

Focusing the Progressive Movement

*The greatest price of refusing to participate
in politics is being governed by your inferiors.*

— Plato

We have argued that world democracy under global law is the best means, and in truth, the *only way* to achieve peace and justice in an interconnected world.

This grand quest for one world democracy is tailor-made for progressives who wish to assert positive and effective leadership in the twenty-first century. It provides for a practical program of transformation that can inspire today's youth and the generations to come. But in order to "get with the program," today's progressives in America and elsewhere must think big—or get out of the way of planetary progress.

This then is our message to mature progressive activists: The generations coming up behind us must face increasingly dire threats to the survival of humanity and of life on earth. Our own generation has responded to these threats with reformism, utopianism, rejectionism, post-modernism, and the single-issue politics of the democratic left. We, the boomer activists, have not yet wrestled with the inexorable need for enforceable global law; we have nearly forgotten the political contributions of the "one world" generation of the late 1940s.

This book retrieves that contribution, and provides a synthesis of the political programs of these two generations of activists. We have named it “enlightened progressivism,” but you may call it what you like. As you have seen in this book, this synthesis starts with a radical critique of the toxic world system that is based on the delusion of unlimited national sovereignty, a weak UN, American hegemony, unaccountable global corporations, and unenforceable treaties. We have cautiously pointed to the hidden agenda of global elites who have already formed a shadow world government. We have concluded by proposing a creative program that treats the causes of global dysfunction, not just the symptoms. This prescription offers the solution of democratic global government based on the sovereignty of the world’s people, against the false remedy of undemocratic world governance based on the “new world order” of the elites.

Let us bequeath to the next generation our blessing for this quest for genuine global solutions to global problems—democratic world federation. Let us not subject our children and their children to the ravages of an unaccountable new aristocracy whose identity, careers, wealth, and policymaking are based on a cynical adjustment to and manipulation of the current world system.

World federation provides a sweeping vision for the future, one that places all of humanity at its center. Our visionary European cousins have already formed a federal union that has eliminated the threat of war in Europe; so also can America lead the world in forming a federal union on a global scale.

It is a strange fact that, given our globalizing world economy, the Green Party is the only existing political party

that is international in scope. If nothing else, the international Green Party's existence in eighty countries around the world is a remarkable foreshadowing of the global political landscape of the future. The day is coming when the world's people will routinely elect representatives to a world legislature. In those great days, there will be numerous global political parties—presumably parties of the left, center, and right. For example, alongside the Green Party might be a Global Labor Party, a Planetary Libertarian Party, or an International Centrist Party.

Today's Green Party stands for UN reform and expansion, for international cooperation and peaceful resolution of conflicts; but it would be a great inspiration if the Greens would be the first to call for the total abolition of war and the immediate creation of a provisional, advisory world legislature—and even for open negotiations to create a global constitution.

Within the progressive wing of the Democratic Party in the US, leadership in providing a vision for global governance has especially been provided by Congressman Dennis Kucinich of Ohio, who among other things used the platform of the presidential election in 2004 to call for a “Department of Peace.” The laudable purpose of this institution would be to make nonviolence an organizing principle at home and abroad. But it would be most refreshing if Kucinich and his supporters and allies—including the Progressive Caucus in the Congress and grassroots groups such as the Progressive Democrats of America—would add “the abolition of war through the achievement of enforceable global law” as a key focus of their peace agenda.

In this connection, it should be noted that world federation has been supported in the past by many far-sighted Republicans. In recent times, John B. Anderson, once a

Republican Congressman from Illinois, served for many years as the president of the former World Federalist Association, and John Sutter, a lifelong Republican from Missouri, is serving at the time of writing as president of the Democratic World Federalists based in San Francisco.

Because the US remains the key player in moving toward global law, the political struggle for the great idea of world democracy in the US is critical. Enlightened progressives must think carefully about how to challenge the many entrenched powers and interests in the US that stand in the way of peace, environmental sustainability, and a world ruled by law. Meanwhile, they would do well to join with their allies overseas in building global constituencies for global political parties.

We have also argued that an inner revolution is necessary before this revolution in our global political institutions is possible. Democratic education on a broad scale must take place before we can create a mass audience that is receptive to a world democratic revolution. By the same token, no world government can be viable without a fiercely independent and robust global media that roots out corruption at the global level of governance, while it also reports on the policies and behavior of global political parties.

Obviously, we are far from these ideals today, so how do we bring these ideals down to earth?

The ancient Greek philosophers recognized that a persuasive message requires not just *logos* (a good idea well-argued), but also *ethos* (a respected and credible spokesperson) and *pathos* (a sympathetic and receptive audience). The ancient Greeks knew that great ideas alone are never enough when it comes to statecraft. If Socrates or Plato or Aristotle were alive today, they would surely tell us that the realization

of even the grandest of all political ideas—world citizenship, global democracy, and enforceable global law—still requires the development of trustworthy leaders and a sympathetic, open-minded audience if they are to become a reality.

Accordingly, those of us convinced of the intrinsic worth of the idea of one world democracy must first seek out and cultivate powerful spokespeople all over the world, as well as become persuasive leaders ourselves. And second, we must use the world media, educational institutions, and all other means of communication to cultivate the desire for world democracy and global justice in the minds of ordinary people, so that our advocacy for world law can find an increasingly receptive audience.

Allow us to put it this way: In politics, as in other walks of life, it is the stories that spokespeople with *ethos* tell in such a way as to create an environment of *pathos*, that are believed by the ordinary folks at the grassroots. These stories provide the reigning metaphors and symbols that shape politics and consciousness. We need to provide a new story about this planet, and about our place as global citizens on this tiny sphere in space. Through updated stories and metaphors that appeal to the heart as well as the mind, we can change commonly held beliefs about peace, war, and government so that the people of the world will easily come to see that they have a right to govern themselves.

If such steps are taken, we believe that the progressive vanguard of world federation can create the popular will for change, which in turn can be translated into the political will needed to legitimize the creation of a global government through one of the tactical vehicles we have suggested in chapters four and six of this book. In the final analysis, a global government will ultimately be created by people with

the power to do so, namely the cultural and political leaders and the elected officials of the world's democratic countries, on the basis of the persistent demand for change by the rightful sovereigns of the planet—the world's people.

We who are committed to one world democracy should know that we are the torchbearers of a great idea, a *logos*. We carry a tremendous responsibility to the future and to all life on earth. Cynics believe nothing will change and so they do nothing; optimists who believe in hope and human potential are the ones who shape the world. Just one person who summons the courage to stand up and speak out against the system of military terror that rules the earth, and for a new system based on law and justice, can give many others the courage to join in. Movements draw strength and energy from such apparently simple actions, each of which occurs one at a time and in apparent isolation. But we never know how one small action might serve as a catalyst to trigger a big response elsewhere. Thus, any ordinary person can provide the hope that shines light into the darkness of people's minds, sending out waves of encouragement and empowerment. The key is to do those things we can do now, with what we have available to us, and then to keep expanding our definition of what can be done.

At the end of World War II, people everywhere were ready to put an end to war. In 1946, the American Institute of Public Opinion asked a representative US sampling, "Do you think the UN Organization should be strengthened to make it a global government with power to control the armed forces of all nations including the United States?" To this question, an astonishing 54 percent answered "yes" and only 22 percent

said “no.”¹ As amazing as it sounds, it is a fact worth repeating: the majority of Americans polled in 1946, with the horrors of World War II fresh in their minds, were in favor of global government. With courageous activists like Garry Davis in the lead, world federation was a viable idea that inspired a large following all over the world. Unfortunately, this window of opportunity closed with the beginning of the Cold War, which led to the Korean War, which in turn led to all the results we have traced in this book. We know the tragic consequences: humankind has suffered through 170 wars since World War II, with over 25 million people killed. Global warming, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation have become dire threats to humanity’s survival.² There can be no doubt that we need to get the global government debate going again!

With the Cold War over and with the expansion of the European Union, a new window of opportunity is opening. It has been said that “timing is everything”—and now the time is ripe. Visionary political leadership is now required. An immense amount of work is needed to crack the stranglehold of corporate control of the media so that enlightened progressives can gain access to the general public. It will take creativity, energy, and perseverance to get the message out that another world is possible, and to rally people to the cause of peace and environmental sustainability through global law.

This global governance movement is like the movement that abolished slavery, the women’s suffrage movement, the movement for the right to unionize, the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement that helped end the Vietnam War, and other great movements all over the planet that have shaped our world for the better. These movements were composed of ordinary citizens who were told they were powerless and impractical dreamers. Yet they won these rights, triumphing

against incredible odds, because they persevered, because they believed in the power of a love that makes anything possible. Yes, we *can* move mountains to create one world democracy under law. It requires abiding hope and the courage to act on our deepest convictions.

*Few will have the greatness to bend history itself,
but each of us can work to change a small portion
of events and in the total of all those acts will be
written the history of this generation.*

—Robert F. Kennedy