

is true of many prominent representatives of psychiatry and jurisprudence of foreign countries who have repeatedly assessed highly the activities of these institutions after visiting them.

It should be noted that there is a small number of mental patients whose disease, as a result of a mental derangement, paranoia, and other psychopathological symptoms, can lead them to anti-social actions which fall in the category of those that are prohibited by law, such as the disturbance of public order, dissemination of slander, manifestation of aggressive intentions, etc. It is noteworthy that they can do this after preliminary preparations, with 'a cunningly calculated plan of action', as the founder of Russian forensic psychiatry V. P. Serbsky wrote. To the people around them such mental cases do not create the impression of being obviously 'insane'. Most often these are persons suffering from schizophrenia or a paranoid pathological development of the personality. Such cases are known well both by Soviet and foreign psychiatrists.

The seeming normality of such sick persons when they commit socially dangerous actions is used by anti-Soviet propaganda for slanderous contentions that these persons are not suffering from a mental disorder.

The fact that certain foreign circles proceed from unseemly aims was confirmed once again at the open trial of Yakir and Krasin who were convicted for subversive propaganda and the dissemination of malicious concoctions about the Soviet Union, and at the subsequent press conference given by Yakir and Krasin in the presence of foreign correspondents. As was admitted by one of the convicted—Yakir—the slanderous allegations that normal people are placed in mental institutions were fabricated by him and widely circulated by the mass media in the West.

At the same time it should be stressed that the majority of persons against whom criminal proceedings are instituted and who are subjected to a forensic psychiatric examination in connection with their offences, are pronounced sane. This is stubbornly ignored by those who try to slander Soviet psychiatry just as they hush up the fact that most of the patients mentioned by them had had psychiatric treatment long before they were subjected to examination by forensic psychiatrists.

The propaganda clamour and smear campaign against Soviet psychiatry is nothing but an attempt to impede the international cooperation of medical men, to damage the developing fruitful contracts between scientists and cultural figures of different countries.

As to the intention of the Royal College of Psychiatrists to visit the USSR 'in order to assess the

facts and, if the accusations are false, to clear the name of psychiatry in the Soviet Union' we should tell you that high professional and moral qualities of the Soviet specialists who have dedicated their lives to this noble profession are well and widely known and are certainly in no need of being 'assessed' by foreign 'investigating commissions'. British specialists who have been to our country surely know that and we hope that at least some of your colleagues are ashamed of this attempt to sow doubts as far as their Soviet colleagues are concerned and to interfere in Soviet internal affairs.

G. GVENTSADZE
First Secretary

TO THE FIRST SECRETARY

26 July 1976

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your very full and informative letter of 28 June 1976.

You strongly deny the allegations of the abuse of psychiatry in the Soviet Union and it is in the hope of proving these allegations false that the College and the Bar wished to send an investigating commission to Russia. The final paragraph of your letter abhors the accusations that are being made, but does not seem to completely preclude the possibility of allowing a visit by an investigating commission. If there is a chance that permission might be granted I would be very grateful for your advice on how we should proceed.

W. LINFORD REES

FROM THE FIRST SECRETARY

28 July 1976

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of 26 July I have to say that a visit to the Soviet Union of any 'investigating commission' is out of the question for the simple reason that it would constitute an inadmissible interference in the Soviet internal affairs. I hope you realize that an idea of subjecting other countries to foreign scrutiny is something entirely alien to the concept of sovereignty. As I understand, this point of view prevails in your own country, too. Indeed, as your Sovereign said during her recent trip to the United States, 'we learnt to respect the right of others to govern themselves in their own ways'.

Having said that I would like to add that Soviet scientists, psychiatrists included, of course, welcome contacts with their colleagues in other countries for this, apart from any practical benefits, leads to improved understanding between scientific communities and people at large.

G. GVENTSADZE