

Society

LOS ANGELES INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHOANALYSIS
LOS ANGELES PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY

Report of the Joint Committee on Mutual Problems
of Society and Institute

Samuel J. Sperling, M. D.
Chairman for the Society

In view of the long agenda and of the facts that you have heard previous reports of the Joint Committee, either before the Society or Institute, and that the minutes of the Committee's meetings are on file and available to any member, I shall keep this report relatively brief.

The Committee, comprising 14 members, has met 10 times in the past year. The Joint Committee at first deemed it essential to have a free-ranging exchange of opinions and ideas in order to develop natural and confluent channels of thought so as to promote the attainment of a general consensus of its goals. This Committee procedure, by exemplifying a model of democratic functioning, would harmonize with our common democratic goal and could manifest the advantages and disadvantages of such organizational operations. Democratic procedures in a large committee entail considerable time and effort, for they contrast poorly relative to the more expeditious and efficient functioning of organizations run on authoritarian lines, especially at their top levels. However, such a price is more than compensated for by their wide-spread acceptance, by the greater degree of voluntary participation, and by identification with the goals of the organization at the membership level and so enhance morale and esprit-de-corps. As Dr. Kohut, the Past-President of The American, recently stated, such an organization should desirably function "not so slow as to incur the loss of momentum and emotional involvement and yet not so fast that we run the risk of making hasty decisions based on slipshod judgments."

I believe that an essential consensus of goals has been achieved in the Joint Committee. The primary aim is that the resultant organization should afford the widest and most democratic expression of the entire membership of Institute and Society. Secondly, although it is recognized that the Training School requires administrative autonomy, there appears

to be general agreement that the degree of autonomy of the Education Committee, which historically was of an absolute, authoritarian quality, is no longer necessary. The extent of its relative autonomy is still under searching consideration. The present consensus of the Joint Committee is that these essential goals of maximum democratization and relative autonomy can in all likelihood be best achieved by a unification of Society and Institute in a single organization. The Committee has under study three very comprehensive proposals for reorganization submitted by Drs. Friedman, Lewy, and Van der Heide. Several particular suggestions have also been received from other members such as Dr. Rollman-Branch, Motto, and Horowitz. These are most welcome by the Committee as well as the attendance of several other members at the open meetings of the Committee.

PROCEDURE:

The present procedure of the Committee has been to form sub-committees to consider in more detail the following divisional functions: that of the Clinic and Extension program, of Research, of the Training School, and that on general or over-all organization. The result of each sub-committee's findings per se are then subject to consideration by the entire Committee, which has the further task of co-ordinating the various sub-committee recommendations. The final report, giving the pros and cons of each functional division and the recommendation of organizational changes to achieve them, will then be presented for the consideration of the entire Society. With the prospective field and procedures well-outlined, we may look forward hopefully to more rapid progress in the coming year.

To provide some more specific information, may I briefly present some material from a preliminary report by Dr. Ourieff, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on the Training School. As a sample, the Committee has been considering the following subjects and questions:

1. What effect does the present organization of the Training School have on the dissolution of the transference reactions in candidates and the growth and independent development of members?

2. What should the relationship of the training analyst be to the training process? Is there any longer a need for independent authority and autonomy aside from ability to analyze candidates? If there is, what are the reasons for and limits of this need for authority and autonomy and how should they be reflected in terms of organization and power structure?
3. Has the training in our Institute been generally successful through the years? Are we satisfied with the caliber and type of analyst we train? This leads to discussion of admission and promotion policies, curriculum, etc.
4. Methods of selection of training analysts--the who and why and how--as well as the advantage, need for, and danger of a self-perpetuating group.
5. The relationship of the Training School to the general membership and the placement of the administrative control of the Training School.

In closing may I acknowledge with deep appreciation the considerable time, energy, and thought devoted by your Committee members to these matters, specifically the following members of the Society to the Joint Committee: Drs. Brunswick, Futterman, Leventhal, Rosow, and Walsh.

SJS:jk