

PAPER DETAILS

TITLE: PSYCHOLOGY IN TURKEY

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PSYCHOLOGY IN TURKEY

Philosophical and religious (Islamic) tendencies predominated in the psychological and educational activities of Turkey until about the First World War. In 1908, after the Constitutional Revolution and with the influence of the great Turkish scholar and sociologist Ziya Gökalp, who was its intellectual leader, a reform had taken place at Istanbul University. This was designed to bring its educational system into line with that of Western Universities. As one feature of the new program German professors in several different fields were appointed in the University. In 1915 Professor G. Anschütz came to Turkey to teach psychology. At the end of the War, the German professors had to leave Turkey. It is known that Professor Anschütz wanted to teach psychology as an experimental science as was done in Germany at the time. He had brought with him several pieces of apparatus for that purpose. But unfortunately, because of the shortness of the period of his activity in Turkey, little evidence of his efforts remained.

At the close of the War, a young Turk, a district governor, with a very strong interest in artistic and abstract thinking went to Geneva and worked there for two years, at the "Institut de Jean Jacques Rousseau". After his return home in 1919, he was appointed professor to the then vacant Chair of Psychology at Istanbul University. The courses which Professor Şekip Tunç offered during the next several years reflected the interests he had developed while in Geneva and also literary and philosophical materials and views which were of equal or more interest to him. Ordinarius Professor Şekip Tunç (now retired) has always been open-minded and interested in all areas in psychology. He was really the first leader in psychology in Turkey.

In 1933, the University of Istanbul began a new administrative development. In this connection a number of German professors who had to leave Nazi Germany were offered professorships. A chair for Experimental Psychology was established, and Professor Adhémar Gelb was invited to fill it, but unfortunately, he died before he could come to Turkey. At that time, Dr. Mümtaz Turhan who had been sent to Berlin and Frankfurt to study psychology, completed his doctoral training and returned to Istanbul where he was appointed assistant in Experimental Psychology, although the chair was then vacant. He lectured in Experimental Psychology for the year 1936-1937, and in 1951 became Professor of Experimental Psychology.

Meanwhile, Ordinarius Professor Wilhelm Peters, formerly of the University of Jena, and later a refugee in England was invited to fill the Chair. In 1937, after his arrival in Istanbul, an Institute of Pedagogy was founded at the University and it included the Chair of Pedagogy and the Chair of Experimental Psychology. The Institute under Professor Peters' direction secured equipment for a psychological laboratory, which functioned under his guidance until 1953. Beside the Chair of Experimental Psychology, there was and is, the Chair for General Psychology, earlier established, and successively occupied by Professor Şekip Tunç and Professor S. E. Siyavuşgil.

As Professor Şekip Tunç had helped in the introduction of psychology in Turkey, Professor Peters contributed to the development of Experimental Psychology. The first psychological laboratory was founded during his tenure and psychology then began to be taught with the important supplement of experimental demonstrations. Practicum courses enabled the students to become acquainted with experimental methods, form habits of scientific observation, and develop technical abilities. In this way, experimental investigations began to be made. About eighty minor studies and half a dozen doctoral investigations have been completed. The Psychology Department of Istanbul University owes much to Professor Wilhelm Peters for his help and leadership.

In 1952, when Professor Peters retired and returned to Germany, the Chairs of Experimental Psychology and Pedagogy became independent of one another. Professor N. H. Pronko of University of Wichita, Kansas, (U.S.A.) was Fulbright exchange professor of experimental psychology for the academic year 1952-1953. Ordinarius Professor Dr. Walter R. Miles of Yale University (U.S.A.) is currently visiting professor (for three years). A Chair of Applied Psychology to be associated with the Chair of Experimental Psychology has recently been approved by the University but no appointment has yet been made. There are also four assistants in the division. In the division of General Psychology, there is one dozent and one assistant. Several psychological investigations are underway including a study on the "Problem of Fitness in Visual Perception", "The Interpretation of Facial Expressions with Relation to a Theory of Recognition", "A Study of the Recall of Strong Emotional Experiences", and "Factors in Recognition". The Department of Psychology at Istanbul under the editorship of Professor Peters, and in association with Pedagogy, issued two volumes of studies, one in 1940 the second in 1952. It is now proposed that a bulletin such as the present one, comprising reports of research work done here in psychology shall be published annually.

Beside the development in psychology at Istanbul, there is also a Chair of Experimental Psychology at the University of Ankara. Usually in the

past and at present this post has been occupied by an American professor serving as visiting lecturer or professor. Professor Carroll C. Pratt, American psychologist, was acting head of the department of philosophy, psychology, and sociology, University of Ankara, 1945-1947. Dr. John Volkman was a visiting lecturer 1953-1954, and Dr. Spaulding Rogers has held this post since 1955. Psychology is taught also at the Institute for Teacher's Training, in Ankara. Its primary aim there is to provide the future teachers with some psychological knowledge and in training them as educational guides. A laboratory of psychotechnic was set up five years ago at the Traffic Bureau in Istanbul and another at the Railway Department. A third has been established at the Training College for Technical Schools in Ankara.

The beginnings of psychology in Turkey seem to have been auspicious ones, and its further development in this country is in part dependent on the creation of professional openings in our educational system, in the field of mental hygiene, and in Turkish industry and business.