Chapter 11

Two Partners in Travel

ON LABOR DAY WEEKEND of 1941, Zerka and I made the first of many trips together. I was invited to Washington, D.C., to take part in the annual meeting of the American Association for Occupational Therapy. I was to make a speech and give several demonstrations upon the joint invitation of the association and of Dr. Winfred Overholser, Superintendent of St. Elizabeths Hospital. Dr. William Alanson White had been superintendent of St. Elizabeths Hospital before Dr. Overholser. Just before White's death, he asked that a theater of psychodrama be built at St. Elizabeths. Margaret Hagan, Director of Social Services with the Red Cross, supervised the building of the theater. Frances Herriott was the first director of psychodrama there. She and Miss Hagan began to use the theater at the beginning of the Second World War to train Red Cross workers, using psychodramatic methods, so that their service in military hospitals would be more sensitive and helpful to the patients.

That Labor Day weekend was the first time that Zerka had seen me lecture anywhere other than the hospital in Beacon and the institute in New York. She came up to me afterwards glowing with intense excitement. She told me that she had been electrified by my dynamic presentation and overwhelmed by it. She felt, though, that the rest of the audience had been swept by my intensity and—as they say today—charisma, but she did not feel that they had any genuine understanding of *what* I had said. My listeners had a nonplused, disbelieving air because just about everything I said ran counter to their own professional views and indoctrination. The live demonstration of psychodrama that followed the lecture made them see, with their own eyes, the effectiveness of my methods, but the air of disbelief still persisted. Zerka and I were to expect this sort of response for at least another decade.

We founded the Sociometric Institute at 101 Park Avenue late in 1941. The official opening of the institute took place in March of 1942. It was our purpose to become a Mecca for social scientists from all over, particu-

larly Europeans, who could come and be exposed to the newest developments in the social sciences so that their own nations could benefit from the lessons sociometry had to teach. The institute organized a meeting in connection with the American Sociological Society's Annual Meeting at the Hotel Roosevelt in December of 1941.

The Society's newly formed section on sociometry sponsored the meeting, chaired by Dr. William H. Sewell of Oklahoma A & M College. Dr. Paul Lazarsfeld of Columbia University, Helen Jennings, Teachers College, Columbia University, Dr. F. Stuart Chapin, University of Minnesota, presented papers. Other program participants were equally distinguished sociologists. . . .

When the Institute opened its doors in March of 1942 our aim was to train about 50,000 men and women as sociometrists to be sent into every area of life in the United States and abroad to help bring about a new form of democracy, one in which, to quote from our introductory statement, "Every member of these groups would be educated by sociometry to the understanding that a truly living democracy cannot be attained unless it is based upon the science of the actually operating interpersonal and intergroup relations which exist and function below the surface of official institutions, laws, courts, and the various cultural agencies within them. The true, full meaning of sociometry will be unrealized unless it considers a worldwide scope. Its task cannot be accomplished in an isolated laboratory, remote from the living web of the social present. If a whole nation is involved in a conflict, one must not, in a scientific social program, focus upon one group and leave out all the others. The total fabric of human relations represented by the nation at large must be faced as one single objective." Alas, we have not been able to accomplish this aim, even today, more than thirty years later!

The May 1942 issue of *Sociometry* carried the first of many articles coauthored by Zerka Toeman and myself. It was a contribution to the still scantily represented area of psychodramatic literature. It was called "The Group Approach in Psychodrama." After this, Zerka Toeman's name appeared more and more often among contributors to the literature.

In June of 1942, we held a conference on national and postwar problems at the Sociometric Institute. I opened the conference with a brief survey of the nationwide response to the establishment of the institute from scientific, educational, industrial, and federal organizations. The meeting had two panel discussions. Among the distinguished participants were Helen Jennings, Paul Lazarsfeld, Margaret Mead, and Robert M. Yerkes. . . .

By 1943, the Second World War was at its height. The fighting of it was the top priority for all of us. While this war was one of the most horrifying in history because of the technical perfection of its weaponry, it was also

the first war in history in which psychiatry became an important and useful tool in dealing with the emotional casualties of the war. We have already spoken of the sociometric and psychodramatic training given to Red Cross workers at St. Elizabeths Hospital. Major Fitzpatrick of the British army came to the Sociometric Institute for a month of intensive study in 1943. He participated in psychodramatic and sociodramatic demonstrations, lectures, seminars, and discussions of the various possible applications of sociometric methods to small and large groups. When Fitzpatrick returned to England, he collaborated with Colonel J. Sutherland, Senior Psychiatrist of the War Office Selection Boards. Sociometry, sociodrama, and psychodrama thus assumed an important role in the British war effort. Our methods were used in the selection and training of soldiers of all ranks in order to reduce the appalling psychological casualty rates of the British army. It was found that many psychiatric breakdowns occurred because men were poorly assigned, so the whole process of induction and basic training in the British army was restructured along the lines laid down by sociometric theory. The process of officer selection and training was also restructured. Group psychotherapy became the preferred mode of treatment in army hospitals and was also used in the repatriation of prisoners of war.

This thorough-going British program sponsored the development of what Dr. J. R. Rees, first president of the World Federation for Mental Health, called the Moreno Brigade, a small band of social scientists of every variety who had been gathered to work on problems of morale and group cohesion in the British military services and were responsible for both the research and the clinical applications to military personnel. As an outgrowth of their work, the Tavistock Clinic (later the Tavistock Institute) was set up. I was invited to London in 1946 to direct their enormously expanding facilities. The Tavistock people were particularly concerned with developing effective action methods for helping their people cope with the aftereffects of the war. Unfortunately, I was not able to accept their splendid invitation because I was already overwhelmed with my other responsibilities. But I have always made appearances there when I was in London, and I have made it a point to work with and to share ideas with the staff of the institute whenever possible.

In 1944, the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association was again held in Philadelphia. Twelve years before, I had introduced the idea of group therapy at a meeting chaired by William Alanson White. But in 1944, there were still people at the meeting who were unaware of the importance of group therapy. A symposium on group psychotherapy was scheduled for the convention and assigned to a small room holding only 70 people. So many people signed up for the symposium, though, that it had to be transferred to the largest meeting room at the hotel.

This is how it came to pass that group therapy became so popular all of a sudden. The military brass were concerned with the high cost of psychotherapy and with the shortage of trained therapists. Therefore, they sent down an order that group therapy was to be used in preference to any other type of treatment. The meeting was crowded with military psychiatrists who had to learn something about group therapy, and quickly. It was made clear to the audience from the outset that, while group therapy might be expedient and more "efficient" from the point of view of the cost accountant, it was also good therapy, not just a poor relation to the individual therapeutic modalities. Now it is a truism, but then it seemed a new revelation to many. "People get sick in a group; they recover better in a group." . . .

Although travel was difficult during the war, we were able to make some trips. My involvement with Harvard University began during World War II, when I was invited to conduct a psychodrama session in the psychology laboratory at the university. Henry A. Murray was head of the laboratory then. He succeeded Morton Prince, the founder of the psychological laboratory, the first American psychologist to point out the split of the psyche in cases of multiple personality.

Henry Murray's associate was Mrs. Christine Morgan. She invented the Thematic Apperception Test [TAT]. Mrs. Morgan and Murray then collaborated on the TAT, developing it into a major diagnostic tool. I have always felt that there is a strong kinship between projective tests like the TAT and psychodrama. Murray and I developed a mutually close and sympathetic relationship.

When Dr. Murray introduced me at that first session at Harvard, he said, "Not even Freud has made such a great contribution to psychology." His remarks were quoted in the *Harvard Crimson* the next day and gave me much pleasure. I stayed in Cambridge the whole day and gave a couple of lectures and psychodrama demonstrations. Shortly after my visit, Murray told me he was building a theater of psychodrama in the laboratory. Because of space limitations, the theater did not have a balcony. It had three levels and had entrances on two sides which, somehow, gave the effect of a balcony. . . .

I had another good friend at Harvard, Pitirim A. Sorokin, perhaps one of the greatest social scientists of our time. We met at a large academic meeting. A tall, slender man—I remember that he had a lot of hair and bushy eyebrows—came up to me and said, in heavily accented speech, "I am Sorokin. You are Moreno." We shook hands and spoke a few words.

Sorokin was in the audience the night we inaugurated the psychodrama theater at Harvard. We gradually became friends after that, although our relationship was full of conflicts.

Sorokin, with his belief that societies evolve according to certain principles that are capable of discovery, made the Harvard sociology department preeminent in its field. It could even be said that he created the department. I know he had tremendous battles within his department with people who wanted to displace him or to reduce his power. Talcott Parsons was one of these.

But Sorokin was too great a scholar and too strong an individual to be bearded by his fellows. His books were always beautifully written and reflected the breadth of his knowledge. He was an omnivorous reader, not just in his own field. And he was one of the most cultivated individuals I ever met.

Born an aristocrat in tsarist Russia, he was Kerensky's secretary and had to flee for his life when the Bolsheviks took over. He came to the United States and became an American citizen as soon as he could do so. Whenever I was in Cambridge, I visited his home. I still remember the wonderful Russian cooking Mrs. Sorokin treated us to. I met Sorokin's sons and found them an interesting pair. Neither of them had any use for sociology. One became a physicist, and the other a medical doctor.

Sorokin had a stimulating effect on me. He was so tall—6 feet 3 inches at least—and dramatic looking. He never spoke softly, never whispered. His presence in the classroom was legendary. But he often became excited during a class and salivated to such an extent that one student stated he could only remember Sorokin's saliva, nothing else. His name, Pitirim Alexandrovich Sorokin, was imposing of itself. There was something about the way it rolled off the tongue.

In 1948 a large group of social scientists went up to Harvard to make nominations for the chairmanship of a newly developed department of social relations at Harvard. Many of my students were there. Several names were mentioned as suitable candidates. Finally Sorokin stood up and declared, "I recommend Dr. Jacob L. Moreno. He is the most original, most capable man in the field of sociology. There is none better!"

My good friend and associate, George Lundberg, responded, "That is true, but Dr. Moreno would never be able to get up early enough in the morning to give lectures and seminars and to run a decent department. Also, he is making too much money as a psychiatrist. He would never be able to manage on the meager salary Harvard would give him."

Sorokin had to agree with that estimate, and so did I when I heard the story. Professor Sam Stouffer was chosen in the end. . . .

[The following words are taken from J. L. Moreno's last published work.]

I am profoundly aware of having hardly touched on the Father-God concretely. I have remained amorphous as a living God. I do not want to diminish and to belittle the efforts which I made during the plastic years of my adolescence when I almost lost my life, almost evaporated into the beyond, not through sickness but through health. But I have failed so utterly in turning the moment in the world's needs. The hope is gone from the faces of men. Our youth is bewildered. Many children are stopped from being born because of the worthlessness of birth and life. It is in the last calamities that my failure comes through. I must admit humbly that my megalomania is shattered. Nothing is left but the crown and the throne. The body is dead.

My failure to become concrete has not been without awards and limited success. All my scientific attempts in the field of psychotherapy had strong religious undercurrents. In order to make the news of my discoveries known and to demonstrate the benefits which people could derive from them, I made trips around the world. On these trips I found in my wife, Zerka, a partner difficult to surpass. Every group and psychodrama session was a living encounter. People came with their problems to meet us. It would be difficult to enumerate all the places we visited, from Arkansas to California, from San Francisco to Montreal, from Paris to London, Munich, Vienna, Frankfurt, Bonn, Heidelberg, Cologne, Prague, Warsaw, Budapest, Oslo, Moscow, Belgrade, Rome, Athens, Constantinople, Barcelona, Jerusalem, finally the Pavlov and Bechterev Institutes in Leningrad—to mention but a few. They heralded the dawn of a new therapeutic religion which is gradually spreading the news of the new cosmic man and fighting the anti-man. However, all these accomplishments and advances did not deceive me as to the failure of the concreteness of establishing the Father-God for all people as a uniting bond between them. Mainly, therefore, the world is divided, fragmented, hopelessly wandering into the darkness of an uncertain future.

How to Concretize the Image of the God-Father is the final question. One way of spreading yourself out if you have just a little body like a man is to be the entire universe, to expand, having more brains, more eyes, more ears, more arms, more legs, more lungs, more heart. Another way is to take in everything which is already in the universe, all the people, and to bring them together, unifying what is apart, man and man, man and animal, man and plant, man and planets and stars, integration of the world. Another way is to hold the future of the universe within the bonds of your power, before the things separate themselves from you and develop apart from you. The robot, for instance, is developing apart from man, building a future world for himself. Is it still possible to hold back the ramifications of his growth, to bring him back under man's

control, or is it too late? The God-Father is irresistible, he has an irresistible drive to include everything into one. It is, therefore, difficult to mold the God-Father unless he arouses the cooperation of every other part of existence, to help him, developing the capacity to hear everything which happens all over the world, to see everything, to feel everything, to share with everybody pain and joy, hope and the excitement of living, to become more and more all-sharing, all-creating, all-involving. Then they will see you everywhere and recognize you, that you are not only one man or another man, but the God-Father himself. In our time God should not be only in one church or another, but in every medium which connects people with one another, on every TV screen, on every ship, in every plane, in every dream. If he is not, he should be. He should be made to be. The end of the world may come, but not the end of the God-Father as long as there are things to create.

Obituary

J. L. MORENO, MD

Pioneer of the Psychodrama Technique Is Dead

BEACON, N. Y., May 15 (AP)—Dr. Jacob L. Moreno, the psychiatrist who pioneered psychodrama as a method for treating mental illness, died at his home here Tuesday.

It was in Vienna shortly after World War I that Dr. Jacob Levy Moreno embarked upon an experiment that was to prove itself a major advance in psychiatry. There he organized something called the Theater of Spontaneity, which employed actors and actresses to participate in a new form of entertainment that grew out of improvisations based on cues from the audience.

The experiment evolved into psychodrama, a technique that hundreds of hospitals in the United States and around the world subsequently adopted to help their patients discover themselves and to aid in the treatment of a variety of conditions, from alcoholism to schizophrenia.

For Dr. Moreno, psychodrama offered not so much a "cure" to mental problems as a device for self-discovery that would help lead to a person's well-being. It was also something that caught the public's fancy,