



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

# JOURNAL OF THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

December 2007



**Book Reviews, page 19.**

## Letter From the Editor

The long-dreamed plan for a national memorial to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade is about to be realized. Many people deserve special appreciation for the long hours they have put into the project, but what has also emerged is amazing grassroots support, not only from the usual suspects, but also from people who have not been involved in our activities. Contributions small and large have come from unexpected sources.

I think that's because this memorial looks in two directions: to the past and to the future. It is not merely nostalgic, but also historical, and the process continues to unfold.

The creators of the memorial, Ann Chamberlain and Walter Hood, make this point explicitly in the description of their objectives: "To make active the process is perhaps what is most difficult in art; to enable the viewing of a work to become an act of participation or of bearing witness."

"Our challenge," they go on, "is to create a memory that actively engages and provokes the imagination of those who visit it. We want to inspire movement; to narrate, to motivate and to direct observers to listen, understand, and act. We want to create a theater of history in which any people could imagine themselves participating in the story of Americans so impassioned by their beliefs they gave their lives in the Spanish Civil War fighting fascism."

Some years ago, the last nationally elected officers of the VALB drew up a legal agreement providing for ALBA to become the sole entity to represent the veterans organization beginning in 2008. With their numbers dwindling—there are 43 vets alive at last count—ALBA is

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poised to assume this solemn duty. The inauguration of the national memorial in San Francisco this spring and a public event we are planning for next fall will mark this sad but unavoidable transition. At these events, in the presence of the last remaining veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, ALBA will reaffirm its pledge to honor and perpetuate their outstanding legacy.

—Peter N. Carroll

## Puffin Foundation Gives \$1 Million!

In a dramatic gesture of support to ALBA, the organization's most loyal and generous benefactor, The Puffin Foundation, Ltd. of Teaneck, New Jersey, has announced the creation of a special \$1 million fund "to further the cultural and education policies set forth in ALBA's mission statement."

According to the terms of the new grant, the fund is to be used exclusively for ALBA cultural and educational programs, relying primarily on the fund's annual earnings to underwrite specific projects.

Recognizing ALBA's remarkable expansion during the past decade, Puffin Foundation President Perry

Rosenstein, long a supporter of progressive arts, cultural, and educational projects throughout the country, stressed the importance of continuing the legacy of "activism and commitment of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade as an inspiration for present and future generations."

"This is a tremendous boost to our organization, promising to continue our recent successes in promoting public awareness of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade through education and outreach programs," said the delighted ALBA Chair Peter Carroll. "This gift

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# The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Memorial: Aiming for March 30 Debut



The monument team: (l to r standing) Walter Hood, Judy Montell, Emily Lazarre, Dave Smith, Ann Chamberlain, and Alice Shaw; (seated) Chris Reed, Linda Lustig and Martha Olson-Jarocki. Photo by Peter Glazer.

**S**even years of committee meetings, another year of contract negotiations—it's all over but the sandblasting and the celebrations. March 30, 2008. Write it down!

Join us! Join this remarkable community that put together an incredible memorial to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: The Bay Area Veterans & Associates of the Abraham Lincoln

Brigade, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, the San Francisco Mayor's Office, the Port Commission, the Arts Commission, the City Attorney and our own pro bono counsel, our friends and supporters who helped and sent in monetary contributions, and the two brilliant artists—Ann Chamberlain and Walter Hood—who designed our memorial with its vision of past and future.

Come to San Francisco to pay tribute to the legacy of those 3,000 women and men who went to Spain to confront the terrors of fascism. Pay tribute to the 800 who did not come back and to the others whose lives were forever changed by the experience of war. Honor the progressive tradition they embodied. Carry on the legacy of commitment to social justice and democracy.

We are still planning the day's events, but count on seeing dignitaries from Spain, including Judge Baltasar Garzón (who indicted Chile's dictator Pinochet), as well as home-grown celebrities, longtime allies, and upstarts you'd like to know. Expect entertainment, but solemnity, too.

More details will follow in mailings to all, but don't be shy about telling your friends.

As John Sayles has said, "in a world run by cynics, in a time when caring about someone you've never met is seen as weakness or treachery, how much strength have we taken from the thought of them, how much pride and comfort to be able to say, 'But what about the guys in the Lincoln Brigade!'" ■

challenges us to do more than we've ever done before."

For the past 15 years, the Puffin Foundation has encouraged and supported nearly all of ALBA's projects, including the exhibitions "Shouts From the Wall: Posters of the Spanish Civil War," "Aura of the Cause," "They Still Draw Pictures: Children's Art in Wartime," "The Cultural Legacy of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade," and most recently, "Facing Fascism: New York & the Spanish Civil War," which opens this month in Spain.

The Puffin Foundation has also supported the publication of exhibition catalogues and special issues of *The Volunteer*, as well as the ALBA-Susman Lectures, the serialized graphic story "Paul Robeson in Spain," and numerous symposia, panel discussions, and film screenings.

"We are eager to carry the work forward," said Carroll, "but clearly we could not do it without the support of the progressive community. We are very grateful to Mr. Rosenstein and our supporters at the Puffin Foundation." ■

# Wisconsin Student Wins First Place in National History Day Competition

*This article is reprinted from the Holmen Courier (Wisconsin) with permission of the River Valley Newspaper Group.*

**By Adam Bissen / Lee Newspapers**

HOLMEN, Wis. — As he sat in the University of Maryland's old basketball arena and heard the names of two of the top finishers in the National History Day competition, Holmen High School junior Cody Haro didn't think he would be returning to Wisconsin with a medal.

Yes, his project on American soldiers fighting in the Spanish Civil War was meticulously researched and took first place in the state finals. But after

dad and said, 'It's OK. We came and we had fun.'"

But when he heard the emcee say "Cody Haro, Holmen, Wis., first place," Haro said, "I couldn't believe it. I ran down the steps of the stadium, and I almost fell. It was all a big blur, running down there and getting the award."

For taking first place in the senior individual exhibit division, the National History Day organization presented Haro with a gold medal and \$1,000 monetary award.

But the day of accolades didn't end there. Near the end of the ceremony, held June 14, the University of Minnesota presented Haro with an additional award: a \$20,000 scholarship.

According to Mary Nugent, Haro's National History Day adviser at Holmen High School, Haro is the first Wisconsin student to take first at the national finals.

When he began researching his project last summer, it was Haro's goal to place at the national competition. He spent every weekend for five months with his nose in a book, then created a three-sided display with matted photographs that was as big as contest rules allowed.

His project was good enough to win the state finals in April, but after arriving in Maryland on June 9, Haro wasn't sure if his project would even finish in the top 25.

Some students presented projects using mounted flat-screen monitors and LCD systems. Other creations resembled museum displays encased in plastic. After shipping his board to Maryland, some of Haro's text boxes



and black and white photos came out wrinkled by the humidity.

"So we know Cody's project didn't win on glitz," Nugent said. "It won on the story and his research and his analysis."

Haro's project was on the Abraham Lincoln battalion, a group of about 3,000 American volunteers who fought against fascism during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39.

In addition to a mountain of books, periodicals, radio reports and published interview transcripts, what likely impressed the History Day judges the most about Haro's project was the extra effort he put into gathering research. Haro drove to Madison to interview a 92-year-old veteran of the battalion. Later, he flew to San Francisco to interview the unit's final commander.

"It was a pretty good investment, I guess, flying out to California to interview the captain. I spent a little money

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seeing the museum-like displays of his 107 competitors, Haro almost tuned out the emcee as he was about to announce the winner.

"When my name wasn't in the third or second places, I turned to my

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Adam Bissen is a reporter with the *Holmen Courier* and *Onalaska Community Life*.

# Dark Side of Memory

By Angela Jackson

**R**esearch to recover the memory of the civil war here in Spain has many facets. Good aspects give victims of repression a voice after many years of silence. It's good to be told repeatedly, in dozens of interviews recorded with those who experienced the war at first hand, that the International Brigaders always treated local people with respect and were renowned for their generosity. Bad memories remain almost overwhelming—loss, persecution, exile.

Recent attacks on the symbols of memory and remembrance on Hill 705—two plaques honoring the International Brigaders were stolen and others defaced this summer—strike the beholder first and foremost as abhorrently ugly. One of the missing plaques was unveiled in 2005 by Welsh Brigader, Alun Menai Williams, to commemorate the British and Irish who died in the Battle of the Ebro.

It remains unclear whether the vandalism was carried out by “four or five kids from another town—not politicians,” as claimed by Pere Martí, the mayor of the nearby village of Pinell de Brai, or by a more organized group. The slogan left behind by the vandals, “The Falange Continues the Fight,” is certainly a clear political statement in support of fascism. It can't have been easy to remove the heavy steel plaque bolted to the wall, and few young people today could spray paint the ancient symbol of the “Victor,” adopted by

Historian Angela Jackson is head of the Catalan organization No Jubilem la Memòria, dedicated to preserving the history of the International Brigades.



The plaque on Hill 705, unveiled in 2005 to commemorate the British and Irish who died in the Battle of the Ebro, has been stolen and graffiti left in its place.

Franco as his personal emblem. Moreover, the use of a stencil to paint the fascist symbol of yoke and arrows belies any suggestion that the perpetrators acted on the spur of the

moment. As historian Paul Preston has commented, “It’s a tribute to the role played by the International Brigades in the struggle for democracy in Spain

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## Second Case of Vandalism

Guillermo Casañ

**T**he plaque to honor the International Brigades in the Benicàssim cemetery was found broken on October 21. It is not known who is responsible, but the possibility of an accidental fall has been rejected because the plaque was well fastened to the wall. The municipal government has ordered the police to open an investigation.

According to Ramón García, board member of the “Associació Republicana Gonzàlez Cherna”—the organization that promoted placing

the plaque in 2004—a replacement memorial will have improvements. They are thinking of erecting a monument, instead of a plaque, with the name of the internationals who died in this coastal town. For the inauguration, they are also studying the idea of inviting veterans of the I.B., or their representatives, from the countries of those buried here.

Although the vandalism was hardly mentioned in the press (only the leftist *Levante* gave one page coverage), this memorial was an issue a few

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# PHOTOS DOCUMENT WAR'S LEGACY

By Rob Snyder

**T**he Spanish Civil War—whose heroism, destruction and wrenching political disputes were documented by some of the best photography of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—still sparks strong feelings in New York City. Now a fine quartet of exhibits at the International Center of Photography recalls photographers who figured prominently in the war (Gerda Taro and Robert Capa), visual media in the Republic, and the execution of Republican civilians. If you thought the war was part of the past, you will be awakened by works like the photo of an execution bullet, dug up from a mass grave of Spanish

Gerda Taro and Robert Capa. The two went to Spain together.

The exhibit presents more than 80 of Taro's photographs, along with magazines that give visitors a valuable sense of how her pictures appeared in European publications. In this show, the first major exhibit of Taro's work, we get a good sense of the range of her work.

If her photos emphasizing the clenched-fist salute of the Popular Front look like clichés of socialist realism, the bulk of her work is more impressive. Her photographs of a war orphan eating soup, a man and a woman of the Republican militia relaxing together, and a blood-stained

Equally strong is "This is War! Robert Capa at Work," which takes Taro's partner through Spain, his work from China, and his coverage of United States forces in Europe during World War II. The exhibit devotes special attention to some of Capa's most famous works: the "Falling Soldier" of the Spanish Civil War, the D-day invasion, and the deaths of G.I.s in combat during the final days of the war in Germany.

Just as "Other Weapons" situates visual media in the larger context of the war, "This is War" shows how Capa's photos were reproduced in major magazines, such as *LIFE*. The result is an exhibit that lifts Capa's work out of the narrow realms of art—in which his photographs are presented simply on their own—and presents them in the context of the media and culture of their time.

In contrast to these three exhibits, which use images to recover the world of the 1930s and 1940s, "Dark is the Room Where We Sleep: A Project by Francesc Torres" introduces to Americans the grim echoes of the civil war in the Spanish present. In this installation, Torres, a Barcelona artist, depicts the excavation of an unmarked mass grave of 46 civilian supporters of the Republic killed by Franco's forces. The grave, outside the village of Villamayor de los Montes in northern Spain, is one of many that date from the war. It is one of the few, however, that has been uncovered and documented.

The photographs depict everything from the grave to surviving relatives to volunteers in the excavation. But perhaps most moving is the centerpiece of the final room in the

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Republicans. (Francesc Torres, "Dark is the Room Where We Sleep," 2007, copyright Francesc Torres.)

Gerda Taro, often remembered as Robert Capa's partner in love and business, emerges here as a photographer in her own right. Born Gerta Pohorylle in Germany, where she was a leftist activist, she fled to Paris to escape Nazi persecution. There she became the business agent of a young Hungarian photographer and developed her own photography. Eventually they took the names under which they would be better known:

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Rob Snyder wrote about the local press in *Facing Fascism: New York and the Spanish Civil War*. He teaches history at Rutgers/Newark.

stretcher memorably depict the interior emotions of the war. The intimacy of her best work, 70 years later on, is still impressive.

So is her courage. In July 1937, covering Republicans' retreat from Brunete, she jumped onto the running board of a car. She was killed when the car was sideswiped by a tank. In Paris, tens of thousands mourned her.

While the Taro exhibit introduces an under-appreciated photographer, "Other Weapons: Photography and Print Culture During the Spanish Civil War" explores the media culture of Republican Spain in wartime. Displaying posters, photographs and magazines, "Other Weapons" is a valuable integration of media history, political history and art history.

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# Spain's Memory Wars

By Gina Herrmann

In conjunction with the International Center of Photography's exhibitions this fall, ALBA and the King Juan Carlos I Center of NYU co-hosted a symposium about how the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship are remembered and represented in photography, autobiography, history books, and the classroom. The symposium opened with a preview of four related photographic exhibits at the ICP, including Spanish Civil War photos of Robert Capa and Gerda Taro. The exhibit of Taro's photos is particularly noteworthy since it is the first time this pioneering war photojournalist has had a show dedicated exclusively to her work.

Artist and cultural critic Francesc Torres presented his new exhibit and companion book *Dark is the Room Where We Sleep*, a photographic itinerary of the opening of a Republican mass grave in Spain. Other highlights of the symposium included the presentation of new historical studies: Angela Cenarro's *La sonrisa de la Falange*, a study of Francoist female social service organization *la Sección Femenina*; and Soledad Fox's biography



Photo from *Dark is the Room Where We Sleep* by Francesc Torres.

of Constanca de la Mora, head of the Republic's foreign press office during the Civil War and a tireless advocate for the Republican cause during her years of exile. Presentations by NYU's Juan Salas and Jacques Lezra engaged questions of memorial retrieval. Salas delivered an extensive powerpoint project on veteran Harry Randall and his team of photographers, who documented the Spanish Civil War under the auspices of the XV International Brigade. Salas's presentation reminds us how much of the mystique of the Brigades relies on images, and not stories alone. Lezra delivered a personal and deeply poetic account of his own efforts to trace, through family oral accounts and in official archives, his family's experience with Francoism and exile.

The symposium concluded with a round table discussion on approaches to teaching the Spanish Civil War based on the book *Teaching*

The exhibitions at ICP, which will be on display from September 25, 2007, through January 6, 2008, are "This is War! Robert Capa at Work"; "Gerda Taro"; "Other Weapons: Photography and Print Culture during the Spanish Civil War"; and "Dark is the Room Where We Sleep: A Project by Francesc Torres."

*Representations of the Spanish Civil War*, edited by Noel Valis. This provided a unique forum in which college and university professors on the panel discussed pedagogical and ideological issues surrounding the theme of the civil war, US activism, and the legacy of the Lincolns with a group of high school teachers in the audience. ■

Gina Herrmann teaches in the Spanish Department of the University of Oregon.

## WAR'S LEGACY

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show: an illuminated pedestal that displays a battered watch that belonged to one of the victims of the shooting. Its hands are missing, so it records no particular moment in time—and thereby it reminds us of how the crimes of the past echo into the present.

The exhibits will be up through January 6, 2008. ■

# Bay Area Picnic



*"They may have won all the battles, but we had all the good songs."*

*Tom Lehrer*



Photos by Richard Bermack.



Photo by Iwona Biederman.

The popular musical duo Jamie O'Reilly and Michael Smith revived their production of *Pasiones* to honor Chicago area volunteers of the Spanish Civil War with two performances last September. The first was part of the Rhinoceros Theater Festival, where the show had its

Humanities Series held at the author's home town Oak Park Public Library.

The folk-cabaret weaves about 20 songs with poetry and reminiscences of the Spanish Civil War, ranging from Andalusian folksongs, international anthems, labor songs, a

## Chicago Honors Vets

enthusiastic debut 10 years ago. The second was part of the Ernest Hemingway "Big Book"

Yiddish lullaby, and a scene based on Lorca's *Five O'Clock in the Afternoon*.

"Performing the show again," said the soprano Jamie O'Reilly, "I see the moral of *Pasiones* rings truer than ever now. Having met so many Brigaders, and said good-bye to them, I feel the responsibility to carry the story. With the train bombings in Madrid, American civil liberties threatened, and, sadly, the Iraq war raging on, the Spanish Civil War and the renowned efforts of those volunteers who fought fascism and for democracy is a timely subject." ▀



# The Lincoln Brigade in the CP Archives



July 7, 1937, Spain, on the Aragon front: Loyalist soldiers, one of them a woman, are shown operating a field telephone.

## By Michael Nash

**M**ost of the nearly 3,000 United States citizens who joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade were motivated by left-politics, with the majority following the leadership of the Communist Party. The CP and the Young Communist League were the primary recruiters for the International Brigades. On the home front, the party rallied support for the anti-fascist struggle, publicized atrocities committed by the Franco forces, brought world attention to the devastation caused by the German and Italian bombing, and raised funds for refugee aid and war relief.

As one would expect, the Archives of the Communist Party, USA, and the *Daily Worker* photo morgue acquired by New York University's Tamiment Library last year are a rich source for Spanish Civil War history. These images provide fascinating views of Spain at war and the role of the international brigades in the fight against fascism.

The *Daily Worker* photographs provide a very different view of the war from the images in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, most of which were taken by Harry Randall and the other photographers of the 15th International Brigade. Randall

and his comrades captured the experiences of the volunteers and their wartime activities, from tedious routine to front-line heroics. The *Daily Worker* photographs allow us to experience visually the impact of the war on the civilian population. They depict the solidarity, bravery and commitment of the Spanish people. Many of these images were published worldwide as part of the campaign to rally support for the Spanish Republic.

The photos on this page provide a glimpse into this wonderfully rich archive.

A number of these photographs are currently on view as part of a Tamiment Library exhibition, "Art and Politics: Posters of the Spanish Civil War." They can be seen at the NYU Bobst Library, 70 Washington Square South, in New York until January 31, 2008. ■

Michael Nash is head of the Tamiment Library at NYU.



Madrid, Spain: When a rebel plane bombards Madrid, the population rushes to the wreckage to salvage fuel for winter.

## Vandalisim

Continued from page 3

that supporters of the Falange feel sufficiently insecure to take the trouble to ascend a remote mountain track to attack the symbol of that role.”

Nevertheless, there have been many messages of support for the monument, and the Catalan government provided funds for a replacement plaque. A re-dedication ceremony was planned for November 10 as part of the annual weekend of events organized by the local association, No Jubilem la Memòria, working together with the British group, the International Brigade Memorial Trust. The veteran brigader and president of the trust, Jack Jones, unveiled the plaque, and Paul Preston spoke at the ceremony. The event showed support for those who wish to honor their dead in public remembrance and to turn an ugly incident into something more notable. 🗨

## Second Vandalisim

Continued from page 3

years ago. The previous conservative municipal government ordered the plaque removed after a motion of censure against the progressive political coalition, and the new mayor placed one in honor of all the Spanish Civil War dead. However, thanks to pressure from the progressive parties, associations and the press, the plaque was restored.

This town, once the site of an I.B. hospital, rendered a tribute to the internationals in 1996 and installed the plaque in one of its most beautiful villas, now a cultural center. A few years later, this plaque was also found broken on the ground, but it was believed that it had fallen accidentally. It was restored with a better fastening to the wall. 🗨



International Brigade veterans attended the ceremony to unveil the plaque in May 2005.

## Vermont Hosts SCW Forum

by Peter N. Carroll

“Looking Back on the Spanish Civil War,” this year’s annual Hispanic Forum at the University of Vermont in Burlington, brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars to explore various aspects of current research. Organized by Gayle Nunley, the program emphasized connections between the war in Spain and similar controversies of later times.

Focusing on the recent strikes and rebellions in Oaxaca, Mexico, the musicologist Alex Stewart discussed thematic links between the songs of the Spanish Civil War and contemporary radio broadcasts, drawing parallels between lyrics and musical influences. Similarly, Helen Scott examined connections between Orwell’s *Homage to Catalonia* and Ken Loach’s film, *Land and Freedom*.

Anthony Bradley’s paper on Irish volunteers, including the poet Charles Donnelly, who was killed at Jarama, focused on issues that related to Irish nationalism.

Anthony Geist and Peter Carroll presented talks about the Lincoln volunteers, capped by a screening of Geist’s documentary, *Souls without Borders*. Another presentation by Antonio Gomez of Dartmouth College preceded a screening of the film *Pan’s Labyrinth*.

A quote from historian Helen Graham summarized the consensus: “Spain’s Civil War, as a war of cultures, remains a parable for our times. The parable remains, even though the forms of our inhumanity to one another are each time differently configured.” 🗨



# Journalists of the Spanish Civil War

By Paul Preston

**A**t the end of the Spanish Civil War, Frank Hanighen, who had briefly served as a correspondent in Spain, edited the reminiscences of several of his companions. He commented, "Almost every journalist assigned to Spain became a different man sometime or other after he crossed the Pyrenees. After he had been there a while, the queries of his editor in far-off New York or London seemed like trivial interruptions. For he had become a participant in, rather than an observer of, the horror, tragedy and adventure which constitutes war." The well-travelled American correspondent Louis Fischer similarly noted that "[m]any of the foreign correspondents who visited the Franco zone became Loyalists, but practically all of the numerous journalists and other visitors who went into Loyalist Spain became active friends of the cause. Even the foreign diplomats and military attachés scarcely disguised their admiration. Only a soulless idiot could have failed to understand and sympathize."

In the sense of becoming what Fischer called "active friends of the cause," there is a link between many of the writers and journalists who came to Spain and the thousands of

Paul Preston is the author of many books on the Spanish Civil War, including *¡Comrades! Portraits from the Spanish Civil War*, and *Doves of War: Four Women and Spain*, as well as biographies of Franco and Juan Carlos. His most recent book, on war correspondents, was published in Spain as *Idealistas bajo las balas* in 2007 and will appear in English in 2008 as *We Saw Spain Die*. The present article draws on material from that book.

men and women from all around the world who flocked to Spain to join the International Brigades. Those volunteers believed that to fight for the Spanish Republic was to fight for the very survival of democracy and civilization against the assault of fascism. Alongside the regular troops sent by Hitler and Mussolini to support Franco and the military rebels, a smaller number of volunteers also went to fight for what they perceived as the cause of Catholicism and anti-Communism. A similar range, and breakdown, of sentiments could be

Barcelona, the correspondents saw the overcrowding caused by the endless flow of refugees fleeing from Franco's African columns and from the bombing of their homes. They saw the mangled corpses of innocent civilians bombed and shelled by Franco's Nazi and Fascist allies. And they saw the heroism of ordinary people hastening to take part in the struggle to defend their democratic Republic.

Observation became indignation, and sympathy became partisanship. As Louis Delaprée, the correspondent of *Paris-Soir*, wrote a mere eight days

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*Observation became indignation, and sympathy became partisanship.*

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found among the nearly 1,000 newspaper correspondents who went to Spain. Along with the professional war correspondents, some hardened veterans of Abyssinia, others still to win their spurs, came some of the world's most prominent literary figures: Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, Josephine Herbst and Martha Gellhorn from the United States; W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender and George Orwell from Britain; André Malraux and Antoine de Saint Exupéry from France. Some went as leftists, rather fewer as rightists, and plenty of those who spent brief periods in Spain were simply jobbing newspapermen.

However, as a result of what they saw, even some of those who arrived without commitment came to embrace the cause of the beleaguered Republic.

Underlying their conversion was a deep admiration for the stoicism with which the Republican population resisted. In Madrid, Valencia and

before his death in December 1936: "What follows is not a set of prosecutor's charges. It is an actuary's process. I number the ruins, I count the dead, I weigh the blood spilt. All the images of martyred Madrid, which I will try to put before your eyes—and which most of the time defy description—I have seen them. I can be believed. I demand to be believed. I care nothing about propaganda literature or the sweetened reports of the Ministries. I do not follow any orders of parties or churches. And here you have my witness. You will draw your own conclusions."

It was not just a question of correspondents describing what they witnessed. Many of them reflected on the implications for the rest of the world of what was happening in Spain. What they saw and what they risked were perceived as harbingers of the future that faced the world if fascism was not stopped in Spain.

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Their experiences led them into a deep frustration and an impotent rage with the blind complacency of the policy-makers of Britain, France and America. They tried to convey what they saw as the injustice of the Republic having been left defenceless and forced into the arms of the Soviet Union because of the Western Powers' short-sighted adoption of a policy of non-intervention. They felt, in the words of Martha Gellhorn, that "the Western democracies had two commanding obligations: they must save their honor by assisting a young, attacked fellow democracy, and they must save their skin, by fighting Hitler and Mussolini, at once, in Spain, instead of waiting until later, when the cost in human suffering would be unimaginably greater." Accordingly, many journalists were driven by their indignation to write in favor of the loyalist cause, some to lobby in their own countries, and in a few cases to take up arms for the Republic.

A small number of men came as journalists and ended up in the International Brigades. One such was the son of Ring Lardner, the American novelist. Jim Lardner came to report for the *New York Herald Tribune* and died fighting at the battle of the Ebro. Claud Cockburn, Hugh Slater and Tom Wintringham, all of whom arrived with credentials from the British Communist paper, the *Daily Worker*, abandoned journalistic work to join the International Brigades and take part in the fighting. Louis Fischer also joined the International Brigades.

Without going so far, many of the correspondents who experienced the horrors of the siege of Madrid and the inspiring popular spirit of resistance

became convinced of the justice of the Republican cause. In some cases, such as Ernest Hemingway, Jay Allen, Martha Gellhorn, Louis Fischer, and George Steer, they became resolute partisans, to the extent of activism yet not to the detriment of the accuracy or honesty of their reporting. Indeed, some of the most committed correspondents produced some of the most accurate and lasting reportage of the war.

Like many others, Fischer found his emotions deeply engaged with the cause of the Republic. Comparing the impact of the Russian revolution and the Spanish Civil War, he wrote in terms that echo writings by other pro-Republican correspondents:

"Bolshevism inspired vehement passions in its foreign adherents but little of the tenderness and intimacy which Loyalist Spain evoked. The pro-Loyalists loved the Spanish people and participated painfully in their ordeal by bullet, bomb and hunger. The Soviet system elicited intellectual approval, the Spanish struggle brought forth emotional identification. Loyalist Spain was always the weaker side, the loser, and its friends felt a constant, tense concern lest its strength end. Only those who lived with Spain through the thirty-three tragic months from July 1936 to March 1939 can fully understand the joy of victory and the more frequent pang of defeat which the ups and downs of the civil war brought to its millions of distant participants."

On both sides, correspondents faced danger from snipers, the bombing and strafing of enemy aircraft. On both sides, there were difficulties to be overcome with the censorship apparatus, although what could be irksome

## The 2nd installment of Paul Robeson in Spain

**By Joshua Brown  
& Peter N. Carroll**

about Paul Robeson's  
adventures with the Abraham  
Lincoln Brigade in 1938.

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Committee*

in the Republican zone was downright life-threatening in the rebel zone. In the Francoist zone, some, like Edmond Taylor, European bureau chief of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Bertrand de Jouvenal of *Paris-Soir*, Hank Gorrell and Webb Miller of the United Press, and Arthur Koestler and Dennis Weaver, both of the *News Chronicle*, were among those imprisoned and threatened with execution. More than 30 journalists were expelled from the rebel zone but only one by the Republicans. The rebels shot at least one, Guy de Traversay of *L'Intransigeant*, and arrested, interrogated and imprisoned about a dozen more for periods ranging from a few days to several months.

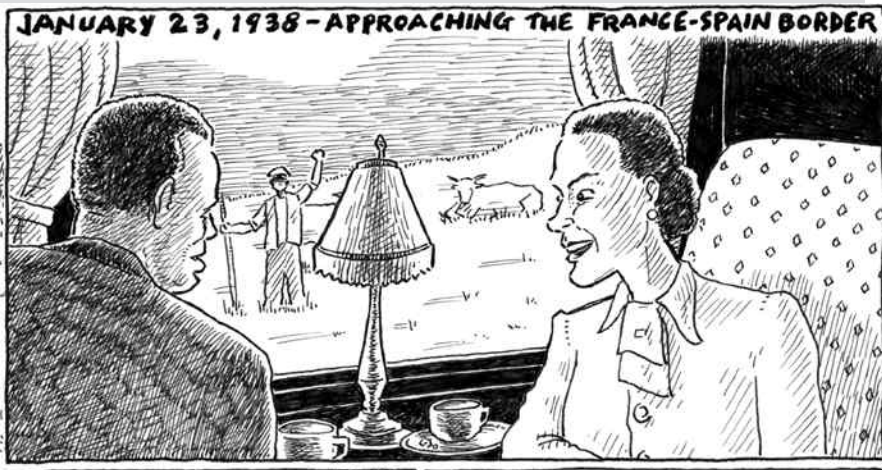
There was physical risk from shelling and bombardment in both

Continued on page 17



# CHAPTER 2

JANUARY 23, 1938 - APPROACHING THE FRANCE-SPAIN BORDER



IT'S A GOOD THING WE HAVE SAFE CONDUCT PASSES FROM THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT...

YOU HAVE THEM, DON'T YOU?



ME? I THOUGHT YOU HAD THEM!

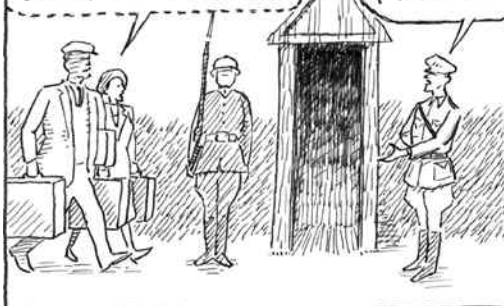


JUST KIDDING, DEAR! AND I HAVE OUR VISAS, TOO. AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE THE STATE DEPARTMENT PUT US THROUGH, DO YOU THINK I'D LET THEM OUT OF MY SIGHT?



NOW THAT U.S. PASSPORTS ARE STAMPED "NOT VALID FOR TRAVEL TO SPAIN" IT'S LUCKY OURS ARE OLD.

BUEENOS TARDES - PASAPORTES, POR FAVOR.



HMMMMM...



BIENVENIDOS A ESPAÑA -

VIVA LA REPUBLICA!



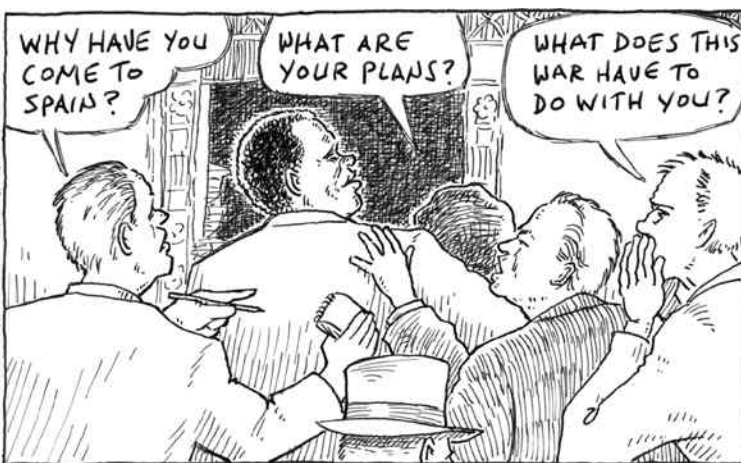
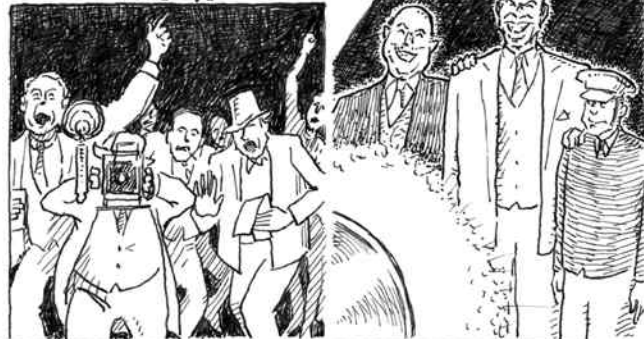
SALUD!



BROWN + CARROLL 2007

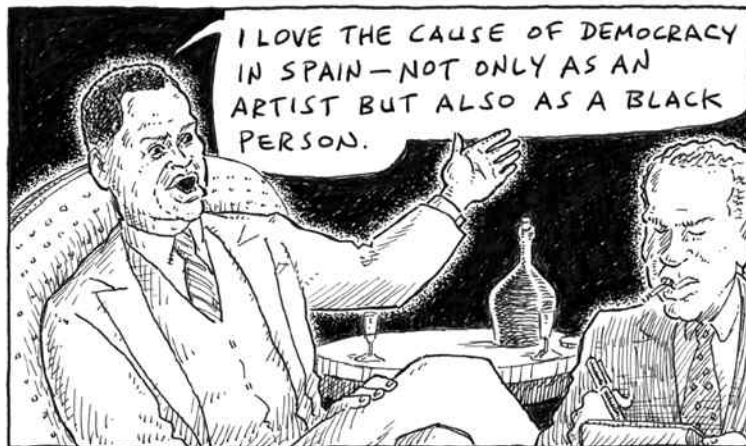


ROBESON  
SR. ROBESON  
MR. ROBESON



WHAT DOES THIS WAR HAVE TO DO WITH YOU?

HOLD ON, BOYS. LET'S DO THIS ONE AT A TIME.



I LOVE THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN—NOT ONLY AS AN ARTIST BUT ALSO AS A BLACK PERSON.



I BELONG TO AN OPPRESSED RACE, DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, ONE THAT COULD NOT LIVE IF FASCISM TRIUMPHED IN THE WORLD.



YOU'RE IN FOR A SURPRISE. WAIT 'TIL YOU SEE HOW DIFFERENT IT IS HERE. YOUR COUNTRYMEN FIGHTING HERE TELL ME THERE'S NOT THE SLIGHTEST TRACE OF COLOR PREJUDICE IN SPAIN.



I CAN'T WAIT TO MEET THEM.

SALUD!

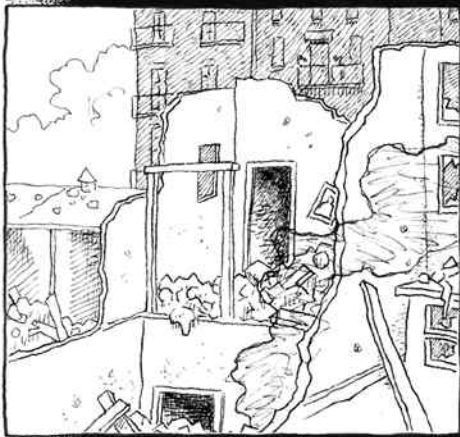
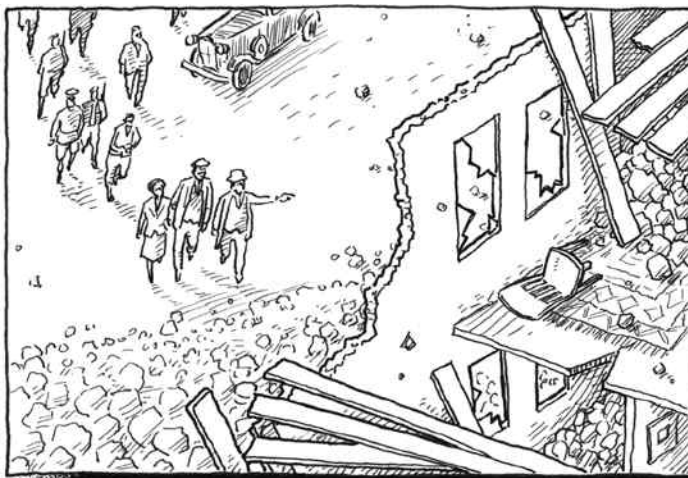


LATER

PLEASE HURRY—THE LIGHT IS FADING AND YOU SHOULD SEE THE LATEST WORK DONE BY MUSSOLINI'S PLANES.

BROWN + CARROLL 2007







# War Medicine

**By Dr. Sidney Vogel**

*Editor's note: The following article is extracted from an unpublished manuscript by Dr. Sidney Vogel, who served as a volunteer physician in the Spanish Civil War. The complete manuscript is in the Steve Nelson Papers of the ALBA collection [ALBA 008, Box 11, folder 33]. It is printed with permission of Lise Vogel.*

**P**icture to yourself the scene of war. Fields of dry stubble. Plumes of smoke in the distance and the sporadic clatter of rifle fire. In the foreground the long wavering line of a trench and in the trench, huddled and weary, the vanguard of an army. The scene is dominated by inactivity.

And then comes an offensive. Thousands of men flung against a shifting wall of steel. Thousands of men moving through a barrage of lead and explosion, huddling for shelter, matching the frail mechanism of the human body against the inhumanity of gunpowder and metal.

And after the offensive—the torn and mutilated dead, the even more torn and mutilated living. And that most silent and dangerous enemy—the soil of the dry field, the breeding ground for poisonous germs which penetrate the wounded flesh, penetrate the shattered bone carrying contamination into the body.

Who picks up the wounded? Who gives them first-aid? What does it consist of? Where are they operated upon? Who puts on the casts? Who gives blood transfusions? Why does one man die from and another survive the same wound? In short what is the medical apparatus of an army that takes the human debris of an offensive and repairs it for further use, rebuilds it for the job of living after war?

Let me describe the system as it operated in the Spanish Republican army during 1936-39. When the line of battle shifted, and often during the very heat of battle, stretcher-bearers went out onto the field and picked up the wounded. The stretcher bearers organized their work in relays. One group would carry the wounded from the field to a prearranged point. Another group would carry them from there to a still further point and so on until they arrived at the classification post. If there was extensive bleeding the stretcher-bearer took care of it on the field. A tourniquet takes but a few seconds to apply. If there were bandages (and often there were not) he applied them. Otherwise the wounded were not treated until they reached the classification post. Here, a doctor examined them and classified wounds according to the need for immediate treatment....

From the classification post, the wounded were transferred to the first hospital behind the lines....This hospital...might be anywhere from eight to twenty kilometers behind the lines, depending on the shifts in the battle line. Sometimes the front changed so quickly that the hospital was actually at the front or just behind it....[But] wounded in the front hospitals could not stay there permanently. They had to be moved to make room for others....Only the most serious cases could be moved by stretcher ambulance. The majority had to sit up through a torturing ride over bad roads. And the torture of a wound was nothing compared to the torture of a helpless man riding in an ambulance over an open road under an open sky, with enemy planes zooming overhead; leaving destruction in their wake....

And here is perhaps the appropriate place to pause and pay tribute to the first-aid man, the unpublicized but all-important cog in the mechanism that is war medicine. During an offensive a wounded man may lie out in the fields, in the mud and cold anywhere from four hours to four days. It depends on the first-aid man. While he lies there, bacteria enter his wounds, cold and starvation sap his resistance, pain and hemorrhage weaken him, until he is no longer capable of fighting off the inevitable infection. It is the first-aid man and the stretcher-bearer—often the front-line doctors—who pick him up, who immobilize fractures, who stop hemorrhages, who often give anti-tetanus injections. And less tangible than these but as important almost is the effect of a good first-aid man on soldier morale. If a man knows he is not going to be left out on the field to bleed to death, if he can depend on the courage and efficiency of the first-aid man—then he is likely to go into battle with fortified will....

Let us further the picture of war medicine. Any layman knows that a man who is shot in the belly is in a very critical condition....A bullet that enters the abdomen may very likely strike the gut, a large blood vessel, or it may penetrate one of the major organs. There is a great deal of bleeding. The chances of survival are very slim. Most of these cases die before they can be picked up and operated upon. Belly wounds are common war wounds and the immediate mortality is, as I have said, terrific. But even for those who are picked up and transported the scales are tipped in advance. Abdominal wounds are associated with shock...which is accentuated by exposure, hemorrhage,

cold, privation, and the transportation by stretcher and ambulance over bad roads. This presence of surgical shock makes every abdominal case a poor operative risk. But worse than this—a penetrating wound of the abdomen is inevitably infected. If the missile enters any part of the gastrointestinal tract..., there is unleashed in the belly cavity a veritable horde of bacteria which bring on the inevitable peritonitis.

The chances of survival in belly wounds are in inverse ratio to the time that has elapsed since the wound was received.... Many surgeons consider eight hours the limit of exposure without treatment if the man is to be saved. If the surgeon does not get the patient until nine or ten hours after the wound was received, the chances of saving his life are very slim indeed. In an offensive, if the work is so heavy or the number of surgeons so inadequate that cases have to be chosen, the doctors will choose those cases that still have a chance, that have been exposed less than eight hours, and let the others wait. "Because they'll die anyhow, with or without my operation, so give them plenty of morphine." This may sound callous but it is really useless wasting valuable time helping to kill someone when the same time might be spent saving another man's life. Now if there were enough surgeons—but in an offensive there never are....

I have already spoken of shock—surgical shock. When a layman uses the term shock he associates it with something sudden, quick, overwhelming, with heavy overtones of fear, the whole affecting the nervous system.... But to the doctor, shock—surgical shock—has a very specific meaning.... Medically speaking, shock is a condition of marked circulatory disturbance. The patient has a low blood pressure, a rapid and thready pulse, breathes rapidly or irregularly or both, is restless,

shows marked pallor, is thirsty, cold—all evidences of the circulatory function distorted or disturbed.

Medical men have come to regard shock almost as a symbol of the ravages of war on the human system. Surgically, shock is tremendously significant, particularly in war where it is so common. Shock of itself can kill. But beyond this it is a surgical axiom that a patient suffering from shock should not be operated upon. The operation only increases the shock. The conditions that bring on shock—pain, privation, cold, hunger, thirst, bleeding—are the everyday conditions of war. Shock becomes a reversal of what civilization has achieved through the centuries. And to treat shock, to cure it, becomes to the doctor a symbol of the whole reason and purpose of war medicine. To treat shock we reverse the process of privation, the everyday process of war. We supply heat, blood by transfusion, we give complete rest and freedom from pain (often by morphine), we prevent further aggravation of the original injury, we attempt to bring the body back to normal. And to do this requires speed, efficiency, organization. The treatments are simple. What can be done is simple to do. But the problem in war is to make it possible for the doctor to do it, make it possible for the wounded to be treated before shock has sapped the body of its resistance, before infection has poisoned the human system.

I have said nothing of blood transfusions because the Service of Blood Transfusion at the Spanish Front deserves special emphasis, becomes a concentrated example of what organization in war medicine can do for the saving of human life.

Let me take you with me into Barcelona during the last days of the war. I was invited to visit the "Service of Blood Transfusion for the Front."

I had only two weeks more in Spain. I made an appointment with the doctor in charge of blood transfusion. It was only four blocks from my hotel.

As I approached the building I was sure I had mistaken the address. Stretching from the corner of the street to the entrance of the hospital was a long line of workers, waiting. It looked very much like a food line.

Beyond the entrance, winding for two flights up the stairs, the line continued, ending before a large white door.

I had seen many things in Spain, many magnificent examples of the people's heroism and courage that a doctor does not forget. But I had never seen anything to equal the sight in that room beyond the waiting line.

It was a big room and bare. Four tall windows flooded it with light. On the floor, arranged in two rows of four, were eight wooden tables draped with hospital sheets. And on each table lay a patient. They were giving blood.

The scene had at once a theatrical and fairy tale like quality. From eight human bodies the life blood was flowing, with quiet and orderly precision, into eight glass bottles, guided and controlled by eight white-robed assistants. And beyond them, running the show, the doctor in charge, a white-gowned impresario.

Bottled blood for transfusions in war time! We had used this blood in all our hospitals. We called it canned blood. It was sent to us in refrigerator cars and it was a great life-saving contribution. In the heat and strain of war we had little time to test donors and give direct transfusions. Too many were needed. There was too little time. We needed blood to save lives and we needed it fast. We use[d] bottled blood and saved thousands of lives. I had used it but I had never seen it bottled.

Continued on page 16



I stood there a little awed by the sight. The doctor in charge came over. "Well, doctor" he said, "what do you think of our system?"

"What do I think?" I said. "It's amazing. It's like a Ford factory, like a blood factory with an assembly line."

He was a Spanish doctor and he was vastly pleased with the analogy.

"Oh, it is very simple," he said. "We take eight at a time. I alone insert the needle. The assistants take care of the rest. By the time I am finished with the eighth table the first table has a new patient and the process repeats itself. Like a Ford factory," he said.

I looked around me. A new group of donors was being admitted. As each one entered an assistant placed a tourniquet around his arm. He was then turned over to another assistant who placed him on the table, prepared his arm, and then called out, "Pintor, Pintor."

For a moment I did not understand. "Pintor," I said to myself, "that means painter." And then a young fellow came running with a bottle of iodine. It was his sole function to swab the arms of the donors with iodine before the needle was inserted. I discovered, later, that in civil life, he had been an artist.

Again I expressed my admiration for the "system." The doctor was proud. "It is nothing" he said, "I will show you later."

Later, when the morning's work was done, he showed me. I had not exaggerated when I said Ford factory. Up to January 1st, 1939, 26,000 donors were filed and indexed by name and blood types in Barcelona alone. Each of these donors had been examined, had had his blood tested and grouped. Beside each name was the man or

woman's place of work. Everything was minutely worked out. Since the canned blood was good for only eighteen days, the Blood Service had calculated how much blood would be needed during offensives and how much during inactive periods. The Blood Service drew very little more blood than was needed. The day of my visit—the period of the great Fascist offensive—386 blood extractions were made.

The citizens of Barcelona, to a man, were blood donor conscious. Each factory, each hotel, each place of work or point of concentration had its "responsable" whose job it was to round up the donors when they were needed. The doctor had merely to telephone the "responsable" in Factory A and say "Tomorrow morning we need so-and-so and so-and-so," naming the people from the file. The workers all had their instructions. They knew

they must not eat before a transfusion. And on the following morning they would be there waiting in line outside the hospital, ready to take their turn in giving blood for the Spanish Republic.

It would serve no purpose here to discuss the technical details involved in the preparation of canned blood. But it is important to know that the technique grew out of the need. It is important to know that this was organizational medicine at its best; that, in Spain, where surgeons worked forty hours at a stretch, where men were brought in bleeding from the field, where surgery was almost always emergency surgery, nothing short of such a technique could have saved human life.

War kills, and the medical staff, against terrific odds, does what it can to reduce the death toll. ■

## History Day

Continued from page 2

on the plane ticket, but I guess the \$20,000 scholarship to Minnesota pays off," Haro said.

Prior to accepting the scholarship, Haro had been torn between attending the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, but the scholarship made him decide on Minnesota. He plans to study political science and pre-law.

But for now, Haro has a summer and his senior year of high school ahead of him. At a recent photo shoot he announced his latest goal will be to lead the school's Quiz Bowl team to the national finals.

"He's a wonderful person and he's going to do real well with his life," Nugent said of Haro.



Cody Haro with Milt Wolff.

"This proves what he can do, and I have no doubt that he is going to be somebody that we are going to be hearing a lot about later on." ■

zones, although the rebel superiority in artillery and aircraft meant that it was greater for those posted in the Republic. Moreover, the close control exercised over correspondents in the rebel zone kept them away from danger at the front. Within the rebel zone, there were of course enthusiasts for Franco and fascism, and not just among the Nazi and Italian Fascist contingent. Nonetheless, Francis McCullagh, Harold Cardozo, and Cecil Gerahty among the British, and Theo Rogers, William P. Carney, Edward Knoblauch, and Hubert Knickerbocker among the Americans, were in a minority. Many more of those who accompanied Franco's columns were repelled by the savagery that they witnessed with the rebel columns—among them John Whitaker, Webb Miller, and Edmond Taylor. Those in the rebel zone were kept under tight supervision and their published despatches were scoured to pick out any attempts to bypass the censorship. Transgressions were punished by harassment, and sometimes imprisonment and expulsion. Accordingly, they could not relate what they had seen in their daily despatches and did so only after the war, in their memoirs.

The correspondents in the Republican zone were given greater freedom of movement, although they too had to deal with a censorship machinery, albeit a much less crude and brutal one than its rebel equivalent. Nevertheless, given that the bulk of the press in the democracies was in right-wing hands, pro-Republican correspondents found publicizing their views often more difficult than might have been expected. It is ironic that a high proportion of the world's best

journalists and writers supported the Republic but often had difficulty getting their material published as written. The powerful Hearst press and several dailies, such as the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, were already deeply hostile to the democratic Republic. Jay Allen, for instance, was fired from the *Chicago Daily Tribune* because his articles provoked so much sympathy for the Republic. There were cases of the Catholic lobby using threats of boycott or the withdrawal of advertising to make smaller newspapers alter their stance on Spain.

Dr. Edward Lodge Curran, president of the International Catholic Truth Society, boasted in December 1936 that his control of a large sum in advertising business permitted him to change the policy of a Brooklyn daily from pro-Loyalist to pro-rebel. Other more liberal newspapers were subjected to pressure to prevent the publication of pro-loyalist news. Herbert L. Matthews, the meticulously honest *New York Times* correspondent, was constantly badgered with telegrams accusing him of sending propaganda. In 1938, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brooklyn helped organize a campaign specifically aimed against Matthews and his reporting, which led to the paper losing readers. In Spain for the North American Newspaper Alliance, Hemingway also had cause for frequent complaint about his material being changed or simply not used. He and others, including Herbert Matthews, Jay Allen, and George Seldes, believed that both the cable desk and the night desk of the *New York Times* were manned by Catholic militants deeply hostile to the Republican cause who edited or

omitted material deemed sympathetic to the loyalists.

The managing editor of the *New York Times* was the short, stick-toting Virginian Edwin L. "Jimmy" James (nicknamed "dressy James" by Damon Runyon because of his brightly colored suits, which led others to compare him to a bookie). A keen bon viveur, James was always keen to get off in the evening and so cultivated an irresponsibly hands-off management style that gave enormous freedom to the night managing editor, the deeply conservative Presbyterian, Raymond McCaw. In turn, McCaw gave considerable freedom to his deputy, Neil MacNeil, a fiercely partisan Catholic, and his assistant, the equally fanatical convert Clarence Howell. These night editors controlled the group of desks known as the "bullpen," in the southeast corner of the newsroom. They had free rein in deciding what stories would get prominence and in the editing thereof.

Matthews was convinced that these men treated his copy with "suspicion, anger, and, at times, disbelief." They printed material from William P. Carney, his counterpart in the rebel zone, despite knowing that it was unashamedly partisan and sometimes even faked. In contrast, they cut Matthews's articles, tampered with his wording, and buried entire stories because they were perceived to favor the Republican side. McCaw issued orders that whenever Matthews wrote about the "Italian troops" who fought with the rebels, the phrase was to be replaced by "insurgent troops." Matthews had gone to Guadalajara after the Italian defeat there. He reported what Italian prisoners had told him and what he had

Continued on page 18

seen of captured Italian weaponry and documents. McCaw's device made nonsense of his despatches. Moreover, McCaw cabled Matthews, accusing him of simply sending Republican propaganda handouts. In mid-December 1937, with Sefton Delmer of the *Daily Express*, Hemingway, and Robert Capa, Matthews courageously reported on the Republican assault on Teruel. His articles were ruthlessly cut, while William Carney's fabricated despatches about a triumphal recapture of the city by the rebels were printed. Hemingway was convinced that this was deliberate sabotage.

Matthews, in fact, took enormous pride in his work, and his personal ethic demanded that he never wrote a word that he did not fervently believe to be true. In Spain, he would endure the bitterness of seeing the side he supported lose. Over 30 years later, he concluded, "All of us who lived the Spanish Civil War felt deeply emotional about it. . . I always felt the falseness and hypocrisy of those who claimed to be unbiased and the foolish, if not rank stupidity of editors and readers who demand objectivity or impartiality of correspondents writing about the war... those of us who championed the cause of the Republican government against the Franco Nationalists were right. It was, on balance, the cause of justice, morality, decency." Matthews was savagely denounced as "a rabid Red partisan" by the leading Catholic propagandist Dr Joseph Thorning. Nevertheless, it did not diminish his passionate commitment to writing the truth as he saw it: "The war also taught me that the truth will prevail in the long run. Journalism may seem to fail in its daily

task of providing the material for history, but history will never fail so long as the newspaperman writes the truth."

Writing the truth meant, to quote Martha Gellhorn again, "explaining that the Spanish Republic was neither a collection of blood-slathering Reds nor a cat's-paw of Russia." She would have no truck with what she called "all that objectivity shit," refusing to adopt a morally repugnant neutrality equidistant between two very different sides. She felt, as did Hemingway and Dos Passos, Geoffrey Cox and Willie Forrest, Louis Fischer and Jay Allen, Henry Buckley and George Steer, that those who fought and those who died in defence of the Spanish Republic, "whatever their nationality and whether they were Communists, anarchists, Socialists, poets, plumbers, middle-class professional men, or the one Abyssinian prince, were brave and disinterested, as there were no rewards in Spain. They were fighting for us all, against the combined force of European fascism. They deserved our thanks and our respect and got neither."

A few who became loyalist partisans went further than just writing the truth, indeed well beyond their journalistic duties. Hemingway gave an ambulance and dispensed advice to military commanders. Fischer helped both to organize the Republic's press services and to repatriate wounded International Brigaders. Jay Allen lobbied tirelessly for the Republic in America, then went into Vichy France to help Spanish refugees and imprisoned international brigaders. In consequence, he suffered incarceration in a German prison. George Steer campaigned on behalf of the Basque

government to get Britain to permit food supplies to get through to a blockaded Bilbao. The Russian Mikhail Koltsov wrote so enthusiastically about the revolutionary élan of the Spanish people that, in the atmosphere of the Soviet purges, he became an embarrassment and was executed.

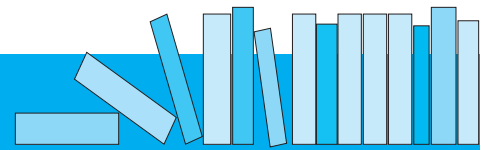
The body of work produced by war correspondents during the Spanish conflict, endlessly mined by subsequent historians, was truly "the first draft of history." Herbert Matthews believed that "a journalist who writes truthfully what he sees and knows on a given day is writing for posterity. The scepticism and criticisms that I met in some quarters during the Spanish conflict made me feel at times that I was working more for the historical record than for the daily reader."

The story of the correspondents is fundamentally about the courage and the skill of the men and women who wrote about what was happening in Spain. It illustrates many of the differences between the harsh ambience of military dictatorship in the rebel zone and the fact that, for all its difficulties, the Republic tried to function as a democracy despite wartime conditions.

The rediscovery of the correspondents and their writings has a wider significance in the history of the Spanish Civil War. The fact that so many of the correspondents wrote and campaigned for the lifting of Non-Intervention underlines the extent to which the Spanish Republic was betrayed by the democracies—to their own very real detriment. The fact that the Western powers turned a blind eye while Franco destroyed the democratic

Continued on page 20





## Rehashing the Lies

*Comrades and Commissars. The Lincoln Battalion in the Spanish Civil War.* By Cecil Eby. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007.

### By Grover Furr

On page 356 of this book, Cecil Eby recommends one account of ALB Commander Robert Merriman's death as "the most objective." It is the *only* time Eby shows any concern with objectivity—the careful evaluation of often contradictory evidence. Elsewhere Eby ignores the well-known canons of historian research. Absent a devotion to objectivity, any historian's bias must overwhelm him, as Eby's does here.

Much of the text is taken from Eby's 1969 book *Between the Bullet and the Lie*. Though the author has added much more material, the basic framework remains the same. Unfortunately, so do the errors of methodology and bias that fatally marred the earlier work.

Eby sets out to write an explicitly anticommunist work. He culls through many works, mainly memoir accounts, to select those that put the Soviets, the International Brigades, and communists generally in a negative light.

But memoir accounts conflict with one another. Furthermore, memories are not like photographs. With the passage of time they change, recreate themselves. Often people come to believe they witnessed and experienced things that never happened. Eby relies heavily on the work of William Herrick, whose book is full of

falsehoods; on Ronald Radosh, whose commentary often flagrantly contradicts the very evidence he cites; on Robert Gladnick, also a bitter anticommunist. These and, in fact, all accounts beg for critical scrutiny.

Eby also cites as fact testimony from the Subversive Activities Control Board, HUAC hearings, and Francoist historians. Such sources—like *all* sources—cry out for critical assessment. They get none here.

When it suits his purposes, Eby reports rumor and allegation as fact. Apparently he did not find enough such rumors, for in addition he lards his account with many cynical remarks, sarcasm and "cheap shots."

Whole pages have no citations at all, so generally we don't know where Eby got his assertions of fact, let alone how to assess their accuracy. This leaves him free to select those that best fit his own biases. Without objective criteria, that's all that's left.

Here are a few cases of outright fraud:

- On pages 189-190 Eby states, without citation, that Lincoln Battalion commander Oliver Law led his men into "ambushes." This assertion is made only by Herrick, who claimed one of Hy Stone's brothers was killed in one such ambush. This is impossible, since neither brother was with the Lincolns.

Of course Eby knows this, for elsewhere he cites the sources that document it. So why does he repeat this falsehood? Out of loyalty to Herrick, a fellow anticommunist and

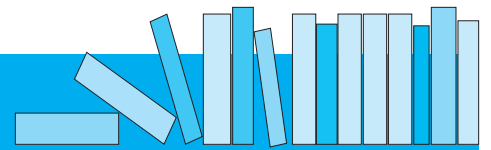
his close friend for 35 years? Whatever the reason, it's a good example of why objectivity is so vital to any historian.

- Eby charges Peter Carroll with "scholarly malpractice" (p. 427), citing John Haynes's and Harvey Klehr's claim that the US government never referred to ALB vets as "premature anti-Fascists" (*New Criterion*, 09.02). But why doesn't he tell his readers of Carroll's response (with Daniel Bertwell) in *The Volunteer* of December '03, where a U.S. Congressman is quoted using the phrase on January 2, 1945? Because most readers will not know about it?

- Eby cites Gerald Howson's remark that Joseph Stalin referred to the Comintern as a "shop of cheap goods" (lavochka). But Howson cites no evidence for this assertion. This tale has been traced to Soviet NKVD defector Walter Krivitsky (Paul Flowers to H-RUSSIA July 20, 2000, <http://tinyurl.com/378267>) whose book was heavily ghost-written by professional anticommunist publicist Isaac Don Levine (Gary Kern, *A Death in Washington*). Evidently Stalin never said it! But it makes the whole internationalist effort, of which the ALB was a part, look like a swindle.

If you don't try to discover the truth from the beginning, you are not going to stumble upon it by accident along the way. Eby's book will no doubt be employed as a fount of anti-communist propaganda. But it is worthless as history. What a pity—and what a waste! ■

Grover Furr is an associate professor of English at Montclair State University in New Jersey.



## Books in Brief

By Shirley Mangini

*The Complete Poetry.* By **Cesar Vallejo**. Edited and translated by Clayton Eshleman. University of California Press, 2007.

**T**his bilingual edition of Peru's greatest avant-garde poet is of special interest because of Vallejo's commitment to the Spanish Republic. When the civil war began, the poet was living in Paris. He quickly became an activist by joining the Committees in Defense of the Spanish Republic and participating in the Second International Congress of Anti-Fascist Writers in Defense of Culture. Vallejo wrote one of the most poignant books of poetry about the civil war, entitled *Spain, Take This Cup from Me*, before he died in 1938. Published posthumously, the book is

full of anguish and hope for the Republic, as in this fragment from the long poem "Hymn to the Volunteers for the Republic."

Volunteers,  
for life, for the good ones, kill  
death, kill the evil ones!  
Do it for the freedom of all,  
of the exploited and the exploiter,  
for a painless peace—I glimpse it  
when I sleep at the foot of my forehead  
and even more when I go around  
shouting—  
and do it, I keep saying,  
for the illiterate to whom I write,  
for the barefoot genius and his lamb,  
for the fallen comrades,  
their ashes clasped to the corpse of a  
road! ■

*Surrealism and the Spanish Civil War.* By **Robin Adèle Greeley**. Yale University Press, 2006.

**I**n this highly original study, Greeley discusses the juncture of art and politics through an analysis of Spanish painters Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, José Caballero, and Pablo Picasso and the French artist André Masson and their surrealist representations of the civil war. She compares how the French Surrealists deployed the style as a political tool, while—with the

exception of Picasso—the Spaniards found it difficult to define their political reactions to the war through their visual language.

Greeley explains that while Miró struggled to express his Catalan identity in some of his more surrealist work that deals with the subject of the war, Dalí expresses his notion that fascism was intimately tied to violence and sexual perversion in his surreal paintings of the period. According to Greeley, the lesser-known painter José Caballero—who was closely allied with Federico García Lorca during the Republican period and actively worked with the poet on his government-funded project, the traveling "La Barraca" theatre group—employed an apolitical type of surrealism, ambiguous about his politics. The author traces how Caballero uneasily dealt with working for the Franco Regime after the war and how this impacted his avant-garde style. Masson, like Picasso, used the theme of the bullfight as a way of portraying the brutal violence of the civil war. But it was Picasso, with "Guernica," Greeley explains, who most brilliantly represented the civil war through the bodily expressions of his subjects. The author states, "It is a painting which manages to incorporate the elusive quality of memory into the work itself, and to bind that quality to an analysis of history." ■

## Journalist

Continued from page 18

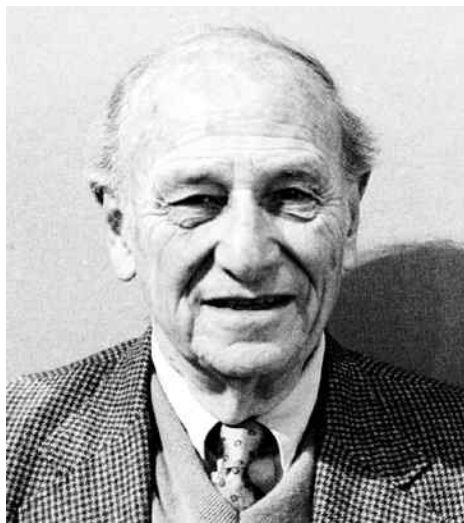
Republic with the help of Hitler and Mussolini has been indirectly justified by two recent trends. In Spain, a group of pro-Franco propagandists, styling themselves as "revisionists," and, in the United States, a number of neo-conservatives have resuscitated the idea that the Republic was a Soviet satellite. The story of the independent-minded American, British, and French radicals who fought with their pens against non-intervention is a valuable counterpoint to this narrow and ill-founded view. ■

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





# Added to Memory's Roster



## Benjamin Lane (1916-2007)

Benjamin Lane, who went to Spain hoping to pilot planes in the Republican air forces and instead served on the ground with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, died of pancreatic cancer on September 21, 2007, in San Diego, California.

Born on April 27, 1916, in St. Louis, Missouri, to Leo and Sophie Azarch Levine, Ben studied at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana for one year. He left school to follow his passion for flying and worked in the nascent airplane industry in St. Louis. In 1937 he joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain and fought with the Brigade until 1939. He returned to Los Angeles, where he met Sylvia Eisenberg. Following a whirlwind courtship, they were married in 1939.

During World War II, Ben served in the U.S. Army Air Corps. After the war, he graduated from the University of Southern California with a degree in mechanical engineering. He competed with the USC track team and became accomplished with the javelin.

One of Ben's noteworthy engineering accomplishments was designing the tracks for rides in Disneyland, including the Peter Pan ride, the Jungle Boat ride, and the Mark Twain Steamboat ride. These rides all opened in 1955. They have been enjoyed by children from all over the world.

Ben migrated into the healthcare field in the 1960's, managing health care and nursing home facilities for over 30 years. He was elected a Fellow in the American College of Nursing Home Administrators. He was a long-time advocate of better health care for the aged. He was also instrumental in developing a role for nurse practitioners and other allied health professionals in working with mental health and elderly patients in both inpatient and out-patient facilities. He opened a number of mental health care facilities in California.

Ben was active in scouting in Whittier, California, and helped to run the Air Explorer Troop 939A for several years.

Ben moved to northern California in 1970, where he frequently participated in Bay Area Post events. In 1986, he traveled to Spain for the 50th anniversary recognition of the International Brigades.

Ben is survived by his wife of 68 years, Sylvia Lane, and his children, Leonard Lane of Corona del Mar, Reese Lane of Burbank, and Nancy Lane of Hillsborough, California.

A ceremony celebrating Ben's life was held on October 20 in San Diego. Another will be held in March in conjunction with the unveiling of a monument to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade on the San Francisco Embarcadero.

—Nancy Lane

## IN LOVING MEMORY

### Gideon Rosenbluth

1919 - 2007

\* \* \*

Courageous fighter for justice  
Union activist

Great friend to generations  
Loving father and grandfather

\* \* \*

He never stopped speaking out  
against oppression and hypocrisy wherever he saw it.  
And he never hesitated to speak truth to power.

\* \* \*

He will be missed.

\* \* \*

The friends, comrades and family of Gideon Rosenbluth

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# National Monument Contributions

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Getting ready for the unveiling, Chris Reed and  
Alice Shaw display a tile from the monument.  
Photo by Peter Glazer.



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