

The Types and Functions of Samizdat Publications in Czechoslovakia, 1948–1989

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Abstract The term *samizdat*, now widespread, denotes the unofficial dissemination of any variety of text (book, magazine, leaflet, etc.) within “totalitarian” political systems, especially those after World War II. Such publishing, though often not explicitly forbidden by law, was always punishable through the misuse of a variety of laws under various pretexts. It occurred first in the Soviet Union as early as the 1920s, before the term was used, and then, labeled as such, from the 1950s onward. While samizdat publication occurred in Czechoslovakia after 1948, the word itself was used there only from the 1970s on. This article seeks to clarify the term and the phenomenon of samizdat with regard to the Czech literary scene to trace its historical limits and the justification for it. I will first describe the functions of Czech samizdat during the four decades of the totalitarian regime (1948–89), that is, examine it as a non-static, developing phenomenon, and then I will offer criteria by which to classify it. Such texts are classifiable by motivations for publishing and distributing samizdat; the originator; traditionally recognized types of printed material; date of production and of issuance, if different; textual content; occurrence in the chronology of political and cultural events under the totalitarian regime; and type of technology used in production. The applicability of such criteria is tested against the varied samizdat activities of the Czech poet and philosopher Egon Bondy.

Both in Czech literary history and, as far as we know, in the literary histories of other countries as well there is a tendency to claim what is more or less obvious: that samizdat¹ books, periodicals, leaflets, and recordings

1. As far as the origin of the term *samizdat* is concerned, in 1953, Nikolai Glazkov (1919–79) actually used the term *samsebyaizdat* (e.g., for the title *Полное собрание стихотворений*).

of music and the spoken word (magnitizdat) were necessary and vital in Soviet bloc countries. The Soviet elimination of unrestricted, uncensored publishing inevitably led to samizdat as an attempt to retain the continuity of pluralistic, democratic values under conditions essentially hostile to them. The need for communication and exchange of opinions results in the circulation of printed-like material, mostly typewritten copies, which reach only a limited number of readers.

When freedom is established, the value of samizdat is at last liberated from its nonliterary, extraliterary function, and it is up to editors and publishers to issue the samizdat materials or not, and literary historians and bibliographers can choose to describe them in their own terms. Literary texts may be interpreted and evaluated *an sich*, and the printed texts may then find their proper places on library shelves, mostly left to find their way to general oblivion. At the same time, bibliographers can describe these texts according to their own criteria with the help of the newly coined word *samizdat*. Perhaps the most challenging of all the jobs concerning samizdat is that of archivists and librarians: what to keep and what not to keep in the archives. How does one distinguish a true samizdat from a (typewritten) manuscript and from a fake?

Yet another difficulty seems to arise in the consideration of samizdat: which are “totalitarian regimes”? Are they only to be identified with the various Communist, mostly Stalinist, systems in their rich variety? Probably not. And if not, could we find samizdat predecessors in, say, Nazi Germany, Fascist Japan, and Italy? Or faced with the alarming lack (if not the total absence) of civil liberties in a large number of other countries during the past century, shouldn’t we look for samizdat there as well? What about the authoritarian, paternalistic regimes and military dictatorships in today’s Latin America, Africa, and Asia? What about the Muslim theocracies and semitheocracies? Is there no need in all of these for a certain kind of “samizdat”? And—last but not least—what about the almost innumerable “independent,” “alternative,” “underground” publishing activities in our contemporary democratic world, which respond to the so-called information explosion in their own ways? Isn’t there at least some continuity with the former samizdat? But we will not pose further questions of this kind. Suffice it to say that the rough, approximate definition of samizdat can no longer suit our purposes.

It is worth noting, however, that the research carried out so far in the

Книга первая. МОСКВА-1953-САМСЕБЯИЗДАТ [Collected Poems. Volume 1. MOSCOW-1953-SAMSEBYAIZDAT; see the reprint of the typewritten title page in Eichwede 2000b: 276), which was later shortened to the now well-known form. See also Eichwede 2002: 16; Daniel 2000: 41; Bock et al. 2000: 65.

field of Czech, Slovak, and other Central and Eastern European samizdat, no matter how valuable, has been based on a vague and limited literal interpretation of the term and consequently has been mostly confined to the description of major editions of samizdat series (e.g., Edice Petlice [Padlock Editions], Edice Expedice [Dispatch Editions], and a few more samizdat editions in the case of Czechoslovakia) and their role in spreading “banned literature.”² One of the first steps in this rather vague research into Czech samizdat was made by the late professor Gordon H. Skilling, and most Czech students of samizdat seem to follow in his footsteps. We have in mind essays and studies by Vilém Prečan, Jiří Holý, Tomáš Vrba, Jiří Gruntorád, Jan Pauer, and a few enthusiastic bibliographers (e.g., Prečan, Gruntorád, Johanna Posset, Jitka Hanáková), whose merits are undeniable.³ Nevertheless, at least the rough delimitation of the subject matter has been made, the samizdat makers themselves have given their evidence in a number of documentary writings, memoirs, and films,⁴ and now seems to be the best time to test some new criteria.

We will attempt to classify samizdat publications, keeping in mind not only the ambiguity of the notion of a totalitarian regime⁵ but also the fact

2. On the history of Central and Eastern European samizdat, see especially Skilling 1989b; see also Konrád 2002; Eichwede 2000a; Bock et al. 2000; Hamersky 2002; Alan 2001; Šrámková 1990.

3. Concerning the basic research into Czech samizdat in English, see especially Prečan 1988, 1992a, 2002; Skilling 1981, 1989a; Machovec 2004a, 2004b. In Czech, see especially Gruntorád 2001; Hanáková 1997; Posset 1991; Vrba 2001; Machovec 1991. In German, see especially Pauer 2000; Posset 1990; Zand 1998.

4. *Samizdat: A Fifteen-Part TV Documentary*, directed by Andrej Krob, Česká televize, Prague (2003).

5. For the purpose of this article, I will resist the temptation to cite at length from Hannah Arendt (1973) and other theoreticians of totalitarianism (Aron 1990; Friedrich and Brzezinski 1965) and instead will offer my own attempt to reach a better understanding of the notion, no matter how commonplace this offering may sound. I would suggest that the criterion may be less political and more economic, at least as far as Stalinist or neo-Stalinist totalitarianism is concerned (and probably the fascist variety as well). A political system may be considered totalitarian if its economy (and, of course, its political structure) consists of a complete, “total,” control of productivity, in which any individual or free enterprise would be a disturbing element. The economic basis is the essence of totalitarianism and is derived from a philosophy or ideology—in this particular case, Marxism in one of its dogmatic interpretations. A system so structured simply cannot admit a single exception, a single attempt to put its guidelines into doubt, for if it did, its ideology would lose its absolute purity and power—and consequently the whole economic and political system would collapse; witness 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe.

There is no doubt, however, that even the most liberal, most democratic states have to restrict basic liberties (e.g., freedom of speech) in a definite but undoubtedly legal way. We simply know what is and what is not “legal,” what is “illegal,” and what is “punishable.” In totalitarian regimes as defined above, the basic civil liberties, especially the freedoms of movement, of speech, and of enterprise, are restricted in a much more radical way than in

that we are trying to interpret phenomena whose legal status was always quite doubtful, never certain.

As far as the totalitarian systems themselves are concerned, historians and other researchers should not view them as one indivisible, unchanging monolith. Regarding Czechoslovakia, it is common to distinguish between (1) the establishment of the Stalinist regime after 1948 and its peak in the early 1950s; (2) the weakening of harsh Stalinism in the 1960s; (3) the almost complete breakdown of the monopolistic position of the government of the Communist Party in 1968–69, during which we need not expect, then, to find intensive, massive samizdat publishing; (4) the so-called “normalization” period of the 1970s and early 1980s, that is, the reestablishment of totalitarianism, sometimes referred to as “post-totalitarianism”;⁶ and (5) the years of “perestroika” and “glasnost”—the gradual degeneration of (post-)totalitarianism. As is generally known, however, in other Soviet bloc countries the chronology of change did not always coincide with that of Czechoslovakia.⁷ What, however, unified the political systems in all those countries was the pragmatic definition of citizenship and the fact that notions of law, legislature, and legality changed semantic identities.⁸ The frontiers between what counts as “legal,” “illegal,” and/or “punishable” are deliberately blurred—as the very notion of the law loses its original meaning and purpose. It seems therefore a little out of place to ask what is “legal,” “official,” *lege artis*, “semilegal,” or “illegal” in totalitarian systems. It is always the will (or occasional goodwill and mercy) of leaders in these systems that determines what is and what is not allowed. Samizdat publishers (and, of course, dissident activists) who tended to ignore the absurd legislation in totalitarian regimes (occasionally going so far as manifesting openly their activities and identities) behaved in a way appropriate for democracies, whose laws most of them would probably be inclined to observe.

Given the ambiguity of the law in totalitarian systems, any attempt to classify various samizdat activities fails if it approaches them as merely textual material, as literary products, or—most of all—as works of art. It is necessary to take into account various extraliterary, extralingual, extra-aesthetic functions of these samizdat activities as well as their social, political, and psychological dimensions. To reiterate one of the most elementary notions of textual studies, it is the texts that we deal with, texts in their

any democratic state (all ideas competing with or contradicting the ruling ideology, philosophy, pseudophilosophy, religion, and pseudoreligion must be banned).

6. See Havel 1986, 1999.

7. See Kenney 2003; Falk 2003; Eichwede 2000b: esp. 12.

8. See Příbáň 2001, 2002.

various forms and sometimes with very specific functions. Traditionally, texts written by hand are called “manuscripts.” However, at a certain stage in the development of writing skills and technology, typewritten texts may also be considered manuscripts. On the other hand, typewritten texts are, in their own way, close to printed material, and it is precisely the ambiguity of the typewritten texts that also makes samizdat materials interesting for textual studies.

In the Czechoslovak context in 1948–89, samizdat mostly consists of typewritten materials. More advanced technology, such as manifolding, hectography, ormig, stencil copying, serigraphy, photography, Xerox copiers, or even offset printing and the use of real printing machines, to say nothing of computer printing (which only began to be used in 1989), was quite rare.⁹ This limitation was due primarily to the fear that frequent use of these machines might arouse the undesired interest of the secret police.¹⁰ There were typewritten copies that were the only versions of a text, so, as a matter of fact, they might count as manuscripts. Yet there were also—though quite rare—handwritten and hand-rewritten copies of an original text which were made for circulation among samizdat readers. And there was printed material, usually costly, rare bibliophile editions of literary texts and reprints of graphic sheets made with the help of slightly more advanced technology (block printing machines enabling casework) which produced prints indistinguishable from printed books. Ultimately, there were additional copies of all three of the above-mentioned samizdat types made with the help of manifold writers and jellygraphs.

Thus we can try to offer the first, tentative definition of samizdat materials: in Czechoslovakia samizdat usually consisted of typewritten copies of texts, not necessarily multiplied or duplicated but mostly in about six to twelve copies, produced by their authors or by editors or typists with the aim (be it conscious or unconscious, deliberate or indeliberate) of dissemination and circulation among readers, regardless of how few they might have been—family members, close friends, acquaintances, or any other persons—without prior imprimatur from the authorities of the totalitarian state.

This definition would probably apply to the USSR as well, but if Poland were included, the first criterion of our definition would probably have to be changed as follows: they are typewritten or *printed* copies of texts . . .

9. The use of printing machines in clandestine printing offices was quite frequent only with the Czechoslovak branch of Jehovah’s Witnesses (the Bible and religious texts’ printing); see Adamy 1999. Some Slovak Catholic samizdat publishers also made full use of the offset printing machines; see note 43.

10. See Vrba 2001.

mostly in several *hundreds or thousands* of copies, and so forth. However, although the word *samizdat* was never used in Poland¹¹ (and it was quite unknown in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and scarce and exotic in the following decade),¹² Polish samizdat publishing was probably the most massive of all of the Soviet bloc countries, and relatively advanced printing technology was much more available there than elsewhere. (The same change in our definition would probably be necessary if we were to trace any contemporary samizdat activities.)¹³

So far almost no attention has been given to the textual or semantic content of samizdat (both literary and nonliterary) publications.

According to the above definition, even utter graphomaniac prattling, babbling rubbish must be granted the status of a samizdat publication, provided it meets all the given criteria; and in theory it would be punishable as a result. However, the more copies made and the more “political” the contents of the disseminated texts, the greater the risk of prosecution for their originators. Typewritten periodicals or casual typescripts produced by high school students, though quite frequent in Czechoslovakia in 1948–89, were the exception that proved the rule, and their originators were rarely prosecuted if ever.

Despite the fact that the Czechoslovak copyright law of 1965 stated that an author could use his or her manuscript as he or she chose, one was liable to be prosecuted and jailed without ever taking part in any samizdat publishing but merely for having written a text, manuscript, or letter¹⁴ perceived as “antistate,” “antigovernment,” “antisocialist,” “anti-Communist,”

11. See Skilling 1989a; Brukwicki 2000; Szaruga 2000.

12. See Skilling 1989a; Bock 2000; Prečan 2002.

13. Vrba (2001) offers a much narrower classification of Czech samizdat. He distinguishes between “samizdats” and “editions,” i.e., unofficial publications bearing most of the signs of a regular book or periodical edition—such as format; bookbinding; high-quality paper; title page, half-title page, etc.; the occasional occurrence of a frontispiece; the frequent use of masthead, printer’s mark, imprint; relatively high-quality typewritten copies; standard, uniform graphic design; pagination; etc. Altogether, what I would call a series of editions of established samizdat is not samizdat for Vrba but only those publications that I call “wild samizdat.”

14. Such were the cases of innumerable petitions and open letters sent by Czechoslovak citizens to the president of the country or to the representatives of the executive and legislature in which they only demanded that the country’s own laws be respected and kept: for which they were often interrogated by the police, even prosecuted. Actually, the Charter 77 movement started with such a letter in December 1976; the Výbor na obranu nespravedlivě stíhaných (VONS; Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted) petitions are another good example. See Skilling 1981; Císařovská and Prečan 2007; Blažek and Schovánek 2007; Blažek and Pažout 2008.

and so forth.¹⁵ One could even be prosecuted without having written anything, much less disseminated it, but simply for one's thoughts, beliefs, or convictions, when expressed orally in public places, or—more likely—for one's social class affiliation. But after the harshest years of early Stalinism in Czechoslovakia in the early 1950s, such danger was relatively small.

Samizdat Classifications

As we seem to have defined samizdat—especially with regard to its role in totalitarian Czechoslovakia—as a historical phenomenon in terms of politics, history, law, and social science, we can now try to make further progress in its classification.

I. According to the motivations for publishing and distributing samizdat.

(a) A sort of “inner need” for the truth, for opposing the totalitarian political system by creating “little islands of truth in a sea of lies.”¹⁶

In establishing, so to speak, a “miniature plurality of opinion,” mostly deliberately inconspicuous “cells of freedom,” samizdat producers and distributors shared “the solidarity of the shattered,” responded to their conscience as “men of the spirit.”¹⁷ This need to maintain truth coincided with the authors' need to continue their writing and to maintain their role of writer, denied them after 1948 and for a second time after 1968. To be sure, for most of the theoreticians of samizdat, only such authors are identified as those worthy of being labeled with the honorary title of a “samizdat writer.”¹⁸

(b) Solidarity with friends and colleagues.

Some authors¹⁹ did not seem to be keen on playing the role of a “living conscience of humanity” (or of a nation);²⁰ they simply chose to

15. For this reason, the editors of *Edice Petlice* and *Česká Expedice* (Bohemian Expedition) inserted into their editions the warning “Výslovný zákaz dalšího opisování rukopisu,” abbreviated as “VZDOR”—i.e., “Any recopying of this manuscript is expressly forbidden.”

16. A paraphrase of Václav Havel's terms “living in truth” and “living in a lie,” which later became popular journalistic clichés; see Havel 1986, 1999.

17. Concerning the system of values, especially the basic moral notions of Czech dissidence of the 1970s, see Patočka 1996; Skilling 1989a: esp. 128–31; Pauer 2000; Tucker 2000; Sedlackova Gibbs 2003: esp. 70–115, chap. 2, “Patočka's Legacy: The Dissident as ‘the Man of the Spirit’”; Suk 2007; Havel 1986, 1999.

18. See especially Skilling 1981, 1989a; Prečan 1992a, 1992b, 1993, 2002; Pauer 2000; Gruntorád 2001.

19. Such solidarity may have been typical of some of the authors of the underground circle of the rock band Plastic People of the Universe, e.g., Věra Jirousová, Jiří Daníček, Eugen Brikcius.

20. “The living conscience of humanity” became a popular journalistic cliché and was

write in their own way, pursuing their own aesthetic ends, which may not have been unacceptable to totalitarian censorship and ideological surveillance. Their samizdat editions or circulating manuscripts may have been motivated by human solidarity with such happier writers' colleagues whose books could no longer be published for different reasons. It was mostly because these colleagues were known in public as "dissidents," that is, opponents of the Communist totalitarian regime, and their works as bearers of politically critical, explicitly formulated standpoints incompatible with government guidelines. (However, the reasons for banning books from libraries and denying their authors any further publishing possibilities were sometimes quite incomprehensible, being merely the result of the "revenge logic" of the representatives of oppressive systems; the truly political, ideological reasons—to say nothing of the aesthetic ones—rarely if ever operated.) The "solidarity authors" could probably publish at least some of their works in state-controlled publishing houses, pretending to comply with government guidelines. Nevertheless, they voluntarily shared the fate of their proscribed colleagues by publishing their works only in samizdat.

In a way, such authors were close to the "gray zone" writers, that is, the ones publishing (or, when artists or actors, exhibiting or performing) officially but covertly sympathizing with the samizdat authors and sometimes proving it by supporting them in a financial or other material way.²¹

probably derived from the notion of the "moral politics," as characterized, e.g., by Sedlacikova Gibbs (2003).

21. The term "gray zone" was probably first used by Josef Škvorecký (1983) in one of his English-language essays. He used it as a metaphor for a considerably large part of Czech and Slovak people, who, though remaining "silent," i.e., not joining the "dissidents" in their protests, disagreed with the Communist Party guidelines and thus represented a hidden threat to the totalitarian regime: "On the outside, these 'conformists', the 'grey zone' of real-socialist society, have become 'normalized,' as the Party lingo has it; that is, they have conformed to the post-1968 political climate. They express their thoughts and feelings only in intimate circles of the most trusted friends, otherwise they follow the nauseating rituals of 'socialist progressivity'" (ibid.: 23). Indeed, the "gray zone" artists, writers, journalists, students, etc., largely helped overthrow the Czechoslovak Communist dictatorship in November 1989 (see also Suk 2007). Perhaps the best-known representative of the "gray zone" writers of the 1970s and 1980s (though not the most typical one) was Bohumil Hrabal, one of the most popular and most published Czech post-World War II writers. However, his case was quite extraordinary. He started publishing in samizdat with Egon Bondy in the early 1950s, became very popular after 1963, when he started publishing some of his books in state-controlled publishing houses, was listed among the "banned authors" after 1969, and was at last pardoned in 1974: prior to 1989 nevertheless, his best books, *Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále* (*I Served the King of England*) (1971), *Něžný barbar* (*Tender Barbarian*) (1973), and *Příliš*

(c) Taking part in samizdat publishing as a result of moral, personal influence.

Some samizdat writers, young in the 1970s and 1980s and hence unable to write and publish during the 1960s—the preceding years of relative freedom—deliberately followed the example of their older friends, colleagues, and sometimes parents. Such was the case of most Czech underground poets, especially those of the “third underground generation”:²² Jáchym Topol, Petr Placák, J. H. Krchovský, and some others who were inspired by the example of the “second underground generation” (Ivan Martin Jirous, the whole circle of musicians, poets, and artists that gathered around the rock band Plastic People of the Universe in the 1970s) or even by the best-known representative of the “first underground generation,” Egon Bondy, who started publishing exclusively in samizdat as early as 1949.

(d) Taking part in samizdat publishing for its own sake to get a chance, so to speak, “to enter the territory of an adventure,” of “the punishable,” of running the risk of being prosecuted, even jailed; a kind of “adrenaline sport.” Likewise with the drive to find a way out, to escape “totalitarian boredom.”

(e) A wish to become a prominent socialite, a VIP of a certain kind; to gain weight or importance from the fact that one is taken for “an enemy of the state” by a totalitarian regime. (Such motivation was probably not so frequent in Czechoslovakia, but we learn that it was quite common in the Soviet Union,²³ especially when such writers²⁴ published their samizdat—or even nonsamizdat—writings in one of the Russian publishing houses abroad as “tamizdat.”)

hlučná samota (*Too Loud a Solitude*) (1976), in their unexpurgated forms, could only be published in samizdat. Concerning Hrabal, see Roth 1986; Pytlík 2000.

22. On the three underground generations, see Machovec 1991; Kožmín and Trávníček 1998; esp. Trávníček 1998.

23. As far as a general survey of the history of samizdat in the USSR is concerned, see Kissel 2000. Concerning samizdat VIPs in the USSR, see Putna and Zadražilová 1994: 130, especially: “Russia has always been a country of bizarre paradoxes. Therefore it cannot be much surprising that, in the Brezhnev years, tamizdat editions were considered to be much more prestigious than publishing in one’s home country. Even utterly conformist writers, publishing abundantly at home [in Soviet state-controlled publishing houses], did not despise publishing in foreign forums [in Russian publishing houses] as such a way of publication gained them reputation and temporary glory” (my translation).

24. On the author’s demand, Miluše Zadražilová (see note 23) mentions, e.g., Bella Achmadulina, Fasil Iskander, or Vasily Aksjonov as authors officially publishing in the USSR yet trying to publish abroad (i.e., in tamizdat) for reasons of prestige (Putna and Zadražilová 1994). Among Russian samizdat authors with the same ambitions, Zadražilová mentions Igor Cholin and other representatives of the “Lianozovo circle.”

(f) Graphomania of all kinds, subdividable in turn.

(f1) Traditional, simple graphomania as manifested by the production of worthless texts which otherwise would not be published. It thus finds the most natural outlet in samizdat editions, which have the advantage of giving their originators the chance to emphasize their own importance. On the other hand, taking part in regular literary competition under so-called normal conditions would leave such authors no choice except “self-publishing” at their own expense.

(f2) A more refined kind of graphomania, not necessarily producing mere rubbish, is rather a response to totalitarian restrictions, to the impossibility to publish, according to the slogan “The more you deny our existence, the louder we shall cry.” One might also consider the generally insane conditions and social climate under totalitarian systems in order to interpret adequately the manic-depressive states of mind of writers and artists provoked by the established insanity. This motivation is also related to the well-known counterproductive effects of repressive manipulation and surveillance.

(g) An effort to fill in gaps in official, government-supported publishing.

Because some out-of-print books were unlikely to be reprinted, many were photocopied in public copy-making offices, though there were not too many of these in the 1970s and 1980s (about a dozen in Prague). Retyping of already published texts was rare, but it did occur. Well-known examples are Jirous’s retyping all available Czech translations of Franz Kafka’s works in the mid-1960s and Bedřich Fučík’s and Vladimír Binar’s editions of the collected works of Jakub Deml, Jan Zahradníček, and Jan Čep in the 1970s and 1980s.

Photocopying of typewritten texts was more frequent in the case of books which were to be published in state-controlled publishing houses but whose releases were delayed for one reason or another, sometimes for years, even though the text was more or less “innocent.” Such was the case with J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* in Czech translation by Stanislava Pošustová: it was completed as early as the beginning of the 1980s but was published by regular printing presses only ten years later. In the meantime, possibly hundreds of copies of its typewritten text circulated.

Other well-known examples of filling in the gaps were innumerable editions of Ladislav Klíma’s philosophical works; Petr Holman’s six-volume *Frekvenční slovník básnického díla Otokara Březiny* (*Word Count Dictionary of Otokar Březina’s Poetical Works*) (1986); and Bondy’s thirteen-

volume *Poznámky k dějinám filosofie (Remarks on the History of Philosophy)*, written and published in samizdat in 1977–87.

(h) Unconscious participation in samizdat publishing.

There could have been “samizdat publishers” who were quite unaware of the possible penalization of their activities. The arbitrariness and willfulness of the representatives of the totalitarian state in interpreting articles of the penal code could have led many people mistakenly to believe that their typewriting and distributing of various texts were legal.²⁵

II. According to the originator.

(a) The author of the text in person.

In such cases, it is sometimes rather difficult to distinguish the “original manuscript,” possibly with its various subsequent versions, from those that were deliberately retyped with the aim of their distribution for circulation. (Only the relative absence of corrections can make us believe that the typewritten copy is a final one and is intended to circulate as samizdat.) The “author’s samizdat” can further be divided into three groups.

(a1) Copies bearing the author’s real name, sometimes even in the form of a signature. Such was the case of Jaroslav Seifert’s or Jaromír Hořec’s samizdat editions of their own work. (Hořec sometimes signed his works with his own name, sometimes with one of his pseudonyms.) In such cases, the author is identical to the samizdat publisher.

(a2) Copies published under a pseudonym. The best-known example of such an approach in Czech literature is probably the case of the underground poet and philosopher Bondy, whose real name, Zbyněk Fišer, is unknown to most readers.²⁶ The reasons for the use

25. A good example of such samizdat production is the copying of Miloslav Švandrlík’s 1969 best seller, the antimilitarist parody *Černí baroni aneb Váleli jsme za Čepičky (The Black Barons, or As We Soldiered under Comrade Čepička)*: though never actually one of the “banned books” in the 1970s and 1980s, it nevertheless disappeared from public libraries in the early 1970s and was never published again before 1989. Moreover, its sequel, or “second part,” existed only in typewritten copies before 1989: both being photocopied and even retyped by thousands of Czech readers, this was probably the most popular book with the Czech general reading public during the two decades (see Švandrlík 1990).

26. Zbyněk Fišer chose the pseudonym “Egon Bondy” as early as 1949 (see note 30) and wrote under it not only until 1989 but until his death in 2007. The case of his pseudonym was extraordinary in the history of Czech literature for several reasons. First, during four decades (1949–89) he published under it only in samizdat, so that officially he was a non-existent writer, an Orwellian “no-person” indeed. (He actually published a text elsewhere under his pseudonym—the novel *Invalidi sourozenci [The Disabled Siblings]*—as early as 1981, nevertheless it was published by the Czech Sixty-Eight Publishers, based in Toronto,

of a pseudonym, as far as samizdat editions are concerned, were certainly not only artistic or aesthetic but mainly political. Let us recall here other uses of pseudonyms that became legendary in the history of Czech literature (though not necessarily because of their bearers having been as politically unacceptable to the totalitarian regime as Bondy). Examples would be Ivan Wernisch's Václav Rozehnal,²⁷ Jiří Hásek's J. H. Krchovský,²⁸ Václav Jámek's Eberhardt Hauptbahnhof,²⁹ and last but not least, perhaps the first Czechoslovak samizdat edition after 1948, Bondy and Jana Krejcarová's 1949 anthology of surrealist poetry, *Židovská jména* (*Jewish Names*).³⁰ There the very Jewish-sounding pseudonyms of the collaborating authors—by which they

Canada.) Besides, Bondy's close friend Hrabal modeled one of his literary figures—a poet named “Egon Bondy”—on the real person Egon Bondy (see Hrabal's officially published short stories “Taneční hodiny pro starší a pokročilí” [“Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age”], first published in 1964, and “Legenda o Egonu Bondym a Vladimírkovi” [“A Legend about Egon Bondy and Vladimírek”], first published in the volume *Morytáty a legendy* [*Murder Stories and Legends*], in 1968). Thus “Egon Bondy” became a literary “myth” twenty years before he actually made his official debut in Czechoslovakia. See Janoušek 1998: 56; as well as the bibliography of Bondy's works in Machovec 2006a.

27. “Václav Rozehnal” was one of the pseudonyms of the renowned Czech poet Wernisch, who could publish only in samizdat in the 1970s and 1980s. Rozehnal's samizdat publications, such as the collection of poems *Ž letošního konce světa* (*Concerning This Year's End of the World*), misled even the editors of the first samizdat dictionary of Czech writers: the entry “ROZEHNAL, Václav” is found in it, presenting the “writer” as a real living being (see Brabec et al. 1982: 396). Concerning Wernisch, see Janoušek 1998: 682.

28. Hásek started publishing his poems under the pseudonym “J. H. Krchovský” in the late 1970s. As he became one of the best-known and most popular representatives of “the third underground generation,” his ironic pseudonym also became famous (“Krchovský” means approximately “Mr. Churchyard” or “Mr. Boneyard,” thus mocking the morbidity and necrophilia of the totalitarian regime). Later, Krchovský's elaborate, refined, ironic, neodecadent poetry gained him not only recognition from critics, reviewers, and literary historians but also large popularity with the Czech reading public: he is probably the best-selling contemporary Czech poet. See Krchovský 1998; Janoušek 1999 [1995]: 446; Topol 2006: esp. 78–79.

29. Jámek's German-sounding pseudonym “Eberhardt Hauptbahnhof” (i.e., “Eberhardt Main Station”) is of a kind similar to “J. H. Krchovský”: the author attacks with his funny-sounding pseudonym the hypocrisy of Czech pseudopatriotism in its Communist or anti-Communist versions. Moreover, his collections of poems published in samizdat in Edice Petlice (1988, 1989) belong to the best achievements of Czech samizdat, dissident poetry (see Janoušek 1998: 319).

30. *Židovská jména* was produced by its two editors and its coauthors at the beginning of 1949. Most of its copies were soon confiscated by the police, but one copy survived, was retyped in the 1960s, and was the source of the first official publication of the anthology in 1995 (see Machovec ed. 1995). Though the participants chose their Jewish-sounding pseudonyms deliberately to express their protest against a new wave of anti-Semitism in the post-World War II Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, only Fišer's pseudonym—Egon Bondy—survived and entered the history of Czech literature.

wanted to protest against a new wave of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia—were asking for prosecution, as it were.

(a3) Anonymous “author’s samizdat,” hardly identifiable as self-initiated editions of the author’s own text.

(b) The publisher of samizdat books and periodicals (often identical to the editor and sometimes even to the typist).

This subgroup of so-called established samizdat is sometimes considered to encompass all samizdat publishing (see works by Skilling, Prečan, Pauer, and others) because of the effort made by the editors to imitate “real books” or periodicals with the limited means and resources of typewriting: every single volume is numbered, bears the name of the edition, often even bears the real name of its editor, contains the imprint information, and so forth. In some cases, this subgroup can be identified with the preceding subgroup, the author of the text in person (IIa), in which the author doubles as the publisher. But in most cases such samizdat publishers (in Czechoslovakia the best-known representatives were probably Ludvík Vaculík, founder of *Edice Petlice*, and Václav Havel, founder of *Edice Expedice*) edited and disseminated texts by other authors. By including their names, often even with their own handwritten signatures in most of the copies of the well-known series of editions,³¹ the publishers took full responsibility for their samizdat activities.

Three more divisions are identifiable here, according to the publisher/author relations.

(b1) The publisher was allowed to publish the book (or the periodical contribution) by the author of the text.

(b2) The publisher was not allowed to publish the book (or the periodical contribution) by the author of the text, but the text was published anyway, against the author’s will, with readers sometimes informed about it, sometimes not. Such was the case of the magnitizdat editions that Petr Cibulka often circulated in spite of the authors’ explicit objections.³² Diametrically opposed was the case of Milan

31. Besides *Edice Petlice* and *Edice Expedice*, Gruntorád (2001) mentions, e.g., *Edice Půlnoc* (Midnight Editions), *Kvart* (Quarto Editions), *Česká Expedice* (Bohemian Expedition), *Krameriova Expedice* (Kramerius’s Expedition), *Kde domov můj* (Where Is My Homeland Editions), *Prameny* (Sources Editions), *Hermetická Edice* (Hermetic Editions), *Vokno* (Window Editions), *Proti všem* (Despite Everything Editions), *Prostor* (Space Editions), *Pražská imaginace* (Prague Imagination Editions), *Popelnice* (Garbage Can Editions), *Duch a život* (Spirit and Life Editions), *Theologia* (Theology Editions), *Přátelé* (Friends Editions), and others.

32. See Vanicek 1997; Müller and Cibulka 1994. Vanicek (1997: 131) argues in the chapter “Controversy over Distribution Practices”: “Cibulka distributed the vast majority of music

Jelínek's attempt to publish Milan Kundera's book *L'art du roman* (*The Art of the Novel*) in Czech translation. This having been explicitly forbidden by its author in a phone call, Jelínek respected Kundera's veto and did not publish the translated book in samizdat.³³

(b₃) The publisher was allowed to publish yet only in secret, *sub rosa*, under the condition that he or she would pretend to have been forbidden by the author (i.e., the preceding situation [b₂]), so as to keep the latter safe from penal prosecution. Such was the case of Bohumil Hrabal's books, published by Vaculík in his Padlock Editions.

(c) The anonymous publisher, often the person who only typed the handwritten manuscript and so mostly indistinguishable from a typist.

These cases are found in the realm of so-called "wild samizdat," which was, of course, the safest, the most frequent, and—from the point of view of textual studies and textual criticism—the "worst of all," as the role of publisher was often identifiable with that of self-appointed editor. Almost innumerable copies of "wild samizdat" are now found on the bookshelves of the Prague samizdat library and archives, Libri Prohibiti, and are a nightmare for today's editors and readers: some of the self-appointed publishers/editors of "wild samizdat" did not hesitate to exercise their own creativity and imagination when retyping texts by other authors, thus generating not only copies of copies of copies but also textual versions of versions of versions and so forth.

without the knowledge or consent of the musicians who had recorded it. He decided on this approach after speaking with many musicians who were adamantly opposed to their recordings being circulated in such a way: 'I found that the majority are cowards and are paranoid about having their music distributed unofficially. After conducting many excruciating interviews, I realized that if I left it to the artist, I wouldn't be able to issue almost anything. . . . Those who were indifferent or pleased were definitely a minority.' This approach obviously presents large ethical problems, a point that did not go unnoticed at the time; it reveals the differences of opinion with regard to oppositional work. One of Cibulka's main goals was to circulate materials at all costs. He was willing to suffer the consequences of such activity, and did indeed suffer throughout the years. What he also did was impose his vision of reality on everyone who became a part of his activity, however inadvertently.'

33. Milan Jelínek, one of the Brno-based samizdat editors, recalls in the television documentary on samizdat that, in a phone call from Paris, his old friend Milan Kundera strictly forbade him to "publish" in samizdat his book *L'art du roman* in Czech translation; Kundera might have been worried about that, nevertheless Jelínek indicates he was more likely to have forgotten about how difficult the publishing situation back in Czechoslovakia was. Moreover, the case provides early evidence that Kundera has always been rather reluctant to publish his French-written books in his old home country (in 2008 the Czech reading public still has no access to Kundera's complete works). See part 8 (on Moravian samizdat) of the Czech television documentary series *Samizdat*, mentioned in note 4.

(d) The typist.

This subgroup sometimes overlaps with the subgroup the anonymous publisher (IIc), so that we are again dealing with “wild samizdat” publishing, but for several reasons we have to establish it as a distinct subgroup. For cases existed where carefully retyped samizdat copies belonging to the subgroups copies bearing the author’s real name (IIa1), copies published under a pseudonym (IIa2), or the publisher of samizdat books and periodicals (IIb) were made simply with the aim of giving more readers a chance to read the same material that the originator had produced by mere retyping and at the same time to avoid the danger incurred by resorting to public copy-making offices. Here, unlike the subgroup the anonymous publisher (IIc), the originator consciously renounces any ambition of editing the retyped text and engages in “mere retyping.”

(e) The products of the activities of the Czechoslovak state security service (StB) aimed at spreading disinformation, that is, the samizdat fakes.

In certain cases, suspicion arose that samizdat readers were chosen as a target of secret police provocation. Police agents provocateurs (or double agents) distributed real or fake samizdat in order to learn what their victims would do with them, especially whether they would further distribute them. Although little research has been done in this area so far, it can almost be taken for granted that such cases were rather rare, and so far there is no direct evidence of the Czechoslovak state security service producing its own fake samizdat for the sake of provocation or disinformation.³⁴

III. According to traditionally recognized types of printed material.

This part of our classification does not seem to pose any difficulty and is a natural part of the work of archivists and librarians of samizdat literature. Here the following may be distinguished.

(a) Books of fiction, nonfiction books, reference books, books with reproductions.

(b) Anthologies of texts (fiction, poetry, essays, articles, nonfiction, etc.).

(c) Collections of poems by an individual author.

(d) Periodical volumes.

(e) Leaflets, separate sheets, loosely joined sheets.

34. See, e.g., the samizdat periodical *Informace o Chartě 77* (*Information about Charter 77*) 14 (1987): a fake letter (probably a product of the Czech secret police) by Čestmír Císař, published in the samizdat magazine *Diskuse* (*Discussion*), is mentioned there. I thank Jiří Gruntořád for the information concerning the hypothetical “samizdat fakes.”

(f) Magnitized issues (tape recordings, cassette recordings), sometimes accompanied by various additional printed matter.

IV. According to the date of production and of issuance, if different.

Here again the situation seems to be quite simple.

(a) Issues of texts dated according to when they were written and/or when they were first published in samizdat.

(b) Undated samizdat publications (frequent in “wild samizdat”).

(c) Antedated samizdat publications, rarely occurring, usually for reasons of safety. A legendary case is one of the very first Czech samizdat examples, from the “presamizdat” period, namely, the typewritten surrealist anthology *Roztrhané panenky* (*The Lacerated Dolls*), dated 1937 but actually published in 1942.³⁵ More frequent were cases of “wild samizdat,” where the dating of individual samizdat issues was often mistaken for—or deliberately replaced by—the author’s own dating of the text itself: the year when the text was written replaces the dating of the samizdat edition, i.e., the year when the text was only rewritten or reedited by an editor or a typist.

(d) Postdated texts, frequently “wild samizdat” issues for which the dating of the text itself was replaced by the dating of the samizdat issue.

V. According to the textual content of samizdat publications, that is, their internal features (linguistic and generic).

Here again the situation is simple.

(a) Texts written in the language of the country where the samizdat publishing took place.

(b) Translated texts.

Both subgroups can be further divided by genre.

(1) Fiction (prose, poetry, drama, essays, entertainment, etc).

(2) Nonfiction.

(2a) Political, informative, juridical texts.

(2b) Documentary texts.

(2c) Philosophical, religious, psychological texts.

(2d) Specialized, scientific texts, including literary criticism, literary history, for example, *Slovník českých spisovatelů* (*Dictionary of Czech Writers*) (Brabec et al. 1982); art history, for example, a number of Petr Rezek’s editions; and lexicographic, linguistic texts, for example, Holman’s *Frekvenční slovník básnického díla Otokara Březiny* mentioned above.

35. Concerning the anthology of surrealist poetry *Roztrhané panenky*, see Kundera 2005, a:172–74, b:93–100; see also part 8 of the television documentary series *Samizdat*, mentioned in note 4.

Until recently, it was assumed by Czech bibliographers that, in Czechoslovakia of 1948–89, political texts and books of fiction and philosophy were the most frequent samizdat materials.³⁶ However, according to a recently published testimony,³⁷ these were outnumbered by printed religious texts, including the Bible in a new Czech translation:³⁸ they were produced in secret, clandestine printing offices run since the mid-1970s by the outlawed religious organization Jehovah's Witnesses, whose samizdat activity was reportedly financed by the voluntary gifts of the sect's Czech and Slovak members. The Czechoslovak Jehovah's Witnesses reportedly published millions of samizdat copies in fourteen secret, literally underground printing offices, using cyclostyle and even offset technology. Theirs was a unique samizdat production, developing in perfect isolation and in no communication with other samizdat activities.

VI. According to the chronological order of samizdat publishing in Czechoslovakia (with regard to the main political changes).

(a) Presamizdat period, 1939–45, the years of the Nazi occupation of the Czech territory (very rare publications).

(b) Protosamizdat period, 1948–56, the period of Stalinism (rare publications).

(c) The gradual decay of protosamizdat, 1956–67 (the more space for uncensored publishing in legally printed books and periodicals, the smaller the need for samizdat publishing).

(d) Nonsamizdat period, roughly between spring 1968 and autumn 1969. Typewritten publications of the time did not have the character of samizdat, as state censorship was either not applied or was completely inoperative. Typewritten copies from 1968–69 were either “manuscripts” or products of “free,” “independent” publishing and could be accorded the status of a samizdat publication only post-factum, that is, at the beginning of the following “normalization” period.

(e) Early samizdat period, 1970–85. Samizdat production then reached *für sich* status, and the term *samizdat* started to be used; well-known series of samizdat editions were founded.

36. See especially Hanáková 1997; Prečan 1988; Posset 1991.

37. See note 9. Unfortunately, there is no other reliable source of information that would verify the data found in Herbert Adamy's book. The secretive, clandestine character of the sect's inner life only aggravates the unreliability of the given data.

38. The translation of the Bible for the use of the members of the Jehovah's Witnesses sect is anonymous. However, the preface of its 1991 edition (of course, already a printed, bound book) says it was translated from English, not from the original languages; its imprint assigns the copyright to “Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania” and describes its translation as the “New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures / Czech (bi 12–B).”

(f) Late samizdat period, 1986–89, the Mikhail Gorbachev years. Here samizdat publishing in Czechoslovakia reached its peak, more and more series of editions and samizdat periodicals were founded, and larger and larger numbers of “gray zone” readers had access to samizdat publications.³⁹

(g) Postsamizdat period, 1989 to this day. Characterized by occasional nostalgic revivals of samizdat publishing. Some authors and editors, now equipped with personal computer printers, occasionally “publish” texts in a very limited number of copies to be used by themselves and a handful of friends but nevertheless give them the shape of a regular publication. Such “samizdat,” however, is to be understood as a product of bibliophilism.

VII. According to the type of technology used in samizdat production.

The variety of technologies has already been outlined above. Let me just stress here again that, for most Czech and Slovak samizdat editors and distributors of 1948–89, a simple typewriter was the only working tool. Vrba (2001) in his useful essay suggests the same disproportion.

VIII. According to a variety of other criteria.

Vrba (2001) also tried to categorize samizdat materials according to various ways of financing their production and distribution and according to whether they were sold or distributed for free. He also suggested sorting them according to the number of copies and print runs (from one copy to several hundred, rarely more than three to four hundred copies) and according to the type of typewriter used. Moreover, apart from Vrba’s suggestions, it would be possible to classify them according to the type of readers, for example, the Charter 77 circle,⁴⁰ the circle of the underground community (the circle of the Plastic People of the Universe, the *Vokno* [Window] circle, the *Revolver Revue* circle, etc.),⁴¹ the Jazzová sekce (Jazz Section) community,⁴² the

39. See note 21.

40. Concerning Charter 77 samizdats, they were especially the so-called INFOCHs, i.e., *Informace o Chartě 77*; see its bibliography in Gruntorád 1998. The two most prominent Czech samizdat editions—Vaculík’s *Edice Petlice* and Havel’s *Edice Expedice*—were mostly distributed among the Charter 77 signatories; see their bibliographies in Prečan 1987; Gruntorád 1994a, 1994b.

41. Concerning “underground samizdats,” i.e., those produced by the members of the community of rock fans, poets, and artists who gathered at the beginning of the 1970s around the band the Plastic People of the Universe, it was mostly various samizdat anthologies—*sborníky*—of poetry (see the bibliography in Machovec 2008: 167–68); then, starting in 1979 and 1985, respectively, there were two underground samizdat journals, *Vokno* and *Revolver Revue*; see their bibliographies in Růžková and Gruntorád 1999–2000; Ježek 1991a, 1991b.

42. Concerning Jazzová sekce’s samizdats (or semilegal prints), see Kouřil 1999.

various religious communities,⁴³ and the various regional circles.⁴⁴ One could even try to trace the degree of isolation as against openness of the various circles, but such a subgrouping would probably be too tentative and vague.

The definition of samizdat publishing as proposed above both widens and narrows the notion of it. On the one hand, samizdat publishing can exist only in totalitarian political systems or regimes and should not be confused with other “free,” “independent,” “alternative,” “underground” publishing anywhere or at any time; on the other hand, what may be considered samizdat material exceeds by far the typewritten documents of a nation’s conscience, the texts by prominent representatives of dissidence.

Egon Bondy and the Samizdat Publication of His Works

To test the applicability of the typology of samizdat outlined above, we will consider the samizdat publication of one of the best-known contemporary Czech writers, now a rather ill-famed ex-guru of Czech underground culture, the poet, prose writer, and philosopher Egon Bondy (born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1930; died in Bratislava, Slovakia, in 2007).⁴⁵ Bondy’s critics and opponents can hardly deny at least one thing: his incessant, continuous samizdat production, which extended over four decades, from 1948 until 1989. The three purely philosophical works published in Czechoslovakia in state-controlled publishing houses in the late 1960s under the author’s real name (Zbyněk Fišer) represent an exception proving the rule: the creative writing was left to the author’s alter ego, Egon Bondy, and found its place only on the thousands of typewritten pages of samizdat publications. Bondy’s bibliography, published recently on the Web pages of the Libri Prohibiti,⁴⁶ includes for the years 1948–89 approximately sixty

43. Besides the religious community of Jehovah’s Witnesses (see notes 9 and 38), it was especially in Slovakia that religious (in this case, Catholic) samizdat flourished. Part 12 of the Czech television documentary series *Samizdat*, mentioned in note 4, was devoted to Slovak religious samizdat. From it we learn about the influence of the “secret Catholic Church” in Slovakia and about various Catholic periodicals, mostly produced with the help of offset printing machines kept in cellars; starting in 1973 and reaching print runs of as many as fifteen hundred copies in the 1980s, various periodicals came out in samizdat, e.g., František Mikloško’s *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť* (Religion and Today), Vladimír Jukl’s *Katolícký mesačník* (Catholic Monthly), Vladimír Durkovič’s *Rodinné spoločenstvo* (Family Communion), and Ivan Polanský’s *Historický zápisník* (History Notebook), whose only two issues (1986, 1987) dealt with the two prominent figures of Slovak clerical fascism, Jozef Tiso and Andrej Hlinka.

44. Concerning “regional samizdats,” see Posset 1991; Petr 1996; Machovec 2008: 134–35; see also note 43.

45. For work in English on and by Bondy, see Bondy 2001; Machovec 2006b; Riedel 1999.

46. See Machovec 2006a.

samizdat collections of poems (classified for our purpose as “first samizdat editions”); nearly thirty-two samizdat titles of prose (novels, novellas, short stories); ten samizdat philosophical essays and treatises; thirteen separate issues of the thirteen-volume *Poznámky k dějinám filosofie* (*Remarks on the History of Philosophy*), published in samizdat between the years 1977 and 1987; three separate issues of political, Marxist analyses of the Soviet, the Central and Eastern European, and the Chinese models of Communism, published in samizdat in 1950, 1969, and 1985; thirteen separate issues of theater sketches (from the years 1968–70); and finally, four samizdat issues of Bondy’s translations into Czech of texts by various foreign authors. While altogether approximately 135 separate issues of the author’s own first samizdats came out during the four decades of totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia, samizdat reissues of his work would probably make the number three or four times higher.

Bondy’s samizdat exists mostly in typewritten editions and copies. At the beginning of the 1950s Bondy, together with his friend, the poet Ivo Vodsed’álek, founded one of the first Czech samizdat series of editions, called Edice Půlnoc (Midnight Editions).⁴⁷ Each of this series’s issues bore the pseudonyms or initials of the authors (in the case of their own texts, these were identical with the pseudonyms or initials of the editors of the issues) and included most of the features in Vrba’s characterization of “established samizdat” editions (format A5, the title page bearing the name of the editions, pagination, imprint, sometimes even a list of “books in print” or “coming out soon,” the author’s handwritten autograph, etc.). From 1951 to 1955 almost fifty typewritten issues of works by Bondy, Vodsed’álek, Krejcarová, Pavel Svoboda, Hrabal, and several others came out in the Midnight Editions. One rare exception to his typewritten samizdat is a marginal collection of poems (Bondy’s *Krajina a nemravnost* [*The Landscape and Immorality*]), dated 1953, which appeared only in one calligraphic copy. After the mid-1950s Bondy’s samizdat publications show almost no attempt to keep to the standard of “established samizdat,” and they become more modest, simple typewritten copies, hardly distinguishable from the author’s typewritten manuscripts. And in the late 1980s some of Bondy’s works were published immediately upon completion in as many as three hundred copies in cyclostyle by the author’s samizdat colleagues—mostly the editors of the underground magazine *Vokno*.

As far as motivation is concerned, Bondy’s works reflect his “inner need” (Ia), but in the 1970s and 1980s they occasionally became a product of a “refined kind of graphomania” as defined in (If2): they suffer at parts

47. See Machovec 1993; Zand 1998, 2002.

from the author's overproduction and haste, which can be understood as a defense reaction to police intimidation and the impossibility of regular, legal publishing.⁴⁸

Bondy's original texts prevail in his samizdat publishing (IIa, IIb), both those of fiction and of nonfiction (political, philosophical texts, occasional literary and art criticism, and review writing). His creativity and fertility are breathtaking. If Bondy's samizdat issues were to be classified according to the types of printed material (III), they would range over all subgroups from (a) to (f). As far as the anthologies and periodical volumes are concerned, Bondy's role was usually that of a contributor or a coeditor.

Bondy always carefully dated not only each of his samizdat issues but often also individual poems or texts in prose (IVa). Some of his samizdat is hardly distinguishable from diary entries, spatial-temporal segments, reflections of the author's own life and work. In numerous cases, "wild samizdat" reissues of his works antedated them (IVc). Thus, for example, a collection of poems written in 1951 (and accurately dated by its author with the same year) but retyped, say, in 1972 or 1985 still bore the date 1951.

This classification of Czech/Czechoslovak samizdat publishing in general and its application to Bondy's works is intended to elucidate samizdat for historiographers and to place samizdat writing in its social, political, and psychological contexts. It can hardly serve or replace literary interpretation, and so literary historians who claim that it is best to forget about all samizdat frameworks and instead concentrate on the interpretation of the works as literature may not be completely wrong.

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48. Bondy's overproduction of literary texts, especially poetry, was criticized by Jiří Kolář (2000: 88–89) and Milan Knížák (1996: 122). However, his poetry as a whole has not been adequately analyzed yet, perhaps because of its enormous bulk (see Bondy 1990–93).

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