

Abstract Submitted
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Albert Einstein and Wernher von Braun - the two great German-American physicists seen in a historical perspective. FRIEDWARDT WINTERBERG, Univ of Nevada Reno — It was Albert Einstein who for the first time changed our view of the universe to be a non-euclidean curved space-time. And it was Wernher von Braun who blazed the trail to take us into this universe, leaving for the first time the gravitational field of our planet earth, with the landing a man on the moon the greatest event in human history. Both these great physicists did this on the shoulders of giants. Albert Einstein on the shoulders of his landsman, the mathematician Bernhard Riemann, and Wernher von Braun on the shoulders of Goddard and Oberth. Both Einstein and von Braun made a Faustian pact with the devil, von Braun by accepting research funds from Hitler, and Einstein by urging Roosevelt to build the atom bomb (against Hitler). Both of these great men later regretted the use of their work for the killing of innocent bystanders, even though in the end the invention of nuclear energy and space flight is for the benefit of man. Their example serves as a warning for all of us. It can be formulated as follows: “Can I in good conscience accept research funds from the military to advance scientific knowledge, for weapons developed against an abstract enemy I never have met in person?” Weapons if used do not differentiate between the scientist, who invented these weapons, and the non-scientist.

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