

International Conference

Tracing Knowledge on Human Heredity

New Perspectives on the History of Human Genetics in the FRG

Date: June 5-7, 2024

Venue: Alexander von Humboldt-Haus, Eichendorffring 5, 95447 Bayreuth

Conveners: Lukas Alex, Isabel Heinemann

After 1945, the discipline of race hygiene in Germany was fundamentally discredited as central element of Nazi eugenics and criminal racial policies. Thus, the history of human genetics after 1945 has a rather twisted and complicated history, especially in the FRG. While human genetics started to replace race hygiene as scientific discipline that dealt with human heredity in the postwar, it took some time until German scientists and research institutions were ready to embrace human genetics on a larger scale: Whereas some scientists (all of them with a Nazi past) had succeeded in re-establishing human genetic research at West German universities already during the 1950s, only the 1960s and 1970s saw research institutes and counselling centres emerge on a national and even regional level – with the help of state funding. As the institutional and personal histories of the discipline are comparatively well researched, this conference suggests shift the focus on forms/cultures of knowledge and practices of research and counselling to suggest innovative perspectives of research.

The workshop brings together international historians of medicine, science, and contemporary history to discuss new research on the history of human genetics in the FRG and its transnational entanglements. It chooses a history-of-knowledge approach to focus on transnational and transdisciplinary entanglements and enhance our understanding of the history of human genetics. Especially we are interested in scrutinizing

- the relations between scientists and probands, physicians and patients/clients,
- the practices of ordering and producing knowledge, and
- the representation of human genetic knowledge.

Program

Wednesday, June 5th

- from 17.00 Arrival at H4 Hotel Residenzschloss Bayreuth Erlanger Str. 37, 95444 Bayreuth
- 18.00 Get-Together at the Hotel Lobby
- 19.00 Dinner at Lamperie Friedrichstr. 13, 95444 Bayreuth

Thursday, June 6th

Alexander von Humboldt-Haus Eichendorffring 5, 95447 Bayreuth

9.00 – 11.00 Panel 1 – Genetic Research on Populations

Chair: Isabel **Heinemann** (Bayreuth)

- Veronika **Lipphardt** (Freiburg): Genetic Studies with Vulnerable Populations: The Case of the Roma
- Lukas **Alex** (Bayreuth): Population Genetics and Eugenic Knowledge in the Early Federal Republic of Germany
- Pascal **Germann** (Bern, CH): Comment

11.00 – 11.30 Break

11.30 – 13.30 Panel 2 – Genetic Counselling between State and Individuum

Chair: Julia **Reus** (Bayreuth)

- Jenny **Bangham** (London, UK): Affective Registers: Documentation and Genetic Counselling in the UK's National Health Service
- Susanne **Doetz** (Berlin): Talking about Risks. Genetic Counselling in the GDR in the 1970s and 1980s
- Heiner **Fangerau** (Düsseldorf): Comment

13.30 – 14.30 Lunch

15.30 – 17.30 Excursion to Richard Wagner Museum Richard-Wagner-Str. 48, 95444 Bayreuth

- Guided tour in English by Museum and Archives Director Sven Friedrich: Wagners Antisemitism and its Impact

18.00 – 20.00 Keynote lecture

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Introduction: Isabel **Heinemann** (Bayreuth)

- Staffan **Müller-Wille** (Cambridge, UK): From Eugenics to Human Genetics: International Entanglements

20.00 Dinner at Trattoria Da Raffaele Von-Römer-Straße 20, 95444 Bayreuth

Friday, June 7th

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9.00 – 11.00 Panel 3 – Heredity or Environment? Aetiological Research

Chair: Lukas **Alex** (Bayreuth)

- Heike **Petermann** (Münster): Hereditary Diseases: Tracing the Research of German Human Geneticists
- Alexander **v. Schwerin** (Berlin): Different Conjunctures of Animal Models in Human Genetics, 1930 – 1990
- Hans-Georg **Hofer** (Münster): Comment

11.00 – 11.30 Break

11.30 – 13.30 Panel 4 – New Perspectives on the Human Genetics and Genetic Counselling in West-Germany

Chair: Julia **Eichenberg** (Bayreuth)

- Isabel **Heinemann** (Bayreuth): Happy Healthy Families. Human Genetic Counselling in the 1950s and 1960s in West-Germany and the US
- Felicitas **Söhner** (Düsseldorf): Understanding the Transformation of a Medical Discipline with Oral History
- Henning **Tümmers** (Tübingen): Comment

13.30 Lunch (package) and departure

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Locations

