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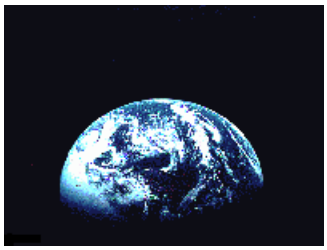

In this Issue:

Another Step in the Public Peace Process

Report by Walt Hays

A retired trial lawyer and practicing mediator, Walt Hays and his wife, Kay, were members of the Foundation's Middle East Task Force for many years. They were invited to join the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group at its inception in 1992. (See Timeline *May/June 1996.) Walt has facilitated many meetings of the Group from a neutral position as neither Palestinian nor Jew and wrote this report of the Dialogue Group's evolution and sponsorship of an historic event.*

"Peace is not about politics, it's about people." That was how Ambassador Dennis Ross, U.S. Department of State Special Middle East Coordinator, affirmed the commitment of 420 Jews, Palestinians and "others" (supporters of peace who are neither Jewish nor Palestinian) who attended a dinner held near San Francisco in November 1997.

Entitled "Building A Common Future," the dinner is thought to be the largest gathering of its kind ever held in the U.S. The program featured dialogue between American Jews and Palestinians over dinner, entertainment by a Jewish storyteller and a Palestinian musician, moving stories of other reconciliation projects all over the country, informative speeches about the conflict and possibilities for its resolution, and an invitation for all present to further the reconciliation process through smaller dinner meetings starting in February. All in all, as noted by Ambassador Ross, while peace must ultimately be made in Israel/Palestine, convocations such as the November event are an important model of how the two peoples can build the bonds that make peace possible.

The dinner was an outgrowth of a long history in the Foundation for Global Community. Back in 1991, when we were called Beyond War, the Foundation's Middle East Task Force sponsored a conference at our retreat center in California attended by eleven prominent Israelis and Palestinians, including a representative of the PLO. With the help of Dr. Harold Saunders, who as an Assistant Secretary of State had helped facilitate the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt, the conference participants drafted a model peace agreement and also introduced the concept of the "public" peace process, in which citizens build the personal relationships that are a prerequisite for political peacemaking.

Three Foundation volunteers, Len and Libby Traubman and Carol Kittermaster, decided that one way to continue the public peace process in this country would be to start a dialogue between American Jews and Palestinians. The initial meetings were difficult, as people from each group were more intent on sharing their pain than listening to that of the other. But once the participants moved beyond stereotypes and encountered each other as people, they bonded—to the point where a steady group of about 30 people, calling themselves the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group, has now met monthly for over five years and was able to plan and execute an event like the

November dinner.

About two years ago the group became concerned that we had become so comfortable with each other that we were in danger of becoming more of a social club than workers for peace. With that realization, we began to intersperse our discussions with various efforts at outreach. Two of the projects involved raising money and giving donated medical equipment to help needy institutions in Israel and the Occupied Territories, first for small hospitals and later for schools.

By Spring 1997 we were ready to try something bigger. Brainstorming sessions elicited the idea of a dinner-dialogue with a major speaker, but the questions were whether a small group like ours could (a) attract such a speaker, and (b) carry off such a giant undertaking. In answer to the first question, it turned out that Ambassador Ross had grown up in the Bay Area, and two of our Jewish members, Eric and Hilde Gattmann, knew his mother. So we decided to invite him and ask his mother to help us. To our shock and surprise, he accepted, thereby immediately moving the question of our ability to execute the event from the abstract to the very real.

Scary decisions then had to be made, like how large a room to reserve and how many guests to guarantee. The decision to go for 400 ratcheted our commitment even higher, because we were now forced to confront the reality of getting people there and handling all the logistics. In response to that challenge, everyone went to work. In addition to planning the program and inviting everyone we could think of, we each took on specific assignments. For example, Donald Stone put together a slide show of Israelis and Palestinians, entitled “The Faces of Our People”; Carol Kittermaster talked a friend into letting her prune enough off her olive trees to put branches on each dinner table; and Nahida Salem translated key phrases into Arabic. Many people spent hours fulfilling various other tasks.

The Traubmans chaired the event, and, among other things, turned their dining room into a grand central station for dealing with tickets and seat assignments. Len, who lives a dual existence as a pediatric dentist during the day and Internet surfer at night, advertised the dinner to peace advocates all over the world, magnifying its inspirational impact and attracting guests from ten states, as well as one all the way from Gaza. He also put together an inspirational, 24-page “Evening Program and Reconcilation Resource.” *(See note at end of article for how to obtain a copy.)*

As ticket orders began to roll in, it soon became apparent that Palestinians were so disillusioned with the peace process that it would be much harder to attract them than Jews. (Many in the West Bank feel that they are worse off than they were under Israeli military occupation, because they now live in isolated towns with harsh restrictions on travel.) Accordingly, the decision was made to put all Jewish orders over 200 temporarily on a waiting list, to see if we could attract an equal number of Palestinians. To accomplish the latter objective, Palestinian member Nadim Zarour invited several key local leaders to one of our meetings, where we convinced them that we were sincere in

our dedication to an even-handed U.S. policy. As a result, we were able to obtain the cosponsorship of the Palestinian American Congress as well as the Jewish Community Relations Council. Finally, through the heroic efforts of our Arab members, the final count included 150 Palestinians.

The dinner had the dual purpose of stimulating further dialogue between American Jews and Palestinians and supporting Ambassador Ross' peace efforts. The key draw was Ross' acceptance of our invitation to speak. However, knowing that the volatility of the peace process might result in his being called away at the last minute, we asked Ronald Young, Director of the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, who had agreed to serve as master of ceremonies, to step in as the principal speaker in that event.

Our precautions paid off, because at the time of our dinner, Ambassador Ross was called to Europe to meet with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat. To underline his support of the event, however, Ross not only called from London with a message that was taped and played at the Saturday evening dinner, but also returned to speak to us on Monday morning. So those who were able to attend both events heard a powerful speech by Young as well as Ross.

Palestinian Elias Botto began the evening by inviting the guests to "open your hearts and minds to what unites us, not what divides us," remembering that both peoples are children of Abraham. The setting was perfect for a positive response to that appeal, because each table had been lovingly decorated with a round mirror in the center, surrounded by olive branches entwined with two paper doves. In that context, Libby Traubman brought the mood to a deeper level by asking a Jew and a Palestinian to light the two votive candles at each table as a symbol of our common goal of enhancing the light of mutual understanding.

Palestinians and Jews were assigned to every table, and suggested questions were discussed over dinner with the aim of having all guests share something about their backgrounds. Then, as a cultural offering, Shai Schwartz, an Israeli Jewish storyteller from Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam, told a fitting tale about two men who asked a wise man to resolve their dispute over land, only to be told that the land did not belong to either, but rather they belonged to it. His friend Nazih Mughrabi, a young Palestinian from Jerusalem, played haunting music to accompany Shai's story, and then played and sang his own beautiful Song of Peace.

The program next recognized the efforts of ten other reconciliation groups around the country, giving a brief description of each and its activities. *(See end of article for a list of the groups and their locations.)* Two women from Seeking Common Ground were selected to speak for all of them. Under its program Building Bridges for Peace, Jewish and Palestinian teenage girls from Israel/Palestine attend a summer camp in Colorado and then continue to meet on returning home. Speaking for the group were Melodye Feldman, an American Jew who founded the group and lives in Denver with her husband and son, and Deana Ahmad, an American Palestinian

and freshman in college who attended the first camp and now helps run it.

Together the two women presented an inspiring account of how dialogue can break down barriers. Deana described her personal transformation from a teenager resisting her parents' decision to invite three Jewish girls into their home, to spending long nights with those girls talking, yelling, crying and eventually laughing, to waking up at the camp with their heads on each other's shoulders and realizing that they had accepted each other as people. Melodye then explained how the process works, noting that it is not contact alone that melts stereotypes, but contact that is "personal and intentional," with emphasis on learning to listen, until a person who was once an abstract enemy acquires a human face and name.

The program then moved to the principal speakers. We explained that Ambassador Ross had been forced to cancel in order to carry on the very work for which we were honoring him and played the tape of his phone call from London. Ronald Young was then introduced and spoke convincingly about possible solutions to the toughest issues in the conflict, and also appealed to the participants to be "passionate for moderation." *(See separate articles for highlights of Young's talk, as well as that made by Ambassador Ross on Monday.)*

Following the speeches, Len Traubman and Nahida Salem came to the podium to invite the guests to continue the dialogue process. Len acknowledged that reaching out to those on the other side can be hard, even causing loss of friends in one's own circle, but he analogized it to Abraham's decision to leave his comfortable home in Ur and take the risk of moving to a then unknown land. In the same vein, he said that the time has come for the two groups to "invite the other into their tents." Specifically, he urged every guest to sign up for a four-week experience of reciprocal meal-sharing.

Nahida repeated the invitation, in both English and Arabic, and also related the evolution of her acceptance of the dialogue group. When she came to the U.S. from the city of Ramallah in the West Bank, when Israel occupied it after the Six-Day War of 1967, she was full of anger at Jews. Later, however, when she married and she and her husband Adham purchased a delicatessen from a Jewish man, he treated them with such love and devotion that she began to realize that not every Jew was a cruel conqueror. Even then, when invited to join the dialogue group, she felt very uncomfortable at the thought of inviting Jews to her home. But she decided to give it a try, and now counts the Jews in the group as close friends.

The response to the invitations was gratifying—more than 100 people signed up, and our group's next task is to implement the meal-sharing program.

To close the evening, Nazih Malak, the youngest member of the Dialogue Group, shared a prayer he had been inspired to write. A Muslim man with a Palestinian father, a Lebanese mother, and a Jewish aunt, he was the perfect choice. The key phrase in his prayer was a plea that we all share—"May the wings of peace fly over the Holy Land—Peace, Shalom, Salaam!"

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Ambassador Dennis Ross

Ambassador Dennis Ross' principal remarks were delivered on Monday morning to about 150 people. He described the current crisis of confidence in the peace process and U.S. efforts to overcome it. He also spoke personally about the source of his long-term commitment to the effort, and took pains to affirm the importance of the public (citizen) peace process, including the dinner and related efforts.

On the personal level, Ross noted that he is often asked why he "sticks" with this conflict, given its difficulty and the existence of superficially more appealing options. His answer was eloquent: "The simplest [answer] is that for me, this is a conflict with a human face. You can't work on something like this as long as I have and come to know the people on both sides as well as I have, without being able to connect to them as people, to understand their hopes...fears [and] aspirations, and to understand how much they want a different future."

On the current crisis, Ross first acknowledged that 1997 was not a good year for Middle East peacemaking, with a seven-month hiatus in talks between Israel and the Palestinians. The problem, as he sees it, was that both parties lost confidence in the core understandings of the Oslo Accord of September 1993 that resulted in the famous handshake between then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Chairman Arafat. Those understandings were that Israel would gain security, and the Palestinians would gain two things in exchange—the right to govern themselves and a "credible negotiating pathway" to achieve their political aspirations. Negotiations broke down because neither side felt it was receiving what was promised, with Israel suffering suicide bombings and the Palestinians feeling betrayed by further settlements and other preemptive actions by Israel.

Negotiations resumed in October at the prodding of the U.S., and since then Ross and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright have been striving to get the process back on track, working at two levels. First, they want the parties to produce some tangible results from the Oslo Accord, in which they agreed that certain things would happen but left the specifics to be worked out; for example, an airport and seaport in Gaza, safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank, terms of trade, and "industrial zones" for Palestinians. The idea behind the zones, first proposed by former Prime Minister Shimon Peres, is to reduce Palestinian dependence on working in Israel, which makes them extremely vulnerable to border closures and has led to a 35 percent decline in their per capita income since the Oslo Accord—the opposite of what was hoped for. According to Ross, the details of the Gaza industrial zone are almost worked out, and it looks as if it will not only employ a lot of Palestinians but also attract both Palestinian and Israeli capital, leading to promising joint ventures.

On the second level, the U.S. has a four-part agenda for moving the process further: bolstering security; giving definition to the meaning of "time-out" for bad behavior by either side; resolving the issue of further redeployment of Israeli troops out of occupied territories;

and an accelerated approach to a permanent agreement.

Ross gave a vivid description of what is necessary to restore the trust that led to Oslo and is a prerequisite for a sustainable peace. First, he said the parties have to have a sense of partnership. In his words: "You're building a common future. You're not building competing futures. You're no longer adversaries. In that case, it means that your partner has interests [and] needs, and before you act...you think about how it affects your partner. Because if it hurts [or] weakens your partner, it weakens you."

Secondly, partnership requires empathy: "Empathy to understand what the other side is going through. Empathy to understand how a particular problem is going to be perceived....Empathy to understand the need for what I call 'explanation' on the other side....[T]hey have to explain the agreement to their own constituencies. And empathy is putting yourself in a position where you understand your partner's need for an explanation."

In order to attain a sense of partnership and empathy, personal bonds must be established between leaders, between negotiators—and finally between peoples. As an example, Ross cited the "extraordinary process" that led to the Interim Agreement, which led to redeployment of Israeli troops out of the major cities of the West Bank. According to Ross, the current map of the West Bank embodies an outcome that neither side envisioned when they started: "The Palestinians had one view of what the security arrangements ought to be...[and] the Israelis had a different view that was 180 degrees apart from that. The negotiating process and the bonds that the negotiators built between each other...produced an out-come that neither envisioned....[Those bonds build] a level of trust between them that allows them, first of all, to unburden themselves to each other, and to genuinely say, when they are in an informal setting, 'I can do this but I can't do that. Explain to me what it is that you need, and then let's figure out a way to accommodate your needs and my needs.' Believe me, the Interim Agreement is [one] of ingenious solutions, [and] ingenious solutions emerge from bonding."

Referring back to the dinner, Ross declared that no negotiated agreement will succeed without the people-to-people bonding that such dialogues help create: "That is why I think this group is so important. Not because you are a substitute for what Israelis and Palestinians will do out there, but because you can reinforce the notion of people-to-people ties [which] are ultimately what this is about. If people like me succeed in building political frameworks that don't produce the people-to-people ties, we've failed. Because whatever we negotiate in the end will not be sustainable. It isn't just the negotiators that have to believe in what they have done, it's the people they represent who have to believe in what they have done."

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Ronald Young

Ronald Young is Director of the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the

Middle East, which represents 2300 American Jews, Muslims, and Christians in initiating programs of dialogue, education, and advocacy across America. Prior to founding that organization, Ron and his wife spent 1982-85 in Amman, Jordan, as Middle East representatives of the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) where they traveled widely and met most of the key players. Ron has supported the peacemaking efforts of the Foundation from the beginning.

In his remarks, Young said he agrees with Ambassador Ross that the peace process is currently in crisis, and that public involvement here in the U.S. may be at least as important as it is in Israel/Palestine. He noted that while Secretary Albright and Ambassador Ross are pushing the process as hard as they can, Congress often acts in ways that are more right-wing than majority Jewish opinion both here and in Israel, by passing resolutions that either support hardline Israeli policies or undermine Palestinian progress.

Leaders in the area are much more willing to consider compromise, according to Young, because they live every day with the burden of the conflict and know they have no other choice. With his intimate acquaintance with such leaders, Young gave examples of possible solutions to major issues that are actually under discussion, as follows:

Security and Borders: Currently, the Palestinians control only five percent of the West Bank, with the rest under either joint or Israeli control, which leads to restrictions and delays that make commerce and daily life virtually unbearable. But since 80 percent of Israeli settlements in the West Bank are located in the 5 to 10 percent of the land closest to the "Green Line" (the border with Israel), one concept under discussion involves allowing Israel to annex that land and compensating the Palestinians by assuring contiguous territory and adding equivalent territory to Gaza.

Refugees: Palestinian refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars are still living in camps in both Palestine and neighboring Arab countries. Their status needs to be acknowledged, but after this much time, and given Israeli concerns about demographics, most are unlikely to be allowed to return to their original homes. One possible solution would be to offer compensation to them (as well as to Jewish refugees from Arab countries) and to negotiate a gradual resettlement in Palestinian territory.

Jerusalem: This is the most emotional issue of all, and Young acknowledged that both sides might have to use force to compel their respective extremists to accept any compromise. However, leaders have discussed solutions with the following elements: (1) The city would remain undivided; (2) religious groups would retain special powers over their sacred sites; (3) the city would be organized into boroughs based on common interests (even some Jewish neighborhoods are very different from each other); and (4) each group would have its capital in the city, through creation of "capital districts."

Despite the existence of such possibilities, Young recommended that U.S. citizens not advocate specific solutions. Instead, we should constantly

emphasize three points: (1) The parties must negotiate; (2) there are solutions that will satisfy all legitimate interests; and (3) the U.S. must play a creative, even-handed role. The problem, according to Young, is that Congress too often hears only from people with extreme views. He therefore concluded by urging the audience to be "passionate for moderation."

For more information on the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, contact the committee at: 922 131st Street, N.W., Marysville, WA 98271.
E-mail: USICPME@aol.com.
Tel/Fax: (360)652-4285.

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The 24-page **"Evening Program and Reconciliation Resource"** document for the dinner contains advice about listening and dialogue, Secretary Harold Saunder's summary of the five stages of the Public Peace Process, inspiring quotes from Jewish and Arab poets and philosphers, and copies of articles about successful dialogues. Several hundred of these booklets have been mailed wordwide to interested parties. You may obtain a free copy by writing to Middle East Dialogue, Foundation for Global Community, 222 High Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301.

Also available from the same source, for $23.50 (includes shipping and handling), are copies of the book entitled *Building A Common Future: The Public Peace Process In Action,* a compendium of materials on the Foundation's Middle East and Armenia-Azerbaijan Projects. More information about the November Dinner and the Dialogue Group is available at www.igc.org/traubman.

Other Dialogue Groups

In addition to Seeking Common Ground from Denver, CO, nine other citizen reconciliation groups involving American Jews and Arabs were honored at the November 15 dinner: Building Bridges from Duluth, MN; the Compassionate Listening Project from Indianola, WA; the Cousins Club of Orange County, CA; Interfaith Witness for Peace in the Middle East from the San Francisco Peninsula; the Jewish-Arab-Muslim American Association (JAMAA) from Santa Clara County, CA; the Middle East Peace Program of the American Friends Service Committee; Project Understanding from New Jersey; Seeds of Peace from Maine; and the Women's Interfaith Dialogue on the Middle East (WIDME) from San Francisco.

Blips on the Timeline

The term "blip" is most often used to describe a point of light on a radar screen. Gathered with the assistance of Research Director Jackie Mathes, here are some recent blips which indicate positive changes toward a global community.

On the Threshold of Change?

"We may be on the threshold of change. The thing that is exciting now is that the world is beginning to come around to recognize that the old model is not going to be viable over the long term," said environmental researcher Lester Brown. Every January for the past 15 years,

Brown's Worldwatch Institute report has presented the evidence that the planet is reaching the end of its resources. But this year, Brown and his co-researcher Christopher Flavin sounded uncharacteristically optimistic in reporting a year of advances in renewable energy sources, corporate moves to shift gears in favor of the environment, and increased recognition by governments of the need for sustainable economics. The report cited Toyota's new hybrid gasoline/electric Prius car, huge increases in windpower generation and photovoltaic-cell use, and investments by major corporations like Enron, British Petroleum, and Royal Dutch Shell in renewable energy sources, among other examples. Nevertheless, the report also emphasized that "as the economy grows, pressures on the Earth's natural systems and resources intensify. Forests are shrinking, water tables are falling, soils are eroding, wetlands are running dry, temperatures are rising, coral reefs are dying, and plant and animal species are disappearing. From 1950 to 1997 the use of lumber tripled, that of paper increased sixfold, fish catch increased nearly fivefold, grain consumption nearly tripled, fossil-fuel burning nearly quadrupled, air and water pollutants multiplied."

Clearing the Air in Zurich

Zurich airport has become the first in the world to charge stiffer landing fees for aircraft that emit more pollution. Since September, the cleanest aircraft pay 5 percent less than before, while the dirtiest pay 40 percent more.

Middle East EcoPeace

Despite the conflicts between Israel and its neighbors, one non-governmental organization, EcoPeace, presses on. A model of cooperation, EcoPeace represents environmental groups: 150 in Egypt, 34 in Israel, 16 in West Bank-Gaza, and 3 in Jordan. Its secretariat is made up of an Egyptian Chairman, a Palestinian, a Jordanian, and an Israeli. Its governing board has four of each. EcoPeace's news-letter is a first for this area. Among its programs is a demonstration project on solar energy. Its major concern is the Dead Sea, which, though not yet truly dead, is rapidly dying. In April, EcoPeace will take Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian legislators there to discuss a master plan for the sea's sustainable development. Gideon Bromberg, an Israeli who manages EcoPeace, says shared work on the environment can build trust as a precursor to full peace.

Virginia Slam

Approximately one billion packs of cigarettes are consumed annually in the U.S. by minors under 18 years of age. When singer/song-writer Leslie Nugent was selected to be promoted through a new record company owned by Virginia Slims on a CD that would be available only with the purchase of two packs of cigarettes, she decided to say no to the opportunity to break into stardom. Inspired by the clash between her career and her values, she started VIRGINIA SLAM!, a group of music professionals and activists who shared her commitment to keep the tobacco industry out of the music industry by providing alternative venues. A first concert featuring five

artists based in New York City was well attended and attracted media attention. Said Leslie, "The only way to make sure that cigarette manufacturers don't attach themselves to music in their ongoing effort to glamorize smoking to young people is to provide positive alternatives, free of smoking and cigarette advertising."

Suggestions Invited

We are always on the lookout for interesting subjects for Blips on the Timeline. Readers are invited to send articles or clippings indicating positive change to Jackie Mathes at the Foundation. If we use your suggestion, we'll automatically extend your subscription for a year.

Transcending Modernity

Book Review by Sandra Mardigian

The theme of Charlene Spretnak's most recent book, *The Resurgence of the Real,* is that, embedded as we are in the worldview of western modernity, we cannot see the forest for the trees—we do not see clearly either the basic assumptions of modernity or the ways that these are being challenged and reinvented in our own time.

Modernity, or modernism, refers to "the overwhelming orientation that began with Renaissance humanism, the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment." Although remarkably successful in many ways, this orientation has led to the disintegration in recent years of much that previously seemed stable, Spretnak asserts. In an attempt to assign blame for many of today's problems, "People tend to cite corporate capitalism or resurgent communism, profit-driven technology or industrialism, materialism or consumerism, or the lack of respect for spiritual concerns. These are indeed worrisome realities of our time, but they are all aspects of an encompassing phenomenon called 'modernity.' The deep structure of our age is not economism or technocracy; these are merely facets. The deep structure is modernity."

"Modernity is to us as water to a fish. I find the invisibility of modernity to be both fascinating and disconcerting, for the water around us...is becoming increasingly cloudy," she says. But, "Once the conceptual framework of modernity is recognized, a relationship becomes evident among many of the seemingly disparate events and developments of our time: They each challenge a failed aspect of modernity...[and are] actually part of a larger dynamic that has the potential to effect a profound correction of the assumptions and conditions that have led to the crises of the [present] era."

Spretnak provides a thorough dissection of modernity's framework. *(See "Aspects of Modernity .")* The limitations of modernity are due to something neglected or suppressed—the denial of some aspect of reality in many of its characteristics.

Ecological Postmodernism

Spretnak identifies three fundamental dualities or "core discontinuities" at the

root of modernity: the separation between humans and nature; the separation of body and mind; and the separation between the self and the rest of the world.

"In the disembodied, disembedded, dislocated worldview of modernism...the body was nothing but a biological machine; the biosphere and cosmos nothing but a predictable, mechanical clockwork; place nothing but background scenery for human projects....Modernity promised freedom from the vagaries of the body, the limits of nature, and the provincial ties to place," but in doing so, denied each its full role.

She argues that a truly postmodern worldview must recognize, correct, and transcend these basic dualities. And she contends that a new worldview that truly transcends modernism is now surfacing. Spretnak calls this emerging view *ecological postmodernism.*

She maintains that there is growing understanding now that we can ground ourselves in reality only through full experience of: *the knowing body* (inter-active body/mind, each influencing and informing the other); *the creative cosmos* (nature, the physical context from which our bodies are not separate); and *the complex sense of place* (encompassing and integrating cosmos, Earth, continent, nation, bioregion, community, neighborhood, family, and person, in unbroken continuity).

The body/mind split is being healed through a growing understanding of the linkage and synergy between psyche and body as revealed by the sciences of psycho-immunology, physiology, biology, holistic healing arts, and the new field of eco-psychology which sees the human psyche as rooted in the psyche of the Earth.

Reconnection with nature is coming about through the recognition that humans and all other species are embedded in a web of life characterized by interdependency. It is further abetted by the breakthroughs in physics which reveal that we can trace our personal origins to the moment of creation of the universe in which all the material, energy, and potentiality that would evolve over billions of years to the present was produced—including in its unfolding the birth of each of us.

The dawning comprehension of a "complex sense of place" which includes all levels and dimensions—person, family, community, nation, planet, and finally, cosmos—is percolating in our cultures and changing our conception of "home." It shows up in a growing focus on grassroots, local development; in community-based enterprises and organizations such as micro-loan programs; in community-supported agriculture and farmers' markets; in the increasing demand for small scale, sustainable development.

All this is what Spretnak calls the "resurgence of the real," stating: "My assertion is not that it would be a good idea if we were to pay more attention to body, nature, and place, but rather that [they] are now asserting themselves and poking large holes through the modern ideologies of denial....I have been drawn to such developments because of their inherent coherence, their wisdom, and

their potential to heal all that has gone wrong."

The *Los Angeles Times* selected *The Resurgence of the Real* as one of the hundred best books of 1997, saying, "It is a book for everyone concerned with the decline of an outdated paradigm and the emergence of the post-modern, ecological vision of reality that will be crucial for the survival of humanity in the twenty-first century."

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Let us memorialize the casualties of modernity:

"To all the women who risked their lives in the American and French revolutions, only to discover the patriarchal character of the Enlightenment, which was never meant for them; to all the country people whose love for the Earth and its cycles made them objects of contempt in the modern urban mind; to all the native people who resisted genocide and forced assimilation, modernity's fate for those considered "backward"; to all the victims of mass murder by fascist regimes using modern bureaucratic efficiency and disengaged, instrumental reason; to all the people brutalized and murdered by Marxist armies and police because they resisted the "scientific theory of history"; to all who fought to save their communities and livelihood from the callous control of giant corporations and cartels; to all the parents who pleaded with officials of the industrialized nation-state to recognize the connection between radiation, or toxic dumping, and their malformed or sickly children; to all the people who persevered in cultivating a spiritual life even though they were mocked as "irrational"; and to all those children who tried valiantly to hold on to their early sense of the world as wondrously creative and vibrantly alive, even as they were jammed into the grid of modern schooling—We here declare that you were right...[and] your tears have fertilized the earth, from which now grow more resistance efforts than can be counted, more resilience than can be known."

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Charlene Spretnak's "Aspects of Modernity"

The limitations of modernity are due to the denial of some aspect of reality in each of these characteristics:

Homo economicus - The human is considered essentially an economic being. The proper arrangement of economic endeavors is expected to bring about contentment in all other spheres of life, which are believed to evolve primarily in relation to economic realities.

Industrialism - Mass-production industrialism is the best way to attain ever-increasing levels of well-being through consumption. Industrialism reflects faith in a rapacious mode of production to bring about an age of abundance and contentment.

Progressivism - Faith in industrialism is linked with the belief that the human condition progresses toward increasingly optimal states as the past is continually improved upon. A salvational sense of progress places economic expansion and technological innovation at the center of importance.

Objectivism - Objectivism is the belief that there is a rational structure to reality, independent of the perspectives of any particular cultures or persons, and that correct reason mirrors this rational structure.

Rationalism - Knowledge, belief, and the basis for action are properly derived solely from reason. The structure of rationality is believed to transcend bodily and cultural experience—"pure reason" is valuable precisely because it is untainted by emotions, sensate knowing, social constructions, and noncognitive awareness.

Mechanistic world view - The physical world is composed of matter and energy which operate in various constellations of cause-and-effect according to "laws" of nature. Occurrences of creative unfolding and complex interactive responses in nature are not included in this perspective. Understanding physical entities, no matter how complex, is achieved by breaking them down into smaller and smaller parts (reductionism).

Reductionism - Reductionism seeks the smallest unit of composition and ignores the interactions of parts of a system or the creative behavior of the system as a whole.

Scientism - Modernity also embraces scientism, the belief that all fields of inquiry can obtain objective knowledge by modeling their practices after the investigative methods of science. Scientistic prejudices extend throughout modern systems of knowledge and institutions.

Efficiency - Efficiency is increased in modern societies because social practices, work, education, language, and expectations become standardized, that is, made uniform to a large extent. Customs and traditional knowledge particular to a community or region are considered quirky, backward, and anachronistic. Efficiency is further improved by bureaucratization, the structuring of human interactions in regimented, hierarchical, and inflexible modes, by which controlled and controlling amounts of information can be gathered by modern institutions. A related momentum within processes of modernization is that of centralization, prized for the increased control and standardization it brings.

Anthropocentrism - Modern interactions with nature are generally informed by anthropocentrism, the belief that the human species is the central phenomenon of the natural world.

Opposition to Nature - Modern culture defines itself as a triumphant force, progressing by prevailing over nature. Premodern and nonmodern societies are seen as having been "held back" by unproductive perceptions of holism and by conceptualizations of human culture as an extension of nature with reciprocal duties.

Contempt for indigenous peoples - The drive to exploit "resources" on native peoples' lands does not fully explain the modern drive, both capitalist and communist, to dismantle indigenous cultures.

Compartmentalization - Modern life is considered to exist in discrete spheres or

compartments, such as family life, work, social life, spiritual life, and so on. Learning, especially at the university level, is strictly divided into departments which have little interaction.

Devaluation of spiritual and religious life - Modern history celebrates the escape from religion and other "superstitions" via rationalism. To survive in the modernist era, institutionalized religions have downplayed spiritual connectedness with the creation; instead, they focus on rationalist applications of morals and ethics.

Shrinkage of the cosmological context - The "advances" of rationalism have resulted in a shrinkage of the cosmological context—the sacred whole—to the scale of humans.

Hypermasculinity - Modern cultures are sometimes called "hypermasculine" because traits considered masculine, such as rationality, are valued more than those considered feminine, such as empathy. Patriarchal socialization also favors competition and a dominance-or-submission dichotomy as the structure of relationships, both personal and impersonal.

The Resurgence of the Real: Body, Nature, and Place in a Hypermodern World by Charlene Spretnak. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1997. $22.00.

Does Our Rate of Making Mistakes Exceed Our Rate of Learning?

Donella Meadows

Though we humans grandly call ourselves Homo sapiens, "man the wise," we also carry on a constant debate about how smart we really are. The argument goes on, because the answer isn't obvious. There's plenty of evidence of our brilliance and of our enduring foolishness.

The ultimate intelligence test is coming from the environment. Are we smart enough to stop destroying our own support systems?

I could argue either way. Clearly we can learn from our mistakes—we seem to be programmed to be learning creatures. But our rate of making mistakes might exceed our rate of learning, especially since we learn so much more slowly as organizations than we do as individuals.

Take the fisheries, for example. Over the past 20 years, one after another of the great ocean fisheries has collapsed, exhausted by overfishing. Individuals warned against every one of those crashes. Each could have been taken as a lesson to forestall the next. Many fishermen saw the end coming, but went right on fishing, and their commercial organizations denied any problem and resisted attempts at control. Some are resisting still.

Pretty dumb. But there are counter-examples. The New England lobster fishery regulated itself early on to ensure

the long-term availability of lobsters. And cod and haddock fishers, having wiped out the enormous resource of George's Bank, are now redefining their mission, I am told, to include the restoration and protection not just of cod and haddock, but of the whole ocean ecosystem that upholds those fish.

It came a bit late, but that's real learning.

Ecologists have known for decades that clear cutting is destructive, that it opens soils to erosion, extinguishes forest species, and decreases the likelihood that a similar forest will grow back. People in industry and government laugh at those claims. Even the landslides in the Pacific Northwest last year, slides that killed people and buried houses and roads, slides associated in every case with logging, have not stimulated any apparent learning in the clear-cutting industry.

But there are breaks in the ranks. Recently I wrote an anti-clear-cutting column. Shortly afterward, I received an e-mail message from a forestry school. Mostly it consisted of unprintable remarks from students making fun of my column. But the sender added: "Dear Professor Meadows. Unfortunately forestry students still think they have to talk this way to get jobs. But I want you to know that a lot of us agree with you. Clear cutting is not a sustainable or ethical way to harvest trees."

Learning and resistance to learning. The race between education and catastrophe.

I got a fax the other day from a logged-over town in Canada. It contained a recent paper from *Nature* showing that clear-cutting changes the nitrogen chemistry of forest soils, inhibiting the growth of fir—the tree of value and the one that companies boast of replanting.

Canada has more than 4 million acres of failed replantings. The *Nature* paper explains why. But the fax also quoted an industry spokesman who refused to believe it. "I think this guy is...pulling the wool over people's eyes. If trees wanted to be in the shade, they wouldn't have long, wooden stems to get their leaves up above the other plants. They would have been shrubs."

Homo sapiens can figure out complex soil chemistry; Homo economicus can refuse to take in inconvenient information. Which side of us will prevail?

I shouldn't bash economics; recently there was a great demonstration of learning by economists. Two thousand of them, headed by six Nobel Prize winners, not only admitted that climate change is real, but told the government what to do about it.

"We believe that global climate change carries with it significant environmental, economic, social, and geopolitical risks, and that preventive steps are justified," they said. "There are many potential policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for which the total benefits outweigh the total costs." They recommended carbon taxes and emissions permits.

My environmentalist friends, who generally fear the worst about our collective human intelligence, point out that scientists knew about greenhouse

gases for roughly 100 years before economists accepted that knowledge. Oil and coal companies are still fighting it. At the rate they're going, it will take our politicians another 100 years before they'll allow the words "carbon tax" to be spoken in their presence. By then the planet will be cooked.

Scientists learn, the pessimists would say, because that's their business. (Unaffiliated scientists, anyway, those not employed by industry or government.) Then citizen organizations pick up the information. Then (unaffiliated) economists, and finally corporations and governments. It takes forever for knowledge to penetrate places of power. Given the rate at which we do damage, the rate of institutional learning is way too slow.

There are days when I agree. But I know people in government, people in corporations, even fossil fuel company executives, who worry about global warming. I've heard higher-ups in chemical companies say privately that the Clean Air Act should be strengthened--while their lobbyists were working flat out to weaken it.

People learn. Organizations balk. But organizations are made of people. Surely there's an opportunity here to wise up.

Donella H. Meadows, a systems analyst, author, and adjunct professor of environmental studies at Dartmouth College, writes a syndicated article each week to "present a global view, a connected view, a long-term view, an environmental and compassionate view." Timeline *readers who feel that these articles deserve the widest possible distribution are encouraged to contact their local newspaper editor and suggest the paper carry them. Meadows can be reached at The Global Citizen, Box 58, Plainfield, NH 03781.*

Freedom

A new video produced by the Foundation for Global Community

Too often, we take freedom for granted. But, as this new video makes clear, in these turbulent times it is critical for society to re-examine its values and its beliefs about freedom since how we use freedom powerfully influences the future. Today, an exaggerated and individualistic view of freedom seems to threaten the things we value most and that are so embedded in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

To stimulate "conversations that matter," *Freedom* is divided into three parts. A guide to help facilitate small group discussions accompanies the video and is structured for three individual meetings, each lasting 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

Part I: Freedom (10 minutes) explores the basic principle and historical development of the concept of freedom in this country.

Part II: Freedom of Choice (8 minutes) examines the choices that freedom allows and the implications and results of the choices we make.

Part III: Freedom to Change (9.5 minutes) focuses on our freedom to

change and what it is in the human being that gives us the ability to change.

Freedom is listed in the Foundation for Global Community catalog as item #700. Orders should be sent to Distribution at the Palo Alto office. Price is $25.00 (includes shipping and handling).

Let's Heal the Relationship with Cuba

A Personal Perspective by Janie Starr

Going to Cuba had been a dream of mine for several years, but since the U.S. government forbids its citizens to travel there except for very specific reasons, I had little hope of realizing that dream. Yet here I am, at age 49, a hosted member of Global Exchange's language intensive program, typing away on my laptop in Havana, sipping a cup of sweet black coffee, and trying to make sense of the catastrophic relationship that my country has with this small and desperately beautiful island.

In addition to improving my language skills, I have come to Cuba to understand its complexities and contradictions and to make friends with some of its people. In that vein, I have spoken with many Cubans, young and old, men and women, to gather their impressions and to experience their point of view. I have been received warmly and graciously, my questions have been answered forthrightly, and the conclusion is always the same: Cubans feel kindly toward their U.S. neighbors. There is an openness and friendliness that I have never experienced in other countries, third world or developed. Yet there is at the same time a persistent rage toward the U.S. government for its repressive and inhumane blockade of resources into Cuba.

Through the Helms-Burton Law the United States has not only increased its own embargo of goods to Cuba, it has also threatened other countries who choose to do business here. Cubans cannot understand this bully mentality, this incessant policy to defeat the Revolution through the withholding of such essentials as food, medicines, and water-purification systems. I am convinced that while the Cuban people admit to suffering greatly, and they speak despairingly of the standard of living which plummeted after 1991 (beginning the so called Special Period), they remain resolved to hold true to their values.

Even after the fall of the Soviet Union, when food supplies were dangerously low, petroleum almost non-existent, and blackouts were the norm, Cubans continued to receive salaries and a minimal food guarantee. The determination of the Cuban people to survive resulted in a massive transformation to bicycle use, the discovery of new medicines, and the introduction of tourism and foreign trade.

What I want to convey is that political and economic struggle has long been a part of Cuba's history. Many people still believe the government is doing everything it can for its people under the circumstances, and there are others who

feel that Castro, once a true revolutionary, now cares more for power than for the people. Cubans are painfully aware of the extent of their problems, and they, like any other people, want to resolve them without outside interference.

Cuba's courting of international tourism and foreign investment (which pours in despite threats of reprisal from the U.S.) has brought its share of negative consequences. There now exists a double monetary standard with the dollar more highly valued than the peso. Professionals, paid in pesos, drive cabs by night in order to obtain dollars. The black market flourishes. Prostitution has returned to the island for the first time since the defeat of Batista. Bombs occasionally explode at the five-star hotels, acts of terrorism which most people assume are "Miami" inspired and intended to frighten away the tourists. Only the Cubans seem frightened, however, for no one here wants a return to the repressive regime of Batista, and no one wants to become like Mexico, or any other third-world country. People want more freedom, but they also want a higher standard of living and the opportunity to work hard, dance, and live without fear. As a journalist from Radio Habana explained, Cuba will be the country it can be and not the country it wants to be.

The U.S. has a history of reconciliation with its enemies: Germany, Japan, China, and Vietnam to name a few. It is time we do the same with Cuba. There is no dragon here, no evil empire; this is a place of incessant sunshine, music, and laughter; it is a place of earnest dedication and formidable resilience. In short, Cuba is not going to capitulate. Instead of continuing to punish a people because of its government, I urge that we follow Canada's example, which is to work in partnership, create relationships, and in the process encourage a more open political system. It is trite to say, but bridges have always been more effective than walls in bringing about change.

I have been warned that to speak too positively about Cuba will weaken my credibility and that people will discount me as a naive tool of Fidel Castro. I would no more defend Castro to the people of the United States than I would extol the virtues of the U.S. Congress to the Cubans. I am speaking about the human beings who are the true pawns of an untenable political situation. I have friends in Cuba now, and when I close my eyes I see their faces, and I hear their voices. I am touched by their kindness and their ability to separate me from my government, and I wonder why we North Americans have such difficulty doing the same. How does it serve us to hold this grudge? Are we so in need of an enemy? What do we really fear? The hostility the United States bears toward Cuba demeans the citizens of both countries, and needs to be put to rest, so that, at last, the healing can begin.

Janie Starr is a long-time volunteer with the Foundation for Global Community in Tacoma, Washington.

"Please Call Me By My True Names"

by Thich Nhat Hanh

Don't say that I will depart tomorrow—
even today I am still arriving.

Look deeply: every second I am arriving
to be a bud on a Spring branch,
to be a tiny bird, with still-fragile wings,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,
to fear and to hope.
The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death
of all that is alive.

I am a mayfly metamorphosing
on the surface of the river.
And I am the bird
that swoops down to swallow the mayfly.

I am a frog swimming happily
in the clear water of a pond.
And I am the grass-snake
that silently feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks.
And I am the arms merchant,
selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl,
refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean
after being raped by a sea pirate.
And I am the pirate,
my heart not yet capable
of seeing and loving.

My joy is like Spring, so warm
it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.
My pain is like a river of tears,
so vast it fills the four oceans.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up
and the door of my heart
could be left open,
the door of compassion.

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