

THE REAL STORY OF WWII'S

'MONUMENTS MEN'

RECENTLY A HOLLYWOOD MOVIE WAS RELEASED, purporting to tell the truth about the Nazi acquisition of European art treasures accumulated by the likes of Herman Goering, Adolf Hitler and others. Of course the movie depicted the Germans as evil thieves who lined their pockets by looting the museums and private residences of the European capitals German troops were occupying. Naturally, the U.S. officers were depicted as avenging angels who did the world a service by locating and returning, for the most part, priceless treasures. But the truth of the matter is not forthcoming in the movie "The Monuments Men." In fact, it was U.S. troops and their commanding officers who seized the greatest art treasures of Europe to satisfy their own avarice.

By Marc Roland

Shot through the heart by a hunter, an eagle fell lifeless to the forest floor. Shortly thereafter, the formerly magnificent bird became infested with growing swarms of ravenous maggots. They gorged themselves on the dead body, soon reducing it to a writhing mass of putrescent corruption. This unpleasant imagery is a descriptive analogy for conditions in Germany beginning immediately after the destruction of the Third Reich, in May 1945. The mass murder and forced deportation of her people—regardless of their individual political affiliations or ideological beliefs—together with the uprooting of her industries and wholesale confiscation by the Allies, have since been profusely documented by professional historians, if unrecognized by the public at large.¹

Former U.S. president Herbert Hoover (1874–1964) and Canadian Prime Minister MacKenzie King (1874–

1950) created a food-aid program that saved an estimated 8 million European lives from postwar famine. But, as a result of official Allied policy specifically excluding Germans from this largest charity in history, more than 9 million of them were forced to die from starvation. In mankind's largest act of ethnic cleansing, some 15 million persons were expelled from their homelands. Over 2 million Germans, including countless children, died on the

"Looting was done without shame or hesitation and was not regarded as stealing. Bankers and clergymen alike dove into this unlimited treasure trove."

road or in concentration camps in Poland and elsewhere.² In postwar Germany, "65% of newborn babies were dying within the first week after birth."³

These conditions represented the wish fulfillment of an American Jewish publisher and convicted thief, Theodore Newman Kaufman (1910–1986), whose *Germany Must Perish!* had been released four years earlier,



Supreme Allied Commander Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, accompanied by Gen. Omar N. Bradley (left) and Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr. (directly behind Eisenhower), inspect art treasures being protected by German conservators in a salt mine in Germany. The salt mine in Merkers was found to contain Reichsbank wealth and museum paintings that had been removed from Berlin for safekeeping. As TBR readers know, Gen. Eisenhower was personally responsible for the purposeful mass murder of over 1 million surrendered German soldiers—kept in open-air pens in freezing weather without proper sanitation or necessary food rations—after the war. Photo: National Archives and Records Administration.

while the U.S. was still a neutral power. “To achieve the purpose of German extinction” was the book’s self-declared intention. “Since Germans are the perennial disturbers of the world’s peace,” Kaufman reasoned, “they must be dealt with like any homicidal criminals.”⁴ Additional torment inflicted upon them included the looting of their cultural wealth on a truly breath-taking scale. However, the scope of theft that far outstripped even their worst fears was only brought to light nearly half a century later with publication of *The Spoils of World War II: The American Military’s Role in Stealing Europe’s Treasures*.⁵

“After 13 years of meticulous research,” wrote author Kenneth D. Alford, “I have uncovered the truth that the U.S. Army, after defeating the German army, proceeded to pillage the German nation. Enlisted men, officers, WACs and nurses united in a festive treasure hunt that began in the ruined, deserted city of Aachen and ranged across Germany into Austria and Czechoslovakia. Looting was so widespread that it was regarded as soldierly sport.”

Alford says: “All the occupying forces looted, and the Army made it easy. Looting was done without shame or

hesitation and was not regarded as stealing. Bankers, clergymen—persons who were normally honest—did not hesitate to dive into an unlimited treasure trove. There were no effective rules to control the game. The Army permitted personnel to mail home captured enemy equipment provided there was no ‘military need’ for it. Technically, soldiers were forbidden to mail home items taken from German homes and public buildings. The ruling was admirable, but rarely enforced.”

Alford also tells us, “In many instances, GIs ordered families out of their homes with less than 30 minutes’ notice and commandeered the residences. The abuse of oc-

cupied dwellings by Americans was at best vandalistic and at worst downright criminal. Expensive carpets were burned by cigarettes, furniture was thrown out into the rain, partitions were knocked out, walls were disfigured with crude drawings—usually obscene—and valuables were stolen. Enlisted men, officers, and nurses mailed home complete sets of silver and china, vases, linen, paintings, ornaments, jewelry, clocks and watches, crystal ware, bedding, toys, books, and an incredible assortment of household bric-a-brac.”

Alford adds: “Looting became an art. . . . The sackers of Germany also invaded museums, libraries and other public buildings. . . . Universities, town halls, hotels and businesses were thoroughly pillaged, their contents added to the mail sacks. The only limit to one’s daily looting was the size of the sack. . . .”

Alford concludes his introduction by saying, “The magnitude of the looting surpassed everything done in past wars and has never been thoroughly chronicled,” chiefly because it was too vast for comprehensive examination.

Consequently, any attempt at definitively documenting American rapine of a prostrate, defenseless nation must run into several, hefty volumes. “There is strong evidence,” Alford writes, “that more than a few Americans grew rich as a result of loot seized in Europe at war’s end.

. . . The acquisition and distribution of Nazi loot at the conclusion of World War II, upon which this book barely touches, is a grossly embarrassing chapter in our history. The U.S. government, under a presidential executive order for ‘national security,’ is safeguarding the secrets of the disposition of the spoils of that great conflict.”⁶

Instead, Alford highlights only several of the most egregious examples, such as that of light-fingered U.S. Army Capt. James H. McGuire, who boasted of “over \$90,000 worth of diamonds in his room,” and Capt. Bertrand LaVien’s confiscation of the “irreplaceable” Salzburg Museum’s gold and silver coin collection, valued in 1945 at more than \$1 million. “In spite of his admitting his part of the theft,” Alford writes, “LaVien remained in the Army unpunished, due to a lack of evidence.”

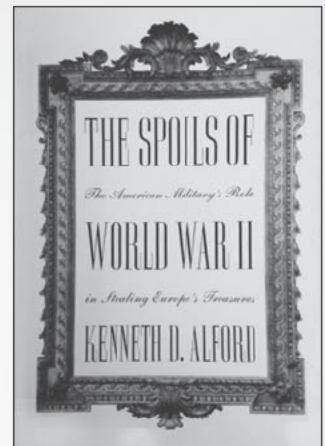
None of this was secret or generally unknown at the time. A sign over the entrance of the U.S. Army Post Office in 1945 read, “The best loot in the world passes through these doors.” Then there was the self-proclaimed battle strategy of the 42nd Rainbow Division: “One man fighting, two men looting.”⁷

Such characterizations are strangely at odds with public perception of American GIs as “monuments men,” a term recently applied to U.S. occupation authorities, who recovered priceless art objects supposedly stolen by

The Spoils of World War II:

The American Military’s Role in Stealing Europe’s Treasures

Jan van Eyck’s Ghent altarpiece, Michelangelo’s “Madonna and Child,” Van Dyke’s “Portrait of a Man With Neck Frill”—what happened to these celebrated artworks and other treasures procured by the Third Reich during the 1930s and 1940s? *The Spoils of World War II* by Kenneth D. Alford answers that question while telling a remarkable story of greed and avarice, with war-torn Europe as its backdrop. More than 50 years of research and documentation have finally revealed the extent to which the German forces acquired artworks from the lands they occupied and portrays the American military forces as both liberators . . . and plunderers themselves. The Reich armies protected everything from art treasures to porcelain, pottery, furniture and even Austria’s prized Lippizaner stallions. But when the Reich finally fell, what happened to these priceless objects when the American troops located the vast storehouses of treasure, and what became of the possessions of the various private mansions and castles that lay along the routes of the “liberators”? This is the story of many of the individuals who did the “liberating.” Names are revealed and the culprits range from lower-level staff officers to generals at the very top of the command chain. *The Spoils of World War II* is a definitive record of events that have, for the most part, remained hidden for over half a century. The many illustrations have been reproduced from photographs in the National Archives in Washington and show in startling detail some of the greatest works of art in Western history. Hardback, 238 pages, #697, \$22 minus 10% for TBR subscribers plus \$5 S&H inside the U.S. Order *The Spoils of World War II* from TBR BOOK CLUB, P.O. Box 15877, Washington, D.C. 20003, call 1-877-773-9077 toll free to charge or visit www.BarnesReview.com. (Outside the U.S. please email sales@barnesreview.org for S&H.)





Hitler, and returned them to their rightful owners, usually Jewish. Dramatizing almost nightly news media reminders of these allegedly righteous U.S. art-lovers from 70 years ago is the release earlier this year of a similarly entitled feature film starring the talented actor and Council on Foreign Relations activist in black Africa, George Clooney, who also wrote and directed the movie. It was based on Robert M. Edsel's book, *The Monuments Men*.⁸ Subtitled *Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*, the only thing really "monumental" about these men was the colossal enormity of their theft, like the stamp collections ("worth well over \$50,000"), Persian rugs, gold jewelry and other personal valuables from a private Berliner's home Capt. Norman T. Byrne shoveled into a three-quarter-ton U.S. Army truck, which delivered the stolen goods to his apartment. Perhaps his most lucrative piece of stolen merchandise was a single artwork: "The removed etching was Albrecht Dürer's *Big Horse*, valued at \$100,000, in 1945."⁹

Likewise "monumental" was Capt. Kathleen Nash's robbery of the House of Hesse's royal jewelry, worth more than \$5 million in 1946 money.

"The Greatest Treasure Hunt in History" actually belonged to a "Hungarian Gold Train" carrying the wealth of Middle Europeans fleeing before the advance of Red Army hordes. Its cars "contained cases of gold, 60 chests

A Wealth of Treasures

Looting has been the norm in warfare since war was first invented. Only in recent times have armies pretended to be above all that—especially the sainted Americans. Here a GI looks at a religious triptych, in a sink, in a room packed with fabulous art treasures—the total possibly worth billions of dollars in today's money. At left is what appears to be a painting of the Annunciation, and below that a portrait of a woman by a Flemish master. Besides the artwork, whole trains full of gold vanished once they got into American hands. The American claim is that the Allies were all "good guys," just taking over what the dirty Nazis stole, so that we could return it to the rightful owners—and some property actually was returned. But the Germans would say they were trying to protect the art from Allied bombers (hence they stored it in castles and mines), only to have it stolen by Allied soldiers and their commanding officers. Something similar was happening in the Pacific theater, where U.S. "brass" were glomming onto "Yamashita's treasure." (See TBR, November/December 2011.—Ed.) According to Peggy and Sterling Seagrave, the United States "appropriated" millions in golden Japanese loot.

of lavish jewelry and chests of the finest collections of Meisen, Dresden and Chinese ivory figurines. There were over 5,000 hand-woven Persian rugs, exceptional works of art, five large trunks full of stamps, over 300 complete sets of classical silverware, and 28 large boxes of mink and sealskin furs. . . . The 1945 estimated value of the contents of the train was \$26 million—which would translate to several billion dollars today.”

This haul—unprecedented before or since—fell into the avaricious hands of Maj. Gen. Henry J. Collins, the military governor of western Austria. The truly “monumental” treasure was divvied up with other American looters, until Allied occupation authorities seized the cars, but not until an undetermined number of suitcases packed with gold dust vanished. Alford writes that, in 1948, “the refugee camps received the first shipment of items from the original, massive quantities of the Hungarian Gold Train. U.S. Army officers in Austria had first choice in selecting valuable objects for their personal use. There followed more, unchecked theft and looting” by U.S. military personnel, who were “then allowed to pick through the contents of the train. Only then were the remaining, practically worthless items turned over to the victims in the refugee camps.”

Particularly disturbing is a chapter entitled “The Austrian Monasteries,” whose sacred relics did not escape American attention. Stolen from the St. Florian Monas-

tery and sent to the villa of Gen. Geoffrey Keyes, the ranking U.S. officer in Austria, were “a Rococo console table, a Chinese rug and an Italian Rococo mirror.” Another fellow officer stole “an illuminated manuscript of the four Gospels, encased in a jewel-encrusted, gold-and-silver binding, dated 9th century. Also included were a rock-crystal reliquary shaped like a fish that, it was claimed, held a lock of hair from the Virgin Mary and another reliquary of silver, gold, ivory and precious stones bearing the likenesses of Germany’s first elected king,

Henry I of Saxony.” In fact, the treasure, valued at over \$15 million, “had been stored in a mine shaft near Quedlinberg, Germany, during World War II, and had disappeared from there shortly after the American occupation. We now know that the Quedlinberg treasure was stolen by an American officer, and taken to his home in Texas.”

By contrast, after U.S. bombers needlessly reduced the monastery at Monte Cassino to rubble in January 1944, German troops returned the relatively few treasures that escaped destruction to the Benedictine monks.

The Spoils of World War II throws incidental light on the question of Nazi looting by mentioning in passing that Hitler commissioned an agent to “purchase” paintings for a projected art museum in Linz, Austria, not to simply seize them, as depicted in both the book and film versions of “The Monuments Men.”

“The 1945 estimated value of the contents of the train was \$26 million—several billion in today’s money.”

What the World Rejected: Hitler’s Peace Offers 1933-1940

By Dr. Friedrich Stieve. Written by Germany’s foremost diplomatic historian of the early 20th century, this work maps out all the numerous times that Adolf Hitler made unconditional offers of peace to all the nations of Europe—and how the major anti-German belligerents, France and Britain, turned down these offers every time. The author lists all of Hitler’s offers in detail, complete with quotes, starting with his first offer of May 17, 1933, his second offer of Dec. 18, 1933, his third offer of May 21, 1935, his fourth offer of March 31, 1936, his fifth offer of Sept. 30, 1938, his sixth offer of Dec. 6, 1938, his seventh offer of late 1939 to Poland to settle the Danzig Corridor issue peacefully and, finally, his offer of world peace on Oct. 6, 1939, just over a month after Britain and France had declared war on Germany for invading Poland. Includes: “A Final Appeal for Peace and Sanity,” July 1940, by Adolf Hitler; “Hitler’s Political Testament,” April 1945; Hermann Goering’s “Last Letter to Winston Churchill, Nuremberg, October 1946,” and Neville Chamberlain in *The Forrestal Diaries*: “The World Jews Have Forced England into the War.” Softcover, 93 pages, #693, \$10 minus 10% for TBR subscribers plus \$5 S&H inside the U.S. (Outside the U.S. email sales@barnesreview.org for S&H.) Order from TBR BOOK CLUB, P.O. Box 15877, Washington, D.C. 20003 or call 1-877-773-9077 toll free Mon.-Thu. 9-5 or visit www.BarnesReview.com.



But Alford is neither a “revisionist historian” nor “Nazi sympathizer.” While his purpose has been to document the flipside of modern history, he does not or perhaps cannot explain how so many American officers and men could have sunk to the level of marauding barbarians, utterly disregarding their ballyhooed role as the bringers of “democracy.” The answer must lie in the hate-filled propaganda of Theodore Kaufman and his ilk. Then, as now, they totally dominated U.S. public information, which skillfully, relentlessly and incessantly conditioned gentle Americans to regard Germans as history’s worst criminals. Instead, however, the Allies’ self-styled “liberators” were the biggest looters of all time. ♦

ENDNOTES:

1 See especially *Crimes and Mercies: The Fate of German Civilians Under Allied Occupation, 1944–1950*, by James Bacque (Vancouver, British Columbia: Talonbooks, revised edition, 2007); *After the Reich: The Brutal History of the Allied Occupation*, by Giles MacDonogh (NY: Basic Books, Reprint edition, 2009); and *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War*, by R. M. Douglas (CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

2 While gentiles are treated by the public information media to daily, fictional reminders of an alleged 6 million innocent Jews killed on Hitler’s express orders, they hear nothing about Germany’s 14 million civilian victims of Anglo-American terror bombing, famine, eviction and Red Army atrocities.

3 Alford, Kenneth D., *The Spoils of World War II, The American Military’s Role in Stealing Europe’s Treasures*, NY: Birch Lane Press, Carol Publishing Group, 1994.

4 Kaufman, Theodore Newman, *Germany Must Perish!*, NJ: Argyle Press, 1941. Jewish apologists dismiss the book as insignificant, without influence and obscure, but millions saw it advertised in *The New York Times* and favorably reviewed by *Time*, which compared *Germany Must Perish!* with Jonathan Swift’s satirical *A Modest Proposal*, noting that, unlike Swift, Kaufman’s work was deadly serious. (“A Modest Proposal,” *Time* magazine, March 24, 1941.) Nowhere in the U.S. press was the book criticized for its criminal advocacy of mass-murdering gentiles. TBR readers can imagine the hostile outcry from these same sources to a book promoting Jewish genocide. On July 24, 1941, Germany’s *Die Völkischer Beobachter* (“The Folkish Observer”) pointed out that Kaufman was closely associated with fellow tribesman, Judge Samuel Irving Rosenman (1896–1973), an influential presidential advisor, who wrote FDR’s speeches: “Given the close relationship of the writer to the White House, this monstrous war program can be seen as a synthesis of genuine Talmudic hatred and Roosevelt’s views on foreign policy.” Although Kaufman advocated sterilization as the preferred method of extinction, the homicidal theme he first sounded echoed throughout Allied thought, growing in volume, until it climaxed in the liquidation of millions of German people. He had been arrested in 1934, along with his father, Anton, for robbing a gentile Hungarian business partner.

5 Alford, *op. cit.*

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

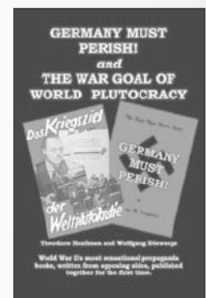
8 Edsel, Robert M., *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*, NY: Center Street Publishers, 2010.

9 Alford, *op. cit.*



Germany Must Perish . . . and The War Goal of World Plutocracy—2 books in 1!

By Theodore Kaufman (shown above) and Wolfgang Diewerge. The March 1941 publication of *Germany Must Perish!* provoked one of the most intense propaganda exchanges of World War II. The book, written by American Jew Theodore Kaufman advocated the physical destruction of the German people through mass sterilization and the total dismemberment of the German state. Because of Kaufman’s claimed links to the policy advisors of the American president, Germany’s reaction to the plan was swift. Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels ordered a rebuttal and analysis written of Kaufman’s book, and this featured in much home front propaganda for the rest of the war. Ironically, significant sections of Kaufman’s book, despite being dismissed as the work of a loner, came true at the end of the war. At least 12 million Germans were expelled from their land following the end of the war, and their deportation became the single largest transfer of any population in modern European history. It is estimated that up to 2 million Germans died during these expulsions. This version contains, for the first time published together, the full text of Kaufman’s original work and Nazi Germany’s official reaction to it: *Germany Must Perish: A*



Germany Must Perish: A leading American Jewish leader calls for the physical extermination of Germans and Germany AND *The War Goal of World Plutocracy: A* leading Nazi author analyzes and answers Kaufman’s book. Softcover, 78 pages, #640, \$10 minus 10% for TBR subscribers plus \$5 S&H inside the U.S. Order from TBR using the form at the back of this issue or call 1-877-773-9077 toll free to charge.

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