

Hist 104, Lecture 15: The Making of “Total War”

0. Keywords

The Final Solution, strategic (saturation, carpet, terror) bombing, Hiroshima/Nagasaki, Manhattan Project, Nuremberg Principles

1. The Not-So-Basics of WWII

- a. When and where did the war begin?
- b. Why did the war begin?
- c. A note on naming the war in Asia

2. The Idea of “Total War”

- a. The idea of limited war
- b. In what ways “total”?
- c. Civilians as combatants
- d. Advertising Total War

3. “Crimes against Humanity”

- a. The idea of “rules of warfare” and how they were “broken”
- b. What is a “war atrocity” and “war crime”?
- c. Who’s guilty; or, rather, who’s innocent in total war?

4. Living with the Bomb . . . and Ourselves

- a. The legacy of the Manhattan Project
- b. Hope and fear in the New World Order/Disorder

**Protection of Civilian Populations Against Bombing From the Air in Case of War,
League of Nations, September 30, 1938**

PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN POPULATIONS AGAINST BOMBING FROM THE AIR IN CASE OF WAR
Unanimous resolution of the League of Nations Assembly, September 30, 1938.

The Assembly,

Considering that on numerous occasions public opinion has expressed through the most authoritative channels its horror of the bombing of civilian populations;

Considering that this practice, for which there is no military necessity and which, as experience shows, only causes needless suffering, is condemned under the recognised principles of international law;

Considering further that, though this principle ought to be respected by all States and does not require further reaffirmation, it urgently needs to be made the subject of regulations specially adapted to air warfare and taking account of the lessons of experience;

Considering that the solution of this problem, which is of concern to all States, whether Members of the League of Nations or not, calls for technical investigation and thorough consideration;

Considering that the Bureau of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments is to meet in the near future and that it is for the Bureau to consider practical means of undertaking the necessary work under conditions most likely to lead to as general an agreement as possible:

I. Recognizes the following principles as a necessary basis for any subsequent regulations:

- 1) The intentional bombing of civilian populations is illegal;
- 2) Objectives aimed at from the air must be legitimate military objectives and must be identifiable;
- 3) Any attack on legitimate military objectives must be carried out in such a way that civilian populations in the neighbourhood are not bombed through negligence;

II. Also takes the opportunity to reaffirm that the use of chemical or bacterial methods in the conduct of war is contrary to international law, as recalled more particularly in the resolution of the General Commission of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments of July 23rd 1932, and the resolution of the Council of May 14th, 1938.

Appeal of President Franklin D. Roosevelt on Aerial Bombardment of Civilian Populations, September 1, 1939

The President of the United States to the Governments of France, Germany, Italy, Poland and His Britannic Majesty, September 1, 1939

The ruthless bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centers of population during the course of the hostilities which have raged in various quarters of the earth during the past few years, which has resulted in the maiming and in the death of thousands of defenseless men, women, and children, has sickened the hearts of every civilized man and woman, and has profoundly shocked the conscience of humanity.

If resort is had to this form of inhuman barbarism during the period of the tragic conflagration with which the world is now confronted, hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings who have no responsibility for, and who are not even remotely participating in, the hostilities which have now broken out, will lose their lives. I am therefore addressing this urgent appeal to every government which may be engaged in hostilities publicly to affirm its determination that its armed forces shall in no event, and under no circumstances, undertake the bombardment from the air of civilian populations or of unfortified cities, upon the understanding that these same rules of warfare will be scrupulously observed by all of their opponents. I request an immediate reply.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Nuremberg Principles, August 8, 1945 [excerpts] CHARTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL [Signatories: USA, USSR, Britain, France]

ARTICLE VI

The following acts, or any of them, are crimes coming within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal for which there shall be individual responsibility:

(a) Crimes against peace: namely, planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances, or participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the foregoing;

(b) War Crimes: namely, violations of the laws or customs of war. Such violations shall include, but not be limited to, murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labor or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity;

(c) Crimes against humanity: namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian populations, before or during the war; or prosecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated.