

men who ruled Russia or led Russian liberal *obshchestvo* at that time. Paléologue does not, however, provide much insight into the thoughts and concerns of Russians outside the narrow circle of the capital-city officialdom and intellectual elite. He obviously had read widely concerning Russian history, religion, and culture, but his knowledge tended to be superficial. Worse yet, he is sometimes patronizing and even supercilious in his comments about Russia and Russians. He did not understand the Russian Revolution or its proletarian politicians. It is not surprising that the French government asked him to return to Paris in the spring of 1917.

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THE HISTORY OF MY CONTEMPORARY. By *V. G. Korolenko*. Translated and abridged by *Neil Parsons*. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1972. xiv, 255 pp. \$12.00.

Vladimir Galaktionovich Korolenko (1853–1921) was a Russian writer and publicist who gained the respect and admiration of his contemporaries primarily because of his qualities as a man and individual—qualities that permeate all of his works and especially his *Istoriia moego sovremennika*, the crowning achievement of his literary career. The product of more than seventeen years of intermittent labor, and unfortunately left unfinished, this work, which was published *in toto* for the first time in 1922, is not only a uniquely important historical document covering virtually the entire reign of Alexander II and affording invaluable insights into this fascinating period of Russian history, it is also an outstanding literary achievement. Like Korolenko's life, it stands as an impressive and rare monument to the human spirit.

Korolenko's *Istoriia* contains an intriguing account of how his acceptance of the existing order during his childhood was gradually replaced by a growing critical awareness, which ultimately culminated in an acute consciousness of social injustice. Like most educated Russians of integrity during his time, he came to oppose the autocracy. But his opposition to the existing political order did not express itself in revolutionary activity—as was the common pattern during his time. Instead, his individuality and balanced personality, his compassion and sense of justice found reflection in a life of dedicated service to his fellow man. Throughout his adult life he fearlessly opposed the anti-Semitism of the Russian government and fought for a Russia in which all citizens, regardless of race, would be free and equal. During the great famine of 1891–92 he organized relief efforts; at the time of the Civil War he assisted the victims of both the Whites and the Bolsheviks. Twice subjected to extralegal arrest, imprisonment, and exile, he nevertheless did not bow to despair or yield to the fanaticism and alienation of the revolutionary, but throughout his life remained totally involved in and committed to the society in which he lived. Along with its extraordinary spirit of humaneness, its nonpartisan nature, and its literary quality, it is precisely this fact which makes the *Istoriia* such a uniquely important historical document. No wonder that some of his contemporaries regarded Korolenko as the "last embodiment of the conscience of the Russian people" and confessed that he made them feel ashamed of their own existence.

We are greatly indebted to Neil Parsons for his admirable translation—es-

essentially an abridgment of volume 1 and the first four parts of volume 2 of Korolenko's *Istoriia*—as well as for his useful introduction to this work and his notes, which make the subject matter and the times intelligible even to the nonspecialist. The value of the translator's introduction could have been enhanced by greater attention to the problem of how and why the *Istoriia* was written, its publishing history, and, above all, by a more detailed sketch of the author's life. As it stands, even elementary information—such as Korolenko's full name and the dates of his birth and death—is missing. Finally, in view of the richness of this work as a historical source and document, an index would have been desirable.

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BELORUSSIA UNDER SOVIET RULE, 1917–1957. By *Ivan S. Lubachko*.
Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972. xiv, 219 pp. \$10.00.

In recent years interest in the non-Russian nationalities has increased at a surprising rate, as though to make up for the long neglect of this aspect of Soviet affairs. Surely the Belorussians—fourth in number among Soviet nations—deserve close scrutiny, if only because their separate identity has been most frequently questioned.

Unfortunately Professor Lubachko's volume is the kind of work more likely to turn away serious students of ethnic relations than to encourage the sort of study needed. Essentially the book is a chronological survey, drawing heavily on the abundant specialized Soviet literature and on Belorussian émigré publications. Since much of this literature is in Belorussian, a critical summary would be of some service, although even in this respect Nicholas Vakar's work provides what is needed except for the last twenty years (it is not clear why Lubachko gives 1957 as his terminal date, since virtually no significant information, even of a chronologically descriptive nature, is provided for the post-Stalin period). In fact, Lubachko's volume is neither critical nor comprehensive. Although much space is devoted to the general Soviet background of Belorussian affairs, use of major analytical studies is spotty. Even some major works dealing specifically with Belorussia (Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Permanent Purge* and Maurice Hindus's books) are omitted. Chapter 7, on collectivization, has astonishingly little material on specifically Belorussian aspects, despite the availability of highly revealing demographic data in, for example, the 1941 economic plan captured by the Germans. Thus, despite the overwhelming evidence that the Kazakhs, at least, suffered more than the Belorussians, the author is able to assert that the human cost of collectivization was greater for the latter than for any other ethnic group except the Ukrainians.

Even more serious than the documentary omissions is Lubachko's failure to *pose* the fundamental questions of Soviet Belorussian development, even if he could not answer them conclusively. His excellent maps and brief textual discussion point to the fact (often overlooked) that the Belorussian SSR does not include a major Belorussian linguistic area around Smolensk. Yet the study provides no analysis of why the Soviet regime kept this area in the RSFSR, though eventually making other territorial concessions to Belorussia. Similarly, the crucial role of the "gray earth" agricultural conditions is never emphasized. Even the position