

Alexander Mitscherlich, 73, German Psychoanalyst, Dies

By BAYARD WEBSTER

Alexander Mitscherlich, a German psychoanalyst credited with pioneering the study of aggression by large groups and with starting the resurgence of psychoanalysis in Germany and Central Europe after World War II, died Saturday in Frankfurt after a long illness, the German Information Office in New York reported yesterday. He was 73 years old.

Dr. Mitscherlich was internationally known among psychiatrists for using psychoanalysis to explain complicated social problems that are caused by the actions of large institutions. In 1949, he created a stir with the publication of his book, "Doctors of Infamy."

The book drew on his observations as head of the German Medical Commission at the Nuremberg trials. He vividly described the inhuman wartime German medical experiments on people for which 15 of the 23 accused medical doctors were found guilty and for which they showed no remorse:

In 1969 the book won the Peace Prize of the German book trade, a prize previously won by Martin Buber and Albert Schweitzer. Another book, "The Inability to Mourn," further investigated such nonremorseful behavior under a variety of conditions.

Such studies led Dr. Mitscherlich to suggest that destructive aggressive behavior was provoked by social factors, a theory that ran counter to the then-current psychiatric orthodoxy that such behavior was purely instinctual in origin.

A promoter of the dissemination of the principles of Freudian psychology in Central Europe and its use for social benefits, he concerned himself with such problems as the effects of urbanization on people, the dynamics of various social reform movements and the relationship between psychiatry and the social sciences. One of his many books, "Psycho-pathographies," was a study of the psychological genesis of the social problems of artists and writers.

A vocal anti-Hitlerite, he was imprisoned in World War II for refusing to give up his psychoanalytical practice and his studies in psychosomatic medicine despite Hitler's efforts to stamp out such ideologies and disciplines.

In his book, "Society Without the Father," published in English in 1969, Dr. Mitscherlich was critical of a society in which the father-dominated family had died out. He argued that its place was being taken by a consumer society based on science and technology.

Alexander Mitscherlich was born in the tiny village of Hof, Bavaria, and his family later moved to nearby Munich, where he grew up. A student of history and philosophy before he began his long training as a physician, neurologist and psychoanalyst, he founded the Hospital for Psychosomatic Disorders in Heidelberg in 1949 and was its director until 1967. In 1959 he founded the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt and served as its director from 1959 to 1976.

In 1976 he made one of his few visits to the United States when he was selected to give the annual Freud Anniversary Lecture of the New York Psychoanalytical Society. He also delivered lectures at the Downstate Medical Center.

He was married to the former Margarete Nielsen, a Danish psychoanalyst who collaborated with him on several scientific papers and books. He had six children.

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