



Stuttgart University apologizes for NS crimes to families of victims of persecution

Memorial event and academic analysis

During a memorial event on 6. February 2017, Stuttgart University has accepted responsibility for originating and perpetrating crimes during the NS regime and has apologized to the victims. In the presence of families of victims and more than 300 guests from the university, politics, and the public, the rector of Stuttgart University, Prof. Wolfram Ressel, said: "On behalf of the University of Stuttgart, I ask forgiveness from all of the families and victims for the injustice they suffered at the hands of the university during the National Socialist regime." Ressel emphasized, "that scientific progress and living research and teaching at universities is unthinkable without the members' personal and intellectual freedom, the acceptance of cultural diversity, and tolerance toward presumed divergence from norms." The rector appealed to all members of the university to continue in their strong commitment to scientific freedom.

After a speech by Prof. Wolfram Pyta of the Historic Institute of Stuttgart University about the culture of remembrance at German universities, Dr. Norbert Becker, Head of the University Archive, introduced the results of the three-year research project "Persecution and injustice at Stuttgart Technical University during the NS regime". The goal of the project, which is unique among German universities, was to identify all members of the Technical University who suffered injustice in the form of dismissal, relegation, forced labor, or discrimination at the hands of the university itself during the NS years.

The project found 440 individuals who had been subjected to injustice by the university and had to endure persecution. Of these, 301 persons were identified by name. Eleven percent of professors and nine percent

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of assistants were dismissed. At least two percent of students were subjected to discrimination and forced to leave the university between 1933 and 1945.

The project documentation will be published in book form by the University of Stuttgart, and families of victims who had travelled to the event from all over Germany and Europe were presented with advance copies. The book illustrates the fates of all known university members and describes the consequences of the injustices perpetrated by Stuttgart TU for the remainder of the victims' lives.



Forced laborers from the Soviet Union are loading the library of the Laboratories for Materials Science around 1944. The second man from the left wears a jacket with the label "OST", which identifies him as an "Ostarbeiter"(Eastern worker). Source: UASt 17/684.

One result of the research, the Head of the University Archive stated in his speech, was the fact that persecution was committed by the university itself in most cases. Perpetrators and perpetrating organizations were revealed to include: rectors, students, administrators, NS student leaders, and faculty leaders. Forced laborers came from the Wehrmacht-occupied regions of Poland, the USSR, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Yugoslavia, and Italy. The treatment of "Ostarbeiter" from the USSR was particularly dreadful.

The event was musically accompanied by the renowned Klenke Quartett (Berlin, Thuringia), who interpreted compositions by ostracized composers Ursula Mamlok and Werner Wolf Glaser.