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Cultural Opposition Goes Abroad: The Collections of Diaspora Communities

Introduction

The notion of “diaspora collection” and its relationship to the concept of “cultural opposition” in the countries of the former Soviet bloc warrants an explanation. The term does not simply denote collections that were compiled “abroad,” by émigré intellectuals or exiled dissenters. Intellectuals who had emigrated did not always engage with their fellow expatriates, nor did they necessarily participate in the life of diaspora communities and organizations. One of the most prominent examples of a non-conformist cultural figure in exile who remained reluctant to get involved in the activities of diaspora groups was Andrei Siniavskii. The Siniavskii collection in the Hoover Institute highlights not only the blurred boundary between non-conformism and opposition, but also the importance of making a conceptual distinction between the more generic notion of “collections abroad” and “diaspora collections.”¹ “Diaspora collections” should also be differentiated from collections that were established by Western intellectuals or organizations, such as Radio Free Europe, which had the aim of collecting material from behind the Iron Curtain. While such collections testify to the significance of transnational links in the dissemination of information, as well as non-conformist cultural products, and demonstrate to various extents the links between emigration and the “home nation,” they are not normally integrated into the social and cultural practices of diaspora communities. The term “diaspora collection” therefore, refers to collections that were consciously created by representatives of diasporas with the specific aim of preserving—but also shaping—the perceived cultural heritage of the nation. Diaspora collections are thus not (normally) isolated projects, but are embedded in broader mechanisms and techniques of preserving national and cultural identities in diaspora communities. At the same time, it needs to be highlighted that the distinction between “collections abroad” and “diaspora collections” is not always straightforward. Intellectuals working for non-diasporic organizations, such as Voice of America or RFE, sometimes reported on and supported the cultural initiatives of

1 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Andrei Siniavskii papers”, by Orysia Maria Kulick, 2016. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

diaspora communities. “Collections abroad” therefore, may contain important material pertaining to the cultural heritage of East European diasporas.

Due to the fact that a significant proportion of East European diasporas, especially from the republics of the Soviet Union, emigrated as a response to the establishment of Soviet power, the collections such groups created are oppositionist by nature and display a general antagonistic attitude towards communism. However, the theme of cultural opposition is not always the main organizing principle behind the collection of material. Diaspora collections often revolve around the “national question” under communism, and themes that are considered components of an imagined national identity (religion, folk art, national literature, military resistance to communism, national movements, etc.). For this reason, cultural opposition in diaspora collections tends to be more closely linked to nationalism than in the case of collections created in the countries of the former Soviet bloc, and it is more clearly represented as an integral aspect of the cultural heritage of the respective nation. At the same time, diaspora collections have been shaped significantly by the social, political and cultural environment of the host country, hence they display a degree of hybridity. Such collections operate within the legal framework of the respective countries, and their opportunities are fundamentally defined by local institutional cultures as well as funding mechanisms. The acts of collecting and displaying material were also shaped by the wider availability of trained experts and networking opportunities, as well as broader social attitudes towards cultural heritage that is reflected in the mentality of curators and visitors alike.

The size, location and socio-cultural function of diaspora collections that were established during the period of communism and which reflect on aspects of cultural opposition vary significantly across the board. The social significance of such collections depends heavily on a number of factors, including pre-communist patterns and traditions of migration; the timing and the scale of migration; the size and the geographical spread of the diaspora; the strength of diaspora institutions and their embeddedness into the institutional cultures of host societies; and the potency of social and cultural links to the home nation.² Substantial differences in the importance of such factors resulted in vast imbalances in the social role of collections in the life of diaspora communities. Long-established diaspora communities with well-organized cultural institutions and active links to the “home nation” were more successful in creating, preserving and promoting collections of cultural opposition than smaller, dispersed groups whose ties to the homeland were less prominent and dynamic. The contribution of the host environment to the development of the collections and the shaping of their social and political function

² For the most comprehensive assessments of East European diasporas see Mazurkiewicz, *East Central Europe in Exile*, vols. 1–2. Ziemer and Roberts, *East European Diasporas*. For a theoretical assessment of the notion of diaspora see Braziel and Mannur, *Theorizing Diaspora*.

was also crucial in specific contexts. In the United States, for example, East European diasporas and their cultural activities—especially those with an anti-Soviet angle—were supported and sometimes even financed by the government and the CIA. Diaspora activities therefore gained political connotations, and cultural initiatives, including the creation and promotion of collections, were shaped to an extent by strategic priorities during the Cold War.³ In such cases, the political and diasporic functions of the act of collecting are difficult to separate from each other.

This chapter explores the notion of diaspora collection through the examples of two of the most successful communities—the Polish and the Ukrainian—to establish and preserve collections of cultural opposition abroad, and to integrate narratives of opposition into practices of promoting the cultural heritage of the nation. In both cases, a wave of emigration—although not on the same scale—was provoked by the Russian Civil War and the proclamation of the Soviet Union. Subsequent waves of migration were also closely linked to key events—High Stalinism, World War II, Sovietization, 1956, 1968, and 1981—in the history of communism in the region. Polish and Ukrainian émigrés established cultural institutions (the Shevchenko Library in London, for example) whose task was to nurture national identity in the context of exile, and promote the heritage of military as well as cultural resistance to Soviet rule.⁴ Such collections exist across the Western world; the most prominent ones being in the United Kingdom, the USA, and Canada. At the other end of the spectrum, there are the East German people who deserted to West Germany from the GDR (“*Republikflucht*”) and integrated smoothly into the host society. Since a “GDR diaspora” did not really exist, collections of cultural opposition that were established abroad were not linked to a diasporic (German) identity. The other nations of the Soviet bloc are located on the spectrum somewhere between these two poles. In some cases, the diaspora played a less prominent role in the history of cultural opposition (even if individual émigrés did), whereas in others (the Baltic states or Croatia), émigré communities—despite their relatively small numbers—proved to be crucial in promoting ideas and representations of dissent to communism abroad. Czech and Hungarian dissenters and non-conformist cultural figures benefited from the extensive transnational networks that connected East and West, as well as from links with diaspora groups, yet the most prominent collections that demonstrate the potency, and shape the legacy of oppositionist movements in the two countries were preserved by domestic actors.

While this chapter focuses on two of the most dynamic and well-organized diasporas, the Polish and the Ukrainian, the COURAGE Registry features a large number of collections that were created by other (Croatian, Czech,

3 Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*.

4 For comprehensive assessments of the Polish and the Ukrainian diaspora see Sword, *Identity in flux: the Polish Community in Britain*, and Satzewich, *The Ukrainian Diaspora*.

Romanian, Hungarian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Bulgarian, etc.) national groups. There is also a collection that testifies to the contribution of an East European diaspora community (Ukrainian) in another Sovietized country (Czechoslovakia) to the development of cultural opposition to Soviet power.⁵ The collections in the database represent all the main types of oppositionist practices COURAGE engages with, including intellectual dissent, non-conformist and subversive art and literature, samizdat and tamizdat publishing, religious movements and practices, national movements, human rights movements, folklore and folk art. Some collections also testify to the importance of censorship and state surveillance in the development of oppositionist ideas and practices. At the same time, diaspora collections demonstrate once again the crucial significance of transnational networks in the distribution of thoughts and materials of dissent.

Although all the major types of opposition are represented in diaspora collections, some themes feature more prominently than others. Since the main actors in the process of collecting and/or transporting (smuggling) material abroad were intellectuals (academics, artists, writers, etc.), the relevant collections highlight various aspects of intellectual dissent, and the role of intellectuals in preserving the cultural heritage of opposition. While the key actors in diaspora collections tend to be intellectuals, one of the main themes that the diverse material address is nationalism. The national question is reflected upon in several collections established abroad—especially by the Polish, Ukrainian, and Croatian diasporas—with a particular emphasis on national/minority movements under communism and the legacy of armed resistance to Soviet power. The theme of nationalism also appears in collections in which the organizing principle was a different concept; religion Action of Light Collection the Karl Laantee Collection, etc.), or illegal (samizdat) publishing, for example.⁶ Although diaspora collections tend to revolve around conceptions of national identity, representations of nationhood in the collected material and even practices of gathering were contested. As the second case study in this chapter shows, the act of collecting sometimes provoked a competition between various actors in exile, and caused significant rifts and antagonisms within the diaspora. At the same time, representatives of different ethnic groups sometimes cooperated with each other and produced joint cultural initiatives. Such initiatives further emphasize the transnational aspects of cultural opposition.

The genesis of diaspora collections was often linked to individual initiatives, prompted by the emigration of dynamic and ambitious intellectuals (the

5 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Zina Genyk-Berezovska Collection,” by Orysia Maria Kulick, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

6 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Action of Light Collection”, by Daina Bleiere, 2016. Accessed: September 28, 2018; COURAGE Registry, s.v. “The Karl Laantee Collection,” by Taavi Koppel, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

Solidarity Collection, the Vinko Nikolić Collection, the Nikola Čolak Collection, the Smoloskyp Collection, the Rațiu–Tilea Personal Library Collection, etc.).⁷ At the same time, diaspora collections sometimes moved from one location to another—even to different countries—and some of these collections, or parts thereof, were returned to the home countries after the collapse of communism (the Solidarity Collection, the Smoloskyp Collection, etc.). The social use of diaspora collections tends to be very imbalanced, and it depends largely on the geographical location of the collection, access to funding and the cohesion of diaspora communities which oversee their development. Some collections are used extensively by researchers and are visited by the broader public, while others are barely known. The Smoloskyp Collection in Kyiv can be interpreted as one of the most prominent “living collections,” the legacy of which continues to play a role in contemporary Ukraine and shapes current political events (Euromaidan) to a remarkable extent.

The two case studies included in this chapter—Polish Émigré Collections in the UK, and the Smoloskyp museum in Ukraine—introduce some of the most prominent diaspora collections preserved by Polish and Ukrainian émigré communities that reflect on the importance of cultural opposition in the former Soviet bloc. As the authors show, the collections discussed in the narrative were integrated into the life of the respective diasporas and they also represent the links between diaspora and the “home nation.” In addition, they represent the division, conflicts and changes in the diaspora, as well as the home society, and thereby highlight the significance of cultural ties across the Iron Curtain. The case studies also show that diaspora collections do not merely represent counter-narratives to Soviet political discourse, but are considered components of the cultural heritage of the nation. The collections therefore show the organic links between cultural opposition and cultural heritage in diaspora cultures.

Polish Émigré Collections and Holdings on Poland abroad: A Selective Overview

The establishment of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe in the wake of World War II, coupled with communist takeovers that took place between 1944 and 1948, resulted in the massive exodus of hundreds of thousands of people. Those who fled their native lands or decided to stay in the West following the end of hostilities represented a wide specter of groups and organizations: former POWs and concentration camp inmates, anti-communist re-

7 COURAGE Registry, s.v. “The Vinko Nikolić Collection,” by Stipe Kljaić, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018; COURAGE Registry, s.v. “The Nikola Čolak Collection,” by Stipe Kljaić, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018; COURAGE Registry, s.v. “Rațiu–Tilea Personal Library Collection,” by Corneliu Pintilescu, 2017. Accessed: September 28, 2018.

sisters and collaborators, members of political elites and displaced persons. In this medley of people, Poles occupied a unique and prominent position having set up a Government-in-Exile and numerous political, cultural and educational networks. The richness of the Polish post-war émigré community was, however, fueled not only by the mass presence of Polish soldiers who fought in the West under allied command (approximately 200,000 men and women) and the continuing presence of government institutions since 1939, but also by the historical traditions of the Great Emigration, which included thousands of Poles who went into exile after the defeat of the anti-Russian November Uprising in 1831.

The parallels between the Great Emigration and anti-communist exiles are particularly striking. Both movements created quasi governments, involved members of political, cultural and military elites, and organized hundreds of institutions that would preserve national identity, help Polish emigrants to acclimatize to their new surroundings, and provide moral guidance to compatriots at home. Like their 19th-century predecessors, the post-World War II émigrés understood the role of independent publishing, which could undermine the impact of communist propaganda and censorship. Due to the presence of the Polish Government in London during World War II, Great Britain constituted the main center of Polish émigré politics, culture and education. The three distinguished cultural institutions that to this day hold important archival and library collections, the Polish Library POSK in London, the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, and the Józef Piłsudski Institute in London, trace their origins either to the Polish Government or the émigré community made up of members of the Polish Armed Forces. Consequently, their holdings include government documents, military files, personal papers acquired from individual donors and corporate records of diaspora organizations. Émigré collections had a profound impact on the life of the Polish diaspora in the UK; they facilitated family research conducted by relatives of members of the Polish Armed Forces and enabled the publication of edited volumes of historical sources. Consider *Armia Krajowa w dokumentach* (The Home Army in Documents), the flagship project of the Polish Underground Movement Study (currently a unit of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum) which was published in six volumes between 1970 and 1989. Prior to 1989, it was impossible to write any historical compendium on the Polish resistance movement and the Polish Armed Forces in the West without consulting these collections and their publications. Since the collapse of communism, émigré holdings have been critical for research into the interwar and wartime periods, military history and a history of international relations.

In 1946, a small group of Polish émigrés in Rome led by Jerzy Giedroyc (1906–2000) created yet another, but very distinct cultural and political institution, the Literary Institute, a Polish-language publishing house, which gradually became more influential than the London-based organizations. The Institute, which relocated to France in 1947, published the monthly journal

Kultura, the quarterly *Zeszyty Historyczne* (History Notebooks), and hundreds of books in the Biblioteka *Kultury* (*Kultura* Library) series. At the heart of Giedroyc's policy stood the notion that, while struggling for Poland's independence, diaspora could not separate itself from the country. To quote Timothy Snyder, "Giedroyc intended to influence politics in communist Poland, rather than create a substitute Poland abroad."⁸ He rejected the division of Polish literature in exile, and in Poland, publishing writers who resided on both sides of the Iron Curtain and represented different nationalities, Czesław Miłosz, George Orwell, Raymond Aron, Milovan Đilas and Andrei Siniavskii, to name just a few. Giedroyc's press also released special editions published in original languages, Russian, Ukrainian and Czech. It was the mission of the Literary Institute to influence political opinion in Poland according to "the principles of political equality, social justice, and respect for human rights and human dignity."⁹ The Literary Institute began smuggling its publications to People's Poland in the 1950s. By the late 1970s, the trafficking of forbidden books went both ways as the *Kultura* milieu started collecting Polish samizdat and underground publications released by the democratic opposition.

Similar trends occurred in Great Britain where émigré librarians, bookstore owners and publishers, among which Zdzisław Jagodziński (1927–2001) of the Polish Library POSK in London and Jerzy Kulczycki (1931–2013) of Odnova press, supplied institutions and individuals in People's Poland with books published in exile and by Western publishers.¹⁰ The Polish Library was one of several distribution centers that participated in the Cold War project coordinated by the International Literary Center (ILC) in New York and secretly sponsored by the CIA. This initiative resulted in the shipment of some 4 million books to Poland and 10 million to the entire Soviet Bloc.¹¹ Jagodziński collected books, serials, brochures, leaflets and posters that had been released by major and minor opposition groups in Poland and smuggled to United Kingdom by Polish visitors and members of the exile community. The underground publishing network in Poland was unparalleled in the Soviet Bloc. It has been estimated that between 1976, the year of the formation of the Workers' Defense Committee and publication of its information bulletins, and 1990, some 4000 underground periodical titles and 6000 books and pamphlets were published.¹²

The acquisitions of Polish underground publications were not limited to émigré institutions. The Hoover Institution Archives in Stanford, the Polish language desk of Radio Free Europe in Munich, the Research Center for East

8 Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations, 1569–1999*, 220.

9 *Kultura Paryska*, "The Literary Institute." Accessed July 18, 2018. <http://kulturoparyska.com/en/historia/institut-literacki>

10 Kulczycki, *Atakować książkę*, 204–43.

11 Sowiński, *Tajna dyplomacja. Książki emigracyjne w drodze do kraju 1956–1989*.

12 Magda Szkuta, "Solidarity Collection." Accessed July 18, 2018. <http://blogs.bl.uk/europe-an/2015/08/solidarity-collection-.html>

European Studies at the University of Bremen, and the British Library in London, to name a few, also acquired substantial holdings of Polish samizdat literature. The Solidarity Collection at the British Library consists of 1,759 books, 831 periodical titles and 469 ephemeral publications.¹³ The origins of the collection go back before the times of Solidarity, to the 1970s, when Hanna Świdowska (1930–), curator of Polish collections at the British Library, began buying smuggled illegal publications from anonymous visitors. Having organized unofficial book exchanges between the British Library and the National Library in Warsaw and the Jagiellonian University Library in Krakow, Świdowska had an excellent network of collaborators among Polish librarians sympathetic to the opposition. She also received Polish samizdat from the Literary Institute.¹⁴ In 1984, Świdowska used these materials in the British Library exhibition, “Works of George Orwell in the languages of Eastern Europe.” In February 1989, the collection included 293 books and pamphlets and 324 mostly incomplete titles of bulletins, newspapers and journals.¹⁵

The Solidarity Collection significantly expanded after the collapse of state socialism in Poland. The British library purchased Polish samizdat items, books, periodicals and ephemeral publications from three collectors: Marek Szyszko from Lublin, Marek Garztecki, journalist, diplomat, and former Solidarity representative in London, and John Taylor, an activist of the Polish Solidarity Campaign formed by British sympathizers of the Solidarity movement. In 2010, the Polish Library POSK in London donated a large pool of underground publications, including books and journals. At present, the Solidarity Collection at the British Library is the second largest repository of Polish independent publications in the British Isles. Of prominence are book holdings which include forbidden works by Polish authors, including such masters of Polish literature as Tadeusz Konwicki, Marek Nowakowski and Stanisław Barańczak. The large selection of non-Polish authors testifies to three important features of Polish independent publishing: the important role of translators in the development of samizdat, the openness of the Polish cultural opposition to the outside world, and cultural exchanges between Polish émigré publishers and the underground press in People’s Poland. By the late 1980s, the underground publishing houses became a significant alternative to state-owned publishing houses which could not publish the works of George Orwell, Arthur Koestler and Evgenii Zamiatin, to name a few writers.

There are numerous books in the Solidarity Collection that demonstrate the wide scope and intellectual horizons of Polish independent publishers. However, three titles stand out, *Książki najgorsze* (The Worst books, 1981) by Stanisław Barańczak, Evgenii Zamiatin’s *My* (*We*, 1985) and the first 1979 underground edition of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (*Folwark zwierzęcy*, 1979).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Hanna Świdowska (Curator, British Library), interviewed by Milan Grba, London, March 2012.

¹⁵ *Polish Collections in the British Library*, 6.

Stanisław Barańczak (1946–2014), a leading poet, essayist, translator, academic and collaborator of the Workers' Defense Committee, was also known for his wit and subtle sense of humour. In 1981, the KOS underground press published *The Worst Books*, a selection of literary reviews which had been submitted to the *Student newspaper* in 1975 by Feliks Trzymałko and Szczesny Dzierżankiewicz, a fictional pair of critics but which in fact had been written by Barańczak. The author set about trashing bad literature, which included people's militia detective stories published by the Ministry of National Defense Press, the erotic novels of former Stalinist minister of culture Jerzy Putrament, and many other gems of literary kitsch that had been released in People's Poland. Relating to Vaclav Havel's concept of "the aesthetics of banality," Barańczak described his book as the study of "graphomania with state imprint" and the relationship between totalitarianism and bad literature, a phenomenon, which flourished under state socialism due to the superiority of ideological criteria over artistic values.¹⁶ Barańczak's humorous book constitutes cultural resistance to communist regimes at its best. While its 'totalitarian' aspect might have lost its sting and edge, *The Worst Books* remains a cult title of Polish samizdat literature.

Published by the largest underground press, Independent Publishing House (Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza, NOWA), and translated by Adam Pomorski, Zamiatin's *We* was a blueprint for such classics of anti-totalitarian literature as George Orwell's *1984* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. The NOWA edition went on public display in 2011 as one of the items presented at "Out of this World: Science Fiction but not as you know it," the British Library's first exhibition to explore science fiction through literature, film, illustration and sound. Curated by Andy Sawyer, Science Fiction Collections Librarian at the University of Liverpool, the exhibition traced the development of the genre and showed how science fiction had turned from a niche into a global phenomenon.

Translated in 1945 by Teresa Jeleńska, the mother of Konstanty Jeleński who was one of the closest collaborators of Jerzy Giedroyc of the Literary Institute milieu, Orwell's *Animal Farm* was first published in Polish by the Radio Free Europe in 1956, and later in 1974 by Jerzy Kulczycki's émigré Odnova press. Jeleńska met Orwell in London during World War II and corresponded with him until his death in 1950. In 1979, NOWA, the emerging giant of Polish samizdat, re-published the London edition with the illustrations and cover page designed by Andrzej Krauze (1947–), a Polish and British political cartoonist known for his damning portrayals of the party nomenklatura and communist rituals of power.¹⁷ Krauze's contribution to the NOWA publication cost him his job at the *Kultura* weekly in Warsaw. In the same year, Krauze emigrated to the West and eventually settled in Great Britain where he joined

16 Barańczak, *Książki najgorsze*, 9–11.

17 *Gdy rozum śpi... Rysunki Andrzeja Krauzego 1970–1989*.

the team at *The Guardian*, reviving the art of political cartoon in the British press. A staunch anti-communist, he often attacked the General Jaruzelski government and martial law in Poland, abuses of human rights in his fatherland, and negotiations between the communist regime and opposition in 1989. A copy of the NOWA edition of *Animal Farm* was included in the 1984 British Library exhibition on George Orwell's works in the languages of Eastern Europe.

Skillfully described by British Library curators, listed in the library's online and digital catalogues, and available in paper formats and microfilms, the Solidarity Collection at the British Library is fully accessible to the public. Although smaller than the collection of Polish Underground Publications in the Polish POSK Library in London, it is a fully processed, invaluable repository of Polish samizdat in the heart of London and at one of the most iconic library institutions in the world. The history and content of the Solidarity Collection provides important insights into the relationship between Western European cultural institutions, dissident movements and cultural resistance to state socialism in East Central Europe.

The Smoloskyp Collection

The Smoloskyp phenomenon is perhaps one of the most striking examples of how the formation of both organizational and informal networks of the Ukrainian diaspora became inseparable from cultural and political life in their home society. Deeply involved in political and cultural opposition in Soviet and post-Soviet Ukraine, Smoloskyp built a communication channel between Soviet Ukraine and the international community, making the case of the Ukrainian oppositional movement internationally known.

The human rights publisher Smoloskyp, named after the poet Vasyl Symonenko, was originally founded in Baltimore, US, in 1967. Traditionally one of the biggest publishers of Ukrainian dissident literature, Smoloskyp nowadays holds the largest collection of Ukrainian *samizdat* (Ukr. *samvydav*) and material of the Ukrainian resistance movement (*Rukh Oporu*), 1960–1990. The phenomenon of Smoloskyp, however, goes far beyond the scope of a publishing house. Smoloskyp is considered the hub of human rights activities of the Ukrainian diaspora and it played an active role in various human rights campaigns in Ukraine.¹⁸ It (co)founded several human rights organizations: Smoloskyp Organization for the Defence of Human Rights in Ukraine, Washington Helsinki Guarantees for Ukraine Committee, and the Committee for the Defence of Ukrainian Political Prisoners in the USSR. Smoloskyp activists took part in follow-up meetings to the Helsinki Final Act (1975), held by the OSCE in Belgrade in 1977–78, Madrid in 1980–83, and Vienna in 1986–89.

18 Mykolayenko, "Pravozakhystna diyal'nist'."

They participated in the International Sakharov Hearing and spoke at the US Congress. Smoloscyp organized a series of protest campaigns against political repression in Soviet Ukraine, and fought for the independent participation of Ukraine in the Olympic games. It ran information services in the US, Canada, and Argentina, widely disseminating factual information on political repression and dissident movements in Ukraine. It cooperated with international human rights organizations (such as the Amnesty International) and sent humanitarian aid to Ukrainian political prisoners. Its secret communication channels along with its own network of specially trained couriers allowed Smoloscyp to establish a two-way traffic of censored information and clandestine materials flown across the Iron curtain.

Separate collections of *samizdat* documents, literature and poetry banned by the Soviet state, political journalism, official letters of protest and petitions, leaflets, interviews, photos, memoirs, and correspondence, as well as detailed lists of Ukrainian political prisoners were carefully processed, catalogued, and preserved by the Smoloscyp group. After the dissolution of the USSR, this collection moved to Ukraine and was institutionalized as the Museum-Archive and Documentation Centre of Ukrainian Samvydav in Kyiv.

Changing Context, Changing Content

The story of Smoloscyp goes as far back as Paris in 1950, when a young Ukrainian migrant student named Osyp Zinkevych established a Ukrainian youth organization and started a special column on Ukrainian youth in the émigré newspaper "The Ukrainian Word" (*Ukrainske Slovo*), which was the main periodical of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. Since that time, Zinkevych has been the continuous leader and the ideologue of Smoloscyp's metamorphoses: from a column in a newspaper, to an independent quarterly (1956), a publishing house in the US (1967), an information service (1967), a human rights organization (1970), and finally an international charitable foundation and a museum-archive in Kyiv (1998). Zinkevych was a member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), and remained a member of its governing body until 1974. Therefore, Smoloscyp, although an independent non-party organization, was fully involved in the political life of the Ukrainian diaspora and its internal conflicts that were triggered mainly by the multiple split in its major political party, the OUN.

The focus of Smoloscyp's activities, and what they collected and published depended on the changing social and political context of the Ukrainian diaspora and its home country. During the Paris period (1950–55), Smoloscyp was mainly concerned with the life of Ukrainian youth in both the diaspora and the Soviet Union. By that time, the Smoloscyp group had also started to collect materials about the so-called Ukrainian "executed renaissance" – the generation of Ukrainian writers and artists of the 1920–30s that had been repressed by Stalinism. During the 1960s, when Smoloscyp was institutionalized as a pub-

lishing house in Baltimore, the primary focus of their collections became the *shestydesiatnyky* movement in Ukraine. Acquiring and publishing works of alternative Ukrainian writers and literary critics was a primary concern for Smoloskyp during the 1960s. They were the first to publish the literary criticism of Ivan Svitlychny and Ivan Dziuba, a novel by Oles Honchar, and the poetry of Lina Kostenko and Mykola Kholodny. With the radicalization of the dissident movement in the Soviet Union, the expansion and the politicization of the Soviet *samizdat*, and the development of the open national resistance in Ukraine (*Ruch Oporu*) in the 1970s, Smoloskyp entered a new phase of activity. Apart from banned literature and poetry, Smoloskyp started to smuggle and collect materials produced by the human rights movement in Ukraine, documents of the Ukrainian resistance movement (mainly circulated in *samizdat*), political journalism, official petitions, and public letters of protest. To draw wider international attention to mass arrests and the harassment of dissidents in Ukraine, Smoloskyp translated *samizdat* into English, French, Italian, and Spanish.

“We are the Third Front”: Smuggling Operations

During the 1970 and 1980s, communication between dissidents and oppositional groups in Soviet Ukraine and smuggling operations (of *samizdat* materials and other government-suppressed literature and documents) became more systematic. Despite the Cold War, communication channels between the Ukrainian diaspora and the Soviet bloc functioned well, and thousands of underground publications and documents were smuggled abroad. Smoloskyp was one of the important chains in this clandestine communication system.

What differentiated Smoloskyp from many other Ukrainian diasporic institutions was that it had no structured organization; it was primarily an informal group of young volunteers.¹⁹ Functioning as a non-profit public organization, with its office in the basement of the Zinkevych’s house, Smoloskyp was a node in an informal network where the access to information and resources was regulated by informal relationships, friendship and trust, suspicion and surveillance, and personal and political antagonism.²⁰ Information exchange routes were coordinated by personal phone calls and correspondence, and clandestine meetings and verbal agreements. Various split diaspora groups, Soviet dissidents and underground oppositional organizations, Soviet sailors and sportsmen, international human rights activists, American and Soviet secret services, and even Communist party officials were part of this informal network. Either willingly or unknowingly, they played their roles in structuring the flow of information and in disseminating ideas and materials “infected” by the “bacillus of freedom,” to use one of Zinkevych’s expressions.²¹

19 Mykolayenko, “Ukrains’ke vydavnytstvo ‘Smoloskyp’,” 22–24.

20 Zinkevych, *Shchodennyk*.

21 Zinkevych, “Batsyl’ svobody.”

In his diaries, Zinkevych draws a vivid picture of how Ukrainian diaspora lived in an atmosphere of secrecy, distrust and suspicion, where every person was suspected of being a CIA or a KGB agent, or working for a rival diasporic group.²² He describes how Ukrainian groups, organizations and parties in the diaspora competed for the rights to acquire *samizdat* materials first hand, and how they infringed copyright, sometimes stealing smuggled documents from each other, or even falsifying them.²³ At the same time, both American and Soviet secret services intended to control the flow of information and documents. "A few years ago, during one of the receptions, I met a former KGB colonel," Zinkevych recalled. "When I said to him that I was from Smoloskyp, he reacted, 'Oh, you are from Smoloskyp! I am so pleased to meet you. Do you remember Halyna Pisetska who you sent [to Ukraine] to meet Antonenko-Davidovych (a Ukrainian dissident), so he could pass his memoirs to the West? But she was so afraid to smuggle *samizdat*, or maybe Antonenko-Davidovych didn't want to give them to her'."²⁴ It was a hide-and-seek game, and the KGB were often well informed about smuggling operations, trying to control them and sometimes inserting false documents or heavily edited writings of dissidents. This constant fear often aroused the most heated debates in the Ukrainian diaspora, as for example with the publication of Danylo Shumuk's memoirs by Smoloskyp in 1974. The OUN declared that the memoirs were a KGB provocation and demanded their withdrawal from publication, with the threat of a Revolutionary Tribunal over Zinkevych.²⁵ Under the fear of death, he nevertheless published the memoirs.

Within such an environment, Smoloskyp managed to survive as an independent group of volunteers, having transparent fundraising campaigns, running effective smuggling operations, translating and publishing Ukrainian *samizdat*, and organizing international human rights campaigns. Smoloskyp developed its own network of voluntary couriers, who, as tourists, students, or members of official delegations, travelled to Soviet Ukraine on secret missions to meet dissidents and human rights activists and to obtain illegal materials. Smoloskyp developed a unique *Training course for couriers* for those about to travel to the Soviet bloc.²⁶ A courier had to learn about the literary movement in Ukraine, the names of *shestydesiatnyky* writers and their work, and importantly, they received secrecy training and learned how to behave during interrogations in case of arrest. Once a courier had obtained *samizdat*

22 Zinkevych, *Shchodennyk*.

23 See also Obertas, *Ukrains'kyi Samvydav*, 64; Mykolayenko, "Ukrains'ke vydavnytstvo 'Smoloskyp'," 24–6.

24 Zinkevych, "Yak distavavsia."

25 Zinkevych, *Shchodennyk*, 257–259. The issue of the authenticity of Shumuk's memoirs is still the topic of much discussion among historians: Omelkovets, "Rol' intsidenta"; Petrenko, "De-konstruktzii dekoratyvnoho"; Zabila, "Yak KGB dopysuvav spohady"; Zinkevych, "Pro spohady Danyla Shumuka."

26 Zinkevych, *Rukh Oporu*, 768; Zinkevych, *Shchodennyk*, 429–444; 156–157.

in Ukraine, the problem was to safely smuggle it out of the country. Manuscripts were usually copied as microfilms and hidden in luggage or parcels. Osyg Zinkevych admitted that, for their smuggling operations, Smoloskyp agents sometimes used official Canadian Communist delegations that visited Ukraine, as their luggage was checked less thoroughly at the border. Unbeknown to them, Smoloskyp agents attached microfilms to their luggage or talked them into carrying some souvenirs (with microfilms hidden inside). "Once they crossed the USSR border, they (Smoloskyp agents) racked their brains thinking how to get those microfilms from their luggage," Zinkevych wrote.²⁷ Many years later, Petro Kravchuk, a leader of the Ukrainian Canadian communist movement, published a protest letter after he discovered how he and his delegations had been "abused" by Smoloskyp.

Another channel to obtain censored materials and information was international sport events. Zinkevych managed to receive accreditation as a sport journalist in the Olympic games (in Mexico, Melbourne, Rome, Montreal, München, and Los Angeles) and in other international sport competitions. This allowed him to meet Ukrainian sportsmen and journalists who carried hidden *samizdat* materials.²⁸ International sport competitions also were a perfect platform to organize protest campaigns against political repression in Soviet Ukraine.²⁹ Soviet sailors were also used as Smoloskyp's emissaries. The Smoloskyp group had a secret meeting point at the Port of Copenhagen. Some trees in a local park were marked and served as a hiding-place for secret messages. This was how Zinkevych and his companions arranged secret meetings and received information about approaching Soviet ships. Here is one of the stories as told by Zinkevych:³⁰

[I] had arrived and got a message about a meeting near the fountain at 10 pm. But I knew that sailors could leave their ship and visit the city only until 8pm... I approached the fountain and saw a person dressed in a civilian coat, waiting at the arranged place. We exchanged our passwords and he... gave me a package, wrapped in newspaper and tied up with a simple lace. The sailor was in a hurry and soon left. I knew the story of the assassination of Yevhen Konovalts in Rotterdam, when he got a similar package from a Soviet ship, with a bomb in it. That same moment I got horrified, I was sure that there was a bomb in the pack. I was afraid to go to the hotel with the "bomb." I jumped over the park fence, hid near the lake under an old oak tree, and put the package on the other side of the tree. I was awake the whole night, waiting. I was convinced that the bomb would explode,

27 Zinkevych, "Yak distavavsia."

28 Woronowycz, "Smoloskyp Publishing House."

29 Deychakiwsky, "Two Groups," 1, 5.

30 Zinkevych, "Yak distavavsia."

but it didn't. At dawn, I crawled to the package and untied the lace with my left hand (I didn't want the bomb to tear away my right hand). Suddenly, sheets of documents flew up to the lake.

This was how Smoloskyp acquired the first documents of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group. It was through these channels and other similar ones that Smoloskyp obtained the vast majority of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group papers. These were then translated into English and passed on to OSCE, the US Congress, the Canadian Parliament, and international human rights organizations, and were later published as a series of volumes.

Among other smuggled materials were all issues of the Ukrainian *samizdat* chronicle "Ukrainian Herald" (*Ukrainsky Visnik*); documents pertaining to the Ukrainian resistance movement *Rukh Oporu*; "The Chornovyl Papers" (*Lykho z rozumu*, the first detailed information about mass arrests and trials in Ukraine which attracted worldwide attention); "Cataract. An autobiographical portrait" (*Bilmo: Avtobiohrafichny narys*) by a Ukrainian journalist and political prisoner Mykhaylo Osadchy; the memoirs of Ukrainian political prisoner Danylo Shumuk; the writings of human rights activist Mykola Rudenko, and many others. Smoloskyp agents also managed to bring the collection of photos and paintings to the West, and even the remains of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, whose graves were destroyed in Western Ukraine by the Soviet regime.³¹

Smoloskyp disseminated Ukrainian *samizdat* and information on Ukrainian dissident activities, and their range was not limited to the West. Their aim also was to make the case of the Ukrainian opposition widely known in the Soviet Union itself. They broadcasted dissident writings and news from the Ukrainian underground, reaching Soviet listeners through Radio Liberty and Voice of America. They published miniature books with dissident writings and smuggled them back to Ukraine. Later, in the late-1970s, Smoloksyyp organized an open campaign to send the bulletin, "*Obloga*," which contained *samizdat* reprints, to the Soviet Union. Published in a pocket-size format and packed in different envelopes with postage stamps from different countries, journals were posted to dozens of addresses in the Soviet Union, including Soviet writers, artists, scientists, and even Party officials.³² At some point, Smoloksyyp activists were even preparing to secretly ship their publications to the Soviet Union in canisters through the Black and Baltic seas: "We need to learn the waves, streams, and the wind, and how to pack and to choose shipping points," Zinkevych wrote in his diary in 1974.³³

31 Zinkevych, *Rukh Oporu*, 249.

32 Zinkevych, *pislyamova*, 236–37.

33 Zinkevych, *Shchodennyk*, 250.

Kyiv period

In 1991–1992, when Ukraine declared its independence, Zinkevych and his Smoloskyp moved to Kyiv.³⁴ While thousands of *samizdat* manuscripts and other documents of the Ukrainian dissident movement were packed in boxes and stored in Zinkevych's apartment, the idea arrived to establish a museum-archive where these collections could be openly displayed. Nowadays, the Museum-Archive and Documentation Centre of Ukrainian Samvydav in Kyiv holds the most extensive collection of Ukrainian *samizdat*, diasporic Ukrainian periodicals, as well as hundreds of photos of Soviet-era political prisoners and dissidents, and the archives of several committees for human rights in Ukraine from the US, Canada, Australia, Argentina, and other countries. The collection holds Smoloskyp correspondence with international human rights organizations. Smoloskyp's financial documentation is also available for readers.

In 2004, the Museum-Archive joined the International Samizdat Research Association, an informal network of over twenty research institutions and archives, studying and preserving *samizdat* collections. In order to make its collection as readily available as possible to international scholarships and a general audience, the Museum-Archive organized a number of national and international exhibitions of Ukrainian *samizdat*.

Similar to its diasporic period, Smoloskyp in Kyiv was embedded into the political texture of transitional Ukraine. Its main bulletin, *Smoloskyp Ukrainy*, and the informational bulletin of the Museum-Archive, *Ukrains'ky Samvydav*, covered the Orange Revolution events and expressed the fullest sympathy to the Euromaidan movement. The collection was politicized too, as its curators re-conceptualized the legacy of the Soviet-era dissident movement in the context of present-day transitional Ukraine. Widely citing dissident writers and *samizdat* masterpieces from the collection, Smoloskyp activists represented contemporary political protests in Ukraine as an extension of the Ukrainian liberation movement in the late-Soviet period. They promoted the legacy of Ukrainian human rights activists, political prisoners and dissidents of the 1960s–1990s and their historical contribution to Ukraine's fight for democracy. The Museum-Archive also became a platform for intergenerational dialogue. It organizes annual seminars and meeting-conferences, where Ukrainian creative youth meet former political prisoners, *shestydesiatnyky*, and activists of *Rukh Oporu* to discuss the history of Ukrainian dissent movements and their political and cultural implications for present-day Ukraine.

Smoloskyp is an active collection. It periodically adds new documents to its collections that are related to the Soviet-era Ukrainian human rights movement and *Rukh Oporu*. Such documents are acquired by the Museum-Archive as a result of its various search campaigns. Smoloskyp continuously enriches

34 Mykolayenko, "Ukrains'kyi period"; Woronowycz, "Smoloskyp Publishing House," 12.

its collections by attracting and publishing contemporary young Ukrainian writers, poets, publicists, and historians. Smoloskyp has founded a charitable foundation and undertakes fundraising campaigns within the Ukrainian diaspora to support a young generation of Ukrainian writers. From collecting documents and writings of the Ukrainian executed Renaissance of the 1920-30s, publishing *shestydesiatnyky* literature, collecting documents pertaining to the Ukrainian oppositional movement of the 1970s-80s, towards publishing contemporary young Ukrainian authors, Smoloskyp has united generations of writers and artists, and produces the history of Ukrainian cultural non-conformism.

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