



ONE LAST SHOT

THE STORY OF WARTIME PHOTOGRAPHER GERDA TARO

KIP WILSON



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One Last Shot

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Rafael Alberti and María León were both poets. A married couple on the republican side, they supported the arts—and artists—at the Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas in Madrid. After the republican defeat in the Spanish Civil War, the couple fled to Paris and then Argentina, where they remained in exile before returning to Spain in 1977.

Ted Allan was a Canadian writer who covered the Spanish Civil War as a reporter with the International Brigades. He later wrote a semi-autobiographical novel about his experiences called *This Time a Better Earth*.

Ernestine (Terra) Boral and Moritz Pohoryles were Gerda's well-off aunt and uncle, who helped Gerda's family when they first moved to Stuttgart and as the children were growing up. They also left Germany for Petrovgrad, and were most likely murdered in 1941 or 1942 after the nazis entered and occupied Yugoslavia.

Cisela (Cittel) Boral and Heinrich (Hersch) Pohorylle were Gerda's parents. Originally from Galicia (in modern-day

Ukraine but previously part of Poland), they moved to Stuttgart before Gerda was born. After Gerda left Germany for Paris, they stayed in Leipzig until moving to Petrovgrad in the former Yugoslavia (in modern-day Serbia). Gisela died of an illness in 1937. Because it was unclear whether this was before or after Gerda's death, I decided not to mention it. Heinrich was most likely murdered in 1941 or 1942 after the nazis entered and occupied Yugoslavia.

Hans (Pieter) Bote was Gerda's fiancé, although he was quite a bit older than her. He remained friendly and supportive of Gerda even after they broke off their engagement. He was not Jewish, so after the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, their union would have been illegal.

Julia and Cornell Capa (originally Friedmann) were Robert's mother and brother. They traveled to Paris in 1936 and waited there for their visas to emigrate to New York, where they both adopted Robert's new last name as well.

Robert Capa (October 23, 1913–May 25, 1954) was born as Endre Ernő Friedmann (later André Friedmann) in Budapest, Hungary. He left his homeland after his arrest and release to study in Berlin, and then emigrated to Paris after the nazis came to power. Though he was linked to many women after Gerda's death, he never got over her. He is considered one of the greatest war photographers, and died stepping on a land mine on assignment in Vietnam in 1954.

Ruth Cerf was one of Gerda's best friends in Leipzig and Paris. She was Jewish. She left Paris in 1939 for Switzerland, where she survived the war. Biographer Irme Schaber was able to interview her.

Willi Chardack was a student and part of Gerda's circle in both Leipzig and Paris, where he was briefly a boyfriend. He emigrated to New York from Marseilles, France, and became a doctor.

Chim (November 20, 1911–November 10, 1956) was born as Dawid Szymin in Warsaw, Poland, and was later known as David Seymour. Chim studied in Leipzig and Paris, where he became a photographer. He covered the Spanish Civil War and other conflicts, and was killed in action in Egypt in 1956.

John Dos Passos was the American author of the successful USA trilogy, among other works. Owing to his socialist and pacifist views, he served as an ambulance driver in World War I and covered the Spanish Civil War. His experiences there led to disillusionment and eventually changed his political views.

Maria Eisner started Alliance Photo agency. A friend of Robert's from his Berlin days, she offered Gerda a job in Paris. When World War II began, she emigrated to New York, where years later she and five other photojournalists, including Robert and Chim, founded Magnum Photo.

Francisco Franco was a general in the Spanish army and one of the leaders of the coup that aimed to wrest control of Spain from the legitimate republican government. He took charge of the nationalist forces in 1936 and led them to victory in the Spanish Civil War in 1939. Spain then became a dictatorship under his control until his death in 1975.

Federico García Lorca was a poet and playwright of critically acclaimed works. He was also a gay man and a socialist who counted Rafael Alberti and María León as well as Salvador Dalí and many other creative people among his friends. He was murdered by the nationalist militia in August 1936.

Martha Gellhorn was an American war correspondent who covered conflicts including the Spanish Civil War and World War II. She also wrote novels and a memoir, but is often more known for her marriage to Hemingway than her own accomplishments.

Ernest Hemingway was an American author of many acclaimed works, including *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a novel based on his experiences in the Spanish Civil War. He married four times; his third wife was journalist Martha Gellhorn. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954.

Georg Kuritzkes was a Jewish student who was active in Leipzig's left-leaning political scene before leaving to study in Italy. He was one of Gerda's boyfriends, and they remained close

even after she met Robert Capa. She inspired him to join the International Brigades to fight in Spain. He survived the Spanish Civil War and World War II and became a doctor.

Pablo Neruda was a Chilean poet who served as the consul in Madrid, where he was close friends with Rafael Alberti and María León and their friends at the Alianza. His collection *España en el corazón* was a testament to his belief in the republican cause. He later served as consul in Mexico City and as a senator in Chile before going into exile for his communist political views. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1971.

Oskar and Karl Pohorylle were Gerda's younger brothers. From what little is known of them, they were as left-wing as Gerda was, so it's unclear why they didn't leave Germany with or after her (although likely both to make things easier on Gerda—since they didn't speak French—and to stay with and help their parents). They were most likely murdered in 1941 or 1942 after the nazis entered and occupied Yugoslavia.

Meta Schwarz was Gerda's best friend in Stuttgart, who went with her to finishing school in Switzerland. She was not Jewish. She remained in Stuttgart, where she survived the war, and biographer Irme Schaber was able to interview her.

Fred and Liselotte (Lilo) Stein fled Germany in 1933 for Paris, where Fred began working as a photographer because he

was unable to work there as a lawyer. They took in other émigrés, including Gerda Taro, at their flat. After World War II began, the couple eventually escaped Paris for Marseilles and traveled to New York on the same ship as Willi Chardack.

Gerda Taro (August 1, 1910–July 26, 1937) was born as Gerta Pohorylle in Stuttgart, Germany. To keep things simpler here, I used the Gerda spelling of her name throughout, but she and André Friedmann did come up with their working names together (Robert Capa and Gerda Taro) when living in Paris. She was the first known female photojournalist killed on the battlefield (in Brunete, Spain).

Lucien Vogel was a French editor and director of several publications, including *Vu*, a photo-heavy magazine that was the first to publish Robert's photos under his pseudonym. He also arranged the first trip that brought Gerda and the others to Spain.

General Walter was the nickname of Karol Świerczewski, a Polish and Soviet general who was one of the leaders of the International Brigades in many battles, including Brunete.

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As I mentioned in the author's note, Spain holds a place in my heart like no other. My immense thanks to Bernardo for introducing me to this beautiful country, and to the entire Rechea family for welcoming an American twenty years ago whose first efforts to speak Spanish came out in German. Muchas gracias por todo, abuelita Marta; hermanos Cecilia, Agustín, María José, Charo y Taeksoo; tíos Cristina, Alfredo, Pilar, Rafa, Miguel, Pili, Carmen y Juan Manuel; y primos Pedro, Lolín, Cristina, Rafa, Gema, Jaime, David, Lucas y Tomás.

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Finally, thank *you*, reader, for stepping into the past on this journey through Gerda Taro's extraordinary life with me. I hope she captivates you as much as she did me, and I hope her passion will inspire you to fight for your beliefs with your entire heart.

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GLOSSARY

GERMAN

Anderssein: being other

blitzschnell: lightning fast

Familie: family

Hauptbahnhof: main train station

jawohl: absolutely

Königin-Charlotte-Realschule: Queen Charlotte Secondary
School

Liebe: dear

Onkel: uncle

Reich: empire

Reichstag: parliament

Tante: aunt

Tanzorchester: dance orchestra

Trauerbinde: armband worn in mourning

Umzug: parade

Zellerstraße: Zeller Street

FRENCH

à bientôt: see you

arrondissements: districts

au revoir: good-bye

bisou: kiss

bonjour: hello, good day

centime: penny

charmant: charming

le chef: the boss

copain: pal, boyfriend

escargot: snail

fausse: fake

flirter: flirt

Front Populaire: Popular Front

Gare de l'Est: east train station

Jardin du Luxembourg: Luxembourg Garden

Je t'adore: I adore you

Je t'aime: I love you

joie de vivre: joy of life

mais oui: that's right

Quartier Latin: Latin Quarter

parler: speak

sourire: smile

un, deux, trois: one, two, three

Veux-tu m'épouser?: Do you want to marry me?

vin de table: table wine

SPANISH

alcázar: fortress

Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas: Alliance of Anti-Fascist
Intellectuals

alpargatas: rope-soled canvas sandals

aventuras en España: adventures in Spain

barras de pan: loaves of bread

Frente Popular: Popular Front

madrileños: people from Madrid

No pasarán: They shall not pass

la pequeña rubia: the little blonde

Regresaremos, mi amor: We'll return, my love

salud: cheers

Semana Santa: Holy Week

señorita: miss

también: too