



# Dovetail

Providing resources to Iowa's peace and justice community from a faith perspective

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## Gas Flares

Excerpts from NPR story on 7.24.07

Every year, millions of dollars are literally going up in smoke in Nigeria, Africa's top crude oil-exporting nation, as companies burn off unwanted natural gas released during oil production.

This flaring and venting produces more greenhouse-gas emissions than any other single source in Africa south of the Sahara, and many who live in Nigeria's oil-producing communities complain of chronic health and environmental problems associated with the gas flares.

### Black Clouds over Ebocha

Much of the region where oil is pumped is a maze of winding mangrove creeks and waterways. Leafy, green and humid, Ebocha-Egbema is an unremarkable collection of small villages with tin-roof houses and shops, located in the heart of the Rivers State in Nigeria's turbulent oil-producing Niger Delta.

Huge flames billow in the air over Ebocha, and above them, black clouds leap into the sky. The giant gas flares operated by Agip-Nigeria belch out noxious fumes that loom over homes, farms and shops. There's a strange smell and an audible hiss in the air.

Residents of the Niger Delta region, where Ebocha is located, say gas flaring is ruining lives and livelihoods. Chief Eze Kingsley Okene, a local traditional leader and retired chemist, says Nigeria isn't doing enough to curb the practice.

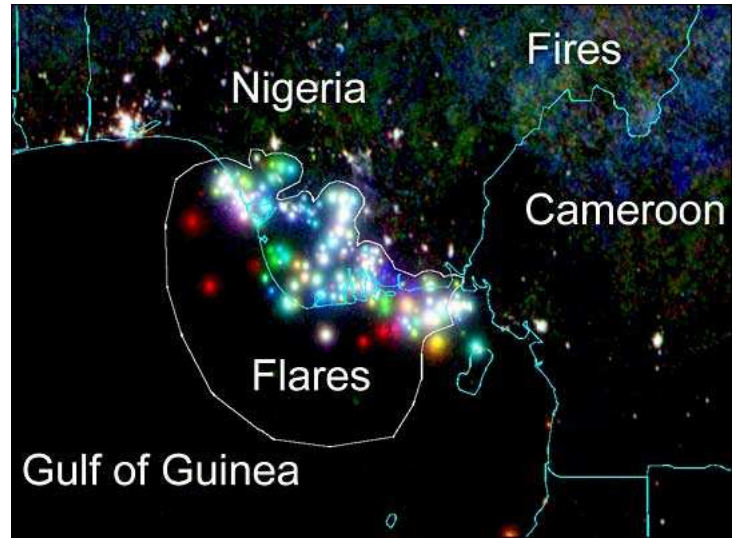
"Yes, we are living with death, because of [the] oil company," Chief Okene says.

While many villagers may not be familiar with the concept of climate change, they complain that the air around them is hotter and foul-smelling because of the gas flares. Chief Okene's wife, Roseline organizes protests against gas flaring, which she says produce poisons that kill crops and make villagers sick.

"If you put water in a basin, you see that the water will change to charcoal — black and slippery," Roseline says. "You cannot wash it out without soap. ... So if [a] human being drinks such water, it will affect a human being."

In the areas close to the gas flares, medical staff report treating patients with all sorts of illnesses that they believe are related to the flames: bronchial, chest, rheumatic and eye problems, among others. Some are referred to Ebocha-Egbema's General Hospital, which is being completely refurbished.

### Putting Out Flares



On the other side of the world, Chris Elvidge, a research scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, monitors a map of satellite images of gas flares so huge they can be spotted from space. Elvidge and his colleagues in Boulder, Colo., track gas flaring all over the globe. He says that after Russia, Nigeria has the most flares.

"The gas flares in Nigeria are in the Niger Delta and offshore. Fifty to 100 of these gas flares produce very large halos of light, balls of light, and it's because the flares have no shielding around them," Elvidge explains.

Worldwide, oil companies have been burning the gas associated with crude oil production for years.

Gas flares emit about 390 million tons of carbon dioxide every year, and experts say eliminating global flaring alone would curb more CO2 emissions than all the projects currently registered under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism.

In response to international and local pressure, Nigeria pledged in 1984 to eliminate gas flares and set 2008 as the target date. While gas flaring is unlikely to end next year, the government says it's serious about the effort, and Chris Elvidge confirms that the efforts to reduce gas flaring are producing results.

"Nigeria has brought their gas flaring down by about 10 billion cubic meters a year from the mid-1990s, so Nigeria is actually one of the few countries of the world where gas flaring has been reduced. But

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there's still a lot of it."

Oil is a mainstay of Nigeria's economy, and the government acknowledges that the oil industry still flares 24 billion cubic meters of gas a year, enough to power a good portion of Africa for a whole year.

Despite its oil wealth, Nigeria itself suffers chronic energy shortages. The gas is often burned right next door to homes that don't have electricity, and while there's a local market for the natural gas vented during oil production, it's less profitable than crude oil. Critics warn that not enough is being done to put out flares or save gas that could be harvested and used within the country.

An executive for Shell, Nigeria's largest energy producer, pointed out to us that gas burns cleanly. Gas is indeed considered cleaner than other fuels, but a U.S. Energy Department official testified in 2002 that flaring is "generally unhealthy to humans and ecosystems" and produces carbon dioxide, which has been linked to global warming.

Why wouldn't the companies sell Nigeria's gas? Until recently, there was a limited market for gas in Nigeria, and there was no easy way to ship it to market overseas.

Today, that's changing. It's becoming common for gas to be chilled into a liquid and sent by tanker ship to major markets, including the United States. Oil companies, led by Shell, have invested billions to build a terminal to cool and ship the delta's liquefied natural gas, or LNG. A second LNG terminal is on the way.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12175714>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4797953>

## CONSCIENTIOUS TAXES

U.S. Rep. John Lewis, D-GA, has introduced legislation that would prevent taxes paid by people conscientiously opposed to war to be used for military purposes.

H.R. 1921, titled the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Act, instructs the Secretary of the Treasury to establish a separate "Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund" for the deposit of income, gift and estate taxes from citizens certified by the Treasury Department as conscientious objectors.

**Individuals are urged to contact their Congressional Representative and ask them to support this Bill.**

An invitation to join Voices for Creative Nonviolence [info@vcnv.org](mailto:info@vcnv.org) and Friends in the run-up to the Iowa Caucuses in Des Moines, Iowa for the kick of the nonviolent direct action campaign of:

"Seasons of Our Discontent:  
A Presidential Occupation Project"

Schedule of events:

**Wednesday, November 7 at 7 pm**

Place: Chet Guinn's Old Fire Station, 1041 8th Street, DM IA. (one block west of the downtown Holiday Inn at the extreme south end of the DMACC parking lot.)

**Program:** "What have we done to the people of Iraq?" Kathy Kelly, Nobel Peace Prize nominee recently returned from living with Iraqi refugees in Amman, Jordan, will speak, followed by a discussion of the occupation of campaign headquarters of pro-war candidates the next day

**Thursday, November 8 at 9 am**

Place: Old Fire Station

Program: Nonviolence Training, required for all "occupiers" risking arrest.

**Time: 12:30 pm**

Place: Nollen Plaza, downtown Des Moines

**Program:** Rally to inaugurate the "Seasons of Our Discontent," followed immediately with occupations of campaign headquarters around the Des Moines metro area. Contact: Voices, 773-878-3815, or [info@vcnv.org](mailto:info@vcnv.org)

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR PEACE

**Peace Rally and March  
Saturday, October 27, 2007  
4:30 to 6:30**

Gather at Nollen Plaza, 2<sup>nd</sup> and Locust, Des Moines. We will march to the State Capital.

As the names of Iowans who have been killed in Iraq are read together with Iraqis who have lost their lives, a procession of 50 flag-draped caskets carried by up to 300 casket bearers, led by drum and bugle and Veterans opposed to the Iraq war will proceed to the offices of our U.S. legislators and end up on the State Capitol mall for a special program of speakers and music followed by a candlelight ceremony calling for peace and an end to the war.

Contact Vern Naffier, PCCI

<http://www.iowaprogressives.org/>

Call (515) 964-1353; [joycevern@juno.com](mailto:joycevern@juno.com)

# How far would you walk to feed your family?

By Fran Fuller

Since 1995, the remains of more than 4,200 border crossers have been recovered along the US-Mexico border. Their deaths are a result of a failed border enforcement strategy that knowingly channels migrants through remote and dangerous desert. In 2006 alone, more than 205 migrants died along the border between Arizona and Sonora. Most are poor, working people, displaced by unfair trade and economic arrangements, seeking to improve life for themselves and their families.

Most of us unknowingly support illegal immigration every day. Every time we buy fruits and vegetables at the grocery store. Every time we stay in a motel. Every time we eat Tyson chicken or eat at restaurants. Every time we walk into a building that has been built in the last ten years. Every time we patronize a business that uses a landscaping service or janitorial service, we support illegal immigration.

Last June I traveled to Tucson to join the No More Deaths group in their work in Arizona and Mexico. It was an exhausting yet highly rewarding trip. Rev. John Fife, founder of the Sanctuary Movement in the 80's, also founded No More Deaths.

This organization was awarded the Oscar Romero Award for Human Rights by the Rothko Chapel. This prestigious award further highlights the fact that what is happening on the border is a human rights travesty. No More Deaths calls upon the US to change its immigration and border policies to protect the rights of workers, respect the dignity of migrants, and help families re-unite and stay together. No More Deaths demands safe, legal and dignified avenues for people to cross the international boundary, and opposes the fundamentally flawed ongoing approach of border militarization. (See [www.nomoredeaths.org](http://www.nomoredeaths.org))

I spent the first week at the Migrant Resource Center in Agua Prieta, Mexico. The Center is just a few feet from the Border Patrol (BP) center where deported Mexicans are released from custody and it is just across the border from Douglas, AZ, one of the largest border crossing facilities in the world.

The locals refer to Douglas as a militarized town. BP agents are a very visible presence. They drive around the town of 15,000 in their SUVs hauling trailers carrying various off-the-road vehicles as a display of power. The job of BP agent is by far the best paying job in town. With nothing more than a high school education, starting pay is \$40,000.

Most migrants are released with no idea of where they are and they are usually hungry and thirsty. Their suffering does not end when they are pulled out of the desert. Sometimes they've been given crackers and water by the BP but no meals are served. We welcome them to the Center and offer water, coffee, burritos and a place to relax. Many folks are willing to talk about their situation. Some are ready to



**L to R: Fran Fuller, Rev. Angel, Rob and Juan at the Migrant Resource Center in Agua Prieta, Mexico**

go home while others will regroup and try to cross again. Information is provided about where to get meals and other services.

Approximately 100 people a day come to the Center. Migrants from Central America are not released here but returned to their own countries. The Mexican government does not prosecute deported Mexicans the first ten times they are caught. The number crossing is just too great.

Another important purpose of the Center was to document abuses by the BP, also known as the Migra. Vast numbers of migrants encountered at the Center have been denied food and water, separated from their families, deported at night, denied medical care, and/or been physically, emotionally and sexually assaulted.

Most people were obviously tired but I was surprised to see smiles and laughter. Most still had hope and weren't completely beaten down. It is not an easy thing for them to decide to return home. No one wants to be seen as a failure by their families. A lot of money is sent to Mexico by those who have successfully crossed into the US and the condition of those families in Mexico is greatly improved. So many people keep trying to cross hoping to help their loved ones.

My second week with No More Deaths was spent at the Aravaca Desert Camp in AZ. It is located on land owned by Byrd Baylor. She is an author of children's books and two have been awarded the Caldecott Award. She has been helping migrants for many years and lives off the grid. There were eight people in our group. Some of us slept in tents and others slept on cots under the stars. A small camper served as a kitchen. Shower and toilets were rustic camp style.

Each day was around 100 degrees but thankfully nights were very cool. Everyone was up at 5 AM for a quick cup of coffee and bowl of cereal. We were in

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the truck by 6 AM to head out to one of the migrant trails looking for those in distress. We took along 5-6 gallons of water and each of us filled a backpack with small water bottles and food packs. After parking the truck, we walked 3-4 miles each trip. Migrants have left well worn trails on their journeys and we followed these looking for fresh tracks. As we walked, we called out, "Hola, amigos. Somos voluntarios de la iglesia. Tenemos agua y comida y ayuda medico." (Hello, friends. We are church volunteers. We have water, food and medical help.)

After our morning walk, we returned to camp for lunch and a rest before repeating this whole process at 3 PM. The only thing breaking the peace and quiet of the desert camp were fighter jets frequently training overhead. Everyone was ready for bed by 8 or 9. These trails were often very rocky and hilly, not a nice walk in the park. The monsoon season had not yet started which meant no mosquitoes!

How far would you travel to feed your family? This question was on my mind as I pondered the journey these men, women and children were willing to make. I found the walks exhausting even though I started out well rested and fed and with a good pair of walking shoes. Most migrants have none of these advantages.

Send an email to [immigrationiowa@gmail.com](mailto:immigrationiowa@gmail.com) if you would like to sign up for three different listserves for current information on immigrant reform events, legislation, discussions, etc. s

## Homeless folks need your old tents and camp gear



Do you have unused camp gear (tents, tarps, coolers etc.) or bikes, or lanterns, or sleeping bags?? We will get these items to those who live outside all year. Tax deductible. We will pick it up. (Local is easier but no job is too daunting!) 515-255-7114

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## MORNING PRAYER

Dear God,

I am powerless and my life is unmanageable without Your help and guidance. I come to You today because I believe that for today, You can restore and renew me. Since I cannot manage my life or affairs, I have decided to give them to You. I put my life, my will, my thoughts, my desires and ambitions in Your hands.

I give You all of me, the good and the bad, the character defects and shortcomings, my selfishness, resentments and problems. I know that You will work them out in accordance with Your plan. Such as I am, take and use me in Your service. Guide and direct my ways and show me what to do for You.

I cannot control or change my friends or loved ones, so I release them into Your care for Your loving hands to do with as You will. Just keep me loving and free from judging them. If they need changing, God, You'll have to do it; I can't. Just make me willing and ready to be of service to You, to have my shortcomings removed and to do my best.

Help me to see how I have harmed others and make me willing to make amends to them all. Keep me ever mindful of thoughts and actions that harm myself and others, and which separate me from Your light, love and spirit. And when I commit these errors, make me aware of them and help me to admit each one promptly.

I am seeking to know You better, to love You more. I am seeking the knowledge of Your will for me and the power to carry it out.

Amen

**IOWA SENATOR CONTACT INFORMATION**

**CHARLES GRASSLEY:** <http://grassley.senate.gov/public/>  
**TOM HARKIN:** <http://harkin.senate.gov/contact/contact.cfm>

**Sen. Chuck Grassley**  
 135 Hart Senate Bldg .  
 Washington, DC 20510-1501  
 202.224.3744

**Sen. Tom Harkin**  
 731 Hart Senate Bldg  
 Washington, DC 20510-1501  
 202.224.3254

**Cedar Rapids**  
 206 Federal Building  
 101 1st Street, S.E  
 Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  
 (319) 363-6832  
 Fax: (319) 363-7179

**Des Moines**  
 210 Walnut Street  
 Room 733, Federal Building  
 Des Moines, IA 50309  
 (515) 284-4574 Phone  
 (515) 284-4937 Fax

**Council Bluffs**  
 307 Federal Building  
 8 South 6th Street  
 Council Bluffs, IA 51501  
 (712) 322-7103  
 Fax: (712) 322-7196

**Davenport**  
 1606 Brady Street  
 Suite 323  
 Davenport, IA 52803  
 (563) 322-1338 Phone  
 (563) 322-0417 Fax

**Davenport**  
 131 West 3rd Street Suite 180  
 Davenport, IA 52801  
 (563) 322-4331  
 Fax: (563) 322-8552

**Cedar Rapids**  
 150 First Avenue, NE  
 Suite 370  
 Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  
 (319) 365-4504 Phone  
 (319) 365-4683 Fax

**Des Moines**  
 721 Federal Building  
 210 Walnut Street  
 Des Moines, IA 50309  
 (515) 288-1145  
 Fax: (515) 288-5097

**Dubuque**  
 350 W. 6th Street  
 315 Federal Building  
 Dubuque, IA 52001  
 (563) 582-2130 Phone  
 (563) 582-2342 Fax

**Sioux City**  
 120 Federal Building  
 320 6th Street  
 Sioux City, IA 51101  
 (712) 233-1860 Fax: (712) 233-1634

**Sioux City**  
 320 6th Street  
 110 Federal Building  
 Sioux City, IA 51101  
 (712) 252-1550 Phone  
 (712) 252-1638 Fax

**Waterloo**  
 210 Waterloo Building  
 531 Commercial Street  
 Waterloo, IA 50701  
 (319) 232-6657

**IOWA REPRESENTATIVES DC AND HOME OFFICES****Bruce Bralev (D-1)**

**Washington Office**  
 1408 Longworth HOB  
 Washington, DC 20515  
 (202) 225-2911 Fax: 202-225-9129

**Waterloo Office**  
 501 Sycamore St., Suite 623  
 Waterloo, IA 50703  
 (319) 287-3233

**Davenport Office**  
 209 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 104  
 Davenport, IA 52801  
 (563) 323-5988

**Dubuque Office**  
 350 W. 6th St., Suite 222  
 Dubuque, IA 52001  
 (563) 557-7789

**David Loeb sack (D-2)**  
**Washington Office**  
 1513 Longworth House Office Bldg  
 Washington DC 20515  
 202-225-6576 phone  
 202-226-0757 fax

**Cedar Rapids**  
 150 1st Ave NE Suite 375  
 Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  
 319-364-2288 phone  
 319-364-2994 fax

**Iowa City**  
 125 South Dubuque St.  
 Iowa City, IA 52240  
 319-351-0789  
 319-351-5789  
 Toll free: 866-914-IOWA

**Leonard Boswell D-3**

**Washington**  
 1427 Longworth House Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20515  
 Phone: (202) 225-3806  
 Fax: (202) 225-5608

**In Iowa**  
 300 East Locust, Suite 320  
 Des Moines, IA 50309  
 Phone: (515) 282-1909  
 Fax: (515) 282-1785  
 Toll Free Phone: (888) 432-1984

**sTom Latham (D-4)**

2447 Rayburn HOB  
 Washington, DC 20515  
 Toll Free: 866-428-5642  
 Phone: 202-225-5476  
 Fax: 202-225-3301

**Ames**  
 1421 South Bell Avenue Suite #108A  
 Ames, Iowa 50010  
 Phone: 515-232-2885  
 Fax: 515-232-2844

**Clear Lake/Mason City**  
 812 Hwy. 18 East - P.O. Box 532  
 Clear Lake, Iowa 50428  
 Phone: 641-357-5225  
 Fax: 641-357-5226

**Fort Dodge**  
 1426 Central Avenue Suite #A  
 Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501  
 Phone: 515-573-2738  
 Fax: 515-576-7141

**Steve King (D-5)**

**Washington Office**  
 United States House of Rep.  
 1609 Longworth House Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20515-1505  
 Phone: 202-225-4426

**Creston**  
 208 West Taylor Street, PO Box 601  
 Creston, IA 50801 Voice: 641-782-2495

**Sioux City**  
 526 Nebraska Street  
 Sioux City, IA 51101 Voice: 712-224-4692  
 FAX: 712-224-4693

**Spencer**  
 306 North Grand Avenue, PO Box 650  
 Spencer, IA 51301 Voice: 712-580-7754  
 FAX: 712-580-3354

**Council Bluffs**  
 40 Pearl Street  
 Council Bluffs, IA 51503 Voice: 712-325-1404  
 FAX: 712-325-1405

**Storm Lake**  
 800 Oneida Street, Suite A  
 Storm Lake, IA 50588 Voice: 712-732-4197  
 FAX: 712-732-4217

## **Voices for Creative Nonviolence and our allies in Iowa are in the initial stages of organizing a campaign of nonviolent civil resistance focused upon those who would be President.**

This fall and early winter, Republican and Democratic candidates are swarming in Iowa in preparation for the “First in the Nation!” 2008 caucuses. Campaign headquarters are established in cities and towns across the state and candidates are showing up at public events large and small, shaking hands, jockeying for photo ops. The national and international press is there in force. Representatives of unions, industry and other interest groups from around the nation are gathering, not only to influence the results of the caucus but also to take advantage of the extraordinary access to the candidates the caucus provides, and to draw attention to their issues and causes as the world’s attention is focused on the state.

Seasons of Discontent: A Presidential Occupation Project (SODaPOP) will launch this October introducing nonviolent direct action against the war in Iraq into the presidential election process. Activists from around the nation are encouraged to journey to Iowa to “occupy” the Iowa campaign headquarters of presidential candidates who do not pledge to concrete plans for complete withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq. Such candidates might also be challenged as they make public appearances around the state without regard for arbitrary “free speech zone” restrictions that may be established by candidates, parties, police or the Secret Service.

While SODaPOP will launch in mid-October, we are organizing for two weeks of intensive and extensive actions in Iowa in the two weeks immediately preceding the Iowa caucus. The Iowa caucus is currently scheduled for January 14, though it is somewhat fluid as of now.

SODaPOP Demands at this point in time:

- Complete withdrawal of the U.S. military forces from Iraq and Afghanistan within 100 days of assuming the office of President of the United States.
- Complete halt to any and all military actions—including ground, air and naval—against Iraq and Iran.
- Full funding for the reconstruction of Iraq to repair the damage caused over these past 17 years of economic and military warfare that the U.S. and its allies
- Full funding for the Common Good in the U.S.—to rebuild our education and health care systems; to create jobs training programs for jobs that pay a living wage; to provide universal health care for all; to rebuild our country’s inner cities and rural communities; and to initiate a campaign on the scale of a new Tennessee Valley Authority and Rural Electrification Project of the Great Depression era to create affordable, safe and sustainable alternative forms of energy and energy consumption; and for other vital social programs.
- Full funding for the highest quality health care, education and jobs training benefits for veterans of our country’s Armed Services.

For those Presidential candidates who currently hold a seat in the House or Senate, we set forth the following additional demands:

- Vote against any additional funding for the Iraq war other than those funds that are essential to fund the complete and immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.
- Publicly commit to oppose the use of U.S. military forces against Iran, Pakistan or any other opening front in the “war on terror.”

Join us in Iowa at this critical time for weekly, if not daily, acts of nonviolent civil resistance / civil disobedience to seek a redirection of our country’s policies and to bring about an end to the Iraq war. We travel to Washington, D.C. for national actions all the time. Now is the time to travel to Iowa, the heart of our country’s heartland, to seek an end to the Iraq war.

Please be in contact with us about joining this very critical campaign of nonviolent direct action, civil resistance and civil disobedience. To participate in SODaPOP, you may reach us via Voices for Creative Nonviolence at 773-878-3815 or via email at [info@vcnv.org](mailto:info@vcnv.org). Additional information and resources will also be available on the Voices website:

[www.vcnv.org](http://www.vcnv.org). Feel free to contact Iowa Peace Network 515-255-7114 [iowapeacenetwork.org](http://iowapeacenetwork.org)





## A People's Campaign to Defund the War

Over the past year, peace activists have voted, lobbied, marched, and taken direct action to end the war in Iraq. Courageous soldiers have refused to fight the war. But Congress has appropriated billions of dollars to continue the war and appears ready to authorize a future military attack on Iran. It's time for taxpayers who oppose this war to join together in nonviolent civil disobedience and show Congress how to cut off the funds for this war and redirect resources to the pressing needs of people.

## Register and Prepare for April 2008

This fall, the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee urges all who oppose this war to register and prepare for an April 2008 nationwide boycott and redirection of the federal income taxes that fuel the war in Iraq. Among the groups promoting this action are Voices for Creative Nonviolence, the National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance, and the Nonviolent Direct Action Working Group of United for Peace and Justice.

## Building From Fall Direct Actions

This campaign to boycott and redirect war taxes launches in September as Congress considers an additional \$142 billion dollar appropriation for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Opponents of war and oppression are encouraged to refuse to pay for the war and occupation they are trying so hard to stop. The campaign will be promoted across the U.S. among the participants of upcoming actions challenging the Iraq war. These include the September "Days of Decision" actions, congressional office occupations, the "No War, No Warming" action, the October 27 Nationwide Mobilization to End the War, and the November vigil at the Army School of the Americas.

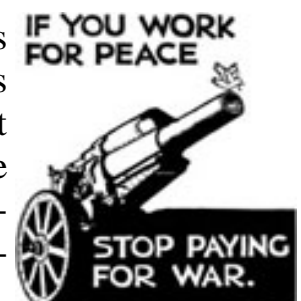
## Redirection Projects

War tax boycott participants are encouraged to redirect their resisted taxes to a project providing health care among Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria, a health care center in New Orleans providing care to survivors of Katrina, or to a humanitarian project of their own choosing.

Join the 2008 War Tax Boycott and Redirection by going to the website for the campaign: [www.wartaxboycott.org](http://www.wartaxboycott.org) . You will find a registration form for the campaign.



If a thousand [people] were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible." Henry David Thoreau, during the Mexican-American War of 1846-48.



# **For Survivors of Katrina, Caregivers and Responders-An Important Message about Traumatic Stress —PTSD**

by Belleruth Naparstek LISW

## **Traumatic Stress is About Survival Biochemistry**

We psychotherapists are just starting to understand how much posttraumatic stress is a *biophysical* condition, related to the massive release of survival hormones that flood the body at the time of traumatic events. These biochemicals don't dissipate quickly, and this accounts for most of the acute, persistent and frightening symptoms that people experience for at least a couple of months after a traumatic event.

## **Symptoms**

The symptoms look and feel like they are strictly emotional problems - flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts, anxiety, panic, concentration problems, emotional numbness, impaired memory, irritability, temper and startling from sudden noise and touch. But that's the effect of these wild swings in biochemistry - alternating floods of natural alarm and sedation biochemicals - as the body tries to settle back down to its normal rhythms. People are generally relieved to know that they aren't going crazy, and that this is a commonplace aftermath of trauma. These biochemical oscillations account for the puzzling mood swings survivors experience. People can be furious or terrified one minute - that's the alarm biochemicals - and numb and disconnected the next - that's the release of the natural opioids.

## **It Takes Time**

We know from studies of typhoons and bombings that for many people it can take from four to nine months to settle back down. For others, it's only a matter of weeks. A lot depends on built-in neurological wiring, how long and how intensely people were affected by the trauma, and whether they suffered previous traumatic experiences.

## **Atypical Memory Storage**

And because traumatic memories are not stored in the language and thinking centers of the brain, where normal memories are catalogued, they are hard to access with language, and they don't fade and distort over time the way normal memories do. Instead they stay in the primitive, survival centers, as flashbacks and nightmares, where they are experienced as actual re-plays of the original event - a reliving of the trauma over and over, through feelings, sensations, emotions, perceptions and muscular reactions, sometimes even gaining in intensity with each repetition.

## **Talking About It Not a Great Place to Start**

So getting thoroughly traumatized people to talk about the terrifying things that have happened to them right away is often not helpful. Either they can't access what happened in words, or they tell it in a rote, disconnected way, that doesn't help; or they try to talk and a panicky flashback gets activated, turning loose another cascade of alarm biochemicals that keep the ugly cycle going full force.

## **Self-Regulate Instead**

What is most helpful in the immediate aftermath of a trauma - once people are safe and their basic needs are being met, of course - is teaching them simple self-soothing skills that help their dysregulated biochemistry return to normal. Once there is a nice, solid practice of one or more of these simple, self-regulation skills under their belt, people are usually able to discuss the trauma without being overwhelmed - that is, if they still want or need to. A spate of recent research suggests that this may be one of the important keys to speeding up recovery from acute stress and posttraumatic stress - learning these relaxation and self-soothing practices or going into the trauma already habituated to them.

## **Simple Practices**

There are many of these practices, and they are simple to do - conscious breathing (counting to five with each in-breath and out-breath, for instance), progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, yoga, qigong, acupuncture, therapeutic massage, energy work, (such as Reiki or Therapeutic Touch) aerobic exercise, prayer, journaling, artwork, music, and, of course, guided imagery.

## **Imagery the Best Tool in the Kit**

Guided imagery is especially easy for people to use, because it demands little and does most of the "heavy lifting" - listeners can just drop into an immersive, receptive, dreamy state (surprisingly easy for most traumatized people to do, thanks to those endogenous opioids) and listen or, more likely, half-listen. There are many other reasons why imagery is ideal for healing trauma, but there's no need to go into them here. (If you are curious to know more about this, email us at [info@healthjourneys.com](mailto:info@healthjourneys.com) and we can point you to a thorough discussion from my book.)

**We have a 15-minute sample for you to stream by going to:**

**<http://www.healthjourneys.com/archivesSingle.asp?pf=1&aid=1254>**



***Blessed are the peace makers. We are called to be instruments of peace.***

***We pray for peace – and we act for peace. Some upcoming events:***

- Peace Rally and March—October 27 at 4:30-6:30 Nollen Plaza. See page 2 for details.
- Kathy Kelly at the Firehouse—November 7— See page 2 for details.
- Reggie’s Sleepout Friday, Nov. 2—7:00pm-7:00am (See: [www.reggiessleepout.org](http://www.reggiessleepout.org))
- Nov 17-18 — Annual Protest at the School of Americas in Fort Benning, GA. Organized by School of Americas Watch (See [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org))
- December 1 — Heartland Presidential Forum sponsored by Iowa CCI and WILPF at 1:30 pm at HyVee Hall, Des Moines, IA (See [www.iowacci.org](http://www.iowacci.org))
- Peace Vigil every Wednesday from 4—5:30 at the Military Entrance Processing Center, 25th and University, West Des Moines, IA, sponsored by the DM Catholic Worker
- Peace Vigil every Thursday at Nollen Plaza in downtown Des Moines from 11:30—1:00.

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**Iowa Peace Network  
4211 Grand Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50312**

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