



# Mississippi to Madrid: Memoir of a Black American in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

*James Yates*

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## **Mississippi to Madrid: Memoir of a Black American in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade** James Yates

From his birth to a share cropper family in the cotton fields of Mississippi to the unrest in Chicago and New York during the depression, James Yates's experience with labor protest and union organizing shaped his vision of freedom and led to his decision to fight against fascism in the Spanish Civil War.

Approximately 100 Blacks were among the 3,200 volunteers from the US that formed the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, the first non-Jim Crow military organization in US history. Yates describes Oliver Law, the first Black commander of a US military unit; Paul Robeson; Langston Hughes, who Yates drove to the front; and nurse Salaria Key O'Reilly. Yates makes cogent connections between fascism and racism.

James Yates returned to the US after having been wounded in the Spanish Civil War. He will be remembered for his active role in the struggle for freedom. James Yates died in January, 1994. The Jimmy Yates Award is presented annually to a short story writer by the Molasses Pond Writers Workshop in Franklin, Maine.

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