

Well, now he told me that the psychiatrists didn't seem to oppose this. Was there anybody vocal who opposed these programs?

There was one person, and unfortunately I forgot his name, who, not vocal, but at least he said he was against it. Not very loud, but not in a very loud voice, but at least within his colleagues.

Within the scientific community generally?

No, not generally. Just within his close group of people around him.

But what I meant to ask was, so within the scientific community-- I don't just mean psychiatrists-- was there generally no opposition?

No, absolutely none. Just none. Zero.

Could you say that in a full sentence?

No. One may wonder whether, within the scientific community, there was an opposition against the euthanasia program, and as far as I know, there was absolutely none. There were some private persons, of course, private people who tried to save their relatives and who fought for their relatives. And that was Bishop Galen who gave his famous speech condemning the murder of the insane. But these were just-- yeah, this was Galen on the one hand. But this was all still very private. Still pretty on the private level, yeah.

In terms of some of the research that was being done during this time, I kind of want to get to whether this was genuine scientific research or quote unquote, "pseudoscience." For example, the genetic research that was being done in Germany at that time. Were they genuinely pursuing scientific goals? Or was it more, as I said, pseudoscience, without any real--

I think to call it pseudoscience is much too nice. Unfortunately, it was more than pseudoscience. It was not pseudoscience. I come back to cases of pseudoscience. But in general, I think it was just ordinary science. For example, just to give you an example, there was a brain anatomist, [PERSONAL NAME], who got approached by the people who worked in one of these extermination places near an insane asylum.

And so he got approached by these people. And they asked him, now, we are just killing all of these people. Are you interested in the brains? And he said, of course I'm interested in the brains. And there's an interesting-- as this conversation is recalled, that he just was delighted to get these brains. And he got about more than 600, in fact.

And in fact, he went once to the place and he was present when the children, the sick children, were killed with carbon monoxide in the gas chamber. He was present. And after they were dead, he took them out. And he took the brains out, their brains out, and he showed these other guys how to do that.

And I'm not a brain anatomist, but I'm told that about 35 papers resulted from this type of research. And they are all solid. And nothing is kind of wrong or bad or something like this. It is solid, possibly boring, but solid, boring, normal science as usually.

But this is this case. So either you have a case where the scientist in fact went himself to the extermination place, was present when the children were killed, but he was still doing solid science. No pseudoscience. Solid, yeah.

Well, what was the science he was conducting? What kind of research was he doing?

Oh, yeah. He was interested in the brain anomalies of various brain diseases. And then, obviously, if you have a very rare brain disease which occurs only, I don't know, one in 200,000 and you find one particular one and you can get a brain, you get a very fresh brain also. You don't have to wait for days after the person died. You get it two hours, half an

hour later. Yeah. Yeah, so this is normal science.

Is that?

Yeah. I can hear that.

Can you go out and see--

It's not discovering much. It's just ordinary science, ordinary science. There was nothing breathtaking there. But ordinary science isn't breathtaking. It's just normal, yeah?

But I guess someone like [PERSONAL NAME] thought perhaps he might make important discoveries by doing this.

Yeah, but this is everybody thinking that. I think this is not so-- this is one and then you have another. And you have a guy named Rascher in Dachau who operated in Dachau. And there are things I think are pretty different because he cheated already in his thesis. His thesis is cheating.

The data cannot be reproduced from his thesis. So obviously there I would say, this guy I wouldn't trust anything. And of course, under such conditions, such maniacs may be more pushy and getting more to the front than more slower guys. So Rascher is just on the other side.

And then there's one guy, one man, von Verschuer who was kind of an interesting in-between. He did some interesting twin research which was generally accepted as good. Was paid by the Rockefeller Foundation between '32 and '35. He was invited to speak in front of the Royal Society in England in '39. And he gave a talk there which was published in '40 still, in the proceedings of the Royal Society during the war.

And so he was pretty goddamn good, yeah. But then he had this postdoc, Mengele, who started his own phantasmagoric research in Auschwitz. And there, things went totally overboard indeed. So I think it's a mixture between solid and fake science. And the fake science, the pseudoscience, is probably more frequent there than in peacetime. That I would say. But it's not exclusive there. It's not exclusive.

When you mention Verschuer, his work, which was well-received and funded by Rockefeller, was he using subjects against their will? Was he part of a program that essentially-- I mean, we know Mengele in Auschwitz, clearly he has captured people against his will. Was Verschuer doing the same kind of?

Some work that was done on Gypsies, which were certainly not free at time, in '42, '43, before they came to Auschwitz. There was a big camp in Berlin. And some research which he had also-- where a postdoc of his was involved with those people. And this was certainly not their free will. So I would say there was a mixture. There was-- this began, that he had people who we analyzed who were not asking for it.

And can you discuss also some of the genetic research at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute and the work of Baur and Fischer, Lenz? What kind of work were they doing?

Verschuer, too, was at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, by the way. He was a successor of Fischer. Fischer kind of retired in '42, '43. And then Verschuer was his successor. And Baur he was also at a different Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for plant research. And he is an interesting case, you know. He was a top scientist. He did excellent, excellent plant genetics. But he had the idea that he would become the Secretary of Agriculture of the first Hitler government. Which he did not. Which didn't happen.

And so then he had, in his group he had some, in his institute, he had some SS, young SS guys, who were really pushing the future and so on and so on. And so he got so disconcerted that he got a heart attack and died in December of '33. So we don't really know what he would have done or had done. He just died too early.

Lenz, he was a subdirector of the institute of Fischer, in the same institute. And he was, I would say, he was loyal to the

last end. He didn't do any experiments. He was kind of just doing theoretical work. But he certainly-- and in fact, he very courageously, so to speak-- there were some guys who did some really absurd genetics. And he attacked them from a solid point of view of solid science.

But again, after the war you may think that he would have sat down and just reconsidered what the hell are we doing? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Two lines or something like this. But not a page on this issue. And this I find just incredible.

Well, what work were they doing there at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute?

Yeah, what work-- for example, Verschuer was there at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, at the Fischer Institute as a group leader between '28 and '35 or something like this. So he did his twin work. Then there were some people who worked on blood groups. Solid work.

For example, also a postdoc of Verschuer kind of showed that you can use blood groups to objectively differentiate between monozygotic and dizygotic twins. Either identical twins and non-identical twins, you can really use very well. And it's all solid science, yeah? There was one guy who was working on Alzheimer's disease. Solid, yeah? So it was a mixture between solid stuff and then some other non-solid stuff.

What was some of the non-solid stuff that was going on there at the time?

Yeah, I would say all the ideological one, which is no real science. Where they were writing articles about how wonderful the Nazi government was now pushing biological thinking by pushing the race thing. And just talking about race and all that. This was this was pretty, pretty, pretty weak. Certainly pretty weak.

And this was going on there at the--

And this was going on there all the time, obviously. They were all the time writing and publishing such articles.

What was the relationship or the evolution, if you will, between the euthanasia program and the final solution?

It was a mechanical one. That is, the people who were experts and specialists in killing patients during the euthanasia programs became then later the first killing units in Treblinka and Sobibor. So it was just the people who did the euthanasia thing, the active, they kind of got their money paid from a certain institution. Which then later paid them anyhow when they became then the first people who started the massive killing with gas.

What institution was that?

Oh, this was Tierstrasse Vier, kind of a subset of Hitler's-- of the central government of Hitler's. Just a side thing where the money was floating to them. And they were paying-- actually, in fact, they were supposedly also when they were still discussing and when it was still discussed that all Jews should be brought to Madagascar in 1940, the idea was that, again, the same institution should pay the, should organize the shipping.

So it was kind of a-- the administrative organization was kind of involved in first paying and organizing the killing of the insane. And then later when this got stopped, they organized and paid the killing of the Jews in Treblinka and Sobibor. So it was just, it was exactly the same people who had done it. And the people who had organized it would just continue. And this can be well read in this book by Henry Friedlander who has really written in great detail about that.

This is a difficult question. As you said, there are genetic traits for certain diseases-- schizophrenia we keep hearing about, Alzheimer's. Is it possible that these are race based or that these are-- that some of the foundation of this eugenics is legitimately based?

Let's first talk about genetics. It is I think most interesting that the people who have promised to solve the genetics of schizophrenia, of manic depression, have so far all failed. It's total failure. I don't know whether this is clear. Total

failure means no gene has been isolated where you can say this is directly involved in the thing. And this is kind of a strange situation.

So the possible solution is there is not one gene. That it's 5 or 10 genes and they all are somehow a little bit involved in the whole thing. OK, so then one could still analyze it. It would get much, much more difficult than if you have just one gene. But it's still feasible, yeah?

But I have to say that at the moment, there's no way one could make a genetic analysis with genes where you could predict-- I would get a blood sample of you and I predict-- a-ha, no schizophrenia. Or I predict there's a good chance of schizophrenia. So this cannot be done. So from this point of view, if it cannot be done here, it cannot be done there either.

I would say-- but the question is sooner or later one may be able to do so. Maybe the guys who were doing that are pretty-- I shouldn't talk bad about my colleagues --pretty incompetent of doing that. So the question is if they get it, what then? And obviously, then you could immediately test blood samples of people from Africa or from Australia or whatever. And just find out whether you find differences. And obviously I would not be astonished at all if you would find differences from this point of view. I would not be astonished at all.

But the point is not that if you have differences, you can immediately say you are apt to say that now you have to take all rights of all of those who have the wrong type of gene. And only those who have the proper get the full rights and so on. This is incredible. This is eugenics.

I think the main thing of eugenics is not that there are differences. Obviously, I would say one would-- I would expect that. But the point is, the real bad point is that these differences lead you then to inhumane acts against this minority which has different genotype. Why should you? Absolutely no.

So from this point of view, I think there's a mixture. One should not say, and I think it's dangerous to say, that there's no genetic impact. For example, there had been in the UNESCO--

I'm sorry, hold on one second.

So if we could back up just a little bit, you're telling me that there's legitimacy to part of the genetic part. But then the eugenics is--

Yeah. Let me just say again that in 1950, there was a meeting-- or '52, I don't know exactly. There was a meeting in Paris of the UNESCO where the question was discussed, is intelligence and all these spiritual capabilities, are they genetically inherited or are they exclusively not? And of course, the majority then said they are exclusively not.

And there were very few people who opposed, who said no, they are certainly not a genetic thing. And it's interesting to look who said no. There's one person who said no. He was H.J. Muller, the great American geneticist. He got the Nobel Prize in '46. And Eugen Fischer, who as an old man, I don't know why they invited him. But they invited him and so he came with a statement. He doesn't believe it. He believes it--

And I think it's kind of interesting that you have this kind of Fischer on the one hand and Muller on the other side who they are suddenly sit in the same boat, which are totally different in what else they think. So I think one should not mix up the sheer fact how the world is, where they both seem to be of the same opinion. And how one should arrange it that they obviously had very different opinions here.

Tell me again what the opinion that they shared was?

An opinion they shared was is that human intelligence and similar things are partially inherited. They are not completely-- they are not only completely known. And this is, of course, today one is not-- it's politically incorrect to say that.

So is it-- now when you say that, then that leads me to question certain things. For example, as I was saying before, there are people-- and I don't know-- let me put it this way. There are journals which posit the idea that there is a likelihood that if someone has schizophrenia, then their descendants may be more prone to schizophrenia. That children of intelligent parents are often more intelligent than those. Is that purely anecdotal? Is it incorrect in your view? Is it--

At the moment, it's purely anecdotal. But it can become serious. That's exactly what it is. At the moment, it's anecdotal and there's no good proof. Absolutely. But there's no good proof against either. And so I think sooner or later, one will know.

And what we know implies that you have a blood sample, you have blood samples, and you predict IQ. And of course, let me tell you I could do so. Let's say if you allow me, if you make this kind of-- conduct an experiment. So what would you do in order to make-- no. Perhaps I stop. I stop. [LAUGHS] I better stop.

But let me-- but you were saying, here these two men, Muller and Fischer, were of the same opinion.

They were of the same opinion.

And you're saying that they were way off base. And the other people were in fact more-- though a layperson like me says, well, that sounds right. It sounds like intelligence is passed on, is hereditary.

Yeah, to some extent. To some extent, exactly. You know, I think it's most likely. But there's no really good, hard proof. And good, hard proof is for me that you can predict the intelligence from a blood sample. Yeah? And show me also how you do it, because you may cheat that.

OK, if you would say that one more time. "There's no good, hard proof that intelligence can--"

There is no good, hard proof that intelligence is inherited and there's no good, hard proof that intelligence is not inherited, neither that. So it is open at the moment. But this will change. I'm pretty sure that this will change. And will change, it means that you are able to predict from a blood sample, from the DNA from a blood sample, the level of intelligence of a certain person.

OK, great.

I have a couple of things to move on to. Do you want to stop tape?