

REPARENTING AND THE TRIDENT HOMES

Compiled by Derek and Elsien Gale

In the January issue of *Self and Society* a piece originally published in the *Observer* headed 'Scandal of 'Back to Babyhood' Therapy' was printed under the heading 'Bad Press'.

It was not the intention of *Self and Society* to cause offence to anybody by so doing and we regret that John Parr, Chairperson of the Institute of Transactional Analysis has had to write to *Self and Society* in such strong terms. We publish his letter to give him the opportunity to make his position clear. The *Observer* did not make any attempt to publish a retraction or apology and John Parr tells us that the Institute of Transactional Analysis was unable to sue the *Observer* due to lack of funds. Also the Institute was advised that as the article in the *Observer* didn't link the Institute directly to either Frank Beck or to Cathexis it was on shaky legal ground, although it is mentioned without comment in the article, sandwiched between Beck and Schiff.

28 January 1992

Dear Editor

Re 'Bad Press' (*Self and Society* Jan/Feb 1992)

I was very angry and concerned to see that you have printed extracts of the *Observer* article under the above title in the January issue of *Self and Society*, without reference to the ITA as to our opinion regarding the matter. As the Journal of a fellow association I would have expected you to have at the very least contacted the ITA before reprinting this piece of mischievous journalism. I am also surprised that you printed it with no explanation as to your reason leaving the reader to perhaps assume that you were in accord with the contents and thus endorsed the uninformed associative links the *Observer* made between the ITA and Mr Beck.

The original *Observer* article was in itself badly written in that it connected the Institute of Transactional Analysis by association with the Leicestershire Child abuse case. There is absolutely no connection in fact as Mr Beck is not now and has never been a member of the ITA and has never received a recognised train-

ing in the use of Transactional Analysis. The practices which led to the eventual finding of guilt and imprisonment are wholly unethical and would have led to the exclusion of any TA practitioner from membership of the ITA for professional misconduct. I would expect this response of any professional body in the circumstances. As it is, Mr Beck's 'therapeutic practices' bear no relation to Transactional analysis other than that he appears to have used some TA terminology in his 'work'.

As the editor of a fellow associate publication I am sure that you will understand my urgent request that you print a retraction and an apology in the next edition of *Self and Society* in a position of equal prominence to the 'Bad Press' article. Also that you print a copy of my letter to you along with a copy of the enclosed letter to the editor of the *Observer*.

Yours faithfully

John Parr
ITA Chairperson

INSTITUTE OF TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS
BM Box 4104 London WC1 3XX

The Editor
The *Observer*
Chelsea Bridge House
Queenstown Road
London SW8 4NN

29 January 1992

Dear Editor,

Re "Scandal of 'back to babyhood' therapy" by Sarah Lonsdale
Observer 29 January 1992

Further to my letter of the 29th September 1991, I have today consulted with a meeting of qualified Transactional Analysis trainers and council members of our institute and am now writing to give you my further response.

Ms Lonsdale's article contains clear implications of connections between our Institute and certain other organisations and individuals.

These implications are wholly unjustified. The misrepresentations put forth in the article are a matter of grave concern for the members of our Institute.

I am therefore writing to you in my capacity as Chairperson of the Institute of Transactional Analysis to ask you to publish an apology and retraction of these implied connections. Specifically I ask you that you make two facts clear in the coming issue of the *Observer*.

1 The Institute of Transactional Analysis has no connection whatsoever with Mr Frank Beck, nor do we promote the practices alleged to be carried out in the Leicestershire Children's Homes.

2 The Institute of Transactional Analysis has no connection whatsoever with the Cathexis Institute. Ms Schiff is not now and never has been a member of the ITA.

I ask you to publish the apology and retraction in a position of equal prominence given to the original article. I trust that you will understand the concern felt by the professional members of our Institute. We should greatly appreciate your prompt action in this matter. We are currently engaged in preparing a press release regarding the activities of the ITA and will send you a copy of this once it is completed. If you then wish to publish this we would be happy to furnish you with any additional information you may require.

Yours faithfully

John Parr
ITA Chairperson

Dear David,

It is a long time since I have been so angry as when I read Sarah Lonsdale on the barbarous practices inflicted on young people and glorified by the description 'regression therapy' (see *Self and Society* January 1992). One has occasionally heard of such things but Ms Lonsdale has effectively exposed the extent of this appalling situation. Apart from the immoral treatment of defenceless human beings, there is a further important point.

Regression therapy - responsibly practised, only with those who are sufficiently mature (usually no-one under 17 or so) and in a properly permissive way and so as to boost self-esteem rather than destroy it - is a valuable technique. By resolving the unconscious roots of current problems it can achieve more, in less

time, with suitable clients, than many other treatments. Re-parenting is also out. It is an abuse of the therapeutic process.

It would be a pity if the publicity given to what should not even be called a therapy, caused prejudice against the genuine article. I have researched an specialised in true regression therapy for the past seven years. This has been accidental in that it arose out of a search for the ultimate origins of neurosis. Almost 600 clients have now experienced this treatment, with a high success rate and certainly not a single individual has suffered any loss of self-esteem: quite the contrary.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Gorman D.H.P., N.R.H.P.

Professional Hypnotherapist

Ruislip, Middlesex

THE USE OF CONTRACTS IN TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

The Institute of Transactional Analysis is a professional organisation which would have no part in associating itself with any form of illegal or immoral activity, especially not the activities of a man such as Frank Beck.

The Cathexis Institute method of treatment as developed by Ms Schiff is based in T.A. specifically through its use of contracts and we publish a short piece by John Parr on contracts here.

From John Parr:

There has been much interest in the media recently regarding Transactional Analysis and Regression Therapy. As the Chairperson of the Institute of Transactional Analysis I wish to make the following points.

Transactional Analysis is a complex amalgam of theories which have been developed over several decades from the original work of Dr Eric Berne. There are three 'Schools' of TA, the Classical School, based upon Berne's original methodology, the Re-decision School, based upon the work of Bob and Mary Goulding and the Cathexis School based upon the work of Jackie Schiff.

Central to Transactional Analysis is the principle that therapy is based upon a contract. A contract is a working agreement between the therapist and the client. The following conditions must be fulfilled before a contact would be considered valid:

- mutual consent i.e. both parties must be in agreement to the contract. The therapist does not impose the contract on the client, rather the contract is negotiated by them.
- Valid Consideration i.e. the fee for the therapist's skill and time. This will be explicit and agreed by both client and therapist.
- Competency. This means that both the therapists and the client must be competent to fulfil the agreed contract. The therapist must be trained to a suitable level to provide the therapy necessary to achieve the client's stated level for change. The client must have sufficient awareness and reality testing ability to make and fulfil the contract.
- Lawful object. The contract goals and conditions must comply with the law and adhere to the ethical and professional requirements of the professional body of which the therapist is a member.

The Institute of Transactional Analysis is the professional body representing TA in the United Kingdom. Transactional Analysts must undergo a lengthy and internationally recognised course of training and accreditation before they can use the title of Certified Transactional Analyst. The Institute has a code of ethics that all our members contract to abide by and an Ethics Committee who would investigate any complaint that may be brought against a TA practitioner. If a TA Therapist were found to be in breach of the code of ethics they would be required to bring their practice into line with the contractual requirements. If they refused to comply with this ruling they would be removed from the register of professional TA practitioners. I know of no TA therapists operating in the U.K. at this time who are in contravention of the ITA's code of ethics.

A copy of our code may be obtained by writing to the secretary of the ITA, BM Box 4104, London WC1 3XX

John Parr
ITA Chairperson

TRIDENT HOUSING PROJECT

The Trident Housing Project which uses elements of Cathexis and T.A.-based contract regression therapy, has recently been the subject of a BBC radio programme Face The Facts.

Face the Facts was not able to get inside Trident (within the time scale offered - they declined to postpone the programme) to see for itself. John Parr did say that he intends to visit Trident himself at the end of February. One of the people working at Trident is an accredited T.A. analyst and Parr told us that he has no reason to believe that this person is doing anything which is any way questionable.

Nick Moreton told the B.B.C in a letter that Trident would like to participate in his programme and would do so quite openly once the Registered Homes Tribunal on 17th February had met. He felt that it would not be appropriate to have the matters aired before the tribunal had made its decision.

In fact the tribunal decided unanimously in favour of Trident after retiring for only 40 minutes. Nick Moreton emphasises that the tribunal accepted on the basis of professional evidence that Trident is a project which is responsible, controlled and using methods appropriate to the clients it works with.

Face the Facts took the view that the treatment offered at Trident is questionable and that it is not backed up by research to prove its effectiveness. It was also suggested that some of the methods used specifically, i.e. cornering, may be an abuse of Human Rights.

The producer of Face the Facts was worried that members of the Trident Project might not be able to speak up for themselves or know what was good for them. Mention was also made of the fact that people who had previously been in a supportive or supervisory role had now resigned from involvement in Trident.

All in all the programme did not show Trident in a good light.

We made several comments to the producer which were noted but which did not substantially seem to change his view that there were still questions to be asked about Trident.

We have not been inside Trident and are therefore not competent to comment on its policies and procedures but we were irritated by the fact that Face The Facts based its criticism on discussions with a psychiatrist and favoured heavily the medical model of mental illness. Interestingly mention was made of the fact that anyone can call themselves a psychotherapist and an MP was interviewed on the subject. However no mention was made of the U.K. Standing Committee on Psychotherapy. The producer of Face the Facts said that the MP had been briefed, so the government seems at least to be taking some notice of

the problem of registration, but is still in no way committing itself to a change in the law.

Trident cleared on appeal by the Registered Homes Tribunal

REPARING

Reparenting sounds like the sort of thing many readers of this magazine will have experienced in Primal type groups.

It involves various forms of regression therapy including the use of nappies and bottles. It is based in a T.A. model of contracts. It is obviously quite a radical form of treatment and its association with Jackie Schiff, whose reputation has been muddied because of legal action taken against Cathexis does not seem to help its reputation. Also Frank Beck who alleged to use it was clearly the sort of person who should never have had anything to do with people in need of help. Clearly questions have been asked about Trident and the method and answered by the tribunal. The methods used challenge some very basic feelings in people. Adults dressed in nappies is something many people find hard to take. However, some methods used, such as "cornering" are seen by some as controlling and punishing and it appears that people in Trident were also physically restrained by being tied together. This has now been abandoned. Nick Moreton denies that people have ever been physically restrained and says that the truth is that "People have been linked together when they have expressed a need for safety and assurance".

This sort of thing may be O.K. in a therapy workshop where people have a choice and are capable of making it, but whether it is a good idea for deeply disturbed people is another matter and one which deserves airing.

Eric Whitton, a respected member of the T.A. Association and of AHP said: "I have met some of the people Schiff has worked with and they are pretty impressive people. Obviously this work is challenging and pioneering and as such is difficult for some people to take."

Nick Moreton points out that it is fundamental to the nature of contracts that people are able to make a choice and that the staff at Trident are trained and ethical workers.

Trident has been under under siege by the media. The establishment in the form of the Registered Homes Tribunal has cleared Trident and endorses its work. Let's hope they can put this episode behind them and carry on their work in peace.

Nick Moreton of Trident also says that he thinks it is disgraceful that Trident was linked in the article by inference with Frank Beck.