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Ernst Rüdin: Hitler's Racial Hygiene Mastermind

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Abstract. Ernst Rüdin (1874–1952) was the founder of psychiatric genetics and was also a founder of the German racial hygiene movement. Throughout his long career he played a major role in promoting eugenic ideas and policies in Germany, including helping formulate the 1933 Nazi eugenic sterilization law and other governmental policies directed against the alleged carriers of genetic defects. In the 1940s Rüdin supported the killing of children and mental patients under a Nazi program euphemistically called “Euthanasia.” The authors document these crimes and discuss their implications, and also present translations of two publications Rüdin co-authored in 1938 showing his strong support for Hitler and his policies. The authors also document what they see as revisionist historical accounts by leading psychiatric genetic authors. They outline three categories of contemporary psychiatric genetic accounts of Rüdin and his work: (A) those who write about German psychiatric genetics in the Nazi period, but either fail to mention Rüdin at all, or cast him in a favorable light; (B) those who acknowledge that Rüdin helped promote eugenic sterilization and/or may have worked with the Nazis, but generally paint a positive picture of Rüdin’s research and fail to mention his participation in the “euthanasia” killing program; and (C) those who have written that Rüdin committed and supported unspeakable atrocities. The authors conclude by calling on the leaders of psychiatric genetics to produce a detailed and complete account of their field’s history, including all of the documented crimes committed by Rüdin and his associates.

Keywords: Eugenics, Nazis, Psychiatric genetics, Racial hygiene, Rüdin, Eugenic sterilization

The purpose of this article is to examine the career of the Swiss-German racial hygienist and psychiatric genetics founder Ernst Rüdin (1874–

1952), and to document the crimes he both supported and committed in Germany during the Nazi period (1933–1945). We then assess the manner in which contemporary psychiatric genetic researchers have written about – or have failed to write about – the crimes committed by Rüdin and his associates. Following this discussion, we present translations of two documents co-authored by Rüdin and racial hygienics founder Alfred Ploetz (1860–1940) in a 1938 edition of *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* (Archive for Racial and Social Biology; Ploetz and Rüdin, 1938a, b). To the best of our knowledge these documents have not been translated in any previous English language publication.

Psychiatric Genetics and Racial Hygiene

Ploetz and Rüdin were among the founders of the German Society for Racial Hygiene (*Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene*) in 1905. The aims of the German racial hygiene movement were similar to the eugenics movements in other countries, including the United States, although the term “race” (*Rasse*) implied a stronger racial or *völkisch* aspect of eugenics. German racial hygienists and other eugenicists believed that humans can be “improved” by selective breeding to eradicate “undesirable” traits in the population. They argued that psychiatric disorders, and traits such as criminality, alcoholism, and hereditary “feeble-mindedness” (*angeborener Schwachsinn*) are caused mainly by hereditary factors, and can be bred out of the population for the benefit of future generations. The *Archiv* first appeared in Germany in 1904 and became the official journal of the Society for Racial Hygiene. After the Nazi seizure of power in the first part of 1933, it became an official organ of the Nazi’s Reich Committee for Public Health (Weindling, 1989, p. 500), with Rüdin continuing as the co-Editor.

Rüdin developed the psychiatric genetics field in the early twentieth century. During that period he was working with the founder of modern psychiatry Emil Kraepelin, first in Heidelberg, and then following Kraepelin to Munich in 1907 (Weber, 1996). Rüdin and his racial hygienicist colleagues were tireless advocates of programs aimed against the carriers of a presumed “hereditary taint” (*erbliche Belastung*) well before the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. Lacking any family or twin studies, Rüdin called for the eugenic sterilization of chronic alcoholics as early as 1903, which “marked the beginning of a life-long crusade for sterilization of the degenerate” (Weindling, 1989, p. 186).

The Nazi takeover provided new support for Rüdin’s “crusade,” and he played a major role in creating and implementing the 1933 Nazi “Law for

the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring” (*Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses*). This law provided for the compulsory eugenic surgical sterilization of people diagnosed with “genetic” conditions such as feeble-mindedness, schizophrenia, manic-depressive insanity, genetic epilepsy, Huntington’s chorea, genetic blindness or deafness, or severe alcoholism. Rüdin was a co-author of the official commentary summarizing the alleged scientific justification for the law (Gütt et al., 1934).¹

The law created a massive program of compulsory eugenic sterilization and led to the establishment of roughly 1,700 hereditary health courts (*Erbgesundheitsgerichte*) throughout Germany (Proctor, 1988). Approximately 400,000 Germans were forcibly sterilized under the law between 1934 and 1939, primarily on the basis of being labeled “feeble-minded” or “schizophrenic.” The sterilization mortality rate was around 0.5%, meaning that perhaps 2,000 people died from the operation (Proctor, 1988).

Rüdin and his close psychiatric geneticist associates at the Genealogic-Demographic Department of the German Research Institute for Psychiatry in Munich, such as Hans Luxenburger and Bruno Schulz, played a major role in establishing, popularizing, and performing research in support of the sterilization law (Joseph, 2004, 2006; Lewis, 1934; Luxenburger, 1934; Rüdin, 1934; Schulz, 1934, 1939). In 1934, the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institute produced a list of 15 “eminent eugenicists in Germany,” with Rüdin and Luxenburger appearing on this list (Thomalia, 1934, pp. 141–142). Rüdin received numerous awards for his work in the Nazi era, including the prestigious Goethe Medal of Arts and Sciences in 1939 from the Reich Ministry of the Interior. In 1944, Rüdin received the Adlerschild des Deutschen Reiches medal (*Eagle Shield of the German Reich*) bearing the Nazi eagle from Hitler, and was praised as being a “pathfinder in the field of hereditary hygiene” (Weinreich, 1946, p. 33).

Like Rüdin, Luxenburger was a strong supporter of eugenic measures well before the Nazi seizure of power in 1933 (see Burleigh, 1994; Joseph, 2004, pp. 34–39; Luxenburger, 1931a, b). As Weiss observed in her

¹ We refer to a compulsory eugenic sterilization program as a crime regardless of whether it was sanctioned by law (as it was in Germany, the United States, Scandinavia, and elsewhere). Many other crimes of the Third Reich, such as the Nuremberg Laws, were also carried out according to the law. In addition to the dangers inherent in the surgical process, the procedure involved depriving people of the right to procreate children and undoubtedly caused many victims to experience a lifetime of emotional suffering. In the words of psychiatric genetic researcher Myron Baron, “What greater harm is there than maiming (sterilization or castration) or murder?” (Baron, 1998, p. 97). When we consider that the alleged scientific justification for the procedure was in most cases based on very weak evidence (see below, and see Joseph, 2004, 2006), the magnitude of the crime becomes much greater.

detailed examination of Rüdin's Institute, "all of its members were strong supporters of eugenics during the Weimar years" (1919–1933; Weiss, 2010, p. 133). In 1931, Luxenburger wrote that sterilization would "considerably contain" but not "fully prevent the transmission of recessive hereditary properties." Nevertheless, he supported sterilization because "it is impossible to see why one should sit back and do nothing only because a radical eradication of degenerate hereditary properties is still impossible today" (quoted in Burleigh, 1994, p. 41). After the Nazi takeover, Luxenburger's definition of "feeble-minded" children deserving to fall under the sterilizer's knife included those having great difficulty in elementary school and those "who fail in life" (Weiss, 2010, p. 144). When asked whether the sterilization law would reduce the number of people available to perform important menial tasks, Luxenburger replied, "even after sterilization there will be enough hereditary feeble-minded individuals to serve as coolies" (quoted in Weiss, 2010, p. 144).

After the Nazi seizure of power, researchers and students from other European countries came to Munich to study under Rüdin and his associates at the Genealogical-Demographic Department. According to David Rosenthal, a leading American supporter of psychiatric genetics and an admirer of Rüdin's scientific work, "From this institute emerged all of the pioneering psychiatric geneticists" (Rosenthal, 1971, p. 7).

Rüdin and "Euthanasia"

In the late 1930s the Nazi regime moved beyond compulsory eugenic sterilization and instituted a secret plan to kill mental patients and other "defectives," "useless eaters," and "incurables." This program, code named "T4" and euphemistically referred to by the authorities as "euthanasia," led to the murder of 70,000 people by gas, lethal injection, starvation, and other methods in the first phase between 1939 and 1941 under the direction of the government and leading doctors and psychiatrists (Lifton, 1986; Proctor, 1988). Many more were killed between 1939 and 1945 in further actions both in Germany and the occupied territories. Some have estimated that 200,000 people were killed in the program (Weiss, 2010), while other estimates run as high as 300,000 (Peters, 2001). Proposals to institute a eugenic killing program in the United States were openly debated in a 1942 edition of the official journal of the American Psychiatric Association, *The American Journal of Psychiatry* (Joseph, 2005; Kennedy, 1942).

Although there is no evidence that Rüdin played a major role in initiating the "euthanasia" program, it is beyond question that he helped implement and justify this program of killing (Roelcke, 2000, 2012; Weiss,

2010). According to Rüdin's biographer Matthias Weber, in internal memorandums Rüdin discussed "euthanasia" as a type of "therapeutic reform" (Weber, 1996, p. 329). The German historian of medicine Volker Roelcke has played an important role in documenting Rüdin's involvement in the euthanasia program, and has criticized what he saw as Weber's (1993) incomplete reporting (including poorly documented claims) of Rüdin's role in the killing program (Roelcke, 2006, 2012). In 1942 Rüdin wrote about the eugenic importance of "distinguishing which children could, already as children, be clearly categorized as so valueless and worthy of elimination that...they could be recommended for euthanasia in their own interest and that of the German people" (quoted in Weiss, 2010, p. 179).

Roelcke has documented Rüdin's support for the killing of children at the Psychiatric Department of the University of Heidelberg in 1943–1945 (Roelcke, 2000, 2006, 2012; Roelcke et al., 1998). He has shown that Carl Schneider and Rüdin's associate Julius Deussen "played a leading role in the research on children in the context of the euthanasia program" (Roelcke, 2006, p. 86). This research included the killing of children in order to "systematically correlate clinical with post-mortem and histopathological data." Roelcke has documented that Rüdin "supported the research efforts of Schneider and Deussen in various ways, among other things with funds from the budget of his own institute in Munich" (Roelcke, 2006, p. 87). The research carried out by Deussen and Schneider attempted to find clinical, genealogical, and/or laboratory criteria to differentiate between hereditary and acquired conditions. At least 21 of the 52 children studied under the program initiated and supported by Rüdin were killed so that their brains could be examined (Roelcke, 2000, 2012).

The brains of other murdered "euthanasia" victims were sent to Rüdin's Munich institute for evaluation and research (Weiss, 2010, p. 183). According to Weber, "Rüdin considered the broadening of the criteria for killing handicapped newborns to be a scientific issue of importance to the war effort" (Weber, 2000, p. 255). In 1944, Rüdin considered publishing an article in the *Archiv* legitimizing euthanasia based on "thoroughly investigated children" (quoted in Weiss, 2010, p. 179). Clearly, at this point Rüdin still believed that Germany would win the war and that open support for euthanasia in scientific journals would become acceptable after the German victory.

Rüdin and his collaborators drafted a memorandum on the Nazi T4 "euthanasia" killing program, discussing ways that doctors and others could justify the killing. According to the memorandum:

Even the euthanasia measures will meet with general understanding and approval, as it becomes established and more generally known that, in each and every case of mental disease, all possible measures

were taken either to cure the patients or to improve their state sufficiently to enable them to return to work which is economically worthwhile, either in their original professions or in some other occupation. (quoted in Müller-Hill, 1998, p. 46)

And in a 1942 letter to the Reich Research Council discussing psychiatric genetics and the conditions of war, Rüdin wrote,

We have no interest in preserving the lives of incurable and ruinous victims of heredity, nor do we have any interest in the propagation of individuals who are carriers of the genetic dispositions necessary for the development of severe hereditary diseases. We do however have an interest in the case of the latter individuals to save what can be saved, at least on a case-by-case basis, by means of timely interventions in pathogenesis and during the course of the disease, in order to at least preserve their utility to society. (quoted in Ritter and Roelcke, 2005, p. 268)

Similar to the selection process at the Nazi's Auschwitz concentration camp, Rüdin condemned to death the "incurable and ruinous victims of heredity" unless they were able-bodied enough to contribute to the war effort or to work in slave labor camps. In the words of a pair of contemporary schizophrenia researchers, "The sterilization and murder of hundreds of thousands of patients with schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders in Nazi Germany between 1934 and 1945 was the greatest criminal act in the history of psychiatry" (Torrey and Yolken, 2010, p. 31).

Indeed, as the contemporary German psychiatric genetic researcher Peter Propping concluded, the leaders of Rüdin's Munich school were responsible for moving along the "slippery slope" from sterilization to killing²:

When the National Socialists came to power in Germany in 1933, the protagonists of the Munich school helped guide psychiatric genetics along the slippery slope from the sterilization of

² Although a solid case can be made in support of Propping's "slippery slope" from sterilization to killing characterization, others might argue that whereas eugenic sterilization was legal in Germany, no law was established sanctioning the euthanasia killing program, and that the programs followed a different logic. A prophetic opponent of sterilization who did see a logical progression from sterilization to killing was Swedish Socialist Party member of Parliament Carl Lindhagen, who objected to a 1922 proposal to enact a eugenic sterilization law in Sweden. Lindhagen stated, "Why shall we only deprive these persons, of no use to society or even for themselves, the ability of reproduction? Is it not even kinder to take their lives? This kind of dubious reasoning will be the outcome of the methods proposed today" (quoted in Broberg and Tydén, 2005, p. 104).

psychiatric patients to their deaths in an organized euthanasia program. Ernst Rüdin was a prominent protagonist of the German racial hygiene movement, his research program as well as his political activities being guided by the idea of a “healthy race.” (Propping, 2005, p. 3)

According to Roelcke,

The aim of re-structuring society according to the laws of biology was the guiding principle motivating all of Rüdin’s research and political activities. He and most of his staff were in one way or another involved in Nazi mental health policy, including active support of the systematic patient killings (“euthanasia”), and in research aimed at finding scientifically valid criteria for distinguishing between those worthy for procreation, or indeed worthy to live, and those supposedly unworthy. (Roelcke, 2004, p. 477)

Historians have pointed out that in addition to the eugenic and “racial purification” aspects of the euthanasia program, other motives included economic factors and the need to clear out hospitals and asylums in the interest of the war effort (Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939). However, although the euthanasia program was carried out under the conditions of war, from another perspective one could argue that, much like the Holocaust itself, it was carried out under the *cover* of war.

Rüdin’s anti-Semitism was also in line with the Nazi leaders he so willingly collaborated with and even inspired. As seen in two 1938 articles he co-authored with Ploetz (which we have translated below) and elsewhere, Rüdin supported every policy and crime directed against the Jewish people, which is confirmed in a 1942 edition of the *Archiv*. Referring to the “fight against parasitic alien races such as the Jews and Gypsies” well after *Kristallnacht* and at a time when the Holocaust was well underway, Rüdin wrote,

The results of our science had earlier attracted much attention (both support and opposition) in national and international circles. Nevertheless, it will always remain the undying, historic achievement of Adolf Hitler and his followers that they dared to take the first trail-blazing and decisive steps toward such brilliant race-hygienic achievement in and for the German people. In so doing, they went beyond the boundaries of purely scientific knowledge. He and his followers were concerned with putting into practice the theories and advances of Nordic race-conceptions... the fight against

parasitic alien races such as the Jews and Gypsies... and preventing the breeding of those with hereditary diseases and those of inferior stock. (quoted in Müller-Hill, 1998, p. 67)

In the same article, Rüdin wrote favorably about Nazi racial laws, which led to a “by now progressed elimination of Jewish influence and especially to the prevention of further intrusions of Jewish blood into the German gene pool.” Like Hitler, he saw the war as being caused by “Jewish-plutocratic and Bolshevik directed powers” (Rüdin, 1942, pp. 321–322; see also Joseph, 2004).

Questionable Premises: Then and Now

German psychiatric geneticists sought to provide alleged scientific evidence in support of social and political policies aimed at curbing the reproduction of people they targeted as harboring “hereditary taint,” which they believed posed a grave danger to society and could lead to societal and racial degeneration (Peters, 2001; Roelcke, 2006; Schulze et al., 2004). However, although contemporary psychiatric genetic researchers usually reject eugenic ideas and programs (while promoting genetic counseling), they may be just as mistaken as Rüdin and his colleagues in their belief that hereditary factors play an important etiological role in the major psychiatric disorders (Joseph, 2004, 2006, 2012).

The reason is that contemporary researchers – in the context of the forty-year failure to discover the genes that they believe cause the major psychiatric disorders (Collins et al., 2012; Gershon et al., 2011; Joseph, 2011, 2012; Joseph and Ratner, in press; Plomin, 2012) – rely on the same two environmentally confounded research methods used by Rüdin and his colleagues: psychiatric family studies and twin studies. Then as now, critics have argued that both family studies and twin studies are unable to disentangle the potential influences of genes and environment, and therefore prove nothing about genetic influences on psychiatric disorders and psychological traits (Charney, 2008a, b, 2012, Joseph, 2004, 2006, 2010, 2012; Lewontin et al., 1984). In addition, critics have argued that psychiatric adoption studies, which have been performed since the 1960s, contain their own set of invalidating methodological problems and environmental confounds (Boyle, 2002; Cassou et al., 1980; Joseph, 2004, 2006, 2010; Pam, 1995; Lewontin et al., 1984; Lidz, 1976; Lidz and Blatt, 1983; Lidz et al., 1981).

The main product of Munich school research was the “empirical genetic prognosis” (*empirische Erbprognose*), which involved calculating

the probability that (presumably hereditary) psychiatric disorders would eventually appear in the biological relatives and descendants of people diagnosed with these disorders. These calculations, which were based mainly on family studies, produced age-corrected “morbidity risk” (MR) percentage figures for various groups of relatives biologically related to the diagnosed “Proband.” Rüdin had developed this method for his schizophrenia family study, published in 1916 (Rüdin, 1916). Much of the work of Rüdin, Luxenburger, Schulz and their colleagues in the Nazi era involved calculating such probabilities in the service of the sterilization law and other racial hygienic measures. For example, the researchers found that the age-corrected schizophrenia morbidity risks among the parents and offspring of schizophrenia patients were higher than the rate expected in the general population, and concluded that these elevated rates were caused by genetic factors. In these studies the researchers did not diagnose relatives blindly, did not use control groups, and used vague and differing definitions of schizophrenia and other disorders (Gottesman et al., 1987).

However, like their fellow eugenicists in the United States who based many of their theories and policy recommendations on allegedly “tainted family lines” such as the “Jukes” and the “Kallikaks,” on a purely scientific level Rüdin and his Munich colleagues made the crucial error of assuming that hereditary factors explain the finding that psychiatric disorders tend to “run in the family.” As most contemporary psychiatric genetic and behavioral genetic researchers *now* understand, traits and disorders can aggregate in families for environmental (non-genetic) reasons because family members share a common environment as well as common genes. As one example, a leading group of psychiatric genetic researchers recognized in 1994 that the familial resemblance or aggregation of a trait or disorder “can occur because of shared genes, shared environment or a combination of the two” (McGuffin et al., 1994, p. 30; other researchers recognizing that family studies cannot disentangle potential genetic and environmental influences include Barondes, 1998; Bouchard and McGue, 2003; Faraone et al., 1999; Kendler, 1988; Kety et al., 1968; Plomin et al., 2008; Rosenthal, 1970).

Empirical predictions based on family studies, therefore, do not prove anything about genetics, and the belated recognition of this fact by the field of psychiatric genetics suggests that the most generous conclusion one can reach about Munich school research is that it was based on questionable science, if it was science at all, and was performed and promoted in the service of eugenics and right-wing political

programs, the desire of institute leaders to maintain funding and the support of the Nazi regime, and their pre-existing *beliefs* about the importance of heredity.

Rüdin's daughter Edith Zerbin-Rüdin became a psychiatric genetic researcher in Germany in the decades following World War II, first continuing her father's work on a greatly reduced scale alongside Schulz at the renamed Max Planck Institute for Psychiatry in Munich, and then heading the department after Schulz's death in 1958 (Zerbin-Rüdin and Kendler, 1996). In a 1972 article on the genetics of schizophrenia, Zerbin-Rüdin observed that although up to the end of the war most researchers accepted empirical genetic prognoses based on family study data as "unequivocal proof" that schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders and traits were caused by heredity, "the interpretation has undergone change":

Until about 30 years ago [roughly the mid-1940s], the clear increase in morbidity risk with the proximity of blood kinship to a schizophrenic was considered unequivocal proof of a hereditary factor. Later, however, it was reasoned that family members become ill more frequently only because their environment is more alike than that of nonconsanguineous persons. (Zerbin-Rüdin, 1972, p. 47)

Although Zerbin-Rüdin consistently defended her father's work and reputation (see Zerbin-Rüdin and Kendler, 1996; Müller-Hill, 1998, pp. 130–133), and although she believed that the schizophrenia adoption studies published in the 1960s suggested that the familial aggregation of schizophrenia is "at least partly attributable to genetic factors" (p. 47), her assessment confirms that the conclusions of Rüdin and his Munich colleagues were wrong insofar as they interpreted the results of family studies as constituting proof that hereditary factors cause (or are the main cause of) psychiatric disorders, "feeble-mindedness," and so on. The "unequivocal proof" they produced, which contributed to the sterilization and killing of (estimating conservatively) hundreds of thousands of people, was in fact no proof at all. Indeed, although the great majority of people labeled "schizophrenic" in Nazi Germany were either sterilized or killed, postwar studies show a high incidence rate of new schizophrenia cases in Germany (Torrey and Yolken, 2010).

Some might object that our brief assessment of Rüdin's scientific work rests on the flawed method of reading research results from later decades back into the past. The main point, however, is that we condemn Rüdin and his associates not for the conclusions they reached on the basis of their results, but rather for what they did to their fellow

human beings on the basis of their conclusions. We do criticize the science, but the present analysis would not have been necessary had Rüdin and his colleagues done nothing more than publish scientific articles concluding that genes play a major role. Rüdin was an internationally known scientist who used his authority to support severely repressive political programs masquerading as “science,” and was a doctor who personally played a role in killing adults and children (“patients”).

Contemporary Revisionist Histories of Rüdin and German Psychiatric Genetics

Teo and Ball (2009) discussed the “revisionist” historical accounts written by some twin researchers, who usually fail to mention that their discipline has its origins in eugenics and German racial hygiene (Joseph, 2004). Twin research was an area of focus at Rüdin’s Munich institute as well being the specialty of Otmar von Verschuer of Germany’s Kaiser Wilhelm Institute Human Genetics Division, and later the Frankfurt Institute for Hereditary Biology and Racial Hygiene. Verschuer was one of the world’s leading twin researchers in the 1930s (Joseph, 2004; Newman et al., 1937), and also played a major role in providing scientific justification and support for the Holocaust and was an accomplice to the murder of twins at Auschwitz for “scientific” purposes (Ehrenreich, 2007; Lifton, 1986; Müller-Hill, 1998). After the war, Verschuer resumed his career as a university professor in Germany and continued to publish research papers and attend international conferences (von Verschuer, 1957), and was honored as a “teacher and example” in a special 1956 edition of *Acta Geneticae Medicae et Gemellologiae* (Journal of Medical Genetics and Twin Research) commemorating his 60th birthday (Gedda, 1956).

Continuing the theme of “insider” histories by members of a group writing about their field’s history (Danziger, 1994), Teo and Ball observed that a hallmark of revisionist history put forward by human genetic researchers reluctant to acknowledge (or possibly being unaware of) the eugenic and Nazi past of their discipline is “revisionism by omission.” As an example, they noted that twin researchers usually fail to discuss the history of twin research in its political and eugenic context, and omit the fact that the discoverer of the twin method, Hermann W. Siemens, was a major figure in the German racial hygiene movement by the early 1920s and later supported the Nazis and their racial policies

(for example, see Siemens, 1937). In fact, some leading contemporary behavioral genetic researchers have omitted Siemens from the history of twin research (Teo and Ball, 2009, pp. 11–14; see also Joseph, 2004, pp. 17–21). In many of the psychiatric genetic “insider” accounts mentioned below, we find a similar “revisionism by omission” in discussions of the history of the psychiatric genetics field.

Three Categories of Contemporary Psychiatric Genetic Evaluations of Rüdin

Contemporary psychiatric genetic evaluations of the founder of the field Ernst Rüdin are varied, but usually fall into the revisionist Categories A and B discussed below. Major works covering many of the crimes of Rüdin and his associates have been available in English since the 1980s (Lifton, 1986; Müller-Hill, 1998 [the first English translation appeared in 1988]; Proctor, 1988; Roelcke, 2006; Weindling, 1989), although English language documentation of Rüdin’s support for the Nazi regime and the sterilization law dates back to the immediate post-war era (Weinreich, 1946) and earlier.

Category A

Category A includes leaders of the psychiatric genetics field and their supporters who have written about German psychiatric genetics in the Nazi period and who either fail to mention Rüdin at all, or cast him in a favorable light. While Category A authors sometimes discuss Nazi policies and document atrocities (at times pointing to the complicity of German scientists outside of psychiatric genetics), they omit mention of Rüdin’s and other German psychiatric geneticists’ role in supporting Nazism, racial hygiene, forced sterilization, the killing of mental patients (“euthanasia”), and Hitler’s persecution of Jews, Sinti and Roma (gypsies), and other targeted groups (examples of Category A authors include Faraone et al., 1999; Flint et al., 2010; Gottesman, 1991; Gottesman and Shields, 1982; Hoge and Appelbaum, 2008; McGuffin et al., 1994; Nurnberger and Berrettini, 1998; Rosenthal, 1970, 1971; Slater, 1971; Slater and Cowie, 1971; Stone, 1997; Strömgren, 1985; Torrey et al., 1994). Category A authors such as Erik Strömgren and Eliot Slater studied under Rüdin in Munich in the mid-1930s and therefore had first-hand knowledge of his public and other activities. Edith Zerbin-Rüdin (born in 1921) also falls into this category.

Here we provide a few examples from the Category A accounts listed above. In his award-winning book *Schizophrenia Genesis*, schizophrenia

researcher Irving Gottesman (1991), who was mentored by Slater, wrote positively of the work of Rüdin, Luxenburger, Schulz and other leaders of the “now-famous Munich school of psychiatric genetics” (p. 14), referring to “thoroughly the scientist” Rüdin (p. 13), and to Schulz as a “star member of Rüdin’s Munich school” (p. 96). In a book describing their own psychiatric twin research, biological psychiatrist E. Fuller Torrey, Gottesman and their colleagues (Torrey et al., 1994) made reference to the Nazi sterilization law, twin research under the Nazis, and the roles of Verschuer and Josef Mengele in the murder of twins at Auschwitz for alleged scientific purposes. At the same time, they discussed the work of Luxenburger in a positive way, made no mention of the role of German psychiatric genetics in supporting Nazi policies, and did not mention Rüdin at all.

Faraone, Tsuang, and Tsuang, in their book *Genetics of Mental Disorders* (Faraone et al., 1999) failed to document the involvement of Rüdin and his colleagues in German eugenic policies, and implied that their findings were merely misused by the Nazis: “Adolph Hitler and his Nazi regime began a systematic program first to sterilize and then to kill ‘genetically defective’ people.... Contemporary researchers in psychiatric genetics are especially disturbed to learn that the Nazis used [German psychiatric genetic] research to justify their eugenics policies regarding the mentally ill...” (pp. 223–224). They wrote only of what they saw as “Nazi abuses of psychiatric genetics” (p. 224).

Hoge and Appelbaum (2008), in their chapter in *Psychiatric Genetics: Applications in Clinical Practice*, wrote that “Eugenics reached its zenith (or nadir) in Nazi Germany” (p. 257). They recognized that “Psychiatrists were directly implicated in the application of eugenic programs under the Nazi regime” (p. 257), and discussed the eugenic sterilization law, the T4 euthanasia program, and that “5,000 children between the ages of 3 and 17” suspected of carrying presumed hereditary disorders “were put to death” (p. 257). However, they did not name any of the psychiatrists involved in these programs, and failed to mention the involvement of German psychiatric geneticists such as Rüdin. This also occurred in the 1998 book *Psychiatric Genetics*. Here, psychiatric genetic researchers Nurnberger and Berrettini wrote that the “low point” of the history of eugenics “was during the Nazi era, when eugenic theories were used to justify the mass murder of people with schizophrenia and mental retardation as well as ethnic ‘inferiors’” (Nurnberger and Berrettini, 1998, p. 129).

In the process of attempting to validate psychiatric twin research in their 2010 book *How Genes Influence Behavior*, Category A psychiatric

genetic researchers Flint, Greenspan, and Kendler ignored the numerous critics of psychiatric twin research and instead focused on Kamin's (1974) critical analysis of IQ genetic studies, including studies of twins. For Flint and colleagues, Kamin's "diatribe" was another example of the danger of "the mixing of politics with science that always seems to accompany these studies" (Flint et al., 2010, pp. 26–27). They cited the rise of the eugenics movement as another example of the supposed hazard of mixing science and politics, regrettably (in our view) linking the "politics" of this steadfast *opponent* of eugenics (Kamin) to the politics of the eugenics movement and Nazism. "The ultimate embodiment of eugenics," wrote Flint et al., "came under the National Socialist (Nazi) program in Germany, starting with the compulsory sterilization of mental patients (modeled after US statutes) and ending with the Final Solution" (p. 27).

Like other Category A "insider" historians, Flint and colleagues failed to mention the fact that German psychiatric genetic researchers – such as the founder of their discipline Ernst Rüdin – were instrumental in creating the conditions for and providing a scientific stamp of approval to the atrocities of the Third Reich. In fact, Rüdin personified the "ultimate embodiment of eugenics" in Hitler's Germany.

Category B

The Category B position acknowledges that Rüdin helped promote eugenic sterilization and/or may have worked with the Nazis, but generally paints a positive picture of Rüdin's research and denies or fails to mention that he supported the euthanasia program or that he supported anti-Semitism and the fight against the "parasitic alien races such as the Jews and Gypsies" (Category B authors include Cardno and McGuffin, 1999; Farmer, 2003; Farmer and McGuffin, 1999; Gottesman, 2008; Gottesman and Bertelsen, 1996; Kendler and Prescott, 2006; Shorter, 1997; Strömberg, 1994; Zerbin-Rüdin and Kendler, 1996). Gottesman and Bertelsen ended their publication with a quotation from Rüdin's former Munich co-worker and racial hygienist Franz J. Kallmann, who wrote a letter in support of Rüdin for the latter's denazification hearing, claiming that Rüdin "is no criminal, of course." Gottesman and Bertelsen concluded, "We are content to let Kallmann have the last word for now" (Gottesman and Bertelsen, 1996, p. 321).

This contrasts sharply with the Swiss government's "last word" on Rüdin only 5 days after the German government's capitulation in May, 1945. According to the Swiss authorities, they decided to revoke Rüdin's citizenship for both his scientific activities and his "pronounced political role":

Rüdin belongs definitely to the intellectual leadership circle of the National Socialist regime. He was the expert who prepared the German racial-political legislation which brought immense suffering and ruin for millions of innocent people. Besides his scientific activity he, therefore, played a pronounced political role. Rüdin's life work contradicts the laws of humanity... (quoted in Weingart et al., 1988, p. 569, our translation)

In a Category B account by Zerbin-Rüdin and Kendler (1996), the authors attempted to legitimize Rüdin and his schizophrenia family research conducted before the Nazi seizure of power, as well as other psychiatric genetic research conducted during the Nazi era. This article caused considerable controversy, and led to some of the Category C responses we will see below. Zerbin-Rüdin and Kendler wrote that "Rüdin and his institute became involved in the eugenic policies of the Nazis," though they saw this only as an example of the "possible political abuse of scientific findings in general and those from the field of psychiatric genetics in particular" (p. 332). Although the authors believed that the "relationship between Rüdin and his institute and the racial and eugenic policies of the Nazi party after it came to power in Germany is an historically important subject" (p. 335), they declined to discuss Rüdin's activities during this period (while referring their readers to Weber's 1993 biography of Rüdin). According to Zerbin-Rüdin and Kendler, many research psychiatrists were uninformed about "the extensive continental tradition of psychiatric genetics" for two main reasons: (1) "a language barrier," and (2) "a rather virulent form of 'presentism,' (the tendency to value only recent endeavors and neglect the work of previous eras)" (p. 332).

In a book he co-authored 10 years later, Kendler mentioned the work of Luxenburger and Siemens without mentioning their strong support for racial hygienic policies both before and after the Nazi seizure of power, and discussed German psychiatric genetics and Rüdin as follows:

In its infancy, psychiatric genetics – under the leadership of Ernst Rüdin (whose critical contributions to the birth of this field were colored by his dealings, later in life, with the Nazi party in Germany) – was at the forefront of the methodological developments of the emerging field of human genetics. (Kendler and Prescott, 2006, p. 13)

We have seen that Category A and B authors sometimes allow that psychiatric genetic research was used by the Nazis, falsely implying that Rüdin, Luxenburger, Schulz and others did not support the racial

hygienic policies of the regime, and that their research was merely misused by *others* (for examples of this argument, see Faraone and Biederman, 2000; Faraone et al., 1999). Cardno and McGuffin (1999) went further and wrote, erroneously, that Schulz and Luxenburger opposed Nazi eugenic policies “on both moral and scientific grounds” (p. 344). A variation on this theme is the implication that Nazi-era psychiatric genetic researchers were judged to have committed no crimes, but “suffered from a sort of guilt by association” with the regime (Farmer, 2003, p. 428; Farmer and McGuffin, 1999, p. 483). Category A and B authors at times mention that Rüdin was convicted only as a “fellow traveler” of the Nazi regime at his denazification hearing after the war (he received only a small fine), implying that he already had his day in court and that he committed no major crimes (e.g., Farmer and McGuffin, 1999). Gottesman and Bertelsen suggested that contemporary re-evaluations of Rüdin based on new evidence amounted to a form of “double jeopardy” (being tried twice for the same crime; Gottesman and Bertelsen, 1996, p. 317). But in fact, Rüdin was one of numerous Nazi scientists with blood on their hands who were allowed to escape justice after the war and continue their academic careers (Proctor, 1988).

While Category A and B authors fail to mention Rüdin’s support of the Nazi persecution of the Jews, some (including researchers who trained, or whose mentors were trained, at Rüdin’s Munich institute) implied that Rüdin was not anti-Semitic and at times even helped protect Jews (e.g., Gottesman and Bertelsen, 1996; Strömgren, 1994). In an interview he conducted with Edith Zerbin-Rüdin, *Murderous Science* author Benno Müller-Hill asked Zerbin-Rüdin if her father was an anti-Semite. She responded, “No, not at all” (Müller-Hill, 1998, p. 132). A 1994 publication by Munich-trained Danish psychiatric geneticist Erik Strömgren provides additional evidence that the historical accounts by Rüdin’s former students and collaborators are unreliable. Strömgren’s account finds Rüdin and others attending the 1935 funeral of noted Munich researcher Walther Spielmeyer, despite the “nasty” weather that day. Strömgren then wrote, “I mention this incident in particular because it was quite remarkable that although Spielmeyer was a Jew, everybody wanted to pay him the last tribute” (Strömgren, 1994, p. 406). In fact, Spielmeyer was not a Jew, although he faced harassment because his wife and child had Jewish relatives (Weiss, 2010).

Category C

The less frequent Category C type of psychiatric genetic writer sees Rüdin, in the words of Lerer and Segman, as “a man who was not only a willing

accomplice to the most abhorrent crimes against humanity but an enthusiastic theorist who provided the intellectual basis for many of these crimes” (Lerer and Segman, 1997, p. 459). These researchers concluded,

There can be only one justification for the name of Ernst Rüdin appearing in a contemporary scientific journal and that is to enable a generation of researchers who may not be fully aware of his tainted legacy, to learn more about it and to appreciate how easily science can be perverted in the service of evil. (p. 460)

Other psychiatric genetic researchers have written about Rüdin as an architect and accomplice of unspeakable crimes against humanity (e.g., Baron, 1998; Gejman, 1997; Gershon, 1997; Propping, 2005; Schulze et al., 2004). Authors such as Baron, Gejman, Gershon, and Lerer and Segman did not set out to write a history of their field, but were mainly reacting to what they saw as the “whitewash” (Gershon, 1997, p. 457) perpetrated by colleagues such as Zerbin-Rüdin and Kendler (1996) and Gottesman and Bertelsen (1996). In his comment on Zerbin-Rüdin and Kendler’s claim that Rüdin’s work was not well known due mainly to language barriers and persistent “presentism,” Gershon wrote, “By putting it this way, this article ignores the disrepute into which this discipline fell all over the world for many years, in no small part because of the misuses of science by prominent scientists in the field, such as Ernst Rüdin” (Gershon, 1997, p. 457).

According to Gejman, “in all probability chronically ill patients from the families that Rüdin used in his epidemiological research were murdered in the T4 euthanasia program” (Gejman, 1997, p. 456). The same holds true for subjects in other studies conducted by Munich school researchers such as Luxenburger and Schulz. Baron also weighed in on this point:

Given the scope of this hideous program and its focus on the genetically unfit, it is highly likely that Rüdin’s own research subjects – thousands of patients and family members were enrolled in his programs – were among those who fell prey to the evil he helped inculcate. The information he collected could readily be put to malevolent use. ... he compiled a vast data bank (on the order of tens of thousands of families) in order to calculate Mendelian ratios, based on information obtained from hospitals, asylums and other institutions. (Baron, 1998, p. 97)

Because Rüdin participated in and supported the T4 “euthanasia” program while possessing detailed records of the families of people diagnosed

with schizophrenia and other conditions, it is indeed likely that he provided this information to help identify and kill the people he and his colleagues had studied. As the German psychiatrist Uwe Peters described it, “Like a spider in the center of its net, all strings of information and power came together in [Rüdin’s] hands” (Peters, 2001, p. 300).

But even Category C authors are not immune to revisionist accounts. In his book on the evolution of psychiatric genetic thought, Mellon wrote, “The role of the founders of modern psychiatric genetics in the sequence of events leading to mass murder is most troubling. Ernst Rüdin was an early and vocal proponent of eugenic applications to mental problems. ...his contribution to the series of events that helped lead to the exterminations is unmistakable” (Mellon, 1996, p. 112). At the same time, based on Slater’s 1971 account, Mellon mistakenly claimed that “in contrast to Rüdin,” Luxenburger and Schulz “managed to stay out of the mainstream eugenic movement” (p. 113). The fact remains that Luxenburger supported and helped implement the eugenic policies of the Nazi regime (Joseph, 2004), and according to a 1934 report by the Danish eugenicist Tage Kemp, Schulz was “doing a great deal of statistical work concerning mental diseases of practical value for the sterilization law and the eugenical legislation in Germany” (quoted in Black, 2003, p. 419). In the late 1930s Rüdin and his institute formed an alliance with Heinrich Himmler’s dreaded SS (*Schutzstaffel*; Weindling, 1989; Weiss, 2010), and in a memo Rüdin assured a leader of the SS *Ahnenerbe* that although Schulz was not “a flaming National Socialist,” his usefulness to the SS could be assured without reservation (Weiss, 2010, p. 164).

In Baron’s (1998) otherwise important review of Rüdin’s crimes, where he wrote that “Rüdin played a central role in inspiring, condoning and promoting forcible sterilization and castration of schizophrenics” (p. 96), he implied that Rüdin’s former associate Franz Kallmann discarded his hard-line eugenic beliefs after he had been forced to leave Germany in 1936 because of his partial Jewish ancestry. In 1935, while still active in Germany, Kallmann had called for the forcible sterilization of the healthy (yet presumed “schizophrenia taint carrier”) family members of “schizophrenics” – a proposal rejected as too radical even by Kallmann’s racial-hygienicist colleagues who strongly supported the sterilization law (Müller-Hill, 1998). Although Baron discussed Kallmann’s 1935 support for the compulsory sterilization of family members, he wrote, “while in the USA, Kallmann recanted his early position on this matter and proceeded with perseverance and dedication to develop one of the finest academic programs in modern psychiatric genetics” (Baron, 1998, p. 99). However, Kallmann’s eugenic views, though

adapted to a new country and post-war revelations of Nazi crimes committed in the name of eugenics and racial hygiene, remained largely unchanged until his death in 1965 (Joseph, 2004).

After being forced to leave Germany in 1936, Kallmann established the field of psychiatric genetics in the United States at the New York State Psychiatric Institute at Columbia University, based largely on the racial hygienic methods and theories he had learned in Rüdin's Munich school. At the same time, Kallmann remained a strong supporter of eugenics and compulsory sterilization (Kallmann, 1938a, b). Upon his arrival in the United States, Kallmann wrote, "The recommendation of negative eugenic measures against the carriers of any mental disease is genetically justifiable" after meeting certain criteria. Kallmann then wrote that "the schizophrenic disease process" meets these criteria (Kallmann, 1938b, p. 105). Clearly, in addition to people labeled schizophrenic, the "healthy" biologically-related "carriers of mental disease" were targeted by Kallmann for the application of "negative eugenic measures" such as sterilization. He called for "systematic preventative measures among the tainted children and siblings of schizophrenics" (Kallmann, 1938b, p. 113), because "we cannot expect sufficient success from the prevention of reproduction in the symptom-carriers alone" (Kallmann, 1938a, p. 4). This suggests that his 1935 position in favor of eugenic interventions directed at the family members of people diagnosed with schizophrenia remained largely in place, although by now he would not support the compulsory sterilization of these relatives, despite "the menace involved in the propagation of heterozygotic taint-carriers" (see Kallmann, 1938a, pp. 68–69).

Moreover, Kallmann published an annual review in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* from 1944 until his death in 1965, entitled "Heredity and Eugenics." Themes of Kallmann's annual updates included positive references to eugenic theories and policies, the alleged benefits of the compulsory eugenic sterilization laws then existing in many U.S. states (e.g., Kallmann, 1947, p. 515; 1951, p. 505), and discussions of Nazi genetic researchers Rüdin and Verschuer in a positive light (e.g., Kallmann, 1952, 1953).

Two Articles by Ploetz and Rüdin in Praise of Adolf Hitler and his Policies

We present below translations of two articles co-authored by Ploetz and Rüdin in the same 1938 edition of *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* (all emphasis in these documents was provided by

Ploetz and Rüdin). Both Ploetz and Rüdin had become members of the Nazi party a year earlier (Proctor, 1988). The articles appeared 5 years after the Nazi seizure of power, and shortly after German troops had entered Austria with little resistance and had incorporated that country into the German Reich (the *Anschluss*). After the German takeover of Austria, the Nazi rulers held a national referendum in that country on April 10th, 1938 under conditions of terror, intimidation, and the persecution and imprisonment of Jews, Social Democrats, trade unionists, and leftists, on whether Germany and Austria should be united (Shirer, 1960). The Nazi government claimed that 99.75% of the Austrian people voted “Yes” to the unification of Austria and the German Reich.

The First Article

The article translated below (Ploetz and Rüdin, 1938b) is entitled “On the Development of the German Reich since our Führer’s Takeover of Power on January 30, 1933” (*Zur Entwicklung des Deutschen Reichs seit der Machtübernahme unseres Führers am 30. Januar 1933*). The article was “addressed mainly to our foreign readers,” which suggests that Ploetz and Rüdin toned down the rhetoric and attempted to convince potentially skeptical foreign readers of what they viewed as the achievements of psychiatric genetics, racial hygiene, and the Nazi regime.

We should emphasize that Ploetz and Rüdin, though discussing Nazi government policies which they wholeheartedly supported, described what they viewed as the achievements of “our field of racial and social biology as well as racial and social hygiene.” They portrayed compulsory eugenic sterilization, the Nuremberg laws, and the vicious repression of “the Jewish part of the population” as *scientific* policies which they proudly played a role in helping implement.

The paragraph on the “racially upward movement” promoted by German foreign policy, in addition to the final devoted praise of Hitler, should forever lay to rest what remains of the myth that Rüdin and his associates were apolitical scientists (see Roelcke, 2006). Ploetz and Rüdin ended by writing that Hitler, one “of our greatest leaders since ancient times,” was “loved so passionately by his entire people.”

On the Development of the German Reich Since Our Führer’s Takeover of Power on January 30, 1933

In this short review, addressed mainly to our foreign readers, it is only possible to point to the most important advances that have

occurred directly or indirectly in our field of racial and social biology as well as racial and social hygiene, a field that was designated by *Adolf Hitler* as the most important foundation of our life as a people and a state.

The reforms began with the passing of the *Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring* (July 14, 1933). According to this law, anybody who is hereditarily diseased can be sterilized with a surgical intervention or by other means, if according to the experiences of medical science it can be expected with a high degree of probability that his offspring will suffer from severe physical or mental hereditary defects.

The *Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor* followed the above-mentioned law (September 15, 1935). With this law, marriages or extramarital sexual intercourse between Jews and citizens with German or related blood were banned.

This was followed by the *Law for the Protection of the Genetic Health of the German People* (the matrimonial health law) of October 18, 1935. According to this law, a marriage cannot be entered into if one of the partners suffers from an infectious disease that raises the fear of significant damage to the health of the other partner or the offspring; if one of the partners is legally declared incapable of managing his own affairs or is put under temporary guardianship; if one of the partners, without being declared incapable, suffers from a mental disorder that makes the marriage appear undesirable for the national community, and if one of the partners suffers from a hereditary illness according to the *Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring*. People who are engaged to be married must provide a certificate from the department of health before the wedding to prove that there is no impediment to the marriage according to the law.

The careful execution of all these laws has been made easier and possible by supplements, decrees, and commentaries. Out of the application of these laws among the people have emerged streams of beneficial effects, effects that will only unfold in their full power in the near and especially in the distant future.

Further racial-hygienic measures were the numerous low interest bank loans for newly married couples and child benefits for families, particularly those with many children. These measures have led to a

significant *increase* in the number of German births, which had been in considerable decline.

The *education of the German youth* in mental, spiritual, and physical respects continued and continues to be implemented under the leadership of the state, more and more independently of religious or racially alien management. In this way, the growth and preservation of the National Socialist spirit, already deeply influenced by state and party organization, is permanently guaranteed.

The *Jewish part of the population* that once had such strong influence, and even dominated our cultural and political life, has been strongly forced back, for example in the military, in the economy, among professional judges, among teachers of all kinds and levels, in the media, in theater, in film.

Unemployment, that was such a heavy burden on our people, has been reduced to a relatively insignificant number, and the condition of the working classes in general was lifted significantly in health, economic, and social respects.

The security of our people in its racially upward movement was further promoted by the *resignation from the League of Nations*, the bold *declaration of the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain as null and void*, steps which enabled powerful measures of protection for the German Reich, such as the creation of a large modern military, the *decisive occupation of the Rhineland* through the entry of German troops, the *German–Japanese–Italian Alliance against Communism* and the creation of the *German Reich – Italy “Axis”* and, finally, the miraculous *reunification of Austria with the German Reich*, which not only meant a considerable increase of military, economic, and cultural opportunities, but above all realized the ancient longing of Germans in the Reich and in Austria to melt together forever and for all times into one *Greater Germany*.

These are some of the main parts of the giant work of our Führer and his loyal supporters!

Hitler moves through his deeds into the rank of our greatest leaders since ancient times!

Our nation has understood this and is devoted to him with grateful hearts. No German prince, no German king or emperor has ever been loved so passionately by his entire people as *Adolf Hitler*.

Adolf Ploetz.

Ernst Rüdin.

The Second Article

The second article (Ploetz and Rüdin, 1938a) consists of a brief message of congratulations to Hitler on the occasion of his 49th birthday and of his successful annexation of Austria and the formation of “Greater Germany.”

On the Occasion of Adolf Hitler's Birthday

On April 20th our Führer will be 49 years old, 10 days after a plebiscite in the old Reich and Austria, which brought him the unheard-of total of over 99% yes votes of the votes cast.

Everyone who witnessed the enthusiasm of our nation or who heard the reports of his friends in the former Reich and Austria about the vote knows that the spiteful and suspecting voices about the honesty of the vote belong in the realm of grey fantasy. If ever our nation (other than an extremely small portion) was perfectly united, it was the case this time.

We wish Adolf Hitler from the bottom of our heart that it may be granted to him by fate to continue to lead Greater Germany to the bright heights of peaceful development!

Alfred Ploetz.

Ernst Rüdin.

Conclusion

The 1938 publications by Ploetz and Rüdin that we have translated for this article provide additional evidence that Rüdin (as well as Ploetz) was a strong supporter of Hitler and his criminal policies. And as others have documented, Rüdin and others worked hand-in-hand with the National Socialist regime to implement and promote these policies, including the killing of mental patients and children for the purpose of eliminating the perceived genetic threat to the German *Volkskörper* (people's body). Whether Rüdin reluctantly aided and helped implement the “euthanasia” killing program, or whether he saw it as the crowning achievement of his decades of psychiatric genetic research based on racial hygienic (eugenic) principles, is an issue that may be decided in the future when more documents become available.

Regardless of his motivation, Rüdin chillingly wrote in 1942 that the anticipated German victory in the war “will only inspire us...to multiply our racial hygienic efforts” (Rüdin, 1942, p. 322). The launching of Rüdin’s Munich institute in 1928, in the words of the President of the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute, was “the starting point of a new epoch in healing” patients (quoted in Weiss, 2010, p. 124). It ended as an institute that played a role in the killing of mental patients and children.

A historian of Nazi-era medicine, William E. Seidelman, wrote in 1996 that “Rüdin’s work on the genetics of schizophrenia, which established a theoretical basis for his eugenics work, continues to be cited in psychiatric genetics without reference to his eugenics career” (Seidelman, 1996, p. 1465). Although we have noted the contributions of the Category C authors, the leaders of psychiatric genetics have failed to produce a detailed (albeit “insider”) complete account of their field’s history. We look forward to the publication of such a work.

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