THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIA
FROM THE "GREAT REFORMS" UNTIL THE REVOLUTIONS
OF 1917

The last sixty years of Imperial Russia are not only in themselves a period of great historical interest; they are significant for other countries and other periods. The pattern of this period in Russia has repeated and is repeating itself elsewhere. It is not only in Russia, and not only in Europe, that the impact of the nineteenth- or twentieth-century West on a backward country has caused distortions and frustrations, has released revolutionary forces. New countries have been drawn into the world capitalist economy, into the rapid exchange of goods and ideas. The loss of centuries has to be made up in a few years. Improved communications, public order and sanitation increase population faster than output. The impoverished masses become more impoverished. The new ways create a new intelligentsia. The shrinking contrast between the old and the new drives a part of the intelligentsia to revolutionary ideas, and if political conditions make this necessary, to conspiratorial organization. The force which keeps such societies together is the bureaucracy. It holds the power, the privileges and the means of repression. From it and through it come such reforms as are permitted. It is outwardly impressive. It weighs heavily on the backs of the people. But like cast iron, though heavy it is also brittle. A strong blow can shatter it to pieces. When it is destroyed there is anarchy. Then is the moment for a determined group of conspiratorial revolutionary intellectuals to seize power.

H. REYN-WATSON

Whether the general well-being of the peasantry had shown improvement or decline—whether there had been within the peasant mass a tendency to draw together or to draw apart—still, as the day of revolt approached, there was no doubt of the existence in the countryside of a mass of penury sufficiently large, an antithesis between poverty and plenty sufficiently sharp, to give rise to whatever results might legitimately be bled and born of economic misery and economic contrast.

ROBINSON

Who lives joyfully, freely in Russia?

NIKISHIN

The "great reforms" made a division in the economic and social development of Russia. Even if we disregard the peculiar Soviet periodization, which considers Russia as feudai from the late Kievan era until the emancipation of the serfs and capitalist from the emancipation of the serfs until 1917, the crucial significance of the "great reforms" must still be emphasized. In particular, these reforms contributed immensely to the economic changes and the consequential social shifts which characterized the empire of the Romanovs during its last five or six decades and culminated in its downfall.

Every social class felt the impact of the "great reforms" and of their aftermath. The gentry, to be sure, remained the dominant social group in the country. In fact, as already indicated, both Alexander III and Nicholas II made every effort to strengthen the gentry and to support its interests. Court circles consisted mainly of great landlords. The bureaucracy that ran the empire was closely linked on its upper levels to the landlord class. The ministers, senators, members of the State Council, and other high officials in the capital and the governors, vice-governors, and heads of various departments in the provinces belonged predominantly to the gentry. With the establishment in 1889 of land captives to be appointed from the local gentry, Russia obtained a new network of gentry officials who effectively controlled the peasants. A year later the zemstvo "counterreform" greatly strengthened the role of the gentry in local self-government and emphasized the class principle within that government. In the army most high positions were held by members of the landlord class, while virtually the entire officer corps of the navy belonged to the gentry. The government supported gentry agriculture by such measures as the establishment in 1885 of the State Gentry Land Bank which provided funds for the landlords on highly favorable terms.

Nevertheless, the gentry class declined after the "great reforms." Members of the gentry owned 73.1 million desiatins* of land according to the census of 1877, 65.3 million according to the census of 1887, 53.2 in 1905 according to a statistical compilation of that year, and only 43.2 million desiatins in 1911 according to Ognovsky's calculations. At the same time, to quote Robinson: "The average size of their holdings also diminished, from 538.2 desiatins in 1887 to 488 in 1905; and their total possession of work horses from 546,000 in 1888-1891, to 499,000 in 1904-1906—that is, by 8.5 per cent." Although the emancipation settlement was on the whole generous to the gentry, it should be kept in mind that a very large part of the wealth of that class had been mortgaged to the state before 1861 and that, therefore, much of the compensation that the landlords received as part of the reform went to pay debts, rather little remaining for development and modernization of the gentry economy. Moreover, most landlords failed to make effective use of their resources and opportunities. Deprived of serf labor and forced to adjust to more intense competition and other

* A desiatina equals 2.7 acres.
harsh realities of the changing world, members of the gentry had little in
their education, outlook, or character to make them successful capitalist
farmers. A considerable number of landlords, in fact, preferred to live in
Paris or Nice, spending whatever they had, rather than to face the new
conditions in Russia. Others remained on their estates and waged a struggle
for survival, but, as statistics indicate, frequently without success.
Uncounted “cherry orchards” left gentry possession. The important fact, much
emphasized by Soviet scholars, that a small segment of the gentry did
succeed in making the adjustment and proceeded to accumulate great
wealth in a few hands does not fundamentally change the picture of the
decline of a dominant class.

The Industrialization of Russia

If the “great reforms” helped push the gentry down a steep incline, they
also led to the rise of a Russian middle class, and in particular of
industrialists, businessmen, and technicians — both results, to be sure, were
not at all intentional. It is difficult to conceive of a modern industrial state
based on serfdom, although, of course, the elimination of serfdom constituted
only one prerequisite for the development of capitalism in Russia. Even
after the emancipation the overwhelmingly peasant nature of the country
convinced many observers that the empire of the tsars could not adopt the
Western capitalist model as its own. The populists argued that the Russian
peasant was self-sufficient, producing his own food and clothing, and that he,
in his egalitarian peasant commune, did not need capitalism and would
not respond to it. Perhaps more to the point, the peasant was miserably
poor and thus could not provide a sufficient internal market for Russian
industry. Also the imperial government, especially the powerful Ministry
of the Interior, preoccupied with the maintenance of autocracy and
the support of the gentry, for a long time in effect turned its back on industri-
alization.

Nevertheless, Russian industry continued to grow — a growth traced in
detail by Goldsmith and others — and in the 1890’s it shot up at an amazing
rate, estimated by Gerschenkron at 8 per cent a year on the average. Russian
industrialists could not rely on a better system of transportation, with
the railroad network increasing in length by some 40 per cent between
1881 and 1894 and doubling again between 1895 and 1905. In addition
to Russian financial resources, foreign capital began to participate on a
large scale in the industrial development of the country: foreign investment
in Russian industry has been estimated at 100 million rubles in 1880, 200
million in 1890, and over 900 million in 1900. Most important, the Ministry
of Finance under Witte, in addition to building railroads and trying to
attract capital from abroad, did everything possible to develop heavy in-
dustry in Russia. To subsidize that industry Witte increased Russian ex-
ports, drastically curtailed imports, balanced the budget, introduced the
gold standard, and used heavy indirect taxation on items of everyday
consumption to squeeze the necessary funds out of the peasants. Thus, in
Russian conditions, the state played the leading role in bringing large-scale
capitalist enterprise into existence.

Toward the end of the century Russia possessed eight basic industrial
regions, to follow the classification adopted by Liabochenko. The Moscow
industrial region, comprising six provinces, contained textile industries of
every sort, as well as metal processing and chemical plants. The St.
Petersburg region specialized in metal processing, machine building, and textile
industries. The Polish region, with such centers as Lodz and Warsaw, had
textile, coal, iron, metal processing, and chemical industries. The recently
developed south Russian Ukrainian region supplied coal, iron ore, and
basic chemical products. The Ural area continued to produce iron, non-
ferrous metals, and minerals. The Baku sector in Transcaucasia contributed
oil. The southwestern region specialized in beet sugar. Finally, the Trans-
caucasan manganese-coal region supplied substantial amounts of its two
products.

The new Russian industry displayed certain striking characteristics.
Because Russia industrialized late and rapidly, the Russians borrowed ad-
vanced Western technology wholesale, with the result that Russian factories
were often more modern than their Western counterparts. Yet this progress
in certain segments of the economy went together with appalling backward-
ness in others. Indeed, the industrial process frequently juxtaposed compli-
cated machinery and primitive manual work performed by a cheap, if
unskilled, labor force. For technological reasons, but also because of
government policy, Russia acquired huge plants and large-scale industries
almost overnight. Before long the capitalists began to organize: a met-
lurgical syndicate was formed in 1902, a coal syndicate in 1904, and several
others in later years. Russian entrepreneurs and employers, it might be added,
came from different classes — from gentry to former serfs — with a
considerable admixture of foreigners. Their leaders included a number of
old merchant and industrialist families who were Old Believers, such as
the celebrated Morozovs. As to markets, since the poor Russian people
could absorb only a part of the products of Russian factories, the industri-
alists relied on huge government orders and also began to sell more abroad.
In particular, because Russian manufactures were generally unable to com-
pete successfully in the West, export began on a large scale to the adjacent
Asiatic countries of Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, and China.
Again Witte and the government helped all they could by such means as
the establishment of the Russo-Persian Bank and the Russo-Chinese Bank,
and the building of the East China Railway, not to mention the Trans-
Siberian. As already indicated, Russian economic activity in the Far East was part of the background of the Russo-Japanese War.

The great Russian industrial upsurge of the 1890's ended with the depression of 1900, produced by a number of causes, but perhaps especially by the "increasing weakness of the base," the exhaustion of the Russian peasantry. The depression lasted several years and became combined with political unrest and finally with the Revolution of 1905. Still, once order had been restored and the Russians returned to work, industrialization resumed its course. In fact, the last period of the economic development of imperial Russia, from the calling of the First Duma to the outbreak of the First World War, witnessed rapid industrialization, although it was not as rapid as in the 1890's, with an annual industrial growth rate of perhaps 6 per cent compared to the 8 per cent of the earlier period. The output of basic industries again soared, with the exception of the oil industry. Thus, counting in millions of pud* and using 1909 and 1913 as the years to be compared, the Russian production of pig iron rose from 175 to 283, of iron and steel from 163 to 246, of copper from 1.3 to 2.0, and of coal from 1,591 to 2,214.

The new industrial advance followed in many ways the pattern of the previous advance, for instance, in the emphasis on heavy industry and on large plants. Yet it exhibited some significant new traits as well. With the departure of Witte, the government stopped forcing the pace of industrialization, decreased the direct support of capitalists, and relaxed somewhat the financial pressure on the masses. Russian industry managed to make the necessary adjustments, for it was already better able to stand on its own feet. Also, the industry often had the help of banks, which began to assume a guiding role in the economic development of the country. But, financial capital aside, the Russian industrialists themselves were gradually gaining strength and independence. Also, it can well be argued that during the years immediately preceding the First World War Russian industry was becoming more diversified, acquiring a larger home market, and spreading its benefits more effectively to workers and consumers.

To be sure, the medal had its reverse side. In spite of increasing production in the twentieth century, imperial Russia was falling further behind the leading states of the West — or so it is claimed by many analysts, especially Marxist analysts. Just as the Russian government relied on foreign loans, Russian industry remained heavily dependent on foreign capital, which rose to almost two and a quarter billion rubles in 1916/17 and formed approximately one-third of the total industrial investment. The French, for example, owned nearly two-thirds of the Russian pig iron and one-half of the Russian coal industries, while the Germans invested heavily in the

* A pud equals 36 pounds.
chemical and electrical engineering industries, and the British in oil. On
the basis of investment statistics some Marxists even spoke of the "semi-
colonial" status of Russia. More ominously, Russian industry rose on top of
a bitter and miserable proletariat and a desperately poor peasant mass.

Labor

The industrialization of Russia created, of course, a considerable working
class. While Russians began to work in factories in the Urals and elsewhere
far back in history, as mentioned in previous chapters, a sizeable industrial
proletariat grew in Russia only toward the end of the nineteenth century.
Russian industrial workers numbered over 2 million in 1900 and perhaps 3
million out of a population of about 170 million in 1914. Not impressive in
quantity in proportion to total population, the proletariat was more densely
massed in Russia than in other countries. Because of the heavy concentra-
tion of Russian industry, over half the industrial enterprises in Russia em-
ployed more than 500 workers each, with many employing more than 1,000
each. The workers thus formed large and closely knit groups in industrial
centers, which included St. Petersburg and Moscow.

True, the term "worker" may be too definite and precise as applied to
the Russian situation. Populists, Marxists, and scholars of other per-
suasions, as well as Western specialists such as Zelnik and Johnson,
have debated the extent to which Russian workers remained — or
ceased to be — peasants. These workers usually came from the village.
Often they belonged to the village commune, left their families behind
in the village, and spent a part of every year there, gathering harvest
and performing other peasant tasks. For them the village remained their
home, while the factory became a novel way to earn obrok, so to speak.
When a close relationship with the village ceased, many factory hands still
maintained their membership in it and sought to retreat to it to end their
days in peace. And even after all important ties with the countryside were
broken and workers were left entirely and permanently on their own in
towns and cities, they could not shed overnight their peasant mentality and
outlook. The Russian proletariat tended to be not only the pride but also
the despair of the Marxists both before and after 1917. In fact, in the
years following the October Revolution much of it vanished into the
countryside. Nevertheless, the Marxists were right in their argument with
the populists to the extent that they emphasized the continuing growth of
capitalism and the proletariat in Russia. With all due qualifications, from
the 1880's on, an industrial working class constituted a significant com-
ponent of Russian population, an essential part of Russian economy, and
a factor in Russian politics.

As noted in an earlier chapter, the government initiated modern labor
legislation in the 1880's, when Minister of Finance Bunge tried to eliminate
or curb certain glaring abuses of the factory system and established factory
inspectors to supervise the carrying out of new laws. More legislation fol-
lowed later, with a law in 1897 applicable to industrial establishments
employing more than 20 workers that limited daily work of adults to eleven
and a half hours and night work to ten hours. The ten-hour day was also to
prevail on Saturdays and on the eve of major holidays, while no work
was allowed on Sundays or the holidays in question. Adolescents and chil-
dren were to work no more than ten and nine hours a day respectively. A
pioneer labor insurance law, holding the employers responsible for accidents
in connection with factory work, came out in 1903, but an improved and
effective labor insurance act, covering both accidents and illness, appeared
only in 1912. Unions were finally allowed in 1906, and even then exclusively
on the local, not the national, level.

However, in spite of labor legislation, and also in spite of the fact that
wages probably increased in the years preceding the First World War — a
point, incidentally, strongly denied by Soviet scholars — Russian workers
remained in general in miserable condition. Poorly paid, desperately over-
crowded, and with very little education or other advantages, the proletariat
of imperial Russia represented in effect an excellent example of a destitute
and exploited labor force, characteristic of the early stages of capitalist
development and described so powerfully by Marx in Capital.

Not surprisingly, the workers began to organize to better their lot. Indeed,
they exercised at times sufficient pressure to further labor legislation,
notably in the case of the law of 1897, and they could not be deterred by the
fact that unions remained illegal until after the Revolution of 1905 and were
still hampered and suspected by the government thereafter. The first signifi-
cant strikes occurred in St. Petersburg in 1878 and 1879 and at a Morozov
textile factory near Moscow in 1885. The short-lived but important North-
ern Workers' Union, led by a worker and populist, Stephen Khataturin,
helped to organize the early labor movement in the capital. Major strikes
took place in the '90s, not only in St. Petersburg, but also in Riga, in
industrial areas of Russian Poland, and in new plants in the Ukraine. In
addition, railwaymen struck in several places. The strike movement again
gathered momentum in the first years of the twentieth century, culminating,
as we know, in the Revolution of 1905, the creation and the activities of
the St. Petersburg Soviet, its arrest by the government, and the unsuccessful
armed uprising of workers in Moscow at the very end of the year. A hull of
several years followed these events. However, the Russian labor move-
ment revived shortly before the outbreak of the First World War. Strikes
became frequent after the massacre of workers in the Lena gold fields in
April 1912, when police fired into a crowd of protesting workers killing
and wounding more than a hundred of them. In 1912, 725,000 workers
went out on strike, 887,000 in 1913, and over a million and a quarter from January to July in 1914. Their demands, it should be noted, were taken political, as well as economic, in character. The Social Democrats, both the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks, developed large-scale activities in the Russian labor movement.

The Peasant Question

Peasants constituted the vast majority of the Russian people, at least three-quarters of the total population according to the census of 1897. In a sense, they were the chief and the most direct beneficiaries of the "great reforms," particularly since the serfs received their freedom and the state peasants escaped some of their bondage to the state. Yet, after the reforms, their condition remained the largest and the gravenest problem in Russia. As mentioned, the emancipation provisions proved to be insufficient to develop a healthy peasant economy — whether any provisions would have sufficed is another matter — and some of these provisions were shown to be entirely unrealistic: at the time of the partition former serfs received considerably less than half of the land, and they simply could not meet the redemption payments. Moreover — a point which we have not discussed in any detail — the emancipation took a long time and followed an uneven course throughout Russia, with periods of transition and other delays to the peasants' full acquisition of their new status. And even that status, when finally attained, did not make the peasants equal to other social groups. Thus they possessed a separate administration and courts and, besides, were tied to the peasant commune in most of European Russia.

The communes, which received the land at the time of the emancipation, were made responsible for taxes and recruits and were in general intended to serve as bulwarks of order and organized life in the countryside. No doubt they helped many peasants keep their bearings in post-reform Russia, and they usually provided at least minimal security for their members. Even industrial workers, as mentioned above, often planned to retire in their villages. But the price of communal services was high. Communes tended to perpetuate backward, indeed archaic, agricultural production: they continued their traditional, ignorant ways, including the partitioning of land into small strips so that each household would receive land of every quality; and they lacked capital, education, and initiative for modernization. Individual householders, even when more progressively inclined, to a large extent had to follow the practices of their neighbors and, besides, acquired little incentive to improve their strips in those communes which periodically redivided the land. At the same time communes greatly hampered peasant mobility and promoted ever-increasing overpopulation in the countryside. Members of a commune frequently found it difficult to obtain permission to leave, because their departure would force the commune to perform its set obligations to the state with fewer men. Also, where communes periodically redivided the land among the households, the head of the household could prevent the departure of one of its members on the ground that that would result in a smaller allotment of land to the household at the next reapportionment. As Gerschenkron commented: "Nothing was more revealing of the irrational way in which the village commune functioned than the fact that the individual household had to retain the abundant factor (labor) as a precondition for obtaining the scarce factor (land)."

Population in Russia grew rapidly after the emancipation: from over 73 million in 1861 to over 125 million according to the census of 1897 and almost 170 million in 1917. Land prices more than doubled between 1860 and 1905, and almost doubled again between 1905 and 1917. In spite of the fact that peasants purchased much of the land sold over a period of time by the gentry, individual peasant allotments kept shrinking. Russian economic historians have calculated that 28 per cent of the peasant population of the country could not support itself from its land allotments immediately after the emancipation, and that by 1900 that figure had risen to 52 per cent. That the allotments still compared reasonably well with the allotments of peasants in other countries proved to be cold comfort, for with the backward conditions of agriculture in Russia they plainly did not suffice. The average peasant ownership of horses also declined sharply, with approximately one-third of peasant households owning no horses by 1901. The peasants, of course, tried a variety of ways to alleviate their desperate plight, from periodic employment in the cities to migration, but with limited success at best. They worked as hard as they could, exhausting themselves and the land, and competing for every bit of it. In this marginal economy droughts became disasters, and the famine of 1891 was a shattering catastrophe. But even without outright famine peasants died rapidly. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the annual death rate for European Russia, with the countryside leading the cities, stood at 31.2 per thousand, compared to 19.6 in France and 16 in England. Naturally, conditions differed in the enormous Russian Empire, with Siberian peasants, for example, reasonably prosperous. On the other hand, perhaps the worst situation prevailed in the thickly populated provinces of central European Russia — caused by the so-called "pauperization of the center." How the peasants themselves felt about their lot became abundantly clear in the massive agrarian disturbances culminating in 1905.

To appreciate the burden that the Russian peasant had to carry, we should take further note of the fiscal system of the empire. Thus, an official inquiry indicated that after the emancipation the peasants paid annually
to the state in taxes, counting redemption payments, ten times as much per desiatina of land as did members of the gentry. And even after the head tax was abolished in 1886 and the redemption payments were finally canceled in 1905, the impoverished masses continued to support the state by means of indirect taxes. These taxes, perennially the main source of imperial revenue, were levied on domestic and imported items of everyday consumption such as vodka, sugar, tea, tobacco, cotton, and iron. The tax on alcohol, which Witte made a state monopoly in 1894, proved especially lucrative. While relentless financial pressure forced the peasants to sell all they could, the government, particularly Witte, promoted the export of foodstuffs, notably grain, to obtain a favorable balance of trade and finance the industrialization of Russia. Foodstuffs constituted almost two-thirds in value of all Russian exports in the first years of the twentieth century compared to some two-fifths at the time of the emancipation.

However, the last years of imperial Russia, the period from the Revolutions of 1905 to the outbreak of the First World War, brought some hope and improvement—many authorities claim much hope and great improvement—into the lives of the Russian peasants, that is, the bulk of the Russian people. The upswing resulted from a number of factors. As already indicated, the industrialization of Russia no longer demanded or obtained the extreme sacrifices characteristic of the 1890’s, and the new Russian industry had more to offer to the consumer. The national income in fifty provinces of European Russia rose, according to Prokopovich’s calculation, from 6,579.6 million rubles in 1900 to 11,805.5 million in 1913. In 1913 the per capita income for the whole Russian Empire amounted to 102.2 rubles, a considerable increase even if highly inadequate compared to the figures of 292 rubles for Germany, 355 for France, 463 for England, or 695 for the United States. Luckily, the years preceding the First World War witnessed a series of bountiful harvests. Russian peasants profited, in addition, from a remarkable growth of the co-operative movement, and from government sponsorship of migration to new lands. Co-operatives multiplied from some 2,000 in 1901 and 4,500 in 1905 to 33,000 at the outbreak of the First World War, when their membership extended to 12 million people. Credit and consumers’ co-operatives led the way, although some producers’ co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operatives, such as Siberian co-operative movements, which proved highly successful. As to migration, the government finally began to support it after the Revolution of 1905 by providing the necessary guiding agencies and also by small subsidies to the migrants, suspension of certain taxes for them, and the like. In 1907 over half a million people moved to new lands and in 1908 the annual number of migrants rose to about three-quarters of a million. After that, however, it declined to the immediate pre-war average of about 300,000 a year. Land under cultivation increased from 88.3 million desiatina in 1901-5 to 97.6 million in 1911-13.
and a half million households that had left communes somewhat more than half had been provided with consolidated farms by 1916. Still, these impressive statistics do not necessarily indicate the ultimate wisdom and success of Stolypin’s reform. True, Stolypin has received much praise from many specialists, including post-Soviet Russian historians and such American scholars as Trendgold, who believe that the determined prime minister was in fact saving the empire and that, given time, his agrarian reform would have achieved its major objective of transforming and stabilizing the countryside. But critics have also been numerous and by no means limited to populists or other defenders of the commune as such. They have pointed, for example, to the limited scope of Stolypin’s reform, which represented, in a sense, one more effort to save gentry land by making the peasants redefine what they already possessed, and to the element of compulsion in the carrying out of the reform. They argued that the reform had largely spent itself without curing the basic ills of rural Russia. Moreover, it added new problems to the old ones, in particular by helping to stratify the peasant mass and by creating hostility between the stronger and richer peasants whom the government helped to withdraw from the commune on advantageous terms and their poorer and more egalitarian brethren left behind.

Conclusion

To conclude, various evaluations have been given of the development of Russian industry in the last years of the empire, of the development of Russian agriculture, and indeed of the entire economy of the country. Whereas Gerschenkron, Karpevich, Pavlovsky, and other scholars have emphasized progress and grounds for optimism, Soviet authorities, as well as such Western specialists as Von Laue, concluded that in spite of all efforts — perhaps the maximum efforts possible under the old regime — Russia was not solving its problems either in terms of its own requirements or by comparison with other countries. Most close students of the period have come out with the feeling — so pronounced in Robinson’s valuable work on rural Russia — that, whether the conditions of life in Russia improved or declined on the eve of the First World War, they remained desperately hard for the bulk of the population. It has been said that revolutions occur not when the people are utterly destitute, oppressed beyond all measure, and deprived of hope — crushing conditions lead only to blind and fruitless rebellions — but when there is growth, advance, and high expectation, hampered, however, by an archaic and rigid established order. Such a situation existed in Russia in the early twentieth century: in economic and social matters as well as in politics.

Russian Culture from the "Great Reforms" Until the Revolutions of 1917

There is only one evil among men—ignorance; against this evil there is only one medicine—learning; but this medicine must be taken not in homeopathic doses, but by the pall and by the forty-pall barrel.

The three points where the new man thought he had made himself most secure were: first, his liberation from all the values and institutions of the status quo; second, his complete faith in human reason and the principles it made known to him; and finally, his assurance that he was the personal instrument of the historical process. . . . They were convinced that they had found the path to a state of personal engagement which could sustain them in their struggle with the tsarist system, because they believed in the justice of their assault and in the inevitability of its ultimate issue. But if we view it critically we note that it rested on an "adjustment" that was composed in large part of hostility to existing institutions, and in equally large part of commitment to a world that had not yet come into being. Described so, its precariousness becomes obvious.

Various forces were at work in the 1890’s in opposition to the Gorky-Andreyev school, and particularly to the dominance of social significance and nihilistic thought in literature. There was a definite turning away from civic morality in aestheticism, from duty to beauty, and cultural and individual values were stressed at the expense of political and social values. Most of the participants in this movement were brilliant intellectuals, and their efforts represented a lofty degree of cultural refinement that had never been achieved by any literary group in Russia hitherto.

The decades that elapsed between the emancipation of the serfs and the revolutions of 1917 constituted an active, fruitful, and fascinating period in the history of Russian culture. Education continued to grow at all levels, in spite of obstacles and even governmental "counterreforms"; in the twentieth century the rate of growth increased sharply. Russian science and scholarship, already reasonably well-established at the time of Nicholas I’s death, developed further and blossomed out. In a word, Russia became a full-fledged contributor to and partner in the intellectual and academic efforts of the Western world, its new high position in that respect antedating
by decades the October Revolution. Russian literature continued its “golden age,” although primarily in prose rather than in poetry and largely through the achievements of several isolated individuals, such as Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoievsky. Later, when the giants died or, as in the case of Tolstoy, stopped writing fiction and the “golden age” came to its end, Chekhov, Gorky, and some other outstanding authors maintained the great tradition of Russian prose. Moreover, the very end of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth witnessed another magnificent literary and artistic revival, designated sometimes as the “silver age.” In literature that renaissance meant the appearance once again of superb poetry, especially Alexander Blok’s, the introduction of a wide variety of new trends, and the emergence of exceptionally high standards of culture and craftsmanship. The “silver age” also extended to the theater, music, ballet, painting, and sculpture, and in effect to every form of creative expression. It proved especially beneficial to the visual arts, which had produced little of distinction in the age of arid realism, and it scored perhaps its most resounding successes in the ballet and the theater. In the history of ideas, as well as in literature and art, the period can be divided into two uneven parts: from the 1860’s to the end of the century and indeed to the revolutions of 1917, the creed of radicalism, utilitarianism, and materialism first proclaimed by left-wing Westernizers dominated student and other active intellectual circles, finding its best expression in nihilism, different forms of populism, and Marxism; yet with the turn of the century and the “silver age” in culture members of the intellectual elite began to return to idealistic metaphysics and religion. The First World War and later the revolutions struck when Russian intellectual and cultural life was exhibiting more vitality, diversity, and sophistication than ever before.

Education

The death of Nicholas I and the coming of the “great reforms” meant liberalization in education as in other fields. The university statute of 1863 reaffirmed the principle of university autonomy, while Nicholas I’s special restrictions on universities were among the first regulations to disappear in the new reign. The zemstvo reform of 1864 opened vast opportunities to establish schools in the countryside. In towns or rural areas, the increasing thirst for knowledge on the part of the Russians augured well for education in a liberal age. However, as already mentioned, official liberalism did not last long, and reaction logically, if unfortunately, showed a particular concern for education. As a result, the growth of education in Russia, while it could not be stopped, found itself hampered and to an extent deformed by government action.

After Dmitrii Tolstoy replaced Alexander Golovin in 1866 as minister of education, the ministry did its best to control education and to direct it into desirable channels. As in the days of Uvarov, high standards were used in universities and secondary schools to keep the number of students down, hindering especially the academic advancement of students of low social background. In secondary education, the emphasis fell on the so-called classical gymnasium, which became the only road to universities proper, as distinct from more specialized institutions of higher learning. These gymnasium concentrated on teaching the Latin and Greek languages, to the extent of some 40 per cent of the total class time. Largely because of the rigorous demands, less than one-third of those who had entered the gymnasium were graduated. In addition to the natural obstacles that such a system presented to “socially undesirable” elements, ministers of education made direct appeals in their circulars to subordinates to keep “cook’s sons” out of the gymnasium, as did one of Dmitrii Tolstoy’s successors, Ivan Delianov, in 1887. In general, the government tried to divide education into airtight compartments that students as a rule could not cross. Under Alexander III and Pobedonostsev, Church schools received special attention. Following the statute of 1884 concerning Church-parish schools, an effort was made to entrust elementary education as much as possible to the Church, the number of Church-parish schools increasing from 4,500 in 1882 to 32,000 in 1894. While inferior in quality, these educational institutions were considered “safe.” By contrast, advanced education for women, barely begun in Russia, came to be increasingly restricted. And in all schools and at all levels the Ministry of Education emphasized “conduct” and tried to maintain iron discipline.

Yet, in spite of all the vicissitudes, education continued to grow in Russia. The impact of the zemstva proved especially beneficial. Thus, according to Charnolvskiy’s figures, the sixty provinces of European Russia in 1880 possessed 22,770 elementary schools with 1,141,000 students, 68.5 per cent of the schools having been established after the zemstvo reform of 1864. In addition to the exclusive classical gymnasium, Realschule, which taught modern languages and science in place of Greek and Latin, provided a secondary education that could lead to admission to technical institutions of higher learning. Other kinds of schools also developed. In addition to the activities of the ministries of education, war, navy, and of the Holy Synod, Witte promoted commercial schools under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance, establishing some 150 of them between 1896 and 1902, and well over 200 altogether. In 1905 these schools were transferred to the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Moreover, after the Revolution of 1905 schools in Russia profited from a more liberal policy as well as from an increasing interest in education on the part of both the government and the public. As mentioned earlier, plans were drawn to institute schooling for all Russian children by 1922, or, according to a revised estimate fol-
lowering the outbreak of the First World War, by 1923. Educational prospects had never looked brighter in Russia than on the eve of the revolutions of 1917. The problem, however, remained immense. Russians needed all kinds of training but above all the acquisition of simple literacy. Although by the end of the nineteenth century Russia had 76,914 elementary schools for children and 1,785 for adults with a total of 4.1 million students, and by 1915 the number of students had grown to over 8 million, on the eve of the October Revolution somewhat more than half of the population of the country was illiterate. To be more precise, in 1917 literacy extended in all probability to only about 45 per cent of the people.

At the other end of the educational ladder, universities increased in number, although slowly. The so-called Novorossiiskii University — referring to the name of the area, Novorossia, or New Russia — was founded in Odessa in 1864, the University of Tomsk in Siberia in 1888, the University of Saratov in 1910, of Perm in 1915, and of Rostov-on-Don in 1917. That gave Russia a total of twelve universities, all of them belonging to the state. However, in 1917 the empire also possessed more than a hundred specialized institutions of higher learning: pedagogical, technological, agricultural, and other. Gradually it became possible for women to obtain higher education by attending special “courses” set up in university centers, such as the “Guerrier courses,” named after a professor of history, Vladimir Guerrier, which began to function in 1872 in Moscow, and the “Bestuzhev courses,” founded in 1878 in St. Petersburg and named after another historian, Constantine Bestuzhev-Riumin. The total number of students in Russian institutions of higher learning in 1917 has been variously estimated between 100,000 and 180,000. It should be noted that while the university statute of 1884 proved to be more restrictive than that of 1863 and over a period of time led to the resignation of a number of noted professors, most of the restrictions disappeared in 1905. In general, and especially after 1905, the freedom and variety of intellectual life in imperial Russian universities invite comparison with the Western universities, certainly not with the Soviet system.

Science and Scholarship

The Academy of Sciences, the universities, and other institutions of higher learning developed, or rather continued to develop, science and scholarship in Russia. In fact, in the period from the emancipation of the serfs until the revolutions of 1917, Russians made significant contributions in almost every area of knowledge. In mathematics, while no one quite rivaled Lobachevsky, a considerable number of outstanding Russian mathematicians made their appearance, including Pafnutii Chebyshev in St.

Petersburg and a remarkable woman, Sophia Kovalevskaia, who taught at the University of Stockholm. Chemistry in Russia achieved new heights in the works of many talented scholars, the most celebrated of them being the great Dmitrii Mendeleev, who lived from 1834 to 1907 and whose periodic table of elements, formulated in 1869, both organized the known elements into a system and made an accurate forecast of later discoveries. Leading Russian physicists included the specialist in magnetism and electricity, Alexander Skoltsov, and the brilliant student of the properties of light, Peter Lebedev, as well as such notable pioneer inventors as Paul Iablochkov, who worked before Edison in developing electric light, and Alexander Popov, who invented the radio around 1895, shortly before Marconi. Russian inventors, even more than Russian scholars in general, frequently received less than their due recognition in the world both because of the prevalent ignorance abroad of the Russian language and Russia and because of the backwardness of Russian technology, which usually failed to utilize their inventions.

Advances in the biological sciences rivaled those in the physical. Alexander Kovalevsky produced classic works in zoology and embryology, while his younger brother, Vladimir, the husband of the mathematician, made important contributions to paleontology — and, incidentally, was much appreciated by Darwin. The famous embryologist and bacteriologist Elizab Mekhinikov, who died most of his work in the Pasteur Institute in Paris, concentrated on such problems as the function of the white corpuscles, immunity, and the process of aging. Medicine developed well in Russia during the last decades of the empire, both in terms of quality and, after the zemstvo reform, in terms of accessibility to the masses. Following the lead of an outstanding anatomist, surgeon, teacher, and public figure, Nicholas Pirogov, who died in 1881, and others, Russian doctors exhibited a remarkable civic spirit and devotion to their work and their patients.

Russian contributions to physiology were especially striking and important, and they overlapped into psychology. Ivan Sechenov, who taught in several universities for about half a century and died in 1905, did remarkable research on gases in blood, nerve centers, and reflexes and on other related matters. Ivan Pavlov, who lived from 1849 to 1936 and whose epoch-making experiments began in the 1880's, established through his studies of dogs reactions to food the existence and nature of conditioned reflexes, and, further developing his approach, contributed enormously to both theory and experimental work in physiology and to behavioral psychology.

The social sciences and the humanities also prospered. Russian scholars engaged fruitfully in everything from law to oriental studies and from economics to folklore. In particular, Russian historiography flourished in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first of the twentieth century.
Building on the work of Sergei Solovic and other pioneers, Buri Kliu-
chevsky, Sergei Platov, Matthew Liubarsky, Paul Miluskov, and their
colleagues in effect established Russian history as a rich and many-sided
field of learning. Their works have not been surpassed. Other Russians
made notable contributions to the histories of other countries and ages, as
did the medievalist Paul Vinogradov and the specialist in classical antiquity
Michael Rostovtseff. While Russian historiography profited greatly from
the sociological emphasis characteristic of the second half of the nineteenth
century, the "silver age" stimulated the history of art, which could claim
in Russia such magnificent specialists as Nikodem Kondakov, Alexander
Benois, and Igor Grabar, and it led to a revival of philosophy, esthetics,
and literary criticism.

Literature

After the "great reforms" as before them, literature continued to be the
chief glory of Russian culture, and it also became a major source of Russian
influence on the West, and indeed on the world. That happened in spite
of the fact that the intellectual climate in Russia changed and became
unpropitious for creative expression. Instead of admiring art, poetry, and
genius, as had been common in the first half of the nineteenth century, the
influential critics of the generation of the sixties and of the following dec-
ades emphasized utility and demanded from the authors a clear and simple
social message. Logically developed, civic literature led to Chernyshevsky's
novel, What Is To Be Done?, a worthless literary effort, whatever its intel-
lectual and social significance. With better luck, it produced Nicholas Ne-
krasov's civic poetry, which showed inspiration and an effective use of lan-
guage, for Nekrassov was a real poet, although he wrote unevenly and too
much. Fortunately for Russian literature, the greatest writers rejected criti-
cal advice and proceeded to write in their own manner. That was especially
true of the three giants of the age, Ivan Turgenev, Fedor Dostoevsky, and
Leo Tolstoy.

Ivan Turgenev lived from 1818 to 1883 and became famous around
1850 with the gradual appearance of his Sportsman's Sketches. He re-
sponded to the trends of the time and depicted with remarkable sensitiv-
y the intellectual life of Russia, but he failed eventually to satisfy the Left. Six
novels, the first of which appeared in 1855 and the last in 1877, described
the evolution of Russian educated society and Russia itself as Turgenev, a
gentleman of culture, had witnessed it. These novels are, in order of pub-
lication, Rudin, A Gentry Nest, On the Live, the celebrated Fathers and
Sons, Smoke, and Virgin Soil. Turgenev depicted Russia from the time of
the iron regime of Nicholas I, through the "great reforms," to the return of
reaction in the late '60's and the '70's. He concerned himself especially with

the idealists of the '40's and the later liberals, nihilists, and populists. In-
deed, it was Turgenev's hero, Bazarov, who gave currency to the concept
nihilism and to the term itself. Although he was a consistent Westernizer
and liberal, who was appreciative of the efforts of young radicals to change
Russia, Turgenev advocated gradualism, not revolution; in particular he
recommended patient work to develop the Russian economy and educa-
tion. And he refused to be one-sided or dogmatic. In fact, critics debate to
today whether Rudin and Bazarov are essentially sympathetic or un-
sympathetic characters. Besides, Turgenev's novels were by no means sim-
ply roman à thèse. The reader remembers not only the author's ideological
protagonists, but also his remarkable, strong heroines, the background, the
dialogues, and, perhaps above all, the consummate artistry. As writer, Tu-
ogenev resembled closely his friend Flaubert, not at all Chernyshevsky. In
addition to the famous sequence of novels, Turgenev wrote some plays and
a considerable number of stories — he has been described as a better story
writer than novelist.

Fedor — that is, Theodore — Dostoevsky, who lived from 1821 to
1881, also became well known before the "great reforms." He was already
the author of a novel, Poor Folk, which was acclaimed by Belinsky when it
was published in 1845, and of other writings, when he became involved,
as already mentioned, with the Peterhovev and was sentenced to death,
the sentence being commuted to Siberian exile only at the place of execu-
tion. Next the writer spent four years at hard labor and two more as a sol-
dier in Siberia before returning to European Russia in 1856, following a
general amnesty proclaimed by the new emperor. Dostoevsky recorded his
Siberian experience in a remarkable book, Notes from the House of the
Dead, which came out in 1861. Upon his return to literary life, the one-
time member of the Peterhovev became an aggressive and prolific Right-
ing journalist, contributing to a certain Slavophile revival, Pan-Slavism,
and even outright chauvinism. His targets included the Jews, the Poles, the
Germans, Catholicism, socialism, and the entire West. While Dostoevsky's
journalism added to the sound and fury of the period, his immortal fame
rests on his late novels, four of which belong among the greatest ever writ-
ten. These were Crime and Punishment, The Idiot, The Possessed, and The
Brothers Karamazov, published in 1866, 1868, 1870-72, and 1879-80
respectively. In fact, Dostoevsky seemed to go from strength to strength
and was apparently at the height of his creative powers in working on a
sequel to The Brothers Karamazov when he died.

Dostoevsky has often been represented as the most Russian of writers
and evaluated in terms of Russian messiahship and the mysteries of the
Russian soul — an approach to which he himself richly contributed. Yet, a
closer study of the great novelist's so-called special Russian traits demon-
strates that they are either of secondary importance at best or even entirely
imaginary. To the contrary, Dostoevsky could be called the most international of, better, the most human of writers because of his enormous concern with and generation into the nature of man. The strange Russian author was a master of depth psychology before depth psychology became known. Moreover, he viewed human nature in the dynamic terms of explosive conflict between freedom and necessity, urge and limitations, faith and despair, good and evil. Of Dostoevsky's several priceless gifts the greatest was to fuse into one his protagonists and the ideas—or rather states of man's soul and entire being—that they expressed, as no other writer has ever done. Therefore, where others are prolix, tedious, didactic, or confusing in mixing different levels of discourse, Dostoevsky is gripping, in places almost unceasingly so. As another Russian author, Gleb Uspensky, repeatedly once remarked, into a small hole in the wall, where the generality of human beings could put perhaps a pair of shoes, Dostoevsky could put the entire world. One of the greatest anti-rationalists of the second half of the nineteenth century, together with Nietzsche and Kirkegaard, Dostoevsky became with them an acknowledged prophet for the twentieth, inspiring existential philosophy, theological revivals, and scholarly attempts to understand the catastrophes of our time—as well as, of course, modern psychological fiction.

It has been said that, if Dostoevsky was not the world's greatest novelist, then Tolstoy certainly was, and that the choice between the two depends on whether the reader prefers depth or breadth. These are quite defensible views, provided one remembers the range of Dostoevsky, and especially his very numerous secondary and tertiary characters who speak their own language and add their own comment to the tragedy of man, and provided one realizes that Tolstoy too cuts very deep.

Count Leo Tolstoy lived a long, full, and famous life. Born in 1828 and brought up in a manner characteristic of his aristocratic milieu— magnificently described in Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth—he received a cosmopolitan, if dilettante, education; engaged in gay social life; served in the army, first in the Caucasus and later in the siege of Sebastopol; and became a happy husband, the father of a large family, and a progressive landowner much concerned with the welfare of his peasants. In addition to these ordinary activities, however, Tolstoy also developed into one of the greatest writers in world literature and later into an angry teacher of mankind, who condemned civilization, including his own part in it, and called for the abandonment of violence and for a simple, moral life. In fact, he died in 1910 at the age of eighty-two as he fled from his family and estate in yet another attempt to save his life with all evil and falsehood and to find truth. It is indeed difficult to determine whether Tolstoy acquired more fame and influence in his own country and all over the world as a writer or as a teacher of nonresistance and unsermonk of modern civilization, and whether Anna Karenina or A Confession—an account of the crisis that split his life in two—carries the greater impact. In Russia at least, Tolstoy's position as the voice of criticism that the government dared not silence, as moral conscience, appeared at times even more extraordinary and precious than his literary creations.

But, whatever can be said against Tolstoy as thinker—and much has been justly said about his extraordinary naiveté, his stubborn and at the same time poorly thought-out rationalism, and his absolute insistence on such items as vegetarianism and painless death as parts of his program of salvation—Tolstoy as writer needs no apologies. While a prolific author, the creator of many superb stories and some powerful plays, Tolstoy, like Dostoevsky, is remembered best for his novels, especially War and Peace, published in 1869, and Anna Karenina, published in 1876. In these novels, as in much else written by Tolstoy, there exists a boundless vitality, a driving, overpowering sense of life and people. And life finds expression on a sweeping scale. War and Peace contains sixty heroes and some two hundred distinct characters, not to mention the unforgettable battle and mob scenes and the general background. The war of 1812 is depicted at almost every level: from Alexander I and Napoleon, through commanders and officers, to simple soldiers, and among civilians from court circles to the common people. Anna Karenina, while more restricted in scope, has been praised no less for its construction and its supreme art.

The Russian novel, which in the second half of the nineteenth century won a worldwide reputation because of the writings of Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy, had other outstanding practitioners as well. Ivan Goncharov, who lived from 1812 to 1891, produced at least one great novel, Oblomov, published two years before the emancipation of the serfs and representing in a sense a farewell, spoken with mixed feelings, to the deputing patriarchal Russia, and a welcome, again with mixed feelings, to the painfully evolving new order. Oblomov himself scored his way to fame as one of the most unforgettable as well as most "superfluous" heroes of Russian literature. Other noteworthy novelists of the period included Nicho- las Leskov who developed a highly individual language and style and wrote about the provincial clergy and similar topics associated with the Church and the people, and Gleb Uspensky, a populist and a pessimist, deeply con- cerned with peasant life as well as with the intelligentsia. An able satirist, Michael Saltykov, who wrote under the pseudonym of N. Shchedrin, fitted well into that critical and realistic age and acquired great popularity. A highly talented dramatist, Alexander Ostrovsky, wrote indefatigably from about 1850 until his death in 1886, creating much of the basic repertoire of the Russian theater and contributing especially to the depiction of mer- chants, minor officials, and the lower middle class in general.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth new
writers came to the fore to continue the great tradition of Russian prose. One was Vladimir Korolenko, a populist, optimist, and author of charming stories; another was Anton Chekhov; and a third was the restless Alexei Penkhov, better known as Maxim Gorky, who created his own world of tramps and outcasts and went on to become the dean of Soviet writers. Chekhov, who lived from 1860 until 1904, left a lasting imprint on Russian and world literature. A brilliant playwright, he had the good fortune to be writing just as the Moscow Art Theater was rising to its heights. He is even more important as one of the founders and a master craftsman of the modern short story, the literary genre that he usually chose to make his simple, gentle, restrained, and yet wonderfully effective comments on the world.

Poetry fared less well than prose between the "great reforms" and the turn of the century. The very great lyricist Fedor Tiutchev, perhaps the world's outstanding poet of late love and of nature in its romantic, pantheistic, and chaotic aspects, died in 1873, an isolated figure. In the decades following the emancipation neither the small group of poets who championed "art for art's sake," such as the gifted Athenianess Fet-Shishkin, nor the dominant practitioners of "civic poetry," led by Nekrasov, left much of lasting value. The poetic muse had to wait for more propitious circumstances.

These circumstances emerged around 1900 with the dawning of the "silver age." Foreshadowed by certain literary critics and poets in the 1880's, the new period has often been dated from the appearance in 1898 of a seminal periodical, The World of Art, put out by Sergei Diaghilev and Alexander Benois. What followed was a cultural explosion. Almost overnight there sprang up in Russia a rich variety of literary and artistic creeds, circles, and movements. As Mirsky and other specialists have noted, these different and sometimes hostile groups had little or nothing in common, except their denial of "civic art" and their high standards of culture and craftsmanship. While much of the creative work of the "silver age" tended toward pretentiousness, obscurity, or artificiality, its best products were very good indeed. And even when short of the best, the works of the "silver age" indicated a new refinement, richness, and maturity in Russian culture.

In literature, the new trends resulted in a great revival of poetry and literary criticism, although some remarkable prose was also produced, for example, by Boris Bugaev, known as Andrei Bely. Among the poets, the symbolist Alexander Blok, who lived from 1880 to 1921 and wrote verses of stunning magic and melody to the mysterious Unknown Lady and on other topics, has been justly considered the greatest of the age and one of the greatest in all Russian literature. But Russia suddenly acquired many brilliant poets; other symbolists, for example, Innokenti Annensky, Bely, Valery Briusov, and Constantine Balмонт; "acmeists," such as Nicholas Gumilev and Osip Mandelstam; futurists, such as Vsevolod Khlebnikov and Vladimir Maiakovsky; or peasant poets, such as Sergei Esenin. The poet and novelist Boris Pasternak, who died in 1960, and the poetess Anna Akhmatova, who lived until 1966 as probably the last Russian poet of the first rank, also belong fully to the "silver age." In literary criticism, too, the new trends continued to enrich Russian culture after 1917, producing notably an interesting school of formalist critics, until destroyed by Soviet regimentation and "socialist realism."

The Arts

In art, as in literature, "realism" dominated the second half of the nineteenth century, only to be enriched and in large part replaced by the varied new currents of the "silver age." In painting the decisive turning to realism can even be precisely dated: in 1863 fourteen young painters, led by Ivan Kramskoy and constituting the entire graduating class of the Academy of Arts, refused to paint their examination assignment, "A Feast in Valhalla." Breaking with the stifling academic tradition, they insisted on painting realistic pictures. Several years later they organized popular circulating exhibitions of their works and came to be known as the "Itinerants." With new painters joining the movement and its influence spreading, "critical realism" asserted itself in Russian art just as it had in Russian literary criticism and literature. In accord with the spirit of the age, the "Itinerants" and their disciples believed that content was more important than form, that art had to serve the higher purpose of educating the masses and championing their interests, and they depicted such topics as the exploitation of the poor, the drunken clergy, and the brutal police. Basil Voreshchagin, for example, observed wars at firsthand until he went down with the battleship Petropavlovsk when it was sunk by the Japanese. He painted numerous and often huge canvases on the glaring inhumanity of wars, characteristically dedicating his "Apologia of War," a pyramid of skulls, "to all great conquerors, present, past, and future." To be sure, painting could not be limited to social protest, and realism naturally extended to portraits, genre scenes, landscapes, historical topics—well handled by Basil Surikov—and other subject matter. Still, the Russian artists of the period demonstrated earnestness rather than talent, and added more to the polemics of the age than to art. Even the most famous of them, Evgeni Ropin, who lived from 1844 to 1930, is less likely to be remembered for his contribution to creative art, than for his active participation in Russian life and culture, and for certain paintings that have become almost inseparable from their subject matter, such as one of the Don Cossacks and one of Ivan the Terrible just after he had mortally wounded his son Ivan.

The development of music followed a somewhat different pattern. It, too, responded to the demands of the age, as seen, for example, in modest
Musorgsky's emphasis on content, realism, and closeness to the masses. Music, however, by its very nature could not be squeezed into the framework of critical realism, and fortunately it attracted much original talent in Russia at the time. The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a great spread of musical interest and education in the empire, with a conservatory established in St. Petersburg in 1862, headed by the noted composer and magnificent pianist Anton Rubinstein, another one in Moscow in 1866, headed by Anton Rubinstein's younger brother, Nicholas, and still other musical schools in other cities in subsequent years. Moreover, quite a number of outstanding Russian composers came to the fore at that time. The most prominent of them included Peter Tchaikovsky and dilettante members of the celebrated “Mighty Bunch,” Modest Musorgsky, Nicholas Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Borodin, and César Cui. The “Mighty Bunch,” or “The Five”—Mili Balakirev, a professional, trained musician, must be added to the four already mentioned—in effect created the national Russian school of music, utilizing folk songs, melodies, tales, and legends, and a romanticized vision of the Russian past to produce such famous operas as Musorgsky's Boris Godunov, Borodin's Prince Igor, and Rimsky-Korsakov's Sadko and The Tale of the Town of Kitech. It hardly needs to be mentioned that much of the instrumental and vocal music of the “Mighty Bunch” has entered the basic musical repertoire all over the world. The same, of course, holds true of Tchaikovsky, who stood apart from “The Five,” developing an elegiac, subjective, and psychological approach of his own. Indeed, few pieces in the world of music are better known than Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony or his ballets Swan Lake and The Sleeping Beauty.

The “silver age” brought a renaissance in the fine arts as well as in literature. In music, where Alexander Scriabin initiated the change, it marked the appearance of the genius of Igor Stravinsky and of other brilliant young composers. In a sense, the new ballet masterpieces, for example, Stravinsky's The Firebird, Petrouchka—which also belongs to Benois—and La Sérénade des bœufs, combining as they did superb music, choreography, dancing, and décor, expressed best the cultural refinement, craftsmanship, and many-sidedness of the “silver age.” The Russian ballet received overwhelming acclaim when Diaghilev brought it to Paris in 1909, starring such choreographers as Michael Fokine and such dancers as Anna Pavlova and Waclaw Slijansky. From that time on Russian ballet has exercised a fundamental influence on ballet in other countries. On the eve of 1917 Russia could also boast of leading artists in other musical fields, for instance, the bass Theodore Chaliapin, the conductor Serge Kouassevitzy, and the pianist, conductor, and composer, Serge Rachmaninov, to mention three of the best-known names.

Diaghilev's ballets made such a stunning impression in the West in part because of the superb décor and staging. Benois, Constantin Korovin, and other gifted artists of the “silver age” created a school of stage painting that gave Russia world leadership in that field and added immeasurably to operatic and theatrical productions as well as to the ballet. Other Russian artists, notably Marc Chagall and Basile Kandinsky, broke much more radically with the established standards and became leaders of modernism in painting. Still another remarkable development in the “silver age” was the rediscovery of icon painting: both a physical rediscovery, because ancient icons had become dark, been overlaid with metal, or even painted over, and began to be restored to their original condition only around 1900; and an artistic rediscovery, because these icons were newly appreciated, adding to the culture and the creative influences of the period.

Theater, like the ballet a combination of arts, also developed splendidly in the “silver age.” In addition to the fine imperial theaters, private ones came into prominence. The Moscow Art Theater, directed by Constantin Stanislavsky who emphasized psychological realism, achieved the greatest and most sustained fame and exercised the strongest influence on acting in Russia and abroad. But it is important to realize that it represented only one current in the theatrical life of a period remarkable for its variety, vitality, and experimentation. Russian art as well as Russian literature in the “silver age" formed an inseparable part of the art and literature of the West, profiting hugely, for example, from literary trends in France or from German thought, and in turn contributing to virtually every form of literary and artistic argument and creative expression. In a sense, Russian culture was never more “Western” than on the eve of 1917.

Ideologies

Russian social, political, and philosophical thought also underwent considerable evolution between the emancipation of the serfs and the First World War. As already mentioned, the radicals of the generation of the sixties, Turgenev's “sons,” found their spiritual home first in nihilism, in the denial of all established authorities. As their spokesman, the gifted young literary critic Dmitrii Pisarev, 1840–68, said: “What can be broken, should be broken.” The new radical spirit reflected both the general materialistic and realistic character of the age and special Russian conditions, such as a reaction to the stifling of intellectual life under Nicholas I, the autocratic and oppressive nature of the regime, the weak development of the middle class or other elements of moderation and compromise, and a gradual democratization of the educated public.

While nihilism emancipated the young Russian radicals from any alle-
glance to the established order, it was, to repeat a point, individual rather than social by its very nature and lacked a positive program — both Pisarev and Turgenev’s hero Bazarov died young. The social creed came with a vengeance in the form of narodnichestvo, or populism, which arose in the 1860’s and ’70’s to dominate much of Russian radicalism until the October Revolution. We have already seen its political impact in such events as the celebrated “going to the people” of 1874, the terrorism of the “Will of
the People,” and the activities of the Socialist Revolutionary party. Al-
though in a broad sense Russian populism belonged ideologically to the
general European radicalism of the age, it also possessed a distinctively
Russian character — for Russia was a peasant country par excellence —
and numerous Russian prophets. The first prophets were the radical West-
erizers Herzen and Bakunin, the former surviving until 1870 and the latter
until 1876, who both preached that radical intellectuals should turn to the
people and proclaimed the virtues of the peasant commune. Bakunin’s vio-
 lent anarchism in particular inspired many of the more impatient populists.
Anarchism, it might be added, appealed to a variety of Russian intellec-
tuals, including such outstanding figures as Tolstoy and Prince Peter Kro-
potkin, a noted geographer, geologist, and radical, who lived from 1842 to
1921 and devoted most of his life to the spreading of anarchism. Kropot-
kin’s activities as a radical included a fantastic escape from the Peter and
Paul Fortress, which was described in his celebrated Memoirs of a Revolu-
tionist written in English for The Atlantic Monthly in 1898–99.

Whereas Herzen and Bakunin were émigrés, populist leaders also arose in
Russia after 1855. Nicholas Chernyshevsky, whose views and impact
were not limited to populism, but who nevertheless exercised a major in-
fluence on Russian populists, deserves special attention. Born in 1828,
Chernyshevsky actually enjoyed only a few years of public activity as jour-
nalist and writer, especially as editor of a leading periodical, The Con-
temporary, before his arrest in 1862. He returned from Siberian exile only
in 1885 and died in 1889. It was probably Chernyshevsky more than any
one else who contributed to the spread of utilitarian, positivist, and in part
materialist views in Russia. A man of vast erudition, Chernyshevsky con-
cerned himself with aesthetics — developing further Belinsky’s ideas on the
primacy of life over art — as much as with economics, and wrote on
dineteenth-century French history, demonstrating the failure of liberalism,
as well as on Russian problems. His extremely popular novel, What Is To
Be Done?, dealt with the new generation of “critical realists,” their ethics
and their activities, and sketched both the revolutionary hero and forms of
collaboration. As to the peasant commune, Chernyshevsky showed more reserve than certain of his contemporaries. Yet he generally
believed that it could serve as a direct transition to socialism in Russia,
provided socialist revolution first triumphed in Europe. For a time Cherny-
shesvsky collaborated closely in spreading his ideas with an able radical
liberal critic, Nicholas Dobroletub, who died in 1861 at the age of twenty-
five.

Chernyshevsky’s and Dobroletub’s work was continued, with certain
differences, by Peter Lavrov and Nicholas Mikhailov. Lavrov, 1823—
1900, another erudite adherent of positivism, utilitarianism, and populism,
emphasized in his Historical Letters of 1870 and in other writings the crucial
role of “critically thinking individuals” in the revolutionary struggle and
the transformation of Russia. Mikhailov, a literary critic who lived from
1842 to 1904, employed the “subjective method” in social analysis to stress
moral values rather than mere objective description and to champion the
peasant commune, which provided for harmonious development of the in-
dividual, by contrast with the industrial order, which led to narrow speciali-
ization along certain lines and the atrophy of other aspects of personality.
The populist defense of the peasant commune became more desperate with
the passage of time, because Russia was in fact developing into a capitalist
country and because an articulate Marxist school arose to point that out
as proof that history was proceeding according to Marxist predictions. Yet
the Socialist Revolutionaries of the twentieth century, led by Victor Cher-
nev, although they borrowed much from the Marxists and had to modify
their own views, remained essentially faithful to populism, staining the fu-
ture of Russia on the peasants and on a “socialization of land.”

Marxists proved to be strong competitors and opponents of populists.
While Marxism will be discussed in a later chapter, it should be kept in
mind that Marxists offered to its followers an “objective knowledge” of
history instead of a mere “subjective method” and a quasi-scientific cer-
tainty of victory in lieu of, or rather in addition to, moral earnestness and
indignation. It claimed to be “tough,” where populism was “soft.” More-
over, the actual development of Russia seemed to follow the Marxist rather
than the populist blueprint. Beginning with the 1890’s Marxism made im-
portant inroads among Russian intellectuals, gaining adherents both among
scholars and in the radical and revolutionary movement. The Social Demo-
crats, divided into the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, and their rivals, the
Socialist Revolutionaries, gave political expression to the great ideological
debate and cleavage of radical Russia.

To be sure, not all thinking and articulate Russians were radicals. But
the Right, the conservatives and the reactionaries, had very little to offer.
The government did little more than repeat the obsolete formula of Official
Nationality, and its ablest theoretician, Constantine Pobedonostsev, deter-
nedly refused to come to terms with the modern world. A few reactionary
intellectuals not associated with the government, such as the brilliant writer
Constantine Leontiev, engaged in violent but fruitless criticism of the trends of the time and placed their hopes — desperate hopes indeed — in freezing the social process, in freezing everything!

Perhaps the new-style violent and demagogic Right had brighter prospects than the conservatives did. Its potential might be suggested by the nationalist rally led by Katkov in 1863, by Pan-Slavism in the late 1870's and at certain other times — although Pan-Slavism, especially when it expanded, was by no means limited to the Right — and by the "Black Hundreds" of the twentieth century. Yet all these movements lacked effective organization, continuity, and cohesion, as well as solid ideology. Pan-Slavism, for example, although it had several prophets, including Dostoevsky, and a painstaking theoretician of the quasi-scientific racial variety, Nicholas Danilevsky, whose magnum opus, Russia and Europe, was published in 1869, remained an "attitude of mind and feeling" rather than an "organized policy or even a creed." In other words, in times of Balkan crises many Russians sympathized with the Balkan Slavs, but they forgot them once a crisis passed. As a political factor, Pan-Slavism was more a Western bugaboo than a reality. And, in general, whatever racist and fascist possibilities existed in imperial Russia, they failed to develop beyond an incipient stage. Their flowering required a more modern setting than the one offered by the ancien régime of the Romanovs.

It can be argued that liberalism, on the other hand, represented a promising alternative for Russia. Moreover, Karpovich, Fischer, and other scholars, as well as a wealth of sources, have demonstrated that Russian liberalism was by no means a negligible quantity. On the contrary, with its bases in the zemstvo system and the professions, it gained strength steadily and produced able ideologists and leaders such as Paul Miliiukov and Basil Maklakov. The important position of the Cadets in the first two Dumas, the only Duma elected by a rather democratic suffrage, emphasizes the liberal potential. But the government never accepted the liberal viewpoint, nor, of course, did the Russian radical and revolutionary movement accept it. The liberals thus had little opportunity to influence state policies or even to challenge them. Whether liberalism could have satisfied Russian needs will remain an arguable question, because Russian liberalism never received its chance in imperial Russia.

The "silver age" affected Russian thought as well as Russian literature and art. Notably, it marked a return to metaphysics, and often to religion eventually, on the part of a significant sector of Russian intellectuals. Other educated Russians, especially the writers and the artists, tended to become apolitical and ascetic, often looking to esthetics for their highest values. The utilitarianism, positivism, and materialism dominant from the time of the 60's, finally had to face a serious challenge.

Philosophy in Russia experienced a revival in the work of Vladimir Soloviev and his followers. Soloviev, a son of the historian Sergei Soloviev, lived from 1853 until 1900 and wrote on a variety of difficult philosophical and theological subjects. A study in ethics, A Justification of the Good, is generally considered his masterpiece. A trenchant critic of the radical creed of the age, as well as of chauvinism and reaction, Soloviev remained a rather isolated individual during his lifetime, but came to exercise a profound influence on the intellectual elite of the "silver age." In effect almost everything he had stood for, from imaginative and daring theology to a sweeping critique of the radical intellectuals, suddenly came into prominence in the early twentieth century.

The new critique of the intelligentsia found its most striking expression in a slim volume entitled Signposts — Fekhl — which appeared in 1909. Signposts contained essays by seven authors, including such prominent converts from Marxism as Peter Struve, Nicholas Berdiaev, and Serge Bulgakov, and constituted an all-out attack on the radical intelligentsia. Russian radicals were accused of an utter disregard for objective truth, religion, and law, and of an extreme application of the maxim that the end justifies the means, with destruction as their only effective passion. Although Signposts represented a minority of Russian intellectuals and attracted strong rebuttals, a new cleavage among educated Russians became apparent — a cleavage all the more revealing because the critics of the intelligentsia could by no means be equated with the Right. Eventually Struve, 1870-1944, became a leading thinker and political figure of the moderate conservatives; Berdiaev, 1874-1948, acquired world fame as a personalist philosopher and champion of "creative freedom"; and Bulgakov, 1871-1944, entered the priesthood and developed into the most controversial Orthodox theologian of the twentieth century. Other prominent intellectuals of the "silver age" included the "biological mystic" Basil Rozanov, who was especially concerned with the problem of sex, the brilliant anti-rationalist Leo Shesov — a pseudonym of Leo Schwartzmann — and the metaphysicians Semen Frank — another contributor to Signposts — and Nicholas Losky. By comparison with the 1860's or even the 1890's, the Russian intellectual scene had indeed changed on the eve of the First World War.

**Concluding Remarks**

The development of Russian culture in the years preceding 1917 suggests certain significant parallels to the political, economic, and social condition of the country. Most striking was the disparity between the few and the many. In the early twentieth century, Russia possessed a rich variety of poetic schools and the best ballet in the world, but the majority of the people remained illiterate. It was even difficult to communicate across the chasm. One is reminded of Chekhov's story, "The Mafactor," where a
peasant brought to court for stealing a bolt from the railroad tracks to weight his fishing tackle fails to see his guilt, explains that enough bolts are left for the train, and in describing his activities constantly refers to "we," meaning the peasants of his village, the people. Again, it can be argued that on the eve of the revolutions Russia exhibited progress and vigorous activity in intellectual as well as in other matters, strains against the confines of the established order. But, contrary to the Soviet view, this intellectual development did not lead ineluctably to Bolshevism. More than that, the cultural climate of the "silver age" indicated that the Russian educated public was finally moving away from the simple materialist, utilitarian, and activist beliefs professed by Lenin and his devoted followers. It would appear that the Bolshevists had to succeed soon or not at all. How they did succeed will be told in the next chapter.

THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1917

The collapse of the Romanov autocracy in March 1917 was one of the most leaderless, spontaneous, anonymous revolutions of all time. While almost every thoughtful observer in Russia in the winter of 1916–17 foresaw the likelihood of the crash of the existing regime no one, even among the revolutionary leaders, realized that the strikes and bread riots which broke out in Petrograd on March 8 would culminate in the mutiny of the garrison and the overthrow of the government four days later.

CHAMBERLAIN

The enemies of Bolshevism were numerous, but they were also weak, poorly organized, divided, and apathetic. The strategy of Lenin was calculated to emphasize their divisions, neutralize their opposition, and capitalize on their apathy. In 1902 in What Is To Be Done? Lenin had written, "Give us an organization of revolutionaries, and we shall overturn the whole of Russia!" On November 7, 1917, the wish was fulfilled and the deed accomplished.

FANNING

As has been indicated in preceding chapters, the constitutional period of Russian imperial history has continued to evoke much controversy, to cite only the contributions by Haimson and other American scholars. Optimistic students of the development of Russia from the Revolution of 1905 to the First World War and the revolutions of 1917 have emphasized that Russia had finally left autocracy behind and was evolving toward liberalism and political freedom. The change in 1907 in the electoral law indicated that the Duma could no longer be abolished. Moreover, the reformed Russian legislature proceeded to play an important part in the affairs of the country and to gain ever-increasing prestige and acceptance at home, among both government officials and the people, as well as abroad. As an Englishman observed, "the atmosphere and instincts of parliamentary life" grew in the empire of the Romanovs. Besides, continue the optimists, Russian society at the time was much more progressive and democratic than the constitutional framework alone would indicate, and was becoming increasingly so every year. Modern education spread rapidly at different levels and was remarkably humanitarian and liberal — as were Russian teachers as a group — not at all likely to serve as a buttress for antiquated ideas or obsolete institutions. Russian universities enjoyed virtually full freedom and a rich creative life. Elsewhere, too, an energetic discussion went on. Even the periodical press, in spite of various restrictions, gave some representa-