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... I did not meet Rosemary Kavan till the early seventies. It was during the cruel repression which followed, slowly at first, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the destruction of 'socialism with a human face'. Rosemary, who felt by now much more affinity with Czechoslovakia than with her native Britain, had remained in Prague as long as possible. But her association with the men, women and youths of 1968, and with their clandestine resistance afterwards, was too well known. She was allowing her flat to be used as a meeting-place, she was typing samizdat, and she participated in the distribution of the anti-election leaflet campaign, launched by the opposition in the autumn of 1971. The penalty was several years imprisonment, and interrogators from the fifties were back at work. Eventually, Rosemary decided that the time had come to go back — England — where both her sons now lived. She was refused a passport but managed, somehow, to escape through Eastern Europe to the West.

In London she started to work for Palach Press. This news agency, named after Jan Palach, the student who immolated himself in protest against the Soviet invasion, was founded by Rosemary's son, Jan Kavan. Since its inception it has provided an extraordinarily full and accurate flow of news from Czechoslovakia, and recently as part of the newly-formed East European Cultural Foundation from Hungary and Poland as well. For anyone trying to learn or write about Eastern Europe, in particular the resistance and the groups striving for change, Palach Press has been quite invaluable.

Working for Palach Press was in some ways an easy