

The Oceanic Circle

ELISABETH MANN
BORGESSE

GOVERNING
THE SEAS AS
A GLOBAL
RESOURCE



The Oceanic Circle: Governing the Seas as a Global Resource

Elisabeth Mann Borgese

This book's title is taken from Mohandas Gandhi's comparison of the social order to the ever-widening circles that result when a stone is dropped in the ocean.

In much the same way, the governance of the world's oceans — as generated by the United Nations' 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea and the subsequent conventions, agreements and programmes following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit — is now affecting the social order of the individual, the village, the nation, the region, and the global community. It is non-hierarchical, participatory, and multidisciplinary, and includes the private sector as well as governments.

This emerging order has social, economic, cultural, environmental and ethical aspects, and requires profound changes in the ways we deal with each other and with nature. An understanding of this new order is needed to solve urgent problems: over-fishing and stock depletion; pollution from oceanic, atmospheric, and land-based sources; climate and sea-level changes; and biodiversity conservation.

Like life itself, the new order started in the ocean, which has been declared the common heritage of humanity, and is expanding to embrace the whole biosphere in "the majesty of the oceanic circle," leading to a more peaceful and equitable world order.

Elisabeth Mann Borgese is Professor of Political Science and Adjunct Professor of Law at Dalhousie University. Before coming to Canada, she was a Senior Fellow at the Center for Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California. It was at that Center that she launched her ocean project thirty years ago, which led to the establishment of the Pacem in Maribus Conference and the International Ocean Institute. She is a member of the Club of Rome, the World Academy of Arts and Sciences, and an Associate Member of the Third World Academy. She has served as Consultant to UNEP, UNESCO, and the World Bank. Among other honours, she has been awarded the United Nations Sasakawa Environment Prize, the Francis of Assisi Environment Prize, and the Order of Canada.

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