

## “Zwischenvölkisches Verstehen” – Theory and Practice of Knowledge Transfer between 1933 and 1945

A critical attitude toward ‘internationality’ is one of the core aspects of the concept of science that was officially endorsed in Germany between 1933 and 1945. ‘Objective’ knowledge was rejected by the National Socialists as liberalist, Bolshevik, and Jewish. Nevertheless, scientific exchange was not abandoned. But how could a transnational science policy be based on a ‘völkisch’ concept of science? How could the primacy of politics over science be implemented, as demanded by Bernhard Rust and other politicians in the mid-1930s? As the jurist Karl Larenz put it: “Instead of a general internationality of science, national socialism requires us to cultivate the intellectual relations with kindred [artverwandten] peoples.”

In a first step, our contribution explores contemporary scientific philosophical and knowledge-sociological reflections of this problem. As Hans Freyer, Erich Rothacker, Martin Heidegger, Herman Jean de Vleeschauwer, Ernesto Grassi, and other philosophers with an affinity to national socialism show, a concept of ‘zwischenvölkisch’ or ‘überevölkisch understanding’ ought to replace the concept of international scientific understanding. In a radical departure from tradition, the validity of scientific knowledge should now be bound to factors such as the people, the nation, and the race. In order to preserve, nonetheless, the claim to universality, theorists introduced ideas of a one-directional, hegemonic transfer of knowledge.

In a second step, we study the influence of the theories of ‘zwischenvölkisch understanding’ on scientific practice: The programmatic statements often justified the selection of scientific topics, authors, and publications, in particular in ‘überevölkisch’ journals like the *Europäische Wissenschafts-Dienst* and *Hochschule und Ausland. Monatsschrift für deutsche Kultur und zwischenvölkische geistige Zusammenarbeit/Geist der Zeit*. The theories informed the policies for academic invitations by German institutions, both in Germany and abroad; and they guided the award of prizes, such as the “Preis für wissenschaftliche Förderung zwischenvölkischer Geistesbeziehungen” from the *Deutsche Akademie*.

Our overall goal is to reconstruct the complex theoretical framework in which knowledge transfers took place during the Nazi era.

### Selected previous publications:

Andrea Albrecht, „Wissenschaftliches Rüstzeug“. Zur Produktion volkswirtschaftlichen Wissens unter den Bedingungen nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft am Beispiel von Hans Peter (1898–1959), URL = <http://fheh.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/AlbrechtHPeter1.pdf>.

Andrea Albrecht/Alexandra Skowronski, Hans Wahl und der Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur in Weimar 1928–1933, in: *Publications of the English Goethe Society* 84.3 (2015), pp. 74–98.

Lutz Danneberg, Wissenschaftsbegriff und epistemischer Relativismus nach 1933: Nicolai Hartmanns (1882–1950) Preisfrage „Die inneren Gründe des philosophischen Relativismus und die Möglichkeit seiner Überwindung“ für die Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften 1936, in: B. Peters, E. Schütz, ed., *200 Jahre Berliner Universität – 200 Jahre Berliner Germanistik 1810–2010*. Bern 2011, pp. 173–216.

Lutz Danneberg/Holger Dainat, ed., *Literaturwissenschaft und Nationalsozialismus*. Tübingen 2003.

Lutz Danneberg, Der Logische Empirismus in den zwanziger und dreißiger Jahren: philosophische Rezeption und kulturelle Ausstrahlung, in: H. Poser/U. Dirks, ed., *Hans Reichenbach – Philosophie im Umkreis der Physik*. Berlin 1998, pp. 119–138.

Alexandra Skowronski, Heisenberg und Goethe – Physik und Dichtung. Strategien naturwissenschaftlicher und bildungsbürgerlicher Selbstdarstellung am Beispiel von Werner Heisenbergs Goethe-Vorträgen (1941 und 1967), in: *Scientia Poetica* 15 (2012), pp. 252–296.