

most fundamental human right—the right to life. This aspect was dealt with in presentations by two speakers. Comparing the 1990 convention on the rights of the child with the reality of the war and embargo, Dr. Huup Diereck showed the toll taken on Iraqi children. Prior to the war, Iraq's children had enjoyed a privileged status, since illiteracy had been virtually wiped out between 1975 and 1980; compared to Iraq's 10% illiteracy figure, Saudi Arabia has 40%, the United Arab Emirates 46%, and Kuwait 30%. Iraqi children have compulsory and free education from kindergarten through university. The war changed that radically, destroying 50% of the educational institutions. Basic school needs, like notebooks, paper, and books, are unavailable even now, because of the embargo. Teachers, too, isolated from the rest of the world since 1990, have been unable to take part in international conferences (including medical conferences), or to read up on new research in professional journals, which affects what they can impart to their students.

Obviously the greatest violation of children's rights lay in the fact that, through wanton bombings of civilian targets and the destruction of infrastructure, the very process of birth and growing up were being halted. This deliberate elimination of at least one generation constitutes the crime of genocide.

The rights of the child

The following is abridged from the speech of Muriel Mirak-Weissbach to the April 28-30 conference "Save the Children in Iraq," in Baghdad. Mrs. Mirak-Weissbach is a leading member of the Committee to Save the Children in Iraq.

The preamble to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 1386 (XIV) says, "Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give." This declaration is a legal instrument of international law, proclaimed on Nov. 20, 1959, in an era when society still placed value on the life of a child; it was proclaimed by the United Nations, the same institution which has shaped itself into a tool of war against the Iraqi population, largely against its children. . . .

It is worthwhile to look at the most significant principles of this declaration and a later one, to identify the nature of the violation of the rights of the child which has taken place in Iraq, and to outline the principles which must guide a renewed effort to effectively defend these rights.

The document reads:

"Whereas, mankind owes to the child the best it has to give, *Now therefore*, The General Assembly proclaims this Declaration of the Rights of the Child to the end that he may

have a happy childhood and enjoy for his own good and for the good of society the rights and freedoms herein set forth, and calls upon . . . national governments to recognize these rights and strive for their observance. . . .

"Principle 2: The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. . . .

"Principle 4: The child . . . shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end, special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation, and medical services.

"Principle 8: The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief."

In a later document, called the Declaration of the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 3318 (XXIX) of Dec. 14, 1974, the same U.N. specified. . . .

"1) Attacks and bombings on the civilian population, inflicting incalculable suffering, especially on women and children, who are the most vulnerable members of the population, shall be prohibited, and such acts shall be condemned.

"6) Women and children belonging to the civilian population and finding themselves in circumstances of emergency and armed conflict . . . shall not be deprived of shelter, food, medical aid, or other inalienable rights, in accordance with . . . instruments of international law."

Every principle violated

The blockade and the war against Iraq have violated the spirit and the letter of every single one of these principles. And it is the children themselves who provide the proof. Four out of the five Iraqi children whom our committee recently took to the United States for surgery, were wounded by explosions that occurred while they were in their civilian homes. Three other children, of a group being treated in Germany, were bombed in the Ameriya shelter—a civilian shelter where they were supposed to enjoy "special protection." As for "shelter, food, medical aid," "pre-natal and post-natal care," they are still being systematically denied by the embargo. . . .

The consequent effects on rising mortality rates among infants and children under five means that the embargo threatens to *eliminate an entire generation*. Prof. Francis A. Boyle, eminent legal expert at the University of Illinois and a member of our committee, filed a complaint to the U.N. last July, in the name of 3.5 million Iraqi children, charging the crime of *genocide*. In August, the International Progress Organization (which is one of the groups, together with the Schiller Institute of Helga Zepp-LaRouche and the Patriarchate of the Chaldean Church, which founded our committee) presented

a memorandum to the U.N. Economic and Social Commission on Human Rights, taking up Professor Boyle's initiative, and denouncing the U.N. Security Council's embargo for "violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms" against Iraqi children. More recently, His Beatitude Raphael I Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldeans of Babylon, denounced the embargo as "a genocide" in an interview with Vatican Radio, following which the Pope spoke out to lift the sanctions.

The genocide being perpetrated against Iraq's children is the expression of a policy which has dominated British-American strategy since at least 1974. Through a series of papers and conferences, the policy has been outlined, to use economic, financial, and military means to induce famine, wars, and epidemics, in order to drastically reduce population growth in the Third World. These documents start with Henry Kissinger's NSC strategy paper "NSSM-200" of 1974, and continue through the Carter administration's *Project 1980s* and *Global 2000*, up to the current plans today for the UNCED conference in Rio, in June. That "Earth Summit" will try to institutionalize linkage between population control and economic planning. In short, the policy of the new world order is to deny the Third World technology, to stop population growth and to control its resources. The war against Iraq was fought ultimately for this reason.

Hatred of children, hatred of God

In order to put through these policies, the malthusian institutions behind them, like the Club of Rome and certain NATO think-tanks, have attempted to undermine traditional monotheistic religions and to break their moral resistance to genocide. Christianity has been eroded in the West; now Islam is being targeted, for similar reasons, which are important to understand.

All our principles of international law, including those instruments of the U.N. which guarantee the rights of children, derive from our civilization's understanding of what makes mankind utterly distinct from and superior to all other species. This is expressed in the Book of Genesis, embraced by Christianity and shared by Islam: That man is made in the image of the living God, *imago viva Dei*. Man displays this likeness, not outwardly, but through his uniquely human capacity for creative thinking; thus, the injunction from the Creator, to multiply and populate the Earth, to exert dominion over nature; to develop ideas, to create, to invent, and through this, to improve the condition of mankind. It is on the basis of this concept of man that we define certain rights to be inalienable; this concept underlies the very notion of the dignity of the human being. This, too, is the reason why our cultures properly place such a high value on the life of a child, because the child embodies this quality most directly.

A child comes into the world full of potential. Through the support and guidance of parents, the child begins the

learning process, which is potentially infinite. The child shapes its first words, takes its first steps, or makes any other small, but crucial, breakthrough, and thus provokes immeasurable joy on the part of its parents. This joy, which they express and which the child experiences as Love, is, in turn, what makes it possible for the child to develop further. Why do we love the child? Because it shows this God-given capacity for development, and rejoices in its own discovery of those creative powers, whether by putting together building blocks, or solving a puzzle, or making a joke. We share with the child its joy at creative discovery, and celebrate, in so doing, our own humanity. We see in the child that which is universal in mankind: development, growth, progress. Thus, the monotheistic religious traditions of our civilization and all the great secular institutions which have sprung from them place a premium on progress and growth as universal principles. For this reason, we exalt the value of the human being, the discrete individual, and most especially the child.

In the West, precisely these values have come under consistent attack by the malthusian lobby, for obvious reasons; if one wishes to stop children from coming into the world, and commit genocide, then one must undermine the value system which defends the dignity of human beings. Now, they say that Islam is the new enemy.

Our task

Defending the rights of the Iraqi child today presents a "challenge to the wisdom and morality of our generation," to use an expression of the Pope. Whether or not we prove capable of defending the rights of Iraqi children will determine our ability to defend the rights of children in Palestine, in Afghanistan, Libya, throughout Latin America, or anywhere in the world. Defending the rights of the child means defending the most precious values common to the best of what our civilization has produced.

To do so, we do not need to draft new documents. We need to enforce those which exist. . . .

1) As far as humanitarian aid to save Iraqi children is concerned, efforts should be combined and coordinated to maximize the impact. Many more NGOs should organize free hospital care and surgery abroad for Iraqi children for as long as the need exists, and should force the Sanctions Committee, as we have done, to allow Iraqi Airways to fly for humanitarian purposes.

2) Religious organizations worldwide should be mobilized in a Christian-Islamic dialogue aimed at lifting the embargo and reviving the universal moral principles in defense of life, against the ideology of usury, exploitation, oppression, and death.

3) Efforts must be redoubled toward uniting the victims of the new world order into a coalition capable of implementing a new, just ordering of world economic relations, in coherence with those moral principles upon which the rights of the child are based.