Historical Article

Sir Ludwig Guttman's publications under the Nazis

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Introduction

I wrote a historical review (*Spinal Cord* (2000) 38, 581–596) on the history of Guttman's and Whitteridge's discovery of autonomic dysreflexia which was based on an application by Ludwig Guttman in 1943 to the Medical Research Council for a research grant.

As part of the application, there was a list of his publications while he was working in Germany. After the rise of the Nazis to power, Jews were persecuted and not allowed to practise medicine or to publish scientific papers in Germany and the fact that these were published at all is remarkable.

In view of the fact that Guttman is such a dominant influence on the formation of ideas on the treatment of spinal injuries and was the founder of this journal, how these papers came to be published is of great interest and is the subject of this present paper.

The anti-Jewish laws

The Nazis came to power in January 1933 and a series of ordinances were introduced (Table 1) which progressively restricted the role of Jewish doctors.

Ludwig Guttman

When the First World War ended, Guttman trained as a doctor, qualified in 1923, and after a short spell in general medicine, he applied for a job in paediatrics but was unsuccessful. He was advised to work for Professor Otto Foerster, an unpleasant man, who had had no applicants for the post of assistant, despite being the most distinguished neurologist in Germany (Figure 2).

Guttman followed Foerster's lead and developed an interest in the spinal cord and sweating. He published several papers on the subject and continued this interest throughout his career.

On 1 April 1933 when he was in his fourth year as Foerster's associate at the Wenzel Hancke Kranken-

haus in Breslau, he received a notice informing him that under Nazi laws his hospital appointment would cease on 30 June 1933.

This was deeply shocking to Guttman who regarded himself as 'a German who happened to be a Jew'.¹

Foerster appealed to the authorities to try and get them to withdraw the dismissal. As a result it was agreed that the notice of dismissal would be temporarily suspended until a replacement for Guttman could be found.

Guttman was furious and absolutely refused to accept this humiliation but he agreed to stay until the official leaving date of 30 June 1933.¹

On 10 July 1933 he started work at the Jewish Hospital in Breslau.

At the Jewish Hospital Guttman was only allowed to treat Jewish patients and could not call himself doctor (Arzt). He had to call himself 'Krankenbehandler' (those who treat the sick.)

Guttman's publications

Figure 1 shows the list of publications by Guttman.

The first five papers were published before the Nazis came to power. Numbers 11–16 were published after Guttman came to the United Kingdom. Numbers 8 and 9 were published in Switzerland but numbers 6, 7 and 10 were published in Germany.

Paper no. 6 was accepted on 22 June 1933, just over 3 months before the Editors' Law was passed (Figure 3). The name of the clinic is given (Wenzel-Hancke City Hospital), which was Foerster's unit, and Guttman is described as a doctor (Arzt) to the clinic.

Papers 7 and 10 were published after the Editors' Law was passed (Figures 4 and 5).

Paper no. 7, published in 1937, does not include his hospital of origin and he does not call himself a doctor (the 'Dr' is a university title) although other doctors writing in the journal were called 'Arzt'.

Despite the Editors' Law, he managed to get the article published but with the limitations that he could

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Table 1

7 April 1933	Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service and its ordinances	Jewish doctors were prevented from treating patients under the national health insurance scheme and were dismissed from university posts.
October 4 1933	Editors' Law	German-Jewish medical scholars were forbidden to publish the results of their research in German books or journals nor were German authors allowed to refer to publications by Jewish authors
1935	The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German honour	Jews were deprived of their German citizenship
August 1938		The licence to practise medicine freely was withdrawn from Jews. They were to be known as Krankenbehändler (those who treat the sick) and permitted to treat Jews only.
End of September 1938		All gentile patients had to be discharged from Jewish hospitals or transferred to other hospitals. No Jewish doctor was permitted to treat any gentile.
1943	The Final Solution	There were still one or two Krankenbehändler treating the few Jews who had not been taken to the extermination camps.

not acknowledge that he was a doctor of medicine nor that he was a Jew, working at the Jewish Hospital.

The last paper no. 10, published in 1938, is the most remarkable since it both refers to the fact that it is from the Jewish Hospital and gives him his doctor's title (Primärarzt), in contrast to the previous paper, which omits it. This is breaking the law under two headings.

Although the Editors' Law was passed on 4 October, 1933, Guttmann managed to get two papers published in 1937 and 1938 despite working at the Jewish Hospital.

Under the Editors' law, it was not just Jewish doctors who were forbidden to publish results of their research in German books or journals; it also applied to other Jewish scientists, such as Einstein, whose work could not be published or acknowledged. The Nazis were trying to institute a Nazi physics which did not mention the work of Jewish scientists and the censorship extended to all sciences and cultures.

The press became almost entirely owned, controlled, and managed by the Nazi party.

Discussion

It is puzzling how paper no. 10 was ever published in Germany since it is fully acknowledged that Guttmann was working in the Jewish Hospital and as, by law, Aryans were not allowed to treat Jewish patients, he was treating Jewish patients and thus he must have been Jewish.

How unusual was it for Jews to get their writing published? Nazi censorship meant that Jews were not allowed to have their articles referred to. Nazi science, Nazi biology, and Nazi music were introduced. Fresh librettas had to be written for Mozart's operas.

The journal that paper no. 10 was published in was a mainstream scientific journal. The only record I can find of Jewish articles being published is a Jewish paper, entitled 'Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt', which informed Jews of all the official measures taken to seal their fate.² Guttmann's paper was not in this category.

There were certain exemptions to the rules. Veterans who served in the First World War were treated differently but Guttmann was not a veteran. Although he received his call-up papers, the war ended before he went into the forces. Was he a mischlinge (half Jew)? He was not a half Jew, he was a full Jew as was his wife. Göring confirmed in a speech as late as 1942 that scientists who were doing important work were still being retained³: 'The Führer rejects a regimentation of science as such ... We have just kept a Jew in Vienna, and another photographer 2 years longer, because they have certain things that we need and that we absolutely have to complete at this moment. It would be crazy to say here: he has to go! He was a great researcher, he had a fantastic head, but he has a Jewish wife and cannot stay at the university. The Führer has made exceptions for artists in cases like this. He will make exceptions even more gladly if it is a question of an important research project or researcher.'

Otto Warburg³ was able to stay on at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute throughout the war and Erhard Milch, the fighter chief, was also exempted, both of whom were mischelings.

The explanation for the publication of this paper may lie in the role of Foerster.

Foerster, whom Guttmann worked for, and by whom he felt betrayed for not getting him exempted, was on the

editorial board for paper no. 10. Foerster was himself criticised for employing so many Jewish doctors but he had replied that he employed doctors for their intelligence not for their religion. He had shown his

loyalty to Guttmann and his anti-Nazi feeling by asking him to assist at an operation on 2 July 1933 although this was not allowed. Another clue can be obtained by the fact that Foerster's wife was half-Jewish (a

Dr. Guttmann has published the following papers relevant to the proposed investigation:-

1. Zur Topik und Pathophysiologie der Schweißsekretion (Topography and pathophysiology of sweat secretion) 1928 Z.Neur., 116, 504-536. (In collaboration with C.F. List)
2. Die nervösen Leitungsbahnen der Schweißsekretion beim Menschen. (The nervous pathways of sweat secretion in man). Dtsch., Zeitschr. f. Nervenheilk., 1928, 107, 61-71.
3. Die Schweißsekretion des Menschen in ihren Beziehungen zum Nervensystem (The relations of sweat secretion to the nervous system in man). Z.Neur., 1931, 135, 1-48.
4. Epidemiologische, klinische und histopathologische Erfahrungen während der Poliomyelitisepidemie in 1932 in Schlesien (epidemiolog. clinic. and histopatholog. experiences during the Poliomyelitisepidemy 1932 in Silesia). Med. Klinik, 1933, 28.
5. Trauma und Wirbelsäule (Trauma and Spinal column). Hefte zur Unfallheilkunde, 1931, 8, 37-59.
6. Motorische und vegetative Grenzzonenreflexe bei Läsionen peripherer und zentraler Abschnitte des Nervensystems (Motor and vegetative borderzone-reflexes in lesions of peripheral and central parts of the nervous system). Z.Neur., 1933, 147, 291-307.
7. Ein neues einfaches kolorimetrisches Verfahren zur Untersuchung der Schweißdrüsenfunktion (A new and simple colorimetric method for the investigation of sweat glands activity). Kli. Wo., 1937, 35, 1212-1213.
8. Zur Frage der Wiederherstellung der Schweißdrüsenfunktion in Hauttransplantaten (Recovery of sweating in skin grafts). Dermatolog. Zeitschr., 1938, 77, 73-74.
9. Ueber reflektorische Beziehungen zwischen Viscera und Schweißdrüsen und ihre Bedeutung bei Erkrankungen innerer Organe (Der viscerosudorale Reflex). (Correlations between Viscera and sweat glands in internal diseases (Viscero-sudoral Reflex). Confinia neurologica, 1938, 1, 296-310.
10. Lähmung des Nervus thoracicus longus mit Sympathicusschädigung als Sportverletzung (Paralysis of N.thorac.long. associated with sympathetic lesion following sport injury). Dtsch. Zeitschr. f. Nervenheilk. 1938, 145, 83-90.
11. Topographic studies of disturbance of sweat secretion after complete lesions of peripheral nerves. J. Neur. & Psych., 1940, 3, 197-210.
12. The distribution of disturbances of sweat secretion after extirpation of certain sympathetic ganglia in man. J. Anat. Lond., 1940, 74, 537-549.
13. Study on sweat secretion by the Quinizarin method. Roy. Soc. Med. 1942 Meeting of the Soc. of Physic. Med. November 4th, 1941.
14. Factors affecting recovery of sensory function after nerve lesions. J. Neur. & Psych., 1942, 5, 117-129. (In collaboration with E. Guttmann).
15. The rate of regeneration of nerve. J. Exp. Biol., 1942, 19, 1, 14-44. (In collaboration with E. Guttmann, F.B. Medawar, J.Z. Young).
16. Extension of Nerve fibres in denervated areas. J. Neur. Psych., 1941, 4, 206. (In collaboration with G. Weddell and E. Guttmann)

Figure 1 Publications listed by Guttmann in his application to the Medical Research Council for a research grant in 1943

Figure 2 With his mentor, Dr Otfried Foerster, whose chief assistant Guttmann became in 1929, at the Wenzel Hancke Krankenhaus in Breslau. (Printed with kind permission of Harper Collins Publishing)

mischeling) and Foerster's two children were expelled from the school because they had a Jewish grandparent and this was forbidden under the Nuremberg racial laws

passed in 1936.¹ In view of the persecution and destruction of the Jews, the fate of Foerster's wife is of interest. As far as can be determined Foerster's wife died of natural causes and she was not sent to the concentration camps. Foerster was buried 'on one and the same day in one and the same grave with his life's companion. The same disease carried off both.'⁴

Conclusion

Guttmann's extraordinary vision, drive and training were responsible for the setting up of a comprehensive spinal service in the United Kingdom and the spread of his ideas throughout the world. I hope this exposition gives some insight into the difficulties of his work in Germany during the Nazi period. It shows his strength of character – as well as being a Teuton he had a Jewish stiff neck.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank K Band, H Bradbury and M Samuelson for their help with this article.

References

- 1 Goodman S. *Spirit of Stoke Mandeville*. Collins: London 1986, pp 45,58–59,61,67. (Based on Guttmann's unfinished autobiography and tapes recorded for the Imperial War Museum.)
- 2 Friedländer S. *Nazi Germany and The Jews*. Phoenix: London 1998, p 284.
- 3 Macrakis K. *Surviving the Swastika*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 1993, pp 92–93.
- 4 Zülch KJ. *Otfried Foerster. Physician and Naturalist*. Springer-Verlag: Berlin 1969, p 24.

(Aus der Neurologischen Abteilung des Städtischen Wenzel-Hancke-Krankenhauses
Breslau [Primärarzt Prof. Dr. O. Foerster].)

Motorische und vegetative Grenzzonenreflexe bei Läsionen peripherer und zentraler Abschnitte des Nervensystems*.

Von

Privatdozent Dr. Ludwig Guttman,
Oberarzt der Klinik.

Mit 17 Textabbildungen.

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Begründet von A. Alzheimer und M. Lewandowsky

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München

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Breslau

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1933

Figure 3 Full details of paper No 6 including editorial details of the publication

EIN NEUES EINFACHES COLORIMETRISCHES
VERFAHREN ZUR UNTERSUCHUNG DER
SCHWEISSDRÜSENFUNKTION.

Von
Dr. habil. LUDWIG GUTTMANN, Breslau.

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Figure 4 Full details of paper No 7 including editorial details of the publication

Aus der Neurolog. Abt. des Israelitischen Krankenhauses, Breslau.
(Primärarzt: Dr. habil. L. Guttmann.)

**Lähmung des Nervus thoracicus longus
mit Sympathicus-Schädigung als Sportverletzung.**
(Gleichzeitig ein Beitrag zur Pathophysiologie der Schweißsekretion.)

Von
Dr. habil. Ludwig Guttmann, Breslau.
Mit 3 Textabbildungen.

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VERLAG VON F. C. W. VOGEL
1938

Figure 5 Full details of paper No 10 including editorial details of the publication