

The Volunteer

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

“...and that government of the people,
by the people, and for the people,
shall not perish from the earth.”
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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Members of the American Medical Bureau in Spain, 1937. James Neugass, author of *War Is Beautiful*, second row, right. See p. 8.

ALBA Launches Summer Institute, p. 1

ALBITA, a Teachers Tool, p. 4

George Watt Awards, p. 6

Paul Robeson in Spain, p. 11

Green Shirt of Fascism, p. 14

Reviews, p. 17

From the Editor

This has been a prolific year—we've unveiled the San Francisco monument, organized museum exhibitions in Spain and the U.S., produced an exciting book that will soon be in your local bookstore, and begun what is probably ALBA's most important undertaking, a new educational program in collaboration with high school teachers.

For many years, we've lamented the fact that young people seldom know about the Spanish Civil War and the Lincoln Brigade. "It's not their fault," someone would reply. "Nobody teaches them. Even their teachers are often unfamiliar with those subjects."

So we've decided to see if we could remedy the knowledge gap.

Thanks to support from Perry Rosenstein and the Puffin Foundation Ltd, last June we organized ALBA's first summer institute for teachers in collaboration with NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development, the Tamiment Library, and the King Juan Carlos I Center. The program introduces high school teachers of social studies and Spanish to the wealth of our archival sources and draws upon their professional expertise to guide the development of teaching programs based on those unique archives that can and will be used in classrooms.

James Fernández coordinated the project, and his letter on page 1 reveals our optimism about the results. We hope to reach many more teachers in the years to come as these teaching programs are made available through the internet. To handle the expected traffic, we are putting a new face on our website and will include an e-newsletter to keep you posted more efficiently. Take a look and sign up at www.alba-valb.org.

Our new book, *War is Beautiful: An American Ambulance Driver in the Spanish Civil War*, was written by James Neugass during the war and then was lost for six decades. Neugass was a well-known poet before he volunteered to drive for the American Medical Bureau to Save Spanish Democracy in 1937. His day-by-day journal, due to be published for the first time by the New Press in October, reveals his extraordinary eye for detail and a spare but splendid literary style. It will be a featured title in the September issue of *Library Journal*. New Press will launch the book around the country in the fall.

In this issue, we're pleased to announce the winners of the 2008 ALBA/George Watt student essay contests. We also bring you the fourth installment of "Paul Robeson in Spain" and reviews of DVDs and books. And we offer sincere thanks for your continuing support.

ALBA Goes Electronic

The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives has launched a new monthly e-newsletter highlighting local and international events, top stories, and research related to the Spanish Civil War. Written for our members, students, and others interested in our mission, the free newsletter is produced by the ALBA staff and board.

To subscribe, visit www.alba-valb.org. Have questions? Call (212) 674-5398 or email jannitto@alba-valb.org.

www.alba-valb.org

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ALBA Launches Summer Institute for Teachers

This summer, ALBA initiated its latest and most ambitious educational outreach program to date: the ALBA Summer Institute for High School Teachers. Thanks to the generous support of the Puffin Foundation, ALBA was able to bring together a group of 17 high school teachers from the New York area for a week of professional and curricular development that focused on teaching the Spanish Civil War. ALBA partnered with the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, Tamiment Library, and NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development to maximize our impact.

There were three objectives: (1) to identify and cultivate a group of talented and dedicated public school teachers by introducing them to the extraordinary documentary resources available in our archive; (2) to take advantage of the collective experience of these teachers in order to learn what materials in and around the archive might be of most interest to high school students and teachers; and (3) to work with the teachers to develop lesson plans and supporting materials that will make the primary source materials in the archives easy to access and to use.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE ARCHIVES SUMMER INSTITUTE



is successfully completed the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives Summer Institute for High School Teachers, held at NYU's King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center and Tamiment Library from June 26 - July 2, 2008

ALBA Summer Institute is sponsored by the Puffin Foundation and was developed in collaboration with the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, Tamiment Library and the Steinhardt School.

James D. Fernández
Institute Coordinator

Report to the Puffin Foundation

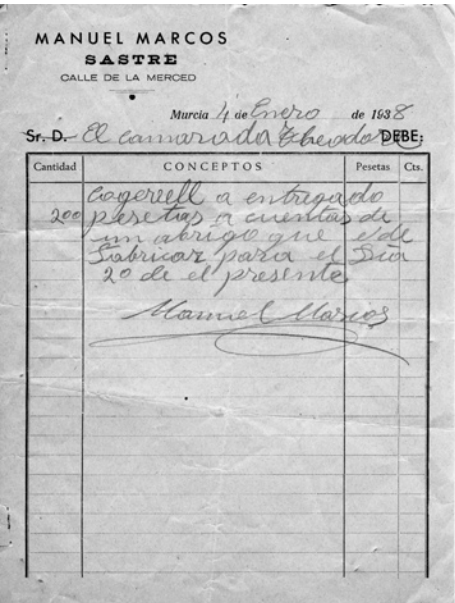
The following brief, preliminary report written by James D. Fernández, the coordinator of the institute, and addressed to Perry and Gladys Rosenstein of the Puffin Foundation, describes the first edition of ALBA's educational initiative, a resounding success. Our plan is to repeat the institute next year in New York and to offer it in at least one additional site. During the next few months, the results of the program—in the form of lesson plans and curricula proposals—will be posted on ALBA's expanded website (another work in progress).

Dear Perry and Gladys,

Toward the beginning of the first full session of the ALBA Summer Institute for High School Teachers, I was leading a discussion of the kinds of materials that are available in the ALBA collection. Using high-quality scans, we were talking about ALBA's collections of posters and postcards, photographs and letters, artifacts and memorabilia, and about how these kinds of materials might be

incorporated into the lessons of the History and Spanish teachers that were participating in the seminar. We were preparing the teachers for their first outing to the actual archives later that day. Toward the end of this preliminary exercise, I introduced an example of my favorite kind of ALBA archival material: the often mysterious and seemingly random souvenirs or pieces of memorabilia that Lincoln vets brought back with them from Spain, and against all kinds of odds, safeguarded for many years, until they wound up in the ALBA collection. I told the seminar participants that these ephemeral objects that have been safeguarded from the ravages of time can be particularly difficult to interpret, difficult to insert into any kind of overarching historical narrative or ideological project, but there they were, relics of an individual and of a historical moment, stubbornly demanding and resisting interpretation. As an example I showed a receipt for an overcoat that Lincoln volunteer

Theodore Cogswell ordered from a tailor in Barcelona in 1937. We were all contemplating this lovely and insignificant object when one of the participants, a history teacher, remarked: "But there is a way that the big picture gets captured even in this scrap of paper." He went on: "Notice how the printed form of address 'Sr. D' [Mister Sir _____]



Continued on page 2

has been crossed out, and in its place the tailor has written 'El camarada Teodoro Cogswell.' This speaks to the redefinition of social roles ushered in by the Spanish Republic and the onset of the war: the tailor addresses the college-educated American volunteer as an equal, a comrade, a peer in the struggle against fascism." Then one of the Spanish teachers chimed in: "There are also a couple of minor spelling mistakes in the tailor's writing—a couple of missing silent h's"—and her comment led to the speculation that the tailor may have only recently become literate, which took us to a discussion of the Republic's ambitious project to banish illiteracy as a central part of their citizen-building and educational initiatives. At that point, with these kinds of sharp perceptions and lucid comments, I knew that the Institute would be successful and rewarding. I was not disappointed.

Our friends at the Steinhardt School helped us shape an extraordinary group of seventeen public high school teachers from the New York area, as the inaugural class of the ALBA Summer Institute. Lee Frissell, Director of Field Projects at Steinhardt, helped us get the word out in the public schools, and we quickly fielded almost two hundred applications. Professor Robby Cohen, Chair of Steinhardt's Department of Teaching and Learning, helped us shape the curriculum of the institute and gave us invaluable advice on how to connect with these educators.

Professor Cohen also spoke at the inauguration of the seminar, reminding the participants of the importance of the Spanish Civil War in the history of the American Left, and urging us to



find innovative ways of incorporating different aspects of that history into our teaching of history, literature, language and culture. He later came back to participate in another seminar session and to offer his counsel to our high school teachers. Robby Cohen's engagement and generosity was in fact typical of all of the seminar's guests:

Michael Nash gave us a wonderful private tour of the archives; Gail Malmgreen opened up the ALBA archives just for us on Saturday morning, and the seminar participants were able to consult with her while they spent several hours handling individual collections from the archive. Peter Carroll was on hand at that Saturday archival session and on Monday led our discussion on the place of the Spanish Civil War in US high school curricula. Jordana Mendelson, a leading expert on art and visual culture in the Spanish Civil War, spent the better part of Tuesday with us, lecturing on that topic and leading a visit to ALBA's poster collection.

The King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center opened its lovely facilities to us for the duration of the seminar. I was able to count on the able support of two outstanding graduate student assistants: Juan Salas (PhD candidate, Tisch School of the Arts) and Régine

Rossi (PhD candidate, Steinhardt School of Education). My diligent and trustworthy research assistant, Mikaela Frissell, was also an important member of the team, as was Jill Annitto, Director of Operations of ALBA's New York office.

But it was the bright and enthusiastic participants—high school teachers who had just completed an exhausting academic year—that made this institute one of the most rewarding teaching experiences I've ever had. They came from a wide range of schools in four of the five boroughs; we had teachers of US history and Global History; teachers of elementary Spanish language courses and of advanced courses on Spanish literature and culture; there were some teachers from elite public schools and others from underperforming schools. They all came eager to learn and share, and throughout the six intense days, participated in vibrant and wide-ranging collegial dialogue. Our discussions ran the gamut from how to use a "carnet militar" in order to structure a basic Spanish vocabulary lesson, to how to use ALBA materials to set up a discussion about isolationism and interventionism in US foreign policy; from how the archive can be mined by the history teacher

Kudos from Teachers

interested in American radicalism, to how ALBA materials can be used to devise a curricular unit on the importance of the Spanish Civil War in American and Latin American poetry of the twentieth century.

A sample of some of the comments they wrote on our exit questionnaire will give you a sense of the kind of participants we had, and of the types of outcomes we can expect from them:

"I'm hoping to teach a class on the role of the individual in history (this year's National History Day theme) and use the Spanish Civil War as the historical context and setting."

"I also think that a 12th grade elective class on the history of New York City could be fun to teach and ALBA seems like it has the resources to cover the whole 20th century! These men and women were everywhere!"

"My school is currently in a tail-spin. If we come out and start attracting stronger students, I'd like to plan a year's investigation of the Spanish Civil War in my history club. If I transfer to a stronger school, I'll certainly propose a new course."

"I really want to thank you for this opportunity. Both being for the first time at this college (out of my budget) and working with material of such quality opened my mind and gave me a lot of ideas. I plan to offer a project-based course on the Spanish Civil War, maybe an interdisciplinary course with the History teachers."

"I will create a course in which we will visit the archives a few times because of its richness..."

"If I could trick you into believing I was a different person, I would reappear next year for a second round.

Continued on page 5

Dear Dr. Fernandez,

Thank you very much for leading and organizing the ALBA Summer Institute. Not only did I gain a substantial amount of information about the Spanish Civil War that I can now teach to my students, but I also gained a sense of passion for this moment of history.

I have spent the last several days asking friends and family in New York and Columbus, Ohio, where I am currently visiting, how much they know about the Spanish Civil War. Unbelievably, they know almost nothing about it, despite how much they know about World War II. When I tell them about the Lincoln Brigade and the other Internationals who came to help the Spanish people fight fascism, they are amazed.

I am excited to continue to educate people about the war and to work it into my lesson plans for next year. You can expect to hear from me later this summer, at the very least to request copies of the "carnet militar"!

Have a pleasant summer and thank you once again for all your hard work in putting the Institute together. What a fascinating and meaningful experience you have given us.

Sincerely,
Laurie Adelman

...Thank you for your help in getting us into the ALBA summer workshop. Personally, it was the best workshop that I have ever participated in in the United States. Not only did I learn a great deal about the Spanish Civil War and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade from the historical, cultural, and artistic perspectives, I was able to get a sense of the very human side of war from the archives we were given

access to at the Tamiment Library. Special thanks to Lee Frissell, Jim Fernandez, Juan Salas, Peter Carroll, and everyone else that organized and contributed so much to making the program such a wonderful learning experience. I also want to thank all of the faculty members that participated for their interesting contributions.

... I would like to create a Wednesday project based on what we learned at the ALBA summer workshop on the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the Spanish Civil War. The project would be interdisciplinary (History and Spanish), bringing in American and World History, Spanish language and culture as well as art. But the center piece of the project that we are proposing would be for our students to gain access to the archives and do archival research, with the culminating assignment being a written report and presentation based on the student's archival research. The highlight of the workshop was the Saturday when we were given the day to read the files of members of the ALB. We imagined ourselves back in 1936-1939 deciding if and when to leave for Spain; how would we explain the decision to fight in Spain, and our experiences fighting in a foreign land. This type of archival research would bring a whole new experience of research to our students, one that usually begins, if at all, on the graduate level. We want to give our students a head start on this wonderful opportunity of investigative history... We would love to pass on the wonderful experience we had at the ALBA summer workshop to our students in the form of an informative and hands-on BCA project.

Sincerely,
Sergei Alschen ■

"ALBITA": A Teachers' Tool in Progress

By James D. Fernández

One of the major outcomes of the first ALBA Summer Institute for High School Teachers will be the creation of a mini-Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archive (ALBITA). During the course of the institute, the teachers helped us identify an array of archive-based topics that would lend themselves to individual lessons or curricular units in their high school courses. Since then, our team of graduate students and assistants—Mikaela Frissell, Régine Rossi, and Juan Salas—has been identifying and scanning documents that are most relevant to those lines of inquiry. The result will be a body of some 400-500 documents, which will be available to everyone on-line via the ALBA website, and in print for use in ALBA's hands-on curriculum development programs.

We are also in the process of developing sample lesson plans that use the documents in ALBITA, based on the discussions that were generated at the institute. The teachers gave us valuable insight into their most

CADA ACTIVISTA UN SOLDADO MODELO

Testimonio de honor y agradecimiento al Activista

Nombre JAMES LARDNER 58 Batallón Compañía

Ejemplo para todos sus camaradas de disciplina, de trabajo, en la defensa de la Causa del Pueblo contra la reacción y la invasión extranjera.

El credo de los Activistas:

I. Asimilar con rapidez la ciencia militar.	VII. Luchar sin descanso contra los derrotistas i provocadores.
II. Ayudar a los demás combatientes a mejorar su técnica de lucha.	VIII. No estar satisfecho en tanto haya un luchador analfabeto.
III. Cuidar las armas como mi propia vida.	IX. Tener como consigna, ser el más fuerte en el ataque y el más firme en la resistencia.
IV. Conocer todas las armas de combate.	X. No descansar en tanto quede un soldado que no sea ACTIVISTA.
V. Ser un campeón de Unidad, digno representante del Gobierno de UNION NACIONAL.	
VI. Trabajar sin descanso para aumentar la capacidad política de los combatientes teniendo como base los 13 puntos del Gobierno de UNION NACIONAL.	

El Comandante

CADA ACTIVISTA UN CAMPEÓN DE UNIDAD

pressing desires and needs. While they were certainly excited about the prospect of having access to ready-made lesson plans, they also reminded us of the dangers of what they jokingly referred to as "teacher-proof curricula," lesson plans and curricular units that are packaged so tightly that teachers can find them difficult to open up, hard to appropriate and make their own.

On the basis of this feedback, we hit on the idea of ALBITA: a flexible, open-ended format that gives students and teachers access to original archival sources and to an array of lessons and ideas for lessons, while at the same time allowing them to incorporate new materials into lessons they already give or to develop new lessons based on ALBITA. The ALBITA collection will grow with each offering of the Summer Institute, as will the repertory of lesson plans and ideas. Ideas for new lesson plans will spur the inclusion of new documents; the addition to ALBITA of new documents will make possible the generation of new lessons.

This format will also allow students and teachers to experience—in a small, controlled environment—the sense of "wallowing" in an archive, browsing through apparently unrelated documents, making their own observations, their own connections, and, hopefully, being spurred to conduct additional research in order better to contextualize or understand

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Kailin Speaks at Peace Rally

The Madison, Wisconsin chapter of Veterans for Peace has named itself after Lincoln vet Clarence Kailin. So it was fitting that Clarence opened this year's Peace Rally on Memorial Day.

Peace will not come easily, said Clarence. "We have to fight for it. We have to build it. We have to create it."

According to Madison's *Capital Times*, Clarence urged personal action from people attending the rally at James Madison Park. The event included a memorial reading of the names of 94 Wisconsin soldiers who have died in Afghanistan and Iraq, with bagpipe accompaniment, and a red carnation ceremony. "I hope all of you become active activists, because it won't happen itself," Clarence concluded.

a document that may have caught their fancy. The teachers were particularly enthusiastic about this possibility of using some of ALBA's most compelling and mysterious documents, with the hope of recreating this sense of "archive fever" in their students.

The documents chosen for inclusion in ALBITA will be carefully cataloged and tagged with key words. The lesson plans we post will, of course, specify which of the ALBITA documents are required for that particular lesson, but students and teachers will also be able to use the keywords to "pull" related documents.

For example, the letter that James Lardner wrote to his mother from Barcelona on May 3, 1938, in which he explains his reasons for resigning from his job as correspondent for the *International Herald Tribune* in order to join the International Brigades, might carry the following keyword tags: Badalona; Barcelona; Catalonia; communism; fascism; Hemingway, Ernest; *International Herald Tribune*; journalism; Lardner, James; Lardner family; letters home; letters to mothers; liberal democracy; May 1938; Neutrality Act

(opposition to); reasons for enlisting; Sheean, Vincent (Jim).

The lessons and units we are currently working on include the following: Guernica Before "Guernica": Aerial Bombardment in the Spanish Civil War; The Great Depression and the Rise of Radical Ideologies; The Spanish Civil War and the Refashioning of Racial Identities; The Spanish Civil War and the Refashioning of Gender Identities; Pre-Mature Antifascists: The Lincoln Brigade, the Red Scare and McCarthyism; and James Lardner: The Last Volunteer.

We'll keep you posted as things move forward. In the meantime, we would appreciate all feedback. Please send comments to jf2@nyu.edu. 📧

James Fernández is Chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at New York University and Vice Chair of ALBA.

Institute

Continued from page 3

(Don't count me out, though, I'm a master of disguises!)"

"This was the most informative and professional professional development I've ever taken part in. Great facilitation, rich discussion, excellent materials. Bravo!"

Perry and Gladys: I realize I might very well be the first project coordinator ever to submit to his sponsors a seventy year old receipt! But seriously, I thought you'd appreciate the anecdote. I know I'll always remember the rich dialogue that flowed from our contemplation of Camarada Teodoro Cogswell's receipt, just as we'll all always be grateful to you for your extraordinary generosity, which has allowed us—and will continue to allow us—to bring these objects and this history to high school teachers in New York and beyond. Gracias, y ¡Salud! 🍷

October in Barcelona

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the departure of the International Brigades from Spain in 1938, the Catalan government is organizing a series of events in and around Barcelona from October 23-26.

The itinerary includes a visit to the International Brigades monument, a floral offering at the Fossar de la Pedrera, a formal reception at the Palace of the Generalitat, and the inauguration of ALBA's exhibition "New York and the Spanish Civil War" in Sitges.

For more information, contact Jill Annitto at jannitto@alba-valb.org.

George Watt Awards 2008

By Sebastiann Faber

I am pleased to announce the results of this year's George Watt Memorial Contest. We received some 20 submissions for both the undergraduate and graduate student categories combined, ranging in length from 8 to 480 pages. Seven essays were in Spanish, 13 in English. The jury—Rob Snyder, Gina Herrmann, and myself—found this year's group particularly strong, and we had a difficult time deciding on only one winner in each category. Given the strength of the runners-up, we also granted one Honorable Mention in each category.

The winner for the undergraduate category is Lynn Cartwright-Punnett, at Wesleyan University, with a 229-page honors thesis on "How Spain Sees Its Past: The Monumentalization of the Spanish Civil War."

The winner for the graduate category is Sonia García-López, at the Universitat de València, with her dissertation entitled "Spain Is the US: La guerra civil española en el cine del Popular Front: 1936-1939."

Allen Kim, from Tulane University, receives an Honorable Mention in the undergraduate category for his essay entitled "Eoin O'Duffy: Self-fashioned Irish Crusader in Spain (August 1936-June 1937)."

James Matthews, from Oxford University, receives an Honorable Mention in the graduate category for his MA thesis entitled "Reluctant Warriors: Republican Popular Army Conscripts In The Spanish Civil War."

The winning essays will be published in their entirety on the ALBA website. Abstracts appear below. Both the winners and the honorable mentions will receive a complimentary ticket to next year's

event in New York, as well as a year's subscription to *The Volunteer*.

How Spain Sees Its Past: The Monumentalization of the Spanish Civil War

By Lynn Cartwright-Punnett

How Spain Sees Its Past: The Monumentalization of the Spanish Civil War is, to borrow a phrase from Pierre Nora, a history of the second degree. It examines the events of the Spanish Civil War and how they have been remembered throughout the years since 1936. Each of the four chapters focuses on a distinct physical location and then examines the writings, monuments, and other sources of historical memory associated with that site.

The four sites examined are the Alcázar of Toledo, el Valle de los Caídos (Valley of the Fallen), the Ruta lorquiana (Lorca Route), and the town of Gernika. The first chapter examines the Alcázar of Toledo and examines how the myth of heroic struggle was codified into historical memory using the Alcázar's museum. The section on the Valley of the Fallen studies how the monument emblemizes the shifting dynamic between Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera and Franco. The third chapter investigates three of the sites on the Ruta lorquiana in and around Granada—the Huerta de San Vicente, the town of Fuente Vaqueros, and the Parque García Lorca in Alfacar. This chapter considers what each site says about Lorca and how the different interpretations of Lorca are related to local politics. Finally, the fourth chapter looks at the Museo de la Paz in Gernika, the painting

Guernica, and what each says about the events that took place.

Nearly 70 years after the end of the Spanish Civil War it may finally be possible to sort factual information from mythology. This work is an attempt to do just that: separate the historical record from the partisan history that has been enshrined at these sites. Given that in many cases the historical record differs from the mythical record, the work examines the reasons that history and historical memory have differed. The result is an examination of what version of history is presented at each of these sites and what this says about historical memory in Spain.

Spain Is the US: The Spanish Civil War in the Cinema of the Popular Front, 1936-1939

By Sonia García-López

My dissertation deals with the impact of the Spanish civil war on the social and cultural life of the United States and the response this conflict generated in the Cultural Front. More specifically, it studies how during this time period U.S. cinema reflected the charged political climate created by the Popular Front.

In the United States, the civilian movement of solidarity with the Spanish Loyalists (despite the non-intervention official policy) functioned as a point of reference that bound a series of emergent political movements that had come to existence in the early 1930s.

Multiple stories that mythologized and legitimized political practices around the significance of the SCW

and international solidarity in relation to the República have become an essential part of the Spanish civil war as a discursive construct within the United States. More than the struggle to support a social and political cause, what was at stake was the need to define a series of U.S. symbols and national values.

The work is divided into two parts, one dealing with New York-produced films and the other with Hollywood. The first part deals with the study of images of the Spanish civil war in New York-based filmmaking. Here, I pay close attention to films such as *Spain in Flames* (Helen Van Dongen, 1937), *Heart of Spain* (Herbert Kline, 1937), and *Return to Life* (Henri-Cartier Bresson, 1938) as well as to other independent documentaries.

In this part I examine the political debate regarding the U.S. non-intervention policy and emphasize the role of artists and intellectuals who took part in the Spanish war as a way to trace their influence in the creation of a political forum. Through a close analysis of *The Spanish Earth* (Joris Ivens, 1937), I demonstrate the issues outlined in this first section. The chapter devoted to this film studies its production history and its circulation as well as the different mechanisms of symbolization at work in the film.

The second part analyzes the only film that the Left made in Hollywood about the war in Spain during the 1930s, *Blockade* (William Dieterle, 1938). My study of this film allows us to address the politicization of the film world in the beginning of the 1930s as a direct consequence of the Great Depression, the arrival in Hollywood

of European émigrés fleeing fascism and Nazism, and the partial migration of the New York intellectual class—Dorothy Parker, Lillian Hellman, Dashiell Hammett or Hermann Shumlin—to work in Hollywood.

Through the study of *The Spanish Earth* and *Blockade*, I identify a series of elements that allowed the discursive construction of Spain and the Spanish people in the United States during the New Deal. Secondly, I trace the nature of the discursive practices that exist between a country in war that has been constructed as a secular space for myth-making and legend for U.S. intellectuals and travellers, and a nation living a historical time in crisis, such as the United States in the era of the Great Depression, which was in the midst of re-negotiating its own identity as a country.

Ultimately, this project attempts to demonstrate the ways in which the Spanish civil war functioned for the U.S. citizens as a mirror that reflected many of the problems they themselves encountered during the Depression, a historical era in which the rise of Fascism was something possible to avoid and worth to fight against. ■



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The Same Path

Were they watching you?
Tiny blue flowers
Crouching beside our path,
Were their eyes watching you?

So long ago and in the dark,
How could you see?
How could you know?
So long ago...

Were they warning you?
The leaves on these trees
So thick and tall,
Were they warning you
Of a careless fall?
So long ago and in the dark,
How could you hear?
How could you know?
So long ago...

Were they scenting you?
Those quiet cattle
Shadowing below...
Were they lifting their heads
And sniffing the air?
Could they scent courage
As well as fear
As you climbed this path,
In the dark, to war?

Now today in daylight,
We go in peace,
No guards on the border
To shoot at us,
Yet we follow your footsteps
And feel you near,
Always, dear comrades,
We feel you near,
... As we climb together....

Con Fraser

Lost Wartime Journal Set for Publication



James Neugass after the war

In October 2008, The New Press will publish a lost memoir by poet, novelist, and anti-fascist volunteer James Neugass, entitled *War is Beautiful: An American Ambulance Driver in the Spanish Civil War*, edited and with an introduction by Peter N. Carroll and Peter Glazer. Called by The New Press “*All Quiet on the Western Front* for the Spanish Civil War,” the book will be an important addition to the literature on the American volunteers, the International Brigades, and the war itself. All royalties from this book will go directly to ALBA.

Isidore James Newman Neugass was born to a well-to-do Jewish family in New Orleans on January 29, 1905. He began writing as a teenager. “I have been writing poetry since I was seventeen,” he stated in 1933, “lots of it and nothing but it.” At that time, editor Edward J. Fitzgerald of the

American Poetry Journal called his talent “forceful, dramatic, and modern.” By the time Neugass left for Spain, his work had appeared in the *Atlantic*, the *Dial*, the *Nation*, and other publications.

At the age of 20, Neugass was working for a newspaper in Paris, during which time he traveled extensively. He returned to the United States late in 1932 and sold shoes, taught fencing, and worked as a cook, a social worker, and a janitor. He also helped organize a department store workers union. And he continued to write and publish poetry, short stories, and book reviews.

In October 1937, in preparation for his journey to Spain, Neugass applied for a new passport. He arrived in the civil war-torn country in mid-November and served with the American Medical Bureau until the following April. He was Major Edward K. Barsky’s personal driver. He wrote almost every day he was there.

Paul Neugass, James Neugass’s older son, remembers a scene from his childhood. “When I was three or four, he and I were relaxing,” Paul recounts. “I was rubbing his large forehead, his eyes were closed—he’d told me I took his headaches away. I again saw the large thick scar that covered the top of his thigh and gently touched it; bumpy and smooth, I had memorized the look and feel of it, and asked if it still hurt. He told me that it was from a downhill skiing accident when he chose to hit a tree instead of a child. Somehow I instinctively knew this was not the truth. I knew it did not come from sport. I knew he was protecting me from a terrible memory of a war.” When James Neugass died of a heart attack in 1949, Paul was six and

his brother Jim was 18 months old. It wasn’t until James Neugass’s journal of his five months in Spain came to light over 60 years after it was written that his sons, Paul and Jim, learned the real story behind that scar, and discovered, in his memoir, a father they barely knew.

“The *Asaldos* ask me what I’m writing,” Neugass noted in January 1938, feeling a certain embarrassment about revealing his journal. “A letter to my *novia*’ I answer. They approve, and admire my leather covered, zipper-bound notebook.” He carried this notebook back to the U.S. when he returned from Spain in April. That year, brief excerpts of his saga were published in *Salud!*, a pamphlet of writings on Spain. “The sketches by Neugass are samples from a new 100,000-word manuscript,” *Salud!* editor Alan Calmer stated.

What happened to this manuscript? We know it was never published. We know that in the year 2000, over 60 years later, a 500-page typescript by Neugass was found in a Vermont bookshop, likely among the papers of Max Eastman, radical critic, poet, and editor of the *Masses*. The typescript was clearly the 100,000-word document Calmer referred to in 1938; it contains the passages reprinted in *Salud!*.

When co-editor Peter Glazer was seeking permission to reprint a poem by Neugass, he spoke with Neugass’s son Paul, who mentioned the typescript and asked if Glazer would like to read it. He did, and shared it with co-editor Peter N. Carroll. They immediately recognized it as a lost gem and worked with the Neugass family to secure the rights on behalf of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives.

Now, thanks to The New Press, it is available to the general public. What follows are three separate excerpts from the book. All the people Neugass mentions are footnoted in the book itself, but we haven't included those annotations here.

"This is the most important thing that has ever happened in my life," Jim Neugass said after reading his father's book for the first time. "This man was a ghost to me." The book reveals a great deal about its author, and about being on the ground in the middle of one of the most complex, tragic, and significant military conflicts of the 20th century. Jim Neugass knew as little of his father as most people know about the war in which he participated. ■

Excerpts from the Journals

January 14. Tortajada.

Late afternoon. Classification Post has been moved to this town, six miles from Teruel.

Slept until afternoon on floor of curiously unwrecked house until S. called me out to drive him to Cuevas. No work all day. Road getting too hot. They can't quite manage to bring it under shell fire. Too well protected by ridge.

Took an hour to drive the six miles to Cuevas although road surface was good, between egg-holes, and I was carrying no wounded. Four, five times we had to stop and get into the good deep ditch which prevents me from driving car off road at such times.

Became disgusted and suggested that S. ride on my running-board. The Captain refused. He said it wasn't dignified. I said that either he would ride on the running board or I would and I wasn't going to let him drive my car.



James Neugass, second from right, with other U.S. medical volunteers

After one more trip into the ditch he consented.

You cannot see planes through the roof of car and engine noises are too loud for them to be heard through the windows. Keep eyes on the road looking for men. When you can't see anyone, either planes are overhead or all human beings are in ditches, culverts, bomb-holes or the open fields, or up the cliff. Teruel-Perales highway is so full of road-gangs and light wounded and men waiting for a lift on a camion, or thinly strung out Companies waiting for orders to go up to the ridge, that you can be very sure, if no one is in sight, that the avions are on you. More and more and more of them. Flying fields at Berlin and Rome must be empty as a baseball park at night. Haven't yet heard that Franco makes his own. Why should he?

Entered Cuevas cut-off with heart in my throat because town had obviously just been bombed. More houses had gone, their viscera splayed into the street. Had the hospital been hit; and the Major?

Four dead cavalymen fully dressed and unspotted by blood lay on stretchers in the hospital courtyard. Saxton, blond tall young English doctor knelt beside one of them. He had rolled a sleeve up past the elbow of a gray arm.

"What do you think you're doing, Saxton?" I asked, suddenly remembering that he was our blood-transfusion expert.

He did not answer.

Angry, I leaned over the doctor's shoulder. The single vampire tooth of a big glass syringe was slowly drawing the blood out of the vein inside of the dead cavalryman's forearm. The vessel filled and Saxton stood up.

"New Soviet technique," he said, holding the syringe between his squinting eye and the late winter sun. Purple lights shadowed the glistening bar of ruby.

"Seldom we get the chance. Most of them are pretty well empty when they go out. Those four over there were in one of those clay dugouts in

Continued on page 10

Excerpts

Continued from page 9

the wall of the main street. No timbers on the roof. Direct hit. Asphyxiated, all of them. Their comrades dug them out before they were cold and brought them up here. Thought we could help. Their bad luck"—Saxton pointed to the four gray young faces with clay-stuffed mouths—"was our good luck. We're running short on donors and the transfusion truck is too busy."

"You mean . . . that you're going to . . ."

"Well, first I'll have to type and then test it . . . why not? . . . have to hurry."

I touched the bright tube with my hard black fingertips. Was the glass warm with the sun or with human life?

Now I understand why we must win. Men die but the blood fights on in other veins and their purpose fills other hearts.

February 4. Valverde

Matthews and Hemingway are the only non-military non-Spanish I have seen in Spain. Once when I was filling in a shell hole a small limousine came tearing down the road so fast I had to put on the ditchdiving act I use when the planes come near. "That's Hemingway," said someone pointing at the vanishing cloud of dust.

"He's a writer and I'm a writer," I thought, and went back to work.

Newspaper correspondents, literary men, visiting members of Parliament, trade union leaders and lady novelists in search of a story for the New Yorker run through the bowels of the Front—and they are bowels—like a dose of Epsom salts. I cannot blame them. They arrive, ask a few questions, look up at the sky, then jump back into their cars.

February 16, Muniesa

Before I go to Bed

The fascist head-case had been giving us much trouble. He makes more noise than the rest of the patients and incessantly demands water. Head-cases are given very little fluids to drink because of the danger of pneumonia, I think. His arms catch at the air. He pulls the sheet over his head and stares at us from under it with a single terrible eye.

A great change came over the fascist this morning. Sana had soft-boiled a quantity of eggs for the patients. As she worked down the ward, carefully feeding liquid gold into the mouths of each man, I wondered what she would do when she got to the fascist. The sheet had come down from his face and he was for once quiet.

The eyes of even the half-conscious were on him and on Sana. Would he be fed? It would be easy for me to say "all wounded are as alike as corpses." We do not hate the fascists when they lie in our hospital, but only when they do not. It would not matter if the head-case were a German artilleryman or an Italian aviator, or William Carney or handsome Adolf or Mussolini or blind old General Milan Astray or the *tercios* yelling "down with intelligence! hurrah for death!" All wounded should be given eggs when we have eggs. I am a poor hater of people and a great hater of ideas. If a man has cholera or smallpox or fascism, you hate, not the man, but the germs he carries. You do not hate Hearst or attempt to destroy him. His ideas may not be killed with a trench knife.

Therefore the fascist should be given an egg although the other wounded men in the ward look at him

as if he were the one who shot them, and perhaps he was. If our supplies had run so low that we had only a single ounce of ether or a dram of morphine, a foot of catgut and one bandage roll left, and two patients to treat, I think that the Republican would get them and not the fascist. When the operating tables are so busy that their doors are blocked with unconscious men waiting on stretchers, who should be taken first, our men or *Theirs*? Two men are heavily wounded. Both of them should be operated on immediately. The militiaman's chances of living are greater than the fascist's, but many hours have passed since both men should have been treated. Would the Major be justified in first operating on the Republican?

With the entire ward looking at her, Sana held the fascist head-case in her arms and fed him two soft-boiled eggs. She is not Mary Magdalen and he is not Christ. If this is religion, then I am religious.

Calm has come over the ward. The wounded fascist no longer keeps the bed sheet over his eyes. Desperation has gone from his cries. Softly he calls for the Virgin Mary to cure him. Although he no longer believes we will kill him, he may still think that we want to kill God.

But if the fascist head-case were an aviator, we should not have given him an egg. I am sometimes thankful that my job does not require me to kill people, but if I ever have a chance to get at an aviator I will strangle him, because I have only eight shells for my revolver and know that I will never be able to get new ones. The aviator should be buried in one piece, unlike so many of his victims. ■

ROBESON SPAIN

YOU DON'T KNOW WHO OLIVER LAW IS?

YOU SHOULD. EVERYONE SHOULD.



HE DID SOMETHING NO OTHER COLORED AMERICAN EVER DID.

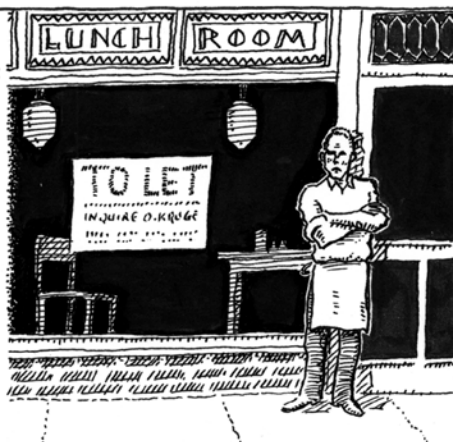


DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HIM BEFORE SPAIN. BORN IN 1899 OR 1900, RAISED ON A RANCH IN WEST TEXAS.



SERVED IN THE U.S. ARMY DURING THE GREAT WAR. RE-ENLISTED AFTER IT WAS OVER. LASTED SIX YEARS AND THEN HE'D HAD ENOUGH OF ITS RACIST WAYS.

HE MOVED TO CHICAGO, DROVE A CAB FOR A SPELL, WORKED ON THE DOCKS, JOINED THE UNION. THEN HE RAN A SMALL RESTAURANT 'TIL THE DEPRESSION DID IT IN.



AROUND THAT TIME HE JOINED THE PARTY AND STARTED ORGANIZING UNEMPLOYED WORKERS. IN 1935 HE LED STREET PROTESTS AGAINST MUSSOLINI'S INVASION OF ETHIOPIA. AND IN JANUARY 1937 HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST VOLUNTEERS TO SAIL FOR SPAIN.

HE FOUGHT AT JARAMA IN FEBRUARY. IT WAS BAD. THE BATTALION LEADERSHIP WAS ANNIHILATED.



AND LAW WAS PROMOTED.

SEE, LAW DIDN'T HAVE MUCH EXPERIENCE FIGHTING—BUT HE HAD MORE THAN 'MOST ANYBODY ELSE AMONG THE VOLUNTEERS. IN THE SPRING HE WAS PICKED TO BE BATTALION LEADER.



OLIVER LAW'S OUR MAN.

AT LEAST HE HAS SOME MILITARY BACKGROUND.

AND IT'S ABOUT TIME WE PRACTICED WHAT WE PREACH AND ADVANCE A COLORED VOLUNTEER.

LAW'S PROMOTION MET WITH GENERAL APPROVAL AMONG THE LINCOLNS.

THE FIRST AMERICAN NEGRO OFFICER LEADING WHITE TROOPS—DAMN!

ABE LINCOLN DIDN'T EVEN ALLOW THAT IN THE U.S. CIVIL WAR!



SOME, THOUGH, DIDN'T LIKE LAW, OR HIS RAPID RISE, ONE BIT.

I WAS A BETTER MACHINE GUNNER AT JARAMA 'N HIM!

THE MAN DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING 'BOUT REAL COMBAT.

RESTORE THE WHITES TO EQUALITY WITH THE NEGRO!



IT MUST'VE BEEN TOUGH BEING A FIRST AND KNOWING EVERYONE WAS WATCHING YOU... SOME CHEERING YOU ON, SOME JUST WAITING AND HOPING YOU'D STUMBLE... WHETHER THEY SUPPORTED HIM OR NOT, LAW MUST'VE FELT HE HAD TO SHOW WHAT HE WAS MADE OF.



LAST JULY, THE BRUNETE CAMPAIGN WAS PARTICULARLY HARD ON THE LINCOLNS... AND ON LAW. WE TOOK MANY CASUALTIES AND THERE WERE JUST AS MANY RECRIMINATIONS.

VILLANUEVA DE LA CAÑADA, JULY 9TH...



WE'RE JOINING THE ATTACK THIS MORNING ON THE FASCIST POSITION ON MOSQUITO RIDGE.

I WON'T MINCE WORDS, COMRADES. THIS WILL BE A BAD ONE.

THERE'LL BE NO AIR, ARTILLERY, OR TANK SUPPORT FOR US.

PLUS, WE'LL BE FIGHTING OUR WAY UPHILL.



DON'T GO OVER THE TOP WITH THE MEN, OLIVER. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE YOU.

STEVE, I'VE GOT TO LEAD THE ATTACK.



BUT—



I'M GOING TO LEAD IT. I HAVE TO BECAUSE IF I ORDER THE COMRADES TO GO OVER THE TOP AND SOME OF THEM GET KILLED, I WON'T EVER BE ABLE TO LOOK IN A MIRROR AGAIN.

2008 BROWN + CARROLL



The Green Shirt of Fascism: Environmentalist Dimensions of Fascist Ideology

By Francisco Seijo

Environmentalism is arguably one of the most attractive alternative ideologies for those critical of the political and economic system existing in advanced capitalist nations. As a post-materialist ideology, environmentalism claims to transcend traditional left and right political distinctions by postulating as a universal and non-partisan goal the human race's survival in a natural environment ravaged by industrial pollution and economic development.

Environmentalism, however, is not as new a political ideology—or as politically neutral—as many of its followers may think. Like all political ideologies, environmentalism has a history. Its intellectual origins are bound to those of nationalism, possibly still the world's dominant political ideology. Some historians, in fact, argue that environmentalism reached its political apex during the 20th century interwar period, when many of the ultra-nationalist Fascist regimes that came to power in Europe sought to turn its until then vague ideological program into official state policy.

The story of environmentalism's connection with Fascism begins in the 19th century, when various cultural movements, such as Romanticism in Europe, developed powerful critiques of the modern urban and industrial life that was just starting to emerge. These ideas inspired political thinkers to develop the concept of the nation as a spiritual basis upon which to build political regimes more attuned to their

citizens' sensibilities. Nationalist and environmentalist ideas were often mixed indistinguishably in these early nationalist thinkers' reflections; nature and national landscape became an essential component of the new spirituality. The first important politician to make eco-nationalist ideas his own was Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th president of the United States. Along with Gifford Pinchot, Roosevelt helped found the United States Forest Service, thus turning the ideology of scientific natural conservationism into official state policy.

The next nationalist regime to make environmentalist ideas central to its political project was Nazi Germany. The main defenders of environmentalist ideas within the Nazi regime were Field Marshall Hermann Göring and Richard Walther Darré, Hitler's minister of agriculture. By 1934 Göring had created a federal forest state agency—the *Reichsforstamt* (Reich Forest Office)—under his direct command. Göring's attraction to such ideas was, of course, only partly environmental. A forestry based on the natural regeneration of local tree species, rather than on what until then had been the official forest policy in Germany of carrying out massive reforestation with fast-growing exotic species, attracted him not only from an ecological but also from an ideological point of view. A pure German Aryan race, in Göring's mind, needed an equally pure German ecosystem in which to live and thrive.

The Nazi variety of eco-nationalism was also tremendously influential in other Fascist regimes, particularly Francoist Spain. In the early years of

the Franco regime, Spain attempted to install the Nazi model of nature propaganda in the country. Plans were made, for instance, for the creation of a national plan of propaganda through which Spaniards would be taught “a love for and appreciation of nature.”

The Nazi influence became particularly apparent in the forest policy of the Franco regime. The term *Reposición Forestal* (Reforestation)—employed by the Spanish state to define its plan of massive tree plantations—consciously referred to the *Reposición* policy carried out by the Catholic kings to re-populate conquered Moorish lands with pure-blooded Christians.

Paradoxically, though the Spanish state's policy of reforestation claimed to be favorable to peasant interests, in fact it contributed to the Spanish peasantry's abandonment of the countryside and their migration to urban areas. Simply put, there was no space in the countryside for trees and peasants. The perfectly aligned soldier-like trees of the Francoist regime were forcefully planted in the communally owned peasant common lands, thus depriving many peasants of their economic livelihood.

The environmentalist dimension of Fascist ideology is still the object of much controversy. Most scholars debate whether this connection emerged in a purely coincidental way or whether it hides a deeper affinity between both ideologies. There is no doubt that environmentalist and nationalist sensibilities share a family resemblance. Even today, eco-nationalist movements prosper throughout

Continued on page 19

Francisco Seijo is a lecturer in political science at Middlebury College School in Spain.

Letters to the editor

Dear Editor,

Recently, while attending a meeting sponsored by ALBA, I heard many laudatory references to Ernest Hemingway. What came flooding back to me was a bitter controversy involving Hemingway some 50 years ago. It happened when I was married to Irving Fajans. A labor organizer, he joined the Lincoln Brigade to fight against fascism in Spain. Then, during World War II, he served with the OSS in Italy.

Shortly after he came back from Italy, Irv was made Executive Secretary of VALB. On its behalf he planned a publishing project to reach the broadest readership with the story of the Spanish Civil War. It would be a literary anthology of prose and poetry, drawn from journalists, poets, and novelists who had first-hand experience of that conflict. Working together with co-editor Alvah Bessie, also a Brigade veteran, material was collected from Americans and Europeans for a book entitled *The Heart of Spain*.

But before going to press, a rancorous dispute erupted when the French Communist poet Louis Aragon said he would withdraw his piece unless the editors dropped the contribution by Ernest Hemingway. This, apparently because in his novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, he had "insulted" the French Communist André Marty, who commanded the International Brigades. Marty's leadership was criticized by Hemingway as brutal and damaging to the cause.

Irv responded by saying that he would not drop Hemingway from the collection. Meetings were then called by the vets to denounce Hemingway—and, indirectly, Irv. Irv argued against censorship and threatened to

withdraw as editor and resign his VALB post if Hemingway's piece was killed. Finally a wall vote was called. Irv and one other vet stood on one side and everyone else stood on the other side.

Irv was called an enemy of the working class. He said that if they could say that they were never his friends and had never really known him. He resigned his position with VALB (which later published the book without Hemingway's piece and with a preface condemning his politics).

On the subway coming home, Irv had his first heart attack. He died in 1967.

I write now because since that time the name of Irving Fajans has almost never appeared in the VALB newsletter, *The Volunteer*. Should his lifelong struggle against fascism in Spain, in Italy, in Germany and at home, be overlooked? Forgotten? Revisionist history and turning active leaders into non-persons will not help us understand the complexities of our times. History does count.

Mimi Fajans Rockmore

Dear Editor,

I read the article about George Brodsky with great interest. ("After Spain, 'Beyond Abstract Art,'" March 2008.) As well as working together, we were personal friends. During visits to his home in Queens, he would entertain my children with his hand puppet, Misha. I still have one of George's shell paintings on my bookshelf.

I was George's proofreading partner at the *Daily News*, on and off, from 1955 through 1965. And during the 114-day strike, December 1962 through March 1963, George was one of my

assistants on the day shift at strike headquarters. (I have photographs of him during the strike.)

The article seems to imply that George started working regularly at the *News* in 1939. I don't think that's accurate. While I cannot confirm exactly when he started there, I do know that George worked in several shops before coming to the *News*. There are other reasons why I doubt the accuracy of that date, which would require a knowledge of the industry, and which I choose not to discuss in print.

Also, the artists, Raphael and Moses, spelled their surname Soyer (not Sawyer), the way their paintings are signed.

Sincerely,

Arthur A. Wasserman

Dear Editor,

I was saddened to learn of the death of Lincoln vet Dave Smith on July 2, so soon after his achievement in driving the San Francisco Lincoln Brigade Memorial to its completion. It was indeed a privilege for me to be present at that unveiling on March 30 and to renew my acquaintanceship with Dave himself.

I had first met Dave in Spain during the 1996 Homenaje a las Brigadas Internacionales.

I had also met Abe Osheroff on that occasion. It is my great regret that I never had the opportunity to say even a few words to Abe 12 years later, after witnessing his slow arrival in his wheelchair at the San Francisco memorial ceremony and having been overwhelmed by the power of his subsequent address. Different people were hit by emotion at different stages of the event and, of course, there was added poignancy to Abe's words re that memorial—"Thank you

Continued on page 20

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The Good Fight “Classic” DVD Re-released

The Good Fight: The Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. Kino International Corp., 1984, 2008; 98 minutes plus special features.

By Robert W. Snyder

In 1984, the documentary *The Good Fight: The Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War* introduced movie audiences to the American volunteers in Spain. Kino International has now released a new edition of the film, with added features, that reminds us why the original was acclaimed when it first appeared.

Written, produced and directed by Noel Buckner, Mary Dore and Sam Sills, *The Good Fight* has all the elements of the best historical documentaries of its time: historic film footage, still photographs, interviews, music, and a strong narration (in this case, delivered skillfully by Studs Terkel). Yet if you view this documentary in its new edition, you won't feel like you're watching an aging film about distant history.

The story itself, of course, is still gripping. But what makes *The Good Fight* engrossing is the opportunity to see the vets when they were decades younger. We glimpse them not just when they were in Spain, but as they look back on Spain from maturity with the passions of youth still visible on their faces. Bill Bailey, Abe Osheroff, Salaria Kea, and Milt Wolff

are all particularly effective on-screen witnesses. Their anecdotes and observations reveal not just the struggles of the Spanish Civil War, but the vets' efforts to understand the war decades later.

Yet this is a film of history as well as memory. *The Good Fight* provides brisk but comprehensive introductions to the Thirties, the origins of the Spanish Civil War, the major battles that defined the conflict, and the contours of the vets' lives after Spain. It recognizes the importance of the Communist Party in the formation of the Brigade, but it points out that not all the volunteers were members of the Party. It acknowledges differences among the veterans over the Hitler-Stalin Pact, but it illuminates their service in World War II. It also depicts the harassment and prosecution that many of the veterans suffered during World War II and the McCarthy years as “premature anti-fascists.” At the end of *The Good Fight*, a coda shows the vets trooping off to demonstrations throughout the 1980s.

Most importantly, this is a film that admires the courage of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade without glorifying war. Film footage of men in elaborate casts, a still shot of a one-legged man, and Bailey's memories of lice all take the romance out of the war. So does Osheroff's recounting of wounded soldiers who responded to

bombastic exhortations with obscene and sarcastic ditties.

Fine as the movie was when it first appeared, the latest edition has valuable special features. A 1988 interview with the filmmakers fleshes out their motivations for making the film. An homage to the brigade includes photographs of international tributes and footage of Pete Seeger singing “Viva La Quince Brigada” with veterans at a symposium on the Spanish Civil War at Dartmouth College. A commemorative list documents the names of the American soldiers, nurses and doctors who served in Spain and those who died there. And a special selection of outtakes from interviews with Bill Bailey preserves the stories of a man who was a superb raconteur.

This edition retains the original's strong spirit but offers new formatting and special features that make it well worth owning. ■

ALBA board member Robert W. Snyder is an associate professor of journalism and American studies at Rutgers-Newark.

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Spies in Postwar Spain

Winter in Madrid. By C. J. Sanson. New York: Viking, 2008. 530 pp. \$25.95.

By Charles Oberndorf

I think it's safe to say there are few, if any, completely successful novels about the Spanish Civil War. The nature of the war is enormous, and the fine novels that do exist, such as Javier Cercas' *Soldiers of Salamis*, focus on one incident or one aspect of the war. On the other hand, the fetid compost heap of the postwar period seems to have caused the flowering of much good fiction, whether they be masterpieces such as Camilo José Cela's *The Hive* and Juan Marsé's *The Fallen* or entertainments such as Carlos Ruiz Zafón's *The Shadow of the Wind* and the recently released *Winter in Madrid*.

It's 1940, and Harry Brett, shell-shocked by the Battle of Dunkirk, is recruited by MI-5. During his years at a prestigious boarding school, Harry had befriended Sandy Forsyth. Forsyth is now in Madrid conducting some kind of shady dealings involving key players in the Spanish government. British Intelligence is working to make sure that Franco doesn't become a full-fledged ally of the Germans, and they want Harry to contact Forsyth, renew their friendship, and find out what he's up to.

While in boarding school, Harry had also befriended Forsyth's polar opposite, Bernie Piper, a working-class scholarship boy and an ardent communist. Bernie had joined the

International Brigades and disappeared during the Battle of Jarama. His girlfriend, Red Cross nurse Barbara Clare, asked Harry to come to Spain in 1938 to try to find out what had happened to Bernie.

Now, in 1940, a despondent Barbara has left the Red Cross and is Forsyth's girlfriend. While Harry is trying to uncover Forsyth's business plans, Barbara is contacted by a desperately impoverished man. His brother works as a guard at an isolated prison camp for Republican soldiers. The brother has seen Bernie Piper. For the right amount of money, he will help him escape.

These plot lines all converge, though at times I found myself wishing for a little more John Le Carré complexity or moral ambiguity. The novel's first quarter does an expert job of using dramatic flashbacks to establish character and place, and the last

quarter moves along at great speed.

The middle suffers a bit for several reasons. First, the novel is a romance as well as a mystery and espionage thriller, and the romance scenes just don't work well. Second, the number of flashbacks seem to multiply. Third, Sanson works too hard to make sure we get the point of his history lesson: the western democracies should have

supported the Republic. Good people comprised the Republic. (We meet a number of those good people suffering under fascism.) Sure, there were communists, and for the most part, they were the bad apples of left-wing Spain, but not the heart and soul of the Republic. Bernie Piper, for most of the novel, seems to be the only communist who hasn't had his soul twisted to make him capable of Stalinist treachery.

The best scenes in the novel are set in the Republican prison camp. The tensions and conflicts amid grueling conditions bring out the best and the worst of the characters, so we get complex portraits of a young priest, a devoted Republican, and a conflicted prison guard.

C.J. Sanson, who is known in Britain for a series of mysteries set in Tudor England, has a great sense of place and an ability to dramatize key moments in history. If you want to give someone a sense of why the Spanish Civil War was such an important event in its day, this novel can do

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www.alba-valb.org

the trick. It's not a perfect novel, politically or aesthetically, but it works well as an entertainment and as a fictional window on the dark, sad landscape that was postwar Spain. ■

Charles Oberndorf is a novelist, book reviewer, and English teacher. He is at work on a biographical novel about Abraham Lincoln vet Abe Osheroff.



Roots of SCW Songs

Folk Songs of Spain. By Germaine Montero, Vanguard Classics, OVC-8081.

By Bruce Barthol

About 20 years ago I first stumbled on *Folk Songs of Spain* by Germaine Montero while searching for inspiration for a musical about the Spanish Civil War. It was a problematic purchase, given that the record (you remember those) had a rather insipid cover of a woman wearing a mantilla. That did not bode well. Was it going to be Montovani Does Madrid? I bit the bullet and paid the nine bucks.

It was the best nine bucks I ever spent. The record contains 31 songs that open up the heart of the music of the people of Spain. Germaine Montero's voice is compelling, and the orchestrations are supremely tasteful and appropriate to the various regions of Spain and styles of the songs. From full orchestra to solo guitar, the musical arrangements give each song character and power. It is the combination of the lyrics and music with Montero's interpretation that conveys the vitality of the Spanish people and of the human spirit in general.

Those with an interest in the music of the Spanish Civil War will hear the songs that became "Los Cuatro Generales" ("Los Cuatro Muleros") and "El Quinto Regimiento" (verse from "El Vito"; chorus from "Las Contrabandistas De Ronda").

The recordings were made in Paris in 1953 and won the Grand Prix

de Disc award. The record was released in the U.S. on Vanguard Records in 1959 and as a CD in 1995. Used copies can probably be found on the internet.

Germaine Montero was born in France. At age 18, she went to Granada to work with Garcia Lorca's theater company. When she returned to France, she acted as well as sang, in films and on television. She was known particularly for her acclaimed performances of the works of Lorca and Berthold Brecht. She died in 2000.

Lorca used the word *duende* to describe the unique quality of flamenco music (which I would also apply to the blues). He defined it as consciousness of the presence of death. Montero brings that power and sensitivity to this wonderful material. ■

Bruce Barthol, formerly of Country Joe and the Fish and the San Francisco Mime Troupe, performs frequently at Lincoln Brigade events.

Environment

Continued from page 14

Europe, especially at the subnational level. Green and nationalist parties have formed coalitions in the Basque Country, Wales, Catalonia, Scotland, and other Eastern European countries. In more extreme forms, minority neo-fascist movements have emerged in the United States mixing white supremacy ideologies with environmentalist ideas.

This is not to say, of course, that inside every environmentalist there is

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a latent Fascist (and vice versa). Not all nationalists have turned into fascists. Yet it is a *sine qua non* condition that all Fascists are also nationalists. History warns us, however, that the temptation of the often abstract and weaker environmentalist ideology to ally itself with its more popular cousin, nationalism, has in some cases led to undesirable, and unexpected, political outcomes. ■

Photos of the Struggle for a Better World

Chronicles of Humanity. Photography by Sydney Harris. Salved Press, 2007.

By Richard Bermack

Lincoln vet Sydney Harris was a prominent Chicago activist and top labor photographer. He headed the Chicago post of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, served as a body guard for Paul Robeson, and was a fixture on picket lines and at demonstrations. He worked as a photographer for the major unions and produced and edited several local union newsletters.

Harris's family has published a collection of his photographs documenting the political activism and the movements of the latter part of the 20th Century. The book contains photographs of civil rights leaders from Martin Luther King to Stokeley Carmichael, from Paul Robeson and William Dubois to Jessie Jackson and Harold Washington; writers such as Carl Sandburg, Studs Terkel, and Norman Mailer; labor leaders such as César Chávez, Walter Reuther, and Dolores Huerta; artists and activists such as Ron Kovic, Pete Seeger, Eddie Balchowski, and Frank Lloyd Wright. The book contains photographs of politicians such as Henry Wallace, Eugene McCarthy, George McGovern, and John and Ted Kennedy. It also

Richard Bermack is the art director and designer of *The Volunteer* and author of *The Front Lines of Social Change: Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*.

includes those on the other side, such as William Buckley and Nelson Rockefeller.

The book contains action photographs of labor marches, strikes, and anti-war rallies. Perhaps the most moving of Harris's photographs are the portraits of everyday people, on picket lines, at demonstrations, and on the shop floor. He captures not just the mighty, but the simple human dignity of American workers. The book is a family album of progressive struggles that captures the aspirations not just of this Lincoln vet, but of all those who aspire to create a better world.

Letters

Continued from page 15

for making us immortal!" —when we subsequently learned that both he and Abe Smorodin, whom I had seen fall at the end of the ceremony, had passed on a week later. Like Dave, it was as if they had both willed themselves to live for that memorial completion, as my own Irish vet father, Michael O'Riordan, had willed himself to live for the first ever annual general meeting of the International Brigade Memorial Trust to be held in Dublin in October 2005, before falling only one month later and being permanently hospitalised for the last six



This photo of vet Eddie Balchowski is one of Sydney Harris's many portraits of activists in *Chronicles of Humanity*.

Copies of the book can be obtained by sending a check for \$16 to Jerry Harris, 1250 N. Wood Street, Chicago, IL 60622.



months of his life.

The part of Abe Osheroff's speech that had particularly, but unexpectedly, ambushed me with emotion was, however, the following: "What the hell are monuments all about? ... I'll tell you what it's all about for me. Some day in the not too distant future, some guy will be walking through here with a couple of his adolescent kids, and one of the kids will say, 'Dad, what's that?' And this Dad may know the answer."

Manus O'Riordan
Dublin

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Continued on page 24



David Smith (1913-2008)

David Smith, last Commander of the Bay Area Post, died in Berkeley, California, on July 2, 2008, just after his 95th birthday. His last public appearance was at the dedication of the National Monument in San Francisco on March 30.

A lifelong activist, Dave's philosophy is best summed up in this quote: "Spain changed my whole life. I saw a country struggling—ordinary people, peasants, poor people. They couldn't even read or write, but when these young people came up to the front, we became an integrated army, the people struggling against the oppressing group of fascists. It left an indelible impression on my mind. So when I got back, I decided that I was going to be committed to furthering the cause of the people, whatever I did."

The oldest of four children, Dave was born June 30, 1913, in Malden, Massachusetts, of Russian immigrant parents. He grew up in nearby Chelsea and then attended the University of Michigan from 1931 to 1935, dropping out in his senior year

for lack of funds. While at Michigan, he attended a demonstration to support Ford Motor Company striking workers and saw three workers shot. This experience and earlier exposure to the Sacco and Vanzetti case marked the beginnings of his political awareness.

Because he wanted to make a difference for ordinary working people, he volunteered for the International Brigades when Spain's democratic government was in danger. He served in Spain from the battle of Jarama, February 1937. He also saw action at Brunete, where he served as a medic and where he gave first aid to the wounded Captain Oliver Law. Later, Dave went to officer training school and returned to the Lincoln-Washington battalion during the action around Teruel. After the recrossing of the Ebro River in the summer of 1938, Dave was wounded in the final actions in the Sierra Pandols. He returned home December 1938 after the International Brigades were dissolved and all volunteers left Spain. His wound left him with a disabled left shoulder, unable to fight in WWII.

Dave settled in the New York City area, marrying Sophie Kaplan in 1940. They remained married for 59 years—until her death in 1999. Before they met, both Dave and Sophie had already joined the Communist Party, in which they were active for about 20 years. Dave had become a machinist, working in several plants as a labor organizer. At Sperry Gyroscope he was involved as a UE organizer of several successful strikes for better wages and working conditions. In the late 1940's he lost his job at Sperry's and he

was blacklisted during the McCarthy period. As they became disillusioned with its direction, both he and his wife left the Communist Party in the late 1950's.

Dave became a high school biology teacher after completing his BA from Michigan and obtaining a Masters Degree in Education from Columbia University. The majority of his 18 years of teaching were spent in New Rochelle, New York, where he was an active teachers' union organizer and supported integration in the New Rochelle public schools.

Dave retired in 1977 and moved with Sophie to southern Vermont, where they lived for almost 20 years. There they became active in local town government and Dave served on the zoning board. They enthusiastically supported Madeline Kunin during her three successful Democratic campaigns for Vermont Governor and Bernie Sanders' independent campaign to represent Vermont in Congress. They were also active in the local peace movement with the Bennington Peace Resource Center and the Somatillo-Bennington County sister city project (Nicaragua). Dave was heavily involved with the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade as they raised funds to send ambulances to Nicaragua. He and Sophie joined many vets as they accompanied the delivery of the ambulances.

While in Vermont, Dave became an avid organic vegetable gardener and made wonderful maple syrup! He participated in the Green Mountain Club and took grandchildren on many hikes and backpacking trips. He also enjoyed cross country skiing.



Added to Memory's Roster



In 1995 Dave and Sophie moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to be closer to family. In the Bay Area, Dave continued his love of the outdoors, working in community gardens and hiking, both with family and with Sierra Club elders.

Dave remained politically active and attended many Bay Area anti-war demonstrations. He also reconnected with the West Coast veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, working with them to support the School of the Americas Watch and Veterans for Peace, among other social justice causes.

Dave became head of the Bay Area Post of the Veterans and Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and spent several years working on a monument to honor the Lincoln Vets. He believed that such a monument was needed to inspire young people to consider ways in which they can make a difference in building a more just society. On March 30 he was able to speak at the dedication of the monument designed by Ann Chamberlain and Walter Hood, which is located on the San Francisco waterfront near the Vaillancourt Fountain.

Shortly after the monument dedication, Dave's health declined. He died on July 2, retaining his sense of humor until the end. He is survived by two daughters, Joanne Smith and Linda Lustig; a son-in-law, Steve Lustig; his partner of nine years, June Spero; three grandchildren and their spouses; and five great grandchildren. If anyone wishes to donate in his memory, the family requests that ALBA be the recipient.



Martin Balter
(1913-2008)

Martin Balter (born Morris Kornblum), a chemical engineer and social activist, died on April 27 at his assisted living residence in Commack, New York, at the age of 95. The day of his death, his wife Clara was representing him at the annual reunion event in New York.

Martin was the fifth of nine children born to Ethel and Isadore Kornblum, illiterate Romanian immigrants, who saw to it that their son's intellect was nurtured. He graduated first in his class, with a master's degree in chemical engineering from the College of the City of New York (now City College of CUNY). He was passed over for good jobs because of his Jewish roots and humble background, but eventually he found a position as chief chemical engineer at Miranol Chemical Company, a wholesale manufacturer of detergents, in Irvington, New Jersey. His company was the supplier of the main ingredients of Johnson and Johnson's baby shampoo, a product he was instrumental in developing.

In 1936, Martin went to Spain to join the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Although a pacifist, he felt a moral imperative to contribute to the cause. He served for two and a half years as a lab technician and field medic.

Volunteering again to serve in World War II, Martin spent four years in the army, stationed in Georgia and Okinawa, again in a non-combat capacity. After serving his country selflessly, he was compelled to change his name legally from Morris Kornblum to Martin Balter (taking his wife's maiden name) during the McCarthy era to avoid hounding by the FBI for his participation in the Spanish Civil War.

Martin was not a man of great financial means, but a man of great principles. Although he owned only 100 shares of Eastman Kodak, when nobody else would volunteer, he allowed his name to be listed as the lead plaintiff in a suit supported by the American Jewish Congress in 1974 to force Eastman Kodak to permit the stockholders to vote on a proposal dealing with Kodak's complicity with the Arab boycott of Israel. He supported the Holocaust Resource Center at Manhattan College, helping to promote better understanding between Christians and Jews, personally underwriting model Passover seders and annual bus trips to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. He also was a supporter of the Foundation for Righteous Christians, an organization that offers financial assistance to non-Jews who, at great personal risk, gave shelter and hiding places to thousands of Jews who otherwise would not have survived. Growing up in a household

Continued on page 24



Added to Memory's Roster



where only Yiddish was spoken, Martin was a charter member and donor to the National Yiddish Book Center, an organization that has so far rescued one and a half million Yiddish books that would have been destroyed or lost forever. Eternally grateful for the free education provided to him, he participated in the renovation of the Great Hall at City College, where he had spent many hours studying. A passionate lover of classical music who never had the opportunity as a child to study the violin, he was a major donor of the Crowden Music Center in Berkeley, California, where his daughter Joan is on the Board of Directors.

Martin leaves his wife of 59 years, Clara Balter of the Bronx; two daughters, Lucy Weinstein, a pediatrician and public health physician of Huntington, New York, and Joan Balter, a luthier (violin maker) in Berkeley, California; and two grandchildren.

Rosario Sánchez Mora, "Rosie the Dynamiter" (1919-2008)

One of the last surviving *milicianas*—the female foot soldiers who took up arms against the insurgent military forces in the early days of the war—and the most famous, died in Madrid on April 19, nearly 89 years old. Rosario had left her village near Madrid to study sewing in the capital at age 15. She was quickly recruited into the Socialist Youth Group. Two years later the war broke out, and when the call to arms went out to the youth in Madrid, Rosario—full of political fervor for the Republic—asked if they were recruiting women. She was assigned to an explosives unit, and while working with crude, hand-made bombs, she lost her right hand. The poet-soldier Miguel Hernández—who would die in prison in 1942—wrote a poem honoring the young woman, thus immortalizing

"Rosario la dinamitera" for her bravery.

Rosario was condemned to death in 1939 along with her father, who was summarily shot. Rosario served three years in prison. When she left prison, she managed to set up a kiosk in Madrid where she sold tobacco and earned her livelihood.

Like all dissidents, Rosario had to maintain silence during the Regime. However, when Franco died, she began to clamor for vindication of those who had fought against him. She was vociferous about the way history had treated the *milicianas*—as women who went to the frontlines as prostitutes, not as soldiers.

Until recently, Rosario was an active communist. She often spoke at conferences celebrating historical memory.

Years ago Rosario took up painting. Several of her canvases hung in her home. She was most proud of her portrait of Miguel Hernández.

—Shirley Mangini

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Continued from page 21

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