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THE LAUCKS FOUNDATION

from time to time calls attention to published material that might contribute toward clarification or understanding of issues affecting world peace. The accompanying reprints constitute Reprint Mailing No. 113.

(Mrs.) Eulah C. Laucks, President
Post Office Box 5012
Santa Barbara, CA. 93150-5012

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The following is quoted from The Conduct of Life
by Lewis Mumford (Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1951)
p. 118:

"The change that made it possible to redeem the Roman world needed a thousand years for its consummation. We know that the living places of our planet may be wiped out, and our planet itself denuded of life, through the wholesale misapplications of scientific power, unless the change that alters the condition of modern man and the direction of his activities takes place in much shorter order: almost, as one reckons historic time, within the twinkling of an eye.

"No matter how efficacious the example of Buddha or Jesus may have been, we cannot put our faith in renewal by a similar process; or rather, though the process itself may be similar, the time in which it operates must be abbreviated. How can this be done? By looking, not for a single transforming agent, but for millions upon millions of them, in every walk of society, in every country: a democratic transformation, dispersed and widespread, to replace those centralized and authoritarian images which would today, under our current nihilism, be either ineffectual or tyrannous."

Comment | The Last Modern Century

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The great question at the turn of the century was whether, in a new age of science and technology, religion and traditional culture could survive. The question for the next century is whether we can survive the technological age in their absence.

Without the self-limiting virtues of the sacred and the soil, modernity lacks any effective moral brakes as we race headlong into the next millennium with smart weapons drawn, the genetic integrity of the species exposed and the Earth itself in ecological peril.

In his hasty flight from the constraints of the transcendent and the narrowness of tradition, Modern Man – that rational, self-interested creature of universal Progress – has eluded the restorative experience of tragedy and invited apocalypse, the time beyond tragedy.

This modern voyage toward freedom has distanced us from concrete human relationships bound by the particular, the limits of nature and the judgement of a cosmic Absolute – the very organic unities that give meaning to our efforts and suffering. In so doing, modernity has erased the ethical imperatives of human action, and thus the boundaries of responsibility and the possibility of redemption.

"Progress has lacked the capacity to amputate its errors as it discovers them in the bosom of success," Carlos Fuentes has written. "As it could not shed its errors tragically, it did so criminally: The century of material freedom has also been the century of criminal calamity."

To the world wars and mass exterminations of the 20th century to which Fuentes refers, one might add, for the next century, ecological holocaust. "At long last," laments Fuentes, "the hubris of the Homeric hero can be satiated: we are now capable of destroying Nature. Nature, like the tragic hero, can now know death."

In the spiritual undercurrents of this pre-millennial decade, the existential unease is

palpable. Secular civilization, with its guided missiles and broken moral compass, its good life and bad faith, has never had more doubters. The yearning for old certitudes and new revelations abounds. From ethnic revivals to Islamic fundamentalism, from Catholic conservatism to New Age holism and Japanese traditionalism, the quest is on for a way to fill the hollow where God and community dwelt. Like doubt, the quest itself is a form of faith.

But can the spiritually homeless find a sacred place somewhere between the medieval orthodoxy of an Ayatollah and the radical impiety of modern times?

Our late-modern moment, Nicola Chiaromonte wrote, "is the moment of both orthodoxy and nihilism." It is a time not only of disbelief, but a time when people look to the past for norms in which to believe, thinking in terms of moral restoration. But, Chiaromonte warned, when reduced to abstract formulas, ancient or recent, all beliefs are alike. Such beliefs are no more than attitudes chosen not because experience has led us to them, but because we fear uncertainty. Since they are not chosen in good faith, orthodox attitudes are no different than believing in nothing, and no more a basis for virtuous living than nihilism.

Transcending this existential standoff will mark the final departure from modernity.

St. Augustine long ago pointed out what the 20th century has affirmed: if the light of reason no longer allows us to act according to truth, then it becomes only an instrument to subjugate others – and nature. Then mankind falls from a reason that has a knowledge of ends, to a reason that is only a knowledge of means. The ends then are set only by lust and power, which are the only values that don't need the light of reason to be discovered.

If there is to be another millennium, it will be a post-modern one in which man has learned he can no longer live by reason alone, or live alone as a nomad. Truth and the sacred will rejoin reason, not replace it with superstition. And the nomad will return to the soil, but not

to the narrowness which is no longer authentic in a world irretrievably linked by technology. In fact, the tribes that constitute concrete human communities in the future may well be global, and the "soil" electronic.

But what truth can a plural, post-modern civilization live by in one interdependent world? As the theologian Hans Kung postulates, the answer for the next millennium is not one truth, but one ethic of global responsibility. For Kung, this ethic would be rooted in the *humanum* common to all traditional religions. Whatever their origins, all share basic beliefs

in the fundamental unity of the human family, the equality and dignity of human beings, that might is not right, that human power is not self-sufficient or absolute, and that mankind is steward, not lord, of our planet.

As the last modern century comes to a close, the recovery of the sacred and the soil needn't lead to a restoration of the past. If leavened but not desecrated by the experience of modernity, it will lead to the conservation of the future.

Nathan Gardels

Editor, *New Perspectives Quarterly*

The following is quoted from "Trained Seals and Sitting Ducks" by Lewis H. Lapham. From NOTEBOOK, Harper's, May 1991, p.15.

"The number of American casualties [in the Persian Gulf War] (125 dead in action, twenty-three of them killed by 'friendly fire') once again posed the question of whether America had gone to a war or to a war game played with live ammunition. But it was a question that few people cared to ask or answer.

"Maybe the question is irrelevant. In the postmodern world maybe war will come to be understood as a performing art, made for television and promoted as spectacle...

"The country welcomed the easy victories in Kuwait and Iraq with band music, ticker-tape parades, and speeches to the effect that once again it was good to be American...

"Maybe the war in the desert was a brilliant success when measured by the cynical criteria of realpolitik, but realpolitik is by definition a deadly and autocratic means of gaining a not very noble end. The means might be necessary, but they are seldom admirable and almost never a cause for joyous thanksgiving. If we celebrate a policy rooted in violence, intrigue, coercion, and fear, then how do we hold to our higher hopes and aspirations? We debase our own best principles if we believe the gaudy lies and congratulate ourselves for killing an unknown number of people whom we care neither to know nor to count."

May 1991, with permission)
(P.O. BOX 29272, Wash.D.C.20017)

EDITORIAL
COMMENT

Where Do We Go From Here?

The march on Kuwait turned into something akin to a Roman triumph, complete with beaming general, rolling engines of war and lines of bedraggled prisoners....America was seen as a giant again—its military might beyond compare, its diplomacy sure-handed, its self-confidence restored....Fashionable notions like "American decline" were hastily cast aside, replaced by older phrases like "world policeman" and "pax Americana."

—NEWSWEEK (March 11)

The Persian Gulf war was a slaughter. While the United States continues to avoid the issue of Iraqi casualties and Saddam Hussein's regime seeks to cover up the extent of its horrific losses, Saudi and European figures now put the number at 100,000 people killed in six weeks. Standard estimates in modern warfare of two to three people injured for every death expand the number killed or injured to upward of one third of a million, suggested by one British expert in a March 12 National Public Radio interview—the most intensive toll since World War II.

Not only was it a slaughter of Iraqis, it was also a slaughter of something else: visions of how the world could function that might be different from the American "new world order." The vanquishing of competing visions has become as essential to the rule of Pax Americana as the vanquishing of Iraq's dictator and overrated army.

A homemade video smuggled out of Iraq shows the gruesome pictures of the innocents of all ages, but especially women, children, and elderly people, who became the "collateral damage" of our Nintendo war where no victims appear on the screens. A few reporters tell us of the "highway of death" leading north out of Kuwait City where U.S. war planes cut off retreating Iraqi soldiers, held them in place, and then rained death on them.

The victims were "basically just sitting ducks," said one squadron leader. Bombing the Iraqis withdrawing from Kuwait (who were doing what the U.N. resolutions called upon them to do) was like "shooting fish in a barrel," said another pilot. Likened to scurrying cockroaches by yet another bomber pilot, the enemy army was eliminated, just as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell had prophesied—"First we'll cut it off, then we'll kill it."

But that's not all they hope they have killed. "There is no anti-war movement," pro-

claimed President George Bush at the end of the war. The commander-in-chief who earlier promised to "kick Saddam Hussein's ass" now gleefully exclaimed, "By God, we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all!" Well maybe, but not "by God."

Yet even that is being claimed. Participants in the National Religious Broadcasters Convention (which has supported every act of violence ever undertaken by its government and has wished for more) cheered when President Bush declared to their meeting that the war was "just." (Is that the way the "just war theory" is supposed to operate? The king defines the war he is fighting as good and righteous and all his royal religious advisers heartily agree?)

In a remarkable coincidence of timing, Richard John Neuhaus got half the editorial

.....
*The best news of the
Persian Gulf war is that
the most important social
institution against it,
from the beginning and to
the end, was the churches.*
.....

page of *The Wall Street Journal* the next day to praise the president's just war theology and to attack the church leaders who had opposed the war as being hopelessly marginal and irrelevant to the American mainstream. (I suppose deciding whose religion is relevant and whose is not has always been the job of the king's court prophets or, more currently, of Pax Americana's theologians.) By the way, no replies to Neuhaus' article were accepted by the *Journal*.

Less predictable and most disappointing was Billy Graham's overnight stay at the White House the evening the war began and his worship service the next day with the president and his cabinet. The news of both, of course, was broadcast from the White House to the worldwide media at a moment when the president's decision to choose the war option could most use the evangelist's great credibility.

Again, war becomes the "last resort" when the ruler making the war says it is, despite all evidence and moral judgment to the contrary. Complicity in the causes of the

war, double standards, and less-than-righteous motives in making war are conveniently ignored; and when the fighting starts, alternatives to violent solutions are defined as never having existed. To which religious leaders are found to say "Amen."

Haunting memories of similar use and abuse in the Nixon years painfully reoccurred. Graham's prayer at the end of the war was one of "praise and gratitude" to "our" God, who heard "our" cries, protected "our" service men and women, gave wisdom to "our" leaders, united "our" nation in support of "our" soldiers, and answered "our" prayers—the evidence of which was that the land battle lasted only 100 hours and fewer than 100 of our soldiers were killed.

The prayer concluded, "We also pray that those who have suffered in this war will know your great consolation." What about the hundreds of thousands of people killed, injured, displaced, or left grieving from this war? Is God "theirs" too? At the end of every speech he gave during the Gulf conflict, President Bush said, "God bless the United States of America." Is God's blessing only, especially, or mostly for us? Is the peace of Christ to become synonymous with the peace of the new world order—Pax Christi become Pax Americana?

After a debate with former education secretary and "drug czar" William Bennett on CNN, I asked him about the attack on the churches he had just made in the *National Review*, charging church leaders who raised moral questions about the war as having "virtually nothing useful, significant, or specifically religious to say." His article went on, "That we can no longer look to the spokesmen [sic] of most of the mainline American religious institutions on important moral issues is bad news indeed. That they have become increasingly irrelevant [there's that word again] to the public debate is, alas, the good news."

I told Bennett that, on the contrary, the churches' moral leadership in the Gulf crisis was one of our finest hours. Perhaps the good news is that the power elite of Pax Americana's practitioners, like William Bennett, can no longer look to every American church leader for a blessing. The best news of the Persian Gulf war is that the most important social institution against it, from the beginning and to the end, was the churches. That is a new moment and something to build a new future upon, both spiritually and politically.

As for the recurring charge of irrelevancy, well, maybe they're right. If relevancy means accepting the framework and assumptions of the new world order of Pax Americana that have just been re-established, let us happily be accused of being irrelevant. Indeed, the label could become a clear sign of conscience.

THE PEACE OF AMERICA, like the peace of Rome, is no peace at all. Pax Americana, as Pax Romana, requires the slaughter of innocents, the worship of idols, and the co-opting or crushing of all other visions.

George Bush says that in the new world order, the weak can trust that the strong will rule "with mercy." What is sure is that the strong will rule and the best the weak and poor and oppressed can hope for is mercy, not justice.

At a remarkable news conference on March 6—the same day President Bush was offered the opportunity by the Democrats to accept his great "victory" in a speech to a joint session of Congress—Republican Sens. Phil Gramm of Texas and Pete Domenici of New Mexico released "new figures" to show that under Ronald Reagan and George Bush the poor have actually "thrived." The timing was no coincidence. Having appeared to win over everyone, the president announced that Secretary of State James Baker would soon leave for the Middle East to shape the peace and continue to establish the new world order.

Due to the weight of its own oppression and hypocrisy, the Soviet counterrevolution to Pax Americana has collapsed. But the euphoria of people set free has as yet failed to produce any alternative to Western-style consumption and ecocide. The vacuum created by the end of the Cold War has been filled by a resurgent American predominance that allows no other visions.

But the poor, the Earth, and the human heart cry out for new visions, now more than ever. The early Christians sided neither with the "morality" of the empire, nor with the "barbarians" (like Saddam Hussein) who threatened it at its frontiers. They offered another way.

In the aftermath of the war in the Persian Gulf, the patriotism of Pax Americana and the ascendancy of George Bush's new world order could easily drive us to despair. Indeed, feelings of defeat, resignation, and withdrawal threaten the spirit of many Christian peacemakers these days.

However, the present moment also brings a fresh clarity. It could become for us a *kairos* time—a time full of fresh possibilities, a transitional period that could signal new directions. Above all, the arrogant assertion of American righteousness and power offers Christians with a different vision an invitation to *go deeper*. To go deeper in the commitment we have already chosen, to go farther down the path we have already set our feet upon.

If we can choose the harder way of personal and social transformation, both our

spirituality and our politics will change. It will mean an unwillingness to accept the limitations of merely reforming a system whose materialistic, exploitative, and dominating values are so corrupting. The liberal collapse of conscience during the war reveals the futility of a reformist agenda.

It will mean a clear distinction from the secular political Left that refuses a single standard for justice and human rights, prefers shallow slogans to political substance and conviction, holds on to failed ideology, and whose self-appointed leadership of the peace movement continues to narrow its focus and limit its horizons.

It will call us to counter the spiritual formation of the popular culture that has become the repository and reinforcer of the prime values of the new world order, rather than a force against it. The mass media literally define public opinion while claiming to reflect it.

Precisely at the moment when a new world order proclaims dreaming to have come to an end, it is most important to dream. Vision is the key spiritual and political necessity now. It is the lack of vision that is Pax Americana's most profound moral failure, and visionless religious conformity that is the greatest threat to genuine faith.

The religion of the prophets and the way of Jesus have never coexisted comfortably with the practitioners of political power, but always with their victims. The prophets of God will always be more at ease in the wilderness than in the guest room of the palace.

A former missionary to Latin America shared a reflection with me just days after the war ended. He recounted how the 1964 military coup in Brazil wiped away a progressive political movement that had been building. Overnight the hope for change collapsed, the Left was crushed, and religionists who had become politicized caved in with it. Brazil's economic "miracle" was proclaimed and everyone went along.

Well, almost everyone. One who voiced a clear no was Roman Catholic Archbishop Dom Helder Câmara. Along with a few others, he called upon Christians to go deeper—deeper into community and deeper into solidarity with the poor. Some did. And out of the faithfulness of that little remnant, a new movement was born—the base community movement.

Eventually, 100,000 small communities of the poor became the real miracle of Brazil. From defeat and despair, seeds of courage were planted, and from those faithful seeds blossomed new life. The missionary saw parallels to our situation now.

I thought of the story when I met Dom Helder Câmara again in early March at the Nevada Nuclear Test Site, where we had both come to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Nevada Desert Experience, a protest initiated by the Franciscans. He is now very old and frail, but there he was in the desert, with 500 other Christians thought to be irrelevant to the new world order for refusing to

accept one of its principal doctrines—nuclear deterrence.

It's time for us to go deeper. This war revealed how vulnerable we are, how much we are still attached to "success" and to "winning," how hard it is for us to feel marginal, how lonely we become when the system scores a great "victory." We need community more than we thought. The experience of our own poverty and marginalization can turn us more toward the poor who, like us, will find no joy in the new world order.

Where do we go from here? To the decision to make some clear choices. What could be more redemptive than for the violent assertion of the new world order to prompt a renewal of faith—issuing forth in the creation of spiritually based communities, close to the poor and with the capacity to vision a different world? Such communities could help to create a distinct style of life and not just hope for positive signs in the changing culture.

In an age when Pax Americana says there are no other options, such little communities throughout the churches and beyond could offer the possibility of a real alternative and, eventually, of a genuinely new world that is even now begging to be born.

—Jim Wallis

The following is quoted from "Reflections on a Glorious Victory" by Fred Buchamer (Fraser Valley Peace Letter, April 1991. 971 Parker St., White Rock, B.C. V4B 4R5 Canada.)

"I'm afraid that for the bulk of the American public this technological victory in the Gulf will only perpetuate the myth of their country's superiority and invincibility. Fantasy will continue to govern their values, stir their passions and dominate their mind-set."

The following is a transcript of Robert MacNeil's "conversation" with Eduard Shevardnadze, former Soviet Foreign Minister, aired May 9, 1991, on the MacNEIL/LEHRER NEWSHOUR.

(Permission to reprint granted by MacNEIL/LEHRER PRODUCTIONS.)

CONVERSATION

MR. MAC NEIL: Next tonight a conversation with Eduard Shevardnadze about Mikhail Gorbachev and his mounting political difficulties. The former Soviet Foreign Minister and Communist Party official is a leading member of the reform movement in the Soviet Union. Beyond his political role, Eduard Shevardnadze was Gorbachev's close collaborator as the Soviet Union and the United States moved from cold war to warmer relations. Shevardnadze met 22 times with Sec. of State Shultz during the Reagan years and 25 times with Sec. Baker after President Bush took office. Their friendly meetings at Baker's ranch, on fishing trips, and in Baker's hometown of Houston symbolized the growing collaboration between the two countries on issues from arms control to the Persian Gulf.

SEC. BAKER: I am proud to call this man a friend. I think that we achieved some significant things during the 23 months that we were able to work together. Let me say that I've known Eduard Shevardnadze to be a man of his word, a man of courage, conviction, and principle. I'm convinced that he is committed to peaceful reform, political and economic, in the Soviet Union. And I'm also convinced that the dramatic moves toward democratization and freedom in Central and Eastern Europe and the new thinking in Soviet foreign policy would never have happened without his and President Gorbachev's courageous leadership.

MR. MAC NEIL: It came as quite a surprise then not only to Washington but to Gorbachev as well when Shevardnadze suddenly announced his resignation in mid December.

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) This is the shortest and the saddest speech of my life.

MR. MAC NEIL: Attacking first his conservative critics in the Soviet Congress, Shevardnadze then criticized the new powers Pres. Gorbachev was assuming, calling them dictatorial.

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) My protests are against the onslaught of dictatorship. I express my profound gratitude to Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev. I am his friend, we are of like mind, I shall support to the end of my days the idea of perestroika, the idea of democratization. Once you have a dictator, no one knows how things will work out. I want to make the following announcement -- I am resigning.

MR. MAC NEIL: Gorbachev's enemies were delighted, his supporters devastated. Gorbachev, himself, was clearly upset.

PRES. GORBACHEV: (Speaking through Interpreter) This is perhaps the most difficult time of all now and it is unforgivable for him to go. I must condemn it.

SEC. BAKER: Minister Shevardnadze's resignation and warning I think has to be taken seriously. In my experience, Minister Shevardnadze has always worked as a professional who served his country's interest. He was in the forefront of the new thinking in foreign policy and democratization at home and I think that he has earned the respect of leaders all around the world.

MR. MAC NEIL: The former Soviet Foreign Minister now heads a Moscow-based think tank. He's on a trip to the United States and we talked earlier this afternoon.

MR. MAC NEIL: Mr. Shevardnadze, thank you very much for joining us.

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) Thank you for the invitation.

MR. MAC NEIL: Pres. Bush made a strong statement of support for Mr. Gorbachev yesterday. Were you pleased with that?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) Yes, I am very pleased and I welcome the statement by President Bush. That was essentially the way that our meeting in the White House proceeded. And in saying this, I know that the President had in mind -- in saying that he supported Gorbachev, I know that he had in mind the process of democratization and reform in the Soviet Union.

MR. MAC NEIL: Why is it important that the U.S. support Gorbachev? And I ask that in the context of some people, for instance, Yelena Bonner, who was on this program shortly after you resigned, who told us that Bush should abandon Gorbachev now and deal with the republics.

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) I would prefer not to talk in terms of support for some individual person since the problem is much more complex than that. What we're really dealing with is support for the democratic process and the process of humanization in Soviet society for the introduction of legal norms in this society. This is a process which started at Gorbachev's initiative and was headed by him. Now, of course, he is confronting certain problems, but I'm sure he will be able to solve them.

MR. MAC NEIL: You said in your speech at the Brookings Institution that the feeling of impending catastrophe in the USSR has not evaporated today. Describe the potential catastrophe.

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) There are many different factors and components in the situation. And there's no question that we are passing through a very difficult stage at the present time in the sense that we are in the middle of an economic crisis and perhaps even sliding in the direction of chaos or anarchy, there's a real danger that this may occur. Another point is the serious level of ethnic conflict in the USSR, which everybody in the world has heard about by now. We also have political problems. There is a struggle for power going on. All of these are true, but the situation is at the same time extremely contradictory in the sense that there are factors appearing on the other side of the picture and that there's a chance that we will be able to overcome these problems that I've described and that we'll be able to save perestroika and save democracy in our country. I would like to add a couple of more comments as well, that in a sense that if we do not succeed in saving perestroika, and if the country does slide into a condition of chaos or anarchy, it is well known chaos and anarchy often generate dictatorships of the most authoritarian and totalitarian kinds. And this would be the worst possible tragedy, not only for the Soviet Union but also for Europe and even perhaps for the world.

MR. MAC NEIL: A simple question. Why should the average American who has his own problems to deal with and who says, look, or might say we won the cold war, why should we care, what would it matter to us if the Soviet Union slid into chaos and anarchy, or even dictatorship, the new Soviet dictator would scarcely be able to find the resources to mount a real threat against the United States again because the effort to do that before practically bankrupted the Soviet Union, what would your response be to that? Why should the average American citizen say it matters to him?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) Well, to answer your question, if we are serious about constructing a new world order, as -- to use the words of President Bush and which I sincerely believe is a genuine task which is confronting us -- then we must assume that the countries of the world, and especially the great powers, such as the Soviet Union, will be democratic, they'll be countries in which freedom is a reality. In the totalitarian countries, in countries with dictatorships, we have always found in the past that they tend to use a militarization of their thinking and they tend to indulge in excessively militaristic policies, so if the Soviet Union were to go back again into a dictatorship, it would be inevitable that this country would start

another spiral in the arms race and a new -- introducing new types of weapons and re-engaging in the arms race as in the past. This would certainly cost the United States and the world very dearly. So in order to have true world order, as President Bush has said, we must have countries which are democratic. So I have to assume that the average American would definitely prefer a democratic, a humane, and a stable Soviet Union.

MR. MAC NEIL: Has the agreement Mr. Gorbachev has reached with Yeltsin and the leaders of the eight other republics put him firmly and your country firmly back on the road towards political and economic reform?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) No. I think that this agreement which you mentioned is a very significant fact, a very significant event in the life of our country, which could lead to political, economic, and social stabilization.

MR. MAC NEIL: As a Georgian, does the agreement give you hope that the aspirations of your republic for more autonomy will be satisfied?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) The Georgians have already said that they are not willing to sign the union treaty. Now this is certainly their right. They have the same right to self-determination as every other nation in the world. This includes the Georgians, the Armenians, and every other nation. So the signing of a union treaty by the other nine republics would not be in any way an obstacle to Georgia's opting for its own self-determination, if that's what it wants to do.

MR. MAC NEIL: When you resigned -- your resignation is still something of a mystery -- one motive attributed to you was that you feared there was going to be a very heavy military crackdown on your own republic, Georgia, is that true?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) A good many explanations have been given for my resignation, some of them serious and some of them rather primitive. Indeed, some have said it was a purely emotional outburst, a decision I reached at that very moment. And, in fact, the statement, itself, was emotional, because it was a very unusual step for us to take. But the decision was not taken at that moment. It was based rather on a lengthy and serious analysis of the situation in the country, in the center, and at the level of the different republics. By my resignation, I tried to stimulate some movement against what I saw to be threats, one being the threat of dictatorship, and the emergence of a totalitarianism political structure from the reactionary forces on the right. Now I did not succeed in doing everything that I hoped to do by my resignation, but I think that to some degree my example did lead to an activation of the democratic movement in the country, which was one of my goals. It may be a little immodest for me to say this, but I can say now for the first time that -- now for the first time in my life, I realize just how much authority I have in my own country and I realize now just what the significance of this step was.

MR. MAC NEIL: Do you and Mr. Gorbachev see each other often now?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) I don't see President Gorbachev quite as often as before, but the contacts still remain. We do meet for discussions from time to time. Quite recently I had a rather lengthy talk with him and, in fact, before my flight here, I had a talk with him on the telephone. So I would say the relationship is quite normal. After all, we are not just acquaintances: we are old friends. We've always said that we think alike about things, which is something I said at the time of my resignation. But, of course, as people go along through life and get older, sometimes their views change but they can still stay friends. I mean, I could quarrel with him, I could disagree with him about certain things, but still we stay friends.

MR. MAC NEIL: Do you meet his friends? Do you have meals together? Are your families friendly?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) No. We don't do that at the present time.

MR. MAC NEIL: Did you before?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) Yes.

MR. MAC NEIL: I'm sorry, yes. How would you describe the change that has come over him as a man? Is it political? Is it only political? Is it psychological?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) I would rather put it differently and say that the situation, itself, has changed. It's become much more difficult, much more contradictory than it was before. We see emerging new social problems, economic problems, political, ethnic problems and the like, and he has tried to find solutions to these problems. Now I wouldn't want to say -- I wouldn't want to attempt to justify everything that he is doing or that I did. We both made mistakes and, indeed, when you're -- one is seeking for solutions to problems, this doesn't necessarily make one popular, but to go back to my first point, really it's the situation which has changed. And that changed situation is what determines his behavior. I spoke yesterday in Chicago for a rather large audience and at that speech I said that the country is in the middle of a genuine revolution. It's changed from one situation to one which is qualitatively different. And when one is engaging in this sort of major transformation, the transformations, themselves, become -- sometimes go out of control and become difficult to keep in hand, and also one doesn't know exactly where they're heading. And for that reason, the leadership makes mistakes as we did then and as it is perhaps doing now.

MR. MAC NEIL: Can I ask you, has he lost the capacity to act boldly?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) If you mean is he willing to take risks, I guess this depends upon what you mean by risk, what risk actually is taken to understand, to mean. If you're in a revolutionary situation, you can't help but take risks. You can't have change and renewal without incurring risk.

MR. MAC NEIL: I guess my question meant, has he lost his nerve?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) No, I wouldn't say that. It's the situation, itself, which is different. In fact, it is so different that it's very difficult for people to get an idea of what's actually going on and we have a lot of wrong views about what is actually happening and what the people in leadership are trying to do about it. I'm often asked whether I think that Gorbachev can stay in power. I'm asked that here in the United States, if I think that Gorbachev can stay in power, and if so, how long will he last, and what I answer when I'm asked this question is that he will be able to stay in power if he's able to deal with the very difficult situation in which we find ourselves at this moment, and if he is able, in particular, to stabilize the political and economic situation. Then I think that perestroika will prevail and so will our democracy. Then he won't be threatened from any side -- not that that question -- I see that that question was there on your sheet of paper probably.

MR. MAC NEIL: If he does not -- if he does not succeed, are you an alternative?

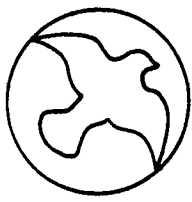
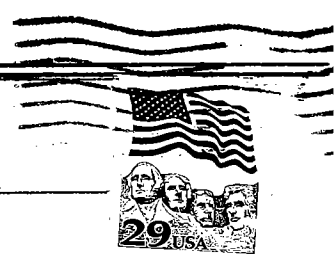
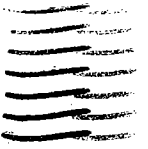
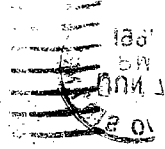
MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) No.

MR. MAC NEIL: Why?

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) I never had any pretense to achieving that particular post and I don't have now. Every individual has to know what his own capacities are. I don't think that the situation will be -- any salvation would come by a change in leadership at this present time. The real all encompassing problem that we're all facing today is that the democratic forces in the country have got to consolidate themselves, come together, and act as a unity. And that is -- that is a task which -- that is a task which Gorbachev by himself cannot cope with. It's a task for the whole of our society. And I'm -- that is his responsibility before the world and before his own people.

MR. MAC NEIL: Well, Mr. Shevardnadze, thank you very much for joining us.

MR. SHEVARDNADZE: (Speaking through Interpreter) Thank you. It was a pleasure talking with you, Mr. MacNeil.



LAUCKS FOUNDATION, INC.

P.O. BOX 5012, SANTA BARBARA, CA 93150-5012

MARY LAUCKS
8708 N.E. 20th
BELLEVUE, WA. 98004

