

ALFRED ADLER IN FRANCE IN 1928

It may be of interest to all persons interested in the evolution of psychology and, especially, of Individual Psychology that, in connection with the Adler CENTENARY, *The Individual Psychologist* presents a document discovered among old French periodicals by Joseph Meiers. It appeared in the *REVUE de PSYCHOLThERAPIE et de PSYCHOLOGIE APPLIQUE'E*, Series IV. Vol. 38, No. 1 (page 7), Jan. 1929.

Individual Psychology

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(translated by Joseph Meiers, New York)

Professor Adler, Vienna University, is the creator of Individual Psychology, known under the name of Adlerian. Recently he stayed a few days in Paris before going to the United States, where he is to give a series of lectures. When he returns to Paris, he will, at the end of June (1929), expose the general plan of his work. The professor takes a special interest in our "Revue" and in our Psychotherapy Society which he considers as an avant-garde of the French psychology movement. Meanwhile, we are happy to give our readers the "guiding lines" of Adlerianisme, which is an antithesis of Freudisme, at least inasmuch as the latter was "deformed" by the exaggerations of some overly enthusiastic (Freudian) disciples.

The child that is born into the world represents, among the Social Mass (the people), a "unit" full of potentialities which all too often are not fully utilized. One should consider the little individual "problem" (which these infant-units present in relation to the great problems of the community); one should do research into the degree of usefulness of each of these two component parts (infant vs society) and to elevate this usefulness to a maximum. In education, the most important point is that of "social usefulness." Each and every individual contains in him some "point of inferiority;" also, the fear of not being able to succeed, or to "remain what he is." This inferiority is compensated for by "superiority": the desire, the instinctive need for success, to grow (*s'élever*). It is only through struggle and effort that qualities can be developed. He who has never suffered cannot become a "useful being."

The importance attributed to heredity, to atavisme, is being exaggerated as compared to environment (*milieu*). The child has to be given directives, he has to be surrounded by a network of social possibilities which he can or would want to evade.

Thus, the overall aim of the "school" of Individual Psychology is: to improve a bad environment of the child; to try to neutralize the effects of such environment; to prepare a (suitable) "environment," a veritable nourishing "broth" for defects and for good human qualities.

Who, if not the educator, has a better opportunity of knowing the child, of working with him, of equipping him for life, to strengthen his tastes, his inclinations, his legitimate ambitions? Let's begin to educate the educators. The

school teacher, in his turn, will exercise his influence upon the family that often can be neglected or ignorant. In this way, and in this way only, one will avoid this social danger: children who are disoriented, who are abnormal (in their relation to the community)—“problem children.” A number of children would have their problems solved if we were to achieve their social adjustment or readjustment. What we call our “virtues”— what are they, after all, but a perfect social “adjustment?”

These are the principal points of what we have been able to note during a long and interesting talk which Professor Adler has kindly granted to the reporter of our “REVUE.”