

OUR VISION:

We envision a future in which countries work together to abolish war, protect our rights and freedoms, and solve the problems facing humanity that no country can solve alone. This vision requires effective democratic global institutions that will apply the rule of law while respecting the diversity and autonomy of national and local communities.

OUR MISSION:

We are a membership organization working to build political will in the United States to achieve our vision. We do this by educating Americans about our global interdependence, communicating global concerns to public officials, and developing proposals to create, reform and strengthen international institutions such as the United Nations.

TRANSFORMING THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Joe Schwartzberg, President, Minnesota Chapter

schwa004@umn.edu

As regular readers of this Newsletter know, I have been working for roughly five years on a book entitled *Transforming the United Nations System: Designs for a Workable World*. Early this year I completed a manuscript of what I supposed would be a publishable work. That manuscript, however, ran to almost 600 pages, including 37 pages of maps and graphs in color. A number of publishers expressed interest in the work but informed me that publication in the form I'd envisaged was economically out of the question. In May I was pleased to accept a request from the United Nations University Press to cut the work down by roughly 50%, to eliminate the color illustrations and to grant them the "right of first refusal." In publishing that means that I agree not to deal with any other publishers until the UNU Press has had a chance to have the work reviewed and evaluated by two outside peer reviewers and give me a positive or negative response on publishing the work. So, while I am optimistic, there is, as yet, absolutely no guarantee of publication.

Since May I have been working diligently on the required abridgement. This has, at times, been a heart-breaking process. I've completely excised four chapters of my work (Part 1: "The State of the Earth"), substantially shortened the remaining fifteen chapters, (in Parts 2 and 3, "Prescriptions" and "Getting There"), and reduced the number of pages of graphics to twelve (all of them redrafted in black-and-white and reduced in size). That should result in a book that is economically priced and more likely to be read by ordinary citizens, I expect to send off the abridged manuscript by mid-September.

While I would like to share that work with you now, I have promised the UNU press that I would not put it up, as I'd hoped, on my website, www.JosephSchwartzberg.org. I can, however, include short excerpts in this Newsletter to give you a better idea of what the book is all about. Here, then, are the opening paragraphs of my **Preface** and **Introduction**:

Excerpt from the PREFACE:

The splitting of the atom has changed everything, save our mode of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.

Albert Einstein

Henceforth, every nation's foreign policy must be judged at every point by one consideration: does it lead to a world of law and order or does it lead us back to anarchy and death?

Albert Einstein

The correctness of Einstein's admonitions ought to be self-evident; but that is clearly not the case. Rather, most of the influential inhabitants of our planet prefer to live in a state of denial. Were that not so, they would sense the need to bestir themselves and try to correct glaring shortcomings in our system of global governance. And it is not only the threat of nuclear annihilation that is being denied. Comparable threats arise from other sources: global warming, loss of bio-diversity, depletion of vital resources such as petroleum and fresh water,

and the explosive potential inherent in the obscene gap between the world's haves and have-nots, to cite but a few. The reasons for inaction are many. But, among them, the inadequacies in the design of the institutional machinery of the United Nations system and the total absence of certain institutions that are urgently needed are especially noteworthy. This book puts forward numerous recommendations, which, if adopted, would help remedy, those deficiencies.

Let me begin then with the enunciation of six fundamental propositions:

- **We must find ways to supplant the law of force with the force of law in international affairs.**
- **Our planet is an exceedingly complex and interdependent organism;** what nations do within their own borders often adversely affects other nations in unacceptable ways.
- **Global problems require global solutions;** there are many pressing problems that national governments cannot solve acting on their own.
- **National sovereignty conveys to governments not only certain rights, but also responsibilities;** the foremost responsibility is the promotion of the security and welfare of the nation's citizens.
- **All human beings are entitled to the enjoyment of political, civil, economic and social rights** as set forth in *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and various treaties and covenants adopted in furtherance of that declaration.
- **We are our brother's keeper;** when nations fail egregiously to protect the rights of their citizens it becomes the responsibility of the international community to protect those rights.
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Excerpt from the INTRODUCTION:

Another world is not only possible; she is on her way. On a quiet day I can hear her breathing. **Arundhati Roy**

One's destination is never a place, but a new way of looking at things. **Henry Miller**

Hearken not to the voice, which petulantly tells you that the form of government recommended is impossible to accomplish. **James Madison, *The Federalist*, No. 14**

Global problems require global solutions. This dictum provides the motive for writing this book. The idea ought to be self-evident, but clearly is not. Our present system of global governance—if one can call anarchy a system—shows little evidence that the principal actors on the global stage have come to grips with the magnitude of the existential threats to a sustainable civilization. The world has thus far failed to put in place a set of agencies suitably empowered to deal with such long-standing threats as the war system and with more recent threats, especially those posed by climate change and other forms of environmental degradation. Existing institutions, within and outside the UN system, must be strengthened and given broader mandates; and new agents of change must be created. The decisions they make must be recognized as legitimate. Time is short. Fundamental reforms in the near future are essential.

A simple, but key, premise underlying this work is that **the design of decision-making institutions has an important bearing on the quality and legitimacy of the decisions they make.** To the extent that this simple truth is recognized, society will be inclined to endow vital institutions with greater responsibility and provide them with greater resources. From this it follows that improved designs for existing institutions and, where needed, the creation of new, well-designed institutions, can set in motion a virtuous cycle that will contribute significantly to the evolution of a more workable world.

The workable world that I envisage centers on a revitalized and **substantially strengthened United Nations system.** While many of the essential institutions within that system are already in place, none is optimally constituted. In particular, their methods of allocating decision-making power typically bear little relationship to the actual power of global actors outside the arena of the UN itself. Consequently, their fairness and even their legitimacy are often called into question. Moreover, some institutions needed for an efficiently working UN system have yet to be created. Other agencies that have become obsolete or that have failed to live up to the hopes and expectations of their creators will have to be eliminated. Finally, the entire system suffers from a serious democratic deficit. Institutions are needed by which to engage ordinary world citizens and civil society organizations in the work of global governance.

WPA MONOGRAPH PUBLISHED

Joe Schwartzberg's monograph, *Creating a World Parliamentary Assembly: An Evolutionary Journey* (not to be confused with the book discussed above) was published by the Berlin-based Committee for a Democratic UN in June 2012. Although it is available for sale for 14 Euros (\$18.00), it can also be downloaded via the Inter-

net. Among others, endorsements for the work have been written by former UN Under-Secretary General, Shashi Tharoor, now a member of India's Parliament; Jo Leinen, a prominent member of the European Parliament; and Johan Galtung, founder of the Peace Research Institute, Oslo and of Transcend International.

THIRD THURSDAY GLOBAL ISSUES FORUM

Free and open to the public.

**Where? Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church,
511 Groveland Avenue, Minneapolis (at Lyndale & Hennepin). Park** in church lot.

Thursday, September 20, 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

THE SITUATION IN SYRIA. Eighteen months ago the people of Syria rose up against one of the world's most oppressive regimes. Since then, more than 20,000 Syrian citizens have been killed, two million displaced and half a million imprisoned. The regime still claims that it is fighting a rogue terrorist group sponsored by foreign powers because of the country's progressive and allegedly expansionist positions. Given the region's volatility and conflicting geo-political interests, outside powers are unsure how best to intervene. Meanwhile, the Syrian people continue the struggle and will accept no substitute for freedom and dignity.

Presenter: Mazen Halabi. Mr. Halabi, a Syrian-American and community activist, left Syria in 1983 following the Hama massacre in which more than 40,000 people were killed by the then President, Hafez Assad. He has advanced degrees in computer science and business from Mankato State University, works in the computer industry, and lives with his wife and son in Champlin, MN. His parents and siblings remain in Damascus and keep him informed on the current perilous situation in that city and in Syria as a whole.

Thursday, October 18, 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

UNDERSTANDING THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS. Following two decades of relatively low prices, global food prices have risen steadily since 2000, spiking in 2008 and then again in 2011-2012. In each instance, price rises have led to social unrest in different parts of the world. With a massive drought and a small corn harvest in the US this year, policy makers are deeply concerned about the integrity of the global food system. This talk explains the short and long-term causes and consequences of the food crisis, as well as needed policy initiatives and programs. It will pay particular attention to the situation in Africa where the speaker has worked for the past 25 years.

Presenter: Professor William G. Moseley. Professor Moseley is Chair of the Geography Department at Macalester College. His research focuses on agriculture, food security, and environmental and development policy. He has worked for the World Bank, USAID, Save the Children (UK) and the US Peace Corps, spending extensive periods in Mali, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, Malawi, Niger and Lesotho. He has authored four peer-reviewed books and over sixty articles and book chapters as well as numerous articles for the popular press in such outlets as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.

IN MEMORIAM

We grieve the death on August 31 of the Reverend Verlyn O. Smith, one of the pillars of the peace and justice movement in Minnesota. Born in 1927 and ordained in 1954, Verlyn taught religion and church history at Augustana College from 1955 to 1968, then worked mainly in campus ministries, and was the pastor of Grace University Lutheran Church. Verlyn was President of the Minnesota Chapter of the World Federalist Association

(later Citizens for Global Solutions) from 1999 to 2002 and was a Board member for many additional years. He was a co-founder of the Vincent J. Hawkinson Foundation for Peace and Justice and of People of Faith Peacemakers. Along with several others of our chapter, he was a member of the planning committee for the memorable Peace Island Conference in St. Paul in 2008.

WFM CONGRESS IN WINNIPEG

June Parrott

Encouraged by Joe Schwartzberg, I attended the World Federalist Congress in Winnipeg. Because I am a newcomer to the movement, had I not attended I would have missed a splendid learning experience. The sessions and presentations were informative and I gained new knowledge from the expressions of distinct and different views.

What I enjoyed most and had not anticipated was the international scope of the gathering. Those in attendance were from Japan, India, the Netherlands, Italy, Argentina, Australia, Denmark, Norway, the UK, Spain, and Germany as well as members from the host country, Canada. The gathering was small enough so that I could engage in conversations and hear ideas from people from all over the world. I was also able to have extended talks with other attendees from the US. I found it especially

delightful speaking with a young delegate from Oxford, Mississippi and was encouraged by the enthusiastic and active participation of the young people who were present

What I gained most from the meeting was an appreciation of and an awareness of how much has been and is being achieved by so few people with such limited resources in a world full of riches. Indeed it was my benefit and pleasure to be in the presence of a network of dedicated people working to transform and broaden our worldview. Some of those present have made this endeavor their life's work. They have exerted great effort in the cause of peace. They believe in, take responsibility for and actively promote the rule of law and social justice on a global basis.

GlobalSolutions.org

(formerly the World Federalist Association)

5492 Bald Eagle Blvd. E.

White Bear Lake, MN 55110

www.globalsolutionsmn.org

The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion. **Thomas Paine**

Nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come. **Victor Hugo**

It is not because it is difficult that we are afraid to act. It is because we are afraid to act that it is difficult. **Seneca**