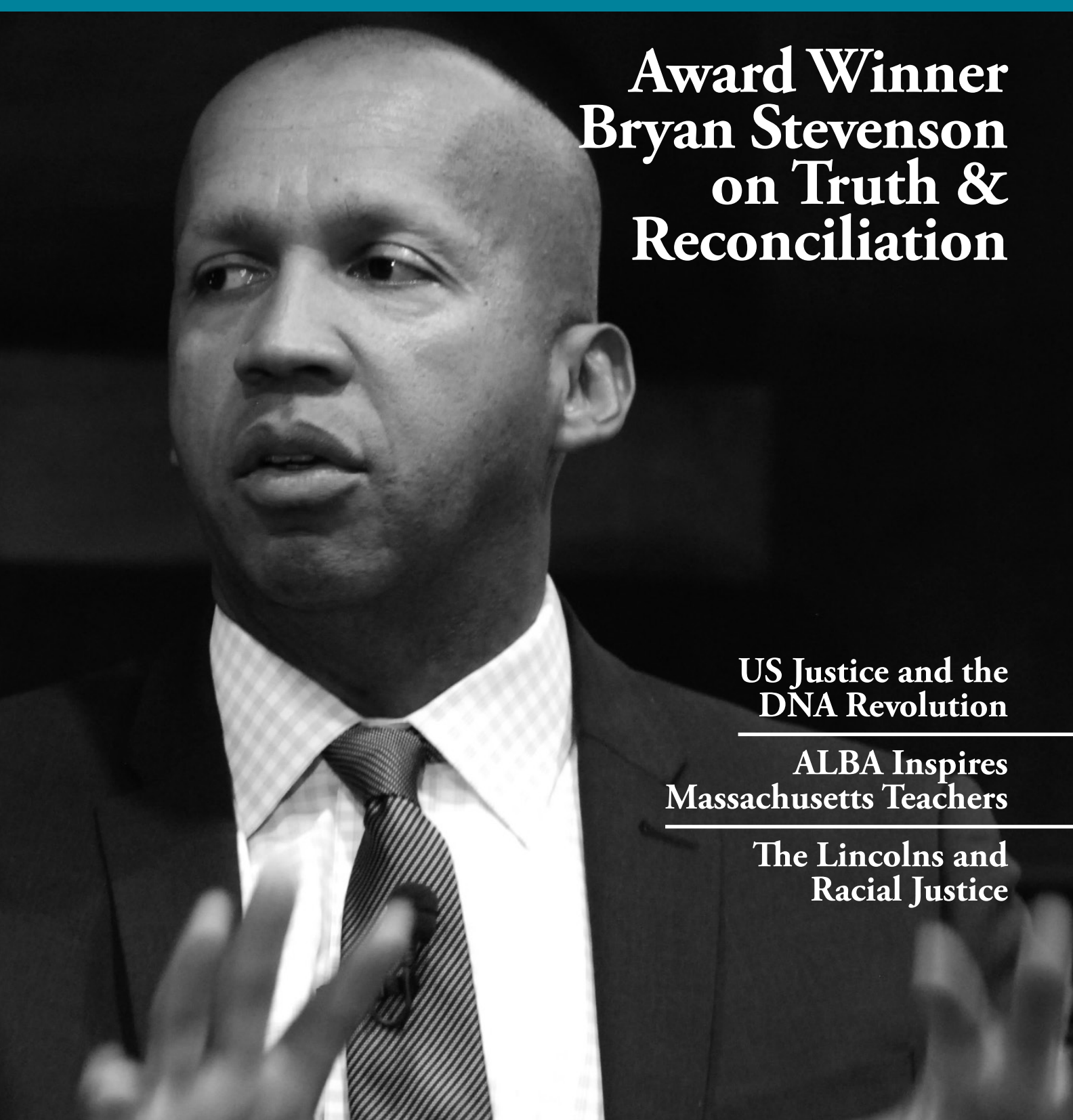


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June 2014

# The Volunteer

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE



## Award Winner Bryan Stevenson on Truth & Reconciliation

US Justice and the  
DNA Revolution

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ALBA Inspires  
Massachusetts Teachers

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The Lincolns and  
Racial Justice

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Cover Photo Credit: Len Tsou

## Dear Friends,

Bryan Stevenson stood on the stage at ALBA's reunion in New York City on April 27 and shined his light on justice. His message reverberated with everyone present. His voice moved us to tears—and to action.

Bryan's message was a simple one. This country and the world are deeply scarred by histories of injustice. But the past is also full of inspirational examples of effective struggles against that injustice. If we believe in truth and justice and reconciliation, then those histories cannot be buried or hidden or sugarcoated. They need to be acknowledged. They need to be taught. They need to be understood. This is why his Equal Injustice Initiative combines hands-on work in prisons and courts with an ambitious educational program.

Education is what ALBA is all about. The new ALBA T-shirt puts it well: "Know History to Change History." In March, we spent an incredibly productive day with high school teachers from Massachusetts (see p. 9). They will soon be teaching their students about the need to stand up for their beliefs, inspired by the volunteers of the Lincoln Brigade. Another teacher from Stuyvesant High School who attended our New York institute in the fall developed a stunning project in which her students studied the Lincolns and the Spanish Civil War and designed their own political posters (see p. 11). In addition, a group of her students attended our event. And another teacher from Springboro, Ohio, who attended our institute in 2010, has been teaching the subject every year since and is organizing a fundraising drive for ALBA.

Bryan Stevenson didn't just talk about the need to acknowledge the uncomfortable past and its enduring legacy of injustice. He also talked about the need for solidarity, alliances, and commitment. Those are terms we understand. After all, few people in American history exemplify those three values better than the volunteers of the Lincoln Brigade, whose internationalist solidarity was the force that drove them to join the alliance against fascism and racism.

We know you are committed, too. To continue our important educational work, to reach young people who hold the future of our ideals, we need your support now. We need your help to ensure that your legacy, our legacy, the Lincolns' legacy, will endure as we bring our lessons into classrooms to inspire younger generations, as we, too have been inspired and remain inspired.

¡Salud!



**Sebastiaan Faber**  
Chair of the Board  
of Governors



**Marina Garde**  
Executive Director

## Letter to the Editor

Today, I received the March 2014 issue of *The Volunteer*, the last page of which lists the last 10 brigaders alive in the world. Gerhard Hoffmann and Hans Landauer are my good friends in Vienna.

I was very happy to also see the name of my good friend Luis Alberto Quesada, although strictly speaking he was not part of the International Brigades. All Spanish-American volunteers were enrolled, first, in the militia columns (anarchist and socialist), and later in the Popular Republican Army. They were practically considered Spaniards. Very few Argentine volunteers were in the International Brigades.

Luis Alberto Quesada was born in 1919 in Lomas de Zamora, in the province of Buenos Aires, to Spanish parents. He was in Spain when the Spanish Civil War began. When the war ended, he spent 17 years imprisoned in different Francoist jails until he was freed and could return to Buenos Aires.

He has been admitted to a Geriatric Institute and is not in good health.

**Juan Carlos Cesarini, Buenos Aires**

# Solidarity Forever: New York Reunion Carries the Torch Forward

By the Editors

Josh White, Jr., Photo by Len Tsou.



At ALBA's moving event in New York, actor Mike Farrell, singer Josh White, Jr., and Amnesty International's Steven Hawkins helped honor Pete Seeger and Bryan Stevenson while celebrating the Lincoln volunteers' commitment to social and racial justice.

*Solidarity Forever*—the commitment to social justice that inspired the volunteers of the Lincoln Brigade stood as a passionate rallying cry at this year's 78<sup>th</sup> reunion ceremonies in New York on April 27.

Highlighting the event was a musical homage to the late troubadour of the left, Pete Seeger, and the bestowal of the fourth ALBA/Puffin Human Rights Activist Award to the charismatic Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, an Alabama-based group that provides legal support for indigent defendants and prisoners who have been denied their legal rights.

Three sets of songs—performed by Josh White, Jr.; Jennifer Glass and Brian Koehler; and the quartet of Peter Blood, Annie Patterson, Matt Emmer, and David Bernz—linked Pete's ballads of protest with the Spanish Civil War songs he immortalized on vinyl, tape, and CDs. A brief video, rescued from the ALBA archives, showed Pete performing for the Lincoln veterans in the early 1970s. A sign saying *Free Angela Davis* appeared above Pete's banjo. He was, as the day's MC Sebastiaan Faber remarked, the most frequent and most loved singer at the annual Lincoln Brigade events.

Between the musical sets, Tony Geist spoke about the Lincoln veterans' strong ties to equal rights both during the Spanish Civil War and in numerous civil rights struggles after they returned to America. (See page 5.)

Geist's remarks segued smoothly to the Human Rights Award ceremony. Introduced by actor Mike Farrell, who heads the anti-capital punishment group Death Penalty Focus, and by Steven Hawkins, executive director of Amnesty International USA, Bryan Stevenson represents an important link that ties

America's current legal injustices to a history of racial discrimination and prejudicial jurisprudence.

ALBA Chair Sebastiaan Faber and the Puffin Foundation's Neal Rosenstein presented Stevenson with a plaque that accompanies the \$100,000 award, one of the largest human rights prizes given by any organization.

All of the above, however, was prologue to Stevenson's riveting address, explaining how and why he works on behalf of condemned prisoners, juvenile offenders treated as adults, people wrongly convicted, poor people without proper counsel, and various trials marked by racial prejudice and judicial misconduct.

He spoke softly, intensely, drawing on his personal experience with victims of injustice, people broken by systematic violence and deliberate mistreatment. He pleaded, in the end, for hope, insisting that even in the worst situations, he has found inspiration from the people he serves, who offer remarkable examples of resilience, resistance, and self-affirmation. "I am here," said one distraught woman, determined to be present at a murder trial to support a wrongly accused African-American defendant, despite the court's open hostility to the members of her community. "I am here." And Stevenson reminded the audience that all of us are here, continuing to demand equal justice for all.

Some said afterward that Stevenson had brought a spirit of "soul" to the annual event. Some said it was the most moving reunion in the last decade. Some said it carried the Lincoln veterans, of whom only one survives, into the good fight of 21<sup>st</sup> century. ▲

## \$100,000 TO CONTINUE THE GOOD WORK



The annual ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism recognizes individuals or organizations whose work has had an exceptionally positive impact on the advancement and defense of human rights.

Endowed by the Puffin Foundation, the \$100,000 cash award supports the laureate's ongoing activist work. The Award was established in 2011 to honor the International Brigades and all those who fought against fascism during the Spanish Civil War.

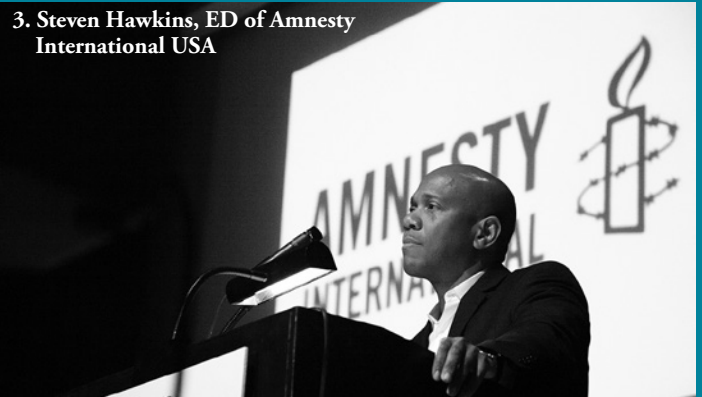




1. The musicians



2. The Orozco Room, with Manus O’Riordan (right), Secretary of the International Brigade Memorial Trust, Ireland



3. Steven Hawkins, ED of Amnesty International USA

“This was one of the very best gatherings—and I’ve been attending since the very beginning. It truly recalled the spirit of the Volunteers” —Granny Peace



4. Marina Garde

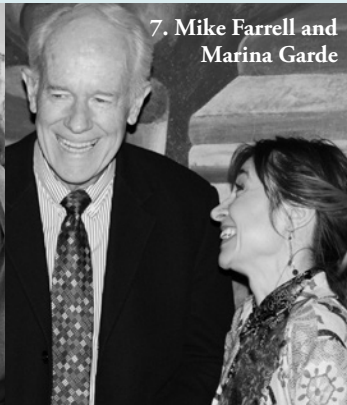


5. The New School auditorium

“What a wonderful day of joyful camaraderie! Sitting in the audience, I was most inspired with the entire program” —Doug Yeager, producer



6. Judith Ross, Ray Hoff, and Josie Nelson Yurek



7. Mike Farrell and Marina Garde



8. Sebastian Faber

“That was a brilliant event. Mazel tov. Kudos. Felicidades” —Gina Herrmann



9. Herbert Freeman, Herbert Molin, and Rita Delespara



10

10. Peter Carroll, Neal Rosenstein, Marina Garde, Perry Rosenstein, Sebastian Faber, Gladys Rosenstein, and Bryan Stevenson.



11

11. Patricia Cazorla, Juliene Patrick, and Andrew Plotch.

12. Perry Rosenstein, Bryan Stevenson, and Neal Rosenstein.



12



# A LEGACY OF RACIAL JUSTICE

By Tony Geist

**Some 90 African-Americans joined the Lincoln Brigade in Spain. They came from urban inner cities in the north and the rural south; they were sharecroppers, labor organizers, mechanics, laborers, merchant seamen, and students. They all shared a commitment to justice and equality.**

**I** MUST KEEP FIGHTIN’/UNTIL I’M DYIN’. . . Paul Robeson sang these lyrics to “Old Man River” in a concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London in December 1937, changing Hammerstein’s original verses, *I’m tired of livin’/An’ scared of dyin’*, words to which he would never return. By Robeson’s own admission he was thinking of Spain when he sang these lines—I must keep fightin’/Until I’m dyin’ . . .—and within a month he would visit that country in the throes of its bloody Civil War. It was a turning point in his life.

We are here today to honor Bryan Stevenson with the ALBA-Puffin Award for Human Rights, in recognition of his tireless and brilliant work for economic and racial justice. What are the links that allow me to mention Paul Robeson, a war that raged on the southern flank of Europe nearly 80 years ago, and Bryan Stevenson in the same breath?

When Paul Robeson visited Spain in January 1938 he met a number of the 2,800 young Americans known as the

## ***“Spain was the first time as a black man I felt a free man.”***

Abraham Lincoln Brigade who volunteered to fight fascism in that country. They in turn were part of the International Brigades, 35,000 of them who came from 52 different countries to defend democracy from the assault by Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. Among the American volunteers were some 90 African-Americans.

They came from urban inner cities in the north as well as the rural south of the United States. They were sharecroppers, labor organizers, mechanics, laborers, merchant seamen, and students. They all shared a commitment to justice and equality that led them to offer their lives to achieve those goals.

Al Chisholm said that he volunteered to fight in Spain because when Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in 1935 “there wasn’t a hell of a lot I could do about it.” Spain was the first chance to fight back, and Al and his African-American comrades knew when to step up.

The Lincoln Brigade was the first racially integrated military unit in American history. Even during World War II, black soldiers had to serve in segregated units. Yet in Spain black and white fought shoulder to shoulder. The Lincolns were aware at the time that they were making history, and were proud of it.

Oliver Law was a labor organizer from Chicago who as commander of the Lincolns became the first African-American to command white troops in the history of the American armed forces. Oliver Law was killed in the battle of Brunete, leading his men in an attack up Mosquito Hill, where he lies in an unmarked grave.

Jimmy Yates survived the war and wrote a wonderful memoir, *From Mississippi to Madrid*. We are fortunate to have him on film talking about his experiences in Spain, in this clip from *Souls without Borders*: “Spain was the first time as a black man I felt a free man.”

Eighty or 90 women volunteered with the Lincolns, mostly in the medical corps, including Salaria Kea, a nurse from Akron, Ohio. Salaria had a passion for medicine from a young age yet was refused admission at three nursing schools in Ohio because of her race before she finally was accepted to the Harlem Hospital Training School in New York, where she graduated in 1934. She experienced discrimination when she volunteered for the Red Cross and enlisted for Spain in 1937.

In Spain the Lincolns fought the good fight yet they lost. It was there that they learned, in the words of Albert Camus, “that one can be right and yet be beaten, that force can defeat spirit, that there are times when courage is not its own

reward.” Nearly a third of the American volunteers, black and white, Jewish and Christian, Latino and Asian, lie buried in the Spanish earth. When the survivors came home they were greeted as heroes by the Left and as common criminals by the government.

When the United States entered World War II most of the able-bodied vets volunteered for service. Despite the fact that they were virtually the only Americans with direct combat experience they had difficulty being sent overseas. The African-Americans, who fought side by side with their white comrades in Spain, were forced to serve in segregated units and were not assigned combat roles until the very end of the war. After the war, they faced a double discrimination: for their skin color (“back to the bottom,” as Salaria Kea put it), and for their politics. For they had landed in Jim Crow America, a country caught in the throes of the anti-Communist hysteria of the McCarthy era.

It wasn’t until the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s that things began to change. We have a picture of Paul Robeson with Julian Bond as a child: passing the torch, handing on the passion for justice from one generation to the next.

The vets didn’t sit out this good fight either. Del Berg recently recalled that his proudest moment since Spain was “When I was elected vice president of the local NAACP.” Milt Wolff worked for the Civil Rights Congress, touring the south with an African-American folk singer in defense of black prisoners. Jack Penrose joined sit-in strikers to integrate lunch counters in Gainesville, Florida. And Abe Osheroff spent the Freedom Summer building a community center in a rural black community in Holmes County, Mississippi, where he lived with activist Hartman Turnbow. Veteran Robert Klonsky organized a fundraiser for the Southern Christian Leadership Council, whose first president was Martin Luther King.

And so we come full circle. Today we are presenting the ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism to Bryan Stevenson because in his own striving for economic and racial justice he carries the spirit of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I believe that Stevenson expresses it best, when he quotes Martin Luther King: “the moral arc of the universe is long but it bends toward justice.”

*Tony Geist, longtime ALBA Board member and Chair of the Spanish Department at the University of Washington, presented this talk at the 2014 reunion. ▲*



# TOWARD TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: Changing the Narrative of US History

By Sebastiaan Faber



Mike Farrell and Bryan Stevenson in the Orozco Room. Photo Len Tsou.

“**WE ARE STRONGER** when we have a historical perspective, because it roots our ability to envision a world that is not the world other people think we have to accept,” Bryan Stevenson said in an inspiring, hour-long conversation with actor and activist Mike Farrell during ALBA’s annual reunion at the New School in New York City on April 27. Stevenson is the founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama. Later that day, he accepted the fourth annual ALBA/

Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism, a \$100,000 prize endowed by the Puffin Foundation.

Surrounded by striking images painted in 1930 by Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco, Farrell and Stevenson discussed the many challenges facing the United States as it confronts its history of discrimination and injustice—a history that lives on in a judicial system that is overwhelmingly skewed against racial minorities and the poor. “In honor of the men and women who

## *The U.S. history of discrimination and injustice that lives on in a judicial system overwhelmingly skewed against racial minorities and the poor.*

gave their time, energy, and in too many instances their lives to defend democracy and human rights,” said Farrell, president of the non-profit organization Death Penalty Focus, “there is no better person than your honoree in today’s America to recognize with the ALBA/Puffin Award. Bryan’s is this country’s most powerful voice for truth and justice. He is one of the leading spokespeople for what is right and good in our country. And his Equal Justice Initiative is leading the way toward a much-needed process of truth and reconciliation.”

“In the United States we are utterly incapable of reflecting honestly on our history and the things that we do wrong,” Stevenson said. “We confuse pride and support for America with the notion that we can never apologize, never acknowledge our defects. And we are suffering because of it. At the Equal Justice Initiative we are working to change the narrative of race and poverty in this country.

*We confuse pride and support for America with the notion that we can never apologize, never acknowledge our defects.*

“The way I see it, four institutions have shaped the lives of African-Americans. The first is slavery and its legacy. Slavery was sustained by myths: by narratives that tried to dehumanize people of African descent. It is these myths that allowed good people to feel okay about having slaves. Now, unfortunately, there is nothing about those myths in the Emancipation Declaration. As a result, slavery didn’t end: it just evolved during Reconstruction.

“The second institution shaping African-American lives goes from Reconstruction until World War II—an era of terrorism. What shaped my grandparents’ worldview was lynching, convict leasing; the daily threat of violence. It was this threat—4,000 lynchings, 10,000 near-lynchings—that made people submit to racial hierarchy and segregation and that destroyed black families.

“The third institution is the Civil Rights era, which gets a lot of attention, but in a way that is much too superficial and celebratory.

“The fourth contemporary institution is mass incarceration: the fact that one in three black male babies born in the United States today is expected to go to jail or prison. That was never true in the 20<sup>th</sup> century or in the 19<sup>th</sup>. The presumption of guilt that we assign to people of color, black or brown, is a legacy of our failure to tell the truth about our racial history. It is a result of the fact that we never had a truth and reconciliation process like they had in South Africa or in Rwanda. I firmly believe that until we tell the truth about this history, we will not recover, we will not move forward. The basic human-rights violations are too grave and too overwhelming to just evaporate. They create

traces and shadows and cuts and injuries that we cannot ignore. If we do, they will fester.”

Stevenson, whom Farrell called “one of America’s leading orators,” held his audience captive, sometimes moving it to tears, by alternating stark truths with poignant stories from his own upbringing in a racially divided Alabama and his long experience as a trial lawyer working on behalf of indigent defendants, particularly on death row. “The U.S. prison population has grown from 300,000 in 1972 to 2.3 million today,” he said. “Nearly 3,000 children have been condemned to die in prison; for every nine people executed, one innocent person has been exonerated. We would be very uncomfortable with a law that would have someone who is convicted of rape be raped by an employee of the state. We think that is inhumane. Nor would we hire someone to beat people convicted of assault. We’d feel bad for the person who would have to do the raping or the beating. But we absolutely believe we have to kill people who have killed people. We have these



Kate Doyle, winner of the 2012 ALBA/Puffin Award, makes a point in the discussion.  
Photo Len Tsou.

constructs—lethal injection or executions by midnight—that allow us to think that this practice will not reflect on us, that *we* are not killing other people, many of whom are innocent. But it is in our name that these people are executed. And that is no better or different than letting people be raped or beaten in our names—or using drones to assassinate them.”

Farrell, best known for his work on the popular television series *M\*A\*S\*H*, is a long-time human-rights activist. Since 1979 he has been spokesperson for CONCERN/America, an international refugee aid and development organization, visiting refugee camps in Asia and Central America and helping to disseminate information about CONCERN/America’s work across the globe. He served as Co-Chair of the California Committee of Human Rights Watch from 1994 to 2004 and remains a member of the Committee. He presently serves with Death Penalty Focus and as a member of the advisory board of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

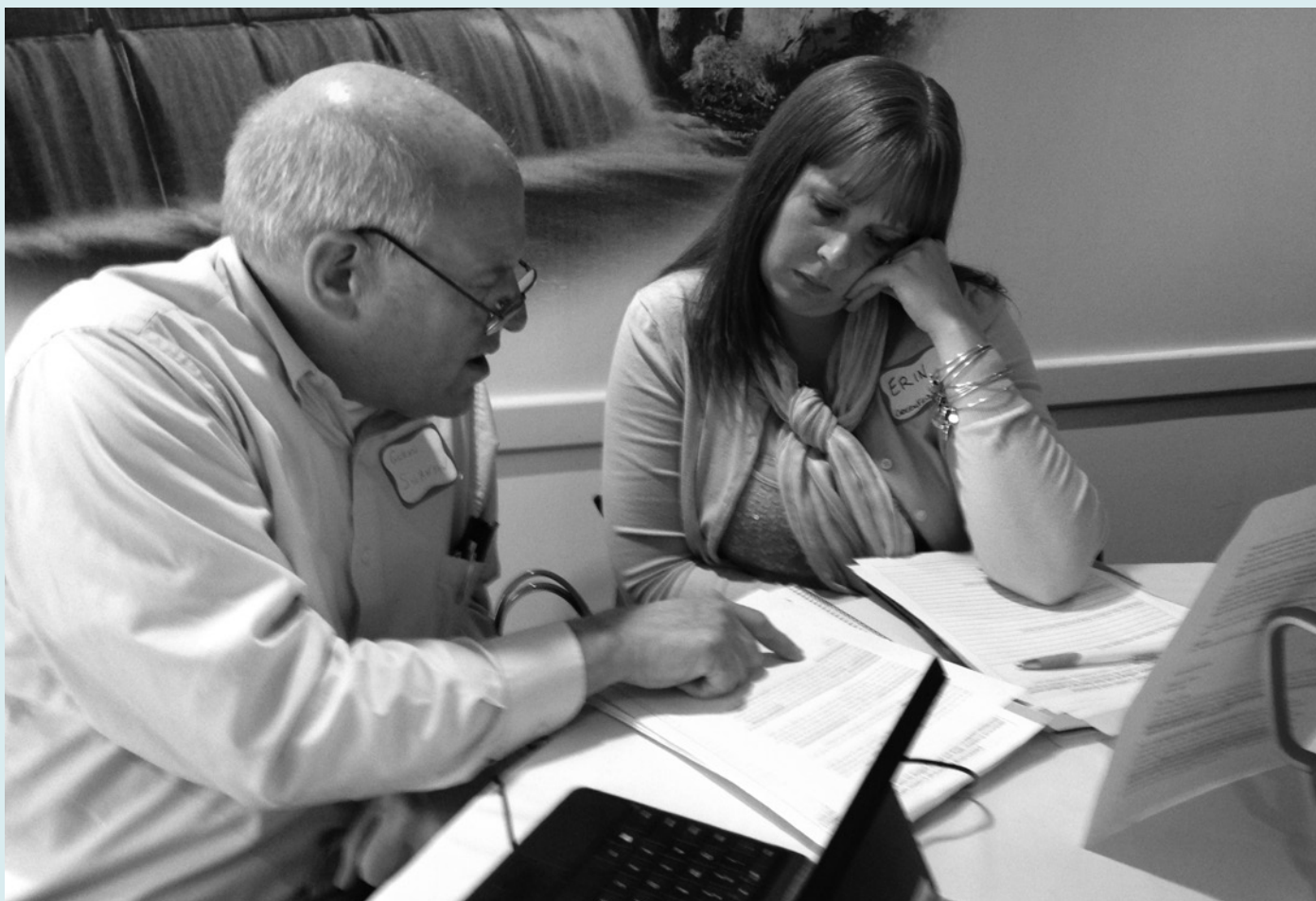
ALBA’s 78<sup>th</sup> annual reunion was made possible with the support of an Honorary Committee including Julian Bond, Peter Coyote, Lila Downs, Gael García Bernal, Oliver Stone, and the members of the Host Committee including Burt Cohen, Dan Czitrom, Kevin Dyer, Sebastiaan Faber, Jeanne Houck, Gabriel Jackson, Julia Newman, Ellyn Polshek, Michael Ratner, and Fredda Weiss. The entire conversation between Stevenson and Farrell is available as a podcast at [www.albavolunteer.org](http://www.albavolunteer.org). ▲



# ALBA Inspires Massachusetts Teachers

By the Editors

The new Common Core Standards provide ALBA with an opportunity to help more high school teachers introduce the Spanish Civil War into their classes.



Glenn Swanson and Erin Degen plan a lesson. Photo Rich Cairn.

**L**AST MARCH, 30 social studies teachers from several western Massachusetts schools gathered on the campus of Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley for a productive six-hour workshop led by ALBA's Peter N. Carroll and Sebastiaan Faber together with master teacher Kelley Brown and Richard Cairn, Director of the Emerging America and Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Program at the Collaborative for Educational Services of Northampton, MA.

During the morning session, Carroll showed how the Spanish Civil War and the Lincoln Brigade provide compelling windows into a range of major threads in United States and world history, from the Great Depression and the New Deal to isolationism, the Cold War, McCarthyism, the Civil Rights movement and the defense of human rights. Faber, who teaches at Oberlin College, illustrated how the visual archive of the Spanish Civil War—particularly photographs and posters—can be used



Kelley Brown and Rich Cairn. Photos Sebastiaan Faber.

fruitfully in a high school setting. “Students are more visually literate than any previous generation,” he said; “they are very good at reading and thinking about images, because they produce and manipulate images all the time.”

The participating teachers received a copy of the documentary *The Good Fight*, which they viewed in advance of the workshop, a 75-page binder with Lincoln Brigade letters, speeches and testimonies, lesson plan templates and other resources as well as access to ALBA’s new teaching resource website.

Under Rich Cairn’s and Kelley Brown’s expert guidance, the afternoon session allowed teachers to design lesson plans that use ALBA’s compelling primary-source materials to meet Common Core State Standards. Brown led the teachers through a gradual process that allows students to complete a complex task in a series of distinct steps. “The Common Core Standards set clear benchmarks for your students,” she said, “but they don’t tell you how to get there. For example, students are expected to formulate a research statement and find evidence in primary sources to back it up. That’s a daunting task for anyone. But when you properly scaffold your assignments it can be done.”

The participating teachers left inspired and energized. “Tremendous presenters and organization,” one of them wrote, “Any and *all* materials are prized for future use.” “Powerful subject matter,” another one said. “A wonderful way to spend a Saturday! *And I mean it!*” Other comments included: “Thank you so much for changing the way history is taught”; “I will be teaching this next year”; “I can’t wait to use the materials with my class!”

The ALBA Institute was made possible with the generous support of the Puffin Foundation, ALBA donors, the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Program, and the Collaborative for Educational Services. ▲

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**The Volunteer**

# Students Showcase their Lessons



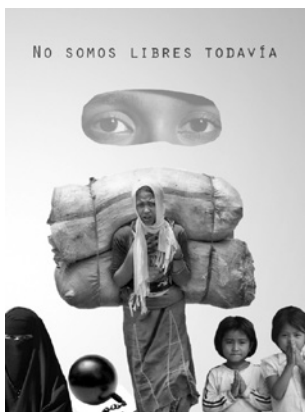
Stuyvesant students at the showcase. Photo Xóchitl Gil-Higuchi.



Anna Montserrat and Robert Weldon, Spanish teachers at Stuyvesant.  
Photo Xóchitl Gil-Higuchi.

IN APRIL, A STUDENT SHOWCASE DAY AT NEW YORK CITY'S prestigious Stuyvesant High School marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Spanish Civil War with presentations based on ALBA's recent Teaching Institute. Students in Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish Literature, AP Spanish Language, and 3<sup>rd</sup>-year Spanish presented interpretative poems accompanied by guitar or saxophone, fictional letters written from the perspective of an imagined American volunteer, and contemporary political posters inspired by the posters of the Spanish Civil War.

The Showcase was organized by Anna Montserrat and Robert Weldon, Stuyvesant's Spanish teachers, who were inspired to dedicate a week of study on the Spanish Civil War after attending ALBA's New York Teaching Institute last November. The program culminated with a dedication to Moe Fishman, who graduated from Stuyvesant before joining the Lincoln Brigade, and featured the late Pete Seeger's musical rendition of La Quince Brigada. ▲



Christina Chong and Paul Lim



Yu Qing Xu



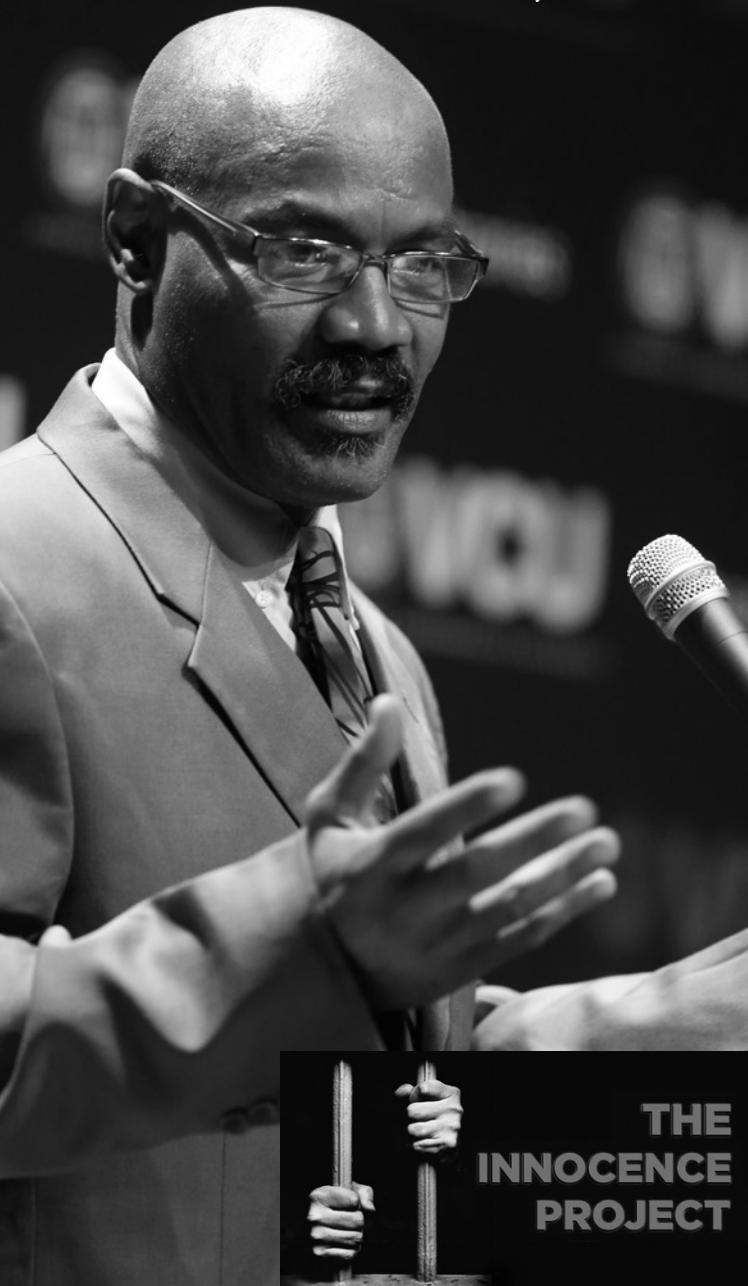
Pablo Blanco and Phillip Huynh



# THE HARD LESSONS OF THE DNA EXONERATIONS

By Maddy deLone

Marvin Anderson speaking at the Virginia Commonwealth University in 2013.  
Photo courtesy of VCU Libraries.



**The era of DNA has changed the face of criminal justice forever. DNA tests have contributed to the exoneration of hundreds of innocent individuals—and exposed a deeply flawed system. Maddy deLone, executive director of the Innocence Project, makes the case for science-based judicial reform.**

**M**ARVIN ANDERSON served 15 years of a 210-year sentence and three years on parole, for a rape, before he was exonerated in 2002 by DNA evidence. The victim was a white woman who had been attacked by a black male. Anderson, who is black, became a suspect in the case simply because he was known by the police to have dated a white woman. He had no prior criminal record, but police included his work identification card, which was in color, in a photo spread that included the black and white mug-shot photos of five other men. Not surprisingly, Anderson was selected. Within an hour of the photo spread, the victim was asked to identify her assailant from a live lineup. Anderson was the only person in the lineup whose picture was in the original photo array. Her memory having been tainted by the earlier photo, the victim wrongly selected Anderson again.

Wrongful convictions are hardly a modern phenomenon. Until recently, however, an injustice had little hope of being righted. The era of DNA has changed the face of criminal justice forever, having not only contributed to the exoneration of hundreds of innocent individuals but also exposed a system that is deeply flawed. Each time an innocent man or woman walks out of prison, the public's confidence in the ability of the system to administer justice fairly is weakened.

Since 1989, 316 innocent individuals have been exonerated by DNA evidence, including 18 prisoners who served time on death row. These are not insignificant numbers, but sadly they represent only a small portion of wrongful convictions because DNA testing can only help in a small fraction of cases. Law enforcement experts estimate that testable DNA evidence is available for less than 10% of violent felonies, to say nothing of the many non-violent crimes for which many people are incarcerated. In addition to limited available evidence, there exists a large backlog of actual innocence cases and a limited number of individuals who can allocate sufficient

*How many innocent people are in prison? We will never know. But even if 1% of prisoners are innocent..., it would mean that a staggering 22,000 innocent men and women are incarcerated.*

time to look into these claims. In other words, the DNA exonerations represent only the tip of the iceberg.

How many innocent people are in prison? We will never know. Just the question itself is haunting, reflecting the now common knowledge that there are undeniably more innocent people languishing behind bars than we will ever find and free. However, even if as few as 1% of prisoners are innocent (a very low estimate in light of the many studies that have been conducted on the subject), it would mean that a staggering 22,000 innocent men and women are incarcerated in America's jails and prisons for crimes that they did not commit.

Fortunately DNA exonerations have generated dramatic learning moments about the root causes of wrongful convictions. Eyewitness misidentification, false confessions, faulty forensic evidence, police and prosecutorial error and misconduct, inadequate defense lawyers and incentivized informant testimony are the most common contributors.

Stories like Anderson's are all too common among DNA exonerees. Nearly 75% of wrongful convictions later overturned by DNA testing were caused at least in part by eyewitness misidentification. Just as science is helping us to uncover these terrible miscarriages of justice, it is also helping us to prevent them from happening in the first place. Scientists have been studying memory and identification for more than three decades and have developed proven reforms that make police identification procedures more reliable. The Innocence Project has helped to persuade state and local policy makers to adopt more reliable identification procedures and other science-based reforms across the nation.

When the organization was founded in 1992, not one state had a law granting access to post-conviction DNA testing of evidence to prisoners; now, every state has one. Similarly, nine states have now adopted identification reforms and 23 require mandatory recording of interrogations. Moving forward, the Innocence Project has its sights on improving some of the other egregious flaws in the system, such as those stemming from the tremendous volume of people processed through an overburdened system that cannot provide the time to treat each individual as a person, let alone do the work that would better protect the innocent.

Mistakes are inevitable in any system, and the criminal justice system is no exception. However, when life and liberty are at stake, errors must be treated as learning opportunities. It is possible to minimize the risks of convicting the innocent without undermining the prosecution of the guilty, and in order to achieve this there is still work to be done in recognizing and reforming the various systemic weaknesses that can cause wrongful convictions to occur in the first place. ▲

*Maddy deLone is Executive Director of the Innocence Project ([www.innocenceproject.org](http://www.innocenceproject.org)), a national litigation and public policy organization dedicated to exonerating the wrongly convicted through DNA testing and reforming the system to prevent further injustice. Marvin Anderson currently serves on the Board of the Innocence Project and is the Fire Chief in Hanover, Virginia.*

## FIGHT APATHY

Andrew Plotch, the winner of the 2012 ALBA-Puffin Foundation Youth Activist Award and a high school senior in New Jersey, is the creator and leader of the nationwide Fight Apathy Campaign, reaching over 80,000 high school students in 21 states and two territories. During Fight Apathy Week, students participated in political discussions at school, both inside the classroom and out.

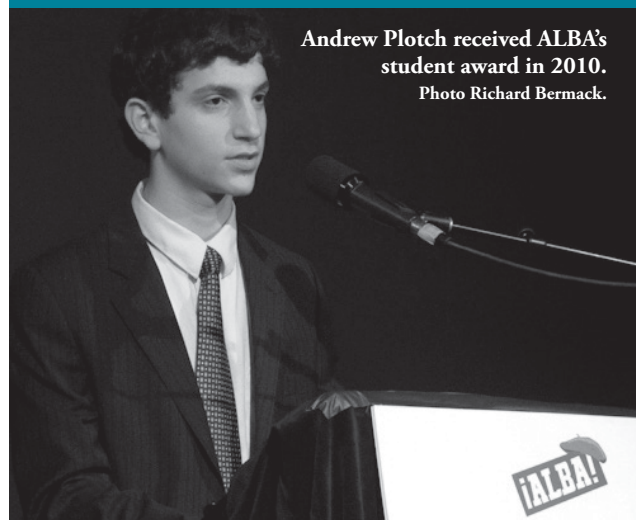
At Fight Apathy events every student receives a sticker with the text "I believe in..."; allowing every student to fill in the blank. The stickers serve as catalysts for discussions about such topics as political morality, fiscal policy, and elections.

"You can write anything on the stickers, from marriage equality to fiscal responsibility, Marxism to Jesus. It's not what you care about; the important thing is to voice your opinion and take action," Andrew said. "At the end of the day the campaign is all about empowering others. That's how you make change in the world."

The campaign, which Andrew started just before he received the ALBA award in 2012, began in his school, Bergen Academies. It has now become a nationally sponsored initiative of Junior Statesmen of America, won support from Rock the Vote, and attracted widespread media attention. More information about the campaign can be found at [fightapathy.jsa.org](http://fightapathy.jsa.org).

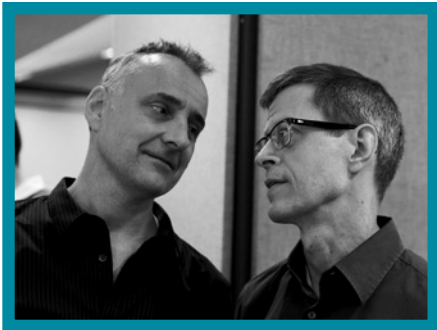
Andrew Plotch received ALBA's student award in 2010.

Photo Richard Bermack.



# Faces of ALBA-VALB

Meet the members of the ALBA community. By Aaron B. Retish



Don Myers (L) and his assistant Casey Cook at ALBA's New York event in 2012. Photo Nicholas Chan.

## Don Myers

### Production Manager for ALBA's Spring Event

#### What do you do as a production manager?

I oversee the technical and presentational aspects of the event and coordinate with both in-house and outside contractors to make sure that everyone is communicating with each other and aware of their responsibilities on the event. I set the schedule for the day of the event and do my best to keep us on schedule by dealing with unexpected issues, preferably in advance or as soon as they occur.

#### How did you get interested in working in theater?

My mother, who was a model and singer, encouraged my sister and me to perform when we were very young. From early childhood we would entertain at grange halls and convalescent hospitals over the holidays. In my teens, I was lucky to go to a remarkable junior high school that was devoted to its drama department and put on major musical productions with amazing sets and costumes. I acted in nearly every school production through high school. After high school, I attended one year of junior college but found it disappointing and felt like I had wasted a year of my life so I began working in community theater and then moved on to semi-professional productions. In 1980 I stage managed my first show in my hometown and realized that I loved that aspect of theatre as much as performing.

#### How did you break into production management?

After leaving home in 1984 and spending the summer months performing in summer stock in Salinas California, I went to visit my sister in Los Angeles. While there, I auditioned for the role of Curly in a production of *Oklahoma* and got the part. It was then that I decided to stay in LA. For two years I took acting classes and did stage management. A friend of mine, who was the original set designer for Jackie Mason's *The World According to Me*, asked me to help on the load-in of the show. From that I was hired onto the running crew and three months later took over as the production stage manager. I soon started hearing rumors that the show was going to Broadway. With Jackie's unwavering support I joined the union, moved to New York and started a new chapter in my life as a professional stage manager. I was 24 years old, very green and scared out of my wits but the show ended up being an enormous Broadway success and ran over two years. From 1986 to 2005, I stage managed all of Jackie Mason's shows on Broadway and toured

with him both nationally and internationally. I have been privileged to have worked with some of the best in the business including Sam Ellis, who was the production manager for the ALBA events for many years before I took over. I continue to stage manage both on and off-Broadway productions and have a show coming up called *Character Man* starring Jim Brochu. This is my third production with Mr. Brochu. Previously I worked with him on *The Last Session* and the award winning *Zero Hour*.

#### How did you get tied to ALBA and producing the spring event?

I was lucky to have worked as an assistant to Sam Ellis, who was the production manager for ALBA's annual events for many years. After Sam closed down his production office on 2004, he passed the gig on to me and I have been doing it ever since. I look forward to working on the event every year, not only because I had a chance to meet some of the vets in the early years but because I think it's important to keep their memory alive.

#### How has producing the spring event changed over the years?

The heart of the event and the reason that we do it hasn't changed. We are there to honor the vets and the ideals that they fought for as well as honoring those that they have inspired and those who today fight for the values that they lived their lives for. What has changed from year to year are some of the amazing speakers and entertainers at the events. For many years we were fortunate to have Bruce Barthol leading the band for the event however last year he was on a European tour, so we changed things around a bit and had two bands. This year we plan on changing things around again to keep things fresh and new.

#### What are some highlights from working on ALBA events?

Some of my favorite years were when we still had a lot of the vets coming to the events and telling their stories. Many of them would sit on the stage or in the front row and we would pass the microphone around giving each of them a chance to talk. They would talk about their experiences and memories that they had of their days fighting for the Lincoln Brigade. I treasure those years. Now their stories are told by others but I consider myself privileged to have met some of them and heard them recount their memories directly. Moe Fishman in particular was a spectacular guy and could talk for hours telling some of his great stories. I was very sad when he passed.

I also enjoyed going out to do the event in San Francisco in 2008, the year that the memorial site was dedicated. That was an exciting year and it was great to be back working in a theater where I used see shows when I was a kid. Because we often hold the event in different venues from it has given us the opportunity to work with many new people on the stage crew. Often they have no idea who the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Vets were but after the event is over they always come up and thank us for educating them on the remarkable lives of these amazing men and women. ▲



# John Hovan

(1916-2014)



**J**OHAN HOVAN, one of the first veterans of the Lincoln Brigade to take advantage of the Spanish law granting citizenship to foreign volunteers of the International Brigades, died in Providence, Rhode Island, on March 27. He was 97. His death leaves only one known Lincoln veteran alive, Delmer Berg, 98, of Northern California.

The son of Czech immigrants, John George Hovan was born in Florida in 1916, graduated from high school in Jacksonville, Florida, and volunteered for service in the Lincoln Brigade in 1937. He served as an auto mechanic in Albacete and as a driver for Brigade headquarters. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Navy in a CB group in the Pacific theater.

A lifelong labor activist, John remained an organizer in the postwar period. Indeed, during the McCarthy-era red scare, he was summoned to testify before the House Un-American Activities committee about his participation in the Spanish Civil War and as a result he lost his job and his house was firebombed and painted with swastikas.

Having settled his family in Rhode Island, he continued to advocate for social justice, including issues related to elder citizens' medical affairs, even appearing on local TV and before the state legislature. He also received a senior internship in Washington, D.C.

When the Spanish government extended citizenship rights to International Brigaders, John stepped forward in 2009. The Spanish consul in Rhode Island presented John with a certificate of citizenship and advised him that the next time he visited Spain he would not have to wait in the line for foreigners. David Cane, the son of another Lincoln veteran, added that the next time John went to Spain he wouldn't have to walk in over the Pyrenees, as he had in 1937.

He was pre-deceased by his wife of 64 years, Mildred Hovan, and is survived by two daughters and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. John resided at Heritage Hills Nursing Home in North Smithfield, RI at the time of his death.

—Peter N. Carroll



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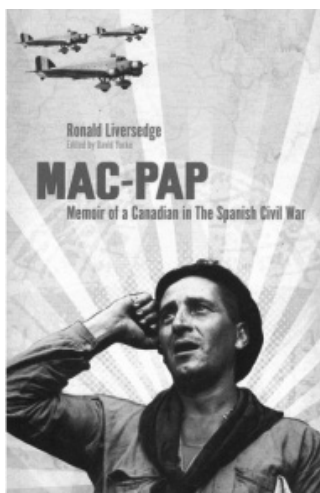


# Book reviews

## Mac-Pap: Memoirs of a Canadian in the Spanish Civil War.

By Ronald Liversedge, edited by David Yorke.  
(Vancouver: New Star Books, 2013.)

Reviewed by Reid Palmer



publication of Ronald Liversedge's *Mac-Pap: Memoirs of a Canadian in The Spanish Civil War* adds a fascinating and much needed contribution to the steadily increasing number of books on Canada's role in the war.

Born in Bradford, England on April 12, 1899, Ronald Liversedge was forced to leave school at a young age to support his large family. After enlisting in the British Army after the outbreak of World War I, he grew disillusioned with the country that seemed to care little for his life. The war served as a political awakening for Liversedge. In the summer of 1918, he met a German prisoner of war who converted Liversedge to communism in under two hours. "I will never forget that little man," he later wrote; "he gave me something to live and fight for." After the war, Liversedge became deeply engaged in the British Communist Party, and after emigrating to Canada in 1927, became a prominent Canadian Communist, even helping to organize the famous 1935 "On to Ottawa Trek."

With the exception of Dr. Norman Bethune's innovative mobile blood-transfusion units, Canada's role in the Spanish Civil War has been largely forgotten both by Canadians and Spanish Civil War historians. Although the largest number of International Brigade volunteers in proportion to their population hailed from Canada, only a handful of scholars have studied the Canadian Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, often referred to as the Mac-Paps. The recent

*"Bob Merriman had been after me for some time for my refusing to eat at the officers' mess."*

When Liversedge heard about the Spanish Civil War, he knew that he had to go. In the Spring of 1937, he said his goodbyes and sailed to France. In his memoir he vividly describes his struggle to make it to shore after his ship, the *Ciudad de Barcelona*, was sunk by an Italian submarine. Shaken by his welcome to the Spanish Civil War, Liversedge made his way to Albacete, where he began to advocate for the creation of a separate Canadian Battalion. Many Canadians had either joined their American comrades in the Abraham Lincoln and George Washington Battalions or had been scattered throughout the European brigades. After a few tense conversations with their American comrades, the Canadians finally earned their own unit.

Indeed, this memoir provides an alternative understanding of the war to the ones offered by many American veterans and scholars: "All attempts to get down to real discussion about the necessity for the formation of a Mac-Pap Battalion [with the Americans]," he writes, "were met by barely concealed scorn, and a studied assumption of the patience of a father trying to explain to an ignorant, fractious child." Later, Liversedge gave up command of the Mac-Paps as "Bob Merriman had been after me for some time for my refusing to eat at the officers' mess. He charged me, and the Canadians in general, with making a fetish of democratism."

Liversedge's memoir traces his actions at Fuentes de Ebro, his time with the Canadian Cadre Service, his service with the 35<sup>th</sup> Artillery Battalion, and his repatriation to Canada in 1939. An honest depiction of a prominent member of the International Brigades, this book is essential for anyone interested in North American participation in the Spanish Civil War. ▲

*Reid Palmer, a senior history major at Oberlin College, has just finished an honors thesis on Alvah Bessie.*



Canadian Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. Photo James Skitt Matthews (City of Vancouver Archives).

# Spain's Violence: An English Woman's View

*Málaga Burning: An American Woman's Eyewitness Account of the Spanish Civil War*  
By Gamel Woolsey. Introduction by Zalin Grant.  
204 pages. \$22. (Reston, VA: Pythia Press, 1998.)

Reviewed by Katherine Stafford



Spanish Civil War literature is replete with expatriate philosophizing about the Spanish character as a response to the violence of 1936-1939. Robert Jordan, of Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* says:

What sons of bitches from Cortez, Pizarro, Menéndez de Avila all down through Enrique Lister to Pablo. And what wonderful people. There is no finer and no worse people in the world. No kinder people and no

crueler. And who understands them? Not me, because if I did I would forgive it all. To understand is to forgive. That's not true. Forgiveness has been exaggerated. Forgiveness is a Christian idea and Spain has never been a Christian country. It has always had its own special idol worship within the church. (354-355)

Gerald Brenan wrote in *The Spanish Labyrinth*:

Where there was envy of the rich (and Spaniards are a very envious race) it took the form of desiring to bring them down almost as much as raising themselves. (xvi)

Gamel Woolsey, a lesser-known writer, also wrote of the Spanish "character" and tried to reconcile her love and appreciation for the Spanish people with the chaotic and merciless violence of the Civil War. The poet and her husband, historian and writer Gerald Brenan, lived in Churriana, Málaga at the outbreak of the conflict. Both wrote about this surreal, horrifying, and heart-wrenching experience: Brenan in his famous history, *The Spanish Labyrinth* (1943) and much later, more intimately, in his memoir, *Personal Record 1920-1975* (1975). Gamel Woolsey published a less well-known memoir, *Death's Other Kingdom* in 1939, which would later be re-released as *Málaga Burning* in 1998 by Pythia Press (and from which edition the quotes here are taken). It has been translated into two Spanish editions (*Málaga en llamas*, Temas de Hoy, 1998, and *El otro reino de la muerte*, Ágora, 1994, 2005), and has enjoyed great success in Málaga in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Antonio Banderas, originally from Málaga, was intent on adapting the book into a movie, a plan that never

came to fruition due to complications regarding the rights to the manuscript.

Woolsey's work begins in the garden with a detailed description of "the most beautiful day of the summer" and ends in Portugal with sadness, anger and disillusionment, as Brenan and Woolsey are forced to flee the village they had come to love. Unlike the works of her expatriate contemporaries, Woolsey includes very little historical or political analysis. This is a book about feelings and personal realities. Woolsey carefully recounts day-to-day life in this deceptively idyllic Mediterranean town, as death and violence gradually intrude and turn her world upside down.

Brenan and Woolsey hide Spanish aristocrat Don Carlos Crooke Larios and his family for months in their house and help him escape the anarchist riots. They observe members of their quiet village turn against one another. They receive word of servants, friends, and acquaintances who are killed. Woolsey dreams of turning her house into a hospital and helping the wounded. From a tower in her house she watches Nationalist rebels bomb the city of Málaga, located about 15 kilometers from Churriana. She and Brenan go to Torremolinos and listen to various canards about the Spanish people from other foreigners. Everyone in their house listens

*Antonio Banderas, originally from Málaga, was intent on adapting the book into a movie, a plan that never came to fruition.*

to the angry words of General Queipo de Llano on the radio as he threatens to obliterate the masses.

Woolsey does not take political sides, but rather laments and condemns human violence, empathizing with victims of all ideological persuasions. She does not describe the violence of the war as uniquely Spanish, but rather as human. What brings her most to despair is the depreciating and entitled attitude of the British and American expatriates observing and condemning the war and the Spanish at a safe distance in Gibraltar. While she does make some observations about the passionate Spanish "character," found in nuns and anarchists alike, the work uniquely focuses on the female rather than male Spanish character and subject. She writes:

A great deal of the character for which the Spanish are famous, I think, is found most of all in its older women. They have suffered and resigned themselves, worked beyond their strength, spent themselves for others. This patient stoicism, a stoicism that is not hard but gentle and quietly resigned, accepting life as it is with all its ills and griefs with dignity and without complaint, is one of the most remarkable of Spanish characteristics. And it has been seen a thousand times everywhere in Spain during the war.

Woolsey, who lived most of her life in the shadow of a famous man, notices and recognizes the women in the background.

Today, a visitor can view the historical setting of the book, as the Ayuntamiento de Churriana has restored Brenan and Woolsey's farm-house and transformed it into a cultural art center, inaugurated in September 2013. Every room has been named after a famous person who visited there. As members



*Woolsey does not take political sides, but rather laments and condemns human violence, empathizing with victims of all ideological persuasions.*

of the Bloomsbury group in London, the couple entertained literary figures such as Virginia Woolf and Bertrand Russell in the house. One room has been dedicated exclusively to works of art representing Brenan, Woolsey, and their friends. Churriana has changed a great deal since 1936, especially with the construction of the neighboring Málaga International Airport. Traces of its earlier delights and charms still remain, and the town affords spectacular views of the Málaga mountains and countryside. Though the Ayuntamiento was unable to buy the entire original garden, the view from the tower, where Woolsey first spied the burning and bombing of Málaga, allows the visitor a glimpse of its original grandeur.

While many residents of Churriana recall Brenan as cold and aloof, Woolsey, known in Churriana as “La señora,” is remembered as a kind, caring, and empathetic person—exactly the kind of sensitive author this short memoir suggests. While Brenan’s *Spanish Labyrinth* has been superseded by other historical analyses of the war and is long out of print, Woolsey’s *Death’s Other Kingdom* still speaks to the people of Málaga. The Spanish edition is sold in bookstores, perhaps because it uniquely records ordinary life in Málaga in 1936, and gives a simple subjective emotional truth about the war.

Woolsey intentionally named the work *Death’s Other Kingdom* in reference to T.S. Eliot’s poem about World War I, “The Hollow Men,” because she wanted to condemn the violence she observed in 1936. After Woolsey’s death, the title was changed to make the work seem more appealing. Whatever the name, the work deserves to be part of the Spanish Civil War literary canon. It is a different kind of historical document, one offering an outsider view of the war, a much more sensitive one—one that notices and observes—that feels deeply (rather than analyzes) the destruction of a great community of people. ▲

*Katherine Stafford teaches Spanish literature at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania.*



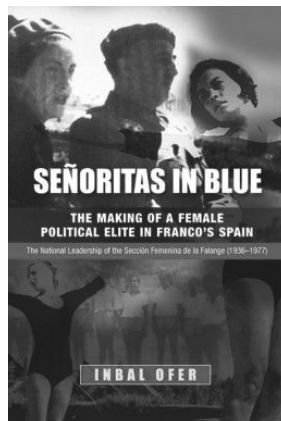
Part of the garden and house at Churriana in 1936. Photo courtesy Fundación Gerald Brenan.

## Franco’s Female Political Elite

*Señoritas in Blue. The Making of a Female Political Elite in Franco’s Spain. The National Leadership of the Sección Femenina de la Falange (1936-1977).*

By Inbal Ofer. (Brighton; Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press, 2009.)

Reviewed by Ángela Cenarro



*SEÑORITAS IN BLUE* by Israeli historian Inbal Ofer is a welcome study about the Spanish women’s division of the Francoist Falange. The organization, *La Sección Femenina*, was founded in 1934 by Pilar Primo de Rivera, the sister of the fascist leader José Antonio Primo de Rivera, and created to mobilize and provide a political education for women. The *Sección Femenina* continues to be misunderstood and its history and significance distorted by simplifications and

stereotypes, despite the existence of several excellent studies by historians and Hispanists including Franco Rosario Ruiz, Celia Valiente, Immaculada Blasco, Helen Graham, and Kathleen Richmond. The richness of the existing scholarship has been Ofer’s challenge as a professor at the University of Tel Aviv.

The book relies on the *Sección Femenina*’s archives, currently held in the Royal Historical Academy and the General Administration Archive in Spain. Ofer also uses numerous periodicals and several interviews with former leaders of the organization. However, the main value of the work lies in both the questions she poses and the new analytical frames she employs to answer them.

Is it possible, she wonders, to speak of the existence of a female political elite in a regime that systematically pursued the exclusion of women from the public sphere? Throughout the book, the author not only demonstrates that such an elite could be forged despite its organic link with the Falangist Movement (the fascist single party, FET y de las JONS), but moreover that the women Falangist leaders used their privileged position to promote an autonomous political and social agenda. The collective experience of visibility and action in public life, therefore, would serve as a crucial point of reference in the future when a set of reforms came in the late 1950s, improving the situation of Spanish women.

Ofer shows intellectual courage when she goes one step further and challenges one of the premises that hovers above

(but is not explicitly posited by) previous research on this topic. Given that the women's section of the Falange promoted an agenda aimed at framing, mobilizing, and improving the material, cultural and legal conditions of Spanish women, is it correct to describe the organization as "feminist"?

Ofer claims that the answer is "yes," and thereby joins other distinguished scholars who have argued for new conceptualizations of feminism—including research by Karen Offen whose writing on France in the early 1990s gave way to a paradigm shift in the understanding of historical feminism. In addition, by working with Franco Linz's definition of Francoism as an "authoritarian" regime—as opposed to a "totalitarian" one—Ofer highlights the *Sección Femenina* as one of the various "political families" that supported the dictatorship and could thus negotiate positions of power and legitimate forms of activism. One way the *Sección* exerted its influence was in its support of the reform of the Civil Code in 1958 that modestly improved the legal situation of Spanish women and the Law of 1961 that introduced political, professional, and working rights for Spanish women.

*Leading Falangista women used their privileged position to promote an autonomous political and social agenda.*

The book not only provides an overall analysis of the *Sección* as a historical phenomenon from a dual theoretical perspective, it also makes concrete contributions that reveal the complexity of an organization that attracted a large group of activists over the course of four decades (1937 to 1977).

First, the book explores the existence of two generations of women militants consisting of the women who founded the organization and participated in the Spanish Civil War and a second generation that dates from 1947 (with the Law of Succession, when the Franco regime configured itself following a monarchic model, and thus dashed the hopes of Falangists to create a totalitarian state). Perhaps it is exaggeration to say, as Ofer claims, that the *Sección* was intended to be a "champion of women's rights" in the 1940s, but she is right to analyze the achievements of the organization in light of this tension between the female Falangist elite and the masses, the constituency from which they drew necessary support and on which they relied as a source of legitimacy in the Franco regime.

The first generation included women linked to the Falange through family ties, and who had been active participants in the civil war as nurses or social workers. A number of these women had been casualties during the war and their dedication and sacrifice served as a badge of fidelity to the Franco regime. The women of the second generation tended to come to the organization seeking professional development and training, activities that garnered legitimacy through the use of the female uniform of the *Sección* as well as by the status conferred by flaunting a kind of virtuous spinsterhood.

The author explores the ways in which gender identity appeared in publications of the *Sección Femenina* and

concludes that the identity promoted was far from fixed or monolithic. Ofer shows how the publications encouraged a female model that subverted the traditional dichotomy between public and private, and proposed a kind of "virile" activism that is not wholly aligned with the ideal of masculinity. These publications distanced themselves from two other models of womanhood: that of the regime's other main women's organization, the *Acción Católica*, as well as from the despised left-wing ("communist" or "red") models of female activism symbolized by the Spanish Civil War figure of the militiawoman. The book also traces the contribution of the *Sección Femenina* to legislative reforms of Franco dictatorship in the areas of gender and describes how women activists engaged with the powerful, both in official and social spheres.

In short, *Señoritas in Blue* marks a milestone in the understanding of the *Sección Femenina* and the analysis of the Franco regime from a gender perspective. It not only offers a new reading, rich and suggestive of the many faces of women's activism during Franco's dictatorship, but also highlights the projects of this "female elite" within the regime and its capacity for empowerment. It also examines how the limits imposed by fidelity to the regime guaranteed the organization's existence. ▲

*Ángela Cenarro is a historian and teaches at the University of Zaragoza in Spain. She is the author of Los Niños del Auxilio Social (2009) concerning the main child welfare agency under the Franco regime.*

## Culture and Dictatorship

***Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory since 1936.* By Jeremy Treglown. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013.)**

**Reviewed by Sara J. Brenneis**



Jeremy Treglown wants to debunk the notion—commonly-held, he says, by U.S. academics and Spanish Republican exiles in particular—that Spanish culture under Francisco Franco was a wasteland. In *Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory since 1936*, he creates a counter history to the counter history: instead of debunking the myths Franco created around himself, Treglown goes after the debunkers of that mythology.

In lively prose, he scours Spanish culture from the 1940s to the present day, reminding the reader of important monuments,

films, novels, and works of art created by Spaniards living under Franco's dictatorship.

Although Treglown recognizes the intellectual drain caused by the Civil War and the injustices of the Franco regime, he makes the seductive argument that the work of artists and writers has been summarily and unfairly ignored.

*Unfortunately, some of the author's reasoning muddles his attempt at a more balanced look at Spanish artistic creations during the past 70 years.*

"Cultural memory," Treglown observes, "has no point if it recuperates only half the past." Unfortunately, like the Falange's yoke and arrows that appears on the book's spine, some of the author's reasoning muddles his attempt at a more balanced look at Spanish artistic creations during the past 70 years.

Aficionados of contemporary Spain will find a vivid survey of Spanish history and culture in Treglown's book. A British journalist and academic, he delves into both popular and obscure Spanish novels, artwork, and films, identifying as much material as possible available in English translation. His years as a regular visitor to the Iberian Peninsula are evident in his long-view discussion of the current state of the recuperation of historical memory: he watches as the graves of Spanish Republicans are disinterred in far-flung municipalities, talks to the curators of Spanish museums dedicated to commemorating the Spanish Civil War, and screens dictatorship-era Spanish films that were never widely seen outside the country (or inside it, as it turns out).

Treglown provides an engaging view of influential postwar Spanish historians, novelists, and filmmakers. With the benefit of hindsight, he sets these writers and directors into a historical and cultural context, laying out the obstacles they encountered and the effects they had in shaping the debates in dictatorship and democratic Spain. Although some of these artists and writers were considered friends of the Franco regime—the novelist Camilo José Cela worked as a censor, while the director Luis García Berlanga supported the Nazis by fighting with Franco's Blue Division during World War II—many more were attempting to fly under the dictator's radar, releasing books and films under the heavy scrutiny and limitations of Franco's government.

Treglown devotes several chapters to major works of fiction published inside Spain while Franco was in power by authors such as Cela, Miguel Delibes and Carmen Laforet as well as others published outside of Spain during the same period by exiles such as Max Aub and Ramón J. Sender. Treglown uses Aub's body of work, specifically his *Laberinto Mágico* series on the Spanish Civil War, as an example to support his argument that scholars have whitewashed the existence of contentious publications in Spain during the dictatorship. Although Aub's novels were originally published in Mexico, where he lived in exile, Treglown points out that the author's *Campo abierto*, which includes a detailed list of Republican combatants, was eventually released in Spain in 1978. Seeing this as proof of Spain's engagement with history

during the years after Franco's death, at a time when the country's transitional government had agreed not to enter into recriminations about the Civil War and dictatorship, Treglown asks "How dare anyone talk about an amnesia deal?"

Of course novels are not the same as politics, and 1978 was not the same as 1948. Treglown has a tendency to conflate novelists—Franco supporters and exiled Republicans alike—who were able to practice free expression with (nonexistent) political freedoms. Yes, novelists could write and publish works of literature that merited academic study and an international audience inside dictatorship Spain, although curtailed by censorship or the distance imposed by exile (Luis Martín-Santos' *Tiempo de silencio*, Carmen Laforet's *Nada*, and Ramon J. Sender's *Réquiem por un campesino español* are only a few of many examples). These works challenged, in one way or another, the regime's stranglehold on Spanish culture. But were they evidence of a dictatorship that was somehow not as oppressive as historians and witnesses have made it seem?

"Our backward glance always flattens the landscape," Treglown says, thinking of the way we simplify the events of the past: "clearly any notion that Franco's Spain was an artistic desert is the opposite of the truth." His book draws attention to that "flattened landscape," which includes some of the public works projects Franco undertook. One such project—The Valley of the Fallen, a monumental work of Francoist propaganda completed by Republican prisoners of war in the late 1950s—still stands on a mountainside outside Madrid. Treglown attended services in the monument's basilica in 2006 alongside an incongruous congregation of local elderly citizens and neo-Falangists in their blue uniforms. Even the landscape of this seemingly immobile granite cross

*Treglown has a tendency to conflate novelists who were able to practice free expression with (nonexistent) political freedoms.*

has changed: meant to memorialize Franco's fallen soldiers in the Civil War, the monument is now a giant reminder of Spain's continued struggles to untangle its divided past and remember the casualties on both sides of the war. This, ultimately, is Treglown's intention as well.

*Franco's Crypt* presents the debates and dialogues, culture and memory from both sides that lie beneath Spain's complicated 20<sup>th</sup> century history. As the author demonstrates, these debates are ongoing in the pages of recent historical novels by Javier Marías, Almudena Grandes and Javier Cercas, and onscreen in the films of Carlos Saura, Guillermo del Toro and even, in his way, Pedro Almodóvar. Once Franco's metaphorical crypt was opened, there has been no holding back the torrent of debate over Spain's historical memory that followed. ▲

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

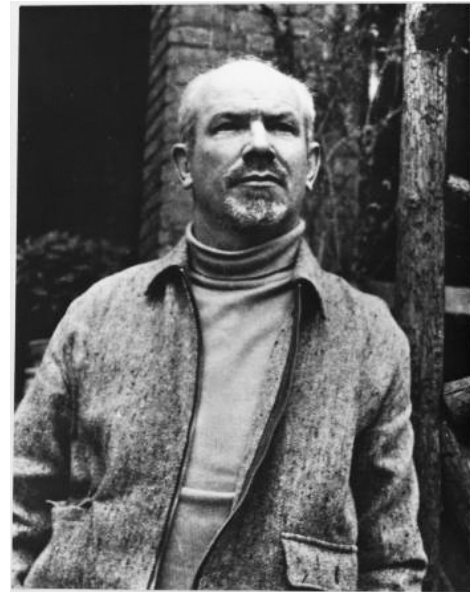


# Norman Bethune in Spain

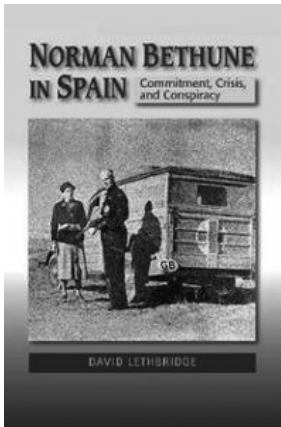
*Norman Bethune in Spain: Commitment, Crisis and Conspiracy.* By David Letherbridge.  
(Brighton: Sussex Academic Press: Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies, 2013.)

Reviewed by David Rodríguez-Solás

*Bethune's assistance to the civilian population after the fall of Málaga was a life changing experience.*



Norman Bethune. Photo Library and Archives



Norman Bethune was probably the most prominent Canadian volunteer in the Spanish Civil War. He is the subject of over a dozen biographies from which one can learn about his role in developing blood transfusion techniques during wartime. Most books regarding Bethune have raised questions but have provided little explanation regarding Bethune's troublesome relationship with Spanish authorities, rumors about alcoholism and libertinage, and his withdrawal from the Canadian Blood Transfusion

Service he created. David Letherbridge's new biography does a remarkable job clarifying these issues.

Bethune's contributions to wartime medical services are legendary. He was in charge of the first mobile blood transfusion unit, a service that started modestly with headquarters in Madrid, but expanded into satellite units in Barcelona, Valencia, and Jaén. Bethune's main contribution was the unit's mobility. "He took the blood to the wounded," and in doing so the Canadians were responsible for 80 percent of all blood transfusions during the war.

*Bethune's contributions to wartime medical services are legendary.*

Bethune arrived in Spain around the same time the first international volunteers did in November 1936, and upon his arrival started organizing the Canadian Blood Transfusion Service. Working side by side with Bethune was a group of Canadians and Celia Greenspan, the first known American woman volunteer.

Propaganda was a major front in the Spanish Civil War, and Bethune understood this well. From EAQ, a radio station off Gran Vía, he broadcast to British and North American audiences. Some of the transcripts of his addresses are reproduced in this book, including other documents by Bethune, such as his pamphlet *The Crime on the Road: Málaga-Almería*. Letherbridge comments extensively on *Heart of Spain*, the documentary film that Bethune made and later used to publicize his work and raise awareness during his North American tour.

Bethune's assistance to the civilian population after the fall of Málaga was a life changing experience. For three days, he and his aides treated hundreds of people en route to Almería in the unit's ambulance. They would not have survived otherwise. Surprisingly, Letherbridge covers this episode in one chapter, relying mostly on the pamphlet mentioned earlier. Bethune's presence on the road to Málaga was due to test the transport blood supplies from Barcelona in their refrigerated truck, an experiment he aborted after the humanitarian crisis confronted him. Bethune solved the deficit in blood supplies during the battle of Jarama—when 700 wounded were brought to his hospital in the first five days—by extracting blood from the deceased. Cadaver blood transfusion was an experimental method he tried in desperation to save lives.

Letherbridge's choice of the word "conspiracy" in the book's subtitle refers to Bethune's withdrawal from Spain. It seems quite possible that it was linked to a report sent by some of his collaborators to Canadian Communist Party officials informing them of his autocratic and selfish attitude toward his comrades. These slanderous accusations led to a police report on Bethune. He left Spain in May 1937.

In Letherbridge words, Bethune's contribution can be put simply: "He had brought blood to the wounded twisting in agony on the front lines. He had built with his own hands and his own determination the world's first unified mobile blood transfusion service. What more could be asked of any man?" ▲

*David Rodríguez-Solás is Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish at Middlebury College. His most recent book is Teatros nacionales republicanos: la Segunda República y el teatro clásico español (Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2014).*



ON SATURDAY, APRIL 26, at Casa Mezcal (NYC), ALBA screened Oriol Porta's 2008 documentary *A War in Hollywood*, which follows the history of Hollywood's engagement with the Spanish Civil War through the figure of Alva Bessie, Lincoln veteran and a member of the Hollywood Ten.

Photos Xóchitl Gil-Higuchi.



## LEGACY

What you leave to friends and loved ones and the causes you champion are ways of expressing your hopes and dreams for the future and perpetuate your part in the story of the Lincoln Brigade. As you make your plans, please consider including ALBA in your will or living trust, or naming us as a beneficiary of your estate. ALBA can accept legacy gifts in any amount, large or small. Please help us to continue to expand our horizons and your beliefs. Help us to carry our shared legacy to the next generation and beyond.

If you have questions or would like to discuss your choices, please call **212 674 5398** or email **[info@alba-valb.org](mailto:info@alba-valb.org)**.

*Special thanks to Ms. Susan Wallis for donating to ALBA the copyrights of Milton Wolff's book "Another Hill."*

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1/16/2014 to 4/31/2014

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## NEWS AND EVENTS

### 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration Honoring the Abraham Lincoln Brigade –West Coast

Sunday, October 5, 2014  
2:00pm – 4:00pm  
Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse  
2020 Addison Street  
Berkeley, California

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

### Essay Competition Opens: 2014 George Watt Prize

Graduate and undergraduate students world-wide are invited to submit an essay or thesis chapter about any aspect of the Spanish Civil War. Two prizes of \$250 each will be awarded. Submission deadline is August 1, 2014.

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

### Call for Entries: 2014 ALBA'S Human Rights Documentary Film Series

Welcome filmmakers! *Impugning Impunity: a Human Rights Documentary Film Series* will take place in October 2014. Submit your film by August 1, 2014.

For requirements and information: [www.alba-valb.org](http://www.alba-valb.org)  
or email [filmfestival@alba-valb.org](mailto:filmfestival@alba-valb.org)

The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives carries on the legacy of the American volunteers who challenged complacency and isolationism. Now you can continue their "good fight" by offering a legacy gift to ALBA.

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