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Celebrate in Times of War? The Academic Jubilees of the University of Kiel and the Vienna Institute of Technology in 1940

Abstract: University anniversaries and jubilees are a central aspect of university communication and they exemplify the interdependencies of both tradition and innovation, past and future. Consciously or unintentionally, jubilee festivities and celebrations serve to create sense internally, to reassure the university's outward position and to intensify its communication with the surrounding society. This raises the question of whether and how institutions of higher education have celebrated such occasions in the past, especially in times of social upheaval and crisis – which undoubtedly included the period of the Second World War. This article adopts the perspective of an integrative university history and uses the example of two different types of higher education institutions to ask about the social and political function of their anniversaries. The festivities under scrutiny are the ones at the University of Kiel and at the Technical College Vienna (Technische Hochschule). Both institutions celebrated their anniversaries in 1940 despite – or perhaps precisely because of – the war situation. The focus is on the festive lectures and on the basic conditions for the celebrations as well as for the corresponding jubilee writings. The question is to what extent the actors involved endeavoured to view the historical stages of the university's history from a National Socialist angle and whether they formulated tangible visions of their institution's future.

Introduction

To this day, there is probably hardly any event that triggers such ambivalent feelings in the scientific-historical sub-discipline of university history as does the historical recollection of one's own alma mater following the rhythm of anniversary numbers. Although quite a few scholarly colleagues have received the presumably decisive impetus for their research in university history through the "utilization context" of the university anniversary, many are extremely critical of the short-lived anniversary-linked boosts of interests.¹ This is primarily due

1 Cf. Hammerstein, Notker: Alltagsarbeit. Anmerkungen zu neueren Universitätsgeschichten.

to the modern event character of academic jubilee celebrations, where they are conceived as more of a mass event, making the scientific examination of one's own past a secondary matter and, moreover, preventing a perpetuation of university history independent of anniversaries.²

To make matters worse, the opulent commemorative publications of the 19th and 20th centuries which appeared on the occasion of university anniversary celebrations were mostly based on a kind of academic navel-gazing that ignored all historical processes.³ The result was often a narrow view of one's own university history, which was essentially limited to the production of reductionist commemorative publications, whose declared goal was to present universities positively as institutions of scholarship.⁴ In the past three decades, however, European and German university history writing has detached itself from this predominantly anniversary-driven founding and success story of one's own alma mater, which, as Notker Hammerstein noted in 1983, often had hagiographic traits.⁵

It goes without saying that university anniversaries are not fundamentally objectionable, but rather a welcome occasion for scientific engagement concerning the research subject "university". Particularly in the last two decades, the collected works and monographs published in the course of anniversaries have brought forth a multitude of new insights with regard to the social, cultural,

In: *Historische Zeitschrift* (HZ) 297:1 (2013). pp. 102–125; Paletschek, Sylvia: Stand und Perspektiven der neueren Universitätsgeschichtsschreibung. In: *NTM. Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Wissenschaften, Technik und Medizin* 19:2 (2011). pp. 169–189; Bruch, Rüdiger vom: Methoden und Schwerpunkte der neueren Universitätsgeschichtsforschung. In: *Die Universität Greifswald und die deutsche Hochschullandschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Ed. by Werner Buchholz. Stuttgart 2004 (Pallas Athene. Beiträge zur Universitäts- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte 10). pp. 9–26.

² Müller, Winfried: Die inszenierte Universität. Historische und aktuelle Perspektiven von Universitätsjubiläen. In: *Jubiläum. Literatur- und kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherungen*. Ed. by Franz M. Eybl, Stephan Müller and Annegret Pelz. Göttingen 2018 (Schriften der Wiener Germanistik 6). pp. 77–97, pp. 91–92.

³ See for a thorough analysis Göllnitz, Martin and Kim Krämer: Hochschule im öffentlichen Raum. Bemerkungen zu Historiographie und Systematik. In: *Hochschulen im öffentlichen Raum. Historiographische und systematische Perspektiven auf ein Beziehungsgeflecht*. Ed. by Martin Göllnitz and Kim Krämer. Göttingen 2020 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Mainz 17). pp. 7–26, p. 9.

⁴ Prüll, Livia: Die Universitätsgeschichte und ihr Verhältnis zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte. Problemstellung und Arbeitsansätze. In: *Universitätsgeschichte schreiben. Inhalte – Methoden – Fallbeispiele*. Ed. by Livia Prüll, Christian George and Frank Hüther. Göttingen 2019 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Mainz Neue Folge 14). pp. 199–218, p. 201.

⁵ See Hammerstein, Notker: Jubiläumsschrift und Alltagsarbeit. Tendenzen bildungsgeschichtlicher Literatur. In: *Historische Zeitschrift* 236:3 (1983). pp. 601–633.

and scientific developments in higher education, without omitting the “critical times”.⁶ Unfortunately, however, it can be observed time and again that many things are made possible in the course of anniversaries – from smaller exhibitions and monographs to multi-volume collected works and digital professor’s catalogs – but that after the celebration, the source of money for historical everyday work until the next jubilee (usually every 25 or 50 years) runs dry again.⁷ It is by no means the rule, but rather the absolute exception, that university history research groups are supported by permanent budgeting, or by a firm anchoring in the budget beyond the festivities, as is the case in Mainz, for example.⁸

Thus, if research into the history of universities and colleges (which is essentially location-based) is so closely intertwined with the respective founding anniversaries, it seems worthwhile to find out more about the expression of institutional self-understanding at the time of the anniversary, and then to take a critical look at reflected and unreflected self-attributions. In this way, the study of university anniversaries enables different perspectives on institutional history, past presences, and the virulent expectations for the future. Like any other institution, the university is fundamentally dependent on communicating

6 Schwinges, Rainer Christoph: *Universitätsgeschichte: Bemerkungen zu Stand und Tendenzen der Forschung* (vornehmlich im deutschsprachigen Raum). In: Prüll/George/Hüther, *Universitätsgeschichte* (cf. note. 4). pp. 25–45, p. 33.

7 This problem has already given rise to discussion on several occasions, see Dhondt, Pieter (ed.): *University Jubilees and University History Writing. A Challenging Relationship*. Leiden 2015 (Scientific and Learned Cultures and their Institutions 13); Paletschek, Sylvia: *The Writing of University History and University Jubilees*. In: *studium. Tijdschrift voor Wetenschappen Universiteitsgeschiedenis* 5:3 (2012). pp. 142–155; Becker, Thomas P.: *Jubiläen als Orte universitärer Selbstdarstellung. Entwicklungslinien des Universitätsjubiläums von der Reformationszeit bis zur Weimarer Republik*. In: *Universität im öffentlichen Raum*. Ed. by Rainer Christoph Schwinges. Basel 2008 (Veröffentlichungen der Gesellschaft für Universitäts- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte 10). pp. 77–107; Blecher, Jens and Gerald Wiemers (eds.): *Universitäten und Jubiläen. Vom Nutzen historischer Archive*. Leipzig 2004 (Veröffentlichungen des Universitätsarchivs Leipzig 4); Müller, Winfried: *Erinnern an die Gründung. Universitätsjubiläen, Universitätsgeschichte und die Entstehung der Jubiläumskultur in der frühen Neuzeit*. In: *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 21:2,3 (1998). pp. 79–102.

8 See Prüll, Livia: “*Universitätsgeschichte schreiben*” – Eine Einführung. In: Prüll/Georg/Hüter, *Universitätsgeschichte* (cf. note 4), pp. 7–21, p. 9; moreover, university history has not succeeded in institutionalizing itself in the form of chairs or professorships, although this has hardly harmed research. From 1969 to 1998, Laetitia Boehm held the only chair in the German-speaking world that dealt decisively with university history in research and teaching (Chair of Medieval and Modern History with special emphasis on the history of the university and education at the University of Munich). From 1999 to 2002, her successor to the then renamed Chair of the History of Universities and Sciences was Martin Kintzinger. The chair was reassigned, however, after Kintzinger had moved to the University of Münster.

its “ideas of order and claims to validity” in the form of a time-specific symbolic presence – or, to put it another way, the representational character of an institution guarantees its duration and stability.⁹

According to Markus Drüding, university anniversaries are to be understood as forms of academic self-representation, which offer those celebrating them a genuine opportunity to reassure themselves of their “own history”¹⁰ and, above all, to position themselves in relation to politics and society by articulating both contemporary experiences and expectations of the future.¹¹ For this reason alone, anniversaries tell us more about those who celebrate and about their time than about the occasion and its history. This is especially true in the context of the festivities or of the commemorative publications published in their wake when an inwardly and outwardly directed, specifically tailored image of the institution is produced.¹² Accordingly, university anniversaries (and their written results) must be understood as both a component and a result of a time-specific culture of remembrance that reflects a historically bound remembrance and forgetting.¹³ For Winfried Müller, they ultimately represent ideal objectifications of the interpretation of history and *zeitgeist*.¹⁴

9 Melville, Gert: Institutionen als geschichtswissenschaftliches Thema. Eine Einleitung. In: Institutionen und Geschichte. Theoretische Aspekte und mittelalterliche Befunde. Ed. by Gert Melville. Köln 1992. pp. 1–24, pp. 2–8.

10 The term aims at the necessity of the self-historicization of social relations for the purpose of increasing legitimacy and the foundation of collective identity. See Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann: Die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit. Eine Theorie der Wissenssoziologie. 27th ed. Frankfurt am Main 2018.

11 Drüding, Markus: Akademische Jubelfeiern. Eine geschichtskulturelle Analyse der Universitätsjubiläen in Göttingen, Leipzig, Münster und Rostock (1919–1969). Berlin 2014 (Geschichtskultur und historisches Lernen 13). pp. 13–14. The author refers to Blume, Thomas: Institutionalität und Repräsentation. In: Dauer durch Wandel. Institutionelle Ordnungen zwischen Verstetigung und Transformation. Ed. by Stephan Müller, Gary S. Schaal and Claudia Tiersch. Köln 2002. pp. 73–87, p. 73.

12 Schmidt-Lauber, Brigitta: Die (sich) feiernde Universität. Bedeutungsstiftungen durch Jubiläen. In: Eybl/Müller/Pelz, Jubiläum (cf. note 2), pp. 99–114, p. 99.

13 Schmidt-Lauber, Universität (cf. note 12), pp. 110–111; Hahn, Alois: Jubiläum und Gedenken im Spannungsfeld zwischen Erinnern und Vergessen. In: Eybl/Müller/Pelz, Jubiläum (cf. note 2), pp. 11–25, p. 11.

14 Müller, Universität (cf. note 2), p. 85; Cf. Müller, Winfried: Inszenierte Erinnerung an welche Tradition? Universitätsjubiläen im 19. Jahrhundert. In: Die Berliner Universität im Kontext der deutschen Universitätslandschaft nach 1800, um 1860 und um 1910. Ed. by Rüdiger vom Bruch. With the assistance of Elisabeth Müller-Luckner. München 2010 (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien 76). pp. 73–92, pp. 84–85.

At this point, it can be said that university anniversaries serve to a large extent to consciously give meaning to the university's work internally. They also contribute to self-assurance and in order to intensify communication between the university and the public.¹⁵ University anniversaries have therefore quite rightly been described as "expressions of life of the institution".¹⁶ This applies all the more to the academic celebrations of German universities during the time of the Nazi regime and especially during the Second World War.¹⁷ The present contribution deals with this subject which, in the sense of an integrated university history as proposed most recently by Anton F. Guhl,¹⁸ compares two different types of universities in order to recognize the special and specific nature of anniversary celebrations during World War II: the University of Kiel in northern Germany and the Vienna Institute of Technology in Austria.

First of all, both universities celebrated the anniversaries of their founding in 1940 (Kiel: 275 years; Vienna: 125 years), and thus in a period when the war had little impact on public life in the German *Reich*.¹⁹ At the same time, the Nazi regime had become considerably more radical than in the foregoing years of peace and had increasingly called on the universities to participate in the war effort – a demand that many young as well as established humanities and natural sciences scholars voluntarily complied with, since many considered war research to be a "patriotic duty".²⁰ Furthermore, previous university anniversaries had been can-

15 Auge, Oliver: Die CAU feiert: Ein Gang durch 350 Jahre akademischer Festgeschichte. In: Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel. 350 Jahre Wirken in Stadt, Land und Welt. Ed. by Oliver Auge. Kiel 2015. pp. 216–259, p. 216.

16 Eckardt, Hans Wilhelm: Akademische Feiern als Selbstdarstellung der Hamburger Universität im "Dritten Reich". In: Hochschulalltag im "Dritten Reich". Die Hamburger Universität 1933–1945. Vol. 1. Ed. by Hans Wilhelm Eckardt, Holger Fischer and Ludwig Huber. Berlin 1991. pp. 179–200, p. 179.

17 Cf. in detail for the universities of Goettingen, Leipzig, and Rostock the study by Drüding, Jubelfeiern (cf. note 11), pp. 103–162.

18 Cf. Guhl, Anton F.: Perspektiven einer integrierten Hochschulgeschichte. In: Jahrbuch für Universitätsgeschichte 23 (2020) [in print].

19 Admittedly, the selection of the study objects could have been different or broader, since celebrating the anniversary of a university founding was not uncommon during the Nazi regime. Between 1933 and 1944, 16 of the 23 universities of the so-called "Altreich" celebrated their anniversaries: Jena (1933), Leipzig (1934), Berlin (1935), Breslau (1936), Heidelberg (1936), Göttingen (1937), Köln (1938), Frankfurt/Main (1939), Kiel (1940), München (1942), Erlangen (1943), Bonn (1943), Hamburg (1944), Königsberg (1944), Halle-Wittenberg (1944), and Rostock (1944). The compilation is based on Drüding, Jubelfeiern (cf. note 11), p. 16.

20 See Grüttner, Michael: Die deutschen Universitäten unter dem Hakenkreuz. In: Zwischen Autonomie und Anpassung. Universitäten in den Diktaturen des 20. Jahrhunderts. Ed. by John Connelly and Michael Grüttner. Paderborn 2003. pp. 67–100, p. 99.

celebrated, since both in 1865 and in 1915, political events or war threatened to overshadow the celebrations – or scientists simply did not feel like celebrating.²¹ By 1940, the responsible actors in Vienna and Kiel were, therefore, keen to hold the anniversary celebrations despite the war events. Last but not least, the excellent availability of sources with regard to published commemorative and honorary lectures suggests this selection and comparison.

It is not the aim of this article to analyze the celebrations of the Kiel and the Vienna university anniversaries in 1940 in their entirety. Rather, they will be understood as a kind of time-specific culture of memory, as objectivizations of the interpretation of history and the *zeitgeist*. It therefore seems appropriate to examine these anniversaries as a space of communication in which the universities formulated their claims of validity for the future vis-à-vis politics and society, but also articulated hopes and wishes. Therefore, the focus lies essentially on analyzing the ceremonial and honorary lectures as well as the festive publications issued in the context of the celebrations, whereas traditional elements of university anniversaries of the time such as torchlight processions and festive parades, concerts and evening parties, honorary graduations and ceremonial services, honorary congratulations and sporting competitions are not considered.²²

Kiel 1940: “There is no reason for lavish celebrations, especially in times of war”

Unlike in 1915, when the University of Kiel had foregone celebration for its 250th anniversary, the rector’s Office in 1940 decided to hold celebrations in the week from 26 October to 2 November 1940, despite the war: One of the rea-

21 The decision of the University of Kiel’s authorities to forego a celebration in 1865 can be analyzed against the background of the German-Danish War of 1864 and the Gastein Convention of August 1865, according to which the duchies were not to form an independent principality under the rule of Duke Frederick VIII. Instead, Schleswig was placed under Prussian administration and Holstein under Austrian administration. In contrast, the Vienna Institute of Technology had canceled its celebrations in view of the 500th anniversary of the University of Vienna. The 250th and 100th anniversary celebrations of the two universities in 1915, which had been planned for a long time in Kiel and Vienna, did not take place due to the First World War. Cf. Auge, CAU (cf. note 15), pp. 231, 235; Lechner, Alfred: Technische Hochschule Wien. In: Die deutschen Technischen Hochschulen. Ihre Gründung und geschichtliche Entwicklung. München 1941 (Die Bücher der Deutschen Technik). pp. 275–291, pp. 285, 288.

22 For the traditional elements of university celebrations, see Becker, Jubiläen (cf. note 7), pp. 92–99.

sons for this step was given by Hans-Helmut Dietze, who was a lecturer in constitutional and international law at the time. In contemporary Nazi jargon, he referred to the ideology of the *Volksgemeinschaft* when he wrote, for example, that “genuine celebrations” can only be “borne and shaped by a community”:

While, particularly in times of war, there is no occasion for lavish festivities, it is almost necessary for the sort of community that every German university must reasonably represent itself and does, from time to time, account for its development and work in a celebratory manner. [...] Thus, the University of Kiel has, not despite the war but just because of the war, taken the opportunity, after 275 years since its founding, to deliver a full report that has, especially in recent times in which our German people has taken up the final fight for its own and the European future, not failed to make an impression.²³

Dietze’s unequivocal reasoning thus shows in a prototypical way that university anniversaries are an objectivation of the spirit of the times: a self-creation of the institution university directed towards the present and related to the future. This becomes even clearer in another quote by the jurist, which is written in an equally martial tone:

The weapons of spirit that have always been forged at German universities have at all times influenced the fate of the *Reich*. Especially today, they constitute to a large extent the German war potential and if one wanted to forego them, the hegemony of the empire would suffer losses that could not be compensated. War, indeed the lives of people in general, is in a decisive way a spiritual process [...].²⁴

The author is undoubtedly concerned here with the legitimacy of the university itself, referring primarily to the current and future tasks of higher education and listing the role of universities during wartime as the prime argument. He does not, however, attach any greater importance to the historicity of the University of Kiel. Instead, in an echo of the ceremonial speech of Kiel’s rector Paul Ritterbusch, he rather links his chain of argumentation to the “scientific clarification of burning contemporary problems”, whereby the universities only “open the way for the march into a greater German future”.²⁵ All in all, Dietze’s remarks show numerous parallels to Ritterbusch’s prestige project, the “Kriegseinsatz

²³ Dietze, Hans-Helmut: Von der 275-Jahrfeier der Universität Kiel. In: Kieler Blätter (1941). pp. 62–64, p. 62. This quotation and the ones that follow have been translated by the authors and the editors from German to English.

²⁴ Dietze, 275-Jahrfeier (cf. note 23), p. 62.

²⁵ Dietze, 275-Jahrfeier (cf. note 23), p. 64.

der Geisteswissenschaften" (war effort of the humanities).²⁶ It appears that celebrating the founding anniversary with its prominent guests provided a suitable stage for the promotion of new political and scientific concepts. In this case, the two men from Kiel tried to integrate the universities in the "Third Reich" fully into the political and social discourse via war-related sciences. Until then, the Nazi regime had largely ignored the potentially war-decisive factor of science and, moreover, acted to a large extent in a rather bewildered manner until 1942/43.²⁷ In 1940, only individual scientific, medical, and technical disciplines, if any, were considered important to the war and received little financial support. Especially the small and medium-sized universities, which suffered particularly from the conscription of their students to the front, feared for their existence.

Ever since the Nazis had come to power, the "spectre" of a temporary or permanent shutdown of individual universities, either in their entirety or with regard to selected institutions – such as theological faculties – had haunted university authorities.²⁸ The sheer existence of the only full university of Schleswig-Holstein was not considered secure as the efforts by various state and party offices to suspend the University of Kiel for the duration of the war for financial reasons posed a threat that should not be underestimated. The university had constantly countered these state plans with ideological, cultural, and political arguments and thus ensured that both teaching and research were largely continued until late 1944. A university anniversary can therefore be understood as a useful or seemingly indispensable means for promoting the social relevance

26 For the "Kriegseinsatz der Geisteswissenschaften" and its initiator, see fundamentally Hausmann, Frank-Rutger: "Deutsche Geisteswissenschaft" im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Die "Aktion Ritterbusch" (1940–1945). 3rd ed. Heidelberg 2007 (Studien zur Wissenschafts- und Universitätsgeschichte 12); Göllnitz, Martin: Paul Ritterbusch. In: Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften. Vol. 1: Biographien. Ed. by Michael Fahlbusch, Ingo Haar and Alexander Pinwinkler. 2nd Ed. Berlin/Boston 2017. pp. 640–645.

27 Cf. Grüttner, Universitäten (cf. note 20), pp. 99–100; see for a different assessment which emphasizes an earlier and broader National Socialist research involvement than commonly analyzed: Maier, Helmut: Autarkie- und Rüstungsforschung und die Technischen Hochschulen im "Dritten Reich". In: Die Technische Hochschule München im Nationalsozialismus. Ed. by Wolfgang A. Herrmann and Winfried Nerdinger. München 2018. pp. 34–49; Hanel, Melanie: Strukturwandel im Zeichen von Aufrüstung und Krieg. In: Epochenschwelle in der Wissenschaft. Beiträge zu 140 Jahren TH/TU Darmstadt (1877–2017). Ed. by Christof Dipper et al. Darmstadt 2017. pp. 66–73.

28 Cf. Göllnitz, Martin: "Hier schweigen die Musen" – Über die erfolgten Schließungen und geplanten Aufhebungen der Christiana Albertina. In: Auge, Christian-Albrechts-Universität (cf. note 15), pp. 260–276, pp. 266–269; Göllnitz, Martin: Der Student als Führer? Handlungsmöglichkeiten eines jungakademischen Funktionärskorps am Beispiel der Universität Kiel (1927–1945). Ostfildern 2018 (Kieler Historische Studien 44). pp. 459–460.

of one's own institution in times of war, since they helped to mobilize a great deal of media and political interest – as is evident from the list of invited guests and speakers.²⁹

The University of Kiel used the anniversary as a suitable opportunity to present itself in the societal and national limelight and claimed that its own institution was of enormous importance to the German people and their future. The prevailing commitment to the Nazi state and the obligation to cooperate in the future, especially in the context of the regime's expansive policies, were the central elements of the celebratory rhetoric. The instrumentalization of university history culminated in the ceremonial speech by rector Ritterbusch, who dealt with the development of the university since 1933 and who inseparably linked the fate of the nation and the fate of the university.³⁰ At the end of a concise list of significant events in the history of Kiel's university, he pledged to the "truth of the National Socialist movement", whose significance was further emphasized by the reference to a renewal of German science.³¹ In his address, Ritterbusch painted a picture of a university that was eager to fight and whose duty was to participate in the victorious outcome of the war:

War has certainly interrupted many things. Above all, it has often given a different direction to the active forces of our university. But the war has also proved to be the driving force behind the intellectual life of our university. Moreover, a high number of lecturers and assistants of our university is fulfilling their duty as soldiers. All the stronger must the efforts of those, who have not been granted the opportunity to serve their fatherland in arms, be to stand up for their people with mental weapons.³²

Ritterbusch's solemn speech, which was primarily addressed to the assembled Nazi celebrities of Schleswig-Holstein and which was printed shortly after the anniversary, clearly shows the extent to which university anniversaries represent an objectification of the spirit of the times, whose direct addressee is the respective present. By creating performative and discursive affiliations – the German people – and demarcations – especially with regard to "all elements alien to race and politically unacceptable"³³ –, the university as an institution legitimizes itself for the years to come. Constitutive elements of this jubilee and historical

²⁹ Cf. the instrumentalization of the 525th anniversary of the University of Rostock in 1944, as analyzed by Drüding, *Jubelfeiern* (cf. note 11), pp. 152–157.

³⁰ Ritterbusch, Paul: *Die Entwicklung der Universität Kiel seit 1933*. In: *Kieler Blätter* (1941). pp. 5–23, p. 5.

³¹ Ritterbusch, *Entwicklung* (cf. note 30), p. 10.

³² Ritterbusch, *Entwicklung* (cf. note 30), pp. 22–23.

³³ Ritterbusch, *Entwicklung* (cf. note 30), p. 10.

staging are thus the concepts of self-assurance and the creation of meaning, from which it is possible to derive what the institution of higher education claims to represent on the occasion of the jubilee celebration and what it strives to be in the future. Seen in this light, university anniversaries basically mark a struggle for the interpretative sovereignty over one's "own history" and the assertion of claims to validity, which, as Winfried Müller already emphasized, could stand in stark contradiction to historical reality.³⁴

When looking at the published ceremonial speeches, it is also noticeable that there are almost no references to earlier achievements, important scholars, or to the position of the University of Kiel within the German university landscape, as was typical for this text genre up to the Weimar Republic.³⁵ Instead, oaths and expressions of political loyalty predominate, within which a certain insecurity on the part of the university representatives is just as evident as are the vague attempts at a new self-legitimation, primarily oriented to the privations and requirements of the war. The addressees of this marked readiness to fight were primarily the party functionaries who sat in the audience. With Hinrich Lohse (*Gauleiter* of Schleswig-Holstein) and Bernhard Rust (*Reichsminister* of science, education and culture), two high-ranking representatives of the NSDAP also spoke at the Kiel anniversary. The *Gauleiter* of Schleswig-Holstein in particular propagated the complete subordination of the universities to National Socialist ideology:

Thus, we see – also in the development of our own university – how the intellectual life and scientific endeavor, which universities were supposed to support and nurture, had changed. Instead of preserving scientific findings and dogmas, which earlier had resisted political hardships and storms, room was made for stronger forces and powers which were to be sought particularly within the camp of Jewish influence. This Marxist-liberal judaization of Germany and of German universities was so strong that no power in Germany could break it anymore. Not until the Lance Corporal of the past world war, Adolf Hitler, has, with his National Socialist movement and its inherent revolutionary force, swept away this haunting and wiped it out forever.³⁶

As in Ritterbusch's work, the National Socialist assumption of power was glorified almost mythically with the help of various rhetorical elements and stylized into the beginning of a new era of German science. This clumsy and obvious

³⁴ Müller, *Universitätsjubiläen* (cf. note 14), p. 84.

³⁵ Cf. also the festive contributions of the Leipzig anniversary in 1934 as described by Drüding, *Jubelfeiern* (cf. note 11), pp. 112–114.

³⁶ Rede des Gauleiters und Oberpräsidenten Hinrich Lohse, gehalten anlässlich der 275-Jahrfeier der Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel. In: *Kieler Blätter* (1941). pp. 1–4, p. 2.

demonstration of the University of Kiel's integration into the Nazi regime was ultimately concluded by *Reichsminister* Rust, who, however, showed hardly able to contribute an individual note and essentially praised the "outstanding achievements of the University of Kiel, especially since 1936".³⁷ The anniversary as a whole, thus, remained related to the immediate present. Kiel's university history was only marginally touched upon, and in those instances where history was addressed, it was referred to almost exclusively as a negative counterpart.

Another central medium of university self-representation is the *Festschrift* published in the context of Kiel's university anniversary, which was written "on the home front, under English air raids and the booming defensive fire of the anti-aircraft guns".³⁸ Upon reading the 23 contributions, it becomes clear quickly that they are strongly influenced by ideology and that the authors endeavored to view the historical stages of the university's history from a National Socialist perspective. As was customary in earlier *Festschriften*, the essays naturally focus on the "great minds" of the university; insertions on student and city history, on the other hand, are usually cursory. In light of the political-ideological enslavement of the university's history, however, it is surprising that the editors do not make a sweeping condemnation of Jewish university teachers in their foreword:

As was the case in other universities, Jews have also here forced their way into the teaching staff in the course of the nineteenth century, first only occasionally, then in higher numbers. For many years, they have represented teaching and research in the areas of German and Germanic law but also exercised their influence within the natural sciences. Their names are mentioned in the articles on the history of science. It is up to future investigations to assess and synthesize the significance of Jewry for the University of Kiel and its individual faculties.³⁹

Apparently, the University of Kiel took its commemorative publication, like its anniversary, as a concrete occasion to give a small account of its own achievements over the past 275 years and to impose new obligations on itself for the future. The ideological contortions that the authors were prepared to make, some of which even distorted the university's history, once again give an idea of the extent to which the celebrations in 1940 were marked by political self-mobiliza-

³⁷ Dietze, 275-Jahrfeier (cf. note 23), p. 63.

³⁸ Ritterbusch, Paul, Hanns Löhr, Otto Scheel and Gottfried Ernst Hoffmann: Vorwort. In: *Festschrift zum 275-jährigen Bestehen der Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel*. Ed. by Paul Ritterbusch et al. Leipzig 1940. pp. V–VI, p. V.

³⁹ Ritterbusch/Löhr/Scheel/Hoffmann, Vorwort (cf. note 38), p. VI.

tion and, above all, served to secure the continued existence of the university in the face of war.

Vienna 1940: “This celebration marks [...] the beginning of a new period in the history of our university”

The Viennese celebrations on November 6–8, 1940, picked up almost seamlessly where the Kiel jubilee had left off. Moreover, the two anniversaries resembled each other in the diction of their ceremonial speeches. The speeches held in Vienna also focused on the inner cohesion of the institution on the one hand, and on the other hand on the presentation and self-assurance of its members vis-à-vis representatives from society, politics, the military, and the economy. At Bernhard Rust’s express wish and despite the war, the anniversary celebration turned out to be more elaborate than originally planned. Rust justified this with the “special significance of the university for southeastern Europe.”⁴⁰ While the academic celebrations in Kiel could only boast with the attendance of Rust (the *Reichsminister* of science, education and culture) and Lohse (*Gauleiter* of Schleswig-Holstein), the 125th anniversary of the Vienna Institute of Technology, since 1872 a technical college (*Technische Hochschule, TH*)⁴¹, was, to a certain extent, politically ennobled by the presence of the high-ranking SS- or *Wehrmacht* officials Ernst Kaltenbrunner and Baldur von Schirach, and by four *Reichsminister*: In addition to Rust, Fritz Todt, Johann Ludwig Graf Schwerin von Krosigk, and Julius Dorpmüller took part.⁴² The ceremonial speech was held by the universi-

40 Cf. on this and on the following quotation Mikoletzky, Juliane: Die TH in Wien im Nationalsozialismus – Hochschulalltag und Hochschulpolitik / The TH in Vienna in the National Socialist Period – Routines and Politics at the TH. In: Juliane Mikoletzky and Paulus Ebner: Die Geschichte der Technischen Hochschule in Wien 1914–1955. Bd. 2: Nationalsozialismus – Krieg – Rekonstruktion (1938–1955) / The Technische Hochschule in Vienna 1914–1955. Vol. 2: National Socialism – War – Reconstruction (1938–1955). Wien etc. 2016 (Technik für Menschen. 200 Jahre Technische Universität Wien 1). pp. 89–111, p. 103.

41 The Imperial and Royal Polytechnical Institute of Vienna had been appointed a “Technische Hochschule” (abbreviated as TH) in 1872 and was renamed as technical university (“Technische Universität”) in 1975.

42 The participation of politicians was, of course, not a specific feature of university anniversaries during the Nazi regime, but had, according to Thomas P. Becker, already been established on the eve of the First World War, see Becker, Jubiläen (cf. note 7), pp. 103, 107; see also Drüding, Jubelfeiern (cf. note 11).

ty's rector, the architect Fritz Haas, who first spoke about the history of the acclaimed institution and then linked the rise of German technology with the person of Adolf Hitler:

But it [German technology] was only able to fulfil its political task after the *Führer* had given the life of the entire German people a new meaning and had thus replaced the pure economic purpose of German technology with an enhanced political mission. Like this, German technology has become one of the most powerful means, not only to unify the German people but also to realize the new world order; a task for which we, who hot-heartedly live the fight and work of this big time, are called to cooperate.⁴³

Although Haas – probably out of consideration for the international guests – did not refer directly to the Second World War, it must have been clear to the audience what was meant by “this great time” and the establishment of a “new world order”.⁴⁴ For the benefit of technology and the German people, the rector thus legitimized the criminal expansion of the National Socialists throughout Europe. At the same time, he placed his institution and the technical sciences at the service of the regime without hesitation, when he spoke, for example, of training the academic “youth to be creative and energetic men” whose *raison d'être* was to “be the guarantor of the future of our people”. In contrast to his Kiel colleague, however, Haas did not formulate any fixed goals or tasks for the technical universities; instead he even left their future development open:

Here we stand in in these historic regalia with golden chains, in front of the uniforms and brown shirts of the [National Socialist] fighters, and with it, we express symbolically the legacy we have to pass on. The possession and management of this legacy obliges us to most faithfully protect and constantly increase it. [...] But we also see the possibilities which we are given in the midst of this time of a hard, but light-shining reality, where so many things struggle for a new form, to find also our new form, which corresponds to the new sense of a National Socialist university.⁴⁵

With his remarks, Haas certainly did not question the future of his institution, only its concrete form, as can be observed from the fact that throughout his speech, he repeatedly endeavored to emphasize the national value of technology. According to Haas, even Hitler had attested German technology a leading role in the “unification process of the German people and in securing its existence”.⁴⁶

⁴³ Haas, Fritz: Die Festrede. In: Die Technische Hochschule in Wien zur Feier des 125jährigen Bestandes am 7. November 1940. Wien 1940. pp. 5–16, p. 5.

⁴⁴ Haas, Festrede (cf. note 43), p. 12.

⁴⁵ Haas, Festrede (cf. note 43), p. 12.

⁴⁶ Haas, Festrede (cf. note 43), p. 16.

Similar to Ritterbusch's speech in Kiel, a clear tendency towards the staging of the anniversary and the respective history is observable in the Vienna case as well, which was immanent to its Technical Institute during the Second World War. The conspicuously strong discrepancy between a critical and reflective pre-occupation with the institution's history and the outright and loud expressions of loyalty to National Socialism suggests that the anniversary celebration was, as in the example of Kiel, primarily placed under the sign of the present and a future self-reassurance. In addition, the "national" (or nationalistic) consciousness of Viennese university professors should be emphasized to representatives from politics and society.

Much like in Kiel, the *Reichsminister* of science and education Rust did not miss the opportunity to speak to the Vienna audience and outline his guiding ideas on German science under National Socialism. These, however, remained highly abstract and imprecise. The technical universities in general and the Viennese institution in particular hardly found their way into Rust's speech, which for the bigger part revolved around the "reality of life" of science, the wording of which largely corresponded to the ceremonial speech he had given in Kiel.⁴⁷ After Rust, Fritz Todt took the floor to convey the wish of the NSDAP that the TH Wien would continue to educate "not only outstanding engineers, but above all [...] National Socialist engineers", in whose work the world view of Adolf Hitler was expressed.⁴⁸ Indirectly, the *Reichminister* for armaments and ammunition, who had a doctorate in civil engineering and had studied at the Technical College Munich, hereby assured his academic audience of the continued existence of the Vienna Institute of Technology. Haas and the other present members of the university were certainly relieved to hear that, with Fritz Todt, they had won a weighty advocate.

While the first part of the anniversary celebration was primarily reserved for politics, the second part belonged almost exclusively to technical sciences – except for the opening address by Vice Mayor of Vienna Hanns Blaschke, who was also an *SS-Standartenführer* and alumnus of the celebrating institution. Blaschke dealt with the "deep dissension" in the German people and the influence of "French *laissez faire*" on technology, which he described with the buzzword

47 Anon.: "Des Führers Wiener Lehrjahre – eine bleibende Verpflichtung". Die Reichsminister Rust, Dr. Todt, Dormmüller und Reichsleiter von Schirach bei der 125-Jahr-Feier der Wiener Technischen Hochschule. In: *Völkischer Beobachter* 53:313 (1940). pp. 1–2, p. 2.

48 Anon.: "Des Führers" (cf. note 47), p. 2.

“machine storm” and called the “scourge of humanity”.⁴⁹ In agreement with his previous speakers, he elevated National Socialism to a form of salvation, supposedly successful in reconciling the German people with technical progress. In summary, it can be noted that in his lecture, Blaschke established a tightly woven web between the development of technology in the Nazi regime and the “liberation of the people”, whereby he attested the Technical College in Vienna a model function in this process.⁵⁰

The six subsequent honorary lectures then focused on the technical sciences and were aimed specifically at an academically and technically educated audience, without referring to contemporary political issues on a larger scale although even in these lectures, the political *zeitgeist* was reflected, at least in places.⁵¹ The acclaimed institution is also only occasionally mentioned in the published lectures. This is probably related to the fact that the speakers were primarily interested in explaining their own fields of research to the audience. However, since the speakers were all Viennese graduates, the relevance of their own alma mater to the present and future society was at least indirectly emphasized.

In his history of the Vienna Institute of Technology, which was published two years after the anniversary and whose printing costs were covered by the *Reichsforschungsrat* (Reich Research Council) “in the middle of the greatest war”, Alfred Lechner portrayed the university from an “all-German point of view”.⁵² In his short survey, the author vowed “to describe to the reader the development and flourishing of the Vienna Institute of Technology, its fate in turbulent times, but also in quiet times, and to report on the struggle and failures of its founders and later leaders, on the merits and the rough edges of the personalities who worked at it”.⁵³ In designing his study, however, Lechner did not aim for a local historical perspective. Rather, his cause was to portray the origins and development of the institution from an “all-German point of view”. As a child of his time, he also deployed common prejudices or transfigurations, such as the “heroic struggle” of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in World War I, which failed

49 Blaschke, Hanns: Eröffnungsansprache. In: Ehrenvorträge zur Feier des 125jährigen Bestandes der Technischen Hochschule in Wien am 7. November 1940. Ed. by Alfred Lechner. Wien 1941. pp. 7–9, p. 7.

50 Blaschke, Eröffnungsansprache (cf. note 49), p. 8.

51 Brandl, Ludwig: Ausbau großer Ströme in Europa und Asien. In: Lechner, Ehrenvorträge (cf. note 49), pp. 37–47, p. 47; Buol, Heinrich von: Die Stellung der Technischen Hochschule im Fortschritt der Elektrotechnik. In: Lechner, Ehrenvorträge (cf. note 49), pp. 10–17, p. 12.

52 Lechner, Alfred: Geschichte der Technischen Hochschule in Wien (1815–1940). Ed. by the Vienna Institute of Technology. Wien 1942.

53 Lechner, Geschichte (cf. note 52), p. VI; see there also for the following quotation.

only because the “home front [...] had collapsed”, although the “front [...] had stood firm”.⁵⁴ Pervaded by an anti-democratic spirit, the author draws his history of the Technical University against the background of liberal and international currents which had allegedly caused an “intellectual and moral low” in the 1920s, followed by a phase of “oppression and arbitrariness” for the nationalistic university teachers and students from 1934 onwards.⁵⁵ Thus, the jubilee was once again associated with the interpretation that it was solely thanks to National Socialism that the Technical University and the technical sciences could have been saved from their impending demise.⁵⁶ The final point of the thoroughly political chronicle is the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the university, which took place “in the midst of a war forced upon the German people” and which, according to Lechner, “marked the end of the past, but also the beginning of a new period in the history of our university”.⁵⁷ After reading the *Festschrift*, there is no doubt that this new era can be observed both in the “construction” and the “defense of the *Reich*”, whereby Lechner performatively and discursively derived the university’s self-assurance and foundation of meaning for the present and the future.

Conclusion

In view of these numerous manifest and indirect expressions of loyalty to National Socialism, it is astonishing that the Prussian finance minister made the pejorative statement in 1942 that the “jubilee addiction of universities and the opportunism with which they are pursued” should be put to an end.⁵⁸ Because the framework conditions for anniversary celebrations had shifted radically since 1933, a considerable degree of self-mobilization of the universities for the goals of the Nazi regime was almost inevitable. At the same time, universities such as those in Kiel and Vienna made use of this form of self-mobilization, since it served to provide both internal and external meaning. After all, the celebrations did not take place in a vacuum, but rather addressed the respective present and thus formed a political sounding board which, especially in times of war, helped to convince an academically educated audience of the supposed achievements of National Socialism with regard to the development of German

⁵⁴ Lechner, *Geschichte* (cf. note 52), p. 196.

⁵⁵ Lechner, *Geschichte* (cf. note 52), pp. 208, 212.

⁵⁶ Lechner, *Geschichte* (cf. note 52), pp. 214–215.

⁵⁷ Lechner, *Geschichte* (cf. note 52), pp. 215–216.

⁵⁸ Cited after Drüding, *Jubelfeiern* (cf. note 11), p. 107.

universities, to justify the privations of the war, and to give new impetus to the desire for the “international standing of German science”.⁵⁹ At this point, of course, it should be noted that universities and technical universities benefited differently from the Nazi regime’s allocation of resources.⁶⁰ Financial resources were given primarily to institutions involved in war preparation and warfare. This was easier for the technical universities with their emphasis on the natural sciences and especially technical sciences than for the humanities, cultural studies, or political science faculties. Nevertheless, the distribution of resources was not necessarily an automatic process with a guaranteed outcome, which is why the technical universities and their professors had to constantly compete for the regime’s favor and resources.

When it comes to summing up the anniversaries in Kiel and Vienna from the perspective of an integrated university history, it is important to note that many organizational, social and functional aspects of the celebrations were similar in nature. At the same time, however, differences can be identified with regard to the concrete objectives of the two anniversaries: Whereas the Kiel actors were concerned with a complete usurpation of the sciences by National Socialism, both in the context of the Second World War and for the period afterwards, those responsible in Vienna formulated their ideas for the future far more vaguely and avoided tangible demands or conceptions. Or to put it in the words of Markus Drüding: Anniversary celebrations in principle remained media of academic self-representation, but at the same time took on a character of political forums.⁶¹ It was in these political forums that the *raison d’être* of universities in the then present and future National Socialist state was negotiated and various components of anniversary celebrations were instrumentalized for the purpose

59 Anon.: 125 Jahre Technische Hochschule Wien. In: Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung vereinigt mit “Zeitschrift für Bauwesen” 60:45 (1940). pp. 727–728, p. 727. The term “interpretive power”, which is closely linked to the catchword “Weltgeltung deutscher Wissenschaft” (the world renown of German science), refers to the idea of a resource sovereignty offensively presented by National Socialist university politicians. This sense of sovereignty resulted from the propagation of a hegemonic claim in the fields of science and research; on this see in particular Göllnitz, Martin: Der Ostseeraum als Konfliktzone eines wissenschaftlichen Geltungsstrebens. Die Deutschen Wissenschaftlichen Institute in Skandinavien (1941–1945). In: Konflikt und Kooperation. Die Ostsee als Handlungs- und Kulturraum. Ed. by Martin Göllnitz et al. Berlin 2019. pp. 45–70.

60 Cf. on this and the following Hachtmann, Rüdiger: Unter rassistischen und bellizistischen Vorzeichen – die Wissenschaften 1933–1945: In: Die Technische Hochschule München im Nationalsozialismus. Ed. by Wolfgang A. Herrmann and Winfried Nerdinger. München 2018. pp. 12–33, pp. 16–18.

61 Drüding, Jubelfeiern (cf. note 11), p. 157.

of placing science, research, and teaching in the service of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.