

Prof. Ludwig Seitz (1872–1961): The Last *Schriftführer* (Editor) of the *Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie* (Monthly Review of Obstetrics and Gynecology) (1933–1938) and the First *Schriftwalter* (Editor) of the *Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde* (Obstetrics and Gynecology) (Starting in 1939)

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From the end of the 19th century until the late thirties of the 20th century, there were a number of internationally leading and much-cited German-language journals [1–3], such as the *Archiv für Gynäkologie* (*Archives of Gynecology*, founded in 1870 and published by Springer Verlag), the *Centralblatt für Gynäkologie* (*Central Journal of Gynecology*, founded in 1877 and published first by Breitkopf & Härtel, then by Verlag Johannes Barth), the *Zeitschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynaekologie* (*Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, founded in 1877 and published by Ferdinand Enke Verlag), as well as the *Monatsschrift für Gynäkologie und Geburtshilfe* (*Monthly Review of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, founded in 1895 and published by S. Karger Verlag) [2, 3].

In this issue, we have also portrayed the founding of the *Monatsschrift* by the two gynecologists and obstetricians August Martin (1847–1933; Fig. 1a) and Max Saenger (1853–1903; Fig. 1b) as well as the young publisher Samuel Karger (1863–1935; Fig. 2a).

By 1933, the *Monatsschrift* had evolved into a widely read scientific journal of high quality. Among its editors were leading figures in the field of German gynecology and obstetrics (Table 1).

However, when the aged Reich President (*Reichspräsident*) Paul von Hindenburg (1847–1934) appointed Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) as Reich Chancellor (*Reichskanzler*) in January 1933, the already difficult political climate in Germany changed dramatically [4, 5]. With the Reichstag fire and the so-called Enabling Act approved by the Reichstag, Hitler and the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) were able to brutally suppress political, religious, intellectual, or “racial” opponents [4, 5]. The Nazis considered the German Jews to be their main enemies and very openly discriminated against them from the first day of their “seizure of power.” Still, many German intellectuals and Jews initially believed that the “haunting” of National Socialism would be short-lived and that one simply had to endure until it was over. Eventually, they thought, everything would return to normal soon. At that time, no one could have imagined that the anti-Semitic mobbing happening in the 1930s would lead up to the Holocaust, the industrialized murder of European Jews, and the devastating impact of the Second World War within just a couple of years [4, 5].

Concerning the field of publishing, the *Schriftleitergesetz* (Editors Law) published in the *Reichsgesetz-*

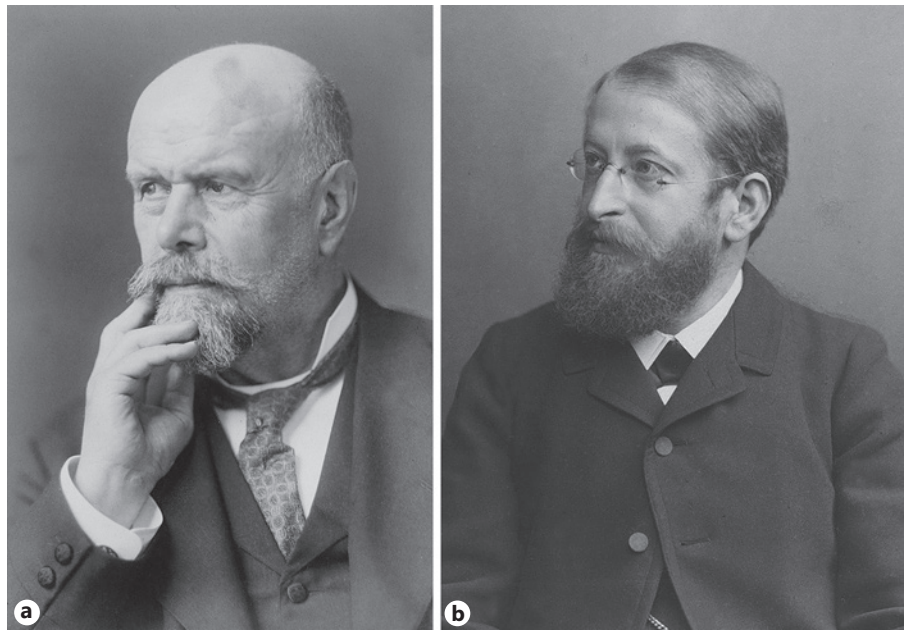


Fig. 1. The first editors of the *Monatschrift*, August Martin (a) and Max Saenger (b). Courtesy of the Karger Archiv.

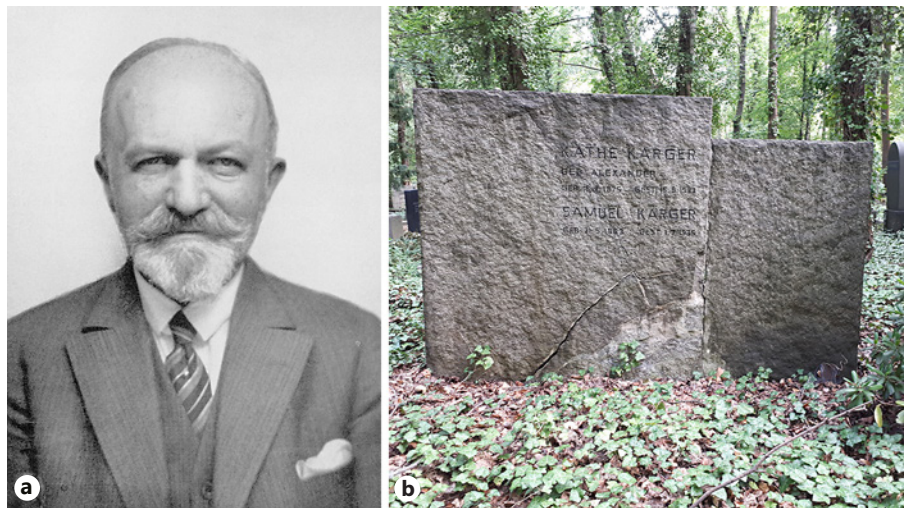


Fig. 2. a Samuel Karger. Courtesy of the Karger Archiv. b The grave of Samuel Karger and his wife Käthe at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin-Weissensee. Photo Prof. Ebert, August 7, 2020.

blatt (Reich Law Gazette) of October 4, 1933 was of great importance [6]. According to this law, Jews were excluded from all editing activities in publishing houses, journals, and the press. Two years later, on September 22, 1935, the *Amann-Anordnungen* (Amann Orders) based on the law of the Reich Chamber of Culture followed [7], aiming to “Aryanize” Jewish publishing houses. Jewish publishers were excluded from the Publishers Association, which had become a National Socialist organization by then [8]. The pressure on German Jews increased dramatically at all levels of society. Soon, the S. Karger publishing house was targeted by the Nazis, too [9].

Samuel Karger died on July 1, 1935, having not fully realized the danger posed by the new rulers to his legacy, his family, and his own life [10]. His funeral at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin-Weissensee (Fig. 2b) was attended by “numerous authors and the publishers and editors of Karger’s journals,” which was a courageous act even in 1935 [9, 10]. Whether the editor of the *Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie*, Professor Ludwig Seitz (1872–1961), was among the mourners is not known. On July 2, 1935, Heinz Karger (1895–1959; Fig. 3), the son of the founder Samuel Karger, received the official request to transfer the publishing house into “Aryan hands” [9, 10]. The ban on publishing followed soon after. In view

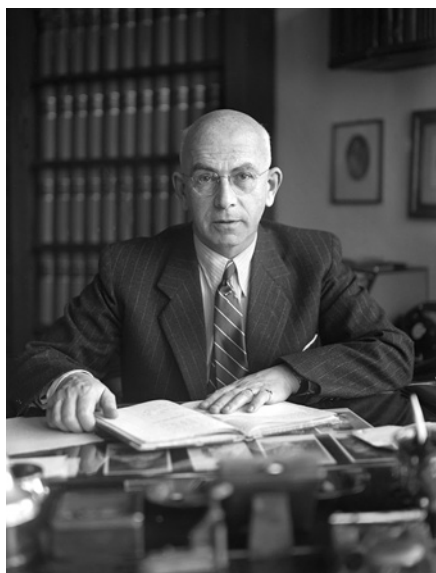


Fig. 3. Heinz Karger. Courtesy of the Karger Archiv.



Fig. 4. Ludwig Seitz (from Dietel [34]).



Fig. 5. Wilhelm Weibel (see www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Wilhelm_Weibel).

of the increasing anti-Semitic harassment, Heinz Karger did everything to get the S. Karger publishing house out of Berlin and out of Nazi Germany altogether. He was successful: “The publishing house was reopened in Basel at Easter 1937, under the same conditions and with the same journals and books as in Berlin. My publishing house was thus the only one among those persecuted by the Nazis to have survived in its entirety, without losing a single publishing right or a single journal. We were granted a deadline for the settlement till the end of 1937 and the Berlin publishing house was allowed to continue work as a branch of our Basel head office until its closure in 1942, managed by our own long-standing employees,” Heinz Karger later recalled [10]. However, all works and journals that had already been printed had to remain in Berlin and Karger’s personal fortune was seized by the Nazis when he emigrated [10]. Thus, reopening the publishing house in Basel was not an easy task. He also had to find new authors, since all scientists and physicians living in the German sphere of influence were no longer allowed to publish with Karger. By 1942 at the latest, the so-called *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (Reich Chamber of Literature) officially announced that the *Monatsschrift für Gynäkologie und Geburtshilfe* was politically no longer wanted [11].

The editors of the *Monatsschrift* in 1937 and 1938 were Privy Councilor (*Geheimrat*) Ludwig Seitz (Frankfurt/Main; Fig. 4) and Wilhelm Weibel (Vienna, 1876–1945; Fig. 5) [12]. Weibel received his professional training un-

der Ernst Wertheim (1864–1920) and Alfons von Rosthorn (1857–1909) and served as chairman of the prestigious gynecological department of the Rudolfstiftung in Vienna. From 1928 to 1932, Weibel was full professor of gynecology and obstetrics at the German University in Prague before he was appointed to the II. University Women’s Hospital in Vienna from 1932 to 1942. His textbooks were very popular at the time. Since 1938, Wilhelm Weibel was a supporting member of the SS [12].

The *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (Reich Chamber of Literature) had officially prohibited German institutes, hospitals, and authors from receiving specialist literature from “emigrant publishers” and from publishing with them [10]. Jewish authors had been banned from publishing since 1933, numerous Jewish publishing houses had been “Aryanized,” Jewish publishers had lost their right to exist, and the *Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie*, one of the most important gynecological and obstetrical scientific journals of the time, disappeared in Germany in 1938, too [8, 10].

Its editors, especially Ludwig Seitz, behaved inconsistently under the new regime. Having been a member of the editorial board since 1925 and entrusted with its editorship since 1933 (Table 1), Seitz had a very good relationship with the publisher Samuel Karger. But the new times also left their mark on Professor Seitz and he clearly made concessions to the Hitler regime in the “new Germany”. A “scandal” at the University Women’s Hospital

Table 1. Over 125 years of service to science – the Editors-in-Chief and members of the Editorial Board of the *Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynaekologie*

Year of publication	Editors-in-Chief (<i>Schriftführer</i>) and members of the Editorial Board (<i>Herausgeber</i>) of the <i>Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynaekologie</i>	Place of publication
1895–1902	August Martin (Berlin/Greifswald) and Max Saenger (Leipzig/Prague)	Berlin
1902–1909	Martin (Greifswald), Saenger (Prague), and Alfons von Rosthorn (Heidelberg)	Berlin
1910–1911	Martin (Berlin) and Friedrich Schauta (Vienna)	Berlin
1911–1918	Martin (Berlin), Schauta (Vienna), and Albert Döderlein (Munich)	Berlin
1919–1925 since 1921	Martin (Berlin), Döderlein (Munich), and Ludwig Seitz (Erlangen/Frankfurt/Main) A. Martin (Berlin) and Eduard Martin (Elberfeld)	Berlin
1926–1927	Martin (Berlin), Döderlein (Munich), Seitz (Frankfurt/Main), and Hugo Sellheim (Leipzig) A. Martin (Berlin) and Eduard Martin (Elberfeld)	Berlin
1928–1929	Martin (Berlin), Döderlein (Munich), Seitz (Frankfurt/Main), Sellheim (Leipzig), and Georg August Wagner (Berlin) A. Martin (Berlin) and Eduard Martin (Elberfeld)	Berlin
1930–1932	Martin (Berlin), Döderlein (Munich), Seitz (Frankfurt/Main), Sellheim (Leipzig), and Georg August Wagner (Berlin) A. Martin (Berlin) and G.A. Wagner (Berlin)	Berlin
1933	Martin (Berlin), Döderlein (Munich), Seitz (Frankfurt/Main), Sellheim (Leipzig), and Ludwig Nürnberger (Halle/Saale) A. Martin, L. Seitz, and L. Nürnberger	Berlin
1934	Döderlein (Munich), Seitz (Frankfurt/Main), Nürnberger (Halle/Saale), Sellheim (Leipzig), Wagner (Berlin), Heinrich Eymer (Munich), and Wilhelm Weibel (Vienna) L. Seitz	Berlin
1935–1936	Ernst Anderes (Zurich), Döderlein (Munich), Eymer (Munich), Nürnberger (Halle/Saale), Seitz (Frankfurt/Main), Sellheim (Leipzig), Wagner (Berlin), and Weibel (Vienna) L. Seitz	Berlin
1937	Anderes (Zurich), Döderlein (Munich), Eymer (Munich), Nürnberger (Halle/Saale), Seitz (Frankfurt/Main), Wagner (Berlin), and Weibel (Vienna) L. Seitz and W. Weibel	Basel and Leipzig
1938	Anderes, Döderlein, Eymer, Nürnberger, Seitz, Wagner, and Weibel L. Seitz and W. Weibel	Basel
1939–1952	E. Anderes (Zurich) and Theodor Koller (Zurich, later Basel) New title: 1946–1969 <i>Gynaecologia</i>	Basel and New York
1953	T. Koller (Basel)	Basel and New York
1954–1959	T. Koller (Basel) and Otto Käser (St. Gallen)	Basel and New York
1959–1964	O. Käser (St. Gallen), O. Koller (Basel), and R. Wenner (Basel)	Basel and New York
1965–1967	P. Bloch (Lausanne), O. Käser (Frankfurt/Main), T. Koller (Basel), and R. Wenner (Liestal)	Basel and New York
1968–1969	P. Bloch (Lausanne), O. Käser (Frankfurt/Main), and T. Koller (Basel)	Basel and New York
1970–1975	W. L. Hermann (Seattle) New title: 1970–1977 <i>Gynecologic Investigation</i>	Basel, Munich, Paris, London, New York, Sydney

Table 1 (continued)

Year of publication	Editors-in-Chief (<i>Schriftführer</i>) and members of the Editorial Board (<i>Herausgeber</i>) of the <i>Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynaekologie</i>	Place of publication
1976–1984	P.J. Keller (Zurich) New title: 1978–today <i>Gynecologic and Obstetric Investigation</i>	Basel, Munich, Paris, London, New York, Sydney
1984–2001	G. Zador (Södertälje)	
2001–2003	J. Yankowitz (Tampa, FL)	
2003–2005	J. Yankowitz (Tampa, FL) and T. D’Hooghe (Leuven)	
2005–today	T. D’Hooghe (Leuven)	

in Münster under the direction of Prof. Peter Esch (1874–1952) in 1938 is proof to this. On Esch’s orders, his assistant Walter Hagedorn had submitted a scientific paper for publication in the *Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie* [13]. On April 28, 1938, Peter Esch sent the following letter to the university’s curator: “With regards to the letter of February 22, 1938 (No. 1029 UK), of which I have today received notice in the Dean’s floating file, I have the honor to submit the enclosed correspondence (...). At my instigation, Dr. Hagedorn, an assistant at my clinic, submitted a paper on “Das Durstfieber bei Neugeborenen” [“Thirst fever in newborns”] for the *Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie* (Karger publishing house) to its editor, Privy Councilor Prof. Dr. Seitz, Director of the University Women’s Hospital in Frankfurt/Main, at the beginning of this year. Privy Councilor Seitz pointed out on April 6, 1938 that the Karger publishing house was non-Aryan. At my instigation, Dr. Hagedorn requested his paper to be sent back to him on April 11, 1938. The publishing house Karger informed him on April 20, 1938 that his paper was already in the process of being typeset and that a return of the submitted paper was generally refused. I hereby ask for a decision on what is to be done in this case” [13, 14].

Eventually, the case was handed over to lawyers. Dr. Seiler, director of the district court, wrote on May 15, 1938, to the curator of the University of Münster: “I assume that Dr. Hagedorn submitted his paper to the Karger publishing house in Berlin (not in Basel) for printing. Therefore, the German law is applicable. I further assume that Dr. Hagedorn was not aware of the fact that the Karger publishing house is not Aryan. He was thus in error concerning one essential detail. This error entitles him to challenge the agreement (§119 paragraphs 1 and 2

Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch [German Civil Code, BGB]). He made use of his right of appeal by requesting back his paper. The Karger publishing house thus acted unlawfully by refusing to return the paper and continuing the printing process. In my opinion, Dr. Hagedorn can prohibit the Karger publishing house from further printing and publishing his paper. In order to enforce this, he may obtain an interim injunction from the competent court prohibiting the publication of his work by the Karger publishing house. In reality, however, such a ban and a corresponding court injunction would probably not be of any practical value since apparently the Karger publishing house operates its business in Basel and will most likely not comply with German court decisions. In general, the person who challenges a contract on the grounds of error must compensate the contractual partner for the damage suffered by the latter relying on the validity of the contract (§122 BGB). However, this claim for compensation is to be excluded here since the Karger publishing house was aware of its non-Aryan components and thus knew the reason for the contestation (§122 paragraph 2 BGB)” [13, 14]. This affair did not have any consequences for Walter Hagedorn, however: On August 10, 1938 he received a letter from the curator certifying that starting from August 8, 1938 he would be a regular scientific assistant and a civil servant until revoked.

Interestingly enough, on November 23, 1938, *Geheimrat* Professor Seitz wrote a letter signed “With best collegial regards and Heil Hitler!” to a potential author of the journal *Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde* (*Obstetrics and Gynecology*) in which he clarified: “After all German editors and employees have ceased working for the *Monatsschrift*, De Gruyter-Berlin first wanted to publish a new journal, as you know. But the publication of this journal

was not approved and the Thieme-Leipzig publishing house has won the day. It is with them that Kaufmann-Berlin and I, together with several other colleagues, will publish a new journal called *Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde, Ergebnisse der Forschung für die Praxis* [Obstetrics and Gynecology, Research Findings for Practical Application]. Its first issue will be available in January 1939” [15].

And indeed, the first issue of the first volume of *Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde* was published in January 1939 by Georg Thieme Verlag Leipzig. The first volume contained a total of 12 issues. Prof. Ludwig Seitz (Frankfurt/Main; Fig. 4) and Prof. Carl Kaufmann (Charité Berlin, 1900–1980) acted as *Schriftwalter* (the old German word for editor used by National Socialists), supported by Hans Albrecht (Munich), Isidor Amreich (Vienna), Heinrich Eufinger (Dresden), Hans Guggisberg (Bern), Heinrich Martius (Göttingen), Hans Naujoks (Cologne), and Robert Schröder (Leipzig). In order to put the new journal on a broader international basis, which was already very difficult from within Nazi Germany in 1939, several specialists who are still well-known today were invited to join the editorial board: E. Alfieri (Italy), J. Beruti (Argentina), K. Burger (Hungary), F. Daels (Belgium), E. Holland (England), H. Knaus (Austria), K. Logothetopoulos (Greece), E. Novak (USA), J. Snoek (Belgium), K. De Snoo (The Netherlands), H. Vignes (France), and A. Westman (Sweden). Issue 1 of the first volume of *Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde* opened with an overview by Robert Schröder (1884–1959) [16], the director of the University Women’s Hospital in Leipzig, who presented groundbreaking ideas on “functional gynecology,” the scientific further development of the prevailing morphologically oriented gynecology [16, 17].

Apparently, Seitz used his connections as editor (1933–1938) of the *Monatsschrift* to redirect interesting manuscripts to his *Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde*, which led to a dramatic shortage of manuscripts for the *Monatsschrift* now published in Basel, so that it had no material for its last issue of volume 108 and had to be filled with nothing else but an index of the past 8 years [18].

The forced disappearance of the *Monatsschrift* with its unique profile had left a huge gap in the scientific communication and the German market for gynecological-obstetric journals, which the new journal was now trying to fill. Although Seitz and Kaufmann focused on the so-called functional gynecology, their new program was strongly reminiscent of the one published in 1895 by August Martin and Max Saenger in issue 1 of the *Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynaekologie* [1, 19].

When Ludwig Seitz took over the co-editorship of *Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde* at the age of 67 in 1939, he was already looking back on a very successful career as a physician and researcher [20]. He had studied medicine in Munich, Berlin, and Heidelberg and completed his professional training under Franz von Winckel (1837–1911) and Albert Döderlein (1860–1941). After his habilitation in 1903, he was appointed full professor at the University Women’s Hospital Erlangen in 1910, which he successfully developed into a renowned center for radiation research and therapy. In 1918, he was appointed Privy Councilor (*Hofrat*), the last one to be appointed by the Bavarian State Government. In Germany, the position of *Geheimrat* (or *Hofrat*) was a (high) honorary and prestigious title which was until 1918 associated with the real function of a consultant to the king and/or the government (i.e., in Bavaria, Prussia, Saxonia, Austria, and others).

In 1922, Seitz succeeded Max Walthard (1867–1933) as director of the University Women’s Hospital Frankfurt/Main, which he managed until 1938. The scientific productivity of Ludwig Seitz is well documented in the volumes of *Biologie und Pathologie des Weibes* (Biology and Pathology of Women), first edition by Josef Halban and Ludwig Seitz; second edition by Ludwig Seitz and Isidor Amreich [21, 22]. After Seitz’s student and senior physician Heinrich Guthmann (1893–1968) had taken over the Frankfurt full professorship in 1938, Seitz was able to devote a larger part of his time and energy to the founding and publishing of a new German journal [10, 11].

Following the publication of the *Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses* (Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases) in 1933 [23], eugenic sterilizations were carried out at the University Women’s Hospital Frankfurt/Main under the direction of Prof. Seitz, just like in many other German gynecological hospitals. Seitz also exposed himself at the congress of the German Society of Gynecology in Berlin in 1933 by talking in detail about the methods, risks, safety, and ideal timing with regards to eugenic sterilization. He also discussed problems associated with abortions in women with hereditary diseases, even though terminations of pregnancy for eugenic reasons were not even mentioned in the *Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses* [23]. Under Seitz, eugenic surgeries had been performed at the Frankfurt University Women’s Hospital even before 1933, albeit on a small scale [24]. Like many of his academic contemporaries, Ludwig Seitz was no stranger to the ideas of biological racism and social Darwinism

[25, 26], which started to spread internationally in the beginning of the 20th century and were widely recognized in the field of medicine.

In his later years after the Second World War, Seitz is portrayed as a quiet scholar and productive thinker who with philosophical equanimity renounced many earthly pleasures [27].

His co-editor or *Schriftwalter* was the then 39-year-old Prof. Carl Kaufmann, who worked as a senior physician at the II. University Women's Hospital of the Charité Berlin (director: Prof. Georg August Wagner) and, after his training under the gynecopathologist Robert Meyer (1864–1947), had published several groundbreaking endocrinological papers (e.g., the “Kaufmann scheme”) since the late 1920s [28]. At the time, Kaufmann cooperated closely with the research department of the Berlin-based company Schering as well as with Adolf Butenandt (1903–1995) and his team in the new field of gynecological endocrinology [29, 30]. In 1946, Kaufmann succeeded Georg A. Wagner (1873–1947) as temporary director of the Charité Women's Hospital on the Alexander-Ufer in the Soviet sector of Berlin. Soon afterwards, however, he accepted a call to the University Women's Hospital in Marburg, which he managed until 1954. That same year he moved to Cologne, where a completely new hospital was being built. In both Marburg and Cologne, he laid the foundations for the successful “Kaufmann School” in the young Federal Republic of Germany [31].

Since 1939, the *Monatsschrift* appeared, published by Karger in Basel, with the addendum “founded by A. Martin, M. Saenger, continued by L. Seitz” under the editorship of Ernst Anderes (1883–1952) and Theodor Koller (1899–1985; both Zurich) and its title was additionally translated into English (*International Monthly Review of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*), French, and Italian. There were no longer any Germans in the editorial board, as this was now strictly forbidden to them in Nazi Germany. Apart from Seitz until 1938, only K. de Snoo from Utrecht

was part of both the *Monatsschrift* and the *Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde*, which was founded in 1939. The *Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde* was discontinued in 1944 due to the war and was later turned into the official publication of the German Society of Gynecology and Obstetrics in Western Germany. In 2006, it was merged with the much older *Centralblatt für Gynäkologie* (later *Zentralblatt für Gynäkologie*, *Central Journal of Gynecology*), the scientific organ of the Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the German Democratic Republic (GDR, until 1962), which forever disappeared from the list of scientific literature. The most important papers of *Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde* are now being published in English and German.

When Ludwig Seitz died in Pfaffenhofen, Germany on June 19, 1961 at the age of 90, his students dedicated a short obituary to him in which the merits of the *Geheimrat* were vividly described [26, 32, 33]. Much in this obituary remained vague and most likely deliberately unsaid. And yet, it seems like a gesture of forgiveness today that this obituary was published in the *Gynaecologia* of all places, the successor of the former *Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie* [26]. Time had apparently passed over the conflicts.

While hardly any German or European gynecologists still remember Ludwig Seitz today, the *Gynecologic and Obstetric Investigation* with its global orientation continues to be a popular medium for publication. We owe this in great parts to Samuel Karger, the founder of the Karger publishing house, as well as August Martin and Max Saenger, the congenial inaugurators of the *Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynaekologie*, and all following generations of publishers, editors, authors, and readers.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors state that they have no conflict of interest.

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