

## Interview with Dr. Ursula Hauser, 24.02.12.

Dr. Hauser was trained in psychoanalysis and psychodrama at the same time. She became interested in the latter method primarily because of her involvement into social activities. She started to work in Zurich with women and adolescents from working class. This psychological work required a method, which could involve groups of people at the same time and would not be too expensive. Psychodrama, as one of the first methods of group therapy, looked very attractive to apply in such conditions.

After the revolution in Nicaragua she was invited by the Ministry of Health to train specialists in psychology. In this group training she also used a combination of psychoanalysis and psychodrama. Ursula Hauser was a key person in the origins of psychodrama in Cuba, having started an educational program in this method in the University of Havana. All professional activity of Dr. Hauser was and still is inseparably linked with social work, based on her left views. Even the cadre of psychodrama program in Cuba was formed by previous members of *Plataforma Internacional* – the leftist organization. Her recent project was psychodrama training groups in occupied territories of Gaza, Palestine.

Dr. Ursula Hauser lives at present in Costa Rica, where she practices psychoanalysis and psychodrama.

### “An attempt to capture Goldy Parin-Matthey”

Questioned by: Marta Vardynets & Mariia Demianchuk

**M.V.:** Mrs. Hauser, to begin with, would you please introduce yourself? Please tell us a little about what are you doing and what is your connection to Goldy?

**U.H.:** Oh, that's a long story, so I'll try to make it as short as possible. Right here I have some photos of Goldy and Paul, also of my husband Antonio who was also a good friend of theirs. As a matter of fact, I never planned to stay in Costa Rica. I was very well settled in Switzerland and finishing my studies there in social psychology. In 1969 I started my psychoanalysis with Goldy Parin-Matthey. A bit later I shall talk about how much she influenced me -- how happy I am, how I consider it quite a privilege to have been, for all of five years, in a very intense psychoanalytic process with her.

It was during the 1960<sup>s</sup>, the time of student political movements. And I suppose my individual analysis with Goldy could be considered a part of that overall phenomenon. In 1969 the organization *Plataforma Internacional* was founded, which gathered left-wing psychoanalysts from all around the world, but mostly Europe and Latin America. Paul and Goldy Parin were active members. At the beginning, political issues were dominant in my psychoanalysis. At that time, I had no idea what psychoanalysis was, but I was in a personal crisis which forced me to seek help. I was just very lucky that someone mentioned Goldy Parin to me.

Goldy was a Marxist and an anarchist and had been very active in politics in 1936 in the Spanish Civil War. She supported the side of international brigades of anarchists. Later on, together with Paul and other medical brigade, she was helping the partisans in Yugoslavia. She

was always looking towards a form of psychoanalysis that was politically engaged and committed. She said that...

Good psychoanalysis brings a grain of sand into the machines, what can  
change everything.

I was the part of movement of 1969 and a co-founder of feminist groups, actively cooperating with Central America. In Zurich we had a group of active people, who shared the idealistic ideas how we can change the world. I finished my analysis in 1974. Parallel to psychoanalysis I started psychodrama training – a group method with theater. I worked in Worker District of Zurich mostly with women and adolescents, so it was important to look for a method, which would involve body as well. In 1980, after the revolution I went to Nicaragua, where I was invited by the Ministry of Health to train the colleagues in group method, which was based on psychoanalysis and psychodrama in my case.

In Nicaragua at the times of international solidarity movement I met Antonio, who was from Uruguay, fighting during the revolution as a *tupamaro* (see below). He died in 1996, but if he had known now that good friend of him, who was *tupamaro*, became a president of Uruguay... *Tupamaros* were the ‘terrorist group’ in 1960s; they were considered, of course, to be terrorists during the dictatorship, now won the election and are in power. This is a wonderful step forward in Latin America.

Because of the revolution and all these collective ideas and my big love to Antonio I stayed in Central America and never went back to Switzerland, except short visits and making bridges with my friends and colleagues. Goldy and Paul wanted to come to Costa Rica after we moved there. But Paul’s difficulties with leg prevented it unfortunately.

Coming back to Goldy, she always supported my work with groups in psychodrama method. After the end of my psychoanalysis and breaking of necessary abstinence, we became very close friends. We spent good times in Utoqai together with my husband Antonio, drinking wine, talking about political movements, into which we were involved. It was a wonderful gift of life – *gracias a la Vida*, - that we could share so many good moments together until 1996, when Antonio died and 1997, when Goldy died.

Now I am still in Costa Rica. I organized a center for training in psychoanalysis. In 1989 we created ASPAS – *Asociacion de Psicoanalisis Critico-Social*, which is the left group here. Most of my colleagues I trained by myself. In that time they had a lot of theory, but no chance to try it in practice. After 20 years now they have a group of around 30 trained psychoanalysts. We are linked to Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Chili and other Latin American countries. In 1996 I started a **post-graduate** training program in psychodrama in the University of Havana in Cuba (**Maestria en Psicodrama y Procesos Grupales**), what I consider to be the continuation of the work of our *Plataforma*. Many colleagues from this movement – *Plataforma International*, which was founded in 1969 and lasted until 1989, came to Cuba afterwards and we were together in the international committee for 8 meetings every 2 years on psychoanalysis and psychology in Cuba. And there came also such people as Eduardo Pavlovsky, Armando Bauleo, other Argentinean colleagues, who started to work with groups and concentrated mostly on psychodrama.

As I was a resident in Costa Rica, I could develop different projects from here with the help of Swiss left movements, like *Medico International Switzerland*. Much earlier Goldy and

Paul in the ranks of this organization were supporting partisans in Yugoslavia. For me it is a great honor that I can go on in cooperation with MIS, like in my project here with women from Salvador – the neighboring country. We started this project in 1996 and these women have already created their own psychodrama center with feminist vision. This year we will have the first feminist meeting around the 12th of October – the day of *Conquista* – colonization, where we plan to gather women from Nicaragua, Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala and hopefully Cuba. It is a very fascinating work, into which Goldy Parin put a seed. She was always much linked to feminist movement, which had nothing to do with communist party, but looked for a change, emancipation from these roles of oppression.

Now I am a professor in the University in Ethno Psychoanalysis. I made my PhD in Klagenfurt (Austria). My investigation was about Nicaraguan women with their subjectivity within revolution. Ethno psychoanalysis now is a research ground in the University of Costa Rica; also in Mexican University they have a combination of psychodrama and ethno psychoanalysis. It is a really pioneer work, which we are very proud of.

**M.V.:** Thank you for this fascinating story, from which we can introduce Goldy as being highly active in social movement and influencing very much feminist activity. So, how actually did she see a new, transformed woman in future, her role in changing the old orders?

**U.H.:** I think it was very important for her that she didn't have children. She said that she never wanted to be a mother, because she herself didn't have a good relationship with her mother. She considered that woman can go out of submissive role. She supported this idea during my own analysis. Within our later work together as colleagues she pointed out the necessity of the rebellious part of woman - not to feel guilty, but to be angry, which is natural response to this unfair world, where women, mostly in poor countries, are used as slaves. I think Goldy sent quite a clear message through her interpretations in my analysis, that...

Where feeling of guilt was, must be feeling of anger and initiative, ability to say “no”.

Of course it is a big challenge to the religion and church. Goldy was an atheist. She was very clear in her position that church is one of the biggest enemies of women emancipation.

**M.D.:** And this situation remains even nowadays in some “third world” countries.

**U.H.:** Yes, unfortunately. For instance, there is still a lot of concern in Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica with the issue of abortions, which are legally punished. I work in this field, trying to liberate women from this oppression. It is so much interrelated. Wherever the colonization came to Latin America, it came with sword and cross. Now it concerns not only catholic religion, but also evangelists, sects, fanatic groups and so on. And in most cases the power is in hands of men, who do all the work and feel like missionaries and there are a lot of sexual abuse. At last women have started to talk.

**M.D.:** You're doing a great job.

**U.H.:** Well, I hope. Now I'm 66 years old, but I feel a lot of energy, because I had very good women's models, starting from my mother, who was a handicraft teacher – woman who was always working besides being a mother, though I come from a very conservative Swiss city, where women were considered to be only within the family. And of course a new world came to

me with Goldy Parin. I don't have children; I had an abortion in 1966, when it was a very difficult time. I think I would never come to a psychoanalyst, not being Marxist with all this social commitment. In my analytical work with Goldy I managed to liberate myself from a very deep crisis, connected mostly with my abortion.

**M.V.:** But can't we say that Goldy as well as you gave a birth to a "social child"?

**M.D.:** With your activity to help other women and to introduce psychoanalysis, where it was needed.

**U.H.:** Thank you very much. I think so, too. There was a time with Antonio, when we wanted to have children, but he was a social fighter and clandestine at that time and I said no – if I decide to be a biological mother, I want to enjoy my pregnancy and not to be afraid that something will happen to my husband. So time went by and I didn't get pregnant. It made me sad for a few years, but then this transformation in our profession happened here. And of course it gives a possibility to have these mothering functions, not only for women, but for men as well in social way with groups, patients. I went by with this new vision of woman who wants to be a protagonist in her life and for a new world without all this guilt feeling and fear, which is produced mostly by politicians in order to manipulate big masses.

**M.D.:** Mrs. Hauser, I guess this topic deserves a wider research and we would love to do it when you have time. So, if we can summarize, what was the influence of Goldy Parin-Matthey on you and what are your brightest memories about her?

**U.H.:** I think her influence was to be a rebel, to get out of this role of nice and sweet woman. You know the Swiss culture is very authoritarian or was such, but I think it is still quite conservative. What Goldy showed by her life was to be happy, to say: "I am a woman, I don't want to submit and to be a slave"...

Concerning memories... of course we had different experience during my individual psychoanalysis, as she was my analyst. But later on I will tell it. Anyway the brightest memories are when we sat together, drinking wine, - both of us liked wine, - eating some chocolate or nuts and we discussed politics! This was our link, when I already lived here in Central America. She was always looking for personal support in our attempts to change the world. Of course she had a difficult life, but she enjoyed so much being together, sharing the pleasure from communication and experience, mostly in the political field.

**M.V.:** But can you give us more intimate feeling of her, besides political and social activity? As we know she was a beautiful woman. We are interested what kind of friend, woman, and wife she was? You know, each of us has a lot of "personalities" or so-called social roles inside...

**U.H.:** This story is like an anecdote. During my analysis, - as you know, the analyst is sitting behind the patient, so I could see her just in the moments of coming in and going out, - I always thought of her as a man and in the end, when we were just sitting together, I looked suddenly and noticed that she had very big breasts. She was a very feminine woman, but with a masculine touch. For me she was a quite different kind of woman than was for instance my mother.

**U.H.:** Her voice changed because of smoking, and her voice was deep, her laughter was deep. I never saw her in a skirt or *vestito (dress)*, she always had trousers and sweaters or a sort of jacket of a suit on. But she was also extremely tender: when Antonio died in 1996 I had a lot

of support from her, not with much touching, but she hugged me, I can speak only for myself, she gave me a big hug and cried with me, she liked Antonio very much. We were mostly sitting together, looking, listening in a very intimate way, understanding with eye contact, giving the tenderness not in a traditional mothering way, but it was like “You can count on me, I’m here for you”. And this was a very special treat she had, she could be very harsh, she wasn’t this kind of woman playing a sexy role in traditional way, coqueting, but she was very attractive. For me she had this kind of sex appeal in her personality, but as a mixture of femininity and masculinity.

**M.D.:** We’re all bisexual creatures...

**U.H.:** Right. /laughing/

**M.D.:** Frau Hauser, you mentioned her mother and her husband Paul, do you know what kind of relationship she had with her mother? We know the story that she was proud that her mother once worked as a cleaning lady...and another part is what kind of wife she was? What was her idea of partnership, being a woman with a man?

**U.H.:** About her mother I cannot really go deeper because one doesn’t become a psychoanalyst by accident, we didn’t talk a lot about her mother, it was a team about motherhood only. She said: I never wanted to become a mother, I asked: why? And she answered I never had a good relationship with my mother. May be in post transference process I didn’t dare to ask her more. This is always very subjective from my part, I saw her relationship with Paul was mostly very respectful, very intimate, but ‘komradship’ relations. You know that in Utoquai there was also Fritz Morgenthaler, who worked as an ethnopschoanalyst and there were for many years not only me, there must have been a trio: Goldy with Paul and with Fritz she had intimate relationships, because it was clear during the African trip that they had very intimate boundaries between them. As for sexual relationships, I don’t know, there were some taboos that still in the post-transference process, she was a bit mothering Paul, because of his health that was much more fragile, especially with his leg. Sometimes I saw their relationships as those of an older sister and a younger brother, but mostly as wife and husband level they were absolutely equal, to talk, for instance. Paul loved to talk, in discussions he was always in the middle and then Goldy would say: now Paul, let the other talk. She never was in a total feminine role, neither was he in a very masculine role, but two of them were very strong personalities who shared their ideas in a professional and political way. And I really never dared to ask her about her sexual relationship. During my analyses in my life I had a lesbian relationship and she was very supportive with her interpretations, never came any homophobic prejudices. I don’t know about Maria Biljan-Bilger, who was a very good friend of hers, a sculptor, she talked about her with a lot of love and admiration, I don’t think that Goldy was concentrated only on Paul, but relationship, the model of this kind of couple was also different from the classical one, from traditional man-woman relationship, for instance she would be the one to set up the wine, because of Paul with difficulties in his leg, but I never had an impression that she would serve him like an obligation, that was like a natural giving and taking, in Utoquai they were together. The only thing I ask her some times: Goldy, why don’t you write more? It was Paul to write a lot, but he didn’t publish anything without reading it with Goldy, correcting it with Goldy, he did with Goldy all of his writings, but she published herself very few papers.

**M.D.:** Yes, we’re going to ask about this, too. Why did she leave so few works of her own?

**U.H.:** I said: Goldy, this is the only aspect I see in you traditional, women aspect of invisibility. We would love if you wrote more...and then she said: I have more pleasure in

sharing, communication, and I believe she was never an academic woman, she was skeptical about universities, and this is reflected in the work of ... aggression in ...and she said I believe in 'brudergemeinschaft', brotherhood, sisterhood, but writing, and that was of course an excuse, a rationalization, we need you to write as a woman, as a psychoanalyst. I really regret that nothing was written of our experience with other 15-20 psychoanalysts with Goldy, she organized it, and we, the youngsters, looked who want to participate in feministic issue, transference and Countertransference within the analytic setting. We gathered every two weeks on Wednesday in Utoquai and discussed the cases with women patients as women analysts. And mostly there were issues of homoerotic dynamics and how to deal with it as an analyst about aggressive and negative transference, because women's aggression was so much pathologised and punished. But there always we would see the opinion of Goldy was that we have to change all these concepts about historical women, of the aggressive bitch, to see what really happened in psychoanalytic situation between two women. I regret that we didn't write anything about it.

**M.V.:** Who of early Psychoanalysis had an impact on Goldy?

**U.H.:** Well, that's a difficult question. We know that she was analyzed by the same analyst that analyzed Paul. And today we wouldn't do that, this is incestuous /laugh/ I never had an impression that she was very much influenced by Brun[name of the analyst]. She mentioned her peer, Maria Langer. Later she told me confidentially that she had ambivalent feelings to her, when Maria Langer arrived to Nicaragua with brigades. I told Goldy that I didn't like **neither the submissive attitude of M.L. towards the communist party** (this communist woman with so much admiring and submission to the party). She laughed a lot, and responded that women can be very good Psychoanalyst, **but M.L. (she) wasn't a feminist at that moment.** My free association that she didn't like Kohut, he came to Zurich, she had a better opinion about Kernberg, this has also to do with issue of positive vision of aggression, narcissism and not only the empathy. I think she admired Melanie Klein because she was also rebellious with Freud, Karen Horney... those who got in difference with Freud. She was also critical with those who were idealized. Of course, she had a very good opinion of freudo-marxism... Reich, Fromm, Annie Reich, (but actually she wasn't really feminist, she wasn't looking for other women psychoanalysts), **she respected Anna Freud, but didn't like her, this became clear during the IPA Congress in Viena 1971** ...I don't know if she had influence on Goldy...

I've been away from Switzerland since the 1980s, and in that time in Switzerland we were limited in our discussions, but that could be also the point, because she didn't theoretize that much. Goldy was more an activist, she didn't go on the streets...well, sometimes she went, but her whole energy was in a practical psychoanalytical work, not so much in theory, and for this may be writing wasn't in her focus as well. She thought freudo-marxism was the most important.

**M.V.:** Now, let us go back to the social aspect, you know that we came from ex-USSR country and it was a realization of the left ideas, but you mentioned that she was against communist party, could you please tell in a few words what was her attitude towards USSR and collapse of USSR, collapse of left social system so to say...

**U.H.:** As I mentioned, she was on the anarchist side in Spanish Civil War in 1936, and there communists killed anarchists, that was a very deep and traumatic experience, she said that she was against communist party, mostly because of all this power, this regime, hierarchic, patriarchic all around the world had too many ...and this we shared also, including Antonio, who was *tupamaro*, very much against communist party, in Uruguay, where the communist party

made an alliance with the conservative party in order to be in the parliament, which was historically a trigger for social attitude, was a great social movement, for a change. I was Maoist at that time in 1969, what came afterwards was a shock, what is going on now is another shock, but at that time though her interpretations I felt /I was in analyses with her/ she was very much against the socialist, imperialist movement of Soviet Union with Stalin who changed the whole situation, as in the 1920s it was very open attitude towards Psychoanalyses with Lenin, with Sabina Spielrein. There were so many people who tried to put Psychoanalytical knowledge in Pedagogical Field, for instance, and all that was repressed by Stalin. So Goldy was very clear saying that what was happening in revolution in 1917, was very wonderful and a necessary movement, but what was afterwards, beyond the regime, also in Czechoslovakia, the only exception she saw was Tito in Yugoslavia, and for this reason they went to help partisans. She never accepted things to be ordered, to receive orders and to say: si, mi commandante...she would never do that, she was against this hierarchic centralist power, government and she looked more for self-determination. Tito tried to combine Marxist theory, scientific theory with social movement to give cultural minorities space. As ethnopsychanalyst, she always criticized centralism of Moscow: the same directives to Ukraine and Syberia, this is impossible, this is oppression. And then she said the only thing she liked in Swiss was that Switzerland gives to the different cultural districts (cantons) autonomy. And this her search for autonomy, self-determination, respect to cultural identities of people that were very much against communist party which never had respect for different cultural identities and was up only for domination, but she was Marxist, the strategy ideally she shared with communists but not with the party organization. We talked a lot about Rosa Luxemburg for instance, whom I and Goldy admired very much. There was a try not to centralize, syndicates and parties that cannot go together, as it was too much power centralized. For that she was also fascinated by the movement of young people in the 1980s in Zurich as these young people fought for their autonomy this we must...as the older generation.

**M.D.:** Frau Hauser, that comes logically to our last question: what would you like to transmit as a female and as a female analyst to us, to 'younger' generation of women and future? Psychoanalysts? What would you tell us from your experience and background?

**U.H.:** I would like to say I share the feminist critics of Psychoanalysis, especially where it goes to deeper study: we, as women, must change, for example, the statements from Freudian theory about women sexuality and this was already partly started by Karen Horney; statements about penis envy, and all the old concepts we must rethink and of course reject what was like a dogma, anyway we must reject some feminist dogmas. A message or homage of Goldy: the autonomy lies in thinking and acting, daring to be myself, daring to respect the other in her/his difference, in his/her diversity, trying to understand the other in his/her cultural different way of thinking and getting away from authoritarian centralist behavior. But I really would say to you, young women, give the possibility to feminist psychoanalyses or left-wing point of view always look at the social and cultural context critically not only the psychoanalytic dynamic like Lacanians. Here in Latin America during dictatorship they could go on making their money while our colleagues worked in exile, were dead or in prison. Psychoanalysis is a good and necessary tool to understand the social move, the politics, why the masses of people say yes against their own interest, why women are still so full of guilt. So, I think we can and we must use the psychoanalyses when we want to understand subject ...and also of men. Now I also want to say from my own experience in the moment I am a psychoanalyst but in this southern country

I work more with psychodrama from psychoanalytic theory base because I see that this group therapy is very much helpful in supporting this autonomy and cultural identity with a transference to me as a European middle class woman but is always considering transference processes between the group participants and it includes body, art, humor, acting-in, in surrealistic meaning, it includes putting our utopias on stage to dare to be a little crazy. So this is so important for young people in this closed world, icy, I would say. From old youth movement in Zurich they used a ship in ice, icebreaker, we called culture icy, and we must put more creativity in it and for that psychodrama is a very good tool with psychoanalytic thinking and interpretation.

**M.D.:** Thank you, Frau Hauser.

**U.H.:** Thank you too, I hope that Goldy is alive with us, because she was one of those women who could deal with pleasure of life.

*Tupamaro – a member of a group of urban guerillas in Uruguay during 1960-1980's.*