

The Volunteer

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

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

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ALBA/PUFFIN AWARD for HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM Uncovering Atrocities, Bringing the Military to Justice: Honor the Activists!



Fredy Peccerelli



This year's Human Rights Award goes to Fredy Peccerelli, Director of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation, and Kate Doyle, Senior Analyst of U.S. policy at the National Security Archives. Their work led to the prosecution of military generals and dictator Ríos Montt. Photos are from the film "Granito: How to Nail a Dictator" by Skylight Pictures. See page 3.



Kate Doyle

Dear Editors,

In the December issue, in an article on “Nick” Carter, the writer makes what seems to me some shameful and unwarranted remarks. He says Carter’s death fighting in the British International Brigade was “especially tragic because of what he might have become.” He then says Carter’s decision to enlist in the brigade was “clearly the worst decision of his young life.”

The deaths of all those who joined the Internationals to fight fascism were equally heroic. No exceptions! All, not some, were “might have becomes.” Carter was no special case....

Nick Carter’s motives behind his decision to risk his life fighting fascism ...cannot be attributed to a case of “bad judgment,” and that at a distance of 70 years! In that light the motives of all those who died might be questioned.

And equally reprehensible is a kind of creeping anti-communism in remarks such as, “his [Carter’s] understanding grew without any evidence of Communist Party dogma.” Communists in all the International Brigades were the backbone of their commitment to fight, and if necessary, to die fighting fascism. Nick’s life was ennobled by his decision to join with thousands of others in that great struggle.

Judge Baltasar Garzón Disbarred Despite International Protests

On February 9, as *The Volunteer* went to press, Judge Baltasar Garzón, the winner of the 2011 ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism, was sentenced by the Spanish Supreme Court to an 11-year disbarment. This decision, which cannot be appealed before the Supreme Court, effectively ends his career and has sparked outrage worldwide. It is widely thought that the judge is the victim of a politically motivated persecution—motivated in part by his decision to investigate Francoist crimes. Judicial experts, human-rights activists, and public opinion leaders worldwide—including the *New York Times*—had called for an acquittal. His conviction strikes a blow against judicial independence and the global fight against impunity—but also casts serious doubts on the credibility of the Spanish judiciary. Garzón’s defense has said they will appeal the decision before Spain’s Constitutional Court and, if need be, the European Court of Human Rights.

For all the latest news on Garzón’s fate and the struggle for human rights in Spain and elsewhere, read ALBA’s blog at albavolunteer.org.

Perhaps I should correct the manner in which I phrased it above: No one who died for the Republic in Spain was a “might have become.” All were as great in their deaths there as they could have become later if they had survived. That is their triumph!

Pete Gourfain
Brooklyn, NY

The Future of ALBA

Planning for your will and your legacy? The Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade established their legacy with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives. Now you can continue their “good fight” by establishing a legacy gift to ALBA in your will. As a non-profit educational organization, 501(c)(3), ALBA can accept legacy gifts in any amount, large or small. Please help us continue to expand our horizons, and your beliefs, and help us to teach the Lincoln Brigade’s legacy to the next generation and beyond.

For more information, call us at 212-674-5398 or email info@alba-valb.org.

The Volunteer

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Forensic anthropologists, led by ALBA/Puffin Human Rights Award winner Fredy Peccerelli. The team is exhuming mass graves and gathering evidence to indict dictator Ríos Montt. The photo is from the film “Granito: How to Nail a Dictator” by Skylight Pictures.

ALBA/PUFFIN AWARD for HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM

Uncovering Atrocities, Bringing the Military to Justice: Honor the Activists!

By Sebastiaan Faber

Two winners share the honors of this year’s ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism, splitting \$100,000 to continue their fight for justice in Latin America.

Both Fredy Peccerelli, Executive Director of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation, and Kate Doyle, Senior Analyst of U.S. policy in Latin America at the National Security Archive, have shown tenacity, courage, care, and acuity in vindicating victims of government violence and pursuing the perpetrators of criminal activity.

The awards will be presented at ALBA’s annual event on May 13, at Museum of the City of New York, starting at 4:30 p.m.

The three-person award committee selected the two awardees from among more than forty nominations. The ALBA/

Sebastiaan Faber is chair of ALBA’s Board of Governors.

Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism, one of the largest human rights awards in the world, is given jointly by ALBA and the Puffin Foundation, which provides an endowed fund exclusively for this annual honor.

Kate Doyle, a dogged and creative researcher-activist, has spent twenty years working tirelessly with Latin American human rights organizations and truth commissions—in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras—advocating for the declassification of U.S. government archives in support of their criminal investigations.

Fredy Peccerelli, a brave and innovative forensic anthropologist, has made crucial contributions to the first-ever conviction of Guatemalan military forces for crimes against humanity. As founding director of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation (FAFG), Peccerelli leads a team that, over the past fifteen years, has exhumed hundreds of

mass graves of victims of Guatemala’s civil war.

Doyle and Peccerelli were both recently featured in the award-winning documentary *Granito*, produced and directed by Pam Yates and Paco de Onís, which narrates their involvement in the effort to indict former Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt for crimes against humanity. “During their extensive careers, both have amassed impressive records of human rights advocacy,” said Marina Garde, ALBA’s executive director, who administered the nomination process.

In 1994, Doyle co-authored the report of the Washington Task Force on Salvadoran Death Squads, produced for the United Nations-appointed *Grupo Conjunto*, which examined the resurgence of death squads in El Salvador after the signing of the peace accords. She published the Guatemalan death squad dossier in *Harper’s Magazine*. She also edited two

ALBA Annual Celebrations *Lincoln Brigade and Human Rights* New York May 13 | Bay Area May 27 | www.alba-valb.org



Archivos Históricos de la Policía Nacional investigative team, of which Kate Doyle is part (above). Kate Doyle with colleagues (below). All photos are from “Granito: How to Nail a Dictator” by Skylight Pictures.

collections of National Security Archive’s declassified record—*Death Squads, Guerrilla War, Covert Operations, and Genocide: Guatemala and the United States, 1954-1999* and *El Salvador: War, Peace and Human Rights, 1980-1994*. In 2002, Doyle appeared as an expert witness in the trial of senior military officers in Guatemala for the assassination of Myrna Mack. Doyle also works with citizens’ groups throughout the region on their campaigns for government transparency, accountability, and freedom of information, and she has written about the right to information in Latin America and the United States.

Peccerelli brings the scientific tools of forensic medicine to the task of human rights. Among his achievements has been the identification of specific victims of Guatemalan genocide, gathering evidence for use in court and providing closure to family members. He also created a national DNA database of those who lost loved ones. His own family was forced to flee Guatemala for the Bronx after his father received death threats when Fredy was twelve. Internationally renowned, Peccerelli has also led investigations of mass graves in the former Yugoslavia. Peccerelli was named by *Time Magazine* and *CNN* as one of the fifty Latin American Leaders for the New Millennium.

“These awards are designed 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,” said Puffin Foundation President Perry Rosenstein. “They are intended to help educate students and the general public about the importance of defending human rights against arbitrary powers that violate democratic principles.”

The ALBA/Puffin Award is part of a program connecting the inspiring legacy of the International Brigades to international activist causes today. The first annual award was granted to the Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzón in May 2011.

The National Security Archive (<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/>) was founded in 1985 by journalists and scholars to check rising government secrecy. It combines

a unique range of functions: investigative journalism center, research institute on international affairs, library and archive of declassified U.S. documents, leading non-profit user of the U.S. Freedom of Information Act, public interest law firm defending and expanding public access to government information, global advocate of open government, and indexer and publisher of former secrets. The NSA is housed at George Washington University.

The Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation (www.fafg.org) is an autonomous, non-profit, technical and scientific NGO. Its aim is to strengthen the administration of justice and respect for human rights by investigating, documenting, and raising awareness about past instances of human

rights violations, particularly unresolved murders, that occurred during Guatemala’s 30-year-long civil war. Its main tool in pursuing this goal is the application of forensic anthropology techniques in exhumations of clandestine mass graves. Its endeavors in this regard allow the

relatives of the disappeared to recuperate the remains of their missing family members and to proceed with burials in accordance with their beliefs and enable criminal prosecutions to be brought against the perpetrators. ■



Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation team at La Verbena Exhumation



Photos by Lisa Oppenheim

Teaching Human Rights and the Spanish Civil War

By Peter N. Carroll

As we begin the fifth year of ALBA’s teaching programs for high school instructors, we are detecting positive patterns in the anonymous evaluations each teacher is asked to complete at the end of the program.

Last December in Chicago, for example, a male world history teacher indicated that he had begun the session with slight familiarity with the Spanish Civil War and admitted he would have been “very uncomfortable” if asked to teach it. After six hours in our seminar, which included reading documents scanned from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives in the Tamiment Library at NYU, the same

Peter N. Carroll chairs ALBA’s committee on teaching.

teacher expressed much greater confidence, saying “very likely” he’d be teaching it soon. “The revisionist concept that World War II began with the Spanish Civil War is particularly compelling and provocative,” he wrote, “and I plan to incorporate it into my teaching.” He was one of nearly twenty teachers in the Chicago public schools who rated the ALBA program “Excellent.”

We hear that type of response frequently, and this year ALBA expects to expand the project into additional districts around the country. In January, the Ohio Humanities Council awarded ALBA a matching grant of \$14,000 for a week-long teaching institute at Oberlin College that will accommodate twenty Ohio teachers of Spanish, English and social studies. During the coming months,

we’ll announce other sites for teaching opportunities following the success in 2011 in New York City; Bergen County, New Jersey; and Chicago. Other seminars have been held in Tampa, Florida, and Alameda County, California. Veteran teachers not only introduce young people to the subject, but often go on to teach it for years to come.

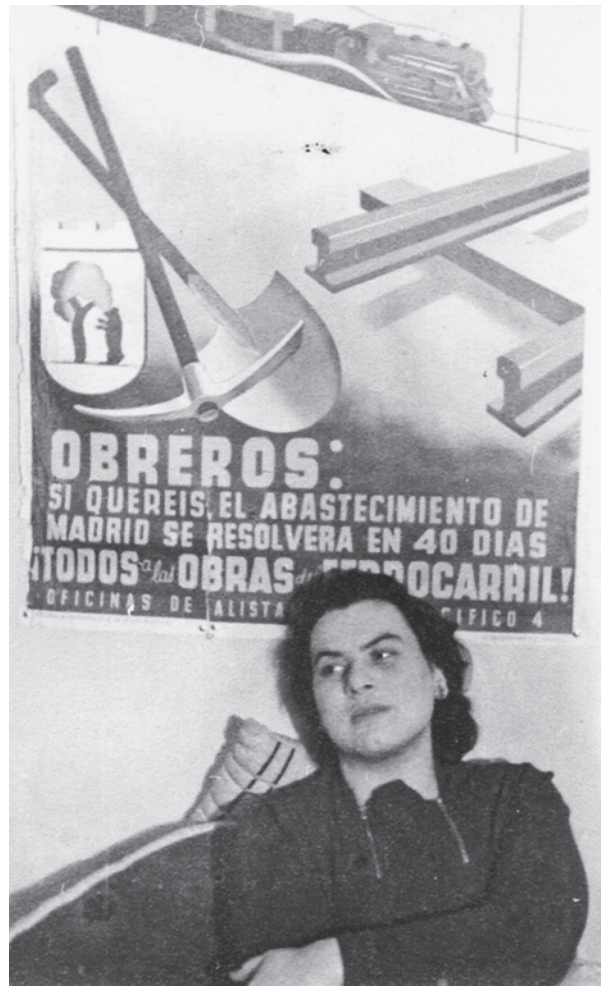
Like the students they teach, U.S. high school teachers of social studies and Spanish seldom have an understanding of the Spanish Civil War as a run-up to World War II. Few have ever heard about the U.S. volunteers who formed the Lincoln Brigade or know that they fought in a racially integrated army over a decade before President Harry Truman ordered the desegregation of the U.S. Army. The

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THE CIVIL WAR BEGINS: *Savage Coast* (Costa Brava)

By Muriel Rukeyser

Edited by Rowena Kennedy-Epstein



On July 18, 1936, at the age of 22, the American poet Muriel Rukeyser (1913-1980) traveled to Barcelona, on assignment for the British magazine Life and Letters Today, to report on the People's Olympiad (Olimpiada Popular). An anti-fascist alternative to Hitler's Berlin Olympics, the popular games were canceled when the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War interrupted the opening ceremonies. Rukeyser was on a train with the Swiss and Hungarian Olympic teams, as well as tourists and Catalans, when it was stopped in the small town of Moncada as the civil war began and a general strike was called in support of the government.

The passengers were stranded for two nights as the people of Catalonia defended themselves and their government from

the military coup, the fascists escaping through the hills surrounding them. Rukeyser arrived in Barcelona just as the city established "revolutionary order" and witnessed the first militias marching to the Zaragoza front. Though she was evacuated only a few days later, Spain would prove to be a profoundly radicalizing and transformational experience, one she would describe as the place where "I began to say what I believed," and as "the end of confusion."

Rukeyser would write about the Spanish Civil War for over forty years, in nearly every poetry collection, in numerous essays, and in fiction, weaving the events of the war and the history of anti-fascist resistance into an interconnected, multi-genre, and radical 20th-century history. The most complete rendering of her experience is her unpublished, autobiographical novel *Savage Coast* (Costa Brava), which she wrote immediately upon her return to New York City in the autumn of 1936 and edited throughout

the war. The novel, which remained unfinished in her lifetime, with her last editorial choices in pen, will be available for the first time from the Feminist Press in January 2013.

The passage below is the first excerpt of the novel to be published. The scene begins after two precarious days in Moncada, all communication cut off by the general strike and the fighting. For the foreigners stranded on the train, the only sign that the government still stands is the intermittent radio. Helen, the protagonist, her lover Hans, a long distance runner and political exile from Nazi Germany, and an American communist couple, Peter and Olive, whom she befriended on the train, have watched the collectivization and defense of the republic with solidarity and excitement, hoping to get to Barcelona with the Olympic teams.

I have made the changes indicated by Rukeyser in pen. Other than that, the text is printed as the author left it.

—Rowena Kennedy-Epstein

They were speaking with difficulty, as if they had been drinking for a long time. As they paid for the food, little coins rolled and fell, and they slapped their hands on the money drunkenly to keep it still. They were surprised at the shifting darkness in the dim room, the immense rolling distance from the table to the door, the faces (like weird fish shining deepseas down) of the girls.

In the street, the elastic waves of sunlight arrived in a flood, shocking them, beating at the temples, insistent.

They looked up toward the church. Butcher's closed; fruit store, closed; grocer's closed; a block away, though, a crowd had gathered, filling the street-corner.

"Probably opening houses," said Olive.

Helen wanted to go up. She remembered their retreat from the church the night before. All these houses must be opened now, she thought. "They must have started this section, last night," she reminded Olive. "The boys were ramming in the door."

They passed the door on their way up. It was broken, half-open, lettered C.N.T., F.A.I. Through one smashed shutter they could see the overturned tables, ransacked shelves, broken crucifixes of the parochial school.

The crowd was standing still. It was not carrying guns. Only two men at the corner, and one who stood in the middle of the crossing, had rifles in their hands.

Across the street, a long robin's egg blue bus stood surrounded by people who put their hands on the bullet-scratches, traced the long roads cut in the enamel with their fingers. Two boys with a can of white paint were daubing large letters on the snub hood and on the rear of the bus.

GOBIERNA.

"That must be the Government bus for the Swiss," said Helen. There was a spick round hole in the windshield. The heavy glass caught sunlight on the hole-rim; bright stripes of light ran outward in a sunburst.

Peter followed her startle, calculating. "That couldn't have missed the driver," he remarked.

The boys went soberly ahead with their lettering, and the crowd, pressing about the truck, commented, told stories about the road, crossed and re-crossed,

shouting to women leaning from windows.

Helen looked at her hand. On it was printed, in a violent after-image, the bullet hole and glassy light.

But the crowd was backing, to clear the street. A car cruised down and guns stood out from every window.

The man in the road raised his clenched fist.

He wore a red band around his arm.

The driver's fist was already held out of the window, his elbow resting on the windowframe. And all the other men, in the car and on the streetcorner, raised clenched fists.

In a wonder, as if the car had come to save them, as if this were her dream that she was dreaming now, Helen raised her arm and shut her fist.

"The first we've seen!" Said Olive. The tears rose to Helen's eyes, sprung; and stopped.

"Long live soviet Spain," Peter answered, completing her thought, all his wish clear in the words.

Order, like a steady finger, covered the street. The crowd looped back, remaining on the sidewalk. The second car came, lettered P.C.—Partit Comunista—and the shouts and fists came up as it passed. The long black car was full of men, and the driver and a woman sat in front, smiling and holding their tight hands to the people.

Helen turned to Peter, "How beautiful it is now!" she said. She looked as if she had just slept. She found the same safety in his face.

"Now it's all right," he answered, and took her arm and Olive's. They walked to the edge of the crowd, and cars kept passing like shouts, with lifted fists. Another man stood on the curb, stopping the cars for passwords. The last one started in second, clashing its gears, hurrying down the road. He stepped back and smiled at the Americans. His eyes were the absolute of black, night tunnels of distance. They smiled.

Peter stopped. "Comunistos hoy?" he asked.

The man's eyes slid smiling. "Si, compañero," his proud singing voice rose. "Today and Tomorrow."

"It's later than we think," Peter quoted.

Helen's face flared. "I want to go back," she insisted. "I want to tell Hans."

"Yes," said Peter. "This is all right."

"Now I'd like to get to Barcelona," Helen pushed out. "This is what it meant. I'd like to see a city like that,"

"It's not like France, is it, Peter? You know," said Olive, abruptly, "it's the first time this has seemed at all real to me. It's the only thing I've felt, really—except for that moment when they shut the door this morning."

The hurrah of gunfires started in the hills, and ran for a minute.

One of the bitches, the sickly one, ran up the station street wagging her hand in the other direction.

"Down there," she panted, wagging. "The Swiss are leaving—"

They started to run down the street. Peter was alongside the bitch, he could see the sad bruised eyes were swollen, the wrinkles were almost erased.

"Upset?" Peter ran alongside.

"Well," she said, and the fret and suffering obscured her voice, "it's the Swiss—they're getting out of this hellhole."

Helen slowed down with them. The words fell icy on her, she had moved so far from that state. Now, with a shock, she saw the sick, pathetic woman plain, and behind her a whole intelligible world she melted into, like a weak animal protectively colored. And with a counter-shock, Helen remembered her own impatience, a tourist spasm, when the train had for the first time stood interminably long in the way stations. The words had wiped that frantic itch for comfort away. But she was, in mood at least, prepared for GENERAL STRIKE, and it could change her effectively at once. The bad leg was all that stood of the past now. There was no time for it. It was later than that. Nothing but the knot of Swiss, waiting on the corner, their battered suitcases and knapsacks heaped ready.

...

The truck was ready, full of Swiss, backed to the station, engine running. The automobiles were lined up. The chorus filled one and left room in the other for the French delegate and his secretary. Another open truck stood empty.

A tall yellow-faced man stood beside it. "This is for anyone connected with the

Olympics, and then for anyone who cares to try the drive with us,” he said, in French and English. His long face was like intellectual metal, yellow and refined sharp; and further lengthened by the high V of baldness which ate into the fair hair, baring the skullridges.

“Who is coming?” he asked. The truck began to fill. Olive was on its floor as the suitcases were thrown in. “Is there much danger?”

The tall man looked up. “There is steady fighting; but we have a guard.” A thin boy with a white handkerchief around his head climbed in. He smiled with all his teeth, he patted his rifle. Olive made room for him, and he took his place at the front of the truck, leaning on the roof over the driver.

“Then it can’t be like this,” she said, and called to Peter and Hans to stop loading.

Helen climbed in. She pulled the suitcases over from the center of the floor.

Olive was busy. She was sure now. She up-ended all the bags.

“Stack them around the outside,” said Olive, setting them straight and close. “We’ve got to have some walls. We’ve got to have some order.” Her face was clear and active at last.

They built a wall of baggage for the truck on both sides. In front, valises and the driver’s box reached breast high. Olive was in charge, she moved everywhere, quickly, with Helen.

“All right,” she said. The tall man nodded, and helped the others in. The bitches came running. Mme. Porcelan, attended by the pock-marked Swiss, brought baggage. They climbed in.

“Ready?” asked the tall man in a father’s voice.

The driver was ready. Another guard climbed into the seat, holding his gun out the window. From the truck, the muzzle could be seen, and the oily gleam of the barrel.

“Slowly, through the town,” the tall man said.

Hans and Helen were beside the guard. He reached out behind the guard and took her hand for a moment.

The boy smiled and looked at his gun. “Everyone is safe,” he said. He was very handsome.

Peter and Olive were crushed against them. Helen was glad to feel their weight.

They are very good friends to have, she thought. The space left between the walls of suitcases was narrow.

The truck started, blowing its horn. As it turned down the main street, Helen could see the women who had listened to the yodeling, standing in the same place. Hans’s fist was up, saluting the town. She clenched her fist, and the women in the street replied. There was a flash of *vivas*, and the little tunnel blacked out the street.

Their truck led the way to the top of the hill. Halfway up, at a sharp curve, the town petered out in a ravel of old houses and meat-stores. The truck made a half-turn, backed, and stopped.

“God!” said Peter fiercely, “what’s the matter?”

“He’s just turning,” Olive suggested.

“He could make the turn—” said Helen.

The street was barred by children; they leaned against the walls, dodged across the road, sat on the curb. Their streaked faces were full of curiosity, and all their heads turned together like news-reel heads of tennis-match spectators, as horns began to blow. The two cars and the other truck pulled up the hill.

“We probably all have to start together,” said Peter.

The yellow man got out and called the drivers together.

His face was the most disciplined face Helen had ever seen, one end of civilization. Down one temple the skin was thin, as if an old burn had left it fragile, and the blood showed dark beneath. He was speaking to the drivers in an extreme of conviction.

Peter pulled her elbow. His face had knotted with the delay, and he was contagiously wound tight. The three of them felt undercut and excited by the same shock of drunkenness they had felt in the café.

“Look at the baby,” he said, as if he were telling a joke.

She followed his finger. The little boy was no more than two years old, and was sitting on the curb. He was staring at the trucks and masturbating absentmindedly.

“Infantile—Infantile—”

“Auto-eroticism,” Helen supplied.

“Not at all,” he said gravely. “Vive le sport!”

Olive howled and the athletes turned in surprise. The yellow man looked up as he finished speaking to the drivers; he crossed to the space in front of the trucks, and held up his hand. The thin lavender mark was streaked, distinct on his temple.

“We are starting now,” he said in a direct, high voice. “We know we can rely on you to work with us, so that everything will go well. From our reports, the road should be well-guarded and quiet now; but you must remember to watch constantly for snipers, and to duck if the truck is fired at.

“Above all, we count on you to maintain with us discipline and proletarian order. If there is too much trouble, we will stop on the way; but, whatever happens, the strictest order must be kept. The guards are not to fire until it is necessary; until they see”—he pointed to his own—“the whites of their eyes.” He looked at the passengers, and raised his fist.

“To Barcelona!” He was in his car, leading the way down the cryptic road.

Their fists came up. Peter danced from one foot to the other in an anguish of excitement. He laughed and exclaimed, pompously and dramatically, in the voice of Groucho Marx: “Of course they know this means War!” Olive and Helen laughed with him in one long shriek. The other truck was starting.

Everyone stopped laughing and looked down the road. The red hill stood above them, the pylons marched over it; it was a different view of the cliff, and the profile of the red sand-cut was clear for the first time. The hill looked entirely new. This was unknown country. The truck got underway, shifting high immediately, racing full-speed and roaring into the open road.

....

Far down the hill the tracks extended, minute and vulnerable. The train stood grotesque, stiff, the only motion being the thin black fume above the waiting engine. The fume rose straight and sacrificial in the still air.

But up here, faces were whipped by wind, beaten with the speed of flying. The open truck ran out into wide country. The high significant hills stood: the farms waited: only the truck raced checkless on the roads.

To those faces, upon those eyes, it was the land racing, the world, high, visionary, unknown.

They were tense, held high, the eyes seemed wider set, like the abstract wide eyes of dancers. All the faces looked up the road.

On either side, the long grass, the wide farm-swarthes, the walls of farmhouses.

The truck stopped where a car was headed across the road. The driver showed his pass-slip to the guard, a woman in overalls and rope sandals. A band about his forehead meant a suffering wound or a badge or a notion to keep the hair back, it matched the band that was around the head of the young guard standing in the truck.

Then they knew they had not reached their full speed. That barrier marked the town limits; now they were entering contested country.

The guard sitting with the driver leaned out and shouted up a word of encouragement. Then they let the motor out. The illusion of great speed was partly the product of a fierce dream, standing on the leaping floor, holding to each other and the walls, receiving the iced wind on skin, used to the stagnant heat of the trains.

But the truck itself was moving fast.

At the right, the blue-and-white Ford sign was a grotesque. And here, along the farmwalls, bales of hay, stacked solid for protection.

The overturned wagon at the door, its front near wheel still spinning.

The black bush on the hill.

Barricades.

And all these rushing past, the speed of fear, the hands in the doorway, the fists on the hill all raised, clenched, saluting.

Put on coats, they thought, the cold will strike you dead! Watch the road, the black eyes are wild concern, the fingers loose the trigger to point to the wild eyes, crying with that pointed gesture: Watch for guns!

On exposed rides, passing the pale houses, the tiled roofs, red now, now darker, shadowdark against the low sun,

fear passes, the faces clear and become fresh and happy, filled with this youth that speed gives, the windy excitement of fear, the exploration opening new worlds with a lifted arm.

A quarter of a mile down the road, they saw the men waiting for them.

And all the sky drawn colored toward the sun.

The men grew larger.

Racing down the stretch, the fields slanted away from them, precious and quickly lost, the pastures gleamed under rich lights like grass-green jewels, the house stood lovely and forbidden.

The floor of Europe leaped shaking beneath their feet.

The men stood before them, signal-

The flaring trees at the top. The deathly bushes, yard-fences, a man sliding down, his legs braced stiff, come down to take the pass.

And another clear run, the road straight, the country-side changing, farm giving way to smaller garden, large estates replaced by factories, closed and empty, but well-kept and waiting as on holidays.

So many windows.

Watched the walls as they had watched the bushes. Each thought: guns! There is no way to watch, raking a wall of windows, for a narrow bore. Instinct, the pure ruler quality, wipes away remembrance, the countryside of the mind replaced from a moving car. In a shock of speed.

They watched; waited for city.

A nightmare gun-bore stood black and round in the brain.

They had expected city.

They saw nothing but street: a passage, impossibly long, bending from country road, where the barriers were far placed and long dashes could be made, to an avenue through glimpsed suburbs, and now this, which must be city, if the mind were free to look, but which seemed only street, broken by barricades at which the truck stopped, and the fringes could not

be noticed, the faces, the piled chairs, corpses of horses. Then a spurt of speed, wind, and tight hands; and immediately, a gap in the road, blind; after that second, recognized.

At such moments, the sides of the road may be discerned.

The sidewalks, the rows of houses, blocks of lowlying buildings

And ahead? A wall.

The passengers drew in their breath as the men before it turned, the levers held in their hands, and the man with the gun came forward. For the levers chopped the street. The street was lifted to make this wall. The cobblestones were built high.

On the barricade, the red flag.

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Location of Lincoln prisoners at San Pedro: top row, corner. Photos by Nancy Wallach.

San Pedro de Cardena Concentration Camp 75th Anniversary at Burgos

By Nancy Wallach

“There are believed to be 9,000 to 10,000 bodies in mass graves in the community of Castile, 3,200 executed in the Burgos region. So far 154 bodies in Burgos have been identified and re-interred by family members.” These were the shocking figures revealed to me by the Families of the Assassinated and Disappeared of Burgos, with whom I met last November during the three-day 75th Anniversary Commemoration of the Concentration Camp at San Pedro de Cardena, which housed the prisoners from the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War.

Statistics soon translated into distinct faces and heart-wrenching stories of individuals who suffered repression and terror during the Franco years. I had

Teacher Nancy Wallach serves on the ALBA Board.

come to Burgos to represent the families of former San Pedro prisoners. My father, Lincoln Brigade veteran Hy Wallach, had been incarcerated there from 1938 to 1939.

The conference opened with a Francoist documentary, “Prisoners of War.” Luis Castro, professor of history and author of *Burgos: Capital of the Crusade*, and Nacho García, blogger of “Jaily News,” described Burgos and the San Pedro camp in sharp contrast to the idyllic conditions depicted in the introductory film. Nacho named the blog “The Jaily News” after the underground newspaper published by the prisoners at San Pedro, which was an example to him of the “discipline, self respect and morale” of the prisoners.

The next day we visited mass graves of former International Brigade prisoners and Spaniards. Family members and I placed wreaths in the colors of the Republic alongside the graves. Inside, the

pristinely restored scriptorium, gleaming marble passageways, and highly polished



Memorial to the International Brigades at San Pedro de Cardena.



Families of the assassinated and disappeared of Burgos at the exhibit.

15th century wooden pews contrasted with the filthy cells the prisoners had endured.

Back in Burgos, we saw the headquarters from which Franco proclaimed his victory, as well as the street plaque from which activists in Burgos had successfully campaigned to have Franco’s name removed. We visited the trade union hall to see the exhibit of letters, photographs, music, and brief biographies of the international prisoners. Here we got our first look at the monument “Roots of Memory,” created for this tribute by local sculptor Susana Rioseras. When official permission is secured, it will be permanently installed on the lawn outside San Pedro, facing the statue of El Cid. An organic form, a branch or perhaps a root, whose fragility suggests the passage of time, sits atop stone panels. The panels are inscribed with the various points of national origin of the prisoners, alongside figures indicating how far they had traveled from their respective homes: “New York 5,695 km... Buenos Aires 10,029 km...Habana 7,440 km.” The internationalism and antifascism of the Brigades were still traveling through Susana’s artistry.

The weekend’s events culminated in a tribute outside the monastery, site of the former concentration camp. Even the rain seemed to reflect the spirit of cooperation

that defined the day, stopping just long enough for the duration of the program. The first speaker, Luis Castro, cited the address of former Irish battalion prisoner Bob Doyle, who stated during his visit in 1996 that the sacrifice of his comrades for the noblest of causes, the freedom of all humanity, was not in vain.

Sculptor Susana Rioseras, creator of the monument, paid tribute to the acclaimed English artist Clive Branson, who was imprisoned at the monastery in 1938. Branson, whose works were exhibited in the Tate Gallery, was part of the “faculty” at the prisoner-organized “University” of San Pedro. The program was punctuated by selections from former Lincoln Brigade prisoner Max Parker’s “Al Tocar Dianne: Songs From a Spanish Prison” album and a message from son Tim Parker. A tape made by Lincoln Brigade ex-prisoner Bob

Steck was dubbed with a Spanish translation. A crowd of about 250 people listened raptly to the voices of these Lincolns.

The program concluded with my remarks, translated by Nacho García. I thanked the Tribute Committee “for reclaiming this chapter of the history of the Brigades at this commemoration at San Pedro. By doing so,” I continued, “you are alerting people to the nature and dangers of fascism, just as the International Brigades did 75 years ago.... By shining a light on their history today, you

are keeping alive their example for future generations. In spite of the subsequent hardships, loss of life and even exile from their respective countries in some cases, the prisoners of the International Brigades at San Pedro left a legacy of inspiration not only to their immediate families, but for the entire family of humankind.” ■



Savage Coast

Continued from page 9

Again, as the guard stopped them with his fist, their fists came up.

From then on, the fists remained high.

The streets were those of an outlying district. Every man on them raised his fist, timed to come up as the truck passed.

The guard kept his gun up. Now, from the windows, white patches flew, hanging truceflags of white, lining this street which was taller as they raced deeper into the city.

The barricades, were up. The barricades, recurring every hundred yards. Here, a young soldier, helmeted, behind a machine gun, trained on the highway.

Speed, two minutes, blindness, the road.

Another stop; another wall, a glimpse of street-corners.

And the children who played, the families who passed walking, all their fists lifted. The movie house on one side; the sudden heat blown from the church burning on a square. The piles of firewood heightened in flame: vestments, statues, gaudy cloth, images to be carried head-high.

The truck swung down a wide avenue, and far to one side, the quadruple black-and-white spires of the Sagrada Familia rose intact.

Stores, promenades, evening. And everywhere, the million white, the flags pendant from the windowsills, the walker in the street who lifts his hand.

The hands lifted from the truck, held tight and unfamiliar in perpetual sign.

They lost themselves, travelers exposed in this way, totally unforeseen, strange. This was a city they had read on pages in libraries and quiet rooms, leaving the books to find a hard street, bitter faces, closed silent lips at home.

But there the boy stood, his face raised in recognition, his hand, like all theirs raised.

The car swung ahead. The bullet cracked. From the confusion as they all bent, head and shoulders low in a reflex

of dread, Helen looked up to Hans’s unmoved head, either risen immediately or never changed.

The truck wheeled sharp, on two wheels, to the left, and they caught at arms and hands in confusion, straightening now, recovered.

Avenues opened wider and wider, the plane-trees, the oranges, the palms. Cars passed them now, and each time they blew, One-two-three, stopping to race the cars loaded with guns, spiked with guns. Each car carried the white letters of its organization: U.G.T., C.N.T., F.A.I.

The chopping of pavingstones was loud at the streetcorners.

And now, down the long Rambla, past riddled barracks, shell-torn carnivals, bomb-pocked hotels. The dead cafés, their chairs piled on the sidewalk, before the drawn steel curtains.

Wind, fast wind increasing; the long view of a brick-orange fortress, impregnable and high. The high column, the long blue stripe of sea.

And the truck turning. Avenues opened into a great circle,

Teaching

Continued from page 5

role of women volunteers like Evelyn Hutchins, Salaria Kea, and Ruth Davidow invariably ignites interest in these forgotten feminists. And discussions of the Jewish volunteers link the soldiers of the International Brigades to the failure to stop Hitler and prevent the Holocaust.

Teaching the Spanish Civil War, in other words, brings a fresh outlook to subjects that are already in the existing curricula: the origins of World War II, totalitarian threats to democracy, U.S. isolationism vs. internationalism, and the unexpected consequences that led to the Cold War, anti-communist campaigns, and the acceptance of General Franco’s dictatorship as part of the western alliance in the postwar era. Teachers of English and Spanish literature can find a wealth of sources in the writings of Hemingway, Lorca, Neruda, and many other less famous writers.

a public square, mastered by two tall pillars, holding subway stations, statues, overturned wrecks of cars, candycolor posters, full-rounded walls, cafés, the guarded front of an immense building out of which streamed warmth and talk, files of young people streaming.

The truck circled, slowing. It stopped at the building’s entrance. The travelers jumped one by one.

Hans dropped catquick down, and swung his arms up for Helen. She placed her hands on his cable wrists, and jumped. It was then that the four pains in the right palm were noticeable, and, looking down, the four blood-dark crescents were seen, the mark of the clenched fist, clutched during the voyage.

A guard in a blue uniform, rifle slung at his back, was standing with them.

He smiled at the hand. They answered. She asked, “and this?” The building was large. It streamed warmth.

He looked at the travelers. “Hotel Olimpiada.” ■

The Spanish Civil War also illuminates issues of human rights. Picasso’s *Guernica* symbolizes a form of terror tactics that democratic people abhorred, even before air attacks on civilians became common practice in World War II and subsequent wars.

Besides classroom activities, ALBA also encourages our teachers to teach other teachers by attending regional conferences of professional educators, contributing articles, and creating original lesson plans and curricula that can be published both in print and online. ALBA’s website provides numerous sources and samples.

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Memoir of Survivor

Fugitive from Spanish Fascism. A Memoir. By Miguel Domínguez Soler. Translated and with an Introduction by Richard Baker. Cornerstone Press, 2010.

By Cecilia Enjuto Rangel

Miguel Domínguez Soler, a young Spanish Socialist worker, committed to republican and democratic ideals, had to flee his hometown of Huelva at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936, after the Fascists took over the town. This memoir is based on the diaries he wrote throughout the turbulent and terrible years that followed the Fascists’ coup, from 1936 until the end of World War II.

Fugitive from Spanish Fascism is one of those books you just cannot put down. It is a riveting tale of survival in the midst of dangerous conditions. Based on autobiographical writings, this memoir truly reads like a historical novel, full of adventures and close encounters with death. The narrative takes us from the atrocities of the Spanish Civil War, escape across the river to Portugal, years trying to evade deportation, experiences as a slave worker during the Nazi occupation of French Morocco, and exiled life as a worker in sardine-packing factories in Morocco. Miguel constantly voices a passionate critique of fascism and its multiple injustices, and his story offers an exemplary tale of struggle for freedom and preservation of one’s integrity against all odds. As he puts it towards the end of the book: “I have always been and always will be a free man until death.... One thing is the appearance of liberty, and another is the freedom one forges and maintains in one’s heart.”

Cecilia Enjuto Rangel teaches in the Spanish department at the University of Oregon.

Miguel Domínguez Soler’s story begins in Ayamonte, Huelva, when the governor asks for supporters to defend this border town, “since the most immediate danger would come from Portugal, ruled by the dictator Oliveira Salazar.” He recounts how, twelve days later, he was woken up, astonished by the news that the authorities had fled, and that he needed to become a fugitive in order to survive. A Portuguese smuggler, “The Pope,” helped him in different moments throughout his journey, but he mainly gave him the tools to subsist and to flee.

After a few days in the forest, Miguel returned to town and hid in various houses. There he learned about the hundreds of executions without trial of many of his friends: “It’s the town’s ‘rich kids’... who break into the houses of the poor with their blue overalls...smelling of dried blood and gunpowder. They are in league with the priests and military men, in other words, the cross and sword....”

Throughout the memoir, Miguel stresses how the war was caused by an anti-democratic alliance of the upper classes, many of them from the Falange Española, with the Catholic Church and the military. He pays homage to all the victims of the Fascist regime by remembering the tragic stories of a few: the schoolteacher, the anticlerical Freemason, the builder, the mothers who were shaved and humiliated publicly. Besides being a fascinating text, this book could be used as an excellent teaching tool for students.

Miguel survives because he crosses the frontier and lives in Portugal during most of the war. Portuguese leftists, fighting Salazar’s dictatorship, had formed a strong net of support for Spanish Republican refugees. Throughout his many perilous adventures in Portugal, Miguel’s ingenuity as an “intellectual worker,” as he called himself, and his talent for learning languages

helped him blend in with diverse social circles. Even among the Portuguese Left, he found himself eloquently defending the Republic as the only democratic option. He quotes himself: “The military insurgents have three essential things they need: arms, foreign support and lies. They claim to be leading an anti-Communist crusade, which is absurd because there had only been four Communist deputies in the parliament. Their only aim is to end democracy. Germany and Italy want to extend their economic control over Europe.”

In 1939 Miguel escaped to Morocco to start a new life running a factory in the sardine-packing industry. But with the Nazi occupation of France and General Pétain’s political alliances, the French gendarmes targeted Spanish refugees, and many were taken as slave laborers, forced to build the Trans-Saharan railroad in the middle of the desert. The operation was like a concentration camp, where discipline was enforced through the cruelest punishments. Months later, he was saved from that nightmare by Monsieur Mallein, who despite technically “owning” him, had become his friend, enabling Miguel to work under better conditions.

Miguel frequently expresses the wishes of many Spanish exiles that the liberation from Fascism in Europe would mean the end of Franco’s dictatorship. Like many others, he would be bitterly disappointed.

Miguel also managed to find a partner, a lover, and a wife in a Moroccan girl named Abouch, laughing “at all religions” and defying all the racial prejudices they had to endure. It is thanks to Abouch that we are able to read his memoir, as the excellent introduction by Richard Baker explains.

Fugitive from Spanish Fascism is well edited and well documented, with useful and illuminating footnotes. The text is lovingly and carefully translated into English, breathing life into Miguel’s voice. I recommend it to anyone interested in reading a poignant tribute to freedom. ■

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