



Hitler's Scientists: Science, War, and the Devil's Pact

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An eye-opening account of the rise of science in Germany through to Hitler's regime, and the frightening Nazi experiments that occurred during the Reich

A shocking account of Nazi science, and a compelling look at the dramatic rise of German science in the nineteenth century, its preeminence in the early twentieth, and the frightening developments that led to its collapse in 1945, this is the compelling story of German scientists under Hitler's regime. Weaving the history of science and technology with the fortunes of war and the stories of men and women whose discoveries brought both benefits and destruction to the world, *Hitler's Scientists* raises questions that are still urgent today. As science becomes embroiled in new generations of weapons of mass destruction and the war against terrorism, as advances in biotechnology outstrip traditional ethics, this powerful account of Nazi science forms a crucial commentary on the ethical role of science.

Hitler's Scientists: Science, War, and the Devil's Pact Details

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From Reader Review Hitler's Scientists: Science, War, and the Devil's Pact for online ebook

Eryck says

At 535 pages I feel I deserve a purple heart for the effort. English authors tend to be verbose and long winded and this one is no exception. So I found myself reading the same thoughts and ideas more than once. But on the plus side, and there were many, my learning curve on the amazing scientific and technological advances that can happen during a war left off the page.

It's almost as if those with the more technically advanced weapons won the war. at least it was with this war. While their war machines and skills were ahead of us at the beginning we soon caught and surpassed them. Or war plane tech surpassed theirs, or sonar caught their subs, or radar spotted their planes, or intelligence cracked their codes, or tanks finally equalled theirs and ultimately or a-bombs were built before they could build one.

And surprisingly it appears that one of the greatest scientist living at the time (right behind Einstein) Heisenberg, the German scientist, purposely and subtly made sure that his own German army wouldn't create an atomic bomb. He knew how evil his own government had become.

Rockets, jet engines, splitting of the atom and much more propelled this world of ours into new and uncharted territories. This book documents it's beginnings.

Joe Oaster says

recommend to anyone who does any scientific research. Author asks serious questions as to morals an ethics of research. Several times in book the quote "People first, science second" leaves some real questions as to the guardrails needed for scientific research

Jimmy says

An abridged audio cd by the author of Hitler's *Pope*. Filled with some interesting stories and some that are so horrible they take a huge step to understand how human beings can be so monstrous to each other. I think it also shows the dangers of scientific ignorance.

There were some fun stories mixed in. My favorite is about Niels Bohr. He was explaining a mathematical formula when he said "And" and then became silent for several moments. Then he said "So" and continued out loud further down the line with what he was saying. I think I will try that some day.

Recato Cristiano Eberwein says

It is sad when authors try to give us "new" history. For instance Albert Speer was never a member of the NAZI-party. You only have to read Speer's "Inside the Third Reich" that he did not. At Nürnberg he was found not guilty on the charge of belonging to the NAZI-party.

So why the author mentions briefly that Speer was a member is totally the opposite to what history teaches us.

Just had to get that off my chest.

Arto Heino says

This book was a wake up call, I never realized that a writer could try and rewrite history and promote a narrative of hatred and negative propaganda of the worst kind. I read this book twice just to make sure it was not an alternative universe with alternative facts. There are so many assumptions and misunderstandings that it reads like a fairy tale written to misinform and mislead the reader into thinking that the German people were incompetent. I don't think John Cornwell did much research into any facts about German Science, he believes Einstein was some sort of Genius and his theories are correct, which has been shown him to be a plagiarist and liar, with relativity now in the dust bin, many try to keep scientism alive though. Darwin has also been debunked, regardless of what the liberal universities keep preaching.

The National Socialists created the outline for all the real sciences for the next 80 years, by the weeding out of "theory before fact" approach which achieved nothing prior to the clear minded and practical Germanic genius. Industry and invention owes so much to this period in history from the National Socialist approach, we would not have the leaps and bounds in our current technology that we see without the practical groundwork laid by the German Scientists of that time.

Science by Cornwell's writing seems to want to return to the wasted efforts of a hierarchy that can no longer be called science, but a religion. He weaves stories like a fiction writer assuming the outcomes and their history to be real, in his mind only.

Calling the well-mannered, artistically profound and scientifically accurate nature of the German people a constant slur of "Nazi" was an aggravating, disingenuous and misdirected term that I almost through the book away. That term implies nothing more than a demeaning and nasty approach to what should be a non-biased read.

This man "Hated" everything about the wonderful period of German national renaissance, even John F Kennedy was so impressed at Hitler's achievements. The Holocaust lie has stained every page of this poorly written piece of fiction.

Not worth a read, you will be misinformed, reads like a novel of hatred to the German people and their great achievements.

Bruce says

The majority of this book deals with German science and scientists with at least a quarter of the book covering the period before Hitler rose to power. The author also provides information on non-German science and scientists interspersed throughout the book. He mentions the support given to German science and scientists before WW II and the "rehabilitation" of many of them after WWII. In the end he raises

questions of ethics which good scientists must address.

David says

This book gives a decent account of how Hitler and the Nazis used and misused their scientists leading up to and during WWII. From driving out Jews, including Einstein and similar, to initially drafting many of the German scientists into the Wehrmacht as common soldiers, there wasn't really a solid plan to use their talents. Even work on atomic weapons was nothing like the Manhattan Project in the US. Hitler seemed to prefer to focus on his V-1 and V-2 rocket programs to attack and destroy London. This drained some support for the Jet aircraft programs so that they were too little and too late. After the war there was a scramble by the allies to round up the Nazi scientists to use them for weapons programs and more as the world entered the Cold War. Overall this was an interesting read and worth the time if you are interested in WWII and related topics.

Raza Syed says

I am a history buff especially history of the 2nd World War, not only the conflict itself but the events leading up to it, the various contributing factors and as well as the aftermath. The mental state of the German Volk, the inner workings of the German Reich, the persona of the Fuhrer have always intrigued yet scared me (especially these days as our favorite democracy seems to be stumbling down a very similar path to Germany in the 30's)

I picked up this book with a bit of excitement and a lot of interest. I was ready to be taught and anxious to learn. I was looking forward to it filling the gaps in my knowledge.

Well..... for the most part this book was a disappointment. The research preliminary, the information mostly basic and the perceived results (derived by the author) sweeping (???)

This book was supposed to be primarily about the collaboration of the learned men, the men of science with Hitler and the Nazis - Science's Pact with the Devil ! how science in Germany entered into a subservient role to the Nazi regime almost voluntarily ! Unfortunately a huge portion of this book was spent laminating over the General evils of Hitler and his regime... and not always in context with their twisted relationship with science.

It does go into roles played by Bohr, Heisenberg as well as Einstein... though not in enough details. It does address the Nazi doctors and their inhumane experiments. In my opinion these should have been the crux of the book not side story.

We do get a good glimpse into the German Rocket program as well their (lack of) development of the Atomic bomb. The author does a decent job in describing the social, political, human nature of why Certain programs succeeded in Nazi Germany while others languished. Reading about the petty disputes, the inter agency rivalries, the over whelming nature of Hitler's Diety like persona ; all of this does out a huge dent in the image of the Hyper efficient German Nazi State.

I categorize this book into "could have been much much better"... if you are a history buff, grab it but keep expectations realistic !

Lauren Aemmer says

Audiobook listener here. I thought the story here was rather interesting. As someone who's always been fascinated by the Indiana Jones vs Nazi Germany trope (for real though, I have always wanted to know if Hitler really was as obsessed with the occult as those movies make him out to be), I was excited by the prospect of a book that looks into science as it was before, during, and after the Third Reich. While the book is far, far more grounded than I secretly hoped it would be, I still found it quite enjoyable. I do have to admit that the narration of the book is rather dry, but even so, I gladly found myself listening right to the end. I'd say that has more to do with my interest in the subject than the narrator's talents, but if niche history is your thing, I think you'll get through it just fine too.

Kimball says

I will update my review and shelves later.

Erik Graff says

I picked up this book as a corrective to the stuff I've read and seen about Nazi 'wonder weapons' during WWII--things like 'foo fighters', flying saucers, antigravity devices and the like. While they are glancingly mentioned as unrealized projects, this book actually has a much broader and more serious agenda.

Cornwall writes in a variety of fields (religion, philosophy and literature as well as history) and this, while principally a history of German science and technology from WWI through WWII, is an application of ethics to history circling around the question of the social responsibilities of scientists. While Cornwall begins with the Germans, he ends with Anglo-Americans in the years from the Manhattan Project through 9/11, comparing the one to the other, not always to our credit.

While a serious book, it is not without some light touches. I particularly chuckled at the efforts of German mathematicians to create an Aryan mathematics in opposition to "Jewish mathematics".

Ray says

Some books don't live up to the promise of the Title, while others, like this one, give more than expected from the title alone. Cornwall discusses many of Germany's leading scientists, some of whom chose to leave their homeland as the Nazi's came to power, others who felt compelled to stay due to their Nationalistic feelings, and others who willingly and knowingly participated in the racist philosophy of the Nazi's. But the book also give a lot of historical context of the era, from WWI up to and through the cold war well after the fall of Germany. There are also numerous parallel stories involving British and American scientific efforts, such as those involving code breaking and atomic weapon developments. And while its easy to condemn any German scientist who supported the Nazi war effort, Cornwall also reminds us that many of those same scientists were subsequently recruited by both Soviet and western governments after the war to work on

rocket and weapon research programs for these Cold War opponents. The dilemma raised by the book, for scientists and citizens alike, is recognizing the difference between the necessity of fully supporting your duly elected leaders, and the personal decisions to be made if policies have drifted beyond recognized moral limits as during the Holocaust.

Smonroe says

This was an excellent book full of detailed information. I was amazed at the names that later became famous for many varieties of science that were involved with the Third Reich, and also to hear stories of those who stood up to Hitler and his cronies.

Each chapter takes on a different aspect of science in Germany from the 1900s through the 1950s, concentrating on their impact during the Second World War.

A good half inch of the back of the book is indexing and the foot notes proving the author's case.

Interesting and meaty reading.

Glenn says

Good stuff.

The author probes the idea of healing in the Nazi regime. This is not the typical book relating the ghastly deeds of Hitler's Scientists, although there is a bit of that to be sure. However, the focus is on figuring out how doctors and scientists went completely counter to their roles and duties as public servants - to do no harm.

He tackles how these forces actually changed attitudes, not that the doctors were simply following orders, but their intrinsic belief in what they were doing.

Wendy says

This was boring as shit. That's about all I have to say. It took me two years to read it. But I was turned off it early on for the author's take on Hitler's alleged vegetarianism. I have seen it said Hitler was a veg, and I have also seen it that he ate pheasant. Therefore, he was not a vegetarian. Regardless of whether he was, the author presents Hitler as an ignoramus who thought he knew all about science but did not -- and this does not seem farfetched to me -- but the section at the beginning where Cornwell is sort of listing Hitler's foibles, "proving," so to speak, his instability or lack of grasp on reality, includes vegetarianism. As if vegetarianism is some bizarre behavior of people who have little grip on reality.

I take exception to this because, of course, it's not true. Vegetarians have more of a grip on reality than omnivores. Also, that it's most likely untrue that Hitler was a vegetarian (he banned all German vegetarian groups when he took office) makes me doubt the research/validity of the rest of Cornwell's book. How can you trust an author who most likely gets this simple fact wrong? So that did not dispose me kindly toward whatever else Cornwell wrote.

And it was boring. I mean, really really boring.
