

First, he shouldn't have been on trial, he was a prisoner of war and his trial was prohibited. And second, the whole trial was a show trial, a kangaroo court proceeding up and down, as your magazine has covered it. It was a setup, a political trial. And these two Libyans, if they're ever sent over to the United States, the same thing will happen to them. They will never get a fair trial in this country, or in the U.K. Look at all the Irish people who were convicted and spent years in prison on trumped-up charges and concocted evidence put together by British police. That's why Libya has offered to have them tried in some neutral country, because they have nothing to hide. You don't go to court, especially the world court, if you have anything to hide. They're willing to have a trial in some country that is neutral. The United States and U.K. are free to bring in their evidence there. Well, it's clear why the United States and U.K. have rejected that option, because they have no evidence that would stand up in a court of law. Indeed, the United States and U.K. are free to bring their evidence to the world court if that is what they want to do.

Right now they have nothing. They have concocted allegations out of Malta. They have concocted evidence by the CIA out of Senegal. You'll note that when all these allegations began to emerge out of Senegal, the exact same week the *Financial Times* of London reported that Senegal's public debts had been miraculously rescheduled by the Paris Club at a highly preferential rate that Senegal was not entitled to.

The story first broke in the *Wall Street Journal*, which is very close to the CIA. If you read the story, it is completely preposterous. All of a sudden, some CIA agent, out of nowhere, reviews all the evidence that they used to have blaming Iran and Syria and a Palestinian group—I'm not saying that they did it or not, I don't know, but the CIA had been blaming them all along. But then, when it becomes politically convenient for Bush not to blame Iran and Syria, they blame Libya. Bush needed Iran and Syria's cooperation on two things: the war against Iraq, and to get the U.S. hostages out of Lebanon. So, Bush decided not to blame Iran and Syria. I'm not saying they did it, but all of sudden there is a shift, and the accounts are completely unbelievable.

All of them go back to two sources, Senegal and Malta. The same week all this came out, Senegal's public debt was rescheduled by the Paris Club. I think it's pretty clear someone was bought. As for Malta, all the evidence of Libya's involvement goes to two fellows who were working for Libyan airlines over in Malta. But the Maltese government has undertaken a very extensive investigation, and their conclusion was that there was no unaccompanied baggage, and they have been able to account for all the baggage. Those two things take care of what flimsy evidence there is. Remember the burden of proof is on the United States and U.K., not Libya. What little evidence they claim they have would not stand up in any fair, impartial tribunal. That is why Libya is more than happy to turn them over to a fair and impartial tribunal.

Vatican moves to lift embargo of Iraq

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

If anyone can prevail upon the U.S. and British governments to lift their United Nations embargo of Iraq, which is killing the civilian population, perhaps it is Pope John Paul II. Important steps are being taken by the Vatican, and by the pontiff personally, which seem to be a prelude to an international mobilization against the U.N. sanctions. Although the initiative has been launched by the highest authority of Christendom, the press has been stingy in its comment, relegating coverage to brief mention in small articles. Press blackout notwithstanding, this is the weightiest institution yet to take up the fight to halt the genocide against the Iraqi people.

The first significant step was taken in January. Timed to coincide with the anniversary of the outbreak of the Gulf war, the Vatican commissioned an English-language version of a volume already circulating in Italian, containing the pope's views on the war. The book, *John Paul II For Peace in the Middle East: War in the Gulf: Gleaning through the Pages of "L'Osservatore Romano"*, was presented on Jan. 15 by the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, Archbishop Renato R. Martino. As he explained in his foreword, the book contains "in chronological sequence, the profound concern of Pope John Paul II for peace in the Gulf region. All his words are recorded, whenever and to whomever addressed, from 26 August 1990 to 6 March 1991: speeches, homilies, messages and prayers."

The book also includes "a collection, from the Vatican daily *L'Osservatore Romano*, of editorial comments and of articles by various authors, aimed at contributing to the discovery of the authentic meaning of peace." The de facto Vatican ambassador to the U.N. made clear in his remarks that the book was no academic matter, but an intervention into the political situation: "At one year since its inception, the events and the consequences of the Gulf crisis continue to distress the conscience of mankind and to demand careful analysis and farsighted remedies. May this small volume help guide and strengthen everyone's steps on the path of peace."

Curiously, though the book was presented by Archbishop Martini himself at the United Nations, the press considered the event "not newsworthy."

In March, a further step was taken, this time by His Beatitude Raphael I Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldean

Church of Babylon. Patriarch Bidawid is the head of the Catholic community in Iraq, which numbers about 1 million souls. Patriarch Bidawid has been an uncompromising critic of the war since its inception, and traveled during the terrible months of January-February 1991 throughout Europe and the United States to tell the truth about how the war was taking its toll on the civilian population. In April 1991, Patriarch Bidawid lent his support to a call for the creation of a Committee to Save the Children in Iraq, together with Schiller Institute president Helga Zepp-LaRouche, and International Progress Organization president Prof. Dr. Hans Koechler. The ad hoc coalition which came into being in May, has since coordinated relief efforts as well as international campaigns to lift the embargo.

This spring, Patriarch Bidawid again took his message to a European public. Traveling through Germany, he denounced in no uncertain terms the effects of the embargo on Iraq's civilians, especially the young. Reaching Rome in April, His Beatitude issued a scathing attack on the sanctions, characterizing the U.N. embargo as "a genocide." In an interview with Radio Vatican on April 3, he said, "This embargo is something very grave," causing the deaths of about 100 babies a day. He charged the embargo had caused "malnutrition for lack of food, deficiencies in public health for lack of medicine," and stressed that the sanctions had "not struck a blow against the Army or the regime, but the people instead." He asked, "How can human consciences accept such situations when the war already has been over for a year?"

After a private meeting with Patriarch Bidawid days later, Pope John Paul II announced his decision to send a fact-finding team to Iraq to express his "concern and solidarity" for the Iraqi people. The four-man delegation, led by Bishop Alois Wagner, vice president of the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum," was to assess the humanitarian needs so as to direct Catholic relief agencies in their efforts. Accompanying Bishop Wagner were Father Claudio Gugerotti, an official of the Congregation for Eastern Rite Churches; Gerhard Meier, secretary general of the Caritas Internationalis; and Father Moussa Adeli, director of Caritas Jordan in Amman.

The assessment brought back by the delegation must have confirmed every detail of Patriarch Bidawid's report, for just days after their return, John Paul II addressed the issue before a broad public. Delivering a speech at Saint Peter's, at his Wednesday audience on April 15, the pontiff called on the leaders of the international community to "stop the sad situation in which the Iraqi people finds itself." He said that the Iraqi people and its Christian community were "expressing their gratitude to everyone, whether it be persons or institutions, who are working to end their suffering, but they are imploring that there be an end, as soon as possible, to their suffering." The message, unequivocal, was grasped by Italy's leading daily, *Corriere della Sera*, which headlined, "Pope: End the Embargo of Iraq."

Will it be grasped by the temporal powers that be?

A moral chronicle of the Gulf war

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Thinking back on the opening months of 1991, when the Gulf war held millions riveted to their television screens or radios, the impression that returns to consciousness is one of a quasi-psychedelic succession of flashing images, accompanied by snippets of narrative, presented as "news." In the collage of phrases, statements, "facts" and analyses, all which later versions would reveal to be deliberate falsehoods, there seemed to be no connection with reality, either the military reality of a civilian population being massacred by superpower superweapons or the deeper political reality motivating the slaughter. The war propaganda machine of the mass media seemed to have succeeded in stupefying public opinion, perverting its moral sense to such a degree that otherwise normal Americans would cheer on genocidal bomber pilots as if they were stars of the local high school football team.

Thus it is especially refreshing to read through a chronicle which depicts the war as it really was. It is, ironically, not an umpteenth paperback, rich in gory detail of the Desert Shield buildup, which tells the deeper story, but a rather unassuming volume collecting the statements made by one man between Aug. 26, 1990 and March 6, 1991, the man being John Paul II. What is outstanding in the book, issued in English on the anniversary of the Jan. 15 ultimatum, is the unbroken continuity of the pontiff's concentration, throughout the terrible months of crisis and war, on the underlying moral principles which were being sorely tested. This steadfast emphasis on the universals, rather than on the elusive and, more often than not, equivocal ephemerals of daily events, allowed the Church to maintain a position of moral leadership which virtually every other social institution lost—or sacrificed—to its war aims.

Constant efforts at intervention

From the onset of the crisis in late summer 1990, the pope consistently pointed to a matrix of problems, some rooted decades, if not centuries, in the past, which must be identified and addressed, if war were to be avoided. Thus, when speaking to a conference of Latin Rite bishops of the Arab region, convened in Rome on Oct. 1, 1990, John Paul II identified the crisis unfolding as "the extremely dangerous tensions affecting the Gulf; the drama of Palestine; the tragedy of Lebanon." This theme was to be elaborated in further pronouncements, as the pontiff expressed his conviction that