

## DOSTOEVSKY IN CONTEXT

This volume explores the Russia where the great writer Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–81) was born and lived. It focuses not only on the Russia depicted in Dostoevsky's works, but also on the Russian life that he and his contemporaries experienced: on social practices and historical developments, political and cultural institutions, religious beliefs, ideological trends, artistic conventions, and literary genres. Chapters by leading scholars illuminate this broad context, offer insights into Dostoevsky's reflections on his age, and examine the expression of those reflections in his writing. Each chapter investigates a specific context and suggests how we might understand Dostoevsky in relation to it. Since Russia took so much from Western Europe throughout the imperial period, the volume also locates the Russian experience within the context of Western thought and practices, thereby offering a multidimensional view of the unfolding drama of Russia versus the West in the nineteenth century.

DEBORAH A. MARTINSEN is Associate Dean of Alumni Education and Adjunct Associate Professor of Russian and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. She is the author of *Surprised by Shame: Dostoevsky's Liars and Narrative Exposure* (2003), the editor of *Literary Journals in Imperial Russia* (1997, 2010), and co-editor, with Cathy Popkin and Irina Reyfman, of *Teaching Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature* (2014). She was President of the International Dostoevsky Society (2007–13) and Executive Secretary of the North American Dostoevsky Society (1998–2013).

OLGA MAIOROVA is Associate Professor of Russian Literature and History at the University of Michigan. She is the author of *From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Nation through Cultural Mythology, 1855–1870* (2010) and has edited several books, including a two-volume edition of previously unpublished works by the major nineteenth-century writer Nikolai Leskov (1997–2000, in Russian) with Ksenia Bogaevskaya and Lia Rosenblum.

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DEBORAH A. MARTINSEN  
and  
OLGA MAIOROVA



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## Contributors

CAROL APOLLONIO is a scholar of the Russian novel. Author and editor of works on nineteenth-century classic writers, including the books *Dostoevsky's Secrets* (2009) and *The New Russian Dostoevsky* (2010), she also writes about problems of translation. A former conference interpreter of Russian, she has translated books from Japanese and Russian, including Kizaki Satoko's *The Phoenix Tree* (1990), German Sadulaev's *The Maya Pill* (2013), and Alisa Ganieva's *The Mountain and the Wall* (2015). Professor of the Practice of Russian at Duke University, Carol currently serves as President of the North American Dostoevsky Society.

KARIN BECK was awarded her PhD in Slavic Literatures from Columbia in 2007, after studying in Berlin, Prague, and New York. Her work focuses on multilingualism in Russian and Czech literatures, especially during the nineteenth century. From 2009 to 2014 she served as Director of the College at Leuphana University in Lüneburg, Germany. She is currently Director of the School of General Studies at Kean University in New Jersey.

ROBERT L. BELKNAP was Professor of Russian Literature at Columbia University for over fifty years. He was educated at Princeton University, the University of Paris, Columbia University, and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) State University. He was the author of *The Structure of "The Brothers Karamazov"* (1967, 1989), *The Genesis of "The Brothers Karamazov"* (1997), *Plots* (forthcoming), many articles on Russian literature and culture, and a study of general education.

ELLEN CHANCES is Professor of Russian Literature at Princeton University. Her publications include the books *Conformity's Children: An Approach to the Superfluous Man in Russian Literature* (1978) and *Andrei Bitov: The Ecology of Inspiration* (1993), as well as many

articles on Russian literature and culture from the nineteenth century to the present. She specializes in the Russian novel, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Andrei Bitov, Russian journalism, literature in its historical and cultural context, the ethical dimensions of contemporary Russian cinema, Russian literature and the arts, and comparative Russian and American literature and culture.

MIKHAIL DOLBILOV graduated in 1996 from Voronezh State University, Russia, and taught at the European University in St. Petersburg. He is currently Associate Professor of Russian History at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is the author of *Russian Country, Foreign Faith: The Empire's Ethno-confessional Policies in Lithuania and Belarus under Alexander II* (2010, in Russian) and numerous essays on bureaucracy, nationalism, and religion in the Russian empire.

BARBARA ENGEL is Distinguished Professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She is the author of *Mothers and Daughters: Women of the Intelligentsia in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (1983); *Between the Fields and the City: Women, Work and Family in Russia, 1861–1914* (1995); *Women in Russia, 1700–2000* (2004); and *Breaking the Ties that Bound: The Politics of Marital Strife in Late Imperial Russia* (2011), and numerous articles; and co-editor of *Five Sisters: Women Against the Tsar* (1975; 2013); *A Revolution of Their Own: Russian Women Remember their Lives in the Twentieth Century*, with Anastasia Posadskaya-Vanderbeck; and co-author with Janet Martin of *Russia in World History* (2015).

ROBERT GERACI received his PhD in Russian and European History from the University of California at Berkeley and is Associate Professor of History at the University of Virginia. He is author of *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* and co-editor, with Michael Khodarkovsky, of *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia* (both 2001). He is writing a book on the relationship between ethno-national diversity and commerce in the Russian empire.

MICHAEL D. GORDIN is Rosengarten Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at Princeton University. He specializes in the history of the physical sciences, especially in the context of imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. He is the author of several books, including *A Well-Ordered Thing: Dmitrii Mendeleev and the Shadow of the Periodic Table* (2004), *Red Cloud at Dawn: Truman, Stalin, and the*

*End of the Atomic Monopoly* (2009), and *Scientific Babel: How Science Was Done Before and After Global English* (2015).

NEL GRILLAERT was awarded her PhD and was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Ghent University (Belgium). She was a Visiting Researcher at the University of Oxford and the Radboud University Nijmegen. She is currently affiliated with the University of Antwerp. Her research covers the interaction between literature, culture, and history of ideas in the Russian Golden and Silver Ages. She has written extensively on Dostoevsky and is author of *What the God-seekers found in Nietzsche: the Reception of Nietzsche's Übermensch by the Philosophers of the Russian Religious Renaissance* (2008).

KATE HOLLAND is Associate Professor of Russian Literature in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Toronto. She is the author of *The Novel in the Age of Disintegration: Dostoevsky and the Problem of Genre in the 1870s* (2013) and articles on Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Herzen, and Saltykov-Shchedrin.

SARAH HUDSPITH is Associate Professor and Director of Russian at the University of Leeds, UK. Her research interests include nineteenth-century Russian literature, particularly Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, contemporary Russian women's prose, humor, and national identity in Russian culture. She has published articles in *Slavic Review*, *Modern Languages Review*, *Dostoevsky Studies*, and *Tolstoy Studies Journal*. Her most recent book publication is *Dostoevsky and the Idea of Russianness* (2004).

LINDA IVANITS is Professor of Russian and Comparative Literature at the Pennsylvania State University. Her primary research field is nineteenth-century Russian literature and folklore. She is the author of the books *Russian Folk Belief* (1989), *Dostoevsky and the Russian People* (2008), and of a series of articles on Fyodor Dostoevsky, Fyodor Sologub, and various aspects of Russian folklore in literature. Her present research concerns the literary use of folklore during the reign of Nicholas I.

KONSTANTINE KLIOUTCHKINE is Associate Professor of German and Russian at Pomona College. He works in the fields of Russian cultural history and media studies. He has published on Dostoevsky, Nekrasov, Chernyshevsky, and Rozanov, on the history of the press and the culture of print, as well as on post-Soviet culture and media. He is currently working on a book project entitled *Rhetoric of the Intelligentsia Self*,

which explores the language of personality in *intelligentsia* discourse between 1840 and 1880.

LIZA KNAPP taught in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California at Berkeley and is now Associate Professor in the Slavic Department at Columbia University. She is the author of *The Annihilation of Inertia: Dostoevsky and Metaphysics* (1996) and the editor of *Dostoevsky's "The Idiot": A Critical Companion* (1998).

NATHANIEL KNIGHT is Associate Professor and Chair of the History Department at Seton Hall University. He has published numerous works on the history of Russian ethnography, Russian orientalism, and concepts of race and ethnicity in Russian culture.

SUSAN LAYTON is a Research Associate at the Centre d'études des mondes russe, caucasien, et centre-européen (Paris). She is the author of *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (1994) and numerous articles on nineteenth-century Russian literature. She is currently working on a book concerning controversies surrounding Russian leisure travel in public discourse from the late Romantic era into the 1890s.

ANNE LOUNSBURY is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Russian and Slavic Studies at New York University. Her first book (*Thin Culture, High Art: Gogol, Hawthorne, and Authorship in Nineteenth-Century Russia and America*) was published in 2007. She is currently finishing a second project, titled *Life Is Elsewhere: Symbolic Geography in the Russian Novel*. Her interests include nineteenth-century Russian prose, novels in comparative context, theories of the novel, and symbolic geography.

OLGA MAIOROVA is Associate Professor of Russian Literature and History at the University of Michigan. She specializes in the intersections between literature, intellectual history, and representations of nationality, especially in the context of imperial Russia. She is the author of *From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Nation through Cultural Mythology, 1855–1870* (2010) and numerous essays on Russian literature and culture. She has edited several books, including a two-volume edition of previously unpublished works by the writer Nikolai Leskov (1997–2000, in Russian; with Ksenia Bogaevskaya and Lia Rosenblum).

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*Notes on contributors*

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DEBORAH MARTINSEN is Associate Dean of Alumni Education and Adjunct Associate Professor of Russian and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. She is the author of *Surprised by Shame: Dostoevsky's Liars and Narratives of Exposure* (2003) as well as articles on Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Nabokov. She is the editor of *Literary Journals in Imperial Russia* (1997, 2010) and co-editor, with Cathy Popkin and Irina Reyfman, of *Teaching Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature: Essays in Honor of Robert L. Belknap* (2014). She was President of the International Dostoevsky Society (2007–13) and Executive Secretary of the North American Dostoevsky Society (1998–2013).

INESSA MEDZHIBOVSKAYA is Associate Professor of Literature and Liberal Studies at the New School for Social Research and Lang College in New York. She is the author of *Tolstoy and the Religious Culture of His Time: A Biography of a Long Conversion, 1845–1887* (2009) and of many journal essays and book chapters on literature, ideology, and education. Her forthcoming books include *Tolstoy and the Fates of the Twentieth Century* and *Writing and Confinement*. She is editor of *Tolstoy and His Problems: Views from the Twenty-First Century* and an annotated critical edition of Tolstoy's tract *On Life* (co-translated with Michael Denner).

MAUDE MEISEL has taught Russian and Humanities at Columbia University, Middlebury College, SUNY Stony Brook, UC Riverside, and Pace University in Pleasantville, NY, where she also ran the Writing Center and currently directs the Challenge to Achievement at Pace program. She continues to teach courses in humanities, English, Russian, and drama both at Pace and at Columbia. In 2005–6, as a Fulbright Scholar, she taught Shakespeare at the University of Culture and the Arts in St. Petersburg (Russia).

ROBIN FEUER MILLER is Edytha Macy Gross Professor of Humanities and Professor of Russian and Comparative Literature at Brandeis University. She received a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2013–14 to begin work on a new project, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and the Small of this World*. Her books include *Dostoevsky's Unfinished Journey* (2007), a second edition of *"The Brothers Karamazov": Worlds of the Novel* (2008), and *Dostoevsky and "The Idiot": Author, Narrator, and Reader* (1981) as well as numerous edited and co-edited volumes. She is currently also at work on an archival project, tentatively entitled *Kazuko's Letters from Japan*, focusing on the letters written by a remarkable woman in post-war Japan over a period of decades.

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SUSAN MORRISSEY is Professor of History at the University of California, Irvine. She has published widely on the history of suicide in Russia, among other topics, and is currently writing a monograph on terrorism and political violence in late imperial Russia. She is the author of *Heralds of Revolution: Russian Students and the Mythologies of Radicalism* (1998) and *Suicide and the Body Politic in Imperial Russia* (2012).

HARRIET MURAV has been Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative and World Literatures at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign since 2002 and currently serves as editor of *Slavic Review*. Her most recent book is *Music from a Speeding Train: Jewish Literature in Post-Revolution Russia* (2011). She received a Guggenheim Fellowship for this study in 2006, and it was named a Choice Outstanding Academic Title in 2013. She is currently working on an English translation of David Bergelson's *Mides-hadin* (*Strict Justice*) and is writing a literary study of Bergelson, titled *A Strange New World: Untimeliness, Futurity, and David Bergelson*.

DEREK OFFORD is Senior Research Fellow and Emeritus Professor at the University of Bristol and a specialist on pre-revolutionary Russian history and culture. He has published books on the early Russian revolutionary movement, early Russian liberalism, Russian travel writing, and the broader history of Russian thought. He is also the author of two books on contemporary Russian grammar and usage. He has recently led a multidisciplinary project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the UK, on the history of the French language in Russia. Within the framework of this project he has co-authored and co-edited, with Gesine Argent and Vladislav Rjéoutski, a book on European francophonie, clusters of articles on foreign-language use and foreign-language education in eighteenth-century Russia, and a two-volume work on language use and language attitudes in imperial Russia.

IRINA PAERT is the author of *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760–1850* (2003) and *Spiritual Elders: Charisma and Tradition in Russian Orthodoxy* (2010). She studied at Urals State University (Ekaterinburg), Central European University (Budapest), and was awarded her PhD in History from the University of Essex, UK. She is a Senior Researcher at the University of Tartu (Estonia).

JONATHAN PAINE is a third-year doctoral candidate at Wolfson College, Oxford. His field of study is economic criticism, particularly

the nineteenth-century novel as a self-reflexive commentary on the conditions of its own production. He studies French as well as Russian and is currently working on Balzac, Dostoevsky, and Zola. He was the co-convenor of a 2014 conference at Oxford entitled “Genius for Sale! Artistic Production and Economic Context in the Long Nineteenth Century.” His economic perspective on literature derives from his background over the last 35 years as an investment banker, a field in which he is still a practitioner.

IRINA REYFMAN is Professor of Russian Literature at Columbia University. She focuses on the interaction of literature and culture, particularly on how literature reflects and affects cultural phenomena. Reyfman is the author of *Vasilii Trediakovsky: The Fool of the “New” Russian Literature* (1990), *Ritualized Violence Russian Style: The Duel in Russian Culture and Literature* (1999), and *Rank and Style: Russians in State Service, Life, and Literature* (2012). She is a co-editor, with Catherine T. Nepomnyashchy and Hilde Hoogenboom, of *Mapping the Feminine: Russian Women and Cultural Difference* (2008) and, with Deborah Martinsen and Cathy Popkin, of *Teaching Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature: Essays in Honor of Robert L. Belknap* (2014). Her latest book manuscript “Writing and the Table of Ranks: Literature and Status in Imperial Russia” is forthcoming. Her work in progress includes *Short History of Russian Literature*, with co-authors Andrew Kahn, Mark Lipovetsky, and Stephanie Sandler.

RICHARD J. ROSENTHAL is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Co-Director of the UCLA Gambling Studies Program. He also has a private psychiatric practice and is on the faculty of the New Center for Psychoanalysis in Los Angeles. It was through his interest in Dostoevsky that he first came to study pathological gambling. He co-authored the official diagnostic criteria, organized the first genetic study, and played a major role in defining and legitimizing the disorder. He is currently writing a conceptual history of gambling and the behavioral addictions.

JAMES P. SCANLAN was awarded his PhD in philosophy from the University of Chicago in 1956 and is now Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Ohio State University. In addition to many other books and articles on the history of philosophy in Russia from tsarist times to the present day, he is the author of *Dostoevsky the Thinker* (2002), a comprehensive critical study of Dostoevsky’s philosophy.



ANNA SCHUR teaches at Keene State College in New Hampshire. Her areas of interest include nineteenth-century Russian literature and culture, law and literature, and comparative literature. Her most recent articles have appeared in *The Russian Review* and *Law and Literature*. She is the author of *Wages of Evil: Dostoevsky and Punishment* (2012).

RICHARD WORTMAN is James Bryce Professor Emeritus of History at Columbia University. His specialty is the symbolism and political culture of Russian monarchy. His books include *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* (1976), *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy. Volumes One* (1995) and *Two* (2000), *Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule* (2013), and *Visual Texts, Ceremonial Texts, Texts of Exploration* (2014).

SARAH J. YOUNG is Senior Lecturer in Russian at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London. Her research focuses on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature and culture, and she is the author of *Dostoevsky's "The Idiot" and the Ethical Foundations of Narrative* (2004) and co-editor of *Dostoevsky on the Threshold of Other Worlds* (2006). She is currently writing a book on narratives about prison, exile, and hard labor in Russia.

IRENE ZOHRAB was Associate Professor in the School of European Languages and Literature at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, and chief editor of the *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*. She is the New Zealand representative of the International Dostoevsky Society and associate editor of the *Dostoevsky Journal* and *NZSJ*. She has published some 180 articles on Slavonic studies with particular focus on Dostoevsky as editor of *The Citizen* and Dostoevsky and England.



## *Acknowledgments*

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We would also like to acknowledge the very generous support we received for our 2013 workshop and the resulting volume from the Harri-man Institute, the Columbia University Seminar on Slavic History and Culture, and the Columbia Slavic Department. Thanks also to Columbia College and the Center for the Core Curriculum for generously providing space for our workshop and to the Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia for workshop support.

We are very grateful to Sergei Antonov for sharing his user-friendly Table of Ranks, to R.O. Blechman for granting permission to reprint his wonderful cartoon “Dostoyevsky at the Table,” to Alexander Brodsky for drawing the map of St. Petersburg and to Boris Krichevsky for designing it. We owe gratitude to the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) and English Heritage for permission to reproduce their images.

Special thanks go to Rachel Harrell-Bilici for her invaluable editorial help and to Alexander Brodsky for his hauntingly beautiful cover design. Words do not suffice to express our gratitude to Lia Friedman for her expert and multifaceted help in researching, copy-editing, organizing, and proofreading, particularly in the later stages of manuscript preparation.

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## *Note on citation, transliteration, glossary, and dates*

### Citation

All citations from Dostoevsky's work are from the academic edition of the *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972–90, volumes 1–30). When citing a work of fiction, in addition to the volume and page number from the *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, we include the part or book number and chapter number, so that readers can find the passage in whichever translation they are using. The opening page of *Crime and Punishment*, for example, would be cited as (6;5; Pt. 1, Ch. 1).

For all citations from Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer*, even if they are translated by an article's author, in addition to the volume and page number from the *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, we provide the page number(s) from Fyodor Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, Vols. 1–2, translated and annotated by Kenneth Lantz (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993–94). In the text, the citation will read (Vol:page; *WD* Vol:page).

For all citations from Dostoevsky's letters, even if they are translated by an article's author, in addition to the volume and page number from the *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, we provide the page number from *Fyodor Dostoevsky: Complete Letters*, Volume 1, edited and translated by David Lowe and Ronald Meyer, Volumes 2–5, edited and translated by David A. Lowe (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1988–91). In the text, these will read (Vol:page; *Letters* Vol:page).

The editors have checked all translations from Dostoevsky's texts against the originals. In a few cases, at a contributor's request or with the contributor's permission, we have modified existing translations to more accurately reflect the original. All italicized words in quotations are italicized in the original unless otherwise indicated.

### Cyrillic transliteration

We use a dual system of transliteration for Cyrillic names, following the guidelines in J. Thomas Shaw's *Transliteration of Modern Russian for English-Language Publications*:

In the text and in all discursive parts of the endnotes, we use Shaw's "System I." This system anglicizes Russian proper names: the "y"-ending is used instead of "ii"; "yu"/"ya" is used instead of "iu"/"ia"; "oy" is used instead of "oi"; "x" replaces "ks," etc. However, "ai" and "ei" are used at the end of names instead of "ay" and "ey" (Nikolai, Andrei, Sergei). Well-known spellings are used for famous people (e.g., Peter the Great).

When citing Russian sources in the bibliography and notes, we use the Library of Congress system without diacritics (Shaw's "System II").

### Glossary

Given that readers might not be familiar with some time-specific and Russia-specific phenomena, we have provided a glossary, thereby eliminating the need to offer detailed explanations in each entry. Each word included in the glossary is marked by an asterisk on its first appearance in each essay.

### Dates

All Russian dates are given in accordance with the Julian (Old Style) calendar used in Russia before 1917. In the nineteenth century, it was twelve days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the West.

## Chronology

- 1821** Born on October 30 in Moscow to Maria Fyodorovna and Mikhail Andreevich Dostoevsky, a doctor at the Mariinsky Hospital for the Poor, Moscow. The second of seven children, Fyodor grows up in a middle-class household run by his father, a former army surgeon and strict family man.
- 1831** Father purchases a small provincial estate in Tula, where young Fyodor spends four summers.
- 1834** Attends the Chermak Private Boarding School until 1837.
- 1837** Mother dies. Begins his training at the St. Petersburg Academy of Engineers. Reads voraciously. Pushkin dies in a duel.
- 1839** Father dies. According to rumor, he is murdered on his estate, presumably by his own serfs.
- 1841** Completes course at the Academy of Engineers; promoted to officer status; continues officer training but devotes himself to reading and writing.
- 1843** Begins service as a military engineer in Petersburg.
- 1844** Resigns from service to pursue literary career. Completes his translation of Honoré de Balzac's 1833 novel *Eugénie Grandet*. Begins work on his first novel, *Poor Folk*.
- 1846** *Poor Folk* published. Wins the friendship and acclaim of Russia's premier literary critic, Vissarion Belinsky, author of the banned "Letter to Gogol" (1847). Belinsky's approval wanes after *The Double* is published that same year. Meets the utopian socialist Mikhail Butashevich-Petrashkevsky.
- 1847** Publishes "A Weak Heart" and *The Landlady*. Is diagnosed with and treated for epilepsy for the first time.
- 1848** Publishes "White Nights." Almanac with "Polzunkov" is banned. Revolutions break out in France, Germany, Hungary,

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- Italy, and Poland. Within the Petrashevsky circle, Dostoevsky joins a secret society led by Nikolai Speshnev. Members plan to publish incendiary pamphlets.
- 1849** Writes *Netochka Nezvanova*. Is arrested for participation in the Petrashevsky circle. Spends eight months in solitary confinement in the Peter and Paul Fortress. In Semyonovskiy Square, condemned to death with several others. Their sentences are commuted to penal servitude in Siberia, but announced only at the last moment, when they stand in their death shrouds awaiting execution.
- 1850** Begins his four-year internment at Omsk prison in western Siberia, an experience that will influence many of his later works. While imprisoned, abandons the radical ideas of his youth and becomes more deeply religious; his only book in prison is the New Testament.
- 1853** Crimean War breaks out.
- 1854** Begins four years of compulsory military service in Siberia.
- 1857** Marries the widow Maria Dmitrievna Isaeva.
- 1859** Allowed to return to Petersburg, under police surveillance.
- 1861** With brother Mikhail, establishes the journal *Vremya* (*Time*); *Time* serially publishes Dostoevsky's fictionalized prison memoir *Notes from the House of the Dead*, the novel *The Insulted and Injured*, and numerous articles reflecting his native soil (*pochvennichestvo*) agenda.
- 1862** Travels to England, France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland, a trip that inspires the anti-European outlook expressed in his *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1863). While he is abroad, government censors order *Time* to halt publication, devastating his finances. Gambles heavily at resorts abroad, loses.
- 1863** Second trip to Europe. Arranges to meet in Paris with Apollinaria Suslova, a writer whose story he had published the year before in *Time*. The two have an affair. January Uprising in the Kingdom of Poland (part of the Russian empire). *Time* banned for printing an ambiguous article about it.
- 1864** The Dostoevsky brothers establish the journal *Epokha* (*Epoch*), which publishes *Notes from Underground*. Wife Maria dies from tuberculosis. Mikhail dies three months later.
- 1865** *Epoch* collapses. Burdened with his own and Mikhail's debts, goes on another failed gambling spree in Europe.

- 1866** *Crime and Punishment* starts serial publication. Interrupts the writing in October to work on *The Gambler*. Dictates *The Gambler* to a stenographer, Anna Grigorievna Snitkina, over the course of a month. Meets the contract deadline, thereby retaining rights to his published works, including *Crime and Punishment*.
- 1867** Marries Anna, who is twenty-five years his junior; the alliance is one of the most fortuitous events of his life. To avoid financial ruin, they live abroad for the next four years, in Geneva, Florence, and finally Dresden. Epilepsy worsens. Begins work on *The Idiot*, in which the protagonist is an epileptic.
- 1868** *The Idiot* begins serial publication. Daughter Sonya is born in Geneva, but dies at only three months.
- 1869** Daughter Lyubov born. After reading about the murder of a student by the revolutionary Sergei Nechaev and his co-conspirators, begins work on *Demons* and on projected novel *The Life of a Great Sinner*.
- 1871** Serialization of *Demons* begins. Return to Petersburg; son Fyodor is born.
- 1873** Begins editing the conservative weekly *Grazhdanin* (*The Citizen*); his column "The Diary of a Writer" becomes a regular and popular feature.
- 1874** Resigns editorship of *The Citizen*. Begins *The Adolescent*.
- 1875** *The Adolescent* published serially. Son Alexei is born. Police surveillance begun in 1859 ends.
- 1876** Writes, edits, and publishes *The Diary of a Writer* as a monthly periodical. January issue 2,000 copies, more printed in February. February issue 6,000 copies. Buys house in Staraya Russa, future setting of *The Brothers Karamazov*.
- 1877** *The Diary of a Writer* circulation tops 7,000. In December, breaks off work on the *Diary* to begin *The Brothers Karamazov*.
- 1878** In May, Alexei (age three) dies suddenly. In mourning, visits the Optina Pustyn monastery along with the philosopher Vladimir Solovyov to seek an audience with the elder Amvrosy, who becomes a prototype for Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*.
- 1879** Serialization of *The Brothers Karamazov* begins.
- 1880** Delivers celebrated speech on Pushkin at the dedication of the poet's memorial in Moscow in June; this is his last, triumphant public address.

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- 1881** Dies on January 28 in Petersburg. Is buried in the cemetery of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery.
- 1912** Constance Garnett begins her translations of the works of Dostoevsky, introducing his writing to the English-reading world.