

1911 - 1961

EDITORIAL

Fifty years ago, in February 1911, Adler declared his independence from Freud, to found his own school of Individual Psychology. It is well to recall on this occasion what essentially was the issue as stated by Adler at the time.

Adler objected to the libido theory, but in particular also to the ensuing emphasis on repression and its subsidiary constructs, such as fixation, projection, regression, sublimation, and complex. With some of these he found fault because they "take recourse to an analogy from physics or chemistry." In general he found them to be reifications and to place a topological view above a dynamic view.

Adler epitomized the issue this way: "Is the driving factor in the neurosis the repression, or is it, as I should like to state it in neutral terms for the time being, the deviating, irritated psyche, in the examination of which repression can also be found?" The psyche is the real "working" force, and it is "intent on the future."¹

The term psyche denoted to Adler what is today called the self or ego, and what he eventually came to describe by style of life. Only from the assertion of an active, future-oriented self, to which all partial processes are subordinated, were all the further developments in Adler's Individual Psychology possible. Today this basic assertion is shared widely beyond Adlerian circles.

When the suggestion was made that this Journal commemorate the 50th anniversary of Individual Psychology, the present issue was already virtually complete. Yet it seems to lend itself well to such a purpose, reflecting, as it does, the extent to which the conception of an organismic, active, future-oriented self has moved into the focus of psychological concern. There is the symposium on phenomenological conceptions of personality, the core of which, according to Landsman, is the self, and which, according to Kuenzli, aims at a science of the style of life. There is the discussion of the review by Rotter who found that today even the most conservative Freudians pay greater attention to ego psychology and other Adlerian conceptions. There are the papers by Progoff and by Lynn which, although on quite different levels, both deal with the psychological necessity of an adequate life philosophy, a necessity deriving from the future-orientation of the individual, which includes the quest for meaning.

Whatever changes the next 50 years may hold, it is difficult to believe that they will bring any fundamental alteration to this viewpoint of the unitary, active, forward-looking individual, asserted by Adler in 1911.

¹ALFRED ADLER & CARL FURTMUELLER (Eds.) *Heilen und Bilden*. Munich: Reinhardt, 1914. P. 104.