

other writers who believe that the much-discussed tidal wave of newspaper readership moving from print to the Internet is more fantasy than fact. A British blogger has written that online sites account for only 17 percent of the page views by British newspaper readers. An important caveat is that total newspaper readership—including paper and electronic readers—has been sliding for 30 years. Circulation has dropped by more than 10 million since the late 1970s, reaching 48,408,000 last year. Many people are simply getting the news from other sources—or not at all.

Commenters on Langeveld's post questioned whether each newspaper copy is truly read by 2.128 readers, as the industry has long claimed, whether readers look at half of the pages in their papers every day, and whether they spend anything like 25 minutes at the task.

Langeveld maintains that the "pass-along" rate, showing that each paper copy is read by more than two people, is based on sound survey statistics. He acknowledges that his measures of pages read and time

spent are estimates. Even if they are cut in half, he says, they show that the overwhelming number of newspaper readers are still getting their fix from ink and dead trees.

PRESS & MEDIA

Cashiering the Critics

THE SOURCE: "Thinking on Film" by John Podhoretz, in *The Weekly Standard*, May 18, 2009.

THE NATION'S CADRE OF MOVIE reviewers has been shrinking so rapidly that by the end of the year only 10 to 15 American newspapers may still have their own film critics, writes John Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary* and movie critic for *The Weekly Standard*. The newspaper film critic may be well along the path of the ichthyosaurs, soon to be extinct.

It's a development much lamented . . . by movie critics, Podhoretz says. Readers, for the most part, don't care. Typical readers don't know the difference between a staff critic

and one who works for a wire service or moonlights as a reviewer after a day of, say, telemarketing. What the stereotypical Joe Reader wants, Podhoretz says, is not cinematically erudite film criticism but sports scores, stat boxes, TV schedules, and, especially, weather maps.

Although movie criticism has been around for a century, most of it has not been memorable, Podhoretz says. "One can count the standout critics throughout that time on maybe two hands."

Podhoretz isn't concerned over the supposed harm done to the "national cultural conversation" by the decline of salaried critics. That's because there are hundreds, maybe thousands, of nonprofessional critics reviewing feverishly on the Web. Amateurism may be the best thing that has happened to the field, he says. It will bring out some "very interesting work" by moviegoers who are seeking to "express themselves in relation to the work they're seeing" instead of cranking out 300 words per movie in return for a regular blip in their electronic deposit account at the bank.

HISTORY

Who Voted for Hitler?

THE SOURCE: "Ordinary Economic Voting Behavior in the Extraordinary Election of Adolf Hitler" by Gary King, Ori Rosen, Martin Tanner, and Alexander F. Wagner, in *The Journal of Economic History*, Dec. 2008.

NO QUESTION OF VOTING BEHAVIOR has been studied more extensively than how the Germans

managed to elect a party that destroyed democracy in their country and left Europe ravaged. The conclusion has generally been that the Nazi victory was a "unique historical case." Now an international team of interdisciplinary researchers has

compared voting results in six German elections between 1924 and 1933 with what is known about economic voting behavior in other countries. They find nothing unique about the Nazis' rise to power. Germans, like many other nationalities at many other times, voted according to what they perceived as their economic self-interest.

Harvard political scientist Gary King, University of Texas, El Paso mathematician Ori Rosen,

Northwestern University statistician Martin Tanner, and University of Zurich finance professor Alexander F. Wagner say that most previous analyses of German electoral results of the early 1930s were flawed. The “catch-all” theory—which describes the National Socialist Party as a protest organization that attracted people dissatisfied with other non-mainstream alternatives—doesn’t say anything useful about the Nazi election since it “applies to most groups and almost all big or growing parties in almost all countries.”

“Mass society” theory, which holds that citizens—primarily nonvoters—on the “social periphery” feel the strongest response to extremist parties, has rarely been tested against hard voting data, the authors say. “Class theory,” which suggests that various social groups were radicalized in different ways, has foundered because researchers disagreed on who precisely was radicalized to vote for the Nazis. Sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset wrote that the typical Nazi voter was a middle-class self-employed Protestant who lived on a farm or in a small community. By contrast, sociologist Richard F. Hamilton concluded that the upper classes (white-collar and self-employed Germans) were the bedrock of Nazi electoral support.

Germany suffered from hyperinflation in the 1920s and began sliding into economic depression in



Workers trudge ahead in the popular 1932 poster *Our Last Hope: Hitler*.

1927. The gross national product of the Weimar Republic contracted by a quarter; unemployment soared and incomes fell dramatically. Support for the Nazi Party, less than three percent of eligible voters in 1924, rose to 31 percent in July 1932, 27 percent in November 1932, and 39 percent in March 1933.

The new statistical analyses by King and his coauthors show that the two groups most affected by the Depression followed separate political paths. The unemployed turned primarily to the Communist party, which catered to them with a program calling for community property. The working poor, including independent artisans, shopkeepers, small farmers, lawyers, domestic workers, and family members of the working poor, disproportionately

supported the Nazis. These groups responded positively to Hitler’s denunciations of big business and government, promises of intensive development of Germany’s own economic resources, support of private property, and plans for expropriation of land from Jewish real estate owners and resettlement of the landless in eastern Germany. Hitler’s support was higher in Protestant areas than in Catholic regions, in part because the Catholic church strongly encouraged the faithful not to vote for the Nazis, and in part because the church ran relatively well-financed social welfare programs.

In the years after World War II, some leading Westerners argued for limiting democracy to stop the masses from electing demagogues like Hitler. King and his fellow researchers say the best way to stop such unhappy repetitions of history is to implement successful economic policies.

HISTORY

Repeating History in Juárez

THE SOURCE: “Drug Gangs and Politics in Ciudad Juárez: 1928–1936” by Nicole Motier, in *Mexican Studies*, Winter 2009.

IN EARLY MARCH MEXICAN soldiers rolled into Ciudad Juárez, which lies just across the border from El Paso, to stop a murder campaign