

LOAVES AND FISHES



Spring 2011

Who we are...

Loaves and Fishes is a Gospel-based community residing in the Endion neighborhood of Duluth. We share three houses, out of which we offer hospitality to individuals and families who are homeless and marginalized. We embrace the Catholic Worker movement and its tradition of service, prayer, simplicity, communal living and nonviolent resistance. We believe in taking personal responsibility for the needs of the world. We are not a tax-exempt organization. We depend entirely on our own work and gifts from friends. We who live in the houses, cook meals, house-sit, counsel and care for our guests, do so on a voluntary basis. We dream of and work to build the kin-dom of God- a world free of hunger, war, racism, homelessness and other such crimes. We invite you to join us in whatever way you can. We are :

Kate Bradley, Emily Jennigan, Greg Boetje-Obed,
Rachel Obed, Michele Naar-Obed, & Sadie Sigford

CALENDAR

Ceili Fundraiser: help us pay our very expensive property taxes! St. Patrick's Day
St. Paul's Church (1710 E. Superior St.)
6pm dinner 7pm dance suggested donation -
\$12 dinner + dance, \$8 dance only, \$5 kids

Art Laffin: of the D.C. Catholic Worker
7-9pm St. Scholastica March 26th

Crafting Night: March 31 7pm
1705 Jefferson St. (Hannah House)

Bike Cave Orientation: April 2nd
12pm interested in helping out this
Spring/Summer? 1712 Jefferson St. (DDH)
RSVP: 218.728.3771 or bikecave1712@
hotmail.com

HOUSE NOTES



Dorothy Day House

As winter set in we realized that we'd have to make big changes at Dorothy Day House. Our summer/fall interns had left, Michele was getting ready to go to Iraq, and our burn-out rate continued to hold steady as two community members, Emily Derke and Greg Schultz, were getting ready to move out. The need for some repairs at the house was becoming too obvious to overlook. The work seemed to mount as our live-in help dispersed.

We realized Dorothy Day House's hospitality to be too demanding for the small number of people we had doing hospitality at the two other houses. In December we temporarily closed the house. There were a lot of factors at play in our decision and we didn't take it lightly.

We don't have a set date to open the house yet. Before we were able to think about it we had to spend some time working on our relationships and building trust. Now we're focusing on getting the necessary repairs completed at the house.

If you want to help with repairs please call Sadie at Hannah House:
218.728.3771

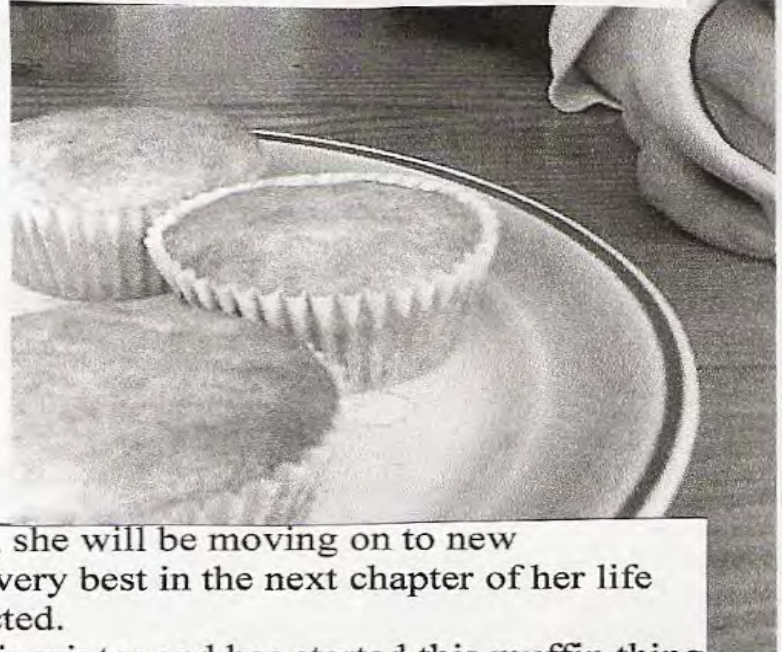
Spring is finally almost here, and we're all glad to see temperatures rising, ice receding and we're anxiously await the return of the summer birds at the feeder.

Olive Branch has been bustling this winter, lots of energy with a young mom living with us, and her three enthusiastic daughters who join her on weekends. We're also offering hospitality to another single woman, who recently landed a new job. We're very happy for her and will continue to offer support as she gets through the next step of solidifying housing. Two long time guests have moved on to a lovely apartment of their own just a few blocks away, and we make space in our home and our hearts for a new young family to join us soon.

A familiar face from last summer, Green Emily joined Olive Branch this fall.

Olive

Branch



After spending autumn and winter with us, she will be moving on to new opportunities this spring. We wish her the very best in the next chapter of her life and do dearly hope she will remain connected.

Kate has been around a lot more this winter and has started this muffin thing on Sunday mornings. She hopes that folks will drop in for coffee and conversation over muffins some Sunday morning soon. First batch out of the oven by about 10am.

Greg has been working on repair tasks in Dorothy Day house and spending more time out at Grass Roots Farm, as well as keeping us apprised of new news from Michele who is in Northern Iraq with CPT until late spring.

We're looking forward to shaking off the layers of winter and welcoming new guests and new community members this spring!

Hannah House



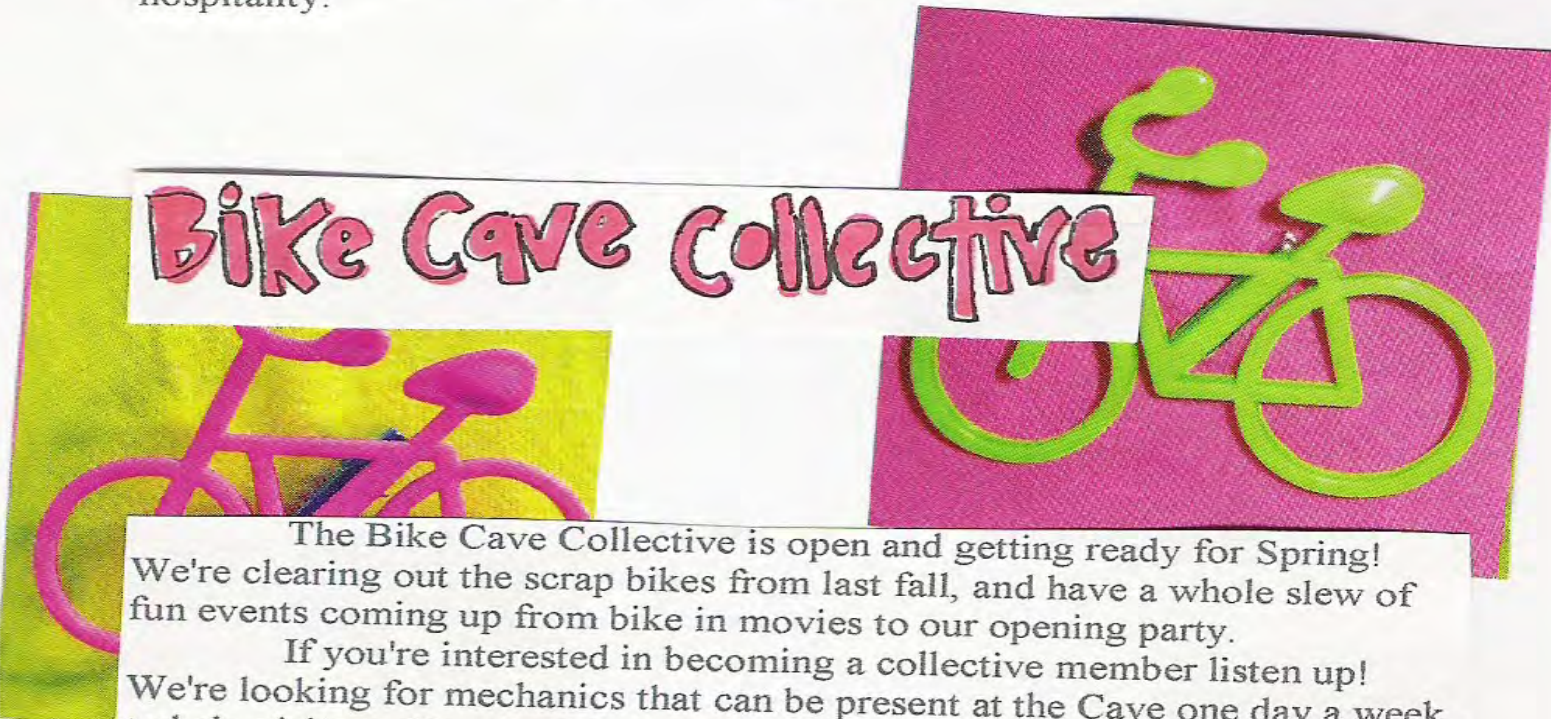
After finishing up some repairs in the Hannah House basement we are officially without mold! Many of you know this has been a struggle in the damp house for years.

Sadie moved from Dorothy Day House to Hannah House at the end of December. While Hannah House has traditionally been the women's hospitality house, we are currently doing hospitality for a woman with two kids and a single man.

Although Hannah House is not a drop-in space, like Dorothy Day house was, we are opening the space up in a few different ways along with our hospitality. Hopefully you have heard of the once a month craft nights Emily Derke has been organizing and hosting at Hannah House. This has been a time for people to come together and share their crafts and projects or learn how to do a craft. People have been drawing, knitting, weaving, and carving!

The other major event we've been hosting at Hannah House has been something we Catholic Workers are good at - dinner! This isn't just any dinner, though. Sadie has been working as a doula with Birthing Ways Doula Connection, and the group decided to help host dinners at Hannah House for pregnant women and moms who are looking for support in mothering or pregnancy. The dinners have been places of encouragement, friendship, and of sharing resources and experiences.

Needless to say there is a lot of activity at Hannah House, but it's been a welcome change for Sadie after almost two years of men's hospitality.



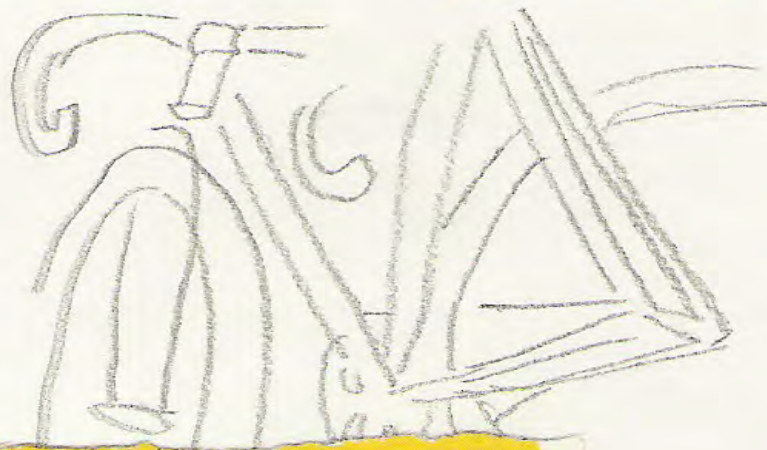
Bike Cave Collective

The Bike Cave Collective is open and getting ready for Spring! We're clearing out the scrap bikes from last fall, and have a whole slew of fun events coming up from bike in movies to our opening party.

If you're interested in becoming a collective member listen up! We're looking for mechanics that can be present at the Cave one day a week to help visitors. You don't have to have any experience with how bikes work or with tools, but be ready for BMX gangs of 12 year old and some bashed knuckles. We'll get through it together and have more fun than a barrel of monkeys riding a tall bike off Niagara Falls! If you're interested in getting more info email the bike cave: BikeCave1712@hotmail.com or call Sadie @ 218.728.3771

In case you don't know... The Bike Cave is a collectively run place where folks can work on their bikes, get educated, renew old bikes, or create works of rideable art! The Cave is a dark, damp womb where creative ideas find life and dead bikes are re-born. We are a people of resurrection called to breathe new life into a dead world. So we collect trashed bikes from dumpsters and junk yards to transform them into new creations. By renewing dead bikes we are reminded that with work, patience, hope and creativity our world can be redeemed!

by Sadie
Sigford



It's still hard for me to accept that it happened by no fault of my own, that I had no control. I replay the whole thing over and over in my head thinking "what could I have done differently?" Until I remind myself that I didn't do anything wrong.

On a mid-December morning I got hit by a car while riding my bike. I briefly heard the growing acceleration, and then the car plowed into me from behind. My bike was pushed out from under me and I saw it slide across the road as I rolled over the car and into the street.

All that the bicycle gave me in self-reliance, physical empowerment, community, and rediscovery of my imagination shattered temporarily with the impact. As I pulled myself off the ground I couldn't stop thinking "this happens too often". First to people I heard of, then to my friends and acquaintances, and now myself. I was overcome with grief, anger, and the shock of my own mortality.

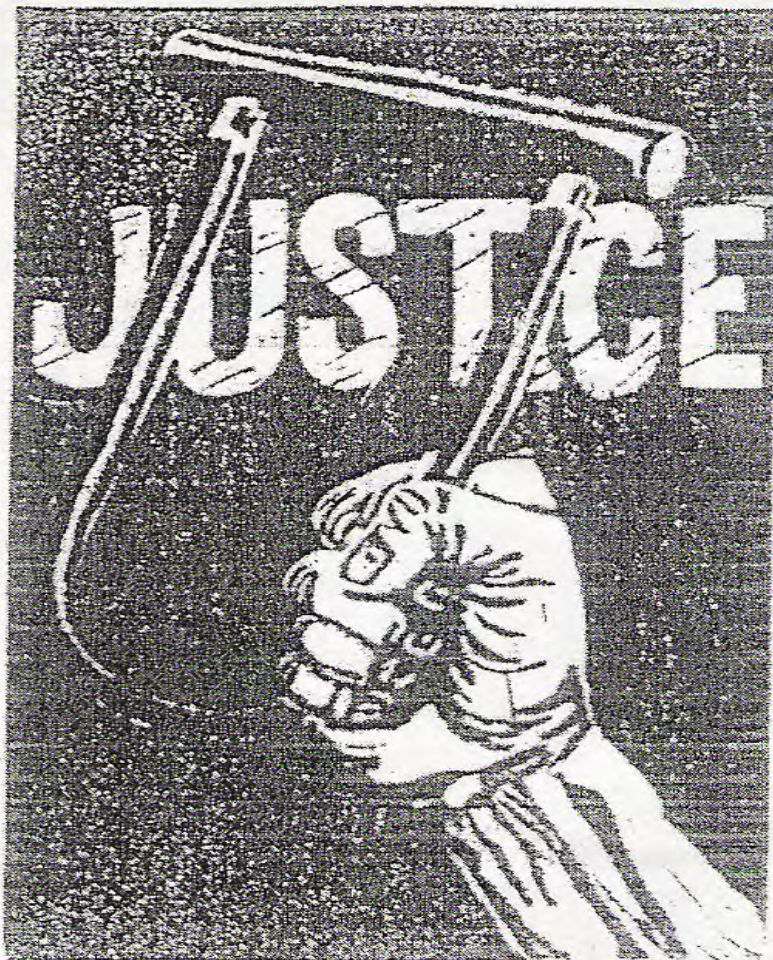
I had felt terrorized by cars and their drivers at times before I got hit, but it was easier to let it go. The invigorating, life-giving rides evened out the ones where I'd been screamed at or almost hit. Now I've been feeling the emotional effects of car culture too closely. The physical pain subsides, but the emotional and mental anguish are harder to heal.

I'm riding again, and was left with very few physical injuries, so by most people's standards I'm recovered and lucky. But I still have nightmares that my loved ones have been run over. I get sick when I hear about others who have been hit. I break down after cars pass me dangerously close. Whenever I tell my story I'm telling it with the emotion of everyone who's been hit. I'm mourning those who have been killed. I carry the collective fear of death that all cyclists experience.

Atrociously, it's justified in this culture that people like me get hit and others are killed, because it is an inevitable effect of the convenience of cars. I'm not a total outsider of car culture myself, but I'm wondering how many people will be hit (and killed) before we think differently, before we have transportation infrastructure that supports all traffic, before students learn about cyclists and pedestrians in drivers ed, and before hitting someone with a car has consequences.

It's been more important than ever for me to celebrate the bicycle and my solidarity with other cyclists. When I lapse in my recognition and celebration it's easy for me to focus on getting hit, and forget all that the bicycle has done for me and why I choose to ride. My experiences are the same as always - exhilarating rides as well as degrading ones and everything in-between. What has changed is how I experience them.

"We're not yelling for bike lanes. What we're looking for is a little more intangible. We're hoping that the culture changes." - Rachael Myers, former NYC Street Memorial Project volunteer



SPIIT ON
RUN DOWN
CUT OFF
CHASED
SCREAMED AT
HONKED AT
LAUGHED AT
CURSED AT
DISRESPECTED
GIVEN THE FINGER
HARRASSED
PUNCHED
PULLED
FRIGHTENED
HIT

all just for riding my bicycle. KILLED.

Greg Boertje Obed

On Daniel Berrigan's
"No Gods But One"
(2009)

In this book Dan reflects on the book of Deuteronomy with insights from many prophets, poets, and seers, including Jesus. Deuteronomy is understood to be a book of the "memories of Moses", and it concerns the journeying thru the desert for 40 years and preparing to enter the "Promised Land." However, scholars believe it was written at a later time of empire – when kings and the temple and palace were in ascendancy.

One feature of Dan's book is the use of a lower case "g" when referring to passages that describe god as violent. Dan suggests this god in much of Deuteronomy is a projection of the people who are "on the road of human development." Later prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Jesus say, "God is not like that. It is you who are like that."

The later insights of the era of the prophets are continually brought up. At this later time, the prophets "define sin and sinner anew." A theme emerges: "Sin, darkly flourishing on high, must be confronted: injustice, tribalism, slaughter in war, meaningless worship. Announce, denounce, no matter the risk!" Thus the tribalism and slaughter commended by Moses are opposed later.

Dan comments on perhaps why so much violence is lifted up in the early books. He writes: "The Bible is a hard schoolmaster; ... long before the exceedingly small, scarcely audible voice of goodness is heard, we must be brought face to face with the worst – our condition."

Dan also points out that parts of Deuteronomy promote compassion for the widow, orphan, and stranger. He amplifies this with eloquence, as, for example, in summary: "Cry it from the city gates, from atop the walls! For this were the chosen singled out, set apart: to do the works of God in the world – works for which the nations are declared radically incapable...."



“The gentile world is an ethical madhouse. Who but the Israelites will speak for the victims, act on their behalf, stand with them?” Throughout Dan's book are pointers for a vocation today that is included in the vocation of the Catholic Worker. He writes, “To repair the common default, there must arise, time and again, someone or some few, acute of conscience, often lacking credentials, untouched by contagion of money or success or ego, intent on righteous behavior, truthful, radiant of soul. “Thus, in due time, a 'suffering servant' (perhaps Isaiah himself?) was anointed 'to bring justice to the farthest isles.' (Is. 42:4).”

And continuing: “The word of Isaiah goes fiercely, insistently counter. In sum: 'No wars, no exploitation, no vaunting wealth, no destitution.’”

This book repeatedly brings to mind current day people who seek to proclaim ways that promote the God of life and compassion. Rev. Carl Kabat, OMI, of the St. Louis Catholic Worker has repeatedly witnessed through direct actions of hammering on parts of our nuclear weapon system. He explains that “non-violent resistance to evil is a constitutive element of the gospel.”

And George Kehoe-Ostensen of the Smilin' Trees Disarmament Farm challenges us to not rely on false gods today such as advanced technology such as cell phones, computers, and airplanes. Can we promote life by seeking to limit our use of advanced technology, like M.K. Gandhi also advocated?

Another excerpt that Dan shared also encourages people to persist in witnessing despite others not rising up. He quotes Bertolt Brecht who wrote: “The first time it was reported that our friends were being butchered, there was a cry of horror. Then a hundred were butchered. But when a thousand were butchered and there was no end to the butchery, a blanket of silence spread. “When evildoing comes like falling rain, nobody calls out 'Stop!’”

With our government starting to build three more nuclear weapon factories, which are designed to build 80 new warheads a year for another 50-100 years, is it not time to continue to call out “Stop!”?

Iraq letter:

"The White Group formed human chains three lines deep..."

25 February 2011

Dear all,

Filled with approximately 15,000 people, Freedom Square in Suleimaniya, Iraqi Kurdistan was a shining example of a nonviolent revolution. At 10:00 a.m., the square was already starting to fill. Before the noon prayer began, there were about 10,000 people listening to the opening speeches. More came when the noon prayer began which took place in the square. People came with plastic cloth, cardboard, and prayer rugs. The Mullah offered a special prayer to all the people who have been participating in these days of protest recognizing that these are the voices of the ordinary people and not the parties.

The rest of the day consisted of many speeches, quite a few of them from women. "There can not be a revolution without the women," a young university student said.

A group from Qaludze marched in with their banner apologizing for getting there so late. Checkpoints made it very difficult for everyone traveling today. The [people from Qaludze] were greeted with welcoming cheers. A group of doctors and medical students marched in with flowers, banners, and placards. "No more killing," and "We want democracy" were two slogans that stood out. The speeches were interspersed with music.

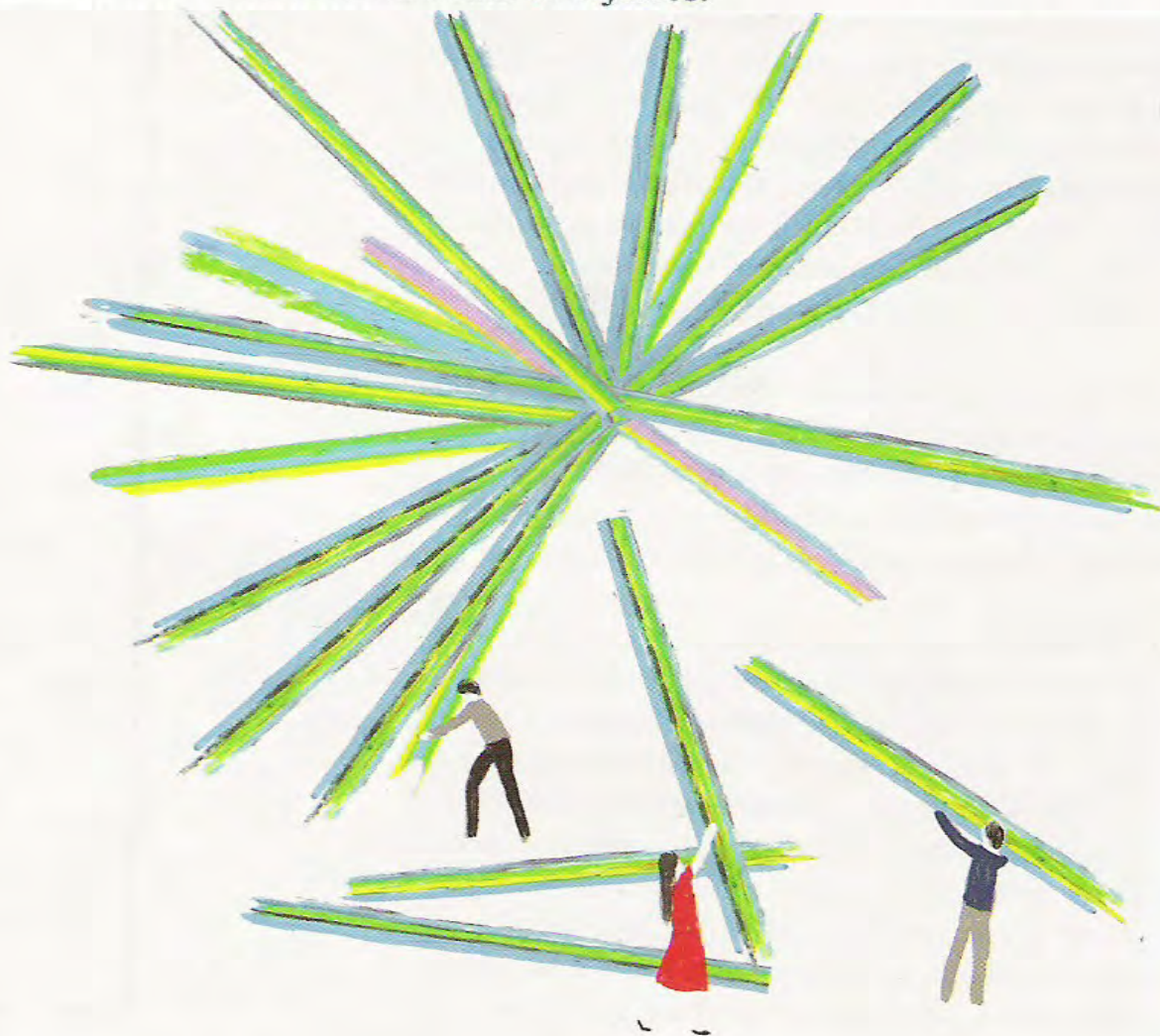
One particular song with the line, "I will never sell this city out to the gold sellers," was played repeatedly.

While the Suleimaniya demonstration continued, three high level government officials met in Suleimaniya. They seemed to agree that change is necessary and there was some talk of new elections in the immediate future.

The White Group (Geroupee Spi) had a large presence at today's demonstration. There were a few tense moments when a crowd of people began giving the soldiers—who were... blocking off key streets—a hard time. The White Group intervened and someone from the stage began to chant, "These Peshmerga are our brothers." The White Group also heard that a group of provocateurs from Erbil were planning to come to destroy the demonstration. One of the security officers spoke with one of the Erbil troublemakers saying, "The people here will kill you if you come." Apparently, this was enough to change their minds.

The demonstration ended at 5:30 p.m., but not without one more round of tensions. Six young drunk men put on a good show of trying to break through the White Group line to attack the soldiers. They rallied a small group to break through the line with them. One was carrying a knife. The White Group formed human chains three lines deep to keep them back. Bottles of water started flying followed by numerous shoes. There are probably many barefoot men walking around the city of Suleimaniya tonight. The soldiers kept their calm, never once raising their rifles and the White Group contained the situation and eventually talked the young men out [of doing what they were planning]. The White Group ended the day by cleaning up the square.

Not every city was so lucky to end without violence. Government buildings in Mosul, Tikrit, and Kirkuk were burned down. As of now, we have not heard confirmations on death or injuries.



Demonstrations will continue daily in Suleimaniya. The youth will not rest until change occurs. Although the streets of Suleimaniya are a little less tense and not as filled with soldiers and heavily armed vehicles [as they were earlier], there is still a sense of urgency in the air for change to come quickly. The White Group will continue its presence at the ongoing demonstrations and will hold a safe space for people to raise their voices for this needed change.

Peace, The CPTIraq Team

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