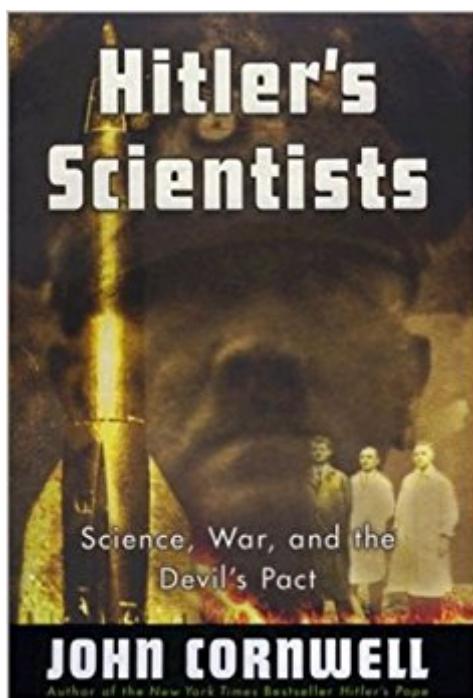


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Hitler's Scientists: Science, War, And The Devil's Pact



Synopsis

From the bestselling author of Hitler's Pope comes a gripping in-depth account of Germany's horrific abuse of science and its consequences--then and now.

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Customer Reviews

Neither Hitler's rocket blitz of England, nor his use of unprecedented weapons technology, nor--most horrifically--his systematic program of genocide could have been achieved without the purposeful work of Nazi physicists, biologists, mathematicians, and technicians. In Hitler's Scientists, John Cornwell asks: "Were these cases of Germans behaving according to type as Germans? Or scientists in Germany behaving according to type as scientists?" These chilling questions encompass two more specific points. First, did the scientists who developed poison gas weapons and concentration camps do it for scientific, personal, or political purposes? Second, can scientists claim to remain objective when funded by, and working for, military or government entities? Cornwell, whose last book was Hitler's Pope, takes a hard line against those scientists who stayed and helped the Nazis after Jewish scientists were expelled and Hitler's plans became clear. With the weight of evidence, Cornwell lays flat the various personal reasons the scientists gave for their actions during the war and shows that even before World War I, German scientists had shown themselves willing to subvert laws and morality in pursuit of money and power. Cornwell also clearly outlines the popular pseudosciences--"racial hygiene," astrology, glacial cosmogony--that drove Hitler's madness. Were there any German scientists who were swept up unknowing or unwilling in the Nazi war machine? It's unclear, but Cornwell's analysis of whether Werner Heisenberg was a

"hero, a villain or a fellow traveler" is crucial to that question. Heisenberg's role in the Nazi's inability to complete an atomic bomb is still a riddle, but Cornwell presents all available facts and allows readers to draw their own conclusions. In his last chapters, Cornwell draws parallels between Hitler's scientists and those working in today's world of political anxiety, terrorism, and attacks on basic science. He demolishes once and for all the outdated, disproven, and dangerous notion of scientists working in a vacuum, free of the "taint" of the outside world, and answerable only to their funders. --Therese Littleton --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Cornwell's devastating bestseller Hitler's Pope is a tough act to follow. Here, the author again claims the moral high ground to critique the ethical and political choices of scientists in Hitler's Germany and to caution that science under the Western democracies in the Cold War and the war on terrorism also wielded and continues to wield the "Janus-faced power for good and evil." Today's best writers on the Hitler era have outgrown the kind of marginalizing polemic Cornwell employs here. His analysis of Nazi science, while built on sound research and often thoughtful critique, sinks to the sensationalism of "Faustian bargains," "scientific prostitutions" and Arendt's "banality of evil." Unsavory concepts are qualified as "pseudo-science," "half-baked," or simply "science" in quotation marks so that the undiscerning reader won't mistake them for the real thing. All the hot-button issues are on display here: racial hygiene; eugenics; the Nazi purge of academia and Germany's forfeiture of its greatest physicists to the Allies because they were Jewish; and human experimentation on concentration camp inmates. The author also details the science of war in Germany, from rockets and secret codes to radar and the atomic bomb, and how the Allies plundered the country's military technology and expertise after the fall of the Third Reich. Cornwell is a gifted writer with a fascinating story to tell, which he ably and engagingly accomplishes despite the hyperbole. But in his pursuit of comfort in right over wrong, the author forfeits objectivity and perhaps a greater understanding of the sources and the whys of the Nazi phenomenon. Despite this, the author's articulate though subtly lurid repackaging of Nazi-era crimes and curiosities should guarantee much attention and brisk sales with general readers. Illus. not seen by PW. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is the history of German science and how it was perverted by Nazi ideology. It begins with a review of what made Germany a leader in science in the 19th and early 20th century. It then discusses how it was used and perverted to support the Nazi agenda. The subject of German

science is an immense one, and this book only scratches the surface. The early history of German science focuses on WWI, particularly with regards to poison gas and Fritz Haber. Thus, early on, it raises the question of what moral obligation, if any, a scientist has towards the use of his science. The answer appears to be that most scientists were more than willing to follow the dictates of their government, with little thought to the overall morality of what they were doing. As Werner von Braun put it after the war, he did not care if he worked for Uncle Sam or Uncle Joe (Stalin), so long as he was a rich uncle. This moral ambivalence is a main theme of the story and led, among other things, to many doctors disregarding their oath to save lives, but instead to end them in the name of racial purity. It discusses how Nazi science contributed to the Holocaust and to the deaths of slave labors working to build the German synthetic gas and rocket plants. The book covers the dismissal of German Jewish scientists and which of their colleagues protested and which took this as the easy road to advancement. The book discusses "Jewish Physics" and how this view of modern physics retarded the development of a German atomic bomb. (Much of the later portion of the book deals with the German bomb project and whether or not Werner Heisenberg actively worked to prevent its development.) Hitler's view of science is also discussed and shows how this retarded not only the development of a German bomb, but also (unfortunately only temporarily) the development of jet planes and rockets. This is an interesting book that raises many troubling questions.

This book seems to be a compendium of information available in other books. As I am very familiar with the topic, I read it in about an hour. It would be fine for someone who is new to its topic. It contains relatively little science, but the historical accounts of the personalities are interesting. It is too bad that few, if any of these "scientists" were executed after they were tried and found guilty after the war. Most stayed in Germany and resumed their careers.

Germany's Misplaced Geniuses John Cornwell chronicles the rise of the scientific and technological accomplishments in Germany from before WWI until the end of WWII. Much of the book is spent on German physicists, but also many other scientific fields of endeavor. Hitler's self defeating (literally) policies of excluding scientists of Jewish heritage put Germany at a disadvantage it could never overcome. The flow of top notch brain power to the US and Britain was not only advantageous to the West in winning WWII, but showed benefits during the Cold War and space race with the Soviets. There is much food for thought of the ethics of creating armaments, especially potentially world ending nuclear weapons. A scientist may have fled 1930s Germany to the West for ethical reasons of not supplying Hitler's war machine, but where can a modern scientist do the same? No

easy answers here.

Eye opening when you think that many of the western world's scientific success stories began in the heads of these guys who, after the war, were selected by Russia, the Brits, or the US as if it were a laboratory pick-up game.

This is a drill down book. The detail is amazing, great research and well written. Foot notes are amazing also and easy to follow. Great condition for a used book.. condition was understated.

I bought this for my husband who is a WWII aficionado - there was much information in it he had not known before reading it.

Anyone interested in science and the turbulent times since the turn of the century will appreciate the material in this book. Personal and science views, also covers post WW2 years. Recommended!

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