

HISTORY, ISSUES, AND STRUCTURE OF THE ENTIRE PROJECT

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The research project on “The History of the German Research Foundation 1920–1970” was carried out from 2000 to 2008 at the initiative of Professor Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker during his tenure as president of that funding institution, the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG). It was directed by Professors Rüdiger vom Bruch (Humboldt University of Berlin) and Ulrich Herbert (University of Freiburg) and was coordinated by the author. It encompassed twenty individual studies, most of which have meanwhile been or will soon be published. Six international symposiums took place that likewise produced detailed collections of essays. The present volume assembles revised versions of the presentations delivered during the research project’s closing convention held in the Harnack House in Berlin in January 2008. The aim of this introduction is to present the project as a whole: its history, its structure, and the issues it broached.

It is not solely due to the initiative of the above-named professors that this research project was set up and executed. Rather, it stood at the crossroads between two discourses. On the one hand, the history of science has been experiencing a boom for some time now. Many share the belief that we are living in a “knowledge-based or science-based society” (*Wissens- oder Wissenschaftsgesellschaft*, Rolf Kreibich), in a “scientific age” (Michael Jeismann). In this connection, curiosity about the historical roots of science and knowledge has been growing for some years, in Germany as well as other countries. On the other hand, particular interest – not exclusive to Germany – in the history of National Socialism remains unabated. Recent professional and public debates have been revolving particularly around the issue of the perpetration or complicity of individual social groups or subsets. And the inquiry goes on. Both of these thematic fields – a consciousness of living within a historically evolved knowledge-based society and an enduring interest in the Nazi dictatorship by historians and the general public alike – converge in the debate over the Nazi pasts of major scientific organizations, such as the Max Planck Society (*Max-Planck-Gesellschaft*, MPG, formerly called the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft*, KWG), or the DFG. Thus, it is symptomatic of the interest in such questions that two major historical research projects were established at the turn of the last century to illuminate the more recent pasts of both these self-governed organizations of science. At their heart is a (re)determination of the role of scientists and their actions during the Nazi period. This role lies somewhere between recruitment and “self-mobilization” (Herbert Mehrrens). It is also a matter of locating Nazi research, or respectively, science conducted inside Germany under National Socialist rule, within international trends and

longer-term developments running from the turn of the century into the 1970s. The research project carried out from 1999 to 2004 by the Presidential Commission on the History of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society under National Socialism set itself the goal of examining thoroughly the contribution to the Nazi system that can be specifically attributed to the KWG and its scientists. It is to Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker's credit that such a research project on the history of the DFG was initiated.

In the spring of 2000 Professor Winnacker appointed a preliminary Study Group to explore the ways and means of researching the Foundation's history. Its members were Professors Luise Schorn-Schütte (University of Frankfurt am Main), Rüdiger vom Bruch (Humboldt University of Berlin), Ulrich Herbert (University of Freiburg), Gerhard Oexle (Max Planck Institute of History, Göttingen), and Winfried Schulze (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich). Following this conference, the DFG president asked Professors Rüdiger vom Bruch and Ulrich Herbert to assume the management of the incipient research project. A short while later the author was engaged as the scientific coordinator of the overall project.

It became obvious very early on that a thorough survey of the available sources and documents was an indispensable precondition to an informed plan and design of the project. In view of the very problematic state of transmission of the source material, an Archive Study Group was engaged to conduct an immediate survey of the documentation available. It was composed of Dr. Sören Flachowsky (Berlin), Privatdozent Dr. Lothar Mertens (†, Berlin), and the author. Our report about the available holdings served as a basis for drafting the plans for the project's material and methodological orientation as well as for its central concerns.

The entire project followed three basic guidelines. First, special emphasis had to be laid on the Nazi regime without, however, isolating that period of dictatorship. The DFG's research policy during the Nazi period had to be located generally within longer-term political trends and specifically within research policy. That is why the period under examination stretches from the beginnings of this funding organization in the 1920s (under its former name *Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft* – Emergency Association for German Science, NG) into the 1970s. Second, the individual research projects supported by the DFG were not to be analyzed primarily along the lines of organizational and administrative history. Our main attention had to be paid to the research activities themselves, their historical contexts in science and science policy, and their importance also with regard to international research trends and standards. Third, it was not a matter of writing a history staked out purely by disciplines. Developments extending beyond individual fields also had to be elaborated; and exemplary scientific projects, approaches, and discourses as well as biographies had to be examined. It would have been impossible to attempt even approximate completeness as regards the fields and disciplines covered. Instead, we focused on expanding on exemplary topics and developments.

At the outset it had been determined that the research project should be developed in stages. Accordingly, the first four analyses started in the fall of 2001,

the last in the fall of 2004. In total the research project comprised eighteen individual studies plus two associated projects. The twenty analysts came from eight universities or scientific establishments and were advised by ten professors. The studies on institutional and political history were conducted under the auspices of Rüdiger vom Bruch and Ulrich Herbert. Professor Wolfgang U. Eckart (Heidelberg) was responsible as a cooperative partner for the history of medicine, and Professors Franz-Josef Brüggemeier (Freiburg) and Clemens Knobloch (Siegen) accompanied the studies on the humanities and social sciences, most broadly conceived (agricultural research was included here for purely pragmatic reasons). Professors Helmuth Trischler (Munich), Thomas Hänseroth (Dresden), and Wolfgang König (Berlin) oversaw the analyses on the technical and natural sciences, and Professors Hans Jörg Rheinberger (Berlin) and Bettina Währig (Braunschweig) the work on the biological and life sciences. The following table offers an overview of the individual projects and already published monographs.¹ These appeared in the series edited by Professors Rüdiger vom Bruch, Ulrich Herbert, and Patrick Wagner (Halle) entitled *Studien zur Geschichte der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (SGD)*, published by Steiner Verlag in Stuttgart.

Overview of the Individual Areas of Research	
I. Institutional and Political History (Rüdiger vom Bruch/Ulrich Herbert)	
Dr. Sören Flachowsky	From the NG to the Reich Research Council – Science policy in the context of autarky, armament, and war (<i>SGD</i> , no. 3, 2008)
Dr. Peter Nötzoldt	The DFG up to 1945 – Poised between the Kaiser Wilhelm Society and the academies of science
Dr. Karin Orth	Research autonomy and planning. The DFG's strategic policies 1949–68 (<i>SGD</i> , no. 8, 2011)
Prof. Patrick Wagner	General account of the history of the DFG between 1920 and 1970
II. History of Medicine (Wolfgang U. Eckart)	
Dr. Anne Cottebrune	The plannable human – The DFG and the science of human heredity (<i>SGD</i> , no. 2, 2008)
Dr. Alexander Neumann	Physiological research support by the DFG 1920–70
Dr. Marion Hulverscheidt	Research support by the NG/DFG for tropical and colonial medicine (1920–70)
Dr. Gabriele Moser	The DFG and cancer research 1920–70 (<i>SGD</i> , no. 7, 2011)

¹ Their titles are translated in the table; cf. the bibliography for the available publications.

Overview of the Individual Areas of Research	
III. The Humanities and Social Sciences (Rüdiger vom Bruch/ Ulrich Herbert/Franz-Josef Brüggemeier/Clemens Knobloch)	
PD Dr. Willi Oberkrome	Order and autarky – The history of German agricultural research, agronomics, and rural social science as mirrored by research sponsorship and the DFG 1920–70 (<i>SGD</i> , no. 4, 2009)
Dr. Corinna R. Unger	Research on the East in West Germany – The inquiry into the European East and the DFG 1945–75 (<i>SGD</i> , no. 1, 2007)
PD Dr. Friedmann Schmoll	Surveying culture – The “Atlas of German Folklore” and the DFG 1928–89 (<i>SGD</i> , no. 5, 2009)
Prof. Bernd A. Rusinek	The physicist and DFG vice-president Walther Gerlach (1889–1979) – A biography
PD Dr. Klaas-Hinrich Ehlers	The will for relevancy. Linguistic research and its support by the DFG 1920–70 (<i>SGD</i> , no. 6, 2010)
Associated: Christoph Seidler	German ethnology 1920–70 – Continuity and change of a science in the international context
IV. Natural and Engineering Sciences (Helmuth Trischler/Thomas Hänseroth/ Wolfgang König)	
Dr. Günther Luxbacher	The DFG and research sponsorship in metallic raw and manufacturing materials 1920–70
Dr. Ulf Halshagen	“Computers for science” and a “science for computers” – The NG/DFG and the forming of numerical mathematics, scientific computing, and informatics in Germany
Dr. Mirko Buschmann	DFG-sponsored research on mechanical engineering, 1920–70 – Machine design: somewhere between path-dependence and path-change?
Associated: PD Dr. Paul Erker	Between the “Four-Year Plan for chemistry” and “polymer science” – The DFG and chemical research in Germany from the 1920s into the 1960s
V. Biological and Life Sciences (Bettina Wahrig/Hans-Jörg Rheinberger)	
Dr. Alexander von Schwerin	Close to the state and oriented toward the fundamentals – The DFG as a biopolitical institution: Biosciences and DFG-sponsored radiation and radioactivity research 1920–70
Dr. Heiko Stoff	Biocatalysts. A history of the science of hormones, vitamins, and enzymes 1920–70 (<i>SGD</i> , no. 9, 2012)

The chosen interdisciplinary approach posed a challenge and an enriching stimulus from the very beginning. The necessary substantial support in order to be able to meet these expectations came from the Research Unit's Academic Advisory Board headed by Professor Friedrich Wilhelm Graf (Munich). Its members were Professors Helmuth Albrecht (Freiberg), Lutz Danneberg (Berlin), Gerald D. Feldman (†, Berkeley), Lutz Raphael (Trier), Carola Sachse (Vienna), Heinz-Peter Schmiedebach (Hamburg), Margit Szölloosi-Janze (Cologne), Jakob Tanner (Zurich), Mark Walker (Schenectady, NY), Ulrich Wengenroth (Munich) and (as an associated member) Privatdozent Dr. Susanne Heim (Berlin). The Research Unit reported about the progress made in these examinations at the advisory board meetings organized annually in December. Hence, an opportunity always existed for reflection on and readjustment to the research project's orientation as a whole as well as that of each individual study. The Research Unit met regularly once or twice a year in addition in order to exchange ideas and discuss topical results. Furthermore, close academic contacts with other groups of scholars working on similar issues proved worthwhile. This applied especially to the Presidential Commission on the History of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society under National Socialism as well as to the Priority Program coordinated by Rüdiger vom Bruch and established in the summer of 2003 on "Science, Politics, and Society. Germany in the International Context in the Late Nineteenth into the Twentieth Century."

Besides supervising these individual studies, the overall project organized a major international symposium every year. The focus topics, of interest to the public at large, intended at the same time to point out how the history of research sponsorship by the DFG falls within the contexts of the general history of science and the individual fields of study. These proceedings volumes appeared in the series *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (BGD)*, under the editorship of the two directors of the research project, likewise published by Steiner Verlag.

The first convention took place from 7 to 9 June 2002 in the Harnack House in Berlin and concerned itself with the Master Plan East (*Generalplan Ost*) within the context of ethnic cleansing, occupation policy, and science. Professor Isabel Heinemann (Freiburg/Münster) organized the conference and afterwards, together with Patrick Wagner, edited the proceedings volume on "Science, Planning, Expulsion: New-Order Schemes and Resettlement Policy in the Twentieth Century" (*BGD*, no. 1, Stuttgart 2006). The response to the subsequently developed touring exhibition on "Science, Planning, Expulsion. The Nazis' Master Plan East" was also great. The opening ceremony took place in September 2006 at the Science Center in Bonn, and it was later shown in more than fifteen other German cities.²

² The contributors to this DFG exhibition were Isabel Heinemann, Willi Oberkrome, Dr. Sabine Schleiermacher, and Patrick Wagner. Dieter Hüsken (DFG) was responsible for the editing and exhibition design; Dr. Guido Lammers (DFG) was a consultant. An Internet version of the exhibition is accessible at http://www.dfg.de/aktuelles_presse/ausstellungen_veranstaltungen/generalplan-ost/index.html

The second conference was organized by Wolfgang U. Eckart and took place from 9 to 10 October 2003 in the historic memorial building dedicated to Reichspräsident Friedrich Ebert in Heidelberg. The topic was experiments on humans in medical research. The proceedings volume edited by Wolfgang U. Eckart, *Man, Medicine and the State. The Human Body as an Object of Government Sponsored Research in the Twentieth Century*, appeared in English in March 2006 (*BGD*, no. 2). The third conference, held from 29 September to 1 October 2004 in Bonn, bore the title “Between Education and Extermination. Research and Policy on Gypsies in Twentieth-Century Europe.” It was organized by Privatdozent Dr. Michael Zimmermann (†, Essen) and Dr. Jörg Später (Freiburg). Michael Zimmermann also edited the proceedings volume (*BGD*, no. 3), which – tragically – he did not live to see in print. The fourth and last conference, devoted to a single subject, took place from 29 September to 1 October 2005 in Berlin. Organized by Helmut Trischler and Mark Walker, its chosen topic was “Physics in Germany from 1920 to 1970: Concepts, Instruments, and Resources for Research and Research Support in International Comparison.” The related proceedings volume has already appeared (*BGD*, no. 5). Two additional conferences served to introduce preliminary and then final results of the overall project. The first conference took place on 16 March 2006 in Berlin in the Harnack House, the closing conference at the same venue from 30 to 31 January 2008.

The present volume is based on the presentations and comments made during the closing conference, with subsequent revisions of the talk manuscripts for publication. The original edition appeared in 2010 (*BGD*, no. 4). Six parts introduce the disciplinary and methodological approaches used to relate the DFG’s history. They also characterize the research project as a whole. “Outlining the Problem” is followed by the sections on the “History of the Institution,” “Natural and Engineering Sciences,” “History of Medicine and the Biosciences,” as well as “The Humanities and Social Sciences.” (In accordance with the general convention adopted by the project, this is where the contribution on agricultural research is inserted.) The last part, under the title “Science, Science Policy, and the German Research Foundation,” makes general observations that resulted from the conference and the research project as a whole. An introductory essay by one of the project heads opens most of these sections, followed by separate studies summarizing the individual research results. An expert commentary by an external scholar closes most parts. For these commentaries I would cordially like to thank, in the name of the Research Unit, Professors Mark Walker, Mitchell G. Ash, Ulrich Wengenroth, Moritz Epple, Johanna Bleker, and Reinhard Rürup.

Many people helped to make possible the execution and completion of the research project on the history of the DFG, and many deserve our gratitude. I restrict my mentions here to a few institutions and persons whose support cannot be overrated and are consequently very cordially thanked. First and foremost, the DFG itself. Our thanks go to its President, Professor Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker, as well as to his successor Professor Matthias Kleiner, who were both positively disposed toward the project throughout, without intervening in any manner in the substance of the research. Part of this procedure included that the overall project

as well as each individual study underwent the DFG's review process and was subjected to the critical scrutiny of a group of peers. These referees – the core of which were Professors Mitchell G. Ash (Vienna), Hans-Ulrich Thamer (Münster), and Jürgen Reulecke (Gießen) – are thanked very much for their constructive critiques and assessments. Finally, the Research Unit also very heartily thanks Dr. Guido Lammers, who always assisted in surmounting bureaucratic and other hurdles. Without him the project could not have been carried out.

The Research Unit would also like to thank the many archives, in particular, the Bundesarchiv, for their active support in tracking down archival holdings; Jörg Später for his excellent and competent copyediting of almost all of the project's publications; Michelle Miles for her thorough copyediting of the English edition; Steiner Verlag in Stuttgart and the publishing director Dr. Thomas Schaber for his uncomplicated collaboration; as well as fellow scholars who were researching similar questions for helping us along with their constructive criticism. In this connection special thanks from the Research Unit go to the members of the Academic Advisory Board for their expert comments and numerous suggestions. In particular, Gerald D. Feldman's wise remarks have brought the solution to many a problem within reach. His far too early death left a painful gap also in our Research Unit. The present volume is dedicated to his memory.

Note to the reader: All sources in the footnotes are given as shortened references. The titles of sources appear in roman type with no further markings. Please refer to the bibliography for complete bibliographical information.