


The Volunteer

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

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

Embattled Spanish Judge to Receive ALBA-Puffin Human Rights Award

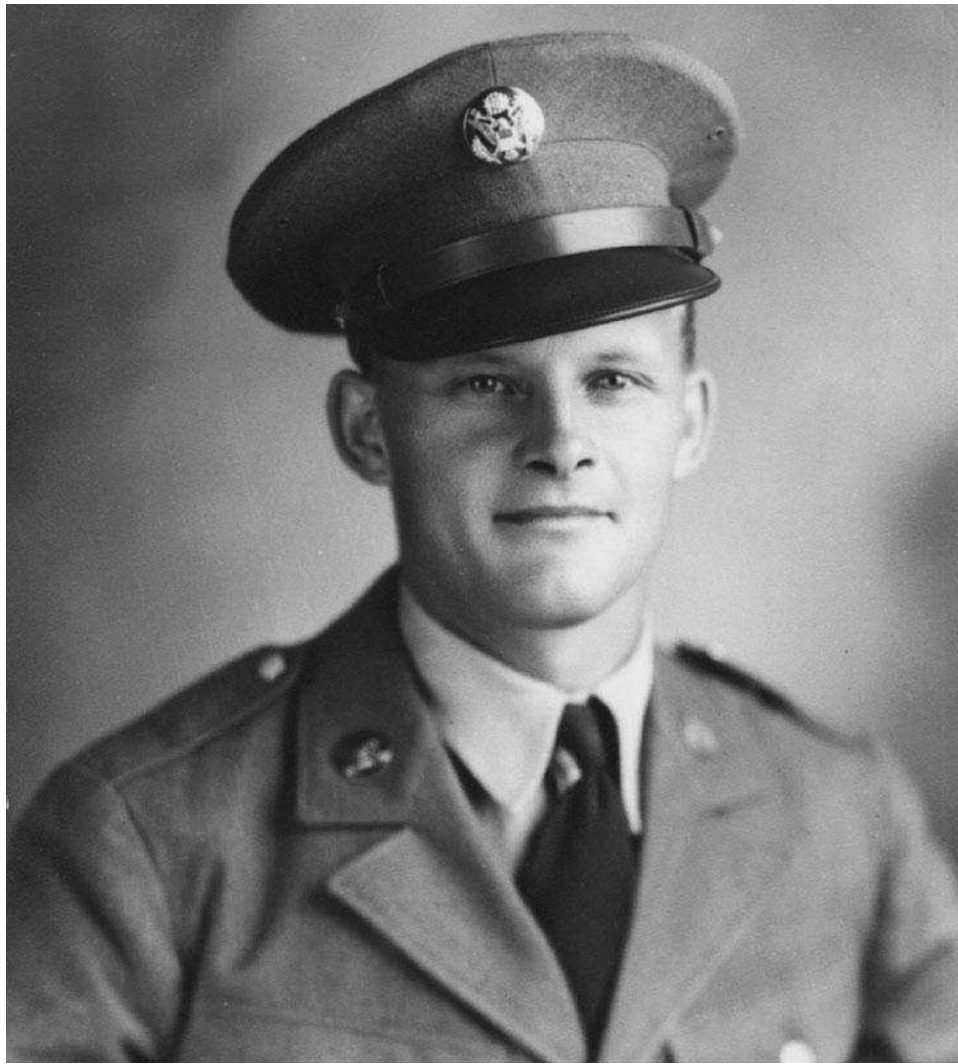


Baltasar Garzón, the Spanish magistrate who has headed the effort to identify human rights violations during the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent Franco dictatorship, will receive the first ALBA-Puffin International Human Rights Award at the ALBA annual reunion in New York City on May 14. "Judge Garzón's exceptional courage in defense of human rights and his commitment to the recovery of historical memory regarding crimes against humanity make him especially worthy of this honor," said Peter N. Carroll, chair emeritus of ALBA's Board of Governors.

This award is given jointly by ALBA and the Puffin Foundation, which provides an endowed fund exclusively for this annual honor. "The award is designed," said Puffin Foundation President Perry Rosenstein, "to give public recognition, support, and encouragement to individuals or groups whose work has an exceptionally positive impact on the advancement and/or defense of human rights. It is intended to help educate students and the general public about the importance of defending human rights against arbitrary powers that violate democratic principles."

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SAVE THE DATE, MAY 14, 2011



Martin Maki. Photo taken in a costume uniform at a photo studio during the time between the Spanish Civil War and WWII. Collection of Maria Maki.

From the Archives

Letter from a Finnish Volunteer **Translated by Matti A. Mattson**

Martin David Maki wrote many letters in Finnish when he was in Spain with the International Brigade. The letters were recently discovered, and thanks to Matti Mattson, the only man who could translate them because he knows both Finnish and the war, we have them now.

Martin's own handwritten story shows that he was at Tarazona, the Madrid front, and joined the British battalion from August 1937 to January 1938. He was also in the Washington battalion with the Finnish machine gunners.

He was at Quinto, Mediana, and Fuentes de Ebro, then in the hospital, Revstaka, Cona, Benacasim, Teruel (the North Pole), Belchite, and Gandesa. In his own words, "For many hot days and nights to come, it was constant fighting and moving and reorganizing into the Washington-Lincoln Battalion. I can remember being so thirsty and the attempts to bring water in wooden barrels on burros were made, but few ever made it. At the time the Fascists began to move in reinforcements with German and Italian artillery and

airpower. The losses were heavy. For us, Mosquito Ridge was the last."

Martin was captured on April 3, 1938, and spent a year at San Pedro de Cardena prison. He left Spain wearing paper slippers and a gown, walking over the bridge to freedom in France. He said all the men spontaneously turned and gave "the finger" to the enemy once they were in the middle of the bridge!

Martin was born in a lumber camp in Newberry, Michigan, on July 4, 1910. He passed away peacefully in Annandale, Minnesota, on May 22, 2001. He served

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in the U.S. army in World War II and said his greatest joy was watching the defeat of Hitler. His wife, Harriet, and his 4 children would agree. Getting his copy of the VALB every month was one of his favorite moments.

Maria Maki

Here is one of the letters. A second letter can be found in the online Volunteer: see <http://www.albavolunteer.org/>.

Spain
September 27, 1937
Salud Comrade Carl*:

I was happy to have received a letter from you. It arrived at its destination at a time when we had just commenced a powerful and calculated offensive on this front. In observing the situation, your interest-rousing letter was especially welcome. Saying this I do not wish to leave an understanding that I, or we, are discouraged. On the contrary, by the victories that we have attained by daunt of fierce battle and decisiveness, our will to do battle has been raised and has carried our fitness

level to its highest point. In other words our morale is at its peak.

Since the last time that I wrote to you a great deal has happened. What we have done and what we have experienced would be enough to write a book. But that is not what I will be trying to do—but then I do

not have the talent to do that. I believe that you have read more from our newspapers about our battles here. Furthermore, I believe that you have read more from the many letters that have come to you from the many comrades in battle. I have, in

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Garzón to Receive ALBA Award

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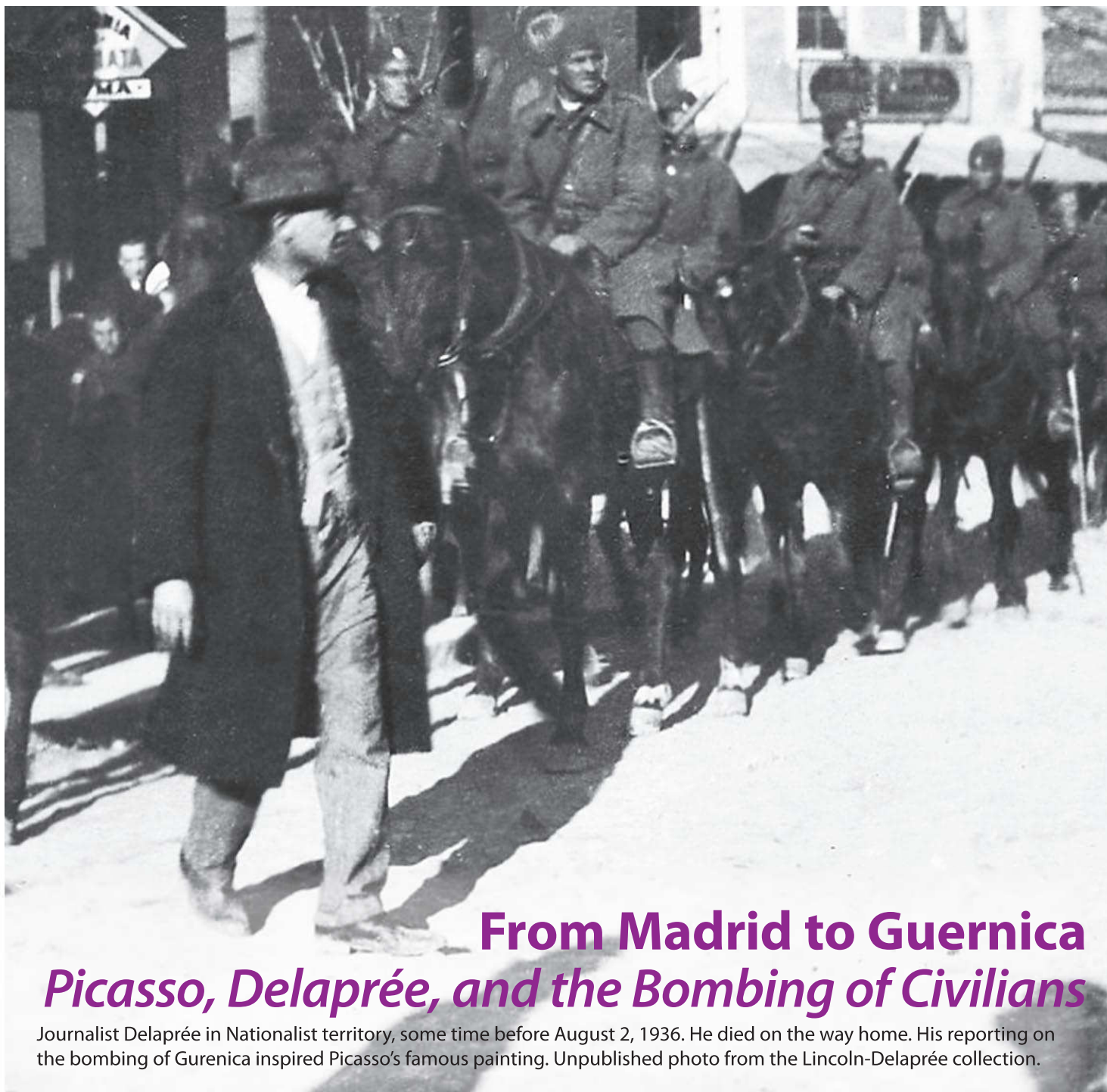
Garzón, catapulted to international fame when he ordered the arrest of former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in 1998, is considered today one of the most effective and imaginative thinkers in international human rights law, having defended the victims of dictatorial regimes in Chile, Argentina, and Spain.

In October 2008, at the request of grassroots victims' organizations in Spain, Garzón determined to carry out an official legal investigation, for the first time in Spain's history, of crimes against humanity, including torture and forced disappearances, perpetrated against civilians by supporters of the Franco regime. In response to Garzón's investigation of the Franco years, fringe right-wing groups filed charges against the judge, who now faces suspension from his judicial duties on Spain's criminal court.

ALBA stands in solidarity with Garzón, who, like the men and women who sacrificed so greatly to support Republican Spain in the 1930s, remains steadfastly committed to social and political justice, the exposure of the criminal nature of fascism in Spain, and the struggle for justice and dignity for its victims.

The granting of the ALBA-Puffin award, which includes a cash gift of \$100,000 to Garzón, underscores ALBA's legacy and mission while simultaneously echoing the sentiment of other human rights organizations that have expressed unequivocal support for the embattled magistrate, including Human Rights Watch and the Robert F. Kennedy Center, Amnesty International, the International Federation for Human Rights, and the World Organization Against Torture.

SAVE THE DATE, MAY 14, 2011



From Madrid to Guernica Picasso, Delaprée, and the Bombing of Civilians

Journalist Delaprée in Nationalist territory, some time before August 2, 1936. He died on the way home. His reporting on the bombing of Gurenica inspired Picasso's famous painting. Unpublished photo from the Lincoln-Delaprée collection.

By Martin Minchom

The Spanish Civil War prompted many memorable responses in all art forms, but none of these came close to matching the extraordinary impact of Picasso's *Guernica*, inspired by

Martin Minchom's publications include Spanish editions of Geoffrey Cox, *La defensa de Madrid* (2005), and Louis Delaprée, *Morir en Madrid* (2009).

the German Condor Legion's destruction of this Basque town on April 26, 1937. It's one of the iconic works of art of the 20th century and an archetypal representation of the destructiveness of war. Yet paradoxically Picasso did not at first seem to respond to the war—artistically, at least—with the same immediacy as many of his contemporaries. Although Picasso experts agree that the painter's interest in the war as a subject was sparked some time in late 1936 or early 1937, the

precise circumstances of the “conversion” that made *Guernica* possible were never fully made clear—until now, that is. Last year, while preparing an edition of the Spanish Civil War reporting by the now largely forgotten French journalist Louis Delaprée, I found new materials that I believe help pin down the exact turning point in Picasso's career. Key, it turned out, was the publication in Paris of a collection of Delaprée's dispatches from Spain on January 8, 1937. It was then that

Picasso started his first political response to events in Spain: a two-part engraving entitled *Dream and Lie of Franco*. I also became convinced that visual imagery from the journalist's descriptions of the bombing of Madrid had left clear traces in *Guernica*. John Richardson revealed a further twist in the plot in a review of my edition of Delaprée's *Mourir en Madrid*.

The symbolic primacy of the bombing of Guernica, rather than Madrid, Durango or Barcelona, was undoubtedly due to Picasso's masterpiece (assisted by clumsy denials from Francoist propagandists that the event had even occurred). But this construct was slow in the making. There were many air attacks during the Civil War, which included both Republican and Nationalist targets, but the template for mass civilian bombings was Madrid. Aerial bombardments both preceded and accompanied the Francoist advance on the city in late October and early November 1936. They acquired a murderous intensity as mainly German aviation caused civilian casualties and widespread destruction in the city.

Nothing on this scale had previously occurred in a major European city, and certainly not under the eyes of so many foreign journalists. This was a highly emotive issue, in part because other Europeans were apprehensive about what the future might hold for them. For a pro-Republican newspaper such as the British *News Chronicle*, this was the moment—November 20—to proclaim: "Madrid Is Defiant Under Rain Of Bombs." In contrast, the French correspondent Louis Delaprée fell foul of the apolitical line of his mass-circulation newspaper *Paris-Soir*. His texts were cut, consigned to obscurity on page 7, and finally rejected altogether as the rift with the head office became insuperable. Delaprée filed his last report from Madrid on December 4, 1936, the day the media floodgates opened on the scandal of King Edward VIII and Mrs Simpson. Incensed, Delaprée dictated:

You've only published half my articles. I know that.

It's your right. But I'd have thought that out of friendship you'd have spared me some useless work. For the last three weeks, I've been getting up every day at five in the morning, so

that you could get the news into your first editions.... Thanks.

I'll fly back on Sunday unless I suffer the same fate as Guy de Traversay [whose plane had crashed], and that'd be fine, wouldn't it? Because that way you'd have your own martyr.

Until then, I won't send you anything else. Not worth it. The killing of a hundred Spanish kids is less interesting than a sigh from Mrs Simpson, the royal whore.

As it turned out, this message was premonitory. The French embassy plane on which Delaprée was returning was shot down, and he died in Madrid on December 11, 1936.

Paul Preston has studied the process by which many conservative journalists who worked in Spain came to identify with the Republican cause. That identification often led to confrontations with their more right-wing newspaper proprietors. Delaprée's conflict with his newspaper was not unique, but it certainly had many unusual features, not least its bitterness and remarkable aftermath.

Copies of Delaprée's dispatches, which had been filed in the Republican censorship office in Madrid, made their way to the French Communist newspaper *L'Humanité*. This provenance makes it likely that their ensuing publication formed part of a Republican propaganda initiative that the Minister of State, Álvarez del Vayo, was planning in late December 1936. On December 30, *L'Humanité* teased its readers by promising "sensational" forthcoming revelations, and that evening Delaprée's melancholy face looked down from posters announcing, "A dead man denounces the lies of the press." His last message was reproduced on the poster and in the paper (December 31, 1936).

Who was Louis Delaprée? Although he has attracted sporadic attention, J. B. Romeiser hailed him nearly 30 years ago as a precursor of the "new journalism" of the 1960s in the way that he broke down the separation between self and subject, sacrificing total objectivity to empathy. He was an acknowledged influence on Virginia Woolf, who kept a copy of *The Martyrdom of Madrid* among her press

cuttings while she wrote "Three Guineas." Delaprée's spirit presides over André Malraux's novel *L'Espoir*. There were numerous echoes of Delaprée's writing in the novel, and some passages were even inserted verbatim, so the extent of his influence is not in question.

Although I could find no mention of Delaprée in studies of Picasso, I found several strong indications of the likely impact of the Delaprée affair on the painter's significant change in orientation leading up to *Guernica*. For one, the Communist poet Louis Aragon was both a prime mover in the Delaprée affair and a close friend of Picasso's. So too was Paul Eluard, whose poem "November 1936" has been cited as a possible influence on Picasso. Picasso read *L'Humanité* every day. More important, we know that *something* related to Spain had deeply affected Picasso on January 8-9, 1937, when he began *Dream and Lie of Franco*, a fantastic, burlesque representation of Franco in a Golden Age setting. *Bather under a Black Sun*, a drawing of January 9, has also been linked to his unease about Spain. An intriguing aspect of this affair is that Delaprée was championed by Picasso's Communist friends as an "honest" journalist fighting the lies of the press; yet he was also respected by the Right, who saw him as one of their own. Given Picasso's known antipathy to agitprop, had a center-right journalist's writing helped to redefine the bombings in human, apolitical terms?

As Delaprée's political attitudes are relevant to this discussion, some of the wilder theories about him need to be laid to rest. Geoffrey Cox's account in *Defence of Madrid* (1937) shows that Delaprée was widely regarded as being a fifth columnist towards the end of his time in Madrid—by those who had not read his suppressed writing. A lifetime later, Sir Geoffrey Cox wrote to me that "Louis Delaprée was suspected of being a Fascist because he worked for *Paris-Soir*, a paper the Republicans regarded as Fascist, that was the case with the rest of us. It was common in the tense atmosphere of Madrid for such suspicions to be held." In this instance, however, we do not have to rely on such late testimony because there is contemporaneous evidence that his alleged right-wing sympathies were causing him problems in Republican territory.

On the other hand, the suggestion that he was a crypto-communist probably derives from the posthumous connection to *L'Humanité*.

Some biographical details may be helpful. Delaprée was born in Brittany in 1902, and the loss of his father in World War I may have reinforced a restless strain that was characteristic of a generation of young French intellectuals, the so-called “non-conformists of the 1930s.” Delaprée trained as a lawyer and dabbled in politics before going into journalism. Brilliant and charming, he also had a fierce temper. On one occasion he punched the press magnate, Léon Bailby, and he maintained this flair for making life complicated by having an affair with Hélène Gordon, the girlfriend and future wife of his boss, Pierre Lazareff, at *Paris-Soir*. Delaprée’s light, brilliant pre-war journalism included a report on a melancholy song that was claimed to have caused a wave of suicides in Hungary. Delaprée brought the words and music back to France, and they were translated and adapted overnight to become the song *Sombre Dimanche*. (The English version, *Gloomy Sunday*, followed quickly, and is best known in Billie Holiday’s marvelous version.)

When the Spanish Civil War broke out, Delaprée immediately told Lazareff that he wanted to go to Spain, invoking his part-Spanish ancestry. He would be in Spain, with some interruptions, from July 22 until his death. During a brief stay in rebel territory at the beginning of the war, Delaprée sent a report that condemned atrocities on both sides, but provided detailed information on Nationalist killings near Burgos. From a short additional note, we know that Delaprée probably never expected this dispatch to be published, but he nevertheless felt compelled to write it. This surely is the best proof of its authenticity. I have studied all of Delaprée’s reports from Spain, and during the early months of the war the overall picture is one of a conscientious and balanced reporter who signposts the more doubtful information he receives so that readers can make up their own minds. But Delaprée loses this composure in Madrid.

By late November, Delaprée is on the other side of the mirror. He is no longer

a working journalist, he is writing for himself. Madrid is a besieged island: “I hope nobody takes it amiss that I say ‘we.’ Living with people under a bombardment makes you feel incredibly close to them.” We are witnessing the transformation of the journalist. Other, more pragmatic journalists worked in upbeat, colorful details—the aerial combats, the rescue of art treasures—to make the carnage more palatable to a mass readership. There is none of this in Delaprée. But his subjectivity makes it harder for us to vouchsafe for each factual detail. If we want balanced, informative descriptions of the bombings by working journalists, we should look elsewhere. Moreover, from internal evidence, it is clear that “Bombs over Madrid,” written over two or three days, permitted him to rework his material and achieve a personal interpretation of what he had seen and experienced.

It is not difficult to imagine the effect that this writing had on Picasso when Delaprée’s writing was published on January 8, 1937. Nothing quite like this had come out of Spain, and certainly not in such dramatic circumstances. Picasso began Part I of *Dream and Lie* on the very same day. This work has been linked

the nature of illusion on Picasso’s *Dream and Lie*. Perhaps, but on the 8th and 9th of January, when he began it, the linked themes of lies and a murderous Franco were much closer in a newly printed pamphlet and on the front page of Picasso’s daily newspaper.

The single most striking image in “Bombs over Madrid,” and probably in all of Delaprée’s writing, is an electric flashlight illuminating a woman and dead child, which is also of course a central image in *Guernica*. Chronologically, the reprinting of the article in *L'Humanité* on January 9 coincided with *Dream and Lie*. Picasso depicted a prostrate woman that day, only introducing the woman and child motif at a later stage. Visually, in any case, Delaprée’s mater dolorosa is closer to the version in *Guernica*, with its nocturnal, dreamlike atmosphere that so closely matches the mood of Delaprée’s writing. One of the drawings connected to *Guernica* has an even more explicit allusion to Delaprée’s text, showing a woman with a sliced breast, from which a triangle of light illuminates the baby.

New light was shed on Delaprée’s influence on Picasso with the publication of Richardson’s article in the *New*

And is a severed arm not the perfect visual metaphor for the silencing of a journalist and the mutilation of his work?

to Goya’s *The Sleep of Reason Creates Monsters*, but after reading Delaprée, Goya’s engraving becomes the eeriest premonition of a nocturnal aerial bombardment as winged night-monsters, owls and bats attack a dormant figure from the sky. “Bombs over Madrid” has a special claim on our attention. After its publication in the pamphlet on January 8, 1937, it was reprinted in *L'Humanité* on the following day, so Picasso saw it at least twice. As it turned out, after *Paris-Soir*’s rejection Delaprée had published it under a pseudonym in a moderate left-wing weekly, *Marianne*. But *Marianne* had cut out its final sentences, allowing *L'Humanité* on January 9 to make front page news out of the scandal of the “lying press.” Scholars have invoked the possible influence of Golden Age dramatist Calderón de la Barca’s exploration of

York Review of Books, which discussed a little-known painting, *Still Life with a Lamp*, representing Picasso’s very first reference to the Spanish Civil War: a modern table in the center of a seemingly antique, tomb-like marble room. Richardson explains that in accordance with Picasso’s anthropomorphic imagery, a jug on the table represents Picasso himself, while a fruit bowl is his mistress Marie-Thérèse. There is a severed arm between them—the image will reappear in *Guernica*—and a poster on the wall is dated December 29.

The painting shows that Picasso was aware of the Delaprée affair from the beginning. It flared up twice in Paris, the first time between December 30, 1936, and January 1, when *L'Humanité* launched its poster campaign against *Paris-Soir*, and again on January 8-9, when the

pamphlet was published and *L'Humanité* reprinted "Bombs over Madrid." On December 29, people linked to *L'Humanité* were printing the Delaprée poster, so only insiders knew about this at that stage. Picasso must have been one of them.

As I read Richardson's *New York Review of Books* essay and related it to my own reconstruction of the Delaprée affair, I found myself slipping between languages as additional associations suggested themselves. I asked myself: doesn't this mean that on December 29, Picasso must have

wordplay, then, in the painting's depiction of a table—or perhaps *marbre*—within a marble mausoleum that is haunted by a dead newspaperman? And is a severed arm not the perfect visual metaphor for the silencing of a journalist and the mutilation of his work? When this image reappears in *Guernica*, it is just beneath scratched lines representing newsprint, and it is included on exactly the same date, to judge from Dora Maar's photos.

As Picasso must have *seen* the poster being printed on December 29, the visual

to our left, and the headline is spread out over three lines to our right: "A dead man / denounces / the lies of the press." Beneath this, although we cannot see it in the photo, is the facsimile of Delaprée's furious final message, which Picasso almost certainly had read, discussed, and quite possibly relished. In Picasso's painting the poster is blank except for the date, which is highly conspicuous.

There is nothing surprising about Picasso being drawn into this affair, taken to the *marbre*, shown the poster, perhaps even invited to make suggestions. The Francoists had made all the running with propaganda campaigns in the early months of the war by focusing on atrocities that had been committed in Republican territory. Anti-clerical killings, in particular, had greatly damaged the Republic's international reputation. Now, however, the Republicans were recovering lost ground, and the bombing of civilians in Madrid and later in Guernica and elsewhere gave them an issue which played a major role in reshaping world opinion. Here surely was an extraordinary opportunity to get Picasso fully involved.

But while the pro-Republicans would certainly have been interested in attracting Picasso's attention, they had no control over his creative response. If Picasso responded so strongly, it was surely because he was moved by Delaprée's writing, moved by the killing of civilians. The affair reinforces, rather than diminishes, the importance of the destruction of Guernica because it demonstrates that the aerial bombing of civilians was at the heart of Picasso's response to the Spanish Civil War. The images discussed here had clearly entered Picasso's creative landscape. And if Picasso reacted so furiously to the destruction of Guernica in April 1937 it was surely because he felt: *they've done it again*. Aerial bombardments were now perceived as a series of recurring and ongoing disasters, interweaving in the single, universal tragedy of Guernica. ▀

If Picasso responded so strongly, it was surely because he was moved by Delaprée's writing, moved by the killing of civilians.

been at the...*marbre*? *Marbre* did not only mean "marble" in the 1930s, it also referred to the table on which newspapers were set and corrected, as well as to finished newspaper articles that were ready for publication. Is there submerged

appearance of the street poster takes on great importance. Unfortunately, I know of no surviving copy, but it appears in the background of a photo of a crowd scene on page 1 of *L'Humanité* on January 1, 1937. We can make out Delaprée's face

**UNE NOUVELLE VICTIME
DU DEVOIR PROFESSIONNEL**

**Louis
Delaprée
est mort**

**Le gouvernement le cite
à l'ordre de la Nation
et lui confère la croix
de la Légion d'Honneur
à titre posthume**

Comme notre collaborateur Guy de Traversay, notre confrère Louis Delaprée, de Paris-Soir, vient de mourir au champ d'honneur professionnel.

On se souvient qu'ayant pris place dans l'avion de l'ambassade de France, le 8 décembre, pour regagner notre pays, il fut grièvement blessé par des balles de mitrailleuse tirées contre l'appareil par un « chasseur » nationa-



Louis Delaprée

liste. Soigné d'abord à l'hôpital de Pas-trana, Louis Delaprée fut ensuite transporté à l'hôpital de Madrid, où son état de faiblesse interdit toute intervention chirurgicale. Puis une péritonite se déclara, et, dès hier, le bulletin de santé qui était publié ne laissait plus que peu d'espoir. Il est décédé ce matin, à 2 h. 30.

➡ Voir la suite en page 3



For additional content
related to this article go to
www.albavolunteer.org.

Forever Anti-Fascists

Matti Mattson (1916-2011)

Matti Mattson, front-line ambulance driver with the International Brigades, died while in hospice at JFK Hospital in Atlantis, Florida, on January 11.

Mattson was born in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, completed one year of high school, and then studied to become a printer. During the Depression, he joined the Young Communist League (YCL) and was active in demonstrations, including a “Hunger March” to Boston.

Strongly opposed to fascism, Mattson was one of four Fitchburg volunteers who went to Spain to help the Spanish people defend the legally elected Republic against the Spanish generals’ betrayal, aided by their backers Hitler and Mussolini. He sailed for Spain on the SS Washington. Once in France, he boarded a small wine-transporting boat that the small businessman risked losing (along with his life) in the Mediterranean port of Sète, about 100 miles from the frontier with Spain. Mattson told the *New York Times*: “We got on at night when no one was looking — we hoped.” He and others reached Spain in March 1937.

In Spain, Mattson was in infantry training for about two weeks and was then assigned to the XIII Brigade Intendencia as a truck driver on the Southern Front. After Brunete, Mattson transferred to the XV Brigade as a front-line ambulance driver, where he was with the Lincoln-Washington Battalion at all of its actions until the Ebro Crossing. He returned to the United States in December 1938. “I now feel that the decision to volunteer was the most important single thing that I have done,” he said later in life. “We helped wake the world up to the danger of war and allowed (the Allies) to prepare somewhat.”

During World War II, Mattson was trained as a pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He graduated with his class but was not permitted to fly because of his political activities. Ordered into the Army Corps of Engineers, he served in the European Theater and was later sent to the Pacific



Maynard Goldstein and Matti Mattson at the Pete Seeger-Guy Davis-Patti Smith ALBA Songs for a Cause concert, 2010. Photo by Len Tsou.

with the army of occupation in Japan. He attained the rank of staff sergeant.

Mattson worked as a printer in New York until his retirement. He was an activist in Local 6 of the Printers Union. He was also an accomplished amateur painter and a sculptor in wood. He was regarded as an elder in the Finnish-American community in New York City.

Mattson was a member of Veterans for Peace. For many years he marched the length of Fifth Avenue in the Veterans Day Parade and he had spoken at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Manhattan on Memorial Day. He was often a speaker at the annual reunions of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in New York City.

In 2009, Mattson became the third surviving Lincoln vet to take advantage of one of the key provisions of Spain’s controversial “Law of Historical Memory,” which allows veterans of the International Brigades to acquire Spanish citizenship without renouncing their other nationality. The next year he was honored with the President’s Medal by Fitchburg State College. On this occasion he said: “I am and will still be a staunch anti-fascist and will oppose war to the same extent as before I went to Spain, and after I returned to my country. I know that my

life has been somewhat different from some others during my time on Earth, but it has always been an honest effort and has fulfilled the teaching that my immigrant parents gave me: ‘Try to leave the Earth in better condition than you found it.’”

Shortly before moving to Florida last October, Mattson spoke at a benefit concert for the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, where he shared the stage with Pete Seeger, Patti Smith, and Guy Davis.

—Grover Furr

Nate Thornton (1915 – 2011)

By the time Mark Thornton and his 18-year old son Nate took a leaflet on a street corner in San Francisco in 1933, their family was down to two. They had left Utah after Mark had been beaten by Pinkertons at a miners’ strike, and the family arrived in Fresno in 1924. Nate’s mother died, and after years of barely surviving in the Depression-hit Central Valley, Mark Thornton sent two children to live with relatives, while he and Nate went to San Francisco to find work.

The leaflet they took was about building socialism and the Soviet Union; it urged attendance at a Communist Party meeting

two days later. Mark and Nate went. That night Mark joined the CP and Nate, a high school student, joined the YCL.

Nate later worked in the New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps and in 1935 sailed as a merchant seaman around the world. In 1937, he was back in San Francisco. When the call came to join the International Brigades, Nate and Mark both enlisted. Nate hoped to live in a socialist Spain.

After two weeks of training, Nate and Mark were recruited as truck and ambulance drivers for the XV Brigade. Nate served at the Cordoba and Brunete fronts, at a military school in Madrid, and at the Ebro, transporting wounded soldiers.

Father and son returned home when the IBs were demobilized in 1938. Nate moved to Los Angeles, where he worked as a union carpenter. There he met Phyllis, who was to be his wife until her death, 43 years later. They had a son, Loren, a daughter, Leslie, and a stepdaughter, Joan. They later moved to the Bay Area, where Nate eventually joined Local 34 of the ILWU.

Nate was active in Veterans for Peace and the Bay Area Post of the VALB. In 1986, he went to Spain for the 50th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War, where he met his future wife, Corine. Together, they were active in the School of Americas Watch and traveled to Cuba to challenge the travel ban. They also marched with Grandmothers For Peace at Gorky Park in Moscow. Last May, Nate spoke movingly at the Bay Area Vets reunion in Berkeley about his belief in the ultimate victory of Socialism and Internationalism. He died at his home in Rohnert Park on January 2, watching the news with Corine.

Let Nate's words be his epitaph:

I am an international. I believe in the international rule of the world and that people of the whole world should get together and decide that there are going to be no classes in this society, just one class. That the capitalists all have to go to work, get off their butts and go to work! No more CEOs, no more billionaires and millionaires, not



Nate Thornton at the SF Bay Area reunion, 2010. Photo by Richard Bermack.

that sort of thing. We work, and we decide when we are going to quit working. We decide it collectively, and everything of importance will be decided collectively.

—Bruce Barthol

Maynard Goldstein (1913-2011)

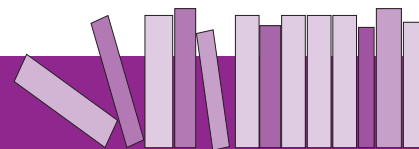
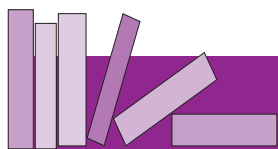
Maynard Goldstein, the last Spanish Civil War veteran residing in New York City, died on January 12.

Just three months earlier, Goldstein—the last surviving veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade who fought at Jarama (February 1937)—spoke at a benefit event for ALBA. He spoke passionately, bringing to life the streets of New York in the 1930's, the streets out of which he came and out of which came the seven other New Yorkers who crossed the Pyrenees with him, putting their lives on the line as

they and 3,000 other Americans tried to stop the spread of fascism. He spoke without hesitation. He spoke about the continued need to confront the forces of reaction. He spoke without notes. And he held the audience spellbound.

Shortly afterward, he celebrated his 97th birthday. Happily? Not quite. Sadly? Not really. But he wasn't pleased with his increasing frailty and he missed Kate, his wife of 68 years, no less an activist than he, who had died three years earlier. Having loving and appreciating friends and family did little to make up for her loss. And so did he go into and through his 10th decade, with all the losses inseparable from a long life, but pleased that his activism didn't stop with Spain. After all, his was the only unionized advertising agency in the City, something he insisted upon, something he brought to pass. His mind never faltered. No surprise then that he played bridge up to the last week of his life.

—Mark Goldstein



Presidential Politics in Republican Spain

Juan Negrín: Physiologist, Socialist and Republican War Leader. **By Gabriel Jackson.** Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press 2010. (First published in Spanish in 2009 by Editorial Crítica, Barcelona.)

By Richard Baxell

Juan Negrín y López, the “enigmatic” leader of the Spanish Republic from May 1937 until its defeat in March 1939, has not been treated kindly in many histories of the Civil War. Some attacks have been personal, with critics scoffing at his “lavish spending...his delight in pretty women and his gargantuan eating and drinking.” Others have lambasted Negrín’s disorganized work habits and high-handed, dictatorial style. But it is Negrín’s role in the shipping of the Republic’s gold reserve to Moscow and his inability to prevent the persecution and murder of “Trotskyists” by Russian agents operating in Spain that have been particularly seized upon and have led to his denigration as a Communist stooge, a tool of Stalin’s apparent control of the Spanish Republic.

Gabriel Jackson’s new sympathetic biography of Negrín presents a rather different image of the Canarian university physiology professor: a highly intelligent, unassuming, and thoroughly decent man. Jackson recounts details of Negrín’s life before, during, and after the war, his intellectual background, and his personal life. However, though Jackson makes use of considerable previously unseen archival material, details are, on occasion, somewhat vague. As Jackson says, Negrín was a man “with an extremely reserved

interior,” and documentary records appear to be almost as elusive as the figure himself. Negrín kept no diary and was not in the habit of saving his correspondence. Many official papers were accidentally destroyed during the war, others afterwards deliberately by his lifelong companion, Feli, acting on Negrín’s personal instructions. The lack of sources means that the early chapters are frustrating, for we learn little about Negrín’s early life, and Jackson is often forced to guesswork. However, when we come to the Second Republic and the war itself, the book is on much firmer ground.

Jackson argues that though the much-derided Negrín was a determined war leader, he was no dictator, but was at heart a moderate socialist and a humanitarian. Like his fellow socialist, rival and one-time friend Prieto, Negrín did what he could to stop the *paseos*, the murder of imagined enemies of the Republic by “uncontrollables.” He issued passports and wrote personal letters to help political opponents flee Spain, and on one occasion, as Jackson approvingly relates, Negrín slept in a prison in order to limit the blood-letting. And while Negrín himself was secular, he firmly believed in restoring religious freedoms and worked hard to secure the release of imprisoned clerics.

Likewise, Jackson explains how Negrín’s lack of action over the murder of Andreu Nin by the NKVD and the Republic’s brutal suppression of the POUM need to be seen within the context of the Republic’s absolute dependence on Soviet military aid. Russia was the Republic’s only ally, and Negrín knew that meant he must do his utmost not to offend Stalin. This is not to say that Negrín, or Jackson for that matter, condoned the actions of the NKVD in Spain, but that unless Negrín was absolutely sure that the Russian agents were responsible for Nin’s disappearance and presumed murder, he could not afford to rock the boat.

On the infamous sale of the Republican gold reserves to Moscow, Jackson confirms that the impetus came from Spain, rather than from Russia as Negrín’s detractors would have us believe. Jackson tackles head-on the popular notion that the Republic’s war effort was dictated by Stalin, rather than Negrín. To Jackson, Negrín’s determination to maintain his—and Spain’s—independence has been sorely underestimated. Jackson explains why Negrín had such close links with Communists and why Negrín was determined to carry on fighting right to the end, when other senior Republicans such as Azaña, Prieto, and others knew that the game was up.

The answer, of course, was that Negrín and the Spanish Republic didn’t have the luxury of choice. Facing a superior army, boosted by troops from Morocco, Italy, Germany, and Portugal, and deserted by the countries that might have helped, Negrín and the Spanish Republic fought on because Franco would never have accepted a negotiated peace. Negrín was forced to accept whatever help he could get, however tainted and whatever the consequences for Stalin’s fourth internationalist scapegoats. Negrín worked closely with the Communist Party not because he was himself a Communist, or even a fellow traveler, but because they were the most resolute defenders of the Republic. Like them, he was determined to fight on until General Casado’s military coup on March 5, 1939, ended any pretence of continuing resistance.

This bleak reality provides the context for Jackson’s portrayal of Negrín. For Negrín, like the second Spanish Republic, there was no happy ending. Continuing squabbles with Prieto over Republican money ensured that Negrín was effectively sidelined after 1945, and he died of a heart attack in 1956. In this new biography Jackson argues that Negrín was treated unfairly. Some may disagree but, at the very least, Jackson’s study clearly shows that Negrín’s role in the final year of the doomed Spanish Republic has been worthy of reappraisal. ■

Richard Baxell, a trustee of the International Brigade Memorial Trust, is the author of *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*.

A Masterly Trilogy

La Soledad de la República; El Escudo de la República; and El Honor de la República.

All three books by Angel Viñas, published by Editorial Crítica, Barcelona, 2006-2008.

By Gabriel Jackson

Editor's Note: Space considerations made necessary a reduction of the original manuscript by half, with Gabe's consent. The complete text is available on line at www.albavolunteer.org. This review was first published in La Revista de Libros, no. 154, www.revistadelibros.com.

These books constitute the most detailed and fully documented archival studies of the diplomatic and military reactions to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. They also describe the efforts of successive Republican governments to overcome the hostility of the major democratic powers—England, France, and the United States—and to counter the military aid given from the start by Italy, Germany, and Portugal to the forces led by General Franco. These efforts obliged the Republic to depend upon the Soviet Union, Mexico, and the International Brigades as the only forces willing and able to help the Republic defend itself.

Soledad opens with the realization that although the Republic was an internationally recognized, democratically chosen government, the democratic powers were not going to provide any help against the military uprising of July 18. On the other hand, within a week of the pronunciamiento, Italy, Germany, and Portugal pledged their military aid to Franco, and the Conservative government of Great Britain indicated to the French that England would not look favorably on French moves to aid the Republic. Within Spain it quickly seemed imperative to replace the timid, middle-class Republican

government of José Giral with leadership representing the entire Popular Front, and led by Francisco Largo Caballero, the most respected leader with a working class following. The Soviet Union joined the Non-Intervention Committee organized on Franco-British initiative, but when in early September it became evident that that committee would not make an effort to stop the flow of aid to Franco, Stalin decided to give limited aid to the Republic. The first Soviet arms, as well as food and medical supplies, reached Spain in the second half of October 1936.

Escudo deals with the months during which Largo Caballero was both Prime Minister and Minister of War, from September 4, 1936, to mid-May of 1937. Largo's age and his lifelong experience as a trade union leader left him without the ability to function as a military leader, and Viñas concentrates on the efforts of Prieto, who as Minister of the Navy functioned as a de facto Minister of Defense, and Juan Negrín, who as Minister of Hacienda was the principal governmental figure involved in efforts to buy arms on the international and black markets. Negrín arranged with the Soviet economic advisers plans to export the gold reserves of the Bank of Spain to the Soviet Union. It was the only destination outside Spain where those reserves would be available to finance the defense of the Republic. Viñas' experience as an economist, diplomat, and student of financial and banking institutions makes those chapters absolutely unique in their information and documentation.

Escudo treats in detail the cabinet conflicts leading to the fall of Largo Caballero, the May Events in Barcelona, the decline of anarchist and POUM political power in Catalonia, the replacement of Largo Caballero by Negrín as Prime Minister, and the kidnapping and assassination of Andreu Nin.

The third volume, *El Honor de la República*, begins with the loss of the Basque country and deals with the efforts of Negrín, Prieto, and chief of staff Colonel (later General) Vicente Rojo to create a sufficiently armed Republican army. Viñas analyzes the

internal strengths and weaknesses of the Republican forces. In addition, he analyzes the concerns of the Soviets with the threat of Japan along the borders of Siberia and the necessary Soviet attention to Hitlerite Germany and to a hostilely conservative England as being inevitably more important to Stalin than the fate of Republican Spain. For the author, the honor of the Republic is embodied in the resistance policy of Negrín and in his efforts to govern as a civilian leader, accountable to the Cortes and to the President of the Republic.

Taken together, the three volumes provide some 1,800 pages of text and footnotes. Viñas' style is at once narrative, explanatory, and argumentative. To obtain the full benefit of these three books, the reader must be able to shift his attention frequently between the discussion of events, the footnote references to the various sources underpinning the narrative, and the interpretation or distortion of those events by other writers. But if he/she has the patience to make those shifts of attention, the results will be rich in both factual knowledge and differences of interpretation.

Chapter 9 of *Escudo* merits special attention. The chapter concentrates on the communications between Stalin, Largo Caballero, and Ambassador Marcelino Pascua and the light those communications can throw on the attitude of the Soviet dictator towards the Republic. It is based principally on reports of Ambassador Pascua and on material from the British Foreign Office. In February 1937, Pascua wrote a memorandum stating that Stalin was preoccupied with the internal development of a socialist society in the Soviet Union and was concerned with the military movements of Japan in the Far East. In addition, he was determined to build a large navy, the investment in which would limit, for the near future, improvements in the standard of living of the general population. Stalin explained to Pascua that during the Russian Civil War of 1918-1921, there had been huge spaces to which the Red Army could retreat if necessary, and that the World War taking

Gabriel Jackson has written many books about the Spanish Republic, most recently a biography of Juan Negrín.

place between the main capitalist powers and exhausting their human resources permitted the Soviets to take initiatives that Spain in 1937 could not take, even if an unspecified portion of its population would like to have carried out a new version of the Bolshevik revolution.

Stalin did not conceal his reservations about the fighting spirit of the Republic. He found the slogan “no pasarán” too passive. Victory required an aggressive spirit, not just “no pasarán.” And by the way, the Republic must strengthen discipline and also “unmask” and “denounce” anarchist “intrigues.” Stalin agreed that the Republic must retain Madrid; otherwise the Soviets would have to “reconsider” their position.

I do think it important to mention a few reservations about these works. Although I have learned something and been intellectually stimulated by almost every page, at times I wonder whether the author was confusing new information with decisively important information. In *Soledad*, the author treats the French decision of August 1936 not to intervene on behalf of the Republic, but rather to try to establish a policy of Non-Intervention. The decision was made by a Popular Front consisting of Socialists and Radicals and supported by the Communists (but without any Communist ministers). The cabinet was divided in its sympathies, not strictly along party lines, since there were Radicals as well as Socialists who favored supplying military aid to the Republic, for reasons of French military security, and in support of a legitimate democratic government attacked by a military junta. But Léon Blum, the Socialist Prime Minister, decidedly favored providing arms to the Republic, whereas most Radicals simply preferred a legitimate and friendly government to a fascist-supported dictatorship.

In Viñas’ narrative, the cabinet meeting of August 1 showed a majority of the members inclined not to aid the Republic militarily. However, the leaders eventually decided that it would make sense to deal directly with the Madrid government. On August 4-5, the newly arrived Spanish ambassador was apprised of what types and quantities of arms were to be sent. He dispatched a confidential agent to the French military authorities in Bordeaux, along with a Spanish government check. But the next day, the expected export permit did not arrive. Subsequently, at a

private meeting, Blum wept bitter tears as he related that the British ambassador had virtually directed France not to arm Spain. He said that if France failed to do this, and if the war were to spread beyond the borders of Spain, England would not be able to defend France in those circumstances.

While Viñas’s account adds new information of France’s decision not to sell arms, it does not add to our fundamental knowledge. As of July 24, when Léon Blum had been in London, he had been clearly warned by the British not to become involved on the side of the Republic. The major French, British, and American newspapers had carried the story within a few days. The British warning, and Blum’s feeling that he must at all costs not offend the British, was widely reported.

Viñas also offers new details about Stalin’s decision to intervene in the Civil

that for Stalin, the themes of anti-fascist solidarity and of Comintern world leadership became increasingly important as a factor in Soviet considerations. Yet Stalin always maintained the possibility of retreat. To the rhetorical question why such a retreat did not occur, Viñas’ reply is that the Soviet Union sought simultaneously to achieve collective security with the democratic powers and to fulfill its role as the leader of a World Left that was becoming increasingly involved in the Spanish Civil War. In addition, Viñas is concerned to refute anti-Communist historiography of the Civil War—that of the anarchists, Trotskyites, and POUMistas, which claims that Stalin was determined to suppress the revolution that had broken out in the summer of 1936, and that of conservatives and Cold Warriors, which claims that Stalin was determined to establish in Spain a “popular democ-

Blum wept bitter tears as he related that the British ambassador had virtually directed France not to arm Spain.

War. In September 1936, Ambassador Rosenberg suggested that the Comintern send a military force armed with the latest weapons. This plan would have been discussed while Moscow was evaluating all the available data that led to the Comintern decisions of September 16-19. Also important were the visit of Maurice Thorez, General Secretary of the French Communist Party, to confer with Republican officials and Soviet Embassy personnel in Madrid, plus the arrivals in Spain in early September of André Marty, a founding member of the French Communist Party, and Manfred Stern, Soviet adviser to the newly formed Fifth regiment and to the Central Committee of the Spanish Communist Party. At the same time, between 11 September and 10 October, some 180 volunteers crossed the border at Cerbère, obliging the Soviets to think about their own image as self-appointed leaders of the world Marxist Left.

Viñas notes that food, clothing, and other humanitarian aid arrived in Soviet ships in late September, but that nothing official was being said about arms. His main conclusions from the relatively sparse documentary evidence are that the Republic saw strong hints that the Soviet Union might intervene, and

racy” of the type he established in Eastern Europe after World War II.

After these general considerations, Viñas introduces important new evidence of genuine, and freely expressed, differences of opinion within the Soviet leadership. Foreign Minister Litvinov at first advocated not intervening in Spain. In Viñas’s opinion Litvinov, who was married to an English woman, was quite anglophile and never understood the extent of British governmental hostility to Soviet Russia. He also quotes a Litvinov telegram to Ambassador Rosenberg on September 4, 1936, reprimanding the latter for interfering in Spanish politics and saying that since Rosenberg had been in Spain there had been many conversations in Moscow, the general conclusion of which was that it would be impossible to send arms to Spain. In Viñas’ opinion, as of September 4, Litvinov still hoped that the recently formed Non-Intervention Committee would oblige the fascist powers to cease their support of the military junta.

Thus Stalin, as of September 4, had not taken a decision. But the meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on September 9, which completely rejected evidence of Italo-German intervention, destroyed any Soviet hope that international pressure

would force the fascist powers to cease their evident, indeed boastful, intervention. According to Viñas, Molotov now asked for immediate aid to the Largo Caballero government. The important point is that different advisers thought differently and dared to express their thoughts in the midst of the Stalinist purges.

According to Viñas, Stalin, while vacationing at Sochi, must have realized that the Republic was not necessarily facing defeat, and that eventual victory would require military aid substantially equivalent to that being given by the fascist powers. This strategic element dominated Stalin's thinking, but it was accompanied by a determination to give battle without quarter to the anti-Stalin factions.

I have no doubt that Stalin was obsessed with the many forms of opposition (real and delusional), but he could have sent NKVD agents to Spain without deciding to send either food and medicines (without payment) or arms (with eventual high payment). So the author's detailed discussion of the purges at this point strikes me as responding more to his preoccupations with the claims of anti-Republican scholars than with Stalin's decision in late September 1936.

These comments are in no sense meant as a negative evaluation. No one has combed the archives more thoroughly than Viñas. No one has been more ready to share information, or more eager to compare interpretations with colleagues. When reading these volumes I was reminded of a conversation we had about 40 years ago. I had said that we, the foreign scholars, had had the great good fortune to read sources that were off limits for Spaniards because of the dictatorship. We had benefited directly from the desire of that same dictatorship to convince us that there was complete liberty of investigation (with the exception of the military archives) in Spain of the 1960's. I was confident that one day the Spaniards would have the opportunity freely to write their own history. I hoped that one of the first to do so would be Angel Viñas.

This trilogy will stand as a uniquely rich combination of archive-based history and deliberately challenging debate in the struggle for an understanding of the Spanish Civil War. ■

Letter

continued from page 3

fact, more to write about than my own impressions from the time that I have been here.

From the time that we left for the front I have been with the [Toivo Antikaisen KK Joukkue] Toivo Antikainen MG Machine Gun Company. There occurred several serious times—while simultaneously there were humorous moments. That is the way that war is. We have made several quick attacks at different times, and in that have succeeded very well. I do not wish to brag, but up to this point those Finns that came from Finland, America and Canada are looked upon as estimable fighters. Of course as solid antifascist soldiers we have given our best efforts. Once the order is received, we have conquered a position and held the position until new orders have been given. Even though at times the area had become very hot, we have gritted our teeth and stood fast.

But it has been a singular “sauna.” No matter how one tried to remain tough-skinned, the most hellish is the airplanes’ bombing and “strafing.” “Strafing” is machine-gun fire from a military fighter aircraft. The bullets that rain down are somewhat larger than the usual bullets. We agree unanimously that bombing by aircraft is such that, take any man, and he will attempt to get his head under the ground as far as is possible.

At times we have been a bit amazed when looking at how many times we have been bombed by German and Italian bombers, but still have carried on firmly.

I have to tell you, Kalle, that I myself have prepared for my death when those Black Vultures soared overhead. Many times I have thought that surely now is my Waterloo. Especially at those times that one is stuck in a position that has no low spot in the terrain and no ditch either. But even if you are in a crater you will break out in a sweat. I remember, especially at the Madrid front, the fascist planes came and circled around for hours. When they started to drop their “eggs” the ground shook so strongly from the explosion that it felt as though they were coming this way and soon we will have a bomb on the nape of our necks. Behind the bomber

planes came “strafters.” They flew, one behind the other, in a long line and fired at our boys. This lasted for some time. When their work of the Devil [The word Devil is profane in Finn.] was finished I felt it and came out of the trench, a sigh of relief escaped, then we were amazed that we were not hit. At the same time we swore a bit in a Finnish manner.

Now, however, we have more and heavier artillery and devilishly skillful men who know how to aim it. Also a new, and such an air arm, that the Fascist air-men are not too willing to remain and have their teeth engaged when our planes appear on the scene. From now on we will begin to fare well and the Fascists will be left on the losing side.

So, Kalle, we have made an effort to keep up to developments in America. We read each D.W. diligently, which we receive quite regularly. Also we have started to get the Tyomies.

Here where we are it is not as hot as compared to July. Here for instance, it is warmer than over there in Minnesota. We still go swimming even though it is late September. A few days ago we received more sturdy clothes, while the time is approaching when the rains begin and the weather turns colder.

Finally Kalle, we have been healthy and just as prepared to go against the enemy as the day that we came to Spain. Greetings from all of us to you. From me, extend my greetings to Onni and Mike, to friends and Comrades, Salud.

In Comradeship,

Martin M.

P.S. My address is;

S.R.I. Plaza Altogana 26,1,
Albacete, Spain

P.S. We were in reserve at this time. I will write to you about future battles at a later date.

**Carl and Kalle, of course, were the same person. That person was Carl Paivio, National Secretary of the Finnish Workers Federation (M.A.M.). ■*



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The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives Annual Events

New York

May 14, 2011

Baltasar Garzón (Winner of ALBA Puffin Human Rights
Activist Award)

Michael Ratner (Center for Constitutional Rights)

Others to be announced

Music by Bruce Barthol & Others

Berkeley

May 29, 2011

Freight and Salvage

A special music program featuring Bruce Barthol

Speakers to be announced

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