

# THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER



ST. MARTIN DE PORRES HOUSE  
ST. BRIGID HOUSE

*What does God require but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly... Micah 6:8*



*Brian Kavanagh*

*The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose...and a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way... and the people shall obtain joy and gladness, and then sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

*Isaiah*

## CHRISTMAS 2004



## THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER

Established November 3, 1993

Volume 12 Number 6

*The Hartford Catholic Worker* is published bimonthly by the St. Martin De Porres Catholic Worker community. We are a lay community of Catholics, and like minded friends, living in the north end of Hartford, working and praying for an end to violence and poverty. We are not a "tax-exempt" agency. We do not accept government funding. Our ability to house the homeless, feed the hungry, and work with the children depends on contributions from our readers. We are not paid. We can be reached at: 18 Clark St.,

Hartford CT 06120; (860) 724-7066, doucot@sbcglobal.net and www.hartfordcatholicworker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Morlianna Evans, Sarah Karas, Jacqueline, Christopher, Micah and Ammon Allen-Doucot.

### SPAGHETTI SUPPER

benefit For The Hartford  
Catholic Worker

Friday January 21

5:30-11:30 PM

St. Patrick/St. Anthony Church

285 Church St, Hartford

Please call Jackie at 724-7066  
to purchase tickets. \$10



The Hartford Catholic Worker extends a hearty thank-you to Chief Carlos Huertas and Family of the Hartford Fire Department for once again convincing Santa Claus and his adorable "elfettes" to join us for our annual Christmas Party. We also thank our many stalwart volunteers, generous donors and faith communities whose prayers, work, and donations make the work of the Hartford Catholic Worker possible. *Gracias!, Shukr!, Thank-you!*

## St. Martin's Calendar

- ◆ Please join us on **Tuesday, January 4, February 3, March 2 and April 6 at 7:30 PM** for the celebration of Mass at St. Brigid House, 18 Clark St., Hartford. Refreshments and conversation follow Mass.
- ◆ Please join us on **Good Friday, March 25** to pray the Stations of the Cross and for the end of war. We will gather at 10 AM in the parking lot of Pleasant Valley Elementary School on Pleasant Valley Rd, Groton and process to the Sub Base. For more information call us at 724-7066 or Stephen Kobasa at (203) 777-3849.
- 🌐 Our vigil for an end to war continues on **Friday's from 11:30-12:30** outside the Federal Building on Main St. in Hartford. Please bring a sign and join our call for an end to the American military occupation of Iraq.

# JOY AND SUFFERING IN THE DESERT OF DARFUR

*Christopher Allen - Doucot*

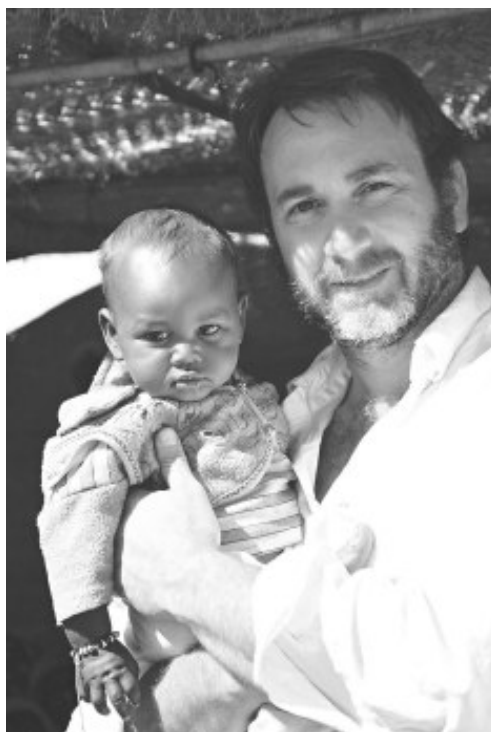
It was dusk of our last night in Nyala. The sun had set and the ever-present dust was settling when we gathered to celebrate mass with Fr. Dnema Emmanuel. The first reading from Isaiah was more than prophetic, it was strikingly apropos. The prophet wrote: ***The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. (35:2)***

Earlier in the day we visited the Derej camp for internally displaced people. Derej is on the outskirts of Nyala just off the road to the airport, in the midst of desert land. The "rainy" season had ended weeks ago and the river beds, the wadi, were dry. The people in Derej, mostly women and children, had walked across the parched terrain after their villages had been burned.

We met a woman whose father and husband had been killed by the raiding Janjaweed death squads. For 5 days she trekked across a sea of sand with her 7 kids. Along the way her 4 year old died of thirst. Still, she welcomed us with a warm, effusive smile. The profundity of her countenance was that she was not alone in her joy. Yes, amongst thousands of people living in huts of twigs, scraps of burlap and litter: joy was abundant. So plentiful was this joy that despite being surrounded by children who had not eaten or wet their lips that day, I could not weep. Joy was their gift to me the stranger from a far away land.

In Leviticus we read: ***"when a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger... shall be to you as one of your own, and you shall love him as yourself" (Lev 19:34).*** I wish to be loved by having my hunger for dignity

sated and my thirst for mercy quenched. The thousands of people in Derej go days without water or food because the government will not permit the 21 humanitarian aid agencies operating in the area deliver these necessities. (The Sudanese government does not want any camps near population centers.) The people in the camp are afraid to go home and don't want to be hidden in an even more remote



camp. Fearful of being shut down the aid agencies haven't defied the ban and have largely deserted the thousands (5000?) of souls in Derej.

The efforts of the international community to alleviate the suffering in Darfur have been predominantly concerned with providing water, food, medicine, education and sanitation in the camps- when and where the government responsible for the people's displacement allows. The humanitarian effort has not kept pace with the burgeoning displaced population. According to Doctors Without Borders(aka M.S.F.) "there have been high rates of

acute malnutrition and epidemics of water-born and infectious diseases raging throughout the crowded and unsanitary camp environments". (*Persecution, Intimidation and Failure of Assistance in Darfur*, MSF-Holland, Oct 2004).

The inadequacy of humanitarian aid in this situation is recognized by some of the aid agencies. For example M.S.F. has called for: "1) expanded assistance in terms of quality and quantity, 2) delivery of aid wherever [people] have chosen to seek refuge [and] 3) freedom from the threat of violence, the fundamental cause of this crisis.". "In all surveys conducted by MSF, the leading cause of death for those over the age of 5 years was violence rather than disease or malnutrition. In one study in Wade Saleh district in West Darfur, 60% of the deaths in people above 5 years of age were due to violence." (ibid).

A just and merciful response to the genocide in Darfur must be multifaceted. The relief provided by the aid groups must continue and expand and we encourage our readers to generously support their work. But obviously relief alone is no solution.

Vince Hoedt, the M.S.F. delegation head in Nyala, urged us to not under-appreciate the importance of "security". He said that while food, water and shelter are the top three needs provided by humanitarian groups they are trumped in importance by security. Mr. Hoedt was clearly frustrated by the ongoing violence that undermines the efforts of the aid agencies. The tragic irony is that the very good people of the aid agencies would not be needed in Darfur if they were able to provide the one service not in their repertoire, namely security The tidal wave in southeast Asia was an act of nature; the

**(SEE JOY& SUFFERING, P4)**

## JOY AND SUFFERING, CONT.

crisis in Darfur is an act of men.

Among the people of Sudan who are working to ease the suffering of their own people there is a more consistent call for the international community to complement humanitarian aid with political solutions and nonviolent interventions that address the underlying conflicts which cause the displacement and death. Francis Bassan of the Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference calls for economic pressure in the form of an international boycott of Sudanese oil to be exerted on the government. In a meeting with our group he said: "What do the people on the street benefit from the oil? It benefits the bankers and the wealthy... whether the oil is here or there will not affect the lives of the displaced people... oil is a very lethal weapon enabling the government to buy more weapons and continue war."

Fatima Kanbami (not her real name), the national coordinator for women's programs for a faith based organization in Sudan expressed profound frustration with the Western aid agencies declaring that the "NGO's want to make business out of war". She says the 21 NGO's in Darfur "misuse resources" by "clustering in areas allowed by the government." The focus of her work is to "give relief with the left hand and with the right hand address the root causes" of the conflict which are "underdevelopment and the Janjaweed" death squads. To emphasize her point she shared in disgust the story of an aid worker who had arrived in Darfur earlier in the week. One evening this worker was startled by shooting in the area. Upon expressing concern to a more seasoned colleague the novice was told that the shooting was actually a generator backfiring. "The worker was told 'don't worry, go back to sleep', in the morning [dozens] were dead."

Ms. Kanbami is also working to stop

the under-reported Slave trade in Sudan, euphemistically down-played as "abductions" by the international community and the government of Sudan. She reports that after the fathers and husbands of a village



are killed by the military or Janjaweed the women and children are sometimes "abducted" as spoils of combat. These human beings are then forced to perform manual labor without pay and they are sold or exchanged for goods. The children often have their Achilles tendon cut so they are unable to escape. Because "you risk your life when you talk about this" I cannot reveal the identity of this woman.

Our efforts in Darfur were an attempt to wed a response of direct aid to suffering while pursuing nonviolent avenues to confront the root causes of the suffering. Opportunities for direct aid were omnipresent and we were able to distribute close to \$20,000 directly to groups doing good work in Darfur. We were also able to distribute food and water at three separate

camps, twice at the Derej camp.

Our more difficult challenge was to identify contacts in Darfur that embraced a nonviolent political philosophy and would welcome the involvement of kindred internationals. Ayya, which translates as "mama", is a newly created organization in the town of Nyala in Darfur. Ayya seeks to use the methods of Gandhian nonviolence to intervene in the conflict. When we met with the director, Mohammed Asil, he had just finished meeting with the chiefs or sheiks of a half dozen different tribes. By building relationships of trust Ayya is hoping to develop a network of respected community leaders who can intervene to resolve conflicts before they escalate and who can also work to prevent assaults on villages by the Janjaweed.

Asil shared with us the story of an attack that occurred the night before our visit. There are conflicting versions of the story but both accounts agree that a conflict between "Arabs" and "Africans" over water quickly escalated to one dead camel, one dead horse and 17 dead ("African") townspeople. Unfortunately, in this instance the nonviolent efforts of three intervening tribes who are working with Ayya appear to have failed. Despite this apparent failure Asil seems to be filled by the same wellspring of hope that we experienced in the camps as he eagerly agreed to work with us to develop a broader international nonviolent presence in the towns, villages and camps.

While there are a plethora of aid groups providing food, water and shelter, there is a dearth of groups of any substantial impact that are working nonviolently to provide security. This role has been largely forfeited to governments, rebels and their armies who too often seek to provide security for "their people" at the expense of the security of other peoples. Until this void is filled by an organized, disciplined and nonviolent league of souls (Gandhi called

these people *satyagrahis*) the outcome of crises like that currently happening in Darfur will be decided by the group or government with the most firepower and strongest political will. Weapons and a political will to use them is a formula that will always result in the death of the innocents.

In lieu of (and hopefully one day in conjunction with) a nonviolent militia of *satyagrahis*, people of conscience must use the resources available to them to confront tyranny and despotism. Among the people we met with in Sudan there emerged a consensus that the government of Sudan must be confronted; some say brought down. The genocide in Darfur would not have occurred so easily if the government of Sudan were not able to arm the Janjaweed death squads. An indispensable first step in ending the killing is to disarm all the parties

starting with the Janjaweed, and then the regular army of Sudan and concomitantly the rebel armies.

In America we need to supplant funds currently used to fight wars with military power with funds to prevent wars by supporting sustainable and environmentally sound development in nations like Sudan. Dollars for development could be used to leverage the Sudanese government into disarming themselves and the Janjaweed. Moreover, as the world's most prodigious exporter of armaments the United States bears significant responsibility for having profited from wars worldwide. In the case of Sudan most of their arms have come from former Soviet republics. Nonetheless, American demands for an end to weapons sales to oppressive regimes and arms smuggling to rebel armies will continue to be hollow and

cynical gestures so long as we make the biggest buck in this bloody marketplace.

More immediately, many of our new Sudanese friends were eager for us to act as American citizens in solidarity with their efforts to end the genocide. We were told that demonstrations at the Sudanese Embassy in Washington would be reported in the Sudanese press and be a source of hope helping to sustain their efforts. Ironically, across the street from the embassy is a life size sculpture of Mahatma Gandhi posed as though he were leading a march toward the embassy. Let us gather at this site, inspired by the Mahatma's life, and walk in his steps to the steps of the Sudanese embassy where we can raise our voices in echo of the voices of the people of Darfur whose cries of joy are a chorus of hope in the desert of our times. **Ω**

**P**ublic schools'

test score  
published

Public's right to know  
where academia thrives and  
where problems lie.

Tax dollars at work  
unmask families  
fallible and frail posing  
overwhelming reasons to  
withdraw collectively,  
safely leaving  
disquieting trouble  
alone  
absent means to  
overcome an  
unspeakable litany of  
human indignity.

Poverty.  
Violence.  
Crime.  
Illness, unisured.

Homelessness.  
Legacies of oppression.  
Prejudice.  
Ancestries of slavery.  
Hunger.  
Shame.

Leave no child behind.  
Politicians say  
it can be  
done  
and  
we abide  
raising the bar  
over  
fertile ground  
for  
casteism.

Real estate values  
borne by children  
growing  
behind invisible lines

perceptible as  
steel girders.  
Discriminating communities  
channel assets  
toward  
promising investments

on the prosperous side of  
man-made boundaries.  
Children  
reduced  
to  
possessions  
little more than  
stock certificates  
expected to gain  
value  
meant to increase  
shareholder's wealth.

Cautiously,  
funds flow  
toward

risky investments  
confined  
behind barriers  
crucial  
to keeping  
limited resources  
from  
draining

capital.  
Virtual  
write-offs.  
No use throwing good  
money  
after bad,  
perhaps.  
maybe,  
not knowing  
what else to do  
or  
not willing.

Open markets  
skiddish.  
Investors  
apprehensive  
as if vast riches  
were not created  
enough  
for all.

We choose  
whether or not  
to divide ourselves  
and  
all that we  
become.

Solid walls  
can dissolve.  
We can be  
free.

God gambles  
on  
love. **Ω**

## *INVESTING IN HUMANKIND*

*Brenda McLaughlin*

# WHAT SHOES DO YOU WEAR?

## *Christopher Allen - Doucot*

The Washington administrator wore crisp brown wingtips when he told us that our efforts in Darfur would amount to peanuts when compared with the need.

The sheik in the Derej camp was wearing simple leather sandals when he prayed with us after portioning out the sack of peanuts we had brought.

The beggar girl on the dirt road outside our hotel in Khartoum was wearing scuffed plastic shoes when she recovered and ate the single shelled peanut that fell from her fingers when she reached for her alms.

The Khartoum administrator for a Catholic aid agency, who wore shiny black penny loafers, cynically dismissed our presence and told us that the problem in Darfur now is an abundance of aid and too many agencies.

The faceless bureaucrat from Caritas Internationalis wrote from Geneva to its workers in Sudan: "do not take an antagonistic tone towards the government... be very careful not to seem anti-government... keep a low profile. Noticeable mentions of government culpability or human rights violations... could jeopardize our, or others, future humanitarian or advocacy work."

The church worker and Sudanese political dissident in Khartoum, who kept eye contact and thus I don't know what kind of shoes he wore, told me that in their silence the aid agencies are complicit in the genocide.

The soldier wore black laced up boots and told me not to take photographs.

The black boots of the three Janjaweed men in red knit winter hats were dusty when they forced the old man off his horse.

The wooden shoes of the Dutchman from Doctors Without Borders knocked in rhythm with his anxious twitching against the concrete floor providing a tenor wood block beat while he told us that wide-

spread famine could still happen if the violence continues.

Asil, the gentle man from Ayya finished meeting with sheiks and chiefs to share with us his hopes for using the methods of Gandhi to stop the violence. This buoyant



fellow was oblivious to the irony of his wearing brown leather shoes with a label on the laces that said "Titanic".

Sudanese Catholic Bishop Paride Taban stood in the shoes of a prophet when he said to the World Council of Churches: "Spending on relief alone is like fattening a cow for slaughter. How long can one be doing work without spending time, energy, and resources on root causes?"

St Paul quoted the prophet Isaiah when he wrote: "*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, and proclaims peace*". (Rom 10:15, Is 52:7)

The first person I met at Kalma camp was an old woman wearing the canvas


shoes which carried her across the desert. She grabbed my hand and led me into her tiny hut of woven twigs and litter and told me without speaking: "this is my home, come in out of the sun".

Fr. Dnema Emmanuel of St. Joseph the Worker parish in Nyala wore plastic flip flop sandals when he celebrated mass for us. He reflected on the words of Isaiah who spoke to us in the first reading saying: "*the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. ...Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong..."*, Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened..., and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; ... the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Fr. Dnema said to us: "after seeing the joy of the people in the camps I hope you have a better understanding of why Jesus came down from heaven to be with the poor... the closer we are to the poor the better we understand God."

St. Francis of Assisi wore sandals like the sheik and said "Where there is poverty and joy, there is neither greed nor avarice."

Fr. Dnema took the bread from the tabernacle shaped like a villager's hut and said to me: "take this and eat, this is the Body of Christ".

In Derej camp the little boy standing outside his hut had no shoes on his feet when he took the bread from my hand and said to me: "Behold!, I am the Body of Christ!" 

# PEACE & THE NEW CORPORATE LIBERATION THEOLOGY

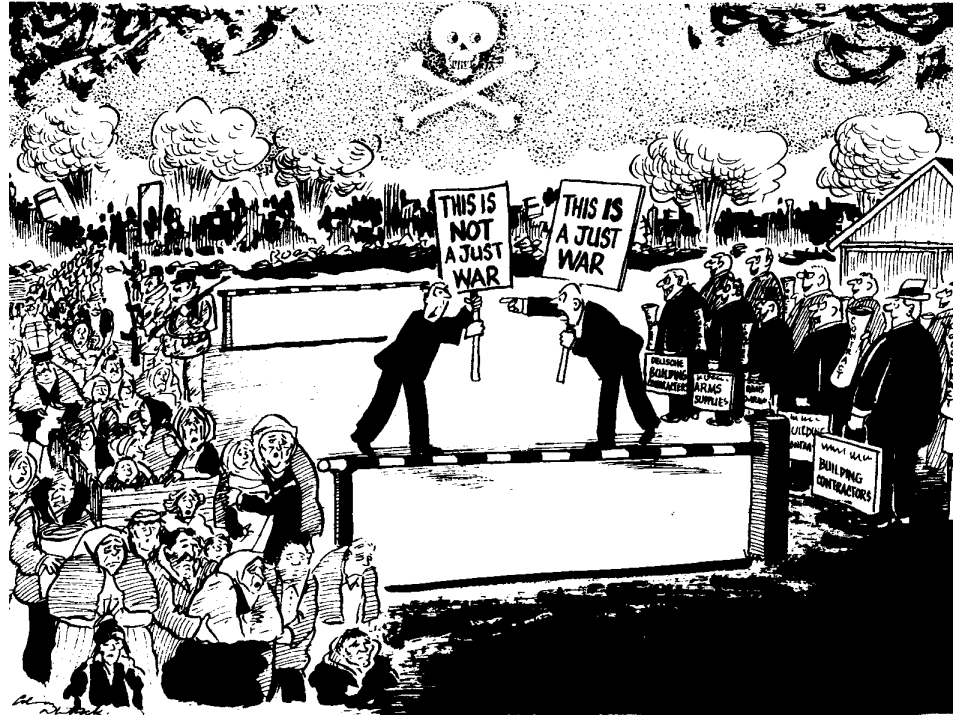
*Anundhati Roy*

It might seem ironic that a person who spends most of her time thinking of strategies of resistance and plotting to disrupt the putative peace, is given a peace prize. You must remember that I come from an essentially feudal country -and there are few things more disquieting than a feudal peace. Sometimes there's truth in old cliches. There can be no real peace without justice. And without resistance there will be no justice.

Today, it is not merely justice itself, but the idea of justice that is under attack. The assault on vulnerable, fragile sections of society is at once so complete, so cruel and so clever - all encompassing and yet specifically targeted, blatantly brutal and yet unbelievably insidious - that its sheer audacity has eroded our definition of justice. It has forced us to lower our sights, and curtail our expectations. Even among the well-intentioned, the expansive, magnificent concept of justice is gradually being substituted with the reduced, far more fragile discourse of 'human rights'.

If you think about it, this is an alarming shift of paradigm. The difference is that notions of equality, of parity have been pried loose and eased out of the equation. It's a process of attrition. Almost unconsciously, we begin to think of justice for the rich and human rights for the poor. Justice for the corporate world, human rights for its victims. Justice for Americans, human rights for Afghans and Iraqis.

It is becoming more than clear that violating human rights is an inherent and necessary part of the process of implementing a coercive and unjust political and economic structure on the world. Without the violation of human rights on an enormous scale, the neo-liberal project would remain in the dreamy realm of policy. But increasingly Human Rights violations are being portrayed as the



unfortunate, almost accidental fallout of an otherwise acceptable political and economic system. As though they're a small problem that can be mopped up with a little extra attention from some NGOs. This is why in areas of heightened conflict - in Kashmir and in Iraq for example - Human Rights Professionals are regarded with a degree of suspicion. Many resistance movements in poor countries which are fighting huge injustice and questioning the underlying principles of what constitutes "liberation" and "development", view Human Rights NGOs as modern day missionaries who've come to take the ugly edge off Imperialism. To defuse political anger and to maintain the status quo.

The invasion of Iraq will surely go down in history as one of the most cowardly wars ever fought. It was a war in which a band of rich nations, armed with enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world several times over, rounded on a poor nation, falsely accused it of having nuclear weapons, used the United Nations to force it to disarm, then invaded it, occupied it and are now in the process of selling it.

Iraq is a sign of things to come. Iraq marks the beginning of a new cycle. It offers us an opportunity to watch the Corporate-Military cabal that has come to be known as 'Empire' at work. In the new Iraq the gloves are off.

As the battle to control the world's resources intensifies, economic colonialism through formal military aggression is staging a comeback. Iraq is the logical culmination of the process of corporate globalization in which neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism have fused. If we can find it in ourselves to peep behind the curtain of blood, we would glimpse the pitiless transactions taking place backstage...

So Iraq has been 'liberated.' Its people have been subjugated and its markets have been 'freed'. That's the anthem of neo-liberalism. Free the markets. Screw the people.

The US government has privatized and sold entire sectors of Iraq's economy. Economic policies and tax laws have been re-written. Foreign companies can now buy 100% of Iraqi firms and expatriate the profits. This is an outright violation of

**(PLEASE SEE PEACE?, P.8)**

## PEACE?, CONT.

international laws that govern an occupying force, and is among the main reasons for the stealthy, hurried charade in which power was 'handed over' to an 'interim Iraqi government'. Once handing over of Iraq to the Multi-nationals is complete, a mild dose of genuine democracy won't do any harm...

Corporations like Bechtel and Halliburton, the company that US Vice-president Dick Cheney once headed, have won huge contracts for 'reconstruction' work...

The Bechtel Group and Saddam Hussein are old business acquaintances. Many of their dealings were negotiated by none other than Donald Rumsfeld. In 1988, after Saddam Hussein gassed thousands of Kurds, Bechtel signed contracts with his government to build a dual-use chemical plant in Baghdad.

Historically, the Bechtel Group has had and continues to have inextricably close links to the Republican establishment. You could call Bechtel and the Reagan Bush administration a team. Former Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger was a Bechtel general counsel. Former Deputy Secretary of Energy, W. Kenneth Davis was Bechtel's vice president. Riley Bechtel, the company chairman, is on the President's Export Council. Jack Sheehan, a retired marine corps general, is a senior vice president at Bechtel and a member of the US Defense Policy Board. Former Secretary of State George Shultz, who is on the Board of Directors of the Bechtel Group, was the chairman of the advisory board of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq...

Between 2001 and 2002, nine out of thirty members of the US Defense Policy Group were connected to companies that were awarded Defense contracts worth 76

billion dollars. Time was when weapons were manufactured in order to fight wars. Now wars are manufactured in order to sell weapons.

Between 1990 and 2002 the Bechtel group has contributed \$3.3 million to campaign funds, both Republican and Democrat. Since 1990 it has won more than 2000 government contracts worth more than 11 billion dollars...

The Bechtel story gets worse. In what can only be called unconscionable, Naomi Klein writes that Bechtel has successfully sued war-torn Iraq for 'war reparations' and 'lost profits'. It has been awarded 7 million dollars.

Invaded and occupied Iraq has been



made to pay out 200 million dollars in "reparations" for lost profits to corporations like Halliburton, Shell, Mobil, Nestle, Pepsi, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Toys R Us. That's apart from its 125 billion dollar sovereign debt forcing it to turn to the IMF, waiting in the wings like the angel of death, with its Structural Adjustment program.

In New Iraq, privatization has broken new ground. The US Army is increasingly recruiting private mercenaries to help in the occupation. The advantage with mercenaries is that when they're killed they're not included in the US soldiers' body count. It helps to manage public opinion, which is

particularly important in an election year. Prisons have been privatized. Torture has been privatized. We have seen what that leads to. Other attractions in New Iraq include newspapers being shut down. Television stations bombed. Reporters killed. US soldiers have opened fire on crowds of unarmed protestors killing scores of people...

So what does peace mean in this savage, corporatized, militarized world? What does it mean in a world where an entrenched system of appropriation has created a situation in which poor countries which have been plundered by colonizing regimes for centuries are steeped in debt to the very same countries that plundered them, and have to repay that debt at the rate of 382 billion dollars a year? What does peace mean in a world in which the combined wealth of the world's 587 billionaires exceeds the combined gross domestic product of the world's 135 poorest countries? Or when rich countries that pay farm subsidies of a billion dollars a day, try and force poor countries to drop their subsidies? What does peace mean to people in occupied Iraq, Palestine, Kashmir, Tibet and Chechnya?... to non-muslims in Islamic countries, or to women in Iran, Saudi Arabia and

Afghanistan? What does it mean to the millions who are being uprooted from their lands by...development projects? What does peace mean to the poor who are being actively robbed of their resources and for whom everyday life is a grim battle for water, shelter, survival and, above all, some semblance of dignity? For them, peace is war.

We know very well who benefits from war in the age of Empire. But we must also ask ourselves honestly who benefits from peace in the age of Empire? War mongering is criminal. But talking of peace without talking of justice could easily become advocacy for a kind of capitulation. And



talking of justice without unmasking the institutions and the systems that perpetrate injustice, is beyond hypocritical.

It's easy to blame the poor for being poor. It's easy to believe that the world is being caught up in an escalating spiral of terrorism and war. That's what allows the American President to say "You're either with us or with the terrorists." But we know that that's a spurious choice. We know that terrorism is only the privatization of war. That terrorists are the free marketers of war. They believe that the legitimate use of violence is not the sole prerogative of the State.

It is mendacious to make moral distinction between the unspeakable brutality of terrorism and the indiscriminate carnage of war and occupation. Both kinds of violence are unacceptable. We cannot support one and condemn the other.

The real tragedy is that most people in the world are trapped between the horror of a putative peace and the terror of war. Those are the two sheer cliffs we're hemmed in by. The question is: How do we climb out of this crevasse?

For those who are materially well-off, but morally uncomfortable, the first question you must ask yourself is do you

really want to climb out of it? How far are you prepared to go? Has the crevasse become too comfortable?

If you really want to climb out, there's good news and bad news.

The good news is that the advance party began the climb some time ago. They're already half way up. Thousands of activists across the world have been hard at work preparing footholds and securing the ropes to make it easier for the rest of us. There isn't only one path up. There are hundreds of ways of doing it. There are hundreds of battles being fought around the world that need your skills, your minds, your resources. No battle is irrelevant. No victory is too small.

The bad news is that colorful demonstrations... are not enough. There have to be targeted acts of real civil disobedience with real consequences. Maybe we can't flip a switch and conjure up a revolution. But there are several things we could do. For example, you could make a list of those corporations who have profited from the invasion of Iraq and..

boycott them, occupy their offices and force them out of business... Why not?

That's only a small suggestion. But remember that if the struggle were to resort to violence, it will lose vision, beauty and imagination. Most dangerous of all, it will marginalize and eventually victimize women. And a political struggle that does not have women at the heart of it, above it, below it and within it is no struggle at all.Ω



## NOTES CONT.

*St. Martin. He was driving around delivering toys when he noticed a big beautiful crow roaming up and down the block dragging a wing. He approached the bird and was able to calm it down and carry it to St. Brigid House in a cardboard box. Donna M., our own St. Therese of the little cleaning way, brought the bird to the Audobon society to be healed. Another successful animal rescue that almost redeems us from Chris' pigeon (ed. note: i.e. pigeon aka rats with wings) murdering spree.*

*The second story involves our friends*

*and neighbors universally, and affectionately, known as "the crazy sisters".*

*(They're not crazy, just a bit eccentric. Who among us isn't?) The sisters, actually twin sisters and a daughter are cheerful ladies who are somewhat obsessive-compulsive. They come weekly for oatmeal: "got's to keep my cholesterol down, Jackie" and juice. They have a funny habit of asking for large and strange things when they come to do laundry on Saturdays. In the past they've asked for a house in West Hartford, a convection oven, and a closet. A week before Christmas they came to give me their Christmas wish list! Among their list of desires was a request*

*for 3 designer purses. I laughed out loud but just for the fun of it we looked for the purses on the computer and discovered that each purse went for over \$150!!!! I told the ladies that if anyone called and asked what they could buy someone for Christmas, we'd let them know that the sisters are hoping for purses. Much to our amazement- on the Saturday before Christmas our dutiful volunteer Steve D. handed me a shopping bag saying to me "these were extra for whoever needs them." In the bag was 3 brand new fancy purses: Prada, Vitton and some other brand from Neiman Marcus. WOW.*

*We never cease to be amazed at the humor and mystery of the Holy Spirit.Ω*

# Notes from De Porres House

## Jackie Allen - Doucot

I am sitting down at Ahimsa House in Voluntown; it is the last night of our holiday break. We came down the day after Christmas for a week of peace and quiet: No Phone or Door!! As we pulled in the driveway it began to snow. We had six inches by morning.

It has been a very busy couple of months for us at the Worker. So busy in fact that by Thanksgiving we had to replace the front and back doorknobs because after only two years they had been worn out. (Special thanks to Don Wheatley). Our usual "crazy time" of the holidays was made even busier by Chris' trip to the Sudan. We were hosting our beloved friend George Rishmawi from Palestine; whose energy creates a whirlwind for the whole house (but we sure miss that "Hump", as Mo would say).

We have been coming to terms with our failure of partnership with friends George and Maureen Keough-Ostensen, who had been caretaking down here at the Voluntown Peace Trust. For me, I could not remember a time in my life when I was more physically or emotionally wiped out. I am grateful tonight for a sense of leaving here with my well a bit refilled. Grateful for having had some

time for prayer, sleep, walks, a little partying- and especially some time alone with my family. It was good to remind myself of why we have been working so hard to make the Voluntown Peace Trust work out. Please join us on January 21st for a dinner dance at St.



Patrick and St. Anthony to benefit the Voluntown project. (see p.2)

We have been so grateful for all our extended community that helped pick up the slack while Chris was away... Ellen, Nancy, Jory, Octo, Pru, Jamie, MaryLou, Mike, Donna, Jane, Lani and Steve (aka the big kahuna of volunteers). Thanks also go out to Princess Di for treating us to two home made gourmet dinners delivered to us when we were at our most pooped out!! and to Kristi G. and the Northwest Catholic kids who came to sort our toys. Oh and we can't forget the 50 or more elves who make our annual Christmas party a

success. This year's party was amazing. Our 135 kids received new toys, hats, gloves, socks and underwear. Thanks to Chief Huertas and his beautiful family for again putting us in touch with Santa. The generosity of all who contributed was almost overwhelming. We

had plenty of toys for the party and we were able to help five social workers with toys for the families they work with. Thanks and God Bless to St. Helena's, Corpus Christi, St. Ann's Avon, Sts. Patrick and Anthony, St. Tim's, St Peter Claver, Our Lady of Mercy, St. Elizabeth Seton, St. Brigid's, and St. Dunstan's for your prayers

and support.

Our live in community has been boosted by the addition of Sarah Karas!! Sarah has been a counselor at our Camp Ahimsa and a part of our extended community for six years. We love having a new "low woman" on the totem pole. I think she is downstairs now drilling holes in the 2005 wall calendar or some other mindless task. Welcome Sarah! We thank-God you came. ♥

We like to add a few odd stories to every house article, this issue we have two. On the day before the Christmas party Brian must have been channelling

(SEE NOTES P.9)

18 Clark St.  
Hartford, CT 06120  
(860) 724-7066

Place Label Here, Please