

RUSSIAN HISTORY – 19th Century

Overview Between the 1780s and the mid-19th century Britain became the world's first industrial power, with other countries on the Continent, such as France, attempting to follow its lead. Industrialization gave the modernized armies of Europe an increasing technological edge over backward Russia. The democratic ideals of the French Revolution were also spreading across Europe at the same time. While political reform broadened the social base on which western European governments were founded, Russia pursued the opposite course. Educated Russians, attracted to Western political ideas, increasingly came to oppose the autocratic system under which they lived in the absence of reform. Some reflected their political views in their writings, the others took their frustration to the streets. Educated and socially aware intellectuals began to demand beneficial changes in Russian society.

EVENTS

Decembrist: Frustrated by Russia's lack of change, a number of young nobles and a group of army officers and civilians committed to Enlightenment values formed secret political societies to overthrow Alexander I. After Alexander I's untimely death, they launched a revolt on December 14, the day Alexander I's brother Nicholas I was to take the throne.

The Decembrist revolt was the first revolutionary attempt carried out by educated members of the Russian elite who wanted political and social change. Most of the Decembrists had fought in Europe during the Napoleonic Wars and had learned about Western political ideas and seen social conditions which were better than those that existed in Russia.

Their supporters included some of Russia's leading literary figures, including Alexander Pushkin and Alexander Griboyedov.

The majority of those who supported the Decembrist movement were exiled to Siberia. Five leaders of the revolt were sentenced to death, and over 100 were exiled to Siberia.

The impact of both European ideas and the Decembrists revolt were the start of organized revolutionary resistance to the tsarist regime. Such resistance would take many forms and experienced numerous failures in the next century, but it did not end until the monarchy was overthrown in 1917.

Intellectuals: In the first half of the 19th century Russian thought was strongly influenced by French and German Romanticism. Some Russian Romantics, particularly the Slavophiles, reflected the German philosopher Hegel's idea of the historical evolution of the human spirit. The influence of these ideas, together with Russia's expanding imperial presence, stimulated a modern spirit of nationalism and the idea that Russia possessed a unique mission.

The second quarter of the 19th century witnessed the marked beginning of the golden age of Russian Literature. This era, which enriched both Russian and all of Western culture, was marked by the major works of A.S. Pushkin, M. Y. Lermontov, N. Gogol, I. Turgenev, L. Tolstoy and F. Dostoevsky.

The other major development was political, to the degree that political expression was allowed in Russia. This involved a new segment of Russian society that was a direct development of the spread of education and Western ideas known as the intelligentsia. Today the term has a broad meaning, covering all whose interests lie in the realm of ideas and the arts. However, in 19th-century Russia *intelligentsia* referred to a much narrower group: educated, socially aware individuals whose main priority in life was to promote

beneficial changes in Russian society. They were inspired by European ideas, especially those connected with German romanticism and idealism, which had reached Russia by the 1830s.

The intelligentsia was at first made up of noblemen, but they were joined by people from the lower classes as education spread, the *raznochintsy*, which in Russian means “people of various ranks.” Unlike the nobles, many *raznochintsy* had known poverty and hardship. They were far more alienated from conventional Russian values and were more radical in their opinions. Russia’s intelligentsia was divided into two groups: Slavophiles and the Westernizers.

Westernizers: Westernizers criticized the Orthodox Church, and supported improvements in education, and the formation of constitutional government. In addition, they were advocates of individual freedom, science, and rationalism.

Slavophiles: Conservative Slavophiles argued that Russia had to find solutions based on its own traditions. Following the lead of German idealism, they argued that each nationality was unique. Russia’s uniqueness came from three institutions: the tsarist autocracy, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the peasant commune. As they saw it, Russia’s troubles began when it abandoned its spiritual and cooperative traditions and began to imitate the rationalism of the West. Slavophiles opposed serfdom, but not the institution of the tsar. However, they were against everything that their tsar Peter I had done in the name of westernization for Russia. For them Peter I was Russia’s greatest enemy.

Serfdom: Serfdom was increasingly viewed as immoral by Russia’s intellectuals. However, the nobles did not want to give up their serfs, fearing they would not survive without them. Alexander II understood the destructive effects of serfdom on his country - in economic terms, forced peasant labor was highly inefficient. Many of the landed estates operated at a loss, and members of the gentry were often in debt. In 1856 he advocated the abolition of serfdom and moved immediately to abolish it. Alexander II issued his *Emancipation Edict* (March 3, 1861), granting the serfs their freedom.

Discussion/Questions

- 1- What was the impact and long-term consequences of the Decembrist Revolt in the history of Russia?
- 2- What role did the intelligentsia play in Russian society and autocracy?
- 3-Why were Western values foreign to Russian culture? Why did they inspire political revolts in Russia?

Reading

- 1-Evtuhov, C., Frank, D.G., Stites, R., *The Age of Restoration: Russia in Europe, 1815-1830*, A History of Russia, Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, New York, 2004, p.329-346.
- 2-Evtuhov, C., Frank, D.G., Stites, R., *Nicholas I: Monarchy, Society, and Empire, 1825-1855*, A History of Russia, Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, New York, 2004, p.347-370.
- 3- Evtuhov, C., Frank, D.G., Stites, R., *Russian Society and Daily Life in the Twilight of Serfdom*, A History of Russia, Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, New York, 2004, p.371-387.
- 4- Evtuhov, C., Frank, D.G., Stites, R., *Alexander II and the Era of the Great Reforms, 1855-1870*, A History of Russia, Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, New York, 2004, p.406-426.
- 5-Ely, C., *The Question of Civil Society in Late Imperial Russia*, A Companion to Russian History, edited by Abbott Gleason, Blackwell Publishing, 2009, p. 225-242.
- 6-Morson, G. S., *The Intelligentsia and its Critics*, A Companion to Russian History, edited by Abbott Gleason, Blackwell Publishing, 2009, p. 261-278.
- 7- Wachtel, A., *Russian Modernism*, A Companion to Russian History, edited by Abbott Gleason, Blackwell Publishing, 2009, p. 279-294

POLITICAL HISTORY

GOVERNMENT

In the 19th century, the country was still ruled by autocratic monarchs who referred to themselves as 'Emperor and Autocrat of all Russia'. Alexander I created functional ministries, permitted the senate to have some supervisory powers over the government bureaucracy and judicial powers to issue decrees subject to the Tsar's veto. He also reaffirmed his autocracy by making it clear that his autocratic powers would remain unchallenged and unquestioned. His advisor, Mikhail Speransky compiled a comprehensive administrative law designed to change arbitrary autocratic government, and to establish the Russian state on the rule of law as steps toward a genuine constitutional regime. He also promoted the idea of merit in state service through compulsory exams. However, many of the nobility resented his egalitarian approach to the system, and Alexander I also showed no interest in Speransky's restructuring, fearing that his power would be limited by legislature, and dismissed him in 1812. One of the positive developments during Alexander I's reign was a law he passed in 1803 that encouraged landowners to free their serfs.

Decembrist Revolt and State Measures:

The Decembrist revolt was the first revolutionary attempt carried out by educated members of the Russian elite who wanted political and social change. They had committed themselves to Enlightenment values and had formed secret political societies to overthrow Alexander I. The revolt was launched after Alexander I's unexpected death in 1825, on the day Alexander I's brother Nicholas I was to ascend to the throne.

Nicholas I, traumatized by this event, decided to change the existing administrative system. He personally scrutinized his brother's administrative reforms and the demands of the Decembrists, and then made some modest improvements in the administration. The legislative, judicial and executive bodies in the government were to be separated. In 1826 Nicholas I established a private bureaucracy with several sections: his Majesty's Own Imperial Chancery; the Second Section of the Chancery which was dominated by Speransky who compiled a 48-volume compilation of Russian law, the laws dealing with government and social structure in 1833; and the Third Section which symbolized Nicholas' whole regime. The Third Section administered a new political police who gathered information about the opponents of the regime, watched state institutions and political prisons, handled censorship, and arrested and exiled the revolutionaries. The government also introduced strict control on education, limiting lower-class children to elementary-level education and reducing the autonomy of universities. Incompetent, poorly educated and poorly paid officials could not implement the laws properly and began to take bribes to support their families. A reform of local government was instituted in 1837. Considerable power was granted to the governors, and the local police were strengthened. In 1838 a network of local *Provincial Messengers* were established in the provinces. The most important of his reforms was to set up a committee to deal with serfdom, and lay the groundwork for limited emancipation.

Abolition of Serfdom: After Nicholas I's death, tsar Alexander II, the liberator, attempted to carry out some political reforms. The first was the idea of liberating the serfs. The Tsar, retaining his full autocratic powers, well-educated and well-prepared, recognized the need for land reform and the abolition of serfdom "from above" before it abolished itself "from below". The emancipation edict issued in 1861 freed the serfs from personal slavery, but did not make a free grant of land - serfs had to pay for any land they received. Therefore, the peasants felt cheated by the whole system.

His reforms also included local government reforms, approved in 1864, which permitted each district to set up a *Zemstvo* (local council). These councils provided local education, health, transportation and taught new agricultural techniques. However, the right to elect members to these councils was restricted to the privileged classes. Although the central government lacked both the human resources or the will to fully carry out this reform, the reform still improved conditions in rural Russia considerably. Alexander II also carried out a series of judicial and military reforms despite powerful opposition.

After Alexander II's assassination by a revolutionary, the assassins were ruthlessly hunted down and executed, and his son, Alexander III sought to limit local autonomy. He instituted a series of strict measures that eliminated many of his father's reforms. Alexander III, influenced by his personal tutor, the procurator of Holy Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev who rejected parliamentary democracy, defended the old alliance between Tsarism and Orthodoxy.

Discussion/Questions

- 1- What were the impacts and long-term consequences of the Decembrist Revolt in the history of Russia?
- 2- Why was a reformist tsar, Alexander II, assassinated by a revolutionary?
- 3- How did the Age of Enlightenment and French Revolution affect Russian intellectuals?

Reading

- 1-Marshall, P., *The Central Government and Its Institutions*, The Cambridge History of Russia, edited by Maureen Perrie, 2006, Vol. 1, p. 435-463.
- 2- Davies, B., *Local Government and Administration*, The Cambridge History of Russia, edited by Maureen Perrie, 2006, Vol. 1, p. 464-485.
- 3- Cicek, A., "The First Russian Revolution – The Decembrist Movement and its Impact on Russian Political History", *International Journal of Russian Studies (IJORS)*, Issue 6, 2017/2, pp. 101-129.

MILITARY

The Crimean War not only destroyed the credibility of the Russian military system but also confidence in the Empire's entire political, social and economic structures. Russia's inadequate industrial sector could not manufacture the new ordnance, rifles and munitions on a large scale.

Universal Military Service Statute: In order to modernize Russian military forces in the most economic fashion possible, Alexander II initiated a series of military reforms that resulted in the Universal Military Service Statute of 1874. Continued territorial expansion resulted in extensive borders that required a military presence to protect them, but such protection came at a cost. Alexander II's war minister, Miliutin, attempted to make the army more efficient through structural reorganization, and improving the education and training of both the officer corps and the enlistees. Reform of the military justice system and abolition of abusive practices were measures that were taken to improve morale. By the middle of the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution was having a major influence on Russia's military industry. However, Russia remained a backward country and did not invest in the latest weaponry, because of rapidly changing armaments and high costs.

Reduction of Mandatory Service: Miliutin embarked on other reforms that were designed to reduce expenses by the 1870s, including the creation of a large, well-trained reserve force, the extension of railways in order to mobilize forces, and a reduction in the period of mandatory service in the regular army under certain conditions. Graduates of universities had their period of mandatory service reduced to six months, and volunteers were also given a reduction in their period of service. One other far-reaching reform was elimination of class distinction in the military draft. All men, regardless of class, were now subject to the draft at the age of twenty if their names were selected in the national draft lottery, ending the aristocracy's previous exemption.

There were still problems with logistics, outdated equipment, lack of funding and manpower. The victories gained in the campaigns in the Caucasus, in the major war with the Ottomans that erupted in 1877, and during imperialist campaigns in Central Asia were counterbalanced by defeats in other theaters that were the result of the vestiges of the old military system.

Discussion/Questions

- 1-Why was the Imperial Russian military unable to compete technologically with the European militaries?

Reading

- 1- Stone, D., *A Military History of Russia: From Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya*, Praeger Security International, 2006.
- 2- *Russia, A History*, edited by Gregory L. Freeze, Oxford University Press, 2009.
- 3- Fuller, W.C., "Imperial Army", in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Imperial Russia 1689-1917, Vol.2, Edited by Dominic Lieven, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 530-553.

SOCIAL HISTORY

CLASSES

During the 19th century the government continued to classify people by social estate (*soslovie*). The rigid *soslovie* categories such as prince, nobility, clergy, merchants, urban dwellers and peasantry continued to be used in official censuses. But, this classification was becoming more cumbersome each year; industrial workers, for example, had no category of their own, and were included in the peasant category. The Code of the Law of the Russian Empire of 1832, vol. 9, "Laws about Estates" defined four major estates: nobility (*dvoryans*), clergy, urban dwellers and rural dwellers (peasants). But, these rigid estate headings were no longer adequate to describe a society in which professionals, workers, intellectuals, industrialists and politicians played a visible, and even dominant, role.

Nobility (Dvoryans): . The *dvoryanstvo* estate was mainly hereditary, but anyone could be promoted into this estate by achieving senior rank in the civil and military service.

Clergy: was subdivided into *white* (priests) and *black* (monks).

Urban dwellers (*meshchane*): Artisans, petty tradesmen and most urban workers were included in this class. They had some real estate in a town, were engaged in some trade, craft, or service, and paid taxes.

Rural dwellers (peasants): The category of rural dwellers had permanent residence in towns, and were correspondingly classified as "urban peasants". The rural dwellers category also included the *inorodtsy* estate, that included non-Russian and non-Orthodox native peoples of Siberia, Central Asia or the Caucasus. An *inorodets* who converted to Orthodox Christianity was excluded from this estate and included into one of the other ones, most often the peasantry.

Raznochintsy: People of miscellaneous ranks. The state was for those people who were unable to be categorized in any of the other existing estates.

Military: This estate included the lower military strata. These people were either discharged or on indefinite leave. In addition, the Cossacks troops from the south brought into this category.

Industrial workers: The urgent need for Russian industrialization demanded industrial workers. After the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, free serfs began to move to urban areas forming a mobile labor force, able to relocate to areas where industrial workers were needed.

Kulaks: The *kulaks were rich peasants* who owned larger portions of land, livestock and machinery, and provided work for the landless peasants. This estate survived until the Bolshevik Revolution.

Inorodtsy: Ethnic minorities which were the part of the Empire residing in European Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Siberia.

Several factors had rendered the old system of social classification largely obsolete by the late 19th century. Among these were the abolition of serfdom, the emergence of a capitalist economy, and property ownership rather than membership in a particular estate becoming the determining factor in the legal and governmental system.

Discussion/Questions

1. After the emancipation of the serfs, they became free and were able to leave their farms. However, did the emancipation of the serfs satisfy both the serfs and the landlords?

Readings

1-Moss, W.G., *A History of Russia Vol I*, Anthem Press, 2005.

2- Moss, W.G., *A History of Russia Vol II*, Anthem Press, 2005.

3- Freeze, G.L., "The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 1 (Feb., 1986), pp. 11-36

GENDER RELATIONS

Russia remained an overwhelmingly patriarchal society in the early 19th century. Women's main duties remained the same. Women were expected to be traditional wives, and should devote themselves to their families and household jobs.

Russian Law of 1836: According to the Code of Russian Laws of 1836 "the woman must obey her husband, reside with him in love, respect, and in unlimited obedience...". Women were forced to marry against their wills, but were able to control any dowry property. These property rights were not given to peasant women.

Intellectuals and the issue of women: Reform-minded women intellectuals began to participate in political life which was one of the most important developments of the Nikolai I era, but the foundation for this participation was laid by Catherine II.

During Alexander II's reign, Russian intellectuals brought up the issue of "the woman question" and they emphasized that women should be given the same education as men, because they were "equal beings." During this period two novels, Ivan Turgenev's *On the Eve* (1860) and Nikolai Chernyshevskii's *What Is to Be Done?* (1863) were both answers to the woman question. Both novels depicted young women who left their parents and in order to devote themselves to doing something useful for society.

Feminism: The discussion around the woman question in the 1860s resulted in the appearance of the feminist movement in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and other provincial cities that was led by Filosofova, Stasova and Trubnikova. They dedicated themselves to helping poor urban women and improving education for girls.

Discussion/Questions

1.What was the image and role of women in the 19th century?

Reading

1-- Engel, B. A., *Women in Russia, 1700–2000*. Cambridge, UK: 2004.

2- Clements, B.E., *A History of Women in Russia: From Earliest Times to the Present*, Indiana University Press, 2012.

ECONOMIC HISTORY

INNOVATIONSS

SOCIETY:

The abolition of serfdom: Serfdom was abolished in March 1861 by Alexander II, granting the serfs their freedom without payment. However, they were liberated without land, which was a major disappointment for the serfs since they had to pay landlords for the use of their land. The government provided loans for these payments, but the peasants were unable to keep up with their payments. As a result, they fell deep into debt.

TECHNOLOGY:

Establishment of railway and steamship lines: In 1815 Russia's first steamship was built. The first railroad connecting Petersburg to the suburbs opened in 1837, and the line connecting St. Petersburg and Moscow opened in 1851. Mileage doubled between 1895 and 1905 with the building of the Trans-Siberian Railroad reaching Siberia and the Far East.

Discovery of Oil: In 1870 oil was discovered in the Caucasus, and petroleum industry developed soon after. At the beginning of the 20th century, Russia became the world's second largest petroleum producer.

CULTURE:

Golden Era of Russian Literature: Traditionally the 19th century is regarded as the "Golden Era" of Russian literature. Poetic talent in particular flourished in the Romantic movement; some of the most prominent writers in this period were A. Zhukovsky, A. S. Pushkin, M. Y. Lermontov, I. A. Krylov. It was in this era the link between literature and national life was emphasized, and literary realism was advanced through the works of N.V. Gogol, I. A. Goncharov and A. N. Ostrovsky.

SCIENCE:

Nikolai Ivanovich Lobachevskii: Sometimes referred to as the "Copernicus of geometry", Lobachevskii became prominent for his work in mathematics and geometry. The non-Euclidian geometry he developed was named after him, Lobachevskian geometry, as was his important work on Dirichlet integrals which came to be known as the Lobachevskii integral formula.

Dmitrii Ivanovich Mendeleev: One of the most important figures in the history of chemistry, Mendeleev was the discoverer of the periodic law and the creator of the periodic table which enabled scientists to predict both new chemical elements and their properties. In 1869 Mendeleev wrote *Principles of Chemistry*, a textbook on inorganic chemistry and his name was given to the Russian Physical-Chemical Society that had just been established.

Periodic Table: The Periodic table that classifies chemical elements was created by the Russian chemist Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev.

Dimitri Iosifovich Ivanovsky - Germ Theory of Disease: In the 1800s Russian scientists supported a theory called the *Germ Theory of Disease* which advocated that infectious diseases were caused by microorganisms. Dimitri Iosifovich Ivanovsky worked on a disease affecting tobacco plants known as *wildfire*.

Igor Ivanovich Sikorsky: Igor Ivanovich Sikorsky designed helicopters, and built fixed-wing aircraft. During one of his flights, he was forced to crash-land. When he discovered that a mosquito in the gasoline could starve the engine of fuel, he built a multi-engine plane to stop this problem. One of them was known the S-6 plane which held three passengers. In 1913 he designed the world's first multi-engine fixed-wing aircraft, the four-engine S-21 *Rusky Vityaz* (Russian Knight) and later the S-22 *Ilya Muromets*, the world's first airliner in 1913. During WWI, Sikorsky redesigned the S-22 *Ilya Muromets* as the world's first four-engine bomber.

Discussion/Questions

1. Why was the Trans-Siberian Railroad important for Russia?
- 2- Why was the institution of serfdom preserved till the late 19th century in Russia?

Reading

1- *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*, edited by Nicholas Rzhevsky, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

TRADE

In the 19th century trade was conducted in open markets, in shops by peddlers, and traders in the cities that were linked to a trading network of wealthier merchants. Peddlers also traveled by horse-drawn carriages or by wagons to sell their products in rural areas. However, most Russian trade was conducted by ships and boats. In 1850's there were 200 steamboats transporting goods, and Russia's leading trade partner was Great Britain.

Russian foreign trade was in the hands of foreign traders, much as it had been in the 18th century. Russia exported food products (exports of grains became particularly important) and raw materials, and imported manufactured and luxury goods. Later, with the development of cotton and sugar industries they imported modern machinery, raw cotton and sugar.

Discussion/Questions

1. Why was the Russian foreign trade in the hand of foreigners in the 19th century?

Reading

- 1- Moss, W.G. *A History of Russia*, Vol. I: to 1917, 2002.
- 2- Moss, W.G. *A History of Russia*, Vol. II: since 1855, 2005.

CULTURAL HISTORY

SCIENCE

The 19th century witnessed the blossoming of Russian science and the emergence of a number of Russian scientists in a variety of fields who would become known around the world. Most, like Lomonosov, were from families of modest means living in distant quarters of the empire. Despite the greater educational opportunities available in the major cities, children from the privileged upper classes made almost no contribution to the development of Russian science. Although scientists benefitted from educational reforms implemented by the tsarist regime and were able to establish a firm base for the advancement of Russian science, at the end of the 19th century Russia still lagged far behind its western European neighbors politically and economically.

Nikolai Ivanovich Lobachevskii: Sometimes referred to as the "Copernicus of geometry", Lobachevskii became prominent for his work in mathematics and geometry. The non-Euclidian geometry he developed was named after him, Lobachevskian geometry, as was his important work on Dirichlet integrals which came to be known as the Lobachevskii integral formula.

Dmitrii Ivanovich Mendeleev: One of the most important figures in the history of chemistry, Mendeleev was the discoverer of the periodic law and the creator of the periodic table which enabled scientists to predict both new chemical elements and their properties. In 1869 Mendeleev wrote *Principles of Chemistry*, a textbook on inorganic chemistry and his name was given to the Russian Physical-Chemical Society that had just been established.

Discussion/Questions

1. Although the foundations of modern Russian science were laid in the 18th century, why did Russian science only make rapid advances in the 19th century?
2. Despite the great advances in Russian science in the 19th century, why was Russia still unable to catch up with the Western countries politically and economically?

Reading

- 1- Graham, R. Loren, *Science in Russia and the Soviet Union, A Short History*, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

ART

Painting

Landscapes: It was not until the early 19th century that Russian landscape painting became widely popular. There had been artists before this time who had produced fine landscape paintings, among them Fyodor Alexeyev, Maxim Vorobiev, Fyodor Matveyev, and Silvester Shchedrin, but their works were products of the Italianesque romantic tradition. True Russian landscape painting only emerged with the works of Nikifor Krylov, Alexei Venetsianov, and Grigory Soroka. However, artists such as Ivan Aivazovsky and Mikhail Lebedev continued to paint in the Italianesque romantic tradition. In the field of landscape painting, French Impressionism was a major influence on Russian works in this category.

Religious motives: Works produced by the Wanderers (see below) were noted for an intensity, both psychological and imaginative, that had been lacking in Russian art since the early 19th century during the time of Alexander Ivanov.

Still Life: Objects from daily life constitute the subject matter of still life painting. Ivan Khrutsky was one of the first major artists in this genre whose paintings, like those of Ilya Repin and Mikhail Vrubel in the second half of the 19th century, were influenced by the masterpieces of Dutch still life painting.

Genre Painting: Genre painting came to occupy a firm place in Russian art, despite having been considered less prestigious than other styles of painting. Peasant culture in all its aspects would be the focus of works by Aleksei Venetsianov, while depictions of the middle class, and even social criticism, would feature in the paintings of Fedotov and other artists.

Slavic Revival: This artistic movement rejected Western subject matter and turned its attention to depictions of Russian culture, particularly as seen in peasant life. The works of Viktor Vasnetsov and Mikhail Nesterov depict heroic episodes of Kievan history and scenes related to the Orthodox Church, and, in general, strive to reflect the richness of Medieval Russia's artistic heritage.

Realism: In the second half of the 19th century Realism was the predominant artistic trend. As a reaction to what they regarded as an excessively restrictive artistic tradition, painters such as Ivan Kramskoi insisted on depicting life realistically in their art. Kramskoi and other like-minded artists would come to be known as the Wanderers due to their travelling exhibitions of their art.

Wanderers (Itinerants-Peredvizhniki): The Academy of Arts witnessed a student revolt in 1863 in which a group of students did not follow the Academy's recommended themes, but used themes of their own. The Academy refused to accept this, leading to the resignation from the Academy of one sculptor and thirteen painters. The leading figures of this group were Ivan Kramskoi, Vladimir Stasov, Vasily Stasov, Ilya Repin, Vasily Surikov, and Vasily Perov. Travelling throughout Russia, society members inspired by the *narodniki* (Populists) held exhibitions of the art that they had produced during their travels and espoused political reform. In keeping with their realist tendencies, formal achievements for these artists were less important than the political and social aspects of their work.

The World of Art (*Mir Iskusstva*): The artistic movement World of Art was established by the avant-garde writers and artists based in St. Petersburg in 1899. It was also the name of their art magazine. Nikolai Roerich, Alexander Benois, Lev Bakst, Evgeny Lancere, Konstantin Somov and Sergei Diaghilev were among the founders of this society that was focused on popularization of Russian history and folk art. Despite the diverse characters of the artists in this movement, they were united by three important principles – their emphasis on individual experience, the concept of “total art work” (*gesamtkunstwerk*), and the aesthetic that art was self-justified.

Sculpture: The first Russian sculptors of note only emerged after the establishments of Arts Academies in St. Petersburg (1757) and Moscow (1832). Most were protégés of the renowned Parisian sculptor Nicolas-François Gillet, and the first to earn fame for his realistic, expressive works was Fedot Shubin. In recognition of his talent the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts appointed Ivan Vitali to the grade of professor, first degree. Other 19th century Russian sculptors included Mikhail Vrubel, Theodore Gordeev, Ivan Martos, Mikhail Kozlovsky, Fedor Shedrin.

House of Fabergé: In 1842 Gustav Fabergé established the House of Fabergé in St. Petersburg. The House of Fabergé was particularly famous for the decorative Easter eggs, intricately designed and decorated with precious jewels, they produced for the Tsars. Management of the House of Fabergé passed to Peter Carl Fabergé in 1882 and continued until 1918 when the Bolsheviks nationalized the company.

Kasli Iron Sculptures: Cast iron sculptures produced by the lost-wax process began to be produced at the Kasli Iron Works in the mid-19th century. Russian and Western European artists such as Eugene Lanceray, Peter Karlovich Klodt, M.D. Kanayev, and N.R. Bakh all produced works at Kasli.

Architecture:

Russian Revival (Russo-Byzantine Style): Russian Revival, or Russo-Byzantine, architecture combines elements of Byzantine architecture with those of pre-Petrine Russian architecture. This style is the Russian interpretation of their architectural heritage that was part of the broader renewal interest in “national” architecture that occurred in Europe in the 19th century. The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, the Grand Kremlin Palace and the Armory in Moscow are well-known examples of Russian Revival structures.

Neo-Byzantine architecture: In the 1850s during the reign Alexander II the Russo-Byzantine style was replaced by the Neo-Byzantine style for new churches. Although new state buildings would again be built in the Russian Revival style during the reign of his successor Alexander III, the Neo-Byzantine style remained popular down to the start of the the First World War. The Cathedral of Saint Vladimir built in Kiev and the Church of Dmitry Solunsky built in St. Petersburg are the first projects utilizing this style.

Eclecticism: In reaction to the strict, limited elements of classicism, Eclecticism attempted to expand the potential of architectural by combining elements taken from earlier styles. Popular until the first years of Nicholas II's reign, Eclecticism utilized elements from Baroque, Renaissance, Neoclassical and Rococo styles. Andrey Stackenschneider's Mariinsky Palace is one of the most prominent examples of this style.

Dance:

Romantic Period: Ballet masters in Russia in the 19th century continued to come from abroad; among the most important were Pehr Christian Johansson, Jules Perrot, Charles-Louis Didelot, Marius Petipa, and Arthur Saint-Léon.

Russian School: The Russian school, which came to be regarded as possessing the most well-developed technique of any school, emerged as a synthesis of the French school and the Italian school whose techniques was introduced by Cecchetti. Some of the young Russian dancers trained by Cecchetti in the late 19th century became some of the most famous dancers of the early 20th century – Anna Pavlova, Vaslav Nijinsky and Michael Fokine. Other students of his such as Agrippina Vaganova in Russia and Ninette de Valois in England became founders of their own companies of developed their own teaching systems. These teachers and dancers took the techniques of the Russian school back to France, and from there they spread into other parts of Europe and the world.

Grand Ballet (Age of Petipa): Taken from the French term *ballet à grand spectacle*, Russian grand ballet was developed under Marius Petipa, a French dancer and choreographer who worked more than six decades at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. Grand ballet, productions that matched contemporary operas in terms of length and storyline, became the favored form in the late 19th century when modern classical ballet reached its peak in Russia. Considered an “art of spectacle” [*zrelishchnoe iskusstvo*], the visual effects of grand ballet overshadowed the music, and even rivalled the dancing itself in importance.

Ballet-Féerie: Popular in the last two decades of the 19th century in private theaters in Russia, *ballet-féerie* was an Italian-based popular derivation of grand ballet which emphasized visual effects at the expense of choreography, flashy performances by the main dancers and set routines for the others. The plots were generally based on fairy tales; the most famous *ballet-féerie* was the 1881 St. Petersburg production of Luigi Manzotti's *Excelsior*.

Bolshoi Ballet: Taking its name from the Bolshoi Theater in 1825, some of the most important choreographers of the 19th century – Arthur Saint-Léon, Marius Petipa and Carlo Blasis – staged their works at this theater. Even during the Soviet period the Bolshoi Ballet was able to keep its name.

Mariinsky Ballet (Kirov Ballet): Originally named for the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, the Mariinsky Ballet would be renamed twice in the 20th century. The first was in 1917 when it became the State Academy of Ballet and Opera, and the second in 1934 when it was renamed the Kirov Ballet following Sergei Kirov's assassination.

Music:

Russian Composers and the Incorporation of Russian Influences

As Russia had no conservatories prior to the 1860's, Russia's first composer, Mikhail Glinka, had to travel abroad to obtain the majority of his musical training. This allowed him to study the folk music of many different countries and to make the acquaintance of many well-known European composers. After his return to Russia Glinka would greatly influence Russian music's development in general, and opera in particular.

A number of composers after Glinka followed his lead and composed music based on Russian fairy tales; among them were Rimsky-Korsakov, *The Golden Cockerel*; Stravinsky, *The Nightingale*; and Prokofiev, in *Love for Three Oranges*. In the compositions for ballet, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and Prokofiev would also be influenced by Glinka's use of fairy-tales.

Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Ludmila* which was first performed in 1842 would be the first in a long line of operas based on Russian fairy tales. Glinka's compositions mark a turning point in Russian music, the point at which Russian music truly becomes a part of European music, while still retaining its folk music traditions.

Russian Musical Society: Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna and the composer Anton Rubinstein established the *Russian Musical Society* in 1859. Its primary aim was to encourage and expand the musical study and performance in the country. Regarded as Russia's first school of music, the Society provided instruction to anyone who wished to study music.

One of the most important events in the growth of Russian music occurred with the opening in St. Petersburg of Russia's first conservatory in 1862.

Balakirev Circle: Mily Balakirev established the Balakirev Circle, a musical group, in St. Petersburg. The Circle studied a wide spectrum of musical traditions to employ in their own compositions: Russian folksongs, classical composers and music from Spain, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Exoticism was becoming as important a part of Russian music as it was in European music. This can be seen in the Middle Eastern influences in *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov, and the Central Asian elements in Borodin's opera *Prince Igor*.

In 1866 Russia's second conservatory was established in Moscow by Anton Rubinstein from St. Petersburg and Nikolai Rubinstein from Moscow. Both brothers would play important roles in making Russian music more professional. Famous graduates of Russia's first two conservatories include Tchaikovsky (St. Petersburg) and Rachmaninoff (Moscow).

Mighty Handful (Moguchaya kuchka): At approximately the same time, five composers from St. Petersburg formed a group which became known as "The Mighty Handful" (or "The Mighty Five"). They shared common political and aesthetic opinions and held that music made by Russians should accurately reflect the people of Russia, and not what was taught by Germans in the conservatory. The group's leader was Balakirev, with Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and César Cui making up the rest of the group.

They advocated the use of Russian elements such as folk music and folklore in compositions, and were disturbed by the predominant position of European music and European musicians. Because of their ability to convey a narrative message they preferred song, symphonic poems and opera over other genres. Despite the group's early solidarity, by the mid-1870s Balakirev and the other members were no longer on good terms and the group was, for all practical purposes, dissolved.

A number of well-known works would be composed by members of the Mighty Handful, among them the operas *Sadko* and *The Snow Maiden*, and the symphonic poem *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov; *Khovanshchina* and *Boris Godunov* by Mussorgsky; *Tamara* by Balakirev; and *Prince Igor* by Borodin. All are regarded as masterpieces of romantic nationalism and are inspired, as many of the Mighty Handful's works were, by Russian literature, history and folk stories.

One of the first graduates of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, Pyotr Tchaikovsky disagreed with the Mighty Handful over the composition of classical music, in particular which tradition, Western or Russian, should determine how it was composed. Although Tchaikovsky's interest in nationalistic music grew in the late 19th century, he remained opposed to the Mighty Handful's nationalistic bent. Despite his disagreements with the *Mighty Handful*, Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* shows the influence of Balakirev.

Discussion/Questions

1. What was the aim of the World of Art Movement (*Mir Iskusstva*) in Russia? What were their key achievements?
2. What is the origin of the Wanderers (*Peredvizhniki* -Itinerants)? How was a relatively minor incident at the Imperial Academy of Arts transformed into an artistic movement that would have a profound impact on Russian society and culture?
- 3-How were the 19th century Russian composers influenced by Western composers and how did they influence the popular culture of the West?

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RELIGION

Sobornost: The idea of *Sobornost* (communality) appeared in Russian religious thought, which was identified with the Slavophiles Ivan Kireyevsky and Alexey Khomyakov's concept of the communal unity of all believers, like Russian *obshchina*, a peasant commune, united by Orthodox values denying Western individualism.

Russian Bible Society: The first quarter of the 19th century witnessed active endeavors for spiritual satisfaction on the part of large segments of Russian society. One group, called the Russian Bible Society, opened in 1813. Although initiated by the upper strata, it derived support from all classes and from many faiths with Prince Alexander Golitsyn who also happened to be Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, at its head. Later in 1817 he was appointed head of a new Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and Education. The ministry introduced the fusion of secular and sacred into the state, and issued a statute declaring all religions equal. By virtue of the prominence of many of its leaders, the Society had significant impact in the government, and it eventually became an official arm of the government.

Toleration Through Isolation: In the Russian Empire non-Orthodox religious communities fell into different legal categories. Some were legally recognized and tolerated; others were tolerated but lacked legal recognition; and still others were neither legally recognized nor tolerated. However, official toleration did not imply freedom of conscience, since toleration was considered to have been granted to a distinct, recognized group, an approach that frequently resulted in nationality and religious identity being inextricably linked.

Revolution of 1905: After the Revolution of 1905, for the first time, the state promulgated an Edict of Religious Toleration in April 1905, granting legal tolerance to all other religions in Russia, and allowing members of other religious groups to act more freely than before.

Discussion/Questions

1. In the Russian Empire non-Orthodox religions were recognized by an Edict of Religious Toleration of 1905. Did this Edict result in real equality for followers of religions other than Russian Orthodox Christianity?

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PHILOSOPHY

Philosophical Circles: The development of philosophy in Russia was strongly influenced by a number of intellectual circles that emerged after 1815. Nikolay Stankevich's circle, established in the 1830s played a key role in introducing such figures as Granovsky, Bakunin and Belinsky to Hegel's idealism. In the next decade Slavophiles and Westerners discussed on what bases a new Russia should be established, and in the last years of the 1840s the Petrashevsky circle criticized the institution of serfdom and debated how to transform Russian society into a socialist, democratic one.

Slavophiles: In line with German Idealism, Slavophiles argued that Russia should seek solutions to current problems from its own unique culture and traditions, and turned their backs on the Western influences that had begun during the reign of Peter the Great. Slavophiles claimed that three institutions were the basis of Russia's unique character – the Russian Orthodox Church, the tsarist autocracy and the peasant commune. The movement was conservative in its reverence for tradition and the past, presenting a potent vision of an ideal Russia that was in contrast to "the West" that has remained influential even to this day.

Alexey Khomyakov: Khomyakov combined elements of classical German Idealism, and the theories of Hegel and Schelling. In particular he argued that Christianity's spiritual and moral freedom that lay at the heart of Orthodoxy distinguished it from the Catholic Church's "despotic tradition".

Konstantin Aksakov: Aksakov, introduced to the philosophy of Hegel through the Stankevich Circle, interpreted it through the lens of Slavophilism. In addition, in the more relaxed political atmosphere of the latter 19th century Aksarov worked as a playwright and social critic.

Stankevich Circle: Established in 1831 by Nikolay Stankevich, the Stankevich circle was closely linked to the beginning of the Westernizing movement. Among its members were Granovsky, Aksakov, Lermontov, Bakunin, Belinsky, Kavelin, Koltsov, and Botkin. They shared an interest in the philosophy of Hegel, history, literature and Schelling's aesthetics and philosophy of nature. Although sharing many ideas with the Herzen-Ogarev circle, they had no defined political agenda.

Westernizers: In the first half of the 19th century French and German Romanticism had profound influence on Russian thought, and it was in this period that calls were made for government reform, educational improvement, and individual freedom in the light of rationalism and science. For the Westernizers Russia's future lay with Europe and would be based on the ideals of the French Enlightenment, rather than in the romanticized vision of Russia's past presented by the Slavophiles. The Petrashevsky Circle would be instrumental in formulating an adaptation of Western European utopian socialism for Russia.

Petrashevsky Circle: A devotee of the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier, Mikhail Butashevich Petrashevsky organized his group in the 1840s in St. Petersburg. Linked by common interests and a desire to reform Russian society and government, the Petrashevsky Circle met weekly.

Peter Chaadaev: Chaadaev examined Russia's historical role and future in his *Philosophical Letters*, written in the late 1820s. His philosophical understanding is religious in general, and his views on history show French, Catholic influence in particular. Like many members of Russia's educated elite in this period, Chaadaev expressed in his work a sense of powerlessness and apprehension about Russia's future.

Visserion Belinsky: As a member of Stankevich's circle Belinsky was introduced to the ideas of Hegel and Schelling's philosophy of nature, and later those of French socialism and the German thinker Feuerbach. In contrast to the Slavophiles who argued that Peter I's reforms were responsible for the gap between the common people and the educated elite, Belinsky claimed that the reforms that had created this gap were merely the first step in the modernization of Russia, and that as the necessary reforms of Russian society and politics were carried out, the gap between the elite and the common people would eventually disappear.

Alexander Herzen: During his student years in Moscow at the Physico-Mathematical Faculty Herzen became acquainted with the ideas of St. Simon, Feuerbach, Goethe, Proudhon, Schiller and Hegel. Imprisoned and exiled to northeast Russia in 1834, Herzen emigrated to France in 1847 where he published two magazines, *The Polar Star* and *The Bell*. Herzen's socialism was a major influence on the early Russian revolutionary movement in general, and on the participants in the revolutions of 1905 and 1917 in particular. Convinced that Europe was on the verge of collapse and that fundamental reform could only be achieved through protracted, bitter conflict, Herzen urged Russia to reject capitalism and bourgeois society in order to avoid this fate.

Nihilism: Popularized in the novel *Fathers and Sons* (1862) by Ivan Turgenev, nihilism was an ideology that rejected traditional sources of authority, saw individual freedom as its highest goal, claimed that materialism was the only reliable source of knowledge, called for society to be based on rationalism and had tenuous links to a revolutionary movement between 1860-1917. However, nihilism soon degenerated into mere anarchy and by the late 1870s was group linked to terror or political murder could be labelled nihilist.

Existentialism: Advocating individual definitions of meaning in life and the effort to make rational choices in an irrational cosmos, existentialism claims that embracing existence is the only means of finding meaning in universe that lacks, meaning or purpose. Two of the most important Russian existentialists were Feodor Dostoyevsky (particularly in *Notes from the Underground*), and Nikolay Berdyaev, a political and Orthodox thinker.

Anarchism:

Mikhail Bakunin: Considered the founder of collective anarchism, Bakunin was introduced to the ideas of Kant, Fichte and Hegel as a member of Stankevich's circle. Bakunin's role in several political uprisings

earned him years in prison, death sentences, and exile to Siberia where he escaped in 1861 to England. From there he went to Italy and eventually Switzerland, where he became an influential figure among Russian and European radicals.

Leo Tolstoy: Tolstoy was a student of Schopenhauer's philosophy whose travels in Europe brought him into contact with Proudhon and other French anarchist intellectuals. Tolstoy's strongest social criticism was aimed at institutionalized religion which he believed had corrupted Christ's true teachings. His Christian anarchism was based on Jesus' stress on resisting evil, which Tolstoy interpreted as *never do violence* to another. According to Tolstoy, Christ had been crucified by the authorities of his time as a conscious response to the threat his teachings posed to social structures based on violence or the threat of violence.

Materialism:

Nicholas Chernyshevsky: Chernyshevsky's thought was shaped by numerous influences – Feuerbach, 18th century French materialism, Hegel, Proudhon, Leroux, St. Simon, and Leroux. Religious until 1848, Chernyshevsky became a materialist, atheist, socialist and democratic republican who advocated the use of the scientific method and denied both divine revelation and the Orthodox tradition. Arrested and sentenced to penal servitude in Siberia in 1862, Chernyshevsky argued for "rational egoism" in his novel *What Is to Be Done?*.

Dmitry Pisarev: Moving from religious mysticism during his university years to Büchner, Vogt and Moleschott's crude materialism later in life, Pisarev was proud to be called a "nihilist". He argued that useless traditions and concepts should be eliminated without mercy.

Populism (Narodnichestvo): The last secular intellectual movement before Marxism in the last decade of the 19th century, Populism advocated agrarian socialism among the Russian peasantry (*narod*). While Populism may have had its roots in the thought of Herzen and Chernyshevsky, Peter Lavrov was its most important theoretician.

Peter Lavrov: Under the influence of Spencer, Comte, Feuerbach and John Stuart Mill, Lavrov came to believe that science could provide the principles of both creative activity and knowledge. Lavrov hoped that the Russians would be the first to carry out a socialist revolution through common cultivation of the land and sharing the products of their labor. His revolutionary associations led to forced retirement and exile to Vologda in 1866. After escaping from exile Lavrov settled in Paris.

Nicolay Mikhailovsky: Editor of *Russkoe Bogatstvo*, Mikhailovsky was the second most important Populist thinker. Like Lavrov, he was an enthusiast for the views of John Stuart Mill.

Tchaikovsky Circle (Tchaikovtsy): Established by the radical Nicholas Tchaikovsky, the Tchaikovtsy began as a literary group promoting self-education, but went on to print, publish and distribute scientific and revolutionary works as it evolved into an activist, Populist (Narodnist) organization in the early 1870s.

Religious Philosophers:

Pochvennichestvo Movement:

Apollon Grigoryev: At one time a member of the *pochvenniki* group, whose members included Dostoyevsky, Grigoryev claimed that each nation developed in line with its own internal principles, like living organisms. This was in contrast to the ideas of Hegel who argued that nations and societies were merely a series of players in the dialectical advance of history in accordance with the spirit of humanity, or the world-spirit.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky: The existential ideas presented in Dostoyevsky's work have had a profound influence on Russian and Western thought and have inspired a number of important religious thinkers such as Lev Shestov, Sergey Bulgakov, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Nikolay Berdyaev. In particular, Dostoyevsky

wrestled with issues related to anthropology, ethics and philosophies of history, religion and the human spirit.

Naturalism:

Vasily Rozanov: Rozanov's intellectual roots lay in conservatism and Slavophilism, and was an admirer of Dostoyevsky and Strakhov. As an existentialist, he rejected both commonly accepted religious tenets as well as the revolutionaries' secular vision. Rozanov considered the teachings of the New Testament to be too focused on death, and espoused an original metaphysics of family life and sexual relations that he believed was more akin to the Old Testament.

Konstantin Leontyev: Worried that Russia would fall under the sway of decadent Western European liberalism and pluralism, Leontyev defended the principles of faith, authority and hierarchy, as well as advocating political and aesthetic ideas in line with those of Nietzsche.

Nicholay Berdyaev: Berdyaev began as an active Marxist, which led to his eventual arrest and three-year exile in Vologda. After moving to St. Petersburg in 1904 Berdyaev abandoned his Marxist views and immersed himself in study and discussion of the spiritual and mystical aspects of various groups. Despite still considering himself a radical, spiritual development took precedence over political struggle for Berdyaev, so the Bolsheviks' restrictions on personal freedom made the regime unacceptable for him. Berdyaev regarded freedom as a gift from God, who had created the world out of freedom, to humanity. These views led to Berdyaev being arrested twice; after his second arrest he was ordered to leave the country or face execution.

Sophiology:

Vladimir Solovyev: As the founder of the theological doctrines of Sophiology and Godmanhood, and the philosophy of all-unity Solovyev attempted to merge rationalism, mysticism and empiricism in order to better know God, man and nature. He believed that Russia could play an important role in reuniting the Catholic and Orthodox Churches to create the one, true, universal Church.

Sergey Bulgakov: Bulgakov's complex spiritual journey took him from abandoning religion and embracing Marxism, to rejecting Marxism in 1900 and gradually returning to his Orthodox faith. In his effort to refute Positivism and Marxism, Bulgakov focused on creating a religiously-oriented idealism by combining Orthodoxy, Neo-Kantianism and Marxism. He stressed the superiority of God over this material world, although existence in this dimension remained meaningful.

Discussion/Questions

1. Discuss what philosophical ideas flowed into Russia during the Westernization period and the impact of Westernization.
2. Slavophiles believed that three institutions were the basis of Russia's unique character – the Russian Orthodox Church, the tsarist autocracy and the peasant commune. If peasant commune was considered one of the unique elements of Russian society, why did the Slavophiles also support the abolition of Serfdom?
3. The Westernizers called for government reform, educational improvement, and individual freedom in the light of rationalism and science under the influence of French and German Romanticism. How did the Westernizers attempt to adapt these Western ideas to the conditions in Russia?
4. In the 19th century numerous literary circles emerged. What was the social and political context in which these intellectual groups and literary circles developed?

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LITERATURE

It was only during the reign of Alexander II that Russian writers were able, for the first time, to experience the satisfaction of independent, creative work which was national in both its spirit and its style. Poetry above all was regarded as a spiritual exploit and a worthy vocation.

Golden Age: Traditionally the 19th century is regarded as the "Golden Era" of Russian literature. Poetic talent in particular flourished in the Romantic movement; two of the most prominent poets in this period were. A. Zhukovsky and his protégé A. S. Pushkin.

Romanticism: It was V. A. Zhukovsky who first brought European romantic idealism into Russian poetry. The fables of I. A. Krylov show a growing interest in national characteristics, and the wars against Napoleon I only furthered this trend. A. S. Pushkin, often regarded as the greatest Russian poet, developed a realistic, nationally conscious modern Russian style, influenced to a degree by romanticism and European poetry in the 1820s. Following Pushkin, the poetry of M. Y. Lermontov was able to maintain such stylistic excellence for a while.

Realism: It was in the 1830s that a cultural divide between Slavophiles and Westernizers became apparent. V. G. Belinsky, the main proponent of the Westernizers, emphasized the importance of the link between literature and national life, and advanced the development of Russian literary realism. Likewise, N.V. Gogol, the main initiator of realistic prose, also demonstrated qualities of romantic and morbid fantasy in his satirical and humanitarian tales. In the mid-19th century, I. A. Goncharov developed a harsh realism, tinged with humor; A. N. Ostrovsky, the first depict the merchant world in Russian literary works, wrote numerous plays, although most of them are no longer performed. F. I. Tyuchev's poetry endowed everyday events with philosophic significance, and N. A. Nekrasov penned verses with social purpose.

The prose works of Russia's literary golden age were written in the context of a strong tsarist autocracy. While generally composed within a realist framework, the masterpieces of this period are also characterized by mysticism, brooding introspection, and melodrama. I. S. Turgenev became internationally renowned for his complex novels which were also extremely critical of Russian society. The moral and religious idealism found in F. M. Dostoyevsky's works earned him both critical and popular acclaim, as did the novels of L. N. Tolstoy. These two writers remain even today among the giants of world literature. A. P. Chekhov closed the golden age with his sensitive plays and stories, and the following period is better known for its poetic works.

Discussion/Questions

1. Why was the 19th century regarded as the "Golden Era" of Russian literature?
2. Discuss the general characteristics of the Russian realism, and the governments reaction to it.

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