

October 19, 1953

Paul Helmer, M. D.
Psychoanalytic Institute
2235 Post Street
San Francisco 15, California

Dear Dr. Helmer:

Again I should like to state how enjoyable our stay in San Francisco was, and how much the efforts and hospitality of your Society members contributed to this. The afternoon at your lovely place is a particularly pleasant memory.

I should like to take this opportunity to ask you a question for which there was no time or place during the meetings: I am referring to your introductory speech, in particular to your remarks on the "split" in Los Angeles, in which you, in essence, admonished all analysts to act like grownups and not to allow themselves to be carried away by their emotions which certainly is a most commendable suggestion. Having been, so to speak, the ringleader of the bad little boys in Los Angeles, I am especially interested in this topic and opinions expressed on it. However, I cannot help but wonder how much information you really had about all the circumstances that led to the split when you arrived at your conclusions. I wonder, for instance, whether you knew that our group, that is members of the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society, very carefully, over a period of about nine months, tried to prepare an arrangement which would have avoided a split; an arrangement, called the "London Plan", which would have enabled the two dissenting factions to remain under one roof, but also to teach according to their respective points of view and scientific convictions freely and without interference; an arrangement which also would have been most desirable in the interests of the students in training; whether you knew that this solution to an entirely intolerable situation was flatly rejected by the other group so that no other way was left but a complete separation. The reasons for a split were disagreements of scientific issues and not personal dislikes. As an illustration of this, I am enclosing a copy of an explanatory statement that we made to our candidates at that time.

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I trust you agree that these facts documented in the minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee do not quite allow the conclusion that the split could have been avoided if only everyone involved had had his emotions under control instead of displacing his hostilities from his patients onto his colleagues. I also hope you will find this information interesting enough not to mind my volunteering it.

With many thanks again to you and Mrs. Holmer, also from Mrs. Levy.

Sincerely yours,

EL:bmw
Enc.

Ernst Levy, M. D.