

# U.S. Caused Hue Massacre

Wilfred Burchett

1970

Via National Guardian

“This war is, I believe, a war for civilization.”

—Francis Cardinal Spellman

The bodies in the mass graves of Hue are not the victims of the National Liberation Front but of American bombs, bullets and napalm.

The NLF attack on Hue was coordinated with an internal uprising Jan. 31, 1968. The main part of the city was in the hands of liberation forces within hours—hardly a shot was fired.

Saigon’s power dissolved overnight. The population of Hue voted with its fists, feet and weapons—when it had them—for the NLF. When the people seized power, the South Vietnamese army simply refused to fight. All its positions in Hue, except the headquarters of its 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, were overrun or surrendered in the first minutes.

U.S. Marines were called in to do the job that the South Vietnamese refused to do—recapture Hue even at the price of its destruction. And destroyed it was.

Here is an account from Britain’s ultra-conservative *Contemporary Archives*, which prides itself on digging up the facts from the most responsible press for the historical record:

“A large part of Hue was reduced to ruins by fighting and bombing. *Le Monde* reported ‘no large town in the Far East has been so devastated since the fighting in Seoul during the Korean war...Vast areas of the beautiful city were demolished.’ Of 145,000 inhabitants, 113,000 were homeless refugees. Bodies lay rotting in the streets for days and sanitary facilities broke down.”

This implied the city was 80% destroyed. Reuters reported that more than 90% was destroyed. By the NLF? No—by U.S. planes and artillery, including the guns of the Seventh Fleet.

The *Contemporary Archives* account continued: “After the assault on the southern ramparts was hurled back on Feb. 14, the United States fighter bombers dropped bombs, rockets, napalm and nausea gas on the Citadel and the following day warships of the Seventh Fleet shelled its walls in addition to fresh United States air strikes. In the old part of the city, South Vietnamese aircraft had carried out heavy air attacks Feb. 3, wherein many houses were destroyed.”

The city which the NLF and the Hue population liberated in a few hours took U.S. Marines 26 days to recapture, at the price of Hue’s almost total destruction. At a certain stage, helicopter gunships, hovering over the roofs, joined dive bombers and naval guns in shooting everything that moved in a total war against the entire population while Marine artillery tanks systematically destroyed the city block by block.

All public functions broke down including sewage, water supply and garbage disposal. In many areas the streets were choked with bodies—limbless, headless, napalm charred and cut into pieces by bombshell fragments.

NLF sanitary services were forced to bury victims in mass graves nightly not because people were lined up in front of troughs of blood-thirsty guerrilla executioners but because the city was under constant U.S. air and artillery bombardment.

On April 23, two months after the destruction and reoccupation of Hue, the Saigon army—after their psychological warfare teams had done certain rearranging of the bodies—invented the “Vietcong massacre” myth, presenting the evidence of mass graves. The U.S. embassy in Saigon solemnly weighed the evidence and added “confirmation” later in the week. The U.S.’s own atrocious massacre in Hue thus was attributed to the “Vietcong” and has been revived to offset the massacre at Songmy.

Every time U.S. propaganda services need a new diversion from increasing revelations of American atrocities, a new “Vietcong atrocity” is discovered. If the graves in Hue did not exist, U.S. propaganda would have been forced to invent them. But they do exist—courtesy of the Pentagon.

## **Related**

See *Fifth Estate's* Vietnam Resource Page.

# fifth Estate

Wilfred Burchett  
U.S. Caused Hue Massacre  
1970

<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/96-january-8-21-1970/u-s-caused-hue-massacre>  
Fifth Estate #96, January 8-21, 1970

**[fiftheestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fiftheestate.org)**