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The Volunteer

FOUNDED IN 1937 BY THE VOLUNTEERS OF THE LINCOLN BRIGADE.
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¡NO PASARAN!



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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
Sebastian 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 4 *The New Popular Front*
- p 5 *Franco is Still Dead*
- p 6 *Nehru in Spain*
- p 9 *Sephardic Brigadistas*
- p 11 *Vicent Andrés Estellés*
- p 13 *Janet Riesenfeld*
- p 15 *Martha Gellhorn*
- p 18 *The Spanish Earth*
- p 20 *Book Reviews*
- p 22 *In Memoriam*
- p 23 *Contributions*

Dear Friends:

I was honored to be elected as chair of ALBA's Board of Governors in May of this year. ALBA has had a series of dedicated chairs who have advanced the organization's mission through both good and bad times. I follow Sebastiaan Faber, who served as chair for more than ten years and who oversaw the evolution of ALBA from one that worked to protect the veterans' history and legacy to one that now also uses the legacy of the veterans to inspire activism and promote human rights and social justice.

I followed a circuitous route to ALBA. Like many of those on the Left, I was inspired as a youth by the courage of the Lincoln Brigade in their fight against Fascism in Spain. However, it was only when I arrived at Wayne State University in Detroit as an historian of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union that I was able to turn my interest into action. In the 1980s, Detroit-area veterans and their comrades raised money for a scholarship to honor the legacy of Wayne State students who fought fascism in Spain, even recruiting Pete Seeger to hold a fund-raising concert. I became involved in the scholarship committee and then asked to join ALBA. Since then, I have had the pleasure to serve as ALBA's secretary, treasurer, and chair of the Watt Essay Prize committee because I love the commitment to social justice and the idea of being inspired by the past.

Both those themes run through the stories in this issue: from Jawaharlal Nehru's anticolonialist commitment to the Spanish Republic (page 6) to the "homecoming" of Sephardic Jews in the International Brigade (page 9), or the way the Spanish fight against fascism shaped the lives and careers of the journalist Martha Gellhorn (page 15) and Janet Riesenfeld, a dancer, actress, and writer (page 13).

As a scholar of interwar Europe, I see the Spanish Civil War as a watershed moment when only a few stood up to fight fascism and authoritarianism. We are once again at a pivotal moment. I hope that you will join ALBA and the legacy of the Lincoln Brigade in standing against unhinged fat cat capitalist racist demagogues who seem singularly committed to undermining basic human rights and democratic institutions. Over the next few months, we must all be activists to defend the gates of democracy and freedom. ¡No Pasarán!



Aaron Retish, Chair of the Board of Governors

Letter to the Editors

I am very grateful to all the members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade for their selfless participation in the Spanish Civil War. I am the proud grandson of a Republican soldier from the Aragon front, who gave his future (and almost his life) in the defense of freedom. I know that the Lincoln Brigade passed through my village (Aguaviva, in the province of Teruel) during the retreat to Castellón in 1938. I just want to thank those magnificent people as well as their descendants on behalf of all Spanish Republicans, for their selfless sacrifice.

— José Ciprés

ALBA NEWS

ALBA's Monthly Film Discussion Series Kicks Off

On July 16, ALBA hosted the first session of its new online film discussion series, sponsored by the Peter N. Carroll Anti-Fascist Education Fund, and geared toward both teachers and the general public. The series features in-depth discussions on important Spanish-Civil-War-themed films. Each session is led by an expert who also shares, in advance, a specially produced introductory video on each film. The first session featured Guillermo del Toro's *The Devil's Backbone* (2001). Close to one hundred people joined for a deep-diving conversation about the film, which is set during the Spanish Civil War and explores history, memory, violence, and trauma through a Gothic lens. On August 13, Peter Carroll hosted a session on Michael Curtiz's 1942 classic *Casablanca*, with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, in which the Spanish Civil War looms larger than many think. Both sessions can be viewed at ALBA's YouTube channel. In September, the session will focus on Víctor Erice's haunting classic *The Spirit of the Beehive* (*El espíritu de la colmena*). To sign up, keep an eye on ALBA's email announcement or visit the ALBA website at alba-valb.org.

ALBA Celebrates Pride Month

On June 25, ALBA commemorated 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, re-acquainted the audience with the ALBA archives and highlighted the importance of telling the stories of LGBTQ volunteers and the challenges involved. Aptheker discussed 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. To view this lively and informative session, visit ALBA's YouTube channel.

Iago Macknik-Conde Wins National History Day Competition

Brooklyn high school student Iago Macknik-Conde, who last year was named a History Day finalist with a project on the Lincoln Brigade, won the most recent National History Day competition with his research on the contribution of the Spaniard Bernardo de Gálvez to the United States' independence movement. Profiled in the national Spanish newspaper *El País*, Macknik-Conde mentioned the formative nature of his work in the ALBA collection. He credits ALBA for his success in a video that can be viewed on ALBA's YouTube channel (https://youtu.be/_f_WNOjCU2s).

Catalonia's Alvah Bessie Program Reports Progress

An article in *The Guardian* on May 29 reported that the Alvah Bessie Program, through which the government of Catalonia seeks to locate, exhume, identify, and repatriate the remains of International Brigade Volunteers who died during the Spanish Civil War, has been making strides. By now, the program has assembled a list of 522 IB members who can be assumed to have been buried in Catalan soil, including 286 from the United States and 86

from Great Britain. Most of these were casualties of the Battle of the Ebro. The team of researchers, which includes Jordi Martí, the author of a book on IB volunteers, has relied heavily on the archival resources provided by organizations like ALBA and the IBMT. *The Volunteer* published an FAQ about the program in September 2022 (<https://albavolunteer.org/2022/11/catalonias-alvah-bessie-program-faqs/>). For more information, search for "Alvah Bessie Programme" or write to memoria.justicia@gencat.cat.

AABI Organizes Jarama March

The Association of Friends of the International Brigades (AABI) has announced that the next annual Jarama Memorial March will take place on Saturday, February 22nd, 2025 in the Jarama Valley (Spain). This year, AABI has chosen to honor the members of the International Brigades from North America, including the Lincoln Brigade and Mackenzie–Papineau Battalions. For more information, contact AABI at amigosbrigadasinternacionales@gmail.com.

Spanish Citizenship for IB Descendants

ALBA has been consulting with our community and partners about the changes in Spain's Democratic Memory Law that allow for the direct descendants of *brigadistas* to apply for Spanish citizenship. Many have begun the process and are sharing their experiences.

In cooperation with Patricia Ure of the Madrid-based Association of Friends of the International Brigades (AABI), and Amanda Klonsky, granddaughter of *brigadista* Robert Klonsky, ALBA has made available a document with useful information to apply for citizenship. The document can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/ALBA-Spanish-citizenship>. A similar information sheet from our friends at the International Brigade Memorial Trust (IBMT) in the UK can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/IBMT-Spanish-citizenship>. (NB: This information is subject to change and does not constitute legal advice.)

Joe Dallet Letters for ALBA Donors

As a gift to those who donate \$125 or more to ALBA, we offer a facsimile reproduction of the 1938 pamphlet *Letters from Spain by Joe Dallet to his Wife*. The pamphlet includes 30 letters from Joe to Katherine Puening-Dallet relaying his experiences in Spain and his hopes for a better world. After Joe's death, Katherine remarried the physicist Robert Oppenheimer. (She is portrayed by Emily Blunt in Christopher Nolan's Oscar-winning film *Oppenheimer*.)

Joe Dallet was born on February 18, 1907. His family was well-to-do and conservative in outlook. As a junior at Dartmouth in the late 1920s, he left college to work as a longshoreman because he felt that he needed to do something in the labor struggle. From that time on Joe was a worker, and he soon became a leader of workers. After the fascist attack on the Spanish Republic, Joe volunteered to fight for democracy. He was killed in action on October 17, 1937.

Support of our mission is crucial to keeping the stories of Dallet and his comrades alive. We encourage you to give what you are able. We are thrilled to share with you this historical memento connecting our educational mission to Nolan's important film. To donate, go to alba-valb.org/donate.

THE POPULAR FRONT STRIKES BACK

In a year where countries worldwide—including the United States—are facing a surge of far-right parties, France saw a revival of the Popular Front, a broad antifascist coalition that managed to hold the Rassemblement National at bay. In the lead-up to the two rounds of elections, the French public sphere was rife with references to the French and Spanish struggles against fascism in the 1930s. The Nouveau Front Populaire (NFP) sparked a wave of creativity that included poster art.



Generalissimo Francisco Franco is Still Dead—Fifty Years Later

By Tyler Goldberger

As SNL is preparing for its 50th anniversary, Tyler Goldberger speaks with Chevy Chase about his legendary gag on Franco's death.



In the fall of 1975, the declining health of Francisco Franco, who had ruled Spain for 36 years, dominated the US news cycle. When Franco died on November 20, VP Nelson Rockefeller traveled to Spain to attend his funeral while former President Richard Nixon described him as a “loyal friend and ally of the United States.”

Nixon’s words were quoted mockingly that same week by Chevy Chase, who presented the Weekend Update on NBC’s *Saturday Night*, which was then in its first season. Chase contrasted Franco’s legacy as “the last of the fascist dictators in the West” with eulogies spoken by Western leaders. As Chevy recalled Nixon’s admiration of Franco’s “firmness and fairness,” the photograph behind him displayed Spanish leader doing a *Heil Hitler* salute right next to Adolf Hitler. The irony wrote itself. Throughout the first two seasons of the show, Chase would continue “reporting” on events in Spain as a running gag with endless variations on the punchline “Generalissimo Francisco Franco is still dead.”

I recently had the chance to sit down with Chevy Chase and his wife Jayni to look back on the iconic bit. As Chevy remembers it, once Franco died, “[The news] was everywhere.” While walking to the studio on November 22, 1975, as he noticed that every news stand was selling the headline of Franco’s death, he thought of a bit to emphasize that “everybody’s sick of seeing this.”

Jayni, who had just turned 18, has fond memories of watching the first season

of *Saturday Night* and laughing with her friends about the sketch. Prior to us speaking, she asked a few people if they remembered the punchline “Generalissimo Francisco Franco is still dead.” They all “cracked up and... said *absolutely*,” she told me. Although she was unfamiliar with Franco at the time, watching Chevy’s sketch, she told me, made her think to herself: “Who is this guy?” Jayni believes that many Americans shared her experience. In other words, it was the *SNL* sketch that drew attention back to the political situation in Spain.

In the years following Franco’s 1939 victory in the Spanish war, the US administration considered him an adversary. But this shifted during the Cold War, when the US was eager to enlist Franco in the global fight against communism. The 1950s brought renewed friendship between the United States and Franco Spain. The 1953 Pact of Madrid established military and economic ties between the two countries. Four military bases were built with American money in the decades following, in exchange for over \$1 billion USD to support Spain’s dictatorship.

In December 1959, President Dwight D. Eisenhower became the first sitting president to visit Spain. Following an invitation from Franco, Eisenhower incorporated Spain into his eleven-nation goodwill trip before his second-term presidency ended. He was welcomed with open arms by Franco and the Spanish public, conducting a press conference next to the dictator in Torrejón de Ardoz, one of US military bases. He then participated in a parade

down the center streets, which up to 1.5 million of Madrid’s 2 million inhabitants attended. The 1960s further deepened the connection between the two nations, as Spain worked diligently to pitch itself as a desirable destination for Western tourists.

I asked Chevy Chase what he knew about Franco in 1975. “I didn’t know shit,” he told me, beyond thinking of the dictator as a “brute” and “bad guy.” Still, his bits following the dictator’s death resonated with the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War, which had mobilized millions of Americans in the 1930s and convinced close to 3,000 of them to help defend the Spanish Republic in person.

Some of this historical memory still lingers today. Seminal texts such as Ernest Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and George Orwell’s *Homage to Catalonia* are still taught and read. Picasso’s *Guernica* hung in the halls of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City for almost four decades, as the painter refused to have this masterpiece displayed in a Franco Spain. After Spain passed its 2007 Historical Memory Law, which called for the removal Francoist monuments from public spaces, the *Wall Street Journal* coyly reported “Generalissimo Francisco Franco Is Still Dead—and His Statues Are Next.” ▲

Tyler J. Goldberger is a History PhD candidate at William & Mary. His work explores U.S.-Spain relations in the 20th century, historical memory after civil wars and conflicts, human rights, and transnationalism.

NEHRU AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

By Ameya Tripathi

Why did Jawaharlal Nehru, future prime minister of India, visit civil-war Spain in 1938? As it turned out, the triangular relationship between Britain, Spain, and India had deep cultural and geopolitical implications.

As collectors well know, the extant copies of the *Book of the XV Brigade*, a richly illustrated volume edited by Frank Ryan that was distributed among hundreds of English-speaking *brigadistas* in 1938, are considered bibliophile gems because they are often hand-signed by dozens of fellow soldiers. The copy held at the Working-Class Movement Library in Salford, England, however, features two surprising autographs: from Jawaharlal Nehru, who in 1947 would become the first Prime Minister of India, and V. K. Krishna Menon, India's representative to the United Nations and founder of the Non-Aligned Movement. They signed the book during a visit to Spain in June 1938, where Nehru and rest of the Indian delegation met with the British Battalion of the XV International Brigade—which, as it happened, was named after Shapurji Saklatvala, the Bombay Parsi who served as MP for North Battersea, first for the Labour Party and later as a Communist.

What was Nehru doing in Spain, when there was so much to campaign for in British-ruled India? The truth is that the Spanish Republican cause attracted many Indian intellectuals in both Britain and the subcontinent. While the cultural ties between Spain and India go back centu-



ries—from colonizers and missionaries to the musical roots of flamenco—in the early twentieth century, the triangular relationship between Britain, Spain, and India, with Gibraltar as a gateway to the East, had deep cultural and geopolitical implications.

Saklatvala's had been a rare Indian voice in Britain's parliament. He was only the third Indian representative in parliamentary history and the country's lone Communist MP, winning a re-election for his seat for the CPGB after Labour expelled

all Communists from their party in 1923. Saklatvala had died from a heart attack in January 1936; his daughter, Sehri Saklatvala, organized events for the Spain-India Committee, run by the India League.

By the 1930s, the British Left was quite transnational and included many anti-colonialists protesting the British Empire. In London, Indian activists organized aid for Ethiopia, China and Spain. Indians in Britain also took part in the India Home Rule Society, India League, League Against Imperialism, Independent Labour Party, Communist Party, Workers Welfare League, and myriad other organisations. As Nancy Tsou and Len Tsou have shown in *Los brigadistas chinos en la Guerra Civil: La llamada de España (1936-1939)*, some

Indians joined the brigades as doctors, journalists and soldiers, including Gopal Mukund Huddar, Mulk Raj Anand, Atal Menhanlal, Ayub Ahmed Khan Naqshbandi, Manuel Pinto, and Ramasamy Veerapan.

Nehru and his daughter, future Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, saw themselves as part of both British and Indian society. Educated at Harrow, Nehru later joked that he was the “last Englishman to rule India.” In his book *Anti-Colonialism and the Crises of Interwar Fascism*,

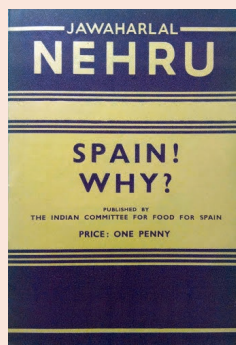
Since the British government was effectively aligned with Fascists, Nehru argued, supporting the Spanish Republican cause was an act of anti-colonial resistance.

Michael Ortiz discovers that Indira, educated at Badminton School in Bristol and later Oxford, was especially preoccupied with the fate of the Basque orphans. In fact, the traffic between British colonial officers and later Indian anti-colonial leaders was two-way. The most famous British author of the Spanish Civil War, George Orwell (Eric Blair), was, after all, born in Motihari, India.

According to Richard Baxell, the British Battalion's official name, Saklatvala, "never caught on." Naming an IB Battalion after Abraham Lincoln worked well in the US context. Though a prominent MP, Saklatvala did not have that kind of legendary historical reputation, and his name might well have been harder to pronounce for many volunteers. Nor was there a settled view on Britain's ongoing rule of India. (Nehru and Saklatvala certainly had their differences: Nehru was not a Communist like 'Comrade Sak' who protested Gandhi's absolute insistence on nonviolent resistance.) Most referred to the Saklatvala as the "British Battalion" while most Spaniards simply called it "el batallón inglés." As Baxell points out, this was not a very satisfactory name for a unit that included many non-English soldiers—not only Irish, but also volunteers from many current or former British colonies. In fact, when Nehru, Krishna Menon and Batlivala visited the British volunteers they were greeted by cries of "Long Live Independence!"

Nehru's interest in Spain was not surprising. By 1936, he had grown frustrated with Gandhi's leadership of the Indian independence movement. As he mourned the death of his wife and struggled to manage the splintered Congress movement, he considered resigning as president of the Congress. But then, as he writes in his autobiography, "a far-away occurrence ... affected me greatly ... This was the news of General Franco's revolt in Spain. I saw this rising, with its background of German and Italian assistance, developing into a European or even a world conflict."

Nehru was one of many Indian intellectuals drawn to the Republican



cause, as were Bengali Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore and Telegu poet Srirangam Srinivasarao. (Tagore's global fame had reached Spanish poets such as Zenobia Camprubí and Juan Ramón Jiménez, who translated his work.) Cultural affinities, such as the possible influences of ancient Indian dance styles on flamenco drew interest about Spain from Indian artists and intellectuals.

There were also political parallels. The Indian Congress and Spanish Second Republic shared goals in the 1930s, such as tackling illiteracy and the problem of large and unproductive agricultural estates. As Maria Framke writes, Congress Socialists organized a "Spain day in different Indian cities in August 1936" and in December of that year asserted at their annual meeting that "this struggle between democratic progress and Fascist reaction is of great consequence to the future of the world and will affect the future of imperialism and India." Ole Birk Laursen describes a major protest in January 1938, on Trafalgar Square in London, in solidarity with the Indian, Chinese and Spanish people:

As around 1,200 people marched from Mornington Crescent, "four bands accompanied the processionists. Flags of the Spanish Republic, Irish Republic, Indian National Congress and Sama Samaja Party, and banners with portraits of Subhas Chandra Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, the Emperor of Abyssinia, Chiang Kai-Shek, and 'La Pasionaria' (the Spanish woman communist leader), were carried.

The British Library India Office Records shows that British intelligence was concerned by Nehru's trip, actively tracking his departure from London to Barcelona, and reporting in great detail on every speech Nehru made once he returned to London. British authorities were worried by the ability of Nehru, and other speakers in London such as Paul Robeson, to synthesize a broader anti-imperialist movement and connect it with what authorities considered a dangerously Communist anti-fascism in Spain.

Nehru's five-day visit to Spain in June 1938 was widely reported in newspapers worldwide. His "tight schedule" included meetings with President Manuel Azaña, Foreign Minister Julio Álvarez del Vayo, Communist leader Dolores Ibárruri, receptions with "the Cortes, the national Parliament," the Foreign Ministry, and, at the battlefront, with officers from the Republican Army and the International Brigades. Photographs of Nehru with Spanish Republican generals and politicians underscore the friendship between the Spanish and Indian peoples; but there was also a geopolitical and pragmatic calculus in Nehru's decision to go to Spain.

After his return from Barcelona, Nehru addressed a 5000-strong crowd in Trafalgar Square, during an event organized under the auspices of the Aid to Spain Committee. Still, Nehru also faced criticism for his trip. Why was he touring around Europe and agitating for Spain when there were flood victims in Bengal and widespread famine around the country? In *The Manchester Guardian* and *The National Herald* (the newspaper Nehru founded in Lucknow), Nehru responded to his critics in a text that was later published as a pamphlet, *Spain! Why?* (1938), by the India League. In it, Nehru defends himself against those who see him as naïve. Since the British government is effectively aligned with Fascists, he argues, supporting the Spanish Republican cause is an act of anti-colonial resistance:

By sending a Medical Mission to China, by our giving food-stuffs to the Spanish people, we compel the

world's attention to our view-point. Thereby we begin to function in the international sphere and the voice of India begins to be heard in the councils of the nations. This is our way of building up a foreign policy and of giving effect to it. Thus, our giving practical shape to our sympathies has a vital significance in giving India a position and prestige which usually only free countries possess. The free aid that we give medically or otherwise to China and Spain stamps us as people who have a view and will of their own.

As Michael Ortiz has pointed out, moreover, for Nehru the Spanish Civil War “underscored the hypocrisy of Britain”:

During the Waziristan Campaign (1936–1939), British colonial forces brutally quashed the Waziri and Mahsud tribesmen of Waziristan. Only months after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, local Waziri led by the Fakir of Ipi opened fire on British Colonial forces in a valley just outside Bichhe Kashkai. To reassert colonial hegemony, British forces bombed the Waziri. How, Nehru argued, could English citizens condemn the bombing of Guernica while ignoring a similar tragedy in Afghanistan?

While other Indian campaigners for independence such as including Mulk Raj Anand and V. Krishna Menon openly compared British colonial rule with German and Italian fascism, Nehru and the Congress movement did not directly challenge the patently undemocratic British Empire. Still, Nehru's comparison of the bombings of the Waziri with those of Guernica shows he was certainly able to make the comparison between British colonial rule and German and Italian fascism. The overwhelming majority of the British Empire's subjects lived in a dictatorship backed by the same imperial navy that blockaded aid from the Soviet Union and Mexico from reaching Republican Spain.



The images of Nehru's visit, and his report on it in his memoirs, gloss over some of the contradictions involved in supporting the Spanish Republican side, let alone calling for British intervention in Spain. For one, the Spanish Republic itself continued to be a colonizing power in Morocco, Western Sahara, and Equatorial Guinea. For another, calling for British intervention in Spain meant advocating for Britain to use its imperial might: in particular, the very same navy that patrolled India, often with colonial troops, sepoys, in its ranks. Ortiz notes that “during Nehru's visit, British machine gunners put on a thrilling display with their maxim gun”; from Richard Baxell, we know that the commander of the Machine-Gun company was “Harold Fry, an ex-sergeant from the British army who had served in India and China.” Did Britain's many machine gun atrocities such as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919 occur to Nehru in this moment?

Michael Ortiz suggests that Nehru found his visit to the British Battalion refreshing after years of Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence. Jim Jump, a British volunteer who served as Nehru's translator, wrote about the visit in his memoir, *The Fighter Fell in Love*, recently published by the Clapton Press:

Nehru spent quite a long time in the *barranco*, chatting to us. He displayed great interest, despite being a pacifist, in our machine guns, and the gun-crew, led by ex-miner from Fife, George Jackson, put on an exhibition of accurate firing. With a few short bursts of fire from their First World War Maxim, they

chopped down a sapling growing a couple of hundred yards away. ‘Would you like to have a try yourself?’ Jackson asked him, but Nehru politely refused.

Like it did for the African American volunteers, Spain provided a release for oppressed dissidents from elsewhere in the world who were militarily outmatched at home or tired of demands for only nonviolent civil disobedience. In Spain, they had a way of striking back at the enemy, arms in hand, even in the knowledge of the

contradictions involved in supporting the Republican side.

Considering the tensions between pacifism and armed struggle, and between anti-fascism and empire, naming the British Battalion after Saklatvala was quite appropriate. As Priyamvada Gopal explains, Saklatvala was a thorn in Mahatma Gandhi's campaign for non-violence, arguing against a pacifist position. Their correspondence shows a revolutionary Saklatvala seeking to radicalize the liberal Gandhi towards a position that would require both nonviolent *and* violent resistance.

A gunner company in the Saklatvala Battalion was named after Clement Attlee, the Labour MP who made several visits to Spain and features in significant images from the war, including photographs with *Guernica* at The Whitechapel Gallery in London. Attlee became Prime Minister in 1945. It was his government that granted India independence. Yet, to the disappointment of many IB volunteers from Britain and India, it made no move to depose Franco. ▲

Ameya Tripathi is Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary Spanish Literatures and Cultures at New York University. He is working on a book project on documentary writing, photography, radio and film in the Spanish Civil War. With thanks to Jim Jump and Richard Baxell for their research help for this piece.

RETURNING HOME: Sephardim Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War

By Delicia Nahman and Katherine O. Stafford

Among the thousands of Jewish volunteers who joined the International Brigades were many descendants of the Sephardim. What was it like for them to “return” to Spain? Three case studies: Lini de Vries, César Covo, and Samuel Nahman, aka Manny Harriman.

In the documentary *Invisible Heroes: African Americans in the Spanish Civil War*, James Fernández points out that Robert Jordan, the protagonist of Ernest Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, is anything but representative of the International Brigade volunteers. A WASP and solitary idealist from Montana, Jordan is in Spain without a clear motivation. The real volunteers comprised a much more colorful and committed spectrum. Hailing from vibrant and mobilized activist communities and marked by lived and generational experiences with trauma, injustice, and oppression, they were driven by a fervent desire for social transformation. It’s no coincidence that the percentage of Jewish volunteers in the International Brigades, estimated between 15 and 25, was strikingly disproportionate to their share in the population of their countries. Among the US volunteers, this percentage was likely close to 40.

Whether they joined the Brigades *as Jews*, however, is less clear. The surviving volunteers long underplayed their weight of their ethnic identity: They went to Spain not because they were Jews but because they were antifascists. Still, the work of scholars like Cynthia Gabbay, Ranaan Rein, Joseph Butwin, and Gerben Zaagsma suggests that Jewishness may have been a more important motivating factor than the volunteers themselves were willing to admit.

How did this play out for the descendants of the Jews who were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula (Sepharad) in the fifteenth century, the Sephardim? Like other members of the Jewish diaspora, they had lived through violence, ghettoization, and expulsion from their adopted homelands. But did their Iberian roots matter? Here, we’ll explore that question through the testimonies of three Sephardic volunteers: the Dutch American nurse Lini de Vries (1905-1982), the French volunteer César Covo (1912-2015), and the US volunteer Samuel Nahman (1919-1997), better known as Manny Harriman, who was also the co-author’s uncle.

Nahman, it turns out, felt called to fight in Spain, in no small part, because of his ancestral Sephardic connection to the Iberian Peninsula. He came from a powerful and well-established Sephardic family. His most noted ancestor, Rabbi Moses ben Nahman of Girona (1194-1270), also known as Nahmánides or Bonastruc da Porta, was Chief Rabbi of Catalonia and physician to King Jaume I of Aragon, best known for his role in a famous 1263 dispute, where he argued forcefully from the Hebrew scriptures that Jesus was not the Messiah. Despite the king’s



initial promise to grant Moses ben Nahman freedom of speech, the king was coerced by the Dominicans, and eventually the Pope, to banish the rabbi from Spain. Nahmánides escaped to Palestine in 1267, from where he corresponded extensively with his homeland.

Samuel Nahman, aka Manny Harriman, was born in 1919 in New York City. According to his niece, Nancy Blaustein, he grew up with the oral history of Nahmánides and the story of his family’s ability to survive the diaspora from Spain while remaining true to their values and maintaining their Sephardic identity. This included the tradition of naming all firstborn sons Joseph, in honor of Rabbi Nahman’s youngest son. Later, when the famous Jewish Encyclopedia was published in 1971, the family confirmed that the oral history about Rabbi Nahman’s disputation that had been passed down through generations was true.

As the son of two Sephardic parents born in present-day Turkey, Haim Joseph Nahman and Gentile Soulam, Sam Nahman grew up speaking Ladino. Only later, on a picket line, did he learn that his home language was a form of thirteenth-century Spanish, mixed with other languages reflecting the diaspora. Gregarious, social, and intelligent, Nahman had to leave school at the age of 13 to work with his father as a shoemaker, often working long hours from 8 am until midnight. New York of the 1930s was an unforgiving, divided, harsh place to live, especially for a first-generation Jew from a working-class community, but Nahman came from a loving, supportive, curious family with a strong value system that drove its ethics and a sense of identity. Nahman, with his parents’ permission, enlisted in the International Brigades when he was only 19. He fought from May to December 1938.

After Franco's death, Nahman returned to Spain several times. He also became involved with the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade as editor of *The Volunteer*. In 1983, he and his family traveled to Girona, where were welcomed with open arms. They were surprised to see that the cultural history of Nahmánides had been conserved and celebrated. In an interview with a local Girona newspaper, Nahman said: "Our parents have always spoken to us in Ladino, and we have maintained this language among ourselves. They also explained to us where we were from, where our families had lived for centuries. For this reason, it allows me to call myself Catalan, because I believe I am, rightly so, like everyone else who lives here." (After 1983, Nahman/Harriman set out to record the oral histories of all the remaining veterans. Today, the Manny Harriman Collection at Tamiment Library holds the testimonies of more than 180 veterans.)

Lini de Vries, who was born as Lena Moerkerk to Dutch immigrant parents in New Jersey, spent her early years in Paterson and worked in the silk mills as a child. In 1937, she volunteered as a nurse for the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy. Facing harassment from the FBI in the 1950s, she moved to Mexico, where she became a health activist in rural indigenous Mexico and a distinguished professor at the Universidad Veracruzana in Jalapa. Later in life, she wrote several memoirs, in which antisemitism looms large. Her mother, she explains, had married a Dutch protestant to hide her Jewish identity. After the 1940 German invasion, her Jewish family in Holland faced persecution. Later, Lini herself felt compelled to hide her Jewish heritage from her husband's family.

Still, as a Sephardic Jew, Lini felt a deep connection with her heritage. In a 1965 memoir, she describes the moment she first arrived in Spain:

I felt the impulse to pick up a handful of Spanish soil and keep it in my bosom. What a strange wish! I felt as if, after a long pilgrimage, I had returned home. Walking away from the group, I walked along the seashore. I was looking for solitude so that my hidden thoughts could emerge to the surface, while I contemplated the waves. I bent down to pick up a handful of sand. I squeezed it firmly. Three centuries earlier, Isabel had expelled my ancestors from Spain, Sephardic Jews, who, residing in Holland, helped liberate the country from Spanish domination in the 16th century. Now we were in the 20th century, in 1937. I was a first-generation American, although I felt Dutch. However, upon stepping onto Spanish land it seemed to me that I had finally returned to the pristine abode: the entire land hurt me. Who would I share my concerns with? With nobody. Deep is the loneliness of the human being.

The French volunteer César Covo, also of Sephardic origin, also felt a deep solidarity with the Spanish people despite his family's memory of inquisition, persecution, and expulsion. In his memoir, he recalls a dialogue with a fellow volunteer:

—Despite the Inquisition, you did not hesitate to go, while yours were tortured there in other times. Maybe you're going with the intention of getting revenge?

—First of all, I am going as an anti-fascist, which would be reason enough. As for the Inquisition, it is true that there is still some resentment, but let us carefully examine the problem of that time, who were the architects of the Inquisition? That was not caused by the Spanish people nor by the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, it is known that at that time the common people encouraged the persecuted to accept baptism, considering that this solution was preferable to exile and persecution. The bourgeoisie and part of the nobility, came to the aid of the persecuted, in many cases lent them their Spanish surnames to save them from the Inquisition. Today a good number of those Sephardic Jews preserve the names and surnames that the Spanish offered to their ancestors.

The memoirs of Nahman, De Vries, and Covo suggest that the Spanish Civil war resonated strongly with Jewish people of Sephardic heritage. What is striking about these three volunteers is their expansive sense of collective memory—a memory that connects rather than competes. They are perfect examples of that Michael Rothberg calls "multi-directional memory." Considering collective memory in multicultural and transnational contexts, Rothberg allows us to see links between memories of trauma and oppression that may span several centuries—for example, tying the Holocaust to the history of colonialism. The International Brigades, of course, were true laboratory of multidirectional memory in this sense: Some 35,000 individuals from around the world took their lived and generational experiences with trauma, injustice and oppression and transformed them into action in the fight against fascism. Instead of waging a competitive struggle for recognition of their own group, as if recognition were a scarce resource, they made connections. In a similar way, Harlem writer Langston Hughes, a war correspondent during the Spanish Civil War, pointed to the deep links between European fascism and racist oppression in the United States.

Rather than viewing oppression through the lens of disparate group identities, as we often see happen today, these three memoirs recognize and identify their entanglement. As Sephardic Jews, Nahman, De Vries and Covo, each in their own way, were driven by their own multigenerational memory of persecution, which compelled them to recognize Spain as their long-lost homeland, while also presenting a case for solidarity with the Spanish people as victims of injustice. "The International Brigades were a babble of tongues," Samuel later wrote in his letter to his daughter. "But it was such a healing sight, to be part of this battle, of people all subjugating their own individual interests—communists, socialists, independents... people who would not see eye to eye in every single thing—to come together." ▲

Delicia Nahman, a niece of Samuel Nahman, grew up in L.A., is a graduate of UC Berkeley, and has lived in Mexico and Chile. She holds an MBA in Sustainability from Bard and currently works as Sustainability Director at Lafayette College in Easton, PA. Katherine O. Stafford, Associate Professor of Spanish at Lafayette College, is the author of several books and articles about the Spanish Civil War, including Narrating War in Peace: The Spanish Civil War in the Transition and Today (Palgrave 2015).

VICENT ANDRÉS ESTELLÉS: MEMORY AS RESISTANCE

By Dean Burrier Sanchis

This month marks the centenary celebrations for the Valencian poet Vicent Andrés Estellés (1924-1993), born 100 years ago on September 4, 1924. While he is widely considered the greatest poet in the modern history of the Valencian language, the political Right seems bent on silencing his legacy.

In February, the center-right Partido Popular (PP) and far-right Vox, which in Valencia and elsewhere are trying to turn back the progressive memory policies instituted in recent years, teamed up to deny Vicent Estellés his centenary, branding him a Catalan nationalist. The truth is different. Not only is the poet a threat to the Right's monolingual Spanish identity, but his work also recalls the brutal reality of the Franco dictatorship. Simply put, the PP and Vox would rather we forget. Remembering Estellés, his experiences, his literary work and legacy provides an invaluable resource for Valencians to construct our identity and understand not only who we are but what our experiences collectively have been. Forgetting Estellés, by contrast, serves to deny Valencian identity and provoke the further alienation of Valencians from themselves.

Estellés was born in Burjassot, a town just to the north of the Valencian capital, connected today by a tram route named in the poet's honor. The son of the town's baker, Estellés experienced the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War as a young boy at the same time as he began writing his first poems and plays. He immersed himself in the books of a neighbor and watched with horror as many volumes were destroyed for legitimate fear of repression following the fascist takeover. Because Estellés did not go into exile, his work provides a window into the realities of the Franco regime. He first worked as a baker, like his father, then dabbled in a variety of labor trades before deciding to study journalism. While studying journalism, he published his first poems, a collection of Spanish translations of poems he originally wrote in Valencian. He worked as head editor of Valencian newspaper *Las Provincias* for 30 years, starting in 1948, while also publishing many poetry collections. He married in 1955 and the couple suffered the death of their first child at just four months. The tragedy marked Estellés forever.

Estellés suffered linguistic oppression and censorship, with many texts only coming to light posthumously—indeed, thirty years after his death, much of it is still forthcoming. Estellés over time felt increasingly empowered to write about these difficult experiences, as he found his voice as a representative of his people, the Valencians. His greatest work is perhaps “Mural del País Valencià” (Mural of the Valencian Country), an ambitious project made up of 27 collections across three volumes that sought to capture everything about the Valencian Country. “Mural” would only begin to see the light in 1978 after Franco's death and the Transition.

The war and dictatorship are deeply woven through his work, along with the themes of love and death. In the gut-wrenching poem “A mi acorda un dictat” (“I'm Reminded of a Dictation”) Estellés uncovers his own traumatic memories of the Civil War. Here is a fragment (the translation is mine):

You have followed the road
made by the train, grimly, burning through la Mancha
—in Chinchilla they loaded the prisoners with their
hands
knotted with chords; it was midnight:
tight, against their clothing, beards from so many
days,
the repugnance of hunger, and also the repugnance
of waiting in fear, of the smell of war,
of trucks and trenches, of that precarious ranch
of chickpeas and dirty water (...)
As if instead of the prison those men came out
from the trench or from an improvised shelter
without understanding anything, barely questioning
«I was in Badajoz and what am I going to say...»
«What I saw on the Ebro...», «It was barbarity», (...)
«I only remember the fear»
«I spent the war reading, in an attic
(so that the beasts of the village would not kill me),
The Criterion of (Jaime Luciano) Balmes again and
again...»
«I was ten years old...» «Very hungry, very afraid»



The poem “Declaració de principis” (“Declaration of Principles”), published posthumously in 1996, underscores the indistinguishable barbarity between the war and the post-war years:

I come from a town, Burjassot, from neatly swept and mopped streets
 that never recovered from the horror of the war
 that kingdom of dead, those of the war and the post-war,
 I went out, taking careful steps,
 full of kisses and wounds,
 without comprehending anything or understanding anything.

Estellés also penned several poems that pay homage to well-known literary figures who died during the Spanish Civil War period: Federico García Lorca, Antonio Machado (who sought refuge in Rocafort, Valencia, practically neighboring Estellés’ hometown Burjassot), and fellow Valencian poet Miguel Hernández, a Communist who died of tuberculosis in a Francoist prison in 1942.

Hernández’s centenary, widely celebrated in 2010, brought him and his work back into the forefront of public consciousness. Estellés, too, can be brought to the light. Fortunately, despite the lack of institutional support, the people of Valencia have taken up his banner. Musical tributes by Valencian artists such as Pau Alabajos, Obrint Pas, Xavi Sarria, Mar Morález, and bérnia are only one indicator. The fight for historical memory includes fighting for literary memory to defeat the sinister attempts by the Spanish right to turn back clocks and close access to the book of the past. ▲

Dean Burrier Sanchis is a high school Spanish teacher and former soccer coach at Elk Grove High School. His Spanish-born grandfather, Vicente Sanchis Amades, was a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

DANCING FOR DEMOCRACY: JANET RIESENFELD'S SPANISH MEMOIR

By Maria Labbato

How the 22-year-old Jewish American dancer Janet Riesenfeld performed flamenco to help raise money for the Second Republic under fascist attack.

With dimmed lights, the wail of a guitar fills up the tiny Madrid apartment that doubles as a dance studio overflowing with dancers, bullfighters, and *gitanos*—the historical, yet often discriminatory, Spanish term for gypsies or Roma people. The dancer moves slowly, while her upward tilted chin and the loud stomp of her heel reflected a resilient pride. Her arms raised slowly, heels clicking the wood floor, she entices her spectators like a *torero* taunting his bull. Her pace quickens with each defiant move as the *cante jondo* (deep song) calls out and inspires shouts of “¡olé, la americanita!”

This is how we might remember the Jewish American dancer Janet Riesenfeld Alcoriza (1914-1998), who performed flamenco to help raise money for the Second Republic under fascist attack during the early months of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

What did dance, and foreign women, have to do with the civil conflict in Spain? The anarchist-in-exile and eyewitness to the Civil War Emma Goldman asserted that a revolution that forbade dancing and the enjoyment of beauty was not the movement for her. The acclaimed dancer and choreographer Martha Graham spent time in Spain, supported the Loyalist cause, and styled her 1938 *American Document* as an anti-fascist expression. Yet Janet Riesenfeld, who was only 22 at the time, seems to have slipped through the cracks of history, despite the fact that she danced flamenco—the musical tradition woven into Spanish historical identity and at its root is one of Roma resistance—at pro-Loyalist banquets as she developed a fierce political consciousness, forcefully expressed in her 1938 memoir, *Dancer in Madrid*.

Riesenfeld was one of the many artists, writers, musicians, photographers, and dancers who supported the Republican cause, along with tens of thousands of volunteers who joined the International Brigades. Opposing the democratic world powers' policy of non-intervention, dance would become Riesenfeld's vehicle of resistance and the preservation of democracy. Born in New York to the renowned Jewish Austrian composer Hugo Riesenfeld, she recounts in her memoir that she learned Spanish and dance young, but did not care much for the uptight ballet. In the Rivoli Theater, Riesenfeld became enamored with flamenco. After her family moved to California, she met a Catalan man, Jaime Castanys. This first meeting was brief and Riesenfeld married another man. Years later, the nearly divorced Riesenfeld rendezvoused with Jaime in Mexico

City, where she performed flamenco under the name Raquel Rojas. They fell in love—her divorce later became finalized during her stay in Spain—and when Jaime's family business required his return to Spain, he instructed her to wait before joining him across the Atlantic. Impatient and ignoring his direction, Riesenfeld enthusiastically left the US to meet her love in Madrid and fulfill a flamenco concert engagement. Stuck at Spain's border, she crossed the Pyrenees in the summer of 1936 just as the Civil War broke out by moonlighting as a journalist's translator.

Riesenfeld's growing political consciousness began not at the front or in international volunteer units like the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, but in the common, everyday spaces of civilian life. During the American's early weeks in Madrid, Riesenfeld observed in her memoir, normal life persisted despite the fact that the “enemy was only some sixty miles away.” This business-as-usual extended to art and entertainment: movie pictures ran, cafés were full of people chatting over coffee for hours, and the gala theatrical season was in full swing. This desire for entertainment, arts, and sociability can be read as modes of ordinary resistance to the engulfing war. But artists and entertainers also put their talents at the service of the cause. Riesenfeld writes:

For a nominal entrance fee, you were able to see all the outstanding artists of Spain. These were benefit performances for the hospitals; in time of peace you could not have seen so many performers in one evening for any amount of money. They worked indefatigably, giving as many as five different benefits a day. As soon as they finished in one theater, they were hurried in cars to appear at another. Seldom have entertainers been so generous in devoting their services and talents.

As Riesenfeld politicized, she performed at Madrid's Loyalist banquets during the early months of the Civil War. She practiced daily at the small apartment studio run by the Albaicín family, to prepare for a scheduled concert tour. This was an intimate space in which a family of instructors and artists lived, socialized, and welcomed Riesenfeld. She claimed they “were kept busy” and “dancing as often as five times a day at the benefits.” The defense of Madrid transpired in apartments that doubled as dance studios; groups created performances for the stages and streets to support the Loyalist cause in the early months of the war. At the Teatro de la

Opposing the democratic world powers' policy of non-intervention, dance would become Riesenfeld's vehicle of resistance and the preservation of democracy.

Zarzuela, the largest theater in Madrid and remaining in business through the war, Riesenfeld danced at one of Madrid's last significant war banquets. A massive crowd enjoyed hundreds of performers and paid homage to Federico García Lorca, the beloved poet who had recently been executed by the Nationalists.

While dance fueled her romanticized view of Spain, Riesenfeld's support of the Second Republic evolved into a genuine one. As a translator, she made connections in the Ministry of Information. She learned some of the complexities of the Spanish conflict by forging friendships at the Press Building. To be sure, there was a healthy amount of propaganda, which proliferated during the Spanish Civil War on both sides. But through dance and intimate conversations with *madrileños* the American gained a sense of historical inequality and tensions within a society still somewhat characterized as "feudal" with wide segments of the population oppressed by wealthy landowners. Simultaneously, the dancer recalled Jaime's characterization of Andalusians' as in perpetual *siesta* and Madrid reluctant to industrialism, "We could become a great industrial country with the proper discipline. It would take no time to have the machines and real progress if we had a small and efficient group to run things." Riesenfeld formed her own perspective. She writes: "I already had found an apartment, seen Jaime every minute he was not working and encountered a growing circle of friends, ranging from colorful and amusing gypsies to the aristocratic business associates of Jaime. I must say I preferred the gypsies."

Indeed, the dancer spent little time near the front and instead documented ordinary forms of survival and resistance in Madrid: listening to la Pasionaria on the radio, admiring market women haggling over the day's scarcity of onions and their preparation of hot oil on women's stoves if Madrid's citizen-made fortification broke, while children waiting in milk lines became sitting targets for explosives. *Dancer in Madrid* exposes Jaime's transformation as well. He had previously referred to himself as a Catalan; now, as the fighting neared, he proclaimed himself a Spaniard and reminded Riesenfeld of her ignorance on Spanish topics. Her love affair with a Nationalist provided her with a unique experience for a foreign woman exposed to

FRIDAY MORNING. Los Angeles

Dancer Near Death in War

Los Angeles Girl's Experiences in Spain Told on Return

The first rebel bomb that crashed down on terrified Madrid, bringing death to forty women and children waiting patiently in line for their milk ration, burst within fifteen feet of an American girl dancer, Janet Riesenfeld.

Miraculously she escaped injury and yesterday returned to Los Angeles on the Santa Fe Chief to be greeted by her mother, Mrs. Hugo Riesenfeld, who daily had feared for her daughter's safety during her four months in the Spanish capital.

TO WRITE STORY

The 21-year-old dancer, known professionally as Raquel Rojas, is the daughter of Dr. Riesenfeld, 1408 Laurel avenue.

She was accompanied by Julius Klein, writer and war correspondent, who met her in New York, where she signed a contract with Bennet Cerf, publisher, to write her Spanish experiences under the title, "I Lived My Life at 21."

"For the first time in my life, I am realizing what it means to be alive. I have seen so much death," she declared yesterday, very poised and smart in her black velvet ensemble, a dashing little hat on her black curls.

BRUTALITY TOLD

The rebel attack on Madrid was an example of horrible bru-

WELCOMED HOME FROM LAND OF TURMOIL



Janet Riesenfeld, Hollywood dancer, being greeted by her mother, Mrs. Hugo Riesenfeld, on her arrival here yesterday with thrilling tales of her experiences in Spain. She escaped injury when a bomb fell within fifteen feet of her.

Times photo

various perspectives. Yet, their ideological differences and estrangement provide a glimpse of Spain's fault lines:

It wasn't an abstraction, but an elemental, concrete question. Living in Spain meant that our whole life would be colored by the outcome of this political issue. In this generation in Spain even love is dominated by devotion to a social belief. If I, as an outsider, found it difficult to compromise, how could Jaime do so?

With each Nazi-made bomb dropping on Madrid, tensions in the relationship grew. Riesenfeld had already become unwilling to appease Jaime when she discovered he boarded an older woman in her apartment who was later executed on charges of

smuggling ammunition to Nationalist snipers. Soon after, the dancer broke up with Jaime. Weeks later, in the middle of the Nationalist siege on Madrid, she identified his body at the makeshift morgue for government assassinations of rebel spies.

Admitting to being a burden, Riesenfeld heeded the Republican government's call for foreign civilians to leave Spain in late 1936. Back in the US, the dancer published her memoir in 1938 as a plea for the American defense of Spanish democracy. Along with its romance and intrigue, it received warm reviews for her coverage of the civil war. Later, Riesenfeld moved to Mexico, where in 1946 she married the screenwriter and director Luis Alcoriza, a Spanish Republican exile and close collaborator of Luis Buñuel. As a screenwriter and actress in her own right, Riesenfeld worked on more than 50 films.

Riesenfeld's is a fascinating story of the interwar "modern woman." It also reaffirms that the war in Spain awakened or reinforced a commitment to transnational anti-fascism—a mission that often carried on in social justice causes such as the civil rights, anti-war, and labor movements. ▲

Maria Labbato is an independent scholar and history teacher at Providence Day School in Charlotte, North Carolina. Her dissertation focused on American women and the Spanish Civil War and her broader research interests include gender and exile in Mexico.

Martha Gellhorn and Spain

The time she spent in civil-war Spain loomed large in the life of Martha Gellhorn, the St. Louis-born war journalist. “The truth is that Martha could not stop thinking, feeling, and writing about her Spanish experiences.”

By Michael Ugarte

“Objectivity bullshit.” That’s what Martha Gellhorn (1908-1998) called the journalism of her day. Her letters to personalities like Eleanor Roosevelt, H. G. Wells, John Dos Passos and of course Ernest Hemingway, her companion, lover and husband in the 1930s and 1940s, were anything but measured. Gellhorn—an American journalist, novelist, antifascist, and defender of the victims of war, especially children—was not known for mincing words.

Although she was among the most audaciously progressive voices of those years, she was not the only writer who yearned to go beyond “objective” and “impartial” reporting. Together with many of the authors gathered at the 1935 Writers Congress, she sought to redefine political engagement. But this does not mean that her work was propaganda. The fact that Gellhorn did not hold back did not mean she hid her dilemmas, doubts, or contradictory emotions.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, she grew up in a posh neighborhood on McPherson Street to which she often returned throughout her life. Her father, George, was a German-born gynecologist; her mother, Edna, the daughter of a professor of medicine and well-known for her activism for women’s suffrage. Edna was a graduate of Bryn Mawr, where she had met Eleanor Roosevelt, who would remain a close friend of the Gellhorn

family. It is clear from her letters that Martha adored and admired her mother, not only for her affection for her four children, but also for her exemplary courage and activism. In 1916, Edna brought an eight-year-old Martha to a demonstration she had organized for women’s rights.

For Martha, the contradiction between her egalitarian ideas and her socio-economic privileges caused her considerable anguish, an anxiety manifested itself in virtually all her writing. Following her mother’s advice, she enrolled at Bryn Mawr but was uneasy about her status as a well-to-do student. After dropping out of college, she landed a job as a reporter for the *Albany Times Union*. But being a small-time reporter was equally unsatisfying, especially when the editor did not publish what she believed her most engaging writing, such as the story of a woman who lost custody of her daughter for smoking during her working hours. She left the paper, returned home, and dedicated herself to writing without objections or censorship. But life in St. Louis bored her. Her letters in this stage of her life manifested the restlessness of a sophisticated, energetic, spoiled woman who abhors the provincialism of her surroundings. What she yearned for could only be found in Europe. With the tacit approval of her parents and about five hundred dollars, she set off for the “City of Light.”

In Paris she worked first in a beauty salon and then as a reader for magazines and newspapers, sometimes editing advertisements. But even here in the city of modernist culture—where she coincided with Picasso, Buñuel, Cocteau, and Josephine Baker, a newcomer to Paris who sang and danced in the fashionable cabarets—she could not express her creativity, until she met the man who helped her launch her literary career, the writer and philosopher, Bertrand de Jouvenel, who fell in love with her.

It is clear from her letters that she loved him, less for his physical and emotional attraction than for being a prominent man with advanced ideas—a philosopher, a connoisseur of economic policy, a liberal activist and scholar of fascism, an ideology that was sweeping Europe. Hitler and Mussolini were on the rise, leading a violent movement that sought to crush the democratic principles to which Jouvenel, Gellhorn, and others aspired. Indeed, from the beginning to the end of her life, Martha did everything she could as a writer to build not only the idea of democracy but the practice of it, working tirelessly for children, women, workers, ordinary people with whom she interacted on a daily basis.

Principles were not enough for her. More than her romantic relationships, more than the fascination and intellectual curiosity, Martha’s longed to become a jour-

nalist and novelist. She wrote constantly. Among her early works is a collection of four short stories, *The Trouble I've Seen*, in which she portrays the sorrows she had witnessed. The book included a celebrated short piece, "Justice at Night," about a lynching, drawn from her travels through the South. Still, she constantly complained in her letters that her writings fell short due to the distractions that surrounded her: the relationship with Jouvenel (a married man whose wife was unwilling to divorce), the living conditions she witnessed, and the desire to change them. In 1934, as the relationship with Jouvenel faltered, she returned to St. Louis.

Back in the US, she got in touch with her mother's friend in the White House, Eleanor Roosevelt, an energetic defender of the millions of Americans suffering from unemployment, hunger and misery. With the support of the Roosevelts, Martha joined the Federal Emergency Relief Agency (FERA) designed to provide economic aid to unemployed workers. She once encouraged some workers in the state of Idaho to throw rocks at the windows of the building housing the agency, which in her opinion did nothing to protect "those poor people." She was fired, which she considered an honor.

The president's wife admired Martha's feistiness. Their fascinating correspondence discusses class inequality, the international threat to democracy, the power



of trade unions, as well as personal issues such as love, motherhood, and books that had impressed the two women. Eleanor was something of a mother figure to Martha. The first lady wrote flattering comments about her in her celebrated syndicated column "My Day," published six times a week in hundreds of newspapers and magazines around the country. About *The Trouble I've Seen* she wrote: "The writing of this woman, young, beautiful, literate, from a good family, with exquisite Parisian tastes and admirable spirit, cannot be underestimated." From what we now know about

Mrs. Roosevelt, and reading into their correspondence, her friendship with Martha may have gone farther than that, hidden in the closets of the White House.

After her father's death in January 1936, Martha traveled with her family to Key West for a Christmas holiday, and there she met Hemingway, then the famous author of *The Sun Also Rises* and *Farewell to Arms*. It was at a bar where the novelist spent time carousing with other writers. Years later, Gellhorn insisted that her relationship with Hemingway was only one episode in her life, that it did not define her character, much less her writings. Beginning in the sixties and well through her life, she insisted on not talking about "Scrooby," the nickname she coined for him. When journalists asked about her relationship with him, she refused to answer. She was fed up with the lack of attention to her abundant writings:

essays, novels, short stories, chronicles of various wars she covered as a reporter. Still, it's hard to deny that were it not for E.H., Martha's life would have taken a different direction.

When Martha returned to St. Louis from Key West, she was eager to go to Spain. Hemingway, equally enamored of his new friend, was willing to accompany her to the war-torn nation. Hemingway would provide her with what she wanted: direct contact with the country, not as a tourist but as a writer/journalist. She needed to see the war with her own eyes,

The contradiction between her egalitarian ideas and her socio-economic privileges caused her considerable anguish.

no matter the danger. In 1937, after obtaining an official designation from *Colliers* as a “special correspondent,” she joined him at the Hotel Florida in Madrid.

These are the years Martha wrote what are the best of her journalistic pieces. In *Colliers* in June 1937, “Only the Shells Whine,” there is no shortage of novelistic touches, metaphors, action, and graphic descriptions. “At first the shells went over: you could hear the thud as they left the fascist guns,” she writes. “As they came closer the sound went faster and straighter [until] you heard the great booming noise when they fell.” In another story covering the war, “Men without Medals” (January 1938), Gellhorn zeroes in on the men in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. It begins with a dialogue between the reporter and a “little soldier with pink cheeks, spectacles and a Brooklyn accent.” He shows her a grenade, asking: “Wanna see how it works?” “No, pal,” the reporter replies, “I believe you.” His fellow soldiers laugh at him as he tries to flirt with the beautiful journalist. One of them is Andy Anderson, the son of farmers from Nebraska, who has seen his comrades die at Belchite and is among the few “survivors of the first American battalion.” Gellhorn does not delve into historical or ideological facts; she prefers direct discourse to that “objectivity bullshit.” She is interested in the soldiers as human beings. Why did they cross the Pyrenees in the snow? Why don’t they give them veterans’ medals? Why are they insulted in their own country for sympathizing with communists? And why don’t Andy’s countrymen realize the emergency of the Spanish situation?

Surprisingly, Gellhorn never wrote any fiction set in Spain. As she states in several instances, she could not bring herself to do so while Hemingway was on his way to deliver *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. When in 1940 Gellhorn published her own novel about 1930s fascism, *A Stricken Field*, it was set in Czechoslovakia. Spain and the anti-fascist war was her most heart-felt cause, but perhaps that

was precisely what made it too difficult to turn into a novel. She set her story elsewhere not to allow for objectivity but for distance. In *A Stricken Field*, the protagonist summarizes the instructions she got from her newspaper editors: “[Write] without propaganda, they told me. They wanted descriptions from within: clear, colorful, dynamic. But how? If I knew how, I would write a lament, I would tell how the children of Spain, in Barcelona, sang in that cold and windy month of March when the planes dropped bombs that fell with the speed of the wind for a few interminable moments...”

The truth is that Martha could not stop thinking, feeling, and writing about her Spanish experiences. Among the later writings on Francoist Spain is a piece she wrote for *New York Magazine*, on the death of the “generalísimo,” entitled “When Franco Died” (1976). On the same day of his death, she traveled to Madrid and stayed not at the Hotel Florida, which had already made way for a department store, but at the Palace Hotel, which was a hospital during the Civil War. As she walks around the hotel, Gellhorn observes, ever the journalist, that the same room where the television set is broadcasting images of Franco’s corpse while some ladies wipe away tears, is very same room that, years ago, housed half-dead soldiers of the Second Republic with amputated arms and legs. She remembers the smell of ether, stale food, and blood-spattered marble stairs. She also remembers Madrid in the winter of 1937, the day 275 bombs fell on the city, causing 32 dead and more than 200 seriously wounded. On the night of Franco’s funeral, she attends an illegal meeting organized by wives of political prisoners. “The wives were heartbreakingly optimistic,” she writes. “They expected the jails to empty in a fortnight.”

Everywhere, says Gellhorn, people are slowly beginning to take risks by speaking freely, although no one forgets that the only one who had died was Franco, not the policemen who were still very much alive and active. Let’s not forget, she continues, that the process known

as the “transition” democracy is more cosmetic than democratic. When Franco died, she goes on, the Civil Guard continued to commit acts of brutality, as in the case of an engineering student who had been beaten into a coma in the same hospital where the dictator had died. There were two forms of torture happening, she points out: the dying head of state whose final days seemed and the torture on the street carried out by agents of that same man.

During the Spanish transition Gellhorn was approaching seventy. Many would say that she had more than fulfilled her literary aspirations. After Spain and Czechoslovakia, she covered multiple wars: she wrote about World War II from Finland; she traveled to Hong Kong to cover the Chinese revolution, then to Singapore. She wrote about the Nuremberg trials, Jerusalem, and Eichmann’s testimony, the Israeli-Palestinian wars, U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, and the struggle for civil rights in the United States. But her writerly legacy does not only consist of journalistic pieces and reports of real events; she also produced narrative fiction. In addition to *A Stricken Field*, she wrote other novels, novellas, and short stories. (Her 1967 novel *The Lowest Trees Have Tops*, a story about the Red Scare, set in Mexico, is worthy of reconsideration.) She mused in her later correspondence to friends (the few that were left) that she could have written much more. At the age of ninety she died from what was probably, according to Moorehead, a suicide. She had always been determined to write her own script, without mincing words. ▲

Author’s note: I am indebted to Caroline Moorehead, who in addition to writing a penetrating biography of Gellhorn and editing her Selected Letters, has generously replied to my emails.

Michael Ugarte is Professor Emeritus of Spanish at the University of Missouri. A longer version of this article appeared in Spanish in the online journal FronteraD.



DOCUMENTARY, CAMOUFLAGED

How Did *The Spanish Earth* Reach A Wide US Audience?

By Tanya Goldman

In the 1930s, documentaries were shut out of mainstream commercial movie houses. Joris Ivens's legendary film about the Spanish war reached thousands of viewers nonetheless.

Of the many films produced to support the fight against Franco, none match the renown of *The Spanish Earth* (1937, directed by Dutch documentarian Joris Ivens with the involvement of Ernest Hemingway. Nearly ninety years after its release, it remains a landmark in documentary history, offering—in the words of Ivens biographer Thomas Waugh—“the definitive model of the international solidarity genre.” While Ivens and his compatriots hoped to bring the film to millions to inaugurate broader support for the beleaguered republic, *The Spanish Earth* never reached an audience comparable to those regularly attained by Hollywood feature films. Still, thanks to the efforts of progressive activists and the film's scrappy distributor, it garnered considerable press coverage and reached thousands at a time when documentaries—especially those advancing “radical” causes—were entirely shut out of mainstream commercial movie houses.

By the time he arrived in the United States in 1936, Ivens, a Communist, was already a respected filmmaker among the global Left. He also shared their outrage over America's inaction to aid the Spanish Republic. In crafting what would become *The Spanish Earth*, Ivens and his collaborators (who included Hemingway, playwright Lillian Hellman, and poet Archibald MacLeish) carefully calibrated the film's scenario and voiceover to appeal to politically moderate viewers. As Ivens recalled in 1969, “we were too eager for a wide theatrical release to risk being either too ‘political’ or too ‘educational.’” References to “fascism” and “Communism” were avoided. Instead, the 53-minute film balances footage shot by handheld camera on the front lines with humanistic imagery of rural Spanish life: a soldier eating a piece of fruit, fresh bread being served for breakfast; the film's quasi-protagonist Juan reuniting with his family. Put simply, the documentary casts the war in Spain as a fight for human survival.

We were too eager for a wide theatrical release to risk being either too 'political' or too 'educational.'

Ivens, accompanied on the ground by Hemingway, shot the film in the spring of 1937. He returned to the U.S. to edit. In June, Hemingway performed a live reading of his narration over a silent "rough cut" of the film at a meeting of the CPU-SA-sponsored League of American Writers. A preview of the final version screened at the White House on July 7 and at the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris International Exposition later that month. Ivens made the rounds in Los Angeles, presenting *The Spanish Earth* at the posh Ambassador Hotel and in the homes of Joan Crawford, John Ford, and Frederic March. These West Coast screenings reached an estimated audience of 6,000 and yielded \$20,000 in donations that were used to buy materials for Loyalist troops.

The official theatrical premiere took place at New York City's 55th Street Playhouse, a prestigious arthouse theater, on August 20, 1937, and garnered praise from mainstream critics and leftist journalists. *The Nation* optimistically reported that the producers were on their way to distributing the film to more than 800 theaters, surely inaugurating a groundswell of support for the Spanish Republic.

This optimism was misplaced. Documentaries were always a hard sell to exhibitors; conservative hostility to the Republican cause likely made commercial distributors and exhibitors skittish. With few options, *The Spanish Earth* team settled on small New York distribution company Garrison Films, helmed by labor activist Tom Brandon, who was known as "a radical and deeply sympathetic to the Spanish cause." The North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy—which had donated \$4,000 to the film's production—was authorized to screen the film widely at political meetings for fundraising. While Ivens and his team were relieved to find a distributor, Garrison tended to distribute Soviet feature films and short films to noncommercial institutions; it had few ties with major theatrical exhibitors. Thus, *The Spanish Earth* found itself relegated to the marginal networks typical of the era's political documentaries. For Ivens, this disappointment still stung decades later: "We fell back into the limited channels available for documentary that we thought we could get out of this time."

Conscious of the market limitations imposed on nonfiction films of all political persuasions, Garrison Films devised a nonpartisan marketing strategy for exhibitors. The company advised against using referring to *The Spanish Earth* as a "documentary" and recommended touting the prominent cultural figures, like Hemingway, affiliated with the project:

Sell ... as a story of people, their struggle, in human terms ... avoid ... such phrases as "a documentary film" ... the [great] interest [has] a definite relationship to the film's distinguished collaborators... They are not arty, they are not amateurs, they are not propagandists. They are brilliant and successful writers on the commercial screen,

the national radio networks, [and] Broadway... Use their names and their importance to give importance to your showing of THE SPANISH EARTH.

Garrison also prepared a set of promotional materials, including a large poster for exhibitors with a collage of newspapers overlaid on a map of the United States under the headline "Unprecedented Acclaim!" This promotional gesture—a visual blanketing of the country from coast to coast—served, perhaps, more as wish fulfillment for a mass nationwide circulation that would never materialize.

Yet rather than dismissing the film's circulation as a failure by comparing it to Hollywood, we should acknowledge that *The Spanish Earth* is very likely the most widely screened leftist documentary in the United States of the entire interwar period. Through the collaborative efforts of Ivens and his producers, Garrison Films, and anti-fascist activists, *The Spanish Earth* was exhibited across 30 states and Puerto Rico from the fall of 1937 to the end of '38. It screened in small independent movie theaters and urban arthouses (even if in Pennsylvania it required the Governor overriding an initial ban by censors to do so). It was shown in noncommercial venues, including colleges and universities, union halls and ethnic worker clubs, and "red" summer camps, and at fundraisers held by the American Medical Bureau, the Lincoln Battalion, North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, and other like-minded groups. Prints of the film were also purchased by small distributors in Brussels, London, and Paris, as well as by individuals in Argentina and the Netherlands.

Screenings of *The Spanish Earth* continued intermittently into 1939, though largely ceased after Franco's victory on April 1. By this time, Garrison Films and Ivens had shifted gears to promote his latest documentary, *The 400 Million*, about China's resistance to Japanese aggression. The film would suffer a similar fate as its predecessor.

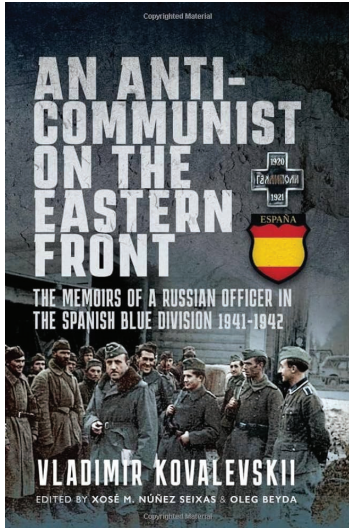
Tracking *The Spanish Earth's* circulation illustrates the structural limitations imposed on American leftist political documentary but also the profound political commitments and solidarity shared among the global Left and fellow travelers during the Popular Front period. Ivens's film remains a landmark work of documentary art birthed by the urgency of political and humanitarian crisis. It also testifies to the idealistic faith in documentary's ability to transform the world—an ethos that continues to inspire progressive activists to produce and disseminate media today. ▲

*Dr. Tanya Goldman is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Cinema Studies at Bowdoin College. She can be contacted via her website tanyagoldmanphd.com. Digitized copies of *The Spanish Earth* circulate widely online, including via the Internet Archive and YouTube.*

Book Reviews

An Anti-Communist on the Eastern Front: The Memoirs of a Russian Officer in the Spanish Blue Division, 1941-1942, by Vladimir Kovalevskii, edited by Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas and Oleg Beyda. Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2023. vii + 249 pp.

Reviewed by Brian J. Griffith



In *An Anti-Communist on the Eastern Front*, Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas and Oleg Beyda reconstruct the scattered memoirs of Vladimir Kovalevskii, a White Russian volunteer soldier who led an adventurous life. After fighting against the Red Army in Russia's bloody civil war (1917-1922), he enlisted with the French Foreign Legion, serving a number of years in North Africa before moving to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, most likely in the mid-

1920s. Two years after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, he relocated to Spain to volunteer for Franco's *coup d'état* against the Second Spanish Republic, along with a handful of other exiled White Russian soldiers known as the "White Guards."

After the war, Kovalevskii began laying down roots in Spain but hoped to return to Russia to redress his grievances with the "the common enemy – Communism" and restore Tsarist Russia to the political map of twentieth-century Eurasia. "The Whites saw themselves as the last pillars of imperial Russia," the authors explain in their introduction, and "it was precisely they, exiles without passport or a penny to their name, who were, in their opinion, the real Russians."

Following the outbreak of World War II and Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Kovalevskii and a number of his White Russian companions finally got the opportunity they had been waiting for. Although neither the Spanish or German military leaderships were interested in Russian volunteers, Franco's dictatorship eventually gave way, enlisting dozens of White Guards and other Russian émigré volunteers for mobilization towards the Eastern Front. Yet to Kovalevskii's and many other Russians' chagrin, they were not allowed to officially join the Spanish Blue Division, the contingent of Spanish volunteers fighting for the Nazis.

Following a less-than-spectacular march through the streets of the Spanish city of Burgos, which had served as the base of operations for Franco's military uprising during the civil war, the

Spanish 250th Infantry Division set out for the Eastern Front by way of France, Germany, and Poland. Upon arriving in the eastern fringes of a now occupied Poland, Kovalevskii frequently observed what he believed to be the socio-cultural remnants of his "old Russia." As the Blue Division crossed into the western stretches of the Soviet Union, Kovalevskii saw half-emptied villages and—in his view, happily—ideologically-indifferent populations.

In his mind, Kovalevskii was returning to his homeland as a patriotic liberator, not an anti-Bolshevik aggressor. "The sincere joy of liberation from the Bolshevik yoke," he wishfully explained, "was visible on everyone's face." Kovalevskii found vestiges of Imperial Russia surviving in the shadows everywhere: "Pre-revolutionary Russia's old family way of life had not suffered" under the twenty-four years of Bolshevik rule, and the "authority of the father and mother was still strong." While "the Soviet regime was horrible," he laconically concludes, Russians "had maintained [a] purity of soul."

Kovalevskii makes a number of observations of both his Spanish and German co-combatants, including what he viewed as the former's incurable backwardness ("every Spaniard is an *embustero* [rogue or cheat] by nature" and the latter's tendency towards fanatical leader worship (the "deification of the *Führer* in Germany... was revolting to people").

Kovalevskii also witnessed minor episodes in the Nazi-led genocide against the European Jewry. As the 250th Infantry Division briefly passed through the city of Grodno (in today's Belarus), he observed a group of Jews "who were particularly noticeable now by the yellow, five-point stars on their right breast," being forced by Wehrmacht soldiers to repair a heavily-damaged road: "It was pitiful to see," he writes, "without forgetting even the crimes of their fellow tribesmen, the young girls, yesterday's young ladies, puttering about in the dust and serving as a laughing stock for any passer-by." Kovalevskii notes that Jews "were only allowed to live in defined quarters of the city—the 'ghetto', and where there were few of them—in concentration camps." Neither "their rights nor their lives were protected by the law," he explains, "and if they got in someone's way, or as a means of repression, they could [be] 'taken out.'"

In February 1942, Kovalevskii came down with an unidentified illness while fighting on the Eastern Front and was evacuated to a military hospital in Russia's Novgorod *oblast*. The following day his military hospital was evacuated, due to westward-moving hostilities between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army and ended up being relocated to another military hospital near Cologne, Germany, where he remained until returning to San Sebastian, Spain a few months later. Although his post-WWII activities remain unclear, it appears Kovalevskii settled into some form of semi-retirement in Spain, which is where he began writing his memoirs as an unrepentant White Russian turned Nazi collaborator, most likely during the late-1940s and 1950s.

The revelation of Kovalevskii's experiences as a volunteer Russian soldier affiliated with the Blue Division has been made possible only with Seixas' and Beyda's painstaking, international archival research. The unexpected discovery of an incomplete version of Kovalevskii's memoirs at the Hoover Institution Library and Archives led them on a quest for the missing chapters

in Russia and Spain. (Having pieced together the memoirs and scattered writings of Ruth Williams Ricci, another far-right war volunteer during the interwar decades, I can attest to how difficult this kind of piece-by-piece archival research is.)

Aside from a fascinating glimpse into the frontline conditions experienced by soldiers and civilians in Poland and Russia during the highpoint of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, this well researched and translated book will undoubtedly serve as a valuable resource for both scholars and students interested in probing the motivations and perspectives of Nazi Germany's far-right collaborators before and during World War II.

Brian J. Griffith is an Assistant Professor of Modern European History at California State University, Fresno, where he specializes in the political and cultural history of modern Europe, including fascism. More at brianjgriffith.com.

Books Briefly Noted: Spain's Many Postwars

Carlos Rodríguez del Risco, *Yo he estado en Mauthausen*, edición crítica. Edited by Sara J. Brenneis. Cádiz: Editorial UCA, 2024. 304 pp.

Carmen Moreno-Nuño, *Haciendo Memoria: Confluencias entre la historia, la cultura y la memoria de la Guerra Civil en la España del siglo XXI*. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2019. 319 pp.

Reviewed by Joshua Goode

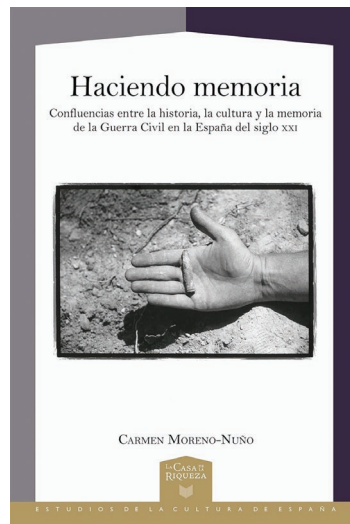


en Mauthausen, edited by Sara J. Brenneis, shows why personal narratives have been so essential for deepening our understanding of World War II. Rodríguez was a Republican soldier who fled to France after Franco's victory and fought the Nazis during World War II. After being imprisoned in a German concentration camp, he returned to Spain as a "Hitler apologist, fervent follower of Francisco Franco and a newly minted fervent fascist." Still, his testimony is an early depiction of the horrors of Nazi concentration camps.

Recent years have seen a growing number of books about the complex legacies of the Spanish Civil War and World War II. What sets these two titles apart is their broad focus, as they place Spain and its efforts to deal with its recent history within a global conversation about coming to terms with twentieth-century violence.

Carlos Rodríguez del Risco's diary *Yo he estado*

The diary and its initial serialized publication in the Falangista newspaper, *Arriba*, becomes in Brenneis's excellent introduction a powerful example of the complex political maneuvering and accommodations, both conscious and unconscious, in the early years of the Franco regime. Brenneis, who has written key works on Spaniards in the German camps and also Spain's memory battles in the twenty-first century, explains how and why Rodríguez del Risco became such a staunch paragon of Francoist Spain. It is a revealing story that explains the mechanisms of Francoist propaganda and the complexities of Spain's current confrontation with the past.



Carmen Moreno-Nuño's book *Haciendo memoria* asks the same broad questions of Spain's unique memory landscape, but with a more direct scan of contemporary representations of the past in film, journalism, television, and literature. Wisely, Moreno-Nuño does not read works like Guillermo del Toro's film *The Devil's Backbone* (2001) as historical works per se, but as statements about how we want to remember the past, what we want to discover,

what we might want to forget—all in service of contemporary political needs and desires.

Moreno-Nuño couches the particularities of Spanish memory in the early twenty-first century in a broad analysis of the ways global capitalism mobilizes the messy past—with its questions of guilt, complicity, collaboration, and atonement—to soften the ideologies of the past and present a quiescent and narrow set of political possibilities in today's world. For Moreno-Nuño, some of the works featured in her book manage to widen this narrowed political worldview.

Both books make clear that Spain occupies a central place in the history and memory of twentieth-century wars. The legacy of Spain's role in World War II is still deeply marked by Franco's decades-long efforts to shape or suppress it. Attempts to confront that legacy are just now rising to the surface. The question these two books grapple with is whether Spain's challenge is much different from those faced by any other country trying to come to terms with a war-torn past.

Joshua Goode, The Volunteer's book review editor, is a professor of cultural studies and history at Claremont Graduate University.

In Memoriam Frank G. Tinker Jr. (1909-1939)

By Alex Vernon

In the summer of 1939, well into writing the *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway heard that Frank Tinker, a volunteer American pursuit (fighter) pilot for the Republic had killed himself. Hemingway had first met Tinker soon after the writer arrived in Spain in the spring of 1937. A couple of years later, Hemingway was able to do him a favor. According to Tinker's war memoir, after getting out of Spain he had trouble establishing his US citizenship with the American consulate in Paris. Like most American volunteers, he had relinquished his passport before entering Spain, because joining the International Brigades violated American law:

Finally, [the vice-consul] said that if I could get some American citizen who knew me to identify me, his department would condescend to give me the passport. . . . But luck was again on my side. I went over to Harry's Bar that night and the first person I saw after entering was my old Madrid friend, Ernest Hemingway. When he heard what I needed, he immediately offered to make the required identification. After a few further delays and obstacles, I was at last formally identified on August 25 and a passport was made out in my name. (311)

If Hemingway hadn't known it before, he would have learned from Tinker's 1938 memoir that Tinker had flown as part of a fighter escort to bombers during the Segovia Offensive, the battle of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*' action. For his part, Hemingway included an excerpt from the memoir in *Men at War* (1942), titling it "The Italian Debacle at Guadalajara."

Between the memoir's publication and Tinker's death, Hemingway wrote the story "Night before Battle." Both texts feature a pilot who recently had to bail out of his shot-up plane and who finds himself loaded with champagne bottles in a hotel elevator. The story calls him Baldy, a "rummy fake Santa Claus"; the real person, the American pilot Harold "Whitey" Dahl, sported Santa-white hair. The Frank character in the story never shows up: "Where's Frank," Baldy asks, and asks again: "Listen, where's Frank?"



A bellhop found Frank Glasgow Tinker dead in a Little Rock, Arkansas, hotel room in June 1939. Newspapers reported his death as a suicide from a .22 caliber pistol. Hemingway probably got the news from his Piggott, Arkansas, in-laws, Paul and Mary Pfeiffer, the recipients of a 28 July 1939 letter in which he writes: "Was sorry I did not see Frank Tinker before he took such a drastic step. Have argued myself out of that so often that I think I could have kicked the idea out of his head. He was a good fellow; very brave and a truly fine flyer." In a letter to Edward Garnett a year earlier, about the memoir, Hemingway described Tinker as fearless in the air.

Family and friends did not believe Tinker killed himself—for one thing, because he always carried a .45 Colt pistol in his suitcase. He was twenty-nine. Tinker titled his memoir *Some Still Live*. His DeWitt, Arkansas, tombstone, which I visited this past summer on the 85th anniversary of his death, reads "¿Quien Sabe?" (*Who knows?*).

Alex Vernon is the M.E. and Ima Graves Peace Distinguished Professor of English at Hendrix College outside Little Rock—This text is adapted from an appendix to his Reading Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls": Glossary and Commentary (Kent State). More at alex-vernonsquarespace.com.

Michael Bailey (1946-2024)

Michael Bailey, son of Lincoln vet Bill Bailey, passed from natural causes June 22 in Seattle. He was 77. A red-diaper kid in a family threatened by right-wing anti-Communists, his parents changed his surname to Maguire, his mother's name, for his safety. Like his dad, Mike shipped out with the Sailors Union of the Pacific. He was also a reliable presence within the Bay Area Post of the Veterans of the Lincoln Brigade. "May he have fair winds and following seas."
—Peter N. Carroll

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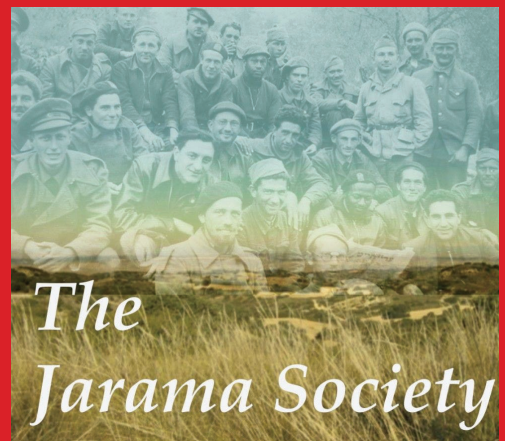
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