

Josephine von Zitzewitz
Independent Scholar
Josephine.vonzitzewitz@gmail.com

FROM SAMIZDAT TO PRINT, FROM LENINGRAD TO PARIS: THE CASE OF *BESEDA*

In 1983, Leningrad émigré Tatiana Goricheva founded the Russian-language journal *Beseda* in Paris. *Beseda*'s key audience, however, remained in Soviet Russia: the journal's aim was to introduce Russian readers to key developments in Western theology and philosophy. This paper offers a comparison between *Beseda* and its predecessor, the Leningrad samizdat journal 37 (1976–1981), also edited by Goricheva. This comparison sheds light on how and why *Beseda* remained part of the rapidly evolving journal landscape in Leningrad, suspended in transit between East and West during the Soviet Union's final years.

Key words: Leningrad, samizdat, tamizdat, religion, journal.

Introduction: *Beseda* between Samizdat and Tamizdat

In 1983, the religious thinker and philosopher Tatiana Goricheva founded the journal *Beseda* in Paris. Goricheva had emigrated from Leningrad in 1980 and decided on Paris as her new home after a short stay in Germany. 11 issues of *Beseda* appeared between 1983–1993. This means *Beseda* was a more or less annual publication that lasted throughout the Perestroika years, until the abolition of censorship and beyond the demise of the Soviet Union. This chapter argues that *Beseda* occupied a liminal space. The journal was the product of a deliberately unresolved transit situation — its maker remained orientated towards Leningrad and never fully settled in emigration.

Beseda's in-between state is confirmed on the inside cover, which gave the place of publication as 'Leningrad-Paris' for issues 1–9. After 1991, when Leningrad regained its original name, the journal straddled 'Peterburg-Parizh' (this is definitely the case for № 11; I have never seen № 10). Produced in Russian on a Western printing press, *Beseda* was a tamizdat publication representative of the era when publishing abroad was driven mostly by recent 'Third Wave' émigrés. But many of the usual characteristics of tamizdat, in particular its ability to influence Western audiences' view of the Soviet Union, are of limited

relevance when describing a periodical such as *Beseda*. Goricheva listed Leningrad before Paris for a reason: *Beseda's* conceptual and personal roots, as well as its entire target audience, were in Leningrad, with Paris merely being the place of production. *Beseda* came in a handy pocket format, perfect for carrying inconspicuously, which made 're-export' to the Soviet Union easier. The text on the flyleaf defines the journal's objective as '[it] aims to introduce the Russian readers to new developments in Western religious and philosophical life'.

Beseda exhibits many traits of a Leningrad samizdat journal of the 1980s. Perhaps this should not come as a surprise, given that Goricheva had been a prominent samizdat editor prior to her emigration. The circle of contributors to *Beseda* was fairly narrow, and a majority of those published in the first few issues belonged to Goricheva's former circle in Leningrad. Goricheva used the standard disclaimer, 'works of writers living in USSR are published without their knowledge or consent' to protect these people against repression. In the case of *Beseda* this sounds particularly spurious given Goricheva's lively epistolary exchanges with her friends, reflected in the journal's 'Letters' section, and their evident knowledge of her publishing activities.

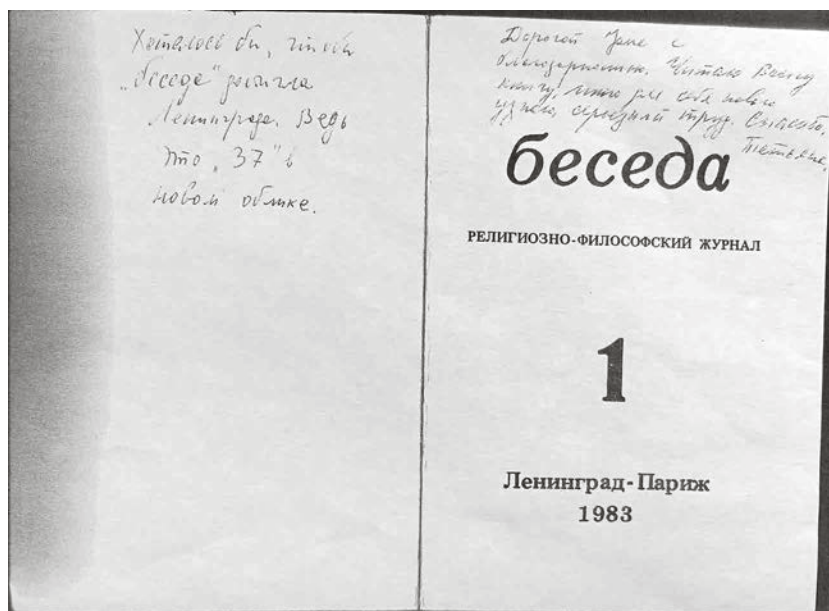
Beseda straddled the concepts of samizdat and tamizdat, introducing new facets to both. The journal's liminal position indicates that émigré publishing had entered a new phase: the insistence to remain in Leningrad, at least in conceptual terms, appears as a refusal to believe that emigration should mean permanent separation. In his review of *Beseda*, written in 1984, Yurii Mamleev insisted that the journal was unique among the many publications of the Third Wave of emigration because it featured not only to authors living in emigration, but also to those living in the USSR [Mamleev 1984: 13]. In 2003, the makers of the seminal encyclopaedia *Samizdat Leningrada* confirmed that they considered *Beseda* part of the Leningrad journal landscape when they included *Beseda* as one of two journals published abroad [Severiukhin et al 2003: 394–395].¹

***Beseda* and the Leningrad Context**

The thematic focus of *Beseda* shows marked parallels to 37, one of the samizdat journals Goricheva edited prior to her emigration. And indeed, a copy of the first issue of *Beseda*, inscribed by Goricheva as a gift to the British researcher Jane Ellis, shows that *Beseda* was intended to be '37 in a new guise'.

In order to better understand the parallels and differences between the two journals, we must take a brief excursion into 1970s Leningrad. In 1976 Goricheva and her then husband, the poet Viktor Krivulin, founded 37, the first samizdat journal that would appear more or less regularly over a number of years. 21 issues were published between January 1976 and March 1981. 37 was closely linked

¹ The other tamizdat journal listed in *Samizdat Leningrada* is *Ekho* (eds. V. Maramzin and A. Khvostenko), Paris, 14 issues, 1978–1986.



Archive of the Keston Institute (now at Baylor University, Texas)

to the Religious-Philosophical Seminar (1974–1980), one of the many informal groups (*kruzhki*) that met in private flats to investigate topics of interest to a growing number of young intellectuals who kept their distance from official culture. The attentive reader will have noticed that *Beseda's* subheading — Religious-philosophical Journal — echoes the title of this Seminar. Goricheva was one of the initiators of the Religious-Philosophical Seminar,² which was originally founded for the purpose of exploring the roots of the Christian tradition but quickly turned to the specific concerns of Soviet Orthodox Christian neophytes. In the pronouncedly atheist Soviet Union 'being religious' was a form of dissent. As a result of the limitations on religious life, the most ardent debates took place underground. Leningrad was home to what can be called the 'cultural faction' of the 1970s neophytes, whose interest in Russian Orthodoxy was entwined with developments in literature, art, and thought rather than national or nationalist sentiment, which dominated the Orthodox revival in other places, notably Moscow. By contrast, the Leningrad intellectuals understood religion as a function of culture: both religion and culture were part of a mindset that acknowledged the existence of a reality transcending the two-dimensional, materialist setup of Soviet ideology.³ The Religious-Philosophical Seminar occupies

² *Samizdat Leningrada* lists the Seminar as 'Tat'iana Goricheva's Religious-Philosophical Seminar'. [Severiukhin et al. 2003: 445].

³ Stanislav Savitskii calls 37 the journal 'on whose pages the religious-artistic mythology was formed' [Savitskii 2002: 29]. Kyrill Butyrin conceptualises the association of culture with

a special place in this landscape because it is exceptionally well documented on the pages of 37. Indeed, the main objective of 37, proclaimed in capital letters in the editorial to the first issue, was 'TO LEAD THE CONVERSATION CULTURE BEYOND ITS PRE-WRITTEN STAGE' by recording and publicising some of the papers given and discussions held at the sessions of the Religious-Philosophical Seminar and related events.⁴

Goricheva edited the journal's section on religion and philosophy. An avid new Orthodox believer, she was also a student of philosophy with a particular interest in German phenomenology. She procured theological texts to the best of her ability and translated from several European languages. And yet, Orthodox texts and translations of Western twentieth-century theology remained rare. Instead, most of the 'Christian' texts on the pages of 37 were generated by the editors and their friends. Just like the discussions at the Seminar, they were very personal in nature and not always comprehensible to outsiders. Some took the form of 'conversations', i. e. stylised epistolary exchanges — such as the 'Evangelical Dialogues' between Goricheva and Krivulin in №№ 1 and 2 and 'Issues of Contemporary Christianity' between 'A and B' in № 2, continued by 'A, B, V, G, and D' in № 3. The tradition of epistolary exchanges would later continue in *Beseda*.

But 37's mission was not limited to publishing the proceedings of the Seminar, or even materials that broadly fitted the label 'religion and philosophy'. Instead, it had several sections with dedicated section editors. First and foremost among these was the literary section, which was dominated by poetry and edited by Krivulin, one of the Leningrad underground's most prolific and original poets. Thanks to his efforts, 37 is known first and foremost as the springboard for many poets who are now considered classics of the late Soviet period, such as Krivulin himself, Elena Shvarts and Sergei Stratanovskii. The editors of 37 were highly selective with regards to the literary texts they published and kept the circle of authors small. Indeed, Goricheva explicitly denies any desire to reach out to an audience beyond their immediate circle: 'Our journal was created elitist. We did this consciously, because you can't do everything at once, as they say. Moreover, in one sense we also did it just for ourselves' [Goricheva 1985]. This elitism on the part of the editors earned 37 the reputation of being a journal for a narrow circle only: 'as the journal emerged from a small circle [kruzhkovyi zhurnal], there was a closely defined community' [Ostanin 2015].⁵

religion in political terms: 'the matter of the cultural-spiritual, and therefore ultimately political, opposition to the communist Leviathan' [Butyrin 1993: 127]. Goricheva herself called 37 'a cultural-religious journal' [Goricheva 1985].

⁴ A few examples: 37 № 7–8 reproduced texts and/or abstracts of eight papers from the conference 'Christianity and Humanism', 5 November 1976, as well as the question-and-answer sessions. № 9 contained the transcript of the discussion 'Contemporary Christianity' from 5 December 1975.

⁵ Ostanin was one of the editors of *Chasy* (1976–1990), a journal with similar beginnings as 37 and representing many of the same people. However, the editors strove to publish as many different authors from the cultural underground as possible.

This background knowledge makes it easier to understand, perhaps, how texts about Orthodox theology could coexist with speculative discussions about avant-garde tendencies in art, experimental poetry, haphazardly chosen texts by Western theologians and philosophers, and the religious-philosophical ruminations of the journal's makers and their close friends. It also foreshadows key features of *Beseda*, such as the eclecticism that placed an interview with Jacques Derrida alongside a text on spiritual anthropology by the Orthodox theologian Olivier Clément (see *Beseda* №4) and the limited circle of authors that were mostly known to Goricheva in person. Indeed, several authors featured in *Beseda* had been regular contributors to 37: Goricheva herself, the religious thinker Evgenii Pazukhin, who for some time co-edited the 'religion/philosophy' section of 37 alongside Goricheva, the linguist and cultural historian Boris Groys, and the (few) poets published in the first issues of *Beseda* (see below). Indeed, *Beseda* attracted criticism similar to that levied against 37: 'a family affair, a journal made by a small circle [kruzhok] and partly intended for this small circle' [Medem 1986: 257].

Goricheva was forced to emigrate in 1980, another victim of the persecution campaign the authorities unleashed against unofficial intellectuals around the turn of the decade. Her departure led to an almost complete overhaul of 37's editorial board, with the consequence that the theology section disappeared completely.⁶ In 1981, after three more issues, the journal was discontinued. While KGB pressure had played a role, Viktor Krivulin also conceded that, by 1981, both the journal's key authors and its main readers had left the country [Krivulin 1993: 79–80]. Two years later, *Beseda* would assume one of the roles 37 had played: it became the journal of those who were interested in Orthodox religion, ecumenical topics and philosophy, and it continued 37's tradition of discussion-in-writing, now across borders and the Iron curtain.

Beseda in Paris

B. Medem concluded that Goricheva founded *Beseda* because she had assumed the position of representative of the religious revival in the West, and this mission was hard to fulfil without a printed mouthpiece [Medem 1986: 257]. This assessment correctly points to *Beseda*'s lineage and Goricheva's continued orientation towards Leningrad. However, 37 had been produced by a group, and the breadth of topics it covered reflected the interests of the people involved. By contrast, *Beseda*'s focus was much narrower on religion and philosophy, Goricheva's area of expertise when she edited 37.

In a sense, *Beseda*'s table of contents reflected Goricheva's own trajectory: after her emigration, she relished the chance to become more involved in reli-

⁶ This section had featured under various headings, such as 'philosophy, theology' (№№ 3, 4, 10), 'Christianity and art' (№№ 14, 15), and 'philosophy and religion' (№№ 11, 18).

gious life. In Paris she began studying at the private St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute, founded in the 1920s by White émigrés. She also became acquainted with well-known figures from different Christian confessions, some of whom she interviewed for *Beseda*. Goricheva's two co-editors also left their mark: after the second issue, *Beseda* was formally co-edited by Pavle Rak, a writer from Yugoslavia/Slovenia who led the Serbian Orthodox Society in Paris and became Goricheva's second husband. His own religious journey is reflected in the materials on Mount Athos (in *Beseda* № 7 and № 9), which he visited repeatedly in the late 1980s, and where he would ultimately become a monk after separating from Goricheva. Rak's interests seem to have been congruent with Goricheva's. Boris Groys, who was nominated *Beseda*'s official representative in Germany in the second issue, continued to write on various philosophical topics, and his own expertise is reflected in various publications related to Moscow Conceptualism, a current in unofficial fine art and poetry on which he had honed his expertise back in Leningrad.

And yet, Goricheva's personal interests or her émigré situation are not the only factors informing the shape of *Beseda*. The key features of *Beseda* were in step with developments in Leningrad unofficial publishing, the beginning of which Goricheva had witnessed herself. While the 1970s had been dominated by 37 and *Chasy*, both of which essentially emulated the format of Soviet 'thick journals', specialist journals began to proliferate around the turn of the decade. In 1979, Viktor Krivulin and Sergei Dediulin set up *Severnaia pochta*, specialising in poetry and poetry criticism. In the same year, Sergei Sigei and Ry Nikonova (pseudonyms of Sergei Sigov and Anna Tarshis) founded *Transponans*, dedicated to avant-garde poetry and art. Also in 1979 Goricheva, together with Natalia Malakhovskaia and Tatiana Mamonova, produced the feminist almanac *Zhenshchina i Rossiia*, which gave the authorities a reason to persecute the editors and ultimately push them all into emigration. Sergei Stratanovskii and Kirill Butyrin, who founded *Obvodnyi kanal* in 1981, concentrated on new unofficial literature and literary criticism. *Mitin zhurnal* — the title translates as 'Mitya's journal' — was the brainchild of Dmitrii (Mitya) Volchek, who wanted to see a journal publishing the poetry he himself liked to read [Volchek 2015]. Between the onset of Perestroika in 1985 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the number of grassroots periodicals exploded. Most of them were even more highly specialised and short-lived, exemplifying the variety of writing and reading tastes that had been fostered by unofficial culture and could now be expressed in the climate of relaxing censorship.⁷ *Beseda* was similarly personal in nature, emanating from a small circle centred entirely on the editor. As a platform for ongoing dialogue between Leningrad and Paris, it derived its identity at least

⁷ Examples of niche journals of the Perestroika years include Boris Ivanov's satirical journal *Krasnyi Shchedrinets* (1986–1990), poking fun predominantly at traditional rubrics in Soviet newspapers, and *Topka* (1988–1992), publishing works by authors who worked in boiler rooms, a menial job popular among unofficial intellectuals.

partly from the rapidly changing journal landscape in Goricheva's home country — a further contributing factor to the journal's 'transit' identity.

One of the issues besetting most Soviet samizdat journals publishing original literary or philosophical texts was self-referentiality: prevented from reaching the general reader by the state monopoly on print publishing, their circulation was limited to the circles close to their authors/editors. While these circles could be large, they were, nevertheless, limited to people intrinsically sympathetic to the authors and of similar background. This shared background placed less of a demand on authors and editors to make their material accessible or appealing to a diverse audience. The second issue was specific to the current in the Leningrad underground which Goricheva helped develop. One of the explicit goals of the makers of 37 had been to introduce their readers to contemporary religious and philosophical debates in the West via translations of key texts. As these texts were hard to come by and usually not translated into Russian, members of the group took it upon themselves to provide the translations. Viktor Krivulin defined the translation policy of 37 as an attempt to strive for 'Russian culture's inclusion in the context of contemporary world culture' [Krivulin 1993: 75]. As evidence he cites the translations of 'key artefacts of the present', maintaining that the choice of texts to be translated was not accidental, and claiming that 'it was important to us to recreate the integral context of contemporary culture and not just individual elements' [Krivulin 1993: 77]. This claim is best read as an ideal scenario. It is true that Goricheva was a prolific and competent translator, especially from German, and her efforts were supported by Groys and others. But the work of any samizdat translator were hampered by the scarcity of sources. Even though the National Library in Leningrad ('Publichka') had started acquiring more contemporary or near-contemporary foreign works of philosophy and theology, they often arrived in the USSR with a significant time lag, and the supply remained unsystematic. Consequently, Goricheva and her friends had only a very limited idea of what was being debated in the West, and their lack of contextual knowledge made it much harder to assess and interpret the texts they effectively chanced upon. If we add the fact that translators were few in numbers and amateurs, it becomes clear why 37, *Chasy* and other journals were unable to publish a representative number of high-quality translations. All they could ultimately achieve was to provide samples of individual texts.

The objective for 37 formulated by Krivulin, and doubtlessly shared by Goricheva — that the journal should be a way for Russian culture (and religion as either an inalienable constituent of culture or its foundation) to rejoin world culture — was clearly reflected on the pages of *Beseda*, most obviously in the interview section, a mainstay of the journal from its inception. As the title indicates, *Beseda* was centred on conversation, in particular the dialogue between Christianity as it is understood in 'the West' and the viewpoints of intellectuals in Soviet Russia. Now in 'the West', Goricheva and those who supported her in making the journal finally had unlimited access to the subject matter they had tried so hard to explore from behind the Iron Curtain. The sections on interviews

and book reviews in particular would have been impossible to produce in Soviet circumstances. Goricheva (very rarely others) interviewed contemporary philosophers and religious figures, including well-known German-speaking Catholic theologians, such as the Jesuit Karl Rahner (*Beseda* № 1) and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI (*Beseda* № 6). These interviews are arguably the highlights of *Beseda*, and they testify to Goricheva's lasting interest in interdenominational exchange. Book reviews can also be conceptualised as a form of conversation — a desire to establish contact with another cultural sphere, and the reviews in *Beseda* covered a wide if eclectic mix of topics and titles that will have been of interest to the target audience, from philosopher René Girard (*Beseda* № 2) to contemporary Greek theology (Zizioulas and Yannaras in *Beseda* № 4), the ideas behind the events of 1968 (*Beseda* № 6) Foucault and Deleuze (*Beseda* № 5) and the German cultural theorist Peter Sloterdijk (*Beseda* № 8).

Outside the interview section, echoes of both issues that plagued its samizdat predecessor(s) — excessive self-referentiality and a haphazard list of sources — are evident in *Beseda's* table of content, too. When we look at the list of authors who supplied original texts, we find the same names recurring frequently. What is more, the editors/initiators of the journal Goricheva, Groys and Pavle Rak — contributed sizeable essays to every issue. Moreover, they continued a tradition of the Leningrad samizdat journals by publishing not only under their full name, but additionally under pseudonym/initials, often in the same issue. In the Leningrad underground, this practice was common; it helped distinguish between a person's creative output and their critical writings, but also gave the impression that a given journal had a bigger pool of contributors than it really had.⁸ In the case of *Beseda*, all book reviews until issue № 7 were written by 'T.G.' and 'P.R', transparent guises for Goricheva and Rak and an indication that the journal, for whatever reason, lacked contributors willing to review titles of interest.⁹ And in spite of Goricheva's intention to publish authors from both sides of the Iron Curtain, the majority of contributors were Russian émigrés. Perhaps this fact merely confirms Viktor Krivulin's statement, cited above, about the majority of 37 readers having left the country. Be that as it may, editors featuring as authors on such a large scale — in effect, self-publishing — is a marker of samizdat journals and subculture publishing more broadly. For the émigrés — who included Orthodox churchmen, such as Lev Konin, forcibly exiled in 1980 (№ 1), writers such as Yurii Mamleev, creator of metaphysical novels and philosophical treatises, or younger people such as Liuba Jurgenson, then a teacher and translator (№ 5) — may have published in *Beseda* because the journal's orientation chimed with their interests. But it was clear that *Beseda* was intended

⁸ The widespread use of pseudonyms by samizdat critics who also published under their real name is a curious phenomenon and seems to have served the purpose of inflating a given journal's perceived number of authors and disguising the degree to which certain voices dominated the scene. For a detailed analysis of the practice see von Zitzewitz 2020: 160–161.

⁹ Issues 3–7 feature work by a certain I.S. It is tempting to conclude that these initials designate Igor' Suitsidov — the pseudonym Boris Groys used in Leningrad alongside his full name. Groys published under his full name in each issue of *Beseda* also featuring I.S.

for a Soviet audience: in other words, it constituted a thread leading 'back home', a way to remain present, however ephemerally, in the circles these authors had been forced to leave behind.

By contrast, works by contemporary authors born outside the Soviet Union were few and far between, especially in the earlier issues, and their inclusion seems to follow the same haphazard selection principles employed by 37. The one exception was the French theologian Olivier Clément, who taught at St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris, where Goricheva studied at some point. Works by Clément (most of them excerpts from *On Human Being* [*Questions sur l'homme*], 1986) featured in *Beseda* №№ 1–8. It is easy to see why Goricheva would want to share his teachings with her friends: as a member of the Ecumenical Institute and a personal acquaintance of Pope John Paul II, Clément promoted dialogue between the denominations, in particular between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, and he was interested in the role of Christian thought in modern society. All these were questions the Leningrad neophytes ardently debated back in the 1970s. At the same time, Clément was intimately familiar with Russian religious thought and contemporary literature; in 1974, he published a volume on the spirit of Solzhenitsyn [*L'esprit de Soljénitsyne*]. It is thus possible to say that in translating and publishing Clément, Goricheva promoted somebody very close in spirit to her own circle.

The dialogue form was central to *Beseda*: it underpinned the entire concept, it shaped the most interesting materials, and it helped fulfil the journal's mission. Analysing the different forms dialogue takes as well as its centrality, we find that both these features, were modelled on practices formed in *Beseda's* erstwhile home, Leningrad. In this context, establishing connection took precedence over the search for truth, academic analysis, and philosophical exercise. This mode of debate, which sometimes morphed into polemic and favoured live contact over definitive problem solving, was characteristic of late Soviet unofficial culture and has been immortalised in the image of 'dissidents' sitting in the kitchen talking and smoking. If 37 had the function of giving this culture of debate a written form, then *Beseda* continued the tradition. In fact, *Beseda* has its roots in a real-life dialogue between dissenting Soviet intellectuals: the idea for the journal reportedly arose from an ongoing correspondence between Goricheva and Groys.¹⁰ Unsurprisingly, this dialogue had a Leningrad precedent: Goricheva and Groys published one of their philosophical exchanges in successive issues of 37 under the title 'Fenomenologicheskaja perepiska' (37 №№ 10, 11, 15; Groys used the pseudonym B. Inozemtsev).

After issue 3, *Beseda* included sections called 'From the letters' and 'From our mailbox'. Even a brief comparison between these sections and their equivalents in 37 offers important insights. Some issues of 37 contained a rubric called 'letters to the editor', reminiscent of the eponymous section in Soviet official journals. In view of the fact that most people 'writing in' to 37 were friends of the

¹⁰ Groys had been a regular contributor to 37, briefly taken a visible role after Goricheva's emigration and emigrated to Germany in 1981.

editors, their letters and the ensuing polemics carry a strong element of *styob*, the ironic appropriation of authority discourse widely practiced in the underground. By contrast, most letters published in *Beseda* are personal and devoid of any notion of *styob*.¹¹ Many are unashamedly intimate, starting with ‘my dearest Tanechka’ (V. K. in *Beseda* № 7, presumably Viktor Krivulin). Of course, when writing to a friend (or one’s former wife) in exile there is no official discourse to subvert. However, it is more likely that the most important distinction was another: it is in the ‘Letters’ section that we most clearly hear the voices of those members of Goricheva’s circle who remained in Leningrad. What the letters convey is how much the writers were relishing the opportunity to establish contact and share their news; salient examples are the letters by V. K. and O. O. (Viktor Krivulin and Oleg Okhapkin?) in *Beseda* № 7. Goricheva also published her own replies, sometimes only her own letter (e.g. the one in *Beseda* № 6 in which she describes meeting Cardinal Ratzinger, addressed to a V. who is likely the author of two letters published in *Beseda* № 4). We can see that the function of the ‘Letters’ in *Beseda* was fundamentally different: they were first and foremost a visible lifeline between the two cities, proof that emigration had not severed personal contact. Some letters contained information about cultural events in Leningrad.¹² Goricheva’s decision to publish them (while not giving details about Paris-based émigré events) continued 37’s tradition of the ‘Chronicle of unofficial cultural life’¹³ and is yet another reminder of *Beseda*’s situation in perpetual suspension between the two cities and its primary target audience.

The orientation towards Soviet Russia, and the religious-cultural circles in Leningrad in particular, place *Beseda* into a liminal space between samizdat and tamizdat. Unlike earlier (and more political?) tamizdat journals, *Beseda* did not feature ‘sensational’ new texts from the Soviet Union that could not be published there. This means the journal never served as a source for translations of new texts into French or other Western languages and thus had little, if any, impact on Western audiences. And while *Beseda* was produced on a printing press and distributed e.g. to university libraries, it was not fully part of print culture, and not just because of the complete lack of commercial accountability: as large parts of the journal were an exercise in self-publishing, editorial scrutiny and other processes that create a distance between author and text were not observed.

¹¹ An exception is perhaps the letter by the Conceptualist art duo Kolar and Melamid, published in *Beseda* № 3 as a reaction to a piece by another well-known Conceptualist artist, Ilya Kabakov, in *Beseda* № 2. Boris Groys, an expert on Moscow Conceptualism, reacted to this letter with a ‘Polemic’ in the subsequent issue (№ 4).

¹² Goricheva republished an article on Klub-81’s that had appeared in Leningrad: Igor’ Ochtich, ‘Klub-81 ili kogo bespokoit “Krug”?’ , *Beseda* 7 (1988): 239–249 (first published in *Mercurii* 5 (1987)).

¹³ 37 had regularly published ‘listings’ for the unofficial cultural scene. Many issues (examples include №№ 4, 9, 14, 17, 19) featured ‘event pages’ that announced future seminars, art exhibitions in people’s flats, etc.

Beseda as a literary publishing house

Although Goricheva claimed that *Beseda* was 37 in a new guise, the new journal lacked what had arguably been the most successful section of 37: literature and poetry. Poetry featured in the first two issues only, and the featured authors who were close friends of Goricheva and classics of the Leningrad underground: Viktor Krivulin, Elena Shvarts, Oleg Okhapkin, Sergei Stratanovskii, and Aleksandr Mironov. They fitted *Beseda's* narrower agenda, because all of them could be called religious, mystical, Christian or philosophical poets. Unlike the majority of non-literary authors, they were all still in Leningrad and never emigrated; it is likely that Goricheva really wanted to offer her friends an opportunity to publish 'officially'.¹⁴

Despite the non-literary focus of the journal, Goricheva became an early catalyst for the canonisation of writers from the Leningrad underground. In 1987, Goricheva began to publish single-author collections under the imprint of *Beseda*. *Beseda's* book publishing programme provided printed, authoritative versions of the poetry of some key authors (samizdat, apart from being hard to access, often introduced variation into texts).¹⁵ In a way, book publishing was a logical continuation of a practice of 37 (and *Chasy*): these journals regularly published larger selections by a particular poet as separate booklets. *Beseda* published the first print collection by Oleg Okhapkin (*Stikhi*, 1989) and Elena Shvarts's second collection (*Stikhi*, 1987). *Beseda's* two-volume collection of Viktor Krivulin's poems (*Stikhi*, 2 vols, 1988) was the fullest collection of his poetry until 2024.¹⁶

Krivulin, Stratanovskii, Shvarts and other figures of the Leningrad underground have become canonical figures of 20th century poetry, regularly included in anthologies and translated into several languages. This could happen because researchers and the international public accepted the canon curated in the literary underground. Canons are made by institutions such as publishing houses and literary criticism, and the canon of Soviet unofficial culture was no exception. In its mature stages, the unofficial cultural scene in Leningrad was highly organised, and many practices it employed were evidently gleaned from official culture — perhaps unavoidable, given that those who practised literary samizdat had been socialised in Soviet official culture. The conceptual and structural dependence on official culture became apparent in the literary underground's institutional drive: isolation from a broader readership and self-referentiality notwithstanding, over the three decades of its existence, Leningrad samizdat managed

¹⁴ Some more poetry appeared in *Beseda* №6, which carried a selection by the metaphysical Leningrad writer Igor Burikhin. However, it appeared in a section called 'Religion and Literature' rather than a dedicated poetry section. Significantly perhaps, Burikhin was an émigré writer, having left for Germany in 1978.

¹⁵ For the discussion of samizdat and its relation of samizdat to print (the 'Gutenberg model' of text production) see: Belenkin; Komaromi; Hänsen.

¹⁶ Izd. Ivana Limbakha Publishing House published a two-volume collection of poetry and prose in January 2024, with a third volume containing the later poetry forthcoming.

to mature into a fully fledged literary process, with institutions such as journals effectively promoting their house authors, a school of literary criticism, regular thematic conferences and the Andrei Belyi Literary Prize. As the Soviet Union began to unravel, parts of unofficial culture became increasingly entwined with their official counterparts. The best example is the emergence, in 1981, of the semi-official *Klub-81*, which provided members of the cultural underground with a space to meet, hold semi-public events and publish, but was curated by a member of the Writers Union and the KGB.¹⁷

So, while the canon created in and by the literary underground was entirely distinct from the Soviet canon in terms of names and aesthetics, in organisational terms it was modelled on official standards. When the Soviet institutions of censorship and ideologically motivated literature collapsed, a large body of well-preserved and professionally categorised material was available to be included into the new canon of late Soviet Russian literature, at least in the realm of poetry. Literary journals had preserved a wealth of material, and the journals' creators — i. e. the literary critics of the underground — were the first who, in the 1990s, published broad overviews of unofficial literary activity. These works created the foundation for much of the advanced research undertaken by Russian and foreign scholars in the 2000s. Emigré publishing was an important element in this process precisely because it provided international readers of Russian poetry with accessible collections of texts — the books published by *Beseda* ended up in foreign libraries — at a time when samizdat journals had not yet been digitised and were hard to access for outsiders.

Let us take a step back then. Literary institutions require networks, and those active in the cultural underground were very good at building networks. In 1984, Yurii Kolker characterised the typical samizdat journal readers as follows:

As a rule, they are a very well educated person working as a guard or boiler room attendant; they have friends among the émigré community as well as in exile and in the camps; they themselves could have their flat searched or be arrested at any moment <...> [Kolker]

As the 'Third Wave' of emigration gathered pace, networks that once had been purely local expanded to other localities within and outside the Soviet Union. An increasing number of those who were forced to emigrate continued to bolster their networks from abroad, via tamizdat-related activities: Vladimir Maramzin founded *Ekho*, both a journal and a publishing house, and dedicated himself to promoting unofficial writers from the Soviet Union. Sergei Dediulin, Krivulin's partner in setting up *Severnaia pochta*, collaborated with several émigré publications in Paris, among them *Russkaia mys'*. Those who found ways to stay involved in their circles helped establish a transnational literary community. By 1983, unofficial literary networks had grown in complexity and habitually included émigrés. By 1987, when Goricheva began publishing single-

¹⁷ For information on *Klub-81*, see the Ivanov 2015.

author volumes, the merging of the unofficial and official sphere was clearly visible: official journals, such as *Novyi mir*, published politically significant 'lost literature' that had been banned from publication for decades (and circulated in samizdat), while most new literature was self-published, but without the organisers running the risk of persecution.

It is possible to argue that Goricheva — at least as a publisher — never fully arrived in emigration, instead creating content tailored to a Leningrad audience. In this sense, she remained in perpetual transit. However, we have also seen that her behaviour was not wholly untypical for an émigré of her generation and very deliberate. More pertinently perhaps, this situation in transit proved very productive. In printing collected works by major samizdat poets, *Beseda* foreshadowed the full union/reunification of the two cultures. Goricheva had been one of the pivotal figures of the unofficial cultural scene before she left Leningrad, and she continued her activity as a curator within her own community, not leaving Leningrad behind while living in emigration: first by creating a journal intended for a Leningrad audience, later by promoting unofficial writers from Leningrad. *Beseda* provided a bridge between fully official and unofficial publication before the two spheres began to merge in Soviet Russia.

REFERENCES

- Belenkin Boris. "‘Rukopisnoe’ ili ‘pechatnoe’? ‘Pечатное’ kak ‘rukopisnoe’? Malotirazhnye izdaniya v kontekste sovremennogo kul'turnogo protsessa". *Acta Samizdatica*, pilot edition. Moscow: GPIB Rossii — Mezhdunarodnyi "Memorial" — "Zvenia", 2012: 14–23.
- Butyrin Kirill. "U istokov Obvodnogo kanala". Vyacheslav Dolinin and Boris Ivanov (eds). *Samizdat: Po materialam konferentsii "30 let nezavisimoi pechati; 1950–1980 gody"*; St.-Petersburg, 25–27 aprelya 1992. St.-Petersburg: NITs "Memorial", 1993: 124–129.
- Goricheva Tat'yana. "Mne nadoeli podval'nost i elitarnost' 'Vtoroj kul'tury'", interview with Raisa Orlova, 1985. Available online (abbreviated): <http://gefter.ru/archive/17640> (accessed 10 Feb 2024).
- Hänsen Sabine. "The Media Dimension of Samizdat: The Präprintium Exhibition Project". Valentina Parisi (ed.). *Samizdat: Between Practices and Representation*; Lecture Series at Open Society Archives, Budapest, February–June 2013. Budapest: Central European University/IAS, 2015: 47–62.
- Ivanov Boris. *Istoriia Kluba-81*. St.-Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha, 2015.
- Kolker Yuriy. "Ostrova blazhennykh: Vtoraya literatura i samizdat v Leningrade". Available online: http://yuri-kolker.com/articles/Ostrova_blazhennykh.htm (accessed 10 February 2024).
- Komaromi Ann. "Samizdat as Extra-Gutenberg Phenomenon", *Poetics Today* 29/4 (2008): 629–667.
- Krivulin Viktor. "‘37’, Severnaia pochta". Vyacheslav Dolinin and Boris Ivanov (eds). *Samizdat: Po materialam konferentsii "30 let nezavisimoi pechati; 1950–1980 gody"*; St.-Peterburg, 25–27 aprelya 1992. St.-Petersburg: NITs "Memorial", 1993: 74–81.
- Mamleev Yuriy. "Beseda. Leningrad-Parizh. 1983". *Russkaya mysl'* 19 April 1984: 13.
- Medem B. "Beseda: Razbor religiozno-filosofskogo zhurnala 'Beseda', Leningrad-Parizh, 1983–1984, №№ 1–2". *Vestnik russkogo khristinskogo dvizheniya* 148 (1986): 256–264.
- Ostanin Boris. interview with the author, 20 August 2015.
- Savickij Stanislav. *Andegraund: Istoriya i mify leningradskoj neofitsial'noj literatury*. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002.

Severyuhin Dmitriy, Dolinin Vyacheslav, Ivanov Boris and Ostanin Boris (eds). *Samizdat Leningrada: 1950e — 1980e gody; Literaturnaya enciklopediya*. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2003.

Volchek Dmitriy. email to the author, 27 August 2015.

von Zitzewitz Josephine. *The Culture of Samizdat: Literature and Underground Networks in the Late Soviet Union*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020.

Жозефин фон Цицевиц

ОД САМИЗДАТА ДО ШТАМПЕ, ОД ЛЕЊИНГРАДА ДО ПАРИЗА: СЛУЧАЈ БЕСЕДА

Резиме

Лењинградска емигранткиња Татјана Горичева основала је 1983. године у Паризу часопис на руском језику *Beseda*. Међутим, кључна публика *Besede* остала је у совјетској Русији, а циљ часописа био је да представи руским читаоцима главна достигнућа у проучавању западне теологије и филозофије. У овом раду се пореде *Beseda* и њен претходник, лењинградски часопис 37 (1976–1981), који је излазио у самиздату и чија је уредница такође била Горичева. Ово поређење баца светло на то како је и зашто *Beseda* остала део брзо развијене лењинградске периодике, лебдећи на прелазу између Истока и Запада током последњих година Совјетског Савеза.

Кључне речи: Лењинград, самиздат, тамиздат, религија, часопис.