

**HISTORY OF ANTARCTIC RESEARCH - A CHALLENGE FOR SCAR**

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Many historic case studies have been published about individual Antarctic expeditions, such as the American Wilkes expedition (1838-42) mapping over 2000 km of coastline and its aftermath at the court of law (Philbrick 2003), the organisation of the first International Polar Year (1882 -83) as the first big science experiment (Lüdecke 2004), the scientific collaboration during 1901-03 in times of political rivalry between great Britain and Germany (Lüdecke 2003), the Belgian attempt to institutionalize Polar Research (1905-15) within an international polar organisation (Lüdecke 2001), the race to the South Pole (1911-12) reminiscent of the imperialistic motive of setting the flag (Huntford 1979) the special weather conditions Scott encountered during his last march (Solomon 2001), or more disciplinary studies like the history of Antarctic astrophysics (Indermuehle et al. 2005).

On the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Geophysical Year IGY (2007-2008) the Action Group for the "History of Antarctic Research within SCAR" was established in October 2004 under the SCAR Delegate Committee on Standing Committees and Outreach. It is the first international and interdisciplinary group devoted to the History of Antarctic Research and its institutionalisation.

We strive to obtain insights into the evolution of Antarctic research as well as the emergence and development of institutions to coordinate what was first called the Special Committee, and then Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research. We are studying to what degree research in Antarctica has been driven by scientific criteria, and to what extent compromises were made in the light of political barriers, levels of technological development, logistical limitations and physical hazards.

A review will be held on both scientific and non-scientific background factors that drove nations to participate in the IGY (1957-58), at the height of the Cold War. We examine the different roles played by non-governmental scientific organisations as opposed to intergovernmental organisations or modes of international organisation. Additional socio-cultural and political background factors will be considered with regard to major nations that chose not to contribute to the IGY.

During our yearly workshops we want to attract Historians, Historians of Science, Polar Researchers, and Polar Veterans. The first workshop took place in Munich, Germany (2-3 June 2005). Proceedings will be published in 2006.