

INTERNATIONAL BALINT FEDERATION

www.balintinternational.com

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FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE BALINT

Minutes of the meeting of the General Assembly of the International Balint Federation

held at 2 p.m. on Saturday 8th March 2008

At the Dead Sea Garden Hotel
Israel.

Those present:

Australia:

Alexa Gilbert-Obrart

Belgium:

Michel Delbrouck;

Finland:

Kristina Toivola

Germany:

Heide Otten
Ernst Petzold
Sigmar Scheerer

Israel:

Mark Budow
Nina Guy

Andre Matalon
Binyamin Maoz
Stanley Rabin
Yuval Shorer

Netherlands:

Marieke van Schie

Sweden:

Henry Jablonski

UK:

John Salinsky
Sotiris Zalidis

USA:

Don Nease

1. **Apologies:** These have been received from Gunnar Axelgaard (Denmark) Jorge Brandão (Portugal) Jean Flechet (Belgium) Marie-Anne Puel (France) Heather Suckling (UK) Albert Veress (Romania)

2. **Minutes of the meeting of the General Assembly 5th September 2007 in Lisbon:**

These minutes had previously been circulated and approved by email.

They were declared a correct record of the meeting in Lisbon.

3. **WONCA meeting 2007**

Heide Otten reported on the IBF participation at the conference in Paris in October 2007. They had been able to meet representatives of the Vasco De Gama movement, a new European association of young doctors. They gave a presentation about different models of general practice in different countries and were interested in the Doctor-Patient relationship. There was some coldness towards Balint from some delegations but the French Society gave a successful presentation and 25 people took part in three Balint groups in French and English. The next WONCA meeting will be in Istanbul (Turkey) and preparations are being made for IBF participation in the following one in Basel (Switzerland) in September 2008.

4. **President and board members' report**

The president, Henry Jablonski (Sweden) said that the report should really come from the Board as they worked as a team. The work of the IBF was to support national Balint Societies, encourage interchange and arrange representation on other bodies. The IBF gave smaller Societies a larger family. We were able to look at each other 'through different eyes'. He was impressed by the fertility of the IBF as a meeting place of psychology and medicine. We needed to discuss how to promote Balint work: we all have the potential to get people enthusiastic in other countries.

Don Nease (vice-president, USA) reported that he had given a presentation on Balint at the World Psychiatric Conference in Melbourne. He was also working with a small group to collate Balint literature worldwide. The group consists of Marion Lustig, Mike Floyd, Stanley Rabin, John Salinsky and Don. He and Frank Dornfest will also make a presentation on Balint and the doctor-patient relationship at the Institute of Healthcare Improvement meeting in Dallas, Texas, in April 2008.

Binyamin Maoz (vice-president, Israel) said he had been to the Göttingen Balint conference in Germany but had no contact with the medical school, where the professor is 'anti-Balint'. He had also been to Bonn, Berlin and a few years ago to Würzburg. Here there had been a struggle between psychoanalytic and behaviour orientated groups but they were now working together. He usually meets the Swiss representatives at the annual meeting at Szilzmarie and has also had contact with the Austrian Balint Society. This has now been re-established and will send representatives to the next council meeting in Leiden (Netherlands).

Michel Delbrouck (treasurer, Belgium) said he represented 'The French Connection'. He had links with France, the French Balint psychodrama society and groups in French Canada. The Romanian Balint Association had also asked him to organize leader training in 2009. The Belgian Review will now be appearing as a monograph twice a year.

There were also reports from the Netherlands, Australia, Sweden and Israel which will appear in the written reports to be sent to the secretary.

5. Treasurer's report Our annual income for the current year is expected to be €8070 when all fees are paid. This will cover anticipated expenditure with a surplus of €600. There were a number of requests for financial assistance with translation of books about Balint work. The Board have decided to allot up to €2000 to assist with any translation that is approved by the Translation Advisory Board. André Matalon and Don Nease have agreed to serve on this board and Paul Sackin (UK) will be invited to be the third members. Henry described the process of getting a translation published and said that those approved translations that were unable to find a publisher might be available to Balint Society members or published by the IBF as part of a Balint Anthology. There was a discussion about increasing the availability of Balint literature. Don Nease (vice-president, USA) said that he was a member of an American group who are trying to collect a comprehensive list of Balint books and papers with links to Amazon etc.

With regard to those Societies which had not paid their fees, Henry proposed that a Society that was two years in default should be asked to pay for the years 2007 and 2008 within two weeks or have their name removed from the IBF website. Mark Budow (Israel) thought we should first try to find out their reasons for not paying.

With regard to expenses for officers, the board had decided that the allowance of €350 per meeting for each officer would continue, but as from the next meeting the total amount (€1750) would be regarded as an overall budget to accommodate small smaller and larger travelling expenses, depending on distance.

The financial statement was circulated and the budget was accepted.

Action: Michel

6. Small Societies

Henry put forward the board's proposal that a Society with more than 40 members should no longer be regarded as small and should pay the full fee(€700). The board had also proposed a fee of half the full amount (€350) for the ex-communist countries of Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Poland. These proposals were agreed by the Council.

7. Secretary's report

John read out Heather's report. Heather gave apologies for her absence and sent good wishes. She had received confirmation from the Right Livelihood Award Board and we will be informed in September of the result. The Austrian Balint Society had joined making a total of 22 member Societies.

(In fact the Austrian Society was not represented at the meeting and has not so far paid fees). She had circulated all reports so far received from national societies and had also produced a list of officers. She wished to remind the meeting that, in order to remain members of the IBF, societies must fulfil the criteria i.e.

Pay the fees, send the leadership criteria in English, confirm the society's ethical code in English and complete a renewal form each year giving the number of members and confirmation that fees have been paid.

8. Right Livelihood Award

Heide Otten gave an explanation of the Right Livelihood Award: which has been called 'the alternative Nobel Prize' (See minutes of the last council meeting, September 2007 for a fuller account of the Award). Heide and Heather were thanked for their hard work in preparing the application. The result is expected to be announced I September 2008.

9. The Website

The president said that it was up to all of us to enlarge the content. A literature list would be very helpful. There is also the e-journal which publishes an annual collection of abstracts of Balint papers, compiled by Marie-Anne Puel. John Salinsky said that articles from the last 10 years of the British Journal of the Balint Society were available to members by email on request. He offered to provide a list of contents for the website. Don Nease spoke in favour of unrestricted access to articles without demanding a password. The website will be updated twice a year, one month after the council meeting and contributions should be emailed to Henry.

Action: John

10. Ascona Prizes

Ernst Petzold thanked the IBF for its financial support of the winning students who presented their papers in Lisbon last year. The Ascona Foundation will be meeting shortly and the IBF Board had agreed some new proposals for the competition. These are that the essays should all be in English and there should be no more than three prizewinners. The IBF will provide one hour of plenary time at the Congress for the students to present their papers. We will also pay their travel expenses up to a maximum of €350 and we will expect the Congress organizers to waive their Congress fees. These proposals were agreed by the council and Ernst will take them to the Ascona Foundation. Henry asked us to energise all out national Societies to promote the prize and publicise it to our students.

Action: Ernst

11. International Balint Congress in Romania 2009

Henry said that the Board's preferred dates were 5-9 September with 22-26 August as an alternative. Council members expressed doubts about August and it was agreed to ask the organizers for the September dates. The cost was not yet know but should be no more than €400 including meals and transport but no accommodation. Bus transport from Bucharest airport to Brasov, the Congress venue, at 9 a.m. was considered unacceptable as it would necessitate staying overnight at the airport or in Bucharest.

We did not yet know the themes for the Congress. Ben suggested a quotation from Kafka:

‘Writing prescriptions is easy but understanding people is hard’. Henry said that we needed more information about the Congress from the organizers as soon as possible.

Action: Henry, Heather, Albert

12. Council meeting in Leiden, Holland 19 October 2008

Marieke said that the Dutch Balint Society would organise a conference from 17-18 October with the Council meeting on Sunday 19th. She would ask the hotel to provide Thursday night accommodation also. In addition to groups there will be lectures by Don, Michel, Heide and John.

There will also be time for travel and sightseeing in Holland. She planned to get bicycles for everyone.

Action: Marieke

13. Council meeting in Spring 2009

Don offered to host this in the USA. The East side of the country would be easier for travelling and Pittsburg was a possibility. He thought it might be combined with the American Balint Society’s first National meeting.

Action: Don

14. Any other business

Alexa asked if all Societies could provide leaflets describing the activities in different countries.

Minutes by John Salinsky