

# THE EIGHTH CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Report by

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It was a hot day as I stepped off the tram and found my way over the brow of the hill. As I got to the top I saw a lake with people splashing about in it down below, and above me the huge buildings of the University. Walking along the path, I passed on my right a new monument, a huge disc of stone, and as attractive looking chalet restaurant. I came to a tall sculpture of steel and glass, three pylons standing together, and turned right to face the University up the hill. I followed the signs saying 'Kongress' into a huge entrance hall, and registered in an office just off it. I got a colourful folder with many pamphlets about Zurich, a huge silver badge which buckled on, and my programme.

And what a programme! Rollo May and Ronnie Laing were the stars, performing all the way through with speeches, seminars and workshops. But each day there were new stars - on the first day, David Boadella and John Richard Turner. I had not come across Turner before, and was very impressed with his work on pre-birth experience. On the second day, Gion Condrau an eminent Zurich existential therapist, and Dora Kalff,

with her work on sandplay in the Jungian manner. On the third day, Gerald Jampolsky and Diane Victoria Cirincione, presenting their work on attitudinal healing, and Ronald Chavers, a student and exponent of shamanism in its relation to personal transformation. On the fourth day, Jurg Willi, who works with couples and families in Zurich, and whose work is well known in Britain, and John Pierrakos, whose spirited lecture on his work in Core Energetic Therapy brought people rushing to the office afterwards to sign up for his seminar later. And on the fifth day Stan Grof, presenting his latest findings in what he now calls holotropic therapy, with some really fascinating case histories, and Mario Jacoby, a powerful member of the C G Jung Institute in Zurich, talking about individuation and narcissism. Most of these lectures were followed up by seminars, for which you had to pay extra, where the person could present his or her work much more fully and be met and questioned in detail.

On each day, after the plenary lectures there was a round table - a presentation by two or three or four people about and around the topic of the day - each day dealt with a different phase of life. The whole morning was spent in the main lecture hall, where we had the benefit of simultaneous translation into five languages, using the latest equipment.

Then in the afternoon there were two-hour workshops; on each day we had to choose between up to eighteen different offerings. Because the numbers at the Congress were not quite as high as had been expected, some of the workshops were rather small, but I never heard of any being cancelled, even though some of them were very large - I remember getting to John-Richard Turner's workshop a little late, and having to perch on a table because the room was completely full.

At five-fifteen each day people went to their home groups, which had been formed during a ceremony the first evening, led by Dieter Mittelsten-Scheid and myself. He also led a very impressive ceremony with candles, meditation music and dancing on the third evening, which people enjoyed a lot.

In the evenings there were other round tables and extra events of one kind and another or people could just relax and talk to each other. The opportunities for meeting people were very good, because of the central hall which everyone had to pass through; the canteen upstairs was of a very high standard, and the chalet restaurant down the hill, which had tables and umbrellas outside for drinking or eating the in the warm air - the temperature went up to 30 degrees or more each day.

I was kept quite busy myself. On the Tuesday there was the usual presenters' meeting, where I met Derek Gale, Bill Hineley (who was also at the AHP Conference in Britain), Aviva Ben-Sira (who was also at Guildford two years back), Viviane Cangeloni (who we often see in Britain), Jackie Doyle from the International Committee of the AHP in

San Francisco, Michele Festa ( who organised the whole thing) Michel Katzeff from Belgium, who I hadn't seen for a long time, Dieter Mittelsten-Scheid ( a regular at these congresses), Swami Prem Dhyana ( who drove us all crazy as usual with his perpetual requests to put on his laughing meditation) and numerous other new people. Jerone Liss turned up later, as did Fred Massarik, JohnRaphael Staude and other known to some people over here.

The following day we had a meeting to discuss the international organization of humanistic psychology, and agreed on a very simple beginning, which was to draw up a list of contacts - not more than twelve at the most - in each country. These would be the people who could network more widely in their own countries and take responsibility for giving reports on what they were doing and what was going on locally. They could also help to distribute a newsletter, based on these reports. All items to be sent to Fred Massarik, Professor in the Graduate School of Management, UCLA Los Angeles, Ca. 90024, USA. There will be a new international committee, consisting of Jackie Doyle, Michele Festa, John Rowan, Stanley Krippner, and Fritjov Capra. There will be a professional conference in Germany in May-June 1987 and the Ninth Congress will be held in Spain in May-June 1988. So this was all very exciting, and it was also good to meet Echi Dacak-Behrens, the new General Secretary (from January 1987) of the EAHP; she is a very interesting person with a lot to offer.

On the Friday I gave my talk on Ken Wilber and the nine fulcrums of development, with a beautiful transparency projection of Ken Wilber's map which the office kindly provided in about fifteen minutes flat. That day I met Frank Cardella, a Canadian psychologist who has done a lot of work with adolescents and is very interested in feminism and men's response to that; I liked him a lot, and hope he can do some workshops in Britain in the not too distant future.

On the Saturday I chaired the plenary lectures and the round table, and did my own non-verbal workshop (this always goes down very well at international conferences, and indeed at any conference where there are a lot of lectures and plenaries) and then in the evening took part in a round table on questions of professional training, with Jackie Doyle and Michele Festa.

But perhaps the high spot for me was on the Sunday, when I had a chance to meet and have a talk with Stan Grof and his wife Christine. They are doing such interesting work at the moment, and he has now completed a book on technique - what exactly you do to help people get into birth and pre-birth experiences which can be so important for their transformation. I was most impressed by his solidity and the depth of his observations.

For me, this was one of the best EAHP Congresses I have been to, and I came away feeling inspired and revived.