

Canadian scientists like Steacie have perceived the practice of science and the role of scientists in society. Despite the invocation of a number of examples to the contrary, such as Steacie's launching of the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), King's evidence seems to lend some credence, at least, to the judgement, particularly of the 1972 Senate Committee on Science Policy, that Steacie was an apostle of pure science, that he often sought to establish a radical disjunction between the laboratory and the outside world, which resulted in the neglect of applied science and national industrial research. Indeed, there were occasions when Steacie seemed to downplay any prescriptive pretensions on the part of science, and to abjure any responsibility for the social consequences of scientific discovery. The role of science, he seemed to think, was confined to penetrating the mysteries of nature. The purposes for which this knowledge might be used was a matter for the political process and society at large to decide. In *defence* of Steacie, King suggests, however, that Steacie was merely trying to redress an imbalance in Canada between pure science and utilitarian science, and that his thinking on the matter evolved. Clearly, King chose wisely when she decided to study Steacie, a key figure in this modern incarnation of a central debate about science which, in Canada, stretches back as far as the first half of the last century.

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Other Losses: An Investigation into the Mass Deaths of German Prisoners at the Hands of the French and Americans After World War II. JAMES BACQUE. Toronto: Stoddart, 1989. xxi, 248 p. ISBN 0-7737-2269-6 \$26.95.

James Bacque has written an extremely controversial book. In *Other Losses*, Bacque maintains he has uncovered yet another terrible chapter in what was the bloodiest struggle in human history. In 1945, as the Third Reich was crushed between the two allied fronts, millions of German soldiers were captured and held in prison camps on the Western Front. The prisoners of war held in the camps run by the Americans and the French were subjected to deplorable conditions and were deprived of reasonable rations, to which they were entitled under the Geneva Convention. According to Bacque, the conditions in these camps were the result of a deliberate policy of the Allied commander in chief, Dwight David Eisenhower. Ike had decided to teach the Germans a lesson.

To most Canadians and Americans, Bacque's theory comes as a complete surprise. When Peter Jennings of NBC News reviewed the book on national television, American historians were sent into a state of near apoplexy. "Could Ike have done such a thing," they asked themselves, "and how come we did not know about it?"

Of the existence of these camps, there is no question. Of the conditions in the camps, there is also little doubt. Bacque has not uncovered anything new here. True, there are no historical accounts of these camps, but there is enough evidence in popular literature. In *Group Portrait with Lady*, Heinrich Boll's powerful novel of Germany before, during, and after the Second World War, there is a reference to two of the camps Bacque describes:

"... a healthy German male of twenty-four, suffering only from slight under-nourishment, do you know what was in store for him? Sinzig or Wickrath, those hellish POW camps — and naturally we didn't want that."

So, the controversy surrounding *Other Losses* relates not to the matter of the existence of the camps, but rather to the question of intent: to what degree were the deaths of hundreds of thousands of prisoners the result of a deliberate campaign? Bacque visited a large number of archives in western Europe and the United States looking for the answer to this question. The problem is that he set out looking for evidence to confirm his suspicions and not for answers. He set out to uncover a plot, and he was either not interested in or chose to ignore records which provided contrary information or interpretations. His pursuit of the archival trail, at several points in this book, reveals a lack of understanding about the history of the Second World War.

Bacque believes that Eisenhower quite deliberately set out to starve these prisoners to death, and that he had decided to do this as early as 1944. He was going to treat them "rough." Bacque provides, however, what amounts to circumstantial evidence on Ike's premeditation. In one almost comic sequence Bacque extracts phrases out of three different communications where the word "rough" is used. In one of these, "'roughly along the lines we discussed,'" Bacque is really stretching a point to try to nail down nonexistent evidence (pp. 7-8). There is also a revealing letter to Eisenhower's wife, in which the general declares that he hates Germans (p. 23). In the heat of the battle did we expect him to cling to the Sermon on the Mount and love his enemy?

The absence of hard evidence to support Eisenhower's supposed plan, is, however, not a stumbling block for Bacque. The crime has been uncovered and, given the magnitude and baseness of this act, indications of premeditation are unimportant. Bacque's claim is that there was plenty of food in Europe, and the Americans and the French withheld it from these prisoners. As Allied Supreme Commander in Europe this was Eisenhower's responsibility. Regardless of Ike's letters to Mamie, Bacque's argument hangs on this single fulcrum. Despite abundant evidence to the contrary, he sincerely believes that there was no world food shortage in 1945-46. Bacque either did not do his homework or chose to ignore evidence contrary to his thesis.

Bacque's use of archival sources on the question of the food shortage is nonexistent. There are plenty of records on the world food situation at the end of the Second World War, including a large number of Canadian records. Deliberations of the Canadian Food Requirements Committee, the Mutual Aid Board, and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency contain abundant descriptions of the situation in western Europe. There are also records of the Canadian/United States/United Kingdom discussions in April 1945, in which the reduction of civilian food consumption was agreed upon as a means of meeting the European shortfall.

Bacque's assertion that Germany could have fed itself at this time if it were given the chance is quite ridiculous. The Reich's food output had dropped dramatically in 1944-45 as the Allies closed the vice. It was at this time that Hitler finally took the farmers from the fields and sent them to the front. The food distribution system was in chaos, and afterwards many who survived credited their own garden plots as their salvation.

If there was in fact a food shortage then this whole episode takes on a different light. One is left with the impression that, having discovered the circumstances around these camps, Bacque was convinced that there was something sinister and conspiratorial at work. He seems to believe that archives are the repository for everything, and if what he is looking for does not show up, then it has been suppressed. However, this was not a case of orchestrated mass murder. A real shortage of food, the lack of a distribution system, and the absence of any civilian infrastructure were the causes for this tragedy.

Bacque's inability to deal with all the evidence is not the only problem with this book. The main argument in *Other Losses* first appeared in *Saturday Night*. The article was well written and the argument presented in a very tight manner. It appears that Bacque received better editing services for the article than for the book. The narrative in the book is not all in one direction. As his argument expands to fill the pages, it loses its organization and structure. One example of this is how Bacque deals with the question of the total number of "other losses." There is no clear and methodical attempt to deal with the numbers, and this leaves the reader frustrated and ploughing through numerous appendices in the hope of an answer, which can only be estimated as somewhere around a million.

That there is no conspiracy involved here does not diminish the tragic nature of these events, and Bacque's descriptions of individual acts of cruelty still stand as evidence of allied inhumanity. And there is no doubt of the need for more scholarly work on war's impact on individuals, rather than accounts of winners and losers. However, future endeavours should not follow the methods employed by Bacque.

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The Field Naturalist: John Macoun, the Geological Survey, and Natural Science. W.A. WAISER. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989. x, 253 p. ISBN 0-8020-2686-9 \$30.00 (cloth).

William Waiser has produced a well-written and balanced account of one of Canada's most prominent field naturalists, John Macoun. This self-taught botanist was with the Geological Survey of Canada for some thirty years, serving first as Dominion Botanist and later as Survey Naturalist. During this period, he is credited with establishing a national herbarium which contained some 100,000 specimen sheets, of which at least one thousand were new to science. His collections remain important even to this day, not because they were among the first specimens collected for some parts of Canada, but because they were gathered before the natural environment was extensively disturbed. Eventually his work helped lay the foundation for the creation of the National Museum of Natural Sciences.

But Macoun's accomplishments were not without their costs, and it is at this level — the critical appraisal of Macoun's research — that Waiser's study is particularly revealing. Throughout his career, Macoun emphasized quantity over quality; many of his field collections were gathered in haste and without any attempt for systematic coverage. His collections were often improperly preserved and without adequate notations. More often than not, his flora record of Canada reflected his personal tastes rather than the needs of the national institution.

Unfortunately, Macoun's emphasis on collection was at the expense of other aspects of scientific study and, as a result, much of his research remained on the fringe of true scientific inquiry. While other natural scientists of the nineteenth century were specializing in the new field of biology, Macoun held strongly to his conviction that the best scientist was the all-round generalist. Macoun had the entire Canadian land mass at his disposal; other investigators would have seen the territory as a living laboratory in which to take up Darwin's challenge and to focus their studies on the anatomy and