

The Volunteer

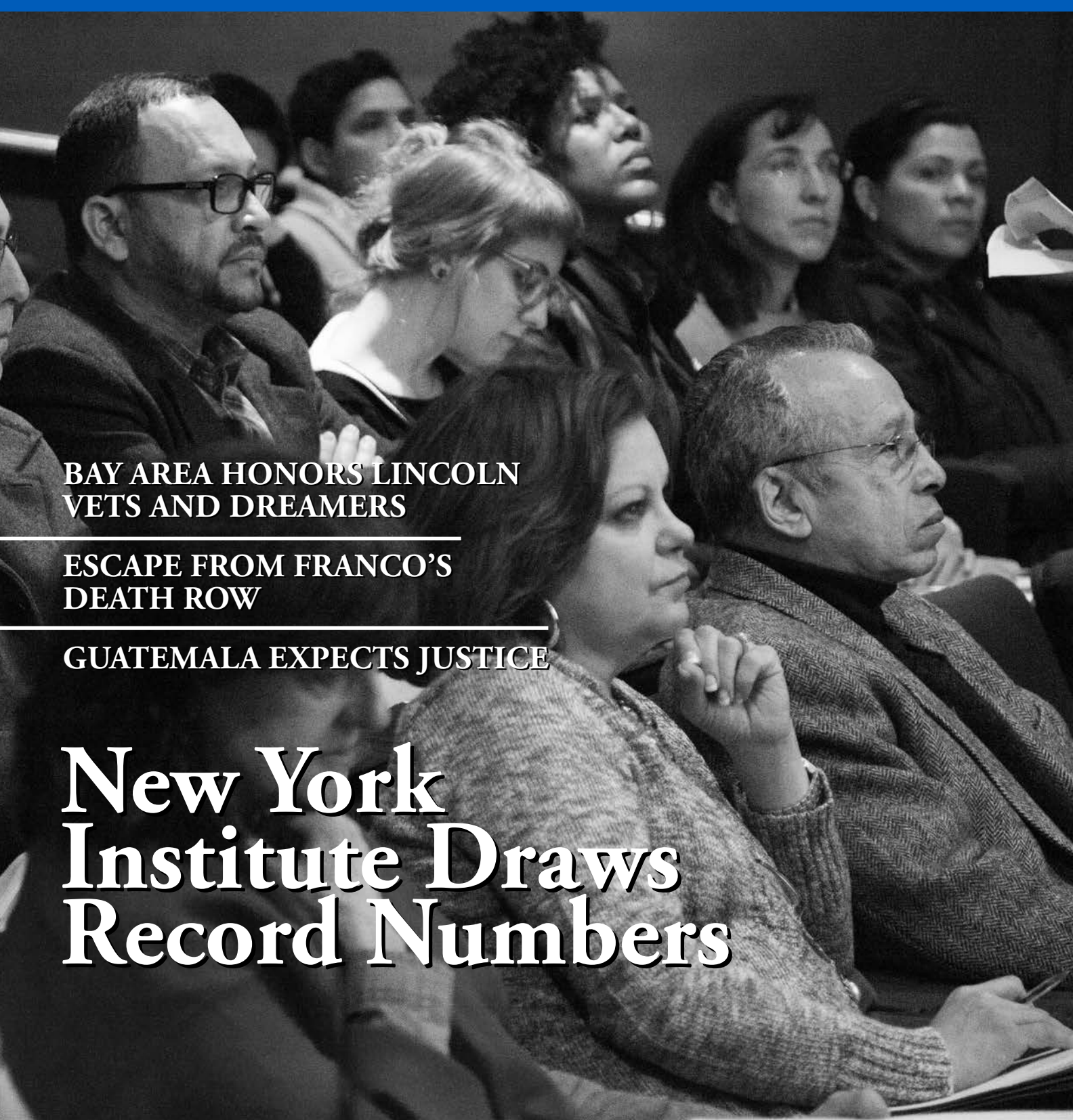
FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

BAY AREA HONORS LINCOLN
VETS AND DREAMERS

ESCAPE FROM FRANCO'S
DEATH ROW

GUATEMALA EXPECTS JUSTICE

New York Institute Draws Record Numbers



Manuscripts, inquiries, and letters to the editor may be sent by email to info@alba-valb.org

The editors reserve the right to modify texts for length and style.

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www.albavolunteer.org

IN THIS ISSUE

- p 3* Bay Area Remembers the Lincolns
- p 5* Record Institute Attendance in NYC
- p 6* George Watt Essay Contest
- p 8* Human Rights Column: Guatemala Expects Justice
- p 10* Carl Geiser's Letters from Spain
- p 12* Faces of ALBA
- p 14* Escape from Franco's Death Row
- p 18* Carlos Blanco Aguinaga
- p 20* Book Reviews
- p 23* Contributions

Dear Friends,

This has been an ambitious year for ALBA as we continue to grow our human rights initiatives and strengthen our educational programming. We recently wrapped up our Third Annual Human Rights Documentary Film Series, *Impugning Impunity*, at Pace University. It was a terrific showing that included powerful films on a range of social justice issues, including Sundance Film Festival Winner *Dirty Wars* written by Jeremy Scahill.

The legacy of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade continues to inspire new generations to engage in progressive activism. We reach thousands of young minds every year through the hundreds of teachers who attend our Teaching Institutes. Participating teachers leave our workshops excited and energized. Surveys show they overwhelmingly integrate lessons on the Spanish Civil War and the Lincoln Brigade in their classes. The comments from participants reflect enthusiasm for the topic and appreciation of our work: "Terribly excited to explore and share!" said a teacher from Tampa, Florida, who attended our workshop in May. "Probably one of the best professional development experiences....Tons of ideas offered," said a colleague from Bergen County, New Jersey, after participating in our April workshop.

As you read this issue we are gearing up for a year-end gathering that will include a screening of *Goodbye Barcelona* – a West End (London) musical about the International Brigades. It has received rave reviews in England and Spain! Our gathering promises to be a fabulous night of music and inspiration. We hope to see your friendly faces, although we realize that some of you are far from New York.

In an effort to engage all of our supporters nation-wide more regularly, we're exploring online venues to begin offering some of our programs remotely by streaming them on the internet, starting with the 2014 Susman lecture. Of course we will also keep sharing news, including the winning essays of the 2013 George Watt Award Competition, through our blog and online *Volunteer* at albavolunteer.org. Keep an eye out for these exciting developments in the next few months!

It is thanks to you, our steadfast community, that we are able to continue the important work begun by the men and women of the Lincoln Brigade. And it is with you by our side that we will carry on their fight for social justice and human rights. On this 77th anniversary year of the arrival of the Brigades in Spain, please honor their vision for a better tomorrow with a gift supporting ALBA and the work you believe in.

Salud,




Sebastiaan Faber
Chair of the Board
of Governors




Marina Garde
Executive Director

P.S. The cost of books, supplies, and a lunch for one teacher is \$100. Why not add this "apple-for-the-teacher" to your gift list?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Fine piece about Bart van der Schelling in the September issue. I recall going along with Alvah and Bart on two occasions, somewhere between 1949 and 1951, where Alvah spoke about Spain, and Bart sang. The place where one was held was at the old mission in Santa Barbara, California. I vividly recall Bart's singing, because it stirred me enormously. It was clear then that his voice was perhaps not as strong as it had once been, but still enormously powerful.

—Dan Bessie

Dan Bessie is the son of Alvah Bessie (1904-1985): journalist, screenwriter, Lincoln vet, and one of the Hollywood Ten.

Bay Area Honors Vets and Dreamers

By the editors



(top) Randy Craig, Eduardo Robledo, Tony Marcus, Velina Brown, Barrett Nelson, Sebastiaan Faber, and Bruce Barthol; (bottom) Catherine Eusebio. Photos Richard Bermack.



“Singing was an important part of our life in Spain,” wrote Lincoln Brigade volunteer Carl Geiser. And music was a strong theme at the West Coast ALBA annual reunion held at the Freight & Salvage music hall in Berkeley, California on October 6.

(Continued on page 4)

THE MUSICAL PROGRAM AT THE ALBA annual reunion on the West Coast—written, directed, and composed by Peter Glazer, Bruce Barthol, and Richard Bermack—framed the day’s political business: honoring the young immigrant activists of United We Dream (UWD), recipients of the 2013 ALBA-Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism.

Paying tribute to the Lincoln volunteers as internationalist activists, ALBA chair Sebastiaan Faber spoke about the immigrant origins of most of the men and women who went to Spain to aid the Spanish Republic. “Three-quarters of a century later, the fight for basic human rights continues; only the battlefield has shifted.” Speaking of the Dreamers, he said “Their cause is not to fight the denial of education to the people of Spain in the 1930s, but those in our own country, right now. *United We Dream* is a national network of youth-led immigrant activist organizations fighting for the rights of millions of undocumented immigrants, of all nationalities, in the United States.”

Catherine Eusebio, board member of UWD from the Bay Area, told an enthusiastic audience how individual youth, raised, if not born, in the United States know this country as their home.

Musical selections reflected this theme, including a Spanish-English version of Woody Guthrie’s classic “Esta Tierra Es Tuya (This Land Is Your Land).” The performers, led by Bruce Barthol (bass), with Randy Craig (keyboard/banjo), Tony Marcus (strings), Barrett Nelson (guitar), Sebastiaan Faber (trumpet), and singers Eduardo Robledo and Valina Brown, brought special exuberance to the day.

Their voices carried on a strong tradition of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. As Carl Geiser put it, “We sang while we marched in our training camp. We sang as we marched toward the battlefield. When hungry and exhausted from fighting all day and marching all night, we sang to revive our bodies to drive ourselves still further. When overwhelming forces drove us back, when all appeared hopeless, we sang as we rallied to do the impossible. We even sang when we faced the firing squad.” ▲

(left to right, top to bottom): Judy Montell and Joan Balter; Frieda Tanz and Ruth Maguire; two young antifascists; David Kirley and Martha Olson Jarocki; Yvonne Corbin (r) and friend; Peter Carroll; Stephanie Brown. Photos Richard Bermack.

Three-quarters of a century later, the fight for basic human rights continues; only the battlefield has shifted.



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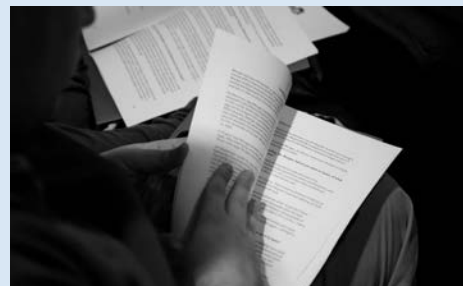
ALBA Institute Inspires Record Number of New York Teachers

By the Editors



“Very informative. I learned a lot & hope to use the letters, the New Yorker piece & visuals in my American Literature class.”

“Great experience, great presentation.”



“This was fantastic. I knew little about the Spanish Civil War & feel much more informed & therefore confident to teach it. Great speakers, great resources!”

An unprecedented 71 New York high school teachers—who collectively teach more than 7,000 students every day—gathered at the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center on November 5 for a full-day workshop. The ALBA institute, taught by Peter Carroll, James Fernández, and Sebastiaan Faber, introduced teachers of Social Studies, Spanish, and English Language Arts from the five boroughs to the compelling history of the Spanish Civil War and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. In a series of sessions covering both U.S. and Spanish history, the institute participants viewed, read, and discussed a wide range of resources, including letters from Lincoln brigaders, political speeches, posters, photographs, and oral history video interviews. All of these texts and images, made available in a

resource binder and online, have been carefully selected to use in high-school classrooms. While introducing a rarely taught but central chapter in U.S. and World history, ALBA's resources also allow teachers to satisfy the demand for primary source materials central to the new Common Core State Standards. Funding for the institute, which was free for all participants, came from a generous grant of the Puffin Foundation. The institute also marked the launch of a new ALBA website designed especially for high school teachers (resources.alba-valb.org), made possible through funding from Neal Rosenberg and the Ohio Humanities Institute. As they evaluated the workshop, many of the participating teachers expressed their appreciation and indicated they would be using the materials in their classes. ▲

Watt Essay Prize 2013: The Cult of the Virgin and Jewish Palestinians

By Gina Herrmann

Jewish volunteers from Palestine and the central role of the *Virgen del Pilar* in the rise of Spanish National-Catholicism are the topics of this year's award-winning essays.



The Virgen del Pilar in Zaragoza. Photo Enallo, CC-BY-SA 3.0.

ALBA's GEORGE WATT MEMORIAL ESSAY PRIZES are awarded every year for excellence in student writing about the Spanish Civil War, the global political or cultural struggles against fascism, or the lifetime histories and contributions of the Americans who fought in support of the Spanish Republic from 1936 to 1939. The award—given to one undergraduate and one graduate—was established 12 years ago to honor the memory of Lincoln vet George Watt (1914-1994), a writer and lifelong activist whose work was central to the creation of ALBA.

Watt had previously been involved in Communist youth activities. In 1937, at age 23, he joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. George's wife, Ruth, a year younger, organized support for the fighters while George served as a political commissar for the Brigade in Spain. Watt's distinguished battlefield action continued through the Second World War. Shot down over Belgium in 1943, Watt lost two of his crew. He survived thanks to the support of the Comet Line, an underground organization active in Belgium and France, with whose help Watt eventually made it back to England. As if these adventures were not dangerous enough, Watt at many turns risked being persecuted for his Jewish identity as well.



Each year, as ALBA grants the George Watt Prize, ALBA pays homage to Watt's example of intrepid anti-fascism and lifelong commitment to justice and social equality. The jury, consisting of Josh Goode (Claremont Graduate University) Mónica Cantero (Drew University), and Gina Herrmann (University of Oregon) received 17 submissions; five essays from graduate students and 12 from undergraduates. As in past years, the jury was pleased to find submissions from the US and abroad, and remarked on the high quality of research coming from Spain. The papers encompassed many themes related to ALBA's mission and Watt's enduring legacy including—in the undergraduate submissions—the functions played by Fire and Emergency Services during the war, the role of US neutrality on Naval policy toward Asia, and poverty in postwar Spain. Among the graduate essays, topics included the massacre of Republicans in Badajoz and the African presence in Franco's army.

moving volunteers to enlist. His research reveals that the political commitment of the volunteers proved to be a stronger explanation for their participation in the Spanish Civil War than did their Judaism.

Francisco Javier Ramón Solans, a visiting scholar at the Remarque Institute (New York University) and a PhD student at the University of Zaragoza (Spain), received the graduate prize for a section of his doctoral dissertation. Ramón Solans studies how the cult to the *Virgen del Pilar* (Virgin of the Pilar), an object of religious veneration in Zaragoza, influences national, public and political spheres of celebration and identity. He argues that the *Virgen del Pilar* has served as both a social anchor and as an ideological touchstone for different political and national groups and their respective world views. Through the *Virgen*, Ramón Solans maintains, we can observe the historical rise of National-Catholicism and its hold on governmental power during the Spanish dictatorships of Primo de Rivera and Francisco Franco. ▲

Gina Herrmann chairs ALBA's Watt Award committee.

Visit the online Volunteer at albavolunteer.org for summaries and the full text of both the winning essays.



Publication from the Botwin Company, formed by Jewish volunteers.

The winner for the undergraduate category, Rotem Herrmann, is a student at New York University. Herrmann (no relation) writes about the participation in the International Brigades of Jewish volunteers from the British Mandate of Palestine. His essay looks at both Jewish and Communist identities of the Palestinian Jewish members of the IB, countering the assumption that Jewish faith was the more influential factor in



Human Rights column

HUMAN RIGHTS ON TRIAL: GUATEMALA EXPECTS JUSTICE

By Pamela Yates and Paco de Onís

Last May, in a historic verdict, former Guatemala dictator Ríos Montt was found guilty of genocide. Ten days later the trial was suspended and the verdict was vacated in controversial split decision by Guatemala's highest court. Pamela Yates and Paco de Onís filmed the entire trial.

"This Court, by unanimous resolution declares: that the accused José Efraín Ríos Montt is responsible for the crime of genocide against the lives and integrity of civilians in the villages and hamlets of Santa María Nebaj, San Juan Cotzal and San Gaspar Chajul, and for this crime we impose a prison sentence of 50 years without parole. That the accused José Efraín Ríos Montt is responsible for Crimes Against Humanity...and for this crime we impose a prison sentence of 30 years without parole."

These words spoken by Judge Yassmín Barrios on May 10, 2013 at the conclusion of the genocide trial of former Guatemala dictator General Efraín Ríos Montt, electrified 400 spectators in the packed courtroom, throwing the room into a tumult. A media frenzy engulfed the defense bench as reporters shoved microphones and cameras at Ríos Montt. Over a hundred Maya Ixil rose up chanting, "justicia, justicia!" Ríos Montt's lawyers shouted out in protest at the verdict and his supporters booted furiously at the judge. Ríos Montt's lawyers tried to exit the

courtroom with their client, as Judge Barrios, whose microphone had been mysteriously cut off, had to scream to the guards to apprehend Ríos Montt and called for police reinforcements to insure the accused did not escape. The guards did not move to stop Ríos Montt, but the crowd of reporters and spectators now surrounding him made it impossible for him to reach the exit. Judge Barrios, in her high-pitched voice, asked the crowd to settle down, and made clear to Ríos Montt that he was in the custody of the court and had to wait for the police to escort him to prison.

The room settled down in anxious anticipation of the arrival of the police, with a cloud of uncertainty hovering over the murmur of the crowd. A man began quietly to sing a poem by Otto René Castillo: "Here, no one cried / Here, we only want to be human / Eat, laugh, fall in love, live / Live life, not die." A section of the crowd began to sing along, the song's haunting words evoking the memory of those who died in Guatemala's internal armed conflict.

It was overwhelming that after a 30-year quest for justice, Guatemalans had finally achieved this historic accomplishment:

it was the first time in 500 years that the genocide of indigenous peoples had been put on trial anywhere in North or South America, and it was the first time anywhere in the world that a former head of state had been tried and convicted of genocide in a national justice system. Living this historic moment with us were many of the protagonists whose struggle for justice was chronicled in our film *Granito: How to Nail a Dictator*: Rigoberta Menchú, Antonio Caba, Kate Doyle, Pancho Soto, Fredy Peccerelli, Naomi Roht-Arriaza, and Almudena Bernabeu. A seemingly interminable hour passed before the police finally arrived, and Ríos Montt was taken to prison—the justice system had triumphed in the battle against impunity!

But that victory would prove to be short lived. Ten days after the guilty verdict was handed down, the trial was suspended and the verdict was vacated in a controversial 3/2 split decision by the Constitutional Court (Guatemala's highest court), leaving the trial in a unique state of limbo, and General Ríos Montt remains under house arrest. Yet it is unclear when the trial will resume.

It is widely held in Guatemala that the Constitutional Court's decision was influenced by tremendous pressure exerted by Guatemala's powerful business and political elite, embodied by their organization CACIF (Coordinating Committee of

Montt, and Zuri Ríos, the general's daughter and his staunchest defender, assured the CACIF that if her father went down they would be next in the sights of Guatemalan Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz.

The decision by the Constitutional Court and the public pronouncements of the CACIF exposed a stark fissure in the Guatemalan justice system, in their attacks on the integrity of Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz and Judge Yassmín Barrios for giving victims their long sought access to justice, and pushing back on the entrenched impunity that has reigned for so long.

But the Maya Ixil plaintiffs and Guatemalan human rights organizations that represent them like CALDH (Center for Human Rights Legal Action), consider the Constitutional Court decision to be illegal. They point out that vacating the verdict was done on procedural rather than evidentiary grounds, because the evidence presented by the prosecution was overwhelming. They see it as an unsurprising exercise of impunity. To counter it they have published hundreds of copies of the 700-page sentence, in which all the evidence presented in the case is laid out, and are distributing them throughout the Maya Ixil region. The verdict may have been vacated, but the sentencing document and the evidence remain in the public realm. CALDH and the Association

Ríos Montt at his trial. Photo: Daniel Hernández-Salazar / Dictator in the Dock



Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, and Financial Associations). Immediately after the verdict they unleashed a ferocious media juggernaut pounding out the message that there had never been genocide in Guatemala, that Guatemala could not be stigmatized as a genocidal country, and that Ríos Montt was the victim of political persecution and "international enemies." In press conferences they called stridently for the verdict to be overturned, that it was an offense to Guatemala and would trigger dire economic consequences. Adding fuel to the fire, President Otto Pérez Molina, a former military officer in the Maya Ixil region during the time covered in the case (1982-83), also publicly announced that there had never been genocide in Guatemala.

Why was this case different from other recent trials in Guatemala, where former military and police have been found guilty of atrocities committed during the armed conflict, and their prison sentences upheld? The answer is it was a genocide case, with all the stigma and legal ramifications that brings upon the perpetrators. Members of CACIF had provided financial and logistical support to the military during the regime of Ríos

for Justice and Reconciliation, the organization led by the victims, have decided on their next move: they are taking the Ríos Montt case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Stay tuned.

To see highlights from the trial we invite you to watch select episodes from Skylight's "Dictator in the Dock" series at: <http://skylight.is/films/dictator-in-the-dock/>

To learn more about the relationship between CACIF and the Guatemalan military during the armed conflict, read this excellent investigative piece from Guatemalan online news site Plaza Pública (in Spanish only): <http://tinyurl.com/jvvec5k>

Also available: day-to-day trial blogs at the Open Society Justice Initiative's trial site: <http://www.riosmontt-trial.org/> ▲

Filmmakers Pamela Yates and Paco de Onis described the search for justice in Guatemala in their award-winning documentary, *Granito: How to Nail a Dictator*.

“The Fight Here Is Between Democracy and Fascism”

Carl Geiser Writes Home from Spain

By Peter N. Carroll and Fraser Ottanelli

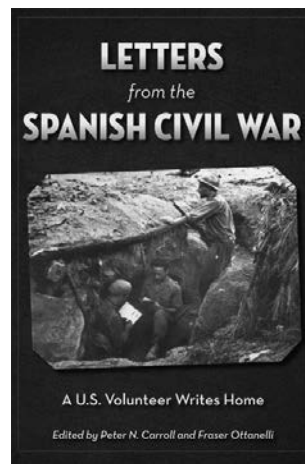


Carl Geiser, political commissar of the Lincoln Battalion, prisoner of war held in Spain until 1939, and author of *Prisoners of the Good Fight*, left the letters he wrote to his family to the ALBA collection. The complete letters, edited by Peter N. Carroll and Fraser Ottanelli, have just published by Kent State University Press in Ohio, Geiser's home state. *The Volunteer* is proud to present an extract from the introduction, along with one of Geiser's letters.

“Probably you are a bit surprised to hear I am in Spain fighting with the army of the Spanish Republic,” Carl Geiser wrote to his brother Bennet nine days after he crossed the border into Spain on May 1, 1937. “And so I suppose you want to know why I am here.”

Born in a small town in rural Ohio, Carl Geiser came from a deeply religious German-speaking family that had recently emigrated from Switzerland. The family was hardworking, frugal, churchgoing, and politically conservative and, while they had little formal schooling, held education in high regard. Carl excelled in his studies and, in 1928, he left home to attend college in Cleveland. With the onset of the Great Depression, the collapse of the job market and the erosion of student funds, Carl, along with thousands of college students across the country, began to question the logic and value of capitalism. This awakening led him to embrace radical politics and eventually to join the Communist Party.

For Geiser the decision to take up arms against Fascism in Spain was the product of a world view which combined



With the onset of the Great Depression, the collapse of the job market and the erosion of student funds, Carl began to question the logic and value of capitalism.

Covering a period of approximately 14 months, Geiser's letters provide detailed accounts of the daily reality of warfare in one of the first battlefields of World War II.

with internationalist ideals of class-based solidarity in the struggle against American small-town communal values exploitation, oppression, and racism. Letters from the Spanish Civil War is possibly the largest surviving collection of letters written by a single volunteer from any country during this conflict. Covering a period of approximately 14 months, in these letters to family and friends Geiser provided detailed accounts of the daily reality of warfare in one of the first battlefields of World War II. More broadly, as he sought to inspire those back home to awaken the U.S. public opinion and policy makers to the global threat of Fascist expansionism, Geiser eloquently described the deep personal motivations that led a young man from the American heartland to defy U.S. neutrality and travel to Spain to risk his life in defense of democracy. ▲

Letters from the Spanish Civil War: A U.S. Volunteer Writes Home, edited by Peter N. Carroll and Fraser M. Ottanelli, has just been published by Kent State University Press.

May 9, 1937
Albacete,
Spain

Dear Brother Bennet & Grace:

Probably you are a bit surprised to hear I am in Spain fighting with the army of the Spanish Republic. And so I suppose you want to know why I am here.

But before I do this, I'll let you know I am well, busy and happy, and quite safe for the time being.

The reasons I am here is because I want to do my part to prevent a second world war, which would without doubt, draw in the United States and seriously set back our civilization. And secondly, because all of our democratic and liberty-loving training makes me anxious to fight fascism, and to help the Spanish people drive out the fascist invaders sent in by Hitler & Mussolini.

You probably have 2 questions, or rather objections to my being here. One, that the fight here is between the "Reds" and the church & democracy, and 2 that my being here tends to draw the U.S.A. into war.

If these things are true then I actually should not be here. And if you think they are true, you have been badly and maybe purposefully deceived. And in the time I have been here, I have been able to ascertain without doubt, that the fight here is between democracy and fascism, and not between communism & fascism or democracy.

Last July 16, an uprising was begun against the democratic legally elected Republican Government of Spain. It was organized and financed by Hitler & Mussolini. Fortunately the leader of the uprising was killed by a plane crash as he was returning from Berlin to Spain. The uprising was supported by few Spaniards, notably the big landowners who have starved the Spanish people for generations, the largest capitalists, the nobility, and the majority of the Army, especially the officers, and certain sections of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church who were rich & powerful & often held large lands.

The uprising would have been squelched within a short time, if Hitler & Mussolini had not sent in tanks, airplanes, weapons, and men, until today they are literally invading Spain.

What would happen if Franco, Hitler, & Mussolini were victorious? It would mean that fascism would be stronger everywhere, & fascism means war. Democratic France would be encircled by fascist states preparing for war. The conquest of Spain is part of the fascist preparation for a new world war....

Faces of ALBA

Meet the members of the
ALBA community.

By Aaron Retish



Evelyn Scaramella

Professor of Spanish Literature at Manhattan College

How did you get interested in Spain and the literature of the Spanish Civil War?

I lived in Madrid for a semester during college and began studying the avant-garde group, the Generation of 1927. Federico García Lorca's work and the circumstances surrounding his death at the start of the war fascinated me. As an English and Spanish double major, I realized that the war was fruitful ground for comparative and interdisciplinary study. Some of my favorite American authors wrote poems about the war and went to Spain to cover it.

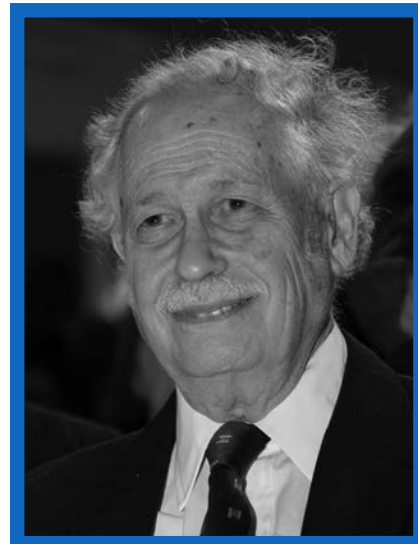
Your work focuses on translation activity between Spanish, American, and English writers who supported the Republican cause. What do you think these writers tell us about the experience of resistance and wartime?

My research will hopefully become a lens through which we can understand the transnational collaboration among leftist writers on both sides of the Atlantic. I focus on the

literary and political history behind the decision to translate certain works (for example, Langston Hughes's translation of Lorca's *Romancero gitano* (*Gypsy Ballads*)). I think the translation work done on the Republican side was another strategy of resistance that helped to publicize the War's horrors abroad. What I find most striking is the depth of the personal relationships formed during a short time in Spain. For example, Hughes developed a close friendship with Lorca's colleague, the poet Rafael Alberti, while they worked to translate Lorca. As they collaborated politically and personally, it's not surprising that they began to influence each other's work.

How do you integrate the Tamiment Archive into your teaching? What do your students gain from using them?

I taught a class on the Spanish Civil War at Manhattan College last spring, and we visited the ALBA archives at the Tamiment. Juan Salas gave a wonderfully informative seminar, and pulled materials for the students to look through. I loved seeing the looks on their faces when they saw the Spanish Civil War posters in person for the first time, or read a soldier's letter to a loved one back home on the original paper. It's the stories read in the archives that drive them to take ownership of a research topic. The more they sleuth through the material, the more they see the topic in a new light and want to share what they discover.



Victor Grossman, 2002.
Photo Richard Hebstreit

Victor Grossman

Journalist and Author

In 1952, when you were stationed in Germany during the Korean War, you decided to seek refuge in the German Democratic Republic. Why? How did you get to East Germany?

I made the fateful decision only because, after fearfully concealing my nasty leftwing past from the Army by signing

the loyalty oath when drafted, they caught up with me. The punishment for lying was up to five years in prison (and \$10,000). I panicked at the thought of Leavenworth and took off, not for the GDR—just away! My flight involved swimming across the Danube from the USA-Zone to the Soviet Zone of Austria (at Linz). The Soviets sent me to East Germany.

How was life in East Germany?

It was actually fascinating; plenty of disappointments, problems—as anywhere—but plenty of satisfactions as a lucky husband, father and only human with diplomas from Harvard and Karl Marx University and a life (as freelance journalist); more normal than media-influenced people in “the West” could imagine.

You continue to be critical of German unification. Why?

Despite lots of crap, blunders, stupidity, sometimes roughness, the GDR was an attempt at an anti-fascist state, with job security, home security, women’s equality, no money worries about medical care, education, child care, birth control. With unification we can buy anything we can afford, travel anywhere we want, vote. But the rest is gone (including much of the anti-fascism); Krupp, Siemens, the Deutsche Bank and other criminal firms are back—and keep spreading!

You have met many of the veterans of the Spanish Civil War. Could you tell us how you met them and what their experiences have meant to you?

I grew up with Spain in my heart. In 1961, I was an interpreter for many Lincoln vets in East Berlin: Bill Bailey, Milt Wolff, Moe Fishman, Ruth Davidow, etc. Now I am active in the German “Fighters and Friends of the Spanish Republic” (the last fighter died 2012). I also published a book about the Spanish War, in German!

Victor Grossman’s autobiography, Crossing the River: A Memoir of the American Left, the Cold War, and Life in East Germany was published by the University of Massachusetts Press (2003).

Aaron Retish is associate professor of history at Wayne State University and a board member of ALBA.

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The Volunteer



At their arrival to New York on the 17th of March 1940. From left to right: Clarence Blair, Rudolph Opara, Lawrence Fant Doran, Anthony Kerhlicker and Harry Kleiman (Cohn Haber).

Escape from Death Row Three Lincoln POWs on Trial

By Anna Martí and Francisco Cabrera

In February 1940, one year after the end of the Spanish Civil War, eight members of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion still languished in Spanish prisons. These volunteers had not been liberated with the rest of their countrymen because they had been subject to judicial military proceedings by the Francoist army and condemned for various crimes. Buried in the Spanish military archives are documents of their trials, revealing the remarkable stories of Anthony Peter Kerhlicker, Rudolph Ludwig Opara, and Lawrence Fant Doran.

ON MARCH 9, 1938, FRANCO'S ARMY launched an offensive, devastating Republican defenses in the Aragon area. U.S. Brigaders of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion began a retreat through Aragón that would last until March 18, when they were sent to the Republican rearguard in Catalonia to be reorganized and rearmed.

Anthony Peter Kerhlicker, Rudolph Ludwig Opara and Lawrence Fant Doran were members of the American Battalion. Larry Doran, 25, was the "rookie." Born in Los Angeles, he had entered Spain on March 6, just before the retreats began. He did not join the Battalion until March 30. He was the only one of the group who was married. Kerhlicker, 31, was born in Polk County, Iowa but lived in Moline, Illinois. He came to Spain in June 1937 and held the rank of Sergeant in a Fortification Group. Opara, 21, born in Cleveland, Ohio, had been in Spain since mid-August 1937.

On March 30, 1938, advancing Nationalist troops crossed the river Matarranya. The Fifteenth Brigade was sent to defend the line on the next river on the route, the Algars, covering the area between the villages of Nonaspe and Batea. There they were attacked by units of the 55th Division of Franco's Army and

withdrew on the evening of April 1 towards the town of Gandesa, arriving in the morning of the following day. There they would be cornered by the First Navarrese Division that had surrounded them. The night of April 2-3, the American Battalion ceased to exist as such, breaking into small, isolated groups of Brigaders fleeing to avoid capture. It is at this moment that the odyssey of Kerhlicker, Opara, and Doran begins.

If we can trust statements that were taken after they were detained, the three men were fleeing separately, hiding and finding food in country houses and farms. Kerhlicker and Opara met on April 10. Doran joined them not much later. We do not know the exact route they followed, but they traveled through mountains and fields along the river Ebro, without daring to cross it, going towards the Mediterranean. In his book *Prisoners of the Good Fight*, Carl Geiser reports that the three were captured on April 19. That is

inaccurate, since in the documents of the Summary Trial it is clear that their detention happened on April 27. This means they had been on the run for 24 days, crossing 90 kilometers (60 miles) of unknown territory from Gandesa to Sant Carles de la Ràpita, where they were caught.

Sant Carles de la Ràpita had been occupied by Franco's Army



Prison of Vinaròs located in the former convent of San Francisco, where the three Lincolns entered on May 13, 1938. (CDGCE Vinaròs)

The night of April 2-3, the American Battalion ceased to exist as such, breaking into small, isolated groups of Brigaders fleeing to avoid capture.

on April 19. The buildings of its Town Hall housed the Military Command of the Second Regiment of Black Arrows, an Italian Unit of the CTV (Corpo Truppe Volontarie). It was there that the 19-year-old Domingo Vizcarro Sanz, who lived in Sant Carles, went at noon on April 27 to denounce the presence of three "militiamen, apparently reds" in an estate close to the urban area. In his statement taken two days later, he and his companion, Tomás Subirats Aguilá, 18, were traveling in a cart to the estate of the Tomás father, called Torre del Moro, with groves of olive trees and carob-trees and a view of the bay a kilometer away. Before arriving at the estate's main building, they met a man who, with signs and some Spanish words, was asking for food. They advised him to go into town, but he replied that he would not do so because the town was Fascist. The boys invited him to get in the cart, promising they would get him something to eat. After jumping in, the stranger called two other men who were hidden in the bushes, who came to the cart. The Brigaders saw the emblem of the Falange on the cart and said that they would rather die than be Fascists. They showed a hand grenade. They also asked if Tarragona was already occupied.

The boys took the three trusting Americans to the house of Torre del Moro and left them to prepare something to eat, while Domingo Vizcarro ran to denounce them to the military authorities, and Tomás watched from a distance. The patrol sent to capture them was composed of an Italian Sergeant, Michele Frappampina, a Spanish corporal and two Spanish soldiers. In the statement taken from the Italian four days later, he stated that one of the Brigaders had made gesture of throwing a hand-grenade as soon as he saw the patrol arriving, but eventually submitted without resistance.

Although the three were captured on April 27, their statements were not taken until six days later in front of the Examining Magistrate, Captain Jesús Dapena Mosquera, along with the Secretary, Second Lieutenant Antonio Martínez Aduriz, and the warrant officer Jose María Comalrena de Sobregrau Egozcué serving as translator. Kerhlicker was questioned on May 3, the other two the following day. All three stated that, being unemployed, they had come to Spain to work and had joined the International Brigades against their will. Kerhlicker claimed that he came to work as painter in hospitals; Opara that an organization in Cleveland told him that they would provide him with a machinist's job in Spain; and Doran that an agency called "All Nations Employment Agency" promised him metallurgical work in Spanish industry. They lied, feeling they could not admit that they had volunteered to fight against the army of which they were now prisoners.

The three also declared that they had never used a rifle. Kerhlicker claimed in his discharge to have been assigned to a Section of Fortifications; Opara to Ammunitions; and Doran to have received instruction as a First Aid man. Doran added that during the seven days since he had been arrested, he had received better treatment than during his entire time with the International Brigades. As Carl Geiser writes, however, "the Italians not only beat them but they did not feed them for the first four days, with the excuse that they were going to be shot anyway." Matters got worse when the Italian Sergeant Frappampina made another statement. Correcting his first version, he now claimed that one of the Brigaders, Larry Doran, had two hand-grenades, one of which he had thrown. It had exploded without hurting anybody. The other grenade was taken from him immediately afterwards. In

subsequent days, judicial authorities interrogated the soldiers of the patrol, who confirmed their Sergeant's version. When it came time to question the two boys who had denounced the Brigaders, however, both denied having heard an explosion during the capture. On May 10 the Brigaders were questioned again; they denied that they possessed more than one hand-grenade, which they had handed over voluntarily. Contrasting the different testimonies, it seems clear that the Brigaders were being entrapped for trial.

The Summary Urgent Trial was scheduled for May 16 in the coastal town of Vinaròs (Castellón), situated 25 kilometers south of Sant Carles de la Ràpita. The three Brigaders had been escorted to there by the Guardia Civil on May 13. We can assume that this was a typical military trial or Court-martial, since the roles of President, Secretary, Members of the Court, Attorney and Defender were all taken by members of the military. Although they did not have any juridical formation, this did not represent any hindrance when it came to applying sentences. There was a translator present at all times. No statement of the defense appears in the proceedings.

The prosecutor asked for the death sentence, based on the alleged throwing of a hand-grenade. He underscored that the three Americans had stated "that they would die defending themselves rather than be Fascists" and that they had come to Spain to enlist voluntarily in the "Red Army." He accused them of the crime of military rebellion. (As per articles 237 and 238 of the Code of Military Justice, rising up against the legitimate government was punishable with life in prison or death.) The Court sentenced the three Americans to life in prison, and the sentence was signed by all three Court members.

Yet this was not the end of the Court-martial. The same day, a member of the Court, Captain Jose Luis Escobar Buiza, filed a dissent to change the initial sentence. This 50-year-old Captain, born in Seville, had joined the Army in 1909, taken early retirement in 1931 (taking advantage of Manuel Azañas Law of April 25, 1931), and rejoined the Army at the beginning of the war on Franco's side. Although Escobar had signed the initial sentence, in his dissent he accused the convicts of being dangerous and responsible of the incalculable "losses caused by the red revolution" in which they had participated "materially and voluntarily." With these arguments he requested that the punishment be changed to a death sentence.

The prisoners knew nothing of these developments. Three days later, the Auditor, Ángel Manzaneque Feltrer, overturned the Court-martial because, as mentioned, the intervention of the defense counsel was missing. He ordered that the procedures be passed to the defense for a retrial. The new trial would be postponed until May 23 at 4pm. We don't know to what extent the prisoners were aware of their procedural situation. Carl Geiser only mentions that both trials ended with a death sentence.

The retrial included two new faces: the Secretary and one of the Members of the Court were changed. The prosecutor again demanded the death penalty. The defense counsel asked for clemency, arguing that the three Americans had gone to Spain cheated "by the grand and well paid propaganda from the Red leaders." He requested that the Court consider them "prisoners of war against their will." During the retrial, the accused were questioned as well. Opara said nothing, Kerhlicker stated that in letters written to his friends he always told them that he was in a

Once set in motion, the wheels of Franco's bureaucracy kept turning, generating an absurd sequence of events.

Section of Fortifications, and Doran said that he had never fired a shot at Franco's soldiers.

This time the death sentence was definitive. The three were found guilty of being "authors by direct, material and voluntary participation" in the "military rebellion," with "the aggravating circumstances of social dangerousness of the delinquents." The following day, the Auditor confirmed the sentence. All that was needed for it to be carried out was the obligatory, final "Agreed" from Franco's Headquarters in Burgos.

The response from Burgos did not come until three weeks later. The three Brigaders were told that Franco "had deigned to commute" their death sentence to a 30-year prison term. In other words, the Americans would be in jail until April 27 1968. (The sentence was the same for the all three. Contrary to what Cecil Eby insinuates in his two books, Larry Fant Doran's case did not receive special scrutiny due to the fact that he shared his last name with Commissar Dave Doran, who had gone missing in the Retreats. Eby's theory that the Nationalist authorities suspected Larry and Dave were the same person is unfounded, given that all the documents refer to Larry, mistakenly, as Laurence Fant Dorange.)

From this moment the three men shared the same fate. Although Geiser hints that Opara could have passed through another prison, the three Americans were taken together to the Central Prison of Saragossa on July 3, and then on September 5 to the Central Prison of Burgos to serve out their sentences.

There was some hope left, however. Throughout the war, international POWs, which included Italians and Germans fighting on Franco's side had been freed through prisoner exchanges. The first liberation of U.S. volunteers took place on October 8, 1938, when 14 Brigaders were exchanged for 14 Italian prisoners in Irún. The U.S. ambassador in Spain, Claude G. Bowers, carried out the negotiations. The next liberation of Americans occurred on April 22, 1939, also in Irún, with the exchange of 71 Lincoln Brigaders. From Irún, the freed Americans went to Le Havre and then set sail for New York, with tickets paid for by the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (FALB). Negotiations were again initiated by Bowers. When the war ended, Bowers resigned and H. Freeman Matthews (Chargé d'affaires) finalized the exchange. But not all American Brigaders had been released. Eleven prisoners were still held in the concentration camp at San Pedro de Cardeña, and eight more in other jails, among them Kerhlicker, Opara and Doran. These eight were subjected to penal procedures, that is to say, they all had been judged and condemned for committing crimes.

The end of the Civil War also meant the end of prisoner exchanges. From then on, the release of remaining Americans became a diplomatic matter between the United States and Spain. (A recent book by Joan Maria Thomàs, *Roosevelt and Franco during the Second World War: From the Spanish Civil War to Pearl Harbor*, describes this process.)

The new U.S. Ambassador Alexander W. Weddell did not arrive in Spain until May 1939. Before his departure he met with the Undersecretary of State, Sumner Welles, who charged him with several immediate tasks: a request of the new Spanish Government for a credit of cotton acquisition in the United States; an American entry request for Colonel Sosthenes Behn, the proprietor of the ITT (International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation) and also the majority owner of the CTNE (Compañía Telefónica Nacional de España) to be at the head of the company; and the demand for the release of American Brigaders still held prisoner. Weddell had little sympathy for the Brigaders. In an April 1940 letter to a friend, he described the volunteers as having been mistaken and badly informed.

On June 14 1939, the third Secretary of the American Embassy, visited the three prisoners and delivered a package with food and clothes. According to Geiser, Doran, who was in the infirmary, told the official that they were treated better in prison than they had been by the Italian soldiers who captured them. The Secretary reported that Doran was suffering from scabies, rheumatism and stomach trouble; Opara was pale and thin, had scabies and two boils. About Kerhlicker, he reported both good spirits and physical condition.

One week later, Ambassador Weddell met with the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Count of Jordana, to deal with the issue of the 19 Brigaders who were awaiting liberation. Weddell argued that this matter was hindering the relationship between both countries and informed the Minister that the State Department was receiving many requests from relatives. He complained that the Auditor of War had not provided a list with the names of remaining American prisoners and the details of their charges. Jordana promised to solve the matter, but only for those Americans who were not involved in specific crimes. This excluded the three men.

On July 20, Counselor Robert M. Scotten from the U.S. Embassy met with Franco's Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, Domingo de las Bárcenas, who suggested that "if he can obtain the cotton credit, the Generalissimo not only will allow for Behn's return, but also he will authorize the liberation of the prisoners." After that, the three issues would remain linked. Two days after this interview the U.S. Secretary of State, Cordell Hull agreed to the concession of credit to buy 250,000 cotton bales. (The decision was not immediately made public.) On July 24, Weddell met with Franco, who assured him that the prisoners would be liberated, and then with the Count of Jordana, who ratified the release of an undetermined number of Brigaders. Still, he did not guarantee the liberation of those sentenced for specific charges. Two days later, the State Department contacted FALB with the news, urging them to collect funds to pay for the Americans' return. The FALB organized a fundraising campaign, and the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln



Original documents of the Summary Trial n°62/1938.

The Lincolns' names and signatures are visible.
A.H.D.(Archivo Histórico de Defensa), CDGCE

Fund Caixa Vinaròs

Brigade (VALB) contributed as well. Although the Roosevelt administration was helping with the repatriation, it refused to cover travel expenses.

On August 7 the concession of the credit for the acquisition of the cotton bales was announced publicly and 18 days later 11 imprisoned Brigaders at San Pedro de Cardeña were released. However, eight volunteers sentenced for specific crimes were still awaiting their repatriation: Anthony Kerhlicker, Rudolph Ludwig Opara and Larry Fant Doran, imprisoned in the Central Prison of Burgos; Alf Anderson and Reuben Barr (Conrad Henry Stowjewa) in the Central Prison of Saragossa; John Clarence Blair and Harry Kleiman (Cohn Haber) in the prison of Valdenoceda; and Harold E. Dahl, who was imprisoned in Salamanca.

On August 10, Colonel Juan Beigbeder was appointed as Franco's Minister of Foreign Affairs. The U.S. Ambassador threatened that if the matter of the CTNE was not solved, no more credit would be granted to Spain. In November, Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles wrote to Weddell after a meeting with the Spanish Ambassador to the USA:

... it is hard to understand the delay of the Spanish Government in carrying out the promise which General Franco gave you personally to release the remaining American citizens who are still under detention as prisoners of war ... Given what we have done for Spain in the way of credits, et cetera, it seems to me that the next move is definitely on the Spanish side. The release of these men, the trial of American citizens under detention of various charges not connected with hostile military service, and a prompt and equitable agreement with the American owners of the telephone company would seem the least we could expect.

Economic relations between both countries would be key for the liberation of the prisoners.

On December 12, 1939, the third Secretary of the American Embassy in Madrid visited the three men in Burgos, delivering holiday packages prepared by the Ambassador's wife, with food, shoes, clothes, and cigarettes. At the beginning of January 1940, the matter of the CTNE was still not resolved. Shortly afterward, Franco's Ambassador to the U.S. met with Undersecretary of State Welles to request a credit for the production of nickel coins. Welles admonished him severely for the rigid attitude of the Spanish Government. On February 3, the Spanish Ambassador sent a telegram to Franco's Minister of Foreign Affairs, warning that the United States will not concede the requested credit until "we find a formula to please them." Since the unresolved matter of the CTNE would not be sorted out until August, this formula would seal the release of the eight American prisoners.

Documentation of the Summary Trial has no information about the three Americans from August 1938 until February 17, 1940, when a communication was sent from Burgos Central Prison to the Vinaròs Military Judge announcing that on that day, the three volunteers' sentences had been commuted and they had been released. The three were escorted to Madrid. Wearing the clothes they received for Christmas, they were met by representatives of the American press who reported that they were "very, very happy." On February 21, they spent one night at the Provincial Prison of Seville, where they met with Harold E. Dahl,



John Clarence Blair, and Harry Kleiman, who had been moved from different prisons. The following night, the released volunteers were turned over to U.S. Consul John N. Hamlin and boarded the freighter *Exiria* bound for New York. Only six Brigaders were on the ship; Alf Anderson and Reuben Barr set sail later on the *Exford*. The passages were paid for with funds from the American associations of Brigaders.

The repatriation from Spain of six Americans hit the newspapers in the States because Harold E. Dahl was a famous aviator who had been captured in July 1937. The newspapers reported at the time that he escaped death thanks to his beautiful wife,

Edith Rogers Dahl, a famous night club singer, who wrote a letter to Franco asking for clemency, and included with it a rather provocative photo of her. Supposedly Franco replied assuring her that her husband's life would be spared. He signed the letter with the phrase "Your obedient servant kisses your foot." On their arrival, Dahl was retained by the police due to a few checks that had bounced in 1936. Kerhlicker told to the press that during their trip on the *Exiria* it was the first time in two years that the three Brigaders ate meat.

Curiously, the documentation of the Summary Trial does not finish with the Brigaders' exit from Spain. Once set in motion, the wheels of Franco's bureaucracy kept turning, generating an absurd sequence of events. On March 4, 1943, three years after their liberation, the Provincial Commission of Examination of Sentences in Castellón de la Plana proposed the commutation of their sentences from 30 years to 6 years in prison, but the Central Commission refused the proposition and commuted them to 12 years. The ineptitude of Spanish justice had no limits: Two months later Castellón's Military Judge requested from the Burgos prison the addresses of the Brigaders (who should be still in Spain, according to the Administration of Military Justice) to communicate to them their commutation. Incredible as it may seem, in February 1952, 12 years after the volunteers' return to the United States, the Central Prison of Burgos replied to a letter from the Commanding Judge of the Military Court, informing him that in 1940 the three Americans had been expelled from the country. It was not until January 29, 1954, almost 14 years after their release that Spain finally closed the Summary Trail.

Anthony Peter Kerhlicker, Rudolph Ludwig Opara and Lawrence Fant Doran would die years later in the United States. They never knew all the details of their case. ▲

For a longer Spanish version of this article with footnotes, go to www.albavolunteer.org.

Anna Martí Centellas was born in Terrassa (Catalonia, Spain) in 1970. She works in a national park and has long been fascinated with the English-speaking members of the International Brigades. Francisco Cabrera Castillo was born in Vinaixa (Catalonia, Spain) in 1951 and lives in Gandesa. A retired service member and researcher of the Spanish Civil war, he is the author of the book Del Ebro a Gandesa and co-author of El frente invisible, which deals with the history of the Republican guerrillas in the years 1936-39.

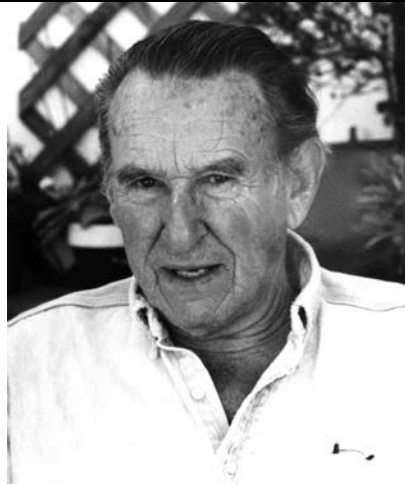
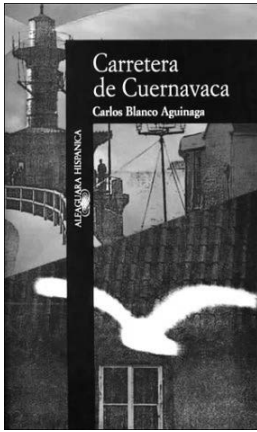


Carlos Blanco Aguinaga at the Thurgood Marshall College opening ceremony on September 26, 1970. Photo courtesy UCSD.

Carlos Blanco Aguinaga (1926-2013) An Exile's Fiction

By Sara J. Brenneis

Carlos Blanco Aguinaga, a preeminent scholar of Spanish literature, a refugee of the Spanish Civil War, and a great friend of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and ALBA, died on September 11. A prolific, rigorous and charismatic scholar, he helped reshape the field of Hispanic Studies in the United States and Spain.



Carlos Blanco Aguinaga.
Photo courtesy of Alda Blanco.



CARLOS BLANCO was born in 1926 in Irún, on the Spanish side of the Basque Country. In September 1936, as the Nationalist General Emilio Mola and his forces fought Republican troops for control of the town, Blanco Aguinaga and his family walked across the international bridge into Hendaye, France. While his father worked for the Spanish Republic from Hendaye, Blanco Aguinaga's family integrated into life in France. But in 1939, with the fall of Madrid to the Nationalists imminent and the sense that their adopted country could not withstand a Nazi invasion, Blanco Aguinaga's father went into exile in Mexico. After a three week passage on the ship Orinoco, 12-year-old Blanco Aguinaga, his mother, and his sister joined their father for their second exile, arriving in Veracruz, Mexico on August 21, 1939.

Although Blanco Aguinaga's family integrated into Mexican life as best they could, they imagined they were only in Mexico temporarily, until Franco fell. In fact, Blanco Aguinaga would spend the next 74 years in exile. After attending Spanish Republican schools in Mexico City, Blanco Aguinaga moved to the United States to attend Harvard when he was 16 years old. There he studied Spanish writers such as Miguel de Unamuno and Antonio Machado, banned in schools controlled by Franco. He returned to Mexico for his post-graduate education and began a life-long career as a writer and literary scholar. Professorships at various universities in the United States led Blanco Aguinaga to the University of California, San Diego, where he was Professor Emeritus of Spanish Literature until his death last September.

Blanco Aguinaga alternated between literary criticism and creative work throughout his life. He worked on Golden Age authors Francisco Quevedo and Miguel de Cervantes, studied the poetry of his fellow Spanish exile Emilio Prados, and wrote a definitive two-volume text on the social history of modern Spanish literature. In the 1980s, Blanco Aguinaga turned his attention to fiction, publishing five novels and one collection of short stories between 1984 and 2000. In three of these creative works, Blanco Aguinaga focuses on stories that parallel his own: the disjointed path of the Spanish exile to Mexico.

Carretera de Cuernavaca (1990) is a collection of short stories that follow different characters before, during and after their exile journeys from Spain to Mexico. In prose that is at times magical and at times starkly realistic, Blanco Aguinaga writes about the dilemmas and adjustments particular to Spaniards

who were children when they left Spain. For Blanco Aguinaga's characters, navigating the pitfalls of adolescence is more difficult away from one's homeland, as is raising a family in which the children consider themselves Mexican while the parents consider themselves Spanish. The stories in *Carretera de Cuernavaca* beautifully capture the emotions and disorientation of exile.

For *En voz continua* (1997), Blanco Aguinaga re-creates a fictional version of Emilio Prados. The author imagines the poet reflecting on his deathbed about his life in Spain before and during the Spanish Civil War as well as his Mexican exile. Thinking through the confusing political situation in Spain before the war, the Prados character also struggles to fit into both Spanish and Mexican life as a writer and a homosexual. Through Prados, Blanco Aguinaga draws a portrait of the confusion and difficulty of belonging that is common to all exile experiences.

Blanco Aguinaga's last work of fiction, *Esperando la lluvia de la tarde: fábula de exilios* (2000), combines a father's memories with his son's, both retelling their life stories simultaneously as the father nears death. Father and son are Spanish exiles of two different generations who exhibit profound differences in how they have navigated their lives while displaced from their home country. Major events of the 20th Century in Europe and the United States--the Spanish Republic, World War II, the "Red Scare" and the Watts riots in Los Angeles--are filtered through the perspectives of two men who have spent most their lives in exile.

Although Blanco Aguinaga's fiction captures many of the author's experiences and emotions of exile, the author recounted his own story in his autobiography, *Por el mundo*, published in 2007. He writes matter-of-factly that "of course the central facts of this story are clear: a well protected early childhood...; a violent and long civil war ... that we would end up losing; a difficult and painful early exile...; and then, a second exile to a remote and surprising country. This is all true, but what about the details?" In his fiction and his autobiography, Blanco Aguinaga succeeded in fleshing out these details, and in so doing created a rich narrative about a singular life. ▲

Sara J. Brenneis is Assistant Professor of Spanish at Amherst College and author of Genre Fusion: A New Approach to History, Fiction, and Memory in Contemporary Spain (Purdue University Press, 2013).

Book reviews

Teenagers Against Franco: Communist Youth In The Spanish Civil War

Paso a la juventud. Movilización democrática, estalinismo y revolución en la República Española.
By Sandra Souto Kustrín. (Valencia: PUV, Universitat de Valencia, 2013.)

Review by Richard Ryan

Editor's Note: Although the book under review is only available in Spanish, we believe the themes discussed will be of interest to our readers.

Far from “youth running wild” in the ruins of empire, Souto reveals young people to be decisive, determined protagonists in this pivotal battle for modernity.

transnational complexities, firmly locating the forging of Spanish youth politics within broader political and cultural milieus of this world in crisis. The appeal to the young was, as Souto explains, “the last card played by all...in the encounter between fascism and anti-fascism,” as all sides realized the adage that who has the youth, has the future.

In Spain *paso a la juventud* [make way for the youth] formed part of an ideological mobilization behind the Republic. Souto demonstrates that young people became fundamental to the Republican war effort, laying down their lives as a political vanguard in the first weeks and months after the coup and performing a crucial role in the mobilization of the home front toward cultural and material production. In that sense, youth politics played a key role in the mass support and political culture of the wartime Republic and in the creation of a new national and political fabric. Of particular interest is Souto's original analysis of the extent to which youth organizations mobilized young women and children, offering a theoretical and empirical challenge to the established tendency to understand youth politics in a masculine interpretative paradigm.

Souto underscores the civil war as a landscape of possibility for young people and illustrates how they were able to navigate the war as an event by tactically manoeuvring within the political spaces opened up after the war began. The confrontation between war and revolution permeates those negotiations throughout, and although the theoretical radicalization and fragmentation of youth politics during the Republic is well explored, Souto contributes significantly to understanding the practical impact of this radicalization. Souto makes clear that translating political ideas onto the landscape of the wartime Republic engendered political infighting and painful self analysis. Mass mobilization challenged ideological coherence, and the demands of war conflicted with revolutionary dreams.

The final chapter of the book recounts the searing experience of defeat. The Casado coup against the Republic in early 1939—triggering the final implosion of Republican resistance—gave brutal form to fractures and animosities in a panicked climate over what the future would hold. The dismemberment of that open, progressive future was embodied in the huge physical and psychological destruction unleashed by Francoism. Souto conveys the sheer scale of the destruction wrought on Spain's youth: the number of young people killed in combat or extra-judicially murdered, imprisoned, “disappeared,” and exiled stands as a visible incarnation of the destruction of the future.

Souto admirably combines theoretical material with extensive and rich documentation, much of it new or underused and encompassing a broad array of Spanish



In the violent conflicts of twentieth century Europe, vast sectors of society mobilized in the fight to determine the continent's future social and political order. New opportunities—blown wide open by the Great War of 1914-18—that promised political, social and cultural emancipation were met head on with attempts at closing them down by the old elites of imperial Europe and their rigidly hierarchical social order. Within this struggle to make sense of

change and determine the future, political leaders initiated an unprecedented mobilization of young people, who were quite literally that future. In an outstanding contribution to our understanding of those struggles, Sandra Souto examines youth mobilization in the Spanish Republic during the civil war. Far from “youth running wild” in the ruins of empire, Souto reveals young people to be decisive, determined protagonists in this pivotal battle for modernity.

With the Spanish Civil War central to understanding those broader currents of violence that stretched across Europe, Souto provides a welcome analysis of those

and international material. Despite the fundamentally important role of youth organization and mobilization in the breakdown of the Spanish Republic and in the violent struggles of European politics, the conventional wisdom of much of the existing historiography remains simplified. Souto provides the framework for a more acute analysis that charts the evolution and development of youth both as a social group in the Spanish Republic and as a historically constructed concept.

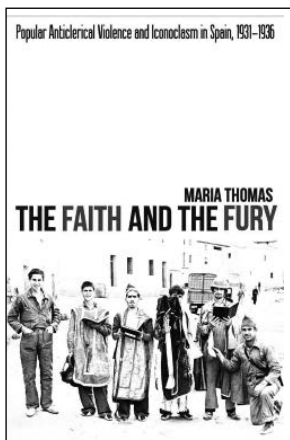
The book stands as a welcome addition to our understanding of the central role youth politics played in the polarization of politics and society in the maelstrom of the 1930s. It is impeccably researched, brought to life by the individual stories and by Souto's readable style and acute analysis. Exploring new avenues of investigation, Souto has contributed not only to our understanding of the Spanish Civil War, but more widely to Europe's twentieth century and the experiences of the young within it. ▲

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Anticlerical Violence in Spain

***The Faith and the Fury: Popular Anticlerical Violence and Iconoclasm in Spain, 1831-1936.* By Maria Thomas. (Brighton: Cañanda Blanchs Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies/Sussex Academic Press, 2013.)**

Review by Julián Casanova



When the Spanish Republic came to power in 1931, Catholicism was the nation's only religion and was clearly identified with political conservatism and social order. Despite the liberal revolutions of the 19th-century, the confessional state had remained intact. Spain remained the quintessential example of a country with a single dominant religion, a religion led and followed by the people, bishops, religious and ordinary Catholics, who believed that the

total preservation of the social order was an inalienable right, given the historical and cultural fusion of order and religion throughout Spain's history.

Even in the face of the omnipotent Church, a counter tradition of criticism, hostility and opposition nevertheless emerged. Already active in the 19th century, an anticlerical liberal and left-intellectual bourgeoisie agitated to reduce the power of the clergy in the state and society. During the 20th century Spanish anticlericalism entered a new phase in which radical militants joined with workers. First in Barcelona, and later in other Spanish cities, an anticlerical movement took hold in which republicans and organized labor (socialist or anarchist) collaborated. This alliance constituted a strike against both the Church and the traditional oligarchy, and established networks of cultural centers, newspapers, secular schools and other forms of popular culture.

The Church pushed back against these winds of change; of modernization and secularization. And it constructed a formidable wall of resistance against those groups that challenged Church doctrine or the way of the life that the Church promoted and protected. These are the tensions that forged the history of constant and intransigent resentment between clericalism and anticlericalism, between order and change, reaction and revolution. The conflict between these systems of belief and ways of life grew increasingly acrimonious during the Spanish Republic, and of course, turned murderous during the Spanish Civil War, ending with the violent and definitive triumph of clericalism in 1939.

The Church and the anticlerical movements willingly joined the battle on key issues related to the organization of society and the State that were fought on Spanish soil between 1936-1939. Religion would prove most helpful to the cause of Franco and the Nationalists. Violent anticlericalism that began with the military uprising did not provide any benefit to the Republican cause. Published reports and photographs of the destruction of churches and the murder of clergy, often illustrated with macabre photographs, were published widely in Spain and beyond the Pyrenees. These images became quintessential symbols of "Red Terror."

The civil war thus took on a religious dimension that condemned anticlericalism as a negative ideology and practice, rather than as an important phenomenon of cultural history, with its particular vision of truth, society and human freedom. All supporters of the defeated Republic were forced to become defensive on the subject of religion, even though they continued to remember and value the important Republican fight for education, for the creation of a secular bureaucracy, and for making religious orders subject to the legislation of civil associations. The meaning and memory of these Republicans initiatives were overwhelmed by anticlerical violence that left 6,832 clergy killed.

In her book, *The Faith and The Fury*, Maria Thomas addresses all these issues. Thomas first reviews, from the perspective of cultural history, the process of anticlerical identity construction before 1931. In the second chapter, the book examines the gap between these two conflicting cultural worlds that widened with the proclamation of the Second Republic and ensnared a large number of Spaniards who had felt hitherto indifferent to the conflicts raging between Catholics and their adversaries. Above all, Thomas's research focuses on this drama's main actors because she identifies--as George Rudé did in his studies on the importance of crowds in history--the flesh and blood characters who, from their varied vantage points and ideologies, formed part of the social mobilization of the Civil War period.

The first conclusion Maria Thomas offers is that "rural and urban male workers were the main agents of the wave of anticlerical violence and iconoclasm which began in July 1936." Thomas shows that the participation of middle-class sectors and people not affiliated with political organizations demonstrate that "anticlericalism was being used as one instrument with which to configure a new social structure."

Franco's military uprising finally resolved the conflict between the Church and Republican projects for secularization. Maria Thomas examines how history has cast this divided Spain into two camps, one for the defense of the Church and the other identified by its hostility to religion. Although the empirical analysis in Thomas's study is focused on the provinces of Madrid and Almeria, thus highlighting the different behavior between urban and rural sectors, Maria Thomas never fails to provide a broader analysis, to use a specific event to draw more general conclusions, or to showcase her detailed knowledge of the most recent historiography of the Spanish Civil War.

Through a combination of primary and secondary sources, analysis and interpretation, *The Faith and the Fury* stands as an important reference book to understand the devastating effects of the massacre of clergy and the destruction of the sacred, "a complex and changing phenomenon which encompassed a highly heterogeneous collection of social actors." ▲

Julián Casanova is Professor of Contemporary History, Universidad de Zaragoza. He is the author of numerous studies on Spanish Anarchism and the Franco regime. He's also a columnist for El País.

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