

# Brandeis University dedicates the Frederica Martin Archives

A dedication ceremony, marking the completion of the cataloging of the Frederica Martin Medical Papers was held at Brandeis University Library on August 12. The event featured the presentation of a plaque to the University, honoring the principle donors who enabled the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA) to add the Martin Papers to the University's Special Collection on the Spanish Civil War.

“Freddie’s” collection represented almost a half-century of labor in preparation for a book on the medical services of the International Brigades. She was well qualified, having been Dr. Ed Barsky’s head nurse and chief administrator of all the American nurses in Spain. Working from a home in Mexico, she had accumulated a mass of material when her death cut the project short in 1991. There were half a hundred cartons of records, first-hand data, memorabilia and photographs that were shipped to ALBA that year by her daughter, Professor Tobyanne Berenberg (University of Mexico). They originated from sources across the globe.

The Frederica Martin papers are not only a mine of unsurpassed data on the

medical services of the SCW, they are a unique source of information on the sadly underwritten history of the women who served in support of the International Brigades.

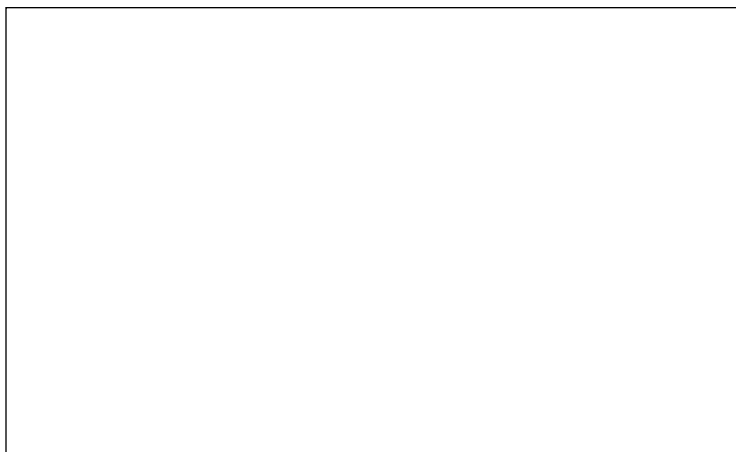
The dedication, with over 80 people on hand, was presided over by Dr. Bessie K. Hahn, director of the Brandeis Libraries. She spoke of the worldwide importance of the collection contained in the Archives, regarded worldwide as an outstanding one in its field. A matching tribute was paid by Encarnación Campuzano, assistant to the Spanish Consulate in Boston.

Speaking for the VALB was Moe Fishman, who expressed appreciation to Brandeis for its interest, investment of personnel and resources to build the ALBA project. He singled out for special tribute Dr. Hahn, the past and present librari-

ans for Special Collections, Victor Berch and Charles Cutter, and, of course, Professor Tobyanne Berenberg who had traveled from Mexico for the ceremony.

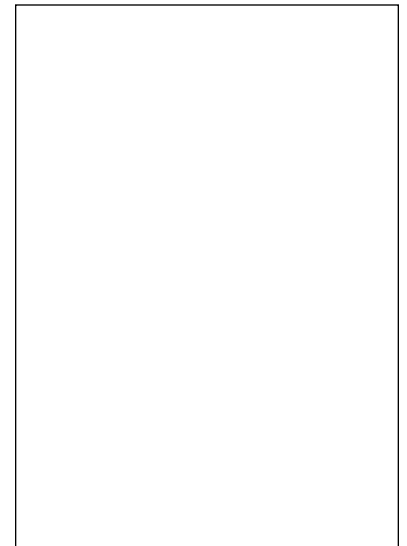
Moe read out the names of the donors honored on the plaque: Tobyanne Berenberg, David Engelson, Louis Gayle, Ben Goldring, Nat Gross, Jacques Grunblatt, Toby Jensky, Charles Keith, Steve Nelson, Irving Portnow, William Sennett, Jack Teiger, Bill Van Felix, Saul Wellman and Steve Zak. Also inscribed are the Edward Aberlin Family, the Charles Keith Foundation, the San Francisco Bay Area Post of the ALB; and friends John D.B. Lewis and John Sayles.

Lincoln vets in attendance were Al Amery, Bill Van Felix, Harry Fisher, John Hovan, Sam Walters and Thelma Erikson Abbott. ☺



Above: (l-r) Thelma Erikson Abbott, Moe Fishman, Bill Van Felix, Encarnación Campuzano and Harry Fisher.

Right: Dr. Bessie K. Hahn, director of the Brandeis Libraries.



## Whither the fight for national health care?

As we prepare this Volunteer for the press, the prospect is bad for the passage of any worthwhile health care legislation.

Responsibility for the present setback falls on the congressional combination of reactionary Republicans and "conservative" Democrats. They are out to kill or, at least, maim, any beneficial measures. And, of course, it must not be forgotten or forgiven, that these same legislators deny the rest of the population the health care that they themselves enjoy, paid for by all the people.

Despite all the flaws contained in the Clintons' original proposals, and the tactical errors committed in the original planning stages, they have projected the image of health care with a sharpness that has never before existed in American political discourse. In the past hundred years, healthcare legislation has been enacted in one industrial country after another,

## Support people's right to travel to Cuba

It has been reported that Castro has called for a meeting with Clinton to resolve outstanding differences between the U.S. and Cuba. If Rabin could meet with Arafat, Nixon with Deng Xiaoping, that request certainly ought to fall within the range of possibility.

Meanwhile, the tightening of the U.S. embargo noose around Cuba is impelling thousands of Cubans to attempt migration under conditions hazardous to life. There is a new urgency for continued support of the third Freedom to Travel Challenge by the San Francisco-based Global Exchange, planned for Oct. 1 through 9, and of the fourth Pastors for Peace Friendship Caravan scheduled for Nov. 2 through Nov. 27. The latter will include a parallel Canadian Caravan which will travel west to east, joining the U.S. contingent in Washington, DC. The merged Caravan will then proceed north into Canada where the accumulated humanitarian-aid supplies will be shipped to Cuba.

Further information on these activities may be obtained by calling:

- Global Exchange at (415) 558-9490, or FAX at (415) 2557498;
- Pastors for Peace at (612) 378-0062. ☺

but one has heard only muffled and crushed references to it in the U.S. Congress. The Clintons must be given credit for nullifying this obscene evasion.

The criminals here are the usual suspects: those sections of the insurance industry which refuse to consent to any modification of their charges and procedures, the pharmaceutical companies and doctors more devoted to mammon than Hippocrates.

There is an important ideological component of this fight. It is necessary to counteract and defeat the promoted notion that the government cannot do anything right. It is with this kind of barrage that Nixon and Reagan, Bush, Dole and Gingrich have covered up the ways in which they have handed over resources and treasures to the most powerful, and thereby worsened the plight of the powerless.

What lies ahead? Protracted fight. The constantly increasing need is too great for the fight to be abandoned. Single payer insurance remains the best option. The fight for this kind of coverage may have to shift from the national arena – to be waged on a state-by-state basis. The ever present puppets in Congress have already proposed making these state initiatives illegal. This only proves how determined their proponents must be.

All of us must join in this fight. ☺

## The Volunteer

Journal of the  
Veterans of the  
Abraham Lincoln Brigade

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## News From Spain

### ***Plans moving forward to honor Jarama Vets and La Pasionaria***

At VALB's request, associate historian Frances Patai met with the Asociación Brigadas Internacionales (ABI) and the Fundación Dolores Ibárruri (FDI), last June in Barcelona, for an update of their respective plans for the 1994 ceremony to dedicate the lapida (monument) in the Morata de Tajuna Cemetery, honoring the Lincolns killed at Jarama; and for the 1995 commemoration of La Pasionaria's birthday centennial.

Santiago Alvarez of the ABI, after expressing his thanks for the VALB's \$200 contribution to ABI, indicated that final plans and a date for the ceremony were not yet set and that VALB would be informed as soon as the calendar of events is made definite. [No news as of the time this Volunteer goes to press - Ed.]

#### **La Pasionaria's centennial**

The detailed calendar of events has not been crystallized but the philosophical and ideological framework for the year-long celebration is

clear: to demonstrate that La Pasionaria was of prime importance both to the final victory over the Franco dictatorship and the restoration of Spanish democracy. The centennial will focus on her life not only as a shaper of Spanish history, but as a symbol of the international struggle for progress and a more just world society.

The FDI envisages the celebration as an ideal opportunity not only for a critical analysis of 20th Century Spain, but for reflections on the future.

Frances was in Spain at the invitation of the 2nd International Congress of the Association of Contemporary Historians sponsored by the University of Barcelona. ☞

### ***An IB archive in Albacete***

Lincoln vet John Rossen has sent The Volunteer a clipping from an unnamed Spanish newspaper,

reporting that the University of Castilla-La Mancha, last April established in Albacete an international center for archives and study of the International Brigades. The undertaking, the first of its kind in Spain, appropriately situated in the IB wartime headquarters city, is a joint venture of the municipality and the university.

Under an agreement signed by the rector of the university, Luis Arroya, and the mayor of Albacete, Carmina Belmonte, the archives, including a collection of pertinent books, will be housed in the General Library building of the university under the directorship of Manuel Requena, professor of contemporary history.

The Albacete municipal government will annually allocate funds to the Center for the acquisition of documents and books, especially from Italy, Germany, the United States and Spain, as well as for its own research projects. ☞

**More news from Spain  
on pages 8-9**

# Book Reviews



## **A classic odyssey of the Lincoln Brigade**

**THE ODYSSEY OF THE  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE:  
Americans in the Spanish Civil War**  
By Peter N. Carroll  
Stanford University Press, Stanford,  
California: 1994.  
\$55 cloth; \$16.95 paper; pp, xii, 429

With the publication of Professor Carroll's massive volume, the Lincoln Brigade volunteers, living and dead, have found their Thucydides; and the author tells us, in his preface, that he is what he calls a member of the third generation of writers about the Lincoln Brigade. The first generation was composed of participants: Edwin Rolfe's *The Lincoln Battalion*, and Alvah Bessie's *Men in Battle*. Both of these were published in 1939. There followed Arthur Landis' *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, published in 1968, and Landis' *Death in the Olive Groves*, posthumously published in 1989. The second generation, he says, were academic scholars, such as Cecil Eby, Robert Rosenstone, John Gerassi. (I would add the generation of journalists who wrote about the Lincoln Brigade: Herbert Matthews and Vincent Sheehan.)

One should note, concerning the third generation, that they have at their disposal not only the great accumulation of archival material at Brandeis University, but also now, for the first time, the archives of the International Brigades which Peter Carroll explored in Moscow.

Of course our readers are well aware of the shifting climate of opinion within which most scholars are constrained. Peter Carroll is the first scholar who approaches the tangled web of Lincoln Brigade history in the post Cold-War period.

There is another unique charac-

teristic of Carroll's book. He has used the word odyssey in its classical Homeric sense. The battles of the Trojan War were told in *The Iliad*. The aftermath of the victorious Hellenic warriors was the subject of *The Odyssey*. In this tradition, the heart of Carroll's work – though it includes the complete trajectory of the Lincoln volunteers' lives – his focus, his passion, is concerned with what happened to the survivors of the Spanish blood bath until the end of their days. The Lincoln Brigade volunteers found that the aftermath was longer and more taxing, more deadly than the "duration."

These intentions of the author manifest themselves in the organization of the book. After a short prologue setting the historical stage, and hinting at the controversial nature of all writings about the civil war, there follow four parts. Part one he entitles *Causes*. By this he means the unique set of historical American circumstances during the Great Depression which created the radical tradition within which a generation of young Americans learned the meaning of fascism and witnessed the apparent collapse of the capitalist system on a world-wide scale.

In the struggles of this period, to organize the unemployed and to build trade unions, emerged the future officers of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Part two, entitled *Spain*, numbers only about 100 pages. Here he sketches the military triumphs and disasters from the Jarama Valley to the last stand in the Sierra Pandols.

The books reviewed here may be ordered directly through the VALB office, 799 Broadway Rm. 227, New York, NY 10003, at list price plus \$2.00 each for shipping and handling.

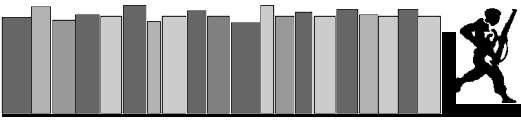
Part three he calls *Veterans*, which runs for approximately 150 pages. Finally there is an epilogue entitled *Old Radicals, New Causes*.

Before I comment on the content of any one of these sections, I would like to make a few professional observations about the craft of the historian. Firstly, archives themselves are mute. In the study of human affairs as well as in the study of nature, what counts as a relevant fact is largely determined by the pre-existing theories in the mind of the investigator.

Peter Carroll views the history of the veterans as embedded and controlled by the ideological conflicts which predated the outbreak of the Spanish conflict. Of necessity this makes it impossible to disentangle the history of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade from the history of the Communist Party of the United States. There can be no question concerning the fact that the International Brigades were created by the Comintern and it cannot be denied that 60 percent of the American contingent were members of the Communist Party or its Young Communist League. The other 40 percent can be best described as individuals who, out of their own experience of union busting, anti-semitism, book burning, racial injustice, plus knowledge of the dynamics of fascism, and inspired by the resistance of the Spanish people, accepted the leadership role of the American Communist Party and went to fight and die in Spain. Peter Carroll takes no sides when chronicling the bitter and often puerile disputes that weakened the endeavors to halt the fascist juggernaut.

As for the internal history of the Brigade veterans, Peter Carroll is not interested in hagiography. The Lincoln Brigade volunteers came from both sides of the tracks. They

*Continued on page 6*



## 'The best book so far' about the ALB

### ANOTHER HILL: An autobiographical novel of the Spanish Civil War

By Milton Wolff

with an introduction by Cary Nelson  
University of Illinois Press, 1994,  
Champaign, IL. pp XX, 395  
\$27.50, cloth

Why an autobiographical novel? Why not straight fiction with invented characters taking part in the historic conflict whose outcome made the larger one of 1939-1945 inevitable? Or why not another non-fictional account of the American volunteers in Spain by their last commander?

The answer is that in neither format could Milton Wolff have painted the picture he provides us in this remarkable, this amazing book. The autobiographical structure of the main body of *Another Hill* enables him to tell his own story as the story of Mitch Castle, the character based on himself, but reworking it in fictional form frees him to render what he saw and did and felt in the kind of graphic detail that no one could recall after

more than half a century – his reaction, for example, to being appointed acting commander of his battalion:

*This training was tough, but suppose he had to take the battalion into action? Oh, Mother!*

*Mother? To his mother he would report that he had been made foreman in the factory.*

It is probable that Milt Wolff, like Mitch Castle, told his mother, at least during the earlier, more obscure part of his time in Spain, that he was working in a factory behind the lines, but it is quite unlikely that he thought, at this particular moment, of disguising his promotion for her benefit. Or if he did, that he would recall it today.

Treating the material as a novelist also makes it possible for him to tell the subordinate story of another volunteer whose reaction to the reality of warfare was in stark contrast to that of Wolff/Castle. As much as by the quality of his writing, which is surprisingly high for a first novelist in his late seventies,

Wolff proved himself a literary artist by his insight into the thoughts and emotions of a man who was twice a deserter from the Lincolns but so attached to the cause that he rejected an opportunity to leave the country, and returned once more to the front. There, in the final confrontation between the two men, the author, who clearly believes in Leo Rogovin's change of heart, also believes in Mitch Castle's conviction that such a change is as unreliable as the man himself.

It is quite appropriate to this unique and fascinating book that its cast includes both real characters and fictional ones. If it suits his purpose to portray someone as he really was and confine his actions and words to an approximation of what he actually did and said, the author calls him by his real name. If, for a fictional purpose, he has him perform a fictional function, the name, too, is fictional. Among those in the former category are Ernest Hemingway, Martha Gellhorn, Jo Davidson, Vincent Sheehan, Herbert Matthews of the New York Times, Joseph North of the New Masses and James Lardner, this reviewer's brother.

Milton Wolff proved himself in Spain and ever since to be an extraordinary man. His talent for leadership put him in a position to know more about what was going on in the International Brigades than any other American volunteer. He writes now with a perspective and an objectivity that would have been impossible during the hot and cold wars that followed the defeat of the Spanish Republic. And he turns out to be a talented novelist. For all these reasons, "Another Hill" is the best book so far about the American participation in Spain. And it might very well remain in permanent possession of that title. ☞

## Hemingway and the VALB

### REMEMBERING SPAIN: Hemingway's Civil War Eulogy and the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

Edited by Cary Nelson, with essays by Milton Wolff and Cary Nelson; with a cassette recording of Hemingway reading his essay "On the American Dead in Spain." Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994. \$14.50; paper and cassette; 39 pp.

This publication is an unusual audio/hard-copy combination that critically ranges the quarter-century relationship between Ernest Hemingway and the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. It was a turbulent one that began with the

battle of Jarama in 1937 and ended with his death in 1961.

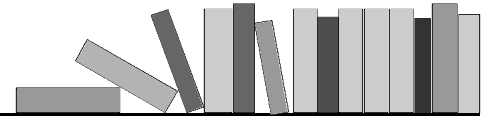
### The Recording

The tape reproduces a record Hemingway sent from Cuba, at Milt Wolff's request, for VALB's tenth anniversary dinner in 1947. It is a reading of his requiem, *On the American Dead in Spain*. He had written it in 1939 for the special "Lincoln Brigade Number" of *New Masses*, published on February 12th, Jarama's 2nd anniversary. One hears Hemingway's flat mid-west voice softened by the solemnity

*Continued on page 7*

**Ring Lardner, Jr.**

# Book Reviews



## *Odyssey*

*Continued from page 4*

were not all Sir Galahads or Parsifals. If I may make a personal remark here, I stated in one of my papers that the Lincoln Brigade soldiers proved how uncommon the common man could be. In their ranks there were bound to be deserters, turncoats, renegades. As distinguished from the first generation of scholars, Peter Carroll's account takes the lives of this category of men and lets them speak their piece for the record.

There is a simple answer for those who believe that the inclusion of such testimony besmirches the reputation of the Brigade. The coward's flight determines the stature of the hero. The turncoat gives evidence as to the steadfastness of those who, against tremendous odds, remained faithful to their political and philosophic ideals. Again, a personal note. As I read the account of the deserters and the government-paid stool pigeons, I kept remembering Carroll's references to veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade who, having been repatriated because of wounds, returned for the second time to the Spanish front, and after the cause was lost there, volunteered again for the U.S. army and participated in some of its most bloody struggles in World War II.

As suggested above, the core of Carroll's book concerns the fate of the veterans after the end of World War II in which many of them participated. It is hard to know how best to characterize this period. Some of the subheads in the book indicate the content: The War of Words, Premature Antifascists, The Political War, Red Scares and Blacklists, The Trials, The Politics of Culture, Alienated Artists, Bridging Old Left and New, The Death Watch.

Stated briefly, the American establishment, fearful of the threat

to internal security, turned the full force of its police powers against radicals, old and new. The Truman loyalty oath, the Smith Act, the McCarran Internal Security Act, the Taft-Hartley Law, the establishment of inquisitorial committees of the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, the incredible establishment of the Subversive Activities Control Board – all of this created a political maelstrom into which the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade were drawn, collectively as an organization and individually. Peter Carroll's account of this is a magnificent example of difficult historiography expounded with sympathy towards the victims, but accurate always in detailing the charges brought against them. Forty years of harassment, however, failed to destroy either the organization or silence its members.

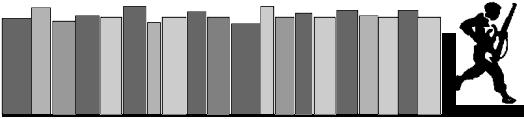
As to be expected, the veterans never took their eyes off Spain. They wept for their country when Franco, to them the butcher, became the favorite dictator of Eisenhower and Nixon. They also took their protest to the streets. For years they used their meager resources to send medical supplies to the Spanish refugees in France and Mexico. Eventually the harassment and the FBI and the Internal Revenue Service ended those activities. As was to be expected from their past record, the veterans were loud in their opposition to the imperial intervention of the United States in south Asia and Latin America. In the Death Squads, which emerged in this region, often under U.S. tutelage, they saw the projection of the punitive squads of the Falange which purged Spain, province by province, for General Franco. Carroll gives a cool account of these anti-imperialist activities. (He might have noted that such protests go back to Abraham Lincoln and Mark Twain.)

I might note in passing that in Part 2 Peter Carroll gives the first

extensive account of the Brigade's medical services. Recruited in the United States were doctors, nurses, ambulances, and ambulance drivers who served the Brigades. Under appalling conditions of poverty of means and exposed constantly to extraordinary danger, the medical staffs set an example of professional excellence and political dedication. What is sad to relate now is that Carroll gives in broad strokes the persecution of these noble human beings. The famous Dr. Edward Barsky, who saved hundreds of lives, will go to jail for refusing to give the name of donors to the funds raised for the refugee hospitals. For years the nurses will be hounded out of employment and some will leave the country for Mexico in order to practice their profession. I would note here a section of the book which perhaps more than any other indicates Carroll's grasp of the big picture. This concerns his account of how in their old age, with very meager resources, the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade were able to raise funds to send a dozen or so ambulances to Nicaragua and El Salvador. Having been transported in ambulances more than once in Spain, they understood the value of these vehicles for their embattled brethren in Central America.

In my personal judgment, nothing that Peter Carroll has written deserves our thanks more than those lyrical passages telling the story of the return to Spain of many veterans on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Spanish conflict.

Again a personal note. I think it was on the 40th anniversary of the Spanish war that the City University of New York placed a plaque in the great hall of the University bearing the 13 names of the faculty and students of that university who died in Spain. On that occasion I was invited to speak for the Brigade and I ended my remarks by thanking the president of the university who was acting as master of ceremonies. I told her,



## Hemingway

Continued from page 5

of the occasion and perhaps deepened by its ending an eight-year estrangement from all but a few Lincoln vets. That rupture, described in detail by Milt Wolff, had begun in 1940 following the publication of Hemingway's Spanish Civil War novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (FWBT)<sup>1</sup>. The reconciliation was verified by a brief introduction which Hemingway had written for this celebration.<sup>2</sup> The first words one hears are, "I am very glad to be present in this distinguished company of premature antifascists."

### The Essays

In the separate essays of *Remembering Spain* (RS), both Milt Wolff and Cary Nelson describe the anger that FWBT churned in the ranks of the Lincoln vets. Into its nearly 500-page bulk, Hemingway had slipped a few off-the-cuff characterizations that disparaged prominent antifascist leaders, including the legendary La Pasionaria. Most infuriating, how-

ever, was his lengthy, totally fictional description of a savage massacre of local fascists in a village loyal to the Republic.<sup>3</sup>

The book triggered the VALB estrangement from Hemingway. It persisted on individual and organizational levels, with varying intensity, until his death in 1961. On Hemingway's side, testifying to his regard for the American IBers, it was confined to his personal correspondence. Some of his letters, however, were eerily off-the-wall.<sup>4</sup>

At Wolff's initiative the breach caused by FWBT was temporarily bridged in 1947 with the phoned invitation to EH in Havana that prompted the recording. On the Lincoln vets' side, their turn-off again peaked five years later in 1952, when VALB excluded Hemingway from its book, *The Heart of Spain*<sup>5</sup> (HoS). It was a collection of writings on the Spanish Civil War. Veteran Alvah Bessie, one of the "Hollywood Ten" jailed for contempt of the House Un-American Committee in 1947, was the editor. His preface, after describing the book as a "partisan anthology," focused on FWBT:

We would particularly like to explain to the reader our reasons for the omission of work by Ernest Hemingway. It was felt that Hemingway's talent and the personal support he rendered to many phases of the loyalist cause were shockingly portrayed in his work *For Whom the Bell Tolls* ... the novel in its impact presented an unforgivable distortion of the meaning of the struggle in Spain.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this censuring, one year later a Hemingway letter to Ed Rolfe<sup>7</sup> reaffirmed his esteem for the VALB. It once again granted a request to play the Havana recording, this time at a Vets' meeting in Los Angeles.

The requiem, reversing *Heart of Spain*, was included in *Our Fight*,<sup>8</sup> another VALB anthology, published

in 1987. The work had begun several years earlier under the editorship of Alvah Bessie and was completed after his death by Al Prago. The book's preface pays tribute to Hemingway: "...perhaps more than any other American writer, he made invaluable contributions to the cause of Republican Spain."<sup>9</sup> But the volume omitted any reference to the tumultuous history of the eulogy.

For the Lincoln vets, time and cataclysmic events have eased their resentment at the unbalanced portrayal of Republican Spain in FWBT. But history has no clear absolution for Hemingway. The small, forgotten edition of *Heart of Spain* (5,000 copies, 42 years out-of-print) has been exceeded exponentially by FWBT which bookstores still stock to meet an unending demand.<sup>10</sup>

It doesn't hurt to show a little Heart to keep the record straight on Republican Spain, even while acknowledging Ernest Hemingway as its most influential wartime supporter in the English-speaking world.

Lincoln vets and supporters, touched or untouched by this history-within-a-history, will want to have it for their book and tape libraries and as an unusual gift for all occasions. ☞

**Len Levenson**

#### Notes

1. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (FWBT): New York, 1940, First Scribner Classic/Collier Edition, 1987.
2. *Remembering Spain* (RS), p. 26.
3. FWBT, pp. 96-130. "I invented completely...." Hemingway's letter to Bernard Berenson in *Ernest Hemingway, Selected Letters* (SL). 1917-1961: New York, 1981, p. 837.
4. See, RS, p. 34, for a manic letter dealing with Fred Keller; also SL, p. 505 - a savage put-down of British and French IBers.
5. New York: 1952, Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.
6. *HoS*, p. vi.
7. RS, p. 33.
8. VALB and Monthly Review Press, 1987.
9. RS, p. 12.
10. FWBT "...was the November 1940 main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, ... by the following April, 491,000 copies had been sold." James R. Mellow, *Hemingway, a life without consequences*, Boston, 1992, p. 522.

## Odyssey (cont'd)

"You have restored a page torn from the history of the United States. Future generations of your students will be in your debt."

Peter Carroll has restored not just a page but I would say an entire chapter of the history of the republic, and the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade will be remembered by this contribution to the vast literary account of that glory and tragedy that was the history of Spain between the two great wars. ☞

**Robert G. Colodny**  
 Profesor Emeritus,  
 University of Pittsburgh  
 Veteran of the  
 Abraham Lincoln Brigade

# News From Spain

## Socialists are set back

The ruling Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez was roundly defeated by the center-right Popular Party (PP) in voting for the new European Parliament on June 13.

A regional Andalusian parliamentary election, held simultaneously, also stripped the PSOE of its absolute majority.

Gonzalez himself recognized that the dismal showing, which exceeded the worst pre-election forecasts, was the fruit of a series of corruption scandals and continuing economic woes that had undermined his own and his government's image.

The PP's victory in the EP election was its first over the PSOE at the national level in 12 years. The conservatives won in 13 of Spain's autonomous regions, losing to the PSOE only in Andalusia and neighboring Extremadura, and to nationalist parties in Catalonia and the Basque country.

In both the European and Andalusian polls the Communist-led United Left (IU) coalition made solid gains at the expense of the PSOE and insured itself an indispensable power broker's role in Andalusia.

Despite the dismal showing, Gonzalez declared "We have to go on governing." But he reiterated his earlier refusal to consider calling an early general election if the European polls did not go his way. El Pais editorialized, "...the scale of the censure expressed by the electorate is almost overwhelming." ☞

*from a Reuter's dispatch*

## Low NATO contribution

Spain remains one of the NATO countries that spends least on defense, in terms of figures relating

to national wealth and population, according to estimates for 1993 made public by the Alliance. According to these figures, Spain is the allied country that devotes the smallest proportion of its Gross National Product (GNP) to defense: 1.5 percent, as opposed to the 2.6 percent average in the Alliance. The only exception is Luxembourg which has a professional army numbering about 1,000. Spain is one of the allied countries which spends least money per capita on defense – \$81, only exceeding Portugal (80) and Turkey (64).

The estimates also suggest that, whereas the Spanish GNP will fall by .8 percent, military expenditures will drop by 5.4 percent, which makes four consecutive years (1990-93) of cutbacks in the national military budget. The National Budget for 1994, however, shows a slight increase over last year. As for manpower, Spain is tending towards a progressive reduction, and its armed forces account for 1.6 percent of the economically active population, far lower than the approximate Allied average of 2 percent. ☞

*España '94, No. 239*

## Spain's youth

*The following is excerpted from a study, The Report on Young People in Spain 1992, dealing with Spaniards between 15 and 30 years old (a total of 10 million).*

### Youth and Work

The unemployment rate among young Spanish people, 32.1 percent, is the highest in the countries of the European Community, ahead of Italy, Greece and Ireland! Among unemployed Spanish youth, 21.25 percent take from six to eleven months to find work and 23.6 percent take almost two years to find it. Nowadays one out of every four young people looking for work have been in this condition for over a year.

This situation means that

employment is the area of least satisfaction since only 43 percent express satisfaction with their work. Moreover, while in 1988, 26 percent were financially independent, in 1992 only 20.1 percent claimed to live solely on their own income. This latter group consisted mainly of people aged between 26 and 30.

### Family and Health Most Valued

Spain's 10 million youth (15-29 years old) account for 24.75 percent of the population. Ten years ago it was 23 percent and in the next decade the figure will drop to 19 percent. In 1992, 75 percent of the young people lived in their family home with parents and siblings. This situation was highly valued by the vast majority: 92 percent stated without reservation that their family and health are the two most important things in their lives and what they are most satisfied with. After these come housing (80 percent), sexual relations (59 percent), and studies (55 percent), whereas their financial situation, often because of lack of work, only satisfied 54 percent.

### Social Outlook

With a level of interest in politics even lower than the population as a whole, Spanish young people are passive in their voting intentions and only show a certain amount of interest in environmentalism.

Membership in youth associations persists at a low level, more so than in the previous decade, and women have a greater tendency to join than men. As for religious matters, over half the interviewees claimed to be non-practicing Catholics, although among those who said they were religious, the majority attend Sunday mass.

There is widespread tolerance of euthanasia, abortion and homosex-

# The Brandeis archive at work

*"Little did I know that the non-descript box of files that Dr. (Charles) Cutter randomly selected for me was soon to take so powerful a grasp of my imagination, to propel me to a time and place different from any I'd ever experienced, yet vividly painted in my mind's eye ..."*

– Brandeis student on his use of the Brandeis Library's Spanish Civil War Collection.

At Brandeis the rare books, rolls of microfilm, and important papers that fill the shelves of the library's Special Collections area are not reserved just for faculty or students. Undergraduates also routinely use the library's Spanish Civil War Collection for Professor James Mandrell's course on the war.

"Throughout my research, the notion would continually cross my mind that Dr. Cutter (of the Special Collections Department) ... or someone was pulling a fast one on me," the student continued. "The stories that the letters told seemed too contained, too juicy, to be actual documents of actual events ... When I look over the summary of materials, I don't see just names; rather, each file conjures up a breathtaking persona in my mind."

Another student observed: "There is something almost magical about holding and reading a mud-

stained letter written home from a trench somewhere in Spain – there is a sense of immediacy that is simply not possible to get from reading reprinted letters in an anthology ... The war becomes personal when examined through such original documents, because the feelings of the people involved shine through. Their handwriting, their doodles, their phrasing ... everything indicates that these were individuals people with lives and opinions and personalities, not just 'soldiers' or 'statistics.'"

This student, who estimates she spent 55 hours on her research project, felt the time commitment was

"entirely worth it," and reported: "This project had more significance than any other serious work I've done to date."

According to Professor Mandrell, the addition of approximately 100,000 Spanish Civil War documents that have been housed in Moscow's Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Modern History Documents to the library's collection will further enrich these teaching and research activities. The Women's Committee's Library Benefactor program will fund the microfilming of these documents. ☞

*Reprinted, in part, from Imprint/Summer '94.*

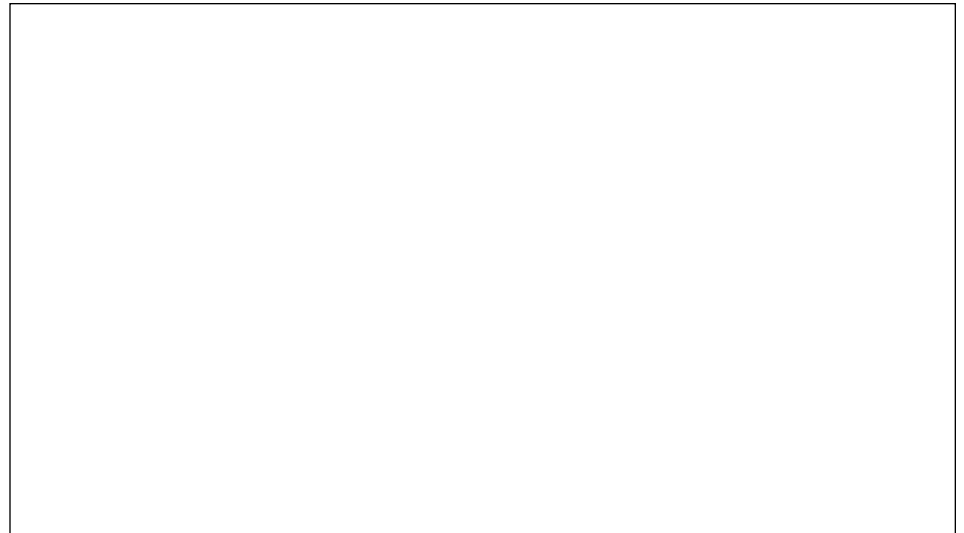


Photo courtesy Brandeis University, National Women's Committee  
Brandeis student Stacey Ratner, '94, searches through the archives of the library's Spanish Civil War collection.

## News From Spain (cont'd)

ual relationships. A majority also opposes the death penalty and military service, and a fairly widespread tolerance of prostitution. However, there has been a reversal in tolerant attitudes to drug addiction.

The most rejected behavior patterns are headed by physical violence (89 percent) and drunk driving (88 percent). These are followed by abuse of drugs (75 percent) and (not too closely) tax evasion (55 percent). ☞

*España '94, No.240*

## Draft resistance

The spectacular increase in the number of conscientious objectors to military service may, in a few years time, leave the Spanish Armed Forces without sufficient recruits to cover the number of vacancies. The figures speak volumes: last year 68,209 young men took advantage of this constitutional right, 61 percent more than in 1992. Reduction in applications for this year lead to a growing fear that 1994 might end with 106,000 new objectors.

The situation worrying the

Ministry of Defense is worsened by Spain's drop in birthrate. The defense minister, Julián García Vargas, has called for legal measures to curb the number of objectors by examining their sincerity before they are granted CO status.

The Administration admits that many objectors do not perform the legally available social service because of the shortage of vacancies for it. A change in the law is being sought to impose compulsory conditions on the CO's, similar to those of the military service. ☞

*España '94, No.242*

## Culling the mail sack

☞ Milton Cohen, Lincoln/Mac Pap veteran, has been memorialized in resolutions passed by the Illinois State Assembly and the City Council of Chicago. Both resolutions pay tribute to Milt's six decades of activism in the cause of peace and democracy, reviewed in the Spring '94 issue of *The Volunteer*.

☞ Veterans Milt Felsen, Bill Susman and Saul Wellman last February toured a number of universities in South Florida, speaking to students about their SCW experiences, the work of ALBA, and current VALB activities opposing the U.S. embargo and the travel ban on Cuba. [See photo, p. 13]

☞ A letter from Harriet Kahn, widow of author Albert E. Kahn, recalls how she and her husband in 1936 made a speaking tour of western cities and mining towns, under the auspices of the Motion Picture Arts Committee, to raise money for medical supplies for the Spanish front. Albert later joined Pablo Neruda and Pablo Picasso on the World Peace Council and collaborated with Pablo Casals on his autobiographical book, *Joys and Sorrows*. This experience inspired him to write a poem in 1971, "Homage to the Three Pablos."

☞ Veteran Jack Penrod writes from Gainesville, FL, that since his retirement from the University of Florida's English Department, he is doing hard time, nine hours a week, tutoring Job Corps candidates for high-school equivalency in basic math and language, and another 12 hours a week reading tapes for use by sight-impaired students.

☞ The Summer 1994 Bulletin of Grandmothers for Peace International carries Corine Thornton's account of the VALB delegation that challenged the travel ban to Cuba last fall. [See *The Volunteer*, Spring '94]

☞ Bob Reed forwards for appropriate recollection a WWII battlefield letter carried by *The Volunteer* in 1944. It was from Harry Schoenberg, a New Yorker, who had been adjutant of the Mac Paps:

... As far as the outfit I'm in is concerned, it's tops. We're one of the few outfits that has gotten a War Department citation. The citation is given to a unit which executes a mission which, if performed by an individual, would rate a DSC. In our case, our battalion destroyed in one afternoon (no artillery support either) a Nazi SS battalion; in the process captured about 12 of their jeeps, a number of trucks. Also a complete Regimental headquarters, with everything intact including radios, maps, etc. Previously, we were the first outfit to successfully cross the Rapido River in the battle for Casino (January). I could go on for the rest of the letter.

What I want to bring out, though, is that these boys are all of Japanese descent. In fact the parents of some of them are still in concentration camps back home. As for me, and my work, all I can say is that I'm an officer in a good infantry outfit. Oh, yes – I'm a first Lieutenant, too. Right now we're sort of resting up holding a quiet sector in Italy. ☞

## Another 100

By Al Amery

In spring I think about the flowers coming  
and the leaves and the grass  
and the birds and the bees  
and the old cycle of birth and death.

They say we need death  
because we'd get bored  
if we lived forever; but I don't know—  
since I've grown up and cultivated  
some brains in my '30s,  
I haven't noticed being bored,  
and I am 88 now.

So far as I'm concerned  
I could live forever, yes—  
or at least for another 100 years.

Why not?

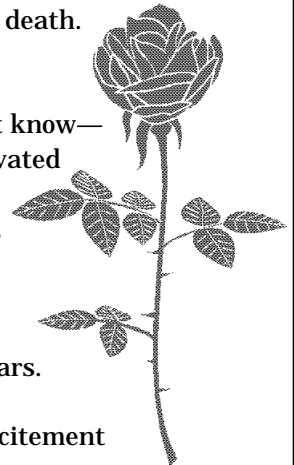
I'm sure there'll be a lot of excitement  
with many changes  
in the next 100 years,  
and I wouldn't refuse if offered the chance  
to keep on living

with some ability to participate.  
I know there's a necessity for opposites,  
having figured it out for myself.

(You need both pleasure and pain  
to make pleasure significant, and good and evil.)  
But I don't see any need to be bored

if you can eat and sleep  
and swim and ski and dance,  
and see the flowers again every spring  
and the miracle of colors again in the fall.  
So put me down for another 100,  
if you can.

Thanks, and may I have the next dance?



# Rebels Without a Pause

## VALB Dinner — East

Addresses by Peter Carroll, chair of the board of governors of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, and by the Reverend Lucius Walker, of Pastors for Peace, highlighted the 27th annual anniversary dinner of VALB's East Coast Post. It took place at the Sheraton New York Hotel on April 24. Over 600 VALB members and associates attended.

Perennial dinner chair Henry Foner, retired head of the United Fur and Leather Workers Union, opened the post-prandial program by introducing Moe Fishman, who spoke for the Post executive staff. After paying tribute to the vets fallen since last year's anniversary, Moe named the vets present, asked each to stand for a group tribute by the guests. The entire audience then rose for a moment of silent tribute to all the fallen heroes and supporters of the good fight against war and oppression.

Peter Carroll next reviewed the successful ALBA/VALB \$100,000 fund-raising campaign for obtaining a microfilmed copy of the Brigade documents deposited in the Moscow archives. Reporting that the first batch of the microfilm had already reached the ALBA office at Brandeis University, he described examples of how the material had confirmed the body of published VALB history, as well as refuted past and current detractors.

The featured speaker, the Reverend Lucius Walker, followed. He traced the significant role played over the years by Pastors for Peace in the fight to lift the embargo on Cuba. Stressing the need to intensify the campaign to end the U.S. embargo on Cuba, he outlined

*Continued on page 12*

*After paying tribute to the vets fallen since last year's anniversary, Moe (Fishman) named the vets present, asked each to stand for a tribute by the guests.*

## VALB Dinner — West

The Bay Area Post's 57th Anniversary dinner on February 27, at Oakland's Parc Hotel, focused on support for the William Soler Pediatric Hospital in Cuba and for Dream West, a local community undertaking that funds scholarships for high school minority students. The celebration attracted over 750 guests and netted more than \$9,000 in contributions for these projects.

Milt Wolff, Post Commander, chaired the program which he opened by urging the diners to support the campaign for California's single-payer health plan. He noted that the day marked the Lincoln's baptism of fire, 57 years before at Jarama. Evoking the solemnity of the occasion, he then read Ed Rolfe's classic poem *First Love*.

Continuing tradition, there followed a roll call of the 19 VALB members who had joined the ranks of the fallen in the past year. The vets among the diners were then asked to stand for an unusual tribute — a voice from the past, a recording of Ernest Hemingway reading his 1939 *New Masses* essay, *On the American Dead in Spain*. [See p. 5]

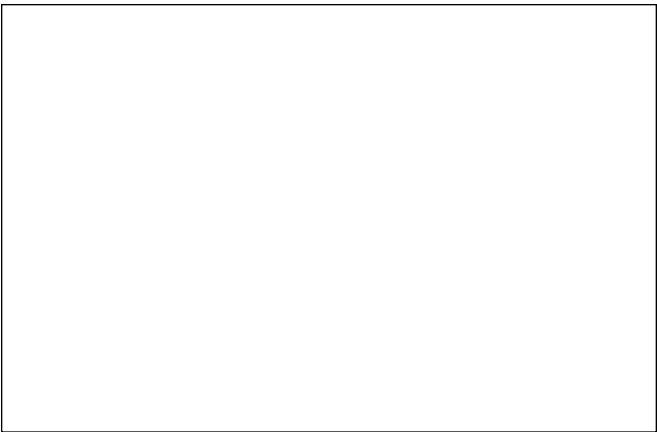
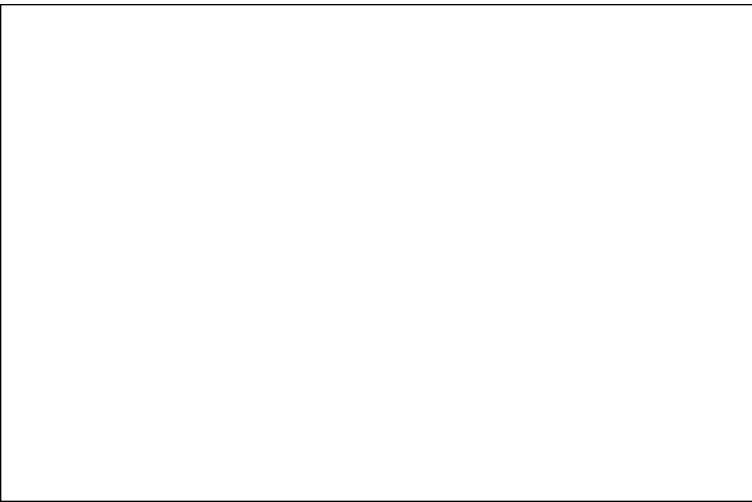
Walter Turner, professor at the College of Marin County and President of the Board of Global Exchange, next spoke on the campaign to end the U.S. embargo on Cuba and of his own empathy with VALB and its history. He urged continued defiance of the travel ban and embargo, exemplified earlier this year by veterans Hilda Roberts, Milt Felsen and Milt Wolff.

A tribute to Steve Nelson, late Commander of the VALB, was then delivered by noted author and VALB

*Continued on page 12*

*The vets were asked to stand for an unusual tribute — a voice from the past: a recording of Ernest Hemingway reading his essay, "On the American Dead in Spain."*

Leonard Olson and his daughter, associate member Hannah Coyle, at the West Coast dinner in Oakland.



Above: Ben Lane (left) and Ed Bender in Oakland.  
Left: The Bay Area Dance Brigade.

## West Coast

*Continued from page 11*

associate, Jessica Mitford. She shared three incidents that she felt captured something of Steve's many-layered life. The first was related by her daughter, Constanza, who, midway during the Cape Cod memorial to Steve, felt "that something was missing ... there had been no mention of the Communist Party. She queried Steve's son, Bob, about what it had been like to be in a family constantly hounded by the FBI: "From my point of view," he said. "It seemed quite normal."

## East Coast

*Continued from page 11*

the plans for a stepped-up reprise of activities scheduled to culminate in another Friendship Caravan, later in the year, to deliver sorely needed medical equipment to Havana.

The perennial fund appeal was made by Henry Foner, in his usual low keyed, highly effective style. It produced a collection of over \$7,000. Augmented by ticket sales and mailed-in contributions, the affair netted over \$17,000.

The dinner concluded with a sing-along concert presented by the Walkabout/Clearwater Chorus, led by son of Lincoln vet Harry Fisher. Over fifty of the Fisher family and friends were in attendance as a special tribute to Harry's wife, Ruth, who passed away last Spring. ☺

She also talked with a grandson, Steve's namesake, who recalled, "He told me stories ... the strikes he was involved with. He never preached."

Jessica concluded with an ironic sidelight of Steve's Pittsburgh trial for sedition. During the proceedings, Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible" came to town and was seen by the prosecutors, who applauded it. Steve chuckled at their obliviousness to the drama's theme - a parable of the witchhunt they were conducting against Steve and his co-defendants.

The keynote speaker, Maykaha Mosia, ANC Representative to Cuba, the Caribbean and Latin America, was then introduced. His speech focused on the imminent South African elections. He opened with a quotation from Carl Geiser's

book "Prisoners of the Good Fight," declaring that the Lincoln Brigade went to Spain "because we were alarmed about what was happening [there]." Invoking also the memory of the '60s Civil Rights Movement, he spoke of the need for massive voter registration and for international solidarity extending far into the future, if a truly non-racial democracy is to be built in South Africa.

The successful fund appeal followed. It was a cooperative effort by Gloria Riva of Pastors for Peace, Dream West's Michael Thomas and Milt Wolff.

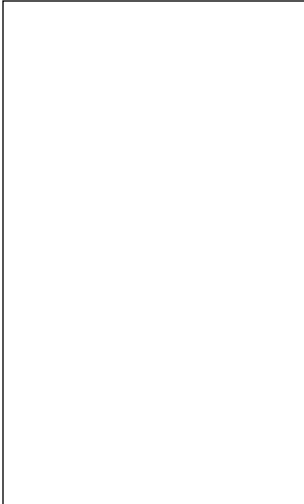
The event concluded with performances by the Bay Area Dance Brigade (a women's group) and the Latin jazz music of John Santos and Friends. ☺

**Roby Newman**  
Associate VALB member

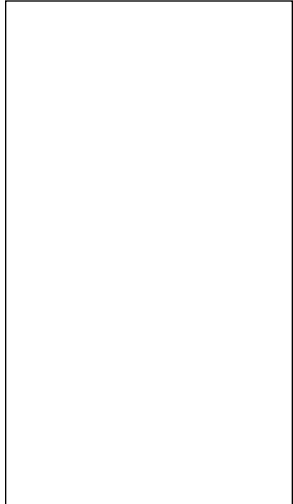
West Coast dinner photos by Richard Bermack



Maykaha Mosia



Jessica Mitford



Walter Turner



## ALBA at Work



*From all peoples, from all races, you came to us like brothers, like sons of undying Spain; and in the hardest days of the war, when the capital of the Spanish Republic was threatened, it was you, gallant comrades of the International Brigades, who helped save the city with your fighting enthusiasm, your heroism and your spirit of sacrifice ...*

La Pasionaria

### By Rob Okun

Keeping alive the words of La Pasionaria is one of the missions of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA). This is both a privilege and a responsibility. As we approach the end of 1994, ALBA has added another major project to its agenda.

#### A touring art exhibit

ALBA is organizing a national touring-art exhibit, *Shouts from the Wall: Art and the Spanish Civil War*. It is scheduled to open in New York in early 1996, the sixtieth anniversary of the start of the Spanish Civil War.

Funded in part by a \$25,000 grant from the New Jersey-based Puffin Foundation, the exhibit will feature many of the gripping posters by Spanish artists that are in ALBA's collection at Brandeis University. Other art, including photographs, will augment the posters. Mounted display-text will feature classic writings about the war by authors such as Lillian Hellman, Ernest Hemingway, Dorothy Parker and Langston Hughes.

*Shouts from the Wall* will dramatically and powerfully introduce younger generations to the fight against fascism, through the images and words of those who often see things most clearly: artists and writers.

In addition to its role as a leading funder of progressive art projects, the Puffin Foundation maintains a Manhattan gallery, the Puffin Room, in Soho. It will mount

*Shouts from the Wall* as an exhibit during April and May of 1996.

People with information about Spanish Civil War art, prospective donors who might want to support the travelling exhibit, or anyone with suggestions of museums or university galleries which might want to mount the exhibit during its journey, should contact ALBA executive director, Rob Okun, at 413-367-9526.

#### The Moscow Archives

Many readers of *The Volunteer* know that ALBA and VALB, in the Spring of 1993, learned what had long been suspected – that the single largest cache of archival materials on the International Brigades was in a Moscow repository. Peter Carroll, Chair of ALBA's board, visited Moscow and confirmed the significance of the treasure trove housed at the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of the Documents of Modern History. ALBA, with the full support of VALB, launched a major fund raising drive to pay for the microfilming of more than 100,000 documents.

Spearheaded by ALBA board member and Lincoln vet Saul Wellman, with assistance from VALB and readers of *The Volunteer*, a total of \$100,000 was raised. The first batch of microfilmed documents was sent from Moscow to Brandeis in May and further shipments will be made throughout the summer.

In Peter Carroll's words, it is criti-

cal "to bring home, once and for all, the official record of the young Americans who risked, and often gave, their lives in the fight against fascism."

#### Planning for 1966

Meanwhile, ALBA is beginning to plan for 1996, the sixtieth anniversary of the outbreak of fascist rebellion in Spain. Plans are being formulated for a major commemoration which would follow in the spirit and scope of the fiftieth anniversary commemoration in Avery Fisher Hall, New York. Speakers, music, dramatic presentations and a tribute to the Vets are the focus of plans being worked on for the program. ALBA will work with its affiliates and the West Coast Vets to plan commemorations in San Francisco and/or Los Angeles.

#### ALBA asks for bequests

Augmenting its fundraising efforts, ALBA is asking its supporters to include a bequest to it in their wills. This will assure, far into the future, the continuance of ALBA's mission to preserve and promote the story of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and its veterans.

Full information on how to name ALBA in a will may be obtained by writing:

ALBA, Box L11  
Brandeis University  
Waltham, MA 02254

The 2nd edition of Rob Okun's *The Rosenbergs: Collected Visions of Artists and Writers* was published in 1993.

Herb Snitzer

Vets caught at a speakers' line-up for a University of South Florida lecture: (l-r) Saul Wellman, Milt Felsen, Bill Susman.

## Added to Memory's Roster

### Nils Berg

*The following is based, in part, on a story in The Advocate of Provincetown, Massachusetts, July 14, 1994.*

**N**ils Waldemar Berg, a veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, died in Provincetown, Massachusetts on July 6. He came to the Cape Cod tourist center by accident in the 1940's, turned a soup-and-sandwich counter into Pepe's Wharf, a landmark restaurant, and became an honored elder of the town.

Born in Sweden in 1914, Nils was three years old when his parents emigrated to the USA. Although reared in New York City he retained his Swedish citizenship. An early IB volunteer, Nils joined the Lincoln Battalion at Jarama where he suffered a crippling hand wound that resulted in his repatriation in 1937.

By 1940, Nils' art talent had earned him a job at the prestigious McCann Erickson Advertising Agency where he became a senior art director on accounts such as General Motors. That talent also served VALB. Nils' designs of the posters and tickets for the pre-World War II annual VALB anniversary dances contributed to their invariably capacity crowds and remain cherished personal momentos today.

As retold by son Jonathan, Nils' introduction to Provincetown was an almost apocryphal tale. It began with a planned visit to an artist friend in Rockport. At the New York railroad ticket office, Nils could not remember the name of his destination and told the clerk he wanted to go "to that artist colony in Massachusetts." The ticket seller routed him to Provincetown where his first

walk-around shaped much of Nils' later life.

It was in Provincetown that Nils met Eva, a young waitress and school teacher at the Flagship Restaurant. They married in 1950.

On his retirement from McCann Erickson in 1965, Nils and Eva bought the Flagship, rebuilt it to his redesign and renamed it Pepe's Wharf Restaurant. A prime Provincetown attraction, it is now presided over by Nils' daughter, Astrid Karinna Berg.

Three Lincoln veterans, Tom O'Malley, Jack Shafran and Jack Bjoze, attended Nils' funeral at St. Mary of the Harbor Church, with the Rev. George Welles, Jr., presiding.

"Nils was a very outgoing person, very interested in people and the world. ...He went to Spain because the world around him wasn't so good then," Shafran said. "Not only was fascism rearing its ugly head in Europe, but back home the country was in the grips of the Great Depression.."

Jack Bjoze told of his difficulty "to express my feelings about Nils or to explain why he was such a special friend. The last time he spent the night at my house, he talked incessantly about world events. His knowledge of the world and its complexities was much broader and deeper than many of his friends realized. It was based on personal wisdom." ☞

### Luke Hinman

**L**uke (Loyal Anson) Hinman, called by Milt Wolff "the best scout the Lincoln's ever had," succumbed to cancer on May 3, in Covelo, CA. Spain for Luke, his daughter Agatha writes, "remained the most deeply felt, memorable experience of his life."

But there were other peaks scaled by Luke in the course of his 88 years.

Born in a Sacramento Valley town, Luke, before Spain, was a political activist and labor organizer in the bitter campaigns to unionize the cannery and agricultural workers of Northern California. Joining the Lincoln Battalion's headquarters company in the winter of 1937, he served as chief scout from Teruel until the IB withdrawal in September 1938.

On his return from Spain, Luke went to work as an organizer for the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers union and led a strike of fruit pickers against the DiGeorgio Corporation that achieved national attention, as well as an arrest and jail sentence for Luke.

In the '40s Luke resettled in Covelo, began work as a millhand at the Louisiana Pacific Corp., a stint that continued until his retirement in 1970.

Agatha Hinman asks, "If anyone has anything they would like to share with us about papa Luke, please write or call" - 5121 Ygnacio Ave., Oakland, CA 94601; phone: 510-532-7835. ☞

### Hy Rosner

**H**y Rosner, veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, died on May 14 at the age of 90 in Oakland. Hy and Ruth Simon, his surviving companion, have been active members of the Bay Area VALB Post since 1978.

Hy was a frontline ambulance driver on the Jarama front until hand and back wounds suffered in a fascist bombing incapacitated him for further service. He was repatriated in 1937 to Philadelphia where he had lived while

## Added to Memory's Roster

shipping out as a merchant seaman.

Hy quit school at sixteen, became a seaman, and joined the NMU. Between berths, he played semi-professional handball at the Philadelphia Elks Club, earning a few bucks in exhibition matches for visiting Elks.

After Spain, slowed down by his war wounds, Hy worked as part-time assistant to a pharmacist friend. At the outbreak of WW II, failing to clear the Navy physical exam, he rejoined the Merchant Marine. His wartime service was ended in 1943 by a Nazi bombing of his convoyed Liberty ship in the North Atlantic. It cost him a leg and many months of hospitalization and prosthesis.

For his heroic wartime service, Hy was awarded a Victory Medal with a presidential citation that read:

*To you who answered the call of your country and served in its merchant marine to bring about the total defeat of the enemy, I extend the heartfelt thanks of the Nation. You undertook a most severe task - one which called for courage and fortitude. Because you demonstrated the resourcefulness and calm judgment necessary to carry out that task, we now look to you for leadership and example in further serving our country for peace.*

Hy's experiences in two wars strengthened a resolve to recapture his health and strength. He succeeded in this - learning to swim, working part-time as a "newsy" on a busy corner in New York City, assisting Ruth's child-rearing while she worked as a seismologist at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, where they had moved in 1966.

A new job for Ruth brought

them to Richmond in Northern California in 1978. There, as close friends of the Veltforts, they settled in among the qualified "forever activists" of the Bay Area Post. ☞

### Frank Stout

*Frank Stout died in Berkeley, CA, on November 5, 1993. He served in the Lincoln Battalion, earning a citation for his performance in the Ebro counteroffensive of July 1939 where he was severely wounded.*

*The following is excerpted from a tribute to Frank published in The Dispatcher, newspaper of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU).*

Stout began his life-long dedication to fighting injustice even before the ILWU was formed, when he became a union organizer among cannery workers in California in the early 1930s.

When the civil war began in Spain in 1936, Stout served with 3,000 other Americans in the International Brigades to defend the Republican government against the fascist military counter-revolution. He was shot in the stomach during the war.

When he returned to San Francisco, he joined the ILWU and worked on the waterfront as a longshoreman from 1943 to 1975 when he retired. The membership of Local 10 elected him president in 1973.

Stout is remembered by his co-workers as honest, quiet, independent, hard-working, meticulous and serious. Richard Austin, a Local 10 brother during the '70s, recalled Stout as a patient teacher and mentor.

Austin also said Stout drew a strong line between the union and the employers, and told a story

about the time Stout found two bottles of expensive liquor on his desk, a holiday gift from the bosses.

When he learned they were from the employers, he walked into the kitchen, poured the bottles down the drain, and said, "This is for the staff for the office party."

Stout and others opposed a new section of the longshore contract known as "efficient operations." Today that provision has allowed employers to encroach on traditional longshore jurisdiction by giving work to management and non-union workers.

Austin, a former coast committeeman, said that Stout was president at a time when Local 10 was fighting a lot of battles: over large debts, the future of its dispatch hall on a prime piece of real estate and mechanization on the waterfront.

Stout is survived by Ann, his widow of 54 years, a son and two daughters. ☞

### George Watt

I felt a little sad at my approaching death," wrote George Watt about plummeting toward earth in a stricken B-17 on his thirtieth birthday in 1943, "but two words kept running through my mind - no regrets, no regrets. I believe I must have spoken them aloud. No regrets because I had lived my life the way I wanted it. I knew what comradeship among men and women meant. I knew what it was to love and be loved. I had had my share of personal hardship and deep personal tragedy, but above all I had that special kind of happiness which comes to one who can say he has lived his life with a purpose."

George Watt, dead at 80 on

*Continued on page 16*

## Added to Memory's Roster

Continued from page 15

July 7, has left behind a legacy of purpose, but also, deep regrets among the veterans who survive him. As a leader of the American student protest movement of the 1930s (The National Student League, the American Student Union) before he went to Spain in 1937, George attained positions of responsibility in left-wing circles while in his early twenties. But it was his spirit of quiet dignity and sincere modesty that characterized his political bearing. Indeed he was "too embarrassed," George once admitted, to show anyone the credentials that he had received in New York, that might have given him a privileged position in Spain. Instead, he rose through the ranks to become battalion commissar during the final battles of the war. A famous photograph by Robert Capa captures George marching at the head of the Lincoln Brigade (with Major Milton Wolff and Don Thayer) at the farewell ceremonies in Barcelona in 1938.

After the Spanish war, George worked as an organizer of the industrial division of the Communist Party, then enlisted in the

Army Air Corps during World War II. His exploits as a waist-gunner are the subject of his remarkable book, *The Comet Connection: Escape from Hitler's Europe* [(University of Kentucky Press, 1990; Warner Books, 1992), which describes his courageous escape from enemy-occupied territory after his plane was shot down over Belgium. Typically, George used the book to honor the heroic Belgian people who gave him shelter and sped him on a safe route to neutral Spain. As a result, George was one of the few Lincolns who had to climb the Pyrenees twice!

With the ending of World War II, he returned to political work, but resigned from the Communist Party in the 1950s. He later admitted that "breaking with the party was the most traumatic episode of my life." Yet he continued to grow. He resumed his education, earned a degree in social work, and became a highly respected administrator of the community health center at Maimonedes Hospital in New York. George's tireless efforts and love of people of all cultures and races won the admiration of his

colleagues and friends.

George's commitment to anti-fascism and social justice was intense and passionate, but always on a human scale. He believed fervently in honest discussions, and he was widely respected for the honesty of the positions he took. And he continued to study the lessons of the Spanish war and its implications for political change. In a controversial speech presented at the Smithsonian Institution during the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Spanish Civil War, George reminded the veterans of their obligations to historical truth and warned of "the pitfalls of blind, unquestioning faith in any movement, no matter how worthy the objectives."

In recent years, George served on the executive committee of ALBA, skillfully mediating the nitty-gritty discussions. He remained a powerful voice of reason and responsibility. And while George Watt could boast deservedly of a life with "no regrets," he had left behind an unhealing wound in the heart of our veterans' organization. ☞

## News From Abroad

### Australia

I have been away from home and I have just read of the death of Steve Nelson and Charlie Nusser, both men I somehow believed would live forever. And they will, too, like Joe Hill, in the memories of their friends and those who believe and work for a better life on this earth.

I met Charlie first in the Broadway offices, in April 1985, when I was researching my book on the Australians and the Spanish

Civil War; loved his charm and appreciated his helpfulness. We corresponded after that and met again in Spain during the homage to the Brigadiers in 1986.

When our committee was formed in 1992 to raise money for a memorial to the Australians who went to the aid of the Spanish Republic, I wrote to the New York office, and soon after, a donation arrived with a cheery note from Charlie.

Our work is over, as you report-

ed in the Spring issue of *The Volunteer*, and I enclose these few dollars left in our bank account for your Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives appeal, in memory of Charlie Nusser. ☞

Salud, **Amirah Inglis**

**More News From Abroad  
on pages 20-22**



## Rebels Without a Pause



### In quest of Edythe

A wistful letter from Vet Ed Lending prompted a search for post-Spain information about Mae Edythe Dyer, a Philadelphia nurse who served in the American Base Hospital at Villa Paz, from the summer of '37 until the war's end. It was there that she took special care of Ed's arm wound suffered at Brunete. Six decades later, he was avid to learn more of the woman whose daily attention assured his present capability for geriatric tennis.

Although a current search for Edythe fell short of its post-Spain goal, it unearthed two documents she wrote during her service at Castillejo. One is a rambling letter from Edythe to a Philadelphia friend, Naomi Wohlgemuth Davis, mother of VALB associate, Julie Davis Carran. It focuses on incidents and conditions of life at Villa Paz, including her attendance at a Conference of Antifascist Women in "V---" [Valencia, Ed.] on November 7, 1937, to which she was sent as a delegate. She expresses her happiness at being slated for duty at the front.

The second Dyer archive was unearthed by historian/author Frances Patai. It is an article that Edythe wrote for the news bulletin of AMI, the organization for overseas medical aid to Spain. It reads as follows:

#### Nurses draw lots for the Front!

The work of the nurses in the American Base Hospital is quite different from the type of work carried on in the front line hospitals.

Our hospitals, having been established here since April 1937, are today running smoothly with no greater handicaps than those caused by the season, location and the times. We take great pride in our hospital, built up through sheer hard labor and ingenuity.

Problems exist everywhere. Out here our main trials and tribulations increase with the advent of winter. The wards are poorly heated. The sole sources of heat are small coal stoves that radiate very little warmth and, due to the scarcity of fuel, operate on a "one day on, one day off" schedule. It is not an uncommon sight to see nurses doing their daily tasks attired in ski pants, sheepskin coats and long woolen gloves.

New Year's Day, the hospital was presented with 15,300 pesetas by the patients and personnel. This sum is to be used for the installation of a lighting system whereby we can be assured of electricity at all times. Our X-ray department is working under great difficulties due to lack of current. It is impossible for the patients to read after 4 p.m. It is doubly hard for the nurses to continue with their tasks, to read thermometers and give

treatments, with nothing more than candlelight.

We have currently reorganized our system of work and are now using the rotating system whereby each nurse is given a certain definite period on each service, including the front service. We have a unit, attached to a brigade, which moves at a moment's notice.

Envied indeed are the nurses who are part of the front group. Isolated as we are here, one hears but one complaint and that is, "When are we going to the front?"...

The nurses have been good soldiers, fighting for their ideals just as surely as if they were fighting at the front. We give all we can, and get in return a deeper understanding of human beings, something we shall keep for the rest of our lives. We have lived through a time of suffering here in Spain and shall not forget it. ☺

*AMI: Periòdico de la Ayuda Médica Extranjera, No. 9, Barcelona Feb. 1, 1938.*

### Timeless in Seattle

*This is excerpted from an article that appeared in University Week, published by the Office of University Services, University of Washington, May 5, 1994.*

It was 1937. Young idealists left their Pacific Northwest homes and colleges to do battle in Spain alongside fellow international volunteers. Ernest Hemingway was their war correspondent, and his book, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, their story. [Not quite so, see p. 5 — Editor] About 250 still survive, many of them now mostly in their 80s.

The story of the Lincoln Brigade is also a story of Seattle. The local contingent is small these days — nine men — but it is still one of the nation's most active brigade groups. Over the years these men, along with now-deceased colleagues, have

been active in local and international issues, including civil rights and trade union organization. They lived stories as compelling as the one Hemingway wrote. And now their stories are finally available in their own words through letters, diaries and memorabilia recently donated to the UW Libraries' manuscripts.

The neatly bound and carefully organized notebooks and folders — called the Pacific Northwest Collective Biography — were prepared and donated by Seattle resident and Lincoln Brigade veteran Robert Reed. Since his 1969 retirement he has devoted much of his energy to the veterans of the Lincoln brigade, and has compiled a four-part collection that tells the story of the Pacific Northwest veterans.

UW History Professor Joan

*Continued on page 18*

## Timeless in Seattle

Continued from page 17

Ullman describes the fruit of Reed's labors as "one of the best Lincoln brigade collections in the United States." It will serve researchers well, she says. A sampling of the collection is now on display at the entrance to Manuscripts and Archives in the Allen library, and the entire collection is accessible at the manuscripts desk.

Ullman, who specializes in modern Spanish history, and Karyl Winn, curator of manuscripts, gave Reed guidelines for organizing the material. The biographical dictionary he created contains one entry for 100 individuals from the Pacific Northwest who served in the brigade (29 died fighting in Spain). Additional material on 50 of the vets is contained in file folders. A booklet, "News from the Thirties," contains typed excerpts from newspaper accounts written by or about Pacific Northwest volunteers. And a source book contains general miscellaneous material about the volunteer group.

The file folders are intriguing:

- Thane Summers, a former UW student and son of a prominent and conservative Seattle maritime attorney, was killed in Spain. His father blamed the university and particular professors, including Giovanni Costigan, for corrupting his son. The father's resentments and political influence were considered to have helped establish the Canwell Committee in 1948, in which several university professors were accused of Communist Party affiliations. Time magazine of July 25, 1938, carried a story on Thane's death.

- Evelyn Hutchins, born in Snohomish to a suffragette mother, was a children's photographer before going to Spain as an ambulance driver. Her role in the war was celebrated in the film, *The Good Fight*, and in a Harpers Weekly article, *Evelyn the Truck Driver*. Shortly before her death in 1982 she recalled Spain as "a chance to fight American chauvinism."

- Clifford Jonathan Haley, Jr., a member of the prominent candy

manufacturing family in Tacoma, went to Spain for nearly a year at the age of 32. The U.S. State Department files in the National Archives contain 38 pages related to him, much of it correspondence from his parents in efforts to bring him home. His 1991 obituary noted that he had been frequently blackballed from engineering jobs connected with the U.S. government because of his socialist ideals, his stint in Spain and his support for the ACLU.

For Haley and many others, the Lincoln brigade was just the beginning of a lifelong struggle against social injustice. Many were Black. Some were trade union organizers, civil rights activists and people willing to suffer for their convictions. Being blackballed as communist sympathizers or troublemakers was a common experience. Even today the Seattle chapter of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade opposes U.S. involvement in Central America, especially El Salvador and Nicaragua, and other causes.

Reed made a career of his commitment to a better world. He received a master's degree in social work from the UW and for many years was director of Holly Park branch of the Neighborhood House, a Seattle social service agency.

Reed describes the war as "the biggest event of my life." His service record, on display in the manuscripts exhibit, shows that he fought in every major battle until Sept. 25, 1938, when the Republican government withdrew the International Brigades from the front.

W.H. Auden, the English poet, spent time in Spain and tried to capture the spirit of the International Brigades in his controversial poem, *Spain 1937*:

*What's your proposal? To build just the city? I will.*

*I agree. Or is it the suicide pact, the romantic*

*Death? Very well, I accept for I am your choice, your decision.*

*Yes I am Spain.*

And Reed captures the spirit of the Brigade's Pacific Northwest contingent in his collection. ☺

**Nedra Floyd Pautler**

### Wayne State update

Dear Editor:

I thought your readers might like an update on the activities of the Wayne State University Abraham Lincoln Brigade Scholarship Fund. The fund honors four WSU students who left the university to fight in Spain. Bob Nagle, the only one of the original four alive, is a founding member of our organization. Since 1982, we have sponsored a yearly event at which we hear a lecture or music or see a film related to the Spanish Civil War. In addition, we make our annual scholarship awards at the event.

Among those who have spoken have been Saul Wellman, Steve Nelson, Robin Kelley and Edward Malefakis. We have given scholarships to nineteen Wayne State students whose activities reflect the values of the brigaders. These have

included several editors of the student newspaper, a med student who set up a clinic and activists in the struggle for freedom in South Africa and Central America.

We met on May 6th this year to see the first Detroit showing of "Forever Activists," and to award the \$600 scholarships to Charles Smith for his work in cultural, Native American and environmental matters, and to Kathy Garrett for her leadership in the attempt to organize teaching assistants on campus.

Local vets who participate in these activities are, aside from Nagle, Les Rowson, Sid Linn, Les Kish, Bob Cummins and Marion Noble.

**Mel Smith**

History Dept.

Wayne State University

Detroit, MI 48202

# My Jewish comrades

*This is an extract of an article which appeared in Jewish Currents in March. It had been submitted for publication in June 1993, five months before Charles Nusser died last November.*

**By Charles Nusser**

**D**uring the rise (and victory) of fascism in Europe, I had often heard or read assertions that Jews did not resist: they went meekly to their fate, leaving the fight against fascism to others. Follow this line of thought to its logical conclusion and where do you arrive? If Jews did not resist, then everything that followed – right up to and including the Holocaust – was their own fault.

Such assertions always evoked a violent reaction on my part. An anti-Semitic lie, no matter how fashionably it is dressed up, remains just that – a lie, slander. I know this from bitter personal experience. In Spain I saw too many bodies. Bodies with names like Max Abramowitz, Hershkowitz – Hy, Joe and Sam (known as the three Stone brothers).

Hy was withdrawn from the Lincoln Battalion after the Brunete campaign. Joe and Sam were both killed in action. Other names are with me yet: Al Kaufman, Milton Rappaport, Irving Keith, Manny Mandel, Harry Levine.

**HARRY LEVINE:** I first met him in 1933 in a CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) camp in Pennsylvania. I was from Pittsburgh; Harry was from Philadelphia. We became fast friends. I played shortstop on the baseball team, Harry second base. We were both on the basketball team. He was a skillful boxer. Some winter mornings were very cold. The guys didn't want to go out to work. So we were involved in a few sit-down stoppages together.

Later on, I went home to Pittsburgh, Harry to Philadelphia, and we kind of lost track of each other.

In August 1937, the Lincoln Battalion was stationed in the little

town of Albares, about 25 kilometers from Madrid. We were at rest after the brutal Brunete offensive – reequipping and awaiting replacements for the dead and wounded.

One day we heard that some Americans would be coming in from the training camp to fill the depleted ranks. Some of us went down to the village plaza to greet them. About two o'clock that afternoon, several trucks pulled into the square. I walked over to one truck, and as one of the soldiers hit the ground I grabbed him.

"What the hell took you so long?" I demanded.

"I knew I'd find you here," he replied. Harry Levine and Charlie Nusser, graduates of President Roosevelt's CCC, were reunited again, this time in Spain to fight fascism together.

A few weeks later, on the first day of the Aragon offensive, outside the cemetery at Quinto, Harry Levine was shot while lying on the ground about ten feet from where I lay. He died a few days later. He never had a chance to fire a single shot against the enemy.

**OTHER NAMES** – Paul Block, Jack Freeman, Rubin Schecter, Sam Levinger. Sam was from Columbus, Ohio. His father was a rabbi, and Sam was a YPSL (Young People's Socialist League) and a member of the American Student Union. He was 19 when he was killed at Belchite.

Ben Barsky, Leo Gordon, Paul Wendorf. Paul and I went over together on the SS Paris. We became good friends on the boat, and shared a dugout on the Jarama front, until he transferred to the Tom Mooney machine gun company. We both went through Jarama and Brunete. I was wounded at Villanueva de la Cañada in the Brunete fighting, but Paul was unscathed. Instead he came down with jaundice at the end of the battle for Brunete. He was sent to a hospital where rest and better food

restored his health.

Paul was reassigned to the International Brigade base at Albacete where he was put on a commission charged with producing a book on the history of the 15th Brigade. Later, during the big Republican retreats on the Ebro front, Hitler poured in huge amounts of the most modern tanks and artillery, plus the Condor legion in the air.

On the Republic's side, the call went out for frontline volunteers. Paul responded. He rejoined the Battalion. On August 18, 1938, Paul Wendorf was killed in action of the Sierra de Pandols.

**T**wo of my closest friends, Harry Levine and Paul Wendorf, both Jews, died fighting fascism in Spain. After Spain, I married Paul's widow.

Jack Weiss, Paul Niepold, "Chick" Chaikin ... I could go on and on. Probably 20 percent or more of the Lincoln Battalion were Jews. Jews made up close to 50 percent of the American Medical Bureau headed by Dr. Edward Barsky. It is estimated that 22 to 25 percent of all International Brigaders were Jews. More Jews, proportionately, fought against fascism in Spain than any other minority. And it was in Spain that the first organized armed resistance took place.

Some years ago, when speaking on this subject, I was approached by a young man who asked, "Why do you get so aggravated, so stirred up, so vehement? After all, you are not a Jew." No, I am not a Jew. But Jews are not the only victims of anti-Semitism. They are, of course, the first. Before the war, Hitler used anti-Semitism to sow hatred, distrust and disunity throughout Germany. He used it to destroy democracy itself – the prerequisite to his program for a fascist, racist world.

History teaches the necessity of maintaining a complete and uncompromising intolerance of the poison of anti-Semitism – in the interest not only of Jews, but of all decent humanity. ☸

# News From Abroad

## A year-end greeting from the Russian IBers

Congratulations on the New Year, 1994. We wish you health and good fortune and success in your work for humankind.

We, old veterans of the Civil War in Spain of 1936-39, despite the complex conditions in which we find ourselves, even as then, are active in the struggle for peace.

We, like yourselves, well know what a misfortune it is for a people to be at war. Today there are many conflicts which nationalistic and chauvinistic groups try to settle in a warlike manner – in Yugoslavia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, etc.

We hope your life in the U.S. continues to be stable, in comparison to ours. As you must know, events in Russia are very unpredictable, and this negatively affects the lives and activity of the veterans of the Spanish Civil War.

Last year our television channel, Russia, presented the first of a series of programs, titled: *The Unknown Wars*. The first film, *Operation X*, concerned the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. It dealt with the Soviet volunteers (pilots, tankists, etc.) and also showed archival footage of the International Brigades. We have the actual cassette of these films and it would be good to view it together with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Veterans. We want to be with you and show it but, unfortunately the high cost of the Moscow-New York ticket prevents that. Our small pensions constitute the obstacle.

We hope that, during this difficult time for our country, we shall have the enduring friendship of all veterans.

To receive your letters is a real support for us. They help us believe in the future.

With respect,

Soviet War Veterans,  
Spanish Section  
**Victor Lavsky,**  
Air Force Lt. General  
**Secretary V. Aleksandrovsky**



## A letter from Percy

*Excerpts of a lengthy letter from Soviet veteran Percy Ludwick, Chief Engineer of the 15th Brigade.*

Moscow, July 1, 1994

Dear Len and Goldie,

Political tensions here have subsided somewhat. Prices for foodstuffs, gas, electricity, telephones, rents and what not have risen astronomically for three years and they continue to do so. Salaries and pensions, however, are indexed periodically. Thus, living standards for most people are tolerable.

Privatization is slowly but remorselessly gaining ground. The large enterprises have just begun to be privatized. Some one million Muscovites, having paid a small fee, now own their own flats. They can now sell, lease or bequeath their flats at will. We personally have not privatized our flat, but we have

become proprietors of two rooms in a cottage in Malakhova, a country place some thirty kilometers from Moscow. Previously, the cottage had belonged to a cooperative. We pay rent for two rooms and have a nice plot of land with fruit and other trees, different bushes and flower beds. The woods are not far off.

Thus, Sasha [Percy's wife—Ed] and I have a nice place to live in the country. But there is plenty of bad with the good. Moscow stinks of commercialism. The city is plastered all over with advertisements of foreign wines, cigarettes and night clubs. Thousands of small shops have appeared that do a roaring trade in wines, tinned food stuffs, chewing gum. Tens of thousands of vendors ply their petty goods in the streets.

However, the queues in the shops for basic food have disappeared and they are well-stocked, mainly with foreign foodstuffs – and the prices are biting. Such goods as cotton stockings, light bulbs, electrical appliances and toothbrushes are not available.

Industrial production continues to fall (25 percent below 1993, in the first three months of 1994). In the Soviet times it was based on the wide decentralization of component parts. Now, with the establishment of independent states, all the industrial establishments belong to the country where they are sited. Ties between the factories have been severed.

All the factories have huge mutual debts. It is costly to produce tractors and machine tools independently and few buyers can afford the high prices for machines. Our pundits predict that this year will see many factories going bankrupt, with a corresponding rise in unemployment and social unrest.

Our veterans' work in the schools has suffered. In today's climate it is difficult here to propagate the idealism of the International Brigades. Talented youngsters are dropping out of their studies of sci-

## England

Last year, Stoke-on-Trent's City Council agreed to run a series of annual lectures in memory of the five volunteers from the city who joined the the British Battalion, linking their antifascist struggle with the need to combat the rise of fascism today.

The inaugural lecture was delivered last February by Roger Bickerstaffe, associate general secretary of Britain's largest union, the public employees' union. His subject was "Learning the Lesson, No Fascist Revival."

We had excellent media publicity for the event which was timed to be part of our annual Jarama commemoration. Sponsored by the City Council, it was a civic occasion. Its success guaranteed another lecture next year for which Tony Benn, MP, is already booked as lecturer.

Recently, the Nottinghamshire County Council unveiled a striking memorial to its IBers (the 54th civic memorial in Britain). Among those doing the honors was the Spanish ambassador, who made a very good, pro-IB speech. ☺

Salud, **Dave Goodman**

## Bulgaria

My wife and I just came back from Europe where we conducted interviews with Dr. Kanetti and Atanaska Radulova in Sofia and Dr. Becker in northern Germany. In Berlin, we had a pleasant three-day stay in Karl Kormes' home.

Of the 20 doctors who went to China after serving in Spain, Drs. Becker and Kanetti are the only ones alive. Thanks to an arrangement made by Mrs. Kanetti (Chang Sun Fen), we met Ms. Radulova in Sophia. She had been a nurse in Spain and has been very active in the Bulgarian veterans' organization.

There are currently about twenty Spanish war veterans living in Bulgaria. However, the antifascist

*Continued on page 22*

Sasha and Percy Ludwick in 1941, at the time they volunteered to defend Moscow.

ences and the humanities "to go into business." They want to get rich – and quickly, too.

If the public image of the "Spanish" veterans in Russia has been somewhat impaired, that of the few living veterans in the former Soviet republics — Latvia, for example — is catastrophic.

I have a recent letter from Yevgenia Schvarz, the daughter of Captain Egon Schmidt (Mikhail Schvarz), commander of the "Zapadores" company of our 15th Brigade, who was killed in the Ebro offensive. She was born in Latvia, is a chemist, married to a doctor and mother of two children. Here is what she writes:

"You write that your International Brigade work is slowing down because of natural reasons, but with us, it is ceasing because of political reasons. All father's documents have been thrown out of the Museum of the Revolution ... Now it has become a military museum in which hangs the portrait of the war criminal Tzunurs who was notorious for the annihilation of the Jews in Latvia in 1941-1944. ... The SS legionnaires are honored."

Some one hundred Letts from small Latvia, including eleven doctors and nurses, fought in Spain. Fourteen died at the front. Sixteen Letts served in the Dimitrov Battalion of the 15th Brigade.

Doctor Peisakh Bernshtam, a Latvian Jew, served with our 15th Brigade at Fuentes de Ebro, Teruel, the Aragon and the Ebro operation.

After Spain, the Letts were not allowed to return home. They spent two years in concentration camps. When the Soviet government was restored in Latvia in 1940, they returned home. During the Great Patriotic War all the "Spanish" Letts took up arms, serving as army officers. Twenty-four of them were killed.

During the Spanish war and the French concentration camp internment time, the Lett volunteers were helped materially and morally by Lett progressives in the United States and by their newspaper, Stradnieku Cina. Now only a handful are alive and they are in need of this support as never before. Perhaps you could raise this problem among your supporters. Here are two people who may be contacted in Latvia:

Kazakuva Lija,  
Avotuiela 9, dzi  
Riga, LV-1011, Latvja

Janis Palkaniens  
Kr. Barone Iela 122, dz3  
Riga, LV-10, Latvja

Kazakuva was an interpreter in Spain. ☺

Salud, **Percy**

## Czechoslovakia

You can hardly imagine my joy when I opened your mail with the Spring *Volunteer*. As I read through it my thoughts went back to when I was in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

My journey to Spain from the former Czechoslovak Republic was complicated. The "state" did not want to give me the appropriate travel documents for Spain. I had to use the subterfuge of a visit to the Paris World's Fair of 1937.

I hid the Paris address of the recruiting center in my shoe and was welcomed there by a young lady from Slovakia who was registering the Czech volunteers.

I reached Albacete after the "traditional" arduous Pyrenees route. As I had studied in the officers school in Czechoslovakia, I was assigned to the headquarters of General Vladimir Copic.

I was wounded at Belchite. At Benacasim, after my recovery, I served as "leader" of cultural activi-

ty. When the fascists reoccupied Teruel, I returned to the front, rejoining the Czech volunteers in the Dimitrov Battalion.

Interned in France when the war ended, we could not return to Czechoslovakia because it was under German occupation. We were disarmed by the French police and sent to concentration camps.

Along with other antifascists, in March 1941, I was deported to Camp Djelfa in Algiers, I was kept there until May 1943 when the camp was needed for Italian and German prisoners of war. I managed to board a Dutch boat bound for England. There I joined a Czechoslovak brigade which successfully fought the German army around Dunkirk. I returned to Czechoslovakia after the German capitulation on May 19, 1945.

Let me wish health and joy to my overseas friends and the veterans of the 15th Brigade — a big greeting, too, to my friend Sam Walters. ☺

**Jiri Horsky**  
(known in Spain as Jura)

## Germany

A letter from Karl Kormes in Berlin reports that the separate German IB organizations formerly maintained in the Federal Republic and the GDR have been amalgamated to correspond with the conditions resulting from the reunification. The merged organization has taken the name Association of Former German Fighters for the Spanish Republic, and Their Relatives and Friends (GVA).

There are 90 to 100 surviving veterans in Germany — 66 in the former GDR and about 30 to 40 in the West. The agreement uniting them was signed by Karl Kormes for the East and Ernst Buschmann for the West. In it the comrades pledge to continue working for the ideals that brought them to Spain, for which they participated in World War II and for which they worked in both German states for democracy, humanism and world peace.

Following reunification — in reality the takeover of the GDR — the government moved to cancel the pensions that antifascist veterans in the GDR had been awarded. There was resistance to this, led particularly by the Jewish community and supported from abroad. It was partially successful, winning retention of the pensions, although reduced.

More seriously, criminal charges, reminiscent of the McCarthy period attacks on the VALB, are being taken against those who held high government positions in the East. Particular targets are members of the Political Bureau of the Socialist Unity Party, of the State Council and government of the GDR, along with high ranking officers of the army, police and security service.

Under particular threat are IB veterans Kurt Hager, Alfred Neumann and Erich Mileke, who were members of the Political Bureau of the old Socialist Unity Party. With the exception of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), all other parties, including the social democrats, support the repressive measures. ☺

## Bulgaria

*Continued from page 21*

fighters are not recognized by the present government in Bulgaria. As a result, the veterans' office has been closed and their pensions taken away. This deprivation is compounded by the high inflation rate due to

"market economy." Nevertheless, their spirits are still high.

Since the veterans' office in Sofia is closed, future correspondence should be sent to: Dr. Constatin Mitcheff, 26 Shainova, Sofia, Bulgaria; or Ms. Atanaska Penkova Radulova, Mladost-2, Bl. 227, en 4; Sofia 1799, Bulgaria. ☺

**Len Y. Tsou**, New York

*The following appeared in the Ottawa Sun, Feb. 15, 1993.*

### **France honors SCW veterans**

Unlike Canada, France is to officially recognize the French volunteers who fought on the left-wing Republican side in the Spanish Civil War more than fifty years ago.

In 1989, the Canadian government decided against granting veterans' benefits to the 100 or so remaining Canadian survivors of that war. But in France, Veterans Affairs Minister Louis Mexandeu has promised to grant official war veteran status to the 150 or so survivors from the 9,000 Frenchmen who fought on the republican side.

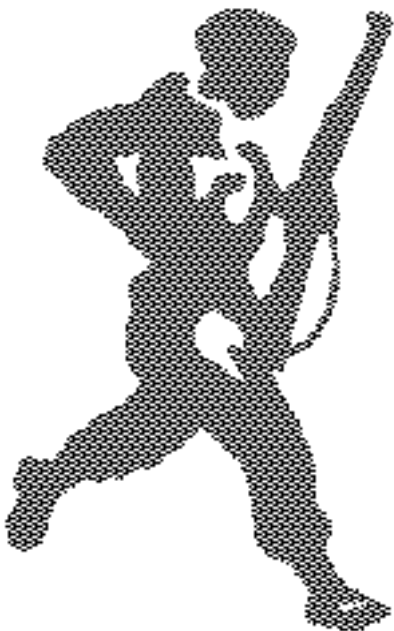
"It's a symbolic gesture to mark France's gratitude to those who before the Second World War recognized the danger threatening Europe and offered their lives to fight against fascism," said Socialist parliamentarian Jean Oriveux, who initiated the tribute.



# Contributors



Betty Albert, \$25 ☞ Al Amery, \$10 ☞ Joe Azar, \$50 ☞ Ed Bender, \$25, in memory of Steve Nelson ☞ Jules Bloom, \$10, in memory of Irv Goff ☞ Sylvia Brown, \$50, in memory of Sid Kaufman ☞ Eugene and Lillian Chodorow, \$50 ☞ Abraham Copeland, \$50, in memory of Hy Rosner ☞ Lou Czitron, 50, in memory of Joe and Leo Gordon, and Ben Barsky ☞ Polly Dubetz, \$100, in memory of my father Charlie Nusser ☞ Dave Engelson, \$1,000, in honor of Steve Nelson and Charles Nusser ☞ Mona Finkelstein, \$50, in memory of Dick and Jean Fein ☞ Becky Gallagher and Ken Kurson, \$10, in memory of Freda Weissman ☞ Carl Geiser, \$20 ☞ Martha Gelhorn, \$50 ☞ Robin Gibbon, \$10, in memory of Steve ☞ Miriam Gittelsohn, \$100, in memory of Lester Gittelsohn ☞ Paul Gittelsohn, \$50, in memory of Lester Gittelsohn ☞ Margaret and Teresa Gloster, \$30 ☞ Paula Gomez de Kranes, \$45, in memory of Louis Kranes ☞ Dr. Rosalyn Guaraldo, \$50, in memory of my father, a VALBer and Garabaldini ☞ Earl Harju, \$50 ☞ George Harrison, \$50, in memory of Steve, Charlie, Jimmy ☞ John Hovan, \$20, in memory of Walter Strauss ☞ Robert and Elizabeth Jackson, \$50, for Steve Nelson ☞ Harriet W. Kahn, \$25, ☞ Charles Kaufman, \$20 ☞ Sidney Kaufman, \$50, in memory of Duncan Keir ☞ Abraham Keller, \$25 ☞ Ruth Kish, \$20, in memory of Charlie Nusser ☞ Hazel Klein, \$125, in memory of Sy Klein and Joe Cobert ☞ Goldie Kleiner, \$10 ☞ Vivienne C. Kloffenstein and Norma Lee Mazzotta, \$50, in memory of Charlie Nusser ☞ Joshua and Victoria Lawrence, \$25, in memory of George Watt ☞ Herman Lopez, \$15, in memory of John Toutloff ☞ Augustin Lucas, \$25 ☞ Ray Marantz in memory of Gus Heisler ☞ Sylvia Marro, \$25, in memory of Joe Gordon ☞ Howard N. Meyer and Gertrude King, \$50 ☞ Annie and Sam Moy, \$25, in memory of George Chaikin ☞ Robert Nagle, \$25 ☞ Tom Norton, \$20 ☞ Paul Nossiter, \$50, in memory of Steve Nelson Ruth Ost, \$100, in memory of Steve Nelson ☞ Samuel Reed, \$25, in memory of Ben Gardner and Steve Nelson ☞ Eleanor Rody, \$100, in memory of John Rody ☞ Reva Rubinstein, \$60 ☞ Saul Shapiro, \$100, in memory of my dear wife Mirta ☞ Dorothy Siegel, \$50, in memory of Maury Colow ☞ Ruth Simon, in loving memory of Hy Rosner ☞ Jeanette Smith, \$50, in memory of Harold Smith ☞ George Sossencko, \$30 ☞ Dorothy Sterling, \$25, in memory of Steve Nelson ☞ Loretta Szeliga \$10, in memory of Sid Kaufman ☞ Al Tanz, \$100, in memory of our dead ☞ Corine Hoskins Thornton, \$20, in memory of Hy Rosner ☞ VALB Bay Area Post, \$1,000 ☞ Veterans for Peace, \$25, in memory of Duncan Keir ☞ Commandante Antonio Vilella Vallés, \$50 ☞ Ronald Viner, \$10 ☞ Joe Vogel, \$20 ☞ Shirley Weiner, in memory of Anne Wolff, \$50 ☞ Shirley Weiner, \$50 ☞ Steve Weiner, in memory of Milton Weiner, \$15 ☞ Bill Wheeler, \$20 ☞ Paul Whelan, \$25 ☞



## An appeal

Yes! I believe that a contribution to the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade has a unique quality. It brings The Volunteer to its readers, free of charge, helps meet the expenses of the office where the persisting Veteran staff carries on; and assures VALB support for causes consistent with its 60-year tradition.

Here's my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Mail to: Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, 799 Broadway, Rm. 227, New York, NY 10003*

# A drama inspired by the Irish Brigaders

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By Francine Cunningham

When the playwright Jim Nolan left his job as a linesman at Telecom Eireann 10 years ago to establish the Red Kettle theatre company in Waterford, he did not expect his former workplace to provide inspiration for one of his plays. Nolan had been fascinated by the story of the 105 Irishmen, 10 of whom were from Waterford, who volunteered for the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War.

"I'm particularly interested in the form of idealism which made these men go to Spain, although I know 'idealism' is a word that the survivors resist," said Nolan, on a visit to Dublin. "Then I began to look at the business controversies at Telecom and at the morality which forms the basis of our political/economic culture. I started to look at that culture through the eyes of a survivor like Peter O'Connor from Waterford, who went some 57 years ago to fight in Spain.

"Part of the reason these men went to fight in the Spanish Civil War was because the struggle for a particular form of social justice in Spain linked into the type of politics they were trying to create in this country.

"In Europe, at a time when many countries did have fascist gov-

ernments, the Republican government in Spain looked like a beacon. The men who fought in the International Brigade had a clearly thought-out vision of the sort of country Ireland might become, emerging from a nation which was narrow, very sectarian and divisive.

"So when I looked at the social culture that prevails in this country, I wanted to make a connection between their hopes for Spain and Ireland."

Nolan's resulting play, *Guernica Hotel*, is set in a small, modern-day Irish town where a veteran of the Spanish Civil War, Francis Shannon, runs a hotel. The local people disparagingly refer to it as the "Guernica Hotel."

While researching the subject of his play, Nolan spoke to survivors such as Peter O'Connor, Bob Doyle and Michael O'Riordan of the Irish Communist Party. "What these men did was virtually written out of history," said Nolan.

"There seems to me to have been a gross and deliberate distortion of information sent back from Spain, with propaganda stories about the murder of priests and rape of nuns by the Communists, spearheaded by the Catholic Church and sections of the Irish media.

"Nothing could be closer to their hearts than to see a socialist government defeated in a Catholic country. So the men who fought were pilloried when they came back.

"There is a harrowing story about one volunteer from Waterford called Frank Edwards, who has since died. Because of his involvement with a group called the Republican Congress, he was sacked from his position as a teacher at Mount Sion school in Waterford. When he came back from the Spanish Civil War he could not find work, until he eventually got a job in the Jewish school in Rathgar.

"What the volunteers struggled for is still worth struggling for. I make the distinction here between the formal Communist Party politics and the principles or ideals at the heart of the system. There is a certain moral stature which screamed for social justice, and it doesn't go away when East Germany collapses. There is a danger of throwing out the baby with the bath water."

Given that Irish men also went to fight alongside Franco on the nationalist side, it is notable that *Guernica Hotel* does not deal with their story. Why did Jim Nolan choose to exclude those who fought with Franco?

"The lives of the volunteers were imbued with what they believed. It was not just a case of the right speech in the right place, it was not designed for getting elected. The play is very much a personal story, about trying to bridge the public and private world of an individual." ☞

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## The Volunteer

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