

One World Democracy: A Progressive Vision for Enforceable Global

by Jerry Tetelman & Byron Belitsos

Review by Ronald J. Glossop

~~~~~

This new book is a straightforward let's-look-at-the-arguments appeal to progressive thinkers to accept nothing less than a radically changed international system focused on enforceable global law as the only way to abolish war and militarism as well as really addressing other global problems such as limiting population growth, preventing and halting the spread of global epidemics, preserving the environment, dealing with the problem of poverty, and limiting the activities of global corporations.

Part I is titled "Principles of Democratic Global Governance." The first point is that sovereignty (legitimate political power) belongs to individual human beings and the global community as a whole, not to nation-states (though nations can retain their identity in a world federation). The fiction of "international law" needs to be replaced by enforceable world law plus the realization that individuals must be held accountable. The creation of the International Criminal Court and the European Union shows that things are moving in the right direction. Nevertheless we now need a constitutional global democracy. A democratic world federation is the only way to get rid of the existing anarchic international war system, a system which undermines democracy within nations. A union of democracies is a logical place to start. A worldwide constitutional convention is one plausible way to get started. Also a few critical changes in the U.N. could transform it into a democratic world federation.

Part II addresses "Global Problems that Need Global Solutions." The first problem is eliminating nuclear weapons. Getting rid of nuclear weapons just cannot be accomplished in the existing anarchic system. Combatting the problem of global population growth and the spread of diseases such as AIDS plus the need to halt global warming are all problems that a global parliament could address. A democratic world government could mount an "Energy Marshall Plan" based on nuclear fusion, new kinds of renewable energy, and new ways of conserving energy, thus providing employment for those now working on weaponry and other military projects. Fighting global poverty would attack one of the factors that lead to more terrorism, and it would also help with other programs such as halting deforestation. Eliminating wars would help greatly in fighting poverty since wars keep people from doing useful work as well as consuming great quantities of resources that could be used to help the poor. Another problem a global democracy could address is reducing the negative impact of national borders. The European Union is showing how the obstacles previously existing at national borders can be eroded, and how making national borders less important can even assist in solving some ethnic and border disputes. Unfortunately, right now the government of the United States "has bought into the war system more than any other major power . . . . Sadly, this attitude probably makes America the greatest obstacle to the realization of a democratic world government." Another problem needing attention is that many global corporations, devoted to making as much money as possible regardless of consequences to others, are using their influence in ways that hinder rather than help in dealing with global problems such as war, depletion of resources, environment pollution, and helping those in poverty. Contrary to the views of some young activists, the problem to be addressed is not the undeniable existence of the spread of economic globalization but the fact that global corporations lack the restraints which a democratic world federation could provide.

Part III is called "Global Activism for a New Epoch." The coming shift in the global system will be "an outer expression of an inner transformation in the hearts and minds of a critical mass of people around the world." People will realize that they are world citizens and have an obligation to advance the rights of all persons on this planet, not just those who live in their own country. This attitude will allow people, especially young people, to resist insidious appeals to militarism, racism, nationalism, and separatist religious ideologies. "The world democracy movement is the culmination of humankind's long struggle to promote reason and

tolerance over suspicion, hatred, and dogma." In the final chapter titled "Focusing the Progressive Movement," the authors note that putting forth a logical argument about what needs to be done is not sufficient. The champions of one world democracy must cultivate influential individuals, especially those in the public spotlight that can reach others. We must again get the idea of world government into the middle of public debate as it was in the 1940s. Consider this: in a 1946 poll 54 percent of the public answered "yes" to the question, "Do you think the U.N. Organization should be strengthened to make it a global government with power to control the armed forces of all nations including the United States?" Only 22 percent answered "No." We need to get busy and spread our message.

The first Appendix lists "Key Organizations and Websites in the Global Governance Movement." The second one provides the text of a very perceptive article "Deck Chairs on the Titanic" by Tad Daley. It criticizes U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's High Level Panel for Change for not going to the root of how the U.N. needs to be reformed. The third appendix is "The World Federalist Movement: A Short History," a talk by World Federalist scholar Joseph Baratta delivered in San Francisco in April 2005.

ONE WORLD DEMOCRACY aims to stir world federalists to action by reminding them of the basic truths that global peace and justice require enforceable world law and that enforceable world law requires democratic world federation. It also argues persuasively that we need a democratic world federation to deal with the many other global problems confronting us. The message for us is: Those who are Citizens for Global Solutions should also be citizens for ONE WORLD DEMOCRACY.

~~~~~

Ronald J Glossop is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Peace Studies at Southern Illinois University and a World Federalist Institute Fellow and Steering Committee Member. He is also author of *Confronting War and World Federation?*

Jerry Tetalman and Byron Belitsos are long-time peace activists in the progressive movement, with 60 years experience combined, including leadership experience in the movement for a democratic world government. Jerry is a businessman and public speaker. Byron is the publisher of Origin Press, and a professional writer and editor.