Eklof's profile of rural teachers an emphasis on their evolving political interaction with both peasantry and obshchestvo.

The book is a reworked doctoral dissertation and shares some of the characteristic weaknesses of its genre. But attention to detail never subsumes more important interpretive themes, and the style, while not elegant, is quite readable with limited recourse to jargon. The research in Soviet archives, contemporary periodicals, and memoirs is impressive, although I, for one, would have preferred to find the author's detailed citations at the bottom of the page. This quibble aside, Indiana University Press should be complimented for the book's physical readability, its lack of typos, and, most of all, for its (by recent standards) reasonable price.

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In many ways, the historiography of the Portsmouth Peace Conference, which ended the bloody Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, presents a salutary lesson in the importance of what Soviet historians call istochnikovedenie. Thus, while full knowledge of the event required not only the usual access to necessary documentation but also facility in at least two relatively exotic languages, interpretations of the Conference were for many years based upon the useful, but essentially insufficient, data available in Western-language sources including, most notably, the papers of American President Theodore Roosevelt, who acted as mediator between the two beligerents at Portsmouth, and the edited translation of the memoirs of Count S. Iu. Witte, the chief Russian plenipotentiary at the negotiations, which first appeared in 1921. Accordingly, beginning with Tyler Dennett's classic Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War (1925), all of the early interpretations of the negotiations emphasized the decisiveness in the successful conclusion of peace of the mediation of Roosevelt and/or the diplomatic brilliance of Witte, who, it was alleged, cleverly manipulated American public opinion at the Conference and thus salvaged for Russia a great victory out of the ruins of what had been an unmitigated military disaster. Although challenged in a meticulous study of American public opinion at Portsmouth by W. B. Thorson in 1948 (see American Historical Review, 53 [April, 1948], 439-64) and, a decade later, in an obscure collection (including excerpts from some key Japanese documents) edited by Kamikawa Hikomatsu (see Japan-American Diplomatic Relations in the Meiji-Taisho Era [Tokyo, 1958]), the initial evaluations of the Conference remained dominant until the mid-1960s when studies by Raymond A. Esthus (1966), Eugene P. Trani (1969) and the late Shumpei Okamoto (1970) began radically to alter pre-
vailing interpretations of the negotiations by bringing to bear new materials from sources in at least one of the two requisite languages. At this point, finally, almost eighty-five years after the fact, the present new volume by Raymond A. Esthus, which employs virtually all of the available sources on the Conference, at last brings the study of Portsmouth to something like a definitive conclusion.

Essentially a much-expanded version of chapters 3-5 of his earlier study entitled _Theodore Roosevelt and Japan_ (Seattle, 1966), Esthus' account of the negotiations brings together the critical Russian materials from the New York Public Library and Columbia University Russian Archives, the microfilmed records of the Japanese Foreign Ministry at the Library of Congress, the published Japanese diplomatic documents entitled _Nihon Gaikō Bunsho: Nichiro Sensō_ (Tokyo, 1957-60) and a full array of additional published and unpublished materials from both Western and Japanese sources. Fully utilizing this extensive documentation, the author has constructed a clearly written narrative that amply demonstrates that the successful outcome of the negotiations at Portsmouth was from the outset far more the consequence of intractable circumstances than it was of decisive personalities. Thus, by mid-1905, although the fact was perhaps not sufficiently clear to either the Russian government or the Japanese public, both parties to the talks at Portsmouth were in desperate need of peace. For its part, in spite of an unbroken series of military successes culminating in the great victory at Mukden in March, Japan by this time was faced with a substantial and constantly mounting logistical inferiority as well as a condition of nearly total financial exhaustion. In these circumstances, the nation’s leaders were acutely conscious of the urgent necessity for an end to the hostilities although, for reasons both tactical and strategic, this situation had to be carefully concealed from the Japanese population at large. By the same token, despite her apparently better military condition, Russia, too, in mid-1905, was in desperate need of peace in order to enable her leaders to turn to the resolution of a domestic political crisis then verging on full-scale revolution. Although this situation had little effect on the dull-witted Tsar Nicholas II, it was clearly understood by chief plenipotentiary Witte, who was determined from the outset to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Given these circumstances, as Esthus effectively demonstrates, the essence of the Conference reduced, on the Japanese side, to a delicate game of secrecy and bluff carefully calculated to extract maximum concessions from their opponent without, however, risking a resumption of hostilities and, on the Russian, to an equally difficult strategy intended to facilitate escape from an unpopular and unsuccessful war without the loss of either national honor or any essential material interest in eastern Asia. Of course, the author does not attempt to discount entirely the role of personalities in the success of the negotiations. Thus, due credit is accorded to the moderating influence of Marquis Itō Hirobumi and the other members of the ruling