

The Volunteer

FOUNDED BY THE VETERANS OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE

Guernica in ruins after the bombardment, April 1937. Photographer unknown

GERNIKA, 75 YEARS LATER NEW YORK COMMEMORATES BOMBING

ÁNGEL VIÑAS
TAKES ON THE
NEO-FRANCOISTS

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Dear Friends,

The elections are over. For the many of us who got involved—canvassing, calling, raising money, writing checks—it felt like much was at stake. And there was. But now it's time to step back, take a breath, and assess the world around us. And what do you know: much work remains to be done. We know that we cannot afford complacency.

As in 2008, these elections introduced a new generation of young Americans to the values of civic activism. The value of standing up for what you believe in. The value of translating your beliefs into action.

Their energy and commitment are inspiring. But they need direction.

This is where ALBA comes in. Working with high school teachers around the country, our workshops find ways to connect the compelling stories of the American volunteers who stood up to fascism in Spain with the challenges that face today's 16-year-olds. We don't teach the past for its own sake. We teach it to start conversations about what matters today and will matter in the future: human rights and social justice; the plight of immigrants and refugees; the environment.

Most important, we stress standing up for one's principles, just as the volunteers who went to Spain defied conventional wisdom and legal challenges.

What we find, moreover, is that today's teachers are eager to acquire the lessons we offer and then bring them into their own classrooms. A single teacher can reach over a hundred students each year. The stakes are large; the payoff is potentially immense.

An election year is exhausting, we know. We, too, have given more time and money than we usually do. But if you believe in ALBA's work, if you would like us to reach more teachers and students, if you agree with us that the story of the Lincoln Brigade deserves to be told *because it is as relevant and inspiring as it ever was*—then please continue to support us as generously as you possible can.

Salud,

Marina Garde, *Executive Director*
Sebastian Faber, *Chair*

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.

Welcome to
Xóchitl Gil-Higuchi
our new Educational Outreach
Coordinator

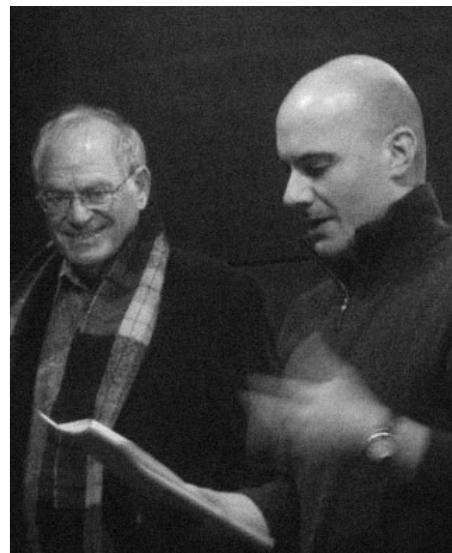


Xóchitl Gil-Higuchi, serving as ALBA's educational and exhibition coordinator, joined our staff this October. She was born in Nogales, Sonora, México and raised in Arizona. She graduated

Cum Laude in Studio Art from the University of Arizona and apprenticed with artist Sheila Divine in Guanajuato, México. Since then she has worked in alternative education with several organizations including the Tucson Children's Museum and Lehman College Art Gallery. She has a long history with grass-roots organizations and non-profits with specific interest in human rights and immigration. She is bilingual in Spanish and English.

ALBA's Back in School

By Peter N. Carroll



AFTER ORGANIZING THREE SUCCESSFUL professional development programs for high school teachers this spring—in Seattle, Tampa, and Oberlin, Ohio—ALBA launched two more in the autumn term in Alameda County, California and New York City. (A planned program in Bergen County, New Jersey was postponed because of Hurricane Sandy.) As in the past, teachers are welcoming the presentation of fresh historical source material from the ALBA archives as well as the long-term perspective that links the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s with continuing struggles for human rights in the twenty-first century.

“The most beneficial part of the day was reviewing lesson ideas together,” wrote one U.S. history teacher from Oakland, California who attended a day-long program in October on the subject “Internationalism and the Coming of World War II: The Spanish Civil War as a Case Study.” “Thank you so much for the primary source packet and the time to discuss our ideas on these.”

Assisted by the Alameda County Office of Education’s social studies coordinator Avi Black, ALBA’s presenters, Michael Batinski and Peter Carroll, distributed a series of historical documents that included letters from Spain written by U.S. volunteers in the Lincoln Brigade, home front commentary by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and various newspapers, as well as the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. A power-point slide show began with Picasso’s *Guernica* and went on to compare visual documents, such as Spanish Civil War posters and children’s drawings, with poster images relating to contemporary Sudan. In this way, major issues of the Spanish Civil War—bombings, civilian casualties, refugees, the intervention of outside nations, and the resolution of conflict—raise related questions that face students studying international relations and world history today.

“I especially liked thinking about essential questions and how to connect the focus of today’s workshop to parts of my curriculum,” one of the participating teachers wrote. “I felt inspired,” wrote another, “so much so that I want to go home and tinker with my year long curriculum plan. I felt both challenged and appreciated as a teacher by this opportunity to learn.” “I greatly appreciated the information that you shared with us today,” a third participant said. “I see multiple units that I will be integrating in future/current [classes].” Such feedback has led ALBA to expand the educational project to include more human rights elements and to increase ALBA’s base of teachers around the country.

In that spirit, nearly forty New York City teachers of social studies, Spanish, and English convened on Election Day at New York University for another professional development seminar organized by Lee Frissell, hosted by the King Juan Carlos I Center, and led by James Fernández. That session represented the fifth consecutive year ALBA offered these programs for New York area teachers.

ALBA’s educational mission is supported by grants from the Puffin Foundation and from independent donors who endorse our work. For more information about how you can contribute to ALBA’s educational programs, contact Executive Director Marina Garde (mgarde@alba-valb.org). ▲

Peter N. Carroll is Chair Emeritus of ALBA’s Board of Governors. His essay “The Spanish Civil War in the 21st Century” appeared in the Fall 2012 issue of the Antioch Review.

James Fernandez, far left, and Peter Carroll, left in far right photo, working with New York City teachers in a heatless building on Election Day, 2012. Photo Xóchitl Gil-Higuchi

GUERNICA: 75 YEARS New York Commemorates the Bombing

By Marina Garde

FOR FORTY-SOME YEARS, UNTIL 1981, New York City was home to Picasso's *Guernica*—painted in response to the destruction of the Basque city by the German Luftwaffe in April 1937. This past of October, *Guernica* returned to New York symbolically as the city commemorated the 75th anniversary of the bombing with a program of events organized by the Etxepare Basque Institute, together with the Basque autonomous government, and with support from ALBA. The program included a round-table discussion, an exhibition at the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, and an outstanding selection of Basque films screened at the Instituto Cervantes.

Franco's dictatorship suppressed the use of the Basque language, ordered the burning of books in Basque and outlawed the use of Basque proper names. After Franco's death, the Basques undertook a massive effort to revitalize their language and culture. Today, Basque nationalism is as strong as ever—witness the results of the recent regional elections, in which the parties in favor of independence won an ample majority. Basque nationalist sentiment—sometimes bordering on dogma and isolationism—was strongly represented in the commemorative New York program.

The round-table *Gernika Revisited* provided a framework for understanding what *Guernica* symbolizes, despite the fact that much of the historical context of the bombing continues to be blurred. Key historical facts are still unknown, including the precise death toll. The attack on the Basque town is widely considered the first attempt to target a civilian population with large-scale, terror bombing. The Spanish Civil War gave the German air force an opportunity to test the effectiveness of "total air warfare," whose primary objective was to break the opponent's morale by killing of civilians. *Guernica* was harbinger of much worse to come.

The bombing was also infamous for the way in which the perpetrators attempted to cover up their involvement. Both the Franco regime and their German counterparts initially denied any involvement. This mass deception helps explain why *Guernica* did not immediately evoke a greater moral outcry.

The discussion following the round table revealed shocking facts. It turns out, for example, that one of the founders of the terrorist group ETA—which shaped one of the darkest periods of Spain's democratic history—was a so-called *niño de la guerra*: one of the thousands of children who were evacuated to other European countries to escape from the horrors of the war. (This is a story beautifully chronicled in Jaime Camino's documentary *Children of Russia*.) Victims, in other words, became executioners; their history embodies the destructive effects of



armed conflict. In fact, Professor Joseba Zulaika suggested a likely continuity between the violence of *Guernica* and that later employed by ETA.

Revisiting *Guernica* brings up questions about terrorism, violence, and militarism that the international community has still not resolved. It is peculiar, for instance, to see how *Guernica*'s responsibility was denied while the destruction of Hiroshima, only eight years later, was openly accepted by President Truman as the "greatest achievement of organized science in history." Maybe one of the explanations lies in the fact that the destruction of *Guernica* was never rationalized by its perpetrators.

The cycle of Basque movies screened at the Anthology Film Archives showed that the death of Franco led to a new freedom in cinema, allowing filmmakers to address many aspects of the Spanish Civil War which had been silenced. The selection of films included *The Good News* (Helena Taberna, 2008) a true story of a young priest who witnesses the destruction imparted on a small village at the start of the civil war; *Lauxaeta* (Jose Antonio Zorrilla, 1987) another true story of a poet who finds himself as a commandeer during the siege of Bilbao; *Children of Russia* (Jaime Camino, 2001) mentioned earlier; the introspective *Vacas* (Julio Medem, 1992); and the surrealist *Tree of Guernica* (Fernando Arrabal, 1975). In one way or another, all these films continue in Picasso's footsteps, documenting the horror of war. ▲

Marina Garde is ALBA's Executive Director.

Two Students Win Watt Award

By Gina Herrmann



ALBA'S **GEORGE WATT MEMORIAL ESSAY PRIZES** are awarded each year to a graduate student and an undergraduate student who have written an outstanding essay or thesis chapter about any aspect of the Spanish Civil War, the global political or cultural struggles against fascism in the 1920s and 1930s, or the lifetime histories and contributions of Americans who fought in support of the Spanish Republic. The award was established 11 years ago to honor Lincoln vet George Watt (1914-1994), a writer and lifelong activist central to the creation of ALBA.

Watt's distinguished action in war continued after Spain. Shot down over Belgium in 1943, Watt lost two of his crew but survived thanks to the support of the Comet Line, an underground organization active in Belgium and France. With the help of the Comet Line, Watt crossed from France into Spain and, eventually, back to England. During this journey Watt faced great personal risk to his life because he was Jewish. Each year, as ALBA grants the George Watt Prize, we are reminded of Watt's stirring example of committed anti-fascism and work for social justice.

The jury, consisting of Josh Goode (Claremont Graduate University), Soledad Fox (Williams College), Fraser Ottanelli (University of Southern Florida), and Gina Herrmann (University of Oregon) received 18 submissions; eight essays from graduate students and 10 from undergraduates. The jury happily notes the international profile represented by

student authors, and this year continued the trend of strong essays received from Spain. The submissions covered a wide variety of themes, including diplomacy during the early years of the Franco regime, the novel *La voz dormida* about women political prisoners in Franco's penitentiary system, the role of the Republican mint and currency production during the war, disaffection within the Nationalist ranks, and Francoist symbolism in monuments in the region of Cáceres.

The winner for the undergraduate category, Reid Palmer, is a student at Oberlin College. Palmer submitted an impressive piece titled, "A Peculiar Fate: American Press Coverage of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade." The winner from the graduate category is Matthew Poggi, of the University of Toronto. Poggi's paper, based on his Master Thesis, is "Saving Memories: Canadian Veterans of the Spanish Civil War and their Pursuit of Government Recognition." The jury also conferred two honorable mentions. At the graduate level, Francisco Leira Castiñeira, from Galicia, Spain who wrote about how the Franco regime monitored soldiers suspected of disaffection with the war. Among undergraduates was Minda Jerde of Pacific Lutheran University who wrote on the role of Moroccan troops in the Civil War. ▲

Gina Herrmann is an Associate Professor of Spanish at the University of Oregon and chairs ALBA's Watt Prize Committee.



CANADIAN VETERANS AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY

By Matthew Poggi

In the latter half of the 1930s, 1,700 Canadians journeyed to Spain to defend the elected republic against General Francisco Franco's military revolt. Decades later, as these men approached old age, they began pressing for official recognition from the Canadian government for their service in Spain; they were ultimately unsuccessful. A close analysis of these veterans' twilight years provides valuable insight into the nature of both collective and historical memory.

The campaign for recognition illuminates a moment in the veterans' lives when their collective memory of the Spanish Civil War was on the verge of disappearing and they contemplated how their experiences should be preserved as historical memory. The veterans faced the difficult task of presenting their case in a manner that would downplay their extensive ties to the Communist Party of Canada but also highlight their commitment as anti-fascists. With this in mind, they chose to portray themselves in the same light as veterans of World War II, a group held in high regard throughout Canada. During the campaign, a concerted effort was made to demonstrate that Canadians who served in Spain fought the same enemy the Canadian military encountered in World War II.

The veterans' overarching goal of ingraining themselves in Canada's historical narrative as "patriots" meant that only certain memories of the war could be preserved. Therefore, the memory of anti-fascism they promoted during their campaign was largely de-politicized and removed from its origins in the Communist Party and other progressive movements of the 1930s. This study of Canadian veterans pushing for official status adds another dimension to the literature on the International Brigades and the politics of memory. ▲

U.S. NEWSPAPERS AND THE LINCOLN BRIGADE

By Reid Palmer

By the mid-1930s, the Great Depression had thrown the United States into political turmoil and radical political parties were gaining popularity. When General Francisco Franco attempted to overthrow the legally elected Republican government of Spain in 1936, sympathetic Americans, organized the "Abraham Lincoln Brigade" and 3,000 volunteered to fight against Franco. U.S. newspaper coverage of the volunteers reveals the domestic and foreign policy debates that arose in the late 1930s and continued into the late 1950s. "A Peculiar Fate: American Press Coverage of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade" explores the impact of these debates upon the lives of the surviving volunteers and the national identity during this period.

My paper focuses particularly on The Cleveland Plain Dealer, which was sympathetic to the cause of the Spanish Republic due to the left-leaning population of the greater Cleveland area. During the first phase of the war, men from every walk of life were encouraged to volunteer. Press coverage drew attention to how soldiers were (supposedly) no longer pointlessly sacrificed as they were in World War I. Race was presented as a non-issue in Spain. As casualties mounted, however, those on the left became increasingly hesitant to lose more men to a lost cause. By the end of the conflict, the leftist press, obviously disillusioned, maintained that Americans should no longer volunteer. Brigaders who returned to the United States after the war faced persecution from anti-communists and racists well into the 1950s.

Press coverage during this time period provides a unique insight into the roots of the American debate over isolationism and interventionism during the World War II, the civil rights movement, and the rise of McCarthyism. ▲



Top: George Watt in Spain. (The 15th International Brigade Photographic Unit Photograph Collection; ALBA Photo 011; ALBA Photo number:11_0186s. Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives.)

Bottom: Canadian volunteers in Spain, 1937. City of Vancouver Archives. Photo attributed to Hazen Sise.

Harry W. Randall

(1915 - 2012)



Harry W. Randall in Spain, December 1937. (Tamiment Library, NYU, 15th IB Photo Collection, 11_0932.)

HARRY W. RANDALL, Jr., once the chief photographer of the special photographic unit of the Fifteenth Brigade during the Spanish Civil War, died at a care facility in Snowflake, Arizona on November 11. His vast collection of photographs—which included not only his own camera work but a large array of negatives, albums of prints, and logs that recorded the photographs of the entire unit—today form the core of the ALBA photographic archives held at the Tamiment Library at New York University. Much of his work in Spain can be found online at the Tamiment website.

Working with other photographers, Benjamin Katine and Anthony B. Drossel, as well as lab technician William H. Oderaka, Harry led the team in documenting the activities of various battalions and brigades, both in battle conditions and behind the lines. Many of his photographs appeared in the Brigade newspaper, *Volunteer for Liberty*, and in other publications aimed at gaining international support for the Spanish Republic.

Each photographer in the unit processed his own negatives, identified the prints, and kept records of their content. The vagaries of the war resulted in the loss of many images. But Harry personally brought the surviving archive back to the United States and, years later, personally saw that they found their way into the permanent ALBA collection.

Harry was born in Spokane, Washington December 20, 1915 and was raised in Portland, Oregon. He attended Reed College, where he developed a political awareness that led him to support various labor strikes on the West Coast, including a major maritime strike in 1934 and another in the lumber industry the following year. At Reed, he also found an interest in photography and film in which he built a professional career. He sailed for Spain in 1937 and trained with the MacKenzie-Papineau battalion before being chosen to head the photographic unit.

After the war, Harry settled in Canada, working with the National Film Board in making documentary science films. He enlisted in the Canadian army in 1944 and served with a group making newsreels in England. He eventually returned to New York in 1952 and devoted the remainder of his career to making medical films, many for the American Cancer Society. His wife Doreen died earlier this year.

Much of Harry Randall's work appeared in ALBA's photographic show, *The Aura of the Cause*, curated by Cary R. Nelson and in a later exhibition *La Brigada Lincoln en Aragón—1937-1938*, curated by Juan Salas. ▲

—Peter N. Carroll



THE GERNIKA ARCANE

By Jack Hirschman

1.
You're all feet waiting
to do the saranda
tonight
hair-free and shoulders
swaying, laughing

because tomorrow you'll
have to carry a column
of trays
of sardines on your head
selling them

in the streets and becoming
one of the invisible
and immortal
reincarnates
in the painting

of the explosion that
in essence is what
the people
of the world have been
living ever since

you,
Gernika, were blasted
to smithereens of
bull-gorge, whinneys
of wounded horse,

light-bulb at the heart
of the sun, dead child
dragged through
the travail of his
mother's wailing

and all is fanged,
flaming, nailed,
screaming. You
didn't invent
the expression

No Pasarán
but it became
an incendiary cry
in your mouth,
Dolores Ibururri,

Gorri pregnant with flame
---while fascist Franco
barked about how you
needed a "detergent
of blood".

2.
O zubiuragakaleagizoniakemakameak
liburudendazimenatrengeltokiagorrigorri\
thunderously now with the Indignados,
with the Arab spring,
the autumn Occupy,

the winter molting
resistance, and though
there are only four
remaining of the original
Abraham Lincoln Brigade

there are Brigadistas
in other lands, in their
'90s and even 100s,
so when the Nazis bombed
you, Gernika,

and you fell through yourself
under the total mobilization
of terrorism as
the first act
of the second World War

in memory of those
three and a half hours
and the hundreds
given death to eat
that afternoon

I who was only
a little boy of 3
that day
and now am an old
man of 78

nevertheless have
been given you,
Dolores Gernika,
and you, Federico,
and you, Ernest,

Milton, Abe,
and César, you,
and you, Jacques,
Langston too
and Pablo, Roque,

Nicolás and Nazim
and Tina also,
and all the Brigades
being born today anew
because the deaths

that look out
of our eyes
are Vivas
and the mourning
that dawns in the depths

of revolution's
resonance of
simultaneity
is always
the future Presente!

THE SPANISH BLOODLANDS

Ángel Viñas, warrior historian

By Sebastiaan Faber



“THERE IS NOT A SINGLE ONE AMONG THE CONSERVATIVE OR NEO-FRANCOIST HISTORIANS who does not manipulate or skew the historical evidence. They sell bold-faced lies. This sounds harsh, I know. But I have proven it time and again. In Spain, the myths propagated by Francoism have survived, conveniently freshened up, and are mobilized in today’s political conflicts. If the Spanish Civil War is still a source of controversy, it is due to the fact that the Right does not wish to stir up a bloody past that puts it in a deeply negative light. Just to give one example: one of Franco’s most sycophantic biographers is a member of the Royal Academy of History. As if it were the most normal thing in the world.”

Ángel Viñas is not afraid to say it like it is—and he doesn’t suffer fools lightly. One of the most prolific historians of the Spanish Civil War of the past two decades, Viñas has taken on enormous research projects and crossed swords with powerful adversaries. Still, since little of his work is available in English, Viñas is less well known outside Spain than his prominence in the field would appear to warrant. His energy seems boundless. Just in the last ten years, he has published or edited more than a dozen substantial books on the Spanish Civil War. These include a four-volume, 2,600-page history of the fate of the embattled Second Republic (2006-2009) which Helen Graham has called “magisterial,” and which Gabriel Jackson described in these pages as “without a doubt, the most detailed and fully documented archival studies of the international diplomatic and military reactions to the outbreak of the

The Right does not wish to stir up a bloody past that puts it in a deeply negative light.

Spanish Civil War.” When, in 2011, the Spanish Royal Academy issued the first 25 volumes of its taxpayer-funded, controversial *National Biographical Dictionary*—whose text was riddled with errors and had never been properly vetted; the entry on Franco not once identified the generalissimo a dictator—it was Viñas who rallied a team of fellow historians to rapidly produce an alternative, more rigorous compilation. The 976-page counter-dictionary, entitled *En el combate por la Historia* (In the Battle for History), came out in April. This October, Dr. Viñas briefly interrupted the many projects piled up on his desk in Brussels—including new research on the bombing of Guernica and a Spanish re-issue of Herbert Southworth’s pathbreaking work—to speak with *The Volunteer*.

Historiography as battle, the historian as a warrior of truth: the image seems appropriate for the field of Spanish Civil War studies today and for Viñas’s work in particular. Born in 1941, Viñas thinks of himself as an old-fashioned historian. Throughout his career he has insisted on the need for rigorous research based on primary evidence from the time period. His main objective is clear-cut. He wants to find out *what* actually happened, *why* it happened, and

explain it as clearly as he can to as wide an audience as possible. “To my mind,” Viñas says, “primary research is the only way to advance, to open new routes, point in new directions, and improve previous interpretations of the past. Primary research opens doors, it doesn’t close them. Of course it’s not the only way of writing history. Applying new paradigms can also yield new results. But I am an historian who likes to keep close to concrete realities, trying to find new answers to old questions.”

Viñas initially combined his research with a diplomatic career. He fell in love with the archives in the late 1960s, when as a young diplomat stationed in Bonn he was asked to write an article about Nazi financing of the Francoist war effort. “When I entered the archives of the Auswärtiges Amt (Ministry of Foreign Affairs),” he recalls, “I knew it was love at first sight.” This research project became Viñas’s doctoral thesis and first book, published in 1974 (*La Alemania nazi y el 18 de julio*). He next tackled the much-mystified episode of the “Moscow Gold”—the controversial transfer to the Soviet Union, by the Republican authorities, of part of the Spanish treasury. Viñas later worked on international relations, particularly the US-Franco alliance of the 1950s, spent twenty years working for the European Union, and five years as Ambassador to the United Nations in New York. He currently lives in Brussels. Happily so: “I am far from the Spanish din. Living here allows me to focus on writing—which I do ten or twelve hours a day, seven days a week.”

Viñas’s work makes for a refreshing read. He writes in straightforward, combative prose with little hedging. He is not afraid to introduce an occasional note of amused malice. In the *La conspiración del general Franco* (2011),

for instance, he scolds the well-known and prolific American historian Stanley Payne for his lack of rigor. Payne and Viñas have been butting heads for a while. In recent years, Payne has often spoken dismissively of academic Spanish historians while championing rightist “revisionist” amateurs like Pío Moa or César Vidal. It is interesting, Viñas points out, that Payne, who “has extended his protective mantle to include some real historiographic pornography,” has himself almost never used anything but secondary sources.

Indeed, the key strength of Viñas’s work is his extensive use of primary sources from a large number of Spanish and foreign archives. Equally important is his insistence that no aspect of the conflict can be explained without taking into account the complex international context of the war—a context determined by powerful interests that were political as much as economic. Reconstructing the intense diplomatic efforts preceding and immediately following the outbreak of the war, for instance, he leaves no doubt about the tremendous difference between the categorical refusal on the part of the Western powers to stand by the besieged Republic, and the almost immediate willingness of the Fascist and Nazi regimes to pledge military aid. Based on extensive evidence, Viñas explains that difference primarily as a function of perceived national and political interest.

The author’s own background and expertise as a civil servant and economist helps him understand his material, but it also shapes his focus. He is ultimately interested in what drives the decision makers: political and economic leaders, as well as diplomats and other go-betweens. Having lived political institutions from the inside, he has no illusions about the moral caliber of their motivations. Viñas is also exceptionally good at reconstructing flows of information: the way in which letters, reports, and personal conversations shaped leaders’ perception of what was going on in Spain. This allows him, for instance, over thirty pages in the second volume of his series on the Republic, to give an unusually nuanced assessment of Stalin’s views and decisions regarding Spain.

Viñas strongly believes that writing Spanish history is the job of Spanish historians. “The battle for the truth

No one in their right mind would think of labeling as ‘anti-Nazi’ or ‘anti-Fascist’ the French, British, or American historians who have analyzed the workings of the Nazi and Fascist dictatorships.

is one that has to be fought in Spain, by Spaniards. There’s nothing strange about that—it’s the norm in all modern nations. Look at France, England, or Germany.” To be sure, he acknowledges the important contributions to Spanish Civil War history by historians from outside of Spain. But their relative prominence in the postwar years was an anomaly, due to the severe restrictions that the Franco regime placed on Spanish historiography. Fortunately, the situation has long been normalized. “The most important advances are now coming from Spanish historians. This is no more than logical; after all, almost all the archives are in Spain, and are now almost all accessible. That said, it would be far from me to deny the contributions of non-Spanish historians. I appreciate their work enormously.”

Why then his critical attitude toward Payne? “I used to have the highest respect for Payne as an historian, and I used to be an avid reader of his works. In scholarly terms, my level of respect has shrunk. Payne doesn’t do archival research. And what we need at this point is precisely to found historical interpretations on primary evidence from the archives. But that is not the worst part. Although he still operates under

the guise of scholarly rigor, Payne today is little more than a product and defender of a conservative view that insists, against all factual evidence, on blaming the Left and the reformist Republicans for the outbreak of the Civil War. From a scholarly point of view, Payne’s methodology and presuppositions are simply unfounded. And the protection he grants to the neo-Francoist clowns who call themselves historians, is quite frankly repulsive.”

Indeed, few things irritate Viñas more than “the nonsense that some authors continue to propagate as if time hadn’t passed”: the set of fundamentally mistaken ideas about the Spanish Civil War that, despite having long been proven baseless, have been around since the 1930s and stubbornly refuse to die. The notion, for instance, that the outbreak of the Civil War saved Spain from a descent into social revolution and a future as a Soviet satellite. Or the idea that the non-intervention policies of France, Britain, and the United States—their betrayal of the Second Spanish Republic, in a word—were driven by anything else than “a savage policy of protection of national self-interest, seasoned with ideological, political, and class connotations, and skewed by mistaken or prejudiced analyses of Spanish reality.”

“Francoist historiography, which still wields a tremendous influence on conservative historians of the Civil War, operates through a mechanism that I, along with Professor Alberto Reig Tapia, have called an exercise in *projection*. By this I mean that the Francoists consistently attribute the behavior of their own side to their political or military opponents. Thus, they frame the Republican reaction to the military rebellion as the outcome of a revolutionary project, while in reality it was a spontaneous outburst in response to a carefully planned military uprising greatly abetted by civilian supporters. They accuse the Republic of requesting foreign—that is, Soviet—assistance in order to impose a totalitarian state, while in truth it was the Monarchists who contracted war material from the Italians *before* the uprising. They talk about the creation of a Communist-controlled ‘popular Republic’ *avant la lettre*, while in reality it was the Right that spawned the actually-existing Spanish fascism. They decry the massacre of patriotic Spaniards, when it was the military rebels who immediately



began massacring their opponents. They denounce the supposed dependence of the Republic on Stalin, to distract from Franco's much greater dependence on Hitler and Mussolini. We see the same mechanism at work in the case of the bombing of Guernica in April 1937. The destruction was long blamed on the 'Bolshevized Basques' or the 'Asturian dynamite crews,' but in reality the bombing was the result of direct orders issued by the command of the Army of the North to the Nazi Condor Legion." All these assertions are founded on primary evidence painfully gleaned from Spanish and foreign archives.

Is it more difficult to be an historian of the Spanish Civil War than, say, of World War II or the Middle Ages? "Yes, it is. This has to do in the first place with the fact that it took so long for the archives to be opened up for research. It was only after the death of Franco that the freedom to do research and to write was consecrated. And then, as I have said, there is the problem of the ideological positions of Neo-Francoism, which continue to have an impact. To this day, an historian who disagrees with these positions is likely to be harangued by the Right. In the context of World

War II that would be unthinkable. No one in their right mind would think of labeling as 'anti-Nazi' or 'anti-Fascist' the French, British, or American historians who have analyzed the workings of the Nazi and Fascist dictatorships."

What does Viñas think of the grassroots initiatives around the "recovery of historical memory" that have sprung up all over Spain since the turn of the twentieth century? "The so-called memory movement is closely related with the collective effort to bring to light the hidden dimensions of the extremely harsh Francoist repression during the war and postwar period. These efforts are very important. What surprises me

Spain was part of what Timothy Snyder calls the Bloodlands—the massive victimizing of civilians by powerful military and state structures.

is that, despite all the work done, the majority of foreign historians still does not acknowledge the fact that Spain was part of what Timothy Snyder, in reference to Eastern Europe, calls the *Bloodlands*—the massive victimizing of civilians by powerful military and state structures—albeit under a different constellation and in a different part of Europe." Fortunately, Paul Preston has brought the Spanish case to an English-speaking readership.

A year ago, Viñas retired from his position as full professor at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. Still, he continues to mentor young historians. Among his disciples is Fernando Hernández Sánchez, with whom he wrote *El desplome de la República* (The Collapse of the Republic, 2010) and

who went on to publish a pathbreaking history of the Spanish Communist Party during the Civil War (*El partido comunista en la Guerra Civil Española*, 2010). Observing the Spanish present from his northern Brussels perch, Viñas sees little reason for optimism. He is worried about his country. The future looks particularly bleak for the Spanish university and academic research. "The Francoist university was corrupt. It was a byproduct of the country's power relations, which were oligarchic and, in the best of cases, paternalist. The situation since the transition to democracy has improved somewhat, although not enough. This is a serious failure on the part of the Socialist administrations and even more on the part of the conservative ones. It has been possible to do good work within the existing structures, and many have done so—although this at times has required a considerable dose of civic courage. Personally I have no right to brag because for professional reasons I was able to work outside of the university for twenty-five years. This allowed me to gain a certain distance and, above all, not depend financially on almost anyone. But I am extremely worried about the future of the Spanish university. Spanish conservatism has entered a regressive, if not reactionary phase, in both economic and ideological terms. The current, ultraconservative government is a genuine disaster. The situation reminds me, *mutatis mutandis*, of the 'black two years' of 1934-35. A whole generation of young researchers will be left in frustration." ▲

Sebastian Faber teaches Hispanic Studies at Oberlin College and chairs ALBA's Board of Governors.

GUERNICA, 75 YEARS LATER: Setting the Record Straight

Among the several titles that Ángel Viñas is preparing for publication is a new Spanish edition of Herbert Southworth's *Guernica! Guernica!*, a classic study of the bombing of the Basque town on April 26, 1937. "My plan was to bring the text up to date, correct the mistakes of the 1977 French edition, and write a brief epilogue on the historiography about Guernica since Southworth's book appeared 35 years ago," Viñas says. "But before I knew it, my short epilogue had turned into a 90-page analysis that deals directly, and harshly, with the nonsense that some pro-Franco historians have been proffering—but not only they.

"Their goal has always been to minimize the responsibility of Franco's command, arguing that the Condor Legion acted autonomously. The most they have been willing to admit to is a 'tactical' responsibility, but without involving anyone within the Spanish high command. Some 'technical studies' by military authors associated with the Spanish air force have reinforced this reading. Professor Xabier Irujo, however, who just published a major study on the bombing, *El Gernika de Richthofen*, has proved that the order to deny that the Condor Legion had destroyed Guernica came directly from Franco.

"In my epilogue I deal extensively with the whole question of responsibilities. What I have found was a level of methodological mischief that stunned even me: omission, manipulation, skewing, and obfuscation of primary evidence. In reality, the connivance between the German and the Spanish command was strategic, tactical, and operational. And I have the archival sources to prove it. It is literally impossible that General Mola and Air Force Commander Kindelán were not informed. What I have not found is direct proof related to Franco himself. But given that he was supreme commander it would be a bit naïve to try to exculpate him."▲



Chi Chang, the Lincoln Brigader

By Nancy Tsou and Len Tsou

Among the nearly 3,000 U.S. volunteers who joined the International Brigades in Spain, there were two Chinese: Chi Chang (张纪) from Minnesota and Dong Hong Yick (his Chinese name: , Wen Rao Chen) from New York's Chinatown. Chang survived the Spanish Civil War, but Yick was killed at Gandesa in 1938.

Chi Chang came from Hunan, China to study in the U.S. in 1918. He received a degree in mining engineering at the University of Minnesota in 1923. After the Wall Street financial crash in 1929 he endured several hardships, including the loss of his job and a serious illness. In time, he became radicalized, participated in left politics in Duluth, Minnesota, and decided to devote his life to the cause of social justice.

In March 1937, Chi Chang boarded the S.S. Paris in New York and headed for Spain. He was older than most other American volunteers. At age 37, he was lanky and weak, but miraculously he managed to cross the Pyrenees on foot. The journey took a heavy toll on his health. He had to give up his initial assignment as a truck driver, and instead worked at a training school. But soon he became ill and was hospitalized for four months. In the fall of 1938, he left Spain for Paris and eventually arrived in Hong Kong to help China fight against the Japanese invasion.

The U.S. newspaper *The Worker* published his picture on December 10, 1944 with the caption: "Chi Chang, pill-box engineer in Spain, now with the Chinese 8th Route Army." His American comrades remembered him long afterwards. In 1986, during a visit to China, Lincoln Brigade veteran Curley Mende went to the Chinese Communist Party Headquarters to seek the whereabouts of Chi Chang but to no avail.

During his stay in Hong Kong in 1939, Chi Chang published "Spanish Vignettes," a memoir of his experiences in the Spanish Civil War. Here is an excerpt from this work.

Nancy Tsou and Len Tsou are the authors of the book (in Chinese) The Call of Spain: The Chinese Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).



Three Chinese volunteers of the International Brigades at a hospital in Spain, 1938. (L-R): Ching Siu Ling (谢唯进), Hua Feng Liu (刘华封) and Chi Chang (张纪). Tamiment Library, NYU, VALB Photo Collection ALBA PHOTO 15, Series IA, Box 3 Folder 114.

SPANISH VIGNETTES

By Chi Chang (张纪)*
Tien-Xia, vol. VIII, no. 3 (Hong Kong, March 1939): 235-242.

A Peasant of Spain

The heat of the June sun became hotter and hotter as I traveled further north, driving a giant truck from Valencia to Albacete [Albecete in original text]. Transportation of meat in that scorching weather without a refrigerator required speed. On a treacherously winding

stretch of the road I spied through the olive trees a donkey cart and a dark jacketed peasant, ambling along leisurely right in the middle of a sharp turn. My frantic tooting of the horn produced no response either from the burro or its master, and when I succeeded in stopping the truck perilously close to the back of the little two-wheeled vehicle, I was ready to swear away the lives of several peasants. The old man turned around his deeply-lined face, all wrinkled with smiles. To show his proud recognition of an International Brigade man, he raised his right fist high in the air and gave a long shout: "Salud, camarada!" The only swearing I was capable of was the raising of my right fist.

Children of Madrid

Motor trouble. I had to stop in a rather

quiet section of Madrid to clean out the fuel pump and the carburetor. In a few minutes a couple of boys stuck their heads under the bonnet beside mine. They were about the same age, twelve or thirteen. My enjoyment of answering in broken Spanish the eager questions shot at me about the automobile was suddenly interrupted by the sound of explosions. I asked the boys: "Aren't you afraid?" "No," said one of them, and the other one explained: "Those shells will not drop over this way today." "Tu Chino?" ("You Chinese?") he asked, and I nodded. He then said: "¡Chicos en China bombardeados también! Fascistas, no bueno, por todo el mundo." ("Little ones in China are bombed too! Fascists, no good, all over the world.")

Waino, the Bartender

The Fifteenth Brigade was passing Albacete on its way to a rest, and I went to look for another Chinese who was in the infantry. [This is Wen Rao Chen (alias Dong Hong Yick) from New York's Chinatown.] I was told that the big toe of his right foot had been shot off and he was in hospital. As this was being explained to me a fat man ran forward and pumped my hand vigorously. It took me a long time to recognize the face behind the heavy blonde whiskers as that of Waino, the bar-tender at a place in a northern Minnesota town where I used to buy my drink. This was what he told me: "By God, I am glad to see you. Heard that you were around here somewhere. Still drinking much? No? Coming to join us soon? What's the matter with truck driving? No action, yep. Say, didn't you know that I came in on the *City of Barcelona*, the boat that was sunk by an Italian submarine? There were sixty Americans and a couple of hundred others from different countries. I was lucky to grab hold of a life saver. What a sight! The whole sea seemed to be covered with men. I was shaking like a leaf, but those communists! You know what they did? They started singing the 'Internationale' in nearly every cocky-eyed language you ever heard. I did not know what it was, but it did me a lot of good. I know the tune now. I am going to be a communist when I get back to America, damned right." But Waino was killed by a Fascist bullet.

Charlie, the U.S. Marine

I went into the infantry. During training I was assigned to work with the topographical section of the staff. In the same barracks I came to know

Charlie [Barr] the twenty-one year old United States Marine and National Guardsman. Through strike action and trips to Nicaragua, Charlie came to be an anti-Fascist. He was one of the best shots at the base and was made an instructor of target shooting. He came in one night after the "taps," drunk and mumbling to himself: "To hell with everything, I don't wanna go to the officers' training school, I wanna go to the front, like a soldier, soldier, you understand? To hell with the Major, I am gonna run away." He had probably had four or five glasses of vermouth at the canteen. But the Major knew his man. He changed his mind about Charlie, and put him in charge of a sniping group. That was how he went to the front. As a goodbye he told me: "Wait till I get back. We are going together to China. I'll show you how to kill the Japs."

Return to Paris

Paris after four months of sickness in Spain. Paris is very beautiful in summer even to a man with bad legs. The newspapers frequently referred to the death of the Popular Front, but in reality it was very much alive under the surface. Every time a train-load of volunteers arrived from Spain, the station and the boulevard in front were crowded with thousands of French trade union men carrying banners and flowers, welcoming these foreigners for whom the French government were making things very miserable. No, the Popular Front is far from dead in Paris.

At the time I was there, negotiations had just been completed whereby fourteen American prisoners from Franco's concentration camp had been exchanged for the same number of Italian aviators. These Americans were to leave Paris the next day, and a friend of mine was among them. I went to the station to see him off, and found that he had been wounded at the Jarama front early in 1937. Several months of Italian treatment had reduced him to but skin and bones. Suddenly a very neatly dressed man jumped out from the next compartment and threw his arms around my neck. "Hello, Chi, don't you recognize me any more? This is nothing, I only lost an eye, that's all, and I didn't mind the prison life either." It was Charlie, the young Marine. While at the front, he had been assigned to lead a party of snipers, and from a rocky hill-side they had done some very damaging work against the enemy. Since they were separated from the main force, they did

not receive the orders to retreat in time, and they continued their effective work in preventing the Fascists from setting up an anti-tank gun, killing or wounding some forty of the enemy. The Fascists eventually sent two planes to get this group of fifteen men, and by this time the brigade had retreated, leaving them behind. They were finally surrounded, and Charlie was the only one left to tell the story. I had been told previously that he must be dead. "When Youngblood was killed," he continued, "I was really mad. But I could do nothing, they were all around and on the rock we never could dig in anyhow. Then I got hit. For a while I could not see out of my good eye either. Someone was shouting in Spanish at me. I reached over and grabbed a couple of grenades and made as though I was going to throw them toward where the shouting came from. That saved my life. They said they wouldn't kill me if I let them take me a prisoner. Well, here I am, still got my shooting eye in good shape. Say, that trip to China still goes with me, if they will take me with my other headlight out. So long, old boy!" ▲

* The author, an American-trained mining engineer, was with the International Brigade in Spain for more than a year. — Ed. of Tien-Xia



Chi Chang's signature on the cover of Harry Fisher's songbook.

THE DIPLOMAT WHO SAVED HUNGARIAN JEWS

A Spanish Schindler in Budapest

By Macarena Tejada-López

Commemorative plaque of the Spanish diplomat Mr. Ángel Sanz Briz (1910-1980), on the wall of the Embassy of Spain in Budapest. (Budapest, District VI, Eötvös Street Nr 11/b). Sanz Briz worked in Budapest in 1944 to rescue Jews from the Holocaust. The plaque was unveiled October 27, 2008. Photo CSurla. CC-BY-2.5.

FRANCISCO FRANCO DECLARED DURING WORLD WAR II that Spaniards would maintain a neutral position toward Germany, but his dictatorship actively supported the Nazi regime in a variety of ways. Spain's support of wartime Germany included the exportation of tungsten (Wolfram), a hard metal used by the Nazi military to harden artillery shells; the sale of food, even though Spain suffered a famine after the Spanish Civil War; and, on the battlefield, sending a reinforcement of 48,000 soldiers of the Blue Division (La División Azul) to fight the Soviets. For the most part, this Spanish-German relationship has not been incorporated into Spanish public memory of World War II and the Holocaust. Nor is another memory of the consequences of Franco's alliance with Hitler, the approximately 10,000 Spanish Republican exiles who died in Nazi concentration camps.

Not every aspect of Spain's participation in the war proved tragic. One remarkable and little-told episode of Spanish aid to European Jewry is that of the Franco regime's foreign minister stationed in Hungary, Ángel Sanz Briz who managed to save 5,000 Hungarian Jews in his capacity as *chargé d'affaires* of the Legation of Hungary in Budapest.

Sanz Briz, known as "the Spanish Schindler," was born on September 28, 1910 in Saragossa to a family of merchants. He studied law in Madrid and later obtained a degree in Diplomacy, graduating the same year the Civil War started. His support for King Alphonse XIII and his conservative ideas motivated him to enroll with Franco's rebels during the war in Ávila. Once it ended, he was assigned to the Spanish Legation in Egypt, and later to Budapest, where he arrived in 1942.

Hungary joined the Axis powers in 1940 under German pressure, after having absorbed Fascist ideas during the previous decade, but it was not until March 1944 that the country was besieged by its neighbor. From the first day, Jews in Budapest suffered various forms of maltreatment and humiliation from Germans and Hungarians, especially by the Arrow Cross Party led by Ferenc Szálasi. The murder of the Hungarian Jews increased when Heinrich Himmler commanded Adolf Eichmann and an Einsatzgruppen to carry out the "Final Solution," meaning the segregation of Jews in ghettos, transportation to concentration/death camps, and extermination. In the city, books written by Jews or about Jewish men and women were burned by Nazi and Arrow Cross Party soldiers. In this desperate situation, a Spanish Jewish community in Tétouan asked for the protection and transfer of 500 Jewish children in Budapest and, later, the protection of 700 adults. Unfortunately they were not allowed to leave the country, but remained under the protection of the Red Cross.



Ángel Sanz Briz, outraged by horrors he witnessed and disenchanted by the non-responsiveness of his own government, calculated how he might save members of the Jewish community in Budapest. There was word from Madrid only once, by then Secretary of Foreign Policy, José Félix de Lequerica, who urged Sanz Briz to save "as many as he could." The diplomat decided to carry out his own salvation plan without the knowledge or approval of the Spanish and Hungarian governments. Although Sanz Briz's actions were carried out clandestinely, he was not necessarily taking an illegal course of action. The Spanish Constitution included a decree signed by General Primo de Rivera on December 20, 1924 that allowed all Spanish Jews in Europe to apply for Spanish citizenship. Thus Sanz Briz found a way to grant Spanish citizenship to Sephardic Jews in Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania.

Many Ashkenazi Jews also managed to receive Spanish citizenship, as did some non-Jews. Sanz Briz appears to have saved thousands of Askenazi Jews by placing them in safe houses and teaching them basic Spanish so they could pretend to be Sephardim. As promising as it sounded, the decree was only enforced for six years and just 200,000 visas were processed. Citizenship was not meant for political asylum, but extended the rights of Spanish citizenship and the protection of Spain to citizens abroad. Sanz Briz utilized this decree to its fullest extent.

The specific *modus operandi* was as follows: from the Legation, he issued visas and protection letters to all Jews who claimed to have any sort of relationship with Spain. But Sephardic Jews numbered only about 500 in Budapest. Sanz Briz was determined to save more. The Jewish population lived in the walled ghettos established by the Nazis in the outskirts of the city. In a documentary aired in Spain in December 2008, the journalist Fernando "Gonzo" González visited the loca-





tions of the ghettos where the Nazis confined 70,000 Hungarian Jews. The documentary underscores the contrast between the terrible conditions in the ghettos and the more centrally located buildings to which Sanz Briz moved all Jews under Spanish protection in 1944. The ghettos and protected buildings are also described in detail in a recent television docudrama “El ángel de Budapest” (2011). In this film, we see how Sephardic Jews spread the word about Sanz Briz’s strategy to save both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews. Before long, many Jews seeking potentially life-saving Spanish visas took the long, risky walk from their ghettos to downtown Budapest, specifically to Eötvös street, where the Legation was located.

The plan ran into trouble when Nazi and Hungarian soldiers began inspecting the visas, prompting Sanz Briz to turn individual visas into family visas and added letter sequences (1A, 1B, 1C, etc.) to increase the number of people protected. This way, if two members of the same family were inspected the same day, the illegality of the document could pass unnoticed. “The 200 units that had been granted to me I turned them into 200 families; and the 200 families multiplied indefinitely due to the simple procedure of not issuing a document or passport with a number higher than 200,” Sanz Briz would

explain years later in the book *Spain and the Jews* by Federico Ysart. Sanz Briz’s ingenuity meant that only minority of the approximately 5,200 Jews that he helped save were of Spanish origin.

By the autumn of 1944 the deportations and the mistreatment of Jews greatly intensified. At this stage, Sanz Briz made use of his own resources to rent entire buildings a short distance from the Spanish Legation to provide shelter and food to every Jew who could be granted a visa or letter of protection. Meanwhile, the Red Army advanced from the east, already at the gates of Budapest by December. At this point, Sanz Briz received orders from Madrid to move to Austria. On December 20, Sanz Briz left the Legation in Budapest almost in secret, bidding farewell only to his closest employees. The Jews he had protected all this time were not abandoned. Giorgio Perlasca, an Italian fascist who volunteered to fight for Franco during the Spanish Civil War, where he had met Sanz Briz, was named Spanish consul and left in charge of the protection of the 5,000 Jews Sanz Briz had sheltered. After the Spanish Civil War, Perlasca, repulsed by anti-Semitism, abandoned his faith in Fascism. In the end, Madrid silenced Sanz Briz and his story in order to avoid drawing attention to the Franco regime’s inaction in the face of the destruction of European Jewry. The historical deception of Sanz Briz’s role thus created a distorted version of the sheltering of Hungarian Jews which has been wrongly attributed to Giorgio Perlasca alone.

In the 30 years after the war, Ángel Sanz Briz worked in other destinations around the world, never mentioning a word about his heroic actions in Budapest, not even to his family. He was stationed in San Francisco, Washington D.C., Lima, Guatemala and Vatican City where he died on June 11, 1980. Eleven years later, Yad Vashem recognized him as “Righteous among Nations” for his unwavering efforts to save the life of innocent men and women. Although relatively unknown in Spain today, his work has recently drawn the attention of filmmakers, historians and novelists. The story has been depicted in a historic novel by the writer and journalist Diego Carcedo, *Un español frente al Holocausto. Así salvó Ángel Sanz Briz a 5000 judíos* (2000 Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy). Sanz Briz is now the subject of both a documentary as well as an historical film for television: the aforementioned documentary by Fernando González titled *Ángel Sanz Briz: the Spanish Schindler* aired on Antena 3 TV in December 2008 -available at full length on Youtube--and the movie by José Manuel Lorenzo, *El ángel de Budapest* (2011) aired on La Primera de Televisión Española in December 2011. Hopefully this new popular attention to an intrepid Spanish diplomat will arouse interest in Spain and elsewhere about the complexities of Spanish diplomacy during the Holocaust. ▲

Macarena Tejada-López has a Master’s degree in Women’s Studies from the University of Huelva and a Master’s in Romance Language from the University of Oregon. She currently lives in Huelva, Spain, teaching English to unemployed immigrants.

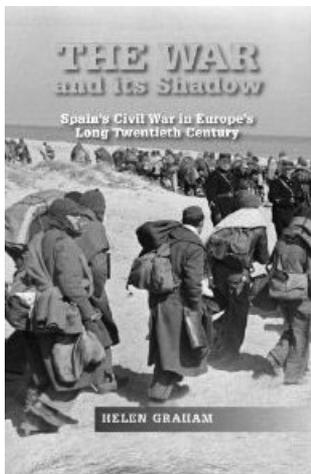
Bust of Ángel Sanz Briz in the Sanz Briz square of Zaragoza, Spain. Photo Ajzh2074. CC-BY-3.0.

Book reviews

Toxic Myths

The War and its Shadow: Spain's Civil War in Europe's Long Twentieth Century, by Helen Graham, Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2012. 250 pp.

A review by Adam Hochschild



Many subjects thread through the pages of Helen Graham's dense but brilliant meditation on the Spanish Civil War, the fruit of more than a quarter century as a scholar of this period. It would take thousands of words to do justice to them all, so I will limit myself to only a few.

The first has to do with the nature of Francoism, which not only became a machine of mass murder but also forced its enemies to make public acts of submission. Graham tells the chilling story of Matilde Lande,

an educated, secular, professional woman (three strikes against her right there) who found herself a political prisoner in Mallorca in 1942. The regime demanded that she recant her beliefs and have a public baptism. Unable to endure the pressures on her—which likely included torture—she committed suicide by throwing herself off a prison balcony. But during the 45 minutes she survived, a priest was summoned to give her last rites. And the regime did not return her body to her family but instead gave it a Catholic burial. There is an echo here of the Inquisition's fury at heretics, and perhaps also of the way Stalin's victims were forced to sign a confession before being dispatched to the firing squad. Hitler, by contrast, was content to merely turn on the gas.

The Spanish Civil War was not merely a conflict in one country; it was part of a broader civil war that, hot or cold, pervaded much of Europe, from 1918 until well after 1945.

The brutal nature of Franco's regime—which, Graham reminds us, had killed or enslaved a vastly greater number of its own people than had Nazi Germany prior to the start of the Holocaust—raises the question: why has the dictator gotten such a free ride from critics of totalitarianism? He is seldom mentioned in the same breath as Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, and the United States built military bases in Spain in the 1950s, President Eisenhower paid the *caudillo* a friendly visit in 1959, and President Ford did so in 1975.

In those years, of course, anti-Communism trumped everything else in American foreign policy, but Graham situates this in a much larger context, which is really the central theme of her book. The Spanish Civil War was not merely a conflict in one country, she points out; it was part of a broader civil war that, hot or cold, pervaded much of Europe, from 1918 until well after 1945. In the 1930s the Spanish right wing believed in an idealized, hierarchical, highly rural Spain, recapturing the glories of its imperial past and unpolluted by subversive outsiders, whether these be Bolsheviks, Jews, Masons, uppity women, homosexuals or egalitarian-minded city-dwellers. This was not unique in Europe; not only Germany and Italy, but many other

countries had right-wing regimes, often with an anti-Semitic tinge, such as Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Greece. And even in functioning democracies, like France or Britain, the fascist or semi-fascist right was vocal and sometimes violent.

In such a continent, beleaguered Republican Spain was the exemplar of something very different. Nothing symbolized this more than the soldiers of the International Brigades and the foreign medical and relief workers who came to help the Republic: men and women of different ethnicities, colors, religious heritage. Most of them felt that the conflict in Spain was a continuation of those in the countries they had come from; Graham quotes one IB unit's banner with the words, in Polish, Yiddish and Spanish: *For your freedom and ours*. After 1939, of course, many surviving Brigadiers continued their fight, in Allied armies or the French Resistance. The International Brigades volunteers "were—though very imperfectly and by no means fully consciously—the soldiers of cosmopolitan cultural modernity."

Who won the continent-wide civil war? In the end, the cosmopolitans rather than the believers in national purity: consider the European Union, any meeting of which certainly looks a lot more like the International Brigades than it does like a gathering of Franco's Legionnaires. But murderous echoes of that war could be heard only 20 years ago in the Serb siege of multiethnic Sarajevo, and more reverberations still sound today. In many European countries, resurgent right-wingers are once again blaming the continent's economic troubles on outsiders, whether they are immigrants, Gypsies, Muslims or some other scapegoated minority.

In what strikes me as the most original of all her observations, Graham points out that even the Allies of World War II, after fighting a war supposedly to rid Europe of Nazism and its entire way of thinking, nonetheless implicitly accepted what she calls a "toxic myth." This was "the Hitlerian principle that ethnic homogeneity was the face of the future, and a desirable norm." It was followed by the victorious Allies—including the Soviet Union—when, at the cost of several hundred thousand lives, they ruthlessly forced more than 12 million ethnic Germans to leave parts of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the USSR where they had lived for generations in the same territories as people of other ethnicities. For them and millions of other Europeans forced to leave their homes after 1945, the believers in national purity won Europe's civil war.

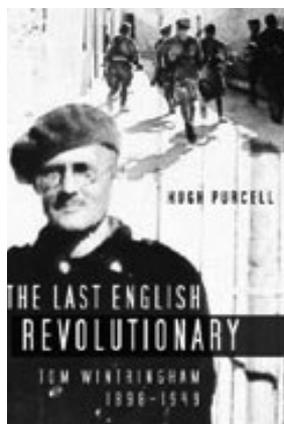
I wish I could say that Graham's book was easy reading, but too often it is not. She has an odd, distracting habit, sometimes several times per paragraph, of surrounding a word or phrase with quotation marks when it is used with anything other than its most literal meaning. Her language is frequently elliptical, assuming the reader's ability to fill in specific examples. And some of her most trenchant points appear only in the endnotes. I fear this means that her wide-ranging look at the Spanish Civil War will take longer than it should to reach the large audience it deserves. ▲

Adam Hochschild, the author of seven books of history, memoir and reportage, is working on a book about Americans in the Spanish Civil War.

The English Captain

The Last English Revolutionary: Tom Wintringham, 1898-1949 (Brighton, Portland, Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), by Hugh Purcell with Phyll Smith.

A review by Peter Stansky



This is a very welcome "enlarged, revised and updated edition" of the biography of Tom Wintringham published originally in 2004. It is sponsored by the Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies, a foundation which supports a series of publications edited by the most important English scholar of the Spanish Civil War, Paul Preston. For the readers of the *Volunteer*, Wintringham's greatest claim to fame is his being the *English Captain*, as his powerful memoir of 1939 was

entitled. He served as a Captain in the British Battalion of the International Brigade and played a crucial part in the battle of Jarama, where so many British lost their lives. (Appropriately, this book begins with that battle.) He was wounded twice in Spain but survived to bring the legacy and lessons of the Civil War back to Britain.

Spain was no doubt the most dramatic part of his life. But his story is also very illuminating about the Left in Britain in the twentieth century. He was born into a prominent and well off professional family in Grimsby that was Liberal in politics and Non-Conformist in religion. He went to an English Public School, Gresham's Holt, fought in the First World War, and studied history at Balliol College, Oxford. He might well have been a successful member of the English upper middle classes. But instead he became a devout Marxist, based on his reading of Marx at Oxford; he joined the Communist Party in 1920, the year of its founding. He was a central figure in its early history, among other activities writing for the *Workers' Weekly*, the predecessor of the *Daily Worker*. For articles in that publication, he was found guilty of sedition in 1925—undermining the morale of the military—and refusing to leave the Party to escape sentencing he went to prison for six months. Even before Spain, he had an intense interest in war and was probably the most talented figure on the far Left able to write on military questions. But his relation with the Communist leadership was a bit rocky both because of his upper bourgeois origins and the leadership's puritanical disapproval of his promiscuity.

As a committed Communist and military strategist, it was hardly surprising that he went to Spain in August 1936. He led the British at the battle of Jarama in February 1937, was wounded but recovered sufficiently to fight in the Aragon offensive in August. There he was more severely wounded and was sent home. While in Spain, he met an American journalist and idiosyncratic Communist, Kitty Bowker, who was to become

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his second wife. He was still married to an orthodox English communist doctor as well as having formed another liaison and having children by both women. The party leadership disapproved of his relationship with Kitty, whom it accused of being a Trotskyite, and informed Wintringham that he had either to leave her or be expelled from the Party. He chose the latter course. But he never abandoned his Marxist views and he preserved some admiration for Stalin, dying before the revelations of the 1950s. Yet he disapproved of the British Party's subservience to Moscow. In 1941 he summed up his views and what Spain meant to him: "Two bullets and typhoid gave me time to think. I came out of Spain believing, as I still believe, in a more humane humanism, in a more radical democracy, and in a revolution of some sort as necessary to give the ordinary people a chance to beat Fascism. Marxism makes sense to me, but the 'Party Line' doesn't."

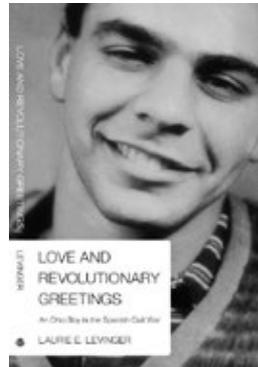
Even before Spain, his interests in military questions were intense but undoubtedly his second personal experience of war was crucial in shaping them. This led directly to his greatest claim to fame: his being a founder of the Home Guard. During the Second World War he produced quite a few studies about how to fight, such as *New Ways of War* (1940) described as "a do-it-yourself guide to killing people." There was very good reason to think that Britain might be invaded in the war's early years. Wintringham argued that unconventional guerrilla warfare would prove necessary. At first not supported by the Government, but rather financially by Edward Hulton, who ran the immensely popular *Picture Post*, and for the training of the Home Guard by the Earl of Jersey who lent Osterley Park outside of London. His "patriotic socialism," an approach he shared with George Orwell, came into its own in his leadership of the Home Guard, not only in person but in his books and numerous articles he wrote and as military correspondent for the *Daily Mirror*. His activities were a crucial part of the idea of a "People's War," a concept that owed a lot to his experiences in Spain. Eventually the War Office undermined his activities; he was a suspect figure both from the Left and the Right. He played an important part in preparing the way for the defeat of Churchill's government after the war in his short book, *Your M.P.* (1944). It argued that not only Neville Chamberlain and his colleagues were "guilty men," but that rank-and-file Tory M.P.s were not to be trusted to shape a new society. He joined the rather eccentric left-wing party, Common Wealth and twice was almost elected to Parliament. Wartime in Spain and Britain were his greatest moments; he ceased to be a well-known figure after the war, dying prematurely in 1949. It is a fascinating story and is very well told here. ▲

Peter Stansky, with William Abrahams, has just published *Ju-lian Bell: From Bloomsbury to the Spanish Civil War*.

Memories of a Fallen Volunteer

Love and Revolutionary Greetings: An Ohio Boy in the Spanish Civil War (Eugene, Ore.: Resource Publications, 2012), by Laurie E. Levinger.

A review by Lisa Renee DiGiovanni



Love and Revolutionary Greetings tells the story of Sam Levinger, a young Jewish-American Socialist from Ohio who fought and died at the age of 20 in the Spanish Civil War. Based on war letters, poetry and writings by Levinger and biographical sketches by the soldier's mother, this narrative takes us from the coal miners' strikes in Ohio of the 1930s to the ruins of Belchite in 2010. At the heart of the story is a powerful reflection on the relationship between American activism and the Spanish Civil War

and the meaning of memory in the present.

In 2001, Sam's niece, Laurie Levinger, stumbled upon a collection of poetry and letters written from the war front when her father was cleaning out his basement. Ten years later, she returned to the box, mulling over the physical record of her uncle's life. The brittle, yellowed letters bridge yesterday and today offering an opportunity for reflection on American socialist projects of the 1930s and their meaning in the 21st century.

Levinger organizes the fragments from her uncle's story into a three-way dialogue among Sam, his mother Elma, who wrote two unpublished novels about Sam's life, and herself, filling the empty spaces with efforts of imagination. "There are layers upon layers of story," she writes. "Sam's recounting his experiences while trying not to frighten his family; Elma's imagining where he is, what he is thinking and feeling; my piecing together the fragments to create a coherent whole."

The book traces Sam's political origins. By the age of 17, he had adopted his parents' commitment to social justice, joining in solidarity with coal miners in Ohio. In November 1936, after spending several nights in jail for picketing with the miners in one of the fiercest strikes of the period, he decided to postpone his studies in Sociology at Ohio State University and join the fight in the Spanish Civil War. The book follows Sam as he traverses geographic, cultural, linguistic and political boundaries. The novice soldier from Ohio soon became a "crack machine gunner," fighting at Jarama and Brunete, where he was wounded.

Sam died on September 6, 1937 in a field hospital in La Puebla de Híjar after being critically wounded at Belchite. Before he died, he wrote a letter to his parents (reproduced in the book in its original form), "I suppose that by the time you receive this, I will have been dead several weeks." His letter reaffirms the depth of his love for his family and their shared socialist commitments.

In the book's final section, the author returns to Spain with her son after the death of her aunt Leah (Sam's sister) in 2010. With Leah's ashes, Laurie makes a pilgrimage to Aragón, searching tenaciously for Sam's burial site. Following the war, the original Belchite was left in ruins — a ghost town — and a new Belchite was built nearby. Laurie returns to the "Silent Belchite," and finds a small stone memorial for the Republican dead in the town cemetery. There, she places a small granite marker with Sam's dates, thanks Sam for his courage and commitments, and scatters Leah's ashes, uniting the siblings in the Spanish soil. ▲

Lisa DiGiovanni is Assistant Professor of Spanish at Indiana State University. Her areas of specialization include Spanish and Latin American literature and film.

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Photo: Gerry Jarocki

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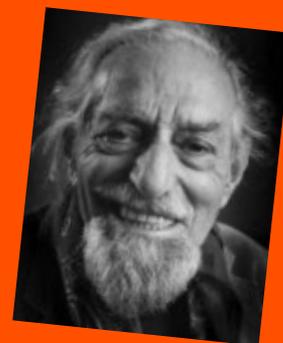
Among Friends, V.1 No. 2, Spring 1938

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