
EDITORIAL COMMENT

Dear Friends:

Your editor had the privilege and pleasure this summer of visiting various Civilian Public Service Camps that are under the supervision of the American Friends Service Committee. It was most gratifying to note the favorable reaction to Individual Psychology by people who are trying hard—and often under duress—to live peacefully with their fellowmen. The difference of personal opinions in regard to the present war did not prevent mutual understanding between the psychiatrist and the group on the methods which could be employed in the solution of conflicts in personal interrelationships and in group living.

We had similar experiences with other groups who are interested in establishing better conditions for human cooperation. The support of IP by leaders of the Cooperative Movement and of a great number of Unitarian ministers, especially of the Humanist Branch, is significant in this regard, as it demonstrates that they realize the value of our method for their own purpose. This seems to indicate that wherever people strive for democracy and social justice, they may sooner or later discover the value of IP techniques.

Our increasingly frequent and close contact with various ideological groups confronts us with the necessity of clarifying our own position in regard to philosophies, creeds, political and sectarian groups. Only too easily could Individual Psychology be regarded as another sect, creed or religion. It is true that behind any technique stands a definite philosophy; but Individual Psychology nevertheless is only a *technique*, not a creed or dogma. It is neither christian, pacifistic, socialistic or radical. If we are asked "Do you believe in physical punishment," we must answer that that is not a question of "belief." One must observe and watch the effects of any particular method in dealing with a conflict situation. In doing so, we come to definite conclusions as, for instance, to the relative value of physical punishment. Adlerian psychology provides only—but it does provide—a technique for solving problems of living together, for improving and preventing human failures and maladjustments. Any person or group looking for adequate answers can learn this technique and apply it. As any technical device, Individual Psychology can even be used by those who wish to abuse it for their own private purpose, for domination and exploitation. However, who abuses psychology will experience the consequences. It is in the nature of our technique that it can be employed to full advantage only by those who wish to achieve understanding, cooperation, peace and harmony. Without necessarily identifying ourselves with any group or movement, we will be able and are obliged to serve their useful purposes by giving advice in regard to methods which they can use.

R. D.