Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) has been described as the most momentous phenomenon of Russian life during the nineteenth century. Indeed, in his own day, and for about a generation afterward, he was an extraordinarily influential writer. During the last part of his life, his towering personality dominated the intellectual climate of Russia and the world to an unprecedented degree. His work, moreover, continues to be studied and admired. His views on art, literature, morals, politics, and life have never ceased to influence writers and thinkers all over the world. Such interest over the years has produced an immense quantity of books and articles about Tolstoy, his ideas, and his work. In Russia alone their number exceeded ten thousand some time ago (more than 5,500 items were published in the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1957) and continues to rise. Clearly, surveys are needed to comprehend a body of criticism so vast. Periodic attempts have been made to present collections of essays and bibliographical surveys, and in this way the criticism after the revolution has been described by the Soviets. Corresponding information about the period before, however, is scarce and, for the most part, incomplete and inadequate. V.S. Spiridonov's admirably thorough annotated bibliography L. N. Tolstoy: Bio-Bibliografia 1845–1870 runs only to the year 1870. Yuri Bitovt's comprehensive bibliography of Russian and foreign secondary literature on Tolstoy, Graf L. N. Tolstoy v literature i is-
kusstue, is so full of errors as to be of dubious value. Neither can, of course, serve as a survey. Except for introductions to collections of critical essays, short sections in textbooks, or the few studies touching on individual critics or periodicals, this critical activity has been largely overlooked and nowhere explored with the thoroughness it deserves.

This book will survey the criticism with reasonable thoroughness. The objective here is a study broad enough to provide a reliable description of reviewing practices in the period, yet sufficiently limited to avoid becoming mired in consideration of minor critics who were of little interest to their contemporaries and are of even less interest today. Of greatest importance is a balanced representation of the major critics of Tolstoy, weighted in favor of their substantial statements, whether the critique was written by a professional critic, a poet, a novelist, a philosopher, or a politician. To this end reviews of Tolstoy's work by Chernyshevsky, Pisarev, Grigor'ev, Strakhov, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Mikhailovsky, Merezhkovsky, Plekhanov, and Lenin were selected—ten critics who represent the dominant critical movements of the time. That these were truly the most important critics of the time is shown in part by the frequent references to them in reviews by other critics. Such selection permits the most representative treatment of the vast and varied criticism of Tolstoy the phenomenon and a detailed analysis wherever information is new or in conflict with previously published material. The information thus provided will enable the reader to evaluate the criticism for himself. Resorting to the sources themselves requires extensive research and presents various obstacles, such as the obliqueness of a critic's style. Much of the information, furthermore, is scattered in articles written on widely varying subjects that do not initially address themselves to Tolstoy at all. Such information, which is often significant, has apparently been overlooked. The survey is thus bound to suggest a new interpretation, and even, in some places, a new translation, of Tolstoy's critics in presenting a clear account of what the critics wrote about Tolstoy within the major trends of Russian criticism. To serve this aim, the following organization has been adopted.

Six sections of this study treat the six major trends in Russian prerevolutionary criticism. The first chapter will serve as an introduction by presenting pertinent information concerning the general background. It is divided into two parts to delineate (1) the
concerns of critics at the time and (2) Tolstoy's message—thus furnishing the context in which critical reaction should be interpreted. Some of the historical and cultural problems of Russia, I believe, have never been satisfactorily accounted for; I have attempted to suggest the bases for some of these conflicts in a brief review of the intellectual currents in Russia and an account of the attitudes, policies, and practices of the reviewers who judged and influenced Tolstoy and his readers. To facilitate identification in this study, critics are discussed in six major groups along with information on the background of each philosophical camp.

In the second part of the first chapter I discuss what I believe Tolstoy was trying to do. Because the reviews and the works cannot adequately be discussed in a critical vacuum, I have attempted to evaluate briefly some of the works themselves and, on the strength of the evaluations, to judge the validity of the critical conclusions reached by the reviewers. Both judgments are an integral part of my general approach.

With this approach I hope to make the critical climate in which Tolstoy worked more accessible. Almost all commentators in the past have either taken an adverse, usually mistaken, stand on many aspects of Russian criticism or indulged in undue condescension. I hope that I have avoided the other extreme; I have not attempted to whitewash the Russian critics. There are, however, some who will object to any kind of evaluation or attempt at objectivity as being fundamentally irrelevant. To such critical relativists critical judgments of any kind have no validity but are merely of historical interest. Aside from the philosophical difficulties of such a viewpoint, it will, I believe, prevent one from arriving at an adequate appreciation of the work done by the Russian critics; for they were operating, not in the humanist critical tradition as it developed since the days of Aristotle, Horace, Dryden, and Dr. Johnson, but in a tradition based on very different utilitarian considerations. Yet they also considered themselves to be criticizing sub specie aeternitatis, although from their own point of view. Some point of view, call it opinion or judgment, will of necessity be taken by everyone; and the prejudice against the utilitarianism of the Russian position, if nurtured by relativism, will result in the loss of a great mass of valuable criticism of Tolstoy's works by depreciation and neglect.

Whether the reader agrees with my evaluation or not, factual information concerning the critical reception accorded to Tolstoy is
available to him in the chapters following. They provide detailed
information on important aspects of each of the major critics' work.
The essence of each critic's position is outlined, his principal
themes and the nature of his critical approach, and his criticism of
Tolstoy, supported by generous quotes from his own writings to
give a fair impression of his style and manner of expression. At the
end of each chapter is a brief comparison of the critic's views with
those of others in the field, some consideration of his influence
upon them, and a description of what they have said about him and
his work on Tolstoy.

A NOTE ON TRANSLATION

Most of the quotes used here have never been translated before.
Those that were I have found to be frequently inaccurate or insen­sitive to certain shadings of meanings or references that were es­sential. Therefore I have made new translations throughout. As to
style, I do not think a translation should aim at improving it. Stylistic
changes that detract from the accuracy of the translation render
the improvement worthless. Translation must convey the meaning
as accurately as possible, even if it means, sometimes, presenting a
certain amount of outlandish thinking that goes with the original
message.

There are special difficulties in translating nineteenth century
Russian journalese. The language was often ambiguous and
oblique. It was dangerous to criticize openly the institutions of the
government, so criticism had to be vague and couched in allegorical
language. It is known as Aesopic language—a special kind of
double-talk that was popular in Russian journalism. The situation,
however, is more complex than that. One must do more than
merely read between the lines to get the underlying political mes­sage. The writers were fascinated with the possibilities of their al­legorical language and became its captives. They became obsessed
with their abstractions and as excited and involved with creating
them as they would be in writing fiction. Their language is replete
with complex imagery, hints, extreme colloquialisms, ambiguities,
and violated syntax—all of which makes for rather difficult transla­tion. My version of the meaning of many sentences is only one of
several possible interpretations. I chose it because I believed it to be
most representative of the overall message.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to all who advised and encouraged me and made possible the publication of this book. I would be remiss if I did not mention for special thanks Professors Roger B. Anderson, Duncan Gardiner, George Gibian, Gerald Janecek, Ralph E. Matlaw, Hugh McLean, Edward Wasiolek, and my wife, Larisa, who read the manuscript at various stages and made valuable suggestions. I must add a more personal word of thanks to Susan Grove Hall, who helped me make my English far better than it could otherwise have been. Finally, I should like to thank Carol S. Sykes, of the Ohio State University Press, who has rendered much invaluable assistance in preparing the manuscript for the press.

Parts of chapter 1 were published previously as “Was Tolstoy a Traditionalist or an Innovator?” in volume 11 of the Transactions of the Association of Russian-American Scholars in USA (1978). Parts of chapter 3 are revised versions of “Moral Regeneration: N. N. Straxov’s ‘Organic’ Critiques of War and Peace,” Slavic and East European Journal 20, no. 2 (1976), and “Dostoevsky on Tolstoy: The Immoral Message of Anna Karenina,” Connecticut Review 6, no. 2 (1973). Parts of chapter 7 were published as “Acute Conscience but Dulled Intelligence: A Famous Marxist Judges Tolstoy,” North Dakota Quarterly 46, no. 1 (1978). I am greatly obliged to the editors of the above-mentioned periodicals for their courtesy in granting me permission to reprint this material.
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