

### The Thaw and Novy Mir.

The Khrushchev era of the Soviet Union is also known as the thaw period. It was an era of relative freedom in literature and ideology, especially when compared to the preceding Stalinist period. The thaw period is generally considered to have started after Joseph Stalin's death and ended with the removal of Nikita Khrushchev from power; however, this is debatable as the thaw was a process not possessing an immediate beginning and end. The controls over literary ideology would once again tighten under Khrushchev's successor Brezhnev. *Novy Mir* is the thick literary journal, mostly under the editor Aleksandr Tvardovskii during this period, which published many of the influential works of the thaw. One important idea that Dina Spechler put forth of this period is that *Novy Mir* and its published works were a form of so called 'legitimate dissent', something that challenged the party ideology and Soviet system as a form of dissent, but did so through official publication. In this paper I will explore *Novy Mir* as the central publisher of the literature of the thaw period, and this idea of legitimate dissent. However, I will argue that despite the thaw containing many ideas and topics in literature that had previously been un-publishable in the Soviet Union, these works published in *Novy Mir* were not dissent published via legitimate means, but a reflection of the wider, if temporary, shift in values of the party and editors of the journal. The most important figures of the period were Nikita Khrushchev and Aleksandr Tvardovskii.

The first major issue is that of publisher intent versus author intent. The author may have written their work as dissent but in order for a work to be published officially, or legitimately, the work would have to pass through the editors of a journal like *Novy Mir*, the censors, and the party. This process requires the journal editors to assess the message of the work, along with literary qualities, and decide whether it can be published. Then the journal passes through the state censors, gaining either approval to be published, or partial to complete rejection based on ideological grounds. Tvardovskii as editor of *Novy Mir* did publish increasingly ideologically varied works during his two stints as head of the journal, especially his second from 1958 to 1970. Due to personal beliefs, which will be discussed later in this paper, he did not see the works published in *Novy Mir* as dissent. Even during the peak of the thaw the state censorship and their handbook Gavlit applied to all literary works. There was a way to get around the censors by gaining permission to publish from the central committee, and we will see that Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* did follow such a path, but this was not a normal occurrence. Due to this process when a work is published legitimately, despite what the authors intentions were, it loses the possibility of being dissent as the work has gained the approval of editors like Tvardovskii, the state censors, or in the case of *One Day* party officials like Khrushchev. These decision makers in the world of publishing were loyal party members, and in being such the approval of them on ideological grounds makes a work published through such people unable to be categorized as dissent, even if it intended to be by the author. Therefore any work officially published in the Soviet Union during the thaw is not dissent, as the process of publication takes away such possibilities.

There were literary works of dissent during the thaw period, but to maintain the status of dissent for a work of literature the author could not seek legitimacy. Many authors and poets wrote works during the thaw that criticised the regime. In not seeking publishing of these works the intent of the author is maintained, and therefore such works can be considered dissent. Some authors, especially young poets, felt the restrictions of socialist realism and the power of editors, forced authors seeking to publish to make a compromise,

and self-censor their work.<sup>1</sup> These authors are often the ones that maintained dissent at the expense of legitimacy. A poet or author could have works that classified as legitimate, while still having others that classified as dissent. Only the works submitted for official publishing became subject to others intents. Works circulated unofficially or kept private served the authors intent as the primary intent, instead of the authors intent becoming secondary to a publishers.

*Novy Mir* was the crucial literary journal of the thaw period, publishing the majority of the official works. During the 1950's and 1960's *Novy Mir* had two editors, Konstantin Simonov was the editor from 1946 to 1950 and again from 1954 to 1958, and Aleksandr Tvardovskii was editor from 1950 to 1954 and 1958 to 1970. The journal was launched in 1925, the name *Novy Mir* meaning *New World*, but it is the general consensus that the journal reached its literary peak during the period of the thaw.<sup>2</sup> To quote Dina Spechler: "For more than a decade after Stalin's death that journal was the major and most steadfast source of dissent among all the legally published newspapers and magazines."<sup>3</sup> Although I disagree with the idea of the works published in *Novy Mir* as dissent, for the reason I argued earlier, the journal for much of the 1950's and 60's consistently published the works that most challenged the literary restrictions of the Soviet Union. The bringing back of Tvardovskii for a second stint as editor shows the shift that had occurred in the Soviet Union towards accepting a wider variety of literary opinions; as Tvardovskii was fired in 1954 for the 1953 publishing of a literary critical article that had attracted negative attention from the party.<sup>4</sup> Yet when Simonov was fired in 1958, the central committee brought Tvardovskii back as editor of *Novy Mir*, and on the condition Tvardovskii had set that he could handpick the editorial board.<sup>5</sup> Simonov had also been fired for publishing unacceptable works, predominantly *Not By Bread Alone* by Vladimir Dudinstev. Tvardovskii would be the editor for twelve years, and would be the editor responsible for the official publication of many of the major works of the thaw, such as *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and *People, Years, Life*.

Aleksandr Trifonovich Tvardovskii was born in Zagore, Smolensk in 1910; his father, Trifon, was a peasant blacksmith and small landowner.<sup>6</sup> Tvardovskii participated in official soviet society for much of his life; he joined the local Komsomol in 1924, and the Russian Association of Proletariat Writers in 1927.<sup>7</sup> This participation in official culture was not without its rough patches, for example in 1930 Tvardovskii was expelled from the Smolensk Russian Association of Proletarian Writers for six-month period, as his poetry ha failed to be proletarian enough.<sup>8</sup> 1931 would see his family labeled as Kulaks, and Tvardovskii was forced to renounce them by the local party secretary.<sup>9</sup> In June 1934 he was admitted to the Soviet Writers Union, he would leave Smolensk for Moscow during this period of his life.<sup>10</sup> Tvardovskii then entered the Moscow Institute of Philosophy Literature and History, and his poem *The Land of Muravia*, written between 1934 and 1936, would receive the first of the three Stalin Prizes he would be awarded in his lifetime.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Emily Lygo, *Leningrad Poetry 1953-1975: The Thaw Generation* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), 17-18.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Glenny, ed., *Novy Mir: A Selection 1925-1967* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972), 12

<sup>3</sup> Dina Spechler, *Permitted Dissent in the USSR: Novy Mir and the Soviet Regime* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), xiv.

<sup>4</sup> Denis Kozlov, "The Readers of "Novy Mir," 1945--1970: Twentieth-century experience and soviet Historical Consciousness" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2005), 26.

<sup>5</sup> Kozlov, 115.

<sup>6</sup> Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers* (New York: Picador, 2007), 132.

<sup>7</sup> Figes, 132.

<sup>8</sup> Kozlov, 178.

<sup>9</sup> Kozlov, 178.

<sup>10</sup> Kozlov, 179.

<sup>11</sup> Kozlov, 179.

During World War Two Tvardovskii would serve first as a war correspondent, then later an officer.<sup>12</sup> It is during this period that he would write and publish his most well known poem, *Vasily Tyorkin*. The poem was extremely well received, especially by soldiers at the front. To quote Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: “Of the many things offered them, they obviously had a special preference for *War and Peace* and *Vasily Tyorkin*.”<sup>13</sup> The success of *Vasily Tyorkin* was partly due to the high standards Tvardovskii set for himself, which would translate to high literary standards as editor of *Novy Mir*, and partly due to his ability to accurately describe the experience of soldiers during the war. Tvardovskii’s officially published poetry was acceptable under socialist realist standards, and unlike many socialist realist authors his literary talent was evident. To quote Tvardovskii: “Even in a socialist society, it is difficult to remove all inequalities of talent.”<sup>14</sup> The rules that Tvardovskii so successfully navigated were developed during the Stalinist period, and are commonly known as the Zhadanov criteria. One element of these rules was Gavlit, the handbook of the censors; it was a written code by which all officially published works were judged. Gavlit placed many topics and ideas as un-publishable, including classifying detention centers and prison camps as a state secret.<sup>15</sup> The publishers of journals, newspapers and magazines followed Zhadanov criteria, not only during the Stalinist period, but also for months after Stalin’s death, and only slowly began to challenge them.<sup>16</sup> The Zhadanov criteria required a clear statement of political or ideological position on all issues discussed in a work. A literary work needed to display party spirit, while portraying the party as the ultimate and infallible leader. Stories must contain educational messages, which were simple and easy to understand. Correct classes of people and class values were to be present and in proper proportions. A minimized discussion of the past was preferred, and instead a literary work should show optimism and progress towards the future. Stock literary characters were to be used, portraying different stereotyped Soviet people, and the good proletariat hero was to win against the class enemy.<sup>17</sup> These criteria said nothing about literary quality of a work, and many works were published under Stalin because they meet these criteria regardless of quality.

The thaw, or the period of Khrushchev as party secretary, represented an increase of freedom in ideas presented by officially published literary works, especially those of *Novy Mir*. During this period fiction became a way to discuss political and social issues.<sup>18</sup> The thaw was a process, and one major factor was the speech Khrushchev gave at the twentieth party congress in 1956. The speech denounced the ‘*cult of individual*’, which had taken place under Stalin, while praising the earlier days of Lenin.<sup>19</sup> This speech set a precedent in looking to the past, and open criticism of Stalin. However, one of the first officially published works to turn to the past occurred prior to this speech, as Valentin Ovechkin’s *District Routine* was published in 1952. It criticized the over centralization that occurred under Stalin, especially in regards to collective farms, instead preferring the voluntary cooperation of Soviet people.<sup>20</sup> The work was well received and opened the door for more works to be written about topics

<sup>12</sup> Vladimir Lakshin, *Solzhenitsyn, Tvardovsky, and Novy Mir* (Cambridge: MIT press, 1980), 93.

<sup>13</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Oak and the Calf: Sketches of Literary Life in the Soviet Union* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 15.

<sup>14</sup> Alexander Tvardovsky, *Tyorkin and the Stovemakers* (Great Britain: Carcanet Press Limited, 1974), 7.

<sup>15</sup> Lakshin, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Spechler, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Spechler, 2-3.

<sup>18</sup> Miriam Dobson, “Contesting the Paradigms of De-Stalinization: Readers’ Responses to ‘One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,’” *Slavic Review* 643 (2005), 581. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3650143>.

<sup>19</sup> The Guardian. “Nikita Khrushchev: The Cult of the Individual.” Last modified April 26, 2007. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2007/apr/26/greatspeeches1>. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Spechler, 13.

such as collective farms.

The 'Speech on the Cult of Personality' given by Khrushchev and Valentin Ovechkin's *District Routine* were key components of the wider turn to the past in both literature and culture. One major genre that occurred in *Novy Mir* was village prose, such as *District Routine*, this genre looked at the rural life and culture of peasants.<sup>21</sup> Village prose had its root in 19<sup>th</sup> century literature, which held a fascination with the peasantry. This fascination with peasants and rural life had been replaced under Stalin with the proletariat as the centre of literary works, but in the rise of village prose we can see a return to the traditions of Russian literature.<sup>22</sup> Along with the rise of village prose, under the guide of *Novy Mir*, came a flood of camp memoirs. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was the most prolific, but far from the only. Tvardovskii, as editor of *Novy Mir*, encouraged those who had experienced the camps to write about their experiences as a form of therapy. He stored those that were not published in a special archive for the future use of historians and writers.<sup>23</sup> These, we can see, were direct challenges to the restrictions on literary works, especially Solzhenitsyn's *One Day* that spoke of camp life, a topic banned in the Gavlit handbook. These works were not dissent, and Tvardovskii published many after Khrushchev's speech.

Along with the twentieth party congress, the twenty-second party congress, of 1961, also contributed greatly to discussions of the terror. This congress reinforced the message of the twentieth party congress, and of the Stalinist period as having gone too far. At the same time as the twenty-second party congress, Ilya Ehrenberg's memoir *People, Years, Life* was being published in *Novy Mir*. It was published in parts over the years 1960 to 63 and 1965.<sup>24</sup> Ehrenberg introduced both people and events that had been eliminated from discussion in official soviet life.<sup>25</sup> In his memoir Ehrenberg largely left out description of the terror, despite talking of the people who were targeted by it. The leaving out of the description of the terror was somewhat due to censorship, both self and state.<sup>26</sup> Here we can see how not only official state censors could control what was either published or not, but also an author can leave out topics, themes, or discussions of events that they know are unpublishable in order to have their work officially published. This self-censorship takes away the ability for an author to write their honest opinion, or write dissent about the Soviet system.

*Novy Mir*, in publishing works like Ovechkin's and Ehrenberg's, was the major literary journal of the thaw period. The *Novy Mir* of the 1960's is widely considered to have reflected on the problems within society through literature. During this period Tvardovskii personally read all major incoming scripts and was the decisive word on what would be published.<sup>27</sup> As a result the journal had quickly become an extension of Tvardovskii's personal reflections on the past and the terror; which had begun much earlier.<sup>28</sup> These reflections included both his personal experience of life under Stalin, such as his family's exile, and the experiences of others, including friends that had been in the camps. Camp memoirs, as a major aspect of the *Novy Mir* of the 1960's, were of importance to Tvardovskii. In these he demanded an element of authenticity, desiring them to accurately portray the experience he had only heard about.<sup>29</sup> November 1962 would see *Novy Mir* publish *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. To Tvardovskii this work would set the standard for camp

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<sup>21</sup> Kozlov, 28.

<sup>22</sup> Geoffrey A. Hosking, "The Russian Peasant Rediscovered: 'Village Prose' of the 1960s," *Slavic Review* 324 (1973), 706. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2495492>.

<sup>23</sup> Kozlov, 318-320.

<sup>24</sup> Spechler, 13.

<sup>25</sup> Kozlov, 218.

<sup>26</sup> Kozlov, 228.

<sup>27</sup> Kozlov, 171.

<sup>28</sup> Kozlov, 171.

<sup>29</sup> Kozlov, 198.

memoirs. He thought that Solzhenitsyn overcame the difficulty of official language not accurately portraying the terror.<sup>30</sup> Tvardovskii, himself a classic of Soviet literature, had successfully navigated official language, but had failed to find the words to describe the terror.<sup>31</sup> He would, as a result, consider *One Day* his greatest literary discovery.<sup>32</sup> *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* is generally considered to have violated the principles of socialist realism, by focusing on the theme of survival in the present, and not idealizing the Soviet life or state.<sup>33</sup> Tvardovskii, despite this, went to great lengths to get the novella published.

Tvardovskii, although a personal champion of Solzhenitsyn, held a vote of the editorial board and received a unanimous approval to pursue the publication of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.<sup>34</sup> He then wrote a letter to Khrushchev advocating the publishing of *One Day*, and the Presidium of the Central Committee discussed the issue twice before granting permission to publish.<sup>35</sup> This is important because not only was the novella granted approval by the entire editorial board, but also the party. The censors of Gavlit could not ban its publishing, even if camps were supposed to be a state secret. The characters from *One Day* were based on real life people, and Solzhenitsyn treated all prisoners equally regardless of the reason for them being in the camp.<sup>36</sup> This is far different from Khrushchev's opinion on the people in the camps, as is evident in the speech *On the Cult of Individuality*. Tvardovskii wrote a preface to *One Day*, which was a huge deal. The preface not only indicated that the publication of the novella was intentional, it also provided Tvardovskii's vast literary authority to a previously unpublished author who would come up against powerful critics.<sup>37</sup> One major impact of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* can be contributed to the idea that it ended the silence between those that had been in camps and those that had not. This silence had lasted ten years between releases from prison camps and the novella's publication. This silence resulted from an inability to communicate between those who had experienced the camps and those who had not.<sup>38</sup> It was partly due to the almost indescribable experience that camps provided. We can see through Tvardovskii how the official language was not able to describe the camps. Solzhenitsyn had resorted to language outside that of official literary circles in order to write *One Day*, including swear words and language that imitated the spoken language of the illiterate lower class.

The method of getting a work published by going directly to the party was the exception to standard practice, generally literary works had to pass through the censors. As a result of the censors many works were either rejected, or editors did not attempt to publish them knowing they would be rejected. An example of a work that was denied the right to be officially published in the Soviet Union is *Cancer Ward* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.<sup>39</sup> Tvardovskii again personally advocated this work to be published, but unlike with *One Day*, he was denied permission. Much of the time, even if Tvardovskii personally liked a work he would not try to get it published, knowing it would not pass through the censors. To quote Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: "Whenever Tvardovsky's first (poetic) self felt strongly attracted to a manuscript, he had to test the feelings of his second (political) self before he could publish it as a work of *Soviet* literature."<sup>40</sup> As editor Tvardovskii was able to read many manuscripts that had literary merit, but were ideologically not permissible. In these instances he had to

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<sup>30</sup> Kozlov, 212.

<sup>31</sup> Kozlov, 212.

<sup>32</sup> Kozlov, 27.

<sup>33</sup> Kozlov, 354.

<sup>34</sup> Lakshin, 4.

<sup>35</sup> Lakshin, 4.

<sup>36</sup> Kozlov, 334.

<sup>37</sup> Lakshin, 19.

<sup>38</sup> Elena Zubkova, *Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 170.

<sup>39</sup> Tvardovskii, 10.

<sup>40</sup> Solzhenitsyn, 29-30.

differentiate between his view as a reader and his view as an editor.

Even during the relatively liberal period of the thaw a number of works were not published via official means in the Soviet Union. One example is Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*. Pasternak had submitted the novel to a number of literary magazine's in 1956 and 57.<sup>41</sup> The central committee, because of the political philosophy expressed in the novel, rejected *Dr. Zhivago*.<sup>42</sup> However, it had been published in Italy and was nominated for a Nobel Prize, creating a controversy within the Soviet Union. *Literaturnaia Gazeta* denounced Pasternak in 1958, this denunciation included letter signed by *Novy Mir* editors. In 1958 Tvardovskii and the new editorial board publicly agreed with their predecessors that the Nobel Prize had been awarded based on political and not literary opinions.<sup>43</sup> Tvardovskii, however, was against the expulsion of Pasternak from the writers union, and abstained from the vote; but the other *Novy Mir* editors fully believed that persecution of Pasternak was the right thing.<sup>44</sup>

A second example of a work that was not published because of ideology is Vassily Grossman's *Life and Fate*. Tvardovskii read the novel and personally loved it, but he also realized he would be unable to publish it. Tvardovskii is quoted as having said *Life and Fate* "Transcends, far and decisively, the borders of literature."<sup>45</sup> He did not consider the novel to be without flaws, he saw the title as ridiculous and Grossman's claims of the novel as an epic to be pretentious.<sup>46</sup> One of the major themes of *Life and Fate* is a parallel Grossman made a between the Nazi's and Soviets. This parallel was hard to accept for Tvardovskii who had taken an us versus them mentality from the war. He did, however, think *Life and Fate* was better than the previous two most famous books of the thaw, *Dr. Zhivago* and *Not by Bread Alone*. The novel would not be published in the thaw period. Mikhail Suslov, an important party member, is rumored to have threatened *Life and Fate* would not be published for at least one hundred years.<sup>47</sup> The novel would not remain hidden for one hundred years, but it was confiscated by the KGB and only published in 1988, more than twenty years after the death of Grossman, who died in 1964.<sup>48</sup> The novel simply went farther than the thaw would permit. Leaders and elites in the Soviet Union did push for an increased critical look at the past, but were not willing to allow works drawing comparisons of the regime to the Nazi regime to be published, regardless of literary quality.

Neither Khrushchev, as party secretary, nor Tvardovskii, as editor of *Novy Mir*, was trying to make major changes to the system. Tvardovskii believed in the regime but wanted to improve it, and thought that by looking at the errors of the past improvement was possible.<sup>49</sup> Khrushchev looked at the Stalinist era as having gone too far, but even in the speech '*On the Cult of Personality*' he accepted the legitimate use of violence for political purposes as well as the party as the rightful rulers of the Soviet Union. Dissidents during the thaw period often felt that the new freedoms were not going far enough. Brezhnev became party secretary in 1964, and these views quickly changed.<sup>50</sup> Khrushchev, Tvardovskii, and others like them, were responsible for the publishing of the works that shaped the thaw. In this way those that shaped the discussion of the thaw were not dissenters, but those that thought looking at the past they could create a better socialist state. The thaw was a brief period that ended with the removal of Khrushchev as party secretary. Like the start of the

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<sup>41</sup> Kozlov, 119.

<sup>42</sup> Kozlov, 121.

<sup>43</sup> Kozlov, 120.

<sup>44</sup> Kozlov, 121.

<sup>45</sup> Kozlov, 213.

<sup>46</sup> Kozlov, 213.

<sup>47</sup> Kozlov, 215-216.

<sup>48</sup> Kozlov, 218.

<sup>49</sup> Tvardovskii, 11.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen V. Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 6-7.

thaw, the end would be a process. This period of relative liberal and free thought would not be replicated during the remaining decades of the Soviet Union.

A huge factor of the thaw is the power of both Khrushchev and Tvardovskii. These two men were far more open to challenges to their beliefs, and more adaptable, than most Soviet elites. Their simultaneous being party secretary and editor of *Novy Mir* gave a legitimate and official route for the publication of the works of the thaw. A major reassessment over this period for Tvardovskii would be his opinion of Stalin, which he reevaluated continually over the 1950's and 60's. This would not prevent him from always retaining a fascination with Stalin.<sup>51</sup> Tvardovskii would also find the 20<sup>th</sup> party congress influential; it officially recognized the rumors about Stalin and the camps that he had already heard.<sup>52</sup> Despite the revaluations and challenges to Tvardovskii's beliefs, he always maintained that communism was the answer.<sup>53</sup> Khrushchev also maintained not only a belief in communism, but in violence as a legitimate tool of power. As is evident in this quote from the secret speech: "Actually Lenin taught that the application of revolutionary violence is necessitated by the resistance of the exploiting classes, and this referred to the era when the exploiting classes existed and were powerful."<sup>54</sup> Khrushchev, although wanting an open and honest discussion of the past, maintained his belief not only in communism but also in the revolution and Lenin.

This overall commitment to the party and communism by both was crucial to the success of the thaw, and also the factor that negates the idea of legitimate dissent. These two men were liberal enough to facilitate a discussion of a controversial point in Soviet history. Many hard line communists disagreed and criticized them, especially Tvardovskii, for permitting works that were too critical or went too far. Despite this, both men being convinced communists were working towards a better communists state. In this way they may have challenged some of the events of the past, but neither represented a true challenge to the system of the state like a dissident would, and Khrushchev in particular wanted to maintain the existing order. In this same respect anything officially published during the thaw could not be dissidence, because it was facilitated and used by men like Khrushchev and Tvardovskii. An author may write a work with the intention of dissidence, but when it passes through editors, journal, publishers, censors and party members to become published via official means, a work ceases to serve only the intentions of the author; but also serves the intentions of the people who it has passed through. Any work published in *Novy Mir* served the intentions of Tvardovskii, and despite his liberal views, he would not intend it to be dissent, and neither would other editors or publishers of official literary works in this period. Because of this process to get official, or legitimate, publication the authors' intention becomes second to those granting permission for publication. Since none of these permission granters were dissenters, no officially published work could be dissent. Therefore the concept of 'legitimate dissent' in the Soviet Union is a false one, as a work could be either or but not both. The period did allow for the publication of many works that in other periods would be considered dissent, but were permissible in the thaw. This period of relative ideological freedom would soon end.

Khrushchev's removal from power in 1964 represented the biggest turning point of the end of the thaw; this persecution seemed to many to be a prelude to the persecution of *Novy Mir*, as both Tvardovskii and the journal expressed views similar to Khrushchev's. Tvardovskii initially feared such a persecution; in an attempt to save the journal he decided no longer to publish works that were sensational or challenged the existing order.<sup>55</sup> Another of the major events signaling and end to the thaw was the Siniavskii-Daniel affair. In September 1965 the Siniavskii-Daniel affair resulted in two academics being imprisoned for

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<sup>51</sup> Kozlov, 181.

<sup>52</sup> Kozlov, 189.

<sup>53</sup> Lakshin, 21.

<sup>54</sup> The Guardian, 2.

<sup>55</sup> Kozlov, 364.

publishing works in the west under pseudonyms. This seemed too many like a return to the Pasternak affair.<sup>56</sup> The similarity being the persecution of Soviet authors for publishing works outside the Soviet Union. Tvardovskii had previously published Siniavskii's writings in *Novy Mir*. This represented a link between the journal and the persecuted writers, which had the potential to threaten the journal if wider repercussions were to occur.<sup>57</sup> Tvardovskii was not only concerned about the repercussions for *Novy Mir*, but also the west's reaction to the trials. He thought that social ostracism might be a better route, as the criminal persecution and imprisonment was reminiscent of the terror.<sup>58</sup> These two incidents, Khrushchev's removal from power and the Siniavskii-Daniel affair, led to a rapid halt in discussions of the terror.<sup>59</sup> As a result the *Novy Mir* of the late 1960's was forced to defend itself against administrative pressures, but they did not completely abandon themes of the past or shift from focusing on heroes as ordinary people.<sup>60</sup> We can see how the Soviet regime shifted over the late 1960's from looking at the terror through literature, to once again trying to have ideological control. This shift in policy would force *Novy Mir*, the journal that had printed many of the crucial literary works of the thaw, to change along with the regime.

In 1968 *Novy Mir* would publish *Youth in Zhelezhoosk* by Nikolai Pavlovich Voronov. The novel was loosely based on Voronov's childhood in Magnitogorsk<sup>61</sup>. *Youth in Zhelezhoosk* said little about the terror, but would still provoke a campaign against *Novy Mir*. The campaign would be a major turning point for *Novy Mir*. During this period Tvardovskii would personally respond to letters of support, which was an indication of the seriousness of the situation.<sup>62</sup> In February 1970 the central committee decided that Tvardovsky should no longer hold the position of editor. To facilitate this they appointed four new co-editors to the board. In return Tvardovskii would resign in February 1970, and die shortly after in 1971.<sup>63</sup> This was a part of the central government's wider attempts in the late 1960's to regain control over intellectual life.<sup>64</sup> We can see how interlinked Khrushchev, Tvardovskii and the thaw were. All three rose and fell in relatively the same fashion, and Tvardovskii, often with Khrushchev's approval, facilitated the intellectual discussions of the thaw via *Novy Mir*. *Novy Mir* would never regain the popularity or influence that it had possessed during the thaw period.

Tvardovskii was a man that during his time faced many critics, despite his wide popularity. This is especially true during his editorship; hard line party members and supporters felt he was going too far, while dissidents and authors like Solzhenitsyn felt he was too supportive of the party and did not go far enough to challenge the Soviet system. In response to criticism he had received earlier in his career Tvardovskii wrote a poem entitled to my critics:

“You ever strive to dictate me,  
 To give simple advice  
 To have me sing, not hearing, not seeing,  
 Only knowing: what's permitted, what's not.

But I can't but reckon  
 That later, after many years have passed,

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<sup>56</sup> Kozlov, 362.

<sup>57</sup> Kozlov, 364.

<sup>58</sup> Kozlov, 417.

<sup>59</sup> Kozlov, 427.

<sup>60</sup> Kozlov, 428.

<sup>61</sup> Kozlov, 439.

<sup>62</sup> Kozlov, 439.

<sup>63</sup> Kozlov, 459.

<sup>64</sup> Kozlov, 459.



It will be you again who will lecture me:  
Where were you, poet? What did you see?<sup>65</sup>

We can see through this poem that Tvardovskii was aware that he would never be able to please everyone, and that despite whatever role a person played in the present that same person could become a critic in the future. Tvardovskii was a fascinating and complicated man. He guided the publication of the literary works of the thaw as an extension of his own beliefs, which had been greatly challenged by the death of Stalin and Khrushchev's speech at the twentieth party congress. He tried to operate within the limits of the Soviet regime that he supported, while continually challenging his own beliefs and the past in order to improve communism. Tvardovskii faced his critics, but followed his beliefs; as he knew that there would still be critics in the future regardless of what path he choose. This also contributed to his removal as editor of *Novy Mir*, his beliefs remained those of the thaw period and did not serve the interests of the tightening of Soviet controls on literature and ideology that occurred under Brezhnev.

In conclusion the works that were published officially during the thaw were not dissent. This is due to the process required to get to get a work of literature published meant that a work began to serve the intent of those who published primarily, and serving the original intent of the author secondarily. Two men who were crucial to the thaw were party secretary Nikita Khrushchev, and *Novy Mir* editor Aleksandr Tvardovskii. Both men looked to an open and honest conversation of the past in order to improve the present and future of Communism. Neither man wanted to radically alter the state; therefore neither man was a dissenter. These two men shaped the intellectual conversation of the thaw, via Khrushchev's secret speech, and Tvardovskii publishing the major literary works. Khrushchev's removal from power signaled the end of the thaw, and in turn Tvardovskii would be removed from the position of editor, as a result of tightening control on literature and ideology. Khrushchev, Tvardovskii and the thaw are interlinked, and their commitment to communism meant that dissent was still not officially permitted during the thaw, even as a turn to history, and criticism of history, became cultural acceptable. The thaw was not a period of permitted dissent, but of relative ideological freedom, steered by two men trying to improve the Soviet system.

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<sup>65</sup> Edith Rogovin Frankel, *Novy Mir: A Case Study in the Politics of Literature 1952- 1958* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 119.