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Fritz Jahr (1895-1953): a life story of the "inventor" of bioethics and a tentative reconstruction of the chronology of the discovery of his work

ABSTRACT

Until a few years ago, the American biochemist Van Rensselaer Potter (1911-2001) was generally acknowledged as the first person to have used the term "bioethics". In 1997, however, Rolf Löther mentioned the name of Fritz Jahr, whom Löther credited for having coined the word *Bio-Ethik* as early as 1927. News about the discovery of Fritz Jahr eventually spread and a more thorough analysis of Jahr's basic ideas has been offered by Hans-Martin Sass of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics.

While the work of Fritz Jahr has been investigated, his life is still quite a mystery. A preliminary search of the archives in Jahr's home city of Halle (Germany) has turned up a lot of interesting data.

Paul Max Fritz Jahr was born on January 18, 1895, in Halle in central Germany, where he spent his entire life. Schooled mostly in the Pietist Francke Foundation, at the University, Jahr studied philosophy, music, history, national economy, and theology.

Jahr started to teach as early as 1917, while within the Church he was active from 1925 onwards. First he was a curate at St. John's church in Dieskau, later in Braunsdorf, and finally, a pastor in Canena.

In 1932, Jahr married Elise Neuholz with whom he had no children. At the age of 38, on March 1, 1933, he withdrew from service. Fritz Jahr died on October 1, 1953, in Halle.

The facts related to Fritz Jahr's life, highlighted in the present paper, might explain not only the sources of his ideas, but also some important motivations for them. In our analyses of the "social circumstances" of a discovery, we often neglect the personal factors that may have influenced the author of the discovery. Therefore, the life story of Fritz Jahr might easily prove to be one of the life stories of bioethics itself.

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There is little doubt that the discovery of the work of Fritz Jahr was the most intriguing and promising moment in the last fifteen years of bioethics history. The importance of Van Rensselaer Potter's contribution has not thereby been diminished: on the contrary, some Jahr's ideas offer the way out of the peril bioethics was brought into by some our-time authors narrowing down the originally broad Pottetian concept to mere medical ethics. Expectedly, however, it has to be said that Jahr and Potter do also differ in their teachings: let us not forget that Jahr deduced the word *Bio-Ethik* out of "bios" and "ethics," therefore associating ethics primarily with life (not just of humans, but also of animals and plants), and not with science (as Potter will do almost half a century later, in the early 1970s).

Who, in fact, was Fritz Jahr?¹

About two dozens of articles, published since 1998, either only mention Fritz Jahr's name or deal with his most famous 1927 paper.² No single article about Fritz Jahr's life and activities, however, can be traced on the Internet or in any scientific journal.³ But a preliminary search of the archives in Jahr's home city of Halle (Germany) has turned up a lot of interesting data, explaining some of the circumstances influencing the "first creation" of bioethics.

Paul Max Fritz Jahr was born on January 18, 1895, in Halle on the river Saale in the Sachsen-Anhalt region of central Germany. Today, Halle is a city of approximately 234,000 inhabitants. Within a distance of about 150 km, many cultural centres are located, including Berlin, Leipzig, Magdeburg, Wittenberg (the home city of Martin Luther and the Protestant rebellion), Gotha, Erfurt, Weimar (Goethe's city), Jena, Bayreuth (Richard Wagner's city), Dresden, Chemnitz, Göttingen, etc. Halle was a province seat until the abolition of regional system in 1952 in Eastern Germany (after the restoration of the system in the reunited Germany in 1990, the seat passed over to Magdeburg). The name "Halle" (most probably deriving from a pre-Germanic word meaning "salt") was first mentioned in 806. Three centuries ago, the city had got a university (in 1694; today Martin Luther University at Halle-

¹ This section of the paper has partly been exploited in the article accepted for publication by *Synthesis Philosophical* Zagreb ("Fritz Jahr (1895-1953), the man who invented bioethics: a preliminary biography and bibliography").

² At least two of its translations into English are available: by Hans-Martin Sass (Jahr 1, no. 2, 2010, pp. 227-231; http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&tid_clanak_jezik=99887) and by José Roberto Goldim (<http://www.ufg.br/bioetica/jahr-eng.pdf>).

³ Our paper "Fritz Jahr: the invention of bioethics and beyond" has been accepted for publication and is expected to appear in the autumn 2011 issue of *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* (John Hopkins University Press).

Wittenberg), and later hosted also the German Academy of Sciences (the *Leopoldina*).⁴ It seems that Fritz Jahr never left his native city.

Fritz Jahr's father was Gustav Maximilian (1865-1930), insurance official,⁵ while his mother was Auguste Marie Langrock (1862-1921): the couple married in 1892.⁶ Although both father and mother had been Protestant, Fritz was baptized according to the Catholic ritual.⁷ It seems that the Jahr family was often changing home address (always remaining within the city): in 1895, when Fritz was born, they lived at Wilhelmstraße 41, a year later at Friedrichstraße 59. In 1899, they are to be found in Ackerstraße 6, in 1900, in Umlandstraße 11. In 1903, they moved into Forsterstraße 5, and in 1905, for a longer period into Völlberger Weg 28. In 1913, they finally moved to the "famous" Albert-Schmidt-Straße 8, occupying both the basement and the first floor.⁸

Fritz Jahr started elementary school in 1901 (*Mittelschule*), and secondary school in 1905 (*Oberrealschule*). Both schools were owned and run by the Francke Foundation,⁹ named after August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), who, together with Philipp Jakob Spener, had founded Pietism, a movement within the ranks of Protestantism, and brought its seat to Halle.¹⁰ The young Jahr's marks were not particularly high: he obtained a "2" (out of 5) for diligence (*Fleißigkeit*), a "2" for behaviour (*Betragen*), and a "2+" for overall results (*Leistungen*).¹¹ In Easter 1914, Jahr took his A-levels (*Abitur*), and in 1915, an additional exam of Latin and Greek languages. All together, he studied eight semesters: during 1914, mostly philosophy, music, history, national economy, and, from 1915 until 1919, theology (first exam

⁴ Beside Fritz Jahr, several other famous personalities, including Georg Friedrich Händel and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, have also originated from Halle.

⁵ Actually, his official title was changing from *Schreiber* (scribe), *Magistrats-Diätar/Diätar* (municipal clerk), and *Stenograph* (stenographer), to *Assekuranz-Beamter/Versicherungsbeamter* (insurance officer).

⁶ Archives of the Sachsen-Anhalt University and Province Library (*Archiv der Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalts*), Album No. 40, 1918.

⁷ Archives of the Francke Foundation (*Franckesche Stiftungen – Archiv*), *Schüleralbum von Ostern 1885 bis Ostern 1914: Realgymnasium der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle a.d. Saale III*, I S B I 7, No. 2072.

⁸ Halle City Archive (*Stadtarchiv Halle*), *Adressbuch für die Stadt Halle a.d. Saale* (Halle: Hendel, 1895-1900); *Hallesches Adressbuch für 1903* (Halle: Kutschbach, 1903); *Neues Adressbuch: Halle a. S. und Umgebung* (Halle: Scherl, 1905-1918). As it can be deduced from the listed address books, the family name "Jahr" was not rare in Halle of that time, sometimes being associated to 5 or 6 households (one Jahr was even the mayor of Halle, and another a senior pastor).

⁹ From the register books of the Foundation, it results that Fritz Jahr did not attend the Francke pre-school (*Vorschule*).

¹⁰ Friedrich Lauchert, "Pietism," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 12, edited by Charles George Herbermann (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911), 2 August 2010 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12080c.htm>>

¹¹ Archives of the Francke Foundation, *Schüleralbum*.

in 1919, the second in 1921). The 1915 summer term Jahr spent as a war volunteer. On March 19, 1921, he took holy orders.

Jahr started to teach as early as May 1917. First he taught for a brief spell at a private school, later at the pre-school (*Vorschule*) and the elementary school (*Mittelschule*) of the same Francke Foundation where he himself had been a pupil. In 1920, he took the elementary-school teacher's exam (*Mittelschullehrerprüfung* in religion and history), and in 1921, he entered the city's Wittekind-School (as a replacement for the future rector, Bonin). From 1923-1925, he had been appointed teacher by the Halle Public Schools Administration, but he left that position by May 2, 1925, due to "discord with the then Education Committee." In the summer of 1926, Jahr started teaching again at the Francke Foundation elementary school, and then at the Seydlitz high school for girls from late 1926 until 1928 when he left as "he did not believe the private schooling system would give him long-term satisfaction" (during the period 1917-1925 only, Jahr worked at 11 different schools). After a few years' break, Jahr went to teach briefly at the Hutten School in 1938 (as a replacement for another teacher), while, during the last years of World War II (1943-1945), he taught cello at the National Education Centre Music School (*Musikschule der Volksbildungsstätte*).

Jahr was active within the Church from 1925 onwards.¹² For the first four years, he was a curate at St. John's church in Dieskau (near Halle), later (1929-1930) in Braunsdorf, and finally (1930-1933), a pastor in Kanena.¹³ It must have been quite painful, since, due to feeling giddiness, he had to take bromide before ascending the pulpit.¹⁴

On April 26, 1932, Jahr married Berta Elise Neuholz (born December 31, 1899), "a worker from Bludau," and a daughter of the teacher Franz Hermann Neuholz (1867-1903). Her grandfather had been Friedrich Ferdinand Neuholz, 1822-1909, a farmer. Elise and Fritz Jahr had no children and lived at Albert Schmidtstrasse 8, Halle¹⁵ (as said before, to that address Fritz Jahr moved in 1913, when he was 18: first he will live there together with both of his parents, and later, until 1930, only with his manic-depressive father¹⁶).

¹² *Pfarrerbuch der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen*, vol. 4 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2006), 395.

¹³ Halle City Archives. 105/4, 1938/1945.

¹⁴ Hans-Martin Sass, "Postscript," in *Essays in Bioethics and Ethics 1927-1947* by Fritz Jahr, translated by Irene M. Miller and Hans-Martin Sass (Bochum: Zentrum für Medizinische Ethik, 2011), 46.

¹⁵ Archives of the Sachsen-Anhalt University and Province Library, Album No. 40.

¹⁶ Sass, "Postscript," 46.

At a very turbulent time for Germany, Fritz Jahr applied in 1932 to the Church authorities for retirement on the grounds of "nervous exhaustion." At the age of 38, on March 1, 1933, he indeed did withdraw from service, only a month after Hitler had seized power. During the war, the Jahr family obviously experienced financial difficulties, further aggravated by Jahr's wife suffering from "backbone sclerosis" (she died wheel-chaired, on February 1, 1947). Then, a month after the surrender of Germany, on June 18, 1945, Jahr applied for a job in a new elementary school: two weeks before, he had become member of the Workers Association. Unanswered remained Jahr's application for the job, addressed to the President of Halle University in 1946, mentioning that Jahr and his wife's joint incomes amounted to 84 Marks only.¹⁷ Together with several other pastors, in October 1946, Jahr signed an invitation (published in the *Freiheit* newspaper) to vote for the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*).¹⁸ Obviously, he spent his last years working as a music teacher (*Musikerzieher*): in a confidential "characteristic" from 1952, signed by certain Luderer-Lüttig and sent to Department of Popular Education (*Dezernat für Volksbildung, Abteilung für Kunstgelegenheiten*) of the Halle City Council (*Rat der Landeshauptstadt Halle*), Jahr's pedagogic qualities are highly appreciated and he is strongly recommended for the instructor of mandolin orchestra.¹⁹

Fritz Jahr died at 10 a.m. on October 1, 1953, in his home in Halle, of cerebral apoplexia due to high blood pressure. He was found dead by certain Charlotte Stenzel.²⁰

The discovery of Jahr²¹

In 1997, at a conference held in Tübingen, Professor Rolf Löther of Berlin Humboldt University mentioned for the first time the name of Fritz Jahr,²² whom he credited for having had coined the word *Bio-Ethik* as early as 1927. According to his own account, Löther heard the word "bioethics" in the 1990s for the first time: since the word, nevertheless, seemed to him somehow familiar, Löther started to search through the bundle of old issues of the *Kosmos* journal, left to him by his

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Halle City Archives (*Stadtarchiv Halle*), A3.21 Kultur-41-4661, January 19, 1952.

²⁰ Curiously, Walter Stenzel was the owner of the carpenter- and funeral company, living in the same Senff Street like Charlotte Stenzel. Halle Registry Office, Register of Deaths (*Standesamt Halle, Sterbebuch*) Nr. 433.

²¹ A tentative scheme of the discovery is provided at the end of the paper.

²² Rolf Löther, "Evolution der Biosphäre und Ethik," in *Ethik der Biowissenschaften: Geschichte und Theorie – Beiträge zur 6. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Theorie der Biologie (DGGTB) in Tübingen 1997*, edited by Eve-Marie Engels, Thomas Junker, and Michael Weingarten (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1998), 61-68.

grandfather and now lying somewhere in the attic. And so he found the editorial of the 1927 volume and the article of Fritz Jahr.

News about the discovery of Jahr eventually was spread mainly thanks to work of Eve-Marie Engels of the University of Tübingen (who had organised the conference Löther attended and eventually edited the proceedings). Engels first mentioned Löther's discovery in an article *sub voce* "Bioethik" in the *Metzler Lexicon* in 1999,²³ then in a paper from 2001.²⁴ This paper was translated into Portuguese and republished in 2004 in Brazilian journal *Veritas* from Porto Alegre.²⁵ There, the paper attracted attention of the Porto Alegre clinician and university professor José Roberto Goldim,²⁶ and of Leo Pessini, vicerector and bioethics professor at St. Camillus University Centre, who both devoted several papers to the Jahr topic.²⁷ Under the influence of Goldim and Pessini, "the Jahr news" spread all over Brazil: Ferreira Carvalho da Cruz and Contri Pitton of São Paulo State University (UNESP) in Rio Claro deliver a talk on Jahr in 2009,²⁸ Mascarenhas and de Oliveira Santa Rosa publish a paper,²⁹ etc.

As yet, the most thorough analysis of Jahr's 1927 paper and the "bioethical imperative" has been offered by Hans-Martin Sass of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University in Washington. In 2007, Sass published a first series of papers devoted to Jahr.³⁰ In the later years, he has continued to promote Jahr's ideas and pre-

²³ Eve-Marie Engels, "Bioethik," in *Metzler Lexicon Religion*, volume 1, edited by Christoph Auffarth, Jutta Bernard and Hubert Mohr (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1999), 159-164.

²⁴ Eve-Marie Engels, "Die Herausforderung der Biotechniken für Ethik und Anthropologie," in *Die biologische Machbarkeit des Menschen*, edited by Christof Gestrich (Berlin: Wichern, 2001), 100-124.

²⁵ Eve-Marie Engels, "O desafio das biotécnicas para a ética e a antropologia," *Veritas* (Porto Alegre) 50, no. 2 (2004): 205-228.

²⁶ José Roberto Goldim, "Bioética: origens e complexidade," *Revista do Hospital de Clínicas de Porto Alegre* 26, no. 2 (2006): 86-92; "Revisiting the beginning of bioethics: the contribution of Fritz Jahr (1927)," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 52 (2009): 377-380.

²⁷ Fernanda Maria Ferreira Carvalho, Léo Pessini, and Oswaldo Campos Junior, "Reflexões sobre bioética ambiental," *O mundo da saúde* (São Paulo) 30, no. 4 (2006): 614-618; Leo Pessini and William Saad Hossne, "Fritz Jahr (sic!): "O Imperativo Bioético" – nas origens da palavra Bioética," *Bioethicos* 2, no. 1 (2008): 7-9 (<http://www.saocamillo-sp.br/novo/publicacoes/publicacaoEditorial.php?ID=60&rev=b>); Leo Pessini, "Bioética na América Latina: algumas questões desafiantes para o presente e futuro," *Bioethicos* 2, no. 1 (2008): 42-49; William Saad Hossne, Leo Pessini, José Eduardo de Siqueira, and Christian de Paul de Barchifontaine, "Bioética aos 40 anos: reflexões a partir de um tempo de incertezas," *Bioethicos* 4, no. 2 (2010): 130-143.

²⁸ Fernanda Maria Ferreira Carvalho da Cruz and Sandra Elisa Contri Pitton, "A inclusão da disciplina bioética na matriz curricular dos cursos de licenciatura em geografia," paper presented at 9th Seminar of Post-Graduate in Geography of the UNESP at Rio Claro, Brasil (IX Seminário de Pós-Graduação em Geografia, UNESP – Rio Claro, November 3-5, 2009 (available at: <http://sites.google.com/site/seminarioposgeo/local>).

²⁹ Nildo Batista Mascarenhas and Darci de Oliveira Santa Rosa, "The teaching of bioethics in the education of nurses: interface with the adopted literature," *Acta Paulista de Enfermagem* 23, no. 3 (2010): 392-398.

³⁰ Hans-Martin Sass, "Fritz Jahr's bioethischer Imperativ: 80 Jahre Bioethik in Deutschland von 1927 bis 2007," *Medizinethische Materialien* (Bochum) 175 (2007): 1-21; "Fritz Jahr's 1927 concept of bioethics," *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 17 (2007): 279-295.

sent them in various international journals in Europe, Asia, and South America.³¹ By the end of 2010, Sass edited a collection of 15 papers by Fritz Jahr (published in German original), as well as a selection of 6 papers of Jahr's in English translation (in a second edition, in May 2011, 15 articles were translated into English).³² Except for the collection of Jahr's papers in German and English from November/December 2010, Sass has never had quoted mentions of Jahr before 2007 (by Löther, Engels, or Goldim). Those authors who got to know about Jahr from Sass, have also been mentioning Fritz Jahr, but not Rolf Löther (or Eve-Marie Engels) in their publications. Such has been the case with Fernando Lolas Stepke, Director of the *Programa Regional de Bioética de la Organización Panamericana de la Salud* (Bioethics Regional Program of the Pan-American Health Organization; PAHO),³³ Juan Jorge Michel Fariña³⁴ and Natacha Salomé Lima from Faculty of Psychology at University of Buenos Aires,³⁵ the priest Fernando Pascual from Catalonia,³⁶ Ricardo Andrés Roa-Castellanos and Cor-

³¹ Cf. Hans-Martin Sass, "European roots of bioethics: Fritz Jahr's 1927 definition and vision of bioethics," in *Od nove medicinske etike do integrativne bioetike: posvećeno Ivanu Šegoti povodom 70. rođendana* [From medical ethics to integrative bioethics: dedicated to Ivan Šegota in occasion of his 70th birthday], edited by Ante Čović, Nada Gosić i Luka Tomašević (Zagreb: Pergamena/Hrvatsko bioetičko društvo, 2009), 19-31; "Vom Ursprung der Bioethik aus evangelischer Tradition," *Zeitschrift für Evangelische Ethik* 53, no. 3 (2009): 177-190; "Asian and European roots of bioethics: Fritz Jahr's 1927 definition and vision of bioethics," *Asian Bioethics Review* 1, no. 3 (2009): 185-197; "Early 1927 European roots of bioethics," in *Peligros y riesgos en las investigaciones: (bio)ética en la investigación con seres vivos (homenaje a José Alberto Mainetti)*, edited by Sergio Ceccheto, Maria Luisa Pfeiffer, and Agustín Estevez (Buenos Aires: Editorial Antropofagia, 2009), 45-57; "Bioethics as a European innovation: Fritz Jahr's 1927 concept of bioethics," in *Vernunft und Innovation: über das alte Vorurteil für das Neue (Festschrift für Walther Ch. Zimmerli zum 65. Geburtstag)*, edited by Antje Gimmler (Paderborn: Fink, 2010), 369-377; "The Earth is a living being: we have to treat her as such!" *Eubios – Journal of Asian and International Bioethics* 21, no. 3 (2011): 73-77 (<http://eubios.info/EJAIB52011.pdf>).

³² Fritz Jahr, *Aufsätze zur Bioethik 1927-1938, Medizinethische Materialien, Heft 187*, Postscript and References by Hans-Martin Sass (Bochum: Zentrum für Medizinische Ethik, 2010); Fritz Jahr, *Selected Essays in Bioethics 1927-1934, Medizinethische Materialien, Heft 186*, Postscript and References by Hans-Martin Sass (Bochum: Zentrum für Medizinische Ethik, 2010); Fritz Jahr, *Essays in Bioethics and Ethics 1927-1947*, Translation by Irene M. Miller and Hans-Martin Sass, Postscript by Hans-Martin Sass (Bochum: Zentrum für Medizinische Ethik, 2011).

³³ Fernando Lolas Stepke, "Fritz Jahr, el 'imperativo bioético y el origen de la palabra 'bioética'," *Boletín Bioética informa* 13, no. 45 (2008): 3; "Bioethics and animal research: a personal perspective and a note on the contribution of Fritz Jahr," *Biological Research* (Santiago) 41 (2008): 119-123; "El 'imperativo bioético' de Fritz Jahr y la neobioética estadounidense," *JANO* (Barcelona) 1710 (2008): 10-16; "Quo vadis bioética?," *Acta Bioethica* 15, no. 1 (2009):7-9; "Salud, salud mental, bioética: interfaces dignas de análisis," *Acta Bioethica* 15, no. 2 (2009):137-138. It was probably Lolas Stepke to write the article on Fritz Jahr in the Spanish version of Wikipedia (http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fritz_Jahr) and later also in the English version (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bioethics>).

³⁴ Juan Jorge Michel Fariña, "Declaración de Rijeka: hacia el futuro de la bioética," *Ibis News* (<http://www.ibisnewsletter.org/spip.php?article21>) April 2011

³⁵ Natacha Salomé Lima, "Fritz Jahr y el *Zeitgeist* de la bioética," *Aesthetika* 5, no. 1 (2009): 4-11; "Las raíces europeas de la bioética: Fritz Jahr y el Parsifal, de Wagner," *Etica y Cine* (<http://www.eticaycine.org/Parsifal>) July 2011.

³⁶ Fernando Pascual, ¿Quién inventó la palabra 'bioética'? *ForumLibertas.com* (http://www.forumlibertas.com/frontend/forumlibertas/noticia.php?id_noticia=15337&id_seccion=5) 2009

nelia Bauer from Colombia,³⁷ Hrvoje Jurić from University of Zagreb (Croatia),³⁸ and others. Unlike them, the "Goldim line" of discovery of Jahr has justfully credited Engels and, sometimes, Löther.

Hans-Martin Sass has won many bioethicists (sometimes one by one) to take Jahr's ideas into consideration. And while North-American scientists (no wonder, one might say) have ignored the discovery of Fritz Jahr (one exemption being H. Tristram Engelhardt in a series of his 2009 lectures and papers³⁹), his ideas seem to have a better perspective in Asia. In Europe, Jahr has entered the bioethics courses (at University of Rijeka Faculty of Medicine, a lecture on Jahr and European bioethics has been incorporated into each bioethics course; in Spring 2010, Jahr's definition of bioethics was included into the programme of the Basel University "Grundlagen der Ethik" module,⁴⁰ etc.).

An interesting issue is how Hans-Martin Sass was attracted to the 1927 Jahr's article. Ivan Šegota, who introduced bioethics into Croatia from the US in the early 1990s, tells in an anecdotal account that he mentioned to Sass "some German" who, allegedly, had coined the term "bioethics" much before Potter, during their dinner in Sydney in 2004.⁴¹ (Šegota recalls that he himself heard about "that German" from Warren Reich about 2003, at a conference in Portugal, as an answer to Šegota's question why some American bioethicists had opposed Potter's candidacy for the Nobel Prize.)

The authors of the present paper got to know about Fritz Jahr first from the Croatian translation of Sass' paper from 2007.⁴² During an Internet search, while working on her PhD thesis,⁴³ however, Iva Rinčić discovered the mentioning of Rolf Löther and

³⁷ Ricardo Andrés Roa-Castellanos and Cornelia Bauer, "Presentación de la palabra bioética, del imperativo bioético y de la moción de biopsicología por Fritz Jahr en 1929 (sic!)," *Bioethicos* 3, no. 2 (2009): 158-170.

³⁸ Hrvoje Jurić, "Počeci i pra-počeci bioetike / The beginnings and the primeval beginnings of bioethics," in *9. lošinski dani bioetike / 9th Lošinj Days of Bioethics*, edited by Hrvoje Jurić (Zagreb: Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, 2010.), 78-80. Also available at: <http://www.hrfd.hr/u/dokumenti/Losinj%20knjizica%20-%202010..pdf>

³⁹ Hugo Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., "Moral pluralism and the crisis of secular bioethics: why orthodox Christian bioethics has the solution," Institute of Orthodox Christian Studies lectures, June 5, 2009 (<http://www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk/Publications/engelhardt-bio-ethics.pdf>); "Moral Pluralism, the Crisis of Secular Bioethics, and the Divisive Character of Christian Bioethics: Taking the Culture Wars Seriously," *Christian Bioethics* 15, no. 3 (2009): 234-253; "Global bioethics: taking moral differences seriously," *Bioethicos* 3, no. 1 (2009): 26-32.

⁴⁰ http://www.aeb.unibas.ch/data/pdf/seminars/10_biol/Programm-Ethik-2010.pdf

⁴¹ Ivan Šegota, "Predgovor" [Preface] to "Bioetički imperativ Fritza Jahra: 80 godina bioetike u Njemačkoj od 1927. do 2007. godine" by Hans-Martin Sass (translated by Suzana Jurin), *Bioetički svesci* (Rijeka) 61 (2008), 2 (1-4).

⁴² Hans-Martin Sass, "Bioetički imperativ Fritza Jahra: 80 godina bioetike u Njemačkoj od 1927. do 2007. godine" (translated by Suzana Jurin), *Bioetički svesci* (Rijeka) 61 (2008): 1-44.

⁴³ "Teorijska uporišta, postignuća i perspektive bioetičke institucionalizacije u Europskoj Uniji" [Theoretical strongholds, achievements, and perspectives of bioethics institutionalisation in European Union], defended in

Eve-Marie Engels in an article by Goldim.⁴⁴ The first results of the research on Fritz Jahr's life, gathered only through Internet correspondence with several institutions in Germany, were presented at 9th Lošinj Days of Bioethics conference (Mali Lošinj, 17-19, 2010)⁴⁵, as well as at the presentation at Ethics Teacher Training Course held in Dubrovnik (Croatia) in June-July, 2010.⁴⁶ In May 2010, the first issue of *Jahr – Annual of Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities at University of Rijeka Faculty of Medicine*, was launched, with Amir Muzur as the editor-in-chief and Hans-Martin Sass among the members of the journal Advisory Council. In January 2011, we were granted a project by Croatian Science Foundation, entitled "Fritz Jahr and European Roots of Bioethics: the Establishing an International Scholar's Network". Among other activities, the project included a conference (held in March 2011 in Rijeka/Opatija)⁴⁷ and a study trip to Halle, where we collected new materials on Jahr's life and work. The preliminary results were presented in three papers at 13th Rijeka Days of Bioethics (Rijeka, May 13-14, 2011)⁴⁸ and 10th Lošinj Days of Bioethics (Mali Lošinj, May 15-18, 2011)⁴⁹ including invited plenary lecture⁵⁰, as well as in an invited lecture delivered at European Academy in Banja Luka (Bosnia and Hercegovina).⁵¹ Papers stressing the importance of re-writing a new history of (European) bioethics have since appeared in several editions.⁵²

October 2010 at University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (under the mentorship of Ante Čović and Nada Gosić). An adjusted version of the thesis is expected to appear as a book (*European Bioethics: Ideas and Institutions*; Zagreb, Pergamena) in autumn 2011.

⁴⁴ Goldim, "Bioética: origens e complexidade."

⁴⁵ Iva Rinčić and Amir Muzur, "Fritz Jahr: prilozi za biografiju osnivača (europske) bioetike / Fritz Jahr: Contributions to the Biography of the Founder of (European) Bioethics," in *9. lošinjki dani bioetike / 9th Lošinj Days of Bioethics*, edited by Hrvoje Jurić (Zagreb: Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, 2010.), 115-116. Also available at: <http://www.hrdf.hr/u/dokumenti/Losinj%20knjizica%20-%202010..pdf>

⁴⁶ Iva Rinčić, "The founder(s) of bioethics: one or more?," presented at UNESCO Ethics Teacher Training Course, Inter-University Center Dubrovnik, Croatia, 28 June – 2 July, 2010.

⁴⁷ With participation of some of the first mentioners of Fritz Jahr: Eve-Marie Engels, José Roberto Goldim, and Hans-Martin Sass.

⁴⁸ Iva Rinčić and Amir Muzur, "Od bioetičara-učenika do bioetičara-učitelja: pijetizam i edukacija u životu i djelu Fritza Jahra" [From bioethicist-student to bioethicist-teacher: Pietism and education in the life and work of Fritz Jahr].

⁴⁹ Amir Muzur and Iva Rinčić, "Ignaz Bregenzner (1844.-1906.): preliminarni prilozi životopisu autora *Životinjske etike (Thierethik, 1894.)*" [Ignaz Bregenzner (1844-1906): preliminary contribution to the biography of the author of *Animal Ethics (Thierethik, 1894.)*].

⁵⁰ Iva Rinčić and Amir Muzur, "The concept and project of European bioethics."

⁵¹ Iva Rinčić, "Europska bioetika: od otkrića do realizacije" [European bioethics: from discovery to realisation], May 26, 2011.

⁵² Amir Muzur, "Evropska i američanska bioetika: ima li mesto za obe?" [European and American bioethics: is there place for both?] *Filozofija* (Skopje) 10, no. 31 (2011): 9-18; Iva Rinčić, "Fritz Jahr (1895-1953): od zaborav do perspektivi na evropskata bioetika" [Fritz Jahr (1895-1953): from oblivion to perspectives of European bioethics] *Filozofija* (Skopje) 10, no. 31 (2011): 33-43; Amir Muzur, "Rijeka na bioetičkoj karti svijeta" [Rijeka on the bioethics world map], *Sušačka revija* 19, no. 73 (2011): 15-21; Amir Muzur and Iva Rinčić, "Impending war over bioethics legacy? The consequences of the discovery of Fritz Jahr" (submitted to *Filosofia*/Bratislava).

Instead of a conclusion

Studying the life of Fritz Jahr – or of anyone else – might seem irrelevant, even to the historians of science. However, we often seem to make a mistake by trying to explain the sources of his/her ideas by studying (or overestimating) only the so-called "social circumstances" of a discovery. As we all certainly would agree, personal factors may and do influence the author of a given discovery much more and therefore should never be neglected in a serious search for truth. The (hi)story of the discovery itself, on the other hand, sometimes so curiously indicates the importance of coincidence or of what seems to be coincidence.

Figure 1: A tentative chronology of the spread of knowledge of Fritz Jahr's work before 2010

