

The *Chronicle of Current Events* and the Soviet Human Rights Movement

by
Jillian Forsyth

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
March 2017

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DEDICATION PAGE

For my parents.
Janet and Mark Forsyth, your many sacrifices and constant support made this project possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	v
ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. LITERATURE REVIEW	5
1.2. A NOTE ON SOURCES	9
1.3. THE ORIGINS OF THE SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT	12
1.3.1. The Soviet Human Rights Movement in a Global Context	14
1.3.2. The Language of Human Rights	18
1.3.3. The Thaw and the Development of the Human Rights Movement	25
1.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY	31
CHAPTER 2 – <i>KOMPANII</i>	32
2.1. <i>KOMPANII</i> AND THE THAW	34
2.2. <i>KOMPANII</i> AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT	39
2.2.1. <i>Kompanii</i> Charity Networks	47
2.2.2. Women in <i>Kompanii</i>	53
2.2.3. Dissident <i>Kompanii</i> and the Intelligentsia.....	55
2.3. CHAPTER SUMMARY	57
CHAPTER 3 – INFORMATION NETWORKS AND THE <i>CHRONICLE OF CURRENT EVENTS</i>	59

3.1. READING <i>SAMIZDAT</i>	59
3.2. INFORMATION NETWORKS	65
3.2.1. Itinerant Editors	66
3.2.2. <i>Khodoki</i>	69
3.2.3. <i>Ksivy</i> from Prisons and Camps	72
3.2.4. Cooperation and Sharing Between Human Rights Group	78
3.3. PRODUCING THE <i>CHRONICLE</i>	81
3.3.1. The Geography of the <i>Chronicle's</i> Information Sharing Networks	82
3.3.2. Compiling the <i>Chronicle</i>	86
3.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY	89
CHAPTER 4 – CROSSING BORDERS: THE <i>CHRONICLE</i> AND THE WEST	91
4.1. INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE WEST	91
4.1.1. Dissidents and Western Correspondents	93
4.1.2. The Portrayal of Dissidents' Relations with the West in the Soviet Press	99
4.2. TAMIZDAT AND THE DISSEMINATION OF THE <i>CHRONICLE</i>	102
4.2.1. What is <i>Tamizdat</i> ?	103
4.2.2. Trans-national <i>Tamizdat</i> Networks	105
4.2.3. Broadcasting <i>Tamizdat</i>	110
4.3. CHAPTER SUMMARY	114
CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION	116
BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Postcard in <i>Komsomolskaya Pravda</i> from June 23 rd , 1978. “Adres Otkrytki - Belyy Dom,” June 26th, 1978, HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 690, Folder 2. Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Soviet Red Archives, Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.....	20
Figure 2	The Locations of Information Sources for Issue 1 of the <i>Chronicle</i> (1968)	83
Figure 3	The Locations of Information Sources for Issue 64 of the <i>Chronicle</i> (1982)	84
Figure 4	The Locations of Information Sources for Issue 56 of the <i>Chronicle</i> (April 1980)	83
Figure 5	The Locations of Information Sources for Issue 60 of the <i>Chronicle</i> (December 1980)	86

ABSTRACT

Samizdat is a specific textual culture that existed in the Soviet Union from the late 1950s to the mid-1980s. Through the production and circulation of texts outside of official institutional frameworks, the practice of *samizdat* challenged dominant values and positions and created a space for alternative cultural communication. The *Chronicle of Current Events* was a human rights bulletin published in samizdat from 1968-1983. Often referred to as the backbone of the human rights movement, the *Chronicle* provided regular information about human rights violations. This thesis focuses on the networks that produced the *Chronicle* and the mechanisms by which information was disseminated. By eschewing the traditional political narrative often employed in studies of human rights and dissident activity, my project attempts to shift the focus from content to method of transmission and in doing so answers larger questions about the spread of information and ideas in a repressive society.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ILO	International Labour Organization
RL	Radio Liberty
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
VSKhSON	All-Russian Social-Christian Union for the Liberation of the People

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was only made possible with the help of a great many people. First, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Denis Kozlov. His advice, support, and seemingly endless patience not only helped guide me through this process, but also made me a better student. I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to work with him. Additionally, I would like to thank the members of my examining committee, Dr. Shirley Tillotson and Dr. John Bingham, for their encouragement, insightful comments, and challenging questions.

I would also like to acknowledge those who read a chapter of this project for the Department of History's Stokes Seminar. I thank them for their helpful comments and for pointing out interesting new areas for further research.

My research has depended greatly on the generosity of others. I received research support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council through the Joseph Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship. I am grateful for this funding and the flexibility it has afforded me. I would also like to thank the Dalhousie Graduate Committee for awarding me a Patricia Keene Travel Scholarship, which helped me explore archives in Russia and Hungary.

At the Memorial Society Archive in Moscow, I am grateful to Aleksey Makarov and Gennadii Kuzovkin for providing me with invaluable materials and insights. Similarly, I would like to thank Robert Parnica and Olga Zaslavskaia at the Open Society Archives in Budapest for their assistance and guidance.

Finally, I would like to thank Dima for his patience and positivity

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

According to Andrei Sakharov, it was a “miracle of self-denial, of wisdom, of courage and intellectual integrity.”¹ For its founder, the poet Natalya Gorbanyevskaya, it remained one of her proudest achievements.² The Soviet press, however, dismissed it as a bunch of “hullabaloo.”³ The publication to which they were all referring is the *Chronicle of Current Events* (hereafter *Chronicle*). The *Chronicle* was a bi-monthly bulletin, published in *samizdat* from 1968 to 1983, which provided information on human rights violations that occurred within the USSR. Known for its objective, concise style, the *Chronicle* reported on extrajudicial repressions, arrests, and trials, and documented the conditions in prisons, labour camps, and psychiatric hospitals. The *Chronicle* drew on networks of informants and communication channels that stretched across the Soviet Union and as a result, the bulletin played a coordinating role within the Soviet human rights movement. Due to its centrality within the movement, much has been written about the content of the *Chronicle*, the motivations behind it, and its influence on Soviet society, but little has been written about its production or dissemination. Indeed, scholarly treatment of the *Chronicle* (and the human rights advocacy associated with it) has often focused on the bulletin’s political dimension, with the main interest presumed to be its content, rather than its material form. Yet, I argue that exploring how the

¹ Andrei Sakharov, Foreword to *Russia’s Underground Press: The Chronicle of Current Events* by Mark Hopkins (New York: Praeger, 1983), vii.

² Arkhiv Mezhdunarodnogo obschestva "Memorial" (hereafter Memorial Archive), Arkhiv istorii inakomyслиia v SSSR, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Natal'ya Gorbanyevskaya, “Nepredskazuemye vospominaniia”).

³ V. Ivanov, “With a Shield of Slander: About a Trial in the Moscow City Court,” *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, August 31st, 1980, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 66, Folder 1. Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Soviet Red Archives, Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.

Chronicle was produced and investigating the mechanisms that supported its dissemination provide important insights into the intellectual and cultural context in which the Soviet human rights movement developed and operated. Accordingly, my project shifts the focus from the *Chronicle*'s content to its method of transmission, and in doing so, answers larger questions about the spread of information and ideas in a repressive society.

Studying the *Chronicle* requires an understanding of two important phenomena: dissidence and *samizdat*. Defining the term “dissidence” allows for an exploration of interesting terminological territory. The Latin etymology of the word reveals that *dissidere* means to “sit apart” and metaphorically signifies disagreement. Historically, the term has religious connotations, however, in the late Soviet period, the term was co-opted by different entities to serve various ends in the context of the Cold War. Indeed, as historian Phillip Boobbyer explains in his book *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia*, in the late Soviet period, the regime frequently labelled people that it perceived as opponents “dissidents” because “the word had anti-social and extremist connotations.”⁴ Western observers, journalists, and pundits also employed the term to refer to those they perceived as being locked in courageous struggles against the repressive Soviet regime.⁵ Perhaps unsurprisingly, most dissidents rejected the label in favour of less politically loaded terms, such as *inakomyshlyashchie* (those who think differently), or in the case of

⁴ Phillip Boobbyer, *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia* (London: Routledge, 2005), 75.

⁵ This oversimplification and the problem of a resistance/oppression binary will be explored in the literature review.

those involved in the human rights movement, *pravozashchitniki* (rights defenders).⁶ Yet, in spite of the word's Cold War connotations, I believe that the term is still productive today. For the purposes of this project, with the term's etymological roots and the late Soviet context in mind, I define dissidence as engagement in activities outside of official institutional frameworks that consciously sought to challenge and change established practices and conventions enforced by representatives of Soviet authority. Furthermore, the dissidents discussed throughout this project are exclusively those who were involved in the human rights movement. As will be discussed below, I do not see dissidents in the human rights movement as *a priori* in opposition to the Soviet regime. Rather, I argue that dissidents in the movement sought to reshape the relationship of critique between state and society.⁷

An important aspect of dissidence and dissident activity in the late Soviet period is *samizdat*. As mentioned above, the *Chronicle* was a *samizdat* publication. The word *samizdat* can be translated as “self-publication.” Etymologically, the word comes from the Russian *sam*, meaning “self, or by oneself” and *-izdat*, an abbreviation of the word *izdatel'stvo*, which means “publishing house.”⁸ Well-known Soviet dissident Vladimir

⁶ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Tat'yana Vladimirova, “Za Vashu i Nashu Svobodu”).

⁷ Additionally, I have chosen to use the term “human rights movement” instead of “democratic movement.” (I define a “movement” as a loosely organized but sustained campaign conducted in order to support the achievement of social goals). While some historians use the terms interchangeably, I have avoided the term “democratic movement” mainly because it has political and programmatic overtones. As will be discussed below, the human rights movement was never a cohesive opposition, nor did it ever claim to be. Indeed, most dissidents involved in the movement took great pains to distance themselves from the notion of an organized political party.

⁸ Nikolai Glazkov is often credited with coining the term in the early 1940s, although in a slightly different form, *samsebiaizdat* (самсебяиздат).

Bukovsky summarized the *samizdat* process as follows: “I write myself, edit myself, censor myself, publish myself, distribute myself, go to jail for it myself.”⁹ I define *samizdat* as a specific textual culture that existed in the Soviet Union from the late 1950s to the mid 1980s.¹⁰ Through the production and circulation of texts outside of official institutional frameworks, the practice of *samizdat* challenged dominant values and positions and created a space for alternative cultural production and communication. The most common way to produce *samizdat* was by typewriter (although handwritten, mimeograph, and later Photostat copies of *samizdat* texts were also in circulation). *Samizdat* authors would usually type their texts using four or five carbons and then distribute the copies to people they knew. If a recipient found value or was interested in the text, he or she would copy it and pass it along to others in a similar manner.¹¹ As I will discuss in more detail below, these informal text-sharing networks were essential to the production and dissemination of the *Chronicle* and studying them sheds light on the human rights movement as a whole.

This project is divided into two parts. In part I (chapters 1 and 2), I examine the factors and conditions that made the circulation of the *Chronicle of Current Events* possible. In this introductory chapter, I provide a review of the current literature

Ann Komaromi, *Uncensored: Samizdat Novels and the Quest for Autonomy in Soviet Dissidence* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 132.

⁹ Vladimir Bukovsky, *To Build A Castle: My Life as a Dissenter* (New York: Viking Press, 1979), 141.

¹⁰ By the mid- to late-1980s the nature of dissident activity and *samizdat* production changed significantly. Dissidence became much more programmatic in the later parts of the decade and alternative, local press was actually encouraged as part of Gorbachev’s *glasnost* in 1987. It is beyond the scope of this project to fully explore these changes.

¹¹ Ludmilla Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent: Contemporary Movements for National, Religious, and Human Rights* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 12.

concerned with *samizdat* and dissident activity, as well as an overview of the origins of the Soviet human rights movement. In chapter 2, I analyse the informal dissident networks that supported the publication and distribution of the *Chronicle*, with a special focus on *kompanii* (informal social groups) and the charity networks that supported political prisoners and their families. In part II (chapters 3 and 4), I explore the *Chronicle's* information gathering networks and dissemination methods. In chapter 3, I challenge the Moscow-centric approach to dissidence and examine how the information contained within the *Chronicle* was gathered and disseminated across the Soviet Union. While the publication did emanate from Moscow, I argue that the ideas and data contained within the *Chronicle* did not necessarily come from the capital alone. The *Chronicle's* system of information transfer involved collaboration and cooperation between geographically isolated, yet like-minded, groups and individuals across the country. In chapter 4, I examine the influence of the West in the dissemination and reception of the *Chronicle* within the Soviet Union. Indeed, the importance of the West is difficult to overstate, as the development of *samizdat* was in many ways supported by audiences abroad and Western publishing opportunities. In the chapter, I also critically examine the role of *tamizdat* and Western radio broadcasting in disseminating the *Chronicle*. Finally, in the conclusion, I summarize my findings and reflect on the relationship between dissidents and the larger public.

1.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Preceding and immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, scholarship concerning the *Chronicle*, especially in the West, was frequently cast in terms

of opposition and struggle against repression. There existed a tendency to portray dissidents as “surrogate soldiers of Western liberalism” and locate dissident activity solely within the context of ideological struggle.¹² Indeed, *samizdat* has often been portrayed as a kind of underground movement to distribute incendiary texts, while dissidents have been depicted as misplaced Western subjects. Such issues surrounding Soviet subjectivity have preoccupied historians for quite some time. In her article, “The Tenacious Liberal Subject in Soviet Studies,” Anna Krylova examines the political and cultural roots of scholars’ conceptualizations of the Stalinist subject. She explores the “believer” and “resisting nonbeliever” roles imposed on Stalinist subjects by scholars and the “transference of liberal moralism from the historian to his/her historical subject.”¹³ While Krylova’s article is specifically about the 1930s Stalinist subject, she does highlight the need to evaluate the Soviet subject on his/her own terms more generally. This trend toward a more balanced and nuanced understanding of Soviet subjectivities is reflected in this project and in much of the recent literature on *samizdat* and the human rights movement discussed below.

In his book *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin*, Jochen Hellbeck examines the formation of the self under Stalin. Like Krylova, he warns historians against casting Stalinist actors as “liberal subjects” grounded in Western

¹² Benjamin Nathans, "The Dictatorship of Reason: Aleksandr Vol'pin and the Idea of Rights under 'Developed Socialism'." *Slavic Review* 66, no. 4 (2007), 633. For examples see: Abraham Rothberg, *The Heirs of Stalin: Dissidence and the Soviet Regime, 1953-1970* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972), Joshua Rubenstein, *Soviet Dissidents: Their Struggle for Human Rights*, (Boston, 1985), and Rudolph L Tökés, ed. *Soviet Dissent: Politics, Ideology, and People* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

¹³ Anna Krylova, “The Tenacious Liberal Subject in Soviet Studies,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, no. 1 (2000), 130.

conceptions of the self, or, in other words, to see Stalinist subjects as “individuals in pursuit of autonomy who cherished privacy as a sphere of free self-determination.”¹⁴ Hellbeck convincingly demonstrates that individuals in the 1930s longed to join something greater than themselves. He notes that diarists of the period frequently described their efforts to merge with “the ‘general stream of life’ of the Soviet collective” through self-fashioning.¹⁵ Some scholars have drawn lines of continuity between the self-fashioning of the Stalin-era and the post-Stalin era, and onto Soviet dissidents.¹⁶ Yet, Benjamin Nathans cautions against transferring Stalinist modes of self-fashioning onto Soviet dissidents, arguing that important changes occurred in post-Stalin era.¹⁷ Indeed, the particularities of the late Soviet subject are explored in Alexei Yurchak’s book *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. In his first chapter, Yurchak lists the dominant binaries at play in the West in discussions of Soviet subjectivities: “oppression and resistance, repression and freedom, the state and the people, [...] official culture and counterculture, [and] public self and private self, [...]”¹⁸ Such rigid categorization echoes the conceptualizations of Stalinist subjects criticized by Krylova and reduces Soviet reality to a division between state and society. This approach not only isolates the human rights movement from its social and cultural context, but also ignores the intellectual and linguistic rootedness of dissident activity in broader Soviet

¹⁴ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Dairy under Stalin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁶ See Benjamin Nathans’ discussion of case studies by Andrew Stone and Benjamin Tromly in “Thawed Selves: A Commentary on the Soviet First Person,” *Kritika* 13, no. 1 (2012): 177-83.

¹⁷ Benjamin Nathans, “Thawed Selves,” 181.

¹⁸ Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 5.

culture. In his article “The Terrifying Mimicry of *Samizdat*,” anthropologist Serguei Oushakine argues against “locating these texts [solely] within the context of dissidents’ ideological struggle.”¹⁹ Rather, he posits that oppositional discourse (the discourse employed by dissidents) shared the symbolic field with the dominant discourse (the discourse of the state).²⁰ According to Oushakine, oppositional discourse “echoed and amplified the rhetoric of the regime, rather than positioning itself outside of or underneath it.”²¹ In a similar vein, in her book *Uncensored*, Ann Komaromi argues against a private versus public binary in discussions of dissidence. She characterizes dissident activity, especially *samizdat*, as existing in a mixed private-public sphere. She argues, “dissidence did not create a separate, individual world,” rather, dissidents sought to reshape the individual’s critical relationship with the state in order to “accommodate negotiations between the individual and society, private identities and public issues [...]”²² By rejecting the strict binaries imposed on Soviet subjects and the public versus private divide found in the literature, this project examines how the human rights movement and the activity associated with it operated not in opposition to, but *within* the larger Soviet culture.

Another issue identified by Benjamin Nathans in the literature is the “psychologizing of dissent,” which he describes as “the attempt to explain (away) oppositional behavior as a function of inner psychic needs.”²³ In fact, we can observe this tactic at play not only in the literature, but also in the psychological reductionism

¹⁹ Serguei Oushakine, “The Terrifying Mimicry of *Samizdat*,” *Public Culture* 13, no. 2 (2001), 192.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Komaromi, *Uncensored*, 5.

²³ Benjamin Nathans, “Thawed Selves,” 181.

employed by the Soviet regime when dissidents were labeled “mentally ill” by the state and incarcerated in psychiatric hospitals.²⁴ Leaving those abuses aside, “psychologizing dissent” feeds into a person-centred approach to the study of Soviet dissent, which is often done in isolation from the cultural and social context. For example, the aim of Joshua Rubenstein’s book *Soviet Dissidents* is to “explore the origins and development of dissent through the lives of important activists,” and “do justice to their struggle and sacrifice.”²⁵ Nathans remarks that this person-centred approach is not surprising given the sheer volume of memoirs and other “ego-documents” produced by dissidents.²⁶ Yet, both Nathans and Komaromi note that recent scholarship has moved away from the “dissident-centric” approach and instead attempts “to evaluate the dissident legacy in a critical way without falling into a static memorialization of heroic dissident efforts of the past.”²⁷ To that end, throughout this project, I focus less on individual actors and more on the cultural and social context in which the human rights movement and the *Chronicle* operated.

1.2. A NOTE ON SOURCES

For this project, I have relied upon *samizdat* texts, letters and appeals written by dissidents, newspaper articles, reports, transcripts of interviews with dissidents, trial

²⁴ As Bukovsky notes in his memoir *To Build A Castle: My Life as a Dissenter*, “Khrushchev declared somewhere that the USSR no longer had any political prisoners and that no one was dissatisfied by the system – the few who still expressed dissatisfaction were simply mentally ill.”

Bukovsky, *To Build A Castle*, 195.

²⁵ Rubenstein, *Soviet Dissidents*, xii.

²⁶ Benjamin Nathans, "The Dictatorship of Reason: Aleksandr Vol'pin and the Idea of Rights under 'Developed Socialism'." *Slavic Review* 66, no. 4 (2007), 632.

²⁷ Ann Komaromi, "Samizdat and Soviet Dissident Publics," *Slavic Review* 71, no. 1 (2012): 71; Nathans, "The Dictatorship of Reason," 632.

transcripts, indictments, as well as copies of the *Chronicle*. For the most part, these documents came from The Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute held at the Open Society Archive in Budapest; the Archive of the History of Dissent in the USSR 1953-1987, housed by the international human rights and historical society, “Memorial;” and the Igor Belousovitch Collection of *Samizdat* and Independent Press at the University of Toronto. Another important source of primary materials for this project was memoirs produced by dissidents intimately connected with the Soviet human rights movement and known to have contributed to the *Chronicle*. In her book *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries and Dreams*, Irina Paperno discusses some of the methodological challenges inherent in using memoirs as historical sources. In the section on memoirs written about Anna Akhmatova, Paperno highlights the precarious status of “memoir evidence [produced] in a tightly knit community that has lived under the conditions of institutionalized ambiguity.”²⁸ Indeed, this description of intimately connected communities could easily be applied to the small groups (*kompanii*) of dissidents to be discussed in chapter 2. Paperno describes how under such conditions, opinion-based testimony is often “cited by others, acquiring the status of evidence and a semblance of legitimacy. Ambiguities and assumptions pile up, and interpretations based on assumptions and opinions are reiterated in subsequent texts as facts; in the end, the memoir becomes a historical ‘source’.”²⁹ Given the seeming untrustworthiness of such testimony, why are dissident memoirs important to use as historical sources? As Barbara Walker argues in her article “On Reading Soviet Memoirs,” memoirs are valuable

²⁸ Irina Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 111.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 110 - 111.

precisely because of these so-called “failings.”³⁰ The value of a memoir lies not in its objectivity, but rather in its ability to reflect the author’s world view: “how they think of their past, and how they connect it to their present; how they believe that society should work, and what they see as appropriate or ideal social, economic, and political behavior.”³¹ Indeed, memoirs have the capacity to provide valuable insight into cultural dynamics within small networks.

Yet the picture is more complicated for memoirs produced by the dissidents of the human rights movement. For the most part, until the end of the USSR, dissident memoirs could only be published abroad.³² Benjamin Nathans notes that the publication of memoirs “outside the country in which their narrative takes place [complicates] Tzvetan Todorov’s dictum that ‘genres communicate with the society in which they are operative’.”³³ Given that dissident memoirs were predominately published in the West, it is natural that their authors experienced a certain degree of estrangement from their homeland. Yet, Nathans also highlights the estrangement between the memoirists and their Western audience.³⁴ Indeed, Vladimir Bukovsky anticipated a “glass wall” between himself and Western journalists in a reoccurring dream.³⁵ Yet this estrangement does not diminish the value of memoirs produced by members of the human rights movement for

³⁰ Barbara Walker, “On Reading Soviet Memoirs: A History of the ‘Contemporaries’ Genre as an Institution of Russian Intelligentsia Culture from the 1790s to the 1970s,” *Russian Review* 59, no. 3 (2000), 329.

³¹ Ibid.

³² I am referring here to official publication. Dissident memoirs certainly appeared in *samizdat* within the USSR. One of the first dissident memoirs to appear in *samizdat* was Anatoly Marchenko’s *My Testimony* (discussed in greater detail below).

³³ Benjamin Nathans, “Talking Fish: On Soviet Dissident Memoirs.” *The Journal of Modern History* 87 (2015), 581.

³⁴ Ibid., 582.

³⁵ Vladimir Bukovsky, *To Build A Castle*, 334.

researchers. Instead, it allows for new and different questions, for example: “[h]ow do the texts navigate between the autobiographical imperative to locate the self in a larger milieu and the otherness of ‘sitting apart?’ What effects were generated by the uneasy combination of Western and Soviet reception contexts during the Cold War?”³⁶ As primary sources, such memoirs not only provide invaluable insight into narrative construction, but also the milieu in which dissidents operated.

1.3. THE ORIGINS OF THE SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT

When asked how the *Chronicle* got its title, Natalya Gorbanyevskaya, its founder and first editor, responded that the name was accidental. “In fact [...] the title was *The Year of Human Rights in the Soviet Union*, and the subtitle was *A Chronicle of Current Events*.”³⁷ The United Nations (UN) had declared 1968, the year of the *Chronicle*’s founding, to be the International Year of Human Rights. Inspired, Gorbanyevskaya planned to publish a special collection devoted to exposing the abuses the Soviet government was committing against its citizens during a year intended as celebration of human rights. While the *Chronicle*’s original title may not have stuck, its commitment to human rights never wavered over the course of its fifteen-year existence. In fact, the cover page of each of the *Chronicle*’s 64 issues bore the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ (UDHR) Article 19, which relates to freedom of opinion and expression.³⁸ Yet, why did human rights prove to be an enduring framework for

³⁶ Nathans, “Talking Fish,” 587.

³⁷ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (“Pervyy Redaktor”).

³⁸ The article in full: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” United

dissidents? What did the term “human rights” mean in the Soviet context? And why did Gorbanyevskaya choose to refer to human rights and the UDHR in the first place? After all, Gorbanyevskaya could have just as easily alluded to domestic protections, such as the Soviet constitution’s section on the “Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens,” which also guaranteed freedom of conscience and freedom of speech.³⁹ This certainly would have been in line with the strategies of other dissidents, such as Aleksandr Esenin-Vol’pin, who just two years earlier had called for the observance of constitutionally guaranteed domestic rights and was an advocate of a “legalist” approach to dissidence.⁴⁰ The fact that the Soviet Union had celebrated the twenty-year anniversary of the UDHR in 1968 by signing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights may have been a factor in Gorbanyevskaya’s decision to allude specifically to the UDHR and human rights. Yet, it does not explain the longevity and productivity of human rights as a framework for Soviet dissidents. To dig deeper into the roots of the Soviet human rights movement, I first briefly explore the ideological ascendancy of human rights on a global scale in the postwar period. This is followed by an examination of the concept of rights within the Soviet context, the Soviet Union and its participation in international rights covenants, and the impact of the Thaw on the development of the human rights movement.

Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” UN.org.
<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> (accessed January 18th, 2017).

³⁹ “1936 Constitution of The USSR,” 1996. *Departments.Bucknell.Edu*.

<http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/1936toc.html> (accessed January 2017).

⁴⁰ Aleksandr Esenin-Vol’pin and the “legalist” approach to dissidence will be discussed in more detail below.

1.3.1. The Soviet Human Rights Movement in a Global Context

What explains the ideological ascendancy of human rights and the turn to this idea as a framework for a series of movements around the world? In his book *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, Samuel Moyn argues that the prominent place human rights occupies in today's political and intellectual discourse is historically contingent and somewhat accidental. Furthermore, he asserts that the supremacy of human rights is a much more recent phenomenon than has been presented by activists and pundits. In recent years, some academics and advocates have come to view the UDHR as a direct response to the horrors of World War Two, arguing that the Holocaust demanded an international human rights regime.⁴¹ According to Moyn, however, when the term "human rights" first entered the political debate in the middle of the 20th century, it was associated with a multiplicity of vague and at times contradictory notions (for example, the issue of national sovereignty). Indeed, in the period following the Second World War, Moyn characterizes the UN rights regime as "dead on arrival" - the UDHR had minimal impact and human rights remained on the periphery as an organizing concept and almost non-existent as a movement.⁴² The various postwar declarations of human rights did not challenge state sovereignty and could not enforce human rights observance across borders. Furthermore, the Cold War and issues surrounding national self-determination (in the context of anti-colonialism) quickly marginalized such declarations.⁴³ As Moses Moskowitz, a veteran NGO chief, remarked in 1968, the idea of human rights "[had] yet

⁴¹ See for example: Michael Ignatieff, *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 4-5.

⁴² Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 200.

⁴³ Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 46.

to arouse the curiosity of the intellectual, to stir the imagination of the social and political reformer, and to evoke the emotional response of the moralist."⁴⁴

It was not until the 1970s that human rights became a trans-national ideal and movement. As Moyn argues, this belated emergence of human rights must be understood as the result of specific historical conditions. Some examples of such historical conditions include: President Carter's invocation of human rights, which played a role in embedding human rights in popular consciousness and ordinary language; the rise of Amnesty International and its innovative grassroots human rights advocacy; coups d'état in Latin America; as well as dissident activity in China and the Soviet Bloc. Moyn emphasises, however, that the condition with the most impact was political activists' widespread loss of faith in socialist and post-colonial visions of the future. He calls this phenomenon the "collapse of other, prior utopias."⁴⁵ At this time of disillusionment, human rights offered an alternative to "belief systems that promised a free way of life, but led into bloody morass, or offered emancipation from empire and capital, but suddenly came to seem like dark tragedies rather than bright hopes."⁴⁶ Human rights provided a powerful, moral framework that could address urgent, global problems without obligation to an overarching political program. In other words, human rights were attractive because they claimed a moral authority that transcended politics in a time of ideological betrayal and political collapse.

⁴⁴ Moses Moskowitz, "The Meaning of International Concern with Human Rights," in *René Cassin: Amicorum Discipulorumque Liber, Jura Hominis Ac Civis*, 1-4 (Paris: A. Pédone, 1969), 1: 194.

⁴⁵ Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

The moral authority of human rights was key to the development of the Soviet human rights movement. For dissidents, the morality of human rights as a concept was in opposition to the immorality of the regime's violations and abuses. Moreover, this emphasis on ethics and morality was a way to ensure that the cause was taken seriously, especially in the West. For example, in his memoir, prominent dissident Natan Shcharansky states that the only reason why "the world paid any attention to a small group of Soviet dissidents and Jewish activists was [their] strong moral position."⁴⁷ According to Shcharansky, "the moral righteousness" of the dissident struggle was the movement's only asset; to cooperate or collaborate with the KGB would severely compromise the group's moral authority and "mean letting down growing number of supporters in the Free World and undermining their continued determination to help [dissidents]."⁴⁸ In this way, the insistence of dissidents on the morality of the human rights was a way to define the terms of their struggle, as well as provide legitimacy.

Furthermore, the Soviet human rights movement was never a cohesive political opposition, nor did it ever claim to be. Most dissidents involved in the movement took great pains to distance themselves from the notion of an organized political party. According to Ludmilla Alexeyeva, a prominent member of the movement and the author of the first comprehensive monograph on dissidence, it was exactly this lack of ideological unanimity that united the movement. The multi-valence of human rights as a concept united advocates of a wide variety of opinions, "from monarchists to Marxists."⁴⁹ Yet, moral unity without political unanimity did lead to some misunderstandings,

⁴⁷ Natan Shcharansky, *Fear No Evil* (New York, NY: Random House, 1988), 42.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ "Human Rights are Everybody's Cause, Says Alexeyeva," 1978, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 11, Folder 2,

especially on the part of Western observers. Valery Chalidze, one of the founding members of the Moscow Human Rights Committee, commented:

Americans find it difficult to understand the non-political nature of Russian social movements, and try to assign them a place in the Western political spectrum. [...] The Left tends to see us as leftists because we criticize the Soviet government, and is surprised when we voice non-leftist opinions; the Right tends to see us as rightists because they think we are fighting communism, and is surprised to hear us voice non-rightist opinions. The truth is that the Russian human rights movement does not fit any slot in the western political spectrum, simply because it is not a political movement.⁵⁰

Remarking on the movement's political inclusiveness, Pavel Litvinov, another veteran of the cause, stated, "We are of different religious and social ideas but we share the ideals of good, justice, human rights and human compassion."⁵¹ For their part, the *Chronicle's* editors tried to express solidarity with all who suffered under the regime, no matter their views, citing freedom of speech and freedom of conscience. For example, the seventh

⁵⁰ Valery Chalidze, *The Soviet Human Rights Movement: A Memoir* (New York, NY: Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, 1984), 27.

At times, the human rights cause took a backseat to discussions of differences in political philosophy among the movement's biggest personalities. Andrei Sakharov, an advocate of "democratization" and rapprochement with the West; Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who espoused a Russia-specific brand of benevolent authoritarianism; and Roy Medvedev, who called for a return to Marxist-Leninist principles.

See chapter 6 of Joshua Rubenstein's *Soviet Dissidents and their Struggle for Human Rights*, for a detailed discussion of the main currents of political thought in the movement.

⁵¹ "Press Statement of Pavel Litvinov on March 22, 1974," Radio Liberty Special Report, April 17, 1974, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 197, Folder 3.

The single exception to this view I found during my research was Andrei Amalrik. In his oeuvre *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?* he states: "*samizdat*, like the Cultural Opposition, gradually gave birth to a new, independent force which can already be regarded as a real political opposition to the regime, or, at least, as a political opposition in embryo." Although, he goes on to temper this statement by saying, "[m]y view of it may be mistaken since I do not know the full facts."

Andrei Amalrik, *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1971), 9-10.

issue of the *Chronicle* contains an article about repressions against members of the Fetisov Group, which was viewed by many to be anti-Semitic. Addressing their decision to include a description of the plight of the group in the *Chronicle*, the editors wrote, “Whatever these ideas may be, one must never forget that four people were sentenced under Article 70 for what amounts to their views and are now experiencing the cruel conditions of a special mental hospital, i.e. imprisonment with forced treatment, for their views.”⁵² Indeed, the human rights movement’s moral authority and political heterogeneity allowed it to bring together and give voice to people from a diverse range of groups, from nationalists, to Baptists, to feminists, and beyond.

1.3.2. The Language of Human Rights

In his history of human rights, Moyn defines them in the Western sense, meaning that human rights are largely understood to be a “set of indispensable liberal freedoms” that guarantee the “dignity of each individual.”⁵³ This certainly seems to be the definition adopted by many in the Soviet human rights movement. In an open letter written in 1969, the Action Group for the Defense of Human Rights in the USSR wrote that the group’s commitment to defending human rights came from their belief in the “unconditional value of the individual.”⁵⁴ In the mid- to late-1970s, in a range of appeals to authorities written by people representing a variety of interest groups (political prisoners, *refuseniks*

⁵² *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii (Chronicle of Current Events)* No 7: 30 April 1969: 138-139 http://hr2.memo.ru/wiki/Проект:Типографские_выпуски (accessed December 2016).

⁵³ Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 1.

⁵⁴ Initsiativnaia Gruppya Po Zashchite Prav Cheloveka v SSSR, *Initsiativnaia Gruppya Po Zashchite Prav Cheloveka v SSSR, Sbornik Dokumentov* (N’iu Iork: Izd-vo “Khronika”, 1976), 21.

and religious believers), “the rights of the person” were regularly evoked and the word “inalienable” was frequently used when discussing these rights.⁵⁵ It may be tempting to view this language as evidence of dissidents simply importing Western conceptions of human rights into the USSR in order to protest against the state. In the section below, however, I argue that this language is in fact representative of larger political and social processes happening in the Soviet Union, and not simply a Western import by the underground. The rights language used by dissidents was largely the product of international diplomacy, internal politics, and societal change in the post-Stalin era.

Before examining the processes involved, it is first important to consider the following question: how does the idea of the inherent rights of the individual compare with rights-talk in the Soviet Union? Entrenched Cold War rhetoric would lead us to believe that “the Soviet side use[d] the term ‘human rights’ predominately in the meaning of basic socio-economic rights, [whereas] the Western side predominately in the meaning of personal freedoms and basic political rights.”⁵⁶ Indeed, the Soviet Red Archive at the Open Society Archives in Budapest is filled with newspaper articles, government reports, and newsletters that echo this view. One particularly illuminating example comes from a 1979 editorial piece in the *Washington Star*. The author asks sarcastically, “What difference does it make to the rest of the people if they can’t start corporations or publish irreverent essays on Lenin? The important thing is that they’re so much better housed,

⁵⁵ See for example: *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii (Chronicle of Current Events)* No 46, p. 70; No 57, p. 47; No 62, p. 63;

http://hr2.memo.ru/wiki/Проект:Типографские_выпуски (accessed October 2016).

⁵⁶ Peter Hübner, “Analysis of Recent Soviet Statements on the Human Rights Problem,” HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 690, Folder 1, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Soviet Red Archives, Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.

fed, clothed, schooled and medicated than they were under the Czars.”⁵⁷ Not to be outdone, the Soviet media also criticised the human rights record of Western countries. The archive contains a wealth of articles lambasting America’s double standard when it came to human rights and contrasting the freedoms enjoyed by Soviet citizens with the privations suffered by people in the West. For example, in a 1978 issue of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, readers were invited to cut out a pre-made postcard, sign it, and then mail it to President Carter (Figure 1). The text of the card, written in English, reminded the President that human rights “begin at home” and urged him to “denounce and stop the political trials of the American civil rights fighters.”⁵⁸ Clearly, human rights were anything but neutral territory during the Cold War’s raging ideological battles and vulnerable to the machinations of spin doctors on both sides.

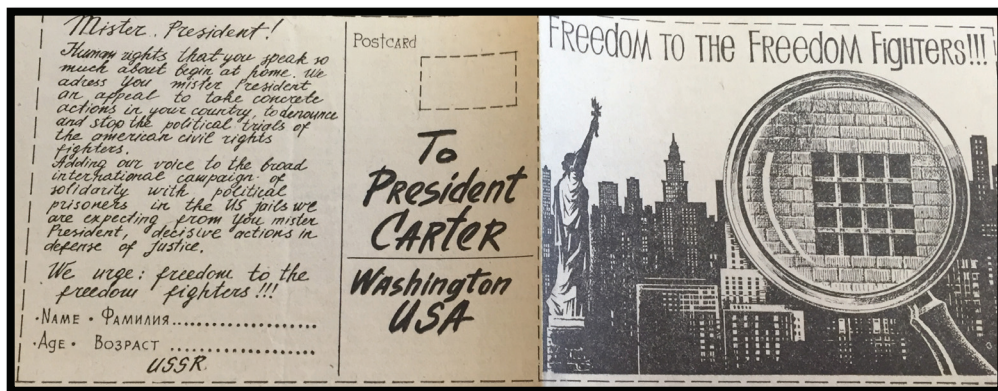


Figure 1. Postcard in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* from June 23rd, 1978.⁵⁹

If historians are to move beyond the Cold War rhetoric and expand and complicate established understandings of human rights, it is essential to explore what the

⁵⁷ “Human Rights: Who Cares?,” October 6th, 1979, HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 690, Folder 4.

⁵⁸ “Adres Otkrytki - Belyy Dom,” June 26th, 1978, HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 690, Folder 2.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

concept meant within the Soviet context. One important distinction to make is that from the Soviet perspective, rights were understood as emanating from the state, rather than as innate to the individual. Indeed, in his article, “Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era,” Benjamin Nathans remarks, “in the Soviet Union rights were typically construed as things the state *bestowed* upon its citizens [...], rather than *recognizing* them as inherent in the latter.”⁶⁰ Take the “Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens” in the “Stalin Constitution” of 1936 (in place until 1977), mentioned at the beginning of this section. In addition to granting freedom of the press, assembly, conscience, and a range of other political and civil rights, it also legally guarantees a comprehensive program of material welfare (including the right to employment, material security in advanced age, education, and leisure).⁶¹ It is important to note that following the enumeration of the Soviet citizen’s civil rights, the document states, “These civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organizations printing presses, stocks of paper, public buildings, the streets, communications facilities and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights.”⁶² This is significant as it affirms, in plain terms, the state’s duty to provide the conditions necessary for the realization of civil and political rights. Yet, at the same time, as seen in the above excerpt’s use of the word “working people,” the Constitution makes it clear that the realization of rights and freedoms is inseparable from the citizen’s performance of his or her duties, meaning that rights are contingent upon the fulfillment of certain obligations. Among other things, citizens are expected to

⁶⁰ Benjamin Nathans, “Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era” in *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 177. Italics in original.

⁶¹ “1936 Constitution Of The USSR,” Section 10, Articles 118-121.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Section 10, Article 125.

observe the law, maintain labour discipline and “respect the rules of socialist intercourse.”⁶³ Nathans observes that “The Stalin Constitution repeatedly distinguishes between ‘having’ a right, something any citizen can do, and being granted (by the state) the material means to exercise it, which depends on [...] fulfilling the preeminent duty of labor.”⁶⁴ This explicit linkage between rights and duties, as well as the state’s guarantee of material provisions for the exercise of civil rights, is almost entirely absent from the Cold War rights-talk. As Nathans observes, the division between economic rights and political rights misses the “dialectic between these two “generations” of rights *within* the socialist camp.”⁶⁵ As demonstrated, Cold War-influenced histories of human rights and rights-talk, especially in the Soviet context, are liable to obscure more than they illuminate.

Following Stalin’s death in 1953, Soviet society underwent important and lasting changes. This period has come to be known as the Thaw and its impact on the development of the human rights movement will be discussed in detail in the following section. There are, however, two significant aspects of the Thaw that are relevant to this section on the language of human rights: discussions of Stalin’s legacy and the opening of the Soviet Union to the world. Khrushchev’s revelations of mass violence during the Stalin period at the Twentieth Party Congress in January 1956 led to calls for the law to be used as a safeguard against the return of arbitrary rule and mass repression. Nathans notes that the “official diagnosis of Stalin’s crimes emphasized his failure to abide by

⁶³ Ibid., Section 10, Article 130.

⁶⁴ Nathans, “Soviet Rights-Talk,” 171.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 188. Italics in original.

‘socialist legality,’ rather than the content of socialist law itself.”⁶⁶ The “socialist legality” to which the Soviet leadership was referring, promised “[...] the necessary conditions for insuring that the activity of all state organs, officials, public organizations and citizens is carried out on the basis of the Constitution, laws and other standard-setting acts. [Further] the state insures the safeguarding of law and order, the interests of society and the rights and freedoms of citizens.”⁶⁷

As legal debates and discussions were happening inside the country during the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviet Union was simultaneously joining a wider, global conversation about human rights. In her PhD dissertation, “Soviet Diplomacy and Politics on Human Rights, 1945–1977,” Jennifer Amos notes that Khrushchev “tested the waters of international public space” by joining the International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1954.⁶⁸ This trend was continued and indeed expanded by Khrushchev’s successors. Examples include the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1968), and later, the Helsinki Accords (1975). Furthermore, Amos describes several human rights awareness campaigns that took place in the USSR. For example, the ninth anniversary of the UDHR was celebrated in the Soviet Union with lectures on human rights around the world and a children’s concert at a Pioneer Palace. The tenth anniversary was celebrated with the issuance of a commemorative stamp and the publication of Anatoly Movchan’s *International Protection of Human Rights*, a book

⁶⁶ Ibid., 173. Quotations in original.

⁶⁷ D. Zlatopolskiy, “People’s Political Freedoms Promote Socialist Democracy,” *Pravda*, 14th March, 1980. HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 690, Folder 5.

⁶⁸ Jennifer Amos, “Soviet Diplomacy and Politics on Human Rights, 1945–1977.” PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2012. ProQuest (AAT 3513410), 240.

describing the Soviet Union's role in the development of the UDHR.⁶⁹ This trend of “moving the Soviet Union into the orbit of international public law,” albeit selectively, is significant because it increased citizens' chances of “gaining knowledge of the rights norms” contained within these documents.⁷⁰

In summary, what can Soviet participation in international rights agreements and “socialist legality,” reveal about dissidents and human rights language? First of all, it is clear that dissidents did not import human rights language wholesale from the West. Certainly due must be given to the circulation of unofficial literature and other unsanctioned sources of information, however, at least in the mid- to late-1960s (i.e. the beginning of the movement), the language of human rights was introduced through the various international covenants, agreements and treaties on human rights that the Soviet government signed. By participating in international conversations about human rights, the Soviet government increased its citizens' awareness of the ideas and language contained therein.⁷¹ In turn, official insistence on “socialist legality” gave dissidents structure when it came to appeals to their government vis-à-vis international agreements

⁶⁹ Ibid., 247.

Although it is important to note that the Soviet “awareness campaigns” were not as extensive as in other countries. For example in the Philippines, planes dropped copies of the declaration to citizens in remote areas. Ludmilla Alexeyeva asserts that only after 1975 did the full text of the UDHR (not just excerpts quoted in newspapers) become readily available to ordinary citizens of the USSR.

⁷⁰ Nathans, “Soviet Rights-Talk,” 181. Although, it is important to note that the Soviet “awareness campaigns” were not as extensive as in other countries. For example in the Philippines, planes dropped copies of the declaration to citizens in remote areas. Ludmilla Alexeyeva asserts that only after 1975 did the full text of the UDHR (not just excerpts quoted in newspapers) become readily available to ordinary citizens of the USSR.

⁷¹ It should also be noted that the USSR was not simply adopting “Western” agreements. The Soviet Union played a central role in the formulation and shaping of rights covenants and agreements. The Soviet Union successfully secured the inclusion of collective economic and social rights in major covenants. See “Soviet Diplomacy and Politics on Human Rights, 1945–1977.”

and rights norms, as well as domestic laws. Dissidents in the human rights movement could cite covenants, agreements, and laws signed or enacted by the government in an attempt to call attention to violations and abuses. Reflecting on the importance of international covenants for the development of the Soviet human rights movement in 1977, dissident Valery Chalidze wrote, “When we were just beginning to publicize, in *samizdat*, the UN Covenants on Human Rights [...], some dissenters regarded those documents as empty verbiage and useless propaganda. But now I sometimes receive appeals from remote provinces citing the Covenants [...]”⁷² As will be discussed below this strategy of demanding observance of the law and citing international agreements would prove to be vital to the development of the human rights movement in the Soviet Union.

1.3.3. The Thaw and the Development of the Human Rights Movement

In her 1990 memoir *The Thaw Generation*, Ludmilla Alexeyeva refers to the Thaw as “twelve glorious years.”⁷³ Of the period she writes, “to us, the Thaw was a time to search for an alternative system of belief. Our new beliefs would be truly ours.”⁷⁴ The identity of “us” is examined in the next chapter, however, the current discussion focuses on what made these years “glorious” and how the Thaw influenced the development of

⁷² Valery Chalidze, “How Important is Soviet Dissent?” June, 1977, Box 372, Folder 5, HU OSA 300-80-7 Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Soviet Red Archives: USSR Biographical Files, Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.

⁷³ Contemporaries often describe the Thaw as beginning with Khrushchev's secret speech in 1956 and ending in 1968 with the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Ludmilla Alexeyeva and Paul Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 208.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

the human rights movement. As evidenced by Alexeyeva's description, the Thaw was experienced as a period of great expectation. Indeed for many it was an "awakening."⁷⁵ The years following Stalin's death witnessed Khrushchev's secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress, the mass exculpation of prisoners, the publication of works such as Vladimir Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone* (1956) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day In the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962), the Hungarian Revolution, Polish uprisings and the International Youth Festival in Moscow. Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd note that the events of the Thaw were not fleeting moments resulting in short-term reactions. Rather, these events "had a transformative impact, catalyzing long-term historical processes."⁷⁶ In this section, I briefly examine three important aspects of the Thaw which I argue played pivotal roles in the development of the human rights movement: public discussions of Stalin's legacy and the development of "legal dissidence," the opening of the Soviet Union to the West, and the liberalization of literature.

Stalin and his legacy were central to the social polemics and intellectual change of the Thaw and had important consequences for the development of the human rights movement. As discussed above, the revelations of mass violence during the Stalin period led to a questioning of the nature of Soviet power and an interest in employing legal means to prevent a new Terror. Fears about a recrudescence of Stalinism came to a head with the trial of the writers Andrei Siniavskii and Yuli Daniel' in 1965-66. Siniavskii and Daniel' were arrested for having published in foreign editorials under pseudonyms and

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd, "The Thaw as an Event in Russian History," in *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*, eds. Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 31.

were charged with anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. Often portrayed as the birth of the Soviet human rights movement, the trial of the writers sparked enormous protest at home and abroad, and firmly established a “legalist” approach to dissidence. For many, the arrests and subsequent trial seemed to indicate “a plan to bring back Stalinism.”⁷⁷ In reaction to the trial, the first “spontaneously organized” public demonstration of the post-Stalin era took place.⁷⁸ The “Meeting of Openness” was held on 5 December, 1965, on Pushkin Square in Moscow. On the appointed day, demonstrators gathered and some even held banners reading: “Respect the Constitution!” and “We demand *glasnost* in the case against Siniavskii and Daniel!”⁷⁹ Insisting that the regime respect its own Constitution was one of the first public expressions of what later became known as “legal dissidence.” The concept was developed by Aleksandr Esenin-Vol’pin and became one of the key principles of the Soviet human rights movement. Esenin-Vol’pin, an eccentric figure who is often referred to as the “intellectual godfather” of the Soviet human rights movement, demanded transparency and strict observance of the law.⁸⁰ It is important to highlight that he was not in opposition to the state. In fact, his whole strategy was entirely dependent on the immanent structures of the Soviet system: the Constitution and established laws. Esenin-Vol’pin’s “legal dissidence” demanded that the state obey its own laws and observe formally guaranteed rights. His strategy was something new and as Vladimir Bukovsky notes in his memoir, Esenin-Vol’pin “was the first person [he] had ever come across to speak seriously of Soviet laws.”⁸¹ Bukovsky continues, “We used to

⁷⁷ Bukovsky, *To Build A Castle*, 243.

⁷⁸ Ludmilla Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 274.

⁷⁹ Rubenstein, *Soviet Dissidents*, 37.

⁸⁰ Nathans, “The Dictatorship of Reason,” 632.

⁸¹ Bukovsky, *To Build A Castle*, 162.

make fun of him. What laws can there be in a country like ours? Who pays attention to them? [and Esenin-Vol'pin would respond] That's the whole problem – that no one pays any attention to them. Look, you see. We've only ourselves to blame if we don't demand that our laws be observed.”⁸²

Esenin-Vol'pin's unique brand of dissidence would soon become, in the words of Valery Chalidze, “the movement's credo.”⁸³ Chalidze was one of Esenin-Vol'pin's most devoted pupils and he stressed the necessity of respect for law in his memoir. He writes, “We did not admire Soviet law; we criticized it. But we tried to take it seriously, and we reminded the authorities that it was important to observe their own laws.”⁸⁴ Later in the memoir, in an imagined conversation with someone arguing that taking Soviet law seriously played into the hands of the authorities and helped persuade the West that the rule of law existed in the USSR, he replies, “Why should you struggle for freedom if you can steal a banana when your master's back is turned?”⁸⁵ This “legalist” approach to dissidence was not only systemically applied to domestic law, but to international rights and norms as well. The pages of the *Chronicle* are filled with trial transcripts, appeals, and letters that cite violations of the Constitution or Criminal Code, as well as international covenants (most commonly the UDHR). For one example among many, in a trial transcript for proceedings against Andrei Amalrik and Lev Ubozhko in issue 17 of the *Chronicle*, Amalrik refers to both Article 125 of the Constitution and the UDHR in the same sentence when defending his right to “creative freedom.”⁸⁶ This “legalist”

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Chalidze, *The Soviet Human Rights Movement: A Memoir*, 4.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 17 : 31 December 1970, 33.

approach of systematically and publicly applying the law (both domestic and international) to abuses and violations by the government proved to be an enduring and indispensable strategy for dissidents.

As discussed in the preceding section, the Soviet Union's participation in international conversations about human rights was important because it increased awareness about rights norms among the country's citizens. Yet, this is just one aspect of the opening of the Soviet Union to the wider world. Eleonory Gilburd demonstrates how, by the 1960s, "the foreign had become a constant, diffused and intimate presence in Soviet cities."⁸⁷ Through events such as the International Youth Festival in Moscow in 1957 and other cross-cultural transfers that began post-war or during the Thaw, the West became a permanent fixture in lives of many Soviet citizens.⁸⁸ Western presence is also important to the human rights movement because contact with the West played a significant role in the dissemination of information produced by members of the movement. In collaboration with Western correspondents, diplomats and international organizations, human rights dissidents were able to organize press conferences, give interviews, produce and disseminate *samizdat*, and carry out myriad other awareness efforts. For example, upon emigrating to the West, Pavel Litvinov issued a press statement asking journalists to publicize information about several imprisoned dissidents. In his statement he pleads, "I want all of you to understand that we [dissidents] have survived because the West exists and in it a Western press. I ask of you: write more about us, think about us, and remember that we suffer for ideals we share with you – ideals of

⁸⁷ Eleonory Gilburd, "The Revival of Soviet Internationalism in the Mid to Late 1950s," in *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*, 392.

⁸⁸ The type of West "experienced" by Soviet People is discussed in Alexei Yurchak's *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More*, 158-206.

freedom and civil rights.”⁸⁹ The ways in which contact with the West influenced the movement is explored in chapter 4, however, it is important to note that the presence of the West in the Soviet Union proved to be essential to the development of the human rights movement.

The final aspect of the Thaw that I will discuss is the role of literature. During the Thaw, literature played a pivotal role in expanding the boundaries of discussion about the country’s recent past. Indeed, as Denis Kozlov notes in his work *The Readers of Novyi Mir: Coming to Terms with the Stalinist Past*, “the intellectual, ethical, and linguistic shifts of the 1950s and 1960s to a great extent originated in literature.”⁹⁰ When discussing the linguistic shifts of the period, struggles against dogmatism were of vital importance. In 1953, *Novyi Mir* caused a sensation with the publication of Vladimir Pomeranstev’s “On Sincerity In Literature.” His article criticizes what he deems the “varnishing of reality” and calls on individual authors to be “sincere” and “truthful.”⁹¹ In the following years, authors grappled with the country’s recent history as well as with the inadequacy of the existing language to reflect current reality. Pomeranstev’s criticism, along with subsequent Thaw-era publications such as Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* sparked debates that revealed a growing crisis in language and expression. Ultimately, these debates were symptoms of something bigger. The shift away from the rigid language of the state was part of a larger process of changing societal

⁸⁹ “Press Statement of Pavel Litvinov on March 22, 1974,” Radio Liberty Special Report, April 17, 1974, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 197, Folder 3.

⁹⁰ Denis Kozlov, *The Readers of Novyi Mir: Coming to Terms with the Stalinist Past*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), 324.

⁹¹ Vladimir Pomerantsev, “The Writer's Diary: ON SINCERITY IN LITERATURE,” in *The Current Digest of the Russian Press* No. 5, Vol. 6, March 17 (1954), 4. <http://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/13843443> (accessed December 2016).

consciousness. To return to Alexeyeva's quote at the beginning of this section, the Thaw was a time for "new beliefs" - for beliefs that were hers, not imposed upon her. It is tempting to view these calls for changing consciousness and new beliefs as quite radical or revolutionary, yet that would be a distortion. The quest for greater cultural autonomy was not in opposition to the state. As evidenced by the publication of works by Pomeransteve, Solzhenitsyn, Dudinstev, in the literary journal *Novyi Mir*, this process was taking place *within* official frameworks. What is the relevance of these calls for greater cultural autonomy to the emergence of the human rights movement? As Komaromi explains in her book *Uncensored*, "resistance *within* the cultural field became the key to opening up the field of dissidence from within Soviet Russian culture. That field expanded out to include heterogeneous types of dissident writing and activity [...]."⁹² The dissident field, of which the human rights movement was very much a part, was preceded and prompted by the internal tensions of the cultural field.

1.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter opened with an introduction to the *Chronicle of Current Events* and covered important historiographical debates within the scholarship on dissident activity, namely: conceptions of the dissident subject and internalist approaches to the study of dissidence. As stated, my project avoids the Cold War binaries prevalent in discussions of dissident activity and instead focuses on how the human rights movement and the *Chronicle* developed not in opposition to, but *within* larger Soviet culture. To that end, my section on the origins of the movement examined the political, social, and cultural processes that produced the Soviet human rights movement as well as the intellectual

⁹² Komaromi, *Uncensored*, 38. Italics in original.

currents that came to define it: its non-programmatic nature and systematic application of law.

In the preceding section, I examined the ideological ascendancy of human rights in a global context in order to show that the appeal of human rights as a framework came from its moral authority and political inclusivity. By doing so, I was able to connect human rights with the Soviet human rights movement's deliberately non-programmatic nature and ability to represent a wide range of voices. This was followed by a re-examination of the Cold War tropes that have reduced human rights-talk to simplistic divisions that lack explanatory power. As demonstrated, human rights and the language used to articulate it were not Western imports. Rather, Soviet human rights-talk was introduced through international diplomacy, internal politics, and societal change in the post-Stalin era. Indeed, changes in Soviet society following Stalin's death were crucial to the development of the human rights movement. Fears of a return to Stalinism, the development of "legal dissidence," the routinization of contacts with the West, and the struggle for greater cultural autonomy, all played significant roles in the coalescence of the Soviet human rights movement. In the following chapter, I will continue to explore the legacy of the Thaw by examining *kompanii*, the shift from literary to human rights dissidence touched on in the previous section, and the informal groups and networks that produced and distributed *samizdat*.

CHAPTER 2 –*KOMPANII*

In her sweeping history of Soviet dissent, Ludmilla Alexeyeva writes that since one of the chief functions of the human rights movement was to gather and disseminate information on human rights violations “it was only by virtue of *samizdat* that the [movement] was able to rise and spread.”⁹³ In this chapter, I explore the informal dissident networks that supported the publication of *samizdat* in order to better understand how information and unofficial texts, such as the *Chronicle*, were gathered, compiled, and disseminated. To that end, I focus on two areas: the phenomenon of *kompanii* and informal charity networks. By concentrating on these two topics, I can answer important questions about participation, information gathering, and *samizdat* dissemination. This analysis also sheds light on broader support for the human rights movement, the relationship between the movement and larger society, as well as the role of women. In the first section I return to the “us” mentioned by Alexeyeva in the previous chapter. The “us” that she refers to were small, tight-knit groups of friends and like-minded people who assembled in private spaces. These small informal groups, called *kompanii* (or sometimes *kruzhki*), would prove to be crucial to the development and longevity of publications like the *Chronicle*.⁹⁴ Before examining exactly how *kompanii* impacted *samizdat*, I begin with a general description of these informal groups and the functions they served.

⁹³ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 15.

⁹⁴ The singular form is *kompaniya* (or *kruzhok*) and the plural form is *kompanii* (or *kruzhki*).

2.1. KOMPANII AND THE THAW

In 1956, Ludmilla Alexeyeva confided some of her anxieties about university and life in general to her acquaintance, Natasha. Natasha commiserated, told Ludmilla about some of her own personal tragedies, and invited her over. This, however, was not an invitation to politely sip tea and munch on *sushki*, it was a gathering of a *kompaniya*. In Alexeyeva's words, it was a meeting of "a group of regular guests who [...] were looking for opportunities to dance to jazz, drink vodka, and talk until dawn."⁹⁵ Alexeyeva describes going through the motions of her daily life: studying, standing in shop queues, preparing dinner, washing up - but then, at 10 pm, flying out the door to attend a *kompaniya*.

Just about every evening, I would walk through the dark corridor of some communal flat and open the door of a crowded, smoky room filled with people I knew, people I'd never met, people I must have met but didn't know by name. Old *politzeiki* would be shouting something at young philologists, middle-aged physicists would be locked in hot debates with young poets, and some people I had never met would be doing unrecognisable dance steps to someone's scratched Glen Miller record.⁹⁶

The gatherings of Alexeyeva and her group of friends and acquaintances were not unique, nor exceptions to the rule. Indeed, according Barbara Walker, *kompanii* were not something new either, as the Russian tradition of intelligentsia circles reaches back to the early 19th century (at least).⁹⁷ As Juliane Fürst demonstrates in her article "Friends in

⁹⁵ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 83.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 84. In this context, a *politzeiki* is a former political prisoner.

⁹⁷ Walker argues that the *kompaniya* tradition involves the creation of social networks among the educated elite within the private sphere. These intelligentsia circles then prompted artistic, revolutionary, and other activity in the public sphere. Further, Walker asserts that these circles reached their zenith among the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia.

Private, Friends in Public,” Thaw *kompanii* were rooted in the social, political, and ideological changes of the period. She asserts that members of the intelligentsia “all over the Soviet Union imbued their friendship circles with a spirit of political and social reawakening turning them into something more meaningful than just a random collection of acquaintances.”⁹⁸ Indeed, Alexeyeva classifies *kompanii* as “social institutions” and includes a long list of the various functions *kompanii* performed, including everything from “confession booths [and] concert halls, [to] coffeehouses [and] dating bureaus, [to] seminars in literature, history, philosophy, linguistics, economics, genetics, physics, music, and art.”⁹⁹ Yet, what are historians to make of these improvised “social institutions?” Do they signal a retreat from the official sphere of party and state? Certainly the gatherings that Alexeyeva describes seem to be essentially private affairs: get-togethers in personal rooms with the guest list determined by friendship and mutual connections. In her article on Soviet salon culture, “Stepping Out/Going Under: Women in Russia’s Twentieth Century Salons,” Beth Homlgren asserts that *kompanii* “evolved to displace all the official venues its members had come to distrust” and reflected “growing

Barbara Walker, *Maximilian Voloshin and the Russian Literary Circle: Culture and Survival in Revolutionary Times* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2005), 1 - 23.

⁹⁸As is clear from Alexeyeva’s reference to philologists, physicists, and poets, this gathering was almost exclusively the reserve of the intelligentsia. The intelligentsia will be discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

Juliane Fürst, “Friends in Private, Friends in Public: The Phenomenon of the *Kompaniia* Among Soviet Youth in the 1950s and 1960s,” in *Borders of Socialism : Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. Lewis Siegelbaum (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 229.

⁹⁹ Alexeyeva, *Thaw Generation*, 83.

trends towards privatization.”¹⁰⁰ Yet, this interpretation would seem to fit into the oppression *versus* resistance binary discussed in the literature review, essentially presenting the state as a monolithic actor and Soviet citizens as *a priori* opposed to it. In assessing this theory of privatization, it is important to highlight that *kompanii* membership was fluid and open in nature, and as a result, these spaces were never entirely private. Alexeyeva reports attending *kompanii* hosted by friends of friends of friends – hardly a gathering of intimates.¹⁰¹ Indeed, Fürst asserts that *kompanii* members “were bound by a shared secrecy concerning the content and details of their discussions, yet [a *kompaniya*’s] relatively fluid membership and openness to guest members made it a quasi-public forum. *Kompanii* assembled in private spaces, which, through the presence of strangers, acquired public overtones.”¹⁰² Instead of seeing *kompanii* as an exclusively private space or somehow operating outside the Soviet system, I classify *kompanii* as existing within a private-public sphere. Indeed, Fürst describes *kompanii* as transcending their origins in private spaces and performing functions that belonged in the public realm, functions such as those listed by Alexeyeva. Fürst argues that a number of Soviet citizens, seeing the ineptitude or unproductiveness of established public structures (e.g. the Komsomol), created parallel spaces “that would fulfill their need for sociability and politically conscious interaction. In other words they created their own public spheres — or at least what they perceived to be the missing space within Soviet society that truly

¹⁰⁰ Beth Holmgren, “Stepping Out/Going Under: Women in Russia’s Twentieth Century Salons,” in *Russia – Women – Culture*, ed. Helena Goscilo and Beth Homgren (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 235.

¹⁰¹ Alexeyeva, *Thaw Generation*, 83.

¹⁰² Fürst, “Friends in Private, Friends in Public,” 230.

linked the needs of the individual with the collective good.”¹⁰³ In this way, instead of seeing *kompanii* as private retreats or conspiratorial cliques, they can be understood as operating alongside state-sponsored structures. Essentially, *kompanii* responded to needs that their members felt were left unfulfilled by the state.

As discussed in the section on the Thaw, literature played a central role in the intellectual and cultural shifts of the period and this is reflected in *kompanii*. While these groups varied in size, composition, origin, location, and much else, one thing that most *kompanii* seem to have in common is a preoccupation with literature and especially poetry. Alexeyeva states that a passion for poetry became a sign of the times.¹⁰⁴ In his memoir, Vladimir Bukovsky writes that knowing the names of Pasternak, Mandelshtam, and Gumilyev was essential to gaining acceptance in *kompanii*.¹⁰⁵ Gorbanyevskaya, a poet herself, said in a 1994 interview that through the works of twentieth-century poets and the original poetry of some *kompanii* members, it became “possible and even necessary to understand life, navigate it, and find one’s own way, preferences, and direction.”¹⁰⁶ In the same interview Gorbanyevskaya went on to say that copying or re-printing and passing around poetry and other works of literature was a common pastime for many in her cohort. Indeed, Fürst confirms that the “publication and redistribution [of texts] became one of the *raison d’être* of such friendship circles and satisfied both their desire to share good poetry or prose with a wider world and to pick holes in the tight

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 271.

¹⁰⁵ Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle*, 144.

¹⁰⁶ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Tat’yana Vladimirova, “Za Vashu i Nashu Svobodu”).

blanket of official censorship.”¹⁰⁷ In her memoir, Alexeyeva asserts that *samizdat* arose naturally from *kompanii*. She writes, “*samizdat* became a *kompaniya* ritual: if you liked a manuscript, you borrowed it overnight and copied it on your typewriter. Generally you made five copies. Three went to friends, the fourth went to the person who let me borrow the poem, and the fifth remained in my possession.”¹⁰⁸ Poetry was not the only type of literary work to be circulated; memoirs by political prisoners, translations of novels by Koestler, Hemingway, and Orwell among others, as well as Pasternak’s *Doctor Zhivago* and some of Solzhenitsyn’s early works, were also disseminated via *kompanii samizdat*.¹⁰⁹ As will be discussed below, the dissemination channels created by literary *samizdat* in Thaw-era *kompanii* would prove to be essential to the development of the Soviet human rights movement and the *Chronicle of Current Events*.

As lively as the *kompanii* were, they did not last forever. In Alexeyeva’s words, “*kompanii* emerged in a flash in the mid-1950s, stayed vibrant for a decade, then faded away.”¹¹⁰ Fürst confirms that starting from the mid-1960s, *kompanii* spaces became less and less prominent. Despite the fact that some groups splintered while others dissolved completely, in her conclusion Fürst suggests that the dissident movement may have

¹⁰⁷ Fürst, “Friends in Private, Friends in Public,” 237.

¹⁰⁸ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 98. Alexeyeva’s reference to typewriters is interesting to note. Some memoirs and memoir material mention the popularity/ scarcity of typewriters during this period. Bukovsky writes that all the typewriters in Moscow “worked overtime.” Everyone who could type was copying poetry for themselves and for their friends (Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle*, 140). In her 1994 interview Gorbanyevskaya says, “Until 1964, I couldn’t actively, that is to say, constantly produce *samizdat* because I didn’t have a typewriter. Though, I did re-type *Syntaxis* and “Requiem” on other people’s typewriters. Then, my mother gave me a typewriter so that I could write my thesis. After that, I became extremely active - I re-typed everything.” Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Tat’yana Vladimirova, “Za Vashu i Nashu Svobodu”).

¹⁰⁹ It is important to note here that legitimate publications were exchanged and shared as well. Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 98-99.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

“picked up from where the *kompanii* had left off.”¹¹¹ Indeed, in the following section, I argue that the informal groups of the human rights movement can claim the heritage of the Thaw-era *kompanii* in terms of their composition, operation, and production of *samizdat*.

2.2. KOMPANII AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT

In the post-Thaw years “the free-wheeling *kompanii*” changed.¹¹² Remarking on the transition, Alexeyeva writes, “the remnants of other *kompanii* joined the remnants of ours. We were just a handful, but a more diverse handful [...]. We were too busy to run from party to party. Instead we remained in small groups that knew of each other and, when necessary, called on each other.”¹¹³ In this section, I will examine these dissident *kompanii* and explore their Thaw-era heritage. The small groups that supported the human rights movement are similar to the Thaw-era *kompanii* in many important ways. Dissident *kompanii* were also characterized by informality, friendship, the production and circulation of *samizdat*, and occupied a unique position in the public-private sphere.

To begin with the informal aspect of the dissident *kompanii*, it is interesting to note that most dissidents stress that there was very little formal organisation within the groups and some contrasted the informality of their *kompanii* with the rigidity of state-sponsored structures. In his memoir Bukovsky asserts that “there were no leaders and no

¹¹¹ Fürst, “Friends in Private, Friends in Public,” 245. Fürst lists a number of factors contributing to the demise of *kompanii*, notably: the closing down of several key venues for *kompanii* gatherings, the imitation of *kompanii* by public organs (i.e. taking *kompanii* ideas and activities and bringing them back into the official fold), as well as the fact that young *kompanii* members eventually grew up and out of the practice (244-245).

¹¹² Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 203.

¹¹³ Ibid.

led, there was no allocation of roles, and no one was actively pushed or persuaded.”¹¹⁴ Alexeyeva echoes this view, writing, “no one assigns tasks to others; instead each is prepared to do what is necessary if other volunteers cannot be found. No one has obligations other than those of conscience.”¹¹⁵ Later she continues, “Tasks were coordinated between friends, and this ensured mutual trust without which organized activities would be impossible under conditions of constant surveillance.”¹¹⁶ Indeed, trust and ties of friendship were extremely important to the functioning of dissident *kompanii*. Sergei Kovalyov, a prominent member of the human rights movement, remarks that personal relationships “played a big role” for those in the human rights movement. He observes,

when you hear that somewhere someone has been arrested, it usually ends up that you express some regret, surprise or perhaps indignation, but do not pursue action. However, when one of your close friends or someone belonging to your circle is suddenly arrested or fired, you say to yourself, “Well, I cannot be silent, it would be shameful to remain silent.” And later on this leads to your intervention on behalf of strangers, illegal searches, etc.¹¹⁷

Trial transcripts in Pavel Litvinov’s collection *The Demonstration in Pushkin Square* reveal that friendship was the impetus for participation in the movement for others as well. In the transcript of the Bukovsky, Delaunay and Kushev trial, Yevgenii Kushev is reported to have said “friendship matters to me more than points of law.”¹¹⁸ When asked why he participated in the Pushkin Square demonstration, he responded, “Friendship has

¹¹⁴ Bukovsky, *To Build A Castle*, 276.

¹¹⁵ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 283.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 (Lev Yelin, “Belaya Kniga - Sergeya Kovalyova”).

¹¹⁸ Pavel Litvinov, *The Demonstration in Pushkin Square* (London: Harvill Press, 1969), 57.

always been the most important thing in life for me - this is why I went.”¹¹⁹ Similarly, when the witness Ludmilla Katz is asked why she went to the square that day, she answered, “It was in defense of my friends, I couldn't stay out of it.”¹²⁰ The idea of a movement built on friendship and common connection raises interesting questions about the movement’s reach. Any movement based on trust would automatically be self-limiting in terms of audience and dissemination, so how does one explain growth, or even survival for such a movement in a repressive environment? Many dissidents in the human rights movement argue that it was the “self-perpetuating nature of dissent” that helped the movement survive government repression and spread. Similarly to Kovalyov, Alexeyeva explains that after any sort of repression against group members by the authorities, new members would spring up. According to her, “repression did not cause an outflow of supporters. On the contrary, after the arrests occurred our group received many offers saying: I want to join the group in order to enable it to continue its work.”¹²¹ In a similar vein, after the arrest of Tat’yana Velikanova, who was an important figure in the movement, Natalya Gorbanyevskaya held a press conference in Paris, where she had emigrated some years earlier. She is reported by Radio Liberty to have said: “At the moments when the human rights movement has been hit the hardest... instead of the panic and confusion expected, there occurred every time a new solidarity in the human rights movement, new people appeared, who up until then had not participated

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 86.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 64.

¹²¹ “Beseda Lyudmily Alekseyevoy s Anatoliyem Kuznetsovym,” June 24th 1977, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 11, Folder 2.

openly.”¹²² Due to the repressive actions taken against the human rights movement only a minority were willing to participate openly and so it is nearly impossible to quantify participation. As a result, Kovalyov, Alexeyeva and Gorbanyevskaya’s assertions about cycles of activity-repression-increased activity are difficult to confirm. However, one thing that is important to note with regard to Gorbanyevskaya’s press conference is its location: Paris. While waves of repression against dissident groups may have steeled the movement’s members and encouraged others to assume the mantle, the role of the West cannot be ignored in the development of the movement. As demonstrated in the example of Gorbanyevskaya’s press conference, in the West a dissident might be given a platform to publicize his or her views and spread the movement’s message to a wide audience (i.e. Radio Liberty listeners numbering in the millions). As Komaromi argues in *Uncensored*, foreign media and Western publishing opportunities were crucial in supporting the development of dissident activity.¹²³ The role of the West will be further explored in chapter 4; however, for now it is important to note that Western publicity helped sustain the movement and disseminate its information and ideas.

As mentioned in this chapter’s introduction, the gathering and dissemination of information on human rights violations were the two primary functions of the Soviet human rights movement. Consequently, the production and circulation of *samizdat* were the chief occupations of *kompanii* members. As Alexeyeva notes, due to the lack of mass printing technology and necessity of working in secret, most of the activists’ energies

¹²² Julia Wishnevsky, “The Trial of Tat’yana Velikanova Begins,” Radio Liberty Research, August 28, 1980, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 66, Folder 1.

¹²³ Komaromi, *Uncensored*, 133.

were taken up with the processes of *samizdat* production and dissemination.¹²⁴ What was involved in drafting a *samizdat* document is described in a collection of memoirs, eyewitness accounts, and *samizdat* materials produced by “Memorial.” In the collection, participants in the “Meeting of Openness” held on 5 December 1965 discuss their memories of the event. Viktoria Vol’pina describes her husband Aleksandr Esenin-Vol’pin’s preparation for the meeting and recalls how “he ran around Moscow for two weeks,” visiting various people and collecting information.¹²⁵ Esenin-Vol’pin himself describes how the text of his “Civic Appeal,” a document he was preparing about the aims of the meeting, “changed endlessly” over the course of various debates in homes of *kompanii* members.¹²⁶ Typically, once a text destined for *samizdat* was ready to be disseminated, it would be typed up on a typewriter using four or five carbons and then the copies would be distributed to people the author knew. If a recipient found value or was interested in the text, he or she would copy it and pass it along to others in a similar manner.¹²⁷ Prior to the demonstration, the “Civic Appeal” was circulated among Moscow *kompanii*. Vladimir Bukovsky, who was also present at the demonstration, recalls that the appeal circulated through *kompanii* “channels of trust” that had previously been used to circulate “the poems of Mandelstam and the literary collections of Pasternak.”¹²⁸ He goes on to call these “channels of trust” one of the movement’s greatest accomplishments and

¹²⁴ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 284.

¹²⁵ “Rasskazyvayet Viktoriya Vol’pina,” in “Pyatoye dekabrya 1965 goda v vospominaniyakh uchastnikov sobytiy, materialakh Samizdata, dokumentakh partiynykh i komsomol’skikh organizatsiy i v zapiskakh Komiteta gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti v TSK KPSS,” eds. N. Kostenko, G. Kuzovkin, S. Lukashevsky, A. Papovyan (Memorial, 1995) <http://www.memo.ru/history/diss/books/5dec/index.htm> (accessed February 2017).

¹²⁶ “Rasskazyvayet Aleksandr Vol’pin,” in “Pyatoye dekabrya 1965 goda.”

¹²⁷ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 12.

¹²⁸ “Rasskazyvayet Vladimir Bukovsky” in “Pyatoye dekabrya 1965 goda.”

credits them with having let “practically all of Moscow” know about the upcoming meeting.¹²⁹

Yet, what is significant about the fact that the channels that circulated Akhmatova’s “Requiem” and Ginzburg’s *Into the Whirlwind* later came to disseminate Esenin-Vol’pin’s “Civic Appeal” and other *samizdat* texts of the human rights movement, such as the *Chronicle*? Traditionally, the trajectory of *samizdat* is articulated as follows: the *samizdat* of the late 1950s primarily consisted of the unofficial circulation of banned, suppressed, and otherwise un-publishable literature and literary journals. In the second half of the 1960s, *samizdat* activity intensified and became inextricably linked with dissidence. After the 1965-66 trial of Siniavskii and Daniel’ and the repression that followed, *samizdat* played a crucial role in dissident communication and activism. This is certainly the narrative presented by Andrei Amalrik, who asserts that “gradually over a period of perhaps five years, the emphasis of *samizdat* shifted from literary to documentary works and acquired a steadily more pronounced social and political content.”¹³⁰ This view is shared by Alexeyeva who also sees the roots of *samizdat* in poetry and affirms, “as *samizdat* matured, it very quickly became politicized.”¹³¹ In the fifth issue of the *Chronicle*, there is a section called “Survey of *Samizdat* in 1968.” The “Survey” states, “During the last few years *samizdat* has evolved from a predominant concern with poetry and fiction towards an ever greater emphasis on journalistic and documentary writing.”¹³² To further underscore this point, the “Survey” points out that in

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Amalrik, *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?*, 9.

¹³¹ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 14.

¹³² *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 5 : 31 December 1968, 76.

the year 1968, “*samizdat* ha[d] not been enriched by a single major prose work.”¹³³ How accurate is this description of *samizdat* transforming from a literary and poetic medium into a civic forum? In her article, “*Samizdat* and Soviet Dissident Publics,” Ann Komaromi reminds readers that it is simply not the case that literary works stopped being produced and circulated in *samizdat* in the late 1960s.¹³⁴ Important works of prose and poetry, periodicals, and even “thick” journals were disseminated via *samizdat* in the 1960s and onwards. Komaromi lists Erofeev’s *Moskva-Petushki* (1969), Voinovich’s *The Life and Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin* (1969), the journal *Tridtsat’ sem’* (1976), and other literary works and journals as examples of a thriving poetic, philosophical, and artistic *samizdat* scene.¹³⁵ It was not that literary *samizdat* transformed into more social and political texts – the two existed simultaneously. Furthermore, returning to the “channels of trust” described by Bukovsky, it becomes clear that these channels were not simply re-purposed to distribute social and political *samizdat*, but rather, the existing channels came to accommodate the inclusion of more socially-oriented *samizdat*, like the *Chronicle of Current Events*.

One final comparison to be made between the Thaw-era *kompanii* and the dissident *kompanii* concerns the private-public nexus. Members of the human rights movement consistently asserted that their movement and its activities were open and public. As seen in chapter 1, the systematic and public application of the law was fundamental to the Soviet human rights movement and its unique brand of “legalism.” Indeed, as Chalidze asserts in his memoir, “the desire to initiate a dialogue between the

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ann Komaromi, “*Samizdat* and Soviet Dissident Publics,” 80.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

government and the society characterized our movement from its beginning.”¹³⁶ Two of the *Chronicle*'s regular sections, respectively titled “*Samizdat Update*” and “Letters and Statements,” are filled with open letters, statements, and petitions addressed to people in positions of regional, national, and international authority. For example, the “Letters and Statements” section in Issue 33 of the *Chronicle* (1974) contains: an open letter from female inmates at a prison in Mordovia to the USSR Procurator-General, R. Rudenko; a statement to the international press by Alexander Ginzburg; a statement by Leonid Lyubarsky to the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet about the pardoning of political prisoners; a letter by Andrei Sakharov to the presidents of national psychiatric associations in nine countries; another letter by Sakharov, this time addressed to Brezhnev and President Nixon; and a statement addressed to the procurator of the town of Chusovoi (Perm Krai) sent by Nikolai Gorbal, a political prisoner.¹³⁷ As can be seen, members of the human rights movement did not see their activity as clandestine, conspiratorial, or illegal; activists operated relatively openly and welcomed publicity. As Sakharov put it: “our only weapon is publicity.”¹³⁸ This openness and desire for publicity is seen in the *samizdat* materials produced by the movement, including the *Chronicle*. Discussing the space that *samizdat* authors occupied, Ann Komaromi affirms that “authors and editors expected an audience beyond their private circles, an audience that would be Soviet and/or international. They expected their writing would at some point

¹³⁶ Chalidze, *The Soviet Human Rights Movement: A Memoir*, 18.

¹³⁷ *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 33 : 10 December 1974, 58-62.

¹³⁸ Nicholas Bethell, “A Diary of Repression,” *The Sunday Times*, December 11th, 1977, HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 689, Folder 4.

become part of a broader debate.”¹³⁹ Yet just because *samizdat* authors and editors were addressing themselves to the wider public does not mean that they were part of the public sphere. Repressive actions by the government against those producing *samizdat*, including house searches, imprisonment and internment in psychiatric hospitals, forced authors and editors to work “in private.” Addressing their readers in 1968, the *Chronicle*’s editors published a statement about the publication’s status and legality. The statement reads (in part):

The *Chronicle* is by no means an illegal publication, but the difficult conditions in which it is produced are created by the peculiar notions about law and freedom of information which, in the course of long years, have become established in certain Soviet organizations. For this reason the *Chronicle* cannot, like any other journal, give its postal address on the last page.¹⁴⁰

Evidently the *Chronicle* did not belong to the official, public sphere, however, by asserting that the *Chronicle* was not illegal, its editors (and the human rights movement generally) were striving to develop a new space for communication. Trying to create this space was neither a private affair nor oppositional, but was rather an attempt to reshape the relationship of critique between state and society.

2.2.1 – *Kompanii* Charity Networks

Aside from *samizdat*, another public function of the dissident *kompanii* was the administration of charity networks to support political prisoners and their families. Alexeyeva writes, “material help for political prisoners was organized by human rights

¹³⁹ Komaromi, “*Samizdat* and Soviet Dissident Publics,” 77. Indeed, as will be discussed in chapter 4, the *Chronicle* was simultaneously being translated and published in the West. From 1971 onwards Amnesty International periodically released booklets containing English translations of the *Chronicle*.

¹⁴⁰ *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 5 : 31 December 1968, 102.

workers on the same principles used in the distribution of *samizdat*, except that in this case the mechanism worked in reverse – from the donors to the collectors.”¹⁴¹ Analysing the structure and operations of these charity networks reveals important information about the way dissident *kompanii* collected information and sheds light on the broader community that supported dissidents, if not their activity.

The practice in dissident *kompanii* of providing material support for political prisoners and their families began shortly after the trial of Siniavskii and Daniel’ in 1965-66. Alexeyeva reports that the first information about conditions in Soviet prison camps came from the two writers while they were still in imprisoned. Even though the information was scant due to the censorship of correspondence, Siniavskii, and especially Daniel’, were still able to communicate their “discovery” of “thousands of political prisoners in the Mordovian camps.”¹⁴² The information coming from the camps via letters was confirmed and supplemented by Anatoly Marchenko’s book *My Testimony*, which appeared in *samizdat* in 1967. Described by contemporaries as the first book detailing life and conditions in Soviet prison camps post-Stalin, Marchenko’s *My Testimony* was an account of the six years he had spent in the camps from 1960 to 1966.¹⁴³ In her memoir, Alexeyeva recounts how she helped prepare three copies of the manuscript for *samizdat* distribution in marathon typing sessions with other *kompanii* members. She recalls, “Tears welled in my eyes as I typed Tolya’s [Anatoly’s] anecdotes. The book worked. It worked! There wasn’t a gratuitous story, not a single runaway

¹⁴¹ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 287.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Marchenko had attempted to cross the border to Iran. Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Tat’yana Vladimirova, “Za Vashu i Nashu Svobodu”).

condemnation. It was a book only Tolya could have written. Only he could remember so much detail.”¹⁴⁴ Clearly, the memoir had a big impact. As Barbara Walker notes in her article, “Pollution and Purification in Human Rights Networks,” the information coming from the camps and Marchenko’s memoir inspired many *kompanii* members “to come to the aid of these unjustly suffering individuals.”¹⁴⁵ According to Alexeyeva,

People knocked on the Daniels’ door to offer money, warm clothes, and food. At first Larisa [Daniel’s ex-wife] and Marya [Siniavskii’s wife] tried to decline, saying that the attorneys had been paid, that Yulik [Yuli] and Andrei had plenty of warm clothes, and that there was no shortage of food on the table. “In that case, give it to someone who needs it,” was the usual reply. Larisa’s refrigerator was filling up with smoked sausage, salted fish and Ukrainian garlic. A pile of flannel shirts, sweaters, fur hats, gloves, mufflers, and felt boots grew in the corner of the room.¹⁴⁶

As Alexeyeva and other members of her *kompaniya* learned the names of more and more political prisoners, and as gifts and money continued to pour in, they established a “Red Cross.” The work of the “Red Cross” involved buying foodstuffs and other necessary items, concealing money for bribes in book covers, and standing in line for hours at the post office to mail the packages.¹⁴⁷ Sporadic, individual donations of money, clothing, and food quickly snowballed into more organized help for political prisoners and their families. Alexeyeva reports that by 1968 a fund was established that “was made up of small individual monthly dues (from one to five roubles) collected among groups of friends and co-workers and supplemented with large irregular contributions from writers,

¹⁴⁴ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 160.

¹⁴⁵ Barbara Walker, "Pollution and Purification in the Moscow Human Rights Networks of the 1960s and 1970s" in *Slavic Review* 68, no. 2 (2009): 382.

¹⁴⁶ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 138.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 140.

scholars, actors and others.”¹⁴⁸ In 1974, Solzhenitsyn announced that he would donate the royalties from the Western publication of his *Gulag Archipelago* to aid political prisoners and their families. The money was distributed to the families of political prisoners through the Russian Social Fund, an unofficial organization created specifically for that purpose.¹⁴⁹ In June 1977, the Fund’s administrators released a statement emphasizing the importance of the assistance given to political prisoners and their families. It reads, in part, “Even a little bit of help means a lot. It is a small joy in a dark, painful, monotonous, constantly hungry existence. It is a friendly hand stretching out through the links of fences reaching all the way to the sky, through the barbed wire, through the stifling walls and sightless windows of the prison.”¹⁵⁰ Indeed, Marchenko echoes this view in his third and final book, *To Live Like Everyone*. He highlights the importance of this “support network provided by strangers” in helping him, a former prisoner, obtain medical care, find a job, and attempt to get a residency permit.¹⁵¹

As demonstrated, charity networks provided essential material and emotional support to prisoners and their families. There was more to these networks than assistance, however, they were also important communication channels. In his memoir, Bukovsky notes, “Families came to Moscow from all over the country on their way to Mordovia and Vladimir Prison to visit relatives. Everyone needed a bed for the night and the chance to buy food. They had to be met and shown around. On their way back from Mordovia they

¹⁴⁸ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 288.

¹⁴⁹ Chalidze, *The Soviet Human Rights Movement*, 32-33.

¹⁵⁰ T. Khodorovich, M. Landa, K. Lyubarsky, “Pomoshch' Politzaklyuchennym SSSR,” June 15th, 1977, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 350, Folder 6.

¹⁵¹ Anatoly Marchenko, *To Live Like Everyone* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), 5

brought the news.”¹⁵² The last line about relatives bringing “the news” reveals how some information made it from the camps to Moscow. As discussed in the previous section, gathering information was one of the primary functions of the human rights movement. Therefore, Bukovsky’s comment about the “news” coming from camps via prisoners’ relatives, who were supported and materially helped by *kompanii* members, highlights the importance of these charity networks to the functioning of the human rights movement.

When describing the salted fish and fur hats piling up in Larisa Bogoraz’s flat, Alexeyeva remarks that the “donations said a lot about the state of mind of the people giving them [...]. For lack of other weapons, they fought Stalinism with felt boots and garlic.”¹⁵³ Relatedly, Chalidze notes that the outpouring of support for political prisoners and their families demonstrates a larger “public sympathy for victims of repression.”¹⁵⁴ Indeed, Walker argues in her article that discreet acts of material aid “revealed the outlines of a broader community – mostly that of the Moscow liberal intelligentsia – whose members, while they might not possess the courage to take some of the bolder steps of the more prominent dissenters, nevertheless offered what support they could.”¹⁵⁵ Support for these charity networks was not limited to the “hard-core” activists of the human rights movement. The charitable donations described by Alexeyeva reveal a broader base of support that was sympathetic to the plights of rights defenders and political prisoners, but was not willing to or not interested in participating in more overt activity. Contrastingly, however, for those activists who did operate openly, the support

¹⁵² Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle*, 352.

¹⁵³ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 138.

¹⁵⁴ Chalidze, *The Soviet Human Rights Movement*, 32.

¹⁵⁵ Walker, “Pollution and Purification,” 383.

offered by charity networks helped to reduce certain apprehensions about participation. Walker argues that the “foreknowledge of [...] material support was one reason why certain people felt emboldened to take great risks.”¹⁵⁶ For those who faced repressive action by the state, the knowledge that money, material necessities, and legal support would be organized to help them and their families must have provided some comfort. The *Chronicle* even reserved space in certain issues to list the addresses and birthdays of the children of political prisoners, presumably for readers to send gifts and greetings.¹⁵⁷

Nevertheless, charity networks were not immune to repression. Walker states that since the Soviet state had powerful claims on volunteerism and the “altruistic will of its citizens,” participants in unofficial charity networks were encroaching on, and implicitly challenging, the state’s prerogative.¹⁵⁸ Facing this reality, Marchenko asks in exasperation in *To Live Like Everyone*, “Where else, in what country, could there be a secret society devoted to good work and noble deeds? A conspiracy of non-betrayal? An underground network of aid to children?”¹⁵⁹ Statements released by Solzhenitsyn’s Aid Fund reveal just how difficult it was to get parcels through to prisoners and navigate the arbitrary regulations about what could be sent to prisoners and by whom.¹⁶⁰ Yet, charity networks not only had to deal with the state, but were also plagued by internal tensions. Rumours swirled about mishandled funds, “double-dipping,” and favouritism, and

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 384.

¹⁵⁷ For examples, see *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 27 and No 46.

¹⁵⁸ Walker, “Pollution and Purification,” 376-377.

¹⁵⁹ Marchenko, *To Live Like Everyone*, 129.

¹⁶⁰ T. Khodorovich, M. Landa, K. Lyubarsky, “Pomoshch' Politzaklyuchennym SSSR,” June 12-15th, 1977, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 350, Folder 6.

debates raged about the ethicality of using foreign funds.¹⁶¹ Whatever the tensions and problems experienced by these informal aid networks, exploring their operations reveals that they were vital to the movement's communication channels and provided a way for sympathetic people to participate in the movement, even if it was only through the donation of some smoked sausage and a pair of woolly socks.

2.2.2. Women in *Kompanii*

Studying *kompanii* charity networks reveals communication channels and broader community support, but it also, perhaps more subtly, brings to light the importance of women to dissident activity. As demonstrated in the examples with Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Larisa Bogoraz, and Marya Rozanova, women seem to have contributed with particular effectiveness to the activity associated with charity networks. Although that is not to say that women's participation in the human rights movement was limited to the administration of charity funds. As Vladislav Zubok notes in his book *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia*, "educated and socially active women, postwar university graduates who for the most part came from families with a revolutionary pedigree, played a leading role in building [...] the infrastructure for the dissident movement."¹⁶² In her memoir, Alexeyeva lists the various ways in which she and other

¹⁶¹ See Alexeyeva's *The Thaw Generation* for her account of the stress and acrimony involved in administering funds for prisoners and their families (246-248). For an argument against accepting foreign funds see Chalidze, *The Soviet Human Rights Movement*, 32-34.

¹⁶² Vladislav Zubok, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 264. Important figures within the human rights movement certainly fit Zubok's description. Two representative examples: Larisa Bogoraz came from a family of Communist Party

women played active roles in *kompanii* and contributed to the development of the human rights movement. In addition to the activity associated with the administration of the “Red Cross,” she describes how she and other women composed and typed *samizdat*,¹⁶³ appealed on behalf of husbands and friends,¹⁶⁴ and volunteered to write letters to camp inmates.¹⁶⁵ Likewise, in a 2011 interview, Gorbanyevskaya revealed that the idea of producing a regular human rights bulletin had been floating around *kompanii* for a while but had never been acted upon. Gorbanyevskaya said that she was able to start the *Chronicle* not only because she “wasn’t lazy,” but also because she was on maternity leave and perceived herself as having more time than the others.¹⁶⁶ Sofia Tchouikina examines the role of women in dissidence, using interviews with former activists as her source base. One aspect Tchouikina highlights is the importance of women in communication and information transfer. She notes that as a result of the fact that wives often remained at liberty when their husbands went to the camps, women were essential to maintaining contact and passing on information.¹⁶⁷ As seen in the previous section, information from relatives was essential for securing the latest news from camps and

bureaucrats and she graduated as a linguist (S. P. de Boer, E. J. Driessen & H.L. Verhaar, *Biographical Dictionary of Dissidents in the Soviet Union, 1956-1975*. [The Hague-Boston-London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982], 57). Ludmilla Alexeyeva trained as a historian and her parents were also Party members (Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 17).

¹⁶³ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 98

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁶⁶ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Linor Goralik, “Natal'ya Gorbanyevskaya: ‘Vot ya dura byla bez strakha’”).

¹⁶⁷ It is important to note that both men and women were sent to camps, prisons and psychiatric hospitals.

Sofia Tchouikina, “Uchastiye zhenshchin v dissidentskom dvizhenii (1956-1986)” *Gendernoye izmereniye sotsial'noy i politicheskoy aktivnosti v perekhodnyy period*. Tsentr nezavisimyykh sotsial'nykh issledovaniy. Sankt Peterburg (1996). <http://www.a-z.ru/women/texts/chuikinr.htm> (accessed February, 2017).

prisons. Tchouikina gives the example of a wife who secretly took information from her husband in the camps and passed it on to *samizdat* bulletins like the *Chronicle* or other *kompanii* members.¹⁶⁸ Women's participation was not limited to human rights *kompanii* and *samizdat* production in Moscow, however. Nadezhda Beliakova and Miriam Dobson demonstrate many of the leading women in the Protestant movement for religious freedoms "were based in Ukraine, although members also hailed from other places, including Omsk, Smolensk, the Tula and Moscow regions, Bashkortostan, Ioshkar-Ola, Chişinău (Moldova), Tashkent and Semipalatinsk (Kazakhstan), and Brest (Belarus)."¹⁶⁹ These Protestant women juggled domestic responsibilities and large families with the rigours and demands of dissident activism. According to Beliakova and Dobson, "female activists found the time to travel regularly, collecting evidence about miscarriages of justice and attending meetings where they carried out editorial work on various *samizdat* publications."¹⁷⁰ From these examples, it is clear that women played varied and vital roles among dissidents. They maintained an atmosphere of solidarity in *kompanii*, provided material support, and created and sustained important communication and information networks.

2.2.3. Dissident *Kompanii* and the Intelligentsia

The example of the Protestant dissidents provided by Beliakova and Dobson raises interesting questions about the geography of the movement and its relationship with the intelligentsia. As seen in the section on charity networks, the base of support for

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Nadezhda Beliakova and Miriam Dobson, "Protestant Women in the Late Soviet Era: Gender, Authority, and Dissent," in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 58, no. 2 (2016): 130.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

the human rights movement is often described as mostly coming from the “Moscow liberal intelligentsia.”¹⁷¹ The geography of movement (i.e. where support and information were coming from and going to) will be explored in the next chapter; however, in this section I critically examine the rapport between dissident *kompanii* and the larger intelligentsia. Members of the intelligentsia formed a majority in Moscow human rights *kompanii*. There were of course exceptions. For example, Anatoly Marchenko, an oil-driller from Barabinsk quickly overcame “all his prejudices about the intelligentsia” after a just short time in Moscow.”¹⁷² As dissident Yuri Glazov reminds his readers, “numerous dissidents were not necessarily members of the post-Stalinist intelligentsia. Equally, to belong to the Russian intelligentsia does not mean that person must be a part of the dissident movement.”¹⁷³ Yet, how integrated were the human rights dissidents within the wider intelligentsia?

In Alexeyeva’s memoir, the larger intelligentsia community is portrayed as initially supportive of the petitions and demonstrations organized by the dissident *kompanii*, especially activity connected with the Siniavskii-Daniel’ trial. Yet, wider support eventually diminished as the risks grew and members of the human rights movement turned to the West for support and publicity. This trend is illustrated in Alexeyeva’s account of a dinner party with a *kompaniya* she had known for decades. The other couples chastise Alexeyeva and her husband for their dissident activities, saying, “have you forgotten where you live? If you like being such a hero, don’t go around

¹⁷¹ Walker, “Pollution and Purification,” 383.

¹⁷² Anatoly Marchenko, *To Live Like Everyone* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1989), 5.

¹⁷³ Yuri Glazov, *The Russian Mind Since Stalin’s Death* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1985), 99.

complaining about being fired or about your husband being fired.”¹⁷⁴ As the years continued, Alexeyeva and other dissidents in her circle felt increasingly isolated. She writes, “a Soviet dissident quickly became a pariah, even among people who privately shared his views. Just by being there, a dissident could induce guilt. The easiest way out would be to dismiss him as a wild-eyed fighter for justice with a penchant for heroic poses and drastic pronouncements.”¹⁷⁵ Yet, according to Zubok, this isolation could also be seen in another way: dissidents isolated themselves from the larger liberal intelligentsia, and not the other way around. He argues that in later years dissidents began to perceive of themselves as “an elite within the intelligentsia or even the only true intelligentsia, in contrast to the conformist majority.”¹⁷⁶ This attitude in turn served to set dissidents apart from those who were sympathetic to the movement but knew participation would most likely result in unemployment, constant surveillance and incarceration. Zubok also notes that the movement’s reliance on the West made the dissidents “foreigners at home” and only served to alienate them further.¹⁷⁷ Whether the dissidents were isolated by the larger intelligentsia or isolated themselves, it is clear that the dissidents of the human rights movement had an uneasy relationship with the larger intelligentsia community.

2.3. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Through the exploration and examination of dissident *kompanii*, I have shed light on the informal groups and networks that supported the Soviet human rights movement

¹⁷⁴ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 194.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 244.

¹⁷⁶ Zubok, *Zhivago’s Children*, 303.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 305. This will be examined in detail in chapter 4.

and its *samizdat* activity. The Thaw-era heritage of *kompanii* reveals that dissident *kompanii* were also informal, based on trust, and occupied a liminal position in private-public space. I have shown that dissident *kompanii* not only produced and distributed *samizdat*, but also provided material assistance and communication channels for information transfer. Further, my analysis has shown that women were crucial in supporting the operation of *kompanii* as well as the larger human rights movement, and that the relationship between human rights dissidents and the intelligentsia grew from sympathetic to strained.

In this chapter I highlighted the importance of gathering and disseminating information for the human rights movement. I also raised some important questions about dissident activity outside of Moscow. In the next chapter, I will address these questions and explore how the information and ideas contained within the *Chronicle* were gathered and spread. I argue that while the *Chronicle*'s editors and contributors were located in Moscow, the ideas and information contained within the bulletin did not necessarily come from the capital alone.

CHAPTER 3 – INFORMATION NETWORKS AND THE *CHRONICLE OF CURRENT EVENTS*

In part I, I analysed the circumstances and conditions that made the circulation of the *Chronicle of Current Events* possible. In chapter 1, I explored the origins of the human rights movement through an examination of the ideological ascendancy of human rights on a global scale and the long-term effects of Thaw phenomena, such as the struggle for greater cultural autonomy, fears of a return to Stalinism, and the increased presence of the West. In chapter 2, I demonstrated how dissident *kompanii*, with origins in the Thaw, created fertile ground for *samizdat* activity and informal communication networks. In part II, I build on the preceding arguments and examine how the *Chronicle* was produced and disseminated. In this current chapter, I analyse the methods employed to gather and disseminate information across the Soviet Union. My research challenges entrenched Moscow-centric approaches to dissidence and reveals that the *Chronicle's* communication networks and systems of information transfer were varied, extremely complex, and had a unique ability to connect geographically isolated segments of the population. Before examining how information contained in the *Chronicle* was gathered and disseminated, it is first important to understand how the bulletin was read. The distinctive author-reader relationship created by *samizdat* explains much about the text-sharing networks that supported the *Chronicle*.

3.1. READING SAMIZDAT

Understanding *samizdat* requires re-imagining print culture. In her book *Uncensored*, Komaromi argues that modern print culture has three distinctive features: dissemination, standardization and fixity. To Komaromi, “dissemination means the broad

distribution of copies of a text; standardization refers to the fact that these copies are identical, and fixity refers to the preservation of texts in print. Together, these features help knowledge be shared and built across geographic distance and over time.”¹⁷⁸ The practice of *samizdat* destabilizes the print paradigm by challenging all three of these features. To begin with dissemination, *samizdat* was spread spontaneously and depended on the participation of its readers. Tat’yana Velikanova provides an illustrative example. When she was asked to describe how the *Chronicle* was published, she answered,

We published it ourselves, it was *samizdat*. How many copies? I don’t know. Well, nobody actually knows. First off, six copies on good paper were typed using carbons, and then they were given to friends. Then these friends re-copied the text, but usually using onionskin.¹⁷⁹ Some people made ten copies, those who wanted higher-quality paper made less, maybe five or six. Well, later, these copies were handed out to friends of friends, and who knows how many copies they made.¹⁸⁰

This hand-to-hand method of dissemination exemplifies the trust-based networks and chains of reproduction and transmission that supported the *Chronicle*. As Alexeyeva reports in *Soviet Dissent*, it took years of “painstaking and dangerous work” to enlarge and consolidate channels and links between human rights activists.¹⁸¹ Clearly, the *Chronicle* had to resonate strongly with its readership in order to merit the significant time investment involved in re-typing the text, as well as the personal risk taken by the readers-cum-publishers.¹⁸² As will be discussed in chapter 4, the *Chronicle* not only

¹⁷⁸ Komaromi, *Uncensored*, 135.

¹⁷⁹ Onionskin is a thin, durable, nearly translucent paper.

¹⁸⁰ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 147 (Katerina Krongauz, “Khronika Tekushchikh Sobytyi ili Lyubov' k Geometrii”).

¹⁸¹ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 285

¹⁸² While it was sometimes the case that members of the human rights movement hired typists, the typists was almost always friends of the activists. In *Soviet Dissent*,

relied on the interest and belief of its readers in the Soviet Union, but also readers in the West. Links with individuals and organizations in the West and the phenomenon of *tamizdat* (often translated as “published over there”) and Western broadcasting also played significant roles in expanding the *Chronicle*’s reach.

The standardization and fixity expected in modern print did not exist in *samizdat*. Komaromi argues that because it was not fixed in official print, a *samizdat* text “might or might not be picked up and established as part of the corpus of known, available texts.”¹⁸³ Certain texts enjoyed heavy circulation, while others “died” in obscurity.¹⁸⁴ Anxieties about the potential disappearance of *samizdat* materials may have been the impetus behind collections like *Arkhiv Samizdata*, a co-operative project spearheaded by Radio Liberty that preserved tens of thousands of pages of *samizdat*.¹⁸⁵ Concerns about authorial control and standardization were also present in discussions about *samizdat* publication. Due to the fact that authors relied on reader-publishers to disseminate their texts, misspellings, errors, and omissions were inevitable. In her article, “*Samizdat* and the Problem of Authorial Control,” Leona Toker describes Varlam Shalamov’s struggle

Alexeyeva notes that attempts to “enlarge the pool of typists met with disaster. Some new typists, once they realized the nature of what they were typing, turned the manuscript over to the KGB.”

Ibid.

¹⁸³ Komaromi, *Uncensored*, 138.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Again, the important role played by the West can be observed in the fixing of these *samizdat* texts. Although, it is important to note that preservation was selective. According to a report by Radio Liberty about the archive, “as a rule poetry, novels, and other works of *belles-lettres* are not included as an integral part of the *Arkhiv Samizdata*, which contains primarily documents of social, political, economic or historical significance concerning contemporary Soviet society.”

“Basic Information about *Arkhiv Samizdata*,” July 1973, HU OSA 300-85-47, Box 11, Folder 11, Samizdat Archives, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.

with unauthorized *samizdat* publications of his collection *Kolyma Tales*. According to Toker, his intentional repetitions and self-contradictions were often “corrected” by self-appointed editors.¹⁸⁶ The *Chronicle* addressed reader-publisher errors in a statement about accuracy in its seventh issue. In the statement, the *Chronicle* requests that its readers be “careful and accurate.” According to the bulletin’s editors, “a number of inaccuracies occur during the process of duplicating copies of the *Chronicle*. These are mistakes in names and surnames, in dates and numbers. The number of these mistakes grows from copy to copy, and they cannot be corrected according to the context, like any other misprint.”¹⁸⁷ Yet, in the *Chronicle*’s case, an insistence on accuracy was more than assertion of authorial control. The data contained within the *Chronicle* had to be accurate and verifiable in order to preserve the bulletin’s reputation as a credible source of information, and further, to stave off accusations of slander by the authorities. The *Chronicle*’s publishers took great pains to maintain credibility, at times qualifying statements with “according to eyewitnesses,” or “according to unconfirmed reports.”¹⁸⁸ Editors would often draw attention to previous inaccuracies and publish corrections as they came to light. In fact, a large number of the *Chronicle*’s issues contain an “Addenda and Corrigenda” section, which attests to the *Chronicle*’s commitment to veracity and accuracy.¹⁸⁹ Valery Chalidze states that the bulletin developed a reputation for reporting rights violations quickly, soberly, and scrupulously, and as a result “enjoyed deserved

¹⁸⁶ Leona Toker, "Samizdat and the Problem of Authorial Control: The Case of Varlam Shalamov." *Poetics Today* 29, no. 4 (2008): 743.

¹⁸⁷ *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 7 : 30 April 1969, 153.

¹⁸⁸ “По свидетельству очевидцев” (*Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 9 : 31 August 1969, 212) and “по непроверенным сведениям” (*Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 29 : 31 July 1973, 49).

¹⁸⁹ “Поправки и дополнения.”

prestige as a [...] responsible source.”¹⁹⁰ Alexeyeva asserts that because of the quality and veracity of the *Chronicle*’s information, the bulletin “withstood investigation.”¹⁹¹ She notes that the majority of the people arrested for involvement with the *Chronicle* were charged under Article 70 of the 1960 RSFSR Criminal Code, which meant that they were accused of “circulating [...] slanderous fabrications which defame the Soviet state and social system.”¹⁹² Alexeyeva reports, however, that even though the information contained within the *Chronicle* was labelled slander, the KGB’s “diligent inspectors were able to find only a few inaccuracies.”¹⁹³ In a 2010 interview Sergei Kovalyov recalled that he participated in his own criminal investigation by volunteering to verify the information contained within the *Chronicle* (and thereby dismiss the slander charges). He

¹⁹⁰ Chalidze, “How Important is Soviet Dissent?” June, 1977, Box 372, Folder 5, HU OSA 300-80-7.

This was not only true for members of the human rights movement who relied on the *Chronicle* for information, but also for interested parties in the West. Radio Liberty programming often included information from the *Chronicle*. An internal directive about broadcasting *samizdat* from Radio Liberty’s archive expresses suspicion about unsigned documents and outlines the need for rigorous authentication. The directive reads, in part: “Unsigned documents will always be treated with utmost caution [...]. No document lacking a signature will be read, excerpted, or commented on by RL until it has been proved to our satisfaction [...].” The fact that information taken from the *Chronicle* (an unsigned publication) was used as legitimate news is a particularly illustrative example of the bulletin’s reputation for factuality.

“On the Use of Documents from the USSR,” Program Policy Division Radio Liberty, April 9th, 1969, HU OSA 300-85-47, Box 15, Folder 1.

¹⁹¹ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, viii.

¹⁹² Harold J. Berman, *Soviet Criminal Law and Procedure – The RSFSR Codes* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), 180.

“Article 70. Anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. Agitation or propaganda carried on for the purpose of subverting or weakening Soviet authority or of committing particular, especially dangerous crimes against the state, or circulating for the same purpose slanderous fabrications which defame the Soviet state and social system, or circulating or preparing or keeping, for the same purpose, literature of such content, shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a term of six months to seven years, or by exile for a term of two to five years.”

¹⁹³ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, viii.

declared himself victorious when he discovered that the episodes he was tasked with investigating were actually reported “very accurately” in the *Chronicle*.¹⁹⁴

It was not only how the author and reader interacted that was unique, but also how a *samizdat* text was read. In a 1999 interview Velikanova remarked that a *samizdat* text was not exactly the type of thing that you could curl up with. She recalled, “[...] there was a book I wanted to read at an acquaintance’s home. I arrived and there was this table and a long, long couch. There were many people on the couch and all of them were reading. The first group was reading pages 1 – 10, and the second group – other pages, and so on. I sat at the end and I waited my turn.”¹⁹⁵ Kovalyov describes a *Chronicle* reading session in a similar way. He was at a *kompaniya* gathering when someone shouted, “Guys, I have the latest issue!” According to Kovalyov, “They pushed away the glasses, closed the curtains tightly, and passed the typewritten pages around from hand-to-hand. They read in silence. Everyone was reading: the hosts, their friends, their retired parents, their children, high school students, and random visitors who came to Moscow

¹⁹⁴ Though his victory did not help him – he was still charged under Article 68 (the Lithuanian SSR ‘s equivalent to Article 70). Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 (Lyubov' Borusyak, “Khronika dissidentskoy zhizni. Beseda s Sergeyem Adamovichem Kovalyovym. Chast' 2”).

Of course the *Chronicle* could not be completely accurate all of the time and there is an interesting transcript in the Memorial Archive that confirms this fact. In an oral interview V. Igrunova, a Ukrainian dissident, comments on information about her (and those in her circle) that appeared in the *Chronicle*. Igrunova’s analysis is quite long as it enumerates various imprecisions and inaccuracies about the details of *Chronicle* reports (for example, the date of her friend’s arrival was the 9th of August, not the 14th). Nevertheless, Igrunova ends her commentary by saying: “All that I’ve corrected in the *Chronicle* are not errors, but inaccuracies. And inaccuracies arise from misunderstanding nuance. That’s all.”

Memorial Archive, f. 162 (“Khronika tekushchikh sobytii - Kommentarii V. Igrunova”).

¹⁹⁵ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 147 (Katerina Krongauz, “Khronika Tekushchikh Sobytyi ili Lyubov' k Geometrii”).

from the provinces.”¹⁹⁶ As can be inferred from Kovalyov’s comment about drawing the curtains, there was risk involved in, not only disseminating, but also reading *samizdat*. Article 70 laid out prison terms of up to seven years with the possibility of internal exile for “circulating or preparing or keeping” anti-Soviet literature (a category in which authorities often placed *samizdat* material like the *Chronicle*).¹⁹⁷ The threat of criminal prosecution and lack of text-reproduction technology may explain why reading *samizdat* was often a social experience: fewer copies meant less risk and small-batch copying, either by hand or by typewriter, resulted in demand often exceeding supply. While *samizdat* reading patterns remain an area in need of thorough research, it is clear that the reading of *samizdat* texts was supported by informal social links.

3.2. INFORMATION NETWORKS

In the above description of the Moscow *kompaniya* reading the *Chronicle*, Kovalyov also goes on to list the information that was contained in that issue; the group read about: a teacher who was dismissed for assigning students the works of Solzhenitsyn and Tsvetayeva; a group of workers who were arrested for forming an unofficial Marx reading circle; children who were taken away from their Baptist parents; and a university professor who was arrested for producing *samizdat* in his apartment.¹⁹⁸ Yet, how did these human rights violations, which happened all over the Soviet Union, reach Kovalyov and his *kompaniya*? Often in the literature, scholars explain the *Chronicle*'s mechanism

¹⁹⁶ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 (“Khronika Tekushchikh Sobytiy”).

¹⁹⁷ Berman, *Soviet Criminal Law and Procedure – The RSFSR Codes*, 180.

¹⁹⁸ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 (“Khronika Tekushchikh Sobytiy”).

for collecting information by quoting an address to the readers of the *Chronicle* found in the fifth issue of the bulletin:

[...] anybody who is interested in seeing that the Soviet public is informed about what goes on in the country, may easily pass on information to the editors of the *Chronicle*. Simply tell it to the person from whom you received the *Chronicle*, and he will tell the person from whom he received the *Chronicle*, and so on.¹⁹⁹

As demonstrated above and in previous sections, trust-based networks were vital to the functioning of the *Chronicle*, as well as *samizdat* generally. Yet, through my research, I have found that this gathering method was neither the most common, nor the most effective information transfer system employed by the *Chronicle*. The *Chronicle*'s information gathering systems were varied, complex, and linked individuals and groups across the Soviet Union.

3.2.1. Itinerant Editors

In a 2011 interview, Gorbanyevskaya recalled how she collected information for the very first issue of the *Chronicle*: she pieced together various *samizdat* materials, visited her friend Alexander Ginzburg to get information about extra-judicial repressions, and met with Anatoly Marchenko to discuss life in the camps. Gorbanyevskaya then revealed that she had travelled to other cities in the Soviet Union to collect even more information. In Leningrad, she interviewed a witness in a trial for members of the All-Russian Social-Christian Union for the Liberation of the People (VSKhSON). From there she travelled to Tartu, where she met with Mark Niklus, a recently released political

¹⁹⁹ *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii (Chronicle of Current Events)* No 5 : 31 December 1968, 102-103.

prisoner, who gave her information about the conditions in Vladimir Prison and the Mordovian camps.²⁰⁰ Similarly, in a 2010 interview, Kovalyov described Pyotr Yakir's extensive travels and the "bits and scraps" of paper he brought back for his daughter, Irina, to decipher and add to the *Chronicle*.²⁰¹ Irina Yakir was reportedly a "great master" at collecting information in her own right.²⁰² In the memoir collection, *The Family Story*, Anatolii Yakobson recalls that Irina often travelled to the Ukraine "on assignment" and carried back information about rights abuses in the heel of her shoe.²⁰³ Kovalyov notes that Yakir and other editors were not only travelling to places to collect information, but also to verify reports that had reached them as well. In his memoir about the *Chronicle*, former editor Leonard Ternovsky states that it was necessary to thoroughly check and "weed out" questionable information.²⁰⁴ He writes that this was done by comparing other people's versions of the same event, showing the information to "experts" (i.e. former political prisoners), and by questioning prisoners' relatives. Throughout the section, he emphasises that this information had to be "sought."²⁰⁵

The practice of going directly to the source was not limited to the editors of the *Chronicle*. It was common for members of the human rights movement to travel to gather information and meet sources. Alexeyeva reports that members of the Helsinki Watch Group each had their own speciality, whether it was religious repression, emigration, or

²⁰⁰ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Linor Goralik, "Natal'ya Gorbanyevskaya: 'Vot ya dura byla bez strakha'").

²⁰¹ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 (Lyubov' Borusyak, "Khronika dissidentskoy zhizni. Beseda s Sergeyem Adamovichem Kovalyovym. Chast' 2").

²⁰² Maya Ulanovskaya, *The Family Story* (Hannover: Seven Arts, 2016), 478.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Leonard Ternovsky, *Saga o "Khronike."* Wikilivres, [www.wikilivres.ru/Сага_о_«Хронике»_\(Терновский\)](http://www.wikilivres.ru/Сага_о_«Хронике»_(Терновский)) (accessed February 2017)

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

the plight of political prisoners, and would visit other regions and cities to get information on that subject.²⁰⁶ In her memoir, she describes travelling to Vilnius on behalf of the group in order to investigate a report about seven students who were expelled for their religious beliefs.²⁰⁷ The way that human rights groups, such as the Helsinki Watch Group, collected information is important to note because their findings were often passed on to the *Chronicle* to be published. For example, Alexeyeva's account of the Lithuanian schoolchildren appears in the 43rd issue of the *Chronicle*.²⁰⁸ The peripatetic editors and activists did not go unnoticed, however. The *Chronicle* contains numerous reports of authorities conducting searches and spot checks for documents at train stations and airports, especially in the late-70s and early-80s.²⁰⁹ Yet, as will be discussed in the next section, the flow of information was not unidirectional. Pilgrim-like messengers, known as *khodoki*, brought information about human rights violations from their areas to *Chronicle* editors in Moscow.

²⁰⁶ "O Sozdanii i Deyatel'nosti Obshchestvennykh Grupp Sodeystviya Vypolneniyu Khel'sinskikh Soglasheniy v SSSR," Radio Svoboda: Vspomogatel'nyye Materialy Issledovatel'skogo Otdela, June 24th, 1977, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 11, Folder 2.

It may be tempting to see the activity of travelling dissidents as a *khozhdeniye v narod* by neo-Narodniks but this would be a mischaracterization. As discussed above, human rights activists were non-programmatic and sought to reshape the critical relationship between state and society through the systematic and public application of the law. Activists gathering information about rights violations from sympathetic informants is a far cry from teaching the peasantry about their moral imperative to revolt.

²⁰⁷ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 285.

²⁰⁸ *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 43 : 31 December 1976, 64-65. Co-operation between human rights groups and the *Chronicle* will be discussed in section 3.2.4.

²⁰⁹ See for example the cases of V. Chornovil and Malva Landa in *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii* No 53 : 1 August 1979, pages 76-78. On his way to Kiev from Irkutsk region, Chornovil was repeatedly searched and at the airport in Kiev his notebook was confiscated, which contained a draft report. Similarly, Malva Landa was stopped on her way from Olkovtsy to Kiev. She was strip-searched and district police confiscated documents, letters, and notes.

3.2.2. *Khodoki*

The term *khodoki* is traditionally associated with the peasantry. In his dissertation Steven Coe defines a *khodok* (sometimes translated as petition-bearer or domestic supplicant) as a person sent by a group of villagers to a person of authority in order to represent the interests of the community.²¹⁰ The word *khodoki* may bring to mind the three peasants in Vladimir Serov's painting *Khodoki u Lenina*. In the piece, Lenin - pen in hand and notebook at the ready - is seated across from and listening attentively to three mud-splashed peasants in sheepskin coats. Yet, if one were to swap Lenin for a *Chronicle* editor and the sheepskin for woolen overcoats, a similar scene might have played out in a Moscow apartment during the late Soviet period. In this late Soviet context, a *khodok* was an individual from any part of the country who brought information about violations and abuses in their areas to human rights activists. According to Gorbanyevskaya, *khodoki* became regular fixtures in the human rights movement after the "The Trial of the Four." In January 1967, Ginzburg, along with Yuri Galanskov, Aleksei Dobrovolskii and Vera Lashkova were arrested and charged with anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.²¹¹ In response to the trial, Larisa Bogoraz and Pavel Litvinov wrote a letter entitled "To World Public Opinion," which described the atmosphere of illegality in the court, called for public condemnation of the trial, and a retrial conforming to legal regulations held in the

²¹⁰ Steven Coe, "Peasants, the State and the Languages of NEP: The Rural Correspondents Movement in the Soviet Union, 1924-1928." PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1993. ProQuest (9332036), 125.

Note, *khodok* is singular and *khodoki* is plural.

²¹¹ *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 1 : 30 April 1968, 2.

presence of international observers.”²¹² The international press published the letter and Gorbanyevskaya reports that it was also broadcast on Western radio stations accessible to Soviet citizens. She says that as a result “many letters began to arrive and people came from all over (later we called them *khodoki*), sharing information, offering support, and asking for our help. We expanded geographically.”²¹³ As with “travelling editors,” *khodoki* were a common occurrence for a variety of groups within the human rights movement. In her memoir, Alexeyeva writes that “domestic supplicants trekked to [her] door by the dozen” once she became involved with the Helsinki Watch Group in the mid-70s.²¹⁴ Yet, as Alexeyeva notes in an interview about her involvement with the group, the path taken by *khodoki* was not always easy. She reports, “sometimes *khodoki* came to Moscow and were faced with many obstacles in trying to find out where group members lived or even just their telephone number.”²¹⁵ Leonid Siry, a dockworker from Odessa who was trying to emigrate from the USSR with his family, perhaps best expresses the difficulty of making initial contact with a representative of the human rights movement. In a Radio Liberty report he is quoted as saying: “People say that here in the Soviet Union there is a champion of human rights – A. D. Sakharov. But it’s almost impossible to get through to him. No matter whom I ask, nobody knows his address, and the Moscow information and telephone offices “don’t know” either. “What’s the name of the

²¹² "Text of Appeal Denouncing Trial of Four Russians." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Jan 13, 1968.

<http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/118313119?accountid=10406> (accessed February 2017).

²¹³ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (“Pervyy Redaktor”).

²¹⁴ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 285.

²¹⁵ “O Sozdanii i Deyatel'nosti Obshchestvennykh Grupp Sodeystviya Vypolneniyu Khel'sinskikh Soglasheniy v SSSR,” Radio Svoboda: Vspomogatel'nyye Materialy Issledovatel'skogo Otdela, June 24th, 1977, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 11, Folder 2.

person who is interested in him?” they ask. But we know that there are still good people left on this Earth.”²¹⁶

Before continuing on to look at other means of information transfer, it is important to return to Gorbanyevskaya’s comment about geographical expansion as it challenges certain aspects of the Moscow-centric approach to dissidence. The spread of the *Chronicle*, and the human rights movement more generally, is often described as expanding in concentric circles centered on Moscow. For example, in his chapter in the influential anthology *Dissent in the USSR*, Theodore Friedgut reports that dissent is concentrated in Moscow and “the relations between Moscow and the provinces are largely one-way.”²¹⁷ Yet Friedgut’s description would seem to ignore phenomena such as the *khodoki* and travelling editors, which illustrate the dialogical nature of the information-sharing relationships that existed between Moscow and other regions in the Soviet Union. Indeed, Gorbanyevskaya expressed frustration with the focus on Muscovite activism in a 1985 interview with fellow dissident Viktor Davydov for the émigré publication *Russkaya Mysl’*. In the interview she asks Davydov:

NG: [...] Where are you from originally?

VD: I’m from Kuybyshev [present-day Samara].

NG: The reason I ask is that in the West, there is a very wide-spread impression that only a small segment of the intelligentsia in the capital is interested in something, and protests somehow, but then there is deepest Russia, which has nothing to do with these things. Were you completely alone in Kuybyshev? [...].

VD: Dissent is not an illness, not a plague that is transmitted by contact or by virus – it’s not an infection. [...] When people tell me here, in the West, that version/view of dissent as the pastime of intellectuals in the capitals, then I always remember other people – those with whom we shared prison rations [...]. I recall

²¹⁶ Julia Wishnevsky, “Are the People and the Party United?” Radio Liberty Research, November 24th, 1975, HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 689, Folder 1.

²¹⁷ Theodore Friedgut, “The Democratic Movement: Dimensions and Perspectives,” in *Dissent in the USSR: Politics, Ideology, and People*, 127.

a worker from the city of Nakhodka [around 85 kilometers east of Vladivostok], a construction worker, Yegor Volkov, who has been in Blagoveshchensk Special Psychiatric Hospital [Amur Oblast] since 1968.²¹⁸

As Gorbanyevskaya and Davydov demonstrate, focusing solely on Moscow is limiting as it ignores activity in other regions. Through the exploration of phenomena such as the *khodoki* and travelling editors, it is clear that the information-sharing channels of the human rights movement were multidirectional and involved cooperation between people in larger urban centres as well as more provincial areas. In the next section, I examine another important source of information for *Chronicle* editors: letters and reports from political prisoners.

3.2.3. *Ksivy* from Prisons and Camps

News about political prisoners was a key component of the information the *Chronicle* provided to its readership. Forty-seven out of the bulletin's sixty-four published issues contain a separate section called "In the Prisons and Camps." The section provided information about hunger strikes, prisoners in solitary confinement, violations of the right to correspondence, hospitalizations, deaths, and releases.²¹⁹ Intermittently from issue 38 in 1975 onward, the section included a "Political Prisoner's Day," an anonymous journal-like report detailing day-to-day violations and abuses by prison staff. Most of the information came from prisons and camps in which political prisoners were held, most commonly these were: penal colonies in Mordovia (a republic

²¹⁸ "Where There is No Last Straw," *Russkaya Msyl'*, May 9th, 1985, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 9, Folder 5.

²¹⁹ The following issues contain a special section devoted to information about camps and prisons: 1, 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 17, 22-25, 27, 30, 32-49, 51-57, and 59-64.

500km south-east of Moscow), a network of labour camps in the Perm Krai (near the Ural mountains), Vladimir Prison (about 160km north-east of Moscow), and later Chistopol Prison (in the Republic of Tatarstan). In 1978 all political prisoners were transferred from Vladimir to Chistopol, purportedly to make communication with the outside world more difficult.²²⁰ Yet, given the inherent inaccessibility of prisons and camps, how did information travel from these distant locales to *Chronicle* editors in Moscow? As discussed in chapter 2, the relatives of prisoners were vital sources of news and information about political prisoners for members of the human rights movement. Bukovsky's comments in the previous chapter about relatives passing along news obtained during prison visits illuminate the importance of a prisoner's family to the *Chronicle* information channels. In his memoir Bukovsky notes that after visits from prisoner relatives, "punishment cells, lock-ups, and prison regimes were as much the small change in Moscow apartments as they were in the camps."²²¹ Yet, perhaps unsurprisingly, finding ways to transmit sensitive information about prison conditions and prisoner health proved to be difficult. A *samizdat* document in the Radio Liberty Archive about the Helsinki Accords and the human rights movement highlights how difficult communication was between prisoners and their families. According to the 1976 document, "there was a sharp increase in restrictions of already infrequent meetings of political prisoners with their relatives. The intimidation of persons visiting prisoners was intensified. Any attempt by a political prisoner to report anything about his living

²²⁰ *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 53 : 1 August 1979, 81-82.

²²¹ Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle*, 352

conditions or even to tell about his illness during a visit was stopped.”²²² The document also states, “in all the political camps and in Vladimir prison searches have become more frequent [...]. Manuscripts, drawings, verses, extracts from materials of court cases and copies of complaints to official offices are being confiscated so that ‘they will not be published in the West’.”²²³ The difficulties enumerated in this *samizdat* document are echoed in a statement released by the aid fund for political prisoners mentioned in chapter 2. The statement repeats the ban on discussions about prison conditions and health and adds that conversations about other political prisoners, food, and work were also prohibited.²²⁴ The document goes on to report that “before and after every personal visit, a body search is conducted on the prisoner as well as on all those who visited him: his wife, his children, his elderly parents.”²²⁵ Given all these obstacles, how did information about political prisoners manage to reach *Chronicle* editors? Archival documents and memoir materials point to *ksivy* as the answer to this question.

Ksivy is a slang term for letters passed secretly from cell to cell, from prison to prison, or from prison to the outside world.²²⁶ For the purposes of this study, I will only examine *ksivy* that were sent from prisons or camps to those at liberty.²²⁷ The Virtual Museum of the Gulag has a unique example of a *ksiva*. The museum, an online project

²²² “An Evaluation of the Influence of the Helsinki Agreements as They Relate to Human Rights in the USSR,” *Materialy Samzidata*, No 29/76, September 3rd, 1976, HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 689, Folder 1.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ T. Khodorovich, M. Landa, K. Lyubarsky, “Pomoshch' Politzaklyuchennym SSSR,” June 15th, 1977, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 350, Folder 6.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Note, the plural form is *ksivy* and the singular form is *ksiva*. *Ksivy* are sometimes referred to as *melkopisi*. See Ternovsky, *Saga o "Khronike"*.

²²⁷ For descriptions of cell-to-cell *ksivy* see Natan Shcharansky's memoir *Fear No Evil*, specifically chapters 16-17. Natan Shcharansky, *Fear No Evil* (New York, NY: Random House, 1988).

created by the St. Petersburg branch of “Memorial,” contains a *ksiva* found near Camp VS 389/36 in the Perm Krai. The exhibit is a yellowed, tattered piece of paper, completely covered in a miniscule, barely legible scrawl.²²⁸ According to the exhibit’s description, this *ksiva* was a chronicle of the camp for the year 1985 and was written by Rostislav Evdokimov, a political prisoner. Reportedly, after several failed attempts to smuggle the chronicle out of the camp, Evdokimov placed the document in a special capsule and hid it inside the camp. The capsule that Evdokimov used was a six-centimetre ebonite tube with a polythene cork.²²⁹ His hidden note was forgotten until 1992, when, during a reunion of former prisoners at the camp complex, Evdokimov removed the *ksiva* from its hiding place and presented it to “Memorial.”²³⁰

Evdokimov’s *ksiva* did not reach its intended destination, but in a 2010 interview Kovalyov described how a *ksiva* made it to the outside world. According to Kovalyov, sending a *ksiva* required thin paper, small handwriting, and a strong stomach. After the document was written, it would be rolled up tightly and placed in a small container (such as the ebonite tube used by Evdokimov). The container would then be wrapped in polythene and sealed by heating the plastic with a match. The process would then be repeated a number of times so that the container would be covered with multiple layers of

²²⁸ The illegibility of *ksivy* is important to note as Ternovsky reports that indecipherable *ksivy* sometimes resulted in misinformation. In his memoir, *Saga o Khronike*, he recalls that the 33rd issue of the *Chronicle* states that Yusup Tachieva was the chairman of the local kolkhoz, but in fact, Tachieva had *killed* the chairman of the local kolkhoz (Ternovsky, *Saga o "Khronike"*).

²²⁹ “Capsule for a “ksiva” (secret note) with a chronicle of Camp VS 389/36, - KP-124 a,b,” The Virtual Museum of the Gulag - Research and Information Centre “Memorial” (St Petersburg) <http://www.gulagmuseum.org/> February 2016.

²³⁰ ““Ksiva’ (secret note) with a Chronicle of the Camp VS 389/36” - KP-126, The Virtual Museum of the Gulag - Research and Information Centre “Memorial” (St Petersburg).

polythene. The final step was to swallow the *ksiva* because, as Kovalyov remarks, the majority of the journey took place in the gastrointestinal tract.²³¹ Kovalyov reports that at one point he had eight *ksivy* in his body for a period of twenty days. He notes that it was difficult to know when exactly he would have an opportunity to give the *ksiva* to his wife during a prison visit. As a result, he often found himself extracting the capsule, washing it, removing the outer polythene, and re-swallowing it. Re-swallowing a *ksiva* was always a gamble as a prisoner had to be sure that there would be enough polythene layers left for his family to transport the document safely to its destination in Moscow.²³² Kovalyov states that this practice was more or less an open secret among those in the camp and could only recall one instance of a person being caught.²³³

Yet, there was a way for *ksivy* to bypass the gastrointestinal route: bribery. In an interview with *The New Times*, Kovalyov jokes that a veteran guard would pass on a *ksiva* for five roubles, a new recruit would do it for twenty-five roubles, and the Chief Officer could be bought for five hundred roubles.²³⁴ In his memoir, Bukovsky recalls,

²³¹ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 (Lyubov' Borusyak, "Khronika dissidentskoy zhizni. Beseda s Sergeyem Adamovichem Kovalyovym. Chast' 2").

²³² Ibid.

²³³ According to Kovalyov, during a visit with his sister, a prisoner named Muhamedshin had just placed the "unpeeled" *ksiva* in a bowl of candy when a guard came in. The sister panicked and tried to swallow the whole bowl of candies. The guard realized what had transpired and forced Muhamedshin's sister to take a purgative (Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 [Lyubov' Borusyak, "Khronika dissidentskoy zhizni. Beseda s Sergeyem Adamovichem Kovalyovym. Chast' 2"]). Similarly, the *Chronicle's* 49th issue contains a report on Ivan Gel, a political prisoner held in Mordovia. According to the report, Gel's visit with his family was cut short because the inner tube of a ballpoint pen was found on him when he was spontaneously searched during the visit. The *Chronicle's* report also notes that his family was had to undergo a two-hour search, which included a strip search, before the visit began.

Khronika tekushchikh sobytii, No 49 : 14 May 1978, 24-25.

²³⁴ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 (Evgenia Albats, "Za Lyubov' k Rodine on Poluchil 7+3+3").

“commercial relations between the cons and guards went so far that you could get literally anything done for money. Protests, declarations, announcements of hunger strikes freely travelled out to the outside. In 1970, we had even received a tape recording of a statement by Ginzburg.”²³⁵ Yet, Bukovsky notes that by 1972 the upper administration had cottoned on to the practice and sent these “dangerous” political prisoners (including Bukovsky) from Mordovia to more isolated camps in the Perm Krai (along with specially selected guards).²³⁶ Kovalyov, who was also interned in the Mordovian camps for a period in the mid-1970s, states that during his time there he developed a very “civilized” way of passing on *ksivy*.²³⁷ There was a bus that took prisoners to and from their visits with their family and in the back of one of the seats there was a hiding-place into which he stuffed his *ksivy*. An orderly (shnyr' – voronok) would then ensure that the information reached its destination.²³⁸ Kovalyov remarks that it was through this channel that he was able to complete his last bit of editorial work for the *Chronicle*.²³⁹

Ksivy are a particularly effective example of the complexity of the *Chronicle*'s information networks. Getting information from the camps to the capital involved cooperation among a variety of groups: prisoners, guards, relatives, and editors in Moscow. *Ksivy* also demonstrate the geographical reach of the *Chronicle*. Letters, reports, petitions, and diary entries from prisoners interned across the Soviet Union managed to reach the capital through a variety of networks. Yet, as will be discussed in

²³⁵ Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle*, 406-407.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 (Lyubov' Borusyak, “Khronika dissidentskoy zhizni. Beseda s Sergeym Adamovichem Kovalyovym. Chast' 2”).

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

the next section, the cooperation demonstrated above was not limited to camps and prisons. The *Chronicle*'s information networks were also supported by collaboration with a variety of interest groups.

3.2.4. Cooperation and Information Sharing Between Human Rights Groups

In her history of Soviet dissent, Alexeyeva states that because the *Chronicle* published information about all types of human rights violations – the right to a nationality, religious freedoms, freedom of movement, et cetera – it was natural that participants in nationalist or religious movements “found their way to the *Chronicle*” and supplied it with information.²⁴⁰ The level of cooperation and collaboration between various interests groups and the bulletin can clearly be seen on the pages of *Chronicle*. Starting from its sixth issue in 1968, the *Chronicle* regularly published excerpts of circulating *samizdat*, but it was not until issue 17 in 1970 that the *Chronicle* began to use bulletins and chronicles produced by other human rights groups as sources. Before quoting the information from these groups, the *Chronicle*'s editors would always indicate the name of the bulletin from which the report was obtained, as well as the issue number. Reprinting information from other groups' *samizdat* began with *Exodus* (a bulletin concerned with Jewish emigration) in 1970 (issue 17), followed by the *Ukrainian Herald* in 1971 (issue 18), the *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church* (issue 32) and the *Bulletin of the Council of Relatives of Evangelical Christian Baptist Prisoners* (issue 33) in 1974, the *Gulag Archipelago Chronicle* (issue 36), *Bulletin of the Chronicle of Baptist Prisoners' Relatives in the USSR* (issue 36), *Initiative Group for the Defense of Human*

²⁴⁰ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 15-16.

Rights in the USSR (issue 37), and *Crimean Tartar Information Bulletin* (issue 38) in 1975, *Helsinki Watch Groups* (issue 43) in 1976, *Information Bulletin of the Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes* (issue 47) in 1977, *Initiative Group to Defend the Rights of the Disabled in the USSR* (issue 51) in 1978, and the *Initiative Committee to Fight for the Right of Free Exit from the USSR* (issue 53) in 1979. As can be surmised from the dates, the practice of using other groups as sources took off in the mid- to late-70s. Indeed, Velikanova notes that by the end of the 1970s, a lot of the material contained within the *Chronicle* came to editors in a “prepared state” from other rights groups.²⁴¹ The relationship between the *Chronicle* and other bulletins was mutually beneficial. The *Chronicle* was able to extend its reach and provide more in-depth coverage of events by using sources thoroughly familiar with the subject matter. For the special interest bulletins, being published in the *Chronicle* ensured that their information would reach a wide, international audience. Kovalyov notes that foreign correspondents did not have accredited access to Vilnius or other Baltic cities (as was the case with most regions in the Soviet Union).²⁴² Yet, as will be discussed in chapter 4, the *Chronicle* had regular contacts with the West and was published abroad. As a result, being published in the *Chronicle* was almost a guarantee that a bulletin’s information would be disseminated in the West and reach a large, sympathetic audience.

Perhaps one of the most productive collaborations was between the *Chronicle* and the *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church (CLCC)*. Out of the *Chronicle*’s sixty-

²⁴¹ “В ГОТОВОМ ВИДЕ.”

Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 147 (“Letopis', Za Kotoruyu Sazhali v Tyur'mu).

²⁴² Memorial Archive, f. 101. op. 1, d. 215 (Evgenia Albats, “Za Lyubov' k Rodine on Poluchil 7+3+3”).

four issues, twenty contain reports from the *CLCC*.²⁴³ In the *Chronicle*'s 44th issue, its editors included a brief note congratulating the *CLCC* on its fifth anniversary of publication. The *Chronicle* expressed "the hope that the mutual cooperation of both publications will continue in the future, until the time when both will cease appearing because of a complete lack of material."²⁴⁴ Kovalyov, who was closely connected with both the *CLCC* and the *Chronicle*, notes that the *CLCC* was inspired by the *Chronicle* and modeled itself after it. Indeed, Kovalyov's involvement with both bulletins is important to examine as it sheds light on the larger dynamic that existed between human rights publications. Kovalyov was arrested for his involvement in both bulletins and his indictment from the Lithuanian SSR Prosecutor states that he "edited the *Chronicle of Current Events* and contributed slanderous information to it from the illegal, anti-Soviet publication the *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church*."²⁴⁵ Kovalyov confirms that he established a "good, trusting relationship" with some young scientists in Kaunas who introduced him to Lithuanian priests and former prisoners who were part of religious circles.²⁴⁶ According to Kovalyov, his Lithuanian contacts brought every issue of the *CLCC* to Moscow for inclusion in the *Chronicle*. Then through Moscow channels the bulletin was passed on to contacts in Chicago (a city with a large Lithuanian Catholic population eager for news from the homeland).²⁴⁷ With Kovalyov's arrest, the channel was temporarily thrown into chaos – materials continued to arrive but no one knew where to send them. Although he acknowledges that the communication channel was interrupted

²⁴³ The following issues contain *CLCC* reports: 33, 37-41, 43, 44, 46-49, 51-53, 56, 60, 61, 63, and 64.

²⁴⁴ *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 49 : 16 March 1977, 81.

²⁴⁵ Memorial Archive, f. 172 ("Obvinitel'noye Zaklyucheniye").

²⁴⁶ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 ("Khronika Tekushchikh Sobytiy").

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

when he was arrested, Kovalyov notes that after some initial confusion, his link with the *CLCC* was taken over by Ludmilla Alexeyeva and the information exchange resumed.²⁴⁸

In her chapter on the Lithuanian National Movement in *Soviet Dissent*, Alexeyeva notes that personal contacts helped promote the “constant exchange of materials and yearly greetings between the *Chronicle of Current Events* and *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* [sic].”²⁴⁹ Indeed, Kovalyov’s relationship with the *CLCC* demonstrates the interconnectedness of the human rights movement and highlights the mutually productive information sharing networks that existed between various rights groups and the *Chronicle*. In the next section, I will take a closer look at the geography of the *Chronicle*’s information sharing networks and examine how the information contained within the bulletin was compiled.

3.3. PRODUCING THE *CHRONICLE*

The Ukrainian dissident Leonid Plyushch notes in his memoir that the *Chronicle* created a space “where like-minded people could find each other.”²⁵⁰ In the preceding sections, I have explored the *Chronicle*’s unique ability to connect geographically isolated segments of the population through information sharing networks. The assertions I have made about the *Chronicle*’s geographical reach are based on the analysis of archival documents and memoir material, but perhaps the most effective demonstration of the breadth of the bulletin’s networks is a visual representation. Below are several maps that illustrate the extensiveness of the *Chronicle*’s communication networks. Analysis of

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 78.

²⁵⁰ Leonid Plyushch, *Dans le Carnaval de l’Histoire: Mémoires* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977), 171.

these maps is followed by an examination of how *Chronicle* editors organised and compiled the material that reached them from across the country.

3.3.1. The Geography of the *Chronicle's* Information Sharing Networks

The maps in this section illustrate the reach of the *Chronicle* by pinpointing the geographical location of the bulletin's sources. For example, in Figure 2, pin 1 represents a source from Moscow, pin 2 indicates information coming from Kiev, pin 3 is information about the Mordovia camps, pin 4 is information from Tver, pin 5 represents a source in Leningrad, pin 6 is information from Novosibirsk, pin 7 represents a source in Krāslava, and pin 8 is data from Obninsk. I compiled this information and created these maps by reading each issue of the *Chronicle* and noting down the location of all mentioned sources of information. For instance, Leningrad is on the map because issue 1 contains a description of the VSKhSON trial (as discussed in section 3.2.1). I recognize that these maps are imperfect, as editors did not always indicate where information came from. Nevertheless, the value of the maps does not lie in their precision, but rather in their ability to represent, albeit roughly, the scope of the *Chronicle's* information sharing networks.

Comparing Figure 2 and Figure 3, it is clear that the *Chronicle* had an enormous growth in the number of its sources and informants over the course of its fifteen-year existence. In the beginning, the *Chronicle's* reach was mainly limited to cities in present-day European Russia, with the one exception being Novosibirsk in Siberia, a large city with a population of over a million people at that time. Contrastingly, the last issue of the

Chronicle in 1982 included information that came from as far west as Uzhhorod, as far north as Vorkuta, as far south as Tajikistan, and as far east as Magadan.

That is not to say that the *Chronicle's* information networks experienced a linear, or even stable, growth. Repressive actions taken against individuals and groups could cause interruptions in communication channels, as seen above in Kovalyov's case with the *CLCC*. The KGB specifically targeted the *Chronicle's* editors and contributors on several occasions throughout the bulletin's history, at one point causing a nearly two-year publication disruption from October 1972 to May 1974. Particularly illuminating examples of how searches and arrests affected *Chronicle* production are found in the bulletin's 53rd and 64th issues.

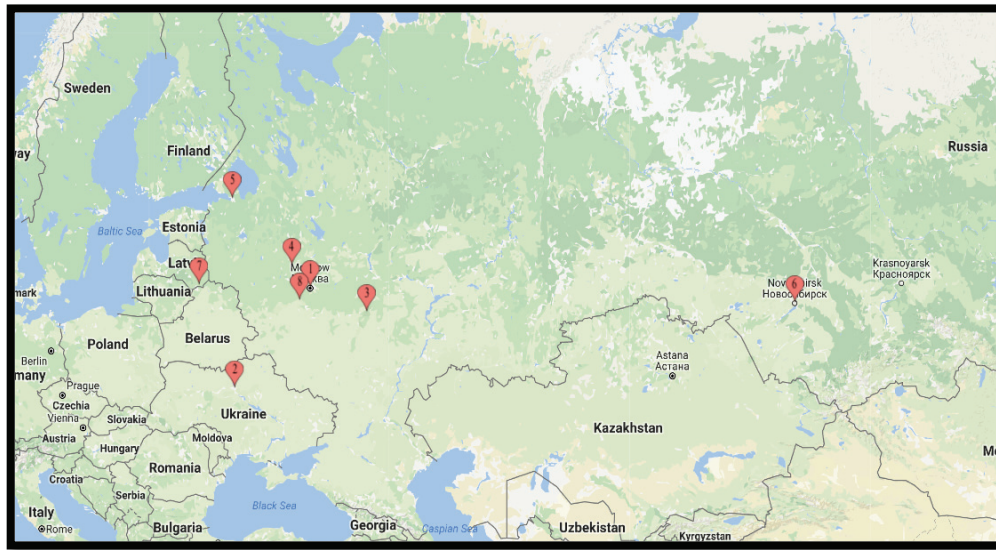


Figure 2. The Locations of Information Sources for Issue 1 of the *Chronicle* (1968).

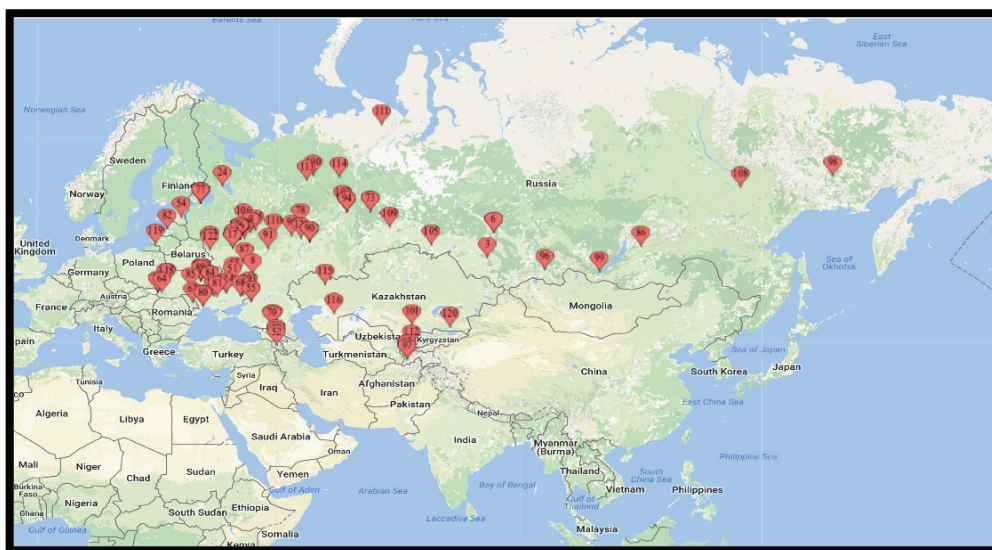


Figure 3. The Locations of Information Sources for Issue 64 of the *Chronicle* (1982).

These issues contain a section called “Case 46012,” which reports on the various repressive actions taken by the KGB against people known to be associated with the *Chronicle*. Issue 53 informs readers that “two numbers of the *Bulletin of the Council of Baptist Prisoners’ Relatives* and manuscripts containing information on the position of religious sects in the USSR” were confiscated from Alexander Daniel’ during a search of his flat.²⁵¹ Issue 54 includes an account of a search at Tat’yana Velikanova’s apartment and lists some of the confiscated documents, which included: “documents concerning the arrests, trials and present situation of political prisoners, believers and would-be emigrants, and documents of various groups to defend the rule of law.”²⁵² The confiscation of such materials, followed by the arrests of the individuals involved, would presumably negatively impact the *Chronicle*’s information gathering ability and publication. Looking at Figures 4 and 5, one can see the instability of the *Chronicle*’s

²⁵¹ *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 53 : 1 August 1979, 64.

²⁵² *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No 54 : 15 November 1979, 25.

information networks and how the flow the information could wax and wane over a short period of time. Figure 4 shows the location of information sources at the beginning of 1980 and has over 175 locations. In contrast, Figure 5 represents sources from the December 1980 issue and has a total of 87 locations. In just eight months, the geographical range of the *Chronicle's* source base was reduced by around fifty percent. It is difficult to pinpoint the causes for such a decline, however, the fact that the KGB confiscated issue 59 (the issue immediately preceding the December 1980 issue) certainly is suggestive.²⁵³ The reduction could be due to the confiscation of material, but it could also be the case that the decrease reflects increased repressive actions against editors and contributors. Alternatively, there simply may have been nothing to report, or perhaps it was a combination of all three factors. Whatever the case, comparison of issue 56 and issue 60 reveals the flux of the *Chronicle's* information networks.

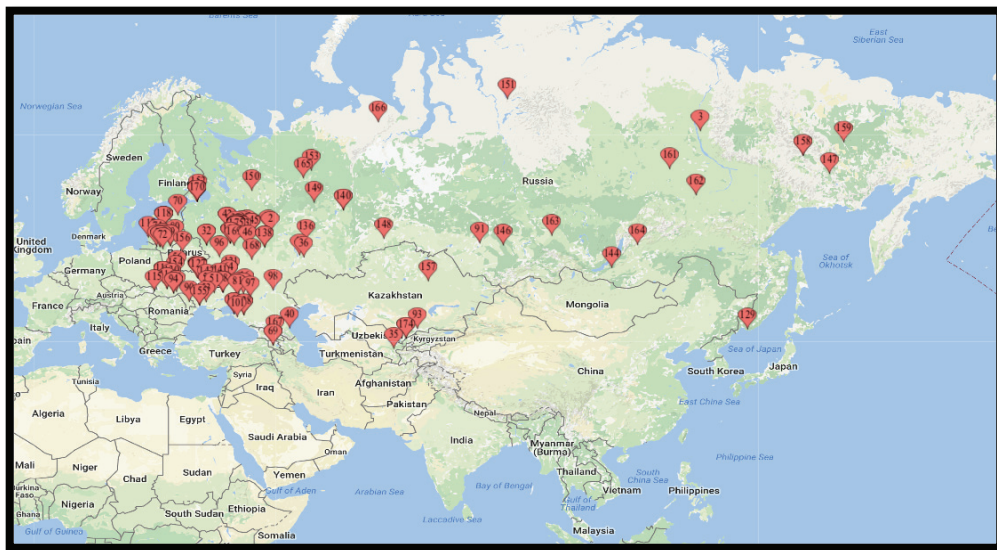


Figure 4. The Locations of Information Sources for Issue 56 of the *Chronicle* (April 1980).

²⁵³ This issue has recently been “re-discovered” by archivists at Memorial’s Moscow branch.

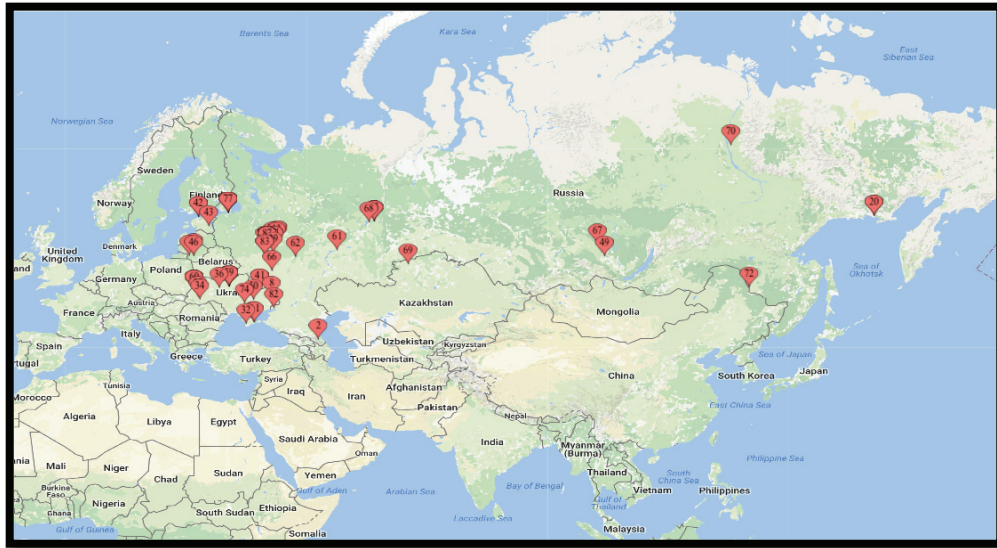


Figure 5. The Locations of Information Sources for Issue 60 of the *Chronicle* (December 1980).

3.3.2. Compiling the *Chronicle*

After they had returned from their research trips, spoken with *khodoki*, read *ksivy*, and leafed through the latest bulletins, editors began the process of putting the *Chronicle* together. The compilation process of the *Chronicle* is described in the endnotes of an English-language edition of the bulletin’s 49th issue published by Amnesty International. According to the note, the editors chose a cut-off date, and then all the material prior to this date was collected, edited, and put in order.²⁵⁴ In a 1990 article, Kovalyov describes this process in more detail. First, all the bits and scraps of paper with information about rights violations that had accumulated since the last publication date were gathered together and sorted into folders. Kovalyov states that there were about ten such folders, with labels such as “Persecution of Believers,” “Events in Ukraine,” and “Arrests,

²⁵⁴ Amnesty International, *A Chronicle of Current Events: Number 49* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1978), 109.

Searches, and Interrogations.”²⁵⁵ Then, according to Kovalyov, the real work began. Three or four people would come to a “clean” apartment in Moscow and translate all the messages into a “neutral, dispassionate narrative.”²⁵⁶ According to Kovalyov, this was “exhausting multi-day, sometimes gruelling multi-week, work” for the editors.²⁵⁷ After the final draft was ready, copies were made and the *Chronicle* was passed from hand-to-hand, city-to-city, and even country-to-country. Gorbanyevskaya refers to this process as pre-internet “viral spread.”²⁵⁸

Tat’yana Khodorovich, one of the bulletin’s editors in the early-1970s, firmly declared that the individuals responsible for producing the *Chronicle* were not editors. In an article written for *Le Figaro*, Khodorovich refers to editors as “les responsables,” and states that they were nothing more than “conduits” for information.²⁵⁹ Yet, throughout this project I have chosen to refer to “les responsables” as editors for two reasons: they made choices about tone and style, and more importantly, about what information to include. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, ensuring the veracity of the reports included in the *Chronicle* was crucial to maintaining the bulletin’s reputation as a source for factual information. Kovalyov recalls that he sometimes refused to include reports because they seemed too ludicrous to be real, but later found out that some were true.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁵ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 (“Khronika Tekushchikh Sobytiy”).

²⁵⁶ By “clean,” Kovalyov means an apartment of someone whom the KGB did not suspect was involved in the movement. Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Linor Goralik, “Natal’ya Gorbanyevskaya: ‘Vot ya dura byla bez strakha’”).

²⁵⁹ “Courroies de transmission.”

Tat’yana Khodorovich, “J’ai Participé à la Chronique Clandestine des “Événements Courants,” *Le Figaro*, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 350, Folder 6.

²⁶⁰ For example, he recalls that there was a report that alleged that a woman was being held in a Tbilisi jail with “stoolies” for cellmates. She managed to steal a copy of a

Kovlayov's comments highlight the role played by editors in selecting and verifying information. Turning to the editor's influence on style, the *Chronicle's* dry, sober tone was one of its most celebrated characteristics. A 1983 Radio Liberty report praises the *Chronicle* for its "objectivity, [...] moderation in their reporting of events, [and for] refraining as much as possible from judgmental commentary on what is being chronicled."²⁶¹ In her study of dissident publics, Ann Komaromi observes that even though the *Chronicle* was a model for many dissident publications, the style of reporting for some rights bulletins remained emotional and personal."²⁶² For example, issue 16 of the *Chronicle* reports dryly that two members of a religious organization near Grodno had been arrested and that no other details were known at the time of publication. In contrast, the Baptist *Bratskii listok (Fraternal Leaflet)*, reported of the same event, "Glory be to God for such a fate! The dear persecuted Church of our Lord Jesus Christ! What a special miraculous fate the lord ordained for us: to be unjustly persecuted for deeds of love and good, to drink from his cup of suffering!"²⁶³ Natal'ya Gorbanyevskaya was the initiator of the *Chronicle's* unemotional tone. Remarking on the bulletin's objectivity, she says, "I avoided ahs, ohs, and indignation. I believed and still believe that the bare facts have a bigger impact. And this was the *Chronicle's* main strength for many years. Sometimes, in some places and in certain moments, of course, objectivity was not

fabricated denunciation one of them had written about her and brought it with her to her court trial concealed in her stockings. During the trial the woman pulled down her stockings and read out the denunciation, offering proof that her cellmates and investigators were colluding against her.

Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 215 (Lyubov' Borusyak, "Khronika dissidentskoy zhizni. Beseda s Sergeyem Adamovichem Kovalyovym. Chast' 2").

²⁶¹ Julia Wishnevsky, "From Gorbanyevskaya to Smironov: The Fate of the Chroniclers," *Radio Liberty Research*, June 22nd, 1983, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 9, Folder 5.

²⁶² Ann Komaromi, "*Samizdat* and Soviet Dissident Publics," 83.

²⁶³ As quoted in *Ibid.*

observed, but on the whole it was unemotional and non-judgmental.”²⁶⁴ The tone set out by Gorbanyevskaya, and maintained by subsequent editors, would prove to be one of the *Chronicle*'s most valuable assets. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the *Chronicle*'s credibility helped the bulletin become a privileged conduit to the West.

3.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have examined the communication networks and systems of information transfer that supported the *Chronicle*. Through this examination I have demonstrated that the *Chronicle*'s networks were multifaceted and had the ability to connect people from across the Soviet Union. My exploration of travelling editors, *khodoki*, *ksivy* and the collaboration between rights groups, has challenged the Moscow-centric approach to dissidence and showed that the flow of information was not unidirectional, but rather dialogical and involved cooperation between people in larger cities as well as more provincial areas. This analysis has also revealed the complexity, interconnectedness, as well as instability of the *Chronicle*'s information networks. Additionally, at the beginning of this chapter, I examined the mechanisms by which the *Chronicle* was disseminated, mainly concentrating on the hand-to-hand method of *samizdat* distribution. In the next chapter, I will again examine dissemination, but instead focus on the influence of the West in the distribution and reception of the *Chronicle* within the Soviet Union. As will be discussed, Western audiences, publication

²⁶⁴ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Linor Goralik, “Natal'ya Gorbanyevskaya: ‘Vot ya dura byla bez strakha’”).

opportunities and radio broadcasts helped to support the development and promulgation of the *Chronicle*.

CHAPTER 4 – CROSSING BORDERS: THE *CHRONICLE* AND THE WEST

In previous chapters I have hinted at the role the West played in the development of the *Chronicle* specifically, and the Soviet human rights movement more generally. In chapter 1, I asserted that during the Thaw, the West became a constant presence in the Soviet Union and argued that contact with the West was crucial for the dissemination of information produced by members of the human rights movement. Similarly, in chapter 2, I drew attention to Natalya Gorbanyevskaya's Parisian press conference and highlighted the importance of Western publicity in helping sustain the movement. Finally, in chapter 3, I briefly referenced *tamizdat* and Western broadcasting while addressing the *Chronicle's* geographical expansion. In this fourth and penultimate chapter, I provide a more detailed analysis of the relationship between dissidents and the West and critically examine the influence of Western publicity on the dissemination and reception of the *Chronicle* within the Soviet Union. I begin this chapter with an analysis of why Soviet dissidents decided to address Western audiences, followed by an examination of dissident attitudes towards Western involvement in the movement. While some members of movement celebrated collaboration with the West, others deemed human rights to be an internal matter and viewed foreign participation with suspicion.

4.1. INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE WEST

“It's our problem; it's our grief. For reporters, this is just a political thriller,” Alexeyeva remembers thinking when she noticed foreign journalists outside the

courthouse during the Siniavskii-Daniel' trial in December 1966.²⁶⁵ Later, after sharing some *pelmeni* with the journalists during a break in the proceedings, Alexeyeva reports that she overcame her wariness and soon saw the Western press as one of the movement's most powerful allies.²⁶⁶ This narrative of an initial reticence about addressing the West turning into a fruitful partnership is common among human rights dissidents. Kovalyov recalls that he overcame his initial fear of appealing to the West when he realised that his voice was not being represented in the Soviet press. He states: "I want to think independently, I want to speak in my own words, and what has this to do with state borders? When a man says what he thinks, he speaks to everybody. If our newspapers do not publish it, let it be published in foreign ones."²⁶⁷ This sense of being ignored by the Soviet press is an oft-cited reason for choosing to appeal to the West. According to a Radio Liberty report, Larisa Bogoraz thought that there was "no other way in which she could address her fellow-countrymen except via the Western media."²⁶⁸ Alexeyeva notes that by the mid-1970s, letters to Soviet authorities had become a "dead genre" because "the authorities did not respond."²⁶⁹ In a 1977 article for the *Wall Street Journal*, Chalidze states, "Soviet dissidents have almost given up appealing to their own government, preferring to try world public opinion, international human rights

²⁶⁵ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 130.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 280.

²⁶⁷ Julia Wishnevsky, "Reappraisal of Dissent in the Soviet Media," *Radio Liberty Research RL 459-88*, October 7th, 1988. HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 40, Folder 2.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 252.

A further factor is the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975. These Accords provided a powerful framework. For example, the goal of the Helsinki Watch Group was to raise awareness of Soviet transgressions against the Accords in the West. In that way, the Accords offered a bridge to Western governments and public opinion. See Joshua Rubenstein's discussion of the Helsinki Accords in *Soviet Dissidents*, 213-250.

organizations, and other governments that have dealings with the Soviet government. We have no other recourse if Moscow is unwilling to listen to us.”²⁷⁰ Receiving nothing in reply from the government except extrajudicial repression and criminal charges, dissidents in the human rights movement increasingly addressed themselves to Western audiences and Western governments.

4.1.1. Dissidents and Western Correspondents

In her book *Uncensored*, Komaromi argues that many dissidents believed that “hopes for real amelioration depended on foreign responses and interventions.”²⁷¹ This view is indeed reflected in the memoir literature and archival materials. The Radio Liberty Archives contain an article written by a group of lawyers for the French journal *Est-Ouest*. The lawyers travelled to the Soviet Union in 1975 and conducted interviews with prominent dissidents and their families. Each interview ends in the same way, with a plea for help from the West. Sakharov is reported to have said, “Only the pressure of Western public opinion and actions by politicians can liberalize our society.”²⁷² Bukovsky’s mother ends her interview by saying, “My son will die or be reduced to a state of actual madness. Only strong pressure from the West could change this, but for now I will continue to be the only one who defends him.”²⁷³ Similarly, Viktor Davydov argues that because his case had received Western publicity, he received better treatment at the psychiatric hospital where he was interned. In an interview with Gorbanyevskaya

²⁷⁰ Valery Chalidze, “Human Rights: A Policy of Honor,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 8th, 1997. HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 689, Folder 2.

²⁷¹ Komaromi, *Uncensored*, 128.

²⁷² “Trois avocats français en U.R.S.S., *Est-Ouest* No 560, November 15th, 1975. OSA 300-80-1, Box 689, Folder 1.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

he tells her that at his hospital, he “turned out to be the only political prisoner whose name was known in the West and about whom such organizations as Amnesty International and the International Society of Human Rights and others were concerned. I myself could not understand why the psychiatrists treated me differently than the others imprisoned.”²⁷⁴ Attention from the West was extremely important to many members of the human rights movement and the most effective way to garner this attention was through the Western press. As a result, dissidents in the human rights movement built mutually beneficial relationships with Western journalists. For their part, dissidents received publicity and, as seen in Davydov’s example, a certain amount of protection by means of their associations with the reporters, while journalists gained access to sources and stories apart from those prescribed by officials. Indeed, in a 1969 article about Soviet dissidents, Anatole Shub, a veteran correspondent for the *Washington Post*, expressed his frustration with the way the government dealt with foreign journalists. He writes,

The Soviet Foreign Ministry, which is supposedly in charge of foreign correspondents, does absolutely nothing to give anyone any information on what Soviet policy really is – the sort of thing one expects in almost any normal civilized country. Yet, in the last five or six years, there has developed the practice of selling news. [...] The result is now that those correspondents who manage to get 40 minutes with the deputy minister for the textile industry, let us say, will be paying \$50 in hard currency to the Novosti Press Agency for the dubious privilege of doing so.²⁷⁵

Perhaps one of the most productive examples of the dissident-correspondent dynamic is the relationship between Natan Shcharansky and Robert Toth. Shcharansky was a

²⁷⁴ “Where There is No Last Straw,” *Russkaya Mysl*, May 9th, 1985, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 9, Folder 5.

²⁷⁵ Anatole Shub, “The Slow Torture of Larisa Daniel,” *The Sunday Times*, May 25th, 1969, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 40, Folder 2.

member of the human rights movement involved with *refuseniks* in Moscow. He describes Robert Toth, a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times*, as the “most reliable individual when it came to keeping our friends in the West informed about our activities and our problems.”²⁷⁶ The two formed a close bond and aided one another in their respective work – Shcharansky introduced Toth to dissidents and helped him to uncover sources, while Toth sometimes gave international coverage to issues close to Shcharansky’s heart. Shcharansky recalls in his memoir, “as I helped Bob [Toth] gather material for his articles I learned a great deal from him, especially when it came to understanding the Western mass media. Our conversations were especially useful in helping me act as a bridge between the aliyah activists and the dissidents on one side, and the foreign press on the other.”²⁷⁷ Yet, close association between the two sides was frequently problematic. In Shcharansky and Toth’s case, both were accused of espionage: Shcharansky was charged with treason (his relationship with Toth being just one facet of the charge) and Toth was briefly held and interrogated by the KGB before being expelled from the Soviet Union.²⁷⁸ In an article written after his expulsion, Toth charges that his treatment by the Soviet authorities was meant “to warn correspondents to limit their dealings with dissidents to dissident affairs, and to warn dissidents to limit information given to newsmen in the same way.”²⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Bukovsky remarks that even though the authorities “expelled anyone who got too friendly with [dissidents],” many

²⁷⁶ Shcharansky, *Fear No Evil*, 99.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ See chapter 7 in Shcharansky’s memoir for a detailed account. Shcharansky, *Fear No Evil*, 91-105.

²⁷⁹ Robert Toth, “USSR – Toth Says Kremlin Rights Policy is Hardening,” *International Herald Tribune*, June 29th, 1977, HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 689, Folder 4.

journalists were “ready to take their chances.”²⁸⁰ He continues, “interest in our problems was growing in the outside world, and whereas, before, an expelled correspondent might be regarded by his newspaper as unprofessional, expulsion was now seen as the norm and occasionally even as an honour.”²⁸¹

Shcharansky admits that he was often tempted to see Toth as his ally in the struggle for human rights, but in reality, the correspondent-dissident relationship was more complicated. Commenting on the dynamic that existed between Western journalists and members of the human rights movement, Shcharansky reveals,

Many dissidents and *refuseniks*, who had no experience with a free press, expected the foreign correspondents to publish whatever they said or did, and couldn’t understand, for example, that reporters were under pressure to file stories that were new or interesting, and that the mere fact that a *refusenik* or dissident was arrested or imprisoned was not enough to guarantee coverage in the West. Sakharov, in particular, was continually frustrated that the foreign press seemed interested in only a few well-known cases, and virtually ignored lesser-known dissidents who were in even greater danger.²⁸²

Shcharansky later notes that Western correspondents may well have been sympathetic to the plight of dissidents, but they could not simply amplify dissident voices in their reports. Not only would acting as didacts for the human rights movement compromise journalists’ professional integrity, but it would also leave them unable to deal with the demands of their editors or respond to the interests of their readers.

The interest of Western readers is an important point to highlight. In her memoir, Alexeyeva remembers assuming that the Helsinki Watch Group was receiving constant coverage in the Western press, but when she emigrated to the United States in 1977, she

²⁸⁰ Bukovsky, *To Build A Castle*, 354.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Shcharansky, *Fear No Evil*, 100.

“found out that most of the stories about us were appearing around page 19 in American newspapers.”²⁸³ Indeed, in his study of the Soviet human rights movement, Joshua Rubenstein acknowledges that although Western audiences were mostly sympathetic to dissidents, “the West, in general, is not thirsting for news from the Soviet Union, [which leads some in the movement to] overestimate Western interest in internal Soviet developments.”²⁸⁴ Upon emigration, some dissidents expressed their frustration with trying to hold the attention of Western audiences. For example, Yuri Orlov is reported to have criticised the reporters who interviewed him immediately after his arrival in America for cutting crucial ideas because “the masses would be bored.”²⁸⁵ Although he later added (apparently with a smile) that he wanted to “learn the art of saying what I want to say quickly and sandwich it between two points that are interesting, so that they won’t cut that remark that I want in the middle.” Orlov’s criticism reveals that there were many obstacles to achieving coverage in the West. Not only did dissidents have to navigate the difficulties and dangers of association with Western correspondents, but (as is the case with any group seeking publicity) they also had to communicate messages that could be turned into punchy headlines and 30-second sound bites that would grab the attention of Western audiences.

In his memoir, Shcharansky reflects on the issues surrounding dissidents’ reliance on Western publicity and foreign intervention. He recalls a conversation in which his cellmate Victoras said, “It is dangerous to count on the West [...]. In the Baltic we waited

²⁸³ Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation*, 284.

²⁸⁴ Joshua Rubenstein, *Soviet Dissidents: Their Struggle for Human Rights*, 111.

²⁸⁵ Deborah Zabarenko, “Orlov, A Week Away From Moscow, Dreams of Work and Travel,” October 11th, 1986, MS Coll 00619, Box 59, Folder 5. Igor Belousovitch Collection of Samizdat and Independent Press. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library of the University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.

for their support throughout the postwar years as they kept saying “Just a little longer.” [...] People would listen to the radio and say, ‘The Americans will intervene in a few days.’ They called on us to continue the struggle, but they never delivered.”²⁸⁶ While Shcharansky did not completely agree with Victoras, he conceded that the difference between Western rhetoric and action was often quite pronounced.²⁸⁷ Some members of the human rights movement did share Victoras’s cynicism about Western deliverance and were suspicious of foreign involvement in their cause. In his memoir about the *Chronicle*, Ternovsky states that he and others in the movement felt that human rights were a private and internal matter. He declares that he never received help from the West and notes that dissidents who did would have been immediately denounced as “paid agents of imperialism.”²⁸⁸ Along similar lines, Valery Chalidze devotes an entire section of his memoir to the challenges and implications of Western involvement in the Soviet human rights movement. While he does not categorically oppose Western support for dissidents, he acknowledges that both the regime and the Soviet people would react negatively to any hint of foreign interference. He asserts that large financial donations from abroad would inhibit local fundraising initiatives and discredit dissidents “in the eyes of the public and furnish grounds for official propaganda branding human rights activists as foreign agents.”²⁸⁹ Despite the best efforts of dissidents like Chalidze, this is exactly what happened. Suspicion about Western participation led to negative portrayals of human rights defenders in the Soviet press and often involved accusations of treachery, slander, and espionage.

²⁸⁶ Shcharansky, *Fear No Evil*, 255.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Leonard Ternovsky, *Saga o "Khronike."*

²⁸⁹ Chalidze, *The Soviet Human Rights Movement – A Memoir*, 33.

4.1.2. The Portrayal of Dissidents' Relations with the West in the Soviet Press

According to a *Sovetskaya Rossiya* article about the trial of Tat'yana Velikanova in August 1980, the nature of dissidence “necessarily and unavoidably leads from anti-Soviet utterances and publication of slanderous material to organizing openly subversive actions against our state and social system and to cooperation with capitalist countries’ special services.”²⁹⁰ The fear about dissident collusion with the West present in the preceding quote is also to be found in a vast number of the Soviet newspaper articles preserved in the Radio Liberty archives. The articles in the archive range from diatribes about the limitless treachery of dissidents, to bizarre claims about love affairs between foreign spies and human rights activists, to more thoughtful reflections on the values of Soviet society. Of the more eloquent pieces, one that stands out is an article written by the celebrated novelist, Valentin Kataev. In his article entitled “I Want Peace,” he denounces dissidents for seeking support from capitalist countries and calls them hypocrites for appealing to America, a country where “wealth is considered to be freedom.”²⁹¹ He ends his article with the old proverb, “Tell me who your friends are, and I’ll tell you who you are.”²⁹²

Attitudes in the Soviet press about the *Chronicle* did not differ much from attitudes about dissidents. During Tat'yana Velikanova’s trial, the *Chronicle* was labelled

²⁹⁰ V. Ivanov, “With a Shield of Slander: About a Trial in the Moscow City Court,” *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, August 31st, 1980, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 66, Folder 1.

²⁹¹ Valentin Kataev, “Ya Khochu Mira,” *Pravda*, March 20th, 1977, HU OSA 300-80-1, Box 689, Folder 2.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

as a “slandorous concoction” and “anti-Soviet libel” by the Soviet press.²⁹³ The *Sovetskaya Rossiya* article about Velikanova’s trial asserted that

[the *Chronicle*’s] facts were deliberately and knowingly distorted and offered in a light both necessary and favourable to Western propaganda. All this “information” was concocted according to one recipe: when it became known that someone, even a swindler or a hooligan, was being brought to court, there soon followed a report about persecution for convictions, people came to hear about the punishments meted out in some penal colony for violations of the regime, and then a hullabaloo was raised about alleged harassment of prisoners...²⁹⁴

Clearly, the press portrayed the *Chronicle* much like dissidents – as an instrument of Western propaganda.

What is the significance of these articles? It has already been established that the Soviet government did not condone dissident activity (to put it mildly), so what is important about these depictions of dissidents in the Soviet press? The articles preserved in the Radio Liberty archive all come from official, highly circulated Soviet newspapers, such as *Pravda*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and *Sovetskaya Rossiya* among others. As Stephen Lovell notes in his book *The Russian Reading Revolution*, such newspapers in the post-Stalin period “provided a transmission belt for the state ideology; their function was to educate, not to inform.”²⁹⁵ As a result, these reports reveal how officials presented dissidence to the public. Further, these reports may also provide some insight into popular reception of the *Chronicle* within the USSR.

²⁹³ V. Ivanov, “With a Shield of Slander: About a Trial in the Moscow City Court,” *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, August 31st, 1980, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 66, Folder 1.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ Stephen Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 100-101.

Although there exists little data to measure the interaction of journalistic content with its audience, one piece of evidence that I managed to obtain through my archival research was a “Soviet Area Audience Research and Program Evaluation” produced by Radio Liberty. This report claims to be the “first quantitative profile of Soviet public attitudes to *samizdat*.”²⁹⁶ Essentially the report is a survey conducted over a three-year period (March 1974 – March 1977) of 3,821 Soviet travelers in Western Europe. The data collected from the travelers was projected onto the Soviet population in order to create a public opinion survey. According to the report, of the estimated 44 percent of the adult Soviet population who were aware of *samizdat*, nearly two-fifths had an unfavourable attitude toward it and only one-fourth were favourable. The Radio Liberty researchers qualify this trend by stating that, “the overall preponderance of negative attitudes may be explained by the fact that more Soviet citizens (27 percent of all adults) have heard about *samizdat* from official sources than through any other channel.”²⁹⁷ Quite clearly, the survey is flawed in many ways and its sample population lacks representative power, especially since the surveyed travelers must have been under considerable pressure when responding to the questionnaire.²⁹⁸ Yet, the Radio Liberty report also includes a compendium of the more typical remarks about *samizdat* made by survey respondents. Although there were some positive comments about *samizdat*, many of the statements in the compendium were negative and reflect views that are also present in Soviet newspapers. For example, a middle-aged mechanic is reported to have said, “I disapprove

²⁹⁶ R. Parata, “Samizdat, The Soviet Public, and Western Radio,” November 4th, 1977, Ms Coll 00619, Box 45, Folder 2.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Furthermore, these tourists would have been specially vetted before they were ever allowed to go abroad, as well as closely monitored during the trip.

of *samizdat* because it's Western propaganda disseminated by our citizens," and a twenty-something student from Leningrad apparently remarked, "*samizdat* is invariably directed against the state."²⁹⁹ While it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from this imperfect survey and the responses selected for the compendium, it raises the possibility that popular attitudes towards dissident activity and the portrayal of dissidents in the Soviet press may not have been discordant, especially when it came to the issue of Western involvement.³⁰⁰ Indeed, Sheila Fitzpatrick notes in her introduction to the book *Sedition*, there existed a "popular prejudice against dissidents as children of privilege who hung around with foreigners."³⁰¹ Therefore it is plausible that as Chalidze and Ternovsky feared, dissident relations with the West were often viewed with suspicion by both the government and the public.

4.2. TAMIZDAT DISSEMINATION AND THE CHRONICLE

"*Samizdat* always implied *tamizdat*," Komaromi declares in *Uncensored*.

Frederike Kind-Kovács echoes Komaromi in her book, *Written Here, Published There*,

²⁹⁹ R. Parata, "Samizdat, The Soviet Public, and Western Radio," November 4th, 1977, Ms Coll 00619, Box 45, Folder 2.

³⁰⁰ There is another layer here, however, as it is difficult to gauge how receptive Soviet citizens were to official discourse during the late Soviet period. Recently historians have challenged established narratives about the way Soviet citizens experienced late socialism and role of official ideology in their daily lives. As Alexei Yurchak argues in his book, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More*, for some citizens in the late Soviet period, official discourse and dissident discourse were very much the same and neither held much value. According to one of Yurchak's informants, "We had no attitude toward them [party activists and dissidents]. We were different from them. We were different, because for us they were simply a change from plus to minus – the pro-system and anti-system types." Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More*, 129.

³⁰¹ Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Introduction: Popular Sedition" in *Sedition: Everyday Resistance in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and Brezhnev*, Vladimir Kozlov, Sheila Fitzpatrick, and Sergei Mironenko, eds. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2011), 23.

claiming that, “*tamizdat*’s trans-national dimension [is] a missing piece of *samizdat*.”³⁰² Indeed, in a 2011 interview, Gorbanyevskaya reminded her audience that “*samizdat* could not reach everyone. So for that reason, we counted on the fact that some copies of the *Chronicle* would get to the West, be distributed there, and a lot more people would hear about it.”³⁰³ The process that Gorbanyevskaya described is called *tamizdat* and as I have mentioned above, it played a significant role in expanding the *Chronicle*’s reach. Building on the context provided in the preceding paragraphs, in this section I define and critically examine the practice of *tamizdat* by analysing its relationship with *samizdat* and exploring how *tamizdat* affected the dissemination of the *Chronicle*. Finally, I end the section with an investigation into *tamizdat*’s connection with Western radio.

4.2.1. What is *Tamizdat*?

In their introduction to the book, *Samizdat, Tamizdat and Beyond*, editors Frederike Kind-Kovács and Jessie Labov define *tamizdat* by identifying what it is not: “a text not originating outside of the country or region of origin that does not in some way define itself in reference to the existing political and/or aesthetic conventions of the state of origin cannot be understood as *tamizdat*.”³⁰⁴ Yet, perhaps more concretely for the purposes of this project, I define *tamizdat* as a text - either an already circulating *samizdat*

³⁰² Frederike Kind-Kovács, *Written Here, Published There: How Underground Literature Crossed the Iron Curtain* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 9.

³⁰³ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Linor Goralik, “Natal'ya Gorbanyevskaya: ‘Vot ya dura byla bez strakha’”).

³⁰⁴ Frederike Kind-Kovács and Jessie Labov, “Introduction: Samizdat and Tamizdat, Entangled Phenomena?” in *Samizdat, Tamizdat, and Beyond: Transnational Media During and After Socialism*, eds. Frederike Kind-Kovács and Jessie Labov (New York: Berghan Books, 2013), 3.

text or material written specifically for publication outside of the author's country - which is published abroad, usually in Western Europe or America. In most cases, the *tamizdat* text published in the West would be smuggled back into the Soviet Union for circulation via *samizdat*. Accordingly, *tamizdat* provided a way for authors and publishers to fix a *samizdat* text in print and avoid the material instability discussed in chapter 3. One of the most well-known pieces of literature to have been through the process of *tamizdat* is Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. The novel was smuggled out of the Soviet Union, published in Italy in 1957, and then brought back to the USSR and circulated in *samizdat*.

Tamizdat was a productive practice for Soviet authors unable to get their work published inside the Soviet Union, but it also proved to be an effective means of information transfer for dissidents in the human rights movement. As discussed above, disseminating information via the Western media involved negotiating the exigencies of mass media, whereas *tamizdat* provided dissidents with chance to better control their message. For example, Shcharansky notes that interviews with Western journalists were adequate for communicating brief messages and simple declarations, but for longer statements or more complicated ideas, publishing via *tamizdat* was a more productive option. In his memoir, he recalls, "When I gave a statement to a correspondent, a news agency would use, at best, only two or three lines from it [...]. If we wanted to transmit the entire text to Soviet Jewry or human rights support groups in the West - say, for example, a twenty page review of Soviet emigration policy, or tapes and photographs of a *refusenik* family - we had to find safe and effective ways to send it."³⁰⁵ Shcharansky's

³⁰⁵ Shcharansky, *Fear No Evil*, 23.

comments about safety highlight the precariousness of the channels of information transfer that supported *tamizdat*. Much like *samizdat*, *tamizdat* involved cooperation and collaboration with a diverse range of groups and individuals.

4.2.2. Trans-national *Tamizdat* Networks

A text intended for *tamizdat* publication usually crossed the border in Moscow. According to Peter Reddaway, an early Western supporter of the Soviet human rights movement, Moscow was one of the few areas in the Soviet Union with a well-organized network for “forwarding information to the West.”³⁰⁶ In *Soviet Dissent* Alexeyeva corroborates Reddaway’s assertions, stating, “it is primarily through Moscow that contact with the West is made; to this day this is the most effective means of distributing information outside of government control – via Western radio stations that broadcast to the USSR, and through *tamizdat*.”³⁰⁷ It is logical that Moscow would be the hub for international textual transfer as it was the host-city for diplomatic missions and consulates, a common tourist destination, and as noted in chapter 3, it was one of the few cities with accreditation for foreign journalists. As a result, most texts produced in other parts of the country first had to travel to Moscow before crossing the border. Indeed, Gorbanyevskaya confirms that manuscripts from republics and provinces had to get to Moscow before they could be transmitted to the West.³⁰⁸ Although she did not actively take part in transferring texts to international channels, Gorbanyevskaya claims that

³⁰⁶ Peter Reddaway, “Andropov's New Attacks on the Human Rights Movement,” *Morgen Bladet*, August 9th, 1983, Ms Coll 00619, Box 60, Folder 5.

³⁰⁷ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 286.

³⁰⁸ Memorial Archive, f. 101, op. 1, d. 167, (Linor Goralik, “Natal'ya Gorbanyevskaya: ‘Vot ya dura byla bez strakha’”).

Andrei Amalrik and Pyotr Yakir were particularly effective at establishing and maintaining international contacts.³⁰⁹ Alexeyeva refers to such individuals as “contact officers” and confirms that Amalrik was one of the first dissidents to establish regular contacts with the West.³¹⁰ Gorbanyevskaya’s assertions about Yakir are borne out in his closing indictment from the Prosecutor General’s office. According to the 1973 indictment, “in the search for new channels for receiving anti-Soviet literature from outside the country, Yakir and Krasin [Yakir’s co-accused] in 1971 initiated contact with the deputy secretary of the American embassy in Moscow, M. Venik and the English correspondent D. Bonavia, from whom they asked for propagandistic literature.”³¹¹ The above quote is important to analyse as it highlights two important similarities between *tamizdat* and *samizdat*: their multidirectional natures and the collaboration necessary to execute them. First of all, Yakir and Krasin’s request for literature reveals that like *samizdat*, *tamizdat* channels were multidirectional. Not only were texts leaving the Soviet Union, but they were also coming into the country. Furthermore, the indictment’s reference to collaboration among dissidents, diplomats and journalists reveals the extent of cooperation required to move a *tamizdat* text across a border. The complexities of these trans-national channels are reminiscent of the dialogical networks that supported the *Chronicle*.

Once a text got into the hands of a “contact officer,” how did it cross the border and reach a publisher? In her book *Written Here, Published There*, Kind-Kovács states that for a *tamizdat* text “to reach its Western destination, secure transfer, information

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 284.

³¹¹ Memorial Archive, f. 138 (“Obvinitel’noye Zaklyucheniye”).

channels, and a great number of mediating figures were needed.”³¹² According to Kind-Kovács, these “mediating figures” could be: “Nobel Prize winners, Western writers and publishers, ambassadors, human rights activists, émigrés, translators, backpackers, and tourists, among others.”³¹³ She then goes on to list some of the techniques employed by these mediating figures to get *tamizdat* texts across borders, with some of the more common methods involving tourists and the postal service. According to Kind-Kovács, “Western tourists and writers often acted as agents smuggling both underground writings to the West and bringing unavailable Western novels into the ‘Other Europe’ [the Soviet Union].”³¹⁴ Such “round-trips” could arouse suspicion and lead to searches and confiscations of materials at the airport, so as an alternative, manuscripts were sometimes sent via post. As Kind-Kovács explains, “the Soviet police were in no position to open all international mail.”³¹⁵ Indeed, even though one of her informants had experienced difficulty getting literature to Moscow though the mail, he insisted, “that if he had sent ten copies of that document to ten different addresses and in ten different envelopes and had posted these envelopes at ten different mailboxes on ten different days, some of them would have arrived unopened.”³¹⁶ As for the *Chronicle*, one of the most commonly cited methods of transferring the bulletin was through diplomatic channels. In his study of the *Chronicle*, Mark Hopkins remarks that, “the early issues of the *Chronicle* itself were slipped into the sealed diplomatic mail of the Moscow embassies of Italy, the United States, France, and Canada, although not necessarily with the ambassadors’

³¹² Frederike Kind-Kovács, *Written Here, Published There: How Underground Literature Crossed the Iron Curtain* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 267.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 220.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 268.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 272.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

knowledge.”³¹⁷ Hopkins later acknowledges that the regular postal service was also used to transmit copies of the *Chronicle*, noting that mail “addressed to neutral capitals (Vienna and Helsinki), seemed to pass Soviet surveillance of international mail more readily than letters going elsewhere in Western Europe.”³¹⁸ As with *samizdat*, there were many routes for *tamizdat* to pass through, yet each was dependent on the physical contributions of many individuals.

It is important to note, however, that just because a text reached the West did not mean that the text was automatically published. As Komaromi notes, “it was not easy for everyone to claim a Western publisher’s attention.”³¹⁹ Publication depended on a variety of factors, including reader interest and the reliability of the text. As discussed in chapter 3, the *Chronicle’s* commitment to providing accurate and verifiable reports earned it a reputation as a reliable source of information about human rights violations in the USSR. It was this credibility that won the *Chronicle* Western readers and publishers willing to advocate for its publication. As an example, Zbynek Zeman, a scholar who worked with Amnesty International, became interested in the *Chronicle* when he discovered that the

³¹⁷ Indeed, Hopkins reports that Mario Corti, an Italian journalist, “personally sent *samizdat* material in the Italian diplomatic pouch unbeknown to the Italian staff, when he worked in the Moscow in the Italian embassy in the 1970s. The Soviet authorities eventually compelled the Italian government to sever the relationship.” Mark Hopkins, *Russia's Underground Press: The Chronicle of Current Events* (New York: Praeger, 1983), 131.

Barbara Walker also confirms the use of diplomatic channels to transmit the *Chronicle*. In her article “Moscow Human Rights Defenders Look West Attitudes toward U.S. Journalists in the 1960s and 1970s,” she cites an interview she conducted with Sergei Kovalev in which he reveals that the *Chronicle* was often sent to the West “through the U.S. Embassy and its diplomatic pouches.”

Barbara Walker, “Moscow Human Rights Defenders Look West Attitudes toward U.S. Journalists in the 1960s and 1970s,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 4 (2008): 920.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ Komaromi, *Uncensored*, 139.

bulletin published well-researched information about human rights violations.³²⁰ Since this was precisely the type of information that Amnesty International was interested in, the organization began publishing English translations of the *Chronicle*. Distribution of Amnesty International's English version eventually reached 3,000 copies per issue.³²¹

In her book Kind-Kovács highlights the important role played by Western scholars and publishers, stating that although publishers were “not risking their own lives with publishing the works of the dissidents, these public figures were key to introducing a new strain of writers to the Western reading world.”³²² Émigrés also played an important role in the publication of *tamizdat* as they often served as intermediaries between Soviet authors and Western publishers. After Valery Chalidze was deprived of his Soviet citizenship during a lecture tour in the United States in 1972, he founded a publishing company called Khronika-Press. He was able to set-up the company with the backing of Edward Kline, an American businessman with “a special interest in human rights.”³²³ Khronika-Press re-published copies of the *Chronicle* in both Russian and English under the title *A Chronicle of Human Rights in the USSR*. Kovalyov's indictment by the Lithuanian SSR Prosecutor confirms that he gave Khronika-Press full permission to re-publish the *Chronicle* (he was one of the *Chronicle*'s editors at that time).³²⁴ The Prosecutor notes that Kovalyov's consent was given with “the objective of enhancing the spread of *Chronicle of Current Events* and to deceive world public opinion by creating a

³²⁰ Hopkins, *Russia's Underground Press*, 94.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Kind-Kovács, *Written Here, Published There*, 221.

³²³ Hopkins, *Russia's Underground Press*, 95.

³²⁴ Memorial Archive, f. 172 (“Obvinitel'noye Zaklyucheniye”).

distorted picture of the Soviet Union.”³²⁵ Chalidze’s *Chronicle* proved to be an important source of information for readers both in the West and in the Soviet Bloc; this was especially true during the original *Chronicle*’s publication disruption from 1972-1974. As Hopkins notes, Chalidze’s *Chronicle* “ably continued the work of the Soviet *Chronicle* during the latter’s 18-month hiatus. Russian-language copies were smuggled into the Soviet Union, and the English-language versions were distributed among Western journalists, government specialists, and scholars specializing in Soviet affairs.”³²⁶

By examining the *Chronicle*’s *tamizdat* dissemination, it becomes clear that the bulletin was supported by extensive, multidirectional, trans-national networks. Yet, there remains an aspect of *tamizdat* that I have not explored: radio. As I argue below, not only were *samizdat* and *tamizdat* inextricably linked, but *tamizdat* and radio broadcasting were intimately connected as well. The channels created by *tamizdat* dissemination also allowed for the broadcast of texts and documents authored by members of the human rights movement.

4.2.3. Broadcasting *Tamizdat*

In a 1986 interview, Alexeyeva declares, “I can testify that foreign broadcasts played a very important part in my own spiritual searchings, which led eventually to affiliation with the human rights movement.”³²⁷ Indeed, many dissidents eagerly point to the Russian-language international broadcasts of stations like Radio Liberty, Voice of

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Hopkins, *Russia’s Underground Press*, 95.

³²⁷ “U.S. Shielding Radio Liberty,” *The Boston Globe*, September 24th, 1986. HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 11, Folder 2.

America, Deutsche Welle, and the BBC World Service as significant sources for new ideas and information. In his memoir Chalidze observes, “Western Russian-language broadcast has been a major factor in introducing new information and ideas, and the readiness to listen to them is another sign of general liberalization.”³²⁸ Bukovsky echoes this sentiment, asserting that tens of millions of Soviet citizens listened to Western radio.³²⁹ He even describes “an original radio game” developed by *khodoki*. According to Bukovsky,

People would come to Moscow from the farthest end of the country in order to tell us about their troubles, then would hurry home in order to hear about them over the BBC, Radio Liberty, Deutsche Welle, etc. Raising their hands in astonishment, they would say to their neighbours: “How do you like that! How the hell do they find out about these things in London [or Munich or Cologne]?”³³⁰

Although it may seem from Bukovsky’s anecdote that the *khodoki*’s information was being directly transmitted to Western broadcasters, as a true testament to *tamizdat*’s complexity, this was not the case. For example, Radio Liberty’s broadcast guidelines explicitly state that the station would never solicit *samizdat* and only broadcast material that had already been published in the West (i.e. *tamizdat*). The guidelines explain, “RL’s [Radio Liberty’s] purpose in doing so is to maintain its own credibility and to avoid implying a direct link between the document’s author and an organ of “anti-Soviet propaganda.”³³¹ In his book *Broadcasting Freedom*, Arch Puddington provides an

³²⁸ Chalidze, *The Soviet Human Rights Movement – A Memoir*, 23.

³²⁹ Bukovsky, *To Build A Castle*, 354.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ The station refers to itself as a purveyor of “anti-Soviet propaganda” because Radio Liberty was often derided in the Soviet press due to its CIA funding and ties to the

example of this principle in practice. According to Puddington, Ginzburg's *Belaya Kniga* (a transcript of the Siniavskii-Daniel' trial) was one of the first *samizdat* documents to reach the West and as such it was delivered to Radio Liberty's bureau in Paris. Puddington states that the Parisian "bureau chief at the time verified the document's genuineness and turned it over to the *New York Times*, on the theory that the news would have a greater impact if carried first by the *Times* rather than on the avowedly anti-Communist RL. Radio Liberty then broadcast details of the trial after they had appeared in the *Times*."³³² As demonstrated, Radio Liberty relied on published *tamizdat* in order to maintain its credibility and protect Soviet authors from accusations of working with "agents of Western imperialism."

Puddington asserts in *Broadcasting Freedom* that, "a major goal of *samizdat* authors was to arrange for the documents to be smuggled to the West and given to Radio Liberty."³³³ The enthusiasm for Western airplay that Puddington describes in fact highlights an important point about the broadcast of *tamizdat*: it enabled the authors to reach a far broader, more varied audience than the physical circulation of materials could. As Puddington asserts, "In typed editions, a *samizdat* document might reach an audience of a few hundred or several thousand at best. If the document were broadcast on a Western radio station, however, it could reach millions."³³⁴ Yet, given that *samizdat* and

American government. "Broadcast Guidance: On the Use of Documents from the USSR," April 9th, 1969, HU OSA 300-85-47, Box 11, Folder 11.

³³² Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 171.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid. According to Radio liberty estimates, 39 million Soviet households had shortwave radios in 1977. In 1978 this estimate grew to 40 million.

tamizdat were textual cultures, what was the effect of broadcasting on the text and the Soviet listener? In exploring the textual to aural transformation of material, it is important to re-consider the author-reader-publisher relationship discussed in chapter 3. In that chapter I argued that both the author and the reader participated in the publication of *samizdat* and as a result, they both invested themselves in the activity and took a measure of risk. Broadcasting would largely change this dynamic, as a listener would be more passive than a reader-publisher. With risk diminished and the personal commitment lessened, radio rendered *samizdat* and *tamizdat* texts more accessible.³³⁵ Yet, this accessibility could come at the price of sociability. In chapter 3 I also asserted that reading *samizdat* was often a social experience supported by informal community links. Listening may or may not have been social (depending on whether or not one listened in the company of others), but it certainly would have not required informal social networks to make listening possible, as with traditional *samizdat*. Although, as seen in chapter 3 with Gorbanyevskaya's example of *khodoki* coming to Moscow after hearing a Western

“1977 Estimate of Privately Owned Shortwave Radio Sets in the USSR,” September 29th, 1977, HU OSA 300-6-3 Box 1, Folder 1.

“1978 Estimate of Privately Owned Shortwave Radio Sets in the USSR,” June 12th, 2978, HU OSA 300-6-3 Box 1, Folder 1, Media and Opinion Research Department, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.

³³⁵ Radio jamming would of course be an obstacle to radio-*samizdat*. This would have been a significant problem in the larger cities, where jamming was often more intense. Yet, many regular listeners found ways around restrictions to access. Nikolay Vilyams, Alexeyeva's husband, reports that, “outside of Moscow reception was a great deal better. In 1971 I listened 60 kilometres to the north of Moscow; in 1973 I remember listening 100 kilometres to the south of the city.” Radio Liberty reports that, “on one occasion reception of RL was so clear at Abramstevo [Moscow Oblast] that Mr. Vilyams could not switch off, and in fact stayed up all night listening to a program on the anniversary of the death of Gumilyev.”

“Western Radios Contribute to Effectiveness of Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group: Listener Evidence from Alexeyeva and Her Husband Upon Leaving USSR,” April 21st, 1977, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 11, Folder 2.

broadcast, foreign radio could play a significant role in informing geographically isolated segments of the population about dissident activity. Indeed, as Alexeyeva notes, “It is not only dissidents who listen to Western radio, but ordinary, loyal Soviet citizens too.”³³⁶ In this way, Western broadcasts of *tamizdat* increased the size of a text’s audience, facilitated the enlargement of communication networks, and connected individuals across the Soviet Union.

4.3. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I explored several important aspects of the complicated relationship that existed between dissidents and the West. Dissidents and Western journalists formed mutually beneficial relationships in order to advance their respective goals – dissidents tried to use Western publicity to bring pressure to bear on Soviet authorities, while journalists profited from dissident contacts, increased the diversity of their sources, and sold stories. These dissident-correspondent relationships were often viewed with suspicion, however, and led to accusations of treachery and espionage in the Soviet press. Nevertheless, dissidents continued to have contact with the West and developed important trans-national text-sharing networks. These *tamizdat* channels were multidirectional and supported collaboration across borders that involved many committed individuals and groups. As Kind-Kovács convincingly demonstrates in her book, examining *tamizdat* reveals that the Iron Curtain was not as impenetrable as is

³³⁶ “Western Radios Contribute to Effectiveness of Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group: Listener Evidence from Alexeyeva and Her Husband Upon Leaving USSR,” April 21st, 1977, HU OSA 300-80-7, Box 11, Folder 2.

sometimes believed.³³⁷ Indeed, the study of the textual transmission of *tamizdat*, as well as its radio broadcast, illuminates the trans-national and collaborative communication networks that made dissident activity possible.

³³⁷ Kind-Kovács' work is part of a growing body of literature that challenges the conception that Cold War Europe's communities and cultures were entirely divided. For another example, see Oksana Bulgakowa's chapter in *The Thaw*, in which she discusses how European and Soviet cinema influenced one another. Oksana Bulgakowa, "The Revival of Soviet Internationalism in the Mid to Late 1950s," in *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*, 436-481.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this project I stated that my aim was to study the mechanisms by which the information and ideas contained in the *Chronicle* were spread. I argued that by privileging dissemination methods over content, I could address issues surrounding the circulation of knowledge in a repressive society and reassess dissident activity within the context of Soviet culture. Through my research I have shown that the human rights movement and its associated dissident activity are largely the product of political, social, and cultural changes in the post-Stalin era. The long-term effects of Thaw phenomena, such as cultural liberalization, fears of a recrudescence of Stalinism, and the intimate yet diffused presence of the West, were all crucial to the development of the culture of independent networks known as *kompanii*. These informal groups created fertile ground for the development of *samizdat*, provided social support and helped establish informal communication networks across the country, and indeed the world, in the case of *tamizdat*. In this respect, considering the Soviet human rights movement and the *Chronicle*'s dissemination networks together is crucial, as studying one illuminates the other. As I have shown, the two were inextricably linked. For instance, the *Chronicle* played a unifying role within the movement and fostered communication and collaboration between rights groups, while charity networks supported by members of the movement were vital to maintaining the *Chronicle*'s communication channels with prisoner relatives.

This study has revealed that the *Chronicle*'s networks and systems of information transfer were varied, complex, unstable, dialogical, trans-national and supported by informal, trust-based social links. These networks had the unique ability to connect and

enable cooperation among geographically isolated yet like-minded individuals not only across the Soviet Union, but also across the Iron Curtain. Informal social groups and associations enabled *samizdat* and *tamizdat*, practices that created space for alternative communication in a repressive environment.

Throughout this project I have emphasized the *Chronicle's* role in connecting like-minded individuals through *samizdat* sharing networks and especially through *tamizdat* radio broadcast. Yet, what about the “ordinary, loyal Soviet citizens” referenced by Alexeyeva in the previous chapter? Earlier in that chapter I quoted Bukovsky’s claim that there were “tens of millions” of listeners to *tamizdat* broadcasts. Yet the majority of these “millions” did not openly or actively criticize the regime, as members of the human rights movement did. So what is the nature of the relationship between dissidents, *samizdat*, and the larger public? Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, historians have often dismissed dissidents as self-aggrandizing and largely irrelevant within the broader society, claiming that “the world of the dissident movement, so vividly known in the West, simply did not exist for ordinary Soviet citizens.”³³⁸ Yet, this view of dissident activity as being largely confined to the intelligentsia and alien to ordinary citizens, would seem to echo the Moscow-centric approaches to dissidence I have challenged

³³⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Introduction: Popular Sedition,” 22. See also Yurchak’s *Everything Was Forever*. Even dissidents sometimes questioned their relationship with the fabled “ordinary Soviet citizen.” In his memoir, Chalidze recalls an incident when Bukovsky challenged his knowledge of the Soviet people. Bukovsky reportedly said, “Admit it, Valery Nikolaevich, you never shared a bottle with truckers, never planted a potato with a broad in Kalinin oblast, never stole machine parts from a factory warehouse with a co-worker...” Chalidze answers, “I really don’t know how to respond. Perhaps sharing a bottle of vodka is necessary to understand the Russian people; on the other hand, this way of understanding people can damage one’s ability to understand anything at all.”

Chalidze, *The Soviet Human Rights Movement – A Memoir*, 14.

throughout this project. In chapter 3, I demonstrated that this approach ignores phenomena such as *khodoki*, travelling editors, and *ksivy*, dissemination methods that illustrate the dialogical nature of the information-sharing relationships that existed across the Soviet Union. I do not think that historians should dismiss the relevance of dissident activity to “ordinary citizens” so quickly. Furthermore, recent scholarship has privileged more typical or common socio-cultural phenomena, revealing a historiographic shift toward an analysis of “everyday socialism” (loosely defined as the everyday experiences of the majority of citizens). If, as has been asserted, millions were listening to *tamizdat* texts via Western radio, this would suggest that radio was the medium through which most Soviet citizens gained access to *samizdat*. Perhaps dissident activity was part of the everyday experiences of a large number of citizens. Analysing how Soviet citizens interpreted and experienced the *tamizdat* texts that they listened to will be an important next step in locating dissident activity within the broader context of Soviet society and the public sphere.

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