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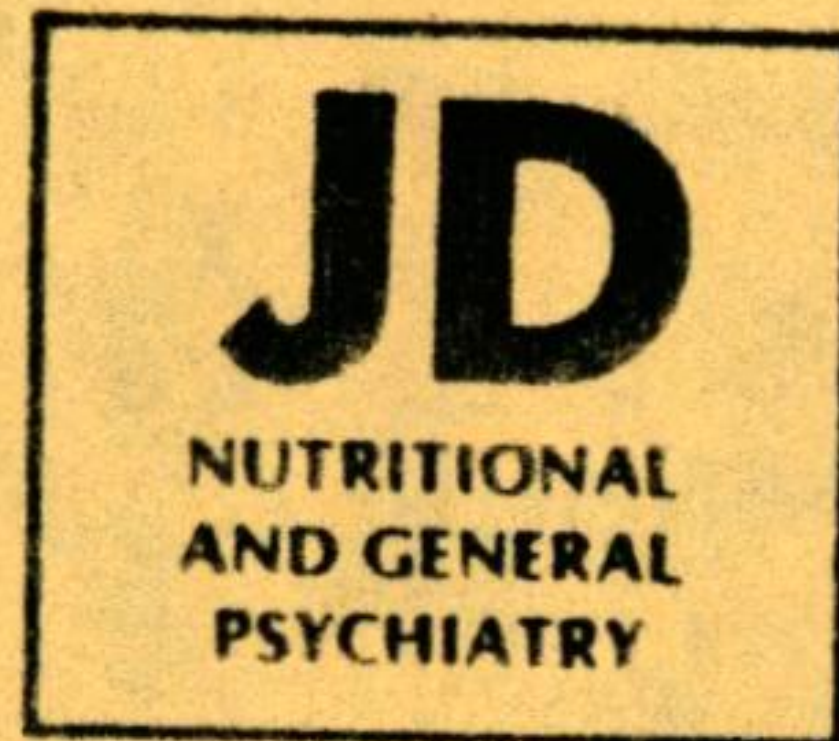
Recd 18/11/85

JOHN DOMMISSE, MD

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PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA 23707

November 18, 1985

The Editor, Psychiatric News
American Psychiatric Association
1400 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20005

Re: The World Psychiatric Association
and South Africa

Dear Sir,

In your issue of November 1, the W.P.A. Secretary-General responded to your request for a description of how the W.P.A. works and what it tries to accomplish. The fact that he mentions nothing about the issue of the Society of Psychiatrists of South Africa and the mental effects of the Apartheid policy highlights the fact that it has been 10 months since January, 1985, when the A.P.A. Board passed a resolution on Apartheid in which it, among other things, requested the W.P.A. to address this issue. In June, the Canadian Psychiatric Association passed a resolution at least as strong, also urging W.P.A. to take some position.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Nigerian, Indian and Pakistan psychiatric associations have also taken a stand. And in July the World Federation for Mental Health refused to receive/seal the S. African delegation, which had already traveled from South Africa and which were subsequently suspended for at least 2 years. I believe W.P.A. has had 2 semi-annual executive committee meetings (in April and October) since the A.P.A.'s Resolution and its communication to the W.P.A. and I am not aware of any response having been forthcoming so far. Nor has it even been mentioned in Dr. Schulsinger's piece, directed specifically at the A.P.A.'s "Psychiatric News" readership. This seems to fit with Dr. Schulsinger's rebuff to those of us who raised this issue at the W.P.A. Regional Symposium in Helsinki in June of 1984, saying we were a "single-issue pressure-group". It also fits with our experience with the previous secretary-general at the World Assembly in Vienna in June of 1983 when he not only refused to hand out material that had been airmailed to each member of the Committee, care of his university department, when the Committee met, but also held onto these materials until so late in the week that, by the time we could try to get them delivered to most addressees ourselves, it was too late to achieve any resolution at the General Assembly. Since 1982 (Psychiatric News, December 17), I have been pointing out a double standard in the W.P.A. on the dual issues of the psychiatric abuse of political dissenters in the Soviet Union and the mental effects on large segments of the entire population and on tortured political detainees in South Africa. In Vienna and elsewhere the one issue was the main talk of the convention, including in the media releases by the secretariat, while the other issue was stifled and stymied at every turn. The General Assembly "did not have time" to vote on South Africa.

Dr. Schulsinger says the W.P.A. is "generally in favor of the W.H.O. model",.... in that the W.H.O. "has not let international politics interfere with its basic purposes". If he doesn't know that W.H.O. has taken an extremely strong and commendable stand against the effects of Apartheid on health, both mental and physical, someone should tell him now. Also that W.H.O. has withdrawn the consultative or affiliate status of the World Medical Association, on 27 January, 1982, by a 27-to-1 (U.S.A.) vote of its Executive Board. This was because W.M.A. had, in October, 1981, re-admitted the Medical Association of South Africa (and also admitted the medical association of the so-called 'independent' homeland of 'Transkei') in the face of the world outcry against the shocking medical care of tortured political detainees and of the rural African population in general. This obviously raises the question of why W.H.O. has not discontinued its relations with W.P.A., since the Society of Psychiatrists of South Africa (SPSA) is still a member in good standing. I hope no one will offer in defense of W.P.A. the weak, vague and non-specific resolution passed by the SPSA in January of this year, in response to the A.P.A. resolution. It does not admit that Apartheid has been extremely discriminatory and has inflicted mental suffering on blacks in South Africa, nor does it say what SPSA has done or will do to counter this. Its continuing silence since then, in the face of all the torture, mental break-downs and other effects in the past 15 months, is continuing damning testimony to its spineless (or willing) acquiescence in the Apartheid system. Two individual SPSA members have resigned government positions over Apartheid and 2 individual SPSA members have protested police intrusion into inpatient psychiatric facilities and abduction of patients, but not a word from SPSA.

In the hopes of prodding the W.P.A. into some action, I am sending copies of this letter to, among others, the W.H.O., the U.N. Special Committee Against Apartheid, the A.P.A., C.P.A., Nigerian P.A., the Royal College, and Amnesty International.

Yours faithfully,

John Burrows

cc.: Mahler, W.H.O. Director
Garba, UN Spec. Com. vs. Apartheid
Nadelson, APA President
Sabshin, APA, WPA & WFMH

Dewhurst, CPA President
Ifabumuyi, Nigerian P.A.
Bewley, Royal College President
Welch, Amnesty Internat.

(See Over)

Re: The World Psychiatric Association and South Africa

cc.: Allodi, Toronto
Africa Regional Director, W.H.O.
A.N.C., London
Andersson, London
Atkins, Toronto Star
Belonsky, CA
Bennun, Exeter
Bibuld, NYC
B.M.A.
Brody, WFMH
Brown, CPA
Brutus, Evanston
Burke, London
Carr & Kohl, Norfolk
Cherry, Englewood
Jackson-Christmas, NY
Coovadia, Durban
Crains, NY
Davis, J., NY
Davidson, L., NY
Dawes, Cape Town
Dickman, Toronto
Dube, Canada
Dube, F., NY
Ellis, Chapel Hill
Ettlinger, Stockholm
Fluxman & Jewkes, U.K.
Gbeho, U.N.
Graham, J., NY
Greben, Toronto
Guardian, NY
Hentoff, NY
Holly, Chicago
Jablensky, W.H.O.
Jegede, Nigeria
Jonathan, Toronto
Johnston, NY
Kastrup, Copenhagen
Kirsch, N.I.H.
Kotze, U.K.
Kovel, NY
Lapchick, Boston
Legge, Toronto
Mercer, APA
Makatini, NY
Matseoane, NY
Mfelang, Luanda
Mji, Durban
Mwendapole, Lusaka
Naidoo, Durban
N.M.A. (Dr. P. Smith)
Naude, Jhb
Ngcobo, Balt.
Neumann, WPA

Ndaba, Atlanta
Novakhov, NY
Pather, Durban
Ramsamy, London
Rakoff, Toronto
Rantao, Tanzania
Rawnsley, U.K.
Reddy, F., Oslo
Reese, NY
Richardson, Norfolk
Rose, Durham
Roy, Vancouver
Sashidharan, Edinburgh
Seedat, W. Ger.
Sidel
Sindab, Wash.
Solomon, Balt.
Soderqvist, Stockholm
Spiegel, Waltham
Susser, NY
Sutcliffe, Durban
Suzman, Maine
Titus, Columbus
Tshabalala, Lusaka
Turshen, Plainfield
Visotsky, Chicago
Watson, Norfolk
Wood, Duke U.
Yacoob, Durban