Contents

Acknowledgments

We are very grateful to The Mikhail Prokhorov Foundation for the support of both volumes of this project through the "Transcript" grant program. This support was essential to the completion of this project.

This project also received support from the Text and Academic Authors Association. Our special thanks for the generosity of the following people and institutions who provided copyright permissions without charge:

Alexander Genis and Elvira Vayl; Copyright © 2003 for Pyotr Vail' and Alexander Genis, "60-e: Mir sovetskogo cheloveka," *Izbrannoe. In 2 vols.* Vol. 1. Ekaterinburg: U-Faktoriia, 2003. P. 611–620; 699–713.

Robert Porter; Copyright © 2007 for Robert Porter, *Solzhenitsyn's* One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2007. P. 40–49.

Zoya Boguslavskaya; Copyright © 1967 for Andrei Voznesensky, *AntiWorlds.* London: Oxford University Press, 1967. P. 40–41, 49–50, 51, 66–68.

The Trustees of the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives and Lianne Smith, Archives Services Manager at King's College London. Copyright © 1987 for "Interview with Evgeny Evtushenko."

Aleksandr Daniel and Irina Uvarova; Copyright © 1967 for Yuli Daniel, *This is Moscow Speaking*. Trans. Stuart Hood, Harold Shukman, John Richardson. London: Collins and Harvill, 1968. P. 20–66.

Natalia Tendryakova and Maria Tendryakova; Copyright © 1995 for Vladimir Tenrdryakov's "Bread for a Dog."

Valentina Brougher and Frank Miller; Copyright © 2011 for the translations and annotations of Vladimir Tendryakov's "Bread for a Dog," Varlam Shalamov's "Eulogy," and Yurii Dombrovsky's "Little Arm, Leg, Cucumber," published in: *50 Writers: An Anthology of 20th Century Russian Short Stories.* Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011. Selected, with an Introduction by Mark Lipovetsky and Valentina Brougher. Translated and annotated by Valentina Brougher and Frank Miller. P. 365–379; 466–86; 505–522.

FTM Literary Agency (Moscow); Copyright © for Varlam Shalamov's "On Prose" and "Eulogy."

Alena Galich (heir) and Maria Bloshteyn (translation); Copyright © 2008 for Alexander Galich, *Dress Rehearsal.* Bloomington: Slavica, 2008. P. 169–92.

Maria Rozanova (heir) and Maria-Regina Kecht (translation); Copyright ©1982 for Andrey Sinyavsky, "Dissent as a Personal Experience," *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 31 (1982): 21–29.

Sem' dnei Publishing House (Moscow); Copyright © 2009 for Vasilii Aksenov, *Tainstvennaia strast'.* Moscow: Sem' dnei, 2009. P. 82–86, 88–95, 96–100, 105–107, 119–133.

Alexei Yurchak; Copyright © 2006 for Alexei Yurchak. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation.* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006. P. 126–155.

Aleksei Losev (heir) and Henry Pickford (translation); Copyright © 2014, Translation copyright © 2014 Henry W. Pickford; for Lev Losev's poems from *Selected Early Poems by Lev Loseff*, edited, translated, and with introduction by Henry Pickford. Spuyten Duyvil Publishing; Bilingual edition, 2013.

Olga Kushlina (heir); Copyright © Viktor Krivulin; permission to translate and publish Viktor Krivulin's poems.

The Estate of Yevgeny Kharitonov and Arch Tait (translation); Copyright © 1998 for Yevgeny Kharitonov, *Under House Arrest.* Trans. Arch Tait. London: Serpent's Tail, 1997. P. 149–57; 184–7.

Olga Sedakova; Copyright © 1991; "Vspominaia Venedikta Erofeeva," *Teatr* 9 (1991): 98–104.

Mikhail Epshtein; Copyright © 1999. Epstein, Mikhail. "Charms of Entropy and New Sentimentality: The Myth of Venedikt Erofeev," in Alexander Genis, Mikhail Epstein, and Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover, *Russian Postmodernism: New Perspectives on Post-Soviet Culture.* Edited and translated by Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 1999. P. 427–42.

Nadezhda Burova (heir), Valentina Polukhina, Robert Reed and Joe Andre (translators); Copyright © 1995 for Dmitry Prigov. *Texts of Our Life: Bilingual Selected Poems.* Edited and introduced by Valentina Polukhina. Keele: Essays in Poetics Publications, 1995. P. 16–33.

Vladimir Shinkarev; Copyright © Vladimir Shinkarev, "Mit'ki," in *Mit'ki: Vybrannoe.* Ed. Pavel Krusanov. St. Petersburg: Kanon, 1999. P. 11–16, 43–50.

We deeply appreciate the cooperation of the following publishing companies for the paid permission to reprint:

Harper Collins Publishers: for Chapters 10 [P. 386–92] and 12 [P. 402–18] (11,200 words) from *The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956* by Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn. Authorized Abridgement with a New Introduction by Edward E. Ericson, Jr. Copyright © 1985 by The Russian Social Fund. Reprinted by permission of Harper Collins Publishers.

Harper Collins Publishers: for excerpt from P. 141–66 (8,712 words) from *Forever Flowing: A Novel By Vasily Grossman*. Translated by Thomas P. Whitney. Copyright © 1997 by Possev-Verlag. English translation copyright © 1972 by Thomas P. Whitney. Reprinted by permission of Harper Collins Publishers.

Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, LLC: for "Letters to a Roman Friend," "May 24, 1980," "The Hawk's Cry in Autumn," from *Selected Poems* by Joseph Brodsky, *Selected Poems in English.* Translated by or with the author. Edited by Ann Kjellberg. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002. P. 58–60, 211, 49–52. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, LLC: for "Less Than One" from *Less Than One* by Joseph Brodsky. Joseph Brodsky, *Less Than One: Selected Essays.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1987. P. 3–33. Copyright © 1986 by Joseph Brodsky. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, LLC: for "No, not one face, but two . . . ," "Someone's crying all night . . . ," "We don't get to choose our century . . . ," "As at every doorstep grow rowan and maple . . . ," "Pan," "Memoirs," and "Before the War: Recollections," from *Apollo In The Snow: Selected Poems* by Aleksandr Kushner. Translated by Paul Graves and Carol Ueland. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1992. P. 6, 21, 36–37, 41, 61–62, 80–81. Translation copyright © 1988, 1989, 1991 by Paul Graves and Carol Ueland. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, LLC: for an excerpt from Andrei Bitov, *Pushkin House.* Translated by Susan Brownsberger. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1987. P. 351–55. Translation copyright © 1987 by Susan Brownsberger. Reprinted by the permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

W. W. Norton: "Bathhouse Blues" by Vladimir Vysotsky, "Cigarette Butt" by Yuz Aleshkovsky, "Dialogue" by Vladimir Vysotsky, "Lesbian Song" by Yuz Aleshkovsky, "Monkey" by Genrikh Sapgir, "Parody of A Bad Detective Story" by Vladimir Vysotsky, "Personal Meeting" by Yuz Aleshkovsky, "Radioblab" by Genrikh Sapgir, "A Voice" by Genrikh Sapgir, "Wolf Hunt" by Vladimir Vysotsky,

translated by H. William Tjalsma, from *Metropol: A Literary Almanac*, edited by Vassily Aksyonov, Viktor Yerofeyev, Fazil Iskander, Andrei Bitov, and Yevgeny Popov. Copyright © 1982 by ARDIS/RLT. Copyright © 1979 by Metropol. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Bloodaxe Books: for the reprint of the following poems from Elena Shvarts, *Paradise: Selected Poems.* Translated by Michael Molnar and Catriona Kelly; "The Dump" (P. 25), "Elegy on the X-Ray Photo of My Skull" (P. 69), "I was born with an unlined palm" (P. 77), "Orpheus" (P. 89).

Counterpoint: Copyright © Sergei Dovlatov, 1982, from *The Zone* by Sergei Dovlatov. Reprinted by permission of Counterpoint. Translated by Anne Frydman © 1982. Reprinted by permission of Counterpoint.

Viktor Erofeev; Copyright © 1991 for "Vremia 'Metropolia,'" *Antologiia Samizdata*, edited by Mark Barbaladze. http://antology.igrunov.ru/after_75/periodicals/metropol/1087390559.html

Permission requests sent to Yevgeny Yevtushenko and his publishers remained unanswered at the time this book went to press. We will be happy to remit all necessary fees for the reprint of Yevtushenko's poems from: Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *The Collected Poems, 1952–1990*. Edited by Albert C. Todd with the author and James Ragan. New York: Henry Holt, 1991. P. 102–104, 113–14, 165–170.

No less deserving of acknowledgment are the translators whose efforts enabled many works to appear here in English for the first time: Rebecca Pyatkevich, Sibelan Forrester, Brian R. Johnson, and Sarah H. Kapp.

Special thanks go to Igor and Kira Nemirovsky and Meghan Vicks at Academic Studies Press for bringing this project to completion.

Part I

Literature of the Thaw

Introduction

Typically, the post-Stalin cultural history of Russia is divided according to the following political periodization: the Thaw (1954–1968), Stagnation (1968–86), Perestroika (1987–1991), and the post-Soviet period (1991–present). The chronological borders for some of these periods are debatable (1968 or 1965? or 1964? 1987 or 1986? or even 1985?). Others are less ambiguous (1954 and 1991). However, the question remains: why do some political changes directly correspond to cultural shifts? Why did political reforms following Stalin's death in 1953 lead to the introduction of the Thaw, why did the ousting of Stalin's successor Nikita Khrushchev in 1964 shift the literary and cultural landscape into Stagnation culture, and why did Gorbachev's *perestroika* and especially the policies of *glasnost'* (openness) have such a dramatic effect on the entire cultural edifice?

The answer to these questions lies in the structure of Soviet society. A strict system of political censorship over all forms of cultural production, but especially literature and film, was established as early as the 1920s, but this is only partially responsible for the correlation between politics and culture. After all, underground and non-conformist literature did not disappear even in the harshest periods of Soviet history, such as the Great Terror of the 1930s (Anna Akhmatova's "Requiem," Lidia Chukovskaya's *Sofia Petrovna*, Osip Mandelstam's *Voronezh Notebooks*, and Andrei Platonov's *The Foundation Pit* attest to this). Certainly, back then and for many

decades afterward, these texts were known only to a confined circle of readers, and their circulation was a dangerous enterprise for both their authors and the texts' "distributors." In the 1960s and 1970s, the production and circulation of uncensored literary texts developed into an entire system of *samizdat* (the self-publication of works reproduced in multiple copies by hand or typewriter) and *tamizdat* (when works were published "there," i.e., abroad, then smuggled into the USSR). However, the coexistence of "official" and "non-official" (non-conformist, uncensored) literatures is a phenomenon that permeates all of Soviet history, resulting not so much in a dialectic of opposing forces, but a plurality of opinions. What is significant is not only the quantitative growth of parallel literary production since the early 1960s, but the fact that this cultural realm included, in addition to politically charged texts that undermined state ideology and official versions of history, a range of modernist, avant-garde, and postmodern works that did not fit into realist aesthetics, let alone into the official doctrine of Socialist Realism.

In other words, Soviet culture—taken as whole, in all its "official" and "non-official" iterations—contributes to an ongoing and contentious debate about the nature of the communist experiment, its results, achievements, and crimes. This includes debates about the relationship between neo-traditionalist and modern visions of society, modernist and avant-garde approaches to culture. This latter debate traverses the borders dividing official and non-conformist cultural realms over the course of Soviet cultural history: works that criticized the Soviet regime for its destruction of traditional culture could only circulate underground (Solzhenitsyn's writings are the best-known example), while "formalism"—a term used to describe all forms of modernist and avant-garde art—was repressed as well.

Perhaps the reason for this paradox can be found in the inherent contradiction of the Stalinist social and cultural project (as well as in other totalitarian regimes): the creation of modern society by anti-modern, neo-traditionalist systems of social homogenization. These systems exhibit the quasi-religious character of Soviet ideology and evince, among other characteristics, the creation of a pantheon of

heroes and leaders with a god-like leader at the top of the pyramid; elaborate social rituals, from celebratory demonstrations to show trials; promote nationalism and xenophobia; the solidification of the cultural canon; and the persecution of "others," a social spectrum that ranged from political dissidents labeled as "enemies of the people" to homosexuals, hipsters (*stiliagi*), Jews, "bourgeois individualists," "cosmopolitans," and still more "others."

However, the balance between striving toward modernization and systems of neo-traditionalism frequently changed in the course of Soviet history. The historical milestones associated with 1953 (Stalin's death), 1968 (the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the destruction of the dream of "socialism with a human face"), and 1987 (the introduction of *glasnost'*) signify the most dramatic moments of these shifts. Since the economic (state control over the economy) and political (one-party state) foundations of the Soviet regime remained unshaken since NEP and until *perestroika*, the majority of political changes affected the field of ideology; in other words, they affected the sphere of values and doctrines, which, in turn, is inseparable from the realm of culture. This is to say that every political change first and foremost affected culture, and only through the latter, the social fabric as a whole. It is no wonder that each of these political shifts immediately affected the balance of cultural forces: those who were persecuted yesterday would become celebrated today, and vice versa.

The period of the Thaw (named after Ilya Ehrenburg's novella of the same name) marked one of the most radical changes in this respect since the early 1930s. Khrushchev's "Secret Speech," delivered at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in 1956, had a profound effect on Soviet society precisely because it exploded the neo-traditionalist order in an attempt to both preserve and modernize the Soviet political and economic regime. In a way, Khrushchev employed the mechanism of instantly converting a former hero or leader into an "enemy of the people," a tactic that was developed in Stalin's time. He did this, once again following Stalin's model, in order to consolidate his own power, neutralize the "old Stalinist guard," and disarm the all-powerful state security forces (former NKVD, then MGB, and finally the KGB) that had been

the primary tool of Stalinist terror. But the fact that he used these methods against Stalin himself, the supreme leader, the axis of the Soviet quasi-religion, caused the ultimate crisis in Soviet civilization. Although Khrushchev, in this speech and afterward, tried to keep intact what seemed to be the foundations of the regime—faith in the communist utopia, the cult of Lenin that replaced the cult of Stalin, hostility to capitalism, and mantras about the supremacy of the first state founded by and for the victorious proletariat—the damage was irreparable, and the ideological and cultural transformations that ensued were unstoppable.

Khrushchev asked: "Why did we not do something earlier, during Stalin's life, in order to prevent the loss of innocent lives?" Toward answering this question, Khrushchev in part blamed Soviet writers, filmmakers, and scientists for mythologizing Stalin's abilities as a leader. "When we look at many of our novels, films and historical-scientific studies . . . the Soviet Army, supposedly thanks only to Stalin's genius, turned to the offensive and subdued the enemy. The epic victory gained . . . through our heroic people, is ascribed in this type of novel, film and 'scientific study' as being completely due to the strategic genius of Stalin."

Khrushchev's denouncement of Stalin (but not Stalinism), allowed for the publication of works such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's 1962 *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, which transformed Soviet literature by depicting a "typical" day in a remote labor camp. However, censorship and other regulatory practices mandated by the state continued to restrict what and whom could be published. Indeed, even Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" itself could not be published in Russia until 1989, when the reforms of *perestroika* that would lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union were underway.

Histories of the Thaw period identify Khrushchev and Solzhenitsyn as initiators of cultural change. Khrushchev, as First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was uniquely positioned to advocate for reform. Solzhenitsyn, as a former "enemy of the people" and literary unknown, was not. Their anti-Stalinism did not unite them in any way, nor were the outcomes of their work confined to the period of the Thaw. Khrushchev's reforms were

largely intended to move the concentration of power away from a single individual and strengthen the stability of the Communist Party elite, a goal that was achieved during the rule of his successor Leonid Brezhnev. Solzhenitsyn's work sought to disempower not only Stalinism, but the Party and the Soviet regime as a whole, a vision that eventually came to pass with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Viewing the cultural changes of the late Soviet period from the standpoint of the present reveals a longer, comparative perspective on how individuals contribute to political and cultural change.

The struggle for self-identification and the search for meaning did not take place exclusively in the political sphere. For the writer Vassily Aksyonov, the Thaw was "a time with no fear." Aksyonov and his young colleagues felt that they were "the new generation, the one which would change things in our country." As a leading figure in the youth prose movement and self-proclaimed *stiliaga* (hipster), Aksyonov introduced slang, a cosmopolitan sensibility, and even new modes of dress into Soviet literature and life. Aksyonov's name became synonymous with a romanticized vision of the Thaw, in which the writer and reader shared a common language, sense of fashion, and love of American jazz. Although Aksyonov would later revise this portrait of his generation in his 2008 autobiographic novel *A Mysterious Passion*, the youthful idealism the *stiliagi* exuded in their life and art during the Thaw stands beside the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Khrushchev's "Secret Speech," and the emergence of the poets Andrei Voznesensky and Yevgeny Yevtushenko as among the most vivid indications that a new era had begun.

Growing conflict within society was the first radical effect of Khrushchev's exposure of Stalin's crimes. Due to the political changes discussed above, the Thaw was a period of heated culture wars between those who wanted to preserve the Soviet symbolic order, such as hardcore Stalinists or followers of Khrushchev's version of communist ideology "cleansed" of the "cult of [Stalin's] personality," and those who embraced opportunities offered by a new and large-scale wave of modernization, the movement from uniformity to heterogeneity in culture and lifestyle, and greater personal and

intellectual freedom. These culture wars are responsible for the numerous internal contradictions of the Thaw period, when each new degree of freedom was earned by bitter political struggle—and could be reversed the very next day. The literary journal *New World* (*Novyi mir*) became a hub of literary innovation during the Thaw, but the publication of nearly every issue was delayed due to the resistance of censors. 1956 was the year of Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" and the beginning of the political campaign against Stalinism, but it was also the year that democratic anti-communist uprisings in Hungary were suppressed (Aksyonov's *A Mysterious Passion* depicts how these events affected the creative intelligentsia). In 1958, with the Thaw in full swing, Boris Pasternak was forced to renounce the Nobel Prize he was awarded for his novel *Doctor Zhivago* (banned in the USSR). In 1961 the Twenty-Second Party Congress demanded the removal of Stalin's embalmed body from the Lenin Mausoleum on Red Square; in the same year, Vasily Grossman's novel *Life and Fate* was "arrested" by the KGB. In 1962, Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was published and even nominated for the Lenin Prize in Literature; in the same year a peaceful workers' demonstration against high food prices in Novocherkassk was suppressed by mass shooting.

The works of many writers who were victims of Stalinist terror, or who were banned in Stalin's time, were returned to circulation during the Thaw. Among them were Isaac Babel, Mikhail Zoshchenko, Andrei Platonov, Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Ivan Bunin, Osip Mandelstam, Ilya Il'f and Evgeny Petrov, Nikolai Zabolotsky, Daniil Kharms, and many others. However, not all of their works were "rehabilitated." Platonov's novels, Bulgakov's *Heart of a Dog*, *The Fatal Eggs*, and other novellas, Akhmatova's "Requiem," Kharms' writings for adults, Mandelstam's late poems, and many other works remained banned. Classics of twentieth-century Russian literature, such as Evgeny Zamyatin, Vladimir Nabokov, Konstantin Vaginov, and Alexander Vvedensky, were forced into "oblivion" and could only be circulated in *samizdat* and *tamizdat* until the reforms of the 1980s.

Such contradictions are visible on a broader scale as well. On the one hand, Soviet society experienced a strong push toward

modernization, which stimulated a surge of creativity among the younger generation. Still enchanted by the idea of communism, the "generation of the sixties," as it was then called, was also creating new identities and ways of living. Pyotr Vail' and Alexander Genis, in their book *The Sixties: The World of the Soviet Man*, provide a broad overview of these innovations. Vassily Aksyonov's *A Mysterious Passion* depicts additional forms of cultural innovation, including sexual revolution as the ultimate manifestation of newly-discovered, private, individual, even hedonistic values—a far cry from the self-sacrificing asceticism demanded by Stalinist culture.

Accompanying these processes was a quest for new subjectivities based on a new sense of the self that was not defined by a sense of belonging to the "collective body" of the Soviet people. These subjectivities are important by virtue of the dissimilarity between them and the challenge of realizing them in all their various forms in everyday life. This quest for new subjectivities found its most vibrant embodiment in the poetry of the sixties, as represented by Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Andrei Voznesensky, Alexander Galich, and others. Their poems were political precisely because they were personal. Each of these poets in his own way tried to define his "I" in its complex relationship to the "we," an attitude distinct from the previous subjugation of the personal to the collective. The public need for such discourse was supported by the unprecedented popularity of poetry in the sixties: poetry readings in the 1960s filled stadiums; poets could be likened to rock stars.

At the same time, the reevaluation of Stalinism, initiated by Khrushchev's speech, launched the process that in similar conditions was defined (in relation to Nazism) as "working through the past." The tragic experiences of victims of the Soviet regime, previously completely excluded from public view, were slowly but steadily entering the collective consciousness. Former prisoners of the Gulag were released by Khrushchev and began to return to society. Their experiences required a new understanding of the Stalinist epoch, and consequently of the entire Soviet experiment. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* produced the first breakthrough, which affected not only Soviet readerships but also the Western perception of communism. After the publication

of Solzhenitsyn's novella, many other works exploring the Gulag as the deepest point of historical trauma—such as Varlam Shalamov's stories, Solzhenitsyn's later novels and his *Gulag Archipelago*—emerged in quick succession. Other works analyzed the traumatic social distortions produced by the Soviet experience. These include Alexander Galich's songs, Grossman's *Life and Fate* and *Everything Flows*, Vladimir Tendryakov's autobiographical depiction of the post-collectivization Holodomor (famine), Andrey Sinyavsky's (Abram Tertz) and Yulii Daniel's (Nikolai Arzhak) "fantastic tales," all of which, like Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, could be published only in *samizdat* and *tamizdat*. The authors of these works were banned from Soviet magazines and presses. Sometimes they endured public shaming, as Pasternak did, or expulsion into exile as in the cases of Solzhenitsyn and Galich. In other cases, they underwent trial and imprisonment as Sinyavsky and Daniel did, or, like Shalamov, suffered extreme poverty and isolation.

Manuscripts could also be confiscated and "arrested" as Grossman's were. However, this was not the only path open to those attempting to "work through" the Soviet experience. The "legal" literature of the sixties developed an elaborate "Aesopian language," a system of hints and allusions that allowed readers to read seemingly innocent texts as political allegories. These tricks did not fully deceive censors, but the censors were also Soviet people, and they were also affected by the crisis of Soviet ideology. They were therefore sometimes inclined to close their eyes to political subversion in a text, so long as it kept the illusion of propriety.

The crumbling of the Soviet symbolic order, the growing heterogeneity of society, and, most importantly, the process of "working through the past" begun during the Thaw, generated at least two significant lines of additional cultural and ideological transformation. The first was obviated by the intelligentsia's reaction to the arrest of Sinyavsky and Daniel in 1965 for publishing their literary works abroad. Designed by the authorities as a symbolic end to the "liberties" of the Thaw, this trial revealed the opposite: the impossibility of a return to Stalinism in culture. Not only did