Samizdat and Soviet Dissident Publics

Ann Komaromi

A few years ago, Thomas C. Wolfe posed what he called an awkward question: why should we care today about Soviet dissent?[1] We might object that Soviet dissidence is obviously interesting as one of the outstanding phenomena of the late Soviet era. When Benedict Anderson imagined the front page of a newspaper for his discussion of print culture in his influential book on "imagined communities," first published in 1983, he described a typical front page from the *New York Times* with stories "about Soviet dissidents, famine in Mali, a gruesome murder, a coup in Iraq, the discovery of a rare fossil in Zimbabwe, and a speech by Mitterrand." Anderson purposely threw together relatively random events with more enduring signs of the time to underscore the arbitrary linkage created by the newspaper's publication on the basis of a regular calendar.[2] Today we notice how strongly Soviet dissidents, along with François Mitterrand, signify that era. Dictionaries show the importance of dissidence, too. For example, the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1993) introduced a new meaning of a "dissident": "A person who openly opposes the policies of a totalitarian (esp. Communist) régime."[3] Likewise, the neologism *samizdat* appeared in dictionaries. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defined *samizdat* as "the clandestine or illegal copying and distribution of literature (orig., and chiefly in the U.S.S.R.); an 'underground press'; a text or texts produced by this."[4] Samizdat was the chief activity of Soviet dissidents. Setting aside the problematic aspects of this definition for the moment, the point of the linguistic innovations as reflected in dictionaries seems clear: samizdat and dissidence are characteristic of the particular historical moment.

Such obvious historical importance may in fact be the problem. The political dynamics of the Cold War tended to fix the idea of dissidence in

I would like to thank my anonymous reviewers at *Slavic Review* as well as Mark D. Steinberg for their helpful comments and Benjamin Nathans and Alexander Gribanov for feedback on an early version of this article. My appreciation also goes to Anastassia Kostrioukova for sharing Baptist Samizdat materials from her research at the Keston Center, Baylor University.

1. Thomas C. Wolfe, "Comment" (on Special Section "Genealogies of Soviet Dissent," *Slavic Review* 66, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 664.

2. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983), 37.

3. See definition 4 of "dissident" in *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles,* ed. Lesley Brown, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1993), 1:703. The new definition of *dissidenty* as participants in a movement against totalitarian regimes in socialist countries appeared in *Bol'shoi entsiklopedicheskii slovar',* ed. A. M. Prokhorov (Moscow, 1997). The term *dissident* comes from the Latin *dissidere,* meaning "to sit apart." It thus emphasizes physical action and location. Because of that etymology, I prefer to speak of "dissidence" rather than "dissent."

4. From the *Oxford English Dictionary,* quoted by Peter Steiner, "Introduction: On Samizdat, Tamizdat, Magnitizdat, and Other Strange Words That Are Difficult to Pronounce," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 614.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the minds of many western observers as opposition to the Soviet regime. This fixed binary made it tempting to romanticize dissidents and their cause. Dissidents, however, had little or no demonstrated impact on the Soviet regime, during Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika, during the fall of the Soviet regime, or in helping to shape a more democratic and just government after the end of the Soviet Union. In more recent times, historians have disputed the need to focus on an elite group of dissidents.[5] Meanwhile, conferences and collections keep appearing to evaluate the dissident legacy in a critical way without falling into a static memorialization of heroic dissident efforts of the past.[6] Promising moves toward a critical history of dissidence include the attempt to more fully locate dissidence in its local Soviet (or other) context and to scrutinize the peculiarity of its means of communication, internally and externally, through uncensored texts.[7]

For my critical historical approach, I will broaden the conception of Soviet dissidence in two ways. First, I want to define samizdat more precisely as a mode of existence of the text and use that definition to encompass a wider set of materials that in many cases show no struggle with the Soviet regime as such. Second, I intend to pick up on a recent characterization of dissidence as a mixed "private-public" sphere. This description promises to open up the way we may explore social and cultural changes in the late Soviet period.[8] To do this, I will engage Jürgen Habermas's concept of the public sphere as reconsidered by Nancy Fraser. Her modified version of a sphere with multiple publics will shed light on the dynamics of a dissident public whose development depended on internal tensions and communication with an international audience.

The best-known representatives of Soviet dissidence, the democratic dissidents, often characterized their struggle as a moral rather than a political one. They preferred the term *inakomysliashchie,* those who think

5. See V. A. Kozlov on "dissidentocentrism," in "Vvedenie," *Kramola: Inakomyslie v SSSR pri Khrushcheve i Brezhneve, 1953–1982 gg.* (Moscow, 2005), 5–64, 10; and Alexei Yurchak, on "deterritorialization" as a more widespread and significant phenomenon than dissident "opposition," in *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, 2006), 115.

6. For example, Friederike Kind-Kovacs and Jessie Labov defined the aim of their volume *From Samizdat to Tamizdat* (New York, 2011) as the development of a critical approach, rather than "another celebratory, anniversary-style series" (2).

7. See location of dissidence in its Soviet context in Benjamin Nathans, "The Dictatorship of Reason: Aleksandr Vol'pin and the Idea of Rights under 'Developed Socialism,'" *Slavic Review* 66, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 630–63. For a discussion and illustration of new approaches, see the two special issues "Publish and Perish: Samizdat and Underground Cultural Practices in the Soviet Bloc (I) and (II)," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 4 (Winter 2008) and 30, no. 1 (Spring 2009).

8. Viktor Voronkov and Jan Wielgohs described a private-public sphere of dissidence in "Soviet Russia," in Detlef Pollack and Jan Wielgohs, eds., *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe: Origins of Civil Society and Democratic Transition* (Burlington Vt., 2004), 95–118, 113. Kevin M. F. Platt and Benjamin Nathans referenced the "private-public" formulation in a response to Yurchak, "Sotsialisticheskaia po forme, neopredelennaia po soderzhaniiu: pozdnesovetskaia kul'tura i kniga Alekseia Iurchaka, *Vse bylo navechno, poka ne konchilos'*," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie,* no. 101 (2010): 167–84.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

differently, rather than "dissidents," a term loaded with political freight in the Cold War. Those involved with the democratic movement regarded the right to defend every oppressed individual as a moral obligation.[9] This moral understanding of dissidence corresponds to a broader, international discourse that views human rights as a moral obligation. Historian Samuel Moyn pointed out that human rights appeared to be an alternative to failed political ideologies.[10] The ambiguity of a project that is political, yet not understood to be political, raises questions about what constitutes public activity. In this article I will call all the Soviets who participate in samizdat "dissidents," in part for the productive resistance this label produces.

The basis for analysis will be a survey of Soviet samizdat periodicals before perestroika, from 1956 to 1986.[11] The wide range of classic Soviet samizdat encompassed there affords a provocative way to analyze the growth and development of Soviet dissidence in the late Soviet period.

Defining Samizdat and Soviet Dissidence

If we define samizdat more precisely than usual, we get a more complicated picture of Soviet dissidence than the one suggested by Cold War binaries and political narratives of opposition. Samizdat taken this way suggests that we cannot simply limit our understanding of dissidence to activities that use the language of human rights, or even national or religious advocacy. Liudmila Alekseeva described samizdat as the "backbone," the "core," of dissidence.[12] The question remains, however, whether samizdat should properly be considered a medium, a genre, a corpus of texts, or a specific textual culture. I take it to be the last of these, a historically limited system of uncensored production and circulation of texts in the Soviet Union after Iosif Stalin and before perestroika, as well as the corpus of texts produced by that system. Samizdat can be productively approached as a particular "mode of existence" of the text—one that is similar to and dependent on print, while not being print.

Samizdat is often introduced as the natural successor to a tradition of uncensored press in Russia that flowered with the liberal press and culminated with the revolutionary press. This seems too restrictive a genealogy, however. Peter Reddaway, in his introduction to material from the best-known samizdat human rights serial publication, the Moscow *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii* (Chronicle of Current Events, 1968–1983), emphasized

9. Philip Boobbyer explored dissidence as a moral project in his study *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia* (London, 2005).

10. Samuel Moyn argued that human rights were widely understood as "a moral alternative to bankrupt political utopias," in *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010), 5.

11. Approximately 300 periodicals are described in Ann Komaromi, "Soviet Samizdat Periodicals," at samizdat.library.utoronto.ca (last accessed 1 December 2011).

12. Ludmilla Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent: Contemporary Movements for National, Religious, and Human Rights,* trans. Carol Pearce and John Glad (Middletown, Conn., 1985), 284. Alekseeva's history first appeared as *Istoriia inakomysliia v SSSR* (Benson, Vt., 1984).

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the place of Aleksandr Herzen's *Kolokol* (The Bell, 1857–1867) and the anti-tsarist movements of the late nineteenth-century era in the "origins of samizdat."[13] H. Gordon Skilling, writing about the origins of samizdat, cited Herzen's *Kolokol,* Aleksandr Radishchev's critique of autocracy *Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu* (A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow, 1790), and Vladimir Lenin's *Iskra* (Spark, 1900–1903). Among other literary precedents, Skilling included Aleksandr Pushkin's verses.[14] A number of Pushkin's verses that circulated in manuscript form correspond to the political characterization of uncensored writing. The Decembrist revolutionaries in particular valued several of Pushkin's manuscript verses for their exposure of and response to the autocratic tsarist regime. Yet Pushkin's uncensored *Gavriliiada* (The Gabrieliad, 1821), a blasphemous parody of the Annunciation, cannot be interpreted as political in the same way. The ambiguous agency of the insemination of the Virgin Mary in Pushkin's account corresponds to a playful freedom in Pushkin's construction of himself. The playfulness of that construction exceeds the bounds of good writing set by society, by the tsar's censors, and even by the Decembrist revolutionaries. Aleksandr Suetnov, first Russian bibliographer of samizdat, cited in addition to the other commonly enumerated precedents of samizdat the uncensored writings of Archpriest Avvakum. Avvakum's *Life* evokes the religious dissidence of the Old Believers. It remains in the Russian literary canon in part thanks to its idiosyncratic style, marked by oral and profane elements that convey more than Avvakum's fervent religious belief.[15] The uncensored writings of Avvakum and Pushkin suggest the combination of a nonconformist style of expression and political critique that we find in mixed proportions in late Soviet samizdat.

While the genealogy of samizdat usually suggests some kind of continuity with the underground press and political opposition to tsarist regimes, we cannot reduce samizdat to the idea of political opposition. Soviet dissidents often insisted they were not engaged in opposition. Rights defenders of the democratic movement employed a strategy of "legalism," designed to compel authorities to follow their own laws in a clear and consistent manner—this is hardly opposition to the regime as such.[16] If "underground press" means political opposition, then it would be incorrect to characterize samizdat that way. The underground press in Russian history and official Soviet discourse carries specific associations with political agitation, parties, and ideologies. In official Soviet history, the illegal press of the nineteenth century illustrated the history of workers

13. See Peter Reddaway, "Introduction," in Reddaway, ed. and trans., *Uncensored Russia: The Human Rights Movement in the Soviet Union. The Annotated Text of the Unofficial Moscow Journal* A Chronicle of Current Events *(Nos. 1–11)* (London, 1972), 17, 20. See also the name of Mark W. Hopkins's book *Russia's Underground Press: The Chronicle of Current Events* (New York, 1983).

14. H. Gordon Skilling, Samizdat *and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe* (Columbus, Ohio, 1989), 3.

15. Aleksandr Suetnov, *Samizdat: Bibliograficheskii ukazatel'* (Moscow, 1992), 1:6.

16. Reddaway described this legal angle as a distinctive aspect of Soviet dissidence as compared to the tradition that precedes it, *Uncensored Russia,* 23–24. For more on the dissident strategy of legalism, see Nathans, "Dictatorship of Reason."

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and the development of Marxism moving toward revolution.[17] Late Soviet samizdat lacked that defining fervor of political ideology, and it did not agitate to overthrow the regime. At the same time, a reductive analogy between samizdat and the underground press would be technologically inaccurate, because samizdat was not (in the overwhelming majority of cases), produced on any kind of printing press.[18] The typewriter dominated in Soviet samizdat.

These two points are related: samizdat as realized through its characteristic typewriter technology was less susceptible to party or organizational control. Because so many people had their own typewriters, the production of samizdat was more individual and typically less linked to ideology and organized political structures. Samizdat usually did not look like political propaganda activity, not least because such activity could be prosecuted more harshly. The circulation of samizdat was more rhizomatic and spontaneous than the underground press—samizdat was like mushroom "spores."[19] A samizdat author, editor, or editorial group generally could not produce a large print run and distribute copies from a central point. An editorial in the Moscow *Chronicle* addressed itself to readers who were the "volunteer publishers." These reader-publishers passed on copies or typed additional copies for distribution. This chain structure protected everyone: if you wanted to pass information back to the editors, the editorial suggested, use the chain and do not try to jump directly to the editors, or you might be taken for an informant.[20]

On the one hand, this type of distribution allows the propagandistic "infection" of people with a particular ideology. On the other hand, this reliance on readers to copy and pass on the texts also opens up the possibility of alteration. The *Chronicle* editorial in issue 5 warned readers to be careful about mistakes. The point was not the purity of the propagandistic message but the transmission of correct facts. A counterexample might be found in the imaginative and experimental periodical *Nomer* (*Number,* 1965–1974, Sverdlovsk and Rostov), one issue of which featured a section called "Vpishi svoe" (Write Your Own).[21] Issues of this neo-avant-garde periodical were elaborately colored, partly or wholly handwritten,

17. See the foreword to *Svodnyi katalog russkoi nelegal'noi i zapreshchennoi pechati XIX veka: Knigi i periodicheskie izdaniia,* ed. I. P. Kondakov, B. S. Itenberg, et al. (Moscow, 1971), 1:v–xvi. The editors wrote that uncensored periodicals of the nineteenth century were integral to the history of the workers' press, by which one could study the "road from Populism [*narodnichestvo*] to Marxism" (v).

18. As an exception, unofficial Baptist groups constructed their own printing presses, which were regularly found and confiscated by authorities. See Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals since World War II* (Kitchener, Canada, 1981). There was also relatively widespread use of photography to duplicate typescripts, although the bulkiness of the texts produced this way constituted a disadvantage.

19. Alexeyeva employed this metaphor in *Soviet Dissent,* 284.

20. See Reddaway, *Uncensored Russia,* 35, I specify the Moscow *Chronicle* because *Lietuvos kataliku baznycios kronika* (Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania) also existed.

21. The section appears in *Nomer,* no. 30 (August 1971). A copy exists at the Historisches Archiv der Forschungsstelle Osteuropa, Bremen, Germany, File 97 (Sigov and Tarshis).

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and they incorporated found texts in witty ways. It seems unlikely that such issues were reproduced or widely circulated. Still, the concept of a text collectively written, altered after the initial authors and editors are done with it, highlights a truth about samizdat: the samizdat system depended on people adding their own imprimatur to texts, at least by passing on a work. In some cases this involved significant alteration of the work.[22] The different faces of a samizdat work, depending on its reproduction and presentation, may be most immediately noticeable in *tamizdat* (over there) reproduction in western print. Russian émigré groups like NTS (Narodno-Trudovoi Soiuz, the Popular-Labor Union) provocatively described samizdat anthologies reprinted in *Grani* (Facets) as "underground" (*podpol'nye*) journals, part of a burgeoning movement to liberate Russia, even though periodicals like the openly produced literary collection *Sintaksis* (Syntax, 1959–1960), with the editor's name on the cover, clearly were not intended to be part of any underground movement.[23] In contrast to revolutionary literature, samizdat depended for its very existence on the endorsement by a varied readership within and outside the USSR. We know about *Nomer* because people writing after the fall of the Soviet Union found it to be a significant part of the history of a curious neo-avant-garde collective.[24]

Samizdat texts and the various types of dissidence they express represent a move beyond the history of revolutions and underground press. Vladimir Bukovskii wrote in his memoirs that every dissident started from the same point—the history of the Communist Party. The 1950s and 1960s saw "a mushrooming of clandestine organizations, unions, groups and even parties of different hues," he said. These were mainly student organizations, still caught up, as Bukovskii thought, with the romantic mythology of revolution.[25] For Bukovskii, revolutionary mythology was part of childhood and popular entertainment. Andrei Amal'rik emphasized

22. An outstanding example is Leon Uris's novel *Exodus,* adapted and edited in Russian samizdat translations. See discussion of this example in Ann Komaromi, "Samizdat as Extra-Gutenberg Phenomenon," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 635.

23. See *Sintaksis,* reissued in *Grani* 58 (1965). Editor Aleksandr Ginzburg put his name on the front of what presented itself as a legal edition. See the description in V. V. Igrunov and M. Sh. Barbakadze, eds., *Antologiia samizdata: Nepodtsenzurnaia literatura v SSSR, 1950-e–1980-e.,* 3 vols. (Moscow, 2005), 1.2:349.

24. On Rea Nikonova (Anna Tarshis), Sergei Sigei (Sigov), and their work, which also included the journal *Transponans,* see Il'ia Kukui, "Laboratoriia avangarda: Zhurnal *Transponans,*" *Russian Literature* 59, nos. 2–4 (2006): 225–59, and Gerald Janecek, "Conceptualism in the Work of Sergej Sigej and Rea Nikonova," *Russian Literature* 59, nos. 2–4 (2006): 469–85.

25. Vladimir Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter,* trans. Michael Scammell (New York, 1978), 118. Evidence on early groups of this type is thin. Anatolii Zhigulin wrote about the unofficial Marxist-Leninist (and anti-Stalinist) student group in Voronezh in 1947 called the Communist Youth Party, which involved over 50 people. See Zhigulin, "Chernye kamni," *Znamia* 7 (1988): 21. E. Iu. Zubkova wrote about an uncensored student poetic miscellany *Snezhnoe vino* (Snow Wine) in Cheliabinsk in the 1940s. She also mentioned more political student groups with names like "Army of the Revolution" and "Union of Struggle" in Moscow, Leningrad, Cheliabinsk, and Sverdlovsk from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. See Zubkova, *Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshchestvo: Politika i povsednevnost', 1945–1953* (Moscow, 2000), 146–48.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

what he saw as the break with Marxist ideology and revolution in Soviet dissidence. Along those lines, dissident Aleksandr Vol'pin talked about a "metarevolution," which Benjamin Nathans explained as a revolution in the way revolutions happen.[26] Amal'rik wrote that dissidents rejected the traditional revolutionary idea that they had to sacrifice their "I" for the sake of the general public. Amal'rik advocated a recovery of the value of one's "I," although not in terms of bare egoism: the recovered "I" was to be asserted in the universal sense, to live "with all and for all."[27] Alekseeva picked up Amal'rik's rhetoric about a "revolution of minds," which she saw as being effected through samizdat.[28]

For democratic dissidents like Amal'rik, Vol'pin, and Alekseeva, this dissident "individualism" manifested itself in the emphasis on the rights of the individual in the discourse of the democratic movement. We might posit another sort of structural individualism, if one may so put it. Such structural individualism in samizdat can be seen in the fact that questions regarding individual expression and particular social identities occupy a place at the center of public activity. These questions do not resolve in samizdat overall into any single form of discourse. The democratic movement was not an umbrella for all types of dissidence, although it did serve as a central node in the network for many other groups. In fact, there existed among dissidents many heterogeneous conceptions about how one defined one's "I" and one's community in a productive social sense. We see this in the diversity of samizdat periodicals: beyond the prominent stream of human rights bulletins and the series of Helsinki group documents and working committee reports, a variety of other periodicals illustrated multiple alternative conceptions of how to forge the self and the community in new ways. These included, for example, *Dievas ir Tėvynė* (God and Homeland, 1976–82, Marijampole), a national Catholic journal, part of a highly developed and diversified Lithuanian samizdat subsystem as well as the anthology *Nadezhda* (Hope, 1977–82, Moscow), with its ecumenical contemporary Russian Orthodoxy. Sophisticated international influences were evident in *Tridtsat' sem'* (Thirty-seven, 1976–81, Leningrad), a journal that featured poetry and philosophical dialogues. At least some saw the new avant-garde experimentation in periodicals including the aforementioned *Nomer* and the experimental art periodical *Transponans* (1979–87, Eisk and Leningrad) from the same avant-garde group. These were all part of a broad field of samizdat and dissidence that also includes periodicals devoted to jazz (*Kvadrat* [The Square, 1965–78, Leningrad, later in Novosibirsk]) and rock music zines, like *Roksi* (1977–90, Leningrad), *Ukho* (The Ear, 1982–83, Moscow), and others. Soviet samizdat also included holdovers from a more traditional approach to uncensored press and revolution, like *Tetrad'* (The Notebooks of Social Democracy,

26. Nathans wrote about Vol'pin's and Amal'rik's comments as indicative of the important break with the revolutionary tradition among democratic dissidents. See Nathans, "Dictatorship of Reason," 634–35.

27. See Andrei Amalrik, *Notes of a Revolutionary,* trans. Guy Daniels (New York, 1982), 26.

28. Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent,* 268–69.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

1965, Moscow), with its article "Who Killed Trotsky?"[29] The *Informatsionnyi biulleten'* of the Free Inter-Professional Association of Workers (Information Bulletin—SMOT, 1978–1982, various cities) showcases the operation of an underground workers' movement, however broad that movement may or may not have been.[30] The revolution in social thought advocated by democratic dissidents played out in these individual and occasionally idiosyncratic samizdat manifestations of the general dissident desire for a forum in which identity and values could be recovered or forged anew.

Many, but not all of these periodicals appeared in the Moscow *Chronicle* in its reports on samizdat. Whether they came into the orbit of Moscow democratic dissidents or not, however, all these disparate forms of expression should be considered part of "samizdat," and they can therefore be interrogated as types of dissidence. Each of these periodicals contributes to and reflects the sense of a system of uncensored textual production and circulation that came into existence by the 1960s and was relatively widespread in the 1970s. Samizdat authors and editors expected an audience beyond their private circles, an audience that would be Soviet and/or international. They expected their writing would at some point become part of a broader debate.

We may consider the growth of the awareness of a system of uncensored textual production and circulation to see how it implicated varying perspectives, which in many cases tried to define samizdat for their own purposes. As is well known, Moscow poet Nikolai Glazkov coined the term (or its forerunner, *samsebiaizdat*) for his homemade collections of poetry beginning in the 1940s. Historian Aleksandr Daniel', introducing samizdat in the recent *Antologiia samizdata* (Anthology of Samizdat, 2005), described the use of the term *samizdat* in the late 1950s or early 1960s among limited groups of Moscow literati. By the late 1960s, the system began to take root and spread and to attract the attention of Soviet authorities, although, as Julius Telesin has shown, officials in Soviet courtrooms and press articles expressed confusion about what "so-called 'samizdat'" meant and how they should treat it.[31] By the 1970s, researchers and the press in the west were using the term *samizdat:* in 1971, Radio Liberty had become the center for description and distribution of samizdat materials for western researchers as well as Soviet broadcast audiences.[32] Radio Lib-

29. From a copy of *Tetrad'*, no. 8, Hoover Institution, NTS Collection, No. 7/1965–Box 1, Item 65/67. *Tetrad'*, the "Notebook of Social Democracy," was one of the few openly political samizdat periodicals that did in fact resemble the party literature of previous eras. The editor, Evgenii Kushev, was put into a psychiatric hospital.

30. Eclecticism in the themes of samizdat is visible in Suetnov's bibliography, *Samizdat.*

31. See Aleksandr Daniel', "Istoki i smysl sovetskogo Samizdata," in Igrunov and Barbakadze, eds., *Antologiia samizdata,* 1:18; Julius Telesin, "'Samizdat' in Brief," *Samizdat Bulletin* 1 (May 1973): 2.

32. See Albert Boiter's article, "Samizdat: Primary Source Material in the Study of Current Affairs," *Russian Review* 31, no. 3 (July 1972): 282–85. For more on the Samizdat Unit at Radio Liberty, see Olga Zaslavskaya, "From Dispersed to Distributed Archives: The Past and the Present of Samizdat Material," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 685–87.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

erty defined the purview of their catalogued samizdat archive in terms of items of "social, political, economic or historical" significance.[33] Daniel' similarly defined samizdat as "socially significant" (*obshchestvenno znachimye*) texts.[34] But the understanding of "socially significant" is not, I would submit, stable or unitary. For Radio Liberty this meant certain materials, and for Daniel' and the 2005 *Anthology* it meant others. The *Anthology* does not limit itself to samizdat with explicit sociopolitical content. It also includes items like the literary anthology *Syntax* that became important for the democratic dissident cohort's conception of the history of their own dissident activity.

What is it that defines samizdat as a textual culture in the midst of disparate content and divergent views on the nature of samizdat and dissidence? Daniel' offered the provocative definition of samizdat as a "mode of existence of the text."[35] The samizdat mode entails production and/or circulation of a text outside official institutions. This can mean items published in the west and then circulated in samizdat or official Soviet print items for which demand exceeds supply. Lev Losev wrote, for example, about the huge demand among Soviet readers for detective novels, Russian or foreign, typescript copies of which might fetch 5 to 10 rubles on the black market.[36] For samizdat typescript copies, thin, brittle onion-skin paper was often used so that five or so copies could be typed at a time using carbon paper. Though easy to conceal, they were also susceptible to damage or seizure. The samizdat mode of existence of the text is a prelude to its existence in print.

The most interesting samizdat is original samizdat, that is, writing originally created for samizdat. Original samizdat typically represented some alternative way in the late Soviet era for a person to define him- or herself in a community and in light of that community's culture or history. This alternative expression involved some development of a particular style of expression (whether of a poetic school, social philosophy, religious worldview, or national identity). It also aimed, crucially, at a wider audience where that particular style sought a place in the discourse of the broader community. This search for an audience was materially realized: the survival of original samizdat texts depended on reproduction and reports in the western and Soviet press (and in post-Soviet records). Samizdat existed in a relationship of uneasy, but necessary, symbiosis to print. This means not a purely "pre-Gutenberg" or "extra-Gutenberg" textual culture, and it does not mean the opposition of two systems, official print

33. From "Basic Information about Arkhiv Samizdata," on the back cover of *Register of Documents: Arkhiv Samizdata,* enl. and rev. Sept. 1973 (Munich, 1973). Radio Liberty left out of its catalogued samizdat archive literary works and works that would be published elsewhere. Its collection cannot be considered a complete representation of Soviet samizdat. We need to expand our archive of information about samizdat combining the obvious aggregators like the Moscow *Chronicle* and Radio Liberty with less obvious sources.

34. Daniel', "Istoki i smysl," 17.

35. Ibid.

36. Lev Losev, "Samizdat i samogon," *Zakrytyi raspredelitel'* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1984), 146–47.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and samizdat (or, to put it politically, regime and anti-regime forces). Rather, as Glazkov's coinage suggested, samizdat was something like a parody of official print, where his samsebiaizdat recalled the abbreviated official publishing houses like Gosizdat, Voenizdat, Detizdat.

We might find an ambiguous and provocative metaphor for samizdat in Glazkov's other work as an actor playing the peasant-inventor Efim in the prologue to Andrei Tarkovskii's film *Andrei Rublev.* Samizdat is like Efim's flying contraption—an amazing "popular creation," one that affords an exhilarating change of perspective and exposure to fresh winds from far away. Those winds and the structural weaknesses of the invention might drive it down, however. Efim's flight was initiated in light of the imminent danger of hostile forces, and it ended in a crash.

Classic Soviet Samizdat

The corpus of "classic Soviet samizdat" located on the territory of the USSR between 1956 and 1986 represents a relatively coherent example of samizdat textual culture. Samizdat originated and became an alternative system of communication during this period, thanks to a sociopolitical environment that was far less brutally repressive and closed than under Stalin. Following the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 and Nikita Khrushchev's so-called Secret Speech exposing Stalin's "mistakes," Soviet citizens sought more debate and openness in culture than official print allowed. This gave rise to classic samizdat. The context changed after Gorbachev explicitly encouraged local press as part of glasnost in 1987. As opposed to the free typescript periodicals of classic samizdat, the alternative periodical press of the perestroika period featured more frequent use of photocopying and printing press technology, as well as regular copyright claims and prices for issues.[37] Classic Soviet samizdat provides a logical starting point for comparison and contrast with the informal press and with related and similar systems of uncensored textual culture in other states in the eastern bloc or in China.[38]

The relative coherence of classic Soviet samizdat corresponds to a more or less familiar story about Soviet samizdat and dissidence that echoes that cinematic sequence of Efim/Glazkov taking flight on his creative invention but headed tragically for a crash. The more diversified understanding of samizdat sketched out above, however, also suggests we may question

37. For a clearly drawn distinction between "classic samizdat" and new samizdat or "alternative press" beginning in 1987, see the "Katalog periodicheskikh i prodolzhaiushchikhsia neformal'nykh izdanii na russkom iazyke v arkhive samizdata," *Materialy samizdata,* no. 8 (1991): iii. See also Elena Strukova, *Al'ternativnaia periodicheskaia pechat' v istorii rossiiskoi mnogopartiinosti (1987–1996)* (Moscow, 2005), 24–25.

38. Skilling was one of the first to make the point that although the Czechs, Poles, and Chinese developed their own "samizdat" systems in the 1970s after the Soviets, they employed different technologies appropriate to their cultures and contexts: "Uncensored material in each country had, too, its own distinctive origins and special features and should therefore be examined separately." See Skilling, Samizdat *and an Independent Society,* 11.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the sufficiency of one trajectory or story to provide an adequate view of the whole dissident field.

The familiar story goes like this: samizdat grew out of poetry circulating in manuscript form; it flowered into the civic forum known as dissidence, with a peak in the immediate post-Helsinki period. Its development was cut short by government repression in the early 1980s. This account appeared in Alekseeva's important history of dissidence.[39] Amal'rik had previously articulated this basic trajectory for samizdat and dissidence when he wrote about literary and documentary works giving way to more pronounced social and political content in samizdat. The "Cultural Opposition," as he put it, gave rise to the "Political Opposition."[40] An initial formulation of that idea appeared in the 1968 "Survey of Samizdat" in the Moscow *Chronicle.* Natal'ia Gorbanevskaia, as anonymous editor, said: "*Samizdat* is a specific form of exercising freedom of expression in our country. During the last few years *samizdat* has evolved from a predominant concern with poetry and fiction towards an ever greater emphasis on journalistic and documentary writing . . . samizdat, in addition to its role as a supplier of books has begun to fulfill the functions of a newspaper."[41] Gorbanevskaia did not make any claims about political opposition. Perhaps not coincidentally, however, a 1970 memo from Iurii Andropov as head of the KGB stated, "so-called samizdat has undergone a qualitative change in recent years. If five years ago it was ideologically defective artistic works that mainly passed from hand to hand, documents of a programmatic political character are now acquiring even greater dissemination."[42] In the case of the *Chronicle* and the KGB, we might point out the degree to which the posited trajectory from literature to politics (or civic discussion) in samizdat served their opposed but related interests. The *Chronicle* aimed to position itself at the center of this new unofficial civic forum. The KGB, on the other hand, had introduced new articles to the Criminal Code in 1966 to deal with samizdat and dissidence (Article 190–1, for "slander" against the Soviet system, and 190–3 for meetings in public that would "disturb the peace"). It had established the "Fifth Di-

39. Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent.*

40. Andrei Amalrik, *Will the Soviet Union Survive until 1984?* (New York, 1970), 7–9. Michael Meerson-Aksenov recalled Amal'rik when he pointed out that social samizdat came after literary samizdat, in "The Dissident Movement and Samizdat," in Michael Meerson-Aksenov and Boris Shragin, eds., *The Political, Social and Religious Thought of Russian "Samizdat"—An Anthology,* trans. Nickolas Lupinin (Belmont, Mass., 1977), 19–49.

41. Gorbanevskaia quoted in Reddaway, *Uncensored Russia,* 35.

42. From "Zapiska KGB pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR ot 21 dekabria 1970 g., No. 3461-A," signed by Iurii Andropov. Document 0044, dated 15 January 1971 on the cover letter, in the Bukovskii Archive online at psi.ece.jhu.edu/%7Ekaplan/IRUSS/BUK/GBARC/buk.html (last accessed 1 December 2011). An interesting point in Alexander Gribanov's analysis of the crystallization of the party's attitude toward samizdat is the degree to which Central Committee members still thought in terms of the Bolshevik underground and civil war factionalism, by which logic a movement could be pro-Soviet but still politically harmful. See Gribanov and Masha Kowell, "Samizdat according to Andropov," *Poetics Today* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 89–106.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

rectorate" in 1967 for dealing with dissidents. The KGB needed to justify these expansions and new mandates.

It was not the case, however, that literary works stopped being produced and circulated by the late 1960s. On the contrary, Venedikt Erofeev's samizdat masterpiece *Moskva-Petushki* began to circulate in 1969, as did Vladimir Voinovich's much-loved satire *Zhizn' i neobychainye prikliucheniia soldata Ivana Chonkina* (The Life and Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin). In terms of samizdat periodicals, the launch of major "thick" journals of poetry and culture, *Chasy* and *Tridtsat' sem',* in Leningrad in 1976, helped establish there a thriving center for unofficial poetic, philosophical, and artistic culture. The series the *Moscow Archive of New Art* (*MANI,* no. 1–5, 1982) was one of the periodicals pointing to new and fruitful directions in unofficial art.

Dissidence: A Private-Public Sphere

Elsewhere I have critiqued unexamined assumptions that unofficial art and politics should be treated separately.[43] Here I mean to interrogate the related assumption that private issues can and should be separated from public ones in dissidence. The binary private/public can be illuminated with the help of Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere. In Habermas's account of the growth of a public sphere in western Europe, the political public sphere developed out of the public sphere in the world of letters with its "audience-oriented privacy."[44] Once it did so, the public sphere excluded private identities and concerns, set aside for the sake of public debate. Nancy Fraser has been one of the foremost advocates among Anglophone critics for the continued relevance of the concept of the public sphere, which Habermas treated as a "category of bourgeois society" that hardly survived into the twentieth century. Fraser argued for the importance of Habermas's distinction between state apparatuses, economic markets, and democratic associations—a distinction often lost in Marxist theory and confused in other discussions, such as the feminist debates Fraser knew well.[45] Fraser critiqued Habermas's account on several points, however, including its strict division between private and public issues in the public sphere, and its unitary character: Habermas told one story about a single unified public sphere. Fraser's critique will help us unpack the history of samizdat and dissidence as a mixed private-

43. Ann Komaromi, "The Unofficial Field of Late Soviet Culture," *Slavic Review* 66, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 605–29.

44. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 51. Habermas talked about letter writing and the rise of the psychological novel, as well as the private bourgeois home with its sitting room as places for practicing "audience-oriented privacy," 47–51.

45. Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 109–11.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

public sphere that exceeds the boundaries of one story about familiar democratic dissidence.

Democratic dissidents adopted a dry, factual style that was very effective for communicating their message to an international audience. After her emigration, Gorbanevskaia, who established the laconic style of the Moscow *Chronicle,* told Michael Scammel, editor of the London *Index on Censorship:* "The importance of the *Chronicle* lies—well sometimes, of course, mistakes are made—but, in principle, it lies in its objective tone, objective, making no judgments."[46] Elsewhere she explained the context for this style, as she saw it: "The love for objectivity was in the air. Was this un-Russian? I don't think so. Herzen's *Kolokol* contained a mass of pure information. . . . We were educated in communist propaganda—exaggeration, lies and the like. And we felt that we had no right to either lie or to exaggerate. The *Chronicle* put itself outside of any polemics. There was the idea that the *Chronicle* was a common voice, not the voice of an individual person or a specific group."[47] This disciplined style obviously grows out of a late Soviet context in which high-flown and emotive language had lost its credibility. Bukovskii recalled the mood of the young generation to which he belonged after 1956: "Our parents had turned out to be informers and agents provocateurs, our generals executioners—even our childhood games and fantasies were steeped in deceit. Only cynicism struck us as sincere, for noble words had become the small change of deception. . . . Liberty, equality, fraternity, happiness, democracy, the people—all were vile words from the vocabulary of vile leaders and red posters. We preferred to substitute profanities [*rugatel'stva*]."[48] This linguistic frustration manifested itself variously, as the laconic, ironic, and slang-inflected style of Vasilii Aksenov's contributions to "youth prose," for example, and in the outrageous stylistic nonconformity of Andrei Siniavskii's prose writing as Abram Terts. We may see the development of the *Chronicle* style, different as it is, as a product of the same environment. To characterize the style of the *Chronicle* and of the democratic movement more generally as markedly "public" discourse is not, therefore, to suggest they merely imitated western public style. It does help us pose a critical question—who is setting the norms of public discourse in dissidence?

Editors of the *Chronicle* would have seen that along with the news they reported, the way they reported it was appreciated by western readers. Amnesty International, which published the *Chronicle* in English beginning with no. 16 (1971), assured readers: "The *Chronicle* has consistently maintained a high standard of accuracy . . . Amnesty International continues to regard *A Chronicle of Current Events* as an authentic and reliable source of information on matters of direct concern to our own work for the worldwide observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."[49] The

46. See "Writing for 'Samizdat,'" *Index on Censorship* 6, no. 1 (1977): 34.

47. Hopkins quoted an interview with Gorbanevskaia in *Russia's Underground Press,* 23.

48. Bukovsky, *To Build A Castle,* 115, translation slightly altered. Compare Vladimir Bukovskii, *I vozvrashchaetsia veter* . . . (New York, 1979), 103–4.

49. From the preface to *A Chronicle of Current Events,* no. 28 (London, 1975). This was part of a constant preface in Amnesty editions.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

New York Times claimed, "With its scope, detail and accuracy, 'A Chronicle of Current Events' remains the most important source of information on violations of human rights in the Soviet Union today. What makes the 'Chronicle' so impressive is its utter lack of melodrama."[50]

This western endorsement was crucial to the credibility and public presence of the Moscow *Chronicle.* Because the *Chronicle* possessed that credibility, it became a privileged conduit to the west. The democratic dissidents were oriented to an international public, and they facilitated others' access to it. They had the symbolic credibility as well as the actual means in terms of diplomatic and press contacts to provide channels to the west for other samizdat periodicals, including those of the Crimean Tatar, Lithuanian, Ukrainian dissidents and others. Those groups did *not* possess channels of their own for communicating with international outlets directly from the non-Russian republics. Archbishop Sigitas Tamkevicius, founding editor of the Lithuanian chronicle *Lietuvos kataliku baznycios kronika* (Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, 1972–89), talked about meeting regularly with Sergei Kovalev and other Moscow dissidents. The Muscovites took issues of the Lithuanian chronicle and translated them into Russian. Information from the Lithuanian chronicle appeared in the Moscow *Chronicle* and the Muscovites sent copies of the Lithuanian bulletin on to the international press.[51]

While the Lithuanian chronicle and the *Ukraïns'kyi visnyk* (Ukrainian Herald, 1970–75) tended to imitate the factual style of the Moscow *Chronicle,* the diversity of styles in Soviet samizdat is striking. Even though unregistered Baptist groups were integrated into the Moscow-centered network of human rights coverage, the style of their reporting remained far more emotional and personal. The Moscow *Chronicle* related, for example, in no. 16 (1970): "It is reported that members of the local religious organization [in Zel'venskii region of Grodno oblast] N. V. Shugalo and N. I. Lazuta were sentenced to five years of imprisonment on 14 January 1970 (details of the case are unknown to the *Chronicle*)."[52] The Baptist *Bratskii listok* (Fraternal Leaflet), no. 1 (1974), by contrast, read, "Glory be to God for such a fate! The dear persecuted Church of our Lord Jesus Christ! What a special miraculous fate the lord ordained for us: to be unjustly persecuted for deeds of love and good, to drink from his cup of suffering!"[53] The readership of Baptist samizdat periodicals was also a more geographically dispersed group, socially disadvantaged as compared to Moscow intelligentsia.

Rostislav Evdokimov, one of the editors of the *Informatsionnyi biulleten'* (SMOT), distinguished the format and style of the SMOT bulletin from that of the Moscow *Chronicle.* While the *Chronicle* aimed mainly at Soviet

50. See the back cover of *A Chronicle of Current Events,* nos. 34, 35, and 36 (London, 1978).

51. Sigitas Tamkevicius, interview, Kaunas, Lithuania, 8 April 2008.

52. See "Presledovanie veruiushchikh," at www.memo.ru/history/diss/chr/index.htm (last accessed 1 December 2011). Translation mine.

53. From page 1 of the copy of *Bratskii listok* in Folder: SU/Ini 11/10 Bratskii Listok S, Keston Collection, Baylor University. Translation mine.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

intellectuals and western readers, the SMOT bulletins addressed a different audience, the workers. SMOT bulletin editors would not shy away from humor and an engaging tone, even when discussing serious topics. Evdokimov clearly understood his editorial group's efforts in terms of contesting the dominance of the *Chronicle* in public debate: he derided the democratic dissidents for being "self-defenders" (*samozashchitniki*), playing on their more common name, rights defenders (*pravozashchitniki*), because the *Chronicle* so often covered cases concerning members from their own ranks.[54]

Democratic dissidents were in a position to serve as arbiters of civic activity and public discussion among dissidents, even if they eschewed any strongly organized structure or overt hierarchy. Others contested the Moscow democratic dissidents' dominance and their relatively elite status. For example, Arsenii Roginskii, Leningrad editor of the samizdat collection *Pamiat'* (Memory, 1976–81, Leningrad-Moscow), a historian who had not previously participated in public actions, wanted to sign a petition on behalf of Gabriel' Superfin, arrested in July 1973 for his work on the Moscow *Chronicle*.[55] A more active Moscow dissident told Roginskii "No! You keep to yourself. Why put yourself out there?!" Roginskii bristled at the directive. Where did that person get the right to tell him whether he could participate, he wondered?[56]

Another dissident close to Moscow democratic circles, Aleksandr Voronel', saw that dissidents enjoyed special status, including accelerated access to doctors and good seats at the theater. He noticed that occasionally dissidents pursued causes to create the most friction with authorities in the interest of publicity, when the problem might be solved more quickly and effectively in a quieter way.[57] Voronel' described a definitive moment in his own career as dissident when he realized that he wanted to create a samizdat forum specifically for Jewish identity and issues.[58] The high standards of altruism set by leading democratic dissidents (like his friend Andrei Sakharov) who worked on behalf of others could be difficult to maintain without falling into hypocrisy and self-serving behavior. Voronel' felt he could better avoid these potential pitfalls by openly focusing on his own interest and those of his Jewish community.[59]

Habermas's own thinking evolved after his initial publication on the public sphere from the model of a single, unified public to a decentered collection of publics. Fraser's intervention has remained compelling, however, in part because of her emphasis on the conflict between counterpublics that should contest the definition of issues for debate. John

54. Rostislav Evdokimov, "Informatsionnyi biulleten' SMOT," in V. Dolinin and B. Ivanov, *Samizdat* (St. Petersburg, 1993), 102–3.

55. Roginskii is currently director of the International Memorial Society, Moscow, which possesses, among other resources, a sizable samizdat archive.

56. Arsenii Roginskii, interview, Moscow, 3 April 2008.

57. Aleksandr Voronel', interview, Tel Aviv, 1 July 2007.

58. See Alexander Voronel, "Jewish Samizdat," in Yaacov Ro'i and Avi Beker, eds., *Jewish Culture and Identity in the Soviet Union* (New York, 1991), 255–56.

59. Aleksandr Voronel', interview, Tel Aviv, 1 July 2007.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Roberts and Nick Crossley, introducing a 2004 collection on the public sphere, still found Fraser's composite model to be an essential corrective to Habermas's original conception.[60] "Competing counterpublics," as Fraser called them, such as the nationalist, popular peasant publics, elite women's publics, and working-class publics in European history, were there from the beginning of the emergence of a public sphere.[61] Habermas initially described the multiplication of publics as a sign of the decline of the public sphere. Fraser argued that multiple publics constitute a necessary part of a progressive trend toward greater inclusiveness.[62] Judging by Fraser's model of multiple publics, the contesting of control of the debate by democratic dissidents as the decade progressed was a healthy sign. Voronel' felt there was no space in general public debate, whether official or unofficial, to articulate the Soviet Jewish experience and a positive sense of Jewish identity, so he created the journal *Evrei v SSSR* (Jews in the USSR, 1972–79) to be that forum. Other forums developed for different questions and perspectives, identities and concerns, showing the strength of the samizdat system, particularly in the 1970s.

One of the curious aspects of Jewish dissidence was its evolution from a relatively exclusive democratic concern for Jewish emigration as a human right to a focus on Jewish identity and culture as such. Early Jewish samizdat periodicals discussed the topic of Jewish emigration as a human rights issue. These included the journal *Iskhod* (Exodus) and its successors—*Vestnik iskhoda* (The Herald of Exodus) and *Belaia kniga iskhoda* (The White Book of Exodus). After the establishment of *Evrei v SSSR*, around the mid-1970s, Jewish dissidents perceived the open political struggle for the right to emigrate to be counterproductive. Subsequent Jewish periodicals treated cultural topics with no apparent political agenda, other than claiming space for Jewish national culture in the Soviet Union. Journals of the so-called cultural movement included *Ivrit / Nash ivrit* (Hebrew / Our Hebrew), *Evrei v sovremennom mire* (Jews in the Contemporary World), and the "thick" journal *Magid* (Storyteller).[63]

Thus, Jewish dissidence exhibits a trajectory opposite to that of the dominant democratic dissident narrative. Jewish periodicals show a move from the "political" to the "cultural." This different trajectory suggests the appearance of what we might call after Fraser a "counterpublic." Of

60. Nick Crossley and John Michael Roberts, eds., *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford, 2004), 15. Pauline Johnson pointed out that Habermas's later focus on the dialectics of system and lifeworld in *Between Facts and Norms* (1996) constituted his own version of a decentered model of informal and formal publics. See Johnson, *Habermas: Rescuing the Public Sphere* (London, 2006), 168.

61. Fraser, "Rethinking," 116. Geoff Eley agreed that along with the struggle against traditional authority, the public sphere was always constituted by conflict. See Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," in Calhoun, ed., *Habermas,* 325–26.

62. Fraser, "Rethinking," 127. Fraser noted that explicitly addressing inequalities in public debate accords with Habermas's later communicative ethics. Ibid., 120.

63. For a more detailed treatment of these periodicals and Jewish dissidence, see Ann Komaromi, "Jewish Samizdat: Dissident Texts and the Dynamics of the Jewish Revival in the Soviet Union," in Yaacov Ro'i, ed., *The Jewish Movement in the Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C., forthcoming).

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

course, the Jewish cultural movement had its own deferred or dissimulated political goals, since people were being educated to go to Israel. To reduce something to its purely cultural or purely political essence is to flatten the picture too much. Still, we might contrast the internally directed orientation of Jewish cultural periodicals toward its own community of Soviet Jews, to the relatively external orientation of the Moscow *Chronicle* toward an international audience. Together these contrasting orientations suggest an important dynamic in the dissident public as a whole. Fraser explained that counterpublics served as sites for withdrawal and regrouping, on the one hand, and as bases and training grounds for agitation directed toward wider publics, on the other. Fraser located the "emancipatory potential" of the public in the dialectic between these two functions.[64] For a critical history, this dialectic might be productive of knowledge: we might look for the operation of this duality within the Jewish counterpublic vis-à-vis the larger Soviet public or with respect to dissidence as dominated by democratic rights discourse. Or we might analyze the dual orientation as a feature of the dissident public at large that helps us see internally directed "cultural activity" as a natural complement to public activity over the whole span of the dissident public's existence, not just as a preliminary or preparatory stage. Cultural samizdat—including poetry, prose, art, religion and philosophy, national culture, and music—functions as a laboratory of values and identities, new and alternative ways of defining the subjectivity that public activity aims to defend.

Dissident feminism illustrates the dynamic rather dramatically. Some Soviet dissident feminists in Leningrad contested the hegemony of one or both of the "establishment" dissident groups—the male-dominated world of unofficial culture in Leningrad and democratic dissidence. Unofficial culture was "overtly phallocratic," according to Tat'iana Mamonova.[65] Male editors regularly marginalized women's writing as inferior, Natal'ia Malakhovskaia claimed.[66] Among dissidents, including democratic dissidents, there was considerable resistance to speaking publicly about sex, childbirth, women's work, or other gendered topics—they were considered "vulgar"—as Iuliia Voznesenskaia reported.[67] "Feminism has not been given the space to develop within the democratic movement," asserted the editors of the English edition of the first feminist collection, *Zhenshchina*

64. Fraser, "Rethinking," 124.

65. See Tatiana Mamonova, "Autobiographie," in *Rossiianka: Des femmes russes* (Paris, 1980), 12.

66. Anna-Nataliia [Natal'ia] Malakhovskaia, "O zarozhdenii russkogo feministicheskogo al'manakha 'Zhenshchina i Rossiia,'" *Solanus,* no. 14 (2000): 68–83.

67. Iuliia Voznesenskaia said that dissident men and women generally reacted with perplexity or derision to the samizdat feminist collection *Zhenshchina i Rossiia* (Woman and Russia), no. 1 (1979). Voznesenskaia's account of the humiliation of young women in prison was dismissed as vulgar, and the discussion of everyday hardships suffered by women was treated as banal and unworthy of debate. See Youlia Voznessenskaia, "Le mouvement féministe dans notre pays," in *Maria: Journal du Club féministe "Maria" de Leningrad* (Paris, 1981), 38. In Voznesenskaia's opinion, however, Leningrad's unofficial "second culture" greeted the feminist periodicals with sympathy. Ibid., 39.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

i Rossiia (Woman and Russia, 1979).[68] These articulations of frustration testify to the energy of a new dissident counterpublic. Dissidence as a public forum had matured enough to be challenged this way from within. As Peggy Watson explained, "Under state socialism, society was excluded *as a whole*. . . . Within liberal civic society, citizens are excluded *relative to each other*. . . . It is democracy itself that brings a new, essentially divisive, political force to gender relations."[69]

Soviet dissident feminism had no time to develop. Soviet authorities forced most feminist dissidents out of the country by 1981. For feminists and most other dissident groups, the Soviet authorities' new, forceful efforts at repression in the early 1980s effectively crushed their activity. Fraser argued, *pace* the ideal of an autonomous public, that opinion formation entirely divorced from the real exercise of power in a state makes a weak, and in this case, untenable, public. Fraser critiqued the autonomy of civil society as a bourgeois value. For her, the distinction between public arenas and state institutions should not imply the pure autonomy of the public.[70]

This problem with the autonomy of a public gets to the heart of what is troublesome about the liberal model of an ideally unitary and autonomous public that may "speak truth to power."[71] I have been talking about Soviet dissidence as an internally differentiated collection of publics that cannot be unified comfortably under human rights or any other single discourse. We need to challenge the idea that dissidents represented simply a "grassroots" movements whose debating partner was exclusively the Soviet state. Fraser in later writing exposed the implicit Westphalian framework of Habermas's model—the public he described was defined only with respect to sovereign state authority of the modern European type. Such a model proves insufficient for a globalized society. This leads to a consideration of transnational organizations, as well as to the challenges the nation-state faces in a new transnational configuration.[72]

68. See comments by the editors of the English edition, *Almanach for Women about Women, Number one (10 December 1979)* (London, 1980), 10.

69. Quoted by Carol Adlam, "Feminism, Untranslated: Russian Gender Studies and Cross-Cultural Transfer in the 1990s and Beyond," in Alastair Renfrew and Galin Tihanov, eds., *Critical Theory in Russia and the West* (New York, 2010), 161. Emphasis in the original. No gay samizdat periodicals in this era have been found, although there was uncensored circulation of gay literature by writers like Gennadii Trifonov and Evgenii Kharitonov. The barriers for discussing homosexuality were much higher, since homosexuality was criminal. See information and excerpts from Kevin Moss, ed., *Out of the Blue: Russia's Hidden Gay Literature. An Anthology* (San Francisco, 1996).

70. Fraser, "Rethinking," 132–36.

71. Habermas discussed the origins of this formulation in Francois Guizot's lectures of 1820, *The Structural Transformation,* 101.

72. See Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 4 (July 2007): 7–30. Habermas himself sought in recent years to address the challenges of globalization. See, for example, Jürgen Habermas, "The Postnational Constellation and the Future of Democracy," in Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays,* trans. and ed. Max Pensky (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 56–112.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Soviet dissidence illustrates the globalized character of a new type of public through its samizdat texts, which circulated to an international readership. Fraser critiqued the internal dynamics of the classic public sphere on the basis of embodied persons, who brought status and gender differences to public debate. Samizdat as an "embodied" text reveals the external relationships of a public that exceeds the boundaries of the state. The samizdat text travels and gets reproduced if it becomes public. Broadcasts, reprints, and other types of publicity in western media outlets display interesting conjunctions of foreign state organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and foreign individuals engaged with Soviet groups to support particular texts and activities. We can ask about the role of Amnesty International in putting Soviet dissidence on the agenda for international debate. We can also wonder about the influence of an environment in which the conception of human rights underwent a fundamental change and became important in international discourse.[73] We should ask about the exact role of the CIA, which initially supported Radio Liberty, in publicizing dissidence and fostering the circulation of uncensored texts across borders.

Yet to reduce the story of dissidence to one involving manipulations by foreign governments would be to reiterate the crudest propaganda of Soviet authorities. Viewing Soviet dissidence as existing in a mixed private-public sphere highlights the wealth of activity needed to build alternative conceptions of self and community via culture. Even as we appropriately pursue the critical examination of the role of governments, nongovernmental organizations, foreign readers, and foreign friends of dissidents, we should not lose sight of individual Soviet activists and particular dissident groups and movements as irreducible primary participants in this process of developing voices for public debate. For example, the eccentric style of Tat'iana Goricheva, who inflected Soviet dissident feminism with Russian Orthodoxy in a way that challenged western feminists, deserves attention.[74] Rather than dismissing her feminism as incoherent, its idiosyncracy might lead us to consider the legacy of Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev in Goricheva's writing and in unofficial Soviet culture overall. It also points us toward the radically different context of atheist socialism in which Goricheva worked, where religion possessed liberating force for a whole generation of Soviet liberal intelligentsia.

While Soviet dissidence did not bring down the Soviet regime or determine the direction of post-Soviet society, it remains interesting as a set of discussions, informal institutions, and practices that arguably did help shape the cultural life of post-Soviet states into the new millennium.[75] The recent NOS-1973 award to Andrei Siniavskii's uncensored book *Progulki*

73. Moyn, *The Last Utopia.*

74. See the editors' introduction to *Almanach for Women,* 2.

75. Irina Prokhorova claimed that some of the more interesting developments in Moscow cultural life since the 1990s, including café life, Proekt OGI, new print and Web publishing enterprises, owed their existence to dissidence. See Prokhorova, "Heirs to the Underground," *Kultura* (Bremen) 1 (October 2005): 3–7.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

s Pushkinym (Strolls with Pushkin) testifies to a continued relationship to the dissident legacy. The shape of that legacy is still being negotiated—the award did *not* go to what would have been in years past the more obvious candidate, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *GULag Archipelago*.[76] The problem that plagued dissidence then—a near total divorce from state institutions—remains an issue now. Does the new cultural public for whom a dissident legacy matters extend beyond the capitals? Does it or could it have any relationship to political discussion?[77]

Basic to Habermas's understanding of the public sphere was the constitution of subjectivity, the "private" self as created in modern European (bourgeois) society. Soviet dissidence exhibits a similar drive to recreate individual subjectivity and group identities independent of the state. The value of Fraser's critique for considering dissidence lies in her insistence on the fact that private identities must be part of the public discussion: Soviet dissidence exhibits this mixed private-public character. Moreover, as Fraser argued, the public sphere is best thought of as a collection of counterpublics that contest the terms of debate among themselves as well as addressing issues of governance at the state and international levels. This contestation matters for a critical history because it highlights the structures of dissident publics, allowing us to examine how and why certain groups became particularly successful and helped manage the participation of others in public debate.

In considering Soviet dissidence "after Habermas," the analytic potential of samizdat stands out.[78] Samizdat, as a mode of existence of the text that is ephemeral and that depends on other modes like print, implies a fundamentally complex life of the text. The samizdat text becomes the site of a dialogical meeting of subjectivities, of the author with reader-publishers. Samizdat as a site of textual negotiation then raises potentially provocative questions about the conjunction of individual and organizational interests. Textual lives that extend over time and space also imply the open-ended and networked nature of public debate.

As discussed earlier in this article, Fraser highlighted the importance of the dialectic between functions in counterpublics: the introverted development of private community values and style combined with extroverted intervention in a broader public discussion to create "emancipatory potential."[79] I want to propose a related potential in samizdat.

76. See description of the NOS-1973 project and award results at prokhorovfund.com/projects/own/108/242/ (last accessed 1 December 2011).

77. The Russian Media Project at the Berkman Center has been analyzing the character and role of alternative media. See the report, "Do Russian Blogs Represent an Alternative Public Sphere? Early Results from Russian Media Cloud," 11 May 2011, at www.mediacloud.org/blog/2011/05/11/do-russian-blogs-represent-an-alternative-public-sphere-early-results-from-russian-media-cloud/ (last accessed 1 December 2011).

78. The phrase "after Habermas" indicates the centrality of Habermas's ideas about the public sphere and communicative ethics to many contemporary debates. A critical history of Soviet dissidence can be part of the process of translating, critiquing, and extending Habermas's insights. See Crossley and Roberts on the continuing debate in their introduction to *After Habermas*, 10.

79. Fraser, "Rethinking," 124.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Samizdat shows introverted and extroverted aspects of dissidence. These help define a radical dissident chronotope, or time-space complex, with two faces. The dissident chronotope may be marked by urgency or eccentricity. The "urgent" dissident text is one like *A Chronicle of Current Events* with time-sensitive information that requires action. The Moscow *Chronicle* and other types of bulletins sought the broadest circulation in the minimum amount of time. The "eccentric" dissident text, such as the Leningrad journal *Tridtsat' sem',* named for the editor's apartment number, exemplifies the other face of the radical dissident chronotope. Eccentric samizdat assimilates outside influences and concentrates them in the space of localized expression. Viktor Krivulin talked about *Tridtsat' sem'* as a periodical that spoke the language of the particular cultural moment and "vibrated" with the time.[80] That kind of dissident periodical orients itself to the *longue durée* of culture. It has no way of joining the broader public discussion immediately. The basis for critical inquiry into dissident history then might be redressing that initial dissident chronotopic imbalance. What endures over time from the human rights legacy? The Soviet dissident legal strategy has proven to have been a unique contribution to rights discourse. As eccentric dissident periodicals become more widely available and read, what seems worthy of attention, and why?

Despite arguing that our understanding of dissidence should encompass a broader range of materials than previously considered, I am not advocating an endlessly open model of the dissident public. That openness, essential to the character of dissidence and samizdat, can also pose a real problem. In retrospect, anyone might claim to have been an important author. The Habermasian emphasis on rationality, combined with the evidence of recorded samizdat, suggests useful methodological caution. Neither urgency nor eccentricity alone constitutes sufficient claim for inclusion in the public discussion today. What texts in fact joined the public debate in dissidence? To be samizdat, a text must have been circulated outside the intimate sphere. In practice, the actual numbers and scope of readers can be hard to determine, although the print record provides an important clue to the circulation of many periodicals. We need evidence of circulation in other cases. Archived copies might help substantiate a claim. Copies from individual collections of the author or editor should be validated by some evidence that a wider circle of people saw the periodical. Finally, we will evaluate the significance of claims that particular periodicals were important to the debate based on rational arguments about how they influenced public discussions then and why they appear important now. The shape of the dissident legacy and of its public impact over time remains a topic for debate.

80. See Viktor Krivulin, "'37,' 'Severnaia pochta,'" in Dolinin and Ivanov, *Samizdat,* 74–76.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070 Published online by Cambridge University Press