

Mission:

**Network for Peace,
Through Dialogue
creates opportunities
for individuals and
groups to engage in
constructive
conversation in an
atmosphere of
openness and mutual
respect.**



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Introducing “High Quality” Dialogue into the Social Media

By Kathleen Kanet

The Network for Peace continues to pursue ways the internet can be used to engage people anywhere in the world. As demonstrated recently in the democracy movements in the Middle East, this technology has the potential to help stimulate change. (See staff member Bret Nelson’s thoughts about this on p. 3)

For the past few months the Network has been expanding and developing its presence and outreach in the social media because we believe we have something important to say. In particular we hope to bring the principles of high quality dialogue that we encourage participants to use in our face-to-face dialogues to internet conversations. These principles stress an honest expression of views and respectful attention to the perspectives of others.

Blog, Facebook, YouTube

In the last year we introduced a blog into our website so that the website would not only tell about our programs promoting dialogue but could itself be a site where dialogue can take place. This blog, a commentary on a current issue, is written by staff members and invites commentary.

We then opened a Facebook page where we post the blog articles and other reflections on current happenings. Here we can also list our events and reach a wider audience. With Mark Zuckerberg as quoted in the movie, Social Network, we can say “We don’t know what it is yet!” but we see great potential.

Beginnings in 2004

Communicating though the internet is not new to the Network. In 2004 we received a generous grant to initiate a website which has been in continuous development since then. From 2006-2009 we carried on an international on-line dialogue and linked people from different nations and cultures through the program, “Shaping Our Future.” We did this by e-mail using a closed Google group. In 2009-2010 we worked with students from Marymount Manhattan College’s course, “Video Activism,” creating videos of our programs. Some of this work can now be seen on YouTube

Our blog, Facebook page and YouTube videos can be activated from the home page on our website:

www.networkforpeace.com

From the Director

This is the 16th year of our Newsletter. We do this to let you know what we are doing and to touch your imagination about the importance and practice of dialogue. As you can see from the cover article, we continue this mission through the internet and social media. We do this to reach a wider audience. Here is an example of some of the outcomes:

- In the last year we have had 19 blog entries including these titles “Women and War,” “Following the money in Libya,” and “Two views of the sex industry.”
- Our Facebook page had 2,078 views in the last month with 93 active users. It has 217 “likes” including four from Nigeria, three from Palestine and Indonesia, two from each of Israel, Ireland, Lebanon and Ghana. Link into this and the Blog from our website, www.networkforpeace.com.
- In January the Network sent half of your donations to relief in Haiti. Here are a couple of your comments: “I never cease to marvel at the great works you guys are doing, this time the Haiti disaster. The result is ordinary people and usually the poor are most affected” from one of our colleagues in Zimbabwe. “This is great,” from the Campus Minister, Marymount Manhattan College.

Please see us on-line and share your thoughts too. Then we can have a dialogue.

We have submitted a proposal for funding which will link our Living Room Dialogues to on-line dialogue. This program is designed to begin in the fall. Meanwhile, explore being active with us on-line. Together we can confront our violent culture and build a culture of dialogue and peace.

The Network is funded by your donations. Please be generous and you will be part of our on-going work.

—Virginia Dorgan

Coming Up

Friday, May 6, 7:00—10:00 pm
73 Fifth Ave. #4 (at 15th St.), NYC
Hosted by Leslyn and Don Rigoni and
Friends of Laura Fernandez
Food by Suzie Crabtree
Sing-along with Donna Cribari
Donation \$100 per person;
\$150 per couple
You can pay at the door
Call us at 212-426-5818

(If this donation is a hardship, please let us know — it is important to us that you attend!)

At this Spring Fling we will honor Laura Fernandez for nine years of dedicated and energetic service on our Board of Directors. What used to be Laura’s available time is filled with caring for baby Leo as she continues her full-time social work administration job and her pursuit of a doctorate. Celebrate her with us.



Recognition Night 2010 as usual brought good friends to the Network, glad to be together.

Network for Peace through Dialogue is a 501(c)3 organization and depends on individual contributions. Any contribution you can make in cash, stock, or a bequest will help to further our work. The address and phone number are on the cover of this newsletter. Thank you.

The “Facebook Revolution”

By Bret Nelson

(The following article was first published on the Network’s blog. Bret Nelson, a staff member at the Network, holds a MA in political science from Fordham University where he concentrated on issues concerning the Middle East and North Africa. He is currently enrolled in the CUNY graduate school .)

There has been much discussion in the media and academia about the role social media has been playing in the recent political upheavals throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Labeling the overthrows of dictators such as Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Ben Ali of Tunisia as well as the uprisings in a host of other Arab nations including Yemen, Bahrain, Algeria, Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, as “Facebook Revolutions” or, less specifically “Social Media Revolutions” implies that social media programs such as Facebook and Twitter are the reasons these uprisings have taken place.

This is misleading. Not only does this assumption misplace the agency of the revolutions, but it also assumes that it is a recent phenomenon. In past revolutions, such as those that took place in France in the late 18th century, Russia in the first part of the 20th century and even in America in the 1770s, movements were birthed in taverns, coffee houses, and people’s homes. This sort of assembly and exchange of ideas have been widely suppressed in the Middle East until recently, and social media have replaced some of these traditional means of communication.



Bret Nelson

Domestic Pressure Essential

While social media tools like texting have been useful in overthrowing oppressive and corrupt regimes going all the way back to Philippine President Joseph Estrada in 2001, it is ultimately people that provide the impetus for uprisings. The factors that lead to successful revolution are many, but the first ingredient is domestic pressure on the existing regime to reform or relinquish power. Oppressive regimes such as those that dominate the Arab world have to stifle civil society by denying essential freedoms such as freedom of movement and assembly, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, etc., in order to maintain power.

Where social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter are useful in facilitating the demonstrations and uprisings that may lead to revolution is by providing a “virtual” civil society whereby messaging and coordination can take place in real-time on a grand scale. The ability to use text messaging, Twitter, and Facebook has allowed protestors to share information, organize, and find like-minded individuals. Rather than meeting in homes, mosques, or cafes where the risk of arrest is high, individuals can share information, ideas, and plans with like-minded people on-line where the risk of arrest is greatly reduced.

Furthermore, although traditional methods of messaging such as spreading of pamphlets and posting of flyers is still important, Facebook, Twitter, text-messaging, and websites increase the speed and reach of messaging in a less risky way, making social movement against oppressive regimes more fluid and flexible. Mass protests can be organized in hours rather than weeks. This flexibility allows mass movements to maintain pressure on regimes, as seen in the case of Egypt and Tunisia.

Other Ingredients

But this is just one ingredient for a successful revolution to take place. There have to be several other ingredients outside the control of Facebook or Twitter to facilitate regime change. There has to be a split in the regime’s coercive apparatus; there has to be sufficient international pressure; there also has to be a gap

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We Remember Geraldine Ferraro

(Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman candidate for Vice President of the United States, died on March 27. We will long remember that she came to the opening session of the Network's 2009 dialogue conference at Marymount Manhattan College and engaged in an on-stage dialogue with Network board member Laurence Berg. Even though she suffered from cancer at that time, she displayed her lively sense of humor and generous spirit. Following are some tips on dialogue she offered in that session.)

In her public life, she learned two principles necessary for effective dialogue, she said. The first is that you have to do the work of building relationships before you can begin to talk. The second is that you can't get everything you want — and other people might know something, too!

As an example of the need to build relationships, she described an experience when she was U.S. Ambassador to the UN Commission on Human Rights. A goal was to get a condemnation of anti-Semitism included for the first time in a UN resolution. Not much could happen in the working Commission, because every representative came to Geneva with their country's own agenda and some ambassadors were only interested in scoring points, not really in talking. If dialogue was to happen it had to take place behind the scenes.

Getting to Know Muslims

To have dialogue, you first have to learn the background of where people are coming from. "Charm" helps in this process, she said. When Laurence questioned her about the ingredients of "charm," she said that being interested and curious about other cultures and customs and approaching people as an ordinary human being rather than as a VIP are important. To make relationships with ambassadors from Islamic countries, she went to many Ramadan dinners, putting on six pounds in six weeks.

She also took the unusual step of inviting all the ambassadors and their wives to a formal dinner and showing the film "Schindler's List." The next day the resolution including the language on anti-Semitism passed unanimously in the full Commission.

Her experience in Congress introduced her to the importance of making relationships. President Reagan and Congressman Tip O'Neill were models for this. They didn't agree on anything, yet they knew how to talk to each other, built up a relationship of trust, and always managed to reach accommodation. Her friends who remain in Congress tell her such relationships aren't happening today and that "it's impossible to get anything done."

Accepting Compromise

Congress was also the venue for lesson number two: You can't get everything you want. She concluded that she would have to accept a little bit of what she wanted when the opportunity arose. When fighting for economic equity for women, for example, she authored sections of a bill on reform of pensions that gave women more opportunities for receiving survivor's benefits. Some complained that she had compromised too much, but she argued that accepting a piece of what they wanted gave them something they could all build on in the future.

Toward the end of the interview, Laurence asked about situations where a person might feel he or she just can't trust another person or group. Gerry (by that time she and Laurence had become friends) got a laugh with the line, "You weren't raised by Marymount nuns!" She added: "I think most human beings are decent...and willing to participate in dialogue if you have something to talk about."



Geraldine Ferraro and Laurence Berg

GETTING TO OUR BLOG, FACEBOOK PAGE AND YOU TUBE VIDEOS THE EASY WAY

Just go to our website: www.networkforpeace.com

Home

Bottom right

and you will see the box below. Just click on the one you want.

MAILING LIST



YOU TUBE



BLOG



FACEBOOK



Facebook Revolution

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between the public's expectations and the regime's performance, forming an incongruence between the legitimacy of the state apparatus and the general culture of the public to name just a few necessary components for a revolution to be successful.

Calling the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa "Facebook Revolutions" is misleading. These revolutions have been aided by social media programs, but ultimately the desire for human dignity and self-determination is the cause of these revolutions – just like all other revolutions prior to the internet. Calling these uprisings "Facebook Revolutions" is no more accurate than calling the American Revolution a "Tavern Revolution."

WE HAVE A WISH LIST AND YOU CAN HELP

Wish List

Send donation to:

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Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

- \$15.49 Hi Yield Brother Ink cartridge
- \$25 for refreshments for a staff meeting
- \$31.90 10 reams of paper
- \$35 membership Non-profit Coordinating Committee
- \$150 membership Peace and Justice Studies Association
- \$240 1 year web access
- \$299 (new) video camera (or a used one)
- \$299 (new) Blackberry (or a used one)
- \$5,000 1 year service of a website editor

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***Principles of High Quality Dialogue as Developed by
the Network for Peace through Dialogue***

Express opinions honestly in response to what others have said:

*Participants acknowledge that they are expressing their own opinion,
rather than expressing an opinion that is true for everyone.*

Participants are able to relate a feeling or story to what has been said.

Participants express their opinions in a positive and constructive way.

Listen attentively to what others have said and respond empathetically:

*Participants state in their own words the point of view of those who
have a different opinion.*

Participants ask questions to get clarity about another point of view.

Participants make statements that recognize how other people feel.

Respond in ways that show an effort to understand others:

*Participants respond to the insights of others with questions,
agreements or respectful disagreement.*

Participants do not try to convince others to change their point of view.

Respond in ways that show openness and a willingness to learn:

Participants identify and recognize their own assumptions.

Participants acknowledge any changes in their own points of view

Participants state what they have learned from others.