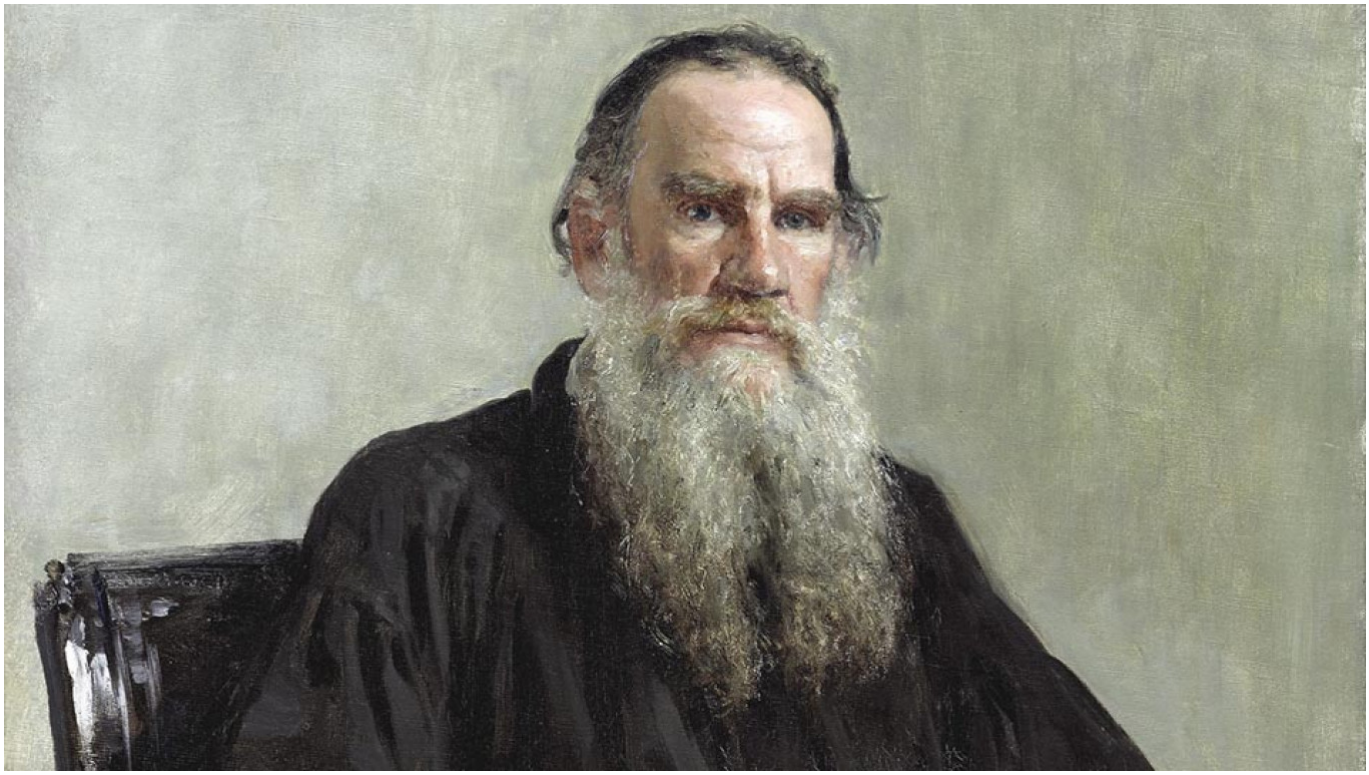
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Tolstoy's 'War and Peace' Left Russia for the First Time

Several handwritten pages are on exhibit in Geneva.

October 18, 2019



Ilya Repin / Wikicommons

For the first time in history, the original manuscript of Leo Tolstoy's novel "War and Peace" has left Russia and the Tolstoy Museum in Moscow for a stay at the Martin Bodmer Foundation museum in Geneva.

Three pages of one of the most famous Russian novels, written between 1864 and 1869, became part of an exposition devoted to the timeless realities of war and peace and organized by the foundation in collaboration with the UN Geneva headquarters and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The organizers asked the Tolstoy museum to let them display the fragment where Pierre Bezukhov and Andrei Bolkonsky speak about war as the most terrible thing, although it is inevitable.

“We have chosen a conversation that’s particularly intense and dramatic,” says Jacques Berchtold, Director of Martin Bodmer Foundation. “The Count — Prince Andrei — who is himself an officer, speaks with utter desolation. He says very clearly that the war cannot be compared at all to a game of chess, that war is a totally dirty, detestable affair.”

This document has such a great value as a national treasure that unusually strict precautions have been taken, and the Federal Council of Switzerland has given written guarantees for the manuscript’s return.

The exhibition will run until March 1, 2020.

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