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Is there a skeleton in the closet of the Julius Klaus Foundation?

Henriette Haas

Résumé

En 2018 la “Julius-Klaus-Stiftung für Vererbungsforschung, Sozialanthropologie und Rassenhygiene” (JKS) a offert ses fichiers aux Archives d’État du canton de Zürich. Publiquement accessibles pour la première fois, ils jettent un éclairage nouveau sur l’histoire de cette fondation. Le § 13 de ses statuts était la cause de diverses polémiques : il instituait “l’amélioration de la race blanche” comme un but de la fondation, en excluant toute subvention au bénéfice de personnes à handicap. Or, ce § 13 a dû être intégré en 1921 à la suite à un avis de droit. Ceci a déclenché une protestation vigoureuse de la part des membres de la JKS. Ils s’opposaient contre la notion de race systémique (répartition des hommes par couleur) et mettaient en garde contre tout eugénisme hâtif. En général, des projets non éthiques ont été refusés et la JKS a investi des sommes considérables pour contester les fondements de l’hygiène raciale des Nazis. Toutefois les activités de la fondation ne furent pas toutes irréprochables. Au sein du conseil de fondation et des bénéficiaires il y eut des différences de distanciation envers l’état nazi. La fondation s’est engagée, malgré son nom, de manière significative contre l’eugénisme et le racisme scientifique.

Zusammenfassung

Die “Julius-Klaus-Stiftung für Vererbungsforschung, Sozialanthropologie und Rassenhygiene” (JKS) hat 2018 ihre Akten im Staatsarchiv Zürich öffentlich zugänglich gemacht. Das wirft ein neues Licht auf ihre Geschichte. Grund für die Skandalisierung der JKS war der §13 der Statuten, der “die Verbesserung der weissen Rasse” zum Stiftungsziel erhob und Menschen mit Behinderungen ausschloss. Der §13 musste 1921 aufgrund eines juristischen Gutachtens aufgenommen werden und rief Protest bei den Gründungsmitgliedern hervor. Sie verwahrten sich gegen den systemischen Rassenbegriff (Aufteilung der Menschheit nach Hautfarben) und warnten eindringlich vor übereilter Eugenik. Unethische Projekte wurden abgelehnt. Die JKS investierte grosse Summen ins

Widerlegen der Fundamente der nationalsozialistischen Rassenhygiene. Ganz fehlerfrei blieb die Stiftungstätigkeit aber nicht. Unter den Kuratoriumsmitgliedern und den Geförderten gab es grosse Unterschiede in der Abgrenzung gegen den Nazistaat. Trotz ihres Namens engagierte sich Stiftung aber dezidiert gegen Eugenik und wissenschaftlichen Rassismus.

1. Public access to the records of the Julius Klaus Foundation

Several studies in the history of Swiss anthropology, medicine and social welfare have dealt with the Julius Klaus Foundation (JKF). The goal of the foundation was and still is the promotion of research for the benefit of the human race. Yet its former name (JKF for “Hereditary Research, Social Anthropology and Race Hygiene”) and its former regulations with §13 requiring the “*betterment of the white race*” and excluding any support of measures from which the “*physically and mentally inferior*” could benefit, sound suspicious for today’s ears—if not scandalous. For example, a journalist¹ assumed that the JKF represented the “*dark side of History of Science*” after hearing a public lecture by anthropologist Hans-Konrad Schmutz, even though Schmutz’s carefully conducted studies do not state this (2001, 2005). They provide a nuanced picture. The journalist’s headline illustrates how strongly readers are influenced by the priming effect of terms like “race hygiene”, “white race” or “inferior”. In 2018 the foundation donated all its records from 1920 to 1980 and later to the Zurich State Archive.² Based on them, this study can shed more light into the situation and provide access to the documents of the foundation to English speaking readers. With the authorization of the archives, I have prepared a Web

¹ Renner, S. (14.5.2004). "Eugenik - Rückschau auf eine dunkle Seite der Wissenschaftsgeschichte". UZH News.

² The inspection of the JKF files after their arrival at the State Archive showed that they contain missings, which none of the previous authors dealing with the topic have declared. The minutes’ books of the Steering Committee are not numbered. They begin only in 1929, not in 1921. From the two books covering the years 1929 to 1947, sixteen pages were vandalized and are missing. Ernst’s letter to Schlaginhaufen from September 1940 is also missing, it is not clear from which file. Chronologically the missings correlate with international relationships of the JKF, decisions and correspondence around important conferences in 1934, 1939, 1941, and 1948. According to material from other archives, from the remaining pages before the missings, and with what is known by Keller (1995, p. 228), those documents are likely to have contained favorable testimonials for the Board of the JKF. The folders with Schlaginhaufen’s correspondence from 1933 and from 1940 to 1942 are also missing in the Anthropological Institute (AIZ). As for the unknowns, it would be interesting to search in foreign archives.

page to make all sources publicly accessible.³ I will argue from a dynamic perspective concerning the actors' scientific and personal development in time.

Close attention must be paid to the changes in the semantics of certain words to understand old documents. Until the mid-1950s terms like “eugenics”, “Volkskörper”, and “race” were considered acceptable everywhere in democratic Europe. People then still used and interpreted them by the meaning they had carried before their ideological abuse by the Nazis. Schmuhl explains the former meanings of “race” (2003, pp. 28s): *“Since the turn of the century [...] two basic views of 'race' had developed, which were already inherently coined by Alfred Ploetz's (1860–1940) terms of 'system race' and 'vital race'. The concept of a 'system race' took a look at the different 'races' gathered under a 'species'. It described, compared and evaluated different, 'racial traits' anchored in heredity. It asked about the 'racial unit' of populations and the genetic effects of 'racial mix'. The term 'vital race' understood 'races' as 'reproductive communities', analyzed their 'genome', asked about 'hereditary health', degenerative processes and inherited diseases, disabilities and behavioral abnormalities. The concept of the 'vital race' offered the approach to a large-scale project of medical genetics that could be expanded as required and a prophylaxis program derived from it. In the conceptual arsenal of this school of research, however, 'race' played no role at all or only a subsidiary role.”* In 1950/51 the UNESCO launched a proposition to ban the term “race” from science and to replace it by “ethnic group”. After controversies lasting into the 1960s, “race” has come to mean only “systemic race” today, even though “vital race” was its original lexical sense (Schmitz-Berning 2007, p. 481). “Race” as “reproductive communities” was gradually replaced by “population”. Today the r-word has become inseparably associated with racism, discrimination, persecution, and genocide. Furthermore the word “international”—one of the Nazis' most hated words—also had special meanings between 1933 and 1945.⁴ In “Mein Kampf” Hitler framed it with “Marxism”, “Jews”, “humanism”, “treason”, etc. To mark their opposition against the NS-doctrine, democrats therefore used the key word “international” as a positive and desirable reference (Schmitz-Berning 2007, pp. 323s).

For those who want to compare the material of the JKF with eugenic right-wing discourses in Switzerland, the appeal of Arthur Mojonnier (a historian) serves as a reference (1939, pp. 7-20):⁵ *“As we stand in a time of deepest transformations”* when *“we live in an epoch of völkisch mysticism and of race rule”*, he promoted for the country's benefit: *“the rejection of the Un-Swiss”*, *“our*

³ cf. www.geschichts-validitaet.com.

⁴ cf. later Bauer vs Wagner 1935. Ernst 1941b, pp. 609, 620.

⁵ Mojonnier, A. (1939). "Heimat und Volk". In J. Wagner & E. Rimli (ed.). Das Goldene Buch der LA 1939. Zürich: Verkehrsverlag, pp. 7-100.

völkisch character”, “*hereditary health of the people*” and the “*extermination of everything feeble*” while he deplored “*the degeneration of taste*” (cf. “*entartete Kunst*”). Fortunately this author’s text was a singularity in the books about the National Exhibition of 1939. Another illustration is a flyer of the fascist “National Front” among the University of Zurich students of 1933, focused on a «Switzerland first» campaign and complaining about “*the Jewish element spreading*”.⁶ Zaugg provides examples from the press (2020, p. 614). The social democratic paper “*Berner Tagwacht*” wrote in 1941: “*An unpleasant phenomenon is the fact known to every population politician: often it is feeble-minded parents who have most offspring. In these cases, promoting the abundance of children would be roughly equivalent to a Volk’s suicide. Here it is rather the prevention of reproduction that must be sought.*” The conservative newspaper “*Der Bund*” sounded similar. Finally the popular children’s book “*The Islanders of Lake Constance*” written by the archeologist Karl Keller-Tarnuzzer and published 1935 in Stuttgart contains an example of veiled accommodation to the neighboring Reich, when it referred to Himmler’s neo-classicist theories of a “*Dorian Migration*”, or to “*the border between the Roman Empire and free Germania at the Rhine Falls*” (p. 109).⁷

2. Julius Klaus as a wealthy 19th century globetrotter

The History of the Foundation begins with a globetrotter and his emotionally unresolved experience from trips abroad. After holding a position as an engineer, the wealthy bachelor Julius Klaus (1849–1920), son of a Swiss industrialist, spent many years travelling around the world. Such travels were highly respected then and considered as a source of universal knowledge and wisdom (Osterhammel 2009, p. 51). “*During his travels Julius Klaus did not overlook social and hygienic facilities in different countries and formed an opinion of his own about their value. Thus, he unconsciously approached the sphere of eugenics. In the orphanage of Athens, which he visited on May 8, 1894, and found very well equipped, he raised the question whether such an institution was really a blessing and whether it would not be more humane to artificially switch off the sickly and deformed creatures.*” (Obituary by Schlaginhaufen 1925a, p. 6).

⁶ StAZH U 920.28: Flugblatt der Hochschulgruppe Nationale Front.

⁷ Keller-Tarnuzzer, K. (1935). *Die Inselleute vom Bodensee*. Stuttgart: Thienemanns Verlag. Was this Keller-Tarnuzzer’s own true opinion? Or, were these words inserted by the publisher? This question needs further investigation (cf. the incident of SS-man Beger’s letter to Schlaginhaufen, cf. Zaugg 2020, p. 383).

Ten years later (1904) Klaus tried to moderate his views somewhat after hearing a public lecture:⁸ *“We do not want to give up the Christian virtues [...]. We still want to feel compassion for people in the future, but we do not want to breed weakness; we still want to show mercy to the sick in the future, but we don't want to propagate the diseases; we want to continue to love our neighbors in the future, but that should not degenerate into a sort of egalitarian thinking which levels and suppresses all individuality. An important factor in Nietzsche's teaching is heredity. [...] Requiring that people with genetic disorders should not reproduce is not as outrageous as it is often said. [...] is such a demand really so much more inhumane than the demand that the bravest and best should give themselves up to become cannon fodder? From the point of view of heredity, this demand not only appears to be inhumane, but a crime against humanity.”* Having written this, Klaus hoped for *“a new doctrine on good and evil”* and laws that would follow it on foot.

3. Klaus' Encounter with Schlaginhaufen in 1915

Another decade later, in 1915, Klaus met the anthropologist Otto Schlaginhaufen (1879–1973) at a public lecture of the Zurich University Association. Schlaginhaufen had received training in anthropological measurement techniques from his teacher Rudolf Martin (Hossfeld 2016, p. 200, Weilenmann 1990, pp. 10-17) and had gained postdoc research experience in Germany, where he studied Virchow's skulls. He also participated in the German Naval Expedition (1907–1909) and conducted anthropological investigations in Papua New Guinea (by the colonial name of “Neumecklenburg”).

At that time, most academics' concern was to defend Darwin's theory of evolution against the religious creationism of missionaries and against the snobbery of classical philosophers of the 19th century who viewed *“anthropology as a peculiar activity, unworthy of a scholar”* by which talents seem *“rather wasted on the habits of backwards races”* (Barkan 1992, p. 36). As much as intellectuals turned against religious bigotry, as little did they challenge the idea of a “white supremacy” among “races”. Not even socialists and pacifists like the psychiatrist Auguste Forel (1848–1931) were aware of this hypocrisy and injustice (Kühl 2013, chap. 3, IFEO). Like his contemporaries, the early Schlaginhaufen viewed “degeneration” as a threat to mankind and participated in the eugenics movement. This was then *“initiated by idealistic scientists and was inspired by a humanistic Enlightenment ideal of science as the servant of*

⁸ StAZH Z 924.271 Klaus, J. “Meine persönliche Stellungnahme zu Nietzsche im Anschluss zu Horneffer's Vorträgen über Nietzsche”.

human welfare, in which the general goal was to improve the biological heredity of human populations. In the abstract this appeared as a good and unobjectionable aim—provided the means were acceptable. Before the 1930s and the traumatic experiences of Nazi population policies, the word 'eugenics' had mostly positive connotations” (Roll-Hansen 2010, p. 81).

When Klaus heard Schlaginhaufen’s public lecture on *“Social Anthropology and War”* he was fascinated by its racist and social Darwinist assumptions. Those were the pillars of so-called traditional or mainline eugenics (Roll-Hansen 2010, p. 85). Schlaginhaufen said (1916a, pp. 10s): *“[...] the aspirations of individual and social hygiene do not go in the direction of natural selection, despite their wholesome effects, which no race hygienist would want to miss either. In their concern for containing the epidemics and alleviating the suffering of the physically and mentally weak and abnormal they are a blessing. But by maintaining these carriers of apparently unfavorable variants to reproduction, they favor the hereditary transmission of the characteristics which are disadvantageous for the entire hereditary pool of the social group, their tendencies are directed against the law dictated by Nature.”* After raising concerns about the unhealthy industrial work environment, the impact of industrial poisons, of alcohol and drugs on health, the anthropologist concentrated on the devastation caused by war (1916a, p. 17): *“the means of modern warfare rule out a [i.e. natural] selection within those at the front. The enemy’s bullet doesn’t vote. Without looking at hereditary qualities, it affects those who are well endowed just like those who are not. Unlike in the early days of the history of war, the genetically well-equipped is not able to use his properties for his own healing. The value of the genome disappears here into nothing.”* He concluded (p. 32): *“It cannot yet be decided today, how the mixing of representatives of different elements of the white race, which accompanies the war, is to be evaluated for the course of life of the peoples. However, the mixing between whites and colored people brought about by the introduction of the colored auxiliary troops is harmful for the characteristics of European man, a robbery of the gene pool of the white race.”*

This lecture received notable praise by the pacifist journal *“Peace Watch”*: *“the study by Prof. Dr. O. Schlaginhaufen offers a contribution that reveals far-reaching perspectives just by grouping the facts; and through its purely scientific method it achieves a profound effect, without commenting on the facts themselves”* (Friedenswarte 1916, p. 374).

Theoretically, racism contradicts Darwin’s main principles: Evolution has no plan and there is no “crown of creation”. But political opinions and self-interest overrode reason. Stepan (1982, p. 111): *“The nineteenth century closed with racism firmly established in popular opinion and science. [...] Belief in the racial superiority of whites, and the practice of racial discrimination at home and*

abroad, if often deplored on moral grounds, had nevertheless acquired some sanction in the seemingly objective findings of modern science". Besides colonial hubris, mainline eugenics was based on a misreading of the theory of evolution (Grimm 2011, p. 17). Thomas Huxley (also known as "Darwin's bulldog") criticized the fatal misunderstanding already in 1890: *"The unlucky substitution of 'survival of fittest' for 'natural selection' has done much harm in consequence of the ambiguity of 'fittest'—which many take to mean 'best' or 'highest'—whereas natural selection may work towards degradation."*

While citing Schlaginhaufen's opinion from 1915 (published in 1916a), some historians⁹ fail to mention that there is no evidence for a continuity of such pronounced racist and social Darwinist opinions in his later career. In a study on pygmies (1916b) Schlaginhaufen maintained the hypothesis of "high intelligence" as a "hereditary characteristic" of "whites" (p. 249), but he scolded prejudice and reminded that pygmies are not "dwarfs" (p. 250) and not "degenerate" (p. 271). Comparing different peoples, he found that pygmies are not more "primitive" than other human "races" phylogenetically (p. 265) and do not resemble children. They are "healthy and strong"; not "withered" in the least (p. 273). Roll-Hansen describes how attitudes began to change slowly (2010, p. 87): *"Criticism of racism from the new science of genetics developed gradually during the 1910s and 1920s, and was radically sharpened in response to Nazi ideology and population policies in the 1930s."* Schmuhl points out (2009, p. 3) that even pioneers against racism like Franz Boas (1858–1942) were not opposed to the "race" concept nor to the methods of physical anthropology. On the contrary, they needed them to produce empirical data to question the racists' unfounded certainties. Inevitably they fall behind when they are judged by today's standards. In spite of these historical facts, some authors intend to scandalize 20th century anthropology, biology and medicine as being inherently racist whenever the construct "race" was used—independently from a study's goals, methodology, hypotheses, results, or interpretation.

During the 1920s race hygiene became a wider movement, politically and religiously very heterogeneous. It had many different branches, there was religious eugenics, as well as communist, social-democratic and feminist eugenics (Weiss 2010, pp. 34, 65, 73; Kühl 2013, end of chap. 3). Biologists who were familiar with genetics, such as the leading plant breeder Erwin Baur (1875–1933) in Berlin, generally understood *"that breeding 'pure' and 'genetically healthy' human races was neither possible nor desirable"* and consequently did not advocate the idea of an *"extermination of foreign races"* (Kröner, Toellner & Weisemann 1994, pp. 48, 80-83, 143). Eugenics then included Social and

⁹ e.g. Tanner, J. (2015). *Geschichte der Schweiz im 20. Jahrhundert*. Beck Verlag (pp. 241f, 600).

Preventive Medicine and Environmental Sciences as well; e.g. Baur and his Russian colleague Nikolai Vavilov (1887–1943) initiated a systematic collection of plants as genetic libraries to maintain the biological diversity that is necessary for the survival of the planet (Hagemann 2000, p. 253).

4. Setting up the foundation after Klaus' death

When Klaus' plan to bequeath his legacy to a foundation became more specific, Schlaginhaufen consulted his faculty colleague, the botanist Alfred Ernst (1875–1968)¹⁰ to assist him. He was the son of Heinrich Ernst (1847–1934), the first social-democratic Government Councilor of the Canton of Zurich, and came from a family of stout scientific sceptics and agnostics. He was a pure scientist, uninvolved in eugenics. After several conversations about research, genetics and eugenics with the two professors, Klaus signed his testament on November 17, 1919.¹¹ When he passed away in February 1920, he left a fortune of 1,274,052.- Francs to the new foundation—more than any other scientific funding agency had in Zürich (Schmutz 2001, p. 306). From the obituary: *“Problems of race hygiene were of particular concern to Julius Klaus during the last years of his life. He often talked to his family doctor Barth about these questions; he also showed a lively interest in the relevant lectures at the Zurich University Association [...], and finally he decided to donate his fortune to the racial improvement of mankind. While his original intent was to sponsor practical measures with the bequest, he understandingly came to accept the proposal of the author of these lines whom he had asked for advice: Foremost consider the scientific foundations for any future practical race hygiene, and create a foundation which shall have the purpose of the preparatory scientific research and, as it progresses, eugenic reforms, too”* (Schlaginhaufen 1925a, p. 6). This cautiousness marked the beginning of a schism within the eugenics movement, when democratic and leftwing eugenicists (so called reformers) began to fundamentally question dangerous visions of «improving» the human race. Roll-Hansen (2010, p. 85): *“By the beginning of World War I, there was widespread and growing concern among professors of biology and medicine in the United States that 'hasty and ill-advised legislation' could result from 'eugenic zeal without sufficient eugenic knowledge.' The same worries were developing among liberal and left-wing scientists in Europe. Their criticism came to have a strong restraining impact on eugenic legislative proposals concerning marriage and sterilization in the 1920s and 1930s.”*

¹⁰ Alfred Ernst is the author's grandfather. She discovered the literature on the JKF in 2017.

¹¹ StAZH MM 3.35 RRB 1921/3417.

Ernst, being a former student of the socialist Arnold Dodel-Port (1843–1908), stuck to Darwin and published unconventional opinions. Under his direction the Botanical Institute was open to an international diversity of students. Free from prejudice and discrimination it offered qualifications and positions on all levels.¹² In 1919 (pp. 40–44) Ernst wrote that bastardization especially from “races” that are far apart (heterogenous crossing), can have advantages for the organism’s adaptation to the environment. The phenomenon was called “luxuriation”. He postulated that mixing of species could be the cause of mutations, “real qualitative change” and thus be a driving force of evolution. This hypothesis was directly opposed to the political idea of a desirability of “race purity” and to panicky warnings against “race-mixing”. On a social level Ernst was friends with his former colleague Hugo Ittis (both had been assistants under Dodel) and his former doctorate student Cecil Yampolsky-Boas, the son-in-law of Franz Boas and his wife Helen, who visited Europe in the 1920s.¹³ From the documents surrounding the creation of the JKF and from publications, we can infer an intense scientific debate among Schlaginhaufen and Ernst on the notions of “race” and “race mixing”. Schlaginhaufen welcomed the botanist’s ideas (1920a, p. 406; 1920b, pp. 34s) and began slowly but steadily to move away from the pretended superiority of the “white race”. For example, he wrote that *“the classification of individuals into sub-races often poses considerable problems”* (1920a, p. 309). He cited Darwin’s results about white pigmentation as a disadvantage and several empirical studies with humans, which found lighter complexions to show a higher prevalence of disorders than darker complexions. He concluded (1920a, p. 404): *“Likewise one will for the time being wait and see what happens to Havelock Ellis’ view stating that the apparently stronger pigmentation in the female sex is correlated with a greater resistance to diseases.”* As an example for luxuriation in humans, he cited (1920b, pp. 35s) Eugen Fischer’s study of the Rehoboth mixed population of Namibia, who distinguished themselves by a greater resilience to stress and to disease than both black and white “parent-races”. He also referred to a similar study conducted by Franz Boas about children of French settlers and native Americans. Contrary to his own opinion in 1915 and to Eugen Fischer, Schlaginhaufen made no snide remarks about the presumed character or the culture of those people. Instead, he criticized the «natural philosopher» Houston Steward Chamberlain—author of *“Mankind’s Racial History”*, a pseudo-scientific work on “Aryans” and in many ways a precursor of *“Mein*

¹² E.g. Olga Knischewsky, Simon Weinzieher, Salomon Rywosch, Clara Zollikofer, Sinia Hiddo Rinse, Ali al-Rawi (cf. UAZ AB.1.0220 Dozentendossier Alfred Ernst, StAZH U 920, Akten 1905–1945).

¹³ StAZH U 920.15/1: Ernst → Yampolsky 16.3.1920, Ernst → Baur 16.3.1920, recommendation for Yampolsky.

Kampf". Schlaginhaufen wrote that Chamberlain needed to modify one of his (pretended) "biological laws", as it was simply based on a misunderstanding (1920b, p. 39). Henceforth Schlaginhaufen abstained from using political slogans and concentrated on publishing carefully obtained empirical results, all of which question the existence of racial classifications. Social anthropology should pay more attention to the question of race mixing—so Schlaginhaufen in 1920b (p. 40): *"It will then be reserved to future times to draw the race hygienic consequences and, depending on the favorable or unfavorable genetic characteristics of certain crossings, to promote or inhibit certain human mixtures through appropriate reforms"*.¹⁴ Then again Keller reports (1995, p. 10) that some rare and anonymous voices told him, that Schlaginhaufen had been against "racially" mixed marriages. Yet, how credible are statements when speakers cannot stand by their name?

On September 28, 1920 Schlaginhaufen, Ernst and Adolf Barth (the executor of Klaus' will) signed the draft of statutes for the Foundation and submitted it to the Government Council of the Canton of Zurich. They defined the purpose of the JKF as the benefit of mankind (in general). In a preliminary Art. 2 the authors pointed out that discriminating against people with illnesses or disabilities had not been their idea (p. 1):¹⁵ *"The purpose of the foundation is the preparation and execution of reforms in the domain of race hygiene, at first through the promotion of scientific research in the entire field of the study of heredity, with special consideration of heredity and racial improvement of man. Any support of aspirations for the benefit of the physically or mentally inferior—donations to hospitals, homes for cripples, institutions for the deaf and the blind, madhouses etc. and the promotion of special aspirations e.g. abstinence as well—are excluded from receiving subventions by this foundation due to the explicit expression of the donator's will."*

5. A skeleton falling out: Paul Mutzner's assessment of the draft of statutes

As this new foundation was particularly well financed, the Government Council of Zurich asked a professor of law, Paul Mutzner (1881–1949), to ex-

¹⁴ Schlaginhaufen's personal and scientific development after 1919 has hardly been taken into account so far. E.g. Kühl (2013, chap. 3) contains errors of dates and judgement about Schlaginhaufen's publications from 1920. Keller 1995 describes the facts correctly so as to allow his readers to form their independent opinion. But some of his judgements seem biased.

¹⁵ StAZH Z 924.252: Reglementsentwurf des Kuratoriums der JKS (Schlaginhaufen, Ernst, Barth), 5.10.1920.

amine the draft. His assessment was apodictic (March 12, 1921, p. 10):¹⁶ “— even if it does not appear in the wording of the testament—but from obvious information provided by those who are best informed about the intentions of the founder—the founder was primarily concerned with the betterment of the white race.” Obviously, political strings had been pulled behind the scenes and a minority opinion had found its way to Mutzner. He threatened (p. 18): “If the board of trustees refuses to comply in drafting new regulations, the supervisory authority would have to make the necessary decisions on its own initiative. Because then one would indeed be dealing with a foundation that [...] ‘cannot march at all, right from the beginning’.” After mentioning “the betterment of the white race” nine times, the jurist categorically ruled out the possibility of regular revisions stated in the draft (p. 19 under VIII): “Art. 24 would best be deleted entirely. It is difficult to see why, on the one hand, a revision should be carried out every five years, even if no one feels the need for it, and why, on the other hand, a revision that is felt as a need should not be carried out just because the five years are not yet over.” Mutzner devised his own version of regulations which contained a new §13: “To be considered as falling under the foundation's purpose are all endeavors with the ultimate goal to carry out practical reforms to improve the white race.” This was followed by the inevitable exclusion of benefits to the “inferior” but without mentioning Klaus’ last will. Mutzner’s sharp tone insinuated that the professors had applied too much pressure on the dying Klaus when they had convinced him to respect scientific prudence and to refrain from prejudice.

On May 24, 1921, Ernst and Schlaginhaufen—but not Barth—protested against Mutzner’s allegations. Their response to the Government Council stated (p. 1):¹⁷ “Taking note of this report we have seen that there are partly erroneous views about our scientific & personal position on this matter; we would like to offer you some opinions that may be useful to clarify. We completely refrain from going into the legal views and deductions contained on pages 1-9 of the report, since we have no intention, nor have we ever intended, to remove the Julius Klaus Foundation from the supervision of the State organs. The following is intended solely to clarify our view of the purpose of the foundation and the ways to achieve it.” (p. 2): “Race hygiene as a science is the teaching of the conditions of optimal and perfecting the human race; [...] Instead of the more common term ‘race hygiene’, the term ‘eugenics’ is also used, a description that is more recommendable because the measures mentioned do not benefit existing systematic races (Nordic, Alpine, Mongolian race, etc.) but the

¹⁶ StAZH Z 924.252: Mutzner → Direktion des Erziehungswesens des Kantons Zürich, 12.3.1921.

¹⁷ StAZH Z 924.252: Schlaginhaufen & Ernst → Direktor des Erziehungswesens des Kantons Zürich, Regierungsrat Dr. Mousson, 24.5.1921.

vital race, which is a unit of maintenance and development of enduring life.” (p. 6): “[...] the main goal of race hygiene is to help the bearers of favorable genetic variants to break through. In addition to the favorable and unfavorable, there are those characteristics that take a neutral position, so to speak, and cannot be described as good or bad, neither as healthy nor as pathological, i.e. the race characteristics in the narrower sense. They are those according to which the race type is usually determined, i.e. eye color, hair color, head shape etc. The fact that these apparently indifferent properties are of great importance socio-anthropologically is evidenced by the fact that the propensity for certain diseases among the carriers of the one characteristic compound is stronger than that of the others.”

On page 7 Schlaginhaufen and Ernst handed out a resolute warning against eugenics, quite a prophecy in the light of what was about to happen during the next decades: *“It is obvious that a reform [i.e. in the sense of race hygiene] requires the most careful scientific preparation in every direction before any proposal to include it in a law can be considered. Just as eugenic measures will be beneficial for the people’s gene pool in the future if they are scientifically well-thought-out and justified, they will take revenge if they are scientifically weak and are hastily put into practice. This point cannot be stressed strongly enough.”* Then the professors argued that during their last reunion with Klaus, he had written his testament in the presence of both executors Barth and Hess. Therefore only this text—together with the name of the foundation and the first paragraphs—reflected Klaus’ true will. They wrote: *“the donation of his fortune would probably not have been made, had he foreseen that the expression of his true will could be superseded by an interpretation contrary to it”* (p. 8).

Mutzner’s legal reasoning for §13 was not entirely false: A testator’s last will including his whims have to be respected if they are not against the law. Klaus’ initial partiality for the “white race” was a fact for 1915. Yet it was also a fact that Klaus had revised his views already once after hearing scholarly presentations. Thus, Mutzner did not present any valid evidence for his affirmation that Klaus was still remained fixed on the “white race” in his last year. The jurist provided only hear-say, no documents and no names. Whose skeleton in the closet is it? We shall never know. Had someone close to Klaus (the most likely candidates are Barth or his replacement Karl Hess) indeed witnessed an ambivalence in Klaus’ later opinions? Or had Mutzner inflated something? In Barth’s obituary Schlaginhaufen (1929) politely alluded to quite a few disagreements between the executioner of the will and the rest of the Board when it came to questions of race hygiene.

Having no other choice under the threats, the professors reduced the “white race”-element to a purely subjective matter of loyalty to one’s own

group, so as to contain the damage (p. 9): *“We agree with the legal opinion that blessings of the measures initiated by the foundation, should primarily be to the benefit the white race. A representative of the white race must first and foremost care about the preservation and promotion of their own race. Of course, this does not mean that investigations should not be carried out on foreign races that are within the scope of the foundation's purpose; because it is clear that observations made with other human races can be useful for the hygienic promotion of the white race. The social anthropologist will make it his duty, e.g. to study declining races, to uncover the sources of their degeneration and to think of measures with which one can effectively counteract such signs of decline in the white race.”* This explanation ruled out that pseudo-scientific arguments for racism and “white supremacy” could be derived from the regulations which would create an obligation for the Board to finance ethically questionable projects.

Mutzner and the professors then integrated their versions into the form which included the new §13 and excluded the old §24. These statutes were authorized by the Government Council on November 12, 1921 (Schlaginhaufen 1925b). Mutzner’s drastic legal «lesson» hung like the sword of Damokles upon the Board of Trustees. With its threats and unfounded allusions, it blocked the possibility to revise the name and the foundation’s statutes for decades.

6. Avoiding serving the letter of paragraph 13

After investing its fortune, the Board of Trustees established a general program of activity in March 1922,¹⁸ based on the proposals of all disciplines.¹⁹ None of them contained anything about the “white race”. In Mutzner’s opinion (p. 12), medicine was the discipline most apt to promote “the betterment of the white race”. Yet, the medical subprogram contained nothing like that, on the contrary it contained references to national concerns, spiting Mutzner and also the transnational “white” alliance of mainline eugenics (for that see Kühl 2013, chap. 3). The social anthropology subprogram warned against eugenic zeal once more and quoted a spectrum of authors and opinions: Herman Lundborg (1868–1943), René Collignon (1856–1932) and Franz Boas. With his study on the children of the first-generation immigrants to the US compared with their parents, Boas found that environmental conditions played an important role in shaping the body. All in all, those documents testify that from

¹⁸ StAZH Z 924.1: Protokolle des Kuratoriums, 6.3.1922, p. 27.

¹⁹ StAZH Z 924.253: Konzepte.

its very beginning in 1921 the JKF did not support the agenda of white supremacism.

One central issue for the bachelor Klaus had been *“to expand the civil status registry so as to enter the findings of regular medical examinations for each individual in order to offer the necessary foundations for race hygiene precautions to the later generations”* (Schlaginhaufen 1925a, p. 6). Barth, representing Klaus, plead for a campaign, so as to convince the public that it *“were a great crime to father children who are ‘degenerated’”*. Thereupon, Schlaginhaufen recommended the exchange of marriage certificates on a volunteer basis, but not as mandatory requirement (Schmutz 2001, p. 308).²⁰ The Foundation minimized all subsidies to practical eugenics and refused demands disregarding human rights. The Board also created a journal of their own, called *“Archiv der Julius Klaus Stiftung”*. Upon Schlaginhaufen’s proposal on February 14, 1924 the trustees decided that the foundation join the *“International Commission of Eugenics”* in order to *“provide the opportunity to get in touch with other similarly oriented institutions and to receive stimulation for tackling projects in practical race hygiene.”*²¹ They were not the first Swiss to join, Forel had already been active since 1912 (Kühl 2013, chap. 1 Eugenics congress 1912, chap. 3). In 1925 this organization was retitled to *“International Federation of Eugenic Organizations”* (IFEEO).

In spite of the considerable sums it could distribute and despite the privilege of the two founding members Schlaginhaufen and Ernst to benefit from much higher subsidies than anyone else, there were no notable tensions among different disciplines within the Faculties or the Board of Trustees. Among the first one to receive funding was a medical study on goiter, which was never realized, even though the Board kindly prolonged the duration of the grant several times.²² Trustee Heinrich Zangger (1874–1957) even had to remind his colleagues from the Faculty of Medicine to respect the guidelines in their research proposals.²³

Schlaginhaufen submitted his expensive project of an *“Anthropologica Helvetica”* in 1926. He planned to search for European “races” in the so-called *“Volkskörper”* (the gene pool) of different Swiss regions in order to facilitate preventive medicine (e.g. in the fight against tuberculosis) (cf. Schmutz 2001, pp. 308–310).²⁴ A total 35,000 of soldiers were measured. Although it used “race” as a variable, the project contained no intent to establish a taxonomy of humans in the sense of a political concept to unite citizens with similar “racial”

²⁰ StAZH Z 924.1: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 6.3.1922, p. 29.

²¹ StAZH Z 924.1: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 14.2.1924, p. 144.

²² StAZH Z 924.1: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 8.5.1923, p. 104, and 14.2.1924, p. 144.

²³ StAZH Z 70.427: Zangger → Hess, 26.12.1922.

²⁴ StAZH Z 924.1: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 22.12.1926, pp. 227–236.

traits and thereby to exclude or discriminate others. From today's knowledge the evaluation of "racial" types (as "*units of maintenance and development of enduring life*") grossly overestimated the role of visible characteristics in the genome. Having no clue about the enormous wealth and complexity of information contained in the human DNA, anthropology and medicine had hoped for more distinct correlations between health dispositions and external non-pathological physical attributes than there actually are. The attempted identification of patterns finally amounted to a non-result, published between 1935 and 1946. Schlaginhaufen found that only small percentages of soldiers fitted into one of the "racial" categories which should have served as the imagined basis for preventive medicine (E. Keller 2006, pp. 61-66).

Unethical proposals of traditional eugenics were generally turned down by the foundation. The Board of the JKF rejected a demand of Stavros Zurukzoglu (1896–1966) a Swiss-Greek hygienist from Berne to finance a film about "*hereditary degenerates*" on July 19, 1929,²⁵ and refused categorically to support the eugenic exposition on hygiene and sport (HYSPA) in 1931 (Schmutz 2001, p. 308; for HYPSPA see Ritter 2009, p. 163). Another request for subsidies made by Ernst Rüdin, the leading Nazi psychiatrist in Munich (a Swiss), was denied by the Steering committee in September 1933.²⁶ In 1936 the JK Foundation received a demand from the "Bureau of Human Heredity" to publish an international call for a "*collection on as wide a scale as possible of material dealing with human genetics*" (i.e. pedigrees, twin studies, statistics). The initiative stemmed from British traditional race hygienists, namely from Cora Hodson, Arthur Keith, Ronald Fisher, and Ruggles Gates. The British Medical Research Council was democratically minded and opposed to these efforts (Kühl 2013, end of chap. 4). The JKF Steering Committee (Schlaginhaufen, Grossmann, Ernst, Hess) also refused this demand in 1937,²⁷ contrary to the US-Journal "Nature". In the following year, they rejected a request of the Swiss Ophthalmological Society to collect all pedigrees of hereditary blindness.²⁸

Obviously, the general skepticism against eugenics inside the JKF did not please the advocates of applied race hygiene, but for as long as the Third Reich lasted, they rarely spoke up. The issue came up only twice. In 1934 the Board hesitated if it should accept or reject a demand coming from a social-hygiene organization:²⁹ "*Prof. Vogt would like to approve a one-time support to counter the criticism that the Julius Klaus Foundation has money for all sorts of purposes, but not for efforts that relate to man.*" It was decided to give 500 Francs.

²⁵ StAZH Z 924.208: Protokolle des Vorstands des Kuratoriums 19.7.1929, pp. 10s.

²⁶ StAZH Z 924.208: Protokolle des Vorstands des Kuratoriums 21.9.1933, pp. 52s.

²⁷ StAZH Z 924.209: Protokolle des Vorstands des Kuratoriums 23.1.1937, p. 12.

²⁸ StAZH Z 924.209: Protokolle des Vorstands des Kuratoriums 29.1.1938, p. 29.

²⁹ StAZH Z 924.3: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 24.1.1934, p. 15.

Another attempt was made 1937 by the executor of Klaus' will:³⁰ *"Mr. Hess reminded that Julius Klaus first thought of a foundation for marriage counseling. He just wanted to create something practical. Therefore, with time, one should give more than before. [...] The chairman [i.e. Schlaginhaufen] supported Mr. Hess's proposal. It is widely expected that the foundation do more for practical race hygiene."* On behalf of projects and institutions of practical race hygiene the trustees supported efforts for public education about biology and eugenics (Schmutz 2001, p. 308), pursuing a very modest doctrine, similar to that of British eugenics (which has been described by Grimm 2011, p. 77). According to the documents of the JKF, the academics among the trustees abstained from developing or promoting eugenic visions. There is no record for such publications of Board members elsewhere either (after Schlaginhaufen's presentation from 1915). *"Practical reforms"* of race hygiene as the *"ultimate goal"* of the foundation were never specified at all (Schmutz 2001, p. 309).

With the NS-*"Law for the Re-Establishment of Lifelong Civil Service"* from April 7, 1933, letters from forcibly retired *"non-Aryan"* researchers arrived at University of Zurich. Ernst could help some, but not all of them. The University of Zürich opted for an isolation-policy (Bolliger 2019, p. 168). Against regulations Ernst used subsidies from the JKF to help Gerta von Ubisch (1882–1965) to stay in Switzerland for a while, until she found a country who would grant her an immigration visa³¹ and he helped to search a post for Emil Heitz (1892–1965).³² When Erich Tschermak complained about the Nazi uprisings in Austrian Universities and asked to find a place for a Dr. Engel from Vienna to submit his habilitation thesis, Ernst expressed his distaste for the strong nationalist current in Zürich. He told him about the hate campaign of the National Front in 1933 against the physics professor Edgar Meyer (his longtime friend, who was a naturalized Swiss citizen with Jewish roots).³³ Being in such a difficult position, Meyer was unable to help out and direct the habilitation thesis of a foreigner.³⁴

³⁰ StAZH Z 924.3: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 1.2.1937, p. 28.

³¹ StAZH U 920.29/1: Ubisch → Ernst 30.1.1934; U 920.29/2 Ernst → Schoch-Bodmer 1.12.1934.

³² StAZH U 920.28: Ernst → Heitz 12.9.1933; U 920.32: Ernst → Senn in Basle 31.5.1937.

³³ StAZH U 920.29: Tschermak → Ernst 14.10.1934, Ernst → Tschermak 8.11.1934; U 920.18: Meyer → Ernst 1923.

³⁴ He was probably Alfred von Engel who managed to flee to England later. Cf. CERL Thesaurus, Online (visited on July 24, 2020): <https://data.cerl.org/thesaurus/cnp00195726>.

7. Navigating between censorship of free expression, democratic tolerance and insecurity

7.1 On the interpretation of ambivalent texts, written under conditions of a dictatorship

When interpreting historical documents, the phenomena occurring under a restriction of the freedom of expression and under the threat of war must be accounted for. Inevitably, texts of those who oppose against a totalitarian rule will show signs of ambiguity. They must be read like palimpsests—i.e. writings composed of two superposed messages (Kröner et al. 1994, p. 108). This requires foremost the comprehensive study of the conditions under which such publications or letters were written, and of the entire set of available documents. Only after a thorough procedure is it possible to determine whether the element of resistance is the predominant aspect while the adaptive element is camouflage, or whether an undeclared opportunistic attitude motivates the ambivalence. In the last decades, historians of Science (e.g. treating the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute) have paid a lot of attention to the opportunism, whereas they neglected subversion, which was a prominent theme in the 1970s and 1980s. Fortunately, other historians object to a «guilty until proven innocent»-rhetoric which violates both democratic principles and logic (e.g. Etzemüller 2003).

Shortly after Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, Schlaginhaufen rejected the concept of "Aryans" as unscientific (Weilenmann 1990, p. 24; Keller 1995, pp. 174s). The refusal of this myth was (according to Weiss 1987, p. 194) also the opinion of the uncompromising socialist, liberal-democrat and Christian eugenicists Schallmayer, Muckermann, Ostermann and Grotjahn in Germany who *"rejected out of hand the desirability of a 'Nordic race hygiene'"* against the vanguard Nazi fraction (Ploetz, Rüdin, v. Gruber, Lenz). In the early 1930s this was a disruption within anthropology (Stepan 1982, p. 140).

From March 1933 on, the "new Germany" began to exercise increasing pressure on Switzerland to restrict its Freedom of the Press. With the alignment-policy ("Gleichschaltung") independent Swiss newspapers were forbidden in the Reich.³⁵ In March 1934 the Federal Council ordered a post-publication censorship on all organs of the press if they endanger Switzerland's relationships with other States by criticizing them (Studer 2002, pp. 26-28). This applied to scholarly journals, as well. In July 1935 the Swiss Medical Weekly (SMW) published an essay by the Austrian endocrinologist Julius Bauer

³⁵ CH-BAR Amtsdrukschriften, Protokoll des Bundesrats vom 2.7.1935 (Pressekonflikt mit Deutschland).

(1887–1979) who dismantled Nazi race hygiene as a pseudoscience. His title ran: *“Dangerous Slogans in Hereditary Biology”*. In revenge, the “Reich’s Medical Führer” Gerhard Wagner prohibited all German physicians to attend the upcoming medical conference in Montreux. He wrote that Bauer’s essay *“concludes with the genuinely Jewish demand: ‘Science and thus the truth can never be national, it can only ever be international, linked to humanity and therefore only ever apolitical’”*.³⁶ Wagner, who belonged to the staff of Rudolf Hess and to the SA, together with vice-“Reichsärzteführer” Franz Wirz, provoked a diplomatic incident. At first Alfred Gigon (1883–1975), the Editor of SMW, proposed to insist on the country’s independence and neutrality, and the Swiss diplomat Dinichert in Berlin qualified (internally) Germany’s antisemitism as *“pathological”*.³⁷ Behind the scenes, President Louis Dapples of Nestlé, the sponsor of the conference, intervened to the Federal Council. He feared the congress would lose its range and importance without the German participation, and asked the Confederation to intervene in his sense.³⁸ The incident ended with the Federal Councilor Guiseppe Motta (1871–1940) giving in to the blackmail from Berlin: not to let Bauer attend the conference and to publish a “correction” instead of the open scientific debate that had been planned by the editor.³⁹ Wirz also quoted⁴⁰ an (unnamed) Swiss NS-sympathizer against his own country while pretending that Germany *“had never shied and would never shy away from a discussion about the scientific part of the incident”* (p. 5). Furthermore, he complained (pp. 4s) about the Swiss Neurologist Mieczyslaw Minkowski (1884–1972) who had also expressed his disapproval of NS-medicine openly (cf. Ritter 2009, p. 229). The courageous Julius Bauer was expelled from the German Society of Internal Medicine and had to flee in 1938. The unspecified Swiss supporter of the Nazis’ interests was Otto Nägeli (1871–1938), Director of the medical policlinic in Zürich and known for his antisemitism.⁴¹

In 1937 the JKF Steering Committee accommodated the federal law and granted funds for a book project by Zurukzoglu about sterilization in the Swiss

³⁶ Wagner, G. (27.8.1935). "Internationale Medizinische Woche in Montreux". Ziel und Weg, p. 447.

³⁷ CH-BAR E2001C#1000/1534#2336*: Gigon → Wagner (undated draft, it was probably never sent), Dinichert → Auswärtiges Amt in Bern 2.9.1935.

³⁸ CH-BAR E2001C#1000/1534#2336*: Memo → Motta about a phone call from Dapples/Nestlé 30.8.1935.

³⁹ CH-BAR-E2001C#1000/1534#2336*: Gigon → Bundesrat 30.8.1935

⁴⁰ CH-BAR E2001C#1000/1534#2336*: stv. Reichsärzteführer Wirz → Swiss diplomat Dinichert 3.9.1935.

⁴¹ AMPG, III. Abt., Nachlass Otmar v. Verschuer, Rep. 86 A, Nr. 271, Nägeli → Gigon (undated).

perspective “under the premise that the collective work would not polemize against measures of race hygiene abroad”.⁴²

In public speeches and texts, Swiss authors stated their demarcation against Nazi ideology usually in positive terms (Maissen 2015, p. 260). By advocating human rights, everyone knew what was meant, without violating the Federal Council’s emergency law.

7.2 Learning to deal with the Swastika and making errors

Every crisis-management involves decisions under complete uncertainty and therefore depends largely on “trial and error”. As we shall see, dealing and refusing to deal with colleagues living under the Swastika had to be learned, and mistakes were made. Switzerland is often proud of its democratic tolerance of political dissent and its problem-solving skills by discussion and compromise. But there are downsides to this cultural tradition. One of them is the citizens’ lack of practical experience with totalitarian systems—a naiveté which can only be corrected after committing errors and by making negative experience. Another disadvantage can be a lack of leadership in situations when it would be needed. On behalf of humanitarian, scientific and diplomatic missions this culture can be seen as a strength or as a weakness, depending on the situation and the perspective.

During the 1930s the International Federation of Eugenics Organizations came more and more under the influence of traditional eugenics. Latin eugenicists had already split in 1932; they wanted to promote Lamarckism and positive eugenics with an organization of their own (Cassata 2011, p. 177; Kühl 2013, p. 110). The biggest error ever in the history of the Julius Klaus Foundation was to hold the 1934 conference of the IFEO in Zürich, while it was under the presidency of the infamous Nazi-psychiatrist Rüdin. On June 24, 1933, the Steering Committee (Schlaginhaufen, Hescheler, Grossmann) answered to the IFEO that the JKF was inclined to hold the conference in Zürich but asked to postpone it for a year “considering the insecure political & economic situation”. Indeed, in 1933 many naively believed that the NS-regime would not last for more than year (Weindling 1989, p. 495; Zaugg 2020, p. 172). The conference took place. Participants, including the most critical from Holland and France, adopted two resolutions: one for the promotion of eugenics by Jon Möjen and one against war, drawn by Alfred Ploetz.⁴³ It is widely known that the Nazis used the congress as a propaganda platform. In 1935 they were full of praise

⁴² StAZH Z 924.209: Protokolle des Vorstands des Kuratoriums 4.11.1936 and 16.7.1937, p. 19 (Schlaginhaufen, Grossmann, Vogt).

⁴³ APSL Mss.B.D27: Charles B. Davenport Papers: Minutes of the 1934 IFEO Conference.

about its outcome and about Switzerland's role as a host.⁴⁴ We do not know what happened inside the Steering committee of the JKF concerning the planning, the concerns and the outcome of the conference. Most entries of 1934 from the minutes of the JKF Steering Committee have disappeared because six pages have been cut out. The last visible fragment of a sentence under a Title 4. IFEO is ominous: "*Recently a request has been received*"⁴⁵.

Contacts with the Reich, wherever they happened and with whoever (supporters or dissidents), were always a walk on the tightrope. Neither the Swiss nor anybody else did or could manage them perfectly, especially as no one had all the necessary information. As reported by Kühl (2013, chap. 4), it took another five years before Dutch and British eugenics reformers definitely broke their ties to the IFEO on Aug 28, 1939. They never formed a separate society to propagate their own ideas (Weiss 2010, p. 295). From the Archives of the Max Planck Society, we do know that the JKF must have left the IFEO sometime earlier. In March 1939 the foundation was not listed as a member anymore, while the Swiss Society of Psychiatry still was.⁴⁶

Among the Board members and the beneficiaries of JKS a whole range of positions of closeness and distance to Germany can be found varying individually, and this was tolerated (examples in Keller 1995).

Ernst Hanhart (1891–1973), a complex personality, but recognized as a pioneer of human genetics (Müller 2020)⁴⁷ received a lot of funding by the JKS while entertaining too many close relationships with NS-Germany. With respect to this entanglement, the Steering Committee (Schlaginhaufen, Grossmann, Ernst, Hess) suggested in 1937 to impose a restriction on funding Hanhart's research, so that he confine it to Swiss soil—"considering the experiences the petitioner previously had abroad."⁴⁸ It is not said what those were. Trustee Vogt was opposed to such a restriction, because: "*Science knows no political boundaries and one should be glad that Dr. Hanhart wants to undertake the type of research that the donor probably had in mind in the first place*". As the co-editor of the Springer journal "Zeitschrift für menschliche Vererbungs- und Konstitutionslehre" Vogt was obviously caught in a dilemma. It was decided to grant the subsidy without the restriction. Alfred Ernst, as a Board-member of JKF reminded Hanhart in 1939 to please consider the local Swiss journal for

⁴⁴ CH-BAR E2001C#1000/1534#2336*: stv. Reichsärzteführer Wirz → Swiss diplomat Dinichert 3.9.1935.

⁴⁵ StAZH Z 924.208: Protokolle des Vorstands des Kuratoriums 1929-1935, missings: pp. 61–66 after 10.11.1933 until 8.12.1934.

⁴⁶ AMPG III. Abt. Nachlass Otmar v. Verschuer, Rep. 204 A, Nr. 59.

⁴⁷ UAZ: Jahresbericht der Universität Zürich 1973/74, p. 89 (obituary).

⁴⁸ StAZH Z 924.3: Protokolle des Kuratoriums, 1.2.1937, p. 47.

once.⁴⁹ Vogt's publications and their political meaning for or against German race hygiene have yet to be examined from a medical and historical perspective. Some evidence stems from an assessment to the Benoist award for Ernst in 1939,⁵⁰ where the ophthalmologist outlined the despair of many German families consulting Swiss physicians to obtain a certificate that would allow them to escape from sterilization.

8. Proving the falseness of the premises of the Nazi race hygiene

In order to reform eugenics, democratic scientists sought to refute the simplistic Mendelian assumptions of the Reich's race hygiene (Paul 1995, pp. 117-125; Köhl 2013, chap. 4). Not knowing if and when the Reich would come to end, Swiss life scientists invested a lot of effort into proving that Nazi science and traditional eugenics in general were built on false pillars. In the 1930s there were good reasons to assume that NS-medicine could successfully be challenged through sound scientific criticism of its genetic determinism. One example is provided by the infectiologist Bruno Lange (1936, pp. 808s) who managed to shake the assumption of a weighty "*hereditary disposition*" and of a "*regulated heredity*" in the aethiology of tuberculosis (Peter 2004, p. 51; Schmuhl 2008, pp. 200s). Another example is Jakob Eugster (1891–1974),⁵¹ an eminent beneficiary of the JKF and friend of Victor Franz Hess, a prominent NS-oppositional and Noble prize winner. Eugster's studies revealed that goiter and cretinism—once considered as prototypical for "degeneration"—cannot be hereditary. Through Otto Nägeli, his father-in-law, Eugster gained access to Otmar v. Verschuer with whom he corresponded friendly until 1939,⁵² but stopped during the war. Thus, Eugster (1936, 1937) got his results published in the Nazi-journal "Der Erbarzt". He thereby reached every single German physician and saved thousands of families from sterilization. From the ex ante perspective, not knowing if terror of the Swastika would ever end, it is certainly much more ethical to try to influence German science than to abstain from all contact, even if that implies that «hands will get wet». Schmuhl (2008, chap. 4D) and Weiss (2010a p.114, 2010b) describe Verschuer's uncanny capacity to lure people into trusting him by his adherence to the Professing Church (NS-

⁴⁹ StAZH Z 924.4: Protokolle des Kuratoriums, 8.2.1939, p. 6.

⁵⁰ CH-BAR#E9510.10#1987/32#331*: Gutachten von Alfred Vogt 22.8.1939.

⁵¹ UAZ: Jahresbericht der Universität Zürich 1973/74, p. 88 (obituary).

⁵² AMPG III. Abt. Nachlass Otmar v. Verschuer, Rep. 86 A.

dissents) while serving the Reich as a loyal bureaucrat and (behind the scenes) even cooperating with Auschwitz in research on the remains of murder victims.

8.1 Schlaginhaufen refutes a unity of “race” and nation

Contrary to Alfred Ernst who never attended any conference in Nazi Germany,⁵³ Schlaginhaufen did so. He *“presented the first preliminary results of the ‘Anthropological Investigations’ at the Population Policy Congress in Berlin in August 1935, surrounded by swastika flags, in the midst of SS people and colleagues who shouted ‘Heil Hitler’ into the hall. His lecture dealt with the prevalence of broad skulls in the Swiss population and showed that the broadly skulled ‘alpine race’ does not occur in large numbers in the Alps, not prevalent at all. Thus, Schlaginhaufen turned against the National Socialist idea of congruence between race and nation, and it is hardly surprising that the congress acknowledged this report with nothing but silence”* (Keller 1998, p. 353). From the 1920s on, the Anthropologist spent considerable efforts into sidestepping the §13 of the JKF regulations by proving that “race-mixing” between far-away “races” had already taken place in pre-historic times in Switzerland.

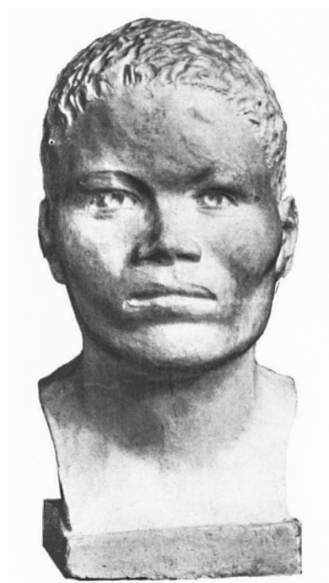


Photo 1: Koller (1935, pp. 857-858, Abb. 4)

His favorite topic was the skeleton of a small, (roughly) thirty-year old woman found 1901 in Egolzwil near Lucerne. In a first study of 1915 he only wrote about “unusual” proportions. After substantial new measurements (1924, p. 200; 1925c, pp. 213-227) he dared to compare her to the “negroid” features of the Grimaldi man (Weilenmann 1990, pp. 37-39). Koller with the Museum of Natural History in Vienna reconstructed a plaster model of her face

⁵³ UAZ AB.1.0220: Ehrungen und Mitgliedschaften und Forschungsreisen of Alfred Ernst.

in 1935 (photo 1).⁵⁴ Schlaginhaufen was very fond of the small Neolithic woman, estimated to have lived about 4000 B.C. According to a photo-album made by his niece Flora Sachser,⁵⁵ he personalized her as the “Egolzwilerin”, not just any skull or skeleton. He published this statement against “racial purity” at the Anthropological Congress in London 1934,⁵⁶ and—in the defense of democratic values and independence—at the Swiss National Exhibition 1939 (Niggli 1939, p. 462).

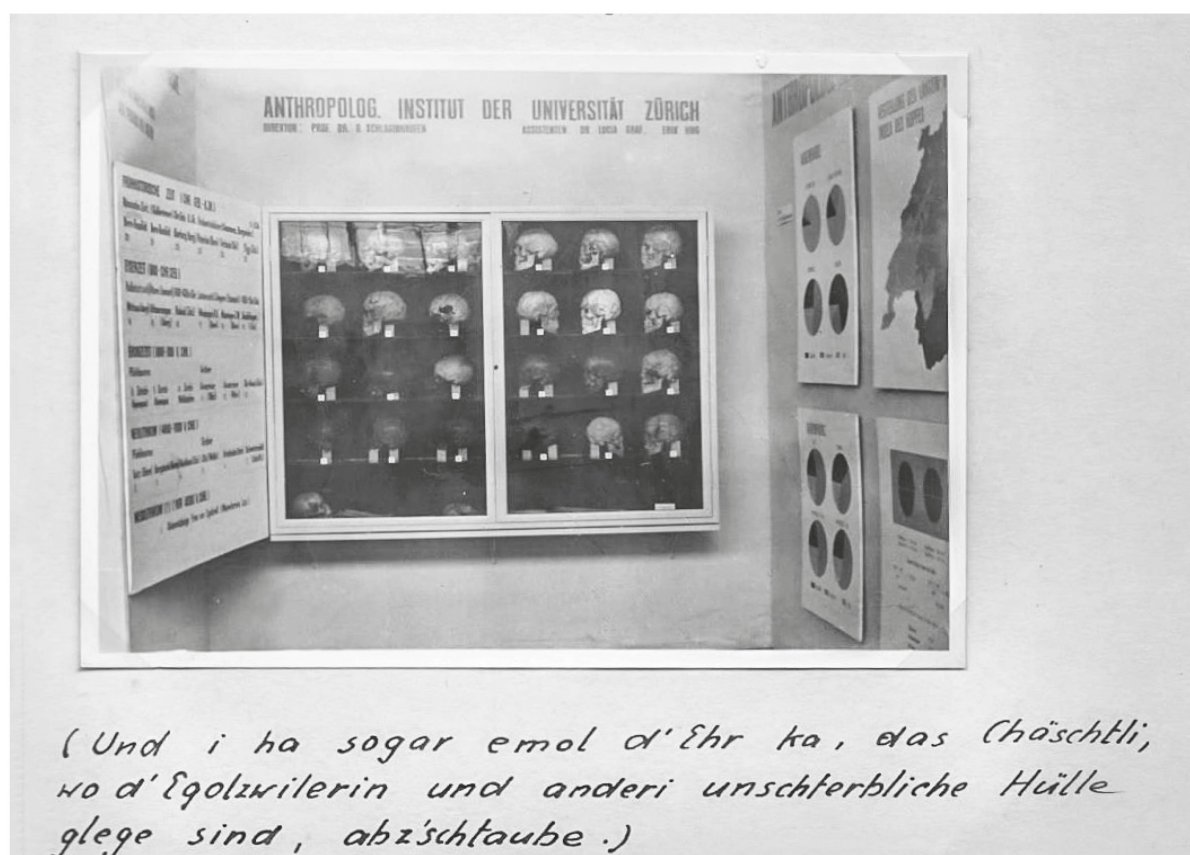


Photo 2: Legend (Sachser 1939, p. 10):

“(And I even had the honor to dust the showcase where the Egolzwilerin and other immortal remains are resting.)”

The Egolzwil woman, hardly visible in photograph 2, is lying at the bottom of the showcase. Under the exposition’s motto “*Different origins, languages and confessions, and yet one Nation*”⁵⁷ (Hofmann 1939), Schlaginhaufen transformed the “negroid” Egolzwil woman into a symbol of national identity. She

⁵⁴ With thanks to the Archeological Service of the Canton Lucerne who provided the article.

⁵⁵ With thanks to Bertram Baier who provided access to Schlaginhaufen’s album: Sachser, F. (1939). Was nicht im Landibuch steht. Fotoalbum, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁶ Neue Zürcher Zeitung (14.8.1934). Anthropological Congress in London in August 1934.

⁵⁷ As opposed to: “*Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer*”.

was then considered the oldest human remains in Switzerland. Asserting that the Swiss have «black blood» in their veins and that they do not hesitate to publish this theory was a slap in the face of all those who pursued the mad idea of a pure “white race”. Schlaginhaufen officially represented both archeology and anthropology at the exposition.⁵⁸ He gave frequent presentations (photo 3) and hosted guests from the League of Nations.⁵⁹

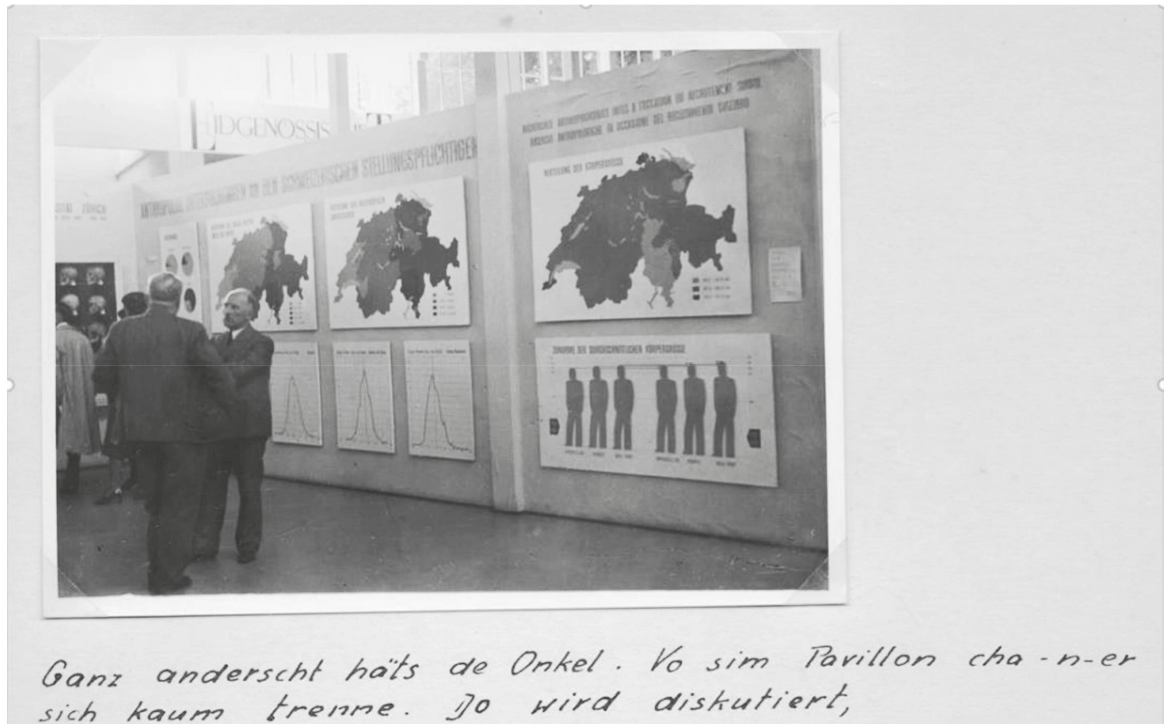


Photo 3: Legend (Sachser 1939, p. 10):

“Otherwise the uncle. He can hardly split from his pavilion. Here the discussions take place,”

Obviously, the exposition was of great interest to the Reich, including German Science, although more in terms of espionage. In November 1939 Eugen Fischer did not consider Schlaginhaufen as a candidate for invitations to Berlin.⁶⁰ In addition the presence of a Wehrmacht officer wearing the Swastika-enhanced Reichs-Eagle at the inauguration is documented by a photograph (Meili 1939, p. 813).

⁵⁸ CH-BAR#J2.144#1000/1231#6/1116*: "Fachgruppen: Organisation, Einladungen, Protokolle, Programme" (zur Landesausstellung 1939). Eingereichte Programme (undatiert).

⁵⁹ Sachser 1939, pp. 4-5, 10-11; Neue Zürcher Zeitung (27.6.1939). Wissenschaftliche Führung an der LA, p. 1.

⁶⁰ AMPG I. Abt. Rep. 1A, Generalverwaltung der KWG, Nr. 1064: Bericht Talsperren-Kommission 10.-13.7.1939 and Nr. 1065: Fischer → KWI 2.11.1939.

In 1945 Schlaginhaufen published another study about race-mixing between “black” and “white” in Switzerland which contained no negative remarks concerning that fact. All things considered, his scientific development follows a path similar to that of the leading British anthropologists Julian S. Huxley (1887–1975) and Alfred C. Haddon (1855–1940). They, too, had held racist ideas in the 1910s but had changed their attitude by the Thirties. With their book “*We Europeans*” from 1936 they went out to prove that the simplified assumptions of the Nazi-scientists were false. Yet their discourse remained strictly within statistics and did not openly challenge racism (Kühl 2013, chap. 5). Kremmentsov observes (2006, p. 394): “*The political connotations of human genetics in the 1930s posed a considerable challenge to the international genetics community. The majority of Western geneticists were reluctant to see their discipline embroiled in a political controversy.*” This applies to Schlaginhaufen as well (cf. Weilenmann 1990, p. 24).

Then again, Schlaginhaufen had two doctoral students with a völkisch agenda: one Georg O. Th. Maier, a German citizen and dangerous agitator for the NSDAP (Bolliger 2019, p. 157) and Ernst Biedermann of the Swiss National Front (Keller 1995, p. 172). Schlaginhaufen seemed completely oblivious to that. During the twelve years of the NS-terror, he was unable to let go of networks that had been established before 1933. He remained on friendly terms with several NSDAP-members, namely Alfred Ploetz, Eugen Fischer, and Otto Reche (Keller 1995, pp. 143, 176, 227, 228, 282). In his *Anthropologia Helvetica* (1946, p. 680) he also cited the so-called “race-pope” Hans F. K. Günther, a protégé of Hitler and the innermost circle, as if he was a serious scholar. Keller (1995, p. 178) qualifies this as “*political naiveté, in the best of cases*”. At the same time Schlaginhaufen corresponded just as friendly with Nazi opponents like Clyde Kluckhohn and Otto L. Moor.⁶¹ He kept away from the eugenics conference in Scheveningen 1936 which was foreseeably dominated by the Nazis, while he still was a member of the IFEO and represented the JKF (IFEO 1937). Schlaginhaufen’s step-grandson Bertram Baier (born in 1938) who grew up with him, characterizes his grandfather as a gentle man, eager to maintain harmony and fleeing potential conflicts.⁶² His wife was Alsatian with a German passport. From her first marriage she had a daughter, Ilse Baier, who was married in Berlin. In 1939 Ilse sent her baby boy Bertram away to grow up with his grandparents in Switzerland (cf. Keller 1995, p. 225). Such a decision can hardly be a sign of great confidence in the Hitler regime. One document in particular sheds a light on the schemes it used to entangle foreigners. In February 1943 and apparently without any preliminary correspondence with him, Schlagin-

⁶¹ AIZ: Schlaginhaufen → Moor 3.11.1933, Kluckhohn → Schlaginhaufen 19.5.1937.

⁶² Personal interview on January 14, 2020 in Zürich.

haufen received a letter by one Bruno Beger, PhD, with the insignia of Himmler's "Ahnenerbe" (his Aryan «research» troop) thanking him that he had helped a Mr. Teuber from the firm Picknes in Berlin to organize anthropological instruments. It closed: "*with the most binding recommendations, I am your very devoted B. Beger*".⁶³ After having sent a middle man to the Swiss (we don't know what exactly had happened) the "very devoted" Beger did neither mention his projects, nor his other function which was: "SS-Hauptsturmführer". Beger was a criminal involved in collecting skulls from Jewish murder victims in Concentration camps. He was convicted in 1970 as an accomplice to 86 murders (Lang 2004).

Schlaginhaufen's international involvement on all sides is weighed by Grimm (2011, pp. 150, 156), who measures the eugenics network for the first half of the 20th century with an ingenious multi-dimensional cluster analysis. There is an US-cluster to the upper left, a German cluster to the upper right, a French cluster in the lower-middle and a British cluster to the lower right. Schlaginhaufen is situated outside of each one of those clusters with about equal distance to all four of them.

8.2 Opposing the German race hygiene with double-headed primula (calycanthemy)

Cantonal and Federal Archives, as well as the Proceedings of the Edinburgh Congress (Punnett 1941, p. 32), show that medicine and botany formed a close alliance with the purpose to reject the Mendelian determinism of traditional eugenics and in particular the assumptions of the hereditary prognoses required by the NS-"Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases". Upon recommendation by the ophthalmologist Alfred Vogt (1879–1943) the Board of the JKF supported the project of studying "labile genes" in primula. The phenomenon of "double-headed" primula (photo 4), a plant disorder called calycanthemy, had already been observed by Charles Darwin (Ernst 1942, p. 22). It can revert back to normal offspring within two generations.⁶⁴

When Ernst presented first results in 1936, he pointed out their significance for human genetics, quoting Wilhelm Löffler (1935) that certain disorders must not necessarily be a fate but can return to normalcy by themselves in the next generations, especially schizophrenia and bipolar psychosis. Those were second and third on the list of "hereditary" conditions requiring the sterilization of the entire family in Germany (Schneider-Nägeli 2014, p. 10). Ernst had been a driving force for the Swiss National Exposition inside the University⁶⁵ and pre-

⁶³ AIZ: Beger → Schlaginhaufen 19.2.1943.

⁶⁴ StAZH Z 924.3: Protokolle des Kuratoriums, 3.2.1933, p. 7

⁶⁵ StAZH U 920.32/2: Rektor der Universität → Ernst 29.10.1937.

sented the self-reversing genetic disorder of primula there. The physicians Fritz de Quervain (1868–1940) and Alexander v. Muralt (1903–1990) made a point of mentioning that by this he was giving hope and comfort to families with (presumably) hereditary illnesses (1939, p. 360). For the same reason he was proposed for the Benoist science award by Alfred Vogt, Nobel prize winner Walter Rudolf Hess (1881–1973) and Hans Bluntschli (both independent from the JKF).⁶⁶ The anatomist Bluntschli (1877–1962) was an outspoken critic of National Socialism from the very first hour and was removed from his position in Frankfurt in 1933. He then returned to Switzerland (Greif & Schmutz 1995, p. 137). On the other hand, the above-mentioned Otto Nägeli refused to attribute any value for human genetics to Ernst's work, underlining his point by citing Ludwig Aschoff, a Nazi-friendly German colleague.⁶⁷

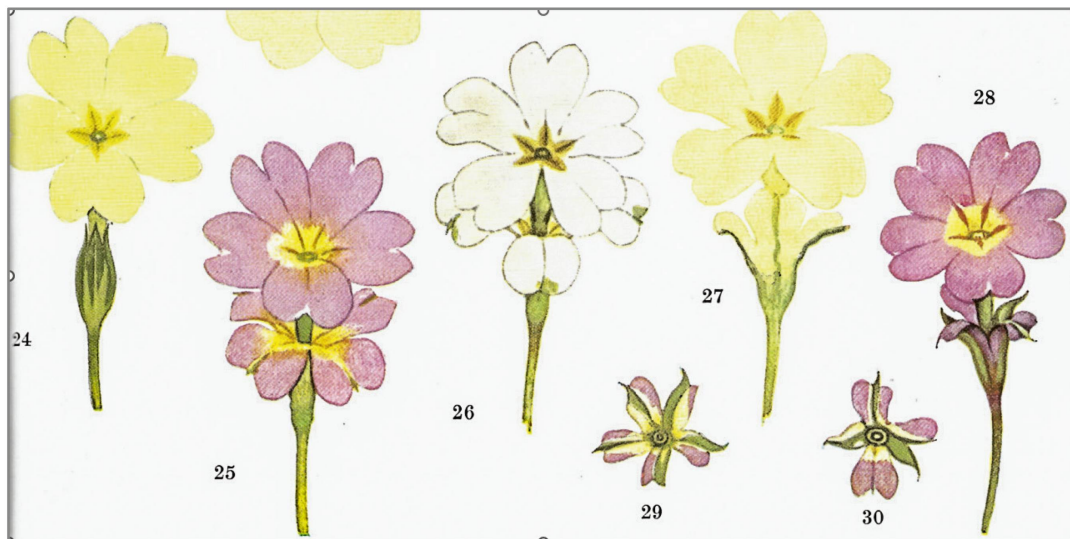


Photo 4: *Calycanthemys* in *Primulae* (Ernst 1942, table I)

Legend: 24) normal primula; 25 & 26 the double crown disorder in full expression; 27 & 28 the disorder in the middle stage of spontaneous remission, 29 & 30 cuts of the inferior, partially reversed crown

⁶⁶ CH-BAR#E9510.10#1987/32#331*: Gutachten von Alfred Vogt 22.8.1939 zur Kandidatur Ernst; CH-BAR#E9510.10#1987/32#374*: Bluntschli an Etter 25.5.1943, Gutachten von Hans Bluntschli zur Kandidatur Ernst 21.6.1943; CH-BAR#E9510.10#1987/32#374*: Begründung Vorschlag von Walter Rudolf Hess. Ernst never received the Benoist award.

⁶⁷ CH-BAR#E9510.10#1987/32#296*: Gutachten von Otto Nägeli 16.6.1936 zur Kandidatur Ernst.

9. Trial and error in tactics against the Third Reich's rise to power

Concerning the period just before the summer of 1939, i.e. when the topics of the Swiss National Exhibition and the 7th International Congress of Genetics were relevant, four pages of the minutes book of the JKF Steering Committee have been torn out.⁶⁸

9.1 Democratic science versus National Socialist and Stalinist obscurantism

In the 1930s biologists were “*fighting scientific obscurantism on two fronts: communist Lamarckism on one, and Nazi mainline eugenics on the other*” (Roll-Hansen 2010, p. 86). Lamarckism (Lysenkism in the USSR) was fallacious doctrine stating that attributes and functions acquired in the course of an individual's life (e.g. by training organs) could be easily passed on genetically to the next generation (see Hossfeld 2016, pp. 138-142).

For the International Congress of Genetics in 1937 nearly a thousand geneticists were expected to meet in Moscow, when, all of a sudden, the Politburo cancelled the conference and arrested the congress's president Nikolai Vavilov under the pretense of holding “German Fascist views” on genetics. Charlatan and Stalin favorite Trofim Lysenko had mounted an attack on the Mendelian theory in which he equated human genetics with eugenics, and eugenics with racism (Krementsov 2006, pp. 369, 376). Then, the *Permanent International Organizing Committee* decided to hold the congress in Edinburgh from August 23 to 30, 1939. As a member of the Committee, Ernst was already looking for locations for the next (8th) Genetics Conference, a topic to be discussed in Edinburgh. Krementsov (2006, pp. 386s) mentions what an ungrateful job that was: “*In September 1939, in his report on the congress's work in Edinburgh, its acting president, Francis A. Crew, observed: 'The chief qualifications demanded of those who undertake the organization of an international scientific conference in these days would seem to be an unwarrantable optimism and a complete disregard for current political events.' Yet in their attempts to organize the international congress, geneticists found themselves continuously caught in the 'force field' of political tensions among Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia, and Western democracies.*”

From the very beginning and without explanation Ernst ruled out Switzerland as a host. One can only guess that this had to do with the previous bad

⁶⁸ StAZH Z 924.209: Protokolle des Vorstands des Kuratoriums 1936–1947, missings: pp. 33-36 from 21.9.1938 to 17.5.1939.

experiences. So, he had to look for an alternative. As a conference location Italy seemingly provided an opportunity to stimulate the international debate against obscurantism. On July 26, 1939 Ernst contacted Alberto Chiarugi (1901–1960), also a defender of labile genes with a proposal to hold the next Genetics congress in Rome.⁶⁹ There were good reasons for this compromise. The mostly Lamarckian and catholic Italians had already left the IFEO in 1932 when it came under Rüdin's presidency. They, in particular, were opposed to compulsory sterilization, to the idea of a "Nordic racial superiority", as well as to Günther's and Rosenberg's "Aryan theory" and some turned openly against antisemitism; so in 1935 they had created their own association (Cassata 2018, p. 52, 49). Italian eugenics favored preventive medicine, public health and social hygiene (Turda & Gilette 2014, p. 165). Not surprisingly, Latin scientists were "*heavily attacked by the German delegation*" (Weiss 2010a, p. 300). In addition to that, Mussolini had briefly turned against Hitler in the summer of 1939 and had effectively stalled the outbreak of war.⁷⁰ So for a short window of time the Rome-strategy offered hope to take the (endangered) researchers from the Soviet Union into the boat again and to divide the Axis Powers in matters of race hygiene.

9.2 The Seventh International Congress of Genetics in Edinburgh 1939

At Edinburgh (Punnett 1941, p. 32, 117) Ernst was scheduled to present his labile genes in a group of botanists and physicians working on non-mendelian genetics and mutations, among them the ingenious Oskar Vogt (1870–1959). Unfortunately, neither the debate took place, nor the planning of the next conference location. The congress was interrupted when the Hitler-Stalin Pact was signed on August 23, 1939 (Kühl 2013, Chap 5). Continental Governments ordered their citizens to return home immediately as they expected the war to break out any day. In the end, "*the looming scientific debate about National Socialist genetic health and race policy did not take place*" (Schmuhl 2008, p. 214). One task did get accomplished, though. On August 24 geneticists accepted unanimously the motion of zoologist Francis Crew for an international collaboration for the maintenance of "*animal and plant stocks of genetical importance [...] in times of emergency*" (Punnett 1941 p. 6, cf. Grüneberg in Punnett pp. 37s). It can be assumed that this was agreed upon not only for research purposes, but also because participants were aware of the danger of

⁶⁹ StAZH U 920.34/2: Ernst → Chiarugi 26.7.1939.

⁷⁰ LeMO (visited on June 11, 2020): <https://www.dhm.de/lemo/kapitel/ns-regime/aussenpolitik/die-deutsch-italienischen-beziehungen.html>

famines during a war, an experience they had all gone through during the winter of 1917.

After the continental participants had left the British Island, the socialist Hermann Muller passed around the so-called Geneticists' Manifesto, the first and only agreement on reform eugenics. It stipulated a utopian vision for "*the effective genetic improvement of mankind*" which depended "*upon major changes in social conditions, and correlative changes in human attitudes*" (Crew et al. 1939, p. 521). In its realistic parts the Manifesto plead for positive eugenics and regretted "*race prejudices*" and "*the unscientific doctrine that good or bad genes are the monopoly of particular peoples or of persons with features of a given kind*". It did not condemn the idea of "improving mankind", nor the concept of "race", or "race research". On the contrary, it required "*extensive and intensive research in human genetics and in the numerous fields of investigation correlated therewith. This would involve the co-operation of specialists in various branches of medicine, psychology, chemistry and, not least, the social sciences, with the improvement of the inner constitution of man himself as their central theme.*" Furthermore, the Manifesto called for "*some kind of conscious guidance of selection [...]. To make this possible, however, the population must first appreciate the force of the above principles, and the social value which a wisely guided selection would have.*" Politically it did not directly point a finger at Germany, it turned against traditional eugenics in general (thus also against the racism in GB, Scandinavia and the US).

In October and November 1939 members of the Organizing Committee exchanged letters about the next conference location. After Hitler's attack on Poland on September 1, everything had changed to the worse, and the Rome-strategy became obsolete. Most correspondents voted against Rome, although there was no alternative. Ernst defended his plan for a few weeks, maybe out of national interest. Without access to the sea, Switzerland could not provide enough food for its inhabitants. Its agriculture only covered half of all the calories needed, the other half had to be imported (UEK 2002, p. 85). In the same period Ernst received letters from two NSDAP members. Edgar Knapp wrote a letter that was a propaganda pamphlet, which Ernst did not care to answer. Fritz Lenz (who had not known Ernst before Edinburgh), did get an answer on behalf of his request to exchange plants. A year later, it turned out that this had probably been a pretense, so Ernst criticized the Reich's customs authority for blocking the plant exchange. This was the end of the short intermezzo.⁷¹ Under the title "German Cultural Propaganda" the Reich's Ministry for Science, Education and Public Instruction launched a survey by about suitable candi-

⁷¹ StAZH U 920.34/2: Lenz → Ernst 2.11.1939, Ernst → Lenz 27.11.1939, Knapp → Ernst 23.10.1939; U 920.35/2: Ernst → Lenz 6.8.1940 (plant exchange).

dates from neutral countries to be invited to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin. In October 1939 Alfred Ernst did not figure among the Swiss with a presumed “readiness” to participate.⁷² The form was filled out by botanist Fritz v. Wettstein, the leader of the German delegation in Edinburgh and member of the *Permanent International Organizing Committee* together with Ernst (Punnet 1941, p. 5).⁷³ This confirms that Germany, even as one of the axis powers, did not feel supported in their foreign science policy by Ernst as a negotiator and by the proposition of Rome as a next conference location.

We all know what happened in Europe and that nothing had worked to pacify the dictators. Vavilov, who had contributed so much to feed the Russian people, was convicted in one of Stalin’s show trials and died 1943 in a camp.

9.3 Gaining distance from eugenics with the Swiss Society of Genetics (SGV)

When at the end of the 1930s race hygiene had turned into a Nazi propaganda tool, democratically minded British geneticists wanted to separate the science of genetics from the political eugenics movement (Kühl 2013, introduction & chap. 4). The same break occurred in Switzerland. In September 1940 Alfred Ernst wrote a letter to Schlaginhaufen proposing “*with total clarity*” to re-orient all hereditary science towards genetics by founding a new society. This letter has also mysteriously disappeared from the Archives since Keller cited it (1995, p. 228). Ernst’s idea received so much positive echo that the first conference was scheduled for September 1941. In his inauguration speech Alfred Ernst stated the ethical premises by recalling the first international conference after World War I, when scholars of different formerly war-leading countries had gathered together again for Mendel’s birthday. As the primary element Ernst cited Bohumil Nemec⁷⁴ from 1922, who was a prominent and active defender of democracy (Ernst 1941b, p. 609): “*Recalling the difficult years of the past and perhaps also anticipating future times just as bad—lasting for years now, again—Nemec emphasized the importance of Mendelian Science for international reconciliation and international unity: 'We have received the very best of our fathers and Mendelian science has a sacred duty to preserve and multiply this very best for the future. If we unite the past and future in ourselves without our own intervention, if we are not to blame for our idiosyncrasies, shouldn't this knowledge result in a deeply rooted tolerance for all individual, national and racial characteristics? If used correctly, Mendelism could lead mankind to a 'tolerari posse' (at least) and maybe—*

⁷² AMPG I. Abt. Rep. 1A, Generalverwaltung der KWG, Nr. 1065: Wettstein → KWI 17.10.1939.

⁷³ D-BAR R 4901-3016, Nr. 169: Wettstein → Kongresszentrale 28.4.1939.

⁷⁴ Online (visited on July 17 2020): <https://www.mua.cas.cz/en/bohupil-nemec-690>.

although it is perhaps only a vain idea—to real humanity and true peace.” The unequivocal plea for humanism, strong words against mainline eugenics, were certainly meant to shake up the geneticists’ community.

After repeating the key word “international” twice, Ernst added another element. An appeal to German and Austrian colleagues seems to shimmer through this, as such appeals had been tried by other dissidents before.⁷⁵ So, Ernst (1941b, pp. 609s): *“Numerous other speeches in the Czech, German, French and English languages repeatedly expressed in ever new forms at the Mendel memorial and in the late course of the celebration, what Erwin Baur, who opened the round of this speech, had already formulated well: Today, biologists all over the world agree [...] that Gregor Mendel’s discoveries were not only groundbreaking for theoretical research, they are also of fundamental importance for the practice of plant and animal breeding, for the medical profession, for population policy and for race hygiene. This has made Mendel the benefactor of all mankind.”* First, Ernst quoted Erwin Baur (1875–1933) only on what all biologists worldwide agreed. Baur’s role in German eugenics had been a “subordinate” one and he was opposed to the “nordic” idea (Kröner et al. 1994, pp. 143, 48). Symbolically the famous geneticist stood for many German elites who had committed the fatal error of underestimating *“the explosive and assertive power of the National Socialists”* (p. 142) and of overestimating their readiness to accept scientific arguments. Baur was a strong personality with rough edges and at the same time many merits. As an ambitious and pragmatic director of his Institute he was always looking for opportunities, not without a certain ruthlessness (p. 142): *“Unlike the majority of his colleagues, Baur did not publicly welcome Hitler’s seizure of power with addresses and speeches, but he immediately tried to come to terms with the new regime.”* Essentially, he was a liberal democrat. During the last two years of his life he had taken several unwise and opportunistic decisions. He had held the illusion that he could use the Nazis to realize his ideas of an agricultural reform and they would inject a lot of money into his projects. When he realized that his dreams would never come true, Baur became relentless in his actions against the NS-bureaucrats, especially against Walther Darré of the Ministry of Agriculture. He not only voiced a loud protest against the Nazi’s alignment of science (*“Gleichschaltung”*), he expressed unveiled threats and—in a general stance of disobedience—mounted a boycott and exerted himself on behalf of his Jewish colleagues (Kröner et al., pp. 81-84, 90-103). At the height of the conflict, on December 2, 1933 he died. Measures to disempower him had already been taken. According to Kröner et al. (1994, pp. 141-143) Baur would not have submitted to the Nazis without resistance, had he lived longer. His relatives,

⁷⁵ StAZH U 920.30/2: Schaxel → Ernst (and the World) in Nov. 1935.

friends and students saw him not as a sympathizer with the National Socialists but as their victim. In the light of Baur's fate, Alfred Ernst's appeal to the colleagues in the Reich must be read as a call for insurgency. Those who had been opportunistic in 1933 should now follow Baur's example, take action and stand up against the NS bureaucrats and party functionaries.

After describing the contributions of some 15 Swiss geneticists, Ernst finished with a political appeal, first to national independence and defense (at the height of the threat of a war against Switzerland) and second to the benefit of mankind in general (1941b, pp. 619-620), stressing again the word "international": *"The activity of the Swiss Society of Genetics should have three directions: Promoting the entire area of genetics and its applications, helping to solve tasks in the service of our country and helping to solve general cultural tasks in the service of Mankind. With its parent, the Swiss Society for Natural Sciences, the Swiss Society for of Genetics Research will also do its utmost to serve the country and, hopes like them to be able to help to reunite the representatives of international Science to cooperate with each other one day."*

The speech was published under the guise of the scholarly journal "Archiv der Julius Klaus Stiftung". Several colleagues from abroad were happy about it and congratulated.⁷⁶ The first was Marius Sirks (1889–1966) from the Netherlands, the next was the resistance fighter Elisabeth Schiemann (1881–1972) from Berlin (honored by Yad Vashem) and Otto Renner (1883–1960) from Jena, also an oppositional from the very first hour and all through the war (Eichhorn 2012, p. 153; Hossfeld et al. 2003, pp. 68, 524, 545). Jantine Tammes (1871–1947) from Holland, a friend of Schiemann's wrote as well. Finally, one quite obscure figure with völkisch ideas named Gertraud Haase-Bessell wrote, she was basically seeking solace. She received it, but combined with a warning against eugenic phantasies. The British geneticist and historian Peter Beighton and his wife reconstruct the international context from an independent standpoint: *"in the formation of the Swiss Society of Genetics, which had the aim of encouraging genetic research for the sake of pure science, and not for political or racial considerations. This Society was formed as a response to developments in the science of genetics in Nazi Germany."* (Beighton & Beighton 1997, p. 213).

9.4 Escaping the Surveillance State

Meanwhile Nazi Germany had spied out many scientists abroad. After starting the war—but only after—, the Reich was confronted with a growing isolation from the European scientific community (Weiss 2010a, pp. 209, 212-218,

⁷⁶ StAZH U 920.37: Sirks → Ernst 21.2.1942; Schiemann → Ernst 5.10.1942; Haase-Bessell → Ernst 8.10.1942; Renner → Ernst 28.12.1942; U 920.38/1: Tammes → Ernst 5.2.1943.

295).⁷⁷ Ties between German and US-research were upheld even into 1941 (Kühl 1998, p. 145). In order to maintain a façade of international collaboration, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute (KWI) in Berlin organized meetings and invited researchers from abroad. The Swiss were not welcome there, contrary to some (but not all) Scandinavians, Dutch, Belgians and Eastern Europeans. The file of the “*Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung*”⁷⁸ from September 5, 1941 contains an order to v. Wettstein, Director of the KWI for Biology, advising him to: “*refrain from any invitation to the professors Dr. A. Ernst, Dr. Frey-Wyssling and Dr. E. Gäumann in Zürich because they are known to be enemies of Germany. Even more so, Prof. Ernst is Marxist, Prof. Gäumann freemason.*” Among the 26 European botanists investigated by the Nazi surveillance apparatus, Ernst and Gäumann (ETH) made the top rank of the Reich’s enemies with their double «qualifications». Obviously, those who were on the radar of the Nazi State were never informed about it, but Ernst suspected that something was going on. On two occasions he had been refused to enter and to stay in a bath hotel in Wiesbaden Germany, where he wanted to meet in private with Otto Renner whom he considered sincere.⁷⁹

Some experiences of dealing with the Swastika are complex and would need more than one paragraph to be presented with all the evidence. Such an episode occurred when organizing a postdoc in Sweden for Ernst’s assistant Hans Wanner (1917–2004) towards the end of 1942. To obtain a travel-visa through Germany, Ernst had given the names of Renner in Jena and of Wettstein in Berlin as references without asking them before. We don’t know why this mishap occurred. Not long after, in January 1943, Ernst received a letter from Renner indicating between lines that he was in great distress about a “*poisonous regime*” and felt utterly isolated.⁸⁰ Fearing that he had put Renner at risk, Ernst had to repair the situation by providing a cover-story to Renner. He then pretended Wanner’s interest in visiting German Institutes and faked a consensus on the idea of a “Nordic race”. No visit was scheduled and Wanner’s letters mention nothing about one.⁸¹ As we know today, Ernst’s fears were justified. Renner did later run into problems with the Gestapo (Rieppel 2016, p.

⁷⁷ This isolation was also self-inflicted by the NS-scientists’ unwillingness to participate in a free scientific debate and to be transparent. Even in 1943, when most intelligent people already could foresee the German defeat, Verschuer refused an international exchange proposed by the Basle psychiatrist John Staehelin (Schmuhl 2008, p. 315). The JKF was not involved in this.

⁷⁸ D-BAR: R 4901-2756, Nr. 285: Dahnke (RMWEV) → Wettstein 5.9.1941.

⁷⁹ StAZH U 920.36: Ernst → Tschermak 10.9.1941; U 920.38/1: Ernst → Renner 21.1.1943.

⁸⁰ StAZH U 920.37: Renner → Ernst 28.12.1942.

⁸¹ StAZH U 920.38: Wanner → Ernst 28.6., 25.7., 6.10.1943; The files of the AMPG I. Abt. Rep. 8 - KWI für Biologie do not mention such as visit either, but I have not had access to all signatures of the AMPG.

251). A series of letters containing coded messages must be accounted for in order to reconstruct this incident (in Haas 2019).

10. After the war

10.1 *Race hygienists' wishful thinking for a revival of eugenics*

Immediately after the war, political pressure for a revival of practical race hygiene was mounted in Zürich. Obviously, its advocates had been disgruntled by the JKF Board's effort to ban it from support. A memo from the Canton Zürich's Education Department from Mai 31, 1945⁸² concerning the annual revision attested that the JKF's portfolio had increased and that subsidies were spoken in accordance with the prevision of §13. It suggested that the Department would like to receive a report on how the income and the fundamental research during the last 25 years had been used in terms of a preparation and execution of practical reforms (i.e. in race hygiene). It mentioned Ernst's genetical studies on plants which had received 190,000 Francs. As a matter of fact, the botanist's contribution had been to provide ever more arguments against practical eugenics.

In 1947 the JKF-Board (Schlaginhaufen, Briner, Ernst, Hess, Löffler, Steiner, Grossmann) decided against a new proposal to count people with visual impairment:⁸³ *"The Swiss Association for the Blind is planning to count the blind throughout Switzerland and is asking for a contribution of 3,000 Francs. The Steering Committee proposes to reject the application, since not much will come of it for research on heredity. After all Government Councilor Dr Briner mentions that a little bit more should be done for practical race hygiene and that the planned count might offer a basis for actual research. When the count has been carried out, the application would have to be checked again."* There was no follow-up.

Three years later in 1950 the executioner of Klaus' testament undertook an initiative to revive eugenics:⁸⁴ *"Mr. K. Hess stimulates a discussion about the ways and goals of the research funded by the foundation. He reminds Mister Julius Klaus' last will. [...] While Mister Klaus originally wanted that the return of his fortune be determined for general efforts to promote and improve the white race, he has come to the conclusion through the discussions with the consultants mentioned that for the time being his goal is not achieved in a*

⁸² StAZH Z 70.427: Erziehungsdirektion 31.5.1945.

⁸³ StAZH Z 924.5: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 11.3.1947, p. 25 (cf. Z 924.209: 29.1.1938, p. 29).

⁸⁴ StAZH Z 924.5: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 28.2.1950, p. 73.

practical way, but only can be prepared through scientific research. Since the foundation came into force, the board of trustees has made every effort to ensure that the funds available each year are used in accordance with the provisions of the regulations. After all, it seems to Mr. Hess that the practical measures requested by the donor, which are listed in §§13 and 15, have so far received little attention. [...] Prof. Dr. W. Löffler, the board member of trustees closest to the practice of race hygiene efforts, points out that it is much easier to put up demands in this area than to meet them afterwards. He has been dealing with issues of heredity for 30 years and has found that good work in the human field can only be built on a solid scientific basis, the results of zoological and botanical hereditary research. [...] Human life is too short to be able to reap fruit in such areas, so it is understandable that Mr. Hess must have the impression that the practical results of the research—that has been subsidized so far—are barely recognizable. Dr. R. Briner understands Mr. Hess's wish. He emphasizes the importance of prophylaxis but is also of the opinion that the primary must be scientific knowledge. After all, some things have already happened in the spirit of Mr. Hess' suggestion. [...] The chairman, Prof. Dr. O. Schlaginhaufen, asks not to forget that the last decade has been unfavorable to the spreading of eugenic ideas and efforts. Now better times will come up in this respect, too." Ernst made a proposal to upgrade the foundation's program from 1922, but no meeting was ever scheduled.

A climax was reached in 1951 when an unspecified voice outside criticized the JKF's practice during the last decade and complained to the Government Councilor: *"Board would donate thousands of Francs to each other while others remain outside the door."*⁸⁵ This was investigated and found to be unsubstantiated according to the minutes of March 4, 1952: *"Government Councilor Briner [...] informs that on February 21, 1952, during an in-depth discussion with the members of the Steering Committee, he has been given the opportunity to recognize that the previous practice of subsidizing was indeed correct and judicious. And he is pleased that, apart from minor details and possible differences of opinion about the task of the foundation, there is no serious reason to criticize the previous practice of the allocation of subsidies."*⁸⁶

Eventually all proposals to invest more money into race hygiene were silently buried. After the old eugenic language had been compromised by the Nazis, several waves of changes in terminology set in around the world. A first one started during the mid-1950s as a consequence of the UNESCO controversy and another one from the 1960s to the 1970s (Grimm 2011, p. 20, 102; UNESCO 1952, 1964). At the same pace all over Europe and Switzerland termi-

⁸⁵ StAZH Z 924.6: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 2.3.1951, p. 17.

⁸⁶ StAZH Z 924.6: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 4.3.1952, p. 21.

nology changed. The words “race” and “race-studies” were gradually replaced by “population” and by “medical” or “physical anthropology”. By the mid-1950s the idea of genetic determinism was brain-dead at the University of Zürich. Rector Hans Fischer drew analogies to astrology and criticized it overtly (1955/56, p. 14).

Judging past generations, we have to keep in mind that so-called common sense in the 1950s and 1960s still believed in the existence of “major races” and in “hereditary differences affecting mental characteristics” between them. This attitude was shared by the political right and the left as well, e.g. by the socialist Nobel prize winner Hermann Muller (UNESCO 1952, p. 52). The left only attributed a lesser weight to the genetic component compared to social factors than the political right did.

10.2 Taking up international relations after the war

Alfred Ernst retired in 1945 from his tenure but remained in the JKF almost until his death in 1968. Otto Schlaginhaufen remained in the Foundation until 1969 and died in 1973. For its 25th anniversary in 1946 the JKF welcomed the Dutch geneticist Marius Sirks as a speaker.

Concerning the period before the 8th International Congress of Genetics in 1948 in Stockholm six pages of the Steering Committee’s minutes book have been torn out.⁸⁷ Upon invitation the JKF⁸⁸ sent delegates, and Ernst as well many others participated. Replacing Ernst, the zoologist Ernst Hadorn (1902–1976) was elected as member in the Organizing Committee (Bonnier & Larsson 1949, p. 89). While the vanguard of Nazi science was excluded from this conference (Weingart, Kroll & Bayertz 2017, p. 569), other German and Austrian biologists, e.g. Hans Nachtsheim and Erich Tschermak, were warmly welcomed by their colleagues. In 1948, they were not considered close to the NS regime (Bonnier & Larsson 1949, p. 81; Thomaschke 2014, p. 328). Only much later, Historians discovered that this was not quite true (Schmuhl 2008, p. 332; Weiss 2010a, pp. 209-212; Gliboff 2015).

10.3 Changing name and regulations in 1971

Mutzner’s veiled accusations and threats against the founding members made it impossible for them to revise name and purpose of the foundation. It could have been interpreted as an admission that they had never wanted to fulfill Klaus’ will at all. Only a new Board could undertake the necessary revision in the 1970s. Ernst Hadorn initiated the change of name and statutes and

⁸⁷ StAZH Z 924.209: Protokolle des Vorstands des Kuratoriums 1929–1935, missings: pp. 121-126 from 6.3.1947 to 28.2.1948.

⁸⁸ StAZH Z 924.5: Protokolle des Kuratoriums, 19.3.1948, p. 41.

it was he who crossed out the sentence that discriminated against persons with disabilities in the draft of new regulations.⁸⁹ On the 72nd Board meeting, held on May 26, 1971, a new generation of trustees changed the name to “*JKF for Genetics and Social Anthropology*” and revised the regulations so as to respect Universal Human Rights.⁹⁰

11. Conclusion

Traditional eugenics was certainly the biggest skeleton in the closet of 20th century Life Sciences and Liberal Arts. Those had been the ideas inspiring Klaus to create a foundation. But mainline eugenics was based on false, simplistic premises about heredity, selection and variation within the human species. Between 1919 and 1921 the debate among the Board members Schlaginhaufen and Ernst led to a growing awareness of its dangers. As a consequence, the Klaus-bequest financed Schlaginhaufen’s and Ernst’s efforts to disclose this. With their research they showed that a “race”-taxonomy for humans does not exist, that there is no unity of “blood and soil”, that the presumed “white race” has never been white and that statistical prognoses of hereditary illnesses lack scientific proof, therefore families are not doomed by their genes. From 1919 to 1945 Schlaginhaufen and Ernst (as representatives of University of Zurich) opened the closet of traditional race hygiene to let a big symbolical skeleton fall out. With its restriction on subventions for practical race hygiene, the Julius Klaus Foundation tamed the beast of social Darwinism better than other Swiss institutions and better than opinion leaders did (for those see Ritter 2009, pp. 163-170), even if it was not perfect in every respect. Unfortunately, all those efforts against eugenics have fallen into oblivion.

Yet more skeletons are hidden in some closets and are ready to fall out. They concern not so much the JKF but the historiography about it. First, it is curious that historians have failed to acknowledge the anti-discrimination potential of the Egolzwil woman. This fascinating witness of Swiss Prehistory has received little attention after the National exhibition of 1939. Only non-historians have described her from time to time (Sauter & Lieberherr 1961, Weilenmann 1990, Ch. Keller 1995). As a consequence, neither the age of her bones nor her DNA have been ever examined to this very day. We do not even

⁸⁹ StAZH Z 924.39: Einladungen und Zirkulare 1966–1975, Sitzung 8.6.1970.

⁹⁰ StAZH Z 924.9: Protokolle des Kuratoriums 1969–1979 (26.5.1971, p. 28). Present: Ernst Haddorn, Wilhelm Bickel (1903–1977), Walter Storck (probably 1909–?), Walter König (1908–1985), Josef Biegert (1921–1989), Andrea Prader (1919–2001), and Gian Töndury (1906–1985). Cf. UAZ: Jahresberichte der Universität Zürich 1947–1973.

know if the find is Neolithic. If, however, Schlaginhaufen's hypothesis were confirmed, she would be "Mother Helvetia".

Second, there is the omission of how §13 on the "*betterment of the white race*" entered the regulations. This topic has not been covered by any previous authors, except that Keller (1995, p. 108) mentions briefly that the first draft had not contained §13.

Third, comparing publications with the newly accessible sources from the JKF, a few recent publications seem obsolete (surprisingly fast) *concerning the themes treated here* and have to be read with caution.⁹¹ By the same token they withhold sources providing historical and political empowerment for people of color, for women students, Jewish students from Eastern Europe and non-European students from colonized countries who were pioneers in seeking higher education in the early 20th century and they withhold sources for the support of those who resisted totalitarian regimes.

But those are exceptions. The great majority of publications can be confirmed in these themes (Bolliger, Chaoui, Grimm, Hossfeld, E. Keller, Kremenstov, Ritter, Schmutz, Weilenmann). Others make sense even in the light of the new data and are well worth reading, even if not every detail, interpretation or judgement can be supported (Ch. Keller 1995, 1998, Kühl 2013).

Last but not least, the history of the JKF illustrates the added value of fundamental research for society. Its function is to correct scientific theories and to warn from premature and poorly conceived developments in the applied sciences and from too much entanglement between academics and politics as well. The JKF spent great efforts into blocking mainline eugenics. From the very beginning in 1921, the founding members held a deep skepticism against this movement. Both Schmutz (2001, p. 307) and Chaoui (2004, p. 158) see a distinct discrepancy between the donator's last will and the activities of the Board of trustees. It never invested anything into feeding the idea of a privileged "race", nor in any other discrimination or exclusion-policy—as opposed to certain other Swiss institutions like Pro Juventute or Pro Infirmis (Ritter 2009, pp.

⁹¹ Obsolete are some publications from the rhetorical talent Pascal Germann from 2015-2019 with respect to the authorship of and intentions behind §13, the former use and meaning of the term "race", Schlaginhaufen's, Ernst's and Eugster's research against Nazi science, the Swiss National Exhibition, the events around the Edinburgh conference, Ernst's relationship with Germany, the JKF's attitude towards eugenics (also Hadorn's and Fischer's), the JKF's financial management, its democratic-patriotic commitment and facts around founding act of the Swiss Society of Genetics. Historians Speich Chassé and Gugerli (2012, p. 90) note the "*empirical weakness*" of Foucault's Discourse Analysis, which is taken rather lightly by some of their colleagues in Zürich. Under these circumstances, it is not astonishing that several clusters of misrepresentations of the Swiss History of Science and Medicine have been discovered recently by Hauser-Schäublin (3.3.2020), Muggli et al. (26.2.2020), Müller (20.5.2020) and Zaugg (2020, pp. 607-619).

163. Unlike Mojonier 1939, the “Berner Tagwacht” and “Der Bund” in 1941 (Zaugg 2020, p. 614), the Klaus foundation never pursued eugenic visions. Instead it invested enormous sums into studies to undermine the delusion of “pure races” and of a distinction between «good» and «bad» genetic endowment. In the case of the Anthropologia Helvetica, Schlaginhaufen had not foreseen the results. They were the effect of choosing wisely the “vital race” and not the “systemic race” as the leading concept and of doing reliable and open-minded studies. Consequently, the JKF’s subsidies spoken for practical eugenics remained extremely modest. In order to turn down such projects, the Board often interpreted its regulations in the narrowest sense, which was a walk on the tight rope. As there is no glory in prevention, let us consider the counterfactual: What would have happened, had the professors not gotten involved with Julius Klaus at all? What projects would have been supported with his tremendous bequest? What would History have to say about Julius Klaus, had he not developed the philosophical stance to accept the advice to donate his fortune to fundamental research instead of to applied eugenics?

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Archives

AIZ:	Archiv des Anthropologischen Instituts der Universität Zürich
AMPG:	Archiv der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Berlin
APSL:	American Philosophical Society Library
CH-BAR:	Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, Bern
D-BAR:	Deutsches Bundesarchiv, Berlin
StAZH:	Staatsarchiv des Kantons Zürich
UAZ:	Archiv der Universität Zürich

Note of the author: In translating the long sentences from old-fashioned German, I used a different punctuation (shortening sentences), so as to make them more comprehensible for today's readers. Numerical dates are written as: day, month, year according to the German notation in the documents.

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