

Notes by -
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6-62

HISTORICAL NOTES

Events Prior to the Split

Ernst Levy, M.D.

At the end of the War and the years right after it the time was ripe for the founding of a local psychoanalytic organization that would qualify for both becoming a branch of the American Psychoanalytic Association and for training in psychoanalysis that would be recognized as professionally adequate for psychiatrists who would want to become psychoanalysts. Not only the further influx of trained analysts, but especially the urgent demand for organized facilities to get together and to get legitimate training made it a natural event when in 1946 the local analysts got together and founded the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society. Unfortunately, and with tragic consequences for the further functioning of the group, Otto Fenichel was not among the founders. Just a few weeks before the official founding date Otto Fenichel died, suddenly, unexpectedly and prematurely. On **MARCH 8, 1946** a memorial meeting was held in his honor at which his paper on **"ON STAGE ACTING"** was read by Ralph B. Greenson. Obituary by Ernst Simmel, I. J. Psy. Vol. XVII, parts 1 & 2.

Jan 22 1946

(I have a copy of the announcement of this meeting)

He was not the only prominent analyst in residence in Los Angeles who was vitally interested, most capable and experienced in teaching and training. There were Ernst Simmel, Frances Dori and others who had valuable experience in teaching and in organizing training facilities, but his personality was particularly suited, in addition to his professional and scientific eminence, to enable him to play the role of a leader of a group of people of very different competence, background and leanings. He was not prone to be deceived by phony appearances and by psychopathic characters, yet capable of being tolerant and of guiding and integrating and encompassing those elements who tried, aggressively or by their wiles, to force undesirable contributions into scientific activities without being quite competent to do it.

The charter members of the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society which was founded on were:

Officers were:

After Otto Fenichel's death, Ernst Simmel was the tacitly recognized leader of the analytic community.

Although somewhat lacking in some of the qualities that made Otto Fenichel so prominent a teacher and leader, Ernst Simmel was perhaps in some ways a more original mind. Unfortunately, he was already at the time of the founding of the Society and Institute a sick man, suffering from angina pectoris attacks, although still full of plans, ideas and initiative. It was harder for him to keep certain elements in line who by their conduct became more and more burdensome, and at the same time this was also harder on him and his health. He at some occasions confided his regret at having been deceived in his appraisal of certain members. He specifically expressed regret at having encouraged Martin Grotjahn to come and join the Los Angeles group.

One of Ernst Simmel's plans was the founding of a psychoanalytic sanitarium that would have enabled him to resume the important experiment of the Sanatorium Tegel in a suburb of Berlin. Following several leads he, accompanied by Ernst Levy and E. Mappett, a successful jeweler interested in psychoanalysis and a good friend of Ernst Simmel, inspected places in different locations in the eastern San Fernando Valley in the hope to purchase and convert them into such a sanitarium. Unfortunately, nothing ever came of this, just as his early attempt at founding a training institute ended in failure.

The first of those members of the Society who were recognized as training analysts were from February 27, 1946 on: Ernst Levy, May E. Roun, Ernst Simmel, Albert Slutsky and Charles W. Tidd. On the 4th of April, 1946 Frances Dori was appointed training analyst and on October 1, 1946 Milton Miller, which brought the number to seven. On January 27, 1947 three more training analysts were appointed: David Brunswick, Ralph R. Greenson and Martin Grotjahn. Later were added: Carol Van der Heide, Hanna Fenichel, Robert E. Joki, Ivan McGuire, Herbert I. Kupper, Richard D. Evans, Lawrence J. Friedman and Leo Rangell.*

*Ernst Levy had been training analyst in Topeka from 1941 on; Ernst Simmel had been, of course, already a training analyst back in Berlin and Frances Dori had organized the training group in Prague. Grotjahn had been training analyst in Chicago (?); (Miller?). The others had no previous experience as training analysts.

It seems that from the beginning the Education Committee consisted of all training analysts, with the number of its members increasing as new training analysts were appointed. From January 1947 till the split-up into two societies and two institutes in 1950 the Education Committee consisted of the following members: David Brunswick, Frances Deri, Ralph R. Greenson, Martin Grotjahn, Ernst Levy, Milton Miller, May Romm, Ernst Simmel and Albert Slutsky. Ernst Simmel first chairman, followed by Ernst Levy.*

In those days meetings of the Society as well as of the Education Committee were held in different places. The Society usually met at the new building of the School for Nursery Years on Alfred Street, later repeatedly in the Gold Room of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. The Education Committee met at first at Ernst Simmel's house as long as he was chairman. It also convened in the penthouse of one of the office buildings in Beverly Hills, near the corner of Bedford Drive and Brighton Way. Later, until the group rented its first permanent quarters, the meeting took place mostly at Ernst Levy's house.

(NO. 563 N. ALFRED ST)
(555 N. WILCOX AVE)

(? 407 Commercial Central St.
Beverly Hills
from Dec 1, 1948

At the very beginning Ernst Levy automatically became secretary of the Education Committee by offering to write down the minutes of the meetings. The typing was first done by Diana Howard, secretary to Ernst Simmel (?) and by Anne Barzman, secretary to Ernst Levy. When Ernst Levy took over the chairmanship, an event that has to be described later, Anne Barzman's activities extended into much more than just typing as the business of the Education Committee enlarged with the increase of candidates in training. In 1947 (?) it became necessary to hire a secretary to the Institute (and Society?) proper. Virginia Smith who worked in cooperation with Anne Barzman was the first hand paid by the organization. A considerable part of the work, however, was still done by Ernst Levy's secretary till the resignation of Ernst Levy from his offices as Dean of the Training School and Director of the Institute.

In the beginning, while the activities of the Society progressed more or less routinely, the Education Committee was faced with the task of

* The Education Committee operated then as a committee of the Psychoanalytic Society.

Officers of the Psychoanalytic Society were:

creating by trial and error, as it were, its own organization and procedures. The main tasks were to organize a curriculum of teaching and training, to find a method by which to select the suitable candidates out of the increasing number of applicants. Different ways were tried: Individual interviews by a varied number of training analysts which were reported to the whole committee (?), interviews of the applicant by the whole committee and combinations of both.

The curriculum at first derived mostly from the Topeka curriculum as laid down in the pamphlet of the Topeka Institute, which in turn had been much influenced by the pamphlet of the New York Institute. The Los Angeles Institute soon also had a pamphlet printed that contained both the curriculum and the rules governing the training from the admission procedure to graduation. For several years one of the requirements for graduation was the presentation of a thesis to the Society based on clinical material. This was dropped in.....

A list of required reading was, of course, necessary. The first, rather skeletal, list was compiled by Charles W. Tidd and Ernst Levy and approved by the whole committee and was gradually enlarged.

While the Los Angeles Society as a whole seemed to function at that early time smoothly, as far as one could judge from the flow of its regular activities, the meetings of the Education Committee after the first year showed signs of the formation of two factions and of discord between them. The underlying cause was mainly the attempts of the smaller faction, consisting of Grotjahn, Miller and Roma to introduce concepts and techniques into the method of training of candidates which stemmed from Alexander's et al. attempts at establishing new and shorter methods of psychotherapy. But interwoven with these scientific differences were certain personal antagonisms of an emotional nature, stemming from character incompatibilities which, in turn, sharpened the existing bona fide scientific discord. Some of the personality traits involved could, with sufficient fairness of judgment, be

called rather undesirable, as for instance, some deviousness, dishonesty and unscrupulousness and an overdeveloped need for prestige, others in retrospect can quite clearly be appraised psychoanalytically as unresolved Oedipal remnants. This was especially apparent in Martin Grotjahn's attitude toward Ernst Simmel and Ernst Lowy. Yet, it cannot be strongly enough emphasized that the real trouble was due to the growing discord relative to the principles of psychoanalytic training and the ensuing growing concern as to how to preserve a good standard of teaching and training. And, of course, there was the eternal issue of the lay analysts whose claims were strongly resented by some of the physician-analysts. Some more or less minor issues proposed to but rejected by the Education Committee was Ernst Simmel's idea to institute what he called colloquia, oral informal examinations which were adopted later and have been a standard procedure for years. Another issue was the idea to establish free clinic for patients in need of psychoanalysis. This was proposed early by Ernst Lowy but met with fierce resistance. Martin Grotjahn called it an attempt at forcing the candidates into "slave labor".

It was already in those early times that the main controversy relative to the training became more and more sharply delineated. It was the firm conviction of the majority of the original group of training analysts, and this included the continued influence of the late Otto Fenichel, that it was necessary to first make the candidates firmly acquainted with and competent in the views, concepts and technique of classical analysis. This was one of the main, if not the main principles. It was thought necessary to leave the also indispensable teaching and discussing of more recent techniques of psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy for later stages of the training, and to leave it, of course, to the individual candidates preference later to decide to what therapy to use. This conviction was shared by David Brunswick, Frances Deri, Ralph R. Greenson, Ernst Lowy and Ernst Simmel. Opposed to it were Martin Grotjahn, Martin Miller, and May E. Roman. They all wanted to immediately introduce into the teaching of theory and technique the modifications propounded by F. Alexander and his co-workers in Chicago. The first rumblings of this had been heard when Otto Fenichel was still alive at one meeting of the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society held at the old home of the School for Nursery Years in..... (late '45 or early '46?). At that occasion Otto Fenichel quite lucidly, but also quite bluntly, told the speaker of the evening that he was confusing the issues by calling his newly developed short technique psychoanalysis. It had been an interesting meeting with what is sometimes aptly called fireworks, but it did not, of course, change anybody's mind about the controversial issue involved.

Miller

571 N. ROSSMORE AVE.
Aug 31, 1945

Here is the place to tell how Ernst Simmel was replaced as chairman of the Education Committee. This must have taken place in 1947, probably in Spring 1947 when the Education Committee already included as members Martin Grotjahn, Martin Miller and May E. Romm. These three at one of the meetings held at Ernst Simmel's home moved, with the alleged purpose of relieving the ailing Ernst Simmel of too much work, to replace him with Ernst Levy, most likely in the expectation to have easy sailing along their intended reform course with Ernst Levy in that position. Ernst Simmel's friends proved themselves very inept at maneuvering and political trickery at that time and were taken in by the benevolent sounding proposal. It was carried. Ernst Simmel was ousted as Chairman of the Education Committee and was, of course, most deeply shocked and hurt. What it meant to him was quickly realized by the others, but it was too late. Ernst Simmel was, as mentioned earlier, a gravely ill man suffering from attacks of angina pectoris. If there is anything in the theory that emotional strain can cause or aggravate coronary conditions one has to believe that this shocking event plus the continued strain of constant discord within the Education Committee hastened the fatal outcome. He fought his disease valiantly and desperately worried in addition by financial difficulties brought about partly by his lack of interest in money matters and by sometimes uncalled for monetary generosity. He was still not only active scientifically and in teaching and as head of the training activities, but had even more far-reaching ideas concerning a world-wide mental hygiene movement as far as this reporter can remember. In the same year his death cut all these plans down through a cruel terminal anginal attack that for unknown reasons could not be relieved. A memorial meeting, attended by several hundred people was held in the Auditorium of the County Medical Association Building on _____ (program in file). Obituary by Ernst Levy, L. J. Psa., V, XVIII, 3-4, 1947.

After the death of Ernst Simmel in November 1947 the activities of the Education Committee and Institute took place, under the chairmanship of Ernst Levy with ever increasing expansion but also with ever increasing tension till 1949.

Dec 13, 1947

(I have a copy of the announcement)

The ouster of Ernst Simmel did not have the effect the "opposition" expected. The "recent advocists" did not find it smooth sailing in their attempts to introduce what they liked to call "flexible" techniques into the training methods. Since they were unable to change the rules which were, anyway, laid down and fixed by this time by the Board on Professional Standards of the American Psychoanalytic Association they resorted to ways that gave the surface impression of complying with the standards but made it possible de facto to circumvent them. This related for instance to the number of hours of training analysis per week as well as to deviations from the rule of abstinence. Some of these differences were, no doubt, based on honest scientific convictions. But in some instances the deviations were simply due to confusion and incompetence. In some other instances the main motivations seemed to be clearly based on expediency and the wish to compromise scientific principles for more profitable practices. When, for instance, the particular analyst insisted that his patient, candidate or private patient, could not afford so many sessions per week he should have more honestly stated that he, the analyst, could not afford to see the patient at a reduced fee. Another "reform" which perhaps more properly should be called corruption was that some training analysts, in particular Grotjahn, were wont to circumvent the rule that an applicant had to be approved by the Education Committee first before he might choose his

analyst, by simply telling the applicant during the preliminary interview that he found him acceptable, that he would be glad to take him into analysis, and that he could begin his analysis right then and there.

As stated earlier, there were some differences based on real scientific convictions. In these cases the insistence of the majority of the Education Committee that the established technical rules be maintained led to the accusation, mainly voiced by Milton Miller, that "academic freedom" was being demolished. That the majority was bound by their "rigidity". Why not be "flexible" and say that 2 plus 2 equals 5? This would be more flexible and human. It also would be more human, according to May Romm, to see to it that "no patient ever leave his session unhappy!"

It is obvious that the teachings by people confused like these, and the contradictions that confronted the students in their classes with teachers of such opposing views created a great deal of bewilderment and undesirable conflicts in the students. All this was, of course, sharpened by the students transference ties to the different training analysts. They were in no position yet to exercise independent scientific judgment and were torn by what they were taught and by their loyalties.

As the years went on the situation became more and more impossible. This was often stated and discussed, and it was sometimes said that something should be done, but nobody just seemed to know what should or could be done.

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It became known that the situation in Los Angeles was by no means unique. It was known, for instance, that similar problems existed in Philadelphia and in London. Here it was the conflict between the Anna Freud group and the followers of Melanie Klein that caused trouble. It also became known that in Philadelphia a split had occurred in the year..... that led to the establishment of two separate societies and institutes.

Finally, early in 1949, Ernst Levy decided that some action was inevitable. He did not feel that a complete split-up as in Philadelphia was the best solution. This was for several reasons. For one, he felt that such a split would be a very hard thing to take for the candidates. For another, just because he believed that much of the conflict was due to honest scientific convictions that ought to be taken seriously and not just squelched, a solution that would be tolerant of deviant views within reason would be preferable. He had by then learned of the way the London analysts had tried to solve their problem. Their solution consisted of the creation of two subgroups within one and the same institute. This enabled the two groups to give courses independently, according to their convictions, together with some joint courses. Ernst Levy corresponded with a number of people about this matter in order to get as much information as possible of what had been done (Katz, Philadelphia, M. Ruben, London). He came to the conclusion that the best remedy for the ailing Los Angeles Institute would be what he called the "London Plan".

This would, on the one hand, insure a satisfactory standard of training, and, on the other, allow those who opposed such standards, to teach their ideas freely, and still preserve the unity of the Institute. Having arrived at this view he then proceeded to prepare such a solution. He knew that it would not be enough to get the Education Committee to take steps, but that it would be necessary to also have the backing of a sufficient number of members of the Psychoanalytic Society to reorganize the Institute. He was sure of certain members of the Education Committee, as to where they stood, not, though, sure enough of whether there would be a majority in favor of his planned proposals. He did not know, however, how many of the members of the Society would decide. Therefore, he proceeded carefully and methodically by approaching the analysts gradually. The first one with whom he discussed his plan was David Brunswick. He agreed instantly. From then on more of these who were likely to follow were taken into confidence, partly by individual interview, later by a number of caucus-like meetings. Out-of-town members, as Charles Sarlin, had to be contacted by phone when the time was ripe. Finally, around the end of 1949 a sufficient number of colleagues was rounded up, and, just as important, a sure majority within the Education Committee was established

(Proceed from here, (again) with Kandelin's memo to narrate the sequence of events through the split.)

HISTORICAL NOTES

Ernst Levy, M. D.

(Cont'd)

The majority within the Education Committee was secured when Charlie Tidd to whom R. Greenson had explained the plan decided to stay with the group, consisting of Brunswick, Deri, Greenson and Levy. We must assume that C. W. Tidd was faced with a conflict which was difficult to resolve; namely, on the one hand his opposition to the policy of the "old" fraction to accept lay analysts as members; on the other hand, being in agreement with the "old" fraction in respect to the principles of training and other scientific concepts. He decided in favor of the latter. This ended a period of suspense and enabled the group to go ahead with their plan.