

THE FUTURE PROGRESS OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY

We have received a number of contributions regarding the present situation and the possible development

of Individual Psychology. We are glad to present some of them in this issue.

H. L. Ansbacher, Ph.D., Brown University:

The teaching of psychology assumes much greater proportions in this than in any other country. General psychology is one of the most popular courses in all colleges, and courses in Mental Hygiene and personality are taught at many high schools. The American Psychological Association has 2,937 members and associates, a large number of whom are engaged in teaching psychology. They represent the organized science of psychology, and any attempt to further the dissemination of knowledge of Individual Psychology should take this group well into consideration.

How can these academic psychologists be approached? The overwhelming majority does not adhere to any psychological school. Rather they stress the common truths as they are revealed from all approaches. They are mildly behavioristic, even as Adler was behavioristic to a certain extent; they appreciate the contributions made by Gestalt psychology; they have found the typological approach to personality as unsupportable by research; they are interested in psychoanalysis, but regard it with skepticism; and a great many have recognized the value of Individual Psychology. The basic common denominator of these psychologists is that they view psychology largely as a quantitative science which endeavors to find facts in such a way that they can be verified by other investigators. This is experimental psychology in the broadest meaning of the term.

In 1933 Alfred Adler wrote a brief paper entitled "Individual Psychology and Experimental Psychology" (Character and Personality, Vol. I, pp. 265-267). In it he concluded: "Experiments do not assume a more scientific appearance and in fact look only like a shadow of reality. Nevertheless, ... they can provide good results for stu-

dents trained in Individual Psychology ...; they also allow them to understand the individual, since the results which have been reached can be further tested. It is possible to demonstrate that they agree with other forms of expression and with the individual personality, as well as to determine the unvarying distance from the ideal social feeling."

With these words Adler showed the way toward the synthesis of Individual Psychology with experimental findings. But in the nine years which have passed since then, as good as nothing has been done in this direction.

Actually, the vast amount of factual data which is continually produced is full of implications for Individual Psychology. By using this material a textbook of Individual Psychology might be written along the following lines: All of the general statements found in the Individual Psychology literature, particularly in the writings of Adler, should be wrought together in a systematic manner. Each of these statements should be followed by references to and citations from the general psychological literature as they are pertinent.

Such a book would be a welcome aid to the many psychologists who regard Adler's common sense approach as the most helpful, but regret that it is based entirely on the case history method. Valid truths can in many cases be stated in quantitative terms. Such a book would reveal that the original Adlerian tenets are exceedingly well supported by subsequent quantitative research, a result which the old Adlerians would expect, but which would make an appreciation of their importance much easier for new students. It would also show that the general trend is much more in accord

with Individual Psychology than is usually assumed by the Adlerians themselves.

The preparation of this book represents an immense task, but at this stage of the development of psychology in general nothing better could be done to further the knowledge of Individual Psychology than to give the

profession of psychology a book which would speak its own language and which would make it possible to concede to Individual Psychology in college and high school courses the place it deserves on the basis of its superior theory. At the same time the book could be sufficiently non-technical to be used in less formal courses and discussion groups.

Mrs. Raissa Adler, New York:

Dr. Adler lectured in 1936 and 1937 in Long Island, Medical College, Brooklyn, New York, on Individual Psychology. The lectures were excellently attended. Dr. Adler liked these lectures especially. The students took examinations in In-

dividual Psychology. Dr. Adler reported that many of them made excellent contributions. Unfortunately, the time was too short to give sufficient roots to this new science, so that it might have been made compulsory for the students.

Robert C. Fagan, Mahwah, New Jersey:

...the organization of classes and study groups is undoubtedly the most effective way to promote the teachings of Individual Psychology in our present fear ridden, competitive, and demoralized society.

My experience with teachers and children has convinced me that the so-called problem child in the school can quite readily understand the cause of his anti-social behavior and will improve if he is treated in the proper manner. It is much more difficult to make a teacher realize that she, in any way, is a contributing factor in problem behavior cases. It is strange that pupils are frequently reprimanded for doing the same acts that a teacher does with regularity. The teacher who fails to complete her assignments as instructed will be most apt to demand punctuality from her pupils.

In every case of impudence, indifference, or acts of so-called insubordination that has come to my attention, I have found a child who felt that the teacher was unfriendly or unfair. (I often think the child correct in his judgment.) A bit of clarification and a visit with the teacher in the office always makes work more pleasant and profitable for the child.

It is fashionable to discuss and em-

phasize individual differences in courses of education, institutes and faculty meetings, but how many teachers have real understanding of individual differences in her group? The goal of the average teacher is academic accomplishment as measured by grades or marks. In fairness to the teacher, she is a victim of a system in which parents are competitive and demand marks or grades for their children, especially for those who receive high grades. A child is considered cooperative when he obeys commands quickly or remains passively submissive and does assigned tasks in a way which pleases the teacher. It is difficult for teachers to see that they have a part in cooperative activity other than dictating orders or administering retaliatory measures for lack of conformity to their standards of conduct and workmanship.

Formal education, in the Elementary School, the Secondary School, or the University, seems to be largely a glorified quiz program in which the student learns many facts, of doubtful value, which are unrelated and which in no way appear to give interpretation or meaning to life as a whole.

Until we have people in our teacher training institutions who are better qualified to select applicants and

better qualified to train teachers, the outlook is not bright.

I feel that it is essential to establish a modest teacher training institution in one of the larger cities, an institution in which every faculty member would be properly adjusted to give understanding of human behavior and conduct to prospective teachers. The curriculum could be set up to meet the requirements of non-educators in control of state educational policies and procedures but the actual teaching could be done in accordance with Individual Psychology principles. Of course extreme care would be necessary in the selection of the faculty, because it is difficult for me to reconcile the statements and opinions of some professed Individual Psychologists with the statements and ideas of Dr. Adler. I want to follow Dr. Adler's techniques because his ideas have worked in the cases studied by me.

I also feel that if we are sufficiently interested and united as a group, we could, with sacrifice and effort, establish a teacher training institution for teachers that would meet state requirements and develop socially-minded teachers. What more fitting monument to a great teacher? Teachers from such an institution would soon be in demand and other schools of education would follow with similar instruction.

Dr. Sibyl Mandell, Stockton, California:

I am giving courses this year, following Dr. Adler's precepts of using our experience, our Individual Psychology views, and our "guess" technique. It is new to most of them and they seem interested.

...Fundamentally, we may have different approaches, but there is much to be learned from other groups. A certain so-called "eclecticism" need not necessarily be superficial, although it takes such a form in a shallow mind. Eclecticism is just as good as the eclectic who practices it; so are Individual Psychology, Christianity, and a few others I could mention.

A new dawn must follow the existing nightmare if humanity is to endure. The principles of Individual Psychology must be developed and strengthened among the peoples of the earth if life is to be worth living. It is our job to help the unfortunate, the ignorant, or those who seek light, peace, and contentment. The results that would be achieved seem worth any effort expended. What are we really going to do about the situation?

Could we produce a faculty staff competent and willing to operate the type of educational training institution that we deem essential? How many of our group will be willing to undergo the sacrifice, resistance, and ridicule that would be associated with the venture at the outset?

There certainly is one or more people willing to endow such a worthy project, if the matter was properly presented. Some of the people, who have received direct or indirect benefits from their knowledge of Individual Psychology, would render assistance to the cause. It can be done. Our potential energy needs to become kinetic if we are to make progress.

Our actions will be much more convincing than all our words.

As to intelligence tests, after my lecture concerning them in our Individual Psychology society on the Schwarzenbergenstrasse, I consulted with Dr. Adler himself. I had previously refused to give my talk until Adler returned from America. I said, "Well, do you disagree?" He answered, "Fundamentally, we are in agreement. You use tests in our sense as a part of the pattern." The lecture appeared in the Individual Psychology Journal under the title of "School Problems and the Family Constellation." An understanding of such psychology as underlies human behavior as well as a clear under-

standing of statistical concepts is necessary before one can appreciate

the values and the limitations of any objective test.

Sydney M. Roth, Chicago:

That task of dissemination presents problems not unlike those which have had to be met by schools of thought in other fields. I am reminded of the type of effort made for that purpose by the followers of Henry George. It would no doubt be enlightening and helpful to make a study of all of the means used by that group to help spread their ideas. There is one mechanism used by them which you might want to add to the methods suggested in this Bulletin.

In considering the possible usefulness to Individual Psychology of this mechanism to which I am referring, one recalls Dr. Adler's great interest in the schools and that much of his hope for the widespreading of Individual Psychology was connected with his opinion that the principles of Individual Psychology could be employed fruitfully by school teachers. It is superfluous to add that there is hardly a school teacher who could not apply some of those principles with great benefit to herself and her class. Since school teachers almost invariably have one or more students who create disturbances of some sort which interfere with the functioning of the classroom group and which place a considerable strain upon the teacher, it seems reasonable to believe that, because of their direct need for it, teachers could definitely be interested in some means which offered them a way of dealing specifically with the problem children in their classes. If, at the same time, this help could be offered the school teachers under circumstances which enabled them to fit it into whatever free time they had and which did not require them to make special trips to specific meeting places, it could reach certain additional large numbers of them.

We are aware, too, that at present only an extremely limited number of people are qualified to teach the principles of Individual Psychology.

Therefore, a method which extended as widely as possible the efforts of the present individual psychologists would be very desirable.

With these things in mind, it might be possible to organize an Individual Psychology Correspondence Division directed to school teachers--those very school teachers who now feel burdened with the necessity of coping with problem children and their disturbing behavior. There are various ways in which a course by mail might be operated; and the decision as to the best method with which to begin would no doubt grow out of the discussion among those persons interested in the idea.

I believe a copy of the letter sent out by the Correspondence Division of the Henry George School of Social Science might serve as the stimulus for such a discussion. You will observe that a recipient of the letter automatically becomes an enrolled student when he answers the questions enclosed in the letter. It may be that the Correspondence Course idea could serve to overcome the limitations on dissemination through attendance courses imposed by limited time, great distances to travel, and lack of a larger number of persons now trained and qualified to teach Individual Psychology.

May I take this opportunity to tell you how pleasant it has been to witness the development of the Individual Psychology Bulletin. You, your staff, and the Association are certainly to be congratulated and deserve the thanks of all of those interested in the subject. It was with great regret that Mrs. Menser and I ceased the publication of the International Journal of Individual Psychology, following the Anschluss and the death of Dr. Adler. It was Mrs. Menser's hope that some means of carrying on the work performed by the Journal might be undertaken. It was gratifying indeed

that you and those associated with you picked up the torch; and that each

succeeding issue of the Bulletin finds it burning with increasing brightness.

Nahum E. Shoobs, New York:

1. The lecture system is too one-sided. It does not allow for give and take.

2. Therefore, we run a half-hour lecture followed by discussion from the floor. The lecture illustrates one principle, giving the Adlerian view on the subject. For example, the principle of masculine protest is developed and illustrated in a talk entitled, "Can we be happy though married?"

We have a lecturer plus a discussion leader who knows how to encourage listeners to express their views.

3. Near the close of the meeting we ask the listeners what problem they would like to take up next week. The audience then chooses the problem for the next session. We accept their decision but ask every one to bring in one question on the subject.

Willard Beecher has used this method successfully.

4. Sometimes we take smaller jobs. A successful buyer in a large department store, an insurance agent, and a merchant and their wives were interested and met to study Individual Psychology from a business viewpoint.

5. A college was having difficulty

Max Strauss, M.D., Lakewood, New Jersey:

On several occasions Dr. Adler decided to give extra talks to physicians, school principals and others at the Long Island School of Medicine.

Then and on various other occasions I noticed that after the first or second talk the group became smaller. Unless the talks were given as a series of lectures as those at the MacMillan Theatre under the auspices of Columbia University, where the name and reputation of the institution carried much weight, the private groups dwindled rapidly. Especially was this true

with some of its students. One of the doctors met the dean to discuss some of their problems. He interviewed several students.

6. The Y.W.C.A. on our invitation sent us the problems troubling their members. From these problems we developed a set of sex discussions, illustrating Adlerian principles in regard to sex.

7. From our experience, we feel that the key to teaching Individual Psychology will begin with our deeds and services. Theory will come later. Example: In the 1920's, an Adlerian who has since turned Freudian, interested a school principal. An informal guidance bureau was set up in that school. Once Dr. Adler addressed the Parent Teachers Association. The principal was transferred to another school and later became a superintendent. Ten years later, a new junior supervisor offered to conduct courses for teachers from the Individual Psychological viewpoint. And in spite of the Freudian climate and control of this city school system, the superintendent, mindful of the successful Adlerian school experiences, accepted the offer. So in spite of all opposition, Individual Psychology is being taught and practiced in that city.

where the groups consisted mostly of physicians. It is not necessary here to go into the details and reasons for the behavior of this particular group.

In my own experience I have given talks for three years in this resort town of Lakewood near New York City. It was a most difficult task to keep even some small part of the group together.

Individual Psychology is essentially the knowledge of human nature, and in view of the fact that every individual

has some of that knowledge it is reasonable to expect a greater individual resistance to this knowledge than to any other. This knowledge can be more readily spread or imparted when one feels the need for it. If an attempt is made to do so regardless of this fact, then it is taken as if the knowledge the individual possesses is negated, for many of us feel masters of our own knowledge of human nature. That accounts for the fact the Individual Psychology although so fundamentally useful is so little universally known as such.

The above description of my experience should not be construed as a means of discouraging one from undertaking to

Dr. Erwin Wexberg,
New Orleans, Louisiana:

I agree that knowledge essential for improved living ought to be spread, and every form of organization serving this purpose is to be considered useful and desirable.

I have contributed some in this respect, in books and articles. However, I do not believe it advisable to let the lay public in on scientific debates and to propagandize one theory as against another. It serves no useful purpose to teach social workers, teachers, or parents that psychoanalysis is all wrong, even though we believe it is. They are not equipped to check up on what we are telling them. Discussions of this kind ought to be limited to psychologists and psychiatrists who know--or are supposed to know--the conflicting view. For similar reasons--and not because I hesitate to admit to be an "Adlerian"--I do not mention except casually, in my pertinent publications, the name of Adler. What we intend to do is to give the lay public a valuable piece of applied science, i.e., of knowledge which we honestly believe to be closer to the truth than other theories and which can immediately be put into practice. Never mind who said it first! We would probably be amazed to see, after some study of bibliography, how often we "ought to" quote Pesta-

spread the knowledge of Individual Psychology. It serves one very well, however, when confronted with these difficulties not to meet with the consequences of disappointment.

I might add that the imparting of the knowledge of Individual Psychology is an individual art which every one of us who considers himself an Individual Psychologist employs in his every day contact with people. The question may be put how can one become an Individual Psychologist if one does not get the instruction in a group? The answer is one gets little of the real meaning behind human actions unless it is given individually to the one who seeks it.

lozzi, Rousseau, or Komensky, to mention only a few great educators of former centuries. And yet we do not quote them, simply because we are much less concerned about priorities than about teaching what we believe is the truth.

To label the organized endeavor which we are interested in with Alfred Adler's name serves only to stigmatize it with the flavor of sectarianism, which does not help at all. Millions of people are applying today conceptions and terms conceived by Adler, knowingly or unknowingly. To tell them that they are Adlerians or ought to be, would only have the effect in many instances of making them wary because somebody warned them awhile ago against Adler. That does not do much harm to Adler, and anyway, let his biographers and us friends of his take care of his reputation as a man and as a great teacher. What we have to do, first of all, is to spread useful knowledge, no matter where we got it from. It is neither customary nor necessary in popular writing and teaching to confirm by exact quotations everything we say. Of course, in scientific publications, it is a different matter.

For these reasons, I still do not see much point in organizing Individual

Psychological units. Instead, let us introduce knowledge which we believe to be important and useful wherever we find already existing lay organizations mainly interested in practical psychology, knowledge of human nature, or education. The fact that in such

circles we will also meet Freudians, Jungians, Rankians, Semanticists, and what not, makes it all the more interesting. No use killing one another. They might benefit from what we have to say and vice versa. There is probably some truth in their mistakes, too.

Here we have various points of view. The suggestions are important enough

to demand more discussion. Please write us your opinions.

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WHAT WE ARE DOING

Nahum E. Shoobs and George Goldberg made a great contribution to Individual Psychology with their new book, "Corrective Treatment for Unadjusted Children." That is an important step toward making teachers aware how to use Individual Psychology in improving their own efficiency and in helping the children. One of the most valuable aspects of this book is the skill with which theory and practice are linked so that the spirit behind each move becomes apparent and the implications of each theoretical principle for practical use are clearly visible. A more detailed report of this most valuable book will appear in the next issue. We hope that in the meantime our readers will make themselves acquainted with this new publication on Individual Psychology.

R.D.

In the Sunday Times-Union, Jacksonville, Florida, September 14, 1941, the following note appeared:

"The many friends of Professor and Mrs. Leonard Deutsch will regret to learn that they left yesterday for New York City, where Mr. Deutsch will continue research work for the collection of folk songs which he is planning to publish.

"During their brief residence in Jacksonville, Dr. and Mrs. Deutsch were distinct additions to the community. Professor Deutsch, famed Viennese musical pedagogue and double-keyboard piano artist, gave numerous lectures on his method of sight-reading and of

the teaching of piano at the Jacksonville College of Music for the local Music Teachers' Association, and for several other local musical organizations, in addition to which he was heard in many piano recitals.

"Mrs. Deutsch, psychologist and teacher of the theory of Individual Psychology founded by Alfred Adler, of whom she was a pupil, lectured for the Parent Teachers Association of Lee High School, before a class at the Jacksonville College of Music, for various social agencies and before numerous other organizations."

We wish Dr. and Mrs. Deutsch much success in their work in New York. There are many interested in the particular way of teaching music which Dr. Deutsch has founded in accordance with the principles of Individual Psychology. We hope that he will succeed in making this technique available to our teachers all over the country.

Miss Regina Seidler is giving a class about the pre-school child as part of the home defense action at the Union Neighborhood House in Auburn, New York.

This class is for women who will do volunteer work in the kindergarten and in play and nursery schools.

The class was received so very enthusiastically that after the first lecture Miss Seidler was invited to start a new class after the completion of the first.

Mr. Guimaraes, former secretary of our Rio de Janeiro group, sends the following report about the Sociedade de Psicologia Individual de Rio de Janeiro:

"The group meets on the first and third Wednesdays every month in order to study theoretical aspects of Individual Psychology and concrete cases. It has been led successively by Dr. Lourenco Filho (end of 1937 and 1938), by Dr. Januario Bittencourt (1939 and 1941) and by Dr. Luiz Viana (1940). The yearly activities begin in the latter half of March and finish in the first half of December.

"The group is now providing for issuing a quarterly bulletin in which its activities will be stated. You surely will receive it as soon as it is published.

"As ever, Dr. Januario Bittencourt is one of the leading spirits of the group and is now our president. The vice-president is D. Celina Nina, Director of the Kindergarten of the 'Instituto de Educacao' of Rio de Janeiro, now working with Dr. Lourenco Filho in the 'Instituto de Estudos Pedagogicos.'

"The group has more than thirty members; several of them are physicians."

Mrs. R. Frohnknecht informs us about the recent activities of the New York group. The Individual Psychology Association of New York City began on April 8, 1942, a very promising series of lectures at their Club Rooms at the International Center, Y.W.C.A., 34 East 17th Street. This is the first time that lectures have been held for the public outside of the group.

The lectures are as follows:

April 8 ... Willard Beecher,
"Can We Live Together?"

April 15 .. Martin Stainman,
"Thoughts about Criminology"

April 22 .. Annie Heinrichs,
"Does the World Owe Me a Living?"

May 6 ... George Goldberg,
"How to Get Along with Parents"

May 20 .. Dr. Frederic Feichtinger,
"How to be Happy though Married"

June 3 .. Nahum E. Shoobs,
"Be Thankful for your Inferiority Feelings"

June 17 .. Danica Deutsch,
"Check up on Yourself--Early Memories and Dreams"

Stephanie Kratovil sends the report of the Individual Psychology Association of Chicago:

On February 13 Dr. Dreikurs spoke on "Problems of Neurosis." In March Charles Adler, Dr. Nita Arnold, Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs, Mrs. Marjorie Keenleyside and Dr. Harry Sicher participated in a symposium on "What is Morale and What Shall We Do About It?" In April Dr. Irving Lee, of Northwestern University, spoke to the group on "Prejudice." Following the lecture of Dr. Lee, who is the author of a book on Semantics, "Language Habits in Human Affairs," members of the Association compared some of Dr. Lee's statements with the Individual Psychology point of view.

Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs is at present conducting a class in Principles of Individual Psychology, which held its first session on April 13. An advanced class is contemplated.

On the fourth Friday of each month the group invites teachers, educators, and psychologists to informal discussion of educational problems. These meetings offer an opportunity for free discussion of problems with which we and our co-workers find ourselves confronted in our practice. Emphasis is placed not on demonstration of instructive cases but on checking our approaches and receiving practical suggestions for the solution of difficult problems.

The Association has at the present time eighteen active Central Members, seventeen Inactive, and twenty-six Associate Members. Our lectures are open to invited guests.