

Global Democracy

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World constitution and Parliament Association
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Abstract. In this article, I argue that the deeper causes of war, social chaos, and movements like Nazism are rooted in the twin institutions of the system of “sovereign” nation-states and global capitalism. We shall see that right wing ideologies become exacerbated and encouraged by these intertwined institutions. In addition, I argue that the only proper locus for democracy is at the planetary scale, and, indeed, only on the global scale can human beings begin to inherit the inner promise of democracy for a world of peace, justice, and sustainability. Finally, this article advocates ratification of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth and the advent of truly global democracy.

I am writing this article in Munich, Germany, the birthplace of the Nazi movement that led to the Second World War and the Holocaust. Yesterday, we visited the Nazi Documentation Center (NS Dokuzentrum Muenchen) and today the National Socialist wing of the Munich City Museum (Munchner Stadtmuseum). Both centers do an excellent job in collecting the historical record that documents the sentiments, conditions, events, and personalities that led to the triumph of the Nazis from before World War I. They trace the movement, in which Adolph Hitler played a key role here in Munich, through the post war chaos that made the rise of the Nazis possible, to the assumption of dictatorial power in 1933, to World War II (1941-1945) and the “denazification” process after the war.

These centers also chronicle the reaction of the people of Munich to their role in this horrific history and the controversies over openly recording and recognizing this history that have persisted to the present day. The Nazi Documentation Center itself was only established a few years ago (May 2015), apparently as the third such center in Germany after the ones in Berlin and Nuremberg. This entire history shows the role of right wing ideas and right wing movements in creating the institutions and conditions of aggressive war, holocaust, totalitarianism, and atrocities against all who are not the mythically constructed “superior” ones of right wing ideology.

Nazi ideology thrives and grows through the mythic magnification of some “in-group” and the exclusion of others as impure, corrupting, and inferior to the in-group. In the case of the Nazis, led by Hitler and others, it was the Jews, the Roma, the blacks, the communists (as social decadents), and in general, all non-Aryan peoples who polluted and corrupted the superior German race. However, this history also reveals that these mythically constructed prejudices, fears, and hatreds grow when there are chaotic social conditions that drive people to desperation, who seek some common enemy and cause for their desperate situation.

The conditions during and following World War I in Germany were of this nature. The many principalities of Germany had only become administratively unified by 1871 after the Franco-Prussian War. There was resentment in Bavaria and its capitol, Munich, against the Berlin central government. Munich had its own identity and conservative ethos, and disliked many “liberal” and more progressive ideas that emanated

from Berlin. Following the war there were many people, like Hitler, who blamed other Germans for the defeat of Germany. There was little German central government control in Munich (far from Berlin), which made the city ripe for struggle for political power by Communists, right wing movements, moderates, liberals and others seeking control of the government.

There was also wide resentment of the Versailles Peace Agreement that ended the war and imposed harsh reparations against Germany. There was growing economic chaos and runaway inflation in which the German Deutschmark, beginning during the war, became progressively evermore worthless and many people rapidly lost their life savings and means of living. The conditions were ripe for extremists like Hitler, who was a stirring speaker and clever strategist, to rally masses of people to the ideology of hate, fear, exclusion, solidarity against the enemies, and pride in one's superiority and strength. Mass meetings to hear Hitler speak took place in the huge beer halls and public places here in Munich during the 1920s.

Right from the beginning, the nascent movement behind Hitler often used lethal violence to intimidate and silence opponents, as in the attempted "Beer-hall Putsch" in 1923 when Hitler's National Socialist People's Workers Party (NSDAP), led by Hitler himself, attempted to take over the government here in Munich. The Putsch failed, and Hitler was charged with treason, but many prominent people (including the right wing judiciary) supported him and, therefore, he spent very little time in jail and was not deported to his country of origin, Austria.

The NSDAP beat up or assassinated opponents and used the media to emphasize the atrocities or violence of those who disagreed and to cover over and minimize their own atrocities and violence. The swastika, the Nazi symbol, was used and displayed everywhere right from the beginning. The mainstream Catholic and Protestant churches were largely accommodating and complicit with the growth of this violent, hate-filled, movement. Religious resistance came mainly from the Jehovah's Witnesses, who refused to cooperate with this paramilitary and violent extremism, and were badly persecuted because of this.

The holocaust (the “final solution”), the aggressive wars, the totalitarian control over the thought and lives of all citizens, were all implicit in the Nazi ideology from the very beginning, an ideology not at all incompatible with capitalism and the system of sovereign nation-states. These wars, totalitarianism, and “final solutions” were not, therefore, an aberration to this right wing extremism but an integral part of its mythical ideology. Hitler could never have succeeded without investors, and there were plenty of these available in capitalist Germany and Munich (as well as many US investors). Both capitalism and the system of sovereign nation-states are institutions fundamentally necessary to the flourishing of right wing extremism because both exacerbate the conditions described above that undergirded the Nazi rise to power.

Capitalism is a system of “free enterprise” in which those with economic resources can invest in profit-making ventures. As such, capitalism thrives in nearly all human social conditions: from natural disasters to wars to conditions of social chaos like those that existed

in Germany after World War I. Those with money to invest will invest in whatever appears to be growing or flourishing so that the investor may expect a return on the investment.

Capitalist “entrepreneurs” are those who see the possibility of making a profit off people’s difficulties and needs no matter under what conditions they find themselves. It is the ultimate creed of amorality. Capitalists saw the growing acceptance of right wing ideology in Munich and began to fund the Nazi party, its leadership, and its media that spewed forth relentless propaganda. After the Nazi Party assumed totalitarian state power in 1933, the big corporations worked hand in glove with the party and raked in profits hand over fist, not least because of the slave labor provided to them from the Nazi concentration camps.

Capitalism also thrives on racism, and/or on nationalism, on anything that divides human beings from one another and leads them to blame someone else for their situation of scarcity and misery. Capitalism generates a ruling class whose wealth and power makes them feel superior to the rest of the population. However, rather than have the majority in difficulty target this ruling class for political action and change, capitalism is happy to fan the flames of racism or nationalism (both endemic to the Nazi ideology) in order to distract people from the real cause of their problems, which is the capitalist system itself.

Naomi Klein’s book *The Shock Doctrine and the Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (2007) documented the horror of the US sponsored system of imperial capitalism that has raged around the world since the 1970s. In

the view of the capitalist-imperialists (quoting what she calls “the Chicago School of Economics”), any society that has public assets (public transportation, free education, public health care, social security, etc.) is an impediment to capitalism because private profit-making is diminished by resources directed to the public good rather than private profit. Ideologues like Columbia University’s Jeffrey Sachs promoted the US government using political and imperial power to force economic “shock therapy” on governments around the world in which all assets were suddenly privatized and available to private profit-making.

This system of imperial promotion of capitalism was also chronicled by James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer in *Capitalism with Imperialism* and studied by Christopher Chase-Dunn and James Boswell in *The Spiral of Capitalism and Socialism: Toward Global Democracy*, and in many other scholarly books. These scholars show that the “rise of disaster capitalism,” in which entrepreneurs profit from the social chaos that results from both human made disasters (such as war) and natural disasters (such as tsunamis or hurricanes), is nothing new but intrinsic to the system of capitalism itself from its very inception centuries ago.

The system of sovereign nation-states, dividing our planet into about 200 separate governmental entities with absolute borders, means that human and natural disasters become compounded since nations are largely on their own and easily subject to aggression from other nations or subversion through economic or other means. Nazi Germany came to power as a militarized sovereign nation-state, fostering a rabid nationalism, and its invasions of Czechoslovakia, Poland, France,

Russia and other countries could not have happened if the world was a demilitarized federation as envisioned by the Constitution for the Federation of Earth. Each of these nations was part of the fragmented system of militarized sovereign nations recognizing no enforceable laws above themselves. Each of these nations fostered nationalism in its own population as it fought back against the enemy Germans.

The fragmented system allows the powerful imperial nations (run by their capitalist ruling classes) to dominate the weaker nations through economic pressure, monetary indebtedness, threats, or outright war. In the late 20th century, the US wiped out 3-4 million people in southeast Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos), and with its NATO allies destroyed the former Yugoslavia, a successful socialist state. US subversion of Yugoslavia and NATO created a human rights nightmare of wars and atrocities among the Balkan sub-states of Yugoslavia, and later acted as saviors by pacifying the mess they had created. In the 21st century, the US and its imperial allies have invaded Afghanistan, destroyed Iraq, bombed Pakistan, Somalia, and other states, destroyed the stable, prosperous government of Libya, and caused immense suffering in Syria and Yemen. As Michael Parenti has pointed out in *The Face of Imperialism* and other works, the list of interventions and destruction of other people's nations and lives by the US with its ideology of global capitalism appears endless.

Capitalism loves this divided and suffering world as the source of immense profit for its "entrepreneurs." They make high profits from the manufacturer, transport, and sale of weapons worldwide and they make immense

profits from securing, and rebuilding, the devastated societies that their weapons manufacture has created. Capitalism as such has no moral grounding. It simply makes profit. It profits more from human disasters and misery than from stable societies in which assets are public, since public assets are there not for private profit but for the common good of the citizens. The sovereign nation-state system, which is a system of war and perpetual humanitarian disasters (as well as a system of imperial domination of the rich nations over the poor nations) is therefore fundamental to the capitalist drive to maximize private profit.

The drive for private profit requires a system of scarcity. There must be simply not enough to go around, and therefore prices can be kept high enough to maximize private profit. Similarly, money must be created as debt to private banking institutions, since money must also necessarily be in short supply in order to maximize private profit. In a system where assets are publicly owned and directed to the common good (a system in which there is reasonable economic equality and enough for everybody), capitalists have significantly less opportunity to maximize their profit at the expense of people and the environment.

Publicly owned resources may include protected national parks or forest preserves in which capitalist exploitation is prohibited by law. Such protection enrages those who believe that the right to private profit is the ultimate right, superseding all other rights. Their mythic ideology, not unlike that of the Nazis, proclaims that “democracy” means the right to exploit without restriction in order to maximize profit.

The Nazis claimed the ultimate “right” of the Volk, the mythically conceived people, to dominate and exploit. The US capitalists claim that they foster “democracy,” a mythically conceived “right” of the rich to dominate and exploit the poor. When the US proclaims it is “promoting democracy” worldwide, this, of course, is merely a code word for maximizing private profit worldwide, at the expense of people, the environment, and future generations.

Both the system of capitalism and the system of warring sovereign nation-states goes back 3 to 4 or more centuries. Over this period in every nation-state, capitalists have colonized the governments of these states, very often in the name of “democracy.” Therefore, because they have coopted the politicians and colonized the governments of many nations, there is no nation today that really serves the common good of its people. One of the principle founders of their ideology was the British philosopher John Locke, who said that the ultimate rights that all governments must respect are “life, liberty, and property.” It is vast accumulations of private property today that dominate every nation that calls itself “democratic.”

Nearly every nation, in one way or another, serves the regime of private profit at the expense of nature and society. Even Western European nations participate in the imperial destruction of other nations worldwide through NATO, which is an imperialist military organization under US domination. These nations with their high standard of living benefit from a world-system in which many of their goods are manufactured within poor, sweatshop nations, to be imported to the great economic advantage for the wealthier nations. It is

in the interest of their ruling classes to support the US led imperial domination of the world.

Any nation that rebels against this world system (of sovereign nation-states interfaced with global capitalism), and tries to create a socialist or economically democratic regime, is immediately targeted for destruction by the dominant system of capitalist-imperialist nations: Chile, which democratically elected a socialist in 1970, had its government destroyed by a US sponsored coup in 1973. Cuba, which threw out a US supported dictator in 1959, was targeted by a 50 year total economic blockade as well as by many attempts at assassination or overthrow of its revolutionary leader, Fidel Castro.

Yugoslavia, a successful socialist federation of nations, had to be destroyed under capitalist-imperialist ideology, which as Noam Chomsky affirms, cannot tolerate “the threat of a good example” anywhere on Earth. Nicaragua, which threw out a US supported dictator in 1979 and instituted a democratic-Christian socialist government, had to be, and was, destroyed by US sponsored terrorist attacks over the next decade. Venezuela today is similarly under systematic attack by the US because of its attempt to end poverty, end homelessness and lack of education, and provide healthcare for all its citizens.

“Democracy” literally means “rule of the people.” However, under capitalism, governments calling themselves democratic have been colonized by the wealthy in their own interests. Any government that limits the ability of the capitalists to rule as an oligarchy is immediately targeted and destroyed. Karl Marx

pointed out long ago that there cannot be effective political democracy unless there is also reasonable economic democracy, and this remains true today as it was in the 19th century. That is why there can never be effective democracy on the Earth unless it is global democracy.

Capitalism thrives upon scarcity as well as disaster. If resources are abundantly available to people, prices remain low and profit severely curtailed. However, if a needed commodity is scarce, prices and profits soar. The fragmented system of sovereign nation-states is a perpetual disaster for many places around the world, fostered by wars, economic competition, tariffs, blockades, and shifting alliances. This makes it perfect for capitalism, which thrives on right wing ideologies, fears, and hatreds, perpetuating social disasters and wars without end—all of which bring tremendous profit to capitalists.

How do we create government that is responsive to the needs of citizens and thereby establishes peace, justice, and sustainability? Under today's world system, it is impossible to create any such government. The global capitalist-imperialist institutions will immediately target such a government for overthrow or elimination. Today, we face the prospects of both global nuclear war and planetary climate disaster. At the heart of both of these planetary crises lie the twin evils of capitalism and the system of sovereign nation-states. If humanity were united, there would be no supposed need for nuclear weapons or any weapons of war, and, if humanity were united under the Earth Constitution, there would be no more capitalist taking advantage of fragmentation and disaster to maximize private profit.

The Constitution for the Federation of Earth creates a World Parliament as the ultimate legal authority on our planet, representing the sovereignty of the people of Earth and dedicated to promoting their common good. It places the basic resources of the Earth necessary for the common good in the hands of the global public authority (Article 4) and establishes global public banking that ends the indebtedness of nations and peoples to the private banking cartels (Article 8). This common good clearly and explicitly entails ending war and disarming the nations, protecting human rights worldwide, ending extreme poverty on the Earth, and protecting the global environment (Article 1). The world system of elections and agencies is arranged so that big money cannot dominate and so that people from around the world are truly represented.

The Constitution, therefore, nonviolently establishes legitimate governmental authority higher and greater than the nation-states, the corporations, and the private bankers. It creates a global public authority that will end the system of nation-state imperialism (by the US and NATO or any other imperial powers). Therefore, for the first time in history there will be government not colonized by imperial powers, nor by capitalists, nor by banking cartels.

There cannot be successful democracy (that is, reasonable economic and political equality for all) anywhere on Earth as long as the system of global capitalism in league with the system of militarized nation-states persists on our planet. Reasonable economic equality will be destroyed anywhere and everywhere until the day when the people of Earth raise their true sovereign authority over every nation, every bank, and every corporation.

Then we will have global democracy and the law will constrain the market place to serve the common good rather than the accumulation of private wealth.

Democracy must be global democracy under the Earth Constitution, or there will never be authentic democracy on the Earth. The fundamental assets of our planet must belong to the people of Earth and be used to serve the common good (Article 4). Only in this way is a decent future possible for human beings. If we want to end capitalism and the war system, and their spin offs in fascism and Nazism, then we must ratify the Constitution for the Federation of Earth.

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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 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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