

*Canada* (proceedings of a 1999 international conference at the University of Ottawa); (b) *Russian Roots & Canadian Wings*—a collection of Russian archival documents on the Doukhobors' history and emigration compiled and translated with annotations by Donskov's colleague, John Woodsworth; (c) *Sergey Tolstoy and the Doukhobors: A Journey to Canada*—a bilingual publication of the diary of Tolstoy's eldest son as he accompanied one of the boatloads of Doukhobors to Canada at the request of his father (edited with a critical essay by A. Donskov, translated by J. Woodsworth).

Indeed, several excerpts from this latter publication are included in *Leo Tolstoy and the Canadian Doukhobors*—a valuable addition, acquainting the reader with Sergey Tolstoy's own personal account of the Doukhobors, his letters home to Yasnaya Polyana, and also his father's concern not only for his son but for the welfare of the Doukhobors as a whole.

The volume also includes guest essays (albeit of varying quality) by three prominent contemporary Doukhobors, which reveal, each in their own way, aspects of Tolstoy's influence on the Canadian Doukhobors of today, thereby providing an inside look at the subject from three additional points of view.

These are followed by the reproduction of several entries from S. A. Tolstaya's memoirs and diary (some published here for the first time), as well as a number of letters by Tolstoy's contemporaries mentioning the Doukhobors. The latter include several significant excerpts from the correspondence (published by Legas of Ottawa in 1995) between Tolstoy and Doukhobor leader Peter ("the Lordly") Verigin.

For scholars who seek detail, a valuable series of appendices offers a timeline of events related to both Tolstoy and the Doukhobors, an exhaustive chronology of Tolstoy's letters mentioning Doukhobors, a list of publications by Sergej Tolstoy, and a copy of the questionnaire the author used to gather information on Tolstoy's role among the Canadian Doukhobors today.

This is an ambitious, inclusive monograph, based on largely hitherto unpublished archival materials, academic scholarship, and sociological data, offering a thorough and comprehensive study of a subject that certainly merits detailed exploration. An eminent Tolstoy specialist himself, Donskov is not averse to citing a variety of other experts on the subject, including the Doukhobors themselves. In this reviewer's opinion, he has succeeded

in bringing together—with meticulous analysis—a vast array of information and materials on the subject into a single unique volume, encompassing not only the factual history of the relationship but also Tolstoy's continuing spiritual presence among the Doukhobors to this day.

Galina Alekseeva

State Memorial Museum—Estate of  
Leo Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana, Russia



*Americans in Conversation with Tolstoy: Selected Accounts, 1887-1923.* Ed. Peter Sekirin. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2006. 244 pp.; \$35 (paper); ISBN 078642253X.

For several of the American writers represented in this collection, the biggest trouble with Tolstoy seems to have been that he wasn't American and that he didn't listen to them; after hosting these drop-in visitors at lunch or dinner, sitting them by his side at the family table, Tolstoy had the gall to treat these Yankees as if their glib, simplistic ideas were glib or simplistic. He was so willful! He refused to throw over his convictions after talking for five minutes to enlightened swaggerers. Not more than one or two of our Americans here is able to add a compelling detail to our curiosity about all things Tolstoy.

On the other hand, I am grateful for being reminded of details, for the visitors pointing out and noticing what I have overlooked or forgotten in photographs and biographies—about the rough-hewn Yasnaya Polyana tennis court, of Tolstoy writing at his table, of the English fluency of the Tolstoy family, of the gracious, respectful reception accorded everyone. Even if all of the good in these pieces has already been plucked off and pasted into biographies, it is pleasant to be reminded.

Of the twenty-six pieces, I would photocopy four for keeps, and they total about thirty pages: Charles Johnson's "How Count Tolstoy Writes"; Ernest Howard Crosby's "Conversations with Ernest Crosby Embodying Personal Impressions of Count Leo Tolstoy"; Stephen Bonsul's "Tolstoy Prophesies the Fall of America"; and Theodore von Hafferberg's "A Vacation with Tolstoy."

Johnson relates: "He has no special habits with regard to pens and paper. And when a firm in Moscow conceived the idea of giving to the world a 'Tolstoyan pen,' it was discovered that on the subject of pens Count

Tolstoy had no opinion.” (56) Tolstoy was annoyed by such questions about pens and work-routines, but (nuts-and-bolts American that I am) I find such details fascinating. Finally, Johnson catches Tolstoy in one elaborate, typically wonderful statement on “artistic productions”:

“You should not neglect the slightest detail in art; because sometimes some half-torn-off button may light up a whole side of the character of a given person; and that button must be faithfully represented. But all efforts, including the half-torn-off button, must be directed exclusively to the inner reality, and must by no means draw away attention from what is of first importance to details and secondary facts. One of our contemporary novelists, in describing the history of Joseph and his wife, would certainly not miss the chance to exhibit his knowledge of life, and would write: ‘Come to me!’ murmured she, in a languishing voice, stretching out her arm, soft with aromatic unguents, on which shone a bracelet decorated, and so on, and so on, and these details not would not light up the heart of the matter more clearly, but would certainly obscure it” (57-58).

Crosby’s ten pages are set up as an interview, but the unnamed questioner is so provocative and insightful that I get the feeling that Crosby must have been interviewing himself or consolidating the more intelligent objections to and criticisms of Tolstoy he heard (Sekirin, snoozing here and elsewhere in his editor’s chair, does not enlighten us as to the context of Crosby’s piece: we get the bare-bones bibliographic information and nothing else). An important distinction Sekirin pretends not to notice is that Crosby does not present *Tolstoy* in conversation. These are Crosby’s indeed very intelligent interpretations of his hero’s life and ideas as well as his own amusing observations: “In judging Count Tolstoy’s consistency we must also remember that he is a non-resistant. ... when Madame Tolstoy puts her foot down his very principles require him to yield. ... I have sometimes thought that it would be a good plan to have one of the parties a non-resistant in all marriages. As far as my observation goes, it would usually be the husband” (77).

Crosby interestingly compares and contrasts Tolstoy and Victor Hugo, and later reflects on human incompleteness: “If Tolstoy and William Morris could have been united in one man, we should have an all-round man indeed. ... But would a man so balanced have been such a force in the world as either of these incomparable men? I doubt it.” (80) Crosby concludes his Q&A with an

engaging point: “Tolstoy has written many great works, but the greatest is his simple, pathetic, inevitable life” (83).

The title of Bonsul’s piece is misleading—American journalism rarely quibbles over the accuracy of its headlines. Tolstoy does *not* prophesy the fall of America. He simply suggests that America might want to remind itself of what it has been and can be. He tells Bonsul:

Forgive me if my judgments have been harsh, or have seemed so. Only remember that you live in a light-house set upon a hill, and that in the last few years, it has seemed to many watchers that the light which was once the light and hope of the world, whose rays penetrated into the uttermost parts of the world, was about to be overwhelmed by shadow.

Pray that young Americans would see to that light, and keep it day and night. It is the flame that their fathers lit, and it has become the light of the world, as well as yours. It would be a dark world without it. (138)

Some of my scholarly readers may already have puzzled over the mention of Theodore von Hafferberg’s “A Vacation with Tolstoy.” Was von Hafferberg *American*? No, not at all. The good, attentive young man who served as French tutor to Tolstoy’s sister-in-law’s children seems to have been German. “If he’s not an American,” you ask, “why is he in this book?”

I don’t know.

The title of Sekirin’s volume is a case-study in inaccuracy, more misleading than Bonsul’s title. *Americans in Conversation with Tolstoy: Selected Accounts, 1887-1923* contains zero “conversations” between the authors and Tolstoy. After long descriptions of Yasnaya Polyana or the carriage-ride from Tula out there, the authors, intrepid literary-hunters, sometimes come away with a tidbit or two—but there are no *conversations*. “Talks with Tolstoy,” for instance, is Richard Baeza’s collection of clippings from the pianist Alexander Goldenweiser’s fine *Near Tolstoy* (which volumes contain actual conversations) and a nice, little account of Baeza’s visit to the Tolstoy Museum in Moscow. But Baeza never spoke to Tolstoy. At least seven of the twenty-six pieces (which Sekirin, a remarkable fudger, calls “a little under 30”) are by non-Americans (for example, Charles Johnson was Irish; Stefan Zweig spent some years in America but was

Austrian; Aylmer and Louise Maude!). The last “memoir” is by Moscow chief of police General Lvov (no first name or patronymic), published in 1924 (then why “1923” in the subtitle?). Most appallingly, several of the pieces are not even first-hand. (Ivan Bunin’s contribution, which Sekirin mentions in the introduction, has disappeared from the book without a trace.) *Боже мой!* No doubt any of us 21<sup>st</sup>-century Tolstoyphiles could have sneaked pieces into this book, as long as we could clear copyright and providing we had gleaned enough details from published accounts about Yasnaya Polyana in 1900. (Zweig’s account of a-day-in-the-life seems to me to be essentially a fictional recreation based on Tolstoy’s diaries and first-hand reports.) Sekirin’s index has so many holes and omissions that we might be better off without it: examining it you would not know that Tchertkov and Ruskin are referred to or that Mozart is referred to not only on page 99 but also on 110. The articles’ original accompanying photographs are mentioned in the texts but are nowhere to be seen, and Sekirin does not apologize.

I have read Sekirin’s translations of Tolstoy’s *Divine and Human* and *A Calendar of Wisdom*, and to his credit they may well have been labors of love. This collection, however, seems to have fallen off a shelf in Sekirin’s study, out of its folder, and across the floor. Sekirin, mistaking sawdust for gold, swept it into an envelope and sent it to North Carolina, where a reference-book editor, too busy to read it, had someone typeset it, and, before anyone knew what happened, out it popped from the printer’s oven. My North American friends, it is on your conscience if you ask your library to spend \$35 on this paperbound book.

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Donskov, A.A., Galagan, G. Ja., Gromova, L.D. (ed.):

*Единение людей в творчестве Л. Н. Толстого/The Unity of People in Leo Tolstoy’s Works. Ottawa: Slavic Research Group at the University of Ottawa, 2002. x + 300 pp.; ISBN 0889273006.*

The *Unity of People in Leo Tolstoy’s Works* is the result of the work of the Slavic Research Group at the University of Ottawa. In 1995 the University of Ottawa initiated a joint Russian–Canadian project on

“The Unity of People in the Works of Lev Tolstoy. Research and New Materials.” The present volume offers the reader some of these new materials. The book has two components: introductory articles by Andrew Donskov and Galina Galagan and excerpts from yet-unpublished drafts of most of Tolstoy’s major works—fiction and non-fiction.

In his article “The Search for Unity,” A. Donskov gives an overview of Tolstoy’s ideas on this subject, showing that it was not an obscure idea of Tolstoy’s late years but was present from the very beginning. Donskov focuses on the literary work and shows how the question of unity through love linked Tolstoy to some of the Russian sects of the nineteenth century, especially to the Doukhobors, thus highlighting the philosophical foundations of their future relations.

While Donskov’s article focuses on applications of the idea of unity in Tolstoy’s work, Galagan presents the philosophical and historical background of Tolstoy’s ideas and helps us understand them in their historical context as Tolstoy’s original reaction to the philosophy of his time as well as to the horrible wars and revolutions, all fought in the name of the public good. She presents Tolstoy’s questioning of this idea and his search for alternatives, which he finds in universal brotherhood and Christian love.

The introductions appear in the volume in Russian with their English translations, which seems a very good idea as it makes them accessible to a wider audience and enables the scholar to follow the precise terminology of the Russian text. Following these introductions, the volume presents excerpts from formerly unpublished manuscripts of Tolstoy’s works. These excerpts cover most of Tolstoy’s major works, fiction, and philosophical writings, from *Childhood* to *I Cannot Be Silent* and are chosen for their representation of the idea of unity. Some of the manuscripts show significant differences from formerly published versions: we can see, for example, that Natasha’s prayer during mass after her betrayal of Prince Andrey was originally planned as a presentation of the entire mass. Many of the manuscripts in this volume, however, differ only slightly from already published drafts or even from final versions. This makes the volume even more helpful for the Tolstoy scholar, as it allows insight into the nuances of the development of Tolstoy’s philosophy as well as details of his artistic process.