
Psychoanalysis in Russia Is a Mark of Progress

To the Editor:

As co-editors of the Journal of Clinical Psychoanalysis, we have recently responded to urgent requests from Russia for copies of our publication, and so are familiar with the revival of psychoanalysis well described in your Dec. 11 front-page article, "Freud in Russia: Return of the Repressed."

The article is accurate in stating that this revival puts Russian therapists "on a collision course with trends in the West." However, we take issue with implications that the Russians are more to be pitied than admired for their backward condition, lagging so far behind the West. It seems the contrary is true.

It is Western culture that gives

cause for concern over the extent that it has abandoned the study of the mind for the chemical and genetic brain theories so congenial to Stalin. For Stalin knew what he was doing in repressing psychoanalysis, whose Western humanistic premise — the freedom of the individual through self-knowledge — was a threat to his totalitarian state; and psychoanalysis remains a threat to intellectual repression and anti-humanistic reductionism, whether political or academic. Western psychiatry has regressed, not progressed, and has nothing to be proud of in its repudiation of psychoanalysis.

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