

# **Humanistic Psychology and the Human Potential Movement — INFORM Seminar**

**by Charlotte Hardman**

INFORM (Information Network Focus on Religious Movements) organised a seminar at the London School of Economics entitled 'Humanistic Psychology and the Human Potential Movement' on Saturday 14th November 1992. There were about fifty participants, including members of the clergy, academics, counsellors, ex-members, relatives and students, a youth worker, two people from publishing, and a sociologist working in mental health.

The morning started with a video presentation of 'The Mind Managers' recently shown on BBC Television, and Sarah Spiller, the reporter, answered questions afterwards. Professor Richard Roberts, Director of the Institute for Religion and the Human Sciences of St Mary's College, University of St Andrews went on to speak about 'Power and Empowerment: New Age and Christian Managers and the Dialectics of Modernity/Postmodernity

The second part of the morning was devoted to a talk by Guy Claxton of Schumacher College, Devon, entitled 'Out of the Frying-pan into the Fire', followed by a panel of three speakers who described their experiences: Tony McCutcheon from the London School of Economics on a month spent at the Esalen Institute, California; Julie Freeman about a management training course and Dr Roy Eskapa, a member of the American Psychological Association, about Insight.

In the afternoon Alan Blakeley, a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Cornwall College spoke on 'Dehumanising Psychology' and John Rowan, founder member of the Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners, on 'The Scope and Limits of Humanistic Psychology'. The meeting then split into discussion groups and after tea Ian Gordon Brown, Director of the Centre for Transpersonal Psychology, gave the final lecture which was on 'Psychology and the Journey to the Self'.

The day led to a few spirited discussions about the possible misuse of therapy in management training courses while some of the talks revealed that a serious debate about personalism is going on alongside a critical re-evaluation of humanistic psychology.