

INTERVIEW WITH DR. LAWRENCE J. FRIEDMAN

by

Dr. Albert Kandelin

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Committee for the History of the Society

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- K: How do you do, Larry. We have to avoid both talking at the same time. A convenient way to commence is perhaps for you to give me, if you will, a brief biographical sketch, which we can amplify for certain details later.
- F: I'll be glad to. I came to Los Angeles in 1935. I graduated in Vienna and worked as an obstetrician and gynecologist for five years, and was to continue my work as an obstetrician and gynecologist here in Los Angeles, but I was always interested in analysis -- I was not a student at the Institute in Vienna. My professors of psychiatry were Wagner Von Jauregg and Poetzl. I met most of the analysts in Los Angeles right after they came here -- Simmel about a week after he came to Los Angeles, Mrs. Deri, and later Fenichel. I was in close contact with Mrs. Olden, being for a number of years her personal physician.
- K: Mrs. Olden was an analyst who was here for a limited time only.
- F: Yes, she was a lay analyst who came here; I don't know exactly what year, but I imagine it was sometime in 1936 or 1937. She lived very near to Mrs. Deri. To my knowledge she moved to New York during the war. When I went into the Army, that was in the summer of 1942, she was still in Los Angeles. She didn't like it at all in Los Angeles. She didn't like the climate and she didn't like the analytic atmosphere, whatever she meant by that.
- K: She is still living and active?
- F: No, she died; she died about two years ago. She practiced in New York for quite some time, worked mainly with children, wrote a number of articles.
- K: Yes, I've seen references to her, mostly in Study Group material.
- F: My personal formal training was in Los Angeles. I started in 1946. My first seminars were with May Romm on technique and with Slutsky on metapsychology, in the basement of the Ambassador. Slutsky died shortly after that, then Fenichel and Simmel. The deaths of Fenichel and Simmel were tragic for the analytic situation in Los Angeles. It left quite a vacuum. As long as Simmel was alive, he had practically everything in his hands; he told people what to write, what paper for what meeting, who should be a training analyst, who shouldn't, etc. I graduated in November, 1949, just before the Split. I found the training at that time more desirable than it is today. The trouble with our Institute is that we are over-organized; the administration and the teaching. I would like to go back in some respects to the kind of teaching we both experienced for awhile. The courses offered depended on the teachers available who had something to offer and wanted to give a course. It was up to the candidates to a great extent what seminar they wanted to attend. You could start any time, you could go to any seminar, without any succession. There was a greater interest in it than with this highly organized system we have at the present time. I hope it will change.
- K: Well I too have heard comments on this very point, that the psychoanalytic climate seems to change in this very way, and that the training does have this over-organized quality at the expense of losing many of the personal and vital touches that existed in the earlier days, but probably a certain amount of

this is inevitable, and cannot be easily recovered.

F: Some of it is inevitable, but not all of it. On one hand we are trying to help our candidates in maturation, on the other hand we are putting rules upon rules upon rules. More detailed reading lists -- we take sentences or paragraphs of some papers as reading material. This is the way one teaches in grade school, not grown-up people. I think a direct result of this is that you can't get a candidate or one of our younger members ever to write a paper. Remember at the time when we were students we were practically standing in line to present a paper? Some were good, some were terrible, some of them won the International essay contest, some were totally unusable; but whatever they were, they were the independent creation of the person who wrote it. After awhile it had to be approved, before presentation, by the Education Committee; and slowly it was anything but an independent creation, and finally it was completely given up, because candidates were incapable or refused to write the papers under those conditions. I think it is a pity that it is no longer a requirement. I would like to see it come back, but come back under the conditions as they were originally; whoever has something to say, say it, and nobody judges, changes or rewrites it before presentation. But it is the nature of organizations. It is very easy to create rules and terribly difficult to get rid of them. But I think many of us are aware of it these days, and I hope that considerable changes will be made.

K: Don't you suppose another factor consists in the pressures for training which followed in the war years when there were so many applicants -- wasn't the natural result to try to make for efficiency and organization in teaching and so forth?

F: It is possible. At the present time we have fewer candidates than we used to have, but we have an organization, rules and regulations which would be enough for a much larger teaching organization. In a small organization, to function efficiently, there should be as little spreading of the work as possible, otherwise you are just multiplying work and confusion. It seems efficient on paper, but actually it isn't.

I'm also sure that some of this is the result of the Split. I don't think anybody can sit down to discuss analysis in Los Angeles without coming to the Split. It is one of the most important issues of training in Los Angeles. I was just finishing my training. I recall a meeting of the candidates to discuss the matter. I was appointed as speaker for the candidates with the hope that it could be prevented. I talked to most of the training analysts. We were very much against the idea. To my knowledge none of the candidates could understand what it was all about. I was always against it. I felt at that time, and I never changed my mind, that it didn't serve the interests of analysis. It did a great deal of harm to analytic training in Los Angeles. When I interview applicants today and hear what's going on in terms of competition for candidates between the two Institutes, I am more convinced than ever the Split was the worst thing that could have happened to analytic training. But unfortunately this is past history and irreversible. I had the opportunity to hear the stories of it from both sides. Those who are in our Institute at the present said it was inevitable because they couldn't get along on a theoretical basis. Those on the other side told me that there was no way out of it, because if they wouldn't have split, they would have been thrown out; after all, we were in the majority. So it goes on. I

think the worst approach is to ask who was right and who was wrong, because nobody was right and nobody was wrong. The tragedy was that after the deaths of Simmel and Fenichel, the organization in Los Angeles was left suddenly without the leadership of someone who had respect and authority, and it was unavoidable that difficulties arose.

- K: You used the expression that, "It goes on," meaning the separation continues, implying probably that any reconciliation between the two Societies is certainly at the present time and in the foreseeable future out of the question?
- F: It seems to me that it is out of the question. There are a number of people who talk about it, have talked about it many times; but it is inconceivable to me that the two Institutes could come together, there is so much hostility.
- K: Yes, the people who were involved directly in the controversy are still active members and practicing the profession, so I suppose in their lifetime it seems unlikely that there could be any healing of the breach.
- F: I don't think that's the only thing; it seems that this goes from generation to generation. Because I'm talking now to candidates, or even to residents who are just applying to our Institute, and they tell me almost identical things that we heard in 1950, or in 1948 or 1949. It is interesting that we are still quite insistent that it was primarily an ideological split, and the other group insists that it was primarily a personal one. What I see at the present time is that in our Institute there is a greater emphasis on analysis in training, attested by the fact that the length of training analysis in our Institute is about twice as long as in the other Institute. On the other hand, in the other Institute they have a larger number of supervisory hours. I personally feel that analysis is one of the crucial aspects of psychoanalytic training, that's why I would like to see the theoretical courses more on a voluntary basis, or with greater freedom of action than we have at the present time. I'm also convinced that the intensity of five-times-a-week analysis, the intensity of the transference is unavoidable and necessary, and I know that the other Institute doesn't see practically anybody more than four times, possibly less. But I do not believe that basically those are the issues. About twice as many people apply to the other Institute because they hear all kinds of things about us that aren't true. But the competition goes on. There is active seduction trying to get candidates, and it would be wrong to say that only the other Institute does this.
- K: I thought you were going to say there is a certain amount of sniping; about that there isn't much doubt, that sniping goes on.
- F: There is no question about it. In spite of it, if I participate occasionally with some from the other Institute in discussions, we don't seem to have any special differences among us. We were candidates together, we are still friends. We hardly ever see each other, because somehow the Split interfered even with the personal lives of the people to the extent that we have practically no social contact. One cannot explain this purely on a theoretical basis. I think this is the best proof of how much more goes into it than just disagreement about theory. Disagreement about theory belongs in the meetings. I know that many of our older members disagree with the things I say, but I can say only what I experienced as a student at that time and what I experienced since as President of the Society and Dean of the Institute. This seems to be true all over the country; whenever splits occur it creates an

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atmosphere of bitterness, which can only be detrimental to the psychoanalytic atmosphere.

- K: I'm trying to review the splits in this country; they have been in Philadelphia and in Washington-Baltimore.
- F: Washington-Baltimore, Detroit, but at least in Washington-Baltimore they moved. They are in two different cities, actually, you see, so the active competition is not as great as in the one city; but I know that the situation in Philadelphia is pretty bad, and in Detroit it is unbearable. It is ten years now, and they still didn't straighten out anything; it is impossible to function there.
- K: In Detroit.
- F: In Detroit, yes, it is impossible to function there. An impossible situation. What the older generation never understood was that in the early history of analysis people when dissatisfied with analysis, they gave it up. But that doesn't occur any more. People remain analysts. It is the function of an Education Committee to get rid of training analysts incapable of training. If we have splits every time we disagree with each other, even if it's on a very theoretical basis, we don't take the interests of analysis into consideration -- I feel this very strongly, and wish it never happened.
- K: Dr. Lewy worked hard, because he shared your sentiments, he worked hard with what was described as the London Plan, to try to avoid a split.
- F: I think the London Plan was unusable, including in London. I talked with the people in London about it, and they find it completely unusable. That was not the answer. As long we had one Institute we had control over all training; once we made the other Institute independent, we had no control.
- K: Some of your remarks would sort of suggest that because of its particular character, psychoanalysis should never become too large in its membership.
- F: No, I wouldn't say that. I'm surprised that I gave that impression. What I say is that it shouldn't be so strongly organized. There should be greater freedom of expression. I don't like any academic teaching which has very strict rules and regulations so there is no room left for an individual's initiative. In postgraduate training like ours there should be even more freedom.
- K: I mentioned Dr. Lewy a few moments ago because I interviewed him last week and saw in his study a silver plaque commemorating his status as Dean Emeritus. I believe this was presented by the Education Committee.
- F: Yes, it was recently suggested that we should give him recognition for the long years he served under very difficult conditions. The Education Committee decided that it would be fitting to make him Dean Emeritus.
- K: He was very delighted and pleased and proud of it, and had it hanging in a conspicuous place.
- F: You see, he was the one who really took over after Simmel's death. He was

the Director and Dean during the Split which created so much strife and bitterness. I am sure there are few people in this city who look at it the same way.

- K: I can assure you, from my work with the History Project in the last six or eight months' time, that I have learned increasingly more about the emotional elements in the Split, and certainly as time goes on an increasing objectivity toward the direction of being franker about these very emotional elements.
- F: The atmosphere was so bitter at that time that no two people trusted each other, and I think this was the most destructive aspect of it, much more destructive than any theoretical difference. The final split was in 1950, which was thirteen years ago, and I don't believe there's a single person today who doesn't have strong feelings about it. Do you enjoy doing this, Al?
- K: Yes, it has been fun. I can tell you some of the other people who are doing it enjoy it equally as well or even more; for example, Dr. Horowitz has done a number of these interviews, and I'm very pleased that he gets so much pleasure out of it because it helps him to do a good job. He interviewed Brunswick and did a very excellent job and got good material, which Brunswick hadn't expected he'd be able to produce.
- F: I would imagine that Horowitz would enjoy it more than you do, because for him most of these things are completely new. You know most of these things anyhow, because you were in it.
- K: Yes, that is true, although there are certain details from each individual that are very interesting to compare. You have talked here today about the over-organization of analysis; the exact sentiments are also those of Ernst Lewy, who spoke at some length about these very ideas when I saw him a week ago.
- F: You know every-once-in-awhile, in a local Society or The American, a man is elected as leader who likes to organize committees, committees on committees. Then he is gone, but the committees remain. Frequently the one function is that they meet. That nothing comes out of the meeting is not the issue. We should try to change this; I'll certainly try.
- K: It strikes me how your friend and neighbor, Mrs. Deri, identifies the personal aspect of teaching very much in contrast to this business of over-organization, because she's been so popular a teacher over the years of psychoanalysis.
- F: Some teachers gave up teaching after our teaching became very strongly organized. I cannot read so that I take a sentence from here and a sentence from there, and a page from here and a page from there; I cannot read that way, therefore I cannot teach that way. It is inconceivable to me that anybody can learn that way.
- K: Ernst Lewy says that he has never taught --
- F: He never taught in Los Angeles; he never taught any course here at all, at any time.
- K: Although he says he did in Topeka, but there he says he was an employee and

didn't have any choice in the matter, is the way he puts it.

- F: Actually he was Dean here for many years and he was Director. In that sense he was an employee too, so he could have done it under compulsion. I think he knows a lot, especially about metapsychology, and for years I was hoping that he would give some courses in metapsychology, but he never did. But, I imagine, every individual has to deal with that in his own way --
- K: As you know he has supported this History Project with his active efforts on our Committee, and I've gotten to know him quite well. Another person who is on our Committee among the old-timers is David Brunswick, who also has a zeal for this particular project. We've talked some about Ernst; do you perhaps have some comments about Brunswick, as an analyst or educator, which you'd care to talk about?
- F: I met David shortly after I started training; I didn't know him before. I met him after the war; he was one of those whom I didn't know before. I knew Mrs. Deri and I knew Mrs. Olden, and the Fenichels, and Simmel -- I knew them all shortly after they came here before I went into the Army, but I didn't know David Brunswick. I remember the day he became a training analyst -- I had lunch with him -- I remember exactly his remark when I congratulated him. He said, "It is nice to be recognized and to go ahead."
- K: Did you know any of the local analysts already in Europe?
- F: No, I didn't know any of them. After I graduated -- I went from medical school to Italy, and then I worked in a hospital in Vienna where I was completely out of contact with all other activities except the specialty I was working in. Besides, the analysts who are in Los Angeles, the old-timers, did not come from Vienna. Mrs. Deri was born in Vienna, but she left there long before my time and went to Berlin and then to Prague; so did the others. I graduated -- I finished medical school in 1930; I graduated a year later because I had no money to pay for graduation, so I had to go to Italy to work in a hospital for a year before I could graduate in absentia. I was supposed to go to Central Africa, but after I got the job in Italy I changed my mind, and by the time I came back the French didn't want to take any foreigners.
- K: Were you going to sign up with the Foreign Legion?
- F: Not the Foreign Legion; it was government service for French Equatorial Africa. Right after graduation from medical school we wanted to get out of Europe -- anywhere -- just out. Before I came to this country I had an invitation to go to the University of Madrid. I'm glad I didn't -- it was just before the Civil War in Spain. Many of my friends died there.
- K: Just for our record here -- you had service with the United States Army. What were the years of your service, and what did you do, where did you go, and so forth?
- F: I went into the Army in June, 1942, spent two summers in Abilene and in Gainesville, Texas, with an Infantry Division. At that time I was Plans and Training Officer of the Regiment. I was teaching first aid and artillery tactics and later also teaching first- and second-echelon motor maintenance.

Then I was transferred to Fort Mead, Maryland, to the Psychiatric Staff. Marty Berezin, who is an analyst in Boston, was my Commanding Officer. I was at Long Island at the Army School of Psychiatry; then I was transferred to Camp Polk. Berezin was by that time also the Chief of the Service, and Charley Sarlin was there, as Assistant Chief. Mark Kanzer, Henry Schneer were also on our Staff. The last six months I was expert psychiatric witness on the Retirement Board for General Officers.

K: Did you encounter Greenson during the war service period?

F: No, I knew him before the war. I didn't see Romi after we both got in the Army. I was once home on leave and we were invited to the Fenichels for dinner, and Greenson was also on a leave -- that was sometime in 1944, that we were all at the Fenichels. Otto Fenichel was interning in the Cedars when our daughter Barbara was born. I was in Louisiana at that time. Marianne told me that Otto sat for hours with her, telling her jokes. I saw him at our home about a week after I was discharged from the Army; he came to visit us. That was just about the last time I saw him because he died in early 1945; it was sometime in February or March, wasn't it?

K: It happened to be January.

F: Well, then it was early January that he was in my home; that's when I was discharged, and that's the last time I saw him. But I knew him before the war quite well. We used to go on Sundays sometimes for walks in the outskirts of Los Angeles.

K: He was supposed to have been very fond of the outdoors and also traveling on weekends.

F: Well, walking outdoors in the outskirts of the city. He loved nature, flowers -- anything. Really, the Fenichels were the only people in Los Angeles who used to send me packages while I was in the Army. During the war Hanna always sent packages to people on Christmas and on any other occasion.

K: The interview which Dr. Horowitz did with Hanna was a very interesting one of course and seemed to be devoted to many details about Otto.

F: He had a fantastic sense of humor. I've never seen anybody enjoy a joke as much as he could -- but it was something entirely different in scientific discussions, I am told.

It is interesting to see how analysis develops in a city --- all the difficulties which go with it. I have all kinds of theories why analysts are so -- let's call it rightly destructive with each other. It is partly in the nature of one's work (of course this would require more explanation, which I cannot go into). But in spite of it, analysis is here to stay. I don't agree with people who say that there are not enough analytic cases any more; there are just as many now or more than before. There are reasons why this complaint comes up. One of them is that there are an awful lot of people today who are practicing "analysis" -- everybody's practicing analysis.

K: You refer to the so-called ancillary therapists.

- F: Yes, anybody from M. D.'s and not M. D.'s, osteopaths, chiropractors, etc., all practice "analysis." Frequently patients come to analysis who have had three or four experiences with some kind of so-called psychotherapy, which greatly interferes with the possibility of analyzing them. Then there are lots of excellent analytic cases, but they cannot pay the price that analysis costs today. Many of those people who are in once-a-week psychotherapy would make good analytic cases; they are not in analysis simply for financial reasons. I think this is a serious problem.
- K: Perhaps another way of formulating it is that with the increased number of qualified analysts there is to some extent a relative shortage of patients in an upper economic bracket able to pay full analytic fees.
- F: That's right. But I'm glad to see that we have lately some of our older members, or younger members, I don't know, certainly not candidates, who are taking patients from the Clinic into analysis. I know one of them said lately he thinks he can afford to take a patient free, so he took a Clinic patient.
- K: If it's on a voluntary basis, how very wholesome. You recall very much bitterness about the Clinic, that this was an imposition, and resented very much by many people.
- F: I know that Lihn would like to put the whole Clinic on a voluntary basis. Maybe it would work. I am very happy about the idea of accepting children in the Clinic for analysis.
- K: You contrast here of course analysis with psychotherapy at such places as Reiss-Davis.
- F: Reiss-Davis is not doing child analysis; they are doing lots of psychotherapy, but they are not doing analysis, and we will be the only ones who are doing it.
- Even though you are interested in history, I am also interested in the future -- I would like to see some changes in our Society. The separation of the Society and Institute into different organizations is bad and a total waste.
- K: Very cumbersome.
- F: It is a tremendous waste. The emphasis should be scientific and on training. Administration should be as little as possible. Most analysts are very poor administrators. If they would be good administrators they wouldn't be analysts. We should have one organization. The training school should be greatly independent. As a hangover from the Split, the majority of the members of the Professional Committee and the majority on the Board of Trustees are training analysts. I don't see any reason for this any more. Training analysts should occupy themselves mainly with training.
- K: It is distracting in many ways.
- F: It creates resentment in the rest of the membership, the feeling that the Education Committee wants to have hold of everything.

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K: Was there once some justification?

F: It had some justification at the time when they were afraid of being out-voted by the hostile group, but certainly no more. I also question the effectiveness or desirability for a so-called lay board. Most of the time they don't do anything.

K: We have a committee now active in studying the By-Laws.

F: In the Society.

K: Yes, and David Brunswick has proposed that we should write in our History Project the chapter devoted to the organization by nature of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Society and the Institute, to understand clearly how things came about, and to this very point that you are mentioning, how it came about to be such a cumbersome and awkward type of set-up such as at present, and how it can be altered and changed and revised and reorganized, for greater efficiency.

F: A great deal came about by mistrust and anxiety; that's how it happened, you know. This is for example why it was made part of the By-Laws that the Director of the Institute had to be a training analyst. Why? What possible reason is there for that?

K: Well, in the past of course it made a good deal of sense, but now --

F: It doesn't make any sense at the present at all.

K: Now it's a limiting, inhibiting factor.

F: Extremely so, and it is not just that it is inhibiting; there might be some people always among the training analysts who would make an excellent Director and an excellent administrator, but what I object to is that the membership of the Education Committee represents a small percentage, maybe twelve to fifteen percent of the total membership of the Institute, and the eighty-five percent of the other members automatically feel resentful about it, that they are excluded, and I think it is very unhealthy for the atmosphere of the whole organization. I would like to see the whole thing reorganized -- the division between Society and Institute eliminated.

K: It really is ridiculous when we come to point it out so clearly. We take it for granted, and this awkward, cumbersome thing is so unnecessary, and we've taken it for granted for quite a few years, and you are right, it's time to do something about it.

F: It's not easy, because it automatically eliminates a number of committees and officers, and I don't know --

K: Vested authority resents the change. A few minutes ago we were commenting about our friend and your neighbor, Mrs. Deri. When you read the transcript of my first interview with her, what did you find interesting, and was there something new that you hadn't known about her?

F: No, there isn't, because actually I think she has a lot more to say than she

did in that interview. She made a few minor mistakes in it, which are meaningless, and when I pointed it out to her she remembered it, that they were incorrect, but I think she could say a lot more. She has a lot more personal experience with the old-timers than any of us could have who didn't have the intimate contact. But just because of the intimate contact she is also much more restricted.

K: Because I had expected we would see her today I did have prepared some leading questions, mostly about her as a person, and some of her European background, some of her activities in Prague.

F: There are so many cute stories about it -- you know Mrs. Deri -- her father was, whatever you call it here, a wholesaler in mother-of-pearl, and used to get shipments of truckloads and truckloads of shells from the Orient, and she says that when she was a little girl she used to play with the pearls, where the others played with marbles, because she found so many of them.

K: She told me that she smoked cigarettes since she was twelve-years old, and her father warned her only against the harmful nature of cheap cigarettes.

F: Of course you know she's a twin.

K: Is that right? I didn't know that.

F: If you ever talk to her about it she will tell you lots of stories about that.

K: Is her twin living?

F: No, she died several years ago.

K: Did you ever meet Dr. Max Deri? Her husband?

F: No, I never did. He died here a year before I met her.

K: Exactly what was his occupation or profession?

F: If I'm not mistaken he was an economist, but I'm not positive about it. He was supposedly a brilliant speaker; I understood that he was one of the best speakers they knew. Bernfeld was another one who was such a good speaker. She has also an older brother in London.

K: No, these are details which she didn't --

F: He's about three or four years older than she, and there isn't a year that he doesn't publish a book. He publishes a book practically every year -- he was here a couple of years ago for a visit.

K: What is his name?

F: Gosh I can't think of it at the moment, but he is a charming person; he cannot sit for one minute without reading something. He must be now about 87 or 88.

K: What's his field?

F: I think he's an economist. His wife is a physician. His name is Herz, I think, my wife knows -- Frederick Herz.

K: Well, we've been talking for quite awhile, and I know that you'd like to wind this up. I hope you will recall what I said about looking at the transcript when we get this typed out, and you might discover that there are certain points you'd like to amplify or add, in which case I hope you'll be willing to sit down with me again.

F: I will be glad to any time if you think I can be of any help.

K: Well, thank you so very much. This has been very useful, very helpful. Good night.

Recorded on tape in the home of Dr. Lawrence J. Friedman
12414 Rochedale Lane
Los Angeles 49

First transcript by Jeanne Herzog
Final transcript by Jean Kameon

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the original as shown to me

and

is

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Witness my hand and seal this [Date] day of [Month], [Year].

[Signature]