

# AP Activities

## What about the Crisis?

Is humanistic psychology completely irrelevant to the kind of economic crisis which is on us at the moment?

It seems that there are at least four ways in which it is highly relevant. The first and most important way is that humanistic psychology has found ways of liberating the creative imagination. And creativity is not just about art work - it is about looking at problems in new ways. It is about not accepting the 'either-or'. It is about looking beneath the surface problem to the real difficulty, and doing something about that. As Julian Beck once put it '*If the imagination is not stimulated and the mind does not grow, how can the great animal figure its way out of the pit?*'

The second way is that we have a lot to say about leisure. If people only work three days a week, what are they going to do in their free time? And we can offer them games. Games which break down alienation. Games which build up the ability to say 'No!' Games which start making people aware of what they have cut off in themselves. And ultimately games which enable us to give up playing games, if that is what we want to do.

The third way is that we have a lot to offer if people become redundant. We know about the self, and about identity, because we actually believe that there is such a thing - unlike many other kinds of psychology and sociology. We know how much people depend on their roles and how little they need to. And we have the approach and the methods to help people to see what they have done to themselves, what they have had done to them, and what they need to do now.

The fourth way is that we have a lot to offer if people really break down and feel unable to cope with such a fast turn of events. It is when people are in crisis, when they are most depressed and lowest, that there is most hope of real change. And we know that often this is not just on an individual level. In the new issue of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Dennis Jaffe says:

*When one begins to see clients' dilemmas as consequences of their positions within an oppressive environment, the solution involves direct intervention, creation of concrete alternative communities, and helping them develop a strategy of social change which will enable them to meet their legitimate needs. Rather than adjustment to a difficult situation with resignation, the goal might better be to develop a sense of personal movement and change so that a new environment can be created.*

This quote underlines the point that the present crisis is not an isolated thing, but is embedded in a much larger long-term set of difficulties which are still there behind the headlines. Humanistic psychology is not a total answer to everything, but it is not irrelevant either.

**What is the AHP?**

People have told us they don't really have any clear picture of what the AHP is all about. Internally, we have had arguments over setting up standards for group leaders, setting up a constitution, being open or closed to behaviorism and psycho-analysis, the kind of organizational structure we should aim for, and so on. Always these arguments seem to get into deep waters which there is no time to explore, because some immediate decision has to be made.

So we feel it is worthwhile to set up a meeting just to discuss some of these issues, to see if we can get to know each other's arguments better, and maybe change or learn something. This meeting will be held on 30 January 1974. It will be opened by John Rowan and Mike Barnett, on the issue of whether there are any specific values held by people working with humanistic psychology. The meeting will be facilitated by Mark Matthews, whose brief is to make the meeting productive rather than mere argy-bargy. It is expected that most of those who come will be willing to become involved in the discussion as it develops.

7 p.m. on Wednesday 30 January 1974, at Community, 6 Harley Road, N.W.3.

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