

History and Significance of the Earth Constitution

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In 1958, an agreement to call a World Constitutional Convention was initiated by Philip Isely and others and circulated worldwide for signatures, with a request that both national governments and people of each country send delegates. From this call began a movement of world citizens from many countries to create a constitution for the Earth and initiate democratic world government. In 1968, a World constitutional Convention was held at Interlaken, Switzerland, with 200 people's delegates from 27 countries.

During the next 8 years, with many international meetings, a strategy for "Reclaiming Earth for Humanity" was circulated and a drafting commission was chosen to write the Constitution according to the guidelines developed at the first World Constitutional Convention. This commission completed the first draft of the Earth Constitution in 1972. Between 1973 and 1975, the draft was finished, printed in 1974, and circulated worldwide for comment, together with the call to the second session of the World Constitutional Convention (now defined as the "World Constituent Assembly") in 1977.

In June 1977, the second session of World Constituent Assembly was held in Innsbruck, Austria. The proposed Earth Constitution was debated paragraph by paragraph, amended, then adopted with 138 original signers from 25 countries and 6 continents. A worldwide call for ratification by the nations and peoples of Earth was issued. The Constitution was sent to U.N. General Assembly and to all national governments.

The Third Session of World Constituent Assembly was held January 1979, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In 1982 in Brighton, England, under Article 19 of the Constitution, the people of Earth begin holding sessions of the Provisional World Parliament.

The process of development of provisional world law had begun, continuing at the Second Session of the Provisional World Parliament in New Delhi, India, in 1985 and the Third Session in Miami Beach, Florida, in 1987. A Fourth Session of the World Constituent Assembly was held in Troia, Portugal, in 1991 that resulted in a number of minor changes in wording. During the course of its 33-year development, literally thousands of world citizens worked at developing the Earth Constitution in the form that we have it today. It is the only world constitution in existence that has undergone such a rigorous process of democratic, participatory development.

Since 1982, the Provisional World Parliament has met at eleven times in different cities around the world. A substantial body of quality provisional world law has been created as a basis for a future world civilization of genuine peace, prosperity, and justice before for every citizen of our planet. At the same time, the worldwide campaign to ratify the Earth Constitution continues to grow. The Institute on World Problems was created in 2001 to work with WCPA and the Earth Federation Movement in this process of nonviolent transformation toward a decent, democratic, and sustainable future for our precious planet Earth.

The Constitution for the Federation of Earth may well be the most important document of the 20th

and 21st centuries. It is comparable in significance to the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Charter for the International Criminal Court. However, unlike the latter documents, the Earth Constitution will be hailed as establishing the paradigm shift that made possible peace, justice, and environmental sustainability for the Earth. These latter documents appear among those representing the highest moral and legal thinking possible under the present world order dominated by the system of sovereign nation-states for well over four centuries. The Earth Constitution establishes the foundations of a transformed world order premised on the holism that has been uncovered by every 20th century science from micro-physics to macro-physics to ecology to systems theory to the basic social sciences.

When future historians consider the history of the 20th century, they will not only see it as the century of global wars and mass exterminations, and they will not only see it as the century that produced nuclear weapons and delivery systems that could wipe out the human race, they also may well see it as the century that produced mankind's greatest hope in the form of the Earth Constitution. For the Earth Constitution embodies a true paradigm shift from fragmentation and fragmented thinking to holistic thinking under the principle of unity in diversity institutionalized within planetary democratic government. It transforms the fragmentation of the modern world system into the holism that will make possible the sustainable, peaceful flourishing of humankind for the next millennium. In the view of many, it represents the paradigm document for the third millennium.

Mahatma Gandhi's dictum that all men are brothers does not merely betoken a moral "ideal" that informs our human situation. It expresses a reality, a fundamental truth of our planetary condition that must be actualized if we are to survive and flourish on our tiny Spaceship Earth. In the face of our present endangered future, and in the face of our incessant chaotic world of war and violence, our partiality for our own culture, race, nation, language, ethnicity, or tradition must give way to the universality of the most fundamental of all moral and existential principles: all human beings are brothers and sisters.

The greatest foundation that this universal truth could possibly have would be embodiment within an Earth Constitution that legally establishes universal citizenship for all the people of Earth. Legal citizenship establishes equality, freedom, and responsibility for citizens to act for the common good of society, the Earth, and future generations. The fundamental existential and moral truth of our planetary condition must be enshrined within the majesty of world law.

"World peace through world law" is a frequently heard maxim of world federalism. Its meaning is quite literal. There can be no peace unless a peace system is established for the world. Such a system has perhaps four most fundamental components: (1) it must involve enforceable world law, (2) this world law must be enforceable over individuals, (3) it must be democratically legislated by a world parliament, and (4) it must be part of a federal system in which governmental power resides on many levels from the local to the planetary levels. Vibrant democracy, legally empowering all persons as world citizens in equality, freedom, and responsibility,

enshrined at all levels from local to global, actualizes the universal moral and existential truth at the heart of our situation. In doing so, it becomes the foundation of world peace with justice.

Each of these components is fundamental to democracy, and the chaos, corruption, and unending violence of our world order stems most basically from lack of authentic democracy. Nations spend a large portion of their wealth militarizing themselves in order to confront a lawless and dangerous world. In doing so, they fail to address poverty, education, sanitation, healthcare, human rights violations, and other serious problems within their own borders.

When they do attempt to address these issues within their own borders, they soon come to understand that our present planetary monetary and political system prevents effective change within countries. These systems are predicated on the fragmentation of our human reality to the point where no part, within the fragmented world order, is capable of realizing the common good of its citizens, let alone of the precious Earth, or future generations. The structural chaos of the present world system itself prevents our highest human ideals from becoming actualized.

Global economic and structural conditions prevent fragmented nation-states from creating a decent life for their citizens while simultaneously inhibiting effective united action to address climate crisis, rapidly depleting resources, massive poverty, weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and other planetary issues beyond the scope of individual nations. Immense debt strangles even the so-called developed

nations, yet there appears no way out of an economic system premised on crushing debt. Militarism drains the wealth of most nations, yet there appears no option but to participate in a never-ending arms race to keep up with the latest technological developments in weapons within a dangerous world.

Global climate crises and resource depletion meanwhile create ever-more scarcity of arable land, fresh water, ocean fisheries, and life-sustaining forests. Rainfall becomes erratic, regular seasons necessary to agriculture lose their reliability, desperate citizens become socially unstable and may resort to violence. Protection of human rights and democratic governance becomes less and less tenable and possible. Universal surveillance and the national security state appear more and more necessary due to the social chaos engendered everywhere by the militarized fragmentation of the world system in tandem with our disintegrating planetary ecosystem.

It is relatively meaningless to believe that something called “international law” can address the chaos, confusion, and endless wars generated by the present world system. You cannot govern the behavior of militarized collective entities called nations who see themselves as “sovereign” and therefore independent of any effective laws above themselves. You cannot address climate crisis, resource depletion, or proliferation of nuclear weapons through a “treaty system” that is largely voluntary on the part of nations and from which they can withdraw at any time as their self-interest dictates or, within which, they can manipulate and interpret the agreement as their perceived self-interest dictates.

World peace through world law necessarily requires

genuine planetary democracy. It necessarily requires that world law be enforceable over every individual by a civilian policeforce trained to follow due processand the protection of innocent bystanders. World peace can only be created through a democratic world parliamentlegislating on the basis of the common goodof people everywhere and dealing with planetary matters beyond the ability of individual nations to handle. Finally, world peace with justicecan only be created through a federal system in which localities, regions, and nations share levels of sovereigntywith a world parliament representing the sovereignty of all the people who live upon the Earth.

Even though human beingshave been widely aware of the democratic idea since the 18th century, authentic planetary democracywould constitute a genuine paradigm shiftfrom a worldwide warsystemto a peacesystem. For planetary democracy under the Earth Constitutionestablishes a world order on the holistic principle of unity in diversity. The system of sovereign nation-statesis inherently fragmented, inherently incapable of uniting humanity. World peacewith justiceand sustainabilitycan only flow from this principle of holismthat constitutes the fundamental discovery of every 20th century science.

The highest moral and legal thinking possible under the present fragmented world system, illustrated in the U.N.documents mentioned above, generates ideals in the service of a slow evolution of humankind toward a decent world order. Documents such as the charter of the International Criminal Courtor the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rightsdo not challenge the system of sovereign nation-states that blocks both

peace and genuine cooperation for dealing with global crises, nor do they challenge the global economic system of crushing debt and unlimited accumulations of private wealth that prevents human flourishing everywhere on Earth. The institutionalized structures of fragmentation turn human unity in diversity into a set of mere “ideals” that ring of an impossible utopia.

Only the new paradigm of genuine planetary democracy, premised on a constitution that institutionalizes unity in diversity through effective world law, can transform our endangered planet before it is too late. We do not need ideals within a model of the slow evolution of hopelessly fragmented institutions. We need a genuine paradigm shift that places the fragmented institutions within a new set of premises that transforms and empowers them to become cooperating units within an authentic world peace system. Only within such a system can the moral and existential truth that all human beings are brothers and sisters become a living reality enshrined in universal world citizenship.

The wonderful diversity of the world’s nations, religions, races, cultures, languages, and forms of life must be preserved and protected, and this diversity must govern itself democratically at the local and regional levels worldwide. But this can only happen if there is genuine unity for the whole, premised on the dignity, freedom, and equal human rights of people everywhere. In a world lacking such unity, the more powerful cultures, races, fragmented institutions, and political powers will simply overwhelm, digest, and assimilate genuine diversity.

Such a unity can only derive from the concrete

institutions spelled out in workable detail by the Constitution for the Federation of Earth. From within the chaos and apparent hopelessness of the 20th century, thousands of world citizens worked together to create that century's most important document, a document founded on a new, holistic paradigm, showing the way forward to a peaceful and just human community living sustainably on our precious planet 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 (WCPA) 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.

Martin has published or edited seven books and many articles and reviews on a variety of topics in comparative philosophy, the spirituality of human liberation, economic democracy, and democratic world government...