Vol. XLI, No. 2

June 2024

The Volunteer

FOUNDED IN 1937 BY THE VOLUNTEERS OF THE LINCOLN BRIGADE.
PUBLISHED BY THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE ARCHIVES (ALBA)

LIBERTAD PARA ANGELA DAVIS

Recovering the Black Antifascist Tradition

p 6

18by Vote Receives ALBA/Puffin Award p 3
Vince Lossowski's OSS Memoir p 17
Documenting War in Ukraine and Spain p 5

Coleman Persily and Angela Davis at a VALB reunion, Oakland, CA, 2002.
Photo Richard Bermack

Felix Beltrán, 1971. Penn State. CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The Volunteer
Founded by the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

239 W. 14th Street, Suite 2
New York, NY 10011 (212) 674-5398
www.alba-valb.org

Editor Print Edition
Peter N. Carroll

Editor Online Edition
www.albavolunteer.org
Sebastiaan Faber

Associate Editor
Aaron B. Retish

Book Review Editor
Joshua Goode

Graphic Design
www.eyestormx.com

Editorial Assistance
Phil Kavanaugh

Manuscripts, inquiries, and letters to the editor may be sent by email to info@alba-valb.org
The editors reserve the right to modify texts for length and style.

Books for review may be sent to
Joshua Goode
Claremont Graduate University
Blaisdell House, #5, 143 East 10th Street
Claremont, CA 91711

www.albavolunteer.org

The **Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA)** is an educational non-profit dedicated to promoting social activism and the defense of human rights. ALBA's work is inspired by the American volunteers of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade who fought fascism in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Drawing on the ALBA collections in New York University's Tamiment Library, and working to expand such collections, ALBA works to preserve the legacy of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade as an inspiration for present and future generations.

IN THIS ISSUE

p 3 ALBA News
p 5 Documenting War
p 6 Black Antifascism
p 10 Dutch Pilot in Spain
p 12 Miner Strike in Córdoba
p 15 Search for Carmelo Delgado
p 17 Lossowski Memoir
p 18 Missak Manouchian
p 20 Obituaries
p 21 Book Review
p 23 Contributions

Dear Friends,

As human rights and academic freedom are under threat throughout the world, it was gratifying to hear former winners of the ALBA/Puffin Award speak to each other and to the attentive audience gathered in New York City this past May 4 for this year's award ceremony. Kate Doyle, the investigative journalist who shared the award in 2012 with the Guatemalan forensic anthropologist Fredy Peccerelli, recalled what it had been like for her to be recognized by ALBA and the Puffin Foundation. Rachael Lorenzo, of Indigenous Women Rising (2023), shared thoughts about tactics and strategy with Ava Mateo, who received this year's award on behalf of 18by Vote—an organization that is entering what is possibly the most important election campaign since it was founded eight years ago. Before and after the ceremony, all three of the former award winners socialized with representatives from My Brother's Keeper (2021) and No More Deaths (2020). In March, meanwhile, Proactiva Open Arms (2017) sent the first ship to sail as part of a maritime aid corridor to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza, in collaboration with World Central Kitchen. (Operations were temporarily suspended following the death of seven aid workers in an Israeli airstrike in April.)

Fourteen years after its birth, the ALBA/Puffin Award has created a community of committed activists who, each in their own way and against all odds, work ceaselessly to defend basic human rights. As they do so, they honor the antifascist legacy of the Lincoln Brigade. Indeed, if the stories in this issue show anything, it's that the echoes of the Spanish Civil War continue to resonate today. For Bill Mullen and Jeanelle Hope, who are interviewed on page 6, the struggle in Spain is part of a Black antifascist tradition that continues to fuel resistance today. As Alex Vernon shows, an Oscar-winning documentary about Ukraine is also a tribute to a classic film on the Spanish war (page 6). Meanwhile, researchers continue to unearth remains of international volunteers killed by the fascists (page 15), or Hollywood-worthy stories of adventure and courage (page 10). Speaking of courage, we're especially proud to feature a moving unpublished memoir by Lincoln vet Vince Lossowski, who after his service in Spain joined the OSS (page 17).

ALBA is a small organization, but we manage to stay busy! It's enormously exciting to see so many of you join our many online events (see pages 3-4). Of course, none of this work would be possible without your generous support. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. As always, you'll find a donation envelope in this issue; you can also donate online at alba-valb.org/donate.

¡Salud!

Peter N. Carroll and Sebastiaan Faber, editors

P.S. We specialize in education programs for the next generations. Please donate.

Letter to the Editors

I found the article by Raanan Rein in the March, 2024 issue of *The Volunteer* to be interesting and insightful. But there was just this one phrase that raised the hackles on this Palestinian Jew's head: "Jewish Palestine." No such place existed. Rather, there was a place called Palestine, a multicultural home to Jews, Arab Muslims and Christians. Only later did that land become a Jewish State. The difference matters a great deal, as Zionists continue to deny that Palestine ever existed. The women in comrade Rein's article were, like my grandfather, Palestinian Jews, but not citizens of a "Jewish Palestine." As members of the Palestinian Communist Party, I suspect they would have agreed with me that they, and their non-Jewish volunteer partners, represented Palestine, and not some proto-Israel.

— Bill Kransdorf

ALBA NEWS

18by Vote Receives ALBA/Puffin Award

In a stirring ceremony on May 4, the youth organization 18by Vote, represented by its President, Ava Mateo, received the 2024 ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism. The gathering, which took place in the historic building of the Spanish Benevolent Society on New York's West 14th St. that houses the ALBA office, also featured two previous award winners. Kate Doyle, 2012 awardee and former ALBA board member, spoke about the meaning of the award for its recipients, while Rachael Lorenzo had a public conversation with Ava Mateo. Lorenzo is the founder of last year's awardee, Indigenous Women Rising. Other former awardees represented in the audience included No More Deaths (2020), and My Brother's Keeper (2021).

This year's winner, 18by Vote, creates sustainable civic leadership among young people who have been historically excluded from positions of leadership and power. Founded in response to low youth voter turnout in the 2016 general election, 18by Vote has since activated hundreds of thousands of young people across the country to engage civically.

As part of the ceremony, ALBA's newest board member, David Parsard, recalled the historic work done by veterans of the Lincoln Brigade to fight for voting rights in the United States. Neal Rosenstein, the President of the Puffin Foundation, underscored the importance of youth activism in this struggle today.

One of the largest monetary awards for human rights in the world, the ALBA/Puffin Award is a $100,000 cash prize granted annually by ALBA and The Puffin Foundation to sustain the legacy of the experiences, aspirations, and idealism of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. It supports contemporary international activists and human rights causes. A philanthropist and visionary, the late Perry Rosenstein of The Puffin Foundation created and established an endowed fund for this award in 2010.

A video summary of the ceremony will be made available on ALBA's YouTube channel soon. For a photo gallery of the event, see our online edition at **albavolunteer.org**.

Neal Rosenstein, Ava Mateo, and Sebastiaan Faber. Photo Donald Borenstein

ALBA Board Elects New Officers and Welcomes New Board Member

At its annual meeting in New York City, the ALBA Board of Governors elected longtime board member Aaron Retish as its new Chair. The author of several books on revolutionary Russia, Aaron is a professor of Russian history at Wayne State, where he also oversees the Abraham Lincoln Scholarship program. For ALBA, he has served for many years as Treasurer and president of the jury for the George Watt Essay Contest. He is also co-editor of this magazine. Aaron succeeds Sebastiaan Faber, who served as (co-)chair since 2010, with a three-year hiatus. The officers who continue in their current positions include María Hernández-Ojeda (Vice-Chair) and Jo Labanyi (Secretary). Gina Herrmann was elected to succeed Aaron as Treasurer. The Board also welcomed its newest member David Parsard, a Brooklyn-born scholar of medieval Spain who is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Brown University.

"At the Barricades" Previewed at NYU

On April 5, the theater company What Will the Neighbors Say? presented a selection of scenes from their current project, At the Barricades, as part of the Fridays on the Patio series at NYU's King Juan Carlos Center. The preview of the play, which explores stories of volunteers during the Spanish Civil War, featured four sections performed by professional actors, with a short discussion between each scene. The Neighbors and KJCC were thrilled to partner with ALBA and the NYU Production Lab for this interdisciplinary event.

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Remembered

On March 28, ALBA featured Mary Anne Trasciatti, a labor historian at Hofstra University, in an event to commemorate the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. Trasciatti presented alongside Abbie Harper, an activist and organizer, and Suzanne Pred Bass, great niece of Rosie Weiner, who died in the fire. For a video of the event, see ALBA's event calendar at alba-valb.org/eventcalendar or our YouTube channel.

Songs & Letters of the Spanish Civil War

On April 14, the anniversary of the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic, ALBA hosted George & Ruth: Songs & Letters of the Spanish Civil War, a musical performance written by Dan and Molly Watt based on the letters George and Ruth Watt wrote to the other while George served in the Lincoln Brigade. The performance was directed by Katie Schmidt Feder of Theatre in the Wood, and performed by Emrigael Alpern, Albi Gorn, and Nick Nazario.

Merriman Fundraiser in Berkeley

On April 29, members of the San Francisco Bay Area ALBA community joined staff, faculty, and students at UC Berkeley to celebrate Robert Hale Merriman, first commander of the Lincoln Brigade, in the beautiful Morrison Library on the Berkeley

campus, where Merriman studied while a graduate student in economics. The gathering served to raise funds for the installation of a memorial plaque on the campus, a gift from the DIDPATRI research group at the University of Barcelona, who placed a matching plaque in Corbera d'Ebre, where Merriman disappeared in early April 1938. Speakers included Linda Lustig, daughter of volunteer Dave Smith and a driving force behind the San Francisco monument, Adam Hochschild, historian, journalist and member of the ALBA Honorary Board, Estelle Tarica, chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and special guest Christopher Stone, nephew of Merriman's widow, Marion Stone Merriman Wachtel, who joined Merriman in Spain as the only American woman in uniform with the Lincolns. For more information or to make a donation, visit crowdfund.berkeley.edu/merriman, or email rhmplaque@gmail.com.

Peter N. Carroll Anti-Fascist Education Fund: ALBA Film Series to Kick Off This Summer

This summer, ALBA is kicking off a monthly film discussion series made possible by the newly created Peter N. Carroll Anti-Fascist Education Fund. The series will introduce feature-length movies about the Spanish Civil War, including both classics and more recent work. Participants will meet online in 75-minute workshop-style gatherings, each led by a different expert, after viewing both the film and a specially produced introductory video. The series is open to all teachers (K-12 and college) as well as the general public. We will open on July 16 with a workshop led by Sebastiaan Faber on Guillermo del Toro's fascinating 2001 film *The Devil's Backbone (El espinazo del diablo)*. For more details, keep an eye on ALBA's email newsletter and the event calendar at alba-valb.org/eventcalendar.

ALBA Celebrates Pride Month

On Tuesday, June 25 at 3 pm ET/12 noon PT, ALBA will once again commemorate LGBTQ Pride month with an online event entitled "Telling Our Stories," featuring Shannon O'Neill and Bettina Aptheker. O'Neill, Curator for the Tamiment-Wagner Collections at NYU Special Collections and ex-officio ALBA board member, will re-acquaint us with the ALBA archives and highlight the importance of telling the stories of LGBTQ volunteers and the challenges involved. Aptheker will discuss her book *Communists in Closets: Queering the History 1930s–1990s.* Drawing on the ALBA collection, among other archives, the book recounts the struggles of the Party to come to grips with the many LGBTQ folks among its rank-and-file. The presentations will be followed by a Q&A session. All are welcome. This promises to be a lively and informative session—don't miss it!

Book Club Explores the Rich Legacy of Spanish Civil War Literature

The Spanish Civil War has inspired a rich trove of novels, memoirs, histories, and poetry, with new books coming out all the time. Each month, the FFALB book club gets together online to discuss one of these works, sharing our thoughts about its relevance, new insights, literary merits, and more. Anyone interested is invited to join us on Saturday, June 1, when we will be discussing *Picasso's War: The Destruction of Guernica and the Masterpiece that Changed the World*, by Russell Martin. A few days before our discussion the zoom link will be posted on the FFALB Facebook page. To join our club, you may also contact me, the discussion moderator, via info@alba-valb.org. *—Nancy Wallach, ALBA Board member and daughter of Lincoln vet Hy Wallach*

The Virtual Museum of the Spanish Civil War Opens Major New Galleries

The Virtual Museum of the Spanish Civil War—**www.vscw.ca**—has opened new galleries that more than double the number of objects on display. It has also added a French version to the existing Spanish and English ones. The new galleries include:

- The Civil War in Catalonia, **https://www.vscw.ca/index.php/en/node/438**, with a version in Catalan.
- The Civil War in the Basque Country, **https://www.vscw.ca/index.php/en/node/348**, with a version in Euskera.
- The Global Spanish Civil War, **https://www.vscw.ca/index.php/en/node/305**. Through a series of sections devoted to individual countries, this gallery explores the full global impact of the Spanish Civil War in a new way. The gallery opens sections devoted to Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Hungary, Ireland, Morocco, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Many more will follow.
- The Open Gallery, **https://www.vscw.ca/index.php/en/node/432**, which presents objects relating to the Civil War submitted by members of the general public, accompanied by short texts explaining the importance they hold for them. If you would like to contribute to the gallery, contact us at **vscw@yorku.ca**.

Since it opened in September 2022, the VSCW has been visited by more than 72,000 people from 132 countries. In February 2023, ALBA hosted a roundtable with the museum creators to help launch the project.

“And the Oscar goes to…”

By Alex Vernon

Why we should read the Oscar-winning documentary about Mariupol as a tribute to *The Spanish Earth,* Joris Ivens’s Civil War classic.

Watching Mstyslav Chernov’s *20 Days in Mariupol*, which shows the Russian bombing of the Ukrainian city at the beginning of the ongoing war, I thought: “I’ve seen this movie before, if with a markedly different soundtrack.” Chernov’s film won the 2024 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. Reviewers have described it as *grim*, *brutal*, and *difficult* for its images of civilian casualties, but also as *essential* and *necessary*, the language of moral imperative.

The film that *20 Days in Mariupol* brought to mind was *The Spanish Earth,* directed in 1937 by the Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, with the help of Ernest Hemingway, John Fernhout, John Dos Passos, and Helen van Dongen. *The Spanish Earth* also based its moral authority on the destruction by air of city and village, Madrid and Morata de Tajuña, and on the civilian victims that bombing caused. As we know, the Spanish Civil War was the first conflict on European soil which targeted civilian populations from the skies—then in Spain and now in Ukraine, by the authoritarian aggressors.

The Spanish Earth is *20 Days*’ historic and cinematic precedent. Both films show us enemy aircraft like predators above. Both show urban landscapes turned inside out. Both show us dead bodies. There’s one shot in the new film of the feet of a dead child on a gurney that verily quotes a shot in the earlier film. “Where do I go?” plead women displaced from their homes in both films. Chernov’s hospital scenes pick up where Ivens’s combat triage scenes left off.

Both films say: *Look.*

Chernov and Ivens even sound alike when discussing their films. These weren’t pre-scripted documentaries, but immersive experiences that required story-building after the fact. And is Chernov’s narrating style very different from Hemingway’s in the context of their respective era’s voiceover standards? Released during their wars, both films bear the political function of drumming up international support for the threatened governments. (Twenty, forty, eighty years from now, *20 Days in Mariupol* might strike viewers unaware of its history as simply a powerful anti-war film.)

The Spanish Earth wrapped up shooting prior to the bombing of Guernica but implicated the terrorist atrocity, nevertheless. In the final scene of *20 Days in Mariupol*, reporters confront the Russian ambassador outside the United Nations assembly hall. Clearly visible on the wall in the background is the U.N.’s reproduction of Picasso’s *Guernica*, with its buildings and bodies turned inside out and its references to print journalism—the narrative war.

Chernov’s film includes one type of footage that, although real, is a diegetic fiction insofar as his crew, with whom we’ve virtually embedded, couldn’t have taken it. The documentary periodically returns to these establishing shots (of sorts) of the city from *above* the city, floating, gliding, surveying. At no point do the filmmakers use or talk about drones. These shots provide strange, unsettling relief from the relentless on-the-ground verité sequences—strange because the respite still trains the eye on the destruction even if at an aerie distance; unsettling because it also inhabits the predator aircraft’s field of vision. *20 Days* unintentionally proves what Paul Virilio and Susan Sontag claimed: The history of modern warfare is bound up with the history of camera technologies.

When *20 Days* delivers me into the drone’s eye view, I can’t but superimpose onto the imagined apparatus of the drone the cryptic, electrified eyeball at the top of Picasso’s 1937 painting—floating, surveying, the screaming inside-out world below. That eyeball is a drone before there were drones.

In 1938, *The Spanish Earth* could not have won Best Documentary Feature. Its politics were too fraught for the times. Besides, the award didn’t exist yet.

Two urgent propagandistic war films first received the honor as a special award in 1941, before the category became permanent. *Kukan* featured China’s resistance to Japan. In *Target for Tonight*, produced by the British Ministry of Information, “each part is played by the actual man or woman who does the job,” according to the title sequence, the overall job being a representative Royal Air Force bombing mission over Germany. The film is representative but fabricated, with scripted lines, a staged aircraft interior, a diorama of the target, and hazy images of German anti-aircraft crews shouting “Fire!” in English.

For all the blatant messaging, *The Spanish Earth*’s reels were real, its historic and cinematic legacy far more enduring. But no wonder *Target for Tonight* won special recognition by the Academy. The film’s scenario begins in the Bomber Command’s Photographic Unit. It foregrounds and celebrates the camera—the mission’s essential first weapon. The diorama rail junction excludes the possibility of one’s imagining civilian casualties, even from an errant munition.

Incidentally, the U.N.’s *Guernica* reproduction that is so prominently present during the Russian ambassador’s denials in *20 Days in Mariupol*—denials that echoed Nationalist Spain’s denials of the bombing of Guernica—is the same reproduction that was carefully covered up for the hallway press cameras ahead of Colin Powell’s duplicitous presentation to the full assembly and the whole world, rattling the sabers for the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. Bombs and missiles led the way. ⮝

Alex Vernon, the M.E. and Ima Graves Peace Distinguished Professor of English at Hendrix College, is the author of Hemingway’s Second War *and a* Glossary and Commentary on “For Whom the Bell Tolls” *(Kent State). More at alex-vernon.squarespace.com.*

Jeanelle Hope and Bill Mullen: "To recover the Black antifascist tradition means to recover many of the best features of the Left in US history."

By Sebastiaan Faber

The roots of fascism lay right here in the United States. In fact, anti-Blackness is a persistent feature of fascism in all its forms. But there is a long lineage of Black antifascists that still have things to teach us.

When the House Un-American Activities Committee was first created, in May 1938, its chair, Texas Democrat Martin Dies, identified communism and fascism as dangerous foreign threats: "un-American doctrines" that, he said, "can only be fought with true Americanism." Indeed, the terrifying prospect that fascism might "come to America," which has been regularly invoked from the 1920s to the present, implies a soothing, even flattering, premise—namely, that it is not from America to begin with.

It's a comforting notion, to be sure, but also one that recent scholarship has shown to be untenable. Last fall, the book *Fascism in America,* edited by Gavriel Rosenfeld and Janet Ward, pointed to the tremendous strength and persistence of fascist currents in American history. This spring, Jeanelle Hope

> “There is no fascism anywhere that is not also anti-Black.”

and Bill Mullen add fuel to the fire with their book *The Black Antifascist Tradition: Fighting Back from Anti-Lynching to Abolition* (Haymarket).

Hope and Mullen present three central arguments. First, they contend that the roots of fascism go back farther than Hitler and Mussolini, to both European colonialism and racial oppression in the United States. It’s no coincidence that the Nazi race laws were inspired by Jim Crow. Second, they argue that anti-Blackness is both a founding principle and a persistent feature of fascism in all its forms: “there is no fascism anywhere,” they write, “that is not also anti-Black.” Finally, they show that many of the earliest and most effective attempts to identify and fight fascism have been made by scores of radical thinkers, activists, and organizations—from Ida B. Wells and Cedric Robinson to Angela Davis, the Civil Rights Congress, the Black Panther Party and Black Lives Matter—who together make up something that we could call a *Black anti-fascist tradition.* It’s a tradition that’s been partly forgotten and is often misread, but that, Mullen and Hope are convinced, can serve as a powerful inspiration to progressive activists today.

Jeanelle K. Hope, a scholar-activist from Oakland, California, teaches African American Studies at Prairie View A&M University. Bill V. Mullen, Professor Emeritus of American Studies at Purdue, is co-founder of the Campus Antifascist Network. I spoke to them in early April.

Who did you write this book for?

Jeanelle K. Hope (JKH): As a scholarly intervention, this is our response to a host of new studies in fascism and antifascism, in which we try to center the debate on the Black antifascist experience and the centrality of anti-Blackness in all forms of fascism. But we are also writing for organizers and activists working today who are looking for tactics and strategies. Haymarket Books has been a great partner in our effort to reach those folks.

Bill V. Mullen (BVM): We are also hoping to reach students across the country, which is why we included a sample syllabus in the book. Some colleagues have already told us they plan to use it in their classes, which is really gratifying.

Many recent state laws explicitly prohibit teachers from suggesting that US history is intimately connected with racist ideologies and practices. You go a step further, arguing that the very origins of fascism can be found on this side of the Atlantic. How do you feel about the fact that your book will likely be illegal to teach in certain states?

JKH: (*Laughs.)* We haven’t yet been notified that we are on any banned-book list! If we were, it’d be a badge of honor. Kidding aside, we knew what we were doing. I mean, the Black antifascist tradition that we outline includes an entire canon or writers and thinkers whose works have already been banned multiple times. From our point of view, which fortunately is shared by many, there is something fundamentally valuable about reading banned books.

BVM: In our epilogue, we explicitly address the recent legislative war on free speech and academic freedom in this country. But, as Jeanelle said, many of the folks we write about were imprisoned, persecuted, or blacklisted for their ideas and activism, from W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson to Claudia Jones and Assata Shakur. Some of the great heroes in the Black antifascist tradition have been real targets of suppression and censorship. In a sense it’s ironic that, as many of us are trying to recover their voices, we’re facing censorship once again. If anything, it shows that their ideas continue to be a threat to the state and mainstream bourgeois society.

What is it about the current moment that makes a book like this both urgent and possible? On the one hand, you draw on work that’s been going on since the late 1980s and early 1990s—I’m thinking of Robin D.G. Kelley, for example. But on the other, there seems to be more space now to recover U.S. radicals associated with the Communist Party, the anarchist movement, and forms of armed struggle against the state. Are the Cold War taboos that persisted into the beginning of our century finally melting away?

BVM: That’s an interesting question. Our book is clearly a post-2016 intervention: Trump scared everyone into thinking that fascism might be on the rise in this country. Both Jeanelle and I have backgrounds as antifascist organizers. Since 2016, as a cofounder of the Campus Antifascist Network, I’ve been collecting resources, both online and through projects like *The US Antifascism Reader* that I put together with Chris Vials. But you’re right that Robin Kelley’s work has been very important. He helped us look with fresh eyes at the role of the Communist Party, without which the history of American antifascism, and Black antifascism, cannot be written. His *Hammer and Hoe,* on Alabama Communists during the Great Depression, came out in 1990 and inspired my first book, which centered on Black cultural politics in Chicago between 1935 and 1946, the era of the Popular Front against fascism. Part of that book was about the Double Victory Campaign, which was initiated by the Black press and the *Chicago Defender,* and which sought to defeat fascism abroad *and* at home. Jeanelle and I return to that moment in our book, in which we identify it as the first mass Black antifascist movement.

JKH: I first started thinking about American fascism and Black antifascism in graduate school, around 2010, when I started researching Afro-Asian solidarity in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1960s and ‘70s, involving the Black Panther Party, Asian-American groups, and other non-Black radicals. One thing that kept coming up was the 1969 conference on the United Front Against Fascism. At the time, I didn’t quite know what to do with that, but Bill and Chris’s *Antifascism Reader* helped me

Demonstrators in DC on Feb. 7, 1974, the first day of the trial of the prisoners who rose up on Oct. 11, 1972.
Photo Washington Area Spark. CC BY-NC 2.0

> "There is something fundamentally valuable about reading banned books."

piece things together and see how the front against fascism served as a tool of solidarity building. In terms of our current book, 2016 was a key moment, but so was 2020, when Black Lives Matter rose in protest over the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others. What's also been crucial in more scholarly terms is the work on Afropessimism done by folks like Frank B. Wilderson, Saidiya Hartman, and Jared Sexton, which has given us language to talk about the centrality of anti-Blackness in the national and global history of fascism.

Your book doesn't just rescue the archive but re-signifies it through the concept of the Black antifascist tradition. For example, you take the label of "premature antifascism" that the US veterans of the Spanish Civil War adopted as a badge of honor, and apply it to Ida B. Wells, the turn-of-the-century anti-lynch activist, who you identify as a "premature Black Antifascist."

BVM: In our book, we argue that fascism always includes anti-Blackness. For us, the key point, even going back to people like CLR James and George Padmore, was to identify blackness as a central element in the discursive analysis of fascism. We felt that was an important task that had not been accomplished in any significant way. For Frank Wilderson, one of those places is South Africa, where Apartheid is founded on anti-Blackness, and from where it travels into the political discourse of the United States. But as we dug into the archive of anti-Black writing, we also located the roots of Black *anti*-fascist thinking and writing.

The twentieth-century history of antifascism is marked by alliances—the United or Popular Front—but also by divisions among Communists, Socialists, Anarchists, and Liberals, which often manifested in disagreements about tactics and strategy. In your book, you show that this was true for the Black antifascist tradition as well—for instance, when the Black Liberation Army, which was founded in 1970, denounced any kind of "reformism" as a fascist complicity. But what you don't do, it seems to me, is take a position in these disputes. You don't really assess the effectiveness of the tactics proposed over the years. It's not clear to the reader, for example, whether you think that armed struggle was a viable tactic then or could be one today.

JKH: That's a fair point. We don't take a stance on the effectiveness of tactics. What we tried to do instead is lay out the whole multitude of tactics used, and to underscore the importance of fighting fascism as a united front, but on multiple fronts. Ida B. Wells urged folks to leverage the press, pick up their gun, pick up their stuff and leave. We look at ways that people like William Patterson fought fascism through the courts. We look at the mobilization of the cultural front, including poetry and comic books. We talk about the Black Panthers, about autonomous zones and mutual aid and the struggle waged by political prisoners in this country, all the way to the hijackings of the Black Liberation Army. Although we don't assess which tactics proved more effective, it's clear to us that some, including the more violent ones, may have been more alienating than others. But for me the key is that there are, and should be, various ways to fight fascism. After all, the Right organizes in many ways as well, from Moms for Liberty to the Proud Boys.

BVM: Rather than taking sides, our goal was to lay out the terms of the debates. When George Jackson was in prison, he corresponded with Angela Davis, debating definitions of fascism. Jackson thought that even capitalist reformism was a form of fascism, meaning that fascism was already here. Davis disagreed, arguing that the United States was in a state of *incipient* fascism. Looking back on it, I think both were right in some sense. Jackson and the Panthers were part of what we call first-wave abolitionism. The prison movements at Folsom and San Quentin and Attica that led to massive uprisings were a product of one particular interpretation of fascism coming down, partly, from George Jackson. Well, it turns out that we *needed* those prison rebellions. Whatever their immediate outcome, they were a necessary step forward politically to lift what, at the time, was a massive specter of racist oppression. Then Davis carries her work forward

> "There should be various ways to fight fascism. After all, the Right organizes in many ways as well, from Moms for Liberty to the Proud Boys."

and becomes a major theorist of prison abolition, arguing, as she has to this day, that the prison industrial complex, if it's not checked, will lead us down a dark path to full-blown fascism. Our role as authors of this book, I feel, is not to take sides in these debates, but to teach them and talk about them.

JKH: Similarly, the 1970s debate between the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army over the usefulness of electoral politics is useful for us today, as the Democratic Party is trying to convince us that the only way to save the country from fascism is to vote for Joe Biden. Well, that cannot be the only tactic.

Since you brought us back to the present, Jeanelle, can you share some of the most interesting or effective antifascist projects you know of in the US today?

JKH: I appreciate the opportunity to spotlight work that may not be immediately identified as antifascist. I'm really inspired and heartened by the folks working around Stop Cop City in Atlanta, who are trying to fight the creation of a testing ground for new police tactics and weaponry in the heart of the city. I'm also deeply impressed with everyone doing mutual aid work—programs that were first pioneered by the Black Panther Party—providing anything from food to bail, including here in Fort Worth, where Funky Town Fridge has been placing refrigerators that become centralized spaces for food donations across historically Black and Brown communities. And of course, the multiple ways in which people have been calling for the United States to stop funding the ongoing war and genocide in Gaza.

BVM: In our last chapter, which is called Abolitionist Anti-Fascism, we discuss some hidden but important antifascist moments in the Black Lives Matter movement. The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, for example, or We Charge Genocide, which emerged in Chicago after the Trayvon Martin shooting and denounced the torture of Black youth by the Chicago police. The group took its name from the 1951 petition by the Civil Right Congress, which, as we explain in the book, used the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention to denounce the treatment of Blacks in the United States. These Chicago youth, too, went to the United Nations.

You said some of these projects would not be immediately identified as antifascist. Which brings me to my final question: both "fascism" and "antifascism" have long been loaded terms here in the United States—perhaps to such an extent that they divide more than they unite. The widespread demonization of "Antifa" has not helped, either. Yet you invoke both terms prominently and unapologetically.

BVM: We do, because we are trying to recover "antifascism" as a term and mainstream it, to put it on everyone's political agenda. It's been controversial since the Cold War, when some of the Black folks who fought fascism in Spain were forced to testify in Washington and asked to denounce their own antifascism—which they refused to do. In this country, in other words, the state itself waged an attack on antifascism because of its association with the Communist Party. To recover the antifascist tradition means to recover many of the best features of the Left in US history. The other thing to keep in mind is that our term "anti-Black fascism" is theoretically important. We want people to use it as a lever for their own activism. We feel like the conversation and the political fightback is not complete without some understanding of both anti-blackness as an element of fascism and the wonderful, robust tradition of Black antifascism. ⮝

Sebastiaan Faber teaches at Oberlin and is a member of the ALBA Board.

THE VOLUNTEER NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Every three months, ALBA is pleased and proud to send you this publication. We know that so many of our readers treasure it, and we value your feedback, your encouraging words as well as your constructive criticism. We strive to make the publication a forum for the exchange of information and ideas of interest to the ALBA community.

Each edition of *The Volunteer* costs $7,500 to publish. Would you consider donating at this amount to cover the cost of one edition? Your name would be prominently displayed (with your approval) in that edition, as the single donor who made that edition possible. We know this is a big "ask"! If you are able to consider a gift at this level, to sponsor an edition of *The Volunteer*, please contact Mark Wallem directly at mwallem@alba-valb.org.

Please know that we appreciate every gift, large or small, that comes our way. Thank you for your generosity and your support of *The Volunteer*.

Charles Jacobs. Archief Anna Christina Jacobs, Atria, Amsterdam.

Courier for the Republic

By Margreet Schrevel

What Was a Young Dutch Pilot Doing in Civil-War Spain?

Saturday, March 20, 1937. Farmers at work in a vineyard near Narbonne, in southern France, see a Dutch plane circling for hours. At four in the afternoon, a car arrives whose driver unfolds a white sheet. At this signal, the plane lands on a bumpy field. Gendarmes, alerted by locals, show up and arrest the pilot. The car drives away at a breakneck speed. The pilot claims his name is Schumacher. He works for International Red Aid, he says, and he was on his way from Toulouse to Marseilles on an assignment. A few days later, however, the pilot vanishes, and the plane is set on fire. The incident makes it into the Dutch papers. The owner of the single-engine Fokker plane, they report, was Charles Erik Jacobs from Amsterdam.

Although Charles Jacobs was only 21 at the time, he was a licensed pilot and the owner of no fewer than three aircraft that he used to maintain a courier service to Barcelona, regularly delivering relief supplies to the Spanish Republic and the International Brigades. These almost certainly included weapons, perhaps even complete fighter planes. In fact, Jacobs worked as an agent for International Red Aid, the medical and humanitarian affiliate of the Communist International. The individual who financed these missions was a Russian oligarch, Michael Holzmann, who lived a stone's throw from Jacobs in Amsterdam. Known as a swindler and black-marketeer, Holzmann was closely watched by the Dutch authorities—which is why there is a wealth of information about Communist-inspired international support for Spain in the Amsterdam police archives.

Michael Holzmann, born 1891 in Kharkov, had become very wealthy by doing business in Western Europe during World War I. Since those businesses could not always bear the light of day, he had been expelled as *persona non grata* from Germany (1926), France (1929), Italy (1931), and Austria (1932). He was known as a "dangerous international extortionist," addicted to gambling and connected with a spade of suspicious individuals from around the world. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in July 1936, he happened to be in Madrid. As commissioner of the Koolhoven Aircraft Factory in Rotterdam, he sold fighter planes to the Spanish government. Through his good contacts with the Dutch embassy, he managed to obtain a passport for stateless people that he used to move to Amsterdam with his wife Anastasia, his son Boris—who was also stateless and had been expelled from France as a communist in 1936—and six very expensive borzoi dogs.

From Amsterdam, Holzmann continued his lucrative business dealings. He delivered dozens of planes, an "ambulance train," blankets and medical supplies, supposedly to France, but actually to Spain. Since the Netherlands had signed a Franco-English non-intervention treaty at the beginning of the Civil War, this business was illegal; and because Holzmann could not sign business transactions as a stateless person in the Netherlands, he was forced to use intermediaries. This was no problem for him, as he had relationships up to the highest diplomatic and government circles—including the Dutch immigration police.

On May 6, 1937, he had lunch with Bernhard zur Lippe-Biesterfeld, the German nobleman who had married the Dutch crown princess four months earlier. Holzmann, according to the many dozens of pages of his Dutch Central Intelligence file, was an anti-fascist who acted on behalf of International Red Aid—that is, the Comintern. According to others, he also sold material to the Francoists. Either way, the Dutch authorities saw this as a violation of the non-intervention treaty. During his stay in Amsterdam alone, Holzmann was charged with crimes ranging from aiding Spain to rape, blackmail, swindling and sex orgies. Yet the file also includes many favorable references from prominent Dutch citizens. The complaints against Holzmann sometimes have decidedly anti-Semitic overtones, something that the National Socialist press in several European countries would later be quick to pick up on. In 1939, when Holzmann was finally expelled from the Netherlands for "disturbance of

Charles Jacobs' life story has spurred at least as much speculation as that of his boss—including a claim that he was murdered.

the public order," the news was covered by papers in several countries. He left for London and eventually settled in Argentina.

Charles Jacobs was one of Holzmann's closest collaborators; a roommate later stated to the police that they talked on the phone daily. Jacobs' life story has spurred at least as much speculation as that of his boss—including a claim that he was murdered. Again, however, the Dutch police archives offer some insight.

A page from Jacobs's passport. Archief Anna Christina Jacobs, Atria, Amsterdam.

Charles Jacobs was born in 1916 into a well-to-do progressive family. Trained as an electrical engineer, he had earned his pilot's license in 1935 and became a commercial pilot from Schiphol Airport. By the age of 20, he already owned his own plane and a luxury car, a convertible. In mid-October 1936, Jacobs and his plane made the papers: he was to fly it to Africa to film wildlife for a French film company. A darkroom would be set up in the plane. It turns out the whole expedition was a cover-up. In fact, Jacobs had already begun his "scheduled service" to Spain, and he never got further south than Barcelona.

This is evident from his passport, which, along with a photo album and some other items, has been preserved in the archives of his younger sister Anna Jacobs (1921-2009). According to the staggering number of stamps in this passport, Jacobs began his flights from Paris (Le Bourget) via Toulouse to Barcelona on October 2, 1936. He would stay in Spain for at least one, but usually a few days, flying back and forth at least two or three times a month. Paris was home to the Western European office of the International Red Aid and housed representatives of the legitimate Spanish government, who were in charge of international arms procurement.

Jacobs' primary contact in Barcelona was Jeanne Schrijver, a seasoned Communist who worked for the Dutch Communist Party (CPN), the International Brigades and Radio Barcelona. It was Schrijver who told him what he should say and do on his expeditions. (Later, she'd become the first woman to join the armed resistance in the Netherlands during the German occupation; she committed suicide shortly after her arrest by Germans in December 1942.) Not much is known of Schrijver's work in Spain beyond the fact that she crossed the Spanish-French border numerous times for a number of unexplained missions. Possibly Jacobs acted as her pilot on these missions as well. One thing we do know is that there was frequent illegal air traffic between southern France and Spain. It was later revealed, for example, that in the September-October 1936 period alone, more than 150 Russian aviators were flown across the French-Spanish border to serve in the Republican army.

Michel Holzmann. Stadsarchief, Amsterdam.

As far as we know, Jacobs was not involved in this operation. He did, however, smuggle gold and other valuables out of Spain to buy weapons. His passport contains his registration with the *Generalitat de Catalunya, Seguretat Interior* (Internal Security Service), dated Nov. 30, 1936. It also contains a scrap of paper with the letterhead *Ministerio de Marine y Aire, Subsecr.* On May 23, 1937, there is a notation written in Catalan in his passport that he carried *900 (illegible) and 130 (illegible) extra.* It may be that Jacobs transported aircraft purchased by Holzmann or lent his name and signature when purchasing and reselling equipment. One thing is certain: both Jacobs and Holzmann operated in a shadowy world where they handled massive amounts of cash.

A piece of that world was later mapped out by the famous Soviet spy Walter Krivitsky, who in August 1936, just a month after the outbreak of the Civil War, received a visit from a man at his home in The Hague. The man gave him an order: "mobilize all available agents and auxiliary offices to immediately set up a system to buy arms for and transport them to Spain." Krivitsky immediately sent the Dutch Communist Han Pieck on his way. In Greece, through yet another intermediary agent, they managed to obtain 50 bombers and fighters for $20,000 each. Krivitsky, like Holzmann, set up import and export firms in a number of European cities to buy war equipment. It is not unlikely that the Krivitsky/Pieck and Holzmann/Jacobs teams were linked.

On May 23, 1937, Jacobs left Barcelona for the umpteenth time; on June 4, he was back in Amsterdam, where he had taken residence at the famous Schiller Hotel on Rembrandtplein, whose café-restaurant was known as a meeting point for intelligence officers of all nationalities, and where Jacobs would meet his Dutch Communist contacts. On June 10, Jacobs suddenly fell ill. Taken to the Wilhelmina Gasthuis hospital, he died two days later. Jeanne Schrijver returned to the Netherlands from Barcelona to attend his funeral.

Jacobs's sister, Anna, believed that her brother was poisoned. Others claimed that he had committed suicide. The police chief agreed the case looked suspicious and ordered an investigation. Among the initial suspects was one of Holzmann's connections. Yet the autopsy excluded any suspicion of murder or suicide. A very rare condition, acute spinal meningitis, had cut short Charles Jacobs' brief but adventurous life. ▲

Margreet Schrevel is a Dutch historian who worked for more than forty years as a researcher at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam.

Miners at Peñarroya, 1947.

Staging Death in Southern Spain

The Forgotten Struggle of the Córdoba Miners in the Lead-Up to the Civil War

By Patricia A. Schechter

As Patricia Schechter dug into her family's history, she uncovered one of the untold stories of the Spanish labor movement: an Andalusian strike in early 1936 grounded in a rich legacy of disciplined pacifism and sturdy worker cooperatives.

After the July 1936 military uprising that unleashed the Spanish Civil War, hundreds of men from the mining town of Pueblonuevo del Terrible near Córdoba (Andalusia) joined the "Batallón del Terrible" to defend the Republic. They first left to reinforce Hinojosa del Duque to the north and, later, Pozoblanco, the headquarters of the Civil Guard to the east. In October, Pueblonuevo was overrun by rebel troops, but for the rest of the war the town and its many mines and metal shops were mostly quiet, as about two-thirds of the population melted back into the surrounding rural villages where they maintained family ties. Goading job advertisements in the press and leafletting by the Falange urging a return to work late in 1936 yielded little response. While some individuals from the area made their way into combat in the northern provinces, about fifteen men from Pueblonuevo and its neighboring village Peñarroya wound up at Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria—an ordeal which fewer than half survived.

The young German photographer Gerda Taro came through the Córdoba front in September and took some pictures, including several of the Chapaiev Battalion of the XIII International Brigade stationed there. Still, the Córdoba province is mostly overlooked in general treatments of the war and its causes, even

The author's mother and great grandfather, 1955.

On May 28, 450 miners sequestered themselves inside the mine Antolín, the last of the great coal pits of the historic Terrible group.

though it was the backdrop to some extraordinary labor activism in the run-up to the war, including a spectacular occupation and hostage-taking at the Antolín mine in May-June 1936. While the revolutionary actions of Asturian miners in the north grabbed headlines 1934-36, the quieter insurgency of miners of Pueblonuevo del Terrible has remained one of the untold stories of the Spanish labor movement. But what happened at Antolín points to a rich labor heritage of disciplined pacifism, sturdy worker cooperatives, and careful mentorship by organizers of the UGT, a labor union affiliated with the Socialist Party (PSOE).

I began my research into Pueblonuevo del Terrible on a quest for family history. My great grandfather, José Becerra Tapia, was a functionary of the *ayuntamiento,* the municipal government, from 1934 until his death in 1955. My grandmother, his eldest child, was born and raised in the village. My mother was baptized in the momentous year of 1936, and she has a faint memory of the last battle of the Córdoba front during the Civil War. It is one of her earliest childhood memories. She recalled being pushed to the ground, face forward, in a freshly furrowed field as the battle of Valsequillo broke out in early 1939. Valsequillo was one of those bloody, inconclusive engagements of the late war, largely forgotten with all eyes on Madrid and Barcelona.

My research into newly available sources suggests that the pacifism and nonviolence characteristic of striking miners in Córdoba was grounded in longstanding traditions of cooperation. The cooperative impulse had many sources, notably in worker self-help traditions stretching back to the early nineteenth century. When mining started north-west of Córdoba in the 1880s, mineworkers in Pueblonuevo del Terrible were paid decent wages. They were also paid in cash, rather than the scrip common in traditional company towns or the pittance of *pesetas* and meals doled out on the region's *latifundios*. By the 1920s, working class residents had built a robust infrastructure for self-directed economic and political activity. Some 20,000 people from Pueblonuevo del Terrible, known as *terriblenses*, supported a cooperative for foodstuffs, a Casa del Pueblo for education and organizing, two newspapers (*El Ideal* and *La Lucha Social*), a federation of mining syndicates, and their crown jewel: the Casas Baratas Pablo Iglesias, 100 units of cooperative worker housing that were named after the founder of the Socialist Party and became the model for a national program during the Second Republic.

The *terriblenses* sought integration and participation in Spanish civic life. From their grassroots petition for *municipio* status in the 1880s to residents' bid for the city via cooperative home ownership in the 1920s, their arguments were couched in patriotic love of country. In the 1910s, the UGT sent organizers to the area who lent support to syndicates and who themselves ran for office representing the PSOE, challenging the domination of conservatives at the polls—even if only symbolically. Francisco Largo Caballero, the Socialist leader who would serve as Prime Minister during the war, ran for office in the olive growing region of La Campiña, south Córdoba, in 1919. Ramón González Peña, a miner's son from Asturias, also ran for election that year in the north of the province. Both men lost, in Peña's case due to considerable corruption and threats of violence. Largo Caballero left the region, but Peña stayed and fostered the PSOE in the mining syndicates in north Córdoba and Ciudad-Real through most of the 1920s. The overall result in Pueblonuevo was a high-functioning worker public sphere. Peña's organizing success on the ground provides context for the tendency among right-wing elements in the area to continue to play dirty. Checked by sheer numbers before the Primo de Rivera dictatorship (1923-1930), conservatives followed the fascist playbook after 1923. Authorities criminalized dissent, bad faith monarchists in elected office disabled the city council by boycotting meetings, and anonymous reporting and letter-writing campaigns slandered the worker population as communists, transients, Africans, and foreigners.

Still, despite the bad press, a pacifist and non-violent approach to conflict matured alongside workers' social institutions in Pueblonuevo. In May of 1920, while in the United States members of the United Mine Workers and company "detectives" engaged in a lethal shoot-out in Matewan, West Virginia, killing seven, the miners of Terrible were in the middle of a successful 63-day strike during which not one life was lost holding the line. This outcome was truly extraordinary. Conflicts around the same time in Oviedo and Huelva, for example, involved bombings and outright assassinations. The *terriblenses,* by contrast, left town for the surrounding villages, staying far away from the police and the Civil Guard. The worker public sphere in Pueblonuevo mitigated violence between the Popular Front's election in early 1936 and the military uprising in July. Especially in Madrid, this period witnessed disorderly and violent strikes in the spring and then murderous attacks against the church, fascists, and spies from the left in the summer. Yet insurgency looked very different in Córdoba. There, the miners of Pueblonuevo extended their pacifist tactics in a more measured—if desperate—response to economic conditions.

On May 28, 450 miners sequestered themselves inside the mine Antolín, the last of the great coal pits of the historic Terrible

Left, right, and center, Spanish observers found the occupation of Antolín almost impossible to narrate, calling it an "anomaly," "absurd," "strange," and "chaotic."

The Antolín mine.

group. Disappearing into the earth, the miners performed a kind of funeral theatrics for 19 days, staging the "death" of the partnership of labor and capital by fusing their destiny with that of the mine itself. The telephone at the bottom of the pit permitted the strikers to speak from the metaphorical grave. The occupation turned Antolín into more than a would-be tomb; it was also a prison. At least four hostages were taken. The occupation was the fifth work stoppage at Antolín that year and it sparked an impressive set of sympathy strikes in the area. In the end, however, the strike could not leverage control over the miners' economic destiny nor prevent the company from divesting from its operations in Córdoba province. The towering headframe of the modern mine Antolín threatened to become a headstone.

The strikers' voices are almost impossible to hear in the extant record. Leadership likely took cues from the wildly successful and widely reported factory occupations in Paris earlier in the year, instigated by communist organizers. An equally dramatic and victorious factory occupation would occur in Flint, Michigan in December. The Paris and Michigan episodes made international headlines, unlike the Spanish case. French and U.S. workers played successfully on gender norms and scripts to garner public support. By engaging the media in their topsy-turvy inversion of work and home, strikers in the French and Flint cases appealed to public opinion by projecting a festive, carnival atmosphere. In Paris, the distress of the hostages was mitigated by the workers bringing in their families and children into the factory space, singing songs and playing games. In Flint, meal prep in a community kitchen turned women's strike support into normative domesticity, visible as "camping" or "picnicking" at the General Motors plant.

At Antolín, however, Spanish women could not draw on well-grooved media scripts of domesticity to reframe their political activity as caretaking labor. The daily ritual of passing baskets of food and blankets down the mine shaft lacked the folksy spirit fostered by the community strike kitchen in Flint. Quite the opposite. In their efforts to hold the line, Spanish women were denigrated in the press as a vicious "lynch" mob who almost beat to death two young men who escaped the occupation. In contrast to the tidy domesticity among autoworkers at GM displayed in newsreels across the U.S., the miners at Antolín were read as gender deviants. The press negatively sexualized them as "sleeping on top of one another" to keep warm, their bodies filthy with human excrement due to the lack of facilities. By descending into the pit, miners at Antolín may have intended to stage a drama of self-sacrifice. But this drama was not readable in acceptably Spanish cultural terms. Instead, the occupation had a scrambling effect, dramatizing the unreadable, senseless conditions workers faced at this moment.

Left, right, and center, Spanish observers found the occupation of Antolín almost impossible to narrate, calling it an "anomaly," "absurd," "strange," and "chaotic." The fact that these insurgents struck against the contract recently signed by the miners' Federation chilled reporting by the Madrid newspaper *El Socialista*, whose editors all but ignored them. Commentators in Córdoba judged the occupation negatively for its "revolutionary flavor," but neither worker ownership of the installations nor nationalization of the mines was on the list of demands. They mainly protested forced layoffs. Based on their place-based knowledge, workers knew that the mines were full of coal. (In fact, Antolín still turned a profit when it finally closed in the 1970s.) The *terriblenses* also knew that Córdoba province needed coal to fuel its trains and to stoke the local thermoelectric plant. Moreover, closing mines deprived residents of access to fuel and water, both of which were completely controlled by the mining company. Firings, layoffs, and mine closures thus threatened residents' survival on many levels. In the end, the strike secured negligible contractual gains while those charged with hostage taking faced prosecution.

And my great grandfather José, the municipal public servant? At city hall, he signed off on the seizure of the Casas Baratas by the invading forces in March 1939. A few months later, he approved outlawing the housing cooperative, the *Cooperativa Pablo Iglesias*, under Franco's "Law of Political Responsibilities." These actions point to a critical element in the fascist playbook: stealing from the poor. There is much more to say about the dynamic working-class town of Pueblonuevo del Terrible. About my great grandfather José, I can only say that it could have been much worse. ⮝

Patricia Schechter has taught at Portland State University in Oregon since 1995. Her book, El Terrible: Life and Labor in Pueblonuevo, 1887-1939, *from which this article is drawn, will be out with Routledge this summer. More at www.pdx.edu/profile/patricia-schechter.*

From Puerto Rico to Republican Spain—and Back Again

The Search for Carmelo Delgado

By Teresita Torres Rivera and José Alejandro Ortiz Carrión

Carmelo Delgado, a Puerto Rican law student in Madrid, fought as a militiaman on the Republican side until he was taken prisoner by the rebel forces and shot. Can his remains be recovered?

In their moving graphic novel *El abismo del olvido*, which deals with the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, Paco Roca and Rodrigo Terrasa recall a fascinating anecdote. The archaeologists of Egyptian tombs, they write, believed that when the bodies were exhumed from the burial chamber, their souls were freed from the "abyss of oblivion"—*el abismo del olvido*—where they were trapped for thousands of years. We felt something similar on December 17, 2023, when we visited the El Carmen cemetery in Valladolid with Jaime Silva, a nephew of Carmelo Delgado, who had been shot and buried there on April 11, 1937. For many years, no one knew where his grave was, until it was finally found and opened in 2022. After 85 years, Carmelo was free.

A native of the town of Guayama, Puerto Rico, Carmelo Delgado Delgado was a law student at the Central University of Madrid when the military uprising against the legitimate government of the Spanish Republic broke out on July 18, 1936. He fought as a militiaman on the Republican side until he was taken prisoner by the rebel forces on November 4, 1936, at Alcorcón, southwest of Madrid. On February 16, 1937, Carmelo was sentenced to death for the crime of "adherence to the rebellion" and executed by firing squad on April 10, 1937, along with Joaquín Pardo García and Paulino Ontalvilla Gil, and buried in a mass grave. (For more on Puerto Rican volunteers in Spain, see our book *Voluntarios de la Libertad. Puertorriqueños en defensa de la República Española, 1936-1939,* just published in a second edition.)

We traveled to Valladolid on a chilly winter day, under a dense fog, typical

of the region, along with Jaime Silva, the nephew, and two local members of the Association for the Recovery of the Historical Memory (ARHM), president Julio Del Olmo and secretary José Miguel Fuertes Zapatero. As the cold got to our bones, we thought about Carmelo's suffering and loneliness, as a prisoner far from his family and loved ones. We visited the building that housed the New Prison (Cárcel Nueva) where he spent his last days, and the Narciso Alonso Cortés schoolyard, the old Campo de San Isidro where he was executed. We walked along the cemetery path where the mass graves were found, admired the Memorial inaugurated in 2020 that holds the exhumed remains of more than four hundred victims, and stood in front of mass grave #6, at lot #63, where Carmelo was buried.

The search for Carmelo's remains began with his mother, Flora Delgado González, in the 1960s. During a visit to the cemetery of Valladolid the officials told her that "the graves of those who had been retaliated and shot had been opened, and the remains thrown into the common ossuary to make way for new graves and pantheons." Fifty years later, in 2017, one of his nephews who visited the Valladolid cemetery looking for his uncle's remains got the same answer. He went back home with the sad news that "most probably, we will never find Carmelo." However, an employee of the Municipal Archives shared the documentation they had about his uncle, including an unidentified photo that was part of the trial records. One of his sisters confirmed that the photo was Carmelo's.

For our part, we learned about the first excavations of mass graves in El Carmen cemetery at the end of 2019, and asked ARHM if the remains of Carmelo Delgado were among the exhumed bodies from grave #6. The response of Francisco Redondo, member of ARHM, was not encouraging. He said they could not be sure if Carmelo's remains had been exhumed or transferred, given the lack of documentary records. Worse, he added, no new exhumations were going to be possible. Three years later, however, hope returned.

Valladolid's Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory was founded in 2002 to study the repression by the military rebels and to search for the remains of their victims during the war in Valladolid region. Since then, the Association has exhumed more than 1,000 bodies from forty mass graves. The search for ten mass graves in El Carmen cemetery began at the end of 2015, at the places indicated by relatives of the victims and by former

The memorial at El Carmen.

gravediggers, near lots #58 and #63. This was the boundary of the cemetery in 1940 and a place of remembrance where, for years, the relatives of the dead had been placing flowers and headstones. It was precisely in this area where, in 1980, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the General Union of Workers (UGT) inaugurated two monuments in honor of the victims of the Spanish Civil War. During 2016 and 2017, with the help of the city council, and often using its own resources, the ARHM exhumed 247 bodies with bullet wounds, some in the chest, others all over the body, including bullet ridden craniums.

In 2019 a Memorial was built at the cemetery to replace one of the older monuments. The exhumated remains of the victims of Francoism were stored in the vault, under storage conditions that ensure their conservation to allow future forensic investigations. The names of 2,647 victims from Valladolid were engraved on the walls of the Memorial, including Carmelo Delgado Delgado.

In 2017, ARHM discontinued the search for other mass graves at El Carmen until, "by a stroke of luck," they found an old map of the cemetery that read "Fosas de fusilados" (mass graves of executions) at lot #63, in the area where PSOE and UGT's monuments were located. They also found an aerial photo from the beginning of the war showing an off-white color in that area, which suggested earthwork. ARHM began excavating the area in March 2022. Very soon, close to the surface, thousands of bones from the ossuary appeared. Farther down, at a depth of sixteen inches, the archeologists found the first victims' remains. The first mass grave excavated that year was grave #6: it was used by the rebels between January 30 and April 23, 1937. The grave contained 73 bodies with gunshot wounds.

The bodies in mass grave #6 were placed side by side, in the same order in which they were shot after court martial, meaning that the upper levels in the grave correspond to the last people shot. Each level was separated by a layer of lime and soil, which facilitated the recovery and evaluation of the remains. There were few personal belongings in the grave because those who were sentenced to death left what little they had to their cellmates. Still, many carried a spoon for their meal. The archeologists also found pieces of a Civil Guard uniform, a button with the initials GC and sections of a coat, belt, straps, and insignia of an Artillery uniform. These findings, when compared with documents from courts martial and executions at the Ferrol Military Archive, allowed the researchers to conclude that Civil Guard Martín Sevillano Soblechero and Artillery Corporal Eugenio García Ortega were buried in grave #6.

In March 2023, when we heard that the excavation of mass grave #6 was completed, we contacted the ARHM again to inquire about Carmelo Delgado's remains. His nephew did the same in April. He received an answer a month later: the ARHM replied that Carmelo's remains may be among those in grave #6. As it turned out, among the 73 bodies found in grave #6 there were three male corpses placed side by side at a depth of five feet—probably buried a few weeks before the mass grave was closed—that matched Carmelo Delgado Delgado's burial date. According to the forensic analysis performed on the remains, two of them were between 30 and 40 years old when they died, and the other between 20 and 30. Carmelo was 24 years old when he was shot, while Joaquín Pardo García and Paulino Ontalvilla Gil were 34. Therefore, Del Olmo, the ARMH president, was "almost certain" that these are Carmelo's remains and suggested a DNA test for confirmation.

The remains, identified as body #21 from grave #6, now rest in the vault beneath the Memorial, awaiting confirmation of his identity. If they are confirmed to be Carmelo Delgado's, they would be the first to be recovered and identified among fifteen Puerto Ricans who fought and died heroically for the Spanish Republic. ▲

Teresita Torres Rivera and José Alejandro Ortiz Carrión are the authors of Voluntarios de la Libertad. Puertorriqueños en defensa de la República Española, 1936-1939 *(2nd edition, 2023).*

In the North African Desert, Thinking of Stalingrad

Remembering the War Years

By Vincent Lossowski

Vince Lossowski (1913-1984), who was born and raised in Rochester, New York, in a Polish working-class family, served with the International Brigades from August 1937 until September 1938. In 1942, he was recruited for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), along with half a dozen of his fellow Lincoln Brigade vets. During World War Two, Vince served behind enemy lines in North Africa and Italy under the direction of General William Donovan. He left the Army at the rank of Captain in 1945 and was presented with the Legion of Merit. Later in life, he wrote this brief memoir, which the Lossowski family has generously shared with us.

American troops moving through the Kasserine Pass. US govt, public domain.

Lossowski's passport photo, 1930s.

I have only to close my eyes to hear the screech of the dive-bombing Stukas seeking us out amongst the cactus plants, where we had taken refuge after falling back on the North African Tunisian front. The acrid smell of bursting bombs filled our nostrils, while cactus shredded by shrapnel rained down on us as we burrowed ever deeper with each bomb burst.

This was a few kilometers back from Kasserine Pass in the Tunisian mountains of Tebessa, where Rommel's famed Afrika Korps Armor had broken through. Rommel's troops immediately spilled out below in the Kasserine Plain, cutting our lines of communications and supply. As an American soldier, I was part of a special reconnaissance and operational group attached to the British army, operating in Tunisia in the months of December and January 1943. It was our task to infiltrate the immediate enemy line and destroy rail communications and bridges to hamper his movement.

What I didn't realize at the time was that the breakthrough at Kasserine by the Nazis was a desperate drive on their part, motivated by the increasingly dwindling supplies to smash our advance with one hard blow. Instead of blowing up Nazi supply dumps, I had to help blow up one of our huge fuel dumps comprising thousands of drums of gasoline, in order to keep them from falling into the hands of Rommel's troops.

The successful counterattack by a joint British and American operation that followed was due in no small measure, as I subsequently learned, to the valiant Russian soldiers counterattacking the Nazis in the frozen nightmare of Stalingrad. With thousands of Nazis breaking their heads against the granite will of the defenders of Stalingrad and using more and more supplies in their futile attempt, supplies that were destined for other fronts were diverted to Stalingrad to bolster their crumbling position. The much-vaunted Desert Afrika Korps of Rommel's felt the pinch of much-needed replacement and therefore couldn't exploit breakthrough at Kasserine. The Nazis, in retreating, had to resort to requisitioning horses and oxen to move their artillery and tanks. I saw numbers of their armor destroyed by their own crews when they ran out of fuel, because gasoline destined for North Africa was instead sent to Stalingrad.

After the defeat of the Nazi Army in the late Spring of 1943, I was awaiting reassignment for the invasion of Italy that was to come in September. While waiting, I happened to see a Russian film on the defense of Stalingrad. I shall never forget what I felt when the camera focused on two distant specks moving towards each other in the snow-covered steppes outside of the city. As the camera moved in closer, I could discern two Russian soldiers struggling through the deep snow. These two soldiers were the spearheads of the tremendous Russian pincher movement that locked the Nazi army in a vast pocket. As the camera zoomed in even closer and the two soldiers, with arms outstretched, finally embraced, a cry came out of my throat at that moment, and I felt as though I was part of that embrace. Although I never met them in the flesh, together in a common cause that led to the defeat of fascism, I felt honored to have been a part of that struggle.

That experience symbolized to me that people of goodwill all over the world can unite to defeat the forces of evil and work towards an everlasting peace. ➤

Poster for the Soviet documentary *Stalingrad* (1943)

Missak (left) and Mélinée Manouchian (standing), with Berdjouhi Elekian in the 1930s. Public domain.

France Pays Tribute to Foreigners in the Resistance

By Robert Coale

This year marks the 80th anniversary of many World War II milestones in France, from the D-Day landings in June, 1944, and those of Province in August to the Liberation of Paris. In fact, some activities are already in full swing. For example, on February 2, the Shoah Memorial of Paris opened the exhibition "Foreigners in the French Resistance," which highlights the participation of hundreds of men and women from various countries and creeds who took up arms against the German occupation to free their adopted homeland.

After 1945, in light of the pressing need to reunify the newly liberated country, the mainstream interpretation of the war—penned by Charles de Gaulle—underlined the participation of the FFI (*Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur*, i.e. the Resistance), the Leclerc Division, and the French Army of General De Lattre de Tassigny, while underplaying the role of British and American armies. The hundreds of monuments to the Allied forces that can still be found across France to this day illustrate that their sacrifices are deeply appreciated and unforgotten, despite the official emphasis on the role played by locals. Over recent years, however, new generations of historians have chipped away at the Gaullist narrative in order to foreground the role foreigners played in the French Resistance—and even in regular French forces. Readers of *The Volunteer* may remember a previous article that discussed the recognition of the Spanish Loyalists enlisted in the Leclerc Division who were part of the spearhead that entered a beleaguered Paris on August 24, 1944.

The recognition of foreign-born members of the Resistance went a step further on February 21. On the exact day of the 80th anniversary of the execution of the "Group Manouchian," the remains of Missak Manouchian, an Armenian-born mem-

A moment from the ceremony at the Paris Panthéon.

This year's "Panthéonisation"—as it is referred to in France—marks a major turning point in the French memory of World War II.

ber of the Francs Tireurs Partisans-Main d'Oeuvre Immigrée, "FTP-MOI," and those of his wife, Melinée, were transferred to the Panthéon, an imposing building in the Latin Quarter sitting atop the Mont Sainte Geneviève, a stone's throw from the Sorbonne. Originally a church dedicated to the patron saint of the city, during Napoleon's regime it was repurposed as a final resting place for exceptional icons of French history. Since space is quite limited, to be reinterred in the Panthéon—or to have a cenotaph or a name inscribed on plaque placed in the national shrine—is considered one of the highest national honors, and a decision left to the President of the Republic. Some well-known honorees include Victor Hugo, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jean Moulin, and André Malraux. There are at present only five women among them, including, since 2021, the American-born French citizen Josephine Baker (1906-1975), who in addition to her artistic career held the rank of lieutenant in the French Resistance.

The eloquent and touching national ceremony in honor of Manouchian and his wife lasted over two hours, was televised live, led by President Emmanuel Macron, and attended by hundreds of dignitaries. In addition, thousands came from all over the country to line the streets around the imposing Panthéon despite the rain.

The *Francs Tireurs Partisans-Main d'Oeuvre Immigrée* was a branch of the French Communist Party resistance movement composed mainly of foreign immigrants. In August 1943, Missak Manouchian was appointed its military commander for the Paris metropolitan region. In October and November of the same year, a band of 24 FTP-MOI Resistance members, one woman and 23 men, only three of whom were French born, were arrested and handed over to the Gestapo, after having been trailed/shadowed for months by the French police. The collective later became known as the "Group Manouchain," thanks in part to a 1955 poem by Louis Aragon and its musical version published in 1959 by Leo Ferré. Photographs of ten members were used in the "*Affiche Rouge*" or "Red Poster," a key Nazi print and film propaganda campaign of February 1944 whose objective was to prove to the French public that the Resistance was the work of foreign Jews and reds ("An Army of Crime"), and that honest patriotic French men and women did not take up arms against Germany.

The campaign failed for many reasons—among them the fact that on September 23, 1943, in Paris, the FTP-MOI group had executed Nazi SS General Julius Ritter. Ritter was officer in charge of the hated *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (Mandatory Labor Service), which sent Frenchmen of military age across the Rhine as replacement labor for Germans drafted for the Eastern Front. In late 1943, the tide was turning in France as more and more citizens were rooting for the Allies. The more determined among them had already joined the FFI, of which the FTP-MOI was part.

When we look more closely at the identities of the Group Manouchian, we see that six men were International Brigade veterans: four Poles (Jonas Geduldig, Szlama Grywacz, Stanislas Kubacki, and Joseph Epstein, who was Manouchian's commander and was executed later); one Hungarian (Francisc Wolf); and one Spaniard (Celestino Alfonso). This clearly illustrates that for many, the armed fight against Nazism and Fascism did not begin in September 1939, but rather in the summer of 1936. In fact, in many areas of France that were liberated during the summer of 1944 by or with the assistance of the FFI, International Brigade veterans and Spanish Loyalist refugees often formed the core of resistance groups.

This year's "Panthéonisation"—as it is referred to in France—is momentous. It marks a major turning point in the French memory of World War II. In order to honor the group as a whole, the reinterment of Missak and Melinée Manouchian was accompanied by the posting of a plaque inscribed with the names of the 24 FTP-MOI members, all of whom were communists and 21 were foreigners. It is the first time that communists and foreigners are officially recognized for their contribution to the French Resistance.

It is certain that this year's commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Paris, in August, will continue to honor foreign participation. It is rumored that the Prime Minister of Spain may attend as an official tribute to the Loyalists of the Leclerc Division. In addition, it is said that the U.S. Fourth Infantry Division, which landed on Utah beach on June 6 and accompanied the Second French Armored Division of Leclerc into Paris on August 25, will be honored for the first time. And let's not forget that Lincoln veteran Larry Cane was a lieutenant in the Combat Engineers of said division, having earned a Silver Star in combat in the Normandy hedgerows. Through him, like through the vets on the *Affiche Rouge*, we come full circle once again from the war in Spain in 1936 to the liberation of Europe in 1944-45. ▲

Robert S. Coale is Professor of Hispanic Studies at the Université de Rouen-Normandie in France and a member of the Board of ALBA.

Naomi Rucker (1954-2024)

Dr. Naomi Gabrella Rucker, a loving and devoted mother and grandmother who was an accomplished psychologist and psychoanalyst, died from cancer on April 4, 2024, in Savannah, Georgia. She was 70.

Naomi was born in New York City on January 6, 1954, to James Bernard "Bunny" Rucker and Helen Muenich. She spent most of her childhood in East Orange, New Jersey, where her father, a disabled veteran who fought with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain and later served in the Army in World War II, worked as chief librarian of the public library and her mother as a ballet dancer and physician's office manager.

A voracious reader and star student, Naomi received a B.A. from Bryn Mawr College and a Ph.D. in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis from Adelphi University. She spent five decades in private practice as a psychologist and psychoanalyst, first in New York City, then in San Diego and, for the past 27 years, in Savannah. She also has taught psychoanalytic theory and clinical technique at the undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate levels.

Naomi was a lifelong student of the human condition, examining people's connections with one another and the influences of their sociocultural environments. She wrote and presented numerous clinical and theoretical papers in psychoanalysis. She also co-authored two books, *Subject Relations,* published in 1998, and *The Color Human,* a memoir published in 2023.

Naomi was known for her fierce independence raising two children alone, generosity and loyalty to friends, as well as her passion for riding horses, playing piano, studying French and rescuing dogs. She is survived by her son, Philip, a journalist in Washington, D.C.; her daughter, Clara, a geologist in Bloomingdale, Georgia; and her grandson, Lee.

A memorial service will be held on May 4 at 2 p.m. at Brockington Hall at 213 E. Hall Street, Savannah, GA, 31401. In lieu of giving flowers, the family asks that those who are able consider making a donation to Hospice Savannah or to the Humane Society for Greater Savannah.

Helene Susman (1920-2024)

With deep sadness, I write of the passing of Helene Susman, widow of Bill, at the age of 103.

She did not go to Spain with the Lincolns nor held a position with the VALB or ALBA, but to me and many others she was a founder of our small organization and a kindred spirit.

According to her daughter Susan, Helene settled in Long Island with her family in 1959 and was known to her peers as a terrific tennis and bridge player, and to her students as a guitar teacher and confidante. She and Bill were active members of the Great Neck Forum, which brought progressive speakers to large audiences.

In her later working years, Helene became an assistant film editor for the renowned documentarian Barbara Kopple, working on *Harlan County, USA* and *American Dream.* (Barbara has recently joined ALBA's Honorary Board.)

When I joined the ALBA Board thirty-some years ago, Helene greeted our meetings at her home with breakfast coffee and bagels, a little later lunch, and often a bed to sleep.

She did not participate in the formal meetings, but she shared her cogent opinions about ALBA policies and programs.

She remained a passionate advocate for social justice and human rights, and inspirational to those who were then the second generation of ALBA members.

She is survived by her daughter, Susan, son Paul and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

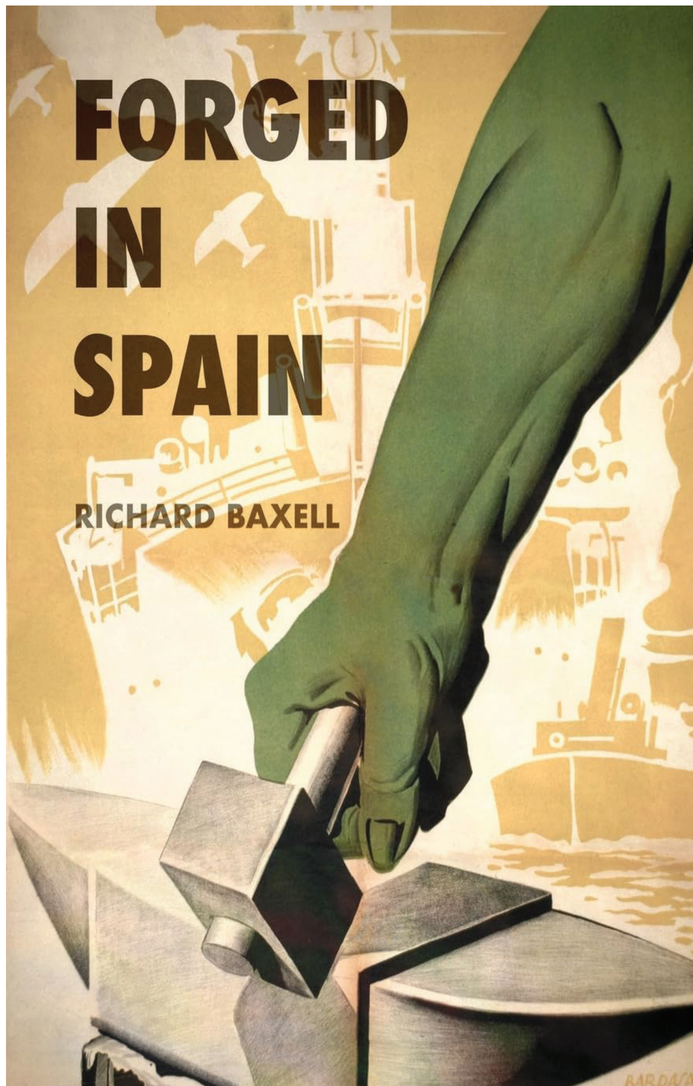
—*Peter N. Carroll*

The Susman Family invites you to donate to ALBA in Helene's memory (alba-valb.org/donate).

Book Reviews

Forged in Spain. by Richard Baxell. London: The Clapton Press, 2023. 412pp.

Reviewed by Giles Tremlett



The body of a mysterious man washes up on a southern British beach near Brighton in 1963. It carries no identification and even the clothes labels have been cut out. The only clue is a monogrammed white pocket handkerchief bearing the initials "MD." Police eventually discover that this is the corpse of Malcolm Dunbar, a former International Brigades officer in Spain who once had been described in the British parliament as "'the man who threw 150,000 men across the River Ebro."

In this excellent collection of ten short biographies of International Brigaders and other foreigners drawn to the Spanish Civil War, Richard Baxell starts with the Dunbar mystery. Has he been murdered? Did he commit suicide? Is his death related to the unmasking of the infamous Cambridge spy ring, in which apparently impeccable members of the British upper class doubled as Soviet spies? "Many people, including members of his family, strongly believed that Dunbar, a Communist and confidant of the notorious Soviet double-agent, Kim Philby, was actually murdered and his death arranged to look like suicide," Baxell notes. The coroner declined to describe his death as suicide, giving an open verdict.

The cloak-and-dagger world of Cold War spying drew in a number of veterans of the International Brigades. The handsome and enigmatic Dunbar—who shared the upper class background, private schooling, and university education of the Cambridge spies—may, or may not, have been one of them. He was a ballet-loving introvert who first gained respect as head of the British battalion's anti-tank unit. His calm leadership and survival of several battlefield wounds saw him promoted rapidly to major. Abraham Lincoln Battalion commander Milton Wolff rated Dunbar as one of the two best soldiers in the XV International Brigade and he would be just one of five British volunteers to receive a signed goodbye note from *La Pasionaria.*

Despite having more battlefield experience than almost anyone else in Britain, Dunbar's role in the Second World War was initially discreet. International Brigaders were not welcome in the British army. "The presence of such men in the Army would obviously be highly undesirable," a military report stated. The former major joined the signals corps as a private and was kept in England for much of the war. When he finally crossed into France in 1944, he soon won the military medal and was described as "a really high-class soldier having initiative, poise and perfect honesty… he is a highly efficient and educated man whose qualifications have not been made full use of."

After the war, now as a member of the Communist Party, he struggled to make sense of life. He worked for the Labour Party and for trade unions but ended up a penniless drunk. Before his corpse washed up on the beach, he had made previous attempts at suicide. Like many brigaders, then, it seems that Dunbar never found anything to match his intense experiences in Spain. In Baxell's biographies, Spain often carries a similar charge—as an experience that is formative, overwhelming, or life-changing.

Baxell has already written the definitive account of the International Brigaders from the United Kingdom in *Unlikely Warriors*, which is also one of the best scholarly studies of the brigades as a whole. Yet all historians of the International Brigades are faced with massive lacunae of information, in part because most IB veterans followed the example of the composer and Republican commander Gustavo Durán, whose poet daughter Jane Durán wrote: "He lays down his arms. / He raises his arms over his head. / He will not tell."

By unlocking Dunbar's story, Baxell fills in one of the larger gaps. Several of his other subjects are also brigade veterans about whom we knew too little. They include Peter Kerrigan, a tough Glaswegian political commissar who became a leading British communist; the painter Clive Branson; and surgeon Alexander Tudor Hart. Stafford Cottman, who joined the POUM along with George Orwell, is another person about whom we did not know enough.

Political militancy helped some overcome the traumas of war and its aftermath, but not always fully. Kerrigan suffered post-traumatic stress disorder, “a hidden psychological scar to accompany the sudden greying of his hair.” Stafford Cottman shared Orwell’s disillusionment with the Communist Party, famously described in the latter’s *Homage to Catalonia*.

Baxell avoids the temptation to paint his subjects as saints. The Communist Party and the Soviet regime are rarely far away. Tudor Hart was at one time married to Edith Suschitzky, considered by Baxell to be “one of the most influential Soviet agents to operate in Britain during the twentieth century.” At Jarama, Tudor-Hart drove his team hard and angered many with his high-handed manner. They worked 14-hour shifts like “cogs in a machine, working in a frenzy, and dropping down to sleep whenever there was a chance.” Unwilling to take breaks, he shocked fellow doctors by urinating into a bucket in the middle of an operation and sometimes fell asleep underneath the operating table. Baxell shares the assessment of a colleague who said Tudor Hart did “magnificent work” but “was a very difficult person to work with.“ His wife was eventually interviewed by MI5 agents. “She was completely composed and answered questions in the manner of a person well trained to resist an interrogation,” they reported. “It remains unclear how much Alex Tudor Hart was aware of his ex-wife’s espionage activities and there have long been suspicions that he knew more than he was letting on,” Baxell adds. Tudor was eventually expelled from the Party for “Maoism.”

Alex Foote, who also fell out with the CP, was a less glamorous presence in Spain, where he worked as a driver before embarking on a colourful life as a Soviet agent. He spent much of World War II as a secret radio operator in Switzerland, where the *Rote Drei* (Red Three) spy ring provided crucial intelligence on the Wehrmacht. Foote was decorated four times by the Soviets but rapidly turned away from communism after the war, publishing *A Handbook for Spies*, which was ghost-written by someone at MI6. When British intelligence declined to hire him, Foote also took to the booze.

Branson, some of whose pictures are held by London’s Tate museum, was captured in Spain, spending time in the notorious prison camp at San Pedro de Cardeña. He would likely have become more famous but was killed fighting in the British Army in Burma in 1944.

Other Baxell subjects are better-known—perhaps none so much as the Haldane family headed by scientist JBS Haldane, although their Spanish stories (including those of his writer wife Charlotte and International-Brigader son Ronnie) have not been told as a family drama before. Leah Manning was instrumental in the evacuation and care of the many Basque children who spent the civil war as refugees in Britain. She went on to become a Labour MP. Peter Kemp, a volunteer on Franco’s side, provides an interesting counterweight to the IB volunteers and leftists—though his is more a story of adventure than of politics, passion or ideology.

Manassah ‘Sam’ Lesser was wounded in Spain early in the war but returned as a reporter for the Communist *Daily Worker*. His ensuing career as a foreign correspondent, in Baxell’s words, “gave him a ringside seat at many of the most dramatic events of the twentieth century.” Lesser was later sent to Moscow but fell out of love with Russia. “In the past, the Party had tried to give the impression that it was a bloody paradise, which it most certainly was not,” he told Kerrigan. The Prague spring finally turned him off Soviet communism though he remained firmly left-wing and eventually chaired the International Brigades Memorial Trust in the United Kingdom. In 2009, he was one of seven elderly British veterans awarded Spanish passports as a symbol of Spanish thanks to the brigaders. Baxell reproduces part of Lesser’s thank you speech, delivered in Spanish: “*Hemos tardado un poco, pero creo que hoy podemos decir que hemos llegado a casa.*” (“We are a little late, but I believe that today we can say that we have come home.”)

Baxell’s book, published at a moment when most of those who experienced the civil war in Spain have died, provides a valuable, entertaining home for the memory of some exceptional individuals. It is also a resource for those interested not just in the war, but in the amazing lives of those who travelled to Spain to take part in it.

Malcolm Dunbar in Spain. Photo IBMT.

Letter to the Editors

In the most recent issue of *The Volunteer*, in the article on page 4 about the Howard Zinn Book Fair, there are a couple of errors in the last paragraph. 1. My book is titled *Home So Far Away*. 2. My character is in Spain working as a chemistry lab technician when she volunteers in the Spanish Civil War as a nurse and translator.

Gracias y salud,

— Judith Berlowitz

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM 02/01/2024 TO 04/30/2024

BENEFACTOR ($5,000 AND ABOVE)

The Puffin Foundation • Open Horizon Foundation • Nancy I. Phillips in honor of Dr. Edward Barsky

SPONSOR ($1,000-$4,999)

Wendy Chavkin • Jeffrey Heisler • Steve Metzger & Debra Rosen • Steve Puddicombe in memory of Raymond Lee Puddicombe • Susan Wolff Wallis in memory of Milton Wolff

SUPPORTER ($250-$999)

Henry Allen in memory of Howard Zinn • Kathie Amatniek Sarachild in memory of Ernest Amatniek & Joan Cindy Amatniek • Mary Blair in memory of John Clarence A. Blair • Eric Botts in honor of Oliver Law • Peter N. Carroll & Jeannette Ferrary in memory of David Smith, Jack Lucid and Don McLeod • Richard Horvitz • Steven Klapper in memory of Milt Wolff • Michael Mulcahy in memory of Abe Osheroff • Joan & Neal Rosenberg in memory of Leo Rosenberg • Naomi Schneider in memory of Leo Rosenberg • Susan Susman in memory of Bill Susman • Nancy Wallach in memory of Hy Wallach & Manus O'Riordan • Josephine & Henry Yurek in honor of Art Shields

CONTRIBUTOR ($100-$249)

Lisa Brier Rose & Howard Rose in memory of Morris Brier • William Allison in honor of Carl & Anne Braden • Joshua Barnett • Tobyanne Berenberg in memory of Federica Martin & Toby Jensky • Steve Birnbaum • Ellen Broms in memory of Harry Kleiman • Martha Copleman • Samuela A. Evans in memory of Judy Montell • Martina Gago in memory of Manuel Ageitos • Edward & Priscilla Goldson • Albert Gorn • Annette & Ronald Halpern in memory of Joseph Siegel • Patrick Kelly in honor of Vic Pace • Jane Kos • Dawn Krause in memory of Buck Krause • David Lichter in memory of Harry Lichter • Paul Marks in memory of Paulina Marks• John S. Morawetz • JoAnna Nakata • Michael J. Organek • Bill Roller in memory of Milt Wolff & Jack Shafran • Peter J. Rubin • Kate A. Stolpman • Paul Susman in memory of Bill Susman • Sara & William Tattam • Todd Trescott in honor of John Johnnie Tricks Trcka • Lotti Tobler-Berenson • Samuel Yoder

FRIEND ($1-$99)

Julia M. Allen • Jeffrey Aron in memory of Henry & Sylvia Aron • Michael Bailey • Mara & Enzo Bard • Dale Baum • Paul Beach • Judith Berlowitz • Michael Bichko • Scott Boehm • Garrett Brown • Alain Bujard • Allison Burnett • Dean Burrier • James Cameron • Ted Cloak • Al & Mary Fenske • Dario Fernandez Graziano • Maura Fitzgerald • Joshua Freeman • Paul Friedlander • Victor Fuentes • Jacob Fund • Francisca Gonzalez-Arias • Roderic Gorney • Paul Gottlieb • Carla Hagen • Rachel Halfant in honor of Jules Halfant • Angela Halonen • Fred Herron • Ann F. Hoffman • Charles Idelson • Dan Jaffee in memory of Abe Harris • David Karpe in memory of Clarence Kailin • Sanford Kelson • Ronald Kent in memory of Milt Felsen • Sandra Kish in memory of Ruth Kish • Fran Krieger-Lowitz • David Lelyveld in memory of Mariamma Sani • Adam Levin • Blas Ruiz Lorena Gonzalez • June Malament in memory of Daniel Malament • Arnold Matlin in memory of Clare Tarter Matlin • Agustin Mestre • Daniel Millstone in memory of Max Parker • John Morgan • Victor M. Munoz • Michael O'Connor • Ronald D. Perrone • Merrill Piera • Louise Popkin • Nieves & Manuel Pousada • David Ravenscroft • Maria Cristina Rodriguez • Suzanne & Alan Jay Rom in memory of Samuel S. Schiff & Isabelle P. Schiff • Constancia Romilly • Miki Rosen • Judith Rosenbaum • Gail & Lewis Rubman • Francis Nash & Sherron R. Biddle • Michael Silver in memory of Nathan Silver • Thomas Silverstein • Irwin & Elizabeth Sollinger • Laura Stevens • Weir Strange • Joel Swadesh • Pedro Luis Sánchez • Margaret Tanttila • David Turner in memory of Dr. Aaron A. Hilkevitch • Denisse Velarde-Cubek in memory of Adam Cubek • Ada Wallach • Mark Wallem • Joan Wider • Thomas Wineholt • Adam Winkel

The Volunteer
c/o Abraham Lincoln Brigades Archives
239 W. 14th Street, Suite 2
New York, NY 10011

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
PERMIT NO. 1577

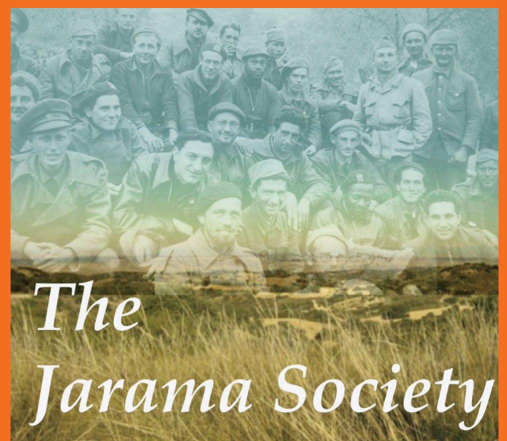
UPCOMING EVENTS:

ALBA CELEBRATES PRIDE MONTH:
"Telling Our Stories," with Shannon O'Neill (curator, Tamiment library) and Bettina Aptheker (author of *Communists in Closets, Queering the History 1930s-1990s*)
June 25, 3 pm ET/ 12 noon PT, online

NEW MONTHLY ONLINE FILM WORKSHOP SERIES FOR TEACHERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC
First Session: July 16, 5 pm ET/3 pm PT
***The Devil's Backbone* (Guillermo del Toro, 2001), with Sebastiaan Faber.**
Made possible by the Peter N. Carroll Anti-Fascist Education Fund

For details, see alba-valb.org/eventcalendar or sign up for our email newsletter at alba-valb.org

MAKE ANTI-FASCISM PART OF YOUR LEGACY!



What you leave to friends and loved ones—and the causes you champion—are ways of expressing your hopes and dreams for the future. As you make your plans, please consider joining the Jarama Society by including ALBA in your will or living trust or naming us as a beneficiary of your estate. ALBA accepts legacy gifts in any amount. Help us to continue and expand our educational mission of teaching future generations about the sacrifices made by the Lincoln Brigade in their fight against the global threat of fascism. Your gift to ALBA will help ensure that today's young people learn about the experiences of volunteers in Spain, as well as their broader dedication to social justice at home.

If you have questions or would like to discuss your options, please contact ALBA's Executive Director Mark Wallem at 212 674 5398 or *mwallem@alba-valb.org*.