In the wake of the defection of the three prominent dissidents Adler, Stekel, and Jung, the first major political crisis and a portent of many more to come, Freud (1914) published a history of the “psychoanalytic movement.” Movement or science? Freud claimed for psychoanalysis “the right to be valued as a science” (p. 59), vigorously polemicizing against hostile critics and horrible heretics. Freud also conceded, that the young science he created was a “scientific movement [with] upheavals and dissensions” (p. 49). But upheavals and dissensions were not only scientific (chiefly about theories of disorder and at that stage, less about technique) -- they were political, over power and control of the organization and fueled by jealousies and rivalries. For the very notion of a movement is inherently political: it is a program defined by platforms and planks. Coeval with the birth of psychoanalysis, started by Jews, Breuer and Freud, another movement, the Zionist Movement, was being born, started by another Viennese Jew (with whom Freud would occasionally friendly nods on the same Berggasse where he lived and worked), Theodor Herzl. The first congress of the new movement was held in Basel in 1897 while Freud was busy writing his revolutionary The Interpretation of Dreams. The very notion of movement ipso facto implies the social and cultural soil upon which it grows. This is Rolnik’s guiding principle, the inextricable bond between psychoanalytic science and psychoanalytic politics.

Dr. Eran Rolnik, an Israeli psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and historian, has given us a splendid, thoroughly researched and book on the history of psychoanalysis as a sociopolitical movement against the backdrop a cultural and social trends in Jewish Palestine, from the end of World War I in 1918 up to the early days of the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Dr. Rolnik’s chosen focus is in part supported by Freud himself. Freud (1933) vehemently denied that psychoanalysis is a weltanschauung, i.e., an ideology, claiming for it the status of an impartial science. However, in that same lecture, while criticizing Marxism for not being a “genuine social science,” because Marxism claimed “that economic factors are the only ones that determine society” (p.
the oxymoron of a ‘social science’ has long since been laid to rest -- Freud also stated that “sociology, too, dealing as it does with the behaviour of people in society, cannot be anything but applied psychology. Strictly speaking there are only two sciences: psychology, pure and applied, and natural science” (p. 179). And once you admit sociology into the discourse about psychoanalysis, the “Jewish question” enters it with a bang: was and is psychoanalysis a “Jewish science,” given the Jewish origins of its founder and substantial number of Jews in the movement. Freud (1925) wrote: “My parents were Jews, and I have remained a Jew myself” (p. 7). For Freud so feared the label of Jewish science that he got involved with C.G. Jung, Horace Frink, and Ernest Jones to lend it Aryan respectability. With the Nazis label became libel, as “judisch-marxistische Schweinerei “ (Jewish-Marxist smut) (Fallend & Nitzschke, 1997, p. 95), complete with the public burning of Freud’s books on May 10, 1933 and the subsequent persecution and exodus of Jewish psychoanalysts from Nazi Austria and Germany and other lands.

While un-ambivalent about being a Jew, Freud remained ambivalent and self-contradictory about politics and psychoanalysis. Of course, there is nothing Jewish or political about the method of free association, repression, transference, sexuality, adult or infantile, in life and in neurosis. However, Freud dealt with psychoanalytic politics and power the way the Victorians dealt with sex: you did it, but the less you talked about it in public the better it was for the cause. In 1949 Jones, the man at the center of IPA politics for years, would declare: “[given] the terrific social and political movements and changes we have witnessed of recent years … the temptation is understandably great to add socio-political factors to those that are our special concern, and to re-read our findings in terms of sociology, but it is a temptation which, one is proud to observe, has, with few exceptions, been stoutly resisted” (p. 178ff.). In that spirit, official historiography written by orthodox psychoanalysts and other insiders on both sides of the Atlantic became a genteel and bowdlerized version of psychoanalytic politics as compared to captivating and informative writings by revisionist historians and Freud-bashers.

Dr. Rolnik is a breath of fresh air in psychoanalytic historiography: he steers a middle course between the official story and revisionism, e.g., Peter Gay or Jones vs. Paul Roazen Russell Jacoby, to give us a story that is alive and pulsing with passion and
that holds the reader’s interest from beginning to end. Moreover, the sweep of Rolnik’s scholarship, based on archival materials presented for the first time, does not stop at Zion. It is also a history of the evolution of psychoanalysis in Austria, Britain, Hungary, Russia, Switzerland, Holland, and America. And since politics still unite and divide the movement today, Rolnik offers an important lesson: as with philosophy, the history of psychoanalysis is an integral part of it as a body of knowledge: those who choose to ignore that history are doomed to repeat it.


It is a fascinating history in which the indisputable hero is the Russian Jew Max Eitingon. Trained by Eugen Bleuler and Jung at the legendary Burghölzli Psychiatric Hospital, the only one in Europe where psychoanalysis was accepted and practiced starting in 1896, three Jewish founders emerged: Berlin Karl Abraham who founded the Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft (DPG) in 1910, A.A. Brill, founder of the New York Psychoanalytic Society in 1911, and Eitingon, founder of the first psychoanalytic outpatient clinic and the first psychoanalytic institute in Berlin in 1920. Through Brill and Adolf Meyer, later the author of DSM-II, another student of Bleuler’s, psychoanalysis spread in the United States.

As re-traced by Rolnik, the fates of psychoanalysis in Europe changed drastically in 1933 with Hitler’s seizure of power, and here the anti-Nazi Wilhelm Reich became the
anti-hero and scape-goat. Freud turned hostile towards Reich in 1932 and in 1933, Eitingon ordered Reich “not to set foot in our institute so that were he to be arrested, it should not happen on our premises” (Fallend & Nitzschke, 1997, p. 69). While clearly a vociferous persona non grata, Reich one among a number of leftist Freudians: Bernfeld, Fenichel, Jacobson, and Simmel, vs. the conservative Hartmann, Waelder, and Kris. At year’s end Jones (1957) spoke from both corners of his mouth: “In November 1933 two official Nazi psychotherapists met [DPG members] Boehm and Müller-Braunschweig and told them [to implement] the exclusion of Jewish members from the Society.

Pressure in this direction increased, not unaccompanied by threats. … I presided at a meeting of the Society on December 1, 1933, where the few remaining Jews volunteered to resign so as to save the Society from being dissolved” (p. 186, italics added) – volunteered, indeed! In 1934 Freud, his daughter, and Jones were negotiating with the aforementioned DPG Felix Boehm and Carl Müller-Braunschweig to work out a deal to “save” psychoanalysis under the Nazis (Lothane, 2001a, 2001b, 2003). Eitingon had seen the writing on the wall in 1933 “volunteered” to emigrate to Palestine to become a founder once again: of Hachevra Hapsychoanalytit Be’Eretz Israel – now Be’Israel – the Israel Psychoanalytical Society. He had been preceded there by Moshe Wulff and other Jewish analyst émigrés from Russia, where Freud was first published by Nikolai Ossipov in 1908. Rolnik writes eloquently about the later trans-cultural bridges between the Russian-speaking “Ostjuden,” Anna Smilansky, Ilia Shalit, Gershon Barag, who promulgated a collectivistic “Russian Freud,” and the “yeckes,” i.e., the German-speaking émigrés, Margarete Brandt, Bertha Gruenspan, Daniel Dreyfus, Erich Gumbel, who were spokesmen for an individualistic “German Freud.”

As a stickler to detail I cannot help mentioning a few mistakes of commission and omission, slips of pen not unusual in book as complex as Rolnik’s, which in no way detract from the book’s importance. Anna Freud is alternately Miss and Mrs. Paul Federn did not teach at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute. He was Heinrich Zvi Winnik, not Hermann, my teacher in Jerusalem. Wilhelm Reich was not the director of the Vienna psychoanalytic Ambulatorium, only its vice-director -- the director was Eduard Hitschmann; from 1924 to 1930 Reich was the director of the Vienna “seminar on technique,” a psychoanalytic milestone. It might have been interesting to mention that the
philosopher Lev Shestov was born Yehuda Leib Isaakovich Schwarzman. Sabina Spielrein was not just a “young Russian physician” but a Russian-Jewish one. Her alleged “nihilism” was caused neither by an alleged “psychotic breakdown” nor to by any “destructive influences stemming from a romantic relationship” with C. G. Jung (Lothane, 1999).

The book should be translated into English and thus made available to an international readership.

REFERENCES


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