

Psychoanalysis and politics

A lecture by Prof. Helmut Dahmer
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Thank you for your kind invitation. I am delighted that you are attending in large numbers.

You know the topic of today. Over the last few days I simplified it a little in my script and simply called it "*Psychoanalysis and Politics*".

To be more precise, our topic tonight is the relationship between the various associations of organised psychoanalysts or Freudians and politics.

The letter of invitation from the organisers, as you have seen, is evidence of a great deal of uncertainty which is expressed in the question - and I quote it: "To what extent the psychoanalytical community" ... and now *three* questions come up: "*should, must*" and even more hesitantly, "*may*, deal with political issues and take a stand". Today's psychoanalytic community has inherited this uncertainty as well as the other one concerning the question, what the psychoanalytical project actually is. You can see this, for example, in the fact that the history of this community has been one of exclusion and dissent both during Freud's lifetime and afterwards. This disagreement about the question of "politics" and the related question of what Freudian psychoanalysis actually is has a history of 120 years. That history in my opinion has been a history of successive limitations and restrictions of the original Freudian project.

Let me give a historical example. The problem is evident in the so-called debate on world views (or "Weltanschauung") which was conducted by psychoanalysts – especially here in Berlin – during the agony of the Weimar Republic. The German contingent was the most significant section of the Psychoanalytical International, in the same way as for example the German Social democracy or later the Communist Party have been the most important sections of the international labour movement. The "Weltanschauungs-Debatte" was dominated by completely contrary positions, which, strangely enough, members of the psychoanalytic community did not seem to have noticed. If you read the report on the DPG conference of 1930 in Dresden, for example, you will find in the group of the speakers the whole political spectrum from German nationalists to communists with their corresponding, heterogeneous understandings of psychoanalysis. Müller-Braunschweig speaks next to Fenichel and Reich, Horney next to Simmel and so on. This debate of the question of "Weltanschauung" (1933) led to a schism amongst German psychoanalysts. The faction collaborating with the Nazi regime was opposed by the Jewish and socialist members of the community, who could only save themselves by fleeing the Nazis by emigration.

For the year 1933 at least three completely different positions on the question of "psychoanalysis and politics" can be distinguished. Let us begin with Freud.

In 1932-33 Freud had tried to keep psychoanalysis out of the looming European war of ideologies. Once again he explained, I think, in an unconvincing manner, that psychoanalysis was a natural science like any other, and as such it was essentially a criticism of Illusions, yet neutral. At least Siegfried Bernfeld, perhaps Wilhelm Reich as well, were

aware of this contradiction. And they then tried to relativise this interpretation of psychoanalysis as "scientific", "anti-illusionary", "but neutral".

In 1932, Freud broke off relations with the likes of Reich and Fenichel – those who may be described as the sociologising Freudian left. In the same way he departed from the radical bohemians with whom psychoanalysis had been entwined from its early days on. This is evident in Freud's correspondence with André Breton which can be found in an appendix to one of Breton's publications of the time, his booklet with the title *Communicating Vessels* (1932). Freud's relation with Breton was very different from his relationship with Schnitzler, whom he welcomed as a brother in spirit and with whom he developed a friendship – as distant as others of his friendships – that lasted a lifetime. Breton sent Freud his publications of the time, such as *The Manifestoes of Surrealism*, but Freud replied coolly: "Perhaps after all I am not suited to understand [your >surréalisme<], I who am so far removed from art. It is strange that the same Freud, who now refused to understand surrealism had written in 1908 the wonderful essay "Creative Writers and day-dreaming" ("The Poet and Fantasy").

A little more on Freud. In March 1933, Freud ignored the strong advice of Sándor Ferenczi, who had witnessed the white terror against the Council Republicans of 1919 under Admiral Horthy in Hungary. Ferenczi had written to him: leave Austria as soon as possible; the Nazis will come there too! If psychoanalysis were to be banned in Germany – and Freud had written: "It will be banned anyway" – he hoped by the spring of '38 that the Catholic Church, of all people, would prevent the worst under the government of the Austro-fascists Dollfuß and Schuschnigg. He reflected on this position in 1933 and 1938 – even if this was not the

time for irony – in his two "preliminary remarks" (of March and June 1938) on *The Man Moses and the Monotheistic Religion*.

What was his assessment of the general political situation? I think, extremely clairvoyant - unlike many of his contemporaries and students. This is what he stated in a letter to Marie Bonaparte from the summer of 1933. I quote him: "The world is becoming one big prison. The worst cell is Germany. What will happen in the Austrian cell is completely uncertain. In Germany I foresee a paradoxical surprise. They have started there with the mortal enmity against Bolshevism and will end with something that cannot be distinguished from it. Except perhaps in the fact that Bolshevism adopted revolutionary ideals after all, Hitlerism only medieval reactionary ones. Me being no longer very much alive, this world seems to me destined for near decline."

This is one of the many letters of Freud that have only been partially published to date. A final assessment of his political positions in the 1930s will have to wait until his correspondence is *completely* available, for example his discussions with Arnold Zweig or Marie Bonaparte.

The position of Freud's student Wilhelm Reich, who within the framework of the Communist Party had tried to mobilise the working youth for the fight against capitalism and fascism by means of lectures and pamphlets, was different. For Sigmund Freud, Reich was considered a security risk, and he had him excluded from the Psychoanalytical Association. In the autumn of 1933 Reich, who had by then fled to Denmark, published in Copenhagen the only noteworthy, psychoanalytically inspired critique of fascism that was published before the outbreak of the Second World War. It has been reprinted and commented on for some little time now by Andreas Peglau; this new edition is not Reich's later ("orgonomic") version from the 1940s, but the

original text from 1933. Reich's colleagues from the psychoanalytic publishing house, who, as they wrote, "with regard to the political situation" did not dare to print his textbook of psychoanalytic technique, *Character Analysis*, although they had already signed a contract with him. He wrote to these colleagues on 17 March '33: "The political reaction associated psychoanalysis with the term >cultural bolshevism<. Rightly so, since analytical science is a danger to the existence of fascist ideology. The sociological, cultural-political character of psychoanalysis cannot be eradicated or concealed. This could only harm the scientific work, but never prevent the reactionary political powers to scent the danger where it appears. [...] It is not the existence of analysts that has to be secured at any price, but that of psychoanalysis as research."

These testimonies (of Freud and Reich) are contrasted by the completely different and admittedly problematic testimony of Werner Kemper. Kemper was a colleague at the Berlin "Görling-Institute" of John Rittmeister, the head of the Berlin polyclinic who was killed by the Nazis in 1943 because of his membership of the resistance group "Rote Kapelle". In Kemper's "Self-Portrait" he presents himself in retrospect - and presumably with an exculpatory intention - as a politically naïve man who was surprised by the events of 1933. I quote Kemper from his "Selbstdarstellung": The "new world of the first Berlin years, which were filled to bursting, both professionally and privately, [...] captivated me and all of us [...] so much that we were hardly aware, well into the 1930s, of the warning signals of certain frequent events outside, in the distant world affairs. Until we were then – internally and externally unprepared – overrun by the events." So far Kemper.

Freud, as you know, escaped the Nazis in 1938 with the help of Marie Bonaparte and died in London in September 1939.

Reich reached the USA via Scandinavia in 1941 but soon got into troubles there and was accused of charlatanism and contempt of court in the 1950s. His writings were burned by court order and he died in prison in 1957.

Werner Kemper emigrated to Brazil in 1948 where he founded his own psychoanalytical society. He returned to and died in West Germany in 1975.

Looking back on the Hitler dictatorship since 1933, it can be said that the Nazis both smashed the most important international organisations of the labour movement (of the Third and the Second International) in Germany and forced psychoanalysts to limit themselves to psychotherapy. Eli Zaretsky sums this up in his *History of Psychoanalysis (Secrets of the Soul)*: “Psychoanalyses survived, but in a completely changed form. Its increasing incorporation into psychiatry in the [United] States was the counterpart of its destruction in Europe.”

There are currently about 12.000 organised psychoanalysts in the world, the German section comprising about a tenth of them. And for the sake of curiosity it should be mentioned that in Buenos Aires alone there are around 5,000 psychoanalysts. The intelligentsia is generally regarded as the larmoyant, criticising or sometimes protesting class. Apart from a few outcasts who as advisors, letter writers or commentators express themselves publicly, the Freudian section of the international intelligentsia has been an increasingly silenced faction for decades. Most psychoanalytic therapists do not see the burden of politics as resting on their shoulders. Instead, they see themselves as specialists, concentrating on the cultivation of their own therapeutic competence and the health of their patients. In that way, they recognise themselves as just as incompetent as anybody else when it comes to

politics. Where Freud understood therapy as a mode of cultural criticism and proposed far-reaching reforms in order to improve everybody's living conditions, psychoanalysts nowadays are more limited in their scope. Over the more than 100-year development of psychoanalysis the practising Freudians have moved from being scientists of the unconscious to therapists, who now only want to be therapists.

An instructive text on this matter recently appeared in the journal *Luzifer-Amor*, which specialises in the history of psychoanalysis, under the title "Do we need to change our image of Freud?" It was written by Ulrike May, who expresses the astonishment that she felt after reading interviews which Kurt Eissler conducted and archived in the 1950s with people from Freud's environment. These interviews have been available on the Internet for some years now. The author writes that Freud was an experimenter or researcher "whose work had curative effects only by the bye", and that this is exactly how he imagined his colleagues to be. She quotes a dictum by Hans Lampl from these interviews. (He is less well known than Jeanne Lampl-de Groot, whose correspondence with Freud was published in 2017.) Hans Lampl simply says: "Freud was not interested in therapy." And Ms. May states: "The post-Freudian shift in the focus of psychoanalysis to therapy, which took place worldwide, meant that an understanding of psychoanalysis that was oriented towards therapy and psychic alteration prevailed. Freud wanted to find out something general about unconscious psychic functioning. There is no getting away from that. And that is what makes the fundamental difference between him and us. We only use the theory for therapeutic purposes. Unlike Freud we have become therapists."

So much for the quote from *Luzifer-Amor*. What is astonishing about this text is that the author registers this pragmatic turn of post-Freud psychoanalysis – she even speaks of post-"Freudian" psychoanalysts (which I believe was a lapsus linguae) – without raising the question of why and how this momentous shift of emphasis occurred. But it was just this shift of emphasis that enabled the organised psychoanalysts to depoliticise themselves, that is to say to make their peace with the culture of inequality, superstition and massacres and to sink into silence.

Instead of simply accepting the version of Freud's Critical Theory reduced to psychotherapy, as its currently only accepted form, in the following I will recall the relationship between theory and therapy as it is with Freud, in the hope that I do not carry too many owls here to Berlin and into your circle.

Freud was indeed different. Not only did he, throughout his life, defend his new science of the unconscious in word and writing, but he confronted the public under all the regimes he experienced with non-conformist statements on central social problems: on war, sexual morality, religion and anti-Semitism. Let us listen to Freud again for a moment. In *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) it says: "In the restrictions that apply only to certain classes of society, one encounters gross disadvantaged and never ignored conditions. It is to be expected that these classes will envy the privileged their prerogatives and will do everything to get rid of their own overburden of deprivation. [...] It need not be said that a culture which leaves such a large number of participants unsatisfied and incites them to rebellion has neither the prospect of conservation nor does it deserve it." So that's Freud.

What was psychoanalysis before its revision? And what were the conditions for its reduction to therapy?

Both questions can only be answered considering the historical context in which psychoanalysis was conceived and the context of its post-Freudian development. First – and this must be stressed in view of the literature on psychoanalysis: it did not fall from heaven. It was conceived neither in 1750 nor in 1950, but in Vienna in the 1890s i.e. in a very specific historical situation. We can characterise these years as the turning point of a long-term development that began with the growing independence of individuals in the wake of the bourgeois revolutions. As we know, these revolutions served to create private property for a majority of the population, which over time led – as a result of competition – to a new form of dependence of this majority.

The society of small and medium-sized independent people – as we find it around 1820 in the United States as well as in the advanced countries of Europe – was transformed in the course of a century into a society of dependent employees. Their situation could hardly be reconciled with the traditional cultural ideal of an autonomous lifestyle. And this cultural conflict, which they had to bear with, drove many of them into "private religions" (Freud) or, since 1914, into new "mass-hostile mass movements" (Horkheimer/Adorno). As you well know, in Freud's model of the psychic stimulus-control apparatus the "Ego" is portrayed as a clown – Freud spoke of "the stupid August" or Clown – who desperately searches for ever new compromises between drives, desires, traditions and reality and always only pretends to be autonomous. The clown in the circus fascinates adults and children by always pretending that everything that happens to him – he is doused with water, he falls, he whines, he is beaten, he is chased and so on – is actually arranged and

staged by himself. That is the role of the "Ego" in Freud's structural theory of the psyche, and Charlie Chaplin's films "Gold Rush" and "Circus" gives us the best illustration it. I think that the social situation roughly outlined above has found its clearest expression in Freud's conception of the house of the soul and its inmates. At the same time, by the way, the contemporary consumer-oriented economy – the school of marginal utility – was conceived (by Menger, Böhm-Bawerk and Wieser). And if you read in their texts what the economically calculating individuals should, should not, must and must not do, you will see a figure that perfectly resembles Freud's "Ego".

Similarly to psychoanalysis in general, the therapy developed by Freud, has been described in the psychoanalytic literature since Freud mostly as a "technique". Why? Because Freud declared the art of puzzle-solving, which he developed in his *Interpretation of dreams*, to be a natural science. His revolution consisted in deciphering the novel diseases of hysterics and characters with an obsessive-compulsive disorder as forms of illness, developed under social constraint. Ferenczi called them "social diseases" ("soziale Leiden"). These maladies and their etiology were completely incomprehensible in the frame of contemporary, physiologically oriented medicine. In his attempt to uncover the etiology of strange symptoms for which there was no organic basis, Freud had come across unconsciously created psychic processes, namely habitualised defence mechanisms. A criticism of supposedly natural, historical processes and social institutions had been developed 100 years before Freud by German philosophers who sought to understand the peripeties of the French Revolution (1789 to 1794 and on to Napoléon). Hegel and Schelling, who worked closely together in the first years of the 19th century, said that the central problem of

philosophy (and society) was - and I quote in their language and explain this immediately – “to understand substance as subject”. This is the decisive formula in Hegel's *Phenomenology of the mind* (1806) as well as in Schelling's philosophy, and it states that society is to be understood as a human product and historical events are to be understood as accomplished by human beings – and not as inevitable or determined by “fate”. The procedure used by these philosophers was termed "dialectic." It consisted of reconstructing (in a dialogical procedure) the genesis of unvoluntarily and unconsciously created institutions that had become obsolete in the course of later developments. What for? To open up a possibility for the reluctant bearers of such institutions to revise them. Two generations later, the Feuerbach students Marx and Freud (I could also add Nietzsche) resorted to this procedure thus founding the critique of Institutions as a special science. This science, as Horkheimer, Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas have shown, differs from both the traditional natural sciences and the humanities. The decisive process in the history of psychoanalysis has been the uncoupling of the healing practice (misunderstood as a “technique”) from its matrix, the critical theory of the evolution of culture.

"Techniques" are commonly considered as applicable in various contexts. They can therefore be used for very different, even contradictory purposes. So it's unsurprising that the Freudian art of interpreting disturbing symptoms was soon captured by clever specialists of “aryanisation” like Carl Gustav Jung or by mere “technicians of the soul” in order to service the “biopolitics” of the fascist cannibalistic state.

This chapter in the history of psychoanalysis has played a decisive role in the process of getting out of sight of the Freudian project of promoting a less repressive culture that does not require the integration of individuals into masses, their des-individualization. Thus, the Freudian Enlightenment only came to us as a fragment. If we are interested in a restitution of the original, then provenance research also in this case is needed.

Breuer and Freud went beyond the scope of the scientific and technical medicine of their time. They did not dismiss the disturbing hysterical phenomena (somatic sufferings without organic dysfunction) as simulations, but instead considered their patients as partners and sources of information. I will name at least the two most important of their patients: Bertha Pappenheim alias "Anna O.", and Anna von Lieben (née Todesco), of whom Freud said this "Cäcilie M." had taught him psychoanalysis. Breuer and Freud thus took their patients seriously and engaged in an anamnestic dialogue with them – in the medium of transference and counter-transference.

As his letters to Wilhelm Fließ show, Freud went a long way from being a researcher of natural objects to a researcher of human subjects. So he became a critic of the "second" or, as we also can say of the "pseudo-nature of institutions, that have been constituted in the process of cultural evolution and personal history. He discovered that the power of neurotic productions – "private religions" – of individuals (developed under the burden of a culture of domestication) and of "collective religions" as cultural institutions are the result of an amnesia: their history has been forgotten or suppressed. With this discovery, psychoanalysis became a social science. Having outgrown the natural sciences, it caused a furore by its critique of pseudo-nature. Freud,

however, insisted that the method which he had developed, to solve the riddle of institutions that restricted socialised individuals instead of allowing them to develop their potentials, was still part of a natural science and should be understood as such.

We know that Freud highly valued Francis Bacon, who published his *Novum organum scientiarum*, a modern alternative to Aristotelian natural science in 1620, and who was also an essayist (in the footsteps of Montaigne). And I think that the Baconian understanding of science surely influenced Freud. In Brecht's *Life of Galileo* (who has been a contemporary of Bacon), Galileo says that "science" is only good if it really improves people's lives.

In Freud's "system" the therapy, the psychology of the unconscious, and his "criticism of cultural institutions" were three aspects of one and the same endeavour: the search for a culture "which no longer is overwhelming anyone" – Freud's minimalistic formula for the whole project of psychoanalysis. The Freudian-oriented doctors and psychologists who, as therapists, joined in guild-like professional associations, soon found this Freudian system of thought implausible. (The doctors and psychologists trained in the natural sciences had prevailed over Freud in the question of "lay analysis"). Above all, the connection between therapy and cultural criticism, i.e. the understanding of therapy as a practical cultural criticism, was considered a political risk by them in the era of totalitarian movements and regimes; it was silently dropped. Ideologists such as Carl Müller-Braunschweig hurried in autumn 1933 to put their "technique" at the service of the National Socialist "uprising" ("Erhebung") in order to save the German psychoanalytical organisation (the DPG)...

Before the Hitler movement's victory without a fight, the Freudians had seen themselves as a liberal, philanthropic, socio-pedagogical-pacifistic, therapeutically active community of interpreters. Within the party spectrum of the time, they had been most likely to sympathise with the reformist majoritarian social-democrats or its left-socialist opposition. Paul Federn, for example, a friend and pupil of Freud (and chairman of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Association), whom you may know from his book *Ich-Psychologie und die Psychosen* (1956) published a psychoanalytic attempt to interpret the council based democracy ("Rätedemokratie") during the November Revolution (in Germany, Austria and Hungary). This is - like Reich's analysis of fascism - unique in psychoanalytic literature. Federn found that the councils were a form of the revolt of the brothers ("Brüderaufstand"), as the revolution figured in Freud's scientific myth of the "primal horde". Federn wrote in 1919 in the journal *Der Österreichische Volkswirt* (a strange place for it!) that the workers-councils anticipated the society of the future. There were criticisms of his text, including from psychoanalysts, but I did not see Freud commenting on it; no doubt, however, he must have read Federn's pamphlet with great interest.

I have been living in Vienna for a number of years now and am gradually becoming familiar with the special Austrian societal relations, including their historical conditions. Recently I visited an exhibition "Red Vienna" and came across a copy of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* with a statement by "intellectuals". It is interesting because it was published in the summer of 1927 (before the Vienna July massacre). I didn't bring it with me because I didn't think there would be time to discuss it, but there is enough time, so I will tell you about it briefly. In this edition of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* appeared a statement on the upcoming elections.

Vienna is, as people like to say, since 1918 a big head with an incredibly shrunken surrounding area. Vienna is to Austria what Berlin was to Germany – and perhaps will be again – and what Paris is to France. In Vienna, as you may have heard or perhaps seen, there existed the only large-scale, socialist-inspired housing programme in interwar Europe. It was financed, in the wake of the November Revolution of 1918, by a special housing tax. This tax targeted people who owned property and lived in particularly luxurious circumstances: it was a luxury tax. If you come to Vienna today, you will see that in the 1920s and 1930s whole districts with modern "municipal buildings" were designed and built by imaginative architects. Of course, this social housing system was attacked, for example in the style in which Trump nowadays is attacking the Democrats in America: this is the downfall of our city, these flats are no good, they will soon collapse...Vienna was then (as now) governed by Social Democrats, and the upcoming elections were, amongst other things, about the housing issue. The Social Democrats have shifted since then, and in Germany you know very well what the situation of Social Democracy is now. But back then, Red Vienna was something of a socialist fortress. I'll spare you the naming of the political staff of that time - that's not important, people tend to forget it right away anyway. In any case, that's exactly what the election campaign was about: there was a cartel of right-wing groups, Nazis, paramilitary home guard units and of course the... I almost said "ÖVP", but that's the name of the party only since 1945. The ÖVP are heirs to the "Christian Social Party" of that time. The spokesmen of the right-wing cartel wanted an end to the successful housing project and of course an end to the housing tax also. In response forty intellectuals intervened, most of whom we no longer know today but among them were Robert Musil (*The Man Without Qualities*), Alfred Döblin (*Berlin Alexanderplatz*), and many others,

including Sigmund Freud. They gave a recommendation for the election but did not name the Socialdemocratic Party explicitly. "We intellectuals are far from politics" said these forty, "we are intellectuals, but as such we see what is at stake here, and we ask you, dear Viennese: Vote! You know what you are about to lose."

So that was also Sigmund Freud.

The basic critical tendency, the epistemological status of Psychoanalysis and the political content of Freudian therapeutics became a problem for psychoanalysts for the first time towards the end of the Weimar Republic. The stylisation of psychoanalysis as a natural science and the postulate of political neutrality was at the expense of the socialist minority that existed at that time among the approximately five dozen psychoanalysts in Germany. From then on, in the psychoanalytic tradition and training "the sociological interpretation of psychoanalytic findings" (as Ernest Jones, the president of the IPV, formulated it in 1949) was considered heresy and political activity in leftist organisations was considered inadmissible, because it endangered the existence of psychoanalytical organisations. If Freudian therapists took the anti-authoritarianism of free association seriously, or, as Ferenczi put it more radically: "the dismantling of the super-ego", without which there could be no psychoanalysis, and if they wanted to make it valid also outside of the psychoanalytic cure, they would turn against the political status quo. Then, like Wilhelm Reich, they would be threatened with isolation and exclusion from their organisations. If, on the other hand, they cooperated with the totalitarian state and were willing to make their medical knowledge available to heal functionaries, to fight opponents of the regime or even to eliminate those who were the unfavourable (euthanasia), then they saw themselves as pure specialists and believed

that they were not responsible either for the respective purposes for which their therapeutic competence was used, or even for the human-technical framework programme, i.e. the biopolitics of the fascist state. The latter tolerated them, provided they renounced criticism and resistance, abjured the Freudian Enlightenment and did not worry about their colleagues who were chased away or killed.

We, some generations ahead, can of course easily criticise, but it is astonishing when you look at the documents, especially in Austria, where there were still five years left – under the so-called "Austrofascism" – until the German invasion: The "disappearance" of their colleagues, the non-Aryans and the Socialists, went unmentioned in private correspondence and in clinical records. The dissolution of the connection between cultural reform, metapsychology and therapy had made it possible to isolate the psychoanalytic technique and its subsequent utilization by the fascist terror state. In the course of the upswing in revised, Aryanised and combined psychotherapies (in the Berlin "Göring Institute"), the "medicalisation" (as Paul Parin called it) of psychoanalysis became the secret programme of the vast majority of Freudian therapists in the pre-war and war years. I have already mentioned that one of the inner-analytical struggles that Freud lost was that about "Lay-Analysis" (i.e. therapy by psychoanalysts who were not medically "pre-trained"). Thus, in the IPV, Anglo-Saxon doctors had already prevailed over continental psychoanalysts.

However, the organised psychoanalysts were by no means completely apolitical or neutral. What their spokespersons condemned as a political abuse of psychoanalysis was a theory and practice that was directed against the status quo, i.e., true to the Freudian programme, committed to overcoming a culture of social inequality, massacres and superstition.

Politics in the service of the status quo, including the policy advice given to the US government after the US entered the war and later, in the years of the Cold War, was not perceived as “politics” by psychoanalytical practitioners and their functionaries. It was therefore tacitly accepted or welcomed by the psychoanalytical establishment. Knut Müller's two-volume documentation on this topic was published in 2017. The inability of the French and Anglo-Saxon psychoanalysts, those who remained in Germany, and those who fled abroad, to deal theoretically with the German "Behemoth", the Nazi state that threatened to swallow them up, was a consequence of the self-imposed neutralisation of psychoanalysis. Their silence was of course beneficial to psychoanalytic therapists; if the political context of the therapeutic action remained out of consideration, the innocence of their professional practice seemed to be preserved and there remained no grounds for criticism or persecution of them.

The ideological course set in the early 1930s – the neutralisation of psychoanalysis as a natural science, the primacy of therapeutic techniques and the frowning upon the political commitment of psychoanalysts (as far as it was directed against the status quo) – has set a precedent in the history of organised psychoanalysis. What at first seemed to be only a stopgap measure in difficult times soon mutated into an institutional norm against the background of the misunderstood and unresolved expulsion of Jewish and socialist Freudians from their educational centres (Berlin, Vienna, Budapest). Confirmed and reinforced by the discrimination and marginalisation of psychoanalysis in the Stalinist Soviet Union and its satellite states (after 1945) and by the later persecution of psychoanalysts in Latin American torture regimes, this internal institutional norm has directly and indirectly determined the

selection and training of the following generations of psychoanalysts. This is how the type of the politically abstinent psychoanalyst has developed who makes his peace with the existing social conditions and, as Paul Parin wrote in 1978, “avoids if possible to take a position on the burning topics of the day”.

Now I look at the clock and think I should reserve time for the discussion, so I'll go straight to the end:

As in the 1930s, the few parliamentary democracies that exist today seem to be overwhelmed by the crises of the present day – growing inequality, wars, global warming, international migration. This parallel is unfortunately striking, in my view, because one after the other of these few states with a parliament and separation of powers that still exist is being transformed into an authoritarian regime. In Germany the Nazi underground, which was hastily built over after 1945 with two different German states, is reappearing. In this situation, it is perhaps useful to recall an answer given in 1931 by Siegfried Kracauer – perhaps known to you as a film theorist (*From Caligari to Hitler*) – to Alfred Döblin's question of how intellectuals should behave in times of crisis and what they could do at all. Kracauer formulated the following as a “minimal demand on intellectuals”: Intellectuals, make use of your intelligence!”

I would also like to call out to the Freudians of today: Psychoanalysts, don't interpret only the unfree associations, dreams and nightmares of your patients, but interpret the wishful fantasies and nightmares of the parties and their voters, the Nazis of today and the terror groups, because without democracy psychoanalysis cannot develop further, namely it cannot revise the revision and reduction it has undergone.

Thank you for your attention!