

## **Visegrad Scholarship Fellow 2020**

### **Final Report**

(March–April 2020)

I was happy to obtain two-month Visegrad Scholarship for archival research at the The Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives at Central European University. Although I had to shorten the period of my research in Budapest because of Covid-19 Pandemic, I can evaluate the time I had spent at the OSA as extremely fruitful. The goal of my archival work was to collect materials for my monograph tentatively titled “The Decembrists of 1956: Leningrad Youth in Search of Space for Public Action”, which is continuing the historiographical tradition of analysis the Thaw period in Soviet history (1950–1960s) beyond the binary oppositions as “protest/conformism”. Instead of these schemes I prefer to focus on spatial dimension of public expression Soviet citizens’ doubts, protests and loyalty. In Budapest I enjoyed to find plenty of unique Samizdat documents and rich collections of clippings collected by Radio Liberty / Radio Free Europe journalists, which are currently located in “Records of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Research Institute” fund. Along with sources I have collected in Russian archives documents from OSA become the base for my monograph.

Collections of clippings from “Soviet Red Archives” (OSA–300-80) were the most valuable for my research, because this sub-fund has lots of documents from Nikita Krushchev’s epoch of 1950–1960s that is the chronological area of my research. I found many articles from Soviet and foreign press (in English, German and French) systematized according to various topics, which are connected to different parts of my monograph (i.e. “underground literature”, “samizdat”, “anti-soviet manifestations”, “youth cafes”). Currently I am working on the article dedicated to youth debates and discussion clubs of the Thaw period that is based on sources from “Soviet Red Archive” along with several subject and biographical files from “Samizdat Archives”.

“Samizdat Archives” (OSA–300-85), which is one of the richest and the most

famous collections of the OSA, was not the object of my direct interest, because most of the documents collected there are dated by the late 1960–1980s. However, I looked for documents of the 1970s, which are connected with persons who began their political or artistic career during the Thaw period.

For instance, I have found valuable documents about Vadim Nechaev, who was “Radio Liberty” employee. Before his emigration from the USSR in 1978 he became famous in Leningrad as artist and writer. During the mid 1970s together with his wife Marina Nedobrova he was organizing exhibitions of the underground art in their private apartment. Also they published samizdat journal “Arkhip (the Archive)” that observed independent artistic life in Leningrad. For my research I found some important details about his youth which he spent in bohemian circles of the 1950s Leningrad.

Also I used Subject Files Related to the USSR collected by the US office of “Radio Liberty” (OSA–300-7-6) and collections of clippings made by Oksana Antic (OSA–300-5-30) and Elisabeth Teague (OSA–300-5-150). For detailed list of OSA documents, which I used for my research, see Appendix 1.

Unfortunately, because of shortening the scholarship period due to Covid-19 pandemic I had no chance to continue my work with documents of the RL/RFE US Office (OSA–300-80-7-6 – Subject Files Related to the USSR), reports of Publications Department (OSA–300-80-8-38 – Reports on the USSR) and Subject Files collected in the Samizdat Archives (OSA–300-85-12).

I hope that my fellowship at the Open Society Archive could launch a new joint research project. As I learned from my archival research, many cases, which are presented in the rich collection of the OSA, are connected with dissidents, protesters, underground artists and samizdat writers from Leningrad. At the moment we are discussing possible forms of trilateral collaboration between the OSA, the “Memorial” Center in Saint Petersburg and the Higher School of Economics focused on the history of unofficial social activity and underground art in the 1950–1980s Leningrad. The web-site “Islands of (Un)Freedom” (<https://spb.iofe.center>) could be the perfect platform for the first step of this collaboration. Sources from the OSA along with documents from the “Memorial” archive and files from Russian state archives could help us to provide multi-facet view on the epoch from the both sides

of the Iron Curtain. If it gains the interest from the audience we could develop it to other on-line projects or/and off-line exhibitions dedicated to Leningrad dissent.

I found everybody at the Open society Archive as very kind and gentle persons and great professionals in their academic fields. But first of all I am grateful for Katalin Gadaros and Robert Parnica who organized comfortable infrastructure for my research and who helped to solve all kind of problems during the whole period of my fellowship.

With great pleasure I will recommend the Visegrad Scholarship Program to all of those, who need to complete his/her research in friendly academic atmosphere of one of the richest archives of Central Europe and in conversations and discussions with highly professional colleagues.

Dmitry Kozlov  
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research fellow

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' and 'K' connected by a horizontal line, with a flourish underneath.

## ***Appendix 1.***

List of OSA collections used for my research during the fellowship

*(box level)*

### **300-5 Analytic Research Department**

- 300-5-30 – Records of Oksana Antic
- 300-5-150 – Records of Elisabeth Teague

*archival boxes: 31, 57–58*

### **300-7 US Office**

- 300-7-6 Subject Files Related to the USSR

*archival boxes: 4–5, 19–23, 33*

### **300-80 Soviet Red Archives**

- 300-80-1 Old Code Subject Files

*archival boxes: 44–45, 180, 241, 246, 308, 318, 393–396, 506, 509, 511–513, 515–516, 523, 550, 556–557, 559, 574, 576, 578, 586*

### **300-85 Samizdat Archives**

- 300-85-9 – Published Samizdat

*documents from 1979 to 1981 (AS-2866 – AS-4516)<sup>1</sup>*

- 300-85-13 – Biographical files

*archival boxes: 90, 156, 161, 231, 254-255*

- 300-85-44 – Unpublished Samizdat: Subject Files

*archival boxes: 15, 17, 31–32, 35*

- 300-85-45 – Unpublished Samizdat: Biographical Files

*archival boxes: 4–6, 8, 14, 18*

- 300-85-48 – New York Office Files Relating to Samizdat

*archival boxes: 24–25, 27–28, 40–41, 44–45, 48*

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<sup>1</sup> Because of the discrepancy of numeration in the index on the OSA web-site and numeration of the boxes, I use internal codes of “Arkhiv Samizdata (AS)”.