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Czech Samizdat Archives – the Past and the Present

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In the former Czechoslovakia, samizdat was not limited just to the dissident community: the big "publishing houses" like Vaculík's Petlice soon became a model for many local followers. Under communism, they naturally made effort to keep their activities secret; after 1989 vast majority of them did not find a reason to claim credit for their work and their production remained buried in their personal archives. Therefore, the lexicographic and bibliographic research in Czech samizdat faced a lengthy problem: while a representative part of the (mostly Prague) dissident publications had been smuggled out of the CSSR and collected in specialized archives in Scheinfeld (Germany) in the 1980s, it took quite a time to identify the local samizdat publishers and get access to their production.

Keywords: Czech literature; Czechoslovak dissent; Czech samizdat 1970–1989; lexicography and bibliography of Czech samizdat; samizdat and exile archives

In 2018, the Institute of Czech Literature at the Czech Academy of Sciences published the encyclopaedia *Český literární samizdat 1949–1989* (Czech Literary Samizdat 1949–1989) at the Academia publishing house. It may be surprising to hear that this first systemic lexicographic exploration of the efforts to self-published material printed without oversight by state authorities was published so late, some thirty years after the collapse of socialism in former Czechoslovakia, but this development was not accidental.

Even though the countries of the East Bloc were ostensibly developing towards the same communist utopia, the actual face of the regime varied a lot from one country and one period to another, and with it the opportunities for various forms of citizen revolt, of which samizdat was one. From the Czech perspective, the Kadár regime in Hungary was relatively

liberal; on the other hand the situation in Romania, where even individual typewriters were registered, was difficult to imagine for a Czechoslovak citizen, even though the state of civil rights and freedoms in the normalization era was very far from ideal.

There is no doubt that in terms of publishing forbidden literature of all kinds, the country that most resembled Czechoslovakia was Poland. Both countries had a rich tradition of secretly copied and later printed texts, and it was hardly surprising that in the seventies and particularly the eighties, this practice based on decades of experience easily spread to almost all levels of society.

There were close personal contacts between the Czech and Polish dissident movements; Polish anti-regime activities of the 80s, based much more on the principle of open civil disobedience than the sort of conspiracy gatherings known from Czechoslovakia, also became a role model particularly for the younger generation of dissident Czechs.[1] And yet it is difficult to compare the inner workings of typewritten Czech samizdat, which involved hundreds of typists (typically women) and bookbinders and was often remarkably pedantic about the aesthetic features of the individual editions, and the Polish "second circulation" and its high-capacity underground printing presses capable of quickly producing thousands of copies of books and tens of thousands of offset-printed newspapers and magazines. Literary historians and bibliographers studying opposition literature in the two countries face quite different problems arising from the substantially different nature and volume of surviving material, which forces them to adopt different methods, often quite innovative (on the differences cf. Kandziora, 2016; Gruntorád, 2016).

The typical print run of a typewritten samizdat edition on the Czech side of the border was 12 copies, distributed to a more or less stable circuit

[1] These close relationships had the form of not only various political initiatives, such as the Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity or Polish assistance provided to Czech samizdat publishers (in 1988, for example, the entire first run of the Brno magazine *To* was printed in Poland and smuggled across the border), but also a strong interest in what's happening in Poland and in Polish culture, prevalent across the country but most prominently in northern Moravia, resulting in samizdat magazines such as *Protější chodník* (The Opposite Pavement; published in Opava in 1987–1988) or *Severomoravská pasivita* (The North Moravian Passivity; Ostrava 1989) which included many translations of Polish authors and reports from cultural events.

of friends who then spread them further among other readers or copyists. Some books survive in a relatively high number of copies that were not all created at the same time, but rather through repeated retyping[2] or in a gradually growing chain of copies leading from one reader to another (which, however, carried the risk of errors and text emendations creeping in, particularly given that the copies were usually made from a borrowed text in a very short period of time). In the Czech samizdat context, the "relatively high number of copies of a book" means at most a few dozen copies (including the cases where the publisher had access to a cyclostyle which increased the size of one printing run to 50–70 copies; this technique was usually used by magazines because it was difficult to procure enough paper for entire books);[3] the first attempts to use computers and printers only appeared in the late eighties thanks to assistance from abroad.[4]

Retrospectively identifying the chain in which copies were made to find out the originator is often very difficult even with the use of subtle methods such as comparing the typewriters and binding techniques used in surviving copies; it also requires having access to a sufficient volume of material. Attempts to trace the origin of a surviving copy or assign a specific volume to an edition are usually made difficult by the several layers of obfuscation commonly employed by members of the samizdat circuits to avoid the attention of the repressive forces. While Havel's Edice Expedice (Expedition) and Vaculík's Edice Petlice (Latch) had a consistent visual style, in the case of smaller editions the publishers often deliberately changed the binding and

[2] Milan Jelínek, the organiser of one of the largest samizdat publishing houses known as the "Brněnská Petlice," says that this organisation retyped the *Slovník českých spisovatelů* (Dictionary of Czech Writers) four separate times (Jelínek, 1995, 131). The Ostrava librarian Jitka Radkovičová, who in this period devoted almost all of her time to copying forbidden texts, retyped Bohumil Hrabal's popular trilogy *Svatby v domě* (Weddings in the House), *Vita nuova* and *Proluky* (Vacant Lots) three times. Using typewriters with extra wide cylinders, typists sometimes copied two A5 pages on one sheet of A4 paper simultaneously, effectively doubling the size of one printing run, but in reality, the result were two different copies (cf. Romanová, 2014, 117–121).

[3] Because purchasing a large volume of paper, ink or even cyclostyle sheets was suspicious, publishers relied on a broad network of sympathisers who provided them with smaller quantities each (cf. Král, 2011).

[4] Thanks to the Charter 77 Foundation and the Jan Hus Foundation, Jiří Müller, a dissident from Brno, was able to utilise computer typesetting and a printer to publish several issues of the specialised Prameny edition of translated texts in 1989.

format of each new book in order to make it impossible to determine the real scope of their activities if they were ever found out.[5]

Czechoslovak authorities punished the dissemination of samizdat texts quite harshly; publishers or copyists who were caught had to face at the very least various forms of persecution in their everyday life (their phone could be disconnected or their driving licence confiscated, they could be fired from their job or expelled from the university) as well as the risk of criminal prosecution. The consequences were usually more serious for "ordinary citizens" than for well-known dissidents who in these cases could rely on support from the international public.[6]

Persecution, however, was not the only risk. Considering how much effort it took to type several hundred pages of a novel on a mechanical typewriter (which involved not only the actual typing, but also the time-consuming interleaving of carbon paper sheets between the pages, collating the completed copies and proofreading), the loss of any unfinished or finished copies confiscated during a house search was always unpleasant, which is why the typists working for the larger editions usually had at their homes or nearby some hiding places for their unfinished work.[7] Naturally, the risk of confiscation of a manuscript was felt even more strongly by the authors for whom samizdat became the only way to reach at least a limited audience in the normalisation era.[8]

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[5] Often, however, formats were changed for purely technical reasons – the usual bookbinder did not have the time, there was a shortage of binding canvas on the market etc.

[6] Internationally, Czechoslovakia wanted to be seen as a democratic regime, and the state tried to avoid drawing any undesirable attention to repressions of its own citizens. The dissidents were aware of their "privileged" position; V. Havel explicitly mentioned this in his contribution to the world congress of the PEN Club in Stockholm (dictated over the phone to F. Janouch) commenting on the arrest of Petr Cibulka, Petr Pospíchal and Libor Chloupek in Brno in May 1978: "How is it possible that so many of my friends and I have been doing this for years, and the powers have tolerated us, and yet these young men are now in prison for having done the exact same thing?" (Infoch /samizdat/ 1, issue 7, p. 13; later also Havel, Janouch, 2007, 33). The degree to which publishers were persecuted varied also locally. In very broad terms, larger cities tended to offer a bit more anonymity while in smaller towns, publishers were often assigned to the category of "suspicious individuals" or "troublemakers."

[7] These hiding spots could be quite bizarre – Aleš Stráník, the Brno-based publisher who worked as a medical orderly at a maternity ward, hid everything behind the panelling of the employee locker room; Táňa Dohnalová, a typist for Jiří Gruntorád's Popelnice (Dustbin) edition, used to hide unfinished or finished but undistributed copies in an old TV set, etc.

[8] There was good reason to worry. We know of many such losses, starting already in the

The risk grew even greater after the proclamation of Charter 77 when the conflict between the now clearly defined dissent movement and the state power intensified and the State Security (Státní bezpečnost, StB) redoubled its persecution efforts – intercepted phone calls, constantly monitored active dissidents and screened everyone around them, casting their net ever wider to catch even those who were in very occasional contact with the dissidents. Keeping an archive of published works (even if it were kept in a friend's flat rather than one's own) was obviously problematic[9] – such an archive could be easily lost, but also used as an evidence in prosecution. It was therefore logical to try carry out and archive samizdat volumes where the StB couldn't reach – abroad. After Charter 77, there was another wave of exiles leaving the country who knew the situation in Czechoslovakia from their own experience and were able to support and defend from abroad the interests of those who were facing persecution back home.[10]

The Československé dokumentační středisko (Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, ČSDS) as an institution collecting samizdat and other documents of the work of Charter 77 and other independent activities in Czechoslovakia was officially established in Hannover, Germany as late as 1986. In reality, however, thanks to the determination and self-sacrifice of the historian Vilém Prečan,[11] the centre had been diligently working for many years before that, even though in makeshift conditions. The collection

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fifties – we have lost all issues of *Magáč* (Zine), a magazine published by Jiří Kolář, several volumes from Egon Bondy and Ivo Vodseďálek's Edice Půlnoc [Midnight] and 99 out of the one hundred cyclostyled copies of the surrealist almanac *Židovská jména* [Jewish Names] (1949). In the seventies, for example, several manuscripts by Mojmír Klánský were confiscated during a house search and never recovered.

[9] During a house search of Ivan M. Havel's flat in 1981, all his samizdat volumes were confiscated, including a complete collection of the Edice Expedice. While his archive was returned to him after 1989, many others were lost forever (Romanová, 2014, 95).

[10] A comment letter sent to Ludvík Vaculík by the head of the Charter 77 Foundation František Janouch indicates that there were two good reasons for sending samples of samizdat abroad. On 9 December 1980, Janouch wrote: "It would be particularly useful and beneficial if, during our recruitment events, we could show the books that you publish, as well as magazines and anthologies. That's why I asked you to send to our Foundation one copy of everything that you publish. (And in general, it would be useful if at least some of these books were stored in neutral Sweden)" (Janouch, Vaculík, 2012, 39).

[11] Vilém Prečan was an employee of the Institute of History at the Czech Academy of Sciences in 1957–1970. In 1968, he initiated the project of the Black Book documenting the military invasion of Czechoslovakia; as a consequence, he was in 1970 fired from his job and

started immediately after the proclamation of Charter 77 in Prečan's flat in Edemissen and after 1979 in Hannover. Prečan collected smuggled samizdat volumes as well as various Charter documents and other information on independent activities in Czechoslovakia in order to gain publicity and find material support in the West; in this he received moral as well as financial support from the founder of the Charter 77 Foundation in Sweden František Janouch, the editor-in-chief of *Svědectví* (Testimony) Pavel Tigrid, the publisher of *Listy* (Letters) and member of the European Parliament for the Italian Socialist Party Jiří Pelikán as well as the Canadian historian and scholar of Czech Harold Gordon Skilling, and many others. Samizdat volumes as well as confidential private letters from Havel and Vaculík were sent to Prečan (and through him to other addressees) from Czechoslovakia through couriers: employees of Western embassies who secretly smuggled them on their diplomatic travels (the most important of whom was probably Wolfgang Scheuer, cf. Prečan, Uhde, 2001, the cultural attaché at the embassy of West Germany who delivered contraband to Prečan in 1981–1986; afterwards it was the Canadian Peter Bakewell with the occasional assistance from the German diplomat Peter Metzger or the Swedish Peter Tejler). The contact person on the Czech side was for the entire period the sociologist Jiřina Šiklová (on her life, her work for the dissent movement and her one year in prison cf. Prečan, 2005; Šiklová, 2011; 2015). The Prečan–Šiklová connection was not the only secret link leading from Czechoslovakia abroad (already since the early seventies, courier services between Czechoslovakia and abroad were organised by Jan Kavan, with whom Šiklová and Prečan originally collaborated), but thanks to Šiklová and her pragmatic talent for conspiracy, it was probably the longest-lasting and most efficient (it was only interrupted from May 1981 to March 1982 when Jiřina Šiklová was imprisoned for subversion of the state).

Prečan's home archive was something of a Noah's ark which regularly received two copies of every book from the Edice Petlice and Edice Expedice (one bound, for archiving purposes, and one unbound, intended for further copying). Prečan then sent copies of samizdat publications

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persecuted (the persecution was officially closed in 1973), had to work in various manual jobs and in 1976 together with his family emigrated to West Germany.

together with other information on Czechoslovak dissent to the Harvard University Library, the British Library, H. G. Skilling and the Toronto University Library as well as to other people and institutions; this was, in fact, one of the centre's sources of income. Prečan also received new issues of the samizdat magazine *Obsah* (Content), *Kritický sborník* (The Critical Almanac), *Historické studie* (Historical Studies), *Střední Evropa* (Central Europe) and others. The same route was used in the other direction to smuggle into Czechoslovakia letters, exile books and financial and material support intended for samizdat publishers (copy machines, ink, later also computers, etc.).

The conditions in which the archive operated were exceedingly difficult. Prečan with help of his wife Helena devoted almost all his time to the Czechoslovak dissident movement and sacrificed his career to it (for several years, he and his family lived on unemployment benefits). The extensive archive was also difficult to manage in terms of space, even though part of the collection of samizdat and exile literature was stored in rented basements. From the start, Prečan wanted to establish an institution that would take over his documentation efforts. For several years, he pleaded in vain with leading politicians (including Zbigniew Brzezinski and Willi Brandt, from whom he managed to obtain at least financial support for Czech samizdat publishers); he helped establish the documentation centre for the Eastern European dissent at the University of Bremen where he applied for the position of an expert on Czechoslovakia, but was rejected in summer 1982 precisely because of his close ties with the dissidents which the left-leaning University of Bremen considered problematic in terms of its relationship with the regime in Prague. But his direct contacts with the dissident movement eventually paid off: in 1985 Prečan received a grant from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), founded by the US President Ronald Reagan to support democracy worldwide. Prečan's application was recommended by H. G. Skilling who had helped to write it, in his letter of 29 May 1985 also by Václav Havel who strongly encouraged Prečan's efforts, in part because he felt he had a stake in this project.[12]

[12] In a letter dated 14 June 1986, Havel writes to Prečan: "The older I am, the more nervous I get while writing, and the longer I am a dissident, the greater my dissident fear for the manuscript. This sickness is part of the job and my fate. […] To put it bluntly, I had a bit of a nervous breakdown and realised that I won't feel fine and won't be able to write anything

In early 1986, NED granted Prečan an annual stipend of USD 50,000, which allowed him to establish ČSDS as a legal entity. Karel Jan Schwarzenberg offered to the centre storage rooms as well as an apartment in his château in Scheinfeld, and in November 1986, more than 200 large boxes were shipped there from Prečan's flat in Hannover (Skilling, 2011, 17).

It is in a sense logical, but also truly fortunate, that the documentation centre was established by a historian who utilised here all his specialised skills. The centre, however, also played another, equally important role as a source of information. In addition to many books edited by Prečan, since 1987 the ČSDS also issued the quarterly review *Acta* (led by the poet Jan Vladislav and published also in an English version edited by the British political scientist John Keane) which published information about important samizdat editions, lists of magazines, etc. (including an annotated list of 367 books of the Edice Petlice from 1973–1987; Prečan, Vaculík, 1987).

After 1989, it seemed ideal to keep the ČSDS as a Czechoslovak cultural institution abroad. In 1994, however, it was decided to transport the collection to the Czech Republic and after some complications, the archive eventually became part of the collection of Prague's National Museum in 2003. For any scholar studying independent culture in the normalisation era, Prečan's archive is truly priceless, but equally important is the fact that the ČSDS was just as diligent about documenting its own activities, allowing us to learn much about its origins and many years of work.[13]

When the socialist regime collapsed in November 1989, literary life and literary historiography experienced many long-awaited changes that facilitated its return from "normalisation" to something truly normal. After the revolution, there were loud voices calling for "repaying the debt" to authors who had not been able to publish for twenty years; for returning their names to dictionaries and their books to stores and public libraries.

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else until this thing [Dálkový výslech?] is safe. And safe for me does not mean any hideout in the woods, unfortunately, but only your archive of Czech literature" (Havel, Prečan, 2011, 162–163).

[13] A list of the ČSDS archive fonds is available from Badatelna.eu: http://www.badatelna.eu/instituce/Narodni_muzeum_-_Historicke_muzeum:_Ceskoslovenske_dokumentacni_stredisko/fondy/?s=1.

The latter turned out to be easier than the former – in the effort to satiate readers' curiosity (and make a profit), many publishing houses, including newly established ones, flooded the book market with an enormous quantity of formerly forbidden literature, resulting in a peculiar inflation phenomenon. From the deluge of books old and new, only some of the samizdat authors emerged as winners. While writers such as Jiří Kratochvil or Jáchym Topol and the established names of the 60s such as Ludvík Vaculík and Ivan Klíma managed to attract readers' interest, the volume of published literature was such that many books that otherwise could have resonated with people were instantly forgotten. The period was too hectic and there was not enough time for a thorough reflection even by professional reviewers. New authors started to emerge who did not carry any positive or negative burdens associated with their past, and as the decade progressed, literary life eventually returned to normal. Codification of books published in samizdat for dictionary purposes turned out to be much more difficult.

Both the public and experts considered the lack of information on samizdat and exile authors to be a real issue. Even though a "first aid" of sorts was provided in 1991 with the revised edition of the originally samizdat volume *Slovník zakázaných autorů 1948–1980* (Dictionary of Forbidden Authors 1948–1980), written by Jiří Brabec, Jan Lopatka, Jiří Gruša and Petr Kabeš in the second half of the seventies,[14] there was great demand for a dictionary of writers of post-war Czech literature written in a free country by a respectable academic institution.

The *Slovník českých spisovatelů po roce 1945* (Dictionary of Czech Writers after 1945) edited by Pavel Janoušek was put together quite quickly by academic standards – the first volume was published by Brána in 1995. The method in which Janoušek approached samizdat publications was, however, immediately seen as controversial – the editors decided to remove books published only in samizdat from the bibliographic part of an author's entry and only include them in the biographic part.

This solution was far from ideal, and for authors who were not allowed to publish during normalisation, resulted in a gap of twenty years, isolating

[14] Under its original title, *Slovník českých spisovatelů* (Dictionary of Czech Writers), it circulated in many copies in the 1980s, usually made from the expanded exile edition edited for 68 Publishers in Toronto by the exile literary historian and Škvorecký's friend Igor Hájek.

their samizdat work from the continuity of their writing. Zuzana Dětáková in her review claimed that this marginalised samizdat production and "made the dictionary useless as a source of a relatively comprehensive bibliography (note how often it says 'e.g.' and 'etc.')" (Dětáková, 1996, 32). Because of my experience with the research of samizdat literary culture, gained together with my colleagues from the Lexicography Department of the Institute of Czech Literature at the Czech Academy of Sciences during many years of work on the online *Slovník české literatury po roce 1945 on-line* (Dictionary of Czech Literature after 1945 On-line)[15] and particularly in 2013–2018 while preparing the encyclopaedia *Český literární samizdat 1949–1989* (Czech Literary Samizdat 1949–1989; Přibáň et al., 2018), I am convinced that this was the only possible solution at that time. The authors of the dictionary implied to readers that information about samizdat editions was not as trustworthy (or comprehensive) as other bibliographical data, and at the same time could at least briefly explain the context of samizdat editions, which would not be possible in the bibliographical section of an entry. Providing trustworthy and comprehensive information was not possible even in theory – not without a sufficiently extensive archive of samizdat material, which simply was not available in the early nineties.

It is important to note that even though Czech samizdat is typically associated with the leading figures of Czech dissent, there was an incredible number of people involved in independent circulation who did not have any personal contact with dissidents and covered their tracks very thoroughly to ensure this would never change. And yet it was these "regular participants in samizdat circulation" who for themselves and their close friends copied books from the Petlice or Expedice editions and inspired by their model, even started creating their own, often very interesting editions; many of these editions then published rarities and literary débuts, turning what was originally forbidden authors' attempt at self-preservation into a mass phenomenon.

The effort to collect their production was launched – naturally only after 1990 – by Jiří Gruntorád[16] in the archive of the Libri Prohibiti

[15] http://www.slovnikceskeliteratury.cz/.

[16] During normalisation, Jiří Gruntorád was a manual worker; he signed the Charter 77 and in 1978 established the samizdat edition Popelnice which eventually published some 130 books. For his activities (including the publication of Seifert's collection of poems *Morový*

Library (LP), opened to the public with help of the Czechoslovak Charter 77 Foundation on 22 October 1990 in Podskalská street in Prague. The core of the private library was his personal samizdat collection which comprised in particular his own Popelnice Edition together with other volumes purchased or received in exchange during the normalisation era. The library gained legal status and independence with the establishment of the Společnost Libri Prohibiti (Libri Prohibiti Society),[17] registered at the Ministry of Interior in April 1991. From Podskalská street, the library soon relocated to Senovážné náměstí 2 where it can be found to this day. The library finances its activities and acquisitions from member fees of the LP Society, donations made by individuals and companies as well as grants of the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the City of Prague, the Foundation for the Development of Civil Society, and other institutions.

Annual reports published on the LP website since 1994[18] show how its activities grew over the years, expanding the collection with audio recordings, exile literature, literature of the First and Second Resistance, legionnaire literature, foreign samizdat, expat publications and more. The original archive of Czech and Slovak samizdat evolved into a specialised digitalisation institution that collaborates with many academic departments at home and abroad. The reports also show how the samizdat archive grew. When it was founded in October 1990, the library had some 2,000 books, magazines and other documents. By 1994, there were 4,000 samizdat books and about 350 samizdat magazines. The most recent report for 2018 mentions 17,700 samizdat books from the 1950–1980s and 450 samizdat magazines, and these figures are far from final. The LP website contains a quite long list of samizdat desiderata that the library is trying to obtain.

It is clear, therefore, than in the mid-nineties when Pavel Janoušek's lexicography team needed to verify bibliographic entries gained from very

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sloup [Plague Column] and Bohuslav Reynek's poetry), he was imprisoned and after his release persecuted.

[17] Founding members of the society included the writers: V. Havel, E. Kantůrková, I. Klíma, H. Ponická, Z. Urbánek, L. Vaculík, J. Vladislav, the philosopher R. Palouš, philologist M. Jelínek, V. Prečan, P. Tigrid, I. M. Havel and others.

[18] https://www.libpro.cz/.

varied sources, some of them even quite trustworthy (including the writers themselves), many of the documents were still stored in personal archives of smaller publishers and their readers whom Gruntorád was still actively trying to contact. And processing this data was even more complicated.

This once again brings us back to the air of conspiracy that was crucial for regional publishers. In many ways, the samizdat archive of the LP is a physical manifestation of this conspiracy. Gruntorád's library gained samizdat materials from all kinds of sources. The samizdat books were donated not only by the publishers, but often by collectors and readers who frequently did not know where the volumes originated from because they received the typewritten sheets through several discreet intermediaries. In other cases, LP staff discovered samizdat editions lying anonymously in second-hand bookshops. The books and magazines obviously often lack any imprint, and if there is one, it tends to be deliberately misleading and incorrect.

It is, therefore, often quite difficult to find out where they came from. The more material there is to work with, however, the more successful archivists and researchers are in identifying individual editions and local samizdat centres. In recent years, the detective work of trying to find the origins of anonymous editions was greatly helped by the advent of the digital era – today's online search engines carry so much information that the right combination of often very obscure clues can sometimes put us on the right track that leads to the publisher.[19]

In her review of Janoušek's dictionary, Zuzana Dětáková was certainly not wrong when she wrote that "as the years go by, it will be ever harder to find out more about samizdat, particularly from the authors and editors" (Dětáková, 1996, 32) – the gradual erosion of the memory of participants in the samizdat process was indeed one of the factors that we found very limiting (and frustrating) in our work on the encyclopaedia. Of course, it

[19] For example, we managed to discover the publisher of the Červená Karkulka (Little Red Riding Hood) edition Ivan Roemer thanks to results tables of minigolf clubs in the Přerov region. Even though information that had been provided to the LP together with the donation of a complete collection of the edition's output pointed at the city of Jihlava, during an interview with Roemer we learned that he had been in fact based in Brno, but had had a girlfriend in Jihlava; he also explained that his books tended to appear in northern Moravia because he had been there often to visit his friends.

would have been ideal to talk to them immediately after they ceased their activities, but until the establishment of Gruntorád's archive at the LP, the public did not even know they existed. The participants themselves often considered their activity to be merely an effort to satisfy their own needs as readers, and if they were not contacted directly, did not feel the need to share any information about it. On the other hand, this investigation proved ultimately fruitful for the LP – the people we talked to while writing the encyclopaedia often helped us add missing volumes to the collection and gave us recommendations for publishers whom we had not known about.

At the same time, the thirty-year "gap" was certainly not wasted. Throughout the entire period, scholars were engaged in research that systematic lexicography relies on: published information on regional editions and magazines which included the testimonies of several publishers, collated partial bibliographies, wrote monographs, published correspondence and memoirs of key participants in the dissident samizdat circulation (dispelling some of the levels of obfuscation), organised thematic conferences and edited their proceedings, consulted diploma and dissertation theses. The first tentative list of Czechoslovak samizdat magazines from the period 1968–1989 was published in 1991, based on the Viennese scholar of Czech Johanna Posset's diploma thesis defended in 1990. The first (and so far the only) bibliography of 59 samizdat editions based on Gruntorád's collection was published by Jitka Hanáková in 1997.[20] Very useful in this context were also the many years of academic discussion on how to define samizdat – in other words, what should and should not be considered samizdat in a country where all one needed for illegal activity was a typewriter and some determination.[21]

All of these steps are of course necessary before any lexicographic synthesis can take place, but truly in-depth and systematic research primarily requires access to a sufficient amount of at least partially sorted archive

[20] Hanáková lists 59 editions; the encyclopaedia *Český literární samizdat* published in 2018 includes 123 literary samizdat editions.

[21] This question, approached primarily as a terminological issue and an effort to differentiate between carefully edited volumes and spontaneous but error-prone production, was discussed e.g. by Tomáš Vrba (2001) and Jiří Gruntorád (2001), but even much earlier by the dissidents themselves from the second half of the 1980s onwards (for more details, v. Přibáň, 2016.)

material. In the case of Czech samizdat, this material base exists in the comprehensive archive of the ČSDS, which mainly records information about Czechoslovak dissent of the 1970s and 1980s, and in particular the very broad and constantly expanding fond which includes the near endless volume of regional samizdat at Gruntorád's Libri Prohibiti library.

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