European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling
2012, 1–3, iFirst

BOOK REVIEW

100 Years of the IPA: The Centenary History of the International Psychoanalytical Association 1910–2010 – Evolution and Change, edited by Peter Loewenberg and Nellie L Thompson, with a Foreword by Charles Hanly, London, IPA & Karnac, 2011, xxxi + 560 pp., £45.00 (paperback), ISBN: 978-1-905888-16-0

Essentially a *Festschrift* written to mark the centenary of the founding of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) in 1910, this volume has taken its two distinguished editors a mere four years to produce, crafting the volume from chapters contributed by 60 authors from IPA affiliated societies across the globe. This has clearly been no easy task.

The book, organized into 49 chapters divided between six parts, initially reviews selected IPA member societies in 33 countries (some of which have more than one chapter devoted to them, reflecting some of the other IPA affiliated psychoanalytic associations in those countries). This takes up the first four parts of the book and contains diverse material that will be of considerable interest to anyone with an acquaintanceship to psychoanalysis. Section five then considers the historic International Training Commission of 1925–38, chiefly associated with Eitingon. It then continues with a brief chapter on the development of new IPA groups. It would have been useful here to have given some detailed consideration to the parts of the world largely devoid of *homo psychoanalyticus*, IPA affiliated or otherwise, such as much of Africa and the Arab world, and why this might be so. The final section consists of six chapters reporting on snapshots of IPA 'leadership' from 1969 to 2009. Unsurprisingly, despite running to a substantial 560 pages, treatment of each area within the book's intended remit is relatively shallow. This is inevitable given the scope of the volume: it is, as such, an introductory guide.

Many readers will initially turn in this volume to the countries they are most familiar with, before then exploring other territories. As a way of approaching such a text, this is as good a way as any. I thus began with Britain and then moved on to other countries. The treatment of the British Psychoanalytical Society offers readers an institutional history, largely chronologically organized (though substantially privileging the early history), that introduces readers to key characters, debates and controversies. Some of these ingredients appear again and again in other chapters. Thus Ernest Jones is ubiquitous, not only in the British Society but also in Canada, the USA, Australia, and has walk-on parts in many of the older European society

ISSN 1364–2537 print/ISSN 1469–5901 online
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13642537.2012.652398
http://www.tandfonline.com

histories. The management of conflicts deriving from theoretical and technical divergences from declared orthodoxy, as well as personality factors, is considered principally with reference to the Freud/Klein controversies in Britain. In other countries tensions relating to orthodoxies and innovations get hinged on other precipitating factors, such as the question of lay (i.e. non-medical) analysts, reporting or non-reporting trainings, creativity, power and control (see Bergmann, 2004, for an incisive treatment of dissidence and controversy in psychoanalysis).

Other chapters, while often revealing similar intra-group tensions within the societies being discussed, approach the historical material using the psychoanalytic vertex itself. Serge Frisch, for example, does this in his discussion on the Belgian Society, framing it as a type of family romance and quotes Kaës (after Freud) to remind readers that 'our origins are precisely what elude us, from which we are irredeemably absent' (p. 27). Raising such a problematic allows a reflexive psycho-historical reading of the material and new insights can thus emerge.

The vicissitudes of institutionalized psychoanalysis as revealed in this book strongly illustrates the dialectical tensions between the local cultural and socio-political features within host countries and the universals held as core psychoanalytic concepts (such as the unconscious, transference, conflict and infantile sexuality), with psychoanalysis taking on local character in each country in which it takes root (Kurzweil, 1989), yet all the time maintaining clear family resemblances on the international stage. There is no detailed comparative overview offered in the book of the interesting local differences the various chapters illustrate. This is a shortcoming, though readers minded to do so can follow this area up in other texts and through the often detailed reference lists contained in the present book.

Psychoanalysis is primarily framed here as a clinical and therapeutic endeavour, with less attention given to it as a body of knowledge of the mind widely applicable to diverse cultural and other human spheres of life. Similarly, the treatment of some component societies is brief (a significant number being missed out altogether) and a number of chapters are relatively uncritical to the point of being hagiographic. This perhaps reflects its intended market: IPA psychoanalysts and candidates, the core of whom are focused on clinical practice and are relatively untroubled by the sociology, history and politics of their own organization. Such a market is a relatively open door. It was, indeed, distributed free to delegates at the IPA Centennial Congress in Mexico City in August 2011.

There is much of real interest in this book, including idiosyncratic details of diverse psychoanalytic institutions that one would not have otherwise readily encountered. While it is not a full history of the IPA or its component societies, it is a volume that should find a place in any library that intends to give even an introduction to psychoanalysis today. For critical readers it will undoubtedly promote worthwhile questions, spurring further engaged inquiry, research and debate.

The book is currently on offer at a special price of $15 from the publishers (see www.ipa.org.uk for details).

References

Bergmann, M.S. (Ed.) (2004). *Understanding dissidence & controversies in the history of psychoanalysis*. New York: Other Press.

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

Roger Willoughby
Newman University College, Birmingham & Kellogg College, Oxford, UK
roger@willoughby.ie