

BOOK REVIEW

The Writings of Richard Falk: Towards Human Global Governance, foreword by B.S. Chimni (*New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2012*), pp. xxxiv+523 (*hardbound*)

An educator and crusader of 'public good', Richard Falk has indelible impact on the international scholarship in the areas of international relations, law, justice and global governance. He combines realist framework with ethics in order to have a global order conforming to desired object of 'public good'. In his writings, one finds an interesting global imagery of just order "that goes beyond bare survival, and is premised upon empathy, love, human dignity and respect for nature," writes Falk in his preface to the volume under review. If we carefully deconstruct his ideas, we may possibly discern that he, characteristically harmonises 'possibilities' and 'feasibilities'. This is probably the reason that his writings generate new hopes of human capacity without hegemony. He propounds the idea of an international order, which functionally combines efficient administration with valued goals of equitable and sustainable development. He rightly says "to reach such ends, institutional reforms and innovations are needed. These include a stronger, more financially independent UN system, the democratisation of international financial institutions, the creation of Global People's Assembly within the UN, and the creation of World Environmental Agency" (p. 28). Such an international order may be civilisationally moulded and based on subaltern juridical creativity. He innovately introduces the term 'environmental justice',

which "should be understood in relation to distributive inequities." (p.179)

His ethical outlook is premised on Gandhian discourse on moral impossibilities and possibilities. However, "if", he writes, "Gandhian moment is to be realised, it must encompass concerns with both the violence of weapons and the violence of inequitable structures of domination and exploitation. Perhaps unwittingly, the visibility of this violence owing to the globalisation of media coverage, especially on TV, will hasten the process by which the peoples of the world, sick from violence and the suffering it entailed, will arouse the conscience and commitment needed to carry forward the struggle for a non-violent world order. This is as much as we can hope for at present, but such a hope will certainly prove futile if we do not also act to the fullness of our individual and collective capacities to rid the world of war and violence." (p. 266)

His idea of world order is best explored in the section VI: Re-imagining and Re-making a New World Order: Rights, Justice and Democratic Governance. In this section, he makes seminally important distinction between 'power of rights' and 'rights of the power'. This has been done in order to propound a counter-hegemonic theory of human rights. Another important methodological distinction that he offers is between the use of expression, *globalisation-from-above as (capital-driven market forces seeking a maximally efficient world)* and *globalisation-from-below (people-oriented transnational and grass-roots social forces seeking a maximally humane and sustainable world)*. (p.382) His idea of a global order is based on radical envisioning of citizenship, justice, liberty, and sovereignty. One would like to conclude with observation made by B.S. Chimni in his foreword to this volume. He says : "In his personal journey Falk has moved from 'intellectual advocacy' to 'activist engagement' that has grown over the years. Those seeking nothing less than the transformation of the global system have much to learn from his rich life. He describes his journey as that of 'a citizen pilgrim' committed to the realisation of 'common good'. Like others who have undertaken this journey, he is conscious of the fact that he may not see the creation of desired global governance system in the course of his lifetime. But that neither shakes his faith in the future or the commitment to global social transformation. Falk epitomises the Antonio Gramsci call for pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will." (p.xxvii)

Publisher deserves special accolade for bringing out such an interesting piece of knowledge seeking to discover human global governance through the collected writings of a person, actively engaged in seeking transformation. One may like to recommend this volume as necessary reading for scholarly pursuits.

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