International Perspectives on Medicine and the Holocaust

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International Perspectives on Medicine and the Holocaust

Editors:
David G. Satin, M.D., DLFAPA
Sabine Hildebrandt, M.D.
Harvard Medical School

2021
International Perspectives on Medicine and the Holocaust
David G. Satin, M.D., DLFAPA
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1. Foreword

2. Contributing Authors

Contributions:

3. "Medicine During the Nazi Period and the Holocaust: Myths, Historical Evidence and Implications for Medical Ethics and Professionalism”
Volker Roelcke, M.D., M.Phil. (Germany), Professor and Chair, Institute for the History of Medicine, Giessen University,

4. "Learning from History? Medicine, Bioethics, and the Holocaust”
Mathias Schütz, Ph.D. (Germany), Institute of Ethics, History, and Theory of Medicine, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich

5. "Books, Bones and Bodies: The Legacies of Nazi Anatomy for Bioethics Today”
Sabine Hildebrandt, M.D. (USA), Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Boston Children’s Hospital, Harvard Medical School

Lea Münch, Dr.Med. (Alsace/France, Germany), Département d’Histoire des Sciences de la Vie et de la Santé, Université de Strasbourg

7. "Medicine and the Holocaust in Austria and Postwar Legacies”
Herwig Czech, M.A., Ph.D. (Austria), Professor, Department of Ethics, Collections, and History of Medicine (Josephinum), Medical University of Vienna, Austria

8. "Medicine and the Holocaust in Occupied Poland”
Kamila Uzarczyk, Ph.D. (Poland), Assistant Professor, Department of Medical Humanities and Social Sciences in Medicine, Medical University of Wroclaw, Poland

Lea Münch, Dr. Med. (Alsace/France, Germany): Département d’Histoire des Sciences de la Vie et de la Santé, Université de Strasbourg

10. “Jewish Prisoner-Physicians During the Holocaust: Macro and Micro Contexts”

Sari J. Siegel, Ph.D. (USA), Founding Director, Center for Medicine, Holocaust and Genocide Studies Acting Assistant Professor, Program in the History of Medicine, Cedars Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles; Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of History, UCLA

11. “Jewish Medicine and Jewish Physicians in the Ghettos”

Miriam Offer, Ph.D. (Israel), Lecturer, Western Galilee College; Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University, Israel

12. “‘Will They Be Assets or Will They Be Liabilities?’: Two German-Jewish Pediatrician Refugees From Nazi Germany and Their Contributions to US Science and Society”

Sabine Hildebrandt, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Boston Children’s Hospital Harvard Medical School;
Benjamin Kuntz, MSc, BSc, Ph.D., Robert Koch Institute, Berlin/Germany


Panel Discussion: Herwig Czech, Sabine Hildebrandt, Benjamin Kuntz, Lea Münch, Miriam Offer, Volker Roelcke, Sari Siegel, Kamila Uzarczyk
1. FOREWORD

“…greater knowledge of the past, fascist or otherwise, allows us to notice and conceptualize elements of the present that we might otherwise disregard and to think more broadly about future possibilities. […] this is not because the present repeats the past, but because the past enlightens the present….”
Timothy Snyder, 2021

The Colloquium on the History of Psychiatry and Medicine has been offered since 1989 through the Harvard Medical School, McLean Hospital Department of Postgraduate and Continuing Education, and the Countway Library’s Center for the History of Medicine.

It offers people working at their clinical, research, or other occupations an opportunity to step back and see their working lives in the context of the past and the future. It could be argued that it is only in such a historical context that our activities and life as a whole has meaning. And it could be argued that workers in the field make unique contributions to history as well as other fields of research.

In spring 2021, the Colloquium was privileged to present a series of lectures entitled “International Perspectives on Medicine and the Holocaust”, organized by David Satin, Sabine Hildebrandt, and Benjamin Kuntz, and presented by a group of international researchers. The mid twentieth century’s rise of extremist political systems, wars, and struggles for principles of behavior, governance, and justice confront humankind with moral issues writ large. Medicine is a societal institution that carries an especially weighty tradition of social responsibility and ethical ideals. How did medicine respond to these societal distortions? How was it influenced by its social environment and how did it, in turn, affect them? Now, too, we are wrestling with great social pressures. How are we coping? What do we have to learn from the great cauldron of the mid twentieth century and its Holocaust? And can we learn?

It can be argued that medicine in Nazi Germany, and its involvement in the Holocaust, are an extreme example of the potential destructive forces inherent in the science and practice of medicine itself. Thus, the historical evidence from this period needs to be gathered and examined to inform our current understanding of medical research and practice. This is especially urgent in times when the social rifts and discrepancies were deepened and became glaringly obvious through the Covid-SARS pandemic, not only in the US, but globally. The social determinants of health, systemic racism in medicine and noxious power differentials in our society can neither be denied nor overlooked any longer – neither can the threat to democracy itself, in the US the same as elsewhere. Learning the historical facts about medicine and the Holocaust and recognizing patterns from this history in the present in order to create a new equitable and just medicine “might just be a contribution to protecting all the peoples of the world from atrocities impossible to imagine.”

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This series of lectures presents not only an overview of the current historical evidence of our understanding of medicine in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust and its meaning for bioethics today, but also new research on areas of medicine that were leading proponents of Nazi policies and practices, including psychiatry and anatomy. Postwar legacies from this history that reach into the present will be discussed. In addition, and importantly, the agency and fate of Jewish physicians, who were persecuted and imprisoned by the Nazis, will be discussed, with an emphasis on the topic of resilience in adversity, and the behaviors we can learn from these examples. The series concludes with a panel discussion including all presenters on the topic of the effect of history on psychiatry and medicine.

We believe that this series of presentations can serve a wide range of audiences in the health professions, from the novice to the expert in history of medicine. This resource is free, and we hope it will be used in many new curricula.
2. CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

**Herwig Czech, M.A., Ph.D. (Austria):**
Professor, Department of Ethics, Collections, and History of Medicine (Josephinum), Medical University of Vienna, Austria

Co-director of the research project “Brain Research at the Institutes of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society in the Context of National Socialist Crimes”

Author of chapter “Holocaust Survivors and Austrian Psychiatry after World War II” In: S. Hildebrandt, M. Offer, M. Grodin (eds.), *Recognizing the Past in the Present. New Studies on Medicine Before, During, and After the Holocaust*

**Sabine Hildebrandt, M.D. (USA)**
Associate professor of pediatrics, Division of General Pediatrics, Department of Pediatrics, Boston Children’s Hospital
Lecturer on Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School

Research interests are the history and ethics of anatomy, and specifically the history of anatomy in National Socialist Germany
Researching the history of the Anatomical Institute as a member of the Historical Commission on the Reichsuniversität Strassburg 1941-44.
Author “The Anatomy of Murder: Ethical Transgressions and Anatomical Science during the Third Reich” 2016
Author biography of the Jewish physician refugee Käthe Beutler  2019
Co-editor of *Recognizing the Past in the Present: Medicine before, during and after the Holocaust*, 2020

**Benjamin Kuntz, , MSc, BSc, Ph.D. (Germany)**
public health researcher at the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin
Doctorate in pubic health, University of Bielefeld
Research: social determinants of health, child and adolescent health and tobacco control
Member Berlin Society for the History of Medicine
Author: biography of Jewish paediatrician and public health pioneer Gustav Tugendreich 2019
Author: biography of the paediatrician, allergologist, and Auschwitz survivor Lucie Adelsberger 2020

**Lea Münch. Dr.Med. (Alsace, Germany)**
Studies in philosophy at University of Warsaw, Poland and Freie Univrsität, Berlin
Studies in Cultural Sciences, Universität der Künste, Berlin
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Département d’Histoire des Sciences de la Vie et de la Santé
Faculté de médecine, Université de Strasbourg
L. Münch: "Restoring the victim’s identity". Medical historian on nazi crimes at the ‘Reichsuniversität’ of Strassburg and the importance of historical knowledge for today. Interview in: Die Tageszeitung (TAZ), 24.08.2019.


Miriam Offer, Ph.D. (Israel): Ph.D. in Jewish History Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Senior lecturer in the Holocaust Studies Program, Western Galilee College

Lecturer on the history of medicine during the Holocaust in the Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University

Researched the history of medicine (organization, science, ethics) in ghettos in Poland and Lithuania

Author: “White Coats Inside the Ghetto: Jewish Medicine in Poland During the Holocaust”


2021- Member of the Lancet Commission on Medicine and the Holocaust: Historical Evidence, Implications for Today, Teaching for Tomorrow

2017: Lecture topic: “Jewish Medical Ethics During the Holocaust” in the International Conference: Medical Ethics in the 70 Years after the Nuremberg Code, 1947 to the Present.

Volker Roelcke, Dr Med. M. Phil. (Germany)

Dr. Med degree from Heidelberg University
M. Phil. Degree in social anthropology from Cambridge, University
Board qualified psychiatrist
Professor and Chair, Institute for the History of Medicine, Giessen University, Germany
Member of the Leopoldina—German National Academy of Sciences

Mathias Schütz, Ph.D. (Germany)
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Studied the development of scientific medicine in Germany in the 19th and 20th centuries
Studied traditional and transatlantic influences on the establishment of ethics in German medicine since the 1970s

Sari J. Siegel, Ph.D. (USA):
Postdoctoral Fellow, Program in the History of Medicine, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of California, Los Angeles;
Teaching course "Medicine and Medical Ethics under the Nazi Regime"

2018-2019 Geoffrey H. Hartman Postdoctoral Fellow at the Yale University's Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies

Book in preparation: Jewish Prisoner-Physicians During the Holocaust Conscription, Circumstances, and Medical Conduct, 1940-1945

Kamila Uzarczyk, Ph.D. (Poland)
Assistant Professor, Department of Medical Humanities and Social Sciences in Medicine, Medical University of Wroclaw, Poland

Ph.D. in history, University of Wroclaw
dissertation The concept of race hygiene and implementation of race hygiene legislation in the German province of Lower Silesia

Past chair, the historical commission of the German Association of Psychiatry on the history of its predecessor-organization during the Nazi period

Past co-initiator of the Nuremberg Declaration of the German Medical Association on the responsibility of German physicians for medical atrocities during the Nazi period

co-chair of the “Lancet Commission on Medicine and the Holocaust”
‘Medicine during the Nazi period: Historical facts and some implications for teaching medical ethics and professionalism.’ In: Sheldon Rubenfeld (ed.): *Medicine After the Holocaust: From the Master Race to the Human Genome and Beyond*. 
(Chapter recordings)