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## Erich Fromm's Role in the Foundation of the IFPS

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*Abstract:* First the role is discussed that Erich Fromm played in the foundation of the International Federation of Psychoanalytic Societies (IFPS) according to the documents and correspondence kept in the Fromm Archives in Tübingen (Germany). In the second part the perhaps more interesting question is discussed of what personally motivated Fromm to initiate and to establish a federation of psychoanalytic societies outside of the International Psycho-Analytical Association (IPA). Although the reasons and motivations for Fromm's initiative are in the first line historical they nevertheless have some impact on the present. Therefore, in a final section, Fromm's understanding of psychoanalysis is discussed as a challenge for the IPA as well as for the IFPS.

The perspective of my presentation is a very specific one: I went through the papers and correspondence that Erich and Annis Fromm have given to me in their last will in order to find out what role Fromm played in the foundation of the IFPS (International Federation of Psychoanalytic Societies). Due to the fact that Fromm's last wife, Annis Fromm, saved only the correspondence that *she* was convinced to be of historical evidence, the material kept in the Fromm Archives is only a small part of the total documentation. More material about the very beginnings of the foundation of the IFPS I assume are to be found in the literary estate of Werner Schwidder and in the papers and correspondence of Franz Heigl of Göttingen on the one side and in the correspondence of Jorge Silva of the Mexican Institute and Gerard Chrzanowski of the New York William Alanson White Institute on the other.<sup>1</sup>

I first want to sketch the beginnings of the IFPS according to the documents I

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<sup>1</sup> Gerard Chrzanowski has kindly donated copies of the correspondence of Gerard Chrzanowski and Erich Fromm which refer to the activities of the IFPS, especially to the III. Forum 1969 in Mexico City, to the Fromm Archives to complete the collection.



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keep in the Fromm Archives and then discuss the perhaps more interesting question of what personally motivated Fromm to stimulate and to establish a federation of psychoanalytic societies along side of and in contrast to the IPA (International Psycho-Analytical Association).

## **1. The foundation of the IFPS according to the documents at the Erich Fromm Archives in Tuebingen<sup>2</sup>**

In March 1961 Fromm wrote from Mexico to Werner Schwidder, at that time the president of the Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft (DPG) requesting a meeting with Schwidder and Westerman-Holstijn, the president of the Dutch Psychoanalytic Society. Fromm planned to stay in May and June 1961 in France and in Yugoslavia and suggested a meeting in Paris in May 1961. But Fromm had to postpone his trip to Europe because of an illness and Westerman-Holstijn was not able to come to Paris at the suggested date. Thus Werner Schwidder and Franz Heigl met Erich Fromm on June 29 and 30, 1961, in Paris and discussed the „idea of a loose association of psychoanalytic societies“<sup>3</sup>. Their next meeting occurred two month later when Fromm participated in the „International Congress on Psychoanalysis and its Proceedings“ that took place September 5-9, 1961, in Düsseldorf.

The correspondence Fromm, Schwidder and Franz Heigl exchanged during these months reveals different concepts about this planned international association. The basic idea was to *institutionalize* the cooperation between several groups which were not members of the IPA. There were quite a lot of non-orthodox groups that cooperated in scientific programs and events without being organized in an international organization. The Düsseldorf meeting in 1961 for instance, which was organized by the DPG, was attended by the Swiss Psychoanalytic Society (represented by Medard Boss), the French Psychoanalytic Society (represented by Renè Laforgue), the Wiener Arbeitskreis für Tiefenpsychologie (represented by Raoul Schindler) and the Dutch Psychoanalytic Society (represented by A. J. Westerman-Holstijn). And there were also speakers coming from the American Academy of Psychoanalysis which was founded in 1956 as an association of medical psychoanalysts in the United States who followed various orientations that rejected any dogmatic approach and also shared controversial scientific and cultural interests. At the Düsseldorf Congress Gerard Chrzanowski

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<sup>2</sup> Where there is no other source mentioned I am quoting from the letters and documents of the Erich Fromm Archives in Tuebingen. The copyright for these documents is still restricted. Thus any citation and reprint requires permission from the Literary Estate of Erich Fromm, c/o Rainer Funk, Ursrainer Ring 24, D-72076 Tübingen, Germany.

<sup>3</sup> Franz Heigl in a letter addressed to Gerard Chrzanowski, dated May 13, 1975.



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represented the William Alanson White Institute, Frederick A. Weiss the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis, and Sandor Rado the Psychiatric School of New York.

Fromm himself and his Mexican Psychoanalytic Society up to this point had not been cooperating with these groups in Europe<sup>4</sup> but only with the William Alanson White Institute in New York where Fromm had been one of the founders in the forties and was still working as lecturer and supervisor. Thus it was Fromm's interest to stimulate Schwidder, Heigl and Westerman-Holstijn for institutionalizing the cooperation in an international federation besides the IPA.

One model for organizing such an international federation – or as it was called in German: eine „Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft“ – was the American Academy of Psychoanalysis. But Fromm from the very beginning doubted that the Academy could help to bring the new federation into being. In a letter to Schwidder, dated April 25, 1961, he says:

„As far as the Academy is concerned, it is not quite clear to me whether their project is one in which they would make a true international academy in which groups like the German Psychoanalytic Association, the Mexican Association, etc., can participate in such a way that each national group determines the conditions for membership, and so on. I would like to hear something more about this.“

Here Fromm seems to have a clear reservation against the American Academy. Being a non-medical psychoanalyst Fromm had his own experiences with the American psychoanalytic societies. He was afraid that a federation similar to the American Academy that accepted only medical psychoanalysts would provoke again the danger of excluding non-medical psychoanalysts and that the shared scientific and cultural interests of non-orthodox psychoanalysts would not dominate the interests and discussion of the new federation but the American „standards“ for the psychoanalytic setting and the psychoanalytic training. In any case Fromm wanted to avoid „American conditions“ where non-medical psychoanalysts would not have the same rights as medical psychoanalysts.

As I shall demonstrate later, for Fromm the strongest motive to establish an international federation besides the IPA was to counteract the bureaucratic atti-

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4 In a postscript to his below mentioned letter to Werner Schwidder, dated April 25, 1961, Fromm states that he „got the very interesting program for the meeting in September“ [the Düsseldorf congress of 1961] and then asks „whether you [Schwidder] had in mind that our Mexican society should participate“. Actually the fact that Schwidder sent Fromm the program was the cause for Fromm's participation in the Düsseldorf congress and the factual beginning of a cooperation between Fromm and the European groups.



tude of the orthodox Freudians against all who did not share the libido theory. The new federation should be a real alternative to the bureaucracy and orthodoxy of the IPA. In this respect Fromm, Schwidder and especially Heigl preferred the same idea of „an international association somewhat parallel to the orthodox one“<sup>5</sup>. Edward Tauber of the William Alanson White Institute (WAWI) in New York also agreed with this idea.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to the representatives of the Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft and the William Alanson White Institute, Westerman-Holstijn was not fond of the idea of an parallel association. Franz Heigl informed Fromm about Westerman-Holstijn's plan to cooperate with the American Academy as an association of equal rank and his wish to be open for the orthodox as well as for the liberal option. According to Heigl, Westerman-Holstijn „was afraid of a foundation of an association struggling against the IPA“<sup>7</sup>. Just as the American Academy, Westerman-Holstijn also never wanted to fall out with the IPA. Heigl mentions Westerman-Holstijn's „latent, although not unconscious misgivings ... in regard to the standards of psychoanalytic training (as for instance the qualification of the institute, requirements for psychoanalysts who offer didactically analyses and supervision, the duration of the training and so on).“<sup>8</sup>

The quotation shows that from the very beginning there was a discussion about the identity and the destination of the IFPS: whether it aims to encourage a pluralistic approach which welcomes the confrontation among different psychoanalytic positions and rejects any dogmatic approach or cares for the requirements of psychoanalytic setting and training and thus focus the interest on the institutional questions such as: Who belongs to us and who does not fulfill the psychoanalytic requirements?

Since Westerman-Holstijn's misgivings influenced also the French and the Belgian groups his resistance against Fromm's idea of an alternative international association parallel to the IPA had the effect that these groups would not join for the foundation of the IFPS. Fromm was somewhat disappointed but not discouraged:

„If neither the Dutch nor the French groups, nor the Belgians want to partic-

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5 E. Fromm in a letter to Werner Schwidder, May 24, 1961.

6 Ibid.

7 „Er fürchtete die Gründung eines Kampfvereins gegen die IPV“ – Franz Heigl about Westerman-Holstijn in a handwritten letter addressed to Fromm from April 9, 1961.

8 Ibid.: „Vielleicht könnte man in einem Gespräch mit Herrn Westerman einige seiner Bedenken bezüglich der Ausbildung (Qualifizierung des Instituts, Anerkennung der Lehr- und Kontrollanalytiker, Dauer der Ausbildung u.ä.) ausräumen; allerdings sind diese Bedenken latent, aber nicht unbewußt.“



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ipate in a new international psychoanalytic association, then, of course, it is somewhat difficult to think of an international group which would only consist of the German, the Mexican and one American association, although even that should not be impossible.”<sup>9</sup>

In spite of Westerman-Holstijn’s reserve, it was the Düsseldorf Conference in September 1961 that nevertheless encouraged Fromm, Schwidder and Heigl to institutionalize the cooperation. Obviously Fromm’s contributions there impressed the others. He presented two papers at the Düsseldorf conference. In the first paper he discussed the main topic of the conference about the essentials of psychoanalysis („Grundpositionen der Psychoanalyse“); the second presentation was a public lecture about alienation in modern society.<sup>10</sup> In his programmatic lecture about the essentials of psychoanalysis<sup>11</sup> he not only sketched his own understanding of psychoanalysis but presented his basic ideas that should be common to all societies organized in an alternative federation. This new federation should essentially be interested in a „de-schooling“ of psychoanalysis. At the end of his lecture Fromm said:

„The future of psychoanalysis does not lie in new schools that have to prove that Freud was wrong and that need a trademark which allows to say in such a school the same important things as under the international acknowledged Freudian trademark. The future of psychoanalysis lies just as little in a bureaucratic organized science... Rather, the future of psychoanalytic theory and therapy lies in continuing research of the unconscious psychic reality and in developing and keeping up of Freud’s radical and critical thinking. In doing so one of course must not forget that what yesterday was radical and critical not necessarily is still radical and critical today.”<sup>12</sup>

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9 Erich Fromm in a letter to Franz Heigl, dated April 25, 1961.

10 This second presentation, entitled „Der moderne Mensch und seine Zukunft“ was published only 1992 in volume 8 of the posthumous published writings of Erich Fromm: „Der moderne Mensch und seine Zukunft“, in: E. Fromm, *Humanismus als reale Utopie. Der Glaube an den Menschen*, ed. by Rainer Funk, Schriften aus dem Nachlaß, Band 8, Weinheim (Beltz) 1992; München (Heyne) 1996, pp. 17-34. A tape of this lecture, presented by Fromm for the first time again in German is available from May 1998 on at *audi-o-torium Netzwerk*, Münster-schwarzach (Viertürme-Verlag), ISBN 3-89680-391-3. – A translation into English is entitled „Modern Man and the Future“, in: E. Fromm, *On Being Human*, New York (Continuum) 1994, pp. 15-31.

11 E. Fromm, „Die Grundpositionen der Psychoanalyse“ (1966b), in: *Fortschritte der Psychoanalyse. Internationales Jahrbuch zur Weiterentwicklung der Psychoanalyse*, Vol. II, Göttingen (Verlag für Psychologie Hogrefe) 1966, pp. 19-32. Reprint in *Erich Fromm-Gesamtausgabe* in 10 Bänden (GA), ed. by Rainer Funk, Vol. VIII, Stuttgart (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt) 1981 and München (Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag) 1989, pp. 35-45.

12 E. Fromm, Die Grundpositionen der Psychoanalyse (1966b), GA VIII, p. 44f. (translation by R.





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Doubtless Fromm's lectures promoted the idea of a new international federation, although – according to the documents – Fromm was not very much engaged in the concrete steps of the foundation which finally took place on a congress at Amsterdam in 1962. With some disappointment, in a letter to Alfonso Millán Fromm wrote: „The congress in Amsterdam was only partly satisfactory. We founded a loose cooperation between the German society, the Caruso Society of Depth Psychoanalysis in Vienna, and our Mexican society.“<sup>13</sup> Franz Heigl who besides Schwidder did most for the foundation of the IFPS was elected as

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F.) – How Fromm himself continued Freud's critical and radical thinking one can read in a condensed form in his German written abstract (enclosed in the conference papers):

„Freud laid the foundation for psychoanalytic theory and therapy and every development of our science is an advancement of Freud's insights and not a construction of new theories which are *opposed* to Freud's. This development leads to new results, which in some respects differ from Freud's ideas because of the change of certain philosophical and anthropological assumptions. By his mechanistic-materialistic philosophy Freud was forced to formulate a libido theory while a philosophy that is focused on an integrated model of man looks at man as an active being who is related to world and therefore comes to different conclusions. If one looks at man as being determined by the specific conditions of his human existence and by his immanent existential dichotomies the results are different conceptions. Libido theory is replaced by the different forms of being related to world; instead of the concept of sexuality (in respect to the pleasure-unpleasure-principle) the male-female polarity, its satisfaction and distortion, becomes the center of attention; mother-fixation in the first place is looked at as the respective way of being related to world. Symptoms and character traits consistently are understood as different possibilities of being related to world. Also the concept of psychoanalytic technique is changing: it no longer refers to an impersonal observation of an „object“, but to a relatedness that assumes that another human being (and including a patient) can never be understood as an „object.“ Finally, man always is seen as a socialized being and also as an being who is judging.“ *[„Freud legte die Grundlagen zur psychoanalytischen Theorie und Therapie, und alle Entwicklung unserer Wissenschaft ist eine Weiterentwicklung der Freudschen Erkenntnisse und nicht die Konstruktion neuer Theorien gegen Freud. Diese Entwicklung führt zu Ergebnissen, die von denen Freuds in mancher Hinsicht abweichen; in erster Linie durch die Veränderung gewisser philosophischer und anthropologischer Voraussetzungen. Freud mußte aufgrund einer mechanistisch-materialistischen Philosophie zur Libido-Theorie kommen, während eine Philosophie, die den totalen Menschen als tätigen und zur Welt bezogenen Menschen in den Mittelpunkt stellt, zu gewissen anderen Folgerungen gelangt. Wenn die speziellen Bedingungen der menschlichen Existenz und die dieser Existenz immanenten Widersprüche zur Basis werden, ändern sich gewisse Vorstellungen. An Stelle der Libido-Theorie treten die mannigfachen Formen der Bezogenheit des Menschen zur Welt; an Stelle der Sexualität im Sinne der Lust-Unlust-Theorie tritt die männlich-weibliche Polarität, ihre Erfüllung und Entartung, in den Mittelpunkt; in der Mutterbindung wird in erster Linie deren Formen als Beziehung zur Welt gesehen. Symptome und Charakterzüge werden in diesem Sinne als verschiedene Möglichkeiten des Zur-Welt-Bezogenenseins verstanden; die Technik verwandelt sich von der unpersönlichen Beobachtung des "Objektes" zu einer der Bezogenheit, auf grund der Annahme, daß der Mitmensch (und der Patient) niemals als Objekt verstanden werden kann. Endlich, der Mensch wird immer als gesellschaftlicher Mensch und weiterhin als wertender Mensch gesehen.“]*



the first secretary and carried out this function until the New York Conference in 1972.<sup>14</sup> With the support of Edward Tauber and „at the suggestion of Fromm“<sup>15</sup> one year later the New York William Alanson White Institute joined and was represented by Gerard Chrzanowski.

Altogether Fromm's part in the further development of the organization was rather a small one.<sup>16</sup> He sometimes made suggestions to invite persons and societies to join the IFPS or expressed his doubts about groups. Thus on the one side he advised Gerard Chrzanowski to invite Ferdinand Knobloch of Prague as a person „battling hard against orthodox Freudian analysis“ in Czechoslovakia for lectures at the William Alanson White Institute<sup>17</sup> and to join the IFPS. On the other

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14 Letter to Dr. Alfonso Millán, one of Fromm's Mexican pupils, dated August 10, 1962.

15 Gerard Chrzanowski who published several articles about the history of the IFPS seems to overemphasize Schwidder's role primarily at Heigl's expense. To Chrzanowski's article about the IFPS in *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* of 1975 Heigl reacted with a letter to Chrzanowski (and also sent on to Fromm), dated May 13, 1975 in which Heigl among other criticism states: „Bei allem Gedenken an Schwidder und bei aller Freundschaft mit ihm – ich hatte immerhin von 1951 – 1970 sehr eng mit ihm in Göttingen zusammengearbeitet – finde ich doch, daß in Ihrem Bericht der sachliche und ideelle Beitrag der anderen Gründungsmitglieder der Internationalen Arbeitsgemeinschaft als der Keinzelle der Internationalen Fora etwas zu kurz kommt. Ich glaube mich recht erinnern zu können, wenn ich sage, ohne deren Einsatz und ebenso gute wie intensive Zusammenarbeit hätte das Internationale Forum nicht gegründet werden können.“ (Erich Fromm Archives, Tuebingen.) – Obviously, Heigl was not able to alter Chrzanowski's view because in his „Comments on the History of the International Federation of Psychoanalytic Societies“ (in *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 2, 1993, p. 168) Chrzanowski again states: „The IFPS came into existence as a post World War II offspring. The father was Werner Schwidder (...) Schwidder provided the spark, or if you will, the sperm, for the neonate. Igor Caruso, the founder of the Viennese Circle for Depth Psychology became his partner, or 'mate'. Erich Fromm, one of the co-founders of the William Alanson White Institute functioned as midwife in the delivery. At the time Fromm represented the Mexican Psychoanalytic Group which he had organized with Jorge Silva-García.“ And again in his paper „Erich Fromm's Escape from Sigmund Freud. An Introduction to Escape from Freedom“ (in: *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 6, 1997, p. 187) he neglects the part of Heigl at all but mentions his own name as one of the founding fathers.

16 F. Heigl in a letter addressed to G. Chrzanowski of May 13, 1975.

17 In these years Fromm spent a lot of time and energy in politics. He was active in the Socialist Party of the United States, in the Disarmament Movement, and in the „National Committee for a Sane Policy“; in 1962 he visited the Peace Conference in Moscow, wrote psychoanalytical papers about foreign policy to influence members of the American Congress (together with David Riesman and Michael Maccoby in the „Committee of Correspondence“) and published a book on this topic (*May Man Prevail? An Inquiry into the Facts and Fictions of Foreign Policy*, New York (Doubleday) 1961. Besides this he was committed to the idea of a worldwide movement of socialist humanism as a third way to end the Cold War. He visited the people of the Yugoslav „Praxis“ group and gave lectures in Czechoslovakia and in Poland. He published for the first time Karl Marx's *Early Writings* for the English reader (*Marx's Concept of Man*, New



side, he was more and more critical of Igor Caruso who proselytized psychoanalytic societies for the IFPS.<sup>18</sup> He was especially critical of the way the Zurich Forum in 1974 was organized.<sup>19</sup> Maybe what happened to the III. Forum which took place in Mexico in 1969 symbolizes Fromm's ambiguity in regard to the IFPS overall: on the one hand he invested a lot of energy to make the Mexican Forum successful and on the other hand he was not even able to participate in the meeting. Fromm wanted this Forum to be not only a Third World meeting but „a worldwide psychoanalytic event“<sup>20</sup>. He was ambitious to bring European and US-American psychoanalysts to Mexico in order to give the Mexicans the feeling of participating in a great psychoanalytic family and to enable a scientific

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York (F. Ungar) 1961 and edited a work of contributed essays on *Socialist Humanism* (New York: Doubleday, 1965). – If one considers all these additional activities (besides his obligations as training analyst and supervisor in Mexico and New York) and his work as author of several more books during these years: *Sigmund Freud's Mission. An Analysis of His Personality and Influence*, New York: Harper and Row, 1959; *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism*, New York: Harper and Row, 1960; *Beyond the Chains of Illusion. My Encounter with Marx and Freud*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962; *The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays on Religion, Psychology and Culture*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963; *The Heart of Man. its Genius for Good and Evil*, New York: Harper and Row, 1964 – his commitment in the further development of the IFPS was indeed only a small one.

18 In a letter dated April 16, 1967, Fromm wrote to Chrzanowski: „He [Ferdinand Knobloch] is a very intelligent and reliable person at the center of all there is in Prague of psychoanalysis, battling hard against orthodox Freudian analysis. He is really the key person in Czechoslovakia for the development of a non-orthodox psychoanalysis, and I have great confidence in him personally. This is also the opinion of Dr. Heigl in Goettingen. Since there are very few people in the Soviet bloc countries who do psychoanalysis I believe it is very important to further the few who are analysts, trained, and at the same time who are not dogmatic Freudians. Dr. Knobloch is one of the few.“

19 „The trouble is,“ Fromm writes in a letter (dated September 4, 1969) to Chrzanowski, „that Caruso may bring in one group after another, always in this fashion that his word is not believed, etc. This method puts the rest of us in an awkward position. I suggest that we consider seriously not accepting the Brazilian group, if the printed material they are going to send us is not satisfactory. This may, of course, lead to Caruso's breaking with us, but one has to take a stand somewhere. On the other hand, if it is satisfactory, at least in its verbal terms we have to accept them. I shall write also in a similar vein to Schwidder and Heigl.“

20 Fromm did not personally participate in the Zurich Forum of 1974 but wrote after the congress had finished quite bluntly about his annoyance to Gerard Chrzanowski: „What you write about the lack of organization of the Forum and the International Federation, only shows me that the liaison officers fail to do a better job. It would have been much better to have told interested people and member societies much earlier about the failure to organize things in a more effective way, and perhaps to suggest that the group should feel free to appoint other people who might do a better job. (...) In this case it was simply left to Dr. Condrau, a single person, to plan the whole Forum, and hardly anybody else was consulted. This should not happen again.“ (Letter to Gerard Chrzanowski, dated July 23, 1974. – According to the documents of the Fromm Archives this letter was the last intervention of Fromm in regard to the IFPS.





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exchange between the First, the Second and the Third World.<sup>21</sup> However, the first debacle was that the third Forum was planned to take place in 1968. It had escaped Fromm's attention that 1968 was the year of the Olympic Games in Mexico. To cope with this problem others suggested meeting in 1968 in Europe rather than in Mexico. Fromm insisted that due to the mentioned reasons in any case the meeting should take place in Mexico. In the end, it was postponed to 1969. To make things even worse, Fromm in December 1966 suffered a mild heart attack and had to recover for months in Switzerland. Fromm who was so proud to have the Forum in Mexico actually did not participate in this third Forum. It's really symbolic of Fromm's part in the IFPS: he had the idea and pushed its realization but the IFPS ran more or less without him.

In a second section I would now like to focus my interest on the professional reasons that motivated Fromm to be one of the founders of the IFPS. In a final section, I would then like to discuss Fromm's understanding of psychoanalysis as a challenge for the IPA as well as for the IFPS.

## 2. Erich Fromm's encounter with the IPA

With regard to Fromm I believe there are two main reasons why he was personally interested in the foundation of the IFPS: first, the claim of the IPA to be the only representative of psychoanalysis all over the world that at the same time defines the orthodoxy of psychoanalysis, and, secondly, the exclusion of non-medical psychoanalysts from ordinary membership, from being lecturers in clinical seminars and from being training analysts and supervisors. These restrictions as practiced especially in the American societies influenced Fromm's professional career tremendously.

The question of membership is like a red thread in Fromm's professional life. Trained at the Berlin Karl Abraham Institute in the late twenties the educated sociologist and Jew Fromm emigrated to the United States in 1933. In 1950 he then moved to Mexico where he established the first Mexican institute and society of psychoanalysis. Due to the fact that he did not study medicine but wrote a dissertation in sociology before he was trained in psychoanalysis and due to his Jewish background and being forced to leave Germany the question of membership is a never ending theme in Fromm's life. Certainly the question of membership for Fromm was a strong motivation to establish a platform for all psychoanalysts who were excluded from being speaker at congresses etc. because of their professional standard.

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21 G. Chrzanowski, „Erich Fromm's Escape from Sigmund Freud. An Introduction to *Escape from Freedom*,“ in: *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 6, 1997, p. 187.



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## a) The trouble with the German Psychoanalytic Society

Fromm finished his psychoanalytic training in 1930 in Berlin and became a member of the Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft. The first trouble about his membership arose after his emigration to the United States when Carl Müller-Braunschweig wrote to him because of his dues which Fromm had failed to pay from 1932 on. Müller-Braunschweig delivered an ultimatum to Fromm to pay these dues of 211 Marks before March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935.<sup>22</sup> Fromm wrote back that he would like to pay the fees by installments since he was unable to pay the amount at once and that he of course is interested in being a member of the DPG also in the future.

One year later Fromm once more wrote a letter to Müller-Braunschweig of the DPG because he had heard that the Jewish members were excluded („ausgeschlossen“) from the German Psychoanalytic Society.<sup>23</sup> Müller-Braunschweig immediately wrote back to Fromm and apologized for not having informed Fromm about the resolutions of the assembly of the German members in 1935 that recommended the Jewish members to resign from membership in the DPG in order to save the professional existence of the German psychoanalysts:

„(...) Es tut mir sehr leid, dass Sie sowohl unzulänglich informiert sind durch blosses Gerücht, als andererseits überhaupt nicht offiziell unterrichtet wurden. Es haben im November und Oktober 1935 mehrere Sitzungen aller Mitglieder stattgefunden, eine davon unter Beisein von Jones, als deren Ergebnis der freie Entschluss aller jüdischen Mitglieder resultierte, unter den gegebenen Umständen aus der Gesellschaft auszutreten, um ein wesentliches Hindernis beseitigen zu helfen für die Weiterexistenz und Betätigung unserer Wissenschaft in Deutschland. Also von Ausschluss kann keine Rede sein.“ (Letter dated March

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22 Fromm in a letter to Gerard Chrzanowski, dated August 6, 1967, states: „It must not be forgotten that a lively European participation would be necessary for the Forum in Mexico to be a success, since its purpose was to demonstrate the idea of the Forum and the existence of psychoanalysis outside of the London organization to Latin America.“

23 After Müller-Braunschweig listed the fees Fromm still owed the Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft he wrote: „Da Sie auf unsere wiederholten Mahnungen seit Jahren nicht antworten, nehme ich an, dass Sie auf die weitere Mitgliedschaft bei der D.P.G. keinen Wert legen. Sollten Sie bis zum 1. März 1935 keine anderslautenden Mitteilungen an mich gelangen lassen, will ich annehmen, dass Sie damit Ihren Austritt aus der D.P.G. erklärt sehen wollen. (...) Für den Fall, dass wir Sie als ausgetreten vermerken müssten, würden Ihre Verpflichtungen ab 1. Januar 32 bis 1. Oktober 34 gleichwohl bestehen bleiben. Mindestvoraussetzung für die Aufrechterhaltung Ihrer Mitgliedschaft wäre die umgehende Zahlung des Jahresbeitrages M. 80.- für 1. Oktober 33 – 1. Oktober 34 und die Zahlung von M. 80.- für 1. Oktober 34 bis 1. Oktober 35 bis spätestens 1. April 1935.“ (Letter to Erich Fromm, dated January 10, 1935.)



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21<sup>st</sup>, 1936.)

Since Ernest Jones should have informed the members abroad, Müller-Braunschweig wrote to Jones and Jones explained once more to Fromm what happened in Berlin:

„It is not literally true that they [the Jewish members] have been excluded (you use the word ‘ausgeschlossen’), but after a considerable discussion in Berlin between them and their colleagues, a discussion at which I also was present, they subsequently decided it would be in everyone's interest for them to send in their resignation. It was plain to me that there was no alternative, and indeed I may tell you that I am daily expecting to hear the whole German -Society itself being dissolved.“ (Letter of March 25, 1936.)

Jones thought that Fromm were now a member of the New York Society and promised Fromm that if there are difficulties „in the way of being accepted there, then I can offer you the direct ‘Nansen’ membership<sup>24</sup> of the International Association“ (I.c.). Two months later Fromm wrote to Jones:

„Since there is no alternative, I accept the fact of giving up my membership in the German Psychoanalytic Society. Though I am in close connection with the Washington-Baltimore Psychoanalytic Society where I gave a course of lectures last year, it would be against their principles to accept a non-physician as a member, and I would rather not press the matter. This being the case, I would prefer to become a ‘Nansen’ member of the International Association and would be very grateful to you if you would take the necessary steps to arrange it.“ (Letter of May 25, 1936.)

Again Jones reacted immediately: „I have pleasure in informing you that you may regard yourself as a direct member of the International Psycho-Analytical Association.“ (Letter dated June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1936.)

## **b) The trouble with the New York Psychoanalytic Society**

Although the question of Fromm's membership in the IPA and his professional exchange was acknowledged, Fromm's status as a non-medical psychoanalyst

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24 Dated March 11, 1936, Fromm wrote to Müller-Braunschweig: „Ich bin jetzt in der Lage, dies zu tun [die restliche Rate meiner Schulden zu überweisen] und würde dieser Tage den Scheck abgesandt haben, hätte ich nicht von verschiedenen Seiten gehört, dass die Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft Ihre jüdischen Mitglieder ausgeschlossen habe. Dass Sie dies getan haben sollten, ohne mich auch nur darüber zu informieren (ganz abgesehen von der Berechtigung des Schrittes selbst, über [den ich] hier nicht sprechen will) scheint mir so unglaublich, daß ich mich vorerst an Sie mit der Bitte wende, mich darüber aufzuklären, ob dieses Gerücht den Tatsachen entspricht.“



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was guaranteed to create problems again very soon. Fromm in the Thirties was acquainted with Harry Stack Sullivan and the Washington-Baltimore Psychoanalytic Society. Sullivan also practiced in New York and was the head of a small circle of psychoanalysts there, the „Zodiac-Club,“ to whom besides Fromm also William Silverberg, Edward Shipley, Clara Thompson and Karen Horney belonged. Karen Horney in these years was personally very close to Erich Fromm. At the same time they both formulated their own psychoanalytic theory which was more and more critical against Freud's libido theory by looking at the individual as a primarily related being who is molded by cultural and social expectations.

Their new approach to psychoanalysis attracted more and more students but also provoked the opposition of the representatives of the New York Psychoanalytic Society. Finally at an assembly of the New York Psychoanalytic Society on April 29, 1941, Karen Horney was disqualified as a training analyst and lecturer for students in the first two years. Karen Horney and others left the New York Psychoanalytic Society and established in May 1941 the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (AAP) and in June 1941 the American Institute for Psychoanalysis as their new training institute at the Lower-Fifth Avenue Hospital in New York. William Silverberg from the Washington-Baltimore Psychoanalytic Society was elected as the first president; suggested by Clara Thompson, Sullivan was nominated as a honorary member.

### **c) The trouble with the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis**

Fromm accompanied the new society and institute from the very beginning. Because of his being a non-medical psychoanalyst he could also be „only“ a honorary member. Fromm protested against this unreasonable request and made his membership conditional on his full acknowledgment as a training analyst and supervisor. Fromm got this status in November 1941 but the conflict about his status was pre-programmed. Because of his stimulating clinical descriptions, students made an application to the faculty requesting that Fromm be able to direct technical seminars, which according to the standards of the American Psychoanalytic Association were to be reserved to medical psychoanalysts only. The faculty and also Karen Horney rejected the student's application in January 1943 but offered as a compromise that Fromm be allowed to direct theoretical seminars on technical questions but not clinical seminars. Fromm did not accept this compromise and stated that he would cancel his membership if he were to be excluded from technical seminars. A commission that was to clear up the situation advised the faculty to cancel all the privileges that Fromm had been



granted in 1941.

At a special assembly of the faculty in April 1943, Clara Thompson, who was the president of the Society, supported Fromm and argued that if Fromm was accepted as a training analyst and supervisor it makes no sense to withhold technical-clinical seminars from him. Finally Fromm resigned and with him Clara Thompson, Harry Stack Sullivan, Janet Rioch, Edward S. Tauber, Ben Weininger, Ernest Hadley and others. The split was also the end of Fromm's friendship with Karen Horney.

The closeness to the Washington-Baltimore Psychoanalytic Society offered the opportunity to establish a new psychoanalytic institute. In 1936 Harry Stack Sullivan founded the Washington School of Psychiatry. Together with Erich Fromm, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, Clara Thompson, David and Janet Rioch he established now in 1943 a New York branch of the Washington School of Psychiatry which became in 1946 the William Alanson White Institute for Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis and Psychology (WAWI). Against the existing official politics the institute developed its own conceptualization: „It trains psychiatrists and psychologists in the theory and practice of psychoanalysis, and instructs teachers, ministers, social workers, nurses, and physicians in the psychoanalytic concepts which will extend their skills in their own professions.“<sup>25</sup>. In 1946 Fromm was elected to be the director of training and the president of the faculty.

#### **d) The trouble within the New York William Alanson White Institute**

Because of the illness of his (second) wife Fromm in 1950 moved to Mexico but continued to give clinical seminars and lectures at the William Alanson White Institute in New York. The charter of this institute – to train also non-medicals like teachers, ministers and social workers – of course was questioned not only by the American Psychoanalytic Association but also by the medical students of the institute. The discussion started in 1954 with the complaint of the medical students about the inefficiency of their training. In March 1956 a petition was signed by 24 physicians who felt isolated from members of other psychoanalytic training institutes because the William Alanson White Institute refers to non-orthodox theories and is training psychologists and members of other professions. They „respectfully request the Council of Fellows to reconsider the policy of training psychologists in psychoanalysis in the hope that they will be persuaded to discontinue the practice.“

Obviously the attack of the physicians was directed against the founders of the

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25 The „Nansen“ membership was establish similar to the „Nansen“ passport for political refugees that F. Nansen introduced in 1922 for Russian refugees without citizenship





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institute – Erich Fromm, Clara Thompson and Edward Tauber and their concept of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic training. Fromm reacted with an official statement in which he referred to the split from the Horney group and the reasons for developing their own concept of training. He attacked the physicians by stating: „The resolution just points the way to the conquest of the Institute by the spirit of conformity and opportunism, and if it were to win, it would be the beginning of the end...” (Erich Fromm Archives, Tuebingen.) After several meetings of commissions the petition of the 24 physicians finally was rejected on a fellow’s meeting on October 7, 1956. In her report of October 26, 1956, Ruth Moulton summarized:

„(...) The Fellows reject all written reasons given in the Petition which are based on prestigious opportunism. (...) The Fellows affirm the principle of the continued and permanent training of psychologists by the Institute. (...) It was suggested that we hold in mind that the most outstanding reason for our separate existence is our unique theoretical approach to analysis, based on the teachings of Sullivan and Fromm, and that our most important long-term goal is to develop this point of view, expand and enrich it.“

#### **e) The trouble with the American Psychoanalytic Association (APA) and the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA)**

The question of lay analysis was discussed in the United States much more rigorously than in Europe. Already the great discussion in the „Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse“ in 1927 is characterized by the restrictive attitude of the American contributors who sought only to acknowledge physicians as psychoanalysts and as members of the American psychoanalytic societies.<sup>26</sup> In 1932 the American Psychoanalytic Association (APA) was re-organized such that the local psychoanalytic societies with their own institutes were automatically members of the American Psychoanalytic Association. Only in 1946 was this automatism of membership replaced by a special routine of acknowledgment which also would prevent that lay analysts who were members of local psychoanalytic societies could become automatically members of the American Psychoanalytic Association. In addition all lay psychoanalysts who were not members before 1939 lost their membership in the American Psychoanalytic Association. At the same time the American Psychoanalytic Association was the only component Society of the International Psycho-Analytic Association (IPA) in the United States. Thus only one's membership in the APA allowed one to be listed also as a member of the IPA.

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted according to the William Alanson White Institute Newsletter, New York 8 (No. 1, Autumn 1973), p. 2.



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Fromm himself was a member of the Washington Psychoanalytic Society but not of the American Psychoanalytic Association (APA). Following his resignation from the German Psychoanalytic Society, with the help of Ernest Jones he became a member-at-large (i.e. without direct connection to a component Society of the IPA) in the International Psycho-Analytic Association (IPA). In 1953 Fromm discovered that his name no longer appeared on the International Psycho-Analytic Association's list of members-at-large, although he had never resigned, nor was he ever notified of a termination of his membership. Fromm wrote to Ruth S. Eissler, the secretary of the IPA during these years, about his status as a member. In a letter, dated June 11, 1953, Ruth S. Eissler informed Fromm that the old German Psychoanalytic Society no longer exists and that he is „listed as a member of the Washington Psychoanalytic Society, which is not in itself a Component Society of the I.P.A. but is an Affiliate Society of the American.“ In regard to his being a member-at-large in the IPA since 1936 Ruth S. Eissler advised Fromm in a letter dated July 27, 1953, that due to a change of the statutes of the IPA in 1949 members-at-large lost their membership but that a

„Joint Screening Committee of the I.P.A. and A.P.A. was established for the purpose of giving those lay analysts in North America who are not members of the A.P.A., and who had lost membership in the I.P.A. (...), the opportunity to be reinstated to membership. (...) All those lay analysts who used to be members at large in the I.P.A. and reside in North America have to reapply for membership through the Joint Screening Committee. (...) I am, of course, not in the position of anticipating the recommendations of the Joint Screening Committee. Personally, though, I would assume that anyone who does not stand on the basic principles of psychoanalysis could anyway not be greatly interested in becoming a member of the International Psycho-Analytic Association which adheres to these principles.“

This was a clear response attacking Fromm as not adhering to the basic principles of psychoanalysis. Fromm answered:

„I consider myself as sharing these principles, but the question is, how broadly or how narrowly the International Psycho-Analytic Association interprets them. It is also not quite the question of wanting to become a member of the International Association, but rather, of the reasons for being dropped from membership.“ (Letter to Ruth S. Eissler, August 26, 1953.)

## **f) The trouble with the Washington Psychoanalytic Society**

Only some months later the next trouble arose. The Board on Professional Standards of the American Psychoanalytic Association (APA) adopted a set of



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principles with regard to the teaching and training activities of its members, to be referred to as a Code of Ethics. Also the Washington Psychiatric Society had to cope with the implementations of this Code which would mean

„that any member of the Society who engaged in any training not specifically recognized by the American Psychoanalytic Association would lose both his national and local membership unless he desisted from such training activities. Members of our Society participate in training at the New York Medical College and at the William Alanson White Institute, neither of which is recognized by the American Psychoanalytic Association.“ (Letter of the Washington Psychoanalytic Society to its members, dated November 10, 1954.)

Fromm answered that he was teaching and training psychiatrists in psychoanalysis at the William Alanson White Institute in New York and at the Graduate School of the National University of Mexico, thus he had to expect to lose his membership in the Washington Psychoanalytic Society. Its secretary, Stanley L. Olinick, reassured Fromm in a letter dated June 11, 1955:

„To my knowledge, there will be no action taken by the American Psychoanalytic Association in the near future concerning unauthorized training. By the same token, neither does the Washington Psychoanalytic Society anticipate any action in the immediately foreseeable future.“

In January 1959 Fromm got a copy of the „Amendments to the By-laws“ of the Washington School of Psychiatry according to which Fromm as a non-medical could no longer be an ordinary member but only a „Research Affiliate Member“. Again Fromm started a correspondence and wrote to the Secretary of the Washington Psychoanalytic Society, Sidney Berman, to be informed about the consequences for his membership. Affiliate Members were not allowed to hold office and to vote.

Berman set Fromm's mind at ease by answering: „Actually, your status as a member of the Society is in no way changed and you share with us all the privileges of membership.“ (February 20, 1959.) The By-laws would not refer to him but to research clinical psychologists that were trained at the Washington Institute in the last years. Fromm's status „as a graduate of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute“ would „in no way [be] affected by the resolution of the American Psychoanalytic Association in 1938. This resolution mentions full active membership for non-medical analysts who were members of Societies prior to that time, or whose training was begun before that time.“ (Letter of Sidney Berman to Erich Fromm, dated March 30, 1959.)

By the same argument Fromm never became a member of the American Psy-



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choanalytic Association (APA) and lost his membership in the International Psycho-Analytic Association (IPA). Nevertheless, the Washington School of Psychiatry felt indebted to Fromm and, hence, never excluded him from membership although in general they practiced the restrictions of the International Psycho-Analytic Association and the American Psychoanalytic Association against their non-medical members and students.

If one looks to all these troubles Fromm had because of his own psychoanalytic approach, his being a non-medical psychoanalyst and a Jewish refugee, it is not at all surprising that from these very personal experiences Fromm was motivated to establish an international federation parallel to the orthodox IPA and thus enable to promote an organization of psychoanalysis which was not primarily interested in dogmatism, orthodoxy and bureaucratic standards but in the radicalism of psychoanalytic thinking.

This brings me to the last point where I shall speak about the goal of the IFPS according to Erich Fromm. Again I shall try to discuss this aspect from a historical point of view although I am convinced that most of the problems are still the same as 35 years ago.

### **3. The goal of the IFPS according to Erich Fromm**

Fromm never tired of emphasizing that the new International Federation of Psychoanalytic Societies should continue Freud's radical thinking. The question, however, is: What makes psychoanalysis radical? For Freud and for Fromm to be radical means to go to the unconscious „radices“ – to the unconscious roots of individual and social behavior. Thus radicalism of psychoanalysis can neither be secured by identifying with a historically given metapsychological framework with which one can understand unconscious strivings – as it was done by the identification of psychoanalysis with the libido theory and the identification of psychic energy with pregenital and genital sexuality; nor can radicalism of psychoanalysis be secured by institutionalizing the frameworks by which one can understand psychoanalytic findings – as it was done by „The Board on Professional Standards“ of the APA and by the IPA by „Screening Committees“ and through rituals of initiation similar to those for religious people who apply for membership in a church, not to mention the exclusion of non-medical psychoanalysts from membership and training institutes especially in the all powerful American Psychoanalytic Association (APA).

Rather, radicalism of psychoanalysis means to find ways and – as a matter of fact – to go to the unconscious strivings, motions, fantasies, ideas and so on. That is to say what defines the psychoanalytic understanding of human behavior



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and can secure the radicalism of psychoanalysis primarily has to do with the methods by which one gets in contact with the unconscious. Therefore, if one wants to define the essentials of psychoanalysis one has to focus on the methods and ways which were developed and one has to stress the openness for new methods and ways to the unconscious.

Fromm himself is a representative for those psychoanalysts who followed the classical paths of psychoanalysis and simultaneously discovered new ways and methods to understand unconscious processes. For him the classical methods for getting in contact with the unconscious are undoubtedly essential for psychoanalysis: the understanding of dreams as the *via regia* and of associations, the understanding of the symbolic language of dreams, fairy tales, myths etc., the interpretation of symptoms and Freudian slips, the awareness and interpretation of transference, counter-transference and resistance phenomena, the understanding of defense mechanisms and the understanding of character syndromes as structures in which psychic energy is canalized independently of actual behavioral requirements.

Besides these – so to speak – classical methods there are other approaches to the unconscious: to analyze language, art and literature, to analyze the ability for imagination (Rorschach, TAT, etc.), the analysis of one's handwriting (graphology), gesture, psychosomatic symptoms, bodily expressions, communication patterns and other individual expressions that may indicate unconscious dynamic forces and strivings. Fromm himself discovered another way to understand the unconscious by looking at the individual as a *a priori* related being. Doing this he became aware that in its ways of being related the individual is not determined by an inner drive but by the identification with the models of being related which are suggested by the requirements of economy, society and culture which are internalized by the family and other agents of society. This approach enabled Fromm to understand the individual as a socialized being and to search in the individual for unconscious strivings which were molded by the socio-economic requirements and thus are part of the social unconscious of this individual.

By his concept of „social character“ Fromm did find a new way to the unconscious „radices“ of the so called modern man by which he was able to understand why people like to be submissive and selfless in authoritarian political systems; to understand why in a market economy the deepest longing for is to be successful and to sell one's own personality in a very egotistical way; to understand why in a high tech society quantification and counting are the highest values and determine human relationships as well as what is called scientific method; to understand why the expropriation of our own psychic forces (like





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reason and love) in a marketing society leads to an ever increasing need for narcissistic compensation by ideas and acts of individual, social or national grandiosity. It is no wonder that Fromm with this approach to psychoanalysis felt driven to analyze society and political processes and to be engaged in political and social affairs. But all these phenomena are not only „social“ phenomena but deep strivings also of our patients and of ourselves as psychoanalysts.

By discovering this way to the unconscious Fromm himself tried to continue Freud's radical thinking. To look at the individual as a socialized being is Fromm's personal contribution to psychoanalysis and to the history of psychoanalysis. This contribution was not only neglected but also rejected by the orthodox psychoanalytic mainstream and movement. Thus Fromm's very personal motive to establish „an international association somewhat parallel to the orthodox one“<sup>27</sup> is to open psychoanalysis to Freud's radical thinking again.

According to Fromm both characteristics should determine the new federation: an *openness for new ways* in psychoanalysis to get to the unconscious roots of human behavior regardless of limitations by dogmatic preconditions, and the *focus on the methods and ways* rather than on the metapsychological frames of reference. With this aim in mind the process of „de-schooling“ of psychoanalysis can be stimulated and the foundation of a new federation of psychoanalytic societies can be justified – in my opinion not only in the sixties but also today.

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27 To push the question a rumor was invented that Freud himself would have changed his positive attitude in regard to lay analyses. In a letter addressed to Schnier Freud wrote on July 5th, 1938: „I cannot imagine how that silly rumor of my having changed my views about the problem of Lay Analysis may have originated. The fact is, I have never repudiated these views and I insist on them even more intensely than before, in the face of the obvious American tendency to turn psychoanalysis into a mere housemaid of psychiatry.“ (Quoted in *WAWI Newsletter*, New York Vol. 8, No. 1, Autumn 1973, p. 9.)