

The Influence of Individual Psychology on the International Scene

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It is not easy to assess the influence of Individual Psychology. Adler himself tried to visualize the future of his school. In 1933, he wrote in the introduction to my book *Dir Einfuehrung in die Individual Psychologie*:

“It must be about twenty years since I tried to foretell the future of Individual Psychology in some words as these. Individual Psychology, which is essentially a child of this age, will have a permanent influence on the thought, poetry and dreams of humanity. It will attract many enlightened disciples, and many more who will hardly know the names of its pioneers. It will be understood by some, but the number of those who misunderstand it will be greater. It will have many adherents, and still more enemies. Because of its simplicity, many will think it too easy, whereas those who know it will recognize how difficult it is. *It will bring its followers neither wealth nor position*, but they will have the satisfaction of learning from their opponents’ mistakes”

This rather pessimistic prediction of Adler was, at that time, shared by all of us. It became even more justified when, at the time of his death in 1937, the lowest point in the reputation of his psychology was reached. The activities of his followers stopped in Europe. They were dispersed all over the world, each trying to carve a niche for himself. But even these gallant efforts did not increase their influence. The *International Journal of Individual Psychology*, published by the Chicago group, was discontinued; the Child House organized in Los Angeles collapsed. The Mental Health Clinic in New York discontinued its work. Many Adlerians all over the States did not disclose their identity out of fear of professional discrimination. Upon my arrival in New York in 1937, I was warned, as I was in Chicago, against admitting my identity as an Adlerian. The Chicago group dwindled, and the Los Angeles group had also to begin from scratch. The leading text books on psychology hardly mentioned Adler, and if they did, he was given credit only for the Inferiority Complex and the Will to Power (and Jones deprived Adler even of that, by giving Freud credit for having discovered the Inferiority Complex). For most authors, Individual Psychology was merely an historic and not too significant phase of psychology. Professional Journals refused to publish papers by Adlerians because they were “out-dated”

during the period of psychoanalytic monopoly in psychiatry. Long after individual Adlerians and their groups succeeded in establishing themselves and spreading their activities, did the professional community acknowledge that Adlerian Psychology was alive and gaining increasing influence.

The development of Individual Psychology was not much different outside the United States. After the death of Crookshank, the British group lost and has not yet regained its influence. The Experimental Adlerian School in Vienna collapsed with the death of its director, Professor Oskar Spiel; the Greek group ended its activities with the death of Moraitis. The Austrians, the French, the Dutch and the Swiss group barely resumed their activities after Hitler. It seemed that Adler's pessimistic anticipation was justified. His followers did not achieve either wealth nor position at that time. Many of Adler's ideas were, however, accepted and spread by the neo-Freudians, such as Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan and Erik Fromm, without mentioning Adler or giving him any credit. It was a hard uphill struggle, indeed, and what we have achieved today seemed at that time impossible and improbable. Today, we know that Adlerian Psychology is on the march, increasing its influence all over the world, particularly in the United States. Adlerians have, indeed, gained status and position as well as its concomitant financial rewards. A hundred years after his birth, Adler's contributions in the field of education, guidance and therapy, are becoming more widely recognized than during his lifetime. Now most textbooks give a rather accurate account of his contribution and significance. In contrast to other schools, Adler's basic principles are as valid today as they were at his time — no, even more so since they fit in our democratic era. His ideas survived the test of time.

How can one measure his influence today? It seems that accurate information about the activities of Adlerians would perhaps be a reliable basis for evaluating their influence. For this reason, most leading Adlerians were asked about their activities and their influence. Almost all replied. However, the descriptions of their activities lend themselves to different interpretations. It appears that the number of activities alone does not provide an accurate picture of the Adlerian influence in various areas. While my assignment was to present a picture of the Adlerian influence of today, I am in no position to make an objective judgment. In many cases, the information which I have may be inaccurate or incomplete, so that I may come to incorrect conclusions. Others may not agree with my yardstick of evaluating their activities. My report is a first attempt to provide a review of our influence; it may serve as the basis for further discussion and may require revision. It would be most desirable and helpful if such corrections would be sent to the editor of this Journal, Dr. Manford Sonstegard. There are probably many individual Adlerians and groups whose activities we have not known.

Before presenting the picture of the activities in the various countries, some general remarks may be in order. It is interesting to note that the relationship between the Adlerians and other leading psychological schools ranges from

friendly co-existence and even cooperation to complete rejection. It seems that the stronger an Adlerian group is, the less it is inclined to be "open-minded." Open mindedness usually implies a certain amount of eclecticism, to which such groups are inclined.

Another characteristic element can be found for the distintional activities of various groups. During the peak of Adlerian influence in Europe, before fascism and Naziism, the Adlerian groups, particularly the leading group in Vienna, engaged in two kinds of activities: regular weekly sessions of the association of Individual Psychology, and open child guidance sessions, *Erziehungsberatungsstellen*, where parents and children were counseled in front of a large group of parents and teachers. Besides these general activities individual members gave classes or held regular private meetings, as did Adler, and applied their Adlerian orientation in their work at clinics or institutions. Foremost of these was Adler's clinic and the classes of Adlerian teachers at the teacher's seminar of Vienna.

Looking at the contemporary scene, one notices that certain groups continued some of the traditional activities of Adlerians and omitted others. It is difficult to explain why the old Adlerians, almost without exception, did not continue the group counseling of parents which, in my opinion, is one of the outstanding and characteristic features of the Adlerian movement. Their program usually consists only of lectures. Even where the new group of Adlerians concentrates on demonstration and open counseling, some of the old members do not participate and may even express some objections. Lectures are usually abstract and do not provide training for professionals. As there are new groups emerging, they provide open demonstrations and systematic and supervised training of professionals and lay leaders.

An example of the trend in organized Individual Psychology is the development in Israel. There we have three groups: one, the original Society which holds monthly meetings, open to lecturers of interest to Adlerians; second, the Alfred Adler Institute which trains workers in all professional fields, conducts a clinic for children and adults, and provides service to a parent education center and governmental agencies. Members of the Institute teach at Bar-Ilan University and serve as consultants to school and agencies. The third group, The Association for Better Human Relationships, consists of lay people. It has managed to influence political parties, the official leadership of government departments, private industry, education and parent organizations and individuals. It is difficult to assess the influence of each of the three groups. The influence of psychoanalysis is receding; but, the impact of two new approaches imported from the States, *i.e.*, Sensitivity Training and Behavioral Therapy, makes itself felt.

In describing the situation in each country, according to information available, we shall start from the East. In India and Australia, small groups have been formed recently. Israel has been mentioned and in Greece, the newly formed Adlerian Society, an outgrowth of the successful Individual Psychology summer school in Crete, already seems to exert a remarkable influence,

particularly among teachers and social workers. Besides, more than 60 mothers were counseled in groups during one semester, and the members worked with two different school units. Monthly meetings of the Society deal with important Adlerian concepts and practices.

A new group has been started in Cyprus by a former student from the University of Arizona. Both in Greece and in Cyprus no school of thought had previously penetrated education; therefore, the Adlerian approach is filling a vacuum. In Czechoslovakia interest in Individual Psychology is growing. In Vienna, Adlerian influence is strongest in the child guidance clinics of the municipality of Vienna, and in the department of child psychiatry of the University Clinic. However, the influence on the teachers diminished with the death of Professor Spiel. The Adlerians are moving more and more to an eclectic position and behavioral therapy is becoming more prominent. There is no group counseling of parents and teachers.

In Switzerland, the influence of Freud, Jung, Maeder, Bènswanger, and Azondi are still strong and some Adlerians, especially the older ones, seem - according to the report received - not sure of their own significance. However, through recent workshops and courses, the influences of the Adlerians, especially in education seems to be growing and is also extending itself to the teachers of Lichenstein and Luxenburg.

In Germany, a new Alfred Adler Society was founded in 1953, which, however, did not exert much influence until recently when the society was reorganized and began training of professionals in seminars and workshops. The influence of psychoanalysis, of Schultz, Hencke and of Jung, is still most pronounced, although there is a tendency toward eclecticism. With the greater self-confidence of the Adlerian groups, a friendly rejection of the above approaches is noticable. In several German cities, courses for professionals are given, and the Society is growing very fast.

In Holland psychoanalysis is still dominant in psychotherapy while Rogerian and Behavioral approaches are growing among psychologists and counselors. In education, the influence of Individual Psychology is perceptible, but the name of Alfred Adler is seldom mentioned. The Dutch group is ready to cooperate with others "without abandoning the basic principles, but the Society is not accepted by professional groups because the membership consists, to a large extent, of lay people." Therefore, there is no contact with other groups. The Society offers a two-year course in Individual Psychology for lay people, but there is no training in therapy. There are monthly lectures, additional courses and weekend conferences. In both Denmark and France, Adlerians have made inroads into education. Psychoanalysts and neo-Freudians dominate psychiatry and child guidance in Denmark, but there are also groups following Wilhelm Reich's Organ-therapy and some Jungians. The small Adlerian group finds opposition to its activities, but has made some inroads in education. In France, Adlerians seem to exert their influence in education and counseling while psychoanalysts dominate psychotherapy. The Adlerians have good relations with the Jungians and minor approaches, but not with the analysts. Leading Adlerians participate

in professional activities, and the Society publishes a bi-monthly magazine. It seems to be significant that in study groups interviews with parents and children are reported for discussion through tapes.

In England the Adlerian Medical Society seems to be inactive, and the Adlerian Society for Individual Psychology concentrates its activities on lectures. Some leading Adlerians are active in lectures to outside groups. There is one child guidance center which has a limited audience, and there are study courses and weekend seminars, but they are not designed to train professional people. The International Newsletter of Individual Psychology is published in England. In South and Central America, Adlerian activities, which never were very strong, ceased in Argentina and Brazil, while in the West Indies (Antigua and Jamaica) some of the interest in Individual Psychology still remains. There are reports of activities by Adlerians in Italy but we have no information or details.

It seems that the advance of Adlerian Psychology was greatest in the United States. To gauge its influence is utterly impossible. There is first such a rapid increase that any statement made at one moment is outdated in the next. New groups are constantly formed, and more and more universities are teaching Individual Psychology and training professional workers. Our emphasis is on training - training of professionals as well as of lay people. One can well assume that at the present time, about 20,000 people study Individual Psychology, declare themselves openly as Adlerians, and apply the Adlerian technique in their dealing with problems, be they lay people or professionals. This is probably only a small percentage of people who study our books, without any participation in our organized activities.

These developments exceed our keenest expectations and confront us with new problems. In the past, Adlerian societies had their main activities in regular lectures and small study groups, similar to the weekly sessions in Adler's home and conducted by members of the Societies. This had been the pattern of the past. For the sake of more systematic training of professionals, the American groups established special Alfred Adler Institutes, like that in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, and most recently in Minneapolis. We had assumed that training of Adlerians would have to be carried out by special institutes. This is no longer true, since now an increasing number of universities and colleges provide Adlerian training. It is now possible to work for a Masters or Ph.D. degree while at the same time train in Adlerian Psychology, as at West Virginia University, the University of Arizona, Texas Tech. University, University of Oregon, and many smaller colleges. Many more universities have some courses in Adlerian Psychology, and we can assume that the greatest number of new Adlerians will be stimulated through their university studies. Since we are not aware of all the places where Adlerian Psychology is taught, we would be interested in hearing from them. We only know that their numbers are steadily growing. At the present time, we hear only by chance about such courses given at a university or college.

Another new development has far-reaching consequences. It is the training for lay people who bring Individual Psychology into the community, either through parents' study groups, or through other community activities. As the example in Israel has shown, such lay groups can actually affect the community and its leaders at large.

Obviously, the influence of Individual Psychology in the States is steadily growing. It is contesting for its place in therapy, but even more in counseling and education, with several newly developed approaches. The influence of psychoanalysis in psychiatry and Rogerian Client-centered counseling is steadily waning. In opposition to their relatively slow procedures, several action methods have developed, such as the Behavioral therapy of Wolpe and Skinner, Reality therapy of Glasser, Transactional therapy of Byrne, Gestalt therapy of Perls.

Recently, Sensitivity Training and T. groups began to spread throughout the country, as well as Synanon and other group activities. Some of them are close to us; some are philosophically and practically opposed to our position. It is hard to estimate which of the various approaches will have the dominant influence in the country. Individual Psychology has a good chance to make itself felt everywhere.

The Alfred Adler Institute in New York is training students, teachers and some nonprofessionals in psychotherapy, counseling and in group therapy. The Alfred Adler Mental Hygienic Clinic and the Individual Psychology Association of New York is open-minded, interested in, and receptive to other approaches. Their faculty members are represented in some of the various other groups where they express their opinions.

One of the strongest groups of lay people exists in Delaware in its organization of Study and Action. The many parents study groups exert their influence not only among the parents, but also in the schools. Four couples moved from Delaware to Washington, D.C. and started an Adlerian movement there. Within a half year, they had about 500 people enrolled in their study group programs. In both states, efforts are made to establish parent education centers.

The group in Vermont may well move into a pivotal position of Adlerian influence in the States. The seat of the most prominent Adlerian theoretician, it recently developed one of the strongest potential influences within the whole country, through the series of TV tapes for counselors and for teachers. The University of Vermont uses the tapes for credit courses. The State Department of Education in Vermont is fully behind us, and is financing the training of Adlerian counselors. The community organizes study groups and the University develops training courses.

West Virginia University is training counselors and doctoral candidates in the Adlerian approach. The Guidance and Counseling faculty at WVU is more strongly Adlerian than any other group in any university in the United States today. In West Virginia, as well as in Pennsylvania and in Delaware, colleges and universities, as well as school systems, are asking for consultants from West Vir-

ginia University. Morgantown has an active community child guidance center and Catholic parochial schools are used for the practicum program, as well as are some public schools.

Chicago has three Adlerian groups. There is first the Alfred Adler Institute. Its main function is to train Adlerian practitioners in the fields of psychotherapy, counseling, education, pastoral counseling, group therapy, psychodrama, etc. A study program leading to a Certificate is provided. The Institute also publishes books and pamphlets and is a central distributing agency for Adlerian literature and tapes. It also provides educational consultants and counselors for the Parents Education centers. In connection with the Institute, the private office of Adlerian therapists and the psychiatric department of St. Joseph Hospital accepts a limited number of psychologists for internship and training. Second, the Individual Psychology association holds regular meetings for lectures and discussions. And finally the Parent Education Association maintains centers and study groups in various communities for parents and also courses in Individual Psychology for lay people.

While the Midwest Society for Individual Psychology is confronted with a strong Behavioristic and Rogerian approach in counseling and therapy, its influence is stronger in the field of education. School counselors conduct parents' study groups in the area of St. Louis and Southern Illinois. Workshops and conferences are held regularly. Also in this geographical area, the Family Education Association of Champaign, Illinois, conducts family group counseling, special parent-teenage groups, and study groups for parents.

Two cities in Ohio are involved with individual psychology. Dayton has a strong Adlerian group and succeeded in working with whole school systems, primarily in Mad River. The leading psychotherapists, psychiatrists and psychologists, arranged a study program with the Alfred Adler Institute of Chicago which sent staff members at regular intervals. Members of the group teach in various colleges. In Cincinnati, Edgecliff College and Longview Hospital arranged Adlerian workshops and courses. While there is no formal Adlerian organization there yet, Adlerians in the community work with school systems.

A most spectacular growth and influence took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and in Tucson, Arizona. In Minneapolis, three groups of activities seem to have developed. The first was the general training of Adlerian oriented social workers, counselors and parents, who attend workshop or training institutes in large numbers. The second group is the Minnesota Society of Individual Psychology, which promotes all activities. Many parent-study groups and six Parent Education Centers are functioning, one in connection with the Juvenile Court which sends most of their cases to the center connected with it. The third group is the Alfred Adler Institute which is not only training an increasing number of professionals, but a growing number of faculty members for the Institute. It provided the staff for the Parent—Education Centers.

The Adlerian group in Tucson, Arizona, was most threatened by the great enthusiasm generated by the sensitivity groups. While these attract people who

are more permissive and less responsible, the Adlerians seem to be a more stable and rational group. They have become the most powerful group in the community. Their suggestion of a drug seminar generated a request for about \$150,000 in federal funds. The apparent power of the Adlerian group is sometimes startling. They are very involved in many state and national projects, and demonstrations of Adlerian counseling have been given in 30 out-of-state presentations during one year.

The group organized about 60 parent discussion groups (for about 600 parents), 2 family counseling centers, and classes for about 300 teachers a year. Thirty Adlerian trained elementary school counselors graduated within one year, and 14 additional during the summer; 3,700 elementary school children were involved in counseling, and 4,000 parents; 3 doctoral candidates completed this study as qualified Adlerians. Adlerians held membership on the board of education, family counseling agency, State commission on counseling and guidance, advisory committee for EPDA consultant of U.S. Office of Education, etc. This is an example of how much can be achieved in a two-year program by one man.

In several states Adlerians are beginning to make their influence felt. In South Carolina and in Florida a shift in the organization of counselors toward acceptance of Individual Psychology is noticeable. In Houston, Texas, the Adlerian movement is dislodging the influence of the leading Jungian group, but the Behavioral therapists also exert a strong influence. The group in Hawaii is primarily organized around the family education centers and Adlerian members on the faculty of the University. Most recently the counselors in the State of Utah discovered that Adlerian philosophy fits the philosophy of the Mormons. A flourishing Adlerian center developed at the Brigham Young University, supported by psychologists trained in Oregon. The Family Education center functions there under the title of Open Family Forum, which now is organized in several sections, using video tapes and closed circuit TV. The superintendent of a school system wants to have study groups in every school, and the Juvenile Court is interested in group discussion.

Oregon has the distinction of having organized, for the first time in our history, a state-wide Adlerian Society. Besides the Adlerian courses given at various universities, the outstanding contribution of the Oregon group was the organization of many parents study groups throughout the state, centered in the larger communities and towns. The *Oregon Newsletter* provides important information about the Adlerian movement in the States. It set the example for such communications, followed by other groups.

Los Angeles had one of the first Adlerian Centers in the States. At present, its influence is not strong, but steadily growing. Some new schools, very close to us, have begun to emerge, such as Reality therapy of Glasser, Transactional therapy of Byrne and Gestalt psychotherapy of Perls. The office of the superintendent of schools of Los Angeles County is promoting Adlerian approaches which are

partly supported by government grants. The Los Angeles State College of San Fernando Valley will become a center for Adlerian training and service to a family education center.

In the Bay area, around San Francisco, two Adlerian groups exist. One, around the Western Institute for Research and Training in Humanics, is gaining influence both through classes at a university and through regular guidance center meetings. The other group exerted its influence less through group meetings than through the work of individual members.

Still north of this area there is activity. In the State of Washington, we have no formally organized groups, but two centers of Adlerian activity, one in Wenatchee, around the College, the other in Seattle. New powerful groups are developing in Canada, one in Toronto and the other in Vancouver Island. The group in Toronto, only recently formed, is getting support from wide circles, primarily in the school systems. In the past, the Rogerian method has been dominant in schools and is now replaced by the Adlerians. A new threat has developed through the discovery that cerebral disfunction is the cause for reading difficulties. This group and the sensitivity groups are probably becoming the major obstacles to Adlerian influence. The many parent study groups maintained by the Toronto Association for Individual Psychology are spreading our philosophy as are an increasing number of counselors and teachers who have been exposed to Adlerian training and accept it enthusiastically. The group in Vancouver is not yet officially organized, but is gaining support rather quickly primarily after some highly successful workshops.

It is hoped that before long I will be able to write a supplement of this report, not only correcting whatever I missed or misrepresented, but adding the many new activities which will develop within a short period. We need particularly to hear about all the classes on Individual Psychology which are given at the various colleges and universities.