

unavoidable." At least 600,000 cases of cholera of a total Central American population of 30 million are expected over the next few years.

In Peru, the number of cholera cases has now surpassed 182,000, while in Ecuador, health officials are admitting to nearly 11,000 cases in that country. Colombia, too, is acknowledging more than 800, while Chile is struggling to keep several outbreaks there from becoming epidemic.

Banks' policy amounts to infanticide

Minister Guerra's presentation in Geneva reached a high point, when he denounced the infanticide that is resulting from imposition of the bankers' brutal austerity terms for paying the foreign debt. In Brazil, he said, 350,000 children are dying each year, "four times the number of deaths that resulted from the bombing of Hiroshima." It is as if "three airplanes filled with children were crashing every day of the year in Brazil," he added. The leading cause of infant deaths in Brazil is diarrheal illnesses, caused—as with cholera—by a lack of basic sanitation.

The murder of babies in Brazil and throughout the Third World, is the cold, hard truth that lies behind the perverse face of bankers' usury. The explosive imagery used by Minister Guerra has enraged the neo-liberal fanatics, who accused the minister of being "grotesque," and demanded his head. A May 9 editorial in the daily *O Estado de São Paulo*, entitled "The Limits of Stupidity," warned that the bold truths stated by the health minister in Geneva could ruin ongoing negotiations with Brazil's creditor banks. President Collor had better make up his mind, the editorial demanded: "The bankers and foreign investors have a right to ask whose mentality predominates in Brazil—the President's or his minister's?"

A new book just published by the Danish section of UNICEF, Danish Save the Children Foundation, offers timely confirmation of the infanticide committed by the International Monetary Fund. The book, *Lost Generations—A Debate about Children and the Debt Crisis*, identified the high interest rates imposed by then U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker in 1979, the 1982 debt crisis, and the "free market religion" exemplified by George Bush's Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, as the principal causes of misery in the world today.

"Every week, year round, 273,000 children die in the Third World from diseases that do not harm our own children. That adds up to 14 million children every year who do not die from the catastrophic famines, the floods, the earthquakes, or the other natural disasters we are entertained with on the TV news or at humanitarian rock concerts. All 14 million die quietly. Killed by the rich world's lack of will to help. . . . Throughout the '90s, it would take \$2.5 billion a year to save the lives of most of these 14 million." This \$2.5 billion "amounts to 6% of what the underdeveloped countries send to the industrialized countries in interest payments on their foreign debt to the West."

Special Report

Group seeks to save the children of Iraq

Almost three months since the official close of hostilities against Iraq, the scale of the devastation wrought on the country and its people—especially its children—is beginning to emerge in the public view. The picture, as presented by members of the newly formed Committee to Save the Children in Iraq at a press conference in Bonn on May 15, is one which strikes horror in the hearts of moral men and women.

In her remarks concluding the Bonn press conference, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, chairwoman of the Schiller Institute, addressed what the real target of "Desert Storm" was: "It was precision bombing, to be sure, but not to spare the civilian population, rather to apply the 'bomb now, die later' principle. The aim of the war was not Saddam Hussein or Kuwait, but the destruction of Iraq as a developing sector land that was on the verge of taking off." The Schiller Institute initiated the call for the formation of the committee (see *Documentation*).

Not only Iraq, but the whole developing sector is targeted, said Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche, pointing to the 120 million people in Latin America threatened by cholera, 5 million homeless in Bangladesh, the 27 million people in Africa, all suffering, not from "natural catastrophes," but from "the result of policies developed in the 1970s to reduce the population of the developing sector." She quoted statements made the week before at a Conservative Party gathering in Britain by Sir Nicholas Fairbairns, to the effect that food aid should not be sent to storm-ravaged Bangladesh, because it would allow them to only "breed more people." This attitude, she said, betrays the same kind of thinking behind Hitler's view of people as useless eaters; today, there are those who think secretly that it is better to let masses of people in the developing sector die.

Only three days after the Bonn press conference, another member organization of the committee was able to announce that former U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan will ensure that the U.N. pays for transport and delivery of goods collected by the Letter of James-Food for Peace in Sweden and the Chaldean Patriarch in London. The committee itself intends to oversee each and every shipment.

A May 18 press release from the International Progress Organization announced:

"Austrian President Dr. Kurt Waldheim yesterday contacted the Executive Delegate of the United Nations for the Humanitarian Program in Iraq, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, so as to facilitate the transportation of hospital equipment and emergency food supplies that has been donated by several humanitarian organizations in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany and other European countries. Thanks to this initiative, transportation and delivery is now being assured within the framework of the United Nations Emergency Program in Iraq.

"The President of the International Progress Organization, Prof. Dr. Hans Koechler earlier this week had briefed President Waldheim in Vienna on the humanitarian situation in Iraq. He informed the Austrian head of state on the joint initiative of the Committee to Save the Children in Iraq, which was established by several non-governmental organizations in order to co-ordinate humanitarian projects.

"The Committee held an international press conference in Bonn on May 15 where Dr. Margit Fakhoury, representative of the International Progress Organization, gave information on the difficult situation in Iraqi hospitals resulting from the lack of medicine and medical equipment.

"Among the members of the Committee are H.E. Raphael Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldeans, Dr. Reza Sabri-Tabrizi (Edinburgh), and Prof. Dr. Hans Koechler, president of the International Progress Organization, an organization in consultative status with the United Nations."

War against innocents detailed

The Iraqi people were first weakened by a five-month-long embargo, then subjected to 40 days and 40 nights of relentless bombardments; those who survived have been suffering ever since from the after-effects of the surgical bombing and the continuing embargo.

Whereas talk is rife of plans for rebuilding Kuwait, with British and U.S. firms scrambling over lucrative contracts, almost no one is addressing Iraqi reconstruction. Indeed, the policy toward this battered country, on the part of those who have isolated it and destroyed it, continues to be total annihilation.

The war's genocidal effects were described at the Bonn press conference by pediatrician Dr. Margit Fakhoury, who worked for years at the Baghdad Children's Hospital. With water, electricity, and communications destroyed, she said, doctors "would like to help patients, but have their hands tied, since the medications and required medical equipment are lacking." This means that diabetic children die from lack of insulin; infants with bronchial ailments die for lack of oxygen; only emergency operations can be performed, and scalpels are used and reused. Most of the illnesses afflicting children are caused by acute undernourishment, a result of the sanctions. The danger of spreading epidemics increases

as the temperature rises—soon to reach up to 120°F in some parts of the country—and even basic information about their location and spread is impossible to communicate, due to the lack of telephones, radios, and television links. Already, 90% of deaths among children are due to diarrhea, contracted through contaminated water.

The conditions in which Iraqi refugees in southern Iran are forced to live, with 22 people in rooms three by four meters, without sanitation, are also breeding grounds for epidemic diseases, as Dr. A.-Hassan Halboos, president of the Association of Arab Doctors, reported from his recent trip there.

While Iraqis are being put slowly to death by torture, the United Nations sanctions blocking vital food and medicine are still in force. "This is an embargo against 18 million Iraqis," in the words of Father Philip Najim, secretary general to His Excellency, Patriarch Raphael Bidawid. "The population is innocent, and has nothing to do with this situation." Yet, he said, "the bombardments destroyed everything, the economy, the infrastructure, even the culture. They bombed mosques, churches, convents, monuments," he said. "Now, it's finished. Our question is: Why is the embargo still on? In order to create more suffering? What about the children?"

The Iraqi health minister had told Father Najim in Geneva in early May that "whatever Iraq receives now" in humanitarian aid "is enough for 10 provinces for six hours." He explained that prior to Aug. 2, 1990, Iraq spent a half-billion dollars a year to import medical supplies. Since Aug. 2, it has not been able to purchase any. The minister was in Geneva for medicines, but was unable to organize purchases because of the sanctions, and has forwarded the list of required items to the Committee to Save the Children in Iraq.

Iraqi Trade Minister Mehdi Salih has asked that the \$1 billion in frozen Iraqi assets be freed, so that the country can buy food, including 1.5 billion tons of wheat already contracted from Australia and Canada. Salih, who threatened to bring the case before the U.N. Human Rights Commission, said Britain was deliberately blocking the funds, in an attempt to starve the Iraqi people and thus force Saddam Hussein out of office.

"The United States and Europe are supposed to be defenders of human rights, but they are destroying human rights in Iraq," Father Najim said. "Here we have to put our hopes and principles together to save this society in Iraq. Saving this civilization is a humanitarian act." He appealed to the press and others present to "say it everywhere, say 'stop the embargo' and give Iraqis their right to begin a new life, to live a normal life in their own country, to produce and use their own goods." Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche also pointed to the moral responsibility Europe shares for having financed the Gulf war: "Humanity will emerge from this crisis, only if Europe overcomes moral indifference, and participates in the reconstruction of Iraq; for this, the embargo must be lifted. Save the children of Iraq!"

Plan of action

What follows is the text of the "Plan of Action" released by the Committee to Save the Children in Iraq at its Bonn press conference May 15.

The Committee to Save the Children in Iraq has been founded as a non-partisan coalition of doctors, intellectuals, leaders in the religious community, human rights and right-to-life activists, politicians, relief workers, prominent citizens, trade unionists, farmers, and all those who cherish the sacredness of human life. We have come together out of a shared concern that, unless immediate steps are taken, a tragedy of apocalyptic proportions will play itself out in Iraq, annihilating an entire population. Especially threatened are the children of Iraq, who represent the country's future. We are committed to mobilizing public opinion and responsible government and international bodies to act on three levels to stop genocide in Iraq: 1) immediate relief, through shipments of food, medicines and other emergency items, particularly required for children; 2) equipment, such as generators and hospital equipment, to start activity needed to save lives; 3) reconstruction of basic infrastructure.

Reports from the United Nations, the Physicians for Human Rights, the International Red Cross, the Gulf Peace Team, and scores of others document the devastation caused by over 120,000 U.S.-led air strikes against Iraq's infrastructure. The precision bombing methods utilized succeeded in paralyzing the nervous system of the entire country, destroying communications, transportation, basic utilities such as electricity and water, as well as homes, schools, factories, farms, distribution outlets and places of worship. The "near-apocalyptic results" of which United Nations emissary Marti Ahtisaari spoke following his March 10-18 tour of Iraq, are visible in reported cases of cholera, typhoid, and other epidemic diseases. Most endangered are the elderly and children. According to a more recent UNICEF report 5 million children in the region as a whole are threatened by death due to food and water shortages, and disease. As of late February, the calories available to Iraqis averaged between 750 and 1,000 a day—less than what a 5-year-old child needs.

Immediate needs

Individuals and organizations working with the Committee have identified the following needs, corresponding to the three levels of intervention mentioned above.

1) Approximately 3.9 million tons of staple foods are required over the course of the coming year, in order to close the gap between 750/1,000 calories a day, to 2,500 calories a day on average. The emphasis must be on items that do not need refrigeration as that is no longer possible due to the bombing. Food items most needed are rice, tea, coffee, flour, powdered milk, canned meat (not pork) and canned vegetables. Approximately 21,900 tons of dried milk powder are required over the coming year to provide for infants.

Medicines urgently required include those to regulate blood pressure and cardiotonics; anesthetics (for local anesthesia as well as for surgery), disinfectants (to purify water, to wash vegetables, to disinfect wounds, for hospital use); insulin for diabetics; antibiotics of a wide variety; and throw-away syringes.

2) Hospital equipment is required to set up functional operating rooms. Electric generators, not less than 10 KW, are urgently needed, as well as material to repair existing generators. Generators are now being moved about in cities and from village to village, because of their scarcity; massive amounts are required, as refrigerators can run only a few hours and freezers, not at all. Emergency power equipment, fuel to run it, and chemicals for water treatment must be provided. While the U.N. estimates needs at 40 liters per person per day, we believe that 150 liters per person per day must be brought on as soon as possible. Before the war, the population was getting 450 liters per day on average. 150 liters is the minimum given the special demands created by the present sharp increase in diarrheal diseases. To get to 150 liters a day in Baghdad, 6,750 tons of fuel will be needed to run water purification facilities, plus 16 tons of chlorine, and 5,600 tons of alum. For sewage treatment, 3,300 tons of diesel fuel would be needed to operate sewage treatment equipment, in addition to 16 more generators for emergency use. Vehicles of all types are needed, especially ambulances, jeeps, bulldozers, dump trucks and spare parts like batteries, tires.

3) Basic infrastructure for gathering and stocking food must be provided, in order that the wheat crop sown last fall be harvested. Seed stocks must be replenished by October 1991, that enough fruits and vegetables may be planted. To rebuild Iraq's infrastructure, a major effort involving governments must mobilize civilian engineering corps to build bridges across the Tigris and Euphrates and restore transport capabilities. A Gulf Peace Team report (April 17) emphasizes the importance of regenerating the Iraqi distribution system, in cooperation with the Iraqi government, so as to ensure that all relief efforts reach the people in need. Emergency measures must also be taken to provide at least 25% of the pre-war civilian fuel consumption. Beyond the emergency phase of restoration of basic infrastructure, a vast project for infrastructure development in the entire Gulf and Mideast region, through cooperative governmental efforts, is required.

Lifting the sanctions

The first step toward implementing this emergency program must be to mobilize the political will to make available the necessary resources. The precondition for averting genocide in Iraq is the lifting of the U.N. embargo against the country, to allow it to sell its oil and therefore be able to purchase necessary goods for the population. A country which was dependent on imports for 70% of its food before the war cannot survive the embargo. Indeed, more deaths are expected through famine and epidemics in the wake of the war than during hostilities themselves. As the cited Gulf Peace Team report moots, "One is led to conclude that the continuation of the sanctions serves more insidious purposes, such as driving the Iraqi people to despair and, ultimately, rebellion." Among others demanding the lifting of the embargo were the representatives of the Christian churches in Iraq, in their meeting with Pope John Paul II in the Vatican May 5. His Holiness indicated he would act through international channels to remove the embargo, according to press reports. Secondly, governments must be forced to mobilize a large-scale relief and reconstruction effort, in cooperation with the Iraqi authorities and other cooperating governments in the region. Finally, the Bush administration policy of "retribution" and technological apartheid (denying life-saving technology to the Third World) must be stopped. The worldwide mobilization to defeat famine and disease, starting with the dire state of Iraq, can not only solve that problem, but provide the impetus for reversing the immoral IMF economic policies of the last 20 years.

The Committee to Save the Children in Iraq has been brought into being by the following individuals (affiliation for identification purposes only): Rev. James Bevel, U.S. civil rights leader; His Beatitude Patriarch Raphael I. Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldean Church, Baghdad; Amelia Boynton Robinson, U.S. civil rights leader, author; Jacques Cheminade, Schiller Institute, Paris; Jutta Dinkermann, Club of Life, Germany; Dr. A. Hassan-Halboos, M.D., Haan, Germany; Katharine Kanter, journalist, Germany; Muriel Mirak-Weissbach, author, Germany; Richard Nikodaim, Berlin; Fiorella Operto, Schiller Institute, Rome; Dr. Reza Sabri-Tabrizi, Edinburgh, Scotland; Ulf Sandmark, Anti-Drug Coalition, Stockholm; Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Schiller Institute, Germany.

People working with the Committee include: Irmgard Ehrenberger, Middle East Action Network, Vienna; Prof. Dr. Hans Koechler, International Progress Organization, Vienna.

The Committee to Save the Children in Iraq collaborates with relief organizations and private groups dedicated to collecting needed goods, and organizations and groups which transport and deliver them. The Committee serves as a coordinating link between the two. While open to collaboration with all such oriented organizations, the Committee currently works through the following: ● Letter of James-Food for

Peace, Sweden, which collects food, clothing, and medicine. ● International Progress Organization, Vienna, which organizes transportation of food and medicines to children in Iraq, via Amman. ● Middle East Action Network, Vienna, which organizes transportation of food and medicines to Iraq, via Amman. It is currently rebuilding and re-equipping a hospital in Kerbala. ● Patriarchate of Baghdad, which coordinates distribution of food and medical supplies.

The activities of the Committee are supported by the following (affiliation for identification purposes only): Dr. Beatrice Boctor, Psychiatrist, Cambridge, England; Keith Bovey, Solicitor, Edinburgh, Scotland; Msgr. Robert Callahan, STL, JCL—U.S. Catholic Relief Mission; Dr. Janet Cameron, formerly Gulf Peace Team, Ayrshire, Scotland; Alan Clayton, Schoolteacher, Glasgow, Scotland; Dr. Andrew Dobson, Keele University, Lecturer in Politics; Mary Catherine Donnelly, Regent, Catholic Daughters of America; Prof. M. Dummett, New College, Oxford; Dr. James Elgorn, The Flying Physicians, U.S.A.; Sr. Rosa Esposito, Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Sammer Ghouleh, Union of Palestinian-American Women; Toby John Grainger, London; Dr. Ahmed Hakim, Arab-American Physicians Association; David Hargreaves, Editor, Surrey, England; Donald Lowry, Primary School Principal, Dublin, Ireland; Adelgunde Mertensacker, Bundesvorsitzende, Christliche Mitte Deutschland; John Morrison, District Manager, Edinburgh, Scotland; A.C. Robb, Catholic writer, Dundee, Scotland; Prof. Hermann Schneider; Nancy Spannaus, Club of Life, U.S.A. Joyce Turner, Save the Children, Philadelphia; Herr Würmeling, General Secretary, Union der Nationen Europäischer Christen, Paris.

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