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Editorial Psychotherapy and Social Change: Gestalt Therapy's Calling?

This issue of the journal addresses the explicit theme of psychotherapy praxis and how it relates to social change. The world of gestalt therapy is the ever-changing social phenomenal field. This has always been one of the starting premises of our approach. Through 60 years of further development, much of gestalt therapy's theory and practice has changed; but this central notion needed no adjustment.

Our founders Frederick and Laura Perls were social activists who fled Central Europe and took with them a *weltanschauung* based on the indivisibility of personal and sociopolitical domains. Their American colleague Paul Goodman was a sociopolitical dissident and social utopian. The metatheory they propounded contained this utopianism's indelible stamp. The early gestalt therapists were social, political, educational, activists as well as artists. They were at civil rights demonstrations, labor picket lines, protest rallies of all sorts, as well as at the avant garde of theater, literature, and other creative arts. And they were also psychotherapists.

Gestalt therapy has been at the vanguard of social change from its inception. In fact, by the time of its adoption by the popular culture's successful rejection of the conformist culture of the 1950's, gestalt therapy had already become a mature institution for social change.

In the following pages, you will find a variety of contributions that look at the role of psychotherapy and social change. In Section 1, "Theoretical Bridges," the eminent sociologist Zygmunt Bauman contributes his reflections on the role of psychotherapy within society and joins the editors in posing a series of questions to dialogue participants.