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## Summary

This volume contains the correspondence between Vassily Maklakov (1869–1957) and Mark Aldanov (1886–1957) from the years 1929 to 1957.

Maklakov was a defense lawyer, a member of the Central Committee of the Constitutional Democratic Party, a member of the Second, Third and Fourth State Dumas, the ambassador of the Provisional Government to France. After the collapse of the Provisional Government, he became the de facto representative of various anti-Bolshevik governments and the interests of Russian exiles in France and other countries. From 1924 he headed the Office for Affairs of Russian Refugees at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was also the Chairman of the Émigré Committee in Paris, a social critic and memoirist.

Mark Aldanov was a writer and social commentator, a member of the Workers' Popular Socialist Party, one of the most popular writers of the "Russia abroad" and one of the leading Russian historical novelists of the twentieth century. He emigrated in 1919 and lived in Paris (1919–1922), Berlin (1922–1924), in Paris again (1924–1940), and then in New York (1941–1947). He then returned to France and settled in Nice.

Maklakov and Aldanov met and befriended each other in the pre-war Paris and in late 1920s started exchanging occasional letters. Beginning in 1945, their correspondence became systematic and rather intensive. The letters have been preserved almost in their entirety among the Maklakov Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University and among the Aldanov Papers at the Bakhtmeteff Archive at Columbia University. Their correspondence is a unique source on one of the least studied periods of Russian emigration – the post-war period. It contains information on émigré attitudes towards Soviet power, the Vlasov movement, and the problem of collaborationism in general, on the activity of various émigré political organizations including the League for Popular Freedom, the Coordination Center for Anti-Bolshevik Struggle, among others, and about various prominent figures of the Russian emigration – Alexander Kerensky, Sergey Melgunov, Boris Nicolaevsky, Ekaterina Kuskova, Sergey Prokopovich, and many others.

The letters contain reflections on the state of affairs in the USSR, the meaning of events unfolding there, and the prospect of the evolution or overthrow of the Bolshevik regime. The correspondence is not limited to discussions of political issues. The two parties addressed the connection between the rights of the individual and the state – "human rights, imperial rights," in Aldanov's words – the role of chance and structure in history, and the peculiarities of the genre of the historical novel. The letters feature information on literary and publishing affairs, and in particular about the New York-based *Novyi zhurnal*, the Chekhov Publishing House, the Parisian *Vozrozhdenie* and *Russkaia mysl'*, and about writers such as Ivan Bunin, Boris Zaitsev, Leonid Rzhevsky, and others. The value of this correspondence extends beyond the fact that it is a wonderful source on the history of Russian political thought in the twentieth century, on the history and culture of the Russian emigration, and on the history of Russian literature. It is also a shining example of the epistolary genre, an art that seems to have vanished. But it hasn't lost any of its charm.

The correspondence is accompanied by an introductory article and commentary. This publication will not only be of use to researchers of Russian history and literature of the twentieth century, and university instructors of history and literature, but will surely be of interest to a much wider circle of readers.