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Review of James Matthews ed. *Spain at War: Society, Culture, and Mobilization, 1936- 44*

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Chile's among Latin American nations. As one would anticipate, most beneficiaries were Nationalists, including Ramón Serrano Suñer, who travelled to Marseilles clandestinely on the naval vessel *Tucumán*, but Argentine policy also helped some Republicans.

The volume concludes with Manuela Consonni's unusual tribute to Renzo Giua, a young Italian who died in Spain in 1938, "with guns blazing" (270). She combines his personal story with that of the clandestine resistance to the Fascist regime in Italy. Giua's own story mostly consists of lengthy extracts from texts written "by those who knew him very well or very little" (271), as well as some letters he wrote to his mother. She borrows the structure from Hans Magnus Enzensberger's biography of Buenaventura Durruti, but her claim that Giua's story resembles Durruti's is unconvincing.

As Rein and Thomàs point out in their introduction, written in December 2017, the Spanish Civil War remains a "source of contention of controversy" (1), with debate still swirling around the Valley of the Fallen and the *callejero* of Madrid. Much has happened in the subsequent two years, including the dramatic/anticlimactic exhumation of Francisco Franco from the Valley of the Fallen broadcast live over many hours on October 24, 2019. Whether this will lead to the repurposing of this Francoist monument is, in the extremely complex current political situation, very much an open question. What is beyond doubt is that the production of scholarship devoted to this seminal event in Spain's— and Europe's— twentieth-century history will not slacken any time soon.

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Matthews, James, ed. *Spain at War: Society, Culture, and Mobilization, 1936-44*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. xii 263 pp. + 14 ill.

James Matthews, who previously won acclaim from the Association of Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies for his *Reluctant Warriors: Republican Popular Army and Nationalist Army Conscripts in the Spanish Civil War 1936-1936* (2012), can count this new edited volume as another achievement. Matthews gives this collection cohesion by bringing together twelve other scholars who can all speak and provide depth to one unifying topic. Namely, the volume's object is to allow the reader to understand what the experience of the Spanish Civil War was like for everyday people—soldiers and civilians—on both sides of the conflict. In so doing, Matthews hopes to demonstrate the agency that these participants exercised, bringing social and cultural analysis to the fore where political and military history have previously dominated the study of the civil war. Thus, he

understands the volume as “new” military history, that is, as part of the movement to develop a “dialogue between military history and social and cultural history;” although, not all chapters are in dialogue with the work of military historians (2). What this volume certainly does do is provide “the grassroots perspective of the experience of war and mobilization between 1936 and 1944” (3). Since each chapter presents a different grassroots perspective, the result is a fairly comprehensive overview that covers the war from its inception to aftermath and spans over a dozen topics, from economics to gender, children to food. Each chapter adheres to Matthews’s mission of foregrounding the social and cultural aspects of the war rather than the politics, battles, and generals, such that the chapters combine to create a new narrative of the war entirely focused on subaltern actors. Since Matthews also provides a brief overview of the course of the war in the introduction, a reader with no prior knowledge of the war could gain a unique grounding in it through this volume, which suggests that the work should be ideal for undergraduate classroom use.

Matthews frames the civil war as a “total war” since the volume’s chapters demonstrate that it affected every aspect of life. Regrettably, however, the collection’s authors do not use the material they present to spell out an explicit case for why the civil war was a “total war,” even though many seem to provide further evidence for Roger Chickering’s argument that the civil war should be considered as such. Although less emphasized in Matthews’s introduction, many chapters do make the argument that the Republic did not lose the war solely because it did not receive substantial aid from the Western democracies (although the authors do not deny that this was a very important reason), but also because the Republic was much less successful in mobilizing its population to fight the war than were the Nationalists. While this conclusion echoes the previous work of scholars such as Michael Seidman, the authors in this volume provide further abundant evidence to support the thesis, showing that the Republicans faced disorganization and disunity in almost every facet of mobilization, including conscription, desertion prevention, espionage, finance, and provisioning. The treatment of each of these varied topics can only be about fifteen pages given the number of chapters in this volume, but each one provides a few suggestions for further reading as well as endnotes so readers can easily find more information. One last achievement of the collection should be mentioned. Matthews brings together Anglophone and Spanish scholars as well as both veterans of the field and relative newcomers. The reader can see how pioneers of the social history of Spain like Seidman and Adrian Shubert paved the way for the innovative new directions that the younger cultural and gender historians featured in this collection are taking in the field.

The volume’s many chapters are logically organized into sections focusing on the initial mobilization of the militias, the later mobilization for total war, the situation in the rearguard, and then finally the aftermath of the war. Matthews and

Michael Alpert begin with the Republican militias, and although they acknowledge that the militias were the key to foiling the coup that set off the civil war, the authors then paint a picture of almost total disarray in which the disunified, poorly equipped and inexperienced militias proved no match for the Army of Africa's disciplined veterans. The contrast with the Nationalist militias, as described by Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrío, could hardly be starker. While Peñalba-Sotorrío proves that the tensions between the Falangist and Carlist militias were very real, it is clear that they were both more effective in battle and more willing to unify than their Republican counterparts. Ultimately, she concludes that the fusion of the Falange and the Carlists into the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Socialista was a victory for the Falange that left the Carlists with little authority.

The next section of the volume concerns mobilization after the initial phase of the war. Matthews begins by considering the conscript experience on both sides of the conflict. While it is no surprise that the Nationalists were more effective in getting their conscripts to fight than the Republicans, Matthews shows that the reality of conscription was not as simple as militarized, authoritarian coercion on the Nationalist side and more respect for freedom and human rights on the Republican side. The Republicans began conscription later than the Nationalists and had looser discipline at first, but late in the war the Popular Army resorted to tactics as extreme as mass executions to try and force conscripts to stay at the front. Not only were the Nationalists able to keep their conscripts better supplied, they proved better at providing what Matthews calls "psychological comforts" (59). Small measures such as offering goods for purchase, a mail service, and regulated prostitutes, all of which the Nationalists made available more effectively than the Republicans, went a long way towards making obligatory military service tolerable. Despite these measures, desertion and self-mutilation were serious problems for both sides, as Pedro Corral's chapter documents. Yet here again, the Nationalists dealt with these issues harshly yet consistently, relying on summary military justice, whereas the Republicans went from Popular Courts to summary executions to offering an amnesty. One would think that the Republic would have had less trouble with its spies, which were supposed to be among its most enthusiastic adherents, but Hernán Rodríguez Velasco demonstrates that this was not the case. Like other aspects of the Republican war machine, its spy network was dogged by disorganization and underfunding, and most spies turned out to be more motivated by personal rather than political reasons, giving more intelligence away about their own side when they were captured than they had gathered on the enemy.

Ali Al Tuma's chapter considers another little-studied group of participants in the war: the Moroccan *regulares*. Al Tuma exposes the deep-seated prejudice that the Republicans held against the "*moros*" and reveals that this prejudice remains present in scholarship on the civil war to this day in the form of the almost

universally held assumptions that the *regulares* were brutal fighters only in Spain for the money. Al Tuma demonstrates that while the *regulares* did commit some atrocities, especially early in the war, how many of these acts were committed is actually unknown. His study of veterans' testimonies also reveals that while economics were certainly a draw, *regulares* were also motivated by a desire to fight those whom they perceived as "Godless Reds." In addition, while talk of a "Moorish invasion" made good propaganda for the Republicans, it might have been at least partially counterproductive since Republicans developed a habit of killing Moroccan prisoners. No wonder the *regulares* were thought to be willing to fight to the last man.

The chapters on the war effort in rearguard areas provide still more evidence that the Nationalists were better able to manage their affairs than the Republicans. Of all the authors in this volume, Seidman makes this claim most forcefully in his chapter on economics and monetary policy. He convincingly argues that the Nationalists' conservative monetary policy convinced international business that Francoist Spain was a safe place to invest, and consequently the Nationalists were able to raise much-needed funds on credit. The Germans and Italians were not the Francoists' only creditors; the Spanish bourgeoisie greatly aided the war effort as well. In contrast, the Republicans were never able to convince investors that their property would be safe. The Republic turned to hyperinflation as a way to compensate for its lack of funds, but this only encouraged capital flight and hoarding. Whereas bank deposits and industrial output actually increased in the Nationalists' militarized economic system, the Republic found it impossible to collect taxes and economic productivity plummeted. Seidman highlights these differences between the Nationalists and Republicans, but Ángela Cenarro demonstrates that in regard to their social policies there were many similarities between the two sides. Both tried to mobilize women for the war effort by channeling them into caregiving work and sought to found a new social order through state intervention.

Suzanne Dunai and Verónica Sierra Blas make clear how deeply the effects of the war were felt even far from the front lines through examining food and children, respectively. Suzanne Dunai argues that, like so many other aspects of its war effort, the Republican failure to provision its population adequately with food undermined that population's willingness to continue supporting the war effort. She points out that while Madrid and Barcelona did not experience a famine during the war, there was a food crisis, and residents considered their monotonous diet unacceptable after enjoying increased food variety in the preceding decades. Regarding children, that tens of thousands were evacuated during the war is well known, but Sierra Blas shows how such experiences affected children's memories by examining the letters and artwork the children made as a way to face their

trauma. She concludes that these traumas defined a generation as many had to cope with them for the rest of their lives.

In the section on the aftermath of the war, Francoist Spain is compared to the fascist states of Italy and Germany rather than to the Republic. Ángel Alcalde finds that the Francoist state, like these other fascist regimes, honored its veterans but left many in a state of impoverishment. As for Republican veterans, they often had to endure a concentration camp in either Spain or France. Xosé M. Núñez Seixas examines the Spanish “Blue Division,” which fought for the Axis on the Eastern Front in the Second World War. He questions the usual assertion of military historians that the Blue Division was simply anticommunist and not linked to the Nazi’s larger genocidal project by examining the actions of the “Blue Division” in the rearguard. He determines that while division members were not involved in mass killings, this was because the Spanish did not participate in the most brutal fighting and partisan warfare rather than because they lacked the racial ideology of the Nazis. Ian Winchester examines what the composition of the Francoist ideology was regarding masculinity. In a creative, Foucaultian reading of training manuals and instructional pamphlets, he argues that the compulsory military service, which continued after the civil war had ended, was a way for the regime to imbue young men with a conception of masculinity that followed the conservative sexual mores of the Church while also emphasizing discipline, obedience, and subordination—characteristics that were important for maintaining a docile citizenry.

Taken as a whole, the most refreshing aspect of this edited volume is that it truly concentrates on the social and cultural experience of the war for everyday people, thereby avoiding the polarized politicization of the war’s history that has plagued scholarship on the subject for so long. The reader will find little here on the war’s charismatic generals and politicians, the heady days of anarchist revolution, or the romanticism of the International Brigades. After all, as Matthews informs us, less than ten percent of the war’s combatants were volunteers. While most scholarship has focused on that ten percent, telling the story of the other ninety seems like as worthy a goal as any for the historian, a goal at least as worthy as determining whether the anarchists or the communists did more damage to the Republic or comparing the body counts of different massacres in the Republican and Nationalist rearguards. This volume shows that most of those impacted by the war were not primarily motivated by any ideological concern. Historians will paint a more representative and ultimately more moving picture of the war if they, rather than engaging in the polarized debates of old, ask questions directly related to the experiences of low-ranking participants: how did the war affect the lives of ordinary Spaniards and how did they seek to cope with those effects? *Spain at War*

demonstrates that there are historians today on both sides of the Atlantic seeking to answer such essential questions.

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Brenneis, Sarah J. *Spaniards in Mauthausen: Representations of a Nazi Concentration Camp, 1940-2015*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. xii + 365 pp. + 10 ill.

Following the liberation of German concentration camps by Allied forces, accounts and testimonies emerged from Jewish Holocaust survivors and led the discourse surrounding the experiences of the victims of Nazi policies. Since then, representations of the Shoah have included these testimonies, but have also extended to include novels, documentaries, Hollywood films, and the creation of Holocaust Studies programs and research centers in academe. The importance of documenting, studying, and continuing the discussion of the tragedy of the Holocaust cannot be understated. In *Spaniards in Mauthausen: Representation of a Nazi Concentration Camp, 1940-2015*, Sara Brenneis contributes significant scholarship to Holocaust Studies at large, and Spanish cultural studies, specifically. Despite the many texts about the Holocaust, both historical and fictional, the experiences of Spaniards who survived and witnessed the atrocities have been largely overlooked. Through the introduction and subsequent five chapters of *Spaniards in Mauthausen*, Brenneis argues for the recognition of the experience of the Spanish deportees who lived and died in concentration camps in order to provide a more inclusive depiction of the Holocaust. Brenneis considers a wide variety of texts spanning seven decades—from high cultural productions to popular cultural materials—that range from survivors’ first-hand memoirs to postmemory works from the second and third generations.

As the title suggests, Brenneis’ study centers on representations of the Spanish experience in the Mauthausen labor camp and its subcamps where a majority of Spanish victims (most of whom were Catalan) were transported (5). The introduction situates Spain’s position within the larger context of World War II and the Holocaust, including Franco and his government’s complicity in the detainment of the more than 7,000 men who fought for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War. Importantly, the introduction differentiates the Spanish prisoners from the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Because of their positions as non-Jews, Spanish survivors “agreed that they held an often-privileged position in the camp, one that was radically different from the treatment of the Jewish prisoners there” (17).