

Sobranie Dokumentov Samizdata

An original microfiche publication



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Samizdat: Primary source material for the study of current Soviet affairs

Although the word **samizdat** (from **sam** - **izdat** = self-publishing) first appeared in written material from the USSR early in 1966, the phenomenon to which it refers has a very long history. In its broadest sense, as written material circulated in circumvention of the censorship system, samizdat is a tradition dating back to the eighteenth century. Since the early 1960s the proliferation of material and the development of new methods for overcoming official censorship indicate that samizdat has become a medium of communication of increasing and undeniable importance, not only to observers and scholars outside the USSR, but more especially to the tens of thousands of people inside the Soviet Union who write, type, distribute, and read this unpublished written material. The material which filters out of the USSR represents only a small part of the total circulating inside the country.

The definition of the word samizdat and the description of the phenomenon vary with the point of view of the observer. Inside the USSR the element of circulation seems to be crucial, that is, the process of reproduction and distribution via an underground network. Western observers would see the technical process as less important than the fact of actual publication, whether in the USSR or abroad. Again, inside the USSR samizdat may include translations into Russian of kinds of texts written and published abroad as well as translations of radio programs and newspaper and magazine articles from Western newspapers and international journals. A distinction is frequently made between literary works not yet published and unlikely to be published and non-literary materials (newsletters, petitions, essays, articles, trial manuscripts, manifestos, etc.). But to Western observers, samizdat has generally come to mean any writing from inside the Soviet Union which has not been or could not be published there. Observers know more about dissenting opinion in the USSR than was known a decade ago, but samizdat is only one indication of the social, political, and intellectual ferment which has developed in the USSR; it is not a synonym for political dissent, which is much broader and more complex.

Samizdat touches upon many themes and subjects including politics, economics, science, religion, cultural life, and human rights. Religious samizdat, for example, comes from virtually all churches, denominations, and sects active in the USSR today. Religious samizdat is not devotional or theological but deals primarily with church-state relations and derives from the common experience of religious groups in the face of official hostility and outright persecution. The official Soviet

posture that full religious freedom exists is belied by the hundreds of pages of samizdat picturing the anguish of parents whose children have been taken away and confined in state orphanages, of families of believers whose husbands and fathers have been sentenced to prison, of congregations whose priests have been exiled. Religious samizdat presents a degree of persecution almost unprecedented in its ferocity and scope.

It is estimated that more than 40,000 manuscript pages of samizdat have been received in the West in the last decade. Most of these have been collected by the Arkhiv Samizdata, a research archive created in 1968 by the Research Department of Radio Liberty in Munich. Many samizdat texts have been published in book form, especially major literary works, autobiographies, documentary collections, and essays. But almost half of the samizdat found in the West has not been published or, in some cases, only printed once in a Russian-language newspaper or journal not normally subscribed to by most libraries. In 1971, the Arkhiv Samizdata began to reproduce all of the samizdat material registered in its files (with the exception of works already available in book form) in mimeographed volumes for distribution to the Western academic community via eight well-known repository libraries in Europe and the United States. These volumes are issued under the title *Sobranie Dokumentov Samizdata* (Collected Samizdat Documents).

Materialy Samizdata

This weekly mimeographed bulletin publishes the text of new samizdat material as soon as possible after it is received abroad.

Materialy Samizdata is made available by the Arkhiv Samizdata to interested persons for a subscription fee of DM 150 per annum to cover the costs of reproduction and postage.

Materialy Samizdata appeared in 50 separate issues in both 1972 and 1973, with a total of 1,700 manuscript pages in each of those years. The flow of new samizdat in 1974 continues at a comparable rate.

Subscription requests should be addressed to:
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The collection

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Number of fiches	415 (407 concerning documents and 8 bearing indexes)
Size of fiches	105 x 148 mm
Film type	Positive silver halide
Internal finding aids	Eye-legible headers with volume numbers and document numbers
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Order number	KR-10,516/1

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RUSSIAN EMIGRÉ JOURNALS 1855-1917

The Russian emigrants' publications from the period before 1917 opposed czarism, and it was their spade-work which prepared the way for the February and October revolutions of 1917.

IDC has made available on microfiche a collection of 139 Russian Emigré Journals based on the bibliography by Tatiana Ossorguine-Bakounine, entitled *L'Emigration Russe en Europe. Catalogue collectif des périodiques russes 1855-1940*, and on the excellent collection of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam.

