

Proc. Rudolf Virchow med. Soc., New York 1963; Vol. 22 pp. 46-49 (S. Karger, Basel/
New York 1965)

IN MEMORIAM: RUDOLF A. STERN

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To-night we meet here to pay homage to the memory of a colleague to whom our Society feels greatly indebted. RUDOLF STERN died November 9th, 1962. He was born in Breslau, March 15th, 1895 the son of Professor RICHARD STERN and his wife Toni, nee Asch.

After having attended the St. Johannes Gymnasium in Breslau, he began to study medicine but joined the army when the first World War broke out. He became a lieutenant, served with the Luftwaffe and was decorated with the Iron Crosses 2. and 1. Class.

After the war he resumed his studies in Munich and Breslau, where he graduated in 1921. He became an assistant of MINKOWSKI but on the latter's suggestion soon went to FRITZ HABER in Berlin, where in FREUNDLICH's department he acquired a special knowledge in colloidal chemistry. Despite a very fruitful activity here, he accepted MINKOWSKI's invitation to return to Breslau in 1923, because he definitely wanted to be a physician like his father and both his grandfathers and not purely a theoretician, working in a laboratory. In 1925 he became a Privatdozent; in 1930 he was named 'ausserordentlicher Professor'. The Nürnberg Laws removed him from office in 1935. The Government of the German Federal Republic made him 'Ordentlicher Professor emeritus', dating back this appointment to 1939.

During the last years of his connection with the University

Hospital in Breslau he worked at BITTORF's request at the Poliklinik, once directed by his father.

He came to the United States in 1938 and worked here with FRANCIS CARTER WOOD in the Cancer Research Department of Columbia University. Subsequently he was connected with Metropolitan Hospital and Flower and Fifth Avenue Hospital.

Having passed his State Board examination in 1939 he developed a very successful practice in his specialty.

He joined our Society in 1941. After having served in its Executive Committee in several capacities, he became its President in 1959. During his term he not only attended to the regular duties of this office with energy and tact, but tirelessly prepared the arrangements intended for the Centennial of our Society, among them the Festschrift, finally edited by BERBERICH, LAX AND STERN. It proved to be one of the major successes of the Jubilee year. He was also a Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine and a member of the Medical Society of the County of New York.

The scientific development of RUDOLF STERN has been mainly influenced by two men: OSKAR MINKOWSKI AND FRITZ HABER. His achievements have been evaluated for our Bulletin more competently than I could do it by his long-time coassistant and friend MARTIN NOTHMANN. He discussed his publications on colloidal chemistry, on diseases of the blood, and on metabolism. According to NOTHMANN, STERN was the first in Germany to study the effect of fats with uneven numbers of C atoms on ketonuria. A field of his special interest was that of trauma and internal diseases, resulting in his book 'Traumatic Origin of Internal Diseases'. It was published in 1930 as the 3rd edition of a book his father had published 23 years earlier. Due to the long period elapsed, this 3rd edition had to be and indeed was an almost completely new book; it became a standard work on the subject. In 1945, it was published in English.

In the execution of his experimental work he proved to be meticulously accurate, scrupulously critical in evaluating and very comprehensive in publishing his results. All these qualities made him an excellent teacher too, highly regarded and loved by his students who enjoyed his inspiration and guidance.

RUDOLF STERN's reserved attitude based on his extreme personal modesty made it hard for many to recognize in him the great warmhearted personality, the outstanding humanitarian he was. Therefore I wish to add some personal remarks derived from two experiences: a friendship which started ca 40 years ago and the fact that he was our physician for more than 30 years.

As a physician I could not imagine a better one: on the basis of his profound knowledge he led his patients like an energetic and loving father (even in his younger years) through the widely varying situations, serious and less serious ones, with which we confronted him in such a long relationship as ours. Whatever it was, he approached it with an objectivity which gave the patient and his family the sense of protection and security. He told you what to do, taking into consideration the realities of your personality, your specific living and working conditions and your very personal habits. He told you the truth as far as necessary for the success of his intentions; but he had the unique gift to do it in a way in which he would not scare or depress a patient but encourage him, make him feel safe. This trait of RUDOLF STERN was not a small help in making his medical knowledge so successful in its clinical administration.

These statements are based not only on my very personal experience for which 3 generations of my family owe him the deepest gratitude, but also on the experience of many patients we had in common. Since MARTIN NOTHMANN mentions the fact that CHAIM WEITZMAN was RUDOLF STERN's patient, I might add that this man in the most trying times of his life, carrying the tremendous burden of his self imposed responsibilities and in times of deep personal grief was attached to RUDOLF STERN by a—one must say—enviable confidence. I do not think it is exaggerated to say that some of WEITZMAN's successes here at that time would not have been possible without RUDOLF STERN's all embracing care. I may add that JOSEPH JADASSOHN, FRITZ HABER and his teacher OSKAR MINKOWSKI were also his very faithful patients.

Regarding our most personal relationship, our friendship started in our younger years in the promising times of what seemed to

be a rise, it stood the test of the discouraging times and events that followed and continued to prove its value during the period of restoration under absolutely new living and working conditions. It was fortified by RUDOLF STERN's integrity and his warmhearted reliability, and it was made so attractive and enjoyable by the combination of his personal charm with the high degree of culture as a scion of distinguished families, the humanistic tradition in which he was brought up, his profound knowledge of the literature, German as well as non-German, esthetic as well as historical and political, his brilliant wit, quick at repartee like a rapier, and his unrivaled art of story telling. All this made him not only an entertaining and interesting but an always inspiring companion whom one never left without having learned something. Unforgettable are the hours we were privileged to spend in the house of the Sterns in the old country and here.

His marriage to Dr. KAETHE BRIEGER of a family background similar to his but with apparently widely divergent scientific interests as a physicist developed most harmoniously and lasted over 43 years. Kaethe and their children Toni and Fritz, their spouses Dave and Peggy, and the grand-children gave RUDOLF STERN all the happiness a man's heart could desire; their development and their successes justifiably filled him with pride. They may feel the satisfaction that more than anything else they have helped to make him what he was and that they represent in fact what he himself considered the best gifts life had bestowed on him.

With them we will never forget him and gratefully cherish his memory.

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