MORESHET

Journal for the Study
of the Holocaust
and Antisemitism

Claims Conference

This publication has been supported by a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

MORESHET

Journal for the Study of the Holocaust and Antisemitism

Dr. Graciela Ben-Dror
Editor

Moreshet, The Mordechai Anielevich Memorial
Holocaust Study and Research Center, Givat Haviva

Alfred P. Slaner Chair in Antisemitism and Racism,
Tel Aviv University

15 | 2018

Moreshet, The Mordechai Anielevich Memorial was established in 1961 by: **Yehuda Bauer, the late Yisrael Gutman, Abba Kovner, Shalom Cholawsky, Ruzka Korczak, Akiva Nir, Yehuda Tubin, and Haika Grossman**

MORESHET
Journal for the Study of the Holocaust and Antisemitism

Published by
Moreshet, The Mordechai Anielevich Memorial
Holocaust Study and Research Center, Givat Haviva

The Alfred P. Slaner Chair in Antisemitism and Racism
Tel Aviv University

This publication has been supported by grants from

The Havatzelet Cultural and Educational Institutions

and from the Eta and Sass Somekh Family Foundation

 ISBN 978-1-885881-66-3

Editorial Offices and Administration
Givat Haviva, Doar Na Menashe 37850, ISRAEL
Tel: 972–4–6309248
E-mail: judymoreshet@gmail.com
The complete catalogue of Moreshet articles: www.moreshet.org

Design
Amy Erani www.multieducator.net

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Antisemitism Research

Documentation and Testimony

Book Reviews

Yosef Govrin

The Image of the Jew in Vladimir Korolenko's *The History of My Contemporary*

Vladimir Korolenko was born in 1853 in Zhitomir, Ukraine, to a Polish mother and a Russian father who was a district judge. He spent his childhood in Ukraine growing up in an environment that was shaped by three nationalities: Polish, Ukrainian and Russian. As a child and adolescent, he had no direct involvement with Jews and no encounters with the severity of the "Jewish question," although he sensed it here and there in the consciousness of the Christian society in which he lived. He encountered no hostility towards Jews in the home of his parents. On the contrary, he was brought up in an atmosphere that emphasized sympathy for and the need to extend assistance to oppressed and suffering people, including Jews, with whom his parents maintained fair relations (as reflected in the reference made to the crowd of non-Jews and Jews alike who accompanied his father's coffin to burial, or to the Jewish tailor who expressed his willingness to sew the orphaned child clothes without being paid immediately for his work).

In 1871, after finishing high school in Zhitomir and Rovno, Korolenko moved to St. Petersburg to study at the Technological Institute. Two years later, he moved to Moscow to study at a college of agriculture and forestry. During his studies, he came to increasingly associate with the "revolutionary intelligentsia," and, as a result of his participation in anti-government activity, he was expelled from school and sent into exile. Between 1876 and 1885 he was repeatedly exiled from one place to another as a result of his activity against the Czarist regime. As he moved around, Korolenko encountered Jews, who were usually revolutionaries, and was impressed by their personalities, their education and their revolutionary vision. As well as learning about their Jewishness, however, he increased his knowledge regarding the moods that prevailed among revolutionary circles in the country during the period in question.

This period – his childhood and his time in exile – is immortalized in his autobiography *The History of My Contemporary*, which he began writing

in 1905 and completed shortly before his death in 1921. The book holds historical significance in its representation of the events of the time, as they were ingrained in his memory, as one of the stormiest eras of his life and the history of Russia itself: the rule of Czar Alexander II, the liberal reforms, the second Polish Uprising (1863) and the beginning of the Reaction, the social unrest, the growth and activity of the revolutionary movement, and the rule of Czar Alexander III during a dark and bloody period of Russian history. The book concludes with Korolenko's liberation from exile, after which he settled in Nizhny Novgorod. By this point, he was already known throughout Russia as a writer and a prominent Russian publicist.

The Jewish motif features prominently in Korolenko's stories, as reflected in his well known "House No. 13: An Episode in the Massacre of Kishinev" (about the Kishinev pogrom), in which Jews are depicted as unjustifiably persecuted and as people who treat Christians better than Christians treat one other.

This article focuses on the image of the Jew as observed by Korolenko during his life, as depicted in *The History of My Contemporary*. As the work is unique in its autobiographical tone, it offers important insight into Korolenko's impressions of the Jewish character and the manner in which these impressions were passed on to the younger generations that were raised on his work.

The Jew as Smuggler, Merchant, Innkeeper, and Moneylender

1. I recall how an 'honorable' gentleman, a lively and witty man who was a close acquaintance of our family, was sitting with us around our table one evening, when we had quite a bit of company, and how, in an extremely picturesque manner, he explained how he had once helped a Jewish smuggler evade responsibility and save a considerable portion of the goods that had been seized…The smugglers had pledged to make the low-level official who had only recently started his career [the teller of the story himself – Y.G.] a rich man, and he acceded to their request before they had fulfilled their promise. To settle accounts with him, they scheduled a nighttime meeting with

> him in a secluded place. He waited until morning…I remember well the lyrical description of the night. The official waited for the Jew like a lover for his beloved. He listened anxiously to the sounds of the night and rose feverishly at every rustling… The entire community followed the movements with baited breath in hopes that the drama of the bribery would end in disappointment… When it became clear that he had been deceived, the drama ended in general amusement, nonetheless demonstrating a sense of bitterness toward the Jews and some feeling of solidarity with the sorrow of the conned…[1]

Prominent in the above excerpt are two perspectives that differ from the then prevalent image of Jews as smugglers, cheats, and people whose deviousness enabled them to triumph over the naivety of a low-level official: the author's attitude toward the narrator, and society's attitude toward the Jew. In this scene, Korolenko the author certainly sought to highlight the fact that no one in Russian society at the time rejected or challenged the official's entitlement to receive bribes, which was an intention of which the teller of the story was not at all ashamed, even at the outset of his career. Indeed, this was regarded as legitimate and par for the course. Society's attitude toward Jews, on the other hand, is depicted as reflecting hatred and an unforgiving view of the fact that, in his deviousness, he succeeds in cheating the Russian.

2. …Batya was an older Jewish woman who sold fabric, ribbons and lace but who always [when visiting the home of the narrator's parents] gave the impression that she had come over for reasons that did not involve profit, but rather that she was there doing her best for her close acquaintances… It was said that Batya was a very wealthy woman who came from a well-known lineage of Jewish privilege, and that she was preparing her granddaughter for a future that was completely unusual for Jewish adolescent girls. She sometimes brought her along to the home of her customers, who would spoil the young Jewish girl with candy…

The above excerpt conveys respect for the Jewish woman, who conducts her business in a pleasant and dignified manner and whose relationship with her [apparently non-Jewish – Y.G.] customers are described as ideal. Korolenko's mother would invite Batya to join her for a cup of tea whenever she visited the house and even initiated friendly conversations with her. This description bears testimony not only to good neighborly relations between Jews and non-Jews in his parents' home and the city itself, but also to relations of mutual respect between individuals based on human values.[2]

3. …Mikit would encounter an embarrassing situation only when Yankel did not prepare him a hiding place in time…[3]

Mikit is the lowly servant of two masters, the owners of an estate in a village that was divided into two rival camps that shared nothing in common but drunkenness. Yankel's depiction as the owner of a pub in the village is positive and extremely human. It gives the impression that the farmers of the village were more interested in drunkenness than Yankel was interested in selling Schnapps. The farmers' ignorance elicits a chuckle, whereas Yankel elicits sympathy and compassion.

4. During his exile in Afanasyev, Korolenko has the opportunity to meet "a young Jewish fellow" named Tzugel who looks like a worker and was exiled there for reasons unknown. He introduces himself as a metalworker who works with frames, but he also lends money for interest. One encounter Korolenko has with Tzugel reminds him of a similar encounter he experienced in Glazov with a different exile, whom the inhabitants of the poor neighborhood of Slovodka had called "Markol the *zhid* [a derogatory name for Jews – Y.G.]," as described in the following account:

…I heard that at the beginning, when he first arrived in Vetskiye Debri, which was considered to be the *uyezd* capital, he felt lost. He later came to terms with the situation and began to engage in things he had done previously [lending money for interest – Y.G.]. His business thrived and he brought his family here. The simple

> people of Slovodka related to him kindly enough, and my teacher explained it simply and clearly: 'I believe that this Markol is a *zhyd* with the best possible heart. Of course he takes a percentage. That is because their religion permits them to do so. Ours does not allow this, although our people raid the city in the most terrible way. Where will I go when the shortage gets tight…The best thing would be for me to go to Markol…[4]

In contrast to the image of the Jewish moneylender as a parasite sucking the blood of Christians which was common in Russian literature at the time, Markol is depicted as a humane individual to whom people turn in times of need, despite the fact that he is Jewish, because the Christians with whom they do business overcharge. Markol the Jew is also characterized as having a good heart, meaning that he is ready and willing to help his fellow man in times of trouble. This is a completely different image than the ugly descriptions of Jews that appeared in the Russian press and in Russian literature, which contributed substantially to the increasing anti-Jewish hatred. Korolenko's depiction elicits sympathy and admiration for Markol the Jew.

The Regime and the Jews

Korolenko's encounters with Jewish exiles who engaged in moneylending,[5] which took place in 1879, provided him with a basis for conclusions regarding the Czarist government's policy on the "Jewish question." He believed that the Russian policy of exile, which was also applied to Jewish moneylenders, represented an attempt at solving the Jewish question in this manner. "In this way," Korolenko explains, "the administrative order" entered into confrontation with the laws of the Pale of Settlement, with "one foolish thing checking another." This conclusion reflects a two-pronged criticism regarding the government's policy toward Jews: one levelled against the existence of the Pale of Settlement, which prevented the expansion of Jewish settlement in Russia, and the other against the exile of Jews, whom the regime viewed as negative elements, to places located outside the Pale of Settlement. For Korolenko, this was a contradiction, as the very justifications for prohibiting the Jews from

expanding their areas of residence were not being applied to negative elements from which the central Russian regime was ostensibly seeking to protect the Russian population. He regarded both approaches as absurd, seeing reason for neither the existence of the Pale of Settlement nor the policy of exiling negative elements in an effort to solve the "Jewish question." Elsewhere in the book,[6] Korolenko refers to this conclusion with regard to a different instance in which he encountered a Jew who had been imprisoned for a criminal offense. In order to improve his financial situation, the Jew sought to have his status changed to "political prisoner" by informing on others and cooperating with the authorities. In this context, he quotes the Russian-language adage "when trees are cut down, the chips fly" in an analogical sense, with the policy of attempting to solve the "Jewish question" by exiling negative elements being analogous to cutting down trees, and the geographical dispersion of negative elements through exile being analogous to "flying chips" that can injure passers by.

He also makes reference to this policy in the section dealing with his return from exile, when he reports to the office for the registration of residents in St. Petersburg and hears the official in charge shouting at a few wealthy Jews requesting to extend their stay in the city by a few days: "You want to stay in order to exploit the people," the official charges, denying them the option to remain in the city, whereas the author himself, who fears he will suffer the same fate as the Jews, is granted a generous extension as a Christian and is permitted to remain in the city "as long as he likes." The paradox, of course, lies in the official's refusal to allow Jews to reside outside the Pale of Settlement while at the same time exiling them to remote places located outside the Pale. Nonetheless, as we will see, the political exiles included many Jews whose exile the author attributes to their involvement in the revolutionary movement and therefore does not classify as part of the attempt to solve the "Jewish question."

In another scene reflecting the regime's treatment of Jews, Korolenko shares his childhood memories of a meeting that took place in his father's office.[7] Among those who attended the meeting was "Rabinovich the Jew":

> At the time, the 'Jewish question' was not yet heard of, and the evil antisemitism of today also did not exist. The law held that when

> a Jewish matter was under adjudication in court, it was fitting for a representative of the Jewish population to also be present. And when Rabinovich, a typical Jew with a swarthy beard and curly hair, dressed in a uniform with a place for a sword, entered the official's office, it was impossible to recognize him as Rabinovich the merchant, who spends his free time sitting in his small shop or at the exchange table. The sheen of the room, it seemed, also lit up his face…

This description is attributed to the early 1860s – a period of legislative easing of the burden on Jews during which the governor general of the south, Count Stroganov, and the governor general of Kiev proposed that the Czarist government grant Jews equal rights. Korolenko's description is intended to reflect the democratic manner in which his father, the judge, treated Jews and to highlight the fact that if Jews were granted equal rights, they would assume the same appearance as all other people in their civil roles, as illustrated by the impressive uniform worn by Rabinovich the merchant. This account also serves as a response to the members of the Russian public who, during a later period, argued that even assimilated Jews could not be absorbed into the Russian population. Using this description, therefore, Korolenko sought to counter this claim during the era of "evil antisemitism."

Another brief description addresses the regime's policy of anti-Jewish incitement. Regarding his period of incarceration in a prison in Nizhny Novgorod after being released from exile and receiving authorization to settle down in the city, Korolenko writes: "The prison was full. Not long ago, a plague of anti-Jewish riots had taken place in the market, and a number of people had been killed. This was the result of the new anti-Jewish policy that culminated in the Beilis Affair."[8]

We do not know when precisely, in Korolenko's view, the new anti-Jewish policy began, although, despite the lack of any direct reference, which seems strange in his book, we can assume that he is referring to the pogroms of 1880-1881. However, what distinguishes Korolenko's reference to the existence of a "new anti-Jewish policy" is the assumption of the existence of an old anti-Jewish policy.

Korolenko recounts these memories in the context of the Beilis Trial, which he himself covered as a correspondent for a number of Russian newspapers

including *Russkie Vedomosti*, *Kievskaya Misl*, *Poltavski Den*, and others: hence, his reference to the anti-Jewish policy which was then at its height (following one of his letters, which contains a report on the course of the Beilis Trial, he charged that the judges had been intentionally selected, resulting in threats of his arrest).[9]

Korolenko articulated his immediate angry response to the Kishinev pogroms in his story "House 13: An Episode in the Massacre of Kishinev," which was published in Russia in 1905. This story expresses bitter protest against Russian antisemitism and the unbridled incitement against Jews, as reflected in the pogroms.

Jewish Customs

Ita was the young teenage granddaughter of Batya, the abovementioned ribbons and lace merchant. She was a friend of Korolenko's sister, and Korolenko characterized her "as an imaginary princess from an Oriental fairytale." In time, a report circulated throughout the city that the grandmother would soon marry off her granddaughter, and when Korolenko's mother asks her "why she was marrying off her granddaughter at such a young age," Batya responds as follows:

> Among us Jews, this is done frequently. One has to take into account whom she is marrying. After all, she cannot be married to the first man who approaches her. But such a groom cannot be found in the street. When his grandfather [the grandfather of the prospective groom – Y.G.], who is a Hassid, arrives in some city, it is impossible to walk by the house. They put up ladders, crawl through the windows, and carry the sick (on their shoulders); crowds line the walls like flies, people gather on rooftops…And the grandson is already a great scholar, and he is only 15 years old…[10]

Although this description reflects a preference for the spiritual values of the Jew as opposed to the wealthy class, and for lineage based on prominence in Torah study, Korolenko is not fully accepting of the Jewish custom of marrying off girls to young 15 year old boys like the groom, whom Korolenko sizes up as follows:

> This gaunt adolescent with thick sidelocks and a sad, pale expression is Ita's groom. I understood my mother's embittered question. I felt as if some sort of irreparable critical cruelty was being perpetrated. Apparently, the groom was a Hassid whose youth had been murdered for the sake of the numbing and illogical memorization of the Talmud, the study of which leads almost to idiotism…[11]

Korolenko ridicules not only the veneration of the great scholar but also, and perhaps to a greater extent, young Jews who memorize the Talmud and completely remove themselves from the life of childhood and adolescence. Still, his assessment of the Talmud reflects criticism influenced by prejudice or antisemitism. Based on his words, he may have regarded the study of the Talmud as a decisive factor delaying the Jews' integration into the enlightened and revolutionary circles of Russian society. In any event, at the time in question, he believed that an immense gap existed between the circles of Jewish Talmudic scholars and proper contemporary society.

Jewish Characteristics

Minor criticism regarding Jews who did not devote themselves to physical work can be found in Korolenko's description of a political refugee by the name of Marek Andreivich Nathanson:

> …I could never forget how strange it was when he harrowed the garden we plowed. The issue is that Nathanson is a Jew, and Jews in general tend to engage minimally in physical work. We had another friend, Weinstein, who engaged in work in the field in a satisfactory manner…The simple fact of the matter was that Nathanson was a theoretician who was more accustomed to books and the revolutionary underground than to practical work…[12]

This criticism of Jews as tending not to engage in physical work appears alongside the presentation of Weinstein, who, though a Jew and a medical student among the exiles, also worked in the fields, somewhat balancing out the generalization that precedes it.[13]

Jews in the Revolutionary Movement

As he moved around as a political exile, Korolenko encountered Jews who, like him, had been exiled from the urban centers of Western Europe. These exiles sometimes also informed him of the activity of Jews in the Russian underground. Korolenko's direct and indirect impression of Jewish revolutionaries, as captured in his book, plays a dual purpose in the narrative: first, in its capacity as a testimony regarding the Jewish activity itself; and second, as words that create an idealistic Jewish image that deviates from the parasitic Jewish characterizations that frequently found expression in Russian literature. The following are examples of the testimonies and impressions of Jewish exiles dispersed throughout *The History of My Contemporary*:

1) In his account regarding the Vishnevoltsk prison for political prisoners, he recounts the names Abramovich, Avgatowich, Galperin, and Rogolski. "All of these," he explains, "proved themselves to be good people and excellent comrades, and we quickly became friendly with them…"[14] Most of these names have a Jewish ring to them.

2) Lazar Yosefovich Zuckerman was a worker in the underground printing enterprise who was arrested in Odessa in 1880. According to Korolenko, Zuckerman

> …was a typical Jew among the printing workers. He spoke broken Russian, and everything he said unwittingly took on a comic tone…I liked talking to Zuckerman, and I came to realize that despite the comedy in his speech, he was a wise man, and was even developed in his own way…[15]

3) A Jew named Grigory Dawidovich Goldenberg, who shot and killed the governor of Kharkiv while the latter was riding through the streets of the city in 1879, was arrested, jailed, and sentenced to death. In the following excerpt, Korolenko describes the prevailing atmosphere among the revolutionary circles:

> This murder was a response to the regime's brutal policy in the major prisons [for political prisoners – Y.G.] and reflected both

> the brutality that had caused it to occur and what a brutal act of devotion it was. The revolutionary circles decided to compensate the movement for what had been lost in the dissemination of ideas with horrible, severe acts from within its ranks…[16]

Korolenko here is critical of those who decided to give the movement broad publicity by means of its brutal terrorist attacks. Although this is not directly related to the Jewish perpetrator of the murder, Korolenko's account of the trial is nonetheless of interest here:

> …during the trial, which could only end with a death sentence, Goldenberg regretted his actions and provided detailed information [regarding other prisoners – Y.G.] which the police could use for its benefit. Shortly afterward, Goldenberg escaped, and his escape was said to have been agreed upon in advance as a reward for his betrayal…

Korolenko also describes Goldenberg's weak, nervous, and cowardly personality,[17]although the book's notes actually explains that Korolenko erred in his assertion that Goldenberg escaped, and that he actually committed suicide in prison.[18]

This reference to the act of betrayal without noting the conditions in which Goldenberg was tortured or explaining that the reports of his escape had been confirmed as false, in conjunction with Goldenberg's depiction as cowardly and weak, may give the impression of the perhaps unintentional emphasis of certain Jewish characteristics, as opposed to the act of heroism of perpetrating the murder. Korolenko's words echo the embarrassment caused by the betrayal among both Jewish and non-Jewish revolutionaries. In *Jews in Times of Revolution*, Elias Tcherikower described the impact of this case as follows:[19]

> …Goldenberg's betrayal, which his biographer[20] believes to have truly created an era in the history of *Narodnaya Volya*,[21] made a horrible impression on the Russian revolutionaries, which is easy to understand from a psychological perspective: during the period

> of his candid testimony, the most important terrorists were removed from the ranks. A few paid with their lives, and the rest were sent to desolate locations. At the time, the secret apparatus of Narodnaya Volya was opened up to the police. However, it is most likely that the betrayal resulted in greater anguish for the Jewish terrorists…

Tcherikower also quotes Deutsch, who characterized Goldenberg as "the first Jew to acquire a reputation, ostensibly for his betrayal…"

While jailed in the Petropavlovsk fortress shortly before his suicide, Goldenberg managed to have a letter smuggled out to his friend, which would later come to be known as a pre-mortem "confession." In this letter, Goldenberg attempts to justify his actions by articulating views that were the product of his long interrogation while under arrest, which run counter to his words and actions prior to the murder:

> …We the terrorists chose a wrong path to political liberty. It is a struggle between unequal forces. The government will not surrender, the best of our youth are killed, the sacrifices are pointless, and Russian society remains a 'flock of sheep'. I wanted an end to the rule of terror, as terrorism was not achieving its goal…I knew that disclosing secrets was a terrible act…The keeping of the secrets had resulted in such great tragedies and suffering…

It was later written that he had been assured by the gendarmes that "if he disclosed all he knew, no harm would come to his comrades, the revolutionaries would stop being persecuted, and state policy would be changed …"[22]

After being told by Zondlvic (a Jewish prisoner in Goldenberg's cell) what had happened to his friends, which was apparently the reason he committed suicide, Goldenberg continued his confession: "I now understand that it was criminal recklessness and a deception of the imagination. The gendarmes were only taking advantage of my raw nerves. They electrocuted me and pushed my imagination to the point of hallucinations, which is not difficult to do in my case…"[23] And in the notes he wrote to his friends, he asked them not to label him a "traitor," as he had

fallen victim to the scoundrels of the police.[24] When relating to his confession, Korolenko attempts to analyze Goldenberg's personality in his most critical hours, in the context of the policy of the movement:

> …At the time, Goldenberg's words appeared to me to not have been guided by fear alone. There was something else in his irritable style that attested to a degree of honesty. Then, his confession was published in the papers, and I unwittingly felt as if the fervent soul of the man who had been arrested subsequently engaged in thoughts of doubt about the terrible path down which he had been pushed by the revolutionary intelligentsia, as a result of the circumstances.[25]

Korolenko's analysis contains two prominent lines of thinking in Goldenberg's favor: a) the need to recognize, with a degree of frankness, that such individuals were characterized by fear as opposed to an impulse of betrayal; b) it was not the man who was guilty of murder but rather the revolution that impelled him to it, by force of the circumstances in which it operated and the circumstances that overcame it. His words therefore reflect a clear tendency to transfer blame, to the extent that there was any blame to transfer, from Goldenberg as an individual to the revolutionary movement itself, making Goldenberg's Jewishness incidental and of marginal importance.

In *The History of My Contemporary*, Korolenko also mentions the names of other Jewish revolutionaries, such as Aptekman, Deutsch, Hillels, Cohen, Finger, Nathanson, Weinstein, Landau, and others. What all of these individuals have in common is the prominent place of respect they occupied within the Russian revolutionary movement and among the exiles Korolenko encountered during his exile, who were sentenced to forced labor as a result of their subversive activities.

Conclusion

Korolenko's attitude toward Jews was shaped by three factors:

> 1) Sensitivity to the national issue and a willingness to understand the problems faced by Jews that stemmed from the national tensions he experienced in his childhood and as a young adult.

> 2) The liberal atmosphere that prevailed in his parents' home, his highly developed sense of justice and honesty, and his heartfelt compassion for the persecuted, including the Jews with whom his parents' household established warm relations.
> 3) The revolutionary fervor for realizing the goals of the revolution he observed in the Jewish revolutionaries he encountered, and Jewish exiles' friendly treatment of the Christians in the midst of whom they lived.

Still, *The History of My Contemporary* contains no evidence that Korolenko possessed first hand knowledge of the social, legal, and economic situation of the Jews in Russia, and the absence of any reverberation of the pogroms of the 1880s is astounding. This lack of reference may have stemmed from Korolenko's distance from the scene of these events, and the fact that the Jewish revolutionaries whom he encountered during this period did not bring them to his attention, perhaps out of a desire to have him view them as "genuine and human" revolutionaries who had risen above such "narrow minded" nationalist considerations.

In cases in which he was knowledgeable about the despondent situation of the Jews he assigned responsibility to the anti-Jewish policy of the Czarist government, which was manifested in explicit incitement against Jews and in the existence of the Pale of Settlement. As a democrat and a socialist, he was an advocate of universal equal rights, and he believed that once a Jew was absorbed into Russian society he was indistinguishable from a Russian. He regarded the corruption of the Christians as no less serious than the deceit of the Jews. Here and there he expressed preconceived notions regarding Jewish practices, but never consciously or out of maliciousness; just as negative characteristics could be found among Christians, it was only natural for them also to be found among Jews. However, as opposed to the ignorance, drunkenness, and maliciousness of Christians, a moral, intellectual, and idealistic image of the Jew emerges from Korolenko's accounts. In view of the prevalent tendency at the time among revolutionary circles to accuse Jewish terrorists of betrayal, he attempted to show that the blame lay with the stream within the revolutionary movement that believed that terrorism was the quickest possible way to achieve the goals of

the revolution, and that it was the revolutionary intelligentsia that had impelled positive elements toward terrorism – not the individual personalities of the terrorists themselves.

Was this a tendentious attempt on the part of Korolenko to represent Jews in a positive light? *The History of My Contemporary* is an autobiographical work that sought to memorialize one of the stormiest periods in the life of the author and the history of the country. In this literary effort, the Jewish element was not a goal in itself and was not intended to serve as a central focus. On the other hand, in its incidental reference to the Jewish element, the revolutionary movement emerges as an element of prominent importance. In addition, the mere mention of Jewish names in the context of the organization of the revolutionary movement, the dissemination of movement propaganda, the management of movement operations and the movement's underground printing enterprise, and even the perpetration of acts of terrorism, highlights their substantial role in these activities. Although Korolenko does not distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish revolutionaries, their participation in the movement undermines the foundations of the image of the Jew that was common in nineteenth century Russian literature: that of a dark, anti-social, exploitative parasite that refused to integrate into Russian society. Although the book was published in its entirety only during the Soviet era (1953), when Jews were equal under the law to all other citizens of the Soviet Union, such positive references to the image of the Jew are of great importance both as mitigating fabricated images of the past and as a source from which to learn about the Soviet era and subsequent times.

Endnotes

1 Vladimir Korolenko, *Istoria moevo sovremennika* [*The History of My Contemporary*], Vol. 6 (Moscow, 1953), p. 16.

2 Ibid., pp. 296-299.

3 Ibid., p.185.

4 Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 239.

5 Ibid., p. 266.

6 Ibid., Vol. 8, pp. 315-316.

7 Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 134.

8 Ibid., p. 345. This event took place in February 1885.

9 Ibid., p. 339.

10 Ibid., pp. 296-299.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 308.

13 Ibid., pp. 251-255.

14 Ibid., p. 125.

15 Ibid., p. 223.

16 Ibid., p. 224.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., p. 389.

19 *Jews in Times of Revolution*, p. 230.

20 This is a reference to L. Deutsch's article on Goldenberg in *Zukunft* 1 (1916), p. 71.

21 A pre-Marxist underground socialist organization that operated in Russia during the era of Czar Alexander (who was killed by members of the group) and his son Czar Alexander II.

22 *Jews in Times of Revolution*, p. 224.

23 Ibid, p. 226.

24 Ibid.

25 Korolenko, *The History of My Contemporary*, Vol. 8, p. 224.