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## Naval Officers under Hitler: The Story of Crew 34

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during the Second World War. This, however, is the book's only virtue.

Gray has provided nothing new from his research or strategic analysis, nor does the author have much to say about the struggle of the Japanese. Indeed, strategic analysis is clearly subordinated to his stories about naval operations.

Of the two books reviewed, *Old Friends New Enemies* is a scholarly work, while *Operation Pacific* was apparently written to reach the general audience.

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Rust, Erich C. *Naval Officers under Hitler: The Story of Crew 34*. New York: Praeger, 1991. 248pp. \$42.95

The dust jacket of this work says that the book argues "that the vast majority of junior naval officers under Hitler, while well trained and prepared to defend 'Volk and Vaterland' as good patriots, felt no profound or lasting attachment to Nazi ideology. Instead their ideological preferences remained with patriotic, conservative groups such as the German National People's Party and its successor organizations after World War II."

This prepared me to suffer the defense of the Kriegsmarine's passivity in, if not outright support of, the Nazi administration. This reviewer has felt insulted by defenses of institutions that aided and abetted Adolph Hitler in his immoral activities by apologies that claim that "we were never

Nazi's" and assert that "We fought the good fight—never mind what we fought for!"

It was a pleasant surprise, then, to find that this work contained instead a rich documentation of the construction, selection, and training of the Kriegsmarine's officer corps. It is a collective biography of 318 men who joined the Kriegsmarine in 1934 to become naval officers. Rust has provided a professional, political, and psychological group portrait.

Selection was made from a pool of about 7,300 petitioners; thus the Kriegsmarine had the luxury of selecting one out of every twenty-five or thirty applicants. The recruits came from the middle and upper classes of Christian background (the navy never admitted either Jews or atheists into its officer corps), with the majority coming from north Germany. All were from conservative backgrounds, known for a strong distrust of democratic government and a longing for the return to the pre-World War I autocratic conditions. The three-and-one-half-year indoctrination isolated the trainees from their family and friends, creating the desired effect of loyalty to the navy and to their crew class that outweighed any previous ties to the outside world. Their training was guaranteed to inculcate and reinforce their conservative-obedient tendencies. There were no closet liberals in this society.

Rust has reconstructed the activities of the members of Crew 34 during and after World War II. Emphasis is placed on the political as well as the

professional activities of crew members. For the uninitiated, the author has described just what the "crew concept" meant to the German navy, and its profound influence upon its members. This is a refreshing and comprehensive study, but it is a microcosm of the German military, *not* German society.

It was the elitist and ultraconservative nature of the armed forces, coupled with their stated goal of political neutrality, that allowed Hitler to remain in power. This work documents something that may be more important than the lack of residual Nazism: that institutional Nazism was more effective in its way than overt Nazism. This system, as it existed in the prewar period, guaranteed that without question the armed forces would support any conservative government. The Kriegsmarine, through its policy of political neutrality, constituted a support to authoritarian, militaristic regimes. What political neutrality actually meant was that the Kriegsmarine was politically obedient to the dictatorial government in power.

Erich Rust is the son of a member of Crew 36, which has provided him with insight into the crew system of the German navy. He argues with considerable effectiveness that the junior officers under Hitler never were Nazis. While accepting his conclusion on the limited effects of Nazism on the junior officers, it is important to remember the speech given by Adolph Hitler after the assassination attempt of 20 July 1944:

"Not a single one of these criminals belongs to the navy. Today it has no Reichpietsch in it." Also, the post-Putsch statement by Grand Admiral Doenitz, "Eating dirt rather than return to Jewry control," is an important indicator of the navy's involvement with the Nazi party.

This is an important work for those who wish to understand the effects of a single political party or system of government on its military. It may just help us to understand the problems we encounter when dealing with countries less friendly to democratic governments.

While reporting a "happy ending," this history depicts a "scary" theme: how honorable men can easily become the instrument of a criminal government.

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Pflanze, Otto. *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, Volume I: *The Period of Unification, 1815-1871*. 518pp. \$39.50. Volume II: *The Period of Consolidation, 1871-1880*. 554pp. \$39.50. Volume III: *The Period of Fortification, 1880-1898*. 474pp. \$35. New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1990.

This trilogy is the culmination of more than four decades of labor, and it constitutes a welcome issuance after the German "reunification." Indeed, both the debate as to whether to relocate the German capital to Berlin (decided in June 1991) and the Bismarck