

tuberculosis will reach middle age and perhaps succumb to heart disease. Indeed, it is important to be aware of each specific spectrum and mix of sickness, since it decisively affects population structure, morbidity and mortality, and above all else, life expectancy and medical care schemes. In the past, Grmek argues, the frequency of infectious disease could have not only masked the AIDS infection but actually "crowded it out" enough to block it from becoming epidemic. However, this argument is somewhat dubious, especially when applied to the eradication of African smallpox at the hands of officials of the World Health Organization. There is no proof whatsoever that the location and success of that eradication campaign coincided with the appearance of AIDS. Perhaps a broader model positing a shifting ecology of disease shaped by the complex interplay of biological and social factors would be more apt in describing the arrival of epidemic AIDS. This could transcend the predominantly scientific perspective employed by Grmek and provide us with more analysis regarding the cultural context in which the construction of AIDS is ultimately imbedded.

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GERRIT HOHENDORF and ACHIM MAGULL-SELTENREICH. *Von der Heilkunde zur Massentötung: Medizin im Nationalsozialismus*. Heidelberg, Germany: Verlag das Wunderhorn, 1990. 287 pp. DM 28,00.

In view of the inflationary quantity of new books about "medicine and National Socialism" being printed almost weekly, it has become more and more difficult to distinguish between high-quality noteworthy publications and second-hand literature that merely repeats well-known facts. The most interesting aspect of the work under review may be that its two editors are not established historians of science but students at the University of Heidelberg Medical School. The sequence of twelve lectures organized by Hohendorf and Magull-Seltenreich during the winter of 1989–90 was brought about by an accusation that had become publicly known in December 1988: slide preparations of victims of the Nazis were still in use for practical instruction at the Institute for Anatomy and Cell Biology of Heidelberg University. An open letter of complaint from a group of students was answered by the rector—a full professor of history—in June 1989 in an unbearably arrogant manner. He argued that research into the Nazi past should be left to experts. The organization of these lectures by the students was their courageous response and deserves to be praised unreservedly.

Naturally, the twelve contributions in this anthology are very heterogeneous in topic and quality. While, for example, the Berlin medical historian Gerhard Baader just repeats his well-known theses on Social Darwinism without any footnotes or bibliographical references, the Heidelberg historian Eike Wolgast presents a well-documented study on the University of Heidelberg during the Third Reich. He shows that the National Socialists' assumption of power at the universities was aided and abetted not least by cowardice and opportunism, and by the dishonorable ambition of German university teachers themselves. Illustrating this shameful fact, Peta Becker-von Rose describes Carl Schneider (1891–1946), the head of Heidelberg University's Department of Psychiatry from 1933 to 1945, as an unscrupulous proponent of euthanasia on the basis of allegedly scientific principles. Unfortunately, her lecture is largely a paraphrase of Bernd Laufs's M.D. thesis (1989). In a further contribution, the

neurologist Wilhelm Rimpau tries to examine the ambivalence of the Heidelberg neurologist and psychosomaticist Viktor von Weizsäcker (1886–1957) in the face of the Nazi ideology of extermination. Perhaps collegial feelings prevent Rimpau from being more critical of his famous forebear. Also worth reading are the essays of the human geneticist Friedrich Vogel on the 1933 “law for the prevention of offspring with hereditary diseases” and of the psychologist Carl F. Graumann on the language of National Socialist propaganda.

The contributions and even more the printed discussions with the audience clearly show, in an impressive and sometimes frightening manner, how little of German physicians’ and university teachers’ participation in the crimes of the Third Reich has to date penetrated public consciousness. In 1991, there is still no legitimate claim to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coping with the past) for German physicians or their academic teachers.

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CAROL L. MOBERG and ZANVIL A. COHN (eds.). *Launching the Antibiotic Era: Personal Accounts of the Discovery and Use of the First Antibiotics*. New York: Rockefeller University Press, 1990. x + 97 pp. Ill. \$27.50.

This series of seven essays commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of René Dubos’s discovery in 1939 of the antibiotic gramicidin, “the first antibacterial agent to be obtained from natural sources through rational pursuit” (p. vii). While only certain papers deal directly with Dubos’s research, the authors in this volume worked under Dubos, knew him well, or were profoundly affected by him in their own research. The volume concentrates on the period from the late 1930s to the early 1950s.

The most interesting paper, a brief sketch of Dubos’s life and work by Carol Moberg, unfortunately comes at the end of the book; it probably should have preceded the other papers for the sake of context. In the first paper, Rollin Hotchkiss discusses his collaboration with Dubos on the early studies on gramicidin. He includes a humorous anecdote about Dubos’s early skepticism about the production and distribution of penicillin (pp. 11–12). Articles by Edward Abraham and Norman Heatley focus, not surprisingly, on the early development of penicillin; both authors were part of Howard Florey’s team at the Dunn School of Pathology at Oxford. Abraham primarily discusses aspects of the chemical study of penicillin but concludes with an interesting recollection of Florey. Heatley looks at the role of chance in the early history of penicillin, from the contamination of Fleming’s culture plate to the circumstances of how the Oxford group produced penicillium by surface culture fermentation.

Theodore Woodward discusses the establishment of chloramphenicol, the first broad-spectrum antibiotic, as a useful treatment of scrub typhus and typhoid fever in clinical studies directed by Joseph Smadel in Kuala Lumpur. No mention is made of the chloramphenicol-induced blood dyscrasias that led to the drug’s demise later on. George Mackaness’s article covers his studies of the tubercle bacillus under Florey and his role in the establishment of the conjunct role of isonicotinic acid hydrazide (isoniazid) in tuberculosis therapy. Finally Bernard Davis, who draws some interesting comparisons between Dubos and Selman Waksman, writes of his research on the