

May 31, 1938

Dear Dr. Alexander,

I regret that circumstances prevent me from attending the forthcoming meeting^{in Chicago} of the American Psychoanalytic Association. I regret it all the more because in the near future it will hold its first meeting on the West Coast, evidently to prove it is interested in the development of the psychoanalytic movement in California. I assume that discussions in Chicago will include the problem of the manner in which psychoanalysis as therapy should be appropriately developed in the future.

Up to a few years ago analysis in California was without official sanction and organization. In consequence it fell into the hands of unqualified laymen, for whom it was solely a commercial venture. The considerable number of quacks still in practice here is a vestige of that situation. However several years ago a number of non-medical analysts who had completed officially sanctioned training at European Institutes commenced to practice here and tried to wrest analysis from the hands of the quacks and to create for it the dignity it deserves. Dr. David Brunswick especially must be credited for his efforts in this activity; he realized that recognition of analysis in California would best be served by the creation of a training center giving present and future analysts opportunity for further development and study. He advocated the principle that analysis does not need propaganda but can prove its

validity and merit through its accomplishments. It was at Dr. Brunswick's suggestion I was invited to California in 1933 to create such a training center. In the spring of 1934 I migrated and arrived in Los Angeles.

From the beginning I emphasized the further training of those lay analysts who had trained at a European Institute, entirely in consonance with the principles of the American Psychoanalytic Association, and especially not to start training non-medical persons to become analytic therapists. Indeed I declined several such requests.

In the fall of 1934 we organized the Psychoanalytic Study Group of Los Angeles, forming it to suit our local needs. I enclose a copy of the By-Laws and you will note how we recognize adequately trained lay analysts as full fledged analysts; on the other hand we ^xexcl_ude from membership all the quacks who practice here, among them several well known psychiatrists. During its existence the Study Group has been regarded as the official representative of Freudian analysis in Los Angeles. The existence and activities of the Study Group has given proof that analysis is a form of treatment based on logical and rational theory and offers a prescribed course of training for its practitioners. Consequently physicians here have acquired an interest in and a respect for analysis. Prominent physicians have become members of the Study Group, others are guests at its meetings.

The directors of several public institutions, such as the Child Guidance Clinic, Juvenile Hall, and several Welfare Organizations are attending members of our seminars.

We have a definite difficulty in that a majority of our analysts in Los Angeles are not physicians. Up to a certain point I must also consider myself a lay analyst, for I do not yet have a California license to practice medicine. It was not possible for me to meet the requirements for admission to the examination, i.e., to serve a year's internship in a hospital. My material situation would not permit it, and my responsibilities as a teacher in the Study Group make it out of the question.

In an attempt to clarify the relationship between the medical fraternity and analytic therapy, many discussions have been held between members of our group and members of the State Board of Medical Examiners. The State Board has taken the following attitude: analysis is a legitimate science and analytic therapy can help many persons overcome their difficulties. And they appear grateful it is being practiced here by trained experts. They do not regard the analytic method itself as a part of medical practice; if an analyst undertakes to treat a patient he must obligate himself to initiate treatment only if a physician regards such treatment as indicated and only if the patient has been previously examined by that physician. This standpoint of the medical authorities here is

extremely progressive when one considers the transitional state of analysis in California. I think it important this fact be brought to the attention of the members of the American Psychoanalytic Association at the Chicago meeting. Presumably the status of analysis on the West Coast will come under discussion.

Should the American Psychoanalytic Association advance the tenet that analytic therapy is a form of medical treatment it would strike a severe blow to the analytic movement. It would be a serious blow to those persons, including the writer, who were the first to gain recognition for Freudian analysis on the West Coast, who helped American physicians here gain basic knowledge about analysis. In further professional activities they would be seriously crippled.

For this reason I beg of you to see nothing is undertaken by the Association regarding analysis here without first exchanging views with representatives of the Study Group. Although not an official constituent member, the Study Group has since its inception been recognized by prominent persons as a legitimately representing the Freudian science. To prove this I remind you that men such as you yourself, Karl Menninger, Harold Laswell, Fritz Wittels, Gregory Zilborg and others have considered it a worthy rostrum for the cultivation of analytic science. Dr. Brill while President of the American Psychoanalytic Association, congratulated me on the founding of the Study Group and remarked that through it the chaos of analysis in the West would be resolved.

If in the course of your deliberations, you should decide that analytic therapy is medical treatment and that this should be so recognized in California, it could only be achieved through negotiations with medical authorities here and ultimately lead to the recognition of the position of the Study Group. The Group merits such recognition because of its past efforts and conversely analysis here needs the continued existence of the Group. Thorough discussion with the California analysts is essential, we are precisely acquainted with the situation here.

In conclusion allow me to inform you analysis has found recognition in the local official scientific world. A few months ago the dean of University College of the University of Southern California invited me for a conference. We discussed the question of whether analysis could be introduced at the University and in what form. As a result I was invited to deliver six lectures to a specially qualified audience, this with the consent of the President of the University and the dean of the Medical School. Enclosed find a prospectus of these lectures. Each presentation will be chaired by a different representative of the University. The purpose is to determine to what extent is it necessary for the University of include analysis to fulfill the needs of a modern university, and to determine how the University could help the advancement of analysis.

Dear Dr. Alexander I consider it my duty in this rather long letter to present once again the position of

6.

the analytic movement in California before you come to California as President of the American Psychoanalytic Association. I wish you and your colleagues success in your discussions at Chicago and will hold myself and my California friends in readiness for the continuation of these discussions in San Francisco.

My heartiest Greetings,

Ernst Simmel