

public. This is an excellent safeguard against eccentricity and triviality of judgment. But it may be that the concentration upon the representation of reality throws the emphasis too strongly on the effects of Christianity and too lightly on the conscious preservation of the learned tradition. His own language alone, we remember, could not bring Dante out of *Inferno*. He had first to show himself master in the *bella scuola*—Virgil, Homer, Ovid, Lucan, Statius and Horace—the solid block of tradition which made him a poet.

What is a poet's public and what the dynamics of literary change? Does he himself comprise the one and effect the other (as Cicero suggested)? Or is the public those preoccupied with the same problems, or cultivated society, readers at large? Which of these brings a style or a form to its perfection?

It matters little. Auerbach's "questions addressed to a text" invariably give him the means of presenting a stylistic problem in its most concentrated and interesting form, and his judgment of the moment of stylistic crisis is very exact. In all this, he owed much to his great teacher Leo Spitzer, whose *Stilstudien*, with their emphasis on the interplay of linguistics and literary history, he made the basis of his own method. Another comparison which inevitably suggests itself for the present book is Ernst Robert Curtius' *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, which appeared two years after *Mimesis*, in 1948.² Here, too, an academic title conceals vast implications: Curtius gives an exact and comprehensive statement of the debt owed by the Middle Ages to classical Latin literature both in form and in content, and asserts the continued solidity in modern European literature of the classical foundations, whether in their original form or as transformed by the Middle Ages. This book was an attempt at a topology of European literature, a demonstration of the enduring ancient conventions, both conceptual and verbal.

Curtius and Auerbach usually differ in their judgment of what is significant. Both are clear that "European philology" must set out from the contemporary situation and must involve far more than an academic study of the past. Whatever the organic links between the quality or the spirit and level of our life and our literature, we are still, after all our vicissitudes, Homer's or Virgil's, or Dante's, or Shakespeare's or Stendhal's audience; and in so far as this is so, Curtius and Auerbach speak directly of as well as to us.

J. B. Trapp

² Routledge, 1953.

EAST & WEST

The Trial in Moscow

"The man of letters is without recourse. He resembles the flying fish—if he raises himself a little, the birds devour him; if he dives, the fish eat him up." VOLTAIRE

THE LAST SCENE in Abram Tertz' *The Trial Begins* takes place in a prison camp where the narrator and his co-accused, having failed in their "essential duty to co-operate in the effort to bring the Glorious Future nearer," are now digging ditches. The recent Moscow Trial had a similar epilogue: Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel were sentenced to seven and five years respectively in a "strict régime" labour camp.

When the smuggled manuscript of the story came to the West in 1959, one could not help being fascinated by the strange, dramatic self-consciousness of the author; it was as if he was writing a scenario of his own fate. There was here a Pirandellesque double involvement in life and literature, and also perhaps, as in Greek tragedy, an element of impending destiny. At any rate, Sinyavsky sensed what was to come.

The Moscow Trial confirmed his ironical projections. Some ten years before he was judged by the criminal court in Moscow, Sinyavsky wrote:

The contents of my story, except for the epilogue, had become known to some highly placed officials. As could be expected, the cause of my downfall was the dragnet mentioned earlier, which had been fixed inside the big sewage pipe underneath our house.

The rough drafts I had conscientiously flushed down the drain every morning went straight to the Interrogator Skromnykh's desk. The important personage whose instructions I had carried out, though perhaps not altogether faithfully, was by this time dead and his personality was, indeed, undergoing a wide-scale public re-evaluation. Nevertheless I was accused of slander, pornography, and giving away State secrets.

We do not know, of course, just how long the true identity of Tertz and Arzhak was known to the K.G.B. The usual Soviet line, on the few occasions when their works were referred to by literary policemen, was that they were "bourgeois falsifications" (*burzhuaznye falshivki*). In *Inostrannaya Literatura* (Jan. 1962), B. Ryurikov poked fun at the Western reviewers of their

work because they did not realise that "Tertz" was a white Russian *émigré* who pretended to be a Soviet author living in Russia.

Among Western reviewers there were some who were inclined to accept this view. Giancarlo Vigorelli—the Secretary-General of COMES, who on 9 October 1965 first disclosed the news about the arrest of Sinyavsky and Daniel and was subsequently active in their defence—expressed the same opinion in *Tempo* (29 September 1965), taking his clue from "one of the best experts on Soviet affairs, Alexander Werth."

At that time Sinyavsky and Daniel were already in prison, and it took exactly three months before the fact was officially admitted. A semi-official confirmation came a bit earlier at a Press conference in Paris (22 November) where Alexei Surkov assured those present that the investigation would be "swift" and according to "strict norms of legality." Both he and Alexander Tvardovsky stressed on this occasion that there would be no return to the methods of the past; Tvardovsky added that he could not fail to be concerned about the arrest of Sinyavsky whose work appeared often in *Novy Mir*.

It was on 3 January 1966 that the first indication that the trial was about to begin came in a broadcast by Moscow Radio in English. The commentator, Boris Belitsky (known for his theory that the "Great Train Robbery" was organised by the British Intelligence Service, assured his listeners that the works of Sinyavsky and Daniel

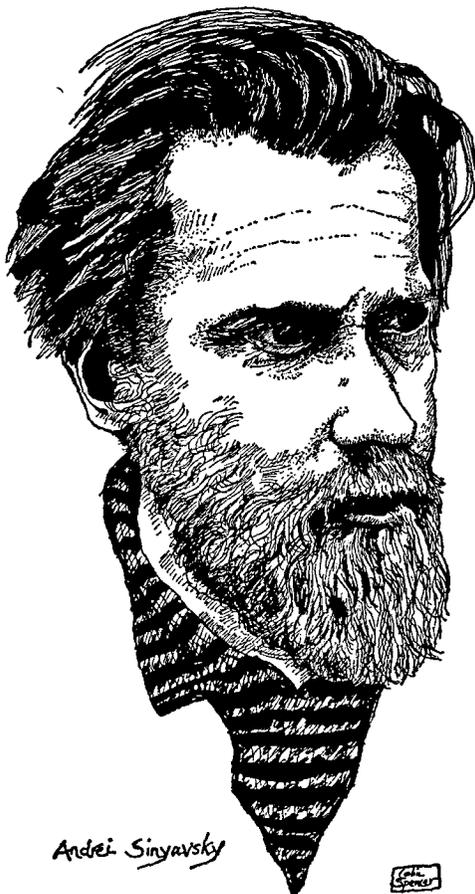
are libellous, malicious, and very often almost illiterate. The two men have clearly been tempted by the possibility of making easy money... they jumped at the possibility of mass-producing libel... (which) is a crime in all civilised countries even when it is directed against a single individual, let alone a country of more than 200 million people... Their punishment will undoubtedly have the backing of the Soviet public.

Belitsky was surprised "that some very

esteemed men, of unimpeachable reputation, have deemed it appropriate to come out in defence of Sinyavsky and Daniel" and deplored "the excitement in certain quarters in the West, following their arrests."

BUT THE CLAMOUR in the West did not abate. On the contrary it grew, particularly after the publication on 13 January of the article "Turncoats" by Dmitri Eremin in *Izvestia*, which in its style of vitriolic mendacity could well compete with things written under Stalin. The two writers were said to be guilty of "double-dealing, shamelessness, moral degradation." They "spatter the paper with everything that is most vile and filthy," being interested "with morbid sensuality in sexual and psychopathological 'problems.'" They are not "simple moral perverts, but active helpers of those who would like to turn the cold war into a hot one." Sinyavsky used his "hooligan pen" to cast a slur on the "most sacred name" of Lenin, he "tried to imply that anti-semitism allegedly exists in our country," he was abusing Chekhov and other Russian classics. The article ended on a note which literally echoed, as Edward Crankshaw pointed out in *The Observer* (23 Jan.), the concluding words of Vyshinsky's speech for the prosecution in the Bukharin trial in March 1938.

The article and the "spontaneous" letters which have followed it in *Izvestia* were in flagrant contradiction with the directive on "Socialist Legality" of the President of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., A. Gorkin, published in *Izvestia* on 2 December 1964. The President's directive deplored the practice of publishing articles in the Soviet press in which "before the case has been tried in courts the guilt of certain persons is taken for granted and the question of punishment to be meted out to them is decided in advance..."



Another attack on the two authors appeared in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (22 January), and it purported to be an aesthetic evaluation of their artistic shortcomings. The critic, Zoya Kedrina (who was later to play the role of the "public prosecutor at the Trial itself) stated in the article that it was not for her to determine juridical guilt ("this is a matter for legal authorities"); she was just concerned with the qualities of their writings. She found that Daniel's *Moscow Calling* represented "simple fascism," that it was "anti-human not only in its content, but also in its form." The works of Sinyavsky were pornographic, exuding an "aroma" of anti-semitism, a plagiarism of Artsybashev, Sologub, Kafka, and Dostoevsky. His *Fantastic Tales* were full of thieves and prostitutes "who spend their illegal earnings on drink in restaurants." As for Tertz himself, he "is inseparable from his abominable characters," so negative and unrepresentative.

These and other denunciations of Sinyavsky curiously echoed his own ironic self-criticism in *The Trial Begins*:

Another failing, gravely criticised, was that my positive heroes... were not portrayed in all the fullness of their many-sided working lives, but maliciously presented to the reader in their least typical aspects. As for the negative characters... it is true that in my slanderous story they were punished as they deserved, but the reactionary basis of their motivation was not fully revealed.

The "incriminating" quotations used (or referred to) by Eremin and Kedrina to prove Sinyavsky's "guilt" were either non-existent or out of context. They attributed to him thoughts emanating from the personages in his stories, a method which, as Max Hayward noted in *The Guardian* (25 January), could be easily used to "make Shakespeare out to be a murderer, Dante an incendiary, and T. S. Eliot a nihilist..."

In fact, Sinyavsky's ideas were often exactly opposite to those attributed to him. To impute his disrespect for Chekhov, Eremin used a quotation taken from an "internal monologue" of a character in Tertz' story, *Graphomaniacs*:

Only the utmost shamelessness [Eremin wrote] can move the pen which writes lines like, "Just to take that Chekhov by his tubercular beard and push him nose-first into his own consumptive spittle."

This thought of an embittered graphomaniac was presented as Tertz' own, although in his essay on "Socialist Realism" he explicitly expressed his highest admiration for Chekhov (the writer who "feared pretentiousness like the plague"). Similarly, Tertz' satirical references to Soviet anti-semitism were presented as expressions of his own anti-semitic attitude. Proofs of

his other misdemeanours were arrived at by similar methods.

THE IMPENDING TRIAL evoked anxiety and revulsion in the world. Articles, letters to the editor, protests and appeals by individuals and organisations to the Soviet authorities to reconsider their action against the two writers began to swamp the press. Emotions ran high and, unlike the time of the Boris Pasternak affair, there were no voices in the West ready to justify the attitude of the Soviet authorities. Even the usually sympathetic and friendly observers were shocked at this reversion to Stalinist practice. If anything, the protest from the "Left" was perhaps even more vocal than that on the "Right." The socialist *Tribune's* strongly-worded editorial called on the Soviet government to "stop this stupid trial"; the *New Statesman* wrote that by staging it Soviet justice was putting itself on trial.

But it was the international community of writers and intellectuals which expressed the greatest concern about the fate of Sinyavsky and Daniel. Appeals for their freedom were coming from all over the world. David Carver (Secretary General of the International PEN) and Giancarlo Vigorelli (Secretary General of COMES) announced a joint action on their behalf and asked permission to be present at the trial.

The most impressive, and probably unprecedented, act of the international solidarity of writers was the letter to *The Times* (31 January) asking for the release of Sinyavsky and Daniel and signed by 49 most prominent writers from France, Germany, Italy, U.S.A., and Great Britain. The signatures read something like an honour roll of contemporary literature, and included François Mauriac, Günter Grass, Ignazio Silone, Alberto Moravia, W. H. Auden, Arthur Miller, Graham Greene. They stressed that their respect for the work of the two authors "is based solely on its literary and artistic merits" and that they regarded their books as "notable contributions to contemporary writing."

Thus on the eve of the trial, for the first time in its history, the Soviet Union found itself practically isolated on an issue, which might in political terms have been a minor one, but which now became a *cause célèbre*.

AFTER THE VIOLENT ATTACK on Sinyavsky and Daniel, followed by the "indignant letters" from readers, *Izvestia* published (30 January) an article by Yu. Feofanov which purported to be a defence of the rule of law:

The law must stand above passions and emotions. And if those that serve the law infringe

this very first commandment, we shall all suffer. For any retreat from the law means the direct road to arbitrary rule... Let the law function without any [outside] influences...

Tartuffe himself would have blushed at such hypocrisy. This plea was in a paper which had initiated the libellous campaign against the two accused writers when they were held incommunicado in prison and the case was *sub judice* (and was later to publish Feofanov's one-sided reports on the trial). Another violent attack on Sinyavsky and Daniel was made just before the trial by the secretary of the Moscow section of the Writers' Union, M. S. Michailov, writing in *Partinaya Zhizn* (Party Life).

When the trial began, it became a matter of world-wide interest, agitating public emotions everywhere no less than the Pasternak affair did in its time. In a sense it was something of a sequel to it. Sinyavsky had helped to carry Pasternak's coffin at the funeral, and he was also the critic who did most to rehabilitate his Soviet reputation as a poet. But Pasternak was only persecuted, not prosecuted; Sinyavsky and Daniel (like Ivinskaya and Brodsky) were subject to criminal proceedings. Much of this was only too familiar but some things (the defiance of the accused, and the open support for them outside the courtroom) were unprecedented.

THE AUTHORITIES acted in a way which can best be characterised by the Russian saying about a girl who wants both to retain her virtue and to sell it for money ("*I chistotu sokhranit i denghi priobresti*"), morally a more emphatic dictum than the English one about eating one's cake and having it too. They claimed that the trial had been conducted within a strictly legal framework, that as *Pravda* (22 February) said, it was "an open public trial reported by the press." They have gone to great pains to stress that the accused had been given all the rights due them; they only succeeded in making the mockery of justice more transparent. As the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune* (14 February) put it, "in this case it included the right to be pilloried and ridiculed in the press, the right to be laughed at by a hand-picked audience of 70 persons in the court, the right to be told that they are not telling the truth in their answer to questions, the right to have only the prosecution side of the case reported in some detail to those who cannot gain access to the 'open' trial because they have no passes." No foreign correspondents or observers were admitted "because of lack of space." Friends of the authors who gathered in front of the court were not allowed in either. The latter, as *The Guardian* (11 February) reported, "told the

Moscow, 11 February

Scene: Courtyard in front of building inside which Sinyavsky and Daniel are on trial. Soviet citizens are taking part in a noisy running debate on literature and freedom that would have been unthinkable ten years ago.

Two policemen hear all, but make no move to break up the crowd, which is complaining of lack of freedom and the slanting of news in the Russian press.

A Youth: "They could very well have held the trial in a larger hall. We should be allowed inside, as in any other court."

A Communist: "We have our representatives—Communist Party members—inside."

The crowd jeers.

The Communist: "Look, it's all reported in the papers."

A Man: "Who can believe that? We can't trust it."

A Girl: "No one knows what is going on in there. Why must we listen to the British Broadcasting Corporation to hear the facts about it?"

The Communist: "The foreign press is distorting the facts."

The Youth: "How do you know? Have you read the foreign press?"

The Communist: "No. But I know."

A Boy: "Why don't they publish the books (of Sinyavsky and Daniel) here so we can draw our own conclusions? This is something for public opinion. The public must judge."

The Communist: "I think that the policy of our Communist Party is right."

The Man: "I don't agree. The difference between us is that you have the right to say openly that the Party is right. I have no right to say it's wrong."

The crowd, fluctuating between fifty and a hundred people, debates philosophically rather than angrily. There is no hint of violence under the warm winter sun.

A Young Man: "Do we have to consider Lenin a god? Can't we criticise Lenin? And what about Stalin, the murderer?"

The Communist: "Lenin is everything. You can't question anything he wrote."

A Girl: "You shouldn't approve blindly of anything."

A Man: "I am a Communist and I have been misled by our press so many times. I'm afraid it will happen again now."

A Woman said that Sinyavsky and Daniel wrote anti-Soviet works.

The Man: "In which way do these anti-Soviet works actually attack the Soviet system and Soviet power? What is the Soviet system? What is Soviet power? Do they want the Czar back? Probably not. Do they plead for the restoration of private ownership? Probably not."

A Student: "We want to read their words. All we have now is taken out of context."

BRITISH UNITED PRESS

police bitterly: 'Of course it is an open trial. And we are here—in the open.'

However, some persons not committed to the cause of the persecutors were present at the trial, including the wives of the accused, Masha Sinyavsky and Larissa Daniel. (Friends and students gathered outside offered them bunches of flowers.) At some of the sessions a number of writers were present, among them the zealous Leonid Sobolev, the servile Alexander Chakovsky, the cowardly Konstantin Fedin, the unhappy Alexander Tvardovsky, and the youthful Evgeni Evtushenko.

Two members of the Writers' Union acted as "public prosecutors." The first was the already mentioned "purely literary" critic of Sinyavsky (and his former colleagues at the Gorki Institute of World Literature), Zoya Kedrina. The other was Arkadi Vasiliev, a novelist who has also worked as a journalist, a sailor, and a KGB investigator (in which capacity he might have read *The Trial Begins* before plagiarising it in one of his film scenarios).

The actual course of the trial can only be inferred from the Soviet press reports—the *Daily Mail* called it TRIAL BY TASS—and from the leaks which inevitably followed it, despite the precautions to keep the "open" trial closed.

The Trial Begins

THE REPORT on the first day of the trial by Yu. Feofanov in *Izvestia* (11 February) was entitled, "THE LAW RULES HERE," that of TASS in *Pravda*—"THE FACE OF THE SLANDERERS." Feofanov solemnly assured his readers that "the court cannot be quite sure until the case is carefully examined, until both sides are heard, until everything is explained which aggravates or mitigates the guilt of the accused." The presumption of innocence is thus replaced by the presumption of guilt; only its degree is in question. However, Feofanov had shown a proper concern that there "should not be the slightest doubt left" about it: "Only then truth will out and justice triumph."

Although "one side" prejudged the guilt of the accused, the "other side" denied it. As Feofanov sorrowfully put it: "At the preliminary investigation both, although denying the intent of waging anti-Soviet propaganda, nevertheless admitted that their works could and were used to harm our country. Now they are both denying everything..."

The TASS report was a poor substitute for the missing show of the show trial:

Judge: "Defendant Sinyavsky, do you understand the substance of the charges against you?"

ARKADY VASILYEV, the "public accuser" representing the Union of Soviet Writers at the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel in Moscow, has himself plagiarised the work of one of the men he accuses.

In Sinyavsky's novel, *The Trial Begins*, the boy Seryozha is being interrogated by the secret police. The Interrogator: "One thing I would like to get straight—how did you manage to get in touch with foreign agents?" Seryozha: "What kind of idiotic joke is that? Please remember, I have not so far been condemned, I am only on trial."

And then, "the interrogator looked amused and drew the curtain back. The daylight was so clean and so transparent that you felt like taking a deep breath of it."

Interrogator: "Come here. Do you hear? It is you I am talking to."

Seryozha thought: Now he is going to strike me. His face stiffened.

"Look through the window," the interrogator said. "That's where they are, the people who are on trial. See how many of them there are?"

"The interrogator pointed at the crowds milling below. Then he stroked Seryozha's shorn head and explained gently: 'You are different now, my boy. You are not on trial. You are condemned.'"

Three years after *The Trial Begins* appeared in the West, Arkady Vasilyev published in the magazine *Moskva* a film script entitled "Adopted Unanimously." It is the story of a young man

unjustly persecuted by the secret police under Stalin. However, after Stalin's death the young man is made to realise that what had happened to him was insignificant compared with Soviet achievements. He joins the Party. In one scene a girl named Zina is being interrogated by police investigator Gerasimov:

"Well, defendant, are you going to talk?"

"I am not a defendant, I am under investigation..."

"Gerasimov got up, went over to the window... He beckoned to Zina with a finger: 'Come over here, dear girl, Come, come, don't be afraid.'

"Zina is at the window, Gerasimov explains to her: 'Can you see people walking?' ... He repeats his question: 'Can you see them? Well, it is they who are under investigation.'" (*Moskva*, December 1962, pp. 12-13.)

Vasilyev, himself a former police investigator, according to the Soviet Literary Encyclopaedia, would appear to have been brought in on the Tertz case quite early. Otherwise, he could hardly have had access to a book banned in Russia. His appearance as a "public accuser" at the trial of Andrey Sinyavsky is the kind of farcical joke that Abram Tertz the satirist would greatly appreciate.

Under Soviet law, plagiarism is punishable by imprisonment up to one year, or a fine of 500 roubles.

THE GUARDIAN

(12 Feb. 1966)

Sinyavsky (a small bearded man barely visible in the dock): "I do."

Judge: "Do you plead guilty?"

Sinyavsky: "Not at all."

Judge: "Defendant Daniel, do you understand the substance of the indictment?"

Daniel (tall, thin, with black, insolent eyes): "I do."

Judge: "Do you plead guilty?"

Daniel: "No, neither in part nor in full."

TASS commented: "Sinyavsky and Daniel are trying to escape responsibility for their crimes, although their hostile attitude has been confirmed not only by their slanderous anti-Soviet works but also by the testimony of witnesses and experts, and by material evidence. . . . Those present in the courtroom at times reacted noisily to the clumsy attempts of Daniel and Sinyavsky to avoid answers to the direct questions from the prosecution. . . . The accused often dodged direct questions; they are evasive. [But] during the questioning many quotations from their books are produced. . . . Daniel, however, tries to veil the political character of the transfer of his writings abroad." "What impudence!"—Radio Moscow commented—"They try to deny evidence, but they were put with their backs to the wall by the prosecution."

Feofanov mentioned one of these "backs-to-the-wall-quotations" contained in "the accusation which on the basis of systematically collected material shows Sinyavsky's and Daniel's face." It was as usual torn out of the context and, according to Feofanov, "characterised vividly the complete vileness of the accused." "One can hardly imagine [the *Izvestia* correspondent added] a greater moral fall." And what was this unspeakably foul moral infamy and crime? Why, it was a passage from *The Trial Begins* satirising the Stalinist demographic theory (since abandoned) and its attacks on Western "cannibalistic neo-Malthusianism." Sinyavsky used the method of *reductio ad absurdum* to poke fun at the idea that one can be unconcerned about the multiplication of human race *ad infinitum*. Karlinsky, the Counsel for the Defence (in that other trial, more fictitious, but no less real), thought that if the population were to go on growing unchecked, the Communists themselves would be forced to resort to some such method as the use of aborted human embryos to feed the increased population. "It would all be strictly in keeping with Marxism. Admittedly it meant a return to cannibalism, but . . . cannibalism on a more refined and altogether higher level."

In Feofanov's (and the prosecution's) argument the context was omitted and the thoughts of Karlinski were used almost to imply that Sinyavsky advocated the canning of human embryos for alimentary purposes.

THE TORRENT of abuse and distortion continued on the second day of the trial. Despite the accused's plea of "Not Guilty," Soviet media did not wait for the verdict, but proclaimed them guilty: TASS explained that "all the details of the case are being studied in order to determine the degree of the defendants' guilt." It also said that the accused maintained their defence, trying "to reduce the essence of their actions, which are punishable under the law, to purely literary, allegedly apolitical creations." Feofanov in *Izvestia* (12 February) reported—needless to say, under the title "THE UNMASKING"—that as the court began discussing *The Trial Begins*, "the same familiar grating words about 'the right of an artist to self-expression,' about literary conventions, hyperbole and so on" were heard from the defendant. With heavy irony Feofanov pointed out that "before the court are men who operate with literary terminology, aesthetic categories, and 'clever' words," that Sinyavsky included in his defence even such things as "a discussion of the 19th-century realism, [his] peculiar conception of socialist realism, and his view of the future of humanity." Apparently his meanderings were interrupted by the presiding judge:

"Perhaps we can leave literary theory. After all, we are not conducting here a literary dispute, but criminal proceedings. You speak of the Soviet people as 'creatures of blood and dust.' How can you reconcile that with your love for the Communist ideals?"

"I think that is an incorrect translation"—announces Sinyavsky to the laughter of the audience.

"Why did you send to the West these monstrous slanders?"

"I wanted to tell about the spiritual needs of the people" [laughter in court].

Feofanov commented that the accused were "trying to present themselves as original thinkers and they used lofty expressions. But the court, tearing away this verbal window-dressing, lays bare their hostile essence."

"Let us turn to your own thoughts, expressed not in fictional works, but in literary, as you term them, meditations. You know the work *Thoughts Unaware?*"

"Yes, that is my book."

"Was it published abroad?"

"Yes."

"Let me quote then. . . . 'Drunkenness is the *idée fixe* of the Russian people. . . . A nation of thieves and drunkards incapable of creating a culture! . . .'"

Predictably, *Pravda* (12 February) called it "a monstrous smear on the Russian people" and Feofanov in *Izvestia* was indignant: "How low can a man fall to write in this way about a people that is amazing and delighting the

world with its achievements!" *Pravda* noted that Sinyavsky exhibited "an amazing cynicism" in "blabbing about his love of the Russian people"; Feofanov reported his words:

"You see, I love the Russian people. . . . [The presiding judge quietyens spectators' laughter.] You cannot accuse me of predilection for the West. I have even been called a Slavophile. . . ."

These, said TASS, were "hypocritical assertions" and *Izvestia's* correspondent added: "It is impossible to escape quotations."

And, indeed, it is. The words quoted by the prosecution form part of Sinyavsky's reflections on the Russian people (pp. 31-33 of the manuscript). He is exasperated there with some of its characteristic ways, but admires some others, and no doubt there is about it a loving concern for his people. One thought ends with the words: "Who will dare to judge [them]? When the judgment comes." Another ends with the reflection on "how difficult it is to govern" the Russians—"how difficult it is for our administrators to deal with us!"

YULI DANIEL received similar treatment. Feofanov called him a malicious enemy who "twists, turns, and plays buffoon like the most banal criminal." The correspondent of *Izvestia* added that although "during the court proceedings the works of the defendant were necessarily abundantly quoted," his conscience simply didn't permit him to mention them in print:

"One cannot hear without wrath how the name of Marx has been sullied—a name dear to all progressive mankind, to all our people."

This refers presumably to Daniel's story, *The Man from MINAP*, whose hero can determine the sex of a child at coition (by thinking of Karl Marx). Daniel was obviously unaware of the neo-Marxist cult of immaculate conception.

Feofanov's tender conscience permitted him, however, to mention (how accurately?) an exchange about another work of Daniel:

Prosecutor: "Tell us, Daniel, what ideas did you want to express in the story, 'Moscow Calling'?"

Daniel: "I was interested in an analysis of the psychology of people finding themselves in an extraordinary situation. I had no political motives. This is purely psychology."

Prosecutor: "What are these extraordinary conditions?"

Daniel: "You see, I wanted to draw a fantastic situation, to place the heroes in unusual conditions. This is fantasy."

Prosecutor: "But why then did you not place the action, say, in ancient Babylon? Why do you allow these fantastic foul things to relate to your own people?"

Daniel: "This is artistic usage."

Feofanov commented here that "for the *n*-th time Daniel tried to reduce the dialogue to the problems of literary creation, [but] the question in the court is not about particular features of Daniel's works, but about his criminal actions."

It is not surprising that *Le Monde* (12 and 13 Feb.) referred to the official reports on the trial as "totally lacking objectivity" and to the exchange in the court as a "dialogue of the deaf." Similarly the *New York Times* (12-13 Feb.) pointed out that "the two sides have often seemed—from Soviet press reports—to be talking past each other. . . ." But perhaps the most pithy comment on the trial was made outside the courtroom by a Soviet man in the crowd who was reported as saying (*N.Y. Herald Tribune*, 12 Feb.): "There has never been anything like it in the history of literature."

NO FURTHER EXCHANGES between the prosecution and the accused were reported in the Soviet press. The third day of the trial was devoted to the examination of the witnesses (some of them friends called on to give evidence against the two authors), the speeches of the state and public prosecutors, the speeches for the defence, and the last remarks of Sinyavsky.

In his report in *Izvestia* (13 Feb.), Feofanov asked a relevant question:

"How could it happen . . . that two relatively young men, living amongst us, educated in a Soviet school and then in the Soviet university, have suddenly become accomplices of our worst enemies?"

To which he gave the irrelevant answer that it was due to "the extreme lack of ideological discipline and moral irresponsibility of the accused."

"Alas, since 1956 when Sinyavsky began to write his lampoons, there was no one among his friends and acquaintances who reading or listening to the anti-Soviet works of Sinyavsky and Daniel, would appraise these writings as they deserved and who would express his opinion with all the necessary straightforwardness."

There was a touch of lament about this retrospective call for denunciations by friends and colleagues. But two members of the literary community, the "public prosecutors," Vasiliev and Kedrina, could make up for it now. They "stigmatised the foul actions of the accused in the name of the literary community and asked for their severe punishment." The gist of their speeches was given in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (15 Feb.).

Vasiliev denied that the two authors belong to Soviet intelligentsia or that their writings have any artistic merits:

"Can the concoctions so full of murders, sexual perversions, and psychological abnormalities be

called works of art? Sinyavsky-Tertz has a pathological tendency to obscenity and pornography. Obviously, this was particularly attractive to the foreign 'connoisseurs of blue art'."

Vasiliev also reported the charge that "what is most blasphemous in the dirty tirades of Abram Tertz and his heroes are the gibes about the name most dear to the Soviet man, the name of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin."

"I must make a digression here. Sinyavsky, on his own admission, succeeded in getting from his [foreign] customers two jackets, two sweaters, a white nylon shirt, rubber shoes, a subscription for a journal, something for his wife, and something for his son. Not much! But I consider that even that was too much. The bosses of Sinyavsky had every reason to pay him even less. The point is that many opinions about Lenin were copied by Sinyavsky from the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. One can see it easily by glancing at the journals *People's Cause* and *Vpered* for 1918. How can one speak here about honesty, when even while working for his real bosses, Sinyavsky acted as a petty swindler?"

In his concluding words Vasiliev played a jingoistic note. Referring to the war [of which both authors are veterans], he declared:

"I accuse Sinyavsky and Daniel in the name of the living and in the name of those who have fallen. . . . Whoever raises his hand against the people will be unmasked as a pseudo-hero, as a phenomenon doomed and condemned to annihilation by the revolution. In the name of all Soviet writers I accuse Sinyavsky and Daniel of the most serious crime and ask the court for a severe punishment."

THE OTHER "PUBLIC PROSECUTOR," Zoya Kedrina, made a similar plea. She stressed that "it is not at all accidental that one of the anti-Soviet articles of Sinyavsky was devoted to the 'destruction' of Socialist Realism" in literature, and stated:

"On the recommendation of the writers' organisations of our country, and in supporting the demand for the punishment of Sinyavsky and Daniel for their criminal deeds, I am striving to defend our soil and our literature from the dirty encroachments of the underlings of the anti-Soviet propaganda."

The state prosecutor said in his summing-up that the two writers had tried "to undermine and weaken" the Soviet Union with their books which were "a mockery of everything that is dear and sacred for a Soviet man, the fatherland,

¹ Some, like Professor Harold Berman of the Harvard Law School, consider the trial "a legal gain" because the "defendants were not forced to plead guilty and were allowed a vigorous defence." (*N.Y. Times*, 17 Feb.)

the Communist ideals, the Soviet way of life, and the morality of the Soviet people." No details of the speeches by the counsels for the defence were mentioned at all in any of the Soviet reports on the trial.¹

SINYAVSKY'S OWN LAST remarks were summed up in two lines: they report his works were "written from idealist and not Marxist positions."

However, the Soviet authorities have not succeeded in silencing Sinyavsky completely. A partial transcript of his self-defence reached the Milan daily, *Il Giorno*, and was published there on 24 February. There seems to be little doubt about its authenticity, as many details in it correspond precisely to the information given by Mrs. Larissa Daniel to the Moscow correspondent of the *N.Y. Herald Tribune* (23 Feb.) in an interview describing the defence pleas of the accused.

Sinyavsky took a bolder stand in his final statement than even the (tendentiously reported) exchanges with the prosecution would suggest. He maintained his position of defiance and complained about the way the trial has been conducted:

"What makes my defence difficult is the particular atmosphere which has been created in this courtroom. . . . The arguments of the prosecution have not convinced me: I hold to my previous position. The prosecution has created in effect a wall of deafness through which it is impossible to get any truth. . . . [It] has succeeded in creating a curtain, a particularly electrifying atmosphere which destroys reality and carries us into the grotesque: as in the works of Arzhak and Tertz."

He exposed in some detail the methods of the prosecution:

"To break this atmosphere is extremely difficult. Neither arguments, nor artistic concepts are of much help. Already during the preliminary investigation I saw that they would not be of any interest to the prosecution. It is not interested in aesthetics, but only in quotations torn out of context and endlessly repeated. I do not intend to explain my creative ideas, hold a conference, beat my head against the wall, or demonstrate anything. It would all be useless. I only want to suggest some elementary truths about literature. The most elementary truth for anybody whose concern is literature is that the word is not an act but only a word, that artistic imagination has a conventional character, that the author does not identify himself with the protagonist."

Sinyavsky noted the Pirandellesque irony of the situation and pointed out that the consciousness of it affected also the prosecution:

"In a strange and unexpected way the artistic imagination loses here its conventional character;

the charges are so literal that the judicial procedure becomes linked with the text as if it were its natural sequel.

"I had the misfortune of putting the date of 1956 on the epilogue of the story *The Trial Begins*. The author has slandered 1956! He wanted to predict... well, you *will* do forced labour in 1966. The tone of malicious satisfaction has been quite explicit in the speeches for the prosecution."

Sinyavsky's ordeal through quotations did not prevent him from revealing them for what they are:

"All these tremendous quotations used in the act of accusation are repeated dozens of times and are accumulating in a monstrous atmosphere which corresponds no longer to any reality... We are facing here a monstrous inversion of significance. Globov, the hero of *The Trial Begins* expresses anti-semitic sentiments in line with the directive at the time... It is clear that the story is against anti-semitism; it deals with the 'doctors' plot.' But no, the author must be an anti-semite. Why then not also make him a fascist?... The concept of 'anti-semitism' is usually linked with that of great power chauvinism. But evidently we are facing here a particularly subtle author. He hates the Russian people. He has contempt for the Jews. He hates everybody—his mother, all humanity. The question arises: where could monsters like us have sprung from?... From somewhere, evidently from America. Somebody must have dropped us down by parachutes, Daniel and me, and we began to demolish everything. What scoundrels we are!... It is difficult though to assert that Daniel [a Jew] is an anti-semite. Here we are then: the fascist Daniel hand-in-hand with the anti-semite Sinyavsky trampling underfoot everything that is most sacred..."

An aside to the "public prosecutor":

"The public prosecutor Vasiliev was not ashamed to mention some napkins which were given as a present to my baby... by a French lady. One brings up even the laundry list to demonstrate that in both cases behind an honest façade is hidden a stealthy nature."

What of the charges of "two-facedness"?

"There were also some new aspects. Which? First of all to condemn the political clandestinity as the clandestinity of the degenerates, of cannibals with the lowest instincts... My articles were quoted here to show that I was writing on Socialist Realism from Marxist viewpoints here in Russia and from idealist positions abroad. Well, if I could write here from an idealist standpoint I would have done it. When I was asked to do some [literary] work here in Russia, I frequently rejected it and tried to occupy myself only with the authors with whom I felt affinity... I wrote about Tszetaeva, Mandelstam, Pasternak... I tried everything possible to express my real thoughts as Sinyavsky. Because of this I

was in trouble. I received admonitions and reprimands in the press and at meetings... Kedrina knows it only too well. She was my colleague in the [Gorki] Institute. She knows that I never played the hero, never made speeches at meetings, never made a *mea culpa*, never talked in slogans. On the contrary, I was often criticised for errors, deviations, and imprecisions."

Sinyavsky ended his speech with a criticism of a black-or-white conception of literature:

"One wants to judge works of art with criteria of propagandistic stereotypes... According to the prosecution, literature is a form of agitation and propaganda. Now, agitation can only be Soviet or anti-Soviet. And if it is not Soviet, this means it is anti-Soviet. I cannot share this view... At this point the law of either-or begins to function... Who is not with us is against us. At certain times—in revolution, war, civil war—this logic may even be just. But it is very dangerous in time of peace, particularly when it is applied to literature... I hold in all conscience that one cannot judge literature through juridical formulae. In fact the nature of artistic imagination is complex and often the author himself cannot offer explanations. I think that not even Shakespeare would have been able to do it if he were asked to explain the significance of *Hamlet*. (Not that—let's be clear about it!—I want to compare myself to Shakespeare; I hope this will not occur to anybody.) And what is the significance of *Macbeth*? There are difficulties here. Not even Shakespeare would have been in a position to give a precise answer."

It must have taken some courage. He was talking to the same audience which would receive his prison sentence with applause (*Pravda*, 15 Feb.). He could not know about the world-wide support for him, the various appeals made on his behalf abroad, about the commotion which the case has created in all literary circles. And he made his speech *after* the prosecutor demanded the punishment of seven years in prison, thereby practically forfeiting any chance of a lighter sentence. (Curiously enough, on the same day *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported that criminologists had established the authenticity of a letter Alexander Pushkin wrote to Tsar Nicholas I admitting the authorship of a blasphemous poem, *Gavriiliada*. Pushkin threw himself "upon the Tsar's mercy.")

By his stand at the trial Sinyavsky has not only shown courage. He also administered a small effective lesson in literary criticism: authors cannot be identified with characters in their books, for in one of his own, in the prologue of *The Makepeace Experiment*, the narrator says:

"If I am caught, I'll deny everything. If I have to stand my trial, hands and feet bound, face to face with a terrible judge, I'll recant..."

THE FOURTH DAY of the trial was devoted to the final plea by Daniel which lasted an hour. TASS reported from it only his denial of "acting with malicious intent" and his admission that he "made a mistake" in sending his works abroad for publication.³ The interview with Mrs. Larissa Daniel in the *N.Y. Herald Tribune* provided some more details, including Daniel's defence of his co-accused from the charges of "anti-semitism." As Daniel told the court:

"Sinyavsky had a friend Daniel, who was a Jew. The wife of Daniel was a Jew, and Golomshok [a co-author with Sinyavsky of the booklet on Picasso; a friend of both defendants; and a recalcitrant witness at the trial who was himself threatened with prosecution afterwards] was a Jew. Why would the anti-semitic Sinyavsky have these Jewish friends? . . ."

Daniel also referred to the purges of Soviet writers and artists, mentioning the fate of Leib Kvitko, the Yiddish poet executed in 1952, Osip Mandelstam, who died in a concentration camp in 1938, and Isaac Babel and Vsevolod Meyerhold who died in similar circumstances in 1941 and 1942 respectively. Apparently he then asked rhetorically:

"Who is responsible for this?"

and he answered:

"I am. You are. All of us are. Maybe I am not right about this, but I can think of no other answer."

When the verdict was announced nobody was left in any doubt who was responsible for the fate of Sinyavsky and Daniel. When it was all over, the professors and dons of literature at Moscow University approved the verdict and castigated the "traitors" in a letter to *Litera-*

³The editorialist in the *Times Literary Supplement* (17 Feb.) remarked in an article condemning the trial: "Admittedly he [Sinyavsky] and Mr. Daniel may have been unwise to by-pass the Soviet literary machine (whether or not they realised the risks involved) instead of exerting their talents within it, as Mr. Sinyavsky was prepared to do with his critical writings under his own name." When Sinyavsky was asked during the trial why he did not publish his books inside the U.S.S.R., he replied: "My artistic preoccupations differed from those of the editors" (*Le Monde*, 13-14 Feb.). As to the question of risks, they can perhaps be realised better in Moscow than in London. In most of Sinyavsky's and Daniel's works one can see that fear of arrest was constantly in their minds.

turnaya Gazeta (15 Feb.); two days later the Soviet Writers' Union expelled Sinyavsky; on 1 March a government spokesman promised the publication of "a detailed account" of the trial.

THE WORLD REACTION to the heavy sentences given to them was probably not anticipated in the Kremlin. Its rulers succeeded for the first time in creating a "united front" on this issue—against themselves. It embraced *l'Humanité* and *Le Figaro*, the *Daily Worker* and the *Daily Telegraph*, Louis Aragon and François Mauriac, W. H. Auden and Alberto Moravia, Ignazio Silone and Graham Greene.

The only support came from rather tainted quarters. The pro-Chinese Belgian Communist journal, *La Voix du Peuple* (25 Feb.), warmly approved what it called with satisfaction "a real political trial." It said, however, that it would not be much help to the revisionists Brezhnev and Kosygin, who "hide behind the verdict on Sinyavsky and Daniel as if it were a smoke-screen for the continuation of their dirty acts of treason. . . ."

Shortly after the Moscow trial a symbolic act in London was to crown it all: the Russian interment of the remains of Alexander Herzen's friend, Alexander Ogarev. When his coffin left the Greenwich cemetery, the Soviet representative in England declared that "Ogarev will get a hero's welcome when he returns to Russia—a Russia freed, as he wished, from Tsarist oppression." (*Daily Mail*, 25 Feb.).

On 2 March Ogarev was re-buried in Moscow, and Alexei Surkov made a speech on the occasion. Ogarev's poem "Freedom" (published in 1958 in a Russian journal in London, *Polar-naya Zvezda*) was quoted:

"All through my life, again and again and again,
One unalterable word reverberated—
Freedom! Freedom!"

A passage from Herzen might also have been quoted (and the Judge and the Prosecutors will find it on p. 561 of Herzen's *Selected Philosophical Works*, published 1956—in Moscow) but woe to any writer who reads these words over a grave in the homeland:

"Was there ever a country with censorship and arbitrary government where secret print-shops and the underground distribution of manuscripts didn't exist once intellectual movements and the desire for liberty existed? That is just as natural a state of affairs as the publication of material abroad and emigration. . . ."

Leopold Labedz

LETTERS

Nabokov, Pushkin, Wilson

MR. NABOKOV is hissing and shrieking again. I don't know why he chooses to do it in *ENCOUNTER* rather than in the *New York Review of Books*, where the controversy about his translation of Pushkin's *Evgeni Onegin* has hitherto been conducted. It is unfortunate—though not perhaps for Mr. Nabokov—that the readers of *ENCOUNTER* may not have seen my original article or the correspondence which followed it. A considerable part of the letter to *ENCOUNTER* has already appeared in the *New York Review*, and I have dealt there with the questions it raises. I don't propose to recapitulate here. As for the additional apologetics: there is no need to discuss the absurd justifications for the absurdities of the Nabokov translation. I do not, of course, object to the use of unusual words. Both W. H. Auden and Compton Mackenzie have sometimes used them with excellent effect, and so sometimes has Mr. Nabokov in his novels. But such words as those I cited in my review of the Nabokov *Onegin* make Pushkin appear grotesque, as he never is. (Of course, the computer I speak of in connection with Mr. Nabokov's style would have to be fed at random from the large Webster's dictionary.) Mr. Nabokov's ideal of "literal" translation I am unable to comprehend. A translation that was truly literal should not contain either the definite or the indefinite article, since these do not exist in Russian. The word *byre*, by the way, is not American but British. If you referred to the cow-barn as a "byre" in New England nobody would know what you meant. This error has not only doubled me up with mirth, it has caused me to roll on the floor exsufficate with cachinnation. (If anyone should question the propriety of this phrase, he will find it used by Bernard Shaw in one of the stage directions of *John Bull's Other Island*.)

EDMUND WILSON

New York

Interpreting the Vinland Map

IN HIS review of *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation* Mr. G. R. Crone [*ENCOUNTER*, January] rightly points out that the question of the Norse discovery of America is not at issue. It is no less true that agreement on the authenticity of a document is a necessary pre-condition for discussion of its significance. What Mr. Crone means by "authenticity" in this context is not at all clear; he seems to be hedging his bets, and does not explicitly commit himself to modern counterfeiting. Professor E. G. R. Taylor, who—like Mr. Crone—had an opportunity over three years ago to examine the Vinland Map (in photo-copy) and to read my study of it, accepted no such inhibition, even if her conclusions, of which a summary has recently been

published, are not upheld by her arguments. Mr. Crone's notice, rather surprisingly, brings into question the objectivity of a reviewer who can misrepresent not only statements in the book under consideration but even map-making practice in a field and period familiar to him.

The lack of information on the previous history of the Map is disconcerting, but not without precedent. The authors of the monograph do not disclose "its former home" because (as Mr. Crone is aware) they do not know it. The statement that "it is believed to have come from a Spanish library" has not appeared in print before, and one wonders about the reviewer's authority for making it. To suggest however, as he does, that no important or valuable maps are likely to remain "in obscurity" today is either naïve or disingenuous. Within the last eight years we have seen the emergence of at least two such maps—the world map of Henricus Martellus now at Yale and a second copy of Waldseemüller's woodcut globe goes of 1507, both from private collections and hitherto unknown; an unrecorded world map by Vesconte Maggiolo is in private ownership in Italy; and there are doubtless others.

The palaeographical and bibliotic evidence associating the Map with the accompanying texts is swept under the carpet by Mr. Crone in a very perfunctory way. One example of his partiality in referring to this evidence is illuminating. Dissimilarity, in texture and quality, between sheets of vellum in a codex is to be expected. That the half-sheet of vellum on which the Map is drawn matches a half-sheet of the textual manuscript is not without significance.

The most striking—and perplexing—feature of the Map is (as all other commentators have agreed) its delineation of Greenland. Here Mr. Crone seems to be divided against himself. He recognises that "the outline of Greenland bears a certain resemblance to that of the island as we know it today"; and he asserts that "with the instruments and technique of those days, no such accurate outline would have resulted." But, in order to establish his claim that "the authors have set too high a value on this Map," he declares the "'resemblance'... to be far-fetched" and suggests that "it is a better attempt at South America." This is hardly serious argument, and in disputing the fidelity of the representation Mr. Crone appears to be in a minority of one. This question I am content to leave to the judgment of the majority; but I wish that, before attributing to me "the argument... that the outline of Greenland is so good that it *must* be based on the result of a running survey made on a voyage of circumnavigation," Mr. Crone had read more carefully page 195 of my study, where alternative hypotheses are set out, with considerably greater caution than he implies and no commitment to any one of them.

In the nomenclature of Atlantic islands in the Map Mr. Crone finds "mystification or even falsification," and he infers that it was "made up *ad hoc*." Here I cannot follow him. Of the four names which he cites, only one cannot be "paralleled on surviving charts," and he himself (scholarly habits reassessing themselves) supplies a convincing parallel for it which I had overlooked. The forms