Opening Address

W.J.

Weixman J.

Warner

New York, N.Y.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is more than passing significance in this brief ceremony designed to open a series of meetings. It is only three years since, in 1954, a few leaders ventured to think that the time had arrived to recognize a set of new ideas. They were really old ideas which in the competition of the market place and the priorities of the classroom had been overlooked. The urgencies of the moment and the historical accidents of origins were to tie psychotherapy to the organism when the group forces of behavior had made few claims for a legitimate domain.

By 1954, the picture had begun to change. Of course, from time immemorial men had used forces of the group in practices which were therapeutic. But only for a generation had the formal pioneers experimented with what was implicit but unlabeled in individual psychotherapy.

Developments led rapidly both to better understanding and the formulation of procedures. This was no isolated phenomenon. In many countries exploration was going forward. Even so, the men who set up in Toronto the First International Congress of Group Psychotherapy could not be sure that the time was ripe for the movement to crystallize on an international level.

But the result was a confirmation that the time for extended communication and international organization was ripe. The number of persons who traveled from all over the world to Toronto exceeded expectations. As a result of that Congress, there was organized an International Committee for Group Psychotherapy, composed of twenty-one persons from ten countries. They were charged with the responsibility of nurturing the collaboration of workers in this field across national lines, to plan for the next international congress, and to prepare the way for the formation of an international organization.

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This the International Committee has done. From the first of its meetings in Toronto, the Committee has followed two principles in approaching its task. First, it has recognized the wide variety of practice and ideas represented in the work of men and women in many places and situations in the different countries. It has sought to avoid any rigid limits of theory which would discourage collaboration or set up prematurely any dogmatic standards by which orthodoxy was to be measured. Second, in a development of such crucial importance, it has recognized that the field needs and should encourage the participation of all competent professional interests, including not only those who are engaged in the practice but also those who are concerned with the scientific study of the problems of group psychotherapy.

The long-range agency which the International Committee envisages, is a permanent organization in which both the national organizations of group psychotherapy and individual

workers in the area will participate in the development of methods and the accumulation of knowledge which will give added substance to our field of action.

It is in that commitment that my colleagues of the Executive Committee and the International Committee of Group Psychotherapy have commissioned me to welcome you and to hereby declare open the Second International Congress of Group Psychotherapy.

Allocution

Par S. Lebovici, Paris

Mesdames, Mesdemoiselles, Messieurs, mes chers Collègues,

C'est en tant que président du Comité Scientifique du Programme du IIe Congrès International de Psychothérapie de Groupe

que j'ai le plaisir et l'honneur de prendre maintenant la parole. Je me bornerai

après vous avoir remerciés de votre collaboration

à vous dire très brièvement quelques mots sur l'organisation scientifique et matérielle de ce congrès. Comme vous le savez

le travail aura lieu en seances plénières

en sections de travail et en séminaires.

Les seances plénières seront consacrées à des exposes qui ne seront pas suivis de discussion.

Après que nous aurons eu le plaisir d'entendre