August 1984, **145**, 193–194). In the time-honoured tradition of ascribing the names of literary figures to interesting syndromes (eg Othello, Baron Münchausen), we suggest that this particular phenomenon could alternatively be named the "Zaphod Beeblebrox Syndrome" after the President of the Imperial Galactic Government and seven-times-voted Worst-Dressed Sentient Being in the Known Universe—who also had two heads (Adams 1979).

PAUL DIVALL
MATTHEW JELLEY

Royal United Hospital,
Combe Park,
Bath BA1 3NG

Reference

ADAMS, D. (1979) *The Hitch-hikers' Guide to the Galaxy*. London: Pan Books.

CORRECTION

DEAR SIR,

I am writing to correct an error which appeared in our papers (*Journal*, **144**, 567 and 575). Owing to a clerical oversight in my office, we described Dr Hobson as a Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, when he is of course a Fellow.

DAVID GOLDBERG

University Hospital of South Manchester,
West Didsbury,
Manchester M20 8LR

Book Reviews

Soviet Psychiatric Abuse: The Shadow over World Psychiatry. By S. BLOCH and P. REDDAWAY. London: Gollancz. 1984. Pp 288. £10.95.

Seven years after *Russia's Political Hospitals* the same authors bring us up to date. They do so in great detail, giving a blow-by-blow account of the struggle in Western psychiatric associations to protest effectively against the mounting evidence of political abuse of psychiatry in the Soviet Union. Every meeting and resolution is recorded with full stories of manoeuvres behind the scenes, the wording of rival motions to be debated, descriptions of famous psychiatrists as boldly intransigent on Soviet expulsion or weakly watering down protest for the sake of maintaining communication. The main events in the West are the Honolulu conference in 1977 (with the Declaration of Hawaii; a condemnatory vote against Soviet practices passed by a hair's breadth, to the Russians' fury; and the setting up of a committee to review the political abuse of psychiatry); the slow progress of the work of this committee, as it writes to the Soviet Union for information, waits months without replies, writes again, arranges further meetings to discuss what to do, and gets nowhere at all until the campaigns in the Royal College and the American Psychiatric Association get going and begin to pose a real threat of expulsion; and the build-up of the move to expel the Soviet Union from the W.P.A., and the dramatic Soviet resignation in January 1983 before the crucial conference in Vienna.

The manoeuvres make a good story, but more interesting, more novel to most of us, and more valuable to have available, is the material on the Soviet situation. The cases to discuss amounted to 200 cases up to 1976 and about 300 more since. The stories are all brief as case-histories, but some are nevertheless terrible, and some are well-known, such as those of Plyushch, Gorbanevska and Gluzman. Some important points are: Soviet use of special (i.e. secure forensic) hospitals rather than ordinary psychiatric hospitals, when what is claimed as the diagnosis is only nonviolent "sluggish" schizophrenia; Soviet lies that Western psychiatrists usually agreed with Russian ones on the diagnosis and dangerousness after they had seen the patients (they did not); the patients are quite certain that publicity and protests in the West helped them and saved certain hardships; Dr Low-Beer's brave trip in 1978, when he interviewed 9 dissenters and found 5 normal, 4 not normal but nevertheless confined only on the basis of excuses; and the truth behind the Soviet innuendo that those dissenter-patients who emigrated to the West turned out indeed to require psychiatric treatment (out of 43 emigrés, only 3 are known to have needed it).

https://doi.org/10.1192/S0007125000118549 Published online by Cambridge University Press