



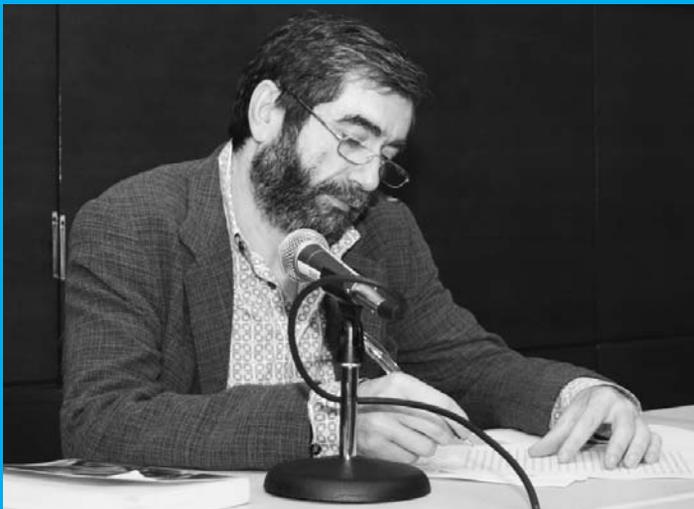
The Volunteer

JOURNAL OF 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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Left: Antonio Muñoz Molina prepares for his presentation of the Bill Susman Lecture. See page 4. Below: Vets Moe Fishman, Jack Shafran, and Lou Gordon (l to r) pose with Pete Seeger (center right) at the NY Reunion. See page 3. Photos by Richard Bermack.



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Letters

Dear Editor:

I notice the ALBA will be honoring Pete Seeger on May 1 for his many years of music AND his support and commitment to the ALBA and our country's Bill of Rights. I wish I could be there with you all - to give my continuing support and my heartfelt thanks for providing me with a lifetime of many, many hours of his music. One riveting memory I have is when I attended his free concert at the Longshoremen's (ILWU) Hall in San Francisco in the early 1960's. He told his audience he wanted to "pay back" the many supporters he had in his own (successful) civil rights battle with the federal government, and the only way he knew how was to sing. And sing he did! The place was packed—to (literally) the hall's rafters. Young men and women had climbed to sit on the cross beams; others were hoisted onto the "Y" supports on the corners of the walls, squatting there from 8 p.m. to sometime after 2 a.m., when his voice finally just disappeared. He sang his heart out, and we sang with him. Thank you ALBA and thank you Pete Seeger! You are two untarnished jewels that sparkle in our country's wreath!

Sincerely,

Linda Grant

Richmond, CA

The Spoils of War

Dear Editor,

I have read with dismay the article you published recently by the Madrid journalist Miguel Angel Nieto entitled "Separatism in Today's Spain." In it he depicts what he clearly wishes your readers to see as the imminent and terrifying prospect of the disintegration of Spain. Whilst it is true, and has been for centuries, that some Basques and some Catalans aspire to self-determination, it is very far from clear that anything like a majority in either the Basque Country or Catalonia would vote for independence, if given the chance.

In fact, the Catalan Government (made up of Socialists, Left Republicans and Greens) is currently in the process of seeking, together with the Catalan opposition Centre and Right parties, an agreed position from which to negotiate with the Spanish Socialist Government a revised version of the Catalan Autonomy Statute that dates from the restoration of democracy after the death of Franco—who, as your

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7th ALBA-Susman Lecture

“Memories of a Distant War” by Antonio Muñoz Molina



Antonio Muñoz Molina. Photo by Richard Bermack.

On April 29, Antonio Muñoz Molina, Spain’s most acclaimed contemporary novelist and the Director of the Cervantes Institute in New York, delivered the seventh annual ALBA-Bill Susman lecture at NYU’s King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center. Muñoz Molina has twice been awarded Spain’s Premio Nacional de Literatura. His novels have been translated to many languages and several have been adapted for the screen.

Muñoz Molina, born in a small town in Andalusia in 1956, would seemingly have no first-hand experience of a war that ended 17 years before he was born. His father was only eight when the military insurrection against Spain’s Second Republic began in July 1936; his mother was even younger. And yet, as he explained in his presentation, titled “Memories of a Distant War,” the Spanish Civil War “cast a long shadow” on most of his literary work.

In a genial but intense voice, Muñoz Molina recreated the percep-

tion of the war pieced together by a young boy growing up in a provincial

Muñoz Molina recalled how his elders would lower their voices into whispers when speaking about certain strangers who had been arrested or killed or otherwise punished for their political views because the person was “a man of ideas.”

town in southern Spain in the 1950s and 60s. He evoked the stories told by elders and the memories of his parents and grandparents. He spoke of how, as a young man, he would rummage through the closets in his home and stumble across the family relics of the lost Republic and of the lost war, which had been stored away by his parents and grandparents.

Muñoz Molina recalled how his elders would lower their voices into whispers when speaking about certain strangers who had been arrested or killed or otherwise punished for their

political views because the person was “a man of ideas.” He recalled a local butcher who had been denounced and shot on the street because he was seen with blood on his clothes—perhaps the blood of meat he had cut—on the day a fascist had been killed. He recalled seeing, under coats of chipping paint, old faded letters on buildings—acronyms of now-banned political parties or the names of anarchist heroes like Durutti. What did the words mean, he wondered. He seldom received a straight answer.

Muñoz Molina described his parents as members of “an unlucky generation.” At age eight, his father had to abandon his education to work the family’s small land holdings while his own father served in the Republican army. His mother, coming of school age after 1939, never had the opportunity for any education because the Franco regime eliminated the rights of girls to public education. She studied to obtain literacy only after the death of the dictator nearly 40 years later.

From his grandfather, who kept an old Republican army uniform hidden in a closet, Muñoz Molina learned of the International Brigades. He also

found a tin box filled with Republican government bank notes—the old man’s savings, now valueless, palpable evidence of the lost future of a young man’s hopes.

Such stories, presented with simplicity, indicate the tremendous transformation of Spain during the 20th century, not only because of the war and its aftermath, but also because of the author’s very presence today, the child of an undistinguished peasant society now an international literary figure.

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VETS HONOR PETE!



Pete Seeger joins in with his banjo during the performance of *The Lives and Times of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*. Performers Grace Garland, Liberty Eelman, Arthur Holden, and Bruce Barthol (left to right). Not shown: Diego Voglino, Andy Tierstien, Chuck McKinnon, and Dred Scott. Photos by Richard Bermack

By Heather Rose Bridger

“You are genuine heroes!” Pete Seeger told the veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade at the 69th annual reunion held at New York University’s Skirball Center on May 1. Seeger, who was honored by the VALB at the sold-out event, encouraged the audience: “You are carrying on! Your job is to change what Gore Vidal calls the



Peter Glazer introduces Pete Seeger.

‘United States of Amnesia’ to a true United States of America!”

Longtime MC Henry Foner opened the day’s event. A short film, produced by James Fernandez and Juan Salas, provided an overview of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives as the “archives of activism.” The late Ossie Davis was present on film, delivering a moving tribute to the vets and recalling that their example led him to volunteer for the army in WWII. He described them as “true Americans who are committed to trying to establish and preserve democracy.” “I salute them,” he concluded.

Moe Fishman, VALB’s executive secretary, hailed Pete Seeger as a “hero of we so-called heroes” and reminded the audience of Seeger’s more than 60 years of activism, friendship, and support of the Lincoln Brigade. He then introduced 11 vets to a cheering audience. One by one they filed slowly onstage and greeted the crowd, some raising fists in the Republican salute, others sharing brief messages.

Commemorating the 61st anniversary of the album *Songs of the Lincoln Battalion*, Peter Glazer introduced Pete Seeger. Glazer spoke of Seeger’s decades as a popular troubadour and voice for peace. When Seeger came to the stage, he recounted the story of recording these Spanish Civil War songs while on a weekend pass from the U.S. Army.

After numerous standing ovations, the crowd cheered, clapped, and sang along with *The Lives and Times of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, the new musical show written by Bruce Barthol and directed by Peter Glazer. Seeger accompanied Barthol and the band on “Venga Jaleo” and “Ay Manuela,” standing tall with banjo in hand and leading the audience in singing “Rumbala, Rumbala Rumbala.” Veterans, friends and family enjoyed a reception after the performance, an opportunity to reminisce and plan for future events. 🗨

ALBA Associate Heather Rose Bridger is the producer of the CD *The Heart of Spain*.

Seattle Conference on Children's Art Closes Exhibit



Tony Geist

By Peter N. Carroll

Inspired by the last exhibition of ALBA's show, "They Still Draw Pictures: Children's Art in Wartime from the Spanish Civil War to Kosovo," an enthusiastic group of scholars and commentators gathered at the University of Washington in Seattle on March 4-5 to describe and discuss the impact of war on children's lives. Organized by co-curator Tony Geist, the conference attracted interdisciplinary interests that ranged from art therapists and political activists to refugee survivors of the Spanish Civil War, historians, social workers, and communications experts.

Geist presented the meeting's keynote speech, "Children of the Spanish Civil War," emphasizing the unique perspective of children's art for understanding the social and cultural consequences of modern war.

Drawing on the material in the exhibition, he showed how children's art expresses distinctive feelings, ideas, and perspectives about the omnipresent danger and fears.

This theme also emerged in another panel, "Children, Trauma, Art," which included commentary by Kathleen Kostelny of the Erikson Institute in Chicago. She explained the uses of art therapy and communica-

tions in contemporary war zones, such as Afghanistan and East Africa. Janice Hoshino, a psychologist and art therapist at Antioch University in Seattle, placed the children's drawings of the Spanish Civil War in the context of current research about the development of art skills among children. Acknowledging the speculative limits of examining art without knowing the artists, she pointed to themes that seemed to illuminate traumatic issues, such as the separation of children from their families.

Moving the conference into the campus's Jacob Lawrence Gallery, where the drawings served as a powerful backdrop, Elyse Pineau, a drama professor at Southern Illinois University, presented a performance dialogue with selected pieces, indicating that even "peaceful" topics revealed underlying anxieties and ambivalence of the child artists.

Two afternoon panels focused on the eyewitness testimony of people



Angela Giral and Marysa Navarro

directly involved in the experiences of Spanish children during the civil war. The first, chaired by historian Joan Ullman, included three child survivors of the war, Angela Giral, Marysa Navarro, and Carlos Blanco-Aguinaga, each of whom drew upon autobiographical experiences to depict the enduring emotional complications of losing their native cultures and being forced to live in exile. These per-

sonal statements touched on some of the unhealed wounds of a war that ended nearly 70 years ago.

A final panel examined the participation of Americans in the Spanish war. Virginia Malbin, one of five social workers from the United States who worked on behalf of orphans and



Kathleen Kostelny. Photos by Peter Leonard.

uprooted children during the war, described her visits to the children's "colonies" where the drawings were part of the therapeutic curriculum. Lincoln vet Abe Osheroff also spoke about his experiences as a volunteer in Spain and afterward in various causes of social justice.

These diverse perspectives on children and war, augmented by animated dialogues with the audiences, stimulated the discourse and added an intense emotional aura to the conversations. A quote from Pablo Picasso was reiterated in several sessions: "Once I drew like Rafael," he said, "but it has taken me a lifetime to draw like a child." The children's art of the Spanish Civil War still evokes the tragedy of that conflict, so eloquently seen through the eyes of its youngest victims. ▣

Peter N. Carroll, co-curator of the exhibition, moderated the veterans' panel.

F D R A N D T H E

By Dominic Tierney

In early 1939, the American ambassador to Spain, Claude G. Bowers, walked into the White House to brief President Franklin D. Roosevelt on the outcome of the Spanish Civil War, which had just been decisively won by General Franco. As Bowers was shown into the president's office, he was surprised to find a somber figure. Usually FDR would throw back his head and make a joke before starting to discuss any serious issues. But not this time. Roosevelt hardly smiled, and before Bowers had even sat down, the president offered this summary of U.S. policy in the Spanish Civil War: "We have made a mistake. You have been right all along."

The story of how Roosevelt reached this conclusion is a fascinating and important one, and it is a story that has never been told. Many people have wondered what FDR—the enigmatic Sphinx—actually thought about the Spanish Civil War. We know that his wife, Eleanor, was passionately pro-Spanish Republican, but what about the president? Based on research in over 30 archival collections, I argue that Spain mattered a great deal to Roosevelt, and that FDR played an increasingly active and important personal role in regard to the Spanish conflict. Roosevelt's beliefs about Spain were steadily transformed, from an initial disinterest in which side won to a position as a partisan for the leftist government who tried both legal and illegal means to aid the Spanish Republic. These changing perceptions mattered not only with respect to policy towards

Dominic Tierney is preparing a book on Roosevelt and the Spanish Civil War. The full story of the covert aid episode appears in the *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.39, No.3 (July 2004), "Franklin D. Roosevelt and Covert Aid to the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939." The author can be contacted at dtierney@wcfia.harvard.edu.

Spain; they also influenced his views about the nature of wider fascist aggression, with consequences for the coming world war, and they created an enduring guilt over the failure of a cause in which Roosevelt came to believe.

The Spanish Civil War broke out in the summer of 1936, in the context of an increasingly disturbing international situation, and at a time of economic depression in the United States. FDR was an internationalist, but he displayed extreme caution about foreign affairs in a U.S. environment focused on domestic issues. Roosevelt was opposed to American involvement in another European conflict, and he signed neutrality

The president repeatedly expressed guilt and remorse for the embargo policy after 1939, telling his cabinet that the non-intervention policy had been a "grave mistake."

legislation designed to stop Americans from selling weapons to foreign combatants. At the same time, Roosevelt recognized the threat to world peace posed by Germany and Italy and sought means of slowing down the drift to war, either through appeasement or deterrence.

From its outbreak, FDR realized that the Spanish Civil War was not merely an Iberian tragedy; it was also a major international crisis. By the end of August 1936, Roosevelt said that Spain was his "greatest worry." The president was overwhelmingly concerned with the disastrous possibility that the conflict could spark a wider European conflagration. Roosevelt was fearful that radical leftists dominated the Spanish Republican government, but nevertheless, as FDR told his friend Texas Senator Tom Connally, his sympathies lay with the Republicans rather than with the Nationalist rebels.

In determining America's initial response to the Spanish Civil War,

Roosevelt was mindful of international and domestic pressures. The British and the French were pushing for an international agreement not to sell arms to either side in Spain and sought American cooperation in this endeavor. Furthermore, the upcoming November presidential election provided incentives for caution in foreign affairs. Almost all of Roosevelt's foreign policy officials wanted strict American non-intervention in Spain. But these pressures pushed Roosevelt further down the road he already wished to travel. Worried that American arms sales to Spain would escalate the conflict, the president helped lead the efforts to introduce an American arms embargo in the

Spanish Civil War. In August 1936 the administration adopted a "moral" embargo, telling Americans that selling weapons to either side in Spain would be unpatriotic. Already aware of Italian and German aid to Franco, Norman Thomas, the American socialist leader, asked Secretary of State Cordell Hull, "Why does our government follow a policy which so clearly helps the fascists?" "Well, Mr. Thomas," replied Hull, "you see the French and British do it that way, and they are much nearer than we are." Noting Thomas' reaction, Hull quickly qualified his statement: "Not, of course, that our Spanish policy is a mere copy of theirs."

Despite the moral embargo, the Spanish Loyalists intended to buy arms in the U.S., and after various schemes to get round the embargo fell through, they decided on a more direct approach. The American arms dealer Robert Cuse simply ignored the moral embargo by requesting licenses to directly export almost \$3 million of

SPANISH CIVIL WAR

arms to the Spanish Loyalists. Roosevelt was personally determined to introduce a legal embargo in order to frustrate Cuse's brazen disregard for administration policy. Indeed Congress raced to act before Cuse could physically ship the weapons from the United States to Spain. In the end, the Spanish Republicans won and the Cuse shipment left for Loyalist Spain a few hours before Congress enacted the embargo. Madrid's victory was short-lived; Franco's forces captured the ship en route.

The president supported the moral and legal embargo because in his mind, promoting international non-intervention in Spain was a more important aim than aiding the Loyalists. But on a number of relatively minor issues, Roosevelt did help the Republicans. FDR ordered the administration not to go "over strong" on prosecuting American recruiters for the international brigades. The president personally forced the State Department to issue passports for Loyalist medical volunteers. Roosevelt also tried to stop Texaco Oil Company from selling oil on credit to Franco.

During 1937, Roosevelt began to worry less that Spain would spark another world war and became more concerned about the massive extent of German and Italian intervention. On April 26, 1937, fascist aircraft destroyed the town of Guernica, the spiritual home of Basque nationalism. In the summer, the president considered extending the U.S. embargo to Germany and Italy for being effectively at war with the Spanish Republic, but Roosevelt retreated when his European ambassadors suggested that this would inflame the situation. Roosevelt's sympathies for the Spanish Republic, along with his unwillingness to act to help Madrid, are captured in his haunting comment to Martha Gellhorn in July 1937: "Spain is a vicarious sacrifice for all of us."

During 1938, Roosevelt's beliefs

about the Spanish Civil War were transformed, and he re-evaluated Franco's likely triumph in Spain as being clearly harmful for U.S. interests. These changing beliefs arose partly because German and Italian intervention in Spain looked more threatening in the context of wider fascist aggression, notably the Anschluss between Germany and Austria, and especially the Munich Crisis. Second, FDR believed a Franco triumph in Spain could worsen Latin American security. The president saw the Spanish Civil War as a potential model for German intervention in future civil wars in the western hemisphere. Franco's triumph could start a domino effect of fascist victories. Third, Roosevelt displayed an aversion to the brutality of Franco's war effort. For all of these reasons, the importance of the conflict in the president's mind became greatly magnified, with FDR suggesting in 1939 that Spain could be the first round of an impending European civil war. Indeed, Roosevelt declared in January 1939 that events in Spain were "occupying my thoughts to an astonishing degree."

Roosevelt recognized that Germany and Italy were winning in Spain in part because of decisions made in Washington. In 1938, the president's support for non-intervention was gradually replaced with partisan backing for the Spanish Loyalists. Roosevelt searched for ways to impede Franco's advance, but the president could hardly have imagined a more difficult policy environment. The European democracies, particularly Britain, were strongly opposed to any American efforts to help Madrid, for example, by lifting the arms embargo, because this might escalate the war. Roosevelt's foreign policy officials, including Secretary of State Cordell Hull, were still largely in favor of U.S. non-intervention. One of the few exceptions was Ambassador Claude Bowers, who, in 1938, supported selling arms to the Spanish

Republic. At the domestic level, Roosevelt's political standing had never been lower than in 1938 as a result of the "Court-Packing" controversy and a recent recession.

Furthermore, U.S. policy in the Spanish Civil War was the subject of an increasingly bitter domestic controversy. The British consul in New York reported in February 1938 that the city "is almost assuming the likeness of a miniature Spain." Pro-Spanish Republican activists represented a loose coalition of Protestant, Jewish, liberal and leftist groups. Tending to see the Spanish Civil War in idealistic terms as a battle of fascism against democracy, these groups campaigned for the lifting of the arms embargo for the government of Spain. With the Spanish Nationalists militarily supplied by the "non-intervening" Germans and Italians, the recognized government of Spain was unable to defend itself by purchasing weapons in the United States. Showing how the Spanish Civil War challenged established views, Gerald Nye, America's leading isolationist senator and the architect of neutrality legislation, became the major voice arguing in favor of selling arms to the Spanish Republic. In sharp contrast, American Catholics tended to identify with the Spanish Nationalist forces, seeing in Spain a war between Christianity and communism and strongly opposing embargo repeal. From FDR's perspective, this controversy split apart liberals from Catholics—the two key pillars of his New Deal coalition.

FDR's changing beliefs about the Spanish Civil War and the problematic policy environment produced a typically Rooseveltian scheme. On the one hand, he opposed efforts in Congress in the spring of 1938 to repeal the embargo, fearing that this could embroil the administration in an international and domestic political storm. At the same time, the president sought to circumvent political con-

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straints by secretly and illegally sending covert aid to Loyalist Spain.

Aware of the iniquitous effects of the embargo, FDR told the Spanish Loyalist Ambassador that the U.S. might allow the sale of planes to France, with no questions asked about their ultimate destination. Then, having heard from Ernest Hemingway that the Spanish Republic was desperate for aircraft, Roosevelt encouraged his alcoholic brother-in-law, G. Hall Roosevelt, to travel to Paris as a secret emissary to arrange for the transfer of American planes to Spain via France. The Spanish Republicans might pay for the aircraft with the \$14 million that the U.S. government gave to Madrid for the purchase of Spanish silver. Rumors of the covert mission abounded, but nothing was on paper. There is one exception: buried in the archives is a phone message from Hall to Roosevelt, written down because by chance the president was at sea. Hall phoned to say that the covert aid scheme was collapsing, with the State Department resisting any efforts to transship the planes via France. Hall would continue to “follow instructions” from the president.

The Munich Crisis in September 1938 proved to Roosevelt that Hitler was intent on war. As Roosevelt remarked, “I don’t care so much about the Italians. They are a lot of opera singers, but the Germans are different, they may be dangerous.”

The president stepped up his efforts to aid the Spanish Republic. He now saw a Franco victory as a triumph for the fascist states and a clear loss for U.S. interests. The president conjured up a plan to push for a negotiated solution in Spain. As he saw it, the American republics could issue a joint request for mediation. However, the plan was stillborn due to deep divisions over the Spanish Civil War in Latin America. Roosevelt also sought to ease the humanitarian situation in Loyalist Spain by creating a commission to raise money to send U.S.

grain to Spain. In the end, Catholics opposed the scheme, which they saw as being pro-Loyalist—most of the needy were in Republican Spain, and the food would indirectly aid Madrid’s war effort. Only a few thousand barrels of grain were ever sent.

By November 1938 FDR had decided that the embargo was a huge mistake and tried to repeal it. As usual, he sought strategies to circumvent congressional opposition, asking the attorney general whether he had the power simply to declare the embargo over by presidential proclamation. Never convinced that the legal power existed to repeal by decree, Roosevelt tried to gain repeal through an act of Congress. In his January 4, 1939, State of the Union address, FDR declared, “At the very least, we can and should avoid any action, or any lack of action, which will encourage, assist or build up an aggressor. We have learned that when we deliberately try to legislate neutrality, our neutrality laws may operate unevenly and unfairly—may actually give aid to an aggressor and deny it to the victim.” Efforts to repeal the Spanish embargo hit a brick wall, partly because of Catholic mobilization, but mainly because the Spanish Republic looked close to collapse with the fall of Barcelona in January 1939.

In the end, most of Roosevelt’s initiatives in Spain came to nothing. At the moment when FDR most clearly saw the “last great cause” as being America’s cause, the Spanish Republic was in its death throes. U.S. policy in the Spanish Civil War highlights weaknesses in Roosevelt’s decision-making, for example, the inability to clearly identify U.S. aims and interests in the conflict and the failure to educate the public or Congress about what he believed was at stake in Spain.

However, Roosevelt’s decision-making in the Spanish Civil War also reveals some important positive

aspects. FDR’s clarification of events in 1938 demonstrated his capacity to challenge and reassess existing interpretations and comprehend what was actually at stake in international affairs. We can also see evidence of his creativity in policy-making, his search for strategies that would aid the Loyalists without sacrificing domestic support.

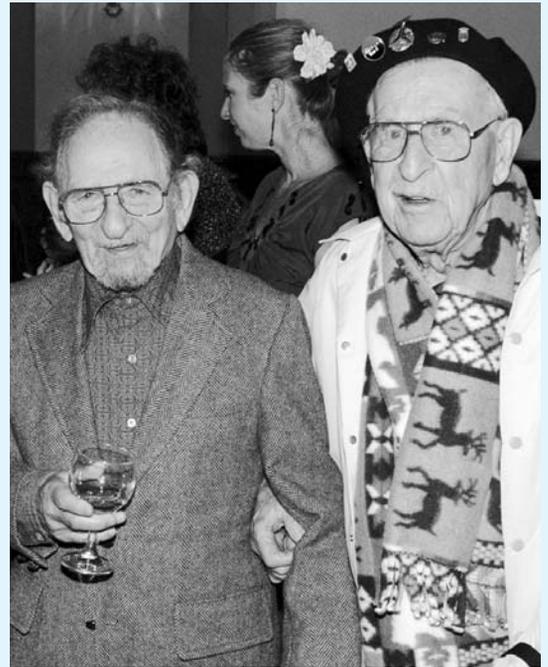
When the Spanish policies are placed in a broader context, they attain considerable significance. The initiatives represented an important juncture in Roosevelt’s longer-term strategy, evident from 1935 until Pearl Harbor: aiding the democracies and the victims of aggression with methods short of war. In fact, the Spanish policies in 1938 were Roosevelt’s first active attempt to confront fascist aggression in Europe. The president’s beliefs about the Spanish Civil War were influenced by his wider international views, but at the same time, the conflict in Spain shaped the president’s broader thinking. In the period before the Anschluss, fascist intervention in Spain was the clearest evidence of German and Italian aggression in Europe. The Spanish Civil War contributed to FDR’s concerns about Latin American security. In addition, Roosevelt’s disillusionment with British policy over Spain is striking. Furthermore, FDR’s gathering awareness of the iniquitous role of the American embargo led the president to question his broader attachment to neutrality legislation.

The president repeatedly expressed guilt and remorse for the embargo policy after 1939, telling his cabinet that the non-intervention policy had been a “grave mistake.” Roosevelt maintained enduring personal hostility towards the Spanish Nationalists. In 1945, in the weeks before his death, Roosevelt signaled a post-war aim of regime change in Spain. However, the Cold War ultimately brought the United States into an alliance with Franco. ■

Trumbo Actor Brian Dennehy Toasts the Vets



Brian Dennehy at the champagne reception with VALB associates Judy Montell and Linda Lustig (above). Vets Dave Smith and Nate Thornton (top right). Photos by Chris Goodfellow.



When the award-winning actor Brian Dennehy came to San Francisco in mid-winter to play the title role of the blacklisted Hollywood screenwriter Dalton Trumbo in a multi-media staged reading of *Trumbo* (based on letters written by Trumbo during the Red Scare era in the 1950s), he also had other heroes on his mind: the veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Brian asked his longtime friend, ALBA Vice Chair Fredda Weiss, if he could play a performance in San Francisco as a benefit for ALBA. The Bay Area Associates responded quickly, organizing ticket sales and a champagne reception for March 17, following the performance.

In the play, Dennehy reads a particularly apt passage in which Trumbo depicts the courage of those who fought in Spain as an inspiration for his refusal to cooperate with congressional investigators, who threatened the rights, liberties, and livelihood of those who disagreed with their anti-communist politics. Later, at the reception, sporting his own Marine veterans cap, the actor offered a toast to “the real heroes”—the veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Vets David Smith and Nate Thornton were there to enjoy the applause. ▣



ALBA Vice Chair Fredda Weiss congratulates Dennehy and thanks him for supporting the vets. Photo by Chris Goodfellow.

Letters

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readers are well aware, annulled the Autonomy Statute achieved by Catalonia under the Second Republic immediately after he succeeded in imposing his Fascist dictatorship.

Even Sr. Nieto agrees that “[t]he Spanish Constitution needs a facelift ... after 25 years’ service,” and it is expected that any changes required to the Spanish Constitution in order to accommodate the new Catalan Statute will be minor. As far as Catalonia, at least, is concerned, then, the alarm that Sr. Nieto seeks to stir up is totally unfounded. In fact, only one political party in Spain today promotes the alarmism that he espouses—the Neo-Francoist Popular Party, formerly led by José María Aznar, which lost power to the Socialists in March 2004.

Far more unpardonable, however, than Sr. Nieto’s alarmist picture of the threatened disintegration of Spain is the way he seeks to link it to the question of the so-called Salamanca Papers. In the course of his cruel, methodical conquest of Republican Spain, Franco employed special forces to seize at gunpoint tons and tons of documents that were then sent to his headquarters in Salamanca in the summer of 1939. This operation, led by Franco’s brother-in-law, Ramón Serrano Súñer, a fervent admirer of Hitler and Mussolini, received technical supervision from the SS. The aim of the exercise was to create a huge police archive, following in the footsteps of the Gestapo and the KGB. On the basis of the Salamanca archive, three million defenders of the Republic were put on file and, over the following decades, hundreds of thousands of them were summarily executed, sentenced to hard labour, imprisoned, tortured or dismissed from their posts.

As your readers are only too painfully aware, very few of the injustices of the Spanish Civil War can be righted now, more than 65 years after the event. However, at least one of them can. Ever since 1978, with the restoration of democracy in Spain, the Catalans have taken every opportunity

to claim the return of the documents seized by Franco’s forces in Catalonia—from the Catalan Government and Parliament, and from hundreds of municipal authorities, the offices of political parties and trades unions, associations of all sorts (including vegetarian and sporting societies), and from private individuals.

Whilst the Popular Party—and Sr. Nieto—claim that the return of these stolen goods to their rightful owners would dismember a valuable historical archive, in fact the sinister Salamanca archive was created by dismembering thousands of archives throughout Republican Spain. What is more, far from wishing to destroy the Salamanca archive, when the stolen documents are returned, the Catalans are perfectly willing to allow digitalised versions of them to be kept in Salamanca.

The Salamanca archive is not—as Sr. Nieto claims—a key source of Spanish Civil War material. It is, in fact, one of the last collections of documents that any student of the Civil War would wish to consult, as it contains very little indeed on the progress of the war, and a great deal on the running—and especially the membership—of the institutions that were ransacked in order to create it, including material that goes back to the 19th century. Contrary to the name it has borne since 1999—*Archivo General de la Guerra Civil Española*—the collection is in fact a very partial record of the Francoist repression.

The campaign for the return of the “Salamanca Papers” has nothing whatsoever to do with “the nationalist persistence of a handful of Catalan politicians,” as Sr. Nieto proclaims. It is, in fact, supported by all the political parties in Catalonia and the rest of Spain, except for the Popular Party, and at times it is supported even by the Popular Party’s Catalan branch. Led during the past three years by the “*Comissió de la Dignitat*,” the campaign has the approval of virtually the whole of Catalan society. It has also received the support of over 700 University professors worldwide and of such internationally renowned figures as the former Presidents of two countries that directly experienced

Fascism—Francesco Cossiga, former President of Italy, and Mario Soares, former President of Portugal—as well as the Nobel Prizewinners Rigoberta Munchú and Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, the writer Nawal El Saadawi, the Spanish Civil War historian Paul Preston, the linguist and political philosopher Noam Chomsky, the composer and Resistance fighter Mikis Theodorakis, and the former Secretary General of UNESCO Federico Mayor Zaragoza.

Last December the Spanish Government announced that it will ensure the return of at least those documents that were seized from the Catalan Government and Parliament, and the *Comissió de la Dignitat* is continuing to press for the return of all the material seized in Catalonia. If, as Sr. Nieto asserts, many of the wounds of the Spanish Civil War are still unhealed, what the Catalans demand is precisely that the gaping holes made by the forces of Fascism in hundreds of their archives be staunches at last.

Even outside Catalonia—indeed, even in the beautiful city of Salamanca itself—many people see the return of these papers as a necessary gesture in overcoming the horrors of the Civil War. It will have taken over two generations to achieve.

Henry Ettinghausen
Emeritus Professor of Hispanic
Studies, University of
Southampton, England

Salud!!

I am one of the second generation of Interbrigadists mentioned in Guillermo Casañ’s article about the plaque at the Benicassim cemetery. The article appeared in your December 2004 issue. The great help and dedication of people like Guillermo, and many others, succeeded to place the plaque at the entrance of the Benicassim cemetery to honor the several Internationals buried there. We are grateful.

My father, Dr. Günter Bodek, is buried in this cemetery. He died in June 1937, being the director of the B.I. Hospital. He was 42 years old, I was 4.

Ulrich Bodek
bodek@cableonline.com.mx

Sid Kaufman's Odyssey out of Spain

By Elizabeth C. Compa

Sid Kaufman was a merchant seaman from New York who went to Spain in June 1937. He served as a runner with the British battalion on the Levante front, in the 35th artillery battery for several months, and as commissar of an anti-tank battery attached to the Slavic battalion on the Aragon front. In late January 1939, as most Lincoln Brigaders were leaving or had left Spain, Kaufman and a handful of other Americans found themselves in Barcelona just as Franco's forces prepared to enter the city. From this point on, for about the next three weeks, Kaufman kept a log of events and his impressions as he traveled around Catalunya, sick and undernourished most of the time, looking for a way out of the country. A week into February he finally made his way over the border, only to be detained in a French camp for several days. Finally Kaufman and his companions managed to find their way onto a train bound for Paris, and shortly after that, onto a ship home.

During WWII, Kaufman worked on the *SS Lurline* transporting US troops around the South Pacific. After the war, he resumed work as a seaman and was a member of the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union until his retirement in 1979. He occasionally contributed to the Marine Workers Historical Association periodical, *The Hawsepipe*.

In August 1977, Kaufman recorded an oral history of his time in Spain, during the course of which he reads and discusses the log transcribed here. On the tape, Kaufman explains that he

Elizabeth C. Compa is a recent graduate of New York University. She is currently working on an inventory of the "Cultural Legacy of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade."

became separated from the group when he was sent to recover the passports of ALB volunteers, so that they might use them to reenter the US. He says, "I had been sent to Barcelona, and that [getting passports] was one of the purposes, aside from trying to also recover seamen's papers, things

ments from the tape are transcribed below, as footnotes to the parts of the log to which they pertain.

This breathless text, literally written during Kaufman's flight from fascism, almost reads like a page torn from a modernist novel. The log fragment, like so many documents in the Archives, is characterized by a compelling mix of embodied immediacy and analytical perspective, psychological intimacy and historical testimony.

Partial Cast of Characters

Marty = André Marty, head of the International Brigades.

Mathews = Herbert Mathews, *New York Times* correspondent to Republican Spain through the SCW. He also covered the French refugee camps.

Minor = Robert Minor, U.S. Communist Party leader in Spain.

John Murra or John M. = a Lincoln volunteer who, after the war, went on to a distinguished career as an anthropologist of the cultures of the Andes.

Nancarrow or "Nan" = Conlon Nancarrow, a Lincoln volunteer who, after the war, lived in exile in Mexico and had a distinguished career as a composer of music.

O'Toole = Larry O'Toole, Lincoln volunteer.

Thompson = Fred Thompson, father of ALB volunteer Dave Thompson, a banker who went to France to help the volunteers return home after the war.

of that nature, personal papers, citizenship papers. And that's why I did go down to the International Brigade headquarters in Barcelona from our base, and that's how I lost the main group and found myself eventually walking 200 miles before I got over the French border." [Side B #3265] Some of Kaufman's additional com-

Jan. 23 – arrive Barcelona – International Hotel. Sleep at 8:30 Bomed 10:30 – Dazed – Glass – Door Skylight – 11:30 5 more times – all next day

24 – Leave Horta 10:30 Train Galleani Miller – hear about Mathews, etc. – Miserable ride – night at Gerona – stragglers on the road – I.B. women

25 – Arrive sick – 10 a.m. missed the brunch –

26 – Maria Planesⁱ nurses me back to health – Hot milk eggs in it – Toasted bacon sandwiches. Rumors start around her house – Fascists have Barcelona etc – we won't have a chance to "escape" etc. Freckle creamⁱⁱ Rumors float around town – Nancarrow shows up – Story of how he missed the convoy at Figueras – stinkin German captain at Horta – now there are two of us –

27 – Hendrickson sets up radio set at Marias – We hear Italian spoken on Government station – Late at night hear report in English – How English consul had arrived "safely" at Cerbere – Maria says she is going to find all her rosary beads and put them on also set up virgins in the houseⁱⁱⁱ – Now there's plenty of panic because of "bulos" [rumors]– Fascists landing on the coast, etc.

28 – Start trek at 2 a.m. arrive in the afternoon at [illeg.] to eat – 37

Continued on page 12

kilometers walked – cover last 15 in truck – feel fucked – last done in driving rain – miserable in open truck – arrive late at night – wet cold – hungry – used to joke about being left. – Now for Nan & I it's a calamity – sleeping in our clothes (civil) living like gypsies – caught in the current. Now at San Pedro de Pescadore. Feel now we must make border as refugees.

29 – Political meeting in the morning – Carlos lays down the dope. They've taken Mataro – the line in not broken Govern at Figueras. (Figueras is a mess – Bombed all the time – Pressman shows up.) – Carlos asks us to give our confidence to the Command – Nan & I had previously asked Oscar Hernandez for a salvo to Port Bou – “no soap”. Wonder how we stand now?

29 – Expect to move into schoolhouse 2 p.m. await developments – practically at end of my rope – Morally – Marty arrives at night – great resentment at his talk about “conejos” & their prostitutes. Explains leave from Cassa de la Selva – Very angry & wild – Landeta – Queipo – Susso – Dominguez & Cubans whores off to border including the “sim” [Spanish military intelligence] man highly trusted by us (found this out much later)

30 – Get order to move – missed from list – great chagrin and bitter disappointment at last minute Gibson,^{iv} Friedman promise to straighten out for us at B.I. Administration. Soria got caught today with a stolen car for trip to border. Morale exceptionally low – sick tired bowel movements very irregular – raining all day. Streets muddy – grub awful no tobacco for a week –

31 – Still feeling very low – no smokes – move to Schoolhouse – more rigamarole – Marty returns – story of how all Americans will be permitted to return. Morale perking up slightly. – Greek named McKay – Haw!

Feb 1. Hernandez leaves to find out about our case – Yes or no? – No

news or papers for days or smokes – Hernandez brings no news.

Feb. 2. With addition of lots of meat to diet Im W. D'ing Canadian Convoy leaves.

Feb 3 Get word that we are leaving tonite – Get disappointed again – no se why. Germans come-in from Hospital – Stock- still with them – wild stories of proximity of the Fascists –

Feb 4. Still don't go – no transport – everyone “standing by” to move – morale sinking again – See Schutt. Hoffmann Germans – Long trek starts again – I ride first half – gigantic retreat^v – smokes begin to appear.

Feb. 5 – All I.B.s to the frontier – Hear they've taken Gerona – lines broken – cigarettes galore – thrown around – bummin'real good – haven't had an issue in 15 days. Our Intendence not so good – 1/2 loaf of bread when we get in after long trek – Shows no savve – bread bully^{vi} everything being thrown at people – Stores broken into 10s of 1000's on the march – Sabotaging of trucks – ammo, etc.^{vii} Clothes (civvies) are so lousy they keep me awake at night. Slept last night in the Pyrenees – freezing cold – in an olive grove what a climax. – See carabineros destroying records – fires galore – feel now altho miserably tired that I've certainly witnessed history in the making. Not possible to describe the night with words – loot – loot everything for the seeking – everything gruyere cheese – pais de fois gras – throwing away milk – sugar – soap – wildest & most exciting night I can remember in my life – Stealing 1000's of cigarettes – last night in Spain – everyone had a belly-ache – Realize now I'm kinda selfish but then again all the fellows are more or less that way. Just thinking of good grub – clean clothes – soft bed etc. instead of the great calamity. Fascism I'm afraid has scored a tremendous victory – I've also neglected thinking of the refugees. – the 10's of 1000's of homeless orphans – the misery of walking untold agonizing kilometers

with carts, burros, packs – soldiers walking for a month from the Lerida front for example – Also neglected thinking of the best of the Americans who came over – the ones left behind – some without even given the decency of a dirt covering – rotting bodies – stench – – John Murra's sourness – talk with him convinced me the “enchufaos” [the ones with connections] got back – the worthy ones – the Joe Bianca's, Harry Hynes, Jim Cody's. Taffy Skinner oh well maybe I've learned something after all – wonder if some of the absolutely true things regarding lack of cadre policy lack of ability to lead – cowardice – glaring mistakes involving lives & welfare of men.

Feb 6. Saw Watzek handling suitcases – heard that 150 Czechs were captured or killed black eye for us – No I.B. at front – understand they were with a Spanish outfit & the Spaniards raised the white flag. Not doing too bad organizing clothes – possibility of cloth for an suit no overcoat – no sleep – been going all night last night & its now 6 p.m. 1 1/2 kil. from the frontier – I feel that I've witnessed something I shall never see as long as I live – tenseness – excitement – suspense all wrapped together – I've been lighting one butt to another all day – and throwing away the butts – imagine – Were I a Mathews for example to describe the masses in motion – the whole road in a sense has a fiesta-like appearance – I suppose it's partly because of my own happiness at getting out with a whole skin – Did my heart good to see Majors & what not in a “Kola” for milk & bread – Laughingly I thought of how I would describe my own “escape” – a fascist chasing me with a trench knife – makes a dive for me & grabs my coat but I manage to just elude him & fall across the border in a manner of the half-back making a last minute touch-down – Hope they separate the Americans – Night coming on – better build a fire – its cold as hell – 1/2 of Spain must be on the move north – So

Kaufman

Continued from page 12

many women kids people have passed today alone – Disgraceful scenes. Carabineros – Asaltos – Intendence in particular corrupt – they've been used as police – Hear rumors of whats going to happen to us – The border is wide open – Women children – soldiers will probably be interned all together – good thing we have carried plenty of canned goods with us liable to be tough until things get organized – Trucks, equipment, arms going over with us or destroyed. Love to be able to get a new. Czech automatic thru – but impossible (Sub-Thompson type) Finally cross the border 5 a.m.

Feb 7 – Mountains of arms piled on our side, pistols tossed about etc. Walking trip with Murra, Nancarrow – Palu & Fontana – about 18 kil. Suitcase on my back rather pleasant talks along the way. Get a look at a French paper – Hell to pay in Spain – might have expected such from Company's [sic] – Azana – Caballero – spent a cold night again on French soil – avoiding sweet stuff – filled up with milk, chocolate etc – going for salmon, tomatoes etc – coffee without milk.

Feb 8. Argeles – Camp of the refugees what a sight – 10's of 1000's of people – gypsy life – The whole thing is practically organized in French Albacete style – There's an excellent control in view of no one having a "sou" in his pocket. The panic in some of the guy's minds was disgraceful not having patience to go together with the others when only 5 kil. from the border – Marty definitely marked lousy on return to the front business – Many Germans & Italians supposedly killed – Rumor has it that L'Humanite carried his statement that 800 IBers were "lost" in the mountains – Hope the American papers are carrying some of the pictures – French papers have lovely stuff –

Feb 9. Spent a miserable night last night – got the shits & sick in general – "Incidents" still continue in camp – There are "bulos" galore Understand the French are using many means of

provocation – Confiscating food as "war material" etc. Commission shows up – "apologetic" about the mess in the camp. The Canadians are in bad shape – no blankets – no food etc. anarchy crops up continually with plenty of fights.

Feb. 10. Consul shows up – almost missed him was away washing – brought cigs & choc. – promised Amer. Flag, medicine, supplies – Haven't found other group yet. Consul promises to get me out tomorrow with Nan. Uplifting to say the least. Former brass hats From Albacete try to carry over I.B. organ. over to France – We don't recognize them – they're pulling the same bull-shit as before.

Feb. 11. Been very sick – gas pains – cramps – shits etc. Shit myself for 3rd night running 2 p.m. Consul hasn't arrived yet – more nonsense from former Albacete phonies including attempt to censor mail. Consul doesn't show but Smith-Field & Canadian rep (Steve) do. They attempt to get us out but Field doesn't care to take the chance. Promise to try tomorrow. ç How often have I heard. Smith is a good egg. Brings cigs & choc. – news – provocations by the French. – now convinced the Popular Front is failing – discuss with J. Murra – the evaluating of a new formation of the policy in view of France, Spain, etc. – Consul's been very busy says Smith – maybe on Lincoln's Birthday slaves may be freed. Continuation on Feb. 8 or 9 Fucker-offers show up to scrounge on our food – Set up temporary org. until others show up – don't know what's to happen to all of us. Reactionary press inciting people in this province against us – "colonizing of France" – Roughness of French soldiers – Senegalese – Papers say they'll be over 200,000 here – camp incidents include stabbings of those who advocate returning to Franco's side –

Feb. 12 – Fascist sound truck shows up with offer in name of French Government. to send Spaniards immediately to Barcelona or Hendaye!!

Truck has to fuck off because of booring – Cavalry comes in to establish "order" (Spahias) using sabers recklessly. Whole raft of people show up all the consuls – Newspaper men etc. Stories of camp are getting out but home offices of big papers in London & N.Y. don't like it – Mathews has been cabled "Why so Anti-French?" Finally escape from Devil's Island – & D. Isle it is minus the chains and dungeons – Smith does wonderful job of outsmarting the right people to get us out – Jumpy all the way to Perpignan stopped once & searched but got by – Have 1st beer in ages – 2 of them gives me a glow – writing this on night train to Paris – Saw train in Perp. Station with load going to Franco. the bastards! Spaniards are beginning to say the next war will be against France even if it has to be on the side of Franco. Marty really marked lousy – some day the real story may come out. Field said he had heard that M. threatened & coerced some back at point of a gun etc. He & other sympathetic members of the Commission interested in proving that government had nothing to do with return of vol. & that I.B. did it on their own. – strikes me that M. had pictures in his mind of another defense of Madrid at Barcelona & made all the plans unknown to Negrin then informed him when too late to stop it. – untold unnecessary losses – Yes even Marty's make grave errors – He and the Minors ought to be retired in a polite way. Along with John M. I wonder if it is worth the effort in view of some good publicity people we had & it might hurt us who are "historically right" –

Feb 13-14-15 Paris – get outfitted – fixed up – hear about deal between Roosevelt & France with double x by Bonnet & Daladier on Spain & plane deal – also hear about blackmail by France to open up frontier – deal with planes which landed at Toulouse. ^{viii}

See O'Toole – hear about the boys –

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Kaufman

Continued from page 13

Hear Mathews has been given an ultimatum on going to Italy – See Allen & party Bob Oken (Hindenburg scoop) Pepita & the little Ziggy who gets everything wholesale – what a job he did in that cabaret. – had to leave in a hurry during the dance – shits – have had it for days – can't appreciate all the good grub – can't trace mail or money – typical I.B. style – Thompson's a great guy brother to Kathleen Norris – doing wonderful job in Paris. Had a talk with him in cab on way down to the a. Express. Besides \$5 I had – cash \$25 check – not supposed to but they screwed up the money I was supposed to have here. I'm made responsible for the 8-Americans getting out of the camp by Saturday thru his efforts – promises Radio gram to ship (Thompson). Promise to look up Babin's wife Story of Jack Waters & Penny in U.S. Rothbart & others aboard the ship – German refugees.

Footnotes

ⁱ Kaufman describes Maria as a “very warm, friendly, personable Spanish woman who hadn't heard from her husband on the front for quite a while. He had been in the retreats, and she didn't know whether he was dead or alive, which—I reflect on it now—was rather typical of many Spanish families.” [Side B #2092]

ⁱⁱ “It's what I feel is kind of a humorous story, even though I've told it countless times, about the very shy girl that she [Maria] had in tow, who was so shy that she hid behind a curtain while Maria explained to us what she wanted us to do when we returned to the States. It seemed that this shy gal—a very young girl, probably, oh, 17 to 19—had what she thought was a great deal of freckles, and vain enough, I guess, that she felt this impaired her beauty, and she had been using a thing called Crema Bella Aurora: Doble Fuerza por las Pecas, in other words, double strength against freckles. It was put out by an outfit

called Stillman Freckle Cream Company of Aurora, Illinois! Fact is, they gave me the cover of the jar that it came in... and they asked, in view of the war, a civil war, where there was a limitation on imports—on a scale of 1 to 100 of what's needed in the country at this time, this would be a 99, I guess—and I promised to do all I could to see to it that when I got repatriated, I'd send back some Stillman Freckle Cream...

“I was sure that if I ever contacted the Stillman Freckle Cream Company

If you have any information about the cultural output of the veterans (books, films, sculptures, paintings, musical compositions, etc), or any information regarding some of the opaque references in the Kaufman text, please contact Elizabeth C. Compa at ecc230@nyu.edu.

with this story of how in the middle of all this terrible civil war, the importance to one woman in Spain, the importance of their product. And I'm sure that they would've sent her a ton if she'd only have her picture taken and give out some kind of a testimonial. I realized after I got back that it wasn't the thing to do. Fact is, I would jeopardize their safety by writing them or even having any contact with them from the States, so I lost track of them altogether.” [Side B #1855, 2250]

ⁱⁱⁱ “I was coming out of Barcelona. While the Franco forces were going in one end, I was going out the other end, and I got back to [the town of] Casa de la Selva again and to Maria's house. And of course at that time there were plenty of rumors. They were sure then that the Republic couldn't hold out, and they would soon be overrun. So Maria said how she had hidden, for several years, the

rosaries, and the statues of the Virgin Mary and so forth... and she said it in a very laughable sort of way. She said, ‘I guess I'll have to go down to the cellar in the old trunk and dig out the rosaries again, and the pictures of the saints and the Virgin Mary, and a picture of Jesus in order to be safe if we get occupied by Fascist forces.’” [Side B #2400]

^{iv} “Pat Gibson, who was the executive officer of our 35th battery, he was a Canadian. None of the Canadians were straightened out yet. They had to leave much later. The Canadian government wasn't ready to accept them.” [Side B #4895]

^v “I refer to the gigantic retreat. This was—I'll try to describe it—it's very much like what happened many, many times afterwards, of course, with—well, we used to see newsreel pictures with tens of thousands of refugees with all their belongings using burros or carts or wheelbarrows or horse-drawn wagons or camions or anything at all, to get moving. It's just a whole sea of humanity just getting away from the Fascists some way, some how. Like I say, this was repeated many times, but to be right in the center of this thing and be part of it is—you feel you're involved in something very historical.” [Side B #5270]

^{vi} Kaufman says on the tape that this refers to “bully beef.” [Side B #5600]

^{vii} “The sabotaging of the trucks was where trucks run out of gas or what have you, or ammo, the trucks were burned or sabotaged in some way so they wouldn't be of any help to the Fascists as they moved up behind us.” [Side B #5650]

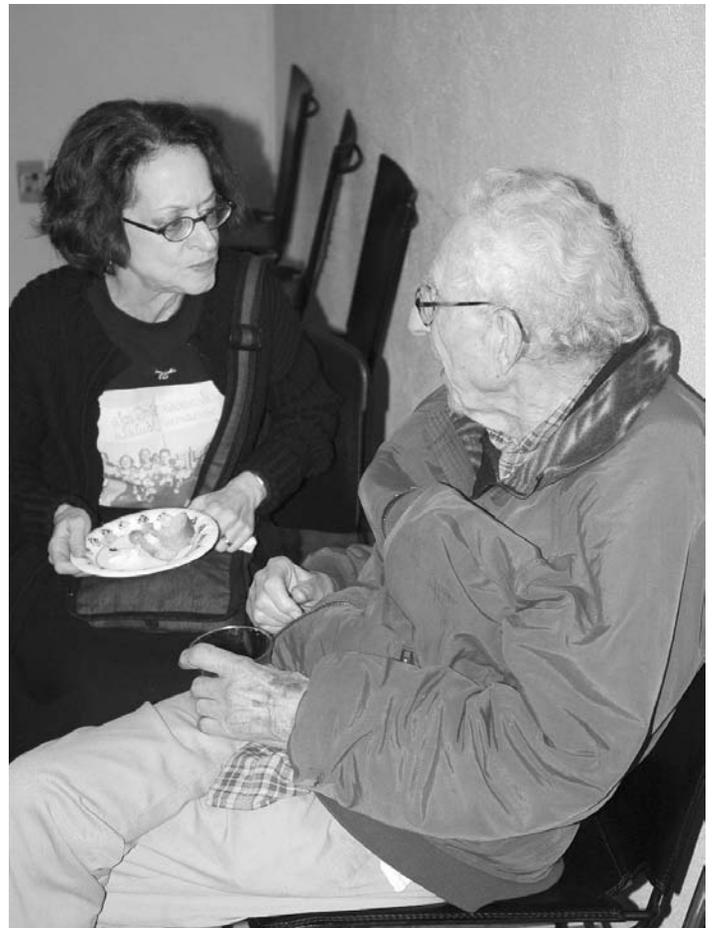
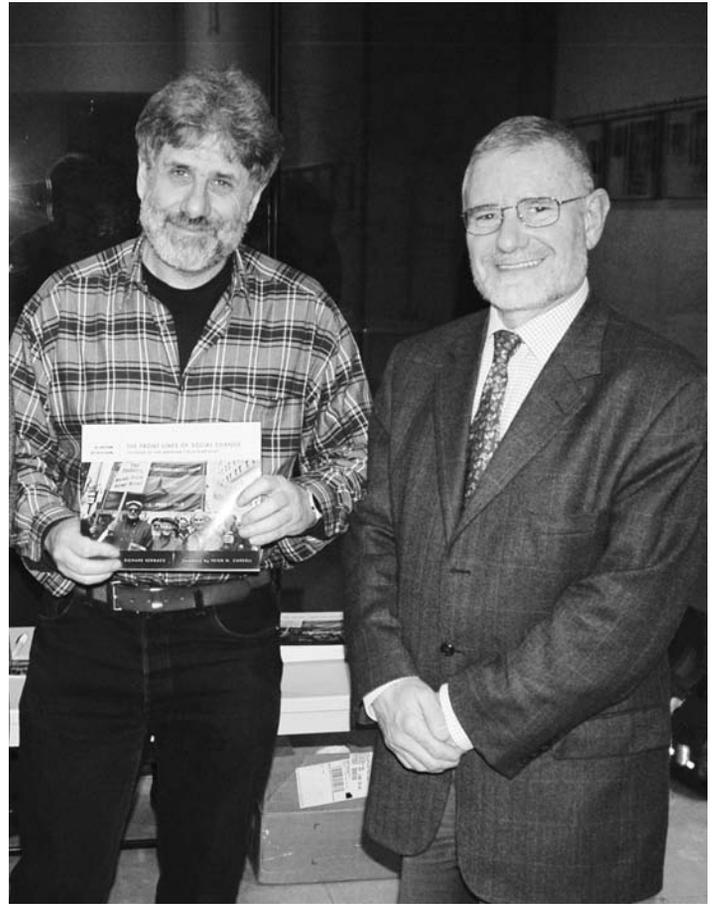
^{viii} For more information on this subject, see Dominic Tierney, “FDR and the Spanish Civil War,” page 6. ▣

Cultural Events

Continued from page 3



Judy Montell introduced her film *Professional Revolutionary: The Life of Saul Wellman* (above). United Nations Ambassador of Spain Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo was presented with a copy of *The Front Lines of Social Change: Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade* by Richard Bermack (upper right). Tibby Brooks talks with vet Clarence Kailin (right). Photos by J. Richard Green.

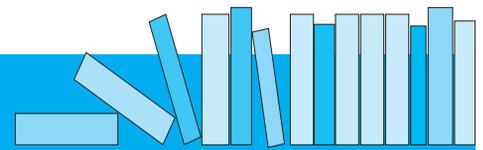


Muñoz Molina responded to his audience with sincerity and passion. He deflected questions about internal divisions within the Spanish Republic by acknowledging their historical truth, but he emphasized how much less serious they were to the lives of the Spanish people than the fascist insurrection that had provoked and continued the civil war.



ALBA's cultural weekend in New York continued the following night with a screening of Judith Montell's new documentary film, *Professional Revolutionary: The Life of Saul Wellman*, and the opening of a month-long photography exhibition at the King Juan Carlos Center titled "The Front Lines of Social Change: The Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade" with images and text from the book by Richard Bermack. All of the events drew large, enthusiastic audiences. ♣

—Peter N. Carroll



A Nurse's Memoir

Mercy in Madrid: Nursing and Humanitarian Protection During the Spanish Civil War 1936-37. By Mary Bingham de Urquidi. Ediciones del Sur, Córdoba, Argentina, 2004.

By Martha Olson Jarocki

Mary de Urquidi's memoir reads like it was written by flashlight while the bombs were still falling. The narrative hurls along, high on adrenaline, serving up details of the daily life of a nurse in a Madrid hospital during the Spanish Civil War. Urquidi was the wife of an attaché at the Mexican consulate, a mother of three and an experienced nurse trained in New York City. In July 1936 she stayed behind in Madrid as her family moved to summer quarters in San Sebastian. Her story is remarkable.

Stranded in the city as Franco's revolt advances into northern Spain, she is unable to join her family. She volunteers her nursing skills for the Republican militia as they hastily organize ambulances and medical care. Within days, skirmishes explode around the city as fascist sympathizers open fire on the militia, launching their attacks from apartment buildings crowded with innocent bystanders. Members of the militia fire back and round up suspected Falangist sympathizers, "taking them for a ride" from which, the author assures us, there is no return. Urquidi is soon in the thick of it, charging up to battlefields in the Sierras around Madrid to gather the wounded, and eventually organizing nursing training and managing the nursing staff in Madrid's Hospital Obrero (Workers Hospital).

Throughout this heightened state of emergency, Urquidi also maintains another life in the diplomatic corps as the Mexican consulate, like those of

other nations, grants asylum to their own nationals and others who have aroused suspicion. Many refugees are monarchists, members of the privileged classes who side with Franco, or at least with the assumption that the unfolding social upheaval has gone too far.

And it was an upheaval. Urquidi's lively account includes the revolutionary young worker Flora, a militiana who curses as she hands out weapons and safe conduct passes, skillfully organizing the personnel and supplies for the Madrid medical corps. The hospitals are desperate for volunteer nurses because the nuns who once staffed them left to join Franco, unwilling to operate in a secular world suddenly leveled by workers, socialists and communists.

There is an irony in hearing from Urquidi about the breakdown of class distinctions as the Spanish Republic fought the war. A diplomat's wife and an educated woman of the upper classes, Urquidi has never been forced to accept the eclipsed circumstance of the working class. She doesn't seem to grasp the hope and energy that the Republican revolution unleashed in workers once the class bonds were released.

It's the details of this release that I found most compelling and also most frustrating in this account. Urquidi, the diplomat's wife, does not acknowledge the sea change that has occurred, especially among the Republican women as they move into roles of responsibility. Reading between the lines of her account, there is an intellectual and political development underway, but Urquidi's focus is elsewhere, and the details remain blurry.

The story eventually moves beyond Madrid, to Paris and London and back again, as Urquidi and her husband are reunited and run the daily affairs of the Mexican embassy. Urquidi's return to wartime Spain

from London is accomplished with members of the English International Brigades, and this part of the narrative is also blurred; the characters and motivations of her IB companions are not at the center of her story.

The memoir, however, retains a compelling freshness, even after all of these years, transporting the reader to an important time. It was published in Spanish in Mexico in the 1970s. It has now been translated by Magdalena Urquidi Bingham, Mary de Urquidi's daughter, and is available in English. ■

Martha Olson Jarocki, daughter of a vet, is a fiction writer living in California.

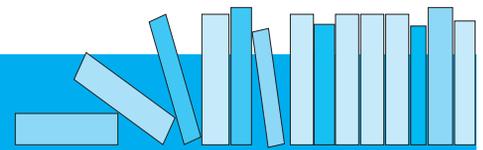
Benicàssim Monument, II

On March 16 the municipal council of Benicàssim reinstated the plaque in honor of the International Brigade soldiers buried in the local cemetery during the war. The plaque, originally unveiled on the cemetery wall in July 2004 (see *The Volunteer*, December 2004), was taken down in October after a change in the municipal government. A minority but very vocal group of extremist Catholics pressured the new council to remove the monument.

The removal, in turn, sparked a local debate reflected in the local and national press. Finally, the authorities agreed to return the plaque to its original location, but only after removing the mention of municipal sponsorship for the memorial. The constant efforts of the local Association González-Chermà have been instrumental in both the original idea for the plaque and its subsequent reinstallation.

At the same time the plaque honoring the IB was reinstalled, another plaque was inaugurated next to it. Its inscription reads in Valenciano: "In memory of war victims, FOR PEACE, Municipal Government of Benicassim, 2004."

--Guillermo Casañ



A Woman Swept into Spanish Politics

A Chronicle of Small Beer: The Memoirs of Nan Green. Edited by R. J. Ellis with an introduction by Martin Green. Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2004.

By Shirley Mangini

Nan Green's memoirs are not insignificant, as the term "small beer" might suggest. They are intelligent, engaging, and witty observations from the perspective of a stoic woman who was swept into the turbulent politics in Spain during and after the civil war. Green's narrative proves her to be a selfless and valiant woman whose convictions motivated a lifetime of helping others, most especially the Spaniards who resisted Franco.

Raised in a strict, middle-class family, Green rejected the bourgeois conformity required of her and struggled for independence. She found it in political commitment, first working for the Labour movement, and then joining the Communist Party, once her aspirations to continue studying were dashed by the economic exigencies of her family.

When her father learned that she was going to marry George Green, a musician, he warned her of the poverty she would suffer, but Green's memoirs reveal that her spunky idealism left no room for bourgeois considerations. In fact, when her husband announced he would go to Spain to drive a truck for the Spanish Medical Aid agency in early 1937, Nan followed several months later to help the cause, leaving her two young children behind in the care of friends, who paid for their schooling. Green speaks of the false accusations of disloyalty to the Communist Party that plagued her during much of her work in Spain,

but those intrigues did not dissuade her from her commitment.

Although Green had the opportunity to see her husband on several occasions, as she was about to return to Great Britain in September 1938, she was informed that he was missing in action at the Ebro River. She hunted for him in hospitals near the Ebro and then in Barcelona. News of his death—ironically only days after Negrin's speech to the League of Nations announcing the unconditional withdrawal of the International Brigades—did not reach her until March 1939, as the exodus from Catalonia was beginning. Green reveals her strength in those days as she continued to work for the Spanish cause; she was determined to shield her children from the pain of her loss. She went to France in May 1939 so she could travel with Spanish refugees bound for Mexico on the SS *Sinaia*, tending to the children on board.

Back in London Green was caught in the maelstrom of World War II, barely surviving several bombings, undaunted as she carried out her work as an Invasion Defence Officer. From 1943 to 1950 she also served as secretary of the International Brigades Association. She admits that she accepted the marriage proposal of a sheet-metal worker she was seeing at this time because she needed "security" for herself and her children. Nan continued to work for the Spaniards within Spain and those in exile, editing a monthly magazine, among other endeavors. In 1945 she traveled to Poland to celebrate the vindication of the Poles who fought in the Spanish civil war, and later that year she attended the Spanish Communist Party meeting in Toulouse, spending time with Pasionaria.

Green also became involved in the World Peace Movement, but at this time she began to question Soviet Communism, which she had believed in with "blind faith," she admits. Her work with the Movement took her to various congresses, and she ended up in China in 1952. Invited back to China in 1953, she later began working on Spanish and English-language publications. Just as Green had learned Spanish while in Spain during the war, she became fluent in Chinese.

1956 was the turning point for Nan Green in terms of her commitment to the Communist Party, when she learned of Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech. In 1958, still living in China, she traveled to Africa and Mauritania. Her marriage was slowly dissolving and she finally divorced in 1973. As anti-Communist sentiments spread, Nan Green could no longer evade the disillusionment she experienced with the Soviet Union. Her memoirs end with that recognition.

Neither Green's disillusionment nor her later illnesses and disappointments would stop her from continuing her work based on Communist ideals. As historian Paul Preston explains in his *Doves of War: Four Women of Spain*, back in London in the early sixties, Green worked for a Communist Party publishing house and traveled to Spain to intervene in some of Franco's last acts of repression against his long-time foes. She also resumed her work for the IBA.

Green died in 1984. In 1986, her son Martin took her ashes to be scattered on the banks of the Ebro River. Nan Green was finally at rest where she had begun the political journey that had shaped her life. ▣

Shirley Mangini is author of *Memoirs of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War*.

Elegies: Three Poems for the

This poem was read at a memorial to the International Brigades at RivasMadrid on November 6, 2004, and for Lincoln vet Chuck Hall in Oak Park, Illinois, April 3, 2005.

Ausencia de lugar

"Ningún hombre ha entrado en la tierra con más honor que aquellos que murieron en España."

Ernest Hemingway, "A los americanos muertos en España," 1938

Sus hijas nunca hablaron de la desaparición de papá, hacía mucho que la polilla había digerido sus calcetines de lana en el cobertizo, dejando colgajos grises agarrados como uñas al gancho que había encima de la banqueta de pino donde ningún peso ha descansado durante 66 años, salvo la memoria y la imagen mental de quince cuerpos, una cara morena inclinada sobre el hombro del hermano.

El nieto sólo sabe que la abuela calcetaba toquillas negras y que se limpiaba las lágrimas con un viejo pañuelo hasta el día en que los arqueólogos, con ojos húmedos y manos secas, cavaron las cunetas para levantar los huesos de papá bajo el sol.

Ahora sus pómulos vuelven a casa para recibir dos besos, para saborear rabo de cordero con patatas, para brindar con el vaso de vino peleón y tarta de almendra, porque todavía es domingo, y cayó al borde del camino con balas en el cráneo y sin tiempo para disculparse mientras la cen a se enfriaba y las cabras se escapaban.

Ahora dicen misa, ahora el cura progresista sólo hace frente a vanas amenazas por las ceremonias antiguas y honorables, y papá se elevará con el humo del incienso más cerca del lugar donde le espera el alma de Federico.



Al otro lado del océano, los americanos no tienen un cielo al que llamar casa, sus descalcificados huesos cocidos al sol y esparcidos, casi todas las semanas ya, como borlas de polvera, en las aguas fugaces

o como el pobre Jack, sus cenizas perdidas en una saca de correos entre un crematorio del Lago Tahoe y la colina de su San Francisco, ni siquiera con una manta de tierra para absorber las lágrimas. Se nos van rápidos estos valientes hombres del batallón Lincoln que dieron sus vidas por España, y con fuertes voces cantaban Viva La Quince

Brigada, cogían petacas de Fundador y lamentaban lo que podía haber sido, si hubiesen ganado. De ellos, todo cabe en cucharillas de polvo calcinado que no asciende a ningún lado y que cae en cualquier lado y se deposita bajo camas vacías, sin una oración que dé cuenta de su paso y su dignidad.

Peter Neil Carroll

Translated by Mary Kay McCoy

Absence of Place

"No men entered earth more honorably than those who died in Spain."

—Ernest Hemingway, "To the American Dead in Spain," 1938

His daughters never spoke of Papa's disappearance, the moths long ago digested his wool stockings in the tool shed, leaving gray shreds clinging like fingernails to the peg above the pine stool where no weight has rested for 66 years, except memory and a mental map of the fifteen bodies, one brown face tilted on the brother's shoulder.

A grandson knows only that Grandma knitted black shawls and wept into an old handkerchief until the day archeologists with moist eyes and dry hands entered the ditches to raise Papa's bones into the sunshine.

Now his cheekbones are coming home for two kisses, to taste lamb tails and potatoes, to lift cups of coarse wine and almond cakes, since it's still Sunday, and he fell by the wayside with bullets in the skull and no time for apologies while dinner turned cold and the goats ran away.

Now they say mass, now the progressive priest faces only idle threats for ceremonies ancient and honorable, and Papa will rise with the smoke of burnt incense closer to a place where the soul of Federico awaits him.



Across the ocean, the Americans have no heaven to call home, their decalcified bones are baked and strewn, almost weekly now, like powder puffs, into transient waters or like poor Jack, his ashes lost in a mail pouch between a Tahoe crematorium and his San Francisco hillside, without even a blanket of soil to absorb the tears.

Going fast these brave men of the Lincoln battalion who bled for Spain, and big voiced sang Viva La Quince Brigada, grasped flasks of Fundador and lamented what might have been, if they'd won. Of them, every thing fits into teaspoons of charred powder that ascends nowhere and falls into nowhere and settles under empty beds, without a prayer to mark their passage or their pride.

Peter Neil Carroll

International Brigades

This poem was translated and read by Anthony Geist at the memorial service for Bob Reed in Seattle, Washington, March 6, 2005.

1936

Remember this, and let others remember,
When you are disgusted by human cruelty
When you are angered by human harshness:
This man alone, this act alone, this faith alone.
Remember this, and let others remember.

It was 1961, in a strange city,
More than a quarter century
Later. The circumstance is unimportant,
You were asked to give a reading of your poetry,
And afterwards, talked with that man:
An old soldier
From the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Twenty-five years before, this man
Without knowing your land, so distant to him,
Chose to go there, and there,
If necessary, to give his life,
Judging that the cause being played out
Then was worthy
Of fighting for the faith that filled his life.

That the cause now seems lost
Matters not;
That so many others, feigning faith in it
Looked out only for themselves,
Matters less.
What does matter and is enough is one man's faith.

So today once again the cause appears to you
As it was then:
Noble and worth fighting for.
And his faith, that faith he has held
Through all the years and all the defeats,
When everything seemed to betray it.
But that faith, you tell yourself, is all that matters.

Gracias, Compañero, gracias.
Thank you for your example. Thanks, for you tell me
That man is noble.
It matters not that so few are:
One, one man alone, is enough
To stand as unimpeachable witness
To the nobility of all mankind.

Luis Cernuda

Martin Green was 5 years old when his father, British volunteer George Green, died in Spain in 1938.

Gandessa: elegy for the dead in Spain, 1936-1939

You had no funeral nor hearse
No grave except the place you fell
No dirge but a soldier's curse
And an explosion tolled your knell

You lie locked in the earth
Perhaps already merged
These thirty years or more
And more and ever more

The cutting of your death
Too quick for pain or words
Aches like a limb that's lost
And cauterized my heart

O king of my coming
I was a boy too young
To take the blow that felled
The tree that was your man

To mark your passing, wife
And daughter traded tears,
But scion with five years
Was dry-eyed and unmoved

But five times five and more
I knock upon the tomb
To give these words to Death
That you shall never hear

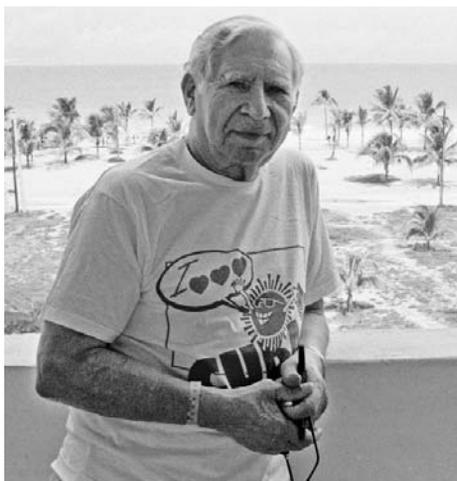
The crumbled flesh that held
The bounty of your blood
Has held my spark of life
Beyond all mortal love

Reluctantly I pass
As cat that toys with mouse
That's dead and moves no more
The memory you left

Perhaps already merged
You lie locked in the earth
These thirty years or more
And more and ever more.

Martin Green 

Added to Memory's Roster



Milt Felsen (1912-2005)

The unassuming and soft-spoken brigadista Milt Felsen passed away on April 8 in Florida. His wife, Lois Bennett, said of him, "Milt was a sweet guy and a tough guy. Life with him was so much fun."

Born in New York City, Felsen left the University of Iowa in his senior year to go to Spain in May of 1937. He served as a machine gunner in the Lincoln battalion and was wounded at Brunete. Upon release from the hospital, he spent the rest of the war as an ambulance driver.

In World War Two, Felsen joined the Office of Strategic Services with other Lincoln veterans. Wounded and taken prisoner in North Africa, he spent two years in prisoner of war camps in Italy and Germany.

Felsen's memoir of childhood and the war years, *The Anti-Warrior*, was published by the University of Iowa in 1989. It is one of the few autobiographies by Lincoln veterans. It is a great read.

Milt accomplished many things in peacetime. After the war, he worked for film-related labor unions in New York. In 1960 he ran the East Coast office of the Directors Guild of America. He served on its board for 30 years. He was an associate producer of *Saturday Night Fever*, the John Travolta film that launched the disco

era. His independent producing credits included *The Bell Jar* and *The Directors*, a television documentary series. Milt retired to Sarasota, Florida, where he kept in touch with film and theater.

Over his busy career, Milt Felsen was staunchly loyal to the Lincolns. He participated in reunions as well as trips to Spain, where his good humor was always appreciated. He will be sorely missed by those who had the good fortune of knowing him.

—Robert Coale

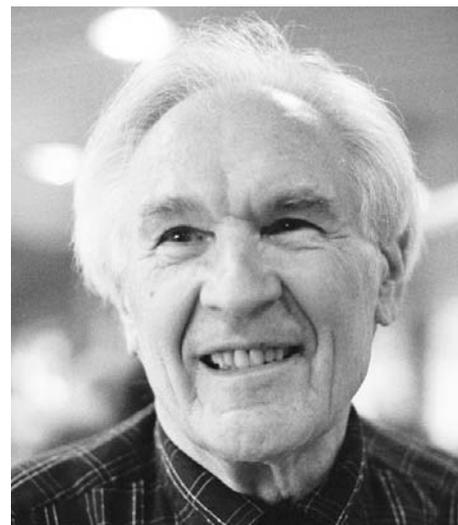
Ernest Amatniek (1915-2005)

Lincoln vet Ernest Amatniek, a pioneer in the application of transistors to biological research, died on April 9 in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He was 89.

Born in Tallin, Estonia, to Latvian parents who were naturalized citizens, Amatniek came to the U.S. at the age of 14. He attended James Monroe High School in the Bronx and City College, where he studied electrical engineering. He served with the Lincoln battalion in the signal corps in Spain. During World War II, he designed and put into production radar identification equipment for the Navy.

Ernie later worked at the neurophysiology laboratory of Columbia University's Medical School, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, during the 1950s. While there, he developed a compact, wide band electrometer amplifier, also called a neutralized input capacitance amplifier. In the 1960s, he founded and was president of Bioelectric Instruments of Yonkers, a company that was sold in 1970. Lincoln vet Ted Veltfort worked with him there. Later, Ernie was a consulting engineer in neurophysiology laboratories at the Mount Sinai and Albert Einstein Colleges of Medicine, as well as at Columbia.

Ernie married artist and art teacher Sara Berlin in 1949. He is survived



by two daughters, Kathie Amatniek Sarachild of Manhattan and Dr. Joan Cindy Amatniek of Newtown, Pennsylvania, as well as 4 grandchildren and 6 step-great-grandchildren. A brother, Karl Amatneek, lives in California.

A memorial celebrating his life and work was held at the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine.—Chris Brooks

Joseph Grigas (1915-2005)

Joe Grigas, a native of Worcester, Massachusetts, veteran of the Lincoln Brigade, and a cited hero in World War II, died in London, Ontario, Canada, on March 8.

Grigas had served in the U.S. Army in Panama during the early 1930s before embarking for Spain in 1937. When World War II broke out in Europe, he enlisted in the Canadian army in 1940 and was posted to the Royal Canadian Regiment. After training in England, the regiment participated in the Allied invasion of Sicily in 1943. Grigas won the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his role in capturing a coastal artillery battery. This was the second-highest medal in the Canadian army, and only five were awarded in the regiment during the entire war.



Bob Reed (1914-2005)

Bob Reed was cutting barbed wire in front of the fortified Nationalist hill at Seguro de los Banos when machine gunners on top opened fire. A round cut through his helmet and into his head. Bob thought his fight was over. Fortunately for him, his fellow international volunteers, social justice, and all of us whose lives he touched over the next seven decades, he survived. We lost a great man on January 29.

Despite his injury at Seguro de los Banos, Bob was able to rejoin the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. He returned to the lines before the Retreats. This move is representative of the dedication and determination Bob exhibited throughout his life.

Born July 6, 1914, in Rodney, Texas, Bob was one six children in a family of cotton farmers. The Reed family worked as tenant farmers across Texas through some of the worst days of the depression. Falling cotton prices caused the Reed family to live on the verge of poverty.

Bob's parents made significant sacrifices to get him through high school. Upon graduation, Bob wanted to attend college, but money was not available. He remained optimistic and was pleased when he ran across an advertisement for a college located on an Arkansas farm, where students

could work for their room and board. Tuition was only \$50 per quarter. Bob submitted an application to Commonwealth College, and with his life savings of \$65, he hopped a freight train for Mena, Arkansas.

During his years at Commonwealth College, Bob studied labor history. He served as student farm manager and volunteered as an organizer for the Southern Tenant Farmer's Union (STFU). He also made many friends, including his roommate Marion Noble, with whom he later fought in Spain. In 1933, Bob joined both the Communist Party (CP) and the Young Communist League (YCL), for which he served as the Arkansas state organizer.

Bob sailed for Europe aboard the *Vollendam* on April 24, 1937. After docking on France's Atlantic coast, he traveled across France to Marseille. There he boarded the ill-fated *City of Barcelona*. The Spanish coastal freighter, carrying approximately 500 international volunteers, was torpedoed by a Nationalist submarine on May 30, 1937. The ship sank in minutes. Despite the lingering threat of the submarine, local fishermen launched their boats in a rescue effort. Bob was among those saved by locals. About 50 of the volunteers lost their lives.

Bob traveled to Albacete, where he formally enrolled in the International Brigades on June 1, 1937. He then moved to Tarazona, where he joined the Mackenzie-Papineau (Mac-Paps) Battalion in training. He served in every battle that the Mac-Paps fought, from Fuentes de Ebro through the Ebro Offensive. He was wounded three times, including the head wound suffered at Segura de los Banos.

Bob joined the U.S. Army on December 27, 1941. He was in the quartermaster branch and served in the 8th and 9th Air Forces in the European theater of operations. He earned the rank of master sergeant before his discharge on November 16, 1945.

After the war, Bob spent a year in

New York before returning to Detroit. He found a kindred soul in a young woman named Mildred Aslin. Bob and Mildred married in December 1945. Bob continued his party work, serving as the circulation manager of a new Detroit workers' paper, *The Herald*.

The 1950s were a difficult time for most veterans. In a survey response to a question about his activities in the 1950s, Bob wrote, "Party assignments, construction laborer, carpenter, sweating possible arrest or summons to appear before an investigating committee because of my political activities. Increasing reluctance to spending Sundays in political meetings when the weather called for fishing. The 50s were rough."

In 1961 Bob quietly left the party. He and Mildred moved to Seattle, Washington, to raise their two children, Bill and Janet. Bob returned to school and earned a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Washington. He worked as the director of a service center for the residents of a low-income housing community.

After retiring, Bob split his time between volunteer activities with various progressive causes and his weekend home in Snohomish. Bob's VALB and Friends Day picnics on his property in Snohomish were much anticipated events.

In the 1970s, Bob and fellow veteran Oiva Halonen began a history of the volunteers from the Pacific Northwest who served in Spain. This invaluable project was completed in the early 1990s and placed in the University of Washington Archives, with a copy presented to ALBA.

Throughout his life Bob worked tirelessly to promote justice and equality. He continued to be active long into his retirement. He was passionate in his causes and about his friends. The compatriots, family and friends of Bob Reed mourn the passing of one whose life exemplified the Good Fight.

—Chris Brooks and Lisa Clemmer



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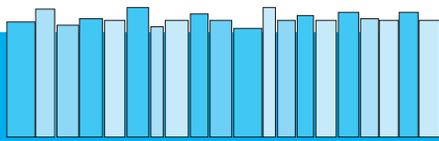
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New York Reunion Events



Vets take the stage: Len Levenson, Harry Randall, Abe Smorodin, Al Koslow, Matti Mattson, Clarence Kailin, Jack Shafran, Lou Gordon, and John Penrod (above l-r). James Fernandez and Antonio Muñoz Molina (right). Photos by Richard Bermack.



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