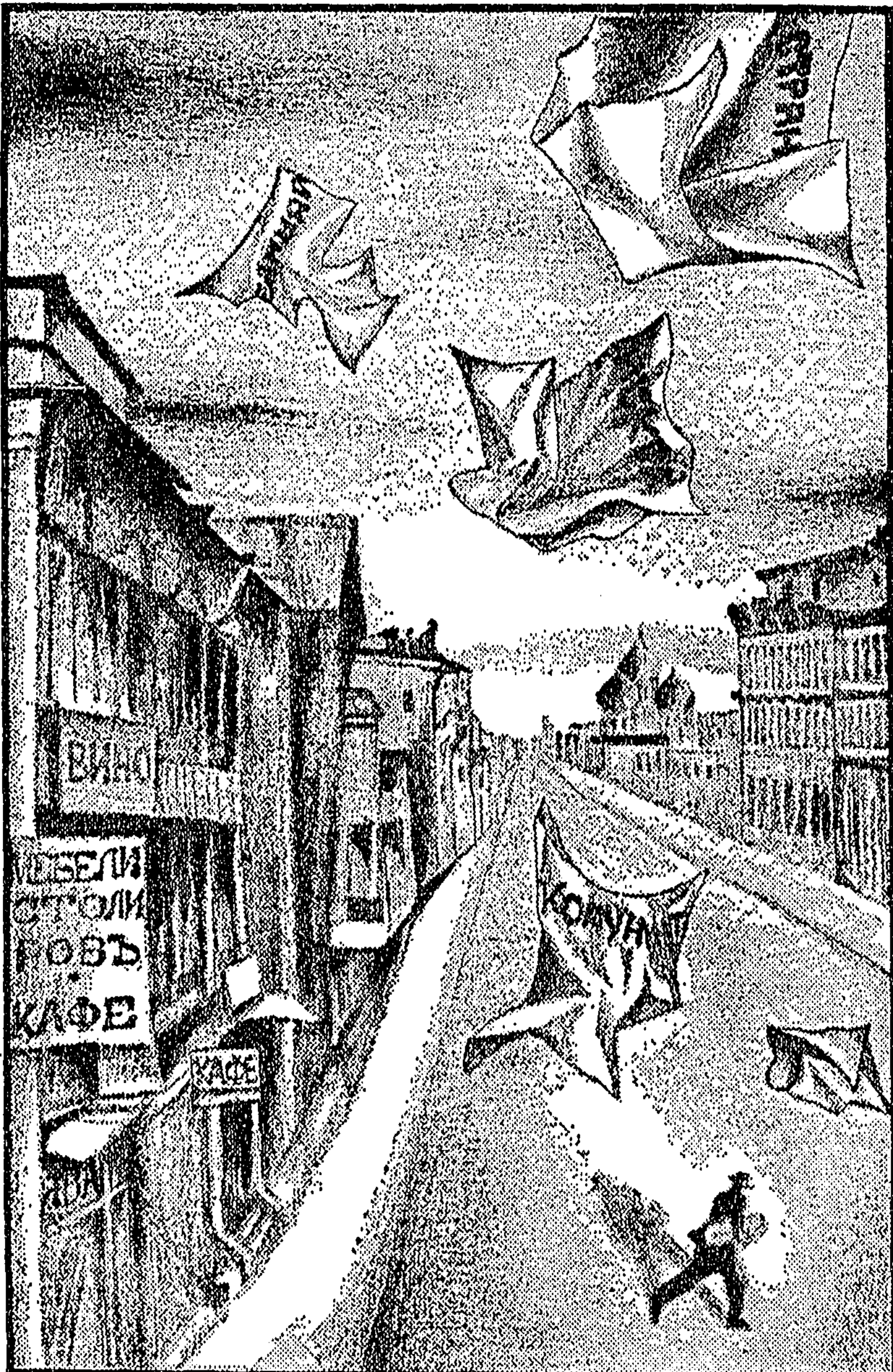


'Our Society Is Still Sick'



Michael Barasky

A few days ago Vladimir K. Bukovsky, a Soviet dissident, was convicted in Moscow on charges of anti-Soviet agitation and sentenced to seven years in prison and five years of exile. Here are excerpts from his closing address to the court, as reported by Reuters.

BY VLADIMIR K. BUKOVSKY

MOSCOW—Before my arrest there was constantly a tail on me. I was pursued, threatened with murder, and one of those following me lost his self-restraint to such an extent that he threatened me with his service weapon.

While under investigation I petitioned for a criminal case to be instituted against these people. I even gave the number of the official car in which these people traveled around behind me and presented other facts which made it possible for them to be sought out.

However, I never received an answer to this request from those departments to which I sent it.

As far as the detective is concerned, he, instead of examining my complaint and giving me an answer, sent me to the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry for medical examination.

The investigation department of the K.G.B. very much wanted me to be found irresponsible. How convenient.

Then there would be no case about me, no need to construct a charge and here there would be no need to prove the fact of commission of a crime. The man is just sick, mad.

And only on Nov. 5, after pressure was exerted by the public, a new medical commission pronounced me healthy.

There you have trustworthy proof of my assertion—which is called slanderous here in court—that on the instructions of the K.G.B. psychiatric reprisals are set up against dissenters.

In accordance with my right to defense, I demanded that the lawyer

Dina Isakovna Kaminskaya be invited for my defense in court.

No lawyer was given me.

It took my 12-day hunger strike, a complaint to the prosecutor general, to the Justice Ministry and the Communist party Central Committee, and also new, active intervention by members of the public before my legal right to defense was finally fulfilled and I was given lawyer Shveisk, who was invited by my mother.

The trial proceedings today have also been conducted with numerous procedural infringements. The indictment, in which the word "slanderous" is used 33 times and the word "anti-Soviet" 18 times, contains no concrete indications of which facts are slanderous among those I communicated to Western correspondents and which materials that I allegedly distributed are anti-Soviet.

I allegedly handed over these materials in the presence of Volpin and Chalidze [Aleksandr Yesenin-Volpin, son of poet Sergei Yesenin, and Valeri Chalidze, a physicist and member of an unofficial Soviet civil rights committee].

However, my demand that these two people be called as witnesses was not met.

Furthermore, not one of the eight people I called who could confirm the authenticity of my assertions on the facts of confinement and conditions of detention of people in special psychiatric hospitals was summoned to the court.

What were all these provocations and crude procedural violations needed for, this stream of slander and unfounded accusations? What was this trial needed for? Only to punish one person?

No, there is a "principle," a kind of "philosophy" here. Behind the accusation presented, there stands another, unrepresented.

With the reprisal against me they want to frighten those who try to tell the whole world about their crimes.

Our society is still sick. It is sick with the fear which has come down to us from the Stalin era. But the process of the public's spiritual enlightenment has already begun and cannot be stopped.

And however long I have to spend in detention I will never renounce my convictions and I will express them, availing myself of the right given me by Article 125 of the Soviet Constitution, to all who want to listen to me.

I will fight for legality and justice. And I regret only that over the short period—one year, two months and three days—during which I was at liberty, I managed to do too little for this cause.