



Collection of *Samizdat* books from Dmitry Yunak's private archive.

Photo courtesy of D.O. Yanak.

Russian Adventist "Samizdat" Literature

DMITRY O. YUNAK

Dmitry O. Yunak graduated in Finance and Economics from a Soviet secular educational institution and completed a six-year course of Theology at an underground SDA Theological Institute (Moldova, USSR). In the Soviet times, he served as a pastor, administrator, and bible/history professor in the underground Theological Institute. In 1990, he was appointed as Treasurer and Publishing Ministries Director for the USSR Division. After the Euro-Asia Division was organized in 1991, Dmitry O. Yunak served as ESD auditor and under treasurer. He was the author of a dozen of SDA history books and scores of other publications. He owns a major SDA history archive.

What is *Samizdat*?

The term *Samizdat* is used as a symbol for the word seeking its readers, not through the route set up by the state, but in a roundabout way. It would be wrong to say that *Samizdat* was something new in Russia. Historians

assert that, even in the 18th century, the literature works censored by the state were copied in handwriting and then distributed. In the 19th century, leaflets and proclamations were published through *Samizdat*. For most of the 20th century, *Samizdat* also existed, but there were only isolated cases rather than a common practice.

The word *Samizdat* was introduced by the poet Nikolay Glazkov, who could not get permission to publish his poems, so he started printing them on his own. He marked his books with the word *samsebyaizdat* (self-published). Over time, the part *sebya* disappeared from the word, creating a term that was never translated into other languages but was still understood all over the world.

In the mid-1950s, *Samizdat* focused on copying the books of the Silver Age poets, authors of the beginning of the 20th century who were no longer published in the Soviet Union. Apart from this, many outstanding literature writings were first distributed as *Samizdat* copies. They included “Dr. Zhivago” by Boris Pasternak, “The GULAG Archipelago”, “The Cancer Ward”, and “The First Circle” by Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, “The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin” by Vladimir Voynovich, as well as poems by Iosif Brodsky, Osip Mandelstam, and Alexandr Galich, etc. Through *Samizdat*, media audio-taped texts of Alexandr Galich, Vladimir Vysotsky, Bulat Okudzhava, Yuliy Kim, and emigrant poets were distributed. This phenomenon was often called *magnitizdat*. The word *tamizdat* (“published there”) was often used along with the word *Samizdat*, sometimes as an antithesis. *Tamizdat* was a word for banned books and magazines published “there”, i.e. abroad.¹ Among Soviet Adventists, *Samizdat* was used since most of their religious works were not allowed to appear in print.

First Soviet *Samizdat* Books

One of the extant Adventist *Samizdat* typewritten books of the early 20th century is “The Great Adventist Movement and Seventh-day Adventists in Russia” by Heinrich J. Löbsack. This book was written in 1918 in Kiev in the German language and translated into Russian, also in Kiev, by V.I.A. (the full name of the translator was never discovered) in May 1920. Due to paper shortage and obstacles created by authorities, the book was never printed in a publishing house and remained a typewritten *Samizdat* book over the decades.

In 1929, the publication of the *Golos Istiny* (“The Voice of Truth”) magazine was stopped, and the repressions against believers intensified. Pastor Stepan P. Kulyzhskiy later recalled: “In February 1929, the ‘Komsomolskaya Pravda’ newspaper inserted a picture presenting the covers of all religious magazines printed by Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Adventists, and others, with a comment: “When the Entente was sending missiles to suppress the revolution in Russia, English workers refused to load them because all of it was targeted against their brothers in labor. Would it be fair for our print workers to create and print religious literature designed to confuse all workers?” As a result of this call, printing of all religious magazines and newspapers ceased that same year.²

Samizdat in 1950-1970s

In the 1930s, many Adventist ministers and lay members were arrested. In addition, their books, magazines, photographs, and manuscripts were confiscated. The reason for this was to control, to every extent possible, the books that church members who remained free still had. At that time, there was a severe shortage of printing equipment, hence church members started copying books in handwriting. Sometimes copying one book took two to three months. After World War II, they copied in handwriting the morning devotionals, Sabbath School lessons, and prayer week devotionals as well. The choice of the copied materials was determined by a desire to print something that could unite believers with their brethren all over the world.

The 1960 to 1970s was the “Golden Age” of *Samizdat* in the USSR. The problem turned out to be so great that the KGB Chief Yuriy Andropov mentioned it in his report. *Samizdat* producers and distributors were sought and arrested which made it necessary to take every precaution possible. Nevertheless, the religious literature banned by the government could not stay on the sidelines of *Samizdat*. Even at the time of the severest persecutions, Adventists sought an opportunity to read the Bible, study Sabbath school lessons, and reflect on morning devotionals.

Typewriters had already been found widespread since the 1950s. Of course, they had to be registered, and purchasing typewriters was a serious and controlled matter. Anyway, many typewriters were bought and delivered to homes of Adventists.

As Pastor Anatoly Dyman’ recalls, “buying and delivering typewriters was strictly controlled. Every typewriter owner had to answer the questions: ‘Do you have permission to buy a typewriter? Have you registered it with the police? What kind of materials are you typing?’ Our brethren often used cases for musical instruments (accordions, button accordions) to transport typewriters.”⁸

The lack of literature, especially the Spirit of Prophecy books, forced Adventist ministers to produce *Samizdat* editions. They worked regularly, copying books in handwriting. Similarly, choir directors copied musical scores, including the “Psalms of Zion” collection. Lay members made notes from sermons to distribute among those who could not attend worship services and among their unbelieving relatives.

After a short time, a demand arose for producing a larger number of copies to meet the needs of church members. Adventists started using photocopying machines and typewriters. The typewriters were initially old ones, captured from occupied Germany, like Underwood, Olympia, or Continental. They had the metal-rimmed keys. A typist had to hit the keys with force to “type through” 10 to 12 or even 14 sheets of thin paper, interleaved with carbon paper that not always was sufficiently thin. The metal rims left deep marks under the nails of typists, causing a sharp pain they remembered long afterwards.

During a working day (which often was a night), an experienced typist could type 30 to 40 or even more pages, and during a month of dangerous, risky, labor-intensive work under the conditions of total spying and squealing, a typist was able to print an entire book like *Patriarchs and Prophets* or *Desire of Ages* with a total of 1,100-1,200 typewritten pages. Whenever done, all the pages were sorted into 10-12 piles to be given over to a

bookbinder who turned them into beautiful books. Thus, before long, every minister could gather an ample collection of the typewritten Samizdat Adventist books.

After the Soviet authorities dissolved the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists, a minister was assigned in every geographic region to be responsible for printing and distribution of Samizdat literature. This work was coordinated in eastern Ukraine by brothers V. I. Prolinskiy and A. G. Katsel, in Central Asia by Pastor K. A. Korolenko and later by Pastor M.P. Kulakov, in Krasnodar by Brother A. F. Stele, in Moldova by Pastor I. A. Gumenyuk and other ministers.

With time, it was not required to register typewriters with the police any longer. On top of that, new imported and domestic typewriters, and even electrically operated ones, came into use. Our members also used xerographic copiers, offset duplicators, blueprint copiers, and other multiplying equipment. When replicating printed materials, photo equipment was often used as well. In doing this, each page was initially typed on a typewriter, then photographed and printed as an ordinary picture. In such a way, they could fit a quarterly Sabbath School Lesson on standard-size photographs. All this was certainly attended with high risk because *Samizdat* production of banned religious literature was punishable to the full extent of the law.

In the latter half of the 1970s, Ukrainian Adventists managed to assemble and use homemade printing presses. As remembered by N. A. Zhukalyuk, "Andrey, a son of S. Smyk, and S. Smyk's son-in-law Svyatoslav Negrich... supported by a highly-skilled technician Ludwig Lemeschek, who was a faithful Christian, assembled the first printing press, which they used to print a large number of copies of E. G. White's 'Steps to Christ' and then went ahead with printing her major work 'Adventist Home'. The second printing press, that was also based on the principle of hand typesetting, was manufactured by brothers Bogdan and Oleg Kochmar. That press was a battery-operated machine worked by a car starter."⁴ In the Soviet Union, there were several autonomous Samizdat centers in Siberia, Kiev, Moldova, and Central Asia.

The Samizdat books typed by wives of ministers were usually not sold, but exchanged for other books brought by church members. In this way, a minister could get, within a month, a dozen new books for his home library. Those were valuable guides for ministers in their self-education and evangelistic ministry. Ministers could also share their knowledge with lay members by organizing book reading events.

It is hardly possible to list the names of all typists because almost every wife or relative of a church minister was typing books on typewriters while photographers were copying periodicals and even the books of the Spirit of Prophecy. The bookbinders, whose number in the country was several dozens, were responsible for giving the books their final shape.

As remembered by N. A. Zhukalyuk, "when forming a group of typists in Lvov, I had to be aware of clandestine security. For this reason I assigned tasks only to those who could keep secrets. I also had to pay attention to reliability and loyalty of family members. In this regard some of our sisters used various excuses to keep the

truth away even from their relatives. Sometimes they left their homes to type the books in the houses where loyal Adventists lived. It was quite often that an unnoticeable house of a single old woman, which did not attract attention of the law-enforcement agencies, was turned into a branch office of our humble publishing house. Most of the girls knew only their supervisor and possibly one or two colleagues so that if they had been nailed very few people would have been involved in a judicial enquiry.⁵

Translation of *Samizdat* literature

Translators made a great contribution to the development of Adventist *Samizdat*. Most of Ellen G. White's books were translated by Nadezhda A. Parasey. She translated over 12,000 pages of the Spirit of Prophecy writings. On February 4, 1974, after finishing translation of the third volume of the *Testimony Treasures*, she wrote on the 22nd day of fasting (she had totally refused any food and had been drinking only water) in her diary: "Glory to You, my dear Heavenly Father, that you heard my prayer and helped me in such a wonderful way to work 10-15 hours a day, to finish this great work."⁶

Zhukalyuk recounts: "Nadezhda Parasey, an exceptionally hard-working, deeply believing, a loving mother of two children, a loyal wife of a pastor and church administrator Aleksander F. Parasey, could find time for such a great work as translation of major books by Ellen G. White from English... To be sure, God made her a tool of the Holy Spirit to bring an opportunity to read major books of the Spirit of Prophecy to the people of the Soviet Union."⁷

"There were other translators who were secretly performing their lofty mission. Some of them remained unknown. Among those who made the most significant contribution to literature ministry as translators, we should mention the indefatigable Alya Shtabinskaya... A tremendous job, especially in translating children's books, was done by Valeriy Ivanov, Nadezhda Gonchar (a daughter of Pavel Matsanov), Lidiya G. Yakusheva (Vera Chipchar's grandmother), and many others...

"In Bukovina, Pastor Leon Belinskiy formed a group of translators from Romanian language. Aleksander Parasey was also translating Adventist literature from Romanian. In Transcarpathia Pastor Ivan Himinets headed a clandestine group of translators from Czech and Hungarian languages."⁸

In Lvov and Volynia, Nikolay Zhukalyuk was translating "The Adventist Home" by Ellen G. White from Polish. Later Olga Pervanchuk, Galina Gritsyuk, Anya Sirenko, and Leonid Drach joined this work.

Pyotr L. Burylo was translating Samizdat materials into Ukrainian. In Moldova, Vasiliy S. Pirozhok was translating books into Romanian, and the book *Counsels on Diet and Foods* by Ellen G. White was translated by Pavel Ocherednyy with his translation being checked by N. A. Parasey and corrected by I. F. Parashchuk.

According to P. I. Mikityuk, the translators who worked with Anatoliy Dyman' were Vladimir Tkachuk (from the city of Chernovtsy); P. A. Baydala, and Isak L. Kleymanis - translators from English; Vasiliy Makiyevets and Dmitriy

S. Lukashenko (from Belarus) – translators from Polish; and Konstantin Kvaskov - translator from German and English.

Translators who worked for Pavel A. Matsanov and the Siberian field (they also took orders from N. A. Zhukalyuk and A. A. Dyman') were Veniamin A. Mironov from Ukraine, Valeriy I. Ivanov from Moscow, Alevtina Shtabinskaya from North Caucasus, and Nadezhda P. Gonchar.

Heikki Silvet was translating from English in Estonia, and L. Sudareva - in Central Asia. P. D. Kostomskiy was translating from Romanian in Ukraine, A. M. Demidov from English and M. P. Kulakov from English and German in Russia. The book "Between Time and Eternity (Zwischen Zeit und Ewigkeit) by Hans Heinz was translated from German into Russian. It was widely distributed by Russian Germans in Central Asia.

Jailed for Books

There were certainly cases when believers were jailed for organizing the publishing work. In 1963 in Irkutsk, a group of five Adventists was arrested and convicted including V. L. Zakharyants and M. P. Belyakova, who were sentenced to three and two years of imprisonment respectively. The verdict said: "V. L. Zakharyants purchased a typewriter and a tape recorder and, with an active assistance of M. P. Belyakova, organized copying and distribution of Adventist literature among his fellow believers. As a result of the mentioned religious propaganda, fifteen members of the sect did not appear at work on Saturdays, thus causing harm to the national economy. Three schoolchildren from a sectarian family did not attend school on Saturday..." A year and eight months later, the sentence was revised by the Judicial Chamber on Criminal Cases of the Supreme Court of the RSFSR and vacated due to a lack of evidence.⁹

In 1970 in Siberia, Mikhail and Antonina Zozulins and Raisa Prilutskaya were sentenced to different terms of imprisonment. In 1971 in Central Asia, Nikolay N. Libenko was jailed for Samizdat printing of a church magazine. Nikolay A. Zhukalyuk and L. A. Polishchuk were arrested in 1973 in Lvov for illegal literature activities and sentenced to two years of imprisonment each.

Pastor Pavel T. Reus received the same sentence for assembling a printing press and copying the "Steps to Christ" by Ellen G. White in Ukraine. He was arrested when he had the last two pages of the book to print. In 1979, S. M. Kravets was sentenced to three years of imprisonment for distributing Adventist books.

On August 27, 1981, the court of the city of Nezhin sentenced Pavel I. Mikityuk to six years of strict-security camps and confiscation of property for literature activities. Along with him, A. A. Baydala was sentenced to five years and V. S. Sulzhenko to four years of imprisonment. On May 14, 1992, their case was revised by the Presidium of the Chernigov Regional Court, and all convicts were rehabilitated due to a lack of evidence.

Many Adventist ministers and lay members were involved in *Samizdat* activities. They begrudged neither health nor energy for giving spiritual food to the people in need. From the beginning of perestroika in 1985 and

adoption of several laws promoting religious freedom, the *Samizdat* literature obtained a wide circulation. After a short space, in 1991, the Seventh-day Adventists in the USSR obtained permission for establishing their own Source of Life Publishing House in Zaoksky, and after that, the book market was filled with Adventist literature printed typographically.

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NOTES

1. See http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/ruwiki/33514#cite_note-2.

2. S. P. Kulyzhskiy, *Moi vospominaniya*. Typescript, 17. Personal Archives of D. O. Yunak.

3. A. Dyman', "Samizdat vnyos svoj vklad," *Adventistskiy Vestnik*, no. 2 (February 2002): 11.

4. N. A. Zhukalyuk, *Kriz' buri, shtormy, lykholittya* (Kiev-Lvov: Djerelo Zhyttia, 2009), 326, 366.

5. N. A. Zhukalyuk, *Cherez krutye perevaly* (Zaokskiy: Istochnik Zhizni, 2002), 231.

6. Irina Bolotnikova, *Dragotsennyye stranitsy v istorii Adventistskoy Tserkvi v Sovetskom Soyuze*. Personal Archives of D. O. Yunak.

7. N. A. Zhukalyuk, *Cherez krutye perevaly* (Zaokskiy: Istochnik Zhizni, 2002), 220.

8. Ibid., 220–223.

9. Extract from judgment in the case of V. L. Zakharyants. Personal Archives of D. O. Yunak.

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