

The Prostitution of Forensic Psychiatry In The Soviet Union

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As Forensic Psychiatrists we are deeply bound by the medical oaths we took as physicians never to harm our patients. If it is brought to our attention that our colleagues are involved in an unethical practice of our profession, it is our responsibility not only to bring it to their attention but also to do whatever is necessary to correct the situation.

In the U.S.S.R. diagnoses are made to order for the state security organs, according to Alexander Podrabinek, a young medical worker in Moscow, who wrote *Punitive Medicine*, a 265-page monograph on political abuses of psychiatry in the U.S.S.R.

He has appealed to psychiatrists and jurists throughout the world and to international human rights organizations to fight against political abuse of psychiatry in the U.S.S.R.

One such international human rights organization is Amnesty International, a worldwide human rights movement which works impartially for the release of prisoners of conscience: men and women detained anywhere for their beliefs, color, ethnic origin, sex, religion, or language; provided they have neither used nor advocated violence. Amnesty International without reservation opposes torture and the death penalty in all cases, and advocates fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners. Amnesty International is independent of all governments, political factions, ideologies, economic interests and religious creeds. It has consultative status with the United Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe; has cooperative relations with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States, and has observer status with the Organization of African Unity. Amnesty International was the recipient of the 1977 Nobel Prize for Peace.

World-wide violations of human rights create an urgent need for effective international protection of human rights. The increasing imprisonment of large numbers of political prisoners, escalating use of torture, disappearances, and executions are only too well documented. The fundamental goal of Amnesty International is to establish a force of awakened world opinion which can become a potent instrument of international intervention in human rights crises. Work is based on detailed research into specific cases of individual prisoners as well as mass violations of human rights. Through the network of members and

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supporters, public opinion is mobilized, and work is done for the release of prisoners of conscience and for their families.

A relatively new subgroup within Amnesty International is the Medical Capacity Committee which is now a year old. It was developed by dynamic professionals such as Dr. Michael Nelson, psychiatrist, and Phyllis Taylor, R.N. It is composed of physicians and other health professionals who believe that by working together they can contribute to the prevention of torture, and work for the welfare of Prisoners of Conscience.

Its effectiveness has been demonstrated by the extensive protocols that have been developed for examination of torture victims, ongoing research developing diagnostic aids for confirmation of alleged torture, development of social and rehabilitative programs for torture victims, drafting of codes of medical ethics concerning torture, through coordinated efforts with the World Medical Association Committee on Medical Ethics; and release of imprisoned colleagues has been facilitated by physician participation in letter writing campaigns.

Since I am a member of the Medical Capacity Committee, my main interest has been in the political abuse of psychiatry, especially Forensic Psychiatry, in the U.S.S.R. The main center for this abuse is the infamous Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry, Moscow's Central Scientific Research Institute of Forensic Psychiatry. This is one of the special Psychiatric Hospitals for very dangerous mentally ill criminals. It is well known that the Institute has close links with the KGB and that some of the leaders are KGB officers. Diagnoses are very broad and general, and anyone can be labeled "insane" at the government's slightest whim. A case in point in World War II was Russian war hero Major General Pyotr Grigorenko. He spoke out against the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and since he held such high respect among his military colleagues, he presented a serious problem for the Russian leaders. It was decided that the best way to handle such a delicate problem was to have him "diagnosed" insane and whisked off to an insane asylum. It was hoped that labeling him insane would cause him to lose credence with his comrades. A "diagnosis" was quickly obtained at the Serbsky Institute, but another problem arose. A young psychiatrist, twenty-six-year-old Dr. Semyon Gluzman, protested the "diagnosis," and with colleagues showed that the diagnosis was not valid. He spoke out against the abuse of the profession. The Russian Bear's Rage fell on the young courageous psychiatrist, and he spent long terrible years of unrelenting punishment for upholding the high ideals and principles of his profession. He has fulfilled the Biblical injunction: Gold is tested in the Fire. Dr. Semyon Gluzman is the Gold of Psychiatry, Forensic Psychiatry and of the Russian people. He is a citizen that any government would wish for.

A quote from Solzhenitsyn is well worth pondering: "The incarceration of free thinking healthy people in mad houses is spiritual murder, it is a variation of the gas chamber, even more cruel; the torture of the people

being killed is more malicious and more prolonged. Like the gas chambers, these crimes will never be forgotten and those involved in them will be condemned for all time during their life and after their death.”

My distinguished fellow Forensic Psychiatrists, I would like to invite you to become involved in the fight against the abuses against our most esteemed profession. You are invited to join the following organizations:

Amnesty International
2112 Broadway
New York, New York 10023
and
Medical Capacity Committee
307 West Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

You are also humbly requested to write to: His Excellency, Ambassador Anatole Dobrynin, 1706 18th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 requesting immediate release of Dr. Gluzman.

Your letters of encouragement to Semyon Gluzman would also be warmly received. Write:

U.S.S.R. R.S.F.S.R.

T Yunmenskaya Oblast 626020

Posiolok Nizhnaya a tavda, do Vostrebovanya, Gluzman Semyon

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