

IDA LOEWY, "If I frequently started for Vienna and I always arrived in Prague, I would know that I had taken the wrong road; and of course I would be more careful the next time. On the road of education, however, we rarely reach our goal, yet we do not change our direction."

Mother noticed Jimmy's behavior, but she did not understand the meaning, the "idea" behind it. Jimmy's bad table manners expressed his feeling of insecurity, because he believed that he had lost the love of his family, as there was a new-born baby in the house.

This basic fact was revealed to the mother. She then understood the meaning of Jimmy's protest. After realizing her error, she changed her method. No more nagging on her side and no more trouble making on Jimmy's part; but mother had to explain to Jimmy that he did not need to have bad table manners to regain the feeling of security. Her new aim was to assure Jimmy of the love of his family. He then could accept and observe the routine of good table manners. Mother and son were now on the right track to reach the common "goal" - good manners.

IDA LOEWY, "Do not center your attention upon the symptoms, but seek the goal they tend to. Expose this "goal" to the child and thus help him see the pointlessness of his misbehavior."

"DER GAUNERVATER"

(FATHER OF THE ROGUES)

In memory of my friend Hugo Sperber.

Among the many famous Viennese attorneys who since the introduction of jury trials to Austria put their knowledge and eloquence at the disposal of the outlaws of society there was none more original as a person, non a more understanding aid to delinquents than Dr. Hugo Sperber. And with pride he called himself a disciple of Alfred Adler. These delinquents (the Viennese called them "Gauner") knew what a friend they had in this man and these stepchildren of fortune bestowed on him the fond nickname "Gaunervater" (father of the rogues).

Sperber, like any modern criminologist, did not recognize the existence of a born criminal. He considered law breakers as a product of social factors expressed in family, education, unemployment and so on, and thought of crime as an expression of social discouragement. As defense counsel he saw society sitting next to his client on the bench, the society "which lets the unfortunate become guilty", as he used to say. It never occurred to him however, to shroud this basic thought about criminology behind high sounding phrases or philosophical explanations while delivering his defense before the court. He realized that that would impress neither the judge nor the jury. Instead, he preferred to "ridenterem dicere verum", to jestingly speak the truth, and to uncover the false pathos of the prosecution with a joke, moving the judge to understanding and leniency. Such stunts became known all around the courts. They were told and retold, and some published. Some, not well acquainted with Sperber, considered the philosophic humor of the great criminologist as the quaint jokes of a wit. They were mistaken. Sperber's humor was spontaneous and was effective just because it was so unlabored.

To the prosecutor who once denounced one of Sperber's clients as aggravating his guilt by committing a burglary at night, Sperber answered, "Burglary at night is especially dangerous. If this man had committed this burglary by daylight, I am sure the prosecution would reproach him for aggravating his guilt through audacity. Gentlemen, when is the proper time for committing a burglary?"

Sperber himself liked to compare his defense with the architecture of Loos. Loos was the famous Viennese architect who fought for simplicity of design, and Sperber likewise hated the use of trite phrases and longwinded verbosity which many of his colleagues liked to employ. The next episode will serve as an excellent illustration of this. The Austrian penal law for theft punished severely second offenders. Without regard for the value of the stolen object (even if it be a few pennies) it provided a term of one to five years, if the offender had been convicted of theft twice before and less than five years had elapsed since his release from jail. Sperber had to defend such a client who had stolen a chicken because he was hungry. And Austrian law made it a crime with a heavy punishment, except in cases where the court recognized extenuating circumstances. The prosecutor made a long and brilliant speech and asked for a long sentence to set an example. Sperber rose to deliver his defense. "Gentlemen of the jury, one chicken." he said and sat down. The jury understood, and passed a sentence of six weeks in jail.

But Sperber was more than a brilliant lawyer, and showed his ability as criminologist in his publications. His first, Die Lüge im Strafrecht (The Lie in the Penal Law) is small in size, but rich in thought, and important in the application of ideas of Individual Psychology. Unfortunately this paper is hard to get at the present time.

In his second work Todesgedanke und Lebensgestaltung (The Thought of Death and the Adaptation toward Life) he proves himself a great disciple of his great teacher Alfred Adler. The inferiority complex is regarded by him not as just the odious privilege of the sick, of the child, the feeble or the oppressed, but as simply human. The awareness of human frailty and imperfection has left its mark on man ever since he started thinking. The thought of death stands behind fate as a lasting, everpresent threat. It can be escaped temporarily, but it will never disappear.

We all struggle against death. Striving for glory and greatness is one form of this struggle to compensate for the primary inferiority complex. But greatness and glory are not always expressed in wholesome and useful achievements. Thus Herostrates set fire to the temple of Diana in 356 B.C. in an effort to become immortal through this memorable destruction. Others, despairing of the ability to master their own lives, may delude themselves by trying to dominate other people's lives. In such manner the fear of death may lead directly to cruelty, to the desire to kill, and to crime.

Mankind also found other means of compensation by using the technique of depreciating death. As man has no way of subjugating death, he transforms his weakness into might. Hence Sperber considers Christianity and its disregard of worldly wants, and the Nirvana of Buddhism as gigantic attempts to overcome the fear of death.

Even suicide is quite frequently a sign of the desire to master one's own life. This may seem a paradox, but Sperber is able to substantiate this with the following quotation from a letter of a Bluebeard, who, sentenced to die, begs his mistress in a letter to procure poison

for him. He writes, "Imagine, sweet, what triumph it would be to me, to hold on till the last moment, and yet to escape the executioner."

Sperber was a confirmed optimist, like all true disciples of Adler. He closes his pamphlet with the idea that the progress of human culture will diminish man's fear of death, and with it his inferiority complex. But only true progress can have this effect. The discovery of a new method to fight cancer is true progress, the invention of a poison gas is not.

In a French Journal in the summer of 1937 I expressed the hope that Sperber would expand the ideas in his pamphlet in a bigger volume. This wish cannot be granted any more. This fighter of injustice, this confirmed democrat - Sperber belonged to the Austrian Social Democratic party ever since his youth - was sent by the Nazis to the concentration camp Buchenwald during the summer 1938. There he died one year later at the age of 54. His body succumbed - his mind could not be broken, as fellow prisoners who were fortunate enough to be released could testify. Just before he died he gave a description of the concentration camp, "Beasts are guarding humans."

At the time when such things will be nothing but a nightmare that is past - then with the victory of the humaneness over desire for might the social adaptation toward life in the sense which Hugo Sperber gave it will win over the idea of death.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mrs. Sofie Lazarsfeld who recently arrived in New York, asks us to greet her friends and sends her best regards.

Dr. Erwin Wexberg recently went to Washington D.C. on invitation of the U.S. Public Health Service to give a lecture on "Senile Deficiency Diseases".

Mr. George Goldberg, Secretary of the New York Group of I.P. sends us the following report of the meeting held April 18th, 1941:

Dr. Brind gave a detailed exposition of her work with underprivileged children ranging in age from two to five years. After observing the children at play and at work, Dr. Brind instructed parents and teachers in the proper method of handling and solving their problems with the children.

The Chicago Group heard at the May meeting a lecture by Dr. Nita M. Arnold on "The Importance of Imagination." - The April meeting of the Educational Group was a symposium on "Educational Approaches to Democracy". Speakers were a teacher, Dr. Charles Adler, a social worker, Otto Wander, a group worker, Charles Ansell, and a sociologist, B.B. Gardner. This meeting was especially interesting and stimulating and brought forth some valuable ideas and formulations. - The May meeting was a symposium on Group work with Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs, Elly Redwin and Murray Gitlin as principal speakers.