

AMHERST CENTER FOR RUSSIAN CULTURE

The Samizdat Collection
1950s-1970s

Summary: The Samizdat Collection consists of self-published manuscripts obtained in Moscow and Leningrad, mostly from the 1960s. Among the authors represented in this collection are B. Akhmadulina, D. Aigi, Y. Galich, D. Kharms, and others.

Quantity: 1.00 linear feet

Containers: 1 record storage boxes

Processed: October 2012

By: Ethan Gates
Stanley Rabinowitz

Listed:

By:

Finding Aid: October 2012

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Edited by: Stanley Rabinowitz, Director, Center for Russian Culture

Access: There is no restriction on access to the Samizdat Collection for research use. Particularly fragile items may be restricted for preservation purposes.

Copyright: Requests for permission to publish material from the Samizdat Collection should be sent to the Director of the Amherst Center for Russian Culture. It is the responsibility of the researcher to identify and satisfy the holders of all copyrights.

INTRODUCTION

Historical Note

In the post-Stalin years of the Soviet bloc, samizdat manuscripts were used in literary circles as a method of circumventing government censorship. Labeled as dissidents, many writers were unable to submit their work for official publication, and so turned to grassroots methods to distribute their writing. Individuals would make unofficial reproductions of documents themselves (the word “samizdat” is formed by combining “sam” – self – and “izdatelstvo” – publishing house) and pass them to friends and other trusted readers. This practice carried plenty of dangers, as being caught in possession of censored materials could lead to arrest.

Samizdat materials ranged from long-running, regular publications to cheap, one-time copies. They also addressed a wide range of topics, from literary criticism to political and religious commentary. Samizdat were not necessarily targeted for the intelligentsia, either; lowbrow genres such as detective novels and adventure stories were represented as well.

The practice of samizdat generally peaked during the Brezhnev years, tapering off as censorship relaxed in the 1980s.

History of the Papers and Their Organization

In 1992, the Samizdat Collection was donated to the Amherst Center for Russian Culture by Thomas Whitney, AC Class of 1937.

In 2012, some materials related to the acquisition of materials by Malevich were moved from the Samizdat Collection to the Thomas Whitney Papers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Scope and Content Note

The Samizdat Collection consists mainly of manuscripts, typescripts and photocopies of various literary works, self-published and distributed by writers and artists inside the Soviet Union.

Organization and Arrangement

The Samizdat Collection is organized as follows:

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	1959-1964	Aigi, Gennadii Poetry (8 pg.) with introduction by Mikhail Svetlov (2 pg., 1961) and commentary by Bella Akhmadulina (2 pg., 1964), two copies
1	2	n.d.	Akhmadulina, Bella “Stikhi o gruzii” (6 pg.) “Ditia, ne bud’ umney otsa...” and other poetry (15 pg.) “Noch” and other poetry (20 pg.), two copies
1	3	n.d.	Bruil, Silvia Story - “Dvadtsat’ let” (136 pg), with one incomplete copy (40 pg)
1	4	n.d.	Fledman, Leonid Collected articles – “Kniga o Sov. lageryakh” (164 pg.) with introduction (2 pg.)
1	5	n.d.	Galich, A. Poetry – “Kniga pesen” (27 pg.), two copies
1	6	n.d.	Galich, Yurii Poem – “Rus” (1 pg.)
1	7	n.d.	Kharms, Daniil “Elizaveta Bam” (16 pg.), three copies “Golubaya tetrad’ no. 10” (misspelled) and other short works (4 pg.), three copies
1	8	1965-1974	Khvostenko, A. Poetry (7 pg.)
1	9	n.d.	Levitanskii, Yurii Poetry – “Iz knigi ‘Kinematograf’” (5 pg.), two copies
1	10	1970	Medvedev, Zhores Essays - “Mezhdunarodnoe sotrudnichestvo uchenykh i granitsyi” and “Taina perepiski okhranyaetsya zanorom” (220 pg.)

1	11	n.d.	Neizvestnii, Ernst Copies of sketches and photos of sculptures (45 pg.)
1	12	n.d.	Oleinikov, Nikolai Poetry (19 pg.), three copies
1	13	n.d.	Panchenko, Nikolai Poetry (4 pg.), two copies
1	14	1968	Sakharov, A.D. Essay – “Razmyshleniya o progresse, mirnom sosuschestvovanii i intellektual’noi svobode” (27 pg.)
1	15	n.d.	Salisbury, Charlotte Essay – “For a Russian Friend” with introduction by Harrison Salisbury (154 pg.)
1	16	1966	Sukhomlin, V.V. Essay – “Zapiski o kariiskoi katorge” (16 pg.), published in <i>Voprosy istorii</i> , izdatelstvo “Pravda”
1	17	n.d.	Vaginov, Konstantin Poetry (14 pg.), two copies
1	18	1973	Volokhonskii, A. Poetry – “Temnye tvari” (17 pg.)
1	19	n.d.	Vysotsky, Vladimir Poetry (4 pg.), two copies of handwritten original Poetry/song lyrics (19 pg.) Assorted articles about Vysotsky (2 pg.)
1	20	n.d.	K. R-N and P. T-V Essay – “O novoi russkoi emigratsii” (30 pg.)
1	21	1975	Litvinov, P., M. Meerson-Aksyenov, B. Shragin (editors) Collection of essays – “Mysli: sbornik statei o rossii” (~300 pg.)

1	22	n.d.	No author listed Poetry – “Verpovaniya ili Kamlaniya verpy” (31 pg.)
1	23	n.d.	Misc. Programs for the Moscow Theater (2 pg.) Unidentified letter (4 pg.)