



## BOOK REVIEWS

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around him be simply read as expressions of “heterosexual masculinity” or as “bolstering his masculine image” (apparently to overcome suspicions—long since demolished—that he was in the closet). Hoffmann never succeeded in displaying Hitler’s domesticity as “personalized and intimate in scale.” He always remained the Führer. When supposedly relaxed, he appears stiffly posed in an alpine pasture wearing a lounge suit and highly polished shoes. Nor is it possible to see him as transformed into a figure from Kaspar David Friedrich just because he was photographed with the Untersberg in the background.

Did Churchill really need cigars and steaks cooked rare (later changed to eaten raw) to establish his “powerful masculinity”? Did permission to smoke at the Berghof give the place a more masculine air? Gerdy Troost was a forceful woman and devout Nazi, but even if she was a lesbian she can hardly be described as someone who “defied gender norms.” It is also interesting to learn that Hitler remained a bachelor for fear that his child might have a genetic defect.

Scholars are on much safer grounds with William George Fitzgerald, who as “Ignatius Phayre” produced a series of rebarbative and fraudulent articles about Hitler at home that delighted fashionable audiences in London and New York. Equally powerful are the descriptions of the debate over what to do with the site after the war and its singularly insensitive and tasteless resolution. Readers will be grateful for learning a great deal about Hitler’s homes, but they still will know little about Hitler at home. Perhaps there is not much to know.

*Simon Fraser University*

Martin Kitchen

*Stormtrooper Families: Homosexuality and Community in the Early Nazi Movement.* By Andrew Wackerfuss. (New York, NY: Harrington Park Press, 2015. Pp. vii, 384. \$35.00.)

Recent years have witnessed a growing number of historical works exploring the relationship between the homosexual community and the Nazi movement, which often yield unexpected connections between National Socialists and a group that suffered extreme marginalization and persecution within Hitler’s Reich. Tackling an issue that has long muddled understandings of the Nazis’ rise to power, the author offers a compelling assessment of the vexing relationship between homosexuality and the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) in this authoritative scholarly effort. Situating his thesis against the myriad social and political arguments that advance irresponsible conclusions by equating homosexuals with fascists, Andrew Wackerfuss demonstrates how the SA derived its strength

from an array of sources; however, homosexuality's impact on the structure of the SA and the course of the early Nazi movement has been grossly overstated by opponents of both fascism and homosexuality alike.

Wackerfuss utilizes a range of primary materials to substantiate his account, including public and private stormtrooper documents, police-surveillance and court records, and newspapers that circulated in his Hamburg setting. Although he does not explicitly articulate his reasons for choosing Hamburg, components of his account justify the decision, such as the widespread belief among Hamburg stormtroopers that forces of modernity were eroding the traditional way of life in their once-proud Hanseatic city. Moreover, he ably uses Hamburg to reflect the greater German story, tracing the origins of the city's SA from *Kaiserreich* institutional inspirations (such as the army), through the trench experience, and ultimately into the beerhalls where the SA was born, weaving the thread of *homosociality* throughout.

Though the myth of pervasive stormtrooper homosexuality has been passed down to posterity, Wackerfuss's nuanced account shows that other factors, including mass marches and political brawls, proved far more critical in forging a sense of community within the SA. Internal rifts notwithstanding, Wackerfuss contends that this sense of community was so strong that stormtroopers regarded themselves as family. Autobiographies abound with depictions of the SA as a surrogate family offering guidance to fatherless young men and material aid to stormtroopers afflicted by interwar economic crises. Because of this concern for comrade welfare, the author posits that the Sturmabteilung was that rare Nazi organization that actually promoted the "socialism" component of National Socialism, though this disposition alienated the SA from the more economically conservative, and ultimately more powerful, branches of the party. Moreover, walking the tightrope between revered homosociality and *verboten* homosexuality constantly threatened to expose the breach between stormtrooper values and occasional realities.

If homosexuality's role in the constitutional makeup of the SA was therefore dubious, accusations of homosexuality nevertheless served as valuable weapons to be deployed against personal and political enemies, a usage that has withstood the test of time. Writing with present-day impulses also in mind, Wackerfuss concludes by discussing the fallacies and dangers of likening homosexuality to fascism, a tactic employed by political leaders and guardians of morality in settings such as contemporary Russia and the United States. Such an imperative surely recommends his book to audiences well beyond the sphere of academic specialists.