

outside Central Asia? If the latter policy, a more probable one, is adopted, what will become of *sblizhenie-sliianie* (coming together and eventual merging), the apparent goal of Soviet nationality policy? The format of the *Handbook* restricts its authors from focusing on specific problems (such as those mentioned). Because the book is directed at the nonspecialist, it concentrates on a description of the present. There are, of course, some historical discussions. These range from the excellent discussions given Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Tatars, and the Tadzhiks to the skimpy one given the Uzbeks, in which the whole history of the Uzbek people is squeezed into a single paragraph.

In terms of quality, the articles in this book rate between mediocre and excellent. Fortunately, most of the articles are well researched and well written, and some of them, for example, those on Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Tatars, Tadzhiks, Moldavians, and the Jews, are insightful and learned.

The major problem with this work, in my view, is the inability of many of the participants to utilize works written by minorities in their own mother tongues. Except for Estonians, Turkmen, Tatars, Moldavians, and the Slavs, no work of local writers (past or present) is discussed or even mentioned in the bibliographies. The works of writers belonging to national minorities of the USSR, in their own languages, should be of major concern to those who are trying to assess the attitudes of these minorities toward the Soviet system, the Russians, each other, and people elsewhere in the world. Their writings should be of interest not only to scholars outside the USSR but also to the Russians, most of whom are innocent about other languages of the Soviet Union.

As an introduction to nationalities of the USSR, this book is a welcome addition to a growing list of good works.

M. MOBIN SHORISH

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

IN JOB'S BALANCES: ON THE SOURCES OF THE ETERNAL TRUTHS.

By *Lev Shestov*. Translated from the German by *Camilla Coventry* and *C. A. Macartney*. Introduction by *Bernard Martin*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975. lii, 379 pp. \$12.00.

In light of the debt owed the Ohio University Press for making available in English over the past ten years an entire series of works by the Russian existentialist philosopher and critic, Lev Shestov (1866–1938), only a churl could greet the present (seventh) volume without at least a show of gratitude. The fact is, however, that *In Job's Balances* has been available in English for a long time. Indeed, portions of the work have already appeared in other volumes of the Ohio University Press series. The chapter "What Is Truth?" was appended to the Press's edition of *Potestas Clavium* in 1968, and for this reason has been excluded from the present volume. However, other, shorter sections included here have also appeared earlier in the *Shestov Anthology* published by the Press in 1970.

It is, of course, useful to have the whole work once again in print, but even that boon has its blemishes. The 1932 translation used here—without revision—was done indirectly from a German translation. The resulting English text, though collated with the Russian and accurate in a general way, is not only remote from the original stylistically but is capable of promoting some unfortunate misunderstandings. Thus, to render Shestov's "dostovernost' sama po sebe, a istina sama po sebe" as "certainty and truth each exist independently" (p. 6) is to suggest, first,

that there is such a thing as certainty—which is precisely the illusion Shestov seeks to dispel—and second and perhaps still worse, that this (genuine) certainty should be sought independently of truth. Minor omissions, gratuitous additions, and simple slips are also a persistent problem; for example, “laws of human evolution” unaccountably become “laws of human thought” (p. 4), and so on.

None of this is to say that the “pilgrimages through souls” (as Shestov called them) which make up the book are in themselves anything short of spellbinding. The essays are vintage Shestov: the old irrationalist’s campaign against the logical intellect is at its most brilliant and compelling height, and the “souls” he traverses in waging this campaign—Spinoza, Pascal, Plotinus, and above all Dostoevsky and Tolstoy—are remarkably illuminated by the attendant spiritual commotion. Bernard Martin’s new introduction is competent and informative, as usual, and there is an added bonus for this edition in the form of a newly-translated letter from Shestov to his daughters, in which he comments further on Tolstoy.

Still, because the primary text of the present volume offers no improvement on a known, existing resource, its value is regrettably limited. Students of Russian thought will welcome it, but will reserve their enthusiasm for the announced next volume of the series, which promises not only additional unpublished letters and fragments but the first English translation of Herman Lowtzky’s biography of Shestov, as well as the first publication in any language of Shestov’s 1918–19 Kiev lectures on the history of Greek philosophy.

JAMES P. SCANLAN
Ohio State University

CONFESSION OF A JEW. By *Leonid Grossman*. Translated with an introduction and notes by *Ranne Moab*. New York: Arno Press, A New York Times Company, 1975. viii, 189 pp. \$12.00.

Dostoevsky devoted half of the March 1877 issue of his *Diary of a Writer* to “the Jewish Question,” that is, the question of his own anti-Semitism, of which he was accused by a reader, Avraam Kovner. As a consequence, a correspondence developed between Kovner and Dostoevsky, and later between Kovner and V. V. Rozanov (another anti-Semite). Dostoevsky expressed the highest admiration for Kovner’s intelligence and Rozanov described him as “a righteous and pure soul.” Kovner was a former Talmudic student from Vilnius, later a progressive Petersburg journalist and writer of fiction. At the time of his first letters to Dostoevsky, Kovner, after a two-year imprisonment in Moscow, was about to be exiled to Siberia for embezzling 168,000 rubles from a bank where he had worked. He proudly wrote to Dostoevsky that he felt no guilt for his crime: he had been driven to it by poverty, by the need to support two families and to promote his own promising career; the bank, moreover, was socially useless, stealing from the public. In short, he had imitated quite consciously his hero, Raskolnikov. He argued that “mine was only a step taken against theoretical and social morality,” and he wanted Dostoevsky’s approval. (Dostoevsky replied that he saw the crime “as you yourself judge it” but censured Kovner for not feeling guilty.)

This exchange of letters led the noted Dostoevsky scholar Leonid Grossman to examine Kovner’s life and writings. Grossman’s book, entitled with perhaps intentional ambiguity *Confession of a Jew*, quietly appeared in Leningrad in 1924 and has never been reprinted in Russia. This is the first English translation.