

Review article

Will the real E. H. Carr please stand up?*

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Reared and educated in a comfortable world where progress was taken for granted—Britain before 1914 he noted was a ‘good place’ and ‘getting better’—Edward Hallett Carr went on to become one of the most influential and controversial figures of his day. An outstanding journalist of the old school, an influential opinion-former in his own right, and a master craftsman in the field of historical writing, Carr could count many achievements to his name in a long and distinguished career.

For many, of course, he is most clearly identified as having written one of the key foundational texts in international relations. *The twenty years’ crisis*, published on the eve of the Second World War, was seen at the time—and was certainly read during the Cold War—as a robust defence of realism. The book, however, was far more subtle and complex. Written in an almost aesopian form that at times obscured its deeper meaning, the study was less a simple celebration of power politics than a materialist attempt to unmask its character (Carr later conceded his work was ‘strongly impregnated with Marxist ways of thinking’). And while it apparently berated utopianism in general, its real target was those liberals who thought they could build a new international system after 1919 without changing the basis of world politics. With its focus on change and crisis, and advocacy of an economic revolution—Carr speaks at one point of the need for ‘radical’ measures—*The twenty years’ crisis* reads nothing like a standard postwar realist account of the international system. It is too dynamic, too

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critical, and far too readily blurs the line between the domestic and the international to be acceptable to later theoreticians of that particular genre. The book was, if anything, one of the least 'realist' things Carr ever wrote. Certainly, he had little in common with those in the emergent discipline, many of whom saw themselves as the intellectual handmaidens of power; and significantly, having reissued the book in 1945, Carr showed little interest in international relations as an academic subject. He later confessed that he doubted there was such a thing, and advised those who thought there might be one, to focus on history!

If Carr's indifference to the postwar discipline of international relations was one reason for his not returning to *The twenty years' crisis*, another was his own preoccupation with the writing of his *History of Soviet Russia*. Conceived in the midst of war, Carr's 14-volume study has variously been described by supporters as Olympian and monumental, and by enemies as a subtle apologia for Stalin which ended too early for Carr to deal seriously with the phenomenon of Stalinism. Even a few supporters wondered why it ended in 1929 and did not engage with the Soviet system in its more mature form. Carr, however, was clear in his own mind. There was, in his opinion, not enough original material to sustain serious research on the 1930s. Moreover, and more importantly, he felt that the system in its essentials was already in place by 1929. Hence there was no need to go further. Anyway, even if he had, one doubts this would have changed Carr's mind about the historical significance of the Soviet experiment. Even so, his *History* was an amazing construction: almost pyramid-like (the less kind might argue Heath Robinson) in its architectural audacity. The scale of the project certainly says something about the sheer determination of the man who planned and wrote it. Hostile critics conceded it was a minor miracle of industry. More favourable observers extolled its virtues. Isaac Deutscher was one, and noted in a brilliant, but tough review written in 1955, that not only did Carr's study have to be regarded as 'definitive', but Carr himself as 'the first genuine historian of the Soviet regime'.

In the middle of his labours Carr was then invited to give the Trevelyan lectures in Cambridge. He decided to use the occasion 'to deliver' what he hoped would be 'a broadside on history in general and on some of the non-sense' which he felt was then being talked about it 'by Popper and others'. The result was published under the deceptively modest title of *What is history?* The study proved an instant success and soon established itself as the point of intellectual reference around which all subsequent debate about the nature of history revolved. The book certainly did very well (so far it has sold close to 250,000 copies). It also had a rather tumultuous, almost embattled career. Criticized for both its epistemological relativism and its claim that objectivity can only be achieved by trying to look at the past from some point in the future—Geoffrey Elton later attacked Carr's views as being 'philistine' and Arthur Marwick as '19th century'—it provoked a particularly robust response from Isaiah Berlin, then guardian of the liberal keep in Britain. Berlin praised

the man but denounced what he saw as ‘Carr’s entire view of history as the story of the big battalions and of progress as being whatever those in power will achieve’. Carr remained unbowed. But if he was too deterministic for Berlin (and if truth be known, far too influential as well) he was not orthodox enough for some sections of the sectarian left. Indeed, the book was banned in certain revolutionary circles in Iran in the 1970s for being a ‘bourgeois treatise’ that the Iranian intelligentsia could well do without reading at that particular ‘historical moment’! For such a small book, *What is history?* had quite a big impact. It is no surprise that Carr hoped to bring out a revised second edition before he died.

Finally, Carr was an accomplished biographer, a fact that rather refutes the charge usually levelled against him that he underestimated the role of the individual in history. But, not only did he seem to like the biographical form—though once wondered whether good biography made bad history—but he wrote four of his own in just under six years: *Dostoevsky: 1821–1881* (1931); *The romantic exiles* (1933); *Karl Marx: a study in fanaticism* (1934); and *Michael Bakunin* (1937). The first was certainly competent, though was less a work of literary criticism than psychological analysis. The second, a sympathetic study of Herzen in exile, was undoubtedly the best of the bunch. The third, according to Carr, was ‘unfortunate’. The last was his favourite, rather a strange choice (one might have thought) for someone later identified as the scourge of all utopians. But all four were important in Carr’s own intellectual development. As he later confessed, it was as a result of studying these exotic people—especially those wild Russians rather than the ‘orderly German’ Marx—that he came to question the West and ‘western ideology’. Hence, at about the same time that Carr was leaving the Foreign Office to take up the Woodrow Wilson Chair in Aberystwyth—a position established by the redoubtable David Davies in 1919 on good Welsh liberal principles—Carr was already in an advanced state of alienation from liberal ideas. Little wonder his appointment there turned out to be a rather controversial one.

Carr’s range was therefore immense. Fluent in several languages, immensely hard-working, with what one observer has called ‘a gargantuan appetite for detailed research’, Carr was, in his own way, a modern renaissance man whose contribution was remarkable by any measure. It is thus very fortunate that this complex and extraordinarily impressive scholar (his close collaborator Bob Davies did not exaggerate when he called him a ‘towering eminence among twentieth-century intellectuals’) has found a worthy biographer in the shape of Jonathan Haslam—one of his former students. Here and there one can quibble with this or that judgement. The book also teeters uneasily sometimes between the private and the public. But in the end it works very well indeed. Haslam after all could have taken the easier, less scenic route, and left out Carr the individual. But advised by one of Carr’s old enemies—Sir Isaiah Berlin no less—that one had to treat the whole man, Haslam decided to tread the far more difficult, but in the end far more satisfying path of trying to write something more than just an intellectual biography. This will no doubt please some of

Carr's old enemies who will relish some of the details about life on the home front; and it might dismay some of his friends. But it makes for a much better book. Elegantly written, well paced, empathetic without being uncritical, and based upon a most impressive amount of material (some of which will soon be deposited in the Carr papers at the University of Birmingham) this is certainly one of the best books I have read in a very long time.

Revered by many, but disliked with a rare political intensity that was only possible perhaps in an age of global war and bitter ideological rivalry, Carr always provoked the strongest of passions. Indeed, as Haslam shows only too graphically, each of Carr's major interventions invariably tended to create something of a minor storm. His scholarship and beautifully clear writing style made him a formidable opponent. He was not an easy man to ignore; his critics rarely did, and from the late 1930s onwards he found himself engaged in combat on several fronts. Accused at various times of being an appeaser of Nazi Germany, a fellow traveller of the Soviet Union, an 'evil communist', a 'bourgeois with a vicarious taste for revolutionary violence', someone who always surrendered 'to the immanence of power', and one of the most dangerous scholars in Britain (the last comment apparently coming from Zbigniew Brzezinski in 1963), Carr not only courted controversy but also managed to generate a great deal himself. Never one to mince his words on important issues, he was nothing if not a bruiser when it came to debate: he took few intellectual prisoners and among his more famous 'scalps' were Arnold Toynbee and Alfred Zimmern who continued to place more faith in the League of Nations than he, the historians Moshe Lewin and Stephen Cohen who happened to think that Bukharin offered an alternative to Stalin, and more traditional philosophers of history like Karl Popper, Isaiah Berlin and Herbert Butterfield. Carr was especially impatient with those who assumed the status quo was always preferable to change. Always the iconoclast, increasingly so during the Cold War, he had very little time for those, who in his words, 'expressed the fashionable weariness' of the age. As he made clear in one scathing review of a study on *The price of revolution* by fellow historian, D.W. Brogan, the subject was an intriguing one, but far too important to be left to a writer who took it for granted that 'the old' was always preferable to or 'better than the new'.

No natural born rebel, the younger Carr might have remained a minor though well-regarded diplomat if it had not been for one very large event: the Russian revolution. Though initially expressing no great sympathy for the Bolshevik experiment (Haslam shows he even helped plan its blockade after 1917) Carr was gradually impelled by a series of events—the world depression, the successes, as he saw them, of Soviet planning and Soviet victory in the war—to come to terms with what he regarded as the great challenge to a failing Western civilization. Carr's attitude towards the USSR, however, was always complex, and was most acutely characterized by James Joll once as being consistently 'positivist' in character. Hence if the system existed, then, in Carr's view, the most important job of the historian was to understand why, not to moralize

about it. And if Stalin happened to win the struggle for power in the 1920s, then again the task was to explain how this had happened, not to 'throw stones' at him. Naturally enough, what Haslam has called Carr's 'deep-seated fatalism with respect to the past' was not to everyone's taste. It was also used against him. In a celebrated attack written in *Encounter* (a magazine Carr despised) Hugh Trevor-Roper, for instance, argued that Carr never showed the slightest concern with the victims of history; he always preferred the 'victorious cause'. This was harsh. However, his attitude towards History with a big 'H' definitely infuriated people, even more sympathetic admirers like Alec Nove who frequently criticized him for always assuming that just because things happened, they had to happen. Carr remained unmoved. The purpose of the historian, as he saw it, was to understand history, not rewrite it. To ask what might have been, or what might have happened, struck him as being faintly absurd. As Haslam has argued elsewhere, Carr was always 'an impatient critic of retrospective day-dreaming, of counterfactual history'.

But if Carr can justly be accused of a certain 'objectivism', this did not make him into a deferential worshipper of all that existed. Indeed, for a tough-minded historian, he had a great deal of time for some of history's more celebrated 'utopians'. He obviously had a soft spot for Bakunin, and admired the gentle Russian radical, Herzen. And though he had many harsh things to say about Marx, he always regarded Marx as 'a man of genius'. Moreover, though he was highly critical of Marxism—disputing the labour theory of value and rejecting what he saw as the childish notion of a classless society (Carr once wrote that a ruling class would always be necessary), he always felt it was necessary to understand Marxism. So close did he come to doing so that many later accused him, quite incorrectly, of having become a Marxist himself. Furthermore, for one accused of being a subtle apologist for Stalin and Stalinism, Carr had some fairly positive things to say about Leon Trotsky, surely one of history's better known losers. This was not because he agreed with Trotsky. In fact, he viewed his theory of world revolution as so much political eye-wash, and Trotsky himself as tactically inept when it came to fighting Stalin in the 1920s. But he could still recognize the man's greatness. His *History of the Russian revolution*, he believed, was without equal. His analysis of the contradictions of the New Economic Policy he saw as acute. It was Trotsky, not Bukharin, who represented the only 'convincing' alternative to Stalin. And according to Carr, Trotsky's assessment of the German situation in the early 1930s was extraordinarily prescient. It was not insignificant, of course, that Carr had the highest regard for Trotsky's biographer, Isaac Deutscher. In fact, one of the more important things that Haslam's book brings out is how close the two men became after they first met in 1948. In many ways, Deutscher was the only intellectual whom Carr even faintly seemed to regard as an equal. And though there were clear differences between the two, Carr was deeply upset when Deutscher died suddenly in 1967. Later he worked closely with Deutscher's widow, Tamara (to whom Haslam generously dedicates the book).

Carr, it has been acutely observed, was never really at home with the rebels of society or its masters. An expatriate from the establishment who could never quite be trusted to toe the establishment line, Carr invariably managed to use his privileged position as respected academic, deputy editor of *The Times*, broadcaster, and public lecturer, to say some pretty radical things. Though a meticulous scholar in the tradition of the Cambridge classicist A. E. Housman ('the most powerful intellectual machine I've ever seen in action' he later wrote), Carr was also one of the great popularizers of his age, and achieved the rare distinction among intellectuals of getting his views across to more than the usual handful of devotees. As Edward Acton once explained, Carr's background and 'range of experience in the Foreign Office and as Assistant Editor of *The Times* gave him a healthy grasp of the world outside the ivory tower'. This was undoubtedly true, and during and just after the Second World War in particular, he managed to reach something close to a mass audience. Indeed, some of his more influential work—on Britain's position in the postwar world, *The new society* and *What is history?*—were broadcast first or published in the influential magazine *The Listener*, before appearing in book form. Nor did Carr have much trouble getting his work reviewed. One sometimes wonders whether if his critics had kept quieter, Carr might have exercised far less influence than he actually did. But they could not keep quiet—apparently—and attacked him whenever and wherever they could. Norman Angell, Susan Stebbing, Leonard Woolf, Winston Churchill, Isaiah Berlin, Hedley Bull, Hans J. Morgenthau, Whittle Johnson, Hugh Trevor-Roper, Geoffrey Elton, Arthur Marwick, Leopold Labedz and many, many more—liberals and conservatives alike—all lined up to put Carr in his place at one time or another.

Yet what was it that upset them so, almost to the point of distraction? It is a critically important question. After all, while Carr may have imbibed more from historical materialism than most parts of the British establishment could stomach, he still felt that Marxism could not explain the complex nature of modern capitalism. He also thought the new generation of younger Marxists in the 1960s were far too concerned with method and not enough with applying Marxism creatively. He was no communist and no Trotskyist, and like his friend Herbert Marcuse, had no faith in the Western proletariat. Furthermore, though Carr was 'unorthodox, radical and open-minded', he was never a revolutionary. Tamara Deutscher indeed, later called him a 'nineteenth century liberal who had grown impatient with the anarchy of modern capitalism'. Yet as Haslam shows, for someone who could write so well about the Bolsheviks, without being one himself, he certainly generated his fair share of abuse. The most infamous, or celebrated example of this was that published just after his death in the *London Review of Books*. In this, Norman Stone—some say in an effort to secure the Chair of Modern History at Oxford—tore into the great man with everything he had, accusing him, among other things, of being a bad teacher and someone who 'never quite said what he meant'. His *History*, moreover, was less a great work, more a 'useless set of volumes' trying to 'masquerade as a

classic'. It was all very strong stuff, which provoked a howl of understandable outrage from Carr's many supporters. But Stone's highly personal broadside was neither the first, nor was it to be the last such attack. Certainly, if we were to judge Carr's career by the number of his critics alone, we would have to conclude that it was one of the more successful in the twentieth century!

Clearly, one of the reasons why Carr aroused such passion was his own very individual, combative style of debate. Once asked by a sympathetic interviewer why he generated so much controversy, he replied that perhaps one of the causes was that he had a 'slightly provocative way of saying things' himself! This was something of an understatement. As one reviewer put it, rather more forcefully, Carr 'had a sharp tongue and an even sharper pen'. The Stone case serves as a rather good example of this. Few would dispute the fact that Stone's attack was vicious and defamatory. We should not forget, however, that only a few years before, Carr had written a devastating review of Stone's own book, *The Eastern Front: 1914-1917*. In an understated but forceful way he literally destroyed Stone's edifice, suggesting, among other things, that his book was just a 'muddle'. One can only begin to guess how the young Scot might have felt about that! Anybody familiar with even a small part of Carr's private correspondence can also attest to his uncompromising assessments of those he deemed to be intellectually inferior, second-rate, philosophically confused, or just politically wrong. Carr was never personal or abusive. However, he did not suffer fools gladly. And even those who were not fools he attacked forcefully. He did not, for instance, rate Leonard Schapiro highly as a historian of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He could not really take his friend A. J. P. Taylor very seriously. And Hugh Seton-Watson he regarded as an 'emotional mountebank' because he took up with the conservative right after the war.

Like all serious people with a mission in life, Carr was also a passionate human being with strong views about the world around him. Deutscher once suggested that Carr wrote as if he were above it all, *au delà de la mêlée*. Nothing could have been further from the truth. In fact, when you examine many of his more important books, it soon becomes apparent that they are—in their own very different ways—great examples of the polemical form that inevitably end up attacking somebody or something else. *The twenty years' crisis*, for example, was an extended and powerful attack on what he saw as the illusions of those who made the peace at Versailles. His study, *Nationalism and after*, was one of the more savage intellectual blows aimed at the idea of self-determination. His editorials in *The Times* during the war were very obviously directed against the political right. His now unread, but then highly influential *New society*, was a broadside against laissez-faire capitalism. And in his *What is history?* he quite literally challenged the English historical establishment to an intellectual fight. Carr was no shrinking violet when it came to debate.

But it was Carr's views on world politics, not just the manner of his writing, that upset so many people. Thus, concerned in the interwar period to avoid another war, he was quite prepared to let Nazi Germany take over most of

Eastern Europe. For the same set of pragmatic reasons he was prepared to let Soviet Russia do the same after the war. A modernist in every respect, Carr also had little or no time for those who stood in the way of what he liked to term 'progress'—especially romantic nationalists and those who clung to the out-moded form of the nation-state. The claims of small powers not only failed to arouse his sympathy, but in his view constituted one of the main obstacles to peace and the creation of a more rational international order. On the other hand, he appeared to have all the time in the world for the big powers. In one of his more remarkable observations, made in one of his most pro-Soviet tracts in 1946, he even went so far as to suggest that 'sooner or later' all small nations would 'be drawn into the orbit of one or other of the Great Powers'. In another equally memorable piece he compared Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe after 1945 with British imperial power. According to Carr, there was really no difference in principle between the two empires—except perhaps that the British had ruled slightly more efficiently and with slightly less international fuss and bother being made about it by other major powers.

But even Carr's controversial views about Germany before the war or attitude towards small nations ('national self-determination' he once opined had 'awkward implications both for bourgeois democracy and international accord') cannot really explain the hostility displayed towards him in the postwar period. Some of his critics had been appeasers too before 1939; and quite a few shared his opinion about small nations. Their hostility was a function of something else; and that 'something' was the Cold War and the pervasive impact it had upon political and intellectual life in the West after 1947.

At the heart of the great divide was a quite fundamental difference about how to view the Cold War itself. Basically, Carr's enemies saw the Cold War as a legitimate Western response to Soviet aggression; Carr on the other hand felt it was all the fault of the West. Indeed, like most revisionists, the conflict with the Soviet Union, he believed, had always been a function of capitalism's refusal to accept Soviet power, rather than the Soviet Union's inability to come to terms with capitalism. He also did not think the Cold War was in Britain's best interest. Very much the patriot, Carr thought endlessly during the war about how best to preserve British influence after the war (a point very well made by Charles Jones in his fine study, *E. H. Carr and international relations*). The solution, he believed, required radical reform at home, and the preservation of the war-time alliance abroad. Unfortunately for Carr, when peace came, not only did the alliance collapse, but Britain quickly established something to which he was vehemently opposed: a close but subordinate 'special relationship' with the United States. This not only offended Carr's sensibility—he was never especially fond of America—but in his opinion could only weaken Britain's leverage in the larger international system. It was also premised on what he, like George Kennan, regarded as an absurdly apocalyptic reading of Soviet intentions and capabilities.

The Cold War, moreover, had its own particular logic which Carr simply could not go along with. Thus while the establishment was talking up the bestial character of Soviet communism, Carr was talking it down. And while liberal and conservative intellectuals were doing their damndest to bury Marxism alive, Carr was trying to defend it. Furthermore, while Carr was no Marxist himself, he was sympathetic towards, and provided some support for, those who were. Isaiah Berlin spotted the problem earlier than most. Carr, he knew from his own experience, was not an active rebel. However, he cast what Berlin perceptively called 'a protective mantle over extremists, however foolish or misguided he may think them to be'. The same could never be said about Berlin, who as Haslam shows, intervened to prevent Carr's ally, Isaac Deutscher, getting a senior position at the University of Sussex. But Carr paid a price for his integrity, and like most dissidents in the West in this period found himself being pushed increasingly outside of the system. He was denied posts at the School of Slavonic Studies, London; Balliol, Oxford; and then King's College, Cambridge. And even when he finally did find a position at Trinity in Cambridge, he was appointed not because he was a radical looking for an intellectual home, but simply (it seems) because he was famous!

Carr's views on revolutions in general and the Russian revolution in particular only confirmed his position as outsider. Liberal and conservative historians saw 1917 as a disaster that could have been avoided; Carr, however, took the view that the revolution was more or less inevitable, and in historical terms, necessary as well. He certainly did not see it as a tragedy—a view now propagated by his old enemy Richard Pipes. And whereas more orthodox historians had a marked tendency to see what happened in 1917 as a conspiracy at worst and a minority affair at best, like Trotsky Carr interpreted it as a mass spontaneous event with large-scale support. The idea, popular in some quarters, that Lenin was a paid German agent and the Bolsheviks an unrepresentative clique, he found risible. Furthermore, while analysts such as Merle Fainsod and Schapiro were deeply anti-Lenin and assumed that Stalinism was inherent in the whole revolutionary project, Carr both admired Lenin and showed that during the first few years of Soviet power—those with which he was most familiar—there was genuine discussion and debate, at least within the Communist Party. Again this was not something his opponents wished to hear, especially from somebody as formidable and credible as Carr.

This brings us then to Carr's attitude towards the Soviet system. While Carr was no apologist—indeed always argued that the USSR was never truly socialist, he could never quite bring himself to condemn what had been established after 1929. This was not because he was ignorant of the facts, or was unaware of the costs involved in building socialism in one country. As he put it in one memorable, but deeply ambivalent phrase, 'seldom in history had so monstrous a price been paid for so monumental an achievement'. But still, it was an achievement, and to deny it would not only do an injustice to history, but provide aid and comfort to those cold warriors who were always on the

lookout for what he saw as dirt to throw at the Soviet Union. As he made clear in an interview for the *New Left Review* just four years before his death, people in the West who moaned most about the abuse of human rights in the USSR were only looking for scapegoats. Hysteria in the capitalist world about what went on in Soviet Russia was, in his view, yet another malign 'symptom of a sick society'. Moreover, though Carr was realistic enough to recognize that the obstacles standing in the way of change in the USSR were immense, he always hoped that things might improve. Like Deutscher, he believed the revolution remained unfinished, and with his almost naive faith in progress assumed that given space, and time, the Soviet system would one day mature into something higher—and hopefully better.

Ever the optimist, Carr thus lived just outside the political pale—in 'splendid isolation' as Haslam puts it, like some 'prophet outcast' from the inner sanctum of power and influence; annoying the establishment without necessarily threatening them, but annoying them just enough (and often enough) to make him quite unacceptable, and for a while unemployable as well. And all the time he pressed on, relentlessly and at great personal cost to finish his *History*. Then, having completed his task, he pushed on again, with Tamara Deutscher's help, to complete yet two more volumes—on Soviet external policy in the 1930s: one on what he called *The twilight of the comintern* covering the years between 1930 and 1935, and the other on the Soviet role in Spain during the civil war. The first was published just after his death in 1982; the other by Tamara Deutscher in 1983—six years before the end of the Cold War and only eight before the disintegration of his obsession: the Soviet Union.

Which raises the obvious question: how should we regard Carr now that the object of his life's work has imploded? Haslam, reasonably, refuses to speculate. Carr's critics, however, have been less reticent. Carr, they argue, was a man of his times; those times are gone; therefore there is little point viewing him as anything other than a curiosity—a mere footnote in British intellectual life who was routed by the very thing he claimed to understand most: history. One can understand this reaction. Carr's purpose, after all, was not just to study any old country, but to assess the historical significance of an experiment within the larger context of what he viewed as a more general transition to planning. And that experiment has failed. Equally, while he did not identify with the Soviet system in any naïve way, he did not criticize it too robustly or detect its more fundamental contradictions. In this regard, his analysis was perhaps a little too 'balanced', too 'fair-minded'—too 'positivist' for its own good.

Yet to dismiss Carr as a relic of past illusions would be most unfair. Far less able people than Carr have suffered illusions, but we continue to read them. People also continue to read Carr, whose influence in international relations has probably never been greater than it is now (though not so much among realists as critical theorists), whose views on the nature of history continue to shape the debate—as the more recent contributions by Richard Evans and Keith Jenkins reveal only too clearly—and whose work on the early USSR remains the

standard reference point. Not bad for a writer who has apparently failed the test of time. As his political enemy Winston Churchill might have put it, 'some writer, some failure'!

Finally, as we all know, the game is not yet up in the former USSR. Though the economic system which Carr once defended has collapsed, its replacement hardly looks much better. Naturally, Carr would not have been at all surprised, given his own prejudices against the market and in favour of collectivism. But it was not prejudice alone, but a recognition of what Trotsky once termed 'the peculiarities of Russian development' that made him sceptical, both about the possibilities of capitalism in Russia and about Russia becoming part of the West. Carr may have been overly optimistic about the Soviet economy. If the truth be known, he did not study it seriously, and his 'faith' in it therefore might well have been 'misplaced' as Haslam suggests. But the story does not end there. As the more recent history of Russia shows, it is not about to become a 'normal', Western capitalist country or join the West. Indeed, if the last few years have proved anything, it is that Russia remains what Carr always thought it would remain: a unique entity that would follow its own distinct path. Hence, while he may have got communism wrong, it looks like he might have got Russia right. History in the end appears to have vindicated Edward Hallett Carr.