

## **REPORT ON THE XVII IFPS FORUM, “WORKING WITH CONFLICT AND ALIENATION”, HELD IN MEXICO CITY IN OCTOBER 2012**

The second week of October 2012 our Federation convened in Mexico City for the second time in its 50 years history, after the III Forum had met there in 1970. Had the 1970 Forum been organized by Erich Fromm (1900-1980), with the help of Aniceto Aramoni and Jorge Silva-Garcia, so was the last Forum very generously and efficiently put together by Aniceto's daughter Rebeca. IFPS meant and means very much to both of them, and this to the point that Aniceto Aramoni was able to give a paper at the Forum, before dying two months later at age 97. In fact, not only the Mexican Institute of Psychoanalysis (which Rebeca Aramoni is the dean of) joined her in the organizational work, but also her own family – with particular regard for her sister Minerva. Did such an organizational spirit allow the more than 300 participants to feel at home in such a big (and potentially alienating) place as Mexico City, so was also the choice of the congress site a good one, being the Hotel Meliá very comfortable and its location (Paseo de la Reforma) very central.

Having arrived in Mexico City on Friday October 5, I could revisit – a tourist for 2 days – both the center of town (with particular regards for Diego Rivera's murals), the Pyramids and – for the first time, on a tour organized for congress participants - the Madonna de Guadalupe Churches (an essential topos of Mexican spiritual and social life). Monday October 8, the IFPS Executive Committee (EC) worked the whole day (at the Mexican Institute of Psychoanalysis), Tuesday October 9 the Assembly of Delegates (AD) met and worked the whole day (at the Hotel Meliá), and Tuesday evening the Forum was inaugurated and its proceedings lasted till Saturday morning October 13.

The first topic of the meeting of the EC (at which Christer Sjoedin and myself participated as coeditors-in-chief of this journal) was of course represented by Rebeca Aramoni's report on the organization of the Forum, from which I extract the following information. Of the 300 registered participants, 200 came from Mexico (among them, many psychology students) and 100 from abroad, especially from Brazil. Such a number could basically cover the expenses encountered by the organizing committee. More than 120 were the papers being presented and 5 the main guest-speakers invited (Christopher Bollas, Franco Borgogno, Horst Kächele, Otto Kernberg, Bhikkhu Nandisena, and Irwin Yalom per skype).

The next point was the report of the Secretary General Agnar Berle (Oslo) - who had been elected to his position at the 2008 XV Forum in Santiago de Chile - whose office term came to the end in Mexico City. Besides mentioning the new contacts established by the EC chaired by him with new groups in Lissabon (Portugal), Theran (Iran), Cairo (Egypt), and Riga (Latvia), Agnar Berle was particularly proud of the work done in terms of the restructuring of IFPS and announced to us that the new Statutes including the new section of Individual Members were ready to be formally approved by the AD. Having the New York Postgraduate Society had to give up the idea of holding the Forum in 2014, the decision was taken to hold the XVIII IFPS Forum in Kaunas (Lithuania) in September 2014.

At this point of the meeting, Klaus Hoffman (Zurich-Kreuzlingen) gave his report on the work done by the IFPS Archives Commission chaired by him (and composed by M. Ermann, R. Funk, E. Frank-Rieser and M. Conci) : his first point was the organization of a panel on the first 50 years of life of our Federation to take place as the inaugural panel of the Forum. The material collected by Michael Ermann (Munich) at the Berlin central office of the German Psychoanalytic Society has been digitalized and all the material collected about the history of IFPS put in the researchers' disposal at the Reichenau Psychiatric Hospital (Germany). A problem to be discussed is what space to give to the history of our Federation on our web-page ([www.ifps-online.com](http://www.ifps-online.com)).

The second part of the morning centered around the presentation and discussion with the EC of the "IFP Editorial Report 2010-2012" prepared by the coeditors-in-chief of this journal. The EC expressed its satisfaction with the way in which the *International Forum of Psychoanalysis* was able to become a well respected journal within the international analytic community and to represent and further promote the pluralistic spirit of IFPS. The production of an English-speaking journal by an international editorial board representing a whole series of different countries (Sweden, Italy, Germany, Norway, Finland, Greece and Lithuania, the last 2 ones through the recent election of G. Maniadakis and Z. Paulasukienie to members of the board) makes it necessary for the board to meet in person twice a year, if we are to keep the very good qualitative level we have reached. Of course, the decision taken at the Athens Forum of October 2010 to guarantee to all IFPS members a free online access to the journal has further strengthened its role in the life of our Federation. We can also be very happy with our publisher Taylor and Francis, from whose websites (the publisher's own and the EBSCO-host database) we had in 2010 6.372 + 22.910 full text downloads. Through the PEP-disk (in which we have been included since 2004) came in the last year 4001 full text downloads. Last but not least, Christer Sjoedin expressed his desire to step down as a coeditor-in-chief after the 2014 Forum

– after having edited the journal as sole editor between 2004 and 2007 and with Marco Conci as coeditor-in-chief since the summer of 2007, and after having being a member of the board since 1991.

The exchange of ideas and plans between coeditor-in-chief and E.C. was followed by a short report by Sonja Gojman (Mexico City) on the plans of the IFPS Research Committee she chairs, included the organization of a panel at the next Forum.

After a coffee break the EC – whose work I am reporting in detail, so that all IFPS members are informed about it - dealt with Darius Leskauskas' (Kaunas) application to hold the next Forum in his Lithuanian home-town. Behind the proposal was the collaboration agreement reached by his group (the Kaunas Society for the Study of Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis) with the Institutt for Psykotherapi (Oslo), represented by Agnar Berle, and the Therapeia Society (Helsinki), represented by Jan Johansson. "Psychoanalysis and severe psychopathology" will be the title of the Forum and [www.ifps-forum2014.com](http://www.ifps-forum2014.com) is the webpage which was arranged later on, in the spring of 2013 – at which time came also the exact date, September 17-19, 2014 and the confirmation of the conference venue : the Hotel Park Inn, Radisson.

After the Kaunas proposal was approved, a proposal for the 2016 Forum was also considered and approved by the EC : to hold the XIX Forum in Rio de Janeiro (where it had been held in October 1989), as proposed by Angela Coutinho as a representative of the Iracy Doyle Psychoanalytic Center – after Rio will have hosted the next Olympics and the next Soccer World Championships.

After the lunch break, the EC dealt with the applications for membership coming from Lissabon, Theran and Cairo, and with the new composition of the Executive Committee itself, included the position of Secretary General, for which only Juan Flores (Santiago de Chile) was ready to candidate. Both topics belong to my synthesis of the work done in the AD.

About 30 colleagues met for the AD and worked together the whole day, Wednesday October 9. After hearing the above mentioned reports of Rebeca Aramoni and Agnar Berle, the Secretary General illustrated the Financial Report for the last 2 fiscal years : thanks to having increased the membership fee (for societies with over 30 members) from 18 to 25 Dollars a year (as decided by the AD in Athens, in October 2010), the decrease of income connected with the loss of the German Psychoanalytic Society (2010) could be partially reduced. In a situation in which not all societies had yet payed their dues for 2012, there were more than 130.000 Dollars in the IFPS bank account. In other words, it will not be easy to find the right balance between the need to spend money in order to expand, and the need to save money, in order to survive. Agnar Berle's Financial Report was followed by

Terttu Mäkinen's Auditor Report, who suggested to the E.C. to pay the greatest possible attention to the collection of the yearly dues from the member societies.

The following points on the agenda were of course the same I already dealt with above (IFP, IFPS Archives, Research Committee, and the 2014 and 2016 Fora), before we came to the also above mentioned topic of the change of Statutes (of the original Statutes formulated in Amsterdam on July 30, 1962). The change was illustrated by Michael Ermann ([michael.ermann@t-online.de](mailto:michael.ermann@t-online.de)), who (together with Christer Sjoedin) will coordinate the new Individual Members Section : according to the new Statutes approved by the Assembly of Delegates (in Mexico City, on October 9, 2012), IFPS now consists not only of full member societies, associate member societies, study groups and candidates of the member societies, but also of "individual members organized in a Section for Individual Members". Such a membership is possible for : 1) members of associated I.F.P.S. societies 2) members of former I.F.P.S. societies which have been dissolved or fused with another psychoanalytic society 3) members of societies which do not intend to join IFPS, but have an educational standard fully compatible to the IFPS standard 4) psychoanalysts who for the time being do not belong to a psychoanalytic society, but can prove that they are educated and approved by a training institute which fulfils IFPS standards. The AD also agreed on a membership fee of 50 USD (with free online subscription to our journal) and accepted Michael Ermann's proposal that the new body can also have its own 2 delegates in the AD.

I come now to the two further big topics which the AD dealt with : application for membership and constitution of the new EC. The AD agreed about having 2 members of the EC visit and examine the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy ([www.apppp.pt](http://www.apppp.pt)), founded in Lissabon in 2005, which applied for membership in IFPS. A long discussion was dedicated to the application of the Theran Psychoanalytic Institute to gain full membership, with the conclusion to accord only a Study Group status to it – as a compromise solution between the necessity to give our support, as an international body, to the attempt at introducing psychoanalysis in Iran, and the necessity for the group to satisfy our membership requirements. Founded as a group in 2000 by an Iranian colleague, Toraj Moradi, trained in the U.S.A., the Theran Psychoanalytic Institute could grow through the creation of a North-American supporting network of analysts (coordinated by Dr. Etezady, Philadelphia) which works with the Iranian group per skype. Apparently, there are many patients in Theran waiting for the possibility to undergo an analytic treatment.

At this point, I can come to the new composition of the Executive Committee. Juan Flores ([jaflores@vtr.net](mailto:jaflores@vtr.net)) was elected to be the new

Secretary General for 4 years (2012-2016), together with Valerie Tate Angel (New York, [vtangel@aol.com](mailto:vtangel@aol.com)) as his Deputy ; Michael Ermann, Klaus Hoffmann and Carola Mann (New York), already members of the EC, were re-elected for another 4 years. Both groups will work in the E.C. together with Agnar Berle (who will act as a liaison-officer to the journal), Sonia Gojman, Rebeca Aramoni and Miguel-Angel Gonzalez Torres (Bilbao), who were all elected in Athens (2010) to a 4 years term. As new Alternate Member was elected Eliana Pereira Mendez (Belo Horizonte) – an office to which Dimitrios Kyriazis (Athens) had been elected in 2010. As new Auditors the AD elected Gila Jimenez (Mexico City) and Darius Leskauskas. The chair of the organizing committee of the XVI Forum held in Santiago de Chile in October 2008, Juan Flores is also a former president of both the Latin American Federation of Associations of Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis (FLAPPSIP) and of his own society (ICHPA) and the director of a master program in psychoanalysis at the Universidad A. Ibañez of Santiago de Chile, whose contacts with a whole series of Latin American groups sound very promising for the life of our Federation.

Having the welcome cocktail of the Forum taken place after the AD on Tuesday evening, the Forum was officially inaugurated Wednesday morning, October 10, by Rebeca Aramoni, Agnar Berle and Christer Sjoedin – and with short interventions by Marco Conci, Arne Doske (Oslo), Romulo Aguillaume (Madrid) and Klaus Hoffmann. Agnar Berle presented IFPS as his own home for 50 years (having his own institute been founded in 1962), created 50 years ago in opposition to the International Psychoanalytic Association and now working in a parallel position to it, aiming to remain an important international place of meeting and exchange. Such an experience of personal enrichment and professional growth was also the topic of Christer Sjoedin's testimony as coeditor-in-chief of our journal, which was founded in 1991 by Jan Stensson (Stockholm) and is kept alive by the regular email exchange going on among the members of the editorial board. The inaugural session came to an end through a very moving video centered around Erich Fromm, the elaboration of the Holocaust and the work of Aniceto Aramoni presented by his daughter Rebeca, followed by – a very vivacious - typical Mexican music.

The second part of the morning centered around a panel on “The challenges of psychoanalysis in the XXI century” chaired by Valerie Tate Angel (and with Edith Frank-Rieser, Innsbruck, Annamaria Lojacono, Florence, Jay Kwawer, New York, Juan Flores, and Rebeca Aramoni as speakers) and the 1962-2012 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary speech given by Michael Ermann. A common thread of the panelists was the challenge of keeping psychoanalysis alive in a rapidly changing world, in which the new technologies not only bring us closer to each other, but also risk to endanger those values of individual liberty and

self-reflection which made the creation and development of our profession at all possible.

The very good (and moving) paper by Michael Ermann, "On working with conflict and alienation – The changing face of psychoanalysis and the development of IFPS" confronted us with both the original involvement of the German Psychoanalytic Society in the life of our Federation (which it had founded together with the groups led by Erich Fromm, Igor Caruso and Gerard Chrzanowski) and with how the new Section for Individual Members can help us construct our future as a Federation. Michael Ermann's paper will be published in a future monographic issue of IFP, "50 years of IFPS", together with the papers given in the afternoon panel sponsored by the IFPS Archive Commission, i.e. by Rainer Funk (Tubingen), Edith Frank-Rieser and Eliana Pereria Mendes, Marco Conci and Klaus Hoffmann.

Very well attended was also the master conference held in the evening by Horst Kächele (Ulm, [www.horstkaechele.de](http://www.horstkaechele.de)) under the title "Critical theory and critical practice for a psychoanalysis of the future".

Given the fact that I can only report about the events that I personally attended or heard about, my report will have to be rather one-sided, as far as the many scientific sessions of Thursday and Friday are concerned. These were the days in which most of the sessions of the Forum took place, out of a total of 7 master conferences, 2 symposia, 9 panels, 22 round tables, 1 book presentation and 1 case report, several of which with simultaneous translation not only into English and Spanish, but also into Portuguese. On Thursday between 8.45 and 10.30 there were 6 round tables and 2 panels, at which a total of 22 papers were presented. Here is a selection of the titles and authors of the papers : "Transference, perversion and enactment" (Tawil, Mexico), "The close link (of the soul) between Ferenczi and Winnicott" (Borgogno, Italy), "Reflections on the contemporary 'marketing personality'" (Kwawer, U.S.A.), "Emigration of parents ... and their children ?" (Leskauskas, Lithuania), "Weaning the breastfed infants in Iran" (Kiani Dehkodi, Iran), "Empathic communication and mirror neurons" (Garcia Montañez, Mexico), "Daughters and fathers in Freud's work" (Berman, Mexico), and "Psychotherapy for children in grief" (Romero, Mexico).

Between 10.45 and 12.30 further 2 panels and 6 round tables took place for a total of 24 papers, of which I can propose the following selection : "Therapy in the digital age" (Katzander, U.S.A.), "The clinical process and the cure" (Flores, Chile), "Psychoanalysis's implications in Cuba" (Diaz, Cuba), "Self-analysis and mindfulness" (Cordova, Mexico), "The transgenerational trauma" (Karamanolaki, Greece), "Primo Levis's concept of useless violence" (Buechler, U.S.A.), "Comparative analysis of the patients of the Mexican Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1980-2010" (Flores and Caravevo, Mexico), and "The non-psychotic denial of pregnancy" (Gomes Neuman et al., Brazil).

Thursday between 12.30 and 2PM the Forum participants could listen and ask questions to the famous pioneer of group therapy and successful writer Irwin Yalom, who could communicate with us per Skype from his office in California. It was very exciting to hear him talk about his background and about how he moved from writing about psychoanalysis to writing novels like the ones centered around Nietzsche and Schopenhauer (see *Why Nietzsche wept* and *The Schopenhauer cure*), with the aim – as he said – to reach out to the younger generation and expose it to the main concepts developed by our profession.

Unfortunately, I could not stay at the whole videoconference, because the Christer Sjoedin and I met with the Regional Editors of our journal (as we do at every Forum), in order to discuss our work and to plan any future issues which they might propose to us. Romulo Aguiillaume proposed to us a monographic issue on “Psychoanalysis and epistemology” and Valerie Tate Angel one centered around a conference organized by Eva Papaisvili of the New York Postgraduate Society and taking place in Freud’s birth-place Pribor (Freiberg) on August 4-6, 2013.

Thursday afternoon, between 4 and 5.50PM, 3 more panels and 5 more round tables took place, with a total of 24 papers, as for example the following ones, as far as the round table are concerned : “Femininity in contemporary focus” (Echevarria, Brazil), “Psychoanalysis and alienation” (Germano et al., Brazil), “Takeo Doi and Erich Fromm” (Carnevali, Italy), “Psychopathy, narcissism and violence” (Oñate, Mexico), and “Alienation, violence and drugs” (Souza, Mexico). As far as the panels are concerned, Sjoedin chaired a panel on “Psychoanalysis and current issues” and presented a paper on “Working with dying patients” ; Conci chaired a panel on “Gaetano Benedetti’s work with schizophrenic and borderline patients”, with papers by Peciccia and Bartocci (both from Italy) ; and Aguiillaume chaired a panel on “Psychoanalysis and society”, in which Gonzalez Torres (Spain) presented the paper “Nationalism, sexuality and identity”.

The day came to the end through 3 well attended master conferences : by Gabriel Rolón (Argentina) on “Psychoanalysis and globalization”, by Lidia Pérez López on “The art of loving” and by Franco Borgogno (Italy) on “The young lady who committed hara-kiri” (the case around which his latest book is centered).

Friday October 12 started out with the master conference “The concept of ‘I’ in Buddhism” by Bhikkhu Nandisena (Argentina) and went on with a case presentation and 4 round tables taking place between 10.20 and 12. The case presentation chaired by Valerie Tate Angel was very well attended, the case being presented by Rebeca Aramoni and discussed by Miguel Angel Gonzalez Torres. As far as the round tables are concerned, here is a selection of the 12 papers presented : “Prejudice and racism” (Saraneva,



Finland), “Denial of trauma” (Huff-Müller, Germany), “Luigi Pagliarani, a pioneer of Italian socio-psychoanalysis” (Morelli, Italy), “Gender conflicts” (Weber, Italy), and “From Freud to the relational model” (Vásquez, Mexico).

Between 12.30 and 2.30PM, Amparo Espinosa (Mexico) chaired the very well attended symposium on “The research of paranoias”, in which Aniceto Aramoni also gave a paper, and Valerie Tate Angel chaired the symposium “Bullying etiology”.

Between 3.45 and 5.35 2 further panels (with papers by Agnar Berle and Rainer Funk, Nora Sternberg, Argentina, and Marcela Ramirez, Chile) one round table on “Violence” and one book presentation took place – the presentation of the Mexican edition of Marco Conci’s *Sullivan revisited*, published by Amparo Espinosa’s publishing house Demac, and translated by Manuel Villalaz Aguilar.

The conference came to the end on Saturday morning, with Otto Kernberg’s master conference by the title “The chances of psychoanalysis in the 21th century” and with Agnar Berle’s closing remarks. It was very nice and rewarding to see what an important contribution IFPS itself can make – according to Kernberg – to the future of psychoanalysis, under the condition that we do our best to meet the challenges (reform of the training system, democratization of our institutes and empirical research) facing us.

Marco Conci -  
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