



Ruth C. Cohn,
the discoverer of TCI:
What from her Biography
as a Migrant,
Psycho- and Social Therapist,
Poet and
Peace Educator
has become important in her Concept?

Webinar with Prof em Dr Matthias Scharer
University of Innsbruck/AUSTRIA

Part I

(Translation supported by DeepL)

Welcome to
my small
writing flat
in winter



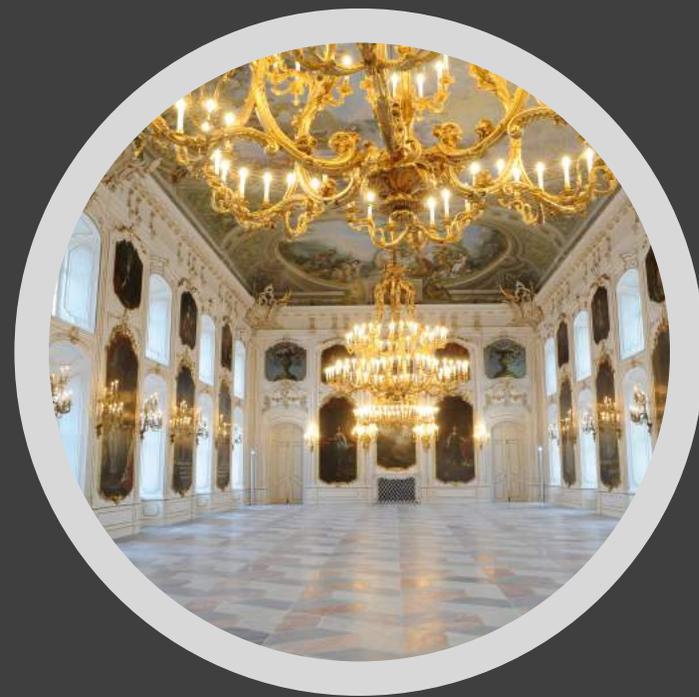
The balcony of my flat



Welcome to
Innsbruck –
a city in the
West of
Austria



Welcome to the University of
Innsbruck with 350 years history |



Welcome in the small City between high mountains,
Golden Roof and Hofburg Castle



Austria –
the small
Country in
the Heart of
Europe

KNOWING WE
COUNT
WITH OUR LIFE
WITH OUR
BELOVED
AGAINST THE
COLD
FOR ME, FOR
YOU, FOR OUR
WORLD

(RUTH C. COHN)



The lived history of psychotherapy



Birth house
of Ruth
Charlotte
Hirschfeld
today



Here lived until 1933
the psychoanalyst and educator

RUTH COHN

27.8.1912 - 30.1.2010

Influenced by her experiences under the Nazi dictatorship
and her life in emigration, she founded
"Theme-centred Interaction" (TCI) in American exile.
She was one of the most influential representatives
of humanistic psychology.



In front of the
birthplace



1. Berlin 1912 – 1933
Ruth Charlotte Hirschfeld
(at the age of 0 – 21)

Parents



Hochzeitsbild der Eltern von Ruth C. Cohn

- Established German-Jewish Family in Berlin-Charlottenburg
- Father: Arthur Hirschfeld (1873 - 1930): businessman in banking
- Mother: Elisabeth Hirschfeld (1883 - 1956): pianist

The Arthur Hirschfeld & Co. Bank



Childhood



We were brought up very strictly

"In my childhood, I never felt that we had much money. We did have maids and a nice apartment, but we were brought up very strictly. In terms of pocket money and gifts, we were brought up to be very frugal. I think that the educational programs came more from my father than from my mother. But my mother's love from and for my father was more important than anything else, so she was actually with me much less than she would have liked. I didn't realize how much she missed that until later."

(Cohn/Wiltmann, Gespräch 1995)

1st Text read by ...



Elisabeth u. Arthur Hirschfeld
in der Friedrichstraße, Berlin (1917)

From the speech of Ruth's father on the occasion of her brother's Bar Mitzvah



"It was never easy to be a Jew; it is less so today than ever. No slander is too crude and low that it would not be brought against the Jews, no crime so bad that it would not be attributed to them. ... You have [therefore] no reason to be ashamed of your descent, you may even be proud of it. Proud, but yes not arrogant!... Become happy and make happy! To this end, may Almighty God give you the strength of health of body and mind, so that you may fulfill your duty not only against Judaism, but also against our poor fatherland, so sorely depressed, against your parents, your sister..."

(from Arthur Hirschfeld's Bar Mitzvah speech for Ruth's brother Karl Ernst)

2nd Text read by...

1931 – 1932
Studies of
economics and
psychology at
the University
of Heidelberg
and Berlin



A poet from Childhood on
fascinated by Goethe as a teenager



LYRICIST AND
PSYCHOTHERAPIST AS
INNER VOCATION



2. The Couch, the Fear and the Gratitude Switzerland (1933-1941): from the 21-29th lj.

Buried Homeland

"In 1933 I buried my homeland. I took my childhood within me, with the awareness that there is injustice within me and outside me that I must fight, and charity and justice for which I must do something."

(Cohn 1981: Heimat-Werte, Scan 75, 236)
3rd Text read by...



First Migration

1933 – 1939 Switzerland

- Training as psychoanalyst (Hans Behn-Eschenburg and Medard Boss with the control analyst Gustav Bally)
- Studies with a major in psychology, minors in pre-clinical medicine and psychiatrics;
- additional studies in education, theology, literature, philosophy.

1936

Loss of German citizenship for all German Jews living in foreign countries

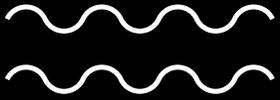
1938

Brother and family emigrate to Italy – after the Jews there are expelled – to the USA.

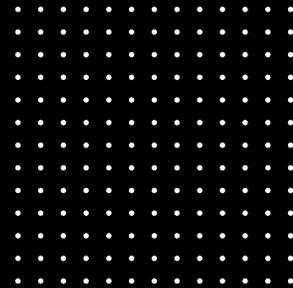
The mother has already emigrated to the USA before the “Reichskristallnacht” (November)

A photograph of the University of Zurich building, featuring a prominent circular tower with a red dome and a large green dome in the background. A statue of a seated figure is visible in the foreground on the right. The text 'UNIVERSITÄT ZÜRICH ZENTRUM' is inscribed on the base of the statue. A dark diagonal overlay is present on the left side of the image.

*Disappointing
Studies in
Zürich*



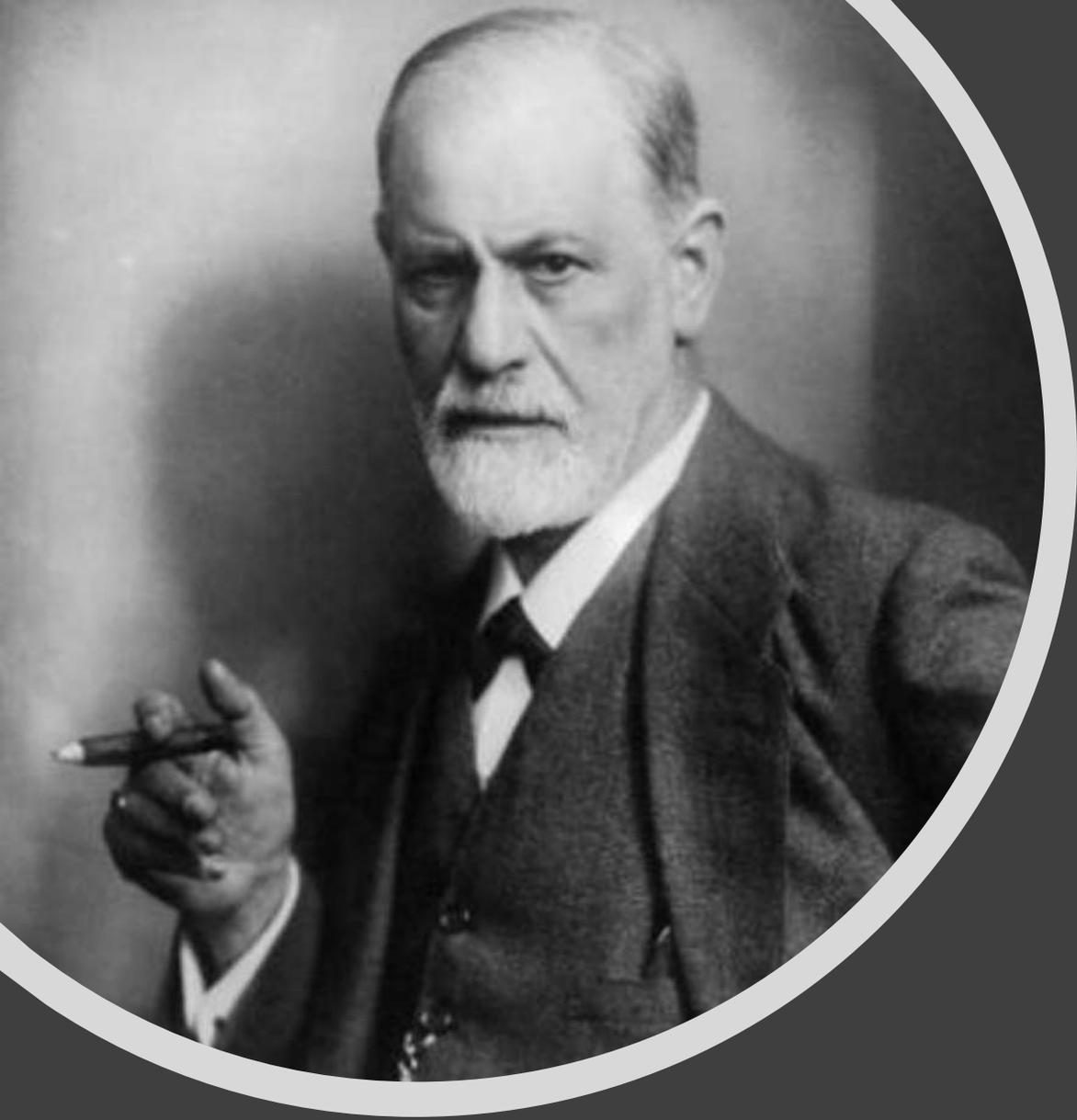
„Psychoanalysis is a set of psychological theories and therapeutic methods which have their origin in the work and theories of Sigmund Freud. The primary assumption of psychoanalysis is the belief that all people possess uncounscious thoughts, feelings, desires, and memories.“
(Saul McLeod, 2007, updated 2019)



"Between 1933 and 1939 I lay six times a week - as was usual at that time - for fifty-minute hour on the couch. The analyst behind me listened me patiently. He was young and very attractive. I only knew that because I saw him at the door and leaving at the door, when he shook my hand."

(Cohn, GG 214)

4th Text read by...



Sigmund Freud and the Psychoanalysis

“The aim of psychoanalysis therapy is to release repressed emotions and experiences, i.e., make the unconscious conscious. It is only having a cathartic (i.e., healing) experience can the person be helped and ‘cured’”. (Saul McLeod 2019)

Anxiety and Defense Mechanism

Freud stated that it is necessary for the self to have some mechanism to defend itself against unfavorable events; this is known as defense mechanisms. Freud's work on defense mechanisms focused on how the ego defends itself against internal events or impulses, which are regarded as unacceptable to one's ego. These defense mechanisms are used to handle the conflict between the id, the ego, and the super ego.

He identified three types of anxiety, reality anxiety (ego), neurotic anxiety (id), and moral anxiety (super ego).

When anxiety occurs, the mind's first response is to seek rational ways of escaping the situation by increasing problem solving efforts and a range of defense mechanisms may be triggered (ego).

5th Text read by...

Do the war and the
Shoah activate the
defense mechanism
OR
is the couch too small?

Hab ich hier was geschrieben
Teils mit Hechern, teils mit Psychotherapie,
es war sehr lieb, und Euch vergesse ich nie.

26

25. November 1938

Lena.

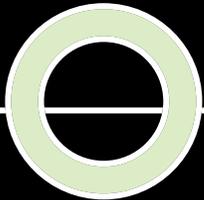


POLITICS AGAINST
PSYCHOANALYTIC ADVISES:
SHE HAD TO MARRY HER
BOYFRIEND
TO SAVE HIS PARENTS FROM
MURDER IN
CONCENTRATION CAMP OF
THE NAZIS.
(JULY 26TH, 1938)



February 2nd
1940
Heidi (Ursula)
was born.





15.5.1940

The (false) alarm is sounded
that the German army had
crossed the Swiss border

15.4.1941

Emigration to the USA

"The wailing of the sirens announced the invasion of the German army. Even though it was later called a false alarm, these words of Ruth's testify to the mortal fear she experienced: 'KZ? Torture? Be murdered? Commit suicide? Hide the little daughter, accept the offer of a Christian Swiss woman that she will raise the child? But the Nazis could very easily find out that this is a Jewish child, our child. They could torture and murder it. Should we protect it from that and kill it?'"

(Herrmann 1992, 27f)



6th Text read by...

War: "Open yourself ..."

Open and take my longing
Thee as a prayer to pray.
Hear from ruins, defiance and tears
Still the voice that pleads with Thee.

Do You know, Creator, what we carry,
before fear nestles flags,
and, because mirrors say too much,
Mirror-less succumbs to hate.

Respect not the sacrificial flames
Until the hand strikes the blow!
He who thus created cannot
condemn
him who loves not only loving.

*Didn't you firebomb
incinerated, what so bat?
Air-raid shelters - catacombs -
bear witness to your creative deed!*

*Open yourself and listen inside,
how it cries for you from the outside -
God, he who builds must begin
with the curse that forgives you.*

(Ruth C. Cohn)

7th Text read by...

A strange and fateful Gift

“I experienced the horrible things of those days very intensely.

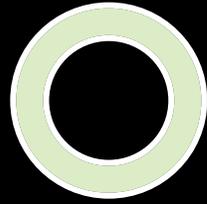
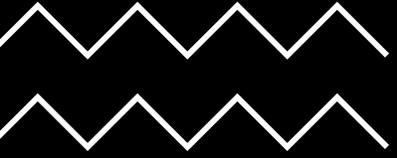
That I was even able to live in Zurich seemed to be to a strange and fateful gift. My whole life long I saw that as a defining challenge to do something with the fate I had been dealt, to pay thanks.”

(Farau & Cohn, 1984, p. 213)

8th Text, read by....



Ruth on the indian couch



Use the couch or
a mat for
10 minutes



My treat:

- Turn off the audio and the camera
- Lie down on a couch or mat and close your eyes for 10 minutes.
- Relax and listen to your breath as it comes and goes
- Wait for thoughts and feelings that arise in you
- After about 10 minutes write down some thoughts that have come to you on the couch or mat; you can also describe feelings that are with you at the moment.
- After this small break you are in a small group where you can share with 2-3 other people.
- After 15 minutes you come back to the plenary with a word or sentence that has become important to you.



3. To the "Promised Land"
America (1941 to ca. 1973)
From the 29th – about
59th year.



We shall overcome

**War,
Disease,
Poverty
And a
Non usable
Teaching analysis**



Second Migration

15.4.1941

Emigration to the USA

1941 – 1942

Training in Early Childhood Progressive Education at the Bankstreet School (later College) in New York City

1941 – 1944

Psychotherapeutic training, especially in the work of Harry Sullivan Stack at the William Alanson White Institute in New York,

additional studies at the Columbia University, New York, Masters Degree (M.A.) and certification as psychologist.

- **23.9.1944**
- Birth of son,
- Peter Ronald



RELATIONS

1946

Divorce from Hans-Helmut Cohn. Ruth moves with both children to Englewood, New Jersey; establishes a psycho-analytical practice in New York City; in the following years primarily devoted to the raising of her children.

1950

Acquaintance with A. Gus Woltmann (Psychologist) who later is her partner, with whom she lives until 1963.

1956

Death of her mother



Encounter with Fred (Alfred Farau) from 1948

"Fred suffered more than any other emigrant I knew. His parents had been murdered by the Nazis. His work as a cultural-political radio writer, begun in Vienna, had been destroyed. His writing of German poetry had been cut short. His Adlerian-therapeutic training could have been a possible basis for professional work..." (Cohn, GG 205).

Ruth also agreed with Fred, above all, about the permanent Hitlerization of the post-Hitler world.



Divorce

Once, when in the great glow of your eyes
Walls of shadows sank,
A tear fell into a chalice.
The chalice sobbed.

I carry your tear,
as the earth carries its secret,
inside, invisible,
under blooming roses.

You incorruptible, incombustible one
go; - so go.
Nonsensical meaning,
that a human couple
can be cut in two
like an earthworm.
Walk, hull, walk.
Cold are winter nights.
Cold are ice eyes.

I love
the dark red morning roses
in the dew glow.
I love
the grass.

My love
rises mysteriously
from the well
Of your one tear.

(Ruth C. Cohn)

9th Text read by (woman)

Mothers

It was in You to leave the dark.
My body, painfully, obeyed.

I was the manna,
who was given to know himself.
You, my carried one,
carried me as I carried you,
from the wall to the shadowless glow.

Days overcame us - piled up with diapers,
that hung on strings
and fell again,
and my arms got caught in strings.
Still entangled, they carried you,
trembling.

You were trembling.

Mütter

10th Text read by (woman)....

Nights followed days in which you cry,
screaming and screaming, -
you ached with hunger, wetness, fear of falling -

"Mother, mother, come, take me,
carry me - -"

You were a bundle.
Bundles are heavy.
But one should not separate from the bundle.
I took you and carried you and took you.
You screamed. I screamed.

And the diapers screamed,
the pots were screaming, the bills were screaming -
The other, big child must go to school on time -
The unwritten books screamed,
Tormented people beside me and across the ocean.

I took you and carried you and took you.
And the corner of the room screamed -
screamed to throw you into that corner
and cover you up,
so that the screaming would stop -

"There can't be anything wrong with me..."



Heidi und Peter ca. 1945

The separation from her husband Hans Helmut was hard on Ruth C. Cohn. "A happy marriage" would probably have been Ruth's wishful thinking when she came to America. Clichés about the ideas of a "good marriage" kept bothering her: "I myself still felt this way when I got divorced: there can't be anything wrong with me, I'm probably not a real woman, otherwise something like this couldn't happen! There was never anything like that in my family. And for me it seemed clear that the woman was responsible for the marriage being and remaining good."

(COHN, *Das menschliche Miteinander von Mann und Frau*, 99.)

CAREER

1946 – 1972

Private practice in psychotherapy in New York City.

Continuous distancing from classic psychoanalysis in the direction of experiential therapy.

1948

Theodor Reik founds the NPAP (National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis) in opposition to the New York Institute for Psychoanalysis, which only admits medical doctors.

STEPS TOWARD GROUP THERAPY

1949 – 1973

Activities in building up the NPAP, teaching member and active in training programs.

1948 – 1951

Training in group therapy with pioneers, such as Asya Kadis, Sandy Flowerman, Alexander Wolf, etc.

1957 – 1973

Instructor at the Centre for Psychotherapy (later Centre for Mental Health) in the Department for Group Therapy.

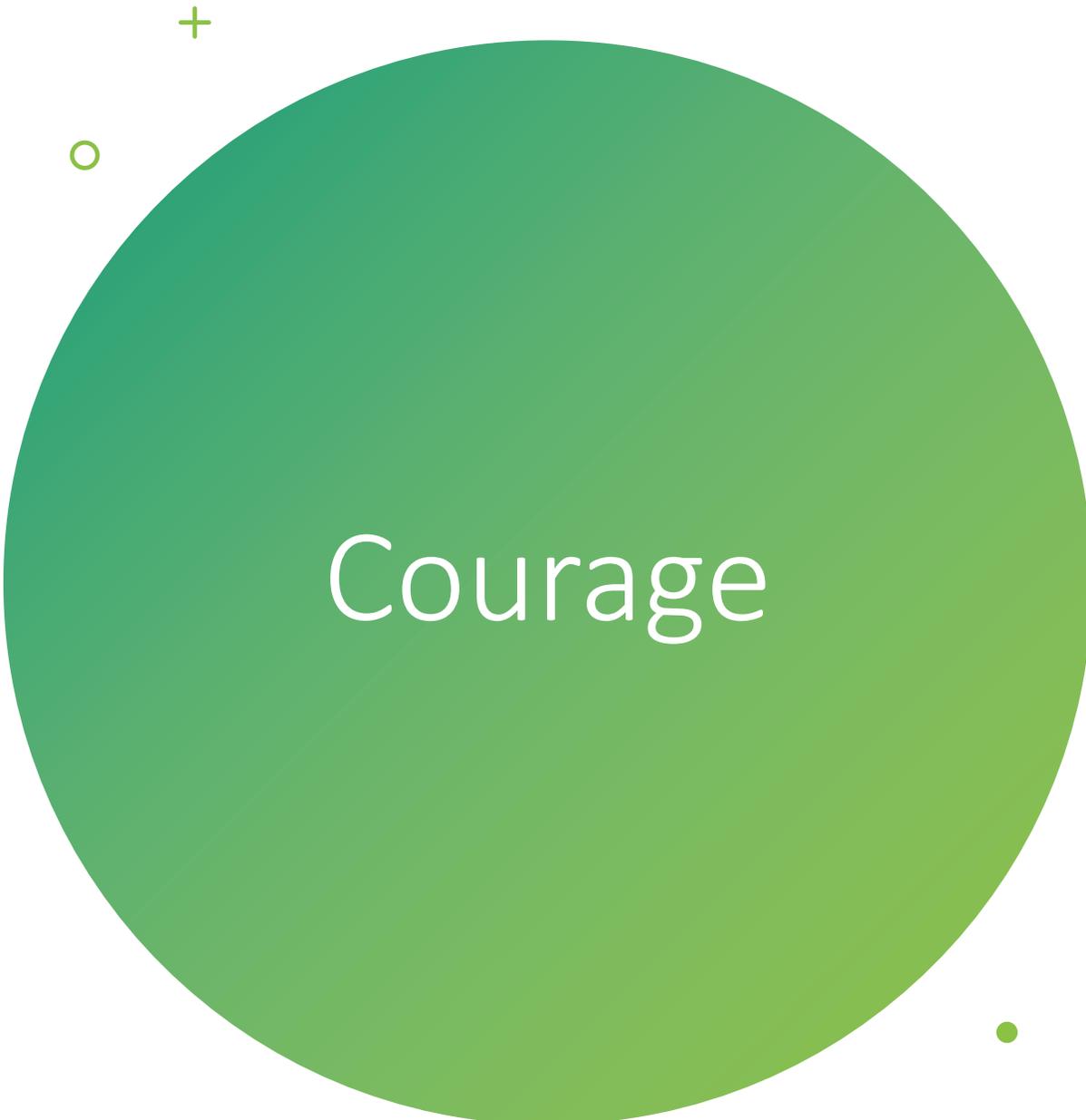
After 1962

Ruth is active member of the American Academy of Psychotherapy, a meeting place for representatives of newer and classic psychotherapeutic methods, i.e., George Bach, Henry and Vivian Guze, Sidney Jourard, Fritz Perls, Ervin Polster, Carl Rogers, Virginia Satir, John Warkentin, Carl Whitaker.



THE GOAL OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

Speech at the Theodor Reik Clinic in New York 1957



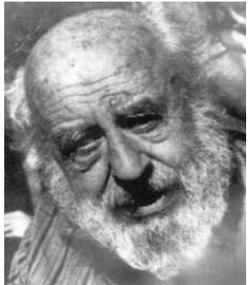
Courage

Those who act courageously are aware of the **risk** involved. Therefore, **courageous people** are usually **not free of (physical, psychological, social) fear**. This **actual fear of the risk** must be distinguished from that "**hang over fear**" that we carry within us - not least from childhood. **Fear** can be **so great** that it "**eats up**" all the **energy to act courageously**. Courageous people have **strong concerns, values, beliefs/trust** that **inspire their actions**. They "**find solutions to many problems that could not be found if they were fearfully and rigidly stuck in old concepts and patterns**" (Cohn)

11th Text read by...

Steps into society/world responsibility

Fritz Perls (Gestalttherapy)



I do what I do;
and you do what you do.

I am not in this world
to live according to your expectations.
And you are not in this world
to live according to mine.
And if by chance we find each other - wonderful.
If not, nothing can be done.

Ruth C. Cohn



I want to do what I do.
I am me.
You want to do what you do.
You are you.

This world is our task.
It does not meet our expectations.
However, if we are committed to it,
This world will be beautiful.
If not, it will be nothing.

Cohn 1974, Die Selbsterfahrungsbeziehung,
-Autismus, S. 164)

ON THE WAY TO THEME-CENTERED INTERACTIONAL METHOD (TIM later TCI)

1955

Ruth initiates a workshop with the theme “Counter-Transference”, whose methodical approach establishes the basis for the development of Experiential Therapy and Theme-Centered-Interactional-Method (TIM), later on Theme-Centered-Interaction (TCI).

1965 – 1966

Additional Training in gestalt therapy with Fritz Perls

1966

Founding of the Workshop Institute for Living-Learning (WILL) New York, an institute for training, research and practice of TCI (Theme Centered Interaction)

4. At home in the hearts of the people Europe (c. 1968-2010) from c. 56th-98th LY.



“I will never have a
homeland again except in
the hearts of humans.”

(Cohn, in: Herrmann 1992, 22)



Springbrunnen

Words – German words and songs
they were my mother
like hallway light and friendly steps at night.
“Guten Abend, gute Nacht,” mein Kind
„Sleep little princess ...“
(She fitted words to match a daughters’s size.)

Evil boots beat on the darkened staircase
They trampled lullabies and light
and almost everything – –
Her too.

The German words drowned into parting seas.

There came to me the image of a fountain
of faded years ago.

Berlin
And she

white-leather button shoes.
The lilac petal patches
bobbed doubly up and down
as I threw pebbles in the rounded pool.

And through forgotten shimmer of cascadic sprays
arose into my English speaking mind
a German word:

“Springbrunnen” – Jumping fountain
and splashed about
around my Rainer Rilke’s “Childhood” little sailboat
(Das Kreise, immer weitre Kreise um sich zog)
Weaving ever widening circles into waves.

12th Text read by

Back to Europe

- From 1968 Ruth returns to Europe
- Invitation from Helmut Stolze to participate in a symposium about Supervision in Vienna at the International Congress for Group Psychotherapy and contact there with Annelise Heigl-Evers, Ingeborg Bojan von Plotho, Ilse Seglow. After that regular invitations to the Psychotherapy Weeks in Lindau, to Group Therapy Conferences in Bonn and to the Psychotherapy Institute in London. Ruth reduces private practice in New York in order to dedicate herself to building up TCI in the USA and Europe.

1971

Psychologist of the Year Award, awarded by the New York Society for Clinical Psychology

27.8.1972

Founding of WILL-Europe in Zurich in Elisabeth Bollag's house (died 1983)

1973

Closing of private practice in the USA, guest professor at Clark University, Massachusetts.

1973 – 1974

Introduction of TCI in the Western-Palatinate-Cooperation-Model (WKM) in Vlotho, an organization founded by Werner Rietz and directed by Annedore Schultze for the Education of youth, teachers and families, whose main emphasis is on the cooperation between parents and educational institutions.

Vienna experience

Vienna: After 27 years' absence, Ruth Cohn once again touched down on European soil.

“I felt uneasy at first, being in this German-Austrian environment, surrounded by the unaccustomed German language. But that soon passed in light of the heartfelt welcome I received from my colleagues.”

(Cohn/Farau, p. 376)

At the end of the [Vienna] congress, an elderly gentleman came up to me and excitedly said:

‘I now realize why they let us contemplate things in silence and allowed us to speak as ‘I’: That was their way of avoiding mass suggestion and mass hysteria.

I had never thought about silence in this way. [. . .] That this was one of the first comments a participant from Germany offered on TCI made me feel happy for a long time.” (Cohn/Farau, p. 380).

13th Text read by...

Intentions and Hopes

What stood out most to me [. . .] in Germany was the need to fill the gaps in both knowledge and experience which had been left behind by the Nazi times and the war.

(Cohn/Farau, p. 384)

I believe that there is something good in human beings. [. . .] It has to do with respect for life, respect for nature, respect for other humans. [. . .] I think it might be possible that, say, in 50 years the appropriate methods [of TCI] will no longer be appropriate, and something new will appear. As long as humankind exists [. . .] even 1% hope is justified.

(R. Cohn in: Heidbrink, 1992, pp. 315ff.)

Career in Europe

1974

Since then, residence of Hasliberg-Goldern, Switzerland, associated with the Ecole d'Humanité, an international boarding school for children and youth, where Ruth is consultant and responsible for introducing TCI to the staff and in the curriculum. Also, training workshops in TCI and private practice in gestalt and experiential therapy, consultation and supervision.

1972

Consolidation of regional and national WILL organisations into WILL-International

1979

Awarded the title of honorary doctor (Dr. phil. h.c.) by the Faculty of Psychology, University of Hamburg, Germany.

1992

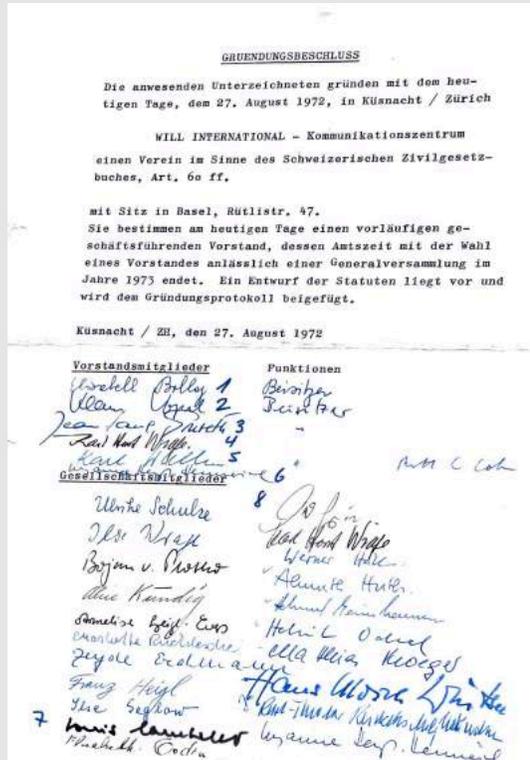
Awarded the Presidential Medal of Honour (Großes Verdienstkreuz) by the Federal Republic of Germany.

1994

Awarded the title of honorary doctor (Dr.phil.h.c.) by the Institute for Psychology of the Faculty for Philosophy and History of the University of Bern, Switzerland.

Great
view
with a
small flat





In numerous letters and documents from Ruth C. Cohn's estate, there is a concern that Theme-centred Interaction is spreading too fast in Europe and beyond (especially India). The WILL organisation would not be able to keep up with the necessary qualification of TCI teachers. Ruth had initially approached psychotherapists of different schools in Europe, for whom TCI was an additional qualification. But soon scientists, teachers, pastors, people from the business world, etc. came to her seminars.

TCI spreads (too) quickly?



Planetary Citizen

After returning from the USA, the migrant saw herself as a "planetary citizen"; she knows she belongs to the "globe" and shares responsibility for its future. Not as a Jew, not as a German, not as a Swiss or American, but as a planetary citizen she returned to her former homeland, which Hitler had stolen from her. She made explicit her understanding of herself as a "planetary citizen" in the "thanks" for the well-meaning gift given to her on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of WILL: Several trees had been planted in honour of the Jewess. Perhaps the idea for the tree gift to Ruth was connected to the Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. As always: the intention of the gift had gone down badly with Ruth C. Cohn. She writes: "I would like to counter your thoughts that I am Jewish and therefore also particularly interested in Israel: I am no more interested in Jews than I am in Arabs, in the sense of preserving their life wishes. And these life wishes of both peoples (as far as one can call them peoples) are worthy of human beings. The fact that the Jews were granted a land by the Allies because there were Zionists, a religious community that considers this land to be their God-given property, has always been so questionable to me that I have never felt the desire to go to Israel, and have not done so."

(COHN, Dank für das jüdische Geschenk 1992, HUB, UA, NL Cohn Nr. 135, Blatt 248.)

14th Text read by.....

... global
themes [...] became her
passion and her
task in a special
way, almost
exclusively.
(Kroeger 2013,
62)

“The refugee problem is planetary. If this doesn’t become part of our awareness and leads to international humane actions, war and terrorism will be unavoidable. I know that planetary solutions can only come into existence slowly. But I also know, and we all might know and make an effort for it, that the heart is the place of conception, birth and life of common sense. We can only see with our hearts, the wise fox says. It is up to us to educate this heart.”

Cohn 1988, 179

Concealment is deadly.
If we open the eyes
And the heart
We have to suffer
when we face
The horror surrounding us
Or dwelling within us.

(Cohn 1986b, 36)

On the Trail of the Divine

"I searched, questioned, cried and prayed - although unbelieving - out of the desperate hope of wanting to find a redemptive answer from my agonising uncertainty" (GG 519).

Ruth C. Cohn describes her "religious impasse" in the following way: "Then came total emptiness. No questions and no answers. I was in the bottleneck, the dead centre. And from this emptiness of the bottleneck, which is part of the organismic change, I found my way back: into the faith in the divine in everything that was familiar to me. But in the meantime I had gone a little further in the same direction, only with a new, a paradoxically knowing-unknowing smile. This smile said that praying was good for me, whether anyone was listening to me or not" (GG 520).

15th Text read by...



PRAYER WITHIN

Let me continue being alive,
Giving and being given;
While I am full of the odour of blossoming earth
Let me not forget
The horror of pain and unhappiness.
Let me be kind,
Let me use my days fully.
Let me stay rooted in the ground
And yet know the sky,
And be a walking tree.
Let me spill my love into the atoms around
So that they will grow
In eternal rhythms of light.
Let me be still to become aware
of starvation around me.
And yet
Guard myself against
the starvation within myself.

Ruth Cohn
Düsseldorf / Germany / Feb 1996, Translation: Mary Anne Kuebel

16th Text read by....



Ageing



„You leaf through books, sometimes you read a few pages. What time is it in America now?' You calculate: 'About six in the morning. Then I can't call my son yet. I'll do it in the evening.' [...] 'Do we have anything for lunch?' You talk about your cooking skills, which you no longer want to cultivate. I learned to cook in Frankfurt, at my cousin's parents' house. You were allowed in the kitchen there. Not here in Berlin, because we would have learned 'bad words' from the girls. [...] We eat vegetarian food and talk about ecology and also about pilgrimages and fasting, about their religious or political orientation. [...] Charming you are at coffee, witty! [...] You look exhausted. 'I'm often scared now.' It's hard to work out what of. Maybe of becoming totally dependent. You seem depressed now, also at risk. And then you realise you should drink something. Old people should drink a lot, no, not just coffee. The daughter is on the phone. You speak German first, until she tells you. As English enters your conversation and your feeling, I leave you alone by the phone, your link to the world, in the living room.

Yes, your living room. Many photos above the desk; you like to look at them and talk about your loved ones: About Dad, who died young. Of your son and daughter in America, of your grandchildren. About the relative with the mysterious circumstances of death. Of the admirer who became unfaithful to you when he remarried.

And postcards above the armchair. You are particularly fond of the old Jew by Chagall. And the Indian wood relief on the wall with a pair of lovers. [...] Today we won't miss the news. You frown at the images of an assassination attempt in Jerusalem: 'I never wanted to go to Israel. For fundamental reasons. As long as the Palestinians don't have their own state ...'

But you still like soup, some bread and cheese, a glass of very diluted wine. And a piece of dark chocolate

(Cohn-Maag: Ein Tag im Leben)

17th Text read by



Blowing shoes

I kicked off the blowing shoes many years ago.
It was too hard to walk in them
to fall in them
and even to die in them.

What a pity: old feet will never again be young
and will never again jump stairs;

Pity: they won't fit into golden shoes
that a prince would recognise at
midnight.

It's a pity - just a pity.

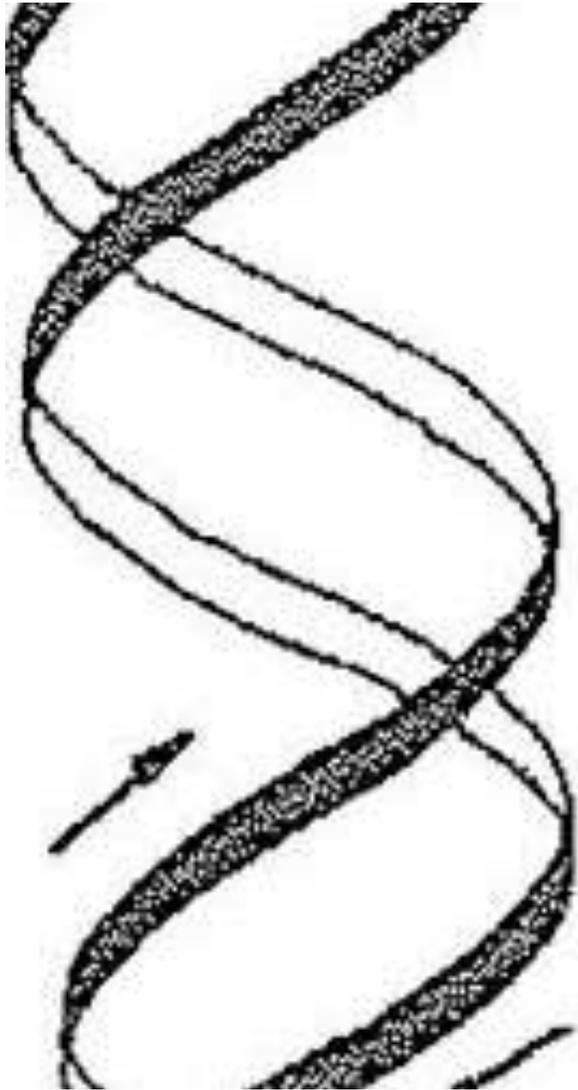
(Ruth C. Cohn)

18th Text read by

How Ruth passed away in India



Social Therapist against totalitarian thinking



Humans tend towards totalitarian thought patterns because they cannot, or can only with difficulty, tolerate the permanent openness, diversity and uncertainty of human life, the contingency. Newly emerging nationalism, ideological-religious fundamentalism, xenophobic neo-colonialism, combined with populist "leaders" who give voice to the "disadvantaged national community", promise a "safe" world.

Ruth C. Cohn, who lived "multiplicity" courageously from childhood to old age (Scharer 2019), resolutely opposed the idealisation and ideologisation of racist, nationalist, religious fundamentalist and thus totalitarian we's with "her TCI" wherever they spread in the world. The homeless poet and social therapist, whose only home was "in the hearts of the people", saw herself as a "planetary citizen" in a world where everything is connected to everything and at the same time independent (Scharer 2020).

Encounter with Ruth in her old age

