

IN MEMORIAM*

DAVID KLEIN (1908-1993)

It is not an easy task to recall the life of someone who was a friend and with whom one shared professional activities during 26 years. I am afraid to forget to relate many important events, impressed as I am by the personality of David Klein.

To characterize David Klein is quite an enterprise which covers numerous activities and which scope forms a field in many domains.

David Klein deceased at 85 years in December 1993.

His youth and adolescence were marked by many crucial events. His parents were killed in a concentration camp by the Germans. Before entering medicine he was tempted at first by history, philosophy and subjects related to jewish culture. He started his medical studies in Germany, in Freiburg im Brisgau and ended them in Switzerland, in Basel.

Once again David Klein had to migrate because of the position of Germany towards the Jews. It is in Switzerland that he endly founds peace and had the opportunity to thrive. After during 11 years psychiatry, he specialized in human genetics, in Geneva.

Medical Doctor in the first place, David Klein ascerts himself in clinic. This alone would already be an achievement. We wish however to add some distinct and supplementary realisations. Several genetic diseases are named after David Klein and were described in close association with Franceschetti and Bamatter. David Klein was the promotor of at least 60 theses, he wrote several books, edited and created several reviews, as for instance the "Journal de Génétique Humaine", organized numerous congresses. He was the first professor of Human Genetics at Geneva University, and in Switzerland.

Besides his many activities, one has not to forget that he was among the firsts to join the World Federation of Neurology. Secretary of the Research Group of Neuropathology and Neurogenetics, he became Secretary and Treasurer of the Research Council and succeeded, a remarkable feat for this Research Council, to collect funds which helped development of its activities. The achievements of David Klein at the World Federation of Neurology were intelligent, efficient and disinterested. Should the World Federation of Neurology been able to rely more collaborators like himself, it might have known fewer struggles and developed more efficiently.

Unfortunately, men are concerned with themselves and their personal desires. Seldom are they idealist like David Klein with matters entrusted.

David Klein has faced often at the World Federation of Neurology pettiness and jealousy. This has never refrained him to accomplish his work with energy and broadness of mind. David Klein was a great scholar, highly cultured and above all a great man.

I remember, during our 26 years working side by side, a number of lectures in genetics, but also numerous in humanism and his broadness of mind. David Klein's departure has left much emptiness in our midts.

I wish to recall his memory and associate Jacqueline Klein, his companion and his collaborator. To end I wish that others and several David Klein were present in the World Federation of Neurology in order for it to develop and enrich.

Armand Lowenthal