



SUPRANATIONAL FEDERALISM

The World Citizens' Journal

For a dialogue between peoples, nations and civilizations



**THE ALTIERO SPINELLI INSTITUTE
FOR FEDERALIST STUDIES**

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"It's good to live where humanity reigns. Those who choose to reside in a place devoid of humanity lack wisdom. ... Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you." (Confucius, *The Analects*, 4.1; 15.24).

Nowadays young people wonder if they will have a future. A nuclear war between great powers can annihilate the population of entire continents. Moreover, all living organisms, including humanity, are threatened by an irreversible ecological crisis of the biosphere. The international political system created at the end of the Second World War is paralyzed by hostilities between large and small powers pursuing conflicting goals and interests. No world player proposes to stop the mad race towards a fatal international anarchy.

However, the federalists can act. About half of the world's population lives in federal states, but in these countries, federalism is conceived as a technique of administrative decentralization. On the contrary, in Europe, since the Schuman Declaration of 1950, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) has been conceived as "the first step towards the European Federation." European and world federalists can act together for a just and peaceful international order, founded on democratically legitimized supranational institutions.

International pacification is necessary to stop the environmental crisis, the arms race and war. The first step is to start a dialogue between all national peoples and civilizations on the future of the international order. The European Union, "by creating an area of freedom, security and justice," has established the European citizenship. Why not establish the same form of peaceful coexistence for the citizens of the world?

Submissions – The "Supranational Federalism" Journal is open to all citizens of the world who wish to develop arguments and observations on the international political process in the spirit indicated in the mission statement above. The contribution must be written in English. The Journal will be published every three months. Each contribution must not exceed the limit of 1,500 words and must be sent to the following address: supranational.federalism@gmail.com. We encourage young people to submit articles. Submission must include a short biography and a photo of the author. Please do not include footnotes, endnotes, or references; instead provide hyperlinks for any references you think would be helpful. We reserve the right to make editorial changes before publication.

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Editor: Guido Montani, Honorary Member of the Union of European Federalists (UEF).

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The figure on the front page - with twelve portraits that have been chosen as personalities who have indicated to future generations the founding values of a cosmopolitan civilization - is the work of the graphic designer Alice Lazzaro: alicelazzaroart@gmail.com

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Why Supranational Federalism

In the summer of 1947, in Montreux, the world federalists and the European federalists decided to separate in order to better pursue the objectives they considered priorities: the world federalists thought that the priority was to put an end to wars, in an international reality dominated by superpowers with nuclear weapons: the world federation was necessary. The European federalists decided that their priority was to build the European Federation, to overcome national divisions among Europeans after the catastrophe of the Second World War and as a first step towards overcoming national divisions at the world level.

For many years, the two organisations achieved their objectives in complete independence, each one ignoring the work of the other federalist organisation. It was only in 1993, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Maastricht Treaty, which sanctioned the achievement of European monetary unification, that the two movements resumed the dialogue interrupted in Montreux. At the Pescara Congress, on May 2nd 1993, the MFE (Italian section of the UEF) approved a motion stating that "federalist action must take the form of a unitary action on different levels with the aim of overcoming the division between different organisations". In addition, "it decides to ask for the recognition of the MFE as an Italian WFM organization". This decision made it possible to start forms of collaboration between young Europeans and young world federalists in the Ventotene seminars and to activate a cultural debate thanks to the "Federalist Debate", where the members of the two organizations could discuss the problems of international and European politics. Furthermore, in the following years, the UEF also took note of the need for this political and organizational turnaround.

More than three decades have passed since 1993, in which personal meetings have increased and debates on world political events have been intertwined, but the different political priorities remain unchanged. World federalists consider what European federalists do interesting and vice versa. However, when it comes to deciding "what to do" everyone decides in separate congresses on strategic priorities. Even the problem of the ecological crisis, which could not be predicted at the time of Montreux, has now become an existential emergency, on a par with the nuclear threat, because the future of humanity depends both on a possible nuclear war between great powers and on an irreversible climate crisis. However, even the search for a common position on this second front has so far proved fruitless.

Are we to think that the division of Montreux between European and world federalists should continue into the Twenty-first century? That would be a mistake. The international and European reality has changed profoundly since 1947. Today, there is some reason to think that all federalists can and should find ways to join forces. If the European Union becomes an active "international peacemaker", federalism as the ideology of peace can become the political thought adopted by other peoples as well. On the world front, any success that strengthens peace between large and small powers, between rich and poor countries, will represent an impulse to the federal unification of Europe. An example of this synergy is the Marshall Plan that the United States launched after the war to promote European unification.

It must be acknowledged that the Cold War is definitively over, there are no longer any superpowers: the United States of America is no longer the dominant power, not even for the so-called West, as in the days when the USSR existed. President Obama had already understood that the United States could not play the role of international peacemaker, intervening everywhere to extinguish hotbeds of regional tensions. With President Trump, this orientation is obvious: Trump deliberately ignores the multilateral world institutions created by Roosevelt and in some cases

sabotages them. The UN has become an empty shell, the Security Council is paralyzed by crossed vetoes. International politics is dominated by nationalism and the arms race. The struggle for world domination generates conflicts between great powers (USA, China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Brazil). Policies for international, economic and political cooperation, and policies against climate change are a souvenir of the past.

The policy of European unification is also stagnating. Nationalism (called sovereignism in Europe) is eroding the European supranational construction. The parties that defend the idea of a European confederation (not a federation) are gaining strength even within the European Parliament. The European Union is an economic power without a real supranational government, it is not a state. It is incapable of having an independent voice in world affairs. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shown that, without the US, the Europeans are unable to help the government in Kiev resist the invasion. The crisis that has opened up again in the Middle East depends on Israel's refusal to accept the United Nations resolution of 1947, which provides for the partition of Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. Israel uses military domination as the only guarantee for its own security. However, peaceful coexistence between the peoples of the region would be possible and would guarantee, in addition to security, a common prosperity. The European Union is watching the drama in the Middle East, but is waiting for the United States to propose a temporary truce among the Mediterranean countries. The countries of the European Union have built a Union that, until now, has guaranteed European citizens peace and well-being. But until when? Europeans seem to ignore that Europe has become the rich continent that other world powers are trying to divide and conquer.

"Supranational Federalism" is an editorial proposal available to all federalists and to those who intend to participate in the search for the political and cultural means necessary to found the cosmopolitan civilization of the citizens of the world. This process is underway in the European Union, where its citizens already enjoy a threefold identity: they have a spontaneous citizenship, which depends on where they were born; a national citizenship and a supranational European citizenship. Europeans, like all the other inhabitants of the Planet, can become citizens of the world, provided that a solid policy for international pacification is developed up to the creation of a world federation.

"Supranational Federalism" is the cultural tool that aims to activate a debate between different peoples, nations and civilizations. The goal is to build, step by step, the contours and contents of a cosmopolitan civilization in the awareness that the new civilization of the citizens of the world cannot arise from the prevalence of one national culture over the others or from the prevalence of one civilization over the others. Léopold Sédar Senghor, who promoted policies for the federal unification of African peoples and the creation of Eurafrica, understood that dialogue between peoples and civilizations cannot lead to the supremacy of one over the other, but must produce a *Métissage*, a mixture that includes part of the past and prospects for the future. The new cultural identity of the citizens of the world and of the policies necessary to achieve it are the *Métissage* that "Supranational Federalism" proposes to all federalists and sympathizers to seek. It is necessary to identify with patience and tenacity the ways to abolish war and avoid climate catastrophe. It is necessary to unite the forces of federalists from all continents until the creation of the World Federation.

The difficult peaceful coexistence in South Asia

Hemachandra Basappa

In response to the killing of 26 Indian tourists in Kashmir by Pakistan based or trained terrorists, the Indian military conducted attacks on the known locations of the would be terrorists or their leaders. But for a ceasefire that was first announced by the US president Trump followed by the Indian and Pakistan military, we do not know as to where the conflict between two Nuclear armed Nations would have escalated to.

Both India and Pakistan are heavily armed nations. India is also becoming an exporter of several types of small arms and light weapons. To a large part India is dependent on Russian weapons and air crafts also the French and the US. Pakistan is dependent on US and Chinese weapons. China assists them both militarily and economically - part of the One Road One Belt initiative.

The trouble over Kashmir, is from the time both India and Pakistan became independent from Britain in 1947 -parts of which is occupied by both countries and is being claimed by both Nations. The government of Pakistan has given a safe haven to groups which are termed as terrorists by India. Their leaders and members freely move about in Pakistan and are reported to be financed by the government of Pakistan.

Due to this attack and the killing of tourists, the Government of India had to act. Which they did through a series of raids on the known locations of safe houses of the terrorists and their leaders. Pakistan has allowed these terrorist groups to be in their country, possibly to provoke and keep the issue of this divided state in the news, for their own reasons. At present Pakistan is facing a revolt in the state of Balochistan which is on their border with Iran and Afghanistan. In the last few months they have begun to deport thousands of Afghan refugees from Pakistan. India and Pakistan share a common heritage and background, culture, food habits and languages. We were ruled by the Moghuls, who came from Central Asia (what is now part of Uzbekistan), they went through Persia (modern day Iran), Afghanistan and conquered parts of North India. They ruled over India from 1526 to 1857. Many small kingdoms were conquered during this period as they consolidated their rule in the region.

However as their rule began to weaken, the East India Company, by the English, which was set up in West Bengal in 1757, slowly began to take over and expand their rule in India. The last Mughul emperor died in exile in Burma (Myanmar) and the reign of the Moghuls came to an end in 1857. The East India Company continued to expand and over the years controlled or ruled all of the Indian subcontinent, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and several other countries in East Asia.

The protests for freedom began in 1857 (May 10th), which is known as the Sepoy Mutiny. This happened when the Sepoys (Indian infantry troops), refused to use cartridges which were greased with animal fat. When they went to arrest a sepoy Mangladas Pandey who had disobeyed orders, he shot a few British officers. He was caught and hung to death in April 1857. As news of this spread, protests and revolts started in many other places...

The movement for India's freedom gained momentum and finally this was achieved in 1947. Not without a price to the people, when millions died and to the land, **that** was split into India and Pakistan (West and East). East Pakistan is now Bangladesh after their liberation from Pakistan in 1971. This partition was based on the religious majority in those places. Which in turn disrupted millions of people when the minorities migrated from the Muslim majority to the Hindu majority and vice versa. Millions of people had to leave behind their homes and property and move. During this hazardous journey hundreds were

killed and lost their lives. The Indian and Pakistani freedom from the British began with a tragedy, which is still haunting the two countries...There are over 200 million Muslims in India, who chose not to migrate or couldn't do so. This is the third largest number of Muslims in the world.

There is a common bond with people, as we all share a common background and heritage. Unfortunately, the political differences and several unresolved issues keep us apart. There are groups and NGOs working and trying to bridge this gap. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), started off in Dec 1985, with a lot of hopes and expectations, with its headquarters in Kathmandu, Nepal. However it has become inactive since the last Summit of the heads of State or Government which was held in 2014. Reviving this forum will be a major boost for South Asian Regional Cooperation.

The leadership in the South Asian Nations to divert attention from serious local economic issues may focus on external issues. In March, a train was hijacked in Balochistan (Pakistan) and several passengers, soldiers and the rebels lost their lives during the rescue. A month later, tourists in Kashmir were killed.

Kashmir is an Indian State, with reference to in the Indian Constitution (Article 370), till it was repealed by the Indian Parliament, in 2019. The state was then divided into two Union Territories (Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh), which was governed from New Delhi - till elections were finally held last year, after a gap of nearly 10 years. There is also the Pakistan controlled Kashmir (POK), which they govern.

It is reported that China has aided Pakistan in terms of both fighter planes and missiles. India has a serious problem with China along the northern border, where it is claimed that a large part of India has been illegally occupied. At the same time India has a massive trade deficit with China exceeding over 100 billion dollars. Much of these imports from China, India cannot do without. This is a huge contradiction.

India has a small but growing armament industry. Recently they have privatised this sector. To a large extent India is dependent on the Soviet Union for a lot of the weapons. At the same time one should not forget that India is an Union of Federal States. China also assists and has good relationships with India's other neighbours, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bangladesh. China is in a position that none of the countries in South Asia can do without it.

If the conflict with Pakistan had escalated and the Chinese helped them in a big way, the South Asian countries would have all refrained from saying anything, since all of them are dependent on them, including India. At the same time China also dominates the rest of the South East Asian region. There is tension with Taiwan. There is a problem with Chinese made islands in the South China Sea, with the Philippines. In the ASEAN region, China is the largest trading partner.

China is also a member of the BRICS nations along with Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa. They all want to delink from the US dollar and have the BRICS currency, which would help reduce their trade balances, which at present is conducted through the US Dollar. India is also part of the QUAD - a military alliance with the US, Japan and Australia.

Given these associations with BRICS and QUAD, it becomes more and more difficult for India to respond. India has one of the largest army in the world - in terms of soldiers. They are upgrading their equipment routinely, though not as much as the military wants to. There are just no funds for any massive expansion of the weaponry. At the same time, they need to be careful, for the countries surrounding us - Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives are all rather small and they could get threatened by this huge Nation and its growing economic growth. At the same time, there is tension on our northern borders with China and with Pakistan on the Western borders.

It is doubtful for either India or Pakistan to engage in a prolonged armed conflict. Both countries do not have the resources for this kind of destructive adventure. One issue that has not been answered after the recent clashes is the sharing of the waters of the Indus river. This flows from India to Pakistan and 80% of their agriculture is dependent on these waters. The Government

of India has after the recent clashes has kept the " Indus Water Treaty " in abeyance. As summer approaches the melting snow and ice of the Himalayas will flood the region if India does not release these waters. The potential for yet another conflict is very much there, until this issue is addressed.



Hemachandra Basappa is a a Peace, Human Rights and Disarmament for Development activist.

He has spoken at several conferences and participated in Track II dialogues. Focusing on South Asian issues towards Regional Cooperation. Concerned, how Federalism is understood and its future.

Transnational Money

Evan Freund

To secure mankind's common stake in peace and security, as well as our shared interest in the continued habitability of the Earth, the world needs a supranational federation of nations. The United States can no longer dominate world politics and impose its economic systems upon the world, as it has since the immediate post-World War II period. In the absence of international reciprocity based on a universal recognition of world community and the right of all countries to develop economically, the conflicting interests of the great powers will devolve further into warring coalitions, each engaged in the zero-sum game of dominating opponents' economies for momentary advantage. All-out economic wars will then quickly evolve into hot wars with no limits and no shared concern for the global commons.

In the United States, international trade has become a plaything of power politics. The United States has instituted a wide range of tariffs, tributary agreements, and favoritism among supplicants regulating access to the U. S. market in a desperate and misguided attempt to regain industrial productive capacity. While the durability of the American flim-flam tariff negotiations is doubtful, the negotiation process has revealed some of the monetary underpinnings of American domination of trade, commerce, and finance in the world. The U.S. has used the SWIFT international payment system established by Western governments after World War II to further its foreign policy goals frequently at the expense of other countries.

The SWIFT system is central to the sanctions regime employed by the Western countries against Russia due to the Ukraine conflict and against Iran due to Israeli conflicts. So it is not surprising that during the current tariff negotiations with the U.S., President Trump has made repeated threats against countries establishing alternative trading regimes to the U.S. Dollar system on which U.S. power is based. President Trump and his administration seem particularly sensitive to any alternative system to settle international accounts that can avoid the sanctions widely and coercively used by the U.S. in its foreign policy. BRICS Pay, developed by the BRICS nations does aim to enable payments in the national currencies of member countries and to eliminate the need for conversion to US dollars or use of the dollar-denominated SWIFT system.

The U.S. Dollar has been the accepted reserve currency of the world since 1945. It has been the currency in which international trade, securities, loans, and other currencies are denominated. It has been not only the common denominator of international trade and finance, it has served as the internationally quintessential reserve asset of all banks. The U.S. wants to keep it that way in order to be able to control international finance, sanctions regimes, and credit around the world through the SWIFT system of international payment settlement. The Central Bank of China has developed one alternative to SWIFT based on a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) with a central ledger used as well for everyday retail transactions. It is being extended to other countries. It uses, like the U.S. Dollar dominated system, a national currency, the Yuan, as common denominator and is subject to many of the same problems and potential abuses as the U.S. Dollar regime. Its development is currently retarded because the international status of the Chinese digital yuan with full international convertibility has not yet been established by the Chinese government. When will the world escape the domination of the U.S. or China in international finance? John Maynard Keynes proposed the development of an international currency called the bancor in 1944. It was not adopted at the Bretton Woods Conference due to the powerful opposition of the U.S. at the time.

More recently, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) has developed a newer multilateral system for cross border payments between central banks, called the mBridge Project. According to the BIS website, “Project mBridge was the result of extensive collaboration starting in 2021 between the BIS Innovation Hub, the Bank of Thailand, the Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates, the Digital Currency Institute of the People's Bank of China and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. The Saudi Central Bank joined in 2024.” The project was abruptly terminated in October 2024 by the BIS. due to the threats it posed to the U.S. sanctions regime against Russia and Iran. Despite readiness for implementation and testing, BIS general manager Agustín Carstens announced the closure of mBridge project at a Group of 30 event in October 2024, saying “we cannot directly support any project for the BRICS because we cannot operate with countries that are subject to [U.S.] sanctions — I want to be very clear about that.”

The developed world cannot progress to establish an internationally sponsored currency system because major countries are engaged in proxy-wars with each other. There is no international authority that can moderate, negotiate, and avoid major disputes and wars between the major countries, no less broker settlements of hot wars between them. Yet the world cannot survive fracture into economic blocks where one bloc or the other employs illegitimate domination and others employ armed resistance that can quickly escalate into nuclear exchanges. All countries have the right to develop, and all countries have the obligation to preserve our global commons. Sufficient peace based on supranational consensus, cooperation, and authority is a precondition to preserve civilization as we know it as well as to establish an international currency. The problem is not technical- it is political.



EF

Evan Freund has served as Board Member and Treasurer of Citizens for Global Solutions since 2014 and as Assistant Treasurer and Treasurer of World Federalist Movement since 2021. Prior to retirement in 2001, Evan developed and delivered health care services for inner-city populations in Chicago as an executive in health care delivery organizations. He has served as consultant to numerous non-profit organizations in strategy, board development, and operations. Evan holds an MBA degree from the University of Chicago, an MA degree in Political Science from the University of Minnesota, and a BA from Cornell University.

The Currency of the Future. Trust and a New Bretton Woods

Antara Haldar

The most valuable currency in the twenty-first century is not gold, oil, or even data. It is trust. Without trust, nations retreat behind walls, economies fracture, and global problems fester. Yet our species evolved to trust in tribes, not in the anonymous billions who now share the planet. If we want to survive nuclear proliferation, climate breakdown, and technological runaway, we must learn to scale trust to humanity as a whole. That is the challenge of planetary governance — and why we need a New Bretton Woods.

For eighty years, the Bretton Woods system, for which the blueprint was drawn up at a New Hampshire Hotel, has defined the architecture of the global economy. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and later the United Nations helped stitch together a shattered world in 1944. These institutions were far from perfect, but they represented an audacious attempt to rebuild trust in the aftermath of catastrophe—including two World Wars, the rise of fascism and the Great Depression. Today, we face challenges just as existential. The task is not to patch up twentieth-century institutions but to imagine a new architecture for the twenty-first. Call it a *New Bretton Woods*.

The cement of trust - Anthropologists point to the “[Dunbar number](#)” — around 150 — as the natural limit of personal networks. In such groups, gossip, honor, and reciprocity ensure honesty. In vast anonymous societies, deception flourishes. Our emotional repertoire is tribal, but our problems are planetary: climate change, pandemics, financial contagion, plastic in the oceans, even the governance of [artificial intelligence](#).

Yet humans have repeatedly broken past our tribal limits. As Yuval Noah Harari observes, we cooperate flexibly in large numbers by rallying around shared fictions: nations, religions, markets. Joseph Henrich calls this our “collective brain” — cultural norms that allow strangers to coordinate. Michael Tomasello traces how morality itself evolved as a way to extend collaboration. Francis Fukuyama argued that trust is the deepest source of prosperity and institutional strength. And Norbert Elias showed how, over centuries, norms scaled outward through what he called “the civilizing process.”

If gossip secured honesty in villages, then radical transparency can play the same role at planetary scale. Open data on emissions, human rights abuses, and financial flows can function as a kind of global gossip — exposing free riders and rewarding cooperation. Technology, when wisely designed, can extend trust rather than erode it.

Narratives and rituals - Every enduring system rests on a story. As Benedict Anderson argued, nations are “imagined communities.” If Italy and India could be imagined into existence, why not a planetary community? Carl Sagan’s “pale blue dot” is already a potent symbol, reminding us of our fragility.

Stories alone are not enough. They must be lived through ritual and symbol. Émile Durkheim described how shared ceremonies create “collective effervescence” — the electric feeling of belonging to something larger. Today, global rituals such as Earth Day, the Olympics, or climate marches play a similar role. Education, film, literature, and even pop culture can enlarge

our circle of empathy. When millions weep at the same movie or cheer for the same athlete, they are practicing, however briefly, world citizenship.

The task is to reverse-engineer belonging: to cultivate myths and rituals that make planetary solidarity feel as natural as national pride.

Institutions out of sync - If narratives are the soul of governance, institutions are its skeleton. Yet the institutions we rely on are dangerously outdated. The World Trade Organization, designed for a world of tariffs and quotas, struggles with digital trade and supply chains. The [World Health Organization](#), underfunded and hostage to geopolitics, stumbled during COVID-19. The IMF and [World Bank](#), still weighted toward mid-century powers, are ill-equipped to mobilize trillions for climate resilience.

Even when institutions act, alienation follows. Law and contracts replaced informal norms, but they can feel rigid and alien. Bureaucracies are supposed to ensure fairness but often descend into red tape. Reputational systems — from credit scores to global rankings — can be gamed and biased. Technology offers “disintermediated trust,” like blockchain, but risks stripping out the human element altogether.

No wonder citizens feel powerless. Principal-agent problems multiply: we delegate authority to governments or international bodies, but their incentives rarely align with ours. The result is a governance gap where global problems metastasize.

Polycentric order - There are fragments of another possibility. The Montreal Protocol curbed ozone destruction. The Antarctic Treaty transformed a potential conflict zone into a commons. The Paris Agreement created a global rhythm of pledges and reviews. Even ICANN, largely unnoticed, keeps the internet functioning as a shared resource.

These are not Leviathans but polycentric nodes: overlapping authorities that collectively govern planetary challenges. Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom showed that commons can be managed without a single central ruler, provided institutions are nested and flexible. Polycentric governance is more resilient than hegemony because it has no single point of failure.

Federalist lessons - Federalism is one of humanity’s best inventions for reconciling unity with diversity. Switzerland balances the autonomy of cantons with the authority of the confederation. The United States created a union of states with both local and federal sovereignty. India holds together dozens of languages and faiths. The European Union, born of the Schuman Declaration, is an experiment in supranational citizenship. Its jurisprudence, institutions, and symbols — from the Euro to Erasmus — have stitched together solidarities once thought impossible.

The idea of world federalism has deep roots. The Montreux Declaration of 1947 called for a world federation. A year later, scholars at the University of Chicago even drafted a world constitution proclaiming: “The age of nations must end and the era of humanity begin.” They imagined a federal republic of the world pooling sovereignty and surrendering arms to a common authority. At the time this seemed utopian. Today, it may be survival.

From hegemony to polycentricism - For centuries, order was enforced by hegemony — the dominance of one or a few powers. That system produced the Triffin dilemma, Cold War brinkmanship, and today’s paralysis of the UN Security Council. If we cling to hegemony, we will veer between alienation and Balkanization.

Polycentric governance offers another path. It mirrors ecosystems, resilient because they lack a single point of failure. It echoes Fukuyama's claim that trust, not just force or wealth, underpins order. And it resonates with moral traditions from Confucius' golden rule to Gandhi's non-violence: reciprocity as the foundation of justice.

Towards a new architecture - What, then, might a New Bretton Woods for the twenty-first century look like? It would not be a single Leviathan but a mosaic, combining the procedural with the poetic, the economic with the ecological, the local with the global. A planetary currency — Keynes's *bancor* reimagined for climate finance, perhaps as a digital "tally" — could channel resources into shared survival rather than competitive hoarding. Institutions of global citizenship could give individuals, not only states, standing in international law, creating a genuine *demos* rather than a mere assembly of governments. Ecological courts could enforce planetary boundaries with the same seriousness that trade tribunals enforce commercial rules. Nested systems of governance could link neighborhood assemblies to transnational compacts, weaving accountability from the ground up. And narratives of belonging, cultivated through rituals, education, and culture, could make humanity itself feel like home.

This is not utopia. It is the sober realism of a species that knows its survival is at stake.

Between alienation and humanity - Hannah Arendt warned that modernity risks leaving us isolated, deprived of a common world. But voices from Gandhi to Martin Luther King Jr., Einstein, Camus, and even Churchill urged loyalty to humanity itself. Vaclav Havel called for "living in truth" — the courage to imagine new communities when old ones fail.

Eighty years ago, in a quiet resort in New Hampshire, visionaries dared to design new institutions for a devastated world. Our task is greater: to design for the species. The castles in the air are already there peace, justice, survival. What remains is to give them foundations on the ground.



Antara Haldar is Professor at the University of Cambridge, in Empirical Legal Studies at the Faculty of Law and at Cambridge's Judge Business School, Faculty of Philosophy. She is a member of the Governing Body of Peterhouse and a Visiting Professor at Harvard's Department of Psychology and held a Fellowship at Stanford's Center for Advanced Study. Her award-winning research lies at the intersection of law, economics, philosophy and psychology. She writes for *Project Syndicate*.

Federal Governance for Europe and the World

Jo Leinen

On the background of the catastrophic experiences with nationalism and as a result of two world wars, personalities from different backgrounds of society and countries came together in Montreux (Switzerland), in 1947, to discuss new governance orders for Europe as for the World.

They all have been united in the conviction that the fragmentation and separation of people on the basis of national power will lead sooner or later to new aggressions and at the end to new wars.

The solution of this dilemma is the pooling of sovereignty on the transnational level with supranational competences and supranational governance structures. Federalist solutions offer the best answer to accommodate and solve the problem. Federalism has the ability to implement three important principles: democracy, solidarity and subsidiarity.

Federalist Supranational governance looks for the support and the legitimacy by the people. Free and fair elections for the respective transnational parliament is a cornerstone.

Solidarity by financial transfer systems between stronger and weaker members of the transnational political union is another key element.

Last but not least is the subsidiarity principle inherent of federalist governance concepts. Not a Superstate, as nationalists and populists are always trying to attack efforts for supranational governance, but a well balanced multilevel repartition of competencies between local, regional, national and supranational level.



JL

Jo Leinen studied in Saarbrücken and Bonn. College of Law office in Freiburg. Minister for Environment in Saarland. Member of European Parliament. Chair of Constitutional and Environment Committees. Chair of China Delegation. President of JEF-Germany. President of UEF. President of European Movement International (MEI) Co-Author (with Andreas Bummel) of the Book, *A World Parliament*, DWB, Berlin, 2018

The Constitution of the Earth. Two converging methodologies

Guido Montani

The book published in Italian by Luigi [Ferrajoli](#) – *Designing the future. For a global constitutionalism* – deserves to be taken into consideration by federalists, since it proposes a draft Constitution that would allow the construction of a "Federation of the Earth", with the consequent extension to the supranational level of democracy, until now experimented only within the cultural and legal boundaries of the nation state. It is a book that would deserve publication in English for its wider circulation. Here, for reasons of space, I will not try to review the entire work. I shall confine myself to recalling the principles on which it is based, in order to compare them with a second constitutional method, developed by the European federalists in the course of their political action for the construction of the European Federation.

In the introductory pages, Ferrajoli states that the classic typology of the separation of powers, proposed by Montesquieu, cannot be adopted for a supranational constitution. In contemporary democratic systems, the executive, "with the disappearance of the monarch, has the same electoral legitimacy as the legislature, and the relationship between executive and legislature, particularly in parliamentary systems, is much more one of connection than of separation" (pp. 29-30). The world Constitution should be based on the distinction between institutions of government, i.e. the sphere of the production and innovation of law, or the sphere of the *decidable*, different from the institutions of guarantee that must guarantee the application and implementation of the law, such as fundamental rights and peace, therefore the sphere of the *undecidable*, which therefore has a constitutional value. "What we need, for the purposes of peace, the environment and human rights, is not an improbable or even desirable reproduction of the form of the state at the supranational level – a sort of Leviathan or world super-state – but the introduction of functions and institutions of guarantee capable of implementing the constitutionally established principles. The functions and institutions of government, being legitimized by political representation, should remain as much as possible the responsibility of the nation states, closer to the voters, since the current institutions of government of the UN, obviously democratized, are sufficient, at the global level. On the contrary, the functions and institutions of primary guarantee of peace, the environment and fundamental rights, and in particular of the social rights to health, education and subsistence, being legitimized by the constitutional principles stipulated in the interests of all, even against majorities, must be introduced at the international level in order to remedy their possible absence or insufficiency at the local level" (p. 32).

Ferrajoli identifies five global emergencies that should be regulated by an Earth Constitution. The first is the nuclear emergency and the use of war. The guarantee of peace can only come from norms that prohibit war and the use of armed violence by states and terrorist organizations. All weapons must be considered as illicit goods and therefore their possession by anyone must be considered as a crime against humanity.

The second global emergency is the environmental one. To signal this emergency, scientists have proposed defining the "Anthropocene" as the phase of history in which humanity acquired the power to destroy life on the planet. To deal with this emergency, Ferrajoli recalls that it is necessary to establish a planetary state property, that is, to remove from the market the properties and vital assets of nature such as drinking water, glaciers, seas and large forests.

The third planetary emergency concerns global inequalities, i.e. the differences in per capita income between rich and poor countries. In this regard, it is necessary to ensure that every inhabitant of the planet has the right to health, the right to education and the right to subsistence.

The fourth planetary emergency is work, which the process of globalization has made precarious, unstable and insufficiently remunerated even in rich countries. The Constitution of the Earth should provide rules to guarantee all workers, in whatever state they live, a minimum wage, the length of the working day, the protection of their health, a period of vacation and freedom of association.

Finally, the fifth global emergency concerns emigration, which today is considered in many countries as a threat caused by the invasion of barbarian peoples, in some cases, considered as belonging to inferior races. Ferrajoli states that "citizenship, which at the origins of constitutionalism was a factor of inclusion, as a negation of the differences in status proper to the *ancien régime*, has now turned into the last accident that differentiates people because of their birth. ... the Constitution of the Earth will have to guarantee the right to emigrate from one's own country by providing for the obligation, logically implied by it, to satisfy it with the right to immigrate to some other country. ... it is necessary to confer on all human beings a universal citizenship as citizens of the Earth" (pp. 46-7).

I conclude this very brief review by recalling that, as an *Appendix*, Ferrajoli publishes a draft of the "Constitution of the Earth", in 100 articles, which allows us to examine in detail the strictly legal aspects of his political proposal.

I would now like to draw attention to the process of European unification, although it has not yet been based on a European Constitution. In this regard, I recall that the opportunity to found the European Union on a Constitution has presented itself on at least three occasions. The first was in 1952, when the Six countries of the ECSC discussed the project of the EDC (European Defence Community) together with that of the European Political Community. The second was when the European Parliament, elected by universal suffrage for the first time, approved in 1984 the draft Treaty establishing the European Union, also known as the Spinelli Project; finally, after a long campaign by European federalists for the European Constitution, the "Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe" was approved by the European Convention in 2003. All these projects were rejected due to opposition from the Council of Heads of State and Government, where a government's veto can block any decision. However, these events are enough to understand why the European Union is not yet a state and does not have its own strategic autonomy in international politics. Furthermore, they allow us to understand how the history of European unification took place within a political-constitutional context that can also be relevant for the understanding of current international problems.

In the course of the federalist campaign for the creation of the European Monetary Union, after the US announcement in 1971 of the inconvertibility of the dollar into gold, and the subsequent crisis of the Common Market, European federalists were faced with the problem of justifying the demand for a European currency. It was a question of creating an alternative institution to national monetary sovereignty, while it was not yet possible to claim a "European Federal Sovereignty", because the time was not ripe for the creation of a European defense. In a 1976 essay, Mario Albertini stated: "Because of its very nature, the European constituent effort cannot correspond to the work of a constituent assembly ... In Europe, there is no European state to which to give a constituent form. In Europe, the state still has to be created, literally ... it is only from an initial form of European state ... that we can begin the process of forming a European state that we might call definitive. This paradox of 'creating a state to create a state' need not worry us. Kant faced a similar paradox (a state of states), but this did not prevent him from formulating, through this paradox, his theory of perpetual peace" ([Albertini 2017](#), 233).

This approach to the European constitutional problem, known as "constitutional gradualism" is the one I have adopted in my work on the problem of the crisis of the contemporary international order and on the possible remedies. In my book [Anthropocene and Cosmopolitan Citizenship. Europe and the](#)

New International Order; I propose two "constitutional" reforms of the international system: the transformation of the International Monetary Fund into a world Central Bank, through the adoption of Special Drawing Rights as the world currency, and the Constitution of the Earth, understood in a more limited sense than that proposed by Ferrajoli, that is, a Pact between humanity and nature, to address the problem of pollution of the planet in a direct and radical way. These are two proposals that make sense in the context of a process of "partial" reform of the international order that is currently in crisis. The preliminary objective is to start a process of pacification of the international system in crisis, not to build "perpetual peace".

I am aware that the comparison between the methodology of global constitutionalism proposed by Ferrajoli and that of constitutional gradualism adopted by me will require new debates and insights. However, the future of humanity is at stake and federalists, as well as professional politicians, should address these problems openly, because the two approaches should not be considered as alternatives. Every step forward towards the federal unification of Europe can allow the European Union to act as a "peacemaker" of humanity, and every step forward of global constitutionalism, to save what is left of the UN, can allow the European Union and all continents where processes of supranational unification are underway, such as in Africa, to act with greater force to affirm peace within and outside their political community.



Guido Montani is Professor of International Political Economy at the University of Pavia. He has taught at the Universities of Bologna, Florence and Rome. From 1993 to 2009 he was Secretary General and then President of the MFE. In 1996 he promoted the MFE-UEF Campaign for the European Constitution. He is an Honorary Member of the UEF. Among his last publications: *Anthropocene and Cosmopolitan Citizenship, Europe and the New International Order*, New York and London, Routledge 2024.

A Federal Europe in a Cosmopolitanising World

Robin Wilson

It is hard to make sense of a panorama of such distressing inhumanities: mass starvation of children in Gaza, grinding war in Ukraine, an unhinged United States president taking on the world ... and, above and beyond, a careening climate and biodiversity crisis to which the respective protagonists of those conflicts—the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Russian president, Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart, Donald Trump—are utterly indifferent.

Yet the leading sociologist Ulrich Beck provided the conceptual framework to link such apparently disparate events in an overall schema. Beck [argued](#) that this was an era of ‘reflexive modernization’, in which rather than modernity being counterposed to tradition—as in Ferdinand Tönnies’ classic dichotomy of *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*—it was now modernising over and against itself, in a much less linear and predictable way and with significant ‘side-effects’. This was provoking a ‘counter-modernity’, Beck contended, seeking in an illusory way to restore all the boundaries—from those between states to those between gender roles—which reflexive modernisation seemed to be washing away: ‘All the concepts that modernity dismantles, unmask and delegitimise are sacred to counter-modernity: of course this includes “tradition” and the “cultivation”, that is, invention of it, but also nature, religion, the nation, the distinction between ourselves and “strangers”, we-they identities and hence their extreme intensification, friend-enemy relationships.’

Netanyahu, Putin and Trump have all retreated into such ‘constructed certitude’, as Beck described it. What appals them is what he [called](#) ‘really existing cosmopolitanization’. A play on the Soviet self-delusion of ‘actually existing socialism’, this for Beck was the very real bringing together in a globalised and individualised world of ordinary selves and others in an intercultural milieu, requiring their mutual re-evaluation. It entailed ‘the art of translation and bridge-building’ or ‘situating and relativizing one’s own form of life within other horizons of possibility’. Netanyahu can no more tolerate this in the shape of the ‘two-state solution’, ending the occupation in favour of genuine Palestinian autonomy and Jewish-Arab coexistence, than can Putin accept a Ukraine set on a European trajectory or Trump a world where multilateral networks enmesh his isolationist thrashing around.

The most cataclysmic ‘side-effect’ of reflexive modernisation is, of course, the catastrophic climate change unleashed by unregulated fossil-fuel corporations, private and state, engorging themselves on rents from the earth’s massively depleted ‘natural capital’. And nowhere is the evidence more obvious that politics must transcend what Beck [described](#) as the national ‘container’. Action within the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is however the responsibility of its member states and the annual ‘conferences of the parties’ can only proceed by consensus. This collective-action dilemma means the sum of states’ individual responses falls woefully short of what the science demands, as a COP insider [has shown](#).

Is it possible, then, to avoid being overtaken by [Antonio Gramsci](#)’s ‘pessimism of the intellect’ or can this still be balanced by his ‘optimism of the will’? The answer lies in the creation of collective agency, at all levels.

Each ‘constructed certitude’ is organised around the polarisation of friend and foe—without which the pro-Nazi thinker Carl Schmitt [claimed](#) politics was devoid of meaning. Ironically, Putin has to see ‘Nazis’ everywhere in Kiev to present his full-scale invasion of Ukraine as just another episode in the Great Patriotic War against Russia’s enemies. Netanyahu is, in his own eyes, similarly beset by ‘anti-Semites’, Trump by ‘communists’.

The populists summon up ‘the people’—one against another in zero-sum, nationalistic games which can only end in war, as Guido Montani [has recognised](#). Yet as the political philosopher Norberto Bobbio [appreciated](#), ‘the people’ is the language of all the modern dictatorships: far from engendering agency, no one gets to step out of line.

By contrast, a cosmopolitanising world requires a politics without enemies: it [entails](#) the inclusion (however partial and limited) of the other within the self, from the local to the global. This reciprocal recognition as free and equal individuals in pluralist societies with permeable borders engenders positive-sum games building transnational trust and collaboration. The national ‘container’ can then be steadily transcended by the ‘pacific federation’ Immanuel Kant [envisaged](#) in *Toward Perpetual Peace*.

In Marx’s conventional modernisation schema, capitalism engendered the international proletariat as its homogenised ‘gravedigger’. Yet this hypostasised category left socialist parties in Europe struggling to connect with actual individual workers, as Eunice Goes [observes](#). Revising Marx for the democratic age, Gramsci coined and Bobbio developed the notion of ‘the individualistic concept of society’, associated with the emergence of the *citizen* on to the political stage.

Beck [recognised](#) that contemporary politics was a battle between corporations and civil-society organisations. While the former had escaped nation-state regulation, rehearsing the neoliberal narrative of ‘*self-regulation* and *self-legitimation*’, the latter should advocate a ‘*cosmopolitan form of statehood*’ and a new hegemonic narrative of ‘radical-democratic globalization’. The two great achievements of progressive politics in Europe in recent years, however contested—the European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Green Deal—would have been inconceivable without pressure from the trade unions and the environmental NGOs respectively.

Sergio Fabbrini has recently [demonstrated](#), in his book on European federalism, that the EU has become more intergovernmental in recent decades—including with the institutionalisation of the European Council representing the member states at the heart of the EU institutions and the peculiar truculence of the veto wielded by the Hungarian populist, Viktor Orbán. The last European term did however show just what could be done when its diverse citizens, rather than the member states, comprised the primary social actors.

The Conference on the Future of Europe, based on citizens’ panels, proposed a raft of progressive structural reforms towards a more federal and cosmopolitan Europe. They included extending qualified-majority voting in foreign and security policy, giving a greater role to the EU high representative, allocating to the European Parliament the right of initiative and introducing transnational lists for election to it, involving more in governance national parliaments as well as the sub-national authorities and the social partners, and reopening the discussion about a new constitution for Europe. These have not though been implemented, with those institutional vetoes still in place—the relevant website, ironically, has been [archived](#).

The transition towards Kant’s pacific federation can take place through what Fabbrini describes as a ‘multi-tier’ Europe and Vivien Schmidt [calls](#) ‘multiple clusters of member states’—so allowing ‘coalitions of the willing to emerge’, free from national vetoes. This could provide for a greater integration of the European Union with the Council of Europe. The universal norms it was established to promote in the shadow of the Holocaust—democracy, human rights and the rule of law—provide a much stronger ‘glue’ for Europe than a common utilitarian commitment to market-clearing. The Russian Federation was shown the door of the Strasbourg organisation in the wake of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. But there is a nucleus here in this evolving institutional patchwork for a revival, post-Putin, of Mikhail Gorbachev’s ‘common European home’ and for the constitution-making on a planetary scale Montani recommends as an ‘Earth Constitution’, to end war between states and foster disarmament.

In *Russia Against Modernity*, Alexander Etkind [argues](#) that Putin’s ‘special military operation’ is not just a war on Ukrainian statehood but ‘a broader operation against the modern world of climate awareness, energy transition and digital labor’. Conversely, Europe not only has to recommit itself to the green transition but advance that worldwide, via a Global Green Deal as Montani recommends.

Nathalie Tocci has [argued](#) that Europe’s green agenda—now threatened by the ‘greenlash’ allying the former European centre right and the far right—gave the union ‘a new lease of life’. Without it, all else for her risks becoming meaningless, given ‘the existential nature of the climate crisis’. But Europe’s rationale now ‘can only be global’: by ‘painting its flag green’ the EU can ‘help save the planet while reviving itself politically’.

Europe has to ally itself with the majority world to pursue its green goals. But such legitimacy will be denied it unless it is willing to stand up, consistently, to the populists. It has no chance whatever of doing so while it betrays inertia rather than agency in the face of the genocide in Gaza—a ‘collective moral abdication’, as Shada Islam [complains](#).

Hegemony, Gramsci realised, entailed representing class interests as universal. Just as employers’ organisations dissolved themselves in the neoliberal era into the universal lexicon of ‘business’—whose demands no one could then contest—so workers’ associations today can present their goals behind the banner of ‘the citizens’, whose democratic claims over the corporations, including for states to engender more public goods, cannot be gainsaid.

On Marx’s grave is famously inscribed the slogan ‘Workers of all lands, unite’. World war was to bury that idea. ‘Cosmopolitans of all lands, unite’ may ring more true today.



Robin Wilson has been an expert adviser to the Council of Europe. He was principal drafter of the [Model Framework for Intercultural Integration Plans at the National Level](#) in 2022. He is author of [Meeting the Challenge of Cultural Diversity in Europe: Moving Beyond the Crisis](#) (Edward Elgar) and [The Northern Ireland Experience of Conflict and Agreement: A Model for Export?](#) (Manchester University Press). From 2013 to 2015 Wilson was lead editor of an ‘openSecurity’ section of [openDemocracy](#) of Foreign Affairs. From 2019 to 2024 he was general editor, then editor-in-chief of [Social Europe](#).
