



RUSSIAN LITERATURE OF THE XX CENTURY

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Annotation: *the Russian literature developed as a major way to learn about the Russian culture and worldview coupled with ways of loving, fighting and expression. This period ranks as the Silver Age of Russian literature and it served the urgent mission to provide the Russian citizens with a kind of truth, which could only be conveyed through literature in a censored society.*

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Russian literature is understood to mean not only Russian-language literature, but also the literature of Russia and its immigrants. The roots of Russian literature go back to the Middle Ages, when epics and chronicles were written in Old East Slavic. By the Age of Enlightenment, literature had gained prominence, and from the early 1830s Russian literature experienced an amazing golden age of poetry, prose, and drama. Romanticism blossomed into poetry.

Vasily Zhukovsky and later his pupil Alexander Pushkin rose to prominence. Prose also flourished. Mikhail Lermontov was one of the most important poets and novelists. The first great Russian writer was Nikolai Gogol. Then came Ivan Turgenev, who mastered both short stories and novels. Fyodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy quickly achieved international fame. Other important figures of Russian realism were Ivan Goncharov, Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin and Nikolai Leskov. In the second half of the century, Anton Chekhov excelled at short stories and became a major playwright. The beginning of the 20th century is considered the silver age of Russian poetry. The poets most associated with the Silver Age are Konstantin Balmont, Valery Bryusov, Alexander Blok, Anna Akhmatova, Nikolai Gumilyov, Sergey Yesenin, Vladimir Mayakovsky and Marina Tsvetaeva. This era included leading novelists and short stories such as Alexander Kuprin, Nobel laureate Ivan Bunin, Leonid Andreev, Fyodor Sologub, Yevgeny Zamyatin, Alexander Belyayev, Andrei Berry and Maxim Gorky[1,35].

After the Revolution of 1917, Russian literature was divided into Soviet literature and white immigrant literature. While the Soviet Union ensured universal literacy and a highly developed printing industry, it also implemented



ideological censorship. Citation needed Social realism became the dominant trend in Russia in the 1930s. Its leading figures were Nikolai Ostrovsky, Alexander Fadeev and other writers who laid the foundations for this style. Ostrovsky's novel *How Steel Was Tempered* is one of the most popular works of Russian socialist literature. Some writers, such as Mikhail Bulgakov, Andrei Platonov and Daniil Kalmus, faced criticism and wrote with little or no hope of publication. Various writers in exile, including the poet Vladislav Kodasevich, Georgy Ivanov, Vyacheslav Ivanov. Writers such as Gait Gazdanov, Vladimir Nabokov and Bunin continued to write in exile. Some writers, like Nobel laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Varram Shalamov, who wrote about life in the concentration camps, dared to oppose Soviet ideology. Khrushchev's thaw brought a breath of fresh air to literature, and poetry became a popular culture phenomenon. This "thaw" did not last long. In the 1970s, some of the most famous authors were banned and prosecuted for anti-Soviet sentiment[3,20].

The second half of the 20th century was a difficult time for Russian literature, with few distinct voices. Among the most talked about writers of this period were short stories and novels such as Viktor Pelevin, novelist and playwright Vladimir Sorokin, and poet Dmitry Prigov. The 21st century saw the emergence of a new generation of Russian writers who differed greatly from the postmodern Russian prose of the late 20th century, and critics began to speak of a "new realism[3,3]".

Russian writers have made significant contributions to numerous literary genres. Russia has five Nobel Prize winners in literature. In 2011, Russia was the fourth largest book producer in the world in terms of published titles .A popular saying goes that Russians are "the most read people in the world [2,13]".

In conclusion, in the latter half of the sixteen-year period with which this book has been concerned, the Soviet Russian literary community made a giant, and largely successful, effort toward recovering those parts of the Russian literary heritage which the communist regime had denied it for many decades. Not only did it rediscover its own literature that had been lost or buried; it also resumed the full contact with twentieth-century world literature, especially that of the West, which Soviet rule had severely limited. And it made enormous progress toward joining forces with the community of Russian emigre literature after decades of compulsory separation. A concomitant of these swift and dramatic developments was a marked growth of interest in the Russian national identity, the peculiarities of the Russian character, the essence of Russianness. This interest, of course, had never died, and had increased in recent decades, notably through the efforts of the village writers. The decay of Soviet rule, however, brought a marked decline in



Soviet consciousness, as writers turned away from ideological categories and measurements and replaced them with cultural and ethnic concerns. Writers increasingly examined Russians not as political animals but as human beings with unique and ancient roots and patterns of behavior and belief, religion included [13,76].

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