

Further reading

Patrick Casement, *On Learning from the Patient*, Tavistock/Routledge, 1985

William Bloom, *Psychic Protection*, Piatkus, 1996

Judy Hall, *The Art of Psychic Protection*, Findhorn Press, 1996

Sheldon Kopp, *Back to One*, Science and Behaviour Books, 1977

Psychotherapists: a club or a profession?

David Jones

Last February the High Court heard a judicial review of UKCP complaints procedures. This established that the UKCP is definitely under the supervisory jurisdiction of the High Court regarding procedures for complaints against members (views had previously been expressed that because the UKCP is not a professional body established by Act of Parliament, but is more like a self-regulating club, its decisions could not be tested in the High Court). It also established that the UKCP has erred in the way it handled a particular complaint which it must now reconsider.

A number of consequences follow from this. The BPS as a learned society and professional association (described in *S&S*, September 1997) represents the interests of professional psychologists. It has been dealing with the Slade case, a serious complaint against one of its members which has been reported in the national press and in its own magazine *The Psychologist*. The BPS is now faced with a further complaint that their procedures and decision were

not rational and fair to the person making the complaint. There is now a precedent for taking this matter to the High Court if the person making the complaint is not satisfied (although the BPS will probably manage to settle the issue before this happens).

Another consequence is that the UKCP is now indubitably recognised in the public domain as a body with responsibilities and duties regarding the training, supervision and ethical practice of psychotherapists.

I can hear one group of my humanistic friends groaning at these events. Legalistic sledge-hammers are an affront to the humanistic commitment to getting complaints sorted out face to face, with the assistance of support groups and mediators. Others will sigh with relief at the security offered by the state legal system in backing individual rights against the decisions of organisations, and in making professional organisations such as UKCP publicly accountable; which is, of course, the aim of statutory registration.

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