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/// Transfer of Ideas and Thoughts from West to East

Western Authors of Hungarian Samizdat Literature of the 1980s

Abstract

The Hungarian *samizdat* literature that emerged in the second half of the 1970s focused primarily on its own region, East Central Europe. It sought to report on the realities of the Soviet bloc—local and regional news that could not appear in the official press—and to convey to its readers ideas that were caught in the various filters of “non-existent” censorship. Therefore, it primarily provided a platform for domestic authors and the writings of the opposition that began to form networks within and even outside the Soviet bloc. On the one hand, the study examines which group of Western authors the seven-volume series *Máshonnan Beszélő*, a spin-off venture of the most influential illegal journal *Beszélő*, and the samizdat publishers selected in the 1980s. It concludes that the main goal of the samizdat editors was to talk about the region even through Western authors, and they basically published non-fiction from literary authors as well. Therefore, increasing readers’ knowledge of world literature and world politics was not a priority of samizdat; within certain limits, official information policy also took on this task from the beginning of the de-Stalinization process. This is supported by the fact that a large proportion of these Western “samizdat authors” also appeared in the first wave of publicity, albeit often belatedly, sporadically, or in connection with completely different topics.

== Introduction

The first issue of the *samizdat* publication *Beszélő* (Speaker)¹ was released in October 1981. It was neither the first nor the last in the series of Hungarian samizdat publi-

1 == The title of the journal refers to the fact that it speaks about news and topics that official newspapers rather avoid. However, it has wider connotations as well, like visitation talks in prisons; this refers to the oppression of the publicity and the nation as well.

cations. However, it became the longest-running and most influential such journal, with twenty-eight issues published by the end of 1989. The editors even undertook to compile a magazine with a different profile, entitled *Máshonnan Beszélő* (Speaking from Elsewhere).² Even so, its circulation was not high; the first issue had a print run of 1,500 copies and was produced on a stencil machine, while later issues still only reached an average of 2,000–2,500 copies. They typically did not reach beyond an intellectual readership, although in 1989—when the party-state press control system was barely functioning anymore—the last illegal issue was printed in 8,000 copies.

Since *Beszélő* was an illegal newspaper, it did not apply for or receive a publishing license, although the editors—in an unusual and courageous way—listed their names in the imprint. It was not the first such publication in Hungary nor in the Soviet bloc, where illegal publications proliferated after the signing of the 1975 Helsinki Accords. Between 1976 and 1989, more than two dozen journals, usually appearing in only a few hundred copies and often consisting of only one or two issues, were produced under conspiratorial circumstances: at homes, illegally in the country. This was the so-called “second publicity,” which in a broad sense included not only these periodicals but also independent book publishers and events (such as exhibitions) organized by various dissident organizations, most of which reached a limited audience.

In contrast, the so-called first publicity encompassed everything that happened with the permission and knowledge of the authorities. Therefore, in this study, we will use the term “official publicity” as a synonym for this sphere. Until 1986, press administration issues in Hungary were not regulated by law but by lower-level legislation, while party supervision of the press was not based on party resolutions. All newspapers, magazines, and books were subject to licensing and, in addition to the officially non-existent party and state censorship, editorial rooms also had to have their own supervisory body and publisher. Nevertheless, Kadarian cultural and information policy—usually described by the differentiated practice identified with the phrase “3T” (*támogatott, tűrt, tiltott* [supported, tolerated, prohibited]) and associated with the name of György Aczél—created a relatively broad spectrum of public discourse, which sought to serve a wide range of political and public needs: from small-circulation newspapers and intellectual broadcasts open to the world and selectively rich in information, to much more controlled forums aimed at the masses. Second publicity rejected this complex system based on compromise, self-censorship, and concessions.

² = = The different title clearly indicated that the editors wanted to implement different editorial principles with this publication. While *Beszélő* published materials from foreign newspapers only in very exceptional cases, *Máshonnan Beszélő* sought to remedy this basic stance, which some of the editors considered provincial, by translating foreign publications. Kis, *Szabadságra ítélve* [Sentenced to freedom], 232.

My specific question is: what was the intellectual horizon of the texts published in the second publicity, based on the selection of Western authors? Who was included in the pages of illegal publications, and with what content? To what extent did the composition of the group of authors thus emerging differ from that of the first publicity? Or was the difference not in the individuals themselves, but in the specific works and the editorial attitude?

Hereinafter, I will examine the oppositional public sphere of the 1980s from the perspective of Western—or more precisely non-Eastern and non-Central European³—sources used in their samizdat publications. Our conclusions will be drawn with the help of analysis of and comparison with the above-described first publicity. Which authors did samizdat editors find most suitable for describing the world of socialism, counterbalancing and discrediting the official narratives? The analysis does not focus on the main samizdat periodical, because *Beszélő* largely remained faithful to the program defined in its first issue: “*Beszélő* will discuss unusual events: when one or more people break the customary rules of interaction between those in power and their subjects, defy offensive orders, invoke their rights, and exert pressure on their superiors...”⁴

The editors therefore aimed at creating a second public sphere, which soon began to monitor developments throughout the region.⁵ However, it is difficult to discern from the published material what Western ideas and authors they considered important. What does the author’s choice of a quote from Walt Whitman or Søren Kierkegaard⁶ as a motto reveal about their thoughts, beyond their erudition and knowledge of world literature and philosophy? The mention of Western sources and connections is inevitable in certain topics, as the entire activity—like the domestic peace movement—developed in complex formulas, partly on the brinks of legality and illegality, amid negotiations between official institutions and grassroots initiatives. Or what should we distil from Ambrus Oltványi mentioning John Rawls’ theory of justice⁷—which, beyond philosophical publications, was also discussed in the relatively widely circulated magazines and programs of the first publicity?⁸

The study of orientations and motivations is much better served by the special venture of *Beszélő*, which was created with the intention of strengthening the international horizons of samizdat readers: “In the heroic age of samizdat, during

3 = = Therefore, the analysis includes authors from the Global South, but not Eastern and Central European emigrants who had to leave their country in the 1970s and 1980s.

4 = = Editors of *Beszélő*, *Lapunk elé* [Prologue to our journal], 4.

5 = = Danyi, “A lokális eseménytől” [From local event], 66–98.

6 = = Garzó, “Éhség és terror” [Hunger and terror], 79; Szilágyi, “Az irónia rekordereként” [As the record holder of irony], 89.

7 = = Oltványi, “A közel- és távolabbi” [About the near and far], 83.

8 = = See Ludassy, “Szabadság vagy egyenlőség?” [Liberty or equality], 23–36.

the era of typewritten publications, there was a periodical series called *Kelet-Európai Figyelő* (Eastern European Observer), whose editors sought to convey the democratic culture of our region to Hungarian readers. When *Beszélő* was launched in the fall of 1981, we thought that the magazine could take on this task as well.”⁹ This publication ran for a total of seven issues between 1985 and 1988. The first three issues were edited strictly in the spirit outlined in the introduction, in which, with a few exceptions, writings of authors in exile or internal dissidents were collected, but subsequently the number of Western and non-European authors increased. Therefore, we are able to examine which Western authors were featured in this forum, and to what extent the circle of authors and their selected works in the samizdat differed from what we find in the first publicity. We supplement this with an analysis of the list of books regularly reviewed in *Beszélő* and published as samizdat in the 1980s—many of which were published by the most active samizdat ‘agent’, ÁB Független Kiadó, and also with the offerings of the so-called Rajk boutique¹⁰ advertised in *Beszélő*.

= = = Parallels

Milovan Đilas’s book *The New Class* was published in Hungarian in 1961. Following the official news agency MTI, the non-party *Magyar Nemzet* labeled the publication a “defamatory anti-communist book” in January of that year, reporting on the fact that the six-year sentence Đilas had received for smuggling the manuscript out of prison for publication in the West was reduced and he was released on parole.¹¹ However, the principles of Hungarian and Yugoslav information policy were not so far apart that anyone could have gotten their hands on the book in Kádár’s Hungary; the party publishing house, which changed its name from Szikra to Kossuth in 1956, printed only three hundred copies of the rebellious Yugoslav communist’s¹² critical thoughts on the system.

This was the first item on the list of closed edition books from Kossuth Publishing House, which initially only 257 people—party and state leaders—could access. Once the series proved successful, the number of copies was increased to 400–500 over the course of the decade, and the number of people eligible to receive them may have been triple that. Then, the Agitation and Propaganda Committee (APC) of

9 == Editors of Máshonnan Beszélő, “Szerkesztői köszöntő” [Editorial welcome], 4.

10 == Samizdat journals and books could be purchased at private places, e. g., homes. The most famous such place of distribution was the flat of László Rajk, Jr.—the son of the former Minister of the Interior who had been convicted and executed in a 1949 show trial—in Galamb Street, Budapest, before Rajk was forced to move out from the flat in January 1983.

11 == Anonymous, “Feltételeesen szabadlábra helyezték Gyilaszt” [“Đilas was conditionally released”], *Magyar Nemzet*, January 21, 1961, 2.

12 == In 1962, a year after the XXII Congress of the CPSU, Đilas wrote his own criticism of Stalin as well with the title *Conversations with Stalin*. This resulted in his third trial and imprisonment.

the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) decided to distinguish between closed works and those subject to slightly less stringent scrutiny (mainly by domestic authors). The basic intention was to inform the inner circle to strengthen their willingness and ability to debate at a time when there was much talk about the struggle between the two world systems, and this was mostly mentioned in the context of its main front line having shifted from direct military confrontation to the field of economic and ideological competition. The series should "include publications that inform the leading party and state cadres about opposing views, ideological trends, propaganda directed against us, and hostile (anti-Marxist, bourgeois) ideological attacks," summarized a 1971 report submitted to the APC.¹³

A review of the list of titles published over the course of roughly a decade and a half¹⁴ demonstrates that Kossuth brought the ideas of numerous Western authors to the Kadarian elite, alongside a not-insignificant body of dissident and émigré literature. These included politicians (Henry Kissinger, Anthony Eden, Zbigniew Brezinski, Allen Dulles, Franz Joseph Strauss, André Malraux, Averell Harriman), diplomats and political analysts (Denna Frank Fleming, Thomas Finletter, Isaac Deutscher), and philosophers and other social scientists (Jean-Paul Sartre, Walt Rostow, André Gorz, Gustav Wetter, Régis Debray). The latter represented influential trends of their time, such as existentialism and the theory of industrial society, which were fiercely debated by defenders of Marxism-Leninism. This closed series also featured key figures in Western left-wing debates, such as "1968ers" (Che Guevara, Herbert Marcuse, Cohn Bendit) and key documents, such as the writings of the Il Manifesto group and the *Capitalist Manifesto*.

There are plenty of names on this list that were often mentioned in the official—so-called first—publicity of the party state, and the thoughts of several of them were disputed there with the public being unable to read their original writings or having access only to their less problematic texts. Yet this list is very similar to the group of names drawn up by the venture of the opposition to that party state in the 1980s, which circumvented the licensing authorities—or the formally non-existent censorship—in spite of the fact that the circumstances, the international background, and the motivation were completely different. After all, Kossuth's "closed" list was compiled by the party leadership with the aim of legitimizing their power, and the selection and publication of works took place within a controlled frame-

13 = = HU-MNL-OL-M-KS-288/41/167. Report on publication and distribution of books classified as "closed" and "internal distribution," October 4, 1971.

14 = = See Cseh, Kalmár and Pór, *Zárt, bizalmas, számozott* [*Closed, confidential, numbered*], 369; Sipos, "Az államszocialista ancien régime" [The attributes of power in the state socialist ancien régime], 16–39. Due to the specific nature of the study (i.e., using content analysis) and therefore the large number of works referenced during the analysis, the footnotes in the study differ from the Chicago Manual of Style convention in that the referenced works (except daily newspaper articles) are abbreviated even when it is first mentioned.

work. The series came into being at a time when the “Soviet galaxy” believed that it could turn the dispute between the two world systems to its advantage,¹⁵ and furthermore that it could present a vision of the future—a utopia. For that reason, it had to prepare its own elite—but only the members of its elite—so that it could hold its own in the international debate. Thus, the focus was primarily on the opponent: the intellectual and political sphere of the West. The samizdat of the 1980s wanted to break down the walls of this “closed” system with the aim of delegitimizing the regime, so the selection and publication of works was conspiratorial and uncontrolled by the authorities. By this time, the “Soviet galaxy” had already lost the utopia of both the Stalinist and Khrushchev eras,¹⁶ and the opposition, which had built regional networks¹⁷ and carried out a series of knowledge transfers even regarding samizdat-making,¹⁸ focused on exposing the grim reality of the system. Therefore, its focus inevitably turned inwards, as evidenced not only by the larger proportion of authors from East Central and Eastern Europe, but also by the fact that voices from the West and the Global South also spoke about existing socialism.

Samizdat literature followed a different pattern.

= = Mëshonnan Beszélő—Authors and Topics

Mëshonnan Beszélő (*Speaking from Elsewhere*) released thematic issues, with the first issue providing a mixed, essentially Central European literary overview. Most of the authors were already living in the West at that time (Milan Kundera, Zdeněk Mlynář, Adam Zagajewski) or were published there as “tamizdat” (Varlam Salakhov, Józef Lipski). Their writings could not be published in their own countries, at least during certain periods, and one of them, Václav Havel, was serving a prison sentence. The only Western author was the Irishman Samuel Beckett, who dedicated his theatre scene to Havel, while Havel’s “response” also appeared in this issue.

Issues 2 and 3 also featured only one article each by Western authors, the former dealing with Polish issues that were also of key importance for domestic opposition, and the latter seeking to confront readers with the realities of the Soviet Union. However, half of the authors in Issue 4 were Westerners, and most of the articles dealt with the division of Europe and the Cold War. The next issue looked

15 = = According to Kalmár, the Soviet Union—as the center of one of the historical galaxies—offered (and forced) an alternative, competing model of globalization and modernization to the states within its sphere of influence and those it tried to pull into it. See Kalmár, *In the Pull of Historical Galaxies*, 81–88.

16 = = Takács, “The Vanishing Soviet Utopia,” 143–47.

17 = = Mitrovits, *Tiltott kapcsolat* [Forbidden relationship]; Danyi, *Az írógép és az utazótáska* [The typewriter and the travel bag], Burgoyne et al., “Unlicensed and unbound”, 415–43.

18 = = Danyi, “Harisnya, ablakkeret és szabad gondolat” [Stockings, window frames, and free thought], 92–127.

beyond Europe; Latin America—above all communist Cuba—dominated, but some articles also touched upon the Middle East and the Southeast Asia: i.e., those parts of the Global South with which the socialist world had the most to do. Here, more than two-thirds (72 percent) of the authors came from outside the Soviet bloc. The next topic—at the end of 1986—was understandably the revolution of 1956, with thirteen articles by nine authors (62 percent of those published) coming from the West. The last issue, which was published in 1988 and discussed conflicts raging in the Soviet bloc despite the officially proclaimed Leninist nationality policy, once again returned to “internal” voices, with a mere four Western authors (29 percent) contributing.

Altogether a total of thirty-six articles by Western and Third World authors appeared in the seven issues. Two of these thinkers also appeared in the “closed” series of *Kossuth*: Zbigniew Brzezinski, who, as a researcher of Soviet regimes, was close to politics in the 1960s but took on a government role in the second half of the 1970s. The other was André Gorz, an Austro-French philosopher close to Sartre. From further samizdat books we can add the Marxist historian Isaac Deutcher. At the same time, *Kossuth* also published works by numerous authors, from Walt Rostow to Raymond Aron, who could have confidently claimed a place for themselves in *Beszélő*, provided it had been prepared some twenty years earlier.

Let us take a closer look at these authors. What could have been the main criteria of the editors’ choice? How familiar were their names and works to readers of the first publicity? Were there any overlaps, or did samizdat make a completely new circle of authors and universe of texts available in Hungarian?

Looking at the professions of those thirty-six mentioned, writers and social scientists are in the majority (fifteen, or 42 percent, of each). The latter group includes historians, political scientists, economists, and philosophers. In contrast to *Kossuth*’s “closed” circulation volumes, the number of politicians and diplomats is low, at only three (8 percent), while two other authors were journalists and one was an actress. The latter, Simone Signoret, was cited because she spent New Year’s Eve of 1956 in Moscow with her husband, Yves Montand, who was treated as a star in the Soviet bloc during the Khrushchev Thaw.¹⁹

Thirteen writings of the above thirty-six in *Máshonnan Beszélő* were also mentioned in the first publicity, meaning that the “legal press” responded to them in some form, even if only in a paragraph of an article discussing a wider or different topic, or “hidden” in a simple news report. However, only in two cases—both literary works—was the original text made available to the wider audience. One was Beckett, whose official reputation underwent a significant transformation between the late 1950s and the mid-1970s. During these one and a half decades, he turned from a nihilist totally rejecting all human values into a humanist concerned about the

19 = = Anonymous, “When a Distant Friend Sings”.

fate of mankind. His most famous play, *Waiting for Godot*, opened in the Theatre of Nations in 1975, when it moved from Paris to Warsaw and was held in the Soviet bloc for the first time.²⁰ Several of Beckett's plays were also performed in small auditoriums but were still reviewed by critics. The Hungarian press repeatedly reported on the Avignon Theater Festival,²¹ where it was performed in 1982. However, *Catastrophe* was not published until 1985; *Új Írás* undertook the task, in the same year as *Máshonnan Beszélő*. The play speaks about oppression and resistance, but so metaphorically that editor-in-chief Ferenc Juhász saw no risk in publishing it. The scene takes place on a stage, where the director and his assistant engage in dialogue while they adjust the posture and clothing of the central figure. The latter, who may be a symbol of the oppressed nation(s), is portrayed as humiliated and tormented as possible, but at the very end, the character shows self-awareness, even if only through a gesture.

The two translations of the text differ,²² but the important point is rather that *Új Írás* does not discuss the background of Beckett's work: namely, that it was dedicated to Vaclav Havel, one of the main organizers of Charta '77, who was imprisoned at the time. As the very first piece in *Máshonnan Beszélő*—and one that stands out from the rest of the issue—it can be seen as a symbolic choice and a programmatic work for the project: a gesture of resistance by the intellectuals of Central and Eastern Europe. The schema is more banal in the case of the other common piece. At the time of its first Hungarian publication, the Cuban Heberto Padilla was on the side of Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution of 1959; his works were published in several magazines (*Új Írás*, *Nagyvilág*), and in the first half of the 1960s, they were also featured in several poetic and musical performances. His poem *In Hard Times*, also published in samizdat, was featured in the program of Egyetemi Színpad, the student theatre of Eötvös Loránd University and the Department of Spanish Language and Literature at ELTE (*Kigyóölő ének*) in 1969.²³ After his arrest in 1971,²⁴ Padilla's poems also became undesirable.

In four further cases, the complete work itself was not available, but certain reviews or evaluations could be read. Simone Signoret published her memoirs in 1975 under the title *Nostalgia Isn't What It Used to Be*, which was published in Hungary in the time of the regime change.²⁵ The excerpt published in *Máshonnan Beszélő* covers their experiences in Moscow, particularly their conversation with Khrushchev in the presence of Soviet party leaders at the theatre where Montand

20 == Takács, "Színházpolitika" [Theater policy], 70, 76.

21 == Anonymous, "Kabuki módra" [Kabuki style], 41.; Ránki, "IN és OFF," [IN and OFF], 10–15.

22 == Beckett, "Katasztrófa" [Catastrophe], 5–7; Beckett, "Katasztrófa" [Catastrophe], 52–55.

23 == Anonymous, "Egyetemi Színpad" [University stage], 15.

24 == Echevarría, "Heberto Padilla."

25 == Signoret, *Már a nostalgia* [Nostalgia isn't].

performed for a Soviet audience.²⁶ She also recalled their opposing assessments of the 1956 revolution. In contrast, when the volume was published, the Hungarian press focused on the scandalous parts, instead of the 1956 references: how the French actress almost failed in her role as Lady Macbeth in London, and how Marilyn Monroe hit on her husband in the US during the shooting of the film *Let's Make Love*.²⁷

The novels of Mario Vargas Llosa were published in Hungarian in various volumes following *The Time of the Hero* in 1971.²⁸ *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta*, excerpts of which were published in Hungary only after the fall of communism, depicts the debates of the Peruvian Left with both unvarnished honesty and sympathy for a young Trotskyist revolutionary. *Magyar Nemzet* provided a relatively detailed review about the novel, while the foreign literature magazine *Nagyvilág* provided a briefer one.²⁹ Guillermo Cabrera Infante, like Padilla, was initially a supporter of Castro's regime, but gradually distanced himself from it, living in Europe and working in Hollywood in the 1970s. His literary discovery in Hungary came late, after the turn of the millennium, but one of his stories was included in a 1966 Cuban anthology.³⁰

His novel *View of Dawn in the Tropics*, from which the editors of *Beszélő* chose absurd one-minute sketches of revolutionary Cuba,³¹ was characterized in *Új Írás* as a work offering a glimpse into the sultry nightlife of the final days of the Batista dictatorship.³² The case of the fourth author, Zbigniew Brzezinski, is somewhat special; his views as a political and social scientist, later as a politician, had been regularly debated since the 1960s. The specific article from *Máshonnan Beszélő* was also criticized by *Béke és Szocializmus* and *Párttörténeti Közlemények*.³³ Yet it was only two years later that, at the very dawn of the transition, he was invited to give a lecture at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) at the request of the Hungarian Political Science Association.³⁴

The above examples reveal that the same text was interesting to the editors of the second and first publications from different perspectives. The former sought out and highlighted parts that provided insight into and criticism of the socialist system(s), while the latter reported on motifs that did not involve criticism of the system.

26 == Signoret, "Párizsi ősz" [Autumn in Paris], 114–124.

27 == For the most detailed report, see Anonymous, "Mebbukott a Macbethben" [Failed in Macbeth], 24.

28 == Vargas Llosa, *A város és a kutyák* [The time of the hero].

29 == Ortutay, "Lurigancho.", *Magyar Nemzet*, June 30, 1986, 2.; Anonymous, "Hírek a világból" [News from the world], 142.

30 == Szerdahelyi, "Cabrera Infante", 1226.

31 == Cabrera Infante, "Hajnali látkép" [View of the dawn], 9.

32 == Bueno, "Széjlegyzetek" [Sidenotes], 90.

33 == Dackiewicz, "Meghaladni Jaltát?" [Getting over Yalta?], 22–24.; Nagy, "Jalta", 147–48.

34 == Galló, "Zbigniew Brzezinski előadása" [The lecture of Zbigniew Brzezinski], 97–98.

The remaining seven works available in samizdat (by Timothy Garton Ash, Jorge Semprún, Jorge Edwards, Robert S. Leiken, William Shawcross, Hannah Arendt, and Alexander Benningsen) were only mentioned in the first publicity. Nevertheless, all of them also appeared in the official public sphere in connection with their other works. Some were known for their books, plays, and films; the best known of these, alongside Vargas Llosa, Beckett, and Signoret, was Jorge Semprún.

The Holocaust novel *Long Voyage* by French communist Semprún was published in Hungarian within a year³⁵ and was followed by others, but *Máshonnan Beszélő* turned to *Autobiography of Federico Sanchez and the Communist Underground in Spain* from 1977. They focused on the passage in which the author—visiting the Congress of the Cuban Communist Party—writes about Castro, including the ironic moment when the Cuban leader’s “cult of personality” was revealed on the basketball court, where opponent players were painstakingly careful not to prevent him from scoring points.³⁶ Besides the works of Cuban Padilla and Infante, a story by Chilean author Jorge Edwards was also published in Hungarian in *Nagyvilág*.³⁷ However, *Máshonnan Beszélő* was interested in the work—in which Edwards recounted how he became persona non grata in Havana as a diplomat of the left-wing Allende government— and particularly in the details of the Cuban propaganda campaign against the Peruvian writer Pablo Neruda.³⁸

Others appeared in the Hungarian journals and magazines only through more or less detailed descriptions of their works, two of them with articles republished in review columns in Hungarian. William Shawcross, an English journalist and expert on Southeast Asia who visited Hungary in 1971,³⁹ was of interest both to the editors of *Máshonnan Beszélő* and to other Hungarian newspapers because of his writings on Cambodia. The latter could use his writings criticizing American foreign policy,⁴⁰ with *Nemzetközi Szemle* reprinting an assessment of Reagan,⁴¹ while the samizdat newspaper highlighted passages about the Khmer Rouge regime.⁴² An article by Hannah Arendt, who became world-famous for her description of totalitarian dictatorships—applied to both fascist and communist systems—was also published in Hungarian. The 1956 issue of *Máshonnan Beszélő* published an excerpt

35 == Semprún, *A nagy utazás* [Long voyage].

36 == Semprún, “Federico Sánchez,” 18–20.

37 == Edwards, “Vasárnapok a menhelyen” [Sundays at the shelter], 840–44.

38 == Edwards, “Persona non grata,” 21–22.

39 == Anonymous, “A Sunday Times munkatársa Baranyában” [A Sunday Times correspondent in Baranya], *Dunántúli Napló*, May 14, 1971, 4.

40 == Bógös, “Kétszeres szembesítés” [Double confrontation], *Magyar Hírlap*, April 13, 1980, 2; Pomroy, “Az örült elmélet” [The consequences of the crazy theory], 141–43.

41 == Shawcross, “Reagan utazása” [Reagan’s journey], 16–19.

42 == Shawcross, “Kambodzsa temetése” [The funeral of Cambodia], 97–106.

from Arendt's 1958 essay analyzing the lessons of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956: a great taboo in Kadarist Hungary.⁴³

In spite of that, Arendt was definitely not subject to a publication ban from the early 1960s onwards, and her works—such as *The Human Condition* or *Eichmann in Jerusalem*—were regularly mentioned, while *Valóság* republished her essay on Pope John XXIII in 1966.⁴⁴ Even Arendt's main opus, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, was discussed in several debate articles written from a Marxist perspective. György Márkus presented the essence of Arendt's concept of totalitarianism as an “abstract, metaphysical, and fanatically hateful” anti-communist declaration,⁴⁵ while in the 1980s, social psychologist Ferenc Erős invoked Arendt to characterize solely Hitler's fascism—this time without condemnation.⁴⁶ A similar pattern can be observed in the case of historian and journalist Timothy Garton Ash: his writings were regularly quoted in the official Hungarian press when he analyzed Western conditions critically, and then at the end of the decade, his writings became interesting because of the idea of Central Europe. Ash maintained active contacts with the democratic opposition in Hungary, participated in the counter-forum of the European Cultural Forum organized as part of the Helsinki process in 1985.⁴⁷ *Máshonnan Beszélő* also published his lecture given there.⁴⁸

== Titles Nowhere to Be Found in the First Publicity

What can be set out about the authors of those twenty-three works which were selected by *Máshonnan Beszélő* and were never mentioned in the official publicity? This list includes well-known names whose literary output was widely known to the Hungarian public. These include two South American novelists, the magical realist Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez, as well as the existentialist Albert Camus. The British poet Stephen Spender was already well-known in Hungary before 1945, and he also visited Budapest in 1947 in a visit organized by the British Council.⁴⁹ Camus and Spender were important to samizdat editors because of their articles and speeches that were written and told in connection with the 1956

43 == Arendt, “Totalitarian Imperialism,” 5–43; Arendt, “A magyar forradalom” [The Hungarian Revolution], 88–94.

44 == Arendt, “A keresztény pápa” [The Christian pope], 120–21.

45 == Márkus, “Szocializmus” [Socialism], 276.

46 == Erős, “A fasizmus” [On the social psychology of fascism], 280, 284–85.

47 == In October and November 1985, the European Cultural Forum—as the first such event in the Soviet bloc in the history of the Helsinki follow-up conferences—took place in Budapest. During the Forum, members of the opposition and foreign sympathizers organized alternative events in private homes. Müller, *Európai Kulturális Fórum* [The European Cultural Forum].

48 == Ash, “Pár gondolat...” [Few thoughts...], 99–101.

49 == Anonymous, “Stephen Spender Budapesten” [Stephen Spender in Budapest], 92.

revolution. Spender's apolitical poems were published in the late 1950s, even though *Jelenkor* referred to him as one of the most active poets who "unhesitatingly put their pens at the service of the increasingly intense Cold War, anti-Soviet, imperialist propaganda of the post-war years."⁵⁰ Some works by Reinaldo Arenas and Archibald MacLeish were also published in Hungarian, while Hugh Seton-Watson's studies were not translated, but were referenced by historians; he even gave a lecture at the Institute of History of HAS in 1969.⁵¹

The next group of samizdat authors includes social scientists and journalists whose "underground articles" were not even mentioned in the "censored press," but whose other publications were reported or debated. However, these latter writings typically covered different topics from what samizdat touched upon. Demographer and political economist Nicholas Eberstadt's observations on China were available to a wider audience, while his work describing the state of Soviet health-care in very critical terms appeared in samizdat.⁵² Political scientist Fred Halliday's analyses of Iran, Ethiopia, and the "mini-Cold War" were used, rather than those of Afghanistan.⁵³ Salvador de Madariaga, a Spanish poet and philosopher living in exile in England, was quoted in response to one of his articles, rather than his 1956 poem entitled "*Epitaph in Budapest.*" French philosopher Claude Lefort's thoughts on 1956 are also not reflected, but rather his study on the sociological examination of democratic systems.⁵⁴ André Gorz's views were debated in numerous journals without translating the original texts, while Swiss journalist Viktor Meier's 1983 article on ethnic tensions in Kosovo was not cited. The weekly *Magyarország* instead used his West German publication as a credible and impartial Western voice on the situation of the Hungarian minority in Romania.⁵⁵ One must add in this case that the time factor, the development of Hungarian-Romanian relations, and domestic public pressure played a significant role.⁵⁶

Six names remain on our list, which appeared only in the samizdat publication—meaning that only one-sixth of the authors of *Máshonnan Beszélő* were not from the Soviet bloc. Among them were two Cubans: Modesto Maidique, an economist known to few, and Armando Valladares, another "public enemy" of the Castro regime who was convicted of terrorism, and whom *Népszabadság* presented

50 == Szili, "Mozgolódók" [The restless], 45.

51 == K. E., "Nemzetközi kapcsolatok." [International relations], 368.

52 == Eberstadt, "Amit most tudunk" [What we know at the moment], 122–23.; Eberstadt, "Egészségügyi válság" [Health crisis], 90–96.

53 == Gellért, "Gazdag örökség" [Rich heritage], 11.; Szalim, "Az objektivizmus" [The seemingness of objectivity], 137–39.

54 == Anonymous, "Külföldi folyóiratok" [Foreign journals], 782.

55 == Anonymous, "Két mércével mérnek" [They measure with double standards], 18.

56 == Földes, "Magyarország, Románia" [Hungary, Romania], 359–92.

in accordance with the official Cuban narrative still in 1988.⁵⁷ Of the remaining group of two English and two American historians and political scientists, three—Anthony Upton, Mark Baskin, and Melvin Croan—can be assumed not to have reached the horizon of Hungarian social scientists.⁵⁸ The exception is Louis Fitzgibbon, who touched on a particularly sensitive topic—the Katyń massacre—which the official Soviet stance defined as a Nazi war crime. Other samizdat publishers also viewed the Katyń issue as a serious matter that could undermine the legitimacy of the regime.⁵⁹

= = = Western Authors of Samizdat Publishing Houses

In this chapter, we expand our inquiry on Western samizdat authors with the samizdat supply published in the first issue of *Beszélő* in 1981 and the most important offers of samizdat publishers between 1980 and 1987. An announcement in Issue 1 of *Beszélő* listed the volumes of “manuscript literature” available at the Rajk Boutique on Galamb Street. Hungarian authors dominated this list of seventy-seven items with nearly fifty writings, and we can find only five Western names, which was merely 6–7 percent of the selection.⁶⁰ Fred Halliday’s work on Afghanistan was later published in *Másbannon Beszélő*. The case of the other journalist, Oriana Fallaci, is somewhat special, because the Italian reporter had a kind of cult following even within the Soviet bloc, and Hungarian journalists could also mention her among their professional role models.⁶¹ The Walesa interview, which could be purchased for thirty forints, could not be published in the first publicity, although official information policy played on several strings in connection with the Polish crisis and Solidarity. It was not uncommon for defamatory material to appear in forums reaching the widest audience, while a more balanced picture of the processes in Poland could be presented via channels with a narrower reach.⁶² Still, the only mention of this interview, which ultimately had its roots in the Fallaci cult, suggests a kind of—perhaps deliberate, perhaps accidental—editorial negligence. *Magyarország* reviewed the star reporter’s article about her own working methods, which included a reference to the 1981 Walesa interview that was not published in Hungary: “My recent interview with Walesa begins exactly as the meeting began: with an

57 = = N. Cs. [Initials]. “Egy szélhámos karrierje” [The career of a swindler]. *Népszabadság*, February 6, 1988, 2.

58 = = Upton’s research on Finland only entered Hungarian historical thinking in a review article published after the turn of the millennium. See Vares, “Sikertörténet” [Success story], 134–35.

59 = = Zawodny, *Halál az erdőben* [Death in the forest].

60 = = Anonymous, “2. jegyzék. 1981. Július” [2nd catalogue. July 1981], 107–8.

61 = = Szathmári, “Kik a példaképek?” [Who are the role models?], 137.

62 = = Mitrovits, *A szocializmus csapdájában* [In the trap of socialism], 352–57.

argument, and ends as the meeting ended: with the unexpected formation of a new friendship.”⁶³

From the two historical works, Bill Lomax’s *Hungary 1956* was a regular feature in the columns of *Beszélő*. Understandably, before January 1989 it was impossible to dispute the evaluation of 1956 that formed the ideological-political foundation of the Kádár regime;⁶⁴ therefore, before 1988 Lomax was only mentioned in the first publicity in exceptional cases, and with a disparaging, propagandistic tone. Thus, the compilation of *Népszabadság* entitled *A tények válaszolnak* (The Facts Answer), prepared for the thirtieth anniversary of the Revolution, used a passage from his book to support the claim that “reactionary” forces had also organized themselves during the revolution and considered Cardinal Mindszenty their legitimate leader.⁶⁵ László Eörsi was the first to cite Lomax as a credible historical source at the end of 1988 in connection with the Kossuth Square massacre of October 25.⁶⁶ British historian Robert Conquest published his monograph *The Great Terror* in 1968 on Stalin’s show trials of the 1930s.⁶⁷ Although violations of the law in the 1950s became a topic that could be cautiously discussed thanks to de-Stalinization, Conquest’s book was accepted as a historical source only at the early stage of the regime change in 1988, when Stalin’s crimes became the subject of public debate again; an article taken from the Hungarian and Soviet press also refers to it.⁶⁸ Conquest’s “erroneous” views were publicly criticized on several occasions: for example, his denial of artistic commitment, or the convergence theories of a “well-known anti-communist expert.”⁶⁹ In this case, the articles taken from the Soviet press also show that the writings that appeared in the wake of Gorbachev’s glasnost—especially on Soviet-related topics—also helped to broaden the horizons of Hungarian publicity.

The fourth most expensive item in the boutique’s offerings was Arthur Koestler’s novel *Darkness at Noon*, which could be purchased for 350 forints. The Hungarian-born author can be compared to George Orwell, whose most important works, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, were also published as samizdat.⁷⁰

63 == Fallaci, “Hogyan készítek interjút?” [How do I conduct an interview?], 19.

64 == Ripp, *Rendszerváltás* [Regime change], 279–81.

65 == Anonymous, “Az ellenforradalom megítélése (1)” [The assessment of the counter-revolution (1)], *Népszabadság*, October 16, 1986, 6.

66 == Eörsi, “Kik lőhettek?” [Who could have fired?], 2.

67 == Conquest, *The Great Terror*.

68 == Gömöri, “Egy tabu anatómiája” [The anatomy of a taboo], 23; Maluhin, “A hadseregparancsnok” [The murder of the army commander], 121–22.

69 == Lutter, “Elkötelezettség” [Commitment], 136–37; Modrzsinszkaja, “A jelenkori ellenforradalom,” [The anatomy of the ideas of the present counterrevolution], 66.

70 == Orwell, *Állati gazdaság* [Animal farm]; Orwell, *Ezerkilencszáznyolcvannégy* [Nineteen eighty-four].

The former, under the title *Allati gazdaság*,⁷¹ was published by Gábor Demszky's AB Független Kiadó, while the latter was published by György Krassó and his Magyar Október Szabadsajtó Kiadó.⁷² Both formerly communist writers' names appeared relatively frequently in Hungarian newspapers; even the so-called forbidden works were mentioned. Koestler's well-known work *Darkness at Noon* began to be publicly discussed in the 1980s, following a few scattered references.

Pál E. Fehér, a cultural critic and contributor to both the literary magazines *Kritika* and *Élet és Irodalom* as well as the party daily *Népszabadság*, and who often represented the official position, shared a Soviet assessment of Koestler in *Élet és Irodalom*. According to Fehér, the main problem with the novel—a good two decades after the first wave of de-Stalinization—was not that it revealed the psychology of Stalinist terror and that it “contained a considerable number of serious truths,” but rather its timing.⁷³ The author published it at a moment when it “objectively” caused harm to the anti-fascist alliance of World War II. Although similar opinion could still be read in 1984,⁷⁴ by then a different assessment had emerged. Writer and journalist Iván Boldizsár, the editor of the English language cultural country propaganda journal *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, shared an anecdote about the novel. According to this anecdote, he bought it during a more open period,⁷⁵ on a trip to Paris in 1946; then in 1949, “G. I.”—most likely the social democrat István Gergely—borrowed it from him shortly before his arrest.⁷⁶ According to the story, Koestler's novel “prepared” Gergely for state security proceedings, therefore he admitted to all the fabricated charges in the hope of taking the easy way out.⁷⁷ After his death in 1983, however, Koestler was assessed in *Nagyvilág* as an important writer who had penned numerous novels. The assessment refuted the claim that the novel's publication had harmed the great cause, as only the 1946 French edition—the one Boldizsár acquired—had a mass impact.⁷⁸ The author

71 == The standard Hungarian translation of the title is *Állatfarm*.

72 == About Krassó as samizdat publisher, see Danyi, “Polgárjogi harcos” [Civil rights combatant], 200–33.

73 == E. Fehér, “Nota bene”, 6.

74 == A. G. [Initials], “Folyóiratszemle” [Journal review]. *Magyar Nemzet*, August 17, 1984, 7.

75 == Takács, “Nyitás és új bezárkózás” [Opening and new isolation], 321–39.

76 == Boldizsár, known as a “passionate storyteller,” is certainly mistaken here. If he indeed lent the book in 1949, it was not shortly before Gergely's arrest, which took place in 1951. He was released in 1955, and his career path under Kádár was not an unusual one either; in 1962, he was appointed head of a department at the government press control agency, the Information Office (Tájékoztatási Hivatal). “Gergely István.”

77 == Boldizsár, “Keser-édesek” [Bittersweet bits], 1394–405.

78 == Vezér, “Az ismeretlenbe” [In pursuit of the arrow shot into the unknown], 1228–41.

and the novel were included in the 1986 edition of a volume introducing Western Hungarian literature.⁷⁹

1984, the “international Orwell year,” was also a watershed in terms of the author’s official reputation. Until the 1980s, there was hardly any mention of his works, which were described in 1955 (taken from the Soviet *Novy Mir*) as “arrogantly anti-democratic and anti-Soviet.”⁸⁰ However the journal *Valóság* in the 1960s referred to *Animal Farm* as “malicious” but “witty” satire,⁸¹ and after a series of references, in 1984 two magazines introduced him as a left-wing intellectual whose polyphonic criticism of oppression had been appropriated and distorted by anti-capitalist propaganda.⁸² However, in the case of both Koestler and Orwell, the only way to become acquainted with their fundamental works was through samizdat editions or copies obtained abroad.

Among Western authors published by various samizdat workshops in the 1980s, historical and factual literature dominates. Five authors can be classified in this category, but only the Polish-American Janusz Kazimierz Zawodny can be considered an academic scholar. He switched from a military career to history while in exile and wrote a book about the Soviet mass murder of Polish officers during WWII.⁸³ As we have seen, the truth about Kaytń was also addressed by *Máshonnan Beszélő*. Isaac Deutscher, a Trotskyist communist who emigrated to England in 1939, wrote monographs on Trotsky and Stalin, but AB Független Kiadó chose his work on the period of de-Stalinization.⁸⁴ Deutscher, however, was not an unknown name in Hungary, even though his first study, on Russian Jewry, only became available in Hungarian in 1985.⁸⁵ His works on historical and ideological issues were read by intellectuals in Hungary, where his statements were referenced and sometimes even used to support Marxist arguments.⁸⁶

Two of the remaining three works are historical accounts of the East Central European region, dealing with the 1953 uprising in East Berlin and the Yalta World Order.⁸⁷ Siegfried Kogelfranz was only mentioned in the first publicity as a West

79 == Béládi et al., *A nyugati magyar irodalom* [Hungarian literature in the West], 14, 50, 123, 153.

80 == Rozanov, “Nagy hagyományok” [Great traditions], 484.

81 == Schaff, “Az egyén” [The individual], 48.

82 == Köröspataki Kiss, “1984”, 42.; Staller, “George Orwell,” 24–31.

83 == Zawodny, *Halál az erdőben* [Death in the forest].

84 == Deutscher, *Korabeli krónika* [A contemporary chronicle].

85 == Deutscher, “Az orosz forradalom” [The Russian Revolution], 269–77.

86 == See Nagy, “A forradalmi út” [Old and new critics of the revolutionary path], 47–48.

87 == Arnulf Baring, *A kelet-németországi* [The East German]; Kogelfranz, *Jalta öröksége* [The heritage of Yalta].

German journalist⁸⁸ working for *Der Spiegel*, while Arnulf Baring, professor at the Free University of Berlin—again, a familiar formula—wrote another publication: an analysis of the internal relations of the Federal Republic of Germany, focusing on the years of the social democratic-liberal government led by Willy Brandt.⁸⁹ The hero of Biermann’s biography, Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, was far from a taboo figure in Hungary. Even a street bore his name in the Újlipótváros neighborhood of Budapest, together with a memorial tablet. “I would write about Raoul Wallenberg if I were a writer,” actress Zsuzsa Gordon told a reporter from *Film–Színház–Muzsika* in 1961. “Raoul Wallenberg was killed. The Arrow Cross killed him,” she concluded after her dramatic personal story.⁹⁰ Biermann’s book could not be published because there could be no mention of Wallenberg’s deportation to the Soviet Union and his death. This version first appeared in the columns of *Magyarország* in a letter to the editor published in the summer of 1988.⁹¹

The name of the authors—more precisely, poets—published (also) as samizdat in the 1980s was well-known to the Hungarian public.⁹² Several of Ezra Pound’s *Cantos* were available in Hungarian⁹³ before György Krassó published the translation of his selected poems, first released in Paris.⁹⁴ Meanwhile Miklós Haraszti, a dissident thinker and editor, edited essays by Hans Magnus Enzensberger—considered one of the progressive West German poets—that were critical of state socialist Hungary.⁹⁵

= = = Summary—About the Western Orientation of Hungarian Samizdat

In 1985, László Zay, a member of the editorial board of the daily *Magyar Nemzet* and working under the pseudonym Bálint Koppány, wrote a response in the samizdat *Beszélő* to the author publishing under the pseudonym Ilona Bak. Bak had recommended that the public completely reject the official media as a form of resistance.

Ilona Bak could also decide to buy the newspaper and read between the lines. I’m not saying that she would find something to read between the lines every day,

88 = = Miklós, “Egy ellenforradalmi központ anatómiája” [The anatomy of a counter-revolutionary centre], *Népszabadság*, September 18, 1982, 9.

89 = = (bt) [Initials], „Baring: Hatalomváltás A »bonni trojka« kulisszái mögött.” [Baring: Change of Power. Behind the Scenes of the ‘Bonn Troika’], *Esti Hírlap*, June 19, 1982, 5.

90 = = Lelkes, “Milyen téma” [What topic], 14–15.

91 = = Anonymous, “Budapest 62., Pf. 634” [Budapest 62, PO Box 634], 31.

92 = = See Bart, *Világirodalom* [World literature].

93 = = Pound, “XIII. Canto”, 1728–29; Pound, “Nyolcadik Canto” [Eighth canto], 1154–57; Pound, “XLIX. Canto,” 213–14; Pound, “LI. Canto,” 214–15; Pound, “IV. Canto,” 1805–8; Pound, “XX. Canto,” 1808–13.

94 = = Pound, *Tizenöt canto* [Fifteen cantos].

95 = = Haraszti, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*.

but this third press also needs publicity. You can also learn something from the refutations; there are traditions of this even from the time of World War II. Ilona Bak could also find examples of how official replies reveal hidden or more open dissent between the lines. This is something to think about, because even if metaphorical language or hiding between the lines lags behind the bluntness of the second press, still a lot can be learned this way as well.⁹⁶

Zay partly “spoke to his own side,” but what he called the “third press” was noticed not only by his contemporaries, but also by media and history scholars. The terms “third publicity” (*harmadik nyilvánosság*) and “intermediate public sphere” (*köztes nyilvánosság*) is used to describe a segment of the public sphere that belongs to the legal forums but is constantly in conflict due to borderline cases and often shifting or occasional tolerances. This segment is controlled by the authorities, but it is well documented that the content that can be expressed and printed there is wider and more profound than in most other programs and journals.⁹⁷ Based on the writings and references in the first publicity of the above-discussed samizdat authors, we are also able to outline these forums of “intermediate publicity” beyond the truly “problematic” papers, like *Mozgó Világ*, *Medventánc*, or *Tiszatáj*;⁹⁸ they included literary and intellectual journals such as *Nagyvilág*, *Valóság*, and *Új Írás*, as well as public affairs weeklies such as *Élet és Irodalom*, *Magyarország*, and *Új Tükör*. In fact, even through these journals, a somewhat fainter Soviet “intermediate public sphere” also emerges. In the case of certain sensitive topics—as illustrated by the authors featured in these samizdat publications—it becomes clear that the actors of the first publicity kept a close eye on the Soviet press, and as soon as a topic or author was published there, it served as a reference point and authorization to bring these topics and authors into the domestic discourse.

The intentions behind turning to Western authors were different. Samizdat was not at all Western-oriented, as it did not aim at debate or soft Western transfers; in addition to Hungarian authors, intellectuals with “personal” experiences with state socialism, often living in exile, were the most frequent contributors. Publishers and editors also used writings and volumes from outside the Soviet bloc primarily to discuss the affairs of the region and existing socialism. Although a significant number of literary figures were also featured, with a few exceptions, they were not important as writers but as eyewitnesses who made statements about politics and society. It is therefore not surprising that many of them had once belonged to the movement, which lent credibility to their revelations. Their statements contributed

96 = Koppány, “A harmadik sajtó” [The third press]. For the article triggering the response, see Bak, “Hogyan szabotálom” [How do I sabotage], 94–96.

97 = Bajomi-Lázár, *A magyarországi médiaháború* [The Hungarian media war], 18; Németh, *A Mozgó Világ* [The history of the journal *Mozgó Világ*], 13; Kiss, “Jegyzetek” [Notes], 316.

98 = Németh, *A Mozgó Világ*; Gyuris, *A Tiszatáj* [Half a century of the journal *Tiszatáj*].

to the delegitimization of existing socialism, often touching on central taboos that could not be discussed in public or only in certain ways, such as 1956, the Eastern European resistance, and the crimes and dysfunctions of Soviet-type systems.

The decisive difference between the first and the second publicity, therefore, is not that certain authors could not appear in the former. In fact, only about one-sixth of them were not even mentioned in the legal press. Furthermore, many of them were well-known to Hungarian readers, and some or even plenty of their works had been translated or at least reviewed, used in arguments, or debated. Even if a certain work was often mentioned, the selection of publications in *Máshonnan Beszélő* and books by samizdat publishing houses show that the text itself was rarely available in Hungarian and so could only be accessed in Hungary through copies brought in from abroad (mainly illegally) or stored on library shelves closed to the public. The first and the second publicity often wanted something completely different from the same author; in the latter, the clear objective was to unveil the dysfunctions and dark secrets of state socialism, while it was not uncommon that in the first publicity, the same author's socially critical writings were used to debunk Western conditions and decision-makers.

It also becomes apparent that the differences between these two public spheres began to become more uncertain in the second half of 1988, fading away in 1989—as the multifaceted censorship mechanisms become inoperable, and as the non-fiction so characteristic of samizdat started to fill the stands of the underground.

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Keywords

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