

Note for English Readers

This issue is dedicated to Kurt Lewin (1890-1947). It contains 26 original contributions by Lewin in chronological order, either written in the original German version or translated from English into German. The main focus is on such contributions where the field of application is obvious. The contributions range from a few German titles to congress lectures, and from contributions concerning Psychoanalysis to Lewin's late contributions concerning education, group processes and minorities. At the heart of his contributions is Lewin's field theory. Some reviews written by Lewin concerning the field of applications have been added. Much of his work published in this issue is difficult to find, some hasn't even been released in the German language so far. References are added at the end of each article.

Attached to this issue is the DVD „Kurt Lewin“, a production of FernUniversität in Hagen (Germany) from the year 2007. This DVD includes historical films, among others Lewin's film „Das Kind und die Welt“ („The child and the world“, 1931) and numerous other documents to Lewin's life and work.

Lewin was born on September, 9th 1890 in the small town Mogilno, belonging to the Prussian province of Posen, Germany, today part of Poland. In 1905 the family moved to Berlin. Kurt Lewin studied in Freiburg, Munich and Berlin. During the First World War he served as a volunteer and was wounded. From 1921 to 1934 Lewin was assistant professor at the Psychological Institute of the University of Berlin, he habilitated in 1921 and in 1927 he became associate professor (without salary) for Philosophy and Psychology. When Nazis came to power in 1933 Lewin and his family emigrated to the United States of America, where he began teaching from 1933 to 1935 at Cornell University and from 1934 to 1944 at the University of Iowa. From 1944 to 1947 Lewin was Professor and Director of the research Center for Group Dynamics at the MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1942 and also 1944-1945 Lewin was consultant for several US ministries. Lewin died on February, 12th 1947.

Lewin is often seen as a member of the school of Gestalt psychology. Based on Gestalt psychology, Lewin however developed his own theories that he called dynamic theory, topological psychology, then vector psychology or field theory. Today's common term “field theory” was enforced only after Lewin's death.

Lewin's work is diverse, an active interest in social and political questions and also in questions of economic life and education was present throughout his scientific career. His “second career”, lasting less than 14 years in the United States, is characterized by the elaboration of the field theory, more intensive concentration on social problems and the trial of possibilities of experimental research in social psychology. Eventually in the last part of his relatively short life he developed action research and applied group dynamics.