

ratitor's corner

20 march 2003

march equinox, 8:03pm, EST

Living On The Creative Edge

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Today, the Sun, appearing to travel along the ecliptic, reaches the point where it crosses the equator into the northern celestial hemisphere. Today day and night are of equal length.

I wanted to write this ratitor's corner six months ago as last September marked the completion of rat haus reality's seventh revolution around SOL. As a young boy I regarded eight as my lucky number. At some point before I was ten I concluded I was off by one, and that seven was the real gem. Since then I've come to feel that four is also highly significant but seven occupies the center.

Thus I had been looking forward to September 2002 given that the seventh anniversary of this process was filled with a heightened sense of personal meaning. Building ratical.org has been a fulfilling experience. But before expressing the significance surrounding that seven-year milestone, I felt an urgent need to fashion the best summation I could of the essential issues we in America must collectively address in "Broadening Our Perspectives of 11 September 2001." Since then a great deal of energy has been devoted to further expanding the Crimes Against Humanity area as well as other ratical additions of which more will be said later. This ratitorial is dedicated to Nina Nicholyevena Vansuch for all she gives me and shares of the luminescence within her self, and for the wholeness she is helping me discover and express for the first time in this journey of days.

We are in the sixth great extinction on this planet -- the first one caused by one species. We humans are causing an extinction that is proceeding more rapidly than the last one, . . . This is a sea-change, an unimaginably big change. Yet every time the Earth has gone through an extinction there's been a unbelievable burst of activity, of creativity. We are seeing that burst of creativity in the middle of the extinction this time, not after it's over. That's why we're all here.

--Elisabet Sahtouris, The Big Picture, August 1999

The SECOND dimension of the great turning comprises the new structures, institutions, agreements, and ways of doing things. It is extraordinary how swiftly these are springing up like green shoots through the rubble of our dysfunctional civilization. I don't think there has ever been a time in human history when so many new ways of doing things have appeared in so short a time -- from ways of owning land, to co-housing, to eco-villages, to cooperatives, to new local currencies, alternative schools, alternative modes of healing. They reveal an amazing degree of ingenuity, an awesome readiness to experiment and create. Even though these emergent and often embryonic systems sometimes look fringe, perhaps, or marginal, they are the seeds of the future.

Yet these new forms will wither and die unless they're deeply grounded in our values. So the THIRD dimension of the great turning is in the way we see things and understand our connection and requirements for life. There is a revolution going on in our grasp of what we really need, and it is quietly spreading now in the simple living movement.

--Joanna Macy, Dimensions of the Great Turning, September 1999

The Gift

The following story about hope and renewal is one more instance of the living mystery of Change yourself and you change the world. Although life is constantly presenting us with situations that can expand and exceed our self-chosen limits, we don't always recognize them when they appear. In the middle of 1977, I was living in New Haven, Connecticut. After studying piano at the Berklee College of Music in 1976-77 I had moved to New Haven at the end of that school year. That summer I found my way to a local record store named Rhymes, less than a block from the old campus at Yale. Next to playing piano, listening to music was one of my primary interests and Rhymes had a very rich jazz section.

During this time I met and came to know Nina Vansuch who worked at Rhymes and stocked the jazz section. She was a singer and knew a great deal about the genre. I was impressed by the fact that although Nina was a vocalist, she knew a lot about piano players. I had not previously considered the dynamic of pianists lyrical sensibilities but given the ability to "voice" harmonies across 2 to 10 notes (i.e., fingers) the giants of jazz in the piano dimension would necessarily have to possess the ability to hear and express themselves lyrically.

This period of my life swung into high gear when, with Nina's help, I got a job working at Rhymes in February 1978. For months I had been asking if there was room for me there. I vividly remember going to work before sunset a few days after the February new moon, when that "Cheshire Cat" grin was visible in all its glory in the western sky at four in the afternoon. A storm had just dumped a load of new snow, it was sparkingly cold outside, and the sky was a deep vivid blue. Beholding the new moon, I was filled with a feeling of potential and delight at the prospect of beginning my long sought-after job.

Nina taught me how the inventory system worked: putting stickers on each newly arrived album with the price, record label and number; pulling off these same stickers at the point of sale and sticking them on each record label's growing list; and tallying the list at the end of each day giving us our reorder list. She taught me about the cash register and closing the store in the evening as well as opening things up in the morning. And, more essentially, she exposed me to other jazz recording artists, pianists and otherwise, than those I had previously been exploring on my own.

We had loads of fun working together. It was especially rich when we were the only ones minding the store; we would laugh that much more deeply and uninhibitedly. Our sensibilities were very much in sync; we saw things in the same light, with the same sense of absurdity, the same sense of humor and personal values. I treasured the time we were the only ones in the store because then I had Nina all to myself and could drink in her friendship, beauty and presence without having to share her with anyone else. I adored Nina but felt inadequate as she always seemed to have a passel of guys swarming around her like moths to a flame. I felt I couldn't compete.

We enjoyed about four months working together and then Nina left New Haven that summer. She had felt for some time that she needed to change venues and went to Boston. We stayed in touch for a number of years. Once when I was in North Carolina studying with Mary Lou Williams I remember sharing how difficult it felt when Mary Lou got angry with me during our piano lessons. Nina responded, 'She wouldn't be upset with you if she didn't care. If you didn't have the talent she wouldn't push you like that.' The time with Mary Lou ended when I returned to California in the spring of 1980. Nina and I fell out of touch.

On March 24th of last year, out of the blue I received an e-mail from Nina. From her work as a singer and actor, a friend had urged her to search on Google to see what people were writing about her. This was about the third time she had ever gone on the web (she felt people already didn't talk to each other enough, and felt the internet exacerbated this condition). Listed on the first page of results was a section from the rat autobio I had finished in early 1997: 'a ratical branch of life: "JFK & Rhymes Records"'. I was very excited to "hear" from her after more than 20 years and wrote back with great enthusiasm. E-mail flurries began. Six days later she called me on the phone. As soon as I answered she burst into laughter that held us both for perhaps a minute. It was extraordinary to regain connection.

We commenced simultaneously travelling "fast and slow" (as Nina put it) in our letters, on the phone, and when I flew to Boston for twelve days in April and when she came to California for six days in May. Timing is everything; we were both ready and able to see the gift being offered to us by life in a way we could not perceive 24 years before, half a lifetime ago, or even in the recent past.

Already in April we both were experiencing the vision of being together. In the middle of June, I picked up and moved to the area outside Boston where Nina lives. Since my life was in flux in a way that hers was not, it was eminently more feasible for me to change venues so that we could begin seeing what exists and could grow between us. Since then, at the beginning of each meal each day, we reaffirm through prayer our gratitude and thanks for the blessings bestowed on us and for this chance to nurture and develop our sacred union. We

could not have embarked upon this a quarter of a century ago but today we are fully committed to this journey together.

I have lived alone through most all my adult years. The largest influence for this was experiencing the dissolution of my parents' love and marriage. I was ten when they divorced. I adamantly strove to reject the changed reality of what was now home. My response contained the seeds of an estrangement from my self that grew deep roots over the ensuing years. Deeply ingrained on an unconscious level, I concluded that if this was the result of love, I would never let anyone touch me and matter to me as deeply as my parents had.

Walking through years that become decades can soften even the most obdurate of hearts. My April 2001 could-have-been-killed bike accident, followed by a second bicycle crash six months *to the day* later in October, imparted, with the greatest intensity, the awareness of the fragility and brevity of life. We are given blessings beyond comprehension with our life, wrapped in our unique human overcoat. By the time Nina wrote me, I was more psychically and emotionally available than at any point in my adult life.

So here we are, daily wading further out into the ocean of mutual being and love. The life-long fears once again rise to the surface: fear of genuine intimacy, fear of giving up/losing control, fear of letting another human being touch the greater depths of whatever 'me' actually is, fear of letting another matter *that much*, fear of once more being vulnerable to the love of another human being. Added to this are the fantasy variations promulgated through cultural conditioning of fairy tales such as "they lived happily ever after".

Our relationship runs the gamut of being: love, joy, wonder, confusion, uncertainty, avoidance, excitement, delight, fear, anger, remorse, gratitude, sadness, respect, compromise, struggle, and on and on. When I was a child, I did not experience the expression of anger as something that was safe. When Nina and I had our first big fight last fall, my response was to shut down and run away. In the fight-or-flight mode, I had only ever experienced flight. In areas of one-on-one intimate personal interaction, I didn't know how to stand up for myself and mix it up. We were able to come back from the brink of this with some visits to a therapist who has helped Nina. I then set out to find someone to carry on and further the inner work of finding more of my wholeness which I have explored on and off and on throughout this life.

A number of indicators have shown Nina and I how wondrous is the mystery of our finding our way back to each other after almost a quarter of a century. The first was my having unconsciously set the beacon on the net in early 1997 with the Rhymes segment that Nina found her way to. Last March, just before Nina responded to that beacon, I was speaking to my brother Bruce. I described how it was hard to imagine how I would ever meet someone who was a good enough match for my own foibles and eccentricities. He responded, 'But you don't know; you may have already met her.'

Another affirmation that I am precisely where I belong is how I found my way to John Ryan Haule ("Hau" is pronounced "hew"). I located the Jung Institute of Boston website and on their list of New England Society of Jungian Analysts page, only two of the many names included a website link. John's was one of these and what I read there interested me. After meeting him I felt an affinity so essential to collaboration. I also proposed trading services --

my expanding his site contents and ease of navigation for his helping me find more of my wholeness -- to which he was amenable. He last updated his site in 1996 and, while he has much material to add (he has written a number of books, including manuscripts of works previously unpublished), he simply was not able to make the time to do so. We began our work together in November.

The Readiness Is All

With John's help I am finding my way into an heretofore unknown dimension of being that is the stuff of relationship. The primary difference between this current and prior relationships is how ready I am for this extraordinary journey of couplehood. Previously I had run away before very much depth was able to be explored between the person I was with and me. Walking this path together with Nina, I am embarked on the course of sharing our lives with the commitment I was never before now ready to express nor accept. The outward affirmation of our union, expressed by picking up my home and traveling to the other coast (in time, we hope to return to Santa Cruz), is matched on the inside by my psychic readiness for this next step in my own growth and further creation of consciousness. One of the core elements I am finding with Nina is seeing more of those patterns within that unconsciously attempt to project a rejection of parts of my self that I am not in harmony with, and that I have fearfully hidden from myself for most of my journey here.

In a general way I wrote about aspects of this growth in the last ratiator's corner, *The New Myth For Our Species: The Creation of Consciousness*. Quoting from that text,

It is precisely this process of manifesting change within by re-embracing and re-integrating one's rejected self that produces an equal and opposite change in others in the world who are similarly trapped in their own avoidance and rejection of their estranged selves. Such a "leap of faith" enabling one to mount this profound commitment to inner change and growth can occur only by acknowledging the formidable and transformative powers of responsibility each of us as human beings is endowed with and capable of summoning when we are ready. When we are ready to truly and fundamentally discover and explore change within ourselves, issues previously considered unmovable and fixed have a tendency to become flexible and fall away with extraordinary ease. As Laurens [van der Post] so aptly reminds us harkening back to Shakespeare's Hamlet, "when the time is out of joint, as ours certainly is, the readiness is all."

One of the most deceptive of popular half-truths is the saying that history repeats itself. Only unredeemed, unrecognized, misunderstood history, I believe, repeats itself, and remains a dark, negative and dangerous dominant on the scene of human affairs. Although the Bushman has gone, what he personified, the patterns of spirit made flesh and blood in him and all he evoked or provoked in us, lives on as a ghost within ourselves. This is no subjective illusion of mine evoked by the special relationship I have always had with him. Something like him, a first man, is dynamic in the underworld of the spirit of man, no matter of what race, creed or culture. I know this as an empiric fact because of all the books I have written and films I have made about the Bushman; his story has been translated into all languages except Chinese, travelled the world and been taken into the hearts of millions as if it were food in a universal famine of spirit. What this means for our own time depends in the first instance on our rediscovery of these patterns in ourselves and our readiness to cease being accessories after the fact of diminished consciousness, of which murder is the ultimate symbol. As Hamlet in his haunted fortress had it, when the time is out of joint, as ours certainly is, the readiness is all.

"Witness to a Last Will of Man," p.123

This dynamic of how "the readiness is all" has resonated inside for some time. The readiness to risk moving to Nina's community and commit myself to an expression of love and relatedness like nothing I have lived before is the driving force in my life today. A common thread in the eloquent writing of Laurens van der Post is how the inner and the outer are a reflection of each other.

World without and world within, after all, whether one knows it or not are expressions of one another; interdependent and ceaselessly in communication, serving something greater than the sum of themselves.

A Story Like The Wind, p. 123-4

I am greatly affirmed in my path by a passage in Laurens' story, at about the same time in his life, of his journey to find the Bushman of his youth and apologize and ask their forgiveness for the terrible things his ancestors did to them. As a boy he had made a pact with himself when he was eight.

. . . Later in the afternoon I locked myself in the study of my father, who had died some weeks before, and took out a diary in which secretly I had begun to write poetry and record my thoughts. The day was October 13, 1914, and in High Dutch I wrote: "I have decided today that when I am grown-up I am going into the Kalahari Desert to seek out the Bushman."

The Lost World of the Kalahari, p.60

In the following chapter, and more than 40 years later, after reaching the moment in his life when he decides to commit himself to fulfilling his childhood pact, he is describing how things fell into place.

. . . Yet even there I was amazed at the speed with which it was accomplished. I say "amazed," but it would be more accurate to say I was profoundly moved, for the lesson that seemed to emerge for a person with my history of forgetfulness, doubts and hesitation was, as Hamlet put it so heart-renderingly to himself: "the readiness is all." If one is truly ready within oneself and prepared to commit one's readiness without question to the deed that follows naturally on it, one finds life and circumstance surprisingly armed and ready at one's side. In fact, I would say now that the tragedy of Hamlet was precisely that he always found a reason for not obeying the readiness of his own spirit. I say this, not because I raised my own small problem to Shakespearian proportions, but merely for the order that the parallel helped to bring to the perplexities of my own mind and for something else that it revealed beyond: how what we sentimentalize as forgiveness is an iron enactment of life. Indeed, life does not merely exact but sets the example. Vengeance, revenge, forgiveness and bitterness are all reactions of the retarded Corsican in ourselves: they play no role in the abiding assertion of life. It is too urgent for that, and in order not to stand still in mere action and reaction, it moves on only with the effect that has freely forgiven its cause. The fact, I believe, will one day be capable of mathematical as well as emotional expression. Meanwhile, here was one more proof of it for me in that if anyone had deserved a rebuff from life after so many fumbled years, I had. Yet I found myself pardoned and my plan welcomed as an old friend.

Ibid, p.72

There is a great deal about the above that has stuck in my mind and my heart since I first read it, and later listened to actor John Nettleton speak it (in the audio book version). The essential image that has stayed with me is that life is at one's side like an old friend when one is truly ready to embark upon one's chosen purpose.

The Power To Choose

In recent years I have been increasingly struck by our human ability and power to choose. In the 1969 Star Trek story, "Requiem for Methuselah" Rayna is an android woman created by an immortal man Flint, to live with him for all time. Flint manipulates Kirk to stir and bring Rayna's emotions to life. At the end she discovers the secret of her not being human and Flint and Kirk fight over her. Rayna yells for them to stop, and in a moment of expanding consciousness she realizes, 'I *choose*, where I want to go, what I want to do . . . I choose.' Almost immediately she collapses and dies. When Kirk asks what happened, Spock responds that 'She loved both of you. . . . she did not want to hurt either of you . . . There was not enough time for her to adapt to the awesome power of her new-found emotions.'

The capacity to choose bestows great power upon us while simultaneously demanding that, as David Korten puts it, "we bear the burden of responsibility to make our choices wisely" (*The Post-Corporate World, Life After Capitalism*, p.137). We choose what we will believe in. We choose how we will respond to each situation life presents us with. We create the reality we experience by choosing *how* we will interpret what we perceive.

My good friend and ratical.org partner rebecca lord challenged me back in the mid-nineties with the awareness that when we become physically mature adults no one can hurt us inwardly. We can choose to be inwardly hurt by another but they do not have the power to do that; only we do through the power of choice. For me this is the meaning of maturity: recognizing that I am responsible for the state of my inner world. I alone chose. Others certainly have a profound influence on me. But in the end, I am the one who chooses. rebecca reflected on this in a letter in 1997:

this a.m. i was thinking/dreaming about the vulnerability of teens -- my own children in particular. the wounds they carry are much deeper than if certain events had occurred either when they were younger or older. i also saw clearly the *fact* that everyone in the family wanted me not to see what was happening and the *fact* that i *chose* not to. i'm able to put down some of the baggage i've been carrying.

i'm finding more often the ability to trust, when i trust, i relax and my awareness of the moment increases. i can respond from an uncluttered, clear place. responsible. it isn't so much that i trust *more* -- rather i'm more aware of how much we all trust. we trust the floor to be solid for our feet, we trust our food will nourish us, we trust our families to love us even when they don't accept us, we trust joy when it catches us by surprise.

This brings back the fundamental point I wish to emphasize. Many of us yearn for the world to be made whole, for the lion to lie down with lamb, for the strong to protect and care for the weak, for our single, fragile human family to grow up and live out its greatest promise and potential as self-reflecting, conscious beings. We all have the power inside our selves to manifest this life-honoring sacred purpose; it is part of our birthright. The process for this places the burden squarely upon each of us: Change yourself and you change the world.

Living Myth and Meaning

While the rational mind balks at such assertions, I find the unfolding river of change now carrying me along in its strong and swift current is giving a palpable experience of meaning akin to what I wrote about in *The New Myth For Our Species*. Meaning is as essential to our being as food and water. We cannot survive without it. At the beginning of his 1984 book *The Creation of Consciousness, Jung's Myth for Modern Man*, Edward Edinger pin-points a central element of the sadness and desolation we are confronted by in the world today with the loss of a sense of meaning.

History and anthropology teach us that a human society cannot long survive unless its members are psychologically contained within a central living myth. Such a myth provides the individual with a reason for being. To the ultimate questions of human existence it provides answers which satisfy the most developed and discriminating members of the society. And if the creative, intellectual minority is in harmony with the prevailing myth, the other layers of society will follow its lead and may even be spared a direct encounter with the fateful question of the meaning of life.

It is evident to thoughtful people that Western society no longer has a viable, functioning myth. Indeed, all the major world cultures are approaching, to a greater or lesser extent, the state of mythlessness. The breakdown of a central myth is like the shattering of a vessel containing a precious essence; the fluid is spilled and drains away, soaked up by the surrounding undifferentiated matter. Meaning is lost. In its place, primitive and atavistic contents are reactivated. Differentiated values disappear and are replaced by the elemental motivations of power and pleasure, or else the individual is exposed to emptiness and despair. With the loss of awareness of a transpersonal reality (God), the inner and outer anarchies of competing personal desires take over.

The loss of a central myth brings about a truly apocalyptic condition and this is the state of modern man. (pp.9-10)

It is critical to be clear about our terms here. Today all too often in our hyperliteral culture, myth is mistakenly assumed to mean something false or not real. By doing so we do our selves and our world great disservice by failing to grasp the essential relevance myth has to our own psychic groundedness and vitality. In 1957 Laurens van der Post explored this at great length in a booklet entitled *Race Prejudice as Self Rejection, An Inquiry into the Psychological and Spiritual Aspects of Group Conflicts*:

I find it so tragic and ironical that the age in which we live should regard the word "myth" and "illusion" as synonymous, in view of the fact that the myth is the real history, is the real event of the spirit. It is this immense world of meaning with which the image links us. The myth is the tremendous activity that goes on in humanity all the time, without which no society has hope or direction, and no personal life has a meaning. We all live a myth whether we know it or not. We live it by fair means or we live it by foul. Or we live it by a process or a combination of both. We have a myth that we live badly. The Christian myth is a myth in the real sense of the word. (p.18)

What is the myth in which each of us lives? For a long time I have felt I have lived outside whatever this culture is that I was born into; that I was not part of it. As the 20th century progressed, especially after World War II, alienation has been a deeply-rooted theme in many people's lives who are embedded in post-industrial culture. But such a dynamic can hardly be called a living myth that sustains and nourishes our sense of psychic wholeness.

Regarding choice and the search for meaning and a living myth, I have become more and more emphatic in my belief that the process of changing myself contains great power and is the most direct path to changing our world in the way we must if we are to survive our species adolescence, grow up, and begin to genuinely live the responsibility that is the irrevocable counterpart of choice. Like two sides of a coin, they are forever joined. As I wrote the dedication to Ending Corporate Governance in February 1996:

If we think there is no hope, that is our reality.
If we sense we are powerless, it is what we are.
And if we *truly see* the fact that we are solely *response-able*
for the way we choose to interpret what we perceive,
then we change the world in ways otherwise unimaginable.

Today our species is moving into the most monumental moment of transformation we will experience in our lives. Old values and ways of being such as "dominion over the earth and all its creatures," "might makes right," and "the law of scarcity" are increasingly being questioned and challenged as the world view and framework of reality they project becomes more and more transparent for all to see. The imperative to see clearly is being caused by the momentum and inertia these values exert that continue drawing every one and every thing closer to the abyss of oblivion. Committing ourselves individually and collectively to change is no longer simply a nice idea. It is essential to our existence.

Waging Peace

The singular significance of this moment of human time was augmented when I received a message about Dr. Robert Muller being honored in San Francisco on February 5th at an event called The Vital Role of the UN in Preserving Planet Earth, sponsored by the United Nations Association of San Francisco. Lynne Twist (Representative to the State of the World Forum, President of the Turning Tide Coalition, Co-Founder of the Pachamama Alliance, Founding Executive of The Hunger Project, Board Member of the Institute of Noetic Sciences) authored an account of Dr. Muller's remarks:

Dr. Robert Muller, former assistant secretary general of the United Nations, now Chancellor emeritus of the University of Peace in Costa Rica was one of the people who witnessed the founding of the U.N. and has worked in support of or inside the U.N. ever since. Recently he was in San Francisco to be honored for his service to the world through the U.N. and through his writings and teachings for peace. At age eighty, Dr. Muller surprised, even stunned, many in the audience that day with his most positive assessment of where the world stands now regarding war and peace.

I was there at the gathering and I myself was stunned by his remarks. What he said turned my head around and offered me a new way to see what is going on in the world. My synopsis of his remarks is below:

"I'm so honored to be here," he said. "I'm so honored to be alive at such a miraculous time in history. I'm so moved by what's going on in our world today."

(I was shocked. I thought -- Where has he been? What has he been reading? Has he seen the newspapers? Is he senile? Has he lost it? What is he talking about?)

Dr. Muller proceeded to say, "Never before in the history of the world has there been a global, visible, public, viable, open dialogue and conversation about the very legitimacy of war."

The whole world is in now having this critical and historic dialogue -- listening to all kinds of points of view and positions about going to war or not going to war. In a huge global public conversation the world is asking -- "Is war legitimate? Is it illegitimate? Is there enough evidence to warrant an attack? Is there not enough evidence to warrant an attack? What will be the consequences? The costs? What will happen after a war? How will this set off other conflicts? What might be peaceful alternatives? What kind of negotiations are we not thinking of? What are the real intentions for declaring war?"

All of this, he noted, is taking place in the context of the United Nations Security Council, the body that was established in 1949 for exactly this purpose. He pointed out that it has taken us more than fifty years to realize that function, the real function of the U.N. And at this moment in history -- the United Nations is at the center of the stage. It is the place where these conversations are happening, and it has become in these last months and weeks, the most powerful governing body on earth, the most powerful container for the world's effort to wage peace rather than war. Dr. Muller was almost in tears in recognition of the fulfillment of this dream.

"We are not at war," he kept saying. We, the world community, are *waging* peace. It is difficult, hard work. It is constant and we must not let up. It is working and it is an historic milestone of immense proportions. It has never happened before -- never in human history -- and it is happening now -- every day every hour -- waging peace through a global conversation. He pointed out that the conversation questioning the validity of going to war has gone on for hours, days, weeks, months and now more than a year, and it may go on and on. "We're in peacetime," he kept saying. "Yes, troops are being moved. Yes, warheads are being lined up. Yes, the aggressor is angry and upset and spending a billion dollars a day preparing to attack. But not one shot has been fired. Not one life has been lost. There is no war. It's all a conversation."

It is tense, it is tough, it is challenging, *and* we are in the most significant and potent global conversation and public dialogue in the history of the world. This has not happened before on this scale ever before -- not before WWI or WWII, not before Vietnam or Korea, this is new and it is a stunning new era of Global listening, speaking, and responsibility.

In the process, he pointed out, new alliances are being formed. Russia and China on the same side of an issue is an unprecedented outcome. France and Germany working together to wake up the world to a new way of seeing the situation. The largest peace demonstrations in the history of the world are taking place -- and we are not at war! Most peace demonstrations in recent history took place when a war was already waging, sometimes for years, as in the case of Vietnam.

"So this," he said, "is a miracle. This is what 'waging peace' looks like."

No matter what happens, history will record that this is a new era, and that the 21st century has been initiated with the world in a global dialogue looking deeply, profoundly and responsibly as a global community at the legitimacy of the actions of a nation that is desperate to go to war.

Through these global peace-waging efforts, the leaders of that nation are being engaged in further dialogue, forcing them to rethink, and allowing all nations to participate in the serious and horrific decision to go to war or not.

Dr. Muller also made reference to a recent *New York Times* article that pointed out that up until now there has been just one superpower -- the United States, and that that has created a kind of blindness in the vision of the U.S. But now, Dr. Muller asserts, there are two superpowers: the United States and the merging, surging voice of the people of the world.

All around the world, people are waging peace. To Robert Muller, one of the great advocates of the United Nations, it is nothing short of a miracle and it is working.

We're Not At War

In a modified form of meaning, Robert Muller's statement, "We are not at war," and "There is no war" speaks directly to something I have wrestled with since 11 September 2001. After that day people in the U.S. Executive Branch immediately chose to label the bombings as an act of war by a foreign aggressor rather than as a criminal act requiring redress through legal remedies. Since then the U.S. corporate regime justifies everything it is doing by claiming we are war. The war powers of the presidency is cited in the courts as justification for the military to hold citizens. Public discourse is largely locked into a tacit acceptance of legitimacy for what has been done because "We're at war" -- from making aggressive war on peoples that cannot defend themselves and rejecting international treaties and laws, to justifying and implementing the unthinkable-before-September-11th police state now codified on the law books here at home.

But there is no war. The 9-11 bombings are not acts of war. The 9-11 bombings are crimes against humanity. These acts are clearly crimes against humanity (as defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court) because they are deliberate and intentional killing of large numbers of civilians for political or other purposes. That is not tolerable under the international systems. And it must be prosecuted pursuant to the existing laws. We don't need new laws. We need to apply the existing laws. Emphasizing the fact that what happened was not an act of war but a crime against humanity is the purpose of the Crimes Against Humanity section on rat haus reality [<http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/>]. This is *one* of the central points that *can* collapse the imperial house of cards.

In his book *Rogue State* William Blum points out that "Propaganda is to a democracy what violence is to a dictatorship." In her autobiography, Agatha Christie observed "One is left with the horrible feeling now that war settles nothing, that to win a war is as disastrous as to lose one!" The so-called victors of war are those people who profit financially from the spoils of war. Smedley Butler was a Major General of the United States Marine Corps. He was twice awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor (1914, 1917) as well as the Distinguished Service Medal (1919). After he retired Butler offered his assessment of how war is just a racket in a speech he gave in 1933:

I wouldn't go to war again as I have done to protect some lousy investment of the bankers. There are only two things we should fight for. One is the defense of our homes and the other is the Bill of Rights. War for any other reason is simply a racket. . . . I spent thirty-three years and four months in active military service as a member of this country's most agile military force, the Marine Corps. . . . I spent most of my time being a high class muscle-man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. . . .

I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912 (where have I heard that name before?). I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested. During those years, I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. Looking back on it, I feel that I could have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.

Robert Muller is an inspiring and gifted representative of peace. As he describes himself in his acceptance of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's 2002 World Citizenship Award,

I joined the United Nations in 1948 as a young man who had been in a German Gestapo prison, a French Resistance fighter and saw the most horrible atrocities of war and destructions. I come from Alsace-Lorraine, a province of France bordering Germany, where my grandparents knew three wars and changed nationality five times and my father was once a German and once a French soldier. Almost all my male schoolmates of the year 1939 were killed in German or French uniforms. . . .

In the disaffected armaments factory in Lake Success where the United Nations was first located, and where I was an intern, a British delegate asked me what I was doing there. I answered: "I came here to work for peace, because I do not want my children and grandchildren to know the horrors I saw in World War II."

From his personal experience Dr. Muller knew the pursuit of peace was the necessary path humanity must follow if it is to mature as a species. In the spring of 1963 President Kennedy -- who also knew the horrors of war first hand -- felt there was a genuine opportunity for movement towards reconciliation with the Soviet Union by his making, as special assistant Arthur Schlesinger put it, a 'peace speech.' President Kennedy gave this address in June. Kennedy's science adviser Jerome Wiesner said afterwards,

The speech at American University made a profound impression on the Soviet Union. Intelligence reports indicated that Chairman Khrushchev had said it was the best speech ever made by an American President. We were hopeful that this would finally mean real progress on a nuclear test ban treaty. Ever since the development of nuclear bombs, we had been attempting to bring them under control.

Kennedy's words and vision are extraordinarily relevant today. They remind us that there are many possible avenues to explore for creatively solving conflicts and that the greatest barrier to such realities is in the way we choose to think about things.

What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children -- not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women -- not merely peace in our time but peace for all time. . . .

Let us examine our attitude toward peace itself. Too many of us think it is impossible. Too many think it unreal. But that is a dangerous, defeatist belief. It leads to the conclusion that war is inevitable -- that mankind is doomed -- that we are gripped by forces we cannot control.

We need not accept that view. Our problems are man-made -- therefore, they can be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings. Man's reason and spirit have often solved the seemingly unsolvable -- and we believe they can do it again.

. . . let us not be blind to our differences -- but let us also direct attention to our common interests and to the means by which those differences can be resolved. And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal.

Commencement Address at American University, Washington D.C., 10 June 1963

What the World Wants Will Resolve 9-11

As much psychic resistance as there is to seeing alternative approaches to the endless spiral of violence we now appear to be terminal locked into, the solution to the puzzle posed by 9-11 is actually quite simple. However, choosing to change the annihilative course of empire lust, blind hubris, and avarice being pursued by the unelected-in-2000 U.S. regime, starkly high-lights the bankruptcy of what is called United States policy. On September 30, 2001 Oglala/Lakota-born Russell Means wrote

George W. Bush has the opportunity to become the greatest President this country has ever produced and to change the course of history. All he has to do is turn the other cheek and reach out to every country and to all peoples in the world.

" What the World Wants -- and How To Pay For It Using Military Expenditures" [<http://www.worldgame.org/wwwproject/>] is a project of the World Game Institute. The What the World Wants Project is an magnificent demonstration of how clear thinking lays bare such falsehoods as the United States' avowed commitment to and desire for peace as well as the moral legitimacy of the U.S. as the sole so-called world super power that squanders its treasure on war-making.

In the above link a 2-dimensional chart measuring 34-by-23 minus 2 little cubes represents "annual costs of various global programs for solving the major human need and environmental problems facing humanity. Each program is the amount needed to accomplish the goal for all in need in the world. Their combined total cost is approximately 30% of the world's total annual military expenditures." 1 cube equals \$1 billion. The total chart contains 780 cubes representing annual world military expenditures of \$780 billion. Below the chart is the following table (links go back to each section at the World Game Institute).

Eighteen Strategies for Confronting the Major Systemic Problems Confronting Humanity:

Introduction

What We Have and What We Want

Synergies of the Whole

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Eliminate Starvation and Malnourishment | 10. Prevent Soil Erosion |
| 2. Provide Health Care & AIDS Control | 11. Stop Deforestation |
| 3. Provide Shelter | 12. Stop Ozone Depletion |
| 4. Provide Clean Safe Water | 13. Prevent Acid Rain |
| 5. Eliminate Illiteracy | 14. Prevent Global Warming |
| 6. Provide Clean, Safe Energy: Efficiency | 15. Remove Landmines |
| 7. Provide Clean, Safe Energy: Renewables | 16. Refugee Relief |
| 8. Retire Developing Nations Debt | 17. Eliminating Nuclear Weapons |
| 9. Stabilize Population | 18. Build Democracy |

Credits, Major References & Footnotes

The What the World Wants Project is by Medard Gabel
and the research staff of the World Game Institute

William Blum is the author of the edifying and exhaustive *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (with 55 chapters spanning interventions throughout the world from 1945 to 1994 and three appendices, the third of which lists 40 U.S. government assassination plots of prominent foreign individuals since the end of WWII) and *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*. Last September in an article entitled "Why Terrorists Hate America", Blum closed with the words,

If I were the president, I could stop terrorist attacks against the United States in a few days. Permanently. I would first apologize to all the widows and orphans, the tortured and impoverished, and all the many millions of other victims of American imperialism. Then I would announce, in all sincerity, to every corner of the world, that America's global interventions have come to an end, and inform Israel that it is no longer the 51st state of the USA but now -- oddly enough -- a foreign country. I would then reduce the military budget by at least 90% and use the savings to pay reparations to the victims. There would be more than enough money. One year's military budget of 330 billion dollars is equal to more than \$18,000 an hour for every hour since Jesus Christ was born. That's what I'd do on my first three days in the White House. On the fourth day, I'd be assassinated.

Blum's final sentence acknowledges the destitute state of America's body politic. For over 25 years, conversations I've had with people that touch on someone getting into a federal position of power (not only the presidency) and seeking to institute changes to address undemocratic policies of the U.S. government always reach the same conclusion: "but then they'd be assassinated."

Assassination in the US: MLK Case History

The use of assassination as a tool for political control is understood by the general public in America to occur in other nation-states -- even by U.S. sponsors. But the control of thought is so regimented that in this country, assassination of prominent individuals and U.S. leaders somehow only occurs by random chance from lone nuts. Hence, the thinking goes, there is never any reason for such murderous acts.

But political assassination that transpires for very specific reasons do occur in the United States. The assassination of Martin Luther King has become the most documented example of this from the work of Dr. William F. Pepper, the King Family's lawyer-investigator in the 1999 Circuit Court trial in Memphis, Tennessee, *King Family versus Jowers and Other Unknown Co-Conspirators*. The story of Martin Luther King's assassination, and the 1999 trial where the facts of this event were finally revealed in a court of law is now encapsulated in Pepper's new book, released by Verso in January: *An Act of State - The Execution of Martin Luther King*.

In 2000 I was directed to this bona fide Trial Of The [20th] Century by Jim Douglass, the only journalist who attended the entire proceedings other than local TV reporter Wendell Stacy. Jim had contacted me to purchase a copy of my 1999 book, *Understanding Special Operations* and included an article he authored in the spring of 2000, "The Martin Luther King Conspiracy Exposed in Memphis ." Jim's article brought to my attention the significance of the trial and I asked his permission to reprint it on ratical.org. Beyond studying this, I minimally explored the King Center website's materials on the trail including

the 14 volumes comprising the complete trial transcript running from November 15th through December 8th.

In April 2002 my friend John Judge shared a letter he had received from William Pepper responding to John's mail about "New MLK Assassination Suspect." I wrote to Dr. Pepper asking his permission to publish his response to John to which he consented (see <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/JFK/WFPonMLK.html>). It contained significant additional details about Dr. King's murder I had not read elsewhere. I also learned he had written a book that would be released in January titled *An Act Of State - The Execution of Martin Luther King*. In January 2003 I wrote a review of this book (see <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/JFK/MLKactOstate.html>) and asked friends to record him speaking in San Francisco. From this recording I then made a complete text transcript to help increase the visibility of this story (see <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/JFK/WFP020403.html>).

The assassination of Martin King is a critical precursor to what we see happening in the world today, particularly in the United States. Beyond the facts of this story -- that members of the U.S. 902nd Military Intelligence Group and Memphis Police Department were involved in the planning and execution of the assassination, and that the FBI controlled the investigation to cover it up -- is the reason Pepper concludes Martin King "was never going to be allowed to leave Memphis." Key excerpts from Pepper's February 4th talk give more details of his 25-year investigation and the trial in 1999:

It became evident that the military did not kill Martin King but that they were there in Memphis as what I've come to believe was a backup operation. Because King was never going to be allowed to leave Memphis. If the contract that was given didn't work these guys were going to do it. . . .

This was not a one-off for these guys. They were trained snipers. You remember a hundred cities burned in America in 1967. These guys were sent around the country, teams of them, into different cities. These particular fellows had been in Detroit, Newark and Tampa and possibly L.A. They were given mugbooks. Those mugbooks were the photographs of community leaders and people who were to be their targets. And they would be put in positions and they would take out community leaders who would somehow be killed in the course of the rioting that was going on in various cities.

The assassination of Martin King was a part of what amounted to an on-going covert program in which they tried to suppress dissent and disruption in America. . . .

Each of these groups of people only knew what they had to know about this overall assassination scenario. There were two photographers on the roof of the Fire Station and they filmed everything. They were still cameramen and they filmed the balcony, the shot hitting Martin King, the parking lot, up into the bushes and they got the sniper just lowering his rifle.

So the whole assassination of Martin King is on film. We negotiated for a year-and-a-half with those guys -- who were psychological operations Army officers -- to try to get it. They didn't know there was going to be an assassination. They were there to take photographs of everybody and everything around the Lorraine Motel at that point in time. The guy just happened, when he heard the shot, to spin his camera up into the bushes. That's why they got the photographs that they did. . . .

But they didn't know what was going on. The guy who shot King was a police officer and he would only be told what he needed to know. The Alpha 184 team knew nothing about the Mafia

operation that preceded them. The Memphis Police Department knew of the Mafia contract and they covered that up. The FBI's role was to take control of the total investigation and to cover it up. . . .

I have friends in a lot of media organizations, sometimes fairly senior journalists and reporters and they say, 'Bill it's just not worth our jobs. Don't expect us to have you on in terms of this book. It's not worth our jobs.'

The consolidation of the control of the media is a major problem in this democracy as it is in most democracies today. I don't know how democracy can function when people are not allowed information that's essential for the decision-making process. But rather they get propaganda continually. . . .

Martin King was killed because he had become intolerable. It's not just that he opposed the war and now was going to the bottom line of a number of the major corporations in the United States; those forces that effectively rule the world at this point in time, the transnational entities. But more importantly, I think the reason was because he was going to bring a mass of people to Washington in the spring of '68. And that was very troubling. He wanted to cap the numbers. But the military knew that once he started bringing the wretched of America to camp there in the shadow of the Washington Memorial, and go every day up to see their Senators and Congressman and try to get social program monies put back in that were taken out because of the war -- and once they did that, and they got rebuffed again and again they would increasingly get angry.

It was the assessment of the Army that he would lose control of that group. And the more violent and radical amongst the forces would take control and they would have a revolution on their hands in the nation's capital. And they couldn't put down that revolution. They didn't have enough troops. Westmoreland wanted 200,000 for Vietnam. They didn't have those. They simply didn't have enough troops to put down what they thought was going to be the revolution that would result from that encampment.

So because of that I think, more than anything else, Martin King was never going to be allowed to bring that mass of angry, disaffected humanity to Washington. He was never going to leave Memphis. And that was the reason for the elaborate preparations that they had. . . .

It is important for Americans to look at this case history in terms of the health of democracy. Particularly during these times which are more troubling than ever before. One chapter of the book deals with Martin King. That's why it's a little different kind of assassination book because I think in many ways that's the most important chapter. Yes it's important to have the details and the evidence of how this whole thing took place and how he was taken from us.

But what's more important is to understand how such a leader comes forward. What his roots are. What makes him so special in terms of all of the co-opting pressures that are on people who emerge in leadership capacities? Why has there been no one to replace him ever since? And why is there a strange inaction in terms of the involvement of people in leadership and organizations with respect to the major problems of the economic situations of vast numbers of Americans in terms of the unequal distribution of wealth in America and the quality of life of at least 30 million Americans and their children?

These movement issues are as much with us today as ever before and yet there is silence. What was there about King and his roots? I trace Martin King back to John Ruskin. Not to Gandhi but to Ruskin. John Ruskin is the true father political economist in Victorian times in England, the true father of Martin King's political and economic philosophy and commitment to the poor of this world. He is depicted on King Day as a civil rights leader. And that's the way you're going to see him probably forever.

But he was much more than a civil rights leader and that's what no one in official capacity wants you to know. He had moved well beyond the civil rights movement by 1964-65 and he had become effectively a world-figure in terms of human rights people and particularly the poor of this earth. That's where he was going. That's the area you don't really get into safely when you start talking about wealth, redistributing wealth. Taking, diverting huge sums of money into social welfare programs and health programs and educational programs at the grass roots.

On the back cover of *An Act of State*, Coretta Scott King sums up her understanding and appreciation of the book's significance:

For a quarter of a century, Bill Pepper conducted an independent investigation of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. He opened his files to our family, encouraged us to speak with the witnesses, and represented our family in the civil trial against the conspirators. The jury affirmed his findings, providing our family with a long-sought sense of closure and peace, which had been denied by official disinformation and cover-ups. Now the findings of his exhaustive investigation and additional revelations from the trial are presented in the pages of this important book. We recommend it highly to everyone who seeks the truth about Dr. King's assassination.

The story of Martin King's execution is of opportune relevance today. Although the 1999 trial was virtually blacked out in U.S. commercial media, its significance should have been front page news across our land. The story of how agencies of our government were involved in the execution of Martin Luther King and covered up the evidence of complicity needs to be common knowledge. When we choose to face the dark side of life in of our society and ourselves, these disparate, difficult to acknowledge and own experiences can be integrated into the wholeness of our life making our lives healthfully complete.

When one is aware of our government's involvement in these criminal acts, one cannot confer moral authority and political legitimacy upon the federal government of the United States. The national security state culture of secrecy is at the heart of such wrongdoing. Secrecy breeds unaccountability which inevitably results in lawless, amoral behavior. As I wrote last September in "Broadening Our Perspectives of 11 September 2001:

As has been the case for decades, when suppression of information is justified under the cloak of 'national security,' or, as described above, 'politically sensitive material,' it usually turned out to be a cover for illicit or criminal activity.

The United States has rejected a legally-binding system of United Nations inspections of suspected U.S. biological weapons facilities while at the same time accusing other countries -- including Iraq -- of developing biological weapons. Simultaneously, the United States armed forces, in direct violation of the Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989, is actively pushing for offensive biological weapons development, despite the fact such activity is illegal and subject to federal criminal and civil penalties. . . .

Back in the early 1970s Nixon and Kissinger chose to end the U.S. offensive biological warfare program for the essential reason that these items cannot be controlled. When people are able to work within a system of legally-sanctioned secrecy pursuing programs that would never survive the light of public scrutiny and inclusive debate, the result is precisely what we have seen and are seeing: a steady, continuing erosion of global security for all. The rejection of international cooperation in arms control and frightening determination -- does not serve the needs of humanity and our Earth. Who truly benefits from the renunciation of such international cooperation?"

U.S. Development of Biological Weapons
Watch What We Say, Not What We Do

As overwhelmed as we might feel with the daily assault of commercial news conglomerates relaying what anonymous Pentagon or White House sources dictate with nary a drop of independent critical analysis, it is essential to see how we have arrived at this juncture. As Pepper states, "It is important for Americans to look at this case history in terms of the health of democracy"; this is central to what we must confront, individually and collectively.

Monopoly Militarism: US is Pre-eminent

An essential indicator of the health of democracy that was a fundamental concern to Martin Luther King in his last year of life was the magnitude of violence being carried out by the United States military in Vietnam. In the address he gave in New York City on April 4, 1967, Dr. King made very clear what was the greatest purveyor of violence in the world:

Since I am a preacher by calling, I suppose it is not surprising that I have seven major reasons for bringing Vietnam into the field of my moral vision. . . . My third reason moves to an even deeper level of awareness, for it grows out of my experience in the ghettos of the North over the last three years, especially the last three summers. As I have walked among the desperate, rejected, and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they asked, and rightly so, "What about Vietnam?" They asked if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent. . . .

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. . . .

War is not the answer. Communism will never be defeated by the use of atomic bombs or nuclear weapons. Let us not join those who shout war and, through their misguided passions, urge the United States to relinquish its participation in the United Nations. . . .

We can no longer afford to worship the god of hate or bow before the altar of retaliation. The oceans of history are made turbulent by the ever-rising tides of hate. History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations and individuals that pursued this self-defeating path of hate. As Arnold Toynbee says: "Love is the ultimate force that makes for the saving choice of life and good against the damning choice of death and evil. Therefore the first hope in our inventory must be the hope that love is going to have the last word."

Vietnam taught the public relations arm of the United States military to never again let the public see the carnage and horror of war as was being nightly broadcast into homes in the 1960s. Since then, the business of war has achieved the pre-eminent position in both the political as well as economic spheres of our culture that Martin King fought so passionately against in the last year of his life. (See "About Face: The Role of the Arms Lobby In the Bush Administration's Radical Reversal of Two Decades of U.S. Nuclear Policy," *World Policy Institute*, May 2002; "Increases in Military Spending and Security Assistance Since 9/11/01 - An Arms Trade Resource Center Fact Sheet," *World Policy Institute*, October 2002; "Making a Killing: The Business of War," *The Center for Public Integrity*, October 2002; "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century," A Report of The Project for the New American Century, September 2000; "The president's real goal in Iraq," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 9/29/02; "A declaration of war against the world, A 28-page answer to the question 'why do they hate us'," *workingforchange.com*, 9/26/02; "The Prague racket, Nato is now a device to

exert control and extract cash. Those who resist, like Belarus, are punished," by John Laughland, *The Guardian*, 11/22/02) Today militarism is the foundation of the United States anachronistic might-makes-right policy.

In April 2000 the International Forum on Globalization held a Teach-In in Washington D.C. on the subject of "Beyond Seattle -- Globalization: Focus On The International Monetary Fund And The World Bank." The third afternoon panel addressed "The Technological Dimension: Globalization of Corporate Communications & Military Technologies." Randall Forsberg, founder of The Institute of Defense and Disarmament Studies spoke in this panel on the subject of "Monopoly Militarism and the U.S. Monopoly on the Militarization of the World":

The 19th and 20th centuries have been the centuries of monopoly capitalism. As we move into the 21st century, there is a new cultural and economic phenomenon arising: monopoly militarism.

...

It starts with technology. The United States has a budget for military research and development, for developing new weapons and new military equipment for intelligence and control. The budget *just for developing* -- not for producing, not for the soldiers and training and putting them out in the field -- just for investigating, testing, engineering and developing new weapons, is as large as the next largest entire military budget of any country in the world. That is why the United States monopolizes the development of new military technology. . . .

In addition to controlling military technology, the United States gives an *enormous* amount of military aide. . . .

In all of these ways we not only recruit and solicit and consolidate and solidify a monopoly relationship with the military elites in countries around the world, but also with the foreign policy elites; the people who work at institutes for strategic studies and in the Foreign Service. . . .

How can the U.S. military have such power? It's because of the \$300 billion military budget. You may not realize that the military budget has gone down since the end of the Cold War. After you allow for inflation, it's gone down quite a lot. It has actually gone down enough to eliminate the 50% increase that Reagan brought in during the 1980s. So today, we are actually back to the "normal level" of Cold War military spending.

In today's dollars, the annual level of spending that prevailed in the United States from 1950 to 1980, except during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, was within 20 billion of \$300 billion. How can you have the Soviet Union disappear, the Warsaw Pact disappear -- there is no threat of major war, no threat of another World War II which justified \$300 billion in today's dollars -- \$300 billion a year for 50 years; how can you have these threats disappear and the money stays the same? How did that happen?

During the Cold War, the argument was made that we needed to spend this \$300 billion to protect democracy. By the way, let's recognize that if it's still the same today, and we have a growing economy, it *is* a smaller share of our economy. That is one of the ways that it happened. They say, 'See, it used to be 6% and now it is 3% -- so it's going down.' It's not going down. But the economy is going up. One of the unfortunate results of this is that people don't pay attention to it. I am going to come back to people paying more attention.

During the Cold War, the argument was made that we needed that higher percentage going to the military to protect democracy; to protect basic human freedoms; to protect against threats of totalitarianism. There was also the question of free markets and free capital, and so on. What about now? Are we protecting democracy? Are we protecting freedom? Are there people we are protecting against totalitarian threats? There are not.

These observations were made a year-and-a-half before September 11th. Before 9-11 the U.S. military agencies and congressional committees, in concert with U.S. corporate sectors that profit from the business of war, were desperate to justify approval of continued military spending at the same unconscionable levels that have caused so much havoc in the world since the close of the 1940s.

Taking Back Our Moral Proxies

Who, if not us, will do this essential work of waging peace. If we choose to avoid acting, our inaction and silence make us as complicit as the civilians of Germany after the end of World War II. A number of recent articles express the same sentiments as Ted Lumley on February 24th: "individuals need to take back their moral proxies, . . . and that is what is happening in the demonstrations all around the world."

The demonstrations now occurring across our planet are extraordinary expressions of the human spirit's devotion to life. An article in the March 3rd *Washington Post* points the way we are being called upon to live as sentient, self-reflecting beings born to honor and serve life's needs.

LONDON, March 2 -- The people who helped organize the largest worldwide peace demonstration in history last month say they are not through yet.

More than 120 activists from 28 countries emerged from an all-day strategy session here this weekend with plans not just to protest a prospective U.S.-led war against Iraq but to prevent it from happening. They want to intensify political pressure on the Bush administration's closest allies--the leaders of Britain, Italy and Spain--and force them to withdraw their support, leaving the United States, if it chooses to fight, to go it alone. And they intend to further disrupt war plans with acts of civil disobedience against U.S. military bases, supply depots and transports throughout Europe.

Finally, if war breaks out, they say, they will demonstrate in towns and cities around the world on the evening of the first day, and hold a worldwide rally on the following Saturday that they hope will rival or surpass their efforts of Feb. 15. . . .

Campaigns to disrupt U.S. forces have also been launched. Besides the dozens of activists who have traveled to Baghdad to volunteer as "human shields" against a U.S. attack, nine Dutch antiwar activists were arrested Tuesday for chaining themselves to the gates of a U.S. military center outside Rotterdam. In Italy, hundreds of protesters occupied train stations and railway tracks for nearly a week to delay trains carrying U.S. military equipment from northern Italy to the Camp Darby military base near Pisa. Irish protesters broke through the perimeter fence at Shannon airport in January and damaged a U.S. Navy plane, causing other planes to divert their flights and refuel elsewhere. Trade union movements in Italy and France are pledging work disruptions and considering general strikes if war breaks out.

Organizers say they would like to find a way to channel the newfound enthusiasm and activism into a worldwide political movement. But they say the disparate nature of those participating would make such a movement difficult if not impossible. "This was caused by social forces, and it's not something that organizations produced," said Andrew Burgin, a member of the coalition's British steering committee. "They're not in our control. . . . You don't lead a movement like this, the movement leads you."

"Organizers of Antiwar Movement Plan to Go Beyond Protests,"
by Glenn Frankel, *Washington Post*, March 3, 2003, Page A14

One approach is to visually help others experience our collective humanness:

BAGHDAD SNAPSHOT ACTION <http://www.nationalphilistine.com/baghdad/index2.html>

On February 13, 2003, teams of artists and activists postered New York City with thousands of copies of snapshots from Baghdad. Quiet and casual, the snapshots show a part of Baghdad we rarely see: the part with people in it.

The snapshots were taken by a friend of ours who just got back from Baghdad working with the Iraq Peace Team. Yes, he saw Iraqis suffering and struggling. But he also saw Iraqis dancing and laughing. This moved him because laughing under the weight of the UN sanctions and the threat of an absurd war is no easy task. We were moved because the people in the pictures remind us of our friends & family.

Thousands of snapshot posters now pepper Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. We want to show New York the people who will get both liberty and death in one fatal stroke if this war begins. We want you to show them in your city. The entire snapshot collection is online as pdfs. Print them out and poster them anywhere and everywhere.

It is resoundingly reaffirming to drink in the faces of brothers and sisters around the world, coming together with common purpose to honor and serve life's needs. We are being called on to steadfastly wage peace regardless how incoherent and overwhelming the drive to pursue war.

- 2003-02-15 War Protests Around the World
<http://www.hyperreal.org/~dana/marches/>
- images from 133 Protests around the World, 15/16 Feb 2003
<http://www.punchdown.org/rvb/F15/>
- images from world-wide protests, 14/15 Mar 2003
<http://www.punchdown.org/rvb/F15/>
- images from Germany -- links to *MANY* more sets in the following url:
<http://www.arbeiterfotografie.com/galerie/reportage/>
 - Berlin, 15 Mar 2003
<http://www.arbeiterfotografie.com/galerie/reportage-2003/index-2003-03-15-berlin-lichterkette-gegen-krieg.html>
 - Berlin, 10 Mar 2003
<http://www.arbeiterfotografie.com/galerie/reportage-2003/index-2003-03-10-berlin-montagsdemo-greenpeace.html>
 - Frankfurt, 8 Mar 2003
<http://www.arbeiterfotografie.com/galerie/reportage-2003/index-2003-03-08-frankfurt-spanisches-konsulat.html>
 - Berlin, 8 Mar 2003
<http://www.arbeiterfotografie.com/galerie/reportage-2003/index-2003-03-08-berlin-us-mahnwache.html>
 - Geilenkirchen, 8 Mar 2003
<http://www.arbeiterfotografie.com/galerie/reportage-2003/index-2003-03-08-geilenkirchen-awacs.html>
- images from Rome
<http://www.h-design.it/photos/nowwar2003/index.htm>
- 294 images of mid-March 2003 Anti-War Protests
<http://news.yahoo.com/news?g=events/iraq/102602iraqprotests&a=&tmpl=sl&ns=&l=&e=1>

Please let me know of other sites/pages you've seen with images that help us to see each other and be buoyed and supported by the recognition of our common purpose.

Antidotes to Militarism: Massive Non-Cooperation Choose Life Before Death

Doctor Rosalie Bertell, Ph.D., G.N.S.H., mathematician, medical researcher, and President of the International Institute of Concern for Public Health (IICPH) spoke in 1986 directly to what we collectively face at this crossroads in the human journey we are *all* part of:

. . . as things get tighter and as money gets shorter, the thing that's sacrificed is always health. . . . there's no justice issue which does not result in a violation of human health. Every time there's a justice issue, somebody gets sick. It's quite clear.

. . . we have a right to know what's in our food. But the problem is just quietly going underground and everybody's just quietly eating radioactive food, and they're going to be quietly getting cancer and quietly having deformed babies. We will quietly undermine the rest of the integrity of the gene pool, and the integrity of the earth.

. . . At some point or other if we survive, there's going to have to be a massive non-cooperation with our society which is producing death. . . . And if we are ever to break out of the militaristic society that we live in -- and that *is* what I think is our basic aim, because that's what distorting everything -- it's going to have to be through an across-the-board non-cooperation effort.

It's this preoccupation with producing death, and instruments of death and mega-death. This is our root sickness. We're not choosing to *live* on this planet, we're choosing to kill it. If we're going to turn that around it's going to require massive non-cooperation; it's going to have to be non-violent because you can't violently choose life, you kill it. So it's going to have to be non-violent. And it's going to have to be basically people-to-people networks built on trust because you're trusting the future and you're trusting your life.

It is profoundly disturbing to face the facts of our society's overriding preoccupation with death. The patterns of addictive, compulsive, and obsessive behaviors rampant in our culture are an expressions of compensation for the sickness we are collectively involved in. As Dr. Muller acknowledges, waging peace "is difficult, hard work. It is constant and we must not let up." This is healing work that brings definition and gives meaning to our lives; our involvement affirms our choice to choose life over death.

Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister spoke last October at the United Nations Conference: The Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders. Her impassioned call to choose life complements Rosalie Bertell's:

I am haunted by a story: In hard times past, a seeker begged the Holy One: "Answer the greatest spiritual question of them all, Is there life after death?"

And the Holy One said: "Ah, but the greatest spiritual question of them all is not, Is there life after death? The greatest spiritual question of them all is, Is there life before death?"

Life, not death, has always been the fundamental spiritual question of every great spiritual tradition.

But if it is true that all religion seeks the God of life, it is also true that life-giving, not death-dealing, has always been the particular province of women. It is women who have borne the sons their fathers sent to war. It is women who have buried the men on whom their lives depended. It is women who have been left alone, babies in their arms, babies in their bellies to deal with the madness that came from the madness of war.

Indeed women have a place to fill, a stake to claim, and a role to play in the world's pursuit of peace. It is time for women to assume as much responsibility for maintaining the life of the world as they do for bearing the life of the world. Otherwise we birth one world to destroy the other. . . .

This is, indeed, a most religious moment. Why? Because religion is fast becoming the most dangerous thing the world has to offer. Religion has become, in other words, religion's worst enemy. It is time for women -- the other half of the human race -- the other face of God! -- to save both their religions and their nations. Women, the life bearers, must now give to the world the spiritual life the world lacks. . . .

It is time for women to speak a public voice against the wars that men have designed to 'protect them' without ever putting women themselves at the tables where only a few men decide to wage war and governments refuse to negotiate them. . . .

Indeed, this is an historic religious moment. It is time for women to take their place in making real the religions they believe in. It is time for women to become an organized, international spiritual voice for peace, a religious critic of national policies that threaten both the life of the world, and the clear signs of peace on the local level everywhere. It is time for women to reach across borders that men will not breach to take the hands of the other -- not to bind them but to bond them. It is time for women's analyses of world situations and women's solutions to conflict to be heard -- in a world where scientists just this month announced that women's brains are simply better wired than men's to deal with conflict.

I am asking, therefore, that in the name of Brahma, the Buddha Yahweh, Jesus, and the Prophet we plead, press, and pray that the United Nations institutionalize what it alone has had the courage to create today: a public rostrum and a universal call to the women religious leaders of the world to monitor, create and publicly critique new initiatives for peace under the status and aegis of the UN -- to bring feeling to the irrationality of reason, to be strong enough not to destroy the weak and courageous enough to develop new ideas rather than new weapons.

The philosopher Camus wrote: "The saints of our time are those who refuse to be either its executioners or its victims." It is time for religious women to put the world on notice that we will not go on silently supporting war -- either its victims or its executioners, not only to make safe the world but to make real the religions we revere, so that life before death can come, as God wants, for us all.

Say yes to life. *Yes* to life. Always, always yes to life.

It is critical to be clear about what we as a species now face, where we stand, what our choices are, and where our responsibilities lie. Martin Luther King knew. He choose to give his life for what he believed in and for what was at stake.

[H]e was much more than a civil rights leader and that's what no one in official capacity wants you to know. He had moved well beyond the civil rights movement by 1964-65 and he had become effectively a world-figure in terms of human rights people and particularly the poor of this earth. That's where he was going. That's the area you don't really get into safely when you start talking about wealth, redistributing wealth. Taking, diverting huge sums of money into social welfare programs and health programs and educational programs at the grass roots.

When you start going into that you begin to tread on toes in this country, in the United Kingdom, and in most of the western world. When you start associating with the poor of this planet and the exploitation of what's happened to whole cultures and tribal cultures in Africa in particular, and you see the results of the exploitation of western colonial powers and when you want to see a movement to not only arrest that process which still goes forward today under different guises but to actually reverse it and to give an opportunity for people to control their destinies and their own natural wealth, that's dangerous ground to get on. So you have to deal with that another way.

King was committed, increasingly, to that kind of political view which you will not hear about in terms of the 'I have a dream' speech which is typically what he is associated with. He wept in India as early as '60, '61 when he was there. He had never seen such poverty in such a massive scale. 'How can people live like this?' . . . King saw that, wanted to bridge it and the solutions were too radical, too potentially dangerous. Jefferson was an idol of his. With all of Jefferson's foibles, remember he said, 'You need a revolution every 20 years. You need to sweep the room clean every 20 years,' said Mr. Jefferson. You need that revolution. King believed that as well.

As Dr. Bertell affirms, "if we [are to] survive, there's going to have to be a massive non-cooperation with our society which is producing death." We are beginning to see such expressions of non-cooperation in the mounting protests and civil disobedience actions occurring throughout the world. As John Judge remarked to Nina and I back in late November, it took years after the Vietnam war reached its mid-sixties intensity for the anti-war movement to grow to the numbers of the populace that we are already seeing today, before out-and-out aggressive war akin to Gulf War I has been launched.

We exist not for ourselves alone

In Chapter 10 of *An Act of State* is a section headed by the latin phrase, *Non nobis solum nati sumus*, meaning *We exist not for ourselves alone*. In this section Pepper considers the challenge of the growing, unbridled militarism Martin King knew he faced, especially in the last year of his life.

. . . post[-1945]-war America began to breed a military establishment which would gradually grow beyond civilian control. . . . Though he could not have predicted the details of the demise of democracy and the ultimate alienation of America from its cultural and spiritual roots, as well as the consequences of its Cold War policies upon the nation and its system of government, Martin King instinctively knew that the only alternative to disaster was to promote the perception of the oneness of humankind over the public policies of the nation.

He knew that if the torch of brotherhood were taken up, its bearers would face hatred like they had never known. So, he urged his followers not to hate those who hated them, for hate, he said, was too great a burden to bear. . . . King agreed that the challenge was not to turn new, emerging societies into mirror reflections of Europe or the United States, not even ideal reflections. Neither was it desirable to imitate institutions which had been derived from those models. Rather, he argued, new concepts must be advanced and a new man brought forward -- one who embraced the brotherhood of all.

In order for this to occur, he said, these courageous pioneers would have to suffer being called social misfits or as he put it 'maladjusted.' He said that concerning certain values and practices of the existing social order, and in particular the growth of militarism, he was proud to be maladjusted and he called upon all people to become maladjusted. He said he refused to adjust to a socio-economic order which deprived the many of necessities and allowed luxuries for the few. He refused to adjust to the madness of militarism and the self-perpetuating use of violence in the development of the American empire.

On December 22, 2002, columnist Eric Margolis wrote about how in Afghanistan, "Details of U.S. victory are a little premature". Near the end he cites the financial cost to the United States for maintaining its occupation:

"The ongoing cost of Afghan operations is a closely guarded secret. Earlier this year, the cost of stationing 8,000 American troops, backed by warplanes and naval units, was estimated at \$5 billion US monthly!"

Eric Margolis told me that his source for this was the "[c]ost derived from Pentagon's budget request to Congress." As William Pepper describes, Martin Luther King "was challenging the weapons industry, the hardware, the armament industries that all would lose as a result of the end of the [Vietnam] war". Today, the military-industrial-corporate complex is the sole winner of a dead-end future it compulsively pursues to the detriment of all life on earth. Where does the \$5 billion a month come from to finance the occupation of Afghanistan? In January 2002 a story by *cbsnews.com* described how the Pentagon was unable to account for \$2.3 trillion in taxpayer money. At this point, the Pentagon is a runaway train of feverish proportions. The current war party occupying the oval office has refined the prosecution of endless war to an heretofore incomprehensible degree. This present is the future Martin Luther King sought to alter.

The Epilogue of *Act of State* describes how the powerful economic interests that Martin King had chosen to directly challenge in the last year of his life have consolidated their power and control under an increasingly formalized movement of corporate globalization. The poor and dispossessed of America were represented and championed by Dr. King like no political or religious figure before or since. King intended "to compel Americans and their government to come face to face with the least of them -- the hidden wretched of their native land."

Martin Luther King Jr was, for the transnational corporations, public enemy number one. He stood in the way of their inexorable consolidation of power. If he had played along as have many of his peers before and after, he would likely be with us today, a wealthy and honored man, a pillar of the state. But he did not choose to play that game and as we have seen the might of the steward state was brought to bear upon him, and to this day the pillars of the American Republic continue to be supported by the same foundation stones of lies and greed which he was determined to crumble to dust and replace. . . .

Martin King's commitments to social and economic justice went beyond the contemplative intellect into the arena of an active life. The root and branch transformations of our society, which was about the shaking of all the old foundations, will require nothing less than a struggle in whatever focus it ultimately takes against the familiar, the comfortable, and the acceptable values and inclinations which constitute a very real type of determinism for each one of us. This transcendent struggle, this exalted commitment, emerged as an all-consuming passion of Martin King. He acted upon it until he drew his last breath.

This is his living legacy to us and people everywhere.

As overwhelming as it is to resolutely face the implications of this central tragedy of the latter half of 20th century American history, I am nonetheless inspired and encouraged by William Pepper's unflinching pursuit to unearth the truth and of his commitment to produce a fuller and just accounting of the sponsorship and actions of our government in the murder of Martin Luther King. Knowing now what we know, each of us must choose how to respond to the meticulously planned execution of this man of peace who stood and died for the weak, oppressed and impoverished people of our world.

I was extremely interested to hear Bill Pepper conclude the talk portion of his February 4th book signing mentioning the focus of his work in the current day and his belief that President Hugo Chavez and the Bolivarian revolution represents a continuation of the legacy of Martin Luther King (see also the section on Water in Impacts of Corporate Globalization on Living Communities, especially the article on "Soaking the poor - S.F.'s Bechtel wants the Bolivian people to pay for

its bad water investment", as well as The Blue Planet Project and the Cochabamba Declaration, 8 December 2000).

That's the background and the overview, I suppose, the summary of the case as it is contained in the book and of my history of involvement with it. In many ways I had put it behind me when this book was finished and now I've had to come around and it's a pleasure to come and see folks like you and talk to you. But there's a whole part of me that's now in a whole other world.

I convene a seminar on International Human Rights at Oxford with the motto of our seminars being *Non nobis solum nati sumus*, which means We exist not for ourselves alone. That's in honor of Martin Luther King, whose son, Martin the 3rd opened the series last year. So I've gone away from this and I spend a lot of time in Caracas with Hugo Chavez who was at Oxford as a guest of my seminar and whose Bolivarian revolution I've come to believe in very much as a continuation of the legacy of Martin King.

Capitalism is Inherently Predatory

On 3 December 1999 at the end of the WTO meeting in Seattle, David Korten emphasized a fundamental issue that Martin Luther King passionately chose to commit his life's energy to address and resolve:

"I suggest we be clear that our goal is not to reform global corporate and financial rule -- it is to end it. The publicly traded, limited liability corporation is a pathological institutional form and financial speculation is inherently predatory. As a first step both must be regulated. The appropriate longer term goal is to rid our economic affairs of these institutional pathologies -- much as our ancestors eliminated the institution of monarchy."

An Act of State expands and further informs our awareness and consciousness of how the world operates. A direct result of Martin King's state-sponsored execution was the increasing concentration of capital accumulation into fewer and fewer hands. Had Martin King lived, there would have been a greater possibility of creating a more equitable distribution of financial wealth for all the world's people.

In April 2000, media analyst, author, and professor Bob McChesney talked about Global Media and Democracy at the IFG Washington World Bank/IMF Teach-In. He made that point that "if you are going to change something, you have to understand how it works." The separatist mindset of 'God Bless America' won't carry us through this transformational epoch of the human journey. The inclusive vision of 'God Bless Humanity' just might sustain us if we can come to terms with the fundamentally interdependent nature of our species and how psychically connected we are to each other.

In November 1998 David Korten made a series of presentations in Canada on the subject of Life After Capitalism. He emphasized the necessary prerequisite of an ethical culture which Adam Smith, the purported originator of capitalist doctrine, saw as being integral to any truly efficient market function.

I want to focus here for a moment on the central importance of an ethical culture to an efficient market. One of capitalism's many myths is the idea that by some wondrous mechanism the market automatically turns personal greed into a public good. Why? Because Adam Smith said so. In truth, the market has no such mechanism and furthermore Adam Smith never said it did. . . . Adam Smith also wrote *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* which is exactly about the

foundations of an ethical culture which he clearly assumed was the cultural backdrop of the market he was writing about. Efficient market function absolutely depends on a culture of trust and mutual responsibility. To emphasize this fact, I refer in my forthcoming book, *The Post-Corporate World*, to the mindful market in order to underscore the importance to efficient market function of an ethical culture that encourages individuals to act with mindfulness of both their personal needs and the needs of the larger whole of the community, and the society, and the planet.

David Korten's awareness that financial speculation is inherently predatory underlies the insights of his 1999 book, *The Post-Corporate World, Life After Capitalism*. Capitalism is inherently predatory given its need for secrecy and unaccountability to achieve ends that would never be sanctioned if they were debated in public. The collapse of such agents of empire as Enron, Arthur Anderson and WorldCom help us understand how capitalism's purpose is antithetical to life's needs.

Catherine Austin Fitts is a former Assistant Secretary of Housing-Federal Housing Commissioner in the first Bush Administration, a former managing director and member of the board of directors of Dillon Read & Co, Inc, and the former President of The Hamilton Securities Group, Inc. She is the President of Solari, Inc, an investment advisory firm. Solari provides risk management services to investors through Sanders Research Associates in London. As described in an interview with Daniel Armstrong on "The Real Deal About Enron," Ms. Fitts "invariably emphasizes in her discussion of global money flows . . . the extent to which criminal proceeds play a part in the real world economy."

If my years working on the clean up of BCCI and the S&L crisis taught me one thing that I would communicate today to the shareholders, retirees and employees who have been harmed, it is this: people like those on the board of Enron absolutely make money from insider trading, bid rigging and fraud, and they do so with help from the highest levels.

Her short November 2001 article, "Solari Rising" provides a concise summary of how the stock market on Wall Street would fail if profits generated by narcotics trafficking, financial fraud and other types of organized crime were ended through decriminalizing or legalizing drugs. In the same year she authored a highly informative work called *Narco-Dollars for Beginners - How the Money Works in the Illicit Drug Trade* that details how our addiction to narco dollars is driving our priorities and incentives systems.

The structures of the so-called free-market codified the pathology of insatiable avarice and gluttony into an institutional framework that is consuming and plundering our souls as well as the treasure trove of our planetary home. David Korten's eloquent expression of how to re-establish the role of money-as-servant offers a plethora of ideas and prospects to reclaim a moral basis to the process of exchange that the tool of money provides.

To create a world in which life can flourish and prosper we must replace the values and institutions of capitalism with values and institutions that honor life, serve life's needs, and restore money to its proper role as servant. I believe we are in fact being called to take a step to a new level of species consciousness and function. A discussion of that challenge, and what we can learn from evolutionary history and from the study of living organisms and living systems is the primary thrust of my forthcoming book *The Post-Corporate World: Life After Capitalism*. It is also the primary focus of a group I helped to found, and whose board I chair, called the Positive Futures Network. We publish a journal called *YES! A Journal of Positive Futures*, which is helping people see the dynamics of the positive changes that are taking place that address these horribly destructive underlying dynamics.

Joining in The Great Conversation

In closing I return to Dr. Muller's perception that "we are in the most significant and potent global conversation and public dialogue in the history of the world." When I hear the words "conversation" and "listening" I think of friend Elisabet Sahtouris and her wide-ranging presentation *The Big Picture* at a 1999 conference on Strategies for Transforming the Global Economy. Elisabet is an evolution biologist who covered a wide swath of significant points about where humans stand, both collectively and individually. The following excerpts highlight of "The Great Conversation" that all of us are always engaged in, whether or not we recognize or acknowledge this dynamic. It depends on how we choose to see our selves, each other, our world, our universe, and our place in it.

Philosophers of science explained decades ago that science was not in the business of proving truths, that all theories were testable stories, and could only be tested for their usefulness, not for their truth. I thought that was *the* most profound sea-change in western culture for this century. Bigger than the bomb. Bigger than the Internet. That we *knew* that no one person and no one culture has a corner on the truth. . . .

As we recognize the universe to be conscious, intelligent, alive, and all of us co-creators, what is our role? Are we not the creative edge of God? We are the universe inventing itself. And that intelligent Cosmos, or God -- whatever you call it; doesn't matter which word you use as long as we agreed that it's alive, intelligent, conscious, and creative -- that is looking through your eyes, working through your hands, walking on your feet. Isn't that exciting? How does the universe get to know itself? Through all of us and what we're doing. . . .

We have people here representing all kinds of ideas on how to change the money game. How come our government gave away it's constitutional right to create money? The government never should have been in debt, should it? There shouldn't be a national debt. The government, constitutionally, could create money as needed. I believe it was in 1913 -- where's Tom Greco?, he would know all this -- there you are -- was it 1913 when we gave that right away? -- and started the Federal Reserve Bank which most Americans still think is part of the government? Just ask them to look for it in the blue pages. It's not there.

Somebody changes the rules of the game all the time. We live in a dynamic universe. Not a static one. Life is not static, it's dynamic. And this is the first time in history when anybody can play in the big world game. It is the Internet that is largely responsible for the ability of a twelve-year-old, who gets upset about child labor in India or somewhere, to start a whole Save-the-Children organization, or whatever. Marianne Williamson can tell us all to meditate on a certain day and if it comes through in your e-mail there's a fair chance you'll pay attention to that. So we can do group mind around the world because we have the Internet. . . .

I'm all for the localization that the opponents of globalization are talking about. But I don't do their either-or, because I know that my cells have to look out for their interest as much as my organs do, as much as my whole body does. When you have self-interest expressed at very level of embedded systems, that's when the negotiations must take place. That's when the co-operation starts to happen in a healthy system. . . .

Janine Benyus, author of a wonderful book called *Biomimicry*, pointed out that humans assigned one group of people called biologists to study how other species make a living, while a totally separate group of people called economists were to figure out how humans make a living. Now we have the opportunity to look at economics in terms of biology -- to look at the experience of four-and-half billion years of self-organization, to see how young species are acquisitive and territorial and grabby, and mature species co-operate, as in a rainforest. Where is the leadership? Distributed leadership. Everything shared and recycled. What a great economic model! . . .

If we had more time I would talk about consciousness. Because I know that my body wouldn't function if my cells couldn't talk to each other through something other than chemistry and electricity. I know that all my cells are in dialogue, all my molecules are in dialogue, all of nature is in dialogue.

Every indigenous culture I've ever learned from has known about The Great Conversation. First time I went into the Amazon with an Indian, I said (in my naivete), "Can you teach me how to talk to the animals and the trees?" And he said, "Oh, shut up Elisabet and listen. They have always been talking to each other. Your job isn't to initiate the conversation. Your job is to hear it."

So here we are. We need to hear The Big Conversation. We need to listen to our selves. We need to keep a very strong center knowing that we are spirit having a human experience, as is often said nowadays. Because otherwise this roller-coaster ride is going to be too much. And I think a lot of people will leave the planet, because it is just too much for them to go through such a huge re-organization.

It's BIG, people. We are in the sixth great extinction on this planet -- the first one caused by one species. We humans are causing an extinction that is proceeding more rapidly than the last one, which knocked the dinosaurs out and was caused by the sudden impact of a huge meteor. It's quite incredible. This is a sea-change, an unimaginably big change.

Yet every time the Earth has gone through an extinction there's been an unbelievable burst of activity, of creativity. We are seeing that burst of creativity in the middle of the extinction this time, not after it's over. That's why we're all here. We're all here because we know that this game can be changed. Paul Ray has developed a whole new wonderful cultural story about forty-four million of us as cultural creatives. Some people argue that his wasn't a proper poll. Never mind. The story is out! And now we see ourselves as forty-four million strong and growing.

That's what matters. Because in the end, it's all stories. No one has ever had any experience outside of their personal consciousness, or outside of the now-moment. Can anyone tell me they have ever had an experience outside that? Scientist or otherwise, that is the only direct experience available to us. Through inner senses, through outer senses, but always through consciousness now!

It's wonderful to see all the different stories and to know that we don't have to arrive at a single story. And yet we can look for principles that work -- that work toward health. You can argue that health is a natural ethic. How do I decide whether something is good or bad? Does it promote my health, my family's health, my community's health, my world's health? If it is at least harmless, and good at some of those levels, go for it. Creative edge of God. We're here to experiment. And this is the most incredible experiment that any of us could imagine. No matter how many incarnations we may have had, this is the big one!

In the eternal 'now' I see my incarnations as lotus petals, all there at once to dialogue with. It is so wonderful! -- It's all wide-open now. We can be so creative about the way we see things. That's what gives me hope. And whenever you're feeling really down, rise above it, look down, say: "I needed the bad guys in my game. I came here as a world transformer; there had to be something to transform. They need me -- I need them." We're all connected anyway. It's a game. And it's a wonderful game. And it's getting more exciting by the minute.

Elisabet's world view is grounded in the understanding that we are constantly choosing: choosing what to believe, choosing what to see and what to not see, choosing what to participate in and with what creative powers we align and ally ourselves. The choices we make express the development of our ability to respond to what life presents us.

On Dr. Muller's website exists a vital compilation of Thousands of Ideas and Dreams For A Better World. Along with the fundamental need to protest and engage in massive non-cooperation with the criminal policies of the type of amoral government gangsterism being championed today by the Bush II regime, it is equally critical to articulate and envision precisely the world we want. Martin King's exercise of his human birthright is a beacon of hope. We too must summon and redouble our magnificent energies and own our responsibility to stand up for our dreams and visions of hope and goodwill for all people everywhere.

Tom Atlee of The Co-Intelligence Institute is inspired visionary seeking practical solutions. He sent out the following e-mail a few days ago as an introduction to Thom Hartmann's 11 December 2002 article, "The Railroad Barons Are Back - And This Time They'll Finish the Job.

Dear friends,

... this information is so important -- so clarifying -- and the immediate future so uncertain, that I wanted to make sure that as many people as possible have it in the next few days.

This article is not about war. It is about the rich soil from which modern war grows. It is about the immunity and power of corporations, and how the privatization of everything from prisons to airwaves, from social services to voting, is stripping answerability out of our democratic politics and governance. Above all, this article details the fascinating history of the legal keystone that holds corporate power in place -- the devastatingly illegal principle of corporate personhood.

It is at this depth that transformation needs to occur if we are to reclaim democracy, peace, sustainability, justice, and a future for our children's children.

We need to ferret out every institution and belief that undermines the healthy feedback systems of our societies -- everything that makes it hard to see together, feel together, talk together, learn together and create together -- and replace them with institutions and beliefs that increase our capacity to work with life and each other for the common good and a better future.

Not every change will do this. Not every form of activism will serve this. As time and resources grow more precious, it becomes more vital for us to think about these things. We need to understand not only what will stop the suffering and abuse but, more importantly, what will stop the *automatic creation* of suffering and abuse.

Above all, we need to clarify what changes in the way our society is set up will make it easy and natural for the life-affirming passions and impulses of ordinary people to flourish. Every human being should be able to live their life without undermining the welfare of others now or in the future. Things should simply be set up that way. They aren't now -- as our oil dependence so clearly illustrates -- and that needs to change.

That's our challenge. The more suffering our current society generates -- and I suspect it is about to increase significantly -- the more vital it becomes to not get distracted by the noise, but to focus our attention on the machines that crank it out day after day.

Corporate personhood is one of those machines. There are others. We can find and change them all.

Coheartedly, Tom

As Tom points out, transforming the devastatingly illegal principle of corporate personhood is essential to our survival. On the equinox Tom sent a 5-part mail entitled, "Reaching from

NO towards a transformational YES." It contains five pieces "which explore the nuances of the YES and NO in whose embrace we currently find ourselves." Tom affirms the necessity "for some of us to transform our NO into a YES so vast it will change the world -- even as others of us persist in voicing our collective NO on behalf Life, as a mother acts powerfully to protect her child."

The second item in Tom's equinox mail is a message by Richard Stimson, "What the demonstrators want - Protesters' Agenda is Clear to the Observant." It starts with:

Before the recent anti-war protests, other protests for global justice have been held in cities where international meetings of the powerful were being held, such as Seattle, Quebec, Washington, and many cities of Europe. The media quoted officials as not knowing what the protesters wanted. A recent analysis reported in the book by International Forum on Globalization, *Alternatives to Economic Globalization*, reveals these objectives common to the diverse groups present.

A list of ten items is then enumerated: "Democracy, Subsidiarity, Ecological sustainability, Common heritage, Diversity, Human Rights, Jobs, livelihood, employment, Food security and safety, Equity, The precautionary principle." Tom adds a footnote of his own at the end of this section:

One of the reasons I like this list is that it places Democracy first. As focused as we get on specific issues, it is easy to forget that democracy is the only decent tool we have to handle all the other issues well. The higher the quality of our democracy, the better EVERY issue will be handled. That's why I've chosen to focus my own attention there. Furthermore, I expect democracy will rise into greater public and activist consciousness as the aspects of democracy people take for granted are increasingly challenged by efforts to concentrate power, silence dissent, control election outcomes, etc.

The third segment of Tom's message is an excerpt from Joanna Macy's "Dimensions of the Great Turning" (from a talk she gave in 1999). Such envisioning of our future is something all of us can and must explore and express to participate in birthing the world we want.

I like to imagine that future generations, even as close as the 2030s, 2040s, will look back on this time and call it "the great turning."

They'll look back at us and say, "All those ancestors back then, bless them. They were involved in the great turning, and they didn't know whether they would make it or not. At times it looked as if it was hopeless, futile. Their efforts seemed paltry, darkened by confusion, and yet they went ahead and they took part in it." And I'm imagining that they'll look back with almost a kind of envy, seeing more clearly than we can now the high adventure that it represents, this great turning from a growth-addicted, unsustainable society to a stable, life-sustaining one.

Lest I sound too wildly optimistic, let me acknowledge that we don't know if this great turning is going to happen fast enough or fully enough to stop the unraveling of the systems supporting complex, conscious life forms on this planet. It's not clear yet whether we're going to pull it off. There's no guarantee.

You know, when you make peace with that, you realize something. It liberates you from having to be braced all the time against bad news and constantly feeling you have to work up a sense of hopefulness, which can be very exhausting. That's one thing the Buddhists have taught me. There's a certain equanimity and moral economy when you're not continually trying to evaluate your chances of success.

Yet we can certainly see the great turning happening now, and most clearly if we look at three particular dimensions of it. These three are interdependent and mutually supportive.

The FIRST I call "holding actions." These are the many forms of legal, political, legislative, and regulatory activities by which we are slowing down the destruction caused by the industrial growth society. To be included also are the many kinds of direct action -- blockades, boycotts, civil disobedience, tree sitting. Through these we are managing to save some species and some ecosystems, save some lives, save some genetic material for the life-sustaining society that's coming.

These holding actions can be exhausting, though. It's good to know that it's OK to step back. Many of us, if we step back when we feel bruised and bent out of shape from being there in point position on issue after issue, feel as if we are abandoning ship. We feel guilty about it. But we need to know that the great turning is vast, and if we step back, it's like the lead goose dropping back from point position to fly in the windstream of the others. We're not abandoning anything. We don't cease being who we are, and we don't stop being deeply allied with the ongoingness of life.

The SECOND dimension of the great turning comprises the new structures, institutions, agreements, and ways of doing things. It is extraordinary how swiftly these are springing up like green shoots through the rubble of our dysfunctional civilization. I don't think there has ever been a time in human history when so many new ways of doing things have appeared in so short a time -- from ways of owning land, to co-housing, to eco-villages, to cooperatives, to new local currencies, alternative schools, alternative modes of healing. They reveal an amazing degree of ingenuity, an awesome readiness to experiment and create. Even though these emergent and often embryonic systems sometimes look fringe, perhaps, or marginal, they are the seeds of the future.

Yet these new forms will wither and die unless they're deeply grounded in our values. So the THIRD dimension of the great turning is in the way we see things and understand our connection and requirements for life. There is a revolution going on in our grasp of what we really need, and it is quietly spreading now in the simple living movement.

I teach general living systems theory because it helps us understand that our true nature is in relationship. Deep ecology, which is also very important for me, is the moral and intuitive expression of this systems view, where we give up clinging to some special status as the crown of creation and rejoin the earth community. Then we can experience our own specialness in ways that allow us to see the specialness of every other life form.

Along with the superlative ideas and possibilities expressed by The Co-Intelligence Institute (CII) see also the immensely rich Innovations in Democracy, one of the New Democracy Projects of CII.

Nina says to start by talking to each other: family, co-workers, the mail carriers, etc. Continue by studying what can be done to address the systemic problems confronting humanity: The World Game's "What the World Wants -- and How To Pay For It Using Military Expenditures" Project is a great tool for sparking our creative edge. We can redirect the terribly misguided global primacy of present-day military priorities that are killing us and the planet. We can collectively change the course we're on. It's all in The Great Conversation of which we must continue to choose to be an active part. As Rosalie Bertell affirms, along with the requisite massive non-cooperation we need to come together in, "it's going to have to be basically people-to-people networks built on trust because you're trusting the future and you're trusting your life."