

The IPA, its affiliates, and the future of psychoanalysis.

The argument I am raising in these posts is about my conviction that psychoanalysis faces a gloomy future if it continues in the trajectory of improving the IPA and its associations as a solution to its declining status. Because I am witnessing the crisis in my Association (*APsaA*) I feel I can talk about the issue in my part of the world. However, from my contacts and some of the *IPA* *"exciting"* news every two years I tend to believe that there must be some similar problems in the other associations and societies. In the last few days we -members of the APsaA- had some news about issues the *custodians of the association* are unable to agree upon in their continuous squabbles (two decades) about reorganizing the organization. I asked a knowledgeable and a respectable colleague: " what will happen, could happen , or should happen to get those people see that they are risking the future of our organisation and psychoanalysis with it. The answer was nothing could be done. It brought me back to the mid nineteen fifties when I was hearing for my mentors in Egypt about the Lagashe- Nacht squabble in Paris and I asked something similar and I got a similar answer.

Any one who reads the history of the Roman Empire would be puzzled about its fall: it is true that it was in decline for a few centuries, but the problems that led directly to its fall were clear, the people who were supposed to solve them were there, some tried some of those solutions but did not work, and finally it faded away leaving behind a faint trail that was useless and eventually that trail has also vanished. Between the lines one can read that the Roman empire outlived its usefulness and had to die. Its usefulness was establishing a new modern concept of the state that is founded on institutions and the rule of law. It took few hundred year more for the Magna Carta to be written.

Everything about the IPA points to the same destiny: it is declining and dying, the problems are clear, the people to solve them are also there, they have been trying but somehow nothing has worked. *The IPA and its affiliates have outlived their usefulness*. Originally the IPA was meant to nurse and encourage psychoanalysis, give it recognition among the other great theories, organise it to progress, make it stand on solid principles of training and knowledge. It succeeded in making psychoanalysis a significant and prestigious designation in the mental health profession and to some degree participated in the activities of non-clinical psychoanalytic endeavours. The psychoanalysis that the IPA nourished is no longer there anymore.

Psychoanalysis now, has to become a profession in its own right, get a different model of training, a suitable method of forming its membership, and a corresponding system of public recognition. What is standing against that? In our association some members who claim to be custodians of that association, hand down their distinguished status to heirs of choice, and preserve the mystique of the management of psychoanalysis. With this prevailing attitude there is *bitter resistance* to changing anything in the organisation. Now that psychoanalysis is disappearing under the tutelage of the old custodians I remind them of the old saying: very little of something is better than much more of nothing.

Why my pessimism that nothing will be done or could be done or should be done? Because there

was no shortage of efforts made by sincere and capable analysts in looking for those illusive solutions, and they came back frustrated. The reason is that *the APsaA (and the existing **APA** societies) has outlived its usefulness, and its existence is harmful to psychoanalysis (I am not apologizing for my unwavering statement), because it stands against its evolvement into a profession and exerts some moral pressure to keep things as they were. *Psychoanalysis is not surviving still because of anything the IPA is doing. It is surviving *in spite* of the insistence of the IPA to be the only official, legitimate reference to psychoanalysts. The physical and material limitations of the IPA in training analysts, and the inadequacy of its training systems to produce analyst who know as much of psychoanalysis as is available after all those years, is evidence enough that it is an organization that has to go. Recently, some major academic projects took on the challenge of educating students in psychoanalysis and teaching them psychotherapy that is derived from the advanced knowledge in psychoanalysis. I know from researching the Net of some formidable university programs in psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy in the US, Germany, Great Britain, and France. I know personally that (CAPA) the Chinese American Psychoanalytic Association has very a impressive program and offers most of what the IPA model offers for hundreds of people over the modern facilities of communication. I hope to be able to visit some of those facilities in Europe this summer to discuss with the academicians in those universities aspects of their programs.

I can imagine the establishment of postgraduate studies in psychoanalysis in different universities, in which the academic degree could get the graduate the local authorities' accreditation for practicing psychoanalysis (not only as a clinical profession). I can also imagine the hundreds of university graduates in psychoanalysis taking their place in many fields of the humanities, while the few less equipped and relatively poorly trained IPA trained graduates competing with them. I can also imagine the IPA and its affiliates realising- at last- that academia is the place to form the professional psychoanalyst and change from a meaningless organisation to a professional one.

That change has already started, but it needs some serious examination of the link between the formation of the analyst and the academic traditions for granting a professional degree.

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A.Fayek, Ph.D.
1201-1171 Ambleside Dr.
Ottawa, ON, Canada
K2B 8E1
Tel. 613-680-3531