

FOOTNOTE - German Guilt over WWII - Applying some logic

At the time:

- Some people supported Hitler because of the terrible economic conditions after WWI, the Allies having bled Germany dry over “reparations”
- A minority of ordinary people helped him get into power.
- He had the backing of many big industrialists who thought they could control him.
- Very few had any idea of how terrible he was or what he would do until it was too late.
- No ordinary person could do anything about the increasingly insane situation that Germany got into under the Nazis: resistance meant harsh punishment, including execution.
- Most people had no choice but to do as they were told.
- The army was too subservient, and of course many supported Nazi aims without realizing until too late the full horror of it.
- Very few ordinary citizens had any real idea about the death camps. Even if they had known everything, they could have done nothing.

Since:

- It must be assumed that many senior military officers at the time knew a lot; indeed, there were some attempts to do something about it, but half-hearted and ineffective given the totalitarian and brutal nature of the regime.
- ALL those responsible for launching the Nazi movement are long dead.
- The ONLY people still alive in ANY way personally responsible for any crimes are a few ex-soldiers and prison-guards approaching their centenary.
- NOBODY can be held responsible for the crimes of their parents; Svetlana Stalin was not blamed for the crimes of her father.
- A “country” cannot be responsible for actions of humans; Only individuals can be guilty of crimes, not a “country”.
- NO German under around 95 years is IN ANY WAY responsible for what happened. The fact that the Nazis were German is totally irrelevant.

Conclusions:

- The concept of “German War Guilt” is intellectual nonsense (and school “punishment” policies should not be influenced by it).
- What is true is that Homo Sapiens of any race, country or creed is capable of horrendous crimes against humanity: there must be few if any racial or tribal groups which at some time or another have not committed horrendous crimes, including genocide.
- The failure is in Man, not the Germans, Japanese, Russians, British, American, Spanish, Turks or anyone else - unless such acts are being perpetrated today - and EVEN SO, it is individuals that are guilty, not races, tribes or states collectively.
- Children should of course be taught all this, but not burdened with “German guilt”: HARDLY anyone alive today is guilty of anything relating to the Nazi period.
- We are NOT responsible for the acts of our predecessors, only for our OWN acts; this is - for example - why the Turkish refusal to acknowledge the Armenian genocide is nonsense.
- Equally idiotic is those Greeks chanting “Nazis” when protesting about German attitudes towards their country’s economic woes.
- As for WWII guilt, a very large number of Italian and French individuals were also guilty of war crimes, but their countries seem to have shaken off their guilt to a far more sensible and logical degree than the Germans in general.
- Lessons have to be - and have been - learned, but one of those lessons is not that Germany today is guilty. A country CANNOT be guilty of anything.
- The biggest lesson is that ONLY democracy can prevent wars; there would BE no wars if the people voted collectively (when did Switzerland or Leichtenstein last launch a war?) No mother is going to vote to risk her son being killed, only a leader or leaders with too much power. The greatest risk today is from dictatorships: Iran, China, Russia and NK.
- Children should be taught the truth as above.