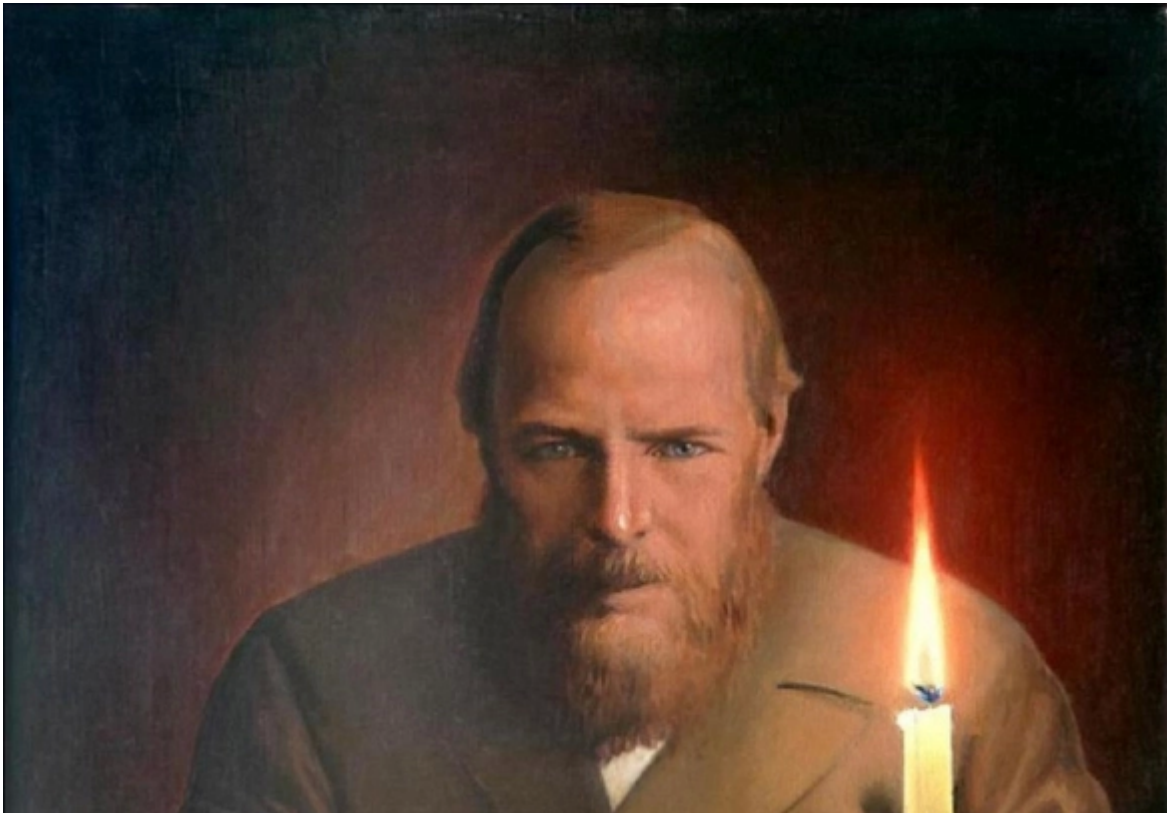


The Idiots



by Armando Simón

It is unfortunate that reading books has gone out of fashion, even with e-books. Nowadays, many people will only read a book if you put a gun to their heads. Picking up a book to read is beneficial because for one thing, with the right book, a lot of the confusion that abounds in today's toxic environment could be cleared up, or at least put into perspective.

Such is the case with Dostoyevsky, one of literature's giants. In his novels (*Demons*, *The Idiot*, and *Crime and Punishment*), he often touched upon the psychology of the fanatics that infested Russian society, the predecessors of the Bolsheviks who would come close to destroying Russia, such as the nihilists and others of the same ilk. After seizing power, Lenin ordered passages of his works to be censored (sound familiar?). Read the following passage from his *The Idiot* and

for the word "Russia," substitute America (or Canada, or Germany, or Britain, or Sweden, or Holland). It deserves to be quoted at length. You will be stunned how relevant are his words, over a hundred and fifty years later.

"To begin with, what is liberalism, speaking generally, if not an attack (whether a reasonable or mistaken one is another question) on the existing order of things? It is so, isn't it? Well, then, my fact is that Russian liberalism is not an attack on the existing order of things, but an attack on the very essence of things, on the things themselves, and not only on their order, not on the Russian system of government, but on Russia herself. My liberal has gone so far as to deny Russia herself—that is to say, he hates and beats his own mother. Every Russian failure and fiasco excites his laughter and almost delights him. He hates national customs, he hates Russian history, he hates everything. If there is any justification for him, it is perhaps that he doesn't know what he is doing and thinks that his hatred of Russia is the more beneficent kind of liberalism. (Oh, you will often meet among us a liberal who is applauded by everyone and who is, perhaps, actually the most absurd, the most shortsighted and dangerous conservative, and doesn't realize it himself!) This hatred of Russia some of our liberals not so very long ago regarded almost as true love of their country, and they boasted that they knew better than anyone else what the nature of that love should be; but now they have become more outspoken, and are even ashamed of saying that they love their country; they have banished and obliterated the very conception of it as harmful and trivial. This fact is true. I can vouch for it and—and after all, it is time one did tell the truth fully, simply, and frankly. But it is also a fact that has never been known anywhere, among any people, since time immemorial, which, of course, may well mean that it is of an accidental nature and may pass away. I freely admit it."

Of course, it was not “of an accidental nature” and it did not “pass away.” The very same pestilence is still with us. In Britain, in Canada, in Australia, in Germany, in Holland, in France.

And in America.

And this hatred, this loathing, for one’s homeland and the desire to destroy it and everything connected to it, can be seen not just today, but around the same time as that in Russia. In America, Theodore Roosevelt’s autobiography remarks on this attitude and it can also be seen in the story *The Man Without a Country*.

And then there is George Orwell:

“England is perhaps the only great country whose intellectuals are ashamed of their own nationality. In left-wing circles it is always felt that there is something slightly disgraceful in being an Englishman and that it is a duty to snigger at every English institution, from horse racing to suet puddings. It is a strange fact, but it is unquestionably true that almost any English intellectual would feel more ashamed of standing to attention during ‘God save the King’ than of stealing from a poor box. All through the critical years many left-wingers were chipping away at English morale, trying to spread an outlook that was sometimes squashily pacifist, sometimes violently pro-Russian, but always anti-British.”

The source of this pestilence, as Orwell often pointed out, was the [intellectuals](#).

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