International Forum of Psychoanalysis, 2013
Vol. 22, No. 4, 195–198, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0803706X.2013.855817

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

EDITORIAL

German themes in psychoanalysis. Part one

At the IIIrd Meeting of the International Association for the History of Psychoanalysis organized in London in July 1990 by Alain de Mijolla, I had the good fortune to meet the American sociologist Edith Kurzweil and to read her fascinating book *The Freudians. A comparative perspective* (1989). A quadrilingual university professor with a personal experience of psychoanalysis, she based her book on her "participant observation" (H. S. Sullivan) of the life and trends of the major psychoanalytic communities of the time (New York, London, Paris, Frankfurt, and Vienna), having had her own life teach her to "automatically check translations and to compare cultural customs and phenomena" (1989, p. x). This allowed her to show not only how psychoanalysis is an internationally recognized (scientific) discipline, but also how its reception and development greatly differed from one country to another – not only because of different historical, social, and cultural conditions, but also because of a series of unconscious issues, of which psychoanalysts themselves were often not conscious.

In other words, Edith Kurzweil contributed to creating some of the necessary premises for the kind of international dialogue that we as psychoanalysts need even more than other professions, from which we can profit in a measure that we have not yet fully realized, and whose realization always was the priority of this journal – an international journal in English produced by an editorial board of non-native speakers. In no book about the international development of psychoanalysis edited according to the principle of assigning every single country to a prominent representative of it (see the anthologies produced by Peter Kutter in 1992 and Peter Loewenberg and Nellie Thompson in 2011), can one find the richness of information that Kurzweil was able to convey in her book – the most important things about a country usually being so much taken for granted by its people that they escape formulation, leaving one to discover them by oneself.

As far as Germany is concerned, these are the topics that Edith Kurzweil presented to readers, in the personal style described above, in the third part of her book, "Psychoanalysis since 1945," with sections on "Psychoanalysis after the Third Reich," "From Nazi practice to the New Germany," "German theoretical trends," "Anti-semitism and Realpolitik in the unconscious and the conscious," and "Mitscherlich's heritage." In other words, on the one hand Kurzweil covered a vast territory that I cannot deal with in this short Editorial, but, on the other hand almost 25 years have elapsed since the publication of her book, and several new topics need to be approached and presented to readers. Concerning the last 25 years, I actually share with Edith Kurzweil the feeling she expressed in her conclusion: "In view of the fact that German psychoanalysis was nonexistent in 1945, its strides during the last forty years have been miraculous" (1989, p. 314).

Here indeed are some of the more or less miraculous – both social and professional – progresses of the last quarter of a century: the fall of the Berlin Wall and the political *Wiedervereinigung* (reunification) of West and East Germany (October 3, 1990); the highly significant public exposure of the German flag on millions of German houses in the context of the 2006 soccer World Cup championships held in Germany, which was the final crystallization and first open expression of a positive feeling of national identity and pride since the end of World War II; and, as far as our own field is concerned, the new, positive relationship that eventually took shape at the 2007 IPA Congress held in Berlin between the German and international psychoanalytic communities, and the readmission of the German Psychoanalytic Society into the IPA at the 2009 Chicago Congress, after a similar long process of elaboration of the past and the attainment of a new psychoanalytic identity.

In other words, the process of triangulation that had not been possible at the IPA's 1949 Congress in Zurich (in which the international community had taken the side of one of the two German groups in conflict with one another) and which was not possible for many years to come, is now so advanced that we can eventually speak of "a German psychoanalysis" without fear of intending a phenomenon that is taking place outside the international community, as had been the case for the German analytic community between January 1933 and May 1945.

This monographic issue, under the title "German themes in psychoanalysis. Part one" – the first of two issues – not only intends to document and, at the same time, celebrate such a new phenomenon, but also reflects the "triangular position" that the author of this Editorial himself was able to develop in such a new analytic geography.

As readers will see, this is the structure of the interview I conducted with Horst Kächele together with Ingrid Erhardt – an Italian living and working in Germany (and a member of the DPG) talking with two German colleagues (an emeritus professor and an analytic candidate and researcher), with the Italian talking positively about "German psychoanalysis", at variance with the negative reaction toward it of all those German colleagues who – for good and understandable reasons – preferred for many years to see their work in our field in terms of the possibility it gave them to leave their German identity behind and/or not conjugate it with their analytic identity.

This is such an important chapter of the history of psychoanalysis in Germany that I must say a few words on it. At the first international psychoanalytic congress I participated in, in May 1986 in Zurich, organized by the Zurich Psychoanaytic Seminar, whose title was "*Institutonalisierung-Desinstitutionalisierung*," such a political topic was introduced by two papers given by Paul Parin and Johannes Cremerius. The German group was so caught up by the elaboration of the recently exploded debate over the so-called "Göring Institute" that it worked only in German (and not in English), and did not allow any foreigners to participate in its meeting. For years to come, the previous involvement of the German Psychoanalytic Society in the project of the "Göring Institute" to create an "Aryan psychotherapy" produced such massive feelings of shame and guilt that German colleagues would only talk about these facts among themselves – with less profit than they would have derived had they had the chance to open up their discussion to informed, interested, and empathic foreign colleagues.

As Werner Bohleber reports in his contribution to this issue of our journal, although the international contacts established by Alexander Mitscherlich (1908–1982) made it possible for many German psychoanalysts to gradually feel integrated into the international analytic community, only "in the 1980s the involvement of German analysts in the National-Socialist Regime eventually became a topic of discussion inside the German analytic community." It is no wonder that, in line with the crucial role of the process of triangulation that I am talking about, it was an American historian, Geoffrey Cocks, who produced the first reconstruction of the history and role of the "Göring Institute" in his 1985 book *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich*.

But the crucial development of the process of triangulation of which I feel a part has to do with the so-called "Nazareth Conferences" promoted by Shmuel Erlich, Mira Erlich-Ginor, and Hermann Beland, whose nature and evolution was described by them in the 2009 book *Fed with tears – Poisoned with milk*. It was only by talking about themselves and to each other in the context of the triangulating function exercised by the group, including Israeli citizens, that our German colleagues could eventually both elaborate their past and overcome the conflict between the "good" (DPV) and the "bad" (DPG) German analysts brought about by the above-mentioned Zurich Congress. This was also the dialogical and collaborative atmosphere in which the daily group meetings "Being in Berlin" took place at the 2007 IPA Congress in Berlin.

Of course, another important result of the process of triangulation I am talking about is the recent initiative taken by Werner Bohleber (2013) to eventually introduce the important work on "the scenic function of the ego" of the internationally unknown – but very stimulating – German author Hermann Argelander (1920–2004) to the international analytic community. As Bohleber wrote in 2010, Argelander's work, together with the work of Mitscherlich, Loch, Lorenzer, Cremerius, and Thomae, has not yet been adequately integrated into the identity of a psychoanalytic community that "was able to elaborate its involvement in the Third Reich, but not yet the holes in its psychoanalytic identity" (2010, p. 311). But now the international analytic community wants to know more about such an important tradition – which our German colleagues themselves ended up neglecting – and this may eventually allow them even to show its contemporary relevance. In the case of Argelander, Bohleber can thus revisit the original contribution to (German) ego psychology that he formulated between 1964 and 1974 in terms of its being a forerunner of the contemporary intersubjectivist concept of the analytic situation as a co-creation of analyst and patient (cf. 2013, p. 94).

Other products of the new climate I am describing are the August 2013 issue of the journal *Psyche*, under the title "Materials on the history of the relationships between DPG and DPV between 1945 and 1967," and the paper that our Munich colleague Angela Mauss-Hanke gave at the IPA Prague Congress about "Psychoanalytic approaches to what it means to be German today."

As far as the "triangular position," which I myself was able to develop as a member and, at the same time, as a participant observer of the life of the

German analytic community, is concerned, let me try to mention at least some of the colleagues who played an important role in such a development. I make reference not only to the authors of the papers published in this issue (see below), but, in the first place, to Michael Ermann and to Zvi Lothane, both of whom I first met in Stockholm in August 1991. Michael Ermann was not only the editor of the monographic issue on "Psychoanalysis in Germany," which we published in 1999, but also one of the colleagues with whom, through our common involvement in the life of IFPS, I could reflect the most upon many of our international experiences. Zvi Lothane was not only the editor of the monographic issue "Psychoanalysis and the Third Reich" (2003), but also an important model of my work as a participant observer of the German scene. Of course, I spent many hours talking about the nature of German psychoanalysis and its relationship to international psychoanalysis with both the members of my *Intervisionsgruppe* (Giulia Oliveri and Giulietta Tibone) and the colleagues with whom I share my *Praxis* (Heidi Spanl, Utz Palussek, and Tobias von Geiso), not forgetting my supervisor, the American-born and English-trained Bion scholar Ross Lazar, and my dear colleague and friend Ilany Kogan.

If I had to condense my *Erlebnis* into a few words, I could simply say that there are so many positive aspects or German psychoanalysis today that I wondered why our German colleagues did not better inform the international community about them. "Please, help us do it!," was the answer I got, which motivated me to prepare this monographic issue. In other words, very few people outside Germany know how much work it took for our German colleagues to feel (re)integrated into the international community; the same is true for a journal like *Psyche*, which goes once a month to several thousand subscribers. And this is not to mention several other points: that Germany, more than anywhere else in the world, is a country in which the history of psychoanalysis is such an important theme of research; that its *Kassensystem* still allows us to have three sessions a week with our patients and/or to treat patients who, in other countries, would not even consider starting a psychotherapy; that, in such a context, empirical research in psychotherapy could undergo a development that we could find hardly anywhere else in the world; and, last but not least, that a journal such as *Psychosozial* still carries on the kind of analytic social psychological research originally introduced by Alexander Mitscherlich and Horst-Eberhardt Richter (1923–2011).

In which with the concept of triangulation line inspired this monographic issue, I decided also to publish in it Harry Stroeken's article "The fate of German-Jewish psychoanalyst refugees in the Netherlands: An overview", and to place this after Werner Bohleber's historical overview of the role played by the journal *Psyche* in post-war Germany. As we, as clinicians, need more than one theory to treat all our patients, international psychoanalysis means that we can gain much from the feedback we can get from our foreign colleagues. Stefano Bolognini's 2010 book *Secret passages* also centers around these two important aspects of our work.

Ulrike May's revisitation of Freud's *Beyond the pleasure principle* is the English version of a paper published in the book edited by Ludger Hermanns and Albrecht Hirschmüller in memory of Gerhard Fichtner (1932–2012), together with Ilse Grubrich-Simitis, the doyenne of the work done in Germany in the field of the history of psychoanalysis in the last 30 years. The philological reconstruction of the creation of this central contribution of Freud's is the focus of the latest issue (Vol. 26, No. 51) of *Luzifer-Amor*, prepared by Ulrike May and Michael Schröter – the present editor of what I see as the most important journal in the field. As an aside, how many foreign colleagues know that Grubrich-Simitis, Fichtner, and Hirschmüller have already published two of the five volumes of the complete edition of Freud's letters to his fiancée Martha Bernays (through which we gain a fully new perspective on his early intellectual and emotional development)?

Hans-Jürgen Wirth (psychoanalyst, editor, and publisher) is also a protagonist of contemporary German psychoanalysis, whose socially critical voice he keeps alive through his papers, his journal, and his publishing house – as readers can see in the article he wrote after Fukushima, that is, after the German government's decision to withdraw from the use of nuclear energy.

As Horst Kächele is one of the best known German psychoanalysts, I do not need to introduce him. I limit myself to thanking him for the very rich interview he shared with Ingrid Erhardt and myself – rich in terms of both (new) information and (moving) emotion on both his personal and professional life, as a German psychoanalyst.

Unfortunately, the papers by Ilany Kogan (on the concept of "psychic holes"), Michael Buchholz (on conflicts and their reconciliation), and Horst Kächele et al. (on the empirical study of countertransference), which I had put together for this monographic issue, will, for reasons of space, come out only next year in "German themes in psychoanalysis. Part two."

In the meantime, I express the following hope: that German psychoanalysis will become as interesting for the international analytic community as it deserves to

be, to the point of making it desirable to have an anthology on it similar to *Reading French psychoanalysis* (Birksted-Breen, Flanders, & Gibeault, 2010).

The last three pages of this issue are dedicated to the XVIIIth IFPS Forum held in Mexico City in October 2012; a longer version of whose Report will appear on the IFPS webpage.

Marco Conci
IFP Coeditor-in-Chief

References

Birksted-Breen, D., Flanders, S., & Gibeault, A. (eds.) (2010). *Reading French psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge.

Bohleber, W. (2010). Psychoanalyse, Diktatur, Professionalität [Psychoanalysis, dictatorship, professional quality]. In: M.G. Ash (ed.), *Psychoanalyse in totalitären und autoritären Regimen* [Psychoanalysis in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes] (pp. 292–315). Frankfurt: Brandes & Apsel.

Bohleber, W. (2013). Introduction to Hermann Argelander's paper "The scenic function of the ego and its role in symptom and character formation." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, *94*, 313–336.

Bolognini, S. (2010). *Secret passages. The theory and technique of interpsychic relations*. London: Routledge.

Cocks, G. (1985). *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Erlich, H.S., Erlich-Ginor, M., & Beland, H. (2009). *Fed with tears – Poisoned with milk. The "Nazareth" Group-Relations-Conferences. Germans and Israelis – The past and the present*. Giessen: Psychosozial-Verlag.

Ermann. M. (ed.) (1999). Psychoanalysis in Germany. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, *8*(2).

Kurzweil, E. (1989). *The Freudians. A comparative perspective*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kutter, P. (ed.) (1992). *Psychoanalysis international*. Two volumes. Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog.

Loewenberg. P., & Thompson, N.L. (eds.) (2011). *100 years of the IPA*. London: Karnac.

Lothane, Z. (ed.) (2003). Psychoanalysis and the Third Reich. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, *12*(2–3).

Mauss-Hanke, A. (2013). Traces of National Socialism in German self-identity: Psychoanalytic approaches to what it means to be German today. Paper presented at the 48th IPA Congress, Prague, Czech Republic.