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A litmus test for the correct stance on Nazi fascism and German nationalism:

Why the Bombing of Dresden in 1945 Was Right

Every year on February 13, there is a “commemoration” ritual marking the bombing of Germany by the air forces of the anti-Nazi Allies, and in particular the bombing of Dresden in February 1945. In addition to the “official” rituals featuring a human chain, over 1,000 Nazis (protected by more than 2,000 police officers) marched through Dresden this year, facing off against over 3,000 demonstrators who sought to prevent the march. The Nazis speak of the “bombing holocaust.” One banner reads: “Yesterday Dresden – today Gaza.” There is indeed ONE important connection here: Anyone who today fundamentally opposes the bombing of Hamas positions because civilians are also affected has no problem “fundamentally” opposing the bombing of Germany or Dresden. After all, civilians were affected by that as well. Regardless of all the nuances that certainly deserve consideration: Here lies a common root of the revisionist propaganda against the war waged by the anti-Nazi coalition and today’s anti-Israel propaganda, which exerts its influence even within the ranks of sincere anti-fascist forces.

The traditional Berlin parties, along with AfD-aligned groups, essentially “argue” in a manner similar to the Nazis, even if they use different rhetoric: The entirely justified and necessary bombing of Nazi Germany’s cities during World War II is slandered as an alleged war crime.

For all these reasons, it seems necessary to refute this web of lies as comprehensively as possible through reasoned argument and to clarify why the bombing of major German cities during World War II was justified.

I. Good Reasons for the Bombing of Dresden

It is no coincidence that the bombing of Dresden is the primary issue used to “indict” the war waged by the states of the Anti-Hitler Coalition against Nazi Germany as a war crime. For this complex of issues brings together fundamental and complicated questions.

Fundamental clarity regarding German imperialism, Nazi fascism, and the course of World War II, as well as the specific characteristics and problems of the anti-Hitler coalition, is a prerequisite for combating the aggressive disinformation campaigns of the German imperialists without yielding or backing down. This is a prerequisite for

Problems should not be simplistically oversimplified, nor should simple questions be unduly complicated.

On the history of the issue “Dresden”

In order to take a well-informed stance on the key issues—the bombing of Dresden, the Allied air war against Nazi Germany in general, and the objective of the Anti-Hitler Coalition to occupy Germany in order to crush Nazi fascism—it is first necessary to examine the **history of these questions**. Since the beginning of the air raids on Germany, and particularly in the final years and months of the war, Goebbels had placed these questions at the center of Nazi propaganda. This was demonstrably done with the aim of binding to the Nazi state and the Nazi Wehrmacht precisely those who no longer truly believed in Nazi ideology or in “Germany’s victory.”

Goebbels’ propaganda machine was well-oiled and enjoyed tremendous success, particularly among those who held no important positions within the Nazi apparatus. This was most strikingly evident in the final weeks and days of the war. Due to the unprecedented scale of reactionary incitement, obstinacy, and moral bankruptcy in world history, **the vast majority of the German population was unable to end the war on its own initiative and overthrow the Nazi leadership**. Since May 8, 1945, the topic of the “bombing of Dresden” has been nurtured and perpetuated without any real interruption to this day. An analysis of the articles and books on this subject shows that—with very few exceptions—they not only follow in Goebbels’s tradition by spreading lies about the bombing of Dresden itself and the circumstances that led to it,

but instead directly attack the Allies’ air war as “barbaric.” In doing so, one central goal is pursued above all: With the “but the others did it too” ideology, the legitimacy of the war of liberation waged by the states of the anti-Nazi coalition is disputed altogether. The criminal and murderous war efforts of the Nazi army, particularly in the final months of the war, are thus

effectively defended and justified. Germany is portrayed as a “victim” of an alleged “attack” by the Allies aimed at killing as many Germans as possible. It is also telling that virtually no one 56,000 members of the British and American bomber crews who were shot down and murdered by the Nazis.

The fact that the majority of the German population “stuck to” the Nazi propaganda line literally until the very last minute of the war is meant to be glossed over or even justified.

It is therefore no coincidence that David Irving, the leading “historian” of internationally active Nazis to this day, published three books on Dresden and the air war for the German market in the 1960s and 1970s and denounced the bombing of Dresden as a “war crime.” He did this even before he revealed to the global public the existence of the Nazi extermination camps as “Auschwitz lie.” First remaining silent about Auschwitz and then speaking out all the more loudly about Dresden—that was Irving’s tactic, even before he began to adopt Nazi positions more openly and directly.

Starting Point: Understanding the Just Nature of the Allies’ War Against Nazi Fascism

The starting point for a calm, convincing explanation and justification is a fundamental understanding that the peoples of invaded countries—who are being or are to be plundered and enslaved—**have the right to defend themselves, the right to wage a war of liberation**, a war that is entirely justified, indeed just.

This was precisely the case when Nazi-fascist German imperialism invaded numerous countries during World War II, plundered them, deprived the people living there of their rights and enslaved them, and committed its unimaginable crimes there. It was above all the socialist USSR that

a war of liberation was waged. In response, the anti-Hitler coalition of the USSR, Britain, and the United States was formed. In response, resistance forces and emerging liberation armies in the invaded countries took up the armed struggle. These were certainly not a unified force. But they waged a just war against the criminal war of the Nazi-fascists, for their expulsion and the destruction of Nazi-fascism. Understanding this is the very first and still relatively simple step as a prerequisite for understanding the second step:

Why the complete occupation of Germany by the Allied armies was necessary

It was clearly not enough simply to drive the Nazi Wehrmacht back into Germany and thereby liberate one’s own country from the Nazi murderers. Why was that insufficient—indeed, absurd? For the simple reason that the Nazis, with their military machinery, would have been able to regroup on German soil and resume the war with full force. That was the main reason for the broader war aims of the anti-Nazi coalition: a genuine end to the war based on **Germany’s unconditional surrender** following the defeat of the Nazi state and, above all, the Nazi army. This was the decisive, though not the only, reason why the states of the anti-Hitler coalition had to cross Germany’s borders and occupy Germany. This gave rise to the problem that Allied soldiers had to fight on “German soil.” It was also clear that this gave the Nazis a major opportunity to further bind the population to Nazi Germany, to “rename” their war of aggression against other peoples as a “war of defense”—a war that was now supposedly “just” anyway, given the offensive by the states of the Anti-Hitler Coalition.

Such a situation could only have been avoided if Stalin’s



“It took Hitler 12 years to do that”

In Berlin in 1945, KPD leaders aptly clarified what the cause and the blame for the destruction in Germany were. It was the Nazis!

hope in 1941 that, thanks to the revolutionary traditions within the proletarian movement in Germany, there would be an uprising of anti-Nazi forces in Germany—facilitated by the heavy blows dealt to the Nazis by partisans and Allied armies—would have been fulfilled.¹ It became clear, however, that such an uprising was not to be expected (even in prisoner-of-war camps, it became apparent that the majority of the much-cited “ordinary German soldiers”—saturated with Nazi ideology—were not prepared to stand up against the Nazis, let alone actively fight the Nazi criminals). The only realistic goal for ending the war and liberating Europe and Germany from Nazi fascism was the prospect of **the complete occupation of Germany by the regular armies of the states of the anti-Hitler coalition** as a fundamental condition for the complete surrender of Nazi Germany.

The occupation of Germany was also a crucial prerequisite for implementing the program agreed upon in February 1945 at the Crimea Conference between the three Allied powers—the USSR, the United States, and the United Kingdom:

Complete demilitarization and denazification of Germany to prevent the resurgence of German militarism.²

¹ See Stalin: The 24th Anniversary of the October Revolution, November 6, 1941, Stalin’s Collected Works, Vol. 14, pp. 255–256.

² See “The Yalta Declaration,” report on the Crimea Conference, February 3–11, 1945, in: The Potsdam Agreement, Appendix: The Documents of Tehran and Yalta, Offenbach 2001, p. 40ff.

Primary: The military reasons for the bombings in Germany

The most compelling reasons for the Allied air war were, above all, **clear military necessities**.

The cities were the crucial centers of Nazi war production. There were the factories that produced tanks, aircraft, trains, trucks, and other indispensable resources for the Nazi war effort. The cities were also logistical hubs for the transport of military equipment and soldiers. And they served as central administrative centers for the entire Nazi war machine.

In response to their military defeats and the advance of the Allied armies, the Nazis—especially in the final phase of the war—adopted the **tactic of “transforming major cities into fortresses,”** which were to be defended by any means necessary. A proclamation by the High Command of the Nazi Wehrmacht (OKW) dated April 12, 1945, states:

“Cities are located at transportation hubs; they must therefore be defended and held to the utmost.”³

The Allies had to respond to this without fail. The goal was to secure supplies and infrastructure as well as industry

to force the evacuation of the civilian population, to disrupt the Nazi extermination machinery, and ultimately to be able to occupy Germany with as few losses as possible.

The military capabilities available to the Nazis on the front lines were significantly weakened by the bombing of cities. Due to the Allied bombing of German cities, the Nazi state was forced to create a technically sophisticated air surveillance and defense system. This not only deprived German ground troops on the front lines of weapons and equipment. It also drastically reduced the number of aircraft available for attacks on all fronts, and particularly in the Soviet Union.

Moreover, the need to defend against Allied bombing tied up not only a large number of soldiers. The Allied air war also tied up a portion of Germany’s scarce labor force: in 1944, an estimated two million Germans were engaged in air defense, the reconstruction of bombed-out factories, and, more generally, the cleanup of the destruction.

Bombing as a means to undermine the Nazi regime’s support among parts of the population

The reasons for such an air war were by no means based **solely** on “purely military” considerations, although these considerations were paramount. It was also important to that the Nazis were megalomaniacal liars.

The bombing of major cities was a new tactic in warfare, introduced by the Nazis with the bombing of Guernica, Rotterdam, Warsaw, Coventry, and others. Following these bombings, the Nazi leadership had boastfully declared that “no bomb would ever strike German cities.” At the height of their power, the Nazis believed they were “invincible.”

One of the objectives of the anti-Nazi coalition’s warfare was precisely to use the air war to irrefutably **shatter the myth of the “invincibility”** of the German Air Force and, bomb by bomb, to **destroy** the belief in the “infallibility” of the Nazi leaders, in order to increasingly break the bond between the majority of the German population and a leadership that was obviously

...could not keep its “protection” promises. The bombing of major German cities had a significant impact in this regard and was quite successful in demoralizing the Nazis’ direct supporters. This is confirmed by internal Nazi reports. For example, following the bombing of Hamburg in 1943, the SS “Security Service” reported:

“The fact that one major city after another is being razed to the ground weighs on all our fellow citizens like a nightmare and contributes significantly to reinforcing the feeling of insecurity and hopelessness.”⁴

This was especially true for the vast majority of people for whom categories such as

“Guilt over Guernica” and “moral responsibility” for concentration and extermination camps simply fell on deaf ears. This majority, raised on the philosophy that “might makes right” and having wholeheartedly embraced it, could not distance themselves from the Nazi leadership simply because they realized that the Nazis had started a criminal war. This was only possible once it became clear that this war could not be won with Hitler and his people, that the “stronger” ones were in fact the others, the Allied armies. That was the reality; that was the state of mind of the majority of the German population.

Allied appeals to the population in Germany

It is to the credit of the nations and armies of the Anti-Hitler Coalition that they made such great efforts to repeatedly inform the German population of the obvious fact that major cities, as logistical and military hubs, had long since become military battlefields. They tirelessly explained, time and again, that the German population must finally leave the major cities.



British leaflet to the German population

3 Quoted from: Götz Bergander: Dresden in the Air War – Background, Destruction, Consequences, Würzburg 1998, p. 249

4 Report of the SD dated July 29, 1943, Borberach, Munich 1968, “Reports from the Reich,” quoted from: Götz Bergander, Dresden in the Air War, Cologne 1977, p. 100

For example, the leaflet “To the Civilian Population of the German War Zones” dated June 26, 1943, contains the British government’s call to leave the cities, as these were war zones due to the presence of war industries there:

“It is our firm resolve to destroy these industries, and we possess the means to carry out this resolve. (...) We will continue and intensify these attacks until all war production in the Rhineland-Westphalian industrial region has been completely paralyzed and its resumption rendered impossible.”

Until this goal is achieved, the Rhineland-Westphalian industrial region constitutes a theater of war. Any civilian present in this theater of war is, of course, just as likely to lose their life as any civilian who is present on a battlefield without authorization. (...) As for women and children, they have no place on a battlefield. As for the workers in the armaments factories, they are in the position of

soldiers of an army whose defenses have collapsed and whose destruction is inevitable. Soldiers in such a situation may cease fighting without dishonor.”⁵

There were millions of leaflets and daily radio broadcasts in German from Radio Moscow and the BBC stating that the attacks were directed against Nazi Germany and were part of the struggle for unconditional surrender and the destruction of Nazi power.

Results of the Allied Bombings

What, then, were the results of the Allied air campaign, including the bombing of Dresden?

- a) Significant German military forces, particularly aircraft, were tied down in the bombed cities instead of being deployed at the front.
- b) Industry and housing for industrial workers were destroyed on a massive scale. Supplies and supply routes, as well as Nazi administrative headquarters, were largely destroyed.

- c) Even some Nazi supporters came to realize, through the ongoing air war on German territory, that this war was lost and that the Allies were clearly more powerful.

German boasts of the “destruction of the Soviet Union and England” had given way to the defensive Nazi lamentations over the “destruction of Germany.”

Overall, the bombings carried out by the U.S. and British air forces—which were welcomed by the socialist Soviet Union—made a significant contribution to winning the war against Nazi fascism and, in doing so, shortened the time it took to completely crush Nazi fascism, reduce the number of Allied casualties, and, above all, shorten the period during which the Nazis were able to continue committing their crimes.

II. Key Points of Historical Revisionism: The Threefold Credo of the “Dresden” Ideologists

Based on these considerations, we can and must address the kind of “arguments” that have been put forward against the bombing of Dresden since 1945, without interruption and with the same lack of substance, over and over again. In this context, it is by no means insignificant that all those who cite very specific “Dresden reasons” are by no means merely opposed to the bombing of Dresden in order to demand a more thorough destruction of Berlin or Hamburg instead. While this might be conceivable in the abstract, it does not exist in reality. **All the “Dresden reasons” serve only as a pretext to label the air war—indeed, Allied warfare in general—as “unjust,” or even as alleged “war crime.”**

Is it worth refuting these “Dresden arguments” in detail? Yes, in order to help those who are wavering or uncertain to see through the entire demagogic chain of propaganda against the states of the anti-Hitler coalition.

1. Regarding the lies: “Dresden had no military significance anyway; the war had already been decided”

So would the bombing have been justified two years earlier? Is that what is being implied? Hardly. That the war was already “decided” is a half-truth. On the one hand, it is true since the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943; on the other hand, it is not.

From 1941 to 1944, the Nazis had nearly tripled their war production, drawing on the economic resources of the countries they occupied. They increasingly adapted their war production to the worsening conditions by moving production underground and feverishly developing new dangerous weapons such as the V1 and V2.

Above all, however, despite the increasing retreats, massive battles were still raging. The Nazis launched counteroffensives in some areas, such as in the Ardennes. V1 and V2 rocket attacks rained down relentlessly on Antwerp, Paris, London, and southern England, claiming tens of thousands of lives. The losses suffered by the Red Army in particular during the final months of World War II

⁵ Quoted from: Rolf-Dieter Müller: Der Bombenkrieg 1939-1945, Berlin 2004, p. 153ff.

were still high. In the battles for Berlin in 1945 alone, the Red Army suffered a total of 300,000 dead and wounded in the final weeks of the war. All of this happened even though the war was supposedly “long since decided.” It is true that the Allies were increasingly on the offensive militarily. Yet “decided” remained hypothetical until the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany was actually enforced.

“Dresden, no military significance”? The Nazis saw it differently, having systematically turned Dresden into a “fortress.” And the Allies saw it differently as well, having clearly stated that Dresden was an important Nazi stronghold.

A Soviet statement from 1945 explained that Dresden

“was an armory of Germany, a powder keg, a source of supplies providing the material for the destruction of peace-loving peoples.”⁶

An order from the High Command of the Red Army in 1945 states:

“After two days of heavy fighting, the soldiers of the 1st Ukrainian Front broke the enemy’s resistance and captured the city of Dresden—a major defensive stronghold in Saxony—today, May 8.”⁷

A 1945 document from the British Royal Air Force states:

“Dresden, Germany’s seventh-largest city (...) has developed into an industrial center of paramount importance and, like any other major city with a multitude of telephone and rail connections, is of the utmost value for controlling the defense of that section of the front now threatened by Marshal Konev’s breakthrough. The attack (on Dresden, Ed.) is intended to strike the enemy where it will be felt most acutely.”⁸

Dresden was a railway and administrative center. After Berlin, Dresden was

and Leipzig, the largest city in the “Eastern Front” region, a garrison town where large military units were concentrated. By 1944, the majority of the factories in Dresden that had previously manufactured consumer goods and luxury items had been almost entirely converted to arms production.

Dresden was thus undoubtedly one of the most important Nazi strongholds and by no means a so-called “open city,” as the Nazis repeatedly claimed—and continue to claim—in an attempt to downplay the situation.

Thus, the general population of Dresden could not, in fact, be described as a “civilian population” removed from the hostilities. Rather, it was very deeply involved in Nazi war production and the conduct of the war on the “home front” (a term coined by the Nazis themselves).

Based on these facts, it must be understood that at the time of the bombing of Dresden in February 1945, the Red Army was engaged in combat with Nazi troops just 110 km away. Supplies for the “Eastern Front” were organized primarily through Dresden; Dresden served as a crucial coordination center, particularly for countering the Red Army’s advance.

In October 1944, dozens of military trains passed through Dresden-Neustadt every day on average. These transported tens of thousands of soldiers daily from west to east to fight against the advancing Red Army. After the war, a former American prisoner of war who was in Dresden at the time reported:

“On the evening before the RAF and USAAF⁹ attacks on the 13th and 14, we were shunted into the Dresden marshalling yard, where German troops and equipment rolled in and out of Dresden for nearly twelve hours. I saw with my own eyes that Dresden was an armed camp: thousands of German soldiers, tanks, and artillery, and freight trains kilometers long, loaded with supplies—German logistics

to the East, for the fight against the Russians.”¹⁰

2. Pseudo-humanitarian hypocrisy: “The poor German refugees in Dresden!”

So they say. The problem, however, was that while the refugee movement did indeed benefit the Red Army’s advance, the detention, administrative support, and military conscription of the refugees served only to stabilize the collapsing Nazi regime. It was the tragedy of this phase of the war that the refugees, in every respect, trusted the Nazis even more than the Allies, who had massively and clearly demanded the evacuation of the major cities. Nor should it be forgotten that a not- , but considerable portion of these “Refugees” were Nazi criminals who rightly feared punishment by the Red Army.

3. Unbearable whining: “the destroyed city of culture,” “Dresden, the jewel of humanity”

Perhaps most unbearable is the whining about the “destroyed city of culture” with its “Frauenkirche” (which was rebuilt at a cost of tens of millions) and so on. The Nazis had already resorted to this rhetoric immediately after the bombing of Dresden. After Nazi Germany’s defeat, this invocation was a staple of all “Dresden” literature in the Federal Republic, just as it was in books, brochures, and speeches in the GDR, as will be shown.

It was war. It’s that simple. And anyone who did not want the destruction of culture had to dare to rise up against the Nazi regime, instead of participating in the Nazi war until the very end!

These three key tenets of historical revisionism are not the only pseudo-arguments, but they are quite pervasive and significant. It can be demonstrated how they are linked to Va-

6 “Scum of humanity,” in: Daily Newspaper for the German Population, June 2, 1945, quoted from Götz Bergander: *Dresden in the Air War – Prehistory, Destruction, Consequences*, Würzburg 1998, p. 294

7 Quoted from: *Sächsisches Zeitung*, May 3–4, 1975

8 From an internal Royal Air Force memorandum, 1945, Review of the work of Int. I

9 RAF is the abbreviation for Royal Air Force, USAAF for USA Air Force.

10 Quoted from: Frederick Taylor: *Dresden*, Tuesday, February 13, 1945, Munich 2004, p. 194 ff. “From

Dresden, or via Dresden, deportations of Jewish people to the extermination camps also took place. The Dresden Department 33 was responsible for the transports to Theresienstadt as well as the transports from there to the extermination camps. See Frederick Taylor: *Dresden*, Tuesday, February 13, 1945, Munich 2004, p. 193ff.

Variations stemming from Nazi propaganda, which found an echo in the SED with modifications reflecting German nationalism. And it becomes apparent, as in the FRG,

documented here since 1995, key tenets of historical revisionism continue to be employed—with this or that variation—

on the topic of “Dresden.”

III. Underestimated Nazi Agitation: The Nazis’ Propaganda Offensive Following the Bombing of Dresden and Its Impact Before and After 1945

The Nazi campaign surrounding the bombing of Dresden on February 14–15, 1945, reveals the largely underestimated danger, sophistication, and effectiveness of Nazi propaganda. Domestically, the primary aim was to incite and mobilize the population for the Nazis’ “total war” through a broad-based “Now more than ever” propaganda campaign. Internationally, the goal was to stir up sentiment against the Allies’ war—

against Germany in favor of Nazi rule.¹¹ As early as February 15, the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda drafted a detailed commentary on the air raid on Dresden. This was distributed worldwide that very afternoon by the Nazi German News Bureau

widely distributed and broadcast by . In the days that followed, the German diplomatic missions in neutral countries were sent the text that set out the guidelines for the Nazi agitation



Nazi propaganda sheet “Der Freiheitskampf” of February 16, 1945

Accordingly, an article titled “The Cultural Crime Against Dresden” appeared in the *Völkischer Beobachter* on February 16. Also on February 16, the front page of the newspaper “Der Freiheitskampf – Dresdner Zeitung” featured an editorial with the headline: “Despite Terror: We Remain Strong.” With

—that is, the socialist Soviet Union—were allegedly behind these “extermination plans.”¹²

- The Nazi leadership thus stoked fears of the alleged inhumanity of the anti-Nazi coalition in order to continue the war at all costs and under any circumstances.
- At the same time, the bombings of the “cultural city of Dresden” were portrayed as “crimes against Europe.” The lie was spread that Dresden and Chemnitz had been “wiped out.”
- Dresden’s industry was said to be of no significance to the war, and the military railway facilities were claimed not to be located in the city center. Dresden was portrayed as a city of art, irrelevant to the war effort.

this media offensive in Germany and abroad, a series of lies and distortions—including inflammatory rhetoric—were to be established and disseminated:

- The bombings were portrayed as part of a long-prepared and systematic campaign for the “destruction of the German people,” to which Germany had allegedly reacted with justified “self-defense”—that is, with murderous attacks and genocide. In keeping with Nazi anti-Semitism and anti-communism, Goebbels led the propaganda campaign claiming that behind these “extermination plans” lay the so-called “the Jew” and his henchmen, the “Bolsheviks,”

The special role of Sparing’s article: “The Death of Dresden” (“Das Reich,” March 4, 1945)

The weekly newspaper “Das Reich” was published from 1940 to 1945 and, with a circulation of up to 1.4 million copies, was one of the most successful and widely read Nazi publications. Its reach was even greater than its circulation, as, for example, in army units, several soldiers would read a single copy together.



Nazi editorial by Sparing in “Das Reich” from March 4, 1945

¹¹ Specific information in this section is taken from: Hesse, Wolfgang / Neutzer, Matthias / Reinhard, Oliver: The Red Glow – Dresden und der Bombenkrieg, Dresden 2005, p. 124ff.

¹² See, among others, “Das Reich,” Jan. 21, 1945, and similarly on Feb. 28, 1945, in a public speech; see: Herf, Jeffrey: The Jewish Enemy, Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust, Harvard University Press 2008, pp. 254–255 and 259–260).

With the appearance of impartial seriousness and seemingly high informational content, some issues of “Das Reich” was also intended to influence international public opinion, with its media aimed specifically at the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. Approximately 250,000 copies were distributed abroad. Many of the authors were not members of the NSDAP. Many of them went on to hold important positions in various fields in the Federal Republic of Germany and were frequently awarded high honors. Examples include Theodor Heuss, Max Planck, Elisabeth Noelle, Werner Höfer, and Benno von Wiese, to name just a few.

After the bombing of Dresden on February 13, 1945, the Nazis deliberately published a central, demagogic, and inflammatory article titled “The Death of Dresden – A Beacon of Resistance” by Rudolf Sparing in this publication on March 4, 1945. In doing so, the Nazis spread demagogic and mendacious narratives that have had a far-reaching impact to this day.

At the forefront of his entire web of lies regarding Dresden, the author makes the highly demagogic claim that “before and after 1933,” the states waging war against Germany “deliberately thwarted the German proposals to abolish aerial bombardment,” calculating from the outset to rely on devastating bombings of cities and their civilian populations, such as Dresden, in their conduct of the war.

According to Sparing, three factors would have further distinguished the bombing of Dresden from the other “terror bombings” of German cities.¹³

1. The alleged complete destruction of a city, an invaluable “European cultural treasure.”

The air raids on Dresden are said to have “the most radical destruction of a large contiguous urban area”

and, relative to the number of inhabitants and the number of attacks, caused by far the heaviest loss of life. It must be acknowledged “that the Dresden catastrophe is unprecedented.” Dresden was allegedly a “destroyed city” as a result of the bombing raids. The bombing of Dresden meant: “A city skyline of perfect harmony has been erased from the European sky.” What had been destroyed was a “common heritage of the West.”

2. The air raid on Dresden was a “coldly calculated plan of murder and destruction.”

Sparing claims that the bombing raids on Dresden had no military purpose. They were aimed solely at killing as many people as possible who were in Dresden at that time. The term “mass murder of Dresden” is used.

- “Terror bombings of German residential centers”;
- Allied aircraft “wreaked havoc among the crowds on the open spaces (in Dresden, Ed.) with high-explosive bombs and onboard weapons”;
- Allied aircraft “laid a new ring of destruction around the city, following the belt where the main mass of homeless people streaming radially toward the outskirts and the surrounding area was presumed to be”;
- Then, it is claimed, Allied aircraft bombed “the villages of the wider Elbe Valley and sought their targets where the long columns of the bombed-out were heading for new homes.”

3. The alleged goal of the Allies: “the annihilation of the German people,” against which resistance must be offered by all means.

The Allies’ aim in all this was “to force capitulation through mass murder,” so that then on

“German people” that “the death sentence can be carried out.” “Against this threat, there is no other way out than that of fighting resistance.” As a rallying cry, Sparing points to “the unique phenomenon of German resilience.”

Abroad, the Nazis sometimes achieved exactly the intended effect with accounts such as the one in Sparing’s article in **Das Reich**. The article was also reprinted in full in the foreign press, e.g., the *Toronto Daily Star*.

Above all, however, the impact of Sparing’s article is clearly evident in Germany after 1945. It is even quoted directly in the first standard hate book published after 1945, Axel Rodenberger’s “Der Tod von Dresden,” which appeared in eight editions between 1951 and 1963 and was reprinted again in 1995 by Ullstein Verlag. It even has the same title as Sparing’s Nazi article and quotes from it. It reads:

“One must acknowledge as sensible and correct much of what was written here in the weekly newspaper ‘Das Reich’ will have to be recognized as sensible and correct.”¹⁴

* * *

What, then, was the immediate impact of this Nazi propaganda offensive abroad?

At a press conference immediately following the air raids of February 14–15, 1945, the Nazis spread the lie that 200,000 people had allegedly been killed in the air raids (while the internal police report cited a figure of 25,000).

On February 16, the first detailed reports appeared in the Swedish press, which essentially followed the Nazis’ false narrative. The Berlin correspondent for the Stockholm-based “Dagens Nyheter” ran the headline: “Inferno in Dresden – Unprecedented Death Toll.”¹⁵ And the Nazis exploited this. With demagogic cunning, the Nazi press—for example, in German newspapers—quoted figures from Swedish media claiming that 200,000 people had reportedly lost their lives in Dresden

A correspondent’s report from Sweden headlined “Dresden Burned to Ashes” and, citing the Stockholm newspaper “Expressen,” described the alleged complete destruction of the city using the English terms “atomized” and “pulverized.”

¹³ The quotations in the following list, numbered 1–3, are taken from Sparing: “The Death of Dresden” in “Das Reich” of March 4, 1945.

¹⁴ A. Rodenberger: *The Death of Dresden: An Account of a City’s Demise in Eyewitness Accounts*, Berlin/Frankfurt 1995, p. 158

¹⁵ On February 25, 1945, the Swedish newspaper “Svenska Dagbladet” published an article with the headline

Headline: “Nearly 200,000 victims in the attack on Dresden.” The text states that the death toll is “closer to 200,000 than 100,000.” The reports from Sweden immediately attracted worldwide attention. As early as February 16, 1945, the “New York Times” relayed the Swedish “reports” and quoted from “Stockholms Tidningen”: “Never before in this war has a city been so devastated in a single night.” The following day, the “Toronto Daily” ran the headline

came to “substantiate” figures that had in fact been fabricated by the Nazis themselves. The article from Svenska Dagbladet dated February 25, 1945

, for example, was cited by the Foreign Office in a telegram dated March 8, 1945. In it, the Foreign Office instructed the diplomatic mission in Bern to quote precisely the phrase “rather 200,000 than 100,000 fatalities” in communications regarding Dresden.

By the end of March 1945, the Nazis were still exploiting Gerhart Hauptmann. Dresden as the so-called greatest humanitarian catastrophe—that was the apt opening line of Hauptmann’s statement on the bombing of Dresden, which he continued to quote even after 1945 and which remains “famous” to this day: “Whoever

has forgotten how to weep will learn it again with the destruction of Dresden.” Hauptmann’s text was read on Nazi radio on March 29, 1945, and appeared in Germany’s major newspapers in the days that followed. On April 9, the German Press Service published “bitter indictment” by Gerhart Hauptmann. It read:

“Even if the European conscience, to which a world-famous figure like Gerhart Hauptmann would otherwise appeal, no longer exists, the voice of the old poet will nevertheless rouse his own people and draw the attention of foreigners to this crime against Western culture. People will feel ashamed.”

The Nazi portrayal of the air raids on Dresden as a super-crime—allegedly unprecedented

and surpassing all others, had and has two main functions: **First**, it was intended to make even the most absurd detail appear credible. **Second**, it was also about the postwar perspective: the more hopeless the situation of Nazi Germany became, the more emphatic the reference to the Allied bombings was to be. With their mendacious descriptions of atrocities, the Nazi leadership certainly also sought to secure better starting conditions for the period after the war’s end—that is, after their defeat—by pointing out:

“But the others did it too...”

IV. Exemplary Positions of the SED from 1948 Onward: German Nationalism

Immediately after May 8, 1945, the KPD held entirely correct positions on the question of the anti-Nazi coalition’s war as well as on the state of consciousness of the German population.

In the KPD Central Committee’s appeal from June 1945, the following very accurate statement regarding the anti-Hitler coalition is made:

“But on the side of the United Nations, with the Soviet Union, England, and the United States at the forefront, stood the cause of justice, freedom, and progress. Through their sacrifices, the Red Army and the armies of its allies saved the cause of humanity from Hitler’s barbarism. They crushed Hitler’s army, shattered Hitler’s state...”¹⁶

On the question of the German population’s complicity in Nazi crimes, it is stated:

“...every German must feel a burning sense of awareness and shame that the German people bear a significant share of the guilt and responsibility for the war and its consequences.”¹⁷

As a result of the lack of principles inherent in revisionism and opportunism, the programmatically correct statements in the KPD’s appeal of June 11, 1945, regarding the just war of the anti-Hitler coalition and the complicity of the German masses in Nazi crimes were relatively quickly set aside. What came to the fore was: nationalistic pandering to the majority of the proletarian class and other working people instead of enlightenment and a life-and-death struggle, especially against “German ideology.”

The recognition of the actual state of consciousness among the broad working masses was accompanied by opportunistic consequences, so that even in the realm of the anti-Nazi democratic struggle, one concession after another was made in both content and wording in order to align with the devastating state of consciousness among the broad working masses.

This was carried out in a particularly blatant manner in the case of the bombing of Dresden.

1. Overview of some SED statements on Dresden, 1948–1950

February 13, 1948: *The bombing killed thousands, even though “the Nazi war had supposedly already come to an end.”*

A commentary in the “Sächsische Volkszeitung” of February 13, 1948, reads:

“Many thousands, mostly women, children, and the elderly, lost their lives in the barrage of bombs dropped by Anglo-American aircraft at a time when the Nazi war had already come to an end.”¹⁸

“Had already come to an end”?! That is simply false. Until the actual end of the war on May 8, there were still many heavy battles with numerous casualties on the side of the Allied armies.

September 22, 1948: “Senseless” Allied air raids “senselessly” against the “city of art and culture, Dresden”

On September 22, 1948, Max Seydewitz, then Prime Minister of Saxony, had opened the rebuilt Main Building of the State Theater with a ceremonial address. In it, he had indeed denounced the Nazi fascists, but then directed his criticism against the Allies as well:

16 “Deutsche Volkszeitung,” No. 1, June 13, 1945

17 Ibid. For a critical assessment of the entire appeal by the Central Committee of the KPD as well as the SED up to

1946 See: The Founding of the SED and Its Prehistory (1945–1946), published by Olga Benario and Herbert Baum, Offenbach 2000

18 Quoted from: Hesse, Wolfgang / Neutzer, Matthias / Reinhard, Oliver: The Red Glow – Dresden and the Bombing Campaign, Dresden 2005, p. 137

"But the massive bombing raids by the American air force were also senseless; in a single night ... they brought death and destruction to the city of art and culture, Dresden."¹⁹

February 13, 1949: "Just like Hitler," American policy was allegedly "unscrupulously willing to murder women and children"

On the anniversary in 1949, Kurt Liebermann, district chairman of the SED, delivered the keynote address. In it, he stated:

"Just like Hitler, American policy was ruthlessly prepared to murder women and children and burn entire cities to the ground, if only to inflict damage on Soviet or supposedly Soviet territory."²⁰

"Just like Hitler"—this is a barely comprehensible equation of the murderous aggression of Nazi fascism with the air raids carried out by the U.S. and British armies to liberate the world from Nazi fascism. The justification that all this allegedly took place to "damage Soviet or supposedly Soviet territory" is completely absurd. Most British and American bombings targeted cities that were, at the time, expected to be occupied by the British and U.S. armies.

At this point, a clarification is in order:

Yes, there were contradictions between the armies of the imperialist countries—the United States and Britain—on the one hand, and the army of the socialist Soviet Union on the other. However, these contradictions did not stem from the Soviet Union criticizing Britain, for example, for fighting Germany too fiercely and brutally; on the contrary, they arose precisely because the fighting was too weak and ineffective.

On the side of the British and American imperialist states, it was not only the principles of imperialist rivalry against the imperialist great power of Germany that played a significant role in the more or less consistent pursuit of a policy directed against the Nazis. The immense moral pressure—perhaps difficult to imagine today, but clearly present at the time—of the

Extreme historical revisionism at the "Rondell im Ehrenhain" in Dresden: Dresden in the same category as Auschwitz, Leningrad, Warsaw...

At the Heidefriedhof cemetery in Dresden there is a rotunda purportedly commemorating the fight against "war and fascism," which was erected in this form in 1965 by the SED/GDR revisionists and maintained in this state after the incorporation of the GDR. But what does it actually represent?

Seven of the 14 sandstone columns arranged in a circle bear the names of Nazi extermination camps and concentration camps: Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen, and Theresienstadt. The destruction caused by the Nazi Wehrmacht's acts of war is symbolized by Coventry, Leningrad, Rotterdam, and Warsaw. Lidice and Oradour stand for massacres of the civilian population.

And then there is another sandstone column there with the inscription: Dresden. The bombing of Dresden by the armies of the anti-Nazi coalition, aimed at defeating Nazi Germany, is thus placed on the same level as the murderous war crimes of the Nazi army, the Nazi massacres in France and Czechoslovakia, and even the Nazi concentration camps and extermination camps.

It is clear that it is not far from such historical revisionism to open Nazi agitation about the "bombing holocaust."

The population of the "home" countries, in light of the global crimes of Nazi fascism, had in a certain sense an even more fundamental significance.

Under pressure from world public opinion, the growing authority of the socialist Soviet Union—which was bearing the brunt of the war against Nazi Germany—and pressure from their own populations, the Western Allies were increasingly compelled to assist the socialist Soviet Union (their mortal class enemy), to supply weapons, to finally open the "second front" in the West, and to vigorously carry out the agreed-upon bombings of Nazi Germany (the scope of which had already been and had to be precisely coordinated to avoid conflict with the advancing Red Army).

The bombing of major German cities took place with the agreement of all the Allies, including the socialist Soviet Union. The documents clearly demonstrate this. (See the box on p. 11) **February 8, 1950:** As reported by the "Sächsische Zeitung" on February 8, 1950, the SED adopted the following slogan for the "Dresden Commemoration" in 1950:

"The Soviet Union did not bomb defenseless women and children."²¹

This is a peculiar, pseudo-left argument put forward by the SED revisionists

as an indictment of the bombing of cities in Germany by the U.S. and British armies (in the quote, this is further embellished with the demagogic claim that the Allied bombings of German cities specifically targeted "defenseless women and children").

Didn't the Soviet Air Force bomb any cities?

The following examples, which undoubtedly represent only a fraction of the Soviet air raids against targets in Nazi Germany, refute the lie that the Soviet Air Force did not attack any cities within the territory controlled by Nazi fascism. Immediately following Nazi Germany's invasion of the USSR, for example, on June 22 and 24, 1941, several dozen Soviet bombers bombed Königsberg and other cities. In August 1941, 81 Soviet sorties were flown against Berlin. In addition, cities in "East Prussia" was bombed. In 1942, attacks were carried out against targets in Berlin. On the night of January 19, 1945, Soviet bombers attacked Breslau, which was then located within the German Reich. On the night of April 26, 1945, Operation "Salut" concluded with a strike by 563 Soviet long-range bombers on key parts of Berlin's city center.²²

19 Quoted from: Ibid., p. 137

20 Quoted from: Ibid., p. 139

21 Sächsische Zeitung, February 8, 1950, quoted from:

Ibid., p. 140

22 These facts can be found in: Manfred Overesch, "Das III. Reich 1939–1945," Augsburg 1991, p.

186, pp. 510 ff. and p. 363. Olaf Groehler, "Kampf um die Luftherrschaft," Berlin 1988, p. 77, p. 153, and p. 327

February 13, 1950: “Brutal murder of a large portion of its inhabitants” In the “Sächsische Zeitung” of February 13, 1950, the Allied air raids are effectively equated with Nazi crimes:

August 24, 1950: *The German people had already experienced crimes like those committed by the U.S. in the Korean War “firsthand”*

“The destruction of Dresden, once one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, and the brutal murder of a large portion of its inhabitants—these are the calling cards of the profit-hungry, bloodthirsty Anglo-American imperialists.”²³

By characterizing the air raids on Dresden as the “brutal murder of a large portion of its inhabitants,” they effectively place them in the same category as the Nazi mass murders.

2. Dresden in the SED Central Committee

statement of August 24, 1950: “Against the carpet bombing by the U.S. barbarians in Korea”

Literally every line of reasoning in this statement is profoundly flawed, a concession to Nazi ideology, or even Nazi in nature. This will be demonstrated in more detail below in five steps.

On August 24, 1950, the SED published the Central Committee statement “Against

carpet bombing by the US barbarians in Korea.” It attempts to mobilize the German population in the former GDR using the specious nationalist trick of directly equating the bombing of Germany during the Nazi era with the bombing of Korea. This statement on the aggression of U.S. imperialism in Korea contains the following passage regarding the bombing of Dresden on December 13–14, 1945:

“The German population has felt the full brunt of these American carpet bombings. The destruction of Dresden at a time when the defeat of the Nazi regime had long been sealed, the destruction of large parts of Berlin’s city center, the destruction of working-class neighborhoods in many German cities

“These carpet bombings, while simultaneously sparing military-industrial facilities, are still all too vividly remembered.”²⁴

Point 1: The war, including the air war against Germany, was a just war, regardless of any secondary considerations on the part of the anti-Nazi coalition. The war the USA against Korea, including



Street exhibition in Dresden in February 1952 featuring the banner: “Yesterday Dresden—today Korea—tomorrow the whole world” and a model airplane with the inscription “USA Killer—Death to Dresden.” Above, one can see Roosevelt and Churchill pouring oil into the “Zwinger.”

air war was a profoundly unjust war.

The fact that a statement against the U.S. bombings in Korea asserts that the German population also experienced the effects of U.S. carpet bombing in Dresden in 1945 demonstrates the equating of an unjust war with a just one.

Point 2: The overwhelming majority of the Korean people, led by communist forces, had been waging a just struggle for many years—first in the anti-Japanese war and then in the struggle against U.S. imperialism—to free themselves from reactionary rule and imperialist domination and aggression. The overwhelming majority of the German people, by contrast, did not fight against the

The Nazi dictatorship did not seize every last opportunity for an uprising in Germany, at the very latest after the Battle of Stalingrad, but instead held its ground and supported the Nazi regime until literally the very last minute. Equating the two wars—and thus equating the stance taken by both in relation to the respective

current war is a complete departure from the truth and from scientific communism.

Point 3: The slogan of the “The destruction of Dresden” is that seemingly minor exaggeration that deserves special attention. First, it is untrue, because Dresden was largely destroyed, but not annihilated. Second, the implication here is that “not only the Nazis” “destroyed” it, but “the others” as well!

Point 4: The inserted clause “at a time when the defeat of the Nazi regime had long been sealed” is a blatant untruth. For the defeat was not sealed until May 8, 1945. Before in many cases, every house had to be fought for. Literally every meter cost the lives of a large number of Red Army soldiers. By creating the impression here that the US barbarians were carrying out a so-called “carpet bombing” of a supposedly defenseless Korea—which had already been defeated

To suggest that the enemy was simply trampled underfoot distorts the historical truth. The full historical truth is that one of the absurdities of Nazism was that, even after victory had become impossible, the Nazis continued to pursue a policy of scorched earth and mass executions—including of their own deserting soldiers—and were unwilling to surrender. Literally, unit by unit, the army had to be worn down, destroyed, captured, or forced to surrender immediately.

Point 5: There is mention here of the “destruction of working-class neighborhoods.” Here, the war against Nazi Germany is portrayed, so to speak, as “anti-worker.” This is just as absurd as or in light of

24 Documents of the SED, Volume III, Berlin 1952, p. 196

23 Sächsische Zeitung, Dresden, February 13, 1950, p. 1, quoted from: Oliver Reinhard/Matthias Neutzner/Wolfgang Hesse: Das Rote Leuchten – Dresden und der Bombenkrieg, Dresden 2005, p. 141

In support of the bombing of major German cities by Stalin and the

The leadership of the Soviet Union has on several occasions not only declared its approval of the bombing of major German cities, but also welcomed its expansion. This is clearly demonstrated by the following messages from Stalin to Churchill, which are printed below in chronological order.

Stalin wrote

- on January 19, 1943:

Thank you for the report on the **successful bombing of Berlin** last night of January 17. I wish the British Air Force continued success, especially in the bombing of Berlin.

- March 3, 1943:

I salute the British Air Force, which successfully bombed Berlin yesterday. **I regret that the Soviet Air Force, which is engaged in fighting the Germans at the front, cannot participate in the bombing raids on Berlin for the time being**

- March 15, 1943:

I have received your messages of March 6 and 13 informing me of the successful bombing of Essen, Stuttgart, Munich, and Nuremberg. **I extend my heartfelt greetings to the British Air Force, whose bombing raids have dealt heavy blows to the German industrial centers.** (...)

- April 7, 1943:

(...) **I welcome the intensified bombing of Essen, Berlin, Kiel, and other industrial centers in Germany.** Every strike by your air forces against these vital centers resonates deeply in the hearts of millions of people in our country.

- April 19, 1943:

I have received your message in which you ask for my consent to convey my congratulations on the bombing of Essen, Berlin, and other industrial centers in Germany to the British bomber squadrons. Naturally, I have no objections to your proposal and leave it to you to decide on this matter. **I am pleased that you intend to continue the bombing of German cities on an ever-increasing scale** (...)

- January 14, 1944:

Our armies have indeed achieved successes recently, but we still have a long way to go before we reach Berlin. Moreover, the Germans are now launching fairly strong counterattacks, especially in the area east of Vinnytsia. (...) **Consequently, you should not scale back the bombing of Berlin, but rather intensify it by all means possible.** (...)

(These messages are taken from: Correspondence between Stalin and Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt, and Truman, Berlin 1961. The quotations are from pages 107 to 148, as well as pages 230–231. All emphasis is ours)

to accuse church towers of an “anti-clerical” stance. The fact was that the bombing campaign against Germany targeted both industrial facilities and residential areas. Contrary to sweeping generalizations, significant industrial facilities were strategically

bombarded and destroyed on a massive scale²⁵ and, given the slogan about the alleged “destruction of Dresden,” a surprisingly large number of apartments were spared.

This statement by the Central Committee reveals fundamental errors on the part of the SED in raising the consciousness of the proletariat in the GDR

25 Frederick Taylor has documented in detail that between February 13 and 15, nearly 200 businesses in Dresden sustained damage, including “severe” damage in 136 cases. The hardest-hit were the Zeiss-Ikon facilities, which, with nearly 14,000 employees, were by far the largest company in Dresden. Several of these facilities were completely destroyed. Of the 14,000 employees, more than half were absent on average in February 1945 because they had perished in the bombing raids or failed to show up for work as they had to tend to their damaged homes and salvage their belongings. (See Frederick Taylor: Dresden, Tuesday, February 13, 1945, Munich 2004, pp. 392–394).

26 On February 10, 1967, the “Sächsische Zeitung,” which once again distinguished itself in a particularly reprehensible manner, equated the bombing of Dresden in February 1945—as part of the just anti-Nazi war—with the criminal U.S. bombings in Vietnam in the 1960s:

“What is happening in Vietnam today is, in essence, the same crimes that were committed against Dresden on February 13, 1945—genocide, terror, and mindless destruction.” (Sächsische Zeitung, February 10, 1967, quoted in: Oliver Reinhard/Matthias Neutzner/Wolfgang Hesse: Das Rote Leuchten – Dresden und der Bombenkrieg, Dresden 2005, p. 356)

in particular, a completely erroneous, pragmatic-opportunistic, and alarmingly German-nationalist stance regarding the participation of Anglo-American forces in the anti-Hitler coalition.²⁶

3. SED statements and Publications 1953–1955

May 31, 1953: Ulbricht’s Lie: “The Most Terrible Catastrophe of Our Homeland”

In his speech at the “laying of the foundation stone for the socialist reconstruction of Dresden’s city center,” Walter Ulbricht said:

“The campaign waged by the German imperialists ended with the annihilation of Hitler’s armies and the most terrible catastrophe to befall our homeland. It was American bombers that—after the defeat of Hitler’s fascism was already evident—barbarically destroyed beautiful Dresden.”²⁷

So the worst thing that Nazi fascism could have done to Germany, “our homeland,” would therefore be the “barbaric” destruction of Dresden by... the U.S. Air Force, which in reality waged war to liberate Germany from Nazi fascism.

Grotewohl’s lie in 1955: “Senseless crimes” intended to “to make further advances impossible.”

On the 10th anniversary of the bombing of Dresden in 1955, Otto Grotewohl, then Prime Minister of the GDR, declared at a rally in Dresden attended by 250,000 people:

“This senseless crime, just like the destruction of bridges, dams, and other vital infrastructure by the SS, served the purpose of creating a wasteland of rubble that would

In a speech in February 1972, in which Fidel Castro evidently echoes the SED arguments presented to him, February 13 and 14, 1945, in Dresden are described as an “act of completely unnecessary cruelty and terror, ... without a doubt an act that can never be justified.” (Neues Deutschland, June 17, 1972) Here, Fidel Castro is clearly serving the German nationalist agenda of the SED, which in turn had adopted much of this from Nazi propaganda.

27 Quoted from: Walter Ulbricht: On the History of the German Labor Movement, From Speeches and Essays, Volume IV: 1950–1954, Berlin 1958, p. 608

"which was intended to make further advances by the victorious Soviet armies impossible."²⁸

This claim, put forward primarily—though not exclusively—by the SED revisionists, is certainly the most demagogic argument.

The fact is that the leadership of the Soviet Union, or rather the Red Army, repeatedly called on the Western Allies to bomb infrastructure and Nazi war industries in order to support and facilitate the Red Army's advance. And this naturally included not only the cities in western Germany, but also those in eastern Germany toward which or into which the Red Army was advancing.

Just how absurd this line of reasoning is becomes clear when we ask: Why, then, did the British and U.S. air forces bomb Hamburg, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, and other cities? Was it also to halt the Red Army's advance there and leave a trail of destruction in its wake? Once again, completely absurd.

1955 Max Seydewitz's book "The Invincible City"

In 1955, Max Seydewitz, an SED functionary, wrote in his book "The Invincible City," which was published in several editions:

"Thus, the destruction of the city of art, Dresden, at the end of the war was a barbaric crime for which there can be no excuse."²⁹

Entire chapters are intended to show that this was a deliberate "barbaric crime." There are—to name just a few—absurd "accusatory" headlines such as "Bomb War Against Churches" and "The Murder of New Mothers and Infants."

But one headline regarding the bombing of Dresden is particularly striking. The headline of Chapter 4 reads:

"This is no longer war—this is murder!" (p. 100) This exact sentence appeared in a Nazi pamphlet from 1940. It was distributed in millions of copies and in several languages after bombs fell on Freiburg on May 10, 1940, killing 57 people, including 22 children.³⁰ Seydewitz must have known this. Yet he had no qualms about

to even adopt this slogan from Nazi propaganda verbatim.

Furthermore, as the Sparing article in "Das Reich" from March 4, 1945, Seydewitz quotes, in full, the text by the die-hard nationalist and Nazi collaborator Gerhart Hauptmann on Dresden: "Those who have forgotten how to weep ... the Downfall of Dresden"³¹ The book goes on to say:

"These attacks were intended to achieve the same thing that Hitler had said in his criminal threat to wipe out English cities. That is why the Anglo-American air raids, just like the attacks by Hitler's Luftwaffe on Warsaw, Rotterdam, London, and Coventry, were acts of terror in the truest sense of the word."³²

The very wording alone

"With the same intent," Seydewitz engages in the worst kind of historical revisionism by equating the Allied air raids aimed at crushing Nazi fascism with the Nazis' bombing campaign.³³

These appalling positions of the SED were also largely commonplace in the FRG. Below, however, we will focus only on key speeches from 1995 onward as examples.

V. Historical Revisionism in "Dresden Commemoration Speeches" by German Federal Presidents

1. Herzog in Dresden in 1995: "Mourn the German victims!"

On February 13, 1995, then-Federal President Roman Herzog delivered a speech in Dresden titled "The 50th Anniversary of the Bombing of Dresden."³⁴ The most egregious points of this speech are discussed below.

"Mourning the German victims of our history"

Herzog cites as the guiding principle of his "mourning":

"Today we remember the victims of violence and war—children, women, and men of all nations. We commemorate the soldiers who died in the world wars, and the people who lost their lives as a result of hostilities or in the aftermath of

"Captivity, as displaced persons and refugees lost their lives."

Herzog concludes:

"That is precisely the spirit in which we also mourn the German victims of our history."

Here, the door is opened to, under the guise of rejecting grief, collectively blame only the "Germans"—specifically the German Nazi perpetrators, who were not even recognized as such

28 Neues Deutschland – Vorwärts Dresden, February 14, 1955

29 Max Seydewitz, *Destruction and Reconstruction of Dresden*, Berlin 1955, Berlin 1961, p. 185

30 The Nazis claimed that this had been a bombing raid by the British Royal Air Force. It was later conclusively proven that aircraft of the German Luftwaffe, which had lost their bearings in poor visibility and were actually supposed to bomb the French city of Colmar, dropped the bombs on Freiburg. In a massive demagogic campaign, the Nazis turned this into a "massacre of children" to fuel their propaganda that they were now, so to speak, "retaliating."

31 Read on German radio on March 29, 1945; quoted in: Hauptmann, Gerhardt, *Complete Works*, Volume XI, Berlin 1974, p. 1205ff. The "Sächsische Heimatblätter" published the entire one-page text "Lament for Dresden" by Hauptmann in issue 8/1962, p. 624, in which he further states:

"I personally witnessed the destruction of Dresden amid the Sodom and Gomorrah-like hell of the English and American aircraft."

32 Max Seydewitz: *The Invincible City*, Berlin 1961, p. 164

33 Here is another example from a different high-ranking SED official of the unspeakable things that were said within the SED in 1955. The deputy chairman of the GDR Council of Ministers, Hans Loch, claimed in 1955 that "*more than 300,000 peaceful people, women, the elderly, and children*" had been "murdered" by U.S. bombers. This corresponds precisely to today's Nazi propaganda on this point (see: H. Loch, *The Emergence of Unique Art Through Noble Friendship*, Berlin 1955, p. 6).

34 Reprinted in: "Das Parlament," No. 9, Feb. 24, 1995

A completely different perspective on the bombing of Dresden: Two Jewish voices

■ Henny Brenner, a Jewish forced laborer who lived in Dresden and survived the bombing, and who was married to a non-Jewish man, had already received a deportation order to the extermination camps dated February 16. Her father said at the time: "The only thing that can save us is a major attack on Dresden." And that is exactly what happened. She recounts her situation immediately after the bombing:

"So we, too, ran through burning Dresden... There was no way through, yet inwardly we rejoiced when people coming toward us told us that all the buildings behind the train station had been razed. That meant the Gestapo, along with all its files, had burned. Or so we thought. It was only later that we learned that at least some of them had been brought to safety in time. At the time, however, the destruction of the Gestapo building seemed like a consolation to us."

(Henny Brenner: *The Song Is Over – A Jewish Destiny in Dresden*, Göttingen 2021, p. 84)

■ Olga Horak, a Jewish woman from Slovakia who had been deported to Auschwitz and Bergen, recounts how she and the others, during their death march in cattle cars across Germany in February 1945, witnessed the Allied bombing of Dresden on February 13–14, 1945:

"It turned out that our next destination was Dresden (...) We arrived in the middle of the city (...) One of the targets was the marshalling yards, near which our train was stopped. During the attack, we watched as the bombs fell from the sky like manna. (...) For us, this was a sign of hope."

(Olga Horak: *From Auschwitz to Australia, Memoirs of a Holocaust Survivor on Her Childhood in Bratislava, the Deportation to Auschwitz, the Death March from Kurzbach to Dresden, and the Liberation in Bergen-Belsen*, Konstanz 2007, p. 61f)

Yes, the bombs also struck forced laborers, Jewish prisoners, and members of the resistance who welcomed the bombing.

But for those who were spared, the bombing also meant personal salvation, as Victor Klemperer reported, "for in the general chaos he was able to escape the Gestapo." (Klemperer, Victor: *LTI*, Berlin 1947, p. 328)

to reclassify them as victims.

Dresden in the "legal sense" – unlike the Allies, it is suggested – is treated generously and refrains from "war crimes trials" against members of the anti-Hitler coalition and declares:

"There is no point in judging whether the bombing campaign, whose inhumanity no one doubts, was lawful in the legal sense or not. What good would that do us..."

This passage contains two revisionist ideas:

- All consistent representatives of the anti-Hitler coalition are dismissed as "nobody." The legality of the bombing of Germany's major cities is questioned by defenders of the Nazi state and its collaborators. That is the crux of the matter.
- By claiming that such a statement "makes no sense," Herzog is, of course, implying

that "actually" these bombings alleged "war crimes," but the oh-so-"generous Germans" refrain from bringing legal charges.

The phrase about the alleged "senselessness of the war" against the Nazis

Herzog directly attacks the just war waged by the anti-Hitler coalition against Nazi Germany:

"...we must not forget that it (Dresden, Ed.) was destroyed in the context of a war that a German government had started. Precisely for that reason, however, Dresden also demonstrates the utter senselessness of modern wars."

"Precisely for this reason"? These two little words are a demagogic ploy. Precisely because Germany (to refer to the Nazi regime as the "German government" is also a turn of phrase with a lot of weight behind it, one that suggests a certain legitimacy of this regime) was responsible for the war, is that why the Allies' war against Nazi Germany is supposed to be "senseless"?

Herzog deliberately identifies the decisive causal link, only to then brazenly and aggressively dispute it in the style of Goebbels, without offering any argument whatsoever.

Hatred of war "as such" In preparation for this thesis, Herzog asserts:

"Only when one imagines who must have been among the bombing victims of Dresden does the human tragedy of modern warfare become palpable. There were the die-hard Nazis and Gestapo agents who compiled deportation lists for Jews. There were Jews who were on those lists."

And the supposedly "inhuman Allies," as this most vile demagogic passage in the speech suggests, not only destroyed Nazis—they were complicit in the "extermination of the Jews"!

Apart from the fact that well over 95% of the Jewish population of Germany had already been deported to the extermination camps by the time Dresden was bombed, it is often overlooked that the Jews facing certain death prior to their deportation expressly welcomed the bombing of major cities as an opportunity to escape into the chaos and, above all, because the air war against Nazi Germany was a harbinger of the unconditional surrender of that Nazi Germany and thus of the end of Nazi crimes.

Now Herzog gets to the heart of the matter:

"It is war itself that we must hate like the plague. Above all, modern war, in which there is neither a front line nor a homeland."

"War as such." It is clear here that Herzog is not concerned solely with the bombing of Dresden or the air raids on major German cities. He is also intent on declaring the Allies' war against Nazi Germany itself to be the "plague" that must be hated!

And so we come full circle: Condemning the bombing of Dresden is merely a pretext for defaming the Allies' war of liberation and equating it with the Nazis' war of plunder and destruction!

2. Köhler's 2005 speech:

The demagoguery of "Anne Frank and little Dieter"

The critique of the speech by then-Federal President Köhler will be presented in four steps below.³⁵

Köhler 1: "Everyone is a victim"

"We mourn all of Germany's victims—the victims of the violence that emanated from Germany and the victims of the violence that fell back upon Germany. We mourn all victims because we want to be just toward all peoples, including our own." (p. 2)

Cause and effect are treated as equivalent in this quote and throughout the speech. The war between Nazi Germany and the anti-Hitler coalition is portrayed, so to speak, as one in which both sides resorted to violence, and thus as unjust. The implication is that injustice has existed regarding "our own" victims in recent decades, and that this injustice must be rectified. Any truly precise and honest analysis of the speeches by politicians of the ruling class in Germany, however, proves that from 1945 to the present day, time and again in a revisionist historical context, the so-called "German victims" have been placed on the same level as the real victims of the Nazi-fascist genocide and the-fascist imperialist war of plunder. It is also obvious that within this general "concept of victimhood," all the Gestapo murderers, SS murderers, and Wehrmacht murderers who were killed are placed on the same level as, for example, children affected and killed by the war, whose suffering and death are, of course, also attributable to German Nazi-fascism. However, their suffering and death must be assessed differently than that of the Nazi perpetrators killed by the Allied forces, who are portrayed here by Köhler as "victims."

Köhler 2: Commemorating "German Suffering"

"We commemorate the more than one million compatriots who died in foreign captivity. We commemorate the suffering of German refugees and displaced persons, of the raped women, and of the victims of the bombing campaign against the German civilian population." (p. 2)

Extreme historical revisionism in Dresden: The bombing of Dresden as "Anglo-American bombing terror"

In the Nickern district of Dresden stands an obelisk that was erected in 1920 as a reactionary "war memorial" for German soldiers of World War I. After February 1945, the inscription was amended. The following was added: "February 13, 1945 – We commemorate the victims of Anglo-American aerial terror." With this slogan, used verbatim by the Nazis, the bombing of Dresden—part of the just Allied air war against Nazi Germany—is openly declared a crime. To this day, the stele stands unchanged. In 2022, only a plaque was added, intended to provide a "historical context," yet it speaks in general terms of "victims of the wars" who are to be "remembered." This equates Nazi criminals who died in World War II with the real victims of the Nazi-fascist genocide and the Nazi-fascist imperialist war of plunder.

For decades, despite protests, the stele in Dresden-Nickern has been and remains a place of pilgrimage for Nazis. On February 13, they hold rallies there and spread their hate speech against the Allied air campaign, calling it a "bombing holocaust."

Köhler's demagoguery is glaringly obvious in this passage as well: Among the allegedly "millions of compatriots" who died in captivity were hundreds of thousands of Nazi war criminals in the strict sense of the word, as well as hundreds of thousands of Nazis who ultimately died in captivity during a war they themselves had waged for many years. No distinction is made between cause and effect. The intent here is not to level an accusation against the Nazis, but against the Allies.

Köhler 3: Anne Frank and Little Dieter

"Let's listen to (...) the writer Dieter Porte, who experienced the bombing of Düsseldorf as a child and still has nightmares about it today, and Anne Frank, who hid from the Gestapo with her family for years but ultimately perished in a concentration camp." (p. 3)

Perhaps the most infamous and unscrupulous distortion of history can be seen in this passage. Anne Frank, a symbol of the murder of six million Jews, including 1.5 million murdered Jewish children, is mentioned here in the same breath as the horrors endured by a writer who successfully survived, who certainly suffered personally as a result of the Nazi war, but who was neither intentionally targeted for murder nor racially persecuted. He suffered merely from the fact that the Nazis refused to evacuate the major cities, and he was thus caught up in the legitimate acts of war of the

Allied forces were involved. Whenever the democratically motivated Allied bombing raids on German cities are not used as an indictment of the Nazis, but are instead seemingly "neutrally" equated with the criminally motivated actions of the Nazis, this constitutes a distortion of cause and effect—it is historical revisionism.

Köhler 4: "We Germans": "A Talent for Freedom"

"But we also have the certainty that we Germans have walked the path to our free and democratic society through our own 'gift for freedom.'" (p. 9)

"Our own gift for freedom"? So is the "gift for freedom" genetically ingrained in Germans, so to speak? Even if we take the concept of

When one examines "talent" and its biological interpretations, it becomes clear that Köhler truly turns everything on its head. Historically, what has actually developed is a mentality among large segments of the German population that is not oriented toward freedom. Otherwise, the Nazi regime and its crimes would not have been possible, and the occupation of Germany would not have been necessary. Here, the necessity of a military victory—not only over the army of German imperialism but also over the vast majority of the Nazi-fascist-indoctrinated German population—is simply cut away with a single stroke.

³⁵ Quoted from: "A Gift for Freedom," speech at the commemorative event in the plenary hall of the German Bundestag on the 60th anniversary of the end

Nazi marches and their connection to the “Dresden” ideology of the “center”

Dresden has been a magnet for Nazis for more than 30 years.

As early as February 13, 1990, British Holocaust denier David Irving gave a lecture in Dresden to an audience of about 500 supportive attendees. He described the Allied air raids as “genocide”

Starting in 2000, the Junge Landsmannschaft Ostdeutschland (JLO) and the The “Landsmannschaft Schlesien” held a nighttime “mourning march.” Among those present were “associations of displaced persons” in traditional dress and carrying flags, the NPD, “Free Comradeships,” and Nazis from other countries, who marched through Dresden chanting slogans such as “In memory of the victims of the bombing holocaust” and “That was no war—that was murder!” In the years that followed, up to 7,000 Nazis marched through the city. These were the largest Nazi marches in Europe at that time.

On September 4, 2003, Jörg Friedrich presented his book **Der Brand** at an event titled “Germany During the Bombing Campaign.” Regarding the bombing of Dresden, Friedrich peddles a series of lies that the Nazis had already peddled before their defeat in 1945, claiming that the British and American attacks were “designed for mass extermination.” (Jörg Friedrich: *Der Brand – Deutschland im Bombenkrieg 1940–1945*, Berlin 2004, p. 362) There were strong protests against the event, including in the hall itself.

In January 2005, NPD Nazi Gansel was able to deliver his “bomb Holocaust” speech—with impunity—at the memorial service for the victims of Nazi fascism on behalf of the NPD, which had recently entered the state parliament. At the annual “memorial services,” NPD representatives stood side by side with representatives of the “mainstream” parties.

In 2010, however, the Nazi march, in which AfD Nazi Björn Höcke also participated, was 5,000 counter-demonstrators and sit-in blockades. On February 19, 2011, the anti-Nazi initiative “Dresden Nazifrei” once again mobilized for mass blockades. 20,000 people who had traveled from all over Germany prevented the Nazis’ large-scale march. The authorities immediately responded with massive repression and persecution against anti-fascists who were not content with a “silent commemoration” in a human chain holding hands. The police stormed the press office of “Dresden Nazifrei.” All 17 people present there were arrested and processed by the identification unit, and all permanently installed equipment was confiscated. The detainees were investigated for nearly a year and a half under Section 129 of the German Criminal Code (“formation of a criminal organization”). The proceedings were not dropped until July 2012. At the same time, over a million data records were collected and stored through cell tower queries. The police and public prosecutor’s office also took action against blockade participants in the aftermath, issuing hundreds of Preliminary proceedings were initiated for violations of the Assembly Act.

In the years that followed, there were no Nazi marches on this scale, partly due to Antifa demonstrations and blockades. However, the Nazi agitation by various Nazi organizations continues, for example through nationwide “action weeks.” Year after year, there are public actions centered on the Nazi slogan of the Allied “bombing holocaust.” In 2021, the Nazi group “III. Weg” incited: “The murderers of Dresden are today’s warmongers.” It is no coincidence that Dresden has become a magnet for Nazis to this day. The Dresden ideology, largely inherited from the Nazi regime, with its incitement against the Allied bombing of Dresden as an alleged “injustice,”

“Terror” and the like have long been and remain a firmly established consensus. This is precisely where the Nazis were—and still are—able to latch onto with their “bomb holocaust” propaganda.

Postscript:

In our analysis of the text of Horst Köhler’s speech, we did not address every problematic aspect of his remarks, but rather focused on a few specific points. From the first line to the last, Köhler’s entire speech is permeated by hatred toward the socialist Soviet Union during Stalin’s era and by anti-communism. It should also be noted that Horst Köhler quite deliberately did not refer to the genocide of the Jewish population of Europe as

refers to such acts and, in a revisionist manner, fails to recognize the genocide against European Sinti and Roma as such, instead equating it with the murder and persecution of people with disabilities, “political dissidents,” and homosexuals.

3. In 2020, Steinmeier casts doubt on the legitimacy of the Allied air raids

Steinmeier’s 2020 speech is certainly not as clumsy as Herzog’s in 1995

or Köhler’s in 2005. Yet it does not differ fundamentally.

Steinmeier begins by recounting how, on September 1, 2020, he stood in the market square of the small Polish town of Wieluń to commemorate its bombing on September 1, 1939, by the German Air Force. (Later on, he also mentions the Nazi bombing of Coventry, Leningrad, Guernica, and other cities.) But in no time at all, he gets to the heart of his speech: equating the criminal Nazi war with the just war waged by the Allies against Nazi Germany:

“The attack on Wieluń also marked the beginning of a brutal bombing campaign in which the civilian populations of cities became the primary targets. The German Luftwaffe on one side and British and American bombers on the other destroyed hundreds of cities in nearly every country in Europe over the course of the war. They left a trail of devastation unprecedented in history, stretching from Great Britain through Germany all the way to Russia.”³⁶

In doing so, Steinmeier equates the Allied air raids aimed at crushing Nazi fascism with the Nazi bombings of cities in the countries they occupied or sought to occupy.

Steinmeier addresses the question of “Allied guilt” with relative skill.

“When we reflect on the bombing campaign today, we also know that even back then, there was debate in Britain and among the Allies as to whether the so-called carpet bombings—in which tens of thousands of Bomber Command soldiers also lost their lives—were militarily justified, permitted under international law, and morally legitimate. To this day, this question continues to occupy historians and philosophers, not least in Great Britain.

We need this sober perspective to understand how that escalation of violence could have occurred back then. We need it to find answers to the question of what means may be appropriate and permissible today to put an end to serious crimes. But the question of Allied guilt leads astray when it is posed to relativize German guilt. When we commemorate the victims in German cities today, then it is

36 Source: <https://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Frank-Walter-Steinmeier/Reden/2020/02/200213-Dresden-Gedenken-Bombardierung.html>

"We are not concerned with accusations, and certainly not with setting things against one another." (Ibid.)

Implicit in Steinmeier's argument is that the question of "Allied guilt" must indeed be raised. This, however,

lead "astray" if it were used to relativize German guilt. Both are guilty; that is the message conveyed. Steinmeier thus primarily attacks and disputes

that the Allies waged a just war with the necessary means at their disposal.

VI. Conclusion

Even before the military defeat of Nazi fascism on May 8, 1945, a dominant narrative had already taken hold, portraying Dresden as a supposedly unique and innocent cultural city of no military significance that had suddenly and senselessly suffered destruction whose impact was equally unique.

This prevailing, revisionist historical construct—based on Nazi lies—was largely retained and adopted in West Germany after the Nazis' defeat. As sobering as it may be, it is a fact that the SED adopted key elements of Nazi propaganda

adopted and reshaped it in an "anti-American" manner in order to align with German Nazi and narrow-minded thinking rather than combat it. This is, unfortunately, an indisputable fact. That, following the incorporation of the GDR into the FRG, the armed forces of the anti-Hitler coalition are once again portrayed more or less unchallenged as "war criminals"—indeed, equated with Nazi crimes—this is the challenge today not only against the open Nazis, but against the entire prevailing "German ideology" of today!

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