

Pinchuk also fails to understand the importance of the Council of Ministers as an institution. The establishment of a cabinet, with mutual collective responsibility and with a prime minister at its head, was an integral part of making the government "responsible" (a word on which Pinchuk rightly lays much emphasis). Stolypin tried, not always successfully, to continue Witte's practice of having ministers report to the cabinet rather than individually to the emperor, and Guchkov regarded this as important for the consolidation of the new legislative institutions. Because the ministers of war, navy, foreign affairs and the Imperial Court were exempted from cabinet collective responsibility, the Octobrists gave much attention to them and tried to move them in the direction of greater "responsibility." This attempt to establish greater "responsibility" also has a bearing on the Octobrists' attitude toward Finnish affairs. In their offensive on Finnish autonomy the Octobrists were motivated partly by the desire to have the state secretary for Finland, who reported to the emperor alone, replaced by a minister responsible to the cabinet, as well as by their desire to increase the powers of the Duma in Finnish legislation.

Both books deliberately leave open what seems to me the basic question about the Octobrists. Did they fail because their leadership was inept and their organization, both in and outside the Duma, was clearly chaotic (as John Hutchinson concludes in his 1966 London doctoral thesis—still the best single general work on the Octobrists); or were they simply in a hopeless situation, where trying to work with a government that would not abandon arbitrary rule resulted in a steady decline in morale and a loss of public support (as I tend to believe)? Both of these works give us much data with which to attempt an answer.

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LIBERALS IN THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION: THE CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, 1917–1921. By *William G. Rosenberg*. Studies of the Russian Institute, Columbia University. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974. xiv, 534 pp. \$25.00, cloth. \$9.75, paper.

William Rosenberg has produced in this work an excellent and much-needed contribution to the growing literature on the Russian Revolution and civil war. If there is such a thing as a definitive study for the 1917–21 period, then this is probably it for the Kadets. Rosenberg has apparently used most of the sources available, including recent Soviet studies which indicate some access to the proverbial archives—the possible future opening of which one usually cites as the chief reason for not applying the "definitive" label.

Besides being a major addition to scholarly analysis of the Russian Revolution, this work should also be considered a significant contribution to the study of liberalism in general. The story of the Kadets is a veritable classic case of the "moderates" caught in the whirlwind of revolutionary dynamics and the accompanying polarization of politics into "left" and "right." Further, one of the virtues of Rosenberg's study is that it does not end with the Bolshevik victory but continues through the civil war and the beginning of the emigration. It also gives ample attention to the variety of views, the many personalities in leadership roles, and the regional organization and role of the Kadet party both before and after the Bolshevik seizure of power.

The latter may indeed be the most valuable aspect of the study, since the facts of the Provisional Government period from March to November are well known and hardly altered by this account, although it does bring new perspective. In the period following November, on the other hand, the Kadets generally fade from sight in most accounts, even those which have dealt substantially with the anti-Bolshevik forces. It is therefore much to the author's credit that he devotes about a third of the book to the Kadet effort to remain alive as a party and to influence political developments in areas such as the Ukraine, the Crimea, the Cossack region and Siberia.

Finally, a feature of this work which deserves attention is the general frame of reference or critical stance of the author. Rosenberg, as have many who have written on the Russian Revolution and civil war, appears to base his critique in the earlier chapters on the notion that the Kadets were failures because they were incapable of becoming socialists. However, in view of the socialists' failures, this thesis never did have much to recommend it, and in his important account of the Kadet role in the civil war Rosenberg develops a much deeper appreciation of the real dilemmas of a liberal party which at its best would not simply respond to popular whim or take the path of opportunism for the sake of holding power.

Rosenberg is not uncritical of the Kadets' handling of the problems they faced, but he does try to deal with his protagonists on their merits, recognizing even a fatal clinging to principle as a virtue of sorts and not just a sign of hard-headed obstinacy. Liberalism was probably a hopelessly inappropriate political philosophy in Russia in 1917–21, but perhaps that says more about Russia than about liberalism. The great fault of the Kadets, just as of the socialists, was undeniably their disunity and internal conflict, but as Rosenberg concludes: "(W)hether the revolution and civil war could ultimately have been altered by a disciplined liberal party is only speculation. The wisdom of hindsight is always easy, and one must recognize that the revolution and civil war presented staggering tasks to all Russian political groups, even the most progressive" (pp. 472–73). One could add simply that hindsight may be easy, but it is well-informed only when studies like this one are available (although at twenty-five dollars one might have to redefine "available").

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1939: THE MAKING OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. By *Sidney Aster*.  
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973. 456 pp. Illus. \$9.95.

"We separated with a feeling almost of relief with the knowledge that a definitive decision had been taken, even though we realized that we were burning our boats and that we might be committed to war over a principle that we have all come to think transcends even the vital material interests of our country." The writer was the Marquess of Zetland, secretary of state for India and Burma, and the definitive decision was the British pledge, announced on March 31, 1939, to defend Poland against a German attack, and it did have all the dreadful significance that he attributed to it. With the Polish pledge, the British government inaugurated a desperate last minute attempt to deter Hitler from new aggressions and, as a result, gave up a great measure of their own freedom of action. If Hitler chose not to be deterred, they had no honorable alternative to resistance.