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## WRITING THE PAPERS

### HOW WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS REPORTED THE FIRST DISSIDENT TRIALS IN MOSCOW, 1965-1972

#### Introduction

‘Accused Soviet Writers Appeal at Trial for Artistic Freedom’ (*NYT*)

‘Russians Can Dissent, But’ (*NYT*)

‘Russian Writers Say They Had No Political Motives’ (*Times*)

‘Der Moskauer Literaturprozeß’ (*FAZ*)<sup>1</sup>

In mid-February 1966, two Russian writers, Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, stood trial in Moscow. While the *New York Times* (*NYT*) correspondent Peter Grose focused on the writers’ appeal for artistic freedom and their act of dissent, the unnamed journalist of the *Times* of London reported that the writers had no political motives, and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*FAZ*) merely reprinted a news agency report about the writers’ trial. These captions and the ensuing articles in the three newspapers differed from each other in vocabulary and appreciation of the situation, as well as in how they related the accused’s appeals and in the sources they were based on.

In these aspects they also differed from the reporting in the following few years and from today’s analyses on dissent in the eastern bloc which highlight the emergence of Soviet dissent and civil rights activism. In hindsight, the trial of 1966 appears to have been a watershed moment in the

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Grose, ‘Accused Soviet Writers Appeal at Trial for Artistic Freedom’, *NYT*, 12 Feb. 1966; Peter Grose, ‘Russians Can Dissent, But’, *NYT*, 13 Feb. 1966; Monitor, ‘Russian Writers Say They Had No Political Motives’, *Times*, 12 Feb. 1966, 7; dpa/AP, ‘Der Moskauer Literaturprozeß’, *FAZ*, 11 Feb. 1966, 28.

emergence of the Soviet dissident movement<sup>2</sup> – but in 1965/66, none of this was foreseeable.

Picking up on these differences, this paper argues that not only the intellectual dissent within Soviet society developed in the years following the trial of 1966, but that the transfer of information to the west and the circumstances under which it occurred evolved as well. One group of people that greatly contributed to this transfer of information were the western foreign correspondents who worked in Moscow in those years. Their reports about the Soviet dissidents appeared with increasing prominence in major western newspapers and can thus be assumed to have been widely read. However, the articles only hint at the process of how the journalists gained and transferred their knowledge: How did they obtain their information? From whom did they get it? How did their Moscow-based experiences reflect in their appreciation of the situation? These questions call for a precise inquiry into the working and living conditions in Moscow at that time. More abstractly, they call for an inquiry that highlights the interactions at a specific geographical location in the eastern centre of the cold war world, where the Moscow-based journalists made and processed their observations and related them to their western audiences, i.e., an inquiry that takes the spatial context into account.

A perspective that pays attention to these entanglements is one that is currently provided by the concept of ‘transnationality’. Merging the different approaches that have been put forward in the debate around the transnational, the editors of the Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History, Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier, describe it as ‘an angle, a perspective that can be adopted by everyone who wants to address the entangled condition of the modern world’ when they are interested in questions of ‘links and flows, and want to track people, ideas, products, processes and patterns that operate over, across, through, beyond, above, under, or in-between polities and societies’.<sup>3</sup> A classical analysis of reception in the west or a classical comparison of these receptions would not explain the process of gaining, interpreting and transferring information. By taking a transnational perspective, however, and by focusing on a specific place and time (namely, Moscow 1965–72), the correspondents, their actions and

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<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Wolfgang Eichwede, ‘Archipel Gulag’, in Wolfgang Eichwede, ed., *Samizdat: Alternative Kultur in Zentral- und Osteuropa: Die 60er bis 80er Jahre* (Bremen: Ed. Temmen, 2000), 8-19; Dietrich Beyrau, ‘Die befreiende Tat des Wortes’, in *ibid.*, 26-37.

<sup>3</sup> Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier, ‘The Professor and the Madman’, in Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier, eds., *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History* (Basingstoke et al.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), xvii-xx; Agnes Arndt, Joachim Häberlein and Christiane Reinecke, eds., *Vergleichen, Verflechten, Verwirren? Europäische Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Theorie und Praxis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht 2011).

their vocabulary can be analysed within the context of the time and space in which they were situated. This enables us to grasp their interpretive accomplishments in translating for their readerships in the west the dissident developments under way in the east. More abstractly, this perspective highlights the contingency of the knowledge about Soviet dissent.

This paper will show that the close reporting on the dissident trials became possible, firstly, because of the correspondents' establishing contact and trust with members of the liberal intelligentsia. This possibility was due to a general shift toward investigative journalism in the west, the cuing by ambitious and well-informed editors in the newspapers' home offices, and the open-mindedness and interests of the correspondents and their wives who were posted to Moscow and came into contact with the Muscovite intelligentsia. Secondly, it was advanced by the correspondents' personal astonishment when witnessing the developments, using highly impressionistic language to convey their feelings of amazement and support to the reader. They also hinted at increasingly reliable sources, with this secretive vagueness intensifying the sense of bravery and personal proximity, all within a general atmosphere of détente and intensifying mutual interest between people in the west and east. Thirdly, with increasing proximity between correspondents and dissidents, the newsmen transmitted the dissidents' claims with more precision, shifting from the outsiders' first interpretation of a matter of possible re-Stalinization to an almost-insiders' recapitulation of the vocabulary of legality and civil rights. Finally, a brief contrasting of the three newspapers' articles indicates the entanglement of the western newspapers, which reprinted agency reports and each other's comments, and thereby steadily began to use similar vocabulary to describe the phenomenon they were witnessing.

This paper will provide an empirical basis for these hypotheses by means of a brief case study focusing on the reporting about three major trials against Soviet dissidents in the years from 1965 to 1972.

### Briefly: The Cold War, Soviet Dissent and the Media

Internationally, these were years of ambiguous change. They encompassed superpower détente and West German *Neue Ostpolitik*, leading up to the negotiations at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Armed conflicts under the auspices of the superpowers in various parts of the world eased while the quagmire of the Vietnam War left its imprint in polarizing standpoints among the political elites and broader parts of the societies on both sides of the east-west divide. Both in the east and west, students and intellectuals voiced their calls for more open and

civil societies, which culminated in 1968 and challenged (although in completely different ways) the conservative parts of their respective societies. Within the Soviet sphere of influence, the Prague Spring and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the violent ending of the wave of protests in Poland in 1968 and 1970 cemented the Kremlin's claim to power while at the same time shocking parts of the societies. In the Soviet Union, Brezhnev emerged as the leading political figure from the collective leadership at the head of the state after Khrushchev was ousted. The 'thaw' that had begun under Khrushchev ended, and the Soviet intelligentsia apprehensively watched the struggle within the political realm between conservatives and reformers over the future course. The liberal wing of the intelligentsia feared re-Stalinization and a few of them spoke out openly for freedom of artistic expression. Within these ambiguous international, western, eastern and Soviet developments, public discourses were split between a longing for change, for a stabilization of the status quo and for a return to a status quo ante.<sup>4</sup>

Within this constellation, a wave of trials against some of the outspoken members of the liberal wing of the Soviet intelligentsia took place in Moscow. It began with the trial against Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel in February 1966 and found its preliminary culmination with the one against Vladimir Bukovsky in January 1972. These two cases will feature prominently in this paper, along with another trial that took place in-between, shortly after international attention focused on the Warsaw Pact invasion to end the Prague Spring in August 1968. All three trials received much attention in the west and incited international protest against the Soviet Union.

Western media are generally assumed to have been an important voice broadcasting the agenda of the emerging dissident movement in the east, providing them with a certain insurance against persecution by focussing western public and political attention on those dissidents who stepped from anonymity into the limelight. The dissent in the Soviet Union has been widely documented and studied, fascinating observers and historians with the inner drive and audacity of the protagonists who voiced their opinions in a hostile political environment.<sup>5</sup> Various studies have focused on several

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<sup>4</sup> See for a multi-perspective compilation Melvin Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> See the rich literature on dissent in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, e.g. Anke Stephan, *Von der Küche auf den Roten Platz: Lebenswege sowjetischer Dissidentinnen* (Zürich: Pano, 2005); Dietrich Beyrau, *Intelligenz und Dissens: Die russischen Bildungsschichten in der Sowjetunion 1917-1985* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); Man-

different points: inter-bloc exchange and interconnection via samizdat and tamizdat<sup>6</sup>, the western reception of developments within the Soviet Union as perceived via information transferred by the media ('Gulag-shock')<sup>7</sup>, the instrumentalization of the media for propaganda purposes<sup>8</sup>, and, recently, both the role of western radio transmissions in providing information to the societies on the eastern side of the 'iron curtain'<sup>9</sup> as well as the journalists' involvement as political avant-garde thinkers<sup>10</sup>. However, the journalists as *acteurs* and the process of gathering, interpreting and transferring information have so far received little attention in studies on the cold war.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, studies on correspondents as actors in west European and transatlantic relations in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries have highlighted journalists as autonomous and politically involved actors within a specific political, social and cultural setting.<sup>12</sup> These studies provide the impulse to

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fred Sapper, Volker Weichsel, Wolfgang Eichwede, eds., *Blick zurück nach vorne: Samizdat, Internet und die Freiheit des Wortes*, thematic issue of *Osteuropa* 60 (2010).

<sup>6</sup> Wolfgang Eichwede, ed., *Samizdat: Alternative Kultur in Zentral- und Osteuropa: Die 60er bis 80er Jahre* (Bremen: Ed. Temmen, 2000); Christian Domnitz, José Faraldo and Paulina Gulińska-Jurgiel, eds., *Europa im Ostblock: Vorstellungen und Diskurse, 1945–1991* (Köln et al.: Böhlau, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Ulrike Ackermann, *Sündenfall der Intellektuellen: Ein deutsch-französischer Streit von 1945 bis heute* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2000); Sonja Hauschild, 'Propheten oder Störenfriede? Sowjetische Dissidenten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Frankreich und ihre Rezeption bei den Intellektuellen 1974–1977', available at [www.epub.uni-muenchen.de/1359/](http://www.epub.uni-muenchen.de/1359/) Virtuelle Fachbibliothek Osteuropa (last visited 31 October 2011); Robert Horvath, "'The Solzhenitsyn Effect': East European Dissidents and the Demise of the Revolutionary Privilege", *Human Rights Quarterly* 4 (2007), 879–907.

<sup>8</sup> For an introduction see Nicholas J. Cull, 'Reading, viewing, and tuning in to the Cold War', in *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 2, 438–459; Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, 'Culture and the Cold War in Europe', in *ibid.*, vol. 1, 398–419.

<sup>9</sup> Conference report, Voices of Freedom – Western Interference? 60 Years of Radio Free Europe in Munich and Prague, 28.–30. April 2011 in München, available at [www.hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=3750](http://www.hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=3750), H-Soz-u-Kult, 30. July 2011 (last visited 30 October 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Guido Thiemeyer, "'Wandel durch Annäherung" Westdeutsche Journalisten in Osteuropa 1956–1978', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 45 (2005), 101–116.

<sup>11</sup> Whitman Bassow provides a journalistic overview of American correspondents' experiences in Moscow during the Soviet era. Whitman Bassow, *The Moscow Correspondents: Reporting on Russia from the Revolution to Glasnost* (New York: Paragon House, 1988). Barbara Walker is currently analysing how the dissidents received the correspondents: Barbara Walker, 'Moscow Human Rights Defenders Look West: Attitudes toward U.S. Journalists in the 1960s and 1970s', *Kritika* 4 (2008), 905–927.

<sup>12</sup> Jessica Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism As Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945–1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999); Frank Bösch and Dominik Geppert, eds., *Journalists as Political Actors: Transfers and Interactions between Britain and Germany since the late 19th Century*

take a new look into the role and involvement of the western foreign correspondents who were working during the cold war and reporting from one of its centres.

By combining research on dissent and on press actors in a transnational perspective, our knowledge about dissent appears less as a given, less clear-cut and automatic, and more dependent on the agency of the transmitters. This approach will reroute our attention to the Moscow-based correspondents as *acteurs* and to the process of how they gathered, interpreted and transferred their knowledge on the trials mentioned above.

This sketch is based on a close reading of the articles featured by the *New York Times* and will briefly refer to the *Times* of London and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* for support or contrast. All three were newspapers with an international reputation for being reliable, well-informed and widely read. Choosing these newspapers provides the opportunity to contrast different approaches to reporting the trials while extracting it from the individual paper's national contexts. The newspapers are not considered to be representing 'their' countries.

Assuming the perspective of an avid western newspaper reader, this paper will highlight what he or she would have read and perceived 'between the lines' about the reports on the three trials. While the choice of sources as well as of the perspective of the contemporary reader provide the advantage of tracing the developments step-by-step without focusing on the outcome, this approach, of course, imposes limits on the analysis by providing impressions and perceptions from the side of the readers. In this article, I will transcend these limits to some extent by an analysis of *NYT*-related archival documentation (and I will do so more thoroughly in the Ph.D. project to which this paper is leading).

Moscow, February 1966

The first news about the arrest of the two writers Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel and the first western protests blindsided the Moscow-based western press.<sup>13</sup> When Soviet authorities arrested them in September 1965,

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(Augsburg: Wißner, 2008); Antje Robrecht, *Diplomaten in Hemdsärmeln? Auslands-korrespondenten als Akteure in den deutsch-britischen Beziehungen 1945-1962* (Augsburg: Wißner, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> [N.N.], 'Crackdown is Feared', *NYT*, 19 Oct. 1965; Hermann Pörzgen, 'Die unbequemen Autoren', *FAZ*, 10 Nov. 1965, 24; Reuters, 'Investigation of 2 Writers Goes on, Soviet Aide Says', *NYT*, 9 Dec. 1965; Reuters, 'Soviet Writers 3 Months in Detention', *Times*, 9 Dec. 1965, 10; Peter Grose, 'Noted Poet Detained in Moscow Protest', *NYT*, 18 Dec. 1965.

the correspondents heard about it through rumours spreading back from the west. In the following months, attentive readers who perhaps were devouring a few of the main international western newspapers for breakfast could only wonder what was happening in Moscow. They learnt about rumours and unverified information spread by word of mouth among the Moscow intelligentsia. It was impossible to know from whom the newsmen were gaining their information since they seemed to rely on 'some observers here' and 'authoritative sources'. In fact, the Moscow correspondents seemed to be more or less simply contextualizing the news that had already spread in the west with a time-lag and with barely any further or in-depth information. It was only several weeks after the arrests that they could finally report an official comment from Soviet authorities about the arrests and the upcoming trials. Interpreting the Moscow events, the correspondents suggested the arrests presaged the beginning of a new political drive against the liberal wing of the Soviet intelligentsia, which they contextualized in the overarching concern present in the west as to whether or not the Soviet Union under Brezhnev was re-Stalinizing.

In mid-December, however, an article by an American correspondent forecast the relationship between western correspondents and the independent thinkers of the Moscow intelligentsia: a demonstration on Pushkin Square by students and university teachers against the arrests took place on December 5, the anniversary of the Soviet constitution. This was reported two weeks later with an air of perplexity by *NYT*-correspondent Peter Grose, who related the protesters' demands word-for-word, namely, to hold a public trial in accordance with the provisions of Soviet law and the Soviet constitution (18 Dec. 1965). Grose reported about it without naming his sources, indicating only 'an authoritative source'. Nevertheless, this was a rare in-depth background article – which a cursory reader might easily have overlooked.

But then, when the trial finally took place in February 1966, even the less attentive newspaper reader could not have helped but perceive the following picture:<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Grose, 'Kremlin Cracks down on Smuggling Authors', *NYT*, 23 Jan. 1966; Peter Grose, '2 Soviet Writers Plead Not Guilty', *NYT*, 11 Feb. 1966; Peter Grose, 'Accused Soviet Writers Appeal at Trial for Artistic Freedom', *NYT*, 12 Feb. 1966; Peter Grose, 'Russians Can Dissent, But', *NYT*, 13 Feb. 1966; Peter Grose, 'Hard Labor Asked for Two Russians', *NYT*, 13 Feb. 1966; Peter Grose, 'Soviet Sentences 2 Writers Today', *NYT*, 14 Feb. 1966; Peter Grose, '2 Soviet Authors are Convicted', *NYT*, 15 Feb. 1966; [N.N.] 'Excerpts from Soviet Reports on Trial of Writers', *NYT*, 15 Feb. 1966; Peter Grose, 'Soviet Reported Tightening Surveillance over Nonconformist Intellectuals', *NYT*, 17 Feb. 1966; Peter Grose, 'Two Score Writers' Trial', *NYT*, 21 Feb. 1966.



It was a very cold week in mid-February. A few western journalists showed up at the site of the trial, although they did not reveal how they had learnt when and where it would take place. Surely, it had not been the Soviet authorities who had informed them. They arrived vaguely expecting to be allowed to attend the hearings, but instead found themselves blocked from entering the building. Officially, the trial was declared to be an open public trial in accordance with Soviet procedural law, but the correspondents were sent away with the explanation that the courtroom was already overfilled with spectators. So they turned away – and then they witnessed something utterly unexpected: there, in the freezing cold, in the side street where the five-story yellow courthouse was located, they caught sight of a shivering band of young people, pacing up and down the street and openly expressing their sympathy and concern for one of the accused, their teacher Andrei Sinyavsky. The same thing happened on the following days of the hearings. Now, the *NYT*-reporters overheard students and older people debating in the street, mainly about the question of varying opinions and artistic freedom within the communist system. They watched Mrs Daniel, the wife of the arrested Yuli Daniel, leave the courthouse in tears. Amazed, the western journalists reported that the two writers pleaded not guilty to the charge of anti-Soviet propaganda, learning about it by relying on a mix of official Soviet newspaper accounts for information about the proceedings within the building and on eyewitness observations and grapevine-rumours in front of it.

On the fourth day of the trial, the two writers were convicted and sentenced to several years of labour camp. The newsmen continued to gather their information in front of the court building, still relying on a mix of official press and unofficial rumours. But now, apparently, they were slowly making connections with the other shivering persons in front of the building, watching attentively and trying to establish personal contacts: ‘The wives of the two writers were in tears as they walked from the courtroom into a driving snow. They kissed each other and walked off in opposite directions with friends. The Komsomol youth prevented newsmen from talking with them’ (15 Feb. 1966). Immediately after the trial, the *NYT*-newsmen could provide background information they could not have received in any other way than through personal acquaintances with members of the liberal literary intelligentsia, for instance, about the repressive treatment of the defendants’ supporters on the site. They quoted their sources vaguely as ‘reliable sources’, ‘reliable informants’, and as ‘friends of the two writers’, guarding their anonymity.

Then, within a week, Peter Grose met with Aleksandr Yesenin-Volpin, ‘a prominent member of Moscow’s literary “underground”’, for an interview in his three-room Moscow apartment, which he quoted word-for-



word, providing Yesenin-Volpin's full identity, background and political standpoint – something Grose must have, under Moscow circumstances, had Yesenin-Volpin's explicit permission to do. Why his Soviet acquaintance was still free despite his open criticism of the regime, Grose could not explain.

This is, in a brief sketch, the picture as a *New York Times* reader would have envisioned it. And it was, in fact, backed by a number of intertwined developments that took place behind the scenes. By the mid-1960s, the *NYT* was shifting from a newspaper-of-reference to a more vivid style in research and writing. The newly appointed managing editor of the *NYT* and his assistant, Clifton Daniel and Harrison Salisbury, had both spent several years in Moscow a decade earlier.<sup>15</sup> They had enjoyed the sense of novelty and adventure that a posting to Moscow provided, and they had endured the hardship of that posting which left the correspondents rather isolated within a Soviet society that was still upset by the terrors of war and Stalinism. Both had learned Russian and had tried to get to know local people, and both had tried to provide their readers with a full picture of life in the Soviet Union. A little after their Moscow postings, during Khrushchev's 'thaw', it became easier for western correspondents to come into contact with the cultural elite of Moscow, and the NYC-based managing editors urged their successors to find and intensify contacts.<sup>16</sup>

So when Peter Grose was transferred to Moscow in 1965, the *NYT*-editors prompted him to bring a new depth and liveliness into his articles, to inform the western readers how Soviet society thought and lived, and to go beyond traditional fact-and-politics-based journalism. They also encouraged Peter Grose and his wife Claudia to learn Russian and to delve into Moscow cultural life. The Groses apparently gladly complied, as did similarly Theodore Shabad (also *NYT*-correspondent) and his wife.<sup>17</sup> From their acquaintances with the Moscow intelligentsia, each received a tip about the trial. And they went to watch and listen. Within weeks after the trial, Grose and Shabad informed their editors that they were 'getting deeper and deeper into the so-called clandestine writers' circle'.<sup>18</sup> As early as March 1966, the

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Clifton Daniel, folder 13, box 1, and interview with Harrison E. Salisbury, folder 17, box 3, Papers of Whitman Bassow (henceforth: Bassow Papers), Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

<sup>16</sup> Folder Moscow Bureau 1965, box 595, Papers of Harrison Salisbury (henceforth: Salisbury Papers), Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Columbia University.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Theodore Shabad, folder 21, box 3, Bassow Papers; interview with Peter Grose, folder 5, box 2, Bassow Papers; Papers of Peter Grose, box 1, Manuscript Division, Princeton University.

<sup>18</sup> Letter, Grose to Salisbury, 28 Jan. 1966, folder Moscow 1966, box 595, Salisbury Papers.

*NYT* sent a third journalist to Moscow, Raymond Anderson, to support Grose and Shabad in the coverage of the events around those whom they called the young people and the writers.

Similarly, the London *Times* reader saw in detail the ‘small, bearded Sinyavsky and the tall, thin Yuli Daniel’ not pleading guilty at their trial. It was held ‘on the second floor of a mustard-coloured building belonging to the Moscow regional court in a quiet courtyard in the western part of the city’ and at the conclusion of it, the forty young people who had gathered in front of the building presented the wives of the two defendants ‘with bunches of flowers’ when they emerged from the building in the evening (11 Feb. 1966). Verbatim, the *Times* printed parts of the debate between the prosecution and defendants, as provided by the Soviet news agency Tass. But it also reported on the discussion between journalists and students in the street, namely, on the question of whether or not the western press should be allowed into the courtroom. The news coverage, however, seems vaguely impersonal in comparison to the *NYT*-coverage. While critically relating Tass and *Izvestia* information and adding personal impressions from the site, no correspondent was identified. Instead, *Monitor* was the vague source of the articles. Oxford-based scholar Max Hayward contributed commentaries, describing the events as ‘coercion [by Soviet authorities] to silence awkward voices’ (1 Feb. 1966). In the days leading up to the trial, Hayward had already pointed out that ‘for all the known cases there are others which we [the collective West] may never hear about’ (1 Feb. 1966).

An *FAZ*-reader would have learnt much less about the events, the protests and the atmosphere.<sup>19</sup> The *FAZ*’s Moscow correspondent, Hermann Pörzgen, who had in November reported ‘rumours in Moscow literary circles’ about the arrests of ‘Alexej [sic!] Sinjawski’ and ‘Jury [sic!] Daniel’ in the Feuilleton part of the paper, was out of town during the first weeks of 1966. He only returned to Moscow in mid-February, when Soviet authorities finally issued a visa readmitting him to the country. In the meanwhile, the paper had featured dispatches by various western news agencies, mostly the West German Deutsche Presseagentur (dpa) as well as the American Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI), to provide the basic facts of the case – featured, up until the date of the trial, in the Feuilleton and only afterwards in the political pages of the paper. Editor Karl Korn – again in the Feuilleton – contributed from

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<sup>19</sup> dpa/AP, ‘Der Moskauer Literaturprozeß’, *FAZ*, 11 Feb. 1966, 28; UPI, ‘Arbeitslager für Schriftsteller’ *FAZ*, 15 Feb. 1966, 5; AP, ‘Kein Problem gelöst’, *FAZ*, 16 Feb. 1966, 2; Karl Korn, ‘Der Prozeß beginnt’, *FAZ*, 21 Feb. 1966, 24; dpa/AP, ‘Moskau zur Rechtfertigung genötigt’, *FAZ*, 22 Feb. 1966, 2.

Frankfurt, not only commenting but also adding the vivid imagery which the other newspapers had already provided their audiences a week earlier. Pörzgen and Korn both considered the trial to be a continuation of the long line of political trials against liberal writers that had previously taken place back in tsarist times.

The newspapers revealed further information on the proceedings within the fortnight of the verdict,<sup>20</sup> with the *NYT* reprinting an article the London *Times* had published based in turn on an article by the Italian *Il Giorno* (25 Feb. 1966) that had included excerpts from what was considered to be a transcript of the writers' statements. The *NYT* commented: 'The paper did not disclose how the transcript had been obtained, but it indicated that it had come from Moscow by way of an East European capital and Vienna.' (25 Feb. 1966) A few weeks later, the Moscow newsmen mentioned a petition by forty prominent liberal intellectuals to the Soviet government, having been informed by 'reliable sources'. And in mid-April, the *NYT* printed at length a description of the trial and a transcript of the proceedings that had reached New York from the Paris-based Polish magazine *Kultura*. It was *Kultura* that also published ten letters of protest signed by more than ninety Soviet intellectuals in November 1966, having received them in early autumn and believing them to have been passed 'from hand to hand in several major Russian cities'. Shortly afterwards, *NYT*-correspondent Theodore Shabad informed his readers about one of these letters of protest which the American publishers had received via 'undisclosed channels'. They considered it authentic and provided it to the Moscow correspondent before publication and it was also reprinted by the *NYT*.

In hindsight, the trial is generally considered the watershed moment in the emergence of the dissident movement. But even though it attracted much western attention and unleashed strong protests mainly by western writers, the implications were unclear at that time. The journalists concluded they had witnessed two novelties, firstly, the defendants' pleading not guilty, and secondly, the 'dissent from the party line' by prominent members of the literary establishment refusing to turn against the two accused writers, with the students milling in front of the courthouse giving evidence of the tug-of-war between liberal and conservative strata of the

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<sup>20</sup> Rome-correspondent of the Times, 'Sinyavsky's Defence Speech Quoted by Newspaper', *Times*, 25 Feb. 1966, 10; [N.N.] "'My works are not hostile'", Milan Paper Quotes Sinyavsky', *NYT*, 25 Feb. 1966; Special to the New York Times in Paris, '95 in Soviet Union Protest Sentencing of 2 Fellow Writers', *NYT*, 14 Nov. 1966; Special to The New York Times in Moscow, 'Russians Protest Writers' Jailings', *NYT*, 16 March 1966; Max Hayward, 'The Trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel', *NYT*, 17 April 1966; Theodore Shabad, '63 Writers' Plea to Kremlin Bared', *NYT*, 19 Nov. 1966; [N.N.] 'Texts of Soviet Writers' Petition to Kremlin and of Letter of Protest', *NYT*, 19 Nov. 1966.

communist elite. The reader of any of the three newspapers would have received the main information and evaluation of the case. Moreover, the reader of the Anglo-American papers could also sense a high level of novelty and uncertainty from the side of the reporting journalists who were on site as ear- and eye-witnesses and who – as they hinted at in their reporting – entered into contact with the liberal intelligentsia and the protestors in front of the court house.

### Moscow, October 1968

Early in 1968, *NYT*-readers found themselves informed by the journalist Raymond Anderson about a trial against four young *literati* to take place shortly after the Soviet New Year and the traditional Russian festivities of early to mid-January.<sup>21</sup> Again it was freezing cold. Again the newsmen were blocked from attending the trial. Again they resorted to reporting the events they witnessed in front of a dingy three-story brick courthouse. More than before, the protests by friends and relatives seemed noteworthy. Anderson described them vividly, along with direct quotations from the debates he overheard and vivid descriptions of the rough scenes he witnessed when relatives of the accused argued and pushed their way into the building and when the supporters protested in front of the courthouse. Especially former major general Pyotr Grigorenko, with his open refusal to be intimidated, featured prominently in the articles, as well as Pavel Litvinov, grandson of former Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov. Up to that point, the *NYT*-newsmen had been discussing letters of appeal circulated by Soviet intellectuals, but rather than receiving the letters directly, they had gained access to them via publishing houses in the west. On the second day of the trial, however, Grigorenko distributed copies of a peti-

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<sup>21</sup> Raymond H. Anderson, 'Trial of Dissidents, Held a Year, Opens in Moscow', *NYT*, 9 Jan. 1968; Raymond H. Anderson, 'Access Is Asked in Moscow Trial', *NYT*, 10 Jan. 1968; Raymond H. Anderson, '2 Russians Term Trial a "Mockery"', *NYT*, 13 Jan. 1968; Reuters, 'Text of Appeal Denouncing Trial of Four Russians', *NYT*, 13 Jan. 1968. See also Kyril Tidmarsh, 'Russians to Be Tried on Monday', *Times*, 7 Jan. 1968, 4; Kyril Tidmarsh, 'Moscow Trial Closed to West', *Times*, 9 Jan. 1968, 1; Kyril Tidmarsh, 'Ex-General in Moscow Trial Protest', *Times*, 10 Jan. 1968, 1; Kyril Tidmarsh, 'Heavy Sentences on Writers Sought', *Times*, 12 Jan. 1968, 5; Kyril Tidmarsh, 'Red Carnations for Defence Lawyers', *Times*, 13 Jan. 1968, 1; [N.N.], 'Appeal to World Opinion over Russian Writers', *Times*, 13 Jan. 1968, 8. For the *FAZ* e.g.: Claus Gennrich, 'Vier Schriftsteller in Moskau auf der Anklagebank', *FAZ*, 8. Jan. 1968, 3; *FAZ* Moskau, 'Moskauer Schriftsteller-Prozeß eröffnet', *FAZ*, 9 Jan. 1968, 3; *FAZ* Moskau, 'Harte Strafen für Moskauer Schriftsteller', *FAZ*, 13 Jan. 1968, 3; Claus Gennrich, 'Um die Freiheit des Wortes in der Sowjetunion', *FAZ*, 13 Jan. 1968, 2.

tion he was about to hand to the Moscow City Court, calling for a fair and open trial of the four defendants – whom Anderson, by the way, now termed ‘dissidents’. Grigorenko, Litvinov, Yesenin-Volpin and Yakir attended the protests and were obviously willing to be named personally by the *NYT*-correspondent in his dispatch about the events. On 13 January 1968, the *NYT* published the translation of an open letter by Litvinov and Mrs Daniel to ‘World Public Opinion’ which they had signed with full names and addresses and handed to some of the foreign correspondents a few hours before the court adjourned for deliberation and which the Reuters-news agency correspondent transmitted immediately via the wire service. Obviously, the fact that they had received the letter directly by hand was newsworthy.

The trials of January and the accompanying protests featured prominently in the western press, in the news sections as well as the editorials and features sections. ‘Litvinov and Mrs Daniel’, as the press tended to call them, were therefore well-known figures when they were arrested in the summer of that year. On 27 August 1968, the *NYT*-readers saw it black on white beside their cup of coffee at breakfast: Mrs Daniel and Pavel Litvinov ‘were reliably reported tonight [that is on 26 August, the day the dispatch was sent] to have been arrested in Red Square’ where they were staging a demonstration against the invasion of Czechoslovakia.<sup>22</sup> Their names and pictures must by then have seemed at least vaguely familiar to the reader, having scanned them over and over again since the beginning of the year. Explaining the events, the *NYT*-correspondent referred to the two as ‘active in a dissident movement of Soviet intellectuals’, which indicated that background explanations were still necessary as well as introducing the term ‘dissident movement’ as a legitimate description.

The trial took place on another cold day, in October, in the same dingy three-story court building in a downtown Moscow side-street that was blocked off by the police while sympathizers gathered in front of the building as before. Henry Kamm covered the trial for the *NYT*.<sup>23</sup> Now, the

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<sup>22</sup> Special to The New York Times, ‘Russians said to seize Mrs. Daniel and a Litvinov’, *NYT*, 27 Aug. 1968.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Kamm, ‘Five Who Staged a Pro-Czech Protest in Red Square Go on Trial in Moscow’, *NYT*, 10 Oct. 1968; Henry Kamm, ‘Prosecutor Asks Exile for Three on Trial of Pro-Czechs in Moscow’, *NYT*, 11 Oct. 1968; Henry Kamm, ‘3 Soviet Dissidents Exiled and 2 Jailed’, *NYT*, 12 Oct. 1968; Henry Kamm, “‘For Three Minutes I Felt Free’”, *NYT*, 13 Oct. 1968; Henry Kamm, ‘6 Reported Held in Soviet Dissent’, *NYT*, 14 Oct. 1968; Henry Kamm, ‘Soviet Trial of 5 pro-Czechs Is Termed the Most “Political” Case’, *NYT*, 15 Oct. 1968; [N.N.] ‘Excerpts from Proceedings of the Trial in Moscow’, *NYT*, 15 Oct. 1968; Kyril Tidmarsh, ‘Moscow Officials Set Up an Iron Curtain round Foreign Press’, *Times*, 1 May 1968, 10.

journalist apparently received his information from relatives of the defendants who had been admitted to the hearings. He added vivid descriptions of the events in front of the building, where protesters set up to gather signatures for their petition, where former major general Grigorenko advocated civil liberties, and where a heated discussion blazed between sympathizers and communist youth, which Kamm related verbatim. He commented (10 Oct. 1968):

Observers could not recall a previous occasion when radical opposition views had been so loudly pronounced. The friends of the regime did little to discourage Russians from speaking freely with foreigners. For the first time, also, a member of the Press Department of the Foreign Ministry was present to provide information to correspondents.

The trial lasted for several days and the readers received vivid daily reports.

Although five persons were on trial, Litvinov and Daniel featured most prominently among the five ‘dissidents’, as they were now termed. Relatives of the defendants who attended the trial let the correspondents know in detail about what happened and quoted one of the dissidents, Vadim Delone, as saying ‘For three minutes on Red Square I felt free. [...] I am glad to take your three years for that.’ Kamm highlighted: ‘The final statements of the defendants were expositions of their dissident political faith, according to the relatives’ (12 Oct. 1968). Again, snow was falling when the relatives of the defendants filed out of the building along a path lined by sympathizers. ‘All of them – including Mrs Daniel’s 17-year-old son, Aleksandr; her lame brother leaning heavily on his cane, and Mr Litvinov’s aunt, Tatyana M. Litvinov – had been crying. They made a noticeable effort not to let it show as they stepped into the street, where a light snow mingled with falling leaves’ (12 Oct. 1968). Looking back on the three days of the trial, Kamm commented that the ‘Prague spring’ had apparently come ‘to one dingy street in Moscow’ where (13 Oct. 1968)

from morning into evening dissidents from the Soviet way of life openly put their radical views to milling, informal groups. [...] The small band is becoming increasingly outspoken not because Soviet society has become more tolerant of dissent. What one senses in talking with them is an increasing sense of anguish that the small measure of liberty that appeared [...] earlier in the decade, is being snuffed out. Their courage is born of despair.

On 14 October, the first weekday after the trial, the *NYT*-correspondent had already talked to his Moscow acquaintances, citing ‘informed quarters’. He already possessed the transcripts of the defendants’ statements, from which he extensively related their political standpoints, namely, calling for the government to respect the right of free speech and assembly as provided for

by the Soviet constitution and describing their plight as political dissidents leaving it unclear in the article, though, whether it was Kamm or they themselves calling them dissidents. The *NYT* published the transcripts of the proceedings, including the final pleas by Litvinov and Mrs Daniel, on 15 October, apparently receiving it cabled directly from the *NYT*-Moscow bureau.

And in fact, in 1968 the *NYT*-editors encouraged their Moscow-based journalists, Raymond Anderson and Henry Kamm, to watch the developments in the dissident scene very closely.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, relations between Soviet authorities and those western correspondents who had close contacts with the dissidents became increasingly strained. The Soviet officials attempted to pressure the correspondents into conformity by providing them with information themselves, by indicating that they could make their working conditions in Moscow so much more difficult, and by alluding to the possible expulsion of the correspondents from the country and the closure of the *NYT*-office. In certain cases, the correspondents took this risk. After the trial in January 1968, the Soviet Foreign Ministry had warned the correspondents not to attend a press conference convened by Ginzburg's mother. Anderson remembers:

So I sent a message to New York saying, 'Should I go? If I go, it probably means the *New York Times* bureau will be shut down.' So I asked for guidance. They came back – 'You cover the news; we'll take the consequences.' It means that I could go. So I went. But the Soviet authorities protected us from ourselves because they had KGB men lined up outside the apartment; we couldn't get in.<sup>25</sup>

A few months later, in October 1968, Anderson nevertheless became the first correspondent to be expelled from the country in the context of the coverage of the dissident phenomenon.

The London *Times* readers were presented with a similarly vivid description, although through a mix of Moscow-based sources.<sup>26</sup> The *Times*' own correspondent, Kyril Tidmarsh, provided some of the information, usually referring to the individuals on trial by giving their names or referring to them as 'the defendants', 'the accused' or 'dissident liberals'.

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<sup>24</sup> Folder Moscow 1968, box 595, Salisbury Papers.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Raymond Anderson, folder 1, box 1, Bassow Papers.

<sup>26</sup> Via NYT News Service Raymond H. Anderson, 'Arrests at Soviet Protest Rallies', *Times*, 27 Aug. 1968, 1; Kyril Tidmarsh, 'Crowd Argues the Case as Litvinov Stands Trial', *Times*, 10 Oct. 1968, 6; Kyril Tidmarsh, 'Litvinov Trial Threat of Exile', *Times*, 11 Oct. 1968, 1; Kyril Tidmarsh, 'Five Years of Exile as Sentence for Litvinov', *Times*, 12 Oct. 1968, 5; via NYT News Service [N.N.], 'Why Dissidents Risked Their Freedom', *Times*, 15 Oct. 1968, 10.



Apparently, his main contact for interviews was Grigorenko, with whom he appears to have spoken regularly in front of the courthouse. Tidmarsh's reports about the October 1968 trial and the accompanying events were supplemented by Reuter news agency reports providing further details on what the protestors were saying. Furthermore, the *Times* printed articles provided by the *NYT* News Service which introduced the vocabulary of dissent by referring to the defendants, the protestors and those who had been on trial earlier as 'dissidents'. The *FAZ* also featured the news prominently on the front pages of its political section.<sup>27</sup> It was via news agency dispatches that the reader learnt about details of the proceedings in and in front of the courthouse in October – containing in a nutshell (although not particularly poignantly) the information the *NYT*- and *Times*-correspondents for their part had embellished with a much more detailed description that was apt to conjure a vivid picture in the reader's mind and therefore last in his memory. More descriptions could be obtained in Frankfurt-based editor Claus Gennrich's articles. Gennrich in turn relied on the Russian-emigrant publishing house Possev, which was also located in Frankfurt, and on the international news agencies, mainly the American UPI. The *FAZ* did not employ the terminology of dissent, but spoke of individuals who were characterized by name and profession and who were introduced as Soviet intellectuals expressing their desire for intellectual freedom.

Apart from the snow and the setting, and apart from a continuity in the general manner in which the trials were conducted, the alert newspaper reader observed notable differences in the increased proximity between the correspondents and the people close to the defendants. This was reflected not only in the passing on of news and documents, but in that the correspondents had become much more attentive to the protestors and well acquainted with several of them. Also, they had become sympathetic in their reporting, as in the recurring citation of Delone's 'three minutes' catchphrase.

### Moscow, January 1972

By 1972, the continuous and diligent newspaper readers' breakfast bacon, bagels or Brötchen would have been accompanied by a quite different picture:

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<sup>27</sup> Claus Gennrich, 'Prozeß in Moskau gegen Oppositionelle', *FAZ*, 13 Sept. 1968, 3; Claus Gennrich, 'Prozeß im Moskauer Stadtgericht gegen Demonstranten', *FAZ*, 7 Oct. 1968, 3; UPI, 'Handgemenge vor Moskauer Gericht', *FAZ*, 10 Oct. 1968, 5; Claus Gennrich, 'Auseinandersetzungen beim Prozeß gegen Demonstranten', *FAZ*, 11 Oct. 1968, 3; *FAZ* Moskau, 'Die Urteile im Moskauer Prozeß', *FAZ*, 12 Oct. 1968, 1.

Now, on 5 January 1972, Vladimir Bukovsky, 29 years old, stood trial for alleged anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. The western press had featured him over the last few years as a dissident intellectual and if the reader was not acquainted with his name, it was certainly not because the press had failed to report on him and his activities. Bukovsky had been in and out of prison and psychiatric hospitals as a political detainee since 1963 for activities the Soviet regime considered illegal. Especially his documentation of the inhumane treatment of sane non-conformist intellectuals who were held in mental institutions and his appeals to western psychiatrists to take action, had gained quite a bit of attention in the west, turning him into a sore spot in the view of the Soviet authorities.

The news coverage on his case intensified in the fall of 1971. For the *NYT*, the American journalists Hedrick Smith and Theodore Shabad provided detailed accounts of the developments.<sup>28</sup> Obviously, they gained their knowledge from first hand sources: when they reported about the upcoming trial (11 Nov. 1971), they referred to reports by ‘friends of his family’ and ‘sources close to his family’ within days after Bukovsky’s mother had received news about her son from the secret police, indicating close connections between correspondents and friends of the Bukovsky family. The correspondents reported that ‘friends of Mr. Bukovsky circulated petitions among western newsmen during the legal pre-trial activities in the hope of stirring foreign interest in the case,’ indicating that they (the correspondents as well as the dissidents) were aware of the support international publicity would accord to the defendant and the journalists’ role in attaining it (6 Jan. 1972).

The trial itself took place in one day, 5 January 1972, a date almost guaranteeing little attention within the Soviet Union as well as internationally due to the traditional winter holidays. Nevertheless, the correspondents were able to report that ‘apparently defiant at today’s trial, Mr. Bukovsky declared his regret, according to courtroom sources, that in the few years he had been at liberty “I did so little”’ (6 Jan. 1972). Merely a week after the trial, the *NYT* published excerpts of Bukovsky’s closing address to the court, as reported by Reuters. In the American press opinion, Bukovsky’s detention had ‘become a minor cause célèbre among Soviet dissidents and intellectuals concerned with human rights’.

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<sup>28</sup> Hedrick Smith, ‘Soviet Said to Plan Trial Soon for Dissident Held 7 Months’, *NYT*, 11 Nov. 1971; Theodore Shabad, ‘Soviet Dissident Convicted – Gets 7 Years and 5 in Exile’, *NYT*, 6 Jan. 1972; Special to The New York Times in Moscow, ‘A US TV Interview Used in Soviet Trial’, *NYT*, 7 Jan. 1972; Reuters, ‘“Our Society Is Still Sick”’, *NYT*, 13 Jan. 1972; Hedrick Smith, ‘Tighter Soviet Internal Security Is Seen’, *NYT*, 19 Jan. 1972; Hedrick Smith, ‘The High Price of Dissent’, *NYT*, 13 Feb. 1972.

This time, the London *Times*' reader found the most detailed reports.<sup>29</sup> The British journalist David Bonavia described Bukovsky as a young Russian, whose detention 'had become a cause célèbre among Moscow dissidents' (11 Nov. 1972). He expected the trial to attract wide attention internationally as well as among critical Soviet intellectuals, and expected it to become 'a fresh rallying point for dissident opinion' (11 Nov. 1971). Bonavia cited his information as coming from 'dissident sources' and mostly referred to 'political dissidents' and the 'opposition movement' in his articles.

When on 4 January it finally became known that the trial was to take place the next day, the Reuter news agency men were immediately informed by Bukovsky's friends ('his friends said today' [5 Jan. 1972]) and their dispatches printed in the *Times* on the following day also provided background information about Andrei Sakharov and his co-activists in the Committee on Human Rights in the USSR, which they had founded in 1970 to defend the rights of victims in political trials. Bonavia proceeded to point out the differences in the accounts of the trial between official sources and contradicting unofficial ones. He frequently quoted Bukovsky's allegations against the prosecution that it was not proceeding in accordance with Soviet law and his appeal to the civil rights guaranteed in article 125 of the Soviet constitution which contained the provision for freedom of speech, print, meetings and demonstrations. Indicating the close ties, Bonavia reported: 'The convicted man's friends were too upset this morning to ask for more details [about the trial proceedings] from his mother and sister, who were allowed to attend the proceedings' (6 Jan. 1972). He elaborated: 'His insistence in 1970, soon after his release, on transmitting information about the appalling conditions in the "hospitals" to the outside world is typical of the stubbornness with which he has defended his belief in the need for more justice and democracy in Soviet society.'

Clearly, Bukovsky's providing western journalists with information about psychiatric hospitals where dissidents were detained was considered

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<sup>29</sup> David Bonavia, 'Plea by 47 Russians To Free Young Dissident', *Times*, 6 Oct. 1971, 8; Peter Reddaway, 'Soviet Group's Plea to Psychiatrists', *Times*, 23 Oct. 1971, 3; David Bonavia, 'Young Dissident Faces Anti-Soviet Charges', *Times*, 11 Nov. 1971, 6; Peter Reddaway, 'Dispute over Defence Counsel for Dissident's Trial', *Times*, 7 Dec. 1971, 8; David Bonavia, '"Torture" of Dissidents in Russian Hospitals', *Times*, 3 Jan. 1972, 1; Reuter, 'Trial of Dissenter to Open in Moscow Today', *Times*, 5 Jan. 1972, 4; David Bonavia, 'Bukovsky Sentence Shocks Russians', *Times*, 6 Jan. 1972, 1; David Bonavia, 'Defiant Bukovsky Told Court that Spiritual Enlightenment of Soviet Society Had Begun', *Times*, 8 Jan. 1972, 5; David Bonavia, 'The High Price of Intellectual Freedom', *Times*, 10 Jan. 1972, 12; David Bonavia, 'Soviet Drive Against Dissidents', *Times*, 15 Jan. 1972, 4; David Bonavia, 'Swoop by KGB on Flats in Moscow', *Times*, 17 Jan. 1972, 4; David Bonavia, 'How Soviet Justice Dealt with a Dissident', *Times*, 7 Feb. 1972, 1.

his main crime. Moreover, the *Times* reader could develop a vivid picture of the international entanglement at the base of the Bukovsky case as well as of the protest against the verdict: 'It is typical of the present situation that Mr Bukovsky's case commands wider attention in the outside world than it does in Russia, and that the mass of Russians will learn about him, if at all, through western radio broadcasts. But I would be wrong to conclude from this that he and others like him have no importance inside Russia' (10 Jan. 1972). Bonavia and Peter Reddaway, backing him up from London, presented the trial as focusing 'world attention on the question of human rights in the Soviet Union' (10 Jan. 1972).

The *FAZ*-readers found themselves on the side-lines again. The paper's correspondent had extensively covered an earlier trial against Bukovsky in 1967, but now the *FAZ* news coverage was again based on the news agency dispatches of AP, AFP and dpa.<sup>30</sup> These provided information and background but not the personally involved reporting of a newspaper correspondent. However, the news agency personnel apparently had immediate access to direct sources of information. The vocabulary of dissent employed by the Anglo-American news agencies shone through the *FAZ*-coverage and characterized Bukovsky as someone 'considered a political dissident' ('Wie die Mutter des als politischer Dissident geltenden 28jährigen, Frau Nina Bukowski [sic!], am Mittwoch in Moskau bekanntgab [...]'. [11 Nov. 1971]). The reader could observe that the newsmen often guarded the anonymity of their sources, referring vaguely to 'oppositional circles' ('oppositionelle Kreise') – a precaution that must have appeared to be necessary at a time when they considered Bukovsky being put on trial for his close contacts to western journalists.

Remarkably, none of the western journalists appears to have been at the trial on 5 January, since they were even prevented from entering the street to the courthouse. But there was no need to be there as an eye-witness – detailed information and petitions were reliably accessible anyway. The correspondents interpreted Bukovsky's trial as a warning not to pursue their contacts with Soviet regime critics. The American CBS correspondent who had filmed an interview with Bukovsky on the situation in the psychiatric hospitals in 1970 had already been expelled. Two western correspondents, an American and a Brit working for international news agencies, had been

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<sup>30</sup> AP, 'Bukowski jetzt im Gefängnis', *FAZ*, 11 Nov. 1971, 7; AP/AFP, 'Bukowski heute vor Gericht', *FAZ*, 5 Jan. 1972, 3; AFP, 'Hartes Urteil gegen Bukowski', *FAZ*, 6 Jan. 1972, 5; AFP, 'Moskau warnt ausländische Journalisten', *FAZ*, 8 Jan. 1972, 6; dpa, 'Ich bleibe bei meinen Überzeugungen', *FAZ*, 8 Jan. 1972, 6; *FAZ*, 'Dokumentation Bukowskij's', *FAZ*, 12 Jan. 1972, 28; Johann Georg Reißmüller, 'Zählebiger Stalinismus', *FAZ*, 19 Jan. 1972, 1; AP, 'Sacharow appelliert an Breschnew', *FAZ*, 22 Jan. 1972, 6; AP, 'Sowjetbürger rufen Waldheim im Fall Bukowski an', *FAZ*, 25 Jan. 1972, 4.

interrogated by the KGB in September 1971 as part of the pre-trial investigations. They were allowed to remain in Moscow but were instructed not to disclose any details about their questionings.

Both events, the expulsion and the KGB interrogations, were judged to be attempts to discourage contacts between the correspondents and the dissidents.<sup>31</sup> In January 1972, both Soviet and western press openly interpreted the trial and the verdict as a warning to western correspondents and to Soviet citizens to avoid contact with each other. It was also seen as an extra-strong warning to Soviet citizens not to disclose information to foreigners on the methods Soviet authorities used to enforce political unanimity within the Soviet Union – a warning that was in vain, as later developments would show.

Leading up to the trial, the correspondents only mentioned that Bukovsky was known to have contacts with correspondents. They only underlined his exceptional role once the verdict was announced, pointing out that he had been one of their most important informers. By now, the Moscow correspondents had established networks and insights that enabled them to go far beyond using the Soviet press as the main source for their reporting, which they had so far had to do due to a lack of other sources. Bonavia, in comparing the official and the unofficial accounts of the trial, drew attention to the fact that ‘dissident circles’ were compiling a fuller and ‘it is believed, more accurate account of the trial’. The compilers, by the way, had ‘asked to remain anonymous’ (7 Feb. 1972).

So the western reader could perceive that a tightly knit network had evolved, with a certain risk surrounding the involvement of the correspondents. Comments such as Bonavia’s provided explicit clarification: ‘Even five years ago, the idea of Soviet dissenters making their protest through the western press startled most people.’ He added: ‘By now the Western press cannot accommodate the full flood of Soviet protest material because a good deal of it is repetitive, trivial or inadequately documented’ (10 Jan. 1972). Moreover, the reader became slowly aware of the fact that some of the correspondents must be meeting with some of the dissidents frequently, informally and without much planning. These, of course, the correspondents did not mention in their articles – but shortly after Bukovsky’s trial, an incident made it newsworthy. As Bonavia described it: ‘Plain clothes men also forcibly detained my wife and myself this evening as we were leaving Mr Yakir’s flat after calling on him to learn details of the searches [of dissidents’ flats by the KGB]’ (17 Jan. 1972). The extraordinary use of first person pronouns in a news article underlines the active role the jour-

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<sup>31</sup> Special to the New York Times in Moscow, ‘KGB Questions 2 Western Newsmen on Dissidents’, *NYT*, 18 Sept. 1971.

nalists were playing by 1972 when reporting about the dissidents in Moscow.

### Conclusion

Summing up, an avid newspaper reader in those years would have noticed how impressed the correspondents were by the fact that they had gained close connections to a group of upright and brave people and by the fact that they were witnessing an astonishing development within the Soviet Union. The impressionistic imagery of their descriptions underlines the authenticity of the reports as well as their amazement in witnessing the events. The recurring references to ice and snow add to this imagery and reinforce the readers' mental image of a freezing Soviet Union – the stereotypical cold in the eastern part of the European continent, the cold in the ambiguous situation of *détente* during the cold war, and the cold of the political situation within the country after the end of the period of 'thaw' under Khrushchev. The mentioning of the cold highlights the bravery of the protestors withstanding ice and snow.

Apart from the recurring cold, western newspaper readers of those years would have perceived that the sense of novelty, uncertainty and analytical insecurity conveyed by the early reporting had been steadily replaced in the course of the following five years by a familiarity with the situation, a proximity to defendants and protestors, and a reliability in channels of information. Instead of reporting what they had read in and between the lines of the Soviet newspapers as was the case up to the 'First Writers' Trial' in 1965/66, the Moscow correspondents were by 1968 providing their readers with extensive and exciting information directly from the source, and by 1972 they were informing their readers about how they needed to scrutinize the mass of information they received from their Soviet acquaintances. By then, the once so fascinating events at the courthouse and in front of the building were hardly newsworthy anymore. Instead, some correspondents stepped into the limelight themselves when they were enduring repression from Soviet authorities for their close relations to the dissident scene.

Clearly, channels of information, personal networks and the trust-based relationships had emerged. This was reflected in the growing speed and extent with which the dissidents' claims and ideas were reproduced in the exact same wording to the western audiences, highlighting a vocabulary of legality and civil rights. In the west, these reports were met by a public opinion preoccupied with similar issues, although in a western context – debates that would have in turn influenced the correspondents' perceptions of the Moscow events. Similarly, the naming of the sources using personal

names must have fallen on fruitful ground in western societies, which, under the impression of détente, were increasingly interested in the societies of the east. These western discourses – while this cannot be proven – are by logic considered as a predisposition to but not causes for the intensification of interest and style of reporting.

Just as any reader of only one newspaper was hardly isolated from information he or she received via other media, friends and colleagues or talk in town, so too the editors of the newspapers hardly worked with only one source. Furthermore, neither did the correspondents themselves expect to be the only sources nor did they rely on only one source of information. Different intensities in reporting by the Moscow correspondents were balanced out by the editors' selection of wire-dispatches which they printed in order to fill in what would otherwise have been gaps. Information about the trials was therefore multi-polar. In the case of the *FAZ*, this multipolarity introduced the terminology and appreciation of dissent before the *FAZ*'s own correspondents employed the concept.

Based on newspaper articles by three major western newspapers and background material on the *NYT*-journalists, this sketch has attempted to draw attention to the fact that those persons producing the newspaper articles were themselves acting within a specific context in time and space. Moscow was an arena for interactions outside preconceived national configurations, a transnational 'space of experience' (*Erfahrungsraum*) par excellence. Within a context of superpower bloc confrontation, internal political developments in the countries of their professional origin, societal upheavals in the east and west along with the evolving discourses, the correspondents had their own experiences within Moscow and conceptualized them for their audiences in the west. As shown, the concept of 'transnationality' opens a new perspective on the history of dissent by focussing on the process of how information is gained, interpreted and transferred. By applying a transnational perspective, the correspondents, their actions and their vocabulary are contextualized in time and in space. This enables us to grasp their interpretive accomplishments in translating the dissident developments under way in the east to their readerships in the west. More abstractly, this perspective obliges historians to explicitly include the news writers' 'space of experience' into the analysis and thereby contextualize the production of knowledge as well as knowledge itself. From this perspective, the contingency of information on dissent and opposition becomes part of the story.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> While this paper provides a brief sketch, the Ph.D. project it is based on will analyse the circumstances under which the western correspondents reported from Moscow more extensively.