

Citicide War Crimes from Guernica to Falludja

Terminology

Pardon me this neologism: The murder of a person is homicide; the murder of a city can thus be called citicide. It is a civilian target and thus a war crime according to the Geneva Convention, which may be a comfort to some but did not save the cities.

A Brief Historical Consideration

Historically, citicide has occurred repetitively but in modern times, **Guernica** marks the beginning of a new era. Many cities were destructed in the subsequent 2nd World War and also the erase from the map of the Bohemian village of **Lidice** fits the description, although somewhat atypical for modern times in that this misdeed occurred without involvement of an air force. The bombardment of **London** can be regarded such a civilian terror but the concept gained a new dimension with the 'firestorm,' ignited over **Hamburg** through several simultaneous firebombs. This effect even surprised the allied forces, and it was subsequently exerted on all major German cities. **Dresden** was the last victim in Europe towards the end of the war, at a time where it was lacking any military importance.

A modern warfare was begun with the nuclear attack on **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**. With one single bomb, a mega city could be virtually extinguished. Later nuclear bombs have been developed which possess a manifold greater capacity than the first nuclear bombs. The impression of the nuclear threat dominated the remaining part of the second Millennium. Toward the end of that era, however, radioactive substances in the form of so-called 'depleted uranium' [**DU**] has been distributed in large parts of Serbia (1999) and Iraq (1991 and 2003) – but having not been aimed at the broad destruction of virtual cities, this abuse evades the current description. In modern times, it deserves mention the citicides of the Iraqi city of **Falludja** in November 2004, the massive bombardment of the South-Ossetian capital of Tskinvali in August 2008 and the pulverisation of Gaza in December 2008-January 2009. The latter two are described in relevant essays [^{1,2}].

Guernica

Previously, nobody knew what a bombing raid could do to a city. That recognition was delivered on April 26, 1937, when German airplanes of 'Legion Condor' attacked the Basque city of Guernica. 50,000 kg of bombs, including 2,500 firebombs, was thrown over the city. It was market day so the city centre was packed with people from the outlying area around Guernica. The first bombs fell on the city at 4.30 pm. 1,654 people were killed and 889 wounded. After the bombing, 70% of the town was destroyed whereas the stonebridge Renteria in front of the city, formally the target, had not received a scratch.

By May 1st, news of the massacre at Guernica reached Paris. More than a million protesters flood the streets to voice their outrage and eyewitness reports filled the front pages of Paris papers – this in regrettable contrast to the reaction of the citicide of the 3rd Millennium.

Picasso made this event as occasion for his painting 'Guernica,' which was delivered to the ongoing World Exhibition in Paris three months later. At the Nuremberg trials, Herman Göring stated that Spain gave him occasion to test his young air-force. Nobody was later charged with this War-Crime – which it has in common with the later citicides mentioned here. Historical notes [^{3,4,5,6}].

1 Attack on South Ossetia

2 Israel's Second Gaza War

3 <http://www.h-ref.de/krieg/luftkrieg/guernica.php>

4 <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gernika>

5 <http://www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/guernica/gmain.html>

6 <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/guernica.htm>

Dresden

Until 1945, Dresden was, as the only among large German towns, largely undisturbed. That changed during the attacks from February 13 to 14 when large British air forces tested a new strategy: at first, numerous exploding bombs were thrown down in two attack waves. Then, through damages in the roofs, 650,000 firebombs were distributed. Finally, on February 14 and 15, also American bombers joined the party. A record destruction of 15 square km was the result, with considerable destruction of other parts of the city. At least 35,000 civilian victims were killed [7].

Hiroshima

In my school-time, I learned that the nuclear bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki were a necessity and saved the life of more American soldiers than Japanese civilians were killed. Later recognitions cast this version in serious doubt. It was not just the availability of tree bombs which, once available, the government wanted to test (the first was tested over New Mexico, and the Japanese government did not know that there were only three weapons of that type produced so far). What was peculiar was that Hiroshima was spared the destruction exerted upon other big Japanese cities. Since there was also war industry in the city, that is strong evidence that the city was preserved for the big military experiment. Also the refusal of the American government to suggestions by the Japanese for peace negotiations was a further evidence in that direction.

Among the preparations, apart from the construction of the bomb, was the conquest of the Japanese pacific Islands Saipan and Tinian in June, 1944. Along with the development of the B29, the 'Flying Super Fortress,' it was now possible to reach mainland Japan and return back. The nuclear bombs both started on their last travel from Tinian, on August 6 and 9, respectably. This once somnolent, obscure, little-known island within the Marianas chain has become the sombre distinction of being forever linked to the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The bomb had the power of 12.5 kilotons of TNT and weighed 3,600 kg. Dropped by parachute it exploded 580 m above the ground and at the point of detonation the temperature probably reached several million degrees centigrade. Hiroshima City Survey Section estimated 118,661 civilian deaths within the first year, to which 20,000 deaths of military personnel must be added. About 140,000 people have since died as a result of the radiation received, resulting from more than ¼ million deaths in Hiroshima alone. Add to this among the survivors the long-term effects of radiation sickness, genetic and chromosome injury, and mental trauma. Stillbirth and congenital malformations prevailed.

Nagasaki might have escaped destruction had it not been for the weather. The US plane that dropped the bomb had headed for nearby Kokura on the morning of August 9, but found the city shrouded in haze. The crew flew on to Nagasaki only to find it was covered in thick cloud and were on the verge of abandoning their mission when an opening appeared. Historical notes [8, 9, 10, 11]

Falludja

The Iraqi city of Falludja (original pop: ~300,000) was attacked twice by the occupation troops, first in April 2004 and then again, after the presidential pseudo-election in USA on Nov 4, 2004. There will not be a third attack since the city was thoroughly destroyed by the second occasion. The amount of casualties may be around the 2,000 killed 'insurgents,' as claimed by the Americans, or the 25,000 citizens who did not flee in time. The finding of massively burned civilians after the chemical warfare with napalm and white phosphorous, the use of which has in the meantime been confirmed by the American forces, lets fear that the higher number is more appropriate.

Before the attack, the city was demanded to expel Al-Zarqawi. Being rather difficult to follow this ultimatum for a person who died 19 months before in the Northern part of the

7 <http://www.altes-dresden.de/html/zerstorung.html>

8 <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/abomb/mp07.htm#h>

9 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/japan/story/0,7369,1545862,00.html>

10 http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/g_i/levine/bombing.htm

11 http://www.pacificislandtravel.com/micronesia/about_destin/spn_history3.html

country, the city tried with an open letter to UN [¹²], then the majority of its inhabitants fled in advance of the attack on Nov. 5. Somewhat atypical for a warfare keenly observed by the international community, this event started with an attack on the major hospital and it was followed up by target killing of all civilians who fled the city over the river of Euphrates, on its Western side. The US troops continued their warfare against hospitals, ambulances and medical staff.

But no doubt, there were strong opposing forces remaining in Falludja. Shall we call them 'insurgents' according to the American taste or 'liberation fighters' according to their own? Let me resolve on the 'Iraqi resistance,' although also this term may not be considered absolute neutral. In the beginning, news were scattered with surrounded occupation forces, dead GIs left in the street From Nov. 13 to 20, the American claimed to have conquered the city, then admitted that there were 'problems'. Still in the middle of December, Falludja was attacked from the air [¹³]. Several planeloads of wounded GIs were on their way to the Landshut hospital in Germany. As cannot be expected otherwise, the opponents grossly altered the reporting. On the 17th, NY Times dutifully reported: "American commanders said 38 service members had been killed and 275 wounded in the Falludja assault." Greg Palast encountered this optimistic evaluation with the following irony: "**Questions for the class: 1. If 275 soldiers were wounded in Falludja and 419 are treated for wounds, how many were shot on the plane ride to Germany? 2. We're told only 275 soldiers were wounded but 419 treated for wounds; and we're told that 38 soldiers died. So how many will be buried?**" [¹⁴].

Falludja is only 5 * 5 km big but proved almost impossible to conquer. On the 26th (after 3 weeks), the occupation forces were still in control of just about half of the city [¹⁵]. More than a month after claimed victory, killing proceeds in Falludja [¹⁶]. Now reports of further war crimes emerged. No less than 26,000 cluster bombs had been distributed over the city, each possibly fatal to all living creatures within 150 meters in a free field if and when they explode [¹⁷]. The use of an upgraded form of Napalm had been used already at the beginning of the occupation by the Americans [¹⁸], and white phosphor grenades had been involved already in the first attack [¹⁹]. White phosphor may be used for illumination but when it is actively applied towards people, with the purpose of causing fatal burns, it must be considered a banned chemical weapon. Although covered by secrecy and helped by control of the mainstream media, the crime slowly emerges. Residents of neighbouring Saqlawiya village have told Aljazeera [on 21st] that they helped bury the bodies of 73 women and children ... burned beyond recognition [²⁰]. How many were really killed this way remains obscure. An obvious murder for open video-screen [²¹] called for the sentiments, including the call for a ban of such reporters on the front. Added to this was the photographic evidence of bodies of handcuffed prisoners, showing these to have been virtually executed [²²]. Americans admitted to aiming at all adult men, possibly being 'insurgents' [²³] but witnesses told that a large number of persons, including children, were killed by snipers [²⁴]. The disruption of the fresh-water supply [²⁵] and the denial of ICRC convoys [²⁶,²⁷] should be mentioned at the end of this sad report which, as initially said, fails the number of victims of all these crimes.

And how was the reaction to this brutality? Remember the million demonstrators in Paris after Guernica? There were demonstrations in Europe, too, and even the USA, but more on the general insanity of the Iraq war. In conclusion, the humanitarian qualities seem to have deteriorated considerably since 1937.

12 <http://www.iacenter.org/fallujah.htm>

13 <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?catid=138&newsid=53676&ch=0&datte=2004-12-11>

14 <http://www.gregpalast.com/detail.cfm?artid=394&row=0>

15 http://wireservice.wired.com/wired/story.asp?section=Breaking&storyId=955474&tw=wn_wire_story

16 http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/FL18Ak04.html

17 http://www.iraq-news.de/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=298&Itemid=213

18 <http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2003-08/10/article10.shtml>

19 http://www.nctimes.com/articles/2004/04/11/military/iraq/19_30_504_10_04.txt

20 <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/24EBE5BB-CA3F-462B-8279-546BC1D9B7E6.htm>

21 <http://mparent7777.blog-city.com/read/905415.htm>

22 <http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/IMAGES/tankhandcuffs.jpg>

23 <http://rense.com/general60/ern.htm>

24 http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/story.jsp?story=586045

25 <http://rense.com/general59/denialofwaterraq.htm>

26 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,1351332,00.html>

27 <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/F0A47D67-7D17-4140-A992-2AEFC1CF0624A.htm>

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Further contemporary citicide is now less detailed described here, therefore with reference to other documentation.

Tskhinvali

Also smaller cities were subject to a virtual citicide. In the night to August 8, Georgia invaded South-Ossetia after a merciless shelling of its capital Tskhinvali (Population ~10,000), possibly claiming more than 1,200 civilian lives [²⁸]. Western propaganda tried to give the Russians responsibility for the war. Now they rely (successfully) on the very limited memory of their readers/listeners/viewers – how sad for truthseekers.

Gaza

After Christmas 2008, Israel attacked Gaza in a merciless destructive invasion [²⁹], which continued until the end of George W. Bush's presidential era, giving this regime another characterization and claiming more than 1,400 lives. However, this Israeli adventure, painted by numerous war-crimes [³⁰], was followed up by a stringent blockade, still lasting in 2010 while this is being written.

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28 <http://www.schou.de/terrorwar/Attack on South Ossetia.pdf>

29 <http://www.schou.de/terrorwar/2nd Gaza Warx.pdf>

30 http://www.schou.de/terrorwar/Goldstone_Report.pdf