

BOOKS

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

B.B.C. Television recently screened a reconstruction of the trial in Moscow of Sinyavsky and Daniel, two writers charged with publishing anti-Soviet material abroad under pseudonyms—respectively, Abram

Tertz and Nikolai Arzhak. The script was based on the report of the trial given in *On Trial*, a fascinating work ably and perceptively put together by Leopold Labedz and Max Hayward, and published in England

by Collins. Stuart Hood made the adaptation for television, and was himself the commentator; the result was something which—as happens all too rarely—compensates for all the triviality and vicious rubbish the little screen presents day in, day out in what are euphemistically called the “advanced” countries of the world.

For me the event had a surprising and rewarding sequel; in order to demonstrate its fairness, the B.B.C.

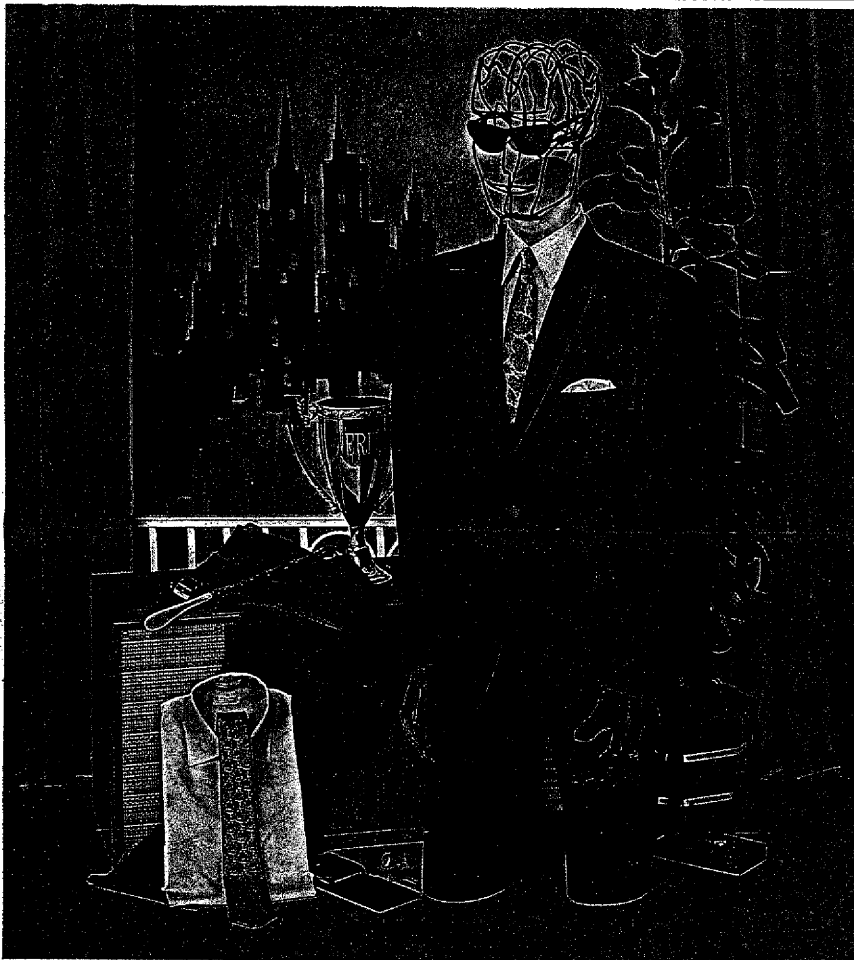
asked over to London Alexander Chakovsky, editor of the *Soviet Literary Gazette* and an important figure among cultural apparatchiks, to be interviewed on the subject of the role of writers and artists in our respective societies, and to put the case for the treatment accorded to Sinyavsky and Daniel by the Soviet authorities. I was asked to be the interviewer, and cheerfully agreed, fully convinced that Mr. Chakovsky would never show up. In fact, he did, and my cheerfulness changed to trepidation at the prospect of a telly-joust with him.

Chakovsky turned out to be a short, dark, energetic and loquacious man whose English, fluent rather than exact, had a marked American accent, for which he apologized. A facility for speaking non-American English would seem to be one of the few negotiable assets we British still have. I had to clear up one point at once—as to whether Mr. Chakovsky accepted the authenticity of the court proceedings as given in *On Trial*. He did, giving rise to the thought that the account of the trial smuggled out of the U.S.S.R. was not, as had been supposed, clandestinely scribbled in court, but the official transcript which someone had been able to obtain and send abroad.

We explained to Mr. Chakovsky that the televised conversation between him and me would be transmitted live, and I had to tell him that it would be impossible to give him in advance the questions I proposed to ask. I said that I never had done this, and never would, because it killed the authenticity of talk. By way of illustration I cited an interview with Mr. Kossygin on B.B.C. Television, when the Soviet Premier was in London recently, which came out just as an exchange of platitudes. We must have a real conversation, I said.

Of course we didn't; it is not possible to exchange ideas unless there is somewhere, however remotely, an area of common ground, which in the case of Mr. Chakovsky and myself didn't exist. It was like disputing with a Jesuit, only worse. On the set he was very nervous, but more, I believe, over the adequacy of his English than over what he was going to say. That he knew well enough and trotted it out resolutely and loudly. It was perfectly permissible and even obligatory, he insisted, for writers in the West to criticize and ridicule their governments and regimes, which in any case were decomposing; in the U.S.S.R. the situation was quite otherwise. There, for the first time in human history, a free, prosperous and brotherly society was in process of coming to pass, and only the most degraded and disloyal of men, like Sinyavsky and Daniel, would provide the enemies of their country with ammunition to attack it.

All I had planned was how I would begin and how end; in between I would let him expound his own case, confident that, for those who had



the NOW forward fashions in out-front styles by Merit

Fashion will be the buy-word for Spring and Summer '68. And biggest profitwise for you—if you're ready with the now styling of Merit's new contemporary suits. Here is the Forward Fashion your medium-price customer will rate as right for him. Right for his style taste, from lapel, pocket and vent treatments to body tracing and button stance. Right for his color ideas, in the new lighter and brighter colorations and multi-shaded patterns. Be right out front with the Forward Fashion that will offer most now next Spring. Phone us for an early call from your Merit representative.

Merit Clothing Company - General Offices and Factories: Mayfield, Kentucky
New York Office: 1250 Avenue of the Americas



eyes to see, its intrinsic absurdities and monstrosities would be apparent. So it worked out. I began by saying that I stood shoulder to shoulder with Sinyavsky and Daniel, but that I didn't want to waste the time of the program indulging in righteous indignation over their fate—righteous indignation being, in my estimation, an empty passion. And I ended by

saying that what Chakovsky and his associates were trying to do was what all authoritarian regimes, including the Catholic Church, had tried to do, to obstruct the free play of the human intelligence and the human spirit. All these efforts had failed, as his would also.

The most interesting moment on the set for me was when, before we

began our conversation, we could see and hear on the monitor Sinyavsky making his final speech to the court. This was taken from the above-mentioned B.B.C. program, and came over very impressively, providing the prelude to our program. Mr. Chakovsky betrayed no emotion of any kind, or even particular interest, as he listened; his face was tight and

closed, and his body tense to spring, as he did the moment I had finished speaking. From our Western point of view, his case was hopeless; the intensity and vehemence with which he made it nullified whatever effect it might have had. I hope it is not wishful thinking—I don't think it is—when I say that he destroyed himself.

Chakovsky was accustomed, one could see, to speaking to audiences who covered before him; after all he's a big shot: editor of the magazine which lays down the standard official line in literary matters; a member of the Supreme Soviet, and a vice-president of the Union of Writers which in terms of patronage—thinking of the United States—combines all publishing houses and magazine managements, universities and foundations, not to mention the C.I.A. A very big shot indeed. Yet for some weird reason I felt sorry for him, especially when at the end of our program he thanked me effusively for my consideration in taking account of the difficult situation he was in. The thought came to me very strongly that he'd much rather have taken the opposite position and championed Sinyavsky and Daniel, but parachutists can't be choosers.

Whether Sinyavsky and Daniel are considerable writers or not is difficult, if not impossible, to decide from their translated works. (See, for instance, Sinyavsky's *The Trial Begins*, translated by Max Hayward, and *On Socialist Realism*, translated by George Dennis, with a characteristically perceptive introduction by Czeslaw Milosz, Vintage Books, \$1.65.) I suspect that they are no more than average, though Sinyavsky's *Lixbinov* (*The Makepeace Experiment*) is Orwellian in the savagery of its satire, as is Daniel's *This Is Moscow Speaking*. The important thing about both of them, however, is that, unlike the vast majority of Soviet writers in the past and now, they have had the courage to defy the authorities and to write in a manner highly displeasing to Mr. Chakovsky. For this they deserve our unstinted respect, admiration and support—insofar as we can provide any.

Who would ever have supposed that there would appear another large volume analyzing and criticizing the findings of the Warren Commission Report on the assassination of President Kennedy? Yet here it is, more than five hundred pages long (*Accessories After The Fact*, by Sylvia Meagher; Bobbs Merrill, \$8.50). Mrs. Meagher—need I say it?—regards the Warren Report as vulnerable to attack in almost every line, and as clearly representing a conspiracy on the part of all concerned to falsify the facts of the case, suppress essential evidence and cover up for the guilty. The very relentlessness of her attack swings sympathy (at least mine) the other way. Come, come, one wants to say; no doubt Chief

Find another car under \$2,000 that has all that the Renault 10 has, and we'll buy it for you.

We believe the Renault 10 gives you more for your money than any other car.

And the fact that sales have soared since we introduced it, leads us to believe that quite a few people agree. We sold 72% more 1967 Renaults than 1966 Renaults.

But if some doubters remain, we offer this challenge:

Find another car under \$2,000 that has all that the Renault 10 has, and we'll buy it for you.

The Renault 10 has, as standard equipment:

4-wheel disc brakes

Disc brakes take hard braking better than drum brakes. They have long been used on super-speed, super-priced automobiles.

4 doors instead of 2

You don't have to fight the front seat to get to the back seat.

35 miles per gallon

Some people say they get more.

Contoured seats that recline for sleeping

Plus 18 other positions for when you're not sleeping.

Engine weight over the drive wheels

The drive wheels bear down on snow and ice because the engine weight bears down on them.

Turning circle of 30 feet

You can make most u-turns in one clean sweep.

4-wheel independent suspension

Each wheel moves up or down without affecting all the other

wheels. So when one wheel hits a bump, only one gets bumped. The other 3 keep the car and you going in a level position.

4-speed synchromesh transmission

This matches the speeds of the engine and transmission to allow the gears to mesh easily. Which makes shifting a lot easier on you and your transmission.

Replaceable wet cylinder sleeves

When the cylinders wear out in a conventional engine, the whole engine has to be pulled out and rebored. Sometimes it pays to buy a new car. But a Renault piston moves in a replaceable wet sleeve. If the sleeve ever wears out, you can put in a new one easily and inexpensively.

Sealed liquid cooling system with expansion tank

Water-cooled engines are much quieter than air-cooled engines. However, water and anti-freeze can frequently overflow. But Renault's water-cooling system has an expansion tank to keep the overflow from escaping.

5 main-bearing engine

Instead of three bearings sup-

porting the crankshaft, we have five. (As many as most V-8's.)

Special vents for draft-free ventilation

You can get plenty of fresh air with the windows shut. Which, incidentally, shuts out noise.

Rack and pinion steering

Eliminates play in the steering.

2-speed hot-water heater and dual defroster

Our heater uses the same hot water that circulates in the engine. So our heater heats faster and produces a more even temperature than any air-type heater.

15 inch wheel

Most economy cars have 13" or less. Our larger wheel makes fewer revolutions to go the same distance. Which saves rubber. Which saves money.

Spare tire not in trunk

If you get a flat you don't have

to unload the trunk and get everything dirty.

11 cubic foot trunk capacity

We're not the biggest in this department, but neither are we the smallest. The smallest only has 2.3 cubic feet, which is about as much space as we have behind our back seat alone.

Hits a top speed of 85

That's pretty surprising considering the mileage we get.

Unique warranty

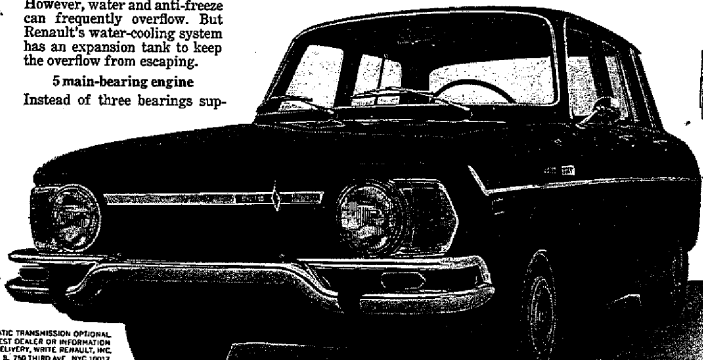
12 months/unlimited mileage.

Price—Under \$2,000

Way under \$2,000.



THIS CHALLENGE APPLIES TO ALL 1968 STANDARD EQUIPPED CARS LISTING FOR UNDER \$2,000 AND INTRODUCED FOR SALE IN THE UNITED STATES BY JANUARY 1, 1968.



AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION OPTIONAL FOR NEAREST DEALER OR INFORMATION ON OVERSEAS DELIVERY, WRITE RENAULT, INC. BOX 8, 150 THIRD AVE, NYC 10017

Justice Warren and his associates were careless, by no means as conscientious and diligent as they should have been in the conduct of their investigation, but that one and all were engaged in a conspiracy of the kind *Accessories After The Fact* envisages seems frankly inconceivable.

Moreover, Mrs. Meagher defends so many doubtful propositions that

her championship of the more convincing ones loses its effect. Surely, one says to oneself, the Warren Commission can't *always* have blundered and cheated; there must have been times when they hit on the truth.

In a very brilliant critique on all the attacks on the Warren Commission Report which appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement*, Warden

Sparrow of All Souls makes a point which strikes me as highly cogent: that if we accept the conspiracy theory, there must be walking about in the United States at this moment scores of individuals who were privy to the conspiracy, any one of whom could make up to a million dollars in syndication rights if he or she decided to come clean. Apart from the

members of the Warren Commission themselves, there would be their staff, most of the Dallas police force, President Johnson and members of his staff, etc., etc. Is it to be believed that all of these would have kept their traps resolutely shut? I find this more incredible than that Oswald operated alone, though I have always been convinced that his wits—such as they were—had been adled by contact with the C.I.A. But then, like most Englishmen, I am convinced that the C.I.A. has a hand in practically everything that happens in America, except the espousals of the Lyndon Johnson girls—and who can be absolutely certain even about that?

William Phillips has an interesting piece in the fall issue of *Partisan Review* on "Writing About Sex," in which he considers the present preoccupation with this subject in contemporary letters, citing, inevitably, Henry Miller, Mailer, D.H. Lawrence, Nabokov, Genet, the anonymous *Story of O*, and our dear Sontag. His observations were much in my mind when I turned over the pages of two recent novels: *The Exhibitionist* by Henry Sutton (a pseudonym for David R. Slavitt—or is it the other way around?), Bernard Geis, \$5.95, is more or less avowedly pornographic; *The Experiment* by Patrick Catling is in a similar vein, and the book is billed as doing for *Human Sexual Response* what *The Chapman Report* did for *Kitssey*.

Catling is a decidedly accomplished writer, and *The Experiment* only just misses fire as the same sort of uproarious parody of "scientific" sex as Terry Southern provided in *Candy*. (Southern's latest book, by the way, *Red-Dirt Marijuana And Other Tastes*, New American Library, is, as its name implies, all about drugs and trips, and I thought infinitely dreary.) Obviously, Catling had in mind the Masters and Johnson experiments about which I've had something to say myself in times past. Whereas *Candy* was funny with additions of smut, *The Experiment* is smutty with additions of comedy: on the whole, thinking of Catling and how nice and gifted he was, it made me sad.

Sutton-Slavitt, with little or no talent, just goes in for the standard pornographic repertory—a pretty limited one as a matter of fact. This is where I take issue with Mr. Phillips. My objection to pornography and pornographic-style writing is not so much that it's dirty as that it's tawdry and cheap. Try writing the seduction of Anna by Vronsky, or of Bathsheba Everdene by Sergeant Troy, in the style of Sutton-Slavitt, and even the afternoon men in mackintoshes who thumb over books like *The Exhibitionist* and *The Experiment* will recognize that Tolstoy and Hardy do it better, not so much in terms of decency as of style. #

Break the Scotch habit.



John Jameson. The superb whisky that happens to be made in Ireland.

70 Proof Standard 100% Grain Neutral Spirits Imported by W. & A. Rorer, Company, New York, N.Y. © 1964 Imported by W. & A. R.