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Nazi Science: Myth, Truth, and the German Atomic Bomb

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detailed, long-term study of that battle to support his conclusion that the ship was lost to friendly fire, in the form of torpedoes from a U.S. destroyer. His chapter inspires one to read his more complete work on the battle.

There is one chapter, however, that left me wondering at its inclusion: "The Forgotten Bases: The Royal Navies in the Pacific, 1945." This contribution by David Brown has an almost total Royal Navy focus and is not in harmony with the remainder of the book.

Those who had the vision to organize the conference from which this collection of papers was derived deserve particular praise. The result has quite significantly improved our understanding of the history of the Royal Australian Navy during the Second World War. We are all products of history, and the way we operate and continue to develop into the future is heavily influenced by that history. This book points to why the Royal Australian Navy has developed the way it has since the end of World War II. There is much more history to be written and evaluated. This volume sets a firm foundation for that work.

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Embassy of Australia

Walker, Mark. *Nazi Science: Myth, Truth, and the German Atomic Bomb*. New York: Plenum Press, 1995. 325pp. \$28.95

Among the many books to have come to press concerning the behavior of

German scientists in the environment created by Hitler, *Nazi Science* presents the most balanced view. The popular conception of German scientists, especially nuclear physicists, in that era is that they easily fit into three distinct categories, Nazi, anti-Nazi, and neither one nor the other. This trichotomy is too simplistic a categorization of the mixed motivations that existed and induced individual behavior. For most scientists then, day-to-day realities made them behave in a complex and inconsistent manner.

Mark Walker presents a coherent view of German science and dispels the myths presented to us by proponents with varying agendas. The selective disclosure of excerpts of the Farm Hall recordings by Leslie Groves in *Now It Can Be Told* (2nd ed., Da Capo, 1983); Samuel A. Goudsmit's *Alsos* (2nd ed., Tomash, 1983); self-serving revisionism by Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker and Werner Heisenberg, propagated by Robert Jungk's 1958 bestseller *Brighter than a Thousand Suns* (Harcourt, Brace) and by Thomas Powers's *Heisenberg's War: The Secret History of the German Bomb* (Knopf, 1993) are all placed into context in this well documented history. Walker shows how one of Hitler's first and most loyal followers, the Nobel laureate Johannes Stark, was rejected in the end by the Third Reich establishment in favor of "White Jews," like Werner Heisenberg. Science under National Socialism remains controversial, fascinating, and disturbing, because it is the history of scientists as *fellow travelers*, adjusting their behavior and what they said to avoid difficulty with authorities. This pattern abetted opportunistic individuals who

rode the party bandwagon for the purpose of self-aggrandizement.

Nazi Science is recommended reading for the student of history who appreciates the complexities of human motivations and who can accept a world containing many shades of gray. In order best to appreciate Mark Walker's book, one is encouraged to read beforehand at least one of the many books about the era, such as *Lise Meitner: A Life in Physics*, by Ruth Lewin Sime (Univ. of California Press, 1996), or *Hitler's Uranium Club: The Secret Recordings at Farm Hall*, by Jeremy Bernstein and David Cassidy (American Institute of Physics, 1995), or one of the books mentioned above. With some prior knowledge of the Nazi nuclear effort, the reader should be able to comprehend and appreciate the nuances exposed here.

If there is a shortcoming in this book, it is perhaps in the title. *Nazi Science* pertains almost exclusively to Nazi nuclear science and neglects the other subfields of physics, let alone the disciplines of genetics, anthropology, biology, and so on. These fields were perhaps more adversely affected than was nuclear science.

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Vause, Jordan. *Wolf: U-Boat Commanders in World War II*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1997. 249pp. \$29.95

Jordan Vause captures the history and tradition of Germany's submarine service through an exemplary analysis

of its commanders. Determined to find common threads of character and personality, he begins his narrative with imperial Germany's World War I strategy of unlimited submarine warfare, continues through the murderously effective World War II wolf pack, and concludes with a relevant postmortem on the ultimate tragedy of that war's destructive aftermath. Ironically, rather than proving the existence of a common *anima* of personal and professional behavior, in the end the author finds that "the man [U-boat commander] was stubborn in eluding any image at all." Nonetheless, the richness of Jordan's research and his comfortable manner of narration perfectly complement the considerable historical value of this book.

Wolf is not a sympathetic treatment of the often relentlessly effective German submarine service (U-Bootwaffe). Vause's success lies in his development of a personal, understanding, and yet incisive portrayal of Germany's World War II U-Bootwaffe commanders—uniform, and yet individually unique. Attempting to construct the persona of the Reichmarine's undersea service, Vause functions as a forensic pathologist, largely disproving a propagandist view of savagely efficient automatons bent on mindless slaughter at sea. He lays open to critical review the professional zeal and individual élan of the U-boat commanders, who sank millions of tons of Allied shipping at a cost of thousands of lives—actions that came perilously close to bringing Great Britain to its knees. Carefully fitting personalities over the stick-figure caricatures, he allows individual U-boat commanders to emerge as crafted