

Spain welcomes the Brigadistas

The best the 20th Century offered

By Vicente Navarro

As a Catalan and the son of parents who fought on the Republican side against fascism, I grew up with an enormous admiration for the members of the International Brigades. I will always remember the day when my parents made us — all their children — sit around the dining table and promise with all solemnity that whenever and wherever we found members of the brigades we should offer them our home as if it were their own. My parents spoke on behalf of those who fought and lost that anti-fascist war. The promise was made during the nightmare of the fifties, when fascist repression in Spain was at its height, with fascists killing and assassinating more people than they did dur-

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Again the cities and the hills

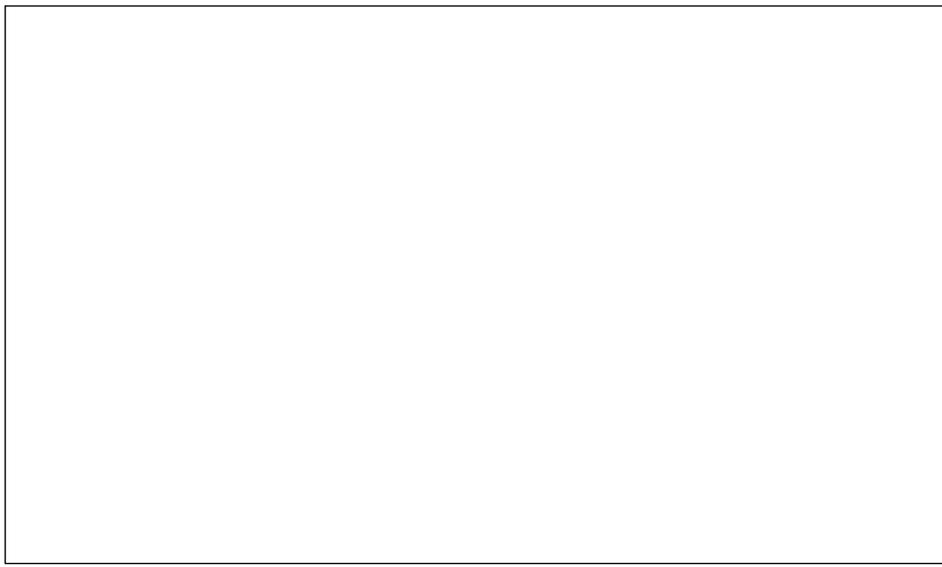
By Milton Wolff

My Delta flight to Madrid was on schedule. Tom Entwistle¹ met me at the Madrid airport. That evening I was lecturing at the College for International Studies, one of two schools that had paid my way over. Before meeting with the students, all Americans, I met with the Directora, Mercedes Vaquero, and several staff members in her office.

The building housing the school is one of those edifices representational of the old Spanish architecture — imposingly massive and impressively baroque, typical of the old grey stone-faced buildings of Madrid's main plazas that I remembered so well from my first leave after Brunete in 1937.

The Director's office furnishings carried out the theme of the exterior: highly polished, elaborately carved dark brown wood desks, chairs and cabinets, grandly scaled to the high-ceilinged large *sala*, the bravura of *España*. I experienced a sense of place, of being truly back in Spain, a feeling reinforced when I responded, "Brandy" to Sra. Vaquero's asking what I would like to drink. There being none at hand, she forthwith dispatched an *enlace* to fetch a bottle — my protests not withstanding.

There were twenty kids, *mas o menos*, and some professors at the lecture, rather more of a conversation than a lecture in that the students were encouraged to interrupt



Editorial

The Homenaje and an old gesture

A recurring memory throughout our wondrous experience of the *Homenaje* recalled an encounter of nearly 60 years ago. Retelling it may best explain the depth of our gratitude to the *Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales* and the profound feeling of the tens of thousands of Spaniards who cheered us along the way.

In November 1939, during our last days in Spain, I left the American base at Ripoll by train for a weekend in Barcelona. The sortie was approved as a small compensation for my having missed Pasionaria's *despedida* and the IB's last parade a few weeks earlier.

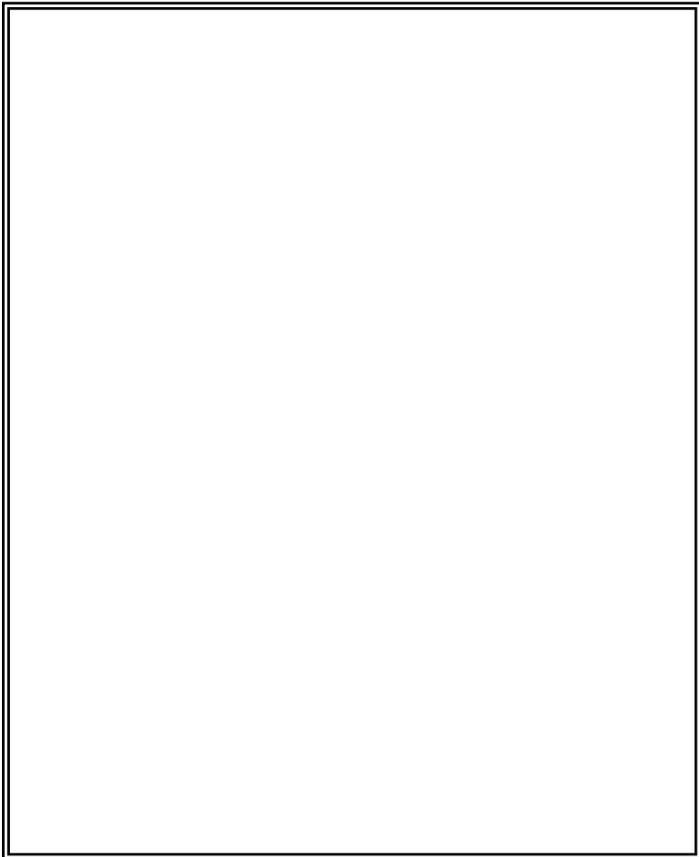
The rail journey of some 15 kilometers was slowed by frequent stops. Most passengers who boarded the war-worn train at every station were women. The packages they carried showed that they had been desperately foraging in the countryside.

Shortly after I entrained, an elderly madre seated herself, facing me in the compartment. She carried a string bag that held two live pigeons. Our conversation was curtailed by my ignorance of Catalan. It limited me to little more than a disclosure of name, country of origin and marital status. However, I did attract attention by a persistent cough, the residue of a bout with flu.

When we arrived at the Barcelona station, I helped her down from the train. Then, reaching into her bag, she pulled out a pigeon. Thrusting it into my hands, she commanded, "Comrade, make a soup of this — it will cure your cough."

Although this anecdote has been interminably retold (my family will verify this), the *Homenaje* made a change in how I understood the incident. The unforgettable gesture of "gracias" was not prompted by an indefinable "love." Its essence was broader and deeper. The appropriate word is respect — respect among all and for all who unite in what La Pasionaria would accurately and eloquently proclaim: "The cause of all humankind." ■

— Len Levenson



The Certificate above reads: "In conformity with the Royal Decree 39/1996 of January 19, [1996] issued as a result of the unanimous agreement of the Spanish Parliament dated November 10, 1995, once the legal requirements have been fulfilled, you will receive Spanish citizenship which will take effect following its recording in the appropriate Civil Registry." Every Brigadista received one of these.

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Please send manuscripts typewritten and double-spaced, if possible. If you wish your manuscripts returned, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The next issue of *The Volunteer* will carry an extensive selection of photographs of the Homenaje.

Now We Are Spanish

By James Benet

In sorting out the scenes and happenings of the wonderful 60th Anniversary trip, two elements stand out: one, the huge crowds that greeted us, and the other, the emotional meetings with vets and their relatives, some old friends unseen for more than half a century and others totally new and unexpected.

At the gathering in the Jarama valley to dedicate the fine bronze star monument, I found myself walking with a Chinese man, looking a little younger than I am. Was he a vet, I asked? No, but he was here with his Bulgarian brother-in-law, a volunteer who had avoided going back home to prison by emigrating to China where he found a Chinese wife. My new friend was a professor in Beijing. Well, there would be a lot to talk about, but then the hurried programs and the buses and trains kept us apart and I never even got his address.

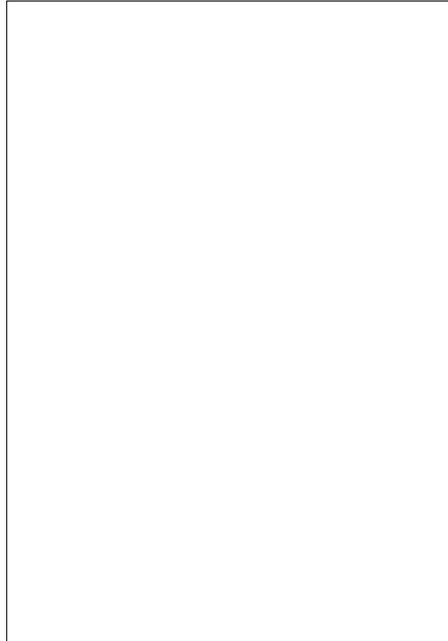
At the Fuencarral cemetery I encountered the son of Ollie Lindfors, a Minnesota Finn who was a close friend in Spain. Ollie's gone now, but we must talk later. And I never managed to join up with him again.

As for the crowds, we won't forget the tremendous concert and meeting in Madrid's downtown sports arena with the roars of "No Pasaran!" and the cheers for the vets and their families. In the Barcelona railway station I found myself walking with my wife, towing our suitcases, between the roped-back crowds cheering us and clapping. At the end of our walk the cheering was overwhelmed by a brass band playing the old wartime songs. When we went to the Catalan parliament the next day huge flag-waving crowds lined the long driveway and some of them had climbed into the trees, just as American kids would do, waving

and shouting.

My side trip was to Albacete and the first crowd there was at the railway station on a sunny afternoon with a brass band, flags and a speech by the mayor.

Next day we went to the new university — Albacete has been transformed into a small, modern city — to be greeted warmly at an auditorium meeting, by university



and government officials. Albacete is what used to be called the "county seat" of the province of Castilla-La Mancha. Then, in the heart of the campus, came the unveiling of a monument to the volunteers. Spain is still Spain, some of us said, because men were busy with the last little work on the monument even as the university rector got up onto the plinth to announce its dedication and pull off the red cloth covering.

The town museum showed us a big exhibit of memorabilia of the IB, with letters, photos, documents and even a model of the Russian fighter planes, the "Mosca," that came to fight with us — although, sadly, too few of them. There was also an art exhibition by local painters, and we received hand-

somely printed catalogues of both.

Then we went to a busy first-class restaurant for lunch and another gift: bone-handled clasp knives in wooden cases, Albacete being famous in Spain for its manufacture of fine knives. "Albacete a los Voluntarios de la Libertad, 1933-1996," says the little plaque in the case.

Perhaps best of all we learned that the arrangements were principally organized by the history department of the university, and that the young people helping with the baggage, wheelchairs and other hindrances were mostly university students. So it is not only old-timers in Albacete who remember us, but the newest generation, too, has made friends with us.

And in friendship they would go to any trouble. Since I am a reporter I had an article that needed typing on a computer in order to be faxed to San Francisco. One of the students found his mother in the crowd. She called her husband and we went to his office. Nice modern equipment — but I suddenly realized that I had no idea what word processor a Spanish government engineer might use. "WordPerfect," he said. Our small but luxurious hotel had, of course, a fax and a very efficient desk clerk. So with my new friends' help I was able to get my piece off on time.

Now the memories will be mixed. Up for us, those of the great crusade — as Gustave Regler called it — of sixty years ago and those of the great trip of 1996. Whatever the outcome of the parliamentary and legalistic complications about citizenship may be, we know for certain — as many of the speakers at the mass meetings told us so emphatically — that we are Spanish, now and in history. ■

James Benet, a journalist, is a Veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

The Homenaje and the Press

Compiled by Jack Karan

The excerpts below are from the untold number of items that appeared in the U.S. press about the Homenaje. Two dispatches, each written for major news services — The Associated Press and The New York Times — appeared in scores of publications.

The Associated Press: From an Arganda, Spain, dispatch by Leon Lazaroff, Nov. 8, 1996

They fought against Franco's fascist forces. They were about to be granted Spanish citizenship.

Yesterday on a grassy plain along the Jarama river south of Madrid, 370 former members of the International Brigades gathered to commemorate their arrival in Spain in the 1936-1939 war and pay homage to those killed in the war.

As the former volunteers crossed the Arganda bridge — sites of many bloody battles — Danes, Yugoslavs, Argentinians and Brits embraced. Some wept.

As in the war itself, the language barrier was largely overcome by enthusiasm. Most have white hair and some walk with canes, but the international veterans of the Spanish Civil War remain as feisty and idealistic as when they volunteered for battle 60 years ago.

In the mid-1930s, the great threat to Western democracies was the expansion of fascism. The international brigades were disbanded and allowed to leave Spain in the late 1930s, when Franco's forces, supported heavily by Germany and Italy, were on the verge of victory.

"That was a very sad and bitter moment," said Clarence Forester, 81, who left Minneapolis at age 22 to join the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. "But we know now that what we did was right."

The New York Times, Nov. 11, 1996: From a page one story, with picture, written by Marlise Simons, reporter for The Herald Tribune, the Times' overseas edition. She interviewed the veterans in the lobby of the Hotel Conveñion in Madrid.

Irving Gold came in a wheel chair. Others used canes or just walked slowly into Madrid's Sports Palace

Soon they were showered with Spain's best: the laments of flamenco, poems of Garcia Lorca, folk music, battle songs. Before long, the old men cried and saluted, raising clenched fists. Some of those fists trembled with age, but they went up anyway before a roaring audience estimated at 10,000. ...

"This is very moving, very uplifting," said Irving Rappaport, 86, who worked in a New York grocery store in 1937.

Charles Hall, one of the 68 American veterans here this week, heard about the war in Spain on his factory floor in Chicago. "The slogan was," he recalled, "in Spain we are defending all of Europe against fascism."

Irving Gold, from Brooklyn, recalled how he and 30 other Americans left New York City in early 1937 on the Ile de France, took trains through France and then secretly crossed the Pyrenees mountains on foot with Spanish guides

Louis Bortz, from Hartford, Conn., is one of several old timers who recalled talking with Ernest Hemingway, and everyone here, it seemed, had read *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Christian Science Monitor, Nov. 13, 1996

"Many of the American volunteers like Clarence Kailin believed Spain was the place to make a

stand against fascism, regardless of the odds."

Eleven union organizers at a [New York] department store went as volunteers to Spain. "Had we prevailed in Spain, World War II probably would not have happened," Jack Shafran said.

Irene Goldin was a young nurse from Connecticut who belonged to no political party but wanted to help people. One of her patients was Harry Spiegel, an Austrian fighter, whom she helped recuperate from severe wounds and then married in Spain.

Sarasota, FL, Nov. 16, 1996

Milt Felsen described his return to Spain with fellow American volunteers as the most moving experience of his life. His lapel bears the insignia of the International Brigades, that brave idealistic band of soldiers who fought against fascism 60 years ago in the Spanish Civil War.

Inscribed on the medallion is an excerpt from a speech by an anti-fascist leader. It reads, "When the olive tree of peace blooms again in Spain, come back."

Deerfield Valley, VT, Nov. 21, 1996

George Cullinan, a young merchant seaman, volunteered to head to Spain to fight the rise of fascism. Last week, Cullinan and the other veterans of the International Brigade were awarded honorary Spanish citizenship for their efforts to keep Spain free.

"We just couldn't believe our eyes," said Cullinan of his arrival in the Sports Palace in Madrid. "There were thousands of people applauding and cheering. It was the same everywhere we went in Spain."

Palm Beach Post, Nov. 10, 1996

Irving William "Bill" Rappaport, a college dropout, understood what Franco's fascism meant both as a person steeped in democratic traditions and as a Jew.

Foster City, CA, Progress, Nov. 30, 1996, and in seven other newspapers published in cities south of San Francisco.

An 87-year-old San Mateo man was at long last recognized for his contributions as a soldier in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1938) earlier this month in Spain.

Al Gottlieb, along with 50 other Americans and 300 international veterans, was honored by the Spanish parliament and granted honorary citizenship in a reunion celebration, November 4-12:

"You have to realize it's 60 years after the war, all the veterans are in their 80s, some 90s, but it's something they all wanted to do. Many walked with canes, and some were in wheel chairs.

"We had never seen such a demonstration of love, affection and admiration as witnessed that day [November 11, day of the *Actos de homenaje* — expressions of homage] in Barcelona."

The Times, London, Nov. 2, 1996

On Monday international volunteers who fought in the Spanish Civil War are about to return to Madrid. Three of the survivors tell their stories. It is not their age that grips me first but their language.

Sam Russell is 81 years old. Milton Wolff is also 81. Patience

Edney, still very beautiful is 85. [Ed: Patience died in Madrid during the trip.]

These three — proud, lucid old lefties — two Brits, one American — all veterans of the Spanish Civil War, say such things as "proletarian," "class struggle," "progressive forces," and "working class." words not used even in the Labour Party. They use these words unselfconsciously and seem to assume that you use them too. Their faith is absolute and touching.

San Jose, CA, Mercury News, Dec. 9

Perley Payne, a member of an old-time Santa Clara County family, was recruited [for Spain] off the waterfront after he left his job as a cannery worker and went to live with an aunt in San Francisco. ■

Spain's media and the Brigades' return

By Bill Susman

The media in Spain — newspapers, radio and television — registered the enthusiasm with which the International Brigadistas were welcomed in the country where they had fought six decades earlier. But that was only part of the story. Along with the efforts of the *Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales*, the media also helped make the trip possible and successful as well.

A review of over 100 articles that appeared in the Spanish press during November 1996 discloses how important the trip and its media coverage was for Spain itself, and for neighboring France as well.

Before November there had been scant public discussion in Spain of the Spanish Civil War. Even after Franco's death in 1975 debate was missing from the media. A tacit agreement seems to have been concluded between left and right to refrain from discussing this most momentous of upheavals in the country's twentieth century history. Both sides feared a resurgence of old animosities.

But suddenly, when the IB veterans arrived, frank and open discussion flourished in newspaper articles, in letters-to-the-editor, and on radio and television. There were even a few scattered attacks on the IB volunteers as "*asesinos*." However, it soon became clear that the reaction was overwhelmingly favorable. This reflected the fact that pro-Franco political forces, after his death, had never been able to garner more than 2 percent of the total vote in Spain.

The general unanimity of the Spanish people in warmly welcoming us as those who came in the 1930s committed to save Spanish democracy, was clearly shown in the press reports. This popular attitude in turn helps explain the earlier unanimous vote by the Parliament, the Cortes, offering to make the Brigadistas citizens of Spain.

The fuller story also reveals political crosscurrents within the present Spanish political system, where certain hidden agendas were at work. In the Spring of 1996 Spain was in the midst of a hard-fought

political campaign when the issue of citizenship came up. Jose Maria Aznar, running for president against the Socialist Felipe Gonzales, had been accused of having been a secret supporter of Franco. Aznar countered by publicly favoring the grant of citizenship to the Brigadistas. He instructed his supporters in the Parliament to vote for it.

But once Aznar had won the election he shifted his position further to the right. Doubts emerged as to whether or not he would pursue "the interview I hope to have with you" he held out in a letter to me last July. [See *The Volunteer*, Fall, 1996, p. 1] In fact, when the Brigadistas arrived neither Aznar nor any of his top aides showed up to greet them, Felipe Gonzales, however, was there.

Here the Spanish press intervened. At least twenty of the articles I looked at were sharply critical of what one of them called this "failure of common courtesy."

Weeks before, Spanish newspapers began carrying stories about the IB, our individual and collective

The best the 20th Century offered

Continued from page 1

ing the entire war. When I arrived in the U.S. (exiled from Franco's Spain) fifteen years later, one of the first things I wanted to do was to meet members of the Lincoln Brigade to thank them for their service to democratic Spain. On behalf of my parents' generation and my own (those who fought in the anti-fascist underground of the fifties and sixties), I wanted to let them know how much they were loved in Spain.

Thirty years later, they could see it for themselves. Their visit to Spain to receive Spanish citizenship, as promised to them by the Republic they defended, was met with an enormously warm and loving reception. People in the streets embraced and kissed them with the same intensity as when they left Spain sixty years earlier.

In Madrid, the IB veterans were not received by Aznar, President of the Partido Popular (PP) government. Although the parliamentary deputies of Aznar's right-wing party had voted to grant Spanish citizenship to the Brigadistas, the PP authorities for the most part kept

their distance from them.

All other political forces and social movements — and very much in particular, the trade unions — welcomed the Brigadistas. But the most impressive mobilization was the spontaneous one. Due to the erroneous policy of forgetting the past, a practice followed by all political parties, including the left, there was the belief that people would barely notice those elders who would be visiting long-forgotten places in Spain. The real surprise to the Spanish establishment — including the media — was that the people have not forgotten. Thousands and thousands of people took to the streets to welcome them. Never in recent history have Spaniards displayed such an outpouring of love and emotion for a group of people as they did for the Brigadistas.

With thousands of Catalans, I went to the station in Barcelona to welcome the Brigadistas. The well-known La Pasionaria speech bidding them farewell was broadcast at the station for their arrival. At the point of the speech when La Pasionaria invited the brigadistas (who were leaving

Barcelona at that time) to come back one day to Barcelona and Spain when democracy existed again, the crowd in the station exploded. It was as if 60 years of history had been suddenly unfrozen. Republican flags, red flags, Catalan flags, red and blue anarchist flags moved like waves in an ocean of color, mingling with people of all ages and nationalities.

Those who were there will never forget it. *Ay, Carmela* and other anti-fascist songs became the most popular tunes for the three days that the Brigadistas were in Barcelona, the most left-wing of Spanish cities. The day after their arrival, the Catalan parliament and representatives of all major political institutions thanked them for their commitment to democracy, liberty and justice. As Pascual Maragall, the mayor of Barcelona, said, "The Brigadistas were the best that the twentieth century had offered. Their sense of commitment and selflessness has been an inspiration to all freedom fighters in the world." ■

Vicente Navarro, professor of public health at Johns Hopkins University, is a member of the ALBA Board.

Again the cities and the hills of Spain

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with comments or questions, which they did to my delight, as we went along: Constance from Northwestern, Sam from Boston College, Luisa from Madrid, Carrie from Middlebury (who will do her term paper on the Brigade) and others.

There was a repeat performance three days later at the Center for International Studies. Some 18 students signed on there for a next-day tour of the Aragon battlefields — about which, more later.

The Hotel Convención, where the IB veterans stayed, is a huge modern hostelry, efficiently run but with little personality. Veterans

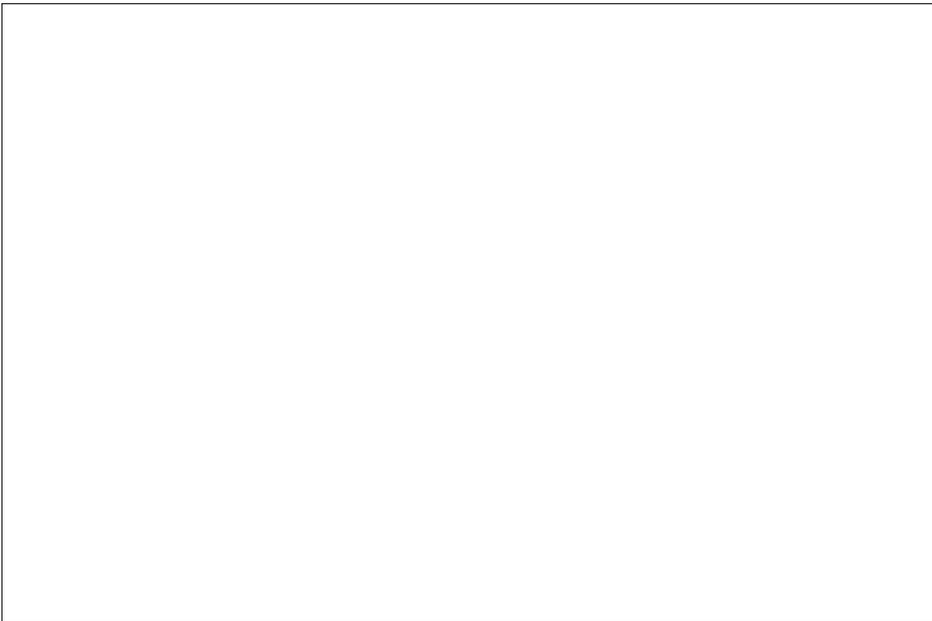
from all over gathered in the lobby where they were collared for countless interviews in various languages by media reporters from TV, radio, newspapers and magazines.

Our celebration coincided with the presidential election in the USA. It was clearly an event of paramount press interest in Spain, therefore much of what was taped never saw the light of day.

One incident, however, made the front page of many local papers. It came about this way: BBC radio asked me for an interview. "Sure," I said, "but only if we hold it in the Cafe Chicote, Hemingway's favorite watering place, where we first had

met. The reporters thought that a splendid idea. Cafe Chicote is now Museo Chicote. Photos of Hemingway (none in uniform) plaster the walls and the joint is upscale, though the *viejo* waiter swears, robot-like, that nothing has changed.

After the interview there was the matter of getting me back to the hotel. I had no pesetas on me, so BBC handed me a fistful of coins. My cab driver, a young man in his late 20s or early 30s, having taken note of the Brigadista ID clipped on my jacket, engaged me in conversation about the war, about the IB volunteers who came from "so far away to give their lives in defense of



Greeting the Brigadistas.

Eric Levenson

my country,” and more along this line, a theme we were to hear many times. When we arrived at the Convención, I held out the handful of coins to pay the fare. No way! Despite my insistence, the man absolutely refused payment.

Well, when I came into the lobby there were several members of the press interviewing an organizer of the *Amigos*. I broke into the proceedings to tell about this cabbie who would not let me pay; I pressed the coins into the hands of the organizer. *Hombre!* So great was the astonishment that a Madrid cabbie had turned down a fare that the story made the front page of several papers.

This simple demonstration of solidarity by a hard-working Spaniard stood out in sharp contrast to the IBers' non-reception by head-honcho Aznar and his crowd of right-wingers in the Cortes who were supposed to ceremoniously present us with a citizenship certificate. That job instead was done by a minor official who perfunctorily handed over a packet of the documents to a representative of each national delegation — not at Parliament but in an office of the Department of Justice.

On to Jarama where I was

called on to speak for *los Americanos*. I used this occasion to thank the *Asociación* for the marvelous job they were doing and to thank the heroic Spanish people whose resistance gave us the opportunity to fight by their side. When I concluded, I called on Mike Pappas to address the gathering on behalf of those who had fought and died at Jarama, his brother Nick among them, and to speak for all the “beautiful Greeks” in our battalions. After all, Mike had been there at Jarama, I had not.

A reporter grabbed me for another interview after I left the platform. We walked away from the speakers and the crowd, seeking a place where this could be done. We found a police squad car with an armed cop standing alongside. “I asked him if it would be possible for the reporter and me to talk quietly inside the car. “Porque no?” he said, ushering us inside. Ha! this is Spain, I thought, without the butcher Franco who surely must be turning in his grave at the sight: The Good Guys won the war after all!”

On to Alcorcon, a suburb about 12 kilometers outside Madrid. We, Abe, Lenny and Jack with their wives and families, were received by the *Alcalde* and a cluster of citizens

who greeted us with bouquets and medals. We were wined and dined; entertained by high school musicians, banqueted and we sat in on a rehearsal of a Verdi opera, before being led to the town hall where poems and speeches were delivered by the mayor and others before a standing-room-only audience. I spoke again as at Jarama, adding only that it was the Spanish people's heroism and love for us that inspired us to remain in the “trenches” for 60 years to carry on the Good Fight in the spirit *they* had shown in their defense of Madrid.

When I asked Lenny and Abe to stand, their wives by their side, the people came to their feet cheering. As I made my way to join them, a grey-haired woman grabbed me, saying (in Spanish, of course), “Dance with me.” And I did — brought down the house (Seems this lovely woman had heard that I danced with Dolores Ibarruri at Spain's Communist Party's farewell banquet for the IB in '38 and this was her way of commemorating that poignant moment.)

The main Madrid event took place in the domed Sports Palace, a short walk from the hotel. There were *Madrileños* lined four and five deep, creating an aisle a block or so long to the entrance. We walked down it to thunderous applause and saluds. The stadium was packed with cheering people, as the Brigadistas marched in. Marcus Ana² told me that there were more than 10,000 souls on hand. When I congratulated him on the Communists being able to turn out so many people, he assured me that it was the doing of more than the party, that it was a “broad effort, and a diverse political and non-political demonstration.”

It was then on to Aragon. The next day, Harry Fisher and his family joined us there for a tour of Quinto, the ruins of Belchite, Fuentes de Ebro, Caspe and, finally,

Added to Memory's Roster

Morris Brier

The news was telephoned from the New York VALB office on January 6 Moish (never "Morris," except on legal documents) had died the previous day. It opened a floodgate of memories.

Moish and I went back together over 65 years. We lived two houses apart in Brownsville. We were not poor, we just didn't have any money.

We played football before we joined the YCL. That was during the Great Depression. Along with others, we formed the Brownsville Sports and Cultural Club, where we pumped iron and listened to classical music.

When some neighbors were evicted, the YCL called on us to put the furniture back in their apartment — and it was done. Moish was 19 and I was 16 and we were busted together. By then his widowed mother had died and he lived with us part of the time — my parents were Mom and Pop to him.

I'll leave others to write of Moish's record in Spain where he preceded me into the International Brigades.

Farewell, dear comrade, and foster brother. You came from a very special mold, and I shall miss you and our golden days.

— Abe Osheroff

Moish Brier truly died in action, not on any battlefield (he had seen more than his share of these) but as a member of the national staff/executive of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and of ALBA. He was treasurer of both organizations.

One of the original "Jarama": Lincolns, Moish arrived in Spain in January 1937 and served as a machine-gunner in all the Battalion's campaigns until the IB was

pulled out of the Ebro front in September 1938. He was twice wounded: in the arm at Jarama and in the foot during the Ebro retreats.

In World War II, Moish distinguished himself as a machine-gunner in the infantry and, rare for a Lincoln Brigade veteran, was commissioned a lieutenant. He served in the Pacific theater, picking up another wound in the Philippines.

Until reaching retirement age, Moish was office manager of the Fur and Leather Workers Union Joint Board. ■

Paul Burns

I was among a group of some forty replacements sent to Jarama from the Madrigueras IB training base in April 1937 to replace the heavy casualties suffered by the Lincolns in the battles of February 23rd and 27th. Even on that first day, I heard from Charles Nusser and Irving Chocoles about the extraordinary courage of Paul Burns. They told about how he had repeatedly gone into no-man's land under fire to bring in wounded.

A couple of weeks later, Pat Reade, one of the Madrigueras replacements, introduced me to Paul who was his company commander. Pat liked Paul for a couple of reasons: he knew he was Irish and he had learned of his bravery.

My first impression of Paul was that he was too gentle to be a soldier. He spoke more like an observer than a participant. His voice was low and his stories stressed the bravery of other soldiers. He had action tales of the Flaherty brothers, and of Joe Scott and Joe Gordon.

I had little contact with Paul until the Brunete offensive in July. He was then commander of Com-

pany One. On the first day, when Oliver Law, the battalion commander, gave the order to go over the top, Paul was right behind Law. There were many casualties, but Law and Burns came through unscathed.

We went over the top again on July 9th at Mosquito Ridge. Law had assigned John Power and me as Paul's runners for that action.

I was amazed by Paul's calm during the ten minutes we waited to begin the attack. Law had told us that there would be no cover fire from our artillery or aircraft. The fascists were on higher ground and we knew that our casualties would be heavy.

When Oliver Law gave the order to attack and charged up the hill, Paul raised his pistol over his head and said, "Let's go fellows." He was wounded within seconds. Law was hit two minutes later and died within the hour. Paul certainly would have been chosen to succeed him.

I next saw Paul, six weeks later at an impressive rest home — the mansion that had belonged to the magnate Juan March, the wealthiest man in Spain, then holed up in France awaiting a fascist victory. The mansion overlooking the Mediterranean had been requisitioned as a rest home for the wounded.

Paul told me that he expected to return to the battalion in a few weeks. The severity of his knee wound, however, resulted in his repatriation.

During the post war years Paul and I were colleagues as correspondents at the UN. I came to know him then as the gentlest person I ever encountered.

After recent housebound years, devotedly cared for by his wife Helen, Paul died in New York City on December 9, 1996. ■

— Harry Fisher

Added to Memory's Roster

Ruth Epstein

Ruth Wilson Epstein's service as a nurse in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade was a part of her unswerving dedication to improving the lives of the poor and oppressed. She died in New York City on December 12, 1996. She is survived by her husband Jacob, also a Lincoln Brigade volunteer, with whom she shared 62 years of marriage.

Ruth's commitment to life was continued after Spain in her work as a teacher of midwifery in Harlem and in her pioneering phrasebooks to improve communication among hospital personnel and patients of various languages in U.S. hospitals.

Ruth sailed for Spain with the 6th American Medical Group that arrived late in May 1937. Her war service was a distinguished one. It began in Murcia at the International Brigade hospitals based there. She played a major role in establishing on-the-job schools to meet the Republic's extreme shortage of trained hospital nurses. That was her unceasing dedication for the next year.

In January 1937 Ruth recorded a speech at a Barcelona studio for radio broadcast to the USA. It was aimed at raising funds for medical aid to Spain. In her talk she briefly described the curriculum that became a vital contribution to the Republic's war effort:

At first the teaching was entirely practical but as the technique was learned the young women wanted to know the why of everything. At this stage we called upon the doctors for help and together planned a course of lectures ... designed to teach something of anatomy, physiology, the causes of disease, and so forth.

After the fascists broke through to the sea in April 1938, the Murcia group was transferred under difficult conditions to Mataro in Catalonia. At the large hospital, familiar to many of the Lincoln Brigade sick and wounded, Ruth was reunited with Jacob — he had become the *responsable* there for the liaison between the U.S. brigader-patients and the military chain of command.

When the Catalan front was overrun at the war's end, the Murcia staff and all moveable patients were evacuated by freight train to the south of France.



Ruth's and Jacob's postwar years together were marked by persistence in the path that had brought them to Spain.

For several decades before their retirement they were teamed as highly successful designers and builders of custom office furniture. A closely knit couple they shared a life enriched by a wide range of cultural interests and a warm circle of friends and family. ▣

— Len Levenson

Harry Hakam

Harry Hakam, one of the original Lincoln Battalion volunteers, died in his native Brooklyn on September 5, 1996. A journeyman electrician and union activist when he left for Spain in February 1936, he served through all the campaigns, from Jarama until the IB withdrawal in September 1938.

Harry joined the U.S. Navy in 1943 as one of the first frogmen, earning a SeaBee's rating as Chief Construction Electrician's Mate.

When WWII ended, Harry resumed his electrician's trade, enrolled in Brooklyn College as the last veteran student under the WWII G.I. Bill, and earned a B.A. in English literature.

A family tribute to Harry concludes:

Harry ... unending intellectual curiosity ... an avid reader (a real bathroom monopolizer), a goofy sense of humor, a hooker of rugs, a piano noodler (played by ear), intensely aware, sometimes teasing, who could still read the New York Times without eye-glasses. If you asked him how he was doing, he'd give you a sly, mischievous look and answer, "I'm here," and that said it all!

Life was his smorgasbord and he never lost his appetite. If offered a choice among several desserts, he invariably chose "a little bit of each." He always managed to find a job and was forever ready to reach out to someone in need — a good soldier to the end. When he left winter and age were on his curly head nut spring was eternally in his heart. Our "original Wandering Jew" crossed his last frontier with no regrets and no backward looks. Shalom, Harry, shalom! ▣

Culling the mail sack

The VALB staff has been swamped with scores of letters from Lincoln veterans, family members and friends who accompanied us on the 60th Anniversary trip to Spain. We have selected the extracts that follow. They recount the joys of recall and reunion the November days in Spain brought to us and our fellow-travellers.

Graffiti that lives

I had last been to the Murcian town of Madrigueras in April of 1937 when I left for the Jarama front with a group of replacements. Our departure was supposed to be secret but the whole town turned out to bid us farewell. People hugged and kissed us and raised their clenched fists in salud.

When I returned last November with my children and grandchildren I wondered how we would be received and how we would be remembered.

Of course our reception was tumultuous and touching. But another more profound expression was found in the town church. We were conducted there and led into a junk-strewn back room where a ladder had been placed against one wall.

Following our host, I climbed into an upper floor, illumined only by flashlights. There the beams revealed antifascist graffiti — *Frente Rojo; No Pasaran*; names and poems in several languages and dated jottings from 1937 and 1938.

A young man who was conducting us explained that when the fascists took power they attempted to obliterate all the antifascist graffiti wherever found.

In Madrigueras, in order to preserve the antifascist slogans written on the church, the townspeople had destroyed the stairway to the upper floor and filled the area with debris to prevent access. The fascists never caught on.

Our guide thought that this graffiti might be the only surviving examples in Spain. Whether true or not, it certainly showed us that in Madrigueras, they remembered. ■

— Harry Fisher
South Orange, NJ

An unforgettable experience

The heroes of the *Homenaje* were the *Amigos'* volunteers who worked with patience and love long hours. With no experience and with constant money worries they managed to make the *Homenaje* an unforgettable experience for us all: Dolores and Ana, Angel, Raquel, Roberto, Gustavo — these are just some of the names I

remember of the mostly young and very dedicated people.

We old geezers sometimes grumbled when things didn't go as smoothly; as we wished — for example, when Ted and I were wakened at 4 a.m. in our hotel near Barcelona, to be told that we had to be ready with our luggage at 5 a.m. for the return flight to Madrid. But that unhappy flight resulted in one of the happiest encounters of our visit to Spain — a day in the family of Angel Escarpa, a founding member of the *Amigos* and owner of the *Libreria Miguel Hernandez*. This small bookstore is full of treasures, like the memoirs of Lise London, *Roja Primavera*, published in 1996. Angel took us to the tomb of Dolores Ibarriuri nearby, and his entire family gave us food and rest and loving care.

We will always feel a profound gratitude toward all of them. ■

— Lenore and Ted Velfort
Oakland, California

Tears of gratitude

My mother, Hon Brown, and my siblings, Doug, Stephanie and Betsy, and our spouses, and I, went to Spain to honor the Veterans of the International Brigades. My late father, Archie Brown, was a member of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion.

Our large group was broken up into smaller groups and 200 of us arrived in Seville from Madrid.

As we rode up the escalator in their beautiful train station, there were thousands of people awaiting us on the landing above. Carrying banners and shouting words of welcome and slogans from the past, *No Pasaran!* We were inundated by waves of roaring sound, expressing their love and thanks for the Vets.

I wish to thank them for surviving, remembering, and for moving toward a democratic Spain. Tears of gratitude for our reception and the honor bestowed upon the memory of my father and his comrades, flow down from my face now as before in Seville. I will never forget this incredible sharing of emotion. Thank you, *los gentes de España! Viva la Quince Brigada! Viva las Brigadas Internacionales!* ■

— Susheela (Susan Brown) Farrell
Santa Rosa, California

The defining event of his youth

With six other family members, I accompanied my husband, Abraham Lincoln Brigade veteran Leonard Olson, to the site of what was the defining event of his youth. Each family member had a task: the sons-in-law pushed the wheel chair and lifted it on and

Culling the mail sack

off planes, trains and taxis. Daughters translated, checked on programs, gathered information and made friends with the *Amigos*. The grandchildren kept up with the entourage and with their homework, and waded in the Mediterranean. I just kept Leonard company.

Our family has lived with Spain, and we have spent much of our time with people who also shared the Spanish cause. Now, we can properly consign to history, with the honor it deserves, the heroic struggle of 1936-1939. ❏

— **Jeanne Olson**
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

The ten days that shook our world

We will always remember our ten glorious days with the other 400 Brigadistas, and with the Spanish *Amigos* and *Amigas* who accompanied us. Everywhere hands reached out to touch and embrace us, and voices said “*Gracias, gracias.*” The volunteers who kept the March of the 400 Grumpy Old Men going were truly magnificent.

We were on TV and our pictures appeared on the front page of the largest newspaper in Barcelona. We met a German from Dusseldorf, the child of two German volunteers who met and married in Spain. The father was killed and the mother returned to Germany. There must have been many other stories like this.

These are some of our impressions of the ten days that shook the world, at least our world. ❏

— **Sandra Cullinen**
Wilmington, Delaware

Still alive and kicking

At the time of the first Spanish election after Franco's death, Sophie and I spent three weeks traveling by car from Barcelona to Malaga. With one exception, all of my discussions with individuals stopped or changed subject when I mentioned that I had fought during the Civil War.

On this trip all was the opposite, especially from the ordinary person on the street. We never met anybody who turned away after noticing that we were Brigadistas.

On the trip to Morata, I met Peter O'Connor of the Lincoln Battalion's Irish Section. Peter gave me his pamphlet, *A Soldier of Liberty*, and I was surprised to

read of his brother, a priest, who had been with them and was killed.

I was introduced to a German woman surgeon who served with her husband, also a surgeon, in Spain. After probing a while, I realized that he and a British surgeon had operated on me at the hospital in Mataro. Much hugging followed.

Afterward, with Judy Montell and her film crew and together with Roby Newman we drove to Brunete, searching for the spot where the Brigade's first aid station was located. This was where Roby's father, Professor Robert Colodny, was brought, unconscious and bleeding profusely from his head. Dr. Straus and I bandaged Bob and slid him into the uppermost slot, the only vacant one on this 3-tiered vehicle.

Exhausted, we closed the doors and the ambulance started off. We gasped as the doors burst open and a stretcher flew out. It was Colodny, but still breathing and with a slow pulse. The bandages were OK and the ambulance again took off with Bob aboard. We thought he would not survive.

Years later I met Doc Straus and, smiling, he recalled the event and reported, “Bob is alive and well with a plate as part of his skull.”

As we were waiting at the Barcelona airport to return home, a couple heard us talking. He recognized who we were and remarked, “It has been too, too many years before you were invited back. It should have been earlier.” He is a Catalan, educated in a U.S. university with an electrical engineering degree. He remained and married there, acquiring dual citizenship. His father fought in the Republican army and some of his family, who crossed the Pyrenees when Franco came into power, are French.

All in all, the trip was very emotional and exciting. ❏

— **David Smith**
San Francisco, California

The legacy is passed on

While I did not myself go to Spain, my friend Karl Jones (son of of deceased vet David Jones) did. I do remember the birthday parties held at David's nursing home in Dorchester, Massachusetts, attended by Steve Nelson, Henry Grossman and others. In the life of trade union militant Karl, the legacy of the International Brigades is passed on. ❏

— **Kevin Coleman Joyce**
Bryant's Pond, Maine



News From Abroad



London

The 60th Anniversary of the Spanish Civil War has been marked throughout Britain on a remarkable scale by many varied events. The International Brigade Association has good reason to feel pleased with this result for which it prepared well and worked hard.

One of the events was a highly successful residential school held from July 22 to 26 [1996] at the Wedgwood memorial College near Stoke-on-Trent. Interest was enormous and the course was fully booked with a waiting list. Among the 40-plus participants were five veterans, two of them with wives, and also the grandson of Dr. Len Crome, chair of the IBA. The remainder included three research students from Madrid, the daughter of a vet and widow of another.

The program, while inevitably less than comprehensive, was wide-ranging. It included the background, both domestic and international, to the Spanish Civil War. Bill Alexander, Secretary of the IBA, led sessions on the role of the International Brigades, with special reference to the British Battalion, and the continuation of the struggle against Franco and after the war.

Two sessions, led by specialists, Dr. Andy Croft and Dr. Dave Spooner, were devoted to the vast literature in English and Spanish engendered by the war. Professor Sally Alexander, co-editor of *Women's Voices in the Spanish Civil War*, led a session of women and the war.

Ireland was a subject of particular interest with volunteers taking part on both sides. The dramatic changes which have taken place in Ireland were the subject of a session led by Manus O'Riordan. Manus is the son of Michael O'Riordan who fought for the Republic in the Connolly Column and who has written its history. Spurned at home

when they volunteered, the Connolly Column fighters are today acclaimed in the Irish Republic. Amongst those who in recent times have paid them tribute are the Lord Mayor of Dublin and Mary Robinson, President of Ireland. The Irish participation in Spain was illustrated by the film, *Even the Olives are Bleeding*, which tells the story of the volunteers on both sides, including the ignominious outcome of the O'Duffy, pro-Franco expeditions.

The course also included sessions on the relevance for today of the Spanish Civil War and on the situation in today's Spain.

Controversial issues were debated, including a discussion of Ken Loach's film, *Land and Freedom*, and the work of George Orwell.

The highlight of the course was a special keynote lecture, *The Spanish Civil War in Perspective 60 Years On*. It was given by Dr. Helen Graham, a historian recognized as a leading authority on the subject. This lecture was hosted by Staffordshire University, whose Vice-Chancellor presided. This change of venue made possible the attendance of a wider audience.

Throughout the week, the level of interest and discussion was high. All who participated were enthusiastic and stimulated. It is hoped to publish Dr. Helen Graham's keynote lecture for general distribution. ■

— Dave Goodman

Dublin

We mourn the loss of our beloved comrade in arms, Paul Burns. Last month it was our privilege to return to Spain to be honored as International Brigades veterans by the people of Madrid, Bilbao, Guernica, Barcelona and Gandesa. We were indeed delighted to renew acquaintance with many Lincoln vets who had also returned. But we also turned our thoughts to

absent friends who had not traveled — particularly Paul Burns who had fought with the James Connolly Section of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion in the 1937 battles of Jarama and Brunete, until invalidated home as a result of war wounds.

Paul was indeed a very special type of American who both dug deep and grew outwards. Deeply conscious of his Irish roots, his sense of internationalism also led him to risk his life in defense of the Spanish Republic, "to try and stem the rising fascist tide."

Daylight was yielding to dusk as we revisited the battlefield of Jarama on November 7. As we proudly stood beside what had been the Lincoln Battalion's trenches with our banner of the Connolly Column of the 15th brigade we remembered that on May 12, 1937, the 21st anniversary of James Connolly's execution, Paul was among those who had organized a Connolly Commemoration behind those lines.

Earlier on the morning of that return visit, we had revisited the nearby cemetery of Morata de Tajuña where in a mass grave of 5,000 who fell at Jarama, there are nineteen Irish dead, including the poet Charlie Donnelly, killed in action on February 27, 1937. And again we recall that in the 1938 Book of the Fifteenth Brigade, edited by the Irish commander Frank Ryan, it was Paul who ensured that the memory of Charlie Donnelly would be kept alive as an inspiration by writing of his death in action. But Paul did more than that. He also wrote for that book a very vivid account of how, when the Lincolns first went into action at Jarama on February 23, both he and Charlie Donnelly had fought side-by-side with no more than an olive tree as their protection.

Speaking of Frank Ryan, our return to Jarama also brought us down the famous "sunken road" where Frank had rallied the troops



News From Abroad



at an earlier stage in that battle. Here once again our thoughts were led back to Paul — for when Ryan had been captured by the fascists and with trumped-up false accusations was put on trial for his life, it was an international solidarity campaign that saved that life.

And to the fore in that campaign was the letter which appeared in the *New York Times* of May 30, 1938, in which Paul Burns and other Irish-American vets of Spain gave eye-witness evidence of Frank Ryan's honorable behavior both on and off the field of battle.

The veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and the Connolly Column have lost a brave and noble comrade, recalled with pride by those with whom he took his stand and fought shoulder-to-shoulder in order that fascism should not triumph in Spain. That it was the democratic will of the Spanish people which finally triumphed over that fascism and warmly welcomed back the International Brigades last month is the ultimate vindication of Paul's courageous stand.

Salud! on behalf of the Irish veterans of the Connolly Column, 15th Brigade. ☐

— Peter O'Connor
and Michael O'Riordan

Barcelona

Salud, comrades! I would like to say many things to you, so many emotions. I was at the Parliament, yelling like never before; I participated also in the organization of the acto at the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona.

There are no words to express what I feel for you. I listened to the words of some of you, but I didn't know what to say. Today, when you are no longer here, I miss you very much. Surely the best way to be close to you is to continue the struggle that you began.

TARRAGONA, Spain — A mathematician from the University of Tarragona, I was privileged to participate in the Homenaje to the International Brigades, one of the most moving events of my life. We Spanish democrats do not forget those who fought for our freedom and we will tell our sons and daughters, who will tell theirs, of this shining example.

At one time I held a Fulbright fellowship at the U.S. Radio Astronomy Observatory in Virginia, so I do not consider myself a foreigner to the United States.

Now I live in Tarragona, near where the bloody Ebro River battles took place in the Spanish Civil War. I invite all interested people to "visit" me there on the web where my address is:

<http://www.fut.es/~msanroma/GUERRACIVIL/guerracivil.html>

— Manuel Sanroma

Someone said:

*There are people who fight one day
and they are good.*

*There are others who fight for
many years and they are
very good.*

*But there are those who fight all
their lives.*

Those are the indispensable ones.

You are the indispensable ones.

Hasta siempre. ☐

— Jordi Marti

This is a list of books and tapes that are available at the indicated prices from the office of VALB, 799 Broadway, Rm. 227, New York, NY 10003-5552. The shipping cost is \$2 for each copy of the book or tape.

MADRID 1937: LETTERS OF THE LINCOLN BRIGADE FROM SPAIN.....(cloth)\$25

Edited by Cary Nelson & Jefferson Hendricks

ODYSSEY OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BRIGADE(pbk).....\$15

by Peter Carroll

ANOTHER HILL.....(cloth)\$25

by Milton Wolff

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR.....(cloth).....\$30

Preface by Robin D. G. Kelley

MEMORIALS OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR.....(cloth)\$31

Williams/Alexander/Gorman

THE ANTI-WARRIOR(pbk).....\$15

by Milton Felsen

TREES BECOME TORCHES *Selected Poems*.....(pbk).....\$10

by Edwin Rolfe

REMEMBERING SPAIN: HEMINGWAY'S VALB EULOGY.....(bklet & audio).....\$15

by Hemingway, Nelson and Wolff

FROM MISSISSIPPI TO MADRID(pbk).....\$10

by James Yates

SPAIN, THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION.....(cloth).....\$15

by Arthur Landis

PRISONERS OF THE GOOD FIGHT(pbk).....\$10

by Carl Geiser

THE LINCOLN BRIGADE: A PICTURE HISTORY.....(cloth)\$15

by Wm. L. Katz and Marc Crawford

EDUCATION OF A RELUCTANT RADICAL: BOOK 3 — SPAIN.....(pbk).....\$14

by Carl Marzani

FOREVER ACTIVISTS.....(VCR).....\$35

Judith Montell

THE GOOD FIGHT(VCR).....\$35

Sills/Dore/Bruckner

Looking back now, when I set out for Spain on Saturday, November 2, I probably knew as much about what lay ahead as an *alpar-gata*-shod American volunteer scaling the Pyrenees in 1937. Strange as it may seem, my sole contact with the *Amigos* had been through fax and telephone from Paris in order to offer my assistance. That had been warmly accepted.

I only began to learn about the *Amigos'* evolution and structure during the memorable nine days that followed — after I had rolled up my sleeves started to work. The complete picture only came when it was all over. That was on Tuesday November 12, after the staff of volunteers began to unwind in the Barcelona Airport cafe after most of the veterans were safely on their way home.

When I had arrived in Madrid, all I knew about the *Asociación de Amigos* was that they had accepted my offer to help and their office address. That was where I reported on Sunday morning, November 3.

Waiting outside a locked door were three volunteers from Madrid with whom I was to work closely throughout the celebration. They were Pepe and Alberto of the press committee, and David, who was in charge of reserving transportation.

I was appointed assistant to the press committee and promptly went to work — photocopying, stapling and phoning Toronto to track down missing Mac-Paps. As the afternoon wore on, other volunteers reported — Barbara (from Switzerland), Anya (from Germany), and Olga (from Madrid). Each had her own story of the rush to arrive.

The three-room office was stocked with two hand-me-down computers, several telephones, fax machines, a photocopier and piles of incoming messages. The atmosphere was charged with expectation of the impending events.

The Internationals and family members began arriving at the airport that afternoon. A Barajas-to-

A '97 Volunteer

By Robert Coale

hotel shuttle began its operation. It reached full schedule on Monday, November 4. Then, I was in the Hospital Princesa, squinting a Mac-Pap veteran who had fallen behind in his suitcase closing.

First of all, one should keep in mind those who helped, whether behind the scenes or in full contact with the veterans and their families — the volunteers. Everyone was a volunteer, from the energetic *amigos* who carried luggage, escorted people on buses, ran errands and cleaned tables, up to the Governing Committee.

My intermediate group had fused spontaneously — each offering free time or more. We were all driven by enormous respect for the Brigadistas and a desire to make the visit a memorable event.

It was no secret that at certain times things did not run as smoothly as expected. The *Asociación* was, in fact, beset by its own success. When discussion about the celebration first began, the attendance estimate was less than one hundred. Seven hundred and eighty veterans and friends from twenty-nine countries arrived, many at the last minute.

A small group of volunteers, no matter how well intentioned it may be, has serious limitations when it comes to handling such a large

group. While the *Homenaje* was far from flawless, the majority of participants and volunteers marvelled at how well things turned out, given the magnitude of the group, the myriad of ceremonies and many last minute adaptations. We volunteers certainly felt honored to have participated in this long overdue tribute to a stalwart and amazing group of veterans. We wear our *Voluntarios de la Libertad* commemorative pins as hard-earned badges of solidarity.

Reviewing it all, I shudder at having been very close to not attending the event. I would have missed a very moving experience, a truly “once in a lifetime” occasion. Expecting the celebration to take place over the summer, conveniently coinciding with a stay in Madrid to research my PhD dissertation in Spanish literature, I had contacted Santiago Alvarez through a mutual friend in May.

When word got back that the festivities would not take place until November, it seemed highly unlikely that I would be able to take time off from work and get to Madrid. I let the idea drop.

In October, however, while taking a break from my thesis research I happened across a copy of Carl Geiser's *Prisoners of the Good Fight*. Devouring it in record time, I then re-read my copy of Marion Merriman's *American Commander in Spain* along with other works on the Spanish Civil War. In no time I was hooked again, certain I could not pass this opportunity to meet veterans and show my admiration.

Although ignorant of what was in store, the important fact was that I was accepted. With an interest in oral history dating from way back, I innocently toted along a cassette recorder expecting to find the time to interview some of the more talkative veterans. That didn't happen.

From a young volunteer's point of view it was a great week, not only for my having met the Brig-

Robert Coale is a young American PhD candidate in Spanish literature at the University of Paris.

adistas and their families: I acquired new Spanish friends, namely, Betina, Alberto, Olga, David, Pepe, Barbara and Anya. Our friendship forged itself amid long hours of confusion and an unwavering, almost fanatical, sense of duty — especially when the going turned difficult.

We learned to improvise; to fill planning lapses and respond to last minute requests; to hammer out solutions for unforeseen problems as best we could, becoming battle-hardened through twenty- or even twenty-four-hour days and midnight-to-three a.m. organizational meetings.

In general, the week of tribute was memorable for all who participated. It provided a unique opportunity for veterans from across the globe to come together once again and to be honored by the people of Spain. As Professor Gabriel Jackson pointed out during the evening ceremony in Barcelona: many of the ideals defended by the Spanish Republic have been integrated into the Constitution of 1978 for present day Spaniards to enjoy. This tangible result may prompt one to wonder who were the ultimate victors in the struggle of 1936-1939.

Being neither a Spaniard nor International Brigade veteran, when my volunteer duties permitted, I was in a privileged position to observe the homage from the “outside.”

On a more personal side, there come to mind many highlights of my dealings with the veterans. Allow me to recall two: the Madrid Palacio de Deportes concert/tribute and a day's excursion in Catalonia.

The first of these provided a moment that itself was memorable. During a pre-concert volunteers' meeting, the Goya Street entrance to the Palacio gate was considered the most appropriate for the veterans' entrance. Despite its location on a far side of the building, it afforded the most direct access to the stage floor and had the shortest stairs.

It was not realized that the

route to this entrance would pass the throngs waiting to buy tickets. Unaware and wearing a red *Organización* badge, I left the hotel with group of Brigadistas. My heart stopped as we encountered the unexpected sea of people that blocked our access to the Sports Palace. However, when I loudly requested: “Perdonen, por favor, paso para los Brigadistas, (Excuse us, please make room for the Brigadistas to pass),” alarm gave way to emotion. The sea of people parted, applauding and cheering.

Turning around to herd the first group through (Swiss and Czechs), I saw them teary-eyed and deeply touched as they were cheered, hugged, their hands shaken and their backs patted by the no-less-

As a present-day volunteer, it was wonderful to feel a part of it all.

moved population of Madrid — survivors, sons, daughters or grandchildren of the battered city that had greeted some of the very same men sixty years before, almost to the day.

As a present-day volunteer, it was wonderful to feel a part of it all. Suddenly, all of the mistaken instructions, the countermanded orders, and the endless waiting for buses, was unimportant, especially after one had seen the brigadistas so moved and so warmly welcomed back to Madrid.

Memories of the week that followed in Catalonia are just a blur of fast-paced situations and more great moments

On the day of short trips from Barcelona to neighboring cities and towns, I was assigned to a bus where I had the opportunity to perform a task that I had anticipated when setting out from Paris — help-

ing those veterans and their families, who did not speak Spanish, communicate with the locals, and vice versa. The manageable size of this busload and its homogeneity was a contrast to the internationally diverse groups I had shepherded on all other events.

The luncheon speech and poem offered by Spanish Republican Veterans was a unique moment to make sure that the words of thanks and recognition spoken by our Spanish hosts were understood by more than the linguistically privileged few. The unexpected and enthusiastic thanks I received from the Catalans for interpreting into English confirmed that they were very anxious for their heartfelt gratitude to be clearly conveyed to veterans so often remembered, even venerated, yet so infrequently encountered in the flesh.

There were many other special moments, but every one who made the trip can assert similar claims. Speaking unofficially on behalf of a small but hard-working group of volunteers, I can say that our most cherished moments were those rare occasions when we had time to spend with the Brigadistas, be it talking during a bus ride, chatting before dinner, recommending sights to see in town, or resolving an unexpected problem.

We would volunteer, without a moment's hesitation, to do it all over again. The exposure to such a unique group of dedicated men and women, who stood up for their principles, cannot help but improve our understanding of this special chapter of contemporary history. November 3 to 12, 1996, will long be treasured by those people forever devoted to the legacy of the International Brigades. May the future offer us many more opportunities to show our appreciation.

Many thanks to the veterans for making possible an enjoyable, unforgettable week of volunteer work. Salud! ❏

Exactly what was I going to see in Spain and what was I looking for? I brought these questions overseas and I brought them home again.

I am in the midst of writing a book about political passion and memory. My uncle, Dave Lipton, is its center. He died on Hill 666 on August 20, 1938, and I went to Spain for him. And for my father who loved him above all else in the world. But my uncle died before I was born, and all I know of him was what my father told me. It wasn't even my memories I could hope to unearth or conjure. So what sort of hocus pocus was I involved with? And whose political passions and whose memories were to be the subject of my book?

I drove with a busload of people to the Sierra Pandols. I climbed to where I could see Hill 666. I didn't know how to take in the round misty mountains, the majestic sweep of beauty Dave saw at the last and that he had never seen before. Nothing like it in his life, he who had grown up in Riga, a port town on the Baltic Sea. He knew ship masts and winds, sturdy bourgeois architecture and broad tree-framed avenues.

He knew maids and loneliness and spacious rooms emptied of love, parents working night and day in their delicatessen, older brothers who didn't speak to him even as they ate around the same table. Only later did they say how wonderful the boy was.

After Riga, he knew the Bronx. He was eleven in 1927 when he entered New York Harbor with his mother, holding hands. He loved her who loved him best of all her six sons, three of whom had already died in Europe. Dave, or Duddy as he was known then, smiled at the tall buildings spiking the clear blue sky. He wasn't a timid boy and he could see.

To some the Bronx is a blocky, grey place. Maybe fun if you're a boy and a teenager liking the girls and the street, but for Dave the Bronx became the place to live out

Tracking a ghost

By Eunice Lipton

his mother's brother's dreams for him, the place to become politically committed. At 15 he was already an American Communist. He wrote his uncles telling them he wanted to go to Russia, but they wrote back saying, "Stay, work in America." The Bronx to Duddy was the Young Communist League, meetings and obligations he was eager to fulfill. The Bronx was putting furniture back into apartments after it had been strewn on sidewalks by landlords indifferently evicting the poor. The Bronx was duty, a duty that brought Dave to Spain and to the mountains I'm having trouble talking about.

The day he died, what did he know? Duty? Defending the world against fascism? Heartache? So often the boys wrote home about peacefulness and beauty and comradeship and loneliness. And love. Mostly for their girl friends or wives. Nothing like that with Dave. I never found a girlfriend or even word of one.

But he did write tenderly to his parents, "I am sitting on a mountain among vineyards and olive trees covered with the blood of Spain. I am looking at the sunset and weeping. I cry and cry and cry. I am crying hot tears that pour from my eyes and I'm not trying to stop them. I'm thinking of you, my dear parents, and the thought of the pain

Eunice Lipton is a writer in New York City. She would appreciate hearing from anyone who knew her uncle: 201 W. 85th St. (7E), New York, NY 10024; tel: 212-724-9456; fax: 212-724-9299.

and anguish I cause you and the thought that you are thinking of me while you read this." He had never said good-bye to them. Like so many others, Dave lied out of love to protect them. He said he was going to the Catskills to work.

As I drove towards you, my uncle, through the dry waste of the Aragon landscape, you kept eluding me. But on Hill 666 in Catalunya, I found you. Those faraway mountain hills — on one side the Sierra Pandols; the pointy ones on the other — the Sierra Caballs. How like the trip in southern France from Mount Ventoux to Cézanne's Mont Saint Victoire. The first an anomalous desert peak from which Petrarch thought he could survey the world; the other rocky with bauxite but forever colored by Cézanne's oranges, greens and blues. Two places of wonder, one barren, the other pure sublimated lust.

You were a virgin when you went to Spain. You slept with a prostitute in Paris that one night you were there, before the journey South. Bill told me he helped you find someone. He also told me you didn't look happy afterwards. But you wanted it, it was important. As if sex like that, any sex could mean something.

Uncle, why did you go to Spain when most didn't? It wasn't an impossible act for you. You sailed the sea. Why? Exactly.

It would be so easy to be nostalgic about the 1930s when good and evil were such stark, uncomplicated poles. Fascism was evil. Period. We in the United States in recent years have stood witness to debacles of morality, in Bosnia and Rwanda most particularly. Had one been sufficiently outraged and decided to go to ex-Yugoslavia, on whose side would one have enlisted? The Serbs? Croats? Muslims? And in Rwanda? Now that we have more detailed and instantaneous information than we've ever had before, we are unutterably more paralyzed to act.

So I went to Spain out of respect

It happened on our first morning in Madrid. I stood in that spacious Spanish bathtub meditating over how this would have felt back in 1937-38 when cracking lice was a daily routine.

What a change! From our reception at the airport the night before, to the mingling at the hotel, it was evident that this was to be a once-in-a-lifetime occasion. The welcome from the *Amigos* was almost overwhelming! I had anticipated meeting the old friends whom I have not seen since the war. Above all, I wanted to meet and enjoy the company of the many comrades in Spain, both young and old, who were the hosts for this occasion.

Then I turned on the shower ...

In a second I was lying full length on my right side in the long unyielding bathtub, trying to assess the damage. I had a large bump on my head and the toes on my right foot were bent unnaturally against the side of the tub. The calf of the leg was swollen and I thought at first that a bone was broken. My knee hurt, as did my hip and shoulder, and I could not lift my right arm.

My wife, Mildred, and Janet, our daughter, were still asleep. I didn't want to admit that such a thing could happen to me, especially on this occasion, so I struggled out of the tub on my own. Pride then gave way to reality and I had to awaken them. They called for help. Within minutes, an efficient, red-banded, first-aid squad was in the room. They arranged for X-rays at a local hospital, and Mildred and I spent the first morning taking care of that.

No broken bones were visible in the X-ray; I was issued a wheel chair and returned to the tour. It was assumed that the pain would diminish as the days went by. It didn't happen. A wheelchair, I discovered, is not a recovery room, especially when a lot of movement and traveling are required.

I'm very thankful for the many volunteers from the *Amigos* who looked after me. They saw that I ate, made the buses on time and kept me informed of what was going on. They were of all ages and wonderful! The care they provided was anticipated in the ques-

Socorro Rojo Lives

By Bob Reed

discussions among those who had attended something I had missed. I could share the experience through them.

At times, being bound in a wheelchair has its advantages. In Barcelona, I was wheeled to the front row of the concert in the Palace of Sports, to the foot of the stage itself.

A unique experience for those of us in wheelchairs occurred in Barcelona. We were pushed through the huge crowd honoring the Internationals at the Sports Palace event. I remember a narrow tunnel, with a mass of cheering people on both sides. My lap was covered with flowers, presents and printed material from unions and other organizations.

Photographers crowded the path ahead. Many, many hands stretched toward us for physical contact. Occasionally someone would break through for more demonstrative action, like hugging or kissing me. Clenched fists ahead would open to hands seeking closer contact. They were of all ages, expressing love and affection for the Internationals who had joined with them in their fight to defend democracy.

I couldn't clasp all the offered hands and there were many pats on the head from people I could not see. There were tears in my eyes in response to this emotional greeting.

The long ride home was a painful one and my hip was operated on after I returned.

Was it worth it? You're darned right it was. It was the most meaningful experience of my life. I'll recover and the memory of the welcome in Spain will be with me as long as I'm around. ■

Continued from page 16

and longing. I met wonderful vets and their partners and friends. I wept for my uncle, my family and myself. I walked the streets of Madrid and stared at bullet-strafed buildings. I listened rapt and heart-broken to the Internationale. But Spain wasn't my fight. I couldn't

possibly feel what you, the vets, felt. And God only knows what that was, mediated as it was by decades of your own complicated lives. But there you were and I loved you, not only for what you did sixty years ago but for the hard and courageous — and I hope satisfying — lives you have led.

Yours are the faces of people

who have lived, people who will never get old. Only death will stop you Lincoln Brigade veterans. You dared to hope. And to act. I feel immensely grateful that in my lifetime I had such a model of generosity and courage.

And that's what I found in Spain, all of you, and the man my uncle would have been. ■



Forever Activists



Seattle's own Northwest homage

By Anthony L. Geist

SEATTLE, Dec. 12, 1996

The Seattle chapter of VALB and Friends, together with me, during last October and November, organized a number of activities to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the start of the Spanish Civil War.

The celebration began with four films, shown one each Monday through October at the Seattle Museum of History and Industry: "The Good Fight," "Ay, Carmela," "For Whom the Bell Tolls" and "Los Santos Inocentes." Each showing was followed by a panel discussion with local faculty and veterans: Abe Osheroff, Dutch Schultz, Buster Ross and Bob Reed. We attracted a total audience of about 350 and there was enthusiastic discussion after each film.

On November 22, some 350 people gathered to welcome the

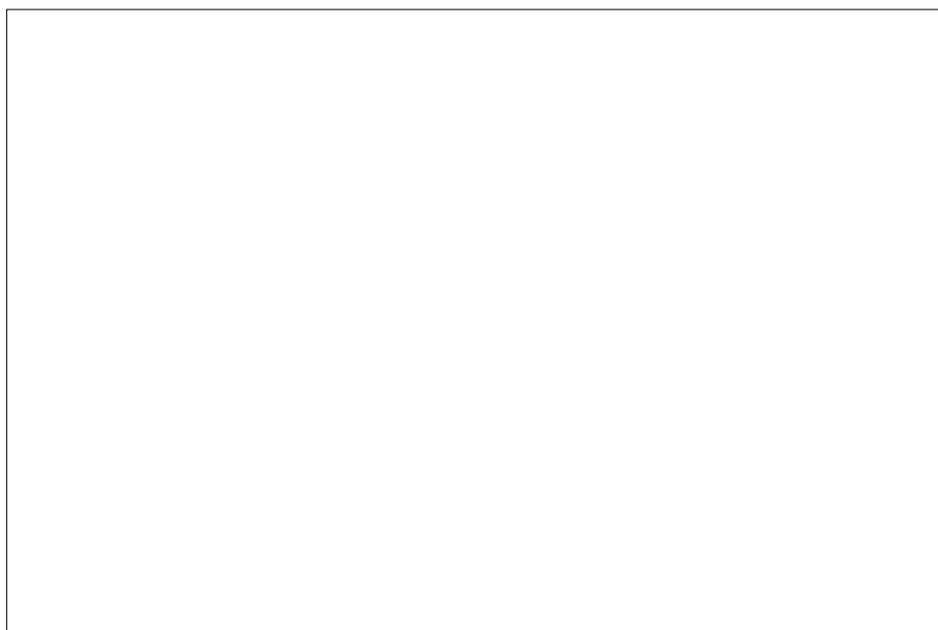
Anthony L. Geist is a professor of Spanish at the University of Washington.

vets home from their trip to Spain. It was an emotionally charged evening, at which I had the honor to be the emcee and who read tributes specially sent for the occasion by Studs Terkel, Ed Asner and John Sayles, as well as greetings from Washington State Governor

Mike Lowry and a proclamation from Mayor Norm Rice, declaring November 22, 1996, Abraham Lincoln Brigade Day in Seattle.

The highlight of the evening was the vets' account of the events

Continued on page 23



The monument in Jarama to the International Brigadistas who died there.

Spain's media and the Brigades' return

Continued from page 5

motivations in coming to Spain in the mid-1930s. Articles featuring individual vets appeared. In one trans-Atlantic telephone interview, I was quoted by Barcelona's *El Pais*, the story later was picked up by *Le Monde* in France and *L'Unita* in Italy. Spanish colleges and universities held seminars on the International Brigades as a collective expression of idealism and international solidarity.

Thus, in addition to contributing to the revival of political discussion in Spain, the press and the schools built a groundswell of sup-

port that soon became evident in the tens of thousands of people, young and old, who came out to greet us, to embrace us, to shake our hands and thank us, and to escort us during our visit. The pessimists among us who had feared that the present generation of Spanish youth were totally lost to consumerism and apathy were glad to be proven wrong.

When we arrived in Spain all went into high gear. The media was full of daily reports dealing with the yearning of the Spanish citizens (especially the youth) for the kind of solidarity today that would be similar in spirit to that exhibited by the

IBs 60 years before — when, as the press expressed it, "Self-sacrificing and generous men and women motivated by idealism offered their lives for the Spanish Republic."

Yet another aspect of the media's impact was evident in the financing of the trip. And here Gabriel Jackson, the noted American historian of the Spanish Civil War (and ALBA Board member), played a key role. In September, Jackson, who writes regularly for the liberal Spanish daily *El Pais*, went public with the story of the

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

Aznar government's failure to follow through on its assurances of support to the returning Brigadistas who came to Spain to receive citizenship.

Gabe's letter (below) was picked up by the rest of the Spanish press. More than 100,000 people responded with donations averaging five to ten dollars each. It is not an exaggeration to say that this spontaneous popular support assured the full program of the celebration

This letter, reprinted and discussed everywhere in Spain, also caused cities to reverse their earlier reluctance and brought the participation of many other localities

Not only did the money that came in make it possible to pay for local transportation, hotel accommodations and food for the Brigadistas and their travelling companions, it also stimulated local and municipal governments to allocate funds. Donations kept coming for weeks afterward.

During their stay, the veterans were virtually media stars of press, radio and television. Among the Americans interviewed were Milt Felsen, Lou Gordon, Carl Geiser, Chuck Hall, Len Levenson, Abe Osheroff, Abe Smorodin, Hy Tabb, and Milt Wolff.

Saul Wellman received a special welcome at Alicante. He found a "Welcome Saul Wellman" banner straddling the main thoroughfare. He was honored at a banquet that attracted 300 guests. Like many other vets in the crowded November days, Saul spent part of his time crying and the rest laughing.

After the IBers returned home, articles continued appearing in the Spanish newspapers. In one of them, the President of the Parliament maintained that he had announced long in advance that he would be out of Madrid on the day the citizenship certificates were presented. The historic significance of this explanation is that the person who made it felt compelled to do so.

There is no yardstick, no scale,

During their stay, the veterans were virtually media stars of press, radio and television.

no scientific instrument to measure the precise contribution of any single factor for the success of a historic event. One can designate important factors however: In the case of the achievements of the International Brigades' 60th anniversary celebration, the press, of course, played an important role. It confirmed that not only does the media reflect what's happening,

sometimes it makes things happen. In so doing, it responded to the will of the Spanish people to honor the young antifascists who fought at their side 60 years ago against the fascist menace.

Another example of the importance of the media came with the reports in Spanish newspapers of the decision of the French parliament to award veterans' benefits (long available to members of the anti-Nazi maquis during World War II, as well as to the regular military) to those French citizens who went to Spain in the 1930s to aid the Republic. It may be that this will influence policies of other nations toward their own citizens in the future. ■

The visit to Spain of the Brigadistas

By Gabriel Jackson

This week is the hour of truth for the long-planned visit to Spain of the surviving veterans of the International Brigades who fought in defense of the Republic during the Civil War.

On November 28, 1995, the Parliament unanimously approved the granting of Spanish citizenship to the survivors. This spring a coordinating committee decided to invite the IB veterans to come to Spain from November 4 to 12 [1996]. The program included three days each in Madrid and Barcelona with receptions by official and unofficial groups. And President Aznar expressed his hope personally to greet them on their visit to Madrid.

There are now between 500 and 1,000 veterans still alive, all octogenarians in varying states of health and ability to travel. Since April, the coordinating committee has visited 35 countries to determine how many intended to come. Their invitation was based on the commitment by the Spanish hosts to bear all local costs of hotel accommodations, transport and food.

But now serious budget problems threaten to destroy this project. The collection of the needed 120 million pesetas has barely begun. The city councils of Barcelona and Gijon have promised 300,000 pesetas. Many other local governments, trade unions, foundations, universities and political parties have offered food, lodging and receptions, and are preparing to make monetary contributions. . . . The Madrid-based Association of Friends of the International Brigades has been working day and night to collect these funds. They have a savings bank account (number 10076000993095) in the name "Homage 1996" [Homenaje 96].

Time is golden. It is hardly necessary to say that the international reputation of Spain is at stake in the successful financing of this invitation, as it follows logically from the grant of citizenship. The veterans are immensely emotional over this act of recognition. I have spoken by telephone to many of them, and they are eager to participate in the ceremonies that will publicly recognize the sacrifices they made fighting for the liberty of Spain and of Europe some 60 years ago. ■

From *El Pais*, September 28, 1996

A new ALBA photo exhibit in preparation

An historic photo-art exhibit is being curated by ALBA Board vice-chair Cary Nelson, assisted by Professor Fraser Ottanelli of the University of South Florida.

Entitled "The Aura of the Cause: A Photo Album for North American Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War," it will feature black-and-white pictures taken by the legendary Robert Capa, others by official International Brigade photographers and by soldiers in the ranks. There will be explanatory wall texts, establishing the historical context of all the pictures on view.

Opening shows are planned for this Spring in New York and Toronto.

The New York opening is **Friday, April 25, 1997**, at the Puffin Gallery in Manhattan. For times and other information call ALBA at **1-212-316-2353**.

Other dates are open. Readers of *The Volunteer* may arrange to book either the photo or poster exhibits into their locality. (Poster exhibit schedule is on page 22.) For information on how this can be done, call ALBA at: **1-212-316-4072**. ❏

ALBA gets an Executive Director

When Marvin Gettleman, early last November, was offered the reactivated position of ALBA's Executive Director, he responded: "What an honor." Long an activist in disarmament, anti-Vietnam War and Latin American solidarity movements, he often marched and demonstrated alongside veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Now, working with them and with the folk in ALBA, Marv finds himself in good familiar company.

To help him fulfill his role at ALBA, Marv will welcome suggestions from readers of *The Volunteer*. He may be reached at the VALB office or via e-mail at:

mgettle@duke.poly.edu

Over two decades ago a number of veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, along with a group of scholars interested in the Spanish Civil War, created a new organization — ALBA, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives.

From the outset, one of ALBA's tasks was to help manage and expand the Spanish Civil War archive housed at Brandeis University in Waltham, MA. Explicit in this undertaking was the educational goal to preserve, disseminate and transmit to future generations the history and lessons of the Spanish Civil War and of the International Brigades.

To carry out these goals ALBA collaborates on the production of books, films and videos, helps send exhibitions of photographs, documents and artwork throughout the United States and Canada, organizes conferences and seminars on the Spanish Civil War and on the role of the International Brigades. ALBA established the George Watt prizes for the best college essays on these subjects and has designed a widely used Spanish Civil War curriculum.

In the coming months ALBA will expand its activity. To do so effectively ALBA must have your support. Please fill out the coupon below, enclose a check made out to ALBA and send it to us. If you are not already on the mailing list for *The Volunteer*, your name will be added to it.

Fill out this coupon and mail it to the address below.

Yes, I wish to become an ALBA Associate, and I enclose a check for \$25 made out to ALBA. Please send me *The Volunteer*.

I also would like to receive a list of books and videos available at discount.

I would like to have the photo exhibit in my locality. Please send information.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please mail to: ALBA, 799 Broadway, Room 227, New York, NY 10003



The ALBA/Adolph Ross Project seeks information

The names below have appeared on documents from a variety of files as possibly used by Americans who served in the International Brigades. We appeal to readers of *The Volunteer* to plumb their memories and probe their files for any data that may link these names with service in the International Brigades. Any positive results of this will be deeply appreciated and should be mailed to:

The Adolph Ross Project
Christopher T. Brooks, 1207 Westminster Ave.
Richmond, VA 23227

Esteban Alcove	Charles Fragiacona	Kimball (surname only)	Mercurio Provenzana
Theodore Ansaldo	Archibald Francis	Alexander Kiokas	Robert Quinn
Mario Aran	Herman Francis	Richard Keoppel	Paul Raguzovic
Pascual Areta	John Fredericks	Augustine Kortright	Nicholas Ramirez Villanueva
Bernt Arnberg	Sam Freeman	Abraham Laxyo	Justo Rivero Montiel
Jack Arnovitz	Morris Frisch	Reuben Lifschitz	Jaime Rodriguez Masjuan
Romero Ascui	Philip Balboa	Joseph Lucien	R. Roff
Augustino Baccioni	Lino Galas	Ricardo Luona	Robert Bruce Rogers
Philip Balboa	Samuel Gelfan	Stabry Mabrogiamakis	John Romins
Harold H. Barnett	Sven Gahn	Peter Machnich	Willy Rosenberg
Carrado Batelli	Rubio Genaro Perez	Bill Madejar	Boleslaw Savitsky
Alexander Bates	Luis Gentila	Bill Madrigan	Isaac Schatz
Antonio Boni	Paul Gobert	Joseph Malusa	Maxim Rolf Schneller
Abel Bonifacio Ferrero	Sylvester Goett	Bill Melanson	Ramiro Secades
Bernard Bucher	Ruben Goldberg	Karl Melen	Thomas Sevian
Francis J. Caler	Edward Grayson	John Mendella	Mary Rene Shaboll
Morch Cottini	B. Guina	Albert Merrell	Charles Shinson
Romano Croce	William Halliday	Guillermo Montero	Hugo Sionger
Morris Davies	Thomas Marion Hanna	Cassimero Mora Guisaob	Kennet Smallett
John de Felippi	Roy Hartwell	Stephen Morel	Albert Smith
Pedro Del Campo	Henry Arnold Hayes	Benedetto Mori	John Edward Smith
George Diamatavis	Pacid Hefferman	Jack Marco Moro	John William Snyder
Pietro Dione	Rudolph Hellmich	Charles Morse	Carlos Sole
Francisco DiSanto	Louis Herrara	Giacomo Mortola	Eugen Soler Alonso
Lawrence Dobbs	Max Herrsher	Charles Muraglia	Jose Soriano
Dave Ehrenburg	George Hines	G. Murray	Dimitri Sorostiaga
Henry Epstein	Richard Hoelzner	David Newman	Joseph Starini
Ernest Erber	Bernard Hoff	Ramon O'Farrell De Miguel	John Stevens
Casimir Ereteo	Teddy Honas	Pete Oiala	George Stoiceff
Santiago Escudero	Holden Howell	Juan Olcimo Taradilly	Shevia Stone
Alf Esplund	James Edward Hughes	Paul Orborn	Czeslaw Tadler
Giuseppi Esposito	Simon Iardino	Harry Owens	James Terry
Frank Farina	Jose Ibaruche Marquez	Eliades Pandella	Antonio Texido Pages
Louis Felman	Earl Ickes	Simon V. Pappadopolous	Ramon Ugalde
Alf Esplund	Axel Iklika	Jose Pasos Rodriqquez	A. Unterman
Aro Fernando	Calisto Jambrosso	Alexander Pawlak	Joseph Usiben
Harry Finkenberg	Frank Jasitis	Sol Peel	Blagio Valcich
Max Fishgold	Walter Jennings	Fred Peters	Gianpaolo Vallou
Donald Foley	Spartaco Kaiser	James Arthy Pierce	Nicolai Walter
Joseph K. Foster	Siegried Kapitz	Francisco Pasciencio	Stanley White
John Walton Foyer	Michael Katelich	Giovanni Poorchedou	

Again the cities and the hills of Spain

Continued from page 7

to a height in the Pandols from which we could see Hill 666 where Joe Bianca had been killed and Aaron Lopoff mortally wounded. It also was where Harry, along with Marty Sullivan, had performed heroically in keeping our ancient telephones working.

As I climbed this hill, I felt the presence of one of the students by my side. Half way up, I turned to him and asked why he was walking so close to me. Says he, his smooth young face framed by long brown hair, his eyes painfully concerned, fixed on me: "I can't believe that at 81 you're doing this." *Merde*, neither could I.

From the top of this hill in the Pandols we could see, on the plain below, the towns of Corbera and Gandesa, and farther off, the city of Zaragossa. Memories of advance and retreat became all too vivid: the senseless attack that led to the killing of Mel Ofsink; the cavalry assault on our hill; the night encounter leading to the deaths of Merriman and Doran, and so many others. In the distance, the silver glint of the Ebro which we had swum across in retreat, and recrossed, in row boats to attack.

As for Quinto and Belchite, there was nothing there I remembered as it had been. It was only when one of the students stood in the entrance of what remained of a destroyed church, silhouetted in the afternoon sun, that a bell rang in what's left of my memory. It was the vision of the time when our machine gun company, commanded by Manny Lanser, had met the fascists coming through the portal, or one like it in some other church in Belchite, that I vividly recalled.

And again at Caspe, where I walked with the students on the railway depot platform where, 60 years before, the red-tasseled caps of the fascist troops had been the targets of our guns. And found the narrow passageway alongside, through which the Italian tanks had come seeking out our position. And we had driven them off, their flimsy armor no protection against our armor-piercing ammo.

Harry and his entourage made off for Barcelona to join the rest of the celebrants who were, as I was told later, royally received by the Catalans, officials and citizens alike. My group headed back to Madrid.

Before I left for home, many of

the students gave me addresses, wanting to keep in touch — future associates of the VALB perhaps. (Louisa has since sent me a loving letter, photos taken in the Pandols and a tape of Spanish songs.)

Alcorcon was the highlight of the trip. It was, en fin, the time we got really close to the people, where we experienced an exchange of love and respect, and admiration that was truly mutual. Come back, they said, as Dolores had bid us do sixty years before. We were back, and we will come back again. After all — we are now Spanish citizens (sort of). ▀

Milton Wolff, the last commander of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, is the author of Another Hill.

Shouts From the Wall ALBA Poster Exhibition Schedule

1997

January 20 — March 9

Meadows Museum of Art
Centenary College
Shreveport, LA 71134

March 24 — May 4

University Center Galleries
Texas A & M
Memorial Student Center
College Station, TX 77844

Sept. 5 — Oct. 19

Hamilton College
Clinton, NY

Nov. 8 — Dec. 22

Contemporary Art Museum
University of South Florida
4204 East Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33620

1998

January 27 — March 13

Art Museum
Mt. Holyoke College
South Hadley, MA 01075

April 4 — May 18

University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI

Nov. 1 — Dec. 15

Bucknell University
Lewisburg, PA

To arrange to show this
exhibit in your locality,
call ALBA at:
1-212-316-4072

Correction

The Web site of Brandeis University was misprinted in the Fall 1996 issue. It is: <http://www.library.brandeis.edu/specialcoll/spcvwr/posters.html>

1. Ex marine; longtime Madrileño family man; historian.
2. Spanish poet and activist.

Seattle's own Northwest homage

Continued from page 18

in Spain. The audience then strolled across campus to view the poster exhibit, *Shouts from the Wall*, and converse over a glass of wine.

Saturday, November 23, a symposium on the WW campus discussed various aspects of the War. Roughly 100 attended each of four panels: *Art and Literature of the War* (Geist), *The Historical Context* (Peter Carroll), *The Veterans' Experiences* (Osheroff, Schultz and Ross, moderated by WW professor Joe Botwin), and a workshop for secondary school teachers, led by Osheroff and Carroll.

The exhibit itself, the centerpiece of all these activities, was enormously successful and heavily attended. Osheroff, Reed and Ross led docent tours of the posters each Saturday. For the month that *Shouts from the Wall* hung in Seattle, the gallery director, Phil Schwab, estimates that between 1,500 and 2,000 people saw the show.

What accounts for this success? There are good historical reasons for studying the war. It produced an enormous outpouring of rich and

There are good historical reasons for studying the war. It produced an enormous outpouring of rich and powerful works of literature and art. Yet the Spanish Civil War is also morally compelling...

powerful works of literature and art. Yet the Spanish Civil War is also morally compelling, first as an unprecedented example of the common people defending their country, and as an example of international solidarity.

The war is morally compelling for another reason as well. Those who should have won were defeated. Albert Camus wrote:

"It was in Spain that my generation learned that one can be right and be beaten, that force can vanquish spirit, that there are times when courage is not its own recompense. It is this, doubtless, which explains why so many, the world over, feel the Spanish drama as a personal tragedy."

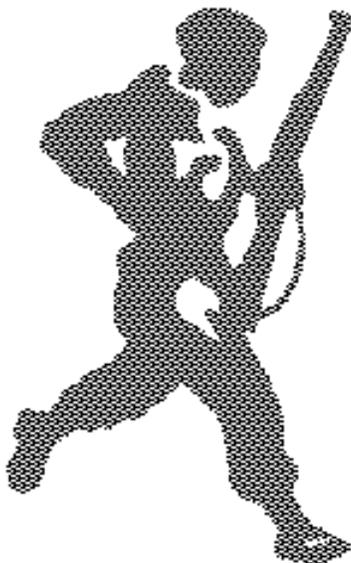
Why in Seattle? Of the 2,800

Americans who served in the International Brigades, a sizeable contingent came from the Pacific Northwest; loggers, seamen, long-shoremen, old Wobblies, students.

Also in Seattle because there is a small group of veterans who have remained active in all the significant social movements of our times, from Spain to Central America. None of what we achieved was without the efforts of Bob Reed, who has kept the memory of the Lincoln Brigade alive in Seattle for over 25 years.

Finally, why me? I was born sometime after the Republic fell, and my generation had its own struggles: the Civil Rights movement and Vietnam. Yet the Spanish Civil War has been an important part of my life. I was raised in a home in Southern California surrounded by working people, artists and intellectuals, among them many Lincoln vets and Spanish Republican exiles.

Many of my parents' friends and comrades fought and died in Spain. They were my heroes and still are. The example of their courage, sacrifice and solidarity has been an inspiration to me, and continues today. ▀



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



Contributions



Jeanette and Mark Alper, in memory of Norm Perlman, \$50 ♣ Anthony Alpert, \$10 ♣ James Benet, \$50 ♣ Harriet Blair, \$25 ♣ Mary Blair, in honor of John Blair and the MacPaps, \$60 ♣ Lisa Blodgett, \$75 ♣ Sylvia Brown, in memory of Sid Kaufman, \$50 ♣ Helen Burns, in memory of Paul Burns, \$50 ♣ Carlos Celaya, M.D., in honor of Pedro Merino, \$60 ♣ Trudy and George David, in memory of Norm Perlman and Gabby Rosenstein, \$100 ♣ John De Ruyter, \$75 ♣ Estate of Evelyn Raskin Dawson, \$1,000 ♣ Jo Differding, in memory of Frank Madigan, Rudy Corbin, Mel Anderson, \$30 ♣ Wendy Doniger, \$100 ♣ John R. Downes, \$100 ♣ Frank Ehrmann, in memory of Norm Perlman, \$50 ♣ Harry Fisher, in memory of Ruth, \$100 ♣ Thelma Frye, in memory of Peter Frye, \$100 ♣ Miriam Gittleson, in honor of Lester Gittleson, \$50 ♣ Miriam Goldberg, \$10 ♣ Charles Hall, \$25 ♣ Roz Henderson, \$5 ♣ Marian Iceland, \$25 ♣ Wendy Joseph, in memory of Harry Hakam, \$50 ♣ Leslie Kish, \$50 ♣ Andy Kamaiko, in honor of Moish Brier, \$25 ♣ Al and Sophie Koslow, in memory of Sophie Koslow Levine, \$15 ♣ Susan Linn, \$50 ♣ Robert Lowery, \$25 ♣ Sylvia Marro, in memory of Joe Gordon, \$25 ♣ James Nechas, \$50 ♣ Rita Neri, \$25 ♣ Edie Newman, \$20 ♣ Leonard Olson, \$25 ♣ Abe Osheroff and Bob Reed from the Seattle Poster Exhibition, \$900 ♣ Walter Philips, \$300 ♣ Ted and Eileen Rowland, in memory of Steve Nelson, \$50 ♣ Elaine Ron, in memory of my father, Mark Straus, \$200 ♣ Max Shufer, \$25 ♣ Deborah and Ruth Smith, in memory of Moish Brier, \$100 ♣ George Sossenکو, \$40 ♣ Mildred Thayer, in memory of Donald Thayer, \$50 ♣ Sylvia Thompson, in memory of Bob Thompson, \$25 ♣ Ronald Vinez, \$20 ♣ Harry and Ada Wallach, \$50 ♣ Paul and Patricia Whelan, \$25



The Volunteer

c/o Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade
799 Broadway, Rm. 227
New York, NY 10003

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Vetting the News

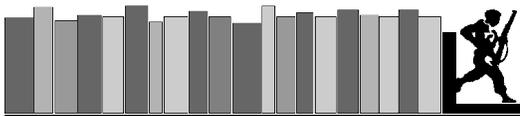
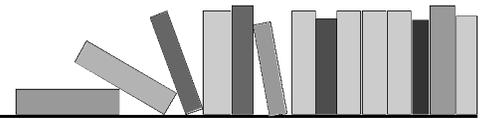


Added to Memory's Roster



Culling the mail sack

Book Reviews



News From Abroad



Rebels Without a Pause



Contributions

