

Science and the Ideology of Race in Western Democracies

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Abstract

Starting with a detailed analysis of a recent prominent case of ideological interference in chemistry, this essay examines the violation of longstanding academic principles by the new ideology of "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI). The imposition of this principle by public opinion, administration, and mass media, particularly in the United States but also in other countries, contradicts the principle of equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, nationality, and class, by putting the emphasis of assessment on group identities. The implementation of this principle has begun to damage careers, threaten scientists, and lower standards in academia.

In order to provide a historical perspective, I review the impact of the implementation of racial principles into academia through anti-Jewish measures in Nazi Germany, pointing to similarities in content and method, and highlighting the fundamental differences between the systems. The essay concludes that the cultural norms, including a merit system based on individual achievements that have enabled science to generate superior knowledge, are at risk through the principle of DEI and its emphasis on group identities as criteria of assessments.

Keywords: ideological suppression of science, principle of universalism, equality of opportunity, meritocracy, diversity, equity, inclusion

1. Introduction

This essay examines and analyzes instances of ideological pressure on scientists and scientific institutions in Western democracies, in particular the ideology of "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI), comparing it with causes and consequences of the introduction of racial principles into academia in Nazi Germany. DEI is a part of Critical

Social Justice / Identity politics, where the words no longer carry their original meaning but a refined one (see, e.g., Pluckrose and Lindsay 2022). It emphasizes similarities in ideological contents and mechanisms of their implementation as well as the important differences between the systems. The author argues that today's ideological pressure is an instance of a larger phenomenon of suppression of freedom of expression in academia that has been apparent since at least the 1970s.

In 1941, Sir Richard Gregory, former editor of *Nature*, pointed to the danger of conducting science based on principles other than scientific ones: "To make race, political convictions, or religious faith, barriers to the pursuit of natural knowledge, means that science in Nazi Germany loses its soul for the purpose of gaining the world." After the Second World War, the American geneticist Hermann Muller accused those of his German counterparts who had supported Nazi race ideology in theory and practice of having "taken part in the prostitution of science" (Muller 1947).

Muller and Gregory believed that science must not be influenced by ideological maxims related to race but should proceed according to the rules and maxims that have guided modern science since its beginning (see Merton 1942). Scientists in Nazi Germany had prostituted this scientific ethos through their ideological and practical support of Nazi race policy, thus violating the core scientific principle of universality, that is, the independence of science from ethnic, national, and religious affiliations.

The idea of universalism may sound idealistic given that throughout the centuries, under political pressure or for other reasons, scientists have been influenced by prevailing ideologies. Yet universalism is one of the principles that, together with special methods and epistemologies, has enabled science to generate knowledge that is superior and more reliable than that generated by any other human activity.

2. The ideology of "diversity, equity, and inclusion" and its impact on science

2.1. The case of Tomáš Hudlický, *Angewandte Chemie*

Tomáš Hudlický, professor of chemistry at Brock University in Canada, passed away "unexpectedly" on May 10, 2022, at the age of 72 during a visit in Prague, the city in which he was born and raised, and from which he emigrated in 1968. As a noted researcher, he became a victim of campaigns launched against him in the name of "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI) after publishing an article that contradicted some dominant opinions. His case sheds light on the ideological pressure that has started to severely affect the freedom of expression brought about by the DEI movement and other ideological strands.

Hudlický was a renowned chemist in the field of organic synthesis. His essay, "'Organic Synthesis—Where Now?' Is Thirty Years Old. A Reflection on the Current State of Affairs," was published by the renowned German chemistry journal *Angewandte Chemie* in its international edition on June 4, 2020. Along with historical reflections on chemistry, Hudlický pointed to positive and negative factors that have, in his opinion, influenced organic synthesis and science in general. A public outcry on social media, especially on Twitter, followed, mostly from North America. Not only were Hudlický's views attacked, but he himself was declared to be "racist", "misogynist", "sexist", "patriarchal", and even "abusive" (Tibollo 2022). The magazine felt compelled to remove the piece two days later, on June 6, 2020. Note, this extreme response was not simply a retraction, with a retraction note.

The following is a summary of the incriminated passages in the paper.

Addressing the "Diversity of Workforce," he defended the merit system and the idea of

equality of opportunity in academia, and expressed reservations about preferential hiring on the basis of race and sex if it was not supported by merit: "New ideologies have appeared and influenced hiring practices, promotion, funding, and recognition of certain groups. Each candidate should have an equal opportunity to secure a position, regardless of personal identification/categorization. The rise and emphasis on hiring practices that suggest or even mandate equality in terms of absolute numbers of people in specific subgroups is counter-productive if it results in discrimination against the most meritorious candidates." This statement may be called traditional, but it is neither racist nor sexist. In fact, it points to the racism inherent in the "diversity, equity, and inclusion" principle that may lead to the denial of equal opportunity to meritorious scientists who don't have the right skin color or gender. It should be emphasized that Hudlický was not racist in his practice either: His own workgroup was highly diverse in both gender and ethnicity.

Discussing "transference of skills," he endorsed Michael Polanyi's view that the training and mentoring of new generations of professionals must be attended to by proper relationships of "masters and apprentices" without dilution of standards. Polanyi was a physical chemist who, after his forced emigration from Nazi Germany as a Jew, turned to be philosopher of science. His "master and apprentice" metaphor (Polanyi [1958] 1962) is borrowed from traditional German craftsmanship, where in order to learn, apprentices follow their masters (*Meister*), until they qualify to execute professional work on their own and guide apprentices themselves. The metaphor has nothing to do, as insinuated in Twitter messages, with conditions of slavery. It refers to a conservative educational principle in many areas, including sports and music.

Finally, in discussing "the integrity of literature," Hudlický criticized certain publication practices by Chinese scientists in Western journals: "In the 21st century, more

publications on organic synthesis originate in China than from any other country. The pressure on Chinese academics to publish in 'Western' journals is immense, and it is therefore not surprising that fraud and improper publication protocols are common." He cites two papers published following an investigation into Chinese publication practices in the West, by the journal *Science*. These papers document and criticize practices such as commercial concerns that guarantee publication in a high-impact journal for a fee (Hvistendahl 2013; Yang 2013). Wei Yang, the president of the NSF of China, criticized that the rapid growth of China's research capacity "has not necessarily been accompanied by an equally measured promotion of the cultural norms of the scientific enterprise. Most troubling is a lack of research integrity, which may hinder China's growth in original science, damage the reputation of Chinese academics, and dampen the impact of science developed in China." Yang pointed, for example, to widespread competitive research grants that provide an economic incentive for ethical violations, and to the use of quantitative rather than qualitative measures of merit that encourage misconduct. In other words, Hudlický criticized Chinese ethical maxims in science that already had been a source of concern not only in Western countries, but also in China itself.

Responses from the journal *Angewandte Chemie* and other chemical institutions to Hudlický's article reveal an alarming degree of conformism with the opinion of militants on social media. The German Chemical Society, the owner society of *Angewandte Chemie*, explains the removal of the article as follows: Hudlický's article "was published on the website of *Angewandte Chemie* as an 'Accepted Article.' The article expressed offending views about women and other groups underrepresented in science. In addition, the Chinese research community was unjustly defamed. It contained a description of mentorship in science that contravenes the values of good working

practice and education. The opinions expressed in this essay are those of the author and they violate the values and codes of conduct of the journal, the members of staff, the Editorial Board, and the German Chemical Society (GDCh), the owner society of *Angewandte Chemie*. As a first immediate response, the article was removed from the Wiley Online Library. A full investigation of the case has been initiated" (GDCh 2020). The Society included links to the deleted article and Hudlický's comments from July 2020 in its webpage (ibid.).

A day after the article had been removed, Brock University's Provost and Academic Vice-President, Greg Finn (2020), publicly condemned Hudlický's statements, permanently damaging his professional reputation. The Organic Division of the Canadian Society for Chemistry categorically rejected the views of its former award-winner and "stands with those working to dismantle the entrenched structures of discrimination based upon (but not limited to) gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin" (Tibollo 2022). Representatives from the three federal agencies that administer the Canada Research Chairs Program, which brought Hudlický to Canada and helped fund a large portion of his career, joined in the public condemnation of the chemist: "As the heads of Canada's federal research funding agencies, we wish to be explicit in stating that we do not support the deplorable views on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) represented in (Hudlický's) paper."

Two days after the article was removed, in a most alarming action, sixteen members of the International Advisory Board of *Angewandte Chemie* resigned, denouncing the "disturbing act of *Angewandte Chemie* accepting and publishing an essay that promotes racist and sexist views." A day later, on June 9, the journal apologized to its readers "that this offensive and misguided essay was published in our journal," denouncing its "offensive and inflammatory language aimed toward people of different genders, races,

and nationalities." <https://retractionwatch.com/2020/06/08/controversial-essay-at-german-chemistry-journal-leads-to-suspensions/>.

To reiterate, the article supported conservative values, but it contained no "racist" or "sexist" views, nor can any "offensive and inflammatory language" be found in it.

The resignation of the sixteen members of the International Advisory Board (IAB), fifteen of whom are from North America, deserves closer examination. Apart from a pointless accusation of Hudlický, their resignation letter also harms a very renowned European chemistry journal through an attitude that appears to be a complete over-reaction devoid of tolerance for different opinions in a situation in which advice and support for the editors should be expected. This was expressed by Ehud Keinan, professor of chemistry at the Technion in Haifa and editor of the Israeli Journal of Chemistry, in a letter on 10 June, 2020, to "his friends at *Angewandte Chemie* and GDCh" (he wrote the letter in spite of being critical of Hudlický's paper):

" [...] I feel that the intense attack on one of the best chemistry journals worldwide has gone out of proportion. Obviously, accepting that article was a terrible accident but certainly not evidence of any conspiracy theory. ... for many people, some phrases in the letter [written by the sixteen members of the advisory board] could imply that *Angewandte Chemie* has some hidden agenda: 'correct its actions... the clear need for drastic change at *Angewandte Chemie*... a path forward for the journal to remake itself and lead in a way that promotes a future for our field that rejects institutional racism and sexism and instead visibly and clearly embraces diversity and inclusivity.' This language could imply that racism and sexism have been the journal's open or hidden policy. I am sure that none of the IAB members ever embraced such an attitude."

Keinan, who knows nearly all the 16 chemists personally, thinks that they could not fit into "one political party or any group of homogeneous ideology," and that they "have

their unique perspective on the world." Therefore, he fails "to understand the mass resignation, which looks like a punitive action against the journal." (I am grateful to Ehud Keinan for showing me his letter.)

It should be added that the author of this essay contacted all signatories of the resignation letter but only received two answers to questions about the reasons for the resignation of the 16 former board members; stating (i) that the handling of the affair by the editors was the prime reason and (ii) that among the initiators were several people whom this signee greatly respected. Thus, the reasons for this mass resignation mainly remain unclear.

Hudlický himself was most troubled by the fact that "social media rage led to the intimidation of the executive staff of a major journal, attacked me personally, and induced Brock University into issuing a strong moral condemnation of my views (and my values), with threats of taking further action against me." He received support from many institutions and individuals (see <https://www.hudlicky.ca/publicity>), including the *Canadian Association of University Teachers* and the *Brock University Faculty Union*. On August 3, 2020, Hudlický explained his position in greater detail and made clear his anti-racist and anti-sexist stance (in theory and practice) (Hudlický 2020). Indeed, his research group shows a much greater gender and ethnic diversity than that of some of the advisory board members of *Angewandte Chemie* who resigned in protest against the publication of his article.

Epilogue:

When Lynn Wells replaced Gregory Finn as Provost and Vice-President in July 2020, the president of the National Association of Scholars, Peter Wood, wrote an open letter to her, asking her to right the wrong committed by her predecessor:

“If you and Brock University publicly vindicate Professor Hudlický, and reaffirm that your bedrock values are academic freedom and charitable tolerance rather than enforced conformity to diversity, equity, and inclusion, you will be honored for making the right choice—and for restoring Brock University to its better self” (National Association of Scholars 2020).

Wells did not respond. The obituary from Brock University on Hudlický, which contains the sentence, “The passing of a Brock community member who has had such a distinguished career as a researcher, is tremendously upsetting,” written by her on May 12, 2022, does not mention the campaign against him, including from Brock University, following the publication of the incriminated article.

Hudlický’s case was presented here in greater detail because it shows how the power of a new ideological principle combined with a militant social media storm can seemingly override the rationality even of highly renowned scientists and scientific institutions and damage the reputation of a respected chemist as well as of a renowned journal.

Unfortunately, Hudlický’s case is representative of other such cases in academia today, some of which are briefly mentioned in the following.

2.2. The ubiquity of ideological repression through the policy of "diversity, equity, and inclusion"

The case of Gordon Klein illustrates the power of students in alliance with a university administration to suspend a highly respected teacher on the pretext of racism because he insisted on treating all his students equally (Klein 2021). Klein teaches financial analysis, law, and public policy at the University of California, Los Angeles. Urged by a

(non-black) student to grade his black classmates with greater leniency, Klein made it clear that he would not treat any student differently because of their skin color. In protest, students circulated a petition and collected around 20,000 signatures, demanding that Klein be fired. After three days, Klein was suspended in the midst of a growing online campaign that included death threats and antisemitic insults to the extent that he received police protection (ibid.). Meanwhile, a campaign was launched in his support and the university's Academic Senate's Committee on Academic Freedom condemned the administration for violating Klein's rights; after around three weeks he was reinstated. This is not merely an academic case, since several of the law firms and other corporations for which Klein consulted terminated their collaboration after he had been suspended, so that he has now filed a lawsuit against the University of California system (ibid.).

The calls to prioritize social advocacy issues over science are ubiquitous. In September 2021, MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), one of the most prestigious institutions of science and technology in the US, cancelled a public lecture by geophysicist Dorian Abbot, in response to a storm of outrage on Twitter that demanded he be uninvited. A group of MIT students, postdocs, and recent alumni criticized Abbot's open advocacy for academic freedom and merit-based evaluations (Abbot 2021). According to Abbot and Ivan Marinovic (2021), "American universities are undergoing a profound transformation that threatens to derail their primary mission: the production and dissemination of knowledge. The new regime is titled 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion' or DEI and is enforced by a large bureaucracy of administrators. Nearly every decision taken on campus, from admissions to faculty hiring, to course content, to teaching methods, is made through the lens of DEI."

In keeping with these values, this year in London, the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) has made “inclusivity” a high priority, even in their peer-review process. It published a "guidance for the elimination of inappropriate content in RSC journals and books," asking authors to "consider whether or not any content (words, depictions or imagery) might have the potential to cause offence" (cited after Krylov et al. 2022).

As these cases indicate, the campaign for DEI, which has led to interference in university policies, science, and scholarship in general, is not confined to political activists. It has reached mainstream science in the form of major journals such as *Science* and *Nature*. *Science* editor-in-chief Holden H. Thorp openly advocates political interference with science. On November 6, 2020, he deplored the "systemic racism" that persists in science in the US, demanding a "difficult soul-searching about the underrepresentation of racial ethnic groups" as well as the establishment of new inclusive norms in science. In his opinion, "the old ideal of keeping politics out of science has not served the United States well (Thorp 2020)." Thorp obviously forgot the devastating consequences of political interference with science in authoritarian regimes. It should be emphasized again that, while the fight against racism of all forms is a necessary and legitimate goal for society as a whole, the demand for equity in science is a demand for a new racial discrimination against people whose “racial group” is allegedly overrepresented. The meanwhile widespread assertion of the existence of systemic racism points to the underlying ideology of critical race theory (see below) and the guilt and shame it implies.

Thorp's view is also reflected in a new initiative that was outlined in an article in *Nature* with the title "The Giant Plan to Track Diversity in Research Journals" on 23 February 2022: "More than 50 publishers representing over 15,000 journals globally are preparing to ask scientists about their race or ethnicity — as well as their gender" when submitting

a paper or editing or reviewing manuscripts. This initiative is meant to contribute to the effort to analyze "researcher diversity around the world". The information should "help to analyse who is represented in journals, and to identify whether there are biases in editing or review." The initiative raises serious questions, among them how biases in editing or reviewing can possibly be detected by correlating results with race or gender. Moreover, it turns upside down the longstanding guiding principle in science that personal attributes such as race, belief, nationality, and, later, gender must not play a role, a principle that was despised and overridden by Nazi science policy. But pilot testing of the initiative to track diversity had the disturbing result that more than 90% of the scientists reported their race and ethnicity, and about half said they would be comfortable providing this information when submitting a paper. People who rejected the initiative because it is reminiscent of Nazi policy - race testing was required for academic positions and student enrolment - or because it contradicts the merit system and the idea of equality of opportunity irrespective of personal attributes, were in the minority.

The current author remembers the shock she felt during her recent online submission of an article to a journal published by Elsevier, when she was asked to state her gender, nationality, and race (not even couched as ethnicity), which she did not. The removal of the race category was one of the first measures of the denazification of academia in Germany, and it seemed impossible that it would be re-instated again, even if allegedly as a measure to fight racism. It is the focus on race where the DEI ideology shows the greatest similarity with elements of Nazi ideology. This similarity that will be analyzed below, should, however, not obscure the fact that the current ideology was not created by the Volkish movement, an ethno-nationalist movement from the 19th century, but was based on more recent theories, in particular critical race theory.

As Andreas Bikfalvi has pointed out, demands to fight so-called systemic racism and restructure universities according to the equity principle often relate to this theory (Bikfalvi 2021). "Critical race theory" has been defined as "a body of legal scholarship and an academic movement of US civil-rights scholars and activists who seek to critically examine the intersection of race and U.S. law and to challenge mainstream American liberal approaches to racial justice."

<https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/critical-race-theory/m06d76c?hl=en> While its philosophical origins are much older, the current movement started in the 1980s, criticizing the "color-blind" approach as a measure to fight racism, and arguing instead that race has to be placed at the center of analysis. As the authors of a recent influential study on this topic, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2012) emphasize, "critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law."

Elements of this theory are now pervading many areas of scholarship. Thus, under the heading "Time to Take Critical Race Theory Seriously: Moving Beyond a Colour-Blind Gender Lens in Global Health," a comment in the medical journal *Lancet* prompts the health profession to "embrace race as an omnipresent factor influencing global health practice, research, and outcomes," holding that "this racial consciousness needs to be part and parcel of our efforts to address gender inequity worldwide" (Yam et al. 2021).

Accusing white men of alleged systemic racism in science and making race a central category of scientific practice, is meanwhile widespread; for example, as guiding practices of journals and syllabi of universities. An example is the syllabus statement that Brown University presented as a model diversity and inclusion statement on the website of its Center for Teaching and Learning: "... much of science is subjective and is historically built on a small subset of privileged voices. I acknowledge that the readings

for this course, [...] were authored by white men. Furthermore, the course often focuses on historically important neuroscience experiments which were mostly conducted by white men. Recent edits to the course reader were undertaken by both myself and some students who do not identify as white men."

<https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/statements>

This statement is indeed remarkable. It is a fact that until at least until the mid-20th century - for a variety of reasons - most science was conducted by white men. It is also a fact that few women engaged in science before the twentieth century and that their contribution to science has often been overlooked. Apologizing for this truth seems to imply that the scientific achievement of past centuries is unworthy of serious consideration today because it was mainly the work of white males. Discarding such work or disregarding its value in keeping with critical race theory would take away the basis for scientific development as well as medical and technological applications, irreparably damage the trust of science and scientific practice, and make future scientific progress difficult, if not impossible (see also Steven Pinker's correspondence with Thorp at <https://whyevolutionistrue.com/2022/05/03/pinker-vs-the-aaas-on-the-politicization-of-climate-change/>).

In this context, it would be highly advisable to listen to authors such as the renowned African American linguist John McWhorter (2021), who in support of the fight against racism highlights the perils of 'woke racism,' arguing that an illiberal neoracism, disguised as antiracism, is hurting Black communities and weakening the American social fabric.

In order to understand the historical dimension of the introduction of the race category into academia, I now briefly survey what happened in Nazi Germany. This is against the

background that the origin and motive of the German race policy, as well as its consequences, were very different from that of DEI. Today the race principle is not imposed by an authoritarian regime or a political party, and the victims are not murdered and often - though not always - not removed from their positions. But a closer look shows parallels that are revealing and illustrates this policy's danger. Similarities with what is happening today can be found in certain ideological contents and also in mechanisms by which they were imposed on the academic system.

3. The introduction of a racial principle into science in Nazi Germany and the expulsion of Jewish scientists

In contrast to what happened in the Soviet Union under Stalin, where the terror in science exerted by Lysenko and his political supporters was directed against scientists who opposed ideologically desired scientific or pseudoscientific doctrines, Nazi terror in science was mainly directed against a particular group of scientists who were defined by what was considered their race, namely, Jewish scientists. This was irrespective of their scientific or political views or achievements. The core of Nazi race ideology was grounded in the Volkish movement, which promoted the idea of *Volk* (people or nation) as an organic unity.

Nazi race ideology affected the sciences and humanities in Germany in various ways. It had its most detrimental impact through the dismissal and forced emigration of Jewish scientists and scholars, that is, through the introduction of a racial principle into academia. This began with the implementation of the "law for the resurrection of the professional civil service" on April 7, 1933, that provided for the dismissal of "non-Aryan" university teachers defined as those with at least one Jewish grandparent, and a small

number of leftist ones, many of whom were also Jewish or "non-Aryans." This was followed by the dismissal of non-Jews who were married to a Jew and of Jewish scientists in Austria in 1938. Most German scholars did not publicly disagree, and many even endorsed the severe political measures imposed on academia, often for opportunistic reasons. Antisemitism was prevalent mainly among young faculty and particularly among students, who were the drivers of the "National Socialist revolution" at universities. It should also be mentioned that some non-Jewish colleagues did not comply with certain measures of the Nazi regime; examples are the organic chemist and Nobel Laureate Adolf Windaus, who refused to expel his Jewish student, and the pharmacologist Otto Kraye, who as a great exception, refused to accept a position that had become vacant through the dismissal of a Jewish colleague (Deichmann 1999).

The chemist Fritz Haber probably embodied the hopes, success, and failure of German-Jewish scientists more than anyone else. In 1909 he succeeded in synthesizing ammonia from its elements, thus securing the supply of fertilizers and ammunition during the First World War, an achievement for which he was awarded a Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1918. A German patriot, he pioneered chemical warfare, which earned him the praise of German nationalists and condemnation of the Western Allies. From 1911 until 1933 he was a professor of physical chemistry at the University of Berlin and director of a prestigious research institute, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry and Electrochemistry. In 1933 Haber was temporarily permitted to remain in his position because of his contributions to the German war effort during the First World War, but after having communicated their dismissal to his Jewish workers, Haber resigned from his position. His letter of resignation to the Minister of Education shows clearly how the introduction of the ethnic principle had turned upside down long-standing scientific traditions:

"My decision to ask for resignation stems from the contrasting notion of the research tradition, the one in which I have lived till now, with the one which you, Minister, and your Ministry represent as part of the actual great national movement. Holding a scientific post, my tradition demands from me that, when choosing my workers, *I consider only their scientific merits and character, without asking about his or her race.*" (Deichmann 1999, emphasis added) A year later, Haber died in exile.

It is interesting to note that the purge of Jewish scientists was preceded by campaigns by non-Jewish students demanding quotas for German-Jewish students (and also students from East European countries) to curb the rising number of Jewish students in Germany. The call for quotas or a *numerus clausus* to restrict the number of Jews at universities was not unique to Germany, but many other countries introduced quotas to limit or deny Jewish access to universities, such as Canada, Hungary, Russia and the Soviet Union, and some private universities in the United States.

In Germany, the expulsion of Jewish scientists and scholars from universities in 1933 had a particularly strong effect. It ended a long period of their increasing participation and success. Following the legal emancipation of Jews in Germany in 1870, Jewish scientists and scholars were admitted to academic positions and became prominent in such fields as biochemistry, chemistry, medicine, mathematics, the classics, and law. The purge in 1933 had far-reaching consequences for many sciences (Bergmann, Epple, Ungar (eds.) 2012; Deichmann 1996; 1999). Chemistry, mathematics, and medicine were affected to a much larger extent than biology and physics, thus about 25% of academic chemists and 33% of biochemists and mathematicians were forced to leave their positions; many of them emigrated. The loss of prominent Jewish biochemists was a major reason for the decline of formerly world-renowned German biochemistry. In psychology, sociology, and classical studies, prominent Jewish

scholars were also expelled. Many Jewish refugees helped significantly raise the scientific level of certain disciplines in their countries of refuge; among them, biochemistry in the US and the UK. Many excellent German or Hungarian Jewish physicists and mathematicians, after emigrating to the US, contributed decisively to the Manhattan project.

The expulsion of Jewish scientists was the single most important reason for the decline of some areas of science in Germany after the Second World War. With slogans like "science is a product of blood" (a metaphor of race) and "scientific universalism is a manifestation of past liberal and Jewish ways of thinking", ideologues such as Hitler's race representative Alfred Rosenberg also aimed - largely unsuccessfully - to instill political ideology into the content of research and teaching. The movement of "German physics", launched by the two physics Nobel Laureates Philipp Lenard and Johannes Stark in the 1920s, rejected quantum mechanics and relativity theory as Jewish science and succeeded in filling some university chairs of theoretical physics by applied physicists (see, e.g., Beyerchen 1977). But these campaigns came to an end during the Second World War and did not succeed in committing scientists to a pseudoscience with the help of political terror. Political ideology did have a devastating and murderous effect on science by providing the conditions for unethical and in part scientifically questionable experimentation on "inferior people" with Josef Mengele as the most infamous representative (see, e.g., Baader 1992; Nyiszli [1946] 2012).

4. The introduction of a race into academia in Nazi Germany and Western democracies - parallels and differences

Comparing the impact of ideology on science under different political systems does not deny the important differences between them, particularly with respect to human rights and the separation of powers. There are no gulags or concentration camps for political/scientific dissidents or racially/ethnically undesirable people in Western countries today. Nevertheless, evidence of the suppression of freedom of expression in teaching and publications, the forcible removal of publications, and the introduction of ethnic or racial criteria into science, considered earlier, has begun to seriously affect science and scholarship also in democracies. These ideological effects are not implemented by authoritarian governments enacting racist laws, but parallels between the past and today are undeniable, in the mechanisms through which ideological goals are inserted into the scientific enterprise by administrators, academics, and students, and in some of the ideological content.

To re-iterate, when I refer to the "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI) principle today, I mean a policy that puts ethnicity, mainly skin-color, and gender *before* merit. I do not talk about preferential hiring of meritorious members of underprivileged minorities and social classes, regardless of gender, an important practice to promote justice, and I fully endorse any program to help underprivileged groups improve their performance before entering academia.

Among the major similarities between DEI and Nazi race policy are the following:

- Race as a decisive category in academia

In Nazi Germany, the allocation of academic positions or the right to study became linked to a racial precondition - to be an "Aryan". Race was given priority. All Jewish scientists and those with Jewish ancestry, independently of any criteria of merit, were expelled, and some years later, Jewish students were completely denied access to

universities. As all other anti-Jewish policies, this one, too, was justified by being beneficial to the German people, in this case, to “remove” numerically overrepresented Jewish scientists and restore justice to non-Jewish students.

The DEI practice is also a racist measure that is justified by benevolent intentions. Inherently, even if unintentionally, it will lead to de-facto quota systems for “over-represented” minorities such as Jews and Asians (in North America). Quota systems, however, contradict the idea of equality of opportunity. Ethnicity appears to be confined to skin color, that is, it is a purely racial category. Other questions are ignored, such as how should equality of gender be achieved in minorities with patriarchal structures? Do different economic statuses also count as diversity? Or how can women or members of a dark-skinned minority be protected against the possible stigma, reproach, or self-doubt, of having received a position due to an institution’s need to demonstrate gender or ethnicity diversity?

It was the devastating effect on science of the National Socialist race principle and Stalinist suppression and persecution of political and scientific dissidents that prompted sociologist Robert Merton to promote his principle of universalism; race (or ethnicity), religion, and nationality must not play a role in science (Merton [1942] 1973).

- Self-censorship and denunciation

In Nazi Germany, universities were forced by law to dismiss Jewish academics and students. But institutions and individuals also adjusted to the new political situation in anticipatory obedience. Scholars displayed their allegiance to the new regime by joining the Nazi party (which never became compulsory), denouncing colleagues, not greeting Jewish colleagues, or hoisting the swastika.

Today, the Nazi party and swastika are not acceptable, but denunciation is. According to the organization “Scholars under Fire”, incidents that target academics have been on the rise since 2015 and are "increasingly coming from within academia itself — from other scholars and especially from undergraduate students. These targeting incidents take a multitude of forms, including demands for an investigation, demotion, censorship, suspension, and even termination" (German and Stevens 2021). This organization found that, in a most unfair way, "scholars were targeted most often for speech involving race (e.g., racial inequality, historical racism, racial slurs, BLM [Black Lives Matter], DEI)," and, in addition, by gender and institutional policy. The number of examples of academics whose scholarly reputation and careers have been destroyed is rising, as the list of “cancelled” professors indicates (<https://www.nas.org/blogs/article/tracking-cancel-culture-in-higher-education>).

- Populism

Unlike the intrusion of ideology into science in the past, the movement of DEI was not manufactured by political parties but by parts of society. But the National Socialist racial transformation of universities likewise made ample use of populist sentiments and was driven in particular by students and young academics who resented the strong representation of Jewish scientists and students. In 1933, students protested against Jewish professors who as former front-line soldiers had been temporarily granted a special permission to retain their positions. It was also students and their organizations who organized the “book burning” events in 1933, in which books by Jewish authors, Jewish and non-Jewish left-leaning authors, and other undesirable books were burned in many university cities. Today, other forms of protest are replaced by social media campaigns, particularly twitter storms that target ideologically deviant behavior. The

resulting academic responses show that protesters often reach their goal (see, e.g., Stevens et al. 2020).

5. The diversity and equity principle in historical and philosophical contexts

By emphasizing group identities as criteria of assessments, DEI violates longstanding academic maxims that are based on individuals regardless of gender or race. DEI especially overrides the existing merit system that rewards individual talent and achievement. Even if the merit system was never fully realized, and has been criticized for flaws (see, e.g., Sandel 2020), it was and remains one of the foundations of scientific success, the results of which we perceive today in reliable theories about nature and the achievements of medicine and technology. Instead of dismantling the merit-based system, we should focus on fixing its imperfections.

DEI also overrides the individual-based maxim of "equality of opportunity" that has to be distinguished, as sociologist Daniel Bell (1972) emphasized, from "equality of result." Equality of opportunity does not necessarily lead to equality of outcome. The term "equal opportunity", which originated in different ways in different countries, is usually understood as the absence of discrimination based on personal attributes, such as gender, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, or age. It implies fair competition for limited positions and funding.

Aiming at predetermined numbers of people representing social, ethnic or gender groups, the equity principle leads to the marginalization of individual qualifications. The danger of the push for equity, as political scientist Charles Lipson (2021) observes, is that it paradoxically challenges America's (and also other Western countries') principle that people should be treated equally and judged as individuals, not preferentially

judged as members of certain groups. For the crucial importance of liberal principles for the constitution of knowledge, see Jonathan Rauch (2021).

The increasing suspension or limitation of the merit system through the implementation of DEI in the United States and the ensuing lowering of scientific standards inflict serious damage not only for individual scientists but also for the international position of its science. Deift et al. (2021) warn of a strong decline of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics system (STEM) in the United States, believing that the country is at risk of losing the dominant position in the mathematical sciences that it has held since the forced emigration of Jewish scientists from Europe in the 1930s. In addition to the "deplorable state of the mathematical education system" and other countries', in particular China's, aggressive competing with the United States to recruit top talent, the authors see the reasons for their concern in the "nationwide effort to reduce racial disparities." This effort, "however well-intentioned, has had the unfortunate effect of weakening the connection between merit and scholastic admission. It also has served (sometimes indirectly) to discriminate against certain groups—mainly Asian Americans." The authors hold that "the social-justice rhetoric used to justify these diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs is often completely at odds with the reality one observes on campuses," because the concept of "fighting white supremacy," doesn't apply to the mathematical sciences where "America-born scholars of all races now collectively represent a small (and diminishing) minority of the country's academic STEM specialists.

The authority that science has in modern societies is grounded in the fact that scientific methods and reasoning are best suited to generate reliable objective knowledge and solve outstanding problems in many fields. This authority is dependent on competent researchers, independent of their gender and ethnic group or race.

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