Alexander Kluge
The Air Raid on Halberstadt on 8 April 1945

With numerous images

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»What I write, essentially, is local history. If I describe an air raid, I use the one I know: the one that hit my hometown.«

About

Alexander Kluge’s account *The Air Raid on Halberstadt on 8 April 1945* first appeared in 1977. Exactly twenty years later, it became one of the most important points of reference in that discussion which freed the air war on German cities and the civilian population from being anathema. Such a literary depiction of the air raids and their effects were not entirely without precedent, but Kluge was the first to give a cool, analytical presentation of the work of destruction and from the bowels of the inferno probe that remainder of autonomy and rationality which allowed the connections of the catastrophe as well as potential ways out to appear.

»Already contained within Kluge’s detailed description of the social organisation of misfortune is the conjecture that a proper understanding of those catastrophes we continuously stage presents the first condition for the social organisation of fortune.« (W. G. Sebald)

From a distance of 30 years, Alexander Kluge re-examines his 1977 story with the addition of a few more recent texts. Sebald’s appreciation of the original has been included in the new edition.

»Without the portrayal of the air raid or the history of Stalingrad, I wouldn’t have been able to tell a lot of other, smaller stories.«