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Richard Rhodes, *Hell and Good Company: The Spanish Civil War and the World It Made*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015. Pp. xviii, 302. ISBN 978-1-4516-9621-9.

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Richard Rhodes, author of many popular histories,¹ tackles the Spanish Civil War in his latest volume, with a particular emphasis on the modern military technology its participants and victims observed. The war was an ideological and political conflict that pitted a large part of the very conservative military, eventually led by Gen. Francisco Franco, in revolt against a Republican government led, after the elections of February 1936, by a left-leaning coalition with support from Communist and anarchist movements. From 1936 to 1939, Spain was torn apart by the conflict. Franco eventually established an authoritarian nationalist dictatorship that remained in place until his death in November 1975. Rhodes is not, however, interested in the politics of the war, but rather in its human stories, particularly with regard to novel technological developments and their lasting effects on the nature of warfare.

Like many others who have told the story of the Spanish Civil War, Rhodes uses the memoirs and other writings of the many foreigners who variously participated in or observed it. Ernest Hemingway, Martha Gellhorn, the English nurse Patience Darton, George Orwell, and Pablo Picasso find a place here and vignettes of their experiences are woven into the narrative throughout. Many of those Rhodes follows were in Spain for only part of the war, and he moves among them to illuminate the course of events.

Rhodes intends to elucidate just how, during the Spanish Civil War, the bombing of civilians became commonplace in modern war-making. He also discusses how contemporary medicine responded to the bombings and to battlefield injuries inflicted by a new generation of weapons. Thus, the main figures here are not the most famous visitors to Spain. We do get the story behind Picasso's masterpiece *Guernica*, capturing the horror of the German Condor Legion's bombing of the Basque village on 26 April 1937. But for Rhodes, the real story is not any one bombing, but the routine targeting of civilians from beginning to end of the conflict. He cites Hemingway's account of a Francoist nineteen-day bombing campaign against Republican Madrid to highlight the brutality of this technology. He also quotes a less well known French journalist, Louis Delaprée, who wrote in December, "night falls. And then the butchery begins, the horror of the Apocalypse: the assassins wheel endlessly around the sky, releasing explosives, incendiary bombs and shrapnel" (32).

The proliferation of bombing memorials and reconstructed bomb shelters that dot Spain today² validates Rhodes's focus on this specific aspect of the conflict. By war's end, he estimates that Franco's bombardments killed over 100,000 civilians, including at least 10,760 children, by May 1938, almost a year before the war officially ended (209).

Another valuable contribution of the book is its examination of the medical practices that emerged during the war in Spain. The heroes here are the Canadian doctor Norman Bethune and his Catalan counterpart Frederic Durán Jordà, who both created blood supply and transfusion services, Bethune in Madrid, Jordà in Barcelona. They collaborated on one such service linking the Republican centers of Barcelona, Valencia, Madrid, and Cordoba by the end of 1936. Bethune's Instituto Hispano-Canadiense de Transfusión de Sangre performed 78 percent of all blood transfusions on the Republican side in the war. Rhodes describes in detail the work of blood transfusion supply chains; he writes that Hemingway's partner and fellow jour-

1. E.g., *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1986) and *Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust* (NY: Knopf, 2002).

2. One of the most famous is in Barcelona, Refugi 307 – www.miwsr.com/rd/1515.htm.

nalist Martha Gellhorn, on a blood run with Bethune and the British scientist J.B.S. Haldane, “saw more than she had ever expected to see of wounds and surgery” (136).

Rhodes also profiles the American doctor Edward Barsky, who began as a fundraiser for Spain in New York as part of the American Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy (AMB). Barsky traveled to Spain in February 1937 to launch the AMB’s mobile hospital. He followed the fighting, often being forced by the bombings to move his hospital in mid-battle. At Guadalajara in March 1937, he established one of the most modern and best staffed hospitals of the war—117 nurses and doctors (187).

Finally, the author stresses the revolutionary transformation of the treatment of battlefield injuries in the midst of the war. He credits the Catalan surgeon Josep Trueta with pioneering the sealing with plaster of open wounds involving broken bones; the technique yielded a 91 percent healing rate for the 1,073 cases he handled, as compared to the 46 percent rate for American soldiers in the First World War who were permanently disabled by similar injuries (102). He also underlines the improvements made to triage, telling the story of the British doctor Len Crome, of the International Brigades, who created a rapid battlefield analysis system (at the battle of Brunete) to distinguish the lightly wounded from the seriously injured and deliver medical care accordingly.

Rhodes’s narrative moves by fits and starts as he jumps from character to character, story to story. Some figures recur through the chapters, others not. The (by now) too familiar stories of Hemingway and Picasso add little that differs from existing accounts. But the author’s central thesis concerning the horrors of modern industrial war visited on a somewhat rural and isolated country rings distressingly true. His depictions of the terror and devastation of the bombing raids are vivid and gripping and their implications for the Second World War in Europe are clearly spelled out. Moreover, his many accounts of medical advances made in difficult conditions by doctors or scientists accustomed to more tranquil and secure treatment centers opens new perspectives on his subject. *Hell and Good Company* deserves the careful reflection of anyone curious about the Spanish Civil War.