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Fribourg, St.Gallen, Helsinki, 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

To the international press,  
particularly to Jewish media  
and newspapers

## **Call for the Denazification of IAU's Naming Policy**

Dear Sir or Madam,

For years we have been informing the public about one of the most important advocates of «scientific» racism, the Swiss naturalist and Harvard professor Louis Agassiz (1807-1873). He moved to the United States in 1846 and came to prominence there, as he already had done in Switzerland before.

Agassiz's ideology of a racial hierarchy legitimised the slavery system of the time, and his repeated visits to slavery plantations – where he studied black people in captivity – were for many a kind of proof of the ethical harmlessness of slavery. His condemnation of «miscegenation» was later noted approvingly by Nazis, Mussolini admirers, KKK activists and creationists.<sup>1</sup>

The Swiss Government<sup>2</sup>, «Presence Switzerland»<sup>3</sup>, the «European Geosciences Union (EGU)»<sup>4</sup>, the City and University of Neuchâtel<sup>5</sup>, the City of Lausanne<sup>6</sup>, Stanford University (USA)<sup>7</sup>, the «Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT)»<sup>8</sup>, and numerous places across the USA have all corrected their view of Agassiz after being informed of his extreme racism. Unlike the institutions mentioned above, the «International Astronomical Union (IAU)» has so far not seen any reason for withdrawing the honour offered to the racist Louis Agassiz in 1935 («Promontorium Agassiz» on the Moon), in 1973 («Agassiz Crater» on Mars) and in 1977 (Asteroid 2267, named after Louis Agassiz, his son Alexander and his grandson George Russel).

The «arguments» put forward by the IAU (see attached letter from the IAU, November 4, 2020) are historically untenable and ethically appalling. They are stereotypes from the racist's toolbox (see our attached reply to the IAU, July 27, 2021). In view of all the horror meted out to millions of victims, the IAU's trivialisation of racism, in particular by trying to outweigh scientific achievements against racist acts and theses, is intolerable. As intolerable as the IAU's clinging to prominent racists.

However, this IAU attitude is no longer surprising when one sees the list of racists and Nazi dignitaries whom the IAU has so far honoured with names in space. Apart from Louis Agassiz (1935, 1973 and 1977), one finds the Nazi criminal Hans Eppinger, who carried out deadly experiments in the Dachau concentration camp. He committed suicide in 1946 and was deleted only in 2002 (!) by the IAU as planetary name-giver. Johannes Stark, Nobel laureate in Physics, fanatical Nazi and convicted war criminal, was honoured by the IAU in 1970. As late as 2020 (!) and due to pressure from outside, the IAU saw itself forced to precipitately announce the withdrawal of the honour from Johannes Stark. The same applies to the ardent Nazi and Nobel Prize winner for Physics Philipp Lenard, who was honoured in 2008 and had to be classified as untenable by the IAU as late as 2020. The list of Nazis honoured by the IAU also includes SS-Sturmbannführer Wernher von Braun, whom the IAU honoured with a lunar formation in 1994. Von Braun personally selected workers in the Buchenwald

concentration camp for his rocket program in the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp. This program for the development of Hitler's V2 rockets was pushed forward by Wernher von Braun under inhumane conditions. Result: «Almost 3000 dead in England, the same number again in Belgium — at least 16,000, possibly 20,000 prisoners who lost their lives in the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp through tuberculosis, pneumonia, complete emaciation, beatings to death, hanging, shooting [...]»<sup>6</sup>

We are writing to you with the request for support and the hope that you will report in your medium about the need to denazify the IAU naming policy. Mr. Hans Fässler is available for any queries.

With kind regards



Hans Fässler

Hans Barth

Sasha Huber

(signed via email)

(signed via email)

Attached documents:

1. Letter of the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT) to the IAU, dated November 4, 2020: [https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Letter\\_IAU\\_Agassiz\\_Nov\\_2020.pdf](https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Letter_IAU_Agassiz_Nov_2020.pdf)
2. Letter of the IAU to SCNAT dated June 14, 2021: [https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/final\\_refusal\\_IAU.pdf](https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/final_refusal_IAU.pdf)
3. Our letter to the IAU dated July 27, 2021: [https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/IAU\\_racism\\_letter.pdf](https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/IAU_racism_letter.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> BAUR, Erwin, FISCHER, Eugen, LENZ, Fritz (3. Aufl. 1927, 1. Aufl. 1921): Menschliche Erblichkeitslehre. J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, München, 1936. Without quoting Agassiz, Robert N. Proctor made it known already in 1988 that Lenz quoted Agassiz: PROCTOR, Robert N. (1988): Racial hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis. Harvard University Press, 1988. p. 136. Concerning Agassiz and the Nazis, see: Hans BARTH, Agassiz und die Nazi-Connection. [https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/nazi\\_connection.pdf](https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/nazi_connection.pdf) and Hans BARTH, Louis Agassiz and Adolf Hitler. Documents in Racist Mania. In: HUBER, Sasha (ed.) (2010): Rentyhorn. Kiasma. Helsinki, 2010. p. 22-32. Also: Hans BARTH & Hans FÄSSLER: Louis Agassiz. In: Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz. 2018. <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/015920/2018-03-23>.

<sup>2</sup> Statement dated 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2007: [https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/sommaruga\\_antw\\_br.html](https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/sommaruga_antw_br.html).  
Statement dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2015: [https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/sommaruga\\_2.pdf](https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/sommaruga_2.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Statement dated 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2016: [https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/frage\\_sommaruga.pdf](https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/frage_sommaruga.pdf).  
<sup>4</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2018: [https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/EGU\\_decision\\_press\\_release.pdf](https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/EGU_decision_press_release.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2018: [https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/ville\\_NE\\_rebapteme.pdf](https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/ville_NE_rebapteme.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Statement dated 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2019: [https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/position\\_municipalite.pdf](https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/position_municipalite.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 <https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/stanford.png>.

<sup>8</sup> [https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Letter\\_IAU\\_Agassiz\\_Nov\\_2020.pdf](https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Letter_IAU_Agassiz_Nov_2020.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Prof. Dr. Rainer Eisfeld: Mondsüchtig. Wernher von Braun und die Geburt der Raumfahrt aus dem Geist der Barbarei. Rowohlt, 1996. Rainer Eisfeld was professor for political science at Osnabrück University and has been a member of the board of trustees of the memorial sites at concentrations camps Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora. Quoted in: Frankfurter Rundschau, 19th July, 2019, <https://www.fr.de/wissen/wernher-von-braun-raketen-ingenieur-von-hitler-11381104.html>.