

**Russian Imageries, Berlin Sensitivities and Jerusalem
Realities:
The Establishment of Psychoanalysis in Jewish Palestine/Israel**

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Abstract

The paper examines the interplay between eastern and central-European intellectual traditions in the establishment of psychoanalysis in Palestine/Israel. A special emphasis is laid on the role of Russian and German speaking émigré` psychoanalysts led by Max Eitingon – Freud's "Helmsman" (Steuerman)– in maintaining the Berlin tradition in the Jerusalem psychoanalytic institute after its establishment and during its formative years. The historical perspective developed here points up the elective affinity which early Zionists professed to find in psychoanalysis' revolutionary nature. While juxtaposing the “New Man” of Zionist ideology and the “Freudian Man,” Hebrew nation-builders developed a particular image which shaped the reception of Freud’s followers in educational, medical and scientific circles in Palestine. Hebrew culture facilitated a particular hybridization between the “Russian Freud” – to whom constructivist-collectivistic aspirations have been ascribed – and the original “German Freud” – notorious for his individualistic and pessimistic *Weltanschauung*

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“Ich glaube wirklich, wenn man in so kritischen Momenten die Menschen einfach im Stich läßt, dann muß etwas passieren und dann ist man mitschuldig. Erinnern Sie sich noch: Es ist schade um die Menschen!”

Letter of Anna Freud to Max Eitingon²

Introduction

The migration of psychoanalysis and its reception outside the German cultural sphere is an important chapter not only in the historiography of psychoanalysis as a scientific discipline but also in the social and intellectual history of many European and non-European societies. Intertwined in the course of the development of the psychoanalytic movement and the creation of a psychoanalytical theoretical discourse are encounters between different disciplines and differing cultural and scientific traditions. The Russian revolutionists, the American psychiatrists, the British Bloomsbury circle, the French existentialists, and also the Jewish intellectuals in mandatory Palestine – each had its own version of Freud. Few chapters in the historiography of psychoanalysis are as densely packed with trans-cultural, political, institutional and ethical issues as the coming of psychoanalysis to Jewish Palestine -- a place that, albeit remote from Europe, bears some of the deepest scars of 20 century European, and in particular German history. Migration, separation and loss, continuity and new beginning resonate in the formative years of the Palestine (later Israel) Psychoanalytic Society. In this paper I would like to approach the history of the migration of German

² 19.5.1938 cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 154

speaking analysts to Israel as a particular encounter between East and West, between Eastern and Central European intellectual traditions.³

How are we to understand the elective affinity which early Zionists professed to find in Freud's theory?

In the historiography of the Palestinian Jewish émigré society, we find frequent discussions of the tension between, on the one hand, the cultural heritage and past of individual immigrants and, on the other hand, the tendency of Zionist ideology to construct a collective past. From the onset of political Zionism onward, the need to build a society with a fixed, distinct identity meant establishing a Zionist "super-narrative": a narrative capable of embracing and overshadowing manifold historical experiences, cultural identities, and ethnic sensibilities, which would still tend to emerge from beneath the surface. The Zionist movement, like most national movements, developed an instrumental relation to the past, attempting to give its followers the impression of a collective present and future through the construction of a unitary collective-mythological past. The image of the Jewish immigrant to Palestine itself served this purpose: the image was of a newcomer who had freed himself from the chains of an

³ This paper completes a series of publications in which I have explored the main ports of entry through which psychoanalysis gained a footing in mandatory Jewish Palestine prior to and shortly after the establishment of the state of Israel. See: Eran J. Rolnik, *Mit Freud nach Palästina. Zur Rezeptionsgeschichte der Psychoanalyse*, in: *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für Deutsche Geschichte* 27 (1998), 273–300; idem, *Von Wien nach Jerusalem. Psychoanalyse im Jüdischen Palästina*, in: *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Theorie und Praxis* 15 (2000), no. 3, 195–212; idem, *Between Ideology and Identity. Psychoanalysis in Jewish Palestine (1918–1948)*, in: *Psychoanalysis and History* 4 (2002), no. 2, 203–224; idem, *Psychoanalysis Moves to Palestine. Immigration, Integration and Reception*, in: J. Bunzl/B. Beit-Hallahmi (eds.), *Psychoanalysis, Identity, and Ideology. Critical Essays on the Jewish/Israeli Case*, Boston 2002, 141–176; idem, *Oedipus in Palestine. Psychoanalysis in Hebrew Culture*, in: *Zmanim* 88 (2004), 44–62 (Hebrew); idem, *Freud in Zion: History of Psychoanalysis in Jewish Palestine/Israel 1918-1948* (2007)(Heb) Am Oved Publishers.

oppressive past, one presented in terms that were in part historical in part abstract and mythic, and who could thus henceforth determine his own fate. Dubbed the "Second Aliya" and "Third Aliya" by Zionist historiographers, the double wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine following the turn of the century - first between 1905 and 1914, then between 1918 and 1923 - contributed in a decisive way to the ideological foundations of the Jewish immigrant community of Palestine under the British mandate (1918–1948). The mental and intellectual makeup of those who immigrated represented by and large the Russian intelligentsia. The transformation of utopian-egalitarian ideas and socialist myths from Eastern Europe into concrete schemas for action for the Zionist movement was one of the chief accomplishments of these immigrants. It appears that from the early days of spiritual and political Zionism the Freudian texts were identified and used as an intellectual playground on which the meeting between East European and Central European intellectual traditions could take place. Hebrew culture thus facilitated a particular hybridization between the socialist version of the "Russian Freud" – to whom constructivist-collectivistic aspirations have been ascribed – and the original "German Freud" – notorious for his individualistic and pessimistic *Weltanschauung*. The debate on the tenets of psychoanalysis took place at the watershed of two conceptions of psychoanalysis – an ideological-political conception and a scientific-therapeutic one. The division between these two facets of Freudian theory is far from clear-cut, and does not necessarily represent the congruency that existed between the cultural and the ideological discourses in psychoanalysis. Additionally, the medical-therapeutic discourse in psychoanalysis was strongly influenced

and shaped by the ideological leanings of physicians of the time. Freud's teachings proposed a perception of man which enabled both to disentangle and to reconstruct the boundaries of different discourses. Through psychoanalysis, certain practices in the fields of education and health were implemented, which were seen to serve different rational and ideological goals. The epistemological position of psychoanalysis, setting itself from the very beginning between the natural sciences and the social sciences and humanities, rendered it a desirable partner in a number of pedagogical circles. Thus, for example, beginning in the twenties, the field of pedagogy attempted to enlist scientific conceptions, or at least semi-scientific ones, for the ideological needs of the Jewish community in Palestine.

As early as 1920, we find **Ernest Jones** reporting to Freud about a conversation he had held with **Chaim Weizman**, in which the Zionist leader (who would later become the first president of the Jewish state) took pride in those "poor Galician immigrants who arrive in Palestine with no clothes but with one hand holding Marx's 'Capital' and in the other, Freud's 'Interpretation of Dreams'".⁴

Yet the peculiar hybridization between psychoanalysis and Zionism could only take place in the presence of a handful of Freudians, whose own personal and intellectual biographies positioned them at the crossroad between these two movements. In Vienna it was **Sigfried Bernfeld** whose work pointed to the possibilities offered to Jewish youth through a fusion of the ideas of Marx and Freud. Bernfeld's doctrine had a particularly

⁴ Jones 7. 12 .1920 in: Wittenberger, G., Toegel, C., eds. (1999), *Die Rundbriefe des "Geheimen Komitees"*. Tübingen: edition diskord.

strong influence on the ideology of the Zionist-socialist youth organization *Hashomer Hazair*. But even the presence of psychoanalytic pioneers like **David Eder** and **Dorian Feigenbaum** who formed the first psychoanalytic study group in Jerusalem did not blossom into the foundation of a local psychoanalytical society. In 1924, a short period before Eder and Feigenbaum left Palestine, the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* published a review article on psychoanalysis in Palestine in which the author anonymously declared that:

"in certain quarters (especially among the young immigrants) there is a tendency to introduce so-called 'psychoanalysis' far too carelessly, and in a 'fashionable' and vulgarized form. This, quite obviously, is doing harm, and it is most necessary that psychoanalysis should interfere in the direction of correct exposition and, above all, in checking this injurious growth."⁵

In order that the comparison between the individual's sick soul and the plight of the Jewish collective would not rest only within metaphorical boundaries, a scientific connection had to be found between the private and the public spheres, between the sickness of the individual and that of the collective. A case in point is the choice of *Group Psychology and Ego Analysis* (1921) as the first of Freud's essays that was translated into Hebrew as early as 1928. An essay utilizing positivist terms of drive to describe the process by which the individual becomes attached to society, it seemed to cater to the needs of the educators in Palestine. The individual was recognized only when he represented the desire to unite with the group members' and to improve the group's cohesion. As one of the reviews written in honor of the new translation claimed: "A reading of this work is recommended, especially for those who take part in

⁵ *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. V, (1924) p. 414

nationalist propaganda and in the dissemination of new ideas”.⁶ Next to appear in Hebrew was *Totem and Tabu* only this time a bewildered Freud received a letter from his enthusiastic Hebrew translator informing him that he found it necessary to supplement the Hebrew translation with dozens of footnotes that base Freud’s text on Biblical and Talmudic literature in order to “strengthen and verify your claims, and to occasionally show them in a new light.”⁷ Many of the writers had a fondness for the question of the relation between the Jewish origins of the creator of psychoanalysis and his teachings. Some even went so far as to claim that his concept of repression should be viewed as an acknowledgment of his faith. An especially hysterical article by **Ben-Shalom**, a celebrated Hebrew poet, coinciding with the appearance of the Hebrew translation of *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, claimed the “repressed Jewishness” of Freud was at the basis of his theory, and that “the secret” of Freud’s life and work is the secret of all assimilated Jews in Berlin and Vienna.⁸ These harsh words were written at the height of the Second World War, at a time when many of the leaders and prominent thinkers of the Jewish settlement in Palestine found it difficult to renounce their ambivalent attitude towards immigrants from Central Europe, and found it necessary to express, together with their empathy and solidarity, their reproach of the assimilation of German-speaking Jewry in the cultural life of Germany. The brunt of the rage of Freud’s readers during the war years was directed towards Freud’s most recent major work, *Moses and Monotheism*, which provided the ultimate proof for readers in

⁶ Strikovsky (1928) cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 252

⁷ Dwois to Freud 30.11.1938 cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 260

⁸ Ben-Shalom (1942) cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 269

Palestine that the creator of psychoanalysis had an intellectual agenda that was not the same as that of his Hebrew readers. There were enraged responses to the central thesis of Freud's work regarding the Egyptian origins of Moses, founding father of the Jewish people. In an open letter to Freud entitled "Sigmund Freud and 'Made in Israel'," the orchard owner Nachum Perlman attacked Freud's attempt to "cast our spiritual assets into the depths of the ocean and to open our spiritual affairs before the eyes of those entirely foreign to Judaism."⁹

A blend of enthusiasm, outrage and misunderstanding characterized the initial encounter between Freud and his readers in Zion. Allegorically, Passion and frustration also stood at the heart of the first clinical paper that came from Tel-Aviv and was accepted for publication in an official journal of the psychoanalytic movement. It was titled "An analysis of a Coitus Interraptus Dream".¹⁰ In fact, dreams of Jewish settlers in Palestine kept pouring into the psychoanalytic journals. Particularly revealing was the conclusion reached by one doctor from Tel-Aviv: The analysis of the dreams of his German and Russian speaking patients, who recently immigrated to Palestine, convinced him that they had an unconscious knowledge of Hebrew.¹¹ In Jewish Palestine the Unconscious was not structured just like any language. It was structured like the language of the prophets.

Some dispatches from Palestine were even sent directly to Freud. During the Arab riots a dentist from Berlin, who recently joined a Kibbutz, gave

⁹ Perlman (1939) cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 291

¹⁰ Jacoby, C. (1927), Analyse eines Coitus-Interruptus-Traumes *Int. Zeitsch. Psycho.* Bd. XIII, Heft 4 458-459.

¹¹ Velikowsky, E. (1934), Kann eine neuerlernte Sprache zur Sprache des Unbewußten? Wortspiele in Träumen von Hebräisch denkenden, *Imago* 234-239.

vent to his orientalist anxieties by writing to Freud and informing him that the Arabs were using telepathy in order to communicate between their villages. Freud cordially thanked the dentist for providing him with further evidence on the subject of telepathy - a secret passion which he was advised to suppress but could never really overcome.¹² By 1933 it was evident that local popular, as well as medical psychoanalytic discourse is in desperate need of senior psychoanalytic luminary that would prevent its deterioration into a cultural curiosity.

Max Eitingon's decision to immigrate to Palestine came as a complete surprise to Freud and his daughter Anna. Eitingon's organizational and diplomatic skills, and especially his uncompromising loyalty to Freud, had rendered him Freud's helmsman ("Der Steuerman") since the early 1920's. In contrast with many of the veteran analysts from Vienna or Berlin, who rarely managed to maintain the symbolic capital they had while they had worked close to Freud, the emigration opportunities for Eitingon were many and diverse. As Arnold Zweig claimed some years later: "Eitingon was among those few persons who arrived in Palestine of their free will."¹³ Although Eitingon tended to keep his intentions as quiet as possible, rumors regarding his planned emigration to Palestine took wing, and soon a chorus of objections was raised. To this, an unexpected voice was added: Albert Einstein attempted to describe to Eitingon his future in Palestine in bleak colors. The very thought of emigration to Palestine with the intention of taking part in psychoanalytic activity seemed to the physicist to be an entirely outrageous idea. With the large number of physicians emigrating

¹² Levinson to Freud 5.8.1938; Freud to Levinson 18.8.1936 cited in Rolnik, 2007 pp.78-79

¹³ Zweig, A. (1941) in: *Die Chewrah Psychoanalytith B'erez Israel gratuliert ihrem Praesidenten zum sechzigsten Geburtstag.* cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 120

to Palestine, the pitiable condition of the Hebrew University, and the tendency of Jewish intellectuals in Palestine to “hinder the development of others,” claimed Einstein, Eitingon would be likely deprived of his ability to continue with his psychoanalytic work, unable to take part either in private practice or in the academic framework.¹⁴

Soon after his arrival in Palestine in October 1933 Eitingon gathered together 6 of his former colleagues from Berlin, and already in his first month, he reported to Freud the creation of the Palestine Psychoanalytic Society. "New Groups' wrote Anna Freud to Jones after she received the news, 'used to be a pleasure. Right now they aren't."¹⁵ It is important to note that the founders of the Palestine Psychoanalytic Society were nearly all German-speakers from Eastern Europe. The mother tongue of **Anna Smilansky**, **Moshe Wolf**, **Ilya Shalit**, Max Eitingon and **Fania Lowetzky** (the sister of the Russian philosopher **Leon Shastov**) was Russian, and the many years they had spent in Germany did not weaken their ties to Russian culture and to the East European version of Jewish ethnicity. Eitingon did not count on the natural willingness of the German émigrés to adopt psychoanalysis, as though it were a Germanic spiritual asset, a “transitional object” which would help them retain their identity in the new homeland. Indeed, the repeated failed attempts to bring psychoanalysis to the Hebrew University could serve Eitingon as a reminder that the German model, on which the Hebrew University was founded and based, would hardly make Hebrew academe more receptive to psychoanalysis any more than German academe had been. The fact that over 30 percent of the 130 analyses which took place at the Jerusalem Institute during the first seven

¹⁴ Einstein to Eitingon 18.1.1934 cited in Rolnik, 2007 pp. 120-121

¹⁵ Freud, A. to Jones 7.11.1933 cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 122

years of its establishment were conducted in either Yiddish or Hebrew demonstrates the significant success of Eitingon and his colleagues in widening the circle of persons interested in psychoanalysis.

Eitingon's involvement as founder of the Berlin Institute and chairman of the International Training Committee enabled the immigrant analysts to foster a shared belief: They saw themselves as the rightful heirs of the Berlin Institute, whose activities, though much diminished, had now been transferred to Jerusalem:

„Das Jerusalemer Psychoanalytischen Institut ist ein direkter Abkömmling und, wie es sich ergeben hat, der Nachfolger des Berliner Instituts [...] Diese Stück Berliner Institut das hierher mitgekommen ist [...] bedeutet, daß auch ein guter Teil vom alten Geist mitgekommen ist, die Liebe und Verehrung für Freud, das „Orthodoxe“ Festhalten an seiner Lehre“.¹⁶

A great number of pictures and furniture, all belonging to Eitingon, had been transferred from the Berlin Institute to Jerusalem; the Berlin Institute's library, also mostly comprised of Eitingon's personal collection, arrived in Jerusalem in its entirety, as did the files from the Berlin Institute. These were only material aspects which assisted in constructing the self-perception of the founders of the Jerusalem Institute, which held that what had been halted in Berlin continued in Jerusalem, and that the Berlin Institute, although still in existence, had lost any connection with the psychoanalytic movement, both formally and conceptually. The rapid incorporation of the small group into the International Psychoanalytic Association, a process which under different historical circumstances might have taken years, was an important factor in the basing of this

¹⁶ Margarete Brand in *Die Chewrah Psychoanalytith B'erez Israel gratuliert ihrem Praesidenten zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*. (Eitingon Collection. Israel State Archive).

feeling of continuity, which was so crucial to the émigré analysts in their new environment.

The transformation of the Institute in Jerusalem into the offspring of the Berlin Institute had an enormous psychological impact on both the analysts and their analysands, who felt that they had succeeded in creating for themselves, under the tragic circumstances which had led to their arrival in Palestine, a Berlinean microcosm which would enable their acclimatization to their new home. Additionally, the formal organizational process (such as the immediate incorporation into the International Psychoanalytic Association) had desired effects in monopolizing and increasing the "symbolic capital" of these "Newcomers" from Central Europe. The analysts were not simply "soul doctors", or "agents of knowledge" – they were the embodiment of psychoanalytic knowledge itself. A look at the regulations they had formulated for the group reveals an unusually strict clause stating that "each member of the society who desires to give a public lecture on psychoanalysis must inform the committee and receive its consent."¹⁷

The rapid acceptance of analytic practice in Palestine necessitated the consideration of a number of formal questions such as the minimum fees analysts would charge their patients. It nearly brought Eitingon into a direct confrontation with the Medical Association, but at last a compromise was reached. It enabled the analysts to preserve the Berlin tradition and give, in cases of need, "gratis treatment".¹⁸

It seems that demographic changes are not a sufficient explanation for the considerable interest in that period in psychoanalysis as a therapy.

¹⁷ Statuten der Chewrah Psychoanalytith B'erez Israel paragraph 8 cited in Rolnik, 2007 p.124

¹⁸ Eitingon to Palestine Medical Association 5.2. 1936 cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 131

Clearly, as the composition of the population in Palestine changed, the number of requests to undergo analysis grew. Still, it is likely psychoanalysis held the promise that reality, however harsh and painful it might be, was never dissociated from one's inner world, and by familiarizing oneself with this inner world, and transforming it into something less intimidating, the encounter with reality would be easier, and the ability to cope with it improved. Paradoxically, in an ideological environment which tended to appropriate the individual's private sphere for the benefit of public interest, and at the period when Jewish reality was shaped by an essentialist fascist ideology which did not recognize the dynamic concept of the "mind", psychoanalysis offered the immigrant the ability to reexamine the borders between inside and out, between his inner world and the reality outside of it. Interestingly enough, yet in line with the reaction of most psychoanalysts during these days, neither the encounter with murderous anti-Semitism nor the theme of emigration as specific stress factors, were acknowledged openly, or reflected upon analytically during the years of the war. The only exception to the silencing of these themes is a paper titled "Emigration and Neurosis" which the writer **Arnold Zweig** read in one of the scientific meetings held in Jerusalem. In this paper he expressed the view that much of the suffering of the Jewish immigrant results from the revival of the painful childhood experience of being excluded from the parent's bedroom.¹⁹

Ernest Jones, who dubbed the emigration of the Central European analysts "the third Diaspora", was concerned about the "notoriously rebellious personality" of the senior Berlin analysts. His letters to Eitingon

¹⁹ Zweig, A. "Emigration und Neurose" (Arnold Zweig Archiv) vorgetragen am 23.1.1937 in Jerusalem

and Anna Freud from the 1930s were replete with complaints about the "quarrelsome Central Europeans", who transposed their "petty battles" from Vienna and Berlin to London and New York.²⁰ Eitingon himself continued to serve as acting "ministry of emigration" for German-speaking analysts, even after relocating to Palestine. The few analysts who sought shelter in Palestine had to first present themselves to him so that he could evaluate their "level of suitability for the unique conditions of this country". Were it not for Eitingon's objections, two renowned analysts, Wilhelm Reich and Theodor Reik, who had roamed Europe during the 1930s, might well have arrived in Palestine as early as 1933; Eitingon had been concerned about the Communist leanings of the former, and the notorious rebelliousness of the latter. Reik did arrive in Palestine for a visit, and lectured before the members of the Palestine Psychoanalytic Society. Yet his critical approach towards Jewish customs and tradition was not only anathema to Eitingon himself, who had grown increasingly traditional over the years; it also threatened to jeopardize the neutral and unobjectionable public image Eitingon had attempted to foster within the Palestine group.

Analysts without medical qualifications ("lay analysts"), or those who preferred working with children, could enjoy particularly favorable conditions if they chose Palestine. After all, political Zionism stressed the privileged role of educators and social workers in the construction of the "New Jew", and the field of "Mental Hygiene", as it was called back then, was crying out for psychologically minded professionals who could withstand the ideological pressures. But apart from a few singular cases,

²⁰ Jones to Eitingon 3.7.1934; 23.3.1938 cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 154, p. 158

the psychoanalysts from Central Europe chose Palestine only after their attempts to migrate elsewhere had failed. Jones, aware of Eitingon's disappointment, attempted in his British fashion to console him: "we are all waiting here in anticipation of Hitler's speech this evening. I hope we won't soon be obliged to seek shelter in Palestine."²¹

Anna Freud was extremely interested in the fate of the group working in Palestine. Eitingon, practical and often reserved by nature, wrote her of his journeys in the country, of his memorable visits in the desert and to Petra, the intoxicating smells of the citrus trees blossoming and the excellent weather. Often he sent to Vienna crates of oranges or grapefruits, and received the report that "such grapefruits, unlike any sold in Vienna, even Papa devours with rapture, although he is forbidden to eat fruit." Anna Freud wanted to know whether the future of the Jewish nation in the "Land of Israel" would also affect the public profile of psychoanalysis and its development, and whether the connection to the land and earth would cause the Berlin analyst in Palestine to suddenly become a landowner, or even a farmer.²² The idyllic descriptions of the nature and the views sent by her old flame from Palestine echoed in Ms. Freud's heart:

"Last night I had a vivid dream of Jerusalem', she wrote to Eitingon, 'but it was a mixture of Vienna forests and Berchtesgaden. It looks as if my imagination can not go further than that'.²³

Eitingon himself at the time had nine patients in analysis. Some 50 scientific meetings were held during the years of the war. **Mosche Wolff**, a former cofounder of the Russian Psychoanalytic Society, who escaped to

²¹ Jones to Eitingon 12.9.1939 cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 143

²² Freud, A. to Eitingon 30.3.1935 ;30.1.1934 ;11.1.1934 ;4.4.1934 cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 126

²³ Freud, A. To Eitingon, 11.5.1934 cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 127

Berlin in 1927, was the most flourishing writer among the group members. He quickly established a small psychoanalytic court in Tel Aviv, called “the David Eder Psychoanalytic Institute,” which trained many educators and social workers for the pedagogic-analytic work with their students. The long-standing rivalry between Wolff and Eitingon nearly led to the breakup of the Jerusalem group. Somehow the small psychoanalytic society managed to at least maintain an image of solidarity even during those times in which a number of members had to face a disciplinary committee under the claim that they had strayed from “the classic Freudian psychoanalysis.” This was an accusation often hurled at one another within the society and which helped to revive certain rituals and memories from Berlin and Vienna. Moshe Wolff was shocked by what the analyst Fania Lowezky wrote (in 1950) in the popular newsletter for pedagogues *Mental Hygiene*, and he began to suspect that she instructed the kindergarten teachers she trained to “spoil the children.” Lowezky was made to appear before a special committee and to “prove that her theoretical positions did not stray from those of classic Freudian analysis.”²⁴

“Classic analysis” -- the watchword that keeps haunting popular as well as professional psychoanalytic discourse since Freud wrote his "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement" (1914) -- received a special signification after the migration of analysts from Central Europe and the closing of the two institutes in Berlin and Vienna. It seems to have been "hypercathected" by those who had been severed from their work environment, their language and culture.

²⁴ Shalit to Loewzky 9.6.1951 cited in Rolnik, 2007 p. 240

But regardless of how "classic" each and every analyst wished to perceive herself, in Palestine the old battles of psychoanalysis had to be fought on a daily basis. Strong opponents to psychoanalysis such as **Martin Buber** or **Gershom Scholem** had to be dealt with cautiously; Not a single critique of Freud's theory that appeared in the Hebrew press would be ignored; Financial and professional support was given by Eitingon on a regular basis to various welfare projects. And there were also the splendid Weimar-style receptions at the institute which helped Mira Eitingon survive the hardship of life in the Orient. Critical voices from within the psychoanalytic society begun to be heard: Die Analytiker, die hier sind, "privatisieren", complained one analyst in a letter to **Otto Fenichel**:

"Dr. Eitingon will die Noble Tradition von Berlin fortsetzen und die Gesellschaft in ein Noli-me-Tangere-Dunkel hüllen. Die sollen warten (Das Publikum), sie werden noch kommen, wir haben nichts zu tun, als zu warten. Jedes Popularisieren, d.h. jeder aktive Kampf, wird sorgsam vermieden. Daß man dabei wenig zu tun hat, können Sie sich vorstellen".²⁵

What the writer of this letter could not know is that years later Max Eitingon, who relentlessly targeted Wilhelm Reich's political activism in Berlin, would be identified as the main benefactor of the Palestine Communist Party!²⁶

By 1943, at the end of ten years of activity in Jerusalem, Eitingon could observe with much satisfaction the list of well-wishers on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. The praises for the pupil of Freud were voiced by representatives of the many different and often opposing ideological and

²⁵ Golan (Goldschein) to Fenichel (not dated) in: Fenichel, O. (1998), *Fenichel, Otto, 119 Rundbriefe in 2 Bände*. Reichmayr, J., Mühlleitner, E., (eds.). Frankfurt, Basel: Sreemfeld Verlag. pp. 193-195

²⁶ Dotan, S. *Adumim b'erez Israel* (Heb.) 1991 pp. 385-387

intellectual streams. None felt threatened by the presence of the Berlin analysts, and no one considered psychoanalytic theory to be overly critical or subversive.

This point raises the question whether the price paid by the immigrant analysts for the establishment of psychoanalysis in Palestine did not entail the relinquishing of its critical aspects. Did the desire to ensure a wide consensus regarding the merits of Freud's theory in the collectivist atmosphere of Palestine bring Eitingon and his colleagues to steer psychoanalysis onto a pronounced anti-intellectual path, leading potentially to a narrowing of the horizons of the local psychoanalytic discourse, and to the danger of severing its connections from the cultural-critical tradition?

Thus, a paradox is revealed: on the one hand, in the collectivist social reality which existed in Palestine, the ability of the analysts to "retreat to the clinic" and to offer the individual the opportunity to recover his own private language and history was of primary importance. However, this very retreat to the clinic distanced psychoanalysis from critical intellectual discourse, where it could have contributed to the liberation of society from the utopist and Messianic elements it was creating and passing on to the younger generation.

The formative years of psychoanalysis in Palestine were thus caught up in a perpetual conflict. While popular psychoanalytic discourse worked ceaselessly towards defusing the social pessimism which was incorporated in Freud's works it was left for the Berlin analysts to safeguard the radical and therapeutic position of psychoanalysis. For quite a few immigrants it

offered an alternative perspective on questions which were otherwise ideologized and considered as self-evident by official Zionist ideology.

If the creation of psychoanalysis epitomizes not only the Genius of its founder but much of modern European self-understanding, then the coming of German-speaking psychoanalysis to Jewish Palestine -- its rapid infiltration into pedagogic, literary and political discourses and its rising popularity as a therapeutic discipline – could also be regarded as an essential element in the continues struggle of Israeli society to establish its collective identity *vis-à-vis* its multiple European pasts.

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