

## Correspondence

*Letters for publication in the Correspondence columns should be addressed to:*

The Editor 'British Journal of Psychiatry', Chandos House, 2 Queen Anne Street, London, W1M 9LE.

### THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN: A POSTHUMOUS ENDORSEMENT

DEAR SIR,

In January, 1971 (118, 61-8) you published an article of mine, 'A Contribution to the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement in Britain'. It was rather disappointing that, in spite of a special appeal from the Editors, no one else familiar with these happenings made any comment on the historical background or described their own recollection of events. In these circumstances, I believe a personal letter written to me by my friend, the late Dr. Edward Glover, will be of interest. He wrote it shortly after the article had appeared (16.1.71), and asked me to publish it after his death:

'Dear Melitta,

An officious friend sent me a copy of your article in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, regretting its publication and obviously hinting that I "should do something about it". To which I replied as follows:

"Dr. Schmideberg's article, in my view, contains more cold-stone truth than any article I have read in the past fifty years. (*Mutatis mutandis* on a few points that don't affect the major historical issue). I have not the slightest intention of acting as a stooge for the British Psycho-Analytical Society or the International Psycho-Analytic Association. If they have anything to say *per contra*, let them get on their own square feet and do so. Her exposé is very temperate, I think (We mellow, don't we?). But don't expect me to lick the boots of those who have played the shameful rôle of timid entrepreneurs."

Don't publish this gloss until I have departed this life. And Good Luck, you have more stingo than I ever pretended to have

Teddy'

In the meantime, there has been another comment from the well known U.S.A. analyst and psychiatrist, Dr. Karl Menninger, in the *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* for May 1972:

'An article appeared in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* for January 1971 which has been conspicuously ignored, as far as I know, in all

quarters. A long-time psychoanalyst, the daughter of one of the most famous analysts, announced her repudiation of psychoanalysis and her official separation from it since 1963. Melitta Schmideberg, daughter of Melanie Klein, first reviews her early contacts at age of 15 with psychiatry, her harming analysis, her Institute training, and her subsequent contact with many British, American and European analysts.

'I think this material will be of the utmost interest when the definitive history of the psychoanalytic movement is written. She is quite right in saying that "Today in the United States it requires courage to be critical of psychoanalysis, then it took courage to believe in it". Most astonishing is the frank description by Mrs. Schmideberg of her theoretical differences with her mother and the political consequences of this.'

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### THE IMPACT OF THE ABORTION ACT

DEAR SIR,

While welcoming the paper by Priest (*Brit. J. Psychiat.*, September 1972, 121, 293-7) on the Abortion Act, I would hesitate to agree with his 'average psychiatrist' who, he says, will find abortion a treatment for depression that compares favourably with anti-depressants and ECT over the short-term period. Such a deduction is not supported by a small series which I studied at the Chelsea Hospital for Women in 1969-70, and which in view of the paucity of relevant information should be of some interest.

Women admitted for termination, in those cases where this procedure was recommended by a psychiatrist, were given appointments to see me at approximately six weeks after their operation. Of the first 23 patients 18 kept their appointments, and their affective state was assessed. The results were as follows:

Markedly depressed	..	..	4
Mild though definite depression	..	..	4
Mild hypomania	..	..	1