

# Psychoanalytic pedagogy during wartime: Lessons from history and emerging challenges

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## **Pedagogia psicoanalitica in tempo di guerra: lezioni dalla storia e sfide emergenti**

The article explores the prerequisites for the establishment of psychoanalytic pedagogy and its evolution during the First and Second World Wars. From its inception, psychoanalysis evolved as a critical method through which the instinctual drives related to life and death were reinterpreted. Sigmund Freud and his followers repeatedly focused on the causes of war and human behaviour in extreme conditions. Special attention was devoted to the theory of education and the organisation of pedagogical work with war-affected children. This study highlights the ideas of leading psychoanalysts from the first half of the twentieth century, who developed the concept of psychoanalytic pedagogy, drawing on their personal experiences of war and forced migration. It is emphasised that with the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe, psychoanalysis was banned in the USSR, Germany, and Austria, yet it continued to develop in more supportive countries, particularly in Great Britain and the United States. In light of the current military escalations in Ukraine and the Middle East, the reinterpretation of psychoanalytic pedagogy for working with children affected by war — children who have experienced trauma from explosions, shelling, and forced migration both within their own countries and to other nations — has gained renewed importance.

L'articolo esamina i prerequisiti per la nascita della pedagogia psicoanalitica e la sua evoluzione durante la Prima e la Seconda Guerra Mondiale. Fin dalle sue origini, la psicoanalisi si è sviluppata come un metodo critico attraverso cui le pulsioni istintuali legate alla vita e alla morte sono state reinterpretate. Sigmund Freud e i suoi seguaci si sono ripetutamente concentrati sulle cause della guerra e sul comportamento umano in condizioni estreme. Un'attenzione particolare è stata dedicata alla teoria dell'educazione e all'organizzazione del lavoro pedagogico con i bambini colpiti dalla guerra. Questo studio evidenzia le idee dei principali psicoanalisti della prima metà del XX secolo, che hanno sviluppato il concetto di pedagogia psicoanalitica basandosi sulle loro esperienze personali di guerra e di migrazione forzata. Si sottolinea che, con l'ascesa dei regimi totalitari in Europa, la psicoanalisi è stata vietata in URSS, Germania e Austria, ma ha continuato a svilupparsi in Paesi più favorevoli, in particolare in Gran Bretagna e negli Stati Uniti. Alla luce delle attuali escalation militari in Ucraina e in Medio Oriente, la reinterpretazione della pedagogia psicoanalitica per lavorare con i bambini colpiti dalla guerra – bambini che hanno vissuto traumi causati da esplosioni, bombardamenti e migrazione forzata, sia all'interno dei loro Paesi che verso altre nazioni – ha acquisito una rinnovata rilevanza.

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## 1. Introduction

It is widely known that war represents a unique system of relations, connected to the resolution of conflicts between different peoples, states, and national or social groups through armed struggle. The history of military conflicts spans as many years as human civilisation itself. It has been calculated that in the last five thousand years, the planet has experienced only 300 years without any military conflicts in total (Korotkyi, 2017, p. 5). In other words, armed conflicts have almost always been an integral part of societal history. Analysing the causes of constant disputes and military confrontations in human history, Sigmund Freud emphasised that two types of drives coexist in every person. One set is directed towards creativity, preservation, and unity, while the other focuses on destruction and death. Both drives, according to Freud, are equally important to the individual, and it is through their interaction and opposition that all societal activity is carried out (Freud, 1964). Freud also argued that social inequality is innate and insurmountable, as it traces back to the early stages of human evolution. Throughout human history, there have always been rulers and commoners, the latter needing an authoritative figure to make decisions on their behalf or to whom they could submit. The motivations behind calls to war have always varied, from constructive (to protect, to defend) to destructive (to conquer, to destroy). Thus, every living being strives to preserve its own life by simultaneously destroying another. Given this, Freud argued that it is futile to aim at eradicating aggressive tendencies. Instead, it is more effective to actively promote constructive drives, as whatever fosters cultural development simultaneously works against the phenomenon of war. In conclusion, destructiveness exists within each of us; however, the role it plays is determined by us individually, within the framework of our personal, familial, group, or societal culture (Rechardt, 2004, p. 47).

The psychoanalytic theory of war is not limited to the examination of aggressive and destructive forms of behaviour along with their corresponding mental states. Within the framework of psychoanalysis, the focus is not on demonstrable biological principles but on dominant psychic drives. Sigmund Freud's theory of libido opened new avenues for understanding various forms of satisfaction. Conversely, the theory of Thanatos seeks to demonstrate that there is a wide range of psychic events, destructive by nature, which serve as alternatives to a single underlying drive – the pursuit of a state of calm.

Throughout the twentieth century, psychoanalysts concerned with the origins of wars focused their attention on the psychological motives of aggression and domination over others. Notably, Adolf Hitler's political activities prompted Wilhelm Reich to write *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933), while the outbreak of World War II motivated Erich Fromm to author *Escape from Freedom* (1941). Despite the fact that prominent psychoanalysts explored different aspects of military conflicts, they were all united by the desire to find paths to social understanding. Moreover, during the world wars, a group of specialists practiced psychoanalysis in the field of education, striving to support and rehabilitate children affected by acts of armed conflict.

## 2. Psychoanalytic pedagogy in the first third of the twentieth century

During times of war, the issue of education and pedagogical support for children in difficult life circumstances takes on particular importance. The history of education includes numerous examples where participants in military conflicts became involved in educational matters. For instance, King Frederick the Great of Prussia (Frederick II) instituted the practice of transferring junior officers from the army into positions as teachers in public schools. In other words, individuals trained to rely on force were assigned to educate the Prussian people, with well-documented consequences. These military teachers frequently responded to any signs of deviant behaviour in children with aggression and physical punishment, which encouraged those children to adopt forceful methods in their interactions with others later in life. Prior to the war, educators and school administrators prioritised developing diligent and responsible citizens rather than promoting militant nationalism. Teaching approaches were largely traditional, focusing on memorisation and reinforcing the teacher's authority. However, with the onset of

the war, these practices shifted, especially in urban areas. Educational reforms introduced more child-centred learning methods, and the curriculum began to incorporate topics related to the war (Kay, 2014, p. 4). Schools played a role in socialising and supporting the war, particularly through «military pedagogy», which allowed the introduction of aggressive propaganda into the educational process. Research often highlights the enthusiasm for the war among teachers and students that prevailed during the early months. However, despite these efforts, schools remained relatively autonomous institutions, and by 1914, a routine began to take hold, diminishing the initial war fervour (Scholz & Berdelmann, 2016, p. 98). Despite this, military propaganda continued to permeate education, influencing the transformation of pedagogy as the art of guiding children. In this regard, the Austrian psychoanalyst Siegfried Bernfeld, a supporter of Freudo-Marxist ideas, stated that pedagogy is merely an appendage of political science. In his book *Sisyphus or, The Limits of Education* (1925), he argued that it is politics, not pedagogy, that primarily requires the science of education, since the aims of education are determined not by philosophy or ethics, but by the dominant socio-political classes, who are driven by their own motives to consolidate and expand their power. Pedagogy merely conceals this unsavory process of power retention, veiling it with a web of new educational ideas tailored to suit the political objectives of the ruling elite (Bernfeld, 2014, p. 32).

It so happened that the emergence of psychoanalysis coincided with the world wars, which significantly influenced the transformation of ideas in psychoanalytic pedagogy. It is well-documented that in the early 1900s, psychoanalytic pedagogy primarily focused on ideas related to sexual education. For instance, during one of the sessions of «The Wednesday Psychological Society», Fritz Wittels raised the issue of sexual education. In his presentations, he emphasised the necessity of sexual education for children as a means of preventing the development of neurotic disorders. Wittels argued that the role of educators should be entrusted to older students rather than elderly teachers (Vallejo, 2007, p. 181). In December 1907, debates within the society continued on the topic of «Sexual Trauma and Sexual Education». Paul Federn and Eduard Hitschmann disagreed with Wittels' assertion that sexual education should have a preventive function in addressing neuroses and psychological trauma. On the other hand, Isidor Sadger pointed out that parents are incapable of providing sexual education for their children, as they themselves require clarification on the subject. Sigmund Freud's position was relatively moderate. He believed that sexual education could prevent severe neuroses, though he did not consider it a panacea for all psychological trauma (Nunberg & Federn, 1962, p. 241).

Sándor Ferenczi also conducted research on the issue of sexual education. Following Sigmund Freud's idea about the dominant influence of erogenous zones and instincts on a child's behaviour, Ferenczi warned educators against suppressing these elements. He believed that teachers should take preventive measures to ensure that expressions of sexuality stay within socially acceptable boundaries. Meanwhile, parents should engage in explanatory conversations rather than leaving their children to face the challenges of accelerated sexual development alone. Only in the absence of «hypocritical secrecy» in matters of sexual education can conscious cathexis and sublimation occur, allowing the child to channel their drives into socially beneficial goals. Overall, Ferenczi argued that a reevaluation of educational theory would lay the foundation for a new generation, one that would not repress its instincts according to cultural stereotypes but would instead learn to manage its internal energy. The emergence of such children, according to Ferenczi, would signify the end of a pedagogical era marked by a lack of self-criticism, hypocrisy, and blind adherence to dogmas and authorities (Ferenczi, 1949, p. 221).

The growing attention to the field of psychoanalytic pedagogy is evidenced by the events of the First International Psychoanalytic Congress (1908). Notably, the opening of the Congress began with a presentation by Sándor Ferenczi titled «Psychoanalysis and Education». In his speech, Ferenczi noted that the long-standing educational system had transformed into a breeding ground for various neurotic disorders and a source of severe mental illnesses. Even those children who were fortunate enough not to develop illnesses experienced constant pressure and suffering due to inadequate pedagogical theories. In his presentation, Ferenczi emphasised that the education of a healthy child should be based on sublimation and the principle of pleasure, as every civilised person seeks to experience as much joy as possible with minimal strain. However, the traditional education system, instead of fostering an environment for creative self-realisation through sublimation, always sought to force the child, who was already bur-

dened by various external factors. In light of this, Ferenczi saw the first steps in educational reform as a review of the work of social institutions and a reduction of the academic burden on children (Ferenczi, 1949, p. 223).

Unlike the early followers of Sigmund Freud, who sought to explore the theoretical aspects of psychoanalytic pedagogy, the official educational doctrine in Austria-Hungary was based on military pedagogy. A typical example of such an approach is the story of August Aichhorn, who in 1907 co-founded the Viennese military reform schools for boys. The management of these institutions was overseen by military authorities, with whom Aichhorn frequently disagreed about the necessity of rote learning of military regulations and strict drilling. In an effort to modify the long-standing system of student training, Aichhorn proposed increasing the hours dedicated to the study of natural sciences, medical aid, sports, and vocational training. As a result of his efforts, the military schools in Vienna were transformed into exemplary children's homes, attended primarily by children from low-income families (Nelin, 2020). After the end of World War I, Aichhorn became responsible for establishing educational centers for children with behavioural issues or legal problems. The first such center was opened in 1919 in Hollabrunn, on the site of a former refugee camp (from 1920, the center operated in St. Andrä). In his work, Aichhorn argued that the suppression of personality, widely used in educational practices, led to delinquent behaviour and psychological trauma in children. Criticising traditional pedagogy, Aichhorn developed an alternative educational approach, grounded in a genuine interest in the student's individuality and an understanding of their psychological needs.

In the challenging socio-economic conditions of post-war Europe, most educators continued to apply methods of authoritarian pedagogy, corporal punishment, and military discipline. However, in practice, these methods primarily provoked further resentment among adolescents. Meanwhile, the humanistic and reformist pedagogical ideas, which promoted compassion and love, failed to produce the desired outcomes. This prompted August Aichhorn to seek alternative pedagogical approaches. Initially, he was interested in the principles of neuropathology, Wilhelm Wundt's experimental psychology, and Ernst Neumann's experimental pedagogy, until in 1920 he discovered psychoanalysis.

Aichhorn's approach focused on understanding the psychology of delinquents and the specific social responses to them. His psychoanalytic pedagogy was not aimed at teaching children new knowledge or instilling socially accepted behavioural norms through re-education. Instead, it sought to identify the underlying causes of neuroses, ambivalent feelings, and other psychological characteristics in children, with the goal of eventually liberating them from deviant and delinquent behaviour. In his studies, Aichhorn argued that children with delinquent behaviour often develop hostility toward school as a social institution, viewing it as a conspiracy between their parents and society, working against the adolescent's interests. Additionally, most young offenders harbored negative attitudes toward psychotherapists, who were often used to threaten or discipline them. Any therapy organised to control the behaviour of troubled adolescents was perceived by them as an attempt to force conformity to societal expectations, which frequently led to negative transference in therapy (Galatzer-Levy & Galatzer-Levy, 2007, p. 156). Overall, Aichhorn pioneered a new direction in psychoanalysis – social work. He fundamentally transformed the approach to «abandoned» youth, showing that both hidden and overt antisocial behaviours stemmed from a profound lack of socio-emotional support in childhood and from the trauma of war (Freud, 1925, p. 272). In his work, Aichhorn rejected the authoritarian approach, as well as the belief that deviant behaviour was a sign of innate degeneration. At the same time, he remained skeptical of overly sentimental approaches that allowed excessive permissiveness.

The events of World War I heightened social tensions across Europe. Against this backdrop, the ideas of social pedagogy gained increasing traction. It was no coincidence that Vienna – where psychoanalysis was flourishing – became the center of this movement. Alongside August Aichhorn, two of the most prominent figures in developing this new educational system were Alfred Adler and Siegfried Bernfeld.

During World War I, Adler served as a physician in the Austrian army. After the war, he turned his focus to educational theory and the challenges of child development. To support his ideas on the relationship between individual psychology and education, Adler established an educational clinic in Vienna (Seidler & Zilah, 1930). Over time, a network of consultative and pedagogical institutions, kindergartens, and experimental schools, all grounded in the principles of individual psychology, sprang up across Austria. By 1933, Vienna alone was home to around 30 such institutions.

In his pedagogical ideas, Alfred Adler primarily addressed teachers, offering recommendations on how they should interact with students to foster the development of mentally healthy individuals. He emphasised that love and trust in education should entirely replace the child's fear of the teacher. One of the main goals of education, according to Adler, was to cultivate a courageous and self-assured individual capable of living in harmony with others and not inclined to violate social norms. This stance conflicted with the ideas of classical psychoanalysis. Unlike Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, one of Adler's key ideas was that social drives are as fundamental as biological ones. While Freud saw the problem of personality development in biological determinism – where the movement of libido through erogenous zones essentially determines a person's fate – Adler believed that every person possesses more talents and potential than they realise. Based on this, the teacher's primary task is to help the child achieve self-realisation (Adler, 2011).

Another notable developer of psychoanalytic pedagogy and education was Siegfried Bernfeld. During World War I, he was a coordinator of the socialist movement of Austrian youth advocating for new education. The group dissatisfied with the existing educational system mainly consisted of families from the Jewish-liberal bourgeoisie. Their ideological foundation was based on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. As anti-Semitic sentiments rose in society, Bernfeld's movement gradually aligned with the Zionist movement, where he led the youth wing of the Zionist Central Council of Western Austria (Herrmann, 2012, p. 14). Over the course of his educational work, Bernfeld co-founded pedagogical seminars for educators and teachers, held at the «Jewish Institute for Youth Research and Education». He was also the editor of the journal *Jerubbaal* and a theoretical advocate for educational development within *kibbutzim*, which he regarded as a model of revolutionary collective social education (Lohmann, 2001, p. 53).

The system of collective education in the *kibbutz* was based on democratic principles of social well-being, grounded in love, mutual understanding, and cooperation. The primary goal of the *kibbutzim* was to raise a new generation – free and independent from previous ones. After World War I, Bernfeld, inspired by *kibbutz* education, founded the experimental orphanage «Baumgarten» in Vienna (1919), which housed Jewish orphans. Baumgarten was conceived as a project for the development of a «children's republic», modeled on the Wickersdorf Free School Community by Gustav Wyneken (1906). The main difference between Wyneken's school and Bernfeld's orphanage was that the former enrolled children from affluent families, while more than 300 homeless visitors to Baumgarten were orphans from proletarian Jewish neighbourhoods. The educational process at Baumgarten took place in barracks that had previously served as an American hospital, and the main goal of the orphanage was to adapt children to new life conditions and redirect deviant behaviour toward socially constructive activities (Kamp, 1995, p. 458).

In his research, Siegfried Bernfeld emphasised that all children of war found themselves in a state of being «neglected» and «abandoned» by society. Most had an underdeveloped emotional sphere and lacked understanding of feelings like friendship, attachment, and love. When faced with new life challenges, they underestimated their own abilities and did not seek support from adults, as they did not trust in their good intentions. According to Bernfeld, the time that the Baumgarten children spent in families was rather short, which did not foster the development of their social interest in life. Furthermore, their fragmented memories of their parents centred their inner world on their own Ego. Overall, the Baumgarten children came from the lower social classes and belonged to the perpetually persecuted Jewish community, which had neither its own territory nor public protection.

Thus, Siegfried Bernfeld characterised the process of education as «violence» against the child's psyche and an intrusion into the freedom of their instinctual life. He argued that the goal of the state education system is to provide society with as many children as possible who conform to the demands of that society. To achieve this goal, society employs teachers to mold obedient children, denying them the right to their own thoughts and limiting them to mere conformity with societal norms and values. In contrast, the education of the ruling elites takes place in youth movements that promote the development of self-awareness and independent actions for the future.

During the interwar period, Bernfeld taught a course on «Psychoanalysis and Pedagogy» for the Berlin Psychoanalytic Association, as well as a child care course at the German School of Politics. He was a well-known expert of his time, but due to the rise of the National Socialists in Germany, he was forced to emigrate, first to France and later to the United States. Throughout his life, he fought against

the bureaucratisation of education, and as a psychoanalyst, he opposed authoritarian control in teaching, advocating for the professional retraining of specialists in depth psychology.

### 3. The Second World War and psychoanalytic pedagogy

With the rise of National Socialism in Europe, psychoanalysis began to rapidly decline in Austria and Germany (Sting, 2018, p. 109). By the mid-1930s, psychoanalysis was also banned in the Soviet Union, where it was labeled as a leftist (Menshevik) pseudoscience (Nelin, 2019, p. 101). As a result, many proponents of psychoanalysis were either repressed or killed. For instance, Ivan Yermakov, one of the leading figures in Russian psychoanalysis, who co-founded the Russian Psychoanalytic Society and the «International Solidarity» Children's Home-Laboratory in Moscow, was imprisoned in 1941 in Saratov and executed the following year. Another globally renowned psychoanalyst, Sabina Spielrein, was murdered by the German army during the mass execution of Jews in 1942 at Zmievskaia Balka, in Rostov-on-Don. In the late 1930s, similar events unfolded in Austria and Germany. Notably, the famous Austrian psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim, who worked with socially neglected, autistic, mentally unstable, and vagrant children, was imprisoned in the Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps from 1938 to 1939 for his anti-fascist views but was later released and emigrated to the United States in 1939. Meanwhile, another Austrian psychoanalyst, Isidor Sadger, died in the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1942. Around the same time, Viktor Frankl and his family were deported to Theresienstadt. Frankl spent nearly three years in various Nazi concentration camps before being liberated by Soviet forces in the spring of 1945. Consequently, due to these military-political transformations, the further development of psychoanalysis primarily continued in the United Kingdom and the United States. In particular, the United Kingdom, where the majority of European psychoanalysts emigrated, saw the evolution of psychoanalytic pedagogy, shaped by the challenges of forced migration and the adaptation of children to new environments, cultures, and languages. But before delving into the history of psychoanalytic pedagogy in the United Kingdom during World War II, let us first turn to a story that illustrates the attitude towards psychoanalysis in Germany after Adolf Hitler came to power.

With the change of power in Germany, Professor M. H. Göring established the German Institute for Psychological Research and Psychotherapy. The fact that he was a cousin of Hermann Göring was likely the main reason for receiving permission to develop German psychotherapy as a counterpoint to the «Jewish» version (Sokolowsky, 2021). As a result, the National Socialist ban was essentially lifted: to address research tasks, psychoanalysis and individual psychology were «re-socialised», and representatives of the three main schools (Freud, Adler, and Jung) were given the opportunity (under the guise of the new institute) to engage in joint discussions, research, therapy, teach, and even issue diplomas, including to those who had been previously prohibited. The Munich Circle of Individual Psychology, which had been banned in 1933, was granted the status of a branch of the Berlin Institute for Psychological Research and Psychotherapy. Two-thirds of the students' training took place in Munich, and only the final third had to be completed in Berlin, where they would take their final exams. At that time, Berlin was primarily the center for training psychoanalysts, Munich for individual psychologists, and Stuttgart for Jungians. It is undeniable that small groups of representatives from other schools also existed in each of these cities. The world's first unique experiment was undoubtedly intriguing. Representatives of different schools became more familiar with each other, engaged in debates that were not overly hostile, and mutually enriched one another.

According to Kurt Seelmann, life in Munich during the war years changed drastically. Many men under the age of 50 who were part of the circle were drafted into the army. After one of the bombings, the Munich group lost its premises and its library with archival materials. Many people left the city. In the evenings, no one wanted to leave their homes due to the frequent bombings. As a result, Seelmann, a secondary school teacher, was evacuated along with 54 thirteen-year-old students to a children's camp in the countryside and was later drafted into the army as well. Despite these challenges, his book *The Child, Sexuality, and Education* was published during the war (Munich, 1942), and earlier, under the editorship of Dr. Leonard Seif, *Means of Pedagogical Assistance* (1940) was also released. Both books developed ideas of individual psychology, and in accordance with Nazi regulations, the name Alfred Adler and the term «individual psychology» were completely omitted (Seelmann, 1977, p. 523).

As previously mentioned, with the rise of totalitarian sentiments and the repression of psychoanalysts of Jewish origin in Germany and Austria in the 1930s, a wave of migration of these professionals to more tolerant countries began. Without exaggeration, London became the key center for the development of psychoanalysis, as the Freud family and many other specialists, representing various schools and approaches within depth psychology, settled there.

The rise of National Socialism, coupled with the arrest and interrogation of the Freud family by the Gestapo, forced them to emigrate from Vienna to London in 1938. At the outbreak of World War II, Anna Freud established the Hampstead War Nursery in London in 1940. By that time, she already had experience in organising educational institutions. Notably, between 1927 and 1932, a private school called «Hietzing» (or «The Matchbox School») operated in Vienna, where Anna Freud worked alongside colleagues such as August Aichhorn, Peter Blos, and Erik Erikson. This school exclusively educated the children of psychoanalysts or those who supported psychoanalysis. In its early stages, the psychoanalysts primarily focused on issues related to sexual education, but gradually their attention shifted to exploring children's aggressive impulses and feelings of guilt (Midgley, 2008, p. 33). After the closure of the «Hietzing» school, Anna Freud transitioned to work at a socio-pedagogical counseling center affiliated with the Vienna outpatient clinic, where she provided free consultations to children and adolescents from low-income families upon referral from doctors and teachers. Later, following the example of Maria Montessori's school model, Anna Freud opened a kindergarten in Vienna called the «Children's House» (1937), which catered to infants. In this natural setting, she observed the psychological separation process of children from their parents (Trabalzini, 2018, p. 154). However, the following year, the Freud family was forced to leave Vienna and relocate to London.

The Hampstead War Nursery, established in London, consisted of three divisions: a nursery, a kindergarten, and a boarding school for evacuated London children aged three to six. In this new environment, Anna Freud aimed to develop an applied, education-oriented psychoanalysis. Unlike the «Hietzing» school, the primary focus areas of the Hampstead War Nursery were: addressing the physical and psychological effects of the war; preventive work with war-affected children separated from their parents; research collaboration with colleagues; and training for nursery caregivers and nurses. All the findings from her work with war children were documented by Anna Freud in collaboration with Dorothy Burlingham in their book *War and Children* (Freud & Burlingham, 1943). In this work, they demonstrated that children exposed to bombings, evacuation, separation from their parents, and the destruction of their homes often developed fear, anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders. Children who maintained contact with their parents or significant adults during the active phase of the war adapted better to stressful conditions and the new environment. In contrast, those placed in evacuation camps or children's homes without adequate adult support suffered more from psychological disorders. Additionally, groups of children who lived together and shared emotional experiences were able to form strong social bonds. Mutual support and friendship among the children helped mitigate the impact of traumatic events and facilitated their adaptation to the new reality more swiftly.

During their work with children affected by bombings and other wartime events, the researchers developed a psychoanalytic toolkit for providing emotional support. To better understand the behaviour of these children, Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham employed observational methods, which helped guide their subsequent actions in psychological support. For those children unable to verbally express their inner experiences, play therapy was employed. This allowed children to symbolically express their traumatic experiences and process them in a safe and controlled environment. In addition, creative workshops, including drawing and reading, were organised at the Hampstead Nursery to facilitate the symbolic expression of emotions and transform them into constructive forms. A key aspect of working with these children was the therapeutic conversation, which helped alleviate tension and improve the child's awareness of their emotions. Through these dialogues, children learned to analyse their feelings and recognise that their fears were a natural reaction to war and stress. Since many children shared similar fears or behavioural issues, group therapy was practiced. This allowed them to feel a sense of shared experience, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. Group therapy became a crucial factor in the emotional recovery of each child, particularly as those evacuated and separated from their parents longed for new bonds and attachment with significant others. To establish predictability in the children's environment, a stable daily routine and clear behavioural rules were instituted at the Hampstead Nursery.

However, one of the greatest challenges for Freud and Burlingham was the realisation that their work with the children could not simply end with the war's conclusion. Even after reintegration into society, the children's return to their parents, or the formation of new families, psychoanalytic work with the children and their caregivers (or guardians) needed to continue. The researchers anticipated further challenges in helping war-affected children adapt to new life circumstances, particularly the need to educate adults caring for them. These adults needed to be trained to respond appropriately to possible expressions of aggression or anxiety in the children and to use psychoanalytic concepts to nurture the children's talents. Overall, the wartime efforts of Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham aimed at helping children process their experiences and adapt to the new reality.

Another prominent leader of psychoanalytic pedagogy in Britain during World War II was Donald Woods Winnicott. It is well known that during the conflict over dominance within the British Psychoanalytical Society between the groups of Melanie Klein (Group A) and Anna Freud (Group B), there was also a group of «Independent» psychoanalysts who maintained a neutral stance in the debate. This group, which included figures such as Michael Balint, Donald Winnicott, Harry Guntrip, Paula Heimann, Sylvia Payne, Ella Sharpe, and Ronald Fairbairn, rejected Freud's biologically driven theory of instincts. Instead, they argued that internal drives seek not just discharge but connection with another object. In other words, they proposed that human beings are not primarily driven by the satisfaction of their instincts, but by the desire for communication and cooperation with others. While Freudian theorists focused on issues like fixation and unfulfilled drives, ego psychologists emphasised the need for adaptation and support for children. Object relations theorists, in turn, analysed how a child interacts with external objects and how these objects are internalised and represented in the psyche. Among the «Independent» group, there were also specialists who primarily focused on infant research (Rayner, 2020).

One of the most prominent figures among them was Donald Winnicott, who initially worked as a pediatrician at Paddington's St. Mary's Hospital. In his practice, he combined various clinical methods based on the use of play therapy. Winnicott devoted significant attention to the study of early emotional development in children and the relationship within the mother-child dyad. In his essay "Birth Memories, Birth Trauma, and Anxiety", Winnicott argued that the trauma of birth is as intense as the trauma of early weaning from breastfeeding, both of which are accompanied by strong feelings of anxiety. Drawing on Freud's idea of birth as a traumatic event and the resulting anxiety during frustration, Winnicott proposed that anxiety arises not from external limitations but from the re-experience of earlier feelings of helplessness and vulnerability. To ensure healthy psychological development and prevent psychic trauma during birth or weaning, Winnicott introduced a specific approach. He recommended that parents consistently verbalise their actions while interacting with the infant and gradually introduce manageable frustrations from birth. For example, when a baby cries for food or wants to be picked up, parents should initially respond quickly but then introduce brief pauses to allow the child time to reflect on their needs. If parents constantly meet every demand without allowing the child to process their feelings, a narcissistic personality type may develop, leading the child to believe that the world revolves entirely around them (Winnicott, 2016).

During World War II, D. Winnicott played a significant role in supporting evacuated children, researching the effects of corporal punishment on their psyche, as well as the causes of their aggression and potential delinquency (Slochower, 2020). Through his observations of children in rural evacuation camps, Winnicott concluded that children affected by war primarily required emotional support from adults and stable environmental conditions. To organise the work of shelters, Winnicott trained adults in psychological support methods, emphasising that their primary role was not to solve all of the children's problems but to provide sufficient support to foster their self-development. Many children, feeling vulnerable due to separation from their parents or displacement from their homes, needed a sense of security and internal control over their new life circumstances (Winnicott, 1948). However, adults were not expected to fully satisfy all of the children's needs or to be perfect caregivers. Instead, they were to provide just enough support – what later became known as Winnicott's concept of «good-enough parenting» – which emphasised that a child's development of independence and resilience depends on the presence of a significant adult, particularly the mother. Winnicott's approach extended to his role as a radio expert, where he provided advice on supporting children's psychological well-being during



wartime.

Responding to the British government's efforts to offer emotional support to the public, Winnicott used radio broadcasts to share practical recommendations for parents. He advised them to encourage children to engage in creative activities such as drawing, letter writing, or inventing games to maintain emotional connections with their loved ones and express their inner experiences. Winnicott also emphasised that even after the war, children would continue to need attention and support, as many had formed strong emotional bonds with the adults who had cared for them in evacuation camps. These new attachments would require careful attention to help children readjust to their post-war reality.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the developmental trends of psychoanalysis and pedagogy in the context of military conflicts during the first half of the twentieth century. In light of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, the ongoing instability in the Middle East, and the growing potential for new conflict zones globally, the ideas of psychoanalytic pedagogy, tested during wartime in the previous century, have gained renewed relevance. In December 2021, as if anticipating these developments, the National Psychological Association (NPA) of Ukraine (a member of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations) organised an international conference titled «Life and Death of Psychoanalytic Societies – Lessons from History and New Prospects for Unions». At this conference, the formation of a working group on psychoanalytic pedagogy was announced (Velykodna, Dorozhkin, Nalyvaiko, Yevlanova, & Lunov, 2022, p. 389). Just two months later, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine resulted in mass casualties and the displacement of Ukrainians both within the country and across Europe. The psychoanalytic community also experienced significant disruptions and migrations. For example, M. Velykodna, the moderator of the «Psychoanalytic Psychology and Psychotherapy» Division of the NPA, spent six months in evacuation in Poland. Upon her return to Ukraine, she resumed her professional activities, while also engaging in volunteer work, providing pro bono psychoanalytic services to those who had lost their homes or found themselves in difficult life circumstances. Drawing on the wartime experiences of F. Dolto, who during World War II provided supportive therapy and arranged with her clients that if they were unable to pay for consultations, they should donate their time or provide «symbolic payment» to someone else in need (Velykodna, 2023, p. 240), Velykodna applied a similar approach. She emphasised that a key aspect of effective psychotherapy is the requirement of some form of payment, whether symbolic or material, as the absence of compensation can lead to feelings of guilt or other unintended psychological consequences. In working with children, symbolic payments, such as drawings or other creative works, have proven effective. In the context of today's grim reality, where military conflicts have become increasingly prevalent, there is an urgent need to study and implement successful psychoanalytic pedagogical practices, particularly those focused on supporting children affected by war. These practices also benefit displaced individuals who have been forced to leave their familiar lives behind and seek refuge, whether abroad or in safer regions within war-affected countries. The lessons learned from past conflicts and the psychoanalytic approaches developed can play a crucial role in aiding their psychological recovery and adaptation to new life circumstances.

The war in Ukraine has significantly impacted psychoanalytic work with children. Many psychoanalysts, themselves affected by the war, have continued supporting traumatized children and their parents while living away from their home cities. Drawing on two years of experience working with children affected by war, a group of Ukrainian psychoanalysts, led by Anna Kravtsova, published «Playing under fire», a collection of essays (Kravtsova, 2024). This volume features 13 contributions from different authors, each sharing their insights into working with children's emotions and war-related trauma. The analysis of this collection has shown that psychoanalytic work with children in wartime conditions requires flexible approaches, including symbolic forms of compensation, creative methods for processing traumatic experiences, and a strong focus on preserving the emotional connection between the child and significant adults.

In the context of migration and profound uncertainty, these individuals, especially children, experience a loss of life anchors and existential values. Given this, the education of children affected by war should primarily focus on helping them rediscover meaning and regain motivation for future growth

and achievements. Accordingly, in existential analysis, the education of the individual aligns with the classical understanding of the teacher as an educator who guides the child on their path to self-realisation and the preservation of inner integrity. The teacher should strive to understand the child's way of being and how their lived experiences may shape their worldview. In this sense, the goal of education is to facilitate "existential communication", enabling the child to process their life experiences in a structured manner, reconstruct their meaning in the present moment, and consciously envision their future (Nelin, 2024, p. 154).

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