

The 2012 Minerva-Gentner Symposium in Berlin

October 15-16, 2012

The Study of Jewish Biological Difference After 1945

The conference focuses on the history of biological accounts of Jews in the life sciences after the end of World War Two. The biological study of Jews, contrary to common assumption, was not discontinued after WWII and the Shoah. The aim of the conference is to examine such studies in the context of deep transformations in these fields themselves, the radically altered political landscape, and the complex nexus between the two in the post-war period.

To that end, we intend to bring together for the first time historians of various branches of the life sciences from Germany and Israel to discuss this issue collectively. Our aim is to systematically address questions pertaining to personal, institutional, and conceptual continuities and breaks in biological investigations of Jews after 1945: How did life scientists after 1945 approach Jews as an object of empirical, biological inquiry; how did they draw on earlier bodies of knowledge; and where can one identify new constraints or moments of break? Which disciplines and leading scientists were now involved and which no longer partook in such studies, and why? From the perspective of scientific networks, what was the significant international cooperation? At what point were German scientists, if at all, reintegrated into this international scientific network? And how can this particular history be placed within the larger framework of the history of German-Israeli scientific exchange?



Monday, October 15th, 2012

10.00

Introduction

Veronika Lipphardt and **Amos Morris-Reich**

10.30 - 12.30

Panel 1: Post War Human Genetics in Israel

Raphael Falk Hebrew University, Jerusalem: From Race to Population Genetics: A (Subjective) Perspective of Genetic Research in the Young State of Israel

Nurit Kirsh Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan: Human Population Genetics in Israel in the Post War Era

14.00 - 16.00

Panel 2: Jewish Difference in Population Genetics

Veronika Lipphardt MPIWG, Berlin: Biohistorical Narratives of Jewish History in Early Human Population Genetics

Snait Gissis Tel Aviv University: The Science and Politics of the Biological Jewish Difference 1945-2012: The Israeli Perspective

16.30 - 18.30

Panel 3: Human Geneticists and Physical Anthropologists in Post War Germany and Their International Networking

Anne Cottebrune University of Gießen: "New Start" of German Human Genetics after WWII - Towards Institutionalizing and Internationalizing a Compromised Field

Amos Morris-Reich University of Haifa: Historical Fragments on the Collaboration between German and Israeli Scientists in the Biological Sciences after 1945

Tuesday, October 16th, 2012

9.30 - 10.30

Panel 3 (continued)

Alexander von Schwerin University of Braunschweig: A "Stranger" in Germany: The Paediatrician Walter Hirsch and Population Genetics in West Berlin

11.00 - 13.00

Panel 4: Studying Jewish Difference in German Scientific Communities

Amir Teicher Tel Aviv University: Mental Illnesses Among Jews. Continuity and Disorder in Twentieth-Century Psychiatric Discourse

Felix Wiedemann Free University, Berlin: The Jews as "Erlösungsvolk" (People of Redemption). Sigrid Hunke and the Ethno-historical Cartography of the Near East

14.30 - 16.30

Panel 5: Contemporary debates on Jewish Difference in Human Genetics

Petter Hellström Uppsala Universitet: Israel and the Jews in Contemporary Population Genetics

Yulia Egorova Durham University: On DNA, Culture and Historical Memory: Theorizing "Jewish Genetics"

17.00 - 18.00

Final Comments and Discussion

Commentators

Jonathan Marks UNC Charlotte

Hans-Jörg Rheinberger MPIWG, Berlin

Paul Weindling Oxford Brookes University

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Max Planck Institute for the History of Science
Main Conference Room
Boltzmannstraße 22, 14195 Berlin, U-Bahnhof Thielplatz
www.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de

Organized by **Veronika Lipphardt** MPIWG, FU Berlin and
Amos Morris-Reich University of Haifa, Bucerius Institute for Research of
Contemporary German History and Society

Contact and Registration Birgitta von Mallinckrodt, officelipphardt@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de

