

February 13, 1950

G. Henry Katz, M.D.  
111 North 49th Street  
Philadelphia 39, Penn.

Dear Doctor Katz:

It was very kind of you to tell me about the development in Philadelphia and to give me such valuable information. I thank you very much.

All this is very interesting to me, especially right now because we here are in a very similar situation as you have gone through and it looks as if things would develop along the same lines.

The main issues are approximately the same here with a slight shift of accent on some minor points.

Perhaps we are in a slightly more advantageous position inasmuch as our group, which would correspond to the group you belong to, has a slight but perhaps significant majority over the other group. The situation and the work at our Institute has almost from the beginning on, when Ernst Simmel was still alive, been quite unpleasant and increasingly difficult and my friends and I have been more and more concerned with the problem how to discharge our obligation to our students to provide and maintain teaching and training on the necessary high level.

Ever since early last summer, I personally tried to find a solution for our difficulties which would eliminate the emotional strain, the friction, the discord of personal and scientific nature and the political maneuvering connected with it. The best way to me seemed to be a re-organization of our training school and education committee along the lines of the arrangement which the London Institute of Psychoanalysis had effected a few years ago. I planned and prepared this very carefully, presented it to some of my friends and finally succeeded in uniting our group into accepting such a plan and in accepting the idea to propose such a re-organization officially to our Education Committee. Unfortunately, when I did this just a week ago, it became clear that this plan, which would have prevented an in my opinion undesirable complete split-up was impossible. The opposing faction rejected such a compromise plan and has insisted on a complete split-up, which I had tried to prevent on principle grounds and out of consideration for our students. It seems now that a split is the only way.

G. Henry Katz, M.D.  
Page 2  
February 13, 1950

No final decision has been yet made how to proceed nor has the matter been brought up before the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society. Therefore, I must ask you to treat this whole affair as strictly confidential.

When I spoke with you and some of your friends at the mid-winter meeting, I heard very interesting news about a revision of your training methods. Again, if it is not asking too much, I would be very interested in hearing more details about the new method of training and teaching that you have adopted. I also would like very much to know how you broached the whole matter to your students, how they took the news and what technical ways you found to protect the students from hardships, such as possibly losing the benefits of the GI Bill, etc.

I read your paper with great interest and can only say that I, of course, agree with it completely. As you pointed out in your paper, this is a battle that has been fought all over again and again for the last forty years and won that long ago. I myself made this the subject of a paper published in the Menninger Bulletin in 1941, in which I put particular stress on what I termed "the return of the repression" which is also the title of the paper.

I am also deeply impressed by Mr. Biddle's letter and would like to ask you to convey to him my expression of appreciation.

It almost looks as if this parting of the ways between those who understand psychoanalysis well and the "recent advancists" is going to be a nation-wide movement. It might be a necessary thing; but I cannot say that I am happy about it. What I dislike about it most is the very great role which personality traits of an undesirable character play in this and the inability of the people involved to find a better and more mature solution to such difficulties.

Let me assure you that my friends and I are in deep sympathy with you and ~~your~~ group. I shall keep you informed of further developments here.

Cordially yours,

Ernst Lewy, M.D.

EL/ab