

INTRODUCTION

Phillip W. Weiss
October 1997

A principle is a rule for ethical conduct and a standard for determining right from wrong. Without principles, law would disappear, chaos would ensue and civilization would cease to exist.

Commitment to principles means being honest with yourself and with others, and treating people with consideration and respect. Lack of principles, on the other hand, is motivated by selfishness, which entails putting one's needs ahead of others, always at the others' expense. In politics this is known as demagoguery. The demagogue is a dissembler who will say anything to gain power. He will spout forth whatever he thinks will appeal to the people, no matter how false or malicious his rantings may be, while cleverly masking his real intentions. In the process, the demagogue will grow more ~~scornful and~~ contemptuous of the people, who he is duping, until his quest for power becomes insatiable. At this point, even the semblance of honesty will disappear, until finally the demagogue is revealed for what he is - a posturing, egotistical, power-hungry lout whose lies have harmed the people and wrecked society. The demagogue is then discredited and repudiated by the people, but by this time the damage has been done and cannot be reversed.

Rejection of principles opens the door to abuses of power. Thus any violation of principle by the leaders of government must be treated with the utmost concern, especially in a democracy where the government is entrusted with power. Once a principle is violated, a precedent is established which could

be used in the future by unscrupulous politicians interested in subverting the democratic process.

In my book I examine three cases in history where democratic principles were violated in the pursuit of government policies. In The Sherman Antitrust Act and the Judiciary - Democracy Betrayed, I reveal how the United States Congress used subterfuge to break the power of organized labor. In The British Bomber Offensive - Survival vs. Morality, I explore how the British government skirted international law to assure their country's survival. And in Morality and the Building of the Atomic Bomb, I discuss how morality was sacrificed in favor of military expediency, with tragic results.

In all three cases the government was confronted with difficult choices in times of crisis. The Sherman Antitrust Act was enacted during a period of labor unrest; the British bomber offensive and the development of the atomic bomb took place under emergency conditions brought about by war.

These cases raise a basic question: when are violations of principle justifiable? The answer is: probably never. For democracy to remain strong, democratic principles must remain inviolate. When these principles are compromised, hypocrisy and deceit become the rule and freedom is placed at risk. To prevent this from happening, the government must be constantly monitored to assure that democratic principles are not betrayed.

It is dangerous to presume that institutions of government are set up to preserve freedom. Institutions of government are merely tools and only the people can determine how these

tools will be used. If the people value their freedom, then the institutions of government will protect the peoples' freedom. If the people are lulled into indifference, or succumb to the appeals of a demagogue, then the institutions of government will become instruments of oppression. It is up to the people, only they can decide.

THE BRITISH BOMBER OFFENSIVE

DURING WORLD WAR TWO

Survival vs. Morality

Phillip W. Weiss
August 1997

World War Two was an air war. Germany, the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan, and Great Britain all used their air forces to achieve strategic objectives. In Great Britain, the Royal Air Force had the responsibility for carrying out the strategic bombing offensive against Germany, which meant bombing German cities. The British knew that this strategy would result in a great many civilians being killed and injured. Did this prospect pose a moral dilemma for British policy makers, and if so, were the British able to reconcile this moral dilemma with the political objective of winning the war?

Defeating your enemy by destroying his war-making capacity is nothing new. Reducing cities to rubble, burning fields and mistreating the civilian population of your adversary have always been a part of warfare. In 146 B.C. Rome obliterated Carthage from the face of the earth; in 1099 the Crusaders massacred the Moslems and Jews in Jerusalem; in 1864 Sherman left much of Georgia in ruins. Brutality and carnage have always been associated with war.

So why should the British have been expected to behave any differently? By the outbreak of the war in September 1939, the British already had a long tradition of respect for the rule of law. The law, not brute force, was the foundation upon which British society was built. Without respect for the rule of law, the British constitutional system would have never evolved. Thus, it was only natural to expect that during World War Two the British would fight the war with a certain degree of restraint and keep within the bounds of international law.

By July 1940 the British were facing the gravest crisis in their history. They had suffered the near disaster at Dunkirk just a few weeks before and had no allies in the fight against Germany. Adolf Hitler was determined to crush Great Britain and predicted that the British Empire would not survive the war. On July 16, 1940, Hitler issued Directive 16 concerning his plan to invade England:

The aim of this operation [the land invasion of England] is to eliminate the English motherland as a base from which war against Germany can be continued and, if necessary, to occupy the country completely.¹

Three days later, on July 19, 1940, Hitler publicly declared to the world that in a war with Germany the British Empire would be destroyed:

Mr. Churchill ought for once to believe me when I say that a great empire will be destroyed - an empire which it was never my intention to destroy or even to harm. I do, however, realize that this struggle, if it continues, can end only with the complete annihilation of one or other of the two adversaries. Mr. Churchill may believe that this will be Germany. I know it will be Britain.²

To insure their national survival, the British had to act. When the war in Europe broke out on September 1, 1939, Great Britain found itself involved in a conflict for which it was militarily ill-prepared to fight. After the outbreak of the war, a period then ensued which was called the phony war. The so-called phony war was a period in which the fighting abated. In April 1940, the phony war period ended with the German invasion of Norway and Denmark;³ Britain's attempt to force the Germans out of Norway failed.

Fighting again escalated on May 10, 1940, the day Hitler invaded France and the Low Countries. The King of Belgium, Leopold III, requested assistance to thwart the Nazi aggressors. Both Britain and France responded to Leopold's request and sent forces to aid the Belgium army. On May 28, 1940, King Leopold III unilaterally ordered his army to surrender after eighteen days of fighting.⁴ The Germans quickly moved to encircle the Allied forces and a complete debacle was narrowly avoided when the British succeeded in evacuating 338,226 men from Dunkirk (one-third of those evacuated were not British).⁵ On June 22, 1940, France fell.

After the fall of France, Great Britain was the only country still fighting the Nazis. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union had yet entered the war. Hitler had invaded and conquered Poland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. The military situation for the British was bleak. The British army had been forced off the continent. Great Britain was standing alone.

It seemed that the only means left to Britain to take the war to Germany was through the bomber offensive. The British decided to attack large industrial areas inside Germany. This decision was made by the Ministries, the Chiefs of Staff Committee and the War Cabinet.⁶ The War Cabinet laid down the general lines of the bombing policy after receiving the advice of the Chiefs of Staff. Within the limits of that policy and under the authority of the Secretary of State, the Air Staff, after consulting with other Departments concerned, issued a

directive to Bomber Command indicating on broad lines the targets to be attacked. Subject to any special directions that may have been given, the final decision how and when a particular target would be attacked necessarily rested with the Air Officer Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command.⁷

On May 11, 1940, the Royal Air Force launched its first attack on industrial areas in Germany.⁸ Although the British began the bomber offensive while France was still in the war, it soon became apparent to the British that France was on the brink of defeat, and with the British ground forces being no match for the Germans, the British utilized the only means they had left to effectively fight the war - the air force.

The Nazis were infuriated by Britain's efforts to carry the war to Germany. On May 12, 1940, Germany threatened reprisal: The New York Times reported:

Berlin gives "reprisal warning."

Berlin, May 11 (UP) There is no question of total air war such as the enemy attributes to Germany. But the German Air Force will repay many times every attempt by the enemy to turn this into a total war. (D.N.B. agency)⁹

On May 24, 1940, Adolf Hitler authorized the German Air Force to attack the English home land in the fullest manner, as soon as sufficient forces were available. Hitler said:

This attack will be opened by an annihilating reprisal for English attacks on the Ruhr.¹⁰

On August 1, 1940, Hitler directed that he reserved to himself the right to decide on terror attacks as measures of reprisal.¹¹

On August 13, 1940, the Battle of Britain began. On the

first day, 1,485 German aircraft crossed the English Channel.¹²

At first the German Air Force was under strict orders not to bomb obviously non-military areas.¹³ This changed however after the British bombed Berlin on August 25 and again on August 28 in retaliation for a Nazi attack on London which was bombed by mistake.¹⁴ After the British raids on Berlin, the German air offensive against Great Britain soon entered a new, much crueler and more vicious phase. On September 4, 1940, Hitler, angered by the British attacks on Berlin, threatened to

raze cities in reprisal for British bombings.

Hitler declared:

Wenn sie unsere Stadte angreifen, dann werden wir ihre Stadte ausradieren!

(If our cities are attacked, then we will eradicate their cities!)¹⁵

Hitler meant what he said. Between September and December 1940, British cities were indiscriminately pounded by fleets of German aircraft. Hardest hit were the cities of London, Coventry, Birmingham, Bristol, Southampton and Liverpool. The results were devastating. Between September 7 and November 13, London was bombed 67 consecutive nights, excepting one.¹⁶ London burned.¹⁷

Perhaps the worst single attack on a British city occurred on November 14, 1940, when German aircraft dropped 600 tons of explosives and thousands of incendiaries on Coventry, annihilating the center of the city and resulting in the death of 400 people.¹⁸ The attack on Coventry was followed by three successive raids on Birmingham, England, from November 19th

till the 22nd, resulting in almost 800 deaths and over two thousand injured.¹⁹ The goal of the bombing was to shatter the morale of the British people in order to compel their unconditional surrender. This, however, Hitler failed to achieve, and on September 15, 1940, with the German Air Force unable to achieve air superiority over England, Hitler postponed indefinitely Operation Sealion, his plan for the invasion of Britain.²⁰ But German air attacks over Great Britain continued, with lethal results. By March 28, 1941, a total of 28,859 civilians had been killed and 40,166 seriously wounded in air raids on Great Britain;²¹ by June 30, 1943, the figures had risen to more than 40,000 killed and more than 120,000 wounded.²²

The British retaliated by expanding their air offensive against Germany. On September 11, 1940, the Royal Air Force attacked Berlin, dropping "a veritable hail of incendiary bombs on the famous Unter den Linden and Brandenburg Gate." British aircraft also attacked Hamburg and ports on the Continent. In these attacks the British used a new "secret weapon," an incendiary device which the Royal Air Force dropped on Germany "by the millions".²³ On September 23, 1940, the British attacked Berlin again.²⁴

Even after the Germans invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, the bombing of Britain did not stop. The Germans launched especially large air raids in 1942²⁵ and 1944.²⁶ But as German military resources were depleted in the east, the German Air Force ceased to be a major factor in conducting offensive operations against Great Britain.²⁷

In place of the air force, Germany utilized new kinds of

weapons to continue their attack on the British Isles. These weapons were called V weapons, V standing for Vergultung or retribution. There were two V weapons. The V 1 was a jet-propelled pilotless aircraft which carried a one-ton warhead. Beginning in June 1944, 2,448 of these weapons hit Antwerp, 2,419 London (out of 10,492 aimed at it) and 3,132 hit other parts of England. The V 2 was a rocket. It was impossible to intercept and arrived without warning since it traveled faster than sound. The V 2 was therefore a more terrifying weapon than the V 1. Antwerp received 1,265 hits. London received 517 and other parts of England 537.

The Germans were also developing a V 3 weapon - a long range gun, 416 feet long, which was to fire one shell on London every twelve seconds. Construction of this weapon was started, but never completed.

The V 1 and V 2 attacks were terrifying. The worst aspect of these attacks was the number of men, women and children who were blinded by flying glass before they knew that anything had struck. In spite of doctors working round the clock on delicate eye operations many lost their sight for life.

In the first two weeks the V 1s killed 1,600 people, seriously injured another 4,500 and damaged 200,000 houses; the casualty rate in England in June 1944 was as heavy as it had been in September 1940, although the weight of attack measured in tons of explosives was much lighter. Over the whole period of the V 1 and V 2 attacks 29,400 houses were completely destroyed in London and over a quarter of a million damaged.²⁸

Thus while the British were bombing the German homeland,

the Germans, utilizing formidable jet and rocket propelled weapons, were bombing the British homeland too. It was total war.

Starting with the raid on Mannheim on December 16, 1940, British air chiefs began bombing the homes of workers. The air chiefs argued that such targets were easier to hit than factories and would reduce German industrial production.²⁹ This tactic gained official approval in March 1942 with the adoption of the Lindemann Plan by the War Cabinet. Frederick Lindemann, Winston Churchill's Principal Scientific Adviser, urged that bombing be directed against German working-class houses in preference to military objectives, which were much too difficult to hit. He claimed that given a total concentration of effort on the production of aircraft suitable for this work, 50 percent of all houses in the cities and towns in Germany with over 50,000 inhabitants would be destroyed, thus significantly reducing German industrial production.³⁰

Lindemann's position was strongly contested by other scientists, notably Professors Henry Tizard and P.M.S. Blackett, who alleged that expectations were greatly exaggerated and argued for more selective operations such as the war against the U-boats.³¹

Nonetheless the Air Ministry fell behind the Lindemann paper. Opposition to the Lindemann Plan was not only defeated but squashed. Tizard was called a defeatist. Strategic bombing, according to the Lindemann policy, was put into action with every effort the country could make.³²

The British air offensive against Nazi Germany became relentless. By November 1942, Berlin had been attacked 53 times, Bremen 101 times, Cologne 110 times, Hamburg 93 times, and Kiel 70 times.³³ Almost every major German city was bombed by the British. In one huge attack on Cologne on May 31, 1942, the British dropped 3,000 tons of incendiary and explosive bombs on the city, leaving seven-eighths of the city in flames and causing 20,000 deaths.³⁴ In an attack on Bremerhaven on the evening of September 18, 1944, the British in twenty minutes dropped 420,000 incendiary bombs and 511 explosive bombs, destroying 2,670 buildings, including 6 churches and 14 schools, damaging over 1,800 other buildings, and leaving 618 dead, 1,493 seriously injured and over 30,000 homeless.³⁵ Such attacks were catastrophic.

The estimates of the numbers of Germans killed and wounded in the air attacks vary. The figures range from 305,000 killed to 600,000 killed and 800,000 wounded.³⁶ In addition, 4.11 million homes in Germany were entirely or partially destroyed and 13.7 million Germans became homeless due to the air attacks.³⁷ Not all these losses could be attributed to the British, however, since the United States Air Force also bombed German cities.³⁸

Despite the immense damage inflicted on the German cities by the Royal Air Force, questions were raised concerning the military effectiveness of the bomber offensive. Due to technical limitations which made precision bombing from high altitudes exceedingly difficult if not completely impossible, only a small percentage of the bombs that were dropped hit their targets.³⁹

Nonetheless many MPs in the House of Commons wholeheartedly approved the bombing of German cities. Perhaps the greatest advocate of strategic bombing was Winston Churchill. Churchill repeatedly spoke out in favor of bombing as a military measure that would hinder Germany's war making capacity and thereby help win the war. On October 8, 1940, Churchill said:

What we are doing now is to batter continuously, with forces which steadily increase in power, each one of those points in Germany which we believe will do the Germans most injury and will most speedily lessen their power to strike at us. ... Our object must be to inflict the maximum harm on the enemy's war-making capacity. This is the only object that we shall pursue.⁴⁰

On May 10, 1942, Churchill said:

The British...bombing offensive against Germany will be one of the principal features of this year's world war. Now is the time to use our increasingly superior air strength to strike and continually at the home front in Germany...which is the foundation of the whole enormous German invasion of Russia....Now it is the time to bring home to the German people the wickedness of their rulers, by destroying under their very eyes the factories and seaports on which their war effort depends.⁴¹

To Churchill, the German "home front" was a legitimate military target.

Many in Parliament agreed with Churchill. One MP argued that all of Germany should be bombed. On November 13, 1941, Captain John Profumo (Conservative) said:

There are some who say we should not debase ourselves by bombing anything but military objectives. To those I would answer that in my opinion any square inch of land which is occupied by anything, animal or mineral, which is contributing in any way to the German war effort is a legitimate military

target.⁴²

Others in Parliament felt that even if the bombs did not hit their targets, the bomber offensive had great military value because it undermined German morale. On March 4, 1942, George Garro-Jones (Labor - Aberdeen, North) said:

Now we know that these heavy bombers cannot operate except from extreme altitudes or by night. In the former case they cannot hit their targets. As far as direct hits on specified industrial targets by high-flying aircraft by night are concerned, we might as well send the long distance bombers to the moon....And now a few words about the moral effect. The moral effect is of immense importance.⁴³

Similar views were expressed by Arthur Duckworth (Conservative - Salop, Shrewsbury),⁴⁴ Geoffrey Mander (Liberal - Wolverhampton, East),⁴⁵ and Captain Peter Macdonald (Conservative - Isle of Wight).⁴⁶

One MP felt relief when told that the bombing of Germany would continue. On March 11, 1942 Lt. Col. Sir Thomas Moore (Conservative - Districts of Ayr Burghs) said:.

I paid a visit to Germany after the war and came across a very intelligent German officer...and one of the things he repeatedly rubbed in, was that the Germans feared bombing more than anything else....I was relieved in my mind by the statement of the Secretary of State, when he made it clear, in categorical terms, that the policy of the Air Force was to continue bombing Germany relentlessly.⁴⁷

The bombing had a devastating effect on the morale of the German people. One German who had lived through several air attacks wrote:

These constant air attacks were a tremendous hardship on the civilian population,

especially the women....Life in the big cities was nothing but turmoil, not just physically, but the psychological effects were considerable....Even the Berliners, who were known for their toughness, became unnerved as time went by. Day after day, night after night, our nerves were tested in the basements. The German people would have not been able to stand this war of nerves, this psychological hardship much longer.⁴⁸

Another German who survived the British attack on Bremerhaven on September 19, 1944, later recalled:

Menschen laufen vereinzelt und verstört durch die Trümmer. In den Gesichtern sehe ich fast nur gequalte Entschlossenheit, das Leid konnte ich nur erahnen. Am nächsten Tag begann wieder, wie seit 5 Jahren, die Arbeit für den schon seit langem verlorenen Krieg. Warum, warum?

(Men ran sporadically and bewildered through the ruins. In the faces I saw only tormented determination, grief I could only imagine. Next day we began working again, already five years, for a war that had long since been lost. Why, why?)⁴⁹

By bringing the war directly to the German homeland, the British bomber offensive weakened the will of the German people to fight.⁵⁰

Support for Churchill's conduct of the war was almost unanimous.⁵¹ On July 2, 1942, the question was put to a vote; the House voted 475 to 25 in favor of Churchill's direction of the war.⁵² On the same day Churchill again defended the need for continuing the bomber offensive.

I know there is a tendency to deride and disparage the bomber effort against Germany, but I think that is a very great mistake. There is no doubt that the bomber offensive against Germany is the most powerful means we have of carrying on an offensive war against Germany.⁵³

Despite the overwhelming support for Churchill in the

House of Commons, some Members of Parliament believed that the bomber offensive, which was central to Churchill's war program, was morally wrong and should be stopped. This issue was raised on several occasions by Richard Stokes (Labor - Ipswich). On May 19, 1942, Stokes called strategic bombing "contagious lunacy" which would never destroy the morale of the people,⁵⁴ and on November 24, 1942, Stokes, quoting a speech he made in June 1942, called the bombing of Cologne

morally wrong, as no real effort was made to limit the targets to military objectives....

Stokes was outraged by the carnage resulting from the bombing:

... women and little children are women and little children to me, wherever they live, and it fills me with absolute nausea to think of the filthy task that many of our young men are being invited to carry out.⁵⁵

Stokes was not alone in his opposition to the way the bomber offensive was being conducted. On November 12, 1942, Ivor Thomas (Labor - Keighly) expressed concern over the morality of bombing non-military targets and how the world would judge the British people.

...we do not believe in the principle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth....Such a step, in sum, would bring us no military advantages but would be calculated to bring us into disrepute throughout the world, and it would inflame public opinion against us.⁵⁶

Thomas was joined by Oliver Simmonds (National Unionist - Birmingham, Duddleston) who lamented the bombing of enemy countries.

...let me not be accused of reveling in

carnage. This bombing of enemy countries, just like the bombing of our own land, is a horrible necessity in modern warfare, which nobody wants less than I....⁵⁷

On March 11, 1943, Frederick Montague (Labor - Islington, West) called for a reaffirmation that the bombing policy was aimed at military objectives and that the bombing was not merely to inflict wanton destruction.

....I do not like the idea of wanton destruction....I believe that we are maintaining our policy of concentrating upon military objectives, but I think it is important that we should state to the world that there is no departure of policy, that we are not bombing the people of Germany - women and children to use another sentimental phrase - merely for its wanton sake.⁵⁸

Montague's appeal led to a response from Captain Harold Balfour, the Joint Undersecretary of State for Air, who denied that the British were responsible for the suffering of the German civilian population and reiterated the military purpose of the bombing.

I give the assurance that there is no change in our policy, that our purpose is to destroy Germany's industry, transport and war industry and war potential, and that we are not wantonly bombing women and children for the sake of doing so.⁵⁹

On March 6, 1945, Richard Stokes, referring to the attack on Dresden in which 35,000 to 250,000 people died,⁶⁰ asked if terror bombing was now part of British policy.⁶¹ Stokes' question led to a reply from Commander Rupert Brabner, the Joint Undersecretary of State for Air, who vehemently denied that the British were engaged in terror bombing. ..

We are not wasting our bombers or time on

purely terror tactics. Our job is to destroy the enemy. That is what we are doing, I hope in an ever increasing and more efficient way. It does not do the hon. Member justice to come to this House and try to suggest that there are a lot of Air Marshals or pilots, or anyone else, sitting in a room, trying to think how many German women and children they can kill....We are concentrating on war targets, and we intend to remain concentrated on them until Germany gives up.⁶²

It can be argued that the British bomber offensive was a reasonable, logical, necessary, and acceptable military strategy. After all, Britain's survival was at stake. But was the bomber offensive legal under international law? Sir Arthur Harris, the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Air Force during most of World War Two, claimed that there was no international law in the matter of the use of aircraft.⁶³ However, this does not seem to have been the case. At the outbreak of World War Two there were at least sixteen international agreements governing the rules of warfare.⁶⁴ Four of these agreements - the 1899 Hague Convention, the 1907 Hague Convention, the 1923 Hague Rules of Air Warfare, and the 1938 League of Nations resolution on warfare from the air - were applicable to aerial warfare.⁶⁵ Both the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions stated that only armed and uniformed personnel who conducted "their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war," qualified as belligerents,⁶⁶ thus excluding civilians, and that "the right of belligerents to adopt means of injuring the enemy [was] not unlimited."⁶⁷ Both treaties also prohibited "the attack or bombardment of towns, villages...or buildings" which were undefended.⁶⁸ In addition, the 1907 Hague

Convention prohibited the employment of "arms, projectiles,
or material calculated to cause unnecessary suffering"⁶⁹ and
further stated that

[i]n sieges and bombardments all necessary
steps must be taken to spare as far as
possible, buildings dedicated to religion,
art, science, or charitable purposes,
historic monuments, hospitals, and places
where the sick and wounded are collected,
provided they are not being used at the
time for military purposes.⁷⁰

Rules specifically governing the conduct of air warfare
were set forth in the 1923 Hague Rules of Air Warfare and the
1938 League of Nation resolution on warfare from the air. The
1923 Hague Rules of Air Warfare forbade the

[a]erial bombardment for the purpose of
terrorizing the civilian population, of
destroying or damaging private property
not of a military character, or of injuring
non-combatants"⁷¹

and "the indiscriminate bombardment of the civilian population"
if situated around military targets in such a manner that the
bombardment of the civilian population could not be avoided.⁷²
The 1938 League of Nation resolution on warfare from the air
stated, according to Adam Roberts and Richard Guelff, that

reasonable care must be taken in attacking
military objectives to avoid bombardment
of a civilian population in the neighborhood.⁷³

Great Britain had a moral and legal responsibility to comply
with these agreements. However, considering the technical
problems affecting bombing accuracy and the viciousness of the
war itself, it is not surprising that British conduct of the
bomber offensive may have at times breached international law.

The fact is that, in accordance with the Lindemann Plan, the British did target German civilians for aerial bombardment and did subject German cities to indiscriminate bombing, resulting in the destruction of schools, churches and hospitals, which could hardly be considered legitimate military targets. But did this mean that the British bomber offensive was immoral? Perhaps the decision to bomb German civilians cannot be condoned,⁷⁴ but there were extenuating circumstances which caused the British to take that action. The British were being threatened with total destruction from Nazi Germany and the British had to do something to defend themselves and insure their survival. Moreover, the British bomber offensive was not a craven act. Germany was far from being defenseless and, unlike the Nazis, whose ultimate goal was, in the words of Adolf Eichmann, the "killing, elimination and annihilation"⁷⁵ of whole populations and the imposition of their racist ideology on the rest of the Europe, the British were not bent on exterminating the German people or exploiting them after the war. British war policy was shaped by a desire to preserve their own existence and bring the war to a successful close. In a letter to Joseph Stalin dated June 25, 1940, Winston Churchill defined British war aims:

Great Britain's policy is concentrated on two objects - one, to save herself from German domination, which the Nazi government wishes to impose, and the other, to free the rest of Europe from the domination which Germany is now in the process of imposing on it.⁷⁶

British war aims did not include massacre of the German people.

World War Two was a worldwide calamity which proved once again the horror and savagery of war. The cost of the war in terms of lives lost and property damaged is incalculable. Millions were killed, millions were injured, millions more were displaced, and whole countries were devastated.

The British did not escape the carnage.⁷⁷ In addition to the thousands of civilians killed and injured in German air raids and V 1 and V 2 rocket attacks, British military losses were 264,443 killed, 277,077 wounded, and 213,919 taken prisoner or missing;⁷⁸ 55,000 died in the bomber offensive against Germany.⁷⁹

Yet despite the brutality of the war and their victimization as targets of Nazi aggression, the British did not debase themselves like the Nazis who derived pathological satisfaction from the vile acts of barbarism they committed in the regions they occupied.⁸⁰ Alan Clark writes of "the septic violence of Nazism", the

mass murder, deportations, deliberate starvation of prisoner cages, the burning alive of school children, "target practice" on civilian hospitals - atrocities...so commonplace that no man coming fresh to the scene could stay sane without acquiring a protective veneer of brutalization.⁸¹

The British never sank to such depths of depravity during the war. Indeed, immediately after the war, with anger and outrage over German atrocities at a high pitch, and with every opportunity to emulate the behavior of their former enemy, the British still treated the Germans with leniency and generosity,⁸² in stark contrast to the way the Germans had tormented and and terrorized their helpless victims, especially the Jews.⁸³

The British bomber offensive was also an act of violence, but it was not a gratuitous and psychopathic act of terror nor was it part of an exterminationist program. The bomber offensive was strictly a military measure, and the Royal Air Force was a military unit and not a terrorist organization like the SS Einsatzgruppen.⁸⁴

British policy makers were confronted with a choice - either bomb Germany with all the means at their disposal, which meant that civilians would not be spared, or risk Great Britain suffering crushing defeat. The choice was made and German cities were destroyed. The evidence indicates that the British government was not insensitive to the moral implications of the bomber offensive, but under the exigencies of war, the British government's war strategy was ultimately influenced not by moral considerations but by the overriding need to achieve victory.

CITATIONS

1. Edward Bishop, Their Finest Hour - The Story of the Battle of Britain 1940 (Ballantine Books, New York), 1968, page 21.
2. Ibid., page 21. The New York Times, May 20, 1940, page 1.
3. I.C.B. Dear, editor, The Oxford Companion to World War II (Oxford University Press, New York), 1995, pages 885-887.
4. Winston S. Churchill, Winston S. Churchill - His Complete Speeches, 1897-1963, Vol. VI (Chelsea House Publishers, New York), 1974, pages 6223-6237. The New York Times, May 28, 1940, and May 29, 1940.
5. Peter Calvocoressi and Guy Wint, Total War (Penguin Books, New York), 1972, page 123.
6. Sir Arthur Harris, Bomber Offensive (MacMillan Company, New York), 1947, page 89.
7. Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons (His Majesty's Stationery Office, London), Fifth Series, Vol. 382, page 1007.
8. F.J.P. Veale, Advance to Barbarism (The Mitre Press, London), 1968, page 182.
9. The New York Times, May 12, 1940.
10. H.R. Trevor-Roper, Hitler's War Directives, 1939-1945 (Sidgwick and Jackson, London), 1964, page 29.
11. Ibid., page 38.
12. Martin Gilbert, The Second World War - A Complete History (Owl Book, Henry Holt and Company, New York), 1989, page 117.
13. Bishop, page 75.
14. Ibid., pages 101-104. Gilbert, page 121.
15. Adolf Hitler, My New Order (Octagon Books, New York), 1973, page 848. Harry Gabcke, Die Zerstörung Wesermundes in der Bombennacht vom 18 September 1944 (Stadtarchiv Bremerhaven), 1985, page 7. The New York Times, September 5, 1940.
16. Bishop, page 152.
17. Ibid., pages 109-152. Winston S. Churchill, Their Finest Hour (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston), 1949, page 378.
18. Churchill, Their Finest Hour, pages 376-377.
19. Ibid., page 377. The New York Times, November 20, 1940, page 1.
20. Gilbert, page 134. Bishop, pages 133-134.
21. Winston S. Churchill, The War Speeches of the Rt Hon Winston

- S. Churchill, Vol. 1 (Cassell and Company, Ltd., London), 1952, page 473.
22. Ibid., Vol. 2, page 480.
 23. The New York Times, September 11, 1940, page 1.
 24. Bishop, page 124.
 25. John Keegan, The Second World War (Penguin Group Viking Penguin, New York), 1989, page 422.
 26. Gilbert, page 504.
 27. Ibid., pages 175, 181-182.
 28. Calvocoressi and Wint, pages 529-532.
 29. Veale, page 185.
 30. Ibid., pages 181-182.
 31. Calvocoressi and Wint, page 494.
 32. C.P. Snow, Science and Government (Oxford University Press, London), 1961, pages 50-51.
 33. Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, Vol. 385, page 327.
 34. The New York Times, June 1, 1942, page 1.
 35. Gabcke, pages 3, 29-30.
 36. Veale, page 175. Harris, page 177.
 37. Hilde Kammer and Elisabeth Bartsch, Jugendlexikon Nationalsozialismus - Begriffe aus der Zeit der Gewaltherrschaft (Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, Hamburg), 1982, pages 28, 67.
 38. The American strategic bomber offensive over Germany is discussed by Martin Caidin in Flying Forts: The B-17 in World War II (Bantam Books, New York), 1990, and by Martin Middlebrook in The Schweinfurt-Regensburg Mission - American Raids on 17 August 1943 (Penguin Books, New York), 1983. American bombing raids over Germany were also extensively reported by The New York Times, for instance in the June 12, 1943; December 25, 1943; and March 7, 1944 editions.
 39. Len Deighton, Blood, Tears, and Folly - An Objective Look at World War II (HarperCollins Publishers, New York), 1993, pages 401-410.
 40. Winston S. Churchill, Blood, Sweat and Tears (G.P. Putnam and Sons, New York), 1941, page 382.
 41. Churchill, War Speeches, page 262.
 42. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 376, page 116.
 43. Ibid., Vol. 378, page 684.
 44. Ibid., Vol. 378, page 718.
 45. Ibid., Vol. 378, page 704.
 46. Ibid., Vol. 378, page 721.

47. Ibid., Vol. 378, page 1164.
48. Rudolph Hoss, Death Dealer - The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant of Auschwitz, edited by Steven Paskuly, translated by Andrew Pollinger (Da Capo Press, New York), 1996, pages 171-172.
49. Gabcke, page 16.
50. The attitude of the German people toward the Nazi state is discussed by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen in Hitler's Willing Executioners - Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York), 1996. According to Goldhagen, the German people eagerly participated in the implementation of Nazi policies. The cooperation and support of the German people were essential to the pursuit of Nazi objectives.
51. Churchill, Their Finest Hour, page 26.
52. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 381, page 610.
53. Ibid., Vol. 381, page 601.
54. Ibid., Vol. 380, page 178.
55. Ibid., Vol. 385, page 686.
56. Ibid., Vol. 385, pages 114-115.
57. Ibid., Vol. 385, page 251.
58. Ibid., Vol. 387, pages 912-913.
59. Ibid., Vol. 387, page 955.
60. Gabcke, page 11. The Washington Post, February 13, 1995, page D1.
61. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 408, pages 1900-1901.
62. Ibid., Vol. 408, pages 1989-1990.
63. Harris, page 177.
64. Adam Roberts and Richard Guelff, editors, Documents on the Laws of War (Clarendon Press, Oxford), 1982, pages 23-148.
65. Charles I. Bevans, editor, Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America 1776-1949, Volume 1 (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.), 1968, pages 247-262; 631-653. Leon Friedman, editor, The Law of War - A Documentary History, Volume 1 (Random House, New York), 1972, pages 437-443. Roberts and Guelff, page 122.
66. Bevans, pages 252, 643.
67. Ibid., pages 256, 647.
68. Ibid., pages 257, 648.
69. Ibid., page 648.
70. Ibid., page 648.
71. Friedman, page 440.
72. Ibid., pages 440-441.

73. Roberts and Guelff, page 122.
74. In The Second World War Keegan writes:
With their backs to the wall the British people had chosen not to acknowledge that they had descended to the enemy's level. In victory they remembered that they believed in fair play. Strategic bombing, which may not have even been sound strategy, was certainly not fair play. Over its course and outcome its most consistent practitioners drew a veil. (page 433)
75. Hoss, page 372.
76. Churchill, Their Finest Hour, page 136.
77. Keegan, pages 588-595.
78. The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 29, 15th edition (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Chicago), 1997, page 1023.
79. Keegan, page 433.
80. Nazi psychopathology is discussed by Dr. G.M. Gilbert in The Psychology of Dictatorship (Ronald Press Company, New York), 1950, pages 240-286.
81. Alan Clark, The Nazi-German Conflict, 1941-45 (William Morrow and Company, New York), 1965, page 193.
82. Keegan, page 433. Harold Neujahr, Das Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges im heutigen Bremerhaven (Stadtarchiv Bremerhaven), 1985.
83. That the Jews were singled out for "especially bitter persecution" is noted by Dr. Johannes Neuhauser in What was it like in the Concentration Camp at Dachau, 15th Edition, English translation (Manz A.G., Munich/Dillingen), page 70. How the Germans planned the "final solution of the Jewish question" is discussed in detail by Hoss, pages 371-381. The "special treatment" of the Jews by the Germans is also discussed by Goldhagen, and by Kammer and Bartsch, pages 195-196.
84. The activities of the SS Einsatzgruppen and the systematic acts of torture, humiliation, terror, and mass murder perpetrated against the Jews by German police units in Nazi-occupied Europe is chronicled by Goldhagen. The SS Einsatzgruppen are also discussed by Kammer and Bartsch, pages 55-57.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bevans, Charles I., editor, Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America 1776-1949, Volume 1 (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.), 1968.
- Bishop, Edward, Their Finest Hour - The Story of the Battle of Britain 1940 (Ballantine Books, New York), 1968.
- Caidin, Martin, Flying Forts: The B-17 in World War II (Bantam Books, New York), 1990.
- Calvocoressi, Peter, and Wint, Guy, Total War (Penguin Books, New York), 1972.
- Churchill, Winston S., Blood, Sweat and Tears (G.P. Putnam and Sons, New York), 1941.
- Churchill, Winston S., The War Speeches of the Rt Hon Winston S. Churchill, Vol. 1 (Cassell and Company, Ltd., London), 1952.
- Churchill, Winston S., Their Finest Hour (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston), 1949.
- Churchill, Winston S., Winston S. Churchill - His Complete Speeches, 1897-1963, Vol. VI (Chelsea House Publishers, New York), 1974.
- Clark, Alan, The Nazi-German Conflict, 1941-1945 (William Morrow and Company, New York), 1965.
- Dear, I.C.B., editor, The Oxford Companion to World War II (Oxford University Press, New York), 1995.
- Deighton, Len, Blood, Tears, and Folly - An Objective Look at World War II (HarperCollins Publishers, New York), 1993.
- Friedman, Leon, editor, The Law of War- A Documentary History, Volume 1 (Random House, New York), 1972.
- Gabcke, Harry, Die Zerstörung Wesermundes in der Bombennacht vom 18 September 1944 (Stadtarchivs Bremerhaven), 1985.
- Gilbert, G.M., The Psychology of Dictatorship (Ronald Press Company, New York), 1950.
- Gilbert, Martin, The Second World War - A Complete History (Owl Book, Henry Holt and Company, New York), 1989.
- Goldhagen, Daniel Jonah, Hitler's Willing Executioners - Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York), 1996.
- Harris, Sir Arthur, Bomber Offensive (MacMillan Company, New York), 1947.
- Hitler, Adolf, My New Order (Octagon Books, New York), 1973.
- Hoss, Rudolph, Death Dealer - The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant of Auschwitz, edited by Steven Paskuly, translated by Andrew Pollinger (Da Capo Press, New York), 1996.
- Kammer, Hilde, and Bartsch, Elisabeth, Jugendlexikon Nationalsozialismus - Begriffe aus der Zeit der Gewaltherrschaft

(Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, Hamburg), 1982.

Keegan, John, The Second World War (Penguin Group Viking Penguin, New York), 1989.

Middlebrook, Martin, The Schweinfurt-Regensburg Mission, American Raids on 17 August 1943 (Penguin Books, New York), 1983.

Neuhausler, Johannes, What was it like in the Concentration Camp at Dachau, 15th Edition, English translation (Manz A.G., Munich/Dillingen).

Neujahr, Harald, Das Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges im heutigen Bremerhaven (Stadtarchiv Bremerhaven), 1985.

Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons (His Majesty's Stationery Office, London), Fifth Series, Vol. 1 - 1000 (February 4, 1909 - March 13, 1981).

Roberts, Adam, and Guelff, Richard, editors, Documents on the Laws of War (Clarendon Press, Oxford), 1982.

Snow, C.P., Science and Government (Oxford University Press, London), 1961.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 29, 15th edition (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Chicago), 1997.

The New York Times, May 12, 1940; May 20, 1940; May 28, 1940; May 29, 1940; September 5, 1940; September 11, 1940; November 20, 1940; June 1, 1942; June 12, 1943; December 25, 1943; and March 7, 1944.

The Washington Post, February 13, 1995.

Trevor-Roper, H.R., Hitler's War Directives - 1939-1945 (Sidgwick and Jackson, London), 1964.

Veale, F.J.P., Advance to Barbarism (The Mitre Press, London), 1968.