

# The Volunteer

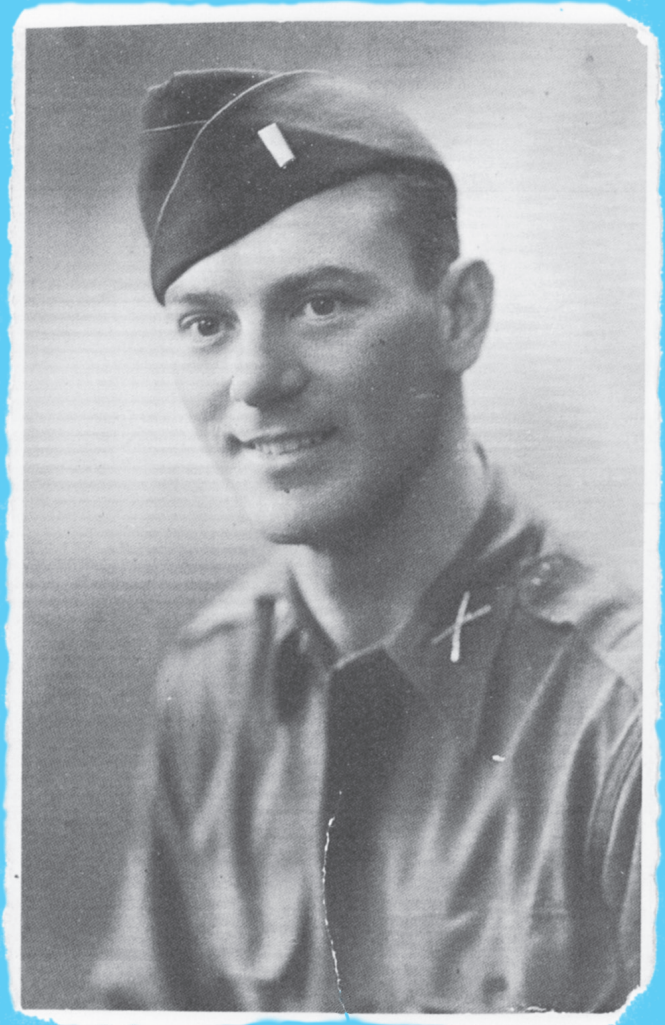
FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

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

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



Veteran Aaron Harris, on right, in Catalunya, Barcelona, 1937. Photo provided by his family.



Jerry Cook in uniform in service in Belgium, 1945, where he served after his return from Spain. Photo supplied by his daughter, Catherine Cook.

## **Lincoln Brigade volunteers' photographs and biographies now online!**

After many years of research and collection of materials, the volunteers' database is online. The above photographs were submitted by families of volunteers. Please consider submitting materials to this new resource. See "Recovering Voices of Unsung Heroes," page 5.

# ALBA & Puffin Announce Human Rights Award

The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives and the Puffin Foundation are thrilled to announce a major new initiative: the Puffin/ALBA Human Rights Project (HRP), established to honor the international brigades and all those who fought against fascism during the Spanish Civil War by connecting that legacy with international activist causes today, in particular the defense of human rights.

The project consists of two primary components: an annual Puffin/ALBA Award for Human Rights Activism in the amount of \$100,000, and an informal international network of allied organizations working in the area of human rights, historical memory, and the legacy of the International Brigades.

In the years after the Spanish Civil War, many of the vets committed their lives to assisting political prisoners around the world—particularly in Spain and Latin America—aiding political refugees, advocating for social justice, actively defending imperiled democratic institutions, or mobilizing the arts for worthy activist causes. Recent developments in Spain and Latin America, meanwhile, have focused world attention on the human rights issues associated with the legacies of dictatorships: the need for working through the violent past, recovering historical memory and honoring the rights of victims of repression.

The annual Puffin/ALBA Human Rights Activism Award, which is intended to continue for a minimum of 10 years, aims to support this work and to keep it in the public eye. The Human Rights Network will serve to provide mutual support, collaboration, and exchange of information among its member organizations; to collaborate on events and programs; and to help contribute appropriate nominations for the Award. The HRP website will be launched later this fall.

Founded in 1983, the Puffin Foundation Ltd is a non-profit foundation that receives thousands of requests from all parts of the United States each year from aspiring artists, photographers, dancers, musicians and playwrights seeking financial support for the creation of new work. Puffin's support helps confirm that cultural works that may often be excluded from mainstream opportunities due to their creators' race, gender, or social philosophy will have an opportunity to be viewed. Puffin is also a long-standing supporter of ALBA's educational mission.

## Online Volunteer

*Starting with this issue, The Volunteer is going online!*

**Here's our new address:**

[www.albavolunteer.org](http://www.albavolunteer.org)

In addition to the full text of the March 2010 print issue, the online edition carries materials such as photos, videos, longer pieces, and a new blog.

We are planning only 3 printed issues this year, for Spring, Fall, and Winter. The Summer issue will appear ONLY online.

**To be sure you don't miss ALL the news, send YOUR email address to**

[info@alba-valb.org](mailto:info@alba-valb.org)

We'll keep you posted.

If you have not been receiving the ALBA email newsletter, please email us at [info@alba-valb.org](mailto:info@alba-valb.org) and ask to subscribe.

## The Volunteer

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Judge Baltasar Garzón. Photo by Richard Bermack.

**T**he 74th annual Bay Area reunion of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, held in Berkeley, California, on May 30, paid tribute to the legal work of Judge Baltasar Garzón in challenging decades of silence about mass murders conducted during the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship of General Francisco Franco. The program, part of ALBA's focus on issues of historical memory and human rights, focused attention on the continuing struggle for justice in Spain today.

Nate Thornton, the single veteran to attend the event, greeted the cheering audience with an appeal to stay in the struggle for freedom and social justice.

Peter Carroll read the roster of veterans who had died during the past year, two of whom—Mark Billings and Hilda Roberts—had lived in northern California. The others were Carl Geiser of Oregon, Clarence Kailin of Wisconsin, and Saul Shapiro of Mexico City.

Guest speaker Maria Blanco, daughter of a Spanish Civil War

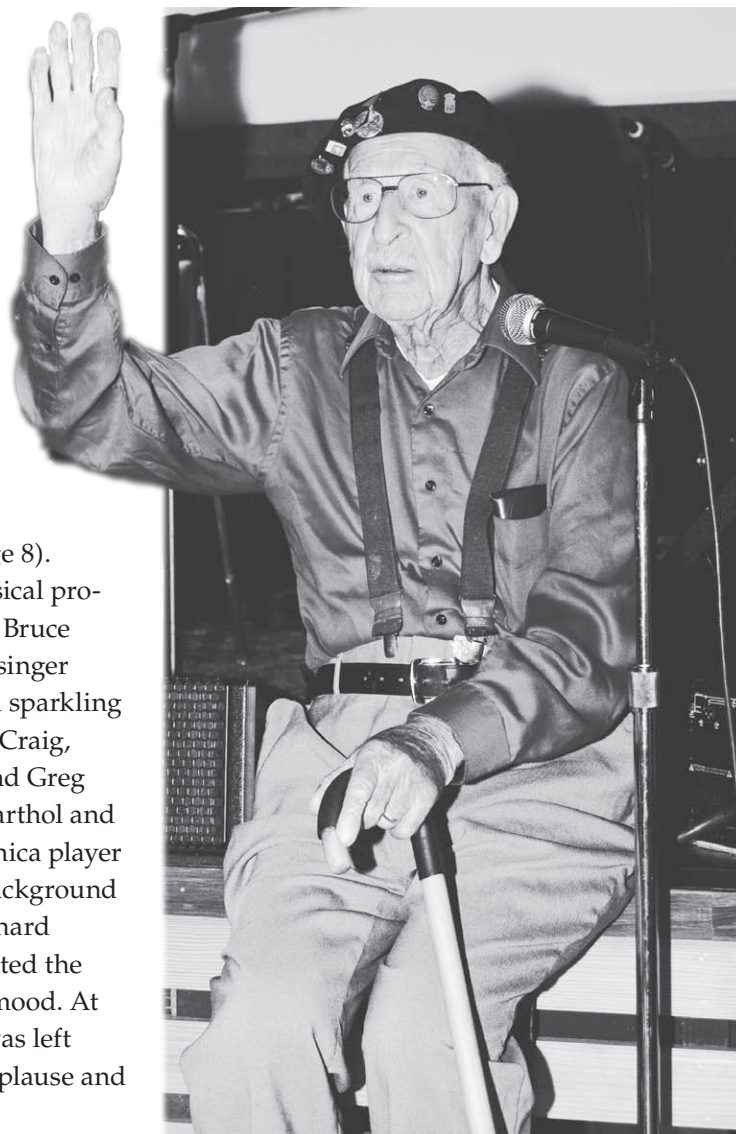
# Bay Area Reunion Honors Spanish Judge: Champion of Human Rights

refugee and executive director of the Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity & Diversity at the University of California, Berkeley, described the legal background of the current debate about memory and human rights in Spain. The issue, she explained, has roots in Garzón's earlier investigations of human rights violations in Latin America. Some 300 guests answered her remarks about Judge Garzón with thunderous applause (see page 8).

A special musical program, scripted by Bruce Barthol, featured singer Barbara Dane and sparkling musicians Randy Craig, Barrett Nelson, and Greg Platt, as well as Barthol and the famed harmonica player Will Scarlett. A background slide show by Richard Bermack highlighted the changing lyrical mood. At the end, all that was left were steaming applause and cheers.

Eight weeks later, ALBA joined the Bay Area Laborfest with the fifth annual screening of documentary films

about the Spanish Civil War. This year's menu included *The Good Fight* and 20 minutes of raw footage, newly attributed to Henri Cartier-Bresson, titled *With the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain*. ■



Nate Thornton, one of the few remaining vets, addressed the audience at the event. Photo by Richard Bermack.

# IBs Meet for Future

By Robert S. Coale

For three years, the French and German International Brigade Associations, respectively A.C.E.R. and K.S.F.R., have pushed for the creation of an international umbrella committee whose role would be to link the many national IB associations. The most recent meeting for the future “Coordination Internationale” took place in Paris last May. Delegations, principally from Europe, met for a weekend of debates.

The ambitious program that was discussed is the envy of any IB organization: an internet network of IB sites; a program of meetings for the 2011 75th anniversary of the IB; a calendar of upcoming commemorations; a so-called “observation committee” to warn of renewed fascist activities in Europe; an international catalogue of archives, photos, films and books on the IB; a future international conference on IB history; the creation of a “pedagogical brochure” on the IB; a selection of books for translations; and, finally, an inventory of IB graves in Spain.

For me as a historian, attending these 21st-century debates turned into a golden opportunity for a glimpse into what it must have been like in Albacete, just prior to the epic battle of Madrid, in the early days of the IB. Many were the opinions, languages and viewpoints. Despite the cacophony of voices, the amateur interpreters and the limited linguistic abilities of the international delegations, it soon became apparent that two opinions diverged. The French and German delegations, the organizers of the

event, supported a Paris-Berlin axis to the organization, whereas many other IB groups with closer geographical and emotional ties to Spain advocated a Spanish presidency and an office for any future international brigade coordinating committee. In essence, this is exactly what the Asociación de Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales has strived unsuccessfully to accomplish ever since the 1996 Homenaje.

Nevertheless, after an afternoon of debates, a plenary meeting of A.C.E.R. and a day of visits in Paris, the weekend was declared a great success. The French and German positions carried the day. The Coordination Internationale will have a revolving presidency, no permanent headquarters, and will manage with the present budgets of its standing members. ■

## Baseball in España

By Maynard Goldstein

War is not all shot and shell and go to hell. Infrequently, it's play. It was on this occasion, when the Lincoln and Washington Brigades got together after Brunete for R and R—and a baseball game.

I was the unofficial athletic director of the ALB, the proud guardian of all the bats and balls and gloves that our friends had shipped over from America and the comrade who discovered an ideal baseball field not far from our rest camp—smooth, hard, big enough to challenge the sluggers and just waiting for somebody to sing: “Take me out to the ball game.”

We dug in the bases, raked out the foul lines and had a memorable game on that wheat field in Spain. The final score, for history's sake, was Lincoln 2 and Washington 1.

On my return to quarters, I was summoned to Steve Nelson's tent, where we were joined by three unhappy peasants. “Looks like you're in a lot of trouble, Maynard,” said Steve.

*Me? Trouble? What's up?* I played it cool.

Steve pointed to the three men. “They claim that you took over their 100-year-old threshing grounds and converted it into a baseball field. They demand justice and demand your blood.”

Indignantly, I questioned how my blood could possibly repair their field.

“It can't,” replied Steve grimly. “But your sweat can.”

And it did. Under the vigilant direction of the peasants, our triumphant baseball team worked its collective butts off to finally bring the field back to a resemblance of its smooth self.

But we never played baseball again in España. ■

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Robert S. Coale, an ALBA Board member, teaches Spanish literature at the Université Paris 8.

# Recovering Voices of Unsung Heroes

## *Documenting the Lives of the Volunteers on the ALBA Website*

By Nancy Wallach

**"M**y great aunt told me that she was married as a young girl but because she and her husband were both employed by the Writer's Project they had to keep their union a secret. When her husband went to Spain he had to leave without telling her. She gave me her wedding band which looks like it could be silver or even nickel. She told me her husband was Aaron Lopov and she knew that Alvah Bessie had written about him....I wonder if there are members of Aaron's family or anyone who was in the Writer's Project who know anything about this. My aunt was interrogated by the Dies Committee about the same time. I am holding a transcript of those hearings. She later went on to join the army 'to fight fascism,' is how she put it, and was occasionally subjected to threats and intimidation during her career." Linda Rubin sent this in to ALBA to help us in our initiative to honor the lives of each of the volunteers on our website.

"This letter tells the story of my father Sol Fellman and his brother Harry," begins another response to ALBA. "The two brothers traveled to Spain together, on the 'Paris' in 1937. They were both members of the YCL. Sol was in the Tom Mooney unit.... He was at Jarama, where my uncle Harry was wounded. The letters of Paul Siegel (in the archives) mention a meeting when my father found Harry in August 1937 when he left the line at Jarama, walked up to him and said, 'Don't I know you from someplace?'"

Nancy Wallach is a member of ALBA's Board of Governors.

(My dad had a great sense of humor.)" David Fellman goes on to let us know that his father Sol and Solomon Feldman are two different people, clearing up an error in our database. "Solomon Feldman came from New York and was arrested trying to enter Spain. My father was in the line at Jarama when Solomon was arrested."

Secret marriages, humor under fire. These memories from family members vividly capture aspects of the human beings who volunteered in the war against fascism in Spain over 74 years ago. As their courageous example continues to inspire generations of activists who respond to the issues of the day, ALBA feels we have a unique opportunity and responsibility to expand on and disseminate each volunteer's biography. We are combining these oral histories solicited from family members with the information we have from the archives at NYU's Tamiment collection into a permanent feature on our website. By clicking on biographies, visitors to [www.alba-valb.org](http://www.alba-valb.org) can find a page for each of the veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

The responses often turn into family endeavors as computer savvy sons or daughters assist widows in capturing memories of lifetimes of activism. This excerpt from 94-year-old Anne Yellin's letter beautifully renders the love and respect in her marriage to veteran Jack Yellin. "I did not know him before he went to Spain. While he was in Spain, my best friend...who was the sister of George Watt, met in Coney Island and became friends and helped organize 'Friends of the Lincoln Brigade in Brighton Beach.' In

Spain, Jack was sent to the auto park, where he would fix cars, trucks and ambulances and drive them back to the front. On one of these journeys, Jack was very badly wounded, hurt by fire from the fascists....He was sent to a hospital in Madrid. At first no one knew where he was sent and what hospital he was in. They finally assumed he was dead and his mother was told he had died. As time went on, he was finally found in the hospital in Madrid where he was very much alive....A couple of years later Jack was stricken with a benign brain tumor, which his brother, a doctor, attributed to being blown up in Spain. When Jack came home in 1938, I met him at a dance at the Diplomat Hotel and fell in love and married him in 1939. When WWII started Jack was not drafted because he was married and had a young child. However, he enlisted and joined the navy where he served until the end of WWII." One common thread that stands out in the range of responses we've received from family members is the pride and respect they feel for the sacrifices of these real life heroes.

One of the most exciting contributions we elicited is featured in another article in this issue of *The Volunteer*. Veteran Maynard Goldstein, who had attended NYU's school of journalism and advertising and lives in NYC, sent in "Baseball in Espana" in response to the biography project.

I could not give you a complete picture of our efforts without mentioning the assistance of researchers who, while not related to volunteers, have been inspired by their example. Nacho Eli, a Spaniard, grew up next to the

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# Florida Teachers Explore Spanish Civil War

By Sherman Dorn

For the last two years, ALBA's Teachers Institute in Tampa, Florida, has focused on the needs of social studies professionals (generally history teachers), helping them to imagine and develop classroom approaches to the study of the Spanish Civil War and its global significance. This summer's week-long institute encouraged teachers to write their own assignments and lesson plans tied to the Spanish Civil War, and teachers were asked to devise something they would use with their own students. Some teachers of advanced placement courses designed structured writing assignments (document based questions) using ALBA's unique primary sources, including letters written by U.S. volunteers in Spain. Other teachers created lesson plans for one, two, three, or five days.

Toward this end, we prepared the teachers with an explanation of



The second Tampa Teachers' Institute included a field trip to the Centro Asturiano, the main center of pro-loyalist activity in Tampa during the Spanish Civil War. During their visit teachers were shown the Republican flag that flew over the building through the end of the war. In addition, they obtained oral histories about activities within the city's Latin community from former members of the local Popular Front Committee: Delia Sanchez, José R. Oural, Aida Gonzalez, Elvira Garcia and Angel Rañon. Not only do the teachers expect to use this information in their classes, but in several cases they have made plans to invite these local activists to meet with their students.

state requirements. For high school teachers, there are straightforward connections to Florida social-studies benchmarks in U.S. history, world

through both personal approaches (Why would people risk their lives thousands of miles away for other people they don't know?) and larger issues (Why would a country ignore an emerging humanitarian crisis?). Sometimes the benchmarks help in making connections. One Florida high school benchmark, for instance, focuses on international responses to genocide and so raises questions about human rights issues tied to the Spanish conflict.

The result of the Tampa summer institutes shows that many experienced teachers need just a little help imagining classroom use. With that assistance, they can devise activities on the Spanish Civil War that are rich, rigorous, and engaging for students. Nearly all the teachers expect to implement these ideas during the coming school year.

ALBA's Tampa Teachers Institute was directed by Fraser Ottanelli and Robert Alicea. Peter Carroll led the first day workshops. ■

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**We selected and organized specific Florida social-studies "benchmarks" to help them think of lessons and to help them justify studying the Spanish Civil War to administrators who want to know how classroom activities are meeting state requirements.**

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how the Florida state curriculum standards could be tied to the subject of the Spanish Civil War. We selected and organized specific Florida social-studies "benchmarks" to help them think of lessons and to help them justify studying the Spanish Civil War to administrators who want to know how classroom activities are meeting

history, and generic history skills. For middle-school teachers, the Spanish Civil War can help students meet Florida's benchmarks in civics and geography as well as historical skills.

The sessions also included discussions about the teaching issues surrounding the Spanish Civil War. For example, does it change how students respond to the material when the end of the war in Spain is seen as a tragedy rather than the standard triumphal story of U.S. history textbooks? We also discussed how to engage students

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Sherman Dorn is a professor in the Department of Psychological and Social Foundations of the College of Education at the University of South Florida.

# Ohio Institute Scores an A:

## Lesson Plans on Geiser, Kea, and McKelvy-White

By Sebastiaan Faber

**A**fter regular classes ended for 20 Ohio high school teachers last June, they spent another six days on the Oberlin College campus attending the first ALBA Institute in the Midwest. Consisting of nine social studies, nine Spanish, and two English teachers, covering all high school grade levels, the group worked on lesson plans and classroom units—ranging from a couple of days to more than two weeks' worth—integrating materials related to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the Spanish Civil War into their regularly taught curriculum.

The Institute was led by Sebastiaan Faber, taught by Peter N. Carroll, James D. Fernández, and Geoff Pingree, and sponsored by the Puffin Foundation, the Ohio Humanities Council, ALBA, and Oberlin College.

A guiding principle of ALBA's teacher institutes is that local and global issues are often closely intertwined and that examples close to home can provide a compelling window into the history of the world at large. The Oberlin Institute specifically focused on the effects of the Spanish conflict on life in the state of Ohio, and in particular on five individual Ohioans: Abraham Lincoln Brigade volunteers Carl Geiser, Salaria Kea, David McKelvy-White, and Paul McEachron, as well as Oberlin Spanish professor Paul Rogers. As in ALBA's other institutes and development days in New York City, Tampa, and the Bay

Area, one objective was to help teachers develop units by using primary source material, ranging from letters and diaries to posters, photographs, and film.

The impact of the Spanish Civil War on Ohio is not surprising. The state had been hit hard by the Depression, which in turn had increased social and racial tensions, including friction surrounding the state's large immigrant population. While Ohio's centers of industry were strongholds of organized labor, which tended to sympathize with the Spanish Republic, the state also had a large Catholic population, which tended to favor Franco. In early 1937, the pro-Republican documentary *Spain in Flames* was banned by the Ohio State Board of Censorship, but in December of the same year, the equally pro-Republican film *The Spanish Earth* was screened at Oberlin's Apollo Theater as a fundraiser for the Republic.

More than 100 Ohioans joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The selected five Ohioans were chosen because their careers were well documented by historical materials and covered a wide range of experiences: Salaria Kea was the only African-American woman to volunteer in Spain; Geiser spent a year in a POW-camp (the topic of his book, *Prisoners of the Good Fight*); McKelvy-White was from a prominent political family in Ohio; McEachron was a sophomore at Oberlin College, where Rogers taught Spanish—both went over to Spain.



"Teaching these institutes is extremely gratifying," Peter Carroll said. "The groups are fantastic, and the discussions often quite lively. And we always discover new things. This time, for example, we realized how rich and compelling Carl Geiser's letters are. His collection includes some real gems."

The Spanish Civil War is an outstanding pedagogical tool to introduce the major historical, political, and cultural issues that marked the evolution of 20th century history and culture, including violent clashes of competing ideologies and issues of national identity, gender, and race. Yet that war is rarely included in the high school curriculum, because teachers lack both the knowledge and the tools to incorporate it meaningfully while meeting academic content standards. ALBA's high school institutes fill that gap by teaching high-school instructors about the war while working with them to create compelling curricular materials based on primary sources that will help them better meet the standards for their classes.

The lesson plans that the participants produced will be posted on the ALBA website for use by other high school teachers in Ohio and nationally, and all participating teachers will be supported throughout the year by ALBA as they prepare to teach the topic. ■



# Tribute to Baltazar Garzón

As Judge Baltasar Garzón faces a backlash that may cost him his position in Spain's judiciary, ALBA invited María Blanco to give the keynote talk at the annual reunion of the Bay Area veterans and friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Berkeley, California, on May 30, 2010. The full text of her speech appears at [www.albavolunteer.org](http://www.albavolunteer.org). Photograph by Jeannette Ferrary.

## By María Blanco

I want to say that I am extremely moved by the invitation to speak today. While I speak frequently at political and public events, this is the first time that I have spoken about the Spanish Civil War. My connection to the war has been personal rather than public. I was born in Mexico, the daughter of a Spanish civil war refugee who arrived in Mexico at age 12 with his parents, who left on the last ship to cross the Atlantic before the outbreak of World War II.

It is not much of an exaggeration to say that I knew of the Abraham Lincoln Brigades probably before the age of 10. I also knew about the Thalmann Brigade, and our family road trips in Mexico, the U.S., and much later Spain, were always to the accompaniment of the Spanish Civil

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María Blanco is currently executive director of the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity & Diversity at the University of California, Berkeley.

War songs, which all of us knew by heart. I grew up surrounded by Spanish refugees: grandparents, uncles and aunts, family friends who fluctuated between silence about the war and the events leading up to the war and those who relived and refought the war in their extended Sunday “sobremesas” or “after meal” conversations.

So when Peter Carroll asked me a few months ago to pay tribute to Judge Baltasar Garzón at this year's Bay Area ALBA event, I thought this would be a wonderful and straightforward thing to do. As a civil rights lawyer, I was familiar with Garzón's important work to hold accountable Latin American dictators and military officials for the murder and torture of thousands of leftists and democrats under international law. More relevant to ALBA, Garzón had opened a groundbreaking investigation in Spain into the disappearance of over 100,000 victims of Franco during the

civil war and the long dictatorship. His investigation included the exhumation of mass graves, including one believed to contain the remains of the poet Garcia Lorca.

Shortly after agreeing to speak, however, the news arrived that Garzón had been indicted for abusing his judicial authority by opening this investigation and that he was facing suspension by the Supreme Court of Spain. This homage to Garzón quickly became an attempt to analyze what was happening to him in the context of Spain's struggle to face its long hidden and officially falsified history.

I think it's helpful to review Garzón's work and his cases in order to understand the current indictment against him and what it means for Spain.

Beginning in 1996, in close collaboration with Chilean and Argentine NGOs in Spain that represented the victims of those dictatorships, Garzón, a magistrate of Spain's national



criminal court, used Spain's Universal Jurisdiction law to indict the former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet and various Argentine military officials who had been the architects and executioners of Argentina's Dirty War from 1975 to 1983. Spanish Universal Jurisdiction law, enacted in 1985, allows for the prosecution *in Spain* of persons residing anywhere who have violated international law by committing crimes against humanity, which include genocide, torture, kidnapping and terrorism.

Under Garzón's interpretation of Spain's law of universal jurisdiction (and the interpretation of other Spanish judges and legislators at the time), crimes against humanity that occur outside of Spain can be prosecuted in Spain, even if the crimes occurred before Spain's law went into effect in 1985, and even if the victims or perpetrators are not Spanish. Based on this interpretation, Garzón issued an international arrest warrant in 1998 for Pinochet and sought his extradition to Spain for international crimes of genocide, murder and torture.

At the heart of the indictment were the deaths and disappearances of Argentines, Chileans, Spaniards and others during Pinochet's dictatorship, in particular during Chile's infamous Operation Condor. Initially, Garzón sought the indictments because of the murder of Spanish citizens by the Pinochet dictatorship, but later he broadened his jurisdiction on the basis of crimes against humanity regardless of the nationality of the victims. As many of us recall, based on that arrest warrant, Pinochet was detained in London and placed under house

arrest for 17 months. Eventually, after much political soul searching and under international scrutiny, England refused to extradite Pinochet to Spain and he returned to Chile, where his senatorial immunity was eventually lifted and he was indicted for murder, torture, and kidnapping.

Even before the Pinochet indictment, Garzón had indicted the Argentine naval officer Adolfo Scilingo for genocide, 30 counts of murder, and 286 of torture. The murder charges against Scilingo related to 30 prisoners, Argentine and foreign, thrown out of government jets during the Dirty War against the left. Unlike Pinochet, Scilingo was tried and convicted in Spain and sentenced to

committed by the military and the supporters of those dictatorships. In essence, by indicting Pinochet and Scilingo under international law, Garzón took the legal and moral position that international law that prohibited crimes against humanity trumped national amnesty laws. Additionally he argued that amnesty should only apply to situations where a person is convicted or acquitted and then granted a pardon or amnesty.

To say that Garzón's prosecutions and indictments were extremely controversial is an understatement. They were controversial internationally, in Spain, and even in democratic political circles. In Spain and abroad, the *legal* criticism of Garzón's indict-

ment was due to concern over the enforcement of international law by criminal courts outside of the International Courts established precisely for the purpose of adjudicating international law. The criticism was particularly pointed because the indictments were not limited to crimes against Spanish victims, where there might be grounds for bringing someone to justice under international law in Spain. In the face of this criticism it is important to point out that this is exactly what Spain's law of Universal

Jurisdiction spelled out and allowed for—it was only last year, in 2009, that the Spanish Parliament amended the law of National Jurisdiction to limit it to cases that involve Spanish citizens or have a strong nexus to Spain.

The *political* criticism of Garzón's cases was of a different nature. While there was much relief and cheering

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María Blanco. Photo by Richard Bermack.

over 1000 years in Spanish prison for crimes against humanity.

Garzón's indictments of Pinochet and Scilingo were significant beyond the application of international law. Of equal importance was the fact that he went after Pinochet and Scilingo despite the fact that at the time, both countries had amnesty laws that provided total immunity for crimes

# “Negrín was right”

## An interview with Gabriel Jackson

[For a longer version of this interview, as well as a video, see the online Volunteer at [www.albavolunteer.org](http://www.albavolunteer.org)]

By Sebastiaan Faber

**“S**e nos ha ido Gabriel Jackson”—“Gabriel Jackson Has Left Us.” The March 25 headline in *La Vanguardia*, Catalonia’s newspaper of record, almost looked like an obituary. But it wasn’t: Gabe Jackson, who turned 89 this year, is alive and well. And yet the article in question was a lament about a deeply felt loss. After 26 years in Barcelona, one of the world’s most prominent historians of 20th century Spain was moving back to the United States. “It’s impossible,” the article said, “to imagine someone more down-to-earth—someone kinder, more educated, discreet, tolerant, austere, always ready to lend a hand to the weak, incapable of flattering those in power.”

Few foreign scholars command the respect and authority that Gabriel Jackson enjoys in Spain. In the English-speaking world, Jackson is best known as the author of two classic accounts of Spanish history: *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War* (1965) and *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War* (1974). In Spain, however, Jackson is an all-round public intellectual, known not only for his regular contributions to the op-ed page of *El País* or his frequent review essays in *La Revista de Libros* (the Madrid equivalent of the *Times Literary Supplement*), but also, until a couple of

Sebastiaan Faber, professor of Spanish literature at Oberlin College, is Chair of ALBA’s Board of Governors.



Photos by Sebastiaan Faber.

years ago, for his performances as a semiprofessional classical flutist. Jackson has also been a long-time ALBA board member. Last March Jackson closed the Barcelona chapter of his life, moving to Oregon to live in closer proximity to his daughter and grandchildren.

For the past decade, Jackson has been working on a major biography of Juan Negrín, the Republic’s Prime Minister during much of the Civil War. Negrín was an accomplished scientist and Socialist politician—as well as a polyglot and bon vivant—whose insistence on winning the war above all else, acceptance of Soviet aid, and refusal to surrender to Franco even

when there seemed little hope for a Republican victory earned him the contempt, if not hatred, of many on the Right and Left: Nationalist supporters of General Franco, of course, but also the more violent factions within Anarchism, the revolutionary anti-Stalinist Left, and those factions of the deeply divided Spanish Socialist Party—to which he himself belonged—which sympathized with Largo Caballero, Besteiro, or Prieto. Not surprisingly, Negrín has been one of the most reviled figures of Spanish politics. Jackson tirelessly scoured through thousands of previously unseen archival materials to produce the most balanced and comprehensive

account yet of the man's life and significance. A year after the publication of the Spanish translation, his *Juan Negrín: Physiologist, Socialist, and Spanish Republican War Leader* has just come out with Sussex University Press.

His work on Negrín has strengthened Jackson's conviction that the Prime Minister was justified in his refusal to surrender, and that the continued refusal on the part of the Western democracies to support the Spanish Republic was immoral and contrary to international law, as well as a huge political mistake. "Negrín's policy of resistance and constant diplomatic effort was the right one. I am also convinced that if England and France had supported the Republic and stood up to Hitler, the Second World War would not have occurred in the terribly disastrous fashion that it did."

What moves a Jewish New Yorker to dedicate his life to the study of Spanish history? "I was 15 when the Civil War broke out. I was an avid newspaper reader and quite politically conscious already. I clearly remember the heated dinner table discussions on Spain between my father, who was a Socialist, and my Communist older brother. Then in the summer of 1942, after graduating from Harvard College, I got to spend two months in Mexico, which by then was full of Spanish Republican exiles. It was meeting and speaking with them that further opened my eyes to the history of Spain and Latin America."

Jackson was drafted that year and spent World War II as a cartographer in the Pacific. In 1950, with a Stanford MA under his belt, Jackson began his doctoral studies at the University of Toulouse in Southern France, on the work of Joaquín Costa. "You have to remember that at the time we lived in Toulouse, a third or a half of the city's

population were Spanish refugees. I made a great many friends among Spanish fellow students and their parents. In later years these connections proved crucial. When I went to Spain to research the Republic, I carried letters from my refugee friends vouching that I could be trusted. That allowed me to speak to people and hear the unvarnished truth—despite the fact that I was an American and that the U.S. government supported Franco."

The first decade back in the States was a difficult one, professionally speaking. Jackson quickly found he was haunted by his reputation as a leftist troublemaker, which wasn't helped by his refusal to provide the FBI with information on his friends. "It followed me whenever I went looking for jobs. In the mid-1950s I had a very favorable interview for a job in Spanish and Latin American history at Dartmouth College. When we were finished, one of the interviewers took me aside quietly and said: *Listen, I am very sorry to have to say this, but we know you're on Roy Cohn's list*—Cohn



was McCarthy's chief field investigator—and *you're not going to get an offer*." After three years at Goddard College, five at Wellesley—where he became close friends with the exiled Spanish poet Jorge Guillén—and three at Knox College in Illinois, Jackson had almost given up on a tenured position when he finally landed a job at the University

of California at San Diego, in 1965. Princeton had just published his *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War*.

It's hard to overstate the importance of Jackson's first book. In the



United States, it helped put 20th century Spanish history back on the academic map, earning him the 1966 Herbert Baxter Adams Prize of the American Historical Association. Its appearance did not go unnoticed in Spain, either. "I've been told it made a considerable scandal among regime circles. Together with Herbert Southworth's *La cruzada de Francisco Franco* and Hugh Thomas's book, which had come out just before, it motivated the Spanish government to initiate a whole new line of research to defend the Francoist record in the war."

Jackson, who holds double passports, will miss living in Barcelona. "Personal relationships with Spaniards have always been very important to me. I have had more deep, adult, personal friendships in Spain than in the United States. It's strange: I felt at home in Spain as soon as I got there. At one point I realized that my Spanish hosts, the parents of fellow student friends that I met in Spain, simply reminded me of my own East European Jewish aunts and uncles in New York. So yes, it will be hard giving up my life there. What I will miss most? I like kissing people on both cheeks." ■



# Blanco-Garzón

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over the fact that the Latin American architects of death and torture were finally being held accountable, there was concern that the overriding of amnesty laws could have the unintended consequence of eliminating a political tool often necessary for difficult transitions to democracy....

It is against this background that we need to understand what Baltasar Garzón has been accused of in Spain and what has led to his suspension from his judicial duties.

After years of pursuing war criminals and dictators abroad (and the Basque terrorist organization ETA in Spain), in October 2008 Garzón opened an inquiry into the disappearance of approximately 113,000 victims of Francoist repression. He also ordered the exhumation of 19 unmarked mass graves. Such graves dating from the Civil War are spread across Spain. While it is believed that most of the Francoist dead were recovered during the Franco dictatorship, the same is not true for Franco's victims. For over 70 years, thousands of Republican families have been in the dark about the fate of their loved ones. The lucky ones were those who knew of their deaths in the battlefields or at official executions. The rest were silenced and kept in the dark through the long years of the fascist regime—often living side by side with suspected accomplices in the murder of their relatives and unable to investigate a part of history that officially did not exist.

As part of his 2008 inquiry, Garzón asked the government archives, the Roman Catholic Church, the keepers of Franco's tomb and the governments of several cities, including Madrid, Granada, Cordoba and Seville, to turn over documentation

related to mass graves from the Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship. He asked for the victims' names, dates and circumstances surrounding their death. As noted by Emilio Silva, founder of the Spanish Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory, this was the first time Spanish authorities had done something like this, and Silva expressed the hope that it could be the first step toward a Truth Commission in Spain.

Because Garzón is now accused of abuse of judicial power, it is very important to underscore that Garzón's inquiry did not occur in a legal or political vacuum—his investigation is part of a larger movement in Spain to condemn its fascist past and face its history. In 2007, Spain's Parliament passed the Law of Historical Memory. Among other things, the law does the following:

It condemns the Francoist regime.

It prohibits political events at the Valley of the Fallen, Franco's burial place.

It orders the removal of Francoist symbols from public buildings and spaces.

It promises state help in the tracing, identification and eventual exhumation of victims of Francoist repression whose corpses are still missing, often buried in mass graves.

It grants Spanish nationality to surviving members of the International Brigades, without requiring them to renounce their own nationalities.

It temporarily changes Spanish nationality law, granting the right of return and citizenship to those who left Spain under Franco for political or economic reasons, and their descendants.

It calls for the provision of aid to the victims and descendants of victims of the Civil War and the Francoist regime.

At the time Garzón initiated his investigation, 1,200 petitions had already been filed at the High Court for information on those who "disappeared" between 1936 and 1975 and approximately 120 mass graves had already been exhumed.

Despite the fact that the Law of Historical Memory acknowledged and promised help with the recovery of victims of the civil war, Garzón's inquiry quickly drew opposition from different political quarters. The crux of the opposition lies in Spain's 1977 Amnesty Law, which bars investigations and indictments for all political acts, whatever their outcome, including murder and mass executions that occurred during the civil war and up to December 1976. Very shortly after opening the probe, and in the face of mounting opposition, stating that he did not have legal jurisdiction to investigate due to the 1977 Amnesty law, Garzón suspended the disappearance probe and handed the issue of exhumations of mass graves to local authorities under the law of Historical Memory.

The suspension of the inquiry, however, did not end the opposition to Garzón's investigation. In September 2009, a right wing fictitious union called Manos Limpias (Clean Hands) and the Spanish Falange, the Fascist organization that provided Franco's shock ideology, filed a complaint in the Spanish Supreme Court calling for Garzón's removal from his position for having abused his judicial authority by opening the mass

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The above donations were made from February 23 through July 31, 2010. All donations made after July 31 will appear in the December 2010 issue of *The Volunteer*.

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# Blanco-Garzón

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disappearances inquiry in contravention of the Amnesty Law. In April, Spain's Supreme Tribunal sustained the complaint. Garzón has now been suspended from his position pending a trial on charges of abuse of power.

Since the case was filed against Garzón, it has become emblematic of the crossroads at which Spain finds itself—both symbolically and concretely.

It is no coincidence that it is the Falange and the Manos Limpias group who filed the complaint. Their complaint is not really directed at Garzón's inquiry (since it was already suspended) or his supposed interference with the Amnesty Law. Garzón's investigation, or other investigations like it that might take place in the future, would undoubtedly reveal the names of high profile persons (dead and alive) who were complicit in the disappearances and murders. In reality, the complaint against Garzón is a heavy-handed attempt by the right wing and the remaining fascists in Spain to stop the Historical Memory movement; that is to say, it is an attempt to hold on to what *up to now* had been their complete revisionist control of Spanish history. And it is not as surprising as it seems at first glance that the Supreme Court upheld the complaint. Four members of this court are well known conservatives who climbed the legal ranks during Franco's reign, when all lawyers, including these members of the Supreme Court, took an oath asserting (and I quote) "unconditional loyalty to the Caudillo, communion with the ideal of the 'crusade' (referring to the fascist National Movement), and adherence to the fundamental principles of the National Movement."

As with other institutions in today's Spain, the Supreme Court is also divided over maintaining the silence or bringing Spain's painful history out of the shadows.

Pandora's box has been opened in Spain, and as always happens with Pandora's box, some are attempting to close it, but I predict, unsuccessfully. Garzón may lose his judicial appointment, but the movement to tell the true history of fascism in Spain cannot be turned back. New and accurate history books will continue to be published, more and more graves will be exhumed, and finally, there will be a generation of Spaniards, and other generations that come after it, who know the truth: who will know how a democratic government was overthrown by

military fascists who ruled by violence and repression for 40 years.

And it may turn out that Garzón's insistence on the supremacy of international laws against genocide over blanket amnesties is making its way to Spain and will ultimately lead to a Truth Commission or at least a willingness to face history and name names. After all, if countries with former fascist regimes like Argentina, Chile and Paraguay could do so, why not Spain? The international movement for truth and accountability, which owes a large debt to Baltasar Garzón, is coming full circle to Spain. And while Garzón may not have a chance to implement it there, he surely had a historic role in its growth and acceptance.

Thank you, Baltasar Garzón. ■

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## Heroes

Continued from page 5

monastery in San Pedro de Cardena, Burgos, Spain, where the International Volunteers were incarcerated during the Spanish Civil War. He started a blog, <http://thejailynews.blogspot.com/>, named after the underground paper edited in the prison by Lincoln veterans Hy Wallach and Sydney Rosenblatt. The latest information he has sent us comes from his visit to the Public Record Office in Salamanca, where he viewed signatures from 25 prisoners who gave parcel authorizations to other international prisoners. He sent me a copy of the record for the authorization my father, Hy Wallach, signed for his friend at San Pedro, a Yugoslav, Radavoy Nicolitch, a fellow chess player. Eli explains that when a prisoner was released "from countries like the USA, Canada, or England, with strong solidarity groups for the Republic, they normally gave authorization to prisoners from countries like Germany, Austria or Yugoslavia,

with right wing governments which stopped attempts at solidarity...I will send you the other 25 authorizations of American prisoners, mostly from communists to communists." The blog also documents the efforts of Eli to bring various groups and associations together to erect another commemorative monument at the site of the prison, after the original was removed by local authorities after its installation. Eli states that the "aim of the blog is to draw attention to what happened in the concentration camp and to highlight the ideals of those who fought for them but have been forgotten by official histories."

His aim expresses our own purposes in undertaking the biography project on each of the volunteers. I know how moved I felt to hear from a person in Spain who was so inspired by the International Volunteers that he continues to use his holidays to

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## Added to Memory's Roster



### Norman Berkowitz (1913-2010)

*My father, Norman (Nathan) Berkowitz, died peacefully at the age of 96 on July 30, 2010. After not being able to speak for 36 hours, Norman rallied and spoke continuously for 30 minutes. His final words were directed to his grandson and they were, surprisingly, entirely in Spanish. Not surprisingly, they were about his memories of Spain. Long Live the ALB!*

Born in Boston, Norman Berkowitz grew up in Brooklyn and attended public schools. He joined the Young Communist League in 1935 and participated in political demonstrations around the city. With other future Abraham Lincoln Brigade volunteers, such as Harry Fisher and Irving Fajans, he played a role in the organization of the Department Store Workers Union. He served with the Lincoln-Washington battalion in Spain and was wounded in action during the Ebro offensive in 1938. He

also served in the U.S. army during World War II. He was living in North Carolina at the time of his death.

### Peter Schemrock (1910-2010)

Lincoln vet Peter Schemrock died on June 24 in southern California, a few weeks before his 100th birthday.

Peter was born on August 17, 1910, in Dunbar, Pennsylvania. His family went back to Croatia (former Yugoslavia) when he was about four years old.

Peter returned to the United States as a young man during the Great Depression. It was during this time that Peter began to understand and sympathize with those less fortunate. Because of his experiences, as well as personal suffering, Peter was

compelled to help those less fortunate than even himself.

Peter joined the Lincoln Brigade to help fight Fascism and restore Spanish Democracy to its citizens. Peter remembered well the suffering and pain of those who fought in that war and the sacrifices they made. Peter was also a veteran of World War II.

Throughout his life Peter championed the rights of the working man. He was a man of great integrity and passion. He never failed to speak up for those who were less fortunate, and he would often donate money for different causes.

Peter is survived by Vjera, his wife of 43 years, as well as several nieces and nephews.

— Claire Oppenheimer Dubin

## Heroes

Continued from page 14

travel to public record offices around his country to bring me documentation on my father. The aptness of the characterization of the volunteers as “forgotten heroes” came home to me when I was relating this project to a young Caribbean-American teacher at my school. He asked if I had a title for this article and suggested I call it “Stories of Our Unsung Heroes,” since he told me that although he was a history buff, he was learning about Americans who volunteered in Spain for the first time through this ALBA initiative.

Using the research begun by veteran Adolph Ross and ALBA's Chris

Brooks and from the Tamiment archives, we've just started to reach out to families of volunteers to add to the material and to help personalize their biographies. The anecdotes in this article are just a few of the stories that we hope to bring to light on the website and in future issues of *The Volunteer*. Although the archives contain a wealth of material already donated generously by friends and family, as well as by VALB itself, the database on ALBA's website makes these highlights immediately accessible. I look forward to sharing many more of the responses that are continuing to come in. ■

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## Fall Events

**September 17, 6:15 pm****Exhibit Opening: La Colonia: Spanish Immigrants in New York, 1898-1945**

Curated by Professor James Fernández,  
co-sponsored by ALBA and KJCC

**King Juan Carlos I Center**

53 Washington Square South, NYC  
Free to the Public

**September 24, 2010 - January 9, 2011****Exhibit: Mexican Suitcase**

Photographs from the "Mexican Suitcase"—almost 4,000 images from the Spanish Civil War by Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, and David "Chim" Seymour. Includes Henri Cartier-Bresson's film, *With the Lincoln Brigade* (ALBA)

**ICP Museum**

1133 Avenue of the Americas, NYC

**October 16, 5 pm****Puffin Foundation fundraising benefit for ALBA: An evening with Pete Seeger and Special Guests****Museum of the City of New York**

1220 Fifth Avenue, NYC

For details & tickets for performance and reception, see [www.alba-valb.org](http://www.alba-valb.org) and [www.puffinfoundation.org/](http://www.puffinfoundation.org/).

**November 11, 6:15 pm****Nueva York: Roundtable discussion with Michael Wallace and Arcadio Díaz Quiñones**

Moderated by James D. Fernández

Co-sponsored by ALBA and KJCC

King Juan Carlos I Center

53 Washington Square South, NYC

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