

Call for Papers for the Conference

Science and the State

Governmental Research in War and Peace during the Twentieth Century

Organized by Simon Große-Wilde, Helmut Maier and Carsten Reinhardt

Time and Place: 3.- 4. March 2022, ZiF, Bielefeld.

Arguably, governmental research institutes and their scientific output have been crucial to state activities during the twentieth century. Think of the National Physics Laboratory (UK), the US Geological Survey, the Laboratoire National de Métrologie et d'Essais (France), or the Materials Testing Laboratories (Germany). However – perhaps due to an emphasis on university-based, “basic” science and its phenomenal growth toward Big Science in this period, or a focus on “applied” science (or technoscience) and its societal effects and repercussions – the research done at governmental institutes is a topic overlooked by many historians of science and technology. Only recently this has begun to change, with sustained efforts especially by political scientists and economists to give governmental science, often analyzed as regulatory science, the attention it deserves. Thus, our conference attempts to place governmental research on the historians’ agenda in an international, comparative perspective, and with a focus on the period of the two world wars and the cold war. For doing so, we wish to scrutinize the diverse national systems of governmental and regulatory science in their respective political, economical and scientific environments.

We especially stress the following themes:

- The institutional organization of governmental science, and its changes.
- The characteristics of its epistemic output, and its uses in innovation, regulation and policy.
- The role of governmental research in armament, resources exploitation, and efforts

to secure autarky.

- The role of governmental research in crimes against humanity.
- The relations to administrations in both dictatorial/ totalitarian and democratic regimes, especially during the shifts from peace-time to war-time economies, and back.
- Cultures of remembrance and politics of the past after World War II in the context of governmental science.

We welcome abstracts of not more than 500 words, and a two-page cv, by 31. October 2021.

We will be able to cover travel and accommodation. A decision if this conference will take place physically, hybrid, or virtual will be made at a later time.

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