Friedrich Georg Josef Meggendorfer (07.06.1880–12.02.1953)

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Introduction: The DGPPN, as a German psychiatric professional society, demands a new, systematic viewing of the biographies, motivations, participations and defense patterns of important representatives of the discipline during the National Socialistic period.

Objectives/Aims: A current evaluation of previously untapped sources makes it possible to assign an appropriate critical-historical position to Friedrich Meggendorfer's role as NS-academic psychiatrist.

Material and Methods: Relevant archive materials as well as primary and secondary literature have been reviewed.

Results: Clinically and scientifically, Friedrich Meggendorfer worked under Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926), Max Nonne (1861-1959) and Ernst Rüdin (1874-1952). Meggendorfer earned a good reputation in genetic research during his activity as psychiatrist in Hamburg under Wilhelm Weygandt (1870-1939). This was the decisive reason why he was called to the Chair in Psychiatry in Erlangen in 1934. At the same time, Meggendorfer was appointed Director of the Erlangen Psychiatric and Neurological Hospital as an adnexe to the Erlangen asylum for the mentally ill. Because he had joined the NSDAP on 01.05.1933, he was suspended from office on 19.11.1945 by the military government. Meggendorfer was rated as a 'hanger-on' by the denazification court on 20.09.1946. In the post-war period, Friedrich Meggendorfer was confronted with comparatively strict restrictions. His removal from the faculty of the Friedrich-Alexander University can primarily be considered due to the post-war Director of the Erlangen asylum, Werner Leibbrand (1896-1974) and his reorganization of the psychiatric clinics.

Conclusion: Meggendorfer's role as an NS-academic psychiatrist is most likely trapped in the professional understanding of his time.