

pression de l'institution judiciaire était préférée d'entrée de jeu, parfois moins pour régler le différend que pour alimenter un conflit larvé. L'auteure se méprend lorsqu'elle affirme sans distinctions que les poursuites pénales « civilisées » (renvoyées à la juridiction civile) n'étaient pas voulues par les parties, ce qui lui permet d'exclure cette catégorie importante du contentieux dans l'analyse des poursuites civiles. En fait, on se demande comment a été effectuée l'identification des procès civils résultant de « situations-problèmes criminalisables » (seulement 11 sur l'ensemble de la période, ce qui est invraisemblable). On voit les limites de la démarche puisque le référent demeure bien le crime ou la faute et sa possible punition judiciaire. On s'étonne aussi de l'absence d'évolution des phénomènes étudiés dans une société coloniale qui, de 1693 à 1760, se développe rapidement. Le dernier chapitre présente enfin de nombreux problèmes : vision à mon avis anachronique de l'État d'Ancien Régime, surtout dans le contexte colonial; mauvaise compréhension de plusieurs réalités judiciaires ou étatiques de l'époque (p. ex : plaintes et dénonciations, rôle du subdélégué de l'intendant, amendes qui seraient publicisées, etc.); méthodologie obscure pour la quantification des causes étatiques (notamment les tableaux 4 à 6); etc. Plus fondamentalement, on peine à voir ce que ce chapitre apporte de neuf, sauf peut-être pour la question de la grâce royale, malheureusement analysée de façon sommaire, encore une fois.

Le projet de ce livre était ambitieux et aurait pu faire le point sur un sujet déjà bien étudié par les historiens depuis de nombreuses années, en France comme au Québec. Son principal mérite est sans doute d'attirer l'attention d'un public plus large sur une question incontournable pour la compréhension des rapports sociaux et de la justice dans la société coloniale étudiée. La réflexion sur la criminalité et sa prise en charge, à laquelle criminologues mais aussi historiens ont beaucoup contribué, s'inscrit dans une perspective pluridisciplinaire qui distingue cette étude. Malheureusement, cet ouvrage ne permet pas, à mon avis, de « repenser la criminalité en Nouvelle-France » de façon éclairante ni surtout très fiable.

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TULCHINSKY, Gerald – *Joe Salsberg: A Life of Commitment*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. Pp. 183.

In Julius Caesar's funeral oration, Shakespeare has Mark Antony pronounce the by now famous words dripping with irony: "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." In his biography of Joe Salsberg, senior historian Gerald Tulchinsky has drawn a portrait of his subject that is all chiaroscuro. On the *chiaro* side of the equation, there is the social activist who drew his primary inspiration from the Prophet Isaiah. For Salsberg was born into an Orthodox Jewish household in Łagów, a *shtetl* in Radom gubernia in Russian Poland, and was destined by his parents to become a rabbi. After immigrating

to Toronto with his family, Salsberg, as the eldest son, joined the labour force at an early age. With a curious mind and an appetite for books, he soon abandoned any rabbinical ambition to become a labour organizer whose skill increased exponentially over the years. At first identifying himself with labour Zionism, he joined the recently created Communist Party when the 1926 general strike in England was crushed. He entered the political arena in the mid-1930s after the Party's adoption of the Popular Front strategy. Elected to the Toronto City Council in 1938 and to the Ontario Legislature in 1943, he vigorously promoted various measures that "significantly influenced the course of Ontario's human rights, social, and labour legislation" (p. 92) until his defeat in 1955 at the hands of Progressive Conservative Allan Grossman.

Tulchinsky depicts Salsberg as a very engaged opposition MPP whose interventions in the Legislature were always well prepared and documented, even earning him the "enormous" admiration (p. 79) of Conservative Premier Leslie Frost. A passionate and attractive orator both in English and Yiddish, the MPP delivered speeches at Queen's Park or political rallies that dealt with concrete matters devoid of Marxist theory or Komintern doctrines. He maintained a very close rapport with his electoral base in Spadina riding, regularly strolling the streets of Toronto's Broadway to meet with his constituents and listen to their preoccupations. Since most Toronto Jews hailed from the gubernias of Kielce and Radom, he spoke their language, both concretely and figuratively. Through his wife Dora who became head of Toronto's Jewish Family and Child Services, he had an immediate appreciation of the social problems afflicting "the little guy," a concern absent from today's political discourses entirely focused on the "middle class." Tulchinsky recognizes the important role played by Communists in general and Salsberg in particular in the revitalization of the trade union movement following the disastrous defeats of the late 1910s and early 1920s and in the civil liberties campaigns of the second postwar period due to the strategic position occupied by the two Communist MPPs in the minority Legislature.

On the *scuro* side is the long shadow cast by Stalin over Communism even after his death in 1953. In his early years as a Party member, Salsberg is described as a maverick. But the episode of his resignation/expulsion from the CPC in 1929 simply lacks clarity. Was the move prompted by disagreements over labour organizing strategies, internal CPC politics, or both? Readers are left in the lurch. On the first question, we are told that Sam Carr denounced the labour organizer for his "bureaucratic, rightist tendencies and penchant for one-man leadership." (p. 31). No date or document is provided as evidence. On the second issue, we learn that Salsberg had actually challenged Tim Buck's leadership at the sixth Party Congress held in Toronto in May 1929. But this fact appears four pages after Salsberg's resignation from the Party in July. Problems of chronology aside, why did he attack the leader? Salsberg maintained that he was fighting against "a leadership cult with Stalinist tendencies emerging in the party." This answer, given years later after the fall of the Berlin Wall, is what allows Tulchinsky to affirm: "Clearly, Salsberg was becoming aware of the dangers of Stalinism and was ready to stand up to them." (p. 36). How clairvoyant hindsight can make us!

Ultimately, however, Salsberg's reluctance to break with Stalinism hangs like a sword of Damocles over this biography: "He was, above all other aspects of his identity, a loyal communist, a Stalinist really, who, despite mounting personal angst which he expressed to close friends, chose to believe what the Soviets told him ... until the autumn of 1956." (p. 116). Tulchinsky espouses Trotskyist Maurice Spector's view that Salsberg remained faithful to Stalin in spite of the purges of the late 1930s, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the postwar anti-Semitism that culminated in the Doctors' plot and the execution of Czech Communist Rudolph Slánský apparently at Moscow's instigation. The historian is perhaps holding his subject to an impossibly high standard of perceptiveness and ethics. Given the highly polarized nature of information on the Soviet Union, it was extremely difficult for an independent mind to get an accurate picture of internal developments there. The testimonies of the few North American Finns who made it out of Soviet Karelia in the late thirties simply became fodder in a ruthless ideological war. Embraced by the Right for revealing the true nature of Communism, they were disparaged by the Left as class traitors. When in the late forties Salsberg bemoaned the disappearance of Jewish institutions and publications in the Soviet Union, he seemed unaware that *Korenizatsya* (the Nationalities Policy) had been a dead letter for at least a decade. In the end his personal evolution regarding the Soviet Union followed that of many North American Jewish Communists: alarm at the decline of Jewish life, shock at the resurgence of anti-Semitism, and strongly expressed private criticism of official tolerance of these phenomena. Nikita Krushchev's inaugural address to the Twentieth Party Congress on the errors of Stalinism precipitated the final break. Salsberg may well have been "a flawed man" (p. 118), but many more were more deeply flawed.

Because he spent the rest of his life as a kind of secular rabbi to Toronto's progressive Jews, it would be a pity if all we were to retain of his public persona were the image of the Stalinist. Ultimately, is it not the good that men do that should live after them?

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WALKER, Louise E. – *Waking from the Dream: Mexico Middle Class after 1968*.
 Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013. Pp. 321.

Until recently, historians treated the middle class as a self-evident reality, an inevitable consequence of the modernization process that manifested the same characteristics, values, practices, and meanings in all time periods and geographic locations. As a result, historical research on Latin American societies has conceptualized political, cultural, and social relations in terms of polar opposites: