

We first had a run of 6,000 copies, now it is only 2,500. It is quite in demand, even though economically we are always in the red, because it is a cultural magazine, which costs a lot and makes little profit.

Through this review we have seen that the intellectual class of the country started appreciating us.

I myself was named, at the end of 1972, to the Syriac Academy, and then, when Iraq's three academies, the Arab, Kurd, and Syriac, were unified, I became a member of the Iraqi Academy in 1978, as I still am today. There are about 30 of us now, people of culture, of a high scientific level, and we meet every two weeks to carry forward scientific work. I have been welcomed into more than one international society, I am constantly invited to international cultural conferences, on the history of medicine, because it is one of my specialties, or history of law, which is my actual field.

Now, with this new college we think we can do much more, because already after one year, I perceive, from the contacts I have had with some professors and intellectuals, their enthusiasm about the idea of being part of this university, of teaching, or participating in scientific courses or conferences, which we started holding last year and which we will do a lot more of this year, once we get the official permit. Last year we held about 10 open conferences. We invited figures, including Muslims, to discuss cultural and scientific themes. We have also thought about musical recitals. . . . The war kept us from continuing, and in the last five months we suspended the activities of the college, but we hope this year to be able to organize a rather dense program of conferences and scientific sessions, and we hope over time to be able to invite people from abroad, too, to do something important.

I have experience in this kind of thing. In 1973 I organized a festival-congress in honor of Saint Efraim, one of the great fathers of the Syriac-Chaldean Church, from the 4th century, and at the same time in honor of Hunayn ibn Ishaq, the famous physician. Figures from many parts of the world came to that conference, from United States, France, Germany, Belgium, England, Holland, Italy, etc. It really was a beautiful occasion, and the result was the publication of two small books and a big volume containing all the acts of the festival-congress, which came out in Arabic and also in the original languages in which the various presentations had been given.

Through this college we hope then to be able to have a review which will be the official organ and other publications. That will give us a way of publishing not just scholarly work, which is exclusively intended for teaching, but also to choose books and topics which are important and profound, and also sensitive, which cannot be treated everywhere with the same ease.

So there is no lack of plans. We just hope that the country can enjoy greater tranquility, because without peace and tranquility you can't do work, especially intellectual work.

Relief official says famine looms in Iraq

Lawrence Pezzullo, executive director of Catholic Relief Services, testified on Aug. 1 before the Select Committee on Hunger of the U.S. House of Representatives. CRS provides relief and development assistance in more than 70 Third World countries, including eight countries in the Middle East. The following are excerpts from his presentation:

CRS can confirm that the health and nutritional plight of a growing number of Iraqis is deteriorating alarmingly, and this situation is likely to be compounded by the reported failure of this year's crop.

Second, we want to emphasize the anomaly of having to spend scarce humanitarian resources in a country that would otherwise be able to provide for its people's needs; moreover, humanitarian efforts directed there could siphon off critical resources that would otherwise go to less developed countries facing major humanitarian disasters. There are currently 30 million people at risk of starvation in 16 countries in Africa. . . .

The crisis in Iraq

Iraq is on the brink of a major humanitarian crisis. Since sanctions were imposed in August 1990, commercial imports of commodities have been reduced to a trickle, and vulnerable groups are feeling the squeeze between reduced supply and rising prices. Prior to the imposition of sanctions, Iraq imported approximately 70% of its food needs, and although the government of Iraq encouraged increased food production following sanctions, the harvest that has just been gathered is reported to be only one-third of last year's record crop. And due to the lack of seeds for planting, fertilizer, and spare parts to run essential farm machinery, next year's harvest predictions are even grimmer.

Food imports to Iraq cost nearly \$3 billion when food production is normal. Taking into account that it might be difficult to reach this level of food intake under current conditions, and using a standard ration computed for a disaster-stricken population, Iraq's food import bill for 1991-92 could be reduced to \$1.6 billion.

In the meantime, the amount of food entering Iraq under the auspices of the United Nations and international agencies such as CRS falls well short of the level of imports prior to

the embargo, and does not come close to the amount of imports needed to maintain a disaster ration. It should come as no surprise that CRS's staff and the private local organizations with which we cooperate are reporting serious food shortages that have resulted in a decline in the nutritional status of the general population.

CRS staff also report seeing those trends that are normally associated with the period before a famine: the use of feed grains for human consumption, the borrowing of cereals from other family members, the selling of household goods to buy food, the migration from farms to cities in search of day labor.

The U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) confirmed these CRS observations in a comprehensive report issued on July 18. According to FAO, the population of Iraq is "approaching the threshold of extreme deprivation except for the very few who can still afford to complement the food rationing system distribution by purchases in the free market." FAO further reports that if large-scale relief interventions are not undertaken in a timely fashion, the current situation will gradually lead to mass starvation.

The cost of food in the open market has skyrocketed. Retail prices of wheat are 45 times higher than their pre-war levels, and rice is 22 times higher. These increases come at a time when incomes have increased moderately. For less-skilled labor, which includes the very poor, incomes have decreased as a growing number of rural people are moving to the cities in search of work.

Prior to the war, Iraq had a food-rationing system that allowed low-income families to buy food at reasonable prices. Those too poor to pay were given food through the welfare system. Today, this system has broken down. Food rationed through the government system accounts for only one-third of the nutritional requirement of an individual, and only those with money are able to supplement the rations through purchases in the marketplace. A growing number of people do not have money to do this, and they are suffering acutely. Still more have run out of resources to purchase food through the government. An increasing number of families are requesting welfare distributions, further straining the already fragile system.

The situation is particularly severe for those with special nutritional needs. Pregnant and lactating women are at risk, and families with infants face shortages of infant formula. When available, a 450 milliliter (13.5 ounce) can of formula can cost roughly 10% of an average family's monthly income.

The health crisis

Infant mortality has doubled in the past year. This is due to a number of factors, including lack of proper nutrition and the adequate supply of medicines. Safe drinking water is available to only 20% of the population, and the sewerage systems of major cities have been cut to one-third of their

pre-war capacity. Hospitals lack essential equipment and medicines, and typhoid and other deadly diseases are now spreading rapidly during the heat of the summer.

CRS staff have been working in Iraq since mid-May, and their observations, based on visits to health centers, pediatric hospitals, and food markets, in cities and towns throughout the country, including the north and south, confirm the dangerously deteriorating situation. These conditions reflect both the devastation caused by the war, the civil conflict that followed, and the debilitating effects of sanctions.

The children are paying the highest price. Increasing numbers of cases of malnutrition, anemia, and serious vitamin deficiencies have been observed by CRS staff at hospitals and clinics throughout the country. In southern Iraq, health conditions are among the worst. There, 15% of the children are severely malnourished. These conditions have also been reported by the World Health Organization and other observers, including the Harvard Study Team and the Tufts University team.

CRS staff also report that typhoid has reached epidemic levels in southern Iraq. Health care facilities in the city of Amara reported 1,500 cases of typhoid in April 1991; 2,300 cases in May; and in one day in July, 250 cases were reported. Sixty percent of the typhoid cases are children under 12 years of age, and 30% of the cases suffer from complications.

The health care system has been affected by postwar shortages of electricity, purified water, and essential drugs and medical equipment. Visits to health care facilities show them to be badly overcrowded. Beds are being shared, especially in pediatric hospitals, increasing the prevalence of cross-infection.

Prior to the crisis, Iraq produced much of its own supply of medicines and medical equipment, even exporting drugs to nearby countries. However, without imports of raw materials to make drugs and other equipment, Iraq can no longer produce essential medicines. Shortages are wreaking havoc.

- The shortage of typhoid medicines (especially chloramphenicol, the standard typhoid medication) has led to the early release of typhoid patients not yet cured, increasing the likelihood of the disease spreading among the population.

- A once well-developed medical system is now largely unable to treat hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer because of severe shortages of the required drugs.

- The suspension of immunizations during and after the war because of the loss of refrigeration to preserve the vaccines has interrupted the protection of a generation of children from deadly diseases. . . .

- Severe shortages of chlorine for municipal drinking water systems, together with damage to pipes and other infrastructure, have disabled most of the country's drinking water systems. In the current summer heat, when temperatures are routinely above 100°F, CRS staff have observed people flocking to rivers and streams where they drink polluted water.

- Lack of spare parts to restore the supply of electricity, which powers the health-care system, has been repaired to less than 25% of its pre-war capacity. The supply of electricity will remain at this level until the embargo on spare parts is lifted. . . .

Sanctions and humanitarian assistance

Never before have international agencies such as CRS been called upon to provide relief assistance to a country that, in the absence of sanctions, would be able to purchase sufficient food to feed itself. Worse still, the policy of deliberately depriving the Iraqi population of regular commercial imports may divert the scarce human and financial resources of private agencies and the United Nations from countries where famine conditions are already in evidence.

CRS is aware that there are legitimate political issues at stake that have resulted in the imposition of sanctions against Iraq. However, as the Most Reverend John R. Roach, Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and chairman of the United States Catholic Conference's International Policy Committee, wrote to Secretary of State James Baker, "The inadequacy of existing humanitarian relief efforts, the conviction that coercive measures should be strictly limited in their ends and means, and mounting evidence of disproportionate harm to the civilian population lead us . . . to the judgment that the embargo, as now applied, unduly risks violating fundamental moral norms and prolonging human suffering."

In accordance with the position outlined by Bishop Griffin on behalf of the United States Catholic Conference, Catholic Relief Services believes that the current embargo should be restructured so that it can still secure full compliance with the cease-fire resolution, without endangering the lives of the civilian population. We encourage a reshaping of the embargo to allow Iraqi resources to be used to purchase essential commodities and to ensure that vulnerable population gain equal access to those commodities.

Let me strike a cautionary note. Suggestions about unfreezing Iraqi assets for the purchase of food, under U.N. control, are encouraging. However, we should not be diverted into thinking that the U.N. can be an effective substitute for the commercial and government mechanisms of commodity distribution. It is difficult to imagine any international agency—or set of agencies—with the capacity to manage the entire food and medical distribution system of a country of 18 million people. . . .

As long as comprehensive sanctions continue and the need for relief assistance grows, CRS will continue to insist (as we do in every country in which we work) that the Government of Iraq allow relief officials free and unimpeded access to vulnerable groups throughout the country. . . . I should note that we work with the Government of Iraq presently, and have thus far received its cooperation in the distribution and monitoring of our relief assistance. . . .

Hamerman tells U.N. LaRouche deprived

Warren Hamerman, speaking on behalf of the Vienna-based International Progress Organization (IPO), made his third powerful intervention into the ongoing deliberations at the United Nations in Geneva on Aug. 21. (See last week's EIR for reports on his previous testimony, on Aug. 9 and 13.) Legal experts of the U.N. Subcommittee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities during the entire morning had held a heated debate over the question whether, and how, to speak out against the coup attempt in Moscow.

During the afternoon session, devoted to a discussion of questions of justice and the issue of fair trial, where the U.S. practice of using the death penalty against minors was repeatedly criticized by law experts, Hamerman was among the first representatives of the non-governmental organizations to be called to take the floor. The room was packed and the attention of the audience, legal experts from all over the world, was described by eyewitnesses as unusually intense.

The text of Hamerman's speech follows:

The situation in the United States is very grave and becoming rapidly out of control with respect to human rights violations central to the related items of the administration of justice and the independence and impartiality of the judiciary. In the interest of consolidating my remarks, I will now present a single presentation dealing with Agenda items 10 and 11 with particular focus upon the pattern of systematic violations of the international standards established in:

1. The Right to a Fair Trial report prepared jointly by Mr. Stanislav Chernichenko and Mr. William Treat which not only analyzes the acceptable general fair trial standards for civilized nations, but also establishes what elements of a fair trial are non-derogable rights in accordance with resolution 1989/27 of the Subcommittee;

2. The Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials adopted by General Assembly resolution 34/169 of 17 December 1979; and

3. The Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary endorsed by General Assembly resolutions 40/32 of 29 November 1985 and 40/146 of 13 December 1985.

Despite its many guarantees of justice *de jure*, the following three areas indicate that the United States has fallen out-