

# The Ampleforth Protocol

## "The Future of Psychohistory"

**Report and text contributed by David Wasdell**

A small group of invited participants gathered in late October 2004 in the secluded setting of the Guest House of Ampleforth Abbey, deep in the North Yorkshire countryside. There were participants from Austria, Finland, Switzerland, UK, and the USA, drawn together by the initiative of Paul Ziolo, to explore the future of psychohistory. Paul acted as Convenor and Conference Chair, while the programme was designed and facilitated by David Wasdell.

We paid close attention to developing the culture and quality of a supportive learning community, within which each participant was able to give an extended specialist presentation with plenty of time for discussion and interaction. The institutional setting of the event provided an unique opportunity to explore the psychohistory and current dynamics of Ampleforth Abbey, supported by a field trip to the neighbouring site of the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey, a foundation that played a key role in the 12<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance.

The main work of the conference was carried out in the seven-session interactive seminar on the central theme of "The Future of Psychohistory". Group brainstorming and open discussion was backed by intensive co-processing in twos and threes, while the content was assembled in real time on lap-top computer with large-screen projection. We were able to work in depth on a series of interrelated issues which included:

- What is Psychohistory?
- The History of Psychohistory
- The current context of Psychohistory
- The social task of Psychohistory
- Construct and paradigm in the discipline of Psychohistory
- Constraints encountered in the conduct of Psychohistory
- Culture, transference and the dynamics of Psychohistory
- Overcoming fantasy-projection in the content of Psychohistory
- Organisational forms and the future of Psychohistory
- Promoting competence in the research task of Psychohistory
- Reflexive integrity in the learning community of Psychohistory

The synergy and convergence of group thinking were awesome as we recognised the critical nature of our current historical situation and affirmed the essential contribution which the discipline of Psychohistory could and should be making. We were also acutely aware of some of the dysfunctional personal and institutional dynamics which had inhibited the development and application of the discipline over the last few decades. The output was organised under ten headings, while the content itself was brought together as sets of bullet-points under each heading. There

is inevitably some overlapping and repetition and many items deserve expanding into major papers. The wording has been kept as it was assembled at the end of the seminar, without editorial polishing or revision. The result is offered under the overall title of "The Ampleforth Protocol", as a framework for future development. The document has no authority other than that implicit in the ideas it contains. Whether or not it has any influence on the emergent shape of the discipline of Psychohistory will depend entirely on the creative use we all make of it.

## **The Ampleforth Protocol "The Future of Psychohistory"**

### **A Organisation Structures and Functions**

1. No command or control of content or process of Individual Psychohistory Societies
2. Organisational Structure that is enabling, polycentric, co-ordinating and functional
3. Functional and organic
4. Ongoing leadership – stay in communication – enabling/co-ordinating structure
5. Preventative maintenance so that difficulties could be overcome – speaking forum
6. Metacomplex functioning
7. Officers
8. Charter or bye-laws
9. Constitutions
10. Dues/resources for optimum performance
11. Name
12. Outreach Officer
13. Psychohistory does need a certain institutional framework (e.g. a group or association), but it must not be reduced to this very framework.
14. A polycentre structure, as opposed to a hierarchical one, by its very nature allows for a self-monitoring process that is required to remain aware of ongoing projections and defences

### **B Community Building**

1. Communication between all Psychohistory Societies / all elements in the field
2. Networking between Societies
3. Networking is regular and ongoing
4. Needs are not overwhelmed – i.e. participation in the network is resourceful not draining
5. Regular conferences with research presentations

### **C Culture and Process**

1. Do not wish to join the fight culture – non power battle
2. Evolving of international community of psychohistory NOT a grand plan
3. Tools of our trade used to address our own process and prevent power battles
4. Professional best practice
5. Mental space for integration self and client
6. Self reflection and awareness
7. Mutual respect and support
8. Openness to learning
9. Evolving processes – open to
10. Competences and skills in handling unconscious factors (projections, resistances, transference, counter-transference etc.)
11. Monitoring personal defence mechanisms into the field
12. Ethics
13. Mutual accountability for conflict resolution
14. Willingness to participate in mediation process

D The Field of Psychohistory

1. Interdisciplinary fields
2. Distinguish specific psychohistorical methodologies
3. Multi-layered orders of human being / experience / becoming and access to that
4. Psychohistory is not an 'ism'
5. Widening discipline to integrative anthropology
6. Reinventing tradition
7. Awareness of other references to Psychohistory from other fields
8. Applied Science
9. By its complexity level, integrating a vast range of issues from quantum mechanics ... to cosmology, Psychohistory surpasses the classical distinction of sciences in either holistic or anti-holistic theories; rather it is a meta-theory.

E Perspectives / Vista

1. Strategic Planning
2. Future as emergent property not an imposed property
3. Exploring new vistas
4. Time dimension: past / present / future not just past

F Research Methodologies

1. Increased Academic credibility – strategy for
2. Research methodologies – appropriate
3. Transition analysis and other predictive tools

G Working Procedures

1. Interdisciplinary skills
2. Widen search to e.g. transition analysis and other appropriate tools
3. Metacomplex functioning
4. Sensitivity to social setting
5. Competences and skills in handling unconscious factors (projections, resistances etc)
6. Dealing with transference and counter transference at different levels:
  - Social
  - Inter-institutional
  - Inter group
  - Intra-group
  - Inter-personal
7. Exploring some other modalities than psycho-diagnostic
8. Monitoring personal projection mechanisms into the field

H Applications and Tools

1. Application methodologies
2. Defining Applications/areas/environments

J Communication/Tools

1. e-mail list
2. e-communication
3. archiving of on line resource base

K Education and outreach

1. Academic discipline
2. Teachers (i.e. to students)
3. Accessibility of language to appropriate group – ordinary people

Responses, comments and suggestions for eventual sharing across the emergent network could initially be sent to: Paul Ziolo ([primeradiant@supanet.com](mailto:primeradiant@supanet.com)) or to David Wasdell ([wasdell@meridian.org.uk](mailto:wasdell@meridian.org.uk)).