John Fonte: Sovereignty or Submission: Will Americans Rule Themselves or Be Ruled by Others? Study Guide, 2012

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Steven Alan Samson

FOREWORD: GLOBAL GOVERNANCE v DEMOCRATIC SOVEREIGNTY, John O’ Sullivan


Outline

A. JOHN FONTE: SCHOLARLY DEFENDER OF DEMOCRATIC SOVEREIGNTY  (ix-x)
   1. Peter Spiro
   2. Ideology of Global Governance [what Russell Kirk called “globaloney”]
      a. Kit is now the prevailing orthodoxy
   3. There Is Little Organized Opposition
   4. The Book Is a Major Counterblast from the Sovereigntist Side of the Debate
      b. The ideas and institutions built on democratic sovereignty reflect the beliefs of the overwhelming majority
      c. Most people would oppose any open attempt to replace their democracies with another system [how this has been accomplished is the subject of such books as Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn’s Leftism and Ralph de Toledano’s Cry Havoc!]

B. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: THE OTHER SYSTEM  (x-xiii)
   1. How It Differs from the Existing International System
      a. In liberal democracies, legitimacy flows upwards from the voters in elections through sovereign governments
      b. Under global governance, legitimacy flows from post-national elites in transnational institutions
      c. So-called “pooling” of sovereignty
         1) Voters have no say
         2) The elites exercise sovereign power
   2. Ideology of Transnational Elites
      a. Imposed on liberal democracies by covert means
         1) Its voice is loud in academic seminars
         2) It is muffled in political debates and the media
      b. Treaties and covenants are negotiated in pleasant foreign cities
         1) They are rarely openly crafted and publicly debated
   3. These Global Treaties Carry Irreproachable Titles
      a. They are subject to extravagant reinterpretation [the strategy pioneered by Fabian Socialists and American Progressives]
      b. Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms transfer authority into domestic policies
      c. Major impetus behind global governance: Insulation of elites against defeat
   4. Political Twilight Zone
      a. Where the maneuvering by NGOs, lobbyists, and pressure groups takes place
      b. Examples:
         1) UN committee’s attack on the First Amendment, 2001
            a) Thwarted in part by American use of reservations
2) Promotion of day care centers  
   a) Complaint by UN monitors that most Slovenian children are not in day care centers  
3) UN objections to detention of illegal immigrants  
5. Such Intrusions into Domestic Politics Are Catnip for the Tabloid Press [and Bloggers]  
6. Soft Soap of Global Governance Eventually Fails to Soothe  

C. EARLY OPPONENTS OF REVOLUTIONS ARE OFTEN DISDAINED BY THEIR NATURAL ALLIES (xiii-xv)  
1. The Case of Edmund Burke  
   a. His analysis of the French Revolution’s early phases was profound and prescient  
2. Fonte and Other Democratic Sovereigntists Find Themselves in the Same Position  
   a. Global governance needs a good deal of explaining  
   b. It deceitfully presents itself as the fulfillment of liberalism rather than its negation  
3. Fonte’s Early Analysis of the Transnational Progressive  
   a. First half of the book is a tour of four centuries of political theory  
   b. The practical difference between the exercise and the surrender of sovereignty  
   1) Transnationalism first imprisons then eliminates the nation-state in a euthanasia of regulations [cf. Gary North’s “Euthanasia”]  

http://www.lewrockwell.com/north/north381.html  

4. The Logic of Global Governance Leads to a Massive, Remote, Undemocratic Leviathan  
   a. European Union: A bird of the same feather  
   1) Walter Russell Mead [cf. his series of essays on the Blue State Model]  
   b. Two additional dangers revealed by the Euro crisis  
   1) Unchecked foolishness in the absence of democratic accountability  
   2) Failure is no restraint [in fact, it reinforces the need for such policies]  
   c. EU’s Common Agricultural Policy  
   1) Folly can be maintained for a long time [but is eventually term limited: cf. Roger Kimball, The EU: Steady on Its Course from Tragedy to Farce]  
   d. As Jonathan Swift might observe: Global governance would risk repeating such failures on a world scale and at Brobdingnagian expense  

D. FOUR IDEOLOGICAL CONTENDERS FOR THE TITLE OF DOMINANT POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (xv-xvi)  
1. Democratic or “Philadelphian Sovereignty” [the word itself is not used in the Constitution]  
   a. Unfortunately, post-Soviet East Europe soon found itself in a halfway house of global governance [Vladimir Bukovsky and Pavel Stroilov tell part of the story in EUSSR; Stroilov’s subsequent articles also draw on Soviet archives]  
2. Radical Islam and  
3. Sovereign Authoritarianism [Charles Hill’s Trial of a Thousand Years shows both to be a continuing challenge]  
4. Global Governance  
   a. Like Marxism, it is a great internal challenge [Philip Bobbitt’s Shield of Achilles identifies three contenders: liberal democracy, communism, and fascism]  

E. RESULT: A COMPLICATED INTELLECTUAL QUADRILLE (xvi-xvii)  
1. Lawfare  
2. The Utopian Vision Is Unlikely to Succeed  
   a. A danger that it will attain Gramsci’s “ideological hegemony” [cf. Toledano]  
   b. Disabling and disarming the democratic state  
3. Slow-Motion Suicide of Democratic Nation-States [cf. James Burnham’s Suicide of the West]  
   a. National judges are among the chief facilitators [cf. Rick Scarborough’s Confronting the Judicial War on Faith conference, 2005]  
   b. Popular rebellion against unaccountable power structures in Europe  
4. One Potentially Decisive Advantage of the Global Skeptics  
   a. Global governance is the ideology that dares not speak its name  
   1) It has to dissemble constantly  
   b. Fonte removes the veils of circumlocution that surround the sovereignty issue