

CORRESPONDENCE

"*Psycho-social leprosy*" — the "*Hansen's bacillus*" broth — I applaud the idea of founding the College of Hansenology, especially for its multiprofessional character. The idea of opening it for professionals in other areas was brilliant.

I began studying hanseniasis at the end of the compulsory isolation era. I was a worker during the era of the out-patients dispensary, and saw the birth of Phase III, whose consolidation I am seeing now with satisfaction. I enthusiastically participated as a doctor, as a director of a Sanatorium and dispensaries and as Minister of Health, convinced that the endemic is principally nourished by psycho-social factors. *There is a psycho-social leprosy which is the Hansen's bacillus broth.* As a Minister, I had the privilege of introducing preventive rehabilitation, of banishing the ugly name from the official vocabulary and of changing the asylum-colonies into cooperative units.

Back to research I continue extremely interested in the subject and faithful to our doctrine: very little will be accomplished by the best chemotherapy if the rejection of the patient does not cease, if his socio-economical level is not raised, if physical deformities are not prevented. I believe that the presence of social scientists, professionals in communication, psychologists and educators will give to the College and to the coming Congress an opportunity for a great offensive, aiming at the demolition of the cultural barriers.

I am adhering to the College and Congress.

PAULO DE ALMEIDA MACHADO

Director, National Council of
Scientific and Technological
Development (Brazil)

Ready answers to critics — "In my text book 'Educational Biology' I write that 'the word leprosy has been used for centuries and has always aroused terror and loathsomeness'. In its latest edition the chapter 'leprosy' was changed to 'hanseniasis (leprosy)' (enclosure).

"However, although I agree 100% with your viewpoints I am at loss for a ready answer to colleagues who criticize 'hanseniasis' as 'pedantic'.

ARY LEX
S. Paulo, Brazil

Here are two suggestions for ready use in street and corridor discussions: 1) A "clean", although "pedantic" name, is much better for the patient and the prevention that a synonym for "filth", "loathsomeness" and "immorality". 2) The super-pedantic "sexually transmissible diseases" is now the internationally recommended (and rapidly adopted!) substitute for the old and much less stigmatizing "venereal". Nobody objected. The no less pedantic "cycloimic personality" is the substitute for the old "neurotic" in the new dictionary of the American Psychiatric Association. Nobody will object. Ob-

jections occur only when "leprosy" is focused: "lepers" have no human rights to a decent terminology.

A. R.

Good Prospects for Uruguay — "I have read with great interest the 'Instructions for the Control of Hanseniasis' that you have sent me some months ago. I believe that the plan is applicable here in Uruguay, although we still lack the means to do it. However, it is always good to be informed; it might be possible to do more work in this country along those lines, in a not so distant future".

"Fortunately for all of us the resistance of the general hospitals against the study, the attendance and the internation of our hansenian patients is vanishing gradually".

MORRIS MARGOUNATO

Montevideo, Uruguay

The "Instructions" cited by Dr. Margounato are those published by the National Division of Sanitary Dermatology of the Brazilian Ministry of Health (1976).