

AP Activities

Humanistic Psychology has infinite implications for education - but how many teachers in this country ever experience 'Psychology' as an experience, rather than know it, or forget it, as a college subject? How many have heard of Reich or Rogers? How many appreciate that they themselves don't automatically have to arrest their own growth once they get into the teacher role? Well - a few: enough that good ideas do filter through, that some schools are creative and healthy places and some children do grow and learn purposefully in them. And before the term Humanistic Psychology was ever coined, many 'progressive' schools and state primary schools in Britain were really good places to be. With Homer Lane and Winnicott on your syllabus your training hadn't been entirely irrelevant, and in stable settings you could promote creativity and facilitate growth - and see it happening too. But the educational scene has changed markedly in the last fifteen years. Its predominant characteristics now, particularly in urban areas, are turmoil, stress, conflict, and a truly painful want of steady support from politicians and parents. In other words the situation reflects pretty faithfully the prevailing social crisis of authority and responsibility.

Changes in society, in organisations, in authority patterns, require changes in teachers. Humanistic Psychology has a great deal to contribute here. It can work for the continuing growth of teachers; help towards revaluations of the nature of authority; promote a greater awareness of behaviour and relationships in groups and institutions; teach techniques for handling stress and conflict. It can make real its belief in humanness and caring. This was never more needed.

Having said that, what do we actually do? And who are we? Good things are happening in education, all over the country - in isolated pockets. It still tends to be experimental. There is little cohesion or co-ordination, in spite of the frequently expressed desire for contact between at least somewhat enlightened workers, many of whom feel they are waging a home battle against reactionary forces. There isn't enough trust. Many people fear control and structure to the extent that they refuse to rationalize or organize what they are doing. British 'progressives' tend to be poor collaborators and organizers - a result perhaps of the formal and competitive traditions of their own education. Everybody ultimately seems to want to do his or her own thing, in isolation and defiance. All this was evident in the Resources Programme for Change in Teaching, which kept going on its own impetus and energy for some time, made a valuable impact, and then died for want of structure, commitment, and money. Society will pay for what it needs: we have to get it to realise what it needs. And we are society - let's beware of pushing all the responsibility on to someone else.

The AHP'S March conference on secondary education can offer an introduction to the possibilities, and a meeting place for people with common problems and interests.

Hopefully something more solid may ultimately emerge from that. The structure of the conference aims to liberate, not cramp, the energy of members. With small group participation, diversity of resources for workshops, and some focus on the problems of choosing and using resources, it will be a learning experience in itself. Many people have already agreed to contribute their skills and knowledge. It looks like being a creative and lively weekend. The date: March 21st-23rd, at the Polytechnic of Central London, Regent Street. All details and booking through the PCL Short Course Unit, 35 Marylebone Road, London W.1. Course title: *Creative Relations in Secondary Education*.

Alix Pirani

Additions to the booklist

Jerome L. Singer. *Imagery and Daydream Methods in Psychology and Behavior modification*, Academic Press 1974.

An academic book, showing strong belief in the therapist as expert. But it contains all the data and all the references on Assagioli, Leuner, Desoille, Fretigny & Virel, Gerard and so on, if that is what you want. Erudite and thorough.

Philip Bonewits. *Real Magic*, Sphere 1974 (1971).

Written by the world's first B.A. in Magic and Traumaturgy. A cool and critical look at the world of the occult (best I've seen on telepathy and reincarnation (with emphasis on clarifying the words and concepts used)). Not strictly humanistic psychology, but I found it very congenial.

Jerome Liss. *Free to Feel: Finding your way through the new therapies*, Wildwood House 1974.

Very good account of most kinds of personal growth group. Very personal and non-academic, a bit rambling at times. One technical appendix. Quite good on social and political aspects. Annotated bibliography.

Rollo May. *Power and Innocence: A search for the sources of violence*, Souvenir Press 1974 (1972).

Some good insights (e.g. the power to be leads to self-affirmation, which if blocked leads to self-assertion, which if blocked leads to aggression, which if blocked leads to violence) but ultimately limited by an ahistorical and Nietzschean stance.