

Letter from Argentina

The Challenges of Recovery

Lia Bikel and Eduardo H. Cazabat

As we told you in our last letter, after the economic and social crisis that Argentina underwent recently, our country has started a slow but steady recovery process. Even though we are not yet in the same condition as before the crisis, large sections of the population have again reached living standards that allow them to consider 'mind problems'.

That is how in Buenos Aires, one of the cities with the largest proportion of psychotherapists per head of population in the world, psychotherapy has regained its central position in many people's lives.

Our recovery exposes a new crisis, one that is affecting systemic therapy in particular. This crisis is the difficulty of revitalising our once large and productive Asociación Sistémica de Buenos Aires (ASIBA — Buenos Aires Systemic Association, <http://www.asociacionsistemica.com.ar>). Even if the systemic approach has many advocates here, lately it has been overshadowed by the development of new disorder specific organisations that configure specialties which tend to integrate diverse modalities, especially the cognitive school as it has strengthened in recent years. Consequently, professionals often group themselves according to the problems they specialise in (e.g. anxiety disorders, eating disorders, trauma, dissociation) and not their theoretical background. Still, systemic therapy has significant channels through which to publicise its valuable contributions, such as the well-known international journal *Sistemas Familiares y Otros Sistemas Humanos* (*Family Systems and Other Human Systems*, <http://www.sistemasfamiliares.com.ar>) and activities like Expo-Sistemica (Systematic Expo) — held every October — where current issues are explored from different perspectives by and for the professional community. Integration seems to be the key to distinct approaches, including systemic ones, becoming more productive and taking our discipline even further, providing more and better resources to relieve human suffering.

We still have an unstable political-social-economic situation, which is extremely distressing for all the inhabitants of our country. Nevertheless, Buenos Aires, the capital, is still an 'oasis' in which artistic and scientific

events flower, for whatever reason. In this context, we still have a lot of activities for psychotherapists, including workshops given by international figures (e.g. Marsha Lineham and Jeffrey Young on borderline personality disorder, Gerald French on traumatic incident reduction, Boris Cyrulnik on resiliency) and congresses with international impact. For instance, the IV International Psychotherapy Congress — organised by the World Council for Psychotherapy and previously held in Vienna — will be held here next August and will feature keynote speakers such as Carlos Sluzki (<http://www.4mp.org.ar>). In addition, in June 2006, the ISTSS World Conference (previously held in Melbourne) will be organised in our country by its local affiliate, the Sociedad Argentina de Psicotrauma (SAPsi — Argentine Society for Psychotrauma, <http://www.psicotrauma.org.ar>), gathering important professionals from the five continents, who will take part in international meetings on dissociation, child sexual abuse, and EMDR.

After several years of contributing to this column, it is now time to make some changes. We hope you regard this last report as a grateful farewell to the editors who invited us to make known our reality, and as an acknowledgment to all readers in Australia, New Zealand, and the ANZJFT area of influence. We expect to continue our professional exchanges through other means. Anyone who wants to contact us personally is welcome to send an e-mail to:



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