



RED THERAPY



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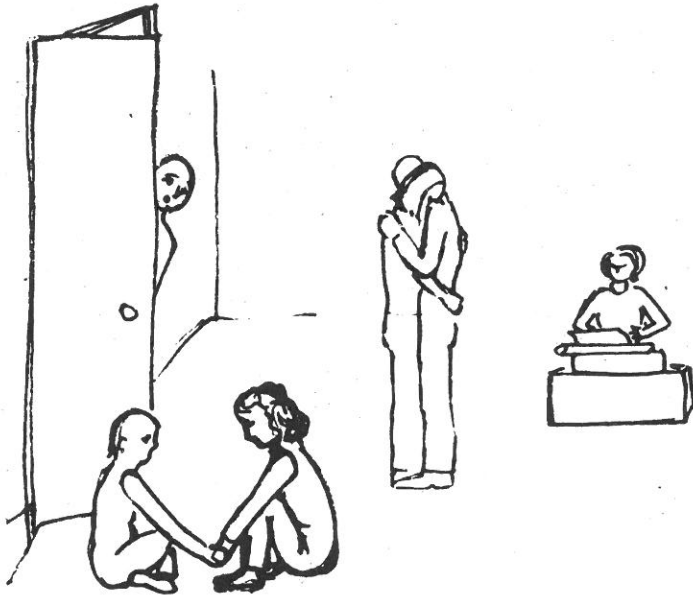
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WHY

When we started meeting as a group in summer 1974, most of us were politically active. We all see ourselves as revolutionaries carrying on anti-authoritarian traditions that sprang for us in the students/workers/womens movements of the late 60s.

Some of us have been active in our jobs - several as teachers, a hospital porter, filmmaker, building worker, social worker, etc. Others have intervened actively in other working situations - in groups regularly leafletting Fords, Dagenham and Lesneys, the toy manufacturers, for example. The women in



particular have been active in situations affecting us and the communities we live in - running a food co-op; a playgroup; a local festival; the National Abortion Campaign; squatting and housing actions. Most of us have been in political groups - C.P., I.S., and several in Big Flame. Most of the women have been active in and identify with the women's movement; the men have been increasingly identifying with a small but emerging anti-sexist men's movement.

At one time of another, all of us had come to feel the need for some kind of therapy, either because we were desperate and needed help; or because we more consciously felt the need for changes in ourselves and in the way we lived our own lives, that went along with the wider changes we wanted to see in society.

RED

Some people in the group wanted to explore the borderline between politics and therapy, to see how therapy and politics could be relevant to each other, and what the relationship between the two could be in our lives and activities. Others saw themselves as people on the left who wanted to do therapy together.

In writing this pamphlet we have tried to put ourselves in some historical and political perspective, as well as describing the concrete and specific problems of getting a self-help, leaderless group together.

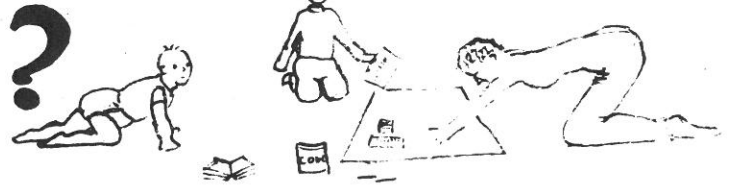


We believe that there are a lot of people who are trying to work out some synthesis of the personal and the political in their lives, who feel the need for some kind of self exploration or therapy, but in non-oppressive circumstances, under their own control. We also believe that there are many people who want to change the overall structure of society, but who are alienated and oppressed by most current forms of left-wing activity. We are trying to survive within capitalism, as well as trying to organise and struggle against it.



The process of bringing this pamphlet out has been very confused and contradictory. It has taken ages. It isn't a totally collective effort (though it's as near as you usually get) and it isn't completely representative. A whole number of different people have worked on it, written and rewritten sections. Some of us have done a lot, some haven't wanted to do anything on it at all. We have had to deal with different levels of expertise and confidence in writing, layout, general articulacy. Some have dropped out after a period of intense activity. Some have come in later to pull it through and out into the world. It feels like the longest birth primal of our history.

THERAPY



"Therapy is for fighting internalized capitalist ideology."



"The problem about the word therapy is that it connotes sick people 'getting better'. I'm not 'sick'. Deep down I'm a healthy person trying to find my power. - The power I need to live my life to the full and confront this sick society. The 'sickness' is the lies I have been taught about myself to make me conform to their rules."

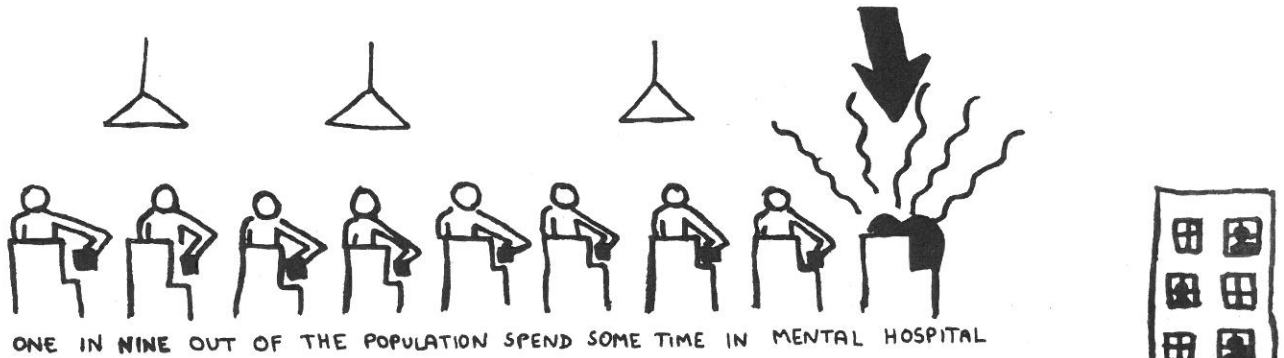
We have had many long and intense discussions about what we're doing, often very interesting but much too broad for the pamphlet. We have had many frustrating hours waiting for other people to turn up to work. In one another's company we sometimes feel confused about whether to get into our feelings, have a good time or get down to work on the pamphlet. Our internal ideology has no good directives on this problem. Sometimes people have felt that working on the pamphlet was a political 'duty' (bad word) and reacted against it. It was strange at first to be 'talking about' a lot together, trying to talk inside and outside our experience at the same time. Others have felt very good about 'going public' - and had more energy for it.

We don't see or offer up Red Therapy as a model for what other groups can be, but we hope that people facing similar problems and contradictions can gain strength from our experience.

Since we started writing this pamphlet, a lot has changed. The mixed group now meets very rarely, the men's group has dissolved as a group doing therapy for itself (though we helped to start another 'autonomous' Red Therapy men's group); and the women's group continues to meet regularly. Our ideas have developed, and if we started writing this pamphlet now we would add some things and say some things a bit differently. But as it is, this pamphlet represents an important part of our history - which we want to stand by and which we want to share.

Mental Health

— NO LONGER A "SIDE ISSUE"



ONE IN NINE OUT OF THE POPULATION SPEND SOME TIME IN MENTAL HOSPITAL

In this country 1 in 9 of the population spend some of their lives in a mental hospital - the figure is higher for women, roughly 1 in 6. About a third of all NHS hospital beds are occupied by people defined as "mentally ill." Another 25% of NHS beds are occupied by people whose conditions may have come from emotional stress - alcoholism, drug addiction, attempted suicide, accidents and diseases caused by tobacco smoking and excessive eating. In 1970/1 over 38m days were lost from work through various forms of mental disorder - the number lost through strikes was only 11m. The sale of sleeping pills and tranquillisers is a growth industry, making huge profits.

— ONE IN SIX OUT OF WOMEN

It is clear that "mental illness" is no longer a side issue - it is a major form of reaction, of our bodies' rebellion, against capitalism. It is also a major area of social control and of capitalist marketing and profit-making. Defining people as "mad" or "evil" as an excuse for putting them away or destroying them has been a common practice since the witches of the middle ages and before - but why, at this point in the twentieth century, is "mental health" a growth industry? What have been the changes in our society which have made people's reaction to life under capitalism express itself in this form of "sickness"? Why is it that this form of "sickness" and this form of "treatment" have become so widespread? How is it that straight psychiatry has recently developed so rapidly as a new weapon of social control?



IN 1970, £47.2m WORTH OF SLEEPING PILLS AND TRANQUILLISERS WERE PRESCRIBED (almost twice as many as in 1965)

THE CHEMICAL FIRM LAROCHE SELL ABOUT 300 MILLION VALIUM AND LIBRIUM TRANQUILLISERS A YEAR (10 for every adult in the UK) THEY SELL AT 500% PROFIT





Being Made A Commodity

A hundred years ago British capitalists could increase their profits by expanding into markets abroad, in the colonies, etc. By the middle of this century, that was no longer possible, and to boost their profits they have had to intensify their home markets, selling more of their products to people in this country, depending more on British consumers to keep them going. This meant a drive to sell more cars, washing machines, etc., per head of population, and it also meant that to sell more they had to move into new areas - vaginal deodorants, pop music and fashions for under-eights, are just three examples of markets that didn't exist twenty years ago. This intensified selling has been boosted by intense advertising and consumer manipulation - which the TV has been able to develop to a fine art. Idealised sex roles - the sexy domesticated wife, the responsible stud man, etc., are used to sell commodities and have become commodities themselves: we're told that if we buy a certain product it will make us happy or glamorous and will transform our lives.

The result has been to create new needs, raising people's expectations of consumer luxury, romantic love, sexual excitement, etc. Parts of our lives which used to be controlled by religion (our sex lives, relationships, our personal and spiritual life) have now been invaded by the commodity ethic - we are led to hope for more, and to think we will be able to buy it; while our real life and experience feels increasingly devalued, and we ourselves are made to feel like dehumanised commodities too. This has been one of the growing pressures on us and on our sense of ourselves in the last twenty years.

5

Every time you change,
you'll be glad
Harringtons
nappies
haven't.



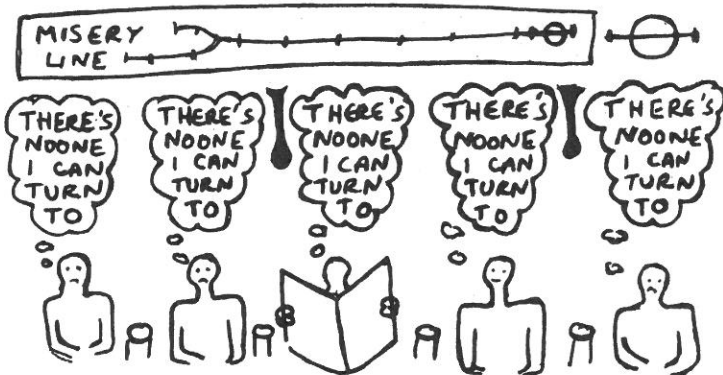
THE SEX-SYMBOL AND THE PERFECT MOTHER— TWO OF THE ROLES THAT ARE SOLD TO US WITH A COMMODITY.



I'm Marisa.
Fly me. 
Fly National.

The Isolation of The Individual

Since the industrial revolution we no longer have the large extended family or the kind of material interdependency between people that used to happen in village life. The destruction of village and community life has placed a lot of pressure on the individual who now has to make his or her own identity in increasing isolation. As people increasingly have had to move to follow work, and what communities are left get broken up by the way redevelopment is carried out, more and more we spend our lives among total strangers for hours every day - travelling and working in cities or sitting alone in tower blocks. To survive we have to cut off whole parts of ourselves - a high level of repression and strain. The number of people you can know, love, get close to and depend on for support dwindles. We have to make our own friends, go it alone in an increasingly competitive and impersonal society. 2½ million people live alone. For others, the main place to get emotional support is the nuclear family which puts an intolerable strain on a few very intense and ambiguous relationships, and the nuclear family is showing signs of the strain. This is why so much of people's distress is expressed in terms of how they cannot get on with other members of the family.



Strain On The Family

Most people have to choose between living in the nuclear family and living in isolation. If you live alone, you are made to feel a failure for not living by the ideal norm; if you live in a family, you face heavy pressures.

The family has a double role - it buys (its own car, washing machine, Mothers Pride loaf) and it also produces (one clean serviced worker every morning, and several little ones being educated and trained for work in the pipeline.) In other words, it is a unit of consumption, and also of production - servicing existing workers and producing future workers whom it prepares and socialises, so that when they grow up and go out to work they will be able to fit in with the role "society" (i.e. capital) requires them to play. So the family plays an important role disciplining us and repressing us in preparation for work - but at the same time it is also the main area of space and leisure and loving relationships in our lives - a place to let off steam & recover for the next days' work. This is a real contradiction and this "double role" puts a lot of pressure on the family, isolated from the support of an extended family or community. Women especially suffer from being trapped in high-rises, isolated by new housing, finding the role they are expected to play as wife and mother more and more at variance with what their lives are actually like. 40% of women go out to work, doing two jobs, one outside and one in the home. The strain on the family is often expressed by the isolated "breakdown" of the woman.



A variety of antidepressants, such as tricyclic antidepressants, have been used in the treatment of depression, but many have serious side-effects. These antidepressants are also recommended to be taken with...

Triptafen-DA or Triptafen-Minor

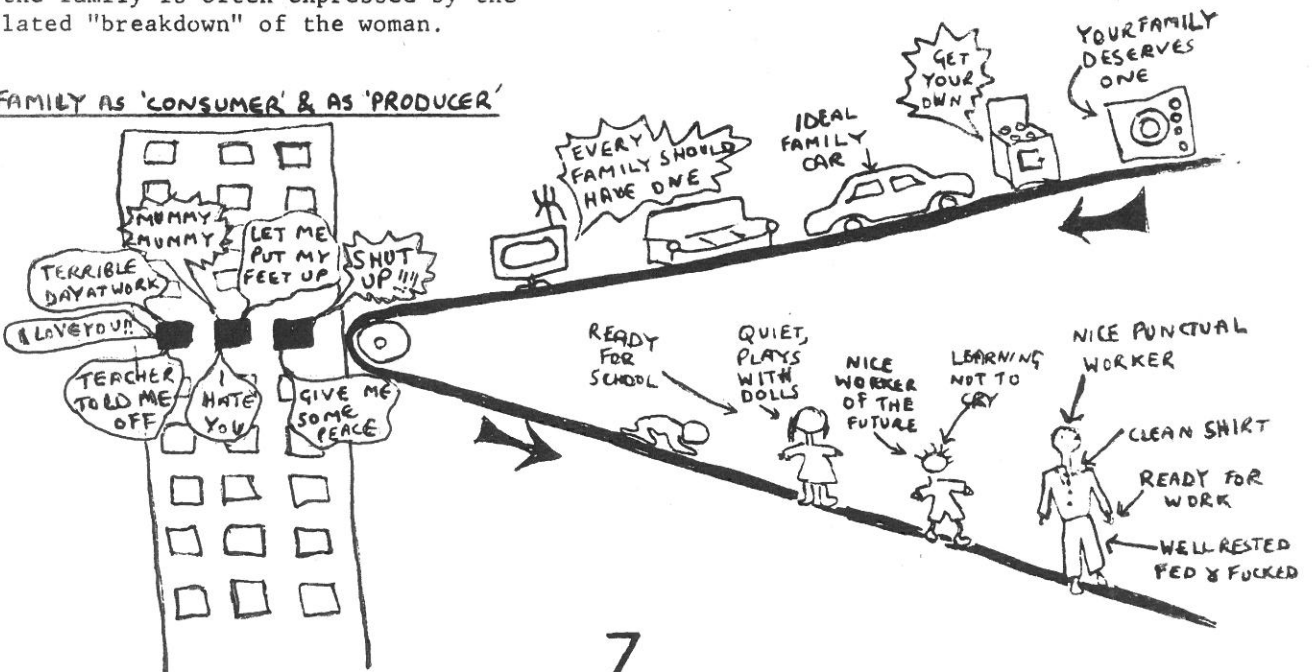
Because "Stress, anxiety and depression are nearly always associated with the symptoms of depression, patients with a tranquilliser and antidepressant at present. And Triptafen-DA and Triptafen-Minor provide amiripyrine hydrochloride (BP) to give the most effective purpose of the BP...

For Depression and Anxiety
PRESCRIBE TRIPTAFEN-DA WHEN DEPRESSION IS PREDOMINANT
TRIPTAFEN-MINOR WHEN ANXIETY IS MORE OBVIOUS

Full prescribing information is available on request.
 Triptafen is a trade mark of ALLEN & HANBURY, SHELTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

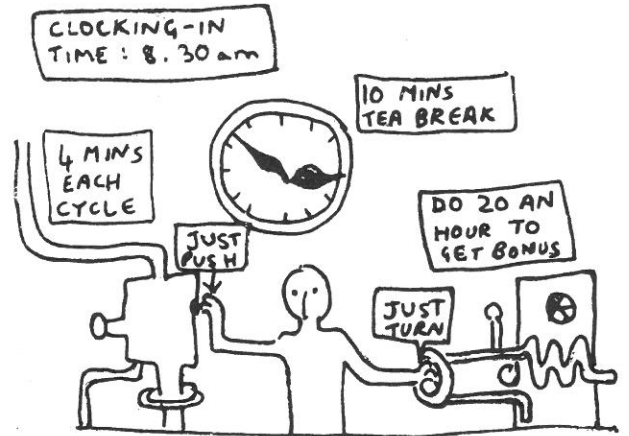
**THE REALITIES OF FAMILY LIFE . THEIR ANSWER —
 DRUGS INSTEAD OF SOCIAL CHANGE**

THE FAMILY AS 'CONSUMER' & AS 'PRODUCER'



Changes in Work

There have been changes too in the patterns of work we do, which have affected different sections of the population differently. In industry, capitalism has needed to exploit each worker more intensively in order to keep profits up - more machinery per worker has meant work that is less skilled, more mechanised, alienated, clock-watching. Speed ups, assembly line work, "scientific management" time and motion studies to make sure the company is getting the maximum profit out of the workforce - all these have created a different kind of stress, not just the anxiety about being sacked or purely physical damage to the body, but a more mind-fucking kind of pressure. Increasingly office workers including junior management have to fill in time-sheets too. For many men, de-skilling and unemployment have made it hard for them to get the sense of pride and identity from their work which they once did - which in turn makes them make more demands on the family to fulfil that need.



For "white collar" workers there have also been changes, with the growth of service jobs like social workers, teachers, secretaries, clerks. These jobs, which are often filled by women, claim to be "people professions" - human caring jobs giving satisfaction and personal rewards. They require you to have self-motivation, internal discipline, as serving people is meant to be some kind of "vocation". So when people don't get satisfaction from these jobs, they experience their problems and dissatisfactions as individual, personal and psychological - i.e. if you don't like your job, there must be something wrong with you, rather than with your boss or your job. Many women suffer another contradiction, being led by the myth of "equal education" which they are given, to think that they can expect to get equally good jobs as men can - only to find that they can't; it's never "because you're a woman", always "because you're just not good enough." All these changing work patterns put increasing pressure on the individual, and especially on his/her sense of worth and value in work.

Same thing Day after day - Tube-Work-Dinner-Work-Tube-Armchair-TV-Sleep-Work. How Much More Can You Take. One in Five Go Mad, One in Ten Cracks Up.

Wall Graffiti. Notting Hill, 1968



Pill mountain

THERE were 20,540,000 prescriptions dispensed in England for tranquillisers in 1975, the last year for which figures are available, says the Department of Health. This is 7,000,000 up on 1967.





Expanding Consciousness Expanding Hopes

What seems to emerge is the picture of a situation where in some way people have demanded more and have been promised more - the post-war boom and intenser consumerism created hopes of higher living standards; the breakdown of extended family and community life and of 'traditional morality' in the 'permissive society' have in some ways seemed to promise greater freedom and to create expectations of greater personal and sexual satisfaction; rock music has been a vehicle for the mass expression of all sorts of feelings and thoughts which were previously taboo, and psychedelic drugs have expanded the idea of self and given a wider view of the kind of consciousness and spiritual fulfilment that each individual might hope to achieve; some changing work patterns have also raised hopes of 'satisfying' or 'fulfilling' work; the expansion of higher and further education in the 60's created more of

a space for students to realise their dissatisfaction with the education and jobs and roles available for them. All these changes are reflected in and by the various liberation movements (for gays, women, students, blacks) which in turn have widened our view of what is possible. People in the previously non-militant caring professions (e.g. nursing, teaching, social work) have organised against the vocational ethos of their jobs, for higher wages, better working conditions, less devoted self-sacrifice. Our freedom from the extended family has given us the space to express our rebellion more openly and in new ways.

The especial tension of the present situation seems to be the contradiction between all these expectations and what turns out to be actually possible: the impossibility of feeling satisfied with the 'sexual freedom' that we are offered (it's OK to fuck but only within safely distanced and objectified sex roles)...the impossibility of being a perfect wife and mother and having a continually exciting sex life in an isolated living situation, on a low wage, with a full-time job of housework and raising kids and with the new, more subtle pressures on the sense of identity and self-value...the impossibility of being a 'satisfied worker' with the realities of increasingly dehumanised conditions for living, working and travelling... .. the impossibility of feeling adequate when standards of success are higher and we are told it's up to you individually to make it.

Because these wider hopes have been held out the failure is often seen as 'personal' or 'emotional' - and in some way this is inevitable as it is in this area of emotional, sexual, spiritual fulfilment that we have been led to hope for more. The fight is not just around money and working hours but around our feelings and relationships. There is a reason why people's unhappiness at life under capitalism comes out at this time in the ways it does - and a politics which doesn't recognise this is a politics which is living in the past blind to the changes that have been taking place in our society over the last decades. The state has not been slow to recognise a developing threat to the smooth running of 'society' - hence the rapid growth of psychiatry and psychiatric drugs as a more sophisticated form of social control.



THE GROWTH OF PSYCHOLOGY IN THE 20th CENTURY

In the previous sections we saw how the conditions of life within contemporary capitalism lead to all kinds of unhappiness, breakdowns, etc. and also to changing expectations of personal life. This section tries to outline how bourgeois society has tried to contain this contradiction of capitalism - namely, that increasing material wealth has been created at the expense of great personal stress and fragmentation of relationships, - of so-called "mental illness".

One main agent of control over people has been psychology in its various forms: IQ testing, psychotherapy, time and motion studies, to mention only a few. The present "science" of psychology originated in the late 19th century, in response to the needs of reorganising capitalism within factories and schools. Psychology has grown and ramified enormously throughout the 20th century. The reasons for this growth are complex. They are partly related to some of the changes described in the previous sections. As well, capitalism has had to develop means of internalised self-discipline and motivation amongst its labour force, especially amongst its "white-collar" and service workers, this century's most rapidly expanding section of the working class. As various forms of coercion, such as instant dismissal or frequent physical punishment, have been resisted, they have been replaced by subtler means of social control, often using psychological knowledge.



Social work has also developed a strongly psychologistic bias, seeing family problems as a function of disturbed and deficient individuals, or of personal conflicts within the family, rather than of the family's situation in society.

It is a mistake to see psychology as just ideology, as many left groups do, just as it is a mistake to see people's unrevolutionary feelings as a question of wrong attitudes or incorrect ideas. This dismissal of everything psychological has been one of the disasters of left politics in the 20th century, with only a few attempts to remedy it, e.g. some of Reich's writings, the present Women's movement, some situationist literature. This dismissal reinforces the enormous split between what is seen as social and what as individual - a split that capitalism in its own interests forces upon us, so that we blame ourselves rather than it for our unhappiness. The ideology of capitalist society, in the guise of bourgeois psychology, tries to persuade us that emotional and mental problems are just in our individual psyches, and that they are separate and different from health problems, economic problems, social, spiritual or political problems. We should not fall into this trap too, as many Marxists do, but rather try to understand the complex material reality of the emotional, personal and subjective aspects of all our individual lives.

Case history 4 Miss Riley: Shop assistant

The shop assistant is now 55. She is a spinster. And she lives, as she always has done, with her parents. She does her job well enough when she's there, but, unfortunately, her condition is such that there are long periods when she is unable to work.

In 1951 her depressive symptoms brought her to the doctor. One of her main interests in life was the church, and things had not been going well with her relationship with the choirmaster - the nature of which was not disclosed.

Another reason for her symptoms was that she had been asked to train a man in her job - so that he could become her manager.

She was given ECT and antidepressants for several years.

Symptoms recurred in 1961 and 1967 with an unsatisfactory response to treatment.

In 1970 a recurrence of the same symptoms - anorexia, irritability, panic sweating, severe headache and insomnia - was treated with Limbitrol. By the time treatment was stopped a few months later all symptoms had disappeared.

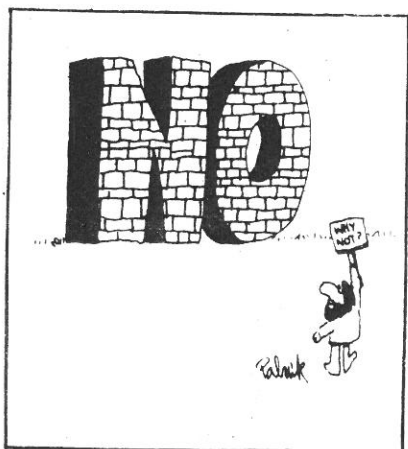


LIMBITROL

treats anxiety in a matter of hours and depression in a matter of days.



Most psychological means of control rely on convincing the person in question - whether worker, patient, housewife or child - that really her or his interests are the same as that of whatever institution they are in, -factory, hospital, family, school, - so that the correct motivation is instilled. However, in a class and patriarchal society such as ours, internalised control is always backed up by more external forms of coercion - loss of wages, drugs, prison, physical violence etc. Reich understood how a society that has to have people acting, feeling and living in ways detrimental to their own interests and needs, produces people who are internally split and in conflict with themselves, alienated from both their own feelings and that of others, pursuing the goals of the ruling class and not their own. He tried to use his psychological and political understanding - in the forms of writing, therapy, and political organising - to allow people to recognise their suppressed needs and feelings, to fight against the conditions of their lives, and against the appropriation of their emotions by capitalism.



Psychology and therapy are double-edged for us, because for the most part they have been used against people. However in some respects they are helpful in helping us understand the current state of our lives, and in fighting against our internalised oppression. We have to take what is useful from the available approaches, for our own ends. Similarly "mental illness" is seen by various anti-psychiatry groups as having a contradictory quality, perhaps epitomised in the slogan of the German Socialist Patients' Collective: "Use your illness as a weapon."

Madness is seen both as a form of protest against an impossible life (an alternative to the more normal acceptance of it), and also as an inhibition and distortion of that protest. Our pain, our anger, our attempts at self-expression, become turned against our selves, against our friends. The "symptoms" of "mental illness" reflect both this struggle for life and the inhibition of this struggle - thus depression, alcoholism, sui-

cide are acts of self-destruction, anger turned against the self. Schizophrenic states are often desperate and largely self-defeating attempts at self-preservation in a seemingly impossible world.



We see doing therapy, in the ways we want to do it, as part of the whole fight against capitalism's control over our lives. Therapy is much more than just making life tolerable so that we can fight better on other "fronts." It is part of the long-term struggle to reclaim our own emotional and personal resources (more on this in the Therapy and Politics section, p.17). Part of this struggle is fighting against the abuse of therapy, against psychiatric control and coercion, supporting mental patients in their resistance to this, and developing alternative means of therapy.

The development of different forms of therapy

(a) Medical Psychiatry and the control of mental illness

Psychiatry is still a branch of medicine and uses most of medicine's approaches and ways of seeing (or not seeing) people. Psychiatric patients are regarded as having symptoms of some underlying disease whose basic physiological nature will one day be discovered. The psychiatrist's task is to remove the symptoms in order to cure the patient. Many of the methods used are physical - drugs, electroshock, surgery, restraint.



your anxious patients
will be more successfully
controlled by

Ativan

Mental hospitals also embody many institutional means of control: deprivation of basic rights, lack of privacy, tight discipline. A small amount of group- and psycho-therapy takes place in hospitals, usually restricted to younger more middle-class patients. The abuses, violence and inhumanity of much psychiatry has been documented by the various anti-psychiatry organisations - Cope, MPU and PROMPT in this country, NAPA in the USA.

The training of doctors and nurses, and the hierarchical organisation of mental hospitals makes it difficult for even the more liberal staff to have any understanding of the whole process that a patient may be going through. Psychiatry fosters a sense of "mentally ill" people as other, completely different from sane people. This creates a fear and horror of madness, and prevents "normal" people, and particularly medical staff, from recognising any of the same feelings, stresses or conflicts in themselves. This division between normal and abnormal is one of the ways madness is contained.



Mental hospitals are supported by the state at the lowest possible level of respect for people's privacy and general well-being, which ensures that they are not asylums in any real sense, and that people will only go there because there is no other alternative. Mental hospitals partly function as dustbins for the more harmless rejects of our society. A high proportion, 44% in 1973, of inmates are over the age of 65.

Not having any where to live, or to be cared for, is one of the main factors determining admission to hospital.



(b) Psychoanalysis

Freud criticised medical psychiatry for not having any sense of what a person's neurotic "symptoms" meant in terms of her/his life, of seeing them as bizarre derangements rather than as stemming from the conflicts of that person's life and personality. In this sense Freudian psychoanalysis was, and is, a form of validation of a person's experience, compared to the invalidation of psychiatry. However other more conformist aspects of psychoanalysis have weakened this potentially radical aspect. Freud also showed how because people are internally split and repressed, they don't fully know themselves, and therefore have little control over their lives, being driven by buried conflicts, desires, or compulsions.

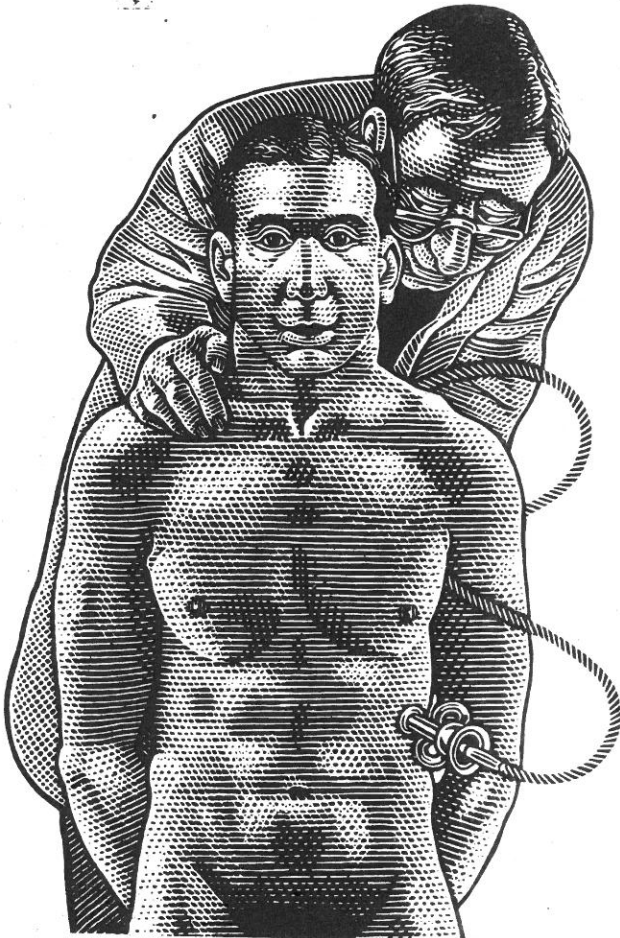
Laing extended this kind of understanding to people in psychotic states. He (and others) saw how they are often a form of self-protection against the invalidation of the self by others, and he tried to unravel the complex symbolism and language of "schizophrenics", the way "reality" gets transformed. Laingian therapy is thus partly a form of validation of the person's life experience, and partly an attempt to set up some less oblique kind of communication between therapist and patient. Madness is here seen as a process that has to be allowed to develop, in a safe but not controlling environment, with no preconceptions as to where this process should end. This is in complete contrast to psychiatry, which

essentially suppresses and stops the person's process, by focussing on the removal of "symptoms", and thus denying the reality to the patient of his or her experiences.

(c) Critiques of psychoanalysis

These are too extensive to discuss here (see bibliography), but for present purposes several points need to be made.

1) Neither Freud nor Laing have been assimilated into medical psychiatry except in an extremely diluted form in the liberal fringes of the NHS. This has effectively restricted psychoanalytic forms of therapy to private medicine, to professional and middle-class people, to the extent that the myth has grown up that working class people are not "suitable" for it. This myth has carried over into the mental hospitals where working class people get disproportionately more than their share of purely physical treatments compared to middle-class people.



2) Freudian psychoanalysis does not contain any critique of the relationship between therapist and the patient - Freud's practice was very traditionally medical in this respect. The psychoanalyst does not reveal anything of himself (occasionally herself) whereas the patient is meant to achieve total self revelation. Most forms of human contact, e.g. chatting, smiling, touching are either avoided or interpreted. The analyst operates on what the patient says with a complex

theory in his head that he does not share with the patient, so the patient is less than fully involved and responsible for her/his therapy. Most Laingian therapists operate within a similar if less extreme form of this relationship. These roles are so highly insisted upon that the analyst gains a lot of power and authority in the relationship, beyond that coming from his experience and expertise. This keeps the patient in an unnecessarily passive and child-like and sick role throughout and ensures that little real challenge of what the analyst says can take place. This extreme inequality often makes therapy impossible.

I've been to the same analyst for 15 years. I'm giving him one more year then I'm going to Lourdes...



3) Psychoanalysis works almost exclusively with what people say about their feelings. This has two limitations: firstly, talking about your feelings prevents or avoids full experiencing and expression of them, so that often there is very limited discharge (e.g. shouting, crying), in favour of lengthy associations and interpretations which can often obscure and confuse what is going on inside. Secondly, talking reinforces the split between our heads and our bodies, and neglects the way our feelings are locked into, & expressed through, our bodies. Reich, impatient with the slow pace of change in verbal psychoanalysis, found that by directly touching the patient and releasing muscular rigidities and energy blocks, very strong repressed emotions could be provoked. He had a much more integrated sense of how part of the reality of our emotions is our bodily existence, and he approached this directly through body-work. Bioenergetic therapy has since developed Reich's insights about this into a powerful form of therapy.

d) The Growth Movement .

The 'growth movement' includes a whole variety of therapies and approaches... encounter, massage, gestalt, bioenergetics, psychodrama, transactional analysis, meditation, movement, though encounter and gestalt probably express most of the growth movement's politics and theory. Both originated partly from impatience with traditional psychotherapy. Encounter also owes some of its origins to the need of various institutions and corporations to deal with conflict between management and workers and also to extremely confrontational methods developed with drug addicts (like Synanon).



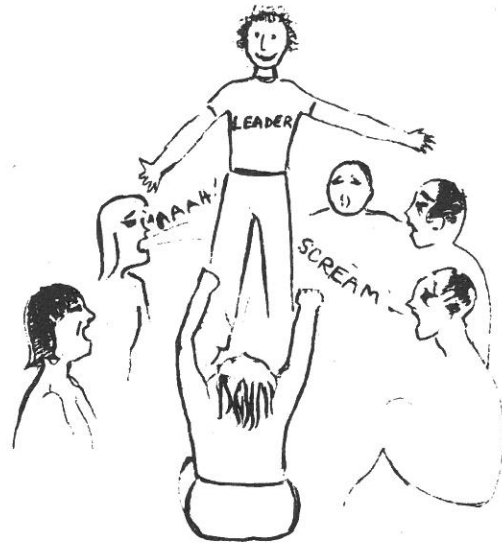
Japanese workers smashing up effigies of their boss: misuse of encounter as a safety valve to divert anger.

Encounter is often experienced as phoney, gimmicky and coercive, but it can also force an awareness about what actually is going on in any interaction between people, particularly in terms of the trips or projections people are laying on each other. It also brings out how much is suppressed and avoided at any one moment between people. Gestalt particularly lays great emphasis on people owning their own feelings rather than referring them onto some external source, and an increased awareness of the present. This can lead to a much clearer and securer sense of self.

The advantages of these and other growth movement approaches are that they deal with a lot of immediate interaction and expression of emotion, both concerning the present and the past, so that feelings are not simply spoken about, but actually gone into. The various methods are flexible and open to change to suit the particular group, situation or individual. On the whole there is a lot of validation of people as they are, in that self, and other, acceptance is stressed. At the same time the possibility of change is seen as growth rather than cure, of the possibility of opening up to a much richer range of experiences, rather than adjusting to the constrictions of 'normal life'.

One of the main criticisms of the growth movement is that this philosophy of personal growth is taken to very individualistic extremes. No understanding of the limits that present-day capitalism imposes on people is incorporated into the therapies, and any attempt to deal with social structures as part of people's feelings is seen as a trip you are laying on people or on yourself...all emotions are referred back to what is inside of you. As well there is very little critique within the growth movement of the professionalism and commercialism of many leaders, of the roles of leaders, many of whom are given star status. Further, access to growth centres is restricted to those with money, time and cultural background - namely slightly hip or

'aware' young professionals. However growth movement methods are beginning to be used in a few mental hospitals, a trend that will presumably grow.



"STAR STATUS"

e) Radical therapy, feminist therapy and anti-psychiatry movements.

Radical therapy and feminist therapy have grown out of the needs of people in various political movements of the 60's and 70's rather than from within existing therapy set-ups. There was an increasing recognition that, despite the best of intentions and of analyses, we were still reproducing within our political groups the same oppressive and hierarchical structures that existed outside, against which we thought we were fighting. This meant that many people did not get the personal support they needed within political groups and that we were divided amongst ourselves, and so much weaker. The women's movement is the best attempt so far to understand how personal and individual emotions grow out of particular social structures, and many people achieved a lot of change and support in their lives through consciousness-raising groups, which have now spread to men's groups. Consciousness-raising is certainly a form of therapy, but even so there was always a strong moralism against too much attention being paid to individuals as against the needs of the group or collective. In many parts of the women's movement, as on the Left generally, therapy is frequently seen and put down as self-indulgent, and as leading people away from (the real) politics (see Politics and Therapy section for more on this). Despite this more and more people in Left movements have turned to therapy, because of needs that are as yet unmet within political groups, and an appreciation that we have to live now - that all gratification cannot be left till after the

revolution.

There is no one form of radical or alternative therapy, but all of them include the critiques discussed above, and a belief that many people need some kind of supportive and therapeutic process now, to find some tolerable way of living whilst being in opposition to, or severely oppressed by, capitalist society. Therapy methods used are drawn from most existing forms of non-coercive therapy (i.e. mostly growth movement and some psychoanalytic) but with many changes and developments.

Both radical and feminist therapy contain a critique of the therapist-patient relationship and of the leadership roles of professional group leaders. Whilst the importance of experience and skills is not denied, attempts are made to modify the power relationships involved. Thus leaderless and self-help groups have started up (like Red Therapy, for example) in which everyone can take turns at being both

the therapist and the person who is helped. Co-counselling seems to be spreading fast and represents a very effective way of spreading therapy into everyday life with minimal economic cost. It is a real expression of the idea that we should all be each others therapists, with sufficient support in terms of handed-on skills to enable people to do this. In feminist therapy great emphasis is laid on the therapist sharing her emotions about what the client is bringing up, so that she is not a remote and role-bound figure.

Radical and feminist therapy clearly include a much greater political understanding of why people feel the way they do and have the kind of relationships they have. A lot of this understanding has come from consciousness-raising. People are helped to have an understanding of their emotions in class, sex and race terms as well as in terms of individual family history, and to apply this understanding to their current situations.



hm... I'm not sure..... psychoanalysis could be good sometimes..... What if it's a feminist analyst ?

Some useful contacts

We have been inundated

and so cannot respond to anymore individual requests to assist people in starting self-help groups. Here are some people & places who it might be good to contact - we have marked with a * those whom we know to be interested in starting self-help groups.

GROUPS - GROWTH CENTRES - TRAINING FACILITIES

The following centres and individuals run workshops and courses and will send information on request: L O N D O N

- Joel Badaines and Marta Ginzburg (Psychodrama training)
83A Oxford Gardens, W10 - 969 7766
- * Barefoot Psychoanalysts (Assoc. of Karen Horney Psychoanalytic Counsellors)
58b Camden Square, NW1
- Beverley Besmer (Transpersonal Psychology - Guided Imagery and Dream Work)
41 Ennismore Gardens, SW7 - 584 6593
- Centre for Bioenergy (Gerda Boyeson and Associates)
Acacia House, Centre Ave, The Vale, Acton Park, W3 - 743 2437
- Centre for Therapeutic Communication (Family Therapy etc.)
46 Antrim Mansions, Antrim Road, NW3
- Centre for Transpersonal Psychology (Ian Gordon-Smith et al.)
26a Gilaton Road, SW10
- Churchill Centre (Primal Integration training, Wm.Swartley)
22 Montagu Street, W1 - 402 9475
- Clinical Theology Association (Therapeutic/Pastoral Counselling, Primal groups)
Edward Wilson House, 26 Queen Anne St., W1 - 580 2492
- Carole Davey and Tom Falkner (Bioenergetics, Regression, Women's Groups)
c/o Quaesitor, 287 Walm Lane, NW2 - 607 5626 (after Feb.16: 278 6783)
- Anne Dickson (Co-counselling; sexual awareness workshops)
83 Fordwych Road, NW2 - 452 9261
- Wm.Emerson and Myrtle Heery (Primal Integration)
Enquiries to: 458 7672
- Tom Feldberg (Ongoing Open Encounter)
41 Buckland Crescent, NW3 - 267 8448
- Gestalt Centre
B.M.Box Gestalt, WC1 6XX. Enquiries: 340 9982
- Group Relations Training Association, c/o Tony Snapes, School of Management Studies, PCL, 35 Marylebone Road, NW1 - 486 5811 x 241
- Human Potential Resources: Dolores Bate, Diana Becchetti, Brian and Eva Coombe, Terry Cooper, Roger Dalton, Helen Davis, Clive and Kirsten Lindley-Jones, Anne Parks, Margi Robinson, Jenner Roth (Variety of Growth Groups)
c/o Maureen Yeomans, 11 Ashbourne Ave., NW11 - 458 7672
- Institute of Psychosynthesis
Highwood Park, Nan Clark's Lane, NW7 - 959 3372
- Kalptaru - Bhagwan Rajneesh Meditation Centre
100 Belmont Street, NW5 - 267 8304
- * Hans Lobstein (Group work and Sensitivity Training, Assoc. for Self Help and Community Groups) - 7 Chesham Terrace, Ealing, W13 - 579 5549
- Natural Dance Workshop (Gym McRitchie and Anna Wise)
162 Barnsbury Road, N1 - 837 7585/458 7672
- Philadelphia Association
74a Portland Road, W11 - 727 5049
- Open Circle (Dina Gloukerman)
20 Dingwall Gardens, NW11
- The Open Centre (Aika, Akasha, Roy Alexander, Flow, Muz Murray, Peter Payne, Martyn Rudin, Freda Sharpe, Kate Wylie),
188 Old Street, EC1 - 935 3777



Alix Pirani (Bodymind and Rebirthing groups: psychodrama, creative writing growth workshops) 35 Achilles Road, NW6 - 794 6062

Playspace, 18 Park Square East, NW1

Polytechnic of Central London, Short Course Unit
c/o Jenny Madley, PCL, 309 Regent St., W1 - 580 2020 x 220

Self Development Centre, 30 Coppetts Road, N10

Glyn Seaborn Jones (Reciprot bodymind workshops)
c/o 10 Steele's News South, NW3 - 586 4109/444 5077

Transactional Analysis Association
c/o Christine Rose, 15 Pages Hill, N10 - 883 2099

Strokes c/o Margaret Turpin - 886 5330

Tavistock Institute (Group Dynamics) c/o Admin. strator, Group Relations Training Programme, Tavistock Centre, Belsize Lane, NW3 - 435 7111

Cabor Varga (Psycho-energetics)
105 Cadogan Gardens, SW3 - 730 1542

* Women's Therapy Centre, 19A Hartham Road, N7 - 607 2864

Westminster Pastoral Foundation (Counselling Courses)
Central Hall, SW1 - 930 6676

Counselling courses incorporating growth techniques are available at several Polytechnics e.g.

Middlesex Poly (Fred Partington)
North Eastern Poly (Brigid Proctor)

Two-year Diploma Course in Humanistic Psychology (Experiential and Theoretical)
David Boadella, Tom Feldberg, John Heron, Frank Lake. Enquiries: 267 8448

O U T S I D E L O N D O N

CAMBRIDGE - Gestalt Centre: Brenda Biamonti, 24 Hertford St. tel. 62691
Mike Wibberley (Encounter) 25 Richmond Rd, tel. 53029
Richard Burns (Reichian Circle) 20, Tenison Ave. tel. 55959

DEVON Ashram (Tony Crisp and Mike Tanner) King St, Combe Martin
Marcia Karp (Psychodrama) Holwell Farm, East Down, Barnstaple. tel. 82 267
Miriam & Richard Dror (Bioenergetics and Gestalt) New Park, Washfield, Tiverton. tel. 3540

Eileen Noakes (Residential Groups) Sidmouth House, Sidmouth. tel. 3963
Gabon Varga (Psycho-energetics) Enquiries: 01-730 1542

QUILDFORD Human Potential Research Project (John Heron) Dept. of Adult Education, University of Surrey. Sec: Kay Thomas - 71281

HAMPSHIRE The Sparsholt Centre, Northwood Cottage, Northwood Park, Sparsholt, Winchester. tel. Sparsholt 374
Terry Cooper and Jenner Roth (Personal Growth Workshops)
Barnards, West Harting, nr. Petersfield. tel. Harting 417

LEICESTER Janet Bradley, 117 Station Road, Wigston Magna

NOTTINGHAM Tom and Elli Chamberlain, 96 Fraser Road, Carlton. tel. 51793

NEWCASTLE Clinical Theology Association, Lingdale, Weston Ave. tel. 75475
Tyneside Growth Centre
c/o Donna Brandes, 54 St. Georges Terrace, Jesmond - 814860

SUSSEX Rev. Geoffrey Whitfield (Growth Workshops)
The Meeting House, Univ. of Sussex, Brighton. tel. 559758

North Suncy Growth Centre, c/o Staines & Sunbury
Institute of Further Education, 36c Kingstons Road, Staines

POLITICS



VS

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In our group we saw ourselves as political - in the form our therapy took; in our working assumptions and values; in wanting to connect therapy to our struggles in our everyday lives, and in society in general.

Despite these working assumptions, we often experience a split, since getting into Red Therapy, between our 'political' selves, and our 'therapy' selves. Most of us have become less active in 'mass politics' as defined by the traditional left; or at least differently active; and have felt the rejection of old friends and comrades as a result. Others of us who were never active in quite the same way still seem to experience the same contradictions.

Of course, the way this works is different for everyone in the group, different for women from men, and more important for some people than others. I've tried to express the different arguments in the form of a dialogue. Many people active politically - or in the growth movement wouldn't even enter into the dialogue. It's the politics/therapy split as it works itself out in me. But I think it contains some strands that a lot of us could recognise ourselves in.

Therapy self (Fritzie): God I can't stand this fucking meeting a moment longer, you pompous windbags proclaiming about the world, nothing ever getting done, it's driving me mad. I don't know how you can go on sitting here with all this smoke and airlessness. It's a sunny day - let me out of here. I suppose you're waiting to tell me I'm needed to go leafletting at 5.00 tomorrow morning. Well I'm not going to do it, I've had enough. If this is what it's all about you can stuff it, it's not my revolution, where's the fun, where's the spontaneity, you dry fucking creeps?

Political self(Karl): Don't give me that shit. If you don't do the leafletting, who do you think is going to do it? I can't do it on my own. You really are irresponsible you know. You don't really care do you? All you care about is yourself. There's a struggle going on here and all you want to do is wank around in your therapy group being nice to one another and changing nothing. You call yourself a revolutionary, but as far as I can see you're just becoming another brand of armchair socialist. Cushion socialists, that's what we'll call you. 'Sorry I can't make the revolution this morning, I've got to sew up the cushion that burst last night.' Well fuck off then, we can do without your sort, just lets see who's on which side of the fence when the big day comes, let's see then.

Fritzie: Fuck you and your big day, you superior bloody bastard. You seem to think that the revolution^{is} like an ejaculation. One big bang and everything changes. And it's you that fires the gun. You're so fucking self-important. You really think you're the cat's whiskers don't you, really think you know all the answers.

Karl: No i don't think I know all the answers. I know that there's a struggle going on that's all. And I can't not be a part of it. This world is full of shit and it's controlled and manipulated by some very nasty people who wouldn't think twice about disposing of any of us. There's poverty and misery and torture and imprisonment of the soul and imprisonment of peoples' lives, and until thats all sorted out I'm not going to be free myself, I'm telling you that. So that's where I'm putting my energy.

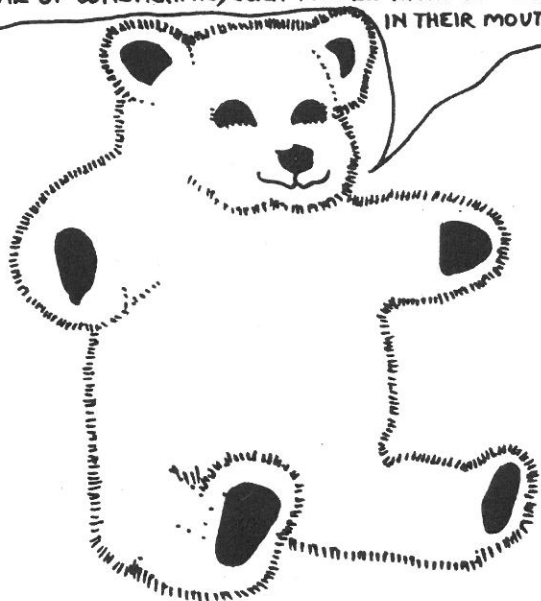
17 Fritzie: O.K. O.K. you don't have to tell me that the system is fucked, I know that. That doesn't give you the right to act so superior,

like you're the only one who suffers in this world, and you're the only one that understands suffering, treating me like I'm selfish and criminal because I'm middle-class and I like going on holidays and lazing around and going to my soft and soppy men's group instead of organising and leafletting and working in a factory every day. In fact I do teaching and bringing up a kid probably fucks me up just as much even if it's less strain on my body. So don't give me all that shit. All you ever see is suffering because you're so fucking long-suffering yourself. Why don't you ever see any of the good things going on, the power that people do have. Don't expect me to be a martyr just cause you are. I'm trying to live my life.

Karl: Well you are lazy. I have been slogging my guts out for the revolution. Why not? It won't come by sitting waiting for it. If people like you and me don't get it together, who will? It's not a game, it's a serious business. And it needs organisation. It won't happen unless we organise you know. The bosses are organised. We have to organise better.

Fritzie: (mutter) So they can know where we are and who we are Fuck your ideas of organisation - committees and hierarchies and specialists and endless meetings. It doesn't catch me alright I'm afraid. I doubt if it catches many other people alright either. O.K. so we go along to meeting after meeting out of frustration, because we do want something to happen. But whenever it does happen it doesn't start in those kind of committee meetings. You just end up frustrated.

PEOPLE WHO TALK ABOUT REVOLUTION AND CLASS STRUGGLE WITHOUT REFERRING EXPLICITLY TO EVERY-DAY LIFE, WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS SUBVERSIVE ABOUT LOVE AND WHAT IS POSITIVE IN THE REFUSAL OF CONSTRAINTS, SUCH PEOPLE HAVE A CORPSE IN THEIR MOUTH



The revolution isn't something we sacrifice ourselves for now, in the hope of some future reward. It starts now, here and now. It's about changing structures of ownership, work, community, family, and about changing relationships within those structures. It's about how I approach my job, what sort of things I do in my spare time, what I eat, who does the washing up, how I feel about my body Your brand of politics is for young people without kids and lots of time. I haven't got that sort of energy any more.

Karl: you mean you aren't angry any more. You've gone soft.

Fritzie: Well maybe I have gone soft. Maybe I have in some ways. It's not such a terrible thing. I don't see how you can be a human being without it. It doesn't mean I'm not angry. You don't have to be hard to be angry. I'm angrier than ever I used to be. More and more aware of when I'm being fucked over. Less and less tolerant of staying in situations where I'm being screwed, put down, done over. Sure, I've lost a certain amount of blind confidence. I don't think I'm superman any more. But I've gained a different kind of confidence - in myself, for myself. For being a person, not being a great theorist, or fantastic militant, or dedicated worker. I don't feel I have to rush around proving myself any more, to you or anyone else. I want to live for myself. I'm not a non-entity. I can't only live through 'the masses'.

Karl: You're just talking about yourself. I, I, I ... all the time. It's all so individualistic 'what about the rest of the world. I don't want to reduce everything going on in the world to hang-ups about my dad. I don't want to stop being effective. It's too easy. It's a cop-out. Why wallow in misery if you don't have to? Who does it help?

Fritzie: It helps me, that's a good enough reason isn't it? It doesn't reduce everything to my Dad. It helps me clear some of my old feelings about my Dad out of the way so that I can see the present more clearly and confront it better. I used to spend half the time in active politics in fear of people that I could have confronted if I hadn't been blocked by my own timidity. And the other half trying to cope with situations that were miles out of my grasp - and getting beaten over the head for my pains By getting out of touch with my own reality I have a better grasp of what other peoples struggles are all about. Take Fords Dagenham for example. The left in Dagenham can't understand why the workers

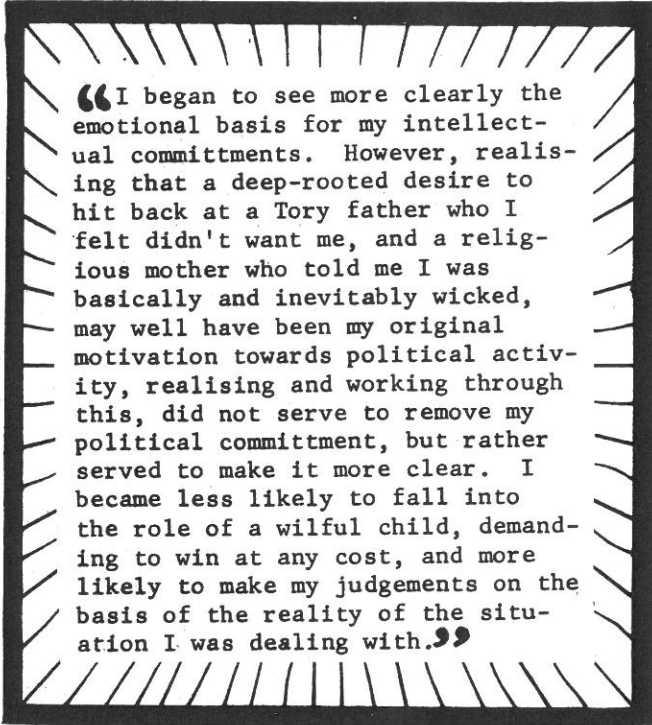
there won't occupy the factory. They think the workers are 'lazy' and 'backward' because they don't want to spend their time in that miserable dump miles from their homes. But they are wrong. It's not because blokes at Fords don't understand the issues. And it's certainly not because they aren't angry enough - look at the number of spontaneous riots that the convenors are always trying to cool down. It's because they hate the place so much - they won't make the sacrifice of an occupation rather than a strike - not seeing the kids, fixing the roof, having fun, having a rest - unless they are sure it's going to make things better for them. The trad left go around calling for occupations all the time. And they can't understand why no-one follows them, because they are so out of touch with their own needs. Then when workers riot and burn cars and P.O. vans they call it spontaneist and don't take the victories seriously.

Karl: It's not that easy, and you know it. An occupation can be a great experience, that put people in touch with one another in new ways; it's too easy to dismiss the rest of the left as being out of touch. We have to say what we think even if most workers don't yet agree with us. It's your arrogance and elitism to say you know best what other people are thinking. You make a caricature out of my politics and then you put it down. It's too easy. Maybe Ford workers don't want an occupation. But have you asked them whether they wanted therapy? Your groups are just for a privileged minority. What have they got to do with Fords.

Fritzie: We don't know yet in any direct way. Indirectly, I don't think we are so privileged - or that our experience is different from that of a lot of other people. Most people have to take time off work because they feel upset or they can't cope or have minor illnesses or backaches or migraines all the time - or they just can't stick it any more and they want to get out. They have to fight for time off - or they have to get sick notes - or they lose pay. 'Getting sick' is the only healthy response a lot of people are able to make to their situations. The problem is how - instead of getting fobbed off with a load of drugs to suppress the sickness - to turn the sickness into anger and a fight for space and time and decent lives. I'd rather go to a therapy group than have chronic indigestion, if that's the choice.

At the moment this is something we are doing for ourselves. But it's part of a movement that includes a lot of other people... and it can grow.

Karl: I don't know, I'm still not happy. I



“I began to see more clearly the emotional basis for my intellectual commitments. However, realising that a deep-rooted desire to hit back at a Tory father who I felt didn't want me, and a religious mother who told me I was basically and inevitably wicked, may well have been my original motivation towards political activity, realising and working through this, did not serve to remove my political commitment, but rather served to make it more clear. I became less likely to fall into the role of a wilful child, demanding to win at any cost, and more likely to make my judgements on the basis of the reality of the situation I was dealing with.”

want my politics to be therapeutic in themselves. It still seems a cop-out to me.

Fritzie: Why do you have to be so hard on yourself and anyone else around? It sounds like you are into making things difficult for the sake of it. I don't think you really want to get through to anybody - you just want to feel you are right and they are wrong. I can't seem to get through to you anyway.

Karl: You're telling me I'm wasting my time. And I'm not. I do like the people I work with. I do care about them. I do need them. I do want their respect. I do listen. Most people come at things very simply and directly out of their own lives. And I respect that and understand that. I trust them. Your therapy and complicated lives and soul-searching seems too hard for me. It's too difficult. I want my life to be simple. I just feel put down by all your stuff. I can't live up to it. OK, so maybe there are a lot of 'oughts' in the way I'm active politically. But look at all the oughts in the way you live: you ought to be honest and open; ought to express your feelings; ought to deal with jealousy and possessiveness in your relationships; ought not to put people down; ought to be happy; ought to be non-hierarchical; ought to share skills; ought to share your lives...

It's all so heavy. I can't handle it. It's a nightmare... a collective nightmare. You are so frightened someone actually might do more than someone else - you even pretend not to have leaders in the therapy groups - but it's obvious you do in practice.

Fritzie: Oh god... what a description. I can see it seems really crazy. It's true that all the 'ambition' stuff about therapy stinks a bit. "I'm going to be a better person" "I'm less fucked up" "I'm much realler than other people". I don't need that any more than you do.

But I do need to be in situations where I can let my feelings out, and get support from other people, accept myself, feel accepted, and find some love for other people. Right now I need to see my own place in the world a bit more clearly before I can relate to other people's struggles. Part of me needs to believe that the most effective, most revolutionary, thing that I can do is what I need to do for myself. A revolution that isn't for me as well doesn't make sense any more.

Karl: Yeah, but what happens to other people makes me happy as well. It's not so clearcut is it?

Fritz: No it's not. I still get a lot out of the victories - like the Trico strike women last week for example. I don't think I'm going to give up the revolution and go straight and end up contented and happy in a secure job in an isolated nuclear family in the suburbs. Because I don't think it could make me happy. Our kind of therapy seems to lead further and further away from that. I feel more and more that I need to share my experience, share my love - be open to a wider group of people. I feel I can begin to make a reality out of the idea of communism in my own life. Only begin, mind you, because it's an uphill battle, and the society is against it.

I'm afraid of the future; afraid of fascism; afraid of prison and torture. And I am hopeful too . . .

Karl: I want to say something to you, you might understand. I've been alone a long time. Really alone, you know. I do get friendship, companionship, comradeship, out of my political work. But I'm lonely at the same time too. I've no-one I can really talk to about the things that matter to me. And I'm frightened to open that up. Really frightened of what might happen.

Fritz: I feel lonely in the therapy group too. There's nobody who doesn't seem to have a word of criticism for us. The straight therapy people hate our politics and the politics people hate the therapy. And the real enemies are getting away with it. We need support to believe in ourselves as a group too. I need you to respect me, take me seriously.

Karl: I do, I do. Believe me I do.

Fritz: I guess both of us are quite depressed the revolution hasn't happened yet.

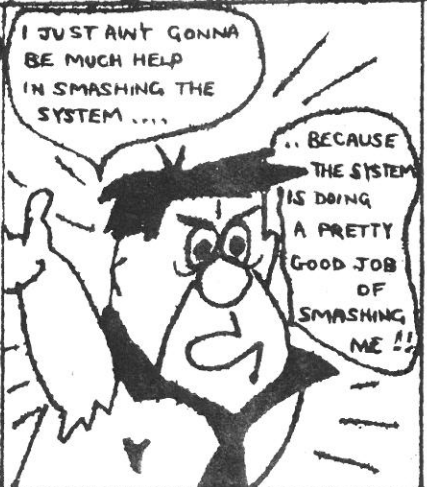
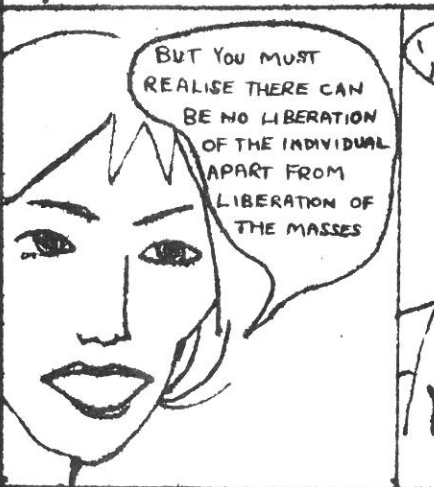
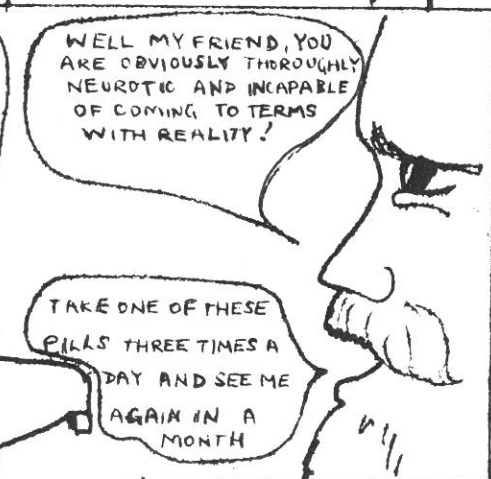
Karl: Now you sound like me. You and I are talking for the first time in a while. That's a revolution isn't it.

Fritz: Yeah, that's a . . .

Karl: That's a . . . something.

"Therapy answered a big political question for me . . . that people are basically OK."
Mark





POLITICS

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THERAPY



one woman's view

“ Maybe it's different for a woman; being "political" for me didn't involve the same split that Fritz and Carl talk about - at least not when I first got involved with the Women's Movement. Politics meant discovering that my isolation, feelings of inadequacy at work, and as a student and a mother and a lover were not just my problem; that other women were like me and we didn't have to see it as our 'fault'. Women's politics was a relief; it meant support from a group in the fight at home over who should wash up, change the nappies or cook the dinner. Politics meant reading a book and feeling that what I got out of it would be of interest to others and might relate to my life. It meant that for the first time I had so many things to do that my husband and son were complaining about me going out, instead of me always wanting more attention from them. Now I was the one who had to go rushing out at midnight to write and print a leaflet. I didn't need to lose the fight over the washing up so that I was significant in my martyrdom; I could be significant in the world. With other women I could challenge authority outside and the authority in my head. The first time I sat in in an S.S. office was a real high.

I think that 'high' made me and other women underestimate the strength of both our internal and external enemies - our conditioning and the patriarchy and capitalism. I remember one member of my women's group saying she thought 'revolution would take maybe ten years, or maybe only five,' and we didn't argue with her. When prices began to rocket and everywhere women were grumbling we put out a leaflet and called a meeting to take action against rising prices. We weren't sure that lots of people would come but we partly expected that the self-evident

discontent with rising prices would naturally lead women to take action. Similarly in my living situation once I'd understood the benefits of collective living or shared child care I thought my new life style would progress smoothly. What I think I had failed to understand was the way in which I had internalised my role as a woman just like the other women on the market who got rid of their anger at the prices by grumbling rather than using it to change the situation.

After a while I realised that I could still feel like a martyr even if I no longer did all the washing up; could still pay more attention to making sure that the man I was making love with had an orgasm than making my own sexual needs explicit, although I knew in my head that I had as much right to orgasms as he did. I could go to meetings with the same sense of duty which had led me to cook an evening meal for my family every evening after a full day out at work.

Therapy for me has been a safe space to look at my own inner controls and contradictions - an essential part of my politics - which only really emerged through being politically involved. I wouldn't have recognised the dual nature of my martyrdom if I'd gone on washing all the dishes; I'd still have been complaining about my husband. In therapy I'm in a position to see how my martyrdom operates and to struggle against it rather than pretend it doesn't exist because I'm writing leaflets instead of doing domestic chores.

I want to see this spreading to other women, and men too, which is why I'm writing part of this pamphlet and feel very good about the ways Red Therapy has 'gone public'.

“ Speaking personally 'cos I can't speak any other way...

I've just left the Troops Out Movement because I became increasingly aware of how dissatisfying and ineffective it had become, at least in my area. My experience in therapy and my political activity before I got involved in TOM made me draw some conclusions - So much political activity on the 'straight' Left is based on guilt and self-denial. People are manically driven into activities by their own unrecognised needs and dare not stop being busy to analyse what it is they are doing for fear it will all turn out to be meaningless.

I went to so many ill-tempered organisational meetings where everyone moaned at each other for not doing more and there was masses of resentment all round. Nobody tried to understand each other and there was a lot of putting-down. Over the years the meetings proliferated, and the committees and groups identified by initials grew farcical. At the same time local organising and propaganda work suffered from lack of time. Resentments grew as it became clear that a people who did most of the talking did least of the work and that many of the political 'heavies', who talked about 'the working class' all the time, could not in fact relate to another person well enough to talk about the weather, never mind imperialism and oppression.

'Local activity' to raise consciousness and organise support for the TOM was only seen by the 'straight' Left as being meetings and rallies where famous people and 'good speakers' talked at the 'masses' who just passively listened and occasionally asked carefully circumscribed questions. There was no room for a dialogue, for listening to what people thought - the whole perspective was to tell people what they should think.

The meetings were so unenjoyable and uncreative that it was not surprising the TOM didn't grow fast. It was clear that most people thought it couldn't be enjoyable if it was to be effective. Occasionally 'socials' were organised, to make money. Grim they usually were too - Leftie men huddled in corners drinking pints and arguing about tactics and strategies, and each other. Often outsiders who came for a beer were either harangued or ignored.

It was hard for me to talk to people about TOM in the end - the politics had become stale from constant repetition and I felt so unenthusiastic for the organisation what could I offer?

Many of the people in TOM I liked, the basic demands are right and there is a need for an anti-imperialist grouping in Britain, but there needs to be serious thought about the current definition of what is 'political'. We need to be aware of our motivations and our own needs and we need to be able to relate to people in a real way, not hiding behind slogans, leaflets,



platforms and 'speakers', megaphones and banners. Once I got caught up in that merry-go-round it was very hard to try and get another form of political activity together.

Also the current accepted definition of who is worth talking to - who can wield influence and has power - is so awful: a few Lefties pursuing the same few shop stewards, councillors, MPs, trades council members, and the rest, the lumpen, considered unimportant, or even non-existent, if they aren't in a Union - those are bosses' definitions of who is valuable (those who are in waged work).

...repressive, resentful, alienated, guilt-ridden ... but I know there is another kind of effective political action which is fun, creative, warm - 'cos we experienced it sometimes in the TV group, so it ain't just Utopian.

An effective way of not looking at TOM critically, in response to complaints, was to put down political differences coming from 'libertarians' as 'personal problems' (in other words, out of TOM's sphere) - even if the criticisms came from seven people they were dismissed as personal problems and and not seen in a political light at all.”

... and
another
woman's view

“Some of us had been active in libertarian politics and the Women's Movement and had had experience of consciousness-raising groups, collective living, personal politics - trying to change our lives.

"We wanted to work together politically in non-hierarchical ways, find some kind of sexual freedom and non-oppressive relationships between men and women and adults and children, etc.

"I think we found it was ALL HARDER THAN WE THOUGHT - that we couldn't somehow will ourselves to be liberated and wake-up the next morning feeling wonderfully collective, non-jealous, confident, non-competitive etc. We couldn't suddenly change the patterns of a lifetime which we had been forced to conform to in this society.

"The changes had to take place at a deeper level than just intellectual and political understanding. We had to go back into our pasts, unlearn our conditioning, break out of the blocks that had been instilled into us since childhood. Only then would we be able to behave differently, live more fully, and fight for the revolution we want - not just with a perspective of changing the ownership of the means of production - but with changing and reclaiming every part of our lives - our leisure, our relationships, feelings and sexuality, our work, our living conditions, our creativity... ”

History/Herstory

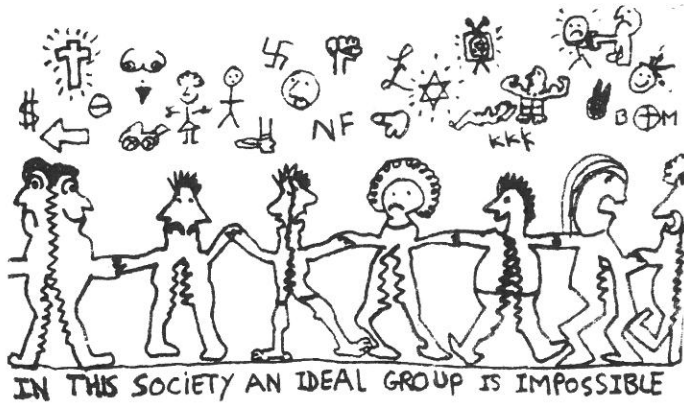
We can change our minds in a minute but it takes our feelings and bodies more time.



Red Therapy had its origins in a group of people trying to change their lives by living collectively and by active politics in a working-class area of East London. Some of us were part of Big Flame, and contributed to its first magazine issue; but there began to appear some important differences, particularly round questions of personal living, women's struggles, and how we saw ourselves as revolutionaries. A few of us had some previous experience of therapy - individual Reichian and gestalt therapy, psychoanalysis, and groups within the growth movement. In Autumn 1973 we set up small leaderless groups for ourselves and a few friends outside that group, because we felt we needed some way of doing therapy. This was in addition to the existing political activity, which was already taking up a lot of our time and energy. "At that time it was manic politics and manic therapy, with little connection between them." It was difficult to talk about therapy within

the political group except very defensively, or to bring our therapy understanding into our political activities - though this latter problem changed later on when a small self-help therapy group began out of a food co-op that the women helped organise with working-class women on a local housing estate. In the main therapy group "there were a lot of problems because two of us - men - did a lot of leading. But we were all getting into a lot of feelings - sometimes did a lot of shouting - and felt we were learning..."

In May 1974 there was a large open meeting in London, organised by people in the growth movement, on therapy and politics, at which Jerry Rubin spoke, saying how fantastic the days of 1968 had been for him and a lot of others, but how he often didn't understand where he was going, how he would get clobbered by 'events and not understand what was happening because of self-alienation. He felt he couldn't be political if he was that out of



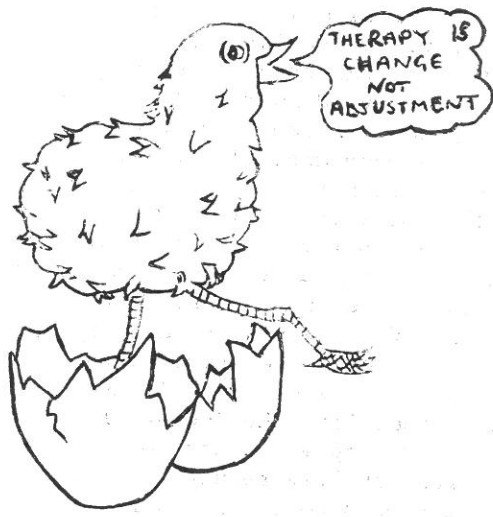
touch with himself and his own body. He felt he had to go back a step and work on himself. However, in the long run the only real therapy was social revolution. It was a well-attended meeting with a lot of energy, and some very moving statements were made by Brian Dempsey and others.

Two people from the East London group spoke, criticising the growth centres, and suggesting a further meeting for all those who were interested in linking up therapy and politics. There was a good response to this, and over the summer several meetings were held with a lot of very diverse people. The discussions tended to get very abstract and generalised, and people drifted away; the people who stayed were those who wanted to do therapy rather than talk about it, and those who had some kind of commitment to the kind of politics which the group had already been into. We didn't believe in the group leader as a kind of infallible authority; we didn't believe that you had to define yourself as sick before you could get benefits from doing therapy; we didn't believe in the "stand on your own two feet" ideology which seemed to us basically liberal individualism; we didn't want to take class for granted or sex roles for granted. We also wanted to do therapy in a way that brought in our experience from consciousness raising - of the social determination of social experience - and that allowed us in therapy to work on political issues without having our values put down as head trips or reduced to our relationships with our parents. And somehow we also hoped to relate this to what we were doing outside the groups. It was about this time that the group began to be known as Radical Therapy.

Initially the group was very slow in getting off the ground. We had decided to be leaderless, in the sense of not having a paid leader; but that people with particular skill and experience should take turns in having responsibility for one evening. The group was very unequal, in that some people had had quite a lot of group and other therapy experience, whereas many people only had a little or none. Another kind of inequality appeared in the way that the original East London group appeared en bloc and seemed to know what it was all about more than others did. So people

with little knowledge or skill tended to hang back and feel unconfident and hesitant; sometimes the more dominant people held back their contributions when they became aware of this, but it did not help much to have them "looking over your shoulder", so things could be very slow and sticky. We also had quite a large turnover of people at this period (Autumn 1974), so that you never quite knew who was going to be there. This initial large turnover contributed to the slowness and nervousness of the group - you have to feel reasonably safe to be able to get into your more scary feelings, and that doesn't happen in an unpredictable group. When we realised what a problem this was, we made great efforts to stabilise it, to ensure that people came regularly, and that new people only joined at certain times.

As well as these internal difficulties, we had a lot of external difficulties too. These all centred round finding a suitable place to hold the group meetings. It is difficult enough at the best of times to find



"I find group therapy necessary for the solidarity and to feel a social context, instead of a unique freak. I've never fancied an analyst, an individual who knows better to tell me what's what, I've always argued with people in that role. The support of a group is necessary, especially perhaps in a big city, but I need other leftists - otherwise I feel like a freak again."

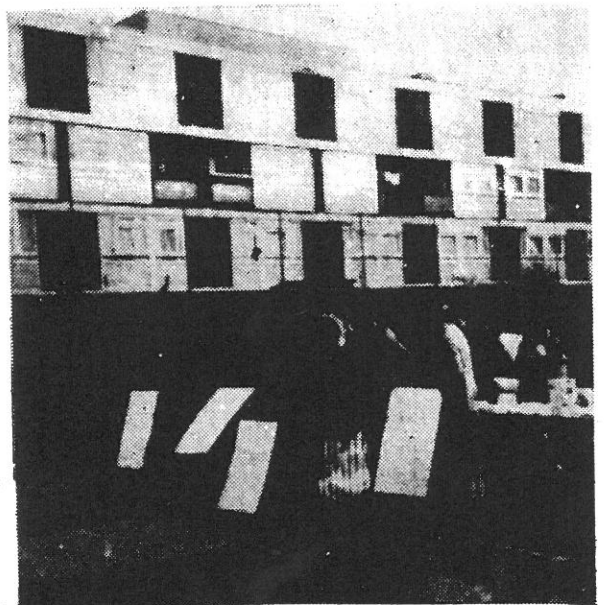
"My strong prejudice has been in favour of free therapy, rather than what is paid for; both because I am mean about money, and because I don't like experts who are going to tell me what to do or what to believe. So I have gone for things like co-counselling and leaderless groups wherever possible. Politically, too, this fits with any analysis which wants to reduce the power of the expert."

suitable rooms for a group which could become very noisy at times with shouts of anger, screams of pain, stamping and banging and all the rest of the things which happen in groups; there are the straightforward difficulties also of disturbing people in the house, upsetting the neighbours, etc. But in addition we had the problem that a lot of people who might be expected to be sympathetic didn't like what we were doing. For the growth centre we had "bad vibrations"; we were told to leave, then offered the room for one evening to "work on" our anger about it! At another place we "didn't have enough experience"; for another we were "too much into your heads"; for another we weren't "clear enough". At one place a police sergeant plodded up the stairs and opened the door - he said he'd been told by two "ordinary workmen" that they were afraid a murder was being committed because of the strange sounds. When we explained that we were doing therapy, his reply was - "I see - expressing your class anger, I suppose?" (It was a well-known political house.) Perhaps they read Reich on police training courses?

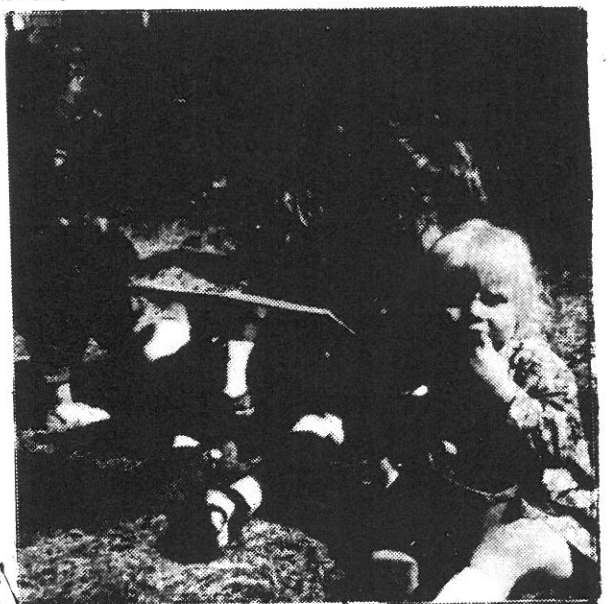
The most regular place we had that winter was a nice padded room in a house where a lot of primal therapy was done. Over this period the name gradually changed to Red Therapy. But here, too, there were hassles, and we eventually had to move out. The first year of Red Therapy was very hard going, both in terms of confidence and trust about actually doing therapy, and keeping the group organised and finding places, and trying to sort out the implicit power structures within in. We wonder now how we ~~ever~~ did keep going.

As we came into the Spring of 1975 we had about 20-30 people who had been to Red Therapy groups more or less regularly. People from the East London collective were, though, the only cohesive group within it. Some of the people from Brixton and Islington and other parts of London were quite regular and committed, but they didn't have the same strong links between them. Others drifted in and out of the group, though by now we were controlling entry a bit more. So this cohesiveness started to become an issue: it had strong positives and also quite strong negatives for the group. On the positive side, it meant that the group had a core pretty solidly built in - and this probably had a lot to do with the group's survival in the difficult periods. On the negative side, it meant that the people from East London had a lot of power in the group, which somehow seemed to exclude others from taking more power to do what they wanted or needed. They took priority in all sorts of ways.

So it was decided to do something we had never done before. We spent a week together in the Summer, at a large house in the country. It would be an opportunity also to integrate into the group the women who had been contacted by means of the food co-op. It was decided that the whole week would be spent doing therapy, and that on one day an outside encounter



OUT OF A LOCAL EAST LONDON FOOD CO-OP AND PLAYGROUP SOME WOMEN BECAME PART OF A SELF-HELP THERAPY GROUP WHICH THEN JOINED RED THERAPY. THIS WOMEN'S GROUP HAD BEEN EVEN SLOWER AND HARDER TO START THAN RED THERAPY BECAUSE WE HAD LESS CONFIDENCE AND EXPERIENCE.



leader would come in and help us to face up to the power relationships and hidden agreements and agendas which were floating around in the group.

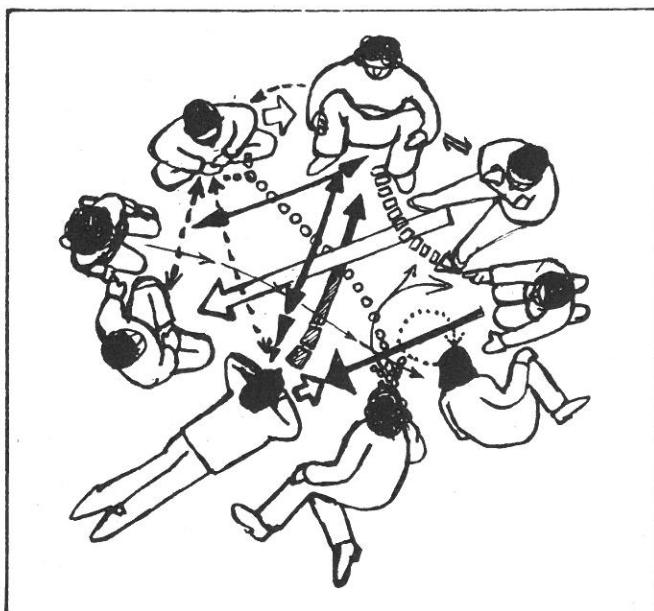
It was an incredible week. It was as if everything exploded. Nearly all the plans we had tentatively held for the week were abandoned. We started the group later and later each day, and went on later and later each night; the last group ended at 6 o'clock in the morning! And the day with the outside leader worked very well - a lot of things were faced and looked at which we had never faced or looked at before. For most of us as individuals it was a powerful experience. It consolidated the group and helped to integrate people who had felt outside before.

But also something quite new came out of that experience - a men's group which worked. Whereas women find it relatively easy to find common cause and get a lot from being with each other, this does not often happen with men. But somehow in the high-energy atmosphere of this week, the men became aware of what they could give each other and gain from being with each other.

After the intensive was over, we discussed how we could do more to redistribute power within the group. It seemed that much of it had to do with the use of skills within the group, and this was something we could work on immediately. We decided that more people should try to go to other therapy groups as well as ours, to learn and gain experience. (We tried later to build up a fund for sending people with little money to outside groups, but this never seemed to work out - it seemed to be beyond our type of organisation.) Also we did one other thing along these lines - three people who had been to co-counselling courses spent a day teaching other people in the group some of the techniques. From this we set up our own network of co-counselling partners, which is still continuing. And these techniques can also be used in the group meetings.



A SMALL GROUP AT ONE OF THE LATER INTENSIVES



That Autumn we were meeting in a comfortable community house in East London, which was very suitable for our needs. But often the numbers were very small, and we felt a big contrast between the high energy of the week's intensive and the relatively low energy of the weekly evening meetings. So we decided to hold another intensive. It turned out that there was a big house in Cornwall which we could use after Christmas, so we went there. During this week it was clear that the dynamics of the group had changed. The basic nucleus had grown, and was no longer dominated by people from East London to nearly the same extent. Most people had gained confidence in their ability to contribute to the group. We were able to follow a programme of things we wanted to do without the group getting into the manic obsessional quality of the Summer intensive. The energy was much more bearable, and a lot of very constructive things happened. It seemed that we had got where we really wanted to go, in terms of how to actually handle the group therapy.

During 1976 we met less often as a big group. For one thing, there are now too many people in Red Therapy for us to be able to do therapy all together in one group. For another, we became so aware of the difficulty of female/male relations that it seemed to need an extended time period to be able to get to a point where men and women could really work together. The separate women's and men's groups met fairly regularly and worked well. The intensives which we had were always valuable and at one of them we made tape recordings which have been used in this pamphlet. One or two small intensives were held, with about six people, and these also worked well. We have found that it is possible to have children and toddlers on intensives, by having the mornings free, the afternoons devoted to fairly structured things, and the main group in the evenings after supper.

In the spring of 1976 we first thought about - and started working on - a pamphlet. This one. We felt sure enough of ourselves and of our three-year experience to want to share some of what we had learnt with other people. It wasn't so much a 'political duty' as a need to communicate, to go out and re-assess what had happened to us in doing so. It reflected a confidence we were beginning to feel in what we were doing: within groups virtually everyone felt able to make suggestions and work with someone who wanted attention; sometimes six or seven 'therapists' could weave in and out of the action, making suggestions, helping him or her to go a bit further, following where it led - without competing with each other and without getting in each other's way. The intensives had become regular and nearly always seemed good and richly rewarding and growing experiences for the people who went on them. On the whole, there was an atmosphere of trust and equality within the group. We began to be proud of ourselves.

Things were changing outside the group, too; in the growth movement, on the left and in the society as a whole. The growth movement is a whole mixture of different approaches to group and individual growth, all loosely organised round the basic outlook of humanistic psychology. These people were now offering gay and women's groups in their programmes, and offered groups in prisons and "in the community". Some of them began to pay lipservice at least to problems of leadership and of sexual politics. This development - liberal as it mostly was - and our own growing confidence enabled us in turn to be less defensive in the face of their expertise - better able to criticise them when they deserved it and to accept what was positive in what they had to offer.

This had partly come about anyway through the painful process of abandoning our own assumption that "getting into feelings" was the answer to everything. There were such things as therapy skills to be learnt, and they weren't always learnt easily. And there was such a thing as experience gained over time. We had tended to deny them before, because in the growth movement those skills and experience had become reified into status and privilege whose owners had a vested interest in maintaining. They had been mystified. Now we had begun to discover these skills in ourselves we could afford to admit them in others; and to pursue the process of learning and teaching which we had before tended to deny. Even so, it must be admitted that it is very hard to share skills in a group like ours: no one wants to come on like an expert, and so no one ever explains what they are doing, or why they are doing it. The skills get picked up in the sort of way that carpentry skills get picked up, from standing behind a skilled carpenter and seeing how he does it. It really seems easier

and more effective for most of us to go out and get the skills elsewhere, and then bring them back into the group.

During the same period, we began to experience increasing interest in what we were doing from people in the women's movement, the men's movement and the left in general. In 1974 when we had started, we had felt ourselves to be freaks - alone in what we did, and sometimes feeling that we were more neurotic than the rest - and we kept our therapy quiet. By late 1976, things had changed a lot. The social contract had taken effect, wage struggles had evaporated; it was impossible any more to believe the revolution was just round the corner; in a period of general retreat people on the left were forced more to look at their own lives, and what they wanted from their own lives before the revolution. Similarly, within the women's movement and in libertarian circles, the early idealism by which we felt we could transform our personal lives and relationships, almost by an act of will, had given way sometimes to cynicism - but also to a painful realisation of the difficulties of making such changes; it would all take longer. We began to hear of other self-help therapy groups, and in other cases were invited to help get them started.



The women's group within Red Therapy was invited to meet - and start - other self-help women's groups in Camden and East London. We met some of the people from the Barefoot Psychoanalyst co-counselling group, and several women began to do counselling at a battered wives' centre. The men's group ran a session at the Men's Health Conference in November 1976, and then ran some open groups for men at the East London Men's Centre. Later some of the women began getting involved in the Women's Therapy Centre in London. And at Easter 1977 both women and men went up to the Laurieston Hall commune in Scotland, to do some therapy both for ourselves and for the people living there. It was our first attempt to communicate our experience to a commune like the ones some of us had been living in. Laurieston people said: "I think it's about honesty really. Working towards being able to be honest, to the I and the we. A lot of slow hard work and not many overnight miracles. But worth it." And - "A glimpse into the pain in other people's lives, through the too readily accepted everyday shell, produced in me feelings of great warmth for those people, while diminishing the reluctance to talk about my own fears and feelings."

Since Laurieston we have been asked to do groups or to talk about Red Therapy with a number of other people around the country.

We have discovered that it is hard to start an ongoing self-help therapy group. It takes a lot of commitment (desperation?), confidence and willingness to open up. This implies that people have some security in their lives. We would tend to feel now that people in acute crisis need one-to-one counselling or individual therapy before they are able to face a whole group. There are ways in which we can now see our own group to have been exceptional; several of us had some therapy experience before we started; a number of us lived together - so we had special reasons for keeping the group going and wanting to work through difficulties in our relationships; we were all quite close politically; at different times there have always been enough of us who felt confident enough to look after the others.

Against this, for any group starting now the climate has changed. There are more other groups to learn from and get support from. And there are more training groups, some of them subsidized as part of the whole educational scene.

In the past two years, some people in Red Therapy have been seeing individual therapists. This goes very much against our initial politics, which was to see the professional therapy relationship as necessarily exploitative, the power and money relationship unbalanced and mystified. Some people have felt abandoned by those who did individual therapy; some have felt critical of it; those doing it have tended to describe it as an "addition" to their lives, not detracting from Red Therapy; some have got into it because they felt dissatisfied with Red Therapy. "I began to hear rumours that some people in the group were going to individual therapists and I felt upset by this discovery. Why hadn't they told me? Did they secretly not like Red Therapy? They must be rich! It's not fair!" And - "I got into individual therapy at a time when I felt quite desperate. In retrospect it was a major crisis in my life, of the kind that pushed me towards therapy in the first place. At that time I had been unable to face a group; and I think in a different way the same was true again.



I felt that I needed support for having a baby and getting into my relationship with Eileen; but, for a variety of reasons, I felt unable to get that support from my men's

group. I needed to look outside our close circle. Also, Joel was the only professional male therapist I had ever met who I could begin to trust. I had first talked to him about individual therapy at a group I did with him a year before. It had taken a year for that need I felt to jell. Joel was expensive. But after years of therapy "on the cheap" I wanted to treat myself, though I can ill afford it. I felt - and still feel - conflicted about the politics of this decision. Partly I see that as my guilt about having someone who's there for me. Certainly it's an incredibly difficult experience working out my dependency on this one person, in a way that can get lost in a group. It's nice knowing he will be there for me in a reliable, regular way. I feel that he cares for me, and not just the money. Sometimes I hate him; sometimes I am really glad of the warmth he offers and the things I can learn from him about myself, and other things too."

And - "I don't like the idea of being therapized or being a therapist - I don't see how anyone can have this 'close' relationship with five people a day, or however many it is. I am working on myself through co-counselling and by going to Red Therapy groups and intensives. This autumn I plan to do an intensive series of Primal weekends because I have become aware of a lot of early stuff which still seems to be affecting me, particularly about relationships with women in general and my wife in particular, and which I want to go into in a wholehearted way." Several people feel that individual therapy is an important way of exploring how you relate to people in one to one relationships. Many of the issues and patterns in one-to-one relationships simply do not come up in groups, as the dynamics are different.

"It seems to me we used to believe that feelings were central, that if we got into our feelings we would find our identity, the sources of our political energy, the basis of our lifestyles, etc. But I have changed... I now see the emotional as one of several aspects which make up a whole person (including the physical, spiritual, mental, sexual, creative, etc. - as the Indian "chakra" system describes.) We probably needed to focus intensely on the emotions for a while as we did; but now I am working on balancing and integrating them with the rest of me - doing massage, meditation and dance as well as the Red Therapy groups (besides living my life and trying to be politically active . . .)."

HOW Red Therapy WORKS

HERE WE DESCRIBE SOME OF THE PROCESSES WHICH HAPPEN IN OUR GROUPS.

FOR A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TECHNIQUES, SEE P. 36.

FOR ADVICE ABOUT HOW TO START A GROUP YOURSELVES, SEE P.54.



What we do mainly is group therapy. A group of this kind works best in a room with a carpet or covered with rugs, mattresses, or other soft coverings. There should preferably be no chairs, tables or other furniture. There should be plenty of cushions of various shapes and sizes, covered in strong material, which will not burst when hit. The room should be large enough for everyone in the group to lie down at the same time, and the ceiling high enough so you can jump up with your arms raised. This is a good rule of the thumb in deciding if a room is big enough or not.

Noise is always a problem, not only because it does mean a lot of noise when doing exercises like everyone shouting "NO" at the top of their lungs, or when people get into their basic emotions and cry and scream; but also because the nature of the noises made is often frightening to outsiders who do not know what is going on. (We have tried telling neighbours that we're an 'experimental theatre group' rather than a therapy group.) This can be overcome by using detached buildings, by putting blankets over windows and doors; acoustic tiles on ceilings etc. (Having glibly said this, we refer you to the 'History'

section to see the sort of problems we've had with rooms.)

Visual privacy is important. You may want to do exercises which will look very strange or misleading to the casual observer, and the idea of being overlooked will act as a great inhibitor to spontaneous expression.

These are 'ideal' conditions, but we have done groups in people's bedrooms, a living room in a terrace house and someone's council flat and find we can manage particularly if the group is small - say six or less.

Working in the Group

The group usually sits in a circle so that everyone can see everyone else. We usually start with everyone in turn saying how they are feeling at that moment, or with a group exercise - breathing, bioenergetics etc.(see section on techniques) after which someone who previously stated they had something to work on will be encouraged to do something about it, or someone will say "I want to work."(although 'working' is the term most of

us use in practice, some of us have doubts about it in theory because of its implications.) Alternatives are "I want to take some time" or "I want the groups attention - help!" This may also be said indirectly by someone bursting into tears, putting a lot of energy into arguing about what the group should do next, or just being very quiet and withdrawing from the group.

It is often very difficult to make a clear statement that "I want to work" and a group often gets off to a sticky start because of this.

Resistance

"Sure I've come to the group to work on my problems in living, but I also have a strong resistance to working on my problems; they're painful; they may go deeper than I'd bargained for, or they're long lasting and familiar, why should I work on them today in particular ...?"

For instance here is a part of a transcript of a group where someone has stated that they want to work but then encountered his own resistance to doing so...

"Well... I don't really want to work... I want to sit here and smoke my cigarette and soak up the sunshine and groove around and look at wild flowers and walk on the beach... I don't want to get into any pain or anything if I don't have to, I'm not forced to..."



Other reasons /rationalisations for not taking the time of the group are modesty and fear of being unfair. "Who am I to take up the time and effort of all these people?" (The bigger the group is, the worse this becomes.) Maybe I'll look foolish; maybe the problem will seem trivial to them. Maybe there are more important problems in the group, what right have I to jump in? Perhaps I haven't contributed enough to the group, or come very often - I should hold back until more worthy or desperate people have gone first. I'm not really sure exactly what I want to work on."

There are issues here of group dynamics, which certainly can't be overlooked. If six people want to work, it is often true that not all of them will have time to do so. It is possible to divide the time equally between people, but it may well take one person the whole evening to work through what they are feeling, so we have to try and be very sensitive to what's going on and watch for rigidities developing, trying to bring these out into the open. If the same person starts crying at the beginning of every group, for instance, it is possible to confront the person with that perception, and work through

the interpersonal issues which that may bring out.

In a therapy group with a leader (or in individual therapy with a therapist) when someone is working the leader will offer suggestions which may help the person to go deeper into their feelings. In a leaderless group one or several people will do this - usually we've found that one person feels particularly able to help and others will offer further suggestions. This brings it's own problems; some members of the group feel more confident to help than others - usually because they have more experience - people may understand what is going on differently so that alternative suggestions get offered;



John: "You know, why shouldn't I conform a bit for a change? Why shouldn't I be a conformist? Why shouldn't I conform?"
Pause.

Paul: "Change back?"

Susan: "Did you say change back?"

Paul: "Yeah."

Susan: "Oh. I think before you change back it would be a good idea to say something like 'I feel left out', and just repeat it a few times, and just really try and let yourself feel it."

John: "I feel left out. I feel left out. (SIGHS) I feel I'm missing something. I'm feeling I'm missing something. I've always been missing something. I feel I've always been missing something....."

It can be difficult to help someone you feel particularly involved with, if you feel unsure of your motivation for making a suggestion (you may have an emotional investment in the work taking a particular direction); on the other hand knowing the person well can make it easier to follow what is happening. Within the group there is a dynamic set-up of who feels more or less able to make suggestions and this in itself has to be worked out and challenged periodically.

Dealing with some-one who isn't there.

It very often happens that someone comes to the group with strong feelings still going on about some disagreement or upset with another person who is not in the group. As soon as someone says "How are you feeling?" it is these feelings which come up.

In this situation, or where someone's feelings take them back to problems with either parent, we deal with this by using a cushion in place of the absent person. Doing therapy without confronting the actual person is often criticised for being 'artificial' and not helpful for sorting things out in 'real life'. We have not found this - getting going with a cushion can be difficult, but it is often impossible with the actual person involved there (e.g. your mother). Once you do start to express some feelings towards the cushion-person, it becomes quite real, and very strong emotions are evoked. It is clearly a limitation on most relationships that emotions are not more directly expressed, but doing therapy can give you the necessary space to learn how to do this better in

other situations. You can see it as a way of helping you to find your power and define your autonomy within a relationship.

As well as using cushions, you can choose other people in the group who evoke similar feelings to play significant people in your life.

After experiencing some of the feelings in this way, the person often feels relieved and wants to stop at this point. It is possible to go further, and there are several useful ways of doing this.

1. PUSH AND PROVOKE

The person can sometimes be pushed and provoked into expressing a feeling in more extreme ways, putting a great deal of their energy into it. For instance, if someone

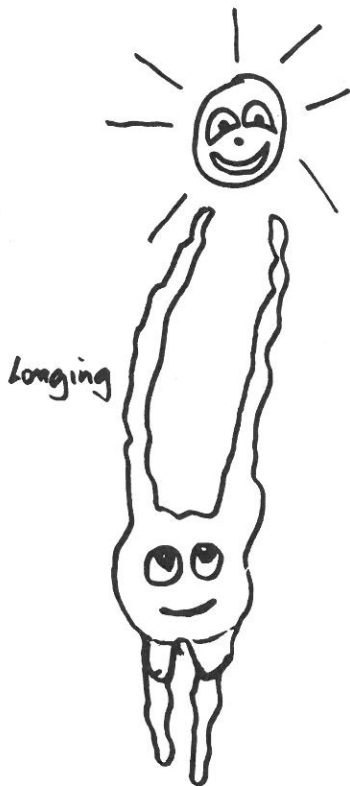


is talking about their fears of being mocked in the school playground, to help them re-experience the feared situation people may act out some school-kids jeering "Ya ya, stupid; look at old knock-knees . .". This may build up to a climax where her feelings may change dramatically from fear to anger, or may result in a sort of exhaustion after which the person feels a very strong sense of closeness to the group and vice versa.

2. ROLE REVERSAL

The person changes places, sitting on the cushion and taking the part of the person or character who was being addressed up to now. In other words, the "other person" now has a chance to reply to the accusations or what-ever. This can often be a powerful experience, as the change in perspective takes over, and the person starts to see how things look from the other side. It very often turns out that the person was not just talking to the original "other" but to a suppressed side of themselves.

Once the person has really got into being on the cushion and talking back, it is often possible for him or her to go backwards and forwards between the two



sides of the dialogue, and to draw the two warring factions within themselves to some kind of agreement.

When John R. worked on his feelings about playing - acting out the two sides of his personality (John B. who is cold, rational and can't play and John A. who is warm, vulnerable and can play) the two sides had a dialogue until in the end John A. predominates and beats up John B. There is group laughter, clapping and great relief. John says "I think I'll go and play with the others" and there is more general merriment as he drags the whole group into a tumbling pile, tickling and being tickled!



3. REGRESSION

Often the person on the cushion becomes identified as "just like" someone's mother or father, and the dialogue changes to one between the person working and one or both parents. It may be that the childhood or infantile feelings which then come out are stronger than the feelings about the current situation.

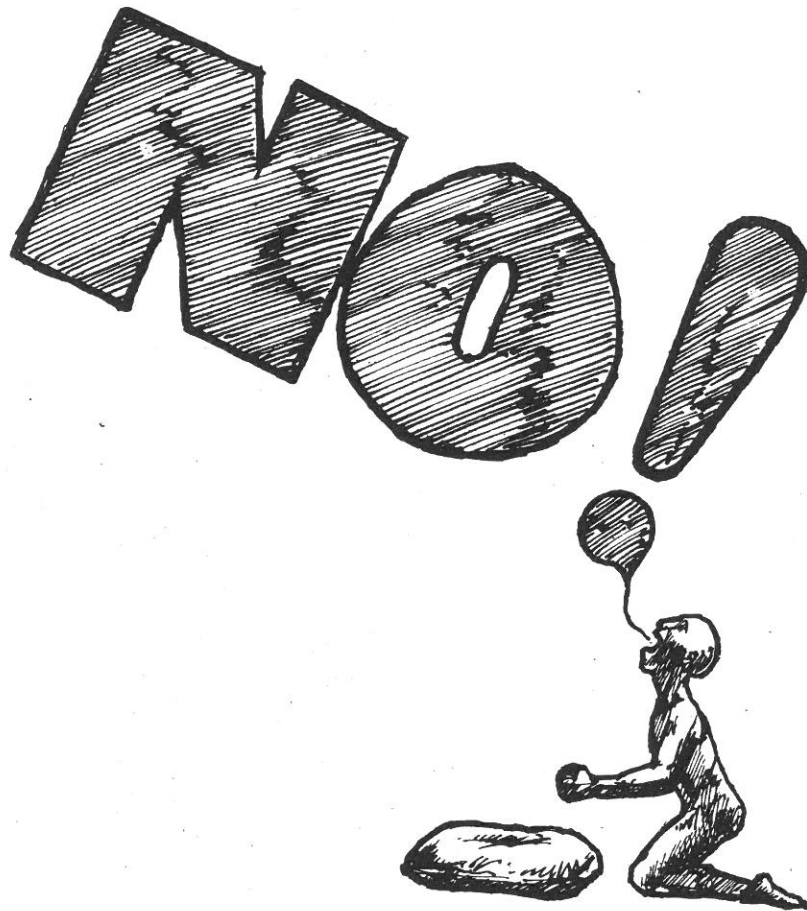
"During the Christmas intensive I began to feel increasingly small, insignificant, and physically weak. I had a bad cough and had been ill in the months before.

I told people in the group ways in which they made me feel small and weak, (mostly by being bigger than me!).

Then I curled up as small as I could, in the middle of the group, and cried and cried. I felt alone, in a strange place, a big cold house with nobody of my own. (We were staying in a huge house that I didn't know.)

It became my grandmother's house in Ireland, where I'd been left when I was eighteen months old. My parents, illegally evicted and penniless, had left me there until I was three. I felt totally grief-stricken and desolate."

"I had images of my mother saying 'You'll get over it, you'll be happy here'. I screamed 'Don't leave me! I don't want you to go!' and 'I'll never get over it! Never! I'll never forgive you!' Then I chose a 'good' mother and father. Immediately I'd chosen I was overwhelmed with feelings of anger at my 'bad' parents . . ."



Dealing with some one who is there.

It happens in every group that difficulties arise between people. In most groups such difficulties are kept on a very rational level, so that one is only able to confront people about things when one has a really justifiable reason. But in a therapy group one can bring up anything, no matter how unreasonable or apparently irrational. There are two basic ways of playing this - both at once and one at a time.

1. BOTH AT ONCE

This is the best method where it seems that both parties have something to work through. They sit or kneel opposite each other, and the group encourages both of them to work through the feelings which come up.

Jenny: I feel a lot of tension with Pete.
I don't know what to do about it.

Pete: I feel the tension too. I have been feeling pretty annoyed with you all day.

Charles: I suggest you both sit in the middle and face one another with a cushion between you. (They do.)

Pete: I don't know where to start.

Susan: Try telling her what you feel annoyed about.

Pete: Well, you have been irritating me a bit around the house. You seem quite bossy.

Jenny: I feel you don't make any effort in the house. You expect me to look after you all the time.

Pete: I don't expect you to look after me. You're like my mother, always nagging me about washing up.

Amy: You're talking a lot. Why don't you just let yourselves shout your resentments. Don't listen to one another. (Pause)

Jenny: WHY DON'T YOU EVER DO ANYTHING - YOU NEVER LIFT A FUCKING FINGER AROUND THE HOUSE...

Pete: FUCK OFF! LEAVE ME ALONE, YOU BOSSY COW! FUCK OFF! NAG, NAG, NAG - YOU'RE LIKE MY MOTHER...

Jenny: I'M NOT YOUR FUCKING MOTHER! DON'T

TREAT ME LIKE YOUR MOTHER! WHY DON'T YOU LEARN TO WIPE YOUR OWN FUCKING ARSE - THEN I WOULDN'T HAVE TO NAG YOU...

Susan: I think you're listening to one another too much. Why don't you both just pick on one phrase and keep shouting it. Don't listen to one another. Try hitting the cushion at the same time.

Jenny: GET OFF YOUR ARSE!!! (Repeated)

Pete: FUCK OFF! FUCK OFF! (repeated)

(They both hit the cushion at the same time while screaming the phrases; after a while they slow down and stop. They are both nearly in tears.)

Charles: How are you both feeling now?

Pete: Exhausted!

Jenny: A lot better, I think.

Amy: Can you keep eye contact with one another? How do you feel about one another?

Jenny: I feel a bit better. I've been storing that up for ages. I think what I feel is that you don't care about me, that's what comes over when you don't do stuff in the house, I feel you don't care.

Pete: I do care. I do. I think I can see you a bit more clearly now. You've become a bit of an object for me the last few weeks, you just became my mother. The thing is, it doesn't help me get housework together when you go on at me.

Charles: It's a real male/female thing. We have to learn to do housework, but we have to learn it on our own terms, not by being put down by women. (Discussion follows.)

Each person is encouraged to concentrate on his or her own feelings, rather than those of the other person: it is not even very important to listen to what the other person is saying, if that gets in the way of one's own expression of feelings. The important thing is for each person to give their emotion and energy to the other - and the group can push and provoke to get this to happen more.

If at a certain point one of the partners "turns into" someone else (a parent, a husband, an ex-wife or whoever), the way to go is to carry on with the action as if the other person actually had turned into this other character. It is important to stay with the actual feelings the person has, not those they should have, or would like to have. The other person carries on with their own action, maybe bringing in another cushion.

2. ONE AT A TIME

This is the better method where it seems that one person is much more upset than the other, or where the person is fairly sure that other outside people are involved too. The active person sits opposite the target person, who just sits there like a blank screen. This goes on much like the "talking to a cushion" method mentioned earlier, except that the eye-contact of the other person often

makes the thing more alive. When the active person has finished going through his or her feelings, the other person, who has probably had all sorts of things stirred up inside by the whole thing, can work through his or her own feelings in turn, with the other person or with a cushion.

Follow up

What happens when the person who has been the focus of attention seems to have gone to the end of his or her experience?

There are many different ways of ending, but they all take into account the fact that the person will usually have experienced some very strong emotions and is feeling very sensitive and opened out. Perhaps she has experienced her fear of physical violence, which she normally avoids experiencing. Perhaps she has got in touch with her fear of rejection - or she may have realised her own sense of herself as a valuable person.

The person who had gained some access to her fear of violence, and perhaps some understanding of it, might be asked if there were anything she would like from the group. She could ask that everyone in the group touch her very gently to help her regain a sense that all physical contact is not necessarily violent. Sometimes all a person wants is to be left alone for a while to digest what happened - a blanket may be put over them, and someone may go every now and then to see how they are getting on.

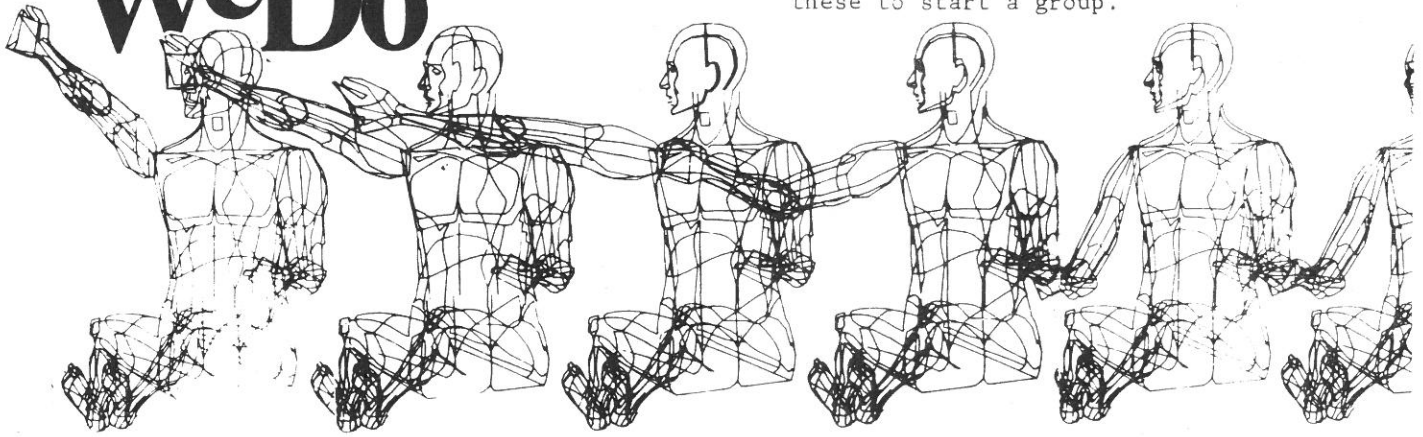
When someone has been starting off with someone in the present, who has then "turned into" someone else, it is good to come back to that person and say what there is to say from where they have now reached.

This opened-up space is also a good place from which to say things like - "I would like you to do more of this, and less of that." Then the other may say - "Well, I think I could, if you would only do more of that and less of this." (Being very specific about the actions.) Sometimes it only takes something very simple to change the nature of a relationship - but that simple thing can't be done because of the strong feelings around it. So we have to work through the feelings fully before we can ask for what we really want.

Finally we usually ask for feedback from the whole group, each person saying what the particular experience brought up in them, in the way of feelings or understanding. This bit is often very moving and important, and we think it is a mistake to leave it out.



The Kind Of Therapy We Do

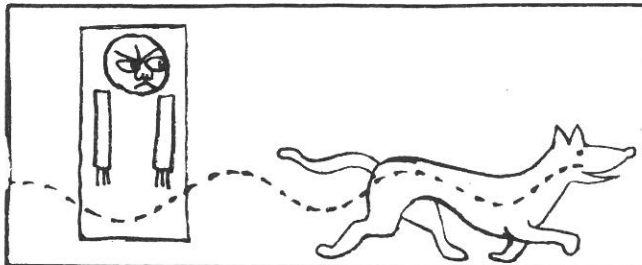


A very brief summary of some therapy techniques.

We use a synthesis of all these methods, with a lot of intuition and as much inventiveness as we can muster. You don't need to know about all of these to start a group.

BIOENERGETICS

A process of re-possessing energy which has become locked in certain parts of our bodies, often expressing itself as aches and tensions. It is based on the idea of Reich that the way we have formed our bodies, the way we move, hold and express ourselves, echoes our emotional patterns. By breathing more freely and loosening specific muscular rigidities with pressure, very strong emotions and memories can be unlocked and released.



GESTALT

Concerned with integration. A process of exploring the 'split' or separated parts of ourselves with the aim of increased awareness and acceptance of our whole selves. The emphasis is on what is happening in the present, the "here and now".

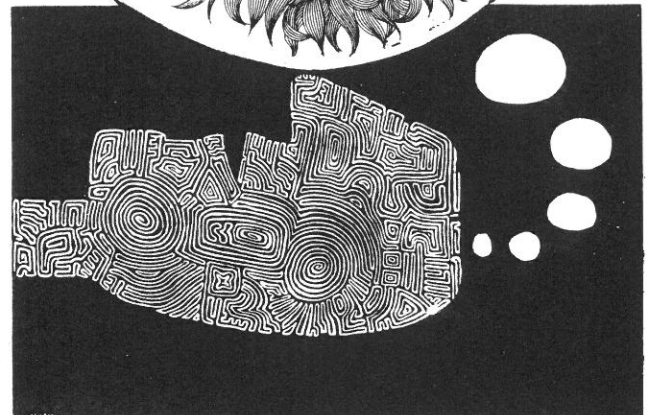
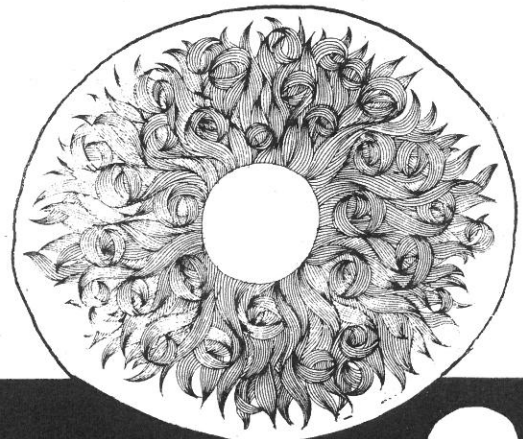
"The basic premise of gestalt and most body therapies is that each individual has her own truth, and her "cure" is within herself, that the path to clarity and personal effectiveness is through self-awareness and integration of one's inner feeling with one's outer actions. When the two are disparate tension is created emotionally and physically; effectiveness and mobility are blocked."

Gestalt uses dreamwork a great deal, also artwork.

GUIDED FANTASY

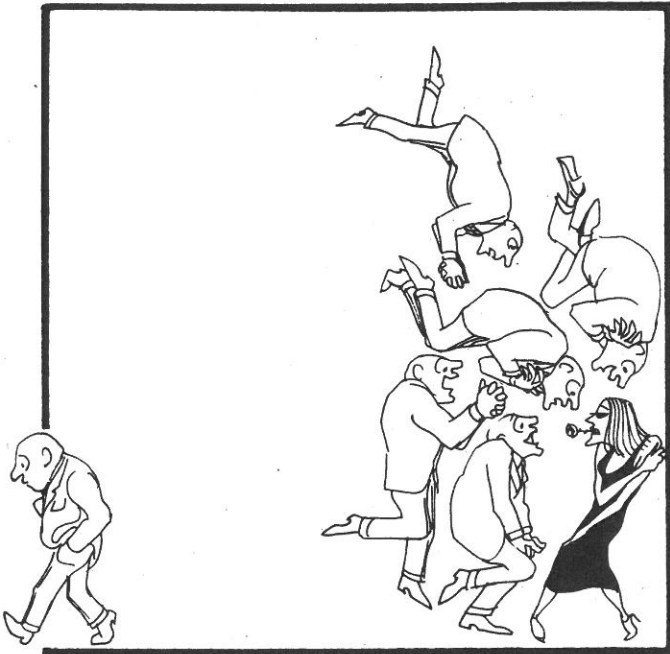
People lie down and relax, and someone suggests a scene, such as a meadow, forest or mountain. Then each individual is guided through his own experience of that scene, which can be worked on further using the methods of gestalt in dreamwork or artwork. The idea is to become more aware about our unconscious perceptions of the world. Can be developed in very specific ways to suit particular situations.

(e.g. fantasy about living situations developed in women's group).



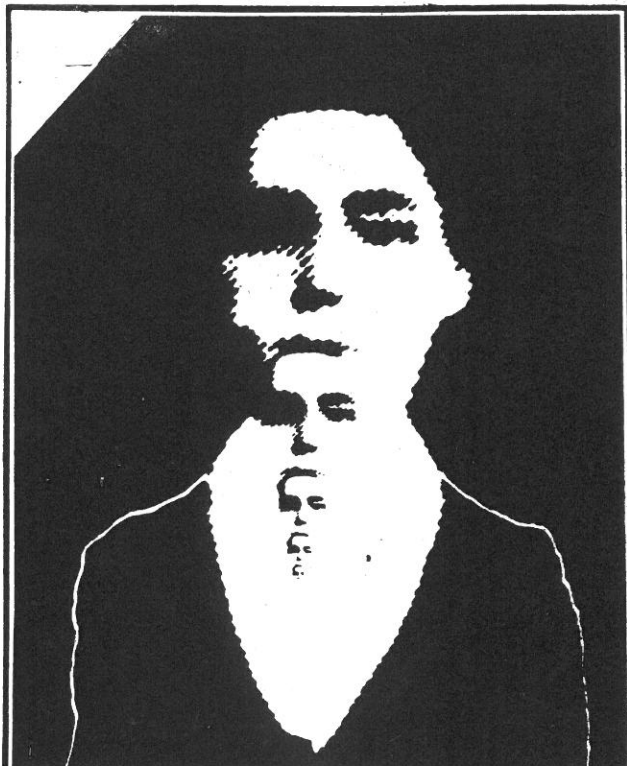
PSYCHODRAMA

The dramatic enactment of situations, problems, conflicts, relationships, past present, real or fantasied, in a group or individual setting. People can act as an "alter ego" and speak on behalf of someone else, to clarify and deepen the situation.



REGRESSION

Re-living childhood situations. This can be set up within a group or it can happen while working on something in the present. We discover in a very emotional way things about ourselves that have completely escaped our conscious memory.



One group member helps another to get into a feeling that he is carrying the world on his shoulders.

ENCOUNTER

The emphasis is on honesty, and open-ness about what is happening here and now with other people in the group, although it can then lead to working on situations outside the group, in the past or present. It is usually used in conjunction with other methods - eg. psychodrama, gestalt, biö-energetics. It is the most flexible of all the methods.

CO-COUNSELLING

Co-counselling can be done in pairs. We use it for therapy and support outside the group. Two people arrange to meet and give each other time, usually an hour each, and complete attention to talk and release feelings. There are certain, easy techniques that can be learnt - particularly for being an encouraging listener - and it can be quite verbal.

It can be used to deal with current problems or explore deep childhood material depending on what the person feels he or she needs at the time.

MASSAGE

Puts emphasis on the body, opens you up to what you are feeling in your body.

THE WOMENS GROUP Sisters in therapy



The women's group started independently of Red Therapy as part of our ongoing involvement in the women's movement. There were really two separate strands which came together; one was our own process of personal change in consciousness raising groups and in our personal relationships, and the other was our experience in action groups such as the "food co-op," a local playgroup, and setting up the Tower Hamlets women's aid centre.

"All of the consciousness raising groups I was in came to a crisis and either split up as consciousness raising groups, or many people left.

In two of them, one of the main ways of channelling the political and personal differences was by scapegoating one woman. In both cases someone older than most of us, with certain characteristics other members found irritating, was accused of being reformist and having a bourgeois lifestyle. The similarities in group dynamics were really striking.

In the last group I found myself in the middle of a complicated and painful web of relationships, with no idea of how I'd got there, or how to work it out in the group.

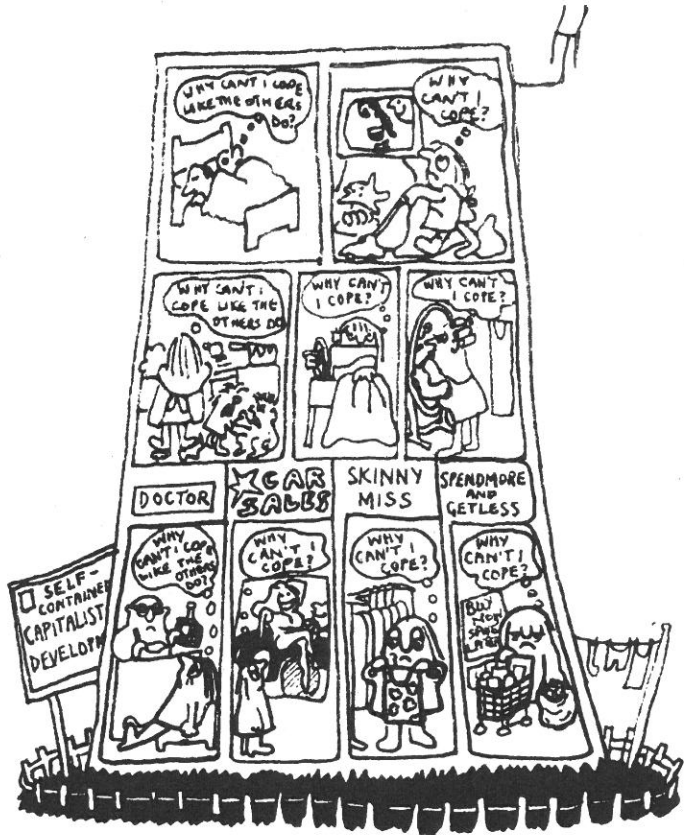
I realised that I didn't know what I was doing emotionally - how I affected other people or what I felt about them. My response was to get into therapy." (Marie)

Two other common responses to the limitations of CR groups were to change your living situation to a less "bourgeois" model - or to turn your energies outwards into "action". For some of us these experiences led us into a women's therapy group -

"The food co-op used to meet once a fortnight in one of the members' flats on the Lincoln Estate. We met to talk about the buying and distribution of the food - and this would lead into talking about relationships and feelings. I remember one evening we were talking about buying cheap cuts of meat and June said, "Oh no I can't get neck-end of lamb. Last time I did that Mike took his plate and threw it across the room saying he didn't consider it a decent dinner after he'd done a hard days work" and this led into a discussion about how much you had to cater to your husband's tastes and how it made you feel. Those of us who were interested in therapy tried to encourage women from the food co-op group to come to the self-help therapy group to have a chance to work on

some of those feelings. Two women did become regular members - some others tried it and left and some pooh-poohed the idea. The food co-op experience made me think that potentially therapy wasn't only relevant to screwed up middle class politicians but could be useful for working class women too. This has come up again in doing therapy with women in a Women's Aid House." (Sheila)

"The other women seemed to want more practical activities such as education, meetings on the law relating to battered women, etc. I felt I ought to be interested in this too, but really wanted some sort of group where I could talk about my feelings of loneliness and unhappiness having just split with my husband. In trying to find my own identity, trying to be more independent, I had encountered all kinds of difficulties and strong feelings that I didn't know how to deal with. I wanted some understanding from other women of how difficult it was to make changes in our lives based on our new-found politics of the women's movement." (Barbara)



The separate women's self-help therapy group became part of Red Therapy during the summer intensive of 1975, at the same time as the separate men's group really developed (see Men's section).

Closeness

The women's group seems to have worked at a basic level for all of us in helping us to

get closer to each other and build stronger relationships with each other and with other women.

"I feel that the women's group has made it possible for me to get to know women as friends. This has happened within the women's group especially because I have got to know the women intimately, but also it has affected by relationships with women outside the therapy group - I'm more confident about getting to know them. I was in consciousness-raising groups before - they altered my understanding but never my feelings about myself. They didn't give me the feeling that another woman might want to get to know me, or that I could make any demands on other people for myself. (Sara).

Negative Feelings

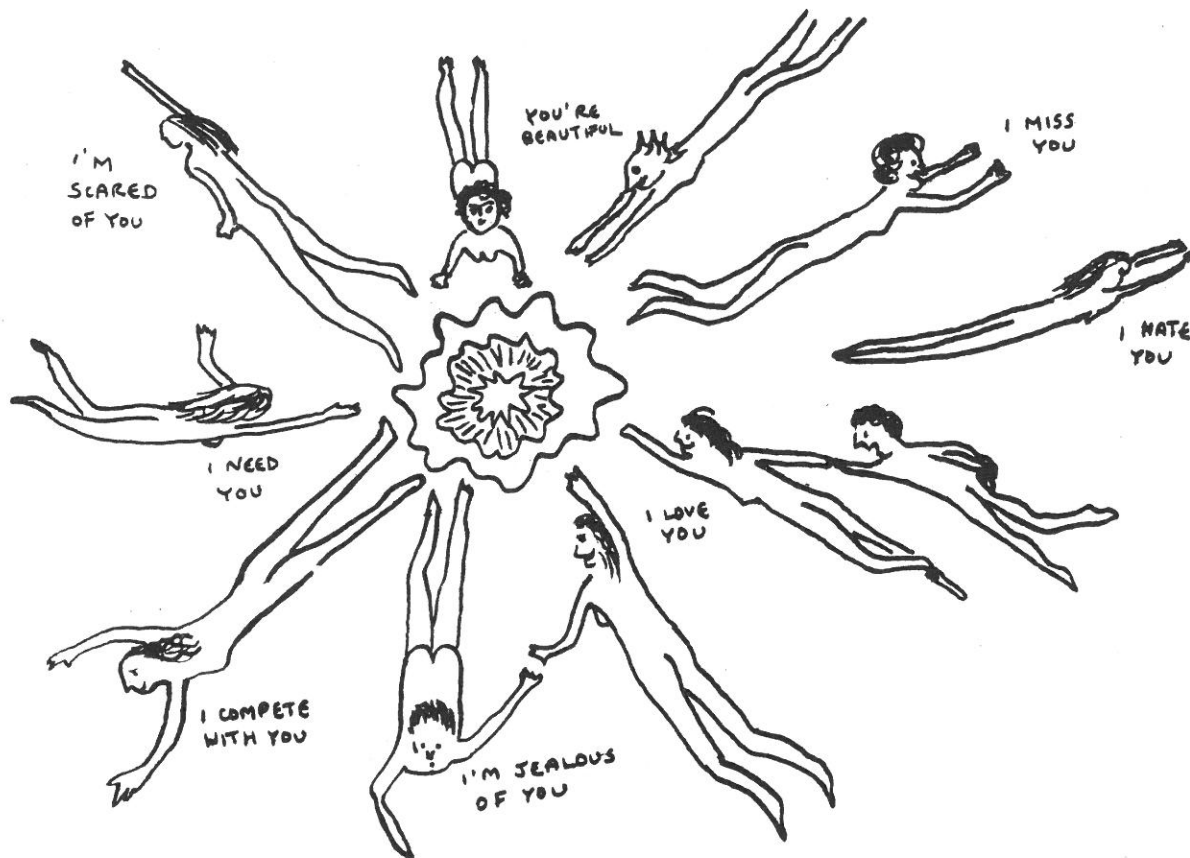
"I saw the group as an opportunity to explore all my feelings about women - love, anger, pity, competitiveness... When I first joined a women's group six years ago, there seemed to be an assumption that our relationships should be "supportive" and 'sisterly'; that it was easier to be with women than men. All the strong, complicated feelings of love and hatred were reserved for men. That's certainly never been true for me in reality I have strong negative feelings for women as well as positive ones, and I have to express them if my relationships with women are to grow. Even though my strongest sexual relationships have been with men, my feelings about my women friends still tear me apart." (Marie)

Being able to express conflicts with other women has been an important part of changing our relationships.

"I find it hard to get into my anger at other women in the group. We tend to maintain a united front when the men are there - maybe we need one another's support as women so much in the mixed group we don't want to stir shit between ourselves. So when Chrystal and I were really angry with each other we had it out in the women's group." (Susan)
(Crystal and Susan were involved with the same man.)

"We screamed and screamed at each other - and then changed roles and screamed more - and finally other women pointed out to us how similar our patterns were and that we were colluding together to maintain a set of multiple relationships which we claimed were making us really unhappy.

Afterwards, I had an amazing sense of relief that I had expressed my worst feelings towards another woman - all my competitiveness, hate, and anger and jealousy - and had felt the strength of Susan's negative feelings for me, and yet we were still accepted in the women's group - I think I had more of a real sense of 'sisterhood' from that than from many of my other experiences in the women's movement where negativity between women has been ignored or denied."



Strength and Weakness

The other thing that has been really important in the women's group has been acknowledging our dependency - our neediness -, at the same time as using the group to get in touch with our own power. Learning about our needs for other women was particularly important as most of us are predominantly heterosexual and used to expressing our basic emotional and physical neediness with men. Often the women's movement has helped us to recognise our strength but not our weakness.

"I'd been very together all week getting a job and looking for a place to live. I'd had a stiff neck for days and it took a few hours of being in the women's group to feel safe again; safe enough to feel sad to feel weak. Then the group held me and supported me while I allowed myself to give up - not to hold my head up - to let it rest on someone else's shoulder and to cry." (Linda)

S. has a small baby and lives in a house with men, two men. She began by talking about being lonely - about not seeing people any more. She said that living in a house with two men wasn't enough - she'd feel all right maybe for hours but then suddenly she'd feel very lonely - the feeling was overwhelming when she woke in the middle of the night to feed the baby. She lay down on the floor and felt her loneliness - named all the people she was missing and cried a lot, realising she

hadn't asked and people didn't know she needed them; and then she sat up and the group supported and held her while she held and fed the baby.

As well as relations between women in the group there have been particular aspects of ourselves that some of us have found better to work on in a women's group, at least at first. One of these is getting in touch with our own power - we were very aware of our tendency to blame ourselves rather than others when things go wrong.

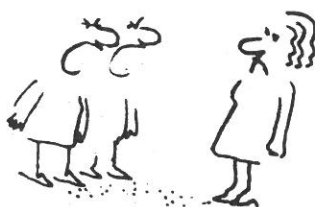
Anger

"Women particularly need therapy - we are conditioned to suppress aggression etc. and turn our feelings against ourselves, which leads to a high rate of depression and suicide among women - we need to find our feelings and needs so as to fight for what we want." (Susan).

"I'd like to emphasise how I think men and women do have different things they need to work on because of their difference in socialisation. For women anger is central. Also feeling strong, especially in your body. As women we are so conditioned to experiencing ourselves as weak - it's different for men." (Melanie).

The effects of this were often felt in women's work situations. After exploring the feelings evoked in her work situation Pat felt much more angry with her boss and was able to

"I used to feel quite split as a person - that I seemed nice but inside I was a nasty person - I think this was a lot to do with feeling that, as a woman, my anger and strong and violent feelings were not accepted, that when I showed them people treated me like a monster or a freak. In a therapy situation I have been able to show them, have found that people accepted them, and so I can accept them more in myself and let them come out more in my everyday life, instead of turning them against myself."



confront the people she worked for. Sue, who was the union rep at her school, found that her deputy head was using his sexuality as a kind of control, making her feel weak and ineffective. In the group she got angry with him for not treating her seriously. After that she found she could make demands like insisting on having supply teachers in rather than covering for absent teachers, and ignore the deputy head's put-downs. Maggie, another teacher, felt that she could relax her control a little - when one of the kids in her class told a dirty joke she felt she could be herself enough to laugh at it instead of feeling she had to "act teacher" and tell the kid off. Another time, she was working in the school hall and a dog wandered in causing havoc - she was able to enjoy the disruption with the kids and not feel threatened by the situation not being totally under her control.

Some women thought it was easier to explore sexuality in a women's group.

"I would feel too inhibited to share a lot of my feelings about sexual relationships in a mixed group. On the summer intensive we did an exercise about our sexuality. Each one of us had to tell the story of our cunt in the first person, e.g. 'I first came to life when Susan was thirteen. I was attracted to boys but she wouldn't let them touch me, she thought I was dirty, etc.'. I think if we had done that in the mixed group it would not have worked so well - we would have been more self-conscious and competitive." (Susan).

'When we did an exercise which involved talking about our sexual history it was a great relief to me to find out how much I had in common with other women. I'd been upset about a lot of things - I'd had a feeling of anger and dissatisfaction in my relationships with men. I hadn't ever joined a women's group before and the consciousness raising aspect of the group was very important to me, especially at the beginning'.

Emma, who had had a baby six weeks before, started by talking about how she felt about her body now - how she felt disgusted by her stretched and stitched vagina - and frightened of her bloke coming inside. Her fear became stronger and stronger and she began to talk about and re-experience the baby's birth. Her body was taking over - her legs were shaking uncontrollably and her breathing was becoming panicky. At the same time she was telling herself to be more controlled - that she mustn't scream and shout - all the things the midwives had been saying to her - that whatever she was feeling in the hospital she must be controlled - "after all the ways we've learned to express our feelings they were there telling us not to - they thought we were crazy. I was screaming and Roger was lying over me crying". We all shared her panic and fear, and afterwards we held her and tried to affirm her feelings and it being all right to express them. It seemed important that we

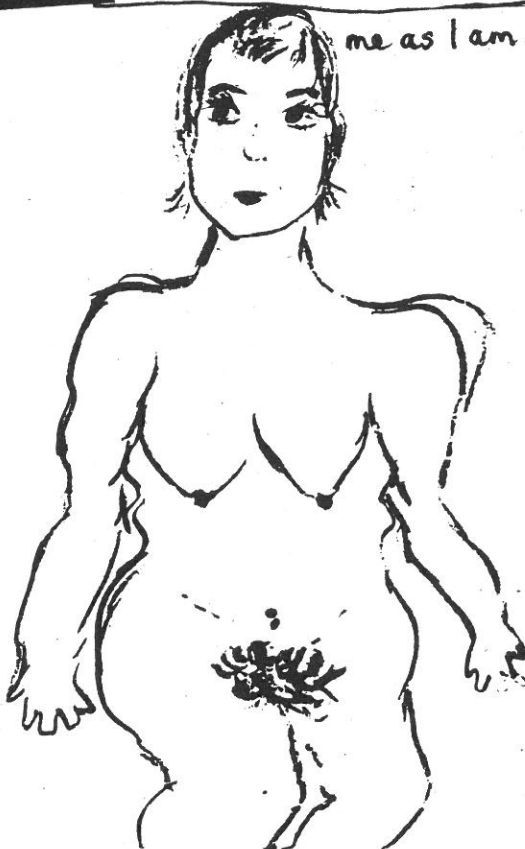
were all women who had either had those experiences ourselves or might do so in the future.

We did an exercise in the group once: drawing a picture of ourselves as we really are and our fantasy of how we'd like to be. Then we talked about our bodies as we had pictured them - the colours we had used, how the bits were related, what was missing....

me as I'd like to be



me as I am.



Mixed Groups?

The women's therapy group is changing, and the relationship between the men and the women in Red Therapy is changing. The women's group continues to meet regularly - but at the same time we join with men on intensives and, in the long term, we don't see ourselves always working exclusively with women.

"I've found that I actually need to be in the situation of feeling sexually insecure, ugly, competitive etc to bring those feelings out - and to explore the ways in which I do/don't project myself sexually"- Crystal.

Some women have always questioned the use of the women's group as a safe place to work on feelings about men.

"Obviously we are going to work on male/female relationships but I don't want the women's group used as a refuge, where we express the feelings we have about men, but don't want to say directly to them in the mixed group. This would also imply that our relationships with women in the group are not really important, and that the group is just a servicing area, a 'safer' version of the mixed group"- Marie.

Gradually a mixed group is becoming a safer place for men and women as if a period of separatism is making us more able to work together.

"I feel more able, after one and a half years of the women's group and the rest of my life, to work in mixed groups. It's also that I'm more aware of my need to work things out directly with men - partly because of the difficulties that have come up in relationships, maybe because I'm nearer facing my fears of sexual rejection by men and feeling safer with the men in Red Therapy".-Jo.

"I seem to have a clearer sense of the women's group as an ongoing supportive group for me to work in - a bit like a group version of having an individual therapist - at the same time as it feels less like a defensive grouping".

Us and the ♀ movement

Over the last year the relationship of our group to the women's movement has changed a lot. Our sisters in the movement used to think us peculiar or "diversionary" to be doing therapy, and the therapy group was a kind of sideline separate from the mainstream of our activities in the movement. There has always been an awareness in the movement that "mental illness" suffered by women is linked with other forms of women's oppression but only recently has the movement realized that it is also an important area of our struggle to reclaim control of our bodies and our health. Many of us have been through periods of crisis and

depression and have increasingly felt a need to reach a feminist understanding of these

**I WORKED HARD AT SCHOOL
HEAD PREFECT
HOCKEY CAPTAIN
SCHOLARSHIP**

**BUT THEY CALLED
ME AN EGGHEAD.**

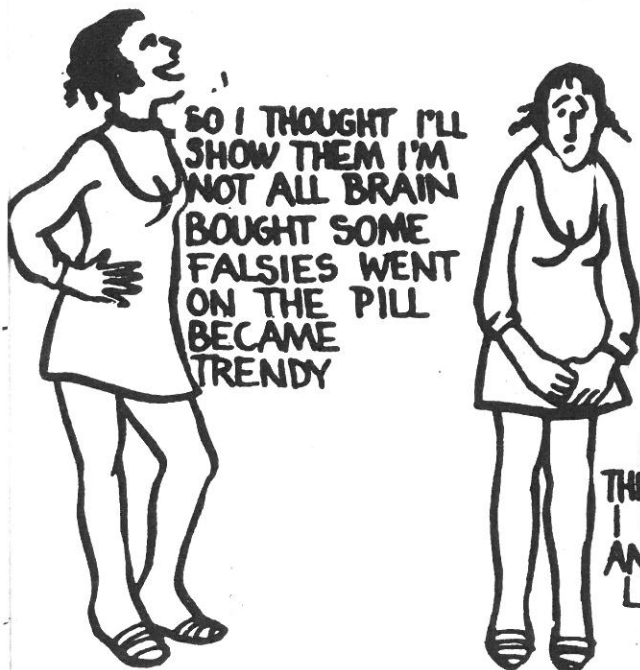


experiences, and to provide within the movement some sort of support system or self-help alternative to the NHS and tranquillisers. At the Women's Health Conference in the autumn of '76 people began to show some interest in our group and at about the same time the "Women's Therapy Centre" started in London, raising similar issues from a different angle. We held two open discussion meetings at the Women's Liberation Workshop and over the following months were involved in helping several other self-help women's therapy groups to get started.

Helping these new self-help groups has been hard work - involving travelling in the evenings to cold rooms with groups of women we did not know - some of us felt nervous, and some found it very tiring on top of full-time jobs. We also realised that it is really hard to start a self-help therapy group, especially

**SO I THOUGHT I'LL
SHOW THEM I'M
NOT ALL BRAIN
BOUGHT SOME
FALSIES WENT
ON THE PILL
BECAME
TRENDY**

**BUT
THEY SAID
I WAS
AN EASY
LAY.**



when the women in the group do not know one another at first and do not have much confidence or therapy experience. It takes a long time to build up enough trust to work as a therapy group. Several groups died. Long-established and cohesive C.R. groups which started move into doing therapy together seem to have fared better. We are trying to find new ways of helping new groups to start - possibly through more intensive day-workshops or through consistent contact over a series of workshops.

Over this time several of us got more and more interested in therapy and felt that we wanted to give up jobs we were doing to work more in this field. Organisations with money were into paying us to do this work, and several of us started to do counselling jobs at women's aid or community centres, or running groups at the Women's Therapy Centre. Several of us have been doing individual therapy; some are doing counselling or psychodrama courses to get some kind of formal qualification and to broaden our experience. Two of us are writing a book about self-help therapy for women. All this has brought up some tensions in the group (were some of us 'professionalising out' of the group? What about our commitment to free, non-professional, expertless therapy?)

**SO I THOUGHT
IT ALL THROUGH
AND DECIDED
MY TROUBLE
WAS THAT I
WASNT
COMMITTED
SO I JOINED
THE LEFT
AND SAT IN.**

**AND
THEY
SAID
I LOOKED
BEAUTIFUL
WHEN
I WAS
ANGRY.**



but partly we have come more to realise that you actually can't do therapy without any kind of teaching or knowledge - we learnt a lot from going to occasional led groups at the beginning; now we are continuing to learn from widening sources (individual therapy, courses) and are exploring new ways of sharing our own experiences and knowledge with more women.

We continue to be involved as a group in helping new feminist groups start informally as before. At one time it looked as if we were losing our therapy group for ourselves, and becoming a "therapy action group" - discussing conferences, papers, this pamphlet,

how to give workshops, help new groups start... But we have managed to continue to do therapy together...and our regular fortnightly self-help group is thriving in its fourth year and is an important and valuable part of our lives. For many of us it is our main frame of reference both as a women's group and as a therapy group.

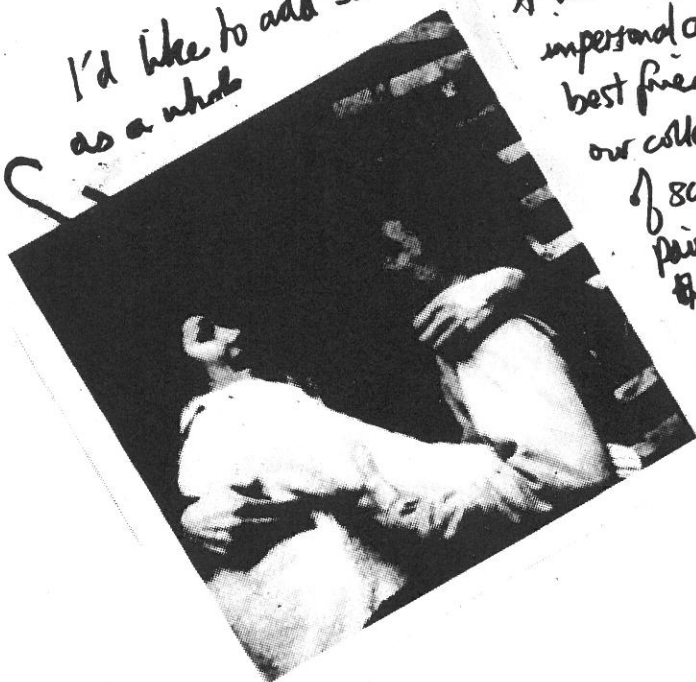
It has been very good to feel that this group is now an accepted part of the women's movement alongside our other activities in health groups, socialist-feminist groups, community politics, etc. At the April 1977 women's conference 200 women turned up to a workshop on therapy, and in the autumn of '77 a special conference on "Women and Mental Health" happened in London, where only a few women were still arguing that all therapy is necessarily male-dominated, reformist, individualist, and anti-feminist. It was encouraging to find that the majority of women were recognising that there can be forms of therapy which are liberating, validating and increase our revolutionary power.



P.S.

I'd like to add something which I feel is missing - a sense of the women's group as a whole

A bunch of women meeting together in each other's rooms, or in impersonal centres. Exposing our worst fears, hating our best friends; self denial, self-damnation. Discovering our collective & individual power & strengths. Hours of screaming, crying, talking, laughing - anger, pain, jealousy, love, hate, joy, fear. Understanding the political context of our personal experiences. Hierarchies breaking down. Trust building up. Sharing skills. Unfeminist desires bottled with. Feminist support inside & outside the group. A safe place. A scary place. A very important part of my life.



Why one woman found Red Therapy very difficult and why she is now doing individual therapy..

"Putting all your eggs in one cobweb"

Why I left Red Therapy

1. Living with X in a collective and all doing therapy together meant that if I let it all go and I wasn't "good enough" (which is a constant fear) then I would lose every thing - "all my eggs in one basket".

2. Afraid that if I let go, nobody in the group was "expert" enough to handle it.

You'll never get anything out of Red Therapy unless you trust us, are more open, take more risks.

3. Difficult in a group to both let out your feelings, respond, freak, get out of your head and take responsibility for group, initiate, suggest, understand and "be a leader".

4. Pulled between investigating trust and dependency with X and demands of Red Therapy anti-couple thing.

5. No consistency, no ongoing "analysis", no long-term patterns, no "development" except by me. Always down to me to know what's going on and what to do about it.

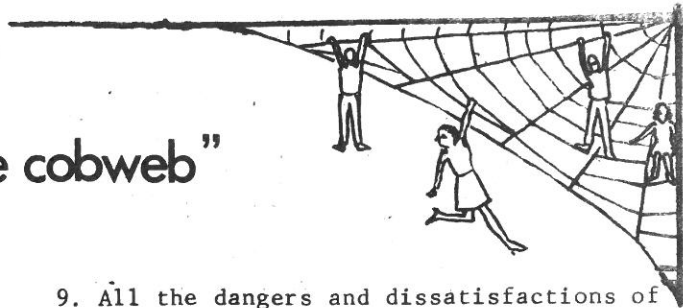
There's no room for neurotics in R.T.- you've got to be really strong to stand it!

6. Group gives high marks for performance, regression, noise, anger and tears, freaking out. So, in the competition for time and attention, tendency for everyone about everything all the time to do just those things - otherwise you "weren't really getting into your feelings."

You're never going to be in the hierarchy of this group unless you freak out more than that.

7. Difficult to challenge group ideology in thought, deed or understanding. Always too much to lose.

8. Support/acceptance/validation/attention for "freaking out" and not for moving on, changes that challenge group, forgetting about it. Different needs of different people at different times are hard to accept and satisfy if so much is invested in one particular pattern. Safer and easier to stay stuck, hanging on and freaked, than "leave"



9. All the dangers and dissatisfactions of once-off evenings and all the risks and complications of ongoing intensive therapy commune.

You're not good enough for this important political experiment. You keep having the wrong feelings.

But:-

1. I find groups of people particularly difficult. I always feel groups are because there isn't one person for me, and they are an inadequate substitute for individual love and attention.

2. I am "never good enough" in groups whereas if only I had an individual relationship I'd be good enough (?)

3. I was too scared to go to any of the intensives.

4. I did very little 'work' in Red Therapy.

5. I find it extremely difficult to trust anybody not to reject me.

Positives about individual therapy

1. Can hand over responsibility for myself to someone else.

2. There is a specific time and place for freaking out, and the rest of the time I can get on with the rest of my life. (I had just started a very difficult job).

3. Consistency, analysis, the process, the going somewhere.

4. Acceptance that for the moment, for a particular finite period of time, things are so bad that you need a therapist, an expert. Whereas therapy-is-life idea can make freak-outs feel never-ending and never changing.

5. Total separation of therapist from life, friends, work. Safe to say whatever you like.

6. I get a lot of positive acceptance, affection, pleasure, energy and love from my therapist. She is a consistent, reliable "Mummy". She also lets me see what's happening for her, so she is also real.

7. I don't have to perform, be good enough, be grateful, earn the attention.

I also want to say that I really value the experience of being in Red Therapy for two years, wouldn't have done without it for anything, I learnt a lot. And I would never have got what I needed from individual therapy if I had not been in Red Therapy.

THE MEN'S THERAPY GROUP

The men's therapy group started in the summer of 1975. It grew out of a number of different needs.

One need was for a safer place to work on our sexism. We had found that this was a very heavy issue to work on in the mixed group; on one occasion a man saying that he did not fancy one of the women in the group (on an occasion when there were five men and only two women in the group) had meant that the women had lost trust in the group as a place where she could be open; on another occasion a man had felt so judged by the women in the group that he had lost trust in the group as a place where he could be open. Maybe these things shouldn't have happened in an ideal group, but we had become aware that in this society the pressures are such as to make in ideal group impossible.

"I became more aware that in some way I was missing something - that I had lost something. Something emotional. A woman I really depended on left me - saying at one point that she felt that 'there was nothing there'. So I was made painfully aware of my unresponsiveness to her. Came my first introduction to therapy, where I suddenly discovered the extent to which I had frozen up - the extent to which I was afraid to feel. Pain, grief, joy, anger - I experienced these feelings more intensely than at any time since I was very young. She had been right and wrong at the same time."

"While I was always trying to prove myself to be strong, independent and successful in the outside world of men, it was impossible for me to see my relationships with women as anything other than a separate private world of emotion and love. I desperately needed Meg to be around to talk to, touch, fuck with, just

be with - a person I could be myself with, whatever that was at any moment. With men I was on show, almost performing, watching and being watched; scared to admit I didn't understand, scared to follow what I felt about people and situations. And yet that was the world that mattered most, the only world I could prove myself to be a proper person in. So I tended to take things with Meg totally for granted. I needed her badly, but as long as things were O.K. our relationship was secondary, hidden, unmentioned. Caring for men has allowed me to care more for women."



Another important area involved those of us who felt inadequate as men. Some of us needed to work on how we hadn't made it as men in the roles laid down for us - that is, cool, capable, responsible, powerful, aggressive, competitive, etc; on how we couldn't get relationships together easily; on sexual difficulties; on how we felt powerless, tended to court, expect and accept failure at whatever we tried (if we got as far as trying); on how we assiduously avoided commitments and responsibility - both for ourselves and others.

"Initially I think an element of my interest in therapy was based on a desire to be successful in the externally defined role of



'man'. I've learnt that that is a possibility for me now. But more importantly I've discovered some of the wider, freer possibilities in being a man.

I've moved from a position of almost total invalidation to a space where I'm beginning to own myself. All the little bits of me that I'd somehow excluded are now allowed a bit of space and I'm discovering that, contrary to my expectations, it feels O.K. and is O.K.

One of those bits is feeling anger. I've been an incredibly 'nice guy' for a long time - completely unable to allow myself to feel anger, let alone express it. This often takes the form of not hearing, or not seeing that which might make me angry. Feeling and expressing anger - at being put down, being pushed around at work, at the people I live with and love - gives me energy I didn't have before. I feel more alive and paradoxically maybe, more loving. I have had the greatest difficulty getting angry with women that I have relationships with. I found it terrifying. Now it is still scary but I know how important it is for me not to bury it. I seem to be getting a bit of my power back in this sense.

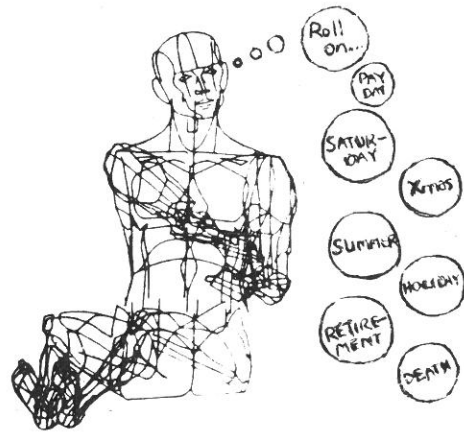
Another need was to work on our relationships as men. We found quite strong feelings for each other appearing once we allowed ourselves to look at them.

"I've always pretended that I wasn't sexually competitive; made out that I was above it all. Then one day in the men's therapy group I exploded into my contempt for another, older man there. It was incredibly scary. I told him he was old, past it, unattractive, that he couldn't get any women any more. I was arrogant, vitriolic, spiteful - John was sad and hurt. I got more and more bullying, more and more invulnerable, cockier and cockier. Then John asked for help. Two of the other men came to his aid, incredibly angry at me. I felt isolated, but I didn't want to give in. I kept my head up. Then I realised that the insults I was flinging at John all reflected how I felt in relation to another bloke that the women I was sleeping with also slept with. In that situation it was me who felt older, unattractive, unlovely, unwanted. As I realised this, my feelings changed. I felt deeply humiliated, then deeply hurt, and

I cried long tears at the way her energy had left me for him. It was all a weird powerful experience, but after it the group seemed much closer, as if we had all been through a trial together."

"During this period my relationship with Susan began to change. We had been expressing a lot of anger in our relationship. At first this had meant a lot to me - to learn to express real anger instead of being 'nicey-nicey' all the time. Then this anger stopped being releasing and somehow became stultifying. We spent hours, nights and days in angry exchanges and shouting matches. But somehow very little seemed to change through it.

Discovering my hurt and sadness at her relationship with someone else did become a real breakthrough. When I could show my hurt I could be seen as a much softer, gentler, loving, vulnerable person. I was more open to her, and she had more - was prepared to give more - to me."



Another need was to work on our work situations. This was something which seemed to come up much less in the mixed group. On one occasion when someone was complaining about all the different activities he had to keep going at the same time, we used books, shoes, scarves, socks, coats, cigarette packers and anything else that was available to represent all the different interests in his life, and spread them all over the floor. He could then get into his feelings about each one, and end up in a clearer space.



"I think it's true that behind our assertiveness and appearance of 'knowing what we want' there are incredible levels of passivity and confusion about our real needs. In our relationships we can be controlling and confident - 'I have to do this important work'; we need to live there'; 'these are the "right" friends; 'you should do this'; etc., etc. Then as soon as the other person finds their own anger at being controlled in this way, our cover is blown, we are revealed as weak and dependent, with little sense of self - 'I don't know why the fuck I'm doing this, what am I getting out of it?'; 'I'm useless'; 'I don't know where I belong'; 'I don't think I'm capable of loving anybody'. We retreat into hard work. We suddenly discover that we have become completely incapable of looking after ourselves, making our own space, making our own home."

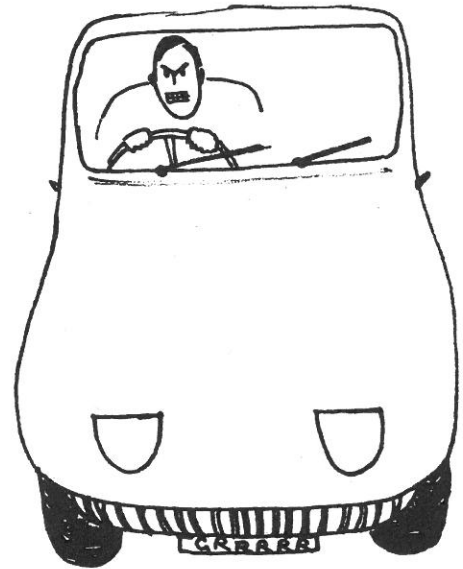
Another area was the general question of masculinity, not just in our relationships with women, but more generally. And some big connections emerged between masculinity as an ideal and capitalism as a system.

"In one group I got into a big thing about being aggressive as a motorist. I really went all the way with it, and got into driving "my enormous powerful red sports car" - found I had in myself a whole mental picture of a jet-set *dolce vita* life centred around swimming-pools and gorgeous blondes. My revolutionary aspirations seemed very dim and flat by comparison. I was a real winner, one of the class of real winners who had always had the real power and always would have the real power! As I went on, I became so obnoxious that the entire group set on me and crushed me to the ground, until I gave in. It was useful, because it made me realise all the bullshit that lies behind my momentary irritation at the slow car in front of me on the road."

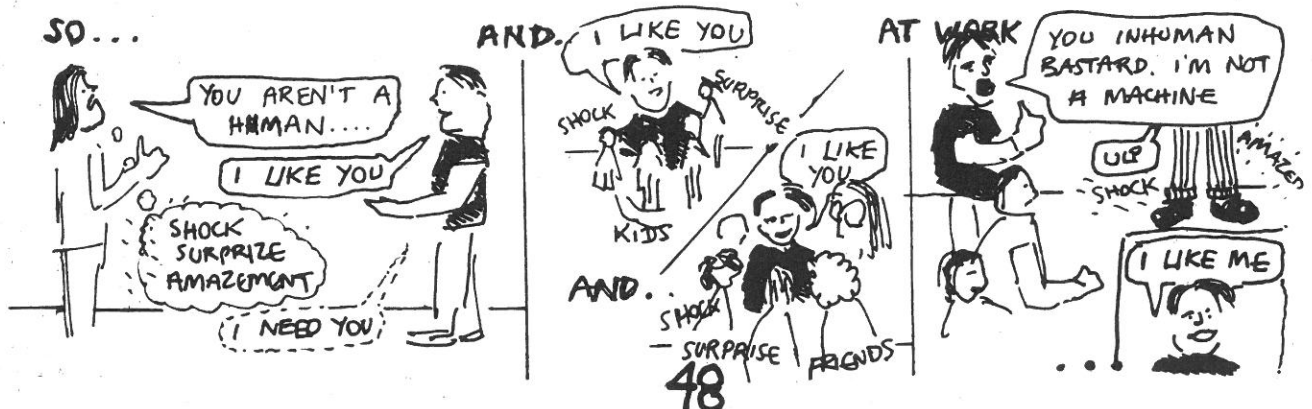
And another thing which came up was relationships to children, including questions about being in a couple where the woman was going to have a baby, or not going to have a baby.

"A part of me dreaded the arrival of my baby - I was an eight-month pregnant father. I co-counselled with another man to see if I could get into some of my feelings about it. It

brought a whole load of different feelings up relating to how we are brought up as a man in capitalism - fear that the baby would take me away from 'my work', which as a man, I was brought up to value above all else; fear of the 'responsibility' - I would never think of, say, dressing a baby as a pleasure - only a responsibility; fear of being no good at it; fear of being left out by Susan and the baby; fear of being tied to my relationship with her for the good of the baby. I got into a lot of my hate for the baby."



One other hangup was the one about responsibility, which is very wide and deep for some of us. We are supposed to be strong and supportive; feel that we owe it to the women and other people we are close to to look after them and do things for them. But by controlling our feelings in this way we also control others. By continually acting strong and protective we deny women the chance to feel strong. And we deny ourselves the chance to be weak and be cared for (except of course when we are 'genuinely sick', when we tend to go overboard the other way. An example of this was when Thomas came to the group one day





feeling very uptight. He had been feeling under great pressure at work - he was in the early weeks of his placement in teacher training. He had also been doing a lot of child care. He said he felt very tense. He was aware that Linden put the demand on him always to be there for her and Bridget. But he felt that he had reached the end of his tether. He had been speeding around, smoking a lot of dope so he wouldn't have to feel too much - just for survival. This was his first chance to let go. Someone suggested he put his "responsible self" on the cushion, and he talked to it.

"You've got to give me a break. You're crushing me. You've been rushing round all week. You've got to stop now." Someone suggested Tom change places and talk as his responsible self. After a while he started angrily.

"I've got to hold it together. Everybody needs me to keep it together. School, everybody. But I can't handle it any more. I've got to let go." Thomas changes places again. He begins to scratch his eye with his finger. John asks him what he is doing.

"Trying to stop myself crying, I suppose." Thomas' face cracks up. Tears start running down his face. He just cries. The crying steadily gets stronger. After a while someone asks him what he is crying about.

"My mother. You stupid fucking bitch. Why wouldn't you let me cry?" Thomas continues to talk to his mother, alternating anger at his mother and grief at the loss of his father.

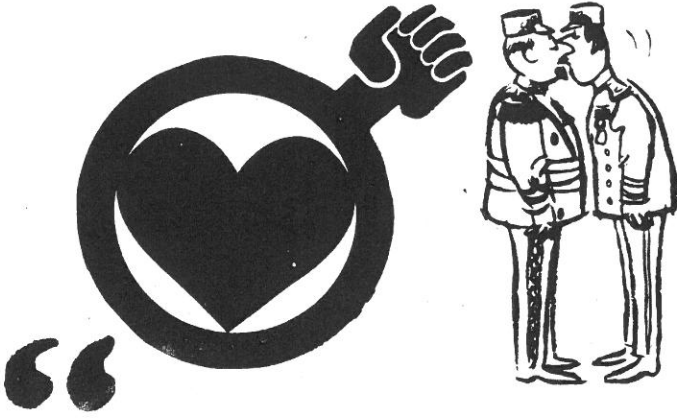
"I wasn't even supposed to cry at the funeral. I was the one who had to be strong and look after you and Jack. Oh! God!" After a while Thomas seems to have cried himself out. He begins to look around and holds hands with someone in the group. He talks a bit about what he went through, and other people add their comments. His feelings about the loss of his father bring up a lot of feelings for someone else in the group, who starts to work on them.

When we started in men's therapy, some of us already had some experience of men's consciousness-raising groups. Doing the therapy was a logical step on. For others it was the first time being in a group of men, and realising all sorts of things about competitiveness, power-grabbing, coolness and not showing feelings, and all other features of the "healthy male ego". But it was not just a matter of learning bad things about ourselves - most of us had plenty of that in our relationships with women in the women's movement - but also of learning that it could be O.K. to be a man. Being strong inside didn't have to mean being tough and cold and hard on the outside, or manipulative and clever either. We began to accept ourselves and one another better as men, men who could be warm and loving and vulnerable without feeling that meant being weak.

"I became aware how I kept my friends at some kind of distance from me. I shared little of myself with them. They had no clear, sharp experience of me - I was always a little out of focus. I became aware that my eyes would often slide away from theirs. What was I afraid of? I slowly became aware that I had needs in relation to them that didn't fit the role - emotional needs for men that felt really scary to begin with.

"I'm beginning to understand that maybe it's O.K. to love a man, that a relationship with a man can be equally rich and rewarding as that with a woman. I'm committed to exploring my gayness, although I feel very scared of where that might take me."

This last statement probably holds true for nearly all of us in the group. None of us are gay, but all of us have become committed to owning the importance of our relationships with other men. Learning to feel, touch, hug, and admit that we care about one another.



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My own experience of the men's group has mainly been of a sense of what it should be like, of what we should be doing. There has been very little of it that has been pleasurable or spontaneous.

The most pleasurable times for me have been the times when it was most disconcerting. The time when Larry attacked me personally and hurtfully; the time when I got into my phoniest patriarchal ego and found I loved it; the time when we were asked to say how we felt about each other, and I blushed when I came to Brian because I fancied him so much.

In the end my clearest sense of what the men's group could be all about came when I was not in the group at all, and hadn't been for a while. I felt as if I had found my rev-

olutionary centre, and it wasn't a question of living up to what the women were demanding.

All the time I'd been so conscious of how important it was to be pro-woman, and listen to what the radical feminists were saying, that I'd lost all sense of what I was about. Often I felt that there was no place for me (as a man) at all in that scheme of things. Or if there was, I couldn't imagine what it could be.

But now I feel as if I've let go of the idea that someone else's truth can be taken over and just adopted by me. I've got my own truth. Or at least, I've got a feeling for how to get it, or build it, or give it birth. I've got my own centre, and I can use that to check things out.

And that means I can learn a lot faster, and change a lot. Faster, because I've got my own flow to follow, instead of trying to adopt someone else's. I can change my behaviour more easily, because I haven't got the same resistance any more - the resistance which can come from feeling 'got at'. These are now changes which I want to carry through because they come from my own flow as a revolutionary.

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It's hard to separate my experience of the red therapy men's group from that of my men's consciousness-raising group which carried on in parallel. Both groups have been about changing and beginning to learn about who I was and who I could be, about re-appropriating my history, about discovering I could make emotional demands on other men, about learning to like myself more, and so to have more to give to others.

Some of us being into therapy made a big difference to the consciousness-raising group, although we have never done therapy as such in the group. It gave us a way of talking directly to one another without intellectualising; and of recognising the feelings behind the conflicts we were trying to express. The two groups were a good balance, I think, and although it has had its crises, the men's group has kept going, and our relationships deepened, for over four years - through some point where a lot of men's groups seem often to get stuck.

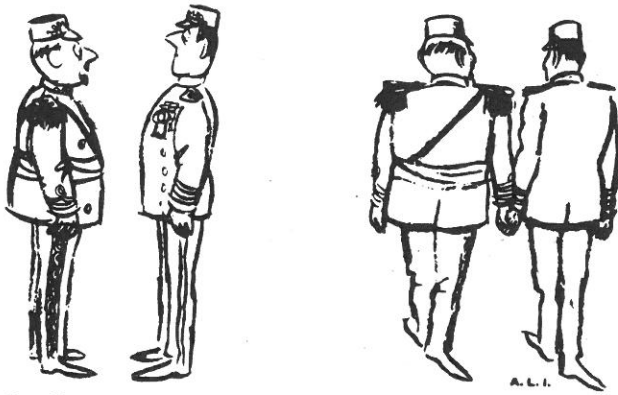
For me it was a struggle to learn to talk about my feelings quite simply without freaking out in a very total way; I think it's a problem for a lot of men coming from therapy towards men's politics. From being quite private about our feelings we become so total and explosive about how we express them that it ceases to be a communication - it's still to ourselves somehow. There was a period I needed to do this - then I wanted to share more, and the consciousness-raising

group - in which we mostly talked - helped me to strike this balance.

It usually takes a while for the men's therapy group to feel safe enough to let out feelings with one another. Sometimes there is up to an hour of tense talking before we start letting go. But once things start moving the group can generate an amazing sense of closeness and solidarity. The competitive barriers melt away surprisingly quickly



once we experience at a deep level the sources of another man's pain or grief or joy. The sense of recognition is incredibly rewarding - even if you are not 'working' in the group yourself.



It sounded great but would I fit in? I imagined myself in a room of 'blokes' who seem to communicate silently "with inaudible squeaks".

When I finally worked in a session and listened to other people work my fears of being so different vanished. That these 'blokes' are going through much the same shit as I, that their feelings towards women, their jobs, families etc. aren't that different - it was only then that I understood in my gut, that I felt the potential of a men's therapy group. I discovered that what I thought to be my own personal problems and experience were in fact the very fibre of capitalism, and that revolutionary politics has as much to do with relations between myself and my parents as my relationships with bosses. Every time I work on a so-called 'personal' problem I feel closer to those around me and feel the Marxism that before I just understood.

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When I arrived in London from America I felt isolated and dependent on the one woman I knew here. I thought no-one would like me, I'd be out of sync with everyone else. I had done some therapy in the past and was in a men's group about four years earlier. When I was asked to join Red Therapy I was confused.

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I used to feel that if anyone was different from me - did different things, found other things interesting or important - I had to feel better or worse about the things they did. I had to compare, make a judgement. It made it hard to enjoy what I was doing myself, or to learn anything from what they were doing. Especially if someone was close to me, I found it incredibly threatening if they changed, and moved away into doing something else that I didn't know about. Now through therapy and the men's group I feel a much stronger sense of myself and my own changes; my own process. And this means I can be more accepting of the changes that other people are going through; more accepting of the differences between us, particularly men. It has been incredibly important to understand the commonness between us - the common struggles; the common oppressions; the nature of school, work, our upbringings. And it has been equally important to begin to appreciate our uniqueness; our individuality; our specialness; and to love and encourage that specialness in one another.

It relates to an idea of what socialism is for me - for all of us: not about 'reducing us' to some common denominator, as the bourgeois press would have us think, but fighting off the things that reduce us now, so that we can all live to our potentials. Red therapy has deeply strengthened that sense in me.

Some of us in the men's group began to feel a need to 'go public' about a year ago, to begin to take what we had learned out of the group. A couple of us started writing, others got involved in starting up the East London Men's Centre; and some of us started doing groups with and for other men. Some of these groups were done with the women in mixed situations, like Laurieston, where we also

encouraged the men to meet separately. Some have been at the men's centre, where we ran a number of exciting introductory one-day groups, and discovered the difficulty of getting other ongoing self-help therapy groups off the ground if we didn't want to be in them in an ongoing way ourselves. Now a completely new self-help men's therapy group has started through the centre, in which a number of people have some previous experience of therapy or co-counselling.

It's hard for us as men to learn to take leadership roles without being oppressive, to share our experience in a way that helps other men without putting them down. But it's very exciting now to be beginning to move outwards. For me somewhere the split between therapy and politics begins to find its resolution through the men's movement, and the connections it makes to socialism. I feel very happy and enthusiastic about where this is leading us.



LEAPING INTO THE ABYSS

ONE MAN'S ENTRY INTO THERAPY



The first time I 'did' anything in Red Therapy was perhaps four or five months after the first meeting in Mile End. It was terrifying. I'd heard people in the group use the word 'working' to describe the activity of making yourself the centre of the group's attention for a definite period, taking the hot-seat and with the group's help actually trying to feel your way through some present or past experience, to express emotion as directly as possible here and now in the group. The idea of working terrified me. The thought of saying to ten or so people, "I want you all to give me your attention. Give me your help to try and sort out something that I can't handle on my own" - that was frightening. Just opening my mouth to speak in a group of people I didn't know hardly was frightening enough, but that wasn't new in itself.

I'd moved from West London to Brixton the year before, determined to become a political-ly active person and to find some way of involving myself in working-class community politics. And politics meant meetings, meetings with people I didn't know and with whom I shared very little immediate experience. That was the spring of 1973. Squatting meetings, claimants meetings, visiting the meetings of the libertarian and marxist Left, our own loose political group in Brixton, Chile Solidarity, Lambeth council meetings. Before Brixton too I'd started working for the W.E.A. which meant at the beginning of the first term walking into a strange room full of strange adults in the wilds of Surbiton or Wanstead. So meetings scared me but they weren't new in themselves.

Partly what was unfamiliar was being expected to talk personally in a meeting, to talk about myself and my life in terms of feelings and relationships rather than talk about something outside me - the working-class, the housing situation in Lambeth, or theories of revolutionary organisation. But again that wasn't totally new. Apart from one-to-one relationships with different people, we'd been having housemeetings since 1972 in which people had begun to talk to each other quite personally in a group. And then there was the Men's Group. Since the end

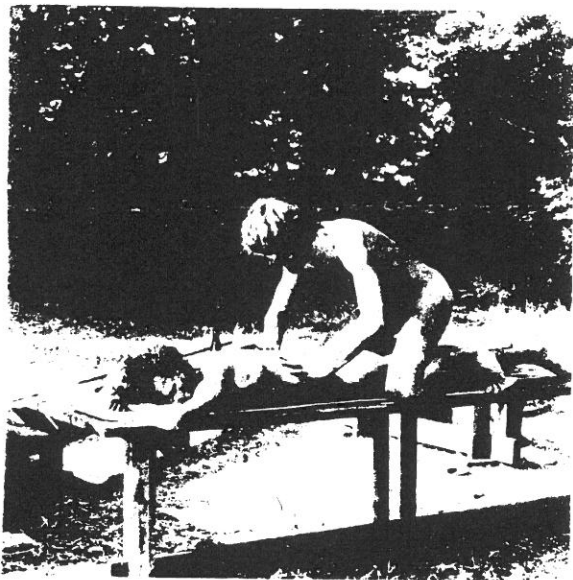
of 1973 four of us had been meeting specifically to talk about ourselves openly and personally and explore our feelings about our past histories, our relationships with women and with other men, and our feelings for each other. The last was hardest and pointed me towards therapy. Paul and Vic, two men in the group, were already doing therapy. The Men's Group was the most immediate stepping stone to therapy for me, but the gap between that and actually 'working' in the therapy group still was awesome. It was a gap between talking about feelings and actually having them there and then in a group - in public. It was the gap between talking about your soul and actually revealing it.



The first thing I did was tiny in itself. I told John R. that I was scared of him, that though he hadn't said anything I thought he was aware of me "holding in my feelings" and was inwardly criticising me for it. No more. Susan suggested I might be feeling competitive; I said I thought it wasn't that. John said he didn't feel critical; on the contrary he was supportive and kind to me. He thought if I had things I wanted to let out they'd come in good time.

A couple of weeks later sitting in a different room with a slightly different group of people I felt sad and began to cry. I cried easily and steadily with a growing sense of release. Thoughts of my mam came with the tears, thoughts of battling through my early life with her without ever having shown her much but cool resentment. I felt that I'd held myself together for years upon years, held myself stiff and structured against the world. The relief of being a small vulnerable boy with no-one around to say I had to be anything different was overwhelming.

A few weeks after that I had a direct conflict with Ellen who I'd lived with for three and a half years and was one of the people in the new household in Brixton. She had joined Red Therapy too. We'd been getting on badly to say the least. We seemed at the time to be locked in a subtle power struggle in the house - both of us were strong-willed individuals. We clashed over how the house should be run, how to organise the finances, how many and what kind of housemeetings to have. The house tended to divide into two camps around us. For me somewhere at the bottom of things living with Ellen brought up a lot of childhood feelings about my mother. They had a similar atmosphere for me, an atmosphere of penetration and control over domestic life. Ellen's being invaded and surrounded me. She seemed to have a similar relationship with her body - her periods, shitting and illness. The same disgust that I'd somehow acquired for my mother's physical presence came up with Ellen.



Living in the middle of it I had very little understanding of what was going on between me and Ellen. Like most men the sense of myself that I'd built up by the age of 21 or so was based mainly on external measures of life. For me that was research in history, intellectual activity and theory in general, politics as an external activity and being working-class as an external label. I had an inner life that I felt deeply to be important but it was fragile, too delicate to air around the place. I kept it closely within my closest sexual relationships. Again like most blokes I felt separate and cut off from other people,

especially from other men. I had little open strength to go out openly to people. I had to have an external identity to protect me. Insecure inside, other people were threats and had to be kept off or competed with. Ideas were my main source of comfort and identity. I controlled through understanding. If I didn't understand something I found it hard to get up and learn. I tended rather to close up in paranoia. In fact at times my ideas almost controlled me rather than the other way round. I never quite let go, never allowed myself to just be - angry, sad, happy, in love, whatever.



That evening sitting in front of Ellen something gave way. I resented her for what she'd done to me over the years. I resented my mother through her, and I resented women for being people I couldn't understand. I began to shout and scream into Ellen's face, "Fuck off. Get off me. Fuck off". She shouted back. Suddenly she was no longer there. All that was there was me. I was angry - furious, and getting angrier. The other people in the room didn't exist either. I was bashing the mattress with my fists. Strange overwhelming waves of energy took over my body completely. My whole body began to contract and relax in waves. I began to tingle all over. Creatures ran up and down my spine. Something seemed to have broken or opened inside me. My body felt alive in a way it had never done before. I lay on my back without thoughts - just sensations undulating up and down my body. The whole world was inside me. For the first time in ages I felt no pressure on me from the outside to be anything. I just was.



ADVICE

If you want to start a group, here is some advice for you. This includes practical details, the 'rules', and how to keep a group going once it's started. Our experience is that it is not easy getting a group going!

Practical details

You need to find a place where you feel comfortable and relaxed. If possible the room should be sound-proof. It needs at least to be somewhere where you can make as much noise as you need to without the neighbours complaining. Draw the curtains so that you are not overlooked either. Make sure you are not going to be interrupted. We have used a variety of places, ranging from a community centre to a council flat.

The room should be warm, and preferably fairly free of furniture - there should be enough room to sit comfortably on the floor. Take your shoes off and have lots of cushions around. Tissues or toilet tissue should be available.

It's important to get these details, and the time you're going to start, well worked out and agreed upon. Otherwise, any feelings of uncertainty people may have about the group may come out as turning up late, getting the day wrong etc., rather than getting expressed directly in the group.

Size of the group

Any number from two to ten seems to work. More than that gets difficult in terms of participation, giving full attention, and feeling safe. Six is a good number - large enough to share responsibility and be supportive, but not too large. People may find it easier, when starting a group for the first time, to do some exercises in two's (like co-counselling).

Rules.....

It's good to make the assumptions on which you base your therapy explicit from the beginning, so that you all start with an

equally clear understanding of what you are trying to do, and the best ways of doing it. In this section we have tried to be explicit about our own 'rules'.....

SITTING IN A CIRCLE

Sit in a circle on the floor, shoes off, facing each other, so that you can all see each other and take part equally. Try not to leave the room, particularly when someone is working.

It is a good idea for every person in the group to have some time, however short. For example, you can go round the group having everyone say how they are feeling at the beginning of the session, and maybe at the end too. This lets everyone feel more in touch with the others in the group and helps people to concentrate on the group.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In order that people may feel safe it needs to be understood that everything that happens in the group is confidential.

ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OURSELVES

Accepting responsibility for ourselves is difficult. The group's responsibility is to encourage a person to get into her/his feelings, and the individual must learn to own her/his feelings. A way of doing this is to say 'I', not 'one', so that instead of saying "One feels terrible in that situation" you say "I feel terrible". The group can remind people to do this.

Sometimes we speak as if we are passive receivers of feelings, saying things like "You make me feel depressed" or "He makes me feel sick". It may help us to own our feelings if we say instead, "I feel depressed" or "I feel sick". This may help also in learning to assert our own needs - and even in discovering what they are.



USING PEOPLE'S SKILLS

The group should decide whether they want to take it in turns to be 'leader' - this may mean one or two people taking responsibility for the group for a whole evening, or different people leading different exercises. If some people have more skills than others it is best to acknowledge the fact, and arrange a means of sharing them.

FOCUSSING ON ONE PERSON AT ONCE

It is important to concentrate on one person at a time in the group, giving free attention and not interrupting. This is important to bear in mind, especially when starting a group. Therapy is different from a discussion, in which everyone feels free to share their own experiences and opinions at any time. However, when someone has finished working some 'feedback', when you all share your feelings and thoughts about what has happened, is useful and validating.

At the start of a group there may be one or more people who are obviously upset or angry, or have something on their mind which they would like to deal with in the group. The group should decide collectively who works, when, and for how long.

DON'T TRY TO 'MAKE IT ALL BETTER'.

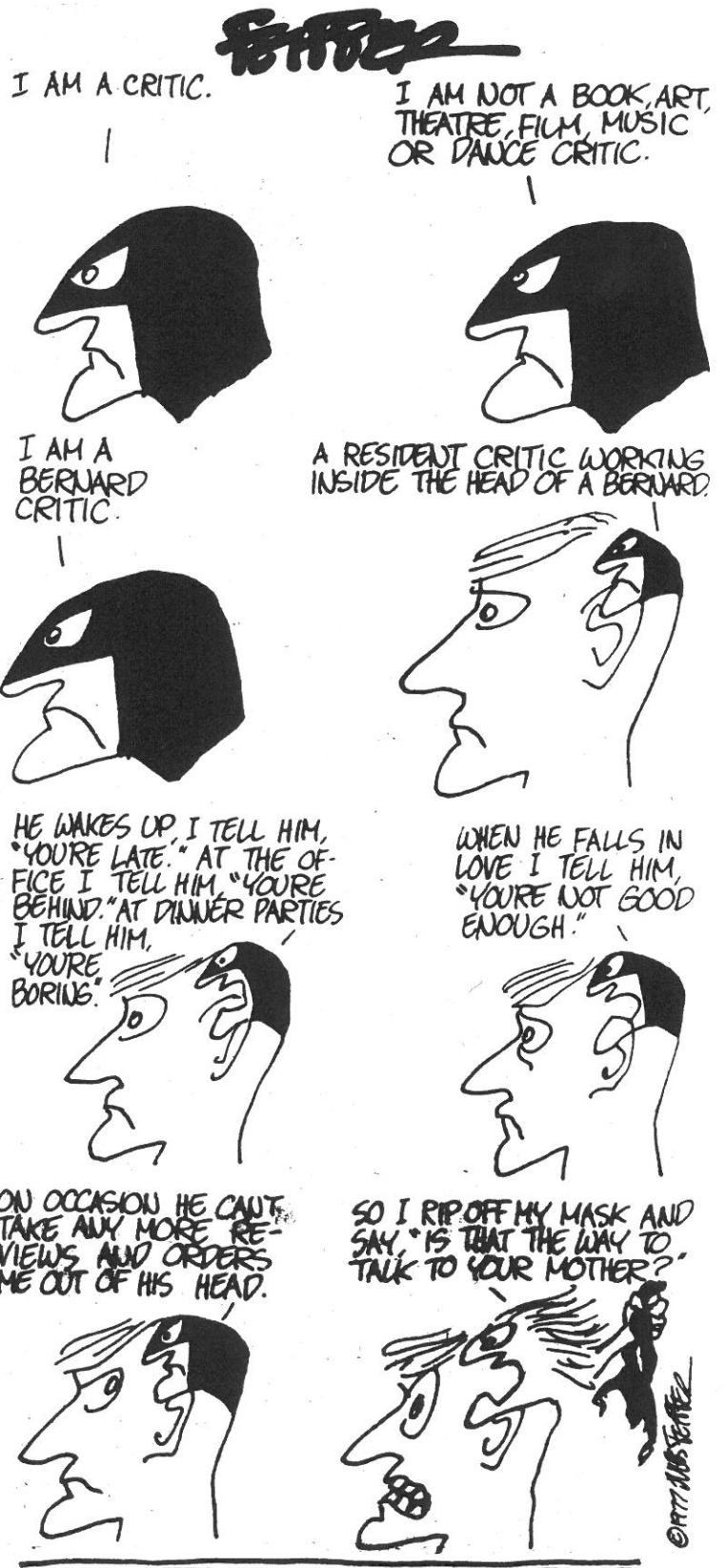
Therapy is upsetting, and it is tempting to try to 'comfort it all away', the way we have been socialised to do. The bad feeling doesn't go away with a bit of reassurance, however (though it might get cut off or recede), and the purpose of therapy is to be in a situation to explore and experience difficult feelings rather than bury them. If we can do this, we can learn where the feelings are coming from, and discover and come to trust our own inner resources for dealing with them. It takes a conscious effort to refrain from consoling people, at first.

NO JUDGING

You can't banish feelings by condemning them as nasty or incorrect. Bad or irrational feelings can't be got rid of by being denied or avoided, but only by being recognised and worked through. It can be a great relief to express all kinds of taboo feelings in therapy. This may be particularly true for political people, who may find it very difficult to admit to certain feelings which they believe to be incorrect - racist or sexist feelings, for example.

DON'T WITH-HOLD INFORMATION

It might seem kinder not to say something you are thinking or feeling, but it's usually more helpful if you do say it. Otherwise, everyone has to imagine what the others are feeling



by reading between the lines of what they are saying and this leads to a lack of trust and honesty. Leaving things unsaid out of kindness is really exerting a kind of power - "I know what is best for you".

NO CENSORSHIP!

Leave 'should' and 'shouldn't' out of it, for once. Telling yourself or someone else that you shouldn't feel like that won't make the feeling vanish. Try to find out what you do feel - which is hard in a society so encrusted in guilt and moralism.

PERMISSION TO BE UNREASONABLE

Therapy is one of the few places where it is considered O.K. to be unreasonable, unfair, irrational - make the most of it! At the end of a group you can give time for discussing what has happened and what you all think about it, but trying to be rational about your feelings during therapy just makes you feel confused and stuck.

From this it follows that the questions which the group asks when someone is working should be aimed at helping the person get more into their feelings, rather than into talking about their feelings. For example, to ask 'Why do you feel angry?' may lead the person into an explanation, and away from the feeling of anger. It would be better to ask 'Is there a particular incident when you felt angry? What would you have liked to have said then?'

STAY IN THE 'HERE AND NOW'

Talking in the present tense about your feelings, rather than talking as if they're over and have passed into history, can help you to get in touch with them. For example, instead of saying 'I felt sad when he went' it would be better to say 'I feel sad that he's gone'. If the feeling is still there somewhere you will experience it afresh.

EYE CONTACT

When talking to someone, or shouting at them etc, it is always useful to look them in the eye in order to really experience what is happening.



STATEMENTS INSTEAD OF QUESTIONS

Asking a question is often a disguised way of making a statement. 'Shall we have the window open?' probably means 'I want the window open'. 'Do you feel angry?' might mean 'I feel angry' or 'I feel afraid of you'. If you bear this in mind it will help you to be clearer about what you want and feel, and to express yourself more straightforwardly.

NO VIOLENCE

If you want to hit someone in therapy you can hit them with a cushion if they agree, or you can use the cushion as a substitute for the person concerned, beating it with your fists, stamping on it, etc. Don't hit each other except with a cushion or it may get too frightening and painful and won't actually help you to experience the emotion.

Sometimes you may want to explore competitive feelings by wrestling. This is best done with a rule that you both stay in a kneeling position so as to minimise the possibility of someone getting hurt.

There are also things called 'encounter bats' manufactured in the U.S. They are foam rubber 'coshes' which you can use to batter someone with, without damaging the person at all - very satisfying for expressing some physical anger!

NO GOSSIPING

It is easy to digress into a chat, and avoid feelings by talking about a third person. If you have feelings about a person who is not in the group you can still talk to them directly. Choose a cushion to represent them, or choose someone in the group to play that person's role.

BREATHING AND BODY AWARENESS

Shallow or restricted breathing cuts off feeling. Inhaling and exhaling properly is a useful way of deepening a feeling and of getting in touch with our bodies. If the person who is working in the group is breathing very shallowly it is helpful to point this out, and encourage them to breathe more deeply.

It is helpful also to notice and draw attention to the person's body language. A gesture, or the way someone is holding their body may be a way of expressing a feeling - or of preventing its expression. So it may be helpful to say 'What is your body saying?' or 'What is your hand doing?' and suggest that the person exaggerates the gesture or posture so as to explore its meaning. Conversely, if the gesture is a means of control, pointing it out may help the person to relax that control.

Hyperventilating is super-deep breathing and can be very unpleasant. It's caused by breathing in heavily and not breathing out enough. It's another way of cutting off feelings (a way which men seem particularly inclined to use) and doing it makes you feel dizzy. If this happens to someone in the group it is important to help the person to stop gasping and to breathe more calmly - it is possible to black-out because of the excess oxygen taken into the blood.

NO DOPE

Beer, cigarettes, strong coffee etc, all affect the way we feel - or don't feel. You may

decide to forgo any drug before therapy in order to be more in touch with your feelings and not distort them. Or you may decide you can't manage without a cigarette - nobody can force you not to - in which case it is worth noticing when you reach for a cigarette. You may gain more understanding of stresses which you were disguising from yourself through your automatic response of lighting up a cigarette. Similarly, it can be useful to notice when you find yourself saying "I must have a drink" or "I need a cup of coffee".

HUGS

Physical contact is strictly limited and encircled with conventions in our society so it is valuable - and nice all round -

to hug each other a lot, particularly at the beginning and end of a group. Hugs are very validating and comforting. Often in this society you only get a physical relationship with sex combined and it helps you to recognise what kind of relationship you really want if your need for physical warmth and affection can be met with in a supportive group.

These 'rules' are offered as ways in which we have resolved issues which arise in any therapy group. Other groups may resolve them in different ways, but what we would stress is that it is good to be explicit about whatever rules you decide on.

some more

ADVICE

GETTING A GROUP STARTED AND KEEPING IT GOING....

Here are some hints on how to get a new group going and meet some of the starting difficulties - because it is not easy:

MAKE IT NICE.

The place where you meet can make a lot of difference. Choose somewhere warm and friendly rather than a draughty hall. Sit close together so that the spaces are not too big to talk across. Spend as much time as you need just getting to know each other, say 3 or 4 meetings. Encourage each person to explore their doubts and anxieties about the whole thing, and let them feel supported by the whole group.

DON'T SUPPRESS THE NEGATIVE!

Often the hardest thing to believe about group therapy (until you've actually experienced it) is that expressing negative things to a person can often bring you closer to that person, and make the group more cohesive. The important thing is the acceptance and support of the group to both people, at the level of feelings. A therapy group is in the reality business, not in the love'n'peace business; but if it pays close enough attention to reality a lot of love and peace will actually be felt by people.

It is also possible, though, to go in so much for the negative feelings (about oneself, or about other people, or about the group) that the positive feelings are pushed aside somehow - only felt if hard-earned! So it is a good idea to deliberately spend some time on positive feelings - to validate someone by talking about their strengths or what people like about them; to talk about what's good about changing and growing; to mention some of

the good things that have happened recently; to hug each other; to go and sit next to someone and express some warmth towards them if it feels right. Just as many feelings can come out of the positive as the negative - and they can be just as hard to express!

DON'T SUPPRESS THE POSITIVE!

All of us have deep needs to be loved and an ability to give love...buried under a lot of other stuff, such as anger, resentment, fear, intellectualisation, guilt, depression, work, sexiness, drunkenness, politeness, embarrassment and all the rest. This is a good thought to have in the back of your mind when starting a group.

MAKE IT EASY.

Always there is some feeling that therapy ought to be hard. There's a puritan streak somewhere that says pain is the real thing and anything else isn't quite real. We don't



go along with this - joy is important too... just understanding something a bit better can be an important step forward; even realising that you are stuck can be important.



*Working in pairs can make it easier - you don't have to feel responsible for using the whole

group's time and it may feel safer. (Detailed ways of working in pairs can be found in 'The Barefoot Psychoanalyst': see booklist)

*Do some group exercises - breathing, encounter games, bioenergetic exercises, dance, movement etc - to start the flow going. This does need a leader if it is to work well, but this is the easiest kind of leadership to learn and everyone can do it in a short while.

Don't just do exercises to bring up feelings - do some exercises to bring you all together in pleasurable ways (especially at the end of a group): massaging each other or several people massaging one person; holding hands in a circle and breathing; a group hug; lifting someone in a cradle of arms and rocking them.

*Respect each person's own way of being in the world and the process they are going through - people can too easily be made to feel inferior, incapable and un-able (this society does that too much already).

*It is best not to have expectations which are too high. Start slowly and let it develop in its own way, without programmes and without 'shoulds'. Encourage each person to get in touch with what they most need and to ask the group for that.

USE STRUCTURES.

A structure isn't always bad - it can be oppressive or liberating. There are lots of useful structures around if we want to use them. *Doing group body-work exercises at the start of a group is one idea.



Some more general ones:

*Contracts: each person decides on a specific thing they want to work on, they want to change and so on. This gives each person continuity to what they do week after week.

*One or two people take responsibility for organising the group for an evening - finding exercises or choosing a topic to focus on. If this is done on a rotating basis it helps everyone take an equal part in the group and takes the pressure off everyone feeling they have to be responsible for themselves and everyone else all the time.

*Ask an outside leader to come in (paid if necessary) An outside leader can help open up patterns locked within the group and hard to change - competition, power, issues that get avoided. Choose a leader you know and trust so you don't spend a lot of time challenging their methods.

*A closed group. Once you have enough people close it to new members for a while. It takes a whole evening to absorb one new person and, if this goes on happening, it is very disruptive to the group. If numbers allow, the group can open every two months or so to allow new people in. This combines a feeling of safety with stimulation in about the right proportions.

*A whole day: The longer you are continuously together the more will happen, and what does happen is often deeper, more intense. So doing

a day-long group is very valuable, or a weekend or a week-long intensive.

*Separate men's and women's groups. The dynamics of single-sex groups are different and different things get worked on (see the separate sections of the pamphlet for more on this)

SOME FAMILIAR GROUP PROBLEMS.

Certain problems arise in any group, but therapy groups give lots of good ways to solve them...

*People coming late. If most of the group arrives late it may show some shared problem. Check this out by putting a cushion in the middle of the group to represent the group and each person in turn talk to it. Let this go on in any of the ways we have mentioned of 'talking to a cushion'. A lot of useful material can come out.



*People being silent. If everyone sits around and no-one wants to start, it often feels as if there is no energy in the group. However, there is probably a lot of energy but it is being blocked off. So try to remove the blocks. One block is to stop breathing or to breathe in a shallow way so try some breathing exercises. Another block is to tighten the muscles for extra control - do some massage, just doing the areas that seem tightest. 'Going dead' is another block - letting the muscles go flaccid and limp so try any kind of movement, just to get the body going again.

*People being dominant. If one or two people dominate the group it is possible to ask them to do less. If they have more skills admit it and arrange to teach and share them. Going to an outside group and learning a skill or new exercises is another way to equalise power in the group - the group can share the cost of one member going to a fee-paying group.

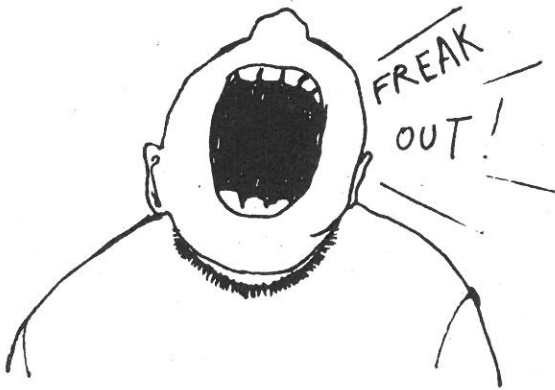
*One person going on and on. If someone goes on talking about things that seem important to



them but in a long-winded, unfeeling way it is important to remember 'I am responsible for myself'. As soon as a person feels bored or put upon it is up to them to say so, as a fact about themselves. It is then up to the group to react to this new situation - maybe by saying 'Shut up, we want to go on hearing the other person', maybe by thinking of a way in which the first person could be encouraged to go a bit deeper, maybe in some other way.

*Is it real? Sometimes you may wonder about

the connection between what you do inside the group and what you do outside it. Maybe you played the role of someone's 'good mother' and feel incredibly close to that person at that moment - does that mean you're now intimately bound to that person outside the group? Maybe you 'raped' someone in the group, and felt an electric charge between the two of you at that moment - does that mean you say "hello" to them when you run into them in a pub? If you say it was all real you are landed with a lot of very demanding relationships; and if you say it wasn't real you are somehow undervaluing the group experience, which certainly felt awfully real at the time. It seems best to regard it as temporary reality, and maybe all reality is temporary. I'd feel disappointed if someone I'd had something important with in the group didn't say "hello" in the pub - but I wouldn't expect to have the same important thing going still (For a fuller idea of 'temporary reality' see 'Don't Push the River' by Barry Stevens).



*Freak outs. If someone gets into some deep feeling (maybe associated with some early time in their lives) and can't get out again, this can cause a lot of fear in the group. It arouses all their catastrophic fears of going crazy. Sometimes the person will be screaming or throwing themselves about the floor. Here are some things to remember in this situation:

1. Make sure your soundproofing arrangements are in position. Other people rushing in to see what's going on will not improve matters. If you have no soundproofing station someone outside the room to keep well-intentioned intruders away.
2. Make sure the person does not hurt themselves. Deploy cushions, mattresses etc around to protect them, particularly their head.
3. Encourage the person to breathe deeply, rather than pant in a shallow way.
4. Try to get the person to open their eyes, and have someone they trust make eye-contact.
5. Then (and only then) encourage the person to go with the experience, instead of fighting it. If it is pure horror, suggest to the person that it is their own particular pure horror, and that they have a lot to learn from really experiencing every bit of it.
6. An experience like this can go on a long while sometimes, and it is best to prepare for this by making arrangements for the person to

stay the night if necessary.

A freak-out like this can be the most valuable and important thing to happen to a person in the group. Usually a person will not let themselves get into it unless they are ready for it. It is a rare thing and many groups will never see it at all. But it is as well to know the ropes because it seems to be a fear at the back of everyone's mind anyway.

Once the episode is over, use your own intuition as to what to do next - it may be a cup of tea, it may be a walk in the open air, it may be a quiet lie-down. If it has all been unintelligible, it may be a good idea to write something down about it, before it is forgotten. If it has been a cathartic experience, leaving the person very peaceful, it may be a good idea to ask the person to go into a fantasy and describe what they see - important memories and messages can come in this way. It can be good to ask the person to draw a picture based on any part of what happened.

The main point is to regard this as a positive worth-while experience which comes rarely and needs to be made the most of.

It is difficult doing therapy in a leaderless group at first - we are so conditioned into believing we cannot trust our own insights, intuitions, feelings, that it takes a while to realise that we can. It takes a long time too to build up a situation where everyone feels safe enough to 'expose themselves'.

On Page 16 we have reproduced the address list of the Association of Humanistic Psychology. Their address is:
62, Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 OAU.
more useful contacts-

01-935-3777
COPE (& PROMPT: Preservation of Rights of
Basement, Mental Patients)
11, Acklam Road,
London W10 01-969-9790

Mental Patients' Union,
c/o Grassroots Bookshop,
Oxford Road,
Manchester 3

Battersea Aid & Action Centre,
8, Falcon Road,
London SW11 01-228-1559

Men's Centre,
19, Redman's Road,
London E.1

Pellin Institute,
58a, Kenilworth Avenue,
London SW19 01-946-1430

* Laurieston Hall,
Laurieston,
Castle Douglas,
Kirkbrightshire, Scotland. 064-45275

* Arjuna,
12, Mill Road,
Cambridge.

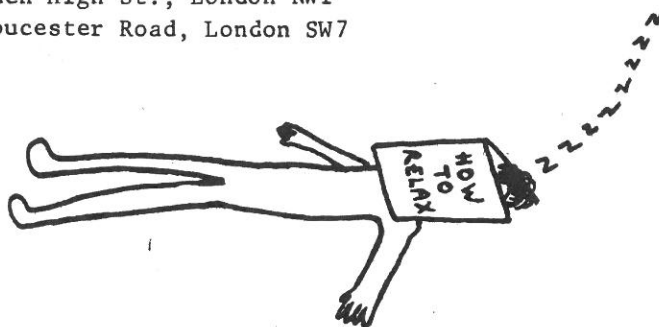
SOME GOOD BOOKS -

- Getting Clear: Anne Kent Rush (Random House, N.Y. 1973) - good interviews, exercises and body-work by and for women changing themselves.
- Self-help therapy: Lucy Goodison & Sheila Young (Women's Press, late 1978) - a basic feminist guide for women which describes many different therapy approaches to help women choose what kind of therapy they want and to help them start self-help groups. It includes a lot of practical advice and exercises.
- Woman's Consciousness, Man's World: Sheila Rowbotham (Pelican 1973) - good essential reading on women's situation in our society.
- Marx for Beginners: Ruis (Writers & Readers Co-op.) - 'reading Marx is therapeutic (and can help insomnia), this is an amusing, easy-to-read introduction to his basic principles: finding that all oppressions relate to each other clears up a lot of confusion.'
- The Primal Scream: Arthur Janov (Abacus 1973) - a good book to recognise your neuroses in. "It made me feel like I have to do primal therapy and helped explain some of my history". Janov is a paranoid egotist in this book, more into blaming your parents than the system, but it is still useful, and 'primals' do happen.
- Gestalt Therapy Verbatim: F.S.Perls (Bantam Books 1969) - "I was reading this book when I was just getting into therapy. I almost learnt to do it myself from this book alone. I kept finding myself in it. Fritz's ego is a bit much but his clarity is wonderful".
- What Is Class-Consciousness? Wilhelm Reich - 'draws out the connections between sexuality and the class struggle in an incredibly influential pamphlet (for me) that at the same time was a critique of the German C.P. in the '30's and its failure to talk in a language ordinary people could relate to.'
- The Politics of Experience: R.D.Laing (Penguin 1967) - An enormous amount is packed into these few pages: alienation, fantasy, negation, psychotherapy, mystification, etc.
- The Book of Secrets & Under One Sky: Bhagwan Shree Ranseesh (E.P.Dutton, New York 1975) Bhagwan is full of amazingly revelatory insight for people interested in making connections between therapy and their spirituality.
- The Massage Book: George Downing (Penguin 1974) - a manual with clear illustrations and strokes from scalp to toe. Massage is a healing art and a way of communicating without words.
- Bioenergetics: Alexander Lowen (Coventure 1975) - basic introduction to the ideas of Reich on energy flow in the body. It includes some practical bioenergetic exercises. Quite readable.
- Wilhelm Reich: The evolution of his work: David Boadella (Dell 1975) - an over-all account of Reich's work appreciating the importance of both the political writings of the 30's and the energetic work of later Reich.
- Joy: William C. Schutz (Penguin 1973) - a classic about the open encounter group, and in particular the non-verbal aspects.
- Social Amnesia: Russell Jacobi (Harvester 1978) - interesting historical accounts of the relationship between Marxism and psychology taking in developments till Laing and Cooper. It tends to be reductionist, having little grasp of the importance of personal and sexual politics.
- The barefoot psychoanalyst: John Southgate and Rosemary Randall (AKHPC 1976) - an introduction to Karen Horney counselling, a form of co-counselling. Has nice diagrams and is a do-it-yourself book.
- Ordinary Ecstasy: John Rowan (Routledge 1976) - humanistic psychology in action, its origins, eight fields of application, directions for the future. With appendix and bibliography.
- Don't Push the River: Barry Stevens (Real People Press) - many people seem to love this book. Gives you a glimmering of what the world could be like after the revolution.
- Readings in Radical Psychiatry: ed. Claude Steiner (Grove Press 1975) - good reading on the practise of radical therapy groups and relating them to community organising.
- Begin at Start: some thoughts on personal liberation and world change: Su Negrin (Times Change Press 1972) - a personal and thoughtful book which deals with domination, sex roles, politics and things generally in a non-alienated way.
- Free to Feel: finding your way through the new therapies: Jerome Liss (Wildwood House 1974) - very good account of most kinds of personal growth group. Very personal and non-academic though a bit rambling at times. Good on social and political aspects.
- Dream Power: Ann Faraday (Pan 1973) - a useful book, it teaches you how to interpret your own dreams, what dreams are and includes research into dreams and dreaming.
- Life Against Death: N.O.Brown (Sphere 1968) - Hard-to-read but, mind-blowing book, reaching a peak in chapter 15.

^{MORE}
SOME GOOD BOOKS....

- Growing (Up) at 37: Jerry Rubin (Warner Books 1976) - Jerry Rubin exposes himself - as he tries est,rolfing and other therapies. Amusing, disorganised and revealing - how a politico got into therapy and what he found, good and bad. Nice, humorous and easy to read.
- One-Dimensional Man: Herbert Marcuse (Sphere 1968) - the heavy classic about alienation in Western society, how Western 'democratic freedom' isn't freedom at all, etc.
- The Radical Therapist: R.T. Collective (Penguin 1974) - an anthology.
- Rough Times: R.T. Collective (Ballantine 1973) - anything by this radical therapy group in the U.S. is worth a read.
- Humpty-Dumpty nos. 6, 7, 8 (from 28, Redbourne Ave, London N3) - a magazine of radical psychology, these particular issues have articles on politics and therapy, and self-help groups.
- Acting-In: Howard A. Blatner (Springer Publishing Inc. New York 1973) - a text book on psychodrama techniques, not much theory but useful for understanding how psychodrama works on a practical level.
- Women and Analysis: ed. Jean Strouse (Dell 1974) - dialogues on psychoanalytic views of femininity. The best collection on women and psychoanalysis.
- Toward a New Psychology of Women: Jean Baker Miller - One of the very few recent books on the psychological development of women written from a more or less feminist perspective. Heavy reading.
- Solving Women's Problems: Hogie Wyckoff (Grove Press 1977) - an account of her ideas about, and experience of leading, problem-solving groups (not just women's groups, though she concentrates on relating the ideas of radical therapy to women's experience). It includes good practical suggestions.
- Pregnant Fatherhood: Paul Morrison (Men's Free Press 1977, 25p + 11p & p) - an anthology of poems and notes by a member of Red Therapy about the birth of his baby and the contradictions of becoming a father.
- Achilles Heal: Men's Free Press (1978 40p + 11p & p) - a new irregular magazine exploring men's lives, and the connections between men's politics and socialism; first issue has articles on Men & Fascism, Sexuality, NSU, creating a men's politics etc. Some RT men are involved (Both available from 7, St. Mark's Rise, London E.8)
- Men and Masculinity: ed. Pleck & Sawyer (USA) - one of the basic reference books of Men's Politics - a collection of very different pieces. A bit out-of-date now but worth having.
- The Limits of Masculinity: Andrew Tolson (Tavistock 1977) - important because it's the first British attempt to get to grips with men's politics. A bit "sociological" in tone, but very interesting.
- The Liberated Man: Warren Farrell (Penguin 1977) - the other basic reference book No class or socialist politics - but good on how men's consciousness-raising groups actually work and traps to avoid.

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Published by RED THERAPY, c/o 28, Redbourne Avenue, London N3 2BS. 1978

Individual copies from the above address (include money for postage and packing).

Bookshop distribution by Publications' Distribution Co-op, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1

Printed by Rye Express, London.

RED THERAPY is the name we gave our leaderless self-help therapy group when we started it about five years ago. This pamphlet, more than two years in the making, is an attempt to share our ideas and experience. It puts our therapy in its historical and political context, describes what we do and offers practical suggestions for other people wanting to start self-help groups.

ISBN 0 9506162 0 6

RED THERAPY

Printed by Rye Express (TU), 204 Peckham Rye, SE22.