

—  
REPORTS  
—

LONDON WORKSHOP 1981

8th London Workshop in Group Analysis, January 3 - 7, 1981

GROUP ANALYSIS - A WIDER ROLE?

Staff: Mrs. Meg Sharpe (Convener), Mrs. Wyn Bramley, Mr. Earl Hopper,  
Dr. Patrick de Mare, Dr. Malcolm Pines (Opening address),  
Mr. Peter Sharpe (Outside Speaker), Dr. A. C. Robin Skynner (Closing  
lecture), Juan Campos (Reporter)

Membership: Denmark - Jorn Beckmann, Ebbe Kyst, Yrsa Lund  
Finland - Martti Jaskari  
Greece - Dr. Kouri, Dr. Vitsas, Mrs. Tsegos, Dr. I. Tsegos,  
Miss Voyajaki  
Israel - Ebbe Stibbe  
Netherlands - Dr. Santman, Dr. van Blaaderen  
Norway - Sigmund Karterud  
Spain - Hanne Campos  
Sweden - Inger Dahlin, Christer Sandahl, Gerd Spens  
Switzerland - Sylvain Berner  
U.K. - David Armstrong, Agnes Beguin, Jim Christie, Ali El-Hadi,  
Joyce Ende, Mrs. P. Holland, Teresa Howard, John Hughes,  
Pamela Johnson, Rosemary Koelliker, Olwen McGregor,  
Catherine Mulligan, Ian Nelson, Stephen Peate, Andrew Powell,  
Margaret Sandison, Shafiq Schlicht, Petra Schotten,  
Marlene Spero, Tamara Sternberg, Anna Tsikoudi  
U.S.A. - Jim Durkin  
W. Germany - Marianne Bosshard, Dorothea Franken, Eva Keil-Kuri,  
Karl König

\*\*\*

From: Juan Campos, Barcelona

April, 1981

Dear Fellow Groupniks of GAIPAC:

I have been on a "Workshop Trip" to London during my New Year's holidays. A nice way of initiating this decade and the last lapse of the Twentieth Century. I went there as reporter. Now I am supposed to report to you on this year's winter group event. I never have been in journalism, so you must forgive me for not having taken along camera and tape recorder. I went there just with a notebook. Half way through the journey I lost it. I panicked: "They have stolen my book!" They had not. I had misplaced it somewhere and the crowd, the mob, the horde were stepping on it. I still don't know if I had lost it unconsciously (my resistance to do the job), or the group just did not want to have bibles written on them. Bion said that bible reading is the best way to stop the growth of a group. Nevertheless, I found it. What a relief! Later on I was to discover that notes don't help much to write a report. Like in analysis, while you are busy taking them you hardly can listen and still less see the face of the interlocutor. So, if you ever have to report on a Workshop, don't take notes! After reading and re-reading mine I put them aside. So in writing to you I rely mostly on the memory traces, on the pictures that flash through my mind and the voices I still hear. In order to make the report less subjective, since

objective it cannot be, I will ask myself and others to make some commentaries and express their views. Maybe that way it turns out to be *we-jective* as a group report about or from a group event should be. Also the reader has to take into account something that was taught us in this Workshop by Pat: to feel with the brain and to think with the guts. Some of that will come across through my writing, I hope! Then, let me tell you now about "my" Workshop.

January 1st, 6.00 a.m., Barcelona time

The alarm clock rings. We have to catch the plane at 10.30. This is a familiar trip in our house. Hanne, my wife, has been doing it weekly for three years while she was qualifying at the Institute. This time we are going together. She is going to be a participant and only source of information about Group C, although I don't know about this yet. We are talking about the Workshop and our expectations are quite different. At this same time many people from all over Europe will be heading for London with their own expectations.

We get to Gatwick with some delay and when we finally arrive at our friends' house it is dark already. They are away on their winter holidays, but they left the key with the porter and a welcome note and a bottle of champagne at the table in our room. We feel at home again.

Friday, 2nd January

A beautifully sunny day. The air is fresh but I still can cope with it. London is on sales. I find a lambskin coat, a beauty and a real bargain. The iceman can come. We have lunch at a Chinese restaurant and see a movie about how the Japanese used to kill each other in the olden days. We are warming up and getting ready for the Workshop.

18.30, 1 Bickenhall Mansions

That place, familiar to Hanne, is foreign to me. I was more used to Montagu Mansions and even 22 Wimpole Street. The door is open to the wide world. The place is full of people, the coatrack full of coats. The Workshop is bursting at its seams. The coatrack threatens to come down from the wall but it holds up right until the last evening.

In this sea of people, the first one I meet is Colin James, who as I was to find out later was the only one from the Society at the Reception besides the staff crew. He did not know that I was coming and handed me a letter he was just going to mail to me. The letter was an answer to a question I posed to the Committee of the Group-Analytic Society about a paper I sent after our meeting in Copenhagen. I had to learn later from Harold Behr that my "Afterthoughts" is the only feedback they have so far received from that meeting, and, mind, many of the overseas members there promised to write! Please do, you lazybones! Our International Panel is made out of what we correspond. Excuse me for being what seems too personal, but it is not; it is part of our "matrix" and moulds the nodal point from which I listened to and watched the Workshop.

Then I met Meg Sharpe, the crew captain of flight 8 LNSH GA. She was standing poised, smiling, and as always just beautiful at the door of the "engine room" of the Workshop. She welcomed us and handed me a folder with materials. There was a name tag to put on one's lapel. People were already wearing them. They were all in colour, mine was the only white one. What a distinction! But no, I was soon to find out that lack of colour meant I did not belong to any small group. The typing of the names, by the way, was so small that in case you wanted to read it you had to put your nose on the chest of who was wearing it. Just not proper! ... and a double-bind trick at that: intimacy and distance were to be a highlight of this Workshop. Not too many familiar faces anyhow. Just four old-

timers, survivors of previous Workshops, and, of course, the staff. The secretary, Brenda, was new, but she was as kind and helpful and efficient as all those I had previously known. Oh, I forgot, Sherry was offered, but, as always on those first meetings the atmosphere was cold, tense and anxious. People went around glancing at coloured tags for future groupmates, and the oldtimers embraced each other remembering old days and finding out what had been of their lives since. The time passed quickly and we went home.

Once there, we opened the folders and I will give you a summary of what we found in them: 1) A paper by Pat de Mare and Robin Piper: *Large Group Perspectives*; 2) A programme with staff profiles; 3) A synopsis of small and task groups: Education - Wyn Bramley; Citizenship and the Median Group Method - Pat de Mare; The Problem of Context - Earl Hopper; and Groups Inside Working Organisations and the Management of Change - Peter Sharpe. Gee, what a lot of reading and homework we were supposed to do! and 4) The Timetable and lists of participants, one by small group of pertinence and another by country of origin. I had to find out that under the disguise of the U.K. heading there were Egyptians, Israelis, Pakistanis, Hungarians, Greeks and others. What an international crowd we were! Maybe the Editor finds place in this issue to include all those materials, but I think it is important to share with you some observations, since I feel that they are an important input of the Workshop and my reactions may explain why.

First, it was quite a large group that time: forty-four participants altogether, twenty-three from abroad, well mixed, eleven to each group. Second, the small groups were to sit in the same room for the whole of the five days; the conductors and task leaders were to move around instead. Third, Pat was going to convene five large group sessions and lead two task groups with every small group. Meg was the conductor of two small groups and would not lead any task groups. Wyn and Earl conducted one small group each and had one task group with every small group including their own; and each group had a slot of time free which they all interpreted as being free not to meet. This made for a complicated time schedule, making it impossible for all groups to have parallel exposures to tasks, experiences and leaders. And, finally, small group conductors were barred from the large group and so was I from the group Hanne was in. This will explain my entering into small groups at different levels of development and not alike experiences. Also it explains that large group dynamics were so unlike what they usually are in workshops of this type. I will come to that later.

Saturday, 3rd January, 9.00 a.m.: Opening address: *Group Analysis - The Wider Role?* by Malcolm Pines

I was twenty minutes late. Train frequency is not the same on Saturdays. Of course, Meg had started the meeting at 9 "Sharpe". I lost her welcome and instructions and Malcolm was well into his lecture when I arrived. I could not follow quite while he was talking about similarities and differences between individuals and groups, so my mind drifted to the last time I saw him. It was at the Closing Plenary in Copenhagen. He had just been elected President of the International Association of Group Psychotherapy and was chairing that meeting. He conducted that panel of eight and a floor of over seven hundred only as a group analyst of his stature could. I thought to myself, is that not proof that today's role of group analysis has spread wide indeed? He was now talking about the history of our Workshops. He quoted Webster's definition which seemed tailored to them: "A seminar or series of meetings for intensive study, work, discussion, etc. in some field, especially social sciences and arts." I checked on it and I found another meaning which also fits: "A room or building where home repairs or light manufacturing is done". Through the titles of the previous London Workshops he traced the developmental history of Group Analysis during those last years. Maybe Workshops have also a role within Group Analysis, I thought. What will this year's role be? Is Group Analysis in need of some home repairs? What is the product we manufacture here? Will it sell?



A lively discussion followed and from this jumping board and after refuelling and defuelling people plunged into their so much looked forward to small groups. I had to choose one of them to observe. I chose the one which was to start with a task group with Pat.

#### 11.00 a.m., Room D. Task group with Pat

Fourteen people gathered for this meeting, eleven with orange tags, Pat, myself, and a guest, Rita Leal, who was passing through London and who Pat had invited for the occasion ... practically a median sized group. I had the feeling that not all of them had done their homework. I had read Pat's paper the night before and still found it hard to follow the discussion. The whole thing started with a problem of chairs. There were not enough of them. Two more had to be entered but then for this enlarged group there was hardly space. The analyst's armchair and the couch that belonged to that room were causing problems. The couch could be hidden in a corner, but the obtrusive black chair could not do the same in the circle. Pat refused to take it, offered it to Rita - the guest - who refused it too, so I, the reporter, the last to enter the room had no other choice but to take, although unwillingly, the chair of the analyst. It is amazing how furniture can talk! Of course with all this jumble, time boundaries were broken. Pat sat at the door: the doorkeeper's role? The group dived straight into the task. Nobody knew each other, but nobody worried about introductions. Pat was forced to lead, for practical purposes to lecture, and had a bright class who responded well. Pat's paper came alive with examples and the interchange of that group. We made believe we were in a group. You will see how different this task group is when Pat's teaching takes place after the "students" have gone through the Workshop. Pat was saying that in order to do justice to the large group possibilities, he would have liked to explore them in a large group of five hundred people, five times a week for five years. Actually he had to content himself with a group of twenty plus once a week. He is talking now of median size group theory - will this be the future therapy for the middle class?

#### 12.30, Staff Group

I was joining this group formally for the first time. The night before, during the Sherry party, we had a brief meeting where we decided how I was going to observe. I was looking forward to this meeting, since coming from abroad, I had had no time to integrate with this group. Unexpectedly, Pat did not show up for the meeting and nobody knew why. In retrospect I wonder if having barred the small group leaders from the large group, he did not feel with the right to come into the staff group or if he felt it was a problem of boundaries between the small, the large and the open world groups. Besides, sheer administrative matters, things, feelings, experiences, started seeping in from the growing matrix of the Workshop network of small groups into this staff group - The Ghost in the Machine of this group event.

Groups had not jelled yet, they were feeling each other, exploring how to become intimate strangers and how to make a group out of a lumpy bunch. Disorientation, don't know who they are nor who we are. Somebody pointing at Michael's sculpture in the Library made a slip and out came Malcolm. Who is the convener, Pat or Meg? Or is it Jim, the Systems Man who just came over from the States? - There is fight for leadership, competition between man and woman, with each other, and with the staff. Trying to reduce English into their mother tongue. They are complaining about the fees. What do we do with the money? They are not interested in education. - Problems with too much light in one room. - My feeling was that they were all in a boiling pot, or as they say in Spanish, "Escaping from the frying pan to fall into the fire". Somebody said in a group: "At the last Leicester Conference with Rice there was a lot of aggression towards him, a lot of talk about death, a few days after the man died". So it happened to Michael in his last group, I thought, but he died in the middle of it. A chill went through my back, and I did not say it. What is safer, the large group, the small

group, the large world? Or is there no safety anywhere? We were certainly scared. But, somebody became pregnant for the first time during the last Workshop, she is back now and pregnant again already. Is there hope? Love and hate, life and death, individual and society, the role of the small group, of the wider group, of what size of group ... it sounds as if this is to be the theme of the Workshop.

#### 14.00 hrs. Room D. Experience Group

I am back with the Orange Group again. The problem of the chairs has been cleared by now. There is a chair for each one, even mine is there. It starts on time. Meg is seated without resistance on the damned black leather chair finally. It is her's no doubt. I feel a relief, we are on familiar ground. She did not say much, I did not open my mouth. The group runs smoothly. Nothing of the kind the other conductors described of other groups was there. That is going to be a very polite group - polite comes from polis, is the behaviour of the citizen. Has it been tamed by its first contact with Pat? Or is it just Meg's style of conducting? We will see. Of course, all the traditional topics of a starting group were there, but the tone was softer, quieter, as if they knew already what they came here to learn. Are they really strangers? Or, have they known each other from the market place - the Greek Agora, where people not only buy and sell, but they also assemble to take political decisions of their concern.

#### 15.30 - 16.00, Tea time and Promenade to Chiltern Street

That time, the beehive that built up at break time in Bickenhall corridors had the door open and a place to go. We were comfortably talking and enjoying the sunny beautiful afternoon at the sidewalk making time to move to the Welsh Chapel in Chiltern Street. Nobody knew exactly where the place was. Somebody headed towards Baker Street and the crowd followed as if he was the "Owl that was God". Like gay kindergarten children out for a school walk the line was marching in the right direction. Pat was following with me, "Conducting it group-analytically", I thought. But, at the point of crossing the main street he had to rush to the head, to be sure we were not lost. We arrived in time to the Chapel and entered a large room that was half theatre, half dance hall, festively decorated with coloured banners and balloons, for these Christmas and New Year's holidays.

#### 16.00 First Large Group at the Welsh Chapel

Again, as in the first task group with Pat, we had a chair problem and another with space-time boundaries. Even the wall clock in that room was not on time. People were entering, moving chairs around, trying to accommodate themselves into a large circle that did not quite fit into the square huge room. For more than fifteen minutes we did not settle and there was plenty of noise. Shyly Mr. Silence made two or three tentative entries, but the group was not ready for him. The main entrance door was banging and a draught came from a window that would not quite close, it was draughty and noisy. Pat who was close to the door - he obviously feels the host and always sits at the gate - went up and tried hopelessly to lock both. The door was banging again. Somebody put his folder - the one they gave us with the materials of the Workshop - across the handles of the door, but no use, it fell. People were nervously laughing at their attempts and finally it was decided to ignore the whole matter and Mr. Silence settled in. You could hear the wheels of the brains turning and see the movements of their chests in breathing while people were staring at the empty space ahead of them. From my privileged position of reporter I felt quite comfortable and calm in contrast with what I could observe in those who were really in. I had something to do. I had a role: I had to observe in order to report. They did not have anything to do but to be in and dive into the experience. They had to swim or drown. A few minutes that felt like centuries elapsed in this vein. Obviously large groups have a bad press. Everybody expects all kinds of psychotic breaks



and ugly things to take place. So, in the middle of this tense atmosphere, somebody brave enough stops sighing, opens her mouth and the Word comes! That was not going to start a conversation and, still less, a dialogue. But the ice-man, Mr. Silence, started to melt. Individuals are trying to reach individuals, and then, as that fails, searching for familiarity to no avail: "Is the place a theatre, is it a church? A dance hall where nobody dares to dance?" Instant intimacy neither works. "To speak is to be the leader!": The Owl who was God confessed to be blind when leading the crowd!

"The room does not belong to us! ... I don't belong to myself ... Were we to own it, it would be like living in a community" ... "It is not the room, it is us people. I have learned a lot about our narcissistic us". "Is this the right way we use our lives?" We get stuck with the same old thing: interpretations. What is our Wider Role? ... Disgruntled talk follows now about the group: "It's trying to become alive. It is an organism. It is a mob. Be kings or murderers. I don't think we can do things together. We have a leader!"

The "leader" - Pat - being invoked, talks: "Why is there so much talk about a group. We are not a group, yet!" They nod at him. "We are a disorganism. We are at the border. Fear to get turned on. The beast is in the middle. You drop something good and it will be swallowed. We know how to live in a family, learnt it from childhood; Nothing to recognise: unfamiliarity! But rules equally apply: not to talk to the neighbour ... it would be intimacy! Intimacy is prohibited. You hold power the further you talk."

He loves the group, all right, but does he care for me? So the crowd answers back: "What sort of care is the care you give? How many people can you mind for? Do you mind? Never mind! Being close is to be in touch, being distant is to mind. I do mind being disturbed by all those people! Don't let me alone. Mind keeping an eye on it?" (While playfully all are with this "mind business", a picture flashes through my mind: The Tower of Babel and the Confusion of the Tongues. Somebody notices it is 5.30. I never thought time would pass so quickly!)

When we are standing up to leave, Pat makes his last appeal: "Please I beg you to come back tomorrow. Do not disappear. Be on time! ... Workshops have a tendency to forget about the large group ..." (While we went out I commented to myself: Gee, I didn't think conveners talk so much in large groups. I was also struck by Pat's last remark. Now while writing, I notice also time goes so fast. I will have to fasten my pace with this report.)

#### Sunday, 9.00 a.m. The Bickenhall Library

We are back in the large group, but now we feel more at home. The room was arranged with two concentric circles of chairs. Pat pulled out the chairs from the inner circle and substituted them by cushions he had brought from his home.. Are we going to be more comfortable in this crowded space? At least the void in the middle will not be there. Where is the beast going to sit?

The first thing people noticed was that staff members don't attend the large group. Then, there seemed to be a dilemma between sitting comfortably versus distance. "To have somebody to back you, or at your back ... to look for somebody friendly was my choice!" There popped up a story of a girl in the tube who looked desperate to talk: "I realised that my need was as great as her's" ... Two or three people are late, Pat, the host and manager, sits at the gate with his back to the door: so that nobody will escape? He lets them in and even offers nice cushions, but once in there is no way out. The group is set to talk about care. From care Pat moves to mind and structure. That is what we were looking for yesterday, he interprets, "minds are going to be violated. Culture versus

System." "I have to take care of myself, to stand on my own legs, to be secure" adds the man to the left of Pat. "In the great world nobody cares!" Somebody volunteers as therapist's assistant: "The theme is helplessness, lack of control. How can they know who I am?" From the floor, "Oh yes they care! When I broke my leg they took me in an ambulance, people gathered around me and they looked so tenderly, so full of care ..." Then somebody else clarifies, "There is some confusion here about caring and being cared for ... it is a pity, in New York nobody cares to help. You endanger yourself if you try to help."

Now Pat interprets again, "Your concern is about what Pat is offering us. I want to be in, not just as a door keeper. I enjoy the group, talking in a large group, I just love the group. What the hell is all that about the large group? I had a half day dream half nightmare on that: What interests me is how to think in a group. It has already been too much talk about systems. It is time to talk about structure! We are used to the cosiness of the small group, based on the family, but the family is hierarchical, it goes against society. I had a picture about the powerful use of the mind ... lateralised knowing instead. A lot to live up to! Freud's concept of the group based on the family is defensive against the group. Engels' origin of the family is in terms of the animal horde ..."

(I quoted or misquoted largely this long, decontextualised, discourse of Pat's because I had the feeling Pat was instilling, pumping in, culture into this acultural large group.) Effectively he continues: "What I am trying to share is not leadership but leading ideas. Freud's society is based on the family. Engels' on the horde. Family is antithetical to society. A bad model. It cannot bear freedom. It is hierarchical by origin and by nature." (I love Pat's leading ideas and so it seems does the group. Or, maybe it is that we all love them because we love Pat, or the chair where he sits? From here on the group is at its boiling point. They hate the group, they love the group. They love Pat. Pat loves them.)

But ... everybody seems to compete for who says the brightest thing! For or against Pat's ideas. They challenge him, they adore him. The old battle between intellectualisation and "feelingization" is back: "Let us talk soundness!" No help. The Wider Role? Who cares? We are not heading for dialogue, we are still fencing with words.

Finally somebody's back starts to ache. He is sitting in the middle on a cushion and is bloody mad at the organisation. We paid a lot of money and they don't even offer us a decent seat. Somebody offers to change places with him. "The Nazi horde was a family, I love the horde. The horde which has a capacity to speak .." "Man is a *parole-être*, a speaking being, the being who speaks!"

(At that point I felt I had to share with the group the image of the Tower of Babel I had had the day before. I said: "You were doing all right at building the city until somebody thought we were here to talk".) The idea of talking and death comes back. "To speak is to talk oneself away". Time, death, enters through speaking; one has to speak one word after the other in a timely sequence". Again Pat: "Do a task is a material thing, to talk is immaterial. We are again in front of the thinking-feeling dichotomy. Here you feel the heat of 'feeling with your thinking and thinking with your feelings!'"

The man with a pain in his back feels much better by now. He knows what they do with his £155: "They crowd us in these small rooms to be flooded with anger, with frustration and hate. So we think. Good. I feel better because I know everything was purposely arranged that way." Another: "Is it their way? Forty-four people is a large number and we cannot but behave forty-fourthly." "But, that stops me from thinking! I cannot follow! I just cannot understand! It cannot be my way!" - Leave it to the horde then!

#### 11.00 a.m. Room B. Experience Group C

This time the colour is pink. Wyn the conductor is not feeling up to it. Sort of an upset stomach. In entering, because of it, she asks the group not to smoke please. (Yesterday I knew they were having problems with the lighting on the ceiling, today I am in for a thunderstorm on ground level. They did not know I - the reporter - was coming. It was announced yesterday, but nevertheless they had already forgotten.) I am felt like an intruder. Who has authorised me to come into the group? They want to vote on if I am to remain or if I am to quit. Wyn finally stops them saying: "I did. You are giving Juan the beating that was intended for me". The thing settles and the group goes through a routine: Competition between men and women, leaders mothers: the old yo-yo: *Oedipus redivivus*. Something, however, did not sound right. So much cohesion for a small group that only met once before does not quite fit. Ah! But they had already two large group meetings! Maybe that is what they have under their skin. We will see!

#### 12.30 Staff Group

Today the whole staff is there. We are a group. Nothing is said about Pat missing our meeting the day before. We talk mainly about the small groups. Nothing much was said, however, about the large group and, I know, the small group conductors are curious if not anxious about what is going on there. I feel sort of a split between large and small group in that Workshop. Everybody is pleased about the way task and experience groups are going. Earl suggests to me not to enter the blue group in order to avoid unnecessary "incestuous complications": Hanne, my wife, belongs to this group. I wholeheartedly agree, more so after the reception I had had this morning with my dear "pinks". I rather felt like not showing up in any other small group. But, I have a task to do, I will go there if I am allowed to. I am starting to feel like a war correspondent on the firing line.

#### 14.00 Room D. Task with Wyn

I am already sort of familiar with the "oranges". This time they already carry on their shoulders two "experience sessions" with Meg. They no longer feel so civil to me. Regardless, I am safer, we are here just for a task of Education. I hoped they would behave, and so they did. Wyn divided the session neatly in two: First part she made a presentation and a demonstration of what it is to lead an education group. Wonderful! What a good job she did! The second part was intended as an exercise. We were divided in couples to bring in our own experiences in previous learning groups and apply to mutual tutoring the principles that we had just learned from Wyn. She was to go around listening in. Unfortunately my partner had missed the lecture and I was forced to "repeat the lesson" for her. We missed the mutual tutoring exercise and I my vantage point of observation. Regardless, I learnt a lot about applying educational principles to group teaching, thanks to Wyn and thanks to the "orange" group.

#### 16.00 By myself in the corridor

I am waiting for Hanne to finish her group experience and go home. The green group I had planned to be with is free for the afternoon. I start to do my homework: reading and polishing my notes. But, some way, I am not pleased with my observation point. I feel that the only group I really belong to is the large group. The woods will not let me see the trees? Besides, too much oversight for so little insight ... will I end up looking outside to the Wider Role? Who knows?

#### 19.30 Pat's Party

I was going to forget reporting this event. To forget? To repress? What is not



said in a group - the social unconscious - is the equivalent of the personal unconscious of the individual. Was that party part of the Workshop? Was it not? A major break at its boundaries? Just a social event? The ones there enjoyed it all the same. Turid is such a splendid hostess and Pat makes wonders making overseas members feel like members and welcome guests. Thank you to you both!

Monday, 9.00 a.m. Third large group. Again in the church

A neat, perfectly shaped circle of chairs is there waiting for us. It looks smaller than the days before. It is! Somebody was more concerned about the shape than about counting heads. All chairs are already taken and people still keep coming in. The circle becomes shapeless as it is being enlarged. Lateness is the topic and the meaning of lateness is explored at length and exploited at large: "Pat did not count the chairs. Do we count, then?" Counting heads becomes a game: Who is missing? Half way through the session, exactly half way through the life span of the large group, at 9.45 enters the last latecomer, tiptoeing her way in, like the Pink Panther, trying to no avail to make her entrance go unnoticed. Time boundaries: beginning and ending. The clock on the wall becomes prominent. It keeps its, our, own time and this does not go along with Greenwich meantime. It is a problem of hierarchy. Time: individual commitment versus group commitment. "Time goes fast" ... Pat is saying, when somebody cuts in with a question: "What is the role of the large group within the Workshop? (What, I wonder, is it that we have done here that can be done somewhere else.) Yes, the role of the large group back home? By now, the group is really dialoguing, about love and hate. Pat leads it with love or he doesn't care? "I love it so that we can or cannot hate each other", Pat answers. Love, love, love ... "I hate the group, but I am here; ... there is no purpose to it .. everything is dropped! In the world there is no purpose! ... Now, ideas about the group being born: "The imperfection of things is what makes us go beyond. We have here space and time to use as a void". "Are we worried because the leaders of the small groups are not here? Not the whole Workshop is in here!" "What we are asking is why Pat is keeping them out. Because they could destroy the group?" They pressure Pat on that. He, finally, clarifies: "We do it that way because we find it the most convenient. Otherwise unresolved differences with the G.A.S. contaminate the large group. This has happened at other times. We have institutionalised it that way by now. Their role is in small groups and task groups. If not, we go into five plenaries instead of five large group meetings. So, we decided not to." The group is not so fragile that it could not take love and hate. Somebody closes the session by reminding us that the large world is full of large groups. Some KOINONIA will help! Transformation appears: "We have still a fragile structure. We have been talking about structure: time, chairs, nothing to do with latecomers and birth. You are the youngest, the latest. We are the latest and we want to be the youngest." Here the session ends.

11.00 a.m. In the Library. Lecture by Peter Sharpe

The blues and the oranges meet together to listen to Peter talk about "Groups inside working organisations and the management of change". There is no way of doing justice to this lecture without getting into the discussion that followed. I hope it will be published. The participants received their own copies. I am left with two questions in my mind: Is organisational development or consultancy for working organisations a new field of application for the trained group analyst - part of the Wider Role? Wouldn't it be good if we as professionals in our own associations were to call in some outside expert to help us out in the management of change? ... And a serious ideological doubt: "Are Group Analytic Principles, which have to do with better living, applicable to an industrial society which is mainly concerned with production and is consumer oriented?" Surely a question to be kept in mind!

## 12.30 Staff Group

Earl cannot come today. Pat talks about the problem of lateness in the large group. Meg suggests that it may be related to yesterday night's party. A boundary incident? Pat did not think beforehand that this could be the case. He just wanted to make some of the foreigners feel at home. Now he realised it could have some disrupting effect. Not everybody was invited and, of course, no nobody else from the staff.

At my request time is taken to discuss my role as a reporter. To report, from the French, *re-porter* means to carry back something to somebody, but to whom? To Group Analysis, of course, but what Group Analysis? The Journal? This Workshop? The Society? I must confess at that point I was utterly confused. I had made enough observations, reflected upon them and had piles of notes to write a book! But who is to read my report? What is the purpose of reporting anyhow? I took that afternoon off and I read the report on the Survivor Syndrome Workshop - a beautiful group report about a group event - and also all those of previous Workshops. Funny, I thought, the only reports that tell me something are the ones where I had been present. Maybe reports are only for the people who had been at a particular Workshop? Is it just a continuation of the work done there?

## Tuesday, 9.00 a.m. Fourth large group

Pat has taken care of the chairs. He starts the group by announcing that one of the members won't come. Everybody else besides is present. Right on the dot! People are pleased at Pat's taking care. "Just structural care!" he clarifies. "Time is psychological, is cultural, is universal." "No, it is not!" "The large group is a cultural organisation, the industrial ones have no concern for the individual or the group. They don't relate to the trunk ..." Time is a problem for meeting people, also important to finish on time, if not there appear feelings of insecurity. Pat says "each session has its own course. Lacan dedicates from some minutes to some hours. A tree has a plan to grow up, a group doesn't.

At the mention of Lacan, somebody clarifies, "the fact that we speak and think one word, one thought after the other, introduces the factor of time; half the conference went on at a symbolic level, half at the imaginary one: which has to do with space ... But we cannot react without talking, speech, the word, introduces time and death ... it is cultural." The group follows: "Too poetic, too philosophical; the fourth dimension; we don't know each other until we talk ... This language ... time and space, is too difficult, too impersonal". (The voice of the unconscious, I think). Somebody interprets we are on time and space because tomorrow we are not to be here: Yesterday we were here with our guts, today with our brains ... Philosophy is a way to tell the others are stupid; it is a matter of levels of communication". Somebody brings back the Tower of Babel, she, an architect, checked it in Genesis II: "God realised that if *they* have a mind to they could achieve almost anything. So he created many languages." (The confusion of tongues is here, so we don't achieve anything?) We are dealing with different values, not with different languages. To listen or not to listen, that is the question! Pat: "There is pressure to impose a value; duality between if you think or you feel is offensive; in the group you think with feeling. We are thinking and feeling at the same time ..." and for the first time in four days Mr. Silence is back and settles in for a while.

Now is questioned the purpose of our group experiments: "50,000 children starve to death each day while we are here!" Impotence, we cannot do a thing about them! Children do not die of hunger, but of malnutrition. Pat: "If we learn, children won't have to die. If we stop thinking, what are they going to do? (When the group moves towards the Wider Role into the open world, boundaries between what is here inside and there outside are crossed, the group talks as if

it had a serious case of survivor syndrome.) "We seek meaning: it is time for meaning, no meaning is death! And from death we move into power: Wider Role! We are very privileged people, have a lot of power, of means, that relates to meaning, on how to talk to each other, how to behave, not family-like but as citizens" ... And citizens of the world?

#### 11.00 a.m. Group A. Experience with Meg

I get a well deserved attack for getting in between. Back home, people say it is better to stay away when people are in a fight. I bet, besides, Earl with his "Context" has been already in that group! Israelis hating Germans, people split because they are half German half Jew. Context is well into the small group. I notice Meg is getting away unscathed from that fight and I dare say so. What a tempest that aroused! Of course, to be in no man's land is to be at the cross-fire line. Meg comes in and rescues me. It is just the day before the last! We too will have to part - to die - and that hurts.

#### 2.00 p.m. Group B. Task group with Earl

The pinks have just had their last group session with Wyn. They feel more like mourning than like working on a task. Besides, Earl, the task leader, has been there before and so was I. They will work but they will let us have it too. The North-South problem emerges with noise. Over lighting - firing - a cigarette, the Tower of Babel collapses at the corner. From that we move into sex: the zipless fuck with a stranger - in which intimacy does not count - is translated into a Greek drama: "When the Greek peasant goes to the market place to buy an animal, what he has in mind is "is it for keeping or just for killing?" Who is the peasant here? Who the animal? ... And I thought the task was on "context".

#### Wednesday, 9.00 a.m. Last large group

Large groups also find it difficult to part. "We have done a lot. We have not done a thing." "It is a myth to live in a non-hierarchical, creative structure". Somebody wants to go to church. (Religion binds together I think). "We have built cultural cathexis, it is difficult to take them abroad, they only can be maintained while here?" "No, when I am back in Sweden, I will know I am not alone, other people like me all over the world are lonely too." Good atmosphere! "We have conquered the devils." Pat: "That is not so, that is bad. We are here to cope with badness. To learn how to survive with badness. We are very well behaved as individuals. We learn how to survive the family, prove we are all here and alive. But we don't know if we will survive the myth of society." "Shouting intimacies across the room is not intimate!" "I like the small group. I don't like the large group: that means the future, reality is organisation, difficult to comprehend people, there is no 'other' in organisations." "I disagree, the future is for more organisation" ... Pat: "But not more bureaucracy!" Large groups don't give gratification (At that point people for the first time in that group start to light up cigarettes.) "Illusion, frustration, what to do with our bad objects inside, with primitive superego?" Somebody says: "I read the Survivor Syndrome report. It has to do with the past: in the future there is hope that we can share some discourse that is not based on intimacy." Dialogue ... Koinonia ... Communication ... Communion. We started with nothing in common, in religion there is an eternal thing: The congregation ..." "It changed the perceptions of people. Maybe we didn't change. Who is with us and who is against. It will destroy what we have. Unity. "Communicare" is individual. To mind is for the other."

Pat: "I discovered many things, for example, my concept of citizenship, I have to change it. I love the idea. That has been a fiasco. We all are a fiasco, all for that citizenship and Polite, Culture. Where you leave that, it is like leaving the family. We developed new words: Fiasco - Fiesta - Siesta ..." The



man who introduced the fiasco idea no longer has the fiasco feeling ... Pat: "Can the group have a task? When the task is communication, communion it is a fiasco!" And somebody ends "I feel the task is to understand the task groups where I have been. It is paradoxical but it is an association!"

### 11.30 a.m. Group A. Task with Pat

That is the second meeting of the greens with Pat. They react in quite a different way after going through the Workshop. That time it is really a seminar about the work done. (I wish I had this meeting taped, but no hope, everybody is going to bring back home ideas that are worth an Empire, they will forget ... and they will get lost ... We are still to learn how to exploit to the utmost ideas which are born by the work effort in a Workshop ... And then they say groups, masses, do not know how to think! Maybe we still have not learned how to use the possibilities of communicational technology to overcome the limitations of the individual minds: the mind is larger than what fits under a single skull ... maybe in the future, machines can help to mind our business: the "mind" which is ours, not only mine.)

### Wednesday, 14.00 to 17.30, Bickenhall Library

That is the start of the closing session.- the final departure. First, Robin Skynner is to lecture, then the whole plenary is going to meet for the first time during the Workshop. Even the outside speaker will be there, but that time he is to record - tape record - what is said. I don't remember whether there was a break between Robin's lecture and the Plenary, it feels just as one whole. I hope the lecture will be published. It helped me to understand theoretically what I had experienced at gut level. It is a live demonstration on how ideas, people and organisations can differentiate from the mother soul without having to split. Also on how the child can fertilise back the mother without Laius having a word to say.

Let us go to the closing plenary Earl is chairing; he presides. He excuses Malcolm because of unavoidable previous commitments: then Malcolm is the first to appear. We are set to evaluate the experience. Somebody says: "It has been a great inspiration, now there is expectation: how are we to apply to the Wider World from which we come the knowledge we gathered here, to fulfil in that world our Wider Role?" That is the question! We move from being omnipotent to being plain impotent! Another picks up the issue: "I am very interested in the Wider Role of Group Analysis. We need in the future more space to think about how we can foster some change. Peter Sharpe suggested how to apply to organisations our thinking. Will that lead into better living? Robin showed us how the therapist cannot be part of the system, how he has to sit on its boundaries. Group Analysis in a factory. Group Analysis in the world. What is the role of the group analyst in real life? We need some time to reflect about it. I make a claim for that space." That appeal brings to the fore the intervention of participants who are not professional psychotherapists. An engineer: "Please, stop hiding behind words, you professionals". An architect, the one who looked up the quote in the Bible, "God was afraid of our one-language-mind. Please, let us translate! But for the first time I felt one with people who hide behind words. Life and therapy are not a different." "I learned a lot here in London, but how am I to apply that back home in Greece? How much have we learnt?" "Let us have a follow-up on that in a few months", somebody suggests and we all agree, but who is to implement it? Workshops are a good learning experience, but what are we to do with what we have learnt? "We know how to make a living out of our work and to enjoy it, but what is the good for society from our work?" (I feel professionals are starting to be concerned about those who they seemingly serve. With a few Workshops like that maybe G. Bernard Shaw would have no reason for saying "all professions are confabulations against laity". Are we moving slowly from small group aims into large society goals?)

Then the mob which thinks starts to face real problems of life. From the problems of the small societies into the problem of society at large. Politics are at the door and so are values. Malcolm radically thinks of the possibilities of Workshops without any pre-given structure, to let them evolve its own. Robin shares with us an image that got stuck in his mind, and which he thinks belongs to us: the Japanese staff when they build a factory in England dine together with the workers. Can we do the same? The Wider Role of Group Analysis is under questioning. Meg, the convener, confesses that what she is more happy about is to have put a big question mark behind the title of Wider Role. Structure versus Systems. Consciousness raising is dangerous for the established systems. Changes are part of life. Most revolutions go back to where they started from. Let us face chaos together and enjoy the fight! God bless us for having bet on change, and men have mercy on us! That is the end of the Workshop.

Wednesday, Farewell supper party - the real end!

We are finally all together, the Workshop-shippers and the house is full with members of the Group-Analytic Society (London). Food and wine were scarce but plenty of Koinonia, music and warmth to compensate for it. I missed the old days when Workshops ended in a restaurant by the River Thames. Standing up parties are still work. I saw plenty of good all friends. They shared with me worries I am not here to share. I had a long chat with the Editor of GROUP ANALYSIS. He granted me as much space as I wanted to publish this report, but also I learnt from him that GROUP ANALYSIS might be published by an editorial house. It would certainly look nicer, but would the International Panel and Correspondence scheme still fit under its new covers? If not, I should no longer like this Wider Role!

*\* Here is the biblical quotation (Genesis Chapter II, vv. 5-8, The New English Bible), dug out by architectural research from the 8th London Workshop.*

*"Then the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which mortal men had built, and he said: Here they are, one people with a single language, and now they have started to do this, henceforward nothing they have a mind to do will be beyond their reach. Come, let us go down there and confuse their speech, so that they will not understand what they say to one another. So the Lord dispersed them from there all over the earth, and they left off building the city."*

Hope to meet you again some day,

Your once in a lifetime reporter

Juan Campos Avillar

\*\*\*

From: Hanne Campos

Just a few thoughts on the January 1981 Workshop in which I participated as a member.

It has been an enriching experience for me. I received a lot from the other people there and I feel that I chipped in to create "our" workshop, our bonds and our common language.

I have been and am very interested in Group Analysis' Wider Role; not so much in reference to its wider application to an ever larger number of different areas (health, education, etc.) but inasfar as it concerns the role that Society at large assigns to Group Analysis in particular and group workers in general.

There seems to be a difficulty - or lack of interest - in analysing our position as professionals in society. As it was pointed out in Peter Sharpe's lecture, if the objective of Group Analysis is better living and the objective of good management is higher achievement and production, then there seems to be no way of making Group Analysis serve the objectives of management. And, I am sure we could ask similarly embarrassing questions in other areas like education, health, etc. The problem for me was that with this title of the Workshop, there was not really any room for the members to get together and discuss their views on what they considered to be the wider role. In the small group we were, of course, after digging around a little more in our innermost and groupmost souls. In the large groups and the task groups there neither seemed to be space for it. So, for me it just boiled down to some observations here and there, but not discussion and dialogue as I would have wished for. As I thought about why we had a theme which was a question and why we had no place where to try and find an answer, it occurred to me that it must be a rhetorical question, the theme really being some other unknown one and the Workshop itself was in some odd way not really for us. My attention was called to copies of the Survivor Syndrome Workshop supplement which were there for us to buy. In the introduction, Caroline Garland tells us that "some of the themes that emerged during that long hot summer term" (1976) - precisely when Foulkes died - eventually crystallised in the idea and the reality of the Survivor Syndrome Workshop. I was further reminded of a repeated slip of the tongue of someone in my small group when she tried to refer to Malcolm and kept on saying Michael. Reading Juan's report I see that an inverse slip of the tongue occurred in the staff group. No doubt the theme of the Workshop came from the staff. And perhaps there is a big and complex question about what Group Analysis' role is after the death of its author and creator who seemed to have its role most clearly in his mind. I, at some point, had a feeling that the Workshops - because one could also remember the one of Family Therapy around the time the Institute of Family Therapy was created - were really for the professionals of the Institute and the Society of Group Analysis. There seems to be a hidden agenda in them. I am not saying that this makes them any less valid an experience for their members, but it does bring to mind the question if the professionals who make up the Institute would not also need their own space where open face to face discussion was possible. Or do we finish up like the chain-smoking doctor who is telling his patient how unsalutary smoking is? Basically it really links up with my preoccupation about the societal role - small and large - of Group Analysis. We seem to have a problem in recognising the need for and creating the space where we can evaluate our role - narrow and wide.

As I said, just a few thoughts ... These were memorable and meaningful days, and thanks to our staff who put in the effort to make them so.

I still think a lot about all of you people there. Miss you. Hope you come to Barcelona some day.

Hanne Campos

\*\*\*

From: Meg Sharpe

29th June, 1981

Dear Harold


I enjoyed Juan's highly personal and colourful report with its "Latin" flavour. One of the rewards of this workshop was the varied mixture of members from many countries which gave it a truly international flavour. It was a pleasure to have a reporter from our overseas membership.



To follow Juan's analogy: pre-flight preparation and crew orientation involved several weekends poring over the flight plan. As a profession we tend to assume "it will be all right on the night" if we cross our fingers and "trust the group process". I confess I am more cynical and in any case I did not want this workshop to resemble a British Airways operation. So the staff group spent much time getting together a programme that we hoped would ensure learning, good group experiences, full use of the varied talents in the total membership, and last but not least, good value for money. The cost and the facilities received some criticism and there was a fantasy floating around that the staff received enormous fees. Of course this was not true; the staff were paid adequately. But they gave freely of their time long before the actual day. Profits were needed to get the Group-Analytic Society out of the red. Economic stress eternally present produces considerable strain on the organisation and corners have to be cut, not always willingly. One day when we as a society are healthier financially, we can provide better premises and facilities at lower cost.

The rationale behind the plan was an attempt to question whether or not we as group analysts have a wider responsibility towards society, rather than just treating patients in consulting rooms and hospitals. I hope, at least, we addressed the question even if we did not find any answers.

Yours sincerely



Meg Sharpe

\*\*\*

From: Peter Sharpe

As the outsider I am grateful to be able to comment on Juan's "serious ideological doubt" about extending group analytic work into industry and commerce, as suggested in my paper to the Workshop. I sensed this reservation was shared by others and feel it deserves some deeper probing. If group analytic principles are to do with better living, what is the real objection to extending them to that large part of life which is spent by most of us in organisational relationships at work? Is it moral distaste, professional nervousness or theoretical incompatibility?

Deplore as we may our consumer civilisation, we are nevertheless traders in it because it is founded on the specialisation of labour. Non-involvement with the working organisations that overtly practise its logical necessities may be technically defensible, but I cannot see a moral case without invoking hypocrisy.

I suggest that specialists with the rare skill of enhancing relationships might at least consider trading in this considerable market beyond their usual professional territory. Personal difficulties arising from organisational faults at work seem to me at least as eligible for group treatment as those rooted in marital or family relationships. They do of course imply rethinking the role of the conductor and abandoning the relative security of stranger-groups. New professional skills and credibility have to be established *inside someone else's closed system*. That's the challenge as I see it.

Peter Sharpe

From: Pat de Maré

22nd June, 1981

Thank you for asking me to make comments about this excellent account of the Workshop. I think Juan is to be congratulated on combining surface diversifications with deeper underlying themes. It brings back the whole experience in a most vivid and humorous fashion. Reports of this sort are notoriously difficult to write.

The basic question of the wider role of group analysis brings us into very deep waters, in this case the question is what happens if we apply group analytic principles to a largish group. For me the implications are mind-blowing. Juan however doesn't refer to the actual theme of the Workshop itself. The principles that were applied were those of sitting in a single circle with a free floating discussion going on, with relatively little leadership. Like anybody who has to face a new structure of this sort people (and this includes Juan) become obsessed by considerations of the structure and there are often widespread attempts to reduce tension by personalising and infantilisation.

I found the Workshop most interesting and was riveted by many of the new ideas that arose in the course of the exchanges. I would like to thank you, Meg, very much indeed, for the manner in which you organised the whole thing.

Pat

Pat de Maré

\*\*\*

From: Earl Hopper

In commenting on this report, I assume that free association is the order of communication.

Juan's quotation of Pat's reference to what is virtually an aphorism, namely, that we have "to learn to think with our guts and feel with our brains", reminds me of Bion's comment ... "the attempt to think, which is a central part of the total process of repair of the ego, involves the use of primitive pre-verbal modes which have suffered mutilation and projective identification. This means that the expelled particles of ego, and their accretions, have to be brought back into control and therefore into the personality. Projective identification is therefore reversed and these objects are brought back by the same route as that by which they were expelled. This was expressed by a patient who said he had to use an intestine, not a brain, to think with, and emphasised the accuracy of his description by correcting me when, on a subsequent occasion, I spoke of his having taken in something by swallowing it; the intestine does not swallow, he said." (*W. Bion, Differentiation of the Psychotic from the non-Psychotic Personalities, IJPA, Vol. 38, parts 3-4, 1957*).

Now, leaving aside the problems of metaphorical and overly concrete ways of thinking (almost reminiscent of Jung's confusing aetiology with free association) it occurs to me that one reason why it is so hard to think in a large group is not only that projective and introjective processes predominate, but also that each participant becomes part of the containing "membrane" of the group for the other participants. Thus, it is very difficult to distinguish what is forced into one's mind, in so far as such a process is really possible, from what one introjects.

Insofar as the capacity to make creative linkages requires explosive expulsions,

as it most certainly does at least for some people, it is vital that the conductor of a large group functions as a container and facilitates the development of containing function of the group. I do not suggest that this should be his only function, or that appropriate interpretations are not containing and nourishing. However, from my point of view as a conductor of small groups and of various task groups, I suspect that this did not happen in the large group in this particular Workshop. Many participants seemed to be seeking in the small groups a container for feelings that were stirred up in the large group. In other workshops the opposite has occurred: the large group has functioned as a container for explosive feelings, thereby enabling participants to use their small groups in an intimate way. I suppose that the relationship between large and small groups in workshops requires more study, but I am certain that all workshops of an "experiential" kind must provide at least a semblance of containment.

Noteworthy to me was that many participants seemed to have come in order to continue work which they had begun in the Survivor Syndrome Workshop (also under the organisation of Meg Sharpe), *whether or not they had actually attended it*. I may have formed this impression because I had asked participants to read the report prepared by Caroline Garland, and because they knew of my active interest in the topic. Among the major themes which appeared in the material of my own small group were birth and death, secrecy, "smoke", buggery, creativity on behalf of those who have died, helplessness, etc., and mostly associated with the "concentration camp chaos" of the large group. Is it possible that, as part of a reparative process, some participants were attempting to reclaim parts of themselves which they had left behind, not only in the large group of this Workshop, but also in other workshops, not to mention other activities in their daily lives?

To return to the beginning, I am increasingly struck by the profundity of psychoanalytical insights as applied to group processes, which is not to imply a reductionist perspective or to ignore contextual processes, as emphasised in my own sociological prospective, to which my students will attest. It also interests me how much the ideas of Pat de Maré have in common with those of Bion and other psychoanalysts, as well as with those of Robin Skynner, or the other way around, as you wish. I am less certain about their "techniques", primarily because what people actually do differs from what they claim or would even wish to do. For example, although I regard myself as a "psychoanalyst" and this image informs my work as a "group analyst", I myself reported a disturbing dream of my own to my small group on the second day of the Workshop. I would not recommend this as standard procedure, but it seemed to me at the time to be the most appropriate way of giving the interpretation which was embodied in the dream. I would regard this as an "interpretive acting-in".

Earl Hopper

\*\*\*

From: Wyn Bramley  
Student Counselling Service  
University College London  
Gower Street  
London WC1E 6BT

What excited me most about the January workshop, was its title. That Group Analysis is now established enough as a discipline to stray beyond its borders into industry, education and social (non-clinical) areas is gratifying indeed. However, it was important to ascertain whether Group Analysis really did have a "wider role" in the minds of the international group-therapy community, and that this was not a figment of the workshop staff's imagination? So with some caution



various tasty tit-bits were offered - "context", "citizenship", "education", "management". Having now reassured ourselves there *is* a wider role, perhaps we could progress from the *hors d'oeuvre* to a full meal? Perhaps participants might choose one area, of a choice of three, upon which to concentrate, rather than taking a mere bite at everything? Any suggestions for topics? For my part I should like us to study the new developments in the Social Sciences, (a field in which many of us have little grounding, but the new ideas from which could and should have a tremendous impact on any helping technique/theory). What are we doing about that boundary between Group Analysis and philosophy, Group Analysis and anthropology, linguistics, political theory? What are we doing about the much "vaunted" interdisciplinary approach?

Wyn Bramley