

Memories of Júlia Budai, the voice of psychodrama in the Russian-speaking world

by Gerda Mävers

It's been a few days since the sad news reached me. In the meantime, the world moved on. But not a day goes by without moments of remembrance of this strong, headstrong woman, Júlia Budai.

I knew her name long before I met her. My mother often returned from cities in Ukraine and far east of it, where she gave seminars and held colloquia for the Psychodrama Institute for Europe - always translated by Júlia Budai. At least in my memory... With Júlia Budai in Kyiv, in Kremencuk, in St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Arzamas... They were names of cities that had a foreign spell on me. A short time later, I kept seeing photos of Ildikó and Júlia Budai in front of golden onion domes and churches, next to frescoes, ancient icons, and at markets selling spices, herbs, and teas.

Júlia Budai loved and mastered the Russian language, which opened the doors for psychodrama throughout the Russian-speaking world. With the help of this linguistic bridge, which Júlia enthusiastically and tirelessly provided, she opened the doors for Hungarian psychodrama trainers as early as 1996, who brought psychodrama to Ukraine with the help of her translation: Sarolta Ónodi and György Adam Kiss, Kamilla Sarkady, Gyula Goda, Júlia Hardy and Ildikó Mävers.

The power of this method gripped Júlia. She became a psychodrama leader herself and supervisor – a valued and beloved pillar for her students. For me, however, she was first and foremost the mouth and voice of psychodrama in the Russian-speaking world. How many psychodramatic plays have been translated by her?!

Later, when I myself became a member of the board of the Psychodrama Association for Europe e.V. (former PlfE), I got to know her personally - really got to know her! As a welcome in my new role, I received a bag of Hungarian spice paprika from Szeged – the best paprika in the world, she told me. She's right! She was an ardent patriot – but she was only proud of things and accomplishments that were really worth being proud of.

Her commitment to psychodrama reached far – further than most of us can imagine: up to Yakutia (Russian Republic of Sakha). Since 2018, when she was over 70 years old, she has always traveled there in the half of the year that could be visited to enable a group of psychologists to train in psychodrama. Thank you, Júlia!

In the International Committee and in the Training Committee of our association, her voice was always heard clearly, committed, direct, never indifferent, without fear of confrontation and always contributing to a solution.

Such members can only be wished for by an association!

And she was never at a loss for a clear point of view: "Language is not to blame".

Júlia, we miss you!

Gerda Mävers

on behalf of the board of the Psychodrama-Association for Europe e.V