

The Volunteer

JOURNAL OF THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

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

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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PHOTO BY ERIC LEVENSON

Arlo Guthrie, Tao Rodriguez-Seeger, and Pete Seeger

Arlo Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Mime Troupe and Garzón Highlight NY Reunion

By Trisha Renaud

A capacity crowd of 1,000 cheered the introduction of 28 Lincoln Brigade veterans, then cheered again and again in response to the remarks of Judge Baltasar Garzón from Spain, music from three generations of folk troubadours, and a moving theatrical presentation by the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

The music and speeches focused on similarities between the struggle against fascism 63 years ago in Spain and the more recent struggle against fascism in Chile.

The New York Abraham Lincoln Brigade reunion, held at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, marked the 63rd anniversary of the brigadistas' arrival in Spain. The packed house paid tribute to the 28 veterans called forward by Moe Fishman to stand before the stage.

In attendance were Emilio Cassinello, Spain's Consul-General in New York; Anna Perez, representing Asociación des Amigos de Brigades Internacionales, a Madrid-based organization; and James Fernandez, Director of New York University's

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PHOTO BY RICHARD BERMACK

Judge Baltasar Garzón

ALBA SUSMAN LECTURE

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Bay Area

By David Smith

Moe Fishman's article in the last issue of *The Volunteer* acted as a catalyst for me to complete this short report of our activities. For many years the Bay Area VALB has planned and produced most of its activities with the direct aid of associates (relatives and friends of the vets). Under Milt Wolff's leadership, the organization was formalized as VALB and Associates, with the associates as a voting and integral part of the organization. Now I must state that the associates are the key to our existence. We have an organization of 24 vets and 55 associates and an executive board of 10. The officers are Corine Thornton, Executive Secretary; Linda Lustig, Treasurer; Martha Jarocki Olson, Vice Chair; and David Smith, Commander. We have regular meetings with potluck lunches about 5 times per year. Younger members have been and are now playing an important role.

The proceeds from our excellent February event were distributed among the following organizations: ALBA; *The Volunteer*; Soler Pediatric Hospital in Havana, Cuba; S.F. Mime Troupe; School of America's Watch West; Global Exchange; and Bulgarian and Romanian veterans in need of aid.

About 50 vets and friends celebrated Nate Thornton's 85th birthday at a dinner party at La Peña Cultural Center—great gathering. At home, Al Tanz's 92nd birthday was celebrated with friends and vets. At the Bird and Becket Bookstore in SF, we vets "talked of Spanish Civil War and politics." It was stimulating to be with a group of us, Milt Wolff, Hank Rubin, Clifton Amsbury, Corine Thornton and myself, exchanging ideas and joking with the audience during the session. During the past year Milt Wolff, Clifton Amsbury and I have been guests at University of California, Berkeley classes. I have become good friends of 2 Spanish high school exchange students, having met them during a presentation to combined Spanish classes at Berkeley High School. The *Diablo* magazine of this area featured a full-page article about Milt Wolff.

I became acquainted with Claudia Durst Johnson, retired professor and chair of the University of Alabama English Department, now residing in Berkeley. Sophie and I were interviewed at length and appear in her book concerning the 1930's, the Spanish Civil War and the blacklisting period, *Understanding the Crucible: A Student Case Book on Issues, Sources and Historical Documents*, A Literature in Context Series, Greenwood Publishers. It is a very good book for senior high and college freshmen, examining the past and drawing parallels with today's society.

"Pinochet is back in Chile—What's next?" On June 15 the VALB post and Asociación de Guatemaltecos Unidos sponsored a conversation with Spanish judge Baltazar



Al Tanz celebrates his 92nd birthday.

PHOTO BY RICHARD BERMACK

Garzón and Guatemalan human rights attorney Mynor Melgar at La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley.

In September our annual picnic will take place at Live Oak Park in Berkeley. Potluck plus grilled chicken prepared by our associates—a wonderful gathering for 75-80 friends. ■

The Volunteer

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Chicago

Chicago Friends of the Lincoln Brigade opened a campaign last May for a monument to honor and remember the 160 volunteers from the Chicago area.

The effort was launched at a successful theater party featuring Peter Glazer's theatrical production, *Heart of Spain: A Musical of the Spanish Civil War*. Brochures announcing the new campaign were distributed at all performances at Northwestern University's Barber Theater.

This new play by Glazer skillfully combines the writings of some of the American volunteers with dramatic scenes that clarify the historical context. It weaves together materials of the time—diaries, letters, poetry and songs—with music by Eric Bain Peltoniemi. *Heart of Spain*

smoothly takes the audience from the general world scene in the 1930's to the thoughts, feelings, and actions of a variety of Lincoln volunteers. That it is a riveting, exciting piece of theater will not surprise the many who have seen Glazer's works in recent years, including *Woody Guthrie's American Song* and the Spanish Civil War musical presentation *Pasiones*. Glazer prefaced his recent success in Chicago by writing and directing the highly regarded *We Must Remember*, performed in San Francisco and New York.

In other recent activity, CFLB co-sponsored an African American History Month program on Langston Hughes at International House at the University of Chicago, where Hughes resided while teaching at the Laboratory School. Cranston Knight, poet and historian, spoke of Hughes' writings and poetry in support of Republican Spain to an audience of students and community residents.

In another collaboration in March, CFLB co-chair Chuck Hall spoke to an audience at a "La Peña" evening at the popular Old Town School of Folk Music. A multimedia presentation, *The Spanish Civil War*, written and directed by Dr. Oscar Ballester, combined narration, text by Pablo Neruda, and poems by Federico Garcia Lorca, Miguel Hernandez, Antonio Machado and Rafael Alberti with music by Pablo Casals and Manuel de Falla and the art of Pablo Picasso. Local poets, actors and musicians participating in the program included Jose Bono, Juan Borja, Gonzalo Cordova, Hoy Son, Hal Ehrich, Kerry Sheehan, Jamie O'Reilly, and Michael Smith. The program in English and Spanish was part of a weekly showcase of Latin folk music and dance enthusiastically supported by Chicago's large Latino community. Juan Dies, Director of La Peña,



Playwright Peter Glazer, producer of *Heart of Spain* and *We Must Remember*, with his father, Tom Glazer

Brigadier News

by Moe Fishman

New York area press covers ALBA-VALB event:

The *Villager*, published in Greenwich Village, carried a lengthy article featuring Al Koslow and Abe Smorodin. The *New York Times* had a good piece in the city section featuring a large photograph of Moe Fishman and quoting Harry Fisher. The *Hartford Courant*, the largest newspaper in Connecticut, ran a feature article on Sunday, May 28, with a picture of Milt Wolff. *Jewish Currents* ran a full-page description of the event by Morris Schappes. Finally, the *Brooklyn Bridge Magazine* will soon run a feature article with pictures and interviews with Abe Smorodin, Al Koslow, Moe Fishman, Matty Mattson, and Milt Wolff.

A plaque in Provincetown:

A plaque was placed in Provincetown, MA. It reads: "Gene and Dick Fein: Fighters for Justice; Lovers of Provincetown; Inspiring us still." Dick was a long-time member of our executive committee and his wife Gene worked for many years helping our organization.

News from Spain:

On April 30, 2000, *El Periodico* of Barcelona headlined: "Slaves of Franco." The article described how a number of former Loyalist soldiers had filed a class-action suit demanding full payment for their work as forced laborers under Franco.

The bulletin of the organization of Loyalist Veterans reports "there has been slight increase for all veterans in the 2000 budget. However, the Loyalist veterans are campaigning for a retirement pension equal to those given to today's other veterans upon retirement."

Mac-Paps continue quest for a national monument:

The provinces of Ontario and British Columbia and the city of Winnipeg have monuments honoring the Canadian volunteers of the International Brigades. However, the Canadian veterans will not rest easy until they achieve the dedication of a national monument in the national capital of Ottawa. ■

spoke of his grandparents, Loyalist refugees who went to Mexico after the fall of the Republic: "Staunch anti-fascists, they never gave up their hope for the restoration of democracy in Spain."

Those wishing to receive a copy of the brochure and to make contributions for Chicago recognition of the Lincoln volunteers are urged to write to CFLB, 211 Elgin Avenue, #3D, Forest Park, IL 60130. ■

Tampa Does Not Forget Elisa Moris

by William F. Garcia

In her farewell speech to the departing International Brigades, "La Pasionaria" exhorted the mothers of Spain not to let their children forget the heroism of the brigadistas. Her words sounded anew recently in Tampa, Florida, at a ceremony honoring the memory of Elisa Moris. During the Spanish Civil War Moris, a cigar maker by trade and a tireless organizer, was a leader of the self-defined "retroguardia de Tampa," the Tampa rearguard, in support of Spanish democracy. Under her stewardship a "ladies' auxiliary" grew to more than 1,000 dues-paying members as it sent tons of clothing to Spain and helped raise funds to purchase ambulances. On February 15, 1938, Moris was presiding at a meeting at the "Centro Obrero," the Labor Temple, in Tampa's cigar workers' community of Ybor City. As she rose to greet a delegation from West Tampa, she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. Four days later she died at the Centro Asturiano Hospital.

Over the years Moris's grave in the Old Centro Asturiano Cemetery had fallen into disrepair. However, her example and life-long commitment to the values of freedom and democracy have not been forgotten. On April 22, 2000, in the shadow of the large Republican flag that had once flown over the Asturian workers' mutual aid society (the Centro Asturiano), four generations of Moris's descendants and a large number of Tampeños gathered around her restored grave to celebrate her memory and reaffirm their commitment to the ideals to which she dedicated her life. With ALBA associate William F. Garcia serving as master of ceremonies, two professors from the University of Tampa, Martin Favata and Susan M. Taylor, read Cesar Vallejo's poem "Masa," Federico Garcia Lorca's "Despedida" and "La Pasionaria's" speech *Hasta Pronto Hermanos*. Then Gus Jimenez, grandson of the Spanish Republican consul



Tampa's "No Pasaran" group assembled in the cemetery of Centro Asturiano for the re-dedication of the grave of Elisa Moris.

in Tampa during the war, spoke on Tampa's Latinos' support for democracy in Spain. Elvira T. Garcia, president of the Centro Asturiano, extended words of welcome, and a letter from the New York office of the VALB was read. The high point of the event was the playing of an original recording of the song "No pasaran," written by a Tampa cigar maker in 1937. Many in the audience had sung this song as children and young adults as they marched alongside neighbors and parents to demand the end of the arms embargo against the democratically elected Spanish government. When the singing was over there were few dry eyes in the crowd.

This event was sponsored by the same group of Tampeños who had organized a series of community activities in conjunction with the visit of ALBA's "Shouts from the Wall" exhibit at the University of South Florida in 1997. By restoring the grave of Elisa Moris, they help keep alive the memory of the over 20 volunteers who left Ybor City to fight for Spanish democracy and of the enlightened community that supported them. ■

¡No Pasaran!

Original lyrics written by a Tampa cigar maker in 1937

There march the militiamen
With great valor to the front.
They go singing to give their lives
Lest Franco, the traitor, triumph.
The fascists are in the skies.
Their aerial bombs may destroy
Our beautiful capital city,
But to Madrid . . . They Shall Not Pass!
They kill women, children, and the elderly

Who are out and about on the streets.
This is the deed of the fascists
Which will be inscribed in history.
Where heroes' blood watered the fields
Beautiful seedlings will flourish.
The cannon roars, the earth trembles,
But to Madrid . . . They Shall Not Pass!

Monument to Swiss IBers in Geneva

By Robert Coale

A view of the Matterhorn, expensive yachts at the city docks, and bumper-to-bumper luxury cars are not what one would expect to find in a town that has recently financed and inaugurated a monument to International Brigade volunteers. Nevertheless, that is what one sees in Geneva.

Renowned as the headquarters of the International Red Cross and the failed League of Nations, the international organization that abandoned the Spanish Republic to the wolves of fascism, Geneva is in fact the most progressive canton of Switzerland. It is also the seat of the Association of Support for Swiss International Brigade Veterans, which has been at the forefront of many initiatives, including exhibits, conferences, the new monument, and the unsuccessful attempt earlier this year to obtain official amnesty for Swiss brigadistas. The refusal of the Federal Council to



Spanish IB nurse (l) and Swiss volunteer

approve the motion to grant amnesty for the surviving Swiss volunteers made the inauguration of this new monument in Geneva on June 17 all the more poignant. Ten of the surviving 15 Swiss veterans, as well as several widows and other family members, attended the unveiling. The Spanish consul, progressive politicians from the municipal and federal governments, members and friends of the Association of Support for Swiss International Brigade Veterans, and representatives from international and local media were also present.



Fluvio Mosentoni, president of the Swiss IB association, at the dedication

The monument is a metal sculpture by the Andalusian-born artist Manuel Torres, consisting of three four-meter high columns and a plaque with an inscription of La Pasionaria's farewell speech. The artist was inspired by the role of three Swiss women who went to Spain to defend the Republic. A total of 766 Swiss volunteers served in Spain, where approximately one-third were killed.

The location chosen for the monument is significant. Very close to the university, it is situated just across the square from the site of the 1932 massacre, when the Swiss Federal Army machine-gunned a crowd attending an antifascist rally, killing 12. The date of November 9, 1932, is commemorated yearly by the political left of Geneva, and many brigadistas cite the tragic event as a factor in their decision to fight in Spain.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Señor Ortega, consul of Spain, addressed the veterans and friends. He underlined the parallel between the steel sculpture of the monument and the steel will of the volunteers who left their homes to defend democracy beyond the Pyrenees. Fluvio Moruzzi, chairman of the Association, used the words of a brigadista to remind the crowd that despite the Federal Council's refusal to give amnesty to the surviving veterans and to erase prison sentences from their records, "nothing prevented us from holding our heads high upon leaving prison."



Due to the unique multilingual composition of Switzerland, Swiss volunteers did not fight together in one unit. German speaking IBers became members of the Thaelman battalion, while the francophone recruits fought in the 14th Brigade. The youngest Swiss veteran, Eolo Morenzoni, crossed the Pyrenees at



Two Swiss brigadistas

the age of 16 with a group of Italians, one of whom lent him a tie to make him appear older.

The luncheon that followed the inauguration ceremony recalled images of the 1996 "Homenaje" in Spain, in that three or four languages were spoken simultaneously in the restaurant, often at the same table, and Spanish was used as a *lingua franca*. ■



Judge Baltasar Garzón Presents Third ALBA-Bill Susman Lecture

Tony Geist introducing Judge Baltasar Garzón

By Tony Geist

The standing ovation thundered before he uttered a word, setting the tone for Judge Baltasar Garzón's lecture, "The Protection of Human Rights in the International Justice System." The applause was not for the third annual ALBA-Bill Susman lecture, delivered to a capacity crowd of 500 in NYU's Tishman Auditorium. Not yet. That would come later. Rather, it was the acknowledgement of Garzón's indictment of Augusto Pinochet, an action that had the former dictator of Chile under house arrest in England for over a year before British authorities released him into Chilean custody. The sound of a thousand hands clapping represented the hope that crimes against humanity will no longer go unpunished in the name of national security and executive immunity.

Garzón is one of six investigating judges for Spain's Audiencia Nacional (National Court). His function is to investigate the cases assigned to him by the court, gathering evidence and evaluating whether the case should be brought to trial. He does not try the cases himself.

His 1998 indictment of Pinochet on charges of genocide, torture and terrorism opened a new chapter in international law and propelled

Garzón into prominence outside Spain. This is what prompted ALBA to invite him to speak at our spring 2000 slate of activities. Yet the Pinochet case is still open, and Garzón made clear that he would not be able to address any of the particulars. Instead, he outlined the development of a new international legal code for the defense of human rights.

He explained that the Holocaust gave rise to an awareness of the need for an international tribunal to prosecute crimes against humanity, and indeed the structure was put in place soon after the end of World War II. Yet enforcement of international law in the last 50 years has met nearly insurmountable obstacles. The political and economic self-interest of many of the more powerful nations has left loopholes in the definition of genocide and the means for its prosecution.

Garzón sees television—and other more recent telecommunications technologies—as the agents of a new international awakening. "Television is the principal mediator between the suffering of strangers and the conscience—slight though it may be—of the inhabitants of the few safe places on the planet." Through TV we witness a new reality: the universalization of victims and the recognition that genocide is a global crime. The renewed

interest in a system of international law grows out of this sense of a moral obligation toward strangers.

The end of authoritarian regimes throughout Europe, Africa and the Americas has often been followed by what Garzón calls "voluntary amnesia." And yet, he maintains, true reconciliation is possible only after a process of collective knowledge and catharsis through the application of the law has taken place.

Globalization has created a world without borders for money, but it has not been accompanied by a social and political restructuring. "Inequalities between the rich and poor countries continue to grow," says Garzón, "with the accumulation of huge foreign debt, corruption, and the systematic violation of the most elementary human rights."

At the Rome meetings of 1998, the Statute of the International Penal Tribunal was drawn up. It would guarantee the international prosecution of violations of human rights. The International Tribunal can work only if ratified by the wealthy nations. Yet to date the United States, China and Russia have not signed. Despite this, Garzón has faith in the rule of law: "At times," he concludes, "utopia can be reached."

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NY Reunion

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King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center. Spanish actor Antonio Banderas sent a message of support.

A particularly poignant moment was the introduction of Joyce Horman, widow of Charles Horman, a U.S. freelance journalist who was murdered in Chile in 1973. Charles Horman died, along with thousands of Chileans, in the aftermath of the bloody coup in which dictator General Augusto Pinochet seized power from the democratically elected government of President Salvador Allende.

While Pinochet no longer heads Chile's government, the fight to bring the former dictator to justice, led by featured speaker Baltasar Garzón, recently made worldwide headlines. Garzón is a 43-year-old Spanish magistrate judge. In 1998, his criminal investigations of human rights abuses led him to issue an arrest warrant for Pinochet and order that the ex-dictator, then in England undergoing medical treatment, be extradited to Madrid for trial.

Garzón's efforts focused the attention of the world on Pinochet's crimes and established a precedent that heads of state can be held accountable for their crimes against humanity while in

office. "Because of our guest," MC Henry Foner told the New York audience, "no tyrant will be able to rest easy."

Garzón's speech focused on the struggle for freedom and justice, a fight he described as always having been the task of "a few who put their lives at the service of others." The brigadistas who fought in Spain are part of "this new awakening of justice today," he said. "The founding of the International Brigades moved the hearts and minds of the world."

Following Garzón's remarks, the entertainment began as veteran singer and activist Pete Seeger (who recently turned 81), folk artist Arlo Guthrie, and Seeger's grandson, Tao Rodriguez-Seeger, took center stage before an enthusiastic crowd.

The musical set ranged from sing-along standards like "Midnight Special" and "Guantanamo" to Guthrie's moving rendition of "Victor Jara," about poet-singer Victor Jara's life and murder in the days following the 1973 fascist coup in Chile.

Then came Peter Glazer's multimedia theatrical presentation, *We Must Remember!*, which had debuted

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PHOTO BY RICHARD BERMACK



PHOTO BY ERIC LEVENSON

Judge Baltasar Garzón

The International Brigade

all of us who are here today, together with other kindred spirits, will lead the way into this extraordinary new century, in which the struggle for liberty, solidarity and human rights will be the most intense and difficult to win, but also the greatest challenge for the survival of the human race.

This belligerent attitude must prevail over that of the unaware citizen. No matter how little we may achieve, it will always be more than

those who sit back and wait for things to happen around them, doing nothing to change history.

Let us remember Holderlin's words: "The very fire of the gods, day and night, urges us on. Come! Let us gaze upon open spaces, let us claim what is rightfully ours, no matter how distant."

One day my son asked me: "Dad, what is solidarity?" I thought it over for a moment and answered him:

Solidarity is not a concept, it is a system of life; it is the generous offering of one's life to others, to the community and to the world to make it better, to create ever better and greater justice, greater equality and fewer differences between all citizens. This is a goal worth fighting for, and finally, it is the essence of the freedom of all men and women, and the way in which the most disadvantaged peoples can emerge from poverty. But our challenge is also to denounce injustice; it is commitment, honesty; it is simultaneously utopia and reality and, in the final analysis, it is the very breath of life that inspires us to keep fighting

for these things.

Evidently my answer didn't satisfy him, and he said, "Give me an example of solidarity." In truth it wasn't too difficult to find one to illustrate the meaning of my words.

I said, "Remember yesterday" (it was November 8, 1996), "when we were going into the Monastery of San Pedro de Carde in Burgos, which had been a fascist prison for internationals during the civil war, and we saw a group of veterans with Republican flags and placards that read: INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES? There's your example, one of the most important in history, of international solidarity and sacrifice for freedom in the war against fascism." I then told him some of the stories of the Spanish Civil War that I had learned not in books but from the lips of those who, like my uncle Gabriel, fought on the Republican side and suffered injustice for fighting for legality and liberty.

The 20th century has been the most violent period in human history; it has also been the most humiliating for mankind, to the point of making us question our idea of man as a rational being, in the face of so many disasters and massacres of innocent beings.

But it is also true that, following each disaster, piece by piece we have assembled a universal structure of ethical conscience that today opens the portal of hope for a better world, with greater solidarity and justice, at least in the face of the great disasters.

Those who 63 years ago made the decision to be volunteers for liberty, and whose selfless solidarity with the Spanish Republic, broken by the fascist coup, are also part of this new awakening of justice today.

The formation of the International Brigades was an act that moved the

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PHOTO BY RICHARD BERMACK

Editor's note: Two days after presenting the ALBA-Bill Susman Lecture at New York University, the Spanish magistrate spoke informally at the annual reunion of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade at Borough of Manhattan Community College, April 30, 2000.

owardice, with the exception of a small number of fighters, has always been the norm throughout the world. The struggle for the freedom of the rest of humanity has always been the task of the few who have put their lives at the service of others, to assure their future. The spirit of the pure man that Shakespeare referred to is incarnate in these men and women, a spirit that today and always they transmit to us and that gives us the strength to keep living, confident that we will create a better world.

On Friday I said that life is a road of hope that we make, as our beloved Antonio Machado said, by walking, and when we look back we do so not to stop, but to gather strength to keep moving forward. Just as in the past,

ALBA-Susman Lecture

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This time the thunderous ovation was for his words. Judge Garzón handled an hour of questions from the floor with intelligence, aplomb, humor and grace. He responded to the expression of gratitude from Chilean exiles and others in the crowd with characteristic modesty: "Don't thank me," he said. "I am simply doing my job."

When asked how he felt about losing the Pinochet case, Garzón replied that as a judge he did not consider it a matter of winning and losing, but of right and wrong. He expressed full confidence in the Chilean justice system. Perhaps the most moving comment from the floor was the testimony of a retired New York State Supreme Court Judge, who rose to thank Garzón for his efforts toward international justice.



Retired New York State Supreme Court Judge Arthur Blynn (r.) and Bill Susman (m.) congratulate Judge Garzón.

I had the good fortune to accompany Judge Garzón as his translator for much of the weekend. The air of intelligence, modesty and sincerity that he communicates in public were confirmed in private. Two moments stand out in my memory.

Sunday morning, we went to lunch at the home of Joyce Horman, the widow of Charlie Horman, whose disappearance and murder in Chile were dramatized in Costa Gavras' *Missing* and form part of Garzón's indictment of Pinochet. Joyce has devoted her life since 1973

to the struggle for human rights and economic justice.

In private conversation Garzón is considerably less guarded than in his public remarks. When one of the guests at the Hormans' home repeated a question the judge had skillfully avoided after his lecture, Garzón confirmed that he

would indeed like to indict Henry Kissinger, Nixon's Secretary of State and architect of his Chile policy in the early 70s, except the United States will not release the incriminating documents. As we were leaving, Elizabeth Horman, Charlie's 95-year-old mother, clasped the judge's hand and thanked him. The emotion that passed between them, borne on a few simple words, filled the room.

The final moment that remains with me took place at the VALB annual event on Sunday afternoon, at the Borough of Manhattan Community



Joyce Horman, whose husband was killed during the coup in Chile, thanks Judge Garzón for his attempt to bring Pinochet to justice.

College. Garzón was in the wings as Moe Fishman introduced, one by one, the vets in attendance and asked them to stand. Garzón moved out on to the stage to see the 28 elderly men who had fought for his country nearly 20 years before he was born. A smile of pride and satisfaction creased his face as he applauded them.

Garzón and the brigadistas both recognize that his fight in the arena of international law and human rights is the extension by other means of their good fight on the battlefields of Spain over half a century ago. ▀



Judge Baltasar Garzón with ALBA board members Frazer Ottanelli, Peter Carroll, and Tony Geist.

PHOTO BY RICHARD BERMACK

PHOTO BY RICHARD BERMACK

Garzón speech

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hearts and minds of the entire world in 1936, a tragic year for all Spaniards. For many the IB were a sign of inspiration and hope that finally the world was reacting to the expansion of fascism. From the first moment of their appearance, rivers of ink ran, from both those who came to vilify them and those who sang the praises of their courage and their unshakable love of freedom and democracy. A number of Americans attended the European Conference for the Defense of the Spanish Republic, organized by the World Committee Against War and Fascism and held in Paris on August 13, 1936. Its aim was to mobilize public opinion on the side of the Popular Front government, and it formed an informational coordinating committee in support of the Spanish Republic.

In 1936, the International Brigades were created, at the same time that Alvarez del Vayo alerted the League of Nations to the danger of the internationalization of the Spanish conflict. In early January 1937, the XV International Brigade was formed, while the United States declared an embargo on the sale of arms to both sides. Following terrible losses suffered on July 12, 1937, the Washington and Lincoln Battalions were merged into a new Lincoln Battalion. Its members were American and Canadian, but also Chinese and Japanese. There was also a significant percentage of Jews (at least one-third), and nearly 100 African-Americans.

Today we remember with deep-felt pride those knights of liberty who fought against the evils of international fascism, moved by loyalty to Spanish constitutional democracy and the legitimacy of its republican government. Today the unforgettable Robert Hale Merriman, Oliver Law, Steve Nelson, Leonard Lamb, Al Kaufman, Stephen Daduk, and so many others are with us, in the memories of many; they are and will always be unforgettable, for they gave their lives for an idea, to build a different

and better world.

They all deserve the heartfelt recognition that Rafael Alberti dedicated to them in his poem "To the International Brigades":

*You come from far away... Yet that distance,
what is it to your blood, which sings without borders?
Necessary death names you day by day,
no matter whether in city, field or byway.
From this country and that, from big countries and small
from one that scarcely is a blot on the map,
with the same roots in the same dream,
simple and anonymous, talking as you came.*

*You do not even know the color of the walls
that your unbreachable commitment shores up.
You defend the earth that covers you, confident,
shooting it out with Death dressed for battle.*

"The struggle for liberty, solidarity and human rights will be the most intense and difficult to win, but also the greatest challenge for the survival of the human race.... No matter how little we may achieve, it will always be more than those who sit back and wait for things to happen."

*Stay here, so cry the trees, the plains,
the tiniest particles of light that join
one sentiment alone to shake the seas:
Brothers!
Madrid with your name swells and
shines brighter.*

The Lincoln brigade had its own poetry:

There's a valley in Spain called Jarama. It's a place that we all know too well, for it's there that you gave

your youth and you wagered all for the freedom of mankind. Today we are proud of our Lincoln Battalion and the fight for Madrid that it made. For it was there that we fought like true sons of the people, as part of the XV Brigade. We have left that valley of sorrow, but its memory shall always remain. Today we face other problems and other sorrows, but your example gives us the strength to continue the struggle to conquer the future.

Of the 2800 American volunteers in the Lincoln Brigade, 750 died in Spain, and neither Hemingway, nor Orwell, nor Koestler, three great writers and friends of the Republic, had time to praise their death in battle. The survivors of that fratricidal horror, which we know can never happen again, once more offered their lives for freedom and against fascism in the Resistance, when on June 22, 1941, Hitler invaded the former USSR.

Today we pay homage to the undying presence of those who went to fight not moved by fraud, or stupidity, or glory, or vengeance, or pay: They went with their eyes wide open because solidarity was the only road they saw. There was no other way to

keep alive the unassailable truth of humanity striving for its freedom and dignity. This is the only thing that was, is, and will always be worth fighting for.

For this reason, here today, I am honored to pay the simple homage of words to these heroes of the 20th century who have taught us so much, and who have made the road to freedom and the dawning of democracy for all wider and brighter. ■

The George Watt Memorial Awards

African-American Volunteers

by Creighton Chandler III

In Spain, white, black, between, we were all one. We shared tobacco, water, blankets, food. Lice drew no color line; so why should we?

"Lice Drew No Color Line,"

By Lincoln Veteran Barney Baley, 1940

The Spanish Civil War represents a crucial moment in world history. While a civil war was being waged in Spain, the major democratic world powers watched silently. Despite the lack of aid to Spain, nearly 40,000 people from 52 countries came together under Communist direction to form the International Brigades. Of those 40,000, about 80 to 100 were African Americans. In Spain, African Americans fought in the first integrated fighting units in American history and were afforded an equal opportunity for meritocratic advancement.

About African-American volunteers, Milton Wolff wrote, "I remember them not as Blacks but as strong, dependable comrades—men for whom this struggle in Spain was a continuation, not a beginning. In one way or another they had 'been there before.'" Spain was a chance for African Americans to fight racial oppression. To them, combating Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini in Spain was an opportunity to combat oppression for all African Americans. They took their duty seriously and fought with valor.

The sacrifice made by African Americans in the Spanish Civil War did not go unnoticed by the African-American press. Newspapers such as the *Pittsburgh Courier* and *The Chicago Defender* extolled Spain's lack of discrimination towards blacks and the men who had come from all over the world to defend the Republic. My paper explores why many African Americans felt compelled to fight in

Spain. It furthermore discusses the support given to the Spanish Republic by the African-American press. Spain represented a chance to combat not only European fascist forces but also similar fascist forces in America such as racial oppression. African-American volunteer Walter Garland noted that African Americans "can't forget for one minute that the oppression of blacks is nothing more than a very concrete form, the clearest expression, of fascism." African Americans wanted to be treated with equality and with fairness. The desire of black Americans to be viewed as equal by their white comrades is nowhere more evident than when it manifested itself in the actions of the 80 to 100 African Americans who fought valiantly to restore the freedom and equality offered by the endangered Spanish Republic. ■

Max Aub in Exile

by Sebastiaan Faber

"Exile and Cultural Hegemony: Spanish Intellectuals in Mexico (1939-1975)," University of California, Davis

Spanish culture was dealt a heavy blow by the defeat of the Republic. By April 1939, the great majority of Spain's intellectuals—university professors, writers, poets, judges, doctors, scientists—had gone into exile. Most of them would never return. It is true that they contributed a great deal to the cultural development of their host countries, especially Mexico, which generously received tens of thousands of refugees. Still, it is undeniable that the intellectuals' leaving robbed both them and Spain of what, judging by the developments in the 1920s and 30s, would have been an extraordinary flourishing in the future. Exile, after all, is a traumatic experience from which it is hard to recover. For a writer especially, being cut off from one's community means to lose one's

audience and subject matter, if not one's language. To be exiled is to be displaced in both time and space; one could even say that, in a way, the exile is a living anachronism, excluded from history itself.

Perhaps nobody embodies the tragic dilemmas of exile like Max Aub (1903-72), one of the many Spaniards who traded their homeland for Mexico. Everything in Aub's life seems to have been out of sync with his time. For one, he considered himself a Spanish writer, even though he was born in Paris and only moved to Spain when he was 11. He was forced to leave again in 1939, at age 36. And while he was a member of the Spanish Socialist party, he consistently kept believing in a popular-frontist "Third Way," which he defined as "a socialist economy in a liberal state structure." Even at the height of the Cold War he refused to pick between East or West. His sympathies for the Communists made him suspect in the eyes of everyone else and caused him to spend almost three years in French prisons and concentration camps, falsely accused of being a CP militant. At the same time, his unveiled criticism of the Communists' methods and mentality cost him their friendship and trust. And yet Aub persisted: "I will never be a Communist," he said, "but I will never be an anti-Communist either."

Aub's most tragic lack of synchronization with history was related to his literary production. Most of his major works dealt with Spain, mainly the Republic and the war. They were written with a sense of urgency and meant to be read by a Spanish audience—yet they were published in exile and barred from Spain. Ironically it is only now, a quarter of a century after his death, that Aub's works are getting the distribution and recognition they deserve.

Aub was a versatile writer who published plays, poetry, short stories, and essays. His magnum opus is *El*

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The Mauthausen Millennial Commemoration

By Gabriel Jackson

The concentration camp near the northern Austrian town of Mauthausen is particularly remembered by Spanish Republicans. More than 10,000 veterans of the defeated loyalist army, many of whom had spent some months in French internment camps, and then had fought in the French Resistance between June 1940 and the summer of 1941, were captured by the Nazis and deported to Mauthausen. There, along with other thousands of Italian antifascist Partisans, they were put in a category labeled “return not desired.” Seven to eight thousand of them were literally worked to death in the granite mines, which formed part of Heinrich Himmler’s SS industrial empire. The semi-starving remainder were liberated by the US Army on May 7, 1945.

When I first visited Mauthausen, in the summer of 1961, the camp was hard to find. It had already been declared an official World War II memorial site, but the residents in the town didn’t seem to know much about it. Yes, a few kilometers over there, somewhere in the pine forest, there was a granite quarry. They weren’t sure whether you could visit, and whether there was any permanent staff taking care of the grounds. This year the situation was entirely different. On May 7, the 55th anniversary of the liberation of Austria’s largest concentration camp, dozens of tour buses and hundreds of automobiles, guided by Austrian traffic police, parked in the rolling meadows below the stone and mortar walls. Around mid-day, some 14,000 people of many nationalities laid wreaths on the numerous statues and gravestones and then marched through what had been the main gate to the camp.

Later, beginning at sundown, an audience of 11,000 persons descended the 180 stairs—the “staircase of

death”—to the floor of the quarry. Thomas Klestil, President of the Austrian republic, Franz Fischler, Austrian member of the Commission of United Europe, and Leon Zelman, a former Mauthausen prisoner and current chairman of The Jewish Welcome Service in Vienna, spoke briefly. Contemporary musical settings of the Male Rachamim and the Kaddish were performed by a Viennese cantor and a choral group under the supervision of the chief rabbi of Vienna, after which Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony was performed by the Vienna Philharmonic under the invited English director Simon Rattle. During the final movement, the choral setting of Schiller’s “Ode to Joy,” candles were distributed to and lighted by the audience.

This year’s commemoration, planned to coincide with the millennium, had received additional publicity and participation due to the recent victory of Jörg Haider’s right wing, ironically named, “Freedom” Party in the Austrian parliamentary elections. The party was represented for the first time in the national cabinet. This development had been widely deplored by the governments of the European Union countries and had led to a partial diplomatic boycott of Austria. Whether a neo-fascist party that wins a substantial share of the votes in a free election should be permitted to participate in democratic governments is an extremely difficult question potentially facing all the countries in the European Union. In the present context it was an additional factor in the many discussions arguing the pros and cons of the whole millennial commemoration.

The most striking thing to me was the atmosphere of genuine seriousness and goodwill. The police were thoroughly relaxed and courteous. Members of several non-governmental youth organizations helped old people negotiate the rocks and get up

and down the irregularly paved steps to the quarry floor. The ceremonies were well organized, with ample time for laying wreaths before the dozens of delegations lined up for the parade through the camp gates. People listened quietly to the bands and the singing accompanying each group as it marched through the gate. I use the verb “march” because they were indeed executing more or less orderly movements, but there was absolutely nothing military about the style. The principal themes of the banners were anti-fascism, anti-racism, the need to remember and to educate future generations in the meaning of the Nazi era, and the vow that such things must never happen again.

There were national delegations from all the east European and Balkan countries, Israel, the US, and all the European Union nations. The large Italian and Spanish delegations marched in groups under banners from different cities and provinces. There were also representatives from the many small Marxist parties and anarchist trade unions. It was a dignified, friendly, not too solemn reunion of the anti-fascist Left in all its distinctive national and ideological variety.

As for the concert, the whole project had been controversial. Some felt that it was unacceptable for the present Austrian government to take part in a tribute to the Mauthausen prisoners. Some emphasized that the Vienna Philharmonic had flourished during the Nazi era, had not protested the dismissal of its Jewish members, etc. Also, they had played Beethoven’s Ninth under Nazi auspices, so that even the choice of the music was in bad taste. And was Schiller’s “Ode to Joy” an appropriate text for memorializing a Nazi death camp?

These criticisms must have been taken into account by those who arranged the final program. Klestil, Fischler, and also the Minister of the

Continued on next page

Interior, Ernst Strasser, spoke frankly and directly about the full nature of Austrian responsibilities. They stated that more than half the prisoners had died; that indeed the purpose of quarry labor was to work the prisoners to death, literally, while producing profitable income for the SS wartime commercial empire; and that on an openly racist basis, Soviet war prisoners, Poles, Jews, and gypsies had been treated with special cruelty. The European commission delegate Fischler stated that "everywhere in Europe fear of foreigners is breaking out again, and the success of xenophobic parties in elections shows us how ephemeral the spirit of cooperation can be." Leon Zelman stated that "Mauthausen was built at a time when many SS-owned companies and concentration camps were built near quarries and brickworks....Almost all authorities, numerous corporations and business people were involved in the killing machine." He added that "as a survivor" he had "a moral obligation for the future of this country...to build a world of humanity, tolerance, and peace."

The whole occasion was dignified and moving. If Zelman and the chief rabbi of Vienna found it appropriate to participate, why should the world democratic Left not join them? The Nazis claimed Schiller and Beethoven for themselves, but there were undoubtedly some involuntary members of the Hitler Youth who responded more to Schiller than to the Führer. Hitler should not be allowed the posthumous victory of spoiling the noblest of Austro-German culture for the survivors and descendants of the Nazis' victims. The creative work of recent decades should be more widely heard than it is, but on this particular memorial occasion nothing could have drawn wider public attention and achieved greater spiritual consensus than the performance of Beethoven's Ninth in the presence of leading Austrian political figures who were fully acknowledging Austria's past and present responsibilities. ■

Reunion



PHOTO BY ERIC LEVENSON

The vets take the stage.

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February 27 at the West Coast veterans' reunion in San Francisco.

Weaving together dramatic readings, poems, slides and music of the

Spanish Civil War, the program told the story of the men and women of the Lincoln Brigade, who risked their lives as fighters for freedom and then stood in the forefront of freedom struggles in their own homeland. The production, led by musical director Bruce Barthol and featuring members of the San Francisco Mime Troupe (some of whom are relatives of brigadistas), left the audience enthused and inspired. ■

An invitation for posterity

The Volunteer invites our readers to consider making a bequest to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives.

ALBA is a non-profit tax-exempt organization. Contributions and bequests provide donors with significant advantages in planning their estates and donations.

For more information, contact

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Art in the Struggle for Freedom

A New Film by Abe Osherooff

When King Alfonso XIII abdicated in 1931, he left a country in crisis. Twelve million Spaniards—half the population, largely concentrated in the impoverished pueblos—were illiterate. Eight million lived in poverty, 2 million of them landless peasants. Twenty thousand people owned half of Spain. Entire provinces were the property of one family. The country was run by the traditional aristocracy, bolstered by a top-heavy army and a bloated church.

At the same time, the 1920s—often called Spain's second Golden Age—witnessed an astonishing flowering of the arts. Spanish poets, playwrights and painters were the equal of any in Europe and the Americas and today form part of a distinguished roster: Lorca, Picasso, Dali, Bunuel, Alberti, Manuel de Falla, to name just a few.

One of the most brilliant achievements of the new democratic government that came to power on April 14, 1931, was its ability to engage this contradiction. Spain's intellectual elite immediately went to work with the Republic to alleviate the conditions of ignorance and poverty afflicting the people. The government built thousands of schools and trained teachers to staff them. Some of the country's finest young writers and artists participated in the first mass literacy campaign in history, and others took plays, movies and paintings to the people.

When war broke out in the summer of 1936 the government continued its commitment to culture under the most arduous conditions, teaching soldiers to read and write in the trenches and

building more schools behind the lines.

One of the brightest moments in the defense of Madrid was the evacuation of the Prado Museum. In his siege of the capital, Franco targeted for aerial and artillery bombardment not only working class neighborhoods and hospitals, but the National Library and the Prado. A crew of blue-clad milicianos, many of whom no doubt had never before set foot in a museum, carefully removed and crated every painting and sculpture in the collection. The works of art were loaded onto trucks and, under the cover of night, transported to safety in Valencia. From there they made their way to Switzerland, where they remained for the duration of the war.

The Spanish people defended their country's artistic treasures, and in turn, painters and poets in overwhelming numbers, both Spanish and foreign, rallied to the defense of the Republic. Lincoln Brigade veteran Abe Osherooff, in his new film *Art in the Struggle for Freedom*, tells that compelling story.

Osherooff's award-winning 1974 personal documentary, *Dreams and Nightmares*, shown at hundreds of col-

leges and universities in the United States and abroad, opened the door for him to teaching and lecturing. *Art in the Struggle for Freedom* grows in large measure out of Abe's experiences teaching the Spanish Civil War at UCLA and the University of Washington. It is also a response to his desire to make "Shouts from the



ART IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

THE POSTERS, POETRY AND MUSIC OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

A new film by Abe Osherooff
veteran of the Abraham Lincoln
Brigades

Wall”—ALBA’s traveling exhibit of posters from the war—as widely available as possible.

Aimed at high school and college students, Abe’s half-hour film gives a thumbnail sketch of the history of the war and a taste of the great wealth of poetry, music and posters produced by the Republic. Under assault by its own army and severely outgunned, the government turned art itself into a weapon. Many of the most accomplished poets of Spain, Europe and the Americas not only wrote of the struggle, but read their works to soldiers in the trenches. ALBA vice-chair Cary Nelson, award-winning poet Martin Espada, and Osheroff himself read stirring poems by Manuel Altolaguirre, Edwin Rolfe, Antonio Machado, Pablo Neruda, Leon Felipe, and Spain’s shepherd-poet Miguel Hernandez.

The centerpiece of *Art in the Struggle for Freedom*, occupying the last third of the film, is a sampling of the nearly 2,000 posters produced on the Republican side during the war. Osheroff explains their ability to communicate, with a striking image and very few words, an urgent message to an often illiterate audience. Their presentation enhances the beauty and power of these “shouts from the wall.” Each poster is rolled out over a “wall” of archival footage carefully selected to echo the subject, while songs of the war play in the background. English subtitles give accurate translations of the Spanish, Catalan and French texts of the posters.

Abe ends his film by reminding us that history that tells us who, when and why can never succeed in making us know how it felt. Only art can do that. *Art in the Struggle for Freedom* gives us a sense of how it must have felt to those who, like Abe, were there when it counted. ■

Art in the Struggle for Freedom runs 27 minutes and is available, with an instruction guide, for \$25 plus shipping and handling. For more information call (206) 364-4521. Osheroff’s first film, *Dreams and Nightmares*, is also available.

Abe Osheroff Film Premieres in Austin, Texas

by Dr. Miguel Ferguson

Abe Osheroff visited the University of Texas in April to premiere his new documentary film, *Art in the Struggle for Freedom*. A front page article appeared in the *Austin-American Statesman*. The premiere was well attended and very well received. After the film, Abe responded to comments and questions from a panel of professors and community leaders. Young and old alike were impressed with the way the film relates the history of the Spanish Civil War through use of archival footage, dramatic poetry readings, and colorful samples of the posters that were created by republican artists during the conflict. The film clearly demonstrates that the art of the time reflected the most profound passions of a people struggling for freedom against overwhelming odds.

The next day, Abe presented *The Good Fight* to an overflow crowd.

However, as impressed as the audience was with the film, it was clear that nothing could compare to Abe’s own telling of the conflict and its aftermath. Audience members stayed long after the film to ask a broad range of questions about the Spanish Civil War and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. With humor, keen insights, and what can only be described as an encyclopedic knowledge of the Spanish Civil War (even the professors in attendance were visibly impressed!), Abe provided a personal testament to the significance of the war and the lifelong achievements of those who dedicated themselves to the cause of liberty during that crucial point in history.

In addition to the film screenings, Abe lectured in four social work classes in the

UT School of Social Work. Though I have seen him lecture many times, Abe never ceases to amaze me with the way he is able to connect with young students. As one of the organizers of Abe’s visit, I have received many letters and emails from students and community residents thanking me for inviting him to campus. One student activist told me that Abe had inspired her to keep dreaming of a better world, and that it was “an honor to be in his presence.”

It is clear that the story of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade continues to inspire the hearts and minds of new generations of Americans. The extraordinary response to Abe’s visit indicates that truly, you *are* history, you *are* legend! ■

Dr. Miguel Ferguson is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin.



Book Reviews



Come and Tell What Happened in Spain: A Review

Ve y cuenta lo que pasó en España: Mujeres extranjeras en la Guerra Civil: Una antología

Edited and with an introduction by Aránzazu Usandizaga. Barcelona, Planeta. 2000

By Gina Herrmann

Come and tell what happened in Spain: Foreign Women in the Spanish Civil War, *An Anthology*.

My English translation of the Spanish title of Aránzazu Usandizaga's marvelous anthology of the writings of British and North American women who witnessed or participated in the Spanish Civil War echoes another well-known title of collected memories, *The Blood of Spain*, by Ronald Fraser. The Spanish translation of Fraser's book has an injunction for its title: "Recuérdalo tú, y recuérdalo a otros" ("Remember it, and recall it to others"). It is likely that Usandizaga had the Fraser text in mind when she put together her selection of excerpts from diaries, news correspondence, autobiographies, memoirs, letters, short stories and poems of primarily leftist or left-radical women who were compelled or even obsessed by Spain and the promise of progressive government when the rest of Europe moved steadily toward conservative extremism.

This anthology accomplishes what its title appears to promise: it presents short, powerful, visually charged and easily remembered anecdotes and portraits of Spain from the first moments of Franco's insurrection until the last heartbreaking days of exile, concentration camps, imprisonments, and firing squads. In Spanish, the command "ve" can mean both "come" and "see." The ambiguity of the first word

of the title is another clue to the intention of the collection. What these women activists, journalists, nurses, novelists, and politicians have in common, regardless of their political and cultural differences, is a talent for an almost photographic recreation of the events they witnessed. Given the highly visual quality of the testimonies, then, the title takes on two meanings: "come and tell" and "show and tell."

Just what these women show and tell constitutes two simultaneous and related milestones in the history of the West: the emancipation of women and the empowerment of the labor classes. The presence of so many foreign women in the Spanish theater of war was a unique event. It was the first time women were able to involve themselves, mentally, politically, and bodily, in the action of war. Nurses Lini de Vries and Winifred Bates experienced the dangers of trench warfare. POUM sympathizer Mary Low joined a women's militia group. Martha Gellhorn and Lillian Hellman relate the bombings of Madrid. Well-known intellectuals and writers Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland drove ambulances on the Aragon front. One of the most incredible stories of the anthology is that of Sheila Grant Duff, who went to Spain as a spy on behalf of the *Chicago Daily News*. Her dual mission—to report on the atrocities committed in rebel prisons and to locate Arthur Koestler—almost landed her in the very penal system she was to investigate.

One of the strengths of this anthology is that it gathers together

valuable writings that have rarely, if ever, been collected in other histories of the war. This is the first time that passages of the writings of the most famous women involved with Spain in the 1930s—Emma Goldman, Dorothy Parker, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Simone Weil, and Lillian Hellman—have been published in one volume. The value of *Ve y cuenta*, however, is not exclusively in the memories of the cultural elite. Leah Manning, the founder of the important Spanish Aid Committee, is well represented here, and the selections from her autobiography stand as important documents of British political history. And from a literary standpoint, the excerpts from Josephine Herbst's memoirs, *The Starched Blue Sky of Spain*, are some of the most intense and sensitively written statements about the complexities of the Spanish war.

Much continues to be made in Spain about whether or not that country suffers from amnesia or an excess of memory about its civil war. Usandizaga is clearly on the side of those who hold that the war story must continue to be told by as many protagonists as possible. This text reminds its Spanish readership about the deep passion and international fervor sparked by the Republic, the confusion and disillusionment that set in among warring antifascist forces, and the selfless participation of non-Spaniards. The book also has the capacity to teach Spaniards about the ideological and historical intersection between revolutionary politics and feminism and the role that Spain played in the formation of many trail-blazing feminist leftists.

The last two decades have seen a growing corpus of book-length studies of women in the Spanish Civil War, most notably works by Mary Nash, Giuliana di Febo, and Shirley Mangini. *Ve y cuenta* is a welcome

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Book Reviews



Civilization and Barbarity in 20th-Century Europe

by Gabriel Jackson
Humanity Books, New York, 1999

By Michael Batinski

Moral courage and sadistic barbarism, peace keeping and brute aggression, toleration and bloody prejudice, democracy and totalitarianism—this is the stuff that centers Gabriel Jackson’s story of Europe’s struggles from the slaughters of the Great War to the defense of the Spanish Republic, the Holocaust, the Cold War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Jackson writes out of a moral urgency that makes this book a good book. How is it that when people look at evil, they can look away, step to the other side of the street, or even make their private peace with the barbarian? The question pursues Jackson as it pursues us all. The answers he proposes are unsettling, indeed for some of us discomfiting. Yet Jackson refuses to descend into despair.

Readers of *The Volunteer* will not be surprised that the struggle to preserve Spanish republicanism figures prominently in this book. Jackson, a renowned historian of the Republic and the civil war, renders a succinct and clear discussion of the tangle of internal political divisions within the republican and the fascist camps and of the international jockeying and bullying. Before the end had come, Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt realized the error of appeasement. The Munich Conference, according to Jackson, must not be remembered as that singular test and failure of the democracies’ nerve, but rather as “the last opportunity” in “an extended diplomatic crisis” that began with Ethiopia and Spain. As the beleaguered Spanish Republic watched the democracies allow Hitler to gobble up a fellow sovereign democracy, many

realized how futile it was to await an awakening of consciences in the international community. The picture of Neville Chamberlain assuring the world that peace had been secured finally “broke the morale of the Spanish Republic.”

The Spanish Republic does not disappear from the narrative with Franco’s victory. Jackson believes that what happened in Spain must be remembered as part of a continuing struggle for decency against barbarity. Jackson wants to know how it is that people take responsibility for doing what is decent or how they fail to do so. Thus he chooses to move rapidly over the campaigns of the Second World War so that he can discuss the German occupation of Europe and the

Jackson believes that what happened in Spain must be remembered as part of a continuing struggle for decency against barbarity.

ways Europeans addressed the question of responsibility. The “obedient armies” that served a “psychopathic dictator,” the resistance movements from Denmark and France to Eastern Europe, the collaborationist who “opportunistically,” even “gleefully,” seized the “jackal’s portion of power,” the Jews who fought the Nazis on all fronts—these people and their stories haunt this narrative.

Jackson is effective because he chooses to focus carefully on individual cases of sadism, such as Auschwitz’s Dr. Mengele. In later sections of the history he returns to this frightfully revealing era by way of personalities perhaps less grotesque, but in their own way equally troubling. How was it that philosopher Martin Heidegger had served Hitler’s genocidal government? Good people, even his

admirers, wanted to know. Yet he would not talk. And how was it that French scholar and Nazi collaborator Paul de Man could come to this country, erase that past, and bask in the admiration of generations of students until the day he died? Such questions do not go away. Recent disclosures have moved the Catholic Church to reconsider the war years. Jackson’s discussion of the papacy and Hitler provides a thoughtful introduction to that thorny issue. He also argues that public memories of the Jewish resistance have been distorting and denigrating. His discussion of Jewish engagement in the resistance to Hitler, from the International Brigades in Spain to the Eastern Front, is persuasive, though too brief.

Jackson refuses to let the past alone. This historian teaches by example that moral passion need not cloud one’s abilities to reason. While admit-

ting that fascists and republicans committed violent deeds in Spain, he does not lose sight of essential differences between egalitarian ideals and selfish traditionalism. While he readily recognizes the crimes of Joseph Stalin, he steers clear of Cold War simplicities. His treatment of early Soviet social achievements, of Nikita Krushchev, of Mikhail Gorbachev, and even of novelist Boris Pasternak demonstrate that moral commitment and reason can work in partnership. And perhaps most important, Jackson looks unflinchingly at the barbarities of this century, still working to keep faith in our potential to be responsible for one another. ▀

Michael Batinski teaches U.S. history at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

Join us in a cause that will never die

Over two decades ago four veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade— Bill Susman, Leonard Lamb, Oscar Hunter and Morris Brier — created a new organization: ALBA, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, bringing in a group of scholars interested in the Spanish Civil War and the International Brigades.

From the outset, one of ALBA's main tasks was to help manage and expand the Spanish Civil War archive housed at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. Explicit in this undertaking were the educational goals of preserving, disseminating and transmitting to future generations the history and lessons of the Spanish Civil War and of the International Brigades.

To carry out these goals ALBA, in collaboration with VALB, publishes *The Volunteer*. ALBA also collaborates on the production of books, films and videos, maintains a website at

web site:
www.alba-valb.org

www.alba-valb.org, helps send exhibitions of photographs, documents and artwork throughout the United States and Canada, and organizes conferences and seminars on the Spanish Civil War and on the role of the International Brigades in that conflict and afterward. ALBA has established the George Watt Memorial prizes for the best college and graduate school essays on these subjects and has designed a widely-used Spanish Civil War high school and college curriculum.

In the coming months and years ALBA will greatly expand its activity. To do so effectively ALBA must have your support. Please fill out the coupon below, enclose a \$25 (or larger) check made out to ALBA, and send it to us. It will insure that those of you who are not veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, or family members of a veteran, will continue to receive *The Volunteer* and will enjoy other benefits of associate status.

Fill out this coupon and send it to the address indicated below.

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- ☐ I would like to have ALBA's poster exhibit, *Shouts from the Wall*, in my locality. Please send information.
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Tell What Happened

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addition to what happily has become a new field of specialization in a variety of disciplines. But insofar as this anthology is a collection of memories, it also holds a prominent place among the autobiographies of the Spanish Civil War and stands as a complement to oral histories, particularly Fraser's *Blood of Spain*. Now all we need is the English version. ▀

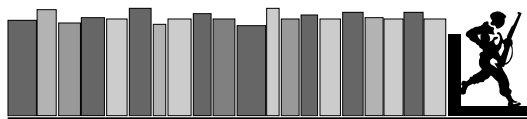
Gina Herrmann is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at Colby College

Watt Awards

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laberinto mágico, five novels and a film script on the Spanish Civil War and its immediate aftermath, written between 1939 and 1968. In reality it would be mistaken to call these texts novels. Lacking a real plot, they are chronicles: labyrinths of storylines and characters—partly historical, partly fictional—in which nobody really has a clear sense of the whole. In the last volume, *Campo de los almendros*, even the author himself confesses to have lost his way. One could say that

this chaotic narrative structure is another manifestation of the political deadlock of exile. This deadlock is a result of the Republic's defeat and the political climate of the Cold War, in which Franco could gain international legitimacy, and the republican cause was swept under the carpet. But it is mostly a consequence of exile itself—that is, of the author's separation from his national community; of his exclusion from history and the nagging absence of an interested readership. ▀



ALBA BOOKS, VIDEOS AND POSTERS

BOOKS ABOUT THE LINCOLN BRIGADE

Madrid 1937 —

Letters from the Spanish Civil War

ed. by Nelson & Hendricks (cloth) \$35

Another Hill

by Milton Wolff (cloth) \$25

Our Fight—

Writings by Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Spain 1936-1939

ed. by Alvah Bessie & Albert Prago (pbk) \$15

The Anti-Warrior

by Milton Felsen (pbk) \$15

Trees Become Torches, Selected Poems

by Edwin Rolfe (pbk) \$10

Collected Poems of Edwin Rolfe (pbk) \$21

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Spain's Cause Was Mine

by Hank Rubin (cloth) \$29
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Comrades

by Harry Fisher (cloth) \$25
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Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

by Peter Carroll (pbk) \$15

Remembering Spain:

Hemingway's VALB Eulogy

by Ernest Hemingway, Cary Nelson
and Milton Wolff (audio tape & pamphlet) \$15

Prison of Women

by Tomasa Cuevas \$15

EXHIBIT CATALOGS

Shouts from the Wall, a poster album

ed. by Cary Nelson (pbk) \$16

The Aura of the Cause, a photo album

ed. by Cary Nelson (pbk) \$25

VIDEOS

Art in the Struggle for Freedom

by Abe Osheroff (VCR) \$25

Dreams and Nightmares

by Abe Osheroff (VCR) \$25

The Good Fight

a film by Sills/Dore/Bruckner (VCR) \$35

Forever Activists

a film by Judith Montell (VCR) \$35

You Are History, You Are Legend

a film by Judith Montell (VCR) \$25

POSTERS

Two Spanish Civil War posters (*Madrid Lion* and *Victoria*) are available at \$10 plus postage, and thanks to Eva and Mark Fasanella, copies of five of Ralph Fasanella's posters are available (\$20 each, plus postage). They are: *Subway Riders* (1960); *Family Supper* (1972); *The Great Strike, Lawrence, 1912* (1978); *The Daily News Strike* (1993); *South Bronx Rebirth* (1995).

These books and tapes are available at the indicated prices from:

Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

799 Broadway, R. 227

New York, NY 10003-5552

Tel: (212) 674-5552

Shipping cost: \$2 per copy of book, album or tape.
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From the Wall*.**



Saul Friedberg 1913-2000

Saul Friedberg, lawyer and activist, died May 15 at 87. During his first year at Harvard Law School, he participated in protests against a German ship that flew the swastika, for which he was beaten and arrested, and became hooked on political action. He joined the Young Communist League and on graduation, instead of going into law, he went into the Chicago steel mills to organize the workers.

Trained as a sniper, he served with the MacKenzie-Papineau battalion and was wounded at both Teruel and the Ebro.

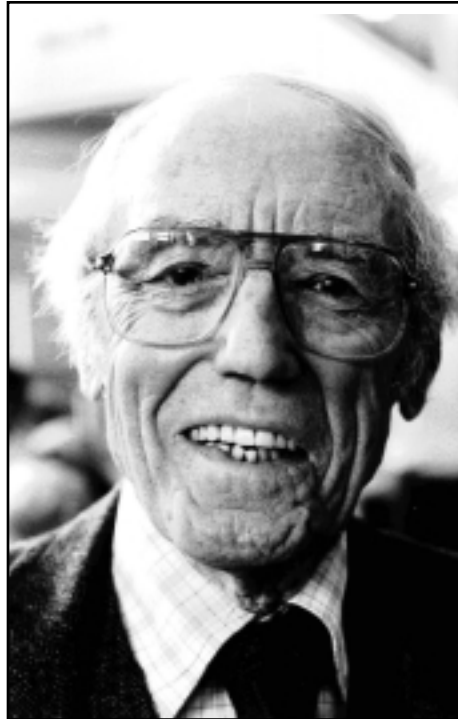
After returning home, he was unable to pursue the law. The character committee of the bar association would not approve him because of his service in Spain. He also had difficulty gaining entry into the U.S. military during World War II, though he enlisted in the navy as an electronics trainee.

He later practiced law in New York. After retirement, he remained active in political movements, including the Nuclear Freeze ballot proposition in Suffolk County. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the new Labor party and was involved in the Suffolk Health Advisory Committee, which defends local health centers for low-income people. He is survived by his wife, Nina, and three children.

Marcus Alper 1911-2000

Marcus Alper of Brookline, Massachusetts, a Lincoln vet and retired food broker, died last May at the age of 89.

Born in Newark, he spent his early childhood in Mexico City, Texas, and Cuba, attended Brookline High School, and graduated from Brown



Saul Friedberg

University in 1933. He fought with the Lincolns in 1937 and 1938.

During World War II, Alper taught aerial gunnery and aircraft recognition in Florida and Wyoming, then served with the 8th Air Force in England and flew 35 missions over Europe as a tail gunner in B-24 bombers.

After World War II, Alper rejoined his family food brokerage, where he worked until his retirement in 1969. During the McCarthy era, he appeared as an unfriendly witness before the House Committee on Un-American Activities and the Joint Investigative Committee of the Massachusetts House and Senate. He remained a lifelong supporter of progressive ideals and causes. He leaves his wife, Jeannette, four children, and eight grandchildren.

Bill Alexander 1910-2000

Bill Alexander, the last commander of the British battalion, has died at age 90. Fifteen years ago, in October

1985, he was present at the unveiling, on London's South Bank, of a memorial to the more than 2,200 men and women who left Britain and Ireland to serve in the International Brigades. The South Bank memorial to the volunteers is now one of more than 55 in Britain, many of which owe much to the efforts of Bill Alexander in his role as honorary secretary of the International Brigade Association, a position he held for more than 30 years. Although his family was poor, education was encouraged, and like most of his siblings, Bill went to university, studying chemistry at Reading. Influenced by his mother's free-thinking philosophy—and the sight of hunger marchers—he joined the Communist party in 1932. He found work as an industrial chemist. Unwilling to be seen as “management,” he repeatedly turned down offers of promotion. He also took part in the battle of Cable Street, which prevented Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists from marching through the East End of London.

He volunteered for the International Brigades in the spring of 1937. Arriving in Spain soon after the murderous battle of Jarama, in which two-thirds of the British battalion were killed or wounded, he joined the newly-formed anti-tank battery, which was equipped with modern, high-velocity Soviet guns. Described by a comrade as “a strict disciplinarian, but fearless,” Bill showed that his military efficiency matched his political resolve and was appointed the battery's political commissar. Bill was cited for bravery at the battle at Belchite in September 1937; four months later, at Teruel in January 1938, he was promoted to captain and commander of the British battalion. The following month he was injured by a bullet and sent home.

Back in Britain, Bill continued to campaign for the Spanish Republic and was involved in numerous

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Added to Memory's Roster



demonstrations outside the Spanish embassy. He also became Merseyside area secretary of the Communist party, which he remained until the outbreak of World War II. He served in north Africa, Italy and Germany, rising to the rank of captain in the reconnaissance corps, even though the promotion board made it clear they knew his history and political background. After the war, Bill resumed his political activities in Britain and, in addition to becoming Coventry secretary of the Communist party, stood unsuccessfully against Richard Crossman at Coventry East in the 1945 general election. From 1947 to 1953, he was party secretary for the Midlands area. Following a six-year period as secretary for Wales, he became assistant general secretary of the party in 1959, a position he held until 1967. He later taught chemistry in southeast London until retirement.

From 1989 to 1996 Bill was president of the Marx Memorial library in London. The library holds the International Brigade archive, where Bill researched a number of works on the brigades, including the official history of the volunteers from Britain and Ireland, *British Volunteers For Liberty* (1982), *No To Franco* (1992) and, with others, *Memorials Of The Spanish Civil War* (1996). He also wrote articles and letters challenging what he felt to be the mythology of the Spanish civil war. He was always strongly critical of the perception of the Spanish war as "the poets' war."

For many years, Bill was tireless in his efforts for the International Brigade Association, which he ruled with a rod of iron. He represented the organization at numerous events and led a group of surviving volunteers and their families on an emotional journey to Spain in 1986 to revisit the sites of the British volunteers' exploits. (The visit was filmed by the BBC for a television documentary, *Return To The Battlefields*.) Bill regularly gave impassioned talks about the Spanish "anti-fascist war" and what he felt to

be its lessons: the importance of "strength and unity." He always turned up with numerous pamphlets and books in aid of the International Brigade Association.

-Richard Baxell

Sam Gonshak

Sam Gonshak passed away on May 9, 2000. Sam was a child of poverty, born on New York's lower East Side of Jewish parents who came from Czarist Russia. He never outgrew his lifelong sensitivity to the poor and to those he felt did not get a fair shake. Early on he identified himself with those he considered to be the "underdog." As a very young man during the depression years, he joined the movement known as the Unemployed Councils. The two main objectives of this organization were to fight for a social security system and for unemployment insurance. When people were evicted from their homes because they could not pay the rent, Sam and his group would take their belongings (as their furniture had been placed in the street) back up into their apartments, giving them another two weeks to try to come up with the rent. They also helped people find jobs. Sam remained active in the Unemployment Movement for several years and was arrested a number of times in demonstrations at welfare stations, where he went with the people who could not pay their rent.

Sam was a leader in early union days, and though small in stature, he was out there throwing up picket lines and carrying banners. He fought for better working conditions, improved health laws, reasonable wages, and employment and dismissal laws. He laughed when he described being thrown down the steps of city hall and being arrested for civil disobedience.

Sam believed it was important to make a contribution to society and not to be consumed with self interest. Early on he championed Sacco and Venzetti, the Scottsboro Boys and Tom



Sam Gonshak, Barcelona, Spain, 1938

Mooney. Often he and his family paid a heavy price for his determined stands. His political activism and civil disobedience earned him a three-year sentence in Sing Sing Penitentiary on a trumped-up charge (assault of a policeman). He served one year in 1933.

A major turning point in Sam's life occurred in 1937, when he joined the International Brigades. Sam went to Spain with 20 young volunteers from Brownsville, Brooklyn. Sam was in Spain for more than a year and a half, serving with the Lincoln Battalion when it captured Belchite. Sam participated in the Brunete campaign and went on to the Aragon campaign, where the Battalion helped take Quinto and Belchite. He was wounded and was hospitalized at

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Added to Memory's Roster



Gonshak

Continued from page 21

Benicasim. After recuperation in the hospital, he was sent to Tarazona, outside of Albacete, and given the responsibility of instructing and orienting new recruits. He later became commander of truck transports and, finally, political commissar of the 15th Brigade transports. All of Sam's life he was extremely proud of his decision to go to Spain.

Sam once again paid a heavy price for his determination and the strength of his convictions. Franco's victory over the Spanish Republic in 1938 sent Sam home not identified as a hero, but rather labeled as a subversive. After serving for four years in the Army Air

Corps as an engineer in the Philippines, he returned home to be hounded by the F.B.I. Undaunted, Sam continued to be an activist, attending freedom marches and civil rights demonstrations. He and other vets were some of the first to march against American involvement in the Vietnam War, in support of nuclear disarmament, and against American intervention in Nicaragua, Chile and El Salvador. He worked tirelessly to raise money for ambulances and medical supplies and for a variety of other causes not always popular in establishment circles. He served as commander of the New York Post of VALB for several years, working at arranging many annual dinners and several of the trips to Spain and espe-

cially in disseminating information about the activities of VALB. Sam's activism has been documented in numerous books and in several movies, including *The Good Fight* and *Forever Activists*.

Sam's legacy cannot be measured in wealth and acquisitions. Rather his legacy is about making a contribution to society while we are here. He never stopped speaking out and marching for what he believed in and what he felt would be a contribution to society. His honesty and integrity live on in those with whom he came in contact, especially his daughter Essie, Buddy, his son-in-law, and Heather and Amber (his grandchildren). ■

ALBA'S TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS

SHOUTS FROM THE WALL

Medford, MA

October 12-Dec 10, 2000
Tufts University Gallery
Aidekman Art Center
40 R Talbot Ave.
Medford, MA 02155
617 627-3505

Riverside, CA

March 15, 2001-April 30, 2001
Sweeney Art Gallery
University of California
Riverside CA 92521
For information contact
Katherine Warren 909-787-3755

THE AURA OF THE CAUSE

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

Medford, MA

October 12-Dec 10, 2000
Tufts University Gallery
Aidekman Art Center
40 R Talbot Ave.
Medford, MA 02155
617 627-3505

For further information about *The Aura of the Cause* exhibit, and its companion exhibit, *Shouts From The Wall*, posters from the Spanish Civil War, contact ALBA's executive secretary, Diane Fraher, 212-598-0968. Both exhibits are available for museum and art gallery showings.

BRING THESE EXHIBITS TO YOUR LOCALITY

Contact Diane Fraher, ALBA executive secretary: 212-598-0968; Fax: 212-529-4603



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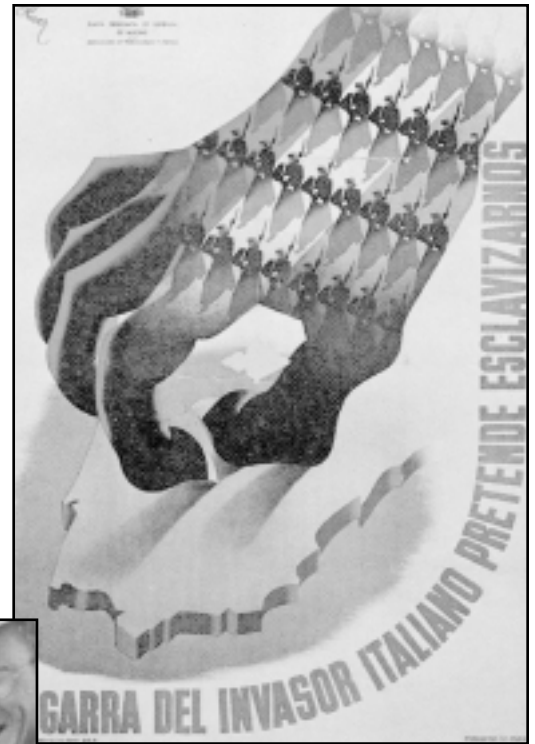


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ALBA traveling exhibits Shouts from the Wall and Aura of the Cause to be exhibited at Tufts University

October 12-Dec 10, 2000

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