

Bombing policy off the rails

Lord ZUCKERMAN has just completed a volume of memoirs that will revive one of the most bitter controversies of the war: whether the Allies could have defeated Germany sooner had different targets been chosen for our bombers.

Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government until his retirement from the public service in 1971, Zuckerman began his professional life as an anatomist and specialist in the habits of apes.

During the war he was sent out to the Mediterranean from Combined Operations to study the effects of bombing on the enemy's men and installations. The capture of Pàntelleria owed much to his advice.

But, as Eisenhower's scientific adviser on planning for the invasion of Normandy, he met his Passchendaele if not his Waterloo.

Zuckerman, backed by Eisenhower and his deputy supreme commander, Tedder, wanted the full force of Allied bombers to be deployed against the railway network of Germany and of occupied Europe.

Civil war

Against him were ranged Air Chief Marshal Harris, the Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command, and Churchill with his scientific adviser, Professor Lindemann.

At a series of midnight meetings, they instead insisted on the bombing of German cities and oil installations.

With a wealth of documentary and statistical evidence, Zuckerman demonstrates dispassionately that the war would almost certainly have been shortened had our bombers concentrated wholly on railways.

As it was, a relaxation of that policy made possible the alarming German counter-offensive of the Ardennes.

Called "Apes to Warlords," Zuckerman's book is to be published by Hamish Hamilton later this year.

It could well evoke a spirited rejoinder from Sir Arthur Harris, who at 85 is one of the very last survivors of our top wartime leadership.

ALBANY at large



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1. Eleson

✓ 2. Harris

✓ 3. Gray

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