

Many criticisms and questions came up, especially on the subject of "creative power." His answers did not seem to satisfy some of Adler's questioners. A pediatrician--a new "Adlerian sympathizer"--declared that the whole concept of "creative power" was a most mysterious one. Adler replied, "Dr. F., the whole concept of human life is a very mysterious one; and creative power is an important part of human life, if you will." More questions on creative power were raised, but Adler answered them and many other questions and criticisms brilliantly.

In the small gathering at the coffee house, I told Dr. Adler that I doubted very much that creative power could counteract the devastating impression made upon a poor school-boy who sees his school-mates enjoying their "brunch"--ham or salami sandwich, orange and other delicacies, while he himself has only a piece of bread or an apple--or not even that. His answer was that the more fortunate schoolmates with adequate social interest would see to it that such poor boys would not go hungry. As I felt that he was evading my question, I asked him whether he did not think that this situation could leave the poor school boy with a memory of humiliation which might be even worse than hunger itself. He promptly replied in a very serious tone something to this effect: "My young man, you will admit that many such humiliated poor school boys have achieved more in life than their more lucky schoolmates. Creative power can do everything against everything. If you want to know how, think about it."

At times, I have thought I have found the answer.

## A FEW PERSONAL MEMORIES OF ALFRED ADLER

by Dr. Alfred Farau, New York, N. Y.

The number of people, students and friends alike, who knew Alfred Adler personally and worked with him many years back in those wonderful pioneer days of Individual Psychology in Vienna is becoming smaller and smaller. More and more of our younger friends never met him in person at all. I myself was only nineteen when I saw him for the first time in his office. At that time, Adler, far from being a legend, the historical figure he is today, was nevertheless highly recognized as the driving force of an ever-growing group of psychologists and educators.

Adler, then in his early fifties, was a man full of vitality and humor. He was rather short in stature and--at first sight--not very impressive. But sitting near him, one was very soon impressed by the mightiness of his forehead and those ever watchful eyes of his. He was a Viennese, combining some of the best human qualities of Old Vienna at its height. He was charming. His sound scientific mind did not keep him from enjoying life to the utmost and, although he was occasionally in a bad mood or even depressed, his vitality and genuine desire to overcome such attitudes of hostility toward others would soon conquer his ill disposition. Then he would tell jokes and listen to them, and he laughed from the bottom of his

heart. Not a Viennese in temper only, he could--and did--speak the idiom of the people, perhaps even better than the truck driver and the mailman. This is certainly one of the reasons why the common people liked him so much when he lectured to them at the "Institute for Adult Education." When he later lectured in New York City, his English, we were told, was still a Viennese dialect. I heard him speak in English once--and I can vouch for the correctness of this statement. Nevertheless, his American students understood him well; his understanding of human nature was stronger than all language barriers.

Adler liked to take long walks, to swim, to sing operatic arias for his friends. And he had a beautiful voice. Like all true Viennese, he often visited the coffee-houses. His "Stammkaffeehaus," the "Kaffeehaus" he visited regularly, was "Café Siller," the place where all Adlerians met so often. It is hard to describe to any foreigner what the Viennese "Kaffeehaus" of old meant to the inhabitants of this city, especially to the intellectuals. It was a most comfortable place where you could sit down for hours, read all the newspapers, eat almost nothing, drink almost nothing and still remain on best terms with the waiters and even with the owner of the Kaffeehaus. Some of the greatest Austrian writers and composers have written works in a Kaffeehaus, and many good ideas of Individual Psychology found their first exploration in Adler's Café Siller. Its owner, Mr. Siller, was at least as famous a café-proprietor as Adler was a psychologist, and often in the evenings the two men played chess together. Adler loved to play chess. No one watching him so and not knowing him would have thought him a man whose work was to make history in science.

When his students discussed a case, he sometimes gave the impression of not listening at all, as if his mind were preoccupied with other things. But suddenly he could turn around, take his cigar from his mouth, and make one short remark--and this one short remark shot to the heart of the case, explaining the structure of a human soul. Again and again we were struck by his psychological clairvoyance.

Yet how cautious and humble he could be! He used to say, "Yes, it may be thus--certainly, it's my opinion. But es kann auch alles ganz anders sein--it may be quite different, too." "I myself once had the following experience with him. I had come to visit him. As he himself opened the door, I saw a lady rush out of his room and depart. All I could get was a glimpse of her. I jumped into Adler's office, sat down vehemently and, without any introduction, started to give him all my intuitive, youthful impressions of the patient. Adler sat in his chair, smoked, and did not say a word after I had finished. "But, Doctor Adler," asked I, deeply hurt by his silence, "was what I said so wrong?" "Not at all," he replied. "You did a very good job. However, you should never judge a patient that way. One cannot understand a human being in a minute--one can be terribly mistaken--you have to be cautious."

Adler considered psychotherapy rather an art than a science. And he had most certainly mastered this art. On one occasion he led me to the conclusion that I had to study more in a particular

area of psychology. I was not very happy about his criticism and said angrily, "If I start today, it will take me three years." "You are right," Adler said. "Why don't you wait until tomorrow? Then it will take you three years and one day." There was a moment of quiet understanding between us. Then we both smiled--and I went to work.

I have often wondered just where Adler's immediate therapeutic effect had its origin. I think it was rooted in his all-embracing optimism. Although I said earlier that Adler was sometimes depressed, this is no contradiction. A highly sensitive and vulnerable human being, often enough attacked and misunderstood by his adversaries in the field of the new psychology, depressive and even bitter moods could temporarily disturb and cloud his basic optimism. But that optimism always broke through again--the very optimism which, at the same time, was itself a source of misunderstanding, the pretext for accusing Adler at times of taking things too lightly, of being too "superficial."

Adler's optimism was his confidence in life as a whole. Nothing would have seemed more absurd to him than the concept of "the absurdity of life," so fashionable today. That life has a meaning beyond any personal present existence was his unshakable belief.

Adler used to point to a little story again and again, the story of the two frogs of Aesop, the ancient Greek fable-teller. "Two frogs jumped around the rim of a pot filled with milk. Suddenly they both fell into the milk. One of them cried, 'That's the end of me,' and croaking, made ready to drown. The other did not give up; he kicked and kicked--until he felt solid ground under his feet once more. What had happened? The milk had turned into butter."

Unbelievable as it may sound, during the time of my stay in the concentration camp of Dachau, I was able to shake many people out of their apathy by telling them this little story. They understood, looked at me, and kicked once more--machten weiter. Of course, there were many cynical remarks as well: "What would have happened if your frogs had fallen into honey... or into vinegar...?" The answer is clear. But it is just these objections which justify the attitude of our kicking frog. The difference between the two frogs is not a difference in life-situation--for both were struggling in the same flood. The difference lies in the conviction of the truly courageous one that the creative process of life must reckon with him too, that he is a part of it! The optimistic frog did not know anything about the substance he had fallen into--he just kept up his fighting spirit. How much more do we human beings know about the substance of life that we have fallen into? Optimism is not the tool with which we will succeed under any circumstances, but it is the only tool by means of which we might succeed at all. We know only too much about the limitless difficulties of life; we know nearly nothing yet of its unlimited potentialities.

When I saw Adler for the last time, in 1935, he had just come back from the United States. It was one of those wonderful pre-summer days in Vienna that nobody who has experienced them can ever forget. The windows were wide open and the warm, soft air came into the room. Adler spoke about the Americans. "They are

eager to learn," he said, "and they are certainly a people of the future. We will have to work with them." We talked about Europe. Hitler was already "der Führer" in Germany. Adler was not very hopeful for the future of Europe. Interrupting me as if the topic disturbed him, he showed me a chapter of Montaigne, whom he liked so much. Finally, I spoke about the growing success of Individual Psychology in the last years. He smiled but, it seems to me in my memory now, a little sadly, as if he would have wanted to say, "It always takes a whole lifetime to reach one's real goal." He went to the window and looked out on the street. Turning to me, he said, "I once told you why I became a physician. I wanted to kill--Death." Then, after a short pause, he added, "You see, I did not succeed. But on my way I found something--Individual Psychology. And I think it was worthwhile."

When we look back today, thirty years after his death, we know that Adler was right.

It was worthwhile.

## OREGON DISCOVERS THE MAN

by Maurice L. Bullard

Ten years ago in Oregon the name of Alfred Adler was only occasionally mentioned, usually being dismissed with a cliché about "will to power." In the ensuing ten years more than 6,000 teachers, counselors, and psychologists have received University training in the educational use of Individual Psychology. One relatively small community has effectively trained more than 1200 parents in ten-week courses. From this group have emerged thirty trained volunteer leaders and a skilled coordinator.

Several family counseling centers are in operation, one of which draws several hundred participants at each weekly session. An accepting climate has been established in another community, making possible a very successful special education class for elementary school children with extreme behavior problems. This class is being used by the Oregon State Department of Education as a demonstration project.

Why did this movement flourish in the face of adversity? What was the manner of this man, Alfred Adler, who has inspired the use of his principles in so many Oregon schools?

In the first place, Oregon, like the rest of the world, was ready and seeking practical assistance in easing the problems of troubled children and their parents.

Secondly, two fortunate coincidences brought the great works of Adler from dusty shelves to eager hands of students and parents.

Heinz and Rowena Ansbacher's single-volume systemization of the principal parts of Adler's works brought them into popular usage again. In addition, their skilled editing of the American Journal of Individual Psychology, a periodical currently accepted in almost 400 University libraries, has established an aura of recency to the Individual Psychology movement.