

The Crushing of Fallujah

By [Prof. James Petras](#)

Global Research, November 21, 2004

21 November 2004

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [Fallujah: US War Crimes, IRAQ REPORT](#)

I am reading William Shirer's Berlin Diary, a journalist's account of Nazi political propaganda during the 1930's, as I watch the US 'news' reports of the violent assault on Fallujah. The US mass media 'reports', the style, content and especially the language echo their Nazi predecessor of 70 years ago to an uncanny degree. Coincidence? Of course! In both instances we have imperialist armies conquering countries, leveling cities and slaughtering civilians—and the mass media, private in form, state appendages in practice, disseminate the most outrageous lies, in defense and praise of the conquering 'storm troopers'—call them SS or Marines. Both in Nazi Germany and contemporary US, we are told by the mass media that the invading armies are "freeing the country" of "foreign fighters", "armed terrorists", who are preventing "the people" from going about their everyday lives. Yet we know that of the 1,000 prisoners there are only 4 foreigners (3 Iranians and 1 Arab); Iraqi hospitals report less than 10% of foreign fighters. In other words over 90% of the fighters are Iraqis—most of who were born, educated, and raised families in the cities in which they are fighting.

Like the Nazi media, the major US radio and TV networks only report what they call "military casualties"—failing to report the civilians killed since the war started and the thousands of women and children killed and wounded since the assault of Fallujah began. Like in Nazi Germany, the US mass media feature unconfirmed reports by the US military of the bloody murders, beheadings and kidnapping "by the foreign terrorists". The unconditional support of Nazi/US mass media of the killing fields is best captured in their reports of the massive bombing of densely populated city districts. For the US network NBC, the dropping of 500-pound bombs in the city of Fallujah is described as targeting an "insurgent tunnel network in the city". And the houses, markets, stores—the mothers and children above those tunnels—vaporized into "pink mist". Their existence never acknowledged by the leading reporters and broadcasters.

Almost the entire population of non-Kurdish Iraq is opposed to the US military and its puppet regime—yet the media refer to the patriots defending their country from the imperial invaders as—'insurgents' minimizing the significance of a nation-wide patriotic liberation movement. One of the most surreal euphemisms is the constant reference to the 'coalition forces'—meaning the US colonial conquerors and the mercenaries and satraps that they direct and control.

The terror bombing of homes, hospitals and religious buildings by hundreds of airplanes and helicopter gunships are described by the media as 'securing the city for free elections'.

'Freeing the city of insurgents' includes the systematic murder of friends, neighbors and relatives of every Iraqi living in the city of Fallujah .

'Surrounding the insurgents' means cutting off water, electricity, medical aid for 200,000 civilians in the city and putting tens of thousands who fled under threat of a typhoid epidemic. 'Pacifying the city' involves turning it to absolute desolate poisoned rubble.

Why do Washington and the mass media resort to gross, systematic lying and euphemisms? Basically to reinforce mass support at home for mass murder in Iraq .

The mass media fabricates a web of lies to secure a gloss of legitimacy for totalitarian methods in order that the US armed forces continue to destroy cities with impunity. The technique perfected by Goebbels in Germany and practiced in the US is to repeat lies and euphemism until they become accepted 'truths', and embedded in everyday language.

The mass media by effectively routinizing a common language implicates the listeners. The tactical concerns of the Generals, the commanders directing the slaughter (pacification), and the soldiers murdering civilians are explained (and consumed by the millions listening and watching) by the unchallenged authorities to the compliant journalists and famous news anchors. The unity of purpose between the agents of mass murder and everyday US public is established via 'news reports': The soldiers 'paint the names' of their wives and sweethearts on the tanks and armored vehicles which destroy Iraqi families and turn Fallujah into ruins. Returning soldiers from Iraq are 'interviewed' who want to return to 'be with their platoon' and 'wipe out the terrorists'.

Not all of US combat forces experienced the joys of shooting civilians. Medical studies report that one out of five returning soldiers are suffering from severe psychological trauma, no doubt from witnessing or participation in the mass killing of civilians. The family of one returned soldier, who recently committed suicide, reported that he constantly referred to his killing an unarmed child in the streets of Iraq -calling himself a 'murderer'. Aside from these notable exceptions, the mass propaganda media practice several techniques, which assuage the 'conscience' of US soldiers and civilians. One technique is 'role reversal' to attribute the crimes of the invading force to the victims: It is not the soldiers who cause destruction of cities and murder, but the Iraqi families who 'protect the terrorists' and "bring upon themselves the savage bombardment". The second technique is to only report US casualties from 'terrorist bombs'-to omit any mention of thousands of Iraqi civilian killed by US bombs and artillery. Both Nazi and US propaganda glorify the 'heroism', 'success' of their elite forces (the SS and the Marines)-in killing 'terrorists' or 'insurgents'-every dead civilian is counted as a 'suspected terrorist sympathizer'.

The US and German military have declared every civilian building a 'storehouse' or 'hiding place' for 'terrorists'-hence the absolutely total disregard of all the Geneva laws of warfare. The US and Nazi practice of 'total war' in which whole communities, neighborhoods and entire cities are collectively guilty of shielding 'wanted terrorists'-is of course the standard operating military procedure of the Israeli government.

The US publicizes the cruel and unusual punishment of Iraqi 'suspects' (any male between 14-60 years) taken prisoner: photos appear in Time and Newsweek of barefoot, blindfolded and bound young men led from their homes and pushed into trucks to be taken to 'exploitation centers' for interrogation. For many in the US public these pictures are part of the success story-they are told these are the 'terrorists' who would blow up American homes. For the majority who voted for Bush, the mass propaganda media has taught them to believe that the extermination of scores of thousands of Iraqi citizens is in their best

interests: they can sleep sound, as long as 'our boys' kill them 'over there'.

Above all the mass propaganda media has done everything possible to deny Iraqi national consciousness. Everyday in every way the reference is to religious loyalties, ethnic identities, past political labels, 'tribal' and family clans. The purpose is to divide and conquer, and to present the world with a 'chaotic' Iraq in which the only coherent, stable force is the US colonial regime. The purpose of the savage colonial assaults and the political labeling is to destroy the idea of the Iraqi nation—and in its place to substitute a series of mini-entities run by imperial satraps obedient to Washington .

Sunday morning: November 14

Today Fallujah is being raped and razed, captured. Wounded prisoners are shot in the mosques. In New York the mega malls are crowded with shoppers.

Sunday afternoon:

the Marines have blocked food ,water, and medicine from entering Fallujah.Throughout the US millions of men sit in front of the television watching football.

Shirer reported that while the Nazis invaded and ravaged Belgium and bombed Rotterdam, in Berlin the cafes were full, the symphony played and people walked their dogs in the park on sunny Sunday afternoons

Sunday night November 14, 2004, I turn on the television to 60 Minutes and watch a replay of Mike Wallace's 'interviews' with Yasser Arafat. Like all US mass media 'stars', he ignores the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and Sharon 's murder of thousands of Palestinians, the military occupation of Palestine and the wanton destruction of Jenin and Gaza City . Wallace accuses Arafat of being a liar, a terrorist, of being corrupt and devious. Thirty million US households watch this ugly spectacle of a self-righteous Zionist apologist flaunting the 'Western ideals', which are so useful in razing cities, bombing hospitals and exterminating a nation.

Yes, there are differences between Shirer's account of Nazi propaganda in defense of the conquest of Europe and the US media's apology for the invasion of Iraq and Israel 's slaughter of the Palestinians: One is committed in the name of the Fuehrer and the Fatherland, the other in the name of God and Democracy. Go tell that to the bloated corpses gnawed by dogs in the ruins of Fallujah.

James Petras is a Global Research Contributing Editor, He is a Bartle Professor (Emeritus) of Sociology at Binghamton University, New York, and author of: Globalization Unmasked: Imperialism in the 21st Century with Henry Veltmeyer (Zed Books, 2001). His web site in English is at: <http://www.rebellion.org/petrasenglish.htm> A superset list of his articles in Spanish is at: <http://www.rebellion.org/petras.htm>

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Prof. James Petras](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca