PODEMOS: Spain’s New Political Hope

Garzón on Universal Jurisdiction

Hoover’s Secret FBI

Songs of the Spanish Civil War
Dear Friends,

When things seem bleakest, hope often sparks.

The victims of Francoism have waited long enough for justice. It’s time for action—and the United Nations agrees. In a scathing report on the country’s thousands of disappeared lying in unmarked mass graves from the Civil War, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has given Spain 90 days to produce a working timeline to assist the victims’ families. The report—issued in late July following a fact-finding mission last year—calls for “a comprehensive, coherent, and permanent state policy” with regard to the disappeared.

The UN report vindicates the work of Emilio Silva, who, for more than a decade, has denounced Spain’s disregard for international law. (Last July, Emilio attended the International Brigade Commemoration in London; see his stirring speech on page 8).

Politically, too, there is hope for change. The Spanish economy has been among the hardest hit by the crisis of 2008. Almost a quarter of the population is unemployed, and the governing Partido Popular has been mired in endless corruption scandals. For a while it seemed that protest politics had fizzled out in Spain. But this year a new grass-roots political movement emerged, calling itself Podemos (We Can). It was founded by a group of activists that include two charismatic Political Science professors: Pablo Iglesias, 35, and Juan Carlos Monedero, 51.

As a political party, Podemos won a surprising five seats at the elections for the European Parliament in May. It is poised to rise higher in the next elections. Its message is lucid and radical, and proudly draws on progressive traditions of the past, particularly the fight against fascism—as Monedero explains in his interview with The Volunteer (page 15).

We agree with Podemos and with this year’s ALBA/Puffin Award Winner Bryan Stevenson that we cannot change history without first knowing it. This is the philosophy that guides everything ALBA does: the teachers’ institutes we are running this fall in Florida, Illinois, New York, and New Jersey; our Human Rights Film Festival in September; and our Bay Area event and Pete Seeger tribute in October.

Of course, we could do nothing at all if it weren’t for your continued support. Un millón de gracias for your steadfast commitment.

Sebastiaan Faber
Chair of the Board of Governors

Marina Garde
Executive Director

IN THIS ISSUE
p 3 Bay Area Reunion
p 4 Teaching in Tampa
p 5 National History Day
p 6 Garzón on Universal Jurisdiction
p 7 Examining Franco’s Graves
p 9 Medgar on Hoover’s Secret FBI
p 12 Songs of the Spanish Civil War
p 14 Faces of ALBA: Bruce Barthol
p 15 J.C. Monedero on PODemos
p 19 Book Reviews
p 21 In Memoriam Gert Hoffmann
p 21 In Memoriam Hans Landauer
p 22 Legacy Gift to ALBA
p 23 Contributions
ALBA Reaches Out to Teachers in Four States

By the Editors

Kicking off a busy fall, ALBA worked with teachers in Tampa.

ALBA's Institute staff has a busy fall, with workshops lined up in Tampa, Florida; Bloomington, Illinois; New York City; and Bergen County, New Jersey. On August 13, ALBA led a professional development day for social studies teachers in Tampa’s Hillsborough County School District, the third largest in Florida and eighth largest in the country.

Fraser Ottanelli, Vice Chair of ALBA and Professor of History at the University of Southern Florida, worked with veteran teacher Robert Alicea and ALBA’s Sebastiaan Faber to introduce teachers of U.S. History, World History, Government, and Psychology to the Lincoln Brigade and the Spanish Civil War.

“The Spanish Civil War and the story of the Lincoln Brigade form the hub of a giant wheel with dozens of curricular spokes that go far beyond the 1930s,” Alicea said. “It provides a fascinating window into issues and topics as diverse as the Great Depression, ideology, the rise of fascism, the Cold War, race, civil rights, the Vietnam war, feminism, memory, activism, citizenship, ethics, and human rights.”

After screening documentary footage from The Good Fight, teachers drew on ALBA’s anthology of primary source materials—letters, speeches, posters, and photographs from the Archive—to create compelling lesson plans for their hundreds of high school students.

Participants and faculty of the 2014 ALBA Institute in Tampa.

ALBA's Institute staff has a busy fall, with workshops lined up in Tampa, Florida; Bloomington, Illinois; New York City; and Bergen County, New Jersey. On August 13, ALBA led a professional development day for social studies teachers in Tampa’s Hillsborough County School District, the third largest in Florida and eighth largest in the country.

Fraser Ottanelli, Vice Chair of ALBA and Professor of History at the University of Southern Florida, worked with veteran teacher Robert Alicea and ALBA’s Sebastiaan Faber to introduce teachers of U.S. History, World History, Government, and Psychology to the Lincoln Brigade and the Spanish Civil War.

“The Spanish Civil War and the story of the Lincoln Brigade form the hub of a giant wheel with dozens of curricular spokes that go far beyond the 1930s,” Alicea said. “It provides a fascinating window into issues and topics as diverse as the Great Depression, ideology, the rise of fascism, the Cold War, race, civil rights, the Vietnam war, feminism, memory, activism, citizenship, ethics, and human rights.”

After screening documentary footage from The Good Fight, teachers drew on ALBA’s anthology of primary source materials—letters, speeches, posters, and photographs from the Archive—to create compelling lesson plans for their hundreds of high school students.

Francie Grossman, a veteran teacher in the county, revealed her personal connection to the Spanish Civil War. “My mother was Francie Grossman, a veteran teacher in the county, revealed her personal connection to the Spanish Civil War. “My mother was a native American who was taken from her parents and raised in foster care,” she said. “And my father, Dr. Leo Grossman, was a bacteriologist from Brooklyn whose family had fled from the Nazis.”

Robert Alicea, a bacteriologist from Brooklyn whose family had fled from the Nazis, who was 18 when the Civil War broke out in Spain. He was determined to join the Lincoln Brigade, but in the end was not able to go to Spain. After World War II he worked hard to get Jewish refugees from Europe to the United States.”

This was ALBA’s fifth institute in Tampa—a historical center of Spanish immigration and labor activism, from which more than two dozen volunteers left to join the fight against fascism in Spain. The city’s Centro Asturiano, founded exactly 100 years ago, features a monument in their memory.

“My teachers are becoming quite familiar with the new Common Core benchmarks,” said Dennis Holt, district supervisor of secondary social studies. “What we are now desperate for is good Core benchmarks,” said Dennis Holt, district supervisor of secondary social studies. “What we are now desperate for is good Core benchmarks,” said Dennis Holt, district supervisor of secondary social studies. “What we are now desperate for is good Core benchmarks,” said Dennis Holt, district supervisor of secondary social studies. “What we are now desperate for is good Core benchmarks,” said Dennis Holt, district supervisor of secondary social studies. “What we are now desperate for is good

Participants and faculty of the 2014 ALBA Institute in Tampa.

Three eighth-grade students at the Open World Learning Community school in St. Paul, Minnesota—Sam Dale-Gau, Bjarn Holm, and Eli Sage-Martinson—placed eighth in the National History Day Finals in the category of Junior Group Documentary for their work on the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The three produced a short documentary film based on archival research and interviews. The Finals were held June 15-19 in Washington DC. Here’s their report (slightly abridged).

A t the beginning of the year we spent nearly a month attempting to settle on a topic. One day while we were researching, we came across an interesting website pertaining to the Spanish Civil War. We were amazed by the sacrifices the Brigade made for what they believed in and the bravery they exemplified throughout the war. We became familiar with our topic by reading online articles and public library books. Next, we took a trip to the University of Minnesota and looked at their microfilm and books to get a better idea of what was going on around the time of the Spanish Civil War. We found several professors and called. Our state coordinator came up to us afterward and told us we had gotten 5th place, not bad. Overall, History Day was a amazing experience that united us with some of the best people we had ever met. And we believe it will prepare us for college and life beyond.

The Finals were held June 15-19 in Washington DC. Here’s their report (slightly abridged).

Three eighth-grade students at the Open World Learning Community school in St. Paul, Minnesota—Sam Dale-Gau, Bjarn Holm, and Eli Sage-Martinson—placed eighth in the National History Day Finals in the category of Junior Group Documentary for their work on the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The three produced a short documentary film based on archival research and interviews. The Finals were held June 15-19 in Washington DC. Here’s their report (slightly abridged).

A t the beginning of the year we spent nearly a month attempting to settle on a topic. One day while we were researching, we came across an interesting website pertaining to the Spanish Civil War. We were amazed by the sacrifices the Brigade made for what they believed in and the bravery they exemplified throughout the war. We became familiar with our topic by reading online articles and public library books. Next, we took a trip to the University of Minnesota and looked at their microfilm and books to get a better idea of what was going on around the time of the Spanish Civil War. We found several professors and called. Our state coordinator came up to us afterward and told us we had gotten 5th place, not bad. Overall, History Day was a amazing experience that united us with some of the best people we had ever met. And we believe it will prepare us for college and life beyond.
The Principle of Universal Jurisdiction

By Baltasar Garzón

The doctrine of Universal Jurisdiction allows tribunals from any State to prosecute heinous crimes that are an affront to all humanity. It is our most important weapon in the battle against the great criminals of history. Yet the United States is dragging its feet.

The International Criminal Court in The Hague. Photo Vincent van Zeijst, CC BY-SA 3.0

O ne of the basic principles that lies at the heart of Universal Jurisdiction is the tireless struggle against impunity. In the midst of so many atrocities, suffering, and aberrations in the history of humanity, there are also a number of experts and proponents of the doctrine of Universal Jurisdiction that today comprise a significant group of activists determined to win the battle against the great criminals of history. For this reason great minds such as Hugo Grecio, Francisco de Vitoria, Diego de Covarrubias or Suárez planted the seed of a principle that with our activism we can extend, apply, and surround with respect.

Universal Jurisdiction allows tribunals from any State to prosecute those crimes that due to their particularly destructive nature are an affront to all humanity. Such crimes have managed to avoid the traditional requirement of demonstrating a direct connection between the criminal act and the jurisdiction of the State that wishes to bring them to trial. In fact, they are limited to a slate of international crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, torture, forced disappearances, or piracy, among others.

The last two decades, the practical evolution of this principle has given hope and faith to those who previously thought they had to resign themselves to the great injustices of history. We could cite the cases of the Chilean Pinochet, the Argentinian Scilingo, or the legal proceedings against Hissène Habré in Senegal. But it doesn't end there, and despite the obstacles some judges encounter in their application (like the recent diminishment of Universal Jurisdiction in Spain), this instrument continues to live and develop.

The Principle of Universal Jurisdiction was first published in 2001. Experts from around the world came together to take a monumental step forward in the codification of the guiding elements that articulate that instrument of justice. This past May, the First International Congress on Universal Jurisdiction signaled the beginning of discussion and elaboration of a new compilation to represent the current state of Universal Jurisdiction and the path to follow envisioned by many experts. It is the embryo of the Madrid Principles of Universal Jurisdiction, an innovative document intended to support all those who want to apply, develop, and spread Universal Jurisdiction.

The Madrid Principles of Universal Jurisdiction strive to expand the catalogue of crimes that merit universal prosecution, including economic crimes and crimes against nature.

The leading role of the United States on the international scene is undeniable. This leading role places the US and its representatives in armed conflicts, the pursuit of major terrorism, or the orchestration of enormous economic interests. In all such cases it is relatively easy to cross the line of what is acceptable for humanity. The exposure of the United States to these scenarios, however, cannot be an excuse to cloak itself in absolute immunity that allows it to operate freely with no need to be accountable to anyone. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for the United States to make a commitment to respect international norms and submit to the examination and audit findings of the International Criminal Court, as well as ceasing to throw obstacles in the path of the application of the principle of Universal Jurisdiction of other States.

The United States is a fundamental player in this battle, but the battle is the responsibility of all nations. The fight against impunity on all levels is a call to action to which we must respond in all realms: the prosecution of crimes committed by States in their local jurisdictions, support of the work of the International Criminal Court, and the application of Universal Jurisdiction. To be sure, there are many pitfalls along the way, but the same energy and commitment that created these instruments will ultimately also allow their perfection and total efficacy. ▲

Baltasar Garzón is an acclaimed Spanish lawyer and former judge who built his career on doggedly pursuing accountability for human rights crimes, including indicting Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. In 2010 he was suspended from the Audiencia Nacional, Spain’s central criminal court, in large part for making the case that France’s repression during and after the Spanish Civil War—which resulted in over 100,000 victims buried in unmarked mass graves—should be viewed as a crime against humanity. In 2011 he received the first annual Puffin-ALBA Human Rights Award.

The Madrid Principles of Universal Jurisdiction

The United States is one of the countries that have refused to ratify the Statute of Rome. It is difficult to understand why a country that raises the flag of lofty principles and ideas would nonetheless refuse to take the crucial step that would help in the universalization of the International Criminal Court.

The leading role of the United States on the international scene is undeniable. This leading role places the US and its representatives in armed conflicts, the pursuit of major terrorism, or the orchestration of enormous economic interests. In all such cases it is relatively easy to cross the line of what is acceptable for humanity. The exposure of the United States to these scenarios, however, cannot be an excuse to cloak itself in absolute immunity that allows it to operate freely with no need to be accountable to anyone. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for the United States to make a commitment to respect international norms and submit to the examination and audit findings of the International Criminal Court, as well as ceasing to throw obstacles in the path of the application of the principle of Universal Jurisdiction of other States.

The United States is a fundamental player in this battle, but the battle is the responsibility of all nations. The fight against impunity on all levels is a call to action to which we must respond in all realms: the prosecution of crimes committed by States in their local jurisdictions, support of the work of the International Criminal Court, and the application of Universal Jurisdiction. To be sure, there are many pitfalls along the way, but the same energy and commitment that created these instruments will ultimately also allow their perfection and total efficacy. ▲

Baltasar Garzón is an acclaimed Spanish lawyer and former judge who built his career on doggedly pursuing accountability for human rights crimes, including indicting Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. In 2010 he was suspended from the Audiencia Nacional, Spain’s central criminal court, in large part for making the case that France’s repression during and after the Spanish Civil War—which resulted in over 100,000 victims buried in unmarked mass graves—should be viewed as a crime against humanity. In 2011 he received the first annual Puffin-ALBA Human Rights Award.

Translated by Anthony L. Goist, member of ALBA’s Board of governors.
Exhuming Franco’s Graves for Democracy

By Emilio Silva

On July 5, 2014, the International Brigades Memorial Trust celebrated its annual commemoration of the 2,500 British volunteers who went to Spain to take part in Europe’s first major clash against fascism. Among the speakers was Emilio Silva, founder of the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory (ARMH). Since 2000, the Association has exhumed and identified the remains of hundreds of disappeared men and women, victims of the horrific repression of the Francoist dictatorship. What follows is a transcript of Emilio’s speech.

T
he entire territory of Spain is riddled with mass graves. In fact, the only country on the planet that has more mass graves than Spain is Cambodia. We have the full names of 113,000 disappeared who lie in hundreds of our own killing fields. And no Spanish government since Franco’s death and Spain’s supposedly exemplary transition to democracy has taken responsibility for offering reparations for the human rights violations committed under the dictatorship.

During all of these years we have asked Spain’s judicial system to investigate these crimes, just as the Spanish judiciary did in the cases of Guatemala and Argentina, or in the arrest and attempt to extradite Augusto Pinochet in 1999. Yet our efforts to prosecute crimes committed in Spain—crimes that have no statute of limitations—have been consistently blocked by various political powers. That’s why, on April 14, 2010, we presented a lawsuit in Argentina’s courts requesting the application of universal jurisdiction. As of today, the only ongoing judicial case against the violation of human rights committed during the Francoist dictatorship is the one in Buenos Aires. Spain itself is a haven of impunity for Francoist crimes.

I want to thank all of you who preserve the memory of the men and women who rushed to save Spanish democracy, who risked their lives to help people like my grandfather. And I want to pay my own tribute to those who wrote some of the most beautiful pages in the annals of the history of humanity.

We work so that all is not forgotten, so that this memory, this example, will remain as a living heritage for future generations. We fight against impunity, against fear—which is still very much in the hearts of many Spaniards—and against silence. One day, during an exhumation of a mass grave in Piedrafita de Babia in León, a miner approached us and said, almost shouting: “It’s a disaster! They are not burying corpses; they are planting seeds.” And that is precisely what we are trying to do. We are spreading the seeds that will allow us to build a better democracy. ▲

On June 6, journalist Betty Medger delivered the annual ALBA/Bill Susman Lecture, based on her recent book The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover’s Secret FBI. Medger’s book is the first to tell the before-told story of the break-in at the FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania, in 1971. The burglars were a group of unlikely activists—quiet, ordinary, hardworking Americans—who revealed a shocking truth, confirming what some had long suspected: that J. Edgar Hoover had created and was operating, in violation of the U.S. Constitution, his own shadow Bureau of Investigation. The lecture honors one of ALBA’s founders, the Lincoln veteran Bill Susman. What follows is a synopsis of her talk.

A t two crucial points in history, and in 1971, Americans learned that their intelligence agencies were out of control and engaging in activities that most citizens consider inappropriate in a democratic society. These deeply concealed secrets were made public, not by investigative reporters, vigilant members of Congress, or alert Attorneys General, but, instead, by unknown citizens who risked being imprisoned for many years.

During the Cold War, in 1971, eight people burglarized the FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania, and revealed through journalists the first documentary evidence that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover engaged in surveillance and aggressive dirty tricks, including violent actions, against people he considered subversive, especially African Americans. In anonymous letters that accompanied the files they mailed, the burglars stepped forward when my book was largely forgotten until most of the files were removed. Beginning immediately, those “few things” missing led to the start of one of the most extensive manhunts—and woman hunts—in the history of the FBI and led, by the mid-1970s, to far more: the first congressional investigations of all intelligence agencies, the establishment of permanent congressional oversight of intelligence agencies and the strengthening of the Freedom of Information Act.

The idea for the burglary came from the mind of William Davidson, a mild-mannered physics professor at Haverton College who had actively opposed the use and development of nuclear weapons since the dropping of bombs on Hiroshima. He had actively opposed the Vietnam War. Throughout 1970 people participating in the large peace movement in Philadelphia had been telling him they thought their organizations had been infiltrated by spies. As someone who disliked conspiracy theories, Davidson did not believe those rumors. But he kept hearing them from people he respected.

That fall he concluded the rumors probably were true. Most people had a helpless reaction to the rumors. “Of course it’s true, but there’s nothing you can do about it.” To them, it was a problem that was impossible to solve. How could anyone force the powerful FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, to open his bureau to inspection? But Davidson thought that if it were true that the government, through the FBI, was spying on protesters in an effort to suppress dissent, it was a problem too big not to solve. He feared rhetoric without
The burglars had promised each other they would take the secret of the burglary to their graves.

Stolen Documents Describe FBI Surveillance Activities

The burglars thought nearly everyone would be tuned to television and radio reports on the fight—FBI agents, local police, the residents who lived on the two floors above the FBI office. The tracking broadcast sounds, they hoped, would suffocate the place, drowning out the break-in. That seemed to be what happened, as Forsythe, the burlesque artist, worked slowly with a crowbar and cat jack to break in and assure the office was ready for the four people who would work in the dark, the night shift, locked in with every file in the office.

One of Hoover’s favorite reporters was David Brinkley, known as “apoeptic” when told about the burglary. None other than the future Deep Throat. Brinkley’s first major assignment was to cover the crime scene the next morning. Ironically, the burglary could not have had a happier result. It seems Brinkley missed the ritual in charge. Her discovery that there was no new system in the office led her to join the group’s decision to move forward. Her first crack was at The FBI’s main switch board. A simultaneous discovery of a sketch of her likeness was issued with every file. The burglars had promised each other they would take the secret of the burglary to their graves.

On the day after their last meeting, John Raines mailed the first set of stolen files to two members of Congress—Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, and Rep. Patren Pettigrew, Democrat of New Jersey. The files, including the so-called Deep Throat, should not prevent people from being driven to acts of violence. Aaron was not alone in his struggle to end the war was the primary inspiration for the youngest in the group. John, who had no idea whether they could have ended up in prison for stealing useless files, blank photographs, and a sketch of her likeness was issued with every file. The burglars had promised each other they would take the secret of the burglary to their graves.

The burglars thought nearly everyone would be tuned to television and radio reports on the fight—FBI agents, local police, the residents who lived on the two floors above the FBI office. The tracking broadcast sounds, they hoped, would suffocate the place, drowning out the break-in. That seemed to be what happened, as Forsythe, the burlesque artist, worked slowly with a crowbar and cat jack to break in and assure the office was ready for the four people who would work in the dark, the night shift, locked in with every file in the office.

One of Hoover’s favorite reporters was David Brinkley, known as “apoeptic” when told about the burglary. None other than the future Deep Throat. Brinkley’s first major assignment was to cover the crime scene the next morning. Ironically, the burglary could not have had a happier result. It seems Brinkley missed the ritual in charge. Her discovery that there was no new system in the office led her to join the group’s decision to move forward. Her first crack was at The FBI’s main switch board. A simultaneous discovery of a sketch of her likeness was issued with every file. The burglars had promised each other they would take the secret of the burglary to their graves.

On the day after their last meeting, John Raines mailed the first set of stolen files to two members of Congress—Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, and Rep. Patren Pettigrew, Democrat of New Jersey. The files, including the so-called Deep Throat, should not prevent people from being driven to acts of violence. Aaron was not alone in his struggle to end the war was the primary inspiration for the youngest in the group. John, who had no idea whether they could have ended up in prison for stealing useless files, blank photographs, and a sketch of her likeness was issued with every file. The burglars had promised each other they would take the secret of the burglary to their graves.

On the day after their last meeting, John Raines mailed the first set of stolen files to two members of Congress—Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, and Rep. Patren Pettigrew, Democrat of New Jersey. The files, including the so-called Deep Throat, should not prevent people from being driven to acts of violence. Aaron was not alone in his struggle to end the war was the primary inspiration for the youngest in the group. John, who had no idea whether they could have ended up in prison for stealing useless files, blank photographs, and a sketch of her likeness was issued with every file. The burglars had promised each other they would take the secret of the burglary to their graves.

On the day after their last meeting, John Raines mailed the first set of stolen files to two members of Congress—Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, and Rep. Patren Pettigrew, Democrat of New Jersey. The files, including the so-called Deep Throat, should not prevent people from being driven to acts of violence. Aaron was not alone in his struggle to end the war was the primary inspiration for the youngest in the group. John, who had no idea whether they could have ended up in prison for stealing useless files, blank photographs, and a sketch of her likeness was issued with every file. The burglars had promised each other they would take the secret of the burglary to their graves.

On the day after their last meeting, John Raines mailed the first set of stolen files to two members of Congress—Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, and Rep. Patren Pettigrew, Democrat of New Jersey. The files, including the so-called Deep Throat, should not prevent people from being driven to acts of violence. Aaron was not alone in his struggle to end the war was the primary inspiration for the youngest in the group. John, who had no idea whether they could have ended up in prison for stealing useless files, blank photographs, and a sketch of her likeness was issued with every file. The burglars had promised each other they would take the secret of the burglary to their graves.
Songs of the Spanish Civil War: The New Edition

By Peter Glazer

In October, the Smithsonian is releasing a stunning new edition of its legendary two Folkways albums, Songs of the Spanish Civil War. First published in the early 1960s, these LPs compiled songs recorded on 78s by Pete Seeger, Tom Glazer, Ernst Busch, Bart van der Schelling and others during and shortly after the war. Peter Glazer’s new liner notes, excerpted here, tell their story.

The Spanish Civil War was sung to me long before I knew what it was about. I grew up in the 1960s. When my parents would invite friends over for a dinner party, the conversations inevitably turned to the war in Vietnam. After dinner, my father, folk singer Tom Glazer, would get out his guitar and play. Often, someone would ask him to perform songs from another very different war, the Spanish conflict of the 1930s. “Do the one about the four generals” was a common request. “Los cuatro generales, los cuatro generales . . .,” my father would sing, and a reverent hush would fall over the room. Eyes would close; people would hum or sing along. This music created an emotional atmosphere I could neither fathom nor ignore. Years later, the songs led me to the history. I found out who the four generals were and why, a few verses later, the song called for their hangmen and their lives, but for many of those who returned, the struggle continued. “The war in Spain is over in the field of action,” Republi
can General Vincente Rojo said in 1939, “but not in the field of thought.” And this “field of thought,” so aptly credited by Rojo, produced its own kind of action on the home front. Among other things, it began and propelled a vigorous commemorative process now 75 years old, in which the musical legacy of the war continues to be a centerpiece. To this day, songs of the Spanish Civil War are sung at annual gatherings in New York City and San Francisco. The songs bring this activist history forward at a time when the causes are no less urgent, and the enemies of freedom no less dangerous.

Peter Glazer, ALBA Board member, is the author of Radical Nostalgia: Spanish Civil War Commemoration in America. He teaches performance studies at UC/Berkeley.

As Songs of the Spanish Civil War Volume 1 (FH5436), to mark the 25th anniversary of the start of the war.

The material on the subsequent Songs of the Spanish Civil War Volume 2 was compiled by Folkways and released in 1962 as FH5437. It consisted of three discrete sections, each with very different origins.

Part 1 - According to the original liner notes to this album, written by veteran Moe Fishman, the first group of five songs was compiled and pressed as a souvenir for members of the International Brigades attending the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the war in Berlin in 1961, which Fishman attended.

Fishman wrote: “[A]nd from the original recordings these songs of the past magically re-created an atmosphere of readiness for combat, hatred for the fascists, and love and longing for the distant homeland.”

Part 2 - Called “Songs We Remember,” this second set of three songs evokes the American volunteers’ love for Spain, its people and its culture. Each of the three songs was recorded in the 1930s in a different Spanish province, sung by local Spaniards.

The recording was issued in 1947 in a limited edition. “We remember a land where the hope of freedom mingled with the soft fragrance of the orange blossoms and the smell of gunpowder,” Moe Fishman wrote in the 1961 liner notes, while Spain was still under France’s rule. “Listen . . . and you will hear the songs of a free Spain.”

Part 3 - The third group of songs were excerpts from “Behind the Barbed Wire,” recorded in New York City in 1938 and originally released in the United States by the League of American Writers. Four of the six songs are included here. The title of the collection, a translation of the German song, “Wie Hintem Draht,” refers to the concentration camps in France, where French, Spanish, Italian, and German anti-Fascists were held and where these songs were sung. The singer is Bart van der Schelling, backed by the Exilus Choir directed by American Earl Robinson, one of the leading left wing composers of the era. Van der Schelling was born in Holland in 1892. He was seriously wounded twice in Spain, but continued to fight. He eventually became physically unable to continue, but didn’t stop singing. He called the official singer for the returning American volunteers.

In his poem, “Spain,” W.H. Auden wrote, “Our thoughts have bodies.” Of the 2,750 U.S. volunteers in Spain, one-third lost their lives, but for many of those who returned, the struggle continued. “The war in Spain is over in the field of action,” Republican General Vincente Rojo said in 1939, “but not in the field of thought.” And this “field of thought,” so aptly credited by Rojo, produced its own kind of action on the home front. Among other things, it began and propelled a vigorous commemorative process now 75 years old, in which the musical legacy of the war continues to be a centerpiece. To this day, songs of the Spanish Civil War are sung at annual gatherings in New York City and San Francisco. The songs bring this activist history forward at a time when the causes are no less urgent, and the enemies of freedom no less dangerous.

Peter Glazer, ALBA Board member, is the author of Radical Nostalgia: Spanish Civil War Commemoration in America. He teaches performance studies at UC/Berkeley.

Songs of the Spanish Civil War rekindles the hymnal of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, honoring the more than 2,600 American volunteers who fought General Francisco Franco and his fellow fascists from Italy and Nazi Germany to defend the popularly elected Spanish Republic during the 1936-1939 conflict. Featuring Pete Seeger, Tom Glazer, Butch and Bess Hawes, Woody Guthrie, Ernst Busch, and Bart van der Schelling, these songs still inspire supporters of democratic causes around the world.

To order the CD please contact ALBA’s office at info@alba-valb.org or tel. (212) 674-5398
Bruce Barthol is the long time band leader of ALBA events. He was the original bass player for the pioneering rock group Country Joe and the Fish and has performed with a long list of great musicians, from Dave Getz to Pete Seeger. He is currently touring with his band The Former Members.

How did you get interested in the Spanish Civil War and involved in ALBA?

I lived in Spain in 1959 when I was a 11. My parents were anti-Franco. The first book on the Spanish Civil War I read was the autobiography of El Campesino [Valentín González, Life and Death in Soviet Russia], which I checked out from the library at the Torrejón U.S. Air Base outside of Madrid. I got the Follows album of Spanish Civil War songs a few years later.

I played my first Lincoln Brigade veterans reunion in 1973. Later on, Peter Glazer and I put together many shows for the VALB. I was resident musical director for the San Francisco Mime Troupe for over 30 years. In 1986, I went to Nicaragua with the SFMT and brought back a list from the Ministry Health of needed replacement parts for the ambulances VALB had sent the year before. I went to Spain twice with [brigade veteran] Milt Wolff for commemorations in Catalonia. I was fortunate to play twice with Pete Seeger at New York VALB events. It was like playing with Jesus Christ, although Jesus didn’t play the banjo.

Was it a natural progression for you to go from the anti-war messages of the San Francisco music scene of the late 1960s—and especially of Country Joe and the Fish—to your work with ALBA?

Yes, I think it was a natural progression. The Lincoln Brigade was a model of resistance and moral courage. Two members of Country Joe and the Fish had parents who had been in the Communist Party, but I’m not talking.

You wrote the beautiful song “Taste of Ashes.” What inspired you to write it? Did you write it for Laurie Lewis specifically?

I wrote it for a San Francisco Mime Troupe play called Spain ’36 on the 50th anniversary of the war. The song was inspired by La Pasionaria’s speech to departing Spain ‘36 on the 50th anniversary of the war. The song was inspired by La Pasionaria’s speech to departing Spain ‘36 on the 50th anniversary of the war.

Had political scientist Juan Carlos Monedero, spoke with us in late August. I

I played my first Lincoln Brigade veterans reunion in 1973. Later on, Peter Glazer and I put together many shows for the VALB. I was resident musical director for the San Francisco Mime Troupe for over 30 years. In 1986, I went to Nicaragua with the SFMT and brought back a list from the Ministry Health of needed replacement parts for the ambulances VALB had sent the year before. I went to Spain twice with [brigade veteran] Milt Wolff for commemorations in Catalonia. I was fortunate to play twice with Pete Seeger at New York VALB events. It was like playing with Jesus Christ, although Jesus didn’t play the banjo.

Was it a natural progression for you to go from the anti-war messages of the San Francisco music scene of the late 1960s—and especially of Country Joe and the Fish—to your work with ALBA?

Yes, I think it was a natural progression. The Lincoln Brigade was a model of resistance and moral courage. Two members of Country Joe and the Fish had parents who had been in the Communist Party, but I’m not talking.

You wrote the beautiful song “Taste of Ashes.” What inspired you to write it? Did you write it for Laurie Lewis specifically?

I wrote it for a San Francisco Mime Troupe play called Spain ’36 on the 50th anniversary of the war. The song was inspired by La Pasionaria’s speech to departing Spain ‘36 on the 50th anniversary of the war. The song was inspired by La Pasionaria’s speech to departing Spain ‘36 on the 50th anniversary of the war.

Could you share a memory of playing at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967?

International Brigaders in Barcelona in 1938. It was the finale of the show. It was the finale of the show. It was the finale of the show. The song was inspired by La Pasionaria’s speech to departing Spain ‘36 on the 50th anniversary of the war.

What inspired you to write the beautiful song “Taste of Ashes”? Did you write it for Laurie Lewis specifically?

I wrote it for a San Francisco Mime Troupe play called Spain ’36 on the 50th anniversary of the war. The song was inspired by La Pasionaria’s speech to departing Spain ‘36 on the 50th anniversary of the war. The song was inspired by La Pasionaria’s speech to departing Spain ‘36 on the 50th anniversary of the war.

T he unexpected European triumph of Spain’s newcomer on the Left underscores the affirmative simplicity of its name—PODEMOS. We Can. Or perhaps better: Together We Can Do It. The party’s rise has been meteoric. PODEMOS began as a grassroots movement in January 2014 and did not register as a party until March. Since the May elections, it has multiplied its support; according to an August poll PODEMOS would earn 21 percent of the votes; the only percent less than the Socialist Party. Its program, the details of which are still being defined, calls for broad political, economic, and social reforms: a new social contract that supersedes neoliberalism. (For more details see the sidebar.)

Among the party’s most prominent public faces is Juan Carlos Monedero, a political scientist at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Monedero has extensive international experience as a consultant to progressive politicians (particularly in Latin America), has worked for years with Spain’s United Left, is a fixture in the Spanish media, and has served as an academic mentor to PODEMOS leader Pablo Iglesias. (More on Monedero and Iglesias in the sidebar.)

Monedero’s life since May has been a whirlwind, with almost daily appearances on television, trips abroad, and feverish preparations to get PODEMOS ready for its first constitutive congress in September. In this first extensive interview to be published in English since the rise of PODEMOS, Monedero spoke to The Volunteer about the birth of the party and his role in it; the Spanish crisis; the progressive tradition; the lessons from Latin America; and the future of his country. “I am a hopeful pessimist. We’re facing a long and difficult struggle. But we have plenty of reasons to keep fighting.”

Why PODEMOS and why now?

Those of us who launched PODEMOS found each other in the...
We learned from Latin America how to respond to institutional collapse.

Pablo Iglesias, born in Madrid in 1978, holds academic degrees in Law and Political Science and earned his Ph.D. in 2005 with a dissertation on the collapse of the German Democratic Republic. He’s been teaching at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid since 1992. Over the past 15 years, he has served as political consultant for the Venezuelan government and the Spanish United Left coalition.

In 2011, a scathing critique of the state of post-franco Spanish democracy, The Traitor, “Told To Tell,” was published. “Spain, a country where what we call the left has not had the opportunity to come together. The right has more power than the left,” he said.

Today, however, there is hope. We’re in the midst of a political upheaval, and it’s not just about the economy. It’s about the future of our country. It’s about the right of people to have a voice in their own government. It’s about the right of people to have a say in what happens to their country.

We’re in the midst of a political upheaval, and it’s not just about the economy. It’s about the future of our country. It’s about the right of people to have a voice in their own government. It’s about the right of people to have a say in what happens to their country.
PODEMOS’s poster for the European elections did not feature the usual airbrushed fake smile of a grinning leader in a suit. Instead, it presented three candidates, four of whom were born after Franco’s death: political scientist Pablo Igesias, 35; an Argentine-born physician, 35; a public school teacher with a degree in Arabic Studies, 32; an unemployed political scientist, 35; and the 79-year-old Carlos Jiménez Villarroya, a prominent retired public prosecutor known for his fight against corruption.

The party has organized itself in some 400 local assemblies, which it calls “circles,” and has effectively mobilized social media like Facebook and Reddit to set up something that comes close to direct democracy. This also means that its platform is still in the making, subject to a broad process of consultation. Some have called PODemos populist, but as the philosopher José Luis Villacañas has pointed out, it does not try to appeal to voters’ emotions. Rather, it appeals to their intelligence, seeking collectively crafted alternatives.

All this is new in Spain. The country’s 34-year-old democracy was built on a compromise between Francoists and opposition leaders, and largely designed to limit upheaval and constrain voters’ role to casting a ballot every four years. Spain’s electoral laws favor established parties over smaller ones and rural areas over cities. Constitutional change is all but impossible. Since the Transition of 1978, its political system has spawned a tightly knit class of party professionals deeply invested in the status quo and determined to hold on to power. Designing to create stability, the system has instead encouraged widespread corruption. It has also widened the gap between politicians and their constituencies, and eroded the voters’ trust. Starting in the early 1990s, the country has seen a series of corruption scandals involving both major parties. Yet impunity reigns. Almost all public officials enjoy a form of legal immunity by which they can only be tried in higher-level courts.

The 2008 economic crisis, which has hit Spain harder than almost any other country, has further sunk the public’s trust. Meanwhile, a battery of ruthless, EU-imposed austerity measures and a 25 percent unemployment rate—approaching 50 percent among the young—dashed all hope. The labor party (PSOE) has been impotent in the face of the neoliberal European power bloc. With no real alternative to offer, it polled numbers have been as stagnant as those of the governing Right.

The immediate origins of PODemos can be traced to public protests that emerged on May 15, 2011, which helped inspire the Occupy Movement in the United States later that year. The participants in the “15M” movement called themselves indignados and demanded “Real Democracy Now.” They purposely kept far from existing party structures. PODemos, on the other hand, tries to strike a balance between the energetic idealism of 15M and the recognition that change requires political work. It has positioned itself as the angry voice of the people (la gente) against the political, economic, and cultural establishment, branded as The Caste (la casta). PODemos has called for measures that look to a friendly neighbor common wisdom, disavowing “indignation and the traditions of the demagogic struggle for political and civil rights. Private profit, it believes, should never be allowed to trump the public good. Similarly, PODemos would prohibit profitable corporations from firing people, favors a 35-hour work week, and has called for a return to a health care system controlled by the state.

PODEMOS is preparing its first citizens’ assembly—a deliberative process that is scheduled to last several months, from September 15 until November 15. While it’s still unclear how or to what extent PODemos will participate in the municipal elections of May 2015, it is gearing up for the next general elections, scheduled for December 2015.

During the Spanish Civil War, all humanitari- an relief effort was based on private donations and received no official sanction.

American Relief Aid and the Spanish Civil War.
By Eric R. Smith. (Columbia MO: University of Missouri Press, 2013.)
Reviewed by Fraser Ottanelli

A t readers of The Volunteer know, the body of works devoted to the history of the Spanish Civil War in general and on U.S. participation in particular is considerable. Not much, however, is known about the relief activities conducted in the United States in support of the embattled Spanish Republic. American Relief Aid and the Spanish Civil War rectifies this omission by providing an account of how groups and organizations from disparate backgrounds and persuasions expressed their material and political support for antifascist forces in Spain.

The Spanish Civil War was not the first time the United States had supplied humanitarian relief aid in times of conflict. During World War I, various organizations provided supplies for millions of starving Europeans and, after the end of hostilities, assistance in reconstruction. While these efforts relied on voluntary support, they also depended on public funds and benefited from the official endorsement of the government. In contrast, during the Spanish Civil War, all humanitarian relief effort was based on private donations and received no official sanction.

Relief activities began immediately following the rebellion by the Spanish army on July 18, 1936 and, building on the earlier “Hands Off Ethiopia” campaign against Fascist Italy’s invasion of the African nation, raised funds for clothing, food, and medical supplies. American Relief Aid to the Spanish Civil War provides a detailed description of the many forms in which Americans expressed their support for Spanish loyalists. Spanish mutual aid societies across the nation were the first to rally in support of the Republic. With backing from the local Spanish, Cuban and Italian immigrant population, the Tampa Committee for the Defense of the Spanish People’s Front stands out as the country’s most successful ethnic-based fundraising efforts.

Radical groups and organizations also engaged in their own separate relief activities. Anarchists, in spite of their shrinking numbers, mounted campaigns in support of their embattled Spanish comrades. By contrast, the various factions of the Socialist party—which ranged from traditional pacificist, to social-democratic and militant revolutionary—could not agree on a common course in relationship to events in Spain. While some called for no action, others pressed for support of the dissident communist Workers Party of Marxist Unity (POUM) in Catalonia. Much more successful were the efforts of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which raised thousands of dollars for medical supplies and clothing.

American Relief Aid and the Spanish Civil War focuses mainly on the activities of the Communist Party (CPUSA) as the organization most actively involved in support of the Spanish loyalists. As the broader context of the Popular Front policy, Communist viewed the struggle of the Spanish Republic against enemies supported by Hitler and Mussolini as concrete proof of the global threat of fascism and, as a result, the need to defend democracy. For this reason, in addition to its essential role in the recruitment of volunteers for the International Brigades, the CPUSA played a central role in the founding of the National American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, the most important and largest organization in support of democratic Spain. Founded in the fall of 1936, this Committee was an umbrella organization for scores of professional groups such as the Medical Bureau, the Musicians, the Lawyers and the Social Workers Committees whose work was focused on mobilizing specific constituencies in support of Spanish democracy. In addition, the Committee also provided a platform for growing numbers of politically active liberals, religious leaders, and non-communist left-wingers like Roger Baldwin, Firello La Guardia, and even Eleanor Roosevelt, to voice their concerns over the global threat to democratic institutions.

Throughout the war the North American Committee organized neighborhood parties, propaganda tours by returning volunteers, benefit concerts, and film screenings. It also sponsored refugee children and sporting events between female and male teams representing a variety of unions.
The Spanish aid movement played an important role in the process that would eventually transform public apathy over the global fascist threat into support for collective security.

While dockworkers refused to handle military cargo and supplies bound for Franco’s forces, hundreds of volunteers took to the streets with collection cans to raise money to buy ambulances for Republican forces or canvassed local stores for food, medical supplies and clothing. All items collected were shipped to Spain on several well-publicized relief ships. Fund raising events took place in cities and communities across the country and were held anywhere from living rooms, union halls, and campus facilities to neighborhood backyards and mansions attracting audiences from common workers to movie stars and upper class patrons.

American Relief Aid and the Spanish Civil War argues that behind the efforts to provide medical and humanitarian aid there was a broader campaign directed at pressuring Congress to lift the arms embargo and allow the beleaguered Republic to defend itself. In the end, the unwillingness of western democracies to stand up to Fascist aggression doomed the Spanish Republic. Even in defeat, U.S. relief activities continued. Lobbying efforts were now directed toward pressuring the president to provide aid and refuge to the hundreds of thousands fleeing the onslaught of Franco’s troops.

American Relief Aid and the Spanish Civil War views the movement to send relief aid to the embattled Spanish Republic as the most visible expression of antifascist challenge to U.S. isolationism during the period leading up to World War II. While in the end, the Spanish aid movement failed to arouse the nation’s public opinion to the danger of fascism and to prevent Franco’s victory, nonetheless it played an important role in the process that would eventually transform public apathy over the global fascist threat into support for collective security. As a result, the book provides fresh insight into national attitudes toward foreign affairs in the 1930s.

Fraser Ottanelli is Vice Chair of ALBA and Chair of the History Department at the University of South Florida in Tampa.

MONTHLY PLEDGE PROGRAM

A simple way to make a huge impact...

Yes, I want to join the Monthly Pledge Program and help support ALBA’s continuing educational work and programs.

To donate, please call 212 674 5398 or mail the enclosed envelope checking the recurring donation box.

The Volunteer

Hans Landauer

Hans Landauer, the last surviving Austrian volunteer in the International Brigades, died at his home on July 19. In recent years, he attended many reunions of Spanish Civil War veterans in Spain. Hans was born into a leftist tradition; both grandfathers were Social Democratic mayors in villages south of Vienna—until 1934 when, on February 12th the leftist Bundesschuetzler lost its struggle for workers’ rights to a clerical-rightist putsch. The bloody events turned Hans, only 13, into a devoted “underground” fighter, delivering forbidden publications smuggled in from Czechoslovakia. When the Spanish war began, though only 16, he decided to volunteer. Once in Paris, in the designated bistro, he asked for “Monsieur Max.” “Max” told him in good Viennese dialect: “Are you nuts? We don’t send kids to Spain! None under 21.” Yet somehow he lied his way through, hinting that if forced to return, Austrian cops might squeeze information from him.

In June 1937 he joined the Austrian unit, the “February 12th 1934 Battalion” (in the largely German-speaking 11th Brigade), and fought all through the war. He suffered only one minor wound. By January 1938, only 70 of the original 500 Austrians were alive.

Like his countryman Gert Hoffman and most volunteers with no homeland to return to, he took up weapons again to defend exodus of Spanish refugees to France. Like them, he was interned in the miserable camps. He escaped but was arrested in Paris. The Nazis sent him to Dachau concentration camp, where he remained from April 1941 until the war’s end. Because of his fluency in German, Hans was able to assist the Spanish prisoners there. When he was transferred to a work assignment, he had access to food which he shared with the Spaniards. After the liberation in 1945, all the Spanish survivors presented him with a certificate of gratitude, a small card made with colors the Republican flag. He was prouder of that thank you than anything.

One of the last veterans of the International Brigades, Gert (Gerhard) Hoffmann died in Austria on July 9, 2014.

When Hitler’s army marched into Vienna in March 1938, Hoffmann had to leave. Not only was he Jewish but as an active young Communist he had narrowly escaped two years in prison because of a recent amnesty. From Czechoslovakia he tried ceaselessly to follow his older brother, a seaman, into the International Brigades. When he finally made it to the Sierra Pandols on the Ebro Front, his Austrian comrades welcomed him but said he might have saved himself the effort, the班 was soon withdrawn from action.

He joined in feal efforts by Brigaders, now without a homeland, to protect the bitter exodus of Spanish families to France and landed with them in the desolate camp at St. Cyprien, followed by the giant, also barren camp at Gurs. False papers identifying him as a Spaniard saved him fom deportation to German death camps. He worked in France as a farmhand and lumberjack under joyful conditions before reaching liberated Belgium in 1944, where he learned of the murder of his mother, father and brother. As a US Army recruit, he joined in the final campaign through Germany and back to his native Vienna. There he remained, except for work as a good carpenter with young Gert Hoffmann (1917-2014) (1917-2014)

—Victor Grossman
World Renowned Scientist leaves Legacy Gift to ALBA

Dr. Nina Byers, who died on June 5, 2014, was a long-time friend of ALBA’s. As a pioneering theoretical physicist, her work contributed greatly to both the understanding of particle physics and superconductivity.

After receiving her Ph.D. in 1956 from the University of Chicago, she became a Research Fellow at the University of Oxford. She was the recipient of several fellowships and author of numerous scientific papers. Professor Byers’ efforts to recognize the contributions women made to modern physics culminated in Out of the Shadows: Contributions of Twentieth-Century Women to Physics. This important anthology, which she edited, documents the original and important work of female physicists. Dr. Byers retired from UCLA in 1993, but was an active Professor Emeritus until her passing.

In addition to her passion for physics, Nina was a staunch anti-war activist and spoke out strongly against nuclear proliferation and for issues of social justice. ALBA is truly grateful for her generous Legacy Gift.

For information about our Legacy Gift program, call 212-574-5398; or visit info@alba-valb.org

Legacy Gifts

Making gifts to ALBA in your will is an important source of funding to continue our work. A gift in your will keeps our educational programs growing in the long term. While gifts for specific purposes are always welcome, ALBA is especially grateful for unrestricted gifts that can be used where they are needed most.

To include ALBA in your will, share this paragraph with your attorney:

I hereby give, devise and bequeath to Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA), with offices at 799 Broadway, Suite 341, New York, NY 10003 and federal tax ID 13-2996513, or its successors in interest, the sum of $______ (dollars), exclusive of my lifetime donations, if any, to be used for its most urgent needs as determined by its board of governors in their sole discretion.

Alternatively, you can donate a percentage. Ask your attorney about a gift from your residual estate.

To learn more about a gift in your will, contact executive director Marina Garde at 212-674-5398 or mgarde@alba-valb.org
NEWS AND EVENTS

WEST COAST: SOLIDARITY FOREVER
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2014
78th Annual Celebration honoring The Abraham Lincoln Brigade – West Coast

Celebrate the re-release of the Smithsonian Folkways album, Songs of the Spanish Civil War with a musical tribute to Pete Seeger with Bruce Barthol and Friends.
2:00pm - 4:00pm

Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse
2020 Addison Street
Berkeley, California 94704
For tickets and information: www.thefreight.org
Tel. (510) 644 20

EAST COAST:
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2014
End of Year Benefit for ALBA

A night of cabaret featuring the screening of the 1990 Carlos Saura’s Award-winning film “¡Ay Carmela!”

Spanish Benevolent Society
239 West 14th Street, 2nd floor
New York, NY 10011

Subscribe to the ALBA mailing list to stay informed about these and other events: info@alba-valb.org
Read The Volunteer and the ALBA blog at www.albavolunteer.org