

EDITORIAL

This *issue* comes to you in the New Year of 1996, we send good wishes to all our readers. Publication has been a little delayed in order to be able to report on the Winter Workshop. The next *issue* will follow the May weekend and Foulkes lecture (see notices) and the third *issue* will appear in the Autumn at the beginning of the Academic year. We ask contributors to bear these dates in mind and please let us have contributions a few weeks in advance.

Symposia and Workshops are a central part of the Group Analytic Society, where new ideas and experiences are generated. As only a minority of the membership is able to attend, more feed back is needed. We are grateful to those who responded to our requests for reports about the Winter Workshop this year, some written at short notice, and about the events in Ljubljana and Tblisis. Would it be possible for future organisers of such events to encourage contributions and reports for " 'Contexts'?"

We are encouraged in this *issue* to have responses to previous articles - could we have more! We have always hoped that the membership would talk to each other through 'Contexts'. Our own Network!

Pat de Mare Founder member, celebrates his 80th birthday on January 27th. We send him warmest good wishes.

Sheila Thompson

Anne Harrow

CONTENTS

Editorial	1
GAS Issues Committee Matters	2
Brenda 's Agenda	3
Letters from the President	4
International Development Sub Committee report	7
The Winter Workshop.	
The Recovery of Childhood Teresa Howard	8
Reflections. Isabel Greenwood	10
Worlds--A--Part. Liz Jupp	13
Talking in Ljubljana. Kevin Power	15
Josephine Lomax-Simpson	17
Extracts from Tiblisi workshop report by Marine Chitashvili. Sheila Thompson	19
Memories and Images. Bernard Ward	20
Weekend Block Therapy. Meg Sharpe & Dennis Brown	23
Learning Psychotherapy and Politics Response to Ronald Spiers. Dick Blackwell	24
Darwin Freud and Group Analysis Christopher Badcock	26
Book Review Sheila Thompson	27
Correspondence	
Olav Dahlin	28
Lauren Storck	30
Pat de Mare	31
Notices and Forthcoming Events	

COMMITTEE MATTERS

The Copenhagen Symposium is on course. There are already 230 respondents.

Here in London the Foulkes lecture will be given by Estela Welldon, beginning the Spring weekend.

Pat de Mare's birthday will also be celebrated at the May weekend.

Currently fresh guidelines for future workshops are being drawn up.

The N.E.European Secretary reported a growth in interest in Group Analysis. Professional bodies are keen to promote democratic psychology and group Analysis has the potential to promote this. Following the workshops offered in Leningrad in 1990/1 Marina Chittashvili, Director of the Psycho-Social Association had continued a programme plan given by Raymond Blake.

Christopher Rance has announced his intention to resign from the joint library committee. The Committee regretted this and expressed their appreciation for the work Christopher has done.

Note was taken of the unnecessary work for admin staff due to deadlines not being respected.

The Committee had an 'away' day (held at Daleham Gardens), to talk in an unstructured way about the future of the Society. A main issue raised was, relationships between the different centres for Group Analysis world wide and the position of the London centre.

My second 3-year term of office ends in May 1997. The Constitution, wisely, does not allow me a third.

I have suggested to the Committee, and they have agreed, that it would be appropriate for the Society to elect the next President some time before I retire so that a smooth handover can be achieved and so that an uneasy period of uncertainty about who will take over can be avoided.

The choice of President lies with every member of the Society and will be made at the Annual General Meeting in Copenhagen in August 1996. Absent members may vote by proxy. Nomination papers for the office will be posted with the AGM papers. The President must be a Full, Honorary, or Founder Member of the Society.

It is not too soon, however, to begin to consider that choice now. Should the next President be a woman or a man? Should she reside in the United Kingdom or on the continent of Europe? Should he be an innovator or a consolidator? Should she be cautious or one willing to take risks? Older or younger? He will need to be able to take a global view of the Society's affairs and to have the ability to contain constructively the tensions which inevitably exist within a society as large and diverse as ours. And she will need to be able to respond creatively to other organisations which might seem to be our competitors in the field.

I hope there will be a wide discussion of the choice within the Society. We have many very able people and it will be good if several can be persuaded to accept nomination so that a clear choice is made.

Bryan Boswood

President

Winter Workshop 1996-1997

The annual Winter Workshop in London, which is now always repeated later in the year in the north of England, and sometimes in other places also, is an important 5-day event in the Society's calendar. It is very much an international event, with a majority of participants coming from outside the United Kingdom. There are some lectures, but there is an emphasis on the experiential component in small groups and large.

The Society Committee invites submissions, early in each year, from members willing to take responsibility for the next workshop. Such submissions should include the names of the conveners, the theme of the proposed workshop, and an outline of the programme.

If you would like to offer a submission for the 1996-1997 Workshop please let me have it by the end of February at the latest. It would be great to see new teams of conveners coming forward, but submissions from members who have accepted this responsibility in previous years would be equally welcome.

Bryan Boswood

President

Where shall the 1999 European Symposium be?

The Society Committee invites bids from group analytic organisations to host the 11th triennial European Symposium in 1999. Recent locations have been Oxford and Heidelberg and this year the 10th Symposium is to be in Copenhagen.

Symposia are held at the end of August or the beginning of September and now usually attract 300 - 400 participants. They are the joint responsibility of a local organisation in the place where the Symposium is held and the Group Analytic Society.

The local organisation must be able to find an enthusiastic team of colleagues who will form a local organising committee to collaborate with the Symposium Subcommittee of the Society. Suitable premises, with a large number of rooms suitable for small groups and one room large enough to accommodate all the participants in a large group, are essential. Residential accommodation for participants in hotels or a university hall of residence must be close to the Symposium venue. It is advisable to have available a professional Congress Bureau to handle the administrative and secretarial tasks.

The Group-Analytic Society will loan funds to meet the start-up costs of the Symposium. Any surplus funds from the event will be shared equally between the local organisation and the Society. In the unfortunate event that losses were to be incurred those too would be shared equally. More detailed guidelines relating to the financial arrangements are available on request.

Who is ready to take on the responsibility for this prestigious event? The closing date for submissions is May 31st and the Committee will make its choice before the Copenhagen Symposium at the end of August.

Bryan Boswood

President

THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

of the Group-Analytic Society (London)

When in doubt, form a committee; the Society now has a new one. It is the International Development sub-Committee. Its main aim is "to foster the development *of* the Society in order to meet the needs *of* its growing international membership".

As well as an increasing number of members from western Europe and the Pacific nations, a gathering number of new members are coming from the countries of eastern Europe. They have often been drawn to the Society by their attendance at workshops organised by the North-East Europe section of the Society. The NEE section was formed in the early 1990's in order to bring some organisation to the individual responses to calls from eastern Europe for Foundation workshops. You will know about this Section's activities if you have been reading earlier editions of "Contexts" and have studied AGM reports from Raymond Blake, the NEE's chairman.

There are also a growing number of extra-territorial initiatives from group-analytic training institutes in Europe. It seemed appropriate that a sub-committee could act as a voluntary clearing house and coordination point for all present and future training initiatives. It could also act as an information centre on all the trainings happening at anyone time, whether the Society might be represented at international conferences around the world, and a discussion point for matters of difficulty and challenge.

For instance a main point of concern is that of translation in groups where the trainers language is not that of the participants. Should the translator be a participant in the group process, or else a separate individual hired solely to translate? Each choice has a range of difficulties to be negotiated. Experience and learning on this important matter need to be shared and the IDC may be one channel through which this can be managed.

The IDC is seeking to designate Liaison Members in different centres throughout the world where there is group-analytic activity, workshops and training courses in order to build a network of such members and to contribute to a resource of information and knowledge. We welcome members from across the globe to correspond with us on matters such as I have outlined here, and contribute to a growing resource of information and ideas, on practical difficulties and fundraising, on the various and varied training courses which are at present in progress or being planned. Such a resource can assist in the growth and development of the Society and its membership, and of group-analysis itself as a unique school of learning and psychotherapy.

As chairman until August of this year I correspondence on I shall be very pleased to receive correspondence on these matters.

Kevin Power,
Chairman, IDC. *c/o* 1 Daleham Gardens, London NW2 4DB, VK.

The Recovery of Childhood

Fifty one participants came from many places all over the UK and the world. Some came from as far away as Australia, Japan and Canada. Others came from Greece, Scandinavia, Slovenia, Germany, France and Switzerland. What a rich opportunity to be with so many people from so many places in one room. From the morning of 2 January to the evening of 6th, we worked together, sometimes in great pain and sometimes with much laughter, recovering lost memories and feelings from childhood. It was difficult. How do you recover childhood? Why do it and, as Susie Orbach asked at the end of the week, "What is childhood for anyway?"

The days were structured with a simple rhythm. Except: for the first day which started with registration, we began with a small group followed by a lecture or experiential exercise, another small group and a large group to finish.

Hymie Wise got us started, provoking a lot of powerful feelings in the process, telling us stories, from his childhood and since, in his lovely rich Irish accent. "Long time ago, long time ago, long time ago". He suggested that we hum for a bit, close our eyes and focus on our breath for a bit, and reflect on the way we take in life through our breathing. "Trust the wisdom of our bodies". He then suggested that we tell our neighbour how we had learnt to speak in our own language. Finally he suggested that we draw a picture of ourselves and then, "Think about how old we seemed to be in it". It was a daring experiential exercise for a group analytic setting and it was refreshing.

Jane Haynes, who is a Jungian, set the scene for the second day by telling us about fairy tales. Almost every child seems to structure their lives according to a fairy tale. Those who want to change it come to therapy to help with writing a new narrative. In telling three versions of Little Red Riding Hood, she illustrated the way many tales have been changed from the original spoken yarns to fit expected cultural norms. The Brothers Grimm were particularly keen on stitching in utopian endings to make stories of abuse more palatable for children. She left us with a quote from Bob Hobson, which reverberated around the large group for the rest of the week, "Growing up is a matter of learning how to mourn and loving with loss".

On the third day, John Byng Hall showed us, on video, how he works with young children within the context of their family. He began by describing attachment theory as his theoretical starting point. His paradigm is a toddler playing in the park being watched by his parents sitting on a park bench. "We need a safe place from which to explore". In response to the way we were brought up we have three choices, be like your parents, be different to your parents, or improvise. Therapy provides a transitional safe place to make it possible to try improvising. The sound of the crying child in the family resonated for the rest of the day.

John Woods provided a powerful set of images from his work with an adolescent boy who had abused and been abused. Quoting from Dali, "Paintings are handmade photographs of concrete reality". John described their encounter as revealed through the boy's drawings. He had drawn on Barbara Docker Drysdale's work to define a therapeutic circle beginning with containment leading to communication and arriving at conceptualisation. He works with the hope that this way of managing pain, will eventually be superimposed on the cycle of abuse, that begins with the original trauma, leading to a defensive system that almost inevitably results in a re-enactment of the original abuse and brings these young people to his door.

On the last day, Susie Orbach set us a challenge. Until very recently, the fate of men was to kill and the fate of women to take care. Childhood is a new phenomenon. There are a set of practices for childhood but no coherent theory. We as a profession have ideas about what constitutes a childhood gone wrong but for some reason we do not make our voices heard. "Why not?" Susie asked. We know that it is better to be emotionally well than emotionally distressed and we know how to make the spaces for repair. So, what would we recommend for children to be able to grow up, explore and digest their experiences?

The large group brought up, revealed and contained more sadness than I remember ever happening before. We learnt that it was the sadness of what had been lost and what inevitably had to be left behind, both in childhood and in the experience of this very moving week. It was a privilege for me to have been there,

Teresa Howard
January 1996

Teresa also received a letter from Andrea Foxwell.
This is an extract. (Ed.)

I wanted to let: you know how enormously enriching I found last week. The time worked on me on many levels. I was able to become aware of a sense of embodiment, it tied in with Hymie talking about body wisdom (and you and I know how our body speaks to us). I was also very conscious of the release that intellectual competition gives, it served, I sensed, as a means of escape from emotional pain. I picked up on a greater collective body which was good at theoretical models, but inexperienced in the practice of corporeal language. The language of the body. Somehow it felt to me that there was still a lot of brain/feet activity, but that the voices emanating from in between were still silenced. If we experience emotional pain in our bodies, and physical pain in our emotions, then quite plainly that field of intelligence, that resource, is something that we as a species evolving in the west have discarded as a way of knowing.

It is hard to listen, and talk in those terms anyway... the learned response is to deride it, because, I suspect, it is such a potent teacher and may effect changes. Change is threatening and provokes angry responses, change is possible and can be accomplished, one step at a time, with care and awareness. Individually we can effect changes which in turn will have an effect on the collective body, bringing about a new consciousness in self and other simultaneously. It's called growth.

My Reflections on The Recovery of Childhood 24th London
Workshop of the Group Analytic Society (London) 2nd -6th January.
1996

I went to a party last night, found I couldn't enjoy it and wondered why?

I have been a participant in the workshop The Recovery of Childhood, I have been seduced and I allowed it to happen! Why? I feel shocked, shaky, bewildered and a little angry. Who do I trust in this world?

Powerful reactions to a workshop designed by creative skilled architects, purposely to entice play and seduce the willing participants. I was one of those. What a fool am I. But am I? Perhaps it took courage to participate. I know I went there with great trepidation at what might happen as I am aware of my vulnerability, yet I allowed myself to go and take myself back to childhood. It was the right time for me as I am at a very small place of development right now and maybe I can learn and grow from the experience, I have the help and support to do so. Can I take the opportunity?

The workshop began with Hymie Wise enticing us to childhood with his tongue in cheek, Irish twinkle in his eye and an effervescent sense of fun at what he was about to do to the G.A.S. Workshop.

He created a picture in our minds of his grandfather, pipe in mouth, with Hymie on his knee telling him a story and as all good stories do began with Long ago, Long ago, Long ago.I could picture my granddad reading stories to me and me not letting him miss a single word, Long ago, Oh so long ago. I was already lost in memory after less than fifteen minutes, what a willing victim!

He continued encouraging and playing with us to loosen our voices and sing, clap to the rhythm of our names and surprisingly we harmonised, more harmony than difference. He played the sound of a heartbeat as heard by the baby in the womb, very powerful imagery was evoked in me. We shared with another how we learnt our first language, drew a picture of ourselves and then were put in touch with our body rhythm by focusing on our breathing. A very playful, seductive exercise I went along with, but which caused others more resistant and knowing a lot of anger.

I was aware of being afraid and shared this fear in the small and large group. I thought I might be "Drowned Out" by the experience.

The next day Jane Haynes continued to entice us seductively with fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm. The tales are certainly grim and I remembered how frightened I was of them as a child, so much so that I have no idea what she said in her paper.

After lunch we were read another fairy tale, my memory of the story is vague and incomplete. As I remember there were six brothers who were turned into swans and their sister undertook to not speak for six years and to sew six shirts to enable her brothers to become human again. At the end of six years she had not uttered a word and had almost completed the six shirts except for one sleeve of the last shirt. Unfortunately, because she was unable to speak to defend herself she was sentenced to

be burned at the stake, just as this was about to happen the six swans flew in to rescue her and immediately they became human, but one brother had a missing arm.

I am struck by the similarity of the story to the abused child, innocence betrayed, inability to speak: and tell the story, and a need to undertake an endless task of repression, and eventually when memory returns the realisation of permanent injury.

That day I recalled a book from my childhood which had great significance for me, it is about a swan who rescues a little girl in distress and loves and cares for her until she is reunited with her father. How I remembered the longings of my childhood and the reading material that helped. Books are truly mends when in distress. I did not remember how I learnt my first language; I remembered the wonder of understanding the written word. My way to learn, what a joy.

In the large group that day I felt very sad and oppressed and recognised that my inner child had died. I was unable to sleep that night.

On the third day John Byng-Hall brought his wisdom and fatherly presence to support and guide us while presenting most distressing material of a family in trouble because mother and daughter were unable to be emotionally in touch. John shared with us his ways of comforting and giving back unity and hope to a distressed family. I tearfully watched the video and understood more clearly how history repeats itself My body was filled with pain and longing: I was drained and exhausted and had no voice in the large group, truly 'drowned out'.

On the fourth day John Woods my small group conductor was to give his presentation, Breaking the Cycle of Abuse. I feared this most of all, and my unconscious gave me away when I wished him well with the words 'we'll be gunning for you'. I had felt about to be betrayed and I betrayed myself

He presented his work with a very ill young man who had been sexually abused and then had abused others, his inner experience was graphically portrayed by his skilful artwork.

Impact profound. I had been seduced to confront the reality of my childhood, can I be as brave and honest as that young man, I need lots of help and understanding.

Having now recognised what is not good in childhood I was then to be provoked into thinking about Social attitudes to Childhood with Susie Orbach. I know what is not good in childhood but do I know what is good? I might think I do but really I have very little idea. I wonder if anyone can answer that question, and who are we to say what is right.

The last large group ended with mixed emotions of sadness that the workshop was ending, we would have to say goodbye for a while, would we meet again next year or ever, who knows. There was an awareness of the new beginnings to come next week for each of us. My contribution was to say that I would come to the party to ingest and digest the workshop.

I did not enjoy the party, I was watchful and alert with a smile on my face and a heaviness inside. I had been seduced back to a painful childhood and could feel it.

Twenty-four hours later I am making connections and allowing myself to think: and understand what had been happening to me over the last four days, there will be many more reflections much work, pain and tears to try to understand my life experiences. Unfortunately the loss is not to be able to confront the seducers face to face, but I suppose that is to be expected of someone seduced.

I was aware throughout the workshop of being very carefully supported by the staff and by a very caring and solicitous Brenda who I am sure has given much support and comfort to many at difficult moments. My thanks is heartfelt, I am very privileged.

All this care and support enabled me to be fed with and digest some very unpalatable and indigestible material. Perhaps the constipation of years is beginning to end as I start to excrete my thoughts on paper.

I have survived in one piece, feel a little anger and realise I am not helpless any more so have been empowered to share my reflections.

Isabel Greenwood

WORLDS--A-PART.

Anxious attachment at "The Recovery of Childhood" winter workshop.

During the workshop, I found I was getting to know about what seems to me to be "an autistic gap", when parent is unable to reach the inner world of the small child, and small child is unable to reach the inner world of the absent-minded parent however hard they try. This may lead to deep feelings of rage, despair and shame by all concerned which becomes uncontrollable and inexhaustible.

At the start of the week I was very quickly in touch with feelings around absent parenting which I wanted to explore.

Later, a video showed a family dilemma in which I saw a small child in a tantrum crying inconsolably, and her mother in despair. They seemed to be in a helpless downward spiral so that neither could sleep. The father tried to carry on, yet I thought he was practically absent for mother and child. There was role reversal in which the child would be asked to "Give Mummy a cuddle." There was also a see-saw effect, one up - one down, so that whenever the child was with one parent she wanted the other, or at another moment, when she clung to one parent she would be told to go and find the other. Thus parent and child could neither tolerate merger nor separation.

In the large group I found there were others who became occupied with the yelling child, with whom I had identified.

Suddenly I was not alone with the experience. It had been possible to recapture it, and find it words, for me for the first time.

This has lead to my seeing in a new light such combinations as fuzzy boundaries and isolation; perfect fit and fragmentation; distancing dislocations in time and space; inability to share and at the same time not to be involved. Needing the opposite - not perhaps only out of denigration - but in a search for the other and the ~elf which, when not reflected side by side, increasingly seem confused or mutually incompatible.

Presence. requires give and take by both parties, a total of four components in any relationship. Absence of any component results I think in loss of self and other, a sense of no answer to "Who am I?" The small child does not develop a capacity for holding with love, until another has been prepared to stay in touch and relatively integrated with the child through the storm. My thanks to those of you who weathered some of this with me.

The multi-cultural mix at this workshop has provided a rich sense of self and other which I find most valuable. I would like to continue to develop communications between us.

Liz Jupp - 9th January, 1996

Talking in Ljubljana

It was like a reversal of Kafka. Arriving late in Ljubljana in the dark, walking through unknown streets in the dusk, finding that the hotel had received my booking. Then leaving my bag and striding off into those unknown streets again to find the University Psychiatric Hospital where the EGA TIN symposium was being held, on the 28/29th October in the recently created Republic of Slovenia. The Kafka reversal? That was opening the closed door and finding a large group in progress, among whom were many faces I knew and was pleased to see again; I was not on trial.

The focus of this gathering was "Median and Large Groups in Group-analytic Training". Papers were given by Josef Shaked, Dubravka Trampuz, Thor-Christian Island, Rocco Pisani, and Yannis Tsegos, All agreed, though in differing ways, to the usefulness of such settings in group-analytic training, yet we seemed squeezed for time in discussing and synthesising the ideas put forward in these papers. Naturally there were the three large group sessions in which I expected discussion to happen, only there was apparent a deep divergence in attitudes and approaches as to how median/large groups should be run and how they may be convened.

There exist at least two broad schools of thought within EGATIN (within Europe?) as to the utility of the median/large group, those gatherings which are more than fifteen people and are formally arranged with circular seating. The first is that of the provision of a psychotherapeutic experience aimed at the individual participant and which concentrates upon the invidious qualities of the individual and collective human personality. This focus provides the participant with a thorough-going experience concentrating upon the psychotic parts of personality, the exposing of them and their subsequent reintegration. It demands a considerable and almost continuous infantilization of the group's membership.

The second broad school acknowledges that the large group experience can be very uncomfortable, bringing on panics, physical discomfort, even distress. The task of the group is to move beyond this stage of primal reactions to the situation, through that of hate, to a worked-through metamorphosis of such psychic energy. This happens via the conveners allowing the group *qua* group to find its own way, within containing parameters, towards managing its sense of panic and physical distress. Mainly this is through the encouragement of dialogue via free-associative discussion which is not reductively interpreted as the various screams of a baby. Such a gathering must be allowed to develop both heart and head, to feel and more importantly to think together.

That the symposium had over half its membership from the new Balkan republics of Slovenia, Croatia and rump Yugoslavia was evidence of the desire in this region for conciliation among those in the mental health professions. (Franc Peternel as the convener of the symposium had not known to whom to send invitations in Bosnia, Macedonia or Montenegro, while the participants from Belgrade had travelled 14 hours by bus to attend. The four participants from Lithuania had motored 26 hours across Eastern Europe). It was acknowledged that psychiatrists had been at the forefront of the Bosnian crisis and war, and how the politically foremost of them once a trainee in group-analysis - had denied that there existed differences among the Bosnians ("We are all the same" was quoted of him by two people who had been in the same group). Hereabouts the meeting took on a sombre tone as those who were managing the effects of war in their professional roles spoke of the devastation, physical and psychological, in family and in the natural large groups, which they

were attempting to alleviate and manage. I felt humbled by the relating of their experiences.

Our evenings were taken up with eating and talking, the first at a reception organised by Franc and his co-workers, and then on the Saturday by an excellent buffet meal close to the meeting place, where we had a huge table of foods to choose from while a real pianist played popular songs, and we could dance in our several ways!

Sunday was Committee day - the EGATIN formal organisation met in several guises, most of which were open to other participants, to continue its work of pooling and organising its knowledge on group-analytic training across its member institutions. The Goldsmiths' training was accepted as a recognised course which was satisfying to me. The weather was excellent, and a steep walk to the castle eased muscles stiff from sitting. The Old Town of Ljubljana clusters around the banks of the river and is delightful. Beyond it spreads the Austro-Hungarian additions which are proportionately grand and imposing. The communist architectural additions aren't as gross as elsewhere in eastern Europe - quite comparable to west London - while the suburbs are without the sprawl which often exists in modern Europe. Slovenia is Europe concentrated, yet without a density of population which pressures. The countryside is lovely, and grand in its mountains.

Sunday evening I was invited to Franc's family house and there enjoyed good conversation and excellent food - many thanks for that, and for your organisation of this event Franc! The next EGATIN symposium is in Munster, Germany, April 19/20 1996, so look to book early!

Kevin Power

HIGH SELF-ESTEEM IN LJUBLJANA.

Standing like giant 'Smartie' tubes, the three rows of perpendicular pillars ranged outside the Triglav Insurance Company building in Slovenia's capital city Ljubljana, reassured me. Part of one of the most beautiful buildings in the city, built in 1930 from plans of master architect Joze Plecnik, those strong steadfast pillars had witnessed great change over 65 years. Accompanying my host, Franc Peternal to the railway station to meet our friends Rocco and Nina Pisani and their daughter Francesca, perhaps we were all part of this ongoing process.

Whilst Franc welcomed Polish colleagues from the railway station I wandered round a retrospective exhibition of a Slovenian artist France Kralj. Taking advantage of T.V. lights to photograph some of the pictures.

The following day - Friday 27th October was the first of the two Study Days organised by the European Group Analytic Training Institution Network. Its venue was the University Psychiatric Hospital. Architecture remained significant and as the daughter of an architect I enjoyed the pleasure the Conference room and adjoining hospitality rooms provided. There was both space and light. The blue chairs and soft yellow walls reminded me of the Swedish National colours - and the absence of Hans and Christina, our Swedish friends. They were celebrating their "centenary" - each having reached the age of 50 years. This observation was my initial large group contribution.

There were however 14 different nationalities represented among the 56 delegates. (I seemed to be the only English representative - Kevin, Piers and Sylvia were listed under title of Great Britain - but London was our unifying factor!)

In the Opening Plenary session, Josef Shaked of Vienna talked about the family drama evolving in the small group. Individual boundaries become blurred in the large group as ego identity is threatened and the unconscious dimensions of cultural and social conflict emerge. Ljubljana seemed a particular appropriate venue in which to explore such phenomena.

The title of the Study Days - 'Median and Large Groups in Group Analytic Training' gave the three large groups an experiential value. The small discussion groups were used to see Ljubljana as suggested by the conveners.

The large groups were to me reminiscent of Bion and 'Fight, Flight and Dependency' - although not necessarily in that order. Convened by Rudolph Olivieri-Larsson from Zurich, the first large group established territory - discussing architecture as opposed to chairs. Emphasis in the second large group **was on**

conflict as efforts were made to explore - and resolve the Croat/Serbian quarrel. Individual wisdom prevailed and it was also recognised that at least one Croat and Serb had been colleagues prior to the political divisions and were only too pleased to meet each other again. In the third and final group the recognition of dependency emerged, an awareness of the social unconscious and the place of God and religion. Continuity was provided by Yannis Tsegos from Athens who had opened the first large group by thanking the organisers for their care. Appropriately he now repeated his "thanksgiving" on behalf of all the members present.

The party was held in an old inn five minutes walk from the hospital. I had changed in a room of an eastern European delegate. This accommodation was provided by the hospital in a former children's ward. There were excellent wash basins, lighting and beds. The eastern European delegates fee of £25 included accommodation and the party. Certainly we in the west must make our Conference fees appropriate for events now individuals are no longer funded by the State.

Franc was referred to as 'France' but he cared for all the delegates with great skill. As the 'official photographer' it was with pleasure I recorded a table spread with goodies, wine on the house and bottles given to the principal speakers. The pianist played as we danced the night away.

Next day most of the delegates caught their planes or drove home to neighbouring countries. Vibeke Nathan was taking Marie Ange Wagtmaur to Prague. There was time for her to join us in a meal prepared by Franc's wife Polana. Other guests included two of the discussion group leaders.

As the visit came to its conclusion, Franc and Polana took Piers Lyndon and myself on a drive through trees rich in their autumn colours. We ended the day joining in a private memorial service. This was an annual event on All Saints Day for a widower whose wife had died four years ago. The fresh flowers were memorable - particularly the roses for their strong necks. The theme was continued in Ljubljana's market place. Its flowers, made up wreaths and candle holders created an appropriate reparation memory.

Returning to England and my own median group, the candle in its royal blue container brought from Ljubljana was lit in memory of a group member who had died.

DR Josephine Lomax-Simpson

THE N.E.EUROPEAN SECTION has extended the range of its activities with a workshop at TIBLISI, REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA, June 24 - 26. conducted by Raymond Blake and Graeme Farquarson. Thirty-five psychologists, including three students, and three physicians attended.

The following notes giving the background to the Workshop are extracted from a paper sent by Dr. Marine Chitashvili, Ph.D., President of the newly formed Society of Dynamic Psychology, Georgia.

Dr. Chitashvili writes about the problems of moving from a totalitarian society to an open society, from "Homo Sovieticus" to "Homo Sapiens". The collapse of communism was "a typical mutiny against the Father..... crashing everything that he had done before without any rational evaluation." People were left without inner self esteem, and with a residue of guilt and disappointment and no experience of looking at themselves as individuals. The collective WE had for so long replaced the I, YOU, HE and SHE. Now WE was discredited. "WE and THEY had become empty." WE had to be relearnt.

Where could they find an alternative to being part of an undifferentiated leader-centred mass, apart from total rebellion and anarchy? There was no model available of an open and democratic society.

The first group-analytic workshops in Leningrad in 1990/91, which four of the Georgian psychologists attended, were the beginning.

During the difficulties of the last five years, with civil war, acute physical deprivations and high crime, the contact with Group Analysis helped Dr. Chitashvili and her colleagues "to survive as persons and as professionals." It seemed to offer a means "to change the psychosocial status of people and teach them through experience what it means to live in a group as its member with rights and duties for the membership: a small model of Open Society."

With little help except for a few (rather old) books and the plan that Raymond Blake had left with them, thirty-two people started meeting regularly for intensive seminars and smaller experiential groups. "The only chance was to begin at the beginning, like the first ones at the beginning of this century did, arrange informal seminar meetings, work and learn ourselves, to clear up every point in a text and go over and over again to understand how the concept may work in practice. For example we have spent over forty hours on the defence mechanisms.""

Most persevered despite the inevitable difficulties and setbacks, and despite having to address issues of leadership, boundaries and authority, that posed particular problems in their historical context.

Dr. Chitashvili writes of her belief that "sometimes local programmes can have a very big influence on psychosocial life of society in terms of changing transforming from one type of living style to another."

Funding is needed now for more workshops.

S.T.

MEMORIES AND IMAGES: working with groups in a religious setting.

This article will outline some work done with groups in different religious settings. Anzieu (1984) writes that, "Human beings go into groups as they go into dreams". People bring to the group unfulfilled wishes and desires. At the same time they have conscious images of what the group is like. In a religious setting memories and images can be used enable people to share their life experience and to build group cohesion. At the same time they can help the group to express some its latent religious symbolism.

My role is that of a Roman Catholic missionary priest working in the field of retreats, spiritual direction, and counselling. The groups vary in size from nine to thirty members.

My aim in working with the groups described is to enable people to use their life experience as a basis for prayer. My method is to facilitate the sharing of a memory or an image. I might ask a group to remember a time when they felt welcomed in a place, what did it feel like? Remember a time when someone kept a promise, what did that feel like? Remember a place that was very beautiful, what was that like?

I would indicate that during the sharing in the group the important thing is to listen rather than to seek to provide an answer or an explanation. A person might share a painful memory. The group is not expected to provide a theology of suffering or to explain away the experience. Thinking of explanations prevents listening. .

At the beginning of each session I indicate the time boundary, usually half-an-hour to forty minutes. Knowledge of the boundary makes the group work and tends to alleviate anxiety since people know what is asked of them and for how long.

The sharing of memories is followed by the suggestion of a piece of scripture which might reflect the feelings and process around in the group. I ask the group members to find a quiet place in which to pray privately, and to begin their prayer from the feelings they had in the group. For example, "you have recalled what it felt like to be welcomed. In this prayer what does it feel like to be welcomed by God'?" Again I make clear the time boundaries for this prayer, about twenty-minutes. This would generally be followed by a coffee-break. I would then ask the group to re-assemble and to share their experience of the prayer time.

The environment or setting place an important part in this group work. A retreat for priests took place at Ilkley on the edge of the moors. The chapel, with a large window looking out onto a tree-filled garden, was chosen as the setting for the group. Here the priests, seated in a circle, shared their experience of their Order, their memories and feelings about it. Hurt as well as happiness came out in this sharing. Gathering the group in front of the window allowed people to have far away thoughts and feelings. It slowed down the pace and seemed to provide a stillness that was safe. The same seating was later

used for the celebration of Mass. In evening, and by candle light the group was asked to share memories of significant people they had known in the Order. Everyone spoke and in so-doing they were able to develop and draw on the group's rich memory of the Order.

During a day's retreat for a group of some thirty nuns from eight nationalities the setting was the convent itself. There was a large garden and the sessions were in a large conservatory that looked out onto the garden. All we seated in chairs of equal height forming a rectangle.

The morning session began with the question, "what does it feel like to be here? What images come to mind? Some of the responses were: it look/feels like a family, like people waiting for something happen, like the Apostles in the upper room, like a tool for working with that God wants to use, like a loaf of bread, like an empty box, like a wide, vast horizon, peaceful and hopeful, feels like Christ uniting us, listening to the voices it sounds like music, a symphony, it feel like adventurers together. This was followed by a period of private prayer. Feelings of annoyance and memories of loss emerged in this prayer. These were shared in Mass later in the day. As the priest celebrating the Mass I was able to link these various themes, feelings and images by saying it seems to be safe to be angry and express loss in the group, perhaps it is also safe to express them to God.

These group sessions were in a retreat setting. In helping the groups to share their experience, rather than giving them talks, I am encouraging them to tap their own resources. By recalling memories and feelings group members link different life experiences. Memories can be integrated into the present. Hopeful they can also be used in prayer. This helps people, in a faith context, to relate to God through their own feelings of joy, anger, or uncertainty, rather than to look for particular "religious" feelings.

Yalom (1985) points out that group cohesiveness is one the contributory factors in group therapy. This way of working with groups in a religious setting might promote cohesiveness in three ways. First, people realise that others have similar feelings to theirs. Second, the experience sharing fosters respect and understanding. A third element comes into play through trusting and being trusted. This shared group experience provides a new memory both for the individual and for the group. The memory the group experience can shared later. Thus the process deepens and continues. The group learns that this is a way of growing together and becoming more cohesive as a community.

What has been said may not always apply to large groups where tapping into images could be very destructive. Main (1975) describes some of the projections, splittings, depersonalisations, and difficulty in reality-testing that can occur in a large group. However, images can also be the source of new energies. Anzieu (1984) points out that, "From these vulnerable points emerge works of art, madness and crime as well as dreams and daydreams..The convergence of the phantasies may produce an ideology even a mythology..or it may provide the group with the energy for

its work." (p.142).

In asking a group to share images or pictures, or to say what it feels like to be here, I am allowing both the wishes and the creative energies to come to the surface. Given the faith context of the retreat situation, another dimension is added to the way in which these images can be understood in the group. In a retreat setting account can be taken of the religious symbolism of the group. As a retreat facilitator it is my role to put the group in touch with this symbolism, to help the group understand the hidden religious meaning of what is being said.

Anzieu would seem to recognise such a role. He writes that, "Whether he be by a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a psychoanalyst or a sociologist in a real group -- from simple everyday meeting to a learned conference -- the person responsible for understanding what is hidden and for telling the truth, that is to say, for putting phantasy into words, by his very presence, arouses what has been up to that time repressed, immobilized and frozen in the unconscious of group members" (pp.155-136). It is the facilitator's responsibility to unfreeze the phantasy.

In working in this way with groups in a religious setting I hope that my background in theology and in psycho dynamic group theory enables me to help the group understand the latent religious meaning of what is being said. The structured religious setting makes it safe for people and provides a container both for individuals and for the group. I want to suggest that group analytic theory can enable creative work to be done in groups in many different settings.

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BERNARD WARD

WEEKEND BLOCK THERAPY GROUPS

Herta Reik and Kevin Power raise some interesting questions on this theme in the August 1995 issue of Contexts (Issue 6, pages 18 - 21). They ask why so few group analysts have started block groups for patients, especially as the block format has become an accepted, and valid modality in group analytic training.

In fact, emboldened by several years experience in such block training, and conducting groups in workshops extending over several days, and also by the pioneering work done by Herta Reik herself, we are currently running two simultaneous groups at the Group Analytic Practice.

At this stage we can vouch for the experience of Herta and Kevin that such blocks provide an intensive therapy, deeply progressive during the six sessions we offer on a Saturday (morning and afternoon) and Sunday (morning). Holding them every two months seems sufficient to provide a continuous sense of containment, involvement and self exploration. The four sessions on Saturday followed by a night "to sleep" on the experiences, before the final two sessions on Sunday do seem to provide a structure that allows the development of sufficient trust and mutual involvement and working through, as our colleagues suggest. Herta and Kevin's contrast between the longer, less frequent blocks on the one hand, and the shorter monthly blocks, makes sense to us. We still need to explore the optimum format and setting.

One of the advantages of our working together is that each conducts a simultaneous group which allows partners and colleagues to attend the blocks together in different groups. It also allows selection by participants of therapy with a female or a male, a "Jungian" or "Freudian" analyst, and to choose between us personally. This is often important in that so far the majority of participants are fellow professionals, many from overseas or outside the London area, as well as people who have had previous analytical therapy, or are in occupations which prevent weekly ongoing therapy.

Groups meet from May to March every two months, with a commitment for a year which is renewable. Potential new members are invited to join us in May 1996.

We would like to hear from other colleagues who have had or plan to work in this way, or are interested in joining our groups.

MEG SHARPE AND DENNIS BROWN

LEARNING PSYCHOTHERAPY AND POLITICS. A RESPONSE TO RONALD SPEIRS

Ronald Speirs (CONTEXTS August 1995) reports the Introductory Courses Staff weekend workshop which began with questions about how students learn and went on to a discussion of politics.

He takes up the question of "Politics in Therapy" and rightly, in my view, emphasises the validity of the discussion of explicitly political matters in experiential and~ therapeutic groups. Finally, he reports with approval Andrew Samuels' survey of psychotherapists regarding their attitudes to and involvement in 'politics' and the way they deal with 'political material' in therapy.

I am generally in favour of this movement to validate political discourse in the therapy session. It is rather obvious that if a patient uses a political metaphor to symbolise an allegedly deeper intra-psychoic issue, then what is significant is not only the deeper intra-psychoic issue, but also the choice of 'political' issue as distinct from any other sort of issue to symbolise it.. Furthermore, it is clear from Foulkes that we should be suspicious of the idea that there are issues 'deeper' than politics and culture.

However, there is a serious problem with this new concern with "political material" and explicit political discussion in therapy. It runs along the following lines:

The most insidious ideologue is the man (it's usually a man) who says he has no ideology. His views wear the sheep's clothing of science, objectivity, impartiality and other laudable and prestigious signifiers. The rulers have historically always determined what is 'objective', 'just' and 'natural' for the governed. That is why in a patriarchal society it is most commonly men who claim objectivity and scientific neutrality while women must state more explicitly their ideological position.

In the same way that we should beware of he who claims to have no ideology, so we should beware of conversations and dialogues which claim not to be political. The idea of something called 'political material' in a discourse called therapy implies that there is such a thing as material that is not political, which also occurs in this context. The idea that groups can usefully discuss 'political issues' implies that there are other issues discussed that are not political. Yet almost any feminist can tell you that the personal is political: and Foulkes said much the same thing slightly less explicitly. Politics is not merely a category of discourse as distinct from other categories like history, economics, art, sport, DIY or psychology. It is a lens, an angle of view, a way of seeing, contextualising and understanding.

Three examples:

1. In the late 1960s and early 1970s many of us student activists were concerned with the ideological implications of what was taught in universities and colleges and the way it was taught. We perceived that the modes of teaching that concerned Jane Abercrombie, whereby students looking down a microscope would see not what was actually there, but what the textbooks had told them would be there, were not only a means of miseducation but were also a means of engineering social and ideological conformity and perpetuating existing power structures.

The idea of creating a group context in which students would really say what they thought, as distinct from what they were supposed to think in order to get good marks, has profound and far reaching political implications. "The Anatomy of Judgement" (Abercrombie 1989) is therefore a profoundly political text though it has no explicitly political content at all.

2. Traumatized refugees often present a high degree of helplessness and dependence to counsellors and psychotherapists. At one level this may be attributed to the regressive impact of trauma; at another level to the deskilling impact of exile in an alien culture and the confusion and uncertainty of the imposed cultural transition; at a third level to the colonial and post colonial pattern of domination and subordination to which third world peoples are still subject. Since political events are the reason that the status of refugee has been acquired, political discussion readily plays a part in therapy with refugees. But a challenge to and analysis of the helplessness and dependency may be ultimately more important in facilitating decolonisation in the relationship between' refugee and therapist.
- 3 The term "material" (as in "political material") referring to the contributions of a patient to the dialogue with her therapist is in itself significant. If Group Analysis is the analysis by the group of the group, including the conductor, then surely what we as therapists say is also 'material'. But I have never seen or heard a therapist's utterances referred to in this way. The term itself can thus be taken to imply a subordination and alienation of the subjectivity of the patient in relation to that of the therapist.

If therapy and therapists are to become seriously politicised, then the first thing to be analysed is not the political context and determinations of the patient, but the class position and ideological interests of the therapist.

Finally, if I may be permitted a postscript, it is incumbent on me, as an associate editor of Group Analysis Quarterly, to point out that Ronald Spiers is not quite accurate in saying that my paper on "Racism" and Liesel Hearst's on "Cultural Cargos" are the only articles from England in the last eighteen issues of Group Analysis to address socio-political issues. There is, for example, Isobel Conlon on 'Gender', Eric Ferron on the 'Black & White Group', Irene Bloomfield on 'Chaos, Creativity and Destructiveness in social contexts', Dennis Brown on "Transcultural Group Analysis", Felicity de Zulueta on 'Bilingualism, Culture and Identity', Okeke Azu-Okeke on 'the transcultural conflicts in doing a Group-Analytic training', and Farhad Dalal on 'Race and Racism'. However, I take the point that this is not a lot from eighteen issues, and that a number of the above contributions, while coming from UK group analysis are written by authors who themselves come from elsewhere.

A well attended scientific meeting at Daleham Gardens on 25th

September heard a paper from Christopher Badcock, a reader in social anthropology at LSE, on Darwin, Freud and Group Analysis. He has supplied this summary.

Darwin, Freud and Group Analysis

Although Darwin published his theory in 1859, for a hundred years confusion and error reigned about natural selection (NS). Biologists settled into the cosy view that both sex and self-sacrifice evolved by 'group selection'. But altruism defined as *any benefit the reproductive success (RS) of one organism at a cost to the RS of another* cannot seemingly evolve because it reduces the RS of the altruist. However, W. D. Hamilton realized that altruism could evolve if the cost to a gene for altruism in the altruist was less than the benefit to a copy of it in a closely related recipient. Eg *if I sacrifice myself to save 3 of my children 100% of my genes for altruism are lost, but 150% are saved (since each child has 50%)*.

In *Group Psychology & the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud established that psychological groups are held together by common identification of members' 'ego ideals with the - leader. Identification may have evolved as a mechanism of *phenotypic matching: the comparison of others with self to establish relatedness*, explaining why studies of altruism by Anna Freud found that identification with the recipient of the altruistic act is critical. She also found that the altruist's narcissism was projected onto the recipient. When seen as mechanisms of defence of the individual's genes and their copies in near relatives, identification, projection and narcissism make profound biological sense, eg explaining why women are more narcissistic than men.

Although biologists for a hundred years settled into the group-selectionist view that sex evolved to benefit the species, modern insights show that 'sex is an antisocial force in evolution' (E.O.Wilson) because NS is not a question of 'survival of the fittest', but of RS of individual genes-the only thing an organism passes on. But long before, Freud had established that sex was an occasion for conflict, eg in *Civilization & Its Discontents*.

Parent-offspring conflict: *because an offspring is twice as closely related to itself as it is to any sibling, parents will demand twice as much altruism (or half as much selfishness) as the offspring wishes*. Eg, faced with a choice of self-sacrifice, an offspring would have to save at least 3 siblings (50% its genes x 3) to justify its own loss (100% its genes), but parents would benefit if it (50% their genes) saved just 2 siblings (100% their genes). *Family conflict is natural and rooted in genetics, it is not a nature/nurture issue*. Eg mother and foetus are now known to be in deep conflict:

- *in pregnancy greater demand by the foetus for blood-sugar can cause diabetes in the mother*
- *hypertension induced by the foetus and destruction of the mother's arteries near it increase blood supply to the placenta*
- *the foetus secretes hCG, attempting to wrest control of the pregnancy for itself.*

Parent-offspring conflict over parental investment (PI) may explain much of so-called 'infantile sexuality':

- *oral behaviour: persistent nipple stimulation inhibits conception in primal conditions where birth of siblings within 1:4 yrs is the biggest single threat to an existing child*
- *anal retention probably evolved to fool mothers who can see what comes out of a baby, but not what goes in from the breast*
- *Oedipal behaviour observed in early childhood in- both sexes makes sense if it evolved to solicit maternal PI*
- *phallic behaviour may have evolved to advertise a son's potential RS to a mother whose lifetime RS could never equal that of a "sexy son"*
- *penis envy makes sense if mothers have this motive for preferential PI in sons and discrimination against daughters.*

Further Reading: C Badcock, *Psycho Darwinism The New Synthesis of Darwin & Freud* (HarperCollins/Flamingo 1994/5).

BOOK REVIEW

Ferron, E. *Man, You've Mixed*. Whiting & Birch Ltd. 1995

Eric Ferron is known to fellow members of the Group Analytic Society as founder/ convenor of the Black and White Group (Ferron Group Analysis 24/2). This group has been meeting regularly since 1988 and has now returned to its original venue at Daleham Gardens.

"*Man, You've Mixed*" is an an autobiographical account of the first half of his life in this country following his arrival aboard a troopship in 1944.

He describes how, as one of the "elite Jamaicans", he was among the proudest, most confident of that West Indian contingent, sure in his knowledge of England as the mother country, able to recite the names of all our kings and queens, expecting warmth and welcome. Then cold replaced warmth - a frozen snowbound landscape, boiled potatoes and cold beer instead of hot curries and rum, and a welcome from people who addressed him as Sambo and asked if he was used to wearing clothes.

Jamaican good will could at first interpret this as ignorance rather than malice: it was only after the immigration flood of the 1950s that ignorance turned to hostility and racism began to be institutionalised.

He acknowledges the friendliness and welcome he often did receive, and which helped him in the struggle to survive "the landlord who refused me entrance, the shop girl who shuddered when she touched my money, the barman who told me to get back to the jungle, the boss who denied me deserved promotion."

So far so familiar. What is less familiar is Eric Ferron's resolute determination to take responsibility for one half of every encounter, to stay with every painful situation and treat it as a learning opportunity for himself as well as for others, and always to strive to replace mindless prejudice with dialogue.

He could draw on the professional background he was building for himself, from medical orderly to psychiatric nurse, via therapeutic community to social work. Moving into social work he felt he was already far along that road, having learnt from life in a racist society "to understand, to control the immediate feelings, to adapt, to tolerate, to help in times of stress." But at the same time other people were learning different lessons.

This is only half his story. The second half, the half in which he becomes a group worker and uses his group work training and skills to confront and combat racism, is still to be told. One is left hoping there will be a second volume.

Sheila Thompson.

CONTEXT

International Newsletter, Group-
Analytic Society (London) 1
Daleham Gardens
London NW 3 5 BY

Stockholm 1311/96

Dear Editors and Readers,

I write this letter in order to throw some light on a corner not so faraway in the north of Europe, that's Sweden (8 million inhab.), where we have a tradition of psychoanalytic group therapy, established in the sixties and since 1980 an Institute of Group-Analysis. Some of you might remember that the 4th Group-Analytic Symposium was held in 1978 in Stockholm.

I have a reason to write this letter now as we 'just have got a textbook on Group Analysis published (yes, we are proud to announce that!) and hope that it will attract attention. No doubt we have a boom in interest in group-activities again in this country, not so much in group-analysis in private practice as in group work with patients in different institutions, "using groups to help people", not so very much to explore and understand yourself.

I called it a textbook not because we believe that the text is completely covering the subject of group analysis once and for ever, God help us! But because we tried to write a pedagogic text, starting with the history of group psychotherapy in order to fit in group analysis in next chapter and so forth. The book is in two parts: theory and practice. The chapter on group-analysis is very much based on Foulkes' texts and follows rather closely his theoretical statements, since his books, except for his last one, have not been translated into Swedish. The practice part include work from different areas, the psychiatric ward with a group of psychotic patients, group-work with alcoholics and groups with university students who have troubles with their identities.

We tried to minimize the impact of our theoretical hobby-horses. The discipline we exercised left us, when the manuscript was completed under the editorial skills of Inge Widlund, with narcissistic wounds and doubts as what constitutes group analysis after all? Hope to see you in Copenhagen to get help to sort that out!

Since the beginning of the 16th Century Sweden has been a country ruled by the King's bureaucracy authorizing detailed regulations. It is not surprising that we already in 1975 had regulations concerning standards of training needed to be fulfilled in order to be certified by the state as approved psychotherapist. The rules prescribed experience of individual psychotherapy and most of the training was in individual psychotherapy so when people ran off to make a career to become certified as psychotherapists, the interest in groups faded. Today you can be approved by training in group psychotherapy if you have done the basic training in psychotherapy. Goran Ahlin (in the Institute) is running 3-year-one-day-a-week-courses in Group Analytic psychotherapy at his Institute for Psychiatric Psychotherapy in collaboration with the Institute of Group-Analysis in Stockholm. These courses have given us a substantial addition of persons interested in group analysis.

The state's supreme power, in form of rules given by the National Board of Health and Welfare, is a problem when it comes to set the standards for training because then the standards of training should, ideally, be equal to all forms of psychotherapies, which comes very close to nonsense or nothing.

Certified group therapists and members of the Institute interested in developing themes pertaining to group analysis have met for many years in a seminar every fortnight. Some stuff that went into the book had been prepared in these seminars. These post graduation seminars selects, by their interest for the seminar-work, individuals committed to group-analysis and participation is a way to acquire Institute fellowship.

The Institute is a very informal structure, a network, of today 12 group-analysts.

As elsewhere cuts in the budget have reduced the possibilities for patients to get money from the community for psychotherapies. This seems to some extent promote the interest in groups. We have for many years arranged a 3 day conference in June, "How to use the small group", eg the group-analytic stance in work with groups. We had last year 34 participants in this introductory course. This conference is an alternative to a Tavistock-Leicester conference also run in June arranged by people more interested in organizational psychology and Kleinian-Bionian and system theories.

You can find our book. in the library at Daleham Gardens, I hope. It should have been sent there if the publisher has kept his promise. We are sorry that we wouldn't get many comments from you as you wouldn't be able to read the Swedish, but you might get a general idea from looking at the index of literature and authors referred to.

Best Regards from Sweden, looking forward to see you in August!

Olov Dahlin, chair, the Institute of Group Analysis, Stockholm.

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28 October, 1995

Anne Harrow and Sheila Thompson, Editors Group-
Analytic CONTEX1S
International Newsletter of the Group-Analytic Society
The Group-Analytic Society
1 Daleham Gardens
London NW3 5Bt
England .

Dear Ms. Harrow and Ms. Thompson,

I noticed in the last issue that a committee is forming to discuss International Development for the Society. I address this to you, but hope you may share it with that committee, or whomever within the Society might be interested.

I have often wondered if the Institute and Society has any *coordinated* efforts in the United States. Although we have a strong and active national group psychotherapy association here, with several local chapters, it seems to me that very little is understood about group analysis.

I lived and worked in London (for nine years) and studied regularly at your Institute for coursework and supervision. Those experiences added enormously to my previous training in group therapy. Since moving back to the States in 1987, I have introduced some group-analytic ideas, here and there, in my roles as a committee chair for the North-eastern (Boston) Society for Group Psychotherapy, as a workshop leader for the national organization (AGPA), and in other teaching duties. I do not teach group analysis *per se*, but I have included mention of some group analytic principles. (e.g. the "culture" of the group, socio-cultural factors in individual development, the "conductor" model, Foulkes' definitions of group therapy, etc.). Some audiences here are hungry to learn more.

Malcolm Pines and perhaps others from London have visited the States to participate in our conferences. There are clearly several group therapists here who are interested in group-analysis. Since we are geographically dispersed, some guidance from London might be useful to coordinate further developments here, via the International Development Committee?

Sincerely,

Lauren E. Storck

THE SECOND NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE ASOCIACION DE PSICOTERAPIA ANALITICA GRUPAL

GETXO SPAIN November 30th-2nd December 1995

8 January 1996

Dear Anne and Sheila,

Dr. Patrick B. de Mare, RR.C. PSYCH.

Getxo is a beautiful seaside resort overlooking a superb bay on the north coast of Spain - ten miles away from Bilbao. The congress took place in a Death in Venice type of old fashioned hotel facing a vast beach.

The Vice-president Dr Oscar Martinez Azumendi amongst several others had arranged this congress in a most charming yet effective manner. There were some 80 participants. I had met Oscar in 1988 at a large group congress where I had the pleasure of convening eight meetings in Barcelona and a further four in Pamplona.

We had previously become acquainted in London (1985) whilst attending a postgraduate course in community psychiatry. Subsequently he underwent the introductory course in group analysis held in Bilbao, and convened by members from the London Group Institute.

It was Dr Fernando Arroyabe who first introduced him to my ideas about the median group and he returned to London and spent several months in my large group seminar.

He is an associate member of the Group Analytic Society.

I was invited to convene three large group meetings and gave one talk. I was particularly grateful to Oscar since he had, with the assistance of a charming interpreter, Elena Herrera, translated a twelve page article of mine concerning median groups into Spanish and had added a further 12 pages of glossaries and explanation, plus a comprehensive bibliography.

Some 70 members attended three large meetings, speaking Spanish, which made for spontaneity, and my own role was consistently facilitated by Elena Herrera's translating and interpreting.

The seating was in a single circle and the meetings went at a tremendous pace, people were relieved that it was a happy and meaningful experience, unlike a passive aggression that had been expected. In fact this large group played a stimulative role in the congress as a whole. I have had the privilege of convening large groups in a great many countries but in none have I felt such an impact of vitality, humour and friendliness.

At the last meeting it was arranged that Dr Jose Maria Ayerra should collect the names of those who would like to continue to meet in some form of large or median group on a regular basis; of this I hope to hear more. He had presented a superb and comprehensive paper concerning many social structures in which large group dynamics had played a major role and with which he had been involved. I found myself in considerable agreement with his approach and that whilst his terminology was different the underlying meanings were often identical with my own thoughts.

I received a very warm welcome and was honoured by being made an honorary member of the Association. I was surprised and delighted to find my work with median groups was well known. There were great perks, which included a magnificent bedroom for me and Turid with an enormous balcony overlooking the sea.

Professor Jorge E. Garcla Badarocco, from the University of Buenos Aires and president of the Argentinian Psychoanalytic Association, had addressed the congress with an account of his very interesting technique. Termed Multiple Family Group Therapy in which several families met together, in my terms Kith encounter Kin in dialogue with each other, families meeting other families in a large group setting.

I concluded that the oppressiveness of the hierarchical system of the Franco regime and the defeat of the International Brigade (in which Bilbao had been the last stronghold) had left its mark. I found that the levelling and the horizontal lateralising had provided an opportunity for expansion: the whole experience had the liberating effect of a democratic dialogue.

Thank you Jose Maria and Jorge and Thank you, Elena and Oscar.

By the way, my first visit to Spain was in 1958 at the Fourth International Congress of Psychotherapy in Barcelona where the theme had been "Existentialism" and where Michael Foulkes, Lacan and I had presented papers. Not surprisingly at this congress no-one had heard of it.

P.B. de Mare, FRC. Psych.