

# The Volunteer

“...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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Moe Fishman at his desk in the VALB office, planning the annual veterans' reunion, April 2001. Moe dedicated his life to VALB, acting as the national spokesman for the vets for over 50 years. See Memory's Roster, page 20. Photo by Richard Bermack.

## Letter From the Editor

We're in a season of milestones.

ALBA's exhibition, "Facing Fascism: New York & the Spanish Civil War," came down from the walls at the Museum of the City of New York in August after attracting many thousands of spectators (see page 1). A facsimile version of the show is bound for Spain, our first exhibition to be seen in that country.

Soon afterward, a facsimile version of "They Still Draw Pictures: Children's Art of the Spanish Civil War" will also be on display in several Spanish cities.

Meanwhile, on the west coast, plans for the inauguration of the new memorial to the volunteers of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade are aiming for the late autumn. Everyone is asking for the exact date, but we can't be precise just now.

The basic contract with the city of San Francisco has been negotiated and signed; the funds are almost at hand. Note the word "almost."

ALBA is required to provide the city with at least \$100,000 in maintenance funds for the next 20 years. That represents our major shortfall.

But the primary delay comes from the technical side of the project: because the memorial requires an innovative process to inscribe visual images and text on the onyx panels, no one can accurately predict how long the work will actually take. There are 40 feet of panels, eight feet high, that have to be prepared and inscribed.

We expect to unveil this glorious monument by December—it could be sooner—and we'll give our subscribers as much advance notice as possible when we set the exact date.

We are also launching a new collaboration with the Bay Area Paul Robeson Centennial Committee: the first installment of a graphic story about Paul Robeson, African Americans, and the Spanish Civil War. It starts in this issue. It will end with a 28-page booklet suitable for distribution to students, along with teaching tools on the subject. Stay tuned for the next exciting installment!

Lastly, we note the passing of the VALB icon, Moe Fishman. It's been almost 20 years since he led me through the streets of New York to meet veterans of the Spanish Civil War who had stories to tell. Afterward, he'd make me meals and give me a place to sleep. His own stories were honest and accurate. He was a fact-checker's dream. Moe, there's still more I want to ask.

—Peter N. Carroll

## The Volunteer

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Veterans of the  
Abraham Lincoln Brigade

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Dear Friends,

I don't know how to express my sorrow; with Moe's death, we've lost a part of ourselves. I write to you, in my own name and on behalf of the Association of Friends of the International Brigades, to express our sorrow and to ask that you convey our condolences to all of our colleagues in VALB and ALBA.

I think Moe led a beautiful life, because he fought for just ideals, the ideals that he maintained throughout his life. We Spaniards will always be grateful to him for bringing those ideals here during his youth, to defend the cause of liberty, democracy and social justice. And for remaining ever loyal to this land in which he endured a cruel war, trying to defend it from fascism. Those of us born later, who came to Moe afterwards, have always seen in him an example of solidarity, a friend who always gave sage advice, and who at times asked difficult but necessary questions. He was a cordial and profoundly human being.

It has been a privilege for us to know him, and we will always remember him as an example of international solidarity. He was truly magnanimous and his humanity knew no borders; these attributes are the only ones on which we can build a future. We will do everything we can to keep his memory alive and to transmit it to future generations.

Our dear friend Moe, thank you, and ¡Salud!

Ana Perez

# SCENES FROM AN EXHIBITION

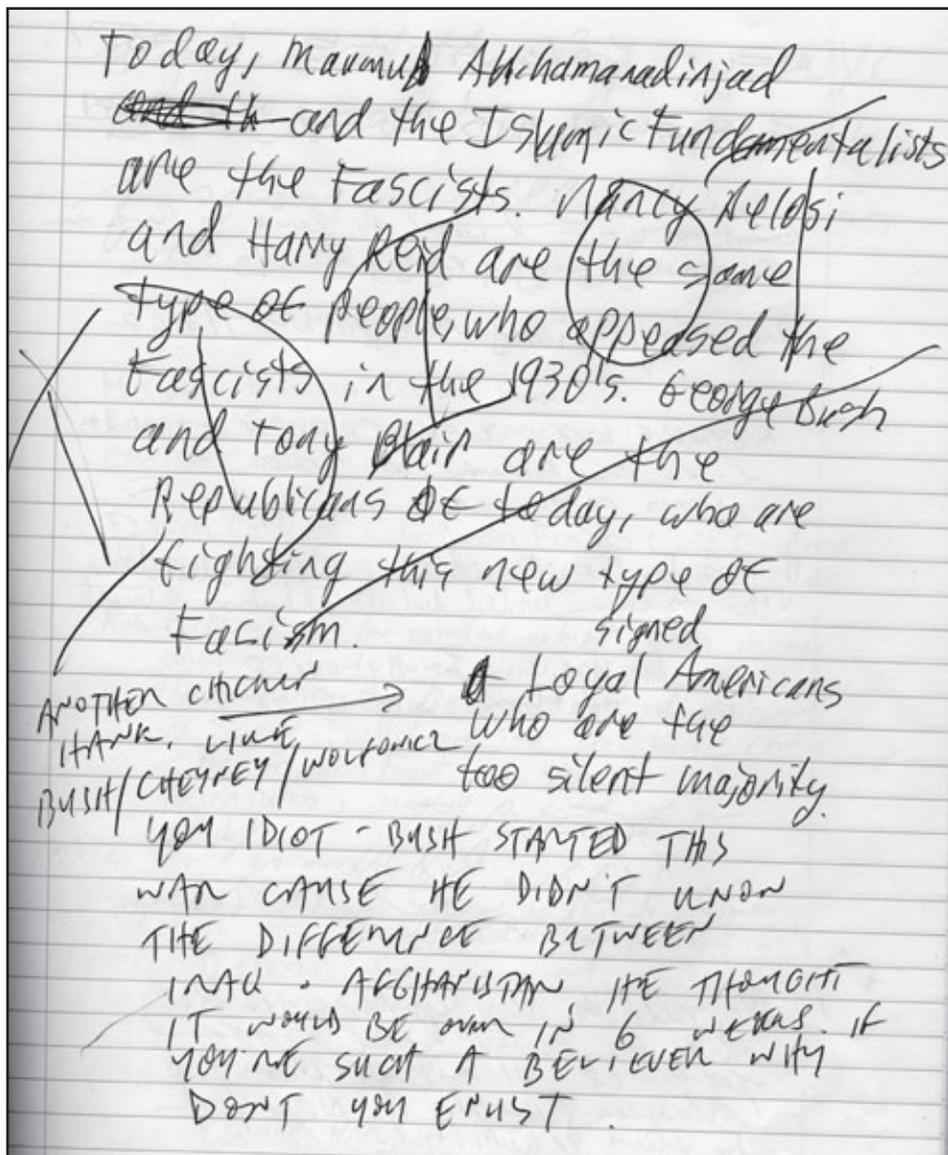
By James D. Fernández

Some came from as nearby as Astoria, Williamsburg, and East Harlem. Others traveled all the way from Canton, Milwaukee, Greensboro, Chicago, San Diego, and San Francisco. Joining their ranks were men and women who journeyed from as far away as Australia, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, Slovenia, Scotland, Switzerland and Uruguay. They expressed themselves in English, Spanish, French, Catalan, German, Italian, Japanese, and Portuguese. All the members of this remarkably diverse group of men and women had one thing in common: they all volunteered to write comments in the first volume of the guest book of the exhibition "Facing Fascism: New York and the Spanish Civil War," which was on view at the Museum of the City of New York from late March until mid-August.

The show was seen by tens of thousands of individuals from all over the world. Thousands more have attended the parallel public programs—lectures, film screenings, concerts, and seminars—mounted by the museum. Hundreds of teachers and students have also benefited from special guided tours and teacher development initiatives coordinated by the museum. Many of these guests have taken a moment to leave a record of their visit to "Facing Fascism" by jotting something down in the guest book.

It's difficult to characterize suc-

James D. Fernández is co-editor with Peter N. Carroll of the exhibition catalogue, *Facing Fascism: New York & the Spanish Civil War* (New York University Press).



cinctly the heterogeneous inscriptions they have left behind, which range from simple, graffiti-like "I-was-here" annotations to paragraph-long reflections and, occasionally, counter-reflections. There is, moreover, a good deal of contradiction among the responses. "Inspiring" and "very depressing"; "uplifting and "tragic"; "impartial" and "horribly one-sided," "informative" and "disingenuous." These are just some of the contradictory characterizations that appear on the 75-odd pages of the book, roughly

covering the first eight weeks of the show's run at the museum.

For the curators of the show, the proximity of the exhibited past (just 70 years ago) represented both a great challenge and a great opportunity. And one thing shared by many of the more substantial entries in the guest book is precisely a strong sense of immediacy or urgency. These are the inscriptions that make one realize that for many of the museum's visitors, the history being chronicled is by no

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# EXHIBITION

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means some kind of remote, detached past, but rather a kind of unfulfilled promise or, perhaps, an open wound.

## Identification, memorialization

“Great for our time, but no pictures of my mom and dad.”

Apparently, some visitors came to the Museum of the City of New York fully expecting to find familiar faces portrayed in the exhibition. Not all were disappointed. “Facing Fascism” was obviously visited by many of the surviving veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and by scores of their friends and relatives. For most of these visitors, the exhibition represented a “long overdue” tribute to the men and women who had risked life and limb to go to Spain to stem the tide of fascism. These visitors tend to write “in memory” or “on behalf” of others and often express gratitude to the museum.

—Thanks for keeping the spirit and ideals of the brigadistas alive. And thanks for perpetuating the memory of my brother, Hy [Greenfield].

—In honor of my uncle Edward K. Barsky, I thank you for an excellent exhibit.

—In honor of my father Arthur Munday, member of the LB. I thank you for this wonderful exhibit.

—In memory of my uncle, Savino Martinez

—In memory of my father, Georges Adorian, who fought in the IB (Toronto)

—Congratulations and thank you from the family of Ben Leider and L R. Bradley.

—Very good. My grandfather died in Spain War.

—For Bill Lazarre aka Bill Lawrence, political commissar, Spain, ALB, Comrade

and Grandfather. For Bill Lazarre, my father. Thank you for this exhibit and all your work.

—On behalf of the families of the brigadistas who volunteered and never returned from Spain. Thank you for the moving and wonderful exhibit.

—I thank the MCNY for a job well done. My great uncle, Herminio Avilés Valencia, was a volunteer in Spain. He was wounded there and died as a result in the Presbyterian Hospital of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

—My husband Jack Penrod fought in Spain, [and I] loved the exhibit.

—I write this entry on behalf of veteran Hy Tabb, 93 years old, who was brought by his wife Tommy (Tamaara).

—My grandmother, Alice Wagnon, was a member of the Lincoln Brigade as a nurse. I have always admired her for this achievement, and I have traveled from California to see the “Facing Fascism” exhibit. Thank you MCNY for this tribute.

—This is my third visit. The exhibit seems even better each time. My father was in the ALB and yet I’ve learned so much from this exhibit. Such important work. History is a treasure and you have brought it alive.

—In memory of my father who came here from Cuba and fought in Spain.

—In honor of my brother-in-law who fought valiantly in Spain and returned wounded; a dom-dom bullet in his chest. God bless his memory.

—Great exhibit. Remembering my dad, vet, Robert Klonsky.

One of the signal contributions of the exhibition has been the documentation of the vast antifascist mobilization that took place in New York in the late-1930s. Though the 2,800 volunteers of the Abraham

Lincoln Brigade naturally enjoy a privileged place in the exhibition, the true protagonists of the exhibition are the tens of thousands of ordinary New Yorkers who took to the streets in defense of the Spanish Republic. These visitors and their descendents were also able to identify immediately with the scenes and events chronicled in the exhibition.

—My mother raised funds for the Abraham Lincoln Brigade!

—My father was in NY, coming from Chicago, to help load ships for Spain.

—Saturday night was “raising money in the New York subway” night. You came with your collection can, you paid your fare and made speeches on the train. Yes we believed in the fight for Democracy in Spain. We believed in Democracy for the world, and we still fight. Ruth, 87 yrs.

—An excellent presentation of this important historic moment in history. From one who shook the collection box calling out “Make Madrid the Tomb of Fascism.”

—In memory of the many times my Spanish mom and I screamed at German and Italian embassies: “Hitler and Mussolini, Keep your hands off Spain.”

—My older siblings were in Spain during this terrible civil war. I was touched and admire the volunteers of Lincoln Brigade, your courage gave many hope. Thank you for this exhibit!

—De una niña de la Guerra que se fue a Mexico pasando por Nueva York y pasando una semana en Ellis Island. [From a “child of the war” who went to Mexico, passing through New York and spending a week on Ellis Island.]

—Enhorabuena. As the wife of the son of an exiled Republican, and a New Yorker descended from Jewish immigrants,

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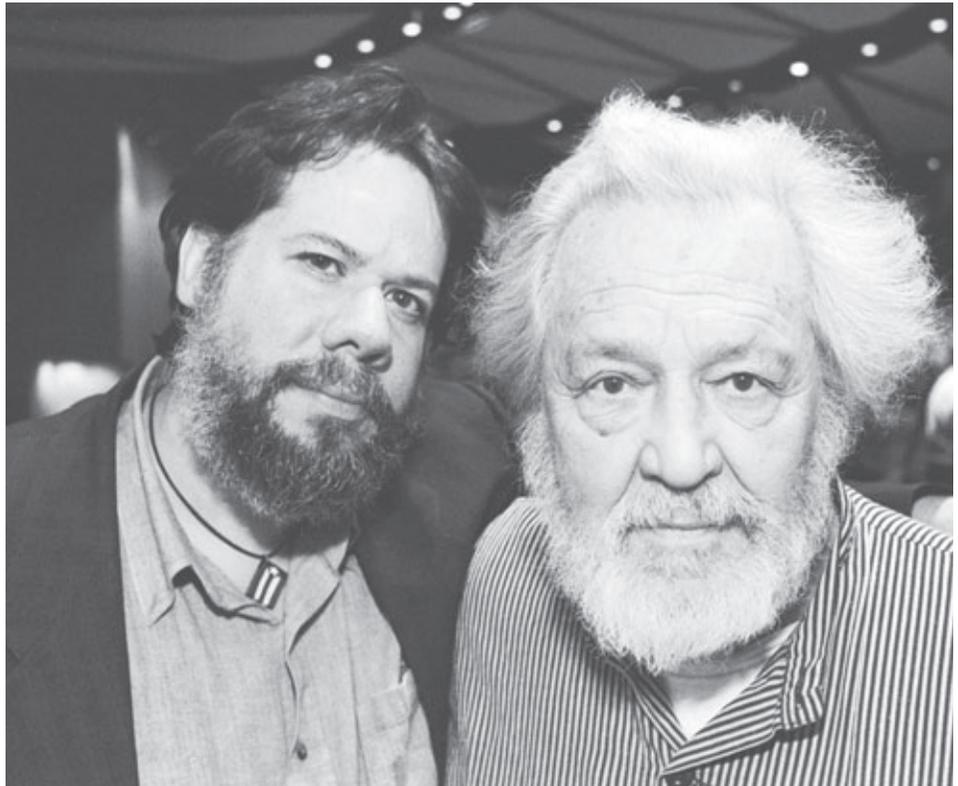
# Poet Martín Espada Presents Reed-Osheroff Lecture

By Joe Butwin

On May 30, 1937, a ship called *La Ciudad de Barcelona* was torpedoed by an Italian submarine within sight of the Spanish coast. Two survivors of the initial blast, Bob Reed and Abe Osheroff, swam ashore and fought to defend the Spanish Republic as part of a life-long commitment that would lead both men to Seattle. There, exactly 70 years later, on May 29, 2007, poet and activist Martín Espada delivered the second annual Reed-Osheroff Lecture at the University of Washington.

Espada, who has published 13 volumes as a poet, editor and translator and teaches creative writing at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, addressed a group of more than 150 people. In its broad diversity, the audience defied characterization as the band of usual suspects who are normally rounded up for poetry readings and academic lectures. Certainly there were students of poetry in the crowd and students of Spanish language and literature, along with some of their professors. There were also parents and grandparents and a liberal sprinkling of children, citizens, scholars, and activists. That would include Abe Osheroff, in a wheel chair. Bob Reed, who died two years ago, was represented by his son Bill and his daughter Janet.

Espada, his audience, and the title of his most recent book of poems—*The Republic of Poetry* (Norton, 2006)—remind us of the long association of poetry and politics that goes back to what writers at the time of the French and American Revolutions began to call “The Republic of Letters.” Writers



Martín Espada and Abe Osheroff, after Espada read “The Carpenter Who Swam to Spain” at a VALB reunion in 1999. Photo by Richard Bermack.

ceased to rely on the patronage of kings and aristocrats and turned to a vast new audience in the emergent democracy for a new kind of patronage. Spain in 1937 may have been such a country, a republic of poetry with emissaries at every front and a capital at Pablo Neruda’s Casa de las Flores, the House of Flowers, in Madrid.

That night in Seattle, Martín Espada called his talk “The Poetry of the Good Fight,” which, as he explained, “refers to the poems and poets that emerge from political struggle, but it also refers to the ways in which political activism makes life poetic. There are politics in the poetry; there is also poetry in the politics.” He reminded his audience of his, and their, roots in the poetry and prose of Walt Whitman, along with poetry of

Neruda, Cesar Vallejo and Miguel Hernandez that flourished in the Republic and the American contributions by Edna St. Vincent Millay, Genevieve Taggard, and the soldier-poet Edwin Rolfe.

Espada, clearly a citizen of the same Republic, also read from his own poems, including a tribute to Abe Osheroff and the others who swam to shore from the *Ciudad de Barcelona* and to his own father, who, like Abe and Bob Reed, was also a civil rights worker. Espada’s passion, his poetry, and the people who gathered in Savery Hall at the University of Washington that night show that in every corner of Bush’s America the Republic of Letters is alive and well. ▀

Joe Butwin is a professor of English at the University of Washington.

# Bay Area Vets Star at Film Screening

**A**s part of San Francisco's annual summer LaborFest, a July film festival and celebration of the city's labor history, ALBA and the Bay Area vets co-sponsored the screening of two documentary movies about the Spanish Civil War, drawing a large crowd to the Roxie Theater to see *Spanish Earth* (1937) and *Souls without Borders* (2006).

The older film, made by Joris Ivens and written by Ernest Hemingway as a propaganda piece in support of the Spanish Republic, presented the stark black and white footage that celebrated the heroic Spanish people in their fight against better-armed fascist insurgents. In his introductory remarks, Peter Carroll explained that the film had been screened at the White House exactly 70 years earlier in an effort to persuade President Franklin D. Roosevelt to support the Republic.

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Vets (l-r) Hilda Roberts, Nate Thornton, Dave Smith and Milt Wolff answering questions at the screening of *Souls without Borders*, produced by Miguel Angel Nieto and Tony Geist. Photo by Richard Bermack.

## Antifascist Monument in Burgos

By Char Prieto

**T**he city of Burgos in Spain is an historical place. It's well known for its monumental 13th century Gothic cathedral, the medieval castle, the Las Huelgas Monastery, and, above all, the Inquisition. If only the centuries old stones of these monuments could talk, we would hear about blood, massacres, repression, torture, and injustice.

Even today visitors can see at the entrance of Las Huelgas Monastery a sign that says: "In the year 1937 the First Fascist National Congress convened, uniting God and General Franco, with a pledge to give its service and lives of its members in the Holocaust for a free Spain." During the Spanish Civil War Burgos served as the base of Germany's Condor Legion. This city is a symbol of the Francoist crusade against liberalism, as well as the base of operations from where German planes left for the bombing of Guernica.

The walls of these historical monuments cannot talk, but the thousands of Republican victims of Franco's terror and despotic ideals can, and they have given personal testimony concerning the cruelty of the Fascist regime.

June 23, 2007, was an historic date for crusaders against Fascism. Finally the Antifascist Association of Ex-Political Prisoners unveiled a monument in Burgos dedicated to the victims of the Civil War and Franco's repression. One of the first words during the commemorative events was to give thanks to the International Brigades. This group of combatants was mentioned several times during the homage.

The mayor of Burgos, from the rightist Popular Party (Partido Popular), of course, was not present; instead there were several hundred antifascist supporters. ■

Char Prieto teaches at California State University, Chico.

### Irving Norman Exhibit

The paintings of Lincoln vet Irving Norman continue their national tour. The next stop for "Dark Metropolis: Irving Norman's Social Surrealism" is the Katzen Art Center at American University in Washington, DC, November 6 to January 27, 2008.

These meticulously detailed paintings reflect a troubled and turbulent world in which urban spaces and modern life are decimated by technology, poverty, and war. The show was curated by Scott Shields and organized by the Crocker Art Museum.

For more information call 202-885-ARTS (2787).



Antifascist monument at Burgos.

# George Watt Memorial Award Winners:

By Daniel Czitrom

ALBA is pleased to announce the winners of this year's George Watt Awards, established to honor the memory of this Lincoln vet (1914-1994), author, activist, and leading figure in creating and supporting ALBA. After his stint in Spain, George served in the Army Air Corps during World War II; his plane was shot down over Belgium and he escaped from behind Nazi lines with the help of local resistance fighters. To get a better sense of his remarkable life story and his passionate commitment to radical social change, take a look at his engagingly written 1990 memoir, *The Comet Connection: Escape from Hitler's Europe*.

The Watt Awards were designed to encourage student research and writing on the American experience in Spain, as well as on related topics in the Spanish Civil War and the larger history of anti-fascism.

For 2007, we began accepting work written in Spanish as well as English, an important part of our effort to make ALBA a more international presence. We received some two dozen entries this year, one third of which were written in Spanish. We had an especially strong group of undergraduate submissions.

This year's committee of judges consisted of Sebastiaan Faber (Oberlin College), Gina Herrmann (University of Oregon), and Daniel Czitrom (Mount Holyoke College).

ALBA is delighted to award two prizes of \$500 each, for one undergraduate essay and one graduate essay. We publish here brief abstracts of the winning papers. The full essays are posted on the ALBA/VALB website.

And this year's winners are:

**Graduate: Julie Prieto, Stanford University**, "Partisanship in Balance: *The New York Times* Coverage of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939"

**Undergraduate: Ashley Johnson, Mount Holyoke College**, "Healing the Wounds of Fascism: The American Medical Brigade and the Spanish Civil War"

*Abstract of:*

**"Partisanship in Balance: *The New York Times* Coverage of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939" by Julie Prieto**

**W**ith the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, Spain became a magnet for international journalists following the fortunes of the Second Republic.

of the three permanent reporters assigned to cover the Spanish Civil War for *The New York Times*. All veteran foreign correspondents, these three men, Herbert Matthews, Lawrence Fernsworth, and William Carney, competed within the structure of the paper to construct very different versions of Spanish events based on their own changing personal politics. Eschewing contemporary notions of journalistic objectivity, Herbert Matthews and Lawrence Fernsworth both wrote articles that were highly supportive of the Republic from their posts in Madrid and Barcelona respectively. While Lawrence had been a supporter of the Republic throughout the 1930s and was strongly in favor of increased regional autonomy, pro-Republican politics represented a departure for Matthews,

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*In newspapers and magazines, writers with a wide range of political affiliations offered competing visions of Spain...*

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In newspapers and magazines, writers with a wide range of political affiliations offered competing visions of Spain, presenting the country as both a symbol of democracy triumphant and of the political instability of revolution in the context of the international spread of communism. With its well-known commitment to foreign news reporting, *The New York Times* invested considerable reporting resources into Spain, assigning numerous temporary correspondents and three permanent reporters to the war in its opening days.

My paper explores the experience

who had been sympathetic to Mussolini and the Italian army. Previously stationed to Madrid, but assigned to Nationalist Spain through most of the war, William Carney also wrote highly partisan articles but was a strong supporter of Francisco Franco's Spain, often minimizing in his dispatches the role of foreign intervention in aiding the insurgents.

Rather than appear biased towards either side, this meant that editors at various levels of the *Times* were charged with creating "fairness" and "balance" by attempting to give

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# Prieto and Johnson

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equal weight to the reporters' divergent viewpoints. Even when this approach was shown to be flawed, as when William Carney's dispatches from Nationalist Spain were shown to be false in mid 1937, the *Times* continued to pursue the same editorial policy. This created a number of personal animosities among the reporting and editorial staff of the *Times*, and led Matthews in particular to become highly critical of news coverage during the war and its effect on public knowledge and opinion in the United States.

*Abstract of:*

## "Healing the Wounds of Fascism: The American Medical Brigade and the Spanish Civil War" by Ashley Johnson

In January 1937, under the jurisdiction of the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy, men and women such as Dr. Edward Barsky, Nurse Fredericka Martin, Nurse Salaria Kee, and hospital administrator/interpreter Mildred Rackley formed the American Medical Brigade to establish the first American hospital for the Loyalist troops in Spain. Catholics, Jews, African Americans, and many others joined from all walks of life to heal the wounds inflicted by Francisco Franco on the people of Spain.

These men and women sailed to Spain with high hopes and a fervent dedication to the Popular Front. Many letters home expressed their optimism, while their diary entries show a darker side of their experiences. In this very public war, they remained cheerful for the sake of the home front,

the hope of lifting Roosevelt's embargo, and for their own personal sanity. After all, in the Spanish Civil War a Red Cross did not represent medical asylum, but a target for Fascist bombers.

The story of the American Medical Brigade is one of heroism, internationalism, and allegiance to the Popular Front of the 1930s. For a brief time in history, Communists, Socialists, liber-

als, and simple anti-fascists joined together with one goal: the defeat of Franco. Behind their Party slogans and optimistic tales, medical personnel were normal human beings, subject to fear in the face of wartime violence. Their story displays the tensions between fervent political beliefs and the horrible reality of one of the bloodiest wars in world history. ■

## Bay Area Vets

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Roosevelt to intervene to save the Republic, but it had succeeded only in making FDR remark sadly, "Spain is the vicarious sacrifice of us all."

*Souls without Borders*, made by journalist Miguel Angel Nieto and Tony Geist, which was recently screened at the Seattle Film Festival, had its premiere in California with several of the members of the cast in attendance. The hour-long documentary won

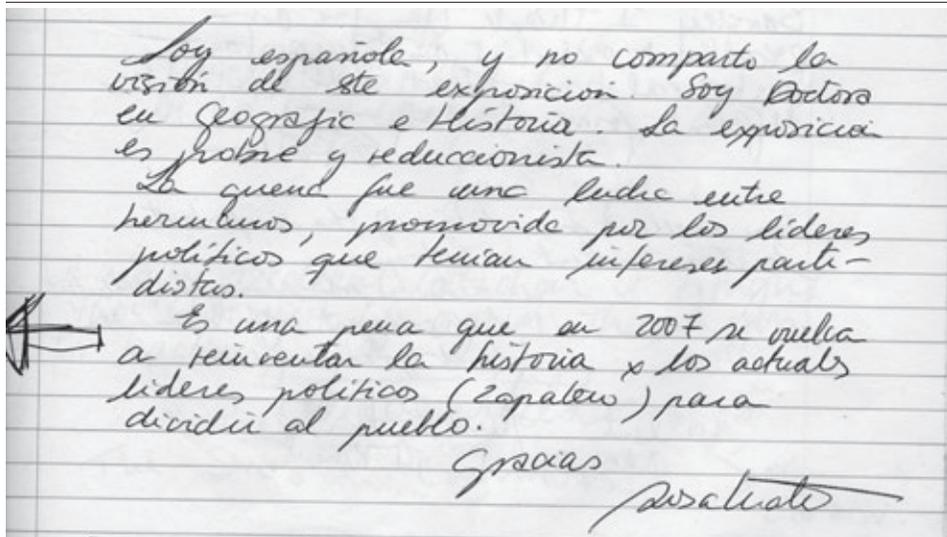
lively applause, but the audience came to its feet with cheers for four Lincoln vets—nurse Hilda Roberts, David Smith, Nate Thorton, and Milton Wolff—who spoke afterwards about their involvement in the Spanish Civil War and reaffirmed the value of a life of activism. Collectively, they presented a living history of the great struggles of the 1930s and an enduring spirit of anti-fascism. ■



Bay Area vets Hilda Roberts and Nate Thornton addressing the audience of *Souls without Borders*.

# EXHIBITION

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it was moving to see my worlds intersect in the space where moral conscience meets human solidarity and action.

## Relevance and Immediacy: Intervention and Appeasement

By chronicling the involvement of New Yorkers in the Spanish Civil War, "Facing Fascism" invites spectators to think about questions of intervention and appeasement in our day. The rhetoric of the Bush administration, which has tried to categorize opponents of the Iraq invasion as supporters of "appeasement," found its way into one entry in the guest book:

—Today, Maunanu Achamanadinjad and the Islamist Fundamentalists are the Fascists. Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid are the same type of people who appeased the Fascists in the 1930s. George Bush and Tony Blair are the Republicans of today, who are fighting this new type of fascism. Signed, Loyal Americans who are the too silent majority.

Another visitor wrote the word "Idiot" in large letters across this entry, and yet another commented, "Another chicken hawk, like Bush/Cheney/Wolfowitz." Several visitors expressed a very different reading of

the parallelisms between the 1930s and today:

—Remarkable exhibit.

Congratulations on a brilliant job. Impeach Bush-Cheney, fascists in residence.

—Now it's time to fight fascism here at home. Impeach and jail Bush, Cheney and the rest of Franco's successors in the White House.

—Excellent! Down with fascism—still alive in the 21st century.

## Sins of Omission

Many spectators chose to write about what they found "missing" in the exhibition: "Not a mention of Lorca, killed by Franco"; "Wonderful exhibit—but needed songs of the war and a huge copy of Guernica"; "Excellent but the songs are missing."

Others wrote to complain of the alleged "invisibility" of the non-communist left in the exhibition, or of the lack of attention to the ideological strife within the left. Some of these complaints seem to be made by sympathizers of the non-communist left, others by anti-communists and enemies of the left in general.

—Where are the anarchists and

trotskyists who died fighting vs. Franco? They are invisible in this exhibit and that's shameful.

—There was an anti-Stalinist left of some significance in this period that played an important role in the Spanish Civil War. You would not know that from this show, unfortunately.

—Unfortunately, the views presented here are most disingenuous—really lies—the Communists were no better than the Nazis

—A horribly one-sided view of history. Hardly a mention of communist atrocities or the soviet union's effort to wield control. I guess there are still unreconstructed communists and fellow travelers in NYC and on the museum's staff.

—According to the comments above, our society still harbors unreconstructed fascists who have learnt nothing from history. Viva la quince brigada.

—An excellent exhibit, although more emphasis could have been placed on the activities of the Soviet Secret Police in Spain, and on the Trotskyist critics of the Popular Front in New York. Nevertheless, a gem of an exhibit.

## Spaniards React to New Yorkers Reacting

How, or whether, to remember and memorialize the Spanish Civil War is a burning political question in Spain today. For this reason, the reactions of Spaniards that visited "Facing Fascism" transmit a strong sense of immediacy and urgency. The general contours of the debate about historical memory in Spain are nicely captured in the inscriptions spontaneously jotted down by Spanish tourists in the museum's guestbook.

—From a Spaniard born in 1941 and raised in Franco's Spain, thank you from

the bottom of my heart for then and for the exhibition now.

—Franco never supported Hitler's ideas. Viva España.

—Fascist! Lies! [in response to above, my translation]

—I don't know what you saw. But you must have been blind. [in response to above, my translation]

—I am a Spanish woman, and I don't share the vision of this exhibition. I have a doctorate in History and Geography. The exhibition is poor and reductionist. The War was a fight among brothers, spurred by political leaders pursuing party interests. It's a shame that in 2007 history is once again reinvented by current politi-

and who took action. [my translation]

—Thanks to the American volunteers who helped the Spanish people, and thanks especially to the women nurses that did their job taking care of children and the infirm. As usual, the people proved to be more admirable than the politicians pursuing their own interests. [my translation]

—Excellent work! As a Spaniard I feel deeply indebted with the men and women from New York who fought for an ideal.

—You Americans are not the saviors of the world. Only those who lived through that war can know what kind of torture it was. 30 years of dictatorship can't be summed up in a small room in a museum. I am not from Spain but my family is. Ah!

—It has been a surprise to meet this exhibition. I'm from Spain, from Basque Country. I didn't know anything about Abraham Lincoln's Brigade. Thank you very much to these NY-ers in my name and the rest of Spanish people. My grandma's family was death in Gernica's crime. Thanks.

—Thanks very much to all the Americans who decided to fight in my country against the fascism. Thanks very much. Spaniards are very proud of them and we will try that all generations never will forget them. ¡Vivan las Brigadas Internacionales!!

### Talking Back: Famous Last Words

Shortly after the inauguration of "Facing Fascism," *The New York Times* published a remarkably tendentious and crotchety review of the show. Dozens of responses were sent to the paper, but none were published. Some visitors chose to respond in the museum's guestbook. For once, the last words belong to them.

—Impressively organized exhibit, not as biased as the negative reviews have claimed.

—Great exhibit. Eddie Rothstein got it wrong in his *New York Times* review.

—Excellent! The *NYTimes* review was so unfair! You can see the conflict from all the points of view involved. Good luck with it.

—Bravissimo. Balanced. Unlike the *New York Times* review which did not review the exhibition as much as give an opinion of historical readings.

—Excellent show! Shame on the *New York Times*. Rothstein is a soul-less crank. History is complex, of course. Courage is not. ■

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## —Now it's time to fight fascism here at home. Impeach and jail Bush, Cheney and the rest of Franco's successors in the White House.

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cians (Zapatero) trying to cultivate divisiveness. [my translation]

—I'm also a Spanish woman with a doctorate in Contemporary History for the Autonomous University of Madrid, and this person that wrote above is what in Spain we call "a fascist." Memory must not disappear from Spain's history as Aznar's government attempted to do. Long live Socialist Spain! [my translation, in response to above]

—I too am Spanish and I think that this exhibition doesn't presume to talk about the causes of the War, but rather to demonstrate that the human spirit can be so grand and generous that you can fight even on behalf of people that you don't know, thousands of miles away. All of these testimonies of the Lincoln volunteers aren't the declarations of politicians, they are the statements of men and women who saw injustice and the horrors of fascism,

There are many things here that ought to be returned to Spain. [my translation]

—The "Homeland" (Patria) is the refuge of cowards. Franco was a patriot and a fascist, and for 40 years he subjugated us. Only with freedom have we Spaniards earned a place in the world. Yesterday, April 14, 2007, we commemorated the 71st anniversary of what the fascists destroyed. Long live the Republic! [my translation]

—Thanks to all the New Yorkers who went to our country when times were tough. Franco wasn't that bad, and the republicans weren't that good. There was good and bad on both sides. Unfortunately. ¡Viva España! [my translation]

—And there you are, lurking "in the middle," taking advantage of everything. People have to respect the legitimate regime, whether they like it or not!! [response to above, my translation]

# Blood Transfusion in the Spanish Civil

By Peter H. Pinkerton

**H**enry Norman Bethune was a Canadian surgeon of Scottish origin. His parents had wide interests in academia, the church, the arts, medicine and business. Bethune had wide interests in medicine, politics and the arts. He graduated in medicine in December 1916 in Toronto after being wounded while serving in Flanders in 1915. He received post-graduate surgical training in London and returned to North America, setting up a practice in Detroit. He was diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1926, from which he recovered, resolved to work in the field of chest surgery. He worked in Montreal for three years with Edward Archibald, one of the pioneers of chest surgery in North America. Archibald had also been one of the first to use blood transfusion in the Great War in 1915.

Bethune moved to Sacre Coeur Hospital in Cartierville near Montreal as head of the chest surgery service in early 1933. The patients he saw with Archibald would tend to be Anglophone middle class, whereas at Sacre Coeur they would be “charity” patients from the poor Francophone community. This experience exposed him to the juxtaposition of tuberculosis and poverty, and to the differences in treatment opportunities and outcome in the poor and well-to-do. Incidentally, we know he was using blood transfusion to treat patients at Sacre Coeur. His social conscience was aroused by these

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experiences, and by a visit to Russia, where he was impressed with the availability and effectiveness of treatment, given as a “right” to the individual, rather than as “charity.” Returning to Montreal excited by what he had learned in Russia and from his own experience, he formed the “Montreal Committee for the Security of the People’s Health.” Driven by Bethune’s energy and dedication, a comprehensive report was produced, advocating measures for delivery of health care services to enhance universal access and to mitigate injustices. The report was rejected both as an election issue in Quebec and by “organized medicine.”

Bethune was angry, frustrated and disappointed at the rejection of his proposals and was ready for some practical action reflecting his developing socialist and anti-fascist views. At this time, he was approached by the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy (CASD), which invited him to head a surgical team in Spain. He agreed to do so, although he had no clear idea what this surgical team might contribute. In early November, on his way to Madrid, he visited and was impressed by the Blood Transfusion Service established in Barcelona in September 1936 by Dr. Duran Jorda, which was supplying blood to a limited area around Barcelona.

In Madrid Bethune met with Henning Sorensen, a multi-lingual newspaper reporter of Danish extraction from Montreal, who was to act as his interpreter and liaison officer. With Sorensen, Bethune visited hospitals and met with surgeons from various organizations serving the Republican authorities and the

International Brigades. He became increasingly uncomfortable with the prospect of working within the administrative and political environment of these organizations. On his visits to hospitals and in discussions with surgeons he became aware of the very limited capacity for supplying blood for transfusion. He conceived the idea of a centralized transfusion service based in Madrid, providing blood for transfusion at the front. This was attractive in that he would have a clearly defined area of responsibility independent of authority and the organized surgical services. He laid his proposal before the Socorro Rojo (the only effective medical service at the time), which endorsed the idea. Funds were made available from the CASD.

On November 21, Bethune and Sorensen left for Paris and London, returning on December 6 to quarters assigned to them at 36 Principe de Vergara in Madrid, with supplies and equipment to establish the Madrid service, to be named the Servicio Canadiense de Transfusion de Sangre. Drivers, technicians, nurses and office staff were hired from both foreign volunteer and Spanish sources, including two Spanish physicians involved with the small transfusion service at the Madrid medical school. Volunteer donors were solicited through newspapers and radio with an overwhelming response.

The first delivery of blood for transfusion was made on December 23. The service expanded rapidly, with “about 10 gallons” (about 80 units) given in January 1937. Additional centers were opened in Valencia and Jaen; the staff increased to about 100, with 4,000 registered donors

# War: Dr. Norman Bethune

and 5 delivery vehicles. Five months after starting the service, Bethune's organization was supplying a front 1,000 km long. As many as 100 transfusions might be given in a single day at times of high military activity. It is clear that Bethune appreciated the need for prompt transfusion in the exsanguinating wounded and urged that transfusion be given as far forward as possible, in casualty clearing stations and field hospitals. Transfusions were often given in primitive circumstances and "cold storage" of blood was sometimes provided by immersion in mountain streams.

However, all was not well within the "Instituto." In March 1937 the Sanidad Militar took over responsibility for medical services (including Bethune's) and moved to appoint a three-man committee (Bethune and 2 Spanish physicians) to oversee the service, which was re-named the "Instituto Hispano-Canadiense de Transfusion de Sangre." This change was in conflict with Bethune's temperament and intolerance of outside authority over his affairs. On April 12 he cabled the CASD demanding the recall of Canadian personnel.

Furthermore, Bethune's personal conduct was causing difficulties. The pressure of supporting his transfusion service, with its wide range of operations, and giving many transfusions himself was affecting his behavior. He was short-tempered, drinking excessively, and promiscuous in his sexual activities. His Swedish secretary (and lover) was suspected of spying on the Republican side, and Bethune was suspected by association. This suspicion on the part of skeptical Republican authorities

was enhanced by Bethune's filming his activities (*Heart of Spain*) to promote fund raising in Canada.

The CASD sent a delegation to review Bethune's operation and decided, with the encouragement of Sorensen and other Canadians working with Bethune, to recall Bethune to Canada, on the excuse that a lecture tour would help fund-raising at home. Bethune returned to Canada in May 1937 to an enthusiastic welcome and a highly successful lecture tour. In January 1938, he left for China with a Canadian-American Medical Unit, where he joined the Communist forces under Mao Zedong. He died of septicemia from a cut sustained during surgery in November 1938.

The Instituto continued to function until the end of the war under the direction of Dr. Vincente Goyannes and later Dr. Valentin de la Loma, including the involvement of Sorensen and other Canadian members of Bethune's team. Overall, about 5,000 units of blood were transfused, accounting for almost 80% of the transfusions during the war.

Bethune's main contribution to blood transfusion was to demonstrate that the systematic collection and distribution of blood on a large scale for transfusion near the front was possible and could be quite quickly organized. He clearly realized the importance of prompt transfusion and went to great lengths to ensure availability near the battlefield. Curiously, his contributions have received little published attention, including from those who were well aware of his activities. Reginald Saxton, a surgeon with the British contribution to the International

Brigades, not only was visited by Bethune (offering transfusion support) and visited Bethune's service in Madrid, but also published a description of Bethune's service in Madrid without mentioning Bethune. Duran Jorda was well aware of Bethune's activities but never mentions him in his extensive accounts of transfusion in Spain in the late 1930s. British authors, preparing for the outbreak of hostilities with Germany in 1939, were well aware of the transfusion experience in Spain reported by Saxton and Duran Jorda (who by then was advising the British) but never mention Bethune.

Several factors are likely involved in the lack of recognition. Bethune never published a formal account of his activities, and our understanding of his contribution comes largely from indirect sources. His commitment was of short duration, and he had no established reputation in the field. His aggressive, irascible, boisterous and unconventional character may have compromised appreciation of his service by others. There is no question there were professional and political tensions between Bethune's (and perhaps other foreign medical) service(s) and the local medical establishment and the Sanidad Militar, which may also have tended to obscure the value of Bethune's contributions.

Bethune never again visited Spain, nor did he express any regret that he did not return to his transfusion service. An interest in developing homes for orphans of the Spanish Civil War proved transient and never came to fruition, being overtaken by his desire to serve the cause of the Chinese Communist forces. ■

What follows is the first episode of a new graphic serial about Paul Robeson's adventures with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in 1938. Three years later the vets made him an honorary member of VALB.

# **Robeson in Spain**

by Joshua Brown and Peter N. Carroll

## **Episode 1**

Brought to you in part by a grant to The ALBA Arts & Letters Program  
from The Puffin Foundation, Ltd.

Created in collaboration with The Bay Area Paul Robeson Centennial Committee

ROYAL ALBERT HALL,  
LONDON, DEC. 19, 1937-  
BEFORE A HUSHED,  
PACKED HOUSE, GREAT  
BRITAIN'S "MOST  
POPULAR SINGER"  
REACHES THE CLIMAX  
OF HIS PERFORMANCE-

TOTE THAT  
BARGE!  
LIFT THAT  
BALE!  
YOU SHOW  
A LITTLE  
GRIT AND  
YOU LANDS  
IN JAIL-

BLIMEY!  
DID YOU  
CATCH  
THAT?

SHHHH!

HE JUST CHANGED THEM-  
ROBESON CHANGED THE LYRICS  
TO "OL' MAN RIVER."

ROYAL ALBERT HALL  
BENEFIT CONCERT

I MUST KEEP  
FIGHTIN'  
UNTIL I'M  
DYIN'-

HE DID IT AGAIN!

ROBESON  
SPAIN

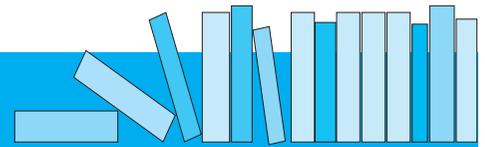
by JOSHUA BROWN + PETER N. CARROLL

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## Preston's Authoritative Account Updated, Expanded

*The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, and Revenge* by Paul Preston. Third edition, revised and expanded. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.

### By Sebastiaan Faber

It is difficult not to be in awe of Paul Preston. It is also hard not to envy him. Over the past 30 years, he has become the world-wide authority of Spanish Civil War studies. Not only is he an astonishingly prolific and successful scholar, an influential mentor of several generations of historians, and, as founder and director of the Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies, a crucial promoter and sponsor of scholarship on contemporary Spain. He is also an engaging author of bestselling books, a prodigious researcher, and a generous and tireless participant in electronic discussion forums, including the ALBA listserv. As one of my Spanish friends puts it admiringly: Paul es una máquina.

The book under review, which came out in Britain last year, is the third iteration of Preston's chronological, overarching account of the Spanish Civil War. (Previous editions came out at the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the war's outbreak,

Sebastiaan Faber, currently serving on ALBA's Executive Committee, is chair of the Spanish department at Oberlin College. He is author of *Exile and Cultural Hegemony: Spanish Intellectuals in Mexico, 1939-1975*.

in 1986 and 1996.) While thoroughly updated and about 50 percent longer than the second edition, the general points of Preston's narrative remain unchanged, as does his position in the protracted "war of words" that has marked the field since 1936.

First, against competing accounts from conservative scholars (such as Payne, Malefakis, De la Cierva and, more recently, Moa), Preston argues that the outbreak of the war in July 1936 cannot be blamed on the provocations from the radicalized

left. To be sure, Largo Caballero's revolutionary rhetoric was naïve and irresponsible. However, in the end, the right was unwilling to accept anything but a return to conditions before 1931 and was determined to use violence to set back the clock.

Nor does Preston agree with accounts proposed by historians sympathetic to the Anarchist and anti-Stalinist left (such as Esenwein or Bolloten) or right-wing anti-Communists (such as Radosh), who blame the defeat of the Republic on the violent suppression of social revolution by the Comintern-dictated policy of the Spanish Communist Party, allied with the middle-class

Republican parties. Preston readily concedes that the Communists' methods were "unnecessarily brutal." Still, he remains convinced that the line followed by Negrín, the Communists, and their Republican allies—creating a conventional army with a centralized command structure, prioritizing winning the war over making revolution, and keeping up the increasingly desperate fight against Franco in hopes of eventual foreign support from the West—was by far the most realistic, given the domestic and international situation.

Third, against "neutral" commentators who maintain that "atrocities were committed on both

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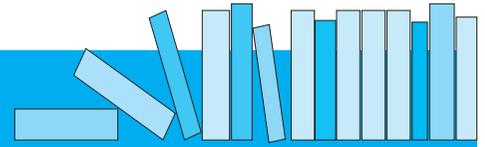
*"[T]here is little sympathy here for the Spanish right, but I hope there is some understanding." Paul Preston*

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sides," Preston convincingly argues that Francoist repression of the enemy was not only far more extensive, but also consciously planned and imposed from above, and therefore more morally reprehensible.

Finally, Preston maintains that, while the war was at base the result of long built-up Spanish problems and tensions, its development, duration, and eventual outcome were crucially influenced by leaders and representatives of foreign nations. The war would have evolved and ended quite differently if it had not been for the spineless Western democracies that hid behind the fig leaf of non-intervention,

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## History Matters: Teaching the Spanish Civil War Today

*Teaching Representations of the Spanish Civil War.* Ed. Noël Valis. New York: Publications of the Modern Language Association, 2007.

By Lisa Vollendorf

The Spanish Civil War looms large in numerous university courses offered by language and history departments. Whether those classes focus on the war years, the Franco period, or even 20th century Europe, instructors inevitably face difficult decisions about how to sift through the abundant materials available about the period. As Noël Valis points out in her excellent edited collection of essays, *Teaching Representations of the Spanish Civil War*, the difficulty of teaching the conflict relates as much to the contest for “truth” as it does to the seemingly infinite historical and artistic interpretations of the events of 1936-39.

Valis’ book is published by the Modern Language Association and therefore speaks most directly to language and literature professors. Yet readers of *The Volunteer* also will find much material of interest here and will likely come away from the volume with a long list of books, films, and ideas for further consideration. Although a specialized book for

Lisa Vollendorf is an associate professor of Spanish at California State University, Long Beach, and author, most recently, of *The Lives of Women: A New History of Inquisitional Spain*.

university teachers, it gives all readers the opportunity to engage with current thinking and to reflect on points of contact between Spanish fascism, violence, and democratic struggles and the same phenomena in other parts of the world since the 1930s.

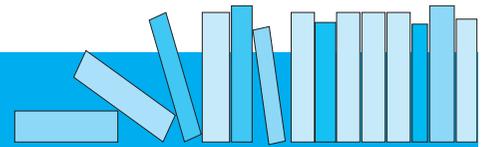
Valis begins the book with a question that may strike readers as purely rhetorical: “Why does the Spanish Civil War continue to haunt us?” As the beautiful exhibit at the City Museum of New York in 2007 decisively demonstrated, International Brigade volunteers, as well as their family members, friends, and supporters, will have highly personal, extraordinarily moving answers to this question. Similarly, the 36 essays in Valis’ book probe ideological, artistic, individual, group, and international responses to this decades-long haunting. For example, Valis’ short introduction contextualizes some of the key questions for discussions of the Spanish Civil War, including whether we can agree upon definitions of a just or a good war. Like the other contributors to the volume (including well-known scholars Antonio Cazorla-Sánchez, Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, David Herzberger, Jo Labanyi, Shirley Mangini, Cary Nelson, Janet Pérez, Randolph Pope, Joan Ramon Resina, Adrian Shubert, Michael Ugarte, Mary Vincent, and numerous dynamic younger scholars), Valis emphasizes

the need to teach the Spanish conflict within its national and international contexts.

*Teaching Representations of the Spanish Civil War* will be of great service to professors interested in developing new classes or modifying current courses, particularly since the essays give overviews of key components of the war (e.g., the Abraham Lincoln Brigade; North African soldiers’ participation; and party alliances in Galicia, the Basque Country, and Catalonia) and its related cultural production (e.g., film, literature, and memoirs). For all readers, the book represents a beacon of hope as it implicitly highlights the power of the Spanish Civil War to galvanize today’s students into thought and action.

Teaching students that history does indeed matter is no easy task, as evidenced by the numerous references to both the challenges and rewards of teaching this particular civil war. Yet anyone who has seen entire classes cry in response to films about the war or heard them cry out in indignation after reading post-war novels knows that this tragic moment has the power to serve as a crucial introduction to political action for today’s often apolitical and disaffected younger generation. Moreover, immigrant students whose home countries have experienced their own civil wars in recent years and Generation X and Y Americans who otherwise never have considered the ravishing effects of war come together in these classes to consider the conceptual, political, and social impact of Spain’s violent years.

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## 3 Novelists & a War

***Trinity of Passion: The Literary Left & the Antifascist Crusade.* By Alan M. Wald. University of North Carolina Press, 2007.**

By Peter Carroll

This study of U.S. writers on the left is the second volume of a planned trilogy, focusing on the impact of the Spanish Civil War, World War II, issues of racial identity, and the labor movement on various literary endeavors. As in his earlier volume, *Exiles from a Future Time*, which examined writers whose works expressed the issues of the 1920s and early 1930s, Wald proves to be an astute reader and sensitive critic of a wide range of authors, some scarcely known (Leonard Zinberg), others eminent and still influential (Chester Himes, Irwin Shaw, Arthur Miller).

The book's first chapter, which will be of special interest to our readers, is titled "Tough Jews in the Spanish Civil War." It probes the thematic interrelationships of three novels written by veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Alvah Bessie's *The Un-Americans* (1957), William Herrick's *Hermanos!* (1969), and Milton Wolff's *Another Hill* (1994). What the three novelists shared, besides the Spanish war, were their origins in secular New York Jewish families.

"All suffered the loss of or alienation from their fathers at a young age. Two were won to radicalism in the early Depression.... The third [Herrick] was born into a

revolutionary family during World War I. Their routes to Communism, Spain, and writing novels," Wald observes, "collectively comprise a vital subset of the literary Left as well as a hitherto neglected segment of Jewish American cultural history."

Contrasting their fictional characters with various biographical narratives of specific soldiers in Spain, Wald deconstructs the primary themes that emerge in their works: an

### Preston

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Hitler's and Mussolini's support for Franco, Stalin's less-than-enthusiastic and anything but disinterested support for the Republic, and the thousands of foreign volunteers who joined the International Brigades.

Preston represents a third generation of brilliant British historians of 20th century Spain. The first was Gerald Brenan, whose *Spanish Labyrinth* was published in 1943, three years before Preston's birth. The second was Raymond Carr, Preston's teacher at Oxford, whose history of Spain came out in 1966. (Preston also studied with Hugh Thomas, whose *Spanish Civil War* [1961] is generally considered less brilliant than efficient and timely.) Preston's approach to Spanish history is indebted to that of his predecessors—and to the British historiographical tradition more generally—in its liberal outlook; its focus on individual agency, particularly from political and intellectual elites;

emphasis not just on the war's political outcome, but also the invention of a warrior Jewish male identity.

Measuring the "truth" of fiction remains a complicated matter, though Wald succeeds for the most part in separating history from sheer imagination. One wishes he also addressed the changing contexts in which the three novels were written—Bessie's in the heat of the McCarthy period, Herrick's in the era of Vietnam, and Wolff's in the post-Franco 1970s and '80s. ■

and its gift for efficient, engaging narrative that skillfully combines the general sweep with the telling or surprising detail.

Preston is also a disciple of the maverick American historian Herbert Southworth, who maintained that the student of the Spanish Civil War can and should be rigorous and intellectually honest, but never politically neutral. As Preston writes in his introduction, his book does not aim "to find a perfect balance between both sides": "Despite what Franco supporters claim, I do not believe that Spain derived any benefit from the military rising of 1936 and the military victory of 1939." Hence, "there is little sympathy here for the Spanish right, but I hope there is some understanding."

Preston's identity as a British historian is also clear from his interest in biography, which has been his main

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## Mosess "Moe" Fishman (1915-2007)

The seemingly indestructible Moe Fishman, who represented the public face of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (VALB) for more than half a century, died of pancreatic cancer on August 6, 2007, in New York. He was 92.

During the past year, Moe had attended public events around the United States and Spain to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, a war that pitted rebellious generals, led by General Francisco Franco, backed by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, against the legally elected Spanish Republic.

Born in New York on September 28, 1915, Fishman left school during the Depression and became a laundry worker and truck driver. He participated in unionizing his fellow workers and found a commitment to social justice issues as a member of the Young Communist League.

When the war in Spain began,

Moe volunteered to fight, but he was rejected for lack of military experience. However, his skill as a truck driver was needed, and a second application for service was accepted—with the proviso that he recruit 10 other volunteers. Fishman quickly found the men, though none actually showed up. The recruiters took him anyway.

Moe arrived in Spain in April 1937 and trained as a foot soldier in the George Washington battalion. In his first action, he was wounded during the battle of Brunete, near Villanueva de la Canada, in July 1937. He spent a year in convalescence in Spain before returning to his home in New York. He then spent another two years in hospitals as doctors fused bones in his injured leg, leaving him with a life-long limp.

During his lengthy recuperation from war injuries, Fishman stayed in touch with New York humanitarian aid organizations providing assistance for the civilian refugees of the Spanish Civil War. He worked in the warehouse of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee while studying to become a licensed radio operator. His skills enabled him to serve in the Merchant Marines during World War II.

After that war, Fishman worked again for the refugee aid committee, even after it was targeted by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) for alleged subversive activities in 1946. Indeed, it was Fishman's proximity to that case that changed his life when HUAC set its sights on the VALB and President Harry Truman's attorney general listed the group as a subversive organization in 1947 as part of the postwar

anti-Communist crusade.

When Congress passed the McCarran Act in 1950, obliging all designated subversive organizations to register with the federal government and creating heavy penalties for leaders who refused to cooperate, the entire executive committee of the

Continued on page 20

Among all the people we worked with, I knew I could trust Moe Fishman. Whatever we did together, I could trust him to do, to be, to take care of whatever had to be taken care of.

—Milton Wolff

Moe Fishman was consistent in his devotion to the vets. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays he was at the office, did whatever needed to be done. There was no question of his loyalty to our organization.

—Abe Smorodin

The loss of every vet is a great one, so many of them embodiments of beliefs and a kind of commitment that resides in some deep place in all of us, we hope. Because Moe has been one of the most prominent public faces of the VALB for so long, because he's been a stalwart since returning to the US after being shot in Spain and holding down the fort for 70 years, this feels particularly sharp. Vets will survive Moe, but he carried the standard with relentless spirit and, even, charm.

—Peter Glazer

Condolences to all on the loss of a great spirit and a wonderful human being. It was my honor to know him.

—Jamie O'Reilly



# Added to Memory's Roster



Continued from page 19

VALB resigned. In its place, two Lincoln veterans stepped forward: Milton Wolff became the National Commander; Moe Fishman became the Executive Secretary/Treasurer and served the organization in an executive capacity for the rest of his life, more than a half century of dedicated service.

Fishman and Wolff led the VALB defense before the Subversive Activities Control Board in 1954. After their efforts failed, they pursued the appeals process that concluded with a favorable court ruling in the 1970s, declaring the attorney general's list and the SACB's rulings unconstitutional. Through it all, Fishman reminded the vets, "we have not forgotten that our main purpose in life is our anti-Franco activity."

"The long fight is over," Moe wrote soon afterward to vet Herman "Gabby" Rosenstein, "and we are in (so to speak) a legitimate non-subversive organization. I'm not sure that is good. Maybe we better do something subversive and get back on it otherwise the public we are trying to reach, especially the youth constituency, will look askance at these 'revisionists' who have stopped being subversive and have a U.S. Court of Appeals that agrees we are not. How about that?"

During the dark years of the blacklists, Fishman kept the VALB organization running. He helped produce dozens of four-page issues of *The Volunteer* to keep the vets apprised of various Cold War political cases; rallied support for individual defense trials; and participated in protest demonstrations against Spanish government policies and cultural activities in the United States.

By 1957, however, the two VALB

leaders, Moe and Milt, faced an empty treasury and considered disbanding the organization. They decided to poll some of the vets, who resoundingly opposed the idea. Meanwhile, Moe had received a letter from a Spaniard who had worked with the VALB in New York in the 1940s and was now in a Franco prison. Moe responded by summoning a campaign to aid all political prisoners of Spain. An aid and amnesty project became VALB's major focus until the dictator died in his bed in 1975. To raise funds for the prisoners and their families, the reconstituted VALB held its first reunion in a decade in 1957, an annual ceremonial gathering that continues now under the auspices of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives.

As more veterans reached retirement age and returned to the VALB in the 1970s, Moe remained a constant in the organization's activities. He participated in innumerable panels and conferences, spoke to students in high schools and colleges around the country, and traveled to international meetings about the Spanish Civil War. In his public talks, as well as in interviews, he revealed an incredible memory for names and historical details, linking past and present effortlessly.

Moe had the patience to listen to the most asked, often hostile questions and yet typically offered clearly recited answers. He seldom allowed a speaker to escape a comment with which he disagreed. Sometimes he seemed a relentless questioner, assuring that the role of the Lincoln volunteers received its proper due. He was direct, articulate, and unselfconscious.

In just one month, Moe appeared

on Pacifica's *Democracy Now* program, greeted guests at the opening night of the exhibition "Facing Fascism," spoke to a high school class on New York's west side, and shared a podium with Harry Belafonte, while handling a multitude of office details and giving interviews to visiting journalists.

Moe was also an active member of Veterans for Peace, proudly carrying the VALB banner to parades.

Moe is survived by his partner, Georgia Wever.

For years, seemingly forever, Moe Fishman stood at the center of a halo that surrounded the Americans who fought in the Spanish Civil War. He relished the spotlight and used it well. Lean, well-dressed in suit and tie, dark eyebrows and brown mustache offset by a full, gray head of hair, he carried the vitality of a young man's cause into his old age. Each year at the annual reunion, it was his voice that announced recent deaths and called the roll of the surviving veterans in attendance.

His silence brings the end of an era.  
—Peter N. Carroll

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## Clifton Holman Amsbury (1910 – 2007)

This past May 28, VALB's San Francisco Bay Area Post lost yet another stalwart from its all too rapidly thinning ranks: long-time Richmond, California, resident Clifton Amsbury. Clifton had mustered the strength to attend this year's annual VALB reunion in Oakland and fully intended to be present for the

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# Added to Memory's Roster



Continued from page 20



unveiling of San Francisco's waterfront monument to Abraham Lincoln Brigade volunteers next fall. But it was not to be. He had been in declining health for some time and, on Memorial Day, died peacefully at home surrounded by family.

Clifton was born on July 16, 1910, in Longton, Kansas, the second of four brothers. From earliest childhood he exhibited an insatiable curiosity about the world around him, together with a marked independence of mind and a wit to match. It is no surprise that he developed a keen interest in the burning social and political issues of his day, heightened by the insights gained from academic training in anthropology at UC-Berkeley and the University of Nebraska.

Clifton understood the menace of fascism in the 1930s and, with the Falangist uprising against Spain's

Republican Government, he joined the international brigades fighting to defend Spanish democracy. He arrived in Spain at the end of August 1937, received his basic training in Tarrazona de la Mancha, served with the Lincolns on the Ebro front, and was wounded in March 1938 and evacuated to a succession of hospitals. By the time he had healed sufficiently to rejoin his unit, the international brigades were being sent home. He was repatriated at the end of 1938.

Like other surviving Lincoln vets, the remainder of Clifton's long life was shaped, defined and inspired by his experience in Spain. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II, married and, together with his wife Shirley, raised four children. He worked for the California State Employment Office until 1971, when he retired to pursue a second career in anthropology, which he taught at Contra Costa Community College for another 20 years until he was obliged to retire at age 80. And all the while he remained steadfast in his support of progressive causes, especially opposition to U.S. interventionism around the world. In 1987 Clifton traveled to Nicaragua with a VALB contingent to deliver Toyota ambulances for the victims of the U.S.-proxy war against the Sandinista Government.

To the very end Clifton remained unwaveringly committed to the ultimate good fight. He remains an inspiration to all of us who have been fortunate enough to know him and who strive to continue that noble struggle.

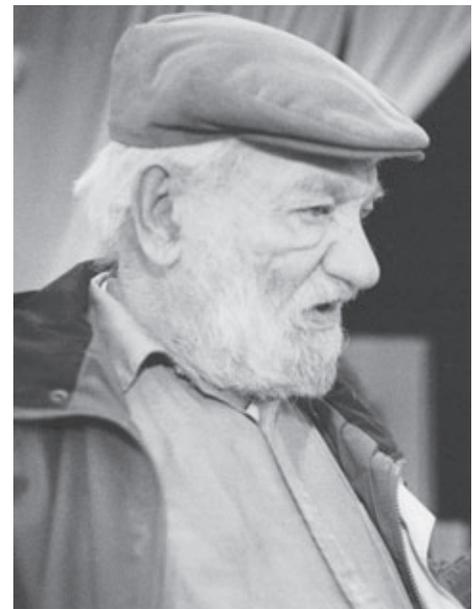
—R. H. Bartley

## Herbert "Hy" Tabb (1913-2007)

Hy Tabb, a Lincoln veteran with proficiency in foreign languages, has died in New York at the age of 94 after a long progressive illness.

Tabb was a rebel throughout his life—an active trade unionist and a fighter for justice. In Spain, he served as a machine gunner and translator from time to time. He returned home to work as a printer and proofreader at *The New York Times*.

Tabb studied foreign languages at several colleges, and he and his wife,



Tamaara, both graduated with MA degrees in Slavic Linguistics from New York University in 1972. His facility with languages enabled them to travel widely and live abroad. They were generous benefactors to ALBA over the years.

Hy leaves behind a loving family that remembers him as "a real mensch."

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# National Monument Contributions

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## Preston

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passion over the past couple of decades. His tremendously engaging portraits in *Franco* (1993), *¡Comrades!* (1999), *Doves of War* (2002), *Juan Carlos* (2003) and, most recently, *Idealistas bajo las balas* (2007), showcase Preston's enduring fascination with the impact of history on individuals' lives and their impact on history.

Spanish historians such as Julián Casanova have pointed out that, for all its merits, British historical Hispanism has been weak on social history, methodologically conservative, and reluctant to engage with theory. To some extent, this is true for Preston's work as well, which tends to reserve its meta-historical comments for pref-

aces and epilogues. One curious stylistic feature of this book, for instance, is its authoritative tone, with its lack of direct references to primary and secondary sources (a lack partly made up by an extensive bibliographical essay). Preston's narrative voice, it seems, tells us how it is. This makes for wonderfully efficient storytelling, but is in tension with the notion, to which Preston himself subscribes, that any narrative of the war is necessarily contentious, if not precarious. To his great merit, however, Preston has produced brilliant disciples such as Helen Graham, Sebastian Balfour, Mike Richards, and Chris Ealham, who have gone on to become outstanding and innovative cultural and social historians in their own right. ❏

## History Matters

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As Valis' book convincingly demonstrates, the Spanish Civil War should not be taught as an anomaly, but as an episode whose multiple meanings and repercussions must be grasped in context. In this fundamental sense, the teacher's role is not dissimilar to the role of all who fight for democracy: we share a deep belief in the connection between commitment and knowledge, action and education, past and present. *Teaching Representations of the Spanish*

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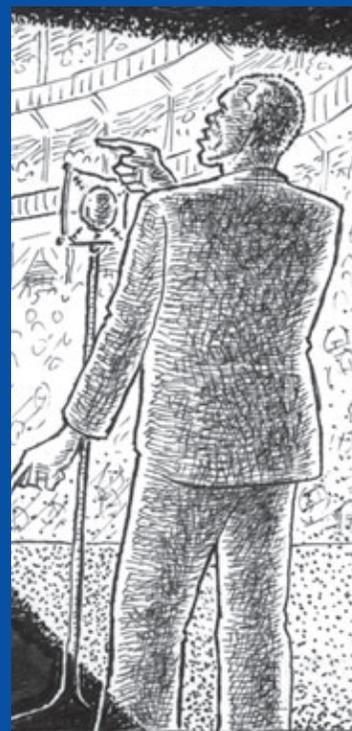
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