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Edith Rogovin Frankel

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# *Novy Mir*

A CASE STUDY IN  
THE POLITICS OF LITERATURE  
1952–1958

EDITH ROGOVIN FRANKEL

*Director, Soviet and East European Research Centre  
Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

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*For my parents*

SAMUEL AND DORA ANN ROGOVIN

*with affection*

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## Preface

My interest in the interaction of politics and literature in the Soviet Union developed when I was a graduate student at Columbia University and some of my basic conclusions on the subject were initially worked out in my doctoral dissertation, completed in 1974. When writing the present book, however, I was able to draw on the ever-growing supply of materials – often circulated in *samizdat* form or published in the Russian *émigré* press – which began to appear in the mid seventies. Furthermore, the recent emigration of citizens from the USSR, some of whom had been active in literary life there, has added a significant new source for a work which would, otherwise, have had to rely almost entirely on Soviet publications. Perhaps I should add that, while the first part of the book concentrates on *Novy Mir* in the period 1952–58, the last two chapters undertake an over-all (non-chronological) analysis of the publishing process. There, free use has been made of relevant materials drawn from more recent years.

All along the way I have received encouragement and help of all kinds and I would like to express my appreciation for at least some of it. This list will not, unfortunately, be exhaustive.

First and foremost I would like to express my gratitude to a number of people at Columbia University, where I did much of the research for this book. The late Rufus Mathewson meticulously went through early drafts of my work and filled yellow legal sheets with careful comments and encouraging remarks, which were of enormous help. John N. Hazard, with his never-failing warmth and enthusiasm, gave me the impetus to persevere in my work when the end was far out of sight. Joseph Rothschild and Peter Juviler also read and commented on this study, while Robert Maguire performed the major task of reading through the entire completed manuscript and devoting a great deal of time to commenting on it.

In general, I received the best of service from the Columbia University Library, but in particular I would like to thank two



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extraordinary librarians who went well beyond the call of duty in providing me with bibliographic help: Eileen McIlvaine Koerner and Mary Ann Miller. Sonya Sluzar of the Research Institute on International Change at Columbia, apart from other help, saw to it at a crucial stage that I could work in a comfortable office.

It was at that time, when my children were smaller, that I relied on the good offices of several baby-sitters, without whom I could never have spent the required time on research. I still recall with gratitude the help of Laurie Weinstein, Elka Gould and, above all, the late Mrs Kathleen McLoughlin.

The New York University Russian Library, administered by Bernard Koten, provided an excellent source of Soviet newspapers and periodicals, readily available to the reader in their original form.

I am extremely grateful to the people who shared with me their first-hand experience in the Soviet literary world: Veronika and Yury Shtain, Grigorii Svirskii, Boris Zaks and Andrei Sinyavsky; and Igor Sats, David Dar and Arkady Belinkov, all three of whom have since died. Their testimony gave my study an added dimension. My colleague Ted Friedgut gave me invaluable help in obtaining some of my source information. And I would also like to thank Martin Dewhirst, who advised me on various matters of Soviet literary policy, as well as Peter Reddaway, Sheila Fitzpatrick and Tatiana Babchina-Herzenberg.

Rose Raskin, Martin Horwitz and Maurice Friedberg all generously gave me of their time and skill in advising me on the translation of Russian poetry in the text, and Stanton Eckstut gave inestimable help in preparing the charts.

While I would like to thank many of my colleagues at the Hebrew University, I will single out here Galia Golan and Gur Ofer, who headed the Soviet and East European Research Centre at the University during the academic year 1977-78 when I was given a fellowship there, thus receiving the opportunity to finish a considerable portion of the book. Also at the Hebrew University, Mikhail Agurskii's comments and suggestions and Ada Steinberg's help are very much appreciated.

My mother-in-law, Ella S. Frankel, went over the entire manuscript and this book is much the better for her good eye and wonderful ability to effect major improvements through seemingly minor changes.

While my daughters, Leora and Rachel, cannot be said to have

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actually helped the progress of this book, they do nevertheless deserve a word of thanks for the fortitude and good humor with which they withstood the rigors of life with a book in progress. And last, but by no means least, I thank my husband, Jonathan, who gave me every encouragement, help and advice from start to finish and whose fine judgment and historical sense added so much.

*Jerusalem, September, 1980*

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## A note on transliteration

Two systems of transliteration are used in this book. Bibliographic references to Russian works are generally transliterated according to the Library of Congress system. However, for the sake of non-specialist readers, the spelling of Russian names and words both in the body of the book and in the text of the notes is rendered in a simplified form of the 'British' system. Thus, Tvardovskii is also given as Tvardovsky and *Novyi Mir* becomes *Novy Mir*. Names which have a generally accepted English spelling are given in that form, e.g. Ilya Ehrenburg. The following table sets out the differences in transliteration.

### *Transliteration table*

|    | Simplified British<br>(used in text) | Library of Congress<br>(used in bibliographic<br>references) |
|----|--------------------------------------|--|
| А  | a                                    | a  |
| Б  | b                                    | b  |
| В  | v                                    | v  |
| Г  | g                                    | g  |
| Д  | d                                    | d  |
| Е  | e                                    | e  |
| Ж  | zh                                   | zh   |
| З  | z                                    | z  |
| И  | i                                    | i  |
| ий | y*                                   | ii   |
| Й  | i                                    | i  |
| К  | k                                    | k  |
| Л  | l                                    | l  |
| М  | m                                    | m  |
| Н  | n                                    | n  |
| О  | o                                    | o  |

\* When appearing at end of word.

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|   |    | Simplified British<br>(used in text) | Library of Congress<br>(used in bibliographic<br>references) |
|---|----|--------------------------------------|--|
| П | п  | p                                    | p  |
| Р | р  | r                                    | r  |
| С | с  | s                                    | s  |
| Т | т  | t                                    | t  |
| У | у  | u                                    | u  |
| Ф | ф  | f                                    | f  |
| Х | х  | kh                                   | kh   |
| Ц | ц  | ts                                   | ts   |
| Ч | ч  | ch                                   | ch   |
| Ш | ш  | sh                                   | sh   |
| Щ | щ  | shch                                 | shch   |
|   | ъ  | "                                    | "  |
|   | ы  | y                                    | y  |
|   | ый | y                                    | yi   |
|   | ь  | '                                    | '  |
| Э | э  | e                                    | e  |
| Ю | ю  | yu                                   | iu   |
| Я | я  | ya                                   | ia   |

## Glossary

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>agrorod</i>            | an urbanized center, advocated by Khrushchev, designed to unite several neighboring collective farms, thereby introducing the amenities of the city into rural life            |
| <i>aktiv</i>              | the active Communist Party members at any institution or organization  |
| <i>apparat</i>            | professional Communist Party administration  |
| <i>apparatchik</i>        | full-time paid Party official  |
| <i>derevenshchiki</i>     | prose writers who take the village and rural life as their primary subject   |
| Glavlit                   | Chief Administration for the Preservation of State Secrets in the Press; the censorship. Regional and local subdivisions of Glavlit are: <i>krailit, oblit, railit, gorlit</i> |
| <i>ideinost</i>           | ideological content; along with <i>narodnost'</i> and <i>partiinosť</i> , the three fundamental requirements of socialist realism  |
| <i>ispolkom</i>           | executive committee of a soviet; responsible for local government  |
| kolkhoz (pl. -y)          | collective farm  |
| kolkhoznik                | member of collective farm  |
| MTS                       | Machine Tractor Station; provided neighboring collective farms with heavy agricultural equipment and the accompanying manpower; discontinued in 1958                           |
| <i>muzhik</i>             | peasant  |
| <i>narodnost' (narod)</i> | of the people, folk character  |
| NEP                       | the New Economic Policy (1921–28)  |
| <i>nomenklatura</i>       | those posts in the various branches of administration which are filled through nomination by the Party; prerogatives and privileges attached to such appointments              |

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|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>obkom</i>          | Party committee of an <i>oblast</i> (region)   |
| <i>ocherk</i>         | essay, sketch  |
| <i>okhrana</i>        | Tsarist secret police  |
| <i>partiinost'</i>    | Party spirit   |
| <i>poryadochnost'</i> | decency, honesty ( <i>poryadochny</i> , adj.)  |
| <i>samizdat</i>       | literally, self-publishing; unofficial (hence, uncensored) reproduction of written materials, circulated from hand to hand   |
| <i>tolkach</i>        | pusher, fixer (in Soviet industrial enterprises), expediter  |
| Zhdanovism            | associated with pronouncements on Soviet literature and the arts made by Andrei Zhdanov between 1946 and 1948; hence, severe restrictions on cultural life as in Stalin's time |

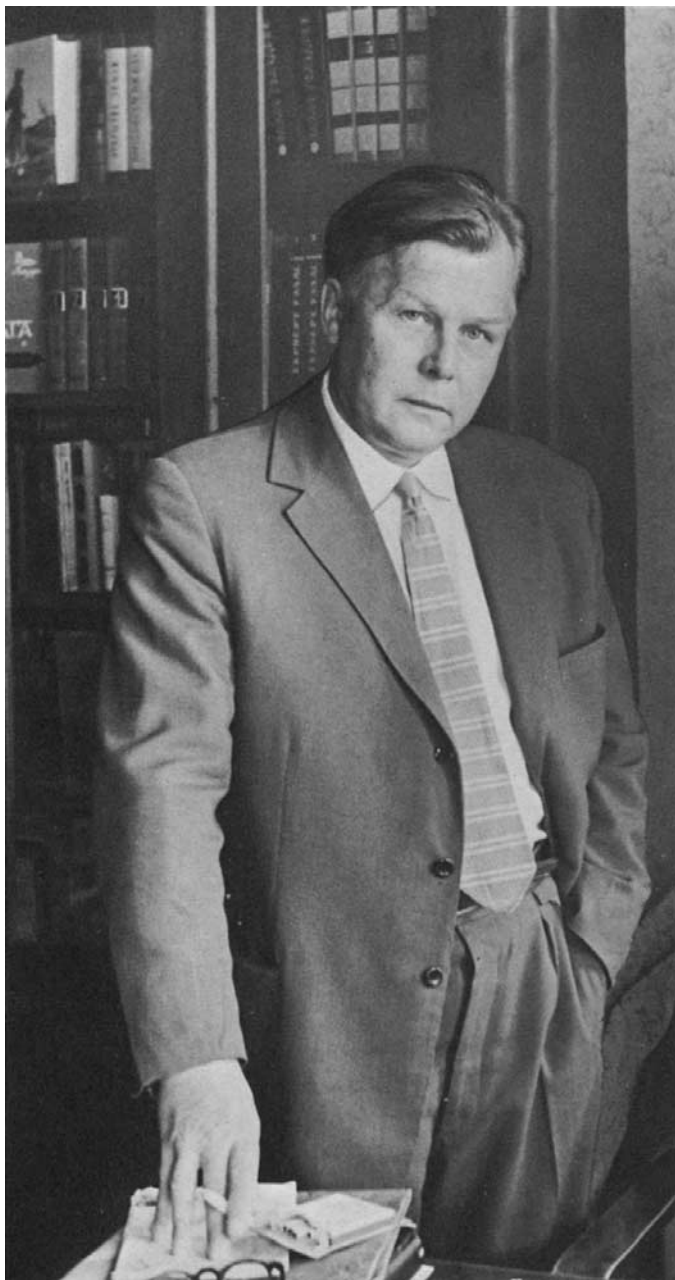
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1 Aleksandr Tvardovsky during the first period in which he edited *Novy Mir* (reproduced by courtesy of Novosti)