

# In Search of a Better World

18th April 08 - Dr Zeki Ergas

A new book by Dr Zeki Ergas is now released based on a collection of short essays originally published in Share The World's Resources (STWR). Framing the question "How to build a better and sustainable world?", Dr Ergas explores the major threats facing humanity in the 21st century and outlines the systemic, structural and institutional changes necessary to avert a global catastrophe.

Through a detailed and structured argument that investigates all major aspects of the world problem, In Search of a Better World emphasizes the central notion that neoliberal globalisation is incapable of resolving the mounting world crisis. The lack of sharing and unequal distribution of the world's natural and energetic resources is at the heart of the problem, the author acknowledges, leading to an unacceptable gap in the distribution of income and wealth.

Addressing the "three scourges" of mankind - namely the persistence of extreme poverty, global warming and the threat of a global war - Dr Ergas identifies the immediate need for international agreement on an improved and binding framework for a fairer world economy. Citing the Global Marshall Plan launched in Germany as an estimable first step towards achieving a global plan of action guided by spiritual, ethical and cultural values, Dr Ergas also supports the noble initiative of an international consultation process that can provide a multilateral platform for experts, leaders and the global public to work together for a new system of global economic and political cooperation.

A triptych of opening essays set out the thesis that a competition is taking place on the world stage between the "mind and the heart", resulting in the "spiritual dimension" of life being neglected in the management of world affairs. The most important issues facing the global community, Dr Ergas argues, cannot be resolved by reason alone, concluding that having a conscience or heart "means making the structural, institutional and systemic changes necessary to build a better world". Humanity is engaged "in a kind of systematic lunatic denial of what is actually happening", he writes, emphasising the need of rebuilding a human civilisation based on the values of peace, social justice, solidarity and frugality.

In a defining essay titled The Political Economy of Love, Dr Ergas states that humanity has at its disposal sufficient resources for all mankind to have a decent standard of living, so the problem is no longer "global scarcity" but "global greed". Extreme poverty, he argues in a subsequent essay, is effectively a form of genocide by omission.

The immediate major risks to humanity are identified as a global war triggered by competition over scarce resources; the catastrophic consequences of global warming; and international terrorism that could potentially develop into a nuclear conflict. Other dangerous risks include the persistence of extreme poverty and the widening of the great divide between the extremely rich and poor, potentially leading to massive disturbances.

Summarising the radical systemic changes needed, Dr Ergas maintains that a "reformist solution" to existing structures is insufficient – the real solution lying in a people-oriented system that enables direct participation in the economic and political decisions that affect people's lives. Social programs, he reasons, must additionally ensure that everyone receives enough resources to have a decent standard of living. In listing the prescriptions for transforming present-day systems and values, the author argues for a gradual overhaul of the global economy to prioritise the qualitative aspect or dimension over the quantitative dimension.

Dr Ergas's analysis of the world situation is also far from downbeat. The empowerment of women, the abandonment of war, a strict protection of the environment, and the eradication of extreme poverty and inequality are all indispensable measures to building a better and sustainable world. "The "profound possibility" is there, so is the "profound hope" and "Therefore, the powers that be of this world, enough words have been said; now is the time to act, and to act decisively."

The essays in the collection are:

The Heart Vs. the Mind

The Political Economy of Love

Towards a Social and Ecological revolution

Market Fundamentalism Vs. Sustainable Development

On Humiliation and Human Dignity

Is Extreme Poverty a Form of Genocide by Omission?

Are Extreme Wealth and Extreme Poverty Inextricably Linked?

Is Big Business Doing Enough to Alleviate Poverty?

Settling an Historical Debt: A Prerequisite to Build a Better World

Why Justice Comes First, and Not Liberty

The Empowerment of Women and the Building of a Culture of Peace

The Abolition of the Culture of War and the Creation of a Culture of Peace

On Why Civil Disobedience Campaigns May Be Necessary

The 'Socialism of the 21st Century' and the 'Bolivarian Revolution' in  
Venezuela and Latin America

The American Conundrum

Globalisation, Rising China, and Declining America: Is War Inevitable?

The Building of a Better World: A Dialectical Approach

For more information and to  
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Link to a  
list of the original articles by Dr Zeki Ergas published at Share the World's Resources.

Link to  
the front and back pages of 'In Search of a Better World' (PDF)