

The Global Democracy Manifesto

<https://globaldemocracymanifesto.wordpress.com/english-2/>

A Critique and a Challenge

Dr. Glen T. Martin

This widely publicized manifesto is a disaster for humanity and for the future. It is vague and idealistic, like the empty Millennium Development Goals of the UN and like the pious and entirely ineffectual Earth Charter. Such empty pronouncements of some vague ideal with no concrete plan of how to get there (or analysis of why we cannot get there) serves only to delude people into thinking something is being done when, in fact, the polluters, the war-mongers, the systems of private profit and exploitation love these kinds of statements. Like the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which nearly every rights-violating nation-state affirms, such empty idealistic statements allow for broad affirmation among the destroyers of our planet since they require no concrete action to change their behavior. Below the manifesto is reproduced in its entirety in black font. I examine the manifesto paragraph by paragraph (in blue font) to make clear why it is a disaster and to show how we can remedy that disaster through an effective road map for establishing real global democracy.

MANIFESTO FOR A GLOBAL DEMOCRACY

- **Politics lags behind the facts.** We live in an era of deep technological and economic change that has not been matched by a similar development of public institutions responsible for its regulation. The economy has been globalized but political institutions and democracy have not kept pace. In spite of their many peculiarities, differences and limitations, the protests that are growing all over the world show an increasing discontent with the decision-making system, the existing forms of political representation and their lack of capacity for defending common goods. They express a demand for more and better democracy.

This paragraph neglects to point out that the economy has been globalized by undemocratic multinational corporations, global banking cartels, and superpower militarism with immense power to coerce nation-states into “trade agreements” that destroy the planetary ecosystem, enrich the 1%, and bring down the wages of workers everywhere, eliminating the hopes of a decent middle class income everywhere on the planet. While worldwide people are indeed demanding a system “for more and better democracy,” these words are dangerously vague and meaningless in the face of these immense forces of domination and exploitation. “Demanding democracy in protests” is surely not an effective strategy for global system transformation.

- **Global welfare and security are under threat.** The national and international order that emerged from the end of World War II and the fall of the Berlin Wall has not been able to manage the great advances in technology and productive systems for the benefit of all humanity. On the contrary, we are witnessing the emergence of regressive and destructive processes resulting from the economic and financial crisis, increased social inequalities, climate change and nuclear proliferation. These phenomena have already affected negatively the lives of billions of human beings, and their continuance and mutual reinforcement menace the peace of the world and threaten the survival of human civilization.

This statement uses the passive voice, as if social inequalities, climate change, and nuclear proliferation were merely oversights in a system that “has not been able to manage the great advances in technology and productive systems” that have emerged since the 20th century. If we do not analyze the causes of our current planetary disaster, or if we pussy-foot around examining how and why the current world anti-system is designed as the antithesis of planetary democracy, then we cannot hope to solve our dilemma. This paragraph makes it seem as if the dominators in the world system just overlooked these changes. But in fact they have actively resisted and systematically organized against any transformation that would eliminate social inequality, protect the climate, or eliminate nuclear weapons. (The completely innocuous nature of this document is revealed in its complaint that the current system has not prevented “nuclear proliferation.” It appears to accept the possession of huge arsenals of nuclear weapons by the superpowers, who remain poised to destroy the planet at a moment’s notice, and merely complains that we have not prevented “nuclear proliferation.”)

- **Global crises require global solutions.** Within a social universe determined by globalization, the democratic capabilities of nation-states and international institutions are increasingly restricted by the development of powerful global processes, organizations and systems whose nature is not democratic. In recent years, the main national and international leaders of the world have been running behind global events. Their repeated failures show that occasional summits, intergovernmental treaties, international cooperation, the multilateral system and all the existing forms of global governance are insufficient. The globalization of finance, production chains and communication systems, and the planetary power reached by destructive technologies, require the globalization of the political institutions responsible for their regulation and control, and the global crises require coherent and effective global solutions. That’s why we call for the urgent creation of new global agencies specialized in sustainable, fair and stable development, disarmament and environmental protection, and the rapid implementation of forms of democratic global governance on all the issues that current intergovernmental summits are evidently incapable of solving.

This paragraph is correct that “the global crises require coherent and effective global solutions.” But the irony is that this document does not offer any coherent and/or effective global solutions, only more pious ideals formulated by impotent intellectuals who imagine themselves to be “global thinkers”—who abhor the thought that their pious ideal of “global democracy” should ever find realization in a concrete and practical form like the Constitution for the Federation of Earth. Instead, we must remain in the stratosphere of abstractions, prating about the need for “the globalization of the political institutions responsible for their regulation and control,” rather than presenting actual concrete plans for such institutions such as found in the Earth Constitution.

- **We need to move forward to new, more extensive and deeper forms of democracy.** The current model of technological-economic globalization must give way to a new one which puts these processes at the service of a fairer, more peaceful and more humane world. We need a new paradigm of development which has to be sustainable on a global basis and which benefits the poorest of humanity. In order to avoid the deepening of global crises and to find viable solutions to the challenges posed by globalization we must move forward to more extensive and deeper forms of democracy. The existing national-state organizations have to be part of a wider and much better coordinated structure,

which involves democratic regional institutions on all the continents, the reform of the International Court of Justice, a fairer and more balanced International Criminal Court and a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly as the embryo of a future World Parliament. Yet, this institutional change will not be successful if it only accrues from the actions of a self-appointed elite. On the contrary, it must come from a socio-political process open to all human beings, with the goal of creating a participative global democracy.

In this paragraph these “global thinkers” appear to have decided to limp along with the same outmoded and inadequate institutions that they just decried (in abstract terms) in the previous paragraphs. They want to “reform the International Court of Justice.” This court was established in 1945 by the UN charter and is predicated on the same principle as the UN itself: the “sovereign integrity” of its member nation-states. You cannot “reform” what is founded on false principles (national sovereignty) you can only replace it with a genuine *world court* empowered and legitimated by a genuinely democratic *world system*. This same fuzzy thinking in this document applies to its call for a “more balanced International Criminal Court.” The ICC is predicated on the sovereignty of its member states (“The Assembly of States Parties”) and since national sovereignty (recognizing no effective enforceable laws above the nation-states) is one of the roots of our contemporary global disaster, it will hardly do to require this flawed institution of sovereign nations to become “more balanced.” Finally, to complete their disastrous foray into useless practical suggestions, these “thinkers” call for a “United Nations Parliamentary Assembly as the embryo of a future World Parliament.” They want to modify and limp along with an organization that has been a global lynchpin in (1) promoting the global neoliberal economic system dominated by banking cartels and multinational corporations, and (2) given us transnational trade agreements that have been a disaster for working people worldwide, and (3) fostered the war-system of the world through allowing rampant militarism in all countries and whose charter in Chapter Seven is explicitly premised on military solutions to conflicts between nations and breaches of the peace. They want to complement the UN General Assembly (which is a powerless advisory body) with a “Parliamentary Assembly” (as a second powerless advisory body) without the slightest recognition that the UN Charter, which is based on the false premise of national sovereignty, must be replaced by a genuine Earth Constitution that places sovereignty in the people of Earth where it rightfully belongs.

- **Globalizing democracy is the only way to democratize globalization.** Beyond our differences about the contents and appropriate methods to move towards a fairer and more stable world order, we the signatories share a strong commitment to the development of a global democracy. On behalf of Peace, Justice and Human Rights we do not want to be governed at the world level by those who have only been elected to do so at the national one, neither do we wish to be governed by international organizations which do not represent us adequately. That is why we work for the development of supranational political spaces and for regional, international and global institutions that live up to the challenges of the twenty-first century; institutions that express the different viewpoints and defend the common interests of the seven billion people who shape humankind today.

These thinkers now claim they have a “strong commitment” to the development of global democracy”—not to global democracy, but to its development. They give us an evolutionary model calling for the

“development of supranational political spaces” and for institutions that defend the common interests of the Earth’s seven billion people. However, political spaces are not some imaginary virtual reality that can evolve through the world’s current global anti-system of war and environmental destruction. Political space is defined by an effective Constitution. It is established when a Constitution outlines the rights and duties of every citizen in relation to the limitations, rights, and duties of government. Political space for the Earth can only be established by a Constitution for the Federation of Earth and cannot be “developed” in some vague way through the current institutions that are designed to prevent and deny that political space. We need a global set of institutions defined by the Earth Constitution that places both economics and politics within the framework of genuine global democracy. Political space is established by an Earth Constitution, not developed through some vague “commitment to democracy.”

- **We ask every human being to participate in the constitution of a global democracy.** We share the appeal to “unite for global change” and for “real democracy” with the world social movements. Both postulates express the growing rejection of being governed by political and economic powers on which we have no influence. Autonomy and self-determination are not only valid at the local and national level. That’s why we champion the principle of the right to participate in the making of fundamental global decisions that directly affect our lives. We want to be citizens of the world and not its mere inhabitants. Therefore we demand not just a local and national democracy, but also a global democracy, and we commit to work for its development and call on all the political, intellectual and civil-society leaders of the world, all the democratic organizations, parties and movements, and all persons of democratic persuasion on the planet to actively participate in its constitution.

Our eloquent spokespersons for global ideals through the inaction of vague generalizations now urge us to “unite for global change.” What can this effectively mean? Do we unite as an international NGO? Do we write to our UN representatives who represent sovereign nations and not us? Do we unite only in opinions and without any organization that can take action? They say we want all civic leaders and others to “actively participate in its constitution” — of what? We are given nothing specific, just a call to unite that is as empty as it is broad and meaningless. *Truly uniting would mean joining humanity together through ratification of the Earth Constitution.* This is what it really means to unite, and it is the only form of uniting that can effectively end war, protect universal human rights, regulate the economy for the common good, and create an environmentally sustainable civilization. To really unite means to establish a binding social contract for all humanity. It means, and can only mean, ratification of the Earth Constitution.

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