Back in Junior High School I became an avid war-gamer, and was fascinated by the military history of the past, especially World War II, the most titanic conflict ever recorded. However, although I much enjoyed reading the detailed accounts of the battles of that war, especially on the Eastern Front that largely determined its outcome, I had much less interest in the accompanying political history, and simply relied upon the accounts in my standard textbooks, which I considered quite reliable.

Supporting that strong impression, these sources hardly seemed to hide some of the uglier aspects of the conflict and its aftermath[1], such as the notable brutalities visited upon pro-Nazi turncoats following the Liberation of France in 1944. Pierre Laval, head of the puppet Vichy government and quite a number of his fellow quislings were tried and executed for their treason, and even Marshal Petain, the renowned French World War I hero who in his dotage had sadly lent his name to the hated regime as its head of state, was condemned to death, though his life was eventually spared. Less prominent collaborators suffered as well, with my books often carrying photos of some of the hundreds or thousands of ordinary French women who for fear, love, or money had become intimate with German soldiers during the four years of occupation, and as a consequence had their heads shaved and were marched through the streets of their towns or cities in parades of shame.

Such excesses were obviously unfortunate, but wars and liberations often unleash considerable brutality, and these spectacles of public humiliation obviously did not begin to compare with the vicious bloodshed of the years of Nazi control. For example, there was the notorious case of Oradour-sur-Glane, a village involved in Resistance activities, in which many hundreds of men, women, and children were herded into a church and other buildings and burned alive. Meanwhile, enormous numbers of Frenchmen and others had been deported to wartime
Germany as slave-laborers, in total violation of every legal principle, producing an uncanny parallel to Stalin’s Gulag and underscoring the similarity of those two totalitarian regimes. This, at least, had always been my limited impression of that very unfortunate era.

Eventually, major cracks in this simple picture began appearing. I have previously written of my discovery of John T. Flynn[2], one of America’s most prominent liberal public intellectuals throughout the 1930s, who was then purged from the mainstream media and eventually forgotten for his discordant views on certain contentious issues. From the early 1940s onward, Flynn’s books only found a home at the Devin-Adair Company, a small Irish-American publishing house based in New York City. Somehow or other, perhaps six or seven years ago I became aware of another book released by that same press in 1953.

The author of Unconditional Hatred was Captain Russell Grenfell, a British naval officer who had served with distinction in the First World War, and later helped direct the Royal Navy Staff College, while publishing six highly-regarded books on naval strategy and serving as the Naval Correspondent of the Daily Telegraph. Grenfell recognized that great quantities of extreme propaganda almost inevitably accompany any major war, but with several years having passed since the close of hostilities, he was growing concerned that unless an antidote were soon widely applied, the lingering poison of such wartime exaggerations might threaten the future peace of Europe.

His considerable historical erudition and his reserved academic tone shine through in this fascinating volume, which focuses primarily upon the events of the two world wars, but often contains digressions into the Napoleonic conflicts or even earlier ones. One of the intriguing aspects of his discussion is that much of the anti-German propaganda he seeks to debunk would today be considered so absurd and ridiculous it has been almost entirely forgotten, while much of the extremely hostile picture we currently have of Hitler’s Germany receives almost no mention whatsoever, possibly because it had not yet been established or was then still considered too outlandish for anyone to take seriously. Among other matters, he reports with considerable disapproval that leading British newspapers had carried headlined articles about the horrific tortures that were being inflicted upon German prisoners at war crimes trials in order to coerce all sorts of dubious confessions out of them.

Some of Grenfell’s casual claims do raise doubts about various aspects of our conventional picture of German occupation policies. He notes numerous stories in the British press of former French “slave-laborers” who later organized friendly post-war reunions with their erstwhile German employers. He also states that in 1940 those same British papers had reported the absolutely exemplary behavior of German soldiers toward French civilians, though after terroristic attacks by Communist underground forces provoked reprisals, relations often grew much worse.

Most importantly, he points out that the huge Allied strategic bombing campaign against French cities and industry had killed huge numbers of civilians, probably far more than had ever died at German hands, and thereby provoked a great deal of hatred as an inevitable
consequence. At Normandy he and other British officers had been warned to remain very
cautious among any French civilians they encountered for fear they might be subject to deadly
attacks.

Although Grenfell’s content and tone strike me as exceptionally even-handed and objective,
others surely viewed his text in a very different light. The Devin-Adair jacket-flap notes that no
British publisher was willing to accept the manuscript, and when the book appeared no major
American reviewer recognized its existence. Even more ominously, Grenfell is described as
having been hard at work on a sequel when he suddenly died in 1954 of unknown causes, and
his lengthy obituary[3] in the London Times gives his age as 62. With the copyright having long
lapsed, I am pleased to include this important volume in my collection of HTML Books so that
those interested can easily read it and decide for themselves.

On French matters, Grenfell provides several extended references to a 1952 book entitled France: The Tragic Years, 1939-1947 by Sisley Huddleston, an author totally unfamiliar to me, and this whet my
curiosity. One helpful use of my content-archiving system is to easily
provide the proper context for long-forgotten writers, and
Nation, and The New Republic, plus his thirty well-regarded books
on France, seem to confirm that he spent decades as one of the
leading interpreters of France to educated American and British
readers. Indeed, his exclusive interview with British Prime Minister
Lloyd George at the Paris Peace Conference became an international
scoop. As with so many other writers, after World War II his
American publisher necessarily became Devin-Adair, which released
a posthumous 1955 edition of his book. Given his eminent journalistic credentials,
Huddleston’s work on the Vichy period was reviewed in American periodicals, although in
rather cursory and dismissive fashion, and I ordered a copy and read it.

I cannot attest to the correctness of Huddleston’s 350 page account of France during the war
years and immediately after, but as a very distinguished journalist and longtime observer who
was an eyewitness to the events he describes, writing at a time when the official historical
narrative had not yet hardened into concrete, I do think that his views should be taken quite
seriously. Huddleston’s personal circle certainly extended quite high, with former U.S.
Ambassador William Bullitt being one of his oldest friends. And without doubt Huddleston’s
presentation is radically different from the conventional story I had always heard.

Judging the credibility of a source from such a distance in time is not easy, but sometimes a
single telling detail provides an important clue. In revisiting Huddleston’s book, I noticed he
casually mentioned that in Spring 1940 the French and British had been on the very verge of a
military attack against Soviet Russia, which they regarded as Germany’s crucial ally, and
planned an assault on Baku, intending to destroy Stalin’s great oil fields of the Caucasus by a strategic bombing campaign. I had never read a single mention of this in any of my World War II histories, and until recently I would have dismissed the story as an absurd rumor of that era, long since debunked. But just a couple of weeks ago, I discovered a 2015 article[6] in The National Interest confirming these exact facts, over seventy years after they had understandably been expunged from all of our mainstream historical narratives.

As Huddleston describes things, the French army collapsed in May of 1940, and the government desperately recalled Petain, then in his mid-80s and the country’s greatest war hero, from his posting as the Ambassador to Spain. Soon he was asked by the French President to form a new government and arrange an armistice with the victorious Germans, and this proposal received near-unanimous support from France’s National Assembly and Senate, including the backing of virtually all the leftist parliamentarians. Petain achieved this result, and another near-unanimous vote of the French parliament then authorized him to negotiate a full peace treaty with Germany, which certainly placed his political actions on the strongest possible legal basis. At that point, almost everyone in Europe believed that the war was essentially over, with Britain soon to make peace.

While Petain’s fully-legitimate French government was negotiating with Germany, a small number of diehards, including Col. Charles de Gaulle, deserted from the army and fled aboard, declaring that they intended to continue the war indefinitely, but they initially attracted minimal support or attention. One interesting aspect of the situation was that De Gaulle had long been one of Petain’s leading proteges, and once his political profile began rising a couple of years later, there were often quiet speculations that he and his old mentor had arranged a “division of labor,” with the one making an official peace with the Germans while the other left to become the center of overseas resistance in the uncertain event that different opportunities arose.

Although Petain’s new French government guaranteed that its powerful navy would never be used against the British, Churchill took no chances, and quickly launched an attack on the fleet of its erstwhile ally, whose ships were already disarmed and helplessly moored in port, sinking most of them, and killing up to 2,000 Frenchmen in the process. This incident was not entirely dissimilar to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the following year, and rankled the French for many years to come.

Huddleston then spends much of the book discussing the complex French politics of the next few years, as the war unexpectedly continued, with Russia and America eventually joining the Allied cause, greatly raising the odds against a German victory. During this period, the French political and military leadership performed a difficult balancing act, resisting German demands on some points and acquiescing to them on others, while the internal Resistance movement gradually grew, attacking German soldiers and provoking harsh German reprisals. Given my lack of expertise, I cannot really judge the accuracy of his political narrative, but it seems quite realistic and plausible to me, though specialists might surely find fault.

However, the most remarkable claims in Huddleston’s book come towards the end, as he describes what eventually became known as “the Liberation of France” during 1944-45 when the retreating German forces abandoned the country and pulled back to their own borders.
Among other things, he suggests that the number of Frenchmen claiming “Resistance” credentials grew as much as a hundred-fold once the Germans had left and there was no longer any risk in adopting that position.

And at that point, enormous bloodshed soon began, by far the worst wave of extra-judicial killings in all of French history. Most historians agree that around 20,000 lives were lost in the notorious “Reign of Terror” during the French Revolution and perhaps 18,000 died during the Paris Commune of 1870-71 and its brutal suppression. But according to Huddleston the American leaders estimated there were at least 80,000 “summary executions” in just the first few months after Liberation, while the Socialist Deputy who served as Interior Minister in March 1945 and would have been in the best position to know, informed De Gaulle’s representatives that 105,000 killings had taken place just from August 1944 to March 1945, a figure that was widely quoted in public circles at the time.

Since a large fraction of the entire French population had spent years behaving in ways that now suddenly might be considered “collaborationist,” enormous numbers of people were vulnerable, even at risk of death, and they sometimes sought to save their own lives by denouncing their acquaintances or neighbors. Underground Communists had long been a major element of the Resistance, and many of them eagerly retaliated against their hated “class enemies,” while numerous individuals took the opportunity to settle private scores. Another factor was that many of the Communists who had fought in the Spanish Civil War, including thousands of the members of the International Brigades, had fled to France after their military defeat in 1938, and now often took the lead in enacting vengeance against the same sort of conservative forces who had previously vanquished them in their own country.

Although Huddleston himself was an elderly, quite distinguished international journalist with very highly placed American friends, and he had performed some minor services on behalf of the Resistance leadership, he and his wife narrowly escaped summary execution during that period, and he provides a collection of the numerous stories he heard of less fortunate victims. But what appears to have been by far the worst sectarian bloodshed in French history has been soothingly rechristened “the Liberation” and almost entirely removed from our historical memory, except for the famously shaved heads of a few disgraced women. These days Wikipedia constitutes the congealed distillation of our Official Truth, and its entry on those events puts the death toll at barely one-tenth the figures quoted by Huddleston, but I find him a far more credible source.

Often knocking the first hole in a mighty wall is the most difficult. Once I became persuaded that my entire understanding of the post-war history of France was entirely wrong and to some extent backward, I naturally became much more open to further revelations. If France—a leading member of the victorious Allied coalition of World War II—had actually suffered an unprecedented orgy of revolutionary terror and killings, perhaps my standard history had also been less than totally candid in its description of defeated Germany’s fate. I had certainly read
of the horrors inflicted by Russian troops, with perhaps two million German women and girls brutally raped, and there was also a sentence or two about the expulsion of many millions of ethnic Germans from the lands controlled by Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other Eastern European countries vengeful after their years under the terrible Nazi yoke. There was also some mention of the remarkably vindictive Morgenthau Plan, fortunately almost immediately abandoned, and a focus on the German economic rebirth under the generosity of America’s Marshall Plan. But I began to wonder if there was actually more to the story.

I soon came across references to some of the writings of Freda Utley[9], now largely forgotten, but once a fairly prominent author and journalist in the America of the 1940s and 1950s, with an interesting personal background. Born an Englishwoman in a family connected with George Bernard Shaw and the Fabians, she took up Communism and in 1928 married a Soviet Jew of a similar ideological persuasion, with the couple then moving to the Soviet Union to help build the Motherland of the Socialist Revolution. As was the case with so many foreign Communists, they grew increasingly disillusioned with their lives there until one day in 1936 her husband was arrested in a Stalinist purge, never to be seen again. She eventually fled the USSR with her infant son Jon, reaching our shores in 1939. Almost seventy years later, I became acquainted with Jon Utley through our mutual involvement in The American Conservative magazine.

Given Utley’s first-hand experiences from a decade in the USSR, her views on Soviet Communism were decidedly negative, very different from that of most of America’s intellectual and journalistic elite. As a consequence, she was quickly tagged as an “anti-Communist,” and her numerous subsequent books and articles[10] over the next couple of decades were generally relegated to publishers of that orientation, viewed with disfavor by mainstream media outlets.

In 1948 she spent several months traveling around Occupied Germany, and the following year published her experiences in The High Cost of Vengeance, which I found eye-opening. Unlike the vast majority of other American journalists, who generally took brief, heavily-chaperoned visits, Utley actually spoke German and was quite familiar with the country, having frequently visited it during the Weimar Era. Whereas Grenfell’s discussion was highly restrained and almost academic in its tone, her own writing was considerably more strident and emotional, hardly surprising given her direct encounter with extremely distressing subject matter. Her eyewitness testimony seemed quite credible, and the factual information she provided, buttressed by numerous interviews and anecdotal observations, was gripping.

More than three years after the end of hostilities, Utley encountered a land still almost totally ruined, with large portions of the population forced to seek shelter in damaged basements or share tiny rooms in broken buildings. The population regarded itself as being “without rights,” often subject to arbitrary treatment by occupation troops or other privileged elements, who stood completely outside the legal jurisdiction of the regular local police. Germans in large numbers were regularly removed from their homes, which were used to billet American troops or others who found favor with them, a situation that had been noted with some outrage in Gen. George Patton’s posthumously published diaries. Even at this point, a foreign soldier...
might still sometimes seize anything he wanted from German civilians, with potentially
dangerous consequences if they protested the theft. Utley tellingly quotes a former German
soldier who had served occupation duties in France and remarked that he and his comrades
had operated under strictest discipline and could never have imagined behaving toward French
civilians in the manner that current Allied troops now treated German ones.

Some of Utley’s quoted claims are quite astonishing, but seem solidly based on reputable
sources and fully confirmed elsewhere. Throughout the first three years of peacetime, the daily
food ration allocated to Germany’s entire civilian population was roughly 1550 calories,
approximately the same as that provided to the inmates of German concentration camps during
the war recently ended, and it sometimes dropped far, far lower. During the difficult winter of
1946-47, the entire population of the Ruhr, Germany’s industrial heartland, had only received
starvation rations of 700-800 calories per day, and even lower levels were sometimes reached.

Influenced by hostile official propaganda, the widespread attitude of Allied personnel towards
ordinary Germans was certainly as bad as anything faced by the natives living under a
European colonial regime. Time and again, Utley notes the remarkable parallels with the
treatment and attitude she had previously seen Westerners take towards the native Chinese
during most of the 1930s, or that the British had expressed to their Indian colonial subjects.
Small German boys, shoeless, destitute, and hungry, eagerly retrieved balls at American
sporting-clubs for a tiny pittance. Today it is sometimes disputed whether American cities
during the late 19th century actually contained signs reading “No Irish Need Apply,” but Utley
certainly saw signs reading “No Dogs or Germans Allowed” outside numerous establishments
frequented by Allied personnel.

Based on my standard history textbooks, I had always believed that there existed a total night-
and-day difference in the behavior toward local civilians between the German troops who
occupied France from 1940-44 and the Allied troops who occupied Germany from 1945
onward. After reading the detailed accounts of Utley and other contemporaneous sources, I
think my opinion was absolutely correct, but with the direction reversed.

Utley believed part of the reason for this utterly disastrous situation was deliberate American
government policy. Although the Morgenthau Plan—aimed at eliminating half or so of
Germany’s population—had been officially abandoned and replaced with the Marshall Plan
promoting German revival, she found that many aspects of the former actually still held sway
in practice. Even as late as 1948, huge portions of the German industrial base continued to be
dismantled and shipped off to other countries while very tight restrictions on German
production and exports remained in place. Indeed, the level of poverty, misery, and oppression
she saw everywhere almost seemed deliberately calculated to turn ordinary Germans against
America and its Western allies, perhaps opening the door to Communist sympathies. Such
suspicions are certainly strengthened when we consider that this system had been devised by
Harry Dexter White, later revealed to be a Soviet agent.

She is especially scathing about the total perversion of any basic notions of human justice
during the Nuremberg Tribunal and various other war crime trials, a subject to which she
devotes two full chapters. These judicial proceedings exhibited the worst sort of legal double-standards, with leading Allied judges explicitly stating that their own countries were not at all bound by the same international legal conventions which they claimed to be enforcing against German defendants. Even more shocking were some of the measures used, with outraged American jurists and journalists revealing that horrific torture, threats, blackmail, and other entirely illegitimate means were regularly employed to obtain confessions or denunciations of others, a situation that strongly suggested a very considerable number of those condemned and hanged were entirely innocent.

Her book also gives substantial coverage to the organized expulsions of ethnic Germans from Silesia, the Sudetenland, East Prussia, and various other parts of Central and Eastern Europe where they had peacefully lived for many centuries, with the total number of such expellees generally estimated at 13 to 15 million. Families were sometimes given as little as ten minutes to leave the homes in which they had resided for a century or more, then forced to march off on foot, sometimes for hundreds of miles, towards a distant land they had never seen, with their only possessions being what they could carry in their own hands. In some cases, any surviving menfolk were separated out and shipped off to slave-labor camps, thereby producing an exodus consisting solely of women, children, and the very elderly. All estimates were that at least a couple million perished along the way, from hunger, illness, or exposure.

These days we endlessly read painful discussions of the notorious “Trail of Tears” suffered by the Cherokees in the distant past of the early 19th century, but this rather similar 20th Century event was nearly a thousand-fold larger in size. Despite this huge discrepancy in magnitude and far greater distance in time, I would guess that the former event may command a thousand times the public awareness among ordinary Americans. If so, this would demonstrate that overwhelming media control can easily shift perceived reality by a factor of a million or more.

The population movement certainly seems to have represented the largest ethnic-cleansing in the history of the world, and if the Germany had ever done anything even remotely similar during its years of European victories and conquests, the visually-gripping scenes of such an enormous flood of desperate, trudging refugees would surely have become a centerpiece of numerous World War II movies of the last seventy years. But since nothing like that ever happened, Hollywood screenwriters lost a tremendous opportunity.

Utley’s extremely grim portrayal is strongly corroborated by numerous other sources. In 1946, Victor Gollanz, a prominent British publisher from a Socialistic Jewish background, took an extended visit to Germany, and published In Darkest Germany the following year, recounting his enormous horror at the conditions he discovered there. His claims of the appalling malnutrition, illness, and total destitution were supported by over a hundred chilling photographs, and the introduction to the American edition was written by
University of Chicago President Robert M. Hutchins, one of our most reputable public intellectuals of that era. But his slim volume seems to have attracted relatively little attention in the American mainstream media, although his somewhat similar book *Our Threatened Values*, published the previous year and based upon information from official sources had received a little more. *Gruesome Harvest* by Ralph Franklin Keeling, also published in 1947, helpfully gathers together a large number of official statements and reports from major media outlets, which generally support exactly this same picture of the first few years of Germany under Allied occupation.

During the 1970 and 1980s this distressing topic was taken up by Alfred M. de Zayas[12], who held a Harvard Law degree and doctorate in history, and served a long and illustrious career as a leading international human rights lawyer long affiliated with the United Nations. His books such as *Nemesis at Potsdam*, *A Terrible Revenge*, and *The Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau, 1939-1945* especially focused on the massive ethnic cleansing of the German minorities, and were based on great quantities of archival research. They received considerable scholarly praise and notice in major academic journals and sold hundreds of thousands of copies in Germany and other parts of Europe, but hardly seem to have penetrated the consciousness of America or the rest of the English-speaking world.

In the late 1980s this smoldering historical debate took a remarkable new turn. While visiting France during 1986 in preparation for an unrelated book, a Canadian writer named James Bacque stumbled upon clues suggesting that one of the most terrible secrets of post-war Germany had long remained completely hidden, and he soon embarked upon extensive research into the subject, finally publishing *Other Losses* in 1989. Based upon very considerable evidence, including government records, personal interviews, and recorded eyewitness testimony, he argued that after the end of the war, the Americans had starved to death as many as a million German POWs, seemingly as a deliberate act of policy, a war crime that would surely rank among the greatest in history.

For decades, Western propagandists had relentlessly barraged the Soviets with claims that they were keeping back a million or more “missing” German POWs as slave-laborers in their Gulag, while the Soviets had endlessly denied these accusations. According to Bacque, the Soviets had been telling the truth all along, and the missing soldiers had been among the enormous numbers who had fled westward near the end of the war, seeking what they assumed would be far better treatment at the hands of the advancing Anglo-American armies. But instead, they
were denied all normal legal protections, and confined under horrible conditions where they rapidly perished of hunger, illness, and exposure.

Without attempting to summarize Bacque’s extensive accumulation of supporting material, a few of his factual elements are worth mentioning. At the close of hostilities, the American government employed circuitous legal reasoning to argue that the many millions of German troops that they had captured should not be considered “prisoners of war” and therefore were not covered by the provisions of the Geneva Convention. Soon afterward, attempts by the International Red Cross to provide food shipments to the enormous Allied prison camps were repeatedly rejected, and notices were posted throughout the nearby German towns and villages that any civilian who attempted to smuggle food to the desperate POWs might be shot on sight. These undeniable historical facts do seem to suggest certain dark possibilities.

Although initially released by an obscure publisher, Bacque’s book soon became a sensation and an international best-seller. He paints Gen. Dwight Eisenhower as the central culprit behind the tragedy, noting the far lower POW losses in areas outside his control, and suggests that as a highly ambitious “political general” of German-American ancestry, he may have been under intense pressure to demonstrate his “harshness” toward the defeated Wehrmacht foe.

Historian Stephen Ambrose, who had made a lucrative career by churning out numerous hagiographic volumes on Eisenhower and World War II aided by his widespread plagiarism[13], reacted in horror at Bacque’s claims, and quickly organized a symposium volume under the auspices of the Eisenhower Center, hoping to rebut the monstrous accusations that had been levied against his personal meal-ticket. But although I felt that he and the wide assortment of co-authors he conscripted into his project did raise some valid doubts about portions of Bacque’s evidence, they seemed unable to effectively challenge the bulk of it, except perhaps by arguing that something so enormous could not possibly have been kept hidden for so long. Moreover, Ambrose and his colleagues grudgingly admitted the official American statistics of POW mortality rates—which none of them had ever previously questioned—were impossibly low, but chose to resolve this difficulty by rather arbitrarily quadrupling those figures, which hardly raises great confidence in their methods.

Furthermore, once the Cold War ended and the Soviet Archives were open to scholars, their contents seem to have strongly validated Bacque’s thesis. He notes that although the archives do contain explicit evidence of such long-denied atrocities as Stalin’s Katyn Forest massacre of Poland’s officer corps, they show absolutely no signs of any million missing German POWs, who instead had very likely ended their lives in the starvation and illness of Eisenhower’s death camps. Bacque points out that the German government has issued severe legal threats against anyone seeking to investigate the likely sites of the mass graves that might hold the remains of those long-dead POWs, and in an updated edition, he also mentions Germany’s enactment of harsh new laws meting out heavy prison sentences to anyone who merely questions the official narrative of World War II.
Bacque ironically notes that the Soviet archival records of their own German POWs show a reasonably high but generally normal death rate across the years of captivity, with nothing like the huge losses that apparently occurred so quickly in the Western camps on German soil, and this was despite the far greater poverty of the post-war USSR. But we should really not regard this fact as so surprising. Stalin, a Georgian, reigned as the Soviet autarch, and in the past he had freely ordered the deaths of vast numbers of his own subjects, Russian or not, in order to enforce his rule. The Germans had opposed and fought him as well, and they had suffered greatly for it, but once their resistance was ended and they were now under his power, why would he feel especially punitive towards them? Friedrich von Paulus, the Field Marshal who had commanded at Stalingrad, later declared his loyalty to the Soviets and was given a post of honor in the new East Germany, so ordinary POWs who obeyed and worked productively would certainly be fed.

Although now quite elderly, a couple of years ago Bacque gave a lengthy interview to Red Ice Radio, and those interested may listen to it on YouTube, which also hosts various other video presentations on the same subject:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKGQ65guU3o

Bacque’s discussion of the new evidence of the Kremlin archives constitutes a relatively small portion of his 1997 sequel, *Crimes and Mercies*, which centered around an even more explosive analysis, and also became an international best-seller.

As described above, first-hand observers of post-war Germany in 1947 and 1948 such as Gollanz and Utley, had directly reported on the horrific conditions they discovered, and stated that for years official food rations for the entire population had been comparable to that of the inmates of Nazi concentration camps and sometimes far lower, leading to the widespread malnutrition and illness they witnessed all around them. They also noted the destruction of most of Germany’s pre-war housing stock and the severe overcrowding produced by the influx of so many millions of pitiful ethnic German refugees expelled from other parts of Central and Eastern Europe. But these visitors lacked any access to solid population statistics, and could only speculate upon the enormous human death toll that hunger and illness had already inflicted, and which would surely continue if policies were not quickly changed.

Years of archival research by Bacque attempt to answer this question, and the conclusion he provides is certainly not a pleasant one. Both the Allied military government and the later German civilian authorities seem to have made a concerted effort to hide or obscure the true scale of the calamity visited upon German civilians during the years 1945-1950, and the official mortality statistics found in government reports are simply too fantastical to possibly be correct, although they became the basis for the subsequent histories of that period. Bacque notes that these figures suggest that the death rate during the terrible conditions of 1947, long
remembered as the “Hunger Year” (Hungerjahr) and vividly described in Gollancz’s account, was actually lower than that of the prosperous Germany of the late 1960s. Furthermore, private reports by American officials, mortality rates from individual localities, and other strong evidence demonstrate that these long-accepted aggregate numbers were essentially fictional.

Instead, Bacque attempts to provide more realistic estimates based upon an examination of the population totals of the various German censuses together with the recorded influx of the huge number of German refugees. Based upon this simple analysis, he makes a reasonably strong case that the excess German deaths during that period amounted to at least around 10 million, and possibly many millions more. Furthermore, he provides substantial evidence that the starvation was either deliberate or at least enormously worsened by American government resistance to overseas food relief efforts. Perhaps these numbers should not be so totally surprising given that the official Morgenthau Plan had envisioned the elimination of around 20 million Germans, and as Bacque demonstrates, top American leaders quietly agreed to continue that policy in practice even while they renounced it in theory.

Assuming these numbers are even remotely correct, the implications are quite remarkable. The toll of the human catastrophe experienced in post-war Germany would certainly rank among the greatest in modern peacetime history, far exceeding the deaths that occurred during the Ukrainian Famine of the early 1930s and possibly even approaching the wholly unintentional losses during Mao’s Great Leap Forward of 1959-61. Furthermore, the post-war German losses would vastly outrank either of these other unfortunate events in percentage terms and this would remain true even if the Bacque’s estimates are considerably reduced. Yet I doubt if even a small fraction of one percent of Americans are today aware of this enormous human calamity. Presumably memories are much stronger in Germany itself, but given the growing legal crackdown on discordant views in that unfortunate country, I suspect that anyone who discusses the topic too energetically risks immediate imprisonment.

To a considerable extent, this historical ignorance has been heavily fostered by our governments, often using underhanded or even nefarious means. Just like in the old decaying USSR, much of the current political legitimacy of today’s American government and its various European vassal-states is founded upon a particular narrative history of World War II, and challenging that narrative might produce dire political consequences. Bacque credibly relates some of the apparent efforts to dissuade any major newspaper or magazine from running articles discussing the startling findings of his first book, thereby imposing a “blackout” aimed at absolutely minimizing any media coverage. Such measures seem to have been quite effective, since until eight or nine years ago, I’m not sure I had ever heard a word of these shocking ideas, and I have certainly never seen them seriously discussed in any of the numerous newspapers or magazines that I have carefully read over the last three decades.

Even illegal means were employed to hinder the efforts of this solitary, determined scholar. At times, Bacque’s phone-lines were tapped, his mail intercepted, and his research materials surreptitiously copied, while his access to some official archives was blocked. Some of the elderly eyewitnesses who personally corroborated his analysis received threatening notes and had their property vandalized.
In his Foreword to this 1997 book, De Zayas, the eminent international human rights attorney, praised Bacque’s ground-breaking research, and hoped that it would soon lead to a major scholarly debate aimed at reassessing the true facts of these historical events that had taken place a half-century earlier. But in his update to the 2007 edition, he expressed some outrage that no such discussion ever occurred, and instead the German government merely passed a series of harsh laws mandating prison sentences for anyone who substantially disputed the settled narrative of World War II and its immediate aftermath, perhaps by overly focusing on the suffering of German civilians.

Although both of Bacque’s books became international best-sellers, the near-complete absence of any secondary media coverage ensured that they never entered public awareness with anything more than a pinprick. Another important factor is the tremendously disproportionate reach of print and electronic media. A best-seller may be read by many tens of thousands of people, but a successful film might reach tens of millions, and so long as Hollywood churns out endless movies denouncing Germany’s atrocities but not a single one on the other side, the true facts of that history are hardly likely to gain much traction. I strongly suspect that far more people today believe in the real-life existence of Batman and Spiderman than are even aware of the Bacque Hypothesis.

In assessing the political factors that apparently produced such an enormous and seemingly deliberate death toll among German civilians long after the fighting had ended, an important point should be made. Historians seeking to demonstrate Hitler’s enormous wickedness or to suggest his knowledge of various crimes committed during the course of the Second World War are regularly forced to sift tens of thousands of his printed words for a suggestive phrase here and there, and then interpret these vague allusions as absolutely conclusive declarative statements. Those who fail to stretch the words to fit, such as renowned historian David Irving[14], will sometimes see their careers destroyed as a consequence.

But as early as 1940, an American Jew named Theodore Kaufman became so enraged at what he regarded as Hitler’s mistreatment of German Jewry that he published a short book evocatively entitled *Germany Must Perish!*, in which he explicitly proposed the total extermination of the German people. And that book apparently received favorable if perhaps not entirely serious discussion in many of our most prestigious media outlets, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Time Magazine*. If such sentiments were being freely expressed in certain quarters even before America’s actual entrance into the military conflict, then perhaps the long-hidden policies that Bacque seems to have uncovered should not be so totally shocking to us.

Cynics have sometimes noted that one ironic aspect of Hollywood fare both in television and film is the overwhelming anti-realism regularly displayed on topics carrying a strong ideological tinge. Action movies invariably show small females easily knocking around numerous large male antagonists with well-timed blows and kicks, while blacks are quite
frequently portrayed as brilliant scientists and scholars but only very rarely as street criminals or hoodlums. So some three generations after V-E Day, perhaps the still continuing stream of World War II films portraying Germans in a particular light should be best understood in these terms.

Related Reading:

- **Unconditional Hatred**[15] by Captain Russell Grenfell
- **France: The Tragic Years, 1939–1947**[16] by Sisley Huddleston
- **The High Cost of Vengeance**[17] by Freda Utley
- **Gruesome Harvest**[18] by Ralph Franklin Keeling
- **The Remarkable Historiography of David Irving**[19]
- **Our American Pravda**[20]

Source References


[7] its entry => [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89puration_l%C3%A9gale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89puration_l%C3%A9gale)


[15] Unconditional Hatred =>

[16] France: The Tragic Years, 1939-1947 =>


[18] Gruesome Harvest =>

[19] The Remarkable Historiography of David Irving =>