The Case for Impeachment Grows

Proof Bush Deceived America

by Ray McGovern

A 27-year veteran of the CIA’s analysis ranks, Ray McGovern’s career spanned seven different presidencies from John F. Kennedy to George Bush, Sr. The keynote speaker at NFP’s 2004 Annual Peace Conference, he serves on the steering group of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS). This article was originally posted on tomopaine.com, January 13, 2006.

James Risen’s State of War: the Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration, may hold bigger secrets than the disclosure that President George W. Bush authorized warrantless eavesdropping on Americans.

Risen’s book also confirms the most damning element of the British Cabinet Office memos popularly called the “Downing Street memos;” namely, that “the intelligence and the facts were being fixed around the policy.” The result is that it is no longer credible to maintain that the failures in the Iraqi intelligence were the product of a broken intelligence community. The Bush Administration deliberately fabricated the case against Iraq, lying to Congress and the American people along the way.

Risen, a senior reporter for The New York Times, reports that British Prime Minister Tony Blair had an urgent need in the summer of 2002 to get the equivalent of a ‘second opinion’ regarding Bush’s plans for war in Iraq—insight independent of his own telephone conversations with the president and independent of what Blair was hearing from his own foreign office.

During his April 2002 visit to Crawford, Blair had gone out on a limb in pledging to support war on Iraq. The following months saw him getting nervous. So he chose what intelligence parlance calls a ‘back channel,’ and sent the chief of British intelligence, Richard Dearlove, to Washington to sound out his counterpart: the garrulous CIA director George Tenet, who he knew to be very close to the president.

The highly revealing Downing Street memo contained the minutes of Dearlove’s briefing of Blair and his top advisers upon his return from Washington on July 23. But what the memo left unanswered was the question of who gave Dearlove the confidence to say this to his prime minister:

“Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and the facts were being fixed around the policy.”

When the Sunday Times published the minutes of that key briefing on May 1, 2005, it seemed a safe bet that Dearlove’s source was Tenet, and I said so.

Now we have the confirmation. Risen writes that George Tenet was reluctant to receive Dearlove, but acquiesced when the British made clear that Blair considered the back-channel meeting urgent. Tenet then rose to the occasion—with a vengeance. Risen, quoting a former senior CIA official who helped host the British for a session that lasted most of Saturday, July 20, 2002, reports that Tenet and Dearlove had a 90-minute one-on-one conversation, during which Tenet told Dearlove that Bush had directed the CIA to fabricate the case against Iraq. The Bush Administration deliberately fabricated the case against Iraq, lying to Congress and the American people along the way.

— Ray McGovern

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The Case for Impeachment
Matthew Rothschild
Editor, The Progressive

The Progressive was founded January 9, 1909, by Wisconsin Senator Robert M. La Follette, Sr. First called La Follette's Weekly, the name was changed to The Progressive in 1929. During the 1960s, it was a leading voice in the civil-rights movement, publishing the writings of Martin Luther King Jr. several times. In 1970, the magazine marked the first Earth Day with a special issue. The Progressive has published leading social critics, such as Jane Addams, Helen Keller, Jack London, Clarence Darrow, Upton Sinclair, Lincoln Steffens, Carl Sandburg, George Orwell, James Baldwin, I.F. Stone, Noam Chomsky, and Edward Said. Rothschild started work at The Progressive in 1983, first as associate editor, then managing editor, and, since 1994, as editor-in-chief.

7 p.m. Thursday, February 23
Dodge Room A, Milo Bail Student Center
University of Nebraska Omaha
Free Admission, Open to the Public
Conclusions

Deceived, Deceived, Deceived, Deceived, Deceived,

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truth, and the truth will set you free."

at the entrance of CIA headquarters: "You will know the
certainties and I worked was chiseled into the marble
experiences like these, how can we fail to be seriously con-
and women, wiping out entire families and communities. After
the exploitation and murder of an appalling number of men
political systems wilfully twisted the truth and brought about
the tragedy of sin and its perverse consequences, which
tertain two months later, when the fabricated National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq and WMD was
produced by Tenet’s National Intelligence Council in a suc-
cessful attempt to deceive Congress into voting for war.

A former CIA official told Risen that after the conversa-
tion with Tenet, Richard Dearlove could certainly “figure
out what was going on; plus, the MI6 station chief in Wash-
ington was in CIA headquarters all the time, with just about
complete access to everything.” In any case, we now know
that Blair got what he wanted out of the visit—the inside
scoop from someone enjoying the complete trust of, and
daily access to, President Bush.

The President now says that he does not want his po-
itical opposition to dwell on how he lied to Congress and
the American people in order to invade a country and kill
tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians and more than 2,200 U.
S. troops—not to mention the many thousands maimed for
life. Perhaps he knows that Risen’s book could do as much
damage to his administration by calling renewed attention
to the Downing Street memos as is likely to be done by the
revelations of the secret NSA wiretapping.

One world leader recognizes the extreme danger of offi-
cial lies told to a nation in the service of an aggressive war.
He also happens to be a leader who survived the horrors of
fascism in the last century. In a Jan. 1 address to the world,
Pope Benedict XVI spoke about the consequences of lies
such as these, in what can only be a thinly veiled reference
to the president of the United States:

“Sacred Scripture, in its very first book, Genesis, points
to the lie told at the very beginning of history by the animal
with a forked tongue, whom the Evangelist John calls ‘the
father of lies’ (John 8:44). Lying is also one of the sins spoken
of in the final chapter of the last book of the Bible,
Revelation, which bars liars from the heavenly Jerusalem:
‘outside are... all who love falsehood’ (22:15). Lying is linked
to the tragedy of sin and its perverse consequences, which
have had, and continue to have, devastating effects on the
lives of individuals and nations. We need but think of the
events of the past century, when aberrant ideological and
political systems wilfully twisted the truth and brought about
the exploitation and murder of an appalling number of men
and women, wiping out entire families and communities. After
experiences like these, how can we fail to be seriously con-
cerned about lies in our own time, lies which are the fram-
work for menacing scenarios of death in many parts of the
world.”

The ethos of the Central Intelligence Agency in which
my contemporaries and I worked was chiseled into the marble
at the entrance of CIA headquarters: “You will know the
truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Sadly, the agency has come a long way.
In response to Yale Gotsdiner’s letter to the editor in the November/December Nebraska Report, we have submitted the article on the Israel government’s violations of international law. A subsequent article will deal with how U.S. support of the Israeli government violates not only international law, but even violates U.S. law. NFP generally seeks to speak with the oppressed (witness the Whiteclay issue) against those with the power to make change, partly because the cause of the oppressed is not usually conveyed in the mainstream media. Israel and it backer, the U.S., have the power to effect a just solution; Palestinians do not have that power. Oppressed peoples (just like the oppressors) are not perfect, but South Africa proceeded with peace talks regardless of efforts to derail it. NFP’s own action suggestions are nonviolent actions.

Henry D’Souza, Ph.D., State NFP Board
Anne Else, Omaha NFP Board

Lennox Hinds

The special UN rapporteur who investigated the violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Palestinians by Israel was Mr. John Dugard of the new South Africa, a nation which owes its existence to international struggles and support by progressive forces around the globe. Mr. Dugard observed, “there are both similarities and differences between apartheid South Africa and the situation in the Palestinian occupied territory. But one similarity is clear: Israel’s conduct in the occupied territory poses the same kind of challenge to the credibility of international human rights that apartheid did in the 1970s and 1980s. There are gross, egregious and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the occupied territory, committed not by undisciplined and uncontrolled militias but by one of the most disciplined and sophisticated armies in the modern world, directed by a stable and disciplined government.”

As it daily violates their human rights, Israel leaves the Palestinians no alternative but to resist by all means necessary. The Charter of the United Nations grants people the right to rebel: *jus ad bellum.* In response to some of the current acts of aggression, Palestinians are being denied the right to self-defense: “the right to receive support from third parties.

This article is a capsule presentation of violations of human rights and international law by the Israeli government. References to laws violated are in brackets throughout this article. Notation of specific Geneva Conventions broken will be abbreviated as follows:

- GC(#) = Fourth Geneva Convention (Article #)
- GC1P(#) = First Protocol to the Geneva Convention (Article #)

When Israeli forces desecrated the Al Aqsa mosque on September 28, 2000 in violation of international law [GC1P(52-3)], the Palestinians responded with the Al Aqsa Intifada, the latest and most sustained rebellion against Israeli occupation and repression. On October 7, 2000, the UN Security Council voted 14 to 0 to pass Resolution 1322 condemning Israel for violating international law as an occupying power and for being responsible for the start of the bloodshed. But the Resolution’s condemnation was not accompanied by sanctions against Israel, and so the Palestinians have continued to rebel as the oppression continues.

The term “occupying power” has a definite meaning in international law. Israel has no sovereignty over the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, nor the entire city of Jerusalem. As for West Jerusalem, the world has never recognized Israel’s annexation of West Jerusalem. That is why the U.S. and almost all other countries that have diplomatic relations with Israel have their embassies in Tel Aviv, not in Jerusalem. This is not Israel’s land as far as international law is concerned. Israel is what lawyers call a belligerent occupant in those territories. So this is a struggle between the belligerent occupant, Israel, against the Palestinians living on their own lands.

Today the Israeli government is violating, and has in the past violated, the rights of the Palestinians under the Geneva Conventions. Violations of these Conventions are war crimes.

Nature of Apartheid System: Palestinians under Israeli Military Occupation

1. Israel’s Discriminatory Land Policies and Illegal Settlements [GC(53) and GC(49)]

Israel’s land laws and policies applied in Israel and its occupation policies applied in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and previously in Gaza are, for practical purposes, identical. The common goal is to “judaize” space and to implement the Zionist project of controlling land solely for the benefit of Jewish citizens. The mechanisms for implementing the Zionist project include:

- outright home demolition and land confiscation
- “absentee” or “abandoned” property policies to transfer Palestinian-owned land within Israel for Jewish-only uses, and
- the building and expansion of Jewish settlements while installing bureaucratic controls and physical barriers that limit the areas where Palestinians reside.

Almost immediately after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Israel began building Jewish-only Israeli settlements throughout the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention [GC(49)] which explicitly prohibits an occupying power from transferring its own population to the territory it occupies. Expansion of these settlements on confiscated Palestinian land has continued through the “peace process.” The 2005 withdrawals from the Gaza Strip and a very small portion of the West Bank should be seen as a beginning. Withdrawal of all settlements from occupied territory is required by international law.

2. Restricted Movement of Palestinians [Article 12-1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, GC(3-1) and GC(27)]

In March 1993, Israel imposed “general closure” on the occupied Palestinian territories. Under general closure, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza had to obtain permits from the Israeli military to enter Israel, East Jerusalem or to travel abroad. The criteria for obtaining permits were not public, and many applications were denied without explanation.

Since October 8, 2000, Israel has imposed a “comprehensive closure” on the occupied Palestinian territories. Nearly all permits to enter Israel and East Jerusalem previously granted were revoked. No permits have been allowed for travel between the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Occupied East Jerusalem. Closures of West Bank and Gaza cities and towns essentially keep Palestinians imprisoned in their own localities, unable to travel even between Palestinian towns.

3. Construction of an Illegal Wall throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories [Article 1-2 and Article 6-1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Article 12-1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, GC(3-1) and GC(27)]

In July 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) held that the wall currently being constructed by Israel snaking its way through Palestinian territory is illegal. The ICJ directed Israel to dismantle the wall, but the construction of the wall continues. Unfortunately, Israel’s recent limited withdrawals of a few settlers have drawn attention away from Israel’s refusal to comply with the advisory opinion of the ICJ.

The wall has serious consequences:

- a. It consolidates and encourages illegal Israeli settlements. The settler population increased by 5.3 percent in 2004 compared with a population growth of 1.4 percent in Israel itself. In August 2004, the Israeli government granted 2,167 permits to Israeli settlers to build in Palestine. This has given rise to increased settler violence against Palestinians for which the state of Israel is responsible.
- b. The wall has resulted in the seizure of Palestinian land.
Global Climate Change And Us

by Charles Richardson

NFP member Charles Richardson is a longtime activist with the Green Party, Central Nebraska Peace Workers, and the Sierra Club.

Bill McKibben’s 1989 book, The End of Nature, was one of the first books to describe the realities of climate change. Grieving for the losses past and future, he laid out the issues so clearly, it seemed unthinkable that we wouldn’t take action.

The 1990s, though, proved to be a decade of dis- may. Despite growing documentation of global warming by of the National Academy of Sciences and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—and gains in public awareness, interest in con- servation and the availability of renewables—no significant political progress occurred. Fossil fuel interests, the major car manufacturers, right-wing think tanks and professional skeptics came together to form the Global Climate Coalition. Corporate friendly and regulation-averse politicians blocked legislative initiatives. And all the while, greenhouse emissions and carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere continued to rise.

The setbacks continued with Senate rejection of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, and worsened after the stolen elections of 2000. The EPA was politi- calized with predictable results. It then could and did hamper power plant clean-ups, weaken the Clean Act, and speak softly, if at all, about climate change. Mandatory cuts or taxes on CO2 emissions were rejected; increased CAFE standards were also rejected. The fossil fuel industries were strengthened as seen with Vice President Cheney’s secret meetings on a national energy policy.

Not surprisingly, the rate of carbon dioxide emission has steadily increased. According to NASA, 2005 was the warmest year on record since recording began in the late 1800’s.

Who knows how long this irresponsible behavior might have gone on, had not a host of other climate-related disasters, culminating with Katrina, highlighted what’s happening with the environment? It’s only a start, and represents only a small shift in thinking, but as a result of these calamities at least a half dozen Republican senators now support mandatory CO2 emission caps. And others may be persuadable. After years of scoffing, with “sound science” as his mantra, even Sen. Chuck Hagel has begun to concede there might be something to all this talk about climate change. This is partly political, of course, as he’s trying to show national leadership, while yet not offending his conservative corporate base. Hence, he’s avoiding stringent and mandatory caps on greenhouse gas emissions, and his legislative proposals—compared to the other global warming-related legislation that’s been introduced—reflect this more minimalist approach.

The better bills currently in Senate Committees provide for a voluntary cap and trade system on emissions, for incentives for renewable energy research and development, and for assuring the availability of these necessary technologies to developing countries. S.342, in particular, introduced by Republican Sen. John McCain, seems strong. If passed, this legislation would constitute meaningful progress. Three other bills though, sponsored by Hagel, have serious flaws, relying on what he terms “emissions intensity” as a way of measuring progress. The use of such a standard of measure is deceptive, in that it inappropriately ties emissions levels to economic growth. For example, in 2004, U.S. carbon dioxide emissions increased by a dangerous 1.7 percent. But since America’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by 4.3 percent, the Bush/Cheney team can declare success.

While our political leaders dither or indulge in sleight of hand, there are signs that, even within the energy industry itself, attitudes are changing. With awareness of the issue steadily growing, concern over insurance costs increasing, and the knowledge that curbs are at some point inevitable, industry support for emissions controls is on the rise. And from a strictly bottom-line perspective, gradual regulation sooner is superior to severe regulation later. According to Xcel Energy (the nation’s fourth largest electricity and gas utility) CEO and Chairman Wayne Brunetti, the industry already has the technology to significantly reduce emissions: “Give us a date, tell us how much we need to cut, give us the flexibility to meet the goals, and we’ll get it done.” (“Global Warming,” Business Week, 8/16/2004)

The problem, it turns out, is not in the science or economics. It’s in the inadequacy of public involvement and the failures of leadership and political will. And the window for pro-actively addressing the problem is closing. Solid research predicts a future for our planet ranging between disastrous and catastrophic. At this point, we still likely have some control over the global warming processes, and still have some ability to ameliorate the impact and to keep the world broadly livable. The undisputed scientific consensus though, if we continue to proceed as we are, is that in the very near future the planetary warming processes will become self-sustaining and autonomous, and beyond human control. Once that were to happen, the potential for sudden and catastrophic climate change becomes possible.

What Is To Be Done?

What we must do now is well under- stood.

1. We must increase our emergency and long-term response capabilities for the already inevitable climate-related disasters—the Katrinas, rising sea levels, floods, droughts, famines, population shifts, wars for survival and more. The problems are already here, as with the drought in Kenya, where an estimated 2.5 million people are requiring emergency food aid and other interventions.

2. Stabilizing the climate, according to IPCC estimates, will require a 50-70 percent reduction in the burning of coal and oil. To do this we must support the global switch from fossil fuels to energy sources such as wind, solar, wave energy, hydroelectric, tidal power, biomass and hydrogen fuel. And we must do this as soon as humanly possible.

Please think about what you buy.

If a corporation doesn’t care about climate change, funds a multi-million dollar propaganda campaign condemning the Kyoto Protocol and continues to discredit global warming data, has a history of misleading the public by using selective, outdated or incorrect scientific studies, and doesn’t believe renewable energy has a future, it’s time for the customers to speak with their consumer power.

graphic by Justin Kemerling
Sierra Club’s COOL CITIES Campaign
Solving Global Warming One City at a Time

by Cammy Watkins, Sierra Club

The Sierra Club has launched its new “Cool Cities” campaign to encourage cities to move forward with innovative solutions to reduce heat-trapping global warming pollution. This campaign showcases local leadership on the part of nearly 190 U.S. mayors to curb global warming, in stark contrast to the Bush Administration’s history of missed opportunities and broken promises on global warming.

So far 183 mayors, representing nearly 40 million Americans in 38 states, have signed on to the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, pledging to reduce global warming carbon dioxide pollution in their cities to 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012 (for a full list of cities and background on the agreement, see www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate/).

“While it is encouraging to see the growing list of cities supporting action to curb global warming, many mayors do not yet have the strategies in place to meet these targets,” said Glen Brand, Sierra Club Global Warming Program’s National Field Coordinator based in Portland, Oregon. “That’s why the Cool Cities campaign is advocating for local energy solutions that can help cities meet their climate protection commitments.”

To accompany the campaign, the Sierra Club has released a new guide, “Cool Cities: Solving Global Warming One City at a Time.” The guide explains the steps toward making cities “cool” and tells success stories from a broad range of cities, from greening municipal vehicle fleets with hybrid cars in Houston and Charlotte; to energy efficient street lights and buildings in Salt Lake City and Scottsdale, Arizona, to renewable energy investments in Waverly, Iowa and Columbia, Missouri. The guide is available online at www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/coolcities.

Mayor Jerry Ryan of Bellevue is the first mayor in Nebraska to sign on to the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. We are very proud of Mayor Ryan for being a true leader and taking the first steps towards making Nebraska a cleaner and “cooler” city. Currently, we are in discussions with the mayors of Lincoln and Omaha about Cool Cities.

Nebraskans for Peace members who are interested in working with the Sierra Club in organizing a local Cool Cities campaign for their city should contact Cammy Watkins, the Sierra Club conservation organizer in Omaha. Cammy can be reached via email: camellia.watkins@sierraclub.org or by phone at 402-551-9480.

Global Climate Change & Us, conclusion

3. The U.S. must rejoin the Kyoto process immediately. The parties to Kyoto must adopt mandatory and stringent curbs on fossil fuel emissions, probably a cap-and-trade system. One idea calls for instituting limits that increase by five percent each year until the world has adequately reduced emissions. For the first few years, most countries would meet their goals by implementing low-cost or even profitable efficiencies in their current energy systems. As the efficiencies become more expensive, countries would begin to consider alternative energy sources and by drawing more and more energy from non-carbon sources.

Motor vehicles are responsible for nearly half of the carbon dioxide emissions. The most obvious approach for dealing with that is to steadily increase the corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards. Industrial countries spend an estimated $200 billion a year subsidizing the extraction and refining of fossil fuels. These subsidies should be replaced with equivalent aid to promote the development of clean energy sources.

4. We will need to assist developing countries that cannot afford the switch to clean energy. A suggested source of revenue is the “Tobin tax” (named for the Nobel Prize winning economist James Tobin) on international currency transactions. Estimated revenue is over $300 billion a year that could be used for renewable energies and clean industrial development. An alternative would be a tax on carbon emissions, particularly coal-generated electricity, which is responsible for about a third of all U.S. carbon emissions. The system currently in place is perverse. We pay a premium in order to receive a component of renewable energy in our homes.

Important as our federal government’s leadership on this issue is, our greatest effectiveness may be at the local and state levels. The International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) is worth checking out. It is a nonprofit organization that assists local governments in identifying, developing and monitoring climate protection projects. One hundred eighty-three mayors in 38 states have signed agreements for reducing greenhouse gas emissions under the Climate Protection Agreement. http://www.iclei.org. The Republican mayor of Bellevue, Nebraska, Jerry Ryan, has signed on and was quoted as saying “You’ve got to ask, ‘Is it remotely possible that there is a threat?’ If the answer is yes, you’ve got to act now.” The Sierra Club website has a section on cities with innovative projects for energy conservation—“Cool Cities.”

We need to be encouraging our mayors—particularly our Democratic mayors of our two largest Nebraska cities—to become a part of this program.

The Apollo Alliance is also worth checking out. It is a nationwide alliance for “good jobs and clean energy” with endorsements by many environmental organizations, labor unions, and green-oriented businesses. The National Advisory Board includes Leo Gerard, President, United Steel Workers of America; Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club; and Rep. Jesse Jackson. There are a dozen or so state chapters, including Wisconsin and Minnesota. Apollo is effective in helping bring business, labor, and environmentalists together into state and local alliances. It could provide a structure for state organizing. You can find good information and examples of campus-based projects at www.apollo-alliance.org.

Finally, there are spiritual matters. Most of the major denominations—mainstream Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish—have expressed concerns about climate change. Perhaps there are opportunities within our various congregations to promote awareness and involvement. But we must take action now. The hour in which to act is growing short. As a letter from the National Religious Partnership for the Environment warned, “Many of us share a deep conviction that global climate change presents an unprecedented threat to the integrity of life on Earth and a challenge to universal values that bind us as human beings.”
Will Justice Finally Come for Ed & Mondo?

by Nan Graf,
Nebraskans for Justice

Ed Poindexter and David Rice (aka Mondo we Langa) have been incarcerated for 35 years, but they have always maintained their innocence in the suitcase bombing death of Omaha Police Officer Larry Minard, that took place in August of 1970.

A legal team is currently focusing on new possibilities for the re-trial and/or release of Ed that could later lead to the same for Mondo. Ed’s attorney, Robert F. Bartle, and Mondo’s attorney, Timothy Ashford, exchange information, so that both of their clients can benefit from the legal work this is going on right now.

Mondo remains at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, where he and Ed were sent to serve a life sentence after their April, 1971 trial and conviction, but in 1979, at his request, Ed transferred to a Minnesota prison—via an Interstate Compact Prisoner Exchange—to work on a Bachelor’s degree in Human Services as part of Minnesota’s “Insight” project. Ed received a $250 award as the “Outstanding Student” at the behind-the-walls graduation ceremony, not only because of his high academic achievement, but also because of his encouragement of other prisoners to earn a college degree. He later earned a Master’s degree in Management of Information Systems from Goddard Graduate School. Educational funding came from private grants, mainly from the Catholic Church and General Mills.

All that Poindexter accomplished was, of course, at the end of a prison work day—with little pay and no vacations. Now 61 years old, he has spent 35 years in prison deprived of home and family. The victim of an unfair trial, he (and Mondo) has been incarcerated while the real murderer(s) are still out there somewhere.

Robert F. Bartle was asked to head the Poindexter legal team in 1999. Even though lawyer and client now reside in different states where both keep busy pursuing legal challenges, they have stayed in touch off and on over the years.

On July 28, 2003, Bartle filed a petition in Omaha’s Douglas County Court on behalf of Ed, presenting four claims:

Claim I 6th Amendment violation—ineffective assistance of trial counsel
Claim II 5th and 14th Amendments violations—prosecutorial misconduct
Claim III 6th Amendment violation—ineffective appellate assistance
Claim IV 6th Amendment violation—defendant’s right to a jury trial through a bifurcated process

On November 18, 2003, District Judge Richard J. Spethman accepted Claims I and III, put Claim II on hold, and ruled that the defendant would not be allowed to pursue Claim IV. The legal team considered this, on the whole, good news for Ed and went to work immediately on what could be pursued in court.

Important depositions—that is testimony under oath that can be used in court when the person is absent from court—were taken in 2004-2005 from former Governor Frank Morris, Ed’s Public Defender lawyer in the original trial, Ed’s co-defendant David Rice (the official court name for Mondo we Langa) and Ed himself. Both prosecuting attorney and defense attorney must be present for taking a deposition; the following were present at the depositions: Chief Deputy Douglas County Attorney Brent Bloom; Ed’s attorney Robert Bartle; and Rice’s attorney Timothy Ashford for the Rice deposition.

According to Bartle, one critical issue to pursue is a 911 tape that is mentioned in a 10/13/1970 FBI Memo to Director J. Edgar Hoover from Omaha’s Strategic Air Command: “Assistant COP GLENN GATES... has advised that he wishes no use of this tape until after the murder trials of Peak and the two accomplices has been completed.”

Duane Peak, the state’s witness against Poindexter and Rice in their April, 1971 trial together, claimed under oath that it was his voice on the 911 tape. Those who knew Peak, including State Senator Ernie Chambers, claim it is not Peak’s voice on the tape. If the voice is not Peak’s, his entire testimony becomes suspect.

On Tuesday, January 3, 2006, Judge Richard J. Spethman ruled that Poindexter has the right to a voiceprint of Duane Peak to compare it with the voice on the 911 tape, which was not available to the defense at the time of the 1971 trial, but allegedly known about by the prosecution.
Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now

Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now

Before reading Unveiling Empire, I avoided the Biblical book known as Revelation or the Apocalypse of John as bizarre and filled with imagery of violence, sexuality, and divine destruction that did not fit my understanding of God and the Gospels. After reading Unveiling Empire, I see Revelation as a powerful inspiration for those who yearn for Peace & Justice. Wielding a credible interpretation of Revelation through the lens of Liberation Theology, progressive Christians can break the Christian Right’s theological monopoly on this explosive text. I will briefly present Howard-Brook and Gwyther’s view of Revelation and review the book.

In a nutshell, the authors present Revelation as a critique of the Roman Empire’s sins, injustices, and lies, an assertion that God—not empire—is in control, and an exhortation to Christians to remain faithful to Christ by refusing to be seduced by empire or to cooperate with empire’s violence. Seduction and violence are key concepts in Revelation’s critique of Rome and are symbolized by the Whore and the Beast, respectively. Seduction took place through Roman media, trade, competition among cities for Roman imperial patronage, and religion. Where these failed, empire used violence to impose its will.

The authors’ discussion of seduction and violence reassured me that Revelation does not intend to insult women or portray God as bloodthirsty as I feared. Rather, the sexual imagery represents commerce with empire. They argue that the violence of the bowl plagues is to represent God’s attempt in the Hebrew scriptures to persuade the people to repent through assertions of sovereignty and power. Because the people did not repent of imperial practices, God tried a new strategy: sending his son as teacher and sacrifice. Revelation celebrates the greater success of Christ. In this way, Revelation reinterprets the message of the entire Bible.

Howard-Brook and Gwyther relate Revelation’s critique of empire to today’s situation. They argue that empire’s principal form today is global capital. Chapter nine compares the dynamics of the Roman Empire and global capital with astonishing clarity. After reading their analysis, I clearly saw the parallels. For example, today corporations dominate mass media and advertising; globalization fosters dependence on global corporations; cities, states, and nations compete against each other for the patronage of global corporations (See the January, 2006 Nebraska Report article on Greg LeRoy); and the Christian Right actively supports pro-corporate candidates and policies.

However, in most of the book, the authors appropriately are concerned with providing context that the original readers of Revelation—in the Roman province of Asia—would have taken for granted but that modern readers often lack. These include the origins of Revelation’s symbolism, understanding of time and space in the ancient world, and the ways of empire as contrasted with the ways of God.

Revelation is one of many examples of apocalyptic literature from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Howard-Brook and Gwyther point out that the word apocalypse means “unveil.” They show that many of Revelation’s images derive from earlier books of the Bible and from other books outside the Bible such as 4 Ezra. These works collectively provided a symbolic language for describing “earth” as viewed from “heaven” that the authors believe would have been familiar to Revelation’s first readers.

Although earth and heaven are separated metaphorically by a veil, first-century Christians understood these worlds as coexisting realities and not separated by time or space. While modern Americans tend to think of the present as merely separating past from future, ancient Christians lived in a present-oriented society in which present and future flowed together so that future things can be present now (p. 125). The authors state, “This notion of the forthcoming as already present is... expressed in the Gospels. For example, in John [4:23], Jesus says: ‘The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth’” (p. 125). This ancient view of time is the key to understanding the periods of time narrated in Revelation such as the famous thousand years of peace.

Similarly, earth and heaven intermingled for Revelation’s first readers in a way that they do not always for modern readers. The authors assert that, for ancient Christians, the distinction between earth and heaven appears to be largely one of perspective: “Earth is the perspective of empire. Heaven, on the other hand, is where John sees that the truth is unveiled” (p. 128).

Indeed, one’s perspective is crucial to understanding Revelation. Although empire—symbolically called Babylon—appears supreme, Revelation reveals that, from heaven’s point of view, empire is already fallen and destroyed by God’s judgment. Howard-Brook and Gwyther argue that the Christians to whom Revelation was originally addressed would have understood Babylon as cooperation with empire and New Jerusalem as the condition of resistance to empire in faithfulness to God. Therefore, New Jerusalem is present now to those who choose to enter it.

Neither Revelation nor Unveiling Empire offers clear roadmaps to New Jerusalem or for coming out of empire. The book is intended for study groups and includes excellent discussion questions. Howard-Brook and Gwyther advocate developing local economy as an alternative to dominance by global capital and concede the difficulty and amorphousness of this task. Although it is not a religious organization, Nebraskans for Peace’s challenges of state subsidies to Big Business is one way that our organization is resisting Babylon/global capital. Arguably, our steadfast opposition to the Iraq War is another. These efforts build up New Jerusalem.

Although the book contains some statements that I could quibble with, overall, the book impresses me as high-quality scholarship and an exceedingly important message to our churches and Peace & Justice activists. It transformed not only the way that I read Revelation and even the whole Bible, it changed the way that I view our movement for Peace & Justice. Our participation is an attempt to come out of Babylon. As citizens of a republic, we have far more power than did the Christians of Roman Asia. Alternatives to the corporate empire—such as union-made clothing, farmer’s markets, and the coming Nebraska Food Cooperative—seem to be on the rise. Are these glimpses of New Jerusalem?

Curtis Bryant is a Quaker and graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Omaha School of Social Work.

NFP ally Doug McMains was traveling in Nicaragua last November (2005) when he noticed this graffiti on the wall of a building in Leon.
Palestine’s best agricultural land and water resources in the regions of Tulkarem and Qalqilya have already been confiscated. Now Israel is seizing East Jerusalem by constructing a wall around Greater Jerusalem to enclose settlements and Palestinian parts of East Jerusalem.

c. The wall greatly impedes freedom of movement. Gates granting access to the closed zone are frequently unopened as scheduled. Some 60,000 Palestinians, living in the suburbs of Jerusalem on the West Bank side of the wall, are denied access to schools, hospitals and employment. Families are divided by the wall. Palestinians in the West Bank are denied access to their lands on the other side of the wall unless they can obtain permits, which are frequently withheld, especially for young men who should farm the land but are seen to be security threats.

d. Although Israel claims the wall is needed for security, that could have been accomplished by building along the border of the West Bank, known as the “Green Line,” or within Israeli territory. Rather, the wall appears to be designed to seize land for Israel’s present and future settlers. It appears to be designed to cause an exodus of Palestinians from areas adjacent to the wall. With no access to their lands and the lives made miserable by the Israeli military presence, Palestinians have, in fact, started to migrate.


The permit system governing travel, trade and labor, combined with the closures of the West Bank and Gaza, keep Palestinian economic “development” at the daily whim of Israeli policy. Chronic Palestinian unemployment has increased during the Oslo era, as has the incidence of households below the poverty line. The trade imbalance has also increased. The Palestinian economy now relies more heavily on goods imported almost entirely from Israel, yet its ability to export to Israel or other countries is severely limited by closure policies and the exclusive Israeli control over trade ports.

5. Illegal Delay and Prevention of Medical Treatment [GC(20), GC(21), GC(55), GC1P(12), GC1P(15), GC1P(21)]

Under international law, Israel must ensure the provision of medical care to an occupied population and must enforce special protections accorded to persons treating and evacuating the wounded. During the first two months of the Al Aqsa Intifada, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) attacked 82 ambulances using live ammunition and rubber-coated steel bullets, wounding 56 medical staff and killing at least one person. The Health Development Information and Policy Institute reports that, through April 2, 2001, Israeli attacks on medical personnel injured 103 medical staff and killed at least two medical personnel in 126 separate attacks.

The same restrictions on movement forced on the Palestinian population are also imposed on ambulances carrying the sick and wounded. Evidence shows that ambulances trying to cross checkpoints to evacuate the wounded are prevented from doing so by Israeli soldiers. The wounded must then be manually carried across, resulting in life-threatening delays. Hospital staff have reported unnecessary delays leading to the deaths of many injured civilians. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, personally confirmed that, during her delegation’s trip to Gaza, there was gunfire at a checkpoint and the IDF prevented two ambulances from attending to Palestinian casualties.

6. Excessive Use of Lethal Force Violates International Law [GC(33), GC(53), GC1P(51-6), GC1P(52-1-3)]

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Physicians for Human Rights/USA, and the UN High Commission for Human Rights have visited Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip to independently assess the conduct of the parties to this conflict. All condemned Israel for its excessive and indiscriminate use of force against Palestinian citizens and civilian areas.

There is a pattern of excessive Israeli force against Palestinian demonstrators who pose no threat of death or serious injury to Israeli soldiers or settlers. The overwhelming majority of demonstrations against the Israeli occupation have been by civilians who are either unarmed, armed with stones or, at most, with bottles of petrol.

According to Amnesty International, “the Israeli security services were almost invariably well-defended, located at a distance from demonstrators in good cover, in blockhouses, behind wire or well-protected by riot shields… Certainly, stones—or even petrol bombs—cannot be said to have endangered the lives of Israeli security services.” However, the IDF employed live ammunition, plastic coated metal bullets, and snipers to inflict massive trauma. Hospital evidence showed that, of the gun shot wounds in Gaza, 50 percent were to the head or upper body. The Israelis seem to ignore the requirement of gradualism, and move directly to the use of lethal weapons, often against children.

Israeli security forces have been trained to control violent demonstrations without the use of firearms. Amnesty International reports that “violent demonstrations by ultra-orthodox Jews in Jerusalem… were policed without resort to firearms” and “no demonstration organized by a Jewish group has ever been fired on, even by rubber bullets.” This discrepancy in practice violated the UN Code of Conduct of Law Enforcement Officers (as distinguished from violations by military personnel).

7. Collective Punishment Is Prohibited by International Law [GC1P(35-2), GC1P(51-6), GC1P(52-1-3)]

Indiscriminate retaliation (as opposed to retaliation focused on a specific threat or alleged perpetrator) is known as collective punishment. Collective punishment is intended to spread terror among the civilian population and results in extensive damage to public infrastructure and residential neighborhoods as well as to civilian life. Between September 29 and December 21, 2000, 93 public buildings and institutions were shelled by the Israelis, according to a report by the Physicians for Human Rights.

The IDF often responds to Palestinian gunmen shooting Kalashnikov rifles at Israeli military posts and settlements by indiscriminately targeting houses not involved in the gunfire, killing and injuring civilians and causing tremendous property damage. Many weapons used in these collective punishment responses are indirect weapons systems, not meant to fire at specific targets. Other weapons used by the Israelis, e.g., armor-piercing bullets, referred to as “concrete busters,” are a disproportionate response to the rifles used against them.

In the next issue of the Nebraska Report, information about how U.S. tax dollars illegally support these military actions will be discussed.

(Footnotes)

1 The right to rebel, jus ad bellum, is recognized under international law pursuant to Article (51) of the UN Charter.

2 The U.S. did not oppose the resolution; it simply abstained from voting.


Maureen Connolly is a School Sister of St. Francis and an educator by profession. She is program coordinator at New Covenant Justice and Peace Center in Omaha and a member of the State Board of Nebraskans for Peace. She wrote the following "open letter" in response to fellow NFP State Board member A'Jamal Byndon's article in the November/December 2005 Nebraska Report, entitled "Building Diversity within the Peace Movement—Is that An Oxymoron?"

A'Jamal Byndon

Maureen Connolly

After reading your article, A'Jamal, I offer in return the thoughts of a white lady and my attempts to make connections around race and culture. Obviously, I have done some thinking about racism, but more never hurts—or it can—but that too is part of the journey.

White folks in my town do not often cross paths with people of color—any color. That is a huge issue. Persons I know who are open to relationships across the ethnic divide do not know how to make it happen, especially when we live in 'one of the most segregated cities in the U.S.' Now, it may be fair to say, 'if you really wanted to, you would figure out a way.' That may be true. The deeper truth is that most of us inhabit pretty totally 'white ghettos.'

White folks in the U.S. are very ambivalent in their feelings about our nation's treatment of Native Americans and the whole subject of slavery. The primary barrier to understanding is ignorance, which enables us to design and live with many false assumptions. As a group, we can stay quite comfortably in a ‘blame the victim’ mode. We saw lots of that happening around Katrina with respect to the African Americans stranded inside New Orleans. Many whites thought the whole thing was weird, and attributed the plight of those left behind to just plain stubbornness (as if ‘they’ could have predicted Katrina and had known the ill-constructed levees would not protect them). Confronted with such a scenario, we are either unable to process the data, or simply find it so much easier to revert to the long-held race bias.

As an Irish immigrant, I often find myself defending immigrants who leave homes and families they love and care about to escape life-threatening horrors. It is not, if we believe the pundits, ‘because they envy the American way of life.’ This is what I consider one of the most stupid theories used by some to explain 9/11. Another irritant is the arrogance of the statement directed at immigrants—especially the non-English speaking—that ‘they need to become Americans,’ whatever that means. Haven’t the folks who say such things yet heard we commonly refer to ourselves as “a nation of immigrants?”

Individualism is the cornerstone of American culture by Constitutional edict. It fosters the illusion of the ‘lone ranger,’ personal responsibility, and the ‘self-made’ man. This sets up a patronizing mentality toward those who have not ‘made it,’ and a deluded mindset in the ones who think they have. Getting beyond this may be our greatest challenge. There are no guarantees that we will. Many, if not most, of these beliefs are unconscious and difficult to access. They are deeply embedded in the meaning of what it means to ‘be an American.’

My own painful experiences with an ethnic group different from my own could have frightened a less stubborn person away. I was invited ‘in,’ and before too long I wanted ‘out.’ I had to talk to a lot of folks to get myself to persist through the conflicts and stay with the process. All cultures have their intra-group struggles because that is who we are. (Sharon was not able to get the Jews in Israel to pull together. Notice that no outside observers rushed in to mediate the fight.) When an outsider like myself gets ensnared in such a conflict—as a volunteer—it is much easier to go somewhere else where I will be appreciated and desired. Volunteerism is activity that people choose for enjoyment. Changing society is not usually ranked ‘number one’ on the list of volunteer priorities, if it makes the list at all. Most of us don’t want to work that hard.

In the peace movement, where the majority of us are volunteers, we are like most do-gooders. We choose the most accessible issues, the ones we know best or that emerge from our life experiences. If we were engaged in advocacy work that provided a salary, we might stretch more because the job would probably demand it. In the present arrangement, many urgent life-saving issues go unaddressed—generally the more difficult ones.

When I reflect on my relationship within a culture outside my comfort zone, I realize the unique ways that I have grown—through experiential encounters and relationships that evolved. I have grown in respect for difference, for trust in the other, and for struggles very different from my own. I have seen first-hand the damage that racism does and the pain it causes. These are awarenesses that I could discover no other way, unless I went out looking. I am fairly certain I would not otherwise have made the effort.

Ending racism is a necessary and worthwhile goal. Like all ‘isms’ it is rooted in ignorance and fed by fear. If we want to succeed, we need to stay in focus. We have to tell each other that there will be no walking away, because we will be walking away from ourselves. We must stay on the road and keep the journey moving—even if it is only one step at a time. And most days… it is only one step at a time.

Maureen Connolly, ssf
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I am neither Catholic nor committed to voluntary poverty, but I love receiving such messages via the eight pages of the Catholic Worker.

News in this free bimonthly publication comes from the Worker farm in upstate New York, and from their Houses of Hospitality on the lower East Side in New York City.

Reprinted from the December, 1960, Catholic Worker, in the current issue, are these words: "What saves us from despair is a phrase we read in The Life of Jesus by Henri Daniel-Rops ‘getting on with the business of living.’"

The article in the October-November 2005 Catholic Worker continues: “The past year has been difficult, particularly in dealing with problems of relevancy. To many in the peace and resistance movement, feeding and sheltering the poor is looked upon as non-revolutionary and a mere band-aid applied to a cancerous world. To many, only when the American giant is confronted at its jugular vein is it worthwhile.” The writer concludes “The fact remains that, while slaying the giant, the wounded have to be cared for. Perhaps those who come by [for food and shelter] can see the necessity of caring for one another and recognizing the importance of community.”

In reflecting on both the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, the author writes today: “What we do for the least of these, we do for Jesus. We here at The Catholic Worker did not start these souplines ourselves. Years ago, John Griffin, one of the men from the Bowery who moved in with us, was giving out clothes, and when they ran out, we began sitting down the petitioners to a hot cup of coffee, or a bowl of soup, whatever we had… all volunteers who come have worked on that [soup] line and felt the satisfaction of manual labor, beginning to do without themselves to share with others, and a more intense desire to change the social order that left men hungry and homeless. The work is as basic as bread. To sit down several times a day together is community.”

Nebraskans for Peace may not run a soup line but in its various acts, “in getting on with the business of living,” serves as the gathering place for those called to a community of Peace & Justice.

In the poisonous atmosphere of today’s wars and lies and diminishment of civil liberties, we need the cleansing air and courage-giving of working together on behalf of the eventual triumph of the collaborative life—that is, where we do not do each other in.

Ruth Thone,
Lincoln, Nebraska
Bartle points out that the jury “should have been allowed to listen to the tape, but it was withheld.” He asks, “How would the jury have reacted if they had heard the tape?” Believing that the science of voiceprint analysis could benefit Ed’s case, Bartle wants the court to address the government’s “dirty tricks type of campaign that targeted Ed Poindexter and David Rice.”

Bartle is pleased that he and his client have a good, working relationship; they see each other occasionally, correspond regularly, and sometimes speak on the phone. He appreciates Ed’s careful study of proposed filings and praises “his persistence in this fight for justice.”

Not only is Ed Poindexter persistent, he fortunately has a persistent legal defense team that meets in Bartle’s office at least once a month (or more often if necessary). The whole legal team dedicates itself to the principle that “the system” can be and must be just. It is their hope that justice delayed for 35 years will soon be justice achieved.
Marketing the Apocalypse
by Paul Olson, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Professor Emeritus

Speaking Our Peace

Nebraskans for Peace was wrong from the start.

All this stuff about teaching kids not to kill or maim. All of this anti-bullying work in our schools. Come to your senses, people. Do your religious duty, which may involve teaching kids to kill—that is, to kill to get rid of evil.

The University of Nebraska Center for Afghan Studies has apparently done just that in the 15 million or so textbooks for Afghan children it published. Yet, to hear them talk, Nebraska had nothing to do with the bad stuff in the textbooks. Nor did the CIA. That was all the Afghans who just love to tell children how to kill bad children through jihad. As the UN Center has publicly said of NFP’s bleeding heart handwringing, “You just keep beating a dead old horse.”

So now to beat a live horse.

Nebraska’s parents can soon have Afghan advantages. You’ll be able to pick up “Left Behind: Eternal Forces,” a videogame to help you counter worldly influences on your children. With this game, Johnny and Susie will learn the difference between sanctified Christian violence, and the plain old handsomely marketed videogames. Teach divine violence and commit to increasing shareholder value. [italics mine]

The Left Behind novels have sold more than 63 million copies. While apocalyptic vision usually appears among persecuted minorities—Jews in Babylon and Persia, Christians in the Roman Empire, Native American Ghost Dancers under the U. S. Army, Shiite Islamic people dominated by Sunnis—Left Behind celebrates American triumphalism. None of Isaiah’s lions and lamb stuff about all the nations at peace in Zion. The end will come soon, and the victory will be total.

So when Reagan speaks of our Soviet opponent as an “Evil Empire” (or of nuclear weapons as leading to a desirable Armageddon), when Bush the Younger speaks of a “crusade” after 9/11 and addresses the CNP behind closed doors, when Tom DeLay puts in his office a wall poster that reads “This Could Be the Day,” we see the vision at work. We see it at work in Iraq and the Middle East every day, making the world safer for the right people.

So stop teaching your children the Sermon on the Mount, stop teaching, “My kingdom is not of this world,” stop teaching Micah 4 or Isaiah 2. Get out your videogames. Teach divine violence and increase shareholder value.

Remember also that the mass organization of sacred story to support military and geopolitical purposes was also used successfully in the nihilistic German 1930s. The Fascist leaders then did not believe the stories. Today’s neconservative gurus creating the political/military ‘success’ of Bush—Karl Rove, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and LeoStrauss—do not game at end-time either.

They know what the stories are for—apocalyptic Christianity plays to a huge market and increases shareholder value handsomely.