

# The Volunteer

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

Photo Credit: Nicholas Chan

## United We Dream

and the legacy of  
Human Rights Activism

Oliver Stone paid homage to the Lincoln Brigade  
at ALBA's 77th annual celebration.

PAUL PRESTON

FRANCO & HITLER

OBAMA'S DRONE WAR



ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE ARCHIVES

*Teaching History - Promoting Activism - Defending Human Rights*

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## Dear Friends,

We've enjoyed a wonderful youth revival this spring, highlighted by the expansion of ALBA's teaching programs around the country and working with the young activists of United We Dream. Building on the values of an older generation of Lincoln Brigade volunteers and veterans, we are passing on the message of international activism and democratic ideals to people who have come of age in this century.

In March, ALBA participated in a two-day conference on Teaching Social Activism, sponsored by the Museum of the City of New York and its new Puffin Gallery dedicated to the history of activism. (On the wall, you can find a plaque honoring the members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, most of whom sailed from New York to Europe to stop fascist aggression.) In April, we organized a professional development day in Bergen County, New Jersey, gathering Spanish and Social Studies teachers. (See full story on page 8.)

In May, the University of South Florida's history department hosted an ALBA day for social studies teachers from Hillsborough and Pasco counties. In June, we're in Oberlin, Ohio working with teachers to align ALBA's historical documents with the new Common Core standards.

Meanwhile, high school classes from New York and New Jersey have visited the Tamiment Library to examine the ALBA collection first hand, using the original documents for their research. What strikes us everywhere is the enthusiasm of teachers and students for material they had never heard about before. This is ground-breaking work, and we are determined to expand our reach. Already we have plans to introduce our programs in western Massachusetts for the first time in October.

The young members of United We Dream, winners of this year's ALBA Puffin Human Rights Activism Award need no further introduction. (See full stories on pages 3-5.) However the final legislation on immigration reforms will look, rest assured that this generation of activists is here to stay and be heard.

ALBA is proud to be part of a movement that promises to change the shape of the country in a more democratic direction. Besides the online Volunteer ([albavolunteer.org/](http://albavolunteer.org/)) and the ALBA Blog ([albavolunteer.org/category/blog/](http://albavolunteer.org/category/blog/)), you can join us on Facebook, and twitter (@LincolnBrigade). For more information, write [info@alba-valb.org](mailto:info@alba-valb.org)

We expect to expand our work long into the future—but only if our loyal supporters, people who read The Volunteer, offer their fair share by contributing to our organization.

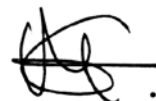
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Thank you for making ALBA possible.

Salud!



Sebastiaan Faber  
Chair of the Board of Governors



Marina Garde  
Executive Director

p.s. And while you're thinking about it, send us your feedback—fresh ideas, opportunities, short letters to the editors. Thanks again.

# Reunion Honors Old Activists & New Ones

By the editors

FILMMAKER OLIVER STONE, whose *Untold History of the United States* excited TV audiences last winter, added a chapter to his narrative in a moving encomium to the volunteers of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in his keynote speech at the 77<sup>th</sup> annual reunion held at Pace University in New York on May 5.

The men and women who went to Spain to stop Hitler and Mussolini, he said, more than most Americans of that era, deserve the honor to be called “the greatest generation.”

Only two Lincoln vets survive and neither could attend the Sunday event that included Spanish Civil War songs performed by musical group *Barbez*. But their spirit lives on in ALBA's teaching programs and particularly in the expansion of ALBA's human rights agenda. “ALBA focuses on education and human rights,” ALBA Chair Emeritus Peter Carroll said. “But what sets us apart is that we do a third thing: human rights education.”

And human rights was the dominant theme of the day's program as ALBA joined the Puffin Foundation in bestowing the third ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism to United We Dream (UWD), the largest network of youth-led immigrant activist organizations pushing for reform of immigration policy in the United States. The award includes a \$100,000 contribution to encourage the group's activities to educate the public about the issues.

Michael Ratner, emeritus head of the Center for Constitutional Rights, who nominated UWD for the award, spoke about the urgency of their efforts and stressed the remarkable courage of the

young activists who put their own status at risk to come out as undocumented Americans.

Accepting the award on behalf of UWD, Cristina Jiménez and Antonio Alarcón described the problems facing undocumented immigrants that led them, despite great personal risks, to join the movement for change. Both stressed the importance of maximum public participation as the U.S. Congress approaches new legislation to address the issues related to immigration reforms.

A musical quintet, led by Bernardo Palombo, performed three songs, including Woody Guthrie's “Deportados,” as homage to the young people now in the vanguard of asserting the need for change in immigration policies. Palombo's connection to the vets goes back decades; he performed the sound track for the documentary, *The Good Fight and Into the Fire*.

One noted absence—last year's award winner Kate Doyle—only underscored the fact that the struggle for human rights continues on many fronts. Hoping to greet the UWD activists, she was called back to Guatemala to provide testimony in the trial of former President Rios Montt, who was subsequently convicted of genocide.

As several speakers mentioned, ALBA's support of human rights activism continues the tradition of the Lincoln Brigade volunteers, many of whom were immigrants and children of immigrants, who stood up to defend democratic values in the face of their own government's indifference. ▲

Photos: Nicholas Chan / Shinsuke Higuchi / Juan Salas





The Rosenstein Family of the Puffin Foundation



John Kailin, Fraser Ottanelli, Josie Yurek, Alan Entin and Henri Yurek



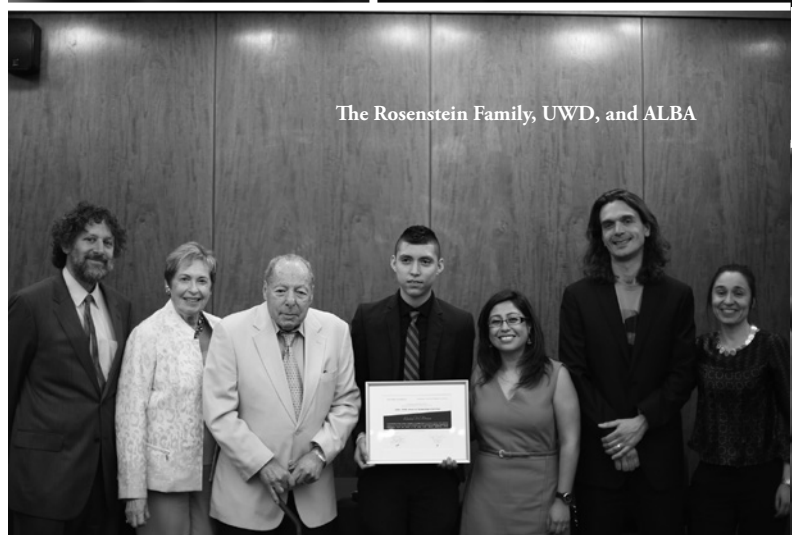
New York Senator Gustavo Rivera



Moderator: Amy Goodman,  
Host and Executive Producer of  
Democracy Now!



Bernardo Palombo's ensemble



The Rosenstein Family, UWD, and ALBA

# ALBA Roundtable Raises Challenges For Immigration Reform

By the editors

*“We don’t owe loyalty to any political party. We are loyal to our communities, whose criminalization affects us all.”*

**C**OURAGE AND FEAR, HOPE AND DESPAIR: those were the recurring emotions expressed by five panelists who spoke about immigration reform at a round-table discussion organized by ALBA in New York on May 5. Speaking from the trenches, they confirmed that much has been achieved. And although the road ahead is long and complicated, every concerned citizen can help in the continuing struggle.

The panel, moderated by Amy Goodman of *Democracy Now!*, took place at Pace University in the hours before the presentation of the ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism, granted this year to United We Dream. Three young leaders of UWD—Cristina Jiménez, Natalia Aristizábal, and Kevin Kang—recounted their personal experiences coming out as undocumented immigrants or committing to help their undocumented peers. They explained how, with the help of lawyers and activists, they pressed the White House to defer deportation of undocumented minors even after the U.S. Senate had voted down the Dream Act last year. If United We Dream has been successful, they stressed, it is because they have been willing to hold politicians’ feet to the fire. “If Marco Rubio thinks he can win the Latino vote just by working for immigration reform,” Jiménez said, “he is mistaken. And so are the Democrats. We don’t owe loyalty to any political party. We are loyal to our communities, whose criminalization affects us all.”

New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera, who represents the Bronx, detailed what can be done at the municipal and state level to push for immigration reform and resist the blanket criminalization of the undocumented. He also emphasized the need for voters to be vigilant and keep applying pressure on their state and federal representatives.

Michael Wishnie, William O. Douglas Clinical Professor at Yale Law School, explained the legal counsel he and his students have been giving to UWD. Although the struggle on behalf of the undocumented has seen many setbacks, he said, and even though the fate of immigration reform in Congress is still unsure, there are real reasons for hope.

Wishnie, too, underscored the ways in which every concerned citizen can lend a hand—not only by urging their representatives in Congress not to give in to pressures from the right, but also by helping to volunteer if and when immigration reform happens and millions of undocumented will need to fulfill complicated procedures to change their status. Wishnie expressed concern for those immigrants, the so-called “super-undocumented,” who will fall outside of the parameters of any new immigration law. ▲

*Author and journalist Jim Jump, son of IB veteran Jim Jump, is the Secretary of the International Brigade Memorial Trust and the editor of its newsletter.*



United We Dream



Neal Rosenstein with the panelists



ALBA's friends



Panel:  
Cristina Jiménez, Managing Director at United We Dream (UWD)  
Natalia Aristizábal, UWD Board Member  
Kevin Kang, UWD Founding Board Member  
Professor Michael Wishnie, William O. Douglas Clinical Professor, Yale Law School  
New York Senator Gustavo Rivera

# British Allies: Keeping History Alive

*Editor's Note: When the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade established ALBA as a non-profit educational organization in 1979 to keep alive traditions of anti-fascism and human rights, they hadn't guessed that the U.S. organization would eventually become a model for their British comrades. The International Brigades Memorial Trust (IBMT), sharing a common mission with ALBA, has emerged as a vital, growing organization. We asked the current leader, Jim Jump, a journalist living in London, for a report of their latest activities.*

**By Jim Jump**

*With the last of  
the veterans gone,  
our work is more  
important than ever.*

THERE WERE MIXED FEELINGS at the end of last year among those of us dedicated to preserving the memory of the 2,500 International Brigade volunteers from Britain and Ireland. On the one hand we celebrated the fact that the International Brigade Memorial Trust now has over 900 paying members. This is a record figure, our organization having tripled in size over the past five years. But a shadow was cast over this achievement by the death on December 21 of our last British-based veteran, David Lomon.

We received many messages of condolence following David's death. One stood out. It said that the work of the IBMT was now even more important than before. The absence of any veterans certainly makes our task seem that much harder. But this is the challenge they have left us, and one that we are determined to meet.

The IBMT was founded in 2001 after the remaining 40 veterans in the International Brigade Association agreed to join forces with their sister group, the Friends of the International Brigades. At the outset there were barely 170 on the membership roll. We were in good

hands, however. Our president was the legendary union leader Jack Jones, a former Liverpool docker who fought in the Battle of the Ebro. And we had two influential patrons: Spanish Civil War historian Paul Preston, who chaired our inaugural meeting, and Ken Livingstone, the mayor of London who helped raise the impressive memorial to the international Brigades next to the Thames.

Our gathering each July at the London memorial now attracts several hundred people. Every March we have a public lecture—the 2013 topic was George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* and nearly 200 people attended the conference in Manchester. Our annual general meeting in October—this year in Edinburgh—brings members together for a weekend of talks, music and film.

Last year we co-hosted a concert to mark the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Guernica, and we organized a

commemorative crossing of the Pyrenees; this year we'll be in Spain to honor the last stand of the British Battalion in September 1938, and later in the year there will be a gala evening in London to mark the return of the British Battalion in December 1938. Meanwhile, new memorials to the volunteers—526 of whom died in Spain—are still being unveiled, adding to the more than 100 existing memorials in the British Isles.

Our aims are clear. We must make sure we meet the expectations of the hundreds of supporters who have joined us in recent years. And we owe it to the volunteers themselves to build a sustainable organization so that future generations can be told the extraordinary story of the men and women who went to Spain prepared to give their lives in the fight against fascism. ▲

For more information, see:  
[www.international-brigades.org.uk](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk)



International Brigades memorial  
London. CC BY-SA 3.0

# New Jersey Teachers on Track

By Peter N. Carroll



High school students from Bergen Academies explore the ALBA collection at NYU's Tamiment Library. Photo credit: Juan Salas

*The Spanish Civil War is seldom taught and yet it fits perfectly into the Common Core Standards.*

**H**URRICANE SANDY swamped the schools of Bergen County, New Jersey last November, forcing postponement of ALBA's teaching institute, but the spring term brought an exciting revival as 22 Spanish language and social studies high school educators attended a lively one-day session at the Bergen County Academies, organized by administrator Tim Caspersen, in Hackensack.

Sergei Alschen and Gabriella Calandra, two New Jersey "alumni" of earlier institutes, provided power point presentations of their interdisciplinary high school course on Activism, explaining to their colleagues how ALBA's Spanish Civil War curricula prepare students to undertake their own projects on past and present activism. (The two had made a similar presentation last March, leading a session on Teaching Activism at a two-day conference sponsored by the Museum of the City of New York, home of the Puffin Gallery History of Activism exhibition.)

ALBA's instructors came to the session armed with documentary sources that included letters written home by volunteers in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, transcriptions of postwar interviews, public documents (including President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Quarantine Speech" and the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights) as well as a wide range of Spanish and English literary sources for use in language courses. In addition, Sebastiaan Faber projected a series of photo and poster images, explaining to teachers how visual sources can be used to supplement and expand the use of written historical documents.

One series of Spanish Civil War posters and drawings directed attention to the human rights issues associated with that war—bombing, civilian casualties, refugees—and linked those issues to similar visual representations in current international crises. Such

documentary sources then provided teachers with opportunities to discuss the ethical and moral dimensions of historical and political decisions.

Most interesting, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., even through the lunch break, the discussions never stopped. New Jersey teachers affirmed what ALBA has seen in school districts throughout the country: enthusiasm and gratitude among teachers for being introduced to a topic that is seldom taught and yet fits perfectly into the common core standards currently being introduced into high school education.

The results came in blind surveys written by the teachers at the end of the day: A social studies teacher with 14 years in the classroom wrote: "one of the best experiences I have had with school content, great and practical resources, and freedom to develop ideas." Other teachers put it another way: "wonderful"; "fantastic"; "amazing"; "professional"; "excellent." Not a sorry note in the lot!

Four weeks later, ALBA brought the professional development program back to Tampa, Florida, the fourth time, organized by ALBA

Vice Chair Fraser Ottanelli, head of the history department at the University of South Florida and by social studies administrator Dennis Holt. This time World History and US History were on the agenda, and ALBA won the same plaudits as in New Jersey. And in Oberlin, Ohio, Spanish Professor Faber organized a two-day program with institute alumni to explore ways of expanding ALBA's role in the new common core curricula. More details follow in the next issue. ▲

*Peter N. Carroll chairs ALBA's committee on education.*



# Missing Migrants

## SEEKING TRUTH ON THE US/MEXICO BORDER

By Eilís O'Neill

*Scientists increasingly employ their skills and knowledge in service of human rights.*

SEVERAL HUNDRED UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS die each year of heatstroke or at the hands of organized crime as they attempt to cross the deserts of Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. Law enforcement officials struggle to identify the bodies, while families in Mexico and Central America wait anxiously, not knowing what happened to their relatives.

Mercedes Doretti, a cofounder of the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF, for its initials in Spanish), is trying to change this situation. As a forensic anthropologist, she can't rewrite U.S. immigration policy, but she can identify immigrants' remains and restore them to their families. Three years ago, she started a project, called "Missing Migrants," to do just that.

Since starting their work over two decades ago, members of the EAAF have worked in 46 countries, using DNA samples and other techniques to identify the bodies of those killed during dictatorships and genocides. The team realized that their skills and experience were needed at the US/Mexico border while working on a project in Ciudad Juárez. They couldn't identify all the bodies which officials had found. "We realized those remains probably belonged to migrants," Doretti says. The ultimate goal of Missing Migrants is to establish a regional forensic database of missing persons and family members' DNA that would help identify migrants who go missing during their journey north.

Doretti never planned to work outside Argentina—or even in the field of human rights. In 1987, she graduated from the University of Buenos Aires with a degree in academic anthropology. Shortly afterwards, a forensic anthropologist from the United States approached her about helping document the Argentine military's human rights abuses. "We wanted justice and we wanted historical clarification and

we wanted to support families of missing persons," she explains. Since then, EAAF has used anthropologic techniques to identify the remains of about 2000 people who disappeared during Argentina's military dictatorship (1976–1983). The military disposed of their victims' by burying them in unmarked or mass graves or by throwing them out of planes into the Atlantic Ocean. Families were left wondering what had happened to their loved ones. People "are paralyzed by this situation," Doretti says. "If there's someone missing in your family, you can't rest until you find that person."

To identify the remains, Doretti and her colleagues studied a number of techniques until then unheard of in Latin America. Because of their expertise, they started to get phone calls from human rights organizations in other countries. These NGOs sought scientists with the skills and the independence to establish the truth about the past. "In Latin America, most of the medical-legal institutes depend on the state," Doretti explains, "[so] they were often questioned by human rights organizations."

Doretti is part of a growing movement of scientists who employ their skills and knowledge in service of human rights. From Chile to Spain, scientists have provided not only relief to grieving families but also key evidence for human rights trials. Technological advances have made these scientists' work easier over time. In the late 1980s, it became possible to extract DNA from skeletal remains. "In most of the countries where we work, there are very poor or nonexistent medical or dental records," Doretti says. "And oftentimes, the population that we work in is very poor and doesn't go to the dentist or the doctor. Or they're very young, and they don't have anything in particular to identify them." The ability to cross-check DNA from remains and

from living relatives enabled the EAAF to carry out identifications of disappeared Argentines, and the technique is a key part of their work around the world.

Since starting the Missing Migrants project three years ago, Doretti's team has opened DNA databanks in El Salvador, Honduras, and the Mexican state of Chiapas. Now, they're trying to match DNA from migrants' remains with the DNA of families.

The migrants, explains Doretti, are usually young. They "start this journey because of lack of opportunities in their own countries. Often, they are the only hope of their families to get out of extreme poverty. And they also have their [own] dreams: They want to do something in life. It's really devastating to see these 18-year-old, 20-year-old kids that just died in the desert in Arizona or in Texas." Except in Pima, Arizona, the team is unable to conduct massive DNA studies and instead works on the basis of probable identification. After conducting interviews with the families of missing migrants, the team guesses who the migrant might have been and checks the DNA of a limited number of families.

Border deaths are "extremely sad," Doretti laments, "because [they] could be avoidable if there were an immigration policy that allowed immigration in a different way." Fortunately, missing migrants haven't always perished in the desert: They can have other reasons for not communicating with their families. In the past three years, a handful of missing migrants—five from Honduras and several from El Salvador—have contacted their families to tell them they're alive. ▲

*Eilís O'Neill is a freelance journalist currently based in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She works in print and radio with a particular focus on social issues and gender.*

# OBAMA'S ILLEGAL, UNWISE DRONES

By Marjorie Cohn

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA has escalated the Bush administration's use of targeted killing with drones and other methods. Drones, which avoid U.S. casualties, are more palatable to the American people than ground invasions such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Of the 366 U.S. drone attacks that have killed more 3581 people in Pakistan since 2002, 316 were launched by the Obama administration. Of the approximately 4,700 people killed by drones since the 9/11 attacks, less than two percent were high profile Taliban militants. Four were U.S. citizens. Most are civilian casualties.

For some time, people writing and speaking out in independent media as well as anti-war activists have criticized Obama's drone war. Many were outraged when Jo Becker and Scott Shane reported in the *New York Times* that Obama maintains a "kill list" from which he chooses who should be assassinated without arrest and trial. There are two categories of possible victims of Obama's extrajudicial executions. Suspected militants are targeted with "personality strikes." But Obama also gives the kill order for unidentified people present in an area in which suspicious "patterns of behavior" have been noted. They are called "signature strikes."

Gradually, military leaders including General Stanley McChrystal, as well as former diplomats and foreign policy experts, began talking about blowback from drones. Now the administration's use of drones has finally entered the national discourse. But this is not because we are illegally killing people in other countries. It was the leak of a Department of Justice White Paper indicating the administration might kill U.S. citizens on U.S. soil that concerned many Americans and led to Senator Rand Paul's filibuster and the convening of congressional hearings.

A recent Gallup Poll found that 65 percent of Americans surveyed think the United States should use drone strikes in other countries against suspected terrorists. Forty-one percent favor strikes in other countries against U.S. citizens living abroad. Only 25 percent are amenable to strikes against suspected terrorists living in the United States. And the number drops to 13 percent

*The administration's use of drones  
has finally entered the national  
discourse.*

who would support strikes in the United States against U.S. citizens. The discrepancy in public opinion between support for drone strikes against U.S. and non-U.S. citizens is largely fueled by racism. Many think of white people when they talk about American citizens.

Jonathan Landay, McClatchy's national security reporter, recently reported that top-secret documents show the administration is "misleading the public about the scope of who can legitimately be targeted." Micha Zenko of the Council on Foreign Relations wrote in *Foreign Policy* that the McClatchy article "plainly demonstrates that the claim repeatedly made by President Obama and his senior aides—that targeted killings are limited only to officials, members, and affiliates of al-Qaida who pose an imminent threat of attack on the US homeland—is false."

Individuals cannot be killed without due process—charges and a fair hearing—unless they are fighting on the battlefield. Obama has followed the Bush policy of defining the whole world as a battlefield. The Obama administration defines "civilians" so narrowly that it claims a ridiculously low number of civilian casualties. All military-age men killed in a drone strike are considered to be combatants "unless there is explicit intelligence posthumously proving them innocent."

Drone strikes are counterproductive. In a Pew Research Center poll conducted last year, only 17 percent of Pakistanis favored them against extremist leaders. They breed increased resentment against the United States and lead to the recruitment of more terrorists. "Drones have replaced Guantanamo as the recruiting tool of choice for militants," Becker and Shane wrote in the *Times* article. They quoted Faisal Shahzad, who, while pleading guilty to trying to detonate a bomb in Times Square, told the judge, "When the drones hit, they don't see children."



Marjorie Cohn in 2011 at ALBA's Susman Lecture in San Francisco.  
Photo credit: Richard Bermack

Why does Obama engage in these illegal, counter-productive strikes? "This government has decided that instead of detaining members of al-Qaida [at Guantánamo] they are going to kill them," according to John Bellinger, architect of the Bush administration drone policy. Most of those still incarcerated at Guantánamo have been cleared for release. Others are being held without charges. Most of them are participating in a hunger strike and many are being force-fed. The United Nations Human Rights Commission said that force-feeding amounts to torture and the American Medical Association declared it a violation of medical ethics for doctors to participate in force-feeding of mentally competent adults who refuse food and life-saving treatment. Obama refuses to use his power to transfer detainees out of Guantánamo on a case-by-case basis.

It is time to raise our voices and demand that the Guantánamo detainees be released and the targeted killings stop. Only when we engage in a frank and honest appraisal of how U.S. foreign policy oppresses people in other countries, and we fundamentally change that policy, will we become less vulnerable to terrorism.▲

*Marjorie Cohn is a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law. She is working on a book about drones and targeted killing.*

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**The Volunteer**

# THE MAN WHO CAN'T SAY NO

Paul Preston Is Working Harder Than Ever

By Sebastiaan Faber

**P**AUL PRESTON is impossible to avoid. Author of twelve books, editor of several more, and director of an important series on the subject, he towers mile-high in the landscape of Spanish Civil War scholarship. And yet in person he can be quite elusive. A previously arranged meeting for an interview in London first had to be postponed, then canceled. A subsequent attempt at a phone interview caught him in the midst of a frantic attempt to correct the Spanish and Catalan proofs for his forthcoming biography of Santiago Carrillo, the recently deceased Communist leader. Another week later, the stars aligned, and we talked for hours. Preston, it turns out, does not purposely avoid engagements. The problem is quite the opposite: he is extraordinarily generous with his time and, if anything, too quick to commit. The Carrillo proofs are off his table, but the pile of work is still stacked to the ceiling of his cramped London study. “I’m up to my eyes with things I promised to do in terms of reviews and chapters for people’s books, and so on,” he laughs. “It’s the problem of being a girl who just can’t say no.”

Preston has officially retired from his post at the London School of Economics and has, in recent years, been in less than perfect health. But he is continuing as head of the Cañada Blanch Center and shows no signs of slowing down his breakneck pace. What keeps him going? Is there anything left to prove, or is his ambition really boundless? Preston self-analyzes reluctantly. “I don’t think it’s ambition at all. I just don’t know what else to do. There are still lots of things I want to say about twentieth-century Spain. If I could live another fifty years, which obviously is not going to happen, I don’t think I would run out of things to say—though I would likely run out of places ready to publish it. But professional ambition? At this point those things don’t matter anymore. I got a full professorship when I was 38, was appointed dean shortly afterwards and had a chance to have a career as a highly paid university administrator. But I just wasn’t interested. All I’ve ever wanted to do is teach and write.”

Paul Preston was born in 1946 in postwar Liverpool. When he was an infant, he and his mother both contracted tuberculosis. Paul eventually got better, but his mother never did. She died when Paul was nine, after spending the last seven years of her life confined to a sanatorium; Paul was mostly raised by his grandparents. He had to take the ferry to get to his school, St. Edward’s College, which was run by the Christian brothers armed with “straps” made from whale ribs covered in black leather. His life changed when he got a scholarship for Oxford to study history.

“For someone with my background getting into Oxford was nothing short of miraculous. Still, I can’t say I learned much as an undergraduate. The history curriculum was unspeakably boring. And the teaching, insofar as there was any, was utterly abysmal. It was really incomparable to how we think of teaching undergraduates now. You were thrown into a very deep pool—and they didn’t even stay around to see if you could swim. What made it worthwhile were the amazing libraries and the lectures by great thinkers like Isaiah Berlin.”

## “FOR SOMEONE WITH MY BACKGROUND GETTING INTO OXFORD WAS NOTHING SHORT OF MIRACULOUS.”

A second turning point came in the late 1960s. “I was lucky to get offered a scholarship to the University of Reading, where it was possible to construct an MA entirely on the 1930s. One of the courses I took there was a class on the Spanish Civil War with Hugh Thomas—a very complicated but fascinating man. Still, even then my interest was almost entirely intellectual. I had no background to speak of, none of the language, nothing. But once I got hooked and had read everything I could in English, I decided I had better learn Spanish. This I did by reading with a dictionary and hanging around with Colombians in the student bar. Then I went to Spain. It was the beginning of a life-long love affair. In the late 1960s and early 1970, I was living in the 1930s, entirely absorbed in my research on the origins of the Civil War. It was on my return to England that I got involved with the anti-Franco opposition, acting as an interpreter for the Junta Democrática, and I came to know the top brass of the Socialist and Communist Parties and some anarchists as well.”

Preston never stopped being a working-class kid from Liverpool. He curses like a sailor; and he stubbornly roots for Everton Football Club, of which he speaks in the first person plural (“I wouldn’t mind Messi playing for us”). When I naively admit to a certain admiration for Luis Suárez, the Uruguayan-born striker of Everton’s arch rival FC Liverpool, the phone nearly explodes in passionate indignation: “Luis Suárez is a loathsome, cheating bastard. He is a great footballer, don’t get me wrong. But he dives, he cheats, he

bites, he kicks people behind the referee’s back—everything about him is vile.”

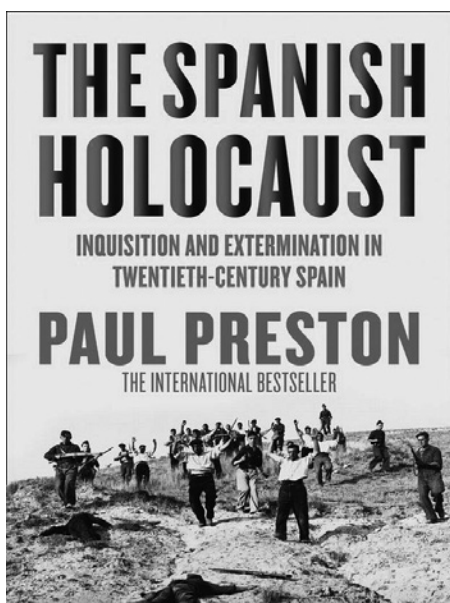
A similar kind of passionate investment drives Preston’s work on Spain and his sympathy for the Second Republic. “I came from a fairly left-wing family. You could not really be from working-class Liverpool and not be left-wing. Emotionally, in my feeling for the Republic I think there is an element of indignation about the Republic’s defeat, solidarity with the losing side. Maybe that’s why I support Everton, although Everton wasn’t the losing side in my day.”

His forty-year long engagement with Spain has led him to a clear set of positions that he defends tooth and nail, with the fruits of decades’ worth of research to back them up. Against competing accounts from conservative scholars such as Stanley Payne, for example, Preston argues that the blame for the outbreak of the war cannot be shoved in the shoes of the radicalized Spanish left. He also believes that the war policy followed by the Spanish



**“SANTIAGO CARRILLO WAS ONE  
SERIOUSLY NASTY PIECE OF WORK,  
WHO SQUANDERED THE SACRIFICES  
OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS.”**

Communist Party—a centralized army; prioritizing winning the war over making revolution; and continuing the fight in spite of the increasingly slim prospects for a Republican victory—was the most sensible one available. And Preston convincingly argues—most recently in his *Spanish Holocaust* (2012)—that, while violence and atrocities were committed on both sides, Francoist repression of the enemy was not only far more extensive but also consciously planned, imposed from above, and based on a colonial, semi-racist



view of the Spanish workers and peasant. “To me there is a huge moral difference between the two. Of course, there are killers on both sides who display the same kind of psychopathology. But generally speaking there are crucial distinctions. How come there is so little rape on the Republican side, while it is a deliberate instrument of policy on the Francoist side?”

And yet he is still capable of surprising himself and his readers. Take Santiago Carrillo, who fought as a young man in the Civil War and went on to lead the Spanish Communist Party for 22 years—through postwar exile, the demise of Stalinism, the Spanish transition, and into Euro-Communism. Preston’s new biography, which just came out in Spain as *El zorro rojo* (The Red Fox), does not paint a pretty picture. Carrillo, who died last year at the age of 97, managed over time to build up an image as a wise senior man of state—a myth that Preston shatters without mercy. “Carrillo,” he sums up the thrust of his book, “was one seriously nasty piece of work. The ruthlessness with which he rose to power, destroying comrades along the way, is just mind-boggling.”

*Will your book shock the Spanish left?*

“The stuff I found in the archives will be shocking for those who think of Carrillo as the Mother Theresa of the Transition, but not for many others. There will be people on the right who say: Even left-wing historian Paul Preston criticizes Carrillo. I knew him and liked him but I ended up indignantly concluding that he undermined the struggle against Franco. By imposing unrealistic strategies, and destroying those who criticized him, he squandered the efforts and sacrifices of the hundreds of thousands of people who suffered under and against the dictatorship.”

*Have your views of Spain and its history changed over the past 40 years?*

“Yes, I think they have. My anti-Francoism hasn’t diminished much, and my deep conviction that the Republic was right is still in place. But over time I have become readier to see good and bad on both sides. That’s obvious even if you look at earlier books like *Comrades* or *Doves of War*, where I write sympathetically about two right-wing women, Mercedes Sanz-Bachiller and Pilar Primo de Rivera. Carrillo is also a case in point. When I did the research for *The Spanish Holocaust*, which is a book I had been writing for years, I was quite shocked by the scale and senselessness of anarchist violence—which doesn’t mean I am not able to see that a lot of this violence stemmed from social deprivation. Still, when I first started to read about Spain in the 1960s, I kind of thought that the anarchists and the POUM were romantic heroes. I certainly don’t think that about them now.

“You see, my vocation—if that is the word—is as a biographer. I am happiest when I write about people. Even in books that are not ostensibly biographical, like *The Spanish Holocaust* or *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, I always try to put people at the center. Although I believe in the social and economic dynamics of history, I also very firmly believe in the role of individuals.”

*You publish in Britain and the United States, but also have a massive readership in Spain. For whom do you write?*

“That’s a difficult question. I write in English, and at the end of the day I am always happier with the English version; it’s more mine. But in a bizarre way, I write for the same audience in English and Spanish. I have always thought that the success of my books in Spain has to do with the fact that I essentially write for an English-speaking audience. That means I have to explain things as I go, and make it interesting. In an English or American university, after all, no one is obliged to study Spanish history. Therefore courses and books have to be attractive. And that means they have to be comprehensible, accessible, readable. Spanish readers rather like that, too. Because in general Spanish academics just write for other academics—though this has changed a lot in the last twenty years, in part thanks to people who have trained with me. When I promote my books in Spain, particularly at the big book fairs, I get to talk a lot to ordinary readers, whose stories are often amazing. And that makes it all worthwhile.”

*I’ve long been fascinated with a strange phenomenon: Many people around the world are so strongly wedded to their existing views of the Spanish Civil War that they seem immune to reasonable argument based on historical research. Myths about the war are incredibly*

*tenacious. In a recent public email discussion with some particularly stubborn individual, you wrote, with some desperation: "I wish I knew what it is about the Spanish Civil War that makes people think that they can say whatever they like without much in the way of knowledge. Ángel Viñas and I have spent ninety years between us studying the war, and we are still reluctant to say things without solid proof." Don't you get tired of that?*

"I do. The utterly prejudiced idiocy that is produced by some people is frustrating, that's absolutely right. You write reasonable stuff based on years of research, and they just dismiss it out of hand, refusing to produce any evidence for their assertions. Friends of mine who work on, say, Nazi Germany, such as Ian Kershaw or Richard Evans, don't have to deal with that. It's accepted that being critical of the Nazis is a reasonable place to start. That is obviously not the case with a critical stance on the Spanish Right during the Civil War or the Franco dictatorship thereafter. It's a real problem. You've almost got to argue from first principles every time."

*Does working on the Spanish Civil War require a particular kind of temperament? People like Michael Seidman, Stanley Payne, or Ángel Viñas seem to relish the scholarly street fight.*

"Academe is a vicious world, that's certainly the case. Still, I challenge you to find anywhere in any of my writings in which I have ever attacked another historian *ad hominem*."

*You also have had your share of enemies in Spain, starting with pro-Franco "historians" like Ricardo de la Cierva.*

"There is a book by De La Cierva called *No nos robarán la historia* (They Won't Steal Our History) of which nearly half is an attack on me. It starts off something like this: Once upon a time, five young men were born in Liverpool. Four of them, who later became known as the Beatles, devoted their lives to song. The fifth, known as Paul Preston, devoted himself to telling lies about Spain.

*The enmity must have to do with the fact that you command your share of media attention. Stanley Payne, too, is very present, especially in the right-wing media, where he freely expresses opinions about Spain's current political situation. How do you deal with the fact that the Spanish media pay so much attention to what foreign experts like Payne or yourself say?*

"I could be in the Spanish media all the time if I were willing to let fly with extreme opinions. But whenever I speak to the Spanish press, I speak with an intense awareness of personal responsibility. For instance, I am amazingly careful with my opinions about the monarchy. I know that people listen to what I say, so I try to say as little as possible. I am not a monarchist, but I do feel that Spain is in a particularly difficult position. And the last thing it needs is institutional instability."

*Given Spain's current state—the severe economic and political crisis, the endless corruption scandals—it must be hard to read the papers.*

"Yes, it is. But my love affair is not with the Spanish political class. There is not much to admire in the British political class, either,

**"MY ANTI-FRANCOISM HASN'T  
DIMINISHED MUCH, BUT OVER TIME  
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or for that matter in the political class of any country I can think of. Still, it is sad and infuriating. It gets to me because I love Spain and I hate to see people suffer. And I get obviously very indignant about the scale of the corruption. It puzzles me at a deeper level, too, though, and I would like to be able to explain it better. One of the projects that I am supposed to be doing, in fact, is an overall history of twentieth-century Spain. Now in one sense I could do that with my eyes closed, standing on one leg: I've covered all the ground, and I could just cobble together a resume of all my books. But I would actually like to do something more original. I want to pose larger questions: Why the violence, why the corruption? But those are incredibly difficult questions to answer. How did the Transition, which was such a good thing, end up in this mire? I can throw out hypotheses, but I am not entirely sure. You can come up with theories about traditions whereby public service is being used for private benefit, and so on. But how did it ever get to the scale that it did? Is it specific measures, like changing the law to give local authorities the power to re-zone land? Or is it something much more profound, more to do with cultural history? Could the attitudes in Spain have been the same during the Republic, with the only difference that the opportunities weren't there? I don't know."

*You recently published a revised edition of your biography of King Juan Carlos. He is not doing particularly well. What is your assessment of his influence since the 1970s?*

"Overall I think the King played a fantastic role during the Transition. In the last years of Francoism he helped ensure that bloodshed would be kept to a minimum. Had he done what Franco intended him to do—which was to maintain the dictatorship—I think violence would have been much more widespread. He played his role very well, and with immense courage. But it was a pragmatic decision: I don't think he was particularly a committed democrat. When he became a ceremonial head of state, after 1982, he continued to play a positive role. He became a very good trade ambassador for the country, for instance. And at a time when Spain was—and still is—deeply divided, he provided a genuinely neutral headship of state. Yet, with time, temptations have got the better of him.

"I can tell you that in personal terms he can be very funny and great to spend time with. I don't know many monarchs, but I've met the Queen of England a couple of times and she could freeze your soul with a glance. Juan Carlos is warm and affable. Not that that ultimately matters much: Santiago Carrillo was always affable and funny, and we have all heard about how charming Hitler and Himmler could be." ▲

**Sebastiaan Faber is chair of ALBA's board of governors and teaches at Oberlin College.**

# Franco, Nazi Collaborator

How Spain's Dictator Failed to Save Thousands from the Holocaust

By Eduardo Martín de Pozuelo Dauner



Franco and Hitler meet in  
Hendaye, October 1940

**F**RANCISCO FRANCO, who ruled Spain until 1975, was obsessed with the notion of a powerful international conspiracy—led by Jews, Masons, Communists, and other “reds”—against the “new” Spain that emerged from his victory in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. He referred to this plot in the very last speech he gave on October 1, 1975—less than two months before his demise, and after signing yet another handful of death sentences. By then, Franco suffered from advanced Parkinson’s disease; but his hand does not appear to have trembled when it came to sending Spaniards to the gallows. The hundreds of thousands of deaths for which he was responsible do not seem to have weighed on his conscience.

In Spain, Franco’s obsessive references to a “Judeo-Masonic conspiracy” were long seen as mere rhetoric, whose only real impact were domestic persecutions of the postwar years. Recent research on the violence during and after the war—and Judge Baltasar Garzón’s groundbreaking attempts to indict those responsible—helps us understand the massive scale of the repression, although much work remains to be done. Yet there is another chapter in this horrific story that has eluded attention until recently—in part because it was considered a state secret, and in part because it took place outside of Spain.

After World War II, the Franco regime succeeded in whitewashing its close ties to Nazi Germany—which had helped Franco win the Civil War, and which continued to be Spain’s closest ally in the years immediately following. After 1945, Franco presented himself not merely as the anti-Communist “Sentinel of the West,” but also as a cunning statesman who had managed to keep Spain out of the war (when in fact he had aspired to join the Axis) and, most notably, as a savior of thousands of European Jews from extermination.

We have long known these were lies. But how different the historical reality actually was has only recently come to light. Declassified documents from the United States’ National Archives in Washington, DC, as well as from archives in London and Amsterdam, confirm an image of Franco as a profoundly anti-Semitic and Judeo-phobic dictator, while also suggesting that he was an active collaborator in the genocide of the Holocaust.

I began investigating Franco’s complicity in the Holocaust in 2004, for a newspaper piece about the 30<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of the dictator’s death. Initially I was hoping to give a different spin to the usual coverage. But what was supposed to have been a brief visit to the National Archives and Records Administrations in Washington led to my discovery of more than 60 pounds of fascinating documents. Eventually these gave rise to three award-winning articles in *La Vanguardia*, as well as three books. The last of these, *El Franquismo, cómplice del holocausto* (2012) deals specifically with Franco’s complicity in the Holocaust.

My book shows that the Nazis repeatedly and insistently offered Franco the chance to receive an undetermined number of Jews from all over Europe before they were taken to the extermination camps. Historians at the University of Tel Aviv and other institutions claim that this offer was limited to the so-called Spanish Jews—that is, those who held some form of Spanish documentation as a result of the 1924 decree by which Jews of Sephardic origins could apply for Spanish citizenship. These historians also argue that Eichmann was opposed to sending massive numbers of Jews to Spain.

I do not fully agree with either of these two points. I argue instead that the Nazi offer affected hundreds of thousands more.

Census figures from the January 1942 Wannsee Conference indicate that some 11 million Jews lived in the area that the Nazis considered “Greater Germany”—populations that were therefore subject to immediate deportation. It was in this context that the offer to Franco was made. The fact that the correspondence between Berlin and Madrid makes explicit reference to areas in which Ashkenazis were much more numerous than Sephardim suggests that the offer may actually have included many more than just those Jews of Sephardic origin who possessed Spanish papers. In fact, it is reasonable to assume that the Nazis, bent as they were on ridding themselves of the Jewish population at all cost and, for the sake of expediency, may have dubbed as “Spanish Jews” all Jewish populations living south of an imaginary geographic line, including Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, France, Greece, and the Balkans, and probably even Poland. Actual genealogy, in other words, mattered little. If this assumption is true, then Hitler and Franco were talking, at the very least, about hundreds of thousands of individuals.

What about Eichmann? My research suggests that Eichmann simply was not

in a position to oppose a state directive coming from Hitler and endorsed by Himmler. Eichmann was an efficient administrator in charge of logistics at the Department of Jewish Affairs who, when so ordered by Himmler, did not object to negotiating with the Allies (I am referring to the Joel Brand case, which I covered for the *Vanguardia* as well). Eichmann obeyed authority blindly and would obviously have sent the Jews wherever they told him to.

The official documentation left behind by the Nazi regime leaves no room for doubt that Franco was treated as a friend, a very special ally of the Third Reich. So much so that the Axis could be said to have run from Berlin, to Rome, to Madrid. But when the Nazis offered Franco the chance to take on the European Jews, the regime at first did not even bother responding. This total lack of reply surprised the Nazis, bureaucratic and precise as they were. They promptly repeated their offer and even extended the deadline in hopes of receiving an official reply from Spain.

Yet Franco was stubborn and unaffected, even when the repeated German ultimatums warned him explicitly of the “extreme measures”—that is, extermination—to which the Jews whom the Nazis considered to be the responsibility of the Spanish leader would be subjected. Ironically, Franco and his embassy in Berlin did not hesitate to claim the property and monetary assets of the deported—alleging that the deportees from Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg were in fact proper Spanish citizens.

Was Franco then just another Nazi who should have been tried at Nuremberg for complicity in the genocide? Documentary evidence indicates not only that Spain’s foreign policy was anti-Semitic, but that the Nazi regime, in the face of Spain’s refusal to take charge of the “Spanish Jews,” actually warned Spain about Hitler’s genocidal intentions. Franco’s position reflected his concern that the Jews would be sympathetic to the Allies and a threat to his regime. In fact, Franco considered the United States and Great Britain as enemies. That much is clear from official secret documents from the time period, originating in the Spanish Foreign Ministry and sent to Berlin, in which the Western democracies are labeled as “enemies” and Germany as ally. The underlying idea was simple: Any enemy of Germany was an enemy of Spain. While Franco presented himself to the rest of the world as tepidly “non-

*“The Nazis repeatedly and insistently offered Franco the chance to receive an undetermined number of Jews from all over Europe before they were taken to the extermination camps.”*

belligerent” and, soon after, as “neutral,” the Gestapo was allowed to operate freely on Spanish soil.

The Nazi offer with regard to the European Jews generated an avalanche of telegrams, verbal notes, and other documents. From 1943 on, the discussion about the fate of the Jews generated no less than a dozen official documents per day, between Spain and Germany. Just to give one example, here is a message from Germany (written by G-Schreiber, the Nazi’s teleprinter with integrated encryption) dated January 22, 1943, sent from Berlin to the German embassy in Madrid. In this case, as in my next example, the Nazis speak of “Jews of Spanish nationality,” although they did not yet have a Spanish passport, which the Nazis hoped Spanish diplomats could provide them with along the way. Here are the Nazis:

*... in the occupied territories of France, Belgium and the Netherlands, there are many foreign Jews to which the occupying [Nazi] administration has not yet applied the anti-Jewish measures. The special treatment of foreign Jews is unjustified given their behavior and reasons of military security. The same is true for individual groups in the Reich and foreign Jews in the Protectorate.*

*This is why it is the intention to submit all the Jews in the above-mentioned territories to the existing anti-Jewish measures starting April 1 of this year, which includes identification, internment, and then expulsion. These measures also affect a certain number of Jews with Spanish nationality.*

*I request that you contact the Spanish government and inform it of the planned measures. For reasons of courtesy we are informing the government before we move to give instructions. Until March 31 they will be able to repatriate Jews with Spanish nationality from the aforementioned territories under German jurisdiction. The German offices will give the necessary exit permits as soon as they have the corresponding entry visa. Corroboration for individual cases is reserved. After March 31 there will no longer be special treatment.*

Even clearer seems the telegram that Hans Von Moltke, the ambassador of the Third Reich in Madrid, sent the Foreign Ministry in Berlin on January 28, 1943, in which the German diplomat specified that Spain was already aware of the limits imposed by the Nazis on the rescue of the Jews. There was no room for misunderstanding:

*Today the Spanish Foreign Ministry has been informed, through the delivery of written documentation, that the Spanish government has until March 31 the possibility of repatriating those Jews of Spanish nationality...who find themselves in territories under German jurisdiction. From April 1 on, and without exceptions, these Jews, who until now enjoyed special treatment, will be subject to all the existing measures against the Jews. The director of the political division of the Foreign Ministry [Spanish diplomat José María Doussinague] expressed gratitude for being informed in advance, which he considers a sign of deference toward Spain. This director [Doussinague] says that the Spanish institutions will have to study the matter and that the Foreign Ministry will transmit Spain’s official position to the [German] embassy as soon as possible. In the personal opinion of the director, Spain will not allow Jews of Spanish nationality to enter Spain. In this context he asks if it would be possible to expel these Jews to third countries, especially to Turkey, from which they tend to originate. He was informed that, in the opinion of this Embassy, that possibility does not exist, so that they will either be repatriated to Spain or submitted to the existing rules. We will keep you informed. Moltke.*

Two weeks later, and given the lack of a reply from Spain, the Third Reich reiterated the warning to Franco’s government with a new message from Berlin to its embassy in Madrid. This time, the undersecretary of the German government was copied. The communique refers to “Spanish Jews,” a term that can obviously be interpreted as Sephardim, that is to say, people of Spanish origin, descendants of those expelled at the order of Queen Isabella in 1492. It is not possible that all of these possessed

Spanish papers in 1943. The Nazis state: “The general measures against the Jews will also be extended to the Spanish Jews who reside in the General-Gouvernement [Nazi-occupied territories in Poland], in the Baltic countries, and in the Eastern territories, starting April 1 of this year. I request that you inform the Spanish government of this.” On February 22, 1943, Ambassador Hans Moltke insisted once more that the Spanish government reply. Two days later, he sent an encrypted telegram to Berlin explaining the results of his attempts:

*... the Spanish government has decided not to allow, for any case, the return to Spain of Spaniards of the Jewish race who live in territories under German jurisdiction. The Spanish government believes that it is opportune to allow those Jews to travel to their countries of origin, especially Turkey and Greece. The Spanish government would be willing in some cases to grant a transit visa for Spain for Jews with an entry visa for Portugal or the United States. In all other circumstances, the Spanish government will abandon the Jews with Spanish nationality to their fate.*

*The Spanish ambassador in Berlin has the order to discuss this matter with the [German] Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hencke replied to the director general... that in the opinion of the ambassador, the German government will not allow the Jews of Spanish nationality to leave for other countries. That the Spanish government had been advised only for reasons of courtesy, to give it the opportunity to repatriate those Jews to Spain before March 31. The director general [Doussinague] remarked that those Jews would probably be more dangerous in Spain than in other countries because they would be immediately captured by American and English agents to be used as propagandists against the Axis, especially against Germany. Otherwise Mr. Doussinague showed little interest on the part of Spain for this matter. I request new orders. Signed: Moltke.*

There is something deeply unsettling about the cavalier way in which efficient German functionaries determine the fate of millions of people. When the Allied Forces entered Berlin at the end of World War II, they found the Spanish replies to these documents. Although we can infer part of their contents through the German side of the correspondence, they make clear what the position of the Spanish government was when it came to the fate of the European Jews. One of the documents is written on the letterhead of the Spanish Embassy in Berlin and carries the seal of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign

Affairs. Next we read the reference, “D III 253g, entry: February 25, 1943” and the word “Reminder.” It says:

*The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been informed by the German Embassy in Madrid that starting March 31, 1943, the Spanish Jews who reside in France, Belgium and the Netherlands will no longer enjoy the special treatment they have had until now. In German and the occupied territories, they will be subject to the general measures against the Jews if they do not leave the country before the date mentioned. The German Embassy added that the Spanish Jews will be allowed to leave the country. The Spanish Embassy desires to know if the German authorities are willing to facilitate the Jews’ travel to the East, especially to Turkey, from where most originate, supposing that it will be possible for them to obtain an entry visa. If that is not the case, the Spanish government will grant them a transit visa for travel to another country.*

*The Spanish Embassy requests that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs intervene before the corresponding authorities to explain to them that the assets of the Spanish Jews left behind when leaving France, Belgium, and the Netherlands will be administered by the consuls and representatives of Spain and that they have to remain in the latter’s possession given that these are assets of Spanish subjects and therefore a national asset of Spain.*

*Berlin, February 25, 1943.*

In reply to this message, the Nazis

confirmed to Spain that nothing could be done for the supposed Sephardim. The dispatch with the laconic reply was sent from Berlin to its embassy in Madrid on March 6, 1943. It was secret, encrypted, and carries the number 1346. The message, to be transmitted to Spain, states that “The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been informed in writing and verbally that the exit of Spanish subjects of the Jewish race from territories under German jurisdiction cannot be allowed to their countries of origin, to Portugal, or to the United States.”

Again it is the Nazis themselves who explain what had happened. Especially revealing here is a summary by Eberhard von Thadden, the liaison between Germany’s Foreign Minister Von Ribbentrop and Adolf Eichmann, who was responsible for deportations, written for the German Embassy in Madrid. The document is from December 27, 1943:

*In negotiations that took place between 1942 and February 1943, the Spanish government insisted that it was not interested in the Spanish Jews. Later, the repatriation of all Spanish Jews was authorized [by the Germans]. Repeatedly, Spain failed to adhere to the deadline for their return....In spite of this, and as a precaution, the expulsion of the Spanish Jews did not commence until November 16. Please explain unequivocally the position of the Spanish government and underscore*

*that the government of the Reich has done everything possible to resolve the problem in a friendly way and to avoid difficulties. We did this taking into consideration the Spanish nationality [of the Jews] despite the fact that it can be assumed that all the Jews have an anti-German attitude.*

Dozens of Nazi documents like the ones cited here suggest Franco’s complicity in the genocide—a complicity that was hidden from the Spaniards and the world, and covered up with a different version of events. And yet it is important to remember that while the deportations went on, some Spanish diplomats acted on their own account against the orders from Madrid and managed to save several thousand people. It was only when the war changed course and the Allies began applying pressure to Franco, that the dictator invoked the heroic actions of his ambassadors to garner sympathy from the victors. Did he really manage to fool them? The archives captured by the Allies contain the same evidence that was no doubt known to their secret services. They reveal a reality for which Franco never paid the price.▲

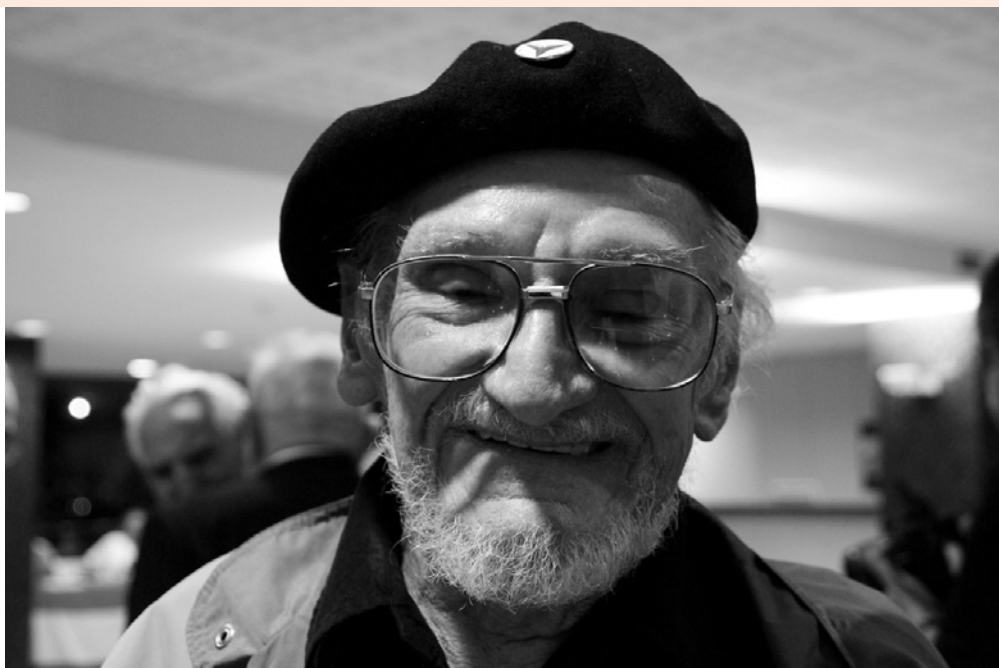
*Eduardo Martín de Pozuelo Dauner is a journalist based in Barcelona. He has written for La Vanguardia and is author, most recently, of El franquismo, cómplice del Holocausto (2012).*



Franco and Hitler meet in Hendaye, October 1940

# George Sossenko

(1918-2013)



George Sossenko in Sitges, Catalonia, in 2008  
Photo credit: Jeannette Ferrary

George Sossenko, who joined the fight in Spain at the young age of 16 and remained active in the fight for social justice until the end of his life, died March 14 in Atlanta, Georgia. He was 94.

Sossenko was born in Odessa, Russia in 1918 but grew up mostly in Paris. In 1936, while his family was vacationing near the Spanish border, the teenage Sossenko heard the guns of war in Spain. Once he discovered what the conflict was about, he left a note for his parents and ran away to enlist in the cause.

His age made it difficult to enlist: he was turned away by the French Communists and Socialists. But the anarchist Durruti Column of the International Brigades was pleased to accept him. Sossenko joined under an alias, but a year later his father tracked him down and George returned to France with him.

During World War II, George served with the Free French forces in North Africa and with the U.S. Fifth Army in Italy and France.

After the war, George lived in Argentina where he spoke out against dictator Juan Perón—and was jailed as a result.

George had a varied work life. Educated as a mechanical engineer, he worked for Michelin in South America, developed a sugar cane plantation and headed a mining company in Brazil. He eventually moved to the United States, settling in Atlanta in the early 1970's. He supervised radial tire development for American cars and became an international consultant on the manufacture of tires.

He remained active in political causes throughout his work life. Once George retired, he became a full-time fighter for social justice. In recent years, despite failing health, he attended weekly vigils against the Iraq War in Atlanta with his wife Bernice Bass, also a lifelong activist. George also served as president of the Atlanta chapter of Veterans for Peace.

George Sossenko published his memoir in 2004, a Spanish-language book entitled *Aventurero Idealista*. In 2011, it was published in English as *The Idealistic Adventurer*.

He is survived by his wife Bernice "Birdie" Bass of Atlanta, a sister and six grandchildren.

—Trisha Renaud

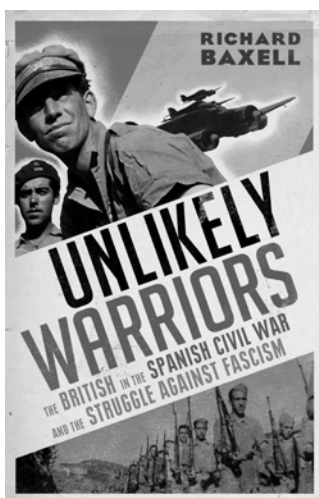


# Book reviews

## The British in Spain

***Unlikely Warriors: The British in the Spanish Civil War and the Struggle against Fascism.* By Richard Baxell. (London, Aurum, 2012).**

Review by Peter Stansky



itself and the latter is fundamentally a book of splendid pictures and short texts. Baxell's *Unlikely Warriors* is a culminating and I believe definitive accomplishment. It appears to use every available source, not only archives in Britain but the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives in New York, the collection in Moscow as well as much unpublished material, including many interviews available at the Imperial War Museum in London. Although most of the story is devoted to those who were with the International Brigade, Baxell pays attention to those who participated in other contexts, most notably George Orwell who fought with the POUM, as well as chapters on the few who fought on Franco's side and on the British reporters who came to Spain.

This is a remarkably well balanced and fair minded account. It faces one squarely with the endless paradox of war. The experience of war itself could not be, as was certainly true in Spain, more dreadful yet for many though not all who participated and survived, it was the most important and rewarding experience of their lives, one that they didn't regret. After many years, with the death of Franco and Spain's transition

OF THE 35,000 foreigners who fought on behalf of the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War 2,500 were British and 500 of them were killed. There have been several books written about their activities as well as memoirs by some of the participants. Two of them were written by Richard Baxell: *English Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War* (2004) and, with Angela Jackson and Jim Jump, *Antifascistas: British & Irish Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War* (2010). The former is short and covers only the three years of the war

to democracy the right side won. *La Pasionaria's* famous speech in October, 1938 was finally fulfilled: veterans could return and become Spanish citizens should they wish. The story is set in the broader context of Britain in the 1930s, the Depression, the growth and activities of the Communist Party and the fight against Sir Oswald Mosley's Fascists. Shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War the idea of an International Brigade, under the aegis of the Comintern directed from Moscow, took shape.

The Party in Britain was the chief recruiter and organizer for British recruits. It is intriguing that the one nation conspicuously missing as a supplier of manpower to the Brigade was the Soviet Union itself. There were crucial Russian advisers, most of whom were to be executed when they returned home, victims of Stalin's paranoia. The West supplied most of the international volunteers. Although the writers and intellectual who participated were significant, by far the great majority who came were from the working class. Three-fourths of the British members of the International Brigade were Communists. Those who went to fight thought, probably rightly, that if Franco could be defeated, it might stop Hitler in his tracks and that the looming war would not be necessary. It is a brutal story. Very few of the volunteers had military experience. Training was inadequate. The leadership was far from flawless. Not only were there military commanders but also a parallel command structure of the commissars who were to make sure that the Communist party continued to be in control. The losses through death or injury were horrific. Through Spanish Medical Aid and other groups there was an attempt to cope with medical needs and important advances were made in the area of blood transfusion but they were quite primitive and difficult. British participation in famous battles are finely described—Madrid, Jarama, Brunete, the Ebro. The deaths, injuries, and suffering of the battles do make one wonder if war is ever worth it. How can it be tolerated even in the interests such a good cause, trying to stop the rise of Fascism? War is not romanticized in Baxell's vivid accounts, nor is it hidden from the reader that there were incompetents and scoundrels among the British who went to Spain.

Baxell deals well with the May days in Barcelona. Certainly one of the most famous accounts of the war is Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, either ignored or attacked when it was first published in 1938, seen as unhelpful in winning the war. It came into its own in the 1950s on the basis of its merits, augmenting Orwell's greater fame, but was also used as a weapon in the Cold War. Orwell himself was hoping to join the International Brigade, appalled at the inefficiency he had experienced while with the POUM militia. But then when he came to Barcelona and found his POUM comrades being attacked, he knew which side he was on. In his view the Communists and their allies were willing to murder those on the same side as well as the truth in order to achieve their aims. Baxell appreciates the tragic irony of the situation: that the Communists were right to suppress the revolution in order to



have the best chance to win the war and their opponents were right about what should be the ultimate aims of the struggle: achieving a better society. But could the latter happen without the former? Indeed the Communists and their allies won out and the still Republic lost, largely because of the policy of non-intervention.

Baxell continues the story, describing vividly the departure of British volunteers and the brutal experiences of those who were taken prisoner. He follows the veterans through World War II when quite a few of them were seen as untrustworthy, “Premature Anti-Fascists,” and were ridiculously kept out of the military. Others managed to serve. Tom Wintringham, drummed out of the puritan Party because of his love life, used his Civil War experience to help found the Home Guard. Bernard Knox came to the United States, joined the OSS and was parachuted into Europe. Others helped to defeat Hitler. Loyal Communists had to deal with the difficulties of the party line, most notably when the Nazi-Soviet pact sparked the claim that the war against Germany was on behalf of imperialism. Despite hopes to the contrary, the end of the war did not bring the fall of Franco.

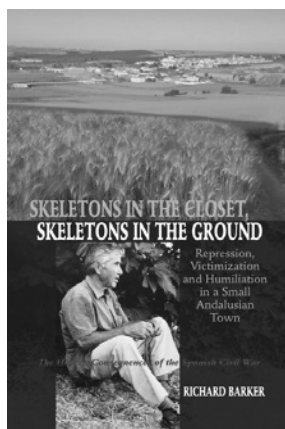
This is a colorful, heroic, tragic and deeply troubling tale. War is a horror that can serve a good cause. Baxell provides a full account of mostly working class people who voluntarily went to war for a good cause that they believed in. Based on an extraordinary range of material, it is a splendid thing to have this full and satisfying account. ▲

*Peter Stansky has recently published with William Abrahams Julian Bell: From Bloomsbury to the Spanish Civil War.*

## War Comes to Andalusia

**Richard Barker, *Skeletons in the Closet, Skeletons in the Ground: Repression, Victimization and Humiliation in a Small Andalusian Town*. (London: Sussex Academic Press, 2012).**

**Review by Carmen Moreno-Nuño**



**I**N RECENT YEARS, Spain has been reshaping its relationship with its violent past. Episodes from the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship whose mention was long taboo have come to the forefront of sociopolitical debate. The desire to forget has become the desire to remember—witness the tireless work of the Association for the Recuperation of Historical Memory, active since 2000, and the opening of mass graves around the country, the Law for Historical Memory passed in 2007, the search for the

grave of Federico García Lorca, and the legal case against judge Baltasar Garzón. Books and films about long silenced stories of the defeated have become a crucial vehicle for the recovery of the repressed past. Their aim has been two-fold: to break the silence and to return dignity to the victims.

Richard Barker's *Skeletons in the Closet, Skeletons in the Ground: Repression, Victimization and Humiliation in a Small Andalusian Town*, is an outstanding addition to this growing corpus of historical documentation, examining how the Civil War affected the small Andalusian town, Castilleja del Campo (Seville). Following the paradigm of microhistory, the book is based on an intensive historical investigation of the everyday life of ordinary people in a well-defined, small unit, while aspiring to find answers to larger questions related to social and political changes. Barker's Castilleja del Campo mirrors the fast and radical changes that impacted Spain before, during, and after the Civil War. He offers a clear and comprehensive vision of this tumultuous time as well as a diverse mosaic of testimonies that, among other things, describe the terror imposed upon Castilleja's inhabitants during and after the conflict. It is this combination of history and memory, general and particular, that makes the book engaging and enlightening.

Barker underscores the agency of historical actors. A literary critic by training, he blends sociology and oral history, grouping together hundreds of personal accounts. The translations of these testimonies faithfully reproduce colloquialisms and disjointed sentences, reflecting the linguistic peculiarities of the area and help us discern the local population's knowledge and understanding of historical events as they affected their lives. Some of the testimonies are representative, even typical, of the repression during the war and the marginalization during the dictatorship suffered by the defeated. Recurring episodes include the forced drinking of castor oil or the shaving of women's hair. Other lesser known stories recall even more vividly the horror of those years, such as the incident told by Barker's informant Narciso Luque Romero: A firing squad was going to give the *coup de grâce* to a pregnant woman they had shot moments before, they saw that the baby had been born of the dead woman. They killed the infant right there. The number of testimonies he provides, besides contributing to the verisimilitude of the historical narration, demonstrates Barker's care for detail. That said, the abundance of testimonies sometimes slows down the pace of the story.

While Barker recorded these testimonies in the 1980s and 1990s, the fact that he did not publish his book for two decades has not made his accomplishment any less relevant. To the contrary, the changed attitude in Spain regarding the memory of the Civil War guarantees that his work has a greater impact now. The book's appendix discusses the politics of memory developed in Castilleja del Campo since the transition to democracy—that is, attempts to recognize and honor victims of repression—and brings out important points regarding the impact of various endeavors referred to as the recovery of historical memory. While the book does not explicitly address this impact, it shows that giving witnesses a chance to talk about traumatic experiences provides catharsis. Similarly, cultural events organized in the wake of Barker's book have enriched Castilleja's cultural life. Barker acknowledges that this process is difficult, but also emphasizes its necessity. “[I]t [is not] my intention that this book be used as a weapon to be thrown in others' faces,” he writes; “Castilleja del Campo needs to turn the page. If it has still not been able to do so more than 70 years after repression, perhaps it is because that page cannot be turned without being read.” ▲

*Carmen Moreno-Nuño teaches at the University of Kentucky. Her research focuses on the cultural representation of the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War and the postwar era in democratic Spain.*

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## NEWS AND EVENTS

### Folk City Music Concert – New York

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2013

New York Academy of Medicine  
1216 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10029

Headliners include John Wesley Harding, Peter Yarrow, Lucy Kaplansky, Langhorne Slime, A.C. Newman, Josh White Jr. David Hajdu, Izzy Young, and surprise guests. Organized by the Museum of the City of New York and cosponsored by ALBA

For tickets and information: [www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org)

### 77th Annual Celebration Honoring the Abraham Lincoln Brigade – Bay Area

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2013

2:00pm- 4:00pm

Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse

2020 Addison Street

Berkeley, California

For tickets and information: [www.thefreight.org](http://www.thefreight.org)

### Essay Competition Opens: George Watt Prize, 2013

Graduate and undergraduate students world-wide are invited to submit an essay or thesis chapter about any aspect of the Spanish Civil War. Submission deadline is July 1, 2013.

For guidelines and information:

[www.alba-valb.org/participate/essay-contest](http://www.alba-valb.org/participate/essay-contest)

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