

German Forest Genetics in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939–1945 (ID 239)

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Historically, Bohemia and Moravia played an important role in the development of the modern science of heredity/genetics. During the 20th century there were several phases, which were highly determined by the political circumstances. One of them was the period of German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, when genetics expanded in several areas. Relatively high priority was given to the applied biological research including forestry. It is the aim of this contribution to give an overview of the attempts to establish the Reich Institute for Cultivation of Forest Plants in Stará Boleslav/Brandýs nad Labem (Altbunzlau/Brandais an der Elbe) between 1942 and 1945 first under the Reich Office of Forestry and then under the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Society. It starts with the overview of the plan relating originally the forest program in the Warthegau and then it continues by the so called Prague Plan. The particular institutional history is analysed in a broader context of the Nazi scientific policy in Central and Eastern Europe. Another important aspects are i. the question of effectiveness of the basic biological research during the period of total war (*Totalkrieg*) after 1943, which was characterised by general shortages in material, staff, and financial sources, and ii. the question of continuities of this particular genetical practice after 1945 in Germany itself.

Keywords: genetics, forest, 20th century, Bohemia and Moravia

Nikolai Dubinin and the revival of Soviet genetics (ID 160)

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The revival of Soviet genetics in the “post-Lysenko” epoch was due to the activity of many outstanding scientists. One of them was the famous Soviet biologist, a fighter with Lysenkoism, the founder and the director of two major genetic institutes, – Nikolai Dubinin (1907–1998). The paper is devoted to the less studied and most interesting stage of N. Dubinin’s biography – his contribution to the overcoming of Lysenkoism and his role in the foundation and development of the Institute of General Genetics of the USSR Academy of Sciences. As is known, in the period of reorganization of the Soviet biology (since the middle of the 1960s), N. Dubinin was in the forefront of the revival of genetics. However, many of N. Dubinin’s contemporaries strongly criticized him primarily for his activity in that period. For example, in the 1970s – first half of the 1980s, he had a resonant conflict with another well-known Soviet geneticist Dmitry Belyaev. According to some authors, N. Dubinin’s position on the human genetics hindered research in this field. Besides, N. Dubinin could not consolidate the staff of the Institute of General Genetics founded as the main research center of genetics. However, it did not achieve the “required” level of research because of N. Dubinin’s conflicts with his colleagues. A significant milestone in his life was the memories “Vechnoe dvizhenie” [“Eternal Movement”] (1973), which provided a conception of the history of Soviet genetics acceptable for the Soviet authorities. At the same time, the main part of the genetic community condemned his book. Thus, despite of N. Dubinin’s contribution to science and uncompromising struggle with Lysenkoism in 1930s–1950s, his activity in the following decades was contradictory and needs a special historical research. Acknowledgments: The research project has been supported by the Russian Foundation for Humanities, grant no. 15–33-01225.

Keywords: genetics, the history of genetics, Lysenkoism, Dubinin, the Soviet Union