

• • • • • breaking the sound barrier
Voices from the Spanish Civil War

By Amy Goodman

Clarence Kailin is 92 years old. He recently traveled to New York City to attend the annual reunion of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The brigade was originally made up of roughly 3,000 U.S. citizens who volunteered to fight in the Spanish Civil War, which raged from 1936 to 1939.

Seventy years later, Kailin recalled his reasons for leaving the comfort of Madison, WI, to volunteer to fight in defense of Spain's democratically-elected government against a military coup led by Gen. Francisco Franco, backed by Adolf Hitler and Italian dictator Benito Mussolini: "It was fighting against Italian fascism and German Nazism. And we felt that if we lost the war, that World War II was pretty much inevitable, which is what happened. It happened because Britain and France and the United States refused to give us any help at all. And so, we fought barehanded at times."

Moe Fishman, a spry 91-year-old Lincoln Brigade veteran, seconds Kailin's point about the United States: "If they had turned to fighting fascism, Hitler would not have attempted a two-front war. There would not have been World War II, where fascism almost won, and 60 million dead, with destruction beyond compare. And, no, there would have been no Holocaust if Hitler had been stopped in Spain in 1936-39."

The Spanish Civil War is little taught in this country. You might know of it from Pablo Picasso's famous anti-war painting, "Guernica." Hundreds from around the world gathered in that Basque city on April 26 for the 70th anniversary of the German bombing there, one of the first aerial



Amy Goodman

bombardments of civilians. The painting has resonance today. A tapestry of the painting that hangs in the UN was shrouded in 2003, just before then-Secretary of State Colin Powell gave his famous push for war, so that the anti-war image would not form the backdrop to U.S. press statements.

Or you might learn of the Spanish Civil War by reading George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* or Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. In our official history, World War II began for the U.S. with the bombing of Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941. But Kailin and other veterans of the Spanish Civil War are living messengers of a different, authentic history, of the earlier fight against fascism and how World War II might have been prevented.

When the veterans returned home, the U.S. government considered them communist sympathizers. Some were prevented from serving in World War II. The FBI actually labeled them "premature antifascists." (I am not making this up.)

Among the 3,000 volunteers were 80 U.S. women. Most of them served in the medical corps. The documentary *Into the Fire: American Women in the Spanish*

Civil War features the nurses and brave women writers, like Dorothy Parker of *The New Yorker*, *New York Times* writer Virginia Cowles, and author Martha Gellhorn. Gellhorn was a close friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, who opposed the U.S. arms embargo against Spain, but failed to convince her husband, Pres. Franklin Roosevelt, to end it. Gellhorn said: "I was in Germany in 1936, and could not avoid seeing these headlines about the Red Swine Dogs in Spain. I'd been in Spain, but I knew nothing about what had happened ... but all I needed was to read in a German paper that it was the Red Swine Dogs to know whose side I was on — theirs."

The Spanish people endured fascism until Franco's death in 1975. They know war. So it is perhaps no surprise that Spain saw some of the largest anti-war protests before the invasion of Iraq, nor is it surprising that when their prime minister allied with Pres. George W. Bush and Vice Pres. Dick Cheney, they voted him out of office. His replacement, Prime Minister Jose Zapatero, immediately withdrew Spanish troops from Iraq.

In this country, the surviving Spanish Civil War veterans are still working to pass on what they learned. They gathered at the Museum of the City of New York to celebrate its exhibit *Facing Fascism*.

Like Kailin and Fishman, Brigade veteran Matti Mattson, also in his 90s, preferred to look forward rather than look back. "We have to restore our democratic rights," he said.

"We have to get rid of this illegal war."

Let us learn from our elders. ☺

Amy Goodman is the host of Democracy Now!, a daily international TV/radio news hour.

Plant Justice, Reap Peace!
 WOMANSWORK GLOVES, HATS, T-SHIRTS, BANDANAS, AND MORE!
 PLUS, SEEDS FROM RENEE'S GARDEN

peace justice store
 Open Seven Days • 863-8326 • 21 Church Street, Burlington

CROW BOOKSHOP

"Books give not wisdom where none was before. But where some is, there reading makes it more."
 —John Harington (1561-1612)

14 CHURCH ST. BURLINGTON, VT

MAKE YOUR HOME MORE COMFORTABLE AND UP TO 30% MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT.

Efficiency Vermont promotes Home Performance with ENERGY STAR, a whole-house diagnostic testing service that can help Vermonters:

- Solve health and safety issues
- Increase comfort and durability of your home
- Improve indoor air quality
- Lower energy bills through quality installations

For a list of certified contractors or to become a certified contractor, visit our website: www.encyvermont.com.

HOME PERFORMANCE WITH ENERGY STAR
 Efficiency Vermont

WHO WE ARE	HOW TO REACH US	miSCELLANY
<p>Editor & Publisher: Shay Totten Contributing Writer: Christian Avard Associate Editor: Dian Mueller Sales: Christian Avard, Paul Fleckenstein, Charmaine Kinton Calendar Editor: Dian Mueller</p> <p>Contributors: Doug Beekman, Berke Breathed, Peter Burns, Mary Fratini, Jen Gilbert, Bill Griffith, Sonja Hakala, John Howland, Jr., Albert Huebner, Ted Kooser, Alan Lewis, Joe Milliken, Mohammed Omer, Dan Perkins, Terri Schlichenmeyer, Joel Senesac, Norman Solomon, Rob Williams, Jerry Weinberg, Scott Wheeler</p> <p>Photographers: Jessica K. Kell, David Shaw Member: New England Press Association, Vermont Press Association, Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility</p> <p>www.vermontguardian.com</p>	<p>Northern Vermont P.O. Box 335 Winooski, VT 05404 Phone: (802) 861-4880 Fax: (802) 861-6388 Toll Free: (877) 231-5382</p> <p>Southern Vermont 139 Main Street, Suite 603 Brattleboro, VT 05301 Phone: (802) 246-5677 Fax: (802) 246-5676</p> <p>Advertising: sales@vermontguardian.com</p> <p>Calendar: listings@vermontguardian.com</p> <p>Classifieds: classifieds@vermontguardian.com</p> <p>Information: info@vermontguardian.com</p> <p>News: editorial@vermontguardian.com</p> <p>Subscriptions: subscribe@vermontguardian.com</p>	<p>Vermont Guardian is published daily online by Vermont Guardian Media at 130 West Canal Street, Suite 15, Winooski, VT 05404.</p> <p>Subscriptions 6-month online subscriptions are available for \$19.95. 1-year online subscriptions are available for \$34.95. Log onto www.vermontguardian.com with your VISA or MasterCard, or mail your check or money order to "Subscriptions" at P.O. Box 335, Winooski, VT 05404. For Classifieds/Personals or display advertising, please call 877-231-5382. Vermont Guardian shall not be held liable to any advertiser for any loss that results from the incorrect publication of its advertisement. If a mistake is ours, and the advertising purpose has been rendered valueless, Vermont Guardian may cancel the charges for the advertisement, or a portion thereof as deemed reasonable by the publisher. Vermont Guardian reserves the right to refuse any advertising, including inserts, at the discretion of the publishers.</p> <p>©Vermont Guardian Media, Inc. All rights reserved.</p>

Confused in Helmland

By Gwynne Dyer

Respected people of Helmand,” the radio message began. “The soldiers of the International Security Assistance Force [ISAF] and the Afghan National Army [ANA] do not destroy poppy fields. They know that many people of Afghanistan have no choice but to grow poppy. ISAF and the ANA do not want to stop people from earning their livelihoods.”

It was such a sensible message that it almost had to be a mistake, and of course it was.

The message, written by an ISAF officer and broadcast in Helmand province last week on two local radio stations, was immediately condemned by Afghan and American officials from Afghan Pres. Hamid Karzai on down. So does that mean that ISAF really is going to destroy the farmers’ poppy fields?

Well, not exactly. The latest plan is that it will be civilians who spray the farmers’ fields with herbicides, while the Western soldiers just stop the farm-

ers from retaliating. That should win lots of hearts and minds in Helmand and other opium-producing provinces of Afghanistan where the former Taliban regime is making an armed come-back attempt.

The soldiers of ISAF do not want to be seen as destroyers of the poppy crop because that would get lots of them killed (for the farmers can turn into Taliban fighters overnight). It was allegedly a territorial army (reserve) officer newly arrived from Britain who “got a bit carried away with the language” and sent the offending message to local radio stations in Helmand, but most other army officers in Afghanistan, whatever their nationality, privately agree with him. You cannot fight a war against the Taliban and a “war on drugs” successfully at the same time.

That was clearly understood at the time of the invasion in 2001. The Taliban, austere Islamist fanatics that they were, had eradicated poppy-growing entirely by 2000, by the simple expedient of hanging anybody they caught growing poppies.

The Taliban begged for West-

ern aid for the distressed farmers, who were only earning a quarter as much from growing grain and vegetables, but Mullah Amir Mohammed Haqqani was adamant: “Whether we get assistance or not, poppy growing will never be allowed again in our country.”

Then the Taliban’s house guests, Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda friends, carried out the 9/11 attacks against the United States. Bin Laden probably didn’t mention this to the Taliban in advance, because Afghanistan was bound to get invaded as a result. In fact, he almost certainly wanted the United States to invade Afghanistan, imagining that it would result in a long guerilla war and ultimate humiliation for the United States, just as it had done for the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

The United States dodged that bullet by not really invading Afghanistan at all. It simply contacted the various ethnic warlords who were already at war with the Taliban regime, gave them better weapons and lots of money, and left the fighting on the ground to them. It worked very well, and

there was no guerilla war.

However, the United States now depended on those warlords to keep Afghanistan quiet without flooding it with American troops (who were all heading for Iraq anyway). The warlords needed cash flow, which meant poppies: opium and refined heroin account for over one-third of Afghanistan’s gross domestic product and almost all of its exports. So the United States turned a blind eye in 2002 while its warlord allies encouraged farmers to replant the poppies, and didn’t object when they were “elected” to parliament and joined Karzai’s cabinet either.

Opium production soared last year to 6,400 metric tons, and Afghanistan now produces 92 percent of the world’s heroin. The “war on drugs” lobby in the United States insists that something be done about it, so the United States and allied armies end up trying to destroy the farmers’ crops. The Taliban swallow their anti-drug principles and promise to protect the farmers. Guess who wins the war.

“We cannot fail in this mission,” said John Waters, head of the White House’s Office of National Drug Control Policy, last December, as if wishing would make it so. But if he would like

to succeed in Afghanistan, he might just try buying the crop up.

Afghan farmers get paid considerably less than \$100 a kilo for their raw opium. Multiply 6,400 metric tons by \$200 a kilo, to outbid the drug smugglers, and ISAF could have bought up last year’s entire Afghan crop for \$2.5 billion. What’s more, the money would be going straight into the pockets of the people whose “hearts and minds” are at stake: the 13 percent of Afghans who are involved in the opium trade.

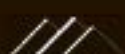
Next year, of course, Afghan farmers would plant twice as many poppies, so the costs of the operation would rise over time. And nothing will stop the flow of heroin to the West: even if poppy production were entirely suppressed in Afghanistan, it would simply move somewhere else, like the Golden Triangle in South-East Asia. But buying up the opium crop is about the only thing that would give ISAF a chance of winning its increasingly nasty little war. ☹

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist.

Featured Non-Profit



Brought to you by:



Trust Company of Vermont

www.tcvermont.com

We support the *Vermont Guardian* in its efforts to be independent, locally controlled and employee owned.



Don't be afraid of Old Man Winter!

Our natural balms and body butter heal & protect dry, cracked, weather-beaten, and sensitive skin on hands, face, body, and feet.

Great for the entire family and anyone you know who bandages their fingers and glues their cracks together!

Handmade in Craftsbury.
 Available throughout Vermont.
 For a store near you call: (802) 586-2482
 or go to www.vermontbeebalm.com

Never Stings!

MAKE YOUR HOME MORE COMFORTABLE AND UP TO 30% MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT.



Efficiency Vermont promotes Home Performance with ENERGY STAR, a whole-house diagnostic testing service that can help Vermonters:

- Solve health and safety issues
- Increase comfort and durability of your home
- Improve indoor air quality
- Lower energy bills through quality installations

For a list of certified contractors or to become a certified contractor, visit our website: www.encyvermont.com.



By John McClaughry

Shabby, desperate attempts to find something new to tax are now playing themselves out in Montpelier. The principal actor is the Senate Pres. Pro Tem Sen. Peter Shumlin, D-Windham.

As every legislator who campaigned last fall well knows, the number one issue afflicting Vermonters all across the state is the rising cost of public education. Those rising costs translate into rising property tax rates. The people demanded action.

But Shumlin opened this year's Legislature, not with a focused effort to deal with education costs, but with two weeks of "seminars" on the menace of global warming. Once everyone was suitably indoctrinated in the urgent need for action to save the planet from Al Gore's heat death, Shumlin planned to push through the sweeping environmental program of the Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG).

There were several key ingredients in the VPIRG anti-heat death program. One was to get people out of big, gas-consuming vehicles. That was the rationale for a \$150 surtax on the purchase of minivans, SUVs, and pickup trucks. The revenues from the tax would be used to subsidize the purchase of upscale hybrids for people who can afford \$35,000 cars, plus little teeny-weeny cars for everybody else. That scheme collapsed in mid-April when even enviro Democrats were too nervous to do it.

Another key ingredient was creating a permanent "efficiency utility" to explain to businesses and homeowners how to get by using less heating fuels. This "thermal efficiency" program was to be paid for with a new tax on heating oil, propane, and natural gas. That scheme — deceitfully labeled a "heating fuel savings charge" — crashed when people who heat their homes and businesses found about it.

By late April, the senator from VPIRG was getting desperate to find new tax dollars to fund his environmental initiatives. So he turned to a favorite shakedown target that, unlike car owners and heating fuel users, doesn't have a vote: Vermont Yankee. Shumlin also represents Windham County. Hitting Vermont Yankee with a new tax is popular with that county's anti-nuclear activists who rightly view him as their favorite politician.

Recall that in November 2003, in return for Department of Public Service's (DPS) support for its application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for a reactor power uprate, Entergy, the owner of Vermont Yankee, agreed to pay the state \$7.8 million to clean up algae in Lake Champlain, 180 miles away, plus \$2.1 million to pay for more low-income home heating assistance.

The lake cleanup plan fund was nixed by the Public Service Board, but in granting uprate approval, Entergy was ordered to put \$4.5 million aside to protect ratepayers from sticker shock if the plant shut down, and then make quarterly payments of \$625,000 to the state.

Two years after making that deal, Entergy sought regulatory permission to store spent fuel rods in concrete casks, instead of a cooling pool. "Aha!" cried the

the upcoming public participation process; and \$50,000 was used to help the University of Vermont and Middlebury College examine the construction of combined heat and power projects.

Now it's 2007. The senator from VPIRG, observing that he was not a party to the 2005 agreement, proposes to tax the spent fuel rods that Vermont Yankee already agreed to pay \$28 million for permission to store. He also proposes to impose a special tax on any revenues the company might make by selling on the spot market the 20 percent of its power not already under a long-term contract. This dishonorable stunt would shatter the 2005 agreement that Entergy, acting in good faith, thought it had sealed with its \$28 million.

But on April 26 that scheme collapsed from legislative opposition (notably from the more

For enough protection money, the state agreed not to strangle Entergy's plans to produce more cheap, dependable power and improve the management of its waste. This is just what any Mafia racketeer would do if he had the power.

Legislature. "Entergy needs another approval. Let's make it pay us \$4 million a year from now until 2012, and we'll decline to object to how the plant stores its used rods (on its own property, at its own expense)."

So, to avoid a long and uncertain political and legal battle, Entergy, the state's lowest cost, most reliable energy producer, agreed to pay the state's new Clean Energy Development Fund as much as \$28 million over the next seven years. The state will use the money to subsidize VPIRG's favorite renewable energy projects, chief among which are legions of already-subsidized 420-foot wind turbine towers marching along Vermont's mountain ridges.

Last year, the Legislature earmarked \$1.3 million in the fund to be used for a variety of projects: \$500,000 to support small-scale wind and solar; \$485,000 to support CowPower projects; \$100,000 went to the Agriculture Agency for renewable energy development; \$100,000 went to an assisted living project in Windham County; \$65,000 went to DPS to defray administrative expenses; \$50,000 was set aside for

conscientious House Speaker Gaye Symington, D-Jericho, who had been a party to the earlier agreement). So the senator from VPIRG proposed another even more far-fetched new tax: a 35 percent tax on any "unanticipated revenues" that only one particular business — Vermont Yankee — might earn from selling its product. Even liberal senators gagged on this fantastic proposal, which if adopted would forever poison Vermont's business climate.

Both the 2003 and 2005 deals between the state and Entergy are examples of government extortion. For enough protection money, the state agreed not to strangle Entergy's plans to produce more cheap, dependable power and improve the management of its waste. This is just what any Mafia racketeer would do if he had the power.

That's bad enough. But the senator from VPIRG now wants to break the latest deal, and hammer Entergy again. Even the Mafia wouldn't do that. ☹

John McClaughry is the president of the Ethan Allen Institute, www.ethanallen.org.

