The bombing of large numbers of civilians in German cities during the Second World War was intended to bring great suffering. And it did. It brought death, disfigurement, loss of home and belongings, psychological disorientation, and paralysing terror to those on whom the bombs fell. After the bomber stream had left and the all clear sounded, people faced thousands of small fires, the ever present threat that the flames would leap from house to house, jumping across streets and uniting into a general conflagration. And from Rostock to Darmstadt, Hamburg to Paderborn, Hildesheim to Würzburg, Pforzheim to Dresden these general fires turned into fire storms, the intense heat sucking in the surrounding air until hurricane-force winds took hold, acting as a giant bellows to the flames. Trees, objects, people disappeared into the storm. Asphalt melted, trapping many of those trying to flee. Those who had stayed in their cellars risked dying from asphyxiation, the intense heat turning their refuges into ovens where, reduced of all water and fat, their corpses shrank to the size of dolls and were carried out in buckets by the clean-up squads who later found them.

Under the flight paths of the squadrons, the wail of air raid sirens interrupted sleep. Families stumbled down the stairs into overcrowded and claustrophobic cellars full of dust and the smell of fear. Knowing that these nights of helpless, passive waiting would have to be repeated again and again without let up spread exhaustion and nervous strain, turning some people in on themselves, stimulating others to fits of exuberance at having survived. Small wonder that so many war children in the Ruhr identified the air raid siren as their earliest and most powerful memory.

Jörg Friedrich’s achievement in Der Brand has been to tell this tale
of death and destruction with a rare plasticity and vividness. Inter-
cutting places and individuals’ experiences he recreates the dance of
death of the German cities. He intentionally repeats the same motifs
as they appeared in different places to build up a comprehensible
sense of the scale of the destruction. It is the urban equivalent of vis-
itng hundreds of scenes of mass murder. And this is also Friedrich’s
intention: the repetition of horrific scenes which invariably follow the
same sequence is built into the architecture of his book.

For much of the post-war period, the subject of Allied bombing of
German cities was virtually unmentioned in West Germany. In the
East, it formed part of imagery of the Cold War, where photos of the
Dresden inferno of February 1945 served to persuade unwilling
young men of the need to play their part in defending the country
against the Anglo–American threat. In the early 1950s, the CDU put
up electoral posters of ‘Asiatic’-looking Soviet soldiers to win voters
in the Federal Republic. Tales of Russian rape spread to areas like the
Ruhr, which had, in fact, never seen a Red Army soldier but had been
massively bombed by the country’s new-found Anglo–American
allies, while the air war was quietly consigned to a void in official
public memory. The bombing of German civilians lived on only in
local memories, from which it was gradually rescued in the 1980s
and 1990s by a local literature about Heimat which saw such notable
works as Margarete Dörr’s Frauenerfahrungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg.¹

As with Antony Beevor’s revelations about the mass rape of
German women at the end of the war, or Günther Grass’s re-telling
of the sinking of the Wilhelm Gustloff, so too with Jörg Friedrich’s
account of the bombing of German cities—the real work of historical
discovery had actually already been done by others. But just as the
German media was not ready for a full public discussion when fem-
insts like Helke Sander and Barbara Johr opened the subject of mass
rape in BeFreier und Befreite, so 1990 was an inopportune moment for
the veteran GDR military historian Olaf Groehler to publish his mag-
isterial Bombenkrieg gegen Deutschland, the culmination of a lifetime’s
study. Groehler’s book rapidly went out of print. As the Federal
Republic signed formal peace treaties with its Eastern neighbours,

¹ Margarete Dörr, ‘Wer die Zeit nicht miterlebt hat...’: Frauenerfahrungen im
Zweiten Weltkrieg und in den Jahren danach, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1998);
see also Winfried G. Sebald, Luftkrieg und Literatur (Frankfurt am Main,
2001).
laying both the war and the Cold War to rest, virtually the entire East German academic establishment was sacked and replaced by Westerners.2

The recent literary successes of Beevor, Grass, and Friedrich in writing about these topics have coincided with a time after Bosnia when the Federal Government is freer and more confident to make its own decisions about military as well as foreign policy than at any period since it was founded. In taking a principled position against American plans to wage war against Iraq, the Federal government can count on war not being popular in Germany—and with good reason. We should all listen hard to the experience of those who have been bombed. Their voices have been silent for too long.

Friedrich wants us to think about the bombing war as a species of mass murder. To this effect he lays claim to the vocabulary of Allied ‘Terrorangriffe’, ‘Massaker’, ‘Vernichtung’, and, in his climactic conclusion, to ‘Die größte Bücherverbrennung aller Zeiten’. Whilst the first three terms were all deployed by Goebbels’s propaganda during the war to describe the bombing, the last, of course, seeks to show that the Allies far exceeded the Nazis’ book-burning ceremonies. The notions are deployed obliquely, dropped into the pulsing thrust of the prose and left to settle in the reader’s mind, absorbed as the natural terms in which to give shape to the rush of emotionally and sensorily over-charged images. In his public utterances since, Friedrich has inflated this language further, turning the asphyxiating gases in the cellars into ‘gas chambers’ and the allied bomber fleets into ‘Einsatzgruppen’.

Friedrich’s war is a war between British and American planes and the German people. And he is at pains to delineate Churchill at his most vengeful and vindictive, effectively a war criminal whose prime object was to kill as many Germans as possible. At the time the ‘Blitz’ was at its height, the RAF concentrated most of its effort on dropping leaflets on Germany. Serious planning for mass bombing of German cities only began in 1942. Both regimes had started out from the assumption that bombing could win a war, a view both thought was

2 Anthony Beevor, Berlin: The Downfall 1945 (London, 2002); Günther Grass, Im Krebsgang (Göttingen, 2002); Helke Sander and Barbara Johr (eds.), BeFreier und Befreite: Krieg, Vergewaltigungen, Kinder (Munich, 1992); Olaf Groehler, Bombenkrieg gegen Deutschland (Berlin, 1990).
on the verge of being fulfilled following the fire-storm in Hamburg in the summer of 1943. Only the unsustainable rise in bomber losses over Berlin and Nuremberg in March 1944 persuaded the RAF otherwise. This is not to say that retaliation played no part in British planning: Churchill’s unfulfilled wish, in 1944, to drop poison gas in retaliation for the V-1 and V-2 rocket attacks on Britain would suggest otherwise. But this was not the sole or even the main purpose.

There was another, and perhaps more important, goal of the bombing in the British war effort. It served as a proxy for a second front. During 1941 and 1942, Britain had experienced nothing but defeats and was in no position to honour its promises to the Soviet Union to open a second front. But even leaving this complex and mistrustful alliance aside, at home Churchill desperately needed something to show for two and a half years of a war which had brought the humiliations of Dunkirk, the horrors of the ‘Blitz’, and defeat by the Japanese in Singapore and Burma. Retaliation against German cities on the scale Harris had in mind when he pledged ‘They have sown the wind and shall reap the whirlwind’ answered defeatism and the Conservative lobby for a separate peace with Germany. Bombing was popular at home. Vengeance, it was rapidly forgotten after 1945, was also part of the mass psychology of total war in Britain. But even this was tempered. Destroying cities was all very well, but the government was deeply worried about public reactions to the number of dead after the attack on Hamburg.

The bombing war was more than a matter of the automated massacre of unarmed civilians from a height at which the air crews could not see the people they were killing. It was also a war between armed forces, between Flak artillery and planes, between night fighters and heavy bombers, between scientists, planners, and, ultimately, the war industries of both countries. To take but one example, the Luftwaffe’s power was broken by the bombing war and as a result, it could no longer support ground troops in the way that this ‘flying artillery’ had done so successfully in the first half of the war. This had serious implications for the rapidity of Allied movement in the last year of the war on both the Eastern and the Western fronts.

Friedrich’s war is so engrossing because it is so exclusively focused on one thing, the bombing of German civilians in the cities. There are virtually no Flak guns, no squadrons of night fighters. There is no German war of aggression and occupation. There is no Eastern front.
There are no Jews; there is no Holocaust. There are not even any foreign slave labourers in the Reich itself, although by 1944 there were 7.5 million of them, accounting for 20 per cent of the population of Berlin alone, and it was they who had to do so much of the dangerous work of cleaning up and defusing bombs after the raids. Just occasionally they appear in the photos of Friedrich’s beautifully produced picture book on the bombing war, Brandstätten, but even here the overwhelming impression is of death, destruction, and the sudden usefulness and vitality of the Nazi mass organizations in helping to feed and clothe bombed-out civilians. In his writing, the cityscape is an entirely German one of Heimat.

Of course, Friedrich is not ignorant of these things he omits. He has himself worked on the Encyclopedia of the Holocaust.3 His very choice of terms, such as ‘massacres’ and ‘annihilation’, implies comparison with the Holocaust. As such they also carry strong echoes of the 1950s, saturated with both the language of Goebbels’s wartime propaganda and post-war feelings of resentment. The ten to twelve million German expellees from Eastern Europe, the still uncounted numbers of German women raped at the end of the war, and the half million people killed by the bombing had been excluded from the crimes against humanity being publicized at the Nuremberg trials. Germans who felt strongly about these issues were prone, for their part, to dismiss Nuremberg, in the phrase of the time, as mere ‘victors’ justice’. From the 1950s, this vocabulary became dormant but remained available. In the 1980s, Ernst Nolte deployed the anti-Soviet atrocity motifs to relativize the Holocaust, and now Jörg Friedrich seizes on the language of the Holocaust to find equivalences in the bombing of German civilians.

These equivalences may re-emerge in their pristine post-war form because of the very silence, because the bombing has not been discussed fully in public. But they also do not really address German suffering in its own right. It is as if individual suffering is only evoked in order to alter the scales of historical guilt, as if different kinds of human carnage can be collected, measured, allocated, and then written off against each other like a rescheduling of financial debts.

The Allies may have decided to retaliate for the German bombing of Polish, Dutch, and British cities with as massive an onslaught on

German civilian populations as possible, but killing civilians was not their central strategic priority: they were still trying to defeat Germany. The Jews made to dig their own mass graves in the Ukraine and Lithuania, and ‘processed’ through the gas chambers of Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz, do not have any equivalent on the scales of German suffering. And, even if there had been an equivalent, what would such a balance sheet have told us about the experience of being bombed?

There is a danger here not only of trivializing and relativizing the Holocaust, but also of trivializing and falsifying the experience of wartime bombing, by rushing to wrap it in the ubiquitous language of innocent suffering and passive martyrdom. The Jews may have posed a monstrous armed threat, the enemy of the war, to Nazi ideologues, but they were in fact—and felt themselves to be at the time—helpless, unarmed victims, abandoned to their fate. Did German civilians feel like the Jews?

Of central importance to the way we understand public attitudes in Germany to the bombing is the question of passivity and helplessness. It was one thing to feel passive and helpless in a cellar as the houses above shook and collapsed during a bombing raid. It was quite another to feel that Germany was helpless. This did not come until the Luftwaffe, the Flak and the Wehrmacht had been defeated. For civilians in the cities and small towns which fell prey to Allied bombing this moment did not arrive until the autumn of 1944 and the winter and spring of 1945. And it was during this last phase of the war that the bombing became most severe, the loss of human life greatest, and the Nazi regime began, for the first time since 1934, to terrorize its own population into continuing the war until the very end. But, for the crucial middle phase of the war, from the attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 through to the D-day landings three years later, the German population as a whole did not feel helpless in the face of British and American bombing, even though it was precisely in this period that the Western Allies attached greatest strategic importance to it.

The language of helpless and passive moral suffering, which so easily lends itself to the motifs of Christian martyrology, redemption, and national reconstruction, came only with the collapse of the Third Reich. It was only then that German ‘victimhood’ attained the status of a popular myth for understanding how the German people had
been misled by Nazi propaganda and destroyed by a perverse combination of Nazi extremists and Allied terror against defenceless civilians. This was the *vox populi* of Friedrich’s childhood and so it may not be so surprising that it should now infuse his history of bombing. But for most of the bombing war, the German population knew that its government still commanded massive military and strategic capability and expected it to take action, to retaliate every bit as much as the majority of the British population expected retaliation against German cities for ‘the Blitz’. Victims, yes: and the twin meanings which the word *Opfer* carries in German, of sacrifice and victim, were invoked as never before, but, during the war, they were invoked as a call to arms.

It is well known that Goebbels responded to the German defeat at Stalingrad by giving propaganda an increasingly shrill and pessimistic content, using the mass graves of Polish officers shot at Katyn and Vinnitsa to impress upon the population at home the atrocities which ‘Judeo-Bolshevism’ would inflict if it could. As RAF bombing of the Ruhr began in March 1943, Goebbels launched a parallel propaganda campaign about the ‘new weapons’ that would enable the Reich to retaliate against Britain. The fire-bombing of Hamburg in the last week of July not only killed 35,000 to 41,000 people and left 900,000 homeless. It also created a mood of panic which spread through both the Nazi regime and the population at large. The propaganda about ‘retaliation’ grew in intensity in order to channel widespread feelings of fear into a common reaction of hatred. But the Security Police reports on public opinion began to register high levels of anxiety about how Germany was going to win the war and when the promised retaliation was actually going to come.

On 8 November 1943, the eve of the twentieth anniversary of Hitler’s *putsch* attempt, the radio carried one of the last broadcasts to the German people by their *Führer*. By this time, he was the only major figure whose reputation remained untarnished and who could still command public belief. The streets emptied to listen to the broadcast of his speech at 8.15 p.m. People were looking for reassurance, most importantly for confirmation that England really would be knocked out of the war by the new miracle weapons, or at least that some tangible revenge was on the way. They leapt on his rather vague threat of a strike against Britain with joy and relief. ‘If the *Führer* says that, then I believe it. Tommy will get his deserts’, one SD
agent reported. Or, as another eavesdropper for the Security Police noted down: ‘A promise from the mouth of the Führer is worth more than all the declarations in the press, radio and meetings of the Party.’

Ten days later the RAF opened its five-month bombing campaign against Berlin, the high point of Arthur Harris’s plan to force Germany to capitulate by 1 April 1944. And within seven weeks of Hitler’s broadcast, whatever temporary hope his words had given had evaporated under the tonnage of high explosive and incendiary bombs, and the news of a third freezing Christmas for the soldiers bivouacked on the Eastern Front. A new rash of political jokes began to alarm the secret police agents who wrote them down in late December 1943. One ran:

Dr Goebbels has been bombed out in Berlin. He rescues two suitcases and brings them onto the street and goes back into the house to hunt for other things. When he comes out again, both suitcases have been stolen. Dr Goebbels is very upset, weeps and rails: when asked what was so valuable in the suitcases, he replies: ‘In the one was Retaliation and in the other Final Victory!’

Although the German rockets were duly named ‘V’ for ‘Vergeltung’ (retaliation), by the time the first V-1 hit southern England on 17 June 1944, whatever hope had been placed in them had evaporated. The D-day landings had already taken place and the Wehrmacht was being pushed back across Belorussia in the East.

It is easy to take the failure of Goebbels’s ‘retaliation’ propaganda as a rejection of Nazi war propaganda altogether. This would be a mistake. Retaliation eventually disappointed principally because it failed to materialize. Instead, the strains of war became more evident and social solidarity began to crumble from within. Cities which had already been bombed turned bitterly against those which had been

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spared; workers in the Ruhr wishing the planes on to Berlin in 1943; Berliners telling friends in Dresden in 1944 that they should feel what it was like for once themselves. As evacuees found themselves set against the resident population, the bombed out against those forced to take them in, apathy, exhaustion, and preoccupation with one’s own problems increasingly overwhelmed any sense of wider social responsibility. From this point of view Nazi propaganda about the ideal of self-sacrifice and the solidarity of the Volksgemeinschaft must have rung as hollow as did talk about the ‘Wunderwaffe’ and the ‘Endsieg’. By contrast, those slogans which demanded nothing more than what the civilian population could not avoid doing, ‘Durchhalten’ under the ‘Terrorangriffe’, appear frequently in personal letters and diaries.

After bombing raids, people came to depend on their immediate neighbours to protect their property from random theft, as those who told the joke about Goebbels’s suitcases knew well. But even though they knew that anyone was liable to steal their property, they looked with the greatest suspicion on those deployed in punitive brigades to defuse unexploded bombs and clean up after air raids. Alexei Antonovich Kutko was a prisoner in Neuengamme concentration camp sent out to Hamburg after the RAF raids: ‘When Hamburg was bombed, prisoners were sent to Hamburg to clear up. And if a prisoner was caught taking a packet of matches or a piece of cheese, then he would be hanged on the parade ground. The whole camp was lined up in formation—and he was hanged.’ This was not just an SS and police activity. During the last few months of the war, as the Allied armies closed in on the heartland of the Third Reich and as British and American bombers caused as much destruction as they had in the previous four years put together, both the sense of desperation and the quest for vengeance intensified further. The merest suspicion of looting after air raids became a licence for murder. On 14 October 1944, the Duisburg Volkssturm stood a ‘suspicious-looking’ Russian working in a clean-up squad against a wall in the street and shot him, because they had been told that some Russian POWs had been eating jam in the basement of a demolished house nearby.


7 Fritz Bauer and Karl Dietrich Bracher (eds.), Justiz und NS-Verbrechen: Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen
One of the problems Goebbels had encountered in anti-British propaganda from 1938 onwards had been the strength of the Anglophilia of the 1920s and the early years of Nazi rule. English continued to be taught in German schools and Shakespeare to be performed more than any other playwright. Goebbels’s solution to the natural limits of anti-English feeling was to attack not the nation but its class system: George Orwell’s essays had the distinction of being used for war propaganda by both sides.8

At the centre of the campaign against British and American ‘plutocracy’ lay the image of the Jew, the single and unitary image of all Nazi propaganda in the last two years of the war. As Goebbels moved towards pessimistic and atrocity-based propaganda in the spring of 1943, so 70 to 80 per cent of radio broadcasts were devoted to the Jewish question, Jewish guilt in causing the war, and the fate awaiting Germany should the Jews take revenge. Both Katyn and the bombing became fused in this over-arching epithet of the ‘Jewish war’.9

This may not have made people particularly vindictive to those few individual Jews they still knew. Victor Klemperer could hardly have survived in Dresden without the many individual acts of kindness shown him in the factory where he worked. On his way across the city, it was quite different as he ran the gauntlet of young boys, old men, housewives, and soldiers on leave. But news of bombing raids also cut across individual relationships and made people think about the abstract ‘Jewish enemy’ who had caused so much suffering. The nice foreman, a fellow veteran of the First World War, who had sympathized with Klemperer on 12 March 1944 for having lost his academic job just because he was Jewish, a week later turned to the idea of Jewish ‘billionaires’ as he cast about helplessly to give Klemperer a reason for the latest, senseless American bombing of Hamburg.10

Review Articles


Later on, as he wrote the *LTI*, Klemperer would make a great deal of incidents like these to explain how the notion of the war as a ‘Jewish war’ was absorbed into the common sense of everyday life and repeated by those who were not Nazis, or were even highly critical of the regime. By February 1945, Victor Klemperer was one of the few remaining Jews in Dresden. As the fire-storm ignited, even this most law-abiding of German professors realized that unless he ripped off his yellow star and began to pretend to be a bombed-out Aryan, he would almost certainly be casually killed on the street were he lucky enough to survive the air raids themselves.11

A string of unsolicited letters to Goebbels survives from mid-1944, advising the regime to use Jews as human shields within German cities—even after they had in fact been deported—and to publish the numbers of Jews killed afterwards. Irma J., who called on Goebbels, ‘on behalf of all German women and mothers and the families of those living here in the Reich’, to ‘have 20 Jews hanged for every German killed in the place where our defenceless and priceless German people have been murdered in bestial and cowardly fashion by the terror-fliers’, also confessed to her feeling of helplessness in Berlin: ‘We have no other weapon available.’ K. von N. took the same view, adding that this form of ‘retaliation’ against the Allies had the ‘additional advantage of not putting our pilots at risk’. ‘You should see’, he opined, ‘how quickly the terror will cease!’

The sense of helplessness and vulnerability fuelling this murderous rage is perhaps most evident in another letter from Berlin, which Georg R. wrote on 1 June 1944. Headed

\[\text{I am receiving my letters poste restante, because in the meantime I have been burned out once and bombed out twice.}\]

Second part of my proposal of 4.6.43:
No extermination of the German People
and of Germany
but rather
the complete extermination of the Jews

Georg R.’s letter reminded the Reichsminister of his communication of a year earlier. But he no longer wanted to expel all the Jews from Germany’s allied countries. Instead he proclaimed: ‘I propose that we should announce with an ad hoc plebiscite that, with immediate effect, we are not going to attack any towns or cities in England any more and hence the enemies may also no longer attack our towns and cities. ... Should the enemies none the less dare to attack even a single one of our towns or cities..., then we shall have 10,000 or 20,000 or 30,000 Jews shot without mercy.’

The deeper point here is that the ‘Jewish war’ could be accepted even by those who wanted no such revenge on the Jews. In Munich, Essen, Hamburg, and Kiel, voices were overheard blaming the Allied bombing on the Nazis’ treatment of the Jews. By 2 September 1943, the Stuttgarter NS-Kurier felt that it had publicly to rebut the argument that world Jewry would not have fought Germany had it not so radically solved the Jewish question. Since 1941, Hitler’s prophecy about the destruction of the Jews had conveyed an abstract sense of the murders for which private news of mass shootings provided all too specific details. But even these critical and unhappy citizens, who found what they did know of the Holocaust deeply abhorrent, had assimilated and made their own the deeper assumption that the Allied war effort was indeed being directed by, or on behalf of, the Jews. For them too, Germany had become a ‘Schicksalsgemeinschaft’ of people tied to one another willy-nilly because all bridges behind them had been burned. Even as they feared the death penalties increasingly being meted out for defeatist talk in the present, so, too, they feared the future punishment it was said defeat was bound to bring.

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By the time its political structures had collapsed on 8 May 1945, much of Nazism’s racial and moral ordering had been imprinted deeply upon German society, down to the quite personal ways in which people who did not particularly favour the regime expressed their notions about crime, sexuality, war guilt, black-marketeering,

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12 All of these letters in Bundesarchiv, R55, 571; my translations.
13 Cited in Bankier, ‘German Public Awareness of the Final Solution’, p. 222.
Russian ‘hordes’, and foreign ‘Displaced Persons’. Although the regime had set out from the beginning to transform the values and loyalties of its citizens, it was not its successes but its failures which played the decisive part in this process. While Hitler had basked in a miraculous glow after the Anschluß with Austria and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia at Munich, many Germans had looked disapprovingly at the violence and destruction of the November pogrom against the Jews which followed.

The moral brutalization of German society came out of events which undermined confidence in official news, political slogans, the Nazi party, its national leaders, and, eventually, Adolf Hitler himself. It was in the mud of the Eastern Front and the rubble of the German cities that German society was Nazified and brutalized in its moral values as never before. It was only now that the apocalyptic predictions—the ‘everything or nothing’ alternatives—of Nazi rhetoric began to fit events and be taken deadly seriously by large sections of the population. Precisely as the Nazi regime became less popular, so elements of its moral and racial framework seeped into popular consciousness, as people waited for air raid sirens and news of casualties from the front.

This may not have been the world Nazi leaders had wanted to create. They no more wanted to have Slavic ‘sub-humans’ living and working in Germany than they desired that German cities be razed. But it was a world almost ideally suited to imprinting a Nazi mindset through the texture of daily living, through the mixture of public slogans and private desires, of family stratagems and official regulations. And it was in the new apocalyptic world of the German cities—the very terrain on which Nazism had been weakest in the 1930s—that the casual brutality Nazism had encouraged against the ‘racially inferior’ would take on mass proportions.

This did not stop the hollowing out of society from within, the loosening of bonds of solidarity and trust, which would make Germans in defeat predominantly preoccupied with their own problems. Such hatreds were part and parcel of this process. Hating Jews and Russian slave workers did not bring respite from bombing or escalating military losses. By the last stages of the war, they were no more than an ersatz for an enemy who could no longer be reached. We need to think about their role here because German city-dwellers were not living in a mono-cultural society. They were not unin-
formed about the mass murder of the Jews and they were not unconcerned about the war in the East, with its starvation and ‘scorched earth’ policies towards Soviet civilians.

We live in a culture saturated with redemptive messages about suffering. Whether it is the history of black slavery in the United States, or survivors of the Holocaust, the Hollywood version of history invites us to see ourselves in the undeserved sufferings of others. When we do so we all too instinctively impute our feelings and moral values to them. It is much harder to recreate their emotions and ways of seeing things. If we really want to understand the historical dimensions of suffering, then we should avoid facile ideas of innocence, martyrdom, and redemption and look terror and pain, grief and rage in the face. Jörg Friedrich has done half of this, but precisely because he reduces his focus only to the bombing itself, his image is a half-image which turns suffering into pathos.

If there is a contemporary message here, then it is that even in those circumstances when air power can be strategically decisive—as atomic bombs forced Japan to capitulate in August 1945—it is not possible to bomb a population into love and virtue. Quite the opposite.

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retaliation definition: 1. the act of hurting someone or doing something harmful to someone because they have done or said... Learn more.

In particular, one might wish to question the move from threat-issuance to threat-execution via the use of an automatic retaliation device. From the Cambridge English Corpus. There was no electoral retaliation at the congressional level either. From the Cambridge English Corpus. Optimal tariffs are difficult to implement in practice, given the possibility of retaliation and the inefficiencies in disbursing the collected tariffs. From the Cambridge English Corpus. Even if the plaintiff state retaliates at the end of the dispute, the effects of retaliation will most likely fall on other industri... Sri Lankan officials said the Easter Sunday attacks that killed at least 321 people were retaliation for the recent Christchurch mosque attacks in New Zealand. Sri Lanka bombings were retaliation for Christchurch shooting, defense minister says. Extremist group named National Thawheed Jamaath carried out Sunday’s terror attacks in response to terror attacks in Christchurch,” the official said. Sri Lanka bombings were revenge for New Zealand terror attacks, official says. April 23, 2019 02:37. Breaking News Emails. Get breaking news alerts and special reports. The news and stories that matter, delivered weekday mornings. SUBSCRIBE. April 23, 2019, 11:08 AM UTC / Updated April 23, 2019, 1:18 PM UTC. By Sanjeev Laxman and Ben Kesslen.