turn to terrorism, and goes on to modern terrorism and its attractions even in societies that are free, democratic, and prosperous, for youth who "are seized by an overpowering destructive urge which, at the same time, exhibits self-destructive symptoms." (p. 29) Such an embrace of violence in the name of a cause can be nothing more than a pretext to engage in actions that otherwise would be considered criminal.

This disquisition on terrorism throws light on the sad plunge into terrorism of so many youth of Degaev's time, but it strays somewhat from the central story of Degaev and leaves the impression that he was more of a terrorist than he actually was.

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Frederick C. Corney. *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004. xvi, 301 pp. $44.95 (cloth); $22.50 (paper).

*Telling October* tells the story of how the Bolsheviks constructed an official narrative and interpretation of the October Revolution during the decade between the October Revolution and the tenth anniversary in 1927, focusing especially on the role of Istpart (Commission on the History of the October Revolution and the Russian Communist Party) and of the anniversary celebrations from 1918 to 1927. For the Bolsheviks "this was not a mere description of events but an argument about their transcendent significance" (p. 45), for they conceived of the October Revolution as the culmination of a long revolutionary tradition stretching back to the French Revolution. In developing the "correct" narrative, Corney argues, they had to resolve certain thorny issues that they themselves had added to the revolutionary tradition: "the role of a party in making a revolution, the relationship between party and the population in whose name it spoke, the absence of clearly defined political allegiances in much of the population." (p. 8)

The process began immediately, in the vehement disputes among Bolsheviks, other socialists, and non-socialists over the legitimacy of October. Was it a *coup d'etat* or a genuine revolution, and if the latter, what kind? For the Bolsheviks this required a lengthy process of creating, rewriting, even inventing a narrative of October that made both it and the working class "Bolshevik." Initially, many accounts of October, even by the Bolsheviks and their supporters, such as Maikovsky's 1918 play about the revolution, *Mystery Bouffe*, "contained no Bolsheviks. . . . It was, in fact, the norm at this time to write the October Revolution without the Bolshevik Party. The ubiquitous worker figure that was featured in Soviet posters became explicitly Bolshevik only in the course of the 1920s." (pp. 66-67) While this seems a bit overstated, it does reflect a reality that Corney does not draw as clearly as he might have, namely, that for most people in 1917 and immediately afterwards, October was a revolution for "All Power to the Soviets" and that the soviets and this slogan were not exclusively associated with the Bolsheviks. Making the workers Bolsheviks and the October a Bolshevik rather than an "soviet" revolution took time and was achieved only during the course of the 1920s.
Also essential to making October "Bolshevik" was the evolving narrative about the Winter Palace. Initially, the Winter Palace played little role in accounts of the October Revolution; the focus was on Smolny as the locus and symbol of revolution. Before long, however, Bolshevik accounts began not only to move the Winter Palace to center stage, but also transformed it from a rather disorganized siege and filtering into the palace into a mass "storming." Central to the process, which built on 1918-19 stagings of workers storming bourgeois strongholds such as the Stock Exchange, was the 1920 anniversary celebration and its elaborately staged (and symbol laden) "storming" of the Winter Palace. This created an important mythic symbol, a Russian equivalent of the French storming of the Bastille. Memories, as represented in memoirs published during the 1920s, were recast as well to fit the new narrative. The process reached a completion with Eisenstein's film October, commissioned for the tenth anniversary in 1927. It created a powerful visual version of the revised official (if inaccurate) narrative of the storming of the palace, which has been given additional potency through its inclusion in almost every film and video of the revolution made since then.

Corney's account of the role of Istpart is an important contribution. Formed in 1921 to provide a coherent, single narrative of the revolution and Bolshevik Party, it undertook "to provide the Bolshevik Party with the aura of organizational coherence and revolutionary continuity." (p. 153) This section shows how the early Soviet narrative construction about October also projected backwards, to give the whole history of the Bolshevik Party greater coherence and to shape the history of the revolutionary movement into the story of the Bolsheviks. It also traces Istpart's role in the "evenings of remembrance" and local histories that helped shape the "memory" of the revolution found in most of the Soviet memoir literature.

Implicit throughout is that the history of October 1917 was consciously constructed by a ruling group to fit their own needs rather than as an attempt to untangle the actual course of events of the period. Meaning and symbolism, not historical accuracy, was the aim. One wishes that the author had been more explicit about the frequent (indeed, growing) distance between reality and the unfolding narrative. It would have made his story even more graphic. The unwary reader, indeed, will not always realize the difference, that the "account" Corney is describing is indeed the willfully constructed one and one quite different from what historians today understand happened. I accept that he is writing a history of the history of writing the history of the revolution, not a history of the revolution, but still would have liked him to be more explicit about the distance between the latter and the unfolding Soviet narrative.

The book will be of value to a wide range of readers. Specialists on the revolution, especially those who have struggled with the problem of creating a better, more historically accurate account of October to replace the traditional and unsatisfactory narrative, will read with special interest Corney's account of how the latter came into being. It will also be of interest to those studying the history of the revolutionary movement or the development of the early Bolshevik/Communist system, for it provides many insights into how the party's image was fashioned. Certainly anyone interested in historiography and questions of how a historical interpretation develops and evolves will find it fascinating reading. It is also a useful cautionary tale about the use of sources, especially memoirs from the 1920s. Many will find his discussion of the