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# **The Allied Bombing of Germany, 1942-1945, and the German Response: Dilemmas of Judgment**

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Most articles published in scholarly journals are reports of research accomplished and conclusions reached, with the author demonstrating by weight of documentation the correctness of his reasoning and the indubitable validity of the judgments he has reached. This article, in contrast, is a maverick. It seeks to set forth the dilemmas of judgment which the author confronts and invites its readers to share in his speculation concerning the bases on which these dilemmas should be resolved.

The author grew up in a time period when moral judgments were etched in black and white without in-between shadings. In his life is a hiatus of over three years lost from scholarly pursuits to contribute in a small and insignificant way to the extinction of the Nazi evil. Since then he has read much of the literature of the holocaust and can see vividly, almost share the terror of the helpless men, women, and children waiting in the chill darkness for their entry into the hellish death camps. He saw two concentration camps before they were sanitized. He saw many of the foreign workers involved in the brutal exploitation by the Nazis. Thirty-five years of reading has done little to lighten his wartime repugnance for Hitler and his followers.

But at the end of the Second World War as the writer traveled from Bavaria to the port of embarkation at Bremerhaven, all previous impressions of the effects of war were shattered by the sight of those endless rows of scorched and skeletonized buildings in Germany's great cities. Then, as later, the question presented itself — "How could people have survived amidst the relentless hail of

bombs from thousands of planes? How could they preserve their sanity confronting the constant danger of death by fire, suffocation, or disintegration?" and the second gnawing question, "Could Americans have met such a challenge?"

Some three years ago the author turned to a study of what it was like on the home front in Germany as the bombs rained down in ever greater numbers, as the German troops once so victorious on the battlefield began to confront defeat after defeat, and as the amenities of life at home shrank down into the mere quest for survival. This study brought a growing sense of admiration for the dogged persistence of a people living under the most extreme pressure, accompanied by the basic moral question, "Were the victor powers justified in the methods of warfare used in those closing days of the war? Did the evil of Nazism justify bombing which drew no distinction between Nazis and non-Nazis, soldiers and civilians, adults and children?" And, closely related to this, came the more practical question, "Was the bombing war the best and most effective way to further the objective of defeating Germany and extinguishing the Nazi evil?"

In considering these questions the author was, of course, following a much trodden path. Even before the fighting was over the United States government established a commission to carry out a thorough and comprehensive survey of the results of Strategic Bombing. Over a thousand surveyors questioned over three thousand Germans, studied German morale reports, checked German records of damages, and presented their materials to be assessed and summarized by a distinguished group of civilians and high army officers.<sup>1</sup> The validity of the overall favorable report of the survey was early challenged by British Admiral Sir Gerald Dickens, who believed that if the effort applied to the bombing of cities had been directed to air strikes against submarines and other military objectives, the course of the war would have been shortened.<sup>2</sup> A year later the British physicist P.M.S. Blackett echoed Dickens' criticism of the ineffectiveness of the bombing offensive<sup>3</sup> and British Major General J.F.C. Fuller deplored the

1. Reprinted with an introduction and editorial comment by David MacIsaac, *The United States Strategic Bombing Survey* (10 vols. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976). The story of the survey itself by MacIsaac, *Strategic Bombing in World War Two: the Story of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976).

2. *Bombing and Strategy: the Fallacy of Total War* (London: S. Low, Marston, 1947).

3. *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy* (London: Turnstile Press, 1948), p. 3.

devastation of cities, "the foundation of civilization and culture in the enemy's land," labelling it "probably the most devastating blow ever struck at civilization."<sup>4</sup>

The first major summary of the operations of the British R.A.F. appeared in 1954, authored by Denis Richards and Hilary St. George Saunders.<sup>5</sup> It was considerably less frank and straightforward than the official account in the British government series on the *History of the Second World War* by Sir Charles Webster and Noble Frankland.<sup>6</sup> The official history of the U.S. Army Air Force appeared in 1951 with a considerably exaggerated summary of bombing accomplishments.<sup>7</sup>

Accompanying these official accounts were a veritable host of articles and books dealing with various aspects of the bombing war, best indexed in the *Air War Bibliography, 1939-1945*, published in 1977 by *Aerospace Historian* for the Air Force Historical Foundation.

As was to be expected, German comment came haltingly and cautiously in view of the position of a defeated and occupied country. The first serious German challenge of both the methods and results of the bombing was published by Hans Rumpf in his book *Das war der Bombenkrieg: Deutsche Städte im Feuersturm. Ein Dokumentarbericht*, published in 1961 in Germany and in 1963 in the United States under the title *The Bombing of Germany*.<sup>8</sup> Rumpf's bitter attack on the bombing methods was somewhat less pungently echoed in Georg W. Feuchter's book, *Der Luftkrieg. Vom Fesselballon zum Raumfahrzeug*<sup>9</sup> and, more recently, in Franz Kurowski's study, *Der Luftkrieg über Deutschland*.<sup>10</sup>

The propagandist note in Rumpf's book has been muted in subsequent publications bearing on the subject — the detailed and authoritative study of measures for protection against air raids by

4. *The Second World War, 1939-45. A Strategical and Tactical History* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948, 1962), pp. 406-07.

5. *Royal Air Force, 1939-1945* (3 vols. London: H.M.S.O., 1954).

6. *The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany, 1939-1945* (4 vols. London: H.M.S.O., 1961). Noble Frankland also wrote a popularized summary of the air war, *Bomber Offensive: the Devastation of Europe* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1970) and Anthony Verrier provided critical conclusions in his one volume study, *The Bomber Offensive* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

7. United States Office of Air Force History with Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate as editors, *The Army Air Forces in World War II* (7 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948-58).

8. German edition: Oldenburg: Gerhard Stalling, 1961; English, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963.

9. (Frankfurt a.M. und Bonn: Athenäum Verlag, 1962).

10. (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1977).

Erich Hampe,<sup>11</sup> the growing series of regional and local studies in which the bombing raids and their results are detailed as part of a scholarly review of the history of the National Socialist period,<sup>12</sup> and in several recent German studies of the two most damaging serial raids, those against Hamburg and those against Dresden.<sup>13</sup>

Outside Germany renewed criticism of the bombing methods employed has appeared in David Irving's *The Destruction of Dresden*,<sup>14</sup> Larry J. Bidinian's *The Combined Allied Bombing Offensive Against the German Civilian, 1942-1945*,<sup>15</sup> and Martin

11. *Der zivile Luftschutz im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Dokumentation und Erfahrungsberichte* (Frankfurt a.M.: Bernard & Graefe, 1963).

12. Three chapters on the Second World War in Paul Saur, *Württemberg in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus* (hrsg. v. d. Kommission für geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg. Ulm: Süddeutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1975); Heinz Bardua, *Stuttgart im Luftkrieg, 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag [1977]), a chronicle of the 53 attacks on the city; Hans-Peter Görden, *Düsseldorf und der Nationalsozialismus* (Inaugural Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität zu Köln. Köln: Spezialdruckerei für Dissertationen, Gouder und Hansen, 1968), a lengthy section on the Second World War; Hermann Vietzen, *Chronik der Stadt Stuttgart, 1945-1948* [with an introductory section on the air raids] (Veröffentlichungen des Archivs der Stadt Stuttgart, Band 24. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1972); Josef Fischer, *Köln '39-'45. Der Leidensweg einer Stadt. Miterlebt v. . .* (Köln: J.P. Bachem, 1970), the air raids as seen by one who remained in the city through all of them; Percy Ernst Schramm, *Neun Generationen. Dreihundert Jahre deutscher "Kulturgeschichte" im Lichte der Schicksale einer Hamburger Bürgerfamilie (1649-1948)* (Vol. II. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), a highly personal account with vivid descriptions of the July Catastrophe; also on Hamburg, Mathilde Wolff-Mönckeberg, *On the Other Side. To My Children: From Germany, 1940-1945* (Tr. and ed. Ruth Evans. London: Peter Owen, 1979); Fritz Nadler, *Eine Stadt im Schatten Streichers. Bisher unveröffentlichte Tagebuchblätter, Dokumente und Bilder vom Kriegsjahr 1943* (Nürnberg: Frankische Verlagsamt, 1969); Martin Broszat, Elke Fröhlich, and Falk Wiesemann, *Bayern in der NS-Zeit. Soziale Lage und Politisches Verhalten der Bevölkerung im Spiegel vertraulicher Berichte* (Vol. I. München, Wien: R. Oldenburg, 1977). Other personal accounts of some significance: Erich Kuby, *Mein Krieg. Aufzeichnungen aus 2129 Tagen* (München: Nymphenburger Verlag, 1975); Kurt Detlev Möller, *Das letzte Kapitel, Geschichte der Kapitulation Hamburgs. Von der Hamburger Katastrophe des Jahres 1943 bis zur Übergabe der Stadt am 3. Mai 1945* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1947); Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann, Tagebuchaufzeichnungen, 1938-1945* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag); Theo Findahl, *Letzter Akt - Berlin, 1939-1945* (Hamburg: Hammerich & Lesser, 1946); Friedrich Percyval Reck-Mellezewen, *Diary of a Man in Despair* (Tr. Paul Rubens. London: Macmillan, 1970).

13. Hans Brunswig, *Feuersturm über Hamburg* (Stuttgart: Motorbuch Verlag, 1979); Götz Bergander, *Dresden im Luftkrieg. Vorgeschichte - Zerstörung - Folgen* (München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1977).

14. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963).

15. (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1976).

Middlebrook's *The Battle of Hamburg: Allied Bombing Forces Against a German City in 1943*.<sup>16</sup>

Any historical interpretation consists of two parts — an exposition of the “facts” and an effort to draw conclusions from them. In respect to the bombing of Germany from 1942 to 1945 some of the most vital facts, scarcely debatable in view of the official documentation provided for them, are the following:

1. Most of the bombing was not “strategic” if that word be defined as the choice of military objectives and bombing directed towards their destruction. The development of R.A.F. strategy is traced frankly and fully in Webster and Frankland's *The Strategic Air Offensive*. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had promised in the British House of Commons on June 21, 1938 that Britain would bomb purely military objectives and even in this endeavor would take due care to avoid civilian casualties.<sup>17</sup> But the exigencies of war forced the British to reconsider such prewar promises. Daylight bombing efforts in 1940 and 1941 proved extremely costly. By 1942 the British turned to night-time raids with a very different definition of the appropriate targets.

Developed by Secretary of State for Air Sir Archibald Sinclair and the British Defence Committee, the pertinent directive was issued on February 14, 1942, eight days before Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris became Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command.<sup>18</sup> The key words in the directive indicated that the “primary objective” of British bombing in Germany “should now be focussed on the morale of the enemy civil population and, in particular, of the industrial workers.” A list of important industries in targeted cities was set forth, but Sir Charles Portal in a memo to Harris' predecessor on February 14, 1942, wrote:

Ref the new bombing directive: I suppose it is clear that the aiming points are to be the built-up areas, *not*, for instance, the dockyards or aircraft factories where these are mentioned in Appendix A.

This must be made quite clear if it is not already understood.<sup>19</sup>

And even at the outset the city of Lübeck was included not because

16. (London: Allen Lane, 1980). Middlebrook also provided critical comment in the latter part of his book on *The Nuremberg Raid, 30-31 March, 1944* (London: Allen Lane, 1973).

17. Webster and Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive*, I, p. 99.

18. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 322-23.

19. *Ibid.*, I, p. 324.

it was important industrially but because it was especially inflammable.

Sir Arthur Harris added to these concepts a propagandist advocacy of the independent employment of bombing forces with the assurance that it could win victory on its own.<sup>20</sup>

The Casablanca directive of October 30, 1942 seemed to reaffirm the basic policy of the R.A.F., although it joined the undermining of enemy morale to "the progressive destruction and dislocation of the enemy's war industrial and economic system."<sup>21</sup> The destruction of cities is clearly underscored in the plans and in such comments by Sir Arthur Harris as, "We can wreck Berlin from end to end if the U.S.A.A.F. will come in on it. It will cost between us 400-500 aircraft. It will cost Germany the war."<sup>22</sup> On November 3, 1943 Harris approached Churchill to defend the bombing record to then, justifying the continuance of his operations by a listing of cities in three categories — "virtually destroyed," "seriously damaged," and "damaged." Those coming closest to fulfilling his objectives were Hamburg, Cologne, Essen, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Hannover, Mannheim, Bochum, Mülheim, Köln-Deutz, Barmen, Elberfeld, München, Gladbach/Rheydt, Krefeld, Aachen, Rostock, Remscheid, Kassel, and Emden.<sup>23</sup> As respects the raids on Hamburg, Harris used the term "Operation Gomorrah" and spoke of the effort needed "to complete this process of elimination."<sup>24</sup>

The U.S. Air Force as it entered the fighting preferred more specifically military targets and there were serious disagreements with the British in respect to strategy.<sup>25</sup> But American efforts at daylight bombing met some of the same difficulties that had attended British efforts in 1940 and 1941. Not until late in 1944 did American bombing accuracy improve enough to draw a sharp line of distinction between American and British bombing efforts. In the bombing of Hamburg the Americans did confine their

20. *Ibid.*, I, p. 341 ff.

21. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 366-67.

22. *Ibid.*, II, p. 9. November 3, 1943.

23. *Ibid.*, II, p. 47.

24. Saunders and Richard, *Royal Air Force*, III, p. 6. There was some criticism of the bombing in the British House of Commons and in some contemporary periodical articles. See, Kurowski, *Der Luftkrieg über Deutschland*, pp. 239-40; Oswald Garrison Villard, "Must We Kill Neutrals?" *Christian Century*, LX, Pt. 1 (April 23, 1943), pp. 483-85; Vera Brittain, "Massacre Bombing — The Aftermath," *Christian Century*, LXII, Pt. 2 (August 1, 1945), pp. 880-81.

25. See, Verrier, *The Bomber Offensive*, pp. 182-85, 330-38; Bidinian, *Combined Allied Bombing Offensive*, pp. 1-28; Craven and Cate, *Army Air Forces*, II, pp. 348-76. But in the end Craven and Cate do defend the bombing of the cities, III, pp. 801-02.

operations accurately to harbor areas.<sup>26</sup> In the bombing of Dresden if the American targets were the railroad stations, the execution was quite faulty.<sup>27</sup> But the offensive against German oil resources was an American initiative and must be classed as the only genuinely "strategic" campaign of the war.

2. There was no real alternative to this kind of bombing in 1942, 1943, and much of 1944 in view of the strength of German anti-aircraft and fighter defenses and the achievable accuracy of bombing. Even night-time bombing could come to grief as late as March, 1944, as demonstrated by the British loss of 95 bombers out of 727 sent to bomb Nuremberg, with the German fighters employing the devastating new tactic of "Schräge Musik," by which they executed a slanting approach from beneath to the blind undersides of the bombers and employed upward-turned cannon.<sup>28</sup>

It is one of the ironies of the bombing offensive that the highest production of German aircraft factories came during the last year of the war. Germany produced over 40,000 planes during the year 1944 and more than 850 Messerschmitt 262s were accepted by the Luftwaffe during the first four months of 1945.<sup>29</sup> German pilots reported that shortly before the end they could obtain replacement planes of any type required. The U.S. Air Force command remained greatly concerned as late as January, 1945 with the strength of German fighter opposition.<sup>30</sup> But shortage of fuel and shortage of experienced replacement pilots on the part of the Germans took their toll. As one of the German experts later reported, the deficiencies of the German air force dated back to the early years of the war when the training program had been woefully neglected.<sup>31</sup>

Given the existing military exigencies the British and American choice for action against Germany in 1942 and 1943 was either to confine their efforts to highly peripheral areas in North Africa and Italy or to try to demonstrate both to the Russians and their own people that dramatic blows could be struck against the heart of the enemy homeland. The continuance of the heavy

26. Brunswick, *Feuersturm über Hamburg*, pp. 208-10.

27. Bergander, *Dresden im Luftkrieg*, pp. 188-94.

28. Middlebrook, *The Nuremberg Raid*, pp. 58-61, 71-73, 277.

29. Kurowski, *Der Luftkrieg über Deutschland*, p. 313; Alfred Price, *Battle over the Reich* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), pp. 175, 189.

30. Craven and Cate, *Army Air Forces*, III, pp. 664-69.

31. Richard Suchenwirth, *Historical Turning Points in the German Air Force War Effort* (USAF Historical Studies, No. 189, USAF Historical Division, Research Studies Institute, Air University, reprinted New York: Arno Press, Inc., 1968), pp. 27-28, 45-47.



bombing through 1944 and into 1945 reflected the fear that the last-ditch efforts of the Germans might, indeed, turn the tide — certainly the events of the Battle of the Bulge argued against complacency. Moreover, the bombing offensive had provided its own propaganda justification and had resulted in the development of armaments which dictated strategy — the use of heavy bombers as a direct back up of military operations defied reason. Their continued employment to destroy the civilian component of enemy resistance still seemed sound.

3. The kind of bombing methods adopted were inhumane — they resulted in the death of thousands of women and children and of many who had opposed the Nazi regime as well as of the Nazis themselves.<sup>32</sup> They reflected an abandonment of a distinction between civilians and soldiers, between those responsible for the war and for Nazi atrocities and those who were not guilty of those charges, and even between Germans and the thousands of foreign workers and foreign prisoners of war working in the German cities. Anyone who can read the vivid descriptions of burned and mutilated victims without a sense of shock and pity is guilty of the same inhumanity that led the Nazis to suppress all human emotions when dealing with the Jews.<sup>33</sup>

4. The number of those killed and injured by the bombing raids was, however, much less than assumed at the time by the Germans and by those who dropped the bombs. The figures of the July Catastrophe in Hamburg have dropped to an estimate of approximately 45,400 killed<sup>34</sup> and of the deaths in the Dresden raids to approximately 35,000.<sup>35</sup> Overall figures for deaths due to bombing vary from 300,000 to 600,000 with one writer suggesting that it required over two and a half tons of bombs to kill one German.<sup>36</sup>

5. In spite of enormous physical destruction due to bombing the reduction of industrial potential remained relatively modest until the development of more accurate bomb targeting in 1944, the provision of P51 Mustang fighter escorts for daytime bombing, and the concentration of bombing on petroleum resources sapped

32. See, Middlebrook, *The Battle of Hamburg*, pp. 75-91, for a discussion of the pro-English sentiments of its populace before the raids.

33. See e.g., Bidinian, *Combined Allied Bombing Offensive*, pp. 47-54.

34. Middlebrook, *The Battle of Hamburg*, p. 328. Even this number was due to extremely unusual meteorological phenomena as set forth in Brunswig, *Feuersturm über Hamburg*, pp. 270-73.

35. Bergander, *Dresden im Luftkrieg*, pp. 247-69. He points out that after its publication Irving revised his estimate of deaths given in *The Destruction of Dresden*, but that few people were aware of the change.

36. See, discussion in Hampe, *Der zivile Luftschutz*, pp. 141-45.

German energy potential and gave almost complete freedom of the skies to allied bombers.<sup>37</sup> Overall estimates of bombing accuracy are faulty since seventy percent of all bombs dropped on Germany were employed in that more favorable period from July, 1944 to April, 1945.<sup>38</sup> And even in the late stages of the war bombing often resulted only in rerubbling the existing rubble.

6. The Germans displayed astounding resilience in clearing away rubble, restoring utility and transportation services, and continuing their daily lives in spite of almost daily bomb threats and raids. In most seriously affected areas enormous efforts had been made to provide anti-aircraft defense and air raid shelters. The organization of teams to fight fires, excavate persons trapped by falling rubble, provide prompt first aid service, direct evacuees from bombed areas, and provide food and shelter for those who had lost their homes was carried out in exemplary fashion in most areas.<sup>39</sup> Only in a few places, notably Dresden, were these measures poorly organized.<sup>40</sup> Allied troops were frequently surprised to learn that transportation systems, utilities, and telephones had operated within the shattered cities until a few days before they yielded to the enemy.

These relatively factual items, however, are surrounded by a host of debatable interpretations. It is doubtful that anyone can

37. The vital character of the offensive against the synthetic fuel installations is graphically detailed in Peter Becker's article, "The Role of Synthetic Fuel in World War II Germany: Implications for Today?" *Air University Review*, XXXII, No. 5, pp. 45-53 (July-August, 1981).

38. MacIsaac, *The United States Strategic Bombing Survey*, I, xviii. An American assessment of bombing from January, 1944 to January, 1945 underscores the tremendous volume of bombs dropped during this period:

	Mines	Explosive	Stick Incendiary	Phosphorus
Berlin	908	26,180	2,455,600	230,182
Kassel	1,267	12,019	563,000	1,100
Frankfurt a.M.	329	16,363	1,409,502	30,200
Nürnberg	381	13,474	1,018,000	5,500
München	104	44,659	2,153,500	88,658
Bremen	114	9,453	582,763	47,628

(Source, U.S. Group C.C., Infantry Division, Statistical Office of German Industries, Reichsgruppe Industrie, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz.)

39. Detailed in definitive fashion in Hampe, *Der zivile Luftschutz*. For a spectacular statistical accounting of such efforts see the report of air raid protection and recovery efforts in Cologne before and after the thousand bomber raid in Fischer, *Köln '39-'45*, pp. 68-69, 218. At the end of the war monetary payments had become less generous than in the earlier years.

40. See, criticisms in Bergander, *Dresden im Luftkrieg*, pp. 113-333.

arrive at a definitive answer to the question of the “success” or “failure” of the bombing offensive. The goal of the British R.A.F. of “breaking civilian morale” was one of those simplistic catch phrases which have little meaning when examined closely. Can one really define “morale?” The Nazis sought all through the war period to assess “morale.” Reports to the *Sicherheitsdienst*, to the Minister of Justice, to the regional government leaders, to the school and labor officials, and to the propaganda ministry provided assessments of morale. These reports generally distinguished between *Stimmung*, the outward reflection of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the regime, and *Haltung*, the behavioral reaction to the exigencies of the war, including the bombing.<sup>41</sup> The American interviewers for the Strategic Bombing Survey followed a similar pattern, making use of a complex questionnaire placed before 3,711 German civilians exploring their memories of morale-related reactions.<sup>42</sup>

But the standard format of the German reports invited indications of difficulties — references to the hopelessness of victory, negative comments on the regime, renewed activities of the churches, worries about foreign workers in Germany, snide comments on Nazi leaders, all indicating the watchfulness of the officials making the reports, and then a standard conclusion that in spite of everything the *Haltung* was good. They are, indeed, valuable as indicating the atmosphere, the emotions lying just beneath the surface of the Nazi regime. There is ample indication of the fact that the air raids produced fear, nervousness, a growing sense of helplessness, and a kind of blind indifference towards the future (the word *Gleichgültigkeit* appears repeatedly). But countering these emotions was the primordial quest for *Überleben*, for survival regardless of the price. And there was also the dogged pursuit of those things which provided the only security during

41. Printed selections from these morale reports are found in Heinz Boberach, ed., *Meldungen aus dem Reich. Aus den geheimen Lageberichten des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS, 1939-1944* (München: Deutsches Taschenbuch, 1968) and Broszat, et al., *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, I, pp. 571-688. The author has examined large sections of the unpublished *Sicherheitsdienst* reports and reports of the *Oberlandesgerichts-präsidenten*. A copy of an interrogation dated June 6, 1945 of Dr. Immanuel Schaeffer, chief of the *Abteilung "Berichtswesen"* in the Propaganda Division of the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* in the files of the OSS sets forth his and presumably other German officials' distinction between morale and behavior. (I am grateful to Burton Wright for providing me with a copy of this interrogation.)

42. See, MacIsaacs, ed., *The Strategic Bombing Survey*, IV, with reports, “The Effects of Strategic Bombing on German Morale,” I and II.

those troubled times — the determination to go on living in one's own city even if the famous buildings and comfortable apartment houses had been flattened; the continued execution of assigned tasks regardless of the difficulties involved because this was an established and familiar routine; and the acceptance of existing authority even if it was no longer popular.

The definition of morale used both by the Nazis and the postwar interviewers is questionable. Does morale consist in working joyfully or working efficiently, of believing fervently in victory or doggedly carrying on because you cannot conceive of an alternative, of always saying "Heil, Hitler" and burying your dead soldier son in a Nazi cemetery or of sometimes making snide remarks or griping about food shortages while you continue to till your fields by hand or walk miles back and forth to work through the rubble of a ruined city. Even more questionable were the efforts of the postwar interviewers to discriminate between the morale effects of the defeat at Stalingrad, the desertion of Italy, and the bombing itself, thus presuming the ability to provide mathematical measures to the ephemeral phenomenon of a morale, which is atmosphere, feeling, and emotion interacting with training, discipline, and personality factors.

As for "breaking civilian morale," a term which assumed that workers would revolt against intolerable conditions, those who established this objective ignored the very nature of the Nazi regime against which they were fighting, the increasingly harsh methods of control applied, and the obvious fact that civilians without arms could not revolt against a regime in full control of all military and police powers.

Furthermore, both the allies and the Nazis themselves failed to recognize the basic success of the party organization. This lay in the extreme bureaucratization of every aspect of life, so that in almost every facet of daily affairs on the local level were Nazi organizations with men carrying out their assigned duties with the old Prussian *Pflichtgefühl*. Although there were criticisms of the Reich leaders of the Nazi party, of the Gauleiters and other party *Bonzen*, throughout the air raids the local agencies for relief to the victims were active and apparently quite efficient, the local party leaders sought to emphasize their concern, to arrange evacuation of women and children, to organize help troops, and to carry out rescue operations. In spite of all the problems of the late wartime period, the local functioning of the party apparatus appears to have been relatively efficient. There was, of course, disruption and precipitate flight in the eastern areas. There were, of course, Gauleiters and

other prominent leaders who sought flight or committed suicide.<sup>43</sup> But there were no significant uprisings anywhere in Germany and the creation of new governments awaited the coming of the enemy.

There was, therefore, one very significant service rendered by the allied bombing offensive — the discrediting of the Nazi regime. The revelation of the lack of concern of Hitler and many of his close cohorts for their own people is overwhelming. The neglect of the home front in order to follow increasingly unrealizable battle objectives, the frequently visible efforts of the Nazi leaders to provide for their own security while neglecting that of the great masses of their followers, above all the failure of Hitler himself to visit the scenes of desolation and share the sorrows of the suffering underscored the monumental character of the Nazi deception of the German people. Germans, who have learned the horrors of the concentration camps in the postwar period, have also discovered the inhumanity towards their own people of the Nazi leaders who could have, but did not, provide better fighter and anti-aircraft protection, could have, but did not, provide better evacuation of their citizens from the eastern areas, and could have, but did not, save many lives by an earlier surrender. The horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought a prompt Japanese surrender. The German leadership allowed city after city to undergo the hell of bombs and firestorms without surrender.

As for the allies and the nature of their bombing offensive, many questions still remain. It was an inhumane kind of war, but it came in response to an equally inhumane method of waging war on the part of the Germans. It was implemented after the bombing of London, the harsh treatment of conquered Poles, the beginnings of severe measures in occupied Soviet territories, the establishment of concentration camps, and the beginnings of the use of thousands of foreign laborers. And, in the final analysis, can one have a humane war? Is it worse to burn to death a woman on the streets of Hamburg than to incinerate a soldier in his tank? Would it have been more humane to leave the cities undisturbed until they had to be destroyed block by block by artillery shells and flame throwers in order to dislodge their stubborn defenders? There remains a sort

43. Ten of the forty-eight Gauleiters active in the closing period of the war committed suicide, see, Peter Hüttenberger, *Die Gauleiter. Studie zum Wandel des Machtgefüges in der NSDAP (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, No. 19. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1969), pp. 213-20. The flight efforts of prominent leaders has been detailed by Werner Brockdorff, *Flucht vor Nürnberg. Pläne und Organisation der NS-Prominenz im "Römischen Wege"* (München-Wels: Verlag Welsermühl, 1969).

of idealized romantic view of war with highly macho motifs of the brave, strong, and vigorous men of the nation going out on white chargers to meet the enemy which has little relationship to the ugliness and dirtiness of wars from ancient times to the present.

Accompanying the bombing, however, was the development of the "score card" approach to war, with the scores noted in terms of numbers of bombers sent, numbers of bombers returning, tons of aerial mines, explosive bombs, firestick bombs, liquid incendiary bombs, and phosphorus bombs dropped, the number of people killed, the number of people injured, the number of people evacuated, the number of people rendered homeless, the square kilometers of destruction achieved, and the number of factories destroyed or damaged. The only item missing was the assessment of the monetary cost of the raids measured against the monetary value of the damages obtained.

Whether these raids justified their cost is indeterminable. A recent study suggests that they did occasion the destruction of the Luftwaffe, which could have been a serious obstacle to the advance of the allied armies, and adds that the disruption of the German railroad and canal system "did much to bring about the chaos which greatly assisted the Allied advances into the country."<sup>44</sup> Shortening the war by even a few days saved the lives of many people in forced labor camps, of many who faced the summary courts of the Gestapo for statements or actions labeled "sabotage of the war effort," and even of many German soldiers and officers who could not help but see the imminence of defeat.

But when the bombing of the cities should have ceased is likewise debatable. Those in the Strategic Bombing Survey asked the Germans when they thought they had lost the war. The Germans might have asked the allies when they thought they had won the war. Until the very end no one in a position of power in the allied camp seems to have considered the question, "What will confront us in a Germany to be militarily occupied with the widespread destruction of middle and small cities as well as the great ones? Are we not contributing to the tasks and costs of administration?" And with the end of the fighting those who had dropped the bombs soon came to respect those whom they had recently sought to kill, to provide monetary support for their survival, to help in the rebuilding of the cities they had destroyed, and to find in bitter enemies the most trusted allies of the postwar era. Somewhere in these developments lies an irony that eludes reason.

44. Price, *Battle over the Reich*, pp. 192-93.