Presentation of the C. Anderson Aldrich Award to Anna Freud

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It is my privilege and pleasure to introduce Anna Freud to you and to read her paper for this most important occasion. Dr. Freud deeply regrets that she is unable to be with you and asked that I represent her at this meeting. May I say how appropriate and fitting it is to honor children throughout the world by conferring the C. Anderson Aldrich Award for 1974 on Dr. Anna Freud. Historically it is impressive that in 1968 and in 1971 this distinguished award was conferred on two of Anna Freud’s former students and colleagues. I refer to Dr. Edith B. Jackson and Professor Erik Erikson.

Anna Freud, who started her professional activities as a teacher of young children, became the founder of child psychoanalysis. Throughout her career she has always had an affinity for working together with pediatricians, teachers, nurses, and all who are concerned with children. To this day she meets at least once a month with a group of distinguished English pediatric colleagues who have been her collaborators for more than 20 years. They share much in their curiosity about and compassion for children. They are devoted to helping children overcome illness and the handicaps of life. These include the burdens, threats, and losses associated with poverty, war, physical illness, genetic handicaps, and the destruction of the child’s body and mind that result from adult abuse and deprivation.

In introducing Anna Freud, it is appropriate to call attention to her clinic, the Hampstead Child Therapy Center, and to her gallant colleagues with whom she works so closely on a daily basis. In London Dr. Freud has elaborated a tradition that was rooted in Vienna to respond to the needs of children at times of crisis as well as at more normative times.

In the early 1930’s she, with the assistance of her closest collaborator, Mrs. Dorothy Burlingham, and with the support and assistance of her colleague and friend, Dr. Edith B. Jackson, established a day-care nursery for the toddlers of the working mothers of poor families in the slums of Vienna. In that nursery, Anna Freud demonstrated the hallmark of her creativity, providing urgently needed services for children that also become the basis for systematic observation organized by psychoanalytic assumptions and hypotheses. These observations in turn led to new theoretical questions and refinements, which in turn have resulted in improved care for children.

In the Vienna day-care program, Anna Freud demonstrated how crucial it is to combine physical and psychological care for children and how risky it is to isolate one kind of assistance from the other. Early in the morning these deprived, environmentally retarded children were brought to the nursery before their mothers went out to do mostly domestic work. After being held and comforted they were fed and bathed. Then psychoanalytically oriented teachers, under Dr. Freud’s direction, enabled them to play,

Read before the 43rd annual meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics, San Francisco, California, October 21, 1974.

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exercise their bodies and minds, and to have the nurturance of social, emotional, and intellectual stimulation and guidance.

In speaking of the war time work of the Hampstead Nurseries from 1940 to 1945, to which children from the center of blitz-torn London were evacuated, Dr. Freud said, "This, then, is the category to which the observations carried out in the Hampstead Nurseries (1940-1945) belong. Far from being any form of planned research, they were no more than the by-product of intensive, charitable war work and financed as such. Since all efforts failed to obtain additional funds for the purpose of observation, recording and classifying of material, all such activities had to be relegated to the spare off-time of the workers and was undertaken as their voluntary effort." As Anna Freud put it, "I was fortunate to have these opportunities . . . to move back and forth between practice and theory."

As a result of her opportunities and in her moving back and forth between practice and theory, she has achieved a level of teaching and scholarship that is internationally recognized as outstanding and sustained. Her writings are too numerous to mention, but one cannot think of Anna Freud without calling to mind her classic books that range from the practical to the clinical, to a high level of theoretical abstraction. They are: (1) Psychoanalysis for Teachers and Parents (New York: Emerson Books, 1935); (2) The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense (New York: International Universities Press, 1966); (3) War and Children (New York: International Universities Press, 1943); (4) Infants Without Families (New York: International Universities Press, 1944); (5) The annual volume, The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, together with Heinz Hartmann and Ernst Kris (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press; (6) Normality and Pathology in Childhood (New York: International Universities Press, 1965); (7) and, most recently, together with Professor Joseph Goldstein and myself, Beyond the Best Interests of the Child, (New York: The Free Press, 1973).

Her creative achievements have been acknowledged by numerous honorary doctoral degrees at American Universities and an honorary M.D. from the University of Vienna, as well as the accolade of Commander of the British Empire in England.

In lucid descriptions by Anna Freud the methods of care and study employed in the early experiments in Vienna and in the wartime Hampstead Nurseries are set forth as working models. Of the many principles that she and her coworkers innovated, a number have already been rediscovered, including:

(1) development of sustained early intervention for the deprived young children of low-income, minority, or immigrant families;

(2) the urgent need to provide training and supervision for paraprofessionals in order to avoid the temptation of providing poor care for poor children;

(3) careful planning for day-care programs of high quality when one cannot help the mother to stay home during the child's first three to four years of life;

(4) the recognition that the physically handicapped child can be helped to master developmental tasks if his potential psychological capacities are safeguarded through adequate maternal care and early specialized education.

Newer problems include the changing aspects of the adolescent experience and the increased dependency on and the misuse of drugs.

It is my privilege to read to you Anna Freud's paper prepared for the 1974 C. Anderson Aldrich Award.
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Pediatrics 1975;56;330

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