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## News of the Profession

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### Saint Petersburg Conference, September 2001

On September 3-6, 2001, scholars from around the world attended a three day conference organized by Vsevolod Bagno at the Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkinsky Dom) in St. Petersburg on the topic *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky? Philosophic and Aesthetic Quests through the Cultures of the Orient and the Occident*. In attendance were representatives from Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Korea and Great Britain, as well as a dominant domestic contingent from Moscow and Saint Petersburg. The attendees participated in a series of workshops, under titles ranging from *Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as symbols of national culture* to *Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in a mutually clarifying perspective*. At the round-table discussion on the topic *Russia's image in the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky*, two papers were presented. Vladimir Tunimanov, president of the Russian Dostoevsky Society, spoke on the legacies of the two Russian literary giants among revolutionaries in Europe. World-renowned scholar Vittorio Strada, discussed the importance of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky for philosophers of the early twentieth century.

All the discussions emphasized the dialectic nature of the interrelations within different genres of literatures in each nation, and in the consciousness of the various nations themselves. Especially interesting in this regard was a paper presented by Alexander Lyvovsky, an independent scholar from St. Petersburg, on the religious complications of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as seen by the Swedes. The conference also explored how great social and historical events, namely wars and revolutions, contributed to the attitudes in various countries toward the two authors.

Jean Young Kim traced the evolution of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's popularity in Korea and the contrasting phases of their appeal, as

determined by the quality of the translations and by the varying states of consciousness of that colonized nation. There were also four papers by Japanese scholars on similar themes: N. Asaoka spoke on Tolstoy in the Tokyo Drama Theatre, Takashi Kimura on fables in the artistic world of both writers, and Koiti Itokava and T. Kinoshita on the social aspects of their influence in Japan. Other topics included the impact of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky on the literatures of Latin America, by Vsevolod Bagno; the dispute about the two writers in French literature, by Anna Vladimirova; and the same dispute in Spain, by Konstantin Korkonosenko. Elvira Osipova discussed the evolution in the reception of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky among American writers in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

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### The Japan Tolstoy Association

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, when Tolstoy's popularity was at its height, many of his works found their way into Japanese culture. This led eventually to the founding of Japan's first Tolstoy fellowship association, under the leadership of Kyuichiro Hara. Hara was also responsible for translating a full range of Tolstoy's works into Japanese. This association was crippled by the economic depression during WWII, however, and consequently Japan went decades without a major society dedicated to the study of Tolstoy.

In December 1996, under the stewardship of Kyuichiro Hara's son, the new Japan Tolstoy Association (JTA) was born. In the two years prior to its establishment, Japanese scholars of Russian