

WHAT'S GOING ON? REMEMBERING GUERNICA



MRS ITZIAR GOIRIENA, SURVIVOR of the 26 April, 1937 bombing of Guernica. "We are walking through the Guernica cemetery to place flowers in memory of the victims of the bombing. We have a ceremony in the cemetery and a mass every year. There is a chapel in the cemetery and that is where the mass is held. I was chosen for two consecutive years to place the flowers; this picture was taken last year.

It is a very sad day. You recall everything. The other woman in the photo was also in Guernica on the day of the bombing. There were many people because it was a Monday, a market day. Many had come from nearby towns, like Bilbao and Amorebieta, so the bombs killed many people.

I was 13 years old. When the bombing started, I hid in the church. People tried to save themselves as best they could. Some people tried to find shelter from the bombs by standing by a wall. The planes flew so low that they actually

machine-gunned the people against the wall. You could see legs scattered around. When they stopped dropping bombs, I came out and saw the slaughter they had made. Some people ran to the nearby mountain. Some hid away.

A day like that you don't forget. When I hear sirens, it has a terrible effect on me. I don't like going to places where there are sirens. When all we survivors gather together every April, everyone has a different story. There are many anecdotes.

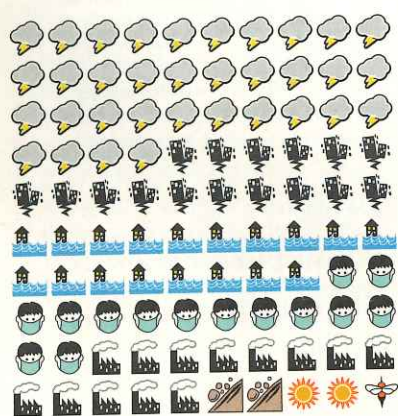
We are very united with the Germans now. Every year, representatives of the German city of Pforzheim [which was bombed by the Allies during the second world war] come to Guernica for the ceremony.

This year, all of the survivors are going to gather for lunch. There are more than 200 of us."

Photograph by José Mari López, El Correo. Interview by Susana Fernández Caro

POWER OF 100 DEATHS BY DISASTER

Reading the percentages Disaster by type, 1990s



In the 1990s, 592,000 people died in disasters. Wind storms were the big killers – although about three-quarters of these deaths occurred when a cyclone hit Bangladesh. About one-third of the flood deaths occurred in Venezuela in 1999. Deaths by earthquake were high in Iran (36,000 in 1990) and Turkey (17,000 in 1999).

The financial cost of these disasters does not correlate to the number of deaths, with floods and earthquakes accounting for nearly two-thirds of costs. The most expensive disaster was the 1995 Kobe earthquake, at about \$130bn. Some 40 per cent of disasters and 70 per cent of related deaths occurred in Asia. In Europe, there are generally fewer than 1,500 such deaths a year but there have been one-offs – the Estonian ferry accident (1,800 deaths in 1994) and a Russian earthquake (2,000 deaths in 1995).

Simon Briscoe

Source: World Disasters Report 2000, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

- Wind storms
- Earthquakes
- Floods
- Epidemics
- Non-natural (industrial etc.)
- Avalanche/landslide
- Temperature extreme
- Other