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Social Science

A Guide to the New World: Why Mutual Guarantee Is the Key to Our Recovery from the Global Crisis

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Solving the world's problems is obviously no small task, but Michael Laitman and Anatoly Ulianov, writing on behalf of the Advanced Research of Integration (ARI) Institute, attempt to consolidate the solution into one central premise: that of "mutual guarantee." The authors believe that globalization has created an environment in which "we are all connected to and dependent on one another like cogwheels in a machine." If people all over the globe can change their mindset from "caring for oneself into caring for all," write the authors, then everyone would be far better off.

The authors explain the notion of mutual guarantee by breaking the book into two parts. Part 1 addresses the key principles related to the concept. Here the authors discuss how mutual guarantee relates to nature, as well as practical issues, such as changing the public discourse, implementing the concept with the help of the Internet, the need to turn school into a place of social learning rather than individual learning, and the way in which mutual guarantee would achieve social justice. In Part 2, they briefly describe how a new society could be established based on the concept of mutual guarantee. One key cornerstone is recognizing that everyone is equal. The authors write, "We must change our social values so that people are appreciated for their contribution to society, not according to the size of their bank accounts."

The authors make an intriguing argument that draws strength from its simplicity. They point to the fact that our system of banks, industry, and international relations "have gone out of our control," so it is time to adopt a different strategy. They admit that, "At first glance, mutual guarantee may seem too utopian, too naïve a concept to work in our self-centered world." Yet they believe interdependence is a viable and necessary solution. "In an interconnected world,

there is no such thing as a local problem," write Laitman and Ulianov. "Only by deliberating in the spirit of our connection in a global web will we find the right way to solve these problems."

A Guide to the New World is more of a manifesto that expresses a philosophical perspective than a comprehensive plan for implementing mutual guarantee. As a result, some readers may be left questioning exactly how such a major shift in thinking would take place. There can be no doubt, however, that the book is provocative and refreshing in its approach to viewing globalization as a potential force for positive good.

Barry Silverstein