

LOS ANGELES PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY

SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING

Time: Thursday, June 25, 1964, 8 p.m.

Place: 344 North Bedford Drive, Beverly Hills

Minutes of the Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 8:12 p.m. by Dr. Rangell, President.

1. Minutes of the Meeting of June 18, 1964:

Dr. Rangell informed the membership that since this meeting is so soon after the last one, the minutes of the last meeting cannot be acted upon at this time but will be sent to the membership along with the minutes of this meeting.

2. Membership Committee:

The application of Dr. Allan Rosenblatt for Guest Membership in the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society was approved.

3. Dr. Samuel Sperling announced that the copy of his Presidential address given at the last meeting and circulated to the membership should be restricted to members of the Society only. He stated that because of the haste, several misspelled words occurred in the copy, the most serious of which occurred on page 4, line 37, in which the word "changes" should be corrected to read "charges."

4. Dr. Rangell then introduced the main item of this meeting, which was to continue the discussion of the findings of the Committee on the Study of Psychoanalytic Practice in accordance with the wish of the membership as expressed at the last Special Business Meeting. He pointed out the constructive nature of the previous discussion and hoped that we would continue in that vein. Although the original queries had to do centrally with problems of practice, the replies caused the interest to branch out into many wider areas; and we should follow those directions. He emphasized again, as he had at the last meeting, the wide band between repression and impulsive action, and hoped that the discussions would be spontaneous, deliberate, and sober. He then turned the conduct of the meeting over to Drs. William Horowitz and Leonard Rosengarten, Co-Chairmen of the Committee.

Dr. Horowitz briefly summarized some of the trends encountered in the discussion at the last Special Business Meeting of the Society. He noted that several members had referred to moral issues and to the influence of the power struggle on the psychoanalytic community. On the other hand there were references by some members to the necessity for autonomy on the part of committees and individuals within our organization. He reviewed the dictionary definitions of the words autonomy and autocracy and noted that some members were disturbed by evidences of autocracy in our organization.

Dr. Jokl then read a prepared statement in which he stated that he was greatly impressed by the report of the Committee but that in his opinion many of the previous discussants had missed the main point. The importance of "public image" in psychoanalysis cannot be denied since we are concerned with reality and with external evaluation, but to us it should strongly include the projection of our "moral image" within ourselves. The main issue is the moral standard of our group and of every



single individual in it, about which Dr. Jokl and others have been deeply concerned. Domination of the group by some members, gratification of personal needs, and intimidation of others create a serious and precarious dilemma. This cannot be cured by changes in organization or procedure but only by the improvement or elimination of defective characters in our midst. Dr. Jokl is worried about the prognosis and feels that a total co-operation and a lifting of the psychoanalytic spirit is essential.

Dr. Rosengarten then read a letter which had been sent by Dr. Greenson. Dr. Greenson felt that the Education Committee is partly responsible for some of the dissatisfaction, and he suggested certain changes in the membership of the Education Committee. Among the suggestions made were that the Training Analyst's function should be separated from membership in the Education Committee, that we do away with what he considers unnecessary secrecy in the proceedings of the Education Committee, and that the term of the Dean be restricted.

Dr. Friedman asked the membership not to lose a sense of proportion and to be prudent and not to exaggerate. He felt that a reorganization was necessary and read a set of suggestions which he had made on previous occasions. These included bringing the Society and Institute together under one administration, the officers being elected by the membership without reference to status as Training Analysts. The Training School should be independent in matters of training and be represented in the Board of Directors by the Dean. Meetings of the Education Committee should be open to the faculty.

Dr. Horowitz noted that Dr. Jokl had stressed the moral aspect of our problems while Dr. Greenson and Dr. Friedman had stressed the organizational aspects.

Dr. Brandchaft noted that most of the discussion centered around the acting out of certain members and a decay of moral standards. He said that he believed that the root cause does not rest on conflicts between the Education Committee and the Society but on certain dissatisfaction with the training. The latter does not prepare the analyst to satisfactorily deal with the character problems of his patients, giving rise to poor results and damage to the public image and self-image of the analyst. He asked that training be reassessed in order to include more attention to character, schizoid, paranoid, and borderline problems.

Dr. Dorn stressed the need to examine ourselves and noted that some physicians do not know the difference between psychoanalysis, psychiatrists, and psychologists. He suggested the possibility that, due to the unusual pressures on analysts and the difficulty in dealing with personal problems in training analyses, the training analysis be shortened and a second analysis be recommended afterwards. He suggested meetings of small groups of analysts in an effort to deal with the anxieties aroused by psychoanalysis.

Dr. Berenson noted that a fear of belittlement and humiliation had prevented members from speaking freely and stressed that as a scientific group we should be open to new ideas. He felt that lack of freedom had inhibited a wish to learn among members. He raised the question as to what constitutes a classical approach to psychoanalytic problems, since those who venture to differ from those who have controlled the Institute have been criticized on these grounds.

Dr. Rangell reviewed the trend of the discussion thus far, and while noting the value of the prepared statements, hoped now for more informal discussions. He pointed out that the central manifestations of our problems were affective in nature and as



analysts we can see that they are due to situations of conflict, both within individuals and within the group. He agreed with Dr. Berenson as to the existence of a feeling of "oppressiveness" within the group and, while organizational deficiencies should also be corrected, he agreed with Dr. Jokl as to the central importance of moral issues and problems.

Dr. Sarlin referred to the arrogant and arbitrary usurpation of power by a few members of the Education Committee and quoted remarks from certain members of that Committee calculated to intimidate other members and to inhibit scientific productivity and freedom. He read a prepared statement which included the suggestion that final approval of the Education Committee's selection of Training Analysts become the responsibility of the total membership of the Society. The Institute, the Education Committee, and the status of Training Analysts should always remain subordinate to the status of membership in the Society. He said that the final authority and responsibility for psychoanalysis must remain the hands of the duly elected representatives of the Society.

Dr. Kenneth Rubin noted that the present situation is unique, in that those who finish training settle in a community occupied by their own trainers and that the Training Analysts have been subject only to their own control--an unhealthy situation in his opinion. He felt that problems of training demanded that a structure be created giving the membership more control of the Training Analysts so that these problems could be dealt with.

Dr. Walsh noted that every group tends to have a covert as well as an overt leadership and that if the covert leader is motivated by self-centered interests, certain results will take place, including loss of communication between group members, dissatisfaction and friction between members, loss of productivity of members, withdrawal of productive members from active participation in the group, and that ultimately the group will approach a split unless the situation can be corrected by courageous action. He remarked that training will also suffer under these conditions because the group members, including the trainees, are treated like children, which they will not indefinitely tolerate.

Dr. Van der Heide criticized Dr. Jokl's statements as too general and felt that if specific charges occur they should be referred to the Grievance Committee. He pointed out that Dr. Greenson's recommendations had been twice voted down by the Education Committee. He also differed from Dr. Brandchaft, stating that specific techniques for the treatment of the special groups of patients referred to by Dr. Brandchaft have not been sufficiently developed to be taught and that research is still going on.

Dr. Horowitz read a list of criticisms and complaints submitted to the Committee on the Study of Psychoanalytic Practice, which included the following: 1) It was commonly felt that a small, covert leadership exists in spite of a succession of other elected officers; 2) that this covert leadership is generally characterized by narcissistic and exhibitionistic self-aggrandizement. 3) Strength and power are held by a small number but are maintained by a group of passively attached people who derive various secondary and vicarious benefits in return. 4) Among those who speak loudest regarding the purity of classical analysis are some whose behavior with patients is characterized by various forms of acting out. The latter varies from subtle to blatant, exists with both patients and candidates, and has become publicly evident. The result is general frustration and demoralization within the group. 5) The education Committee is a nerve center for such problems and has as a result become a seriously divided group--again this filters down and has become rather public



knowledge. 6) The misuse of the position of Training Analyst as a status symbol rather than as a service symbol. The arrogant treatment of members as though they were still candidates. 7) Character assassination, both of a subtle and not-so-subtle variety, of people in high and low places in psychoanalytic achievement. Such activity takes place at parties, informal gatherings, and in the audience at Scientific Meetings. 8) The rationalization of acting-out behavior with patients by the borrowing of certain theoretical formulations which are presented as applicable to disturbed patients. 9) There is a feeling among some that economic pressure is also used as a device to maintain power.

Dr. Malin remarked that the group members are now able to talk about their dissatisfactions openly and that since this tendency has begun, a change in the group has already occurred in a favorable direction. He stated that the Education Committee has severe problems which it must face. He warned against "guilt by association," a tendency which he feels is common in our organization; and he stressed the need for openness in discussion.

Dr. Mandel asked whether Dr. Horowitz had specific proposals to make in order to correct the situation described in his list of quoted dissatisfactions and criticisms obtained from members.

Dr. Horowitz said that proposals had already been presented.

Dr. Rangell pointed out that the matter of what to do next was indeed vital and was hoping to ask the membership what their attitude was toward the material brought out, in view of its nature and of the unusual situation.

Dr. Sperling noted that the Committee was authorized only to study the unsatisfactory situation, not to bring out recommendations for change. Out of this dissatisfaction came the proposals of Dr. Greenson, Dr. Friedman, Dr. Sarlin, and Dr. Rubin. These proposals need extensive study. There is already a joint Committee of Institute and Society set up to study mutual problems, to whom all these matters can be referred. The Board of Directors of the Society also constitute a Grievance Committee to whom specific complaints against members can be presented.

Dr. Rosengarten called for moderation and noted that the Education Committee had not reacted unfavorably to the criticism it had received.

Dr. Rollman-Branch noted that through discussion there seemed to be a tendency to arrive at a common ground.

Dr. Friedman remarked that a differentiation must be made between the following: 1) What is the goal of psychoanalytic training? And 2) what is needed to develop a psychoanalyst? He felt that some of the speakers appeared totally unaware of the requirements of The American Psychoanalytic Association. He felt that it must be up to the individual what he does after receiving his training. He stated that he believed that most of the critics of the training activity were unfamiliar with the basic tenets of psychoanalysis.

Dr. Van der Heide agreed with Dr. Friedman regarding going back to basic tenets of psychoanalytic training. He disagreed with what he considered Dr. Malin's implied attitude to be; namely, that to stick to psychoanalysis as defined by Freud was to stick to a dead science.



Dr. Rangell, in bringing the discussion to a close, formulated the following two possible alternatives which might be considered at this time: 1) To discharge the Committee with our deep thanks and to continue to discuss their findings in the various bodies noted by Dr. Sperling, or in small groups, or in future Plenary Sessions of the Society. 2) To continue the Committee because of a feeling that its work has not yet been completed.

Dr. Mandel asked if there were no other alternatives, to which Dr. Rangell replied that all other suggestions were welcome. Dr. Mandel felt that we should proceed to some action, but he felt that change should take place slowly. He recommended the formation of a new committee having the commission from the membership for a restatement of principles and to bring these to the Society. He wished to avoid a piecemeal change in the organization, which he felt would follow from Dr. Friedman's suggestions. Several speakers explained that the Joint Committee to Study Mutual Problems was already set up to consider precisely such principles.

Dr. Barnard expressed some disagreement with Dr. Brandchaft's statements. She also felt that specific committees were needed to study the material which had been brought out.

Dr. Dorn recommended the creation of a committee to study the dynamics of a group such as ours, with special reference to the influence of covert leadership.

Dr. Furniss moved that a continued study of the situation and of recommendations for remedy to the Society be entrusted to Dr. Rangell. Dr. Rangell, although expressing appreciation for the sentiment, spoke against this. Dr. Feldman amended the motion to include the entire Board of Directors.

Dr. Malin felt that since the Society was acting as a committee-of-the-whole, that no motion was in order.

Dr. Rangell hoped that no hasty, definitive action be taken at this late hour and that the future course be left to the officers to deliberate. He asked whether Dr. Furniss would withdraw the motion, to which Dr. Furniss agreed.

Dr. Friedman pointed out that the Committee was already automatically discharged because of the change in administration and that the President and the executive officers automatically have the responsibility to consider such matters further.

Dr. Berenson noted that many things could be changed under the existing organization, and Dr. Rosengarten advised proceeding slowly with actions intended to resolve the problems discussed.

Dr. Rollman-Branch felt that further open discussion should continue in the future.

Dr. Rosengarten moved that the Committee for the Study of Psychoanalytic Practice be dismissed with honor and that the President appoint another similar committee if he saw fit; S/Dr. Futterman. Dr. Rubin proposed that a meeting in September use as its focus a report from the combined committee of the Society and Institute. Dr. Rangell felt that in his opinion such a report was not likely to be forthcoming for many months.

Dr. Barnard stated that if a new Committee for the Study of Psychoanalytic Practice were appointed, we would lose the experience gained by the present Committee. She



suggested that the Committee might interview those members who were not interviewed up to the present and that something additional might be thus learned.

Dr. Friedman stated that Dr. Rosengarten's motion was out of order since the Committee was automatically discharged with the change of administration.

Dr. Rangell noted that in The American Psychoanalytic Association the Executive Committee is given the authority to act in comparable interim situations and suggested that this could be done in this instance. This was agreed upon, and Dr. Rosengarten withdrew his motion. The Board of Directors will decide what the future course will be.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

Maurice N. Walsh, M. D.  
Secretary

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