

# THE ANILINE WOMEN

Female Employees at BASF  
1865 to Today

 **BASF**  
We create chemistry



### Looking back ahead

With 150 years of corporate history behind us, now is the time to reassess the work of the men and women at BASF. Where did it all begin for women at BASF and how far have men and women come in their collaboration since then? This cursory overview will highlight the milestones on the joint path and show which tasks still lie ahead.

Women at BASF have always challenged seemingly obvious living and working situations. This requires a lot of strength and courage. Did you know, for example, that it took 40 years, i.e. more than one generation, before women worked in the laboratory at BASF? And then they only had cleaning tasks. In those days, being denied equal access to employment meant, and still means, to be denied resources and development opportunities. A quote by Alwin Mittasch, head of the ammonia laboratory, demonstrates the mixed reception of women's entry into the workforce. In 1917, he complained that it would be "unavoidable that female chemists will be employed in the laboratory in the future due to the huge shortage of male chemists."

The fascinating biographies of the great male inventors and researchers are testimony to how rich and diverse the path of development has been in the history of BASF. Names like Heinrich Caro, Carl Bosch and Walter Reppe are well-known among BASF employees. The Wikipedia article on BASF is also very informative with regards to this point. Among the 16 most important people in the history of the company, exactly one woman is mentioned. This woman is Gabriele Bopp, the first

female plant engineer at the beginning of the 1980s. However, the generations of women who filled the empty workbenches during the war remain nameless. This book tells their story as well as Gabriele Bopp's, showing that biographies of the women at BASF actually do exist. Ever since alchemical times, women have contributed to chemical research, albeit largely unheard and unseen for centuries. Since historical records often focus on the work of men, we have become so accustomed to the names of the well-known men at BASF<sup>1</sup> that it is hard to find entries on women in the historical documents.

"Women in Business" took on this task together with Corporate History and collected findings about the areas and professions in which women worked at BASF. And so the story of how the tasks executed by women evolved from generation to generation slowly unfolded before our eyes. For example, new professions emerged for women and they began to work in more and more male-dominated professions.

Looking back ahead: As Newton said (more or less), it is good to know whose shoulders we stand on. The fact that we can take the way in which we can discuss new professional projects today for granted, is owed to all those women who took risks in the past and stood up for themselves. The following pages are therefore also an encouragement to take risks and challenge the familiar.

<sup>1</sup>And women are not just an exception at BASF, there is only one woman named among the 152 authors who published more than 35 manuscripts in the "Applied Chemistry" magazine between 1946 and 2012: Alexandra Slawin (DOI: 10.1002/ange.201300056)





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1 Cable room of the telephone switchboard, 1921

2 The Board of BASF SE, 2016



Dear colleagues,

In the photo of the telephone switchboard engineering room of BASF from 100 years ago, there is only one woman among the colleagues. Similarly, there is only one woman, Margret Suckale, to be seen on the photo of the Board from the 2016 annual report.

There may only be one woman on each photo, but they are still worlds apart. Today, 19.8% of all leadership positions are occupied by women. However, women only represent 12.5% of the Board and only fill 12.9% of secondary positions. So there is still room for improvement. The goal is to increase the proportion of women in our management team to between 22 and 24 percent by 2021. This is an ambitious goal, especially as there is relatively little fluctuation in the management team of the BASF Group.

It is therefore all the more important to promote diversity worldwide. After all, diversity is part of BASF's corporate culture, acting as a driver of both performance and innovation. The globalization of our markets is accompanied by diverse customer requirements. We want to reflect this diversity in our workforce in order to understand the demands of our customers even better.

Important values here are creativity, motivation and company identification. We need the collaboration of men and women as well as that of people of various nationalities to promote these values. Management teams play a crucial role in strengthening diversity and making the most of this diversity in the daily work. They are joined by networks such as "Women in Business", which also contribute to making diversity a matter of course. "Aniline Women 1865 to Today" documents the milestones on the way to a diverse team that can successfully implement our values.

Yours,

Kurt Bock

Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of BASF SE





# 1865-1913

**Women at BASF –  
an exception at first**

1914-1918

Female workers in a male domain –  
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# 1865-1913

## Women at BASF – an exception at first

### Framework conditions and milestones

1865	Founding of the Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik and the “General German Women’s Association”
1878	Introduction of maternity leave for female workers (3 weeks after childbirth)
1890	<b>BASF employs the first nurses to provide medical care for the employees</b>
1900	For the first time, women in the Grand Duchy of Baden can enroll to study at university
1905	<b>The first female cleaning staff are employed in the laboratories at BASF</b>
1908	Women can become members of a political party or association
1903/1911	Marie Curie receives the Nobel Prize for physics and chemistry respectively
1913	<b>Dora Larass is the first female employee in the patent department at BASF</b>

### Founding years and company welfare policy

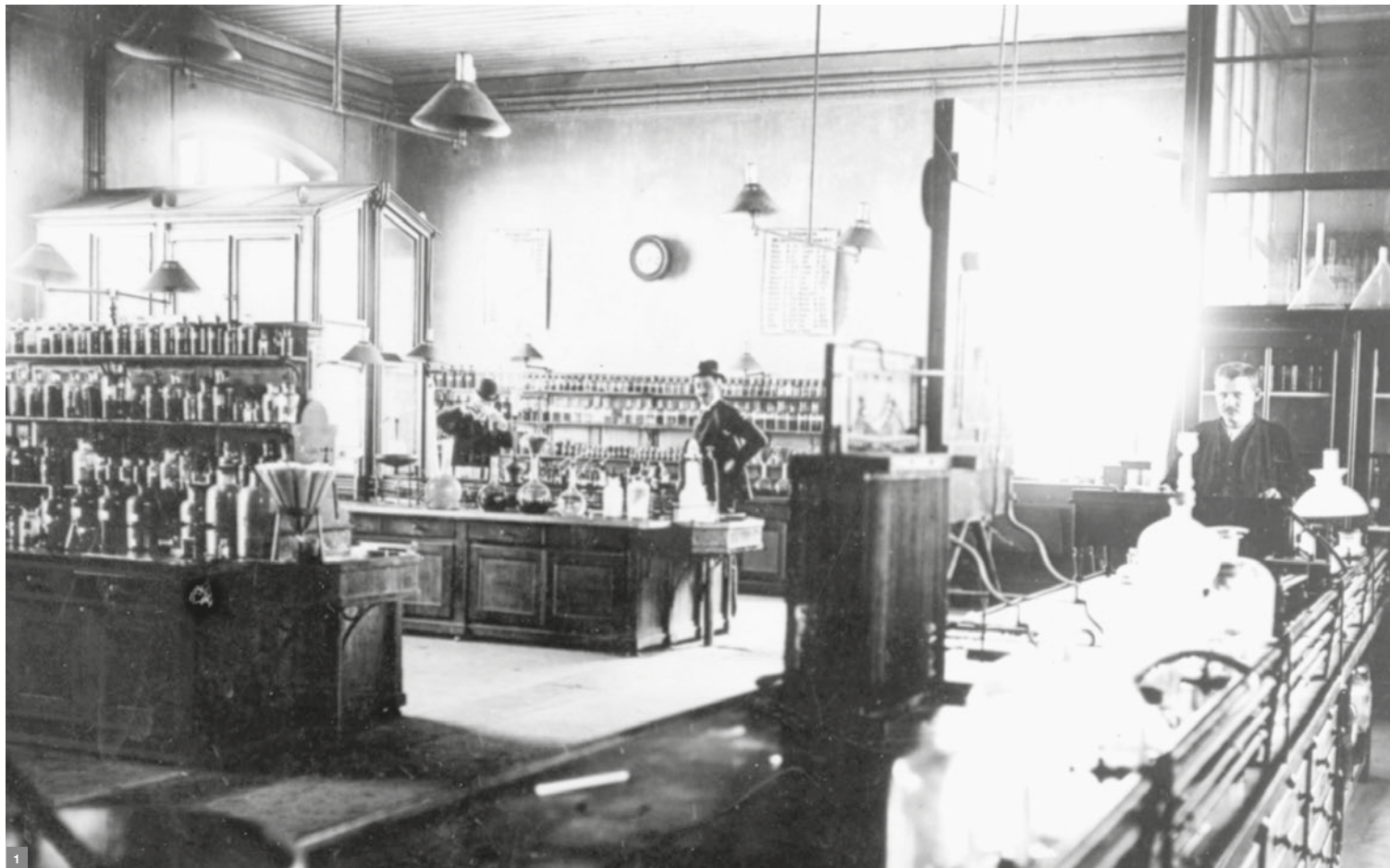
In the same year that Friedrich Engelhorn established the Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik in Mannheim, the organized women’s movement began in Germany. The “General German Women’s Association”, established in Leipzig in 1865, advocated the legal equality of men and women, as well as equal access for women to education and gainful employment. Middle-class women were only able to work as teachers at the time, after completing their studies at a higher girls’ school. Female factory workers and laborers had other concerns. They demanded improvements to the hard working conditions and better pay. However, many years passed before the first results could be seen.

The Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik was still in its early phase when it had its first major sales success on the world market with the synthetic dye alizarin, which was introduced on the market in 1869. More new dyes followed in the next few years until the “king of all dyes” was created: “Indigo Pure BASF” was introduced on the market in 1897. The company continued to grow with every success. It went from having 500 employees in 1870 to over 3,000 in 1888. The initially high fluctuation in the labor force decreased by 50% in the 1880s. This is credited to the company welfare policy which improved the living conditions of the workers and their families. Above all, the policy included measures



Bathhouse in Hemshof for the wives and children of BASF employees, 1910





for living and health care. Although not directly employed by BASF, the wives of workers were also able to profit from the company welfare policy. For example, they were able to use the women and children's bathhouse which was purpose-built in 1893, or go to the "New mothers' sanctuary" as of 1894. There, new mothers would receive medical care after the birth of their babies. Daughters from working-class

families could learn domestic and garden work, manual work and how to keep the household in order at the school of home economics founded in 1894. The Heinrich von Brunck Foundation has enabled women and children of employees to visit spas and treatment facilities since 1909. In 1914, BASF even acquired its own recreation home in St. Johann for this purpose.

### The first women at BASF

Women first entered the company as workers in 1905. The first female employees rinsed glasses and performed cleaning tasks in the laboratories.

In 1913, Dora Larass, originally from Great Britain, was the first woman to take on typically male work. She worked as shorthand typist in the patent department.

1 Men in suits and hats and no women to be seen - alizarin laboratory, around 1900

2 Two mothers and their new-born babies in the "New mothers' sanctuary", 1918



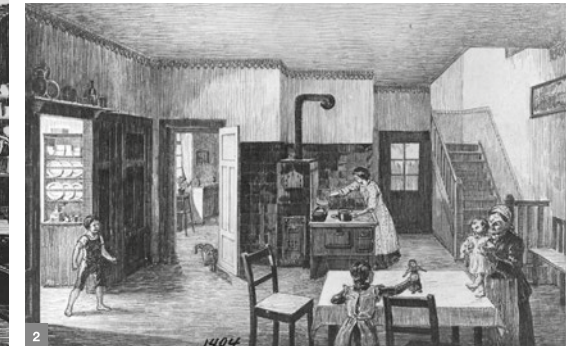
### THE NURSES' HOME

The nurses' home was established in 1890 in the Kurze Strasse in Ludwigshafen, near to where Gate 1 is located today. It included housing for three nurses, a clinic with a waiting room and a consulting room. The nurses who worked here were members of the Bavarian Women's Association and later of the Badische Women's Association. They received their salary from BASF, however. The Badische Women's Association supported female employment and the establishment of a nursing profession. The number of nurses increased constantly. By 1923, there were nine. The nurses were subordinate to the company physician and carried out health care measures under his instructions. In addition to the normal consulting times, there were also special consulting times twice a week when women could see a gynecologist. Every worker who had worked at BASF for at least two years received a certificate of authorization for himself and his family members to use the clinic. There was also a BASF milk kitchen here where young mothers received specially-treated milk for their babies.

### A NEW HOME FOR THE WORKERS AND THEIR WIVES

The rapid growth of BASF made Ludwigshafen one of the fastest growing cities in the German Empire. The housing supply in the city was unable to keep up with this growth and housing shortage became a very pressing social problem. As a solution, the Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik began to construct the first 400 company houses in Hemshof in 1872. Free-standing houses with gardens were built. The workers' houses were one and a half floors high, and each housing unit had two rooms, one bedroom, one kitchen, two cellar rooms and a small garden. The workers used the

120 square meters of greenery to grow vegetables and keep small animals. Considering the housing shortage at the time, these workers' dwellings represented significant progress for BASF workers and their families. The houses for supervisors and foremen, as well as for the "officials" (managers) were larger and more comfortable. All housing units were located only a short distance from the factory. So the wives of the workers could easily bring lunch to their husbands in the factory. Further company housing followed. In 1899, construction work began for further additional housing in Limburgerhof. By the beginning of the First World War, BASF had built 950 housing units for employees.



1 Milk kitchen in the nurses' home, drawing by Otto Bollhagen, 1914

2 The interior of a worker's home in the Hemshof housing units, drawing by Otto Bollhagen, around 1913

3 Nurses' home, 1920

4 Women's clinic in the nurses' home, 1917

*"Female workers were (...) few and far between; the first shorthand typist, an English woman working in the patent department, was marveled at, as the sight of a female within the walls of the factory was very unusual."*

Quote on the employment situation in BASF around 1913 (Dr. Walter Vogtländer-Tetzner, in his BASF chronology from the 1940s, p. 491)



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# 1914-1918

## Female workers in a male domain – interlude due to the war

### Framework conditions and milestones

1914	Beginning of the First World War
1914	Most German women's associations join forces with the Nationaler Frauendienst (NFD), which is active in providing housing, health and child care
1915	First International Congress of Women in The Hague with 1,000 participants from 12 different countries
1916	<b>BASF requests permission to employ female workers for the first time</b>
1918	Women receive active and passive right to vote. The Constitution of the Weimar Republic (1919) states: "Men and women are equal and have the same rights."
1918	<b>By the end of the First World War, women represent nearly 3 percent of the labor force at BASF</b>

### War economy needs chemical products

The Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik thrived and tapped into another promising field of activity due to the large-scale implementation of the Haber-Bosch process for ammonia synthesis. Suddenly, the company faced a whole new challenge. The First World War began in summer 1914. Many BASF products were used for other purposes in the state-driven war economy. At the Oppau factory, which was commissioned in 1913, ammonia was converted into nitric acid and supplied to the explosives industry instead of being used for the production of fertilizers. The intermediates chlorine and phosgene, which were usually used for the production of dyes or pharmaceutical products, were now needed for the production of poison gases used by the

armies on both sides of the front line. The importance of the chemical industry in the German Empire was increasing. The growing shortage of raw materials promoted innovations which in turn led to an enormous increase in production.

### Worker shortage – BASF relied on women

Many workers were enlisted for military service during the war. By the spring of 1916, the management of the Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik faced a shortage of around 200 unskilled workers, despite the fact that prisoners of war represented a new source of labor. For the first time in its history, the company filed a petition to the district government to hire



Women working in the mineral water factory established in 1917. Factory employees were able to buy the mineral water in 0.33 l bottles at a price of 5 pfennigs.





250 female workers over the age of 18 years. In November 1917, 1,525 of the 12,880 employees in the Ludwigshafen and Oppau factories were women. Unfortunately, there are no reliable figures on the total number of women employed during the First World War in the various working areas within the company. They worked in the factory kitchens, offices, storerooms, laboratories, workshops and in production. They made coffee in the kitchens, took it to the factories in tin pots

and personally served the workers. They also pushed the railway wagons for transport orders. In 1917, the first women were also employed in the procurement department to carry out filing work and work on the typewriter.

**Women filled the gaps, but only temporarily**

Not only in the Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik, but throughout the entire German Empire, women filled the



gaps in public and business life; gaps left by the men who were fighting on the front line. They worked in the factories, delivered letters, drove trucks and streetcars and harvested crops. Their commitment and their services were viewed as supporting the war effort and therefore as a temporary state of emergency. At the end of the war, women were removed from the better-paid "male" working areas. According to today's research, the work carried out by women during the

First World War made a smaller contribution to emancipation than previously assumed. On the contrary, it strengthened the previous gender balance through the consideration of

**1** Lead soldering, 1917. This photo was featured in an article on the then relatively new process of welding with gas in the site newspaper in 1917. "As our picture shows, women and girls could even find work in the pipe welding department of our boiler shop – something no one could have previously imagined."

**2** Employees in the telephone office, 1916



women's work as part of a war-related state of emergency. At BASF, too, documentation shows an awareness of an exceptional situation due to the war. The Select Commission of the Supervisory Board stated in October 1916: "We were forced to employ female workers, despite having made less than favorable experiences with them in the factories." This statement is particularly fitting regarding the employment of women in chemical production, as this involved very strenuous manual labor at the time.

also included a clothes hand-out, which was set up in the "Vereinshaus" (today the Feierabendhaus), as well as the handing out of meat and other foodstuffs, free of charge, to the families of workers who needed help. The office of the BASF worker's association, founded in 1911, oversaw the hand-out of coal for heating and took care of those who had been injured in the war or who had gone missing. Wives and daughters of senior managers and foremen volunteered in the field hospitals on the site premises. One of these field hospitals was located where building F 103 stands today.

**THE DRYING PLANT**

During times of war, food is usually scarce. For this reason, BASF built a drying plant in 1917. It was housed in a new building which had not yet been commissioned. In the drying plant, machines washed, peeled and cut fruit and vegetables, after which the food was dried in large drying vats. These vats had a finely perforated sieve bottom through which the residual moisture could drain away. Drying using warm air took around 10 hours. Approximately 100 kilograms of dried goods could be produced from 800 kilograms of fresh carrots. By removing the water, fruit and vegetables could be preserved for longer periods. The 50 women working in the drying plant on the historical photos give the impression that this plant was firmly in female hands.

**ALLEVIATING THE EFFECTS OF THE WAR**

The families of BASF workers benefited from the products of the drying plant and other amenities to alleviate the effects of the war. A workshop to repair shoes and a sole repair shop were established in summer 1918. The amenities



1 Female shoe repairer, around 1918

2 Woman in the gas engine power house in the Oppau factory, 1917

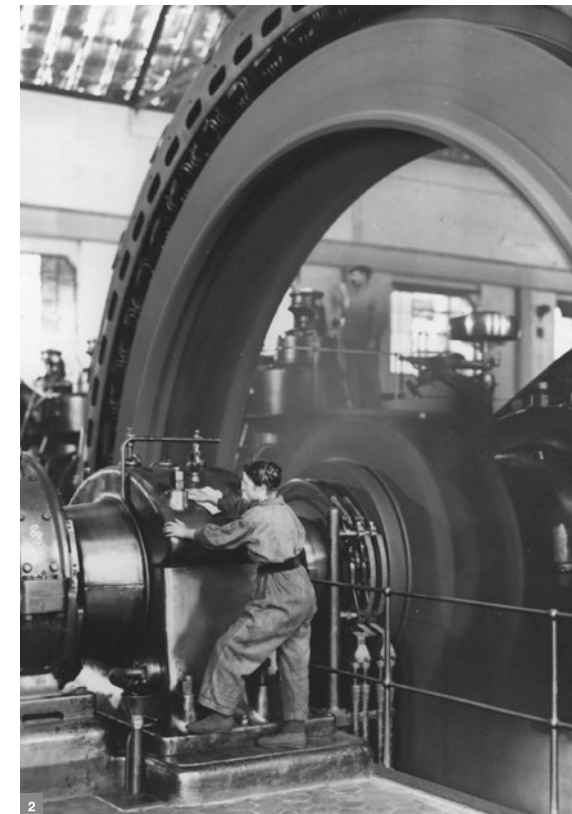
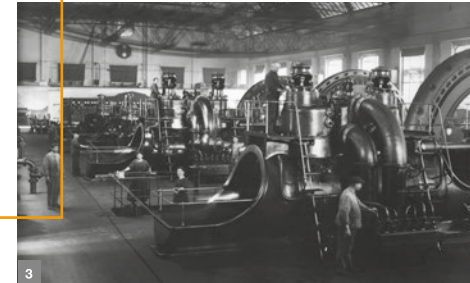
3 Gas generators in the electrical power house, 1915

4 The First World War changed the appearance of BASF in two ways. For one, women in working clothes were everywhere on the site premises and secondly air strikes left their mark, like this crater caused by a bomb, 1918.

5 A look inside the field hospital II in building Lu 204, today F 103, 1914

*"If we had come across a woman walking around the site premises before the war, we would have been completely shocked. However, we are now so used to seeing women and girls working in our factories that we don't even notice the woman wearing men's clothes. However, women's work in the chemical industry is likely just a temporary phenomenon, at least to the extent seen during the war, and that is something that future generations will certainly be grateful for."*

Quote from the site newspaper of the Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik, no. 10, October 1918, p. 89: "Women supporting the war effort in the aniline factory"





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# Excursus

## The first female academics – assistants instead of researchers

### The first female chemists at BASF

With the continuous growth of the chemical industry in Germany, there was an ongoing demand for chemists who could research new innovations in the laboratories of large companies. In the ten years between 1880 and 1890 alone, there was a 200 percent increase in the number of chemists at BASF, Bayer and Hoechst. However, both workers and academics were conscripted for military service in the First World War, which further compounded the situation on the labor market. Dr. Alwin Mittasch, head of the ammonia laboratory, wrote to the main laboratory responsible for the recruitment of chemists in October 1917: “After talking to Dr. Bosch, the Director, it has been noted that we will not be able to avoid employing female chemists in the laboratory in future due to the shortage of male chemists.”

### Shortage of male chemists paved the way for women

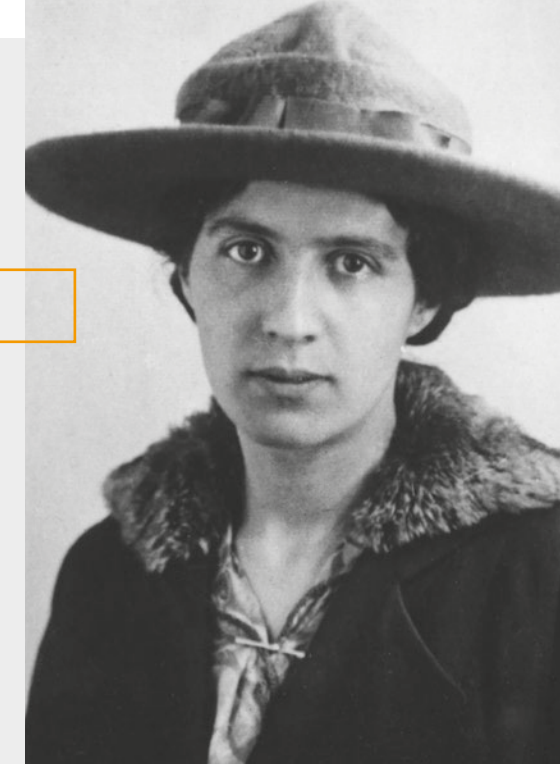
Women were first allowed to attend German universities in the period between 1900 and 1909. So there were already a few female graduates in the field of chemistry. One of them was Dr. Lili Wachenheim, who graduated from the University of Heidelberg in 1917 and then worked for a year as assistant to Dr. Max Bodenstein, Director of the Electrochemical Institute of the Technical University of Hanover. On January 2, 1918, Lili Wachenheim began her employment as the first

female chemist at BASF. She worked for Dr. Alwin Mittasch in the ammonia laboratory. Her first research report, “On the effects of nitrogen dioxide on water and nitric acid in various concentrations”, from March 11, 1918, is included in a list of reports from the ammonia laboratory. Two further reports from “Miss Dr. Wachenheim” are filed under the year 1918. Lili Wachenheim left BASF a year later. The reason for leaving is presumed to be her marriage. At the time, there was a social consensus that a woman should give up her employment to serve husband and family, even if she had studied for her profession for six years. The second female chemist, Dr. Martha Bretschneider, was hired by BASF on November 15, 1918 and on April 1, 1920, Dr. Wilma Schneehagen joined the company. She was the first female chemist to remain at the company for a significant period of time. She left BASF in 1939 after 19 years of employment.

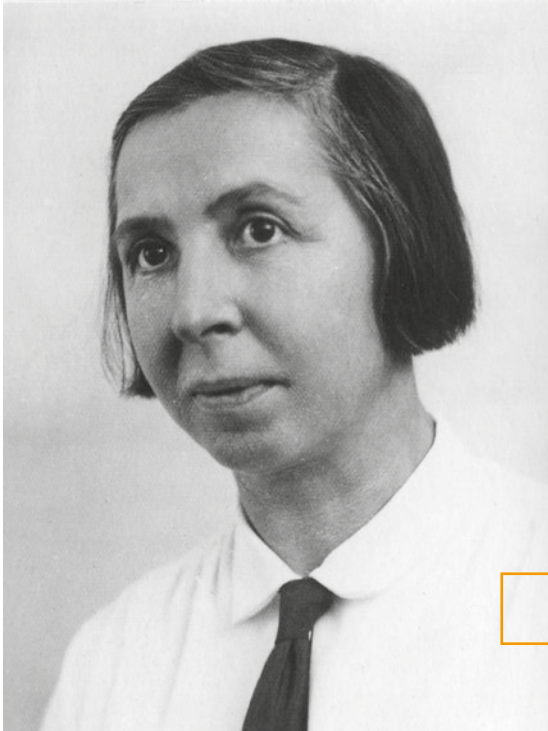
Most of the 30 female graduates hired between 1918 and 1928 (including 27 female chemists, one female botanist and two female physicists) left BASF after a period of between one to nine years. Only three fields of work were available to the female chemists at BASF during this period. These fields involved working in a literature office, literature work for individual working groups or, as an exception to the rule,

experimental research in the ammonia laboratory. On the other hand, women were not employed in laboratories which were closely connected to production or research work in the factories. Women were not viewed as suitable for this work. It would take quite a while longer until a female chemist received her own area of research.

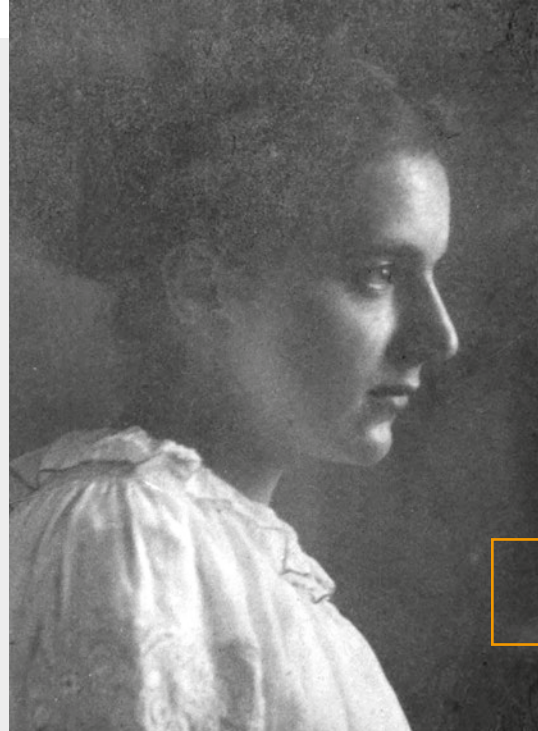
*Dr. Lili Wachenheim, around 1918*



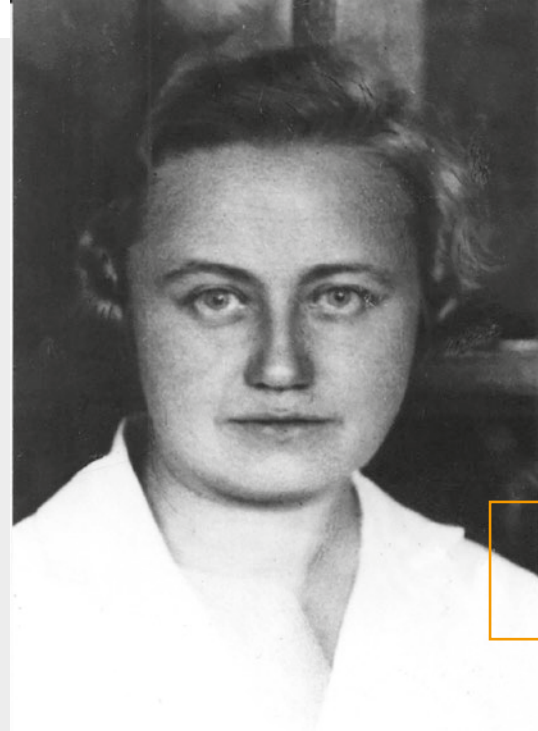
*Dr. Martha Bretschneider, around 1919/20*



*Dr. Wilma Schneehagen, undated*



*Dr. Marianne Cauer, employed as a chemist in the ammonia laboratory in 1922, undated*



*Dr. Marta Grote, the first female physicist at BASF, employed in the nitrogen dioxide department from 1920, undated*



*Dr. Irmgard Hogrefe, female chemist in the patent department from 1921, undated*



*Dr. Lene Müller, the first female botanist at BASF, employed in the ammonia laboratory from 1928, undated*



*Dr. Agnes Lindner, employed in the ammonia laboratory from 1920, undated*



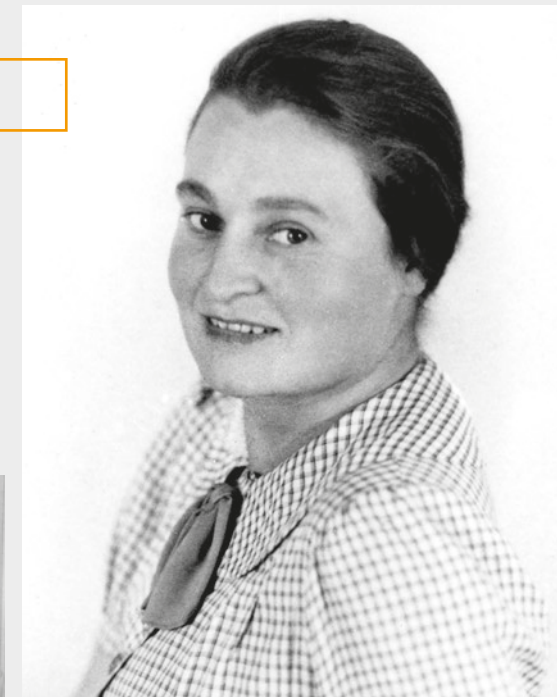
### THE LITERATURE OFFICES

In the 19th century, the research landscape at the Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik was still so small that researchers were able to discuss their topics and results in person. By the end of the First World War, it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep a comprehensive overview of all the topics that the different departments were researching. As a result, a so-called literature office was set up in the main laboratory in 1920. The office reviewed and organized the knowledge collected in laboratory journals and reports and made it available using a sensible registration process. In addition, a new job position was created which involved providing information on all products manufactured by the company. This position was occupied by female chemist Dr. Marie Meyer in September 1920. In the same year, another literature office was established in the ammonia laboratory. One of Dr. Wilma Schneehagen's tasks was to support the head of the ammonia laboratory Dr. Alwin Mittasch with the registration of his patent literature. In 1921, a literature office was set up in the patent department. It was responsible for processing patent files, patent registers and newsletters, as well as checking translations. In 1928, for example, the female chemist Dr. Hildegard Danilof, checked the accuracy of translations from French. The female chemists in charge of literature carried out expert reviews of the literature and then categorized it, a task which undeniably required a scientific education. This could not be said for the daily clerical work, which was completed by employees without an academic background. In the literature offices, there were very few chances of further professional development.

### DR. EMMA WOLFFHARDT – THE FIRST FEMALE CHEMIST WITH HER OWN AREA OF RESEARCH

The female chemist Emma Wolffhardt began her employment at BASF in 1925. Initially, she worked in the literature office of the main laboratory. However, she was very unhappy there. In an interview a few years later, she recalled that she would cry every evening because she wasn't allowed to work in a research position. When the head of the ammonia laboratory Dr. Alwin Mittasch was looking for an assistant a few months later, she applied for the job. Her manager was not impressed by this and considered her chances to be small. Despite this, she got the job supporting Mittasch in his scientific work. Nonetheless, it was only in 1940 that she received her own area of research which involved researching various methods of manufacturing fuel for airplanes. In 1950, Emma Wolffhardt was the first female academic in the corporate history at BASF to celebrate 25 years of service to the company. In reply to the letter of congratulations she received from company management, she wrote: "It would mean so much to me should my colleagues and I succeed in persuading the management at Ludwigshafen that new generations of female chemists can become a valuable addition to our site." Ten years later, Emma Wolffhardt retired. In 1997, she died at the age of 98 in Heidelberg.

*Dr. Emma Wolffhardt, around 1940*



*Dr. Emma Wolffhardt with chemistry colleagues in the ammonia laboratory, 1951*



*Chemists in the main laboratory with Dr. Marie Meyer (left) and Dr. Emma Wolffhardt, 1925*







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# 1919-1938

## Shorthand typists & co. – office work as a new field of employment

### Framework conditions and milestones

1919	In January, nearly 90 percent of all women exercise their right to vote. They vote 41 women into the constituent assembly.
1919	The SPD female politician Marie Juchaz is the first woman to speak in parliament
1922	Women are officially allowed to become judges and lawyers
1924	Introduction of minimum wage and social security for homeworkers
1925	Nearly 1.5 million women employed (in 1907, this was 500,000)
1927	Maternity leave terms improve
1931/2	Establishment of Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst ('Voluntary Work Service' – FAD), also for young women
1933	The Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine (Federation of German Women's Associations – BDF) disbands due to pressure from the NSDAP

### BASF returned from an economic crisis

At the end of the First World War, German dye factories no longer had the leading position on the world market. Subsidiaries and associated companies abroad were seized and patents registered abroad confiscated. The Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik was occupied by French troops for several months and suffered a heavy blow due to the devastating explosion of a fertilizer silo in 1921. Two years later, inflation was rampant in Germany. To counter the difficult economic situation with a united effort, the three chemical companies BASF, Bayer and Hoechst extended their cooperation and joined forces with other companies in 1925 to form the

Interessengemeinschaft Farbenindustrie Aktiengesellschaft (I.G. Farben). The Ludwigshafen, Oppau and Merseburg sites now formed the Upper Rhine works group. New synthetic products were developed on the basis of new technologies, such as high-pressure processes for the production of gasoline from coal or for the production of synthetic rubber (Buna).



Female employees of the telephone switchboard, 1921



### Women gained more rights

In the Weimar Republic, the legal situation of women was slowly improving, mainly due to the fact that many women were now represented in the Reichstag. However, there was still no unrestricted legal equality between men and women. Nonetheless, better education opportunities led to better qualifications of women for the labor market. The number of female employees increased. While half a million women were employed in 1907, this number increased to nearly 1.5 million in 1925. Most women, however, were employed for relatively simple tasks. Only a tiny minority had qualified jobs with academic training. Although the image of the “new woman” with a bob cut and short skirt was a popular object in the media, family remained a woman’s main responsibility. The unstable economic situation of the interwar period contributed to the fact that the emancipation of women was not a permanent fixture despite the considerable progress made during the short period of the “Roaring Twenties”.

### A new female ideal as of 1933

The world economic crisis between 1929 and 1932 also hit the Upper Rhine works group with full force: In 1931, only half as many people worked there as in 1927. Although I.G. Farben was initially skeptical of the National Socialists, who came to power in 1933, the cooperation intensified over the following years. The company needed government subsidies to cope with the consequences of the global economic crisis and with the high investment costs for its hydrogenation projects. The NSDAP wanted to make Germany more independent from imports. By the time the Second World War broke out in 1939, I.G. Farben was the world’s largest chemical company.

After the NSDAP seized power in 1933, women were ousted from academic professions. The opportunities to study at universities were limited and women could no longer fill official positions. Instead, more incentives were created to keep women at home as housewives and mothers. This was reflected in the site newspaper of I.G. Farben at the time. It included a separate section for the “housewife and mother”, which provided useful tips on the topics of housekeeping and parenting.

### WOMEN CONQUERED THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR —

In contrast to the overall societal trend, the proportion of female academics in the Upper Rhine works group in the interwar period remained relatively constant at just under two percent. The majority of female academics remained entrusted with well-defined literary-chemical tasks. Hardly any women made the leap into research. However, more happened in others areas.



1 Cable room of the telephone switchboard, 1921

2 Male and female employees in an I.G. Farben sales office in Russia, 1927

3 Male and female employees in the BASF Workers Association’s office, 1924

4 Maternity care center in the nurses’ home, 1938





In the 1920s, women worked on the telephones, as shorthand typists and completed clerical work in the offices. Clerical work, which was a male profession until well into the First World War, increasingly became a female domain. More and more women were employed, particularly in the commercial sector. Hans-Karl Lobenwein wrote in his manuscript “BASF

and its employees” in the 1960s: “In the 1930s, there was a change in the commercial sector. More and more women were active in purchasing, sales, accounting and other administrative departments on the operative level as opposed to the managerial level. This sector therefore became exclusively a women’s domain.”



In 1931, at the I.G. site in Ludwigshafen, there were 1,469 employees in the commercial department of which 195 were women. In 1939, there were 1,817 employees of which 323 were women and in 1940, there were 2,108 employees in the commercial department, of which 508 were women. In total, however, of the 18,710 workers at the Ludwigshafen

and Oppau sites, only 117 were female. The overwhelming majority of these female workers worked in the day shift. Only a small minority worked in rotating shifts.

**1** Medical laboratory female assistant in the laboratory of the old clinic, around 1940

**2** The interior of a commercial office, around 1931





1865-1913  
Women at BASF –  
an exception at first

1914-1918  
Female workers in a male domain –  
interlude due to the war

Excursus  
The first female academics –  
assistants instead of researchers

1919-1938  
Shorthand typists & co. –  
office work as new field of employment

1939-1945  
**Aniline women caught in between the Nazi  
female ideal and the war economy**

1946-1968  
From "rubble women" to emancipation

1969-heute  
Women in nearly all professions

Excursus  
Women in leadership positions at BASF



# 1939-1945

## Aniline women caught in between the Nazi female ideal and the war economy

### Framework conditions and milestones

1939	Beginning of the Second World War
1940	The first air raids on the Ludwigshafen and Oppau sites in June
1941	<b>Female forced laborers begin working in the Ludwigshafen and Oppau factories together with drafted women</b>
1941	Through the construction of the Buna III plant, the previously separate Ludwigshafen and Oppau sites merge geographically
1943	<b>Dr. Friedel Vogel is employed as the first female site physician</b>
1945	Massive destruction to the site at the end of the Second World War

### Production had to be maintained during the war economy

The beginning of the Second World War in September 1939 forced all German companies to transition into a wartime economy. I.G. Farben was part of this self-sufficient and compulsory system with its synthetic products: nitrogen, synthetic rubber (Buna) and gasoline from coal. As the Ludwigshafen and Oppau sites played a major role in the research and production of products which were important to the war efforts, they were expanded further during the war. This meant that production had to be maintained under all circumstances. As early as the second half of 1939, around 4,000 workers were absent due to being conscripted. In the mid-1940s, the first prisoners of war worked at the

Ludwigshafen and Oppau sites. Work was initially performed by voluntary foreign workers, later by forced laborers and increasing numbers of drafted women.

### The NS woman fulfills her duties as a mother

According to the National Socialist ideology, the ideal woman is of Aryan descent. She possesses character traits such as the desire to fulfill her duties, loyalty, a readiness to make sacrifices and selflessness. For the benefit of the “national community”, she is supposed to fulfill her duty as a mother above all else. However, with the beginning of



Woman operating a large engine, around 1940



the war preparations, this image of the ideal woman was relaxed and quickly replaced by reality. After the Second World War broke out, women were actively recruited for activities outside the family again (work in production), even for tasks which directly supported the war efforts (for example, as Flak or Wehrmacht helpers). At the I.G. Farben sites in Ludwigshafen and Oppau, an increasing number of women were put to work during the war. The site newspaper praised their commitment as “Lady workmate” and “Miss Installer”: “The women, of whom we were first suspicious, have proven their worth. They stand undaunted at their workspace in their blue work clothes, as though this were their true domain,” reports the I.G. Farben site newspaper “Von Werk zu Werk” in 1943. It was mainly young women between the ages of 16 and 25 who were put to work. 61.3 percent of women were entrusted with work in production, whereas 18.3 percent worked with machines, 15 percent carried out handicraft work and 28 percent worked in the laboratory. The remaining women completed unskilled work, ten percent of which were errands, 20.5 percent cleaning, and 8.1 percent office work. In the middle of the war, in 1943, Dr. Friedel Vogel, began her service as the first female site physician.

From the middle of 1944, the Allies increased their air raids on the Oppau and Ludwigshafen sites. The idea was to prevent the fuel supply to the Third Reich. At the end of 1944/beginning of 1945, production almost came to a halt. At the end of the war, 33 percent of the 1,470 factory buildings had been completely destroyed, 61 percent were heavily damaged and a mere 6 percent remained intact.

#### Proportion of women in employment at the Ludwigshafen and Oppau sites 1939-1945

1938: Employees	18.593	▶ of whom	117 were women
1939: Employees	17.922	▶ of whom	1.143 were women
1940: Employees	19.664	▶ of whom	2.596 were women
1941: Employees	21.179	▶ of whom	2.878 were women
1942: Employees	22.751	▶ of whom	5.137 were women
1943: Employees	20.961	▶ of whom	7.404 were women
1944: Employees	19.084	▶ of whom	6.361 were women
1945: Employees	12.044	▶ of whom	942 were women

#### FEMALE FORCED LABORERS

At the beginning, civil laborers from abroad came to the I.G. sites in Ludwigshafen and Oppau voluntarily. However, over the course of the Second World War, the recruitment of forced laborers from territories occupied by the Wehrmacht increased. After 1941, this included laborers from Poland and the Soviet Union (“Eastern Workers”) in particular. Forced labor reached its absolute and relative peak at the Ludwigshafen and Oppau sites in April 1943.

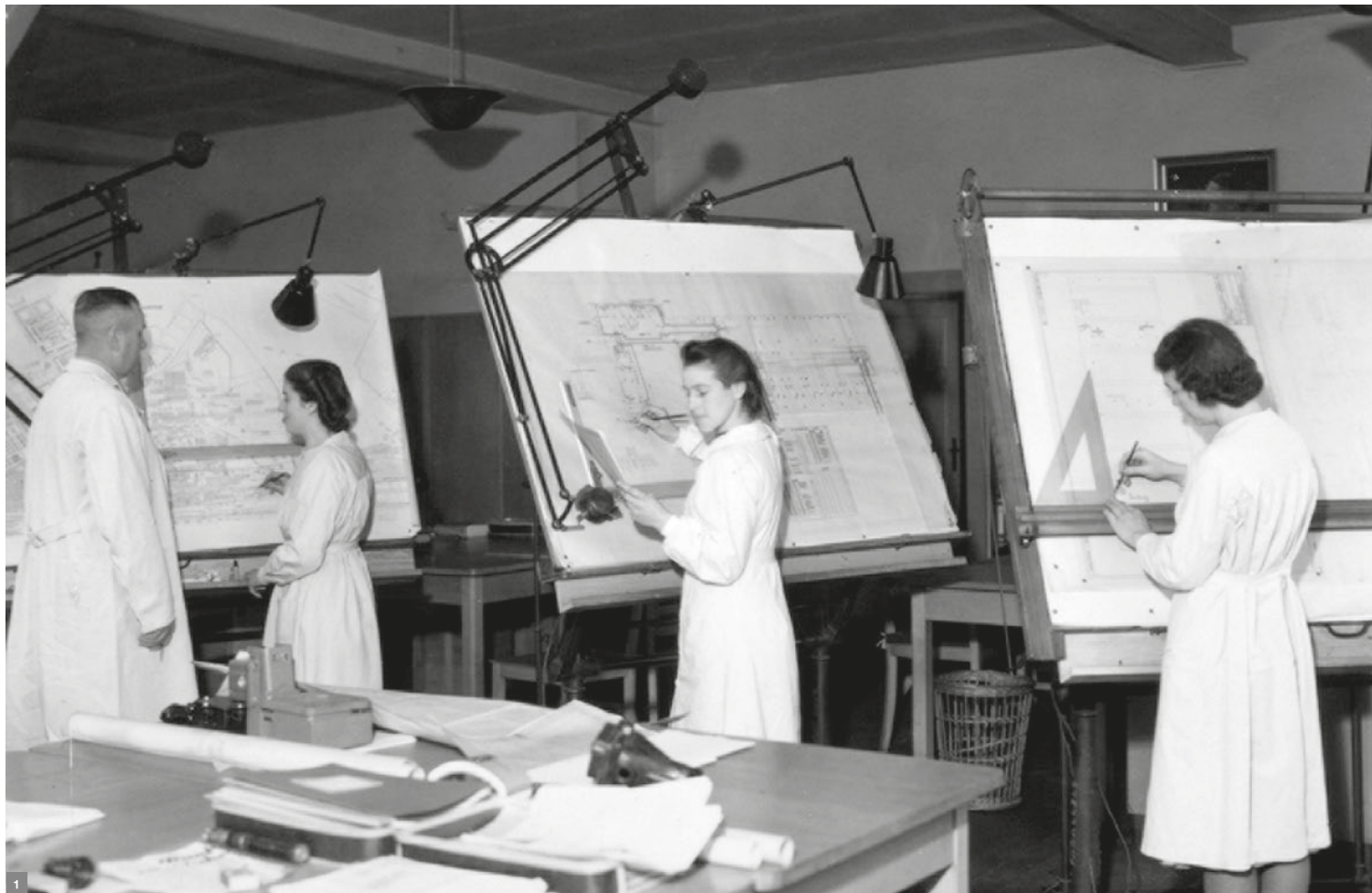
- 1 Female forced laborers, around 1943
- 2 High pressure hydrogenation experiments in the laboratory, 1943
- 3 Issuing office for site identification, 1940
- 4 Technical training for women, 1940
- 5 Apprentices in the laboratory, 1942
- 6 Chemistry class in the training laboratory, 1942. As part of systematic training of the next generation of workers, the training of female chemical workers began during the Second World War. In 1944, 135 young women completed their training.



*“In one plant, women stood side by side with their male work colleagues at the centrifuges and filling equipment. When we asked the men whether the women were doing a good job, one man replied laconically: ‘Yeah, fine.’ These few words demonstrated more recognition than a long speech ever could have.”*

Quote from the I.G. site newspaper no. 10. 1939, p. 211, “Lady workmate”





13,727 forced laborers made up more than a third of the employees. The majority of them were from Poland and the Soviet Union, from Italy, France and Spain. However, some also came from Belgium and the Netherlands, Croatia and Slovakia. Both men and women were forced to work. At first, there were fewer than 100 women, but the numbers

increased to over 2,000 by mid-1944. Although all foreign workers were paid according to the German wage system, they received a low wage due to their classification as “Hilfswerker” (help workers). From this wage, the state deducted costs for living and meals as well as a so-called “Ostarbeiterabgabe” (Eastern worker deduction). After these



deductions, there was little left for the worker. Up until 1944, there were a total of seven barracks to lodge forced laborers. Close contact to German employees was not allowed. In the unprotected wooden barracks, male and female forced laborers were particularly at risk from the bombing raids. The number of victims was correspondingly high.

1 Technical drawing office, 1941

2 Punch card hall in the Hollerith office, 1942





Control station in the acrylic ester plant, 1941



Women installing a gearbox after a service, around 1940





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# 1946-1968

From "rubble women" to emancipation

## Framework conditions and milestones

- 1949 Equality between men and women is anchored in the German constitution
- 1952 **Reestablishment of BASF as a German stock corporation on January 30 with the first female on the supervisory board: "Frau Geheimrat (privy councillor) Carl Bosch, Heidelberg"**
- 1952 The Maternity Protection Act improves the legal status of pregnant women and mothers in the work place
- 1958 The Equal Rights Act annuls the right of the husband to terminate the work of his wife at any time and with immediate effect, without giving a reason. However, women continue to need the approval of their husbands to take up paid employment (until 1977). Women may now also apply for a driving license without requiring the approval of their father or husband.
- 1961 Dr. Elisabeth Schwarzhaupt (CDU) becomes the first female German Federal Minister in the department of health care
- 1964 **Economist Rita Hoffmann is appointed authorized officer (Sales S)**
- 1968 Women's movement arises as part of the student movement

### BASF in ruins: reconstruction and recovery

At the end of the Second World War, the site premises were in ruins. The I.G. Farben Group was in the process of dissolving and the businesses of the former Upper Rhine works group were effectively in the hands of the French occupying powers. The reconstruction process was long. From 1948 onwards, the German works management regained the right to make its own decisions regarding the fate of the company. On January 30, 1952, BASF AG was established as an independent company. In the 1950s and 1960s, BASF

developed new fields of business and became one of the leading manufacturers of plastics in the world. The bestseller Styropor arrived on the market in 1951. With this product, BASF conquered new domestic and foreign markets, and established successful subsidiaries with foreign partners.

The women's work effort was indispensable during the Second World War due to the absence of the men. The effort of women also remained important immediately after the war.

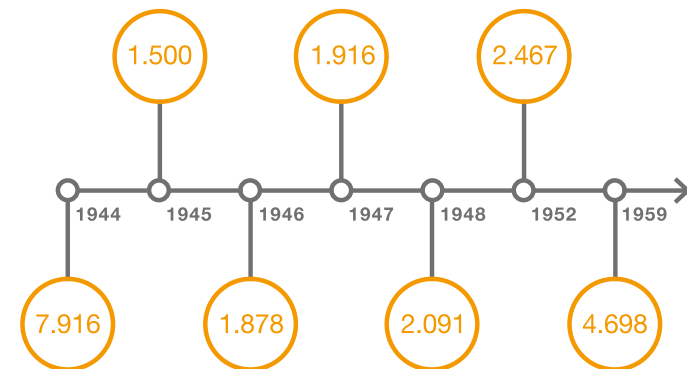


With the advent of mechanical data processing, a new field of work for women is established: female employees in accounting, 1954 (Photo Laux)

As "Trümmerfrauen" (rubble women), they became the symbol of the reconstruction of Germany. With social circumstances normalizing again and the beginning of the "Wirtschaftswunderjahre" (economic wonder years) in Germany, the role of women changed once again. As soon as a family could afford to live from a single source of income, the woman would once again take on the traditional role of wife and mother. In comparison to 1944, the number of female workers in BASF drastically decreased in the 1950s.

tasks and the upbringing of the children. The student movement of the mid-1960s brought about a major shift in society but did not alter the traditional gender roles. In protest to these circumstances, many German universities established women's groups. This led to the start of the new women's movement in 1968.

Female workers at BASF in the 1940s and 1950s:



**The traditional image of the woman returns**

In the 1950s, society idealized the role of the wife and mother. This is reflected in BASF product advertising at the time. Prejudices in companies also harmed the careers of women. And BASF was no exception. Employing women was viewed as difficult in many areas, as the usual prejudices dictated that women either lacked the required educational background, or were unable to work in shifts. Most female employees worked in "typically female" professions at BASF, such as which included washing dishes, cleaning, office work, work in the kitchen and work as waitresses, sales officers, laboratory workers or shorthand typists. The number of female chemists also remained relatively low. At the beginning of the 1970s, 25 female chemists worked at BASF AG, half of whom were in the patent department.

The education opportunities for girls improved significantly after the Second World War and so an increasing number of women began their studies at university. However, they earned less than men and were not given equal status from a legal standpoint. Women seldom had access to managerial positions as they were still responsible for the household

- 1 Female workers on the telephone exchanges, 1962
- 2 Female workers on the telephone exchanges, 1962
- 3 Indanthren advertisement, early 1960s
- 4 The first female authorized officer, Rita Hoffman, 1965
- 5 Waitresses at the Gesellschaftshaus, 1955



*"I will only continue to work in the office until we have furnished our apartment. Then, we will get married and I want to stay at home and look after Stefan and the household..."*

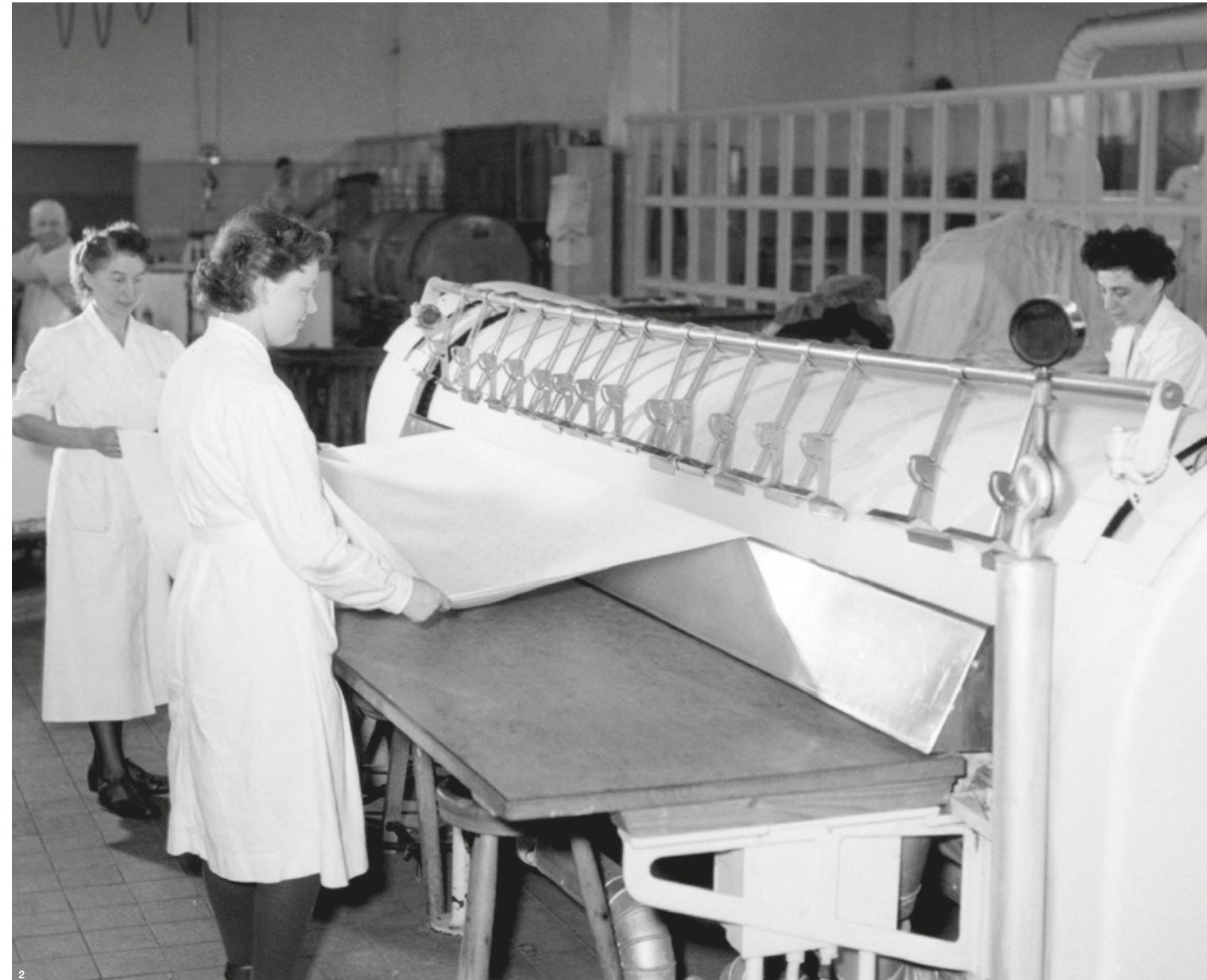






1 Female employees during ballpoint pen production, 1959

2 Female employees in the laundry room, 1954



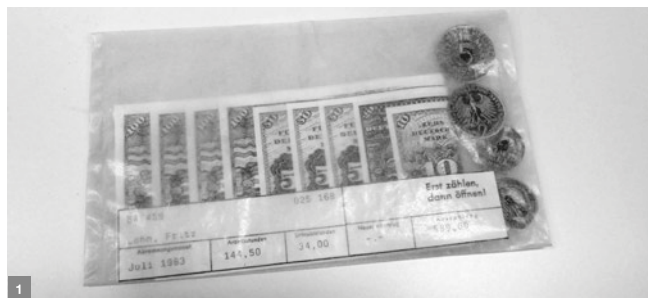
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**WAGE INEQUALITY – UNEQUAL PAY FOR MEN AND WOMEN**

As early as in the 1950s, gender pay equality also became a topic at BASF. In the mid-1950s, women were mainly registered in the lower pay ranges and only 0.5% of women had the highest salary level. In 1956, the Federal Labor Court in Kassel delivered the judgment that women are entitled to the same wage as men for the same work. In the same year, the workers' council at BASF negotiated with the site management and found a solution "with which the female workers were fully satisfied." Due to the agreed wage groups and job grades for non-pay-scale employees, women and men receive the same salaries at BASF today. However, the reality is that a pay gap still exists in Germany today. In 2015, the newspaper 'DIE ZEIT' stated that a man earns 22 percent more than a woman in the same position.

Wage group women	Percentage of
Wage group I	26,7 % (603)
Wage group II	12,7 % (784)
Wage group III	4,1 % (197)
Wage group IV	0,5 % (41)



**A NEW TOPIC – MARRIED COUPLES AT BASF**

In the 1950s and 1960s, the employment of women at BASF was often limited to a short period. The reasons for leaving were generally marriage or children. The reason "Family/marriage" comes up frequently in the personnel statistics of the 1950s. It was usual for a married woman, and particularly a mother, not to work but to look after the household and family instead. However, there were more and more married couples working at BASF. The site management encouraged married couples not to work in the same plant and, in general, not to work in the same department, so private conflicts would not have an impact on work. This recommendation was not always adhered to, as can be seen in a newsletter from the personnel department from 1956, which included a short reminder and announced a review. The results of the review showed that there were 423 married couples at BASF, 106 of which worked in the same department and 25 in the same plant. The departments tried to separate the couples or confirm there was no close collaboration. In some cases, the problem could be resolved by the wives giving up their jobs in favor of their families.

Table shows the percentage of women in each wage group at BASF, 1955

- 1 Wage packet 1963 (part of the Corporate History collection)
- 2 Female worker using a mangle, 1953
- 3 Female workers sorting the site mail, 1965
- 4 Female workers in the tailoring department, 1954
- 5 Lightweight Styropor, 1950s
- 6 Female workers filling containers for test plants at Limburgerhof, 1960



*"The employment of women brings both technical and organizational difficulties. On the one hand, there are difficulties with their educational background and professional ability to perform technical work. On the other, there are organizational difficulties with regards to their employment, in particular in shift work."*

Quote from a newsletter on the staff situation, 1955





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# 1969-today

Women in nearly all professions

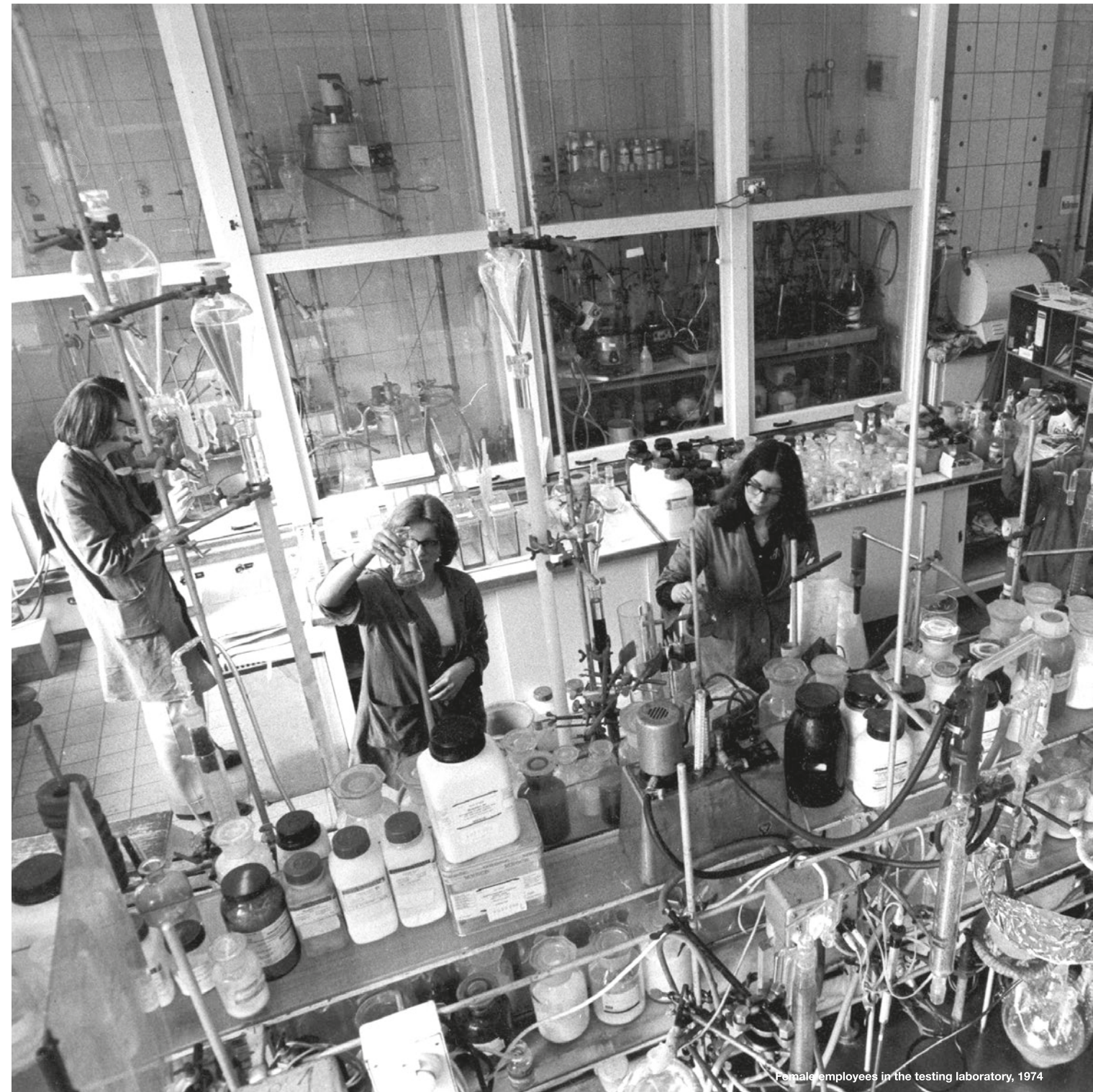
## Framework conditions and milestones

1977	Women can take up employment without their husbands' permission
1978	<b>Founding of the BASF Women's Choir</b>
1986	<b>Introduction of the BASF program "Parents and child"</b>
1992	The Federal Constitutional Court lifts the ban on night work for women
1995	The second Equal Rights Act includes an Act on the Promotion of Women, a tightening of the legal ban on discrimination and protection against sexual harassment in the workplace
1995	<b>Introduction of a point of contact at BASF for the protection against sexual harassment</b>
2001	Reform to the Education laws: Both mothers and fathers can take parental leave at the same time
2008	<b>Start of the global project "Diversity + Inclusion"</b>
2010	<b>Founding of "Women in Business" (WIB)</b>
2011	<b>Margret Suckale is the first woman to be appointed to the Board of Executive Directors at BASF</b>
2011	<b>BASF opens the first employee center for work/life management ("LuMit")</b>

## The start of an international and sustainable BASF

Through the expansion of the areas of work and the acquisition of important subsidiaries and affiliated companies, the BASF Group increased its fields of activity and bolstered its product portfolio. BASF reacted to its extended international activities by streamlining its foreign operations. Sales and production companies merged into efficient parent companies. In all foreign activities, BASF follows the motto: think globally, act locally.

Before the turn of the millenium, BASF further committed to the global concept of sustainable and promising development and the principle of responsible trade. Thanks to its extensive portfolio, its presence on all world markets, the continuous innovation strength in research areas, as well as a solid financial position, BASF was able to overcome the many economic fluctuations brought about by the oil crisis in the mid-70s and the financial crisis in 2008.



Female employees in the testing laboratory, 1974



### Women's movement wins more rights for female workers

At the end of the 1960s, a huge social upheaval took place. Women were also involved in the 1968 movement, but soon realized that their desire for change would not be heard within the patriarchal structures. The internal conflict of the movement attracted attention when tomatoes were thrown at the SDS delegation congress in 1968 as a symbol of the female protest against the ignorance of men regarding women's issues. As a result, increasing numbers of women's groups were established. These groups sometimes went to extremes to draw attention to gender inequality. The struggles of the New Women's Movement were fruitful. In the 1970s, women received more rights and independence in their professional lives. The increase of part-time work enabled women to have more flexibility, which in turn meant a better balance of work and family.

### Triumph of part-time work

The term "part-time work" first arrived at BASF in the 1960s for those women who typically worked in the typing offices. This type of work was initially seen as a temporary compromise. However, this stance changed in the 1970s. In 1979, BASF participated in a pilot project in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate to enhance the provision of part-time work. As part of the project, the number of employees who worked part-time increased from 630 to 650. Furthermore, the company set the goal of breaking down prejudices against this type of work. In 1999, the possibility of part-time work was confirmed and a "right to work part time" introduced. In selected units, employees were able to reduce their working hours from 100 to 85 percent.

A further important contribution to the compatibility of family and work was the introduction of the "Parents and child" program on November 1, 1986. The program allowed female employees to suspend their employment for a longer period after the birth of a child and then to re-enter the professional environment later on. The option to work part time was also retained. A care program for children of employees was also gradually developed.

### Women in technical and managerial positions

Abolishing the legal prohibition of night work in 1992, meant that women could now do shift work in technical areas which were formerly reserved for men. At the beginning of the 21st, more and more women assumed managerial positions as heads of department, operations and divisions. The proportion of highly qualified women in managerial positions and key functions increased further. At the end of 2016, 13.3% of all managers at BASF worldwide with disciplinary responsibility were women. And this number is still rising!

1 Dr. Carl Wurster, Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of BASF AG 1952-1965, with his secretary Dr. Gertrud Melan, 1970

2 Quality control of a nylolith printing plate, Willstätt site, 1988

3 Female chemistry laboratory worker Melanie Bauer analyzes samples in the Competence Center for Analytics, 2016

4 Type writing course, 1975



### WOMEN WORKING SHIFTS

After the abolition of the legal ban on night work in 1992, women could take on work in the associated professional fields. Like their male colleagues, they could earn a better wage through the shift bonus. In February 1992, the pilot project “Women working shifts” began. In the project, 20 women worked in shifts after they could not continue working in their skilled professions after training. The areas of work included site security or work as chemical specialists. Today, there are comparatively fewer women working shifts. In 2016, only 2.5 percent of women worked on rotating shifts.

### THE FIRST...

Since the 1980s, women have been advancing in areas in which their employment would have been unthinkable just a few years earlier. They now work in site security, as chemical technicians, train drivers or at the site fire department.

#### Female site security workers

The first female site security workers took up their profession in 1986. On December 1, 1986, Antje Bajon-Jacob and Stefanie Strickler began working in the two reception areas in buildings D 100 and E 100. Female site security workers only started working at the site gates in 1993, one year after the abolition of the ban on night work for women.

#### Female chemical technicians

Since 1995, women have been allowed to learn the trade of a chemical technician. Makda Tekeste was one of the first. “When I first arrived at the technical college and I was the only girl in the class, the others trainees were quite surprised. I could sense it.” Female toilets had to be installed, so women

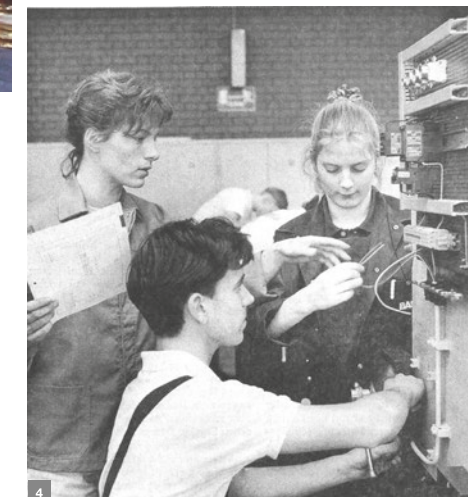
could work in a previously male-only profession. Additionally, women had to be warned about chemicals which could potentially harm their fertility. Only eleven women were employed as chemical technicians by 2001.

#### Female train drivers

The first female train driver arrived at BASF’s railways in 2008. Madeleine Giebmanns is the first woman to work among the 70 drivers of the radio-controlled trains.

#### Female instructors in electrical occupations

There are barely any women to be found among communication electricians, measurement and control mechanics or electronics specialists for power systems. In 1989, Marina Polte became the first female instructor in this area.



- 1 Female site security workers Antje Bajon-Jacob and Stefanie Strickler, article in BASF information, 1987
- 2 Chemical worker, Makda Tekeste, 1998
- 3 First female train driver Madeleine Giebmanns, article in BASF information, 2008
- 4 Female instructor Marina Polte with prospective communications electricians, article in BASF information, 1990



**Firewomen**

For 89 years, the BASF Coatings site fire department did not have a single woman in its employ. This changed in 2008 when Mareike Strickmann arrived. As the first full-time firewoman of the BASF Group, she continues to face a lot of prejudices but also knows the best way to tackle them. Her line manager was skeptical at first: "Giving a woman a job in the fire department was a revolutionary idea." In hindsight, everyone sees her as an asset.

**Female operations manager**

It took until the turn of the millenium for a woman to assume complete responsibility for a production plant. Dr. Ursula Siebenhaar was made operations manager of the Budimat factory in 2001. At the time, she was the only woman in such a position.

**Female division manager**

The first female division manager in the history of BASF arrived on November 1, 2007. Dr. Beate Ehle took over the management of the Intermediates Business Unit (CZ) from Dr. Walter Gramlich.

**Female members of the BASF Supervisory Board**

There have been seven female members of the BASF Supervisory Board in total, as well as one woman on the Board of Executive Directors (a second woman will join the team in 2017). The first woman on the BASF Supervisory Board was Else Bosch, who assumed this position in 1952 during the reestablishment of BASF. She remained on the Supervisory Board until 1958. The next woman to join the Supervisory Board was Ellen Schneider in 1993. Since then, at least one woman has been a member of the BASF Supervisory Board.

**GIRLS' DAY**

Since 2001, there has been a country-wide campaign day for girls known as "Girls' Day". This is a career orientation project aimed at female students, during which companies and universities in Germany present girls with information on apprenticeships and study programs in IT, crafts, sciences and engineering. Since 2002, BASF has been involved in encouraging young women to take up apprenticeships as plant and industrial mechanics, mechatronics engineers or electricians for automation technology. Many participants later apply for an internship or an apprenticeship at BASF. In 2014, 7% of all apprentices in technical professions were female. This is also the percentage of female employees in these professions at BASF.

- 1 Tineke Libbrecht, Deputy Head of the Acrylic Ester Plant II, article in BASF information, 1993
- 2 Dr. Beate Ehle
- 3 Else Bosch, 1930
- 4 Female horticulturist apprentice, 1977
- 5 BASF Supervisory Board 2014: Front row from left to right: Denise Schellemans, Anke Schäferkordt, Dr. Jürgen Hambrecht, Dame Alison Carnwath DBE. Behind them (from left to right): Michael Diekmann, Wolfgang Daniel, Franz Fehrenbach, Professor Dr. Francois Diederich, Robert Oswald, Ralf-Gert Bastian, Francesco Grioli, Michael Vassiliadis
- 6 Female mathematical-technical assistant apprentice, 1972
- 7 This was the design that BASF used to advertise technical professions to girls in 2014/15



*"With regard to the female hormonal balance, Dr. Lore Vetter determined: 'It is proven that the physical and mental ability of the woman is significantly reduced before and during menstruation (sometimes up to 25%). An increased rate of accidents has been observed before and during menstruation.'"*

Prejudices over the reduced physical capabilities of women remained for a long time. Quote from BASF information from 1979.





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# Portrait

## Balancing professional and private life

### Margret Suckale as a positive force

In May 2011, the BASF Board of Directors approved the LuMit, the center for work/life management and increased the planned number of day care spaces from 200 to 250. At the same time, Margret Suckale took up her work as Director of Personnel and Site Manager for Ludwigshafen. She has been a member of the BASF SE Board of Directors since May 2011.

In times of varying challenges, including demographic transitions or Industry 4.0, is it important to Margret Suckale that changes in the working world are positive. For her, the compatibility of work and private life is an important component of a modern and successful human resources policy.

The LuMit combines work and family, health management and social counseling and provides diverse programs from a single source. These programs cover various phases of life, ranging from LuKids, the daycare center, to LuCare, for social counseling, and LuFit with its sport and health program. With

this employee program for work/life management, BASF has positioned itself at the top of the DAX companies.

Modern personnel work is also the focus of Margret Suckale's work in other areas. She helped shape and advance topics such as Best Team Strategy, Diversity & Inclusion or the Wissensfabrik (Knowledge Factory) to a large extent.

As Ludwigshafen Site Manager, the future of the site is very important to her. This is why BASF has invested more than 6 billion euros in modernization projects during her time as Board Member, in the form of new plants, production and office buildings. In addition, she is committed to pushing forward the topics of maintenance, climate protection, safety and energy policy.

Margret Suckale likes to remain in direct contact with the employees as a personal chat is irreplaceable. She strives to always bear in mind the diversity of the team, the various fields of activity and the multiple challenges. She began

*Born 1956 in Hamburg  
Lawyer  
Married  
Mobil Oil / BP  
Deutsche Bahn Board of  
Directors*

the "Simply Simpler" initiative in order to encourage the employees to question the complexity within their professional and private lives. She shows that she is approachable and open with her many visits to sites and operational facilities. She also meets with employee confidants over breakfast and communicates with the employees directly. In the dialog format "A coffee with...", which was introduced by Suckale, BASF information documents a conversation between an employee and Margret Suckale on a monthly basis. The topics are varied and include the tasks of a construction manager at the new acetylene plant or the tasks of a female rotating shift worker in the Deka factory, as well as the challenges of the work of the employee representatives. Innovative future topics such as 3D printing or predictive maintenance in the "reliability center" are also included. With this format, Margret Suckale shows what the male and female employees achieve at the Ludwigshafen site in an uncomplicated and personal way.



Margret Suckale



# Interview

## An interview with Margret Suckale

Mrs. Suckale, you have been through various challenges at BASF. A key topic is Industry 4.0. In the preface of the 'Chemie Digital' book, you wrote: "In 30 years, I will probably look back at the beginnings of digitalization with a smile."

What does that mean for BASF and how will this development affect the role of women and their place and acceptance in the industry in thirty year's time?

**Margret Suckale:** With the help of modern technologies, we can work more flexibly and are not as bound to time and place factors. This makes it easier to balance family, private life and career. Some professional fields will change drastically. Only with well-trained specialists and managers in the technical and scientific areas will we be able to completely utilize the opportunities of digitalization. Unfortunately, there are still too few women in the STEM subjects, science, technology, engineering and mathematics, even though we continuously seek to attract women to these subjects through the Wissensfabrik and other activities. At BASF, we are actually heading in the right direction. We have an increasing number of women in traditionally male-dominated areas, such as engineering, information technology and production.

This diversity in the management teams also entails diversity in our ways of life. What exactly is BASF doing for its employees in this area?

**Margret Suckale:** When BASF made the topic of diversity & inclusion a management issue many years ago, we deliberately defined the term very loosely. It does not just refer to nationality, gender and various age groups, but also to various backgrounds, educations and ways of thinking. At BASF, we are convinced that our diversity leads to more innovative solutions, which in turn create more success for our customers. And that is our goal. In our modern world, the personal circumstances of our employees are much more varied than they were 20 years ago. Blended families, single mothers and fathers, long-distance relationships, full-time working parents, and multi-generation families are as much a part of the private lives of our employees as full-time, part-time, sabbaticals, job rotations and postings abroad are a part of their professional lives. Therefore, our programs to reconcile the professional and private spheres must also be varied, because one solution does not fit all ways of living. On the other hand, we would like to encourage our employees to be confident and proud of their ways of life. Unfortunately, social judgments can make it difficult for people to live and work the way they want to. The mother who works full time is criticized as much as the father who decides to take some time out to spend with his family. Each of us is guilty of having "unconscious biases". We discussed this exact topic with external speakers and 400 Ludwigshafen managers as

part of the D&I forum "Ways of Living – Success Models". The feedback was very positive.

In your opinion, what is the most important factor for BASF to continue to develop successfully?

**Margret Suckale:** In the past, BASF did not let itself be influenced by short-term trends and fads. In 2011, we created a new, well thought-out strategy along which we have continued to develop. However, we can still show more courage to try out new things and we could simplify our topics and add emotional value to them. Above all, we should look to the future with constructive optimism. When I look at the many great products and applications we provide to our customers through sustainable means, I think we should make these specific examples available to the public more often.

How do you see the roles of employee resource groups, such as men for part time, "Women in Business" or "LGBT" (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) today and in 30 years?

**Margret Suckale:** When I look back at my eight years at BASF, there has been a lot of positive development in these interest groups. The "Women in Business" group is very active and has some great ideas. It also offers interesting discussion forums from which many women and men can benefit. Other groups have been inspired by these examples and are



tackling their topics with more confidence than before. The discussions with all employee groups have always given me new food for thought. As I already mentioned, we all live our lives differently. There is no right or wrong approach. The only approach should be: "I stand by my way of life and respect the way others live their lives."



# Interview

**Saori Dubourg,**  
Board Member

(as of May 1, 2017)

*“It is important that people welcome change and are not left behind”*



What have you learned throughout your career?

**Saori Dubourg:** Particularly my time abroad in the USA, South America and Asia, has helped me gain deep insights into globalization and the resulting requirements that BASF needs to consider. This raises the question: “What does the modern ‘aniline’(BASF) look like in a global context?” What are the implications for innovation, customer focus and knowledge transfer in the digital age? And management also takes on a new angle: What does “leading” mean in a global context, how much cultural adaption is necessary and what is the key to motivating colleagues in different countries? How adaptable must the management of tomorrow really be with regards to their management styles?

What experiences have characterized your leadership?

**Saori Dubourg:** The most difficult issue was how to tackle multiple problems simultaneously, while also remaining calm and not losing structure. We had to catch up with the knowledge of the industries and implement powerful

strategies as quickly as possible. It was vital that the people welcomed the change and were not left behind. Explaining the “why” was the prerequisite to making people willing to embrace change.

How do you view the topic “Women in Business”?

**Saori Dubourg:** I am pleased that BASF is making clear progress. And I hope that our children will meet people of both genders and different nationalities in their working lives, as they already do in school. For me, that is the sign of natural interaction and thus the symbol of family. Just like within a family, there are often strong individuals with different opinions and personalities. However, there is also no better place to learn how to resolve arguments and understand and accept the opinions of others. Ultimately, companies are like a microcosm of our society and our customers are a part of that society.

# Portrait

**Melanie Maas-Brunner,**  
EN Divisional Manager

(as of April 1, 2017)



Melanie Maas-Brunner is a chemist. She began to work at BASF in 1997. Due to the scope of her projects in the ammonia laboratory, she had a lot of contact with different company divisions from the very beginning of her employment. After three years, she moved into production for a short time. And then she worked as Jürgen Hambrecht’s assistant for two years. There, she received good insight into strategy work on a corporate level. Her next career step was the first level 4 leadership task at ED. There she had a global responsibility tied to a regional unit at an organizational level. This type of challenge requires transparent and open communication above all.

During her time at ED, her son was born. She swiftly returned to work in a part-time position and then transferred to Asia with her husband and child one year later. In Hong Kong, she was promoted to level 3. After transferring back to KT in Europe, she faced her biggest challenge to date: merging the KTE and KUE departments to become a single new department, PME.

While summarizing her achievements, Maas-Brunner says that she had never planned her career the way it panned out. She had simply been given more challenging tasks. She had always had managers who encouraged her to work independently and provided her with the necessary support to do just that. Nonetheless, it was important to her to experience the consequences of her decisions herself. This is why she believes it makes sense to remain in one position for a long enough period of time. In addition to open and direct communication, a constructive and solution-oriented collaboration with her team is also very important to her.



Shredding vegetables in preparation for drying in the drying plant, 1917



Magnetic tape check, 1946

**IMAGE DIRECTORY:**

- |              |  |              |   |
|--------------|--|--------------|---|
| Cover:       | Female employees in the biological laboratory, 1936                        | Pages 40-41: | Laboratory for high pressure hydrogenation experiments, 1943              |
| Pages 02-03: | Female worker in the carbon conveying system in the Oppau factory, 1917    | Pages 50-51: | Female employees in the punch card hall of the computer center, 1946      |
| Pages 08-09: | Women's clinic in the nurses' home, 1917                                   | Pages 60-61: | Female employees at BASF Bioresearch Corporation (BBC) in Worcester, 1996 |
| Pages 16-17: | Preparation of vegetables for further processing in the drying plant, 1917 | Pages 70-71: | Composing: Melanie Maas-Brunner, Saori Dubourg, Margret Suckale           |
| Pages 24-25: | Dr. Martha Bretschneider in the ammonia laboratory, around 1918            |              |   |
| Pages 32-33: | Female employees of the telephone switchboard, 1921                        |              |   |

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