

***Uprooted Minds: Surviving the Politics of Terror in the Americas***by **Nancy Caro Hollander**

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The complicity of psychoanalysis with authoritarian political regimes is one of the signal facts in its history. The most important example is that of Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud and Ernest Jones who all sought to work with German psychoanalysis after it had been rendered *Judenrein*, that is, after the Jewish analysts had been expelled. Also of great significance was the cooperation of many American ego psychologists with the Cold War, even with McCarthyite repression. To be sure, the opposite is also the case. There were psychoanalysts who resisted Nazism and who stood up to Cold War bullying. *Uprooted Minds* is a study of both sides of this analytic conundrum, as applied to the Americas.

The latter phrase is the key to understanding the book. Although largely devoted to Latin America, Hollander's perspective places the US in the role of hegemon for the entire hemisphere. Nothing that happens in Latin America happens without US influence. Furthermore, in a brilliant turn, she takes the experiences of violence and oppression with which Latin American (especially Argentinean and Brazilian) psychoanalysis has been inflected, and turns those experiences back on the study of the United States. In particular, she uses Latin American analytic understandings of trauma, mourning and working through to examine the North American response to 9/11.

In 1991 Horacio Etchegoyen was elected President of the International Psychoanalytic Association. The election marked the recognition of the leading role that Latin Americans played in the global analytic profession. Brazilian analysis flourished, with perhaps 11 major institutes. Buenos Aires billed itself as the 'world capital of psychoanalysis.' When the IPA met there in 1991 it commanded a level of news coverage comparable to that which the International Chess Association commands in Moscow, or the World Series in New York.

Yet, ten years earlier, Jacques Derrida had written:

This that we would call from now on the Latin America of psychoanalysis is the only zone of the world where, confronting each other or not, a strong psychoanalytic society and a society . . . that practises torture on a large scale, torture that is not limited any longer to the easily identifiable classically brutal forms, coexist. This torture . . . sometimes utilizes psycho-symbolic techniques.

(Derrida, 1987, p. 327–52)

The fact is that, although psychoanalysis was introduced in Latin America into Buenos Aires in the 1940s and 1950s by Jewish refugees from Hitler, and witnessed explosive growth in the 1960s, it really flourished under the dictators. How had that occurred? The reason was that the military governments installed in Argentina and Brazil were modernizing regimes in which analysis could play a role. The Argentinian military, for example, allowed for what it called 'democratic islands' in the universities and in scientific institutes, and even provided mental health insurance. Similarly, the

Brazilian Vargas regime and its successors encouraged a non-threatening, apolitical psychoanalysis following the policy of authoritarian modernization. The most striking example of the complicity of analysts with authoritarianism was the Lobo case, which the IPA and its affiliated societies in Brazil tried but failed to keep secret. In this case, Amilcar Lobo, a candidate in a Rio de Janeiro society, had been involved in supervising army tortures.

At the same time, Hollander recounts the inspiring stories of such figures as Juan Carlos Volnovich, forced to flee Argentina; Marcelo and Maren Viñar, tortured and driven into exile from Uruguay for treating a Tupamaro; Elizabeth Lira, who worked with the church to restore democracy in El Salvador; Estela Carlotto, who worked with the 'disappeared' (young people thrown live from military airplanes); Julia Braun, a psychoanalytic student of state terror; Ignacio Martín Baró, an important social psychologist assassinated by US-trained Salvadoran soldiers in 1989; and Marie Langer and other analysts of the Marxo-Freudian *Performa* and *Defensa* schools. She recounts, especially in biographical form, the efforts of these and other analysts to study the psychology of the 'disappeared,' the misshapen masculinities that resulted from the colonial trauma, the 'collective unconscious,' the 'work of mourning' and the need for 'working through'.

On Tuesday, September 11th, 1973, the democratically elected Social Democratic President of Chile, Salvador Allende, was overthrown by the Chilean military, with the encouragement and support at every stage of the US government, in a policy established by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. This event, which was followed by numerous executions and the installation of the dictatorship of August Pinochet truly deserves the term 'traumatic.' Thus, from a Latin American point of view, there was remarkable synchronicity in the fact that the US suffered its own traumatic wound on the same day, September 11th, 28 years later. Hollander uses object relations theory as well as the largely Latin American theories of the social unconscious to reflect on this event.

While I cannot fully do justice to these theories, I do believe that they should be connected to recent reflections on the US September 11th by Judith Butler and John Dower. According to Judith Butler's *Precarious Life*: "US boundaries were breached [and] an unbearable vulnerability was exposed" (2004, p. xi). In his *Cultures of War*, historian John Dower has argued that the attacks were experienced as a repeat of Pearl Harbor. According to Dower, George W. Bush wrote in his diary: "The Pearl Harbor of the Twenty-First Century took place today" (2010, p. 4), numerous newspapers bore such headlines as 'New Day of Infamy,' while a billboard on the Kennedy Expressway in Chicago placed the legend 'Never forget!' between the two dates of December 7, 1941 and September 11, 2001. Not only Pearl Harbor but the subsequent war and the atomic bomb were invoked. The famous photo of Marines raising the Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima was recycled as a poster and then postage stamps showing firemen raising the flag over the devastated World Trade Center site. The site, in turn, was renamed Ground Zero, until then a term reserved for the bombed out areas of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

As Butler points out, everyone in the United States remembers where they were and what they were doing when they learned that the planes hit the Towers. Everyone begins the story of that day by invoking a first-person narrative point of view. That narrative is part of a healing process, an attempt to rebuild a shattered world. As Butler has written: “A narrative form emerges to compensate for the enormous narcissistic wound opened up by the public display of our physical vulnerability” (2004, p. 7). But, although necessary, the first-person narrative is not sufficient. Equally necessary is the process of de-centering and reintegration suggested by Hollander’s brilliant account. All psychoanalysts owe it to themselves to avail themselves of her hemispheric, indeed, global picture in order that the analytic commitment to neutrality in the individual practice of analysis is not compromised by the analytic profession’s complicity with illegitimate power.

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