

SCIENTIFIC MEETING

Febr.3rd,1939

(901 S.Hudson)

Total attendance: 30

Guests: Dr.& Mrs.Cryst
Dr.& Mrs.R.Evans
Miss Sommers
3 social workers(?)
2 physicians Compton (?)

Dr.Sperling
Dr.Greensphoon
Mr.Sklarek
Miss Fraenkel

Dr.Brunswick presiding

Speaker: Prof.Paul S.Epstein

Topic:"The Death Instinct"

The speaker presented the historical background for the theory and classification of instincts as we are acquainted with them to-day. His own general remarks were as follows: "The concept of the death instinct grew out of theoretical speculations. The theoretical arguments of Freud and his followers prove only the existence of a passive slipping towards death which it would be entirely unjustifiable to call an instinct. The existence of an active death instinct does not follow from any physiological considerations, nor is it supported by the clinical evidence which was available to me".

Discussion: Fenichel: argues against the necessity for an new division of instincts. He warns against danger of misuse of hypothesis of the death instinct, a) phenomenon of "man against himself" stops research, b) tends to underestimate importance of conflict between instinct gratification and obstacle from without. Neurosis, on the basis of the new instinct division, could be the conflict between death wish and eros, excluding any social factor in its genesis.(Rado represents this trend to some extent.)

Adjournment.

M.L.secretary