

The second half of the book focuses on money as a cultural category and desired consumer goods like the automobile and items from the Intershops. Zatlín closes the book with a chapter on letters of complaint about East Germany's inability to satisfy consumer desires and an epilogue on German unification. Although beyond the scope of the volume, a comparative analysis with the Soviet Union and other Eastern-Bloc countries may have illuminated the peculiarities of the East German experience.

The author is best when he illustrates abstract concepts with specific stories. The most memorable and emblematic story the author has dug up is East Germany's attempt to bottle and sell the Western-trademarked Pepsi-Cola. Typically, the GDR ended up renegeing on the contract and used the bottles to sell beer and not Pepsi.

The Currency of Socialism will appeal to specialists in GDR history and offers a richly documented alternative to traditional accounts about the failures of the East German economy. Paradoxically, money was never eliminated, but rather East Germans' desire for Western consumer goods led to a quest for hard currency. In a globally interdependent world, the bankrupt economy also became increasingly dependent on the West in other areas like modern technology to keep the society functioning. Finally, instead of continuing to import goods from the West, East Germany became part of it through unification.

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GENERAL, COMPARATIVE, HISTORIOGRAPHICAL

Comrades and Commissars: The Lincoln Battalion in the Spanish Civil War. By Cecil D. Eby. (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007. Pp. xv, 510. \$39.95.)

On 17 July 1936, the Spanish military revolted against the legally elected center-left Republican government. While Hitler and Mussolini backed the insurgents, the Soviet Union provided military aid and promoted the recruitment of over thirty-five thousand volunteers to join what became known as the International Brigades to assist the Republican government in the fight against its fascist foes.

From the onset of hostilities, a debate has raged over the place of the Spanish Civil War in U.S. history. Many see the struggle of the Spanish Republic against its enemies as part of the global fight against exploitation, and they hold the appeasement policies pursued by the U.S. along with other Western democracies

responsible for the defeat of the Republic and for encouraging further Fascist aggression. Others, including Cecil D. Eby, dismiss Moscow's intervention in the conflict and its decision to recruit international volunteers, including 2,800 Americans, as an expression of Stalin's global expansionist designs. The work most cited as evidence of Moscow's nefarious designs over Spain is George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* [1938], in which he accused Soviet agents of crushing the anti-Stalinist and anarchist movement in Barcelona in 1937. The Barcelona events, as described by Orwell, provide a common foundation for the interpretations offered by anti-Soviet leftists and conservatives. Although the first group claims that Soviet-inspired repression of the anti-Stalinist forces undermined popular support for the Republic, the second sees it as proof that a Republican victory would have turned Spain into a satellite of the Soviet Union.

Significantly those who use *Homage to Catalonia* as the centerpiece of their interpretation ignore Orwell's later writings on the subject. In 1943, with Hitler in control over continental Europe, Orwell revised his earlier assessment of the reasons for the fall of the Spanish Republic in an essay titled "Looking Back on the Spanish War." This time, rather than blaming Communists and Moscow for the defeat of the Republic, Orwell wrote that the "outcome of the Spanish war . . . was settled in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin—at any rate, not in Spain." The Fascists won, he wrote, not in response to Moscow's expansionist aims but rather "because they were the stronger; they had modern arms and the others hadn't. No political strategy could offset that."

The author claims that *Comrades and Commissars* is an "updated" version of his earlier book, *Between the Bullet and the Lie* [1969]. Unlike Orwell, nothing is new in Eby's second work. The author ignores the wealth of new documentation, including personnel files of international volunteers that have emerged from the archives of the former Soviet Union and, instead, continues to rely on discredited sources, repeats disproved rumors, and "cherry picks" through secondary works for information that supposedly supports earlier claims while ignoring what does not. Readers are presented with a litany of clichés, errors of fact, and sloppy translations; even worse, the author's extensive claims of Soviet malfeasance and heavy-handed activities in Spain are made without reference to documentary evidence. In the end, *Comrades and Commissars* does not add to the ongoing historical discussion on the Spanish Civil war and the book's shoddy editing does not reflect favorably on the press that published it.