Psychoanalysis in Vienna and Berlin 1920’s to early 30’s: A contrast between two PsAn Societies.

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Abstract

This paper presents the political atmosphere and the consequent theoretical differences of the Vienna and Berlin PSAN Society and later Institutes in the 1920’s and early 30’s. (With implications for our later PsAn development), placed in the context of the post World War I Germanic world.

Psychoanalysis in Vienna and Berlin 1920’s to early 30’s : A contrast between two PsAn Societies.

Tonight I will talk about the political atmosphere and if I get to it the consequent theoretical atmosphere of the Vienna and Berlin PSAN Society and later Institutes in the 1920’s and early 30’s, with implications for our later PSAn development. I will attempt to place these differences also into the context of the politics of the post World War I Germanic world.
Freud was Born in 1856 in a monarchy that had been there for a thousand years. There was no tradition of a constitution, parliamentary democracy, or rule of law.

This is reflected in the organization Freud created. I am not condemning Freud so much as seeing him as a product of his times.

Freud surrounded himself with admirers. Loyalty to him and his ideas was paramount. Freud, as the inventor of PsyAn, perceived of it as his personal creation and hence he owned it. And later it was to become a family business.

There was little flexibility for new contributions. Time and time again Freud admired a follower and then felt betrayed when the follower developed ideas in PSAN not yet acknowledged by Freud. Such a person was hounded out of the organization, isolated after being an intimate part. A traumatic experience for many e.g. Jung, Rank, Tausk, Reich (I will come back to them later)

**In all these ways the PSAN organization that existed at the close of WWI resembled a sect.**
It was the requirement for loyalty and the fact that PSAN was treated like a family business that has left scars on the subsequent development that we suffer from to this day. The many splits in the dynamic psychotherapy movement, the separation of the many organizations, the fact that they each publish their own journals, usually not read by the members of the other organizations, has weakened us in the current climate of cynicism against PSAN by the so called more scientific branches of psychology.

WE now recognize the need to unite and the Alliance is part of that trend.

Two things happened in the early twenties. A whole new generation of admirers and adherents joined the movement but at the same time in 1923 Freud became ill with severe cancer of the pallet. Over the next few years, though he continued to create theory, he became less and less active in the organizational affairs of the PSAN movement.
It is the experience of this new generation of analysts I wish to explore.
I choose only Vienna and Berlin, though there were other centers for instance in Budapest and London.

There was no organized Institute of Psychoanalysis in Vienna till late in the 1920’s.

Edith Buxbaum, the analyst who with Douglas Orr started PSAN in Seattle, described the training in an interview with Dr Lawrence H Schwartz. (3).

The training was very haphazard, there was no requirement for a training analysis, and the candidates organized their own supervision if they wanted it and often the supervisor also analysed the candidates.

But these enthusiastic new recruits read everything they could get their hands on and attended every and any lecture that was open to them.

Attendance at Freud’s Wednesday evenings, for instance, was strictly by invitation. The candidates started teaching others as soon as they learned something. Eg. Fenichel, Reich
In contrast, as described by Michael Schröter (16), Edith Jacobson’s training in Berlin from 1925-1929 was organized with training analysis, lectures, and supervision. Of course the curriculum was much shorter than in present day and was enhanced by private seminars and lectures.

Despite this informal structure in Vienna there was a strict formality at the Freud’s home. Helene Ross (An American school teacher) (4) described with witty sarcasm, the air of formality and awe of the teachers at lectures held at the Freud’s house, where Mrs. Freud worried if the chairs touched the wall. And students, much subdued, felt a sense of awe if they were invited to these events at all.

**Freud over idealized new recruits and used them mercilessly** to run the clinic, the publishing house, the journals, then suddenly felt threatened by some deviation of theory and ruthlessly discarded them (My Own interpretation that this is a repetition of his relationship with his younger brother who died as a toddler) Otto Rank for instance was greatly prized and the suddenly extirpated for his theory of the birth trauma (later separation anxiety) and had to find refuge in America.
There was much literature created in Vienna that elaborated on Freud’s theories, but the candidates did not strike out on their own with new theories. Only in the late 1930’s when Freud’s health was severely impaired did some more original work arise in Vienna.

As Freud became less active new leadership had to be found.

Helene Deutch, was a well known Viennese analyst, who has written extensively on women and adolescents, was chosen for the future leadership. Though always complimentary to both Freuds in her published writings (2) she complained bitterly in her letters and in interviews with Paul Roazen about how she was treated. (12)

1) Deutch was in analysis with Freud, when one day he told her he needed her time so that he could analyze Dorothy Burlingham. Thus ending Deutche’s analysis abruptly, while Deutch did not feel ready. ¹

2) In 1924 Freud asked Deutch to go live in Berlin for two years so that she could study the system the Berlin PSAN Institute had developd for training candidates. (This was an organized curriculum, training analysis and

¹ Burlingham was a rich American who not only had four children in analysis with Anna Freud, but also became her closest friend and companion.
supervision and two hours a day donated to the PSAN clinic, analyzing patients for free.).

Deutch complained to Roazen that one could not say no to Freud. She was very discomfited because she had to leave a young daughter behind in Vienna. (Remember Freud employed his followers mercilessly to run his organization.)

3) After two years Deautch returned to Vienna to start organizing an institute. However only one year later Freud decided Anna Freud was ready to lead. Deuch was left out.

4) Later Deutch complained that Anna isolated Freud, surrounding him with a few favorite women analysts.

Anna Freud was more concerned with orthodoxy than Freud\(^2\)

but she also demanded loyalty to her self. This eventually lead to a happy IN group and a larger OUT group, in Vienna, who often tried desperately to become IN. (e.g. R. Sterba (17), Deutch (2)) There were also people who did not seem to care. e.g. Edith Buxbaum. Who told Dr. Schwartz that she

\(^2\) After World War II Anna Freud spent huge amounts of research time, with her team, following every concept Freud evolved through all his writing and coding them on index cards.
experienced Anna as “cold”. However Dr Schwartz stated that she regretted that she could not be analyzed by Anna and that she envied Ericson for this.

Anna (despite all her contributions to PSYAN) was an astute behind the scenes politician she held vendettas and pursued people for years. Unfortunately for her she left a paper trail of letters, faithfully preserved, that reveal her behind the scenes plotting. (4) (5) (9) (17) Not only did she pursue individuals but all analysts who seemed friendly disposed to that person. (6) (12)

It can be speculated that Helene Deutch, Edith Buxbaum, and Richard Sterba were OUTs because of friendly relations to Wilhelm Reich. Edith for joining him in going to working class neighborhoods with a van to help the working class with sex education etc, Later in 1937 Edith was arrested for three weeks for radicalism. Therefore lucky for Seattle, she circuitously immigrated to America. Deutch, I think, was an OUT for attending Wilhelm Reich’s seminar on technique rather than the seminar Anna’s held at the same time, (Though she later averred she only did this to critique the seminar). Sterber was a great friend and student of Reich’s.
Story of Reich

Wilhelm Reich found Freud by 1919 and became a member of the Vienna PsAN society by 1920. He was well regarded by Freud, one of the up and coming members of his inner circle. He taught a seminar on technique and worked for the psychoanalytic clinic, as assistant director and then director.

He and Anna Freud seemed to have a running competition for many reasons (see for instance (14)). It eventually led to her behind the scenes manipulation to have him expelled from the IPA1934. (6) They taught courses at the same time so no one could attend both; they worked on the same theme of how to adopt Freud’s new theories of the ego, id, and superego into analytic practice. Reich advocated incorporating this theory into practice by focusing on the “resistance” a mélange of defenses, compromise formations turned into chronic character traits and negative transference. His seminar on technique was well received. Anna took a much narrower approach focusing on the defense mechanisms in a systematic fashion.

Reich was very impressed by Freud’s libido theory and advocated for the “instincts” Anna was known to witty Viennese as the “Iron Maiden” or the
“Vestal Virgin” and stood broadly for the control of the “instincts”. When Reich in 1927 came out with the “Function of the Orgasm”-- a book he eventually had to publish himself in 1933, which based itself on Freud’s libido development, the most grown up stage being the Genital Stage —the book elucidated all the types of resistance to a true orgasm, listing all kinds of partial orgasms, and maintaining that only the non neurotic person could achieve this true orgasm, he must have touched a sore spot with Anna indeed.

By 1927 buoyed up by Paul Federn³ who had trouble with Reich’s challenging, provocative negative transference, Anna was able to turn Freud against Reich. In response Reich first developed a severe depression and a flair-up of tuberculosis, but then he found a new organization to belong to, the radical movement.

This was a New Sect for him.

After this Anna Freud and Freud attacked him and finally expelled him for his political activities.

³ On Fri evenings 1xmonth meeting with SF. 3 people were officials to be elected and 36 chosen. (This after some attempt at organizational structure was achieved) Reich was elected but AF and Federn got around the rules and Yokl served instead
Vienna, as well as Berlin was in Political uproar after WWI. In Vienna this was between Socialists and Christian Democrats, coming almost to civil war. Till 1934 when the rightwing won and civil liberties were suspended Reich was not wanted for his open radicalism. Though Muriel Gardener, a rich American heiress studying PsAN in Vienna, was acceptable. despite her avid socialist activities. (Lillian Hellman’s stole her story as “Julia” based on Gardener’s book “Code Name Mary”.)

The Freuds wanted to appear politically neutral but seemed to have supported conservatives. They therefore wanted to be accommodating to the Nazi’s even when the latter demanded the exclusion of Jews from membership in the German PsAN Society. This stance later led to disaster, ending with the co-opting of the PsAN ASSN into the Göring Institute, (a cousin of the famous Göring,) and the analysts were eventuality used to decide who would be killed amongst mentally disabled. (11)
In Vienna, when the Tripart training system was finally adopted by the late 192’s or 1930, to make sure only the RIGHT people could do a training analysis, the appointment of special selected analysts to be elevated to training analyst status was instituted. Thus establishing a hierarchy that has been with us ever since. Because the only criterion about who was selected was by who was OK’d by Anna, the lack of criterion stayed with us ever since --making for immense problems in many institutes.

In Berlin on the other hand all analysts who desired to treat candidates were accepted as training analysts. So even though Anna Freud wanted Reich barred from teaching courses he was a training analyst when he moved to Berlin in 1930. When Annie Reich went to Berlin in 1931 to be with her husband, Anna wrote Eitingon not to let her become a member. This caused a scandal which, with the help of Fenichel, was fought and won by Annie Reich.

The Berlin Society was led and influenced by Karl Abraham till 1925 when he died of a fishbone stuck in his throat. The Berlin senior analysts wanted to keep Abraham’s influence going and coalesced under the leadership of Max Eitingon. Loyalty to Freud and Anna Freud was very important to him.
Eitingon was rich from a family business and gave large sums of money to both the publishing house and the psychoanalytic clinic in Berlin. This money dried up in 1929, ostensibly because of the world wide depression.

However serious questions have been raised where this money truly came from (3, pg 244-254). Etkind, who researched the relationship between the Soviet Union and Psychoanalysis shows that Eitingon’s close relative, variously described as a brother, first cousin, or brother-in-law by the same name, was the head of the NKVD. It seems that Max Eitingon was implicated in some later conspiracies. It is suggested that the money, funneled through the Eitingon business, was really Soviet money. Special privileges of foreign fur trade were given to them at a time when no other company could get permission. During the early 20’s the Soviets were pouring huge sums into Germany for furthering a communist revolution and for spying, but by 1929 this stopped. Both, Stalin and Trotsky had contact with psychoanalysis, Trotsky had relatives in treatment, Stalin’s son was living in a psychoanalytic oriented group home run by Vera Schmidt, a Russian Psychoanalyst, later murdered by Stalin.
Berlin had a very diff atmosphere than Vienna. The older analysts led by Eitingon were very loyal to Anna. But the younger analysts were rebellious. They formed the Kinder Seminar (Children’s Seminar) where they met without the oversight and criticism of the older analysts and discussed and thought out ideas that Freud kept presenting. These discussions were held with great enthusiasm.

Being removed from Vienna these younger analysts were less concerned about loyalty and more genuinely enthused by ideas.

The left wing of the Kinder Seminar contained the Marxist analysts (remember this before disillusion with Soviet Union set in and only a few years after Russian Revolution) Started by Wilhelm Reich when he moved to Berlin in 1930. I Don’t know all the people who belonged to it. Some were Fenichel, Jacobsen, Annie Reich, Lowenfeld, and Gero.

When this group had to disperse after Hitler came to power in 1933, Fenichel started the Rund Briefe (round robin letters (6)), to keep the group intact. These were typed with carbon copies on onion skin paper, sometimes
20 pages long, containing political gossip of the PsAn movement, and reviews of articles of interest or controversy. These letters went on for 10 years till Fenichel’s death. They were highly secret because of the participant’s original Marxist ideology.

Having described the difference in atmosphere between The two institutes, and the greater intellectual freedom experienced by the Berlin analysts, I will now touch on some of the consequent theoretical developments

The Berlin younger Analysts felt freer to respond to Freud’s new ideas than did the Viennese. So that major advances besides Freud came from Berlin.

Freud was very inventive despite illness. His new theories, avidly studied in both cities, included the new structural theory and new anxiety theory, the death instinct and primary masochism, and a new heavy emphasis on the Oedipus complex. Furthermore he thought the superego was created by the smashing of the Oedipus complex, from castration anxiety and identification
with the father. Since Women were already castrated they did not form this strong superego. Although he later modified his concept of female development Freud’s emphasis on female penis envy became the predominant way of thinking of female development. Freud painted himself into a corner by asserting women had a less developed superego.

In Berlin there was some opposition to these thoughts. Karen Horney (8) chose to question Freud on his theory of penis envy, pointing out that females also had genital anxiety centering on fear of penetration; this could lead to secondary penis envy as a defense. She also argued that Freud’s view was phalocentric and appealed to men. In this way she dared to openly challenge Freud. She later paid for her deviation in New York, when with the guidance of Anna Freud the NYPSI expelled her. By this time Horney had had enough experience with the negativity to her that she gave up on Freud’s theories to a large extent.

Edith Jacobson questioned the idea that females had less superego, and Rado pointed to many early “superego precursors” in development. (10).
The role of the mother in mental development was underplayed in Vienna as the oedipal period was thought of as the dominant formative era of development. (Anna Freud for instance did not turn her attention to the role of the mother in infant and toddler development till WWII when she ran a residential nursery for evacuated babies and toddlers who were separated from their mothers)(7) Most Viennese considered treatable patients to be those whose problems centered around unresolved oedipal problems. They were leery of the “preoedipal”; unless it was a phenomenon of regression from an oedipal conflict. (In New York during my training in the late 1950’s “preoedipal” was often used in a dismissive fashion)

In contrast many in Berlin were influenced by Abraham with his investigations of the oral and anal phase. This led a great emphasis on the oral period and consequently the infant-mother relation. Even though Abraham died in 1925 his influence remained active.

Melanie Klein of course had the greatest emphasis on early phantasy in relationship to the mother which involved both aggression and destruction of the mother/breast and being persecuted in revenge by the mother /breast.
Bert Lewin, an American studying in Berlin, was very interested in the infant’s relation to the breast suckling and falling asleep but chose the positive side.

Sandor Rado a Hungarian living in Berlin, who later was excoriated by Anna Freud and made a person “non grata” in New York for forming the Columbia PSAN Institute separate from the control of the NYPSI, was the first to develop the concept of the good and the bad mother split. Together with contributors in England this was the beginning of object relations theory.(10 pgs 77.80-81)

When we talk of object relations theory, we mean the internalized concept of the object, not the actual relationship to that person. So Rado’s concepts surrounded the phantasies people had of their mothers, the split occurring because some kind of fusion and acceptance of the flaws and human failings in the “other” had not taken place. Instead there were two images, the bad and the good mother

Edith Jacobson And Melanie Klein, both contributed vastly to the ability of Psychoanalysts to treat preoedipal conditions, some psychoses
and many borderline and narcissistic states. Given the current practice in America we owe a lot to them, as the concept of analyzability as practiced in Vienna would leave us without patients nowadays. Edith contributed to object relations theory and Melanie reminded us of the struggles in the deep unconscious.

The most controversial of Freud’s new theories was the death instinct as a biological imperative. It was only as Freud was fading that Hartman in Vienna politely turned this into a dual instinct theory of aggression and libido, then built a whole ego psychological structure on this.

Melanie Klein was the most receptive to the death instinct. It fit in with her theories of the baby with its aggressive phantasies to the mother and then the fear of persecution.

Wilhelm Reich, feeling himself already on the outs, was able to voice his disagreement with Freud quite loudly. He disagreed with the death instinct theory blaming abusive life experiences in childhood that were eroticized with subsequent anxiety instead of pleasure from orgasm. (15
chptr. XI) Reich was always interested in the realistic experiences of childhood that led to certain character defenses. As a Marxist, he thought of man as essentially good and it was experience that turns him. Freud in his death instinct theory was actually saying that man is not essentially good.

Freud did not want Reich to publish his paper on Masochism in the International Zeitschrift on the basis that it was a communist paper. However a number of analysts intervened and eventually it was published with a rebuttal by Bernfeld.

With this summary I will end.

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