flirtations, parties, and "scrapping" with "the girls" (as she puts it). She shows no interest in her Spanish nurse colleagues or her Spanish surroundings. She keeps talking about wanting to come home, but each time adds a reason why she can't. One deduces that she's saying she wants to come home to please her family, because in a letter from London on April 3, 1938, about to sail back to the States, she comments on the bad military news from Spain and how she "certainly picked the wrong time to leave," implying a serious political commitment. Indeed, after the war she would help Fredericka Martin, the chief nurse and administrator of the American medical volunteers, assemble papers for Martin's planned history of the American Medical Bureau (their correspondence continues until 1984).

Toby mentions Philip very little in her letters home to Jenks and Max, and only after he's gone missing. On September 7, 1937—two months after Philip's letters stopped—she asks Jenks to tell Philip's "pop" not to worry. On March 20, 1938, on her return from the front, she briefly says she hasn't been able to get any news about Philip. But this apparently minimal concern with Philip's disappearance is contradicted by a letter she wrote to her sister Jenks dated September 2, 1937; this letter details Toby's extensive efforts to get news of him. She tells Jenks there "were good reasons" why she couldn't talk about Philip before, but now she has the political

commissar's permission to report what she has known all along: that Philip disappeared at Brunete on July 24, 1937. She writes this to Jenks alone, as if she can tell her more easily than when writing to her and Max together.

she mentions to them. If one checks this against Gurney's 1974 memoir, it becomes evident that Toby's dismissive account bears little resemblance to reality; indeed, she and Gurney married after the war. Gurney's memoir



Spanish peasant woman

Toby tells Jenks she will write to Philip's sister Rose, but will say nothing about Philip. This dossier provides an object lesson in how letters can serve to conceal, rather than reveal, the truth.

This is further illustrated by Toby's description in her letters to Jenks and Max of her fling with the English volunteer Jason "Pat" Gurney—the first of various flirtations

*Crusade in Spain* lyrically describes the impact of coming round from his injuries in the American hospital to see, reading at the end of his bed, a nurse whom he describes as a figure from a Florentine painting (he was a sculptor), and with whom he fell head over heels in love. It is clear from Gurney's description of their makeshift "marriage" that Toby reciprocated. Toby's

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# The Politics of Everyday Life

*Editor's Note: The activist legacy of the Lincoln Brigade takes many forms, not least in its inspiration to the families of the volunteers. Esther Silverstein Blanc served as a nurse in the International Brigades in Spain and in the U.S. Army during World War II; she later earned a PhD in the history of medicine. Her son, Dr. Paul D. Blanc, follows her path. He holds the Endowed Chair in Occupational and Environmental Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. His new book is titled, How Everyday Products Make People Sick: Toxins at Home and in the Workplace (University of California Press). This extract is taken from the book's introduction.*

## By Paul D. Blanc, M.D.

When someone inquires about my professional work and I reply, "Occupational and environmental medicine," an awkward pause usually follows. To fill in the gap, I'll elaborate, "That's the treatment of diseases that people get from their work or as a result of pollution." Sometimes bringing up a specific problem clarifies matters. Immigration and Naturalization Service officers, for example, seem to relate easily to carpal tunnel syndrome, likely because of their own experience with keying in data and hand stamping documents for hours at a stretch.

People often ask whether my field is a new branch of health care, along the lines of modern subspecialties such as sports medicine, genetic counseling, and bariatrics (the treatment of obesity). That such issues could even become the stuff of popular song only serves to further reinforce the impression that occupational medicine, so topical, must also be novel, too. Dire

Straits' 1982 ironic rock-n-roll ballad "Industrial Disease" was nothing if not a processional anthem meant to be played at the arrival of yet one more late twentieth-century health obsession. . . .

In fact, occupational and environmental disease is not new at all. In my work as a poison control physician, I have been called on to consult on cases arising from toxic chemical exposures. In my medical research, I carry out investigations of current-day health problems, such as illness among welders from metal fumes and asthma among workers in professions exposed to allergy-producing dusts. In both settings, I always encounter the same recurring phenomenon. Time and time again, I am astonished to learn that what I first believed was a novel finding in fact had already been reported by others often ten, twenty, or thirty years earlier, sometimes as long as a century or more ago.

I have learned through trial and error that this distant history may be documented somewhere but is all too often exceedingly hard to find. Such information is frequently omitted from textbooks. Even specialized review articles in scientific journals rarely follow the past trails of evidence in order to track down how, when, and why a specific man-made illness may have first occurred and what attempts, if any, were made to control the disease at its initial outbreak. Coming on the same story told and retold again and again, albeit with a different cast of characters, I had to ask myself, Why is this the case?

Over time, I have come to understand that the pivotal difference between industrial injuries or illnesses

and environmental contamination episodes on the one hand and most other medical problems on the other hand is that a human perpetrator usually is not involved in the latter. It is one thing to isolate a deadly microbe but quite another to identify, by name, a life-threatening place of employment or clearly pinpoint a hazardous environmental epicenter. Ibsen understood this contradiction in *An Enemy of the People*, his play describing the ostracism of a medical doctor after he threatens the local tourist-based economy by revealing pollution of the town's bathing spring and seashore by industrial tannery waste. Arguably, similar forces also were at play, acting in a way that we ended up with an illness named Legionnaire's disease rather than Bellevue-Stratford Hotel pneumonia.

As I began to explore further the backgrounds of different and seemingly unrelated occupational and environmental case studies, another common thread began to emerge. First, the story of each newly introduced hazard and the disease outbreak that resulted from it was mirrored in a parallel process of medical discovery, as intriguing as the tale of any microbe hunter tracking infectious disease. Second and more surprising still, I was also finding a remarkably similar pattern of delay, deferral, and outright defeat when it came to prevention. Not only did the perpetrators go unnamed; they usually went on with business unrestrained.

Following out the various ramifications of each of these episodes, I could well appreciate the old adage

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# Every Day Life

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“Everything is connected to everything.” In its way, this is the absolute inverse of the bromide “The solution to pollution is dilution,” a favorite utterance of a rather reactionary public health professor I once had. By this he meant that a smokestack, if tall enough, could solve any problem. Acid rain falling in New England but originating from midwestern power plants is a potent refutation of this proposition. Acid rain also underscores the truism that risks do not evaporate outside the factory door. There is no absolute boundary point between “occupational” and “environmental” risks. Hazardous materials certainly do not recognize a separation between the workplace and the wider environment. Each such product passes through its own life cycle, from invention through technological refinement, then on to mass production, until it reaches obsolescence. Along the way, to paraphrase the advertising slogan of the chemical industry, something it makes will touch your life.

My impetus in writing this book is to tell a story that has not yet been told but needs to be heard. This is not the saga of one exceptional manufacturer, notorious for the particularly brazen manner in which it flouts occupational and environmental protections. Such industries do exist and are instructive in their way, but they are not central to this tale. Rather, this is the story of the run-of-the-mill, the unexceptional—no more or less damaging than a scofflaw manufacturer. It is the narrative accompanying many of the everyday objects that surround us: a tube of glue in a kitchen drawer, a bottle of bleach on the laundry

room counter, a rayon scarf on a closet shelf, a brass knob on a door, or the wooden plank in an outside deck...

These problems, still with us today, stretch back in time long before 50 years ago, when Josh White composed “Silicosis Blues,” or even before

150 years ago. A medieval Jewish prayer, still recited annually on the Day of Atonement, includes the admonition, “Man earns his bread at the peril of his own life.”

May it not always be so. ■

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## Future Spy

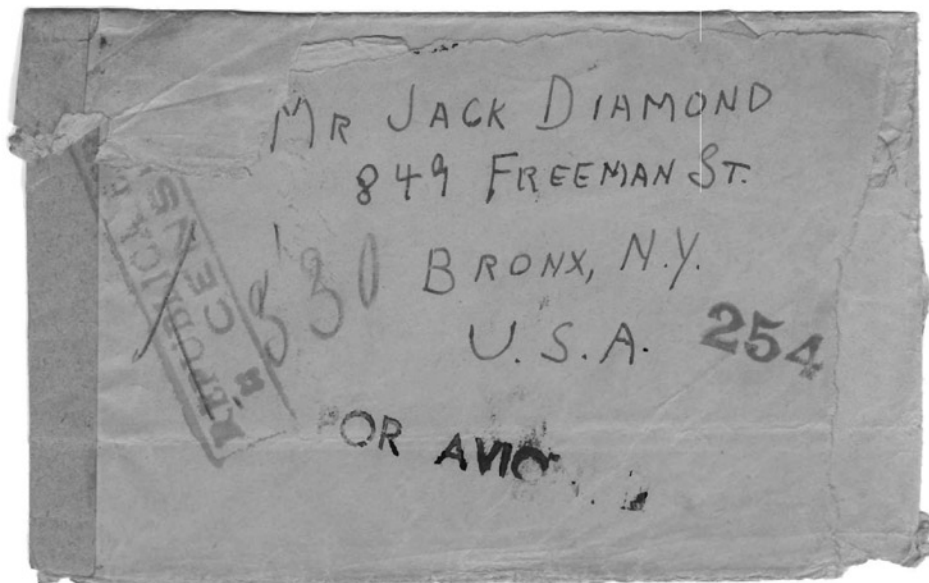
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by the democratic nations, including the Soviet Union but a withholding of arms from the fascists and their sale, as international law provides, to democratic Spain & China which have been invaded by the fascists. Also this action summons you and your family in defense against Hearst, Girdler, Fritz Kuhn, Ford and the American fascists, to join the forces for peace & democracy in the U.S.A., as the American League for peace and democracy. Jack, you must act and not isolate yourself until the fascist guns begin shooting at you in N.Y. as they did in Germany, Austria, and here. You as a Jew are in double danger.

Our cause is common and to rationalize against acting is to play into the hands of the American fascists. Try to get in touch with the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade at 125 W. 42 St.

Regards to your family and the friends we know.

The Spanish women are in the Anti-Fascist Mujeres or Union of Muchachas, completely supporting us. Many have fought in the trenches and are now taking the place of the men in the factories. Women can move men & the world. Don't pick yourself just a money-bags. ■



# Seventy Years After Gernika, Burgos Has the Scent of Franco

By Peter Schwab

Seventy years ago, on the afternoon of April 26, 1937, Nazi German Junkers and Heinkel bombers operating on behalf of Franco's Nationalist forces flew out of Gamanol, Burgos, and demolished the Basque town Gernika. The airfield at Gamanol, then a subdivision of Burgos, was the base for Germany's Condor Legion. Within months, Pablo Picasso immortalized the town's destruction in his masterpiece *Guernica*. Now lodged permanently in Madrid's Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, *Guernica* represents the horror that Franco's murderous crusade meant to Spain, and which, within two years, would be inflicted upon most of Europe. Because Picasso believed that photographs did not adequately portray the apocalypse emanating from Burgos, he accented the perspective of those who suffered, conflated various scenes, and did not immix victims and aggressors. It was a new perspective, and its impact was stunning.

Burgos has long symbolized Franco's crusade since it was the military capital of the Nationalist zone during the civil war. Taken by Franco's forces without opposition shortly after the war began, its conservative population was largely fanatically supportive of The Rising. The reign of terror unleashed against

all Burgaleses suspected of supporting the Republic was dramatized by the execution in the early morning hours of October 9, 1936, of the exceedingly popular musical folklorist and composer, Antonio José. Only 34 years old when he was murdered, he was a man of liberal sympathies but had remained non-political. His compositions are beautiful, deceptively simplistic, and touching.

The Burgos Junta, led by General Emilio Mola and General Miguel Cabanellas, ordered the executions of hundreds of Burgaleses. The archbishop of Burgos, who preached from the massive 13<sup>th</sup> century gothic cathedral, endorsed the butchery, insisting that Burgos had to be cleansed of anti-ecclesiastical "reds" who supported the Republic. Indeed, with the archbishop's blessing, it was in the 12<sup>th</sup> century Burgos edifice, the

the conduct of the Church and the citizenry of Burgos during the civil war were not surprising.

Present-day Spain is led by Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, and his Socialist Party of Spain (PSOE) controls the Cortes. The government has enshrined the Law of Historical Memory, a legal philosophy invoked to end the nationwide amnesia that developed after Franco's death in 1975. The law recommends the elimination of Franco symbols and monuments and calls for redress for the victims of his regime. It proclaims that the state will clear the names of those executed for political crimes. The government has terminated the state's direct subsidy to the Catholic Church, legalized gay marriage and adoption by gay couples, and successfully moved to declare abortion lawful. It has also

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*Populated largely by retirees of conservative values, Burgos remains dotted with Franquist nostalgia, and is often proud of it.*

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Monasterio de las Huelgas, where Franco's National Council was established in 1937. Anyone viewing the photographs in *Memoria Gráfica de Burgos: 1936-1959* cannot but still be appalled by the fervor of Church leaders in offering the fascist salute, kissing the Franquist flag, and hosting Franco in the Burgos Cathedral. The local population was just as exhortative. Since Burgos was also a center of the Inquisition,

condemned the United States over the Iraq war. Thirty-two years after Franco's demise, Spain has become a liberal socialist state. But Burgos has a local government dominated by the conservative Popular Party (PP) that stems from the Franco era.

Populated largely by retirees of conservative values, Burgos remains dotted with Franquist nostalgia, and is often proud of it. In July 2004,

Continued on page 15

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Peter Schwab is a professor of political science at Purchase College, State University of New York, and directs the college's summer program at the University of Burgos.

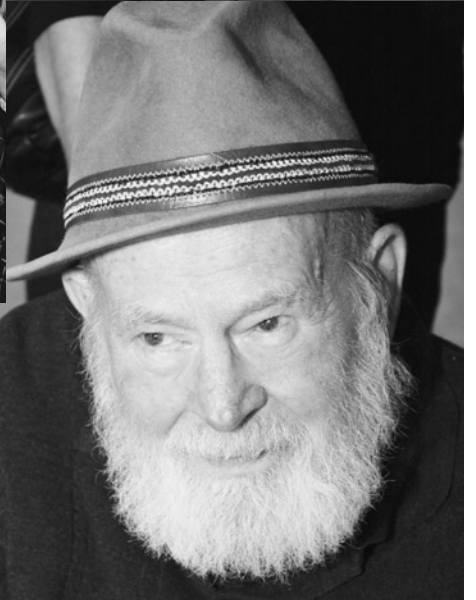
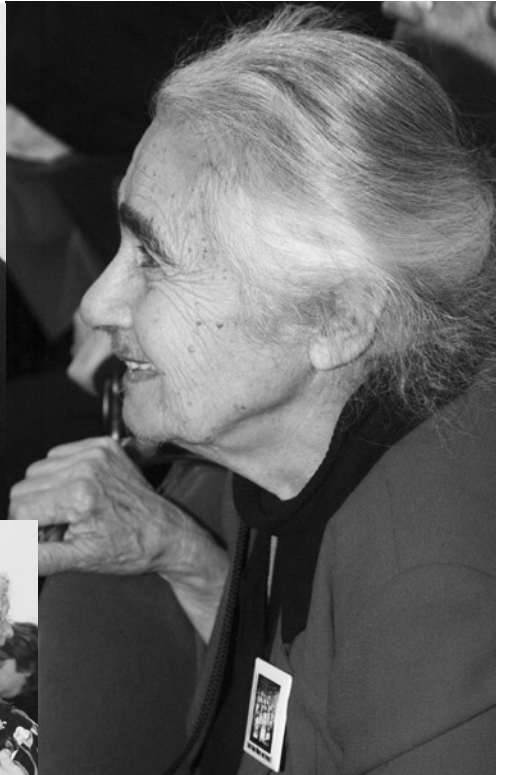
# Bay Area Reunion Celebrating the Vets, Family photos by Richard Bermack



The Bay Area Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade gathered with family and friends for their annual reunion on March 3, celebrating community and raising money for the National Monument. The keynote speaker was Russ Ellis, and there was a musical performance by Barbara Dane, Bruce Barthol, and Barrett Nelson.



# Family, and Friends



# Emotions in the Archives

Continued from page 8

letters simply say that Gurney had tried to find someone to marry them but fortunately had failed. Gurney's memoir, by contrast, describes how they improvised an idyllic marriage ceremony, huge party, and wedding night at an abandoned farmhouse, with an ox cart garlanded in flowers. From this moment on, Gurney refers to Toby as his "wife." One can understand why Toby might not have wanted to tell her family.

The photographs conserved by Toby after the war also tell a different story than her frivolous letters. They include a high proportion—about a third—of photographs of Spaniards: nurses, soldiers, and above all civilians, contradicting the letters' apparent lack of interest. The very ordinariness of some of the photos she chose to keep—a standard landscape, a picture of a flower-seller—suggests an engagement with the country. Other photographs show how the nurses fraternized with the local population. One depicts nurses mixing with civilians at a dance beneath a Republican banner. Another shows Toby and her fellow volunteer Sana Goldblatt posing with unidentified soldiers and children in 1937; on the back Toby has written, "Taken at a near-front village and kids are the same the whole world over. Dec. 15 (Teruel)." Especially eloquent is a tiny portrait of a peasant woman: this is not a photograph of an objectified ethnic "other" but of a subject, full of individuality and life, who interpolates the viewer.

Very different are the letters from and (mostly) to Philip's siblings Max and Rose, charting their attempts to ascertain whether Philip is dead or

possibly in a Franco prison. These letters are heart-rending because of the obligation to use formal language and edit the emotions out. The correspondence—with Congressman Robert Wagner, the State Department, International Red Cross, Zionist Organization of America, Republican Defense Ministry, US Ambassador to Republican Spain, Franco Government's Ambassador in Washington, and US Consulate General in postwar Barcelona—persists from February 1938 through April 1941. The replies monotonously repeat that there is no information about Philip—apart from two of March and October 1938, respectively reporting him captured by the

then in Barcelona. He also tells his brother Max that he is working in Barcelona, but he is more frank about his political motives. In a letter to Max of June 19, Philip apologizes for leaving "the way I did," but evidently he can't say this to his father. Harry appears to be the only fellow radical in the family, who can be told that Philip is fighting on the front. We now understand why Toby doesn't talk about Philip in her letters to Jenks and Max prior to his disappearance. Philip's letters show him getting increasingly screwed up by the difficulty of maintaining the lies. As he notes to Max (June 19), "Letters are very difficult affairs to write." On July 15, having heard that his father is trying to get

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*In the ALBA collection one does not have to look very hard: the emotions are everywhere.*

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Nationalists at Brunete on July 15, 1937 (from the Republican Defense Ministry) and rumored killed at Belchite in August 1937 (from the State Department). Both reports contradict Toby's information. One can sense, through the tenaciousness of the correspondence and the bureaucratic language of the replies, Max's and Rose's desperation at hitting their heads against a brick wall.

After reading this formal correspondence, it is an emotional experience for the researcher to read Philip's own letters home to his father and his brothers Max and Harry, from April 28 through July 15, 1937. Philip's letters to his father are excruciatingly short, describing the weather and saying that he is working in Paris and

him repatriated, an exasperated Philip instructs Max and Jenks to tell his father he's away from the fighting in Valencia. In a letter to Harry on the same day, in which he talks openly about the fighting, he looks forward to killing his first Nationalist. This is his last letter; he disappeared 9 days later.

Stoler's reply to the question I mentioned at the start of this essay was: "The emotions are there [in the archive], if you know where to look for them." In the ALBA collection one does not have to look very hard: the emotions are everywhere. We should treat them not as something that obstructs our access to the facts, but as historical evidence in their own right.

■

the mayor of Burgos, Juan Carlos Aparicio Pérez, met with a group of U.S. college students studying at the University of Burgos under the aegis of Purchase College, State University of New York, and the University of California–Davis. As he spoke to the students in his office, he stunned them by pointing to his desk and proclaiming how “proud I am that this desk was once used by Generalissimo Franco.” It was an offensive moment, at which I was present.

A few blocks from the Burgos Cathedral stands Franco’s former headquarters, which remains a military installation. On the front of the building is a plaque commemorating General Mola’s taking possession of Burgos; nearby is a memorial tablet praising Franco. Although now shielded by transparent plastic coverings because of red paint that was splattered by anti-Franquists, they stand as symbols of the Franco years. One can shop at any commercial philatelist in Burgos and purchase postage stamps from the 1940s to the mid-1970s which have Franco’s visage on them, listen to older citizens (many of whom come out on Franco’s birthday and offer the fascist salute) complain that streets once named for personalities of the Franco regime should not have been renamed (not all have), or hear citizens proclaim that the repression and deaths attributed to Franco are lies or exaggerations. Indeed, in the summer of 2006, while giving a lecture to students on Franquist oppression in a café on the Plaza Mayor, I was verbally accosted by a young man who proclaimed that nothing of the kind ever occurred. The Law of Historical Memory is

not fully endorsed in Burgos.

No matter what happens over time, the everlasting nature of Franco’s memorialization in Burgos will remain. That is because of the monument to Spain’s national hero, El Cid, the 11<sup>th</sup> century Castilian warrior who began his military exploits in Burgos. His iconic militaristic virtues are captured in the 1140 epic *The Poem of the Cid*. He is seen to be a national hero who challenges authority, brings about extraordinary military results, and lets nothing stand in his way. On its own, the statue simply represents El Cid and would not appear to have any direct correlation with Franco. But that is not the case. For Franco saw himself as a contemporary El Cid and was intent on burnishing his reputation for posterity by connecting himself with this historical individual. Indeed, in 1949 Franco commemorated his victory over the Republic in the Burgos Cathedral where El Cid is entombed.

On July 23, 1955, Franco came to Burgos for the inauguration of the installation of the statue, whose construction he had ordered. The massive metal structure depicts El Cid in military regalia, astride his horse, sword drawn, ready to thwart all opponents, embarking on one of his military feats. It sits in the center of the city at a spot that during Franco’s era was known as the Plaza de Miguel Primo de Rivera, honoring the despotic general who ruled Spain from 1923 to 1930 and whose name is carved into the entrance wall of the Burgos Cathedral.

Franco, like El Cid, was a man of small stature. Yet the statue portrays a giant of a man. Franco viewed El Cid’s exploits as akin to his own

wartime feats. The monument dominates the plaza, and because it lacks any obvious connection with Franco, it is likely to remain in Burgos as a reminder of his leadership. It is doubtful that it will be removed under the Law of Historical Memory.

As the world commemorates the Spanish holocaust set in motion by Franco 70 years ago, recounts the exploits of those who battled Franco in the cause of democracy, and recalls the victims of Franco’s terror, one must also remember that even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some Spanish cities and many Spaniards cannot bring themselves to discuss Franco’s despotism. Those who are leading the effort to cleanse Spain must grapple not only with obvious symbols, but also with the subtle relics that remain under cover of other venues.

The defrancoization of Spain must be an ongoing effort no matter which political party controls the national government. Public and private institutions must be prepared to continue this national endeavor. Invoking legislation, using litigation, opening minds through education and the media, making use of the cinema and literature, identifying symbols or, where it can be done, discarding them, and continuing a national conversation on the awful significance of Franco’s purposes is vital if Spain is to be rescued from the burden of that era. Those heroes, Spanish and foreigners who fought against Franco, those executed for their political beliefs or psychologically or physically scarred, and those hundreds of thousands who fled to France at the conclusion of the civil war to live a life of exile, deserve no less. ■



# FACING FASCISM

Continued from page 2



studies professor at Montclair State University, examined short films on New York City in the Thirties. On April 20, filmmaker Julia Newman screened her documentary, *Into the Fire: American Women in the Spanish Civil War*, at the City University of New York Graduate Center. And on April 25, the exhibit "Art and Politics: Posters From the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939" opened at the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library at New York University; it closes August 15.

"Facing Fascism" is open through August 12. Public programs ranging from screenings to concerts to panel discussions will continue through the summer. For information about upcoming events, contact the Museum of the City of New York at [www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org)



and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives at [www.alba-valb.org](http://www.alba-valb.org).

“Facing Fascism” is a collaborative project of the Museum of the City of

New York, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, and Instituto Cervantes New York. Lead funding comes from the Puffin Foundation,

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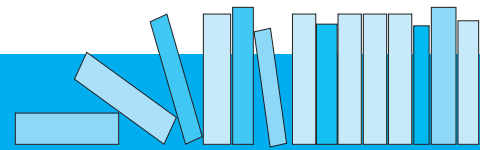
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## An Anarchist Classic

**La CNT en la revolución española.** José Peirats Valls. 3 volumes. Edited by Chris Ealham. Hastings, East Sussex: Meltzer Press-Christie Books, London: Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies, 2001-2006.

**By Andrew H. Lee**

José Peirats's study has long been a standard source for information on the Spanish anarchists. Now, a half-century later, we are treated to a translation by Paul Sharkey and Christopher Ealham that, because of the added material provided by Ealham, is effectively new and much enhanced.

Peirats's text is an internal history, one that is fiercely critical not only of the CNT's ideological opponents, but also of the organization itself. Peirats miraculously reconstructs a history of the vanquished despite the fact that the documentation was scattered around the globe. Furthermore, as a militant anarchist and a former secretary-general of the libertarian movement, he was unable to travel to Salamanca to see the documentation and the material seized by the Francoists. The original work was published in three volumes from 1951 to 1953.

Peirats traces the history of the CNT and its evolution during the course of the war. He deals with the various factions and their internal conflicts, notably that involving four anarchist ministers from November 1936 through May 1937. Unlike many other accounts, he continues the his-

tory past the May Days to the very end of the war; close to half of the text deals with events after May 1937. Furthermore, a great deal of attention is devoted to economic matters. Peirats quotes extensively from documents that he tracked down across the globe. The internal economic conflict is crucial to understanding the widening rift within the Popular Front before May 1937, as the anarchists increasingly viewed Negrín in a negative light because of his activities as the Republican finance minister.

Negrín was determined to prevent the CNT ministers from achieving anything, and he obstructed the collectives from obtaining much needed (and allocated) financial resources. Thus the conflict that erupted in May 1937 grew out of domestic and internal struggles that predated the war, rather than purely external Soviet machinations, as many non-Hispanists continue to argue. This is not to downplay the role of the USSR, but rather to emphasize that

it was an overwhelmingly Spanish conflict and that the Soviets were used by the Spanish and vice versa.

There are a few problems with the new edition, but they are minor compared to the wealth of information that this publication provides. And the English edition has some decided advantages over the previous Spanish ones. It has a useable index and editorial additions by Ealham. His notes provide extensive biographical information, much of it previously difficult to find. His introductory essays in each volume provide (1) the history of this history, (2) a biography of Peirats, and (3) an essay and bibliography of English language works on Spanish anarchism. These are invaluable sources for scholars as well as for the lay reader.

The English-speaking world has had to wait over 50 years for a complete translation of Peirats's text. The added material by Chris Ealham has made it well worth the wait. ▀

Andrew H. Lee is the Librarian for History, Politics and European Studies at New York University, where he is completing his doctorate in Spanish history.

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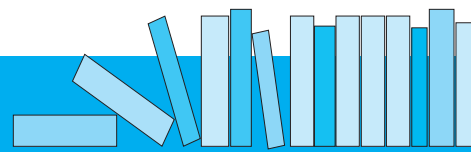
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## A Mystery of Spanish Exile

**Constancia de la Mora in War and Exile.** By Soledad Fox. Sussex Academic Press, 2007.

**By Shirley Mangini**

Constancia de la Mora worked as a press censor for the Spanish Republic during the civil war. She published her autobiography, *In Place of Splendor* (1939), while in exile in New York. Her primary purpose in writing the book was to garner sympathy in the United States for the doomed Republic. Through her groundbreaking research, Soledad Fox reveals many previously unknown facts and contradictions about de la Mora's life in New York and later in Mexico, most importantly, that she did not actually write *In Place of Splendor*.

An enormously popular book, *In Place of Splendor* was written, according to Fox's sources, by leftist writer Ruth McKenney. De la Mora never acknowledged this in the book. In addition, in order to appeal to an American audience, she withheld information about her role in the Communist Party and her affiliations with many communist activists and functionaries in Spain and the Soviet Union.

*In Place of Splendor* was conceived as a melodrama in which the "aristocrat" Constancia, after becoming politically aware of the injustices of Spain's political system as a child, became a renegade to her class and a selfless "Republican" activist. Fox demystifies much of this. According to Fox, de la Mora was of the upper

class, but not an aristocrat. She became politically committed only after she left her first husband and met her future spouse, the Communist aviator Ignacio Hidalgo de Cisneros.

De la Mora was well connected with wealthy and powerful sympathizers in New York. However, Fox describes her fall from grace in the United States when, after the signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact in August 1939 and in the midst of the anti-Soviet sentiment that followed, her key supporter, Eleanor Roosevelt, apparently began to suspect her Communist ties.

De la Mora was living in Mexico at the end of 1939. When she decided to return to New York to speak on behalf of the Spanish refugees in France, who were being deported back to Spain, her visa was denied. At this time, de la Mora appears to have become disheartened about Spain's destiny and her own activism. She and Hidalgo de Cisneros divorced, and Constancia became a folk art expert and started a bed and breakfast hotel in her home.

De la Mora often traveled with friends. On one of these trips, which she took with an American woman she barely knew, she was killed in a suspicious accident. Fox alludes to other bizarre deaths of Constancia's friends and colleagues: Communist photographer Tina Modotti died suddenly, possibly of poisoning; de la Mora's colleagues at the Soviet embassy in Mexico City, where she worked, were killed in a plane crash.

This is a highly provocative book. Just as it brings to light myriad

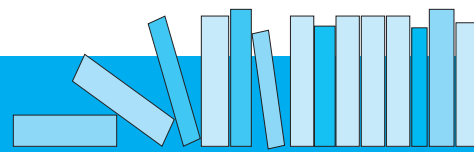
mysteries surrounding de la Mora's peripatetic life, it raises many other intriguing questions. For instance, why did de la Mora avoid giving credit to her ghostwriter, and why didn't McKenney insist that she reveal the truth about authorship of *In Place of Splendor*? What motivated de la Mora to go on a trip with a conservative American woman whom, from Fox's descriptions, de la Mora appears to have loathed?

Fox suggests that de la Mora became intransigent and capricious in her last years. No doubt, like many of her fellow exiles, she suffered from the psychological trauma that those who had lost their homeland and loved ones experienced, and her anguish was complicated by her feeling of impotence. One can only imagine how deeply confounded and miserable she must have been when she realized that she could not help the Spaniards suffering in Spain and France and when, after World War II, all hope that Franco would be overthrown disappeared. ▀

Shirley Mangini has just completed a manuscript on the Republican artist Maruja Mallo.

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## Spanish Anarchists

**Anarchism, the Republic, and the Civil War in Spain, 1931-1939.** By Julián Casanova. Translated by Andrew Dowling and Graham Pollok, revised by Paul Preston. Routledge, 2005.

By Daniel Kowalsky

Julián Casanova's landmark study of Spanish anarchism was first published in Spain in 1997. This long overdue and lovingly prepared translation now takes a place of pride in what has become the most important English-language series of new research on modern Spanish history. Edited by Paul Preston and Sebastian Balfour, the 15 volumes already produced for Cañada Blanch Studies on Contemporary Spain reflect well on the Hispanist circle at the London School of Economics. At a time when the most challenging or original research on civil war topics is being carried out in Spain and disseminated exclusively in languages of the Iberian peninsula, the Cañada Blanch series enables Anglo-Saxon readers to participate in exciting advances in the historiography.

A professor of modern history at the University of Zaragoza, Casanova has perhaps the least tendentious approach in a crowded field of works on the topic. His study displays no obvious party sympathies, opting instead for a global interpretation that takes into account conflicting interpretations and a fresh analysis of key events in the rise and demise of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labor,

or CNT). The author's overarching concern is to explain why, on the one hand, European anarchism had its greatest success in 1930s Spain, and why, on the other, Spanish anarchism never reemerged after Franco's victory.

Casanova traces the development of the movement from the late-1920s to the end of the civil war. Under the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, the divisively moderate views of the CNT leadership led to the creation of the secretive—and combative—Federación Anarquista Ibérica (Federation of Iberian Anarchism, or FAI). The split between the CNT and FAI increased with the declaration of the Republic in 1931; part of the CNT welcomed the progressive legislation, while the FAI continued to denounce collaboration with any "bourgeois" regime. A wave of strikes and violent demonstrations followed, culminating in the October 1934 uprising in Asturias. Casanova reveals how, in the elections of 1936, many anarchists ignored the established policy of abstention and instead voted for the Popular Front.

Given their strained relations with the Republic and shabby treatment during the civil war, anarchists showed little heart for a struggle that few identified as their own. Yet the war was a backdrop for the most significant advances in the movement, including a high percentage of worker collectivization in parts of Catalonia and Aragon. Together with economic reorganization came a palpable enthusiasm for cultural revolution, which Casanova describes

without hyperbole. For those familiar with Orwell's account of revolutionary Barcelona, some of the conclusions here will be surprising.

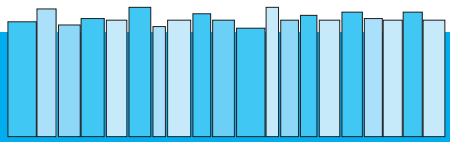
Two additional features of this fascinating book deserve highlighting. The annotated bibliographical appendix makes the volume essential for students and teachers. This brief essay guides the reader through recent literature on the topic, identifies competing methodologies, and suggests avenues for further investigation.

Finally, the epilogue is unusually illuminating and poignant. Without lapsing into sentimentality, Casanova describes the pitiful fate that awaited revolutionary activists following the fall of the Republic. It was not enough that anarchists were herded together among the vanquished, persecuted, imprisoned or often executed. "All that was positive in the experiences in that period when agriculture was reorganized and power redistributed," Casanova writes, "gave way to the weight of negative memories." During the final years of Francoism, the movement was all but broken.

Anarchism's remarkable success in Spain during the civil war had as its corollary a striking loneliness in defeat. The old revolutionaries could not find international political allies during their long sojourn in the wilderness, for the simple reason that there were none. Spain was anarchism's last best hope, and it died there in spring 1939. ▣

Daniel Kowalsky is author of *La Unión Soviética y la guerra civil española: una revisión crítica* (Barcelona, 2003). He teaches at Queen's University-Belfast.





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The campaign to install the National Monument to all the volunteers of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade continues with great success. Every day we get closer. As we go to press, the artists have begun inscribing historic photographic images on the onyx panels. These panels will be attached to a steel framework that stands over eight feet high and extends 40 feet. There's a lot of labor involved to finish the job. The monument designers estimate everything will be completed during the fall of 2007. Then we'll have a big inauguration ceremony near the monument site, close to the Ferry Building and Embarcadero in San Francisco.

But we still need \$50,000 to complete the project and ensure that the memory of the Lincoln Brigade will endure after the vets have passed, even after the memory of those of us who know them have passed. In other words, this monument is about the future, too.

If you've already contributed to this campaign, please consider an additional gift.

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