

# The Volunteer

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

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE



# From the Chair

It's been quite a year. The good: Pete Seeger and Guy Davis, giants of music and activism, performed for ALBA just over a month ago, along with Patti Smith and Tony Shanahan—showing the mobilizing power of music for activist causes bridges the generations. We've had riveting reunion events in New York and San Francisco. We repeated a successful High School Teachers Institute in Tampa, Florida; organized professional development days in New York; and held a first-time Ohio Institute at Oberlin College. ALBA was involved in two major exhibits, *Nueva York: 1613-1945* and *The Mexican Suitcase*—the 4,000 rediscovered Spanish Civil War negatives by Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, and David Seymour ("Chim").

The bad: With right-wing populism on the march, progressives have suffered painful defeats in Europe and the United States. In Spain, Judge Baltasar Garzón was suspended from his position at the National Criminal Court as the result of a political witch hunt. Why? Because more than 30 years after the dictator's death, he dared to initiate an investigation into the thousands of killings perpetrated by the Franco dictatorship during and after the Civil War. Despite widespread international support from organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, the Spanish right may succeed in terminating Garzón's position.

Garzón's case makes clear that the legacy of the Spanish Civil War is still unresolved. It also shows how the Civil War and its aftermath are closely connected to human rights issues. The Lincoln vets, of course, understood this all along. Their commitment to the Republican cause became a commitment to the Republican refugees and political prisoners; a commitment to fight against Franco; a commitment to oppose unjust war and human-rights violations resulting from U.S. intervention in Latin America. In

## Highlights of 2010 Credits:

Top row: Pete Seeger, *Songs for the Cause*, photo by Alan Entin; Samuel Rosenblum receives ALBA Puffin Student Activism Award, photo by Len Tsou.

Middle row: Republican soldier, Battle of Brunete, Spain, July 1937, photo by Gerda Taro, International Center of Photography; Agustí Centelles (1909-1985), "Volunteer in the Lincoln Battalion, Barcelona, January 1937," Spain, Ministry of Culture, Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica, Archivo Centelles; Maria Blanco, photo by Richard Bermack; Noche Flamenca.

Bottom row: ALBA Teachers Institute, Florida; ALBA Honors Amy Goodman; *Daily Worker* cartoon by Maurice Del Bourgo, courtesy Jack Ziebel.

the U.S. context, the vets didn't budge an inch in their commitment to social justice and civil rights.

For this reason, we are honored that the Puffin Foundation has given ALBA the privilege of granting a new annual award for Human Rights Activism. Meant to honor the progressive, internationalist legacy of the Lincoln vets, the ALBA Puffin Human Rights Award in the amount of \$100,000 will serve to support human-rights activists world-wide. ALBA will fold the activities of the awardees into its educational programs. Our mission is to keep the legacy of the Lincoln Brigaders alive—and the way to do that is to connect their legacy to today's struggles.

I can't thank you enough for your continued support.

Sebastiaan Faber

Chair of the ALBA Board of Governors

## Letter to the Editor

Regarding the death of British vet Samuel Lesser (1915-2010):

We Spanish people will never be able to express with words the gratitude we feel for the likes of Mr. Samuel

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## The Volunteer

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# Photos Show Spanish Life in NYC

On September 17, over 150 people attended the opening of “La colonia: a photo album of Spanish immigrants in New York, 1898–1945” at NYU’s King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center. Co-sponsored by ALBA and curated by ALBA board member James D. Fernández, “La colonia” uses the family archives of seven descendants of Spanish immigrants to explore and display the history of Spaniards in New York.

By the mid-1930s, roughly 30,000 Spaniards lived in the city. Most were working class immigrants from the northern coastal regions of Spain (Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque Country). Many came to New York after stints in Spanish-speaking America, particularly Argentina, Mexico, Cuba and Puerto Rico. Like



Photo courtesy of Joe Mora.

other ethnic immigrant groups, throughout the 1920s and early 30s, Spaniards wove dense networks of mutual aid societies, social clubs, soccer leagues, etc. After the outbreak of the civil war in Spain in 1936, this

infrastructure would be tapped to mobilize the community on behalf of the Spanish Republic.

“La colonia” has aroused great interest in Spain and has been covered in dozens of newspaper articles, several

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## European Reunion in Berlin

By Victor Grossman

Joined by guests from Spain, France, Austria, Denmark, and the Netherlands, the German Fighters and Friends of the Spanish Republic 1936-1939 held their 13th annual get-together in Berlin last September. The young author Jochen Voit read from his new biography of the great singer and actor Ernst Busch (1900-1980), who sang for the International Brigaders in Spain and compiled a legendary song book for them in many languages, *Cantos Internacionales*. The next evening they thrilled to the singing of Busch’s best known songs by the dedicated progressive Gina Pietsch. Among the loudest to continue the singing till

very late was 93-year-old Austrian veteran Josef Eisenbauer. Those attending listened, far less happily, to Professor Heiner Fink, head of the Union of Victims of Nazi Persecution/League of Anti-Fascists, who described current attempts to form a new movement, or maybe a political party, based on anti-Polish and anti-Muslim prejudices. Such parties have become a worrisome menace in the Netherlands, Hungary, Switzerland, Britain, Denmark, and now Sweden.

Major themes at the meeting concerned plans for next October’s 75th commemoration of the founding of the International Brigades and how to coordinate activities with similar groups elsewhere, especially as an

answer to the extreme right-wing menace. Representatives from the Alliance of Friends of the International Brigades, centered in Madrid, were heartily welcomed for the discussions based on a coordination meeting with 15 countries last May in Paris.

The German organization, originally based on veterans, includes their widows and children plus historians and others interested in telling the story of Spain as part of the fight against neo-Nazis and racists in Germany. There is only one German survivor, Fritz Teppich, a Berliner who became a young commissioned officer in the regular Spanish army during the Civil War. ▀

# Watt Essay Contest Winners

By Gina Herrmann

**A**LBA's George Watt Memorial Essay Prizes are awarded annually to a graduate student and an undergraduate student who have written an outstanding essay or thesis chapter about any aspect of the Spanish Civil War, the global political or cultural struggles against fascism in the 1920s and 1930s, or the lifetime histories and contributions of the Americans who fought in support of the Spanish Republic from 1936 to 1938. The award was first established 10 years ago to honor the memory of Lincoln vet George Watt (1914-1994), a writer and lifelong activist central to the creation of ALBA.

Watt's distinguished action in war continued after Spain. His bomber was shot down in 1943 over Belgium, and two of his crew were lost. Receiving support from members of the Comet Line, a clandestine organization active in helping the Allies in Belgium and France, Watt managed to make his way from France into Spain and, eventually, back to England. During this journey Watt faced serious peril because he was both a Jew and an American.

Each year, as ALBA grants the George Watt Prize, we are reminded of Watt's inspirational example of committed anti-fascism and work for social justice.

The jury, consisting of Soledad Fox (Williams College), Rob Snyder (Rutgers University at Newark), and Gina Herrmann (University of Oregon), is pleased to announce the results for this year's contest. We received 15 submissions for both categories combined; six essays were in

Gina Herrmann chairs ALBA's 2010 Watt Award committee.

Spanish, nine in English. The jury was impressed by the international profile represented by the student authors, as well as with the quality and the scope of the essays. The essays addressed many topics, including the poetry of Langston Hughes, the political writings of Margarita Nelken, jazz and the songs of the Spanish Civil War, and Spanish Civil War monuments and the politics of commemoration.

The winner for the undergraduate category is Conor Tomás Reed, at City College of New York, who submitted a paper from a research colloquium titled "Seed Foundations Shakin': Interwar African Diasporic Responses to Fascism and the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War."

Christopher Bannister, a PhD researcher at the European University Institute, won the graduate prize with a selection from his master's thesis, "The Rival Durrutis: The Posthumous Cult of Personality of Buenaventura Durruti, November, 1936–June, 1937." His research concerns the posthumous cult of personality of Buenaventura Durruti during the Spanish Civil War and details the rise of the living cult and the perpetuation of the cult following the subject's death. The portion of this larger work submitted for the Watt Prize focuses on the cult in the period November 1936 to June 1937.

## **African Responses to Fascism & the Spanish Civil War** By Conor Tomás Reed

**B**etween World Wars I and II, the contentious issue of nationalism—how it can be shaped in radical or conservative ways by racially oppressed people; whether it must be embraced or superseded by

Black social movements worldwide—was a complex terrain on which members of the African Diaspora galvanized their extended communities. Contradictions abounded in the ideological alliances formed during this time. Many prominent radicals advocated various projects for Black nationalism, as well as multi-racial internationalism, as solutions to halt the development of fascist power and the congruous ideologies driving Jim Crow segregationist practices in the United States. Simultaneously, however, some members of the African Diaspora openly advocated ideas of fascism as a means towards Black liberation, seeing Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco as charismatic leaders to emulate and support; or arguably, they didn't see themselves as part of a socio-ethnic diaspora at all.

This essay appraises divergent strands of the African Diaspora's political spectrum, as represented in particular by the interwar writings and experiences of Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, C.L.R. James, Marcus Garvey, Black Abraham Lincoln Brigade volunteers, and Moroccan conscripts in Franco's army during the Spanish Civil War. A synergy of these historical actors' thoughts and actions can hopefully contribute to a dynamic, non-essentialist understanding of African Diasporic history, processes, and political movements that characterize the most nuanced diaspora-related scholarship being done today. Moreover, a historical analysis of fascism's rise that re-situates Afro-descended people as some of the most trenchant originators of anti-fascist critiques can suggest, in the current atmosphere of fascistic ideas

reappearing worldwide, that precisely the most socially oppressed can lead the most powerful resistance.

## Rival Durrutis: A Posthumous Cult of Personality

By Chris Bannister

**B**uenaventura Durruti was a hero to the anarchist movement, and his death on the Madrid front on November 20, 1936, saw a mass outpouring of grief from Spain's anarchists. The paper details the development of the posthumous cult of personality of Durruti between his death and the Barcelona May Days of 1937 and their immediate aftermath. The work is concerned with the two rival representations of Durruti that were created in the period by the leadership of the anarchist *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* and the union's more radical elements, mirroring the ideological schism that was to reach its climax in Barcelona in May 1937. The paper follows Max Weber's theory of charismatic authority and political charisma, asserting that the adoption of the Weberian model results in the focus of the study being not Durruti himself, but his perception within the anarchist movement. Consequently, this approach emphasizes the representation of the individual and in turn, the agents with influence over these representations. Following his death, Durruti was portrayed as an advocate of the counter-revolution, a non-partisan antifascist committed solely to winning the war, yet alongside this figure there was an alternate Durruti, the unrepentant revolutionary anarchist.

The paper examines the two depictions and the ideological motivations behind them, considering the use of Durruti's cult of personality as a means of political mobilization. The central assertion of the work is



## NYC Teachers Attend ALBA Workshop

On Tuesday, November 2, over 40 New York City public high school teachers of social studies attended the second annual ALBA/Puffin Professional Development Day at NYU's King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center. The teachers were selected from a pool of almost 100 applicants. In the morning session, James D. Fernández and Peter N. Carroll introduced the teachers to the archival resources and outreach programs available through ALBA. On hand as well were Michael Stoll, a PhD candidate at NYU's Steinhardt School of Education, who has been helping us in our public school outreach programs, and two alumni of ALBA's Summer Teachers Institutes, Sergei Alschen and Gabriela Calandra, who teach social studies and Spanish at the Bergen County Academies.

Throughout the day, the teachers handled and discussed a set of documents that included letters by Hy Katz, James Lardner, Canute Frankson, Hy Greenfield, Harry Meloff and Crawford Morgan, and they discussed ways of incorporating these primary source materials into their curricula. In the afternoon, Michael Nash, Director of Tamiment Library, welcomed them to the archive, introducing them to some of the visual sources. We are particularly grateful to Patricia Bauman and the Puffin Foundation for generously sponsoring this wonderful educational initiative. ▲

best summarized by Jacinto Barras, an anarchist journalist for *Solidaridad Obrera*, who wrote in 1938 of Durruti:

In everything written to date, each author has delineated the spiritual profile of Durruti; not taking into account what it was but as each one wanted it to be. Catholics say that God made man in his image, when

we all know that God is a product of the human imagination. Many commentators have done something like this with Durruti.

The work illustrates the veracity of Barras' observation and how, following Durruti's death, his legacy became a source of political capital in the CNT's ideological schism. ▲



# Songs for the Cause: Seeger-Davis-Smith Sing for ALBA

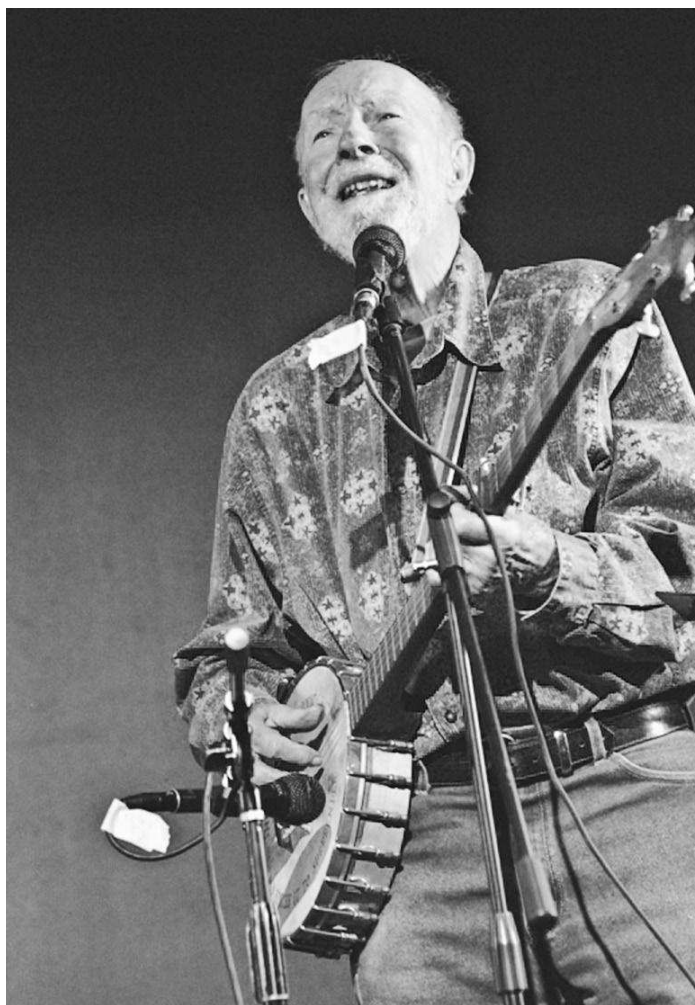
By Sebastiaan Faber

**"T**here's an extra beat here, I think." Pete Seeger's banjo tentatively picks the chords to "Viva la Quince Brigada," the classic Spanish Civil War song that he first recorded in 1943. While Seeger, who is turning 92 this year, half-hums the staccato Spanish lyrics, blues singer Guy Davis hesitantly follows along on his guitar. The tiny green room at the auditorium of the Museum of the City of New York is barely big enough to hold these two giants of musical activism. They have known each other a long time. Guy, in fact, learned to play the blues—as well as the banjo—at a summer camp in Vermont run by Pete's brother John sometime in the early 1960s.

It's about four o'clock on a windy Saturday afternoon. While Pete and Guy are getting ready for a sound check, the museum's hallways are filling with people eager to enter the 250-seat auditorium for the ALBA benefit concert, hosted by the Puffin Foundation, also featuring Patti Smith—punk-rock legend, poet,

artist, activist—and her band partner Tony Shanahan. Seeger—who still chops his own firewood—squats down and nimbly hops off the stage (a four-foot drop) to examine it from the house. He is holding some pages on which he has hand-printed the lyrics of "Venga Jaleo" and "Freiheit." "Where can we hang these so the audience can read them?" he inquires. "I want the people to be able to sing along." Someone points out that the songs are printed in the program booklets. "That's nice," Seeger says, "but I want them to look up at me, not at their programs."

*Songs for the Cause* aimed to celebrate the important role that music and musicians have played in the history of activism, as well as the strong link between music, activism, and education. Seeger (1919), Smith (1946), and Davis (1952) represent different generations of performing activists who continue to rally and inspire younger



Pete Seeger. Photo by Len Tsou.

cohorts. This inter-generational link was further brought out when Samuel Rosenblum, a high school junior at Bergen Academies (New Jersey), received the first ALBA Puffin Student Activism Award from two of his teachers, Sergei Alschen and Gabriela Calandra, both alumni of ALBA's High School Teachers Institute. "I would like to thank the establishment," Rosenblum quipped, "for continuing to give my generation reasons to fight against it." For the past three years, Alschen and Calandra have been presenting the history of the Lincoln Brigade in their classes.

Before the music began, the sold-out audience of 250 heard stirring speeches by Lincoln vets Matti Mattson and Maynard Goldstein and



Guy Davis, David Roland, and Pete Seeger. Photo Len Tsou.



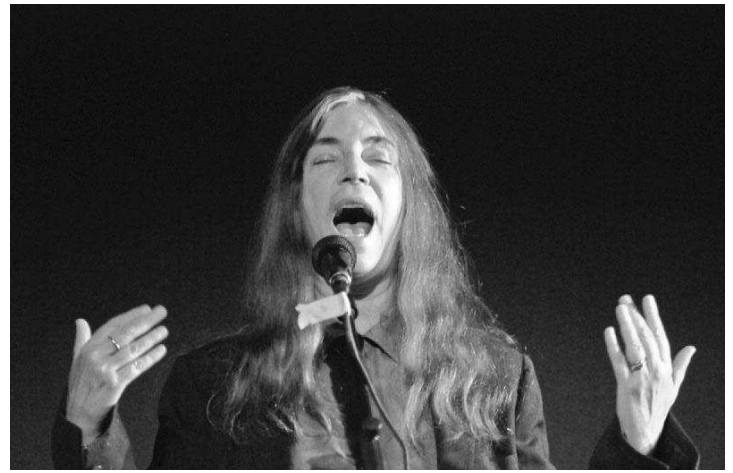
Perry and Gladys Rosenstein with Pete Seeger. Photo by Alan Entin.

a brief talk by ALBA's Peter Glazer, whose father Tom was one of the four musicians on *Songs of the Lincoln Battalion*, the 78 rpm album that Seeger first recorded on Moe Asch's Stinson label. Marc Lambert of the Puffin Foundation also announced the creation of a new gallery dedicated to the history of activism. The gallery is scheduled to open in 2011 and includes a permanent plaque honoring the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

The Puffin Foundation joined ALBA in announcing the new \$100,000 international ALBA Puffin Human Rights Award, which will be granted for the first time next spring at the annual reunion event in New York City.

Seeger and Davis shared the stage for stirring renditions of "Venga Jaleo," "Viva la Quince Brigada," "The Ballad of John Henry," "This Little Light," and "Freiheit." Smith and Shanahan played a 40-minute set including "People Have the Power," "Because the Night," and "The Geometry Blinked Ruin Unimaginable," a moving poem from Smith's *Auguries of Innocence* (2009), inspired by Picasso's *Guernica*. The evening ended with Smith, Shanahan, Davis, and Seeger joining together with the audience in "Blowin' in the Wind" and "Jarama."

In the reception that followed the program, *Democracy Now!* radio commentator Amy Goodman spoke about the connection between the painting that commemorates the German air bombing of the Basque town in 1937 and the tapestry that replicates the painting and hangs in the room where the United Nations Security Council meets. She pointed out that in 2002, as the UN debated the invasion of Iraq, the U.S. arranged to have the tapestry covered so as not to disrupt the proceedings. "We need to lift that curtain," Goodman exhorted the cheering crowd. New York City Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito also addressed the reception audience.



Patti Smith. Photo by Len Tsou.

*Songs for the Cause*, sponsored by the Puffin Foundation, was conceived by David Roland, who first met Pete Seeger at a summer camp, and produced by Marc Lambert and Jeanne Houck, executive directors of the Puffin Cultural Forum and ALBA, respectively. ■

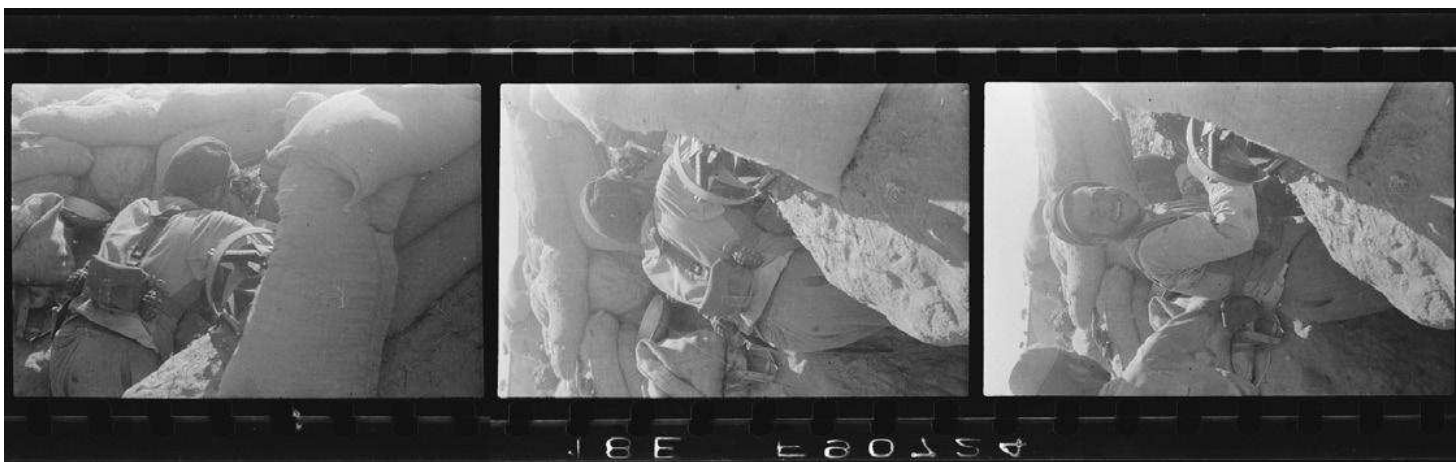


Maynard Goldstein and Matti Mattson. Photo by Len Tsou.



Sergei Alschen and Gabriela Calandra present the ALBA Puffin Student Activism Award to Samuel Rosenblum. Photo by Len Tsou.





Republican soldier, Battle of Brunete, Spain, July 1937. Photo by Gerda Taro. Copyright International Center of Photography.

## The Ghost of Gerda Taro

**By Anthony L. Geist**

*Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted with permission of the International Center of Photography from the new catalogue of their current exhibition, The Mexican Suitcase: The Rediscovered Negatives of Capa, Chim and Taro. Volume 1: The History. Volume 2: The Films. ICP/Steidl: New York/Göttingen, 2010.*

**T**he Battle of Brunete looms large in the memories and the memoirs of the veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, some 2,800 young Americans who joined 40,000 other volunteers from over fifty countries in the fight against fascism in Spain from 1936 to 1939.

In July 1937, in an attempt to stem the Nationalist advance on Madrid, the Republican army went on the offensive at Brunete, about 35 kilometers outside the capital city. The Lincoln Brigade formed part of the government's 80,000 troops. The Battle of Brunete instantly, if briefly, attained mythical status internationally and among the American volunteers for

Anthony Geist is chair of the Spanish department at the University of Washington.

two reasons. It was there on July 9 that Oliver Law, leading an attack up Mosquito Ridge, met his death. Law was the first African American to command white troops in the history of the United States military. It was also on a battlefield between Villanueva de la Cañada and Brunete two weeks later, on July 25, that Gerda Taro was crushed by a Republican tank in the chaos of retreat. Taro was the first woman photojournalist to die in action. She was given a hero's burial in Paris.

Law and Taro have something else in common as well: until recently, history has all but forgotten them both. The Lincoln Brigade fell victim to the anticommunist witch hunts of the 1950s, holding a place of honor at the beginning (as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade) and end (as the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade) of the House Un-American Activities Committee's list of subversive organizations. The Abraham Lincoln Brigade has been systematically written out of American history books, including, sad to say, Howard Zinn's otherwise splendid *A People's History of the United States*, which makes not a single mention of the volunteers.

Gerda Taro was consigned to

oblivion for other reasons. For one thing, Robert Capa, Taro's partner in love and photography, quickly overshadowed her after her death. His photos of Spain and D-Day soon came to define photojournalism in the twentieth century. For another, World War II surpassed the Spanish Civil War in sheer savagery and numbers of casualties, reducing the earlier conflict to a footnote. Yet in her brief career as a photojournalist (which lasted scarcely a year), Taro's work was published in many of the most important European and American magazines of the time. Subsequently, many of her photos were attributed to Capa. Recently, due in large part to Richard Whelan's meticulous efforts to identify her prints and negatives, and Irme Schaber's groundbreaking biographical studies, Taro has begun to emerge from the shadows.

Viewing Taro's negatives of the Battle of Brunete, preserved for seventy years in the Mexican Suitcase, is like seeing a ghost. They constitute a visual record of the last days of her life. Indeed, many of them have a ghostly quality. Whether the negatives have deteriorated over the years or were originally overexposed, many of them have a phantom look to them: figures



emerge from a cloudy background, flames from a burning truck sear through the smoke, buildings literally spill their guts after an air raid.

The Mexican Suitcase negatives do not represent all of Taro's photos from Brunete. Many of her better-known shots, published in reportages in a number of French, German, and American periodicals, are not here. From those that are, it is difficult to configure a chronology or narrative line. With many of Capa's photos included in this same collection, one can reconstruct a sequence by studying the contact sheets. His photos from the Battle of Teruel, for instance, fall into groupings that can be reassembled to structure a narrative: battle itself, captured prisoners, initial victory celebration, the consequences for the civilian population after the Republican defeat.

Such is not the case with Taro's negatives dating from the weeks of the Brunete battle. They jump from shots of the battlefield (where the war is almost always outside the frame) to a handful of pictures of María Teresa León and Rafael Alberti in the Palace of the Marquis of Heredia Spinola back in Madrid (requisitioned by the Republican government as the headquarters of the Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas); from the Second International Congress for the Defense of Culture (in Valencia) to scenes of Madrid under bombardment. Yet even when viewed in the contacts it is difficult to establish a narrative sequence. Perhaps this is because, as Fredric Jameson reminds us, history is *not* narrative, it is struggle and blood. Yet paradoxically our only access to history is through narrative. Hence our compulsion to tell stories, to set the pieces in order.

On the one hand, a snapshot is a frozen moment in time. It removes

the subject from chronology and sequence, rendering it static and iconic. (Capa's controversial *Falling Soldier* is one such example.) On the other hand, "photographs are artifacts with a continuing life," as Judith Fryer Davidov contends in her book *Women's Camera Work* (1998). The difference between stasis and "continuing life," in essence, is context. In the case of Taro's Brunete negatives, we can reconstruct context as the general historical framework of the Spanish Civil War and the ideological mobilization of the media. Capa and Taro were both aware of the international dimensions of the war and consciously put their craft at the service of the Republican cause. "Objectivity" was not their goal. They strove to show the world the effects of fascism on the civilian population. Their objective in photographing the

that precede and follow it. One of the more compelling sequences in Taro's Brunete negatives consists of three photos of a soldier squinting down the barrel of his Mauser (ms076, frames 49, 50, 51). Negative 50 was published on the cover of a German magazine, *Die Volks-Illustrierte* (August 25, 1937). Sepia tinting replaces the gray of the negative, making light glance dramatically off the two hand grenades strapped to the soldier's belt. It is a powerful shot that captures the tension of combat in the man's body as he pokes his weapon through the sandbag levee. The frame before is nearly identical but shot in horizontal format. In the following frame, the soldier has turned to the camera, a wide grin creasing his face. It changes our understanding of the previous photo without in any way devaluing it. Is the infantryman mugging for the camera



Gerda Taro with Republican soldier, Córdoba front, September 1936. Photo by Robert Capa. Copyright International Center of Photography/Magnum Photos.

Battle of Brunete was to provide visual evidence that the Republican army was indeed prevailing.

The context of a particular snapshot is also found in the exposures

or, more likely, for the young woman behind the lens? Is this shot staged rather than spontaneous? Ultimately,

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# A Volunteer's Farewell: Sam Levinger

*Editor's Note: When he volunteered in 1937 to fight against fascism during the Spanish Civil War, 20-year old Samuel Levinger was an undergraduate at Ohio State University in Columbus, a Socialist, and the son of a rabbi. He was an exceptionally sensitive man. He was also an excellent writer—of stories, letters, and poetry.*

*After giving a lecture recently at the University of Vermont, I was approached by Levinger's niece, Laurie Levinger, who offered an example of her uncle's writings.*

*The first is a letter that is self-explanatory as to its purpose and intention and, fair warning, will touch most readers deeply.*

*The second is a work of poetry.*

*We publish both pieces with the permission of Ms Levinger, who is currently working on a biography of her uncle. These writings may not be reproduced without her permission. She asks that anyone with information about young Levinger contact her at [Laurie@Levinger.net](mailto:Laurie@Levinger.net).*

Peter N. Carroll

In case of death only,  
please send this to  
Mrs. Lee J. Levinger  
2257 Indianola Ave.  
Columbus, Ohio  
U.S.A.

Do not send in case of injury.

Thanks, comrade. Samuel Levinger  
Dear Mother and Father:

I suppose that by the time you receive this, I will have been dead several weeks. Of course, war is a confused thing, and I have seen enough certified corpses walking around to make me a little skeptical, but if you receive this and an official announcement too, count it as definite.

This is the last day of relief. We are going up to some front tomorrow

to clear out the Fascists. I do not doubt that we will be successful in repatriating the boys across the street, but it will be at considerable cost, and as the Lincoln Battalion is good it should be in the middle of it.

I still stick by my original conviction that I will be alive long after a whole lot of dictators have died of lead poisoning or hardened arteries; but I've been wrong on other matters before. Hence I decided to write this letter.

Certainly I am not enthusiastic about dying. I've gotten a good bit of fun out of my first twenty years

despite the fact that, except for the last six months they were pretty useless. I suppose I would have enjoyed my next twenty just as much. I wanted to write this letter, however, to make clear that there is absolutely nothing to regret.

If I were alive again I think I would join in the battle again at this crucial place. There was an extremely important job to do over here and I was one of the men who decided to do it. That a good many of us were killed while doing it is unfortunate, and the fact that I was killed is still more unfortunate from our standpoints.

*Poem written in the hospital after being wounded a second time at Brunete.*

## **The War Is Long** by Sam Levinger

Comrades, the battle is bloody, the war is long;  
Across grey hills ahead hear the shout of the guns,  
Above us sweep white planes pregnant with pain.  
See the tanks sullen and savage, hating flesh,  
And listen—the rifles are pointing men out for oblivion,  
The winging machine guns are beating the drums of death.

Comrades, the battle is bloody, the war is long;  
There lies a comrade, head swathed in blood and bandages,  
There stands a broken comrade with white face twitching,  
There lie our dead, waiting for a little sand.  
And we are tired with war and sick with danger,  
Dreaming of girls waiting a long ways off;  
And there is blood on our hands we cannot wash clean,  
Blood on our souls which will not wash off for a long time.

Comrades, the battle is bloody, the war is long;  
Still let us climb the grey hill and charge the guns,  
Pressing with lean bayonets toward the slopes beyond.  
Soon those who are still living will see green grass,  
A free bright country shining with a star;  
And those who charged the guns will be remembered,  
And from red blood white pinnacles shall tower.



However, this has no relevance to the necessity of doing the job. This difference between world Fascism and world socialism is too great to permit our safeties to be a factor for consideration.

Next I want to beg both of you not to see this out of context. World change is a stern master. It has killed and will kill millions of boys as dear to somebody as I am to you. The Fascists want war, and bitter war we will give them.

You are more fortunate than many of the parents, for you still have two children with extremely bright futures. You have your extremely valuable work. I am less able to evaluate Father's work, though I realize its great worth; but in my field, that of an author, I can say I think Mother should become one of the most valuable authors of the generation. And you still have the emancipation of America to be achieved.

I think my ideas on immortality agree largely with yours. I once wrote a lousy poem "If there is darkness beyond I shall sleep, if light I shall wake." So if I meet you folks again all to the good— if not, we've had quite a bit of pleasure in each other's company while it lasted.

As for my friends, give them my love if you run across them. Tell them I said there's only one thing to remember—that there's one comrade less to do the job of soldier of discontent. They'll all have to do some work to make up for my getting perforated. See if that will get a few of these muggumps into action.

This has been a clumsy letter. I just want to say that I love you both a great deal, and so forth. Also that it isn't such a serious thing.

Love and revolutionary greetings.  
Joy to the world.

Samuel Levinger ■

## Arborglyphs Found in California

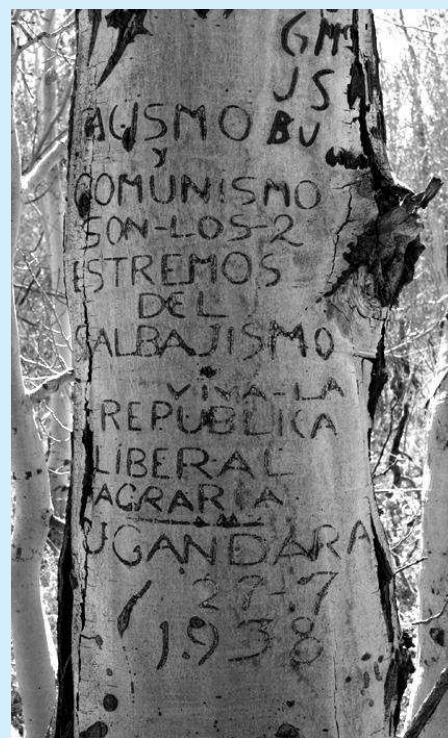
While hiking in the Glass Mountains of Mono County, California, last year, Betty Brown of Kensington, California, came upon some carvings made on aspen trees. The carvings refer to the Spanish Civil War. Apparently they were cut by a Basque shepherd with anti-fascist opinions. The photos have been sent by Ms Brown's daughter, Paula Brown-Williams, and are printed here with her permission. The texts have been translated by Sebastiaan Faber:

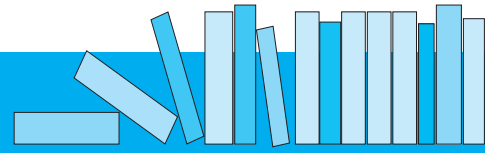
Viva la República  
Mueran los fascistas  
[date illegible]

1937  
Long Live the Republic  
Death to the Fascists  
[date illegible]  
1937

Mueran los fascistas, separatistas, el clero, los fanáticos, los dictadores y políticos millonarios.  
Viva la República liberal y la libertad de palabra, comercio, trabajo para todos.  
Death to the Fascists, Separatists, the Clergy, the Fanatics, the Dictators and Millionaire Politicians.  
Long Live the Liberal Republic and Freedom of Speech, of Commerce, and Work for All.

Fascismo y comunismo son los 2 extremos del salvajismo.  
Viva la República liberal agraria.  
Ugándara [?]  
27-7 [i.e. July 27] 1938  
Fascism and Communism are 2 Extremes of Savagery.  
Long Live the Liberal Agrarian Republic.  
Ugándara  
July 27, 1938 ■





## Spain's Legacy in Britain

*Looking Back at the Spanish Civil War: The International Brigade Memorial Trust's Len Crome Memorial Lectures, 2002-2010. Edited by Jim Jump (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010).*

*Antifascistas: British & Irish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. Edited by Richard Baxell, Angela Jackson, and Jim Jump. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010).*

### By Peter N. Carroll

**T**he International Brigades—some 35,000 volunteers from 50-odd countries—stand in history as a unique transnational effort of the mid-20th century. “Honor for them in this lies,” wrote the U.S. poet Edwin Rolfe in “Elegy For Our Dead,” that theirs is no special strange plot of alien earth. Men of all lands here lie side by side....

Rolfe's internationalism was answering the British poets of World War I who wrote that in Flanders Field there was “one spot” that would forever be English. Indeed, to the IB volunteers, reacting against the nationalism that had led to blood baths in that first world war and the nationalism that infected the fascist minds of the 1930s, the best human response to anti-democratic movements required an international commitment symbolized by the famous poster showing black, white, and yellow people of the world united

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to save the Spanish Republic.

It is no small irony, therefore, that many of the IB volunteers who survived both Spain and World War II returned home to form national veterans organizations honoring each country's struggle against fascism. In the past few decades, monuments and plaques have sprung up worldwide to celebrate local and national heroes. And it's no coincidence that scholars who have followed in their footsteps have often adopted a national perspective. (Full disclosure: my own work is no exception from that pattern.)

Among the most active and successful of those groups is the International Brigades Monument Trust, founded in the United Kingdom in 2001 as a successor to the British veterans' International Brigade Association. Its members, including many family relations of the volunteers as well as the country's leading scholars of the Spanish Civil War, have undertaken numerous programs and projects to preserve the legacy of the struggle against fascism “as an inspiration to people around the world.” The scope of their activities can be found on their website (<http://www.international-brigades.org.uk/>) and in their quarterly newsletters. The two books under review reflect their recent achievements.

*Looking Back at the Spanish Civil War* is a collection of the first 10 Len Crome annual lectures sponsored by the IBMT. These include Paul Preston's tribute to the man for whom the series is dedicated, “‘No Soldier’: The

Courage and Comradeship of Dr Len Crome,” describing one of the many medical personnel who gave generously to the Spanish cause and later served in World War II. As expected, the British side receives considerable treatment—essays by Richard Baxell and Angela Jackson, and Enrique Moradiellos's “Albion's Perfidy” about the pro-Franco response of the British government. But running through most of these essays is a strong international thread: Helen Graham's “The Return of Republican Memory”; Ángel Vias's “September 1936: Stalin's Decision to Support the Spanish Republic”; Julián Casanova's “History and Memory.”

*Antifascistas* is more of a picture book designed to accompany a traveling exhibition honoring the role of British and Irish volunteers in Spain. Paul Preston's introductory essay contextualizes the story, and the editors have added clear explanation of the various aspects of the Spanish war involving British soldiers, medical aid, journalists, the arts, etc.

Separately and together, this historical work is good—have no doubt

### New in Spanish

*La Batalla Del Jarama*, by Jesus Gonzalez de Miguel (ISBN 9778497347938). This is a definitive study of the first battle of the Spanish Civil War that had widespread participation of U.S. volunteers, in February 1937. It includes much first-hand commentary about this critical defense of Madrid.



about it—and reflects the growing interest around the world in matters related to the Spanish Civil War and its legacy. Partly the result of new archival discoveries, partly because of the passing of the generation that lived and fought the war, the new scholarship has effectively shifted the historical narrative closer to its original, pre-Cold War position.

Most recent writing emphasizes that the war in Spain had long, indigenous roots; stresses selfish national interests in Britain, France and the United States for the failure to prevent fascist expansion; and treats the IB volunteers as heroic anti-fascists (rather than dupes of Stalin). On these grounds, the Spanish Civil War was a fight between an elected democracy and a fascist-military rebellion rather than a war between fascism and communism (the Cold War version). Instead of seeing the Spanish war as a precursor or “dress rehearsal” for a world war, it appears as it once was seen by its contemporaries, the first battlefield of World War II. ▀

## Taro

Continued from page 9

what does it tell us?

Taro’s own image is almost entirely absent from her Brunete negatives. She was always behind the camera. We see her shadow in just one shot (ms075, frame 36). Yet in a certain sense it is Taro who emerges from these ghostly negatives, haunting us as we look back over seven decades and countless armed conflicts. She is powerfully present in her traces, in her very absence. To this day, treasure hunters armed with metal detectors sweep the hills and fields of Brunete in search of Gerda’s lost Leica. ▀

## Spanish Life in NYC

Continued from page 3



radio reports, and even a featured spot on Spanish television’s nightly news program. Fernández has received over a hundred e-mails from people in Spain, other parts of Europe, and the U.S. with questions, information, and, in some cases, images of Spaniards in New York. He hopes to expand the exhibition and have it travel in Spain.



Upper photo courtesy of Manuel Alonso and Dolores Sánchez; bottom photo by Juan Salas.

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### [Correction for September Volunteer:](#)

Felice and Saul Ehrlich in memory of Morris (Moishe) Brier, founding member of ALBA

*The above donations were made from August 1 through October 31, 2010. All donations made after Oct. 31 will appear in the March issue of The Volunteer.*

## Letters

### Continued from page 2

Lesser. The brigadists left Britain to fight against fascism. In other words, they were people that did what their countries should have done and didn't do. Those countries—including the UK—had to wait a couple of years until they finally realized the dangers of fascism. Even when they defeated Hitler they decided not to take any action against Franco: instead he was supported. As I said, no words can express the admiration that I feel for Mr. Lesser and all the rest of brigadists.

Just one small note that I think is important to clarify: The expression "presente!" was (and is still) an expression USED BY FASCISTS to glorify their dead "heroes" ... I think is a bit disgusting that same expression is used in this case for a man that went all the way to Spain to fight fascism.

Miguel, October 21, 2010

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**Veterans Auditorium**

**ALBA-Bill Susman Lecture**

**co-hosted with Bay Area Veterans for Peace**

Marjorie Cohn, former president of the National Lawyers Guild, author of *The United States & Torture: Interrogation, Incarceration & Abuse*

**New York City, May 14, 2011**

**Annual Reunion and award of first ALBA Puffin Prize for Human Rights Activism**

**Berkeley, May 29, 2011**

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