

Individual Psychology in Germany

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Three years after the end of hostilities, communications from Germany are still sparse and unorganized. Since the readers of this journal have a particular interest in knowing what remained of Individual Psychology in Germany and how it fared under Hitler and after, we are presenting the following information, incomplete though it undoubtedly is.

Dr. Leonard Seif's circle in Munich continued its work throughout the reign of Hitler without interruption, stressing communal feeling and endeavoring to bring problem children back into the community. From this point of view, Seif treated not only the individual child but the whole family. He attempted to bring parents and children together again. With a staff of assistants he gathered problem children and adolescents into sports, music, and play groups, in which he re-educated them for socially useful living. On principle, his child and adolescent guidance was always conducted in the presence of others so that the problem cases would experience recognition from a group and thus gain in self-confidence. Seif succeeded in continuing his efforts by changing the name from "Individual Psychology" to "Community Psychology" (*Gemeinschaftspsychologie*). At first he had to struggle with difficulties such as being denied space in school buildings for his educational guidance clinics. Eventually, however, a school official with a Nazi party badge took his side. Although never a party member, it appears that Seif projected many of his own ideals on to Hitler, which would of course make his situation easier. This, together with his ability to operate successfully in Individual Psychology with the consent and cooperation of the Nazi regime, leaves an unfortunate question in the minds of many. His work flourished in later years when the Labor Front and the National-Socialist Social Agencies, beginning to show interest in Community Psychology, sent their social workers to Seif for training and gave financial support to his guidance clinics. Seif did much to undo and minimize the damages and exaggerations of Nazi education, especially with regard to its theory of heredity of personality traits. It was always a great pleasure for him to save a child from being sent to a school for the feeble-minded. Seif, now eighty-two years old, is still active and still conducts guidance clinics in Munich.

Regarding Seif's co-workers, the following is known. Dr. Lene Credner, neurologist, lives in Holzhausen. Frau Lüps does psychological counseling in Munich. Frau Trübswetter specializes in cases of speech disturbance. Kurt Seelman who is the author of *How to Educate School*

*Children for Life*¹ and *Child and Sexuality*² has recently been appointed principal of a school. Alfons Simon separated from Seif in 1933, probably for political reasons, having always been a violent enemy of the Nazis, and at present holds an important position with some government agency. Among Individual Psychology homes for children the one in Söcking under the direction of Frau Dr. Sofie Freudenberg was dissolved, but that of Line Schmidt and Modesta Timme still exists in Schwalenberg, Schaumburg-Lippe.

In Berlin, the German Institute for Psychological Research and Psychotherapy (*Deutsches Institut für Psychologische Forschung und Psychotherapie*) was founded in 1936 under the direction of Dr. M. H. Göring, a psychiatrist, and cousin of Hermann Göring. Before the ascent of Hitler, Dr. Göring was listed as president of the Wuppertal-Elberfeld Association of Individual Psychologists. He can be considered a pupil of Seif with whom he underwent a training treatment in the 1920's. After 1933 he approached the psychology of Jung. Dr. Göring is credited with having made the continuation of psychotherapy in Germany under the Nazis possible and in doing so also having provided some counterweight against the stress that Nazi psychiatry had placed on heredity. Thus his function in psychiatry, though of greater importance, was similar to that of Seif in education. Again like Seif, Göring had considerable difficulties at first, until in September, 1939, his Institute received semi-official character through support of the German Labor Front for cooperation in industrial efficiency and personnel relations. The Institute was housed in the quarters of the dissolved German Psychoanalytical Society, which were destroyed by bombs in the winter of 1944-45. Today in Berlin there are some psychotherapists who live and work together in a building maintained by the official Sickness Insurance Agency (*Krankenkasse*) which refers patients to them. Göring is reported to be living somewhere in the Rhineland at present and about to become de-nazified.

Then, there is Dr. Zeise who in 1933, as director of the Army Psychological Testing Station in Munich, expressed himself strongly in favor of Adler. According to Zeise, Adlerian theory had been alive in German military psychology from its inception in 1926, even though this was not commonly known, and any personality study for selection purposes "without the inclusion of Adlerian views was unthinkable for us." In later years Zeise withdrew from army psychology and achieved fame as an industrial psychologist for the I. G. Farben Company. Together with Dr. Vetter he administered a foreman selection and training program which,

¹So *Schulkinder für ihren Lebensweg erziehen*, Luzern, Switzerland: Verlag des heilpädagogischen Institutes.

²*Kind und Sexualität*, publisher not known.

for its uniqueness and pioneering features, has since the war become the object of a special study by Morris S. Viteles of the University of Pennsylvania. According to this study "The basic materials of the training program were cases supplied by supervisors and foremen. These were analyzed to demonstrate how . . . knowledge of individual differences among employees could be used to advantage in handling the problem presented by a given employee. Other situations were used to illustrate the drive for recognition and prestige characterizing the human being." Today Zeise is with the Bavarian Ministry of Education, concerned with the psychological selection of elementary school teacher candidates.

Finally, Dr. Johannes Neumann has been heard from. From 1927 to 1931 he had published several articles in the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Individual Psychologie*. In 1938 he published a book *Life Without Anxiety*³ which was entirely Adlerian. The name of Adler appeared in it, however, only twice, quite incidentally, and certain concessions to National-Socialism were made. Today Neumann justifies himself by stating, "I had only the choice either not to publish the book in Germany or to continue teaching Individual Psychology under Nazism without mentioning Adler. It seemed to me that it was in the spirit of Adler to present the cause even if one could not mention the name. The book has helped many people." During 1942 Neumann received a call to the above-mentioned Göring Institute to work in depth-psychological testing. After the war he resumed his psychotherapeutic practice in Wetzlar-Garbenheim. His book is about to appear in its sixth printing, this time including a detailed introduction on Adler's Individual Psychology.

These are the fragmentary reports on Individual Psychology in Germany today. No word has been received regarding any formal reorganization as has so vigorously taken place in Austria.

³*Leben ohne Angst*, Stuttgart-Leipzig: Hippokrates Verlag.