

System Change or Climate Change and No Third Possibility

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**World Constitution and Parliament Association
India Chapter**

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With economic globalization the regime of capital has gone to planetary proportions. It has demanded new globalized institutions be developed to attempt to regulate and organize this monstrous system that creatively develops ever new methods of extracting surplus value from economic exchanges. These new transnational systems for regulating globalization include the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These organizations are managed by experts in this system of extracting private profit from economic exchanges.

That is, they are experts in instrumentally maximizing the perpetual growth of the global economic regime directed toward the private accumulation of wealth under the ideology that such perpetual growth includes a “hidden hand” that indirectly benefits the vast majority who are not the owners and accumulators of wealth. As such the experts who run the transnational organizations regulating and modulating global capital exchanges are specialists in the very thing

that makes them incapable of understanding the fundamental ecological principles that govern evolution and life on the Earth.

The entire globalized economic system is directed toward the accumulation of private profit and not the ecological viability of the ecosphere of our planet that supports and promotes the flourishing of life. Ecological principles are the principles reflecting the integrated and interdependent wholeness of evolving living systems within the framework of the immutable laws of physics, chemistry, and material forms. Ecological principles study the amazing evolution of the life-system encompassing planet Earth (our biosphere) and the interlinked and interdependent networks of increasingly smaller ecosystems from the giant Amazon Basin down to the anaerobic microbes living deep beneath the Earth's mantle.

The globalized economic system of the planet has long since colonized all the sovereign nation-states of the world into its system of powerful center nations, semi-peripheral nations, and marginalized peripheral nations. The planetary economic system draws on the military and economic strength of the center nations to maintain the "order" of the globalized economically driven hierarchy.

The peripheral nations, deeply in debt to the banking monopolies within the imperial centers, are forced to accede to the private profit imperatives of capital through structural adjustment programs selling off their public assets, along with their cheap natural resources, to first world corporate interests. In this way they remain perpetually locked into the status of the vast impoverished majority that capitalism inevitably creates while maximizing extreme wealth and power for the few.

This entire system violates the ecological principles that must be adopted by humanity in the near future if there is to be a future at all for us and future generations. The nation states are colonized by the power of concentrated capital and have all become agents for the stability of the system. Even the impoverished countries, which no longer control their own economic destiny, have been colonized into supplying the military and police powers necessary to prevent their citizens from rebelling or from experimenting with more ecologically sound patterns of economic and political organization. The world system that now dominates our planet inextricably links the fragmented system of militarized sovereign nation-states with the gigantic power of transnational corporate capital and banking. The world system, integrated

economically and politically into the sovereign nation-state system, necessarily functions to destroy the planetary ecosphere and radically diminish the life prospects of future generations.

This becomes crystal clear if we consider the fundamental and necessary requirements of sustainability. First, a sustainable world system would necessarily convert all energy sources to clean, renewable sources such as solar, water, and wind power. Under capitalism, the iron law of profit declares that only what is profitable can grow and flourish. Capitalism is based on the cancerous, anti-ecological principle of endless growth on a finite planet. The planet will not be converted to clean energy for survival and flourishing's sake, nor for moral and ecological reasons. Clean energy can only spread if there is endless profit to be made from this, and this iron limitation, of course, spells doom for humanity, since ecological principles of delicate balance and interdependence fundamentally contradict the iron law of profit.

Second, within a sustainable world system all heat waste, trash waste, and externalities of production, transportation, consumption, and disposal would be reduced to an absolute minimum and anything not so reduced would have to be recycled, repaired, and maintained

for as long as possible. Immediately we can see that this is not possible under capitalism, nor under the system of sovereign nation-states. The capitalist system driven exclusively by the quest for private profit, necessarily requires that waste and all non-profitable by-products of the economic cycle be externalized onto nature and society.

Bankers and businesses require national governments to subsidize their operations through providing food stamps, medical care, and other amenities to workers who are not paid enough to live a quality life without the help of the government. Corporations are supplied by an endless army of massive trucks spewing greenhouse gasses into the environment as they deliver supplies and goods. The externality of these millions of tons of CO₂ trashing the environment worldwide is not even counted among the costs of these enterprises. The cost of trucks, tires, maintenance, drivers, etc., entirely ignores the damage to the environment caused by the burning of fossil fuel everywhere within the global production system. The requirement of the capitalist system (grow or die: increase profits or go under) functions in direct contradiction to the equilibrium principles of ecology and requires that all capitalist enterprises externalize their costs

onto the environment and/or society in order to maximize profitability.

Third, under a sustainable global economic system, all production necessarily requires products that last for many years and are repairable, so that they do not need throwing out. We have the technical capacity to build houses, roads, and all other products that would last a lifetime, or many lifetimes. Yet the imperative for the endless generation of private profit requires that capital “produce for the dump.” Capitalism faces the overwhelming incentive to produce cheap, throwaway junk products, since it is only the endless resupply, along with the requirement of endless consumption of new products on the part of consumers, that keeps much of the profit system running. Ecological principles are in direct contradiction to this need for endless production and ever-expanding consumption. Ecological principles require that all growth be qualitative rather than quantitative.

Similarly with nation-states. Not only are sovereign nation-state governments today required to use their resources and governing power to facilitate capital accumulation, as “sovereign” nations they are also in competition with one another. This requires an endless development of new military weapons and an

endless upgrade and resupply of vast military organizations worldwide, none of which has the slightest concern with ecological principles since “national security” always trumps environmental concerns. In addition, the production of these trillions of dollars in bombs and weapons is the most environmentally destructive form of production, with immense amounts of toxic waste generated even before these hideous forms of production are used to kill and destroy. But the military-industrial complex is among the most successful forms of capitalist production for private profit and is at the very core of several national economics, such as that of the USA.

Again, we see that the world system of sovereign nations integrated with global capital is anti-ecological to its very core. There is no possibility of rescuing or restoring our planetary ecosystem (to the extent that this is still possible) under the present world system. We are, indeed, faced with the choice between system change and climate change with no third possibility. What are our options and where might we go from in the light of this frightening and deplorable situation?

The only system that can address the ecocide inherent in the very structure of the capitalist-

nation-state system is universal democratic ecosocialism. Democracy, properly understood, is inherently ecological because it accords rights and responsibilities to all persons who must cooperatively work together to actualize the common good of the community. Hence, democracy has the capacity to invigorate a community spirit that lives in harmony with nature. As the French revolutionary thinkers put it: “liberty, equality, and fraternity.”

“Positive freedom” is actualized when people work together for the common good, a common good that includes harmony with the ecosystems of the Earth. Equality is both a cause and a consequence of authentic democracy in which every person plays a unique role, just as happens within healthy ecosystems. It is inherently socialist not in the sense that everybody has the same but in the sense of fundamental and reasonable economic equality and cooperative management of the means of production, distribution, consumption, and disposal. Finally, fraternity is another word for community: a common identity, set of rules, and vision that brings people together in solidarity. The entire Earth must become such an ecological community if we want a future for our children and grandchildren.

Such a world system of liberty, equality, and community cannot be actualized unless humanity joins together under the Constitution for the Federation of Earth (<http://www.earth-constitution.org>). This Constitution provides both the means and the vision for creating a global community on the Earth dedicated to democracy and ecological sustainability. Under the system of sovereign militarized nation-states, defending absolute borders and struggling in economic competition with one another, such a planetary community is not possible. In the very act of uniting, humanity transcends militarism, absolute borders, and destructive competition, all of which are anti-ecological.

Planetary ecosocialism without the Earth Constitution is not possible. You cannot have portions of the world clinging to the destructive process of capital accumulation if we want a sustainable global economy. Neither can you have portions of the world clinging to the destructive process of militarism, which we have seen is inherently anti-ecological. Unless everyone is united in the conversion of the world to democratic ecosocialism through authentic planetary democracy, there is no chance that we will convert to true sustainability. Once, united, every person born will be a legal world citizen, and the common good of humanity and future

generations will become crystal-clear common sense.

In addition to uniting humanity, we need the global government to provide comprehensive research, monitoring and guidance for ecologically sensitive economics and politics. The global government will also rest on the best and most comprehensive knowledge provided by science and human wisdom. All the ecological systems of the planet fit together in intricate and often surprising ways, and every local human community will need this knowledge and access to a comprehensive vision so as to be able to coordinate with other local communities around the globe for true democracy and sustainability. The dynamic interface and interdependency of ecological systems worldwide (including the oceans, the atmosphere, and the polar regions) requires a centralized, democratically run, system of management and coordination.

The Constitution for the Federation of Earth supplies all of these necessities for a sustainable Earth System. Besides uniting humanity under a planetary common good, it, first, makes all essential planetary resources the responsibility of the Earth Federation government to be cooperatively run through the agencies of the

Integrative Complex and the World Parliament. Second, it institutes democratically run global public banking, along with debt-free money creation, thereby freeing all nations from their international debt and instituting a banking system predicated on investment for human and ecological needs rather than, as now, a global system of private banking directed to maximizing private profit.

Third, the Earth Constitution makes ecological sustainability of the Earth system both a right and a responsibility for every person on Earth. This effort is no longer a direct responsibility of nation-states, since a fragmented, dis-coordinated system of individual national entities, as now, who are expected to assume voluntary responsibility without consequences for failure, cannot possibly achieve the level of integration and coordination necessary for planetary sustainability. Fourth, the Earth Constitution progressively and rationally disarms the nations, ending world militarism, and redirecting the immense waste of money and ingenuity from the practice of destroying one another toward multiple practices of cooperating with one another to make our planet a decent home for all its citizens and future generations.

Fifth, the Earth Constitution establishes the World Service Authority in which tens of millions of persons from around the world can leave their former military, capitalist, or jobless lifestyles and join together in global projects for the replanting of forests, conversion to clean energy sources, and the restoration of the integrity of our oceans, land and air. Finally, the Earth Federation government will have immense resources dedicated to education and training for children and adults worldwide in the rationales for democracy, sustainability, peace, and justice. Through this global effort in the name of the democratically united people of Earth, the new generations will grow up thinking differently. They will be thinking in terms of ecological systems, economic cooperation, peaceful relationships, and global harmony.

Those who argue that such things must happen from the “grass roots up” only are naïve and mistaken. We must indeed empower the grass roots in all these principles, and local democracy including ecosocialism must be freely practiced everywhere. But this is not possible under a global anarchism without a central set of principles ensuring justice, peace, and sustainability everywhere on Earth. Top and bottom must meet one another in global harmony and mutual empowerment.

Ratification of the Earth Constitution is the key to making this transition from the current failed and ecologically destructive system of capitalism and sovereign nation states to a system of global peace, justice, and sustainability. Our immediate task must be to get this message out to the people of Earth before it is too late.

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Dr. Glen T. Martin is Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Radford University in Virginia and founder in 1994 of the Radford University program in Peace Studies. During his twenty-five years at Radford University, Dr. Martin has been active in both national and international work of philosophers focusing on issues of peace. Since 1996, he has been President of International Philosophers for Peace, an organization with members in 25 countries that works to promote the social, political, and economic conditions necessary for world peace. Since 1995, he has also been active in the movement to create non-military, democratic world government under the Constitution for the Federation of Earth. In this capacity, he has been a member of the World Executive Council of the World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA, www.wcpa.biz) which coordinates a network of tens of thousands of people from 120 countries worldwide in their work toward these goals. On behalf of the Earth Federation Movement, Dr. Martin has travelled and lectured widely with respect to world peace and the need for democratic world government. Since December 2003, he has served as Secretary-General of WCPA, of which currently is the President.

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