

# Acknowledgments

This book has come a long, a very long way. I first became interested in the Quakers as part of a project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation from 2010 onwards with a Dilthey Fellowship entitled “Globale Hilfe. US aid organizations and *international relief* 1850–2010”. While the center of my life shifted from Germany to Scandinavia in the following years and the ideas for a book on the topic developed further, both the funding and the support for my project has remained constant. My first thanks therefore go to the Volkswagen Foundation, which has allowed me to bring this book project to a successful conclusion and first publish it in German, and now in a thoroughly revised form in English. A special thank you goes to Anja Fliess, who accompanied this project from the Foundation’s side with generosity and interest almost over the entire duration, and to Eva Maria Schaefer, who helped bring it to its eventual conclusion. My heartfelt thanks also go to De Gruyter Brill, and in particular to Rabea Rittgerodt: for her interest in the project and for taking this book on board in the first place and last but not least her constant encouragement and support on the way; I would also like to extend my gratitude to Verena Deutsch, Annika Padoan and Anett Rehner for their friendly support in the final phase.

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Nearly three years have passed since the launch of the book *Politics of Service* in German. If anything, these years have further extended the list of people to which the book and its author are indebted. First of all, Jonathan Hoare did a tremendous job in making sense of my English and in transforming the manuscript

into readable prose. I am also immensely grateful to Doug Rossinow and the two anonymous reviewers, who - from different perspectives - pointed me to shortcomings and gaps in my writing. The thoroughness of their reading was really way out of the ordinary. Receiving their extensive, critical and multifaceted feedback on my work together with Esther Möller's and Matthew Stibbe's reviews of the German book has been crucial for adding depth and perspective to my study of Quaker humanitarianism. A great thank you to all of you for the "constructive service" you rendered to this book! No need to emphasize that all remaining errors, faults and shortcomings are entirely of my own making.

Among the best experiences that have come from working on this book for more than a decade are the many opportunities I had to discuss it with friends and colleagues at conferences and at dinner tables, in colloquia and workshops, in pubs and during long walks, in Oslo, Berlin, Nürnberg, Aarhus, Giessen, Philadelphia and many other places. I cannot hope to do justice to all the people who left their imprint in the book: First of all, I want to mention Laura Huth and Freda Wagner, whose PhD projects originally formed part of my greater project on "Global Aid". Although my move to Oslo brought the joint project period to a premature end, I received impulses from the exchange for which I am very grateful to both of them. Fabrice Braun, Maret Grapengeter, Klaus Nathaus, Elisabeth Piller, Katharina Rietzler and Dietmar Süß have read parts or the entirety of the German manuscript. There were numerous others who generously provided advice and suggestions: Franz Adlgasser, Guy Aiken, Arnd Bauerkämper, Thorsten Borring Olesen, Patricia Clavin, Eleanor Davey, Jürgen Dinkel, Norbert Götz, Matthew Hilton, Jørgen Jensenhaugen, Sandrine Kott, Till Kössler, Daniel Laqua, Kai Nowak, Kevin O'Sullivan, Johannes Paulmann, Davide Rodogno, Silvia Salvatici, Glenda Sluga, Bertrand Taithe, Heike Wieters, Dirk van Laak, Hanne Hagtvedt Vik, Steffen Werther, Tobias Winstel. Last but not least, the Quakers were also a recurring topic in conversations over many years with my late friend Volker Barth, who passed much too early in 2021, which makes the memories of the chats we had on the subject particularly precious to me. I must not fail to mention that my teaching at universities in Germany, Denmark and Norway has provided me another set of valuable opportunities to further develop my ideas on the history of humanitarian aid in conversation with a varied group of students from all around the globe. If anything, they have strengthened my conviction of the high relevance the history of humanitarian aid carries for our understanding of the world we live in and the value that comes out of a diversity of perspectives.

Furthermore, working on the history of Quaker humanitarianism for much of the past fifteen years surely could not but leave a mark on my own life and the way I see the world around me, as it faces some of the fundamental problems that my protagonists struggled with (sometimes in the very same places of their

past operations): how to end wars, how to achieve and sustain peace, how to promote reconciliation and justice are painfully pressing questions of the present. To engage with the Quakers' past answers on these questions, with their inward and outward struggles, their uncompromising dedication, bordering at times on stubbornness, as well as with their uncertainties and soul-searching has been a mind-provoking, enriching experience, which strengthened me in my conviction that this is a story worth telling.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, my wife Verona, and our children Luis and Ricarda. They have met my often solitary engagement with the Quakers' "fanaticism of good" with an equally relentless fanaticism of patience. This book is dedicated to the three of them.

