

## "Group Analytic Society versus Institute of Group Analysis"

To: Andrew Powell

From: Juan Campos-Avillar  
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Dear Andrew

I am an Overseas Member of many years who happens to live under the same roof with a recently qualified Member of the Institute who on those grounds has compulsorily become a Full Member of the Society. I have been paying higher fees than she actually pays and my knowledge of *the* Society is sound and seasoned, and I was unpleasantly surprised to discover that the enclosures she received with the announcement of this year's Annual General Meeting were attached to a leaflet that was not enclosed in mine.

As I understand, there is a mood for this year's Meeting to translate symptoms into their underlying problems and conflicts and an intention of trying to solve them the group analytic way. I think this mailing lapsus has the value of a symptom and that is why it should be reported - carried back - where it belongs, that is to the General Meeting of the Society. The leaflet reads as follows: "Please make sure you have read the enclosures. This is *your* Society and your participation in its affairs is vital." What does that imply? Does it mean *it is not mine* as well? What is the role of Overseas Members within the Society, then?

That brings to mind something that was associated at a meeting of a task group on "Context" during the last Workshop: "Group Analysis: a Wider Role?" to which I was invited as official reporter. In the middle of a discussion on the old North-South problem, somebody brought the following story: "The Greek peasant while he is shopping for an animal at the village market has this question in mind: is it to be kept or just to be killed?" Who is the peasant? Who is the vendor? Who the animal? And that...to be kept or just to be killed? In case, I, we, Overseas or plain Members of the Society are the ones to be killed, I appeal to the right of freely speaking first:

Do you have problems with money? Have you ever thought what the Society is offering to present or prospective members ... and mostly if sheer associate or overseas members? A journal for twice the price of the direct subscription to GROUPANALYSIS. Some sort of accreditation? A cut in registration fees to workshops, symposia, scientific events that take place mostly in London and at the most odd dates of the year and days of the week? Nothing of the sort. It is not very appealing and it is no argument to recruit new members nor to keep old ones: Societies live out of Membership fees and people adhere to societies because they offer them professional advantages, some support or services of some kind. Most of us are still in Group Analysis as a result of reminiscences or else out of commitment to an idea which we still consider worthwhile to keep and to fight for.

To grow or to perish is the dilemma the Society is facing today. There is plenty of space to grow, in case parochialism does not kill the plant. As a matter of fact at national and international levels there is a void for

an ambit where Groupnicks with an analytic orientation can thrive, where to enjoy themselves working together towards a general theory of group dynamics applicable to all group activities (T.T.T.) and to groups of any kind and any size. That I think is what Michael had in mind by "bringing closer together the active exponents and friends of group analytic psychotherapy". They are, as yet (June 1961) a small band, but of distinguished people in many lands. The contribution which can be made by group analysis, based on therapeutic investigation and theory as understood by us, is considerable, deep and wide. Thanks to a start of twenty years or so in organisation here in England and the willingness of some of us to give time and money and to take trouble we can now offer this News and Views and act as editors. With your co-operation it will live and grow, without this, it will die. Active inter-communication is necessary. Let us begin!"

Twenty years more have elapsed since S.H.F. signed those words. GROUP ANALYSIS an International Panel first by correspondence and later through face to face contact was the child of News and Views. I hope there are still today enough among us ready to take trouble, put enough money and time behind,... and blood and tears as for giving birth to a vigorous grandchild ready to face the end of the millennium. Do thoughtfully as you please at the General Meeting, but, please, be reminded not to throw out the baby with the bath water.

Let me finish this bloody long letter, which more than a letter is an Emergency Advance Report of the Wider Role? I see from the one you are submitting as Honorary Secretary that there are basically three alternatives being considered as future aims and purposes of the Society: One is based on the "Facets Theory" debated and finally rejected at a joint meeting of the Committee and the Council of the Institute. Two, is the European Federation sponsored by Rome and springing from international developments in Germany, Denmark, Italy and I would add here Spain; and three, is to revert to what you call the informal body and which I strongly feel is what is at the core of the international projection of Group Analysis.

If I were to bet, since by Constitution as an Overseas Member I have no right to vote, I would put all my stakes on the third option. Although not wanting to ride on Michael's coffin, I am convinced though that this is where he put most of his time and money since he founded GAIPAC. As a matter of fact, during the last two years here in Catalonia we have been giving this model a trial and we can tell you it works. It helped us run the First Residential Workshop in Group Analysis, under the auspices of the Institute, it has radically changed the Catalan Section of the Spanish Society of Group Psychotherapy and Techniques, and we hope it will also contribute to solve the problems this Society has during the next Annual Symposium in May. Do you know what we do? Very simple; we apply General Group-Analytic Principles to our societal problems and we give ourselves enough time and enough space to examine the situation not only "as it appears to be, but as what it really is".

I hope I will not be prosecuted as a trespasser for having written this

letter. Even if constitutionally I am not entitled, I feel that the Society is a little mine, ours, as well. Besides, having sat as an official reporter during the first week of the year at the boundaries of the Workshop and the Society and at those of "Group Analysis, a Wider Role", maybe I had a view from where the woods were not hidden by the trees. I do not know if everybody will like what is seen from there, but I feel after the storm the fields are greener and a rich harvest seems promised. Work hard at it ... and in case you need a hand, here we are the Overseas to help. The Porc Symposium could well be a fertile meeting ground. Please do not kill the animal yet ... maybe what is just needed is a feed with plenty of t.l.c.

With my best wishes to you all and to your work, Yours,

Juan Campos-Avillar