

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

exceptional men had tolerated slavery in the Constitution. Mill, like Thomas Jefferson, had expected it to wither away, and was encouraged by a spate of manumissions following the Revolutionary War and by the American ban on the importation of African slaves in 1808.

Mill blamed the survival of slavery on economics: Cotton production required little but brute animal force for its production, depleted the soil,

and fueled an insatiable desire for new territory. If the North had compromised with the secessionist states, he wrote, the South's peculiar institution would have been pushed by the barrel of a gun into Mexico and Central America as cotton growers acquired the virgin land necessary for further production. Slavery would have been somewhat legitimized and would ultimately have required a crusade by civilized Europe to eliminate.

Mill had become concerned that America forgot its principles in the pursuit of prosperity in the early years of the 19th century. A "courtier spirit" pervaded American life, and people had little stomach for those who questioned established institutions. America lived in "perpetual adoration of itself," Mill wrote, and the greatest danger it faced was that the national mind would be dulled by the self-satisfied notion that all was right.

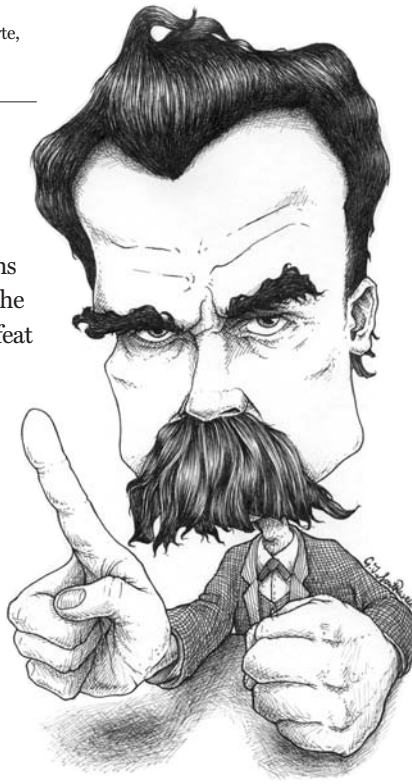
RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Nietzsche and the Nazis

THE SOURCE: "The Uses and Abuses of Nietzsche in the Third Reich: Alfred Baeumler's 'Heroic Realism'" by Max Whyte, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, April 2008.

DURING WORLD WAR II, Hitler's soldiers marched off to battle with field-gray editions of Friedrich Nietzsche's works in their packs, and ordinary Germans were occasionally urged on with the philosopher's words. After the defeat at Stalingrad in 1943, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels declared, "We shall once more justify the words of the philosopher: 'That which does not kill me makes me stronger.'" Yet today Nietzsche (1844–1900) is one of the guiding lights of modern and postmodern thought, his exploitation by the Nazis dismissed as a travesty based on ignorance and willful distortion.

Not so fast, says Max Whyte, who



Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, prolific and ambiguous, provided grist for the Nazi mill.

recently received his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge. Nazi thinkers picked selectively from Nietzsche's vast and ambiguous corpus, but we must still reckon with the fact that many of the philosopher's ideas did lend themselves to the Nazi cause. Liberal bourgeois existence—the very ideas of Christian morality, democracy, and rationality—filled Nietzsche with contempt. God is dead, he declared, and mankind must reinvent itself in a new image of greatness. The door was open.

Among the Nazi thinkers who seized on Nietzsche was Alfred Baeumler (1887–1968). A professor at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Berlin, Baeumler embraced the Nazi cause around 1930 and was granted an hour-long audience with Hitler himself in 1931, the same year he published his influential *Nietzsche: The Philosopher and Politician*. Baeumler also edited Nietzsche's works and wrote for the general public; Whyte adds that he was "a close personal and professional ally of Alfred Rosenberg—the self-proclaimed 'chief ideologist of National Socialism.'"