THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF E. H. CARR AS REFLECTED IN HIS TREATMENT OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

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PREFACE

Mr. Carr's reputation as a Kremlinologist is well-established and his works are an invaluable guide to the student of Russian history. But even the best of historians may have a flaw. I believe a close examination of his works will show the flaw in Mr. Carr to be his deterministic approach to writing history and I believe it can be shown that this attitude is reflected in his treatment of the dissolution of the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1918. Because of the presence of this attitude in his works, I believe Mr. Carr leaves the reader with the wrong impression of the assembly.

I have chosen Mr. Carr's treatment of the Constituent Assembly as the basis for my work because I consider a proper understanding of the forces around the Constituent Assembly vital to an understanding of the nature of Soviet power. By his misinterpreting the nature of the October revolution, I honestly feel Mr. Carr has been forced by his deterministic outlook to relegate to an inconsequential role in the evolution of the Soviet state the Constituent Assembly and its proponents. Mr. Carr seems to me also to have missed the republican idealism of the revolution, an idealism which culminated in the Constituent Assembly, and is content to describe the emergence of a state. This is the same as saying the revolution was only an unpleasant interlude in Russia's history, while it does not recognize the similarity between the Bolshevik brand of totalitarianism and that which characterized earlier Russian history.

In my work, I have claimed Mr. Carr is not describing the extension

of statism within a state, but is trying to describe the creation of a new state. To me, this would be most difficult since I regard the kind of control through power represented by the Communist party as closely corresponding to the traditional statist concepts held by the Russian people. To me, there was no creation of a state, except in the outward appearance, but merely the re-emergence of a traditional concept which held that strong centralized state government is good for Russia. Mr. Carr, in failing to note this, must stand accused of not giving enough forethought to the forces which helped create the revolution and of depending entirely too much on the Bolshevik pledges to build a new order from old lumber.

For aid on this paper I gratefully acknowledge the following: Dr. Alfred Levin, whose kind patience and tolerance encouraged me to continue this work; Dr. Sidney Brown, who suggested the topic as a possible theme for a thesis; Dr. Theodore L. Agnew, whose willingness to excuse first errors of form was exceeded only by his ability to find them, and, lastly, Dr. Homer L. Knight, Head of the Department of History, who always believed I could do it if only given a little more time.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"...it would be impossible, within the confines of a review, to document fully the overtones and undertones of Mr. (E.H.) Carr's work (A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923). So skillful and subtle has his presentation been, so tightly have his reconceptions been woven into the fabric of his sentences and his paragraphs, so carefully have his quotations been chosen, that a completely effective demonstration of the bias would require a dissection, an argument, and a restatement of the facts on at least the scale he has chosen for his own work. Doubts arise from the very start . . . ."

- The London Times, 16 Feb., 1951, Literary Supplement, p. 102.

This work is an attempt to do with one particular segment of E. H. Carr's A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923[1] what the Times advised for the entire book. We shall test the hypothesis that there emerges from a dissection of Mr. Carr's treatment of the Constituent Assembly a philosophy of history generally known as historical determinism. For our purposes, because it is the definition to which Mr. Carr subscribes, determinism will mean in these pages that "...the data, being what they are whatever happens happens definitely and could not be different."[2]

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[1] New York: Macmillan & Co., 1951, 430 pages.

[2] E.H. Carr, What Is History? (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1962), p. 122.

Our concern is to what extent, if any, does Mr. Carr allow this approach to writing history to color his handling of the section on the Constituent Assembly, and whether this prevents him from reaching an accurate and realistic interpretation of the role the assembly played in the Russian Revolution. This work is not an attack on determinism per se, since the author finds many facets of that philosophy compatible with his own philosophy of history. Nor will this work belabor the time-worn controversy between determinism and free will. But this work will attempt to analyze how a dependence upon a philosophy of history to supply a rhyme and a reason to historical progression can lead to a misinterpretation of historical fact.

The need for a reinterpretation of Mr. Carr's writings is three-fold. First, this is desirable because of Mr. Carr's stature within the Russian studies area and the emergence of his works as standard source material on the Soviet system. Secondly, reinterpretation is possible, because of the opportunity given by the recent appearance of Mr. Carr's What Is History? to compare the stated philosophy of history in it with the philosophy of history inherent in the first volume of A History of Soviet Russia. In What Is History? Mr. Carr has given us a vivid statement of his philosophy of history. We will, of course, never be entirely certain if this philosophy sprang from his pen as he wrote, or if it was something he arrived at prior to writing. It is possible only to compare the stated philosophy for consistency with the "hidden" philosophy and to try to determine how this philosophy is reflected in Mr. Carr's writing. This is important because his interpretations are a fundamental part of his presentation and, as he recommends, it is best to know the historian so that we are better able to judge the work and aptness of the interpretation of the phenomena

described.[3] Lastly, a reinterpretation of Mr. Carr's works is desirable because of the controversy which surrounds him.[4]

This work cannot fulfill the entire obligation. It can only hope to take a small segment of one volume and examine it in light of our purpose. For that reason, it must be emphasized here that whatever conclusions are drawn pertain only to the section dealing with the Constituent Assembly and not to the entire work.

There are many instances throughout Volume One where philosophy and history meet and mingle, but nowhere is it so pointed and so indicative of Mr. Carr's attitudes as in the section dealing with the Constituent Assembly and, in part, in the chapter immediately preceding on the interval between the March and October revolutions. It is for that reason we have selected this part of Mr. Carr's work as the basis for this work. At play here are Mr. Carr's attitudes toward the dramatis personae, the peasantry, the bourgeoisie, the concept of democracy for Russia, the revolutionary activity, the traditions of statism, the revolution itself, and the social tensions of the era. Whether all of these attitudes are a

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[3]Ibid., p. 24.

[4]That such a controversy exists scarcely needs documentation. In a review of Mr. Carr's works the most eminent historians roam from a salute to the new Caesar to a verbal crucifixion. R.V. Daniels, in writing of Volume One in the American Historical Review of July, 1951, said the book "was a disappointment as far as it attempted a new integration of Soviet History." Barrington Moore, writing of the same volume in the American Political Science Review of September, 1951, called the book "a return to the grand manner...analysis...of a very high order...logical organization." It is interesting to note that this is not the only time two respected journals carried articles by authors who diverged widely in their analysis of Mr. Carr. W.N. Hoadsel writing of Mr. Carr's International Relations Between Two World Wars in the American Political Science Review of August, 1948, and F.L. Schuman, in reviewing the same work for the August, 1948, edition of the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, reached conclusions varying with each other to an extreme degree. Michael Karpovich praised Mr. Carr's Bakunin as "the best biography...so far available," which was challenged by such writers and critics as Edmund Wilson and Franz Hoellering. The list goes on and on and it would be fruitless to cite here all the opinions of writers who disagreed among themselves as to the merit of Mr. Carr's works. The examples cited here are extnded only to illustrate the controversy which Mr. Carr has created.

direct result of Mr. Carr's determinism need not concern us, and it is just as well, since to link determinism with a repugnance for revolutionary activity, such as Mr. Carr displays, would be fruitless and pointless indeed. Nevertheless, we must include Mr. Carr's attitudes, however acquired, in our analysis of his treatment of the Constituent Assembly. They are no less responsible for his ultimate interpretations than is his philosophy of history.

The Constituent Assembly met January 18, 1918, in Petrograd. It was composed of freely elected representatives professing to almost every shade of political thought in Russia at that time. The assembly had been sanctioned by the Provisional Government set up directly after the March, 1917, revolution, and the Bolsheviks said nothing about cancelling it when they seized power in October of that year. But there was a very real difference in the way the two factions regarded the Constituent Assembly. As the name implies, the members of the Provisional Government deemed themselves temporary keepers of the government store. True, they anticipated that permanent recognition of much of their power would be granted by the assembly, but there is little doubt they would not have bowed to the assembly's will. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks had no intention of relinquishing their hard-earned power to an assembly they held in contempt as representing "bourgeois" interests. If the assembly would recognize the Bolshevik fait accompli, then all would be well and good. But at the first sign of reluctance on the part of the delegates to consent to Bolshevik domination, the Bolshevik leader, Lenin, was prepared to dissolve the assembly through force of arms if necessary. Lenin claimed the right to do this because he considered the October revolution to have supplanted the March revolution and thus to have invalidated any plans and policies of the earlier Provisional Government. He also claimed

the right on the grounds the Bolshevik party was the legitimate revolutionary power in Russia because it represented the will, conscious or not, of the Russian people.

To make their control of the Constituent Assembly appear as legitimate as possible in word and deed, the Bolsheviks allowed the elections to the assembly to proceed as planned. The results of the vote showed the moderate Social Revolutionary party[5] to be the majority party. The Bolsheviks were a minority, although a powerful one. Despite claims by Lenin that the elections were based on out-dated party lists (made outdated by the October revolution) it appeared that the Bolsheviks did not, in fact, have the sympathy or understanding of a majority of the Russian people.

Aware of their precarious position and the likelihood of censure, the Bolsheviks attempted to solidify their gains by winning over the delegates to the assembly. Those who could not be influenced were to be excluded from the assembly through one means or another. Even so, the assembly did not recognize the Bolshevik seizure. Demonstrations on behalf of the assembly, by the public and by various parties, made it obvious that any hopes the Bolsheviks had of dominating the assembly were fast fading. On January 20, the Bolsheviks dissolved the assembly and posted a guard to refuse readmittance to the meeting hall.

Mr. Carr knows and records all this and it is not in the presentation of facts that controversy rages about him.[6] Rather, the controversy is over

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[5]Hereafter referred to as SRs.

[6]Isaac Deutscher claims Mr. Carr has had no access to unpublished material and that there is nothing "new" in Mr. Carr's presentation. Deutscher should know since he read the entire manuscript before it was published.

what he does with the facts he has in hand.[7] Mr. Carr seems to feel that the facts justify relegating the assembly to a relatively insignificant place in the history of the evolution of the Soviet state. He further appears to champion the Bolshevik right to dissolve the assembly, this right based upon the same arguments we noted earlier as those used by Lenin. The Bolsheviks, then, to Mr. Carr represent the legitimate repository of power. Conversely, the Constituent Assembly, as a product of the Provisional Government overthrown in October, was, to Mr. Carr, out of step with the times, and when it failed to march shoulder to shoulder with the Bolsheviks it could not blame them if it was run off the road to socialism.

How much of this attitude toward the Constituent Assembly is the result of a deterministic frame of mind remains to be proven. How much is the result of non-deterministic prejudices likewise must be proven. If, as this work hopes to show, Mr. Carr's interpretation about the significance of the Constituent Assembly is not a realistic one, then the reader must conclude that the assembly did have a legitimate and potent role to play in the revolution. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this is true. If it is true, then the Bolshevik dissolution of the assembly is more insidious than Mr. Carr seems inclined to indicate. In light of the subsequent development of the Soviet leadership into dictatorship, the latter view has particular appeal to this author.

The crucial point of fact which is involved here is whether the October revolution did supplant the March revolution, as Mr. Carr feels,

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[7] M.T. Florinsky, writing in the Political Science Quarterly, p. 286, January, 1951, calls Volume One "vastly informative and profoundly misleading." Max Beloff, writing in Spectator, November 17, 1951, p. 518, says of Volume One that Mr. Carr is not impressed with "the tragedy of the transformation (in Russia)," and, apparently, cannot draw the type of conclusions Beloff would appreciate. But Beloff recognizes and pays tribute to the "intellectual magnitude of Mr. Carr's achievement."

or whether it was merely an extension of the March revolution, an isolated, if skillfully guided, outburst of frustration at the slowness of the progress of the revolution. Were the participants in the October revolution willing to exchange representation for dictatorship? Or were they convinced they were defending the March revolution? These are questions to be answered.

Before any answers will be forthcoming, we must range far afield of our narrow topic. We will examine the nature of the October revolution, the strength of the Bolsheviks at various times before the October revolution, and even Mr. Carr's earliest writings. Only by seeking to understand the true nature of all this, and more, can we hope to fulfill the task we have set for ourselves.

CHAPTER II

A PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY IN ACTION

Many historians share the belief that Mr. Carr displays deterministic traits and that these beliefs must be guarded against when reading his works. In the annotated bibliography of The Dynamics of Soviet Society, Mr. Carr is listed as displaying a deterministic view of history which "should be noted and discounted."[1] Richard Pipes makes the same claim, saying Mr. Carr "selects facts to suit his principal theme: the inevitable triumph of Bolshevism," and that for Mr. Carr "events . . . unfold with an inexorable logic: the collapse of the Tsarist order, the overthrow of the Provisional Government, for which he holds the Bolsheviks responsible only in an external sense, and the ultimate victory of the Soviet regime . . . all were unavoidable."[2] Bertram Wolfe says "a historical inevitability" permeates Mr. Carr's works and conveys the impression the Bolsheviks won because they had to win.[3] Professor Moseley, although writing of Volume II, suggests Mr. Carr is "dazzled by success" and that he treats the Bolshevik gains as likely to have occurred.[4] Isaac

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[1]W.W. Rostow, Alfred Levin et al., The Dynamics of Soviet Society, (New York: Mentor Books, 1954), p. 248.

[2]Richard E. Pipes, Review of A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923, by E.H. Carr, The Russian Review, X, (July, 1951), p. 226.

[3]Bertram Wolfe, "Professor Carr's Wave of the Future," Commentary, XIX, (March, 1955), p. 284.

[4]P.E. Moseley, Review of A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923 by E.H. Carr, The New York Times, 13 Apr., 1952, p. 19.

Deutscher, who has written perhaps the most exhaustive analysis of Carr as a historian of the Soviet regime, and has been the most understanding of Mr. Carr's critics, notes that a certain sense of "inevitability" creeps into Mr. Carr's description of the Rapallo Treaty. This is caused by an inclination of Mr. Carr not to differentiate between periods of Russian history on the basis of personalities, Deutscher says, and is unjustified because of certain moral differences between Lenin and Stalin which make it difficult to ascribe the same set of motivations to both men.[5]

If Mr. Carr's determinism has led to criticism that "inevitability" is a major ingredient in his interpretation, he seems unbothered by the charges. The first charge, that he is deterministic, he would not refute. He readily admits to holding with the deterministic philosophy and even considers it an aid to performing the historian's highest task - the discovery of "why?" Of the second charge, that of inevitability, he calls it "barren and pointless."[6] "Historians," he writes, "are not troubled by the question of inevitability because like other people they sometimes fall into rhetorical language and speak of an occurrence as 'inevitable' when they mean merely that the conjunction of factors leading one to expect it was overwhelmingly strong."[7] Mr. Carr once wrote that the clash between the Bolsheviks and the Orthodox Church was "inevitable" and he apologizes for his backsliding. He says he is quite prepared to do without such words as "inevitable," "unavoidable," "inescapable," etc.

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[5]Isaac Deutscher, "E.H. Carr As a Historian of the Bolshevik Regime," Russia in Transition, (New York: Grove Press, Evergreen Edition, 1960), pp. 217-218.

[6]Carr, What Is History?, p. 122.

[7]Ibid., p. 125.

But, nonetheless, the charge of inevitability must have smarted, for Mr. Carr has concocted a "might-have-been" school of history to explain why his accusers confront him with this invective. Mr. Carr suggests that the "might-have-been" school of history is not so much a "school of thought as one of emotion."[8] Alternatives are not really open to the actors of history simply because what happened did happen, he says. Anything else would have had to have a different set of antecedent causes. This strict adherence to the causal approach to history is Mr. Carr's defense against charges of inevitability.

Further evidence of Mr. Carr's determinism is contained in his The New Society and is interesting because it appeared in 1951, only months after the publication of the first volume of the history series. The New Society includes a commentary on the so-called pattern of history which is striking in its resemblance to his philosophy of eleven years later. In The New Society, Mr. Carr claims history is nothing more than a chain of continuous events. By studying the past, he maintains, it is possible to see the relationship, and only the relationship, of past events to future tendencies. It is not possible to predict the form of these tendencies, or the manner in which they will react to external pressures and completely autonomous circumstances, he writes.[9]

Like the charge of inevitability, the charge of selectivity of facts has not escaped Mr. Carr. And, like the previous accusation, the latter one does not bother Mr. Carr either. "History," writes Mr. Carr, "consists of a corpus of ascertained facts. The facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions, and so on, like fish on the

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[8]Ibid., p. 126.

[9]E.H. Carr, The New Society, (London: Macmillan, 1951), p. 14.

fish-monger's slab."[10] These facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts he will give the floor and in what order or context. "The historian is necessarily selective," Mr. Carr goes on, "and the belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which is very hard to eradicate."[11]

The relationship between determinism and inevitability is obvious and despite Mr. Carr's dismissal of its significance, his own kind of determinism is expressed best by the sense of inevitability which runs through this section on the Constituent Assembly. Because the terms inevitability and determinism are linked in an inexorable chain of their own, it is permissible to regard them as interchangeable during our examination of Mr. Carr's treatment of the Constituent Assembly. It is possible to construct from Mr. Carr's interpretations a Jacob's ladder of causation which leads directly from the inevitability of the October revolution to the dissolution of the assembly. It will be necessary here merely to trace the steps up this ladder by sketching their outlines, returning to consider each step in all its ramifications after we have established that a ladder, with its connotation of narrowness, exists.

Mr. Carr begins his ascent up our ladder by speculating on the nature of the October revolution. Was it bourgeois-democratic or proletarian-socialist? Mr. Carr reaches the conclusion that the October revolution was, for good or evil, a proletarian one.[12] To those who claimed the elections to the Constituent Assembly, held shortly after the Bolsheviks

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[10]Carr, What Is History?, p. 6.

[11]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[12]E.H. Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923, (New York: Macmillan, 1951), p. 122.

seized power in Petrograd, demonstrated clearly that a proletarian revolution had not, in fact, occurred nor that it was upheld by a majority of the Russian people, Mr. Carr points out that Lenin's argument, which held that the elections were based on party lists made out-dated by the October revolution is "cogent."[13] Mr. Carr also points to the coalition formed between the Left SRs and the Bolsheviks which realigned power within the assembly and says this gave a "potentially deceptive character" to the majority SR vote.[14]

To substantiate his claim that "the elections, if they did not register the victory of the Bolsheviks, had clearly pointed the way to it for those who had eyes to see," Mr. Carr cites, without recording the vote, the results in the large industrial cities in which he says the Bolsheviks had almost everywhere been ahead of the other parties.[15] The vote, then, was deceptive as far as Mr. Carr is concerned. But, despite the results showing the way to a Bolshevik victory, they made it clear to Mr. Carr that the Constituent Assembly was to be a rallying-point for the bourgeois and the dissident socialists. At this point, Mr. Carr dips back into French history to the time of the French Constituent Assembly of 1848 and purports to see a parallel between it and the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1918. Should the bourgeoisie gain control over the Russian Constituent Assembly, as they did the French Assembly, Lenin knew it would surely be cut to "bourgeois standards." The Bolsheviks could not allow this to happen and Mr. Carr quotes Lenin as determined to stand firm against the propertied classes and prevent them from suppressing the proletariat.[16]

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[13]Ibid., p. 112.

[14]Ibid., p. 111.

[15]Ibid., p. 112.

[16]Ibid., p. 113.

This is valid thinking, according to Mr. Carr, who sees class lines becoming firm and the peasantry and proletariat becoming more determined to defend the revolution from any usurpers. For Mr. Carr, such developments as the "permeation of the army and peasantry with revolutionary ideas . . . created an inevitable[17] clash between the Constituent Assembly and the . . . toiling and exploited classes . . . ."[18] The bourgeois nature of the assembly, plus the "inevitable" clash due to occur, makes the Constituent Assembly an "anachronism" to Mr. Carr.[19] In light of the essentially bourgeois character of the Constituent Assembly and the threat to the revolution it represented, the tactics needed to retain power in the hands of the "proletariat" can be, if not justified by Mr. Carr, regarded as at least expedient.

If the Bolsheviks were hesitant about their high-handed tactics in disrupting the Constituent Assembly, it was because of what Mr. Carr calls an "apprehension felt by some... of the supposed prestige of the Constituent Assembly among the masses."[20] This apprehension was not justified by the events, Mr. Carr concludes, and he asserts that the "dissatisfaction with the Constituent Assembly itself" actually aided the Bolsheviks in their dissolution of it.[21] Part of this dissatisfaction Mr. Carr attributes to the inability of the assembly to compromise on principles of government, a factor which contributes to the "unreality of the

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[17]Italics mine.

[18]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 114.

[19]Ibid., p. 115.

[20]Ibid., p. 118.

[21]Ibid., p. 120.

assembly."[22]

When Tsereteli for the Mensheviks argued in favor of the Constituent Assembly and in favor of a gradual transition to socialism, Mr. Carr says he did so at "enormous length, as the Mensheviks had argued for 14 years," intimating that the Mensheviks were not prepared to accept the fact that the proletarian revolution had indeed occurred. "Speech-making went on unabated for nearly twelve hours. But little that was said had any relation to the world outside," Mr. Carr writes.[23] At any rate, Mr. Carr cannot find anywhere in the proceedings of the first meeting of the assembly that an "alternative government capable of wielding power was suggested or could have been suggested. In these circumstances the debates of the assembly could have no issue," he writes.[24] Not only the debate, but the very existence of the Constituent Assembly had no issue to Mr. Carr, who thinks the assembly was "bankrupt" because it could do nothing more than "repeat in substance what the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets had done on the morrow of the revolution ten weeks earlier."[25]

All these things demonstrate to Mr. Carr the lack of "any solid basis or any broad support for the institutions and principles of bourgeois democracy in Russia."[26] And so the Constituent Assembly, an "unreal," "bankrupt," "anarchronism," failed to serve any real function in the revolution and did so inevitably because it simply had too much against it to succeed.

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[22]Ibid., p. 118.

[23]Ibid., p. 119.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., p. 120.

[26]Ibid., p. 121.

It is an impressive case Mr. Carr has built. It is a case based on the deterministic philosophy of history, on the type of causation which best answers the question: "Why did the Constituent Assembly fail?" There are clear examples of Mr. Carr's determinism in this section dealing with the Constituent Assembly. The matter of forcing the October revolution into either a bourgeois-democratic or a proletarian-socialist mould, when, in reality, it was a revolution in which the power was usurped by a minority in the name of the majority, is a prime case in point. The consideration of the real nature of the October revolution would not be compatible with the conclusions Mr. Carr makes about the Constituent Assembly.

Then there is Mr. Carr's careful analysis of the vote for the assembly. Was the vote potentially deceptive, as he claims, or was it a valid indication of the revolutionary frame of mind of the Russian people? To substantiate the claim that the revolution was indeed a proletarian one, would it not be necessary to show, logically, that the vote did register an obvious proletarian victory?

And is not the paralleling of one historical situation to another good practice for the deterministic historian? Mr. Carr does this with his comparison of the French Constituent Assembly to the Russian. But is the French Constituent Assembly comparable to the Russian?

Mr. Carr's statement that an "inevitable" clash was due to develop between one class and another in Russia is in the best tradition of historical determinism, and a very necessary ingredient in the formula he has worked up for the dissolution of the assembly. It legitimatizes the Bolshevik tactics and makes them appear to be on behalf of the "exploited and toiling classes." But were the Bolsheviks concerned with the desires of the Russian people and did the Russian people have a coherent idea of

what they were faced with?

The lack of prestige for the assembly Mr. Carr professes to see amongst the masses is likewise a vital part of his argument, since it would hardly do for the people, who make up those social forces Mr. Carr is so concerned with, to have supported the assembly, thus upsetting the neat chain of causation which inexorably leads to dissolution. But was the attitude as Mr. Carr describes it? Did the assembly lack prestige?

There were no alternatives to Bolshevik rule, Mr. Carr suggests, certainly one of the clearest deterministic statements in Mr. Carr's presentation. Were there no alternatives simply because the Bolsheviks did control the capital city? Or were there no alternatives because none actually presented themselves? Or do the facts support the contention that Bolshevism was indeed the wave of the future for Russia? What of democracy for Russia? Mr. Carr says it had no broad support in Russia. But why the concern for the security of the vote to the Constituent Assembly? And why did the Bolsheviks consent to the elections if what Mr. Carr says is true? Mr. Carr does say the first steps of the revolution were taken in the name of democracy, but he is dealing largely in semantics.[27]

These are the questions raised by Mr. Carr's treatment of the Constituent Assembly. Before we can accept, or reject, Mr. Carr's evaluation of the assembly, they must be answered. To do so, we must return to the bottom rung of our ladder and retrace our steps to see if they lead us to a different destination than Mr. Carr's.

To determine if the October revolution was proletarian-socialist or bourgeois-democratic, or neither, it is necessary to know the Bolshevik

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[27]Ibid., p. 109.

position in relation to the revolution to learn if they had a claim to power. We can concede that the Bolsheviks represented, for all practical purposes, the proletariat of Moscow and Petrograd, but Mr. Carr leaves the impression he considers the Bolsheviks the legitimate spokesman for the entire "proletariat," into which he lumps the peasantry. He also treats the October revolution as an Bolshevik intra-party affair. This, in essence, leaves the right to choose future forms of power to the Bolsheviks. Despite the difficulties which were to confront the Bolsheviks in assuming this right, difficulties which Mr. Carr duly notes, the real dangers to their rule did not emerge. Nor does the manner in which Lenin consolidated his power. Pipes claims Mr. Carr, in order to carry forward the story "generally tends to ignore or greatly minimize the anti-Bolshevik forces both before and during the revolution."[28] That these forces were considerable can be illustrated by calculating the strength of the Bolsheviks at strategic times during the months between the March and the October revolution.

In his April Theses, Lenin quite frankly admits the minority position of the Bolsheviks.[29] That admission stemmed not from defeatism, but from a determination to strengthen the Bolshevik position. From that moment the Bolsheviks began a systematic process of building power through temporary alliances. Always it was the Bolsheviks who emerged as stronger - not through any intrinsic appeal to their allies, but merely through the expedient of making each groups' cause their own as long as certain other conditions were met. Mr. Carr, like Lenin, knows that

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[28]Pipes, p. 226.

[29]Carl Landauer, European Socialism, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 578.

numbers count in history. The progress of the Bolshevik party by these means did not necessarily mean they were abandoning any of their dogmas by compromising, for, throughout the time between April and the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, all of Lenin's "compromises" were designed with only one thing in mind: the ultimate and final triumph of the Bolsheviks.

The progress of Marxism was less certain than that of the Bolsheviks. From April to June it enjoyed little sympathy. Its failure to make an impression on the Russian revolutionary scene is demonstrated by the elections to the First All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies. Of the 1,115 delegates elected by all strata of the peasantry, 537 were Social Revolutionaries, 465 were non-partisan and 103 were Social Democrats, including Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.[30] The delegates to this congress voted unconditionally to support the Provisional Government and to refer final settlement of the land question to the promised Constituent Assembly. At this congress, unanimous opposition was voiced against the Bolshevik land program of seizure without controls. Since the Bolshevik program was put forward as representative of Marxian thinking, it can be safely assumed that Marxist philosophy "did not touch these representatives of the Russian blacklands...(who were) the principal force in Russian society."[31]

During the First Conference of Factory-Shop Committees, held between June 12 and 16 in Petrograd, a resolution drafted by Lenin advocating the establishment of workers' controls over the production and distribution

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[30]James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, The Bolshevik Revolution, (Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 9.

[31]N.N. Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, 1917, Volume I, (New York: Harper & Bros., 1962), p. 321.

of goods was passed by a margin of 290 - 111.[32] Lenin's popularity was based on worker control of the economic system, a program designed to appeal to the workers who were asking redress from grievances. We see this pattern repeated time and again as Lenin secures support for the Bolsheviks by offering the extremist elements a rallying-point for their demands, even though these demands were equivalent to advocating anarchy and a breakdown of the economic system of the nation. And time and time again we see the more responsible elements, such as the Mensheviks and the SRs, while advocating no less socialistic measures than the Bolsheviks, refuse to sanction the Bolshevik intent. Oftentimes these responsible elements sacrificed public support to principles.

Although Lenin's program for the proletariat in June, 1917, was calculated to obtain support for the Bolsheviks, it was not necessarily the program to which he was philosophically committed. On the first anniversary of the October revolution, Lenin admitted to the Sixth Congress of Soviets that a year earlier he had been well aware that the workers' control of industry would be "chaotic, shattering, primitive, incomplete."[33] Yet Lenin pursued this program because he knew that it was the one certain way to win the workers to his side. As it became obvious the workers were incompetent to manage industry, Lenin retreated to a position of state capitalism administered by a managerial class which had come of age during the Tsarist era. Mr. Carr, however, says this conference was a "foretaste of things to come," but fails to indicate if he feels this is an example of Bolshevik tactics or of the acceptance of Bolshevism as the bellwether

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[32]Bunyan and Fisher, p. 10.

[33]Paul Avrich, "The Bolshevik Revolution and Workers' Control in Russian Industry," The Slavic Review, XXII, March, 1963, p. 47.

for Russia.[34]

If Lenin enjoyed a measure of success at this first "workers'" congress, it was a different story at the All-Russian Congress of Workers and Soldiers Deputies which opened June 16. Again, the Bolsheviks were a minority, holding only 105 seats out of a total of 882, with the SRs holding 285 and the Mensheviks 248.[35] The major issues at stake were 1.) whether the socialists would condescend to enter a government with the bourgeoisie and 2.) whether to continue the war. Both resolutions passed over Bolshevik protests. Mr. Carr does tell us the Congress voted to support the Provisional Government but neglects to draw any conclusions from this action.[36] The delegates were looking to the Provisional Government not to the Bolsheviks, for answers to social ills. But why were they doing this, if it was true the Bolsheviks were accepted as the proponents of a proletarian view? We can better understand the reason why the workers and peasants as a whole were looking to the Provisional Government to solve their problems if we read Sukhanov's most illuminating description of the type of delegate attending the congress. ". . . The Moscow worker is as different from the Petersburg proletarian as the hen from a peacock. But even he, as familiar to me as the Petersburger, is not altogether benighted and homespun. Here at the Congress, however, the hall was filled with a crowd of a completely different order. Out of the trenches and obscure holes and corners had crept utterly crude and ignorant people whose devotion to the revolution was spite and despair,

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[34]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 89.

[35]Pervyi Vserossiiskii Sezd Sovetov RISD, Moscow, 1930, I, xxvii, cited in Bunyan and Fisher, p. 11.

[36]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 90.

while their 'Socialism' was hunger and an unendurable longing for rest . . . ."[37]

When these delegates voted down the Bolshevik resolution, it is unlikely they understood the fine points of political intrigue involved. These delegates, the true representatives of Russia, were casting their lot with the Provisional Government, the established, if confused, authority because they wanted to see order come out of chaos as quickly as possible. In November, during the elections to the Constituent Assembly, this same grey mass was to repeat their faith in this approach. And this is what Mr. Carr has not concluded: that, by voting to enter a government composed of Kadets, the "socialists," except for the Bolsheviks, indicated a willingness to put the welfare of the people above the considerations of dogma.

Before its adjournment, the First Congress of Soviets elected a new Central Executive Committee, which held power until the October revolution and was composed of 104 Mensheviks, 99 SRs, 35 Bolsheviks and 18 others. About all that can be concluded from these, and the preceding figures, is that there is little to support any contentions that Lenin and the Bolsheviks represented the social forces of Russia in June, 1917.

It would be well here to depart for a moment from our analysis of Bolshevik strength and examine Mr. Carr's attitude toward Lenin. It is necessary to do this now if we are to obtain an insight into the manner by which Mr. Carr progresses from March to October, then to January, from the "bourgeois" revolution to the "proletarian" one and thence to the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. Mr. Carr's attitude toward Lenin has been of concern to many reviewers. J.B. Sheerin writes that the "personal admiration of Lenin makes the book [Volume I] potentially a dangerous

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[37]Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution, p. 635.

one . . . "[38] Florinsky says one of the three major faults of Mr. Carr's which color his interpretation of the Bolshevik revolution is his "worshipful admiration of Lenin."[39] Deutscher wonders why Mr. Carr ascribes to Lenin the stature of a statesman, especially in view of the latter's better-known revolutionary activity.[40] This would seem to place Deutscher in the ranks with other reviewers who deplore Mr. Carr's attitude toward Lenin. But such is not the case, for Deutscher has rejected contentions that Mr. Carr worships the Russian revolutionary. He claims Mr. Carr is too "skeptical, too acute and too strongly aware of Lenin's inconsistencies to be his worshipper."[41] Deutscher says Mr. Carr admires Lenin the state-builder not the state-destroyer. But this recognition of the positive aspect of Lenin's nature cannot explain why Mr. Carr choses to ignore Lenin's revolutionary tactics in the destruction of the Constituent Assembly, nor his neglect of the destructive process involved when Lenin refused to contribute anything to the construction of a state until power was resting securely in Bolshevik hands. Since Deutscher wrote without benefit of access to Mr. Carr's stated philosophy of history, his work does not tell us why the omissions are made. But, according to What Is History?, it is obvious that Lenin is regarded by Mr. Carr as the agent of force over which he had no control other than to direct them into preselected channels.

It seems, then, that Mr. Carr is not particularly impressed with the role of the conscious individual in history. He is not. "It defies all the evidence to suggest that history can be written on the basis of

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[38] J.B. Sheerin, Review of A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923, by E.H. Carr, Catholic World, CLXXIII, May, 1951, p. 156.

[39] Florinsky, p. 286.

[40] Deutscher, p. 207.

[41] Ibid.

'explanations in terms of human intentions,' or of accounts of their motives given by the actors themselves, why, in their own estimation, they acted as they did," he writes.[42]

> The facts of history are not about actions of individuals performed in isolation, and not about the motives, real or imaginary, from which individuals suppose themselves to have acted. They are facts about the relations of individuals to one another in a society and about the social forces which produce from the actions results often at variances with, and sometimes, opposite to, the results which the individuals themselves intended.[43]

Mr. Carr feels that the historian is called upon to investigate what lies behind the act and that the conscious thought or motives of the individual may be quite irrelevant. He is fully aware that it was Lenin who moulded the forces which brought him to power.[44] But for even this technique to have succeeded, it was necessary that the social forces be present, if in flux. To that extent, at least, Lenin must have been an expression of the prevailing social forces, if we are to hold with Mr. Carr's theory. But the social forces were demanding not necessarily change of direction, but merely a speed-up in the realization of reforms. The elections to the Constituent Assembly amply prove this point, inasmuch as the Kadets (who had been responsible for the foot-dragging) were left out of the victor's column, while the SRs (those advocating reform rather than overthrow) captured the largest vote. Could it be that what Mr. Carr really means is that, in actuality, Lenin rode to power on the backs of the frustrated proletariat and the peasants, held aloft by the power of his intellect and vision and single-mindedness? "What seems to me

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[42] Carr, What Is History?, p. 64.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., p. 68.

essential is to recognize in the great man an outstanding individual who is at once the representative and the creator of social forces which change the shape of the world and the thoughts of man," writes Mr. Carr.[45] Under this philosophy of history a great man, a leader, such as Lenin, rules not through any virtue of his personality, although that may help him maintain power, but only because society allows him. The leader is the product of social forces which perpetuate his existence, and when the social forces no longer wish him to reign, they, and they alone, will topple him. When Mr. Carr writes that the October revolution had broken forever the democratic mould and that nothing could have put it together again, he leaves Lenin no choice except to justifiably proceed to the dissolution of the last vestige of democratic power.

Mr. Carr has moulded Lenin into a social force, an expression of society. But is it necessarily a true mould? It is difficult to measure to what extent a man and his philosophy are incarnations of some historical force. About the only real standard of measurement applicable is the one Mr. Carr uses: to what extent was the man, or the philosophy, successful? Social forces themselves involve vague, indefinable processes which can be viewed, perhaps, only in retrospect and only with the advantage of time. Yet Mr. Carr has claimed that Lenin took the social forces and moulded them into his concept of the state. This implies that the social forces existent were available to Lenin to do with what he could. Since the Bolsheviks did prevail, there can be little question that their will to survive was greater than that of the other parties, who, in effect, surrendered to the Bolsheviks by refusing to do battle with them.

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[45] Ibid.

It is necessary to remember above all else that Lenin was a conscious agent of the revolution, plying an ancient and respected trade in Russia. He fits into a definite and determinable revolutionary pattern and tradition, a point Mr. Carr does not emphasize. Lenin was a revolutionary who worked himself into a psychological and even intellectual position in which he identified himself with the proletariat with whom he had no real economic or psychological connection other than his acceptance and interpretation of Marx. Lenin never thought he represented the majority. He was going to make a revolution and then ram its fruits down their throat. The point is that to Mr. Carr it makes little difference to distinguish between the intentions of one man, a group of men or a desperate mob. What happened did happen and there is little reason to justify it morally or to attempt to find alternatives.

But Mr. Carr overlooks one important aspect of the kind of control Lenin advocated: a highly centralized dictatorship. Beyond a single sentence, which, if lifted out of context, would seem to indicate that Mr. Carr knows something of the traditional statist outlook of the Russian people, there is nothing in his treatment of the revolution that would lead one to believe Mr. Carr is aware that the concept of the highly centralized state is a real and very potent social force within Russia. From the days of the Golden Horde, and before, when they united under a central authority for security, the Russian people have looked upon centralization of state control as a mixed blessing. But Mr. Carr does not include this concept of the state in his ingredients necessary for Lenin's success. That the Bolshevik rule is merely an extension of the type of rule exercised by the Tsars is readily seen when one compares the systems.

With this understanding of Mr. Carr's attitude toward Lenin and a

quick glance at the social forces present in Russia at the time of the October revolution, we can return to our examination of the strength of the Bolsheviks as reflected in elections to the many conferences held between March and January. Following the First Congress of Soviets, the next major indication of the Bolsheviks' strength - which was undeniably growing all the time, largely because the other parties had failed to deliver anything to the Russian people and the Bolsheviks promised to deliver everything - came at the Third All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions, which met in Petrograd July 4-11.[46] Of the 220 delegates, the Bolsheviks could count on 80, with the remaining combined into a loose coalition containing Mensheviks, SRs and trade unionists. The issues here centered around one point: state control of industry versus worker control. The latter was advocated by the Bolsheviks and was, as at the workers congress of the previous week, defeated. The Bolsheviks, however, fared better on the executive committee of the Central Council of Trade Unions than they did at the Congress of Soviets, sharing power with the Mensheviks.

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[46] The best indication of the growing dissatisfaction with the elements comprising the Provisional Government and the consequent strengthening of the Bolshevik position, is shown in the drift of public opinion in the Petrograd and Moscow municipal elections. It must be remembered that these two cities were the strongholds of Bolshevism. But the drift of public opinion and support away from the Kadets and other "liberal" elements does demonstrate public discontent with the manner in which the nation was being run. The Bolsheviks in Petrograd registered only 183,694 votes in municipal elections of September 2, 1917, but had climbed to 415,587 on the November 25 Constituent Assembly elections. The SRs had declined approximately 50,000 votes, but the Kadets, because of the regard for the Constituent Assembly, showed a healthy gain. However, the percentage of the Kadet's gain was not nearly as great as the Bolsheviks. Between July 8 and December 2-4 (latter dates are the dates of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Moscow), the Bolsheviks picked up 36 per cent in Moscow. The Kadets showed a gain of 22 per cent, due primarily to the fact that SRs dropped 50 per cent, their voters having gone over to the Kadets to show their contempt for the Bolsheviks' seizure of power. The Kadets had previously shown a decline of about 10 per cent as reflected in the municipal elections of October 3 in Moscow. Figures are from Nasha Rech, No. 2, November 30, 1917, p. 2, and Russkiia Vedomosti, No. 257, December 7, 1917, p. 2, cited in Bunyan and Fisher, p. 348.

The Bolsheviks, by maintaining their position on workers' control of industry, were, in the face of growing disorders, beginning to strike a responsive chord in the workers, even if they failed this time to secure passage of their resolution.

At almost the same time the trade unionists were meeting, the All-Russian Conference of Bolshevik Military Organizations met to serve notice to the Provisional Government that at least 26,000 soldiers were ready to stand behind the Bolsheviks.[47] The soldiers' enthusiasm for the Bolsheviks, who were promising peace, can be traced to a lack of enthusiasm for the front. Again, Lenin was merely promising to give potential followers what they wanted.

Mr. Carr does not concern himself with either of these meetings, preferring to concentrate on the July days and the Sixth Party Congress. The resolutions of this party congress, formulated while Lenin was in hiding in Finland, were a formal accusation directed toward the socialists who did not follow the Bolshevik lead in the attempt to wrest power from the Provisional Government. These socialists were declared to be tools of the bourgeoisie and hence counter-revolutionary. Mr. Carr records the fact that there were many at the congress who disagreed with this indictment. Even so, he gives precedence to the arguments advanced by Stalin, who said, (repeating Trotsky), that Russia may be the country which points the way to socialism and that all who parleyed with the "bourgeoisie" forces were hindering the progress toward socialism. There seems little inclination on Mr. Carr's part to speculate on the alternative: i.e., that Russia may not have been ready for the socialist revolution which Stalin foresaw.

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[47]Bunyan and Fisher, p. 14.

Because of the Kornilov affair,[48] the continual desertion from the front, the plunder of once-great estates and the apparent helplessness of the Provisional Government to do anything about this state of affairs, Mr. Carr feels the conditions for the second stage of the revolution - the Bolshevik stage - were "maturing fast."[49] But were they? What was maturing was dissatisfaction with the way things were going, not any widespread acceptance of the Bolshevik program. If the Bolshevik "star was rising rapidly," it was not because of any understanding of their program, but because they "promised everything." And for a party to seize power under the auspices of fulfilling whatever society demands the program through which this would be achieved must be understood, or at least have been made available to the society. It is difficult to assume the grey masses Sukhanov speaks of as having understood the Bolshevik program. It is more accurate to assume the peasant understood little little other than hunger and fatigue.

Still, by August 8, the Bolshevik party could claim direct representation of 177,000 members in 112 organizations.[50] This strength was revealed at the Sixty Party Congress, and represented a potent force to be reckoned with. It did not, however, represent the consensus of the Russian people.

The Kornilov affair finally brought home to the Provisional Government the fact that running the nation without the active participation of the socialist parties would be tantamount to committing political

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[48]By August, 1917, the rightist General Kornilov attempted a coup d'etat by marching on Petrograd. He was repulsed.

[49]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 93.

[50]Bunyan and Fisher, p. 19.

suicide. But it was already too late. Aware of the weakened position of the Provisional Government, the executive committee of the Workers and Soldiers Deputies and the executive committee of the Peasants' Deputies issued a call on September 16 for a democratic congress to assemble for the purpose of setting up a truly representative form of government which would direct the course of the nation until the Constituent Assembly had completed its work. When it met, the Bolsheviks were again a hostile minority. At first, attempts to include the bourgeois representatives in any government to be formed were voted down. But, without the Kadets, the moderate socialist parties felt the new cabinet would not be truly representative. On October 3, a compromise was reached and Kerensky formed a new government including ten socialists, four Kadets and two non-party-aligned men. For the first time, the nation seemed to have a basis for a stable government. Representation was better proportioned according to the actual political situation and, even though the Bolsheviks did not participate, it appeared this democratic government could reconcile dissident viewpoints. Yet it was to prove too little and too late. And so Mr. Carr calls this new government, which was inching toward true representation, a "wordy fiasco."[51]

It was also at this meeting that the first concrete steps toward convening a Constituent Assembly were taken. A Pre-Parliament was formed, made up of representatives of the groups at the democratic congress. The Bolsheviks were a minority and withdrew from the Pre-Parliament, unwilling to participate in it as they were in the congress which preceded it. This continual refusal to compromise on solid issues points up the deceit of the Bolsheviks' compromises with organizations whose aid they solicited.

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[51]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 92.

The Bolsheviks were destined to walk out of many meetings as a part of their tactics. By standing aloof from the mistakes of the parties enjoying public support and sympathy, the Bolsheviks could claim they had no part in whatever failure occurred as a result of the mistakes. That by refusing to cooperate they did nothing constructive during this period is evident. Mr. Carr does not explore this negative aspect of the Bolsheviks' activities; indeed, he reserves for Lenin the label "creative."[52]

As the Bolsheviks agitated louder and longer for "All Power to the Soviets," and "Land, Bread and Peace," their adherents grew more numerous. On October 24, the day before the Bolshevik revolution, the unofficial Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region and the All-Russian Congress of Factory Shop Committees approved a Bolshevik takeover of the government.[53] The Petrograd Soviet followed suit. But the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Workers and Soldiers Soviet, which, despite Bolshevik claims they were out of touch with their constituents, still remained the most representative body in Russia, voted down the Bolshevik resolution to transfer all power to the Soviets under Bolshevik domination (the leading Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow). This is the clearest indication that at the time of the seizure of power, the Bolsheviks were regarded with open hostility by the elected representatives of a substantial majority. The vast majority of Soviets were not under the domination of the Bolsheviks. Several did not fall to the Bolsheviks until well after the Civil War. To some degree, the executive committee was out of touch with its constituents. But their position, if slightly more to the right than

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[52]Carr, What Is History?, p. 68. Mr. Carr is speaking of Lenin's "creativeness" in moulding the social forces to his own will.

[53]Rabochii Put, No. 42, November 6 (October 24), 1917, p. 3, cited in Bunyan and Fisher, p. 67. The date October 24 corresponds to November 6, since the Russian calendar was, prior to February, 1918, thirteen days behind the Western calendar. We have used the Russian Gregorian calendar in this work.

was the prevailing attitude of the nation at the time, was vindicated at the Second Congress of Soviets. The delegates to this congress, which was composed of every shade of political thought in Russia, were the first to learn of the Bolshevik revolution. They reacted to the news by beginning the policy of dissassociation which was to leave the Bolsheviks in power in the Soviets. Mr. Carr considers the Bolshevik-dominated Soviets as the "natural, if self-constituted heirs"[54] to a government which surrendered.[55]

The moderate socialists left the congress, as did the peasants deputies.[56] Again, we turn to Sukhanov to provide us with an insight into what desertion of the congress by these moderate (Sukhanov calls them Rightist) groups meant to the future course of history. Here is his account:

> If the Mensheviks and SRs left now, they would simply write finis to themselves and infinitely strengthen their opponents. One would have thought the Right wouldn't do this immediately, and that the Congress, though with a wavering majority, would be set on the right road to the formation of a united democratic front. But the Mensheviks and SRs did do it. These blind counter-revolutionaries not only failed to see that their 'line' was counter-revolutionary, but also failed to realize the complete absurdity and unworthy childishness of their behavior.... A struggle at the Congress for a united democratic front might have had some success. For the Bolsheviks as such, for Lenin and Trotsky, it was more odious than the possible Committees of Public Safety or another Kornilov march on Petersburg. The exit of the 'pure-in-heart' freed the Bolsheviks from this danger. By quitting the Congress and leaving the Bolsheviks with only the Left SR youngsters and the feeble little Novaya Zhizn group, we gave the Bolsheviks with our own hands a monopoly of the Soviet, of the masses, and of the revolution. By our own irrational decision we ensured the victory of Lenin's whole 'line.'[57]

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[54]The phrase is Mr. Carr's.

[55]Georg von Rauch, A History of Soviet Russia, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), p. 60.

[56]Vtorio Vserossiiskii Sezd Sovetov, RISD, pp. 37-44, cited in Bunyan and Fisher, pp. 111-112.

[57]Sukhanov, pp. 637-646.

This theory, if it can be called such, is a well-established one and will come as no surprise to the student of Soviet affairs. But what is surprising is that Mr. Carr says only that the Second Congress of Soviets "proclaimed the transfer of all power throughout Russia to Soviets of Workers' Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies."[58] It must be remembered, too, that even in transferring control to the Soviets, the congress was not necessarily transferring control to the Bolsheviks, for the provincial Soviets were often autonomous.[59] But of this, and of the price of democracy which disassociation cost, Mr. Carr says nothing.

On October 26, the Committee to Save the Country and the Revolution was formed of groups who opposed the Bolshevik seizure of power. These included such groups as the City Duma, the Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the SRs, the Mensheviks who left the congress, the Railway Mens' Union, the Post and Telegraph Union, the Central Executive Committees of the SRs and the Mensheviks, the Council of the Russian Republic, and various organizations from the front.[60] A formidable array it was, but one already destined for the "rubbish-can of history," because it was one day too late to form a solid front against the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks were on their way toward consolidation of power and in so doing were receiving help and comfort from the actions of their opponents. The more moderate elements finally divested themselves entirely of any claim to power when on November 17, 1917, the SRs broke with the Bolsheviks. This break also had the effect of casting more doubt

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[58]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 99.

[59]George Vernadsky, A History of Russia, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 297.

[60]Delo Naroda, No. 190, November 9/October 26, 1917, p. 2, cited in Bunyan and Fisher, p. 118.

on Bolshevik claims that they represented the social forces within Russia, and this doubt would not be lessoned until the Left SRs made their peace with the Bolsheviks at the "special" Congress of Peasants' Soviets.

But even this "special" congress is not altogether an accurate reflection of the Bolshevik strength because of the manner in which it was called and convened. The Left SRs called for this special meeting of the Peasants' Soviets on November 23, against the will of the Executive Committee of the First Congress of Peasants' Soviets which had been elected in July and claimed prior rights to represent the peasantry. That many delegates duly elected by the peasantry turned up at the special congress can be attributed more to an unwillingness to miss anything than to a willingness to be led by the Bolsheviks. The likelihood of being led by the Bolsheviks seemed remote when the vote was counted. The Left SRs obtained 195 seats, the Right SRs, 65, and the Bolsheviks, 37.[61] The Left SRs supposedly were the spokesmen for the "poor" peasantry, or those who had benefited least from the March revolution, while the Right SRs represented the more moderate elements, meaning those who saw hope for the future, and the Bolsheviks represented the extreme, or those who not only had not benefited from the change but who also demanded immediate confiscation of the estates. At this special congress the Left SRs and the Bolsheviks worked for a coalition which would makes them the spokesmen for the peasants represented at this special congress. As far as representing those peasants whose delegates had boycotted the congress on the grounds that it was not properly called, Mr. Carr says nothing.

The Bolshevik desire for a coalition had its foundation in the supposition that it would legitimize their takeover of power, even though the

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[61]Bunyan and Fisher, p. 210.

Left SRs represented only a fraction of the total SR strength. The problem blocking a coalition centered around the manner in which land taken forcibly from landlords would be distributed. In May, the First Congress of Peasants' Soviets had gone on record as favoring the transfer of requisitioned estates to a land committee in each locality which was to oversee the use of the land until a Constituent Assembly had decided how it should be divided. The procrastination of the Provisional Government disturbed the peasants, but, even so, they, through their representatives, sought a more lasting and orderly solution to the agrarian problem than the one advanced by the Bolsheviks. While the immediate Bolshevik program would have permitted the peasants to seize the estates for whatever use they wanted (a program designed to appeal to the peasantry), Lenin was philosophically committed to an agrarian collectivization which later characterized the Stalin era. Just as in the case of the workers, to whom he offered control of the industry of the nation, Lenin was offering the peasants a quick solution to their ills. How enduring a solution it would have provided is another matter.

But the Left SRs spotted this flaw in the Bolshevik program. They accused the Bolsheviks of not caring how the land problem was solved, just that it be solved.[62] And this obstacle had to be removed before the Bolsheviks and the Left SRs could form a coalition. Lenin was too shrewd to put forth the idea of collectivization, for the Left SRs were adamant in their insistence they would never tolerate a dictatorship of the proletariat. Miss Rochester, although an admirer of Lenin's agrarian program, admits that Lenin would never have been successful in forming a

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[62]John Reed, Ten Days That Shook the World, (New York: Random House, 1936), p. 302.

coalition with the SRs if his true intent for Russian agriculture had been known. This realization forced Lenin temporarily to abandon his plan and advocate leaving the solution of the agrarian problem to the peasants.[63] Yet even this much of a retreat was not enough for the Left SRs, who felt Lenin's decrees would lead to a state of anarchy. And, too, there was a matter of ethics involved. The Left SRs claimed the Bolsheviks had stolen the agrarian platform originated by the SRs (distribution of the estates among the peasantry, not to be confused with collectivization) but had departed from their tactics. Kolchinsky, a Left SR, claimed that the Bolsheviks departed from SR tactics because they wanted to hasten the solution to the land question so the Constituent Assembly would have nothing to do.[64] These considerations of practical politics are missing from Mr. Carr's treatment of the congress.

The differences in viewpoint seemed irreconcilable and it appeared that the Bolsheviks would not be able to draw peasant support to their revolution. But Lenin went backwards even further. He submitted entirely to the Left SR program and renounced any intention of creating a proletarian dictatorship over the peasants, declaring his party wanted nothing more than to welcome the peasants as brothers of the revolution. How truthful he was can be demonstrated by the type of compromises he made with other factions. But, regardless of his intentions, his immediate purpose was served: the Left SRs agreed to form a coalition, and thus a small segment of society seemed to stand behind the October revolution. For Lenin this support seemed to have cost him dearly, if we ignore the behind-the-scenes nature of his compromise. He had been forced to

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[63]Anna Rochester, Lenin on the Agrarian Question, (New York: International Publishers, 1942), pp. 91-99.

[64]Reed, p. 302.

subordinate his collective ideas to that of a petty-bourgeois peasant approach to socialism and had accepted the program of nationalization offered by the Left SRs. Rochester apologizes for this sacrifice by rationalizing that there was a need to allow the development of capitalistic-style farms because it was the first step in breaking the feudal grip of the large landowners on the peasantry.[65] Yet even this coalition with the Left SRs was not wholly indicative of the peasant position. A final demonstration of peasant dissatisfaction with the direction of events, and a condemnation of the coalition reached between the Bolsheviks and the Left SRs, came between December 9 and Christmas Day, during the Second Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. A resolution was passed 360-321 condemning the policy of the Bolsheviks.[66] It was the last word to be heard from the peasantry as an independent force, for the Bolsheviks quietly took over the buildings of the peasants' organizations, eliminating them as effective communications tools with the people of the soil. Mr. Carr sheds no light on Lenin's relationship with the peasant, and his work is barren of any reference to the manner in which the coalition between the Left SRs and the Bolsheviks was formed.

From the foregoing it is clear that Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not represent a majority force within the socialist ranks and that they seized power while a minority. Lenin's concept of party organization certainly demonstrated its effectiveness, but the success enjoyed through force of arms is in no way an assurance the social forces were receptive to a dictatorship of the proletariat. Von Rauch says it best: " . . . it is pure fiction to maintain that it was the workers who took over the

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[65]Rochester, p. 108.

[66]Bunyan and Fisher, p. 218.

government the day of the October Revolution. It was the Bolshevik party which, in the name of the working class but in reality over its head had usurped power."[67]

But this is just the "fiction" Mr. Carr regards as fact. He writes:

> Politically, Lenin's argument could hardly be refuted. The October revolution had settled the question for good or ill. Whether the bourgeois revolution had been completed or not, whether the time was or was not ripe for the proletarian revolution - and whatever the ultimate consequences if these questions had to be answered in the negative sense - the proletarian revolution had in fact occurred. After October, 1917, nobody could undo what had been done or force the revolution back into a bourgeois-democratic mould. Political development seemed to have outrun economic development. This was indeed the assumption which Lenin made on the eve of October . . .[68]

In addition to considering the October revolution a proletarian one, Mr. Carr makes the assumption that the revolution was also a prelude to socialism. Mr. Carr's willingness to believe this is not shared by other historians. In the structural sense, Vernadsky refers to the takeover of power as a dictatorship of the Communist party, just as von Rauch does, and says that it was only after the Bolsheviks seized power in the capital that they could extend control to the provinces (a fact Mr. Carr attributes to the "rule" that villages always follow the city in revolution.)[69] In the broad social and political prespective, Rostow believes that had not the war interfered and had not the social conditions been what they were Russia might well have been moving toward the kind of democratic institutions the Western world could easily recognize.[70] Alfred Levin

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[67] von Rauch, p. 60.

[68] Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 122.

[69] Vernadsky, p. 294.

[70] Rostow, Levin, et al, pp. 34-35.

believes that had not there been a combination of factors, including the war and the unbelievably inept rule of the Romanovs, some resurgence of the monarchy might have been possible.[71] While this is all speculation, and falls in that category of "might-have'been" thinking, it nonetheless serves to point out that the foundations for a proletarian revolution may not have existed. If the proletarian revolution did in fact occur, it was because Lenin made it occur. The truth is that when Lenin arrived at the Finland Station in April he brought with him the proletarian-socialist revolution. The most surprised of all were his followers. Mr. Carr has an excellent description of the controversy which Lenin's April Theses caused amid the party members,[72] but he neither notes the realities of the situation in which there was actually little basis to assume a socialist revolution was in the making, nor does he allow much validity to the arguments of those who maintained the revolution had only entered its bourgeois stage. For those who supposed the March revolution was largely spontaneous, Mr. Carr does not even record Lenin's scorn. All that is important to Mr. Carr is that Lenin did triumph and his April Theses carried the day, "giving concrete shape and a constitutional mould to the Bolshevik scheme of revolution."[73]

Mr. Carr's observation that political development seemed to have outrun economic development[74] would seem to evidence a concern over Marxian precepts and how they were faring under Lenin's direction. F.C.

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[71]Alfred Levin, Stillwater, Oklahoma, letter, February 16, 1963, to the author.

[72]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, pp. 78-84.

[73]Ibid., p. 84.

[74]Ibid., p. 36.

Barghoorn calls this preoccupation with embodying Marxist doctrines in Soviet institutions "the principal defect" in Mr. Carr's work because it keeps him from drawing the proper conclusions about certain aspects of Bolshevik rule, namely the fact that the revolution was not progressing along any recognizable ideological lines.[75]

One way Mr. Carr could contribute to the sense of inevitability which runs through Volume One is to claim the revolution was proceeding along Marxian lines. It was not and he does not. Mr. Carr is fully aware of the damage the revolution did to Marxist doctrines.[76] But, beyond an explanation of how Lenin justified his dictatorship, Mr. Carr is not interested in reconciling the Marxist tradition with the Bolshevik methods. His efforts are not directed toward describing the development of an ideology into a working set of principles, nor even toward justifying the activities of the Bolsheviks in terms of Marxian dictates. For Mr. Carr, Marxism is simply one more tool the Bolsheviks had in their storeroom of revolution.

Considering this, it seems strange that A.L. Rowse would see in Mr. Carr an ideologist who has shown how the doctrine of Marxism acquired a new force in the Nineteenth century and became the ideology of a group of intellectuals concerned with maintaining their identity by linking their interest with the interests of the community as a whole.[77] But, on the other hand, Rowse says Mr. Carr is not a Marxist and therefore could not

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[75]F.C. Barghoorn, Review of A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923, by E.H. Carr, The Saturday Review of Literature, XXXIV, March 17, 1951, p. 21.

[76]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 123.

[77]A.L. Rowse, "Questions in Political Theory on E.H. Carr," End of an Epoch, (London: Macmillan, 1947), p. 292.

write the kind of historical inquiry Deutscher says might be revealing: that of a Marxist writing a history of the Soviet state. Mr. Carr, writes Deutscher, stands "au dela de la melee."[78] If Mr. Carr cannot be considered a Marxist or a student or Marxism, outside of its effect on policies and institutions, then one cannot look to his work for a critical analysis of Marxism as it affected the Bolshevik rule. There is not even an attempt to do so.

Because of this there arises a paradox. Why is it that we cannot expect from a writer who has built his reputation partly upon works concerning Russian revolutionaries that he include in his most comprehensive work a chapter or at least a section on Marxism as it pertains to the Russian revolution? It seems a strange oversight, if it is an oversight. Perhaps a closer inspection of these earlier works can provide us with a key to unlock this paradox.

Although his Dostovesky was called a "standard," and was favorably received by the majority of reviewers, there are some notable dissenters. Babette Deutsch, a literary critic for the Boston Transcript, said that Mr. Carr did not realize the full measure of the man.[79] Malcolm Richards, a critic for the New York Evening Post, wrote that Mr. Carr might as well be unaware of the psychological, moral and religious questions Dostovesky raised.[80] And J.W. Krutch, writing in The Nation, seems to think Dostovesky was never met on his own ground.[81]

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[78]Deutscher, p. 204.

[79]Babette Deutsch, Review of Dostoevsky, by E.H. Carr, in Books of the Boston Transcript, November 1, 1931, p. 5.

[80]Malcolm Richards, Review of Dostoevsky, by E.H. Carr, in the New York Evening Post, October 31, 1931, p. 9.

[81]J.W. Krutch, Review of Dostoevsky, by E.H. Carr, in The Nation, November 4, 1931, CXXXI, p. 490.

Of Mr. Carr's Bakunin, generally the same criticisms are leveled. Franz Hoellering in The Nation wrote that the book "is as precise as a timetable and tells little more about an exceptional and important historic personality than a train timetable tells about the complexity of a railroad."[82] Edmund Wilson's criticism is that Mr. Carr tells all but "what it is all about."[83]

The Romantic Exiles by Mr. Carr fared little better. Isidor Schneider, writing in The Nation, says the revolutionary activity that could be vitally informing to us is "idly glanced at and ignored while our attention is diverted to trivial love affairs."[84] The Saturday Review of Literature says of Mr. Carr's Studies in Revolution that it is a "pleasing but sketchy primer on the march of revolutionary theory in the last century."[85]

There runs through a substantial portion of the reviews of Mr. Carr's works on revolution and revolutionaries this recurring criticism suggesting that he has not grasped the idealism, or the motivating forces, behind revolution. Perhaps a large part of this failure to see beyond what actually occurred stems from Mr. Carr's distaste for Utopias. According to him, "the complete Utopian, by rejecting the causal sequence, deprives himself of the possibility of understanding either the reality which he is seeking to change or the processes by which it can be changed.

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[82]Franz Hoellering, Review of Bakunin, by E.H. Carr, in The Nation, November 4, 1931, CXXXI, p. 358.

[83]Edmund Wilson, "Cold Water on Bakunin," in Shores of Light (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1938), pp. 716-721.

[84]Isidor Schneider, Review of The Romantic Exiles, by E.H. Carr, The Nation, CXXXVII, August 9, 1933, p. 164.

[85]Review of Studies in Revolution, by E.H. Carr, Saturday Review of Literature, XXXIII, August 19, 1950, p. 36.

Too much realism, on the other hand, can lead to sterility, since the realist analyses a predetermined course of development which he is powerless to change," writes Mr. Carr.[86] But for all his understanding of the pitfalls of a totally empirical outlook, Mr. Carr regards himself as more a realist than a Utopian. For Professor Carr, history is a science. If the historian finds himself embedded in the stream of history, then the path of "objectivity" lies not only in finding facts but in managing to assess them in the face of the limitation placed on his vision by his own time.

There is yet another indication that Mr. Carr, despite his apparent intimacy with revolution, finds it repugnant and is loath to dwell on it. Deutscher writes that Mr. Carr is a sometime despiser of revolutionary ideas and principles, and illustrates his point well with Mr. Carr's treatment of the Brest-Litovsk talks.[87] And it is necessary only to turn to the table of contents to catch a glimpse of what was on Mr. Carr's mind when he wrote the first volume on his history series. Part One totals 70 pages and professes to take us from the foundations of Bolshevism directly to the October revolution. That part is entitled "The Man and the Instrument," and is followed by "The Constitutional Structure." This second part deals with the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the Constitution of the RSFSR, Consolidating the Dictatorship, the Ascendency of the Party and the Party and the State. The chapter on the constitution, which immediately follows Mr. Carr's description of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, has special significance for it

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[86]E.H. Carr, The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939, (New York: St. Martins, 1946), p. 16.

[87]Deutscher, p. 212.

displays admirably his tendency to attach importance to the trappings of democracy even though they are likely to be hollow shams. The lengthy chapter on the constitution, which is important only in the doctrinaire way it pays tribute to traditional revolutionary goals, sheds no light on the forces creating the revolution or on the way in which it developed.

This sketchy treatment of the revolution and the manner in which Mr. Carr handles it can best be explained by examining the premise of his work. Mr. Carr is not telling the story of a state being built upon ideological maxims, nor is he chronicling the purely revolutionary force of communism. His purpose is the consideration of communism as an economic and political force largely characterized by a return to the normal pursuits of statecraft. Perhaps this is another reason why Lenin emerges as a statebuilder, rather than a state-destroyer, in Mr. Carr's estimation. Mr. Carr's purpose with his work is clearly stated in the preface to his first volume. "My ambition," he writes, "has been to write the history not of the events of the revolution . . ., but of the political, social and economic order which emerged from it."[88] He frankly admits that the volume devoted to the revolutionary period was originally imagined as a long chapter in the book which ultimately appeared as Volume Two.

Since he is not a Marxist and does not have a Russian background, he appears a bit hesitant about offering a book dealing in other than institutions and policies. Pipes is sympathetic, and agrees with Mr. Carr that he is at his best when dealing "with specific institutions or constitutional problems, but considerably weaker when called upon to tell the story of historical events."[89] Deutscher, too, notes this side of Mr.

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[88]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. v.

[89]Pipes, p. 226.

Carr and writes that Mr. Carr's desire for a return to normalcy allows him to compromise with revolutionary ethics.[90]

The most apparent example of Mr. Carr's regard for this return to normalcy is not found in the first volume, but in the fourth. In the first volume, the reader is exposed to his attitude on this matter only by inference, but in the fourth volume, Socialism in One Country, Volume I, his satisfaction with the re-establishment of the Russian foreign ministry and his treatment of it as a symbol of the gradual re-emergence of the apparatus of traditional statism is almost flagrant. He is happy when the Bolsheviks give up their Utopian ideas of an international collectiveness in foreign affairs and lose their haughty contempt for the ordinary conceptions and procedures of foreign policy. Here, then, we return anew to this idea that Mr. Carr is not overly concerned with revolutionary ideas, but with the facts of the revolution insofar as they contribute to the building of order out of chaos.

At the height of the chaos, Mr. Carr was serving in Paris as a member of the British delegation to the Peace Conference. On August 18, 1919, he sent a letter to a friend, a Mr. Geogory in London, which included an extract from the report of a military man who attempted to determine to what extent real Bolshevism was disappearing and being replaced by socialism. According to the observer, a General Malcolm of the Berlin section, Lenin was a comparative moderate who was gaining in authority, with the result that anarchy and terriorism were disappearing. Mr. Carr called this "the clearest and soundest thing" he had seen lately on the Russian situation."[91]

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[90]Deutscher, p. 212.

[91]Documents of British Foreign Policy, 1919-1937, First Series, Vol. III, p. 510.

Lenin, to Mr. Carr, represented order and stability.

For the sake of this order and stability, Mr. Carr constructs a ladder of events in this first volume of the history series which leads to the final triumph of Bolshevik power. The revolution of October was proletarian, he writes, and the Bolsheviks were the spokesmen for the social forces which carried them into power. But we have seen that the revolution represented not proletarian-socialism, but, instead, the failure of the democratic forces to congeal their efforts and present a united front to the Bolsheviks. In spite of evidence to the contrary, Mr. Carr holds to his assumption because to do otherwise would force him to reanalyze his approach to and treatment of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly.

Mr. Carr feels that if the Constituent Assembly did eventually assume power, it would do so as a characteristic organ of bourgeois democracy. If, as he says, the revolution, by overthrowing the Provisional Government, had left the Soviets the "supreme repositories of revolutionary power," and, if the Council of People's Commissars really did represent "a provisional workers' and peasants' government," then the proletarian revolution had occurred and the Constituent Assembly, as "a characteristic organ of the bourgeois democracy" stood outside the revolution and could not become a part of the proletarian rule.[92] This argument is recognizable as Lenin's, and Mr. Carr has been accused of making Lenin's premises his own without subjecting them to a critical examination.[93] But Mr. Carr is not nearly as dogmatic as Lenin was to become, for Mr. Carr

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[92]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 105.

[93]Michael Karpovich, Review of A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923, by E.H. Carr, The New York Herald Tribune, Book Review Section, February 4, 1951, p. 6.

thinks that Soviet power did not imply rejection of "the ultimate authority of the Constituent Assembly."[94]

Because he believes the proletarian revolution had occurred, Mr. Carr writes that the "fate of the Constituent Assembly . . . was sealed," and that the assembly was "an anachronism once the stage had been superceded by the proletarian-socialist revolution."[95] The proletarian revolution had also solved the dual power issue and the only choice left the Constituent Assembly was to "surrender or be wiped out."[96] The proletarian revolution of Mr. Carr's was not merely an extension of the March revolution (an argument he notes but dismisses by upholding the counter-argument that the Bolshevik dissolution of the assembly was not something spontaneous) but was the "result of a considered policy and a clear-cut view of the progressive development of the revolution from its bourgeois democratic to its proletarian socialist phase."[97]

In view of the real nature of the revolution the elections to the Constituent Assembly, which awarded a minority position to the Bolsheviks, can be considered to accurately reflect the will of the people. Although the Bolsheviks did secure 9,800,000 votes, the SRs garnered 15,800,000, giving them a decisive victory.[98] Even so, Mr. Carr feels this pointed the way to a Bolshevik victory for those who had eyes to see. The future may have seemed secure to Mr. Carr, but there was less certainty about

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[94]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 105.

[95]Ibid., p. 115.

[96]Ibid.

[97]Ibid., Italics mine.

[98]Oliver Radkey, The Elections to the Constituent Assembly, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 80.

the present. Professor Carr foresees that the Constituent Assembly would serve as a rallying point for opposition to the Soviet regime, even though the results of the vote did not preclude some kind of coalition in which the Bolsheviks might have enjoyed a strong position. But to attempt an honest working coalition was, as we have seen, not a part of Lenin's tactics. Mr. Carr excuses this attitude on the grounds the Bolsheviks were so well-versed in revolutionary history they could see a parallel between the French Constituent Assembly of May, 1848, and the one which commanded their immediate attention. In order to preserve the revolution and not have "it cut down to bourgeois standards," Mr. Carr feels the Bolsheviks were justified, in view of his interpretation of the nature of the revolution, to exploit the assembly for their own ends: domination by the Soviets, primarily by the leadership of the two most influential Soviets, the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets.[99]

In making this assumption that the revolution would be cut to bourgeois standards, an assumption he apparently bases upon his comparison between the French and Russian Constituent Assemblies, Mr. Carr has fallen victim to a practice of Lenin's: labelling. He regards the Constituent Assembly as "bourgeois" without properly explaining why. The assembly was not bourgeois in the sense of property interests. Most of the delegates were professional men; lawyers, doctors, newspaper people, intellectuals. They belonged to the most unique class of Russians: the intelligentsia. The Russians have a word which more accurately describes the type of men which found themselves attempting to shape the destiny of a nation on that cold January day in 1918. That word is raznochintsi

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[99]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 112.

and, while it has no literal translation in English, it means roughly "people of no class." Actually the word has connotations which are not strictly applicable to the men who composed the assembly, but it is certainly a more adequate description than "bourgeois." Conversely, it is not entirely accurate to describe the Soviets as "proletarian." Or, at least, it is not accurate to describe the leadership as such. There was present there, as well as in the assembly, persons cut from the same bolt of cloth. But the Soviets represented to Lenin the most direct route to power. They were a cohesive body easily available and, if not always dominated by the Bolsheviks, at least the Bolsheviks were generally represented by an adequate and militant force.

When Lenin raised the banner of "All Power to the Soviets," he did so because it was the most astute strategy he could have used.[100] This is true regardless of whether there is any truth in Mr. Carr's contention that the Soviets were "the natural, if self-appointed, heirs to the Constituent Assembly."[101] Mr. Carr writes that Lenin's "somewhat lukewarm attitude towards the Soviets in 1905 had been modified by their vigor and success in mobilizing popular support, and by the prestige which attached to them even after their downfall."[102] But he does not elaborate on the principal reason that caused Lenin to attach new importance to the Soviets. Lenin turned toward the Soviets because he found in them the power he needed to gain his ends. The power resting in the Constituent Assembly was too representative, too accurate an indication of majority will, to encourage hope in Lenin that he could ever control it through legitimate

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[100]Hugh Seton-Watson, From Lenin to Malenkov, (New York: Praeger, 1953), pp. 28-29.

[101]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 121.

[102]Ibid., p. 84.

means. The vote shows this, and even Mr. Carr suspects the election was a "crushing vote of non-confidence."[103] He qualifies this judgment because he finds in the out-of-date party lists a reason to suspect the vote was not indicative of majority will.

Lenin could not claim the power which, because of the outcome of the election rightfully belonged to the Constituent Assembly. It is true that the liberal-democratic revolution had defaulted, and the election substantiates this view since only two million votes were returned for the Kadet party.[104] But this alone did not give the Bolsheviks the mandate they felt was needed to assume power. So they cloaked their seizure of power in a shadowy claim that the bourgeois revolution had come and gone and with it the necessity for the Constituent Assembly.

Radkey assures us the elections to the assembly epitomized the revolutionary mind of the greatest part of Russia when they were held.[105] Sukhanov passionately claims that Lenin's support of the Constituent Assembly as a means of exploiting it for the preservation and ultimate domination of the Soviets was "deception on a national scale."[106] And Berdyaev says the Bolsheviks were acting more like the Tsarist police than a responsible element of the revolution when they were successful in their attempt to destroy the Constituent Assembly. Nor can we fail to mention those Populists and those of the Marxist liberal tradition who as early as the 1870s were cautioning that the centralized power of a dictatorship would become reactionary.[107] Shub writes, too, that the Russian

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[103]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 110.

[104]Radkey, p. 80.

[105]Ibid.

[106]Sukhanov, p. 551.

[107]Franco Venturi, Roots of Revolution, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), Chapter One.

people, "in the freest election in their history voted for moderate socialism against Lenin and against the bourgeois."[108]

In an effort to explain away the results of the election, Mr. Carr distinguishes between the Right and Left SRs, the latter having joined forces with the Bolsheviks at the "special" Peasants Congress in December. We have seen that Mr. Carr believes Lenin's argument that because of the coalition the Bolsheviks represented the majority of the peasants as well as the working classes. But we have also seen how the Second Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies rebuked this argument. It is true that the two wings of the party represented two different viewpoints. But it is less certain that these viewpoints were clear to the peasantry. It is also true that when the Left SRs aligned themselves with the Bolsheviks it cast a different light on the physical makeup of the Constituent Assembly. But, insofar as this was understood among the peasantry and would have affected the vote, it is unlikely such interparty manipulations could have influenced many voters. The trend of voting in communities which were not subjected to pressures from either the SRs or the Bolsheviks forcibly demonstrates that the vote was not a matter of choice between Left and Right SRs or the Bolsheviks, since the peasants hardly understood the concept of nationalization, but simply a matter of the tendency of the peasants to follow those who had, in the past, been in the forefront enlisting support for the peasants' land demands. This lack of understanding of the issues is also illustrated by the fact that in those communities which hosted SR or Bolshevik agitators the peasant generally voted for those who reached him with their message last.[109]

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[108]David Shub, Lenin, (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1948), p. 146.

[109]Radkey, p. 56.

The peasants near the front, from whence came Bolshevik agitators, voted Bolshevik. Similar voting patterns were revealed where the SRs had agitators. Instances where whole villages knew their own collective mind well enough to disregard agitators were rare. Because of the great distances involved and the brief amount of time alloted the agitators after the October revolution and before the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the number of peasants influenced by the presence or absence of either party was negligible and it can be safely assumed that the majority of peasants voted for those they had long regarded as their champions. In so doing, they were reiterating their faith in the ability of their duly elected representatives to carry out the dictates of the people of the soil. This is not to say that if the Bolsheviks and the SRs had had an equal opportunity to present their cases that there might not have been radical shift in the vote. But about the only thing the peasant understood was that some sort of land distribution was being promised by everyone who sought his support. The peasant could not tell the difference between the two parties because of the similarity of their land programs, and when the conclusion is drawn, as Mr. Carr does, that the vote should have represented the choice between Bolshevism and Right SRs, this is ascribing too much political maturity to the peasant.[110] It is unlikely that either party represented the social forces predominant in Russia, since neither had any real roots in the peasantry and probably neither understood the motivations of the peasantry outside of some vague notion that a land decree would be necessary.

The malleability of the peasants, or their political immaturity, did not concern Lenin, except insofar as it served his purposes. He cared

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[110]Carr, A History of Russia, Volume I, p. 111.

little whether the issues were understood. It better suited him if they were not, because he would not have been able to collectivize the farms and install a proletarian dictatorship over agriculture without meeting headon opposition from the SRs. All that interested Lenin was mobilizing support for his program by holding out bait, in the form of land, to the peasants. "We will win the peasants' trust with a single decree which will annihilate landed property," Lenin told the Petersburg Soviet on October 25, the day of the Bolshevik revolution.[111]

But to Mr. Carr, the elections to the Constituent Assembly were invalid because the electors did not have an opportunity to vote on their preferences between Left and Right SRs. This argument, known as the outdated-party-lists-argument, is considered even more cogent by Mr. Carr because "in the large industrial cities the Bolsheviks had almost everywhere been ahead of the other parties."[112] But Radkey's figures tell a different story: the Bolsheviks were not as strong as they expected to be in the heavily industrialized regions outside Moscow and Petersburg.[113] It is well to note that the Bolsheviks secured an absolute majority in the two capitals, but it is equally well to remember Sukhanov's admonition that the proletariat of those cities are as different from the majority of workers as day and night.[114]

Mr. Carr devotes a good deal of space to Lenin's careful development of the image of the Constituent Assembly as an agent which would be used against the people. This elaborate defense against any pre-eminence of

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[111]Sukhanov, p. 629.

[112]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 112.

[113]Radkey, pp. 38-39.

[114]Ibid.

the "bourgeoisie" seems a bit overdone on Mr. Carr's part in light of what Radkey tells us of the lack of support for the conservative element.[115] The Constituent Assembly, in reality, represented as strong a revolutionary force as the Bolsheviks, if not stronger.

As Lenin hounded the Constituent Assembly to death, he was merely climaxing a series of personal and individual acts designed to rout the assembly. Certain factors facilitated his success, but, all in all, Lenin must accept the responsibility for the failure of the assembly. Mr. Carr omits from his description of the Constituent Assembly many of the outright illegal acts which sounded the death-knell for the assembly. He failed, for instance, to mention that two Kadet delegates to the assembly were murdered in their hospital beds because they would not join forces with Lenin. Lenin may not have ordered or wished this, but the moral guilt is his because he encouraged extremism by his methods and his unbending opposition to compromise with anyone who would thereafter have to be treated as equals. Mr. Carr also fails to give the authority for outlawing the Kadets and the arrest of several leading Right SRs. He implies Lenin was able to employ these tactics because the Constituent Assembly did not enjoy the prestige in the public mind that some had ascribed to it. Mr. Carr neglects to mention a possible explanation for the lack of protest at the dissolution of the assembly might be because a substantial number of armed men stood ready to disperse demonstrations with gunfire. It should be pointed out that the normally dependable Semenovsky and Pavlovsky regiments in Petersburg were replaced by Letts, who were considered more likely to back up Bolshevik actions against the Constituent Assembly. Lenin organized the Cheka, established the right

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[115]Radkey, p. 71.

to call for re-elections, and locked up the electoral commission of the Provisional Government whose duties were to look after the legality of the elections. Perhaps most significant was the fact that pre-assembly meetings of parties were forbidden by the Bolsheviks.

The day the assembly convened, one demonstration took place in spite of the danger represented by the Letts. It was put down and several demonstrators were killed. Mr. Carr mentions this demonstration, but says "the act of dissolution passed almost without protest."[116] The actual end to the assembly came when a sailor put out the lights "because the guard /was/ tired." This Mr. Carr calls a "dramatic symbol," and he says every period of history has its own.[117] He seems to feel that all the contempt for the assembly was summed up in this one gesture. Lastly, Mr. Carr does not tell us of the actions Lenin himself took to disrupt the proceedings, such as feigning sleep on the benches and pretending to be snoring.

Perhaps Mr. Carr could excuse these omissions on the grounds that it matters little now what tactics were used to dissolve the assembly. It was dissolved and that was that. But it does matter when it is assumed that because the assembly failed there is no reason to think democracy could work in Russia. Mr. Carr calls the assembly "bankrupt" and further states that its dissolution and subsequent events "demonstrated the lack of any solid basis, or any broad popular support in Russia for the institutions and principles of bourgeois democracy."[118] Because of this non-support for democratic forms of government, Mr. Carr assumes "no alternative

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[116]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 120.

[117]Ibid., p. 119.

[118]Ibid., p. 121.

government [to the Bolsheviks] capable of wielding power was suggested or could have been suggested."[119]

Perhaps the assembly had a great deal to overcome before it could have wielded power. And perhaps its eventual downfall could have been forecast on the basis that it was the first time an attempt had been made to run the nation on a strictly parliamentary - a democratic - basis without responsibility to or interference from higher controls. But the Constituent Assembly was not altogether bankrupt from the standpoint of heritage. An interest had been shown in the parliamentary form of government throughout the period from Alexander I's reign right down to 1917. Russia also had its early modern Estates General. Throughout Russian history there has been evidence of a crude kind of democracy which has been acceptable to the mainstream of the Russian population. The Zemstvos were locally administered, and even the Mir itself was not totally devoid of the democratic spirit and practice. To be sure, Mr. Carr qualifies his statement, saying there is no support for bourgeois democracy. But the Constituent Assembly was not bourgeois in the sense it had property interests. It came closer to being raznochinets than bourgeois. So his qualification is meaningless, or at best, Leninist.

Confronted with this evidence of support for democracy in Russia, Mr. Carr still argues that the dissolution of the assembly occurred partly because it was non-indigenous to Russia. But the representative principle had a strong appeal in Russia. Certainly the vote to elect delegates to the Constituent Assembly demonstrated an interest in the parliamentary system. If there was no broad support for democratic institutions or practices why did the Bolsheviks feel it necessary to put up a facade with

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[119]Ibid., p. 119.

all the complex electoral machinery? And why the present concern with democratic labels in what is essentially a totalitarian state?

We have reached the top of our Jacob's ladder. The determinism of which Mr. Carr has been accused and the inevitability which is a corollary of this determinism can be sensed in a variety of ways in Mr. Carr's treatment of the revolution and the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. It is sensed in his philosophy of history, which regards causation as dictating the forms for the future, in his feeling that Lenin, because he was successful, did represent the social will, and, conversely, that the Constituent Assembly, because it failed, was at odds with the October revolution, in his regard for Lenin the state-builder rather than the state-destroyer, and, finally, in his personal desire for a "return to normalcy" within the Russian state.

Equally important toward leaving the reader with a sense of unwarranted inevitability are Mr. Carr's omissions. He neglects Lenin's personal role in destroying the assembly, primarily because of his refusal to accept Lenin as a consciously motivated individual. He fails to mention the illegal acts perpetrated by the Bolsheviks, and he treats very lightly the damage the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly did to Marxian precepts of the evolution of socialism. And, lastly and most importantly, he neither presents to the reader nor counters the argument that the act of dissolution was considered by some to be a counter-revolutionary act.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS

What Mr. Carr has failed to understand is the type of revolution which occurred in October. He makes this mistake not because he was unaware of all the facts, but because the successful culmination of the proletarian revolution was essential to his interpretation of the meaning behind the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. Because he is a determinist, he felt it necessary to see in the dissolution of the assembly another step in the consolidation of Bolshevik - proletarian - rule. Mr. Carr could not, in fairness to his philosophy of history, recognize the necessity for the completely autonomous nature of the Constituent Assembly unless it was to supersede the Bolshevik rule. Under Mr. Carr's philosophy of history, there were only two routes history could have taken at this junction in the road. Either the Constituent Assembly must prevail, making the Bolshevik seizure of power merely a nocturnal adventure, or the Bolsheviks must prevail, making the assembly an "anachronism" which existed and could be disposed of at the pleasure of the Bolsheviks. Had the Constituent Assembly prevailed, Mr. Carr would say the antecedent causes leading to its success would have had to be different from what actually happened. As it was, the antecedent causes pointed to the unavoidable conclusion that the assembly was "bankrupt."

But the antecedent causes pointed to no such conclusion. Mr. Carr has misinterpreted the nature of these causes. The October revolution was nothing more than a skillfully planned adventure which paid off because of the personalities behind it. The Constituent Assembly was not

bankrupt, and we have Radkey's opinion, an opinion based on the most comprehensive analysis of the elections to the assembly, to substantiate this claim. He writes that the vote was a true reflection of the feeling in Russia. Any assembly held to ascertain the collective thought of a nation cannot be bankrupt unless the elections to that assembly failed to reflect a true sampling. There is every indication that the sample was a true one, not only because of the manner in which the elections were conducted, but also because the articulate voices of Russia, as expressed in the newspapers and periodicals, favored some kind of parliamentary type of government. The Kadets considered it "the only true lord of Russia," when they spoke of the Constituent Assembly, but their inability to act had cost them the confidence of the people.[1] The Petrograd Union to Defend the Constituent Assembly attempted to rally support for the assembly by claiming the "last hope of the Russia revolution /was/ dead" when the assembly was dissolved.[2] The Inter-Ward Conference and the Central Municipal Duma, meeting without a quorum because it had been since the October revolution, composed of a majority of Bolsheviks who had earlier in the month walked out, called for defense of the assembly and held meetings to see what could be done.

There is more which shows the Constituent Assembly was not without prestige, despite Mr. Carr's claims to the contrary. The Red Cross declared the day the assembly met a national holiday, and at a huge meeting in the Chinizelli Circus, I. G. Tsereteli gave an address calling for "All Power to the Constituent Assembly," obviously a counter to the

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[1]This is cited from a leaflet distributed to the people of Petrograd by the Kadets on January 19, 1918. The leaflet is now in the Hoover War Library. It is cited in Bunyan and Fisher, p. 209.

[2]Delo Naroda, No. 219, December 9, 1917, p. 4. Cited in Bunyan and Fisher, p. 351.

Bolshevik slogan.[3] And in the meeting of the Central Executive Committee on January 19, 1918, where it was decided to dissolve the assembly, Stroev, a representative of the United Internationalists, said the Left SRs who had linked arms with the Bolsheviks were "clever fellows who had managed to lose their faith in the Constituent Assembly in about an hour and a half."[4] The Bolshevik Rizzanev said the assembly should be given a chance to show what it could do, and that the people had not formed "an idea of its possibilities in one day."[5] Rizzanev's comments are particularly interesting inasmuch as Mr. Carr regards the Constituent Assembly as unable to compromise on fundamental differences of doctrine.[6] This lent a certain atmosphere of unreality to the proceedings, he claims. Yet on the next page, Mr. Carr concludes the assembly was bankrupt because "it could do nothing more than repeat in substance what the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies had done...ten weeks earlier."[7] This seems somewhat contradictory, since in order for the Constituent Assembly to reach agreements similar to those of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, it would have been necessary to compromise to some extent. And Mr. Carr does not identify the congress of which he speaks. Was it the "special" Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, held in late November, or the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets held in early December? From his description of the assembly of Soviets as being "ten weeks earlier," it appears he speaks

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[3]Bunyan and Fisher, p. 345.

[4]Noviia Zhizn, No. 6, January 22, 1918, p. 3, cited in Bunyan and Fisher, p. 383.

[5]Pravda, No. 7, January 24, 1918, p. 2, cited in Bunyan and Fisher, p. 384.

[6]Carr, A History of Soviet Russia, Volume I, p. 118.

[7]Ibid., pp. 119-120.

of the "special" conference.[8] If that is the case, then there would have been a wider difference between it and the Constituent Assembly than between the December Congress of Soviets and the assembly, and, thusly, more of a compromise involved.

Sukhanov claimed the people had not lost faith in the Constituent Assembly, and Avilov, a United Internationalist, claimed Lenin had not pointed out satisfactorily why the Constituent Assembly did not reflect the will of the people.[9] Even more incriminating is Sukhanov's contention that the assembly had not refused to transfer power to the Soviets simply because the question had not even arisen. Of all this, Mr. Carr has nothing to say.

Philosophically, the Constituent Assembly was based on the strongest claims of representation. It was challenged by Lenin on philosophical grounds: i.e., that the October revolution was the proletarian revolution and the assembly was a holdover from the bourgeoisie revolution of March and had no place in the new society. But Lenin knew the philosophical argument would not impress the delegates to the assembly, who were secure in the knowledge they represented the social forces. He was forced to extra-legal methods to dissolve the assembly.

Since Lenin's ideological arguments do not necessarily prove the Constituent Assembly was bankrupt, the practical measures he took to dissolve it indicates quite the contrary. But Mr. Carr cites only the ideological argument and does not tell us of the real challenge to Lenin that the assembly represented. If the assembly had been allowed to

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Novaia Zhizn, No. 6, January 22, 1918, p. 4, cited in Bunyan and Fisher, p. 383.

fulfill its obligations to the voters, the Bolshevik grip on the nation would be lost. But a naked show of force, as ultimately happened, must be tempered with ideological considerations. So while the Bolsheviks were making preparations for the dissolution of the assembly - a dissolution made possible, Mr. Carr says, by the "clear-cut...progressive development of the revolution from its bourgeois democratic to its proletarian socialist phase," the Bolsheviks kept reassuring the delegates to the assembly that the seizure of the government did not mean the breakup of the Constituent Assembly.[10] Lenin had said the legality of the elections could be guaranteed only by a democratic government and not one made up of Kadets, Kornilovists and compromisers. Since the government consisted of only four Kadets and ten socialists on the date of the October revolution, and since the elections failed to vindicate the Kadets, the Constituent Assembly, according to the Bolsheviks' own definition, was a legally constituted assembly. Couple this with the fact that the Bolsheviks actually conducted the elections and the case for the assembly appears even stronger.

The trouble with Mr. Carr's interpretation is that it reverses the importance of the ideological and practical considerations for dissolving the Constituent Assembly. This can be linked with his deterministic approach to writing history. For Mr. Carr it is necessary that the October revolution be a prelude to the dissolution of the assembly. And for the dissolution of the assembly to fit into the pattern of causation Mr. Carr has drawn, the October revolution must have rendered it unnecessary to convene the Constituent Assembly. While Mr. Carr agrees

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[10] Izvestii, No. 209, November 10, 1917, cited in Bunyan and Fisher, p. 341.

with Lenin that under no circumstances could the revolution of October be made to fit into the bourgeois mould of the March revolution, an invalid statement since neither revolution was "bourgeois," he overlooks the fact that that is exactly what happened. The October revolution came to a close when the voters cast their ballots for those who rose to power on the strength of the March revolution and had retained the confidence of the people. To those voters, the Constituent Assembly was the only authoritative expression of the national will. But to the Bolsheviks it was something quite different, for they were looking beyond the democracy to the proletarian dictatorship. There was little choice left the Bolsheviks: dissolve the assembly in spite of the national will and consolidate their position in any way they could, or join the assembly and take a role, a secondary role, in the formulation of a new state.

There is yet another point Mr. Carr has missed in assuming the October revolution represented the majority will of the populace. The October revolution was in the traditional Russian manner of change: from the top down, not from the bottom up, and, in failing to see this, Mr. Carr has missed the point of the revolution. Mr. Carr's regard for normalcy has forced him to consider the Constituent Assembly as a departure from ordinary, "normal" practices in Russia. It was surely that. The Constituent Assembly was formulated from the bottom up, or at least from the middle up, an extremely unusual factor in the traditional Russian political pattern. The assembly was largely liberal in outlook, but even so, it was in a sense more revolutionary than the handfuls of radicals who led the October revolution. The radicals have always been with Russia. This liberal makeup of the assembly was its strength, not its weakness and it cannot be maintained, as does Mr. Carr, that merely because it stood in the way of Bolshevik power that it was bankrupt. Mr. Carr fails to see

that by the act of dissolution, and in the Bolshevik consolidation of rule, there was something counter-revolutionary. The return to the traditional pattern of government is welcomed by Mr. Carr, not because he knows this is a social force which will facilitate the Bolshevik consolidation of rule, but because in Russian political life, at its most liberal, the government exists for the people, but not of or by the people. Wolfe so deplores this oversight that he claims Mr. Carr ignores the revolution.[11]

Mr. Carr may be right when he hints that the Constituent Assembly was doomed before it convened, but he may be right for the wrong reasons. The Constituent Assembly failed because there was a concentrated effort to make it fail. It did not fail because of an inherent difference with the traditions of Russia, as Mr. Carr indicates, although it is true the assembly might eventually have run afoul of these traditions. If there was any bankruptcy about the assembly, it stemmed not from its purpose or role in the revolution, but from the men who sat in it. The men met fully expecting to be harassed by the Bolsheviks, but they armed themselves only with candles, in case the lights were extinguished, and sandwiches, in the event they were not allowed to leave the building. These were poor weapons for saving the democracy.

The elections to the Constituent Assembly did not, then, point the way to the Bolshevik victory. The elections registered nothing except the fact that the peasantry had little understanding of the political issues, that they voted for familiar faces except when convinced otherwise, and that the Bolsheviks had little power outside of Petrograd and Moscow. Mr. Carr is consistent with his philosophy of history when he

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[11] Wolfe, p. 284.

relegates the assembly to an insignificant role in the revolution, but his philosophy has betrayed him into thinking that the bulk of the Russian people were ready for a proletarian revolution. It is a fact that articulate voices of Russia were not thinking of a Bolshevik form of government, but of a more legally constituted form such as the type they had been working toward since 1905. A basis for democracy might not have existed in Russia, but it is also a fact that the interest and the determination to try a parliamentary form of government was high. The Bolsheviks had the strength to overcome this determination not by convincing the nation their way was the only way, but because they had so successfully identified themselves with every cause that the lines between traditional parties had become blurred. The Bolsheviks rode to power on the most tried and true revolutionary tactic: divide and conquer.

Mr. Carr tacitly approves of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly because it fits in nicely with the progress of the revolution. Once the assembly was removed, it became possible for the Soviets to move on into that sphere Mr. Carr is most concerned with: the drafting of policies and the establishment of institutions. He is much more at home there than he is in the revolution.

The question whether Mr. Carr regards the revolution and the Bolshevik rule as legitimate can be answered in the affirmative. From the first days of the October revolution to the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the attitude displayed by Mr. Carr toward the ultimate outcome of things leaves little doubt that he regarded the Bolsheviks as the legitimate heirs to the Tsars. But one must be careful in assuming that legitimacy has anything to do with revolution. This author is inclined to think that legitimacy depends upon a multitude of circumstances and that judgment cannot be rendered except on the basis of human relations.

Where the error is made is in looking to history to prove the legality. This is the error Mr. Carr made.

There is only one basis for assuming that Lenin represented the social forces of the day and that is to consider him as representative of the same forces which kept the Tsars in power. But this is to ignore the March revolution, the disintegration of the army and the demand for change that was, if not sweeping the country, at least creeping across it. And since Mr. Carr seems insistent that the October revolution was indeed proletarian (like it or not) he cancels the effectiveness of even this argument.

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