

tions of relationships rigid in a time when the relationships themselves were in a state of flux, and sooner or later the new tides of life within events were bound to burst the institutional forms that were no longer adequate to them.

This is not an excuse for Germany. It is a confession of sin. The United States Senate had a hand in it. So did Tory Britain. And France was an accessory. The consequent disease was about as diffused through the human race as it could be. It broke out virulently in the Nazi movement. This center of accumulated poison has to be opened and drained. That will give us a chance for convalescence. But the full cure will have to wait upon the willingness of all of us to discard old ways for new ones that will give the tides of organic health a chance to flow freely through all the veins of all nations.

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Erich Fromm:

PSYCHOANALYSTS and psychiatrists have often tried to "analyze" nations, and religious and political movements. The methodological pitfall common to most of these attempts followed the same pattern—the psychoanalyst discovered some similarity between a clinical symptom and a cultural phenomenon. He then proceeded to establish an analogy between the two and to explain the cultural phenomenon on the assumption that it was caused by the same factors which had caused the individual's neurotic symptom. Thus, for instance, religious controversies were "explained" as symptoms of compulsive neurosis, political movements as results of an unresolved "Oedipus-complex," socio-economic systems as caused by neurotic character formations. Social and political factors were not considered to be "real" excepting as the rationalized expression of some neurotic symptom. The fallacy of this method has been so discouraging to many social scientists that most of them did not consider it worth while to combine psychoanalytic and sociological knowledge.

The desire on the part of psychiatrists to make a contribution to victory over the enemy has resulted in a series of articles and books dealing with the character of the Germans. Dr. Brickner's book is one of the outstanding attempts of this kind. To a social psychologist who has always

believed that psychology can make a significant contribution to our understanding of group behavior, the renewed interest in this problem as expressed in Dr. Brickner's book should be very encouraging. All the more must I regret that the author repeats the methodological fallacy which was typical of the older writings of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts.

His book, too, employs the method of *analogy* where a thorough *analysis* of the character of the Germans is warranted. His clinical description of the paranoid character is excellent. But his way to prove that "the Germans"—or most of them—fit into this clinical picture is untenable. He attempts to prove his thesis mainly by quoting German writers whose utterances have the paranoid coloring which he had described in the clinical presentation of paranoid patients. Quite aside from the fact that it seems dubitable that one can analyze the character of any nation on the basis of literary quotations, the author's selection of German writers is lacking completely in objectivity. With few exceptions, he only quotes nationalistic and reactionary writers who are not more representative of Germany than reactionary writers are representative of any other country; as a matter of fact, this same method of quoting certain writers as proof of the evilness of a whole nation has been used by the Nazis in their attacks on the Jews, French, or British. Not only is the selection of writers one-sided, the author also quotes particularly often from books written during the First World War or previous wars which adds to the bias of his selections. He puts Goethe's sentence "Hammer or anvil must thou be" as a motto to the chapter on the German need to dominate, although Goethe could serve as an excellent illustration of the very opposite of the "paranoid" philosophy. One of the few occasions where the author refers to political movements instead of literature is the frequent reference to the Pan-German League; here Dr. Brickner is simply misinformed about the popularity of this small group of German Tories in pre-Hitler Germany.

It would indeed be most valuable



for our war effort if we were correctly informed about the German character. But this task requires more knowledge of the Germans and a better method than is applied in Dr. Brickner's book. It is true, nations have a "social character." They share certain character traits because they share certain fundamental experiences to which all members of the group have been exposed. In order to analyze the social character of any nation, one must study their social, economic, political, and cultural situation in its minute details and then proceed to understand how this total situation molded the character structure of the majority of all members; one must study the intricate interaction of socio-economic, ideological, and psychological factors which operate in the history of any nation. This can only be done if one is as thoroughly acquainted and concerned with the history of a nation as the psychiatrist is acquainted with the individual life history of his patient.

There are good reasons to assume that the result of such serious study will be to show that great nations differ in certain character traits but not in the sense that some are essentially good and others essentially evil, nor in the sense that some are "healthy" and others "sick." What such study is most likely to show is that the characterological differences between different social groups within a nation are of great significance. Germany is a case in point; some of Dr. Brickner's description of the paranoid character may very well be applied to the German lower middle class, which formed the nucleus of the Nazi party, and further analysis can show that the reasons for this development are to be found in the socio-economic position of this class. It would become equally apparent that the paranoid trends are not characteristic of the vast majority of German workers, peasants, and middle class.

The increasing literature dealing with a psychiatric approach to the German national character suggests a twofold danger. On the one hand that psychiatric concepts are used as rationalizations for political slogans, thus depriving us of valid knowledge which we need for the conduct of the war and for realistic and rational plans for peace. On the other hand, that they become a substitute for valid ethical concepts; that they tend to weaken the sense for moral values, by calling something by a psychiatric term when it should be called plainly evil.

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Copernicus After 400 Years

The Man Who Set the Earth in Motion

FELIX E. HIRSCH

DURING this week, the whole civilized world is commemorating the four-hundredth anniversary of the death of Nicholas Copernicus, the astronomer who "stopped the sun and set the earth in motion." He died in a little town near the Baltic Sea the very day on which the first copy of his treatise on the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies had reached him. This work, though rarely studied by laymen today, is one of the greatest books of modern times, for it overthrew the whole traditional concept of the universe. Fitting tributes are being paid now to Copernicus at meetings throughout the United States.

It is a dreadful irony of history that in this Copernicus year, the gates of his alma mater, the University of Krakow, remain closed, like those of all other Polish seats of higher learning. There will be no celebration by Polish scientists in the building in which he studied and in whose courtyard his monument rises. But Polish patriots insist that you cannot commemorate Copernicus without paying homage to the University of Krakow and the spirit of learning that has prevailed at Polish scholarly institutions since the days of the Renaissance. The jubilee we are celebrating now seems to be a fitting occasion to assure the suffering people of Poland that the full restoration of their universities is a task close to the hearts of the American intelligentsia. No peace arrangements that will follow this war can disregard this just claim. The damage done to these universities and to the brave men who taught there must be repaired. American generosity certainly will not be lacking when it comes to the rehabilitation of Poland's academic institutions. The people of this nation will do for Krakow and Warsaw what they did for Louvain a generation ago.

THE dreamy little town of Frauenburg has not changed much since the days when the Cathedral Canon Nicholas Copernicus studied the sky from the tower of his residence there and, by his observations, brought about one of the great revolutions of the human mind. The old-fashioned buildings around the market place convey a feeling of peace and serenity, but are not remarkable otherwise. The town derives its only significance from the fact that it has been the seat of the Bishop of Ermland (Varmia) since the four-

teenth century. The cathedral is a powerful Gothic structure, impressive by its dignity and simplicity of design; it has few, if any, equals in Eastern Germany.

Nicholas Copernicus passed thirty years of his ripe manhood and old age on this cathedral hill. Here in this church—near the second foremost column of the southern row—stood the altar which was entrusted to him when he was inaugurated as a canon. And his remains were interred under the flooring somewhere beside the same altar; the exact spot is in doubt. Very close to the cathedral was the Curia Copernicana, the modest home in which he spent the hours not taken up by his ecclesiastical duties. His living quarters were located in the northwestern tower of the bastioned wall that surrounded the cathedral. The tower opens up an almost unlimited view over land and sea and, therefore, must have been an ideal observation point for an astronomer.

The Curia Copernicana has undergone various changes since his death, and many of the canon's earthly possessions disappeared in the turmoil of the Thirty Years' War. Part of the three-story building serves now as the Episcopal library, while the uppermost room in the tower has become a Copernicus museum. The visitor who enters today the Curia Copernicana in a spirit of reverence may easily have a vision such as Jan Matejko, the Polish na-

tional painter, put on canvas. In this portrait Matejko showed the great astronomer standing at night on the open bastion that was connected with his observation tower, and watching the sky. Very few instruments are indicated in the portrait, and Copernicus had indeed only some elementary tools at his disposal, most of which had been known to Ptolemy and other ancient scholars.

Those who make the pilgrimage to Frauenburg, as did this writer ten years ago, will never cease being intrigued by the personality of this unassuming cathedral canon. Unfortunately, the literature in the English language dealing with Copernicus is rather unsatisfactory. Only three publications deserve favorable mention: a Columbia dissertation on the gradual acceptance of the Copernican theory of the universe by Dorothy Stimson (1917), a short biography by Angus Armitage of University College, London (1938), and a spirited essay by Stephen P. Mizwa of the Kosciuszko Foundation, New York (1943). Three Copernican treatises have been translated by Edward Rosen (1939), but the *magnum opus* about the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies is not yet available in English, just four hundred years after it was first printed in Nuremberg! The serious student of Copernicus's career and accomplishments has still to rely on the older standard works written in German (by Leopold Prowe) and Polish (by Ludwik A. Birkenmajer).

It may be hoped that the present jubilee celebrations will inspire an American scholar to give us a new full-length portrait of Copernicus. This task should be undertaken only by a person who is thoroughly familiar with both the development of astronomy and the general history of Euro-



—From the painting by Jan Matejko
Copernicus on the bastion of his observation tower.