

EDITORIAL

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY OF THE SFSPS

This issue marks the fifth anniversary of the Seminars. During this period we have developed in two ways: culturally and organizationally. The rapid evolution of a fairly distinct culture in such a brief interval should be of both theoretical and practical interest to anthropologists, but an account of that can wait for some more opportune moment—perhaps when we have some anthropologists among our membership. The present indications are that we are going to survive. The fact that we are beginning to get in people's way and that one eminent gentleman even proposes to "eradicate" us as "weeds that blemish his creation" (S. R. Slavson, *Acta psychother.* 10: 62-73, 1962) is from a group dynamic point of view a healthy sign. If we do survive, some people in the future as well as in the present might wonder where we came from. The following is a brief answer to that question from an administrative point of view.

In the middle 50's there was an active group therapy program at Mount Zion Hospital in San Francisco under the supervision of E. Berne, with the collaboration of M. Steiner. This included a weekly seminar open to the professional public. Mrs. Gene Prescott, a psychologist with the San Francisco Health Department, mentioned that several of her colleagues would like to attend such a seminar if it could be given after working hours. Dr. Berne accepted this proposal, but Dr. Steiner was unable to give the additional time. The first meeting was held at Dr. Berne's office on February 18, 1958, with six people attending: Mrs. Prescott, Sanford Harris, Viola Litt, Florence Powers, Leslie Waldo, and Adeline Nuszbaum. By the fourth meeting, the group had grown to 13, and six months later more than 40 people were on the roll. A private practitioner, Dr. R. J. Starrels, was the first to request individual supervision in transactional analysis.

By the middle of 1959, the meetings were becoming unwieldy in two ways: first, large numbers of people were crowding into the small quarters; and secondly, newcomers with little knowledge of the subject were mingled with more sophisticated people who had been attending the meetings for a long time. It was reluctantly decided that some form of organization was necessary, and the proceedings were split into an introductory course, and an advanced seminar to which only people who had completed the introductory course would be admitted. The title of the organization was carefully chosen to avoid pretentious words like "Institute" and "Society." The first introductory course (called 101 at the suggestion of Dr. Gordon Gritter) ran for ten weeks, starting September 29, 1959. Notices were sent out to local clinics and agencies, and a crowd of newcomers, together with the regular members, covered every square foot of seating space, including a stack of camp-stools which had been foresightedly purchased.

For the first time in the history of the Seminars, it was now necessary to make financial arrangements. A charter was granted by the State of California and we became a non-profit educational corporation in May, 1960. The incorporators were Dr. Starrels, Miss Litt, Barbara Rosenfeld, and Dr. Berne. Up to that time, we had managed to absorb all our finances by adopting George, a Cretan orphan, through the Foster Parents Plan. As time passed, there were more and more people to keep in touch with, and some regular way of doing that became almost imperative. This led to the inauguration of the Bulletin in January, 1962. In order to be able to receive donations, one more step was necessary, and in September, 1962, we were certified by the Bureau of Internal Revenue as a "tax-deductible" educational organization.

E. B.