

The Human Community and Our Global Social Contract

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World Constitution and Parliament Association
India Chapter

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2019

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**World Constitution and Parliament Association
India Chapter
Global Communication Center
7, Jantar Mantar, New Delhi**

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We stand at a critical moment in the Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth Community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility for one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations. (The Earth Charter, 2000)

Conscious that Humanity is One despite the existence of diverse nations, races, creeds, ideologies and cultures and that the principle of unity in diversity is the basis for a new age when war shall be outlawed and peace prevail; when the earth's total resources shall be equitably used for human welfare; and when basic human rights and responsibilities shall be shared by

all without discrimination; Conscious of the inescapable reality that the greatest hope for the survival of life on earth is the establishment of a democratic world government; We, citizens of the world, hereby resolve to establish a world federation to be governed in accordance with this constitution for the Federation of Earth.

Preamble to the Earth Constitution, 1991

Abstract.

The concept of our 'human community' pervades much of the literature and thought of the early 21st century. Yet much of this literature and thought has not yet comprehended the truth that a community cannot be fully realized without genuine democratic law. Democratic world law is not something added to the human community from another tradition or set of ideas. Rather it is intrinsic to the very concept of our human community. Indeed, without democratic world law, the fate of humanity and the Earth is infused with great peril, with the possibility of nuclear holocaust or planetary climate collapse. The 'great promise' of this moment in history is found not only in recognition of our human family as one global community. It is also necessarily found in the recognition of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth as the key to a peaceful,

just, and sustainable human future.

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Part One:

Human Development, Global Community, and Our Present Limitations.

Many psychologists, philosophers, and other thinkers today recognize broad patterns of human growth toward cognitive and moral maturity. There is a wide consensus that proper human growth moves beyond acceptance of the values and beliefs of one's local nation and culture to a "worldcentric" and global orientation. This consensus spans from psychologists such as Carol Gilligan and Lawrence Kohlberg to philosophical thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas and Ken Wilber. Mature people, become world citizens, members of the human community. The human race itself is capable of historically growing to worldcentric maturity.

In terms of our generic, human historical development, this is sometimes put in terms of a first and second Axial Period. The first Axial Period (described today by many thinkers) took place between the 8th and 2nd centuries BCE and is generally understood as the period

when humans matured to the point where we became capable of discerning ever-more clearly our personal subjectivity from the 'objective' world around us. We also became capable of individuality, of understanding our lives as individuals moving from birth toward death and needing to relate ourselves spiritually and morally to the surrounding universe (Hick 2004: 29-35).

A number of thinkers assert that today we are moving into a second Axial Period, one characterized as awakening to our common planetary situation as citizens of spaceship Earth. As Swidler and Mojzes put this, "The new form of consciousness is different from the First Axial Period. Then it was individual consciousness; now it is global consciousness" (2000: 85). Even though the idea of the human family reaches back into the ancient roots of many religions and cultures, the actualized consciousness of this truth is emerging globally only today. As spiritual thinker Eckhart Tolle declares: "Our species now faces a stark choice: Evolve further our comprehensive and integral sense of interconnectedness, and our mutually shared sense of the inherent value of all humanity and planet earth which hosts us, or die" (in Johnson and Ord, 2012: 36).

However, there are many who have reached the stage of worldcentric maturity who refuse to recognize the need for democratic world law. They refuse to move beyond the antiquated framework of so-called sovereign nation-states and affirm that global consciousness alone will not save humankind from impending disaster. Only a democratic World Parliament under an effective Constitution for the Earth can prevent or mitigate the disasters happening all around us. For these disasters are largely consequences, not simply of our planetary immaturity, but of our antiquated global economic system interfaced with our centuries old planetary war-system of militarized nation-states.

So, for example, the Worldwatch Institute speaks of the need to work toward “the evolution of an environmentally sustainable and socially just society, in which the needs of all people are met without threatening the health of the natural environment or the well-being of future generations” (in Osborne and Kriese 2008: 217). As Helen Caldicott expresses this, “We have been given the privilege of saving all past and all future generations, all animals, all plants” (in Brooks and Fox 1995: 28). But Worldwatch Institute, like Greenpeace, 350.org, and nearly all the other environmental organizations, fails to draw the profoundly logical, moral,

and sensible conclusion that the only way to achieve these things is through enforceable democratically legislated world law.

Global thinker David C. Korten, in his book *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*, declares, “This revolution is bringing forth a new consciousness of the reality that we humans are one people sharing one destiny on one small planet” (2006: 7). In the United States today, book after book appears with similar titles such as: *Empowering Global Citizens: A World Course* (Reimers, et al. 2016), *Global Community, Global Security* (Osborne, et al. 2008), or *Understanding the Global Community* (Messitte and Grillot 2013). The latter declare: “In response to the growing connectivity, governments, international organizations, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, world leaders, students, and individuals are engaging with counterparts at home and abroad to better understand the global community in which we all live” (2013: 5-6).

These discussions, however, often ignore the two-headed elephant in the room: a global economic system out of control, dominated by the super-rich, and militarized sovereign nation-states in economic and political

competition with one another, also dominated by the rich. How can we achieve peace, justice, or sustainability in the face of this fragmentation and undemocratic rule of our planet? The United Nations itself is grossly undemocratic. Without global democracy, uniting us all as political, economic, and human-rights bearing equals, these rulers have a vested interest in promoting division, fragmentation, and fear. As Osborne and Kriese put it, “When we look at the world through provincial borders, a sense of ‘us versus them’ usually emerges. When we ‘see’ the world through a community lens, however, a sense of ‘we’ can and often does emerge” (2008: xv). However, the military-industrial-academic-security complexes of the world are accumulating vast wealth with respect to these “provincial borders.”

We need to take our shifting and vague notions of the “human family” or “human community” and make them into more than simply an amorphous “culture of peace.” For a culture of peace alone cannot turn the global community to the worldwide, coordinated effective action necessary to overturn the negative effects of global rule by the rich and their militarized sovereign nation-states. The United Nations, based on both these premises in its Charter, is incapable, therefore, of protecting the

environment or disarming the nations: the UN's recently proclaimed "sustainable development goals" notwithstanding. We need to replace its Charter with the Constitution for the Federation of Earth.

Matthew Crosston writes: "Presently, the world community recognizes these problems but has not yet formally incorporated them into an accepted definition of security." However, it should be clear that security cannot possibly come from more militarism, more denial of civil liberties, more spying and secrecy, more violations of due process of law, more 'free trade' capitalism, and more injustice. These initiatives go in exactly the wrong direction. As physicist and spiritual thinker David Bohm writes:

This [fragmentation] can be seen very clearly in terms of groupings of people in society (political, economic, religious, etc.) The very act of forming such a group tends to create a sense of division and separation of the members from the rest of the world but, because the members are really connected with the whole, this cannot work. (In Osborne and Kriese 2008: 92).

The idea of the 'human community' is not a 'mere ideal' or a vision of something morally desirable. It is the most fundamental reality

of our human situation. Separation and division are secondary and largely contingent. Nevertheless, in future-oriented free beings, our reality also grounds our ideals. The ideal of ‘human community’ is inherent in the very fact of our common humanity, an ideal that is denied everywhere on Earth where division, fragmentation, and conflict are emphasized. Our fundamental problems, as well as our dominating institutions—global capitalism and the system of militarized sovereign states—stem from a refusal to recognize this reality.

As critical social thinker Antonio Gramsci expressed this: 20th century culture “is made up in a queer way. It contains elements of the caveman and principles of the most modern advanced learning, shabby prejudices of all past historical phases and intuitions of a future philosophy of the human race united all over the world” (in Harmon 2008: 618). Those who promote global capitalism with its inevitable rule of the rich, and its inevitable colonization of national governments by the interests of the rich, are like ‘cavemen’ with their ‘shabby prejudices’. As psychologist Erich Fromm put it, “the fact is, while we are living technically in the Atomic age, the majority of men—including most of those who are in power—still live emotionally in the Stone Age” (1981: 18). Many of these Stone

Age men have modern weapons systems with nuclear capability, or global economic empires, at their disposal.

If we want a future on this planet, it is time the citizens of the world united behind something more than idealistic slogans about the need to be a global community or a human family of brothers and sisters. The truth of these realities needs to be grounded in a global social contract that takes universal ideals of human rights, peace, and environmental sustainability and institutionalizes them in a democratic Constitution for the Earth that guarantees these necessities with the force of law. It is this social contract that will be most effective in raising human consciousness out of the Stone Age and into the age of global consciousness.

If we act in time, our future might well be a glorious one, despite the damage already done to the environment. Global thinker R. Buckminster Fuller envisions a synergistic effect of cooperation among the human community that could readily solve our terrible economic problems of scarcity, poverty, and misery, and that can make possible a freedom and cooperation now actively prevented by what he calls the "limitations of [our] exclusive identity only with some sovereignized circumscribed

geographical locality” (1970: 90):

Earth planet-based humanity will be physically and economically successful and individually free in the most important sense. While all enjoy total Earth no human will be interfering with the other, and none will be profiting at the expense of the other.... They will be free in the sense that they will not struggle for survival on a “you” or “me” basis, and will therefore be able to trust one another and be free to co-operate in spontaneous and logical ways. (Ibid. 95)

Failure to do this means almost certain destruction under the current fragmented and alienating world institutions, and it means that we are actively limiting our human potential through fragmentation and conflict. As Johnson and Ord put this: “Almost everything wrong with the world is the result of the way the institutional space is misaligned and out of control” (2012: 31). The answer, however, is not to ignore the fragmented ‘institutional space’ as most advocates of our ‘human community’ tend to do, but to establish a correct and rectified institutional space that truly provides for human and environmental needs, and frees us to really address our increasingly lethal global problems.

It is not only pragmatic necessity for survival

that demands this, and not only moral ideals. Human spirituality also demands that we create a global institutional space that mirrors our planetary human community. My own writings over the past 20 years have insisted that “Democratic world law is the 21st century form of love.” Philosopher Alan Gewirth, in his book *The Community of Rights*, emphasizes the same point:

Amid my concentration here on economic needs and problems, it is important to keep in mind that my whole project has an important spiritual dimension. This spirituality is directly reflective of the moral concern that all humans, actual or prospective agents, be enabled to live lives of dignity, self-fulfillment, and mutuality of respect. This may be a secular spirituality, but it is none the worse for that. The thesis I present in this book, epitomized in the community of rights, can indeed be viewed as arguing not only for a caring society but also, in a parallel way, for an institutionalization of love. (1996: 15)

If the law institutionalizes respect for human rights and dignity, and concern for justice and economic equity, then the law is an “institutionalization of love.” Like the concept of our human community, love is both the fundamental reality of our human situation (see

Martin 2016, Chap. 9) as well as an ideal inherent in our human futurity. It is perhaps our most fundamental human potential. Cosmologist and planetary thinker Ervin Laszlo writes:

I may be more closely related to my sons and partners in life than to someone I have never met on the other side of the world. But I'm related to all of them; it's a difference only in intensity. Ultimately I am connected with everyone, just as I'm connected to the person closest to me. If I love the person closest to me then I also love all other people because we are all part of the same whole—we are part of each other.... We can discover that we are all one family. Utopia because a possibility at this critical juncture of our history. (2014: 79-80)

Full recognition of our human community is simultaneously love for all other people, and the 'utopia' that emerges before us is a 'practical utopia', not an impractical dream. It is 'utopia' in that we need to solve our most fundamental human problems once and for all. These are problems finally emerged clearly before us in the 20th century in the form of two world wars, dozens of smaller genocidal wars, global terrorism, and a collapsing planetary environment. Innumerable critical thinkers have identified the primary source of this

nightmare as global capitalism, with its rule by the rich, and sovereign militarized nation-states, colonized by the rich.

We can solve these problems only by uniting together in the name of the 95% of the people of Earth who are not the rulers, and who are not rich, most of whom live in abject poverty. And we can only unite in a truly practical way by turning the nations into states within the Earth Federation, states that can ultimately be demilitarized by law and made into cooperative administrative districts based on constitutional principles of peace, freedom, justice, and environmental sustainability. As Benjamin Ferencz, chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals, declared: “The only way to permanently solve the problem of war between nations is to replace the LAW OF FORCE with the FORCE OF LAW” (in Brooks and Fox, 1995: 230).

If true spirituality means universal love for humanity, the Earth, and the Divine Ground of Being, then spirituality needs to be institutionalized under an Earth Constitution that embodies that love. As Martin Luther King, Jr. declared, “Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible”

(ibid. 166).

Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi declared that the “State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form” (1972: 132). It institutionalizes violence in the forms of militarism and ‘national security’. It is not only the spirituality of love, but also the rationally discernable moral values of peace, freedom, justice, and environmental sustainability that must be institutionalized. This cannot be done within a fragmented system of some 193 sovereign states. It can only be done for the human community as a whole.

Both King and Gandhi understood that the human community is intrinsically denied by the system of militarized sovereign nation-states. It may be that King was assassinated because, at the end, he began seeing the connections between injustice within the United States and the horrific injustice of the Vietnam War. The very existence of such a system of militarized sovereign states denies the reality of our human community. Violence, institutionalized with the very existence of militarism, including the violence and suspicion embedded within ‘national security’ institutions, destroys community.

The Earth Constitution does not abolish the

nations. It merely limits sovereignty to their internal affairs and binds them all together under laws that establish peace, justice, freedom, and sustainability for the whole of humanity. It specifies that the law be enforced with a minimum of force, and with many forms of incentive as alternatives to force (Article 10). It actualizes our human community.

Neither does the Earth Constitution abolish 'free trade'. It merely limits trade to those forms that enhance human well-being through institutionalizing global public banking (Article 8) and placing the Earth's essential resources (Article 4) in the service of human well-being (instead of the accumulation of private profit for the 5%). Gandhi wrote: "A nonviolent system of government is clearly an impossibility as long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists" (ibid. 120). The human community can only be actualized through effective global economic and political democracy. The cultural ideals of 'community', without changing the system that blocks those ideals, will clearly never succeed.

Part Two:

The Concept of Community versus the Concept of Absolute National Sovereignty.

In *The Community of Rights*, Alan Gewirth argues that our universal human rights bind us into a “positive” community based on rights and responsibilities. He argues that the role of government is not only to protect rights to freedom but also to promote the universal economic “well-being” for all citizens, since freedom has little meaning without economic well-being. He sums up:

My main emphasis in this book has been on the vast unfulfilled needs for freedom and well-being on the part of masses in the United States and throughout the world. What to do about these needs poses, in my opinion, the major challenge that confronts moral and political philosophy. If the needs are left unfulfilled, dire consequences may well follow for both West and East, both North and South. The consequences bear not only on the fates of millions of deprived persons throughout the world but also on the endurance of democratic institutions. I have tried to show that fulfillment of these needs is a matter of the human rights of the persons involved. (1996:

The misery of the majority of the world's citizens, which constitutes a violation of their most fundamental human right to well-being, is the "major challenge that confronts moral and political philosophy." We address that challenge by recognizing the right of every person on Earth to live under global democracy that explicitly protects their freedom and well-being. (See Articles 12 and 13 of the Earth Constitution, on-line or in Martin 2013. Article 28 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights implies this same right.)

Philosopher of law Ronald Dworkin, in *Law's Empire*, imagines three types of "community" that could be at the basis of law. He claims that the truth of legitimate law is premised on the "third model" of a community based on "integrity" and "principles":

The third model of community is the model of principle. It agrees with the rulebook model that political community requires a shared understanding, but it takes a more generous and comprehensive view of what that understanding is. It insists that people are members of a genuine political community only when they accept that their fates are linked in the following strong way:

they accept that they are governed by common principles, not just rules hammered out in a political compromise. (1986: 211)

We should accept integrity as a virtue of ordinary politics because we should try to conceive our political community as an association of principle; we should aim at this because, among other reasons, that conception of community offers an attractive basis for claims of political legitimacy in a community of free and independent people who disagree about political morality and wisdom. (Ibid. 411)

This is what is missing in today's world system. Internally some constitutions of sovereign nation-states may be based on 'principle', and, indeed, they may even claim that these principles are universal and apply to all human beings. But their absolute, militarized territorial borders: their armies, visa laws, and fear of immigrants, like their struggles for economic resources and ascendancy, belie this claim in practice. They militarize and fragment our natural human plurality with respect to morality and wisdom.

The structure of the world system defeats human rights and human dignity at every turn. It cannot be redeemed. It must be transformed into a legal community based on 'integrity' and

‘principle’, that Dworkin argues is at the heart of all legitimate law and governmental authority. ‘Integrity’ means that our pluralities concerning morality and wisdom are embraced within a larger, democratic institutional framework that affirms the principle of unity in diversity.

Philosopher of law, John Finnis, analyzes the concept of our universal human community into four components. The first component of our human community, he asserts, is “physical and biological”: “An aspect of human community is the genetic unity of the race” (1980: 136). The second component of human community is the “unity of intelligence in its capacities, its workings, and its product, knowledge.” Human beings are not only one species, all related to one another with the closest biological unity, but our collective intelligence produces our common heritage of human knowledge.

The third “part of our unity in human community, then, is the cultural unity of shared language, common technology, common technique (as in an orchestra), a common capital stock, and so on” (137). Thinkers as diverse as Noam Chomsky and Jürgen Habermas have also maintained that the ‘deep grammar’ of our languages gives all cultures, religions, and ways of life a shared civilizational foundation:

all translatable into one another. We coordinate worldwide in techniques, cultural activities, communications, etc. Our human community involves all of these universal dimensions.

Finnis continues: the fourth “part of our unity in human community, then, is the unity of common action.... But no degree of unity in those other three orders can substitute for such co-operation and common commitment” (138). This is because the fourth component of authentic human community is the rule of enforceable law under a democratic constitution. He continues: “As the common understanding of the unqualified expressions of ‘law’ and ‘the law’ indicates, the central case of law and legal system is the law and legal system of a complete community” (148).

On the basis of his detailed analysis of the concept of the human community, Finnis concludes:

We must not take the pretensions of the modern state at face value. Its legal claims are founded, as I remarked, on its self-interpretation as a complete and self-sufficient community. But there are relationships between men which transcend the boundaries of all poleis, realms, or states. These relationships exist willy-nilly,

in manifold and multiplying ways, in three of the four orders.... If it now appears that the good of individuals can only be fully secured and realized in the context of international community, we must conclude that the claim of the national state to be a complete community is unwarranted and the postulate of the national legal order, that it is supreme and comprehensive and an exclusive source of legal obligation, is increasingly what lawyers would call a 'legal fiction'. (129-130)

The basis of the authority of the state is that it promotes the "flourishing" of its citizens, and no state can fully promote such flourishing unless it is democratic. The state is increasingly a 'legal fiction' because it cannot be a "complete community" promoting (what Alan Gewirth calls) the "freedom and well-being" of its citizens. Instead the state must be concerned with "national security, military defense, foreign corporate invasions, international debt to private banking cartels (such as the IMF and World Bank), global economic competition, diminishing natural resources, and increasing social chaos. Under these circumstances no nation can any longer be truly democratic, and no nation can therefore be called a legitimate political community.

The concept of a complete community under the rule of law has therefore matured to its proper locus: the world community. Only the world community has the potential for becoming a “complete community.” The political framework of the world community (requiring ratification of the Earth Constitution) is more legitimate than any of the nation-states ever were.

That is because, as Jorge M. Valadez states, “Nation-states cannot claim to have a morally unconditional claim on their territories, for they generally acquired them through violent conquest, invasive settlement, broken treaties, and other morally illegitimate means” (in Osborne and Kriese 2008: 266). That is also because the human community is our fundamental reality, not nation-states, which will forever remain arbitrary and historically contingent. Our fundamental reality as a universal human community gives rise to the ideal of a complete human community—a global social contract institutionalizing democratic world law under the Earth Constitution.

Philosopher Errol E. Harris agrees with Gewirth, Dworkin, and Finnis that true democracy is a requirement of the human community and that sovereign territorial nation-states are no longer legitimate governing bodies. Their legitimacy

can only be restored if they federate under an Earth Constitution and their sovereignty becomes limited to internal affairs, leaving global problems and global issues to the World Parliament, the World Courts, and the World Administration. He concludes:

National sovereign states at the present time can no longer ensure to their own peoples the security that they originally promised and that was the essential justification of their *raison d'être*.... As long as national states remain sovereign, such democracy as exists (whether only professedly or more genuinely) is endangered internally by the extreme measures adopted to meet exceptional global menaces (such as terrorism and war), and externally by those dangers themselves, as well as others arising from global warming.... Only if the dangers currently overshadowing the human race can be removed and the associated world problems effectively tackled will there be any prospect of regenerating the democratic idea. (131-32)

If we want a future for the planet beyond perpetual war and climate collapse, if we want a future for our planet beyond totalitarian human rights violations and lack of democracy, and if we want a future that actualizes our planetary

human community, then we need to ratify the Constitution for the Federation of Earth. The concept of sovereign nation-states defeats community. Fernando Reimers, et. al. put it in this way:

National citizenship, since the Treaty of Westphalia over 350 years ago, is a status bound to the nation-state that is both inclusive and exclusive. It is inclusive in that it defines who qualifies as a member, or a citizen, and exclusive in that it also defines who is not. Global citizenship, by contrast, crosses multiple borders—political, cultural, social, and historical—and is entirely inclusive. Boundaries, some of which are clearly established in the context of national citizenship, fade in the context of global citizenship such that global citizenship runs the risk of becoming a meaningless concept. (2016: lxii)

Global citizenship, as membership in the human community, must be legally defined by world law enforceable over all individual persons (giving us all the rights and duties that legal citizens enjoy). All the idealistic slogans, from the Earth Charter, quoted above, to discussions of spirituality, to well-meaning contributions to the culture of peace, are in danger of becoming part of a 'meaningless concept', since our world remains legally defined by institutions of global

capitalism and militarized sovereign states that actively defeat human growth toward a truly human global community.

In the face of this horrific reality of structural fragmentation, human and environmental exploitation, and institutionalized, worldwide militarized violence, the concept of 'human community' (despite its popularity) becomes almost meaningless. 'World citizenship' needs to be more than a mere honorific title. There are worldwide movements such as www.unify.org that are rapidly spreading the concept and feeling of a common human community. But feelings and concepts are not enough. We need legal embodiment, thereby establishing the human community of world citizens under the Earth Constitution: whose rights and duties toward the Earth and its human family become officially recognized and demanded by world law.

As we have seen John Finnis and others affirm, a true community is a community bound together by common values (such as democracy, freedom, and human dignity) embedded within an effective democratic constitution. We need, more than all the idealistic proclamations about 'community' and the 'human family', to institutionalize our love and our sense of the

human community into an authentic legal community. The Earth Charter states that “it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility for one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.”

Such idealistic slogans alone will not replace the rule of force on Earth with the force of law. Future generations need to be protected by law, not by mere sentiments. Our true human community, and our true human potential for cooperation, harmony, and justice, will only be set free with the ratification of the Earth Constitution, making the human community into a “complete community.” To promote this task should be the number one imperative of all of those who consciously identify themselves as members of the human community.

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