

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

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

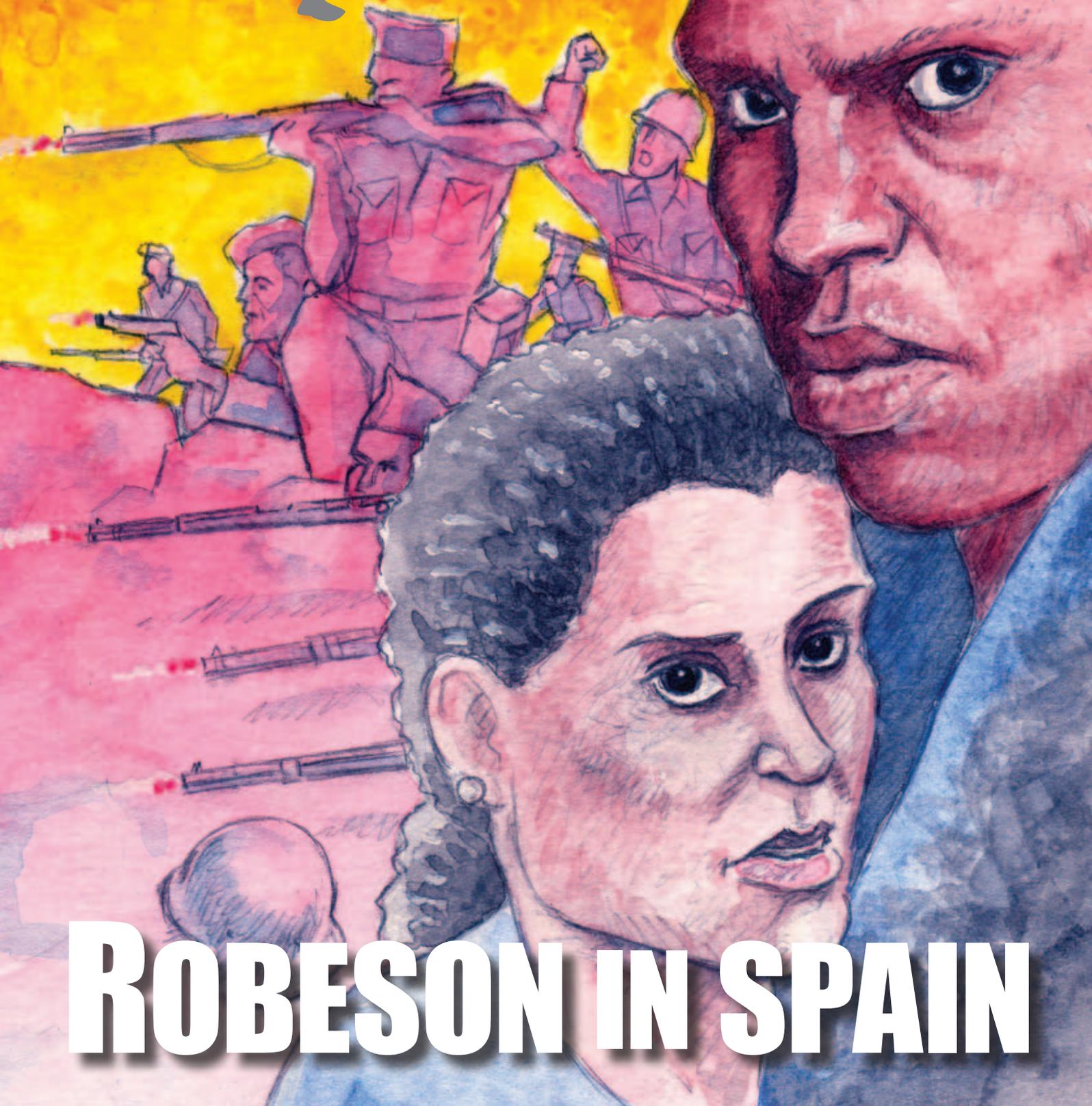


# The Volunteer

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

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June 2009



# ROBESON IN SPAIN

# Paul Robeson

(1898-1976)

“The artist must elect to fight for freedom or for slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative.”

—Paul Robeson, 1937



The African-American Paul Robeson, a large man with a deep voice, achieved great distinction as an athlete, singer, actor, scholar, and supporter of social justice. Born in Princeton, New Jersey, Robeson graduated from Rutgers University with honors. He excelled in sports (All-American in football). He graduated from Columbia Law School in 1923 and married Eslanda Cordozo Goode. He won fame as an actor on stage and screen. In the popular musical *Showboat*, Robeson sang “Ol’ Man River.”

The rise of fascism in Europe in the 1930s awakened Robeson’s political activism. He sang benefit concerts to assist Jewish refugees from Hitler’s Germany and to support Spain’s democracy during the Spanish Civil War. His mounting concern over fascist Germany’s and Italy’s direct support of the Spanish insurgents, and the western democracies’ refusal to assist the legitimate government, led him to visit the war-torn country in January 1938. He called his 1938 trip to Spain “a major turning point in my life.” He became an outspoken critic of U.S. segregation and

lynching. In 1939, he recorded “Ballad for Americans,” a work that celebrated diversity and multiculturalism.

Robeson’s demand for equality and his opposition to the Cold War in the 1940s angered conservatives, who called Robeson a Communist. His refusal to be silent led to violent attacks at a concert in Peekskill, New York, in 1949. His criticism of the Korean War led the U.S. government to revoke his passport (later overturned by the Supreme Court), which limited his travels until 1956. He died after a long illness at the age of 77. ▣

## Robeson in Spain

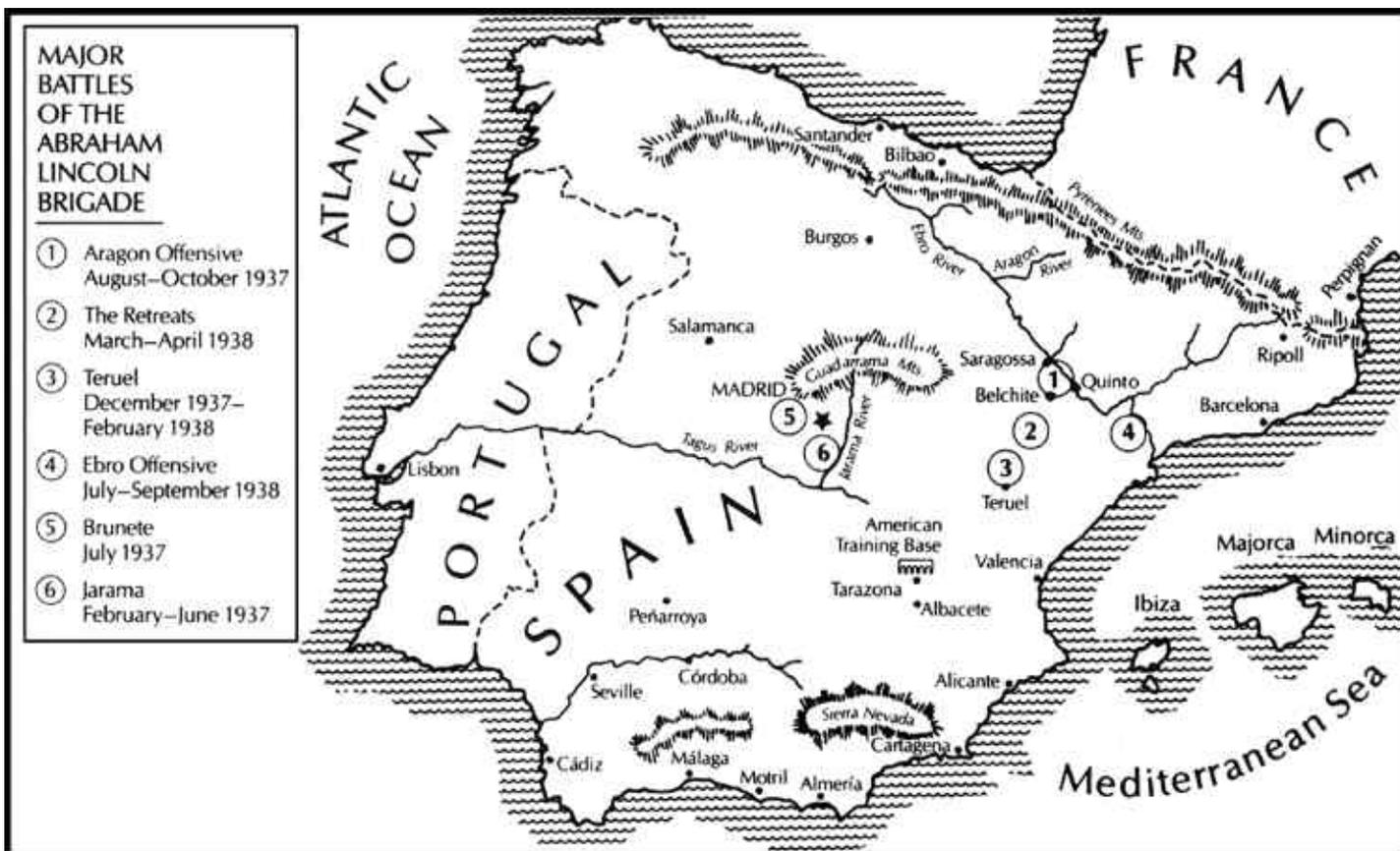
Illustrated by Joshua Brown

Written by Joshua Brown and Peter N. Carroll

Designed by Richard Bermack

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Map of Spain, c. 1938 from Alvah Bessie and Albert Prago, eds., *Our Fight: Writings by Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Spain, 1936-1939* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987). Photo of Paul Robeson is from the National Archives.

# Spanish Civil War Timeline

## SPANISH CIVIL WAR & ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

**1936**

**JULY:** Franco leads military rebellion against the elected Spanish Republican government.

Hitler and Mussolini provide military aid to Franco's Nationalists.

**AUGUST:** Soviet Union agrees to provide aid to Republican Spain.

**DECEMBER:** December 26, first contingent of U.S. volunteers leaves New York City for Spain.

**1937**

**JANUARY:** Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy sails for Spain.

**FEBRUARY:** U.S. volunteers name themselves the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and see first action at Jarama.

**APRIL:** Basque town of Guernica destroyed by German bombers.

**JULY:** Captain Oliver Law is appointed commander of the Lincoln Battalion, first African American to lead American troops in battle.

**DECEMBER:** Battle of Teruel begins.

**1938**

**JANUARY:** U.S. volunteers participate in battles around Teruel.

**JULY:** The Lincolns join in the Ebro offensive and remain in action until September.

**SEPTEMBER:** Premier Juan Negrín announces withdrawal of all foreign soldiers from the Republic's armies, hoping to pressure Franco to do the same for German and Italian volunteers. Franco ignores the gesture.

**OCTOBER:** International Brigade begins to leave Spain.

**1939**

**JANUARY:** Barcelona falls to Franco. Lincoln veterans hold public rallies urging U.S. to lift embargo on arms for Spain.

**FEBRUARY:** Franco's troops take Catalonia.

Britain and France recognize the legitimacy of Franco government.

**MARCH:** Madrid surrenders to Franco.

## THE WORLD

**SEPTEMBER:** Major European powers form a non-intervention committee, agreeing to support neither side.

**OCTOBER:** U.S. President Roosevelt presents "quarantine speech," warning of an epidemic of lawlessness around the world.

U.S. Congress extends Neutrality Acts, barring U.S. involvement in Spanish Civil War.

Picasso's *Guernica* exhibited at Paris World's Fair.

Italy withdraws from the League of Nations.

Japanese forces bomb and occupy Nanking, causing large civilian casualties.

**MARCH:** Germany annexes Austria into the Third Reich.

Munich Conference provides for German occupation of portions of Czechoslovakia.

**NOVEMBER:** Kristallnacht: Jewish synagogues and businesses destroyed throughout Germany.

Germany occupies Czechoslovakia.

**SEPTEMBER:** German armies invade Poland, beginning World War II.

# The Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War began as a rebellion, led by General Francisco Franco, against the legally elected Republican government in July 1936. The rebels opposed liberal changes, such as land reforms and provisions for women's education, legal divorce, and the right to vote. In large cities, such as Madrid and Barcelona, civilian militias successfully resisted the military uprising, but Franco appealed to Europe's fascist dictators, Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy, who sent armed forces to Spain. In 1937 German planes bombed the town of Guernica, an atrocity that inspired Pablo Picasso's most famous painting. The Spanish Civil War continued until April 1939, when the victorious generals captured Madrid.

## The Abraham Lincoln Brigade

European democratic countries feared that their intervention in the Spanish Civil War might provoke a second world war. To avoid that, the international community adopted a policy known as "non-intervention," denying aid to both the legal Spanish government and the rebels. Starved for assistance, the Spanish Republic then appealed for voluntary help. This appeal was supported by the communist-led Soviet Union.

Volunteers from more than 50 nations, numbering around 35,000 men and women, went to Spain, forming the International Brigades against fascism. To enter Spain, U.S. volunteers had to defy State Department orders that stamped all passports with the warning "NOT VALID FOR TRAVEL IN SPAIN" and pretend to be tourists. Nearly 3,000 volunteers from the United States served in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade or the American Medical Bureau to Save Spanish Democracy. About one-third of the Americans died in Spain.

## African Americans in the Spanish Civil War

About 90 African Americans volunteered in Spain, including Oliver Law, from Chicago, who eventually commanded the Abraham Lincoln battalion until he was killed in 1937. The only African-American woman was Salaria Kea, an Ohio nurse. The Abraham Lincoln Brigade was the first fully integrated army. Black volunteers were surprised and delighted to mix completely with whites without worrying about race prejudice or discrimination. "Spain was the first place I ever felt like a free man," said soldier Tom Page. Later, during World War II, African Americans had to serve in U.S. units that were segregated by race. ■

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

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

BLIMEY!  
DID YOU  
CATCH  
THAT?

SHHHHH!

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

ROYAL ALBERT HALL  
BENEFIT CONCERT

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

HE DID IT AGAIN!

ROBESON

SPAIN

by JOSHUA BROWN + PETER N. CARROLL

SHORTLY AFTER THE CONCERT





JANUARY 23, 1938 - APPROACHING THE FRANCE-SPAIN BORDER



IT'S A GOOD THING WE HAVE SAFE CONDUCT PASSES FROM THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT...

YOU HAVE THEM, DON'T YOU?



ME? I THOUGHT YOU HAD THEM!



JUST KIDDING, DEAR! AND I HAVE OUR VISAS, TOO. AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE THE STATE DEPARTMENT PUT US THROUGH, DO YOU THINK I'D LET THEM OUT OF MY SIGHT?



NOW THAT U.S. PASSPORTS ARE STAMPED "NOT VALID FOR TRAVEL TO SPAIN" IT'S LUCKY OURS ARE OLD.

BUEAS TARDES - PASAPORTES, POR FAVOR.



HMMMMM...



BIENVENIDOS A ESPAÑA -

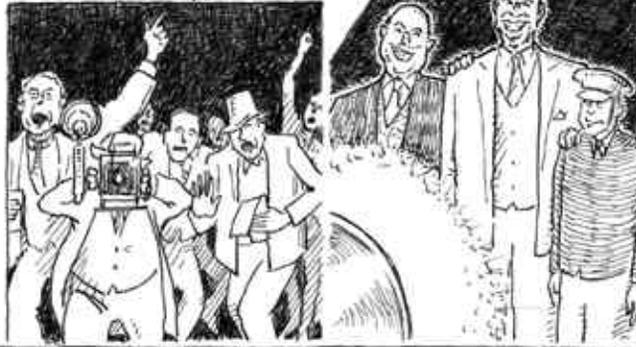
¡VIVA LA REPUBLICA!



¡SALUD!



ROBESON  
SR. ROBESON  
MR. ROBESON



WHY HAVE YOU COME TO SPAIN?

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS?

WHAT DOES THIS WAR HAVE TO DO WITH YOU?



HOLD ON, BOYS. LET'S DO THIS ONE AT A TIME.



I LOVE THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN - NOT ONLY AS AN ARTIST BUT ALSO AS A NEGRO.



I BELONG TO AN OPPRESSED RACE, DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, ONE THAT COULD NOT LIVE IF FASCISM TRIUMPHED IN THE WORLD.



YOU'RE IN FOR A SURPRISE. WAIT 'TIL YOU SEE HOW DIFFERENT IT IS HERE. YOUR COUNTRYMEN FIGHTING HERE TELL ME THERE'S NOT THE SLIGHTEST TRACE OF COLOR PREJUDICE IN SPAIN.



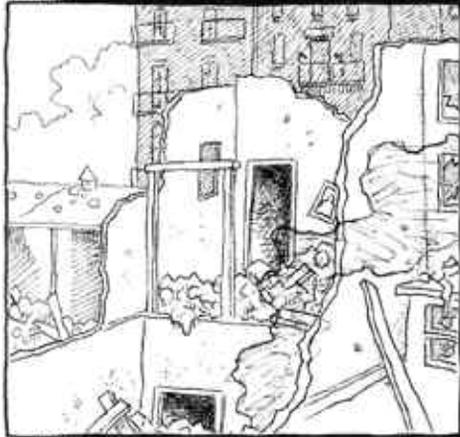
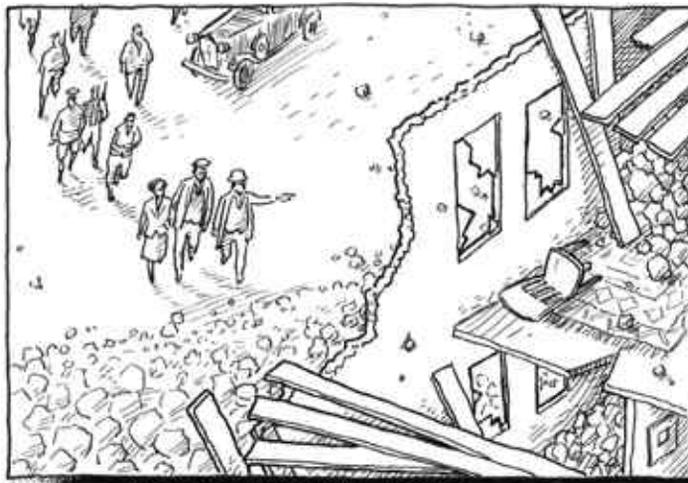
I CAN'T WAIT TO MEET THEM.

¡SALUD!



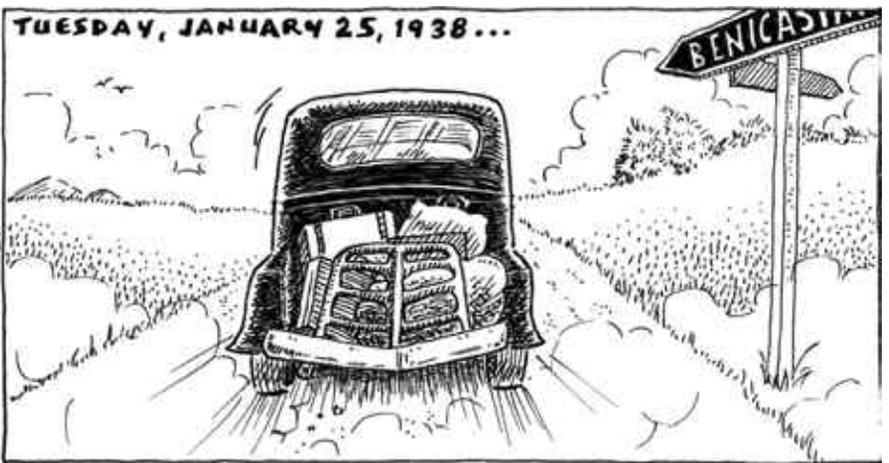
LATER

PLEASE HURRY - THE LIGHT IS FADING AND YOU SHOULD SEE THE LATEST WORK DONE BY MUSSOLINI'S PLANES.





TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1938...

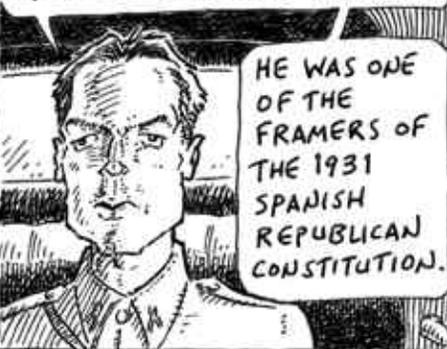


CAPTAIN CASTILLO, YOUR ENGLISH IS IMPECCABLE.



THANKS TO MY STUDIES IN LONDON.

BUT THAT SEEMS A LONG TIME AGO. BEFORE THE FASCISTS MURDERED MY FATHER.



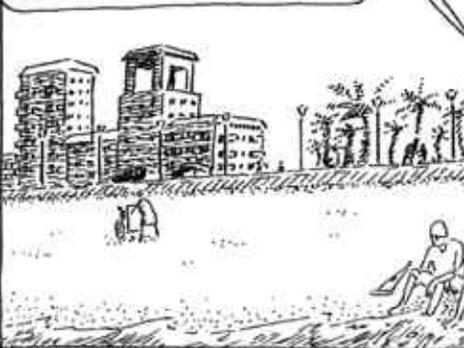
HE WAS ONE OF THE FRAMERS OF THE 1931 SPANISH REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION.

YOUR FATHER WOULD BE PROUD TO SEE YOU DEFEND THE CAUSE HE DIED FOR.



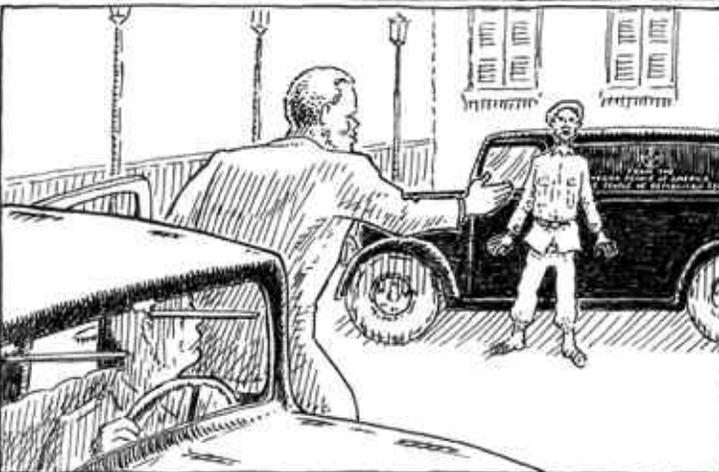
PERHAPS. I AM NOT ALONE, THOUGH—FIVE OF MY BROTHERS ALSO ARE IN THE FIGHT.

BUT I AM NEGLECTING MY DUTY AS YOUR GUIDE AND WE HAVE ARRIVED IN BENICASIM.



FORMERLY A RESORT FOR THE RICH—

—AND NOW THE BASE HOSPITAL CLOSEST TO THE FRONT.



¡SALUD! MY NAME IS—

PAUL ROBESON! I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU BUT I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT.



THE NAME'S JULIUS RODRIGUEZ. BORN IN TAMPA, BRED IN SPANISH HARLEM- WHICH IS WHY I **COMPRENDE** THE LINGO HERE. BEEN IN SPAIN, IN THE LINCOLN BRIGADE, ELEVEN MONTHS.



I HEARD THERE WERE **HERMANOS** FIGHTING FOR THE REPUBLIC. YOU'RE THE FIRST I'VE MET. BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING AT THE HOSPITAL?

OH, I GOT A BLIGHTY IN THE TERUEL FIGHT. I'M FINE NOW, I'LL BE BACK AT THE FRONT IN NO TIME.



**BLOODY HELL- IT IS HIM!**

**COMRADES, OVER HERE! IT'S PAUL ROBESON!**



I SEEN YOU IN KING SOLOMON'S MINES.

I HEARD YOU SING IN TORONTO- IN MASSEY HALL.

YOU WERE DAMNED GOOD IN SHOW BOAT.

HE'S A LOT BIGGER'N HE LOOKS IN HIS FILMS.



YOU KNOW, YOU'RE THE **ONLY** FAMOUS ENTERTAINER WHO'S COME FROM AMERICA TO VISIT THE VOLUNTEERS.



REALLY? WHAT ABOUT HEMINGWAY?

YEAH, MATE, HE'S BEEN HERE.



BUT HE CAN'T SING!

**LATER.**

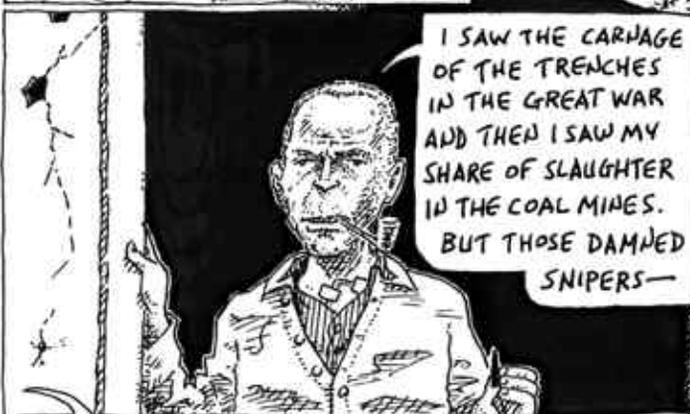
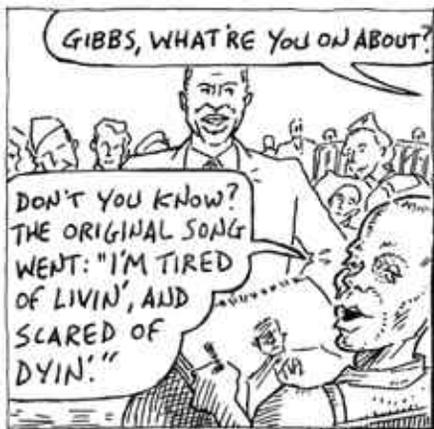
I MUST KEEP FIGHTIN' UNTIL I'M DYIN'

BUT OL'MAN RIVER, HE JES KEEPS ROLLIN' ALONG!



AND BRAVO FOR CHANGING THE LYRICS!

**BRAVO BRAVO BRAVO BRAVO BRAVO BRAVO**



LET ME INTRODUCE SEÑOR CLAUDE PRINGLE. AND THAT IS—

THAT'S WHERE THE FASCISTS USUALLY MAKE THEIR LAST STAND, SHOOTING DOWN AT THE SOLDIERS.



YOU DON'T KNOW WHO OLIVER LAW IS?

YOU SHOULD. EVERYONE SHOULD.



HE DID SOMETHING NO OTHER COLORED AMERICAN EVER DID.

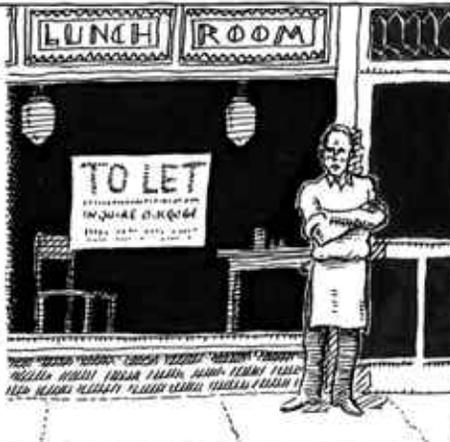


DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HIM BEFORE SPAIN. BORN IN 1899 OR 1900, RAISED ON A RANCH IN WEST TEXAS.



SERVED IN THE U.S. ARMY DURING THE GREAT WAR. RE-ENLISTED AFTER IT WAS OVER. LASTED SIX YEARS AND THEN HE'D HAD ENOUGH OF ITS RACIST WAYS.

HE MOVED TO CHICAGO, DROVE A CAB FOR A SPELL, WORKED ON THE DOCKS, JOINED THE UNION. THEN HE RAN A SMALL RESTAURANT 'TIL THE DEPRESSION DID IT IN.



AROUND THAT TIME HE JOINED THE PARTY AND STARTED ORGANIZING UNEMPLOYED WORKERS. IN 1935 HE LED STREET PROTESTS AGAINST MUSSOLINI'S INVASION OF ETHIOPIA. AND IN JANUARY 1937 HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST VOLUNTEERS TO SAIL FOR SPAIN.

HE FOUGHT AT JARAMA IN FEBRUARY. IT WAS BAD. THE BATTALION LEADERSHIP WAS ANNIHILATED.



AND LAW WAS PROMOTED.

SEE, LAW DIDN'T HAVE MUCH EXPERIENCE FIGHTING— BUT HE HAD MORE THAN 'MOST ANYBODY ELSE AMONG THE VOLUNTEERS. IN THE SPRING HE WAS PICKED TO BE BATTALION LEADER.



LAW'S PROMOTION MET WITH GENERAL APPROVAL AMONG THE LINCOLNS.



THE FIRST AMERICAN NEGRO OFFICER LEADING WHITE TROOPS - DAMN!

ABE LINCOLN DIDN'T EVEN ALLOW THAT IN THE U.S. CIVIL WAR!

SOME, THOUGH, DIDN'T LIKE LAW, OR HIS RAPID RISE, ONE BIT.



I WAS A BETTER MACHINE GUNNER AT JARAMA 'N HIM!

THE MAN DDN'T KNOW THE FIRST THING 'BOUT REAL COMBAT.

RESTORE THE WHITES TO EQUALITY WITH THE NEGRO!

IT MUST'VE BEEN TOUGH BEING A FIRST AND KNOWING EVERYONE WAS WATCHING YOU... SOME CHEERING YOU ON, SOME JUST WAITING AND HOPING YOU'D STUMBLE... WHETHER THEY SUPPORTED HIM OR NOT, LAW MUST'VE FELT HE HAD TO SHOW WHAT HE WAS MADE OF.



LAST JULY, THE BRUNETE CAMPAIGN WAS PARTICULARLY HARD ON THE LINCOLNS... AND ON LAW. WE TOOK MANY CASUALTIES AND THERE WERE JUST AS MANY RECRIMINATIONS.



VILLANUEVA DE LA CAÑADA, JULY 9TH...

WE'RE JOINING THE ATTACK THIS MORNING ON THE FASCIST POSITION ON MOSQUITO RIDGE.



I WON'T MINCE WORDS, COMRADES. THIS WILL BE A BAD ONE.

THERE'LL BE NO AIR, ARTILLERY, OR TANK SUPPORT FOR US.

PLUS, WE'LL BE FIGHTING OUR WAY UPHILL.



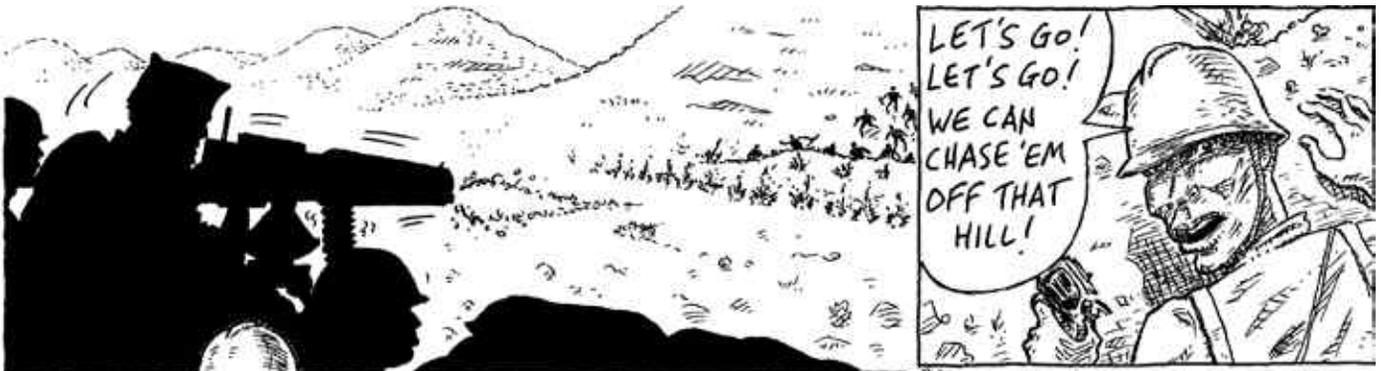
DON'T GO OVER THE TOP WITH THE MEN, OLIVER. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE YOU.

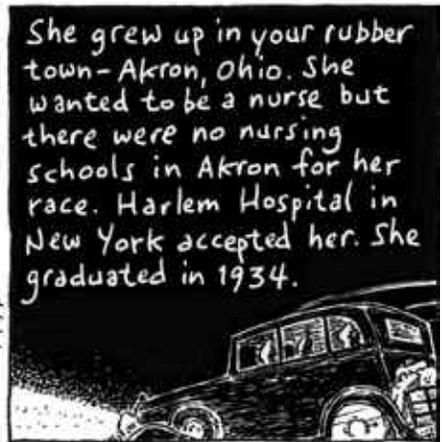
STEVE, I'VE GOT TO LEAD THE ATTACK.

BUT-



I'M GOING TO LEAD IT. I HAVE TO BECAUSE IF I ORDER THE COMRADES TO GO OVER THE TOP AND SOME OF THEM GET KILLED, I WON'T EVER BE ABLE TO LOOK IN A MIRROR AGAIN.







SHE MARRIED ONE OF HER PATIENTS, A BRITISH VOLUNTEER.

AHH, A ROMANTIC FINALE. SOUNDS LIKE SALARIA'S WORTHY OF A FILM, TOO.

AND I KNOW JUST THE PERSON TO PLAY HER PART!

THE ROBESONS CONTINUED ON TO MADRID — BUT SALARIA KEA'S STORY WASN'T OVER...

THAT APRIL SALARIA WAS SENT TO THE FRONT NEAR TERUEL TO HELP SET UP A FIELD HOSPITAL.

THEY WERE SUBJECTED TO RELENTLESS BOMBING AND STRAFING.

SALARIA! ARE YOU HURT?

I'M... I'M OKAY. I MUST HELP THE OTHERS.

THE FASCISTS BROKE THROUGH THE LINES AND THE MEDICAL WORKERS HAD TO EVACUATE. ATTACKS CONTINUED AS THEY FLED. SOME OF THE MEDICAL STAFF SWAM THE EBRO RIVER TO SAFETY. CUT OFF FROM THE OTHERS, SALARIA MANAGED TO WALK AND HITCHHIKE HER WAY TO THE AMERICAN MEDICAL UNIT NEAR BARCELONA.

IT WAS NO SAFER THERE. THE BOMBS RAILED ON BARCELONA. SALARIA WAS ALWAYS ONE OF THE FIRST TO ARRIVE TO TRY TO SAVE SURVIVORS.

THE WORST WAS WHEN THE VICTIMS WERE CHILDREN.

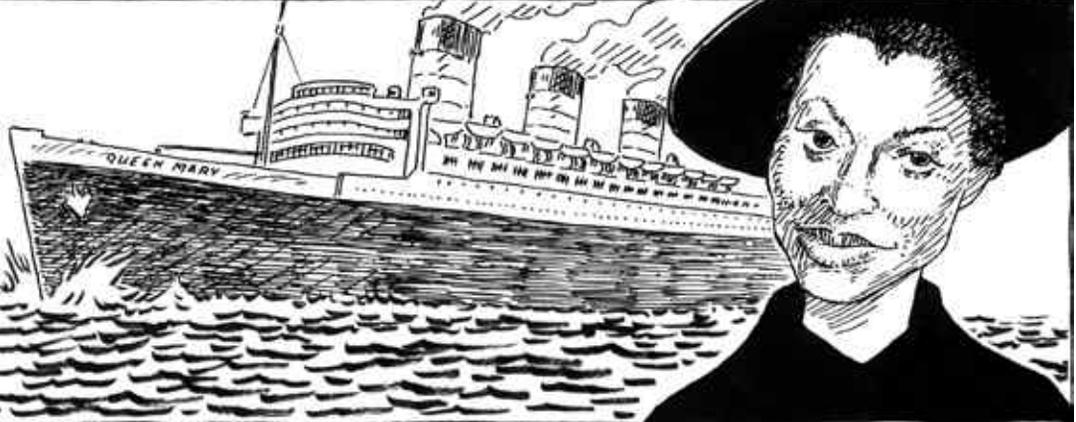
FINALLY, SALARIA BECAME A VICTIM, HERSELF.

THANK GOD— SHE'S ALIVE!

SALARIA'S INJURIES WERE SEVERE. SHE WAS SENT HOME.

BUT EVEN AS HER WOUNDS HEALED SHE WORKED TIRELESSLY TO SEND MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO SPAIN.

SHE LATER SERVED IN THE U.S. ARMY NURSE CORPS DURING WORLD WAR II.





ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF MADRID...

THE ROAD HERE IS TREACHEROUS - THE FASCISTS HAVE CONSTANTLY BOMBARDED THE CITY SINCE 1936.



LATER AT THE PALACE HOTEL IN MADRID...

TALK ABOUT LUXURY! I'LL BE ABLE TO SLEEP WITHOUT A LULLABY TONIGHT.



I'M AFRAID THAT WILL BE YOUR LULLABY!



THE NEXT DAY ON THE ROOF OF THE FORMER ROYAL PALACE...

YOU CAN EASILY SEE THE TRENCHES FROM HERE - AND THE INSURGENTS CAN EASILY SEE US!



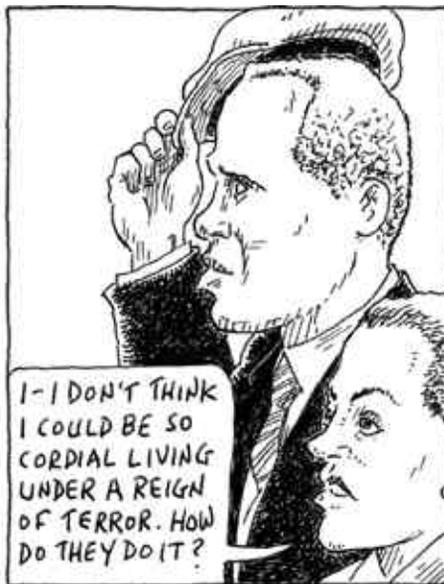
QUICKLY, LET US TAKE COVER IN HERE!



CAN YOU HEAR? THE FLAMENCO IS BLACK IN ITS RHYTHM AND SAD DEPTHS.

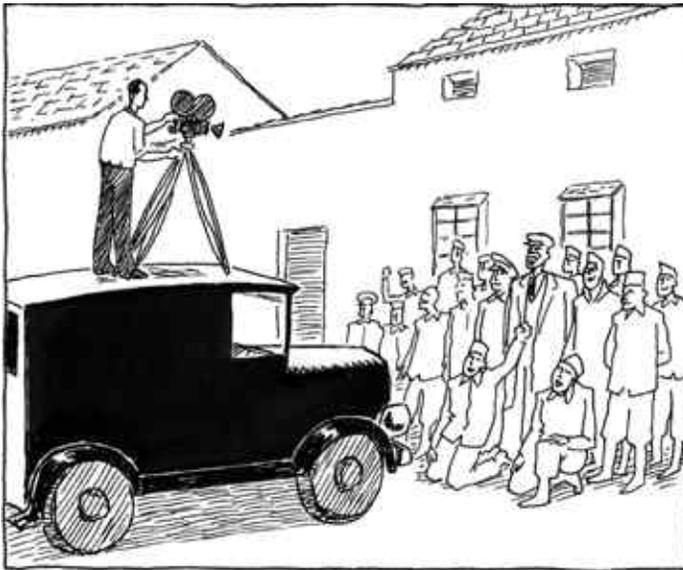
THAT'S AFRICA'S INFLUENCE ON SPANISH MUSIC.

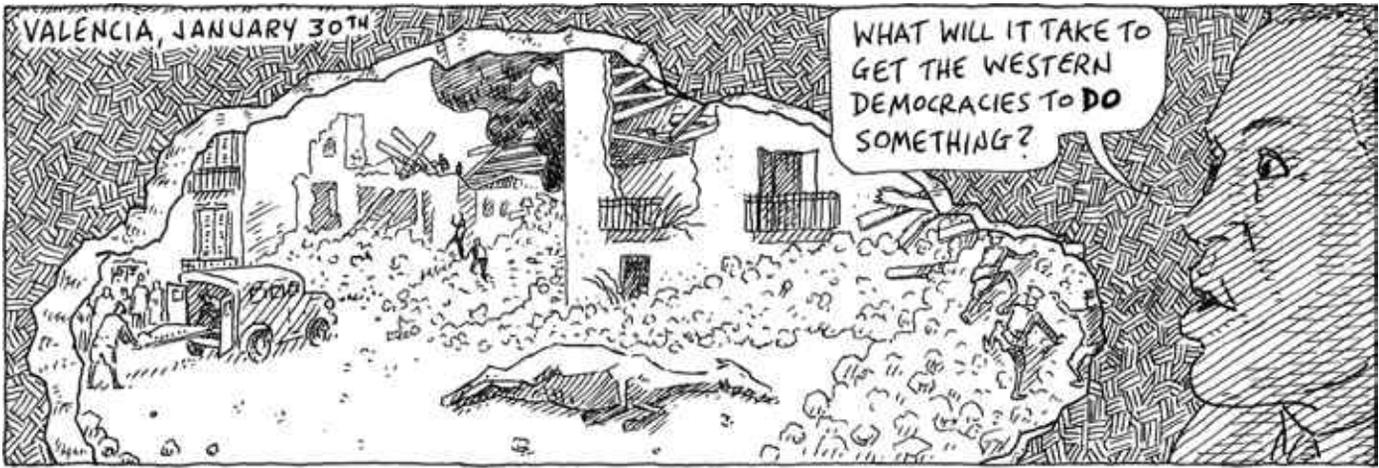




FOR THE NEXT DAY, THE ROBESONS' SCHEDULE IS FULL...







FOR THE NEXT YEAR PAUL ROBESON WORKED TIRELESSLY IN SUPPORT OF THE SPANISH REPUBLIC, PERFORMING-



AND SPEAKING OUT-

IN MY TRAVELS IN MANY COUNTRIES OF EUROPE, PARTICULARLY SPAIN, I HAVE SEEN AND RECOGNIZED THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF THIS INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY AND AGAINST FASCISM ...



HAVING HELPED ON MANY FRONTS, I FEEL THAT IT IS NOW TIME FOR ME TO RETURN TO THE PLACE OF MY ORIGIN.



IT IS MY BUSINESS NOT ONLY TO TELL THE GUY WITH THE WHIP HAND TO GO EASY ON PEOPLE, BUT ALSO TO TEACH MY PEOPLE - ALL THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE - HOW TO PREVENT THAT WHIP HAND BEING USED AGAINST THEM.



IN SEPTEMBER 1939, THE ROBESONS RETURNED TO THE U.S.



WE'LL SEE HOW AMERICA TAKES TO AN ARTIST WHO TALKS LIKE YOU.

AS FOR THE VOLUNTEERS WHO ROBESON MET ON HIS JOURNEY-

JULIUS RODRIGUEZ, THE WOUNDED VOLUNTEER FROM SPANISH HARLEM, WAS AMONG THE LAST AMERICANS TO LEAVE SPAIN IN 1939.



HE SPENT WORLD WAR II BUILDING WARSHIPS IN PORTLAND, OR.



THEODORE GIBBS WAS INJURED IN FEBRUARY 1938 WHEN HIS AMBULANCE WAS SHELLED. HE RETURNED TO THE U.S. IN DECEMBER.



HE RETURNED TO CHICAGO AND RECORDED HIS SPANISH EXPERIENCE IN PENCIL, INK AND PAINT. HE DIED IN 1962.



CLAUDE PRINGLE, WHO SERVED IN FRANCE DURING WORLD WAR I, MINED COAL AND ORGANIZED MINERS AFTERWARD, AND WAS WOUNDED AT TERUEL, RETURNED TO THE FRONT IN MARCH 1938.



HE WAS CAPTURED BY THE NATIONALISTS AND IMPRISONED. HE WAS REPATRIATED TO THE U.S. IN MAY 1939.



SALARIA KEA O'REILLY SERVED IN THE ARMY NURSE CORPS IN THE LAST MONTHS OF WORLD WAR II. SHE DIED IN 1997.



ROBESON NEVER WAS ABLE TO MAKE A FILM ABOUT OLIVER LAW.



BUT THE VOLUNTEERS NEVER FORGOT ROBESON'S SUPPORT. AT THEIR 1941 REUNION IN CHICAGO, THEY MADE HIM AN HONORARY MEMBER OF THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE.



AND IN SEPTEMBER 1949, AFTER ANTI-COMMUNIST RIOTERS ATTACKED AN AUGUST BENEFIT CONCERT IN PEERSKILL, NEW YORK, PAUL ROBESON RETURNED TO SING TO 20,000 ADMIRERS—

WE SAID IT TO THE FASCISTS IN SPAIN AND WE'LL SAY IT NOW TO THE MOB: "INO PASARAN!"



# DISCUSSION TOPICS

## “Ol’ Man River”

Compare and contrast the two sets of lyrics to the song “Ol’ Man River.” How do they differ?

What do Paul Robeson’s new lyrics suggest about the feelings of African Americans in the U.S. during the 1930s?

Why did Paul Robeson change the words of the song?

## Spain and the International Crisis

Why did Paul Robeson decide to go to Spain during the Spanish Civil War?

Which countries supported the military uprising led by General Francisco Franco against the elected Spanish Republican government? Why?

Which countries supported the elected Republican government? Why?

Which side did Paul Robeson support?

What is “fascism”? Why did Paul Robeson oppose fascism?

What did the Spanish Republic stand for? Why did Paul Robeson support the Spanish Republic?

How did the civil war in Spain affect that nation’s civilian population?

What aspects of the Spanish Civil War suggest that “Spain was the first battlefield of World War II”?

The Spanish Republican leader Dolores Ibarruri said, “It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees.” What did she mean? Do you agree with her statement?

Are all wars worth fighting? Are any wars worth fighting? Which, if any?

## The United States and the Spanish Civil War

What position did the U.S. government take on the Spanish Civil War?

Why were U.S. passports stamped “NOT VALID FOR TRAVEL IN SPAIN”?

Do you believe the government should prohibit the travel of citizens to other countries?

Which countries are U.S. citizens prohibited from visiting today? Why?

In October 1937, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said that the international community should “quarantine” aggressor countries. What did he mean? Was that a realistic proposal?

## American Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War

Why did some Americans view the Spanish Civil War as an American problem?

When, if ever, do you think it is appropriate for civilians of one country to become involved in the problems of another nation?

Why did 3,000 Americans volunteer to defend the Spanish Republic against the military rebellion? Did African Americans have particular reasons to volunteer?

Do you think it was appropriate for U.S. citizens to ignore their government’s policies in order to volunteer to fight?

If you disagree with the U.S. government’s foreign policy, how can you express your objections?

How could civilians assist the Spanish Republic without participating in the civil war?

What does the life of Captain Oliver Law reveal about U.S. race relations in the 1930s?

What does the career of Salaria Kea suggest about the status of African American women in the 1930s?

Why would the U.S. volunteers in Spain appreciate Paul Robeson’s visit in 1938? 🗙

## Sources

*Robeson in Spain* is based on a number of textual and visual primary and secondary sources, including materials located in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives in the Tamiment Library at New York University. In addition to the books listed in the bibliography, our story relied on Eslanda Goode Robeson's Spanish diary, excerpts of which were published as "Journey into Spain" in Alvah Bessie, ed., *The Heart of Spain: Anthology of Fiction, Non-Fiction and Poetry* (1952). We wish to thank our fellow members of the ALBA Board of Governors for their help, and to acknowledge the gracious assistance of Joellen El Bashir, Curator of Manuscripts at Howard University's Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, where the Paul and Eslanda Robeson Collection is housed. Any historical account involves narrative choices and requires interpretation, and graphic narratives have their own particular emphases and limitations; the choices made in this account are solely the responsibility of the authors.



Paul Robeson sings for Republican soldiers near the battlefields of Teruel, courtesy of the Paul Robeson Archives.

**Additional information, pictures, and other supplementary material about Paul Robeson, the Spanish Civil War, and the American volunteers is available on the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives website at <http://www.alba-valb.org/resources/robeson>.**

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Sheila Tully Boyle and Andrew Bunie, *Paul Robeson: The Years of Promise and Achievement* (2001).

Lloyd L. Brown, *The Young Paul Robeson: On My Journey Now* (1997).

Peter N. Carroll, *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War* (1994).

Peter N. Carroll, Michael Nash, and Melvin Small, eds., *The Good Fight Continues: World War II Letters From the Abraham Lincoln Brigade* (2006).

Danny Duncan Collum, ed., *African Americans in the Spanish Civil War: "This Ain't Ethiopia, but It'll Do"* (1992).

Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (1989).

Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction* (2005).

Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand* (1958).

Susan Robeson, *The Whole World in His Hands: A Pictorial Biography of Paul Robeson* (1981).

Sterling Stuckey, *Going through the Storm: The Influence of African American Art in History* (1993).

## Selected Web Resources

**Paul Robeson Biography (Wikipedia):**  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul\\_Robeson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Robeson)

**Paul Robeson Chronology (Bay Area Paul Robeson Centennial Committee):**  
<http://bayarearobeson.org/Chronology.htm>

**Paul Robeson Timeline (PBS American Masters):**  
[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/database/robeson\\_p\\_timeline\\_flash.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/database/robeson_p_timeline_flash.html)

**Paul Robeson on the Web (Princeton Public Library):**  
<http://www.princetonlibrary.org/robeson/links.html>

## About ALBA

The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA) is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to promoting public awareness, research, and discussion about the Spanish Civil War and the American volunteers who risked their lives to fight fascism in Spain. Using its continually expanding archival collections in exhibitions, publications, performances, and educational programs, ALBA preserves the legacy of progressive activism and commitment of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade as an inspiration for present and future generations.

The work of ALBA is to bring the history of the Spanish Civil War, and the ideals that motivated the International Brigaders, to a larger and more general public of all ages. Our mission is to maintain the archives as a living, breathing, inspirational and intimate collection of personal, as well as political, histories.

## About the ALBA Institute for Education

The ALBA Institute for Education uses the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives at New York University's Tamiment Library as a learning laboratory for educating high school teachers and students on the use of primary documents and multimedia resources and to convey the lessons learned from the American volunteers in the Spanish Civil War in the 1930's: progressivism, activism, and the impact of grassroots organizing.

ALBA's Institute programs for high school teachers bring together groups of 15-20 teachers for two-day or week-long seminars aimed at introducing educators to the resources available for integrating the history of the Spanish Civil War into their social studies, literature, and Spanish language classes. Seminar sessions are devoted to developing lesson plans and curricular units based on archival materials. Teachers participate in hands-on workshops conducted by leading experts on the history and culture of the Spanish Civil War.

## The Authors

**Joshua Brown** is executive director of the American Social History Project and professor of history at the City University of New York Graduate Center. He is author of *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (California, 2002) and co-author of *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (Knopf, 2005). He is visual editor of the noted textbook *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History* (3rd ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), and he co-wrote/directed its accompanying CD-ROMs and documentaries. He has served as executive producer on numerous award-winning Web projects, including *History Matters*, *The Lost Museum*,

*The September 11 Digital Archive*, and *Picturing U.S. History*. His illustrations and cartoons, including his weekly commentary on contemporary politics, *Life during Wartime*, appear regularly in print and online. For more go to <http://www.joshbrownnyc.com>.

**Peter N. Carroll** is the author and editor of 17 books, including *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War* (Stanford, 1994), *The Good Fight Continues: World War II Letters from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade* (NYU, 2006), and *Facing Fascism: New York and the Spanish Civil War* (NYU, 2007). He is chair of the Board of Governors of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA) and co-curator of two museum exhibitions: *Shouts From the Wall: Posters of the Spanish Civil War* (with Cary Nelson) and *They Still Draw Pictures: Children's Art in Wartime From the Spanish Civil War to Kosovo* (with Anthony L. Geist). He is the editor of *The Volunteer*, journal of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives. He serves as a trustee of the Puffin Nation Prize for creative citizenship and teaches history at Stanford University. He is the author of a poetry volume, *Riverborne: A Mississippi Requiem* (Higginum Hill, 2008). ■

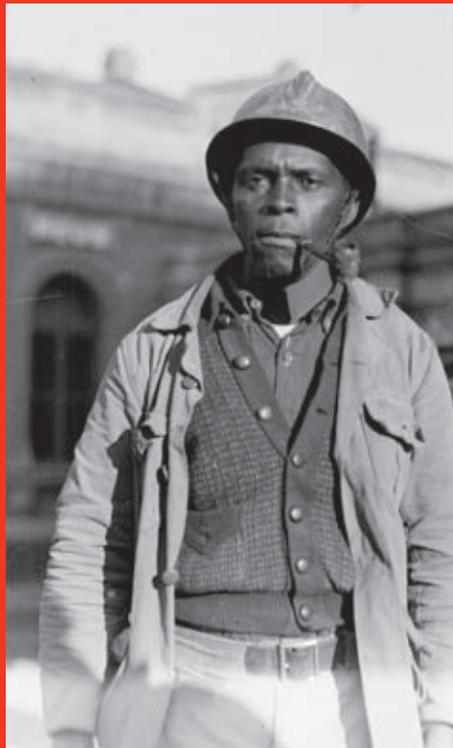
**For more information:  
The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives  
799 Broadway, Suite 341  
New York, New York 10003  
(212) 674-5398  
[robesson@alba-valb.org](mailto:robesson@alba-valb.org)**

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799 Broadway, Suite 341  
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Photos from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, Tamiment Library, New York University. Clockwise from top: Theodore Gibbs (Fredericka Martin Collection), Claude Pringle (15th International Brigade Photo Unit Collection), Salaria Kea (Small Photographic Collections), Paul Robeson at VALB 5th Reunion (VALB Photographs Collection), Oliver Law (Small Photographic Collections), and Oliver Law with the water carriers (Small Photographic Collections).