

Fernando Lopez-Alves in his analysis of the political structure elaborated in Uruguay.

The volume comprises essays of diverse coverage; some examine the region as a whole while others use a comparative approach which covers a few nations, and still others explore a particular theme within only one country. Ian Roxborough provides a broad overview of the perils of labour in the postwar period in which he weaves together the various forces arrayed for and against the movement. David Rock's general essay on the United States and Latin America as well as his introductory and concluding chapters bring together information on the region as a whole which challenges the history of the region as a whole. These two contributors stand out simply because their essays fulfil the mandate of the volume most fully.

The unevenness in coverage of the region as a whole within the essays probably reflects a lack of depth in these particular areas of inquiry. Rather than signalling a weakness in the volume, this factor should only indicate directions for future research. A number of essays address distinct topics within the setting of the external influences specific to the 1940s. Corinne Antezana-Pernet, for example, documents the attempts of Chilean women to secure the vote. The political processes which were particular to pro-suffrage Chilean organizations in this period are clarified in the light of international trends. In the same vein, the impact of World War II on Argentine farming is explored by Daniel Lewis who argues that the crisis of this sector arose from a combination of internal weaknesses and the loss of markets due to the war. On the other hand, Joseph Cotter present a revisionist version of the

"Green Revolution" in Mexico in which Mexican farmers rather than suffering an isolation during this period benefitted from the introduction of foreign seeds, fertilizers and technology.

Although the authors' disciplines are varied, the approaches of the essays are uniformly political and economic. The analysis thus holds together tightly but does not go beyond a small range of analytical strategies. The authors argue collectively and individually that this period represented a key transformation but do not give us any sense of mentalities or the cultural impact of these sea changes. The integrated method used by the authors of this anthology is one which shows much promise for a reinterpretation of twentieth-century Latin America and already has shed new light on this period.

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David J. Bercuson and S.F. Wise (eds.), *The Valour and the Horror Revisited* (Montreal: McGill Queen's 1994).

When the CBC aired *The Valour and the Horror*, a three-part television series on Canada's role in World War II, it sparked a major controversy among viewers, war veterans, and historians. Brian and Terence McKenna, the authors-producers of the series, were accused of distorting historical facts, maligning individuals such as Commanders Arthur Harris and Guy Simonds, presenting a biased account of events, and overstepping the line between journalism, history, and drama. Their revisionist interpretations of Canadian involvement in Normandy,

Hong Kong, and Britain challenged long-held assumptions and historical explanations as to perceived Canadian performance. Brian and Terrence McKenna forced the issue of alternative historical interpretation into the national spotlight. The ensuing debate was played out in the media, universities, and even made its way into the Senate Chambers when a Royal Commission investigated the role of "docudrama" as Canadian historical fact.

However, the focus of the debate shifted from historical interpretation to the question of "docudramas" as a viable outlet for an historical explanation. *The Valour and the Horror Revisited* sets out to address such important issues as the nature of "docudrama," the meaning of the Canadian experience in the war, and the nature of history. This collection of original documents and reports, essays, and commentaries provides an in-depth look at the specific accusations and the larger questions concerning responsible journalism. Both Bercuson and Wise appeared before the Senate Committee as independent historians commissioned to investigate the historical accuracy of the McKenna's film series. Part of their testimony and findings serve as the basis for this book. The editors of the book were drawn into the debate because they agreed, as professional military historians, to evaluate the series for William Morgan, the CBC Ombudsman. In particular, they were asked to consider how well the three episodes depicted Canadian participation in the Second World War in terms of their fairness, balance, and accuracy.

More importantly, Bercuson and Wise address the most fundamental question in regards to this on-going debate: Who owns our history? This question has some importance in terms of

the controversy surrounding the series, and certainly it was raised often by the McKennas. As the editors correctly point out, any professional historian has difficulty with the concept of historical truth and is aware of the philosophical pitfalls in store for those who claim to have achieved it.(9)

Bercuson and Wise insist that they have no quarrel with the McKennas venturing upon historical ground and no argument with any attempt to "demythologize" history. However, Wise argues that he does not view the series as history, but rather as a series of journalism.(29) Clearly, Bercuson and Wise strongly disagree with the McKennas. This in itself forces the reader to recognize their bias, and put more emphasis on the historical critiques supplied in the latter part of the book. The editors do an admirable job of setting up the background for the debate and the contentious issues addressed, while the essays provide actual analysis of the historical facts.

Although the editors' opinions and contributions set the tone for the text, the true strengths of this monograph are contained in the historical essays submitted by three leading historians who each objectively investigate the subject matter of a particular episode. As Bercuson and Wise point out, there are instances where the three historians differ from the editors' views. This lack of unanimity helps to strengthen the interpretations forwarded by the contributors.

Professor John Ferris (University of Calgary), who specializes in military intelligence, analyzes the episode entitled "Savage Christmas: Hong Kong, 1941." The McKennas' assertion is that Canadian soldiers, untrained and under-equipped, were knowingly dispatched to Hong Kong by the British Government,

even though Churchill and others knew that a Japanese attack was imminent. Unfortunately, the McKennas base their interpretation on Canadian documentation, not British. Ferris investigates both British and American documentary sources and concludes that neither side knew if, or when the Japanese would attack. Ferris does agree with the McKennas on one point, that being that those *particular* Canadian troops should not have been sent. The Canadians were to be used for garrison duty, not combat duty. The McKennas correctly argue that the troops were ill-prepared for battle, but they fail to inquire as to why that was. Perhaps Ferris' conclusion correctly assigns blame, if any, to a Canadian society and government that starved its military forces for years on end and then one day sent them off against well-equipped enemies, in pursuit not of national interests defined by Canadian politicians but of international interests defined by external authorities.(122)

Bill McAndrew, a historian at the Director General History, National Defence Headquarters, investigates the episode devoted to the Canadian army in Normandy. The McKennas assert that the Canadian Army was undertrained and poorly led and needlessly suffered heavy losses. McAndrew's analysis focusses on the numerous complexities and dimensions of a battlefield. McAndrew investigates one particular battle, "Operation Spring" and agrees with the McKennas that the troops were indeed poorly equipped. However, similar to Ferris, McAndrew looks beyond the simplicity of assigning blame to Canadian soldiers and officers. McAndrew looks at the larger picture of all Allied Forces, commanders, and the decision-making process while a battle is in progress. McAndrew concludes that there are thou-

sands of variables involved in large-scale combat, and that there was no "cover-up" of evidence by Canadian commanders as the McKennas suggested. McAndrew suggests that errors were made, but that errors are inevitable in wartime.

Scott Robertson, a historian at the Directorate of Force Concepts-National Defence Headquarters, analyzed the "Death By Moonlight" episode. The central contention of the episode was that the strategic bombing campaign against Germany during the Second World War was both immoral and ineffectual, and that Canadian pilots were duped into taking part in this monstrous crime against humanity. Robertson agrees with the McKennas that there must be some revulsion against the futility of human carnage. Indeed, Robertson goes further than the McKennas when he suggests that it is understandable that some would seek to condemn the bomber offensive on the basis of the result.(173) However, Robertson correctly points out this revulsion should not unduly influence the nature of historical inquiry. It should be borne in mind that the task of historians is not to deliver verdicts, but to analyze and understand, which does not necessarily mean approve of, events as they occurred. Unlike the McKennas, Robertson investigates why Bomber Command adopted such a strategy. This is not addressed by the McKennas. If this had been understood, the McKennas' interpretation might have been a bit easier to accept.

In the end, *The Valour and the Horror Revisited* provides one of the best examples in current Canadian historiography to address the question of who owns history. Is it the private domain of professional historians (Bercuson, Wise)? Is it the public domain of commissioned film-makers (Brian and

Terrence McKenna)? Is there room for both schools of thought? These are fundamental questions at the heart of this debate. Sadly, most Canadians have little knowledge of the actual facts surrounding this critical period in Canadian history. The greatest aspect of this book is the opportunity provided for all interested parties (historians, journalists, film makers, ordinary Canadians) to look at a variety of historical interpretations, either traditional or revisionist, and determine for themselves the role of Canadian soldiers during the Second World War. Any mythology which may have surrounded the Canadian Armed Services during the war is quickly erased. Whether you agree or disagree with either the McKennas or Bercuson and Wise is irrelevant. What is relevant is that Canadians confront any preconceived notions they might have had about who has the right to historical interpretation. This is a question that will never be resolved because it is a collective right. This text is just one step in the process of addressing this challenge.

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Peter C. Emberley and Waller R. Newell, *Bankrupt Education: The Decline of Liberal Education in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1994).

*Bankrupt Education: The Decline of Liberal Education in Canada* is an angry book. Parents are angry because "the school system has abandoned its responsibilities." Teachers are angry because "the ministries of education ... do not

support the teachers, but rather contribute to the general abuse aimed at them." (5) The authors are angry because "instead of providing the foundations of intellectual and spiritual life, the new educational reforms are creating adaptable problem-solvers and socially integrated team-players fearful of giving offense [and] the schools, instead of being communities dedicated to the equality of opportunity and the freedom of the mind, have increasingly become ghettos or theme parks of 'identities' — race, colour, ancestry, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age — and promoters of 'sensitivity' to the totality of ecological existence." (4-5) The authors' "aim is to resist these reforms by restoring the classical ideals of liberal education," reemphasizing the "fair and challenging system of liberal education put in place by the architects of Canadian schooling, ... who understood the founders of Canadian Confederation and thus the distinctiveness of Canadian political culture." (5)

Peter C. Emberley and Waller R. Newell, political science professors at Carleton University, capture the distress and confusion felt by many over the New Democratic Party's (NDP) restructuring initiative of January 1992, particularly over the destreaming initiative. As they point out, the lack of consultation outraged parents and teachers as did the ideological assumptions behind destreaming. The previous system had been condemned by the NDP's 1992 Party Convention: "this system has grown into an institutionalized form of racism." Now, even those who might have had reservations about the existing structure and curriculum of Ontario's educational system might be offended to find it so harshly condemned. The arrogance of some of the reformers, who