

Heisenberg in Poland

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While much is known about Heisenberg's visit to Copenhagen in 1941 little has been written about his visit to Poland two years later. This article attempts to fill in the gap. © 2004 American Association of Physics Teachers.

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In 1980, Elisabeth Heisenberg published a memoir in which she discussed the actions of her late husband during the war. (He died in 1976.) It was translated into English with the title "Inner Exile."¹ "Inner exile," was, she says, a status that her husband chose for himself. He had decided not to emigrate, and he had no wish to become a martyr, so he remained in Germany making whatever compromises were necessary to survive and work. The picture she paints of her husband is, as one might imagine, unfailingly flattering. It is, however, a portrait in which things are often left out or distorted. I could cite any number of examples, but I want to focus here on what she had to say about Heisenberg's wartime visits to several countries occupied by the Germans.

"A further duty Heisenberg felt bound to and he thought to be important, was to give scientific lectures as often as possible, either at native or foreign universities—especially though, at the universities of the occupied areas, so as not to lose contact with his harried colleagues, but mainly to demonstrate that a different, better Germany existed than the Nazi Germany that had won the upper hand to such a terrifying degree."² A nice picture, but is it true? Does it apply, for example, to Heisenberg's visit to occupied Poland which took place in December, 1943, eight months after the Germans had liquidated the ghettos of Warsaw and Cracow? What did Heisenberg know about the extermination of the Polish Jews? On his visit, did he restore contact with his "harried" Polish colleagues?³

The route that ultimately led to Heisenberg's 1943 visit to Cracow began at the time of the First World War in Munich. He was then enrolled in the Maximilians—"Max"—Gymnasium, as was his older brother Erwin. For a while, Erwin had a classmate named Hans Frank.⁴ Both Erwin and Hans were born in 1900, while Heisenberg was born a year later. Hans Frank and Erwin Heisenberg graduated from the gymnasium in 1918, after which Frank served in the army infantry for a couple of years. The precise amount of contact the Heisenbergs had with Frank is not clear. There appears to be no mention of Frank in any of the Heisenberg correspondence so far discovered, at least until 1943.⁵

Werner Heisenberg became a Pfadfinder (pathfinder), the German boy scout movement in 1919. Somewhat later he joined the Neupfadfinders (new pathfinders), a group that added Teutonic romanticism to the usual hiking and camping. About the same time Hans Frank also joined the Neupfadfinders. For Frank, and others, this Teutonic mystic romanticism led to embracing National Socialism. Heisenberg neither then, nor ever, was a member of the Party, nor any of its offshoots. Things were very different with Frank.⁶ After his military service, he began the study of law at the universities of Kiel and Munich and almost immediately joined a right-wing paramilitary group called the Epp Freikorps. By

1923, he had become a Storm Trooper and a member of the Nazi Party, taking part in Hitler's failed Beer Hall putsch in Munich. He had a love of Hitler that bordered on the erotic. He soon began moving up in the Party's ranks by defending various Nazis in libel suits. At one point Hitler asked Frank to examine the Führer's family tree to see if any Jews were lurking among the branches. In 1933, he was appointed minister of justice for the state of Bavaria, and soon after, minister without portfolio. His general task was to create a legal construct behind which Hitler's regime could operate with the facade of a legal system. One of the items that he later cited in his defense was the role he played in the Night of the Long Knives. In June, 1934, Hitler organized a massacre of people he believed were a challenge to his power, among them Ernst Röhm, who was the leader of the storm troopers. Frank claimed that by intervening with Hitler personally, he reduced the number of people executed from 110 to 20. Hitler proposed that Röhm should be allowed to commit suicide, but when he refused, he was shot.

The Germans invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. A month later Hitler appointed Hans Frank as the governor general of Poland with headquarters in Cracow. Frank settled with his wife and family including his infant son Niklas in the Wawel Castle in Cracow, whose name he changed to the German, *Krakauer Burg*. It is important to understand for what follows that this Germanization of a name was not an isolated whim, but was part of a systematic effort to reduce Poland to a colony without a culture—an appendage to the Reich designed only to serve its needs. The intent was made absolutely clear. Frank stated it himself, "What we recognize in Poland to be the elite must be liquidated."⁷ Poland, he said, was to "become a society of peasants and workers" with no "cultured class." As far as Poles were concerned, higher education as well as Polish theatre and literature was to cease. The language itself was to be obliterated. No radios were allowed and all news came from loudspeakers that belonged to the Nazi authorities. Undesirable books were banned, even if they had not been written by Jews. Jews were herded into ghettos where they were readily available for shipment to extermination camps.

Cracow surrendered to the Germans on September 6, 1939. The university was soon to open for its fall term. On November 3, Bruno Müller, the local Gestapo chief, ordered the Rector of the University, Professor Lehr-Splawinski, to call a faculty meeting for November 6 at noon.⁸ He assumed that Müller was going to discuss—it was still early days—the sort of higher education that would be encouraged under the occupation. About one hundred and fifty five of the invitees came, including various other university employees. It was a trap. They were all arrested on the spot by the SS. The SS also rounded up anyone else who happened to be in the

building for a total of one hundred and eighty three. This operation became known as the *Sonderaktion Krakau* (Special Action Cracow). Its anniversary is still acknowledged at the university, where a ceremony is held annually in the room in which they had been arrested. After a few days in a local jail, the arrested were shipped to Breslau and then to the concentration camp at Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg. News of these events got to other European scientists, and in part because of their protests, on February 8, one hundred and one, mainly men over forty, were released.⁹ Twelve had already died in the camp and the rest were sent to other concentration camps or remained in Sachsenhausen. A few more were subsequently released while the remainder, including all the Jews, were killed.

The university was now closed. Any higher education had to be done clandestinely at peril to teacher and student alike.¹⁰ Frank and the SS sometimes acted at cross purposes, sometimes in concert. There was a constant power struggle between them. Frank was himself a crude and brutal anti-Semite. During this entire period he maintained a journal, which ultimately came to forty-three volumes.¹¹ It included records of his speeches, one of which was addressed to his cabinet on December 16, 1941. Here is some of what he said, "As far as Jews are concerned, I want to tell you quite frankly that they must be done away with in one way or another. The Führer said once: 'Should united Jewry again succeed in provoking a world war, the blood of not only the nations which have been forced into war by them, will be shed, but the Jew will have found his end in Europe.' I know that many of the measures carried out against the Jews in the Reich at present are being criticized. (I wonder by whom.) ... Before I continue, I want to beg you to agree with me on the following formula: We will principally have pity on the German people only, and nobody else in the whole world. The others too, had no pity on us. As an old National Socialist, I must say: This war would only be a partial success if the whole lot of Jewry would survive it, while we would have shed our best blood in order to save Europe. My attitude towards the Jews will, therefore, be based only on the expectation that they must disappear. They must be done away with. I have entered negotiations to have them deported to the East. A great discussion concerning that question will take place in Berlin in January, to which I am going to delegate the State Secretary Dr. Bühler ... A great Jewish migration will begin in any case."

Lest there be any confusion about what Frank meant by "migration" he goes on, "But what should be done with the Jews? Do you think they will be settled down in the 'Ostland,' in villages? This is what we were told in Berlin: Why all this bother? We can do nothing with them either in the 'Ostland' nor in the 'Reich kommissariat.' So liquidate them yourself."¹²

But it was not only the Jews. Frank decided that the German war machine needed manpower, and by 1940, he was making arrangements to export slave labor to Germany. By August of 1942, he had supplied 800,000 Polish workers for the Reich. Of the Jews, on January 25, 1944, Frank estimated that of the original two and half to three and half million in his territory, only one hundred thousand were left.

With this background we can return to Heisenberg. The first thing to remark was that there is no credible evidence that Heisenberg was ever an anti-Semite. His thesis supervisor in Göttingen was Max Born who was a Jew. In one of Heisenberg's finest actions, when Heisenberg won the Nobel

Prize in physics in 1932—it was actually not awarded until 1933—he crossed the border into Switzerland so that he could mail an uncensored letter to Born in which he expressed his regrets and feeling that Born should have shared it. Heisenberg was nominated for the prize by both Einstein and Bohr. His closest collaborator was Wolfgang Pauli, who used to tease Heisenberg about his Pfadfinder connections. There were many people such as Rudolf Peierls, who came as students to work with him. All these people had Jewish ancestry.

I have remarked that there is no evidence that Heisenberg was ever a Nazi. Until the war, he seemed largely indifferent to politics, although he was a thoroughgoing German patriot and nationalist. There is evidence that not only did Heisenberg want the Germans to win the war, but that he felt that the invasion of Poland was a good thing. He also, as the following will show, was a person with an almost pathological lack of understanding of the feelings of other people, at least in some circumstances.

As is well known, Heisenberg made a visit to Copenhagen in September of 1941. We now know that during this visit, he spent three evenings with Bohr and his wife at Bohr's house.¹³ But in addition, he made visits to Bohr's Institute where he spoke with some of the physicists. Among them was Stefan Rozental, who had been born in Poland. Rozental retained a vivid memory of this encounter which he described in a letter to the British historian Margaret Gowing.¹⁴ Rozental wrote, "He [Heisenberg] stressed how important it was that Germany should win the war. To Christian Møller [a well-known theorist at the Institute], for instance, he said that the occupation of Denmark, Norway, Belgium, and Holland was a sad thing but as regards the countries in East Europe, it was a good development because these countries were not able to govern themselves. Møller's answer was that so far we have only learned that it is Germany which cannot govern itself."

We do not know how much Heisenberg knew of his school friend's activities in Poland, but we do know that early on he knew that Jews were being slaughtered there. We know this from none other than Elisabeth Heisenberg herself. In her book she addresses the question of why good Germans like herself continued to deny the reality of what was happening around them. She cites the following example. "I can still see my father standing in front of me. He was a man with a venerable and law-abiding outlook, who actually went into a rage when Heisenberg once showed him a report he had received from a colleague at the institute who had been a witness to the first cynical mass executions of Jews in Poland. My father lost all self-control and started to shout at us: 'So this is what it has come to, you believe things like this! This is what you get from listening to foreign broadcasts all the time. Germans cannot do things like this, it is impossible!' He was not a Nazi; he had prematurely retired from his position following the National Socialist takeover."¹⁵

I would give much to know what this report said. Who wrote it? She does not tell us.¹⁶ But what strikes me is that she apparently sees no connection between this report and Heisenberg's subsequent visit to Poland. She doesn't seem to realize that she's implying, albeit indirectly, that when Heisenberg visited Poland, he knew in advance of the slaughter of the Jews. The question, which begs for an answer, is why did he go? Why didn't he, by refusing this visit,

which he could have done by claiming, for example, that he was fully occupied doing research related to the war, at least make some small gesture of protest?

I have not been able to discover whether and to what extent, if any, Heisenberg kept up his contact with Hans Frank between the time when they were in the Pfadfinders and when he received his first invitation to visit Poland in May, 1941.¹⁷ This invitation was not signed by Hans Frank, but by Wilhelm Coblitz, the director of the Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit (Institute for German Work in the East). It had been formed in the spring of 1940 by Frank. It was devoted to studies in aid of the colonization of the eastern countries.¹⁸ The astronomy and mathematics section used Russian forced laborers. Much of the research was devoted to the Jewish question and to racial matters in general. The invitation was issued on behalf of this Institute. Heisenberg was quite willing to accept it, but he was not given permission to make the trip. Here we must back up a little. During a brief period Heisenberg was himself under suspicion. He had even been called a “White Jew,” because of his association with Jewish scientists and his unwillingness to accept and teach an absurd Aryan physics which had become part of Nazi ideology. Finally, the matter, which could have become very serious, was sorted out by an intervention from Heinrich Himmler. An agreement was reached that Heisenberg could use Einstein’s physics, provided that he did not discuss its non-Aryan origins.

Even after this agreement, he was not able to get permission to travel. This changed in the fall of 1941. Heisenberg had a student and protégé named Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker. His father, Ernst, was State Secretary, the highest form of civil servant, and was in a position to alter Heisenberg’s travel status. Indeed, Heisenberg and von Weizsäcker received permission to attend a conference of astronomers in Copenhagen, which was the occasion on which they both visited Bohr in his home. It appears as if the German authorities regarded the visit to Copenhagen as a success because Heisenberg readily obtained subsequent permission to travel to places like Holland and Switzerland and ultimately to Poland. Incidentally, there is an odd trace of the aborted 1941 visit. In the German language Cracow daily, the *Krakauer Zeitung*, there appeared in January, 1942, in two successive issues a lecture by Heisenberg entitled “Unity of the Scientific Worldview.” It turned out that it had been given at Leipzig University on November 26, 1941. It was very likely the lecture Heisenberg would have given if he had received permission to go to Cracow.

Coblitz renewed his attempt to get Heisenberg to visit Poland in May of 1943. This time he wrote in the name of Frank as well as himself to urge Heisenberg’s visit. In subsequent letters he conveyed Frank’s besten Grüsse (best greetings) and Heisenberg responded in kind.¹⁹ Coblitz said that Frank would personally attend the lecture that Heisenberg was scheduled to give. There was then a hiatus, because Frank’s summer vacation plans had not been fixed. But on September 29, Coblitz wrote, “Der Herr Generaldirektor lässt Sie und Ihre Frau einladen, seine Gäste auf Schloss Wartenberg, nahe bei Krakau zu sein.”²⁰ (The Herr Generaldirektor invites you and your wife to be his guests at the Wartenberg Castle, near Cracow.) The Wartenberg Castle is a villa that was built between the wars within sight of Wawel Castle. Ironically, it now belongs to the university and is used for conferences on Polish culture. The name “Wartenberg” (Observatory Mountain) was a German invention used

by Frank and his associates. The villa was known locally either as the “Szyszko-Bohuz villa,” after the architect who built and owned it, or the “Przegorzaly villa,” after the town above which it is located. In the summer of 1943, Frank had “donated” it after his visit to Himmler for use by the SS, but he continued to occupy it. Heisenberg responded that while he accepted the invitation, his wife was unable to accept because of her domestic responsibilities.

For several reasons we do not have as complete a record of Heisenberg’s December, 1943, visit to Cracow as we do for his visit to Copenhagen. One reason is that during his visit Heisenberg saw none of the Polish physicists, which is not surprising because university professors were regarded as outlaws by the regime. How this fact struck Heisenberg we do not know because no report of the visit written by him has been found. Also there is no photograph that I have been able to locate. We do know that he stayed in Frank’s castle. The previous June, Himmler had stayed with Frank in the same castle. Frank’s castles were furnished with masterpieces stolen from the Poles—some from museums and some from cathedrals.²¹ Frank estimated that ninety percent of the valuable art in his territory had been “safeguarded.” Frank furnished his domiciles with works of people like Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Rembrandt. As the war was ending many of these were shipped to Germany. Frank explained this to the GI’s who eventually captured him by saying, “I took along certain objects of art so that they would not be plundered in my absence.”²² Some of the art was later restored and some simply disappeared. I wonder about Heisenberg’s feelings when he discovered that he was staying in an art museum. He must have known where these treasures had come from.

Heisenberg gave a lecture. I do not have a copy of the text, but I have been informed²³ that no Poles, although they tried, were allowed to attend—only Germans. The Poles were turned away at the door. In the December 18 issue of the *Krakauer Zeitung*, the following article appeared with the title “The Smallest Building Blocks of Matter.”²⁴ “Prof. Dr. Werner Heisenberg, Director of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Physik, Berlin-Dahlem, lectured to a large audience of interested listeners in the great lecture hall of the Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit about the central problems of scientific progress: contemporary aims of research in physics. The lecturer presented the development of modern atomic physics from their beginnings at the end of XIXth century. At the start of this development there was the discovery of Roentgen rays and Planck’s theory of quanta. It was finalized about 15 years ago by the so-called quantum mechanics (Heisenberg). For about the last ten years, the main line of research in atomic physics became the investigation of atomic nuclei. By the use of high voltage devices and other high technology means, it became possible to transform the atomic nuclei, and thus to fulfill the old program of the alchemists: the transmutation of chemical elements. However, the ideal laboratory, in which the atomic transformations occur at highest energies, was presented to us by nature in the form of cosmic rays. The sources of this strange radiation in space are unknown. However, the effects of this radiation are being investigated by physicists and provide us with most interesting information about the nature of the smallest building blocks of matter.

After the enthusiastically received lecture, Governor-General Dr. Frank spoke personally as the president of the Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit and praised the work of the

lecturer, who is among the most eminent personalities of the internationally recognized German science. Heisenberg, a Nobel Prize winner at the age of thirty, belongs to the list of great German physicists, whose investigations in theoretical physics led to landmark discoveries.”

The closest Heisenberg ever came to explaining his visit to Cracow was in an interview he gave to David Irving in 1965. Irving reports Heisenberg as saying that “Here in Munich I was in school with some people who later became great Nazis, among them the Herr General Gouverneur of Poland, Frank. Frank was in the school class of my brother, and so naturally he knew us and *dutzen* us. [The phrase “dutzen us” is not directly translatable because in English there is no equivalent of *Sie* (the formal “you”) and *Du* (the familiar “you”). “Dutzen” is like the French *tutoyer* meaning employing the familiar *du* or *tu*. The implication of this choice of words is that the friendship was close enough so that the familiar *Du* was used.] I had completely lost sight of him and thought, O.K, I will have nothing further to do with him. But then around September of ’43, if I remember correctly, he wrote that I should nevertheless come to Cracow, and give a scientific lecture there. I felt, this is stupid, what am I doing there in Cracow; Frank does not concern me anyway. But he wrote in such a friendly way: my dear friend! Can you not ... so that I wrote: Dear Frank! Well, I have so many other things to do here, unfortunately it is impossible for me to come. But then he sent me yet another letter, and was so pressing, and with implications that did not sound so pleasant, so I thought I do not really need to make an enemy. OK, I will give the lecture in Cracow. So in December 1943, if I remember well, I went to Cracow where first I was his guest in his castle, then I gave a lecture on the innocent theme of quantum theory, or something like it ...”²⁵

What is one to make of this interview? First it must be noted that no trace of a letter from Frank to Heisenberg has been found. The only correspondence that is known is between Heisenberg and Coblitz acting on Frank’s behalf. Nowhere does Heisenberg show any reluctance to go to Cracow and nowhere is there any suggestion of a parallel correspondence with Frank. On the contrary, the letters always convey something personal through Coblitz as the intermediary. It is as if Heisenberg created in this interview a fantasy of what, looking back, he would like to have happened, and how he would like it to be perceived. Like so much else that involves Heisenberg, we end up with an enigma—what did Heisenberg really think about his visit to Poland? With Frank there was no enigma. In October of 1945 he went on trial at Nuremberg.²⁶ He was found guilty and on October 16, 1946 he was hanged.

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¹Elisabeth Heisenberg, *Inner Exile* (Birkhäuser, Boston, 1984).

²Reference 1, p. 96.

³This visit has been discussed in various degrees of completeness by David Cassidy, *Uncertainty* (Freeman, New York, 1992); Thomas Powers, *Heisenberg’s War* (Alfred Knopf, New York, 1993) and Mark Walker, *Nazi Science* (Plenum, New York, 1995) and *German National Socialism and the Quest for Nuclear Power, 1939–1949* (Cambridge, U.P., Cambridge, 1989). I am very grateful to these authors for many helpful communications.

⁴David Cassidy has studied the records of the Max-Gymnasium. He informs me that in the years 1911 to 1914 Erwin Heisenberg and Hans Frank were in the same class but different sections. However in 1914 there was only one section in which Frank and Erwin Heisenberg were both enrolled.

⁵I am grateful to Helmut Rechenberg of the Heisenberg Archive in Munich

for pointing this out and also for supplying an account of the correspondence that did lead to Heisenberg’s visit.

⁶A scathing portrait of his mother and father is given by Niklas Frank in his book *In the Shadow of the Reich*, with Arthur S. Wensinger, Carol Clew Hoey (translator), Jonathan B. Segal (editor) (Knopf, New York, 1991). Frank who collaborated in a play about this material was born in 1939, but his memory of both the wartime and the immediate post-war experiences is very vivid. There is as yet no biography of Frank. The following websites with their links may be useful. <http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html/biografen/FrankHans/> and http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Frank

⁷This quotation and the one that follows can be found in a fascinating essay called “The University of Cracow Library under Nazi Occupation: 1939–1945” by Mark Sroka, *Libraries and Culture*, Vol. 34, Winter 1999. Sroka is primarily concerned with the fate of the Polish libraries but he also discusses the general cultural life.

⁸For information on this event, and many other aspects of this history, I am greatly indebted to Krzysztof Fialkowski, who is a theoretical physicist on the faculty of Jagellonian University in Cracow. He discussed Heisenberg’s visit with colleagues who have recollections and he also searched newspaper archives and other historical sources.

⁹For a discussion of this see, for example, Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastward* (Cambridge U.P., Cambridge, 1988), pp. 253, 254. When a letter was circulated in Germany protesting the only physicist to sign it was Max von Laue.

¹⁰I know a Polish physicist, Jacques Prentki, who received his education this way. Prentki was himself arrested in a random operation in Warsaw but managed to escape the box car in which he had been placed in which he was being shipped to an extermination camp. He is not Jewish. Professor Fialkowski informs me that on the day of Sonderaktion his mother, who was a law student, was in the library across the street. She was with a friend who went to see what was happening and did not return for six months. He was later killed in the 1944 Warsaw uprising.

¹¹There is some disagreement about the number of volumes. At Nuremberg Frank said forty three, but only thirty eight were actually found. The National Archives and Records Administration has these on microfilm. Part of the copy I studied was very dark and not easy to read.

¹²This quote can be found on the website <http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/document/DocFrank.htm>. It is translated from the German and I have quoted this translation.

¹³This recently came to light in a letter that Heisenberg wrote to his wife from Copenhagen. The letter in English and German can be found at <http://werner-heisenberg.unh.edu>

¹⁴The letter is quoted in Ref. 3 (Powers, p. 121).

¹⁵Reference 1, p. 49.

¹⁶Rechenberg believes that it was the physicist Karl Wirtz and that the report was in 1942. Wirtz was one of the ten German scientists detained at Farm Hall near Cambridge. These conversations were recorded—see J. Bernstein, *Hitler’s Uranium Club* (Copernicus, New York, 2001). In one of them Wirtz says, “We have done things which are unique in the world. We went to Poland and not only murdered Jews, but for instance, the SS drove up to a girls’ school, fetched out the top class, and shot them simply because the girls were high school girls, and the intelligentsia were to be wiped out.” p. 98. This does not appear to be the incident described by Elisabeth Heisenberg. There is no reason to assume that these girls were Jewish.

¹⁷Mark Walker’s book *Nazi Science* (see Ref. 3) has been very helpful to me with these details.

¹⁸For a full discussion of this see Ref. 9 (Burleigh).

¹⁹I am grateful to Mark Walker for a file of these letters and to Helmut Rechenberg for permission to quote from them.

²⁰The quotation was supplied by Rechenberg.

²¹For an account of this plunder see Jonathan Potropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1996), Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa* (Vintage, New York, 1995).

²²Reference 6, p. 309.

²³By Professor Fialkowski who asked those of his colleagues who knew physicists who were in Cracow at the time. There were a few who had actually been there and had tried to attend the lecture.

²⁴I am very grateful to Professor Fialkowski for finding this article in the library. The reference is *Krakauer Zeitung*, 1943, nr.302, December 18. He also sent me the German original from which this is a translation.

²⁵Niels Bohr Library, AIP, M140, 31526–31567. In the translation above I have left out the allusions to nuclear weapons. My problem with them is,

considering the unbelievability of the rest of the letter, what are we to believe about this.

Hier in München war ich auf der Schule zusammen mit einigen Leuten, die später grosse Nazis wurden, darunter der Herr Generalgouverneur von Polen—Frank. Der Frank war in der Schulklasse meines Bruders und daher kannten wir uns natürlich und duzten uns. Ich habe ihn völlig aus den Augen verloren und dachte, gut, dass ich nichts mit ihm zu tun habe. Dann schrieb er mir so im September 43 etwa, wenn ich mich recht erinnere, ich sollte doch mal nach Krakau kommen, um dort einen wissenschaftlichen Vortrag zu halten. Ich fand, es ist doch blöd, was habe ich da in Krakau zu suchen, der Frank geht mir sowieso nichts an. Aber er hatte nun so freundschaftlich geschrieben: mein lieber Freund! Kannst Du nicht ..., so dass ich ihm dann schrieb: Lieber Frank! Ja, ich habe hier mit so vielen anderen Dingen zu tun, leider ist es mir unmöglich zu kommen. Dann aber schickte er mir noch einmal einen Brief und machte es so dringlich, und schon mit Wendungen, die nicht so ganz angenehm klangen, und da dachte ich, na ja, also verfeinden will ich mich nun auch nicht. Gut, ich halte den Vortrag in Krakau. Da bin ich also im Dezember 1943, wenn ich mich recht erinnere, nach Krakau gefahren, erstens war ich dann bei ihm Gast auf seiner Burg, dann habe ich einen Vortrag gehalten über ein ganz belangloses Thema, also, Quantentheorie oder so etwas. Dann hat er mich hinterher auf die Seite genommen und ausgefragt. Er hat gefragt: Wie est das eigentlich, man hört immer, dass es so eine Wunderwaffe gibt, vielleicht Atombomben oder so etwas. Da habe ich ihm ganz klar gesagt, dass es das alles nicht gibt auf deutscher Seite. Aber immerhin aus dieser Frage von dem Hans Frank schloss ich, dass doch in den höchsten Parteikreisen davon gemunkelt wurde.

In the last part of letter Heisenberg says Frank questioned him about

nuclear weapons. This is briefly discussed in *The German Atomic Bomb*, by David Irving (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1967), p. 240. Irving claims that Heisenberg told Frank that while the Germans could not make a bomb in wartime, the Americans might. This is not supported in the transcripts of the interview, nor am I aware that this was Heisenberg's view.

²⁶In his testimony at Nuremberg, Frank stated that he did not arrive in Cracow until a few days after the Sonderaktion. He then, he tells us, devoted himself to getting the imprisoned faculty released. However, it was pointed out to him that in his journal he said that these professors should be returned to Poland either for liquidation or imprisonment. To this he responded that he had written that "to hoodwink my enemies." Frank also claimed that he encouraged higher education in Poland under the occupation, something which certainly would come as a surprise to the people who lived under it. This testimony can be found on the site <http://www.law.umke.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/nuremberg/franktest.html>. In his diary Frank records his comment on the Sonderaktion. "We cannot burden the Reich concentration camps with our affairs. The trouble we had with the Cracow professors was awful. Had we dealt with the matter here it would have taken a different course. I should therefore like to request you urgently not to deport any more people to the concentration camps in the Reich, but to carry out the liquidation here or to impose a regular sentence. Anything else is a burden of the Reich and continually leads to difficulties. Here we have an entirely different form of treatment and this form must be maintained." *Hans Frank's Diary*, edited by Stanislaw Piotrowski (Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warsaw, Poland, 1961), p. 61.