

The Volunteer

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

"...and that government of the people,
by the people, and for the people,
shall not perish from the earth."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

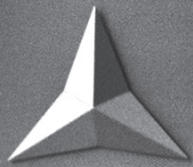
ALBA/PUFFIN AWARD for HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM Bringing Closure and Justice to Guatemala



Perry Rosenstein presenting the ALBA/Puffin Human Rights Activism Awards to Kate Doyle and Fredy Peccerelli.

ALBA

ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE ARCHIVES



SYMBOL OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES

IN HONOR OF THE MEN AND
WOMEN VOLUNTEERS IN THE
ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE
WHO SAILED FROM NEW YORK
TO STAND BESIDE THE SPANISH
PEOPLE AND FIGHT FASCISM
IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR
(1936-1939)

The Future of ALBA

Planning for your will and your legacy? The Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade established their legacy with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives. Now you can continue their "good fight" by establishing a legacy gift to ALBA in your will. As a non-profit educational organization, 501(c)(3), ALBA can accept legacy gifts in any amount, large or small. Please help us continue to expand our horizons, and your beliefs, and help us to teach the Lincoln Brigade's legacy to the next generation and beyond.

For more information, call us at 212-674-5398 or email info@alba-valb.org.

Museum Gallery Features Plaque to Lincoln Brigade

The new Puffin gallery at the Museum of the City of New York, focusing on the history of social activism from colonial days to the present, features a permanent plaque to honor the men and women who volunteered to defend the Spanish Republic against the military uprising during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Although the U.S. volunteers in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade came from nearly every state in the union, the largest numbers originated in New York City, and nearly everyone who sailed to Europe to enlist in the fight departed from the port of New York. The visual symbol on the plaque, a three-pointed star, was used by the International Brigades in Spain to represent that "all mankind"—believed to consist of three "races"—supported the elected Spanish Republic. Photo by Len Tsou.

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founded by the
Veterans of the

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ALBA Executive Director Marina Garde, Fredy Peccerelli, *Granito* director Pamela Yates, ALBA Board Chair Sebastiaan Faber, Kate Doyle, and *Granito* producer Paco de Onís at the New York celebration.

ALBA/Puffin Award Honors Struggle for Victims' Rights

ALBA's annual celebrations in New York City and Berkeley, California, commemorated the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Guernica and honored the groundbreaking work of two tireless defenders of human rights in Latin America: Fredy Peccerelli, Executive Director of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation, and Kate Doyle, Senior Analyst of U.S. policy in Latin America at the National Security Archive. They accepted their shared \$100,000 ALBA/Puffin Award for

Human Rights Activism before the sold-out auditorium of the Museum of the City of New York on May 13. Doyle also joined the reunion festivities at Berkeley's Freight & Salvage auditorium on May 27, where she was greeted by Lincoln vet Delmer Berg, the only surviving vet able to attend either event. He was delighted to see that the "good fight" goes on.

"Doyle and Peccerelli do the tough, tedious searching and retrieving of evidence, which the perpetrators try so hard to bury and destroy, and without

which no case could be made," ALBA Board Chair Sebastiaan Faber remarked. "They have shown tremendous tenacity, courage, care, and acuity in vindicating victims of government violence and pursuing the perpetrators of criminal activity—helping make possible the first-ever conviction of Guatemalan military forces for crimes against humanity. The forces and people they are up against are cunning and powerful, and the stakes are high. But their search for the truth does not serve just a legal purpose.



Andrew Plotch, winner of the ALBA/Puffin Student Activism Award, addresses the New York gathering.

I work within a web of extraordinary colleagues. We have been plucked out of a line where we stand with hundreds and hundreds of amazing activists.”

“The work we carry out,” Peccerelli added, “is made possible first and foremost by the thousands of brave survivors, witnesses and relatives—who have never stopped searching for their loved ones, for truth and for justice.” Peccerelli dedicated his award to the vic-

tims of military violence in Guatemala.

A roundtable discussion preceding the award ceremony described the advances made in the fight against impunity in Guatemala, as well as the obstacles still remaining. “The numbers of per-

whose documentary *Granito: How to Nail a Dictator* recounts the story of the Ríos Montt trial. Also present was Néstor Villatoro, son of Guatemalan labor leader Amancio Samuel Villatoro, who was disappeared and killed in the country’s internal conflict. Villatoro’s remains were retrieved and identified by Peccerelli’s team.

This year’s ALBA/Puffin Student Activism Award was granted to Andrew Plotch, a high school sophomore from Bergen Academies (New Jersey), because of his commitment to social justice as a leader in his school’s Junior Statesmen of America program and in Amnesty International. “An activist life,” said Plotch, “means a commitment to fighting injustice, no matter the odds, no matter the consequences. Learning about the Lincoln Brigade has opened my eyes to a group of people who cared about righting the wrongs in the world to an extent I had never seen before.” Plotch is a student of two alumni of ALBA’s institute for education, which organizes workshops for high school teachers all over the United States. “It is amazing,” said ALBA Executive Director Marina Garde, “to see the work

They also provide closure. Every document and every body they dig up help strengthen democracy and the rule of law. Their work embodies international solidarity, moral outrage, and a thirst for justice. That is the lasting legacy of the volunteers of the Lincoln Brigade that we want to honor—a legacy that leads from Guernica to Human Rights.”

Peccerelli heads a large team that, over the past 15 years, has exhumed hundreds of mass graves filled with victims of Guatemala’s civil war. Doyle has spent 20 years working with Latin American human rights organizations and truth commissions—in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Peru—to obtain the declassification of U.S. government archives in support of their investigations.

“Doyle and Peccerelli have bravely sought out the criminals in Central America,” said Perry Rosenstein, President of the Puffin Foundation, “criminals whose murderous actions have been supported by our government. We worry about Kate and Fredy’s safety. But we hope their work will inspire others to participate in bringing the stories of these atrocities to light.”

“Human rights activism,” Doyle said in her acceptance speech, “is the recognition of the imperative of *engagement* in order to right wrongs so grievous that we have no other choice but to join in the struggle. In Guatemala, Fredy and

“The work we carry out is made possible first and foremost by the thousands of brave survivors, witnesses and relatives—who have never stopped searching for their loved ones, for truth and for justice.”

—Fredy Peccerelli

petrators indicted and convicted may seem small in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of victims of violence in Guatemala,” said Daniel Wilkinson, Deputy Director of the Americas Division at the Human Rights Watch organization. “But the progress made is actually remarkable. Fifteen years ago nobody would have imagined that a former head of state like Augusto Pinochet could have been indicted, as Judge Garzón did in 1998. This past January, the same fate befell Efraín Ríos Montt, President of Guatemala during the worst of the genocidal violence in the early 1980s. His indictment was made possible largely through the work of Doyle and Peccerelli.”

The roundtable discussion was moderated by filmmaker Pamela Yates,

that high school students are capable of when put into contact with the compelling stories contained in ALBA’s archive.”

Both events, which also honored recently deceased Lincoln vet Vernon Bown, closed with a stirring performance of Spanish Civil War songs by Bruce Barthol’s band.

The ALBA/Puffin award has been widely covered in U.S. and Latin American media, including NPR, CNN, EFE, and *Salon*.

The New York event was made possible by the Puffin Foundation and the Rosenstein family, the Host and Honorary Committees, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Jacob & Ruth Epstein Foundation, the Political Science Department at Pace University, and the Museum of the City of New York. ■



Attendees at the New York event. Clockwise, starting at top left photo: (l to r) Molly Klotz and Tibby Brooks; Nancy Wallach and Josie Nelson Yurek; Nancy Tsou, Sylvia Thompson, and Len Tsou; members of Fredy Peccerelli's family with Georgia Weber; forensic anthropologist Gina Hart (right) with daughter Allison Sharplin. Photos by Richard Bermack.



Fredy Peccerelli and Kate Doyle with Nestor Villatoro. The identification of the bones of Nestor's father by Peccerelli's team was a breakthrough in establishing the military's responsibility for the disappeared in Guatemala. Photo by Richard Bermack.

Editor's note: The following are the edited speeches by the recipients of the 2012 ALBA/Puffin Award for Human Rights Activism, presented at the Museum of the City of New York.

The Search for Truth and Justice

By Fredy Peccerelli

I want to begin by thanking the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives and the Puffin Foundation for honoring the work of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation and for recognizing the importance of the process of the search for truth and justice in Guatemala. This award has already raised awareness about the work of the FAFG and the need to find the 200,000 victims of Guatemala's armed conflict, and will continue to do so for a long time.

It is a great honor and a privilege to share this award with Kate Doyle. I could not think of a more deserving individual. Her work has directly contributed to the search for truth and justice in Guatemala and has impacted my life personally. You're my hero, Kate!

I would like to thank:

All the members of the Fundacion de Antropologia Forense de Guatemala (FAFG), specially the board of directors: Jose Suasnavar, Claudia Rivera, Nancy

Valdez, Leonel Paiz, Renaldo Acevedo, Shirley Chacon. Also, FAFG directors Bertony Giron and Silvia Pellecer, as well as La Verbena Cemetery Project Coordinator Jessika Osorio.

The many human rights organizations that have worked side by side with us for the last 20 years, specially Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM), CONAVIGUA,

I would like to thank our many U.S. supporters and friends, specially Clyde Snow, Kate Doyle, Pamela Yates, Paco de Onis, Peter Kinoy, Scott Greathead, Holly Montufar, John Crews and Almudena Bernabeu.

To my family: my kids Ashley and Tristan, my Mom and Dad, to Jessy my love and to Bianka, Antonella, Tony,

My message to you is "We are looking for you and we will find you. Your stories will be told to every Guatemalan and to the world." For truth, for justice, and for dignity!

Famdegua. Also CALDH, Fundacion Myrna Mack, ECAP and the Amancio Villatoro Foundation.

I would like to thank all of the archivists at the Guatemalan Historical National Police Archive and the prosecutors at the Guatemalan Attorney General's Office.

Jeannette, Mama Toya, Walter and William, I love you all. Thank you for always supporting me and the FAFG.

I humbly accept the 2012 ALBA/Puffin Human Rights Activism Award on behalf of the 136 members of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology

Foundation. We hope that our work honors the memory of the thousands of brave men and women who fought against tyranny during the Spanish civil war as part of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

The FAFG is a scientific organization comprised of young Guatemalans who dedicate their lives to search for the 200,000 victims of Guatemala's armed conflict. The process takes us on a journey to try to understand who the victims were, how they were tortured and executed, in many cases where their bodies were disposed of, and in the case of the 45,000 victims of enforced disappearance, the fact that the families still don't know what happened to them.

This search for truth begins with the families requesting an investigation that they hope can lead to the recovery of the bodies of their loved ones and to the truth of what happened to them. If we know where the bodies might be buried, we search for the graves and conduct the exhumation to recover the bodies, analyze them, and eventually extract DNA to compare the profiles of the victims to the profiles of the thousands of family members looking for their loved ones.

The work we carry out is made possible first and foremost by the thousands of brave survivors, witnesses, and relatives who have never stopped searching for their loved ones, for truth, and for justice. Their trust in the FAFG is the first of many steps in the search, recovery and identification of the bodies of the disappeared. It is also made possible by brave prosecutors of the attorney general's office, who now understand the need for this work, not only to identify and return the bodies to their families, but also the need to document the causes of death and present the evidence of the crimes in the search for justice for thousands of Guatemalans still coping with the repercussions of impunity in these crimes. It is made possible by the people of the Netherlands, Sweden, and the U.S., through the support of their state development agencies and their support to the FAFG through the United Nations Development Program.

The search for truth and justice through science, with the support and trust of the families of the victims, has now turned into a national movement,

a process that involves many people and organizations. This long process withstood many obstacles, including death threats and lack of official Guatemalan government interest, but it has now become a necessity, a new tool, and new hope for the families and the country.

I want to end by dedicating this award to the 201 victims of the Dos Erres Massacre, the 268 victims of the Plan de Sanchez Massacre, the 424 victims of the Cuarto Pueblo massacre, the 177 women and children executed at the Rio Negro massacre, and to the victims of all the massacres in Guatemala. But not only to them. Also to Amancio Villatoro, Sergio Linares, Juan de Dios Samayoa, Hugo Navarro, Moises Saravia, and the other 178 victims that appear in the Military Diary, as well as the other 45,000 victims of enforced disappearance. My message to you is "We are looking for you and we will find you. Your stories will be told to every Guatemalan and to the world." For truth, for justice, and for dignity! ■

The Imperative of Engagement

By Kate Doyle

Thank you so very, very much. It is so exciting to be here. I am grateful to everyone who made this possible, and to everyone who has come and turned out in such a wonderful way to accompany us today.

I need to thank in particular a few institutions that have meant so much to us. First to the Puffin Foundation, to the Rosenstein family: it's been a wonderful pleasure meeting you. It is a great honor to accept this award from your family and your foundation, so thank you.

I also want to thank the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives: Marina Garde, the executive director, and Sebastiaan Faber, and all the people on the board of ALBA. It is an organization that especially speaks to me and to the work we do at the National Security Archive. ALBA is engaged in what we call in Latin America "the recovery of historical memory": that is, the rescue and the preservation of many human individual experiences, on the one hand, but also the restoration of

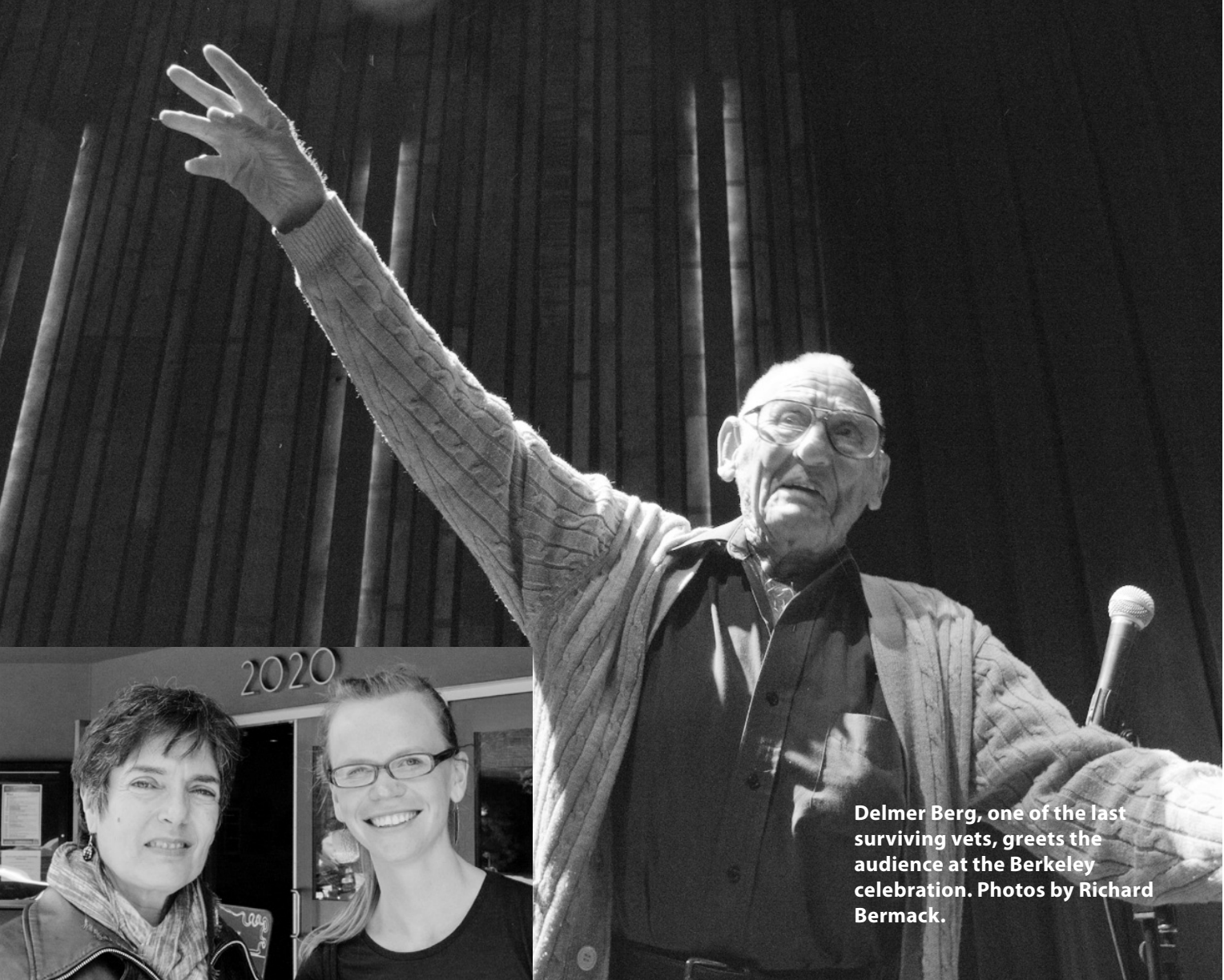
a shared history, a collective history, *our* history. In the case of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade it's the history of these 2,800 American citizens who left the safety of their lives, their worlds, to join the fight against international fascism as it played out on the battlefields of Spain. And that is the case of human rights activism all over the world: a recognition of the imperative of engagement in order to right wrongs so grievous that we have no other choice but to join the struggle.

I have to thank my own organization, the National Security Archive, which has been a standard for activism, engagement, scholarship, and history.

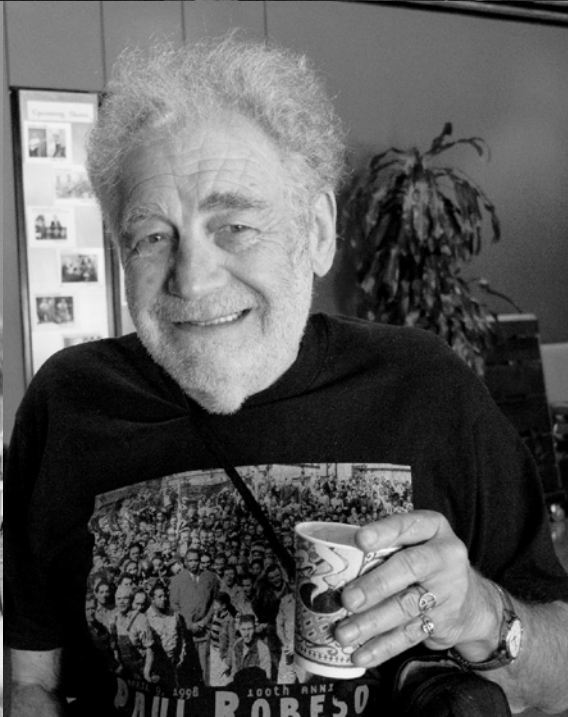
And a special warm thanks to "Granito" and the team at Skylight Pictures for helping tell the story not only of what Fredy and I did, but of the work that goes on in Guatemala every day.

This is Mother's Day, as Andrew has already so aptly pointed out, and I think we should recognize the central role that mothers have played in every human rights struggle around the world... whether you are talking about the Madres, or the Abuelas, of the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, Argentina, or the Mothers of Srebrenica, or Mothers for Peace here in the United States. I am a mother too. I have two beautiful children who have supported me every step of the way in the work that I do—Ruby and Emma Doyle—they are here today. So is my husband, Tim Weiner; my mother-in-law, Dora Weiner; my own mother; my own father; my three sisters; their sweethearts; their children Ben and Eliza.... I get to work surrounded by this network of affection and support. And in Guatemala, too, Fredy and I work within a web of extraordinary colleagues.

It is wonderful to be honored in this way for the work that we do. But it is also strange, in a way, to have been plucked out of a line where we stand shoulder to shoulder with hundreds and hundreds of other amazing activists and lawyers and human rights investigators and family members and other ordinary citizens who collaborate to try to uncover the hidden history of violence in a country better known for its silence and impunity and injustice. Your award honors all of us and I thank you very much. ■



Delmer Berg, one of the last surviving vets, greets the audience at the Berkeley celebration. Photos by Richard Bermack.



Attendees at Berkeley celebration. Top left (l to r), Joan Balter and Theresa Huhle; bottom left (l to r), Yvonne Corbin, Lenore Veltfort and friend; right, Lew Levinson. Photos by Richard Bermack.



One night that same week I was contacted at my hotel room and handed a military log book [containing military photographs and descriptions of the disappeared] that would become the first document from inside the killing machine that was the Guatemalan government in the 1980s.

Justice for the Disappeared

By Kate Doyle

Editor's note: The following is an edited version of excerpts from Kate Doyle's speech at the Berkeley event.

My interest in Guatemala began when I was a student, when I learned that in 1954, the United States had engineered a coup against Guatemala's elected president, Jacob Árbenz, and installed a military dictator, beginning cycles of destruction and repression. A small guerrilla army grew up in the 1960s to challenge this repressive and corrupt regime, and as a result, the Guatemalan army, with the explicit and very direct support of the United States, planned and carried out a savage counterinsurgency. The military was funded, trained, and supported by U.S. government policy, through the doctrines of national security and anti-communism. These doctrines provided the ideological underpinning for a scorched earth

operation carried out through all of Latin America, involving torture and disappearance.

My organization, the National Security Archives, advocates for the right of any citizen to have information about what its own government does. We knew that when the U.S. formed close alliances with any government in the world, that relationship automatically generated paper documents, such as meeting minutes, travel notes, memoranda, intelligence reports, and all kinds of secret records. Beginning in the 1990s, we started to mine the CIA, State Department, and Pentagon archives by filing Freedom of Information Act requests. Slowly, over the course of 20 years, we accumulated thousands and thousands of declassified documents, creating our own secret archives.

When human rights organizations or the families of disappeared couldn't

find information about what happened in their country through their own military or government, we could do that for them through the information we had collected on our own government agencies.

In 1996, the horrible 30-year conflict in Guatemala ended with the formation of a truth commission, set up with United Nations support and an agreement between the guerrillas and the government. So we began to work with the truth commission. After two years of investigations, the commission presented its report at a public event in the national theater of Guatemala City. I went down there to witness the proceedings and to present the testimony of thousands of survivors of the massacres and their family members, such as Nestor and Samuel Villatoro, the sons of Amancio [a Guatemalan labor leader whose bones were exhumed on a military base]. The

commissioners testified that they were hampered from carrying out their work by a lack of cooperation from the government and the military police in handing over documents and their denials that any documents or records even existed.

One night that same week I was contacted at my hotel room and handed a military log book [containing military photographs and descriptions of the disappeared] that would become the first document from inside the killing machine that was the Guatemalan government in the 1980s. That military log book was the beginning. After that, government records were stolen or leaked and, in one very extraordinary case, accidentally found on a police base during a routine inspection by human rights investigators. All of these documents have now come together to provide the first real, concrete, and sometimes direct corroborative evidence of the crimes of the Guatemalan state. For the first time, we are now seeing human rights trials where the perpetrators of these crimes, leaders of the country, such as Efraín Ríos Montt, are being put on trial for human rights crimes, based not only on the testimony of these brave family members, but also increasingly on the innovative and creative forms of evidence, including the use of new technologies such as DNA testing. And it is not just me and Fredy, but hundreds of us that have been using this evidence to put together these prosecutions. It's been an unbelievably rewarding experience, especially meeting people like Samuel and Nestor.

Just to give you an idea of the climate that was Guatemala in 1984, Amancio, as a labor leader, was the target of constant surveillance and death threats. He knew there was a possibility that something would happen to him. So one day, when Nestor was about 16 years old, his father called him into his study and said, "I want to show you something. Look inside my mouth. You see the silver crown? If anything ever happens to me, remember it, and maybe you'll be able to identify me." That crown, along with the clothes he was wearing, was the first identifying feature, before the DNA tests, that linked Amancio's body to his wife and children. ■



Professor David Rodríguez-Solás's class on representations of the Spanish Civil War visited the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives at the Tamiment Library at NYU in March.

Teaching Programs Continue to Grow

By Peter N. Carroll

Now in its fifth year, ALBA's educational program aims to reach high school teachers of social studies and Spanish who will use archival sources related to the Spanish Civil War in their classrooms. Three separate programs filled the calendar during the spring term; three more are expected in the fall.

Last March, ALBA board members James Fernández, Tony Geist, and Peter Carroll joined with the Center for Spanish Studies and the Division of Spanish and Portuguese of the University of Washington to co-host a Saturday development day in Seattle, mostly for local Spanish teachers. The teachers were introduced to a variety of source materials. The seminar focused on U.S. policy in the Spanish Civil War and related human rights issues of civilian casualties and showed how volunteers from the Pacific Northwest participated in the struggles.

In May, ALBA returned to the campus of the University of South

Florida for a fourth session with Tampa high school social studies teachers. ALBA explained how the study of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the civil war in Spain fit within the state's curricula guidelines. ALBA Vice Chair Fraser Ottanelli drew on local resources to assist the project.

Thanks to a matching grant from the Ohio Humanities Council, ALBA Chair Sebastiaan Faber leads the second week-long teaching institute at Oberlin College, which will accommodate 20 high school teachers from around the state.

For the coming fall, ALBA is looking to New York, New Jersey, and Chicago, Illinois, for additional programs. As always, the goal of these sessions is to reach teachers, and through them, their students, to keep alive the history of American activism. ■

Peter N. Carroll chairs ALBA's committee on teaching.



Mobilized Spanish emigrants in Tampa, Florida. Reproduced in *Stars for Spain: La guerra civil española en los Estados Unidos*.

An Unfinished Journey: U.S. Spaniards Face the Civil War

By James Fernández

On March 27, 1938, Avelino González Mallada, former mayor of the Asturian city of Gijón, died in a car crash on a country road in Woodstock, Virginia. The next day, *The New York Times* explained that “Señor Mallada was in this country on a sixty-day permit granted to him by the Department of Labor after he had appealed a ban on his entry imposed at Ellis Island by immigration officials upon his arrival here on February 16.” Other papers reported that González was here to carry out a fundraising tour on behalf of the Spanish Republic and had plans to travel as far as California, addressing groups of Spanish immigrants along the way. An article in the *Washington Post* later reported that on the night of the wreck, González Mallada “was en route to Beckley, West Virginia to

address a meeting of Spaniards there.”

Spaniards in West Virginia? Groups of Spanish immigrants from New York all the way to California? Enough to warrant a coast-to-coast fundraising tour? Yes indeed.

West Virginia

In the early decades of the 20th century, there was a significant influx of working-class Spanish immigrants into the United States, a process that reached its peak in the years before World War I and the restrictive immigration laws imposed in the early 1920s. During those two decades, thousands of Spaniards came to the U.S., either directly from Spain or, more often, after stints in other parts of the Spanish-speaking Americas. Like other immigrant groups, Spaniards tended to cluster in regions where certain kinds of work were available and to live together in enclaves, forming networks of solidarity and survival by establishing social clubs, mutual aid societies and the like. By the time the Spanish Civil War broke

out in 1936, these small communities of working-class Spaniards dotted the entire map of the country, as can be seen on the nation-wide list of wartime affiliates of the umbrella organization, *Sociedades Hispanas Confederadas* [Confederation of Spanish Clubs].

Of the 120-odd affiliated Spanish clubs on that list, 12 are located in the state of West Virginia, in places like Holden, Raysal, Fairmont, Warton, Lillybrook, Spelter and, of course, Beckley. In the story of working-class Spanish immigration to the United States, West Virginia is the stage of a crucial chapter or two. Thousands of Spaniards found work either in the coal pits of the southern part of the state or in the zinc foundries further north and organized themselves into the clubs that González Mallada was on his way to visit on that fateful night in the spring of 1938.

The Sunshine State

Had González Mallada continued his fundraising tour, he almost certainly

ALBA Vice Chair James Fernández is currently conducting research on the Spanish communities in the United States during the 1930s.

• Frente Popular •

C. A. E.

VOL. II

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No. 1

Creemos que es necesario ganar la guerra para que la Revolución cuente con garantías de estabilidad. Y los que se esfuerzan en sostener definiciones que solamente han de lograr divididos, deberían hacer buenas estas definiciones desde la cátedra indiscutible de la trinchera y con el argumento irrefutable del fusil. Pero aquí, en esta lejana retaguardia, no puede privar otra cosa que el de Ayudar a España sin distinguirla entre los que luchan por la Libertad.

Saludan llenos de Jubilo al Heroico Pueblo Español en 1938, y Desean Feliz Año Nuevo, de Paz, Justicia y Libertad a la Gran Colonia de Habla Española de los Estados Unidos de Norte America, que Ayudan a España,

SOCIEDADES HISPANAS CONFEDERADAS Y SUS FILIALES

CLUB OBRERO ESPAÑOL DE NEW YORK
 ATENEO HISPANO DE BROOKLYN, N. Y.
 COMITE "SOLIDARIDAD" (I. W. W.) N. Y.
 BUREAU HISPANO DEL PARTIDO COMUNISTA DE NEW YORK
 COMITE ANTIFASCISTA ESPAÑOL DE ELIZABETH PORT, N. J.
 CIRCULO DE TRABAJADORES DE BROOKLYN, N. Y.
 CENTRO ANDALUZ DE NEW YORK
 GRUPO ESPAÑOL DE HELEN, W. VA.
 COMITE PRO DEMOCRACIA DE NIAGARA FALL, N. Y.
 GRUPO ESPAÑOL "AMIGOS DE AZASA" DE NEW YORK
 COMITE ESPAÑOL DE AYUDA A ESPAÑA. EAST ST. LOUIS, ILL.
 GRUPO ANTIFASCISTA DEL BRONX, N. Y.
 COMITE ANTIFASCISTA DE WESTCHESTER COUNTY, WHITE PLAINS, N. Y.
 FRENTE POPULAR ESPAÑOL DE QUEENS, N. Y.
 COMITE FEMENINO DE WHITE PLAINS, N. Y.
 ATENEO HISPANO AMERICANO DE WHITE PLAINS, N. Y.
 GRUPO ANTIFASCISTA DE GLENCOVE, N. Y.
 AGRUPACION OBRERA HISPANA DEL BRONX, N. Y.
 SOCIEDAD NATURISTA HISPANA DE NEW YORK
 GRUPO ESPAÑOL DE LODI, N. J.
 CIRCULO VALENCIANO DE NEW YORK
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 CENTRO MONTAÑES DE NEW YORK.
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 FRENTE POPULAR DE FAIRMONT, W. VA.
 ACCION DEMOCRATA DE PITTSBURG, CALIFORNIA
 COMITE ESPAÑOL DE AYUDA A ESPAÑA, SHENANDOAH, PA.
 THE NEW ENGLAND COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF SPANISH DEMOCRACY BOSTON, MASS.
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 COMITE PRO AYUDA A ESPAÑA DE BARTLEY, W. VA.
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 CLUB CUBANO JULIO A. MELLA DE NEW YORK
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 CLUB PORTUGUES "NOVA AURORA", DE MT. VERMONT, N. Y.
 COMITE ESPAÑOL DE STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.
 COMITE PORTUGUES PRO DEMOCRACIA ESPAÑOLA, DE SOMERVILLE, MASS.
 GRUPO VASCO DE NEW YORK
 CENTRO GALICIA DE NEW YORK.

COMITE ANTIFASCISTA DE SCARSDALE, N. Y.
 SPANISH AMERICAN WOMEN'S CLUB DE NIAGARA FALL, N. Y.
 COMITE PRO FRENTE POPULAR DE ROME, N. Y.
 COMITE DE MONTPELIER, VT.
 SPANISH AMERICAN CITIZENS CLUB DE BAYONNE, N. J.
 COMITE FRENTE POPULAR DE WEIRTON, W. VA.
 MUTUALISTA HISPANO AMERICANA DE BROOKLYN, N. Y.
 GRUPO ARTISTICO TEATRO DEL PUEBLO DE NEW YORK
 FRENTE ESPAÑOL DE WINTERPORT, ME.
 PLUS ULTRA DEMOCRATIC CLUB DE BAYONNE, N. J.
 CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS SOCIALES DE WHITE PLAINS, N. Y.
 JUVENTUD LIBERTARIA "HIJAS DE ESPAÑA" DE NEW YORK
 COMITE S. H. C. DE AMSTERDAM, N. Y.
 COMITE DE DAMAS DE LA ALIANZA OBRERA ESPAÑOLA DE NEW YORK.
 AMIGOS DE LA DEMOCRACIA ESPAÑOLA DE WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, N. Y.
 SOCIEDAD DE SOCORROS MUTUOS "LA NACIONAL".
 COMITE CENTRO CULTURAL ESPAÑOL DE NEW BRITAIN, CONN.
 VANGUARDIA PUERTORRIQUESA, N. Y.
 GRUPO ESPAÑOL DE LA "ASTORLOID" DE NEW YORK.
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 GRUPO "ANTORCHA" DE NEW YORK
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 COMITE S. H. C. DE SCHENECTADY, N. Y.
 SEGURA FOOT BALL CLUB, DE BROOKLYN, N. Y.
 CLUB "HIRAM" DE NEW YORK
 COMPASEROS ANTIFASCISTAS DE BRYTEN, CALIFORNIA
 COMITE ANTIFASCISTA DE CANTON, OHIO
 UNION DE TABAQUEROS, LOCAL 273 DE NEW YORK
 UNION DE COCINEROS, LOCAL 89 DE NEW YORK
 SOCIEDAD DE AYUDA A ESPAÑA DE SPELTER, W. VA.
 SECCION HISPANA DEL INTERNATIONAL WORKERS ORDER DE NEW YORK
 JUVENTUD ESPAÑOLA DE BROOKLYN, N. Y.
 COMITE FEMENINO DE SCHENECTADY, N. Y.
 FRENTE POPULAR ESPAÑOL DE SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO.
 FRENTE POPULAR ANTIFASCISTA GALLEGO, NEW YORK
 GRUPO LEONES DE AYUDA A ESPAÑA
 RAMAL DE LA I. W. O. BECKLEY W. VA.
 GRUPO ESPAÑOL DE EAST GULF, W. VA.
 COMITE ANTIFASCISTA DE FRESNO, CAL.
 ATENEO DE ESTUDIOS SOCIALES DE BETHLEHEM, PA.
 GRUPO ESPAÑOL DE SARATOGA SPRINGS, N. Y.
 GRUPO ANTIFASCISTA DE LILLYBROOK, W. VA.
 GRUPO ANTIFASCISTA DE HOMESTEAD, PA.
 GRUPO ESPAÑOL DE AYUDA A ESPAÑA DE ALBANY, N. Y.
 GRUPO ANTIFASCISTA DE MECHANICSVILLE, N. Y.
 GRUPO FEMENINO DE RAYSAL, W. VA.
 GRUPO ESPAÑOL DE ISLAND PARK, N. Y.
 GRUPO FEMENINO DE BARRE, VT.
 GRUPO ANTIFASCISTA DE LONG BEACH, N. Y.
 COMITE FEMENINO DE ASTORIA, N. Y.
 COMITE FEMENINO VASCO, N. Y.
 CENTRO ESPAÑOL DE PATERSON, N. J.
 CLUB HISPANO PORTUGUES DE PATERSON, N. J.
 RAMAL DE LA I. W. O. DE MAHONNY CITY, PA.
 GRUPO ANTIFASCISTA DE KEISER, PA.
 FRENTE POPULAR DE BROOKLYN, N. Y.
 SPANISH AMERICAN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CLUB DEL WEST SIDE DE NEW YORK
 COMITE FEMENINO AUXILIAR DEL S. A. CLUB DE BAYONNE, N. J.

List of member organizations of the Sociedades Hispanas Confederadas in late 1937. Originally printed in the Brooklyn-based paper *Frente Popular* (15 January 1938), reprinted in Marta Rey García's invaluable *Stars for Spain: La guerra civil española en los Estados Unidos* (Sada, A Coruña, Edicions do Castro, 1997).

would have visited Tampa, Florida. Tampa was a sleepy town of just a few thousand inhabitants in 1885, when the Spanish cigarmakers Vicente Martínez Ybor and Ignacio Haya decided to relocate their “clear Havana tobacco” cigar factories from Key West to Tampa. (They had relocated in 1869 from Havana to Key West to avoid high tariffs on cigars produced in Cuba and the violence of what would become known as the “Ten Years War.”) Thousands of workers poured into “Ybor City,” primarily from Spain (Asturias, in particular) and Cuba. By 1893, there were so many Cuban and Spanish cigar workers in Tampa that José Martí traveled there from New York to generate support and raise funds for the last push of Cuba’s war of independence from Spain (1895-98).

Immigration to Tampa from Spain, often via Cuba, continued unabated during the early decades of the 20th century. Thanks in large part to the presence of a considerable population of working-class Spanish immigrants, Tampa would also be a hotbed of pro-Republican fundraising and mobilization during the Spanish Civil War. “No pasarán”, the rousing pasodoble that became the unofficial anthem of people facing fascism all over the United States, was composed by Leopoldo González, a Tampa-based cigar-factory “lector” or “reader” from Asturias.

Green Mountain Spaniards

González Mallada might have chosen to visit another somewhat unlikely focus of anti-fascist activism during the Spanish Civil War: Barre, Vermont. The town was home to a significant population of working class Spaniards, most of whom had left their native region of Cantabria (Santander) to work in the granite quarries and stone sheds of the Green Mountain State.

The passage of time, the dispersal of the town’s Spanish community, and the corrosive ideological work of the Cold War have all but erased the history of Barre’s antifascism. Thankfully, an article written just after the end of the Spanish Civil War by Miss Mary Tomasi for the Federal Writers Project gives us a priceless snapshot of what González

Mallada would have found in the town’s “Club Español”:

From the far wall letters in shrieking red prophesy, ¡Morirá el fascismo!... The Club overlooks North Main Street, just above Barre’s “deadline.” The furnishings are simple, practical. Smooth-worn benches line the walls...

John Bavine, born Juan Bavine some sixty-five years ago in Santander, Spain, is El Club’s efficient secretary...

“We Spanish are good Loyalists, —so you see by the walls—.” Bavine indicated the vivid posters. “Our Club has done good work for the victims of Fascism. In France there are 500,000 refugees in concentration camps. That war in Spain, it started in July of 1936. It did not take us in America long to lend a hand.” Bavine took a Club ledger from the shelf. “See,” he ran a stubby, calloused finger down a page with fine writing. It was in Spanish, neat, the letters much like printing. “See, here is the record. It say we start to take in contributions in August. That is fast work, no? Since then, up to date, we have taken in \$15,000. Just here in Barre. Oh there are many ways we raise money. Festivals, dances, picnics, now we even have little stamps...”

On the Pacific Coast

Had González Mallada made it all the way out to the West Coast, he probably would have addressed the protagonists of one of the strangest and least studied waves of Spanish immigration to the United States. In the decade after 1900, some 8,000 Spaniards—mostly from Andalucía—were recruited to work on the sugar cane plantations of the Hawaiian islands. Working conditions were awful, and many of the Spaniards re-emigrated to California as soon as they could, settling in places like the Monterey peninsula, where they often worked in canneries, or in the state’s Central Valley, where they harvested crops in the fruit and nut orchards. Throughout the Spanish Civil War, immigrant organizations all over the state of California organized

rallies, picnics, and film-screenings to raise funds for the Spanish Republic. In one notorious episode that took place in June 1938, the police raided a Vacaville hall and confiscated a print of the documentary film *Spain in Flames*, which was going to be screened by the Vaca Valley Spanish Societies to raise funds for Spain.

Unfinished Journey, Incomplete Knowledge

We will never know the actual coast-to-coast itinerary that González Mallada had planned in the spring of 1938. But with the list of organizations that made up the Sociedades Hispanas Confederadas and our knowledge of Spanish immigrant communities in the U.S., we can hazard a reasonable guess as to his route by connecting the dots of a spotty archipelago of communities of Spanish antifascist solidarity: from the East coast groups sketched out here, through the steelworkers of Canton, Ohio; the zinc workers of Cherryvale, Kansas; and the Basque shepherds and inn-keepers of Nevada, Montana, and Idaho; all the way to the pruners and canners in places like Vacaville, California.

The unfinished journey of González Mallada is an apt metaphor for our incomplete understanding of the depth and breadth of anti-fascist mobilization in the United States around the issues of the Spanish Civil War and, in particular, of the role of Spanish immigrants in that process. We know, for example, that the Confederated Spanish Societies and the Tampa-based Comité Popular Democrático together raised almost two-thirds as much money for the Republic as the much larger and well-studied American Medical Bureau and North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy (\$520K/ \$805K). We know, moreover, that roughly 10 percent of the last names on the Lincoln Brigade roster are Hispanic. And yet many of our research and outreach projects seem to ignore or marginalize the fact that a significant portion of “American” involvement in the Spanish Civil War was carried out by Spaniards, in Spanish. *Ya es hora de remediar esta situación y así, de paso, rendir tributo al desafortunado viajero, Avelino González Mallada.* ■

THE SPANISH HOLOCAUST

INQUISITION AND EXTERMINATION IN
TWENTIETH-CENTURY SPAIN

PAUL PRESTON

THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER



Paul Preston in 2009. Photo Colin McPherson

Reframing Our View of the War in Spain

***The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain.* By Paul Preston. New York: Norton, 2012.**

By Sebastiaan Faber

Names matter. How we label events from the past does not just reflect how we view those events, but actively shapes our understanding of them. One could go so far as to say that historical events don't actually exist as events until they are labeled. We now know the messy decade of civil and military violence that held Mexico in its grip from 1910 to 1920 as the Mexican Revolution, for example, and refer to the 40 years' worth of intricate military, diplomatic, political, and cultural world history between 1948 and 1989 simply as the Cold War. Labels, to be sure, are indispensable; they help organize

the unmanageable chaos that makes up actual history. But names are never gratuitous: they always frame how we think of the past as well. This is especially crucial when it comes to categorizing armed conflict, which calls for the identification of victims and attackers, the innocent and the guilty. Consider the difference in this respect between "The War between the States," "The War of Northern Aggression," "The War of Secession," and "The American Civil War." While it is generally the winners who get to determine how wars enter the history books, the perspective of the losers is not erased, and often survives in competing labels. Finally, of course, the names we give to historical events are themselves subject to change. (It took a second global conflict for la Grande Guerre to become the First World War.) Often, name changes respond to changed power relations, political interests, or sensibilities—and are likely to cause disputes.

For the conflict that broke out in Spain in the summer of 1936 as the result of a failed military coup, the term "civil

war" stuck early on, in Spain and in the rest of the world. This was in part because its prospect had already been invoked for several years as a threat hovering over the increasingly polarized country. But once the fighting began, the "civil war" label faced fierce competition. On the Left, some preferred to call the conflict The Spanish Revolution, or, denying the Nazi-aided Nationalists their Spanishness, a War of Independence. The Nationalists, meanwhile, rhetorically dressed up their illegitimate coup as an *alzamiento*, or "rising," and referred to the war as a holy struggle, a *crusada*. Until the 1960s, these were the terms officially used in Francoist textbooks, monuments, and government documents. (One multi-volume account of the war was titled *History of the Spanish Crusade*.) As Herbert Southworth was first to show, the regime's late adoption of the term "civil war" was part of a deliberate policy change that attempted to bridge the gap between official Francoist historiography and that of the democratic West. But the switch was only possible because, by then, Franco's regime had

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been strengthened by economic growth and international recognition, and it felt less need to compensate rhetorically for the obvious illegitimacy of its origins.

Names matter, indeed. Paul Preston's choice of *The Spanish Holocaust* for his latest and most ambitious account of the massive violence unleashed in the wake of the 1936 coup is as polemical as it is well-pondered. It reflects a conscious attempt on Preston's part to reframe how we think about the war in Spain and its long, bloody aftermath. Referring to the hundreds of thousands of Spanish deaths as a holocaust has three immediate implications. First, it underscores the massive scale of civilian suffering. Second, it directly links Spain's Nationalists to the Nazi regime, stressing that Franco's reign of terror, like that of Hitler and Goebbels, was carefully planned and systematically executed. Third, it calls attention to the motivations behind the violence in Spain. Preston presents convincing evidence that the massive killings perpetrated by Nationalist forces were driven not just by political differences of opinion, but also by an immense amount of cropped-up hatred and disgust filtered through notions of racial inferiority. The military Nationalist leadership saw Spain's workers and peasants not just as dangerous subversives or fellow citizens gone astray, but actually as subhuman, mentally and morally deranged creatures whose physical extermination was necessary for the good of the country.

This last point is one of the most important contributions of Preston's monumental study to Spanish Civil War historiography. If the Spanish Civil War is still generally considered to have been a class conflict, Preston reframes it as, in part, an ethnic one. He establishes clear links between the political ideas of the rebel military leaders (in particular their cockamamie belief in the existence of a global Jewish-Bolshevik-Masonic conspiracy), their decades' worth of experience as officers in the ruthlessly repressive Spanish colonial army in North Africa (whose populations were routinely subjected to acts of unspeakable cruelty that included torture, mutilation, and rape), and their treatment of their fellow citizens

during the Civil War. "The leaders of the rebellion," Preston writes, "... regarded the Spanish proletariat in the same way as they did the Moroccan, as an inferior race that had to be subjugated by sudden, uncompromising violence." The overarching purpose, however, was fundamentally economic and political: to ensure that the interests of the establishment—the Church, the landowning class, and the Army—"would never again be challenged as they had been from 1931 to 1936 by the democratic reforms of the Second Republic." Since these reforms included the establishment of workers' and women's rights, secular public education, literacy campaigns, and land reform, it is no exaggeration to say that the coup

Republicans were executed by the Franco regime in the postwar years. Thousands more died as bombing victims, refugees, and inmates of prisons and concentration camps. And none of these statistics takes into account the immense suffering endured by the survivors.

These numbers are important and shocking. But the value of Preston's book is the rich historical context he provides for them. The first four chapters cover the five Republican years (1931-36) to explain the gradual but deliberate build-up of hatred and political tensions. The bulk of the book, organized in eight central chapters, deals with the violence during the war. The long final chapter narrates the "continuation of the war by other

The supporters of the Nationalists had reached the conclusion that the defense of their interests required "the eradication of the 'thinking' of progressive liberal and left-wing elements"; or, in General Emilio Mola's words, to "eliminate without scruples or hesitation all who do not think as we do."

aimed to stop modernity itself in its tracks. The supporters of the Nationalists had reached the conclusion that the defense of their interests required "the eradication of the 'thinking' of progressive liberal and left-wing elements"; or, in General Emilio Mola's words, to "eliminate without scruples or hesitation all who do not think as we do."

The Spanish Holocaust draws on Preston's vast research, as well as scores of recent historical studies, to establish the most accurate possible estimates of numbers of Spanish victims—statistics that, ever since the outbreak of the war, have been notoriously subject to manipulation and distortion. Almost 200,000 men and women were murdered extra-judicially behind the lines. Another 200,000 men fell at the front. Around 20,000

means" during Franco's almost 40-year dictatorship, built on the conviction that only harsh punishment for the defeated, not reconciliation, could be the basis of a "healthy" and "true" post-war Spain. For decades, the country lived in the grips of a perverted justice system that branded loyalty to the Republican government as treason and largely relied on denunciations from ordinary citizens.

A brief epilogue ponders the long aftermath of violence in political, psychological, and cultural terms. The regime's "powerfully sustained attempt to brainwash its population" in the years following the war, Preston writes, "inflicted a great long-term damage on Spanish society": "To this day, its powerful residual effects hamper the ability of mainstream contemporary society to look upon its

recent violent past in an open and honest way that could facilitate the necessary social and political closure.” This is due not only to the fact that the memories of suffering on the Republican side were not allowed into the public sphere. The “near-hysterical reaction” of some sectors of today’s Spain to the recovery of historical memory, the exhumation of unmarked graves, and the investigation of past crimes also “derives from the fact that there were...many historical memories among the victors and their descendants that had to be repressed by the need to safeguard a false memory”—including the haunting memories and feelings of guilt among those who had committed atrocities. This is what Preston’s colleague Helen Graham has referred to as Francoism’s “lasting toxicity.”

Preston covers the violence on both sides of the war. One of the sections that has received the most attention in Spain is his analysis of the infamous execution of almost 2,500 right-wing prisoners at Paracuellos del Jarama (the responsibility for which Preston places at the feet of, among others, the young Communist leader Santiago Carrillo). But Preston makes clear that, on the whole, the killing on the Republican side was quantitatively and qualitatively very different from that on the Nationalist side. Here three points merit emphasis. First, that the “repression by the rebels was about three times greater than that which took place in the Republican zone.” Second, that the violence on the Republican side was essentially reactive to that on the Nationalist side. (“It is difficult to see,” Preston writes, “how the violence in the Republican zone could have happened without the military coup which effectively removed all of the restraints of civilized society.”) And third, that while the killings by the Nationalists were not only condoned or actively planned by the rebel military authorities, those in the Republican zone happened outside the control, and against the will, of the government, which put a stop to them as soon as it could. Violence in Republican-controlled territory was partly driven by notions among the “extreme Left, particularly in the anarchist movement,” about the need for elimination of the class

enemy and “purification by fire” as first steps toward a new, more just society. (For Preston, “the outburst of revolutionary fervor and an orgy of killing” in some of the areas in which the coup failed “would demonstrate once more that Spain’s harshly repressive society had produced a brutalized underclass.”)

As Graham wrote in *The Independent*, this book, years in the making, happens to appear at an opportune and complicated moment. The movement for the “Recovery of Historical Memory,” which over the past dozen years has exhumed hundreds of mass graves and emphatically defended the rights of the victims of the Franco regime, now faces one of its greatest challenges. The trials that resulted in the disbarment of Judge Baltasar Garzón, who attempted to seek truth and reparation through Spain’s criminal justice system, allowed for unprecedented scenes: victims of Francoism telling their stories of suffering to Spain’s highest court. But the Court’s sentence closed off all possibility of a judicial satisfaction to the victims’ demands.

Preston’s *Holocaust*, too, opens up the public sphere to individual stories of suffering. The many hundreds of horrifying stories that make up the bulk of this book serve as illustrations to the larger picture, to be sure, but they also recognize and honor their protagonists, all of whom appear with their full names, as citizens entitled to our attention and a place in Spain’s historical memory. As Graham writes, “Preston’s study is history as a public good, a substitute for the truth and reconciliation process that has not taken place in Spain.”

Meanwhile, the reception of this book in Spain has been predictably uneven. Preston, after all, tells truths that many are not interested in hearing, and he does so in great detail, with scholarly rigor (the notes run 120 pages), and in an accessible, efficient prose. This leaves little recourse to those flatly opposed to the revelation of some of the darkest pages of Spain’s recent past. The journalist Jorge Reverte, writing in the center-left newspaper *El País*, dismissed the book as “a hyperbolic and unbalanced narration,” claiming that Preston’s sympathy for the Republican side determined his partisan

assessment of the crimes he describes. In fact, Reverte unwittingly proved one of Preston’s key points: The persistence in Spain and elsewhere of myths about the war and Francoism, which allows the public to identify the notions of “objectivity” and “balance” with a “neutral” condemnation of both sides as equally violent and therefore equally reprehensible and equally guilty. “To this day,” Preston writes, “General Franco and his regime enjoy a relatively good press,” thanks to “a series of persistent myths about the benefits of his rule,” including the false notions that he saved Spain from Communism or engineered its later economic boom. “Recognizing that the initial massive violence was generated by the military rebels themselves,” Helen Graham echoes Preston, “remains the biggest taboo of all in democratic Spain’s public sphere.” (The whole notion that scholars like Preston, Graham, Angel Viñas or Julián Casanova should be labeled as “pro-Republican historians” is quite curious: Should we also be referring to, say, Richard Evans or Martin Gilbert as “pro-Allied historians” of the Second World War?)

Preston admits in his preface and acknowledgments that writing this book was one of the most difficult tasks he has faced as a scholar—not only because of the scale of its aspirations, but because of the book’s depressing, painful subject matter. Like most of us non-Spaniards who dedicate our lives to understanding the Iberian Peninsula, Preston is driven as much by a thirst for knowledge as by affection and respect for his subject. Forcing himself to research and describe the appalling cruelties that Spaniards were capable of inflicting on each other must have been grueling. Gerald Brenan, another staunch British Hispanophile, famously wrote his seminal *Spanish Labyrinth* (1943) as a form of therapy, a way to deal with the anxiety caused by the endless flow of distressing news from Spain. After seeing the results of the rebels’ rage in the hospital of Toledo, the UP correspondent Webb Miller told Jay Allen that “he came close to going off his rocker.” One can imagine that the same is true for Preston. But it was worth it: He has produced an indispensable, important book. ■



California Vets: Del Berg and Jim Benét

By Nadya Williams

in Madison Square Garden “feel (for they called out during the collection) that the money should be given for arms, instead of supplies.”

Benét arrived in Spain soon after the destruction of the Basque city of Guernica in April 1937 by German incendiary bombers practicing their first “Blitzkrieg.” Cynically, he said, the Spanish fascists announced to the country and the world that “the Reds” had leveled the defenseless town. He saw combat in the battle of Brunete in July 1937 and then again during the first and second attempts to stop Franco’s offensives at Aragon in March and April 1938. Of combat, he recounted, “I saw a young Lincoln’s hair turn white, in the space of one week, completely white—from fear. He was then transferred away from the front.”

“I’m very proud of the fact that my family name is Catalan,” he said in a recent interview. “I’m mostly Irish, but one eighth Spanish—from Catalonia.” After 15 months of duty, Benét left Spain in the fall of 1938 along with the other internationals. “We were tricked by the fascists,” he said of the defeat of Republican Spain the following year. “The fascists had much more technologically

Delmer Berg at the Bay Area event. Photo by Richard Bermack.

Northern California is the fortunate home to two of the remaining Lincoln Brigade veterans: former newspaperman James Benét, now 98, and Delmer Berg, a very lively 96. Two of the four known living Lincolns today, Berg and Benét, each of whom lives a few hours

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drive from San Francisco, are mentally fit and living independently.

Already a professional journalist in New York City, 23-year-old Stanford graduate Jim Benét arrived in Spain in the spring of 1937 to drive ambulances. Later he volunteered for combat. Before leaving for Europe, he wrote in the *New Republic* magazine that many in the crowd at a fundraising rally for the Spanish Republic

advanced weaponry, but the Republican and the international troops had greater numbers and bravery.”

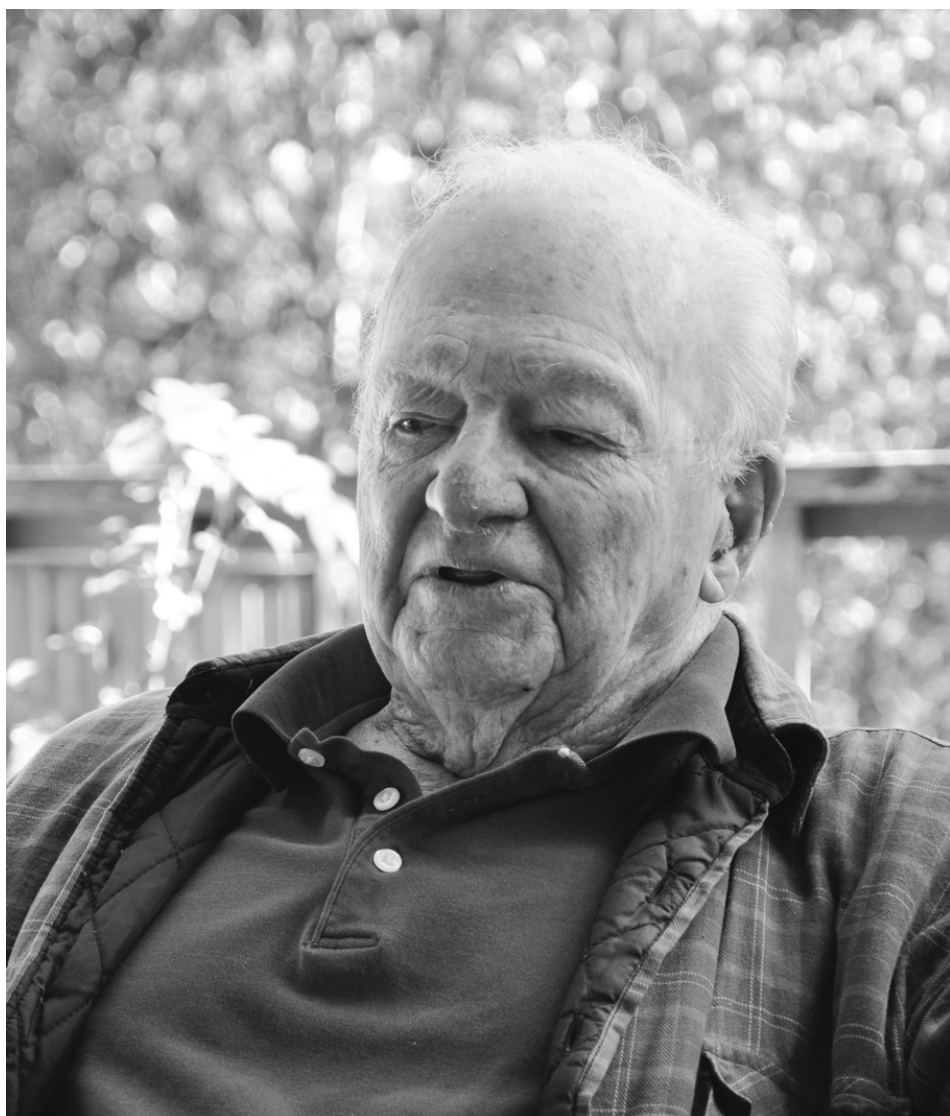
Benét, whose uncle was the famous Stephen Vincent Benét, author of “John Brown’s Body,” resumed his journalistic career with the New York bureau of TASS (the Soviet news agency) during World War II. He later worked for the *San Francisco Chronicle* for 20 years and for the Pulitzer prize-winning KQED television show *Newsroom*. For several years he taught at the university level. He now lives alone in a cozy home in rural Sonoma County, assisted by regular housekeepers. He advises young people today to always question and seek truth for themselves, so that “when you get old you won’t feel, ‘I should have known. I should not have believed or accepted [the lies].’”

“Spain made a man of me,” Benét added. “Going to Spain was the right thing to do. You couldn’t have a better beginning in life! We thought then, and I know now, the civil war was a genuine attempt by the Spanish people to defend democracy against the tyrannical and inhuman regimes of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini.”

Del Berg’s roots contrast with Benét’s middle-class upbringing. “I was born into a struggling farm family in Southern California,” said Del in a recent interview in the spacious, stone, hillside home he built himself in the Sierra Nevada foothills of Tuolumne County. A life-long farm laborer and radical organizer, he now cares for his ailing wife, June. Berg had already been in the U.S. National Guard—as well as the Young Communist League—before he took off for Spain in early 1938 at the age of 21.

Based on his military experience, he was assigned to laying communication lines from Republican bases to the battle fronts. Berg’s unit worked first near Barcelona, then in the defense of Teruel, and at the battle of the Ebro River. “We helped blow up the bridge on the Ebro, because it was an important connection to the Mediterranean Sea for the fascists,” he said, smiling.

Next came his fateful assignment to the central coast city of Valencia, where he was largely idle, as lines had already been laid. “We got a liter of wine a day,” he recounted happily, “and I even got to go to the movies a couple of times in Valencia.”



Jim Benét. Photo by Phil Richardson.

But in August 1938, at 10 p.m., Italian airplanes bombed the dormitory of a monastery where the brigadistas billeted, rather than their intended target, the railroad station. “If you want to be safe,” we used to say, “go to where the fascists want to bomb.” Berg, who was sitting up in bed, was hit in the side by shrapnel, which still rests in his liver today. But several of the internationals from Italy were killed by the very fascists who had taken over their country. Like Benét, Berg left Spain in October 1938. “I felt bad,” he admits, “because I was not that active in Spain. But you do what you can do.”

Back home, Berg got married, was drafted into the U.S. Army for three years during World War II, and returned to Modesto. He participated in numerous activist movements with various groups,

including the United Farm Workers, the local NAACP (he was the only white member), the Mexican American Political Association, the anti-Viet Nam War movement, the Democratic Club, the Congress of California Seniors, peace and justice committees, and many more. Asked if he was ever called by the House Un-American Activities Committee, Berg proudly produces a 1966 letter asking him to “please contact” their office. “They could never find me to serve a summons,” he grins.

His proudest moment since Spain? “When I was elected vice president of the local NAACP,” Berg says, “and when one of my grandsons was valedictorian at his Oregon high school graduation and said in a newspaper interview, ‘My grandfather is my inspiration. He’s a Communist.’” ■

Mauthausen: A Spaniard's Tale

By Sara J. Brenneis

Editor's note: A longer version of this piece will be published next year in the journal History & Memory.

A Spaniard named Carlos Rodríguez del Risco was imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camp of Mauthausen from 1940 to 1945. Although he was sympathetic to the Spanish Republic when he went into exile at the end of the Spanish Civil War, he became hostile to the Republican cause during his deportation and imprisonment. He subsequently renounced what he considered to be his disloyal defense of the Republic in favor of a newly found devotion to dictator Francisco Franco and the Nationalist cause, declaring, "Catholic by conviction, I am a soldier of the Church; fervent Spaniard, I will always be a loyal servant of my Country. And my Country is now, whether or not the communists and renegades like it, unanimously represented by Franco, a man providentially chosen to liberate it from the most tremendous loss of life of all time."

In 1946, one year after he was liberated from Mauthausen, Rodríguez del Risco published an account of his five-year exile in the Franco regime's officially sanctioned fascist newspaper, *Arriba*. During a period when information about Nazi concentration camps and World War II was largely censored in Spanish newspapers, the author's story, "Yo he estado en Mauthausen" ("I Was in Mauthausen"), was the first published account of a Nazi concentration camp by a Spanish survivor. Although Rodríguez del Risco's memoir presents verifiable historical information about the Holocaust and the experiences of Spaniards in a Nazi camp, it is also propaganda for Franco, containing offensive rhetoric about Jews and Spanish Republicans. These contradictions and the fact that the author is the first Spanish voice from the Holocaust make Rodríguez del Risco's story appalling and fascinating at the same time.

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Rodríguez del Risco was one of thousands of Spaniards caught in Nazi concentration camps after fleeing Spain at the end of the Spanish Civil War. First held in flea-infested, barbed-wire enclosures along the coast of France, many defeated Spanish Republicans were forced into the French Companies of Foreign Workers or Foreign Legion in order to escape their miserable conditions. Like many of his exiled compatriots, when World War II erupted, Rodríguez del Risco was taken by the Germans and sent to a prisoner-of-war camp. Although Spain was officially neutral in World War II, Franco was complicit with Hitler's Germany. The dictator disowned the exiled Republicans, leaving them at the mercy of the Nazis, and they were deported to concentration camps across the Third Reich. Rodríguez del Risco and over 7,000 other Spaniards were sent to the Mauthausen extermination camp in Austria, where 5,000 of them died. None were Jewish.

As a political prisoner, Rodríguez del Risco was not a target for the Nazi's Final Solution, unlike Mauthausen's Jewish population, which was subject to extermination in the gas chambers. Although he writes about meager rations, inhumane working conditions, and beatings he received for offenses as minor as smoking a cigarette, Rodríguez del Risco survived his ordeal in Mauthausen, unlike the majority of the Spaniards, who died from starvation, lethal injection, physical exhaustion, or the brutality of the S.S. When Mauthausen was liberated by American forces on May 5, 1945, some 2,000 Spaniards were still alive, although many of them died in the days after liberation from dysentery and starvation-related causes. Unlike Rodríguez del Risco, who returned to Spain as a Franco supporter in 1945, most Spanish survivors returned to France after the war, fearing they would be killed or imprisoned in Spain for their fervent anti-Franco politics. With few exceptions, the stories of the Spanish survivors of Mauthausen would remain untold in Spain until after Franco's death in 1975.

Rodríguez del Risco's testimonial narrative is one of the few exceptions. Between April 26 and June 1, 1946, the 28 installments of his story, each one subtitled "*Carlos R. del Risco relates exclusively for ARRIBA his seven years of adventure in exile,*" were splashed across the pages of *Arriba*, a newspaper that acted as the Franco regime's mouthpiece. Although the author's story mimics a classic adventure tale, a conversion narrative, and a 19th-century serialized Spanish novel, it is not a work of fiction, but sprang from the true-life nightmare Rodríguez del Risco survived.

In the articles, Rodríguez del Risco recounts beatings and deprivations that he and other Spanish prisoners suffered in the camps at the hands of the S.S. and fellow prisoners-commanders or *kapos*. He observed the high-ranking Nazi officer Heinrich Himmler's inspection of Mauthausen, and he identifies individual S.S. and *kapos* who were particularly cruel or who provided aid to the prisoners. In 1940, he witnessed the arrival of a train convoy from Angoulême, France, of entire Spanish families, writing that "they arrived at the Mauthausen camp on the 16th of [August]. Astonishment, anger and terror gained control of all of them, but all of the protests that they formulated ended up being useless. They made the men and boys over 10 years of age get off the train, and despite the desperation of the women, mothers, sisters and wives who stayed on the train, they were imprisoned in Mauthausen." This and other detailed historical information provided in the pages of *Arriba* demonstrates the power of one eyewitness account of the Holocaust.

Yet in the same pages, Rodríguez del Risco includes anti-Semitic diatribes, misinformation about Spanish Republicans, glowing words about Franco, and the absurd argument that Hitler, whom he calls a "true patriot," had no knowledge of the Nazi's systematic extermination of the Jews. The articles served as propaganda for the anti-Semitic and anti-Republican Franco dictatorship, bordering on a denial of the Holocaust. ■

Letters from a British Volunteer

The Last to Fall, The Life and Letters of Ivor Hickman, an International Brigadier in Spain. By John L. Wainwright. Hatchet Green Publishing, 2012.

By Christopher Brooks

From the cover photograph of the International Brigade volunteer's weather-beaten face to the closing lines, John L. Wainwright beautifully intertwines the personal correspondence of Hickman into the broader context of the British Battalion. The photograph, taken during the Ebro campaign of 1938, shows a soldier who appears to be in his thirties, with worry lines etched into his forehead and a tired squint. The image belies Ivor Hickman's youth. Hickman, the Chief of Observers for the British battalion, was only in his early twenties when the photograph was taken.

Wainwright takes the reader through the brief life of this almost forgotten Spanish Civil War volunteer. The letters Hickman wrote to his wife, during both their courtship and his time in Spain, are the book's focal point. Hickman was only 23 years old and married less than a year when he died in Spain. As his letters convey, he was committed to surviving the war, exercising every opportunity to obtain training aimed at increasing his chance of survival. Despite his optimism, he understood that one cannot ensure his own safety on the battlefield.

Hickman had an impressive education. He attended Peter Symond's preparatory academy on scholarship after his father, an officer in the Great War, committed suicide. In light of contemporary psychology and the study of combat's aftermath, it can likely be concluded that the elder Hickman suffered from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). An outstanding student at Symond's, Hickman



was accepted to Christ's College, Cambridge University, graduating in 1936. While at the university, he developed liberal political leanings and joined the Cambridge Communist Party. He also met his future wife, Juliet MacArthur, a student at Newnham College, Cambridge University.

Hickman's letters are introspective and contain less of the propaganda element many other volunteers interjected into their correspondence. Despite self-censorship, and strikeouts by the censors, Hickman provides a very human portrait of his service in Spain. Wainwright provides context, adding short biographical sketches, either in the text or in footnotes, of volunteers Hickman mentions in his letters. This element is strengthened by Wainwright's inclusion of many photographs of the volunteers. Additionally he includes relevant primary

sources and provides transcriptions. Wainwright's extensive research is evident and his narrative is engaging. This book is a worthy addition to Spanish Civil War libraries.

Christopher Brooks directs the ALBA biographical project. ▲

Poet on the Spanish Front

Julian Bell: From Bloomsbury to the Spanish Civil War. By Peter Stansky and William Abrahams. Stanford University Press, 2012.

By Charlie Oberndorf

In 1966, Peter Stansky and William Abrahams published *Journey to the Frontier*, which followed the lives of two young poets from families with strong intellectual and artistic backgrounds, both of whom died in the Spanish Civil War. John Cornford went to Cambridge, joined the Communist Party, wrote committed poetry, and recruited for and enlisted in the International Brigades. Julian Bell went to Cambridge, wrote some good nature poetry, and followed a road to Spain that took a number of telling detours.

In the past four decades, new information about Bell has come to light, some of it personal details that friends were less likely to share in the mid-1960s, when a sense of decorum and privacy were a strong part of British intellectual culture. Now, with the support of the heirs, Stansky has expanded the sections about Julian Bell to produce a full-scale biography of that young man. (Abrahams, one of our great literary editors, died in 1998.)

Bell was the son of painter Vanessa Bell and nephew of Virginia Woolf. In a sense, he was a child of Bloomsbury, that group of artists that charted a new aesthetic away from Edwardian tradition. He grew up wanting to be a man of action and took an interest in the nature of war, while at the same time taking an intense interest in what the future of poetry should be like. At King's College, Cambridge, he seemed to lose his way. After a brief affair with Anthony Blunt (who later became a Soviet spy), Julian fell in love several times; in all his affairs, he wrote openly and honestly to his mother about his relationships.

Bell met with some success as a poet, producing two books, but he had trouble shaping a manuscript that would earn him a fellowship. Trying to find a new direction, he took a position in China to teach English literature. There he fell in love with his dean's wife.

As the 1930s progressed, so did Bell's political commitments. When he had to leave China because of his affair, he decided to join the International Brigades. There was enormous pressure from his family not to go. He was told that his talents could be better exploited by becoming involved politically at home. Others worried how this move would affect his mother. As a compromise, Julian agreed to drive an ambulance rather than enlist as a soldier.

Stansky and Abrahams divide Bell's life at Cambridge into three sections, examining his intellectual development, his love affairs, and his increasing interest in politics. As a result, however, the reader doesn't get an integrated sense of how these three threads weave together. The writers do a fine job of excerpting poems, letters, and essays to give a sense of Bell's thinking. At times, we see Julian so closely that we don't get a sense of his charisma.

The most personal sections of the book are the most riveting. The authors do a fine job of catching the way Bell's affairs start as great passionate encounters, then as he rethinks them, in the background always concerned as to how his mother will respond to the woman in his life. The chapter on China, full of fresh information, is particularly rich, and the final chapter on Bell in Spain is strongest when capturing that particular tension many who went to Spain must have felt when deciding if they should join the fray.

Bell seems to be at his finest when in Spain. We don't see the same confused young man who seemed to seek out love affairs as a way to give his life direction. We find someone who becomes the hallmark of dedication. So it comes as a surprise when Stansky writes, "His death was a terrible waste." This is much different from the end of the original book, *Journey to the Frontier*, when the two writers merge Julian's death with the deaths of all those who had fought for the Spanish Republic.

Charles Oberndorf is working on a biographical novel about Lincoln Brigade vet Abe Osheroff. ■

Respond to Repression

***Hell No: Your Right to Dissent in Twenty-First Century America.* By Michael Ratner and Margaret Ratner Kunstler. New York: The New Press, 2011.**

By Michael Batinski

Somewhere lurking in our imaginations we carry a picture of ourselves responding to a rap at the door to be bullied by agents of the FBI. The fantasy is nurtured by films like the Bourne series. It is made real by reports of government violations of rights to privacy and free speech. While we want to dismiss the news as exceptional and the films as fantasy, we carry a dread that saps our willingness to say no to government. *Hell No* brings fantasy to reality and the exceptional to common practice with its long catalogs of what the protectors of our security do to our rights of speech and dissent. More important, Michael Ratner and Margaret Ratner Kunstler work to counter that debilitating dread that may silence us.

As each of us reads this book, the threat becomes real, even personal. The government has targeted Quakers and animal rights activists in its efforts to stem the terrorist threat. I am a Quaker in part as witness against our descent into a warrior society. My mother, in her last years, gave money to protect animals from inhumane treatment. Neither of us ever considered that we consorted with terrorists.

The authors catalog a list of police tactics, recommending responses to each. If innovations in communications enable dissenters to organize, those technologies also open the door for snoops. For example, legal restraints that apply to telephone lines do not extend to cell phones, and the police jump to take advantage of the difference. How to respond to the rap at the door? Advice is provided.

For moments we may imagine that Margaret Atwood's fantasy of America (*The Handmaid's Tale*) is becoming real. Read this book. Support the Center for Constitutional Rights. Join your local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. And say no.

Michael Batinski, emeritus professor at Southern Illinois University, volunteered for a year at The Meeting School in New Hampshire. He teaches in ALBA's program for high school teachers ■

A British Nurse in Spain

***"For us it was Heaven." The Passion, Grief and Fortitude of Patience Darton, from the Spanish Civil War to Mao's China.* By Angela Jackson. Brighton, Portland, Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2012.**

By Helen Graham

Patience Darton's life spanned the turbulent 20th century across two continents. Not only was she a witness, but she also left a remarkably eloquent and original written record in the form of correspondence, the heart of this extraordinary biography by historian Angela Jackson.

Jackson charts, in a vivid and engaging manner, Patience Darton's extraordinary "outward" journey, from her battles against London hospital bureaucracy—themselves revealing of the severe limitations of British "democracy" in the pre-1945 world—and her midwife's view of the struggle for survival among the urban poor of East End London to a memorable encounter with the exiled Ethiopian ruler, Haile Selassie, on the doorstep of her Bloomsbury church, and reaches the story's heart in civil war-torn Spain. The story of "Spain," i.e., of a deeply felt personal commitment to the same cause of social justice that had first fixed Patience's resolve among London's poor, is told in a fresh way that draws in the reader immediately. In particular, the picture she paints of front-line nursing in Republican Spain is vividly rendered, and the telling of its traumatic toll on the medical personnel recalls those edgy truths later brought to us by productions such as *M.A.S.H.*

But even more than all of this, Jackson gives us, again in hugely evocative—but always precise—prose, the story of Patience's remarkable inner journey:

You are quite right in saying that it is only in struggling and fighting, not only outside things but things inside ourselves, that make a person. [...] Anyway I made a person out of myself, and became an individual with a life and work of my own.

This is what makes the book stand out as a real gem. Patience's story is extraordinary—inner struggle, existential becoming, self-fulfillment, tragedy, gritty survival, mental fortitude and undying love-in-memory. But the power lies in the telling, in the way in which Patience herself was supremely capable of revealing her experience in luminous prose. Patience's words, her wit, and her arresting, often heartbreaking, style, are the secret weapons in this story.

There are so many resonant vignettes in the text that it is difficult to single any out. My own choice would be Patience's telling of the three Finnish International Brigaders, mortally wounded in the battle of the Ebro in 1938, who die, untranslated—a story which, as told by Patience, conveys far more than its content:

We were very good with the Brigades in the hospitals about trying to get somebody who spoke their language, because that was always a dreadful thing with very ill people, dying people—they couldn't speak—different tongues, you see. And that was where the Commissars came in. Very often there were a lot of Jewish people in the Brigades, a great many, and a lot of them spoke Yiddish and something else. And you would always try to get a Jewish person who could speak Yiddish, to another Jewish person—it didn't matter if they were Romanian or Hungarian or what they were, you could get a common language, get a message if you wanted it, that they wanted to send home or say who they were or something like that. But we had on the Ebro, in that cave, three Finns and nobody could speak anything to them. Nobody speaks Finnish. They were all very bad chest wounds. In those days we didn't know that you could operate on chest wounds, we used to strap them up tight and sit them up, but they were miserable. They couldn't breathe; they were strapped up tight as well as being with all these dreadful flesh wounds, very deep ones. And they were all three dying. And we couldn't get anyone

Vernon W. Bown (1917-2012)

One of the last surviving veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, Vernon Bown, died of pneumonia at a VA hospital in Martinez, California, on March 23, as reported by his son Ricardo.

Born in rural Wisconsin, Bown went to Spain in 1937 and saw action with the MacKenzie-Papineau battalion until the volunteers were repatriated in 1938. During World War II, he served in merchant marines.

During the more "peaceful" 1950s, Bown's politics brought him national attention. "All of the situations and struggles I have participated in throughout my life have stemmed pretty much from the same reason I went to Spain: my extreme dislike, and yes, hatred of oppression.... I've always felt a kinship with the oppressed."

While working as a truck driver in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1954, around the time the U.S. Supreme Court issued the *Brown* decision denying the legality of racial segregation in schools, Bown read a newspaper story about community protests against a black family that had purchased a home in an all-white neighborhood. Bown volunteered to live in the house to discourage further violence. He was lucky not to be

there when a bomb exploded, damaging the house.

Segregationist officials blamed the attack on a Communist plot to instigate racial turmoil, and when investigators found communist literature in Bown's room, he became the prime suspect. "I have gradually come to the conclusion that Negro people have been pretty badly treated in this country," he told a grand jury investigating the bombing. For these opinions, Bown was held in jail on a high bond for six months on charges of sedition. "My freedom was gone. My job was gone," Bown said. "There was nothing left but to fight." But not until the Supreme Court ruled that state sedition laws were unconstitutional was Bown released in 1956.

Five years later, he was among a group of demonstrators arrested in San Francisco for protesting hearings held by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Among those arrested with him was his second wife, Spanish Civil War nurse Ruth Davidow.

Bown eventually retired in his hometown, Minong, Wisconsin. He grew his own garden and kept his own bees to make honey. He enjoyed going on walks and dancing at the senior center as often as he could.

Only four U.S.-born vets are known to ALBA to be still alive.

—Peter N. Carroll

who spoke Finnish and they weren't Jewish. Oh! I'll never forget them; they were such beautiful creatures, great blonde things, you know [sigh] unable to say anything.

Patience Darton's life is an encapsulation of some of the 20th century's most critical moments. Without an ounce of didacticism, her life shows the reader the abiding truth of "the personal is political." No didacticism then, just a truth rendered with grace and melancholy (wrenching understatement is Patience's forte) and delivered in a way that speaks directly to the sensibilities

of the contemporary reader. This is why I highlight the story of the Finnish volunteers—for it seems to me that this book achieves quite beautifully the big challenge of "translating the 1930s" for today's readers. Patience's is a unique voice that locks into a rich seam of memory, illuminating the big historical picture while never losing sight of the particularity of heartbreaking loss. This is a subtle, moving story—exquisitely told.

Helen Graham is a professor of Spanish history at Royal Holloway, University of London. ■

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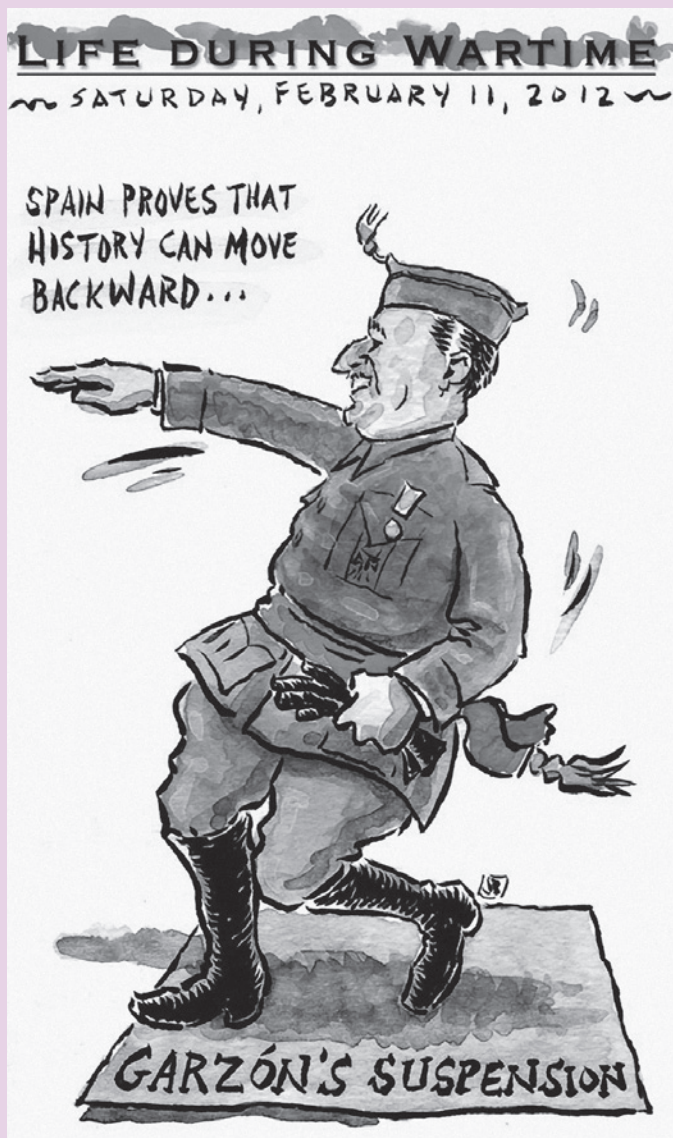
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In loving remembrance of Carl Marzani—life and accomplishment—on what would have been his 100th birthday. His date of birth, March 4, was also his credo: march forth!
—Charlotte Pomerantz

The Volunteer

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