

Perspective

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A Tale of Two Geniuses in Stuttering

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Perspective

How One Russian Genius Invented the False Stuttering Disease While the Other One Debunked It?

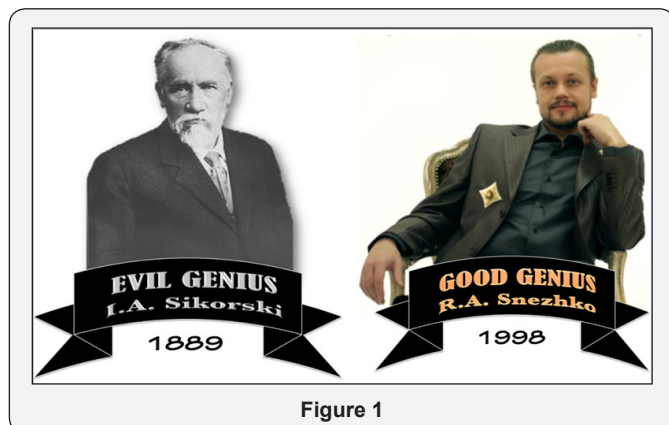


Figure 1

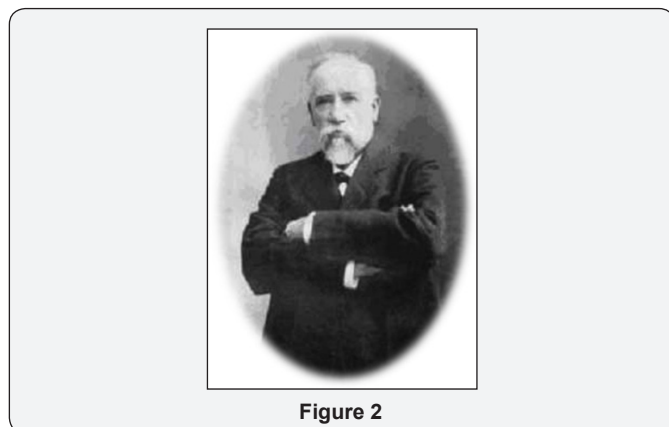


Figure 2

Once upon a time, in the era of troubles, there lived on Earth two geniuses. One was Evil, the other one was Good (Figure 1). One profited from deception, the other earned an honest living. They did not know each other as the first one lived a hundred years earlier than the second. The Evil Genius LIED: "I've discovered a dangerous disease. It is called STUTTERING. Patients cannot speak on their own they need a CURE that medical science has yet to find (Figure 2). In the meantime, until it has been found, stutters require some-one's constant assistance, a MEDICAL

CRUTCH, as they are not capable of walking independently in speech! We must create a help system for these disabled patients. Let's organize a widespread distribution of medical crutches to stutters in special centers and organizations structured similar to CONCENTRATION CAMPS, where every prisoner will be restricted from independent movement without a crutch to ensure their safety!" (Figure 3).

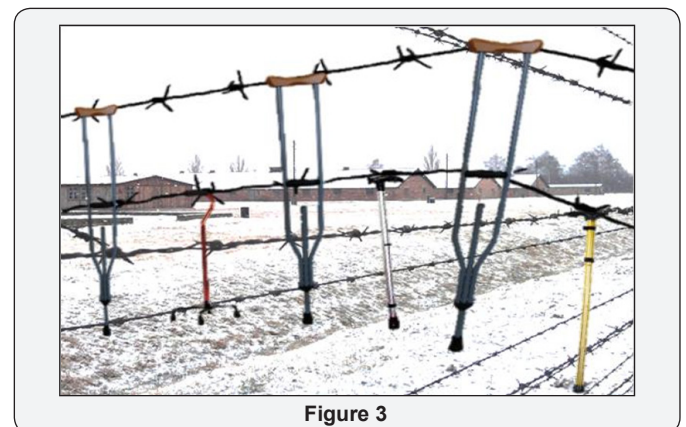


Figure 3

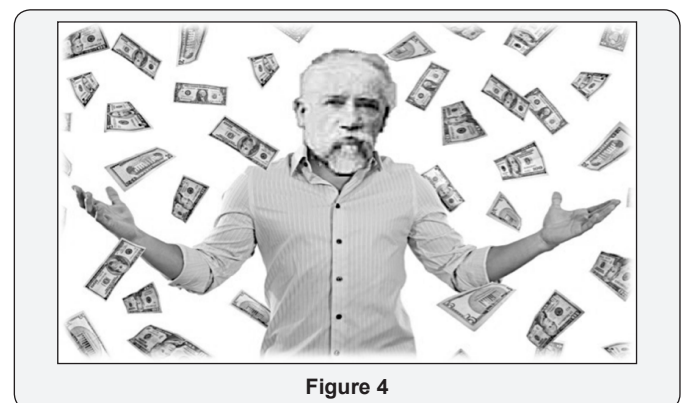


Figure 4

Frightened by the dangerous disease, people believed the false words of the Evil Genius (Figure 4). They provided him with a lot of money so he could save them and rid the mankind of the terrible affliction of stuttering. Under his leadership, they began diligently inventing medical crutches and building

an International system of crutch distribution to every stuttering child (Figure 5). They worked hard and excelled in their persistent labor. They created diverse forms of stuttering assistance all over the world and designed an infinite number of medical crutches for stuttering patients (Figure 6). To operate thousands concentration camps for stutterers, they produced a lot of “operating specialists”: “therapists”, “pathologists”, “psychologists”, “psychiatrists”, “neurologists” and others. By the will of the Evil Genius, all these “experts” were declared “helpers” of people who stutter.

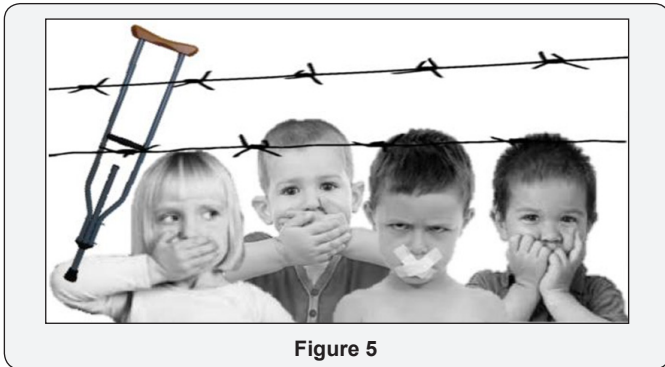


Figure 5

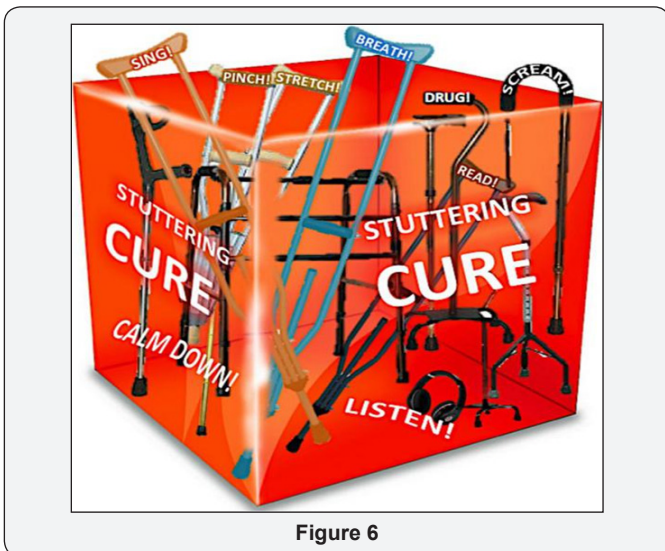


Figure 6

But under the guise of “help”, these inadvertent carriers of the lie created thousands of obstacles blocking the stutterers from using their natural speech, which each of them received at birth as a gift from Mother Nature or God, as believers say. They were then ordered to practice these “helping” unnatural exercises diligently and persistently. Sadly, this caused stutterers to further crippling and distorting their natural God-given speech. The fact that their stuttering did not improve and became even more severe convinced them of a horrible NON - TRUTH. They concluded hopelessly: “We are born crippled and cannot do anything about it” (Figure 7). Feeling sad about their destiny, they cried and thanked those “helpers”, not realizing the danger of such “help”... Giving away their money, time, freedom... even their life, millions of people who stutter would voluntarily self-surrender into the hands of their “supervisors”. Despite the

inconvenience and the apparent worsening of their “stuttering illness”, stuttering prisoners would still lay willingly and even gratefully on the bunks of concentration camps for stutterers.



Figure 7

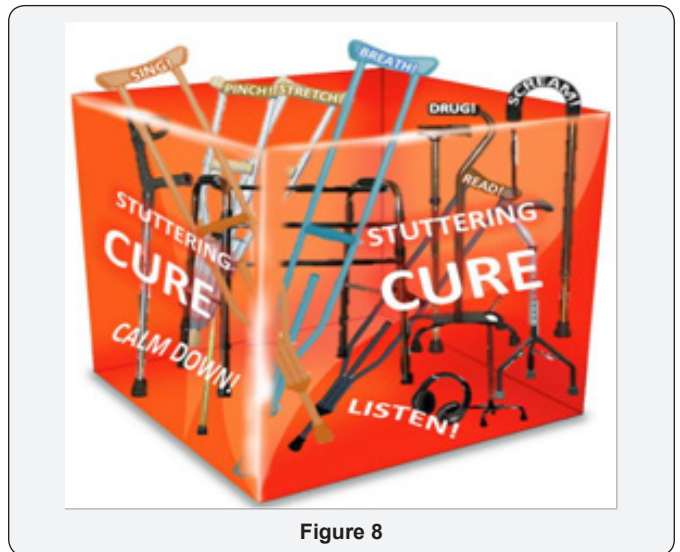


Figure 8

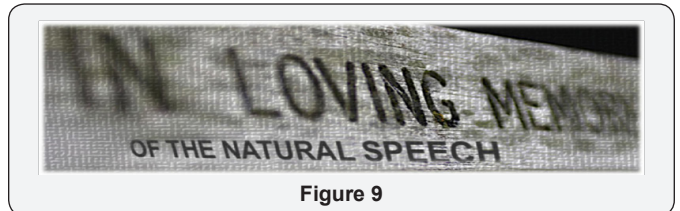


Figure 9

Without hesitation, they would obediently take addicting harmful drugs prescribed by their “helpers” and tirelessly train themselves to use various crutch-methods issued by these same “advisors”. As the result, it would become more and more difficult for stutterers to operate their own speech muscles naturally. However, they would still continue using all these destructive methods, techniques and devices until one day; they would totally lose the ability to speak in the natural way because they killed their own God-given speech (Figure 8). But the system of the Evil Genius anticipated this and immediately provided the solution to such an “embarrassing mistake” in the form of the death of the patient’s speech! (Figure 9). With sympathy and compassion, the “supervisors” would authoritatively declare to an “unfortunate” stutterer: «You have an incurable form of severe stuttering. Accept it. Embrace it. Try taking this anti-anxiety drug!» (Figure 10). Suddenly, behind the dark cloud of

sinister lies, there came a ray of sunlight - TRUTH. It was the confident, awakening voice of the Good Genius! (Figure 11).

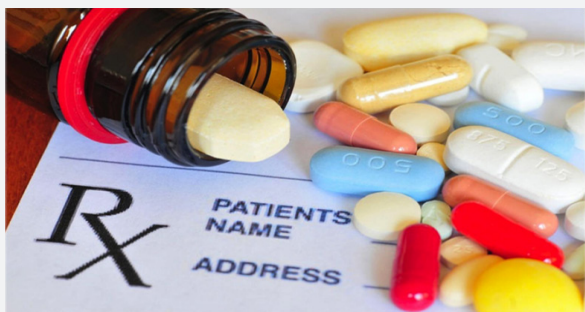


Figure 10



Figure 11

Good Genius said,

“Stuttering disease does not exist!

It is a dangerous fiction and a terrible deception by the Evil Genius!

Stutterers are inherently healthy people.

They need NO help, NO crutch-methods or techniques and NO drugs! They can speak naturally on their own without crutches, without any unnatural training by simply moving their tongue and lips in a nature always!

All that is required for anyone not yet trained to speak adequately is to drop the crutches and start working independently with their own speech muscles! Any form of stuttering will be eliminated in just three days of self - training at the Etalon Speech Gymnastics!”



Figure 12

“WHAAAT?” - Stamped their feet and shouted in anger the supervisors of the camps for stutterers - (Figure 12).

“What do you mean that stuttering disease does not exist? If so, then who are those patients that we have been treating so diligently for years?

And what are we going to do, if every stutterer gets rid of stuttering in just 3 days?”

“You’ve been lied to as well, - the Good Genius said, - The Evil Genius trained you to deceive healthy people by convincing them that they are sick, that they need some unknown treatment and cannot live without crutches. You have been mutilating the minds of your patients by imposing the use of your various artificial crutch-methods on them and preventing perfectly healthy humans from speaking normally on their own” (Figure 13).



Figure 13

“How dare you treat incurably sick people with such cruelty? - rebelled the stuttering prisoners drugged by their captors. They asked in fear: “Would you also expect us, unfortunate disabled victims, to work?” (Figure 14).

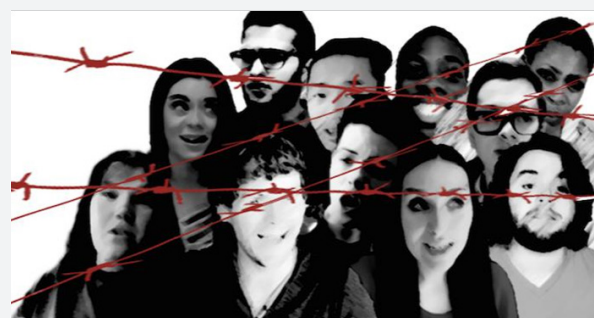
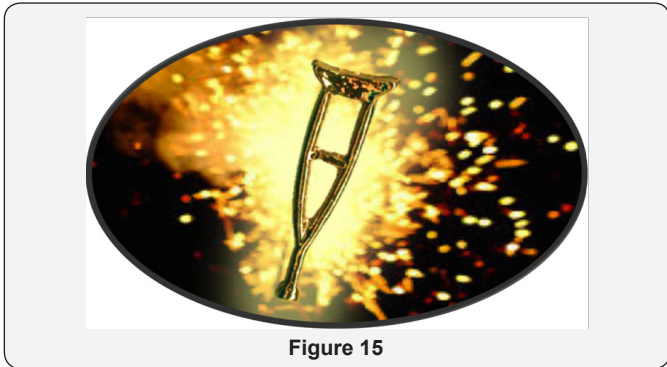


Figure 14

But the Good Genius continued carrying THE TRUTH about stuttering to the world.

He revealed the terrible SECRET OF THE MAGIC CRUTCH used by the Evil Genius (Figure 15). The Good Genius uttered: «Give a

healthy person a cane - and everyone will automatically consider him sick despite the fact that he walks without a limp. As long as a stutterer speaks with any type of a crutch-method, his speech will never be normal naturally!"

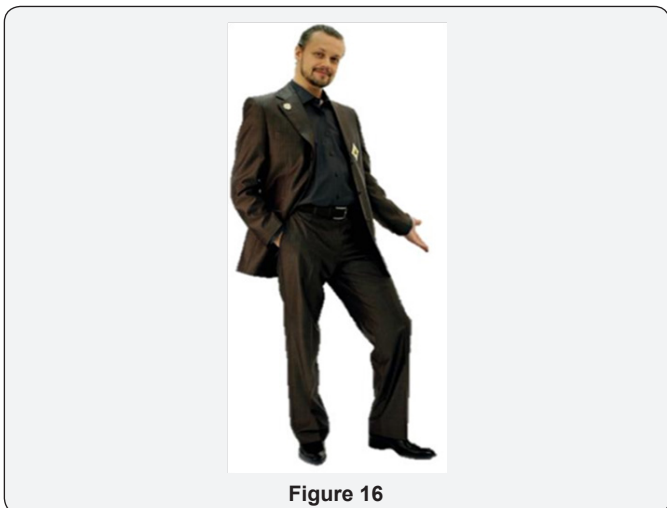


"How can we possibly be healthy? - the Stutterers continued to complain, beginning to clear their mind of poisonous lies, - we have tried all the methods, have done all the exercises, but the stuttering condition has only continued to worsen?"

The Good Genius went on to explain patiently,

"A crutch is no help for a healthy person, but it is only a hindrance!"

All these methods and exercises are just crutches, which only hinder you to speak naturally: easily, simply, conveniently, comfortably. They make you think, slow down, doubt, and distort the core of your natural speech. Because of these crutches, your speech will only worsen. It is their use that makes your speaking actions unnatural: hard, difficult, inconvenient, and uncomfortable. By trying to improve your natural speech, you only distort it (Figure 16).



"Better" is the enemy of "perfect."

«But we do not know how to speak naturally!» - The awakened stutterers retorted.

The Good Genius held up his finger and asked: "Do you know how to bend your finger? No one does! We, people, simply use this miracle of nature with ease without knowing or thinking about the billions of operations that take place at this moment in our body. We just take our finger and bend it. And we do not need any "improvements" that would only disturb the existing organic harmony and the natural balance. Every attempt to better the norms only complicates their simplicity. By using any crutch-method in your speaking, you complicate the simple speech norms and inevitably develop speech disorders." (Figure 17)



"So, what do we do now?" - The stutterers asked, turning to Good Genius, hoping for some help.

The Good Genius raised the bright light of the truth torch over his head and called:

"Throw all the artificial methods of stuttering treatment in the trash and leave it in the past!"



Only after having dropped all the crutches disabling your independence, you can free yourself to walk with speech on your own!" (Figure 18). And the stutterers raised their heads in the intention to follow the Good Genius. They wanted to obtain the

freedom the natural Etalon Speech Gymnastics offered. But it was not so easy to escape from the clutches of Evil Genius with the army of false stuttering «helpers» because they needed to continue selling their speech crutches. These “helpers” wailed again, calling out to the stutterers:

“Stop! You are sick! It is dangerous for you to move in speech without a crutch! We, trained stuttering advisors, have never heard about this “etalon”, this speech standard... What is it?” (Figure 19)



Figure 19



Figure 20

“The etalon is not a “what”, it is the “who” - the Good Genius explained - it is a living example of the naturally ideal speech demonstrated by an Etalon Speech teacher. After having copied the exact actions from him/her, any stutterer can speak adequately and independently without crutches! The truth is that stutterers are totally healthy” (Figure 20). “How can we drop all our crutches?”- asked the stutterers fearful of taking their first independent speech step. After all, their dependence on “helpers” and the crutches instead of reliance on themselves and their own power has been the exact original plan of the Evil Genius! How could they detect the lives of their “good”, «kind» and “caring” overseers who people who stutter learned to believe and obey without questions for so many years?

Finally, the ray of truth penetrated the minds of the most awakened, rational, and brave people who stuttered and they murmured: “Indeed, our “helpers” have not really taught us anything else, but crutch - techniques that only destroyed our speech over all these years!”. They dropped all the crutches, followed the Good Genius, and started speaking in the Etalon-standard way independently, without any helpers! (Figure 21). Today, the number of people released from stuttering is growing worldwide. The voices of thousands of Etalon graduates sound loudly and confidently as they are promoting passionately THE TRUTH, which continues to clear the minds of deceived people from lies and distortions (Figure 22). The Good Genius transmits his HEALING TRUTH to his followers - living Etalon Speech Teachers (Figure 23).



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

But the army of deceived wage-paid servants of the Evil Genius is not ready to give up! They continue poisoning people's minds with their lies to fill the concentration camps with their new victims (Figure 24). Stutterers still keep coming to their "taskmasters" and giving them their meager savings in exchange for more and more disabling speech crutches and toxic drugs...

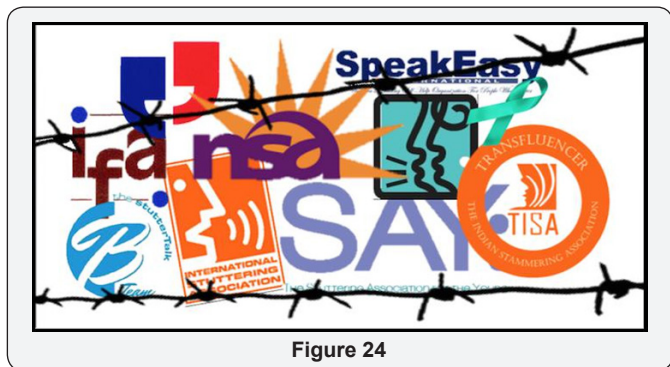


Figure 24

Dear people who stutter!

You and only you can decide which Genius to follow and what to do with your own life. Here are the choices you have today:

EVIL GENIUS:	GOOD GENIUS:
A stutterer is sick!	A stutterer is inherently healthy!
Long live the stuttering disease and the numerous crutches (methods, tech-niques, tips, tricks, devices or drugs) of stuttering cure!	Long live the natural speech by natural standards! Destroy all crutch-methods of cure for a non-existent "stuttering" disease! (Figure 25).

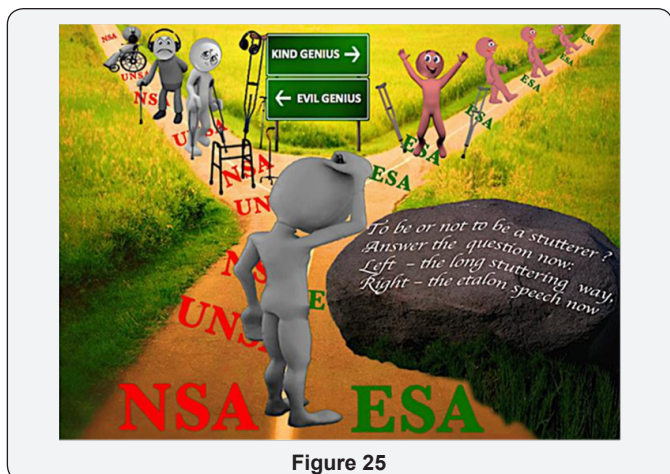


Figure 25

For those who do not know the truth

EVIL GENIUS - Professor I.A. Sikorski, the author of "About Stuttering", 1889

GOOD GENIUS - Academic R.A. Snezhko, a co-author of "Speech Is A Skill", 2015

A. The truth has been disclosed by Anna Deeter, Etalon Speech Educator

i. How Stuttering Became a Mysterious Neurological Disorder?

An excerpt from the book 'Speech Is a Skill', by Anna Deeter

The more I worked with stuttering during my 30 year-long speech/language therapist career, the more discouraged and disappointed in the results of my therapeutic work with stutterers I became.... I always wondered if I could expect a successful outcome without knowing precisely what I was dealing with.... Today, after having witnessed the 100% effectiveness of my Etalon knowledge, I know exactly what stuttering is, why people stutter and what a stutterer must do to enable him or herself to eliminate stuttering forever. This is why I have started asking myself the following questions:

- I. How could the concept of stuttering as a neurological disorder confuse so many scientists in the world?
- II. Why was stuttering announced and remained a mystery for such a long time?
- III. Who were the pioneers of such a mistaken, delusional and harmful approach, which still causes an estimated over 80 million people worldwide to struggle with stuttering today?
- IV. Why does this approach call stuttering an «incurable and mysterious disorder» with unknown, elusive and mystical reasons?

It Started In Russia¹

The whole delusional hypothesis about stuttering as a neurological disorder (some kind of illness) was born at the end of the 19th century, in Russia. Well-remembered there, but practically unknown in other countries today, Russian psychiatrist (not a speech expert!), Professor I.A. Sikorski officially "voiced" this hypothesis in 1889. He presented his unsubstantiated assumptions in his "scientific" monograph "About Stuttering". This was later translated into German, discussed at international conferences, served as a textbook in Germany, and was further adopted by America in the twentieth century. Based solely on his observation and analysis of stutterers' behaviors (not on experiments!), Sikorski described the symptoms and characteristics of stuttering. He also proposed its causes and offered a method of cure for overcoming stuttering as a neurological disorder (some kind of illness).

¹ I have found and translated from Russian the following historical facts stated by the most trusted online source of information, called "Bukunedua". This data is presented in English language for the first time.

After Sikorski's work with its vaguely expressed hypothesis of a "stuttering disease" was actively advertised in the scientific community, this absurd and unproven assumption immediately began to evolve into a form of scientific postulate. It began to rapidly accrete more and more new so-called "scientific research" of Sikorski's followers, who blindly took his speculation for granted! To this day, many so-called "scientists" continue to rigidly follow this ignorant Sikorski's assumption and present it

in their “scientific papers” as scientifically proven and even as a postulate!

Today, 126 years later, we have indisputable scientific experimental data that refutes the Sikorski hypothesis presented in his “About Stuttering” monograph. We have many reasons to doubt the honesty of Mr. Sikorski as a scholar and authority of his “scientific” findings. Russian sources of information display various citations of famous well-known scientists and writers of that time. Many of them characterize Sikorski’s personality and his public speeches with a great deal of negativity and even aversion. Here are just a few facts about this so-called “scientist”.

Mr. Sikorski was the largest Russian ideologist of nationalism, actively preached racism and anti-Semitism, and objectified inequality of people as a basis for racial hierarchy. He was caught many times using false assumptions and referrals for his political purposes.

After Sikorski’s testimonials as an expert witness from prosecution at one of the political trials, one well-known and respected Russian writer, who also attended the court, wrote the following: “Instead of a psychiatric assessment report, Professor Sikorski started reading a collection of bigot stories from his notebook, the stories that had nothing to do with science”. Another witness, the founder of forensic psychiatry in Russia, expressed his criticism of Sikorski’s dishonesty in the following way: «Science with its first and indispensable condition - honesty - was totally absent in the expertise of Prof. Sikorski.”

The “Modern Psychiatry” magazine evaluated Sikorski’s expertise as shameful and not meeting the most basic scientific standards”. Another respected publication, “The Journal of Neuropathology and Psychiatry”, argued, “the eminent Russian scientist compromised Russian science and covered his gray head with shame”. By the special resolution, the Society of Psychiatrists determined Sikorski’s expertise as “pseudoscientific, not relevant to the objective data and not consistent with the rules of the statute of criminal proceedings”. In the spring of 1913, the XII All-Russia Pirogov Congress of Doctors adopted a special resolution against Sikorski’s expertise. In the fall of 1913, Sikorski’s expertise was condemned by the International Medical Congress in London and by the 86th Congress of German Natural Scientists and Physicians in Vienna. The whole book of disapproving foreign responses to Sikorski’s expertise was published in Leipzig in 1913 and later published in Russian as well. One Russian psychiatrist noted a massive rejection of Sikorski’s expertise by his colleagues: “Psychiatrists have never been so unanimous and fundamental in the manifestation of their aversion to the use of psychiatry for political purposes”.

After Sikorski appealed to the politicians to stop the criticism, a number of medical societies in Russia were closed for their criticism of Sikorski’s expertise... The Moscow “Journal of Neuropathology and Psychiatry” wrote in this regard: “Talking about Sikorski’s expertise and criticizing it have become almost criminal”.

The above facts certainly do not characterize Mr. Sikorski as an honest scientist! They are a great demonstration of the ease with which he expressed, falsified and used his unsubstantiated - and not backed by practical experiments - assumptions about different things for his personal benefit. One of these hypotheses was his assumption of stuttering as a neurological disorder. Without any practical testing, this hypothesis was accepted (taken “on faith”) by the global scientific community, turned into a mass delusion, and even raised to the level of the law in many countries in the 20th century. No wonder - after all, anyone doubting this hypothesis was threatened by court and prosecution!

It Continued In the USA²

In the USA, the approach towards stuttering as a neurological disorder started with Lee Edward Travis (1896-1987), “who can be viewed today as the ‘Adam’ of scientific speech pathology” - the founding father of the profession of Speech-Language Pathology in America. As “a clinical and experimental psychologist” (Not a speech expert!) with “a particular interest in the neurophysiology of the brain, he had a strong hunch about the origin of stuttering laid in a disorder of cerebral dominance.”

² *Information and citations in this chapter have been taken from the article I found online: “WENDELL JOHNSON AND CHARLES VAN RIPER”, by Dave Williams*

After he had read several publications dealing with the nature and treatment of stuttering, Travis realized that they all were based on ‘wishful thinking’ of the “armchair speculations and casual observation” (most likely, made by Professor Sikorski!) and that “there was no systematic effort to deal with the problem in a scientific manner through controlled, quantitative research.”

Just like Prof. Sikorski, but even in more detail, Travis once again devoted his research to studying people who stuttered. He carefully observed stutterers’ brain activity and developed his “cerebral dominance theory”, which postulated, “Stuttering begins when neither hemisphere of the brain is dominant for speech and language, so that neither side takes the lead in coordinating the movements of the speech musculature. This lack of dominance,” said the theory, “results in a momentary neuromuscular ‘block’ or in coordination, which is the basic nature of stuttering.”

The researcher noticed, but failed to interpret correctly, the lack of brain activity in stutterers during their speaking. Influenced by the old hypothesis of the neurological nature of stuttering, Travis mistakenly assumed that the lack of cerebral dominance “must be an inborn weakness” and that all behaviors of a stutterer are simply the “result of his fear, tension, struggle and panic in reactions to the experience of the neuromuscular ‘block’.”³

Simply put, the founding father of American Speech-Language Pathology continued to develop understanding and handling of stuttering in the old (mistaken, as we know today!)

direction of dealing with the symptoms and not with the root cause of stuttering. Instead of establishing a reference point - studying speaking behaviors of normal speakers and gathering information about natural speech algorithms, he collected data about stutterers. "Travis was a researcher, not a therapist. He was primarily interested in discovering the basic nature of stuttering, and it was left to the graduate students - stutterers themselves (!) - to develop the practical techniques of treatment."

An idea of expecting people who stutter to come up independently with a solution for others on how to stop stuttering appears as ridiculous as if we asked a blind person to give us specific visual details of the route to our destination in order to avoid getting lost! Travis "focused his research on gathering information "about a corps of graduate stuttering students who became second-generation speech pathologists, earning their doctorates through the 1930s. Of this group, the two who would become world renowned for their work in the field of stuttering were Wendell Johnson and Charles Van Riper" - in spite of the fact that they both were stutterers who never stopped stuttering themselves!

³ *The nature of this so-called "block" and the real reason for the brain inactivity in stutterers will be explained in the next chapter of my books, entitled: "STUTTERING SOLVED", "LIVE STUTTER FREE", "SPEECH IS A SKILL".*

Each of these two passionate stuttering speech-language pathologists developed their own techniques of treating the symptoms of stuttering to the best of their abilities! The effectiveness of their solutions was clearly not high as these authors themselves remained stutterers for the rest of their lives. Unfortunately, because of their own stuttering and lack of understanding of the natural algorithm of speaking, they simply could not physically find the real solution for stuttering.... In order to accomplish this, they would have had to be able to identify their own not correct speech actions - in short, NSAs⁴. But because they performed these actions unconsciously (were not even aware they did so!), the stuttering speakers had no way to determine inappropriateness of their actions.

Imagine a mental hospital patient, who declared himself a psychiatrist! Did he stop suffering from a psychiatric disorder by having done so? Did he become a mentally adequate person? Did it give him the opportunity or the right to treat other psycho-ill people? I am sad to conclude that the development of methods for the correction of stuttering in the USA went on exactly in this ridiculous historical scenario!

There was no one who could point those stuttering speech pathologists to their speech mistakes and teach them how to perform these same actions in a naturally appropriate way. Such reference points had not yet been established. Stutterer-researchers did not know what stuttering and its causes really were and, most importantly, how to eliminate them. This is why they could only speculate about them, try "by chance", and design their artificial, pretty ridiculous, illogical and even funny

techniques to address the symptoms of stuttering: stutterers' fears and avoidance. They assumed that reduction of these symptoms should be the main prerequisite to any improvement in speech "fluency". "It was generally agreed that the main goals were to reduce the fear of stuttering and to modify stuttering behavior in such a way as to bring it under voluntary control as much as possible."

Based solely on their personal negative experience and unrealistically high level of their mental self-esteem, the speech pathologist-stutterers claimed: "the total elimination of all stuttering" is impossible, "but hopefully anyone could learn to eliminate much of the tension and perform stuttering in a relatively easy, slow, fluent manner..." Simply put, stuttering "specialists" speculated and insisted on the following: «We have tried everything and remained stutterers. Believe us, no one will ever be able to offer anything better than us. So, do what we did and remain stutterers as well!"

⁴ *NSA is a Not correct (not logical, not rational, not natural, not proper, not adequate, not appropriate, not accurate, not practical, not possible to execute, etc.) Speech Action of a speaker.*

Undoubtedly, these two SLPs have "left a legacy ... in the field of stuttering". However, both their methods of stuttering treatment turned out to be effective only in some degree for some time and for some stutterers...

"Van Riper was the eternal clinician, always seeking to develop better therapy." In order to reduce fears and avoidance, he suggested "the stutterer should put his stuttering behavior under a microscope, becoming aware of [his] every little thing he did that reflected anticipation of stuttering or how he coped with the tension and struggle once a block had actually begun, and what he should do about it following the completion of the block and the utterance of the word". This approach required "hard work, demanding constant monitoring of [stutterer's] speech so that [he] felt the right way and did the right thing before, during, and after having a stuttering block." The bottom line is that Van Riper taught stutterers to always focus on their speaking mistakes because again, the knowledge about the natural speech action algorithm was discovered later, only in 1998.

In contrast to Van Riper, Wendell Johnson "preferred not to always be fretting about every little bit of stuttering." He suggested stutterers should just let go of their fears and avoidance, be willing to stutter in any situation, speak as well as they can and just "bounce along". Johnson always put more emphasis on a change of attitude towards stutterers' own emotions rather than any change in speaking behaviors. He offered pretty vague and emotional advice that every stutterer could interpret in their own different way. Such advice as «bounce along» can not be called scientific or accurate!

Both Van Riper and Wendell Johnson attempted to decrease stutterers' negative reactions to their own disordered speaking behavior by teaching them either to control their speaking

mistakes (Van Riper) or accept them (Wendell Johnson) . Neither one did not find it necessary to address the root cause of stuttering - the irrational speaking behavior of a stutterer himself. Despite both followers of Travis being stutterers, they were able to discover some truth about speaking. In general, Mr. Riper was the first speech professional to introduce the importance of self-control in speech. However, because he did not have a reference of the speech norms, Van Riper had no way to figure out that instead of focusing on speaking mistakes, a stutterer would have to learn the speaking norms first and then, always control his own rational speaking.

The main merit of Wendell Johnson was his discovery of the nature of stuttering as a learned behavior and the importance of the way speakers use words in a meaningful way. He "believed that what has been learned can be unlearned". He also put a lot of emphasis on the ability of people to speak in "clearly defined terms". Unfortunately, instead of teaching stutterers how to perform and control their own naturally correct speaking actions, he passionately taught them to change their attitude towards their fears and avoidance. But just like Van Riper, Wendell could not know that all the psychological aspects of stuttering are just the symptoms - the logical and natural outcome of the root problem of stutterers' incorrect use of their own speech apparatus (performing of NSA - Non- correct Speech Actions). This real cause of stuttering was discovered later.

To summarize the above, none of the pioneers of the cure for a stuttering approach, as well as their followers (mostly stutterers as well), could understand the cause and the mechanism of stuttering. Still today, every dictionary describes stuttering as a mystery. Here is the definition given by Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia: "Although the exact cause of stuttering is unknown, both genetics and neurophysiology are thought to contribute however; there is essentially no cure for the disorder at present."

The cerebral inactivity in the brain of every stutterer during his speech remained unexplained until 1998 and was something that the "founding fathers" hoped would be solved in the future. Thus, in "The Nature of Stuttering", 2nd edition, 1982, Van Riper wrote: "it is our impression that dimly we see the contours of the pattern of stuttering well enough to know that someone someday shall somehow manage to fit all of its pieces together". And 17 years later, this "someone" has turned to be. If you would like to learn how Van Riper's dream has finally come true, who this "someone" that solved the mystery of stuttering is, and why the first 100% effective science-based complete Speech Education Program is the first and only real solution for the elimination of stuttering, please, read at least one of my books: 'STUTTERING SOLVED', 'LIVE STUTTER FREE' or 'SPEECH IS A SKILL' (the most informative edition).



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