

JOZEF KONIECZNY

PROBLEM OF A HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WEST
GERMAN SOCIETY

Only few historians, publicists and educators were critical to the past of Germany after the defeat of this country in 1945. The bulk of the society was sickened at the history and apathetic towards the past. This apathy partly denotes an attempt to escape from a critical evaluation of the nation's past. Besides this evaluation concerns a period of the Third Reich only and in a manner arousing reservations and protest even in the GFR. The handbooks for example provide young generation with a knowledge on the Hitler's personality only and in a way far from the truth. The results of the numerous researches conducted in the society or in the students' circles on their attitude to the past confirm extremely low level of knowledge in young generations. On the other hand according to these researches a lapse of time creates imperceptible changes in the historical consciousness of the nation. The deviation from the traditional interpretation of some historical facts is characteristic for this generation. It provides us with an evidence of more critical evaluation in the judgement of facts from the nation's history. It depends on a further development of the situation both in the world and in the Federal Republic of Germany if this process is to be continued and if it brings a reevaluation of the German history.

ANNA WOLFF-POWĘSKA

POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH IN
GERMANY (1919 - 1939)

It was geography which between the wars had been particularly subordinated to a political activity of the Reich. Geographical arguments were submitted by Nazi authorities to justify expansionistic plans and new policy of the living space. There was an attempt to implement traditional geographic approaches as well as those created ad hoc to revise provisions of the Versal Treaty, especially those referring to the Eastern frontier of Germany. Particularly aggressive propaganda could be observed in the field of geopolitics, searching for a cause of the political phenomenon in such geographical factors as the climate, the site, space, resources, a character of the frontiers. Some elements of the Darwin's theory of evolution were adopted by geopoliticians (particularly by R. Kjellen and K. Haushofer) to develop a nationalistic „Staatswissenschaft” concerning the state in terms of a biological organism subjected to a law of nature especially to a law of struggle for existence and natural selection. According to the geopolitic approaches the geographical position and the borders being far from perfect and therefore allegedly not ensuring the security, required the living space to be enlarged by the German nation.

The geopolitics was closely related to the „Lebensraum” and the space research (Raumforschung). It was a „kulturgeographie” which was dealing with cultural transformations of the natural landscape and a colonial research which was to prove the necessity of resuming possession of the German colonies. The public