

The Pro-Soviet Message in Words and Images: Dyson Carter and Canadian “Friends” of the USSR

Jennifer Anderson

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Résumé de l'article

Dyson Carter, soviétophile et membre du Parti communiste du Canada, a passé la majorité de sa carrière à promouvoir l'URSS auprès des Nord-Américains. Il a été président de la *Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society* (CSFS) de 1949 à 1960, et éditeur du bulletin de la CSFS, *News-Facts about the USSR*, de 1950 à 1956. Il a publié également le populaire magazine pro-soviet *Northern Neighbors* de 1956 à 1989. Son travail était appuyé à Moscou par la *All-Union Society for Friendship with Foreign Countries* (VOKS), et ses écrits ont plu grandement à la gauche canadienne. Fondée sur des documents d'archives de Russie et du Canada publiés récemment, ainsi que sur des témoignages oraux, cette histoire de la propagande et de la persuasion au Canada au cours de la guerre froide offre une nouvelle perspective de l'histoire de la gauche canadienne.

The Pro-Soviet Message in Words and Images: Dyson Carter and Canadian “Friends” of the USSR

JENNIFER ANDERSON

Abstract

Dyson Carter, Sovietophile and member of the Communist Party of Canada, spent most of his career promoting the USSR to North Americans. He served as President of the Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society (CSFS) from 1949 to 1960, edited the CSFS newsletter News-Facts about the USSR from 1950 to 1956, and published the popular pro-Soviet magazine Northern Neighbors from 1956 until 1989. His work was supported from Moscow by the All-Union Society for Friendship with Foreign Countries (VOKS), and his writing had wide appeal on the Canadian left. Based on recently released archival material from Russia and Canada, as well as oral history, this story of propaganda and persuasion in Cold War Canada offers a new perspective on the history of the Canadian left.

Résumé

Dyson Carter, soviétophile et membre du Parti communiste du Canada, a passé la majorité de sa carrière à promouvoir l'URSS auprès des Nord-Américains. Il a été président de la Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society (CSFS) de 1949 à 1960, et éditeur du bulletin de la CSFS, News-Facts about the USSR, de 1950 à 1956. Il a publié également le populaire magazine pro-soviet Northern Neighbors de 1956 à 1989. Son travail était appuyé à Moscou par la All-Union Society for Friendship with Foreign Countries (VOKS), et ses écrits ont plu grandement à la gauche canadienne. Fondée sur des documents d'archives de Russie et du Canada publiés récemment, ainsi que sur des témoignages oraux, cette histoire de la propagande et de la persuasion au Canada au cours de la guerre froide offre une nouvelle perspective de l'histoire de la gauche canadienne.

For forty years Dyson Carter,¹ a Canadian admirer of the Soviet Union, produced literature that mixed a radical political message with articles on Soviet science and medical advances. This literature, which Carter claimed was sent to thousands of subscribers internationally,² maintained the Soviet political line from the first issue of *News-Facts* in 1950, to the last issue of *Northern Neighbors* in 1989, and promised readers an up-beat alternative view to what Carter considered to be “Western propaganda.” Arguing that Western government authorities were censoring or twisting the information provided to their citizens, Carter claimed to be a beacon in the night: allowing his readers an inside view of the enlightened and altruistic Soviet experiment. Carter combined text and photographs to produce this message, and while President of the Canadian Soviet Friendship Society (CSFS) from 1949 to 1960, he organized events that diffused the pro-Soviet message orally and in photograph and film exhibitions. Using Soviet sources, Carter produced what was essentially Soviet propaganda,³ ironically emanating not from across the Arctic, but from Ontario. This message was often built around images and perceptions of the North, and attempted to persuade progressives that the USSR was in fact the realization of

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- 1 For an unpublished biography of Dyson Carter, see Mary Eleanor Barber Watson, “Study of Dyson Carter’s Life and Works” (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1974). His role in promoting the USSR and socialism has been touched upon in J.L. Black and Norman Hillmer, “Canada and the Soviet Union as Neighbours,” in *Nearly Neighbours: Canada and the Soviet Union from Cold War to Détente and Beyond*, ed. J.L. Black and Norman Hillmer (Kingston, Ont.: Frye, 1989), 6, 7; J.L. Black, *Canada in the Soviet Mirror: Ideology and Perception in Soviet Foreign Affairs, 1917–1991* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1998); J.L. Black, “Soviet Tactics and Targets in Canada Before and After the Gouzenko Defection,” in *The Gouzenko Affair: Canada and the Beginnings of Cold War Counter-Espionage*, ed. J.L. Black and Martin Rudner (Manotick, Ont.: Penumbra Press, 2006), 108–29; James Doyle, *Progressive Heritage: The Evolution of a Politically Radical Literary Tradition in Canada* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002); and Faith Johnston, *A Great Restlessness: The Life and Politics of Dorise Nielsen* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006).
 - 2 This claim appeared on the banner of *Northern Neighbors*. See also *Gravenhurst News* (6 December 1985).
 - 3 Literature on Soviet propaganda in the West has at times been polemical and defensive, but there have also been more balanced attempts to understand the role of ideology and perception in creating political propaganda. The word “propaganda” in Russian is not pejorative and is derived, as it is in English, from the verb to propagate or to diffuse information. In this sense, it was close to the Soviet understanding of “political education,” thus the Bolshevik acronym “Agitprop” (Agitation and Propaganda). Consider, for instance, Ian Greig, *The Assault on the West* (Peterham: Foreign Affairs Publishing, 1968); Mark W. Hopkins, *Mass Media in the Soviet Union* (New York: Pegasus, 1970); Anatoliy Golitsyn, *New Lies for Old: The Communist Strategy of Deception and Disinformation* (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1984); Jean Delmas and Jean Kessler, eds., *Renseignement et propagande pendant la guerre froide, 1947–1953* (Bruxelles: Editions complexe, 1999); Black, *Canada in the Soviet Mirror*; David Cauter, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

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the ideals of gender, class, and ethnic equality, and scientific and technological superiority.

The history of the CSFS and Dyson Carter’s role as a promoter of the Soviet Union is linked to the history of the Canadian left,⁴ but adds a new perspective to the historiography. Carter was a member of the Communist Party of Canada from the 1930s,⁵ as were several of the other core CSFS organizers and members, but the rank-and-file membership and readership was also drawn from the non-Party left. Very little has been written on fellow-travellers in Canada.⁶ This story hints at the radical aspirations and goals of some Canadians during the Cold War; individuals who may have appeared quite “normal,”⁷ but

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- 4 See, for instance, Catherine Vance, *Not by Gods But By People: The Story of Bella Hall Gauld* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1968); Ivan Avakumovic, *The Communist Party in Canada: A History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973); Louise Watson, *She Never Was Afraid: The Biography of Annie Buller* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1976); Norman Penner, *The Canadian Left: A Critical Analysis* (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice Hall of Canada, 1977); Stephen Endicott, *James G. Endicott: Rebel Out of China* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980); Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada* (Montreal: Vanguard, 1981); Merrily Weisbord, *The Strangest Dream: Canadian Communists, The Spy Trials, and the Cold War* (Montreal: Véhicule, 1983, 1994); Peter Hunter, *Which Side Are You On Boys ... Canadian Life on the Left* (Toronto: Lugas, 1988); Bryan D. Palmer, ed., *A Communist Life: Jack Scott and the Canadian Workers Movement, 1927–1985* (St. John’s, Nfld.: Committee on Canadian Labour History, 1988); Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto: Methuen, 1988); Joan Sangster, *Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920–1950* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989); Andrée Lévesque, *Scènes de la vie en rouge: L’Époque de Jeanne Corbin, 1906–1944* (Montréal: Éditions du remue-ménage, 1999); Maurice Rush, *We Have a Glowing Dream: Recollections of working-class and people’s struggles in B.C., 1935–1995* (Vancouver: Center for Socialist Education, 1996); Cy Gonick, *A Very Red Life: The Story of Bill Walsh* (St. John’s, Nfld.: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 2001); Julie Guard, “Canadian Citizens or Dangerous Foreign Women? Canada’s Radical Consumer Movement, 1947–1950,” in *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History*, ed. Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 161–89; Faith Johnston, *A Great Restlessness* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006).
- 5 John Boyd, private collection (hereafter Boyd collection), Dyson Carter to John Boyd, 28 February 1990.
- 6 On fellow-travellers in the United States, Britain, and Western Europe, David Cauter has published *The Fellow-Travellers: Intellectual Friends of Communism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988); revised edition of *The Fellow Travellers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, Ltd., 1973). Julia L. Mickenberg’s *Learning from the Left: Children’s Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) is also useful in this connection.
- 7 A growing literature has challenged the distinction between political and social history, showing that Cold War rhetoric shaped North American culture in the 1950s. Coming out of cultural studies, this scholarship has analyzed trends in popular culture, and pointed to the way these trends were influenced by political considerations. This work has, in turn, led to a rethinking of what it has meant to be a “radical” in the United States and Canada. Implicit in this work is an explication of how individuals challenged the prevailing discourse of “normalcy” and the

who “lived otherwise”⁸ and interpreted Cold War international relations differently than their neighbours. Ironically, it is the demise of the USSR that makes it possible to tell this story today. Access to documents previously off-limits to researchers,⁹ and the willingness of former activists to participate in oral history interviews today allows this story to be elucidated.

“Telling the *truth* about the Soviet Union” was the constant theme of the literature, speeches, and cultural exchanges sponsored by the CSFS. Through their own publications, and in distributing Soviet magazines published specifically for foreign readers, the CSFS challenged the discourse of “truth” which characterized Cold War rhetoric in mainstream Canadian society. Upon their return from tours of the Soviet Union, members took part in cross-Canada speaking engagements organized by the CSFS, arguing that the prevalent Western view of the Soviet Union as sinister and backward was false. These arguments were built using the language of the Enlightenment, and the USSR was held up as the only state willing and able to construct a truly “progressive”

significance of ideology. See the review of John Lewis Gaddis’ *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) by Melvyn P. Leffler, “The Cold War: What Do ‘We Now Know’?” *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (April 1999): 501-24; Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Joel Foreman, ed., *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Denis Smith, *Diplomacy of Fear: Canada and the Cold War, 1941–1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Wini Breines, *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism and the Atomic Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995); Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Valerie Joyce Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003); Caren Irr, *The Suburb of Dissent: Cultural Politics in the United States and Canada during the 1930s* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998); Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); Joy Parr, ed., *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945–1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Caute, *The Dancer Defects*; Richard Cavell, ed., *Love, Hate and Fear in Canada’s Cold War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

8 Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada’s Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 35.

9 This research project is based on documents from the Soviet organization, the All-Union Society for Friendship with Foreign Countries (VOKS) British Countries division relating to Canada, copied from the Russian State Archives, and currently held by the Centre for Research on Canadian-Russian Relations (CRCR), Institute of University Partnerships and Advanced Studies, Georgian College, Barrie, Ont.; as well as recently released documents from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police via Access to Information and Privacy, and other archival sources open to the public.

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society.¹⁰ CSFS members were “high modernists” — a term used by James C. Scott in *Seeing Like a State*¹¹ to denote a “faith” in the possibility that scientific rationalism can cure all social ills, and in admiration of highly rational, scientific state planning done in the name of egalitarianism. CSFS members visited Soviet hospitals, sanatoriums, prisons, factories, collective farms, and schools, and everywhere admired the order and egalitarianism they saw. They were interested in how “average” people lived and in the workings of “everyday socialism” in the Soviet Union.¹² They were interested in how Soviet women were treated. They were interested in peace. And they reported back on their observations, emphasizing that, like scientific observers, they were witnesses and could attest to the truth in these social experiments. The CSFS newspaper *News-Facts* and Dyson Carter’s *Northern Neighbors* magazine published information on old age and health in the USSR, innovations in the treatment of cancer, sport and physical culture, greetings from Moscow schools, and Soviet innovations and inventions. The CSFS thus appeared as a projector of social idealism, acted out through “friendship” with the Soviet Union.

How do we understand this techno-utopian view of the future, and the Soviet Union’s prominent place in it? It might help to know that Dyson Carter himself was something of a science-miracle boy. Raised by Salvation Army parents in a home for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents, no amount of prayer was able to help young Dyson overcome the condition of *osteogenesis imperfecta*, with which he was afflicted. A rare bone disorder which meant that the slightest impact or pressure could break his bones, Carter did not walk until he was 14 and he accidentally took a super-dose of vitamin D. Doctors were just learning that vitamin D aided in the absorption of calcium, and could be useful in curing rickets and other bone disorders. In 1932 Carter earned a Masters degree in chemistry from the University of Manitoba, and his articles on popular science and engineering were published in mainstream journals through the 1930s and 1940s.¹³ Carter was convinced that a cure for many common ailments and diseases was just around the corner, but although he had full confidence in scientists, he worried that because of press bias, citizens of North

10 On the link between fellow-travellers and the language and ideals of the Enlightenment, as well as the way the USSR was seen to embody these ideals, see Cauter, *The Fellow-Travellers*, especially 264-81.

11 James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). Scott argued that “high modernism” was a “faith” or “ideology” based on the idea that scientific and technological progress could be used by a state to create an improved social order and to champion nature (see 4-6).

12 Adapted from the term “everyday Stalinism” used by Sheila Fitzpatrick in *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

13 Doyle, *Progressive Heritage*, 174-79; Dyson Carter, *This Story Fierce and Tender* (Gravenhurst, Ont.: Northern Book House, 1986).

America may not be informed of Soviet scientific advances in a timely fashion. Carter's wife Charlotte died of cancer in 1972, and this may have played a role in his publication of numerous articles on research and treatments for cancer, at home and especially in the USSR. Publishing this material, knowledge apparently "hidden" by the Western powers-that-be from their denizens,¹⁴ became his *raison d'être*. Having rejected the religious evangelism of his parents, Carter nonetheless was a believer in the ability of science, and Soviet science in particular, to solve society's problems.

It is important to understand the symbolic significance the USSR held for many Canadian leftists at this time. As Merrily Weisbord and James Laxer have suggested, in looking to the Soviet Union, Canadian communists and sympathizers were seeking a concrete example of how their beliefs could be implemented, and at times were willing to close their eyes to unflattering evidence of Soviet reality in order to maintain this ideal.¹⁵ Progressive Canadians with ethnic roots in Eastern Europe saw the Soviet Union as embracing and promoting the cultures of the various peoples and republics.¹⁶ It is likely that individual members were constantly negotiating a compromise between their ideals and the practical realization of them, in Canada and abroad. In oral interviews, former Friendship Society activists speak about the need of researchers to understand that the Depression was a terrible time in Canada, and that the Communist Party was the only group standing up for the working person. References to philosophical similarities between Christianity and communism

14 A discussion of the concept of "rejected knowledge" prevalent in radical literature can be found in Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 23-4.

15 See Weisbord, *The Strangest Dream*. A similarly personal experience with communism is described by James Laxer in *Red Diaper Baby: A Boyhood in the Age of McCarthyism* (Vancouver, Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 2004). In the American context, Kim Chernin describes how and why communists and Soviet sympathizers admired the USSR, and the ways narrative is constantly reformulated by the storyteller, the reader, and the circumstance. Kim Chernin, *In My Mother's House: A Daughter's Story* (New York: Harper Collins, 1983, 1994).

16 See, for instance, Frances Swyripa, *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Varpu Lindstrom-Best, *The Finns in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1985); Varpu Lindstrom, *Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1992). The path breaking work on radicalism in Canada and ethnicity is Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), which is a re-working and expansion of his earlier "*Dangerous Foreigners*": *European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979). On Canadian responses to immigrants in Cold War Canada, see also Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006). On the way leaders with Anglo-Saxon names were chosen to head up the radical consumer's movement in the late 1940s, in order to avoid being seen as "communist," see Guard, "Canadian Citizens or Dangerous Foreign Women?" 161-89.

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are also frequent, and several of those who have been involved in the CSFS explain that they came to the movement through the United Church or other social gospel groups. The Soviet Union appeared to these people as the only nation in the world that had successfully established a system that did not exploit the lower classes, and for this it was admired. When through the years evidence from Moscow showed the USSR to be less than ideal, some members left the Party, the Friendship Society, and the movement, while others hung on. These decisions were not taken lightly, and many experienced disillusionment, anger, and even a sense of betrayal in the process.¹⁷

But what many members and readers may not have known is that Dyson Carter made a living as a propagandist for the USSR. He received his materials from the Soviet Union, via the All-Union Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations Abroad (VOKS) and its successor, the Canada-USSR Society, and he took every policy turn in step with Moscow.¹⁸ His income consisted of the subscription payments, generous donations sent by his readership, as well as payment for books purchased from him, all of which he had received at no cost from Moscow.¹⁹ In addition, his second wife, Sally Nielsen, remembers that the Soviet embassy staff themselves periodically brought him cash bonuses, and he may have received some financial support from the Communist Party of Canada. With these funds he invested in Bay Street stocks and bought real estate. When he sold the warehouse he used for his journal and bookhouse, he apparently turned a profit on the deal. He lived out his life in a comfortable home in Gravenhurst, Ontario. But there is no doubt that Dyson Carter believed sincerely in the USSR and its brand of socialism. Sally Nielsen, the daughter of one of the original CSFS leaders, Dorise Nielsen, had known Dyson for many years before

17 John Boyd, interview by author, 2 August 2006, Toronto, Ont.; John Boyd, "A Noble Cause Betrayed ... But Hope Lives On: Pages from a Political Life," originally published as Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Report, no. 64, 1999; *Socialist History Project*, <<http://www.socialisthistory.ca/Remember/Reminiscences/Boyd/B1.htm>> (viewed 25 August 2007); Sally (Thelma) Nielsen, interview by author, 28 November 2006, near Lakefield, Ont.; Leslie Hunt, interview by author, 2 January 2007, Hanover, Ont.

18 VOKS is the Russian acronym for the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, a Soviet organization responsible for public relations abroad, monitored by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee.

19 There are references to products and books shipped to Carter for sale throughout the VOKS collection. Carter wrote frequently to VOKS asking for material on particular subjects for publication. A report sent from the Soviet Information Bureau representative in Canada in 1954 specified the number of articles and partial articles the office had supplied that year to the progressive press in Canada, including *News-Facts*. Centre for Research on Canadian-Russian Relations, Georgian College, Barrie, Ont., VOKS collection (hereafter VOKS), Series 6, Section 3, File 97, 36-47, V. Kachanov, Deputy Director of the Soviet Information Bureau in Canada, Top Secret report of the Mission of the Soviet Information Bureau in Canada in 1954. Documents originally in Russian have been translated by the author.

she married him in 1980 and has said that he was greatly disappointed with Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms, but "quickly changed his tune in order to keep his job."²⁰ In 1989 he stopped publishing *Northern Neighbors*, and a year later he expressed his disillusionment with the USSR in a letter to his former comrade in the Canadian Communist Party, John Boyd, arguing that all his work on promoting the USSR amounted to 40 years of "bullshit" and "fabrications."²¹

The Soviets had been pleased when Dyson Carter was chosen as president of the Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society in 1949, praising him as a propagandist of longstanding.²² In 1952 an article about Carter in the Soviet magazine *Ogonyok* called the picture of the USSR given by Dyson and Charlotte Carter in *We Saw Socialism* "correct."²³ *Ogonyok* gave a favourable review of Dyson Carter's latest book, *The Future is With Us* (translated as *The Future is Ours*), and compared one of his characters to the mother figure in Maxim Gorky's *Mother* (high praise from the Soviets) for her exclamation that the radical pamphlets she printed were "pure truth! Like the holy scriptures!"²⁴ The review pointed to the popularity of Carter's books in left-wing American circles, and noted that the action in the novel could be taking place in Canada or the United States. The Soviets clearly saw Carter and the CSFS as a kind of information bridge to American, as well as Canadian, audiences, and American readers of his publications often wrote to Carter.²⁵

Carter became relatively well-known in Canada during the Second World War as a science writer, and in his descriptions of the Soviet Union as an Ally. For instance, his *Sea of Destiny*, published in 1940, warned that Canada's undefended North could leave it open to Nazi invasion, and *Russia's Secret Weapon* (1943) suggested that the power of the USSR was its ethos of positivism in the promotion of science and universal well-being.²⁶ For the Soviets, it did not hurt

20 Sally (Thelma) Nielsen interview.

21 Boyd collection, Dyson Carter to John Boyd, 28 February 1990.

22 VOKS, 5:3:31:202, "Kharakteristika Prezidenta Obshestvo Kanado-Sovetskoi družhbi Daisona Cartera" ["Biography of the President of the Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society, Dyson Carter"], 1950.

23 Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), RG1 46, A200600101, 124, RCMP translation of G. Vladimirov and D. Erde, "Exposed Provocation," *Ogonyok*, no. 37 (September 1952), dated 27 September 1952; VOKS, 6:1:41:5-8, K. Perevoschikov, Review of Carter's 1943 biography of Josef Stalin, 13 April 1953. Perevoschikov said that in the biography of Stalin, Carter "correctly" describes Stalin's activities and events in the USSR.

24 LAC, RG146, A200600101, RCMP translation of Vladimirov and Erde, "Exposed Provocation," 125.

25 Letters from American readers can be found in the VOKS collection, as well as in the Dyson Carter fonds at LAC (MG31-D182).

26 Dyson Carter, *Sea of Destiny: the Story of Hudson Bay— our Undefended Back Door* (New York: Greenberg, 1940); Dyson Carter, *Russia's Secret Weapon* (London: Hooper, 1943); and see also Doyle's commentary on Carter's literary work in *Progressive Heritage*, 105-6, 174-9, 224-30, 258-62.

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that Carter had also written an admiring biography of Josef Stalin,²⁷ and that in 1945 he had published an account of why he became a member of the Labor Progressive Party.²⁸ Other books Carter published, sometimes co-authored with Charlotte Carter, included comparisons of the health and medical treatments in Canada and the USSR, stories about the difficult living conditions for Canadian miners and their families, and the discrimination affecting poor Americans, Ukrainian-Canadians, and Blacks on the Canadian prairies.²⁹

The style and themes of his writing led many on the Canadian left to find in Carter's work a reflection of their own ideals. For instance, Robert (Mendel) Laxer, an organizer with the Labor Progressive Party, called Carter "Canada's best writer."³⁰ However, for the subscribers to *News-Facts*, and later *Northern Neighbors*, it appears that Carter's combination of scientific and technologically-oriented articles had particular appeal. Towards the end of the 1950s, the Canadian Communist Party put a new person in charge of the Friendship Society and renamed the group the Canada-USSR Association; but Carter continued to publish *Northern Neighbors*, which had proved to be very popular with the non-Party Canadian left.³¹

The Friendship Society based its perceptions of the Soviet Union on a very Thucydidean notion that "being there" and "seeing the facts for oneself," combined with a special talent for seeing through "Western propaganda," provided their members with a healthy perspective on Cold War politics. This perspective was presented as the basis for true knowledge about the Soviet reality, a

27 Dyson Carter, *Stalin's Life: At Last the True Story* (Winnipeg: Contemporary Publishers, 1943).

28 This declaration was published as Dyson Carter, "Dyson Carter Explains: Why I've Joined the LPP," *Canadian Tribune* (15 December 1945); but Carter said elsewhere that he had been a Party member since 1931. Carter and John Boyd were in the same closed Party group in Winnipeg at that time. Boyd collection, Dyson Carter to John Boyd, 28 February 1990; John Boyd interview.

29 Other published books by Dyson Carter include *Men, Machines and Microbes* (Winnipeg: Contemporary Publishers, 1942); *Night of Flame* (New York, 1942; London: Chapman, 1946); *Atomic Dollars* (Winnipeg: Frontier Books, 1946); *Sin and Science* (New York: Heck-Cattell, 1946); *Fatherless Sons* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1955); (with Charlotte Carter), *Science of Health and Long Life in the U.S.S.R.* (Sydney, Australia: Current Book Distributors, 1956); (with Charlotte Carter), *Cancer, Smoking, Heart-Disease, Drinking in Our Two World Systems Today* (Toronto: Northern Book House, 1957); *The Big Brainwash* (Toronto: Northern Book House, 1958); *Future of Freedom* (Gravenhurst, Ont.: Northern Book House, 1961); *Worker Power: Dare We Win?* (Gravenhurst, Ont.: Northern Book House, 1970); and his semi-autobiography, *This Story Fierce and Tender* (Gravenhurst, Ont.: Northern Book House, 1986). An interview with Dyson Carter appeared in the Moscow English-language newspaper, *The New Times*, 41 (October 1983), 27.

30 Laxer, *Red Diaper Baby*, 25.

31 Leslie Hunt interview; John Boyd interview.

knowledge that could and should be passed on to other Canadians. For example, in its draft constitution of January 1952, the CSFS's aim was proclaimed to be: "develop friendship between the peoples of Canada and the peoples of the Soviet Union," which would

be realized by bringing to the Canadian peoples, in every possible way:

- a) Information about all aspects of life in the Soviet Union today;
- b) The truth that the Soviet peoples and their Government want peace and friendship with all countries;
- c) Facts concerning the great advantage Canada can gain by economic, cultural and scientific exchange and co-operation between our country and the Soviet Union.³²

This aim was to be accomplished using the CSFS journal *News-Facts* as "the chief means for building the Society and achieving its aims."³³ Leading members of the CSFS repeatedly argued that any suggestions that the Society served Moscow's interest were the result of anti-Soviet sentiments that had taken root in Canada since the beginning of the Cold War. Rather than appealing exclusively to convinced communists in Canada, the CSFS emphasized that its membership included Canadians of all political stripes, who simply wished to see a warmer international climate. For instance, in his "President's Speech," given at the first CSFS conference in 1952, Dyson Carter said:

no doubt there will be efforts, by those whose aim is to promote hatred, not friendship, efforts to make people think the Friendship Society has aims which are not made public in our constitution. For example: some people will say the aim of the Friendship Society is to bring about Socialism in Canada, to do away with the capitalist system in our country. This is not true True, the Friendship Society *does include* people who would like to see Socialism in Canada. But the majority of Friendship supporters are people who believe in the economic and political system we have in Canada, the capitalist system.³⁴

Probably Carter was exaggerating these claims to some extent. The idea of "friendship" with the USSR had broader appeal between 1941 and 1945, while the Soviet Union was an Ally, but after the defection of Igor Gouzenko, a cipher clerk at the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa in late 1945, prominent "friends of the USSR" had become skeptical about such claims. In adopting the rhetoric of earlier times, Carter probably hoped to convince those on the non-Party left that

32 VOKS, 6:1:36:19, "Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society, Draft Constitution", January 1952, 1951-1952.

33 Ibid.

34 VOKS, 6:1:36:60, "President's Speech, January 27, 1952," Carter's emphasis, 1951-1952.

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they were in good company. As it was, the CSFS gained most of its positive press from the established left-leaning papers.³⁵

Still, the “truth” argument was one that Carter frequently used. He argued that “the Canadian people want the truth, the facts. The job ahead is to get the truth, the facts, into their hands! ... What is the greatest, most inspiring truth brought forward at this convention? — that friendship with the Soviet Union is a means to preserving world peace.”³⁶ Frequently referring to negative reports on the USSR as “slanders,” the CSFS worked to produce information that would disprove claims it saw as “untruthful.” For example, Dyson Carter wrote:

... a flood of fantastic anti-Soviet slanders [have been] poured on the Canadian people for so long. Truth has been virtually excommunicated from the press. But the love of truth and reason is deeply engrained in [*sic*] Canadian character, founded as it is upon intermingling of French and British democratic traditions and the freedom-loving spirit of millions of immigrant European workers and peasants. Today the Canadian people are becoming sharply curious about life in the Socialist world.³⁷

Education was seen to be the best way to combat this “slander,” as it brought enlightenment. Carter argued:

... the main features of anti-Soviet opinion in Canada today are utter stupidity and gross ignorance. People with such weaknesses of thought in time become hungry for truth Over and above all facts about the Soviet Union there stands the profoundly impressive truth that the land of Socialism is

35 During World War II, the National Council of Canadian-Soviet Friendship enjoyed broad mass support and many prominent Canadians were honorary members, including Prime Minister Mackenzie King. However, soon after Igor Gouzenko defected from the Soviet Embassy in the fall of 1945, an event which most historians agree signalled the beginning of the Cold War in Canada, the National Council membership dropped off sharply, and in February 1949 the Royal Canadian Mounted Police told Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, that it was “inactive.” VOKS suggested that the Council’s trouble was “absence of leadership,” lack of funds, and an anti-Soviet campaign. In November 1949 the National Council was reorganized, under the leadership of Dyson Carter, who claimed that Council members who “withdrew their support” had done so “(many with sincere regrets) due to anti-Soviet hysteria.” See Amy Knight, *How the Cold War Began: The Gouzenko Affair and the Hunt for Soviet Spies* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2005); LAC, RG146, A200600096, 133, RCMP report “Extract Re: National Council for Canadian Soviet Friendship,” 28 February 1949; VOKS, CW2, file 2, 5, “Otchet o rabote VOKS v Kanade za 1946” [Report on the Work of VOKS in Canada in 1946]; LAC, RG146, A200600091, 53, from “Questions People Ask about the Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society,” a “New-Facts” leaflet, n.d., but probably from late 1952.

36 VOKS, 6:1:36:65-6.

37 VOKS, 6:1:32:165, draft of article for *New Times* on Canadian-Soviet Friendship Month entitled “A Demonstration of Friendship” by Dyson Carter, 1951.

the most faithful, most determined, most powerful guardian of peace for all peoples. This truth, without a doubt, is wearing away the foundations of anti-Soviet propaganda.³⁸

In all its publications, the CSFS emphasized this theme, and the distribution figures were celebrated as proof that the truth was spreading. The tone of reports to VOKS in Moscow were enthusiastic, and sales figures for *We Saw Socialism* were put forward as proof that the Canadian public was increasingly sympathetic to the USSR. In October 1951 Carter claimed that the first 4,000 copies of the book had completely sold out, and another 4,000 copies were being made.³⁹ Similarly, Carter proclaimed that the CSFS bulletin *News-Facts*, which had for a mission statement “Canada’s Authoritative Information Service,” was increasing its circulation in the United States and in Canada “continues to be popular”; and the distribution of “Anti-Slander ‘Photo-Facts’” cards (“little bullets of truth”⁴⁰) were spreading positive information about the Soviet Union.⁴¹

Photography played an important role in the message produced by Dyson Carter and the CSFS. In the USSR, creating images of the technological progress of socialism was a task the photographer performed for the state. The CSFS used this technique, and photos received from the USSR, to educate Canadian audiences to the Soviet “reality.” “Photo-Facts,” published by the CSFS in 1951, came in a set of 12 cards, with photos of the Soviet Union on one side and Soviet factoids on the other. CSFS printed 4,000 sets of these cards and had their branches across Canada distribute them. Carter had hit on the idea of publishing photo-cards in 1951, and argued that “tens of thousands more” needed to be sent out.⁴² For instance, one card showed a worker smiling at the camera, and under the photo was the phrase “Freedom for the Working Man.” On the back were three categories: “The Papers Say: Soviet workers have to work where they’re told to, their wages are low and working conditions are bad.” Then under the title “The Photos Shows” were the words, “This machinist of Soviet Latvia, U. Masulis, has been elected member of his country’s Supreme Parliament.” Under the subtitle, “The Facts Are” were several comparisons between Soviet and American workers, suggesting that better working conditions were found in the USSR. Holders of the card were encouraged to write to *News-Facts* for a subscription, so they could have “proof” of these facts, and each card finished with the phrase, “Let’s get to know our neighbors

38 Ibid., 166.

39 VOKS, 6:1:32:1, letter from Dyson Carter to V.S. Bogatyrev (Head, Dept. of British Countries, VOKS), October 1951, 34.

40 VOKS, 6:1:36:29, “The President’s Recommendations to the Convention,” n.d., 1951–1952.

41 Ibid.

42 LAC, RG146, A200600091, from “Questions People Ask about the Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society,” 53.

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— we can live in peace!"⁴³ Other cards dealt with "Freedom from Rising Prices," "Freedom from War Propaganda," and "Freedom from Farm Debts." Writing to VOKS, Carter suggested sending sets of these cards to other Soviet Friendship societies, such as those in Australia and New Zealand, and, if needed, he was willing have more printed, presumably for a fee. In April 1952 an article on the cards ran in the *Toronto Telegram*, calling them "straight, undiluted Communist propaganda" that were ultimately unconvincing.⁴⁴ John Yaremko, Ontario MPP, made fun of the cards, which he had received unsolicited in his mail, when he spoke at the annual meeting of the Women's Progressive Conservative association in February 1952.⁴⁵ But Carter called the cards "a new development in fighting against anti-Soviet slanders."⁴⁶ Members were encouraged to buy "Photo-Facts" to distribute to friends and to leave them in public places where other Canadians could find them.

Similarly, in their book *We Saw Socialism*, the Carters put images to the text describing their highly orchestrated trip to the USSR.⁴⁷ The text is arranged around thematically-oriented photographs, which are large and usually include one of the Carters in the shot. The message clearly is that here is the evidence that the Carters were there and that they investigated the truth about the USSR. Captions under the photographs included: "Mr. and Mrs. Carter saw hundreds of apartments like these," "Mr. and Mrs. Carter shopped in splendid stores like these," "the Carters saw mass-production of these big welding generators," "the Carters witnessed this Victory Day Anniversary scene," and "Charlotte Carter was deeply impressed by the cleanliness and care provided for workers' children."⁴⁸ The shopping photograph appeared in the chapter "Paradise or Poverty?" subtitled "Here's What We Saw."⁴⁹

1950 saw the first *News-Facts* publication, which was a small folded newsletter that contained snippets of interesting (and always positive) facts about the Soviet Union. Sixty-eight issues of *News-Facts* were published between 1950 and September 1956. Written in what has been described as the "U.S. News and World Report" style that Dyson Carter always used in his pub-

43 The "Photo-Facts" cards are copied in LAC, RG146, A200600101, p. 11-12, 95-102.

44 Allan Kent and Clem Shields, "Red Menace Real if War with Russ or Slump Comes," *Toronto Telegram* (1 April 1952).

45 "Communist Posters Shown to Women's PC Association," *Globe and Mail* (20 February 1952), 8.

46 VOKS, 6:1:32:51, letter from Dyson Carter to Bogatyrev, 10 October 1951. If the CSFS gained from the distribution of the cards, it was mostly in terms of publicity. The financial statements from 1951 indicate that only \$100 were made on the sale of the cards. LAC, MG28-V-154, vol. 25, file 11, CSFS Income Statement, 1 November 1950–1 November 1951.

47 VOKS, 5:3:31:206-211, Biography and Itinerary of Dyson Carter trip to USSR, April 1950.

48 Charlotte and Dyson Carter, *We Saw Socialism*. (Toronto: Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society, 1951), 25, 65, 59, 368, 225.

49 *Ibid.*, 62-5.

lications,⁵⁰ they were snappy, concise, and enthusiastic reports on Soviet medical and scientific advances. In addition to articles that praised all things Soviet, Dyson Carter used these pages to respond to critiques of the USSR. Armed with “facts” and “the truth about the USSR,” he urged readers to engage friends and neighbours in discussion, to write to political leaders advocating trade with the USSR, and argued that the mainstream domestic newspapers must be read with skepticism. The first issue included greetings to J.V. Stalin on his 70th birthday, declaring that “history is not changed by falsehood, and history records forever the truth that the Canadian people owe to you immeasurable gratitude for your leadership in the historic battles of Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad.”⁵¹ In 1956 Carter published reports and photographs of people born in the USSR, who had been relocated as “displaced persons” to Western Europe and North America, and who had since “returned to the homeland.”⁵² The overall impressions readers got from *News-Facts* have been described in this way:

A subscription fee of one dollar would cover twelve issues, mailed in a plain brown envelope. When they opened their plain brown envelopes, subscribers could read about the latest wonders of Soviet science: “famed Soviet scientist finds way to double production of sheep ... daring new airplane flies with no fuel.” They could be assured that they were in good company: that in Britain, Vivien Leigh, Laurence Olivier, and Arthur Rank were members of the British-Soviet Friendship Society. And they could have some of those hard questions answered. Why, for example, had the Soviet Union refused to allow the UN to investigate charges of slave labour camps? No, answered Carter, the Soviets had not refused, they had proposed a commission to investigate prisons in all countries.⁵³

By 1953 a page or two of photographs appeared monthly, and the quantity and size of the photographs steadily grew. Initially, Carter wrote to VOKS asking for photos “showing different sides of life of the Soviet people” to be used in *News-Facts*;⁵⁴ but, increasingly, he began to request photographs of specific subjects. In the April-May 1953 edition, the captions to photographs of Soviet development and smiling faces read, “These new, exclusive News-Facts photographs show life inside the Soviet Union today. News-Facts welcomes readers’ suggestions for topics to be shown in future photo pages.”⁵⁵ On the same page under the headline “Canadian Trade Unionists on Visit to U.S.S.R.,” photographs of the smiling delegates were shown touring. The names of the

50 John Boyd interview.

51 *News-Facts*, no. 1 (5 January 1950), 4.

52 *News Facts*, no. 62 (February 1956), 3; no. 65 (June 1956), 7.

53 Johnston, *A Great Restlessness*, 226-7.

54 VOKS, 6:1:50:29, letter from Yakovlev to Pozdeev, 17 December 1955.

55 *News-Facts*, no. 36 (April-May 1953), 7.

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delegates were printed in the captions, thus attesting to the truth of the image, and in the location was noted in terse phrases: "Arrival in Moscow, Aug. '52, Tom Applegarth of Toronto receives welcoming bouquet"; "Up From the Coal Mine, K. Hladiy, C. Leech"; "On Moscow's Metro. K. Hladiy, J. Goldman, J. Hines, B. Magnuson, C. Leech, J. Leech."⁵⁶ In February 1954 a line at the bottom of a page said, "The News-Facts camera takes you visiting; a Soviet hockey game with 80,000 attendance; opening of Moscow's new university; and a New Year party in the Kremlin," alerting readers to the exciting photos inside. The pictures of the opening of Moscow State University present a spectacular skyscraper of knowledge and classrooms packed with studious proletarian youths. The enormity of the building and its modern architecture are impressive, and readers are informed that "in all there are 27 academic and 10 subsidiary buildings, 148 auditoriums, over 1,000 laboratories, and a 1,200,000-volume library."⁵⁷ In April 1955, under the headline "Just Arrived in Canada: They Saw for Themselves: Seven Canadians in the Soviet Union," another delegation, including R.L. Patriquin, Morris Biderman, and Louis Kon are shown in conversation with citizens of the "worker's state."⁵⁸ In its photographs, *News-Facts* showed the Soviet truth and showed Canadians as the witnesses.

After returning from visits to the USSR, CSFS delegates toured regions of Canada speaking about their experiences. The number of people attending each of these meetings was duly recorded and reported to VOKS. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police were also paying close attention to the numbers of attendees at each of these functions. After their return from the USSR in May 1951, Jacob Penner is recorded as having spoken to 500 people in Toronto and 600 in Winnipeg; Mr. and Mrs. Gartner to 500 people in Toronto, 800 more in Toronto at a later date, as well as smaller groups of musicians and artists, university people, housewives, Jewish adults and children at a United Jewish Peoples Order meeting and summer camp; Frederick Taylor and Jeannette Pratte, restricted from speaking to public meetings by "conditions in ... [the] province of Quebec," were reported to have spoken at five or six small, private meetings each.⁵⁹ Dorise Nielsen argued that in terms of delegations sent to the USSR:

the most important thing ... is NOT how big they are, nor HOW MANY we send ... it is that every member is prepared to give of their time and energy in telling the truth about the Soviet Union to Canadians when they return. Even

56 Ibid.

57 *News-Facts*, no. 43 (February 1954), 7, 10.

58 *News-Facts*, no. 55 (April-May 1955), 8.

59 VOKS, 6:1:32:74-75, "Report on Activities of Society Delegation to USSR," May 1951 (20 July 1951).

if this means personal sacrifice, it becomes the most important thing about any member of a delegation, that they are prepared to defeat the Big Lie, and give of their best effort to help maintain peace and freindship [*sic*] with the Soviet people.⁶⁰

Nielsen quoted from the journals of the Italian-Soviet Society, which had written, “Today the centre of our struggle for peace, and the future of our nation is the struggle against anti-Soviet propaganda”; and from the Iceland-Soviet Society, where a member had pledged to “... work persistently and honestly, everywhere, and all the time, to strengthen world peace, to defend the truth that comes to us from the great land of Russia.”⁶¹ Nielsen asked members of the Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society to take heed of these words in their own work and to appreciate the “profound truth” contained therein.⁶²

Photograph collections sent by VOKS for exhibition by the CSFS were named “Vacation below Moscow,” “A Day at a Kolkhoz,” “Science and Religion,” and a slide show entitled “Along the Halls of the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism” was sent in 1957.⁶³ Once sent, VOKS remained very interested in getting feedback on the way the photographs and films were being used. VOKS asked to know not only where, when, and who saw these materials, but if the progressive groups had any comments or wishes to express to the organizers of these exhibits for future reference. Films also fit the bill of objectively showing Soviet realities to Canadians. In 1953 the RCMP reported that Dorise Nielsen, former MP and co-founder of the CSFS, toured Saskatchewan “... to organize cultural groups throughout the province, and to make arrangements for the screening of Soviet movies.” At her talk in Kamsack, “The Leading Soviet Athletes in Training” was shown, and in Winnipeg “Construction Sites of Moscow,” “Republic of Kazakhstan,” and “Girl at the Circus” were shown.⁶⁴

Films and photo exhibits were often used to supplement other activities, such as handicraft sales or lectures. At one showing a room meant to hold 250 people was so full that some people were refused entry. The VOKS representative in Ottawa reported to his Moscow office that the audience responded to the film and Carter’s speech “very warmly.” Carter had pointed out to VOKS that this report “shows once more that the Canadian public is interested in the life of the Soviet people, willingly attends suitable events and the Society (CSFS),

60 VOKS, 6:1:36:57, “Report on Organization,” January 26, 1952, Nielsen’s emphasis, 1951–1952.

61 *Ibid.*, 58.

62 *Ibid.*

63 VOKS, 55:186-188, letter from G. Ioanisyanyan to A. Tovstogon, 29 October 1957.

64 LAC, RG146, A200600091, RCMP report, “The Canadian Soviet Friendship Society, February 1951 to March 1953. Addendum to Brief Ending February 1951,” 15 April 1953, 113-44.

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because of this ready cooperative desire, is able to find the necessary audience amongst Canadians."⁶⁵ But at times the Russian language used in the Soviet films offended the Canadian audience, many of whom were of Ukrainian background. A letter sent to VOKS in December 1956 requested that films sent in Ukrainian and Latvian languages to Canada have English subtitles (not Russian), because the clients are members of the Canadian progressive organizations, specifically listed as "Russians, Ukrainians, Latvians, etc.," and the Russian subtitles are displeasing and even used by Ukrainian-Canadian nationalists in anti-Soviet propaganda about the Russification of the USSR.⁶⁶ In forwarding this letter to the Ukrainian cultural organization, the request was made that action be taken "in alleviating the uncomfortable situation for Ukrainian-Canadian progressive organizations."⁶⁷

Films and photographs also represented a budgetary consideration for the CSFS, though the amounts were rather small. In 1952 the CSFS finances listed "films" as accounting for \$269.75 in income, while in 1953 income "receipts from films" came to \$123.00; "receipts from records," \$30.00; "receipts from exhibition," \$662.50; "Sale of donated picture," 102.50.⁶⁸ Probably, more than financial return, the films and photographs sent from the USSR were meant to draw larger audiences to CSFS events.

In October 1951 Dyson Carter reported to VOKS that 35 percent of new subscribers to *News-Facts* were residents of the United States.⁶⁹ By 1956, with the subscription to *News-Facts*, readers were entitled to receive *Moscow News*,⁷⁰ and many also subscribed to the *VOKS Bulletin*, which was a Soviet magazine prepared especially for a foreign audience, and available in English, French, and other languages. International events in 1956, which included the Suez Crisis, the Soviet invasion of Hungary, and Nikita Khrushchev's famous speech denouncing Josef Stalin's personality cult, damaged the Soviet image abroad. Most likely as a response to the resulting crisis in leftist circles worldwide, both VOKS and the CSFS produced a new journal shortly afterward. In January 1957 VOKS changed the name of its magazine to *Culture and Life*, and the VOKS representative in Ottawa was told that his task was to "popularize the journal ... and use links to Canadian intelligentsia and the progressive organizations of the Russian and Ukrainian diaspora" to do so, while the CSFS was also asked to "propagandize" the journal.⁷¹ Carter adver-

65 VOKS, 6:1:49:74, letter from A. Tovstogan to Kulakovskaya, 9 March 1956.

66 VOKS, 6:1:55:27-8, letter from Tovstogan to Abramov, Sovexportfilm, 11 December 1956.

67 VOKS, 6:1:55:29, letter from Ioanysyan to K.Z. Litvin (UkrOKS), 9 January 1956.

68 VOKS, 6:1:50:116, 1952 finances; 6:1:50:117, 1953 finances.

69 VOKS, 6:1:32: 32-37, letter from Dyson Carter to Bogatyrev, 1 October 1951.

70 VOKS, 6:1:49:150-153, letter from A. Vertogradov to A. Tovstogan, 17 April 1956.

71 VOKS, 6:1:49:217, letter from A.S. Tovstogan from Yakovlev, 16 October 1956.

tised the opportunity of subscribing to other Soviet magazines on sport, women, literature, and photography, and lists of addresses in the VOKS files shows that many did.

In December 1956 the first issue of *Northern Neighbors* appeared, replacing *News-Facts*, which stopped publishing in October 1956. Subscribers were automatically changed over to the new magazine,⁷² which was much fuller, with bigger pictures, and more like main-stream magazines. *Northern Neighbors* did not call itself a CSFS publication, and instead was published by the Northern Neighbors Publishing Company, which was Dyson Carter's own initiative. A few years later, when the Carters moved from Toronto to the more northerly town of Gravenhurst, Carter gave up his presidency of the CSFS to devote his time entirely to the magazine and bookhouse work. The Party apparently felt Carter needed help, so Leslie Hunt was asked to take over the Society, soon after renamed the Canada-USSR Association, and Carter kept on with his work on *Northern Neighbors*.⁷³

The initial price of the new magazine was \$1 for 10 issues, and even in 1989 it was still affordable at \$10 for 10 issues. The first issue featured an interview with Soviet ballerina Galina Ulanova, photographs of the International Seminar on the Equality of Rights of Women in the USSR, and photos of the CCF Delegation and Canadian lumbermen visiting the USSR. The page on the lumbermen was headlined "Northern Neighbors in Real Life."⁷⁴ Articles dealt with experiments in wind and solar power, women's rights, the way the Soviet Union provided daycare and opportunities for women outside the home, freedom of religion, human rights and disabled rights, and how the USSR tackled environmental problems. But the wonder of science, and Soviet science above all, remained a popular theme. For example, in one of its first issues *Northern Neighbors* showed how "Man's Conquest of Nature is Taming Siberia," with the help of guest farm workers from across the USSR.⁷⁵ Carter published a

72 *Northern Neighbors* (December 1956), title page.

73 Leslie Hunt interview. 1956 was a water-shed for many communists and fellow-travellers. Nikita Khrushchev's so-called "secret speech" to the 20th Party Congress in Moscow, officially distancing the CPSU from the legacy of Josef Stalin, plus the Suez affair and the invasion of Hungary created a crisis in the international communist movement. Charlotte Carter commented on the fact that the Congress had "made the idea of Canadian-Soviet friendship 'unpopular' in Canada." VOKS, 6:55:150-153, letter from A. Tovstogan to G. Ioanisyanyan, 31 May 1957. An executive member of the CSFS was "freed from his duties" because of his "incorrect behaviour" following the 20th Party Congress. VOKS, 6:49:264-7, letter from A. Tovstogan to A. Vertogradov, 20 September 1956. The need to issue a new magazine was probably an attempt to respond to this crisis. For more on the response in Canadian leftist circles, see Weisbord, *The Strangest Dream*.

74 *Northern Neighbours* (December 1956), 5, 12, 13. The Canadian spelling of "Neighbours" was used in its first issue only, after which the magazine was called *Northern Neighbors*.

75 *Ibid.*, 13.

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page on "Science and Our Future" in the February 1957 issue, that promised that once "the Cold War [was] out of the way" a "Climate Alteration Authority of the three northern neighbor countries: USA-Canada-USSR" could be set up to "revolutionize our winters" using atomic power.⁷⁶ The same issue featured photographs of massive machines in Soviet construction and industrial projects under the headline "Big Jobs for Heavy Industry."⁷⁷ Frequently, articles on Soviet medicine appeared, dealing with how science could conquer cancer, but also recommending alternative medicine, such as ginseng. Throughout, the idea that Canadians had gone to the USSR and "seen the truth for themselves" was prominent.

The magazine also carried a heavy political message. Until its last issue in 1989, it followed the Soviet line closely — from the events of 1956 in Hungary to the advent of glasnost under Gorbachev. *Northern Neighbors* presented more in-depth political content than *News-Facts*. In January 1957 the magazine ran a large article called "Our Readers Ask: What do Soviet People Really Say About Hungary," which essentially outlined the Soviet position on the 1956 Hungarian revolution.⁷⁸ Readers were told that the facts of the situation, "rarely noted" in the North American mainstream press were that the Hungarian "rebels" had established a "Reign of Terror," and the Soviet Army had entered the country to prevent the establishment of a fascist state there.⁷⁹ Reading *Northern Neighbors* today, a consistent pattern of about-turns is evident as it followed the line from Moscow. Nikita Khrushchev's famous "secret speech" to the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 is not mentioned in the magazine's pages until 1989,⁸⁰ although, from 1957 on, Stalin's legacy was referred to as "mixed" — the product of a "personality cult." An explanation for why the Soviets put down the Czech "rebellion" in 1968 is provided,⁸¹ and as the Cold War heated up in the 1980s, so did the *Northern Neighbors* rhetoric; articles defending the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan appeared in 1980,⁸² and opinion pages protesting the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games followed.⁸³ Articles purporting that the Soviets were winning the space race appeared throughout the 1980s,⁸⁴ and Gorbachev's photo and speeches were prominently featured

76 Ibid. (February 1957), 3.

77 Ibid., 12-13.

78 Ibid. (January 1957), 7.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid. (May-June 1989), 4-5.

81 Ibid. (March 1957), 16; (February 1980), 11; "Student Rebels – Czech Liberals," Ibid. (September 1968), 3.

82 Ibid. (February 1980), 4-5, and special supplement; Ibid. (March 1980), 6; Ibid. (October 1980), 13; and cover story in November 1986 issue as Soviets left Afghanistan in "friendship."

83 Ibid. (March 1980), 4, 17.

84 For example, see Ibid. (November 1982).

after 1985. In 1986–1987 the effects of Chernobyl were downplayed,⁸⁵ and by 1989 *perestroika* and *glasnost* were providing the main themes.⁸⁶

Science offered the solutions to technological and industrial dilemmas, Carter argued, and machines brought nature under man's control. Many of these articles carried gendered assumptions. In "Big Jobs for Heavy Industry"⁸⁷ the power of mechanical tools was heavily masculinized. Although women were shown to be the partners of Soviet men in bringing the caprice of Mother Nature under control, femininity was not sacrificed. Unisex clothing was eschewed in the USSR, Carter told his readers, and women delighted equally in physical work and traditional feminine pursuits such as dancing, teaching, cooking, and child-rearing.

The North featured prominently in this pro-Soviet message. Soviet sovereignty in the North, and the technological tools needed to defend it, were the implicit themes of many of Carter's articles, whether or not the story was explicitly about Northern cities or ice-breakers. (This approach was similar to the way outer space was portrayed in *Northern Neighbors*.) The Northern theme was a clever move by Carter to appeal to Canadians. The Cold War caused issues of the North to resonate with much greater meaning in Canada than it had previously.⁸⁸ The DEW line, the fear of bombers coming over the North Pole from the USSR, and Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's "Northern vision" emphasized the link between Canadian sovereignty and the Arctic. Carter's message played on these issues, with a pro-Soviet tune. The USSR was a good friend to Canada, ran the message, and Canadians would do well to expand friendly relations with their northern neighbours, in order to learn from them. On the inside of the cover of the first issue of *Northern Neighbors* an image of the North was presented to represent its mission — a flat map of Canada and the Soviet Union, appearing side-by-side (1956). By 1957 the image depicted the Arctic from above, as if the viewer were looking down on the globe, with the Canadian North on the left and the Soviet on the right. In 1958 a similar image included a series of human figures holding hands, stretching across the Arctic Ocean from Canada to the Soviet Union. The image was eventually dropped altogether from the inside cover, but the rhetoric of

85 For example, see "Real 'Chernobyl' Disaster Was in West," *Ibid.* (June 1986), 4; "How Many Will Die from Chernobyl?" *Ibid.* (January 1987), 3. In the last article is the claim that "... no informed scientist ... can state that this fall out *will in any significant way change the future cancer death rate.*" (Emphasis in the original.)

86 See, especially, the final issue of *Northern Neighbors* (December 1989).

87 *Ibid.* (February 1957), 12-13.

88 There has been a good deal of work in Canadian historiography dealing with the links between Canadian (self-) identity and the North. See, for instance, Janice Cavell, "The Second Frontier: The North in English-Canadian Historical Writing," *Canadian Historical Review* 83, no. 3 (September 2002): 364-89; Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates, eds., *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2001).

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Northern linkages remained. Stories about Soviet ice-breakers and skiers reaching the North Pole hinted heavily at Soviet sovereignty in the Arctic.⁸⁹

Carter apparently held a modernist view of what we now call global warming. As a scientist and a utopian, he had a strong belief in the possibility of science to improve the everyday lives of people, using techniques that could seem fantastic. In addition to the article on how to "revolutionize our winters" using atomic power, Carter frequently referred to Soviet advances in meteorology. In October 1962, in an article entitled "When will Scientists Change the Weather?" Carter informed his readers:

Soviet scientists believe [melting the Arctic ice] would have big beneficial effects, and the undesirable effects could be offset by other deliberate actions. Such as: spray the Atlantic Ocean with chemicals to speed up evaporation, and prevent Europe-Soviet drought. Achieve the same end by mounting great solar mirrors on special sputniks, above the Ocean. By the way: both in China and in USSR they are right now trying out a weather-change of immense beneficial possibilities. By spraying cheap carbon-black on high mountain glaciers, vast quantities of solar heat are absorbed (instead of reflected) this melts whole rivers of ice, and opens the way to turning some of Asia's worst and biggest deserts into real Gardens of Eden.⁹⁰

By January 1980 Carter had changed his tune. Under the headline "Ice Work," Carter wrote that the "world is just becoming aware of the fact that our planet's ice is vital to our future. In USSR most elaborate research goes on in many areas." Next to the text were pictures showing male scientists taking measurements. Under one photo of snowmobiles, a plane, and an ice tractor, the caption read, "Soviet people make greater use of ice than we do. Here they are studying new methods of making landing strips for aircraft. USSR has world's largest fleet of Arctic planes, and nowadays they are increasingly used to carry heavy freight to polar construction sites." On the next page Carter asked, "What's so fascinating about ICE?" and answered: "When you burn down a *jungle* it will re-grow in a couple of years. Damage permafrost, and you've ruined the land for *a century*, maybe forever. Avoiding that tragedy is the goal of hundreds of Soviet researchers. Their aim is no less than preserving one-quarter of our entire planet."⁹¹ Never one to miss an opportunity to criticize the United States, Carter wrote in March 1980 in "Which way is our Weather going?" that "[y]ou'd think, from reports we get in our media, that USA scientists have 'weather theory' pretty well wrapped up. Not so. Recent astonishing discoveries by Soviet researchers show that the Ocean's ice plays a dominant

89 An article on the Soviet atomic ice-breaker *Lenin* appeared in *Northern Neighbors* (July-August 1961), 19; "How to Ski to the Pole," *Ibid.* (February 1980), 20.

90 *Ibid.* (October 1962), 8.

91 *Ibid.* (January 1980), 20, 21.

role in weather.” Arguing that the world needed cooperation on weather studies, he wrote, “This is the kind of joint world-wide research which the man in the White House is now wiping out. And it may well be that USA needs this most of all. Science for peace, not for profits in bloodshed.”⁹²

Setting the tone in the earliest issues of *Northern Neighbors*, Carter maintained a commentary on how Soviets had tamed and domesticated the wild environment of the North, making it fit for human habitation.⁹³ This rhetoric appears tragically ironic today, knowing as we do that Soviet attempts to tame the environment led to extraordinary destruction and suffering. The article entitled “Man’s Conquest of Nature is Taming Siberia,” in which Carter argued that the wilderness of the North was being domesticated by the Soviet state, mentioned earlier in this paper, was not unique.⁹⁴ In June 1960 Carter wrote, “Siberia Has a Winning combination — Resources for Electric Power, Metallurgy, Chemicals, Agriculture,” and by using numerous statistics on the amount of timber, coal, metal, and power generated, as well as the population increase, Carter explained how machinery and planning allow the economic development and exploitation of Siberia.⁹⁵ In October 1960 he made precise comparisons between the Soviet and Canadian experiences: “Mirny, far up near the Arctic Circle is on a parallel with much of Canada that is considered uninhabitable in any big way. Yet look what planners there are doing.” He bragged that Mirny had a “hospital, nurseries, kindergartens, schools, movies and clubs, swimming pools, stadiums, centres for skiing and ice-boating,” as well as shopping opportunities. Engineers had built a reservoir on a nearby river to supply the town with water, and efficient and low-cost heating techniques were used, and all this amounted to only positive affects on the environment. “Trees?” asked Carter, “A Soviet town just isn’t a town without trees. So Experts had to find a way to make them grow in the climate of Yakutia.”⁹⁶ In February 1962 Carter claimed, “The Roar of Industry is the Music of a New Era for the 29 Million People Who Make their Homes in Siberia.”⁹⁷ In fact, in comparing how government policies affected the lives of the peoples of the North, Carter argued that “[w]e can be proud of Canadian Eskimos and Indians [*sic*] who have achieved professional or trades standing *despite government policies*. But

92 Ibid. (March 1980), 10.

93 It is worth noting here the work by Ken Coates and William Morrison on how winter, technology, and ideas about national exceptionalism in Canada are also linked. They point out that newcomers to the North often had the attitude that rather than adapt to winter, the North should be “conquered.” Ken S. Coates and William R. Morrison, “Winter and the Shaping of Northern History: Reflections from the Canadian North,” in *Northern Visions*, ed. Abel and Coates, 23-35.

94 *Northern Neighbors* (December 1956), 13.

95 Ibid. (June 1960), 18-19.

96 “New Siberian Town has no Chimneys,” Ibid. (October 1960), 16.

97 Ibid. (February 1962), 14.

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how much more fortunate are their Soviet counterparts who are *not* hand picked — but whose *whole populations* are encouraged and given every opportunity to sweep forward to a full life."⁹⁸ The North was well-populated, therefore Soviet sovereignty there was secure, Carter seemed to say.

Carter argued that the Soviet Northern peoples were better off, more personally developed and happier, than the Inuit of Canada. Special emphasis was placed on the medical facilities and schools made available to the Northern peoples by the "generous" Soviet state, and pictures and text often functioned in a before/after relationship, suggesting how the lives of Soviet people had improved since 1917. Articles were accompanied by pictures of smiling people in northern settings, usually dressed in furs, with signs of progress, such as schools and other institutions and industry in the background.

In September 1962, under the headline "A Doomed People Lives Again," photographs of members of the Nivkhi tribe showed them to be modern yet still able to practice their traditions. One photo in particular, of a man named Chuner Taxami dressed in a suit, was accompanied by the caption, "Chuner Taxami, (left) of the Nivkhi nationality, a Master of Historical Sciences, recalls: 'My fellow-tribesmen huddled in windowless yourtas and dug-out shelters.' Today the Nivkhi have sound, well-equipped homes. Above, a village kindergarten and nursery."⁹⁹ A few months later, in December 1962, an article, which asked rhetorically, "Soviet 'People of the Deer' — Can They Prosper in the Arctic?" argued that "32 years of Socialist Evenkia Gave Evenks New Life, New Jobs: They are hunters and reindeer breeders, but also doctors, teachers, writers." Under one photo of a man in traditional dress holding a reindeer was the caption, "Vasili Uvachan, Evenki author, has not forgotten how to handle his reindeer team. He travels widely in the taiga (the arctic forest)."¹⁰⁰ In a 1981 article called "North Country Boom," Carter arranged photos of female school-children in classrooms next to adults dressed in furs to show progress made and traditions preserved.¹⁰¹ The message seemed to be that the Soviet state allowed for progress without usurping the traditional gendered way of life.

Another Northern theme that ran through the magazine was the idea that involvement in winter pursuits meant Soviet people were like their Canadian neighbours. Not surprisingly, this often meant hockey. While noting that ice-hockey was a rather new sport in the USSR, the message of the importance of hockey as a language of friendship was frequent.¹⁰² Still, the competitive spirit was always present in Carter's writing. For example, following the Summit

98 "Arctic Socialism: Full Education, Full Employment Among Rights of Northern Peoples," *Ibid.* (May 1962), 12-13. (Emphasis in the original.)

99 *Ibid.* (September 1962), 17.

100 *Ibid.* (December 1962), 14-15.

101 "North Country Boom," *Ibid.* (February 1981), 14-15.

102 For example, see "World-Wide Hockey," *Ibid.* (January 1958), 12-13.

series in September 1972, Carter ran an opinion piece under the headline “Truth of the Month: The Russians Didn’t Beat Us in Hockey,” in which he argued that “Soviet sportsmen took up hockey only 25 years ago” and “the best system plays the best hockey.” That was to say, the National Hockey League style of hockey was too violent, Soviet players were more sportsmanlike, and clearly played for the love of the game, rather than the money.¹⁰³ Incidentally, Carter probably saw himself as combating the congratulatory rhetoric which pervaded the Canadian press. As the website “1972 SummitSeries.com” observes of the winning Canadian goal, “... millions of Canadians danced and hugged in a scene that was reminiscent of the celebrations at the end of World War II. Never has a single sporting moment meant so much to so many Canadians.” Carter, on the other hand, argued that many Canadians were fed up with the bad behaviour their players demonstrated on the ice, and that the main lesson to be learned from the summit was this, not victory.

Carter used perceptions of the North to persuade Canadian readers, many of whom already admired the Soviet Union, that the USSR was an advanced nation, and friendly relations were possible and desirable. Strangely, what could be considered real and specific advances in Northern cooperation, such as the protocols of Canada-USSR cooperation in the North signed in 1984, and Mikhail Gorbachev’s Murmansk speech in October 1987,¹⁰⁴ received no coverage at all in the magazine. Instead it was the general message that the North linked Canada to the Soviet Union that predominated; that by building bridges of cooperation and goodwill, Canadians could learn from Soviet superiority in the North.

By the late 1980s it became difficult to maintain this argument. As Aileen Espiritu has shown, with the advent of *glasnost*, Soviet indigenous people spoke out against the “concealed racism” to which they had been subjected, and which had led to cultural decline, environmental damage, and high rates of tuberculosis, poverty, and infant mortality in the Soviet North. Espiritu concludes that the official line was “... not congruent with the realities experienced and lived by the indigenous peoples of the Russian North and Siberia.”¹⁰⁵ The use of massive machinery throughout the USSR to “tame Nature” wrecked

103 Ibid. (October 1972), 4.

104 For discussion of these developments, see the special edition of *Northern Perspectives*, 16, no. 4 (July-August 1988), published by the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee <<http://www.carc.org/pubs/v16no4/index.html>>, (viewed 23 April 2007). From this edition, Dan Hayward’s “Gorbachev’s Murmansk Initiative: New Prospects for Arms Control in the Arctic?”; Carl Macmillan’s “Joint Ventures in Arctic Resource Development”; and J.L. Black’s “The Soviet Perspective on Canada’s North: An Overview of the Literature, 1947–1988” are particularly useful in this connection. Also, Walter Slipchenko, “Co-operation in Arctic Science,” *Northern Perspectives*, 15, no. 2 (May-June 1987), published by the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee <<http://www.carc.org/pubs/v15no2/6.htm>> (viewed 29 April 2007).

105 Aileen Espiritu, “Whither the Northern Natives in Russian History?” in *Northern Visions*, eds. Abel and Coates, 170-1.

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havoc with the environment, and technological innovations did not live up to Carter's claims of a "citizen's paradise." The image Carter had created, and readers had hoped for and believed in, was grotesquely out-of-sync with the everyday lived experiences of Soviet peoples, especially in the North.

From the archival collections at Library and Archives Canada, we can see how Dyson Carter put together his later issues of *Northern Neighbors*. Included among the files in the Dyson Carter fonds are pages of news releases published in English summarizing articles from the Soviet press. There are also thick packets of Soviet press agency photos showing smiling Soviet people and enormous machines at work on building Soviet socialism. Also included are clippings taken from Western newspapers, underlined and annotated in Carter's red pen, showing how he spliced together scientific reports in the West that coincided with recent reports on Soviet accomplishments. From the VOKS files, we can see that Carter wrote constantly to officials in the USSR, asking for further information on particular themes in order to respond to readers' queries, and to publish on these themes in *Northern Neighbors*. The Soviet authorities took his letters quite seriously and responded quickly. Customs forms show that the material sent to Carter included all kinds of books and publications which he used as incentives for subscribers, as well as photos and opinion pieces which he could publish. Carter did not usually cite his sources, and readers did not always know that Carter rewrote material found elsewhere.

How was the message produced by Dyson Carter received by his readers? Readers' letters often featured a strong political interest, and some were clearly Stalinophiles. In 1980 an Australian reader wrote "the campaign of vilification of the USSR never lets up for a moment in our press and radio. But in the long run policies of destabilization are not going to destroy the world movement any more than bombs, napalm, etc. were able to do in VietNam. As you say, peace will win." Accompanying their \$50 donation, Signie and Henry Traeger of Chilliwack, B.C., wrote that they would "gladly send you a donation to help you spread the gospel of truth to many more people." A Toronto reader wrote to thank Carter for the article on Stalin, saying, "Thank you for writing a article [*sic*] on *Stalin* in N.N. as he dissevers [*sic*] to be *honored*. What he did in his lifetime for his country and for the *world*." But another reader in Oregon did not like the article for its reference to the number of people Stalin had killed. Norman Haaland wrote that "this [*was*] without one iota of evidence. This is the cheapest [*sic*] form of Journilism [*sic*] and I want you to know I resent it deeply. It had no place to be used in the *Northern Neighbors*."¹⁰⁶ In 1981 a reader in

106 LAC, MG31-D182, vol. 2, file 10 letter from Alf and Kay Watt, New South Wales, Australia to Dyson Carter, 2 January 1980; vol. 1, file 2, note from Signie and Henry Traeger, Chilliwack, B.C., to Dyson Carter, n.d., 1978; vol. 4, file 5, note from Anna Hintsu, Toronto, to Dyson Carter, n.d., postmarked 29 February 1980; vol. 3, file 7, letter from Norman Haaland, Portland, OR, to Dyson Carter, 27 February 1980. (Emphasis in original.)

British Columbia wrote to say that he was “a Christian that believes there is more godliness and Christianity in Soviet Communism than in any Church-centred ‘Christian’ organization [In reading Scriptures] it became overwhelmingly clear to me ... that Soviet Communism would conquer the world, overthrow every imperialist power and wipe out the spirit of imperialism (in some 430 to 540 years) and usher in a reign of peace and righteousness commonly known amongst Bible scholars as the ‘millenium [*sic*].”¹⁰⁷

Periodically, Carter asked readers for comments on the photographs published, and whether they preferred them to be larger or more plentiful. Readers responded enthusiastically, arguing that more shots of the USSR were better than large ones, to better allow for visual understanding of Soviet life and people. Mrs. Olive Cooper, a reader from Waterloo, Ont., wrote Carter in February 1982 to say, “I enjoy the health articles, science and many pictures.” Lynn K. Sully, a reader in White Rock, B.C., wrote September in 1981 that *Northern Neighbors* editors “... are to be complimented for a spiritual uplift that their writings and pictures give.” However, some readers objected to photographs of military machines. Florence Petrie of Magog, Que., wrote in December 1981, “It makes it difficult to persuade prospective new readers when there are pictures and articles indicating the armament [*sic*] superiority of the USSR”; and Belly Farmer wrote suggesting the magazine show “people enjoying themselves in a natural way,” since the appeal of military parades is “over except in fascist countries.” Stacks of the glossy photos Carter used for his publications remain in the Dyson Carter fonds, including those of Warsaw Pact arms, which were to illustrate a feature entitled “We Must Not Fall for Any Illusions.”¹⁰⁸

In December 1989 the last issue of *Northern Neighbors* appeared. As mentioned above, soon after acquaintances remember that Dyson Carter said cynically that he had spent forty years producing “bull shit,”¹⁰⁹ which they interpret as disillusionment. But, in fact, this view was still the Soviet line. The State Committee on Education in the USSR cancelled the national high school history exams in June 1988 because the Soviet textbooks were “incorrect.”¹¹⁰

107 LAC, MG31-D182, vol. 5, file 7, letter from Paul Mann, Telegraph Creek, B.C., 13 March 1981, to Dyson Carter. The broken English apparent in many of these letters may hint at the fact that many readers were not native speakers. Indeed, from the VOKS files it is clear that members of the “ethnic progressive” organizations were amongst the most faithful subscribers.

108 LAC, MG31-D182, vol. 7, file 7, letter from Mrs. Olive Cooper to Dyson Carter, February 1982; vol. 10, file 2, letter from Lynn K. Sully to Dyson Carter, 28 September 1981; vol. 6, file 12, letter from Florence Petrie to Dyson Carter, 4 December 1981; vol. 7, file 10, letter from Belly Farmer, Tofino, B.C., to Dyson Carter, March 1982. These photos are in LAC, MG31-D182, vol. 11, file 9.

109 Leslie Hunt interview; John Boyd interview; J.E. Baxter, interview with author, 8 December 2006, Stratford, Ont.; Boyd collection, letter from Dyson Carter to John Boyd, 28 February 1990.

110 Esther B. Fein, “Moscow Summit: Unmaking History and Debating Rights; Soviet Pupils Spared Exams While History is Rewritten,” *New York Times* (31 May 1988).

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The policy of *glasnost* had been producing almost daily newspaper articles about the inaccurate portrayal of the Soviet past, students had been confronting their history teachers with the gaps between these revelations and their textbooks, and a well-known history professor in the USSR, Yuri Afanasev, was heard to say, "I can give you my assurance that there is not a single page [in the textbook] without a falsification."¹¹¹ It appears that Dyson Carter, too, had come to this conclusion: "I publicized so many Soviet 'achievements' that were total falsifications, that I consider my 'work' an exercise in political pathology."¹¹² Carter said he had an offer to continue publishing *Northern Neighbors* from Moscow, but he decided it was time to give it up.

How many people read or were influenced by *Northern Neighbors*? In 1985, when Dyson Carter celebrated his 75th birthday, an article in the press repeated his claim that there were 10,000 subscriptions to *Northern Neighbors* in 81 countries; but Carter's ex-wife has said that not all of these were paid subscriptions.¹¹³ Free subscriptions were sent to public libraries across the country, and ethnic organizations on the political left received copies. Readers were encouraged to leave used copies in public places, such as cafes and city buses, for others to read. It is difficult to arrive at an exact number of readers, or judge the impact of these publications. Nonetheless, from anecdotal evidence, it appears that Dyson Carter's magazines had a large and convinced readership on the Canadian left.¹¹⁴

Dyson Carter dedicated his career - in fact most of his life, to promoting the Soviet Union. *News-Facts* and *Northern Neighbors* represented Soviet propaganda prepared and published by Canadians for a North American audience. In his publications and through his work for the CSFS, Dyson Carter tried hard to create a version of the "truth" that complimented the USSR. Those who traveled under CSFS auspices to the USSR, and subscribed to *News-Facts* and *Northern Neighbors*, wanted to believe that the Soviet Union represented an important alternative to Western society. Today we see that this image was

111 Iurii Afanas'ev, "Perestroika i istoricheskoe znanie," *Literaturnaia Rossia* 8 (June 1988), quoted in Tatyana Volodina, "Teaching History in Russia After the Collapse of the USSR," *The History Teacher* February 2005, <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ht/38.2/volodina.html>> (viewed 17 January 2008), paragraph 5.

112 Boyd collection, letter from Dyson Carter to John Boyd, 28 February 1990.

113 Reg Watson, "Controversial pro-Soviet publisher turns 75," *Gravenhurst News* (6 December 1985); Sally (Thelma) Nielsen interview. The magazine was distributed in the United States, and "friends" of the USSR in other countries also received it. This international character was promoted by Carter as further proof of the popularity of the interpretations found in the magazine.

114 A survey of young members of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians in 1965 found that many of them read *Northern Neighbors*. LAC, MG 28-V-154, vol. 27, file 14-18, "Poll of Participants of the AUUC National Youth Conference, July 9-11, 1965, Ukrainian Camp Palermo," Toronto.

highly constructed, ignoring the negative aspects of Soviet reality. However, in acting out their political views, many of the CSFS members and readers sincerely hoped that as individuals they could make a difference in Cold War international relations. In studying Dyson Carter's efforts to reach out to this audience and their responses, we gain a perspective on how some Canadian leftists articulated their own radical views of the Cold War.

JENNIFER ANDERSON is completing her Ph.D. dissertation on the Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society at Carleton University in Ottawa.

JENNIFER ANDERSON achève sa thèse de doctorat sur la *Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society* à l'Université Carleton à Ottawa.