

women. He also offers compelling analysis to account for the apparent increase in juvenile delinquency that caused much anxiety during the war years. Since the segment of the population most prone towards criminal activity — young men — was largely absent from Canada, civilian police forces were more likely to target youths than they had before the war.

Keshen's thoughtful insights help enliven his study and caution historians against relying too heavily on any one source. The propagandist use of certain groups could mask the reality of their experiences. For instance, the British children who were evacuated to Canada during the blitz "emerged as inspiring symbols of the United Kingdom's resolve to resist the Nazis and Canada's determination to stand by the mother country to an extent that resulted in an almost exclusive focus on heartwarming and successful experiences, with virtually no attention paid of significant failings in the program and much suffering" (p. 226). Such insights are a direct result of Keshen's approach that balances personal accounts with contemporary media portrayals and government propaganda. Fortunately, Keshen does not allow the numerous wartime surveys, facts, and figures that he cites to overwhelm the voices of individuals.

By including soldiers and civilians in the same social history, Keshen moves towards a more comprehensive analysis of the Second World War in Canadian history. The war is present in this book, but male and female service members are part of the continuum of Canadian society, rather than relegated to a separate "military history".

In his conclusion, Keshen argues reservedly that the conflict left "a legacy of progressive, bold, and often ground-breaking initiatives that provided millions with the means to achieve greater personal growth, social mobility, financial security — and even, it might be said, good reason to speak of a 'good war' " (p. 286). *Saints, Sinners and Soldiers* thus answers its original question from a liberal perspective. However, the evidence he presents that the war was responsible for raising the consciousness of women sits uneasily with the socially conservative nature of the Veteran's Charter and the family allowance. Likewise, orders-in-council that ultimately consolidated capital's control of labour are not worked out in his analysis. Nevertheless, it is a testament to the breadth of his research that there is ample material in the text to support alternative judgements on the legacy of Canada's Second World War.

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KOWALSKY, Daniel — *La Unión Soviética y la Guerra Civil Española. Una revisión crítica*. Barcelona: Crítica, 2003. Pp. 504.

Courage, good intentions, and reason win far more easily and frequently in fiction than in reality, and this is particularly true for Europe in the 1930s and early 1940s. Most sensible students of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) have always felt frustrated by the incapacity of the Republican army to win decisive victories. History

often seems to follow a plot imagined by José Luis Borges. As a new page is turned, readers may wish for things to change, but again and again they find that the Past is there: hard, immobile to human wishes, almost enjoying our frustration by siding with the wrong side. And there were many bad causes winning in Europe in the 1930s and early 1940s, which cost millions of innocent lives. First, the Fascists finally were able to take Madrid in 1939. Then, with many more disasters in between, exactly four years later, Nazis were to raze the Warsaw Ghetto. In those two distant corners of Europe, hope was finally overcome by terror. The comparison between those two cities is not accidental.

Hope for the Spanish Second Republic came from an unlikely place: the sinister, murderous Soviet Union of Joseph Stalin. It came by default. Conservative Britain and deeply divided France denied help to the legal government of Spain only one week after the beginning of the war. International law and huge gold reserves were not enough to overcome those supposed super-powers' fears of Communism, even if the Spanish Communists were, in July 1936, a rather small political party with no presence in the government. Hitler and Mussolini were not bound by any moral (however hypocritical) restraint, and they were already sending everything they could to help Franco. By the end of July, their meddling in Spain was clear to everybody. It was then that Stalin, who only the previous year allowed the Comintern to discover that democracies and Socialists were not after all Fascist puppets, saw a chance to play his new role as defender of bourgeois freedoms and perhaps to turn things to his advantage.

Daniel Kowalsky has written the best book available on Stalin's intervention in the Spanish Civil War. Before writing, he first learned Russian and went to the former Soviet Union archives, when they were briefly open to researchers. This is more than any other historian of Spanish-Soviet relations had done, and it shows. His work is detailed and yet provides a rich analysis of the unlikely liaison between the ruthless dictator and the dying democracy. The information and data that he provides are revealing and, in many cases, shocking. Perhaps the most crucial among Kowalsky's revelations is the cadence of Soviet military help to the Republic. He makes clear how after July 1937, two years before the end of the war, that help dropped dramatically, which left the Republican army under-equipped just as the quality and the amount of materiel sent by the Fascist powers was increasing. This is enough to explain why the Republic, after the successful defence of Madrid in the fall of 1936 and the victory at Guadalajara the following March, was not only unable to turn the tide of the war but entered a period of constant, painful defeats and retreats.

For many years, historians and others have argued that the Republic lost because of too much or too little revolution behind its lines. Kowalsky's work, like all very good history books, puts those debates where they deserve to be: in the realm of political lucubrations. Wars are won by the side that is able to put more men and more and better weapons on the field, and to sustain them there longer. The Republic was outmatched in most aspects by the better-supplied rebels. At the end, whether revolution was taking place or not, whether the tactics adopted were the better ones, or whether there was too much infighting and too little organization

mattered only to an extent, but none of these factors was decisive enough to decide the fate of the war.

By March 1938, the Republic credit in Moscow, paid until then with the gold sent by the Spanish government, was exhausted. The high prices charged by Moscow (about 25 per cent too high) had something to do with this. However, the Soviets kept sending enough materiel to keep the Republican forces alive but not enough to gain them victory. Why? Was it a product of Stalin's famous duplicity? Lack of resources? Or the reorientation of Soviet attention to events in China and Mongolia? Kowalsky has no definitive answer, and it seems very unlikely that we will ever know what was in Stalin's mind. What we know is that those whom he sent to Spain often were rewarded with execution for their efforts. Dictators do not commit mistakes, and it seems that Stalin could neither assume that he had failed in Spain nor allow witnesses of that failure to remain alive. But the logic behind the limited Soviet intervention in Spain still escapes us, perhaps because, as in so many tragedies of the past, there was not logic but a trail of hopes and corpses left behind.

The easily predictable fate of the loyalists by late 1938 affected morale, especially of those who knew how bad the situation was becoming. Indalecio Prieto, the redoubtable Socialist Minister of Defence, had been frequently accused of pessimism, as opposed to his indomitable fellow Socialist, Prime Minister Juan Negrin. Perhaps we should change forever our opinion of both and rediscover wisdom in Prieto's pessimism and lack of realism in Negrin's stubbornness. The mythical tale of the Republican lost good cause probably also needs to be revised. When the sensible reader returns to the pages of resistance and doomed glory of that ill-fated army, he or she must keep in mind that, in each unchangeable page of defeat, the retreating Republican soldiers are more alone and vulnerable than we always hoped they were, not only because the United Kingdom and France sold their future for a few more months of appeasement but also because their dark ally, Stalin, now was thinking of a pact with Hitler. The booty was first Madrid, then Warsaw, and finally tens of millions of lives and the death of innocence.

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LAMONDE, Yvan et Sophie MONTREUIL (dir.) — *Lire au Québec au XIX^e siècle*, Montréal, Fides, 2004, 332 p.

L'histoire du livre au Canada se porte bien. Ses assises institutionnelles se sont consolidées et le projet « History of the Book in Canada / Histoire du livre et de l'imprimé au Canada » s'apprête – si ce n'est déjà fait – à rendre le premier de ses trois volumes. De tels projets mobilisateurs s'accompagnent généralement de nombreuses retombées scientifiques. La publication de ce recueil d'articles, rassemblés par Yvan Lamonde et Sophie Montreuil, est du nombre; elle s'inscrit dans la foulée des travaux préparatoires au deuxième volume dont les deux chercheurs sont les maîtres d'œuvre francophones.