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Unlicensed and Unbound: Researching Textual Traffic (Samizdat/Tamizdat) and Information Flow Across Borders

Introduction

The last two generations of Cold War researchers have had the luxury of access to rich archives across Europe that document the material and intellectual history of underground publishing in the former Soviet-controlled socialist states. This chapter will provide an overview of some of the most important archival collections in conducting further research in *samizdat* (underground, unlicensed, and/or self-published material), as well as important connections to wider phenomena in alternative culture and transnational flows of information. After a brief review of major milestones in samizdat research, four case studies will provide more in-depth treatments of archival collections that pertain to underground publishing during the Cold War.

Although the term “samizdat” as a broad category had been in regular use by opposition groups, state powers, and Western observers since it was coined in the Russian context in the late 1950s,¹ it was not until H. Gordon Skilling and Stanisław Barańczak’s work beginning in the early 1980s that attention focused on the *practice* of underground publishing as a phenomenon, and shifted the geographic scope to Central Europe.² Skilling stresses the social practices that had arisen around samizdat, extending samizdat’s domain from a completely clandestine underground operation to a much wider phenomenon of independent publishing. This was the beginning of an important trend in samizdat scholarship that persists to this day: that the only way to work comparatively across the many different activities is to put samizdat in a wider context of alternative culture (or “second” or “parallel” culture), such as foreign radio broadcasting, and cross-border exchanges of texts and other cultural products. More recently, interest in samizdat as a material practice

1 Early treatments of samizdat as seen by contemporary analysts include: Feldbrugge, “New Sources of Information”; Tökés, *Dissent in the USSR*, and Meerson-Aksenov and Shragin, *The Political, Social and Religious Thought of Russian “Samizdat.”*

2 See Skilling, “Return to the Pre-Gutenberg Era.”

led to a rich double-issue of *Poetics Today*, and several important articles on the implications of studying samizdat in the post-socialist context.³

This line of research leads directly to the parallel practice of *tamizdat* (publishing abroad), a term first used in connection with the publication of Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* in Russian by the Italian publishing house Feltrinelli Editore in Milan in 1957. Although the term *tamizdat* is connected to the appearance of *Doctor Zhivago*, the phenomenon was more often referred to as "Western publication" or exile publication, not distinguishing between the publication of the text by Western or by émigré publishers. It's also important to note how widely the practices of unlicensed print cultures underground (as well as émigré publishing abroad) differed from one national context to another. Poland is the most well-established case, with the Parisian émigré journal *Kultura* that ran from 1947 through the end of the century, and several intensive periods of underground publishing from the late 1960s which eventually reached true mass circulation in the late 1980s. The Czechoslovak dissident culture was consistently supported by *tamizdat* publications in Canada and France, as well as small-circulation but consistent publishing efforts underground. While similar structures existed in Hungary, dissident circles were even smaller and more compact, and the majority of the traffic of ideas from East to West occurred via semi-official systems such as cultural and academic exchanges. Finally, the GDR was in a unique situation due to its shared culture, language, and contiguous border with West Germany; this resulted simultaneously in the greater possibility of information flow via radio and eventually TV broadcasting, but also a correspondingly greater intensity of control at the state security level. Three publications by co-authors of this chapter make a collective argument that we can only understand what happened in underground or alternative culture in Eastern Europe with reference to the broader amplification of these voices in the West, which in turn created a feedback loop for the two-way development of ideas, political programs, and aesthetic shifts in art and culture.⁴ Both samizdat and tamizdat research have gathered momentum in the last decade, in each of the languages of the region as well as in English and German, and will continue to be fuelled by the digitization of key sources as well as the development of digital resources in this research area.

In order to map out the major archival holdings relevant to samizdat studies, it is necessary to return to the early years of the transition era, when in 1995 the largest single collection of material on underground publishing was dismantled and redistributed, namely: the Radio Free Europe/Radio Lib-

3 *Poetics Today* 29 and 30; Komaromi, "Samizdat and Soviet Dissident Publics"; "Samizdat as Extra-Gutenberg Phenomenon" and "Material Existence of Samizdat"; Oushakine, "Terrifying Mimicry of Samizdat."

4 Kind-Kovács and Labov, *Samizdat, Tamizdat and Beyond*; Kind-Kovács, *Written Here, Published There*; Labov, *Transatlantic Central Europe*.

erty (RFE/RL) holdings in Munich were moved to Prague and then split up in 1999.⁵ The Corporate and Broadcast Archives were donated to the Hoover Institution Archive in Stanford, California, while the archives of the RFE/RL research institute (as well as its successor, the Open Media Research Institute) went to the Blinken Open Society Archive in Budapest (OSA).⁶ Since that original division of fonds, there has been much redistribution and merging of records (for example, copies of some of the Corporate records were made available at OSA as well; copies of the Broadcast Archives were shared by Hoover with respective national libraries and archives in the region.⁷ Furthermore, as each of the relevant institutions pushes farther ahead with digitization and digital curation, the collections are slowly gravitating back into one coherent space online⁸, while they still bear traces of their itinerant provenance in their metadata and the cataloging ontologies they have passed through.

Beyond the RFE/RL behemoth, however, there are several smaller but equally important archives and collections, each with its own emphasis and specialized character. In Poland, the distribution of samizdat-related materials is broad, spanning the KARTA Centre Foundation⁹, the Institute of National Remembrance, and holdings at the National Library. In his discussion of Polish samizdat below, Piotr Wciślik notes some of the differences between these archives, and the profound impact that adjacent source material can have on the way we read unlicensed publications. The holdings at the Forschungsstelle Osteuropa Bremen (FSO Bremen) feature personal papers of key Soviet writers, Soviet samizdat journals (a number of which can be searched via Ann Komaromi's electronic archive Project for the Study of Dissidence and Samizdat), records of the Polish Solidarity union, and a large collection of Czech underground documents and publications, including the

5 See Stanford news item from 6 October, 1999. Accessed October 08, 2018. <https://news.stanford.edu/pr/99/991006HooverRFE.html>.

6 "Historical Archives." For a comprehensive treatment of the history of RFE/RL and its implications for Cold War studies, see Johnson and Parta, *Cold War Broadcasting*.

7 From "Historical Archives": "The National Digital Archives of Poland (<http://www.hoover.org/library-archives/collections/national-digital-archives-warsaw-poland>) and Polish Radio (<http://www.polskieradio.pl/68,Radia-Wolnosci>), the Hungarian National Szechenyi Library (<http://www.hoover.org/library-archives/collections/national-szechenyi-library-budapest-hungary>), the Czechoslovak Documentation Center (<http://www.hoover.org/library-archives/collections/czechoslovak-documentation-centre-prague-czech-republic>) at the National Museum, the National Archives of Estonia (<http://www.hoover.org/library-archives/collections/filmiarhiiv-rahvusarhiiv>), and the National Archives of Latvia (<http://www.hoover.org/library-archives/collections/national-archives-latvia>)." Accessed September 28, 2018; COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Open Society Archive", by Béla Nóvé and Tamás Scheibner, 2018. Accessed: October 10, 2018.

8 See CEU press release from 16 November, 2015. Accessed September 28, 2018. <https://www.ceu.edu/article/2015-11-16/rferl-hoover-institution-transfer-copies-historical-documents-blinken-osa>.

9 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "KARTA Center Foundation", by Macej Melon, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

Edice Petlice (Padlock editions). The Czechoslovak Documentation Centre (Československé dokumentační centrum, ČSDS), founded in West Germany in 1986, and Libri Prohibiti, founded in Prague in 1990, are two more valuable sources, both currently based in Prague, on the cultural and political opposition in Czechoslovakia. Later in this chapter, Veronika Tuckerová details the specific holdings of Libri Prohibiti, and focuses on one of its unique aspects, the Kafka collection, in order to highlight the instability and difficulties of cataloguing and curating samizdat texts.

In the case of the German Democratic Republic, the study of samizdat and dissident culture is dominated by the Robert Havemann Gesellschaft (RHG), which contains documentation of the most well-known GDR dissident Havemann, and the interlocking circles of opposition figures and artists in the Prenzlauer Berg scene. Nicole Burgoyne takes the RHG as a starting point in her survey of GDR underground publishing, but also includes an exploration of the Archiv unterdrückter Literatur der DDR (Archive of Repressed Literature of the GDR, AUL), as well as related collections of Stasi records at the State Security Service archives. She notes the richness of the Stasi records as a source on underground activity, as well as the difficulty of using such documentation responsibly. Finally, although there are many more national contexts for unofficial publishing that might be described and mapped out, this Chapter moves to the territory of tamizdat, in Friederike Kind-Kovács's rich illustration of the relevance of the Alexander Herzen Foundation (AHF) at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam. Established in the early 1970s as a direct corollary to the work of the famous 19th century Russian exile Herzen, AHF served both as a surrogate publisher for Soviet authors *and* a source of Western books for students in Moscow. This last section of our Chapter also serves as a methodological demonstration of how Western correspondence and records can be mined to illuminate a transcontinental network of samizdat-tamizdat contacts, smugglers, sympathizers, and publishers who were essential to sustain underground culture in Eastern Europe, as well as an international investment in it.

Polish Unlicensed Print Culture at the Blinken Open Society Archives

Polish unlicensed print culture from 1976–90 is one of the most extraordinary chapters of the heritage of resistance and dissent, which surpasses the samizdat phenomena in other former socialist countries when it comes to its size (in total, the Polish National Library records 6,513 monograph editions and 5,957 press titles produced before the abolition of censorship in Poland in April 1990), and which in turn translates into employment of advanced duplication techniques (rather than re-typing typical of samizdat proper) and tens of thousands of people involved as editors, printers, distributors and readers.

The history of Polish unlicensed print culture as a whole, as well as the history of the most important journal titles and publishing houses has been widely described in journal articles, monographs and collected volumes. The most comprehensive introduction for the English reader will be found in the collected volume *Duplicator Underground*, which not only showcases the best of recent scholarship on Polish samizdat, but also contains a rich set of translated source materials.¹⁰

The documentary legacy of Polish unlicensed print culture is fairly well consolidated and accessible both online and in various archives around the world. The KARTA Foundation and the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, IPN) in Warsaw, the Blinken Open Society Archives (OSA) at the Central European University, Budapest, The Research Centre for East European Studies (Forschungsstelle Osteuropa, FSO) at the University of Bremen, and The Hoover Institution at the Stanford University, count among the biggest collectors of Polish underground prints. KARTA,¹¹ IPN¹² and OSA¹³ make the bulk of their collections accessible online. Even though the catalogue of dissident publications differs in each case, for the purpose of general orientation, each of these collections is a good place to start. Unless the researcher is looking for a very specific title, what really makes a difference when deciding where to conduct your research is the archival context, manifested by the adjacent source material that was collected or produced together with the unlicensed prints. At KARTA's Opposition Archives, for example, these come accompanied by personal papers of some of the most renowned dissident figures (including the digitized collection of Jacek Kuron's legacy), and a collection of subject files containing primary source materials on oppositional persons, organizations, initiatives, and events. At IPN, which holds the files of the repression and surveillance apparatus of People's Poland, the collection of unlicensed prints is in a way a side-effect of the operational activities of the secret police (and after 1989, of the research activities at the Institute). The uniqueness of IPN's archival legacy is constituted by the confidential reports of the informants of the security forces as well as more analytical materials prepared by its officers. In particular, the former complements the materials to be found at KARTA, since it is due to infiltration by the secret police that minutes from a good number of clandestine meetings were preserved (but should be carefully checked against other testimonies), and it is due to its repressive activities that some important documentation, especially related to the material and financial aspects of oppositional activities, has survived because it was seized and never returned.

10 Zlatkes, Sowinski, and Frenkel, *Duplicator Underground*.

11 <http://dlibra.karta.org.pl/dlibra/collectiondescription?dirids=714>. Accessed January 19, 2018.

12 http://repozytorium.encysol.pl/wiki/Strona_g%C5%82%C3%B3wna. Accessed January 19, 2018.

13 <http://www.osaarchivum.org/digital-repository>. Accessed January 19, 2018.

In this vein, the aim of present section is to provide background information about the holdings of the Polish unlicensed print culture at the Blinken Open Society Archives at the Central European University in Budapest, and its distinctiveness.

The Collector: Polish Underground Publications Unit

The collection constitutes the documentary legacy of the Polish Underground Publications Unit (PUPU) of the Research and Analysis Department of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). As explained in detail in the introduction to this Chapter, RFE/RL was, in addition to its broadcasting activities, one of the biggest hubs for intelligence-gathering on socialist Eastern Europe during the Cold War. RFE/RL's Research and Analysis Departments (RAD), divided into national units similarly to the broadcast desks, collected publications in official circulation and monitored the licensed radio, press and television, as well as conducted extensive interviews with travellers across the Iron Curtain through a network of field offices located at various transit points in Europe. These counter-surveillance activities, aimed at generating informed opinion on socialist bloc affairs as an alternative to the people's democracies' own media representation, materialized in the form of vast archives of monitoring transcripts, subject and personal files and card indexes, as well as analytical outputs: in particular, the regularly published background reports, and the occasional situation reports.

The decision made in December 1983 to set up the PUPU as an autonomous section which would focus exclusively on the Polish underground publications, similar to the Samizdat Archives established at Radio Liberty in 1968, reflected both the exponential growth and significance of the phenomenon in Poland. Even though the Polish independent publishing movement was a latecomer to the practice, it soon surpassed the Soviet samizdat scene, which had served as its main inspiration (both in terms of thematic and genre variety, and in terms of print runs—if not in terms of intellectual quality). Already before the emergence of Solidarity in August 1980, the circulation of unlicensed prints consisted of around 100 titles and 720 issues, among them *Robotnik* printed in twenty thousand copies on average. Between August 1980 and the imposition of the Martial Law in Poland, the number of titles increased twenty-fold. In total, the Polish National Library records 6,513 monograph editions and 5,957 press titles produced before the abolition of censorship in Poland in April 1990.

The emergence of the mass culture of independent publishing in Poland substantially changed the balance of forces on the propaganda front of the Cold War. Needless to say, the Polish opposition found a priceless ally in Radio Free Europe, with the ability to amplify their message on an otherwise unconceivable scale. At the same time, the existence of underground press was crucial to the mission of the radios. In the early postwar period, RFE/RL's

claim to represent an undistorted voice of the captive societies from behind the Iron Curtain relied—apart from careful monitoring of the official press and the available institutional resources—on the leaked information provided by domestic informants, defectors, Western visitors as well as on the émigré public opinion. Due to the secrecy of its sources and controversies surrounding the émigré circles, the political representations of RFE on behalf of the Eastern Bloc countries was often contested, not only by the communist propaganda, but also by the supporters of détente in the West. From the late 1970s onwards, the harvesting of independent public opinion expressed openly and immersed in the domestic realities made it possible for RFE to make up for this deficit of credibility, positioning itself as the genuine transmitter rather than a creator of the independent voice of Eastern Europe.

Already before 1980, the flood of uncensored printed matter had been a challenge for the RFE/RL Research and Analysis Department (RAD) Polish Unit, which, endemically understaffed, had started to collect and process the vast amount of first-hand information in a rather haphazard way. After a while, Weronika Krzeczunowicz was employed on a freelance basis to organize the archives and edit the first reviews of independent press which started to appear in 1977 as Background Reports.¹⁴ Once PUPU was established in December 1983, the section employed 2–3 permanent staff: Witold Pronobis as research analyst and unit's head (1983–89), Anna Pomian as chief archivist and Weronika Krzeczunowicz as editor. Pronobis was recommended for the post by Zdzisław Najder, the RFE/RL Polish desk director between 1982 and 1987, due to both his professional education (as historian and archivist) and his contacts with the underground press movement as well as the émigré publishers. He started working for RAD in 1983, taking over the task of the consolidation of the unlicensed prints holdings from Krzeczunowicz. In addition, at different times the section employed a few temporary staff: Wanda Kościa, Halina Kościa, Jolanta Murias, and Irena Sweykowska.

With the aim of processing the most current information about independent political and cultural life in Poland, various acquisition channels were established. The network included: Solidarity's Coordination Office Abroad (Biuro Koordynacyjne NSZZ "Solidarność" Za Granicą) in Brussels, counting Najder among the Office's advisors; Komitet Koordynacyjny NSZZ "Solidarność" w Paryżu (Solidarity's Coordination Committee, Paris), with Jacek Krawczyk as main contact; Solidaritet Norge-Polen (the committee for support of Solidarity in Oslo, Norway), with Paweł Gajowniczek as main contact; Mirosław Chojecki, founder of the veteran Independent Publishing House NOWA, who was responsible for coordination the transports of press equipment to Poland and edited the monthly *Kontakt* from his exile in Paris;

¹⁴ Sources for used in reconstructing the provenance of the collection include: Zamorski, *Pod anteną Radia Wolna Europa*, 111–12; Najder, "RWE 1982–1987. Zapiski dyrektora," 219–20; Pomian, *Polish Samizdat Holdings*; Pronobis, personal page.

Piotr Jegliński—Paris representative of the underground journal *Spotkania*; as well as representatives of the *Solidarność Walcząca* organization such as Jerzy Jankowski (Norway) and Andrzej Wirga (Germany).

By February 12, 1986 the unit's archival holdings included: 304 titles of underground periodicals published prior to Martial Law (December 13, 1981); 708 titles of underground periodicals published after Martial Law; 482 titles of underground monographs; 137 hanging folders of subject files and related publications issued in the West; 53 files of documents, 180 underground postage stamps and 158 items of other ephemera. By March 6, 1989 the holdings grew significantly to include: 1166 titles of underground periodicals published after Martial Law; 993 titles of underground monographs; 265 hanging folders of subject files and 52 hanging folders of related publications issued in the West; 67 files of documents. After 1989, the documentary legacy of the unit became a part of the East European Archives at the Information Resource Department of the RFE/RL Research Institute headed by a former staff of the unit, Anna Pomian-Srzednicka.

The Adjacent Source Material

In addition to Polish unlicensed periodicals and monograph holdings and their catalogues, the PUPU collection at the OSA contains a number of series which build on these materials in order to generate contextual information of broader relevance. That is particularly the case of the section's own analytical publications based on unlicensed printed matter.¹⁵ Partly as a continuation of the activities within the RAD Polish Unit from before 1983, the section issued three types of periodical publications for the use of the Polish and other broadcasting sections:

– *Polish Independent Press Summary*: published biweekly from September 1987 to July 1990 in Polish; contains copies of major articles, lists of contents from journals, and title pages of new books.

– *Polish Underground Extracts*: published monthly from June 1984 to August 1986 (until April 1985 known as Polish Samizdat Extracts) in English; contains translations of mainly press materials.

– *Polish Independent Press Review*: continuation of PUE in a situation report format, published from September 1986 to November 1989 in English; contains topical reviews of the contents of Polish unlicensed journals.

In addition, the PUPU staff contributed to RAD Polish Unit Background Reports and Situation Reports on irregular basis.

15 HU OSA 300-55-9 Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Polish Underground Publications Unit: RFE Publications Based on Polish Underground Press, accessible online at <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:e0410998-f423-4efe-946b-751433c43594> Accessed January 17, 2018.

Other series arrange the materials into subject files composed mostly of unlicensed press clippings. By type, the collection contains four different sets of topical subject files,¹⁶ biographical files on dissidents¹⁷ and institutional files on independent political parties and groups.¹⁸ By origin, we can distinguish the series that were originally part of the PUPU archive, and the series that most probably belonged to specific RFE analysts working on unlicensed materials and whose composition reflects their specific research interests.¹⁹ Finally, the collection of unlicensed periodicals and monographs comes accompanied with a collection of émigré serials (produced mostly by the post-Martial Law political exile)²⁰ and a very rich collection of independent ephemera, including stamps, envelopes, postmarks and postcards, fake banknotes, calendars, photos, leaflets and posters.²¹

In terms of thematic scope, the source collection itself provides a rather comprehensive sample of the diversity of Polish underground print culture: ranging from political and literary samizdat through bulletins of Solidarity members and sympathizers; from workers and professionals (esp. in Education and Health) to Catholic community newsletters. The collection contains publications by green, pacifist, military *refusenik* and other new social movements, but otherwise does not do full justice to the alternative culture of the late 1980s, which in many ways emerged out of the exhaustion of the dissident veteran underground. The culture outside the dissident and Solidarity mainstream is even less present in the press clippings and the samizdat-based publications of the PUPU Unit, most likely due to the policy decisions of the RFE to remain loyal to the oppositional center, as well as due to generational differences. The Polish Section was dominated by the 1968 and 1980 migrants, who were rather distant from the cultural patterns of protest characteristic for the youth culture of the late 1980s, with its promotion of alternative lifestyles, punk attitude, and its symmetric estrangement from the main political fault lines.

16 HU OSA 300-55-10 Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Polish Underground Publications Unit: Subject Files.

17 HU OSA 300-55-12 Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Polish Underground Publications Unit: Biographical Files on Dissidents; HU OSA 300-55-13 Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Polish Underground Publications Unit: Democratic Opposition Related Files; HU OSA 300-55-14 Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Polish Underground Publications Unit: Democratic Opposition Related Files on Legal Matters.

18 HU OSA 300-55-11 Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Polish Underground Publications Unit: Polish Independent Parties

19 HU OSA 300-55-14 Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Polish Underground Publications Unit: Democratic Opposition Related Files on Legal Matters

20 HU OSA 300-55-8 Emigré Serials

21 HU OSA 300-55-7 Printed Ephemera; accessible online. Accessed January 17, 2018. <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:554e8ec5-a131-4087-9b5d-4551cc82b291>.

When to Start at OSA?

For work towards a monograph on a given individual, group, journal or political current of the Polish dissident lifeworld, KARTA or IPN (in tandem, much better still) are more likely to contain a comprehensive set of materials. When it comes to comparative samizdat or dissident studies, OSA is one of the best places to carry out such research, although FSO and Hoover might offer comparable possibilities. The subject files are particular sources that are exclusively available at OSA and cannot be found elsewhere. These files cover an extensive range of topics from clippings related to various countries, through to labor relations and economic matters, women, youth, environment, Central and Eastern Europe (as a theme of independent political discourse), Yalta, culture and performative arts, religious and ethnic minorities, prison systems, and so forth. While the press clippings do not always present a comprehensive bibliography of the given topic, they can be considered a very useful first filter which will make the researcher's life much easier. Given that many of the subject files have their equivalents in the subject files of the RAD Polish Unit²² (whose more comprehensive index evidently guided the arrangement of the archives of the PUPU unit), containing mostly licensed material, OSA presents a unique possibility to study certain topics from a perspective that eludes the conceptual polarity of civil society versus the State. Finally, it is important to highlight that the PUPU publications, especially the translations of Polish samizdat press articles, as well as the reviews which contain detailed profiles of many of the most important journals and publishers, are probably the best companion to an English-speaking scholar taking their first steps in the field.

Researching Czechoslovak Samizdat at the Libri Prohibiti

There are two important Prague-based archival collections specializing in samizdat and exilic publications: the Czechoslovak Documentation Center (*Československé dokumentační středisko, ČSDS*),²³ founded in West Germany in 1984, and the library Libri Prohibiti, established in Prague in 1990. This

22 HU OSA 300-50-1 Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Polish Unit: Old Code Subject Files.

23 The Czechoslovak Documentation Center was founded in 1986 by a group of exilic writers, led by the poet Jan Vladislav and the historian Vilém Prečan. Its aim was to collect and document Czechoslovak post-1948 realm of independent writing. The Center was also instrumental in enabling publication of the original Czech works in exile, and in shipping and distributing such publications in Czechoslovakia. Since 1986, the collection was housed in the castle belonging to Karel Schwarzenberg in Scheinfeld. The entire collection was moved to the Czech Republic in 2000, and it was donated to the Czech National Museum in 2003. See COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Samizdat Collection of Czechoslovak Documentation Centre", by Jitka Hanáková, 2018. Accessed: October 08, 2018.

study focuses on Libri Prohibiti, a unique institution that contains an extensive collection of Czech samizdat²⁴ and exilic materials,²⁵ but also smaller Slovak, Polish,²⁶ Russian and Ukrainian collections.²⁷

Libri Prohibiti opened in October 1990, less than a year after the events of November 1989 that led to the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia. Jiří Gruntorád, a Charter 77 signatory who published a samizdat series during the so-called “normalization,” post-1968 period in Czechoslovakia, founded the library. Gruntorád, who spent four years in prison from 1980 until 1984, has been its director since its inception. Gruntorád recalls how he conceived the idea of creating a samizdat library in the summer of 1990, after several boxes of samizdat books that had been confiscated by the secret police were returned to him: “These are books-non-books, onion-skin papers, a strange message from recent times.”²⁸ In 1990, the library was comprised of about 2,000 items that had been collected by Gruntorád during the 1970s and 1980s. The archival copies of his own samizdat series, *Edice Popelnice*, which Gruntorád started in 1978, formed the bedrock of the collection.

Libri Prohibiti includes books, magazines, and various other documents related to the opposition in Czechoslovakia and other communist countries of the Soviet bloc. It is currently located in a former apartment in Senovážné square, in Prague 1. As an institution conceived as a place documenting the “strange message from recent times,” the library also organizes exhibitions and various literary and other events thematically related to samizdat and exile, and unofficial Czechoslovak culture in general. In 2016, a group of distinguished Czech personalities of 1970s and 1980s samizdat—and with a connection to the library—declared October 12 to be the International Day of Samizdat. The collection focuses on Czech and Slovak samizdat during communism from 1948 until 1989 (books and magazines), exilic publications (including wartime exile from 1939–1945), audiovisual records, and numerous documents related to Charter 77; it houses for example an extensive collection

24 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Czech Samizdat Collection at Libri Prohibiti”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: October 08, 2018.

25 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Czech Exile Collection at Libri Prohibiti”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: October 08, 2018.

26 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Polish Underground Library at Libri Prohibiti”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: October 08, 2018.

27 In addition to various bibliographical resources, e.g. *Česká samizdatová periodika 1968-1989* by Johanna Posset (Brno, 1993) a current project by The Institute for Czech Literature of the Academy of Sciences in Prague and Brno works on the *Encyclopedia of Czech Literary Samizdat 1948–1989* (Encyklopedie českého literárního samizdatu 1948–1989), the first attempt at a comprehensive summary with a proposed date of publication of 2019. See COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Foreign Samizdat Collection at Libri Prohibiti”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: October 08, 2018; COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Foreign Exile Collection at Libri Prohibiti”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: October 08, 2018.

28 “Jsou to knihy-neknihy, průklepové papíry, zvláštní poselství z času nedávno minulých”; *Moderní Dějiny*, “Samizdat.”

of documents of the Committee for the Unjustly Persecuted (VONS). The Polish collection contains oppositional materials from 1970 to 1989.

Terms such as parallel, second, unofficial, non-conformist and underground culture have been used in Czechoslovakia to describe the kind of material contained in Libri Prohibiti. The phrase “banned books” in the library’s name evokes parallels between censorship in the communist era and similar practices in other historical periods or geographical locations. The Russian word “samizdat” entered Czech parlance in the 1970s.²⁹ It was later also used retrospectively for unofficial publishing reaching back to the 1950s. Among the oldest samizdat materials held in Libri Prohibiti are slim volumes from Edice Půlnoc (Midnight editions), which was founded by the poets Egon Bondy and Ivo Vodseďálek circa 1950/1951, and primarily published their own work and the work of their friends. Libri Prohibiti owns many of the forty-nine titles from Midnight Editions, some of them in facsimile or photocopy form. Unlike later samizdat activities (1970s and 1980s), these early samizdat volumes were not distributed beyond the small circle of the authors. Bohumil Hrabal’s texts were published in Midnight Editions, as were those of Jana Krejcarová-Černá, an original poet and the daughter of Milena Jesenská.

Libri Prohibiti’s Czech and Slovak samizdat materials range from 1948 to 1989. The collection contains 17,000 books, both from book series as well as individual samizdat items that were published outside of any of the established series. The 1970s and 1980s saw an extensive production and distribution of samizdat books and magazines. These unofficial enterprises employed typists, and their books were bound, carefully edited, and sometimes illustrated. They had a much wider distribution than the 1950s samizdat. The critic and editor Jan Lopatka (1940–1993) described the “technical procedure” of the samizdat production of the journal *Kritický sborník* (Critical anthology) published from 1981 to 1988: “We made a certain number of proofread copies—at the beginning there were about thirty-five, the original print run grew very fast to about one hundred twenty to one hundred fifty copies—which we distributed. Some subscribers copied each in ten to twelve copies. Later we copied part of the print run by Xerox machines. Therefore, it is hard to estimate the overall print run. My estimate is six hundred copies. The publicity was fairly good abroad. We sent copies to Vilém Prečan, who copied them and distributed further into libraries.”³⁰

Libri Prohibiti contains publications of about one hundred “editions,” book series produced by a few collaborators. Edice Petlice (Padlock editions) was founded by the writer Ludvík Vaculík in 1972 in Prague among the circle of writers who were banned after 1968. Other authors included Ivan Klíma, Jiří Gruša, Milan Jungmann, Petr Kabeš, Klement Lukeš and Sergej Machonin. Edice Expedice (founded in 1975 by Václav Havel and Daňa Horáková), not

²⁹ The term was coined in 1950s in the Soviet Union. Machovec, “Types and Functions.”

³⁰ Lopatka, *Šifra lidské existence*, 467–70.

only copied books that had been previously published in Padlock Editions, but also published new titles, including translations, essays, and works of the literary underground. *Kvart*, published by the poet Jan Vladislav, was established in 1974 and focused on poetry, criticism, and translation. Other important samizdat editions included *Česká expedice* (Czech expedition), *Kde domov můj* (Where is my home), and *Popelnice* (Trash bin). Also noteworthy is the Jewish samizdat Alef Editions, which published translations of Martin Buber and I. B. Singer.

The periodicals collection of *Libri Prohibiti* contains 420 titles, including the already mentioned *Kritický sborník*, *Křesťanské obzory* (Christian horizons), *O divadle* (On theater), *Paraf* (acronym for PARalelní Akta Filosofie), *Střední Evropa* (Central Europe), the underground culture journal *Vokno* (Window), and the samizdat newspaper *Lidové noviny* (1987–89). The very titles demonstrate the cultural, political, and religious diversity of Czech samizdat culture. *Libri prohibiti* provides an online bibliography of samizdat and exilic periodicals, and many of the periodicals are digitized. An important resource for historians of dissent is the periodical *The Information about Charter 77* (Informace o Chartě 77, Infoch), documenting the activities of the most important Czechoslovak human rights movement. Some of the journals have a distinct artistic quality: *Revolver Revue* and *Sado Maso*, which were published in the 1980s by the so-called “second generation of the underground,”³¹ are richly illustrated with original artwork and photographs. Attention to book design is characteristic also of book series such as *Kvart* and *Expedition Editions*.

The audiovisual collection³² includes records of non-conformist music as well as of lectures from underground apartment seminars, and numerous video documents. The archival documents include petitions, flyers, letters, and various other papers, including unpublished manuscripts.

The rich collection of exilic materials alongside home-based samizdat production allows for the study of networks of unofficial culture in and beyond Czechoslovakia. Exilic publications include books as well as periodicals. Among the most important exilic publishers were Arkýř (Munich), Index (Paris), or 68 Publishers led by Zdena Salivarová and Josef Škvorecký in Toronto. *Libri Prohibiti* also contains exilic materials from the World War II, and documents of resistance during the World War I. Truly unique is the extensive collection of exilic periodicals from the late 1940s until the present day (1,300 titles). Some of the journal series are complete, e.g. *Archa*, *Svědectví*, *Listy*, *Studie*, *Proměny*, *150 000 slov*, *Obrysy*, *Západ*, *Reportér*, *Rozmluvy*, *Hlas domova*, *Text*, *Kanadské listy*, *Sklizeň*, *Okno*, *Modrá revue*, *Hovory s pisateli*, *Perspektivy*, *Bohemia*, *Skutečnost*, and *České slovo*.

31 Topol, “Contribution to a Closer Understanding,” 71.

32 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Audiovisual Section at *Libri Prohibiti*”, by Michaela Kůželová, 2017. Accessed: October 08, 2018. (forthcoming)

Samizdat materials related to Franz Kafka may offer a surprising example to illustrate the variety in forms of Czech samizdat. Kafka, who died in 1924, long before the communist takeover and the inception of Czech samizdat, is not a typical samizdat author. Still, these materials document the discontinuous afterlife of Kafka's works in the context of post-1948 censorship. Kafka was of paramount importance to Czech literature, culture, and especially the various manifestations of criticism of the communist system and the expression of dissidence. Kafka's texts were not officially published for long periods of time between 1948 and 1989. *Libri Prohibiti* contains typescript copies of Kafka's various works (often based on formerly officially published works), as well as essays about the author and literary works inspired by him, both in the original Czech and translation (altogether there are several dozen items). Among the earliest items is a c. 1959 essay by the surrealist poet Zbyněk Havlíček.³³ Other early items are typescript copies of Kafka's formerly published works from the early 1960s, such as *The Castle* and various short stories. In the early 1960s, the art critic, poet, and leader of Czech underground Ivan Martin Jirous copied several unavailable texts for his friends, using either older editions of the respective works, or translations and new works that had existed only as manuscripts (according to *Libri Prohibiti*, Jirous copied twenty-two titles in total). The bibliographical record for his typescript of *The Castle* informs us that Jirous is its author but his name does not appear on the typescript, nor does the information about the translator, or the year in which the typed copy was made.

Jirous copied the 1935 translation of *The Castle* using green carbon copy paper. The work took about six months.³⁴ The pages are not bound or numbered; the loose sheets of onion-skin paper are inserted between two cardboard sheets, and held together by rubber bands. On the right margin, some lines extend to the end of the page, and occasionally a letter is cut off. Jirous produced ten copies, which exceeded his more usual number of eight copies during one typing. The missing letters suggest that it was easy to misalign such a thick bulk of paper. The title of the novel and Kafka's name are written by hand, with a pencil, along with a note stating that the copy was made in 1962 at Brancourov (a slightly altered name of an existing place).

Kafka's works began to be officially published only a few years after Jirous had made his copies, but after 1968 his works were not published again for some time. Another batch of Kafka-related material in the early 1980s attests to the continued interest in the writer. The May 1983 issue of the samizdat journal *Obsah* (Contents), published since the late 1970s, included essays related to Kafka by Czech authors Petr Kabeš, Karel Pecka, Iva Kotrlá and Ivan Klíma, and a translation of an essay by Philip Roth. Kabeš's essay, which recounts his police interrogation on the topic of Kafka, suggests that the jour-

³³ Havlíček, *Psychopathologie v díle Franze Kafky*.

³⁴ Jirous, Interview.

nal's editors – as well as the communist secret police – anticipated an increased interest in the writer by foreign visitors in 1983, because of it being the centenary of Kafka's birth. For obvious reasons, the copy of the journal includes neither information about the date of publication, nor the editors.

These few examples illustrate the intricacies of cataloguing and researching samizdat materials. The items described above contain very little bibliographical information—for obvious reasons concerning the protection of people involved in the production of samizdat. These issues also raise fundamental questions about the nature of samizdat. Drawing on Soviet-era samizdat, Ann Komaromi elaborated on the idea of the “instability of the samizdat text,” that results from the mistakes made in subsequent copies and by textual interventions by translators and editors, comparing this production to the oral tradition and calling samizdat an extra-Gutenberg phenomenon.³⁵ The Czech case of samizdat, exhaustively documented in Libri Prohibiti's collections, show the diversity of samizdat materials, and instructs us that different types of samizdat adhered to different textual standards: they range from spontaneous copies made for one's own use or for a small circle of friends (whether from the 1950s or 1980s) to more professional and rigorous planning, professional editing and wider distribution in the 1970s and 1980s exemplified by the journal *Kritický sborník*.

Archival Resources for the Study of Samizdat in the GDR

The study of samizdat in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) has largely focused on the so-called “Prenzlauer Berg Scene.” Named after a neighborhood in East Berlin, the term refers to a broad network of interconnected individuals, performance and discussion groups, and unsanctioned publications also active in the GDR's other major cultural cities, Leipzig, Dresden, and beyond. Many uncensored periodicals included photographs, silk screen prints, drawings, paintings, and even collage along with poetry and prose texts, and thus multi-medial samizdat is one notable aspect of alternative culture of the GDR. The definitive treatise on the Prenzlauer Berg Scene in the English language was written by Karen Leeder in 1996.³⁶ Since its publication, a number of scholars have attempted to broaden the focus of East German samizdat studies: above all the idea that one particular generation of GDR authors desired and attempted to form alternative culture in the GDR (an idea buttressed by Wolfgang Emmerich's touchstone history of GDR literature) has been challenged.³⁷

Birgit Dahlke has also investigated alternative culture of the GDR, beginning with her 1997 monograph on female authors who published their work

35 Komaromi, “Samizdat as Extra-Gutenberg Phenomenon.”

36 Leeder, *Breaking Boundaries*.

37 Emmerich, *Kleine Literaturgeschichte der DDR*.

unofficially. Dahlke provided the sole contribution on alternative literature in a recent volume of note edited by Karen Leeder, which expatiated the current state of research on the GDR.³⁸ Despite the relatively limited engagement with unofficial literature of the GDR compared to better known authors such as Christa Wolf and Heiner Müller,³⁹ a plethora of available sources in Germany invite new research to broaden studies of both post-World War II Germany and alternative culture under Communism.⁴⁰ In the following section, three archives containing such material will be introduced.

The Robert Havemann Gesellschaft (RHG) is named after the GDR's most famous dissident, a chemist and Marxist philosopher active in the Communist resistance to the Nazis during World War II, who served as a representative in the GDR's parliament but was eventually stripped of his university post and expelled from the ruling party due to public criticism of the government. The archive is generally devoted to political opposition in the GDR and is comprised of a number of collections donated by organizations and individuals, including Havemann himself.⁴¹ The most notable collection donated to the RHG by an organization is that of the *Umwelt-Bibliothek*. *Umwelt*, meaning environment, suggests a particular focus of the political movements that coalesced in the GDR in the eighties, namely that devoted to protesting the widespread local pollution due to state-run heavy industry. Founded in 1986, the *Umwelt-Bibliothek* collected the unsanctioned newsletters, magazines, and fliers of local environmental, pacifist, and civil rights movements. In addition to producing its own samizdat newsletter, *Umweltblätter*, later renamed *telegraph*, the *Umwelt-Bibliothek* served as printing press to other newsletters and magazines, such as the popular *grenzfall*. Preparatory work with the bibliographic directory accessible online is highly recommended.⁴²

The RHG offers many sources that document the connections between political opposition in the GDR and other Soviet Bloc countries, especially neighboring Poland and Czechoslovakia.⁴³ For example, the personal papers of human rights activist Heiko Lietz include a typewritten copy of the famous "Two Thousand Words" manifesto to reform socialism by Ludvík Vaculík, translated into German, with an accompanying plea for support from German tourists in the wake of the Soviet invasion of 1968. The politi-

38 See Dahlke, *Papierboot*, and "Underground literature?" Dahlke has also published biographical literary analyses of Wolfgang Hilbig and Kerstin Hensel, authors also associated with East German dissent.

39 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Heiner Müller Archive / Transitroom", by Uwe Sonnenberg, 2017. Accessed: September 27, 2018.

40 See also Horakova "Learning from the Underground."

41 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Archive of the GDR-Opposition at the Robert Havemann Society", by Uwe Sonnenberg, 2018. Accessed: September 27, 2018.

42 https://www.havemann-gesellschaft.de/fileadmin/robert-havemann-gesellschaft/archiv/sammlungen/Samisdat/Samisdat_Findbuch.fb.pdf. Accessed September 28, 2018.

43 See Vilímek, *Solidarita napříč hranicemi*, and von Plato and Vilímek, *Opposition als Lebensform*.

cal samizdat collected by the RHG, such as the above-mentioned *grenzfall* frequently included reports of oppositional actions and their suppression across the Soviet Bloc.

The Archiv unterdrückter Literatur der DDR (Archive of Repressed Literature of the GDR, henceforth AUL)⁴⁴ is a collection of sources for the study of opposition including and beyond the Prenzlauer Berg networks. Curated by Ines Geipel and Joachim Walther, the AUL hoped to respond to the expectation that once the repressive regime of the GDR's government fell and the files of the East German Secret Police (known as the Stasi) were open to its victims and scholars, a flood of repressed literature would reach the public. Geipel and Walther present the fruits of their labor in a new literary history of East Germany, centered on a conscious effort to address oppositional culture from the immediate post-World War II aftermath of Soviet occupation to the fall of the GDR regime.⁴⁵ This literary history utilizes the files of the Secret Police, and indeed the archive often includes personal copies of secret police files acquired by the authors themselves. Walther previously worked in the Stasi archives as an independent scholar with unparalleled range of access, and is known in the field for his handbook to decoding the Stasi files from the cultural division, of which more below.⁴⁶ As an initial contribution to primary sources available to the public, Geipel and Walther have edited a series entitled "Die Verschwiegene Bibliothek" (The silenced library), publishing ten books of poetry, diaristic, essayistic or fictional prose from the archive.

As Geipel and Walther attempted to prove, and as Dahlke also mentions in her overview of unofficial literature, although the beginnings of samizdat culture are often traced to the Prenzlauer Berg scene of the early eighties, earlier efforts at repressed cultural collaboration have now been documented. For example, in the early seventies, a full decade before most studies of underground culture in East German began, Ulrich Plenzdorf, Klaus Schlesinger, and Martin Stade led a project to create an anthology that would be collectively edited by the participants, thus circumventing the usual censorship exercised by publishing houses and the regime's central publishing bureau. The editors and authors expected to officially publish the anthology with one of the publishing houses recognized by the East German state, despite refusing the usual input from the said institutions. Due to the intervention of the Secret Police, the anthology was not published until 1995, at which point it included the original contributions of eighteen short texts that had been collected by the editors from 1974 to 1975, as well as the Stasi records describing how and why the volume was kept from publication.⁴⁷

44 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Archives of Suppressed Literature in the GDR", by Uwe Sonnenberg, 2017. Accessed: September 27, 2018.

45 Geipel and Walther, *Gesperrte Ablage*.

46 Walter, *Sicherungsbereich Literatur*.

47 Plenzdorf, Schlesinger, and Stade, *Berliner Geschichten*.

One contributor to this anthology project was Heidemarie Härtl, an author who became active in later Prenzlauer Berg scene publications as the editor of *Anschlag*, *Zweite Person* and the Bergen samizdat publishing series. Härtl also contributed her writing to *glasnost*, *Raster*, *Verwendung*, and *stechapfel*, the last of which continued publication into the nineties. Härtl's copies of the aforementioned samizdat publications from the eighties are available in AUL, as well as a number of manuscripts of poetry, short stories, and plays.⁴⁸ Härtl represents an interesting figure due to her connections to better known repressed authors of the GDR such as her husband, Gert Neumann and Wolfgang Hilbig. Härtl also had connections to the state in the form of employment at a school and publishing press for the blind and her one and only official publication in the GDR, which Stasi files reveal was part of an elaborate plot to end her close collaboration with her husband.⁴⁹

Paradoxically, given the lack of detailed catalogs from individuals repressed by the state, the Stasi archive⁵⁰ has emerged as a major source for the study of samizdat and oppositional culture in the GDR generally.⁵¹ Thus, the very governmental service devoted to annihilating oppositional forces within the GDR is now used to prove the hitherto underestimated extent of said forces. A Stasi file contains meticulously dated reports on the unsanctioned activities of individuals with extensive efforts to document connections with other individuals, places of meetings, and of course the heretofore secret actions taken by the government to impede this perceived opposition. It becomes abundantly clear when reading Stasi files that, due to their rigid use of hyperbolic vocabulary to describe the "crimes" under investigation, the files are subjective to the point of exaggeration. For this reason, the files are best used to present the government's views of publications and activities that have been corroborated by other sources.⁵²

48 A more complete collection of samizdat literary periodicals is held by the German National Literature Archive in Marbach. The Sächsische Landesbibliothek in Dresden also began collecting samizdat in the 1980s and has digitized their holdings under: <http://www.deutschefotothek.de/cms/kuenstlerzeitschriften-ddr.xml>. Accessed: September 27, 2018.

49 See Geipel, *Zensiert, verschwiegen, vergessen*; Härtl, *Ach, ich zog den blauen Anzug an*, and Härtl, *Puppe im Sommer*.

50 COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Stasi records", by Uwe Sonnenberg, 2018. Accessed: September 27, 2018.

51 Officially known as die Behörde des Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdiensts der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik or BStU (Federal Commission for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic).

52 The broader issue of banned literature represents a blind spot in grasping what was actually available in the GDR. Unfortunately, anecdotal statements describing the smuggling of books from West Germany, or digging copies of the officially banned works by Nietzsche, Freud, Karl May, or even Karl Marx from dusty shops or grandmothers' bookcases currently suffice in the place of systematic study. Collections of interviews are the best source for these topics, such as those found in Lokatis and Sonntag's *Heimliche Leser der DDR*, or von Plato and *Opposition als Lebensform*.

The archive that holds the Stasi files is a fascinating institution deserving of study in its own right. Generally speaking, scholars have the right to access the files of those deceased individuals deemed to be people of public office, and this classification extends to notable authors. In all cases where the individual under consideration is alive, their express permission is required to view their files. It is strongly recommended to register with the archive and apply to view files several months before intended arrival.

In the immediate aftermath of the opening of the secret police files, some individuals decided to publish their own files. It is worth looking through publically available Stasi files to begin to acquaint oneself with the kind of information that may be gleaned. One of the earliest such publications was that of Reiner Kunze in 1990.⁵³ Born in 1933, Kunze studied under Ernst Bloch and Hans Mayer before withdrawing from the Karl-Marx-University in Leipzig in 1959 due to accusations of counter-revolutionary activity. In the early 1960s, Kunze lived in Czechoslovakia where he formed attachments to artists and poets. In 1976, Kunze was expelled from the East German Writers' Union, largely on the basis of his collection of short stories that were critical of GDR society and the invasion of Prague in 1968, entitled *Die wunderbare Jahre* (trans. *The wonderful years*, 1977). Reiner Kunze is often identified as a dissident, and the publication of highlights of his 3,000-page files are worth inspection.

The Dutch Connection: The Alexander Herzen Foundation and the Smuggling of Tamizdat in the Cold War

Amsterdam hosts one of the greatest institutes and archives to study the social history of Europe's twentieth century and in particular the "global history of labor, workers, and labor relations:" the *International Institute of Social History (IISH)* which was established in 1935.⁵⁴ Today, the most consulted holdings at the IISH archives are (among many others) the collections of Amnesty International, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Greenpeace International, and the Socialist League; however, the archives are also relevant for researchers with an interest in the transnational history of East European dissidence. In 2004 the IISH received the archive of the Dutch *Alexander Herzen Foundation (AHF)*⁵⁵ from Elisabeth Fisher-Spanjer, the literary agent of the AHF, and Jozien Driessen-van het Reve, the daughter of Karel van het Reve, one of the founders of the AHF. The IISH also obtained the private collections of Jan Willem Bezemer, professor of Russian history at the University of Amsterdam

53 Kunze, *Deckname "Lyrik."*

54 "Institute of Social History." For a detailed treatment of this series of decision, see Johnson and Parta, *Cold War Broadcasting*.

55 The collection can be found here: "Archief Alexander Herzen Foundation" Accessed October 08, 2018. <http://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH02660>.

and as well a founder of the AHF, and of Elisabeth Fisher-Spanjer. What was the AHF and why are its archives worth researching?

Back in May 1969, Karel van het Reve, a professor of Slavic Literature at the University of Leiden, founded the AHF in Amsterdam, together with Jan Willem Bezemer, a Dutch historian, and Peter Reddaway, a lecturer at the London School of Economics (LSE).⁵⁶ Their goal was to publish uncensored literature from the Soviet Union which could not be officially published back home, and which had often been circulating in *samizdat* in the West. Inspired by Alexander Herzen's *Free Russian Press*, established in London in 1853 to publish revolutionary Russian literature that was prohibited inside Russia, the AHF published uncensored works of Russian authors such as Andrei Amalrik, Andrei Sakharov and Pavel Litvinov. Karel van het Reve expressed his conviction about the value of cultural exchanges in an article in 1973. "Cultural exchange," he stated, "is something which [...] should be applauded, as long as such exchange takes place in a situation of maximum freedom and with as little governmental intervention as is possible."⁵⁷ With his press he aimed to increase the cultural exchange between the Soviet Union and the West. For that end, the AHF acted not in isolation, but it relied on a complex system of personal and professional contacts both in the West and inside the Soviet Union. By making Max Hayward (who ran the New York-based Russian exile *Khronika Press*) and Leopold Labedz (the editor of the influential quarterly *Survey: A Journal of East and West Studies* in London) trustees of the foundation, the AHF expressed its aim to set up an international network that would promote Russia's uncensored writers. Gleb Struve at the University of California in Berkeley, Michael Scammell of *Index on Censorship*, Leonard Shapiro who also taught at the London School of Economics and the translator Manya Harari at Collins and Harvill Press in London⁵⁸ were key figures in this transnational undertaking. The communicative network between those institutions and individuals involved in the circulation and publication of the AHF's Russian books manifested itself in letters, joint projects and personal visits.

When it came to the publication of uncensored literature from inside the Soviet Union in Amsterdam, the AHF first scheduled the publication of Russian editions to establish copyright. It then negotiated editions in other languages, which depended on the specific expression of interest of Western publishers.⁵⁹ The Russian works were meant to be either smuggled back into the USSR or to circulate among Russian émigrés and Russianists. Van het Reve recalled in 1970 how Russian *samizdat* literature was actually circulating

56 For secondary literature on the AHF, see Reddaway, "One of the CIA's most zealous agents," 138. See also the subchapter on the AHF in my own monograph: Kind-Kovács. *Written Here, Published There*.

57 van het Reve, "The Free Exchange of Ideas and Information."

58 Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations*, 16.

59 Parry, "Samizdat is Russia's Underground Press," 249.

among interested readers inside the Soviet Union and how it reached the West. The handovers happened during “meetings in restaurants, parks, cinemas, underground stations or on street-corners,” where “briefcases” were “exchanged” and “microfilms hidden in tubes of toothpaste, double-bottomed suitcases.”⁶⁰ In the Western sphere, Sovietologists were especially keen on receiving unmitigated information from inside the Soviet Union. Despite major obstacles in getting in touch with authors and gaining access to critical pieces of writing, the Russian-born academic Albert Parry observed in March 1970 that “comprehensive channels of information” did “thrive between samizdat and its Western sympathizers.”⁶¹ In various ways the Russian-language manuscripts found their way to the headquarters of the AHF in the “house on the canal at Amstel 268” where “anything of literary or political value, without regard to political or religious philosophy” would be published.⁶²

The archives of the AHF reveal the contacts between the AHF and various literary organizations in Western Europe. Secrecy shaped the literary contacts and the communication between the AHF, its literary partners, and the literary scene inside the Soviet Union. Some confidential letters from the 1970s give us an insight into the personal contacts between the AHF and the International Literary Association (ILA) in Rome. The letters reveal that the AHF, apart from publishing underground literature that was smuggled out of the Soviet Union, also distributed Western books among students in Moscow. A letter by Carol Boren, dated September 17, 1973 to Jozina van het Reve Israel, van het Reve’s wife, discloses that the ILA provided the books that were to be distributed in “M.,” meaning in Moscow. While asking Jozina for information about “the method of distribution and the recipients,” Boren clarifies that “details of this nature are extremely confidential” and that such information should not be sent to her by direct mail. Instead she asked for a simple confirmation of the books’ receipt in Moscow, and wished to later discuss it with her “privately.”⁶³ Three years prior to this event, in 1970, Lorraine Kaufmann inquired with Jozina if the books she had sent to the AHF were still on Reve’s bookshelves or if they had been distributed in Russia; if they reached Russia, she wished to know to whom the books were given.⁶⁴ In 1970, as another of her letters to Jozina uncovers, the ILA had even dared to send book packages immediately to a Russian writer “without mentioning his [the recipient’s]

60 van het Reve, “Samizdat,” 21.

61 Parry, “Samizdat is Russia’s Underground Press,” 249.

62 Schenker, “A Dutch Outlet for Banned Soviet Writers.”

63 Letter, Carol Boren to Jozina van het Reve Israel, Rome, September 17, 1973. Archief Alexander Herzen Foundation, Inv. Nr. 28. Archive of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

64 Letter, Lorraine Kaufman to Jozina van het Reve Israel, Rome, October 27, 1970. Archief Alexander Herzen Foundation, Inv. Nr. 28. Archive of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

name on the envelope.” Kaufmann acknowledged that it would be pure “luck “if the censors don’t stop the package,” which “after all is pretty ‘hot.’”⁶⁵

While the AHF published the Russian works, the ILA circulated some of the printed books in the West. In a letter to the Russian writer and human rights activist Pavel Litvinov, Reddaway excused himself not only for having used the post box number on the postal address, but also for having handed it over to somebody even if he was trustworthy. He acknowledged that only afterwards he had received Litvinov’s request “not to give it to anyone.” Being terribly sorry for having put Litvinov’s safety at risk, he suggested to him to “look carefully at the envelopes of letters” he would receive in the future.⁶⁶ Such details were important not to risk the interrogation or imprisonment of the books’ recipients. Yet, at the bottom of some of the communication between Karel van het Reve in Holland and Gleb Struve in the US, one finds lists of addresses of recipients in Russia that were to be used to send books directly to Russia.

Beyond the dangers involved with the direct circulation of books, ‘publishing-over-there’ in the West, namely in *tamizdat*, equally endangered the lives of Russian authors. In a letter from 1968, Struve worried if “the publication of our collection” could “be used as a pretext for re-arresting him” [an author that ran under the pseudonym of ‘Grandison’].⁶⁷ Here the Western activities tangibly affected lives inside Russia. Similarly, also the Russian authorities tried to undermine the uncensored literary contacts between East and West. Some years before the AHF was set up, Karel van het Reve had been in touch with international scholars with whom he corresponded about the publication of uncensored Russian writers in the West. Struve addressed in a letter the—at times—uncertain and therefore highly problematic provenance of some books from Russia: “There is, of course, just now a great deal of suspicion attaching to mss. [manuscripts] that are smuggled out of the Soviet Union and a belief that some of them may be deliberately foisted upon Western publishers by the KGB.”⁶⁸ Yet, in order to prevent such insecurity, the AHF invested great effort into setting up secure distribution channels.

The transnational circulation of Russian books depended on a network of individuals, translators, publishers and publishing houses. To promote and place the AHF’s books among Western publishing houses, newspapers, and other media, and to negotiate editions in other languages, Mrs. Elisabeth Fish-

65 Letter, Lorraine Kaufman to Jozina van het Reve Israel, November 10, 1970. Archief Alexander Herzen Foundation, Inv. Nr. 28. Archive of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

66 Letter, Karel van het Reve to Pavel Litvinov, August 17, 1974. p.1–3, p.1. Archief Alexander Herzen Foundation, Box 1–8, Archive of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. DSC_8733.

67 Letter, Gleb Struve to Karel van het Reve, August 27, 1968. Archief Alexander Herzen Foundation, Inv. Nr. 32. Archive of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

68 Letter, Gleb Struve to Karel van het Reve, October 10, 1968, p.1-p.2, p.2.

er-Spanjer worked as the literary agent of the AHF. Van het Reve on the other hand was the key figure in Amsterdam. Struve called him his personal “intermediary,” but he took care not to mention his name to anyone in connection with the publication of certain works, such as Pavel Litvinov’s collection of documents *The Trial of the Four. A collection of Materials on the Case of Galanskov, Ginzburg, Dobrovolsky & Lashkova*, which appeared in 1972.⁶⁹ Struve, who arranged for the Russian edition of Pavel Litvinov’s collection of documents, hoped that van het Reve would equally like to obtain some copies and would possibly be able to “send some to Russia.”⁷⁰ Struve was aware that a “certain amount of ‘conspiratorial caution is sometimes desirable and even imperative in these matters,” which is why he neither mentioned van het Reve’s name to Max Hayward nor to Boris Filippov.⁷¹ To improve the secrecy of the communication, Struve addressed van het Reve in some letters even as “Karel Iosifovich” or “Karel Gerardovič,” in order to secure their communication. Also, the books’ material outlook was altered to distract the attention of the postal censors. Struve recalls an incident where an author’s name was taken off from the cover, yet where “no changes whatever have been made in the text”: “The idea of the cover with a different title was Filippov’s, the objective being to make the ‘smuggling’ of the book easier by not attracting immediate attention to Litvinov’s name.”⁷²

As authors inside the Soviet Union often found themselves in a precarious financial situation due to not being officially published, the AHF cared much about paying the Russian authors the royalties to which they were entitled. This was, however, not always an easy undertaking, as some authors were in prison and others difficult to reach inside the Soviet Union. Royalties would be at times physically carried to Russia and personally delivered to its recipients or intermediaries. One intermediary, simply addressed as “Henk” in one letter, no surname indicated, who was going to travel to Moscow in the fall of 1971, was instructed in a letter by Peter Reddaway to “not declare the rubles (sic!) at the Soviet border,” but instead “carry them loose in a pocket (not in your wallet).”⁷³ The royalties should then not be given to the author himself but to other intermediaries that would deliver the money to the actual beneficiary. Furthermore, he was asked to collect a long list of samizdat documents in Russia that were to be printed by the AHF, including certain issues of the Russian samizdat journals *Chronicle of Current Events*, *Veche* and *Social Problem* and letters of local human rights initiatives. Instead of smuggling the

69 Letter, Gleb Struve to Karel van het Reve, September 6 1968. Archief Alexander Herzen Foundation, Inv. Nr. 32. Archive of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

70 Letter, Gleb Struve to Karel van het Reve, September 6 1968, p.1-p.2, p.1.

71 Letter, Gleb Struve to Karel van het Reve, February 27, 1969. Archief Alexander Herzen Foundation, Inv. Nr. 32. Archive of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

72 Letter, Gleb Struve to Karel van het Reve, October 10, 1968.

73 Letter, Peter Reddaway to Henk, October 2 1971. Archief Alexander Herzen Foundation, Inv. Nr. 1-8. Archive of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

documents out by himself, Reddaway suggested that the courier should either try to use the “diplomatic bag” or to go to the American embassy and “leave the documents in an envelope addressed to Mr. Jim Yuenger, The Chicago Tribune, c/o American Embassy.” To prove his integrity, he should insert a note that he was a friend of Reddaway. Code words and even entire sentences were prepared to secure that the literary works would not fall into the wrong hands. The courier was further instructed to obviously not mention Reddaway’s name to any Soviet official in Moscow, be it in private conversations or even over the phone. While in Moscow he should systematically collect information on how authors expected their royalties to be paid, either in the form of presents or money. When it came to the delivery of royalties to political prisoners, the AHF mentioned its close cooperation with Amnesty International, which played an important role in looking after the families of prisoners.⁷⁴ Royalties could become a vital means for securing the mere survival of the prisoners’ families and of those they left behind.

In contrast to other Western publishers that often cared little about the implications of a Western publication for the Russian authors, this collection shows how the AHF pursued a responsible publishing strategy. It not only published the works in their original language and took an active stance against “corrupt editions and bad translations,”⁷⁵ it also cared about its authors and the possible implications of certain publications on their authors’ lives. It published uncensored Russian books to draw attention to otherwise invisible or silenced authors and to advocate on their behalf. The foundation strove to see their authors’ works in print, to gain them a readership and to offer them proper payment for their intellectual work. The letters in the AHF collection provide us with a rare glimpse into the immense efforts of a few individuals in setting up a transnational publishing endeavor, without endangering the authors’ lives and securing the proper handling of their works. Serving as the ‘Dutch connection’ between the Russian writers and the Western publishing sphere, the AHF helped to build personal relationships across the Western sphere but also across the systemic divide.

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⁷⁴ Letter, Peter Reddaway to Henk, October 2, 1971.

⁷⁵ “Alexander Herzen Foundation,” Accessed August 17, 2018. <https://www.revolvy.com/page/Alexander-Herzen-Foundation>.

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