

AHPP to Leave AHP?

David Jones

When I heard that AHPP was thinking of leaving the AHP my first reaction was 'I will be £20 better off'. When I think of the important consequences, I see that there are compelling administrative, financial and ethical reasons for remaining as we are, a section of AHP.

The founding parents started AHPP in 1980 for those members of AHP (AHP had been formed in 1971) who wanted to use a humanistic approach in their professional work. They were not against the atmosphere of fun which was, and still is, an important part of AHP, but they wanted a clear focus on the workplace free from the potential for acting out encouraged by the encounter group culture which was often apparent in AHP.

There is a case, a strong one in my view, for seeking ways so that people can join AHPP as non-accredited members (called 'non-accredited subscribers' perhaps) if they can show that they have the training and experience to be considered an authority in a particular type of work. These non-accredited members would share and help develop the humanistic approach in the workplace. Social workers, teachers, police, military people and those who work in commerce and industry would be among those who might, perhaps should, join. But that is a separate

issue from AHPP leaving AHP. Let's get that out of the way.

The founding of AHPP coincided with the Rugby Conference, set up to promote the professionalisation of psychotherapy and which is now known as the UKCP. The members of the Rugby Conference represented a very wide range of interest groups and the AHPP delegates played a major part in developing it. John Rowan, Shirley Wade and Courtenay Young, for example, made major contributions chairing working parties, preparing definitive documents and being elected to office. The importance of their contributions was, and still is, recognised far beyond the humanistic and integrative fraternity.

Administration

When the AHPP administrator's post comes up for reappointment it would be possible to increase efficiency by appointing a senior administrator for the whole of the AHP and AHPP together with one or more full or part-time assistants. One specialist clerical officer could deal with subscriptions, another with membership, accreditation and re-accreditation, right across the whole organisation, supervised by a senior officer. Publicity, which is becoming a major problem, would be cheaper and more effective if it were centrally organised. When the Royal British

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Psychological Society (BPS) gets its Bill through Parliament protecting the title 'psychologist', as it eventually will, (see my earlier articles in *S&S*) they will have the legal power to determine who may call themselves a psychologist. The AHPP would be well advised to follow the Jungian analysts' example and persuade the BPS to include in its draft Bill a clause excluding them. The Jungians persuaded the BPS because they were large and had been in existence for the best part of a century. The AHPP would only have this advantage if they were on board with the AHP, and even then their case would not be as strong as the Jungians, for AHPP has no learned journal. There is a risk that the term 'humanistic psychology' would die.

Financial

It would be easier to meet the salary needed to attract good people into the AHP and AHPP's administrative posts. Sub-

scription renewals would be a lot cheaper to collect if they were centralised. As a learned society AHPP lacks credibility because it lacks publications. AHP, with AHPP's help, will soon be rich enough to start a learned journal.

Ethics

The European Association for Humanistic Psychology (EAP) held enormously successful and large conferences during the 1980s, but has floundered in the 1990s. Humanistic psychology in Europe needs support, not further fragmentation. In order to fulfil their aims as laid down in their constitutions both AHP and AHPP need to support each other, jointly, organically, with interlocking committees. AHP exists as a check against the AHPP ceasing to be an association of authoritative practitioners, and becoming instead a body of authoritarians.

Other readers' contributions to this debate are invited by the editors.

