

THIS WAS WHAT LONDON WAS SAYING IN 1935.....

During the 1930's, a small society called the Society for Creative Psychology operated in Bloomsbury and produced various small publications, of which the following is an example.

The Technique of Group Work

by

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As it is stated in the rules for group members, a group shall consist of three or more people co-operating together under the supervision of a group leader, who shall be appointed by the President, the purpose of a group being the solving of individual problems by the technique of group work. The group members promise to observe strict secrecy with regard to the proceedings of the group. Personal information which may be disclosed in the course of group analysis must never be mentioned, and the problems of the members must never be discussed outside the group.

The principal aims of the group are not only the solving of individual problems but the teaching and the practice of integration, which calls for the co-operation of every member of the group. Integration is the welding of diverse personalities into one whole, while retaining their individual uniqueness. To attain psychological freedom it is essential that the ability to integrate should be achieved through practice, for psychological freedom is the functioning of the individual as a valid personality in society. The importance of this principle will be realised if we consider the fact that the degree of success or failure of a Government depends upon the degree of understanding and co-operation of its individual members. This is also true with regard to a relationship such as that of husband and wife, for the success or failure of marriage will rest likewise upon the degree of co-operation and understanding which is attained.

In this age of mechanisation and separateness it has become increasingly difficult, in spite of modern means of communication, for people to attain even a measure of integration, owing to the diversity of ideas and professions and the separation of the sexes in childhood. The technique of group work has been introduced as a method by which the rapidly-growing tendency towards separateness may be combated and overcome. For integration should not only be practised within the group, but, once achieved, should aid the group members in their co-operation with others who have been unable to benefit by this method.

The technique utilised in the groups for accomplishing this consists in bringing to the surface and studying the individual

members' reactions towards each other and the synthesizing of diverse attitudes into a constructive whole, which constructive whole will be of greater individual benefit to each member than his own separate attitude.

The first point to gain in a group is the principle of acceptance. To learn to accept each other the members must reveal their often well-concealed antagonisms, the source of which should be carefully traced and viewed with detachment. This will entail a deep study of the members' styles of life, which in its turn will reveal many individual problems. The life style is the mould or pattern in which the individual casts his life, based on his reactions to his environment. In dealing with individual problems it is necessary that three principles which are of primary importance in individual analysis shall be dealt with and studied:

1. The Goal in Life. It is essential that everyone should have an aim or goal towards which he is orientating his life. Not only should his goal be a distant and perhaps visionary one, but he should have an immediate and practical one, which may be one of the many steps towards the achievement of his ultimate goal.

2. Co-operation with Other People. It is impossible for man to lead a completely separate life without contacting other people. Complete separation through neurosis leads to isolation and mental suicide.

3. The Study of the Sex-urge or Libido. Sex and the whole life-urge or libido in man is one of the great problems that everyone has to deal with, and therefore it is of importance that a synthesis of experience should be gained, which may be put at the disposal of the group.

In a well-run group every member will be contributing his full share of experience, and the group leader's function will be that of aiding in the co-ordination and synthesizing of these experiences. If the group is being really successful, the group leader will have no need to stand out as a dominating force; but it may be a considerable time before a group will arrive at such a free rhythm. At first the group leader will seek to draw out the members and to elucidate their problems, to act as an intermediary between any who have violent antagonisms towards each other, and to check the group from being, on the one hand, hysterical and unbalanced, or, on the other, from being superficial and false.

There are several dangers that will be encountered when endeavouring to run a group. There is the danger of intellectuality. It is very easy for members to escape delving too deeply into their own problems and reactions by embarking upon an intellectual discussion of some problem, such as the value of money. Admiration is another danger. After a while, the group having achieved a measure of integration, it will be found that all the members are inclined to agree far too easily one with another, and thereby lose their individual uniqueness. It often happens, too, that one member of the group, by the very nature of his neurosis, seeks to dominate and hold the whole group's attention fixed upon himself for a much longer time than is necessary; or,

conversely, a member may be so reserved that he will hold himself back and be unable to take his full share in the responsibilities that co-operation in group work entails. Members of a group may find themselves becoming bored while the leader is assisting one of them to unravel a deep complex, and this will show that they are again not taking full responsibility and initiative in aiding the solution of the problem.

Group work is not meant to be entertaining or stimulating to the intellect; it is a serious and human method of bringing psychological freedom and adjustment to people who are not able to afford an analyst, or for people who have had analytical treatment and now want to put into practice some of the help received. Group work will be of value in showing a member whether he needs special analytical treatment or not, in giving aid where treatment cannot be afforded, or as a continuation of psychological study after treatment has ceased. It should be clearly understood that all people can benefit from a psychological understanding and freeing of themselves, and that psychology is not only for extreme cases of mental illness, but is a practical measure of benefit to the individual in everyday life.

It will be seen that group work has a social as well as an individual value, and although we have been considering the technique of group work as applied to individual problems based mainly on separateness, there will also be groups called together for specialised work. There will thus be an Artists' Group in which the problems of individual expression and social culture will be studied, and individual artists will be assisted to reach their public by co-operative methods.

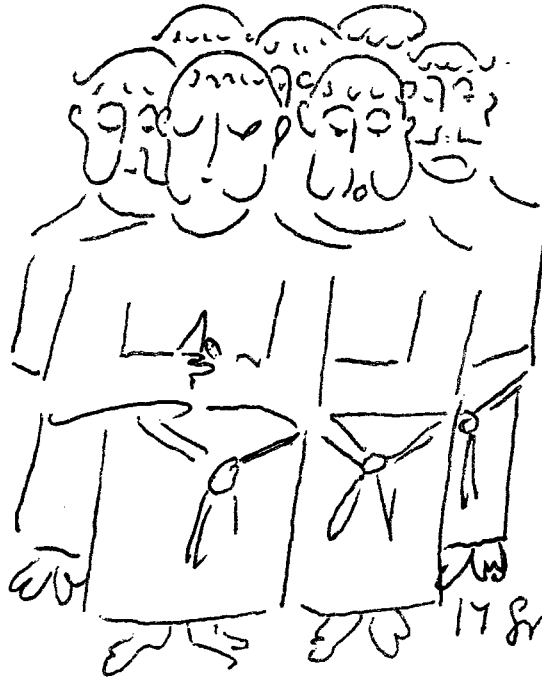
There will be groups for parents, where child welfare, birth control, and all problems connected with the up-bringing and education of children will be discussed. Indeed it is possible to utilise the group technique as a basis for the study of all branches of human activity, whether social and political, cultural or individual.

It is hoped that members of the group, after they have been aided in the solution of their individual problems, and having achieved a degree of integration, will seek to study psychology with a view to becoming in their turn group leaders. For this purpose Group Leaders' Classes are organised by the Society, to which group leaders are invited to come, on application to the President. For the detailed study of various aspects of psychological teaching, lectures are given, designed to cover all aspects of life likely to be dealt with within the groups, so that individual experience can be backed by a certain amount of acquired knowledge. Group leaders are encouraged to undergo a course of psycho-therapeutic analysis, so that they may attain a fuller degree of psychological freedom themselves and have a deeper knowledge of psychological technique.

The aim of the Society for Creative Psychology is to construct a network of groups throughout the world, in which the above principles may be carried out; and it is hoped that group leaders, after a certain amount of experience, will in their turn institute groups under the parent body in whatever district they may be situated, so that gradually the aims of the Society may permeate the world.

ABOUT YASSKY'S ENVY AND BOTT'S "ORTHODOX GROUPS"

A Response to the March 1976 Issue of GROUP ANALYSIS



AN ORTHODOX GROUP.

Alfred Yassky criticized my report about the treatment of the "Beautiful People" in Groups, and I thank him for it. I tried obviously to express myself too briefly and may have assumed too much as self evident, as for instance, the fact that these narcissistic personality types need careful and often prolonged individual treatment before the start of group therapy.

I know the importance of envy, and anticipated it to be the main resistance against group therapy in these cases. I found, to my surprise, that envy is almost exclusively directed toward the fantasy image and rarely appears after getting to know these people in the reality of the group. The exceptions are transference phenomena, mostly the transference of sibling rivalry from the past. This observation of the lack of envy was a great surprise for me. It confirmed my faith and confidence in people.

I never thought I would see the day when somebody would call any kind of analytic group therapy as "orthodox," as Peter Bott did. I consider all of us group analysts as pioneers, or avant garde - and now we are called "orthodox." If the time should come, and it certainly will happen, that our present day group analytic approach can be replaced with new and better forms, then please call our approach "standard". "Orthodox" is a thoughtless term because none of us, I think, is dogmatic like a religious fanatic. Flexibility and tolerance is our trademark.

Martin Grotjahn

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