
Raphael Löwenfeld, Leo Tolstoy's First Biographer

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I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to be here today.¹ To be invited to speak at a conference on Leo Tolstoy, held at Iasnaia Poliana, is an honour beyond anything I could have dreamed of. I am all too aware of my limitations: I am not a scholar by profession, and—for this I can only apologize—I speak no Russian.²

Fortunately, Raphael Löwenfeld, who was my great-grandfather, *was* a linguist, and a scholar, too. His distinction was to have recognized, relatively early, that Leo Tolstoy was destined to be important not just in his own country and era, but throughout the world and through all time.

Löwenfeld also believed that to understand and appreciate Tolstoy's significance, his life, his works, and his philosophy had to be considered together. At that time, however, though Tolstoy's novels were widely read outside Russia, Tolstoy the man was all but unknown. To fill that gap in the world's understanding, Löwenfeld undertook to write Tolstoy's biography—the first in any language. *Leo N. Tolstoy, His Life, His Works, His World-View, Part I*³ was published in Berlin in 1892 and in a Russian translation four years later. It covers Tolstoy's life up to his marriage to Sophia Behrs, to whom the book was dedicated. For every subsequent biographer, starting with Pavel Biryukov, it has been, directly or indirectly, a major source of information on Tolstoy's younger years.⁴ Löwenfeld was already at that time the translator and editor of Tolstoy's works for publication in German.

By a curious turn of events, Löwenfeld later became Tolstoy's defender in the courtroom, at a critical time in the author's life. In 1901, after Tolstoy's excommunication by the Holy Synod, Tolstoy's reply to the Synod could not legally be published in Russia, but was widely circulated nevertheless. In Germany, Löwenfeld prepared a



Raphael Löwenfeld, circa 1893.

translation for publication by the Eugen Diederichs publishing house in Jena. At the instigation of the Holy Synod, however, the publisher's office was raided by the Saxon police and all copies of the pamphlet were seized. Löwenfeld and the publisher were charged with blasphemy, a criminal offence carrying a three-year prison term.

Why, one must ask, would the Holy Synod consider it worthwhile to press authorities in Germany to take action against a pamphlet whose contents were already well known inside and outside Russia, and against two such minor figures as a translator and a publisher? I would suggest that the real target was not the pamphlet, nor was it Löwenfeld and Diederichs, but rather Tolstoy himself. To bring criminal charges against

Tolstoy in Russia would have been impossible, I think; he had too many supporters and sympathizers, and a firestorm of protest would have resulted. But if a foreign court could be persuaded to rule that a pamphlet by Tolstoy was blasphemous, then the Holy Synod could claim that Tolstoy was a convicted blasphemer, and use this to take action against him: perhaps having him confined to a monastery or forcing him to leave Russia. If this theory is correct, and the Leipzig prosecution was really aimed at Tolstoy, then a great deal depended on the outcome of the trial.

The prosecution attracted wide attention. In Germany, the humorous weekly *Simplicissimus* seemed to understand who was really on trial: it published a cartoon showing Tolstoy with a rope around his neck, being dragged through the streets by German prosecutors and policemen. The drawing was entitled, "Through Darkest Germany."⁵ In America, the *New York Times* called the prosecution "medieval" (July 11, 1902).

The case was heard in Leipzig on July 9, 1902. The next day's *Berliner Tageblatt* reported that after the defendants' lawyer and the publisher spoke, Löwenfeld took the witness stand and gave

a deeply felt defence not only of himself but also of Tolstoy, a speech of even greater effect than that of [the defence lawyer]. He said in advance that he was personally closely allied with the Russian writer and in a good position to follow his intentions exactly; he knew best how deeply serious Tolstoy's nature was, and if he himself had gone through a quite different spiritual development, and could not agree with the writer on all points, still this much should be clear to every intellectual person: that in his writings Tolstoy pursued purposes and goals other than to mock religion. If Tolstoy wanted to free religion from the invasive spirit of formalities, and strove to restore the Christian faith to its original, primitive form, it was only Russia's religion that he had in mind. He was not thinking about conditions in Germany, and moreover had no knowledge of them. (1)

Löwenfeld went on to compare Tolstoy with Nietzsche, who had gone much further than Tolstoy in his writings on Christianity, but had never

had his works confiscated. He concluded his defence by saying that Tolstoy was read in every country of culture; that the "Answer to the Synod" was publicized everywhere; and that only in Saxony had such an accusation been brought against it.

It took the court just 15 minutes to acquit the two defendants and absolve the pamphlet and its author. On religious issues, the court said, strong words were "in the nature of the thing," and always had been. The pamphlet, it found, had been published with no purpose other than to serve the cause of knowledge.⁶

Raphael Löwenfeld, the passionate defender of Tolstoy and his view of Christianity, was neither a Russian nor a Christian. Rather, he was a German and a Jew, born in 1854 in Poznan, Poland, when that city was part of Prussia. While very conscious of his Jewish identity, in religion he was a non-believer.

In ordinary circumstances, a German-speaking Jew would have had limited contact with Poznan's Polish population, and little cause to become expert in the Polish language. Löwenfeld, however, was one of twins, and their father did not want the brothers to be in competition in school. He therefore enrolled Samuel⁷ in the city's German Gymnasium, while Raphael went to the Polish Gymnasium, where he discovered a love of Slavic languages and literature.

Raphael Löwenfeld's ambition was to become a lawyer, but his pious father would not allow it, thinking that a career in law might cause him to stray from religion.⁸ Löwenfeld therefore studied philology, taking a PhD at Wroclaw (Breslau). His doctoral thesis, on the Latin verse of Jan Kochanowski, Poland's greatest Renaissance poet, was published in 1877.⁹

Löwenfeld's first involvement with the theatre was as a 19-year-old student. In 1873, after a disastrous storm at sea drowned many fishermen, students at Wroclaw mounted a production of *Julius Caesar* to raise money for their widows and children. Duke George II of Saxe-Meiningen, then in the process of establishing what was to be a ground-breaking and highly influential theatre,¹⁰ was impressed by Löwenfeld's performance as

Cassius and offered him a job as his secretary. For half a year, Löwenfeld worked for the Duke, but then returned to his studies. It was during this time that he ceased to be religious.

In the years after he received his degree, Löwenfeld seems to have struggled to find his calling, working at various times as a school-teacher in a Polish girls' school in Warsaw, an editor of a literary magazine, a translator, and a free-lance writer. In 1884, his book on the sixteenth-century Polish humanist Lucasz Gornicki appeared. He translated several of Henryk Sienkiewicz's early novels from Polish into German, and the anthropologist Paolo Mantegazza's *Physiognomy and Expression* from the Italian.

Löwenfeld had not lost his interest in the theatre. In 1887, he was exploring ways to popularize the arts, and in particular, to make theatre available at low cost to people from all walks of life. He and the playwright Ernst von Wildenbruch formed a plan to found a Berlin city theatre, with Wildenbruch as its director and Löwenfeld his assistant. It came to nothing. A year later, a Baron von Malzahn formed a similar plan. Again, Löwenfeld was involved, and to further the project, a Society for the Founding of German People's Theatres was established in 1889.¹¹ But the Baron soon died, and the organization disbanded.

At some point, I am unsure of the year, Löwenfeld began making direct translations of Russian texts, among them the works of Turgenev. (Until that time, Germans wanting to read Russian novels had had to depend on retranslations from the French, most of which were mediocre.) Löwenfeld also began work on a life of Turgenev, but he laid it aside as he found himself more and more captivated by Tolstoy. He later wrote that it was reading the *Confessions* that brought him so powerfully under Tolstoy's spell; he was gripped by the passion with which the author searched for truth, and by the tireless struggle within his soul. Löwenfeld now had two more ambitions: to become Tolstoy's authorized German translator and also to write his biography.

In February 1890, Löwenfeld therefore wrote to Tolstoy, enclosing two articles that he had already published about him and his works. He told

him that he planned to write a book about him, asked whether any biography had yet appeared in Russian (none had), and requested his authorization to prepare a careful, accurate translation of his works into German. If Tolstoy's reply has survived, I am unaware of it, but later references make clear that he furnished Löwenfeld with materials to assist his work on the biography.

A few months later, with curiosity about Tolstoy greatly heightened by the recent publication of the then scandalous *Kreutzer Sonata*,¹² Löwenfeld left for Russia with a commission from the *Berliner Tageblatt* to write a series of articles. A fellow passenger on the train gave him an introduction to a Moscow Tolstoyan named Volganov, who in turn helped arrange a visit to Iasnaia Poliana.¹³

On July 24, 1890, Leo Tolstoy recorded in his diary his mixture of feelings at being, for the first time, the subject of a biography:

Löwenfeld came, he's writing a biography of me. Unpleasant titillation. Walked about and thought and prayed. . . . Thought about my old diaries, about how disgusting I appear in them, and about how I don't want people to know them—i.e., I'm concerned about worldly fame even after my death. How terribly difficult it is to renounce worldly fame, not to be concerned about it at all. And not to suffer at the thought of being taken for a scoundrel. (Christian, *Tolstoy's Diaries*, Vol. I, 289)

Löwenfeld's account of the visit appeared first in 1890, in the weekly magazine *Zeitgeist*, and a year later as part of a book, entitled *Conversations about and with Tolstoy*. It is clear from the essay that, notwithstanding the depth of Löwenfeld's admiration for Tolstoy as an artist and as a human being, their world views were far apart. Tolstoy tells Löwenfeld that he considers himself a "completely new person since 1877," and that he "doesn't count the time before then," which was "vanity and egotism" (*Conversations* 84). Löwenfeld, on the other hand, is not prepared to write off the period of Tolstoy's life in which he created his greatest works of literature. He therefore asks many questions about Tolstoy's formative years,

including the time spent travelling in Western Europe as a young man. Because Löwenfeld does not agree with Tolstoy's philosophy of life, and his host apparently realizes this, they avoid the subject.¹⁴

The account of the visit includes some charming vignettes. Staying in Tula, Löwenfeld is introduced to an old maidservant who said she knew Tolstoy well, having been his serf at the time of emancipation. But she is reluctant to talk about him, and in response to every question, she will say only, "A good master, a good master." At Iasnaia Poliana, having breakfast outdoors with the family, Löwenfeld is puzzled to see a Tolstoy niece making indentations in a piece of paper with a metal stylus. He learns that this a new method of writing for the blind; the girl is transcribing *War and Peace* for the inmates of the Moscow and St. Petersburg houses for the blind. In the afternoon, Tolstoy invites Löwenfeld to join him as he works in the fields. The two men take turns cutting oats with a scythe, and the 36-year-old visitor discovers that the work is harder than it looks.

The book also includes a fund of information about Tolstoy's life, gathered as part of Löwenfeld's biographical work. Unlike the 1892 biography, it was never translated from German, and it therefore seems to have been largely overlooked by later biographers. We learn, for example, that Tolstoy himself is the source of the report that, during the Crimean War, the Tsar asked that the young writer be removed from the dangerous Fourth Bastion.¹⁵

The question must be asked whether Löwenfeld's reporting is trustworthy. I would suggest that there are several reasons to think that it is. First, if one reads his two books on Tolstoy, one realizes that the quality in Tolstoy's character that Löwenfeld viewed as most admirable was his passion for truth and knowledge. It would hardly be in character, then, for the biographer to be fabricating or distorting facts. Moreover, his interest in writing about Tolstoy was to foster understanding of him, not to propagandize for his philosophy of life. Löwenfeld is an admirer but not a disciple. The fact that he does not hide his disagreement with Tolstoy's philosophical views

is a further reason, I think, for confidence in the accuracy of what he reports. He also knew that the articles he wrote would be read by Tolstoy and his wife. If they decided that Löwenfeld was misrepresenting the facts, presumably he could not expect them to help him obtain the information he needed for the forthcoming biography. There is also reliable independent evidence, from a source with no bias in Löwenfeld's favour—the English journalist E. J. Dillon—that Tolstoy approved of Löwenfeld's reporting.¹⁶ Finally, we know from an 1891 diary entry (June 7, 1891) that Tolstoy himself read the proofs of Löwenfeld's biography.

The account of the 1890 visit makes clear that the struggle between the Countess and the Tolstoyans had already begun in earnest, and that Löwenfeld's sympathies were entirely on her side. She tells Löwenfeld matter-of-factly:

I was a true collaborator in everything Lev Nikolayevitch undertook, and was the greatest admirer of his works. It's just the philosophy that he now preaches that I can't share.¹⁷ (*Conversations* 62-63)

Löwenfeld offered his own views:

Especially in business relations, the Countess is the good spirit of the household. The followers of Tolstoy see in her a dangerous rival on that account. The Count, they say, rejects the concept of property, and the Countess snatches up whatever she can.—What an injustice! The Count holds firmly to his newfound point of view, the Countess shares the concept of property of the European world. That she administers her property to the best of her ability, that she asks publishers to pay a royalty for the works of her husband, that she takes good care of it for her children, who are raised like Counts—when these considerations are taken into account, then what she does can only be called praiseworthy. (*Conversations* 61)

Although I have been unable to pin down the exact date, it appears that either late in 1890 or early in 1891 the *Berliner Tageblatt* sent Löwenfeld to St. Petersburg as its foreign correspondent. In March of 1891, however, as Grand Duke Sergei, brother to the Tsar, prepared to take over the

position of Governor-General of Moscow, the authorities began mass expulsions of Jewish residents (Dubnow II: 399 *et seq.*). Similar measures soon followed in St. Petersburg. On March 26, 1891, the Paris newspaper *L'Europe* reported: "M. Loewenfeld, the correspondent of the Berlin newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt*, has just been expelled from St. Petersburg by administrative order." Disappointed once again, Löwenfeld found himself back in Berlin, 36 years old, without a job, short of funds, and in ill health, apparently an aftereffect of the influenza pandemic of 1889-1890.

An article written by Sigmar Mehring after Löwenfeld's death suggests that he may also have suffered some kind of nervous breakdown at this time.¹⁸ He reported that after months in the hospital, he rallied, emerging with his health and spirits restored. Mehring recalled with what optimism Löwenfeld described his ambitious plans for a people's theatre, notwithstanding that he was living on the edge of poverty in a dismal furnished apartment, much too small to accommodate his books. His salient characteristic, Mehring thought, was his persistence, and his refusal to be discouraged by the many setbacks he experienced.

Löwenfeld continued his work on the Tolstoy translations¹⁹ and on the biography, which appeared early in 1892. In the foreword, he staked a claim for the permanence of Tolstoy's greatness as a writer and thinker. He wrote:

Anyone who lets his gaze roam freely into the future, anyone who listens with understanding to the language of the present, recognizes in Leo Tolstoy one of the rare men who come only in the great turning points of world history—to teach, to warn, to save! (vii)

The biography is far too long and detailed to try to summarize here. I would suggest, however, that it is well worth consulting, especially (as Biryukov indicates) for its discussion of Tolstoy's travels in Europe as a young man. Löwenfeld also shows, I think, a sensitive and profound understanding of what it is that sets Tolstoy apart from other writers and thinkers:

We have no right to teach the child truths that we ourselves do not accept without doubts. We must listen much more to his instincts, and lead his pure nature to blossom fully. This is the connection between Tolstoy's literary and pedagogical works.

In all his works Tolstoy struggles to form a moral way of thinking: not one that is ready-made, or that is passed on to us, but one that is continually renewing itself. That was the fundamental difference between Tolstoy and his countrymen and contemporaries, which the critics did not immediately recognize, but which one or another of them unconsciously hinted at. . . .

Tolstoy struggled desperately for a world-view that would resolve the terrible contradiction between the two worlds of what is cultured and what is natural. More and more in this combat he leaned to the side of the natural. With egoism he contrasts self-denial; with the struggle for possessions, a humanitarianism that is ready to help others; and with enmity among nations, eternal peace. (292)

Although as noted, Tolstoy had reviewed the biography when it was still in proof, he had mixed feelings when it appeared. In a dictated note to Löwenfeld, beginning "Dear Brother," he wrote that he had read some parts of the book with pleasure, but that other parts caused him "anger and regret" at their failure to express clearly what he had so wished to communicate.²⁰ Tolstoy maintained, not altogether persuasively, that his ego was not involved: "For a long time I have battled vanity and egotism and for the most part have already conquered them, so that it does not give me an unpleasant feeling that people will judge me on the basis of a rash, not sensible, and often insufficiently well-founded expression of my thoughts." The complaint, it will be noted, seems not to be that Löwenfeld has erred in presenting the facts, but that he has not done justice to Tolstoy's philosophical views. Tolstoy added that though he would never have wished such a book to appear, now that it was published he had nothing against it, and he signed the letter, "L. Tolstoy, who loves you."

The following year saw two major developments in Löwenfeld's life. In February 1893, after

two leading members of the Berlin Jewish community appealed for the Kaiser's protection against increasing anti-Semitism, Löwenfeld published, at first anonymously, a pamphlet entitled "Protected Jews or Citizens of the State?" In it he argued that, in matters of religious belief, equality for all citizens was an issue of law and right, not a matter of privilege or royal favour. The German Jewish community responded enthusiastically, and Löwenfeld, no longer anonymous, organized a public meeting at which the Central Union of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith was founded, to fight anti-Semitism in court and through the political process.²¹ The parallel between Löwenfeld and the young Mohandas Gandhi in South Africa—both working to remove legal barriers against their co-religionists, both deeply influenced by Tolstoy—is strong.

Also in 1893, Löwenfeld succeeded in organizing his "people's theatre"—the Schiller Theatre, which opened the following year. One of his principal supporters was the astronomer Wilhelm Förster. Many other public-spirited citizens, including the biologist Robert Koch, contributed funds. The theatre was founded on the principle that there existed a "right to art" for all—that access to art should not be limited to the educated and privileged classes, but should be available to everyone. Prices were kept low. The least expensive seats cost the equivalent of six American cents, cheaper by far than any other theatre in the city, with free performances for public school students and city employees. Evenings of music and poetry were also provided, as were educational lectures.²²

It is impossible to say how much the theatre was a reflection of Tolstoyan ideals, since Löwenfeld's efforts to create such a theatre antedated his first contacts with Tolstoy.²³ There was in any case an important difference between the two men's approach to life, as a perceptive Englishwoman, Edith Sellers, commented in a magazine article in 1900:

Dr. Loewenfeld . . . made his mark in the world as a writer, especially by his *Life of Count Tolstoi* (by his translation of the Count's works too) between whom and himself there is not only warm

friendship but close sympathy. The Doctor shares to the full the Count's intense pity for the poor, and his eagerness to give them a helping hand; but, being a practical man with more than his fair share of common sense, he differs from him fundamentally. . . . For he is bent on brightening men's lives in this world, whereas Count Tolstoi's strongest wish is to fit them with wings for the next. (Sellers 870)

If Tolstoy himself was ambivalent about bringing culture to the uneducated classes—he once wrote an article entitled, "Who Should be Teaching Whom to Write: Should We be Teaching the Peasant Boys, or They Us?"—Löwenfeld had no such doubts. Sellers, who had talked with him at length, accurately described his conception of what a people's theatre should strive to be:

A theatre, he holds, is, or ought to be a place of recreation, a place where men and women are not only amused, but where they have their dormant faculties aroused, where their imagination is excited, their feelings are touched, where they are made to laugh and to cry—are humanised in fact. It is a school where they who go are raised above class barriers, are taught to understand the different phases of life, and to sympathize with their fellows—to rejoice with those who rejoice, sorrow with those who sorrow. . . . (871)

In no other theatre, indeed, in Berlin, is such an interesting audience to be found. All sorts and conditions of men are there: white-haired professors sit side by side with first-grade teachers; rough-looking artisans with smart young clerks; droschke-drivers with Government officials. Factory girls are there by the dozen, especially on Sunday afternoons. (879)

Löwenfeld was adamant that the Schiller Theatre should be self-supporting, in part to encourage imitation elsewhere. The dividend paid to shareholders was small, however; the by-laws provided that any surplus was to be used for the benefit of the theatre. Löwenfeld opened two more theatres in Berlin. His crowning achievement, a theatre built to his specifications in the rapidly growing suburb of Charlottenburg, was in its time—it opened its doors in 1907—the largest

theatre in the German-speaking world. As an expression of its democratic ideals, it was built in the form of an amphitheatre, without boxes or balconies. Among other innovations, the theatre provided free programs, with serious essays about the plays and the playwrights, in the hope that playgoers would take them home and read them at leisure. Löwenfeld himself wrote these essays. Actors and actresses were put on year-round contracts, which eased living conditions for them, and actresses' costumes were provided by the management.²⁴ Löwenfeld himself, according to a contemporary writer, was just another employee on the staff (Stümcke 63).²⁵ His nickname within the theatre was "Väterchen" ("Daddy").

Perhaps surprisingly, the country where the concept of people's theatres took hold most firmly was Tsarist Russia. By 1902, Sergei Witte's Finance Ministry had built 200 "people's theatres," using profits from the vodka monopoly, and 60 more were under construction.²⁶ The Finance Ministry was trying to address Russia's alcoholism problem by taking over the manufacture of vodka and devoting about 20% of the profits to creating non-alcoholic diversions for the poor, such as restaurants, theatres, libraries, and parks.

Why, it may be asked, would the Russian Government of Tsar Nicholas II take up the idea of people's theatres so enthusiastically? I cannot say for sure, but the connections between some of the individuals involved suggest an answer. In December 1898, a laudatory lead article in the semi-official *St. Petersburg Gazette* described Löwenfeld's plan to make "art for the people" a reality. The newspaper's proprietor was Prince Esper Esperovitch Ukhtomsky, a friend both of the Tolstoy's and of the Tsar, with whom he had travelled to the Far East when Nicholas was still Tsarevitch.²⁷ Ukhtomsky was also associated with the Finance Ministry, and was the business partner, in the Russo-Chinese Bank, of Witte's financial adviser, the banker Adolf Rothstein.²⁸ Rothstein, born in Berlin, was the brother of Löwenfeld's wife Ida.²⁹ What this at least suggests is a chain of influence connecting Tolstoy, Löwenfeld, Rothstein, Ukhtomsky, and the Finance Ministry.

In the summer of 1898, in honour of Tolstoy's upcoming seventieth birthday, Löwenfeld travelled to Russia. On July 2 (old style), the Countess wrote in her diary: "That uncongenial [*nesimpatichnyi*] Jew Löwenfeld has arrived; he has written a biography of Lev Nikolaevitch and is now writing the second part."³⁰ The following day she reported:

Talked to Löwenfeld this evening. He was telling me about the Ethical Society in Berlin. Total atheism and a concern for people's material well-being. This concern would be a fine thing if it was practiced on a wide, universal scale, but why should faith in God stand in the way of that? Without the idea of God I should lose all ability to love or understand anything. (*The Diaries of Sophia Tolstoy* 328)

Löwenfeld gave an account of the same conversation in a letter to his wife, dated July 15, 1898. After telling her how much he missed her and their two-year-old daughter, he wrote:

My sense of longing is made all the stronger by a certain feeling of foreignness that I cannot shake off. Tolstoy judges everything, even on my behalf, from only *one* standpoint, with the one-sidedness of a strongly formed personality—a one-sidedness that generates its own force. Goethe, Bourget,³¹ the financial policies of Miquel³² and Witte—now every phenomenon, past and present, is forced into the Procrustean bed of morality. I can't go along, not when from *this* point of view Schiller is placed far, far above Goethe. Nor could I long ago, when he viewed "The Robbers" as a masterwork of world literature, by his also somewhat unusual, but at any rate original yardstick of popular art. What I am just hinting at here, and will supplement orally, was all very interesting to me, but I feel spiritually alien—that's just what I feel—to the lord of the manor, and much more so than formerly, when he already had these attitudes toward art, but in a less clear form, not systematically worked out.

The Countess has also become a different person. Since the death of her youngest boy, who was two years old and played in the sand when I was here in '90, she is less lively. She has also become more

troubled. Yesterday evening I chatted with her alone for two hours. She has never been outside Russia, and I have invited her to come to us in February. She appreciates it greatly, she would love to hear Wagner and get to know our museums; I have sung your praises, my dear, as a guide. If only she can leave her husband for 10 to 14 days! Today she wants to work with me after dinner from 3 to 5 o'clock. Because I have prepared everything well, it is possible that we will finish with the questions that I have for her. Also, in a few days she has to go to see her married daughter, and then it would be impossible to do any more.

And so I'm gradually coming to a decision to cut short my stay here and return home, by way of Petersburg—to you, my darlings, to you, my beloved angel, and our lovable little chatterbox.

And so Löwenfeld, who revered Tolstoy and had travelled more than 1500 kilometers on the slow trains of the era to see him, left Iasnaia Poliana after only two days. The biographer, it appears, was no less passionate than his subject in his views on literature. Though they continued to correspond warmly, they never saw each other again. There is no way of knowing what additional information about Tolstoy's life we might possess today if Goethe had not come up in their conversation.

Löwenfeld came back to Berlin deeply saddened by the changes that had taken place in the Tolstoy household since his 1890 visit. He told his wife that the disciples surrounding the aging Tolstoy were not only making a cult of him but also treating the Countess very badly, and he felt great pity for her. None of this appeared, however, in the account of the trip that he dictated soon after his return home. He mailed the typescript to the Countess, with a letter urging her to "delete whatever you feel you need to" (*Diaries of Sophia Tolstoy* 910, n. 119). The meaning of the letter was plain enough: since Tolstoy was forever running afoul of the authorities, Löwenfeld wanted to be sure that nothing he published would create further difficulties.

The Countess made numerous corrections to the typescript.³³ Most were minor—a sentence

describing her son-in-law was removed, and various details relating to herself were added—but at least one seems significant. It involves a renewal of famine in the Tula district just a few months earlier. As in 1891, Tolstoy had opened soup kitchens and welcomed the help of student volunteers. This time, however, Government officials closed down the soup kitchens and sent the volunteers back to the cities.

"The Countess hoped," Löwenfeld wrote, "by a word to the Tsar's mother—the wife of Alexander III—to intervene." The message that she and Tolstoy sought to communicate to the Tsar—with the intention of helping him, she emphasized—was this: "Violent measures, with official explanations that there is no famine, at the same time that people are dropping like flies, really educate both the common people and the intelligentsia toward revolution."³⁴ Editing this passage, the Countess crossed out the inflammatory word "revolution" and replaced it with the bland phrase "bad feelings," written in German. But a broad pen stroke later crossed out the entire paragraph (22-23).³⁵

The article contained numerous anecdotes about Tolstoy's life, some amusing, some enlightening. For example, Tolstoy described to Löwenfeld how, when he was directing an amateur performance of his comedy *The Fruits of Enlightenment* at the Tula Nobles' Club, the well-bred nobleman playing the part of a servant ejecting peasants from the master's anteroom could not achieve the roughness that the role required. Tolstoy relied on personal experience to set the actor straight:

"No," said Tolstoy, "that's not how it's done. That's not throwing someone out. You have to grab more forcefully—just the way it happened to me here on the steps. The policeman, who stood at the entrance to the club to let in no one but Count Tolstoy, saw to his amazement a stocky peasant in a sheepskin coat approach and without any ado try to walk past him. He tells him to stop, but the peasant walks calmly up the steps. The man of the law cannot let this happen. Immediately he goes after the peasant, grabs him ungently by the wrists, and with all the dignity of the representative of law and order, sets him down in the snow. As soon as

the peasant makes clear to the policeman that he is the author of the play and is the awaited Count Tolstoy, he is allowed entry." "You see," Tolstoy closed the tale of his experience, "he understood what it means to throw somebody out." (7-8)

Elsewhere, Löwenfeld described how, at the same time that the officials of Tsar Alexander III were persecuting Tolstoy and suppressing his works, the Tsar himself was "one of the most diligent readers of Tolstoy's works." M. A. Stakhovich, a Tolstoy family friend whom Löwenfeld had met at Iasnaia Poliana in 1890, would read each new work of Tolstoy's to the Tsar as soon as it was published. After the censors suppressed *The Kreutzer Sonata*, Löwenfeld reported, Alexander astonished his officials by remarking, "How Europe will laugh!" and declaring that henceforth he personally would pass judgement on Tolstoy's works (2).

Löwenfeld politely told the Countess that he found her unchanged since his 1890 visit. She did not agree:

"I have changed very, very much since you were here. How long has that been? Eight years, isn't it? Then you saw our little boy. Since he died, I have changed greatly. I have become a quite, quite different person. You will also no longer find me the help with your work that I was then so happy to take part in." With these words the Countess alluded to the fact that at the time of my first visit, she read aloud to me from her extensive diaries, and in this way furnished me with the best material for my biography of Tolstoy that one could have at one's disposal, so long as the rich treasures of the letters that he has written and received remain unavailable. But they will not be available, as the Countess told me, for fifty years. The grief for her boy, dead three years, recurred now and then in her narrative. "He was certainly our most gifted child," the Countess said to me the next day. "The little six-year-old already showed quite exceptional talents. They say that is often the case with children of more mature parents." When I asked how Lev Nikolayevitch had borne the loss, the Countess said: "It may be the only time in my life that I have ever seen him succumb to grief. He expressed the same thing himself. You can't imagine how moving it was, as the 67-year-old father, with the

little coffin on his shoulder, made his way to the grave. Little Ivan lies buried in Pokrovskoye-Streshnevo, 12 versts from Moscow. You know the place, it was the usual summer residence of my parents. That is where Lev Nikolayevitch began to woo me for my hand in marriage. We were all so deeply affected by the death of the boy that we did not want to spend the summer in Iasnaia Poliana." (15-16)

Löwenfeld followed up this last point, and in so doing established why Tolstoy never travelled outside Russia in his later years:

"I remember," I replied to the Countess, "you even wanted to come to Germany. Among my press clippings I have a letter that Lev Nikolayevitch wrote to a German author in Bavaria. In it he asks about a summer residence. How did it come about that you did not carry out your plan?"

"As a matter of fact, we had firmly decided to come to Germany. I myself was exceptionally pleased to leave Russia for once. As you know, I have never been over the border. Now I especially wanted to travel to Bavaria, to Bayreuth. Here in Moscow we hear quite superb music in our symphony concerts, but the Wagner operas in Bayreuth are now what I long for."

"And yet you gave up the idea of a journey?"

"Yes. And there was, of course, a very good reason for doing so. When it became known that Lev Nikolayevitch wanted to travel abroad, a high official—the Countess told me the name, which, however, I do not want to repeat here—"said to me, 'Listen, naturally no one is going to make the slightest difficulties about your journeying abroad; but who knows whether your return to Russia will depend solely on you?' Naturally this hint was enough to make us drop the planned trip." (16-17)

To Löwenfeld's undoubted pleasure, Tolstoy took interest in the Schiller Theatre and its goal of bringing fine drama and poetry to the general public at low cost. But he suggested that Löwenfeld was placing too much emphasis on the "satisfaction of esthetic needs" instead of "moral goals." Tolstoy proposed that in addition to offering programs on such poets as Schiller, Chamisso, and Lenau, the theatre should promote philosophers, with "an Epictetus evening, a Sakiamuni

[Buddha] evening, a Pascal evening (17).”

Tolstoy told Löwenfeld a revealing story about his visit to Rome on his first European trip. The garbling of this story by a later biographer illustrates, I would suggest, how dangerous it is when biographers allow their imaginations to supply missing facts.

Löwenfeld had written in the 1892 biography that in April and May of 1857, on Tolstoy's first trip to Western Europe, he had travelled rapidly through the cities of Italy. However, Löwenfeld observed:

Nowhere in the author's writings do we find a reference to his impressions of the Eternal City or the other places in Italy, which by their history or their wealth of artworks must surely have aroused the interest of a spirit like Tolstoy's. (*L. N. Tolstoy* 111)

Thus Löwenfeld, who himself loved Italy, was differentiating between what he knew for a fact and what he guessed to be true. In 1898, seeking to fill this gap in his knowledge, he asked Tolstoy about the Italian trip:

“It's really not possible, Lev Nikolayevitch,” I said, “that you were in Italy and didn't see Rome. But there is not a trace of it. In the materials that I received from the Countess in 1890, there was nothing to read about Rome.” “Certainly I was in Rome. I know the city very well, and with a Russian painter, whose name escapes me at the moment, I made long excursions to Naples, Pompeii, and Herculaneum. We found ourselves together in the Café Greccho, and left from there. He knew Rome very well through a stay of many years there.” Naturally, we got to talking about the art treasures of Rome. “I have to confess,” said Leo Tolstoy, “that ancient art did not make an extraordinary impression on me, though everyone around me seemed very moved by it. At the time, I talked about this a lot with Turgenev. I was convinced that there was a general overestimation of classical art.” (19)

Tolstoy continued:

“Everywhere, the person [*Mensch*] was what interested me most. Yesterday, I read an observa-

tion that seemed apt in what you wrote about me. You say that everywhere it was only the person that interested me. How correct that is, is confirmed by a memory of my stay in Rome. When I look back today, there is only one little incident in my memory. With my friends, I took a little walk to Mount Pincio. Below, at the foot of the mountain stood a delightful child with big black eyes—truly typical of an Italian child of the people. I can still hear his cry: ‘*Date mi un baioccho!*’ Everything else is almost blotted out of my memory. And the reason for that is that I have always concerned myself most with the people [*Volk*].” (19-20)

“Baioccho” was the smallest copper coin of the era; the child was a beggar, trying to survive.

If we compare this with Henri Troyat's 1965 biography, we find Tolstoy visiting Rome not on his first trip to Western Europe, but on his second, in 1860, and being “overwhelmed by the beauty of the ruins and the treasures in the museums” (Troyat 202). He repeats the story of the walk up Mt. Pincio, but with embellishments not found in the original. According to Troyat, tears are staining the little boy's dirty face, and he is asking not for a “baioccho” but a “balocco”—which, we are told, is a “toy.”³⁶

The modern biographer has thus taken a straightforward account of a rich, sensitive young tourist confronted by life among the poorest of the poor, and has mangled it beyond recognition. It is hard to imagine that Tolstoy, at 70, would have been so affected after 40 years by the memory of an acquisitive child demanding a toy.

The account of the 1898 visit also sheds light on, even if it cannot definitively resolve, a problem that has long vexed students of Tolstoy: how Tolstoy could have heard Charles Dickens lecturing on education during his 1861 visit to London, as is often reported, when Dickens's only public appearance in that time was a reading of *A Christmas Carol*. Victor Lucas, in *Tolstoy in London*, says of Tolstoy—inaccurately, as will be discussed shortly—that “all his biographers have stated” that he heard Dickens speak on education. Lucas goes on to surmise that Tolstoy may have been misquoted, or that Dickens may have made incidental references to education that so im-

pressed Tolstoy that they blotted out other memories of the evening when he described it decades later.

In his 1988 biography of Tolstoy, A. N. Wilson cites Lucas for the proposition that Tolstoy told “his first biographer Biryukov” that he “heard Dickens in a large public hall.” Wilson theorizes that Biryukov, aware of Tolstoy’s and Dickens’s interest in education, “supplied the deadly untruth” (Wilson 161).³⁷ Wilson thereby does an injustice both to Biryukov, as we shall see, and to Lucas, who attributed the Dickens story not to Biryukov but to Aylmer Maude (Lucas 35, 109).

The reality may be simpler than what Lucas and Wilson theorize. I would suggest that Tolstoy probably never saw or heard Dickens at all. In the 1892 biography, Löwenfeld reports that during his stay in London Tolstoy visited Parliament and was “lucky enough to hear Lord Palmerston deliver a three-hour speech” (141). Nothing is said about Dickens. In the 1898 typescript, Tolstoy is quoted as saying that during his trip to London—a trip cut short because of a bad toothache—introductions from the Comte de Surcour in Paris got him entry to such clubs as the Pall Mall Club, “where Thackeray from time to time also was a guest” (20). Again, there is no mention of Dickens. To me, it seems improbable that Tolstoy would recall and mention to Löwenfeld so trifling a connection to Thackeray, while neglecting to mention having heard Dickens if he had in fact done so. Dickens was far too important to him to have slipped his mind; we know from Tolstoy’s 1891 letter to M. M. Lederle, for example, that *David Copperfield* was one of the books that he described as having had an “enormous” influence on him (Christian 485). We also know from Löwenfeld’s biography, and from Biryukov, who relied on it, with what apparent pleasure Tolstoy recalled other people who impressed him on his European travels: Proudhon, Lelevel, Auerbach, and others. In addition, K. N. Lomunov has collected more than 20 other instances in which Tolstoy wrote or commented to others about Dickens; in none of them does Tolstoy say anything about having heard Dickens in London (Jones 43).

It seems significant, moreover, that the story of Tolstoy’s having heard Dickens makes no appearance in several other biographies which appeared in Tolstoy’s lifetime: Biryukov’s *Leo Tolstoy, His Life and Work: Childhood and Early Manhood*, published in English translation in 1906; Edward Steiner’s *Tolstoy the Man* (1904); or Maude’s two-volume biography of Tolstoy, first published in 1908. Rather, the story seems to have originated with Makovitsky, whose memoirs, not published until 13 years after Tolstoy’s death (and two years after Makovitsky’s suicide), were later cited by Gusev. In sum, I would suggest that if Tolstoy had in fact heard Dickens in 1861, it is likely that not only Löwenfeld, but many others as well, would have been told about it, and it would not have taken six decades for an account of the event to appear in print.

In the early years of the new century, Löwenfeld was primarily occupied with his theatre, although he continued to make translations of Tolstoy’s works, dictating them to stenographers. As a Berliner fluent in Slavic languages, and with ties to Russia and Tolstoy, he received many visitors from the East. In a May 1901 letter, for example, he describes how a Russian has appeared in his office, greeting him as though they were old friends. The visitor has brought a letter from Tolstoy which begins “my dearest Löwenfeld” and tells him, “What you do for Mr. Tregubov you do for me.”³⁸ Löwenfeld was happy to oblige. A photograph from 1906 shows him with Nemirovich-Danchenko and other actors and actresses of the Moscow Art Theatre, in Berlin on their first visit outside of Russia. Löwenfeld was also a source of moral and material assistance to artists and political refugees from Russia. Serge Koussevitzky, then a poor young double-bass player (later, after his marriage to an extremely rich woman, he became a world-famous conductor), was one of those he supported.³⁹ When pogroms in Russia brought large numbers of refugees to Berlin, Löwenfeld went to the railroad station to meet the trains and assist the new arrivals, and he wrote an impassioned article about their plight for the *Berliner Tageblatt* in 1905. He also helped political fugitives from Russia, sometimes inviting

came the property of the Berlin city government.⁴³ Ida Löwenfeld supported herself by taking in lodgers, including a family of Russian émigrés, the Nabokovs, who appreciated her late husband's large library of Russian books (Boyd 176).⁴⁴ At her death in 1926, Raphael Löwenfeld's papers passed into the hands of his daughter Eva, my grandmother.



Members of the Moscow Art Theatre, with Löwenfeld standing on the far right, in 1906.

them to stay in his house.⁴⁰

In December 1910, only a few weeks after Tolstoy's death in the station master's house in Astapovo, Raphael Löwenfeld died in Berlin at the age of 56, having never completed the planned second volume of his biography.⁴¹ In the inflation that followed the First World War, Löwenfeld's widow, suddenly reduced to poverty, had no choice but to sell her late husband's collection of letters from Tolstoy.⁴² The Schiller Theatre be-



Löwenfeld around 1906, with Eva Ortmann Lechner (née Eva Marie Lowenfeld), the author's grandmother (1895-1988)

In the mid-1980s, visiting my grandmother at her New York apartment, I found in a desk drawer a 24-page typescript, written in German, entitled "My Second Trip to Iasnaia Poliana." It appeared to be either a memoir of the 1898 visit or the draft of an article, and it was edited in three different handwritings. I recognized one as Löwenfeld's; another seemed likely, from the context, to be Tolstoy's. But there was a third, rather feminine handwriting on the document, which baffled me, and I therefore put the document out of mind. Several years later, however, I came across Cathy Porter's translation of the Countess's diaries. Turning to the diary entries for the summer of 1898, I found first the description of Löwenfeld's visit in July, and then the following entry for August 19, 1898: "I made some corrections to Löwenfeld's German article about his second visit to Iasnaia Poliana, and made prints of Misha's photographs. I have a stomach-ache" (*Diaries of Sophia Tolstoy* 334).

From the notes, I learned for the first time that this account had appeared as an article, and that it had first been sent to the Countess for her review. The source of the many corrections in a feminine handwriting was thus apparent.

In the foreword to his biography, Löwenfeld had said that his objective was to present Tolstoy "in his complete essence" (VI). He added that he was deeply aware how short he had fallen of his objective, but he hoped that his effort would be judged less severely than would be a work that had the research of a hundred predecessors to rely on. He asked readers to consider his book as just a first attempt: "Biographies of great men can only become what they should be through the assistance of many people, and through the ever-renewed work of years" (VII). He would be grateful, he said, to anyone who contributed information, no matter how little, that helped to augment the biography or correct an error in it, and he gave his address so that readers could write to him.

In 1994, my family and I came to Iasnaia Poliana to present the 1892 letter from Tolstoy and Löwenfeld's 1898 typescript to the Tolstoy archives.⁴⁵ During our visit, an elderly beekeeper

equipped us with hats and veils and showed us around the beehives in the orchard. On our return to the United States, my son, then eight years old, reported one day that he had written a biographical essay about Tolstoy for school. I sent a copy to Irina V. Nikerina, who had been our interpreter at Iasnaia Poliana. She wrote back that she had taken it to the orchard and translated it into Russian for the beekeeper. That would have given pleasure to Raphael Löwenfeld, I think, and perhaps also to Leo Tolstoy.

Notes

1. This article is a revised and expanded version of a talk presented on September 30, 1998, at the conference on "Tolstoy and World Literature" held at Iasnaia Poliana. The author is an attorney with the United States Government.
2. I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to my learned and multilingual brother, John Thomas Crane, for reading and translating for me those of Tolstoy's letters to Löwenfeld that appear in the Jubilee Edition of Tolstoy's works, as well as relevant passages from the books of Gusev and Makovitsky. Translations from the German, unless otherwise indicated, are mine. For any errors and omissions in this article I am solely responsible, and I would appreciate readers' bringing them to my attention, either by mail, at 4809 Drummond Ave., Chevy Chase, Maryland, 20815, USA, or by e-mail, at pgrane@erols.com..
3. The planned second volume was never completed, owing to Löwenfeld's early death.
4. Biryukov wrote: "The interesting details of the second journey abroad we borrow from the book of Loewenfeld, *Count L. N. Tolstoy: His Life and Works*, in which this journey is minutely described" (278 n. 1). Biryukov in turn has been a source for later biographers.
5. In the cartoon, by Thomas Theodor Heine, Tolstoy is being told, "You mustn't think that it's like Russia, we don't tolerate such nasty blasphemies." Another cartoon showed Löwenfeld standing in chains before Pobedonostsev, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, who is pulling strings like a puppeteer to control the actions of Saxon officials. In the background, Tolstoy's works



From an unidentified German publication in 1902. The heading reads “Onward, my people! The bonfires blaze and burn. Rays of freedom are shining brightly from the North.” The caption below reads: The Procurator General of the Holy Synod: “I heartily thank you, dear Procurator of Saxony, for bringing to justice the distributors of Tolstoy’s works on the charge of blasphemy and defamation of the Russian Church. For us, given the lack of firewood and the leniency of Russian laws, this has been unfortunately impossible.”

are being burned on a bonfire.

6. Afterwards, Löwenfeld sent Tolstoy a copy of the *Berliner Tageblatt* article describing the acquittal. A few weeks later, he received a warm letter from Tolstoy, written in his own hand, which wished him success in all his undertakings but made no mention of the trial. “Apparently, this was intentional,” Löwenfeld wrote his wife on August 8, 1902. “He would certainly have had to say that we were wrong to defend ourselves, etc. Perhaps it was also just weakness. For the letter very much gave the impression that a sick man had forced himself to write it, out of great courtesy”

(July 15/28, 1902; *PSS* 73: 270). In it, he declined to give Löwenfeld permission to translate *The Living Corpse*, explaining that he had only roughly sketched it out, and was unsure, owing to his illness, whether he would return to it any time soon, as there was “much more important and necessary work to be done.” He wrote, “*Ars longa, and vita, especially when you’re 74 years old, is very brevis.*”

7. Samuel Löwenfeld (1854-1892) became a historian of the medieval Papacy, working in association with the famous liberal historian Theodor Mommsen.

8. Many years later, Löwenfeld learned that a niece, Rahel Straus, who had wanted to become a doctor, was unable to afford medical school and was studying philology instead. He wrote to her that he knew what it was like to study a subject other than what one desired, and offered to pay the full cost of her medical studies. She became a doctor, and during the Nazi period, emigrated to Palestine. Her excellent memoir, *We Lived in Germany* (*Wir lebten in Deutschland*), contains portraits of both Raphael and Samuel Löwenfeld.

9. In the foreword, written in German, he observed: "It is a curious phenomenon that German scholarship, which usually considers the most remote and meaningless subjects to be worth contemplating, gives so astonishingly little attention to the great tribe [*Stamm*] of the Slavs, its history and literature."

10. Duke Georg seems to have pioneered the idea that a director can create and lead an entire ensemble to further a particular conception of what a theatre should be. He was also unconventional in his willingness to produce controversial plays. He was an early champion of Ibsen, and at a time (1886) when *Ghosts* could not be performed in public theatres he staged a performance on his estate for an invited audience, including critics and the play's author. Konstantin Stanislavsky was one of many directors who were greatly influenced by the Meininger theatre troupe, which visited Russia in the 1890s, some years before the Moscow Art Theatre was founded. See Miller 1931.

11. An article in the *Berliner Courier* of December 5, 1905, described Löwenfeld's history of involvement with the theatre. Shortly after the "Society for the Founding of German People's Theatres" was founded, the right-wing *Preussische Zeitung* commented, in unrestrained terms, that it had discovered two Jewish names (one of them Löwenfeld's) among the list of organizers, and that because of this the Society's "plans, which in themselves are good and laudable, will run aground." These and other newspaper clippings saved by Löwenfeld were preserved by his daughter and brought to the United States in 1936.

12. In the United States, the Postmaster General banned shipment of *The Kreutzer Sonata* through the mails, for which he was condemned by the *New York Times* in a scathing editorial (August 1, 1890).

13. On the same train trip, a young man gave Löwenfeld the name of the Moscow rabbi who had been

Tolstoy's Hebrew instructor five or six years earlier. This rabbi reported that Tolstoy, having decided that he could not understand the "Jewish question" without reading the Bible and the Talmud in the original, was an assiduous student.

14. "Of the spiritual philosophy of the Count we spoke little. He probably had the feeling that I was not a follower of his, and I considered it impolite to offer criticism, when I had come into the house as a guest and, I may also say, as an admirer of the writer" (*Conversations* 81).

15. The French biographer Henry Troyat refers to the "legend as attractive as it is unlikely [that] the new Tsar, Alexander II" read "Sebastopol in December" and ordered the author removed from danger (*Tolstoy* 122). But is this merely a "legend," and is it necessarily so unlikely? In the *Conversations* (54), Löwenfeld writes that he asked Tolstoy whether a satirical soldier's song from the Crimean War was correctly attributed to him. Yes, Tolstoy replied, and it had a decisive effect on his life. He had had the ambition to become *aide-de-camp* to the Grand Duke Michael Nikolayevitch. At the time, his standing in the army was high, because Tsar Nicholas, having read his "Sebastopol in December," had ordered that he be reassigned from the Fourth Bastion to a less hazardous position. Tolstoy, ordered to call on the Grand Duke, thought that he was about to be informed of his appointment as *aide-de-camp*. He learned instead that his authorship of the lampoon on the Russian commanders had become known, and that the post was therefore being given to someone else. Looking back, Tolstoy did not regret this, he told Löwenfeld, but at the time he felt very unfortunate.

Though Tolstoy himself is the source, something is nevertheless plainly amiss in Löwenfeld's account, as Tsar Nicholas died in March 1855, and Tolstoy, according to his diary, did not finish "Sebastopol in December" until April 12. (The error may be as slight as identifying who was Tsar at the time.) Aylmer Maude, in the 1930 edition of his biography, expresses doubt that Tolstoy's writings could have been connected to his transfer, since the latter took place on May 15 and the story did not appear in print until June. However, this does not necessarily resolve the issue. The piece would have been submitted to the censors some time earlier; thus it is not implausible that as a first-hand account of the battle by a participant, it would have been forwarded promptly to Alexander II by the censors, and that the Tsar would have read it and

given the order to protect Tolstoy before its actual publication.

16. In December 1890, Dillon made a visit to Iasnaia Poliana, also with plans to write a biography. (A long-time resident of Russia, Dillon was proud of having been a friend of Dostoevsky, and in 1881 had helped carry the author's body from the room in which he died.) On this occasion, he was in an apologetic mood. W. T. Stead, an English magazine editor who had visited Tolstoy with a letter of introduction from Dillon, had written an article that reflected an utter misunderstanding of Tolstoy's views. Hoping that the editor's mistake was not unique, Dillon asked Tolstoy, "Have other foreign interviewers blundered in a similar way?" Tolstoy replied bluntly: "I cannot call to mind any such case. The Germans and indeed all Teutonic peoples come with a knowledge of two or three foreign languages and they grasp fully what is said and unfold it clearly to their readers." Tolstoy named two Germans, both of whom Dillon had met previously, adding that one of them—clearly Löwenfeld—was at work on a biography, and was being supplied with materials for it. "But that is also my ambition," Dillon protested, "as I wrote to you and as your apostle Tchertkoff wrote to you." The conversation is recounted in Dillon (173). In it, Dillon shows striking hostility toward Tolstoy, writing, for example, "Tolstoy's ruling passion was love of fame—a weakness that few great men can wholly conquer" (19).

17. She adds, "The difference in our philosophies has never led to a note of discord between us," and goes on to explain that *The Kreutzer Sonata* is a work of fiction, not about their own marriage.

18. For these and other obituaries, many of which contain biographical information not elsewhere to be found, I am indebted to my cousin, Hedda Michaelis of London, whose mother Marie was one of Löwenfeld's many nieces.

19. His command of the two languages was such that as he read a Russian text, he could dictate the German translation to a stenographer.

20. The letter is now in the Tolstoy archives at Iasnaia Poliana.

21. At the time, not everyone agreed that the answer to political anti-Semitism was to fight it. In 1893, Theodor Herzl was making plans to solve the "Jewish question"

by organizing the mass conversion of Jewish children to Catholicism. He envisioned leading a parade of children to Vienna's St. Stephen's Cathedral, where the Pope himself would conduct the baptism ceremony. Two years later, Herzl published *The Jewish State*, the starting point of the Zionist movement. See Laqueur 88.

22. For example, Eduard Bernstein, the founder of Revisionism and a *bête noire* of Lenin's, gave a series of ten lectures in 1907 on the history of political and social thought. He and Löwenfeld were cousins.

23. I am indebted to Professor W. G. Jones of the University of Wales for informing me that Tolstoy wrote "The Power of Darkness" (1889) for the people's theatre movement.

24. At the time, actors and actresses were normally hired only for the length of a particular production, and actresses were expected to bring along their own wardrobes.

25. Stümcke noted that some snobbish critics looked down on the Schiller Theatre because its prices were so low, and because many in the audience, for whom classical drama was unfamiliar, actually found the works of Schiller "fun." For him, this was all the more to the theatre's credit.

26. According to Long, ticket prices in the Russian theatres were even cheaper than in the Schiller Theatre, which suggests that the Schiller Theatre was the standard by which other "people's theatres" were being measured (615).

27. Ukhtomsky was a house guest at Iasnaia Poliana on the occasion of Tolstoy's seventieth birthday, and described a recent conversation with the Tsar about Tolstoy (*Diaries of Sophia Tolstoy* 336). A serious student of Tibetan religion and religious art, Ukhtomsky once travelled to Lhasa to meet the Dalai Lama and persuade him to accept Russian protection (Pares 58). A frequent writer on political themes, he argued that Russia was an Asiatic rather than a European country, and that its future lay in the East, not the West. Ukhtomsky was used by Witte for diplomatic missions involving China (*New York Times*, August 27, 1900). Though he believed in autocracy, his newspaper, which was read by the Tsar (a photograph in the collection of the British royal family shows him reading it), had a radical tinge; it broke the story of the 1903 massacres

in Kishinev, notwithstanding official denials that such outbreaks had occurred (*New York Times*, May 11, 1903). I have been told, but have not yet been able to confirm, that Ukhtomsky played a role in the establishment of the Moscow Art Theatre in 1898. It is noteworthy that Nemirovich-Danchenko, the co-founder of the Moscow Art Theatre, was mentioned by Löwenfeld in the 1891 *Conversations* as being associated with Tolstoy, through Chertkov, in the movement for the dissemination of good popular writings.

28. For Rothstein's role in the conversion of Russia to the gold standard, see Von Laue (140).

29. In 1894, shortly after the Schiller Theatre opened, the 40-year-old Löwenfeld married Ida Rothstein, the 27-year-old, politically progressive, free-thinking daughter of a Jewish financier. Löwenfeld was willing to have a religious wedding, in deference to her parents' feelings, but she insisted on a civil ceremony.

30. In contrast to her diary entry for June 3, 1891, in which she used the pejorative "zhid" in reference to Löwenfeld, the Countess here uses the non-offensive "evrei." On the question of what Löwenfeld was working on at the time, the notes to the diaries say that the Countess was in error, and that Löwenfeld was preparing a second edition of the biography, not a second volume. The Countess was correct, however. Whether the Countess's apparent antipathy toward Löwenfeld was based on his being Jewish or his lack of religious belief, or both, she was nevertheless generous with her time in helping Löwenfeld with his biographical efforts, both in 1890 and in 1898. It is to her credit that her interest in seeing her husband portrayed accurately seems to have taken precedence over whatever negative feelings she may have had for the biographer.

31. Paul Bourget, a contemporary French novelist and critic.

32. Johannes von Miquel, Prussia's reformist Finance Minister in the 1890s, introduced a graduated income tax.

33. The typescript remained for many decades in the possession of Löwenfeld's daughter Eva (1895-1988). It is now in the archives at Iasnaia Poliana. It bears numerous additions in pencil by Löwenfeld, mostly proper names which the typist left blank for him to fill in, and many additions and corrections by the Countess. In addition, there are in a very few places changes

made in a handwriting that appears to be neither Löwenfeld's nor the Countess's. Both the context of the changes (for example, identifying a companion of Tolstoy's on his European travels) and the idiosyncrasies of the handwriting (the lower-case letter "d", in which the upper portion veers sharply to the left) suggest that they were made by Tolstoy himself. At one point, the word "Strophe" has been changed to "Vers" in what seems to be an old man's thick, unsteady handwriting; it bears no resemblance to the Countess's neat script, which is written with a pen with a thin nib. In the published version, however, "Strophe" has been reinstated. If the change had been Löwenfeld's, the published version would have read "Vers."

The final article presumably appeared in German in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, though I have so far been unable to confirm this. The notes to the Countess's diaries state that it appeared in the *Russian Gazette* of September 10, 1898, under the title, "At Count Tolstoy's" (910). However, that citation may be erroneous; I was unable to find it in the microfilms of that number of the *Gazette*.

Tolstoy's reaction to the article is not recorded. In 1901, Löwenfeld published a new edition, the third, of his *Conversations*, and added the account of his 1898 visit as a last chapter.

34. However, because Tolstoy was ill, the Countess never got to make her overture to the Tsar's mother.

35. If, as I have suggested, the typescript was reviewed both by Tolstoy and the Countess, then it seems probable that it was Tolstoy who crossed out the paragraph. It seems less likely that the Countess would first alter the wording of the paragraph and then cross it out. Moreover, she wrote with a fine-nibbed pen; this change, like others that seem likely to have been Tolstoy's, were made with a pen with a wide nib.

36. In the original, "un garçon italien réclamant un jouet" (Troyat 249). Troyat gives as his source an "article by Löwenfeld about Tolstoy, cited by Gusev."

37. This is not the only place where Wilson might have benefited from greater familiarity with earlier works. In a chapter entitled "Bronchitis is a Metal," he describes the tempestuous relationship between Tolstoy and Turgenev, and the occasion on which Turgenev, driven beyond endurance by Tolstoy, exclaimed, "I can't take it any more! I have bronchitis!" (Wilson 137). Tolstoy replied, according to Wilson, "Bronchitis! Bronchitis is a metal!" To Wilson, this comment

seems so absurd that he speculates that Tolstoy might have misheard, and he suggests that Tolstoy might have mistaken some other word, such as “grafit” (graphite) for the Russian “bronchit” (bronchitis). (Wilson does not explain why Turgenev might be exclaiming that he had graphite.) If Wilson had been aware of the source of the anecdote—D. V. Grigorovich, quoted in Löwenfeld’s biography (152)—no such speculation would have been necessary. There, the quotation appears in full: “Bronchitis! Bronchitis is an imaginary disease. Bronchitis is a metal.” If anyone misheard the exchange, it would seem likely to have been the witness, Grigorovich. In the context, Tolstoy might reasonably have used the French “mentale” (as in the expression “maladie mentale,” an imaginary illness). The word could have been mistaken for “metal,” which, as Wilson observes, makes no sense whatever.

38. Ivan Mikhailovitch Tregubov (1858-1931) was a close friend of Tolstoy’s.

39. Decades later, in 1936, he returned the favour, assisting Löwenfeld’s daughter when, as a refugee from the Nazis, she arrived in New York with little money and only a tourist visa.

40. Löwenfeld’s daughter remembered the children’s dismay at one political houseguest, known by the pseudonym of “Mr. Tom,” who seemed to stay forever. Their father told them gently that Russians were accustomed to make long visits.

41. Apart from the reference in the Countess’s diaries to Löwenfeld’s work on the second volume of the biography, there is additional reason to think that his work on the biography had continued. In 1901, when the Schiller Theatre travelled to England, Löwenfeld paid a visit to Chertkov. The most likely reason for doing so would have been to gather biographical material on Tolstoy’s later years.

42. She kept just one, the letter in which Tolstoy reacted to the biography. An indication of how much valuable material was dispersed or lost may be found in Steiner (1904), in which the first of the author’s acknowledgements is to “Director Raphael Loewenfeld, of Berlin, who placed at my disposal his unsurpassed collection of Tolstoyana. . . .” (xvii.)

43. The theatre passed into the hands of the Berlin municipal authorities in the early 1920s. After the Nazis came to power, Joseph Goebbels took a particu-

lar interest in the Schiller Theatre, installing the actor Heinrich George, a former Communist, as Intendant. The memorial plaque in the lobby to the theatre’s founder was discreetly covered with a swastika flag. In an irony that Löwenfeld would not have appreciated, the Schiller Theatre was sent to France in February 1941 as an emissary of German culture, to perform Schiller’s *Kabale und Liebe* at the Comédie Française. The theatre was heavily damaged by Allied bombing in 1943. It was rebuilt after the Second World War and reopened in 1951. During the years of West Berlin’s isolation during the Cold War, the theatre was a symbol to West Berliners of the continuity of the city’s cultural life. In 1993, however, the Berlin Senate decided that, since reunification, the city had more theatres than it needed, and closed the Schiller Theatre, over protests from newspapers and the public. It was an echo of 1871, when, as Tolstoy commented to Löwenfeld in 1890, unification caused a withering of cultural activities in the capitals of the formerly independent German states. Tolstoy said: “What may be good politically—and that, however, still does not appear to me necessarily to be the case—is harmful to artistic creations” (*Conversations* 112).

44. Vladimir N. Nabokov, the author’s father, impressed the Löwenfeld children by insisting on shining his own shoes, in an era in which this was regarded as work for a servant.

45. On that occasion, Mr. Nikolai P. Puzin kindly showed me, reprinted in a Russian book, the German newspaper cartoons on Löwenfeld’s trial in 1902. This was the first I knew of the trial, apart from some hints in Löwenfeld’s letters, such as a 1906 letter from Leipzig in which he told his wife that it was a pleasure to be back in the city without the threat of conviction and imprisonment hanging over him. To the best of my knowledge, none of Löwenfeld’s three children ever knew of the trial. Probably, the idea of being a defendant in a criminal case—even a politically motivated prosecution, instigated by Tolstoy’s enemies, and ending in acquittal—was considered too shameful for them to be told of it, even long afterwards, or for any of the many obituaries of Löwenfeld to refer to it. The trial is mentioned, however, in Maude (2: 406).

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