

FROM THE KGB FILES

The birth of *samizdat*

The last few years have seen the appearance among the intelligentsia and our young people of certain ideologically corrupting documents in the form of political, economic and philosophical essays, literary works, open letters to government, Party, the judiciary or prosecutor, and memoirs written by those claiming to be 'victims of the personality cult'. Those who write and distribute these texts call them 'literature outside censorship' or *samizdat* [self-publishing].

These documents, presenting certain faults in the Communist system as though they were intrinsic flaws, misrepresent the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet state, criticise measures taken by the Party on the nationalities question and on economic and cultural development, make propaganda with opportunist theories on 'improvements' in socialism in the USSR, and end with demands for the abolition of censorship and the rehabilitation of those who have been condemned for anti-Soviet agitation.

In most cases, this *samizdat* is a typed or hand-written manuscript, passed from hand to hand and reproduced on photocopiers and duplicating machines. The distribution of these works attracts shady types and speculators who make a profit by selling them and holding on to the proceeds.

The propaganda disseminated in these *samizdat* is concocted in the course of all kinds of semi-official discussions — at musical evenings, at concerts, in clubs and even in the writers' unions. Many such organisations are led by people who have given no proof of their political soundness.

One should note that the preparation and distribution of these *samizdat* takes place dominantly in Moscow, but also in Leningrad, Kiev, Odessa, Novosibirsk, Gorky, Riga, Minsk, Kharkov, Sverdlovsk, Karaganda, Iouno-Sakhalinsk, Obninsk and in other towns and regions.

In Moscow, the preparation and distribution of these slanderous texts is done by individuals well known for their antisocial activities: Grigorenko, Litvinov, Bogoraz-Brouxman, Iakir. Grigorenko, in particular, wrote and took to the praesidium of the consultative meeting of representatives of Communist and workers' parties in Budapest a letter misrepresenting the creation of a Communist society by the CPSU. Litvinov and Bogoraz-Brouxman prepared and distributed an 'Appeal to world opinion' in which they accused the Soviet judicial system of violating the law. Iakir, in collaboration with other writers, put

out an 'Appeal to men of learning, culture and the arts' containing fabrications on the 'restoration of Stalinism in the USSR'.

Some of these *samizdat* demand particular attention: the 'philosophical' article 'Reflections on progress, peaceful coexistence and intellectual freedom' by the academician Sakharov, the book by Medvedev, a researcher at the academy of pedagogical sciences...the notes, 'Letters to an unknown', by Iakoubovitch, a former Menshevik, now retired and living in Karaganda... These anti-Soviet and anti-social elements frequently send their 'uncensored' documents to western newspapers, magazines, radio stations and emigration centres hoping that by means of western broadcasts into the USSR, a significant number of Soviet citizens will come to know of their documents and that distribution will spread inside the country.

The information contained in their *samizdat* is largely used by capitalist intelligence organisations and foreign anti-Soviet groups in their campaigns against the USSR. They are presented by imperialist ideologues as 'proof' of an 'active opposition' inside the USSR. For instance, most recently, imperialist propaganda has made good use of the article by Sakharov and the work of Solzhenitsyn...

Imperialist reactionaries consider *samizdat* one of the ways in which they can weaken socialist society within our country and give the authors and distributors of these politically damaging documents all possible support. As a result, the print runs of books containing 'secret Soviet literature' have increased...

In addition to foreign publications and broadcasts into the country, there are other channels through which *samizdat* is brought into the USSR.

Given that the spread of a politically incorrect literature will affect the education of Soviet citizens, in particular our intelligentsia and our youth, the KGB are taking measures to suppress what the authors and disseminators of *samizdat* have done and limit the influence these 'uncensored' works have on the Soviet public. In 1968, the majority of those mixed up with *samizdat* — its writing as well as its distribution — were, with the help of social organisations, subjected to preventative interviews as a warning. Several who had made premeditated attacks on the Soviet state and its social system were brought before tribunals. □

Y V Andropov, president of the KGB, 7 February 1969

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