

Obituary of Dina Rosenbluth

by Martha Harris

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Dina's sudden death under anaesthetic in July came as a great sorrow to many of her friends and analysts at the Tavistock and elsewhere. She had been ill for some time, but following a period of convalescence in her brother's beautiful garden in our unusually sunny summer, she seemed to be recovering and had just returned home when a new symptom appeared for which she had to go back to hospital.

Those of us who saw her during the period of her illness were greatly moved by her courage and consideration, the tenacity and ready humour that never totally forsook her even in darkest moments.

I first met Dina in the early days of the last war when University College, London, was evacuated to Aberystwyth. She was then studying psychology. She had been educated at the King Alfred School, to which her mother had sent her and her brother after their emigration to England soon after the Nazis came to power in Germany. Her father, a judge in Berlin, had been a Zionist from his early years, and went to Israel where he played a leading part in the establishment of the State and became Minister of Justice. Her parents divorced over the issue of national identity, which was painful to Dina who was very attached to both. She admired and identified with her father increasingly over the years, and their holidays together were precious to her.

She was parted from her French fiancé by the war, and it always seemed a great pity that she who loved and enjoyed children had none of her own, although she was able to express her deep interest in them through her work.

We became friends at the Tavistock at the end of 1950 when we both joined the small intake of child psychotherapy students. The other two were Frances Tustin who commuted from Birmingham, and Yvonne Blake who had come from Johannesburg where she is now living. Dina had already joined the Tavistock as one of the founder members of Dr Bowlby's separation research team, together with Mary Boston and James Robertson; and was one of the assistants making the first Robertson film.

Shortly after completing her training as child psychotherapist, she joined the Tavistock child psychotherapy staff on a sessional basis while taking other sessions at the Kilburn clinic, and also worked privately. She continued at the Tavistock until 1970, taking increasing responsibility for training students. She served on a number of committees in the Association of Child Psychotherapists while the pro-

fession was becoming established and striving for professional recognition within the Health Service.

After her first analysis with Harold Bridger she began a second analysis with Herbert Rosenfeld and trained at the Institute of Psychoanalysis in the late fifties. After she left the Tavistock in 1970 for fulltime practice, she continued to work for the child psychotherapy discipline through the Association, and through her analyses of candidates of the Tavistock course.

She wrote a number of papers for the *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*. Her paper on transference in typically simple clear language is much used by students beginning their clinical work. In a wider field and in a number of countries her major contribution to the Tavistock series on Child Development has been greatly appreciated. This series has been translated into a number of languages, including recently Japanese, and is about to be reissued in this country where it is currently out of print.¹

Dina's life was rich in people. She came from talented German Jewish families on both her mother's and her father's side, many of whom emigrated to Israel. She was heir to a tradition of hospitality which enabled her to create in her own ordered home an atmosphere which made even short visits to her a pleasure and a relaxation. She retained friends over many years and many thousands of miles, taking a keen interest in their lives and in their growing families, so that most weekends when she was at home in London she would have a house guest.

She enjoyed traveling, visiting her friends and exploring foreign cities and countrysides. To be with her either at home or abroad was always something of a treat, a time to savour life and to enjoy watching it pass by.

Dina had three serious illnesses in the last thirteen years of her life, from which she made good recoveries. They deepened her sense of compassion for others and her appreciation of the value of life and of the analytic work which she enjoyed. She developed a voice of her own with increasing confidence as the years went by. It was a quiet voice with a forward-looking quality of lightness and gaiety that never entirely forsook her even in the face of death. Some of us who loved her are missing that voice, but we are glad to remember and feel privileged to have known her.

1 The series originally published by Corgi in 1969 was not reissued. The three books written by Martha Harris (*Your Eleven Year Old*, *Your Twelve to Fourteen Year Old*, *Your Teenager*) were republished by the Harris Meltzer Trust in 2007 in a single volume entitled *Your Teenager*.