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The Development of Individual Psychology in Brazil

RUDOLF DREIKURS, M. D., CHICAGO

Brazil today is a country which has recently freed itself from dictatorship and is striving to establish political democracy and to improve its economic and social conditions. Professional circles become increasingly interested in educational and psychological problems, physicians in psychiatry and psychosomatic medicine. Although there exists no organized Psychoanalytic group in Rio de Janeiro, a great number of physicians are influenced by the writings of Freud and the psychoanalysts. On the other hand, the Individual Psychology Association, founded nine years ago, held for many years regular meetings, and a number of physicians practiced the techniques of psychotherapy developed by Alfred Adler. Dr. Januario Bittencourt, the president of the Association, was the leading spirit of these activities. Dr. Danilo Perestrello, who studied Individual Psychology with Dr. Murillo de Campos, is the new president of a group of young psychiatrists which formed the Centro de Estudos Juliano Moreira; he published an excellent discourse on Individual Psychology. Dr. Antonio da Silva Mello, professor of Internal Medicine, was the first one in Brazil to become interested in the problems of Psychosomatic Medicine, many years ago. He had studied with Wilhelm Stekel in

Vienna and was responsible for my first visit to Brazil in 1937. Although he himself—not being a psychiatrist—does not belong to any school of psychology, he accepts Individual Psychology as the most practical approach to human problems and says so explicitly in his books and papers. As chief-editor of the *Revista Brasileira de Medicina*, the medical journal with the greatest circulation in Brazil, and as author of the most popular Brazilian books on Psychosomatic Medicine, he wields considerable influence in medical circles. He has already published a number of articles by Adlerian psychologists in his *Revista* and intends to continue doing so to an even greater extent in close cooperation with the Individual Psychology Association to which he gives moral support and to which a great number of his assistants belong as members, the leading ones being Dr. Olavo Rocha, Dr. Granadeiro Neto, Dr. Aguelo Quintello Filho, Dr. Pedro Jose Ribeiro de Carvalho and Dr. Raphael Galvao Flores.

Dr. Silva Mello, as head of the Nucleo Biologico of the Getulio Vargas Foundation invited the writer again for a series of lectures and round table discussions, to be given in Rio de Janeiro under the sponsorship of the Foundation, beginning in June, 1946. Although the interest in the lectures seemed to be great, unfavorable conditions soon led to their discontinuation. There was, first, the opposition of those who felt that psychological and educational techniques are premature as long as economic and sanitary conditions keep a vast number of children almost starving, in malnutrition and disease, and as long as parents believe in spirits and cannot be reached by reason. Many professional workers in the field firmly believe that all available money and energy should first be directed toward an improvement of economic and social conditions before any further efforts be made in regard to the improvement of psychological and psychiatric services. Then there was a crisis within the Foundation itself. The whole scientific staff, including leading Brazilian scientists and experts resigned in protest against what they called "dictatorial management" of the Foundation. Other organizations took over. The Individual Psychology Association sponsored a class on Psychosomatic Medicine which was frequented by a number of psychiatrists and many leading exponents of various medical specialties. The Faculdade Nacional de Filosofia of the University of Rio de Janeiro invited the writer as visiting professor for a class on "Personality Development". A number of psychiatrists participated in a special training course in Individual Psychological techniques. Another group, composed of child psychiatrists, psychologists and teachers studied child guidance techniques. This course led to the establishment of the first child guidance clinic in Rio, sponsored by the Individual Psychology Association. The clinic is conducted on a collective basis, Dr. Olavo Rocha, Dr. Marialzira Perestrello, Miss Iva Waisberg, professor of psychology at the Teachers' Normal School, assisting Dr. Benjamin Gasper Gomes and Mrs. Vera Street in conducting the clinic.

The most important factor in establishing an understanding for the Adlerian technique was a post-graduate course for physicians which the Centro de Estudos Paulo Cezar de Andrade arranged in Rio's largest hospital Santa Casa da Misericórdia. This course on Psychosomatic Medicine was coupled with a course on gastro-intestinal disturbances given by Professor Antonio da Silva Mello; fifty to a hundred doctors participated. Dr. Silva Mello presented cases from the clinical point of view and in the following class the same patients were analysed from a psychological point of view. (A report on these cases, written by Dr. Olavo Rocha who assisted in this course, will be published in one of the next issues of the Bulletin.) It was an interesting coincidence that Dr. Mariano Barilari of Buenos Aires visited Rio on the occasion of the Medical Congress and took over one class hour from Dr. Silva Mello, in which he presented the Adlerian point of view in psychosomatic medicine. Dr. Eric Wolff of New York, passing through Rio de Janeiro, also took over two hours from Dr. Silva Mello's class. He discussed the influence of emotion upon the physiology and pathology of the stomach. All these various contributions made these courses the more impressive and stimulated great interest.

Professor Austrogesilo, the dean of neurology in Rio, invited the writer to present a paper on "Psychology in Medicine" at the Academia da Medicina, on which occasion the large attendance showed again the great interest which Brazilian physicians have in these problems. The First Inter-American Congress of Medicine, held in Rio in September, 1946, had a large participation of psychiatrists and neurologists, especially from the United States and from Argentina. A large group of psychoanalysts came from Buenos Aires. The writer also presented a paper on "Training of Organic Disorders" with a review of the general trend in psychosomatic medicine.

The Individual Psychology Association of Rio de Janeiro gained the interest and support of physicians, educators and interested laypersons. Scientific papers will appear in the *Revista Brasileira da Medicina* and will be reprinted separately as pamphlets of the Association.

Adler's books, "The Science of Living" and "Understanding Human Nature" appear in consecutive new editions. The writer's books on marriage and on education have been accepted for publication and are in the process of translation. It seems that there will be demands for physicians and educators from the United States, trained in the method of Individual Psychology, to visit and to assist in the development of clinics and centers for study. Several of the Brazilian doctors plan to come to the States for further study of our technique.