

Index on Censorship: How George Orwell's Banned Novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, was Received behind the Iron Curtain

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Introduction

Index on Censorship (hereafter, *IoC*) is an English-language quarterly journal for the dissemination of free speech, published in London since 1972 by a non-profit organisation of the same name.¹ Over the past fifty years, the magazine has brought to the world's attention instances in countries and regions around the world where freedom of speech has been violated, and has launched campaigns and debates to alleviate such situations. Although the 1970s saw a period of *détente* when tension between the East and West eased, this did not necessarily suggest that East European authorities relaxed their oppression of citizens. Towards the 1980s, moreover, the Brezhnev regime was tightening restrictions in the Soviet Union, a move followed, and in some cases amplified by, regimes in its satellite countries. In line with this, all kinds of artistic and creative products were censored, and freedom of speech was severely restricted. Against this backdrop, 'samizdat' (unofficial) literature that escaped government censorship, began to flourish among those who disagreed with the authoritarian government.

By using the *IoC* to examine the reception of one of the most censored books in the Eastern Bloc, the banned British writer George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this article shows how literature, a perfect vehicle for the distribution of anti-regime material, gives valuable insight into life behind the 'Iron Curtain', revealing to people the oppression that they were living under, and helping to construct an 'imagined community' for the overthrow of the regime. As the *IoC* regularly and comprehensively reports on the state of restrictions and repression of speech in various countries, it is possible to see how *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was reproduced as samizdat, mainly in underground organisations, how it was suppressed by the authorities, and the impact it had on its readership.

Speech Restrictions

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) were both banned for a long time in the Eastern Bloc, including in the Soviet Union², Poland (see, Barańczak), Czechoslovakia (see, Vladislav) and Hungary (see, Short). The *IoC* has reported regularly on the situation of people considered dissidents, and who have been punished for owning or distributing banned books. For example, at the International Book Fair held in Moscow in September 1979, forty banned books exhibited by American and British publishers were confiscated by the authorities. They included works by Adolf Hitler and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, as well as Orwell's *Animal Farm* and his *Critical Essays*.³ Even if it was not a death sentence to interact with such books as it proved in Iraq⁴, the report describes cases where people were imprisoned, fined or forced out of their jobs, if the authorities discovered that they had published or translated banned books in Soviet and East European countries.

In an interview with Tomas Venclova (1937-), a Lithuanian-born professor who left the Soviet Union in 1977, he talks about his own writing activities, which were restricted by Soviet rule. As a well-known multilingual translator and accomplished author in his own right, he always feared censorship of his work. The activity of translation was highly restricted until 1955, and only Russian authors were allowed to translate. After that time, however, as long as the work was not on the 'black list', translations of writers such as Shakespeare and Goethe were allowed, a change in policy which reflected the translators' enthusiastic appeals. However, the contents of the 'black list' were unknown even to the officer of the editorial offices of a government-accredited magazine, but it was possible to guess. If it was the work of an exile, it would not only be untranslatable, but also punishable. According to Venclova, 'Those who were Communist, or on the left, who became disillusioned with Communism and expressed that disillusionment – such as André Gide, André Malraux, Arthur Koestler, George Orwell, André Breton, Ignazio Silone – are also inaccessible' (Venclova, p. 12). Other modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf, Franz Kafka, Marcel Proust and James Joyce were considered 'abstractionists' by the authorities and were not allowed to be translated. In addition to political taboos, there were also moral taboos, with the work of writers such as Arthur Miller and D. H. Lawrence restricted on the grounds of their sexually explicit material, already controversial in the West, as well as *avant-garde* and right-wing writers, who were the subject of translation embargoes (see, Venclova).

Meanwhile, in Czechoslovakia, authorities had tightened restrictions on speech

since 1970, and there was growing repression of those with ideas opposed to the prevailing political system and their families. Czechoslovak historian Vilém Prečan (1933-), who emigrated to Germany in 1976⁵, once experienced his own house being raided and had dissident documents and literature, as well as literature of Western politicians, thinkers and writers including Orwell, confiscated by the secret police STB (see, Hora and David). Prečan also shows how the authorities carefully monitored the political beliefs and behaviour of dissidents for many years, citing cases where children of suspected dissidents were prevented from entering higher education institutions. In this sense, the 'web of police surveillance' was everywhere and so deeply-rooted that 'This is by far the most effective and widely exercised means of manipulating citizens and influencing their attitudes and behaviour – exceeding even the imagination of the far-sighted George Orwell' (Hora and David, p. 50).

Publishing Journals under Gag Rule

In this socio-political context, in Czechoslovakia, the magazine *150,000 slov* (*150,000 Words*) was published in 1981. Issued three times a year, it bore the cryptic subtitle 'Texts from somewhere else'. As the title suggests, it published 150,000 words, including by famous figures such as George F. Kennan, Czesław Miłosz and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. The magazine also included a literary supplement in each issue in which Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* appeared in complete translation (see, Kyncl, 1984).

In Poland, the *IoC* for July 1977 reported the publication of a magazine called *Zapis* (meaning 'listed') in March of the same year (see, Barańczak). Published in secret in Warsaw, the magazine published seventeen novels, poems and essays by leading Polish writers (including Jerzy Andrzejewski, Kazimierz Brandys and Antoni Slonimski) that were banned by the authorities. In Poland, while not as extreme as the resistance movement of October 1956, violent civil opposition in December 1970 led to the ouster of the Gomułka government. This was accompanied by a cultural revival, and a certain 'thaw' could be felt in the early 1970s. On the other hand, following economic stagnation after the change of government, the new government gradually imposed more restrictions on civil society. In this context, even though regulations were not as strict as in Czechoslovakia, the publication of banned books on such a large scale was still a rather bold move.

In fact, editors of publishing houses were responsible for self-censorship, and often

lost their jobs when they were found to have published works that fell outside the views of the authorities. However, it was authors who received the most severe treatment. For example, according to Stanisław Barańczak (1946-), poet, critic and the founder of *Zapis* magazine, when the essayist, translator and historian of Polish and Russian literature, Ryszard Przybylski (1928-2016) published an essay on Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* in 1972, he was banned from publishing his own work for many years thereafter. Notably, it was Przybylski who was punished, not the censor who had given permission for the publication. After that, for authors in general, it was even more difficult to find subjects to write about, and Barańczak's sense was that 'we are in a situation in which one-third of all writers in Poland are gagged, one-third come under pressure from the censorship whenever they dare to write the truth, and the remaining third know the truth but do not write it' (Barańczak, p. 10). *Zapis* was created to overcome this situation.

Use of 'Samizdat' and Repression by the Authorities

Both *150,000 slov* and *Zapis* were considered 'samizdat magazines', which were published in secret, to avoid government censorship. 'Samizdat' means, 'The clandestine or illegal copying and distribution of literature (originally in the Soviet Union); an 'underground press'; a text or texts produced by this. Also *transferred* and *attributed* or as *adj. in samizdat*, in this form of publication' (*OED*), which began to spread in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the late 1960s. The term is often used to refer exclusively to typewritten documents, but it can also refer to documents circulated as handwritten manuscripts, as in the case described below, or, as printing technology gradually evolved, to 'printing' such as the magazines mentioned above, which were published (illegally) without being reviewed by the authorities.

It is reasonable to assume, that samizdat-like 'activities' took place before the foundation of the term itself. In Czechoslovakia, for example, there was a *coup d'état* in February 1948, which brought the Communist Party to power. This established the Cold War system between East and West. Although Soviet dominance was increasing in the 1950s, and repression was taking place in various parts of Eastern Europe, protests had already begun in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, partly fuelled by nefarious literature. In the wake of the 'thaw' that followed the death of Stalin (1879-1953), writers and intellectuals made statements against censorship at the Writers' Congress in 1956 (see, Vladislav). Literature (literary media culture) was very important and useful for counter-establishment activities. Unlike film and theatre productions which are large and require

a great deal of equipment and manpower, to create and reproduce literature only requires a typewriter and paper, as Vladislav describes: 'Literature plays such an important role because, purely for technical reasons, it is easy to produce. All you need is a typewriter, paper and some carbons, and you're in business' (p. 33). It is, therefore, not hard to imagine that the authorities were particularly wary of the spread of literature. In 1948, the Communist regime dismantled the Writers' Union and began to put pressure on writers. In the 1950s, as many as forty domestic writers were rounded up, while Baudelaire, Dostoyevsky, Rilke, Babel, Kafka and Orwell were also banned from publication, thus creating a situation where, 'All these became part of the samizdat network of unofficial literature in the 1950s' (Vladislav, pp. 33-34). While it is generally accepted that samizdat did not become widespread until the late 1960s onwards, this reference confirms that Orwell and other writers were incorporated into 'the samizdat network' as soon as the banned book designation was made. From then onwards, those involved in the publication of banned books did so with great conviction and a sense of mission. Jan Vladislav (1923-2009), a Czechoslovakian poet who was involved in such underground publishing for many years, wrote: 'I believe it was something I had to do. It was one way of preventing the Czech nation from being robbed of its identity and having an alien identity substituted instead. That I thought was very important, and I still do' (Vladislav, p. 35).

In the 1980s, technological advances led to an explosion of underground publishers, the so-called 'samizdat publishers', who were able to publish large numbers of printed works that were not handwritten or typed manuscripts. Founded in December 1981, Hungary's AB Independent Publishers (hereafter, AB)⁶ was publishing the works of Hungarian authors and writers and UN reports in a well-developed environment a little over a year after its foundation. Wanting to translate and publish the works of writers from neighbouring countries outside Hungary, the company published the samizdat magazine *Máshonnan-Beszélő* ('Speech from Elsewhere') in 1985 (see, Short).

The number of samizdat publishers continued to grow in Hungary. The most important political publisher was the aforementioned AB, and subsequently, ABC was established separately from AB. There were also others such as Free Time and M.O. ('Hungarian October').⁷ Thus, the first Hungarian translation of Orwell's *Animal Farm* was published by AB and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by M.O.; AB also published a novel *1985* by Hungarian writer and historian Gyorgy Dalos (1943-).⁸ It depicts the 'aftermath' experienced by the main characters in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and is in a sense a ludicrous story in which the protagonist, who was supposed to have been executed for treason by the Party, actually survived, and Big Brother was captured and met a tragic end.

Incidentally, at almost the same time, Free Time published Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (see, Short).

According to László Rajk, an AB publisher, 1,000 to 2,000 copies of their publications were usually printed, but would have been read by at least five times this number as copies were passed from hand to hand. They also fed their publications to Radio Free Europe (officially, 'Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty'), a broadcasting organisation supporting free-media, which usually read out 'nearly all the books in their entirety' (Short, p. 53). However, it goes without saying that the risks of publishing were also very high. There was strong pressure from the authorities, and salaries for these underground publishers were very low. László Rajk responded as follows:

The way the authorities treat us is not to be compared with, for instance, Poland, Rumania or Czechoslovakia. But one should never forget the overall picture. In relation to the good economic situation in Hungary, the harassment is strong. With few exceptions it is not spectacular, just a kind of persistent harassment like losing jobs, not getting passports, and so on. I think I am the only one from the opposition who has a job with a state firm. But I am in the lowest possible salary category, which is not enough to live on. (Short, p. 53)

Rajk stated that in recent years he had found the laws were increasingly applied by the authorities and, if not imprisoned, anybody could be fined and have their house and private car ransacked.

Of course, in other countries, a number of cases of imprisonment among writers who worked on or contributed to samizdat publications occurred. For example, in December 1983, a Latvian human rights activist, Gunnars [Gunārs] Astra (1931-1988), was 'sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment and exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" after he had circulated a samizdat copy of *1984*.⁹ In April 1986, in Czechoslovakia, 44-year-old lumberjack and amateur writer, Jaroslav Švestka (1942-)¹⁰, was sentenced to two years in prison followed by 'protective surveillance' for three years, because he sent part of his manuscript titled 'The Year of Orwell'¹¹, in which 'he had compared the real situation in Czechoslovakia with George Orwell's dystopia'¹², to a friend in West Germany, but it was 'intercepted by the authorities and never reached the addressee'.¹³ Orwell's novel seems to have had a great impact not just on this lumberjack, but also on Bohumil Rudolecký, a Czechoslovakian political activist. The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights in Vienna, published a list of cases featuring

thirteen political prisoners incarcerated in Czechoslovakia, in which Rudolecký's case is described: he 'has been in prison since the beginning of 1985, and was sentenced to five years in prison on "subversion" charges for copying books (including George Orwell's *1984*)...' ¹⁴ From these examples, it may be inferred that at considerable personal risk both men, Švestka and Rudolecký, made great efforts to increase the number of readers of subversive literature, and to let them know the real character of their totalitarian regime.

In this context, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* continued to be read by those who managed to escape detection by the authorities. In Hungary, Gábor Demszky, publisher of the aforementioned samizdat publishing house AB, separated his readers into two groups. One contained the younger generation, such as students and recent university graduates. They could be whimsical and liable to change their minds, as some considered reading samizdat and activities such as evading the authorities as fashionable. On the other hand, the other group comprised the older generation, mostly born in the 1920s, who experienced the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, and who were the most serious readers. Demszky affirms: 'This group is not satisfied with official propaganda and information. They were the main ones to buy Orwell and Koestler...' (Short, p. 53).

Samizdat literature was not only typed and printed. In some limited cases, handwritten manuscripts were also made. The historian Helen Womack, author of *The Ice Walk: Surviving the Soviet Break-up and the New Russia* (2013), describes an interesting episode from her visit to Moscow in 1985:

I particularly remember one evening, when they showed me a samizdat (self-published) copy of George Orwell's *1984*. It wasn't even typed but written out by hand in a school exercise book. The 'publisher', who risked jail for his work, had illustrated the dystopian novel with maps of Eastasia, Eurasia and Oceania. Readers could borrow the book for one night before they were expected to pass it on. (Wormack, p. 34)

This case occurred in the middle of the 1980s. Although it is possible that the Soviet regime was so strict that underground publishers were struggling to prevail, as mentioned above, in the 1980s, several samizdat publishing houses had already been established in Eastern European countries, and their works were being mass-produced with a circulation that exceeded that of typewritten copies. This is an interesting contrast.

Indeed, authorities were well aware of the 'danger' posed by *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It was reviewed in the Soviet Union in early 1984, even though most citizens were unaware

of its existence. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, a Soviet newspaper for Communist youth, noted that the world described by Orwell resembled modern Britain.¹⁵ A Soviet news agency also reported that the world Orwell described depicted the United States of America, and named then-President Ronald Reagan as Big Brother. Does this mean that this was used as a means of bringing about a renewed awareness of the West among the general public, on the assumption that they had not read the work themselves? Unlike Wormack's perception, Venclova, a multilingual translator from Lithuania, responded to these reports by the Soviet authorities sarcastically, 'That novel is completely inaccessible to Soviet readers. And, of course, if they could read it, they would see it bears far more relation to the Soviet Union than to America' (Venclova, p. 12). There can be little doubt that the authorities were aware of the reaction to this book in Western Europe. On the other hand, it is not clear whether they based their comments on knowledge of how successfully the banned book was actually circulating as samizdat in Soviet society. According to Venclova, Orwell the author was better known to the general public in Russia [than in Lithuania], but little was known about the content of his actual works. Commenting in the August 1984 issue of *IoC*, he believed that they would not be translated in the future and not widely available for a long time. Interestingly, his concern was what he perceived as the growing gap between the elite and the general public in Soviet society in terms of access to books:

There is an elite to whom more or less everything is available — villas, swimming pools, cars (sometimes even Mercedes), trips abroad, very high quality cultural events — which the average person will never have access to. Now also books. (Venclova, p. 13)

This description is reminiscent of *Animal Farm*. In the (supposedly) Communist Soviet Union, the gap between rich and poor was widening just as the pigs' status in the story gradually rises and they live as comfortably as humans on Animal Farm, while other animals continue to be exploited. The lack of access to books, the 'fountain of knowledge' as it were in the real world, also echoes Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in which the introduction of 'Newspeak' increasingly reduces the range of the citizen's vocabulary. The restriction of reading, in other words, means the suppression of ideas.

The Impact of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* on Intellectuals

How did intellectuals satisfy their intellectual needs in this context? The answer is complex, but may be approached by looking at four intellectuals who, for one reason or another, acquired a copy of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and were inspired by it. The aforementioned, multilingual translator, Venclova stated in an interview that he read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in Moscow in 1962 or 1963, when he was in the Soviet Union:

This book made perhaps the greatest impact on my life. That I am here [the United States] and not there [the Soviet Union] — for this I am grateful to Orwell. He was the first to explain to me that a normal person cannot live in that society. I repeated the story to other people, those who could not read it themselves, who had no access to a copy, or who spoke no English. (Venclova, p. 12)

Evidently, for Venclova, reading *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was an important moment in his intellectual development and political orientation. Not only did it make him aware of the reality of Communist rule, but also he was energised and managed to convey the seriousness of the situation to those who could not actually read the book.

Secondly, Jan Trefulka (1929-2012), a Czechoslovak novelist, literary critic and screenwriter, worked for the Moravian literary magazine *Host do domu* (*House Guest*) in the eastern Czech Republic, but his publishing activities were suspended by the authorities. He remained in his home country, publishing his work exclusively in samizdat. What he tried to express was the circumstances of his oppression through the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:

Orwell's vision of *1984* shows the world as it might have been had Stalin lived to a hundred and had the Western democracies changed into right-wing terrorist dictatorships under pressure from left-wing terrorism. Orwell brilliantly diagnosed that the human race could be destroyed by the destruction of the relationship between word and reality. (Trefulka, p. 50)

He goes on to suggest that Orwell knew from his own experience of Nazi Germany and the Stalinist regime that repressive forces were necessary in the process of separating words from truth.

Among intellectuals, there are writers whose encounter with the book had a

very significant impact on their subsequent lives. According to journalist Karel Kyncl, Orwell's work and the life of Milan Šimečka (1930-1990), a renowned Czechoslovakian philosopher and literary critic¹⁶, had 'staggering similarities' (Kyncl, 1990, p. 32), but Šimečka himself also considered his own life to be superimposed on Winston's (see, Šimečka, 1984). Czechoslovakia became Communist in the year 1948, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which was published in 1949, was subsequently banned, but in 1984, this book was published in a samizdat typescript translation. Milan Šimečka wrote the preface to this samizdat edition.

Šimečka first came across the book around 1964 when his wife returned from England, where she had travelled, and bought with her the original Penguin edition. At that time, it was still possible to buy foreign books and bring them back home. In his 'A Czech Winston Smith', while still living in Prague, Šimečka reflected that 'In Prague, many of Orwell's fantastic-sounding flights of the imagination have been everyday reality for the past 35 years' (Šimečka, 1984, p. 6), and that the building in which he lives bears a striking resemblance to Winston's 'Victory Mansions' — slogans are seen everywhere in the city, and television and radio broadcasts are always clamoured for:

In all these things I understood Winston perfectly, and he, in turn, would silently nod his head when one of my visitors muttered so softly that I could not make out a word he was saying, or when he stuck little bits of paper with brief messages in my hand, turning his eyes ceilingwards as he did so, as if there, of all places, were to be found the omnipresent ear of the Thought Police. (Šimečka, 1984, p. 8)

Orwell's world and his own situation were so similar that he felt as if Winston was his brother:

This feeling of affinity I had was not at all pleasant — it gave rise to profoundly disturbing sensations, an irrational state of mind in which I distrustfully wondered whether George Orwell, an Englishman with a life experience totally different from mine, had not written this book for me, intending in this way to pass on a personal message and a well-intentioned warning. (Ibid.)

What becomes clear from Šimečka's account is that this experience, a feeling of veridical hallucination, something bridging Orwell and Šimečka's temporal and spatial differences, helped him to construct and affirm his identity as a dissident writer.

What was the message that intellectuals influenced by Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* received from him? Russian poet and short-story writer Igor Pomerantsev (1948-), having drawn the attention of the KGB for disseminating anti-Soviet literature, left the Soviet Union in 1978, and now lives in London. He perceived from Orwell's work that the real social crisis was that when Soviet society was tightly controlled, culture was deliberately destroyed and people forgot their own language:

But in the Soviet case — and one sees something similar, for example, in the case of Nazi Germany — we have a quite deliberate perversion, a deliberate breaking of culture — with the conscious aim of producing a single ruling ideology and culture. To the extent that people forget even their language — not to mention their history or cultural tradition. Orwell's situation, actually... (Pomerantsev, p. 16)

Of course, the real world is more complex than any novel can depict and is not tintured with the unremitting despair of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. From this passage, however, Pomerantsev's sense of impending crisis, of losing the cultural assets of his own country and his desire to hide things away before they completely disappeared is both understandable and relatable.

Four years later in 1988, Šimečka also developed his own Orwellian argument. It was about how to perceive the past, and was formed immediately after reading Orwell:

The past did not seem all that important to us. Back then, I was not aware of the continuity of the past, the present and the future, which I would learn only later, from Orwell, and which has since shed light on the causes of the historical lies I hear around me: whoever masters the past, masters the future, whoever masters the present, masters the past. (Šimečka, 1988, p. 52)

Had he not encountered Orwell, he would never have understood that the present and future exist only because of the past. The history of the last thirty years that he looks back on is almost entirely the history of the Party, the rest of which has been increasingly whittled away and ordinary people's lives thrown into a 'black hole'. He must have envisioned the spectacle of Winston in the Ministry of Truth dumping one inconvenient historical fact for the Party after another into the 'memory hole'. Šimečka is here trying to warn people about the dangers of overlooking the 'black hole' of history that has already been created in reality.

Furthermore, Stanisław Barańczak, the founder of *Zapis* magazine, knowing that in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the protagonist Winston's job in the Ministry of Truth is to censor and fake the past, proclaims that 'we may hope that they [the seven years from 1977 until the real 1984] will not witness a degree of technical improvement such as would make it possible to "control the past" in Orwellian style' (Barańczak, p. 7), noting that great care is taken with regard to falsification of the past. In day-to-day life, he felt that intellectual life was becoming increasingly uniform, and resented the suffocation of living in a reality controlled by the authorities. However, Barańczak's message was as clear as Orwell's: when the authorities 'bring about a total uniformity of intellectual life' and 'control the present', people should refuse to allow this to happen. This is because 'if we permit this today, we may find ourselves burning books tomorrow' (p. 7).

After the Real 1984 — to the End of the Cold War

That the first signs of democratisation began to appear in the Soviet Union and its satellites immediately after the year 1984 is suggestive. When Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, he embarked on reforms to overhaul previous policies in order to escape from the evils created by a Communist system founded on Stalinist lines of control and eradication of dissent. The reforms were wide ranging, aimed at overhauling every area of Soviet society, but with a profoundly economic focus. Domestically, *perestroika* ('restructuring') aimed at restoring the stagnant economy, along with the introduction of *glasnost* ('transparency') allowing freedom of speech and the press, which led to a wave of democratisation that spread rapidly throughout civil society.¹⁷

In response to the reformation of its own ruling state, Jan Trefulka felt the winds of change in Czechoslovakia as follows:

Three years after 'Orwell's year' everything looks different: suppressed and forgotten facts are being returned to history, suppressed and almost forgotten people are returning to life. We are watching the experiments of reviving memory, we are hearing proclamations about the need for correspondence between word and reality. Andrei Sakharov¹⁸, Lech Walesa¹⁹, the spokespersons of Charter 77 are walking around freely, yet are not free. (Trefulka, p. 50)

Here, Trefulka expresses elation over what he perceived as the recoupling of words

and reality, the restoration of historical facts and lived experience, and of the seeming democratisation of the Soviet world, but remained cautious, striking a note of scepticism. Figures such as Sakharov and Wałęsa, the spokespersons of Charter 77, may have regained their freedom physically, but whether or not this apparent freedom was real and permanent remained an open question.

In Hungary, the September 1988 issue of *IoC* announced the banned book *The Joke* by Czech writer Milan Kundera (1929-2023) was to be reprinted by the Europa Publishing House.²⁰ Generally, when a work was banned in Czechoslovakia, it could not be published in Hungary either and had previously been shelved by the publisher, but in conditions of loosening censorship, the Party Agitation Propaganda Department gave permission for its publication. The publisher also gave notice that it hoped to publish *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Solzhenitsyn's work in the future.²¹

It was reported that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was also published in Poland by the State Publishing House in November 1988, revealing that it was added to the publisher's 'Interesting Book Club' series.²² In the Soviet Union, two chapters from *Animal Farm* were published in *Nedelya* (the weekly supplement to *Izvestiya*, the official daily newspaper of the Soviet government) in September 1988. A notice was also given that the entire novel was soon to be published in *Yunost* (*Youth*), a monthly magazine with a circulation of three million copies. Taking a revisionist line, Soviet authorities suggested, 'The novel did not make a mockery of socialist ideals as some critics maintained'²³, and sought to reinterpret it. The same year saw the official publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, translated by Viktor Golyshev (1937-) in the Soviet Union. The end of the Cold War with the series of Velvet Revolutions also marked the end of the flourishing of samizdat literature.

Conclusion

In 1977, Stanisław Barańczak described the purpose of publishing his samizdat magazine:

It is our hope that even from this first, fragmentary and incomplete presentation of 'forbidden' texts the reader will get a general idea of the kind of restrictions from which our literature suffers. He will see that ... a writer who is honest and faithful to his inner truth today has little chance of making his work fully known to the reader. (Barańczak, pp. 11-12)

Thus, we can see that *Zapis's* mission was to discover unknown authors and to bring their words to as many readers as possible. Gábor Demszky, editor of the Hungarian samizdat publishing house AB, expressed similar sentiments and his desire to write about the reality of social conditions in the Soviet world:

We have to write and publish the truth about current social inequalities, about how reforms have not touched the political taboos, about 1956, and also about the historical experiences of other nations in Eastern Europe. We have to persist, and I believe that our work *will* have an effect on people's minds. We don't know when the results will be visible, but they will be sooner or later. (Short, p. 53)

Thanks to the efforts of these publishers, the strong will of the authors who risked their lives to contribute to these publications and provide translations, and the public who continued to circulate samizdat books from hand to hand, hidden from the authorities, a great many prohibited books did indeed become known to the people of the Eastern Bloc. One of the most important books was undoubtedly George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.²⁴ Looking at the situation in their own countries, readers would have taken to heart the idea that, through the samizdat edition of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, they might better understand their own situation of exploitation under totalitarianism and fight against it. It also helped them to recognise that they were not alone in their thinking and determination. All intelligent readers of this work could not fail to realise that there were real comrades who agreed on the need to overthrow tyranny. In other words, the work helped form an 'imagined community of readers' that transcended the borders of the Eastern countries. Moreover, the thoughts of the citizens of the Eastern Bloc were conveyed to readers in the West — many of whom must have been exiles from the Eastern camps or groups of Displaced Persons — through the *IoC*, which continued to report on their plight in detail. It can be assumed that an even larger imagined community of readers was created which traversed the Iron Curtain, offering various voices that resonated against oppression and tried to save their homelands.

More than thirty years have passed since the end of the Cold War, an ideological conflict between capitalism and communism, and it seemed until recently that democratic societies had matured in the former Eastern Bloc. However, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022, a 'new Cold War' has broken out. In Russia's attempt to control Ukraine, militarist education has been restarted and restrictions on speech are being tightened. According to information provided by Reuters in December

2022, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is now attracting attention again in Russia: the book was the number one download in 2022 in the country.²⁵ The same reasons can be found in the intentions of readers who have chosen to read this book, which has been converted from paper to electronic format, as the Cold War readers of the twentieth century. New readers must now remember what happened in the past, plot how to understand and act in the present, and move towards a better future in their 'imagined, "cyber" community'.

¹ *Index on Censorship*: <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/> (last accessed: 9 January 2024). Hereafter, quotations from the *IoC* where the author's name is given are included in parentheses and indicated in the main text.

² Felicity Capon and Catherine Scott, 'Top 20 books they tried to ban', *The Telegraph* (20 October 2014): <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/booknews/9900733/Top-20-books-they-tried-to-ban.html> (last accessed: 3 January 2024).

³ 'Index Index', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 9, no. 1 (February 1980), pp. 73-74.

⁴ In Iraq, the translator of Orwell's *Animal Farm*, published in 1971, was executed in December 1980. See, 'Index, Index', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 10, no. 4 (August 1981), p. 46.

⁵ See, *Memory of Nations*: <https://www.memoryofnations.eu/en/precana-vilem-1933> (last accessed: 4 January 2024)

⁶ See, [Anonymous,] 'AB: Hungary's independent publisher; An interview with the creators of a source of uncensored writing', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 12, no. 2 (April 1983).

⁷ As its name suggests, M.O. often published literature, political works, and diaries related to the Hungarian uprisings. See, Short.

⁸ Incidentally, the British writer Anthony Burgess (1917-1993) also wrote a novel called *1985* in 1978.

⁹ 'Index Index', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 13, no. 3 (June 1984), p. 49. See also, 'Index Index', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 13, no. 2 (April 1984).

¹⁰ See also, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, ed., *Violations of the Helsinki Accords: Czechoslovakia* (November 1986).

¹¹ Jaroslav Švestka's *Orwellův rok (Orwell's Year)* was eventually published in 2013.

¹² 'Later in August, his charge was reduced to 'a one-year jail sentence for "subversive activities"'. 'Index Index', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 15, no. 10 (November 1986), pp. 44-45.

¹³ 'Index Index', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 15, no. 6 (June 1986), p. 38.

¹⁴ 'Index Index', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 17, no. 9 (October 1988), p. 36.

¹⁵ See, 'Index Index', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 13, no. 3 (June 1984), p. 49.

¹⁶ Milan Šimečka was a Czech philosopher and essayist. He lived in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, where he lost his job as a university teacher in 1970 for refusing to recognise the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968 as 'fraternal assistance'. He became a manual labourer and was imprisoned in 1981 on charges of treason and released thirteen months later. According to Kyncl, after the Eastern European revolution he immediately became the chairman of the Council of Consultants to Václav Havel, but died on 24 September 1990 at work. See, Kyncl, 1990.

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- ¹⁷ On the international front, in December 1987, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, together with US President Ronald Reagan, signed the Treaty on the Total Abolition of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces. In addition, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1988-89 accelerated the momentum towards the end of the Cold War.
- ¹⁸ Andrei Sakharov (1921-1989): Soviet theoretical physicist and politician. Worked on the development of the hydrogen bomb in the Soviet Union and was known as the 'father of the hydrogen bomb', but was also a dissident and human rights activist; exiled by Brezhnev to Gorky in 1980 for protesting against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; freed from exile by Gorbachev in 1986. Also known as the 'father of *perestroika*'.
- ¹⁹ Lech Wałęsa (1943-): Polish politician. President of the Republic of Poland (1990-95); Nobel Peace Prize laureate, 1983. As leader of the 'Solidarity Movement', he was instrumental in ending the Cold War.
- ²⁰ See, 'Index Index', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 17, no. 8 (September 1988).
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² See, 'Index Index', *Index on Censorship*, vol. 18, no. 1 (January 1989).
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Dan Jacobson, a Lithuanian-born South African novelist who worked at the University of London during the Cold War, recalls that Soviet exiles and dissidents had already read Orwell's work. 'As a university teacher of English, I soon discovered that they [*Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*] were the only two books I could be certain all applicants to the department would have read; the same turned out to be the case when I began to meet émigrés and dissidents from the Soviet empire.' Dan Jacobson, 'The Invention of Orwell: plainness, swagger and delicacy in Twenty Volumes', in *The Times Literary Supplement*, no. 4975 (21 August 1998).
- ²⁵ Kevin Leffey, 'Orwell's novel of repression "1984" tops Russian bestseller lists', *Reuters* (14 December 2022): <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/orwells-novel-repression-1984-tops-russian-bestseller-lists-2022-12-13/> (last accessed: 9 January 2024).

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ジョージ・オーウェルの禁書『一九八四年』の
冷戦期東側陣営における受容
—英文雑誌 *Index on Censorship* を手がかりに

渡辺 愛子

*Index on Censorship*は、同名の非営利団体による1972年刊行の雑誌で、過去50余年にわたり、世界各地で言論の自由が侵されてきた国や地域の状況を世界に報じてきた。なかでも、冷戦期の共産主義陣営における言論規制の動向は、本誌が創刊時から取り上げていたものである。1970年代にはいわゆる東西の緊張緩和が進んだものの、ソ連東欧各国内では当局による市民への規制は続き、80年代にかけて強まっていた。これに伴いあらゆる著作物は検閲を受け、言論の自由は厳しく制約された。そのようななか、体制に異を唱える者たちの間で政府の検閲を逃れた「非公式な」著作物である「サミズダート文学」が普及していく。本稿では、東側陣営においてもっとも検閲を受けた書物のひとつで、禁書とされたイギリスの作家ジョージ・オーウェルの『一九八四年』の受容を *Index on Censorship* から検証することで、反体制への格好の素材といえる文学が、圧政下の人々に現実を知らしめ、体制転覆への「想像の共同体」を構築する糸口となりえたことを示していきたい。*Index on Censorship*には、各国の言論統制の情報が端的に記されているだけでなく、著名な知識人によるエッセーやコラムも多数収められているため、『一九八四年』がおもに地下組織でサミズダート版としてどのように再生産されたか、それが当局によってどのように弾圧されていたのか、さらに読者の間でどのような影響力を持ったのか、といった状況を俯瞰するのに役立つのである。