WILHELM REICH AND ANNA FREUD: His Expulsion from Psychoanalysis

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Abstract

Wilhelm Reich and Anna Freud: His Expulsion from Psychoanalysis.

This article describes the growth of hostility to Wilhelm Reich in the psychoanalytic community over his Marxist ideology and activism as well as disagreements over the death instinct. It describes the behind the scenes political manipulations between Ernest Jones and Anna Freud to effect the expulsion of Reich both from the Vienna and Berlin local psychoanalytic societies and from the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA). It describes Reich’s reactions to these events. Further it describes the pressure placed on other psychoanalysts to stop supporting him and also to the revision of history about the expulsion. It discusses the use of the term “crazy” as it was used in the psychoanalytic movement. Further the article discusses personality attributes of Anna Freud leading to counter-transference possessiveness to children and women especially patients. And briefly touches on the attitudes of both Sigmund and Anna toward sex and how this furthered the clash with Reich. It discusses similarity between Anna’s actions toward the Burlingham children and what happened to the children of Reich.

Key Words: political manipulations, Jones, pressure on analysts, revision of history, countertransference, Burlingham children.
This paper is about the history of the struggles between Wilhelm Reich and Anna Freud in the 1920s and 30s in the contest of the major ideological and political trends and events of that time. This struggle will described from a number of angles, both political and because of personality disorders, but it ended with the expulsion of Reich from the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA). I write from two perspectives. The first is that of a psychoanalyst who is attempting to interpret the available documents in the field. The second is of a more personal nature. Wilhelm Reich was my father.

In recent years, as people have died and can no longer promote censorship, a lot of history has come out in letters and biographies. Two books, for instance, have come out about Anna Freud, which I am using as my main sources about Anna’s personality and disposition. One is a biography by Elizabeth Young-Bruehl (1) and the other is called *The Last Tiffany* by Michael Burlingham (2). His grandmother was Dorothy Burlingham who became Anna Freud’s lifelong companion.

In the last year some new books have also come out in Vienna and Basel dealing with Reich: a) Karl Fallend’s two books, "*Wilhelm Reich in Wien*" (3.) and Fallend and Nitzschke (eds),
“Der Fall Wilhelm Reich”(4); and b) Fenichel Rundbriefe have been published by Stroemfeld Verlag(5). The Rundbriefe are ten years worth of correspondence that Fenichel had with a select few analysts from 1934-44. They came into my possession through my mother. Despite pressure I gave these letters to a publisher instead of burying them in the Freud Archives in the Library of Congress. Personal information concerning Reich comes from conversations with my mother and other members of the family.

Now I’m going to talk about my father. He was not a saint. He was a very difficult man but I am not going to stress that today in this birthday celebration. I became interested in the fact that here was a man who was enthusiastic, energetic, dedicated to psychoanalysis. He came to psychoanalysis almost immediately after his discharge from the army after World War I while he was still a medical student in Vienna. Reich eventually became the head of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Clinic. He also taught a seminar on technique from 1924-1930 at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute. According to sources cited in this article, he was well respected with many friends in the psychoanalytic community(3:45),(6). Richard Sterba (7) describes this community, which was extremely important to Reich, as unusually close - so close-knit that members, that is
younger people who came to psychoanalysis after World War I, often married within the group. Such was the case for my father and mother, who also became a psychoanalyst.

Reich, however, ran into trouble with his second analyst, Paul Federn. Nowadays we are very interested in transference and counter-transference. Although something was then known of transference, practically nothing was known of counter-transference. Federn, I believe, developed a severe counter-transference toward my father and ignored all modern rules of confidentiality regarding talking about one’s patients, instead, he spent years trying to get Freud to get rid of Reich, to get him out of the technical seminar, out of the clinic (3:195-202). My father complained to Freud about what he considered a persecution. Federn had no idea that there was any counter-transference involved. He considered Reich to be crazy and was trying to get rid of him. It might be noted here that Freud did not listen to Federn (4:250) till about 1930 when other voices, especially Anna Freud, were raised against Reich.

My father’s reaction to Federn’s persecution is interesting because he had two. First, I think he got quite depressed over it, although that’s not written anywhere. This I piece together from my mother’s remarks about a major depression
that hit my father in 1927 leading to a severe case of tuberculosis.

Second, after he returned from a Davos sanatorium he developed a very smart, brilliant, new technical innovation. It had to do with ferreting out negative transference in the patient. It seems to me what he decided to do, I don’t know if consciously or unconsciously, was to teach his analyst Federn how he should have conducted the analysis. Reich then wrote the book, *Character Analysis*(8). Approximately the first one hundred pages are about negative transference and how that has to be understood before you can analyze somebody. This is not so startling a theory nowadays. Psychoanalysis has gone so much into dealing with transference and counter-transference, that this idea is quite modern. But at the time the concept of counter-transference was quite revolutionary and not acceptable to the psychoanalysts.

Reich had a very creative way, I think, of handling what was really a trauma. This pattern of getting upset and then finding a new theoretical conclusion was a pattern in his life. His other restorative defense mechanism came about slowly at the same time: If excluded from a group, he would make a new group and make new friendships. During Reich’s
lifetime he made many new theories in response to setbacks and formed new groups. But I am ahead of my story.

Though Federn did not succeed in alienating Reich from Freud or from the psychoanalytic community, Anna Freud did succeed as I will relate below.

As Reich was losing the psychoanalytic group he became more and more involved first with the Socialists and then the Communists. Then as he was excluded from the psychoanalytic group he left Vienna for Berlin in 1930, forming a new community and support system for himself. (It has to be mentioned that by 1934 Reich was kicked out by the Communists and, as we all know, became a strong anticommunist in later years.)

He left Vienna in 1930 and went to Berlin. As he was becoming increasingly radical, the ostensible reason given for this move by him was that he was going to Germany to fight the Nazis. Vienna, however also was becoming increasingly fascist and he was potentially in danger there. That was probably one of his motives for moving, but he also was being squeezed out of the psychoanalytic in-group. This was a more personal and painful motive for moving. During the late nineteen twenties he was a very vocal communist. At the same time, many colleagues in Vienna were very
conservative, although not all of them. Some psychoanalysts were very left wing and radical. The Freuds, both Anna and Sigmund, however, were very conservative. These were difficult times, so Reich’s radicalism stood out. The Freuds, were very upset. They felt that Psychoanalysis would be confused in the public’s mind with Communism.

I have to tell you though that I really don’t know how much Sigmund was doing anymore by himself. His cancer was diagnosed in 1923. Increasingly, Anna Freud took over the running of the psychoanalytic organization. In 1932 my father wanted to publish a paper on the masochistic character. Freud absolutely refused to have it published because he said it was a Communist paper. But then there was pressure on Freud (4:35) and so eventually he said it could be published only if the journal published a rebuttal which said it was a Communist paper. Only because of pressure from people like Ernst Kris and Siegfried Bernfeld was this paper published in the Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse(8:208, 3:166). It is now republished in Character Analysis(8). I read it there recently and it’s a perfectly nice paper on masochism

What Reich did in that paper was attack the death instinct, a theory Freud had developed at that time. The Communists, of course, said that there couldn’t be a death instinct
because people’s problems are all the fault of society. So Freud felt my father’s attack on the death instinct was coming from a Communist point of view. Of course few theorists currently believe in the death instinct and when they do they have altered it considerably from Freud’s pessimistic formulation.

Reich’s paper was a perfectly fine psychoanalytic paper. But it was notable that Reich openly attacked a Freud theory in a paper. This was not the wont of the psychoanalysts. They tended to revere Freud and if they disagreed with him, they subtly changed ideas in later papers, while attributing their ideas to Freud. There is no doubt that in 1932 my father was no longer a member who was liked by the Freuds, and that he knew it so that he no longer hid his disagreement with them.

By 1933, there are letters now published(9) in which Anna Freud writes to Ernest Jones in England that Freud, her father, has no time for discussion and he just wants to get rid of Wilhelm Reich(9:59). I don’t know, as I said, whether this is Anna or this is Freud himself. But the correspondence between Anna and Ernest Jones leaves no doubt that Anna plotted to get rid of Reich and slowly convinced
Jones that this was the correct thing to do. She is particularly incensed that after Reich left Germany in 1933 he came to Vienna and gave a radical talk. She thought this was endangering the psychoanalytic movement (4:68). Anna’s point was that one should not mix politics with psychoanalysis (9:59). Jones, who first defended people’s right to have political opinions, slowly came around to Anna’s point of view. When, after meeting Reich personally, he liked him and faltered in his resolve, Anna spurred him on by revealing matters out of her analysis of Reich’s wife, my mother (9:60). Jones then began a vigorous campaign against Reich. He wrote The Danish government (9:59) and later the Dutch government (9:71) to warn them about Reich. And he as well as Freud wrote to the German Psychoanalytic Association, asking that they should dismiss Reich from membership (9:71). The fear of both Freuds and Jones was that psychoanalysis would be identified with Communism. Jones, after struggling with his British civil libertarian conscience, suggested that psychoanalysts should not be actively engaged in politics.

There can be no question that Anna or Sigmund also was in touch with Max Eitingon. In 1933, just after Hitler came to power, Eitingon (4:69), who was running the Berlin
Institute, wrote to Reich to stay away from the Berlin Institute as they don’t want Reich arrested on the premises. Eitingon conveyed this message to Reich, who as a courtesy resigned from the German institute. It should be noted that when Reich left Vienna in 1930, Anna told him he could not be a member of both the Berlin and the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, and thus by her request he had also previously resigned his Vienna membership.

This story of the voluntary resignation of Reich from the German Psychoanalytic Society, believed by most psychoanalysts, which I accepted in the original version of this paper, turns out to be totally false. Instead, in re-reading the Fenichel Rundbriefe (5:letter VIII)-- which I originally read in single spaced typed onion skin paper -- it becomes amply clear that Reich had no idea that he was dropped from the list of membership. He found it out when he read the brochure of the IPA on his arrival at the Congress in 1934. And, ironically he turned to Anna Freud for help, thinking it was something Müller-Braunschweig had created on his own responsibility. (The latter was the replacement for Eitingon.) For details of the story of how Reich was excluded, and then not informed, from the German Psychoanalytic Association see Fallend(3:224-225).
Now, there’s a whole long history that you can read (4: chapter 2) about what happened to the German analysts under the Nazis. There is some controversy whether the analysts cooperated with the Nazis. Nitzschke thinks that they cooperated. To put this whole episode into perspective, I am sure that Ernest Jones as well as the Freuds, thought, like Winston Churchill at that time (1934), that the Communists were the worse danger than the Nazis.

In 1934, there was one of those summer International Psychoanalytic Congresses in Lucerne, Switzerland. My father went there, all innocent. He was living in Denmark but was about to be expelled – how much Jones was responsible for instigating this expulsion is unknowable. He came to this congress and found out he was dropped from the membership list of the German Psychoanalytic Society. At that time, Anna Freud was on the Executive Committee and Jones was the President of the IPA. They told Reich that since he was not a member of the German or any other local organization he was not a member of the International. The by-laws stated that he could be a member. So that on a technicality, created by them in the first place, they kicked him out. They said of course if he joins a local organization he could come back. But then Jones had already met with all the
component societies and got them to agree that they would not accept Reich (letter VIII). Furthermore, the application of the Scandinavian Society was postponed, after they refused to be admitted with the stipulation that they would refuse membership to Reich. But then a year or two later, after my father had moved to Norway, when the Norwegians applied for membership as a local organization, IPA wouldn’t allow the new Norwegian organization into the International. Thus Reich could never become a member again (letter VIII). So, it was engineered. First they maneuvered him out of his local affiliated societies; then they told him because he’s not in a local organization, he’s out of the International. Fenichel, who had originally planned to make resolutions in defense of Reich, confined himself to procedural protests. When confronted at the meeting of a small committee to review Fenichel’s protest -- this committee comprised of Fenichel, Hartman, Wälder, Glover, Sarasin, and Anna Freud -- Fenichel was told that that Reich would be readmitted if people wanted him, but that he is not wanted. So it is better if Reich stays out of the IPA because of his politics and his disagreement with Sigmund Freud on the death instinct. Reich has combined these ideas into a theory of Sexecomy, they said, and the IPA will be blamed (letter VIII).
In reading the Rundbriefe it is clear that Fenichel had no idea that Anna Freud had plotted this scenario with Jones. She was able to stay totally in the background as just one of the group.

The aftermath of this expulsion is what I want to talk about. I was with my father that summer. We drove, in a circuitous way, not going through Germany, to Switzerland. We took a boat to Belgium from Denmark and then circumvented Germany. I had spent all summer with my father. He was in a perfectly good mood. He was having a very good time that summer. But after he was kicked out of the IPA, he went what my friends call “ballistic”. He was totally enraged, fought with my mother and fought when the children were around, I’m sure fought with all kinds of other people. He was really very upset. He soon recovered by using the effective coping mechanisms I mentioned above. First he made a new group for himself in Norway, a group which, in so far as they are still alive, remember him fondly. Second, he broke with the psychoanalytic barrier against touching the body, and developed more in the direction of “vegetotherapy” (which later evolved into bioenergetics).

To return to the history, what’s important is that the psychoanalysts who supported Reich -- Fenichel and an entire
group in Berlin and a lot of people in Vienna -- felt intimidated. They couldn’t say anything. They were afraid they would get kicked out too. I think this danger was rather real. Fenichel for instance in 1936 still felt treated like a prodigal son returned to the fold and was told by his Viennese colleagues “now you see that Reich is crazy” (5:280). My mother, for instance, was mysteriously denied membership in the German Psychonalytic Society when she transferred to Berlin in 1931—after she crossed Anna Freud’s wishes by rejoining my father. So, feeling helpless, Otto Fenichel solaced himself and expressed himself by writing the Rundbriefe. They didn’t have Xerox then so he would type out 13 carbon copied on a typewriter, on onionskin paper, and send them to all these friends who were left wing and Marxist analysts. These letters were very hush, hush. My mother was one of the recipients of the Rundbriefe. Many years later as she lay dying, a fellow recipient went into her closet and stole them so that it would not become known that they existed or who had received them -- both out of fear that their Marxist past as well as their opposition to organized psychoanalysis would be known. That is how frightened these ex-left wing analysts were to be known as having been part of the Rundbriefe. The thief, however, had a guilty conscience and confessed this to me and brought me the Rundbriefe in a shopping bag. That’s how
we rescued the papers. There are other copies, of course, but I had the most complete set.

Now what happened with the rest of the analysts? The left wing really was afraid that they too would be kicked out and lay low, but they had a secret cohesive group and the Rundbriefe. The rest of the analysts developed a conspiracy of silence. This story about how Reich got kicked out of the International is only in the Fenichel Rundbriefe. Otherwise nobody ever mentioned it. Nobody ever said what happened to Reich.

Then there was a revision of history. Ernest Jones wrote a biography of Freud and, in it, he says that Reich “resigned from the International Psychoanalytic Association” “Reich’s politics led both to personal and scientific estrangement” (10:191). But the expulsion was engineered by Jones himself! What is true is that after he was expelled and rejected and told he could not be a member because of his “sex-economic” ideas, Reich got mad and hurled at Jones that then he would be only a sex-economist.

Then analysts started stressing that Reich was “crazy,” and that was the real reason he was kicked out. It should be noted that labeling someone as “crazy” had been used in
kicking a number of other people out of the analytic community, including Rank, Rado, Tausk, and there had been attempts for the same reason to exclude Ferenczi. In fact at the very time that Reich was being expelled Anna Freud was laying the groundwork for getting rid of Rado (12:281-282).

Some analysts, with great hilarity, started a story going. It’s typical of Viennese humor. They said that Reich came to Lucerne and put up a tent right in front of the Congress and stayed there with his mistress. They also said that he carried a big knife. The truth is so mundane in comparison. Reich wasn’t in front of the hotel, he was in a campground. The woman wasn’t his mistress she was his common law wife. (My mother was in the process of getting a divorce and had left him.) He didn’t have money. He camped. It is necessary to have a knife when one is camping. They also pointed to his upset after he got kicked out to show how uncontrolled he was. Nobody ever mentioned all this to the children. We had no idea why he was so upset at this Congress. It just seemed he suddenly blew his stack.

Now over the years a number of analysts have come up to me; it’s so unbelievably impolite. They have this funny kind of look on their faces, sort of sheepish and they say: “He was really a great man. What happened to him? Isn’t that sad?”
Usually, you don’t go up to somebody’s child and suddenly say, “Your father is crazy.” You just don’t do that. It’s not polite. So there’s a kind of a pressure behind this. They have to do it. It’s compulsive. I think it’s guilt because they were all there at that Congress. They all knew what happened and nobody talked about it. And then they started the re-write of history.

I will just mention a few examples. Sterba, for example. He was a great friend of my father’s. There are pictures of them on a ski trip together, I think in 1931, and they’re having a great time(7). But he told Myron Sharaf(6:147) that he had trouble with Wilhelm Reich since 1927. So what was he doing skiing with him in the thirties? Sterba had immigrated to Detroit. In the 50s he came to New York to give a paper(12). The paper -- it’s printed in the Psychoanalytic Quarterly you can all read it -- told how Character Analysis was a very bad book. Sterba said you can already tell that Wilhelm Reich is paranoid by reading this book. Now why did Sterba have to do this? This was not a paper which would further psychoanalytic knowledge but it would reestablish him with the psychoanalytic community. Because he had been a friend of Reich, he was suspect. So, in order to be “in” with the European émigré analysts, who especially
in New York, were extremely close with Anna Freud, he gave this paper.

Another person who revised history was Helene Deutsch who wrote a biography called *Confrontations With Myself* (13) in which she gives a three-page paean of praise to Anna Freud (13:140-143). This book was published in 1973 so presumably written a couple of years earlier. Roazen writes in his introduction to the second edition of his Deutch biography (11:vii-viii) that Anna Freud put enormous pressure on Helene after she gave a plug in 1968 to Roazen’s book *Brother Animal* -- a book critical of Sigmund’s handling of Victor Tausk. And Roazen says this caused Helene to drop all contact with him for several years. In other words Deutch wrote her autobiography just a year or two after she was in serious trouble with Anna Freud. Thus it seems to me that the part of her autobiography that deals with Anna was part of her attempt to get back into the good graces of the in-group. Anna by this time had enormous power in the IPA and the American Psychoanalytic Association, especially on the East Coast.
Years later Deutch made up with Roazen and she gave him permission to see her letters and to write her biography (11). A totally different picture emerges of her relationship with Anna and Sigmund Freud. Apparently she was having a lot of trouble with Anna Freud and with Freud. It is clear that Deutch left Vienna and came to Boston in 1933, apart from the political situation in Austria, because she did not feel comfortable with the circle that Anna had established around Freud in his declining years. “What is good for Freud’s genius and his age and for Anna yielding herself up to the paternal idea, is becoming for others a mass neurosis” (11:288).

But in addition Deutch felt it necessary to distort history pertaining to Reich. Despite Deutch’s enormous reputation in psychoanalysis, I think she also felt “tainted” by her association to Reich and felt she had to re-establish herself. She had watched with horror as Rado was being squeezed out of the inner circle. Amongst other problems “Anna had not approved of the warmth of a memorial for Ferenczi that Rado had published in 1933” (11:281). This implies that Anna took exception to being friendly toward people who were “out” and this made her tend to “out” you too.
Helene also had expressed positive ideas about Reich. She had attended his seminar and not Anna’s held at the same hour. She had, according to Sharaf (6:152), “enjoyed and derived a lot out Reich’s Vienna technical seminar” though she thought him “a fanatic”. She even was one of the few analysts who met with Reich after he migrated to America. But in her autobiography not only is she very critical of Reich, which she might genuinely have been, but she writes that she herself initiated the technical seminar for the purpose “of discrediting his ideas of dealing exclusively with the negative transference in the opening phase” (13:157-158). But this can not be accurate, not only because she had stated she enjoyed it, but also because the seminar started in 1924 and Deutch was in Berlin that year. So I assume that in getting back into the in-group with Anna Freud, Deutch felt impelled to undo her disloyalty of almost fifty years earlier, by stressing that she had only been part of the Reich technical seminar in order to discredit it.

The last incident I want to talk about is when Sharaf and I were invited to the American Psychoanalytic Association in 1986 to attend a panel on the history of psychoanalysis. The children of Viennese psychoanalysts were asked to talk about
their parents. They invited the children of Reich, Siegfried Bernfeld and Ernst Kris. In the little talk I gave I mentioned how Robert Waelder wouldn’t publish Reich’s paper on masochism and then I went on. At the very end of the panel, Gutmacher, an analyst from Philadelphia, now deceased, a student of Waelder’s, got up and said, “Haven’t you left something out?” I said, “What?” I didn’t know what he was talking about. He said, “Reich was crazy. That’s what you’ve left out.” I realized only later that he did that because I attacked Waelder for not wanting to publish the paper on masochism. And this was a student of Welder’s. At the time I didn’t understand at all what was going on. When I reviewed the tape of that panel I was chagrined to find that, just when this incident happened, they were changing the tape, so there is no record.

Now why was everybody so worried about Reich? What was the atmosphere that they made them be so quiet and to revise history in order to disassociate themselves from Reich? The tremendous turmoil in Europe was part of it. The Nazis were in power, people were being arrested, the Communists were actively promoting revolution. So the psychoanalysts were scared. But there was also something going on in this psychoanalytic community. A period of orthodoxy had set in
by 1911(14) but in the late twenties and thirties the problems of orthodoxy had to do with Anna Freud, who was being groomed to take over the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society and then also the International. She was helped by Freud to consolidate her power. But Anna also had, shall we say, a personality disorder. She really had to be number one(1). That is, Anna Freud seemed to be a very retiring kind of person. Nobody would have known that she was so manipulative and determined -- that it was so important to her to be number one and to be adored by everybody. But if you didn’t coalesce around Anna Freud, you were “out.” For instance Sterba was “out” but all the people in Vienna that were “in”, were her great friends. When she got to England in 1938, this personality trait came out much more clearly. It became obvious to everybody, including Ernest Jones who had so defended her before. When Anna got to England, she found that Melanie Klein, her great rival in child analysis with whom she had theoretical and technical differences, was ensconced there and admired by all. Anna started the same thing -- that you were either loyal to her or you “weren’t an analyst.” This is what in subtle ways she had been doing in Vienna. But now she did it openly. Well, the British are much more devoted to democracy, and they didn’t want any of this. So a group coalesced around Melanie Klein and Anna Freud isolated herself in Hempstead with a small group of
loyal followers, but her real analytic "in" group was in the USA, the rest of the British became what’s called “the middle group”, they didn’t want to be part of this partisanship.

Now to return to how it had been in Vienna, I have to say my father was not a team player. He also had to be number one. There was bound to be a clash of personalities. The thing is that he didn’t understand that Anna Freud had to be number one. As I noted, she seemed so quiet and retiring. According to Fenichel, at the Vienna Institute there was a corridor. At one end, in a classroom, Anna Freud was teaching what later became the *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, while at the other end Reich was teaching what later became *Character Analysis*. They both taught at the same time, and you could not go to both. You had to go to one or the other. As these two books had very different approaches to the theory of character structure, one can see in retrospect that a spirit of partisanship over theory already existed in Vienna. This is why Deutch who attended my father’s seminar had to backpedal her respect for him in later years.

The idea that theoretical factionalism was acceptable was extended to New York in the 1950’s. When I was in training
in the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, Melanie Klein was just a bad name. She was not read and was looked down upon, while Anna Freud was considered the high guru. Now, Melanie Klein is being appreciated and looked at as a forerunner of the current object-relations theory which is really much closer to what’s going on in current psychoanalysis. Anna Freud is lumped with the ego psychologists and not much of her work is being quoted.

There were also hidden counter-transferences in Anna Freud which led to her wishing to get rid of Reich. Firstly, around Vienna Anna Freud was jokingly referred to as the “iron maiden” – a medieval torture device of a hollow statue of a woman who pierced the unfortunate victim placed inside her with iron spikes -- sometimes she was referred to as the “iron virgin.” She had no known sex partner at the time that Reich knew her. Some people think that later Dorothy Burlingham became her lover. However, others think this was never a sexual relationship, although they did end up living together. Anyway, what is known for certain is she never had a male lover. Now both Freud, at the time of my father’s membership in the psychoanalytic community, and Anna Freud, valued sublimation through work. You didn’t have to have overt sexual expression, you could sublimate this(1:107).
For instance, in *The Last Tiffany* (2:203, 208) it’s clear that Dorothy Burlingham yearned for her husband, yearned for sex. The Freuds worked very hard to keep Dorothy separated from her husband. And they said, no you can work hard and you don’t have to have sex. Freud said that to Robert Burlingham when Robert came to interview him. Anna Freud’s whole theoretical emphasis was on the defenses against the instincts. So, I’m sure, she felt personally attacked by Reich, who was saying that if you did not have complete orgasm you were neurotic, that incomplete orgasm was a source of neurosis. And here’s this woman who had no orgasms. According to Young-Bruehl, when Anna was young she had struggles with masturbation and so Freud took her into analysis about that (1:103-107). That is he actually analyzed his own daughter about her sex life!

By this time in his life Freud was very chaste, having given up his sex life at age forty when his wife balked after giving birth to six children. So Anna and Sigmund had very old-fashioned ideas about sex. Freud, however, had changed from earlier interests. According to the new complete letters of Freud to Fliess (15:44), when Freud was first married and having a lot of sex problems, he started speculating about a cure for neurasthenia. "The only alternative would be a free sexual intercourse between young
men and unattached young women...otherwise the alternatives are masturbation, neurasthenia...syphilis...in the absence of such a solution society seems doomed to fall victim to incurable neuroses”. So Freud’s original thoughts about sexuality and society were much closer to my father’s promulgation of teenage sexual freedom and the need to change society by liberating the sex lives of the populace. Though Reich and Freud never agreed on masturbation. By the time that Freud was in his 60s and had cancer presumably he was not so interested in sex. My father seems to have arrived at psychoanalysis too late.

Peter Heller talks about Anna Freud vacationing at Gruendlesee(16) in 1930 ( I also spent many summers at Grundlesee and I am not sure of the correctness of Heller’s date). She was staying at one end of the lake and, at the other end the younger analysts were having sex and sunbathing in the nude. Anna was very disapproving of that(16:337-338). Heller talks about Berta Bornstein having sex in a boat in the middle of the lake(16:340) So even though they were of the same age, one must guess that these young analysts were very different from Anna Freud.

Unfortunately for Reich, he arrived at psychoanalysis at just the time when the whole theory about sexuality was
changing, with emphasis shifting to the exploration of the ego. To Anna, Reich’s theories must have meant she wasn’t normal.

Another source of counter-transference by Anna to Reich has to do with Anna’s complicated relationship to her patients and to children. On the one hand Steiner(9) makes a good case for her maternal devotions illustrated by her concern for all the potential refugees (after the Nazis came to power) -- except Reich -- as her “Sorgenkinder”. On the other hand when Anna was not in the care-taking role, people were rivals. She also showed a great tendency to possessiveness of her analysands, especially children, and a tendency to separate them from rivals. In her own words, referring to two of her Burlingham child patients, “[I have] thoughts which go along with my work but do not have a proper place in it...I think sometimes that I want not only to make them healthy but also at the same time to have [my italics] them...for myself”(1:133). Unfortunately for the Burlingham children, despite this insightful statement, Anna enacted this desire, so that she ended up by possessing the mother and the four children, becoming their “alter parent” as well as their analyst(2). And Sigmund in his feeble state went along with this program. Anna Freud subsequently developed theories of child analytic technique which
emphasized that the child is not a grownup person so the analyst also educates the child and, in fact, does a better job than the parent. This possessiveness I am sure played a large part in her relationship to my mother who was her patient in 1927 (see below).

There are some similarities between what happened to my family and what happened to the Burlinghams. Anna Freud started analyzing all four of the Burlingham children at the same time that she was starting her close friendship with their mother. Both Freuds worked very hard to keep the children away from the father, Robert Burlingham, because he was “crazy.” He apparently had a bipolar disorder and so it was deemed bad for the children to have anything to do with Robert. To keep Robert away, Anna wrote to Robert telling him that his visits from America to his children had upset the children and he should stay away (2:201-202). At the same time Anna tried to convince the children that seeing their father was bad for them. Anna also got Freud to analyze Dorothy and they all went on vacations together, Freud, Dorothy, her children and Anna. It was very cozy, not at all neutral as psychoanalytic technique at that time required. When Robert came anyway, Freud told Robert that he, Freud, was helping Dorothy overcome her sexual needs for
Robert(2:203,208). The children never overcame their conflict about being separated from their father.

Unfortunately this story parallels what happened in my family. My mother was in analysis with Anna Freud in 1927. Anna was telling her to give up sex with Reich because he’s “crazy.” Anna told my mother not to have a second child. That’s me. I believe that Anna, privy to my parent’s marital struggles tried to influence Freud against Reich, just as Federn did. My mother defied Anna in 1931 and went back to my father, briefly, after they’d been separated. I think Anna never forgave her for this disloyalty and that my mother had to struggle ever after to stay in the “inner circle” of Viennese analysts.

My sister, but luckily not I, was sent to analysis with Berta Bornstein, who I figured out was in supervision with Anna Freud.(Though Young-Bruehl does not seem to think so.) There was nobody else who could have been the supervisor. My sister has told me that the analysis consisted of Berta telling her over and over that her father was “crazy”. That was the analysis. I remember when my sister was around twenty we -- my mother, Berta Bornstein, my sister and I -- were climbing a mountain. Berta Bornstein was carrying on, “Now you see that he’s crazy. Can’t you see?” My sister
finally spit at her she was so angry. But to continue the analogy to the Burlingham situation, Berta Bornstein wrote a letter to my father (unpublished 1934 letter from Wilhelm Reich to Annie Reich quoting Bornstein). In this letter she told him to stay away from his children, and not to write or phone, because it was interfering with Eva’s analysis. He, being honorable, naïve and not prone to manipulations, accepted that. He even said, “I don’t want to interfere with analysis.” This had a very deleterious effect on me as my father simply disappeared out of my life for several years. I had no idea why. This experience then also caused later separations.

To summarize then, Anna Freud had many neurotic, personal motives which impelled her to get rid of Wilhelm Reich and at the same time her personality made it difficult for other analysts to keep a more even disposition to Wilhelm Reich. Given the political setting of the time, it was impossible for these two individuals to avoid the clash that ultimately led to Reich’s expulsion.
REFERENCES


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