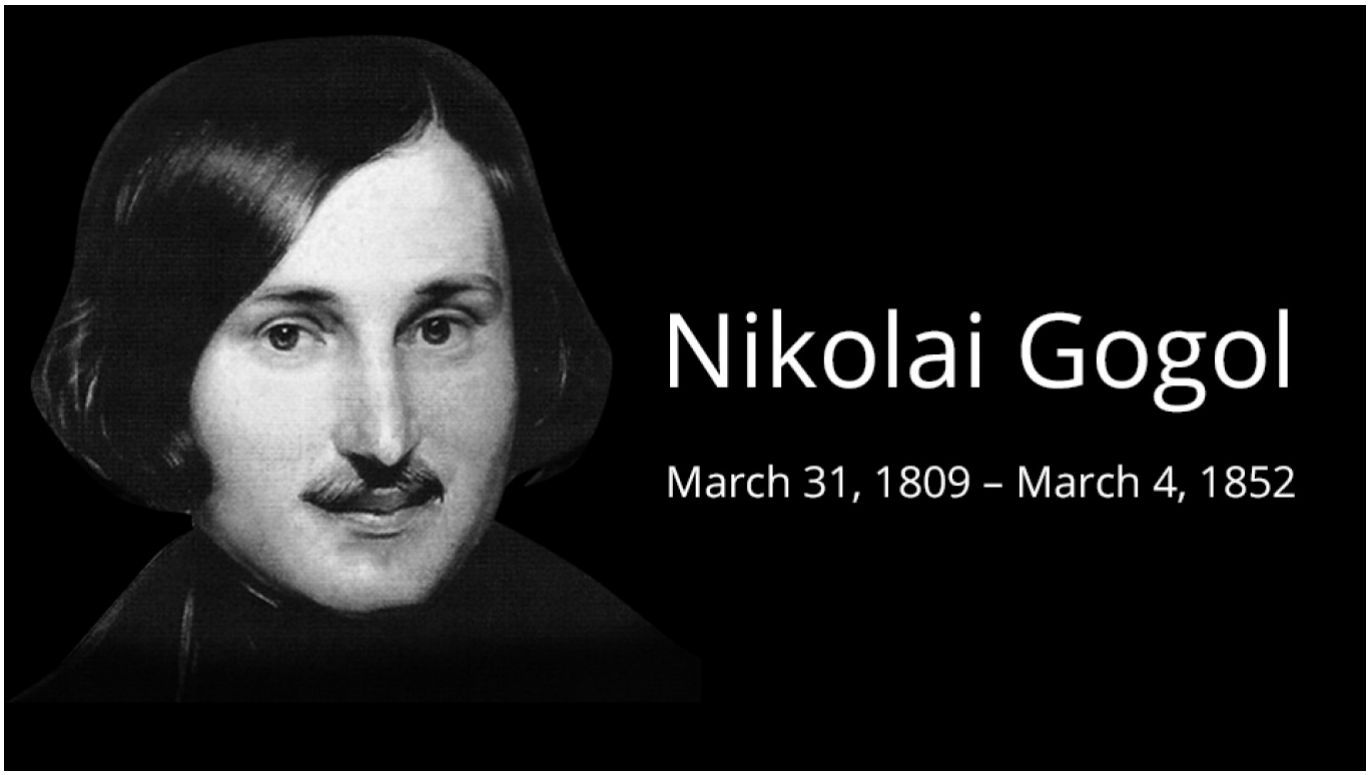
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30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

On This Day: Nikolai Gogol

On March 31, 1809 Nikolai Gogol was born.

March 31, 2019



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Nikolai Gogol was born in the Ukrainian town of Sorochintsy in 1809. His father, Vasily Gogol-Yanovsky, was himself a poet and a playwright, writing in both Ukrainian and Russian. Both languages were spoken in their home, and this would go on to have a significant influence on Gogol's writing.

In 1828 Gogol moved to St. Petersburg. It was here he attempted to become an actor, and later tried his hand at poetry. The results of this were so catastrophically bad that Gogol burnt all copies of his published poems and swore never to write poetry again.

With writing that included elements of Ukrainian folklore, phrases and vocabulary, Gogol published eight narratives in a series of short stories titled "Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka," written in 1829 – 1832. This would be his first success in the Russian literary world, and Gogol quickly became famous. Perhaps his most notable admirer was Alexander Pushkin,

whose death would have a profound impact on Gogol. Possibly his most famous work "Dead Souls" was published in 1842; other work featuring the same satire and comedy would follow.

At the age of 42, Gogol fell into a deep depression. One night, he burned some of his manuscripts (including the second volume of “Dead Souls”). He later dismissed this as a joke played by the Devil himself and went to bed, refusing to eat. Nine days later, he died.

Today, Gogol is commemorated with two statues in Moscow’s Arbat neighborhood — a gloomy Gogol built in 1902, and a happier Gogol erected in 1952 on the 100th anniversary of the death of one of Russia’s most celebrated writers.

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