

PSEUDETHNOLOGY

Idea of Germanic Supremacy Ordered Stressed in Teaching

WHEN the Armistice was signed in 1918, some cynical newspaper wit remarked, "The nations will now proceed to beat their swords into plowshares, and their version of the War into the heads of their children."

Germany, losing none of its national efficiency through the advent to power of Hitler, is going that idea one better, in the new "directive principles" laid down by Minister of the Interior Frick for the guidance of history teachers in all German schools. A translation of the document is published in *Nature*.

Not merely recent history but all history; not merely history but prehistory of even the most vaguely guessed-at kind, is ordered into a single supporting skeleton for the thesis of Nordic (and hence Germanic) supremacy throughout all ages in all the virtues and valors.

Unifying systems of this kind have long been characteristic of a certain type of German philosopher. Since they have practically without exception failed to fit the facts when tested, they have one by one been discarded. But such experiences never discourage amateur speculative scientists. Indefatigable as spiders, as soon as one of their fragile webs is torn apart they promptly spin another.

A few brief quotations from the English translation will be illuminating:

"The heroic idea in its Germanic ex-

pression, associated with the idea of leadership of our own day, that is linked with the earliest models of the Germanic past, must penetrate historical instruction at all stages," Dr. Frick's proclamation says. "The heroic idea leads on directly to the heroic outlook which specifically befits us as a Germanic people, as no other does, and inspires us with ever-renewed vigor in the struggle for national self-assertion in the midst of a hostile world."

The search for the heroic race goes into remote times and lands; Nordics are found in northern Africa and in Mesopotamia as early as the fifth millennium B.C. Sumer, earliest of known civilized city-states in the Near East, is credited with having had "a former upper class of Nordic conquerors." The "Indians, Medes, Persians and Hittites" are also claimed as being "originally of Nordic stock." The pupils must have the example held before their eyes of the sad fate of these heroic peoples "who eventually declined, overwhelmed by the forces of foreign blood."

"The history of the Greeks has again to begin from Central Europe," the proclamation continues. "It must once more be insisted that it deals with our nearest racial brothers . . . The Nordic Greeks, as conquerors, formed the aristocracy in the land." And again the admixture of Asiatic blood is blamed

for the decline.

"The history of the Nordic peoples of Italy must likewise begin in Central Europe . . . The struggle between patri-cians and plebeians is to be understood mainly as a racial struggle—hence too the particularly fierce resistance to the grant of the right of intermarriage to the plebeians." And yet again the non-Nordic element in the population takes the blame, this time for the Fall of Rome. And so on, through the Middle Ages and modern times.

Anthropologists and historians of other lands will meet this doctrine with either scorn or derision. But Germans, especially German school teachers, will take it seriously. They will have to.

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ANTHROPOLOGY

Scientist Urges Study Of Children's Physical Growth

STUDY of the physical measurements of the growth of a large number of individual children was urged by Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, curator of the division of physical anthropology, U. S. National Museum, in a report to the Conference on Child Development, Care, and Training, held under the auspices of the Mooseheart Laboratory for Child Research.

"These studies, as I should conceive them, would include periodical—say quarterly—observations of the utmost possible accuracy and with the best modern means, on all the physical as well as physiological conditions and changes in the life of the child; and in addition to this such measurements and other instrumental determinations as would seem most fit for supplement to the other observations," Dr. Hrdlicka said. "The information thus secured would shed light on not only the most important processes of normal development but also, which is of equal weight, on the normal variation in these processes.

"Moreover, studies of this nature, carried on quarter by quarter and year by year on the same individuals, would have much more than a mere academic or local importance. They would assist very materially in detecting defects of development in individual children and thus be of direct benefit to these. And such careful, thorough observations could not help but come to constitute standards for the American children at large, and indirectly be of benefit to all the children in this country."

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