

THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF ADLERIAN PSYCHOLOGY  
IN THE UNITED STATES---1937-1943

by Nahum E. Shoobs

During the life of any movement there is a period during which foundations are laid and integration develops. The Adlerian development in the United States went through such a phase during the period from 1937 through 1943.

Adler's sudden passing on May 28, 1937, shocked Adlerians into temporary passivity, and with the death of its Editor-in-Chief, the International Journal of Individual Psychology, brought out and supported by Sydney Roth of Chicago, ceased publication.

The New York Group

However, by the fall of 1937, under the constant urging of Lawrence Opedal, a New York Society of Individual Psychology had been organized which met bi-monthly at the home of our president, Dr. Frederic Dey. The members of our small group of some twenty-five, all professing Adlerians, were practicing psychologists and educators--as indicated in the fact that five were psychiatrists, two school psychologists, two social workers, two school supervisors and still others active in the field of education. During this year only the psychiatrists contributed papers. In addition, Dr. F. Feichtinger and Dr. M. Allen each brought patients for group conferences. Some of us, like Dr. Dey, traveled to other cities at our own expense and without pay to teach Individual Psychology and hold conferences.

At the unexpected death of Dr. Dey in 1939, our vice-president, Nahum Shoobs, succeeded him as president of the New York Society --with the encouragement of Dr. Alexandra Adler, always available with her sound advice and guidance, who had come in from Harvard University for a weekend expressly to help us make our plans. All meetings were held in the home of Ned Shoobs. Soon interest was so intense that meetings were held monthly. Such dedicated Adlerians as Asya Kadis, Anna and Noah Brind, the Beechers, Mrs. Frohnknecht, F. Feichtinger, Emery Gondor, Edyth Menser, George Goldberg, Luna Reich, Hattie Rosenthal, Annie Heinrichs, E. Schlessinger, Bernard V. Strauss, Martin Stainmen and many others came to the meetings. Some, like Asya Kadis, came directly from their work in nearby institutions. In 1942, Mrs. Frohnknecht was able to transfer our meeting place from Brooklyn to the Y. W. C. A. in lower Manhattan as it was more centrally located.

Dr. Feichtinger continued at the Long Island College Hospital Mental Health Clinic three days a week. He also served as a neuropsychiatrist at the Metropolitan City Hospital. Added to that, he and Dr. Allen conducted a mental health clinic at the Community Church --without compensation. Feichtinger and the pastor conducted Mental Health Forums. University courses were given by Alexandra Adler and others. From 1938 to 1949, under the auspices of the New York City Board of Education, Ned Shoobs gave four courses a year in Individual Psychology for teachers, besides conducting the parent groups without recompense.

The Beechers carried on their work in New York and Washington, D.C. They established the Beecher Remedial Center in Brooklyn. They, too, organized many groups which met at their home and which they trained in Adlerian theory on a volunteer basis, as did Lawrence Opedal. In addition, Willard Beecher, a stalwart Adlerian, became consulting psychologist at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont. He is still a sound and prolific writer whose articles have been widely accepted, even in such business magazines as Forbes.

Danica Deutsch, with Mrs. Frohnknecht and Mrs. Lazarsfeld, organized lectures for students and lay people at Carnegie Hall and at Hunter College, and being an interesting, intelligent and engaging speaker, DD was kept endlessly busy.

On the fifth anniversary of Adler's passing, heartfelt memorial services were held at our Y.W.C.A. meeting place in downtown New York City.

Has this original Individual Psychology Society of New York been of any value to Adlerian psychology and the Individual Psychology movement?

1. It was the focus and locus for Adlerians. Many Europeans, all of them earnest Adlerians, arriving in New York, were referred to us by Mrs. Raissa Adler. We offered them our hospitality, and they helped renew our impetus.

2. It was an advisory center for many Europeans as well as for Americans. For example, on his arrival in the United States in 1937, Dr. Dreikurs came to a special meeting held at the home of Dr. Dey, where he asked us for our opinion. Should he concentrate his efforts on writing, on lecturing, on practicing. Those familiar with Dr. Dreikurs' career in America can have no doubts as to the value of our advice.

3. It was this organization which Mrs. Frohnknecht incorporated as the present Individual Psychology Association of New York.

### The Chicago Group

In 1937, the present Individual Psychology society was formed by the members of a group that met with Dr. Nita Mieth Arnold. Edyth Menser, secretary of the preceding Adlerian Society that had begun in 1933, took part in forming this new one. Dr. Arnold was selected chairman and classes were organized. For two years popular lectures open to the public were given at the Art Institute of Chicago. The members of the group met regularly to listen to lectures and to discuss problems connected with Individual Psychology and with other psychologies as well.

In this period our tireless Dr. Dreikurs played a leading role in establishing Individual Psychology centers and study groups in Chicago, Gary, and other cities.

After the termination of the widely-distributed International Journal of Individual Psychology in 1937, Dr. Dreikurs courageously began the mimeographed "Individual Psychology News," which later became the Individual Psychology Bulletin, then the American Journal of Individual Psychology, and finally the present Journal of Individual Psychology, established in 1944. Speaking of the "News," Dr. Lydia

Sicher wrote, "The need for it is the greater because so many adherents of Adler's school are scattered throughout the world, and the 'News' might become their means of still feeling united--tied together by a common idea."

### Detroit, Michigan

Through his lectures and writings dynamic Dr. Dreikurs encouraged the growth of study groups in Detroit. Commenting on the active organization in Detroit, where he had addressed an audience of over one thousand teachers, he ascribed this acceptance of Individual Psychology in Detroit to the fact that the Couzen's Fund had employed Adler for a month of intensive lecturing and teaching. He complimented Miss Marie Rasey as the leading exponent of Individual Psychology in Detroit.

### Ogden, Utah

Judge Paul Thatcher of the Juvenile Court credited Dr. Lydia Sicher with organizing an Adlerian study group in Ogden. It was Dr. Sicher who had previously formed one in Salt Lake City.

Groups like those in Detroit and Ogden were formed chiefly by teachers, social workers and parents, who though not necessarily Adlerian, were eager to discuss and study Individual Psychology. Nor were they established in the United States only, for there were groups formed in Canada and even in Costa Rica as well.

In no other five-year period since the tragic loss of Alfred Adler has so much responsibility been placed on so few Adlerians. Above all, perhaps, we cannot forget the selfless devotion of Raissa Adler and the dedicated Sydney Roth.

## THE TASKS OF LIFE II. THE FOURTH LIFE TASK

Rudolf Dreikurs and Harold H. Mosak  
The Alfred Adler Institute of Chicago

Adlerians have dealt extensively with attitudes which enhance or diminish a person's ability to meet the life tasks of work, social relationships, and sex. Now we propose to concern ourselves with the ways in which individuals deal with themselves. The requirements for success and the reasons for failure are fundamentally the same with regard to living in peace with others or in peace with oneself. The lack of social interest, of a feeling of belonging, reduces our tolerance level in dealing with the problems around us; its counterpart, a feeling of inferiority and inadequacy, prevents us from accepting ourselves as we are. To get along with oneself is thus the fourth life task.

One cannot attribute a person's failure to fulfill the tasks of life merely to individual maladjustment. We are faced with a cultural setting which makes the fulfillment of the life tasks difficult. We