

**The first decade of the Palestine Institute for  
Psycho-analysis (Max Eitingon Institute)  
1934—1944**

by

**Margarete Brandt**

Jerusalem

In 1941, on the occasion of Dr. Eitingon's sixtieth birthday, the members of the Palestine Institute for Psycho-analysis were able to give the founder of their Institute the pleasure of hearing a report on the activities of the first seven years of its existence. The account then presented to Dr. Eitingon was intended to assure him that, notwithstanding the destruction of his Berlin Institute by the Nazis, work was continuing for the realisation of his vision of transforming Freud's stimuli at the 1918 Budapest Congress into reality. Even though the amount of work performed was quantitatively more modest than that accomplished in Berlin, Dr. Eitingon was yet delighted to recognise just how important for Palestine was the work already performed, and how unerring his conception of the tasks of the Psycho-analytical Institute had proved to be. While in Berlin the debatable point had been the practicability of polyclinical treatment and the endeavour to find the best methods to train young analysts, here in Palestine the problem of neurosis prevention came ever more to the fore. It was always specially pleasing for Dr. Eitingon when former patients came to him to tell how they turned the knowledge gained by their analyses to good account in practice, in "Kinderhaus" and at school. It transpired that the communal settlements sent not only their most difficult and unbearable neurotic

cases for treatment, but in particular also pedagogically talented persons, even if they had no grave disturbances at all. After analysis these individuals were, in addition to their being the better able to cope with educational difficulties, also more capable than the non-analysed effectively to apply the results of consultation and advice to problematical cases. Dr. Eitingon had this group especially at heart, so much so that he used a special phrase when he saw their names on the waiting list: "Deal with him quickly, he really deserves it".

The hours of reception which he held regularly at the Institute were a pleasurable duty for him, and neither illness nor the worst of Hamsins (desert winds) could deter him from coming to the Institute. Even in his last months, when his physicians were warning him against going out, he grasped every opportunity to come for at least a short while to the Institute, to hear what was going on and to converse with old and new patients. Many of them got from him during such first interviews essential explanations that were to exercise a positive influence over the whole analysis. Many felt the need to go to Dr. Eitingon, at times when they had improved to acquaint him with their progress; they all had unshakable confidence in his impartial verdicts in cases where difficult situations arose between patient and analyst. For every one did he have time, in all did he display interest, retaining full details in his mind. Practical assistance to a large number of patients was likewise rendered by Dr. Eitingon, in the form of obtaining for them employment, opportunities to recuperate, money, or suitably interceding in certain quarters in their favour. His patients had boundless confidence in his capabilities—a confidence gained by good experience, for they were but rarely disappointed.

In the first ten years of its existence the Institute treated 232 cases, all of which were women and 121 men.

The patients came from all strata of the population and the most varied parts of the country. Only a very small fraction had been sent by physicians, the majority coming upon the advice of former patients.

The number of patients treated was as follows, by years:

1934	4	1940	19
1935	16	1941	34
1936	17	1942	27
1937	18	1943	30
1938	28	1944	20 (up to 1.9.44)
1939	19		

making a total of 232. These fall into the following groups:

Obsessional Neurosis & Compulsive Character	53
Hysteria & Hysterical Character .. .. .	40
Neurotical Depression .. .. .	13
Manic-Depressive State .. .. .	9
Cleptomania .. .. .	6
Neglect .. .. .	7
Bronchial Asthma .. .. .	4
Inhibition to Work or Study .. .. .	14
Masochism .. .. .	15
Psychopathy .. .. .	3
Infantilism .. .. .	11
Disturbances of Speech .. .. .	5
Paranoia .. .. .	7
Disturbances of Potency .. .. .	7
Frigidity .. .. .	3
Schizophrenia .. .. .	9
Fetishism .. .. .	1
Erythrophobia .. .. .	2
Homosexuality .. .. .	5
Enuresis .. .. .	4
Mixed States .. .. .	10
Epilepsy .. .. .	1
Training .. .. .	3

and in the result

	31	cases were cured
	83	„ „ improved
	29	„ „ broken off
	39	„ „ uninfluenced
while	44	„ „ still current in September 1944.

Those marked "improved" were for the most part symptom cured patients who are to be regarded as cured in effect, but who by our theoretical standards are not to be registered as cured. The relatively large number of cases that were broken off is to be explained in part by the fact that many patients were called up for military service, it having been only in exceptional cases that the Institute intervened requesting exception. Furthermore, a number of patients with modest incomes were obliged to leave Jerusalem and discontinue their analysis, better opportunities for finding work having presented themselves elsewhere. Several had in the first place received only limited leave to come to Jerusalem.

Five probationers, among whom is one physician, carry out control analyses.

In addition to therapeutic work, on which the main emphasis is laid, steadily increasing importance is being attached to didactic work. A number of workers at the Institute, Drs. Brandt, Dreyfuss, Gumbel, Hirsch and Lowtzki, held lectures based on Freud's writings and delivered to diverse audiences, such as to welfare workers, students, and kindergarten and school teachers. Of greatest practical value was the tuition of the group under Dr. Lowtzki's guidance, its thirty-six participants being school and kindergarten teachers, youth leaders, "Heilpädagogogen", and school physicians. These activities found a strong echo among health, welfare and educational bodies.

When an organ, published by Dr. Brachiyahu under the name of "Hygiēna Ruhanith" (Psychic Hygiene) was founded, all members of the Psycho-analytical Association were called upon to support it, several cooperating on the editorial. Psycho-analytical pedagogy is

allotted a substantial space within the framework of this paper, with the object of imbuing pedagogical circles with psycho-analytical modes of thought.

To sum up the activities of the Palestine Psycho-analytical Institute one is tempted to quote a passage of Freud's introduction to the Report of the Berlin Institute on its first ten years. The excerpt is applicable to our circumstances as it stands:

"Such an Institute was indispensable. It would have been vain to wait for State assistance or University interest. The energy and self-sacrifice of one single analyst stepped in at this juncture. Ten years ago Dr. Max Eitingon founded such an institute with his own means, and has ever since maintained it and by his own endeavours directed it. The Report does homage to its founder and director, and attempts publicly to express gratitude to him. Whosoever has a part in any form of analysis will add his voice to these thanks".

And two further relevant passages, this time extracted from Simmel's History of the Berlin Institute:

"A more embracing social-hygienic effect the Institute will only then be able to have when the most competent organisation, the Sick Fund, will combine with the Institute and allow its members to undergo psycho-analytical treatment. The continued situation wherein our Policlinic treats contributors to health-insurance without remuneration, that is, on account of the members of the Psycho-analytical Association themselves, cannot go on for ever.

"The necessity for such treatment has become so widely acknowledged that the members will shortly demand analysis regardless of those Sick Fund executives who still maintain that their organisations cannot take over psycho-analytical treatment, if only for financial reasons. At present members of the Sick Funds have still to entreat psycho-analytical treatment as a semi-favour, as it were. Some of them who are registered on the long

waiting list of our Institute often forfeit some of the most important decisions of their lives because timely psycho-analytical help was not available. All these will, in the not distant future, have confidence only in such physicians as are able to prescribe a suitable treatment also for their psychic ailments."

"And herein lies the great social merit of Max Eitingon, for it is after all he who, through never tiring application, has not only maintained but even constantly expanded the Policlíne — the more so as this was accomplished in the face of the hardships of all these years of political confusion and economic crises, at a time when even governmental and municipal health measures had to be reduced in scope because of the necessity to economise."

Dr. Eitingon died on the 30th July, 1943. The loss for the Institute is irreparable. We, his fellow workers, are certain that we are acting in his spirit when we persist in the course of this Institute that bears his name and endeavour to realise the plans he made for its further development.

*Translated by David S. Pinsky*