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The Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum Heidelberg (German Cancer Research Center) has a predecessor in one of the first cancer institutes not only on German soil but in the world. This was the "Samariterhaus," by Vincenz Czerny (1842—1916), Professor of Surgery at the University of Heidelberg. Their establishment coincided with an auspicious occasion, the First International Cancer Congress held at Heidelberg and Frankfurt am Main in 1906. In subsequent years the Heidelberg Institute pioneered in the development of radiation therapy for cancer, and its clinical facility came to be known as the Czerny-Krankenhaus für Strahlenbehandlung.

In the late 1940's the "Hinterzarten Kreis" of German cancer research workers, headed by Professor A. F. J. Butenandt and sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, proposed the idea of establishing a national German Cancer Research Institute. Through the vigorous efforts of Professor K. H. Bauer, the well-known surgeon and oncologist of the University of Heidelberg and member of the "Hinterzarten Kreis," leading politicians of the state of Baden-Württemberg and the Government of the Federal Republic were stimulated to support this idea, which finally led to the establishment of Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum at Heidelberg in 1964. Its constitution designates the German Cancer Research Center as a foundation dedicated to the public and administratively independent of the University of Heidelberg. It is supported by the Federal Government, the state of Baden-Württemberg, and the Community of the Federal States. Its Board of Trustees (Kuratorium) includes the Deans of the Medical School and the Faculty of Science of the University. The center is headed by the Board of Directors (Direktorium) and by the Board of Administrators (Verwaltungsrat). Each board elects its chairman for two and three years, respectively.

One of the reasons for selecting Heidelberg—an ancient seat of learning—as the site for the Cancer Center was the prior existence of the above-mentioned Institut für experimentelle Krebsforschung and the Institute of Virus Research of the Community of the Federal States (Prof. Dr. K. Munk, Director). These institutes, still located within the old city of Heidelberg, were incorporated into the Center in January 1966. The five other institutes, i.e., the Institute of Experimental Toxicology and Chemotherapy (Prof. Dr. D. Schmahl, Director), the Institute of Experimental Pathology (Prof. Dr. K. Goerttler, Director), the Institute of Biochemistry (Prof. Dr. E. Hecker, Director), the Institute of Documentation, Information and Statistics (Prof. Dr. G. Wagner, Director), and the Institute of Nuclear Medicine (Prof. Dr. K. H. Scheer, Director), are located in provisional buildings within the new university campus north of the Neckar River. All seven institutes are devoted primarily to basic cancer research.

The final stage of the German Cancer Research, a new eight-story building including faculty houses and providing space for eight institutes, has recently been completed and is scheduled to be opened officially on September 25, 1972, one day before the 82nd birthday of Professor Bauer. It will house the seven institutes already in existence as well as a new institute covering tumor immunology and tumor genetics.

The cover illustrates the final building of the German Cancer Research Center (lower left); background, the five provisional buildings of the Center; upper left, a photograph of Professor Czerny, circa 1906; and lower right, a 1968 photograph of Professor Bauer.