

detonated a nuclear weapon.)

But details do matter, and so does a judicious attitude, Gusterson says. Reporters should identify U.S. government officials who make accusations about Pyongyang, diversify their pool of Korea specialists, occasionally dial the 011 international access code instead of turning exclusively to District of Columbia analysts, and separate news about nuclear developments from opinion about Kim Jong Il's personal peculiarities. More objective reporting would yield better national debate and sounder foreign policy regarding one of the world's gravest areas of concern.

## PRESS &amp; MEDIA

## News Virgins

**THE SOURCE:** "Young People Flee From the News, Whatever the Source" by Thomas E. Patterson, in *Television Quarterly*, Winter 2008.

A GENERATION AGO, AS THE Watergate scandal threatened President Richard Nixon, knots of readers stood outside the entrance of *The Washington Post* each night waiting to buy the next day's news-

paper, which would go on sale at 10:15 P.M. Many of these eager consumers were teenagers and twentysomethings who were as interested in public affairs as they were in the new Stones album.

That was a time when more than half of all adults under 30 were regular readers of a daily newspaper, and most of them also watched the evening news. Today, only one in 12 young adults reads printed news. Twice as many watch news on television—one in six. One young person in eight checks out Internet news.

So how does this generation get the news? Much of it doesn't.

Roughly a fourth of all younger Americans pay no attention to news from any source, writes Thomas E. Patterson, of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

A large national survey found that only a fifth of younger respondents could accurately dredge up a factual element about the top story of the day. And though some proponents of new media say that young Americans merely get their news fix through a "different distribution system" such as *The Daily Show*, the

survey uncovered only a tiny number of such individuals.

The decline in exposure to news is part of an overall cultural shift. Two or three decades ago, news had a near monopoly on dinner-hour television, Patterson says. Watching TV while preparing—or eating—dinner meant watching news. But television's ability to force-feed news ended with the rise of cable, which offered alternatives, even at six o'clock. Fewer parents watched news, and even if they did, their children were usually in another room watching something else. The development of "news habits" in children and teenagers slowed dramatically.

The Internet has even less ability to build new audiences for news. Users gravitate to the sites they like, and news is about as popular with many of them as spinach. Even if they call up the news, they spend less time reading it than in the past, and are less likely to do so as a matter of habit. New media, Patterson says, reinforce interests rather than create new ones.

## HISTORY

## Currying Maximum Favor

**THE SOURCE:** "France Under the Nazi Boot" by Filippo Occhino, Kim Oosterlinck, and Eugene N. White, in *The Journal of Economic History*, March 2008.

IT TOOK DECADES FOR HISTORIANS to shatter the political fable that the French fought back fiercely

against their German occupiers during World War II. Now, researchers have debunked the economic myth that the Nazis were solely responsible for the pervasive hunger and deprivation in occupied France during the period. In

fact, the French government voluntarily turned over far more money and manpower to the Hitler regime than the terms of the armistice required.

In 1941, French leaders, expecting Britain to surrender quickly, maneuvered to curry favor with Germany to boost French standing in a new Europe dominated by Adolf Hitler, write economists Filippo Occhino and Eugene N. White of Rutgers and Kim Oosterlinck of

the Université Libre de Bruxelles. “Germany secured a massive and, perhaps, unparalleled transfer of resources from France” to finance its war on other fronts, the authors say.

The French turned over 479 billion francs to the Germans from 1940 to 1944. The occupiers took billions more in loot. While the economists don’t translate the sums into current U.S. dollars, they note that the payments were equivalent to 55.5 percent of French economic output in 1943. The elderly French hero of World War I, Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, was allowed to remain head of the country because he ensured the “passivity” of the population and the continued exploitation of the economy during the occupation, according to Occhino and his coauthors. The strategy worked so well for Germany that it took fewer than 40,000 unfit and overage German occupation officers to administer all of France until the Allies threatened a cross-channel invasion in 1943.

When the Germans marched around the Maginot Line and launched their blitzkrieg against France on May 10, 1940, France’s economy was slightly larger than Germany’s on a per capita basis. When France agreed to an armistice six weeks later, the two nations’ fortunes reversed. The Germans received 400 million francs a day in “occupation costs,” a figure so large that Nazi authorities were unable to spend it. Reduced to 300 million francs a day in 1941, the toll was raised to 500 million a day by 1943 as the war turned against the Germans. Germany

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also put thousands of French prisoners of war to work in its munitions industries, and conscripted another 649,000 civilian laborers to work in its factories—altogether, about 10 percent of the French labor force. Germany commandeered 92 percent of France’s oil, cut off 40 percent of its coal, and took so much of its food that adults were reduced to 1,500 calories a day, less than the daily rates in Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania. (Conquered Slavic states were exploited more ruthlessly, but they were targeted for eradication under Hitler’s plan.)

Twenty-five years earlier, France and its allies had demanded 132 billion gold marks in reparations from Germany after its defeat in World War I. In the years from 1923 to 1931, Berlin paid the Allies 50 billion deutsche marks, or 83 percent of one year’s gross domestic product. The amount of the reparations was considered so crippling that it helped Hitler justify World War II.

France’s collaborationist Vichy government paid Germany much more, and much faster. The payments, the authors conclude, probably represent the “maximum degree of exploitation that is feasible when a state is left intact.”

## HISTORY

## Blood for Liberty

**THE SOURCE:** “The Emancipation of the American Mind: J. S. Mill on the Civil War” by John W. Compton, in *The Review of Politics*, Spring 2008.

UNLIKE MANY OF HIS ENGLISH contemporaries, philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806–73) applauded the American Civil War. In only a few decades, he argued, the fledgling United States had slid backward from the highest principles of liberty and equality to “intellectual stagnation” and a fixation on “money-getting.” The war would provide a “salutary shock” to the national conscience. The horrifying butchery required to eradicate slavery was well worth the cost, not only for the emancipated victims but for society as a whole, he believed.

Mill’s now-little-studied views were highly unpopular in Britain, where traditionalists openly supported the Confederacy and many reformers loathed slavery but balked at the expected carnage, writes John W. Compton, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles. Mill thought the elimination of slavery essential to the preservation of liberal ideals. Because the United States was at the time the only nation founded on “abstract principles” that could fade over time, a struggle to eliminate a “stain” on the national character might force a re-articulation of principles, leading Americans to tackle other wrongs, such as the failure to allow women to vote.

America had been blessed with founders of political and intellectual genius, according to Mill. Mostly supported by the labor of slaves, these