

Samizdat and the Ambiguities of Resistance in the Post-Stalin USSR

Dzmitry Halavach

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Supervisor: András Bozóki

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Abstract

The thesis examines the Soviet samizdat – printed materials originating outside of the official system of publishing in the USSR – as a case of resistance to an oppressive regime. Motivated by an interest in the degree of intellectual freedom possible under a dictatorship and in the modern state's ability to construct subjectivity of its citizens, the thesis explores discourses, rhetorical strategies, and subject matter of Soviet samizdat. While the Soviet samizdat can be seen as a case of an emergence of an alternative public sphere and the resistance to the encroachment of the system on the individual life-world, the dependence of the dissident on the official Soviet discourse testifies to the uncanny ability of the state power to form the way its subjects think. Despite the unrelenting pressure, the Soviet regime did not manage to suppress samizdat and dissent generally as a means of resistance, but the ideological distance of the Soviet dissidents from the regime they chose to criticize was often very small. The subversive power of their acts lied in the illocutionary dimension of their utterances, i.e. not simply in what the Soviet dissidents said, but in what they did by saying this: holding the Soviet power accountable, albeit to its own standards. The implications of the research suggest caution in the casual ascription of liberal subjectivity to the opponents of authoritarian regimes elsewhere.

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Introduction

To say that there are disagreements among scholars on how to treat the Soviet dissent would be an understatement. Even the conceptual variety (dissent, sedition, resistance, independent society, alternative society, etc.) precludes any unified account, particularly at this stage of research on the former Soviet Union when many priceless sources are still buried deeply in the institutional archives of the Russian secret police. Therefore, this thesis aims no higher than to produce a series of impressionistic descriptions of the varieties and ambiguities of the resistance and collaboration in the post-Stalin Soviet Union, focusing on the samizdat, human rights movement, and nationalist dissidents. The general puzzle that motivates this study is the degree of independence of thought and capability for symbolic intellectual resistance that are possible for the people living under oppressive regimes. The history of the Soviet Union presents a unique opportunity for an inquiry into this area.

Samizdat literature – a body of underground self-published texts – was an ‘unofficial field of late Soviet culture’ (Komaromi 2007) where the official discourses and practices were contested. Although there are no perfect indicators of what the people living under a dictatorship ‘really thought’, the Soviet samizdat presents a unique means for exploration of this issue. Samizdat’s role is currently being reconsidered: while the studies from the time of the Cold War painted a heroic image of the ‘underground resistance’, a more recent scholarship looks at samizdat more critically, emphasizing its ambiguities, ‘dark sides’, and nationalist overtones (Kind-Kovács 2013; Komaromi 2008, 2012; Oushakine 2001; Yurchak 2006). Drawing on these exciting theoretical and historiographical developments, the study of Soviet samizdat will address the major puzzle that motivates this research: were the dissidents able to articulate an independent discourse in their contestation of the Soviet power? More broadly, the

research is stimulated by the desire to understand how stable the Soviet polity was, and what was the role of the resistance and collaboration in its history.

Initially samizdat was treated with great suspicion in the West. Even the reality of the people behind the samizdat publications was uncertain. For instance, ‘in America there were people who, for years, said that Solzhenitsyn did not exist, and that it was probably the KGB that concocted those pieces and sent them to the West to confuse Western public opinion’ (Gordon 1999: 639-40). *The Chronicle of Current Events*, one of the most important samizdat publications, was initially regarded as a KGB fabrication (Kind-Kovsics 2013: 5). The Western receivers of samizdat initially treated it with great suspicion. Sometimes, the only source of credibility for samizdat sources was the news of their imprisonment in the official Soviet press, as was the case with the Latvian religious dissident Iosif Bondarenko (Feldbrugge 1975: 2). As personal relations with the producers and distributors of samizdat were unavailable to the Western specialists, such cross-referencing of official and non-official sources was one of the few ways to establish reliability of the documents.

The creators of samizdat themselves were also on a constant watch against the police provocations. Even the *Deutsche Welle* and the *Voice of America* broadcasts were under suspicion in that atmosphere of general distrust. According to the recollections of Joseph Brodsky (1986), sometimes the very existence of the world outside of the Soviet Union seemed uncertain – so detached and isolated the life in the USSR could be. In this atmosphere, a romantic image of the Soviet dissent prevailed. A dissident posed as a heroic individual in grip of a Cartesian demon, surrounded by the sea of falsehood and looking desperately for a firm point to start with, for this one word of truth that will outweigh the whole world (to borrow an expression from the Solzhenitsyn’s Nobel lecture).

The current scholarship of samizdat starts to look at it from a more critical perspective. A seminal paper ‘*The Terrifying Mimicry of Samizdat*’ by Serguei Oushakine (2001)

exemplifies the general move of the scholarship away from the binary opposition of the state lies versus dissident truth to a more nuanced approach. Oushakine argues that the dissidents did not manage to negotiate a peculiar place of locution outside of the Soviet discourse and, in effect, resorted to mimicking it. Employing the Foucauldian perspective on resistance, he suggests that the samizdat discourse came to resemble the official discourse it purported to reject. He considers the samizdat to be an example of what he calls, following Foucault, a ‘mimetic resistance’. According to Foucault,

There are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real. . . It exists all the more by being in the same place as power (Foucault 2001: 142).

Ann Komaromi (2008) treats samizdat texts as an extra-Gutenberg phenomena created in the conditions of epistemic instability. The validity of the texts circulated in the personal networks of soviet dissidents was not a given because of widespread KGB fabrications. The trustworthiness of the published material was a function of personal networks, the relationships of gift giving, and the success the samizdat piece enjoyed in its circulation. In her analysis, the samizdat articles operated in a way similar to that described by a French anthropologist Marcel Mauss: the spirit of the gift impelled the receiver to pass the gift further, to send gifts in return, or even to produce one’s own textual objects. Komaromi takes samizdat to be a peculiar form of resistance embodying an alternative form of textual culture. Essentially, samizdat was an extra-Gutenberg phenomenon. Nadezhda Mandelshtam (1970: 380) once observed that ‘in a sense, we really do live in a pre-Gutenberg era’ and that her husband, a celebrated Russian poet, Osip Mandelshtam, did not really make much use of Gutenberg invention in the Soviet times. Anna Akmatova, allegedly, also observed that in the Soviet Union life is organized according to the slogan ‘Down with Guttenberg’. This alternative network of circulation of self-published texts, similar to the structures of pre-printed press era, was an embryonic form of the true

independent society in the Soviet Union. In the situation when the official publishing system, the *Gosizdat*, was dominated by texts that were mediocre at best, the samizdat provided the means to cultivate the aesthetic and cultural tastes of a significant part of Soviet society.

The study of symbolic intellectual resistance in the Soviet Union has a wider relevance for the study of other authoritarian regimes. In fact, contemporary Internet blogs are often described as digital samizdat, and the study is connected with the literature on the role of media in defeating authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, although the proposed research project is partly descriptive in nature, the evidence it will furnish can be used for further causal inquiry into politics of authoritarian regimes.

Although, national minorities' texts are taken into account, Russian samizdat is chosen as the primary focus of this study for a number of reasons. First, the study of national dissent in the Soviet Union has traditionally focused on non-Russian republics. This exclusion of the biggest nation of the USSR omits the fact that many Russians had their own nationalist grievances against the Soviet state, and that the USSR was not simply a refurbished Russian empire. The Russians, for instance, were the only large nation in the USSR without their own federal republic. My study will attempt to compensate for this omission. Second, the focus on Russian texts is determined by convenience motives: a comprehensive study of publications from all the ethnic groups of the USSR requires a linguistic expertise far surpassing my own. Third, being the largest ethnic group in the USSR, the Russian population was potentially one of the most important sources of dissent.

The study makes use of the samizdat material from the Soviet Union from 1956 to 1991, stored in the Fond 300 of the Open Society Archive in Budapest. It is one of the largest repositories of samizdat materials in the world, although many relevant sources are also available at the Memorial organization archive in Moscow and Hoover Institution archive in

Stanford (Zaslavskaya 2008). The time frame is dictated by the availability of sources. Samizdat materials from the Eastern Europe are not included. Homemade audio and video recordings (*'magnitizdat'*) are excluded. The so-called *'tamizdat'*, i.e. the materials published abroad and circulated in the Soviet Union, is excluded as well (see Steiner 2008).

The problems with validity and reliability are numerous. First, many sources were produced by the KGB and the police as a means of provocation. Due to the nature of the material, it is hardly possible to establish exactly what the origins of a particular piece of samizdat material are. However, this represents a problem only as long as the 'independent' origin of the published material is a necessary attribute of the concept of the samizdat. From another perspective, a published material acquired samizdat status due to success in the circulation in the network of persons exchanging underground literature, irrespective of its origins (Komaromi 2004, 2008). Moreover, the archivists and the analysts of the Radio Free Europe conducted thorough examinations and evaluated the pieces of samizdat sent to them. Only materials deemed genuine were include in the Samizdat Register, while the others were included in the 'Unpublished Samizdat Collection'. However, the peculiar nature of the sample available to us (the archives of the Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty) which include only materials send abroad or collected by the analysts of the service, will lead us to suspect a particularly high number of fabrications among the samizdat materials preserved in the archive. Therefore, the problems of validity and reliability remain pertinent because of the specific way the 'sample' was created. In effect, the social and political processes truncated the data available for this research.

There is a possible problem with the representativeness of the archival 'sample'. To study the whole population of samizdat texts is impossible for a number of reasons. First, many texts are no longer available because they were destroyed by the producers and/or readers of these materials, confiscated and destroyed by police and intelligence service (or preserved in

their archives which are out of reach). Second, even if all the materials were available, the amount of time and effort to read them all would make such study unfeasible. Unfortunately, it is impossible to achieve a random sampling, and the actual procedure is closer to convenience sampling: a researcher has to make do with whatever material is available in the archive. The sub-fond 85 of the fond 300 of the Open Society Archives, '*Samizdat Archives*', contains 1587 archival boxes, which make for a substantial amount of material for a research.

The Samizdat Archive (*Arkhiv Samizdata*) was put together by the Research Department of the Radio Liberty. The materials of this collection are published in *Sobranie Dokumentov Samizdata* (Collection of Samizdat Documents), which constitutes the primary source for this study. The text of the thesis will refer to these documents by the AS abbreviation and the number of the document.

Samizdat is conceptualized as underground self-published texts in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Samizdat is sometimes understood as general term for all kinds of underground self-reproduced media, including audio and video recordings (*magnitizdat* or *roentgenizdat*). However, I employ it in a more specific and narrow way, referring only to textual materials. Samizdat here is employed as a 'low-level concept', tailored to capture the idiosyncrasies of the particular phenomenon. In Sartori's terms, the concept of 'samizdat' prioritizes intension over extension: it can be meaningfully applied mainly to the Soviet self-published texts. The concept of samizdat is relatively low on the ladder of generality (see Collier and Mahon 1993). Its application to other similar phenomena ('digital samizdat', 'samizdat software', etc.) has a metaphoric nature. To facilitate conceptual traveling, the researcher needs to move up the ladder of generality, to, for example, the concept of 'underground media'.

The necessary attribute of the concept of samizdat is its individual, non-state origin. For some pieces of samizdat, the origin cannot be verified. Another attribute of samizdat is its circulation in personal networks of producers and readers of these material. However, it is

neither a sufficient nor a necessary attribute: some of the most interesting pieces of samizdat were not circulated due to confiscation, and not all texts that circulated in these networks were self-published. The question of whether illegality is the necessary attribute of samizdat is hard to answer because of a very peculiar nature of legality in the Soviet Union: while the publishing of texts was not prohibited *de jure*, usually such activities resulted into an interest from the police and often into different forms of persecution, including legal.

To use samizdat texts as an unproblematic indicator of what the Soviet people ‘really thought’ would be naïve. These materials were usually created by very narrow groups whose views are not necessarily representative of the population at large. However, this indicator is among the best that are available to the student of Soviet society, and, provided, that this bias is recognised and made explicit, samizdat materials can and should be used. Furthermore, the focus on intellectuals and nationalist intellectuals is theoretically justified: they play disproportionately big role in protest movements, especially in nationalist movements, according to many theorists of nationalism (Conversi 1995; Hroch 1985; Kedourie 1993; Smith 1981).

The studies of samizdat use the typology dividing samizdat into political, literary, and religious (Joo 2004: 572-74). However, the definition of ‘political’ in the Soviet Union is problematic: for a state that aspired to regulate the life of its citizens in its entirety, everything was political. Similarly, the boundary between ‘political’ and ‘religious’ is unclear: if the state sets out to eradicate church and religion, then religious pronouncement and publications constitute political acts.

‘Russian’ and ‘non-Russian’ refer to the place of origin of samizdat material. Samizdat materials of national circles that operated in the Russian part of the USSR are classified as non-Russian, and vice versa.

Nationalist contention is defined as the political mobilization of ethno-national groups, involving claims of individual cultural rights, group cultural rights, autonomy, and independence. Following Benson and Saxton (2010), I conceptualize nationalist contention as a multidimensional concept along the three main dimensions: electoral contestation, non-violent protest, and violent resistance. The indicator used in the study –character of nationalist texts in the samizdat – measures only one dimension of the concept, a nonviolent protest through claim-making behaviour of ethno-national groups. Intensity of ethno-nationalist contention is understood as a continuous variable ranging from relatively low levels (claims of individual cultural rights) to higher levels (claims of autonomy or independence). For the purpose of this study, it is operationalized through the analysis of the discourse of nationalist texts in samizdat publications and the character of these publications. The ethno-nationalist contention is conceptualized along multiple interrelated dimensions as a means of clarifying the ‘semantic field’ (Adcock and Collier 2001: 533; Sartori 1984: 51-54).

‘Nationalist text’ is conceptualized as a text making at least one of the following claims on behalf of an ethno-national group: individual cultural rights, group cultural rights, autonomy, or independence.

How effectively does the quantity and character of samizdat texts measures dissent? This indicator measures only one very peculiar aspect of the concept. However, it constitutes an improvement compared to the usual measurement procedures employed in assessing the resistance in the Soviet Union. Due to the repressive nature of the Soviet regime and high costs of ‘voice’ option in expressing discontent, low levels of discontent were less likely to take highly visible forms, such as demonstrations, strikes, and mass petitions. In effect, low levels of resistance remain hidden from researchers of the Soviet society when only traditional indicators of this concept are employed. The analysis of composition and topics of samizdat texts is a more fine-grained indicator to measure the intensity of dissent.

The issue of high contextual specificity of measurement validity takes the following form in this research: did the resistance and dissent mean the same things throughout the whole period in question? Contextual specificity, or the problem of measurement equivalence, arises when ‘the same score on an indicator may have different meanings in different contexts’ (Adcock and Collier 2001: 534), and it is common in comparisons of distinct historical periods. Indeed, meaning, content, topics, and structure of samizdat texts have changed over the period in question. Therefore, discourse analysis was chosen as the primary method of the study in order to capture qualitative differences between different samizdat texts.

There is a possible problem with the reliability of scoring individual cases as belonging to one of the types of samizdat. However, if there is no reason to suspect a systematic character of these errors and, if they are random, on the aggregate level they cancel each other out. There is a disagreement between the scholars who consider that even if individual scores are unreliable, they still can be seen as valid (Babbie 2001), and those who believe that scores are valid only when neither random nor systematic errors are involved (Kirk and Miller 1986; Shively 1998). However, conceptual analysis, theoretically sound concept formation, and the ‘double fitting’ process of going all the way from background concept to individual scores and back can minimize the issues with measurement validity (see Adcock and Collier 2001). The measurement validity is also an issue because of the peculiar character of the sources: samizdat publishers were a tiny minority of activists who were more politically engaged than the population at large. Therefore, the use of the discourse of samizdat texts as an indicator of the intensity of the protest may systematically overestimate its level.

Conceptual stretching is an issue in applying the concept of ‘samizdat’ to diverse empirical data. It is possible to avoid conceptual stretching by employing different types of concepts: classical, radial, and family resemblance (Collier and Mahon 1993). ‘Samizdat’ can be understood as a radial concept: an individual non-state origin is shared by all cases, but

circulation in the networks of samizdat readers, production and distribution of multiple copies, and political engagement are characteristic only to some of the cases.

The study uses discourse analysis. The unit of analysis for both of them is a group of samizdat texts; the unit of observation is an individual text. Discourse analysis is used to study the difference in topics and the character of samizdat texts. It will also focus on different types of claims made in the texts, from individual rights to political reforms or even national independence. Discourse analysis of the samizdat texts is way to estimate the discursive independence of the Soviet dissidents from the regime. In terms of discourse analysis, the general theoretical points of reference are the works of Michel Foucault (1972; 1977; 1979; 2001; 2002; 2010), Norman Fairclough (2002; 1992, 1995, 2003), Pierre Bourdieu (1990; 1991) and J.L. Austin (1962; 1975). The role of national history and nationalist historical narratives is studied from the perspective of Pierre Nora (1996) and Stephen Berger (2007; 2008). This theoretical literature is also relevant because the study is a descriptive one and it eschews the notion of causality, focusing instead on Foucauldian ruptures in the discursive formations. Moreover, one of the major aspects of this nationalist contention was the historical revolution – the contestation and revision of official Soviet historical narratives and the construction of competing counter-narratives by politically active nationalist activists and dissidents (Beissinger 2002; Brunstedt 2010; Davies 1989; Husband 1991; Ito 1989; Lindner 1999). Discourse analysis is appropriate for studying this important development. According to Mills (1997: 30), ‘discourse ... offered a way of thinking about hegemony – people’s compliance in their own oppression – without assuming that individuals are necessarily simply passive victims of systems of thought.’ Moreover, ‘questions of agency are less clear and, as a consequence, questions of how much control one has over what happens as a result of one’s own actions are very much to the fore’ (Mills 1997: 30). This features of the method of discourse analysis make it highly suitable for this study.

The research also employs the descriptive method. Far from being a ‘mere description’, this task is essential for any social scientific inquiry, as Gerring (2012) argues.

This study looks mainly at two types of samizdat texts: human-rights movement texts and nationalist texts. There is, of course, no hard and fast distinction between ‘right-defenders’ and nationalist samizdat. Many of the nationally oriented dissidents were also involved into human rights movement, and vice versa. For instance, Crimean Tatar activists signed letter of protest against the arrest of Petr Grigorenko en masse and the Jewish samizdat circles (*Vestnik Iskhoda* and other periodicals) were also actively involved in the human rights protection (Zisserman-Brodsky 2003: 59). The letter of Ukrainian dissidents protesting against the trial of Ginzburg, Galanskov, Lashkova, and others had collected 139 signatures in 1968 (AS 46). Lithuanian samizdat materials, including *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, published the documents of the Russian human rights movement. Similarly, many of the Russian samizdat texts share the concerns of the national activists (Zisserman-Brodsky 2003: 60-61).

Selection of cases for discourse analysis is based on data availability, and on different rationales for case selection suggested by Seawright and Gerring (2008). Although their analysis seems to be tailored to a large-N quantitative study aiming at causal inference, it can also be applied to this research. The following rationales will be used: the importance of individual texts (like the manifest of Russian nationalists ‘*A Word to The Nation*’ and the samizdat journal ‘*Veche*’); the extreme character of some of the texts (publications of the proto-fascist group *Pamiat*); typical (selecting texts which are representative of the population); and, possibly, a random selection to minimize selection bias. The focus on the discourse analysis allows to alleviate problems with the selection of cases: from a Foucauldian perspective, it is not only the author that matters, but also the discursive structure in which s/he is operating. Accordingly, there is no ground to prioritize the writing of a handful of famous dissidents

(Sakharov, Bukovsky, Amalrik) to the exclusion of everybody else. A humble letter of otherwise unknown author is as important as the writing of more famous counterparts – provided that it was circulating in the samizdat networks.

The thesis uses author-date citation style. In accordance with the common practice in samizdat studies, many samizdat documents are cited by their number in the Archive of Samizdat register (AS), with the bibliographical information presented in Appendix 1. Russian names and titles are transliterated according to the Library of Congress Romanization Tables, unless a common usage dictates otherwise.

Chapter 1. Power, Resistance, and Public Sphere: Theoretical Foundations

The primary focus of this study are the questions of resistance to power of modern state and emergence of public sphere. Therefore, the major theoretical points of reference are the works of Michelle Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, and James C. Scott.

James C. Scott explores the varieties of hidden forms of resistance in his *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Scott 1990). A ‘public transcript’, according to Scott, is a language of the structured public interaction between the elite and the dominated group. Public transcript is a dissemblance of conformity and acceptance by the oppressed group. For the powerful, it is the way to affirm and simultaneously to reproduce the power relations. Ritualization of the public transcript progresses as the power becomes more oppressive: ‘the more menacing the power, the thicker the mask’ (Scott 1990: 3). However, the powerful never exercise a full control over society. Scott argues that beneath the façade of conformity there is a hidden transcript of resistance and subversion. Hidden transcript is a discourse taking place outside of the official sites of power, ‘offstage’, out of reach of the power elite. Traditional history and social science largely ignored it, focusing on a more visible form of interaction – on the ‘public transcript’. Hidden transcript is contextual, it is rooted in individual situations of power and domination, and it is not limited to speech acts but includes a variety of social practices (Scott 1990: 12). Although there is no hard and fast distinction between public and hidden transcripts and they form a seamless continuum of power and contestation, for analytical purposes, Scott establishes the following distinction: the public transcript is ‘the self-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen’ (Scott 1990: 18), while the hidden transcript is a discourse outside of the hegemonic self-presentation of the elites. Scott distinguishes four varieties on the public-hidden continuum. The first one takes the self-image of the power as its starting point, drawing on the ideology that serves as a means of legitimizing

the power: supposed ‘paternalism’ of slave-owners, generosity and protectiveness of nobility, or ‘progressive’ nature of the Soviet power. This rhetorical device of calling the powerful to respect their own norms is one of the most widespread and relatively safe means of resisting the domination, according to James C. Scott. Second version is the hidden transcript proper. The third is constituted by an ambiguous and anonymous realm of group politics that consists of rumours, rituals, carnivals, and tales. It falls chiefly in the domain of social anthropology. The fourth element is the policed border between the public and hidden transcript. All this varieties, except for the first one, are within what Scott (1990: 19) calls the ‘infrapolitics of subordinate groups’. Overall, Scott focuses more on personal and local forms of hegemonic domination and resistance to it, unlike Foucault’s works which stress the modern and scientific dimensions of power.

‘Relations of domination are, at the same time, relations of resistance’, according to James C. Scott (1990: 45). Once established, the power relations do not persist on their own but require a constant maintenance and re-affirmation. The spectacle of unanimity is required for a continual affirmation of the public transcript. The epitome of this affirmation is, according to Scott (1990: 45), a parade. The individuals who break out of this strictly ordered pattern of domination are subversive not due to their actions per se, but rather because they question the whole display of unity and orderliness by their act. From that perspective, a single dissenting voice has the power to break the whole spectacle of power, and this insight casts a new light on the practice of the Soviet dissent and samizdat publishing.

Although Jürgen Habermas’s contribution to the contemporary social science is manifold, his concept of the public sphere is particularly relevant for this study (Habermas 1989). The liberal public sphere, the emergence of which Habermas traces back to the 18th century, was a site of rational discussion, monitoring, and criticism of the issues of society. Openness and publicity were its guiding principles. The liberal public sphere was a societal

challenge to the ‘arcane and bureaucratic practices of the absolutist state’ (Habermas 1989: xi). The public sphere contested the traditional form of domination based on ‘representation’ of the authority of the sovereign before the subjects in a spectacle of power and splendour. Instead, the power had to be exercised through a ‘rational-critical public debate’ (Habermas 1989:28). Oliver and Myers (1999:38) define public sphere as ‘the abstract space in which citizens discuss and debate public issues.’ According to Michael S. Evans (2012: 874), ‘deliberative public sphere has at least three characteristic features: inclusion, reason-giving, and open-mindedness.’ The process of deliberation in the public sphere confers a democratic legitimacy to the power (Rawls 1971). Ideally, public sphere operates on an egalitarian basis, providing opportunity to participate in the deliberation for all citizens (Adut 2012: 238). However, many scholars have contested the Habermasian concept of the single unified public sphere arguing instead for analyzing numerous ‘counterpublics’ (Adut 2012: 239).

The samizdat in the Soviet Union was not, of course, a ‘bourgeois’ phenomenon. However, the fundamental principles which the political samizdat, and especially the samizdat of the human rights movement, espoused, were similar to the guiding principles of the liberal public sphere as analysed by Habermas. Publicity (*glasnost*’) was demanded by many dissidents well before Gorbachev. The adherence of the Soviet power to its own laws, the rationalization of the political oppression (i.e. persecution of criminals and dissidents only according to the law and not at will of police or party officials), the public and rational justification of the state action, the setting of the scene for public deliberation of matters important for the society –all these features were embraced, to a certain degree, by ‘right-defenders’ samizdat. Many passages in letters of protest, petitions, and declaration of Soviet samizdat and human rights activists sound as if they had taken a leaf from the Habermas’s book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* – with the important difference that they were expressed by 20th century Soviet dissidents, not 18th century French bourgeois.

The ‘concrete functioning of power’ and analysis of the ‘techniques through which the person initiates an active self-formation’ are the focus of Foucault’s work, which makes it highly relevant for this study. Furthermore, from the Foucauldian perspective the practice of samizdat and Soviet intellectual dissent generally can also be understood as belonging to the tradition of *parrhesia* (from the Greek παρρησία) – speaking truth in the face of danger. According to Foucault, the ‘fearless speech’ is

... a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness, a certain relationship to his own life through danger, a certain type of relation to himself or other people through criticism (self-criticism or criticism of other people), and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and duty. More precisely, *parrhesia* is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In *parrhesia*, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy (Foucault 2001: 19-20).

Thus, the Soviet dissidents can be seen as not only re-enacting the emergence of the liberal public sphere, but even resurrecting the classical Greek tradition of ‘speaking truth to power’. In terms of discourse analysis, it represents an interesting example of validation of utterances through the readiness to face potential personal costs of voicing a dissenting opinion. Demonstrative signing of samizdat documents is an example of this strategy.

The case of Soviet samizdat presents an interesting contrast of Foucault and Habermas. While the strategy of samizdat producers might seem from the perspective of Jürgen Habermas as an attempt to resist the encroachment of the life-world by the system. Samizdat was an attempt to construct an alternative public sphere, built on principles of rationality, logic, and proof. On the other hand, the Soviet samizdat illustrates nicely the power of the modern state to mould the subjectivity of its citizens as it was analysed in the works of Foucault.

The research on the varieties and ambiguities of resistance and collaboration in the post-Stalin USSR is connected with the ‘Soviet subjectivity’ debate. The pioneering works of Igal

Halfin (2000) and Jochen Hellbeck (2009) suggested that the early Soviet subjects have associated themselves with the regime and to sough to reconstruct their personalities to build a new Soviet self. Far from being a mere atomized victim of the regime, as the totalitarian school (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956, Arendt 1951) would have us to believe, the inhabitants of the Stalinist Soviet Union set out on a revolutionary crusade. In their research, Halfin and Hellbeck relied heavily on the works of Foucault in an attempt to historicize the notion of liberal subjectivity. However, their ideas came under fire from other professional historians (Etkind 2005) who criticized selective bias and uncritical approach of the founders of the notion of the ‘Soviet subjectivity’.

The theoretical background that informs the study of samizdat as a site of nationalist contention are constructivist theories of nationalism and ethnicity (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983), and theories of social mobilization (Beissinger 2002; Tilly 1978). The research adopts a basic premise of constructivist theoretical approach to nationalism (Anderson 1991; Bhabha 1990; Gellner 1983) and its sceptical attitude towards nationalist narratives of history and primordial character of the nation.

Chapter 2. Samizdat: Origins and Background

Samizdat is conceptualized as underground self-published texts in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The term was coined by Russian poet Nikolai Glazkov in the 1940s, who described the self-publication of his poems as '*sam-sebia-izdat*', later shortened to *samizdat* (Feldbrugge 1975: 2). The name was in opposition to the official publishing institutions, such as *Gosizdat* or *Voenizdat*. It is very difficult to establish when precisely the samizdat activities in the post-Stalin USSR took off. In 1956, the newspaper *Kultura* appeared in Leningrad, and Revolt Pimenov published the first Bulletin of information (Zaslavskaya 2009: 682). Samizdat was not, of course, an exclusively Soviet phenomenon. Similar activities existed in Poland, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, China, and other countries (Zaslavskaya 2002; Kowalczyk 2002; Preibisz 1982; Skilling 1989; Tokes 1996).

The necessary attribute of the concept of samizdat is its individual, non-state origin. For some pieces of samizdat, the origin cannot be verified. Another attribute of samizdat is its circulation in personal networks of producers and readers of these material. However, it is neither a sufficient nor a necessary attribute: some of the most interesting pieces of samizdat were not circulated due to confiscation, and not all texts that circulated in these networks were self-published. The question of whether illegality is the necessary attribute of samizdat is hard to answer because of a very peculiar nature of legality in the Soviet Union: while the publishing of texts was not prohibited *de jure*, usually such activities resulted into an interest from the police and often into different forms of persecution, including legal.

The early emergence of samizdat dates back to Khrushchev years. It was a period of relative softening of the Soviet regime, the time when personal costs of production and dissemination of samizdat materials stopped to be an effective deterrent. Similar activities in the Stalin era were much more certain to bring about a long-term imprisonment or even

execution and, therefore, the consequences of the ‘voice’ option (see Hirschman 1970) in a totalitarian regime physically disrupted the networks of samizdat producers and readers. Therefore, samizdat as a fully formed mass phenomenon emerged in the Khrushchev years and it became especially numerous under Brezhnev (1964-1982). The tendency to tighten the control over the society in the early Brezhnev years was among the catalysts of the emergence of samizdat. The trial of Siniavsky and Daniel in 1966 was a watershed between Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods in the relations of the regime and artists. According to Feldbrugge (1975:5), this trial sent the waves of protest and samizdat materials which became self-reproducing. The repression of every new samizdat outlet spread ripples of letters and materials, and so ad infinitum. Of course, the central role of this trial is characteristic only for the human rights movement (*pravozashchitniki*) samizdat. From the relatively humble beginnings in 1965, the human rights samizdat documents doubled in number by 1967 and by 1968 the overall number of human rights samizdat documents had increased five times (Feldbrugge 1975: 2).

The system of censorship in the Soviet Union which the samizdat thought to circumvent was established in the 1930s. All publications had to receive a visa from *Glavlit*– the Chief Department for Literature (Feldbrugge 1975: 3). All publications in the state publishing houses had to pass through this system. Production and possession of private printing presses and other means of copying texts was forbidden by law (Feldbrugge 1975: 10). Typewriters, which had to be registered in Stalin years, were relatively free to use in the years of samizdat flourishing. There were no direct prohibitions of self-publishing and the word ‘samizdat’ did not feature in the Soviet law. However, its production and distribution was reasonably certain to cause legal persecution, trial, and imprisonment.

According to Komaromi (2007), samizdat status was acquired not simply through self-printing, but through the circulation of these materials in networks of producers and readers. From that perspective, it is possible to introduce the concept of unsuccessful samizdat:

documents that were produced to be spread and widely read but which have been confiscated or destroyed by the author or one of early readers out of fear (see Feldbrugge 1975: 5). Some of the documents passed to the West and included in samizdat collection might have had little to no circulation in the USSR. The vast majority of this category, however, remains unknown. National samizdat, apart from Ukrainian, Crimean Tatar, Lithuanian and Estonian, is also virtually unknown.

According to Feldbrugge (1975: 38-40), a substantial part of the samizdat-producing groups were either communists or socialist. Earliest 1960s-1970s groups included Ryleev club, Party of True Communists, The Marxist Party of a New Type, Union of Struggle for Political Rights, Committee of Struggle for Socialist Democracy, Dzibalov group, Russian Socialist Party, Party of Non-Party Workers Struggling for the Restoration of Socialism, Partisans of Socialist Democracy, Union of Independent Youth, Civic Committee, and many others (see Feldbrugge 1975). Many of them were minuscule groups, exhibiting a Pythonesque world of left-wing politics, obsessed with esoteric distinctions and theoretical issues.

The '*Varga Testament*', produced in 1964 by the economist E. Varga, was one of the first samizdat documents that criticized the state of affairs in the USSR from an orthodox Marxist viewpoint (Feldbrugge 1975: 57). Roy Medvedev's book *On Socialist Democracy* (1975) is the most fundamental text of this category of samizdat. The texts of this group were often very critical about the post-Stalin USSR, but they share the basic premises of Marxist-Leninist ideology, positive attitude towards the October Revolution, unquestionable authority of Lenin, and concern with the Stalinist 'bureaucratization'. In an argument resembling the views of Lev Trotsky (1937) and Milovan Đilas (1957), the problems of the Soviet system were traced to the merging of the Party with the state bureaucracy. Attitude to Stalinism was ambivalent. On the one hand it supposedly epitomised the bureaucratization. On the other hand, Stalinist industrialization was highly appraised. E.S. Varga wrote that

Although the industrialization required an enormous waste of human resources and an overcoming of material and organizational difficulties, although subsequently, especially during the second five-year plan, the new heavy industry was built largely by what was essentially the slave labour of hundreds and thousands and even millions of innocent people who were slandered, arrested and sent to concentration camps, nevertheless the realization of Stalin's five-year plans had, in a national scale, a decidedly progressive meaning (quoted in Feldbrugge 1975: 63).

Among civil rights groups, there were Action Group for the Defence of Human Rights, Committee for Human Rights, Moscow Human Rights Committee, Gorky Human Rights Organization, Group 1973, and others. National organizations were particularly numerous among Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars and Baltic nations.

Robert Darnton in his book *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* argued that the network of readers had achieved 'the penetration of society by a communication network composed of arteries, veins and capillaries, and that takes account of every stage in the process of production and distribution' (Darnton 1982: 13). The Soviet samizdat networks achieved a similar, if not greater penetration of society. Samizdat was for the late Soviet culture a counterpart of the bourgeois public sphere as analyzed by Habermas (1989).

Samizdat literature was, in part, a response to the inability of the state publishing houses to fulfil popular demands. Due to the idiosyncrasies of the Soviet planning system, the printing facilities aimed to meet only the aggregate print run plans, and cared less for the diversity of their output. In practice, it resulted in the publishing of a huge number of ideologically safe but rather unpopular books. Censorship of foreign literature was particularly harsh. A very significant share of foreign and 'subversive' literature was buried in the 'special storage facilities' – *spetskhran*, unavailable to most of the Soviet citizens. The largest of them, the *spetskhran* of the Lenin State Library, contained over one million items in the 1980s (Stelmakh 2001: 144). As a result of this planning failure and censorship, samizdat gradually evolved into an alternative book market. In 1988, samizdat literature reached 21 per cent of the state

publishing system (Stelmakh 2001: 146). On the receiving end, samizdat was, essentially, a reassertion of the right of independent reading.

According to Benjamin Nathans (2007: 651), Revol't Pimenov was the father of the Soviet political samizdat. In 1957, he was arrested on the charge of the creation of the 'anti-Soviet political organization'. Apart from his writings, the transcripts of the trial of Iosif Brodsky were among the most famous materials widely circulated in the samizdat networks. The notes of Frida Vigdorova, who was admitted to the process, were printed, re-printed, and widely read among the dissident and reading public generally. The future Nobel laureate was condemned for 'parasitism'. The manifestly absurd nature of the process made for a great example of the absurdity of the whole system. Consider this excerpt:

Judge: And what is your profession in general?

Brodsky: Poet, translator.

Judge: Who recognized you as a poet? Who enrolled you in the ranks of poets?

Brodsky: No one. Who enrolled me in the ranks of humanity?

Judge: Did you study this?

Brodsky: This?

Judge: To become a poet. You did not try to finish high school where they prepare, where they teach?

Brodsky: I didn't think you could get this from school.

Judge: How then?

Brodsky: I think that it . . . comes from God. (Etkind 1978: 22)

Another trial that was widely covered by the emerging movement of the human rights defenders was the trial of the writers Daniel and Siniavsky. Ironically, Vitaly Ginzburg who contributed to the *White Book* (1966) documenting this trial, was tried himself, charged with the anti-Soviet activities, found guilty, and went to serve his sentence to the same camp where Daniel and Siniavsky were confined.

The materials of the early samizdat were very diverse – from Russian literary classics to the explicitly political materials. One of the first political samizdat journals was called *Kolokol* (*The Bell*), consciously reproducing the title of the journal that Aleksandr Herzen

published in the XIX century. The book by a painter and writer Iakov Ven'kovetsky '*How to behave during KGB interrogation*' (*Kak vesti sebia na doprosakh v KGB*), was also widely spread alongside with other samizdat materials. *Pamiat'* (*Memory*) group collected and published historical documents on the recent Russian history and the history of the samizdat movement itself.

Many of the samizdat producers were also involved into the human rights movement that had strong connections to the West. The 'Helsinki network' of international human rights defenders was instrumental in the end of the cold war (see Snyder 2011). The signing of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act gave the Soviet dissidents a standard to hold their government accountable. The decision by the US president Jimmy Carter to make the human rights promotion into the centerpiece of the America foreign policy contributed to the growing importance of the international human rights networks as well. According to Sarah B. Snyder (2011: 244),

Helsinki process directly and indirectly influenced both Western and Eastern governments to pursue policies that facilitated the rise of organized dissent in Eastern Europe, freedom of movement for East Germans, and improved human rights practices in the Soviet Union – all factors in the end of the Cold War .

Helsinki monitoring offered a channel for the Soviet human rights defenders to transfer their samizdat materials abroad. Radio Liberty and its research institute served as an 'echo chamber' of the Soviet samizdat.

However, many of the Samizdat readers were not involved in any type of organized political activity, let alone political resistance. Many of them, undoubtedly, remained loyal citizens. The reasons for that are manifold. First, the diversity of samizdat materials suggests that its impact was not uniform. Second, the use of self-published literature does not necessarily lead to the wholesale rejection of the regime. There is a tendency to portray Soviet citizens as

closet liberals or the ‘tenacity of liberal subject in the Soviet studies’, as Krylova (2000) puts it. However, even the disappointment with the Soviet order did not necessarily manifest itself in the shift toward a Western-style liberal world view. More often, perhaps, it resulted into a cynicism which was perceived as the only true sincere feeling. As one historian put it, ‘the emergent cynical subject was not tantamount to the rebirth of liberal man’ (Boobyer 2005: 47). It is this caution in the ascription of a liberal subjectivity to the dissidents that guides the following chapter and this research in general.

Chapter 3. Samizdat and the Human Rights Movement

Human rights samizdat was among the earliest specimens of the genre. The concern with legality and the call to the Soviet state to respect its own laws was a very popular topic in samizdat texts. The attention to the letter of the Soviet law was a principal characteristic of the ‘right defenders’ (*pravozashchitniki*) in the USSR. They were the group of Soviet dissidents that was the most visible internationally. The peculiarity of their protest strategy was to call the Soviet government to respect its own law by practicing radical ‘civil obedience’, in the words of Benjamin Nathans (2007: 630). At the first sight, a harsh repression of the dissidents merely calling for adherence to the ‘Socialist legality’ seems puzzling. However, if we employ the notion of speech act (following Austin and Searle), the challenge to the Soviet authority laid not in what the ‘right defenders’ said, but in what they were doing by saying that. The dissent was inherent in the illocutionary dimension of the utterances of human rights movement dissidents and samizdat producers. The slogans and ideas were, for the most part, virtually harmless. Esenin-Volpin, for instance was once protesting under the slogan ‘Respect the Soviet Constitution’. It was the challenge to the Soviet order by holding the elite accountable, albeit it to its own laws, that caused the official ire. It was the abovementioned Esenin-Volski, Soviet mathematician and logician, who had inspired this peculiar strategy (Nathans 2007: 631). According to Andrei Amalrik, another prominent Soviet dissident, Esenin-Volpin was ‘the first to understand that an effective method of opposition might be to demand that the authorities observe their own laws’ (quoted in Nathans 2007: 631).

Liudmila Alekseeva has thus described the Esenin-Volpin’s idea behind his insistence on the importance of the Soviet law:

He would explain to anyone who cared to listen a simple but unfamiliar idea: all laws ought to be understood in exactly the way they are written and not as they are interpreted by

the government, and the government ought to fulfil those laws to the letter. What would happen if citizens acted on the assumption that they have rights? If one person did it, he would become a martyr; if two people did it, they would be labeled an enemy organization; if thousands of people did it, they would be a hostile movement; but if everyone did it, the state would have to become less oppressive (Alekseeva (1985: 275).

Characteristically, the demonstration at the Pushkin square in 1965 was arranged to take place on December 5 – the Day of the Soviet Constitution. Volpin even took the Soviet libel laws seriously and made legal complaints against the authors of articles about him, such as a slanderous piece in January 1963 issue of *Ogoniok* magazine by a certain Shatunovsky (to no avail). Many of the documents produced by Volpin attained wide circulation in samizdat networks, in particular his *Instruction to the Interrogated*. It meticulously outlined the legal status of the accused and advised on how to behave – all in strict accordance to the letter of the Soviet law. Volpin was also among the first dissidents to demand *glasnost* (openness) from the judicial procedures, a rhetorical strategy which later became the staple discourse of the ‘right defenders’ samizdat texts. Volpin was also among the most prominent protesters against the trial of Siniavsky and Daniel. He drafted a proclamation that was later spread in samizdat circles. He argued that

The bloody past calls us to vigilance in the present. It is easier to sacrifice a single day of rest than to endure for years the consequences of an arbitrariness that was not checked in time. Citizens have a means for struggle against judicial arbitrariness - a ‘glasnost’ meeting’ during which those who gather will project a single slogan: ‘We demand an open trial for . . . (followed by the names of the accused).’ Any other phrases or slogans going beyond the demand for strict observance of the law will be absolutely detrimental and possibly serve as a provocation and should be cut short by the meeting’s participants themselves. During the meeting, it is essential that order be strictly observed. At the first demand by the authorities to disperse—one must disperse, having communicated to the authorities the meeting’s aim (quoted in Nathans 2007: 656).

According to Nathans (2007: 637), the studies of logic, and in particular *Principia Mathematica* by Bertrand Russell and Alfred Whitehead, pushed Volpin to strive for an ideal formal language devoid of ambiguities. He found in the Soviet law, of all texts, the standard against which to measure everyday reality, a clear and precise medium capable of that

Wittgensteinian dream of analytic philosophy: to dissolve philosophical problems by clarifying the language. Consider the following quote: ‘We must free ourselves from the influence of people with their stunted language and find a scientific expression for the concept of freedom. Only when we attain this will we be able to trust our own thoughts’ (Volpin, quoted in Nathans 2007: 636). In a letter to his friends, written after his confinement in a psychiatric asylum in 1968, he re-stated his credo: ‘I have struggled against the muddle and disorientation in the people’s heads in the matters of law, legality, rights, power, etc. I have never lied and I have demanded from others to stop telling lies, even ‘beneficial’ ones’ (AS 35).

Ironically, in the Soviet Union the ‘right defenders’ dissidents appear to be the people who took the Soviet law most seriously. The rhetoric of ‘civic duty’, ‘socialist justice’, ‘openness’, ‘adherence to the Soviet Constitution’ pervade their texts. Consider the very first document in the Samizdat Archive (AS 1) – *‘The Letter of the Eighty’*, a collective protest against the way in which the trial of Ginzburg, Galanskov, Dobrovolsky, and Lashkova was held. The document present its authors as demanding ‘a true openness of this process’ out of their ‘civic duty’. The accuses as well are construed as having acted ‘within the limits of our Constitution and our law’. The fact that the process was not open led the authors of the document to classify it as ‘untrustworthy’. The appeal was made to the letter of the Soviet law itself, not to the idea of the human rights or some higher moral principle. In particular, the authors appealed to the norms of the Soviet Criminal-Procedural Codex and they argued that the detention period of the accused was longer than the allowed by the law. The ultimate argument was that Ginzburg, Galanskov, and Lashkova merely wanted to make the materials of the Siniavsky-Daniel trial public, and that the Soviet law does not prohibit such actions. The openness of their actions was stressed over and over again. The fact that their publication *Feniks* was signed spoke in favour of their innocence and the strict lawfulness of their activities, according to the authors of this samizdat-circulated letter. It has to be noted that this strategy of

signing the documents was very widespread in ‘right-defenders’ samizdat. It was a means to protect from a slander of writing an anonymous letter or publishing an anonymous document because such document (*anonimka*) had very strong negative connotations in the Soviet culture. It was also an attempt to stress the legality and the patriotic motives behind one’s actions, the readiness to face personal problems that could arise from such signature and the normalization of one’s actions and thoughts by refusing to hide behind the anonymity or a penname. It was a modern example of the Ancient Greek practice of parrhesia, or ‘fearless speech’ where the act of locution gained special status through the personal danger to the speaker (see Foucault 2001). However, anonymous documents and pennames were not infrequent.

A letter of a similar type - ‘*The Letter of 170*’ in support of Ginzburg, Galanskov, dated 5 February 1968 – listed a ‘crude violation of legal norms’, ‘holding an open process behind the closed doors’, ‘public resentment’ (*obshchestvennoe negodovanie*), ‘lack of proof’, and violation of legal procedure. Not a single witness has supported the accusation, according to the authors of the letter. The court judged in favour of accusation all the same. The discursive means of this letter and many other similar documents are Soviet through and through: a recourse to the public as the ultimate judge in the matters of justice, high acclaim of the Soviet law, a frequent references to the ‘Great October Socialist Revolution’, a concern with the ‘bureaucrats’, warnings that violations of law will give grounds to the ‘enemies of socialism’ and ‘imperialists’, a fear that ‘our communist comrades’ will see the Soviet system in a bad light. Stalin was often invoked as an epitome of this ‘role of personality’ and ‘excesses’ of his rule were considered to be in danger of repeating by the ‘bureaucrats’, lawyers, judges, and state security police. The trial of Siniavsky and Daniel and especially the trial of Ginzburg et al. engendered a great number of the documents of that sort. Letters, petitions, proclamations, and notes were both addressed to the Soviet authorities and circulated in the samizdat networks. For instance, the letter of G.S. Pod’iapolsky to the Persecutor General of the Soviet Union

protesting against the ‘constant violations of the socialist legality’ during one of the trials of the dissidents was addressed to the abovementioned official, but it was also circulated in samizdat and, in fact, made its way to the West (see AS 3).

Press was often addressed as well, often in response to slanderous state-sponsored articles about the dissidents. Once again, the protestors took the Soviet law seriously and demanded a legal action against libel. Another demand of these protests was to provide proofs of their ‘anti-Soviet’ activities. Here we can see the emerging of a Habermasian public sphere with its standards of publicity, argumentation, rationality, and evidence. The following passage from a letter addressed to the editor of chief of the Soviet broadsheet *Izvestia* is particularly suggestive:

As a citizen of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic, in whose name that disgraceful verdict was passed [Ginzburg trial], I protest against this verdict and the judicial farce that was staged in Moscow. I demand an immediate, open, and objective re-investigation with the presence of the public [*‘shirokaia obshchestvennost’*] and foreign reporters. I demand a public condemnation of the tradition of closed judicial reprisals with the dissidents [*inakomysliashchie*] and punish those guilty of breaking the norms of legality. I demand the truth and justice to be restored. (AS 4).

Some of the documents even demanded the broadcasting of political trials on radio and TV (AS 7). The eyewitnesses of the Ginzburg trial were protesting against the misrepresentation of the case in the Soviet newspapers (AS 6, AS 9). The demands for openness also cause the human rights activists to circulate the materials of the investigation, such as search protocols (AS 10). *The Letter of 46 Soviet Scientists* from Novosibirsk protested against the ‘lack of complete and truthful information in our newspapers’ (AS 21).

Most of the right-defenders samizdat used Soviet law, Constitution, and socialism as rhetorical means to substantiate the urgency and importance of their claims. The references to justice were widespread as well. ‘Conscience’ was another frequently cited reason for action, a tradition of rhetorical justification that reaches well beyond the Soviet era (see Boobbyer 2005).

The invocation of Russia or other respective nation is far less frequent in the right-defenders samizdat, with a few exceptions (AS 5).

Here is an example of a typical text about the trial of Ginzburg, Galanskov, Lashkova, and others:

A huge damage to the our Party and to the cause of Communism in our country originated from such 'legal' processes .. We are giving to the enemies of Communism strongest arguments against us ... We were naked, famished, poor, but we were victorious because we set the liberation of the humanity from lawlessness, abuse, and illegality. And we can lose everything, having rockets and hydrogen bombs at our disposal, if we forget the origins of the Great October Socialist Revolution (AS 11).

The orthodoxy of this text is breath-taking for a document produced by a 'dissident'. At first sight, it could be mistaken from an excerpt from a speech by a General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Yet, it comes from a samizdat-circulated letter of I.A. Iachimovich to Suslov protesting against the political trial. The letter proceeds to quote Lenin: 'we need complete and truthful information. The truth should not depend on the interests of those with an axe to grind' (AS 11). The only way to stop the proliferation of samizdat, argued Iachimovich, was to expand democratic rights and to observe the Soviet Constitution. According to him, he was writing the letter out of his 'duty as a communist' (AS 11). 'Yes to Leninism, no to Stalinism', concludes the document (AS 11).

The fear of the 'return to Stalinism' was a persistent topic in many right-defenders' samizdat texts. 'The ominous symptoms of the restoration of Stalinism' was a rhetorical construction that allowed to express dissatisfaction with the state of affairs (political trials, persecution, etc.) at the same time staying within the official Soviet discourse of the denunciation of the Stalin's 'cult of personality' in the spirit of the XX party congress. 'Return to Stalinism' was the concern numerous letters of protest (AS 14, AS 15, AS 17, AS 26, AS 34, AS 125, AS 504, AS780, AS 960, AS 1024, AS 1865). For instance, *The Appeal to the World*

Public by Bogoraz and Litvinov expressed a protest against the Ginzburg trial and a conviction that this process is ‘no better than the 1930s witch-hunt’ (AS 17).

Right-defenders samizdat sometimes coalesced with the nationalist texts. The strategy of arguing for the observation of ‘Socialist legality’ was employed by some of the Crimean Tatar documents. A *Letter* by Osmanov, written and distributed in 1968, rhetorically questioned the grounds of the ‘violation of Soviet legality in dealing with a small nation’ (AS 91). Once again, this legalistic strategy was ostentatiously loyal. The abovementioned letter complained that the Soviet power, in the year of its 50th anniversary, is unable to ‘uncover the disgraceful actions of its enemies’ (AS 91).

From its very beginning, the Soviet communism has been conceived as a morally superior project. Its advantage over the capitalism and liberal democracy was expected to be not only material but also moral. Similarly, the human rights movement in the Soviet Union and the production of its samizdat documents were conceived as a moral affair. According to Sergei Kovalev, the basis of this movement was essentially moral:

Act according to your conscience. That was the basis of the human rights movements of the 1960s-1980s. It was not a political platform – there was no such thing. Only naïve people thought that we were engaged in politics. Political platforms were not the basis of our behavior, but rather moral incompatibility. (quoted in Boobyer 2005: 76).

Politics, for most of the dissidents of the 1960s was either too dangerous or too ‘dirty’ (Boobyer 2001: 77). Traditionally, samizdat has been understood both by Soviet dissenters and by Western observers as the way of speaking the ‘truth’. Solzhenitsyn (1972: 34) famously proclaimed that ‘one word of truth will change the course of entire world’. Similarly, Alexander Esenin-Volpin (1961) searched for a universal language of logic and reason, from the lies and distortions of the official speech (Nathans 2011).

The reach of samizdat texts and their influence on the society at large is unclear. Apart from a small number of copies produced and frequent disruptions of the samizdat networks by the regime ('supply side'), many Soviet citizens were indifferent or cautious about the subject matters of human rights samizdat ('demand side'). For an ordinary Soviet citizen, the failure to be informed was sometimes a conscious choice. A friend of Soviet physicist turned dissident Sergei Kovalev, expressed this wilful ignorance well:

Do not try to convince me of something. All the general issues that you talk about – I understand them and can formulate them no worse than you can. However, I do not wish to know the details, because if I know the details, I will not be able to do the science and in general live. And I don't want that (quoted in Boobbyer 2005: 158).

Moral aspect of the dissent was particularly salient in the legendary protest on the Red Square against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Seven protesters – Larisa Bogoraz, Natalia Gorbanevskaja, Delone, Litvinov, Dremluiga, Babitski, and Feinberg – took to the square on 25 August 1968. The demonstration lasted, according to different sources, from five to fifteen minutes and then the protesters were arrested. According to the recollections of one of them, in five minutes the demonstration was surrounded by 'civilian-looking men in identical shoes' – KGB agents, that is. The protesters received different terms of confinement, and some of them spent prolonged periods in psychiatric institutions. It was clear to everybody, and above all to the participants themselves, that this protest was not simply symbolic, but also deeply personal. Many of the dissidents quoted 'conscience' (*sovest'*) as the main factor behind their decision. The demonstration spotted famous slogan from the times of the 19th century Polish revolutionaries – 'For Your and Our Freedom'.

Bogoraz herself expressed her rationale in the following way:

Had I not done this, I would have considered myself responsible for these actions of the government, just as all adult citizens bear the responsibility for all actions of our government, just as our whole people bear the responsibility for the Stalin-Beria camps, the death

sentences... I decided that it was not a matter of effectiveness in so far as I was concerned, but of my responsibility. (Gorbanevskaya 1972: 213-14)

A book of materials on the trial – *Red Square at Noon* was published in the West in 1972. The demonstration was also extensively covered in the samizdat publication *The Chronicle of the Current Events* (Gorbanevskaya was its first editor). A letter by Aleksandr Iakobson, published in the Chronicle, stated explicitly that the '25 August demonstration was not the manifestation of a political struggle ... but the manifestation of a moral struggle. One must begin by postulating that truth is needed for its own sake and for no other reason' (Boobyer 2005: 83).

In the attempt to raise the costs of the dissident activities and samizdat publishing, the KGB sometimes resorted to the practice of hostage taking. Trying to prevent the *Chronicle of the Current Events* from appearing, the KGB representatives stated that even people not directly involved or unrelated to this publication will be arrested when new issues are published. In another similar declaration, the KGB offered to the publishers of the Chronicle to ease the prison conditions of some of their friends who were already in prison if they abstain from further samizdat activities. Kovalev, Khodorovich, and Velikanova emphatically rejected these overtures:

We are presented with an unendurably difficult choice – a precisely and cruelly considered blackmail. We know that we cannot judge anyone who would do this deal – such a step is made with compassion and love. But to sacrifice one's spirit – this is suicide, and another's – murder. In a spiritual sense. We will not do this. And to those who put us in this position, we say only one thing: no. Your deeds, your conscience, your sin – these are on your account. Do you want to take hostages? We will not assist you (Boobyer 2005: 90).

In this situation, the dissidents refused to be responsible for the choice in the situation that was constructed by the other agent and shifted the responsibility to the architect of this choice –the KGB itself.

Overall, the human rights movement samizdat challenged the Soviet power to respect its own laws. It relied on the letter of the Soviet law and on the international human rights law to hold the regime accountable. The whole affair was often conceived as an essentially moral one, following the tradition of Russian intelligentsia. The discourse of many of the Soviet right-defenders samizdat document is very close the official discourse of the Soviet communism. Nevertheless, they represented a genuine protest – not simply by what they said, but also by what they did: hold the power accountable, demanded proof and evidence, and challenged the position of the authorities by asserting the importance of legality – albeit a socialist one.

Chapter 4. Samizdat as a Site of Nationalist Contention

In a closed repressive society such as the USSR, costs of voicing discontent were often prohibitively high. Therefore, even the most deeply felt grievances were often pushed offstage into the realm of samizdat and unofficial culture. The multinational composition of the Soviet population and the legacy of the years of ruthless Stalinist social engineering with its mass deportations and NKVD's 'national operations' left deep resentment in many a nationalist intellectuals. A creeping, if unplanned, Russification of the Brezhnev years, combined with a relative liberalization of the regime, resulted in an emergence of a great number of nationalist samizdat texts. The most frequent categories of nationalist texts are Ukrainian, Crimean Tatar, Lithuanian, and Jewish. Not least, the Russian nationalism resurfaced and many text of that character circulated in samizdat. For instance, Osipov and Ruslanov, two prominent Great-Russian nationalists, argued that the 'Soviet youth was becoming Russian':

By the mid-1960s yesterday's nihilist young leaders returned after serving terms in labour camps or mental hospitals. There were many things that they had seen, understood, experienced ... Rebels became revolutionaries. Their interest in Western literature and art became an interest in Russian philosophy, history, and religion, as well as in modern Western thinkers; their former cosmopolitanism was replaced by national self-consciousness. Soviet youth is becoming Russian youth again (quoted in Zisserman-Brodsky 2003: 37-38).

Osipov himself claimed that 'the labour camp rendered me a person who believes in God, Russia, and our ancestral heritage' (Zisserman-Brodsky 2003: 38).

Russian nationalist texts and text of non-Russian nationalities differ fundamentally in their motives for rejection of Soviet system and their discursive strategies. National minorities' samizdat texts demanded democratization, liberalization, development of national culture, reversal of Russification, and adherence of the Soviet rule to the international norms. 'The return to the West' was also a prominent trope in the texts of non-Russian nationalities, especially in the texts originating from the Baltic nations.

The declaration of the representatives of the Crimean Tatars to the world public (AS 45) described the brutal dispersal of demonstration in Chirik in Uzbekistan on 21 April 1968. It had 118 signatories. It was one of the first available documents that classified Stalin's deportation of the Crimean Tatars as a 'genocide'. This rhetoric strategy that will become a staple topic of both Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar samizdat texts. The deportation started on 18 May 1944 and in its aftermath thousands of Crimean Tatars died. The whole nation was stigmatized as 'traitors'. Only on September 5, 1967 the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR 'rehabilitated' the Crimean Tatars, although they were still de facto not allowed to return to the Crimea. In 1968 over 800 representatives of the Crimean Tatars came to Moscow in order to petition the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. They wanted to ask to be allowed to return to their homeland. All of them were detained. To add insult to injury, they were sent away to Tashkent: Uzbekistan was the chief destination of the original deportation. The discourse of the early Crimean Tatar documents is marked by a stressed loyalty to socialism and Soviet power. The abovementioned demonstration in Chirik was held to commemorate Lenin's birthday. The text of the Declaration (AS 45) proclaims loyalty to the USSR and the Soviet laws. It was against the 'violations' of the Socialist legality and the 'transgressions of Stalinism' that they ostensibly protested. The marked loyalty to the socialism, adoption of the regime's discursive means, and the strategy of mimetic resistance (Foucault and Oushakine) pervade the Crimean Tatar samizdat texts.

However, the Crimean Tatars as well as other non-Russian Soviet nationalities sided with the Western ideals of democracy and human rights. In matters of foreign policy, non-Russian samizdat texts also took an explicitly pro-Western position. Mustafa Dzhemilev, for instance, in one of his public letters explicitly condemned Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and argued that the Kuril Islands should be returned to Japan (Zisserman-Brodsky 2003: 41). As a part of this orientation, many samizdat documents called for international institutions to play

the role of arbiter in their issues. Crimean Tatars for example, circulated documents with their appeals to the United Nations and human rights organizations. A generic ‘world public’ was also often targeted, and so were foreign communist and socialist parties.

Initially, the national minorities samizdat deployed the same strategy of ostentatious loyalty to the Soviet power as did the human rights one. It professed loyalty to the ideals of Marxism-Leninism and allegedly sought only to correct ‘deformations’ and ‘transgressions’ (*peregiby*). Ukrainian, Crimean Tatar, Lithuanian, Armenian, and Tatar-Bashkir texts employed this rhetorical move in some degree. In 1964, *The Appeal* by Ukrainian nationalist dissidents stated that ‘our lives can serve as an example of adherence to the ideas of communism’ (AS 912). Levka Lukianenko the author of the programme of the Union of Workers and Peasants in Ukraine in a letter to the Soviet authorities stressed that the programme of the organization was based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism (AS 906). Similarly, Ivan Dziuba spoke of the Ukrainian ‘socialist nation’ (AS 914) and V. Chornovil stressed his loyalty to socialism even during his imprisonment in a Soviet labour camp (AS 969). *The Appeal to the XXIII Party Congress* by a group of Crimean Tatars activists was stressing that their co-nationals bravely fought in the Red Army during the Second World War, and even before that had contributed to the Bolshevik victory in the Civil War (AS 1877). *A Statement of Representatives of the Crimean Tatars* complained that they face ‘constant aberrations of the genuine Leninist nationality policy and the lack of desire to solve the question of Crimean Tatars in truly Leninist fashion’ (AS 922). Mustafa Dzhemilev’s attempt to unite young Crimean Tatar activists in Uzbekistan was cast as the founding of a true Leninist Youth Union. The samizdat-circulated *Letter to General Grigorenko* by Dzhemilev stressed that the organization was a communist one (AS 281).

However, the national minorities’ samizdat texts associate themselves not with the socialism as a whole, but rather with the ‘true Leninism’ and its contribution to the development

of their national cultures. Indeed, the Soviet Union was an ‘affirmative action empire’ (Martin: 2003) that sponsored nation-building on an unprecedented scale, providing subsidies and state encouragement for schooling in national languages, publication of national literature, development of theatre, opera, ballet, museums, and national intelligentsia. The 1920s were considered by many nationalist dissidents to be the Golden Age of the Soviet nationalities policy when the affirmative action dominated over more brutal means of social engineering that the Soviet State employed in the 1930s-1940s – terror, deportations, and NKVD ‘national operations’. Hence, the juxtaposition of a ‘good Leninism’ and ‘bad Stalinism’ had some roots in the Soviet history. As a means to demand the fulfilment of their demands, at the same time staying loyal to the regime, it was invaluable for the Soviet nationalist dissidents and samizdat producers who had to operate in an extremely repressive system.

However, the wholesale rejection of Soviet ‘totalitarian system’ was also present in some of the samizdat documents of the national minorities. An appeal to the UN from Crimean Tatars expressed the hope that ‘one day we will be able to write the history of terror and lawlessness, and we will make all the world to know what is the true face of the Soviet power is’ (AS 491). Another appeal by a group of Crimean Tatars claimed that their persecution stems from the system itself: ‘our tragedy did not result from the evil deeds of individuals such as Stalin, Beria, or Voroshilov, but is an outcome of the totalitarian system as a whole’ (quoted in Zisserman-Brodsky 2003: 57). Starting from the 1970s, the rejection of the official Soviet discourse by nationalist dissidents became more frequent. Allegations of loyalty, whether ritual or sincere, disappear, and Lenin ceases to be the ultimate authority in matters political. Valery Marchenko, for instance, in 1975 characterized the Marxism-Leninism as ‘the most brutal apology of murder’ (AS 3381). In 1979, Tatar activist Reshat Dzhemilev (not to be confused with Mustafa Dzhemilev) similarly argued that the deportation of Crimean Tatar was the result of the functioning of the Soviet system and of practical application of Marxism (AS 3600).

Mykola Sagaidak even proclaimed in the Ukrainian Herald that the USSR was a ‘fascist empire in which KGB decides what rights its inhabitants have’ (AS 2076). To sum up, the period of ‘mimetic resistance’ and reliance on the official discourse to substantiate their claims was largely rejected by the nationalist dissidents by the 1980s. A certain discursive dependence on the regime remained, in particular, in the reproduction of primordialists national historical narratives and in the moral substantiation of the claims. Nevertheless, nationalist text in samizdat are among the earliest specimens rejecting Communism and Soviet ideology altogether.

Russian nationalist texts in samizdat exhibited a very different discourse. Although there was a wide variety of texts produced by dissidents of all political hues, most of Russian nationalist texts were of a conservative, anti-Western, and outright reactionary character. The samizdat periodical *Veche* was a primary example of this category. Ivan Ruslanov’s essay *On the Youth in the Russian History* that was published in the *Veche* nicely illustrates the views of this group. Westernization, ‘treacherous intelligentsia’, and Marxism were castigated as inimical to the spirit of the Russian nation. Ruslanov argued that the

Russian revolutionary idea is national neither in origins nor in its aims. Socialism, parliamentarism, and political democracy of an arithmetical majority have been deeply alien and unnecessary for the Russian self-consciousness. The Russian commune, whose economic meaning stems from moral-spiritual grounds, has nothing in common with the socialist cell (quoted in Zissermann-Brodsky 2003: 45).

The tropes of blood, soil, national spirit, community, resurgence, and decadence pervade the essay and *Veche* texts in general. Unlike many other dissident texts, references to Lenin as an authority are conspicuously absent. The discourse of *Veche* is close to the classical Romantic nationalism, combined with Slavophile sentiments, ideas of Russian exceptionalism, and longing for the lost *Gemeinschaft* of Russian peasant commune. It is remarkable that in Russian-originating samizdat conservative nationalists of *Veche* variety were among the first dissidents

who were able to reject communism altogether. While many other texts exhibit a ‘terrifying mimicry of samizdat’ (Oushakine), copying the official discourse in its structure, if not in its content, the nationalist seem to did away with it altogether. Nationalist discourse seem to be the only one capable of displacing the Communist one (cf. an article by Grzymala-Busse and Darden (2011) connecting the strength of nationalist tradition to the success of de-communization and democratization in post-socialist Europe).

There was, however, a not very widespread but an interesting variety of Russian nationalist texts in samizdat – a mix of Stalinism and Great-Russian nationalism. The ‘Fetisov group’, whose arrest was reported in the Chronicle of Current Events in 1969, is the best example of this strand in dissident movement. Its members combined anti-Semitism, Slavophile ideas, and appraisal of Stalinism. The only mistake of Stalin was, according to Fetisov, not to come down on ‘rootless cosmopolites’ hard enough. Ideologically similar *Manifesto of Russian Patriots* argued that ‘democracy in its egalitarian variant has proved to be both the result of degeneration and simultaneously its stimulus’ (Zissermann-Brodsky 2003: 47). Similarly, Osipov argued that the Westernization of Russia ‘dulled the national spirit, debased its honour and nobility, undermined the faith, depreciated life. In return for all that, they brought freedom.... I believe that even the problem of human right in the USSR should be given less prominence in this concrete historical moment than the issue of the dying Russian nation’ (Zisserman-Brodsky 2003: 48). Osipov and his group believed that authoritarianism observing the laws was the best choice for Russia, not a liberal democracy.

The attitude to the West was a point of contention among the Russian nationalists. The All-Russian Social Christian Union for the Liberation of the People - the *VSKhSON* – is an example of a Russian text of a different character. Its Program is marked by a complete rejection of communism, but it also appraises the capacity of the ‘Western civilization’. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders* in 1973 (Solzhenitsyn 1974). Despite his

acclaim in the West, Solzhenitsyn was far from being a liberal. He disliked the Soviet communism, but he did not want Russia to be Westernized either. Instead, he preferred it to opt out of the race with the West altogether. In a classical Slavophile style he rejected forced economic development, industrialization, growth of cities, and materialism as meaningful values for Russia. However, he hoped that the West would be able to overcome these problems. Unlike Solzhenitsyn, *Veche* authors despised the West. Decrepit, bourgeois, decadent, weak, materialistic, diabolic, and standardized – these were the epithets Western societies were described with in *Veche*. The Russian revolution was rejected accordingly, and so were the Petrine reforms of the 18th century. Osipov argued that ‘the key point of the Russian foreign policy should be non-interference in the problems of the West’ (AS 1013).

The Ukrainian question was of interest to many of the Russian dissidents as well. Solzhenitsyn considered Ukraine to be a part of the historically Russian territory. However, he argued that Russia should cast off the burden of empire and turn itself into a national state. Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, for him, were not a part of this ‘burden’ but an integral part of the ‘Russian world’. He was against the independence of Ukraine, acknowledging, nevertheless, that the Ukrainians constitute a distinct nation. Solzhenitsyn passionately argued that Russia does not have the strength to maintain the empire but he nevertheless reproduced the old Great-Russian chauvinist myth about the construction of the Ukrainian language by the Habsburg Empire.

The rhetorical repertoire of these texts is reminiscent of the text of classical fascism with its obsession with ‘degeneration’ and ‘decadent democracy’. Although the subject of this research is not a comparison of Soviet and contemporary Russian discourses, it must be noted that in contemporary Russia similar ideas are expressed by fascist figures like Aleksandr Dugin, Aleksandr Prokhanov, and Zakhar Prilepin. While it is important not to succumb to presentism and not to present the past as logical and inevitable prelude to the present, the conservative turn

of contemporary Russia and the nationalist rhetoric of its propaganda have roots in the Soviet past.

By no means all Russian samizdat documents subscribed to this view of the world. Sakharov, another famous Soviet dissident, disagreed with Solzhenitsyn and argued in favour of democracy and against ‘Slavophile myths’ (Zisserman-Brodsky 2003: 179). Soldatov, one of the Russian dissidents of a liberal variety, wrote a *Letter to Russian Patriots* rejected the ‘utopian’ visions of *Veche* and conservative Russian nationalists and argued in favour of a liberal democracy (AS 3256).

A separate strand in samizdat was constituted by texts concerned with religion and religious persecution. Although it is not a primary subject of this study, many of this religious texts are adjacent to the nationalist category, especially the Russian Orthodox publications. Osipov, one of the major contributors to the *Veche* magazine, started in 1974 a periodical *Zemlia*. It argued from the positions close to *Veche*, but emphasized more Christianity as an integral part of Russian culture. Apart from local material, the émigré periodical *Vestnik RSKhD* was circulated in samizdat in the USSR as well. Overall, the Russian nationalist samizdat exhibited a strongly negative attitude to communism. Osipov in his article ‘*Three Attitudes Toward the Motherland*’ criticized Marxism and Communism as foreign impositions alien to the Russian soul (AS 1844). Religious Orthodox samizdat texts also, unsurprisingly, castigated the Soviet Communism as alien to Christianity. However, they did not necessarily rejected the system outright, but rather the attempts to impose atheism.

To sum up, the samizdat also served as a site of nationalist contestation of the Soviet regime by both the Russians and non-Russian nationalities alike. In terms of discourse, however, there is a marked difference between these two groups: while the Russian texts mainly embrace the *Blut und Boden* variety of romantic nationalism combined with Slavophile ideas,

the texts of national minorities are oriented more towards the Western-style democracy, liberalisation, and human rights.

Conclusions

The conventional story of the Soviet dissent would have it as a long heroic struggle ultimately ending in defeat. Although the language of the dissidents have been appropriated by Gorbachev and the reformers around him, the softening of the Soviet regime in perestroika years deprived the dissident samizdat practices of their status of a powerful resistance act. The image of dissidents has undergone a significant change and in today's Russia they are mostly perceived as misguided individuals who had helped the West to 'brought down a great country'. On the other hand, in 1996 Andrei Sinyavsky observed that 'Gorbachev simply read his fill of samizdat and was fulfilling the dream of Soviet dissidents by becoming the first dissident in his own Politburo' (Boobbyer 2005: 251).

Ethnic and national issues were a major site of contestation of the Soviet regime. Russian and national minorities' nationalists developed two distinct discourses in their samizdat texts. While Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar national movements framed their demands according to the discourse of human rights and democracy, Russian nationalist were anti-modern and anti-Western in their rhetoric.

The Soviet citizens living under the regime had managed to articulate far more 'islands of separateness' than the totalitarian model envisaged. From everyday sedition to samizdat publishing, from workers manipulating industrial relations in their favor (Filtzer 1992) to professors of history reexamining the national past (Berger 2007; Husband 1991), from grotesque 'living outside' (Yurchak 2006) to heroic demonstration on the Red Square – the submission of the Soviet citizens to the system has never been as complete as totalitarian model would have us to believe. Of course, the totalitarian model itself is long out fashion – since, at least, the 1970s revisionist turn in the Soviet studies. The ambiguities of the resistance and collaboration with the Soviet system illustrates this nicely. On the one hand, there is an ample

evidence that contradicts the totalitarian vision. On the other hand, it is perilous to consider the Soviet dissenters to be some kind of crypto-liberals rejecting the system wholesale. The Soviet subjectivity was not necessarily liberal, and the tenacity of liberal subject (see Krylova 2000) in the Soviet studies is indeed a cardinal sin of the discipline. There is a tendency to see the Soviet Union in Orwellian terms – all too understandable because of the artistic and sociological merits of the *1984*. However, as Oushakine (2001) claims the unofficial samizdat activities effectively mimicked – and amplified – the official discourse. This ‘terrifying mimicry of samizdat’ suggests that the discursive autonomy of ‘independent’ samizdat publishers was limited at best. The human rights defenders strived to hold the Soviet authorities accountable to the *Soviet* laws; the individual dissenters expressed their moral protest from the positions that were not dissimilar to the *Moral Code of the Builder of Communism*; and the witch-hunting mood, suspicion, and intolerance among some of the dissidents rivaled the worst Soviet examples. Everyday dissent and sedition were also bound by the discursive power of the Soviet socialism. On the other hand, the spontaneous reemergence of the philosophical thought, the reinvention of the philosophical tradition and skepticism, the resilience of the remnants of the ‘world culture’ to which the dissidents clung and which they reproduced to supplement the official version of it, the rapid and thorough reexamination of the national histories after only a couple of years of perestroika and the nationalist mobilization of the glasnost’ years to which it had contributed – all this suggest that the Soviet state was much more brittle than the contemporary observers believed. It never managed to control the population entirely, and although the dissenting voices were not liberal par excellence, they still were voices of dissent that the Soviet power failed to uproot despite its enormous efforts.

The question whether or not the declarations of loyalty represent a genuine identification with the discourse of the regime is partly a methodological one. It was a tradition of Sovietology and totalitarian school of thought to represent the inhabitants of the Soviet Union as crypto-

liberals, cynically disguising their own views under the cover of demonstrative acceptance of the regime's rhetoric. However, there is no ground to privilege speculations of Western scholars over what the Soviet subjects wrote themselves. Current scholarship on the Soviet subjectivity suggests that at least part of the Soviet citizens actively associated themselves with the regime and sought to reconstruct their selves on a new communist basis. Although the Soviet subjectivity debate focuses on the Stalin's era, its finding has some implications for the post-Stalin USSR as well. Even if the use of the regime rhetoric was just a trick and a case of 'mimetic resistance' (Foucault), then it possible to argue with the anthropologist James C. Scott that routine and continuous performance of rituals of subjection leads to the real acceptance of domination: 'the face grows to fit the mask', as he aptly puts it (Scott 2003: 44). Whatever perspective is closer to the truth, there is no reason to dismiss the proclamations of loyalty and the dissidents' mimicking of the official discourse as irrelevant.

The case of the Soviet samizdat suggest the importance of what I propose to call the 'repertoire of dissent'. In order to express protest or dissatisfaction with the status quo, dissidents need to draw on the discourse other than a mere dissatisfaction. The Soviet law, the human rights, the rhetoric of national martyrdom and genocide, the Slavophile ideology, true Leninism, Christianity – these are just a few examples of the discourses that structure the repertoire of dissent and it give it language, meaning, and structure. The protest was performed through this discursive mediation. However, I question the possibility to find some deeper, more fundamental level on which the 'true' meaning of protest, dissent, and contestation of power lies. Judith Butler (2004) famously argued that there is no gender identity deeper and more basic rather than the one that is created through performance. Likewise, the attempts to penetrate to the source of discontent, to reveal its true basis is futile and methodologically suspect. The reason for this suspicion is that such attempts usually lead to the portrayal of Soviet dissident as crypto-liberal in disguise who cunningly employ rhetorical tricks in order to protect

themselves from the oppressive Soviet regime. Such casual ascription of liberal subjectivity is both unwarranted and ahistorical.

The protest of many dissidents was not directed against the Soviet system as such, let alone against communism. Their goal was to do away with the practice of closed trials and to introduce openness (*glasnost*). This idea of openness (*glasnost*) – introduced well before Gorbachev – was considered to be a means to prevent the horrors of Stalinism from happening again. It was believed to be necessary to amend the ‘transgressions’ of the system – not to fight the system itself. Once again, we see the identification of the authors with the socialist norms and using them as rhetorical tools against the regime itself. If the Soviet dissidents, ‘other-thinking’ (*inakomysliashchie*) were thinking differently from the ruling elite, this difference consisted in taking the norms and ideals of Soviet socialist system more seriously. A casual ascription of liberal subjectivity to the Soviet dissidents is misleading. While some of them, undoubtedly, qualify as Western-style liberals, a vast majority appears to be very different. The case of the Soviet dissent demonstrate that we should imagine that every political protest that opposes a repressive system is necessarily a liberal one. More often than not, discourse of samizdat texts employed the rhetoric of the regime to challenge the regime itself. The ‘terrifying mimicry’ of samizdat texts (Oushakine 2012) is a testimony to the power of the modern state to shape the subjectivity of its citizens. The failure of the Soviet system to eradicate dissent despite decades of struggle and a colossal state security apparatus points to the limits of this capacity to mould citizens into compliant supporters of power.

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Appendix 1

The samizdat documents of *Sobranie Dokumentov Samizdata* collection of the Open Society Archive (HU OSA 300-85-11), sorted by archival containers¹

Container	Sobranie Dokumentov Samizdata, Volume	AS (Arkhiv Samizdata) Documents	Year of publication
1	1	AS1-106	1972
	2	AS107-154	1972
	3	AS155-218	1972
2	4	AS219-301	1973
	5	AS302-383	1973
	6	AS384-470	1973
3	7	AS471-543	1974
	8	AS544-622	1974
	9	AS623-699	1974
4	10a	Chronicle of the Current Events, 1-16	1973
	10b	Chronicle of the Current Events, 17-32	1973
	11	AS700-769	1975
5	12	AS379-1946	1975
	13	Jewish samizdat periodicals	1974
	14	AS441-799	1977
6	15	AS800-1241	1977
	16	Samizdat periodical <i>Obshchestvennye Problemy</i> , 1-5	1976

¹ Source: Open Society Archives, <http://osaarchivum.org/db/fa/300-85-11-1.htm>, date of access: 06.06.2014.

7	17	Lithuanian samizdat	1976
	18	Ukrainian samizdat	1976
	19	Baptist dissidents documents	1976
8	20	Samizdat periodical <i>Politicheskii Dnevnik</i>	1976
	21a	Samizdat periodical <i>Veche</i> , 1-5	1976
	21b	Samizdat periodical <i>Veche</i> , 6-9	
9	22	AS1014-1135	1977
	23	AS1136-1180	1977
10	24	AS1181-1290	1977
	25	AS1291-1299, 1392-1500	1977
	26	Documents of the Orthodox church	1978
11	27	AS1300-1389	1978
	28	AS1501-1599	1978
	29	AS1600-1699	1978
12	30	Helsinki movement samizdat	1978