

ALFRED ADLER IN THE GREAT SOVIET ENCYCLOPEDIA

We are presenting below the article on Alfred Adler in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, third edition. Published in March 1970 in the first volume of a work which will eventually consist of 30 volumes, this article is of special interest as a description of Adler in Russia in this year of the 100th anniversary of his birth. We follow it below with the Adler entry in the preceding edition, published in 1949, and with a letter to Adler from a Leningrad medical society, dated 1928.

The contrast between the two encyclopedia entries is sharp. In 1970 we find a very adequate account of Adler. Though it is still brief, it is three times longer than the previous entry, although the present edition will have the same number of words as the earlier edition (*New York Times*, March 24, 1970). The author, D. N. Ljalikov, describes the Adlerian dynamics as the striving toward an "idea-goal" of "fulfillment and personal excellence." Together with the individual's manner of realization, this forms his "unique 'life style.'" For Adler personality is transactional and "social in its formation." Recognizing that Adler "was in fact not a disciple of Freud," the author finally points to similarities of Adler's system with Gestalt psychology, existentialism, and what he calls the "social Freudians." One only wishes that the concepts of the creative power of the individual and of social interest, as well as Adler's practical work in his child guidance centers, had also been included.

The 1949 entry in its absurdity represents only a passing phase of the view of Adler in Russia, during the Stalin era. The 1928 letter from Leningrad shows that another 21 years earlier, Adler was held in sufficient esteem to be made an honorary member of a medical society.

Again 15 years earlier, around 1913, several of Adler's most important papers of that time had appeared in translation in *Psychotherapy, Moscow*. They are articles which have become part of *Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*—the chapters on Individual-Psychological Treatment of the Neuroses, Syphilophobia, Dream and Dream-Interpretation, and On the Role of the Unconscious in Neurosis. We owe this information to B. P. Kanevsky, chief, international book exchange department, Lenin State Library,

Moscow, who adds: "Adler's works are widely represented in our Library in German, English, French and Russian."¹

—EDITOR

THIRD EDITION, 1970², ³

ADLER, ALFRED (Feb. 7, 1870, Vienna—May 28, 1937, Aberdeen), Austrian physician and psychologist, founder of the system of Individual Psychology. At first a follower of Freud, he later founded a school of his own which exerted its greatest influence in the '20s and led to the creation of an international association of Individual Psychology (1924). In 1932 he left Austria and lived mostly in the U.S.A. Although in fact he was not a disciple of Freud, he has in common with him the thesis of the major role in the psyche of an urge and of the unconscious. In his work, *On Organ Inferiority* (1907), Adler formulated the concept of disease as an upsetting of the balance in the relationship of the organ with its milieu, for which the organism strives to compensate. The principle of compensation which is one of the mainstays of Adler's concepts is related to the concept of homeostasis which was developed later. Compensation is interpreted by Adler as a universal mechanism of psychological activity. As the basis of all activity, Adler considers the striving for fulfillment and personal excellence which can be realized through compensation of the original feeling of inadequacy. This idea-goal, although it is only vaguely felt by the individual, becomes the center for the formation of the personality and determines the psyche. The character of the goal and the means to realize it form a unique "life style." The inadequacy of the personality, however, manifests itself only in relation to the milieu; from this Adler concludes that personality is social in its formation.

A number of features of Adler's system were developed by other schools of psychology also: e.g., the thesis of the supremacy of the whole over the single psychological elements—Gestalt psychology; principle of compensation—in the writings of the German existentialist, K. Jaspers; and the idea of attaining "a healthy society" with the aid of therapy—in the writings of the so-called social Freudians (E. Fromm, K. Horney).

¹B. P. Kanevsky, personal communication, June 26, 1970.

²We wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Kanevsky for having made a copy of this article available to us.

³For the translation of this article and of the entry from the 1949 edition we are indebted to Eugene Lepeschkin, M.D., University of Vermont, College of Medicine.

Bibl.: Individual-psychological treatment of the neuroses [in Russian], Moscow, 1913; *Praxis und Theorie der Individualpsychologie*, 4th ed., Munich, 1930; *Menschenkenntnis*, 5th ed., Zurich, 1947; *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler*, New York, 1956.

Lit.: Orgler, Hertha, *Alfred Adler: the man and his work*. 2nd ed., New York, 1950; Way, L., *Alfred Adler: an introduction to his psychology*, London, 1956.

D. N. LJALIKOV.

SECOND EDITION, 1949

ADLER, ALFRED (1870-1937)—reactionary Viennese psychopathologist-idealist, pupil of Freud, since 1912 the head of a separate direction of *psychoanalysis* (see), so-called Individual Psychology. Adler falsely considers as the moving psychological force the urge to dominate, which according to him results from a feeling of inferiority. The Adlerian school falsely interprets the process of personality and character formation, considering them the result of an inner protest against “unworthiness.” The psychopathology of Adler is completely unscientific and distorts the laws of personality development and their social basis. The psychopathology of Adler combines with the reactionary philosophy of Nietzsche, with its “will to power,” and is used as the “psychological basis” of the ideology of imperialism.

LETTER OF HONORARY MEMBERSHIP, 1928^{4, 5}

R. S. F. S. R. THE LENINGRAD SCIENTIFIC-MEDICAL CHILD STUDY SOCIETY.
LENINGRAD, FONTAKA, No. 5, TEL. 6-06-99 November 1928

Professor Alfred Adler
University of Vienna⁶

Dear Professor:

As a token of the high esteem of your merits in the field of investigation of the individuality of the child, the Leningrad Scientific-Medical Child Study Society has elected you as Honorary Member at its annual meeting of 1928.

While informing you of this, the administration of the Society politely requests your cooperation in its future problems, as well as information regarding the results of your latest work.

President of the Society: (Griboedov), Professor,
Vice-President of the Psycho-Neurological Academy
Secretary of the Society: (Scherschen)

⁴Original in German.

⁵Made available by the courtesy of Kurt A. Adler, M.D.

⁶Adler was not a professor at the University of Vienna, but a Dozent at the Pedagogical Institute of the City of Vienna.