Bombing, state and civil society 1933 -1945

Research on the topic of "Bombing War and the Civilian Population" to 1945 is well advanced, both in Great Britain and in Germany. If one counts the products of both countries together, enough literature has appeared over the course of the past 20 years almost to fill a small library. Numerous works have appeared dealing with a big variety of topics and aspects.

Proceeding from this basis I would like to offer the a model based on transnational comparative studies. Taking German and British preparations for defense against aerial attack *prior* to 1939 as an example, I shall attempt to explore new avenues of approach. Concerning wartime events between 1939 and 1945 I can just give a few hints. My own knowledge on this matter based on hard archival work is limited, since my dissertation ended with the year 1939.

I will be concentrating my remarks more on each respective *political* system, rather than on the "nation". There is a strong nexus between the form of government and the external threats to which the system must respond. In my view, this comprises one of the core elements of social and political life.

In my remarks I will compare democracy and dictatorship, the two forms of government which have concerned the Western world most and, indeed, continue to do so today. Of course it remains true that form of government and nation cannot artificially be separated from one another. Concentrating on the governmental and social system seems nevertheless in my view to be more productive than concentrating on the nation as such.

In any case, it is well worthwhile to work on themes that deal with political or social entities as a whole, this not in the least because we are looking on aspects, that are pertinent to the *current* political questions. The threats against civil society from external violence and its consequences for the political and social system as a whole, have by no means disappeared. Unfortunately, it seems that perpetual guaranteed peace without fear, is a state of affairs that the democracies have long since enjoyed. The German democracies throughout their history have practically never known anything of the kind. They always lived with the eventuality of conflict.

The starting point for my following remarks will be the thesis that when confronted with a massive threat modern systems of government and society react according to their immanent structures and basic parameters. This approach enables the scholar to scrutinize the principle parameters within they function. Put more sharply: the way in which a system of rule reacts to a modern war from the air permits assumptions to made about the core interrelationships that govern its existence. The findings derived from such an inquiry can then be compared with comparable findings from other kinds of regimes.

To be able to produce adequate results, the researcher's scrutiny cannot limit itself to the superficial aspects of each government action, but rather needs to penetrate deeply into the underlying material and mental structures.

I my remarks that follow I will be using a three-step approach. First, I will be discussing the political and social orientation of the two systems with respect to their durability or toughness against aerial bombardment. Then I will discuss the practical preparations made prior to the war's outbreak. In my short conclusion I will then be discussing briefly the prospects for further research for the wartime period.

One of the central questions is: How did these two systems prepare their populations to endure the suffering of a bombing campaign, especially in view of the fact that it was obvious to all of responsible actors right from the start that people would by no means automatically be enthusiastic about the prospect. On the contrary, it was rather more to be expected that the multifaceted characteristics typical of a modern society would come into play, including mental rejection, fear, protest, desertion, griping, and lack of physical and moral "fiber".

To the first point. It is by no means easy to define the political and social underpinnings of the two systems in a clear-cut way. It is absolutely necessary to contrast imagination and reality when it comes to the question of how each state prepared its civilian population for the hardships of war. This is where the danger of succumbing to cross-epochal stereotypes becomes particularly great.

For Germany at least the various stages along the way have been relatively well researched, but still require methodological and critical scrutiny. The primary elements are clearly recognizable: the general process of militarization that already started in the Weimar Republic and grew stronger towards its end; the appearance of a whole phalanx of moral mobilization prophets, the most prominent of these Carl Schmitt and the brothers Jünger; the activities of clubs and associations promoting military and civil defense preparedness; and finally the ideas of the Nazis, especially those of Hitler. The civilian population was expected to become something like the frontline fighters of the First World War and be just as courageous and militant, should it come to air raids.

This expectation led very soon to contradictions for which no solution was ever found. The discrepancy between civil society and the soldiers in the combat zone could only poorly plastered over. The idea that the German people would rally like soldiers behind Hitler and his oppressive apparatus was pure delusion, propounded probably in its most radical form by Ernst Jünger in his monumental travesty "The Worker: Dominion and Gestalt". The reality looked quite different.

In Britain's case it is in my view still not completely clear how society transformed itself mentally from depression in the years following the First World War into the tough wartime community it proved to be during the Second. The problems of the 20s and 30s are well known to us all: economic decline, diplomatic weakness, the society's purported class-boundedness, labor disputes and strikes and, from 1933, a certain sense of inferiority with respect to Nazi Germany and, finally, the fear of bombing.

The answer to the basic question of how these problems were overcome lies in a complex of factors that in part go back to the time before the First World War. I believe that important sectors of British society had a kind of 'traditional' confidence of in the ability of the country to defend itself. Moreover, I think there was a certain inherent aggressiveness concerning 'external defence'. Further research on this point has to be done including a sharp look the development of the imperial 'mind' and 'jingoism' after 1914.

Maybe, there are even continuities from a colonial point of view. Some Officers of the RAF that had important position in the Second World War served as Air Officers in the Colonies (e.g. Iraq or India): Arthur Harris, Philip Game (who from 1935 – 1945 was Police Commissioner of London). Both were real hardliners when attacking insurgent people. Here further research is needed, especially on the imaginations on the term "civilised" / "semi-civilised".

As a thesis I would say, that a strong will for defence persisted even after 1918, although largely unnoticed in the public. How tough the system still was is illuminated by the general strike of 1926. This strike was in no way a phenomenon of British democracy's weakness, but its strength. The general strike provides a pattern for all of the preparations for a bombing war, especially in terms of organization, but also of mindset. For example, the organization for civil defense up to 1945 descends directly from the "general strike organization". In a sense the strike provided certain social groups and government authorities with an opportunity to test their powers of resistance.

Of course mobilisation wouldn't have occurred without the threat from Nazi Germany. It was against this background that the mentality of British society transformed itself. This can be demonstrated taking important literary figures as examples. In the mid-thirties visions of doomsday predominated according to H.G. Wells and his novel "The Shape of Things to Come", which then afterwards gave way to the image of the "Citizen Hero", that finally grew so strong that even George Orwell propagated it.

Concluding, one could say, that the British were neither a race of pacifist and decadent democrats, nor were their actions governed by so-called national virtues. The emergence of basic psychological and mental patterns fostering defense preparedness goes back to a combination of political, military, psychological and social developments. Additionally, the close chronological proximity of the First and the Second World Wars had a deep impact. Finally, no-one should underestimate the "will-factor" of the British government. This played a crucial role, for its task was the skillful management of the mobilization process.

In summary we can confidently state that both states had to deal with a populace that was fearful and unprepared for war, but, as shown during World War II, were nevertheless successful in mobilizing them in such a way as to enable them to ensure considerable privations. The mere fact that this occurred in both cases is in my opinion not necessarily spectacular. But how it came about illustrates clearly the difference between democracy and dictatorship and leads to new insights.

Which brings me to my second point.

In both cases systematic preparations for air-raid defense began in the early 1920s. In Germany interest in civil defense against air attack had never really died because of the threat against the borders. Systematic planning then began against the background of the Ruhr conflict. In *Great Britain* a first Air Raid Precautions Committee was set up as early as 1923/24, not so much because there was immediate danger, but more as a "matter of fact." As noted by Sir Maurice Hankey: „to try and overhaul our position and to be as ready as we can be the next time. It is a continuous study." The practical planning and preparations process differed in part considerably. In Great Britain the work and central policy decisions never really left the realm of Whitehall committees. Their work essentially involved theoretical policy debates of considerable scope and the preparation of "paper schemes". The whole planning into the early 1930s was pronouncedly theoretical in nature, centering around the extrapolation of bomb damage and the consequent effects on the civilian population. Rationality in general and rational government in the sense of Max Weber were clearly interdependent. The observance of established rules of procedure was purchased at the cost of considerable ponderousness and inefficiency. Whitehall planned and debated for almost ten years before any serious steps were undertaken. This, of course, was a result of consideration for existing domestic political circumstances that in no way made active preparations for war seem advisable.

But it did not mean that authoritarian thinking didn't exist. The British air-raid preparedness committees contained a group of members who quite early on were already calling for dictatorial solutions with radical propaganda and severe obligations for the civilian population. They couldn't push their ideas through in the end, because the leading men, Sir John Anderson and Maurice Hankey were opposed to that. But that was no easy task for these two. The committees were wavering at some time.

In Germany, thinking and preparing for civil defense had much more practical, albeit limited results. That had in part to do with a different political and strategical framework. The defeat of 1918, the precarious strategic situation, general disarmament and the persistence of old and the emergence of new authoritarian and mobilization concepts were the most important aspects.

That, however, does not mean that the political fundaments were completely different than on the other side of the English Channel. The formulation of policy and the initial buildup of an organizational

skeleton in the early thirties were, according to the actual principles of government, placed under civilian control. The German Home Office was assigned overall responsibility in 1927. This responsibility had to be shared with the other constitutional governing administrations, that is, the other Reichs Ministries, the "Länder" and the Local Authorities. The military who had controlled the Air Raid Precautions in the First World War were given no leading position.

In *Great Britain* there was some experimenting with military-style organizational models during the early thirties (the so-called Commandant Principle), but this was quickly abandoned in favor of assigning primary responsibility to the Local Authorities, which were expected to act upon instructions from and under the supervision of the Home Office.

Overall, both systems were committed to a rational course of development, at least up to the year 1933. When we consider things from the perspective of Max Weber's typology of power we find that in German and Britain mobilization for air war was clearly embedded in the existing power structure, which in both countries was strongly legalistic in nature informed by a parliamentary democracy and rationalistic government. This found expression particularly in the case of funding. In both cases the finance ministries stubbornly refused to approve major funding for the buildup, sometimes with just the same arguments commonly advanced by the pacifists.

Concerning propaganda and political values, organizational control lay with the authorities, which were unwilling to give up any of their turf. In Great Britain the same self-restrain that limited work to within the walls of the ministries led to the government making no attempt to initiate government-sanctioned propaganda, even indirectly.

In Germany the propaganda was much more lively. After the 1926 Paris Air Treaty had permitted passive Air Raid Precautions for Germany national air-raid associations were founded. They initiated a increasingly strident public awareness campaign combining humanitarian arguments on the one hand with massive calls for militarization on the other, already postulating a supposed struggle for the survival between the nations. They pressed more and more aggressively for a mobilization of air-raid protective measures and demanding that it be placed under their leadership and control. The German Home Office had to intervene massively to get the associations under control. From 1931/32 onwards emerged a massive air-raid preparedness movement, at first tolerated, later unofficially subsidized and controlled by the government.

In Britain things went on more calmly. The belief in London was that sufficient time remained to formulate a strategy theoretically. So the ARP committees introduced the strategy of "gradual dissemination of knowledge." They trusted that the issue would percolate by "natural" means, practically on it own, through the public, whether by means of activities by various outside authorities or consultants, or through deliberate or unintentional indiscretions. That was not particularly convincing, not least because the government always insisted on secrecy. In fact, this was an attempt to avoid awkward contact with public opinion.

From 1930 on, criticism was beginning to be heard from mobilization supporters. The complaints usually centered on the government's "lameness", presenting it as one of the traditional elements of British government. Some citizens threatened to protest publicly, pointing to their status as taxpayers or their years in the trenches of France. Some associations, such as for instance the "Legion of Ex-Frontiersmen", offered their services. Interestingly enough, they too, like their German counterparts, displayed a certain organizational aggressiveness and sought to gain control over civil-defense preparedness.

At this historical point matters could have rested. But it was Hitler's subsequent rise to power that brought about massive changes. The corresponding effects were soon to be felt in every corner.

The subsequent developments, quasi the Road to War, in the area of civil defense may be categorized under six key points. Before I start it is maybe wise to make a short remark: I concentrate fully on Civil Defence and I am fully aware that the terror aspect of the German regime in the East cannot be compared because it didn't exist in Britain. I try to identify Civil Defence within the framework of the respective system.

1. In Germany, and changes to the practice of power led to massive changes to the organizational landscape. Of special importance was the fact that former collegial and cooperative distribution of tasks in the Reichskabinett and the federal structures were for the most part replaced by a neo-patriarchic system, characterised by internal rivalry concerning executive power, especially between the Luftwaffe under Göring and the Police under Himmler. The formerly responsible authorities, i.e. the federal states and local communities, were, however, not eliminated, but continued to exist formally. All of this led to unbelievable confusion and to a vertical fragmentation of the entire structure.

In Great Britain, after a brief debate, it was decided to assign primary local responsibility for civil defense to the Local Authorities, which after a series of reform laws had formed the basic framework of domestic civil administration since the 19th century. Unlike in Germany there was no rearrangement and fragmentation into different power blocs and administrations. Instead, there persisted the colorful variety of all kinds of local authorities, a kind of patchwork system.

After the short interlude with the experiment along military lines, based on the model of the Air Raids Commandant the organization was built up according to purely civilian principles with strong similarities to the Emergency Strike Organisation of 1926. The central element of this organization were the "Regional Commissioners", which bundled all other organisational elements in their Headquarter.

2. One outstanding difference between the edifices on both sides of the Channel was that Germany possessed a totalitarian body for mobilization, by means of which the population might be controlled: the *Reichsluftschutzbund* ("National Air-Raid Protection Corps"). It was organized similar to the Nazi party and had few actual protective responsibilities, its primary purpose being the carrying out of massive propaganda and the control of the public.

In Great Britain the government consciously rejected this kind of thing. But this did not mean that Britain had no such organisation of its own. The Legion of Ex-Frontiersmen, the British Legion of Ex-Servicemen, the Air Raid Protection League and the National Association of Air Raid Wardens all offered themselves one after the other as official partners to the Home Office but were more or less brusquely rebuffed, remaining for the most part confined to local affairs. No overall national official or semi-official organization ever existed.

3. There were major differences too in the policing aspects of air-raid protection. In Germany police came under the control of Himmler and Heydrich up to 1936. As a consequence of the instrumentalization as tool of political terror and its merging with the SS the German Police lost its organic place within the structure of civil, rational government as it was understood under the Weimar Republic. What emerged was a "State Security Corps" ("Staatsschutzkorps") expected to act against public enemies of the Nazis, this in all places, where German power extended. So Civil Defense became an integral part of the apparatus of terror, albeit as a soft element.

In contrast, the *British* police were defined completely differently, both organizationally and in respect to its tasks. Except for the chief of the London police, who was directly appointed by the Crown, police administrations belonged to the Local Authorities, with the Home Office exercising overall supervision. The Chief Constables did indeed seek to gain control over the air-raid protection organization, especially over the Air Raid Wardens, that were appointed in every city from 1936 on. Only, they weren't allowed to. The Local Authorities and their councils, their committees and the mayors remained the final decision authorities, and this applied also for the Fire Brigades, etc. Only when the Local Authorities agreed the police could assume control. The separation of powers went so far that it was specifically laid down who would have control in the case of an emergency. The emergency organisation could only assume command and control when enemy aircraft were approaching and was required to relinquish command as soon as the raid was over.

4. Considerable *similarities* between the two systems exist in the area of regular legislation. Both in Great Britain and in Germany began with the promulgation of framework laws (the

Luftschutzgesetz of 1935 and the *Air Raid Precautions Act* of 1937), later supplemented by more detailed statutes. The legislative process was for the most part orderly in the case of both laws, even though legal culture was beginning to erode in Nazi Germany.

Implementation met with considerable obstacles under both systems. In Germany there was a massive conflict of interests right from the outset between the police and the Luftwaffe. The resulting squabbles involved the topmost levels of the Reich, especially Hitler's closest paladins, who intervened according to their own power ambitions. Although the "lower" levels of the administration continued to operate in an orderly way, the legal system was constantly disrupted by arbitrary and sometimes irrational interference. In the second half of the war the police and then the Nazi party gained the upper hand after Göring fell out of grace with Hitler.

In *Britain* the *funding* regulations constituted the main problem. The government in London knew very well that parliament would never approve any civil defense legislation before the issue of funding was settled with the local authorities. They had to be approached.

So, despite the fact that theoretical planning had been ongoing for more ten years, another committee was formed to negotiate with local authorities, which by the middle of the thirties had stopped all work on civil defense. Heated verbal clashes ensued, in which Herbert Morrison, the Local Authorities' spokesman, at first repudiated all responsibility. After long drawn-out haggling a burden-sharing agreement was reached, under which the government had to bear the lion's share.

Looking back from our time, many observers still view the British system as cumbersome and inefficient when compared with the German one. In my opinion this verdict counts as one of the most persistent stereotypes of the whole period. It may well actually be that Nazi Germany, as a result of the ruthlessness, with which it organized things down to the lowest tactical level, was able to react much more quickly than the British organization. The Nazi regime also had a considerable ability to mobilize people. But this was bought at the cost of an overblown and totally over-managed apparatus that consumed many more times the organizational energy than was the case in Britain. The burden this placed on the Reich didn't come to the surface because by 1940 Germany had already overrun the half of Europe, whose unprepared nations now had to pay the bill by delivering additional material and manpower.

5. With regard to constitutional principles one main point jumps to mind in comparison: the issue of volunteerism. Here, the situation differed significantly. The German laws, according to German legal tradition, contained specific regulations obligating every German to take precautions against air attack. This enabled the state to exercise its powers of enforcement against any individual, and legal penalties were introduced accordingly. The British ARP Act of 1937, in contrast, had nothing of the sort. The statute merely specified the organizational and financial responsibilities that pertained to the government and Local Authorities, making no reference whatsoever to the private citizen.

British propaganda was quick to exploit the issue of the voluntary effort at every opportunity, maintaining that the British could defend themselves and their democratic system of government as a community of free citizens as well or even better than the dictatorships on the Continent could through coercion.

In the case of Germany, what maybe impressed foreigner was the aggressive way, in which the civilian population was being mobilized, not least because of the functionaries' ruthless methods, especially the treatment of the Jews. In terms of civil defense, Jews were more or less handled in a kind of legalistic way, according to their status as "dangerous potential" defined on the lines of Nazi ideology. They received a kind of special treatment in the sense of Ernst Fraenkels "prerogative state". The statutes distinguished between Jews and Germans for civil defense purposes and applied different regulations for to them. So-called "Germans" and Jews were not permitted to share air raid shelters and civil defense measures for them were to be organized separately. This was the seed from which later discrimination against so-called "foreign racials" and "public enemies" later grew, to whom under bombing attack often shelter was denied.

6. Finally, the 'higher' principles under which both systems operated and which formed the basis of their internal cohesion are a major factor in comparing and analyzing them. Despite all military-charismatic orientation, Germany could not do without at least a modicum of rational cooperation. Because of the organizational fragmentation and the rivalries, the structural integrity of the civil defense edifice was soon on the brink of "collapse", as one high-ranking functionary put it. That the whole structure did not come tumbling down was because the principle actors found a way to compromise. Without cooperation and coordination things just could not go on. Mere vassal loyalty and leader worship would not be enough.

In Great Britain too there were considerable tension when it came to organizational matters. Complaints about the incompetence, inefficiency and wasted effort of Local Authorities, already being heard prior to 1939, multiplied. Massive calls for authoritarian methods could be heard, especially from police representatives. Some prominent experts, especially London's Police Commissioner were calling for a military-style solution. In 1940 the Mabane Committee was formed to evaluate air raid precautions, whose findings, despite the severe critics, largely confirmed the arrangements made before the war.

Concluding, one of the most interesting, but perhaps also the most delicate questions in this regard is how long British democracy would have been able to hold on to its civilian principles if the Luftwaffe had ever conducted a really serious bomber offensive against the island. Without wanting to diminish Civil Defense's achievements in any way it has to be said that all in all the United Kingdom came away from it all quite lightly. From today's perspective one might provoke by asking: how many 9/11s can a civil society take before it degenerates into dictatorship?

Now just a few remarks about the propaganda of both systems. For both systems, consideration for the psychological condition of their civilian populations, especially their fears, proved to be an incalculable problem. This was even true for Germany. It is indicative that it was the Nazi Party that found the *Reichsluftschutzbund*'s propaganda strident and dangerous, at least up to 1939.

The *Reichsluftschutzbund*'s major rallies and Göring's public appearances nevertheless differed hardly from those of Hitler or Goebbels. They were a public celebration of the collective between leader and followers.

But these major events, particularly Göring's speeches, still revealed serious contradictions concerning the rift between the soldier and the civilian. The gap between the grand dream of a totally willing war fighting collective and the legally mandated compulsory regulations was revealed for all to see and never could be resolved.

In Britain, massive propaganda did not begin until the spring of 1938, three years after the start in Germany. Until then, the government had let things generally run their course, trusting in the Local Authorities and the volunteers that had already come forward.

Massive organized programs began only following the campaigns organized in the autumn of 1938. These constituted the beginning of a kind of semi-permanent mobilization. Although British propaganda did not reach the grade of professionalism of of the German, it used any medium as its disposal, including Film and Radio. And, to be clear again, its efforts definitely did not just begin on the 1st of September, 1939. Whether by accident or design, as time went by the propaganda came to resemble Germany's more and more. It culminated in a mass parade in London's Hyde Park in July 1939 whose organizational pattern at least was identical to the *Reichsluftschutzbund*'s mass rallies.

The differences in the 'technical' form of the propaganda were more gradual in nature. Total differences, however, meet the eye, when one looks on the political contents. Against ideological challenge of the Nazis the British government set its own philosophy. For us today, the question has to be discussed, if Britain and the British were really 'unideological'.

In any case, political legitimation was developed centrally and laid down in detail in the "Outlines of Policy" published for the autumn 1938 recruiting drive. The main focus there laid on the individual, willing and *conscious* solidarity of every British citizen. Unlike the German 'Volksgenossen', the British would stand by one another as a free community of enfranchised citizens, ready to defend their country and its people at need. Democracy, the rule of law and free will were propagated as the elements of world history that would in the end prevail, and as such were to hallowed to a limited extent. The question remains if that free will for massive mobilisation within the population existed in reality.

The *Nazi worldview*, in contrast, defined freedom as something completely different, namely as the "freedom" and self-assertion of the German people or the Nordic race at Total War, that in the final event had already begun. In this ideology there was no longer any such thing as "peace", in the narrower sense of the term, or personal freedom.

It is interesting to cast a glance at the degree to which *charismatic* elements applied. Even in Britain there was no embarrassment attached to having mass demonstrations of people in uniforms and waving flags, even though this cult never reached the extreme proportions as in Germany. The fact is, that the British also could not dispense with a certain glorification of their own values. No political system can. In short, one might say that in Germany the cult of the charismatic leader was directly

carried over into the area of civil defense, while Britain celebrated the rule of rational government.

In terms of primary strategic and political aims, the British efforts to mobilize for civil defense differed in the end little from those in Germany. For both systems, preserving the 'fighting morale' of the populace, sustaining war production and ensuring the survival of the community took first place. The protection of the individual and private property took second place, even in Great Britain. Total war called for total measures and the mobilization to go along with it. In a sense the British had no choice. This is a problem and a danger that still persists today. A society threatened mentally and ideologically by aggressive elements and powers comes willy-nilly near the danger to adapt at least some of the same characteristics, this the more, the longer the danger persists.

Finally, let us take a look at how the population reacted to civil defense measures. At first look, there are strong differences between the two systems. Most obvious and to be expected is the fundamentally different attitude towards basic civil rights, especially freedom of opinion. In Germany, the tools of terror enabled the regime to suppress any public or fundamental objection to the preparations for war. Not so in Britain. Especially after 1937 there was massive and vocal criticism, notably from independent scientists and intellectuals. The spectrum of opinions ranged from arguments about the general sense and the technical efficiency of the measures up to social arguments and political criticisms all the way to open calls for the overthrow of the government of the day, this last however usually without the threat to use violence or revolution.

The government on its part employed specific strategies to counter opposition. It used sometimes-manipulative techniques to put the critics in their place. Among these were to sitting things out or hushing things up, setting up committees packed with government-friendly experts, discrediting the argument or explaining the government position. Further, Whitehall never involved themselves in tedious discussions, since this would only have encouraged the critics.

The critics were probably aware they were being manipulated, but could do nothing about it, since they were politically powerless. The government simply had to make sure it was careful about the way it handled public opinion.

The *real* problem lay with the 'silent' majority of the population, because *they* were really needed, at least had to be motivated to take personal precautionary measures, and because a not inconsiderable number – more than a million – had to be motivated to participate actively in the public civil defense organizations. It wasn't any different in the Reich. Despite all full-blown propaganda declarations, the work of mobilization required hard work every day too.

In both systems a relatively small proportion of the civilian population became actively and wilfully engaged in civil defense, accepting the responsibilities involved in setting the system up and in transporting attendant propaganda. They formed the backbone of the effort. Such persons exist under any system – notwithstanding its specific power structure or form of government. It might be that the clichés that grew before, during and after World War II regarding imagined British or German national virtues actually refer to this 'elite'.

Finally, I would like to make a few remarks about the perspectives for future research concerning the Second World War itself. As I mentioned in my introduction and have sought to show during this lecture, that comparative research should base itself on as many aspects and types of source material as possible.

Moreover, one should have the courage to ask counterfactual questions, this in combination with comparatistic research. For the case of Britain, for instance, research should not stop with factors and relationships that were constitutive *that* the civilian population could endure the war with all of its hardships. Much more interesting in my opinion would have been to find out whether there were facts and frameworks that *endangered* the war effort and internal order as a whole, e.g. tendencies towards lasting authoritarian solutions, or inefficiency, defeatism, recalcitrance, carping, exhaustion or mistrust on the civilian side. It is important for us today, and here the circle closes, to learn what limits democratic society has and where they lie.

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