

Contact: Bobbi Schlesinger
973-226-6097
bobbischlesinger@gmail.com

Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA) and the Puffin Foundation Announce Major New Human Rights Award

Internationally Famed Judge Baltasar Garzón Named First Recipient

“Today, the whole world is watching as the people of nation after nation struggle to obtain their freedom from oppressive regimes. Could there be a more appropriate time to announce a major new human rights award established in honor of the brave individuals who joined a similar struggle 75 years ago?”

So said Sebastiaan Faber, Board Chair of The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA), in announcing the first annual ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism.

The \$100,000 ALBA/Puffin Award – one of the largest human rights awards in the world – has been generously funded by The Puffin Foundation and will be made annually for at least the next ten years. It is part of a program connecting the inspiring legacy of the International Brigades – who fought against fascism during the Spanish Civil War – to international activist causes of today, particularly those in defense of human rights.

The first recipient of the new award will be Baltasar Garzón, the prominent Spanish magistrate who became an internationally celebrated figure after he ordered the arrest of former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in 1998. More recently, Judge Garzón led the effort to identify human rights violations committed during the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent Franco dictatorship. He will receive the ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism on May 14th at ALBA’s annual celebration in New York City.

“Judge Garzón’s exceptional courage in defense of human rights and his commitment to the recovery of historical memory regarding crimes against humanity make him the ideal first recipient of this honor,” said Peter Carroll, Chair Emeritus of ALBA’s Board of Governors, noting that Garzón is considered “one of the most effective and imaginative thinkers in international human rights law, having defended the victims of dictatorial regimes in Chile, Argentina and Spain.”

Puffin Foundation President Perry Rosenstein said: “This award is designed to give public recognition, support, and encouragement to individuals or groups whose work has an exceptionally positive impact on the advancement and/or defense of human rights. It is intended to help educate students and the general public about the importance of defending human rights against arbitrary powers that violate democratic principles.”

In addition to the new ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism, ALBA is supporting an informal international network of allied organizations working in the area of human rights, historical memory and the legacy of the International Brigades.

ALBA - During the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) nearly 40,000 men and women from 52 countries, including 2,800 Americans, traveled to Spain to join the International Brigades to help fight fascism. The U.S. volunteers came to be known collectively as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Founded in 1979, The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA) is a non-profit educational organization that promotes public awareness, research and discussion related to that war and its historical, political, artistic and biographical significance. ALBA has also preserved and cataloged the letters, pamphlets, posters, writings and photographs of the period. The Archives are housed at New York University's Tamiment Library and are used by scholars and students from all over the world. ALBA also presents exhibitions, publications, performances and educational programs for high school teachers, working to preserve the legacy of progressive activism of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade as an inspiration for present and future generations.

The Puffin Foundation – Since it was founded in 1983, the Puffin Foundation Ltd. has sought to open the doors of artistic expression by providing grants to artists and art organizations who are often excluded from mainstream opportunities due to their race, gender, or social philosophy. The Puffin, a species whose nesting sites were endangered by encroaching civilization, were encouraged to return to their native habitats through the constructive efforts of a concerned citizenry. We have adopted the name Puffin for our Foundation as a metaphor for how we perceive our mission, which is to ensure that the arts continue to grow and enrich our lives. In so doing we have joined with other concerned groups and individuals toward achieving that goal. The Puffin Foundation is also a long-standing supporter of ALBA's educational mission.