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Samizdat Collection

1955-1983

12 boxes (6 linear ft.)

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In the mid-1970s, the Center for the Study of New Russian Literature in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at UMass Amherst began collecting the self-published and underground literature of the Soviet Union as a means of documenting social and political dissent in the Communist state.

The Samizdat collection includes writings in several genres -- chiefly fiction, poetry, drama, and literary, social, and political criticism -- in handwritten, photocopied, and printed form, as well as photos, a passport application for Mikhail Baryshnikov, and memorabilia from an American production of one of the plays in the collection.

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Background

With the formal publishing houses and mimeograph and xerographic machines controlled by the state in the Soviet Union, dissident literature circulated in manuscript form, copied over and over by hand or typewriter. Despite these difficulties, samizdat (literally self-published) writing flourished in the 1970s and 1980s and exerted a significant cultural and political influence. Although individual works migrated to the west, often with the exiled writers themselves, very little was ever formally published due to the relatively limited market and low potential for profit.

In the mid-1970s, the Center for the Study of New Russian Literature in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at UMass Amherst began collecting samizdat to document political and social dissent in the Soviet Union. Laszlo M. Tikos, Head of the Department, established the Center both to create an archive of the New Russian literature and a place for its systematic study.

Scope of collection

Writings by Russian dissident authors in many genres (chiefly fiction, poetry, drama, and literary, social, and political criticism) in handwritten, photocopied, and printed form (printed versions were made in the United States, West Germany, Spain and Argentina), all unpublished in the Soviet Union; also photos, a passport application for Mikhail Baryshnikov, and memorabilia from an American production of one of the plays in the collection.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into four series:

Series 1. Literature

Series 2. Literary Criticism

Series 3. Social and Political Criticism in Current Events

Series 4. Bibliography

Inventory

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Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Laszlo Tikos, 1975 and later.

Related Material

See also the Basia Jakubowska-Schlatner Solidarity Collection and the Michael Bernhard Solidarity Collection (MS 575) for Polish underground literature.

Processing Information

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Search terms

Subjects

Underground literature--Soviet Union.

Writers--Soviet Union.

Contributors

Dremluga, Vladimir.

Khudiakov, Genrikh.
Kuklovskaia, Elizaveta.
Mamleev, Yuri.
Monastyrskii, Andrei.
Len, Vladislav.
Mamonova, Tatyana.
Miroliubov, Yuri.
Suslov, Aleksandr.

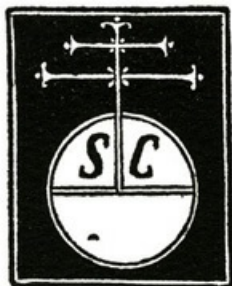
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