

The Need for a Global Legislature

*We need first and foremost
a world democracy—a government
of this planet for the people and by the people.*

—Robert Muller
Former UN Assistant Secretary-General

Amidst appalling inequality, nuclear proliferation, a war on terror, and a global climate spinning out of control, international business-as-usual grinds on. Trillions of dollars in financial transactions occur daily, untaxed and far beyond the reach of popular control. On any given business day—as thousands of children die of starvation—financial transactions in developed countries, representing more than *one thousand times* the value of all other economic transactions in the world, flash across the screens of traders and financial analysts. This growing power of speculative finance and investment capital is supposedly regulated by the rules of antidemocratic institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank. It is driven by the impersonal quest of the world's investor class for new markets and ever-higher profits. The undeniable reality of commerce beyond the reach of democratic global law leads us to some stark questions:

If such “globalization without representation”¹ is permitted to continue, what lays ahead for the mass of the world's people?

What future can we expect for human rights? What fate can we expect for the “commons” of the world—the water resources, the atmosphere, the oceans, and the forests?

Are we moving toward a global dictatorship of capital, or a world democracy that ranks the needs of people higher than the search for profit?

Further, must we let the current system of global anarchy pit classes, races, and religions against one another? Or will the peoples of the world gather themselves as one global community and take control of their political destiny?

We have shown that the global issues facing humankind simply cannot be addressed without a global democratic authority—a governing structure that is legitimized by the consent of the world’s peoples. We have also explained that each person is inherently a world citizen who is entitled to equal protection under global law, must be held individually accountable before world law, and possesses an intrinsic right to vote for representatives to a global democratic body.

To those with concerns that such a democratic world authority may turn into a global “tyranny of the majority,” we say this: Our current course *already* is the road to a global tyranny of a wealthy and powerful minority. And we also ask: Who would you rather see make decisions that affect all of humanity: the UN General Assembly, the WTO, the World Bank, the White House—or a directly elected world parliament?

Students of government know that well-tested mechanisms already exist for controlling “majority factions” and insuring the rights of minorities in the deliberations of democratic bodies. If constitutional democracy is esteemed as the ideal for nations, how is it that representative government is not the optimal method for governing the world?

The real question is not if the world will have one government, but *what form* that government will take. Will it be a transparent, democratic, constitutional government, or will it be dominated by small groups of powerful nations and global corporations acting behind the scenes? Will it require the submission of imperial power to an objective body of world law, or will it permit great powers to veto the will of the nations at their whim? Will it allow open forums for deliberation about the global public interest, or will it stand for the unaccountable private interests of hidden global elites? Will it hide behind the mask of an obsolete national sovereignty, or will it affirm the sovereignty of the world's people? Even as you read these words, decisions are being made at the global level without humanity's consent by what might be called a *shadow* world government.

In this chapter, we will examine the proposition that moving toward the only alternative—a democratic model of world governance—may not be as difficult as one might imagine. Inspiring and useful prototypes already exist for what some have called a *global legislature*, and what others prefer to call a *world peoples' assembly* or a *world parliament*.

The grandest democratic endeavor of all time is imminent

The people of this planet don't need a "permission slip" from anyone to proclaim themselves sovereign. We can begin the great democratic experiment now. What earthly reason can justify delaying the launch of an institution that expresses our innate sovereignty?

A global parliament could be launched immediately, as an independent voice of the people—even in the absence of

a global constitution or approval by the UN. And in fact, several important global organizations have already initiated significant efforts, albeit these have been largely symbolic thus far. But there are no global bureaucrats standing in the way of all possible options, blocking us with impenetrable red tape or incomprehensible regulations. When it comes to establishing world democracy, the only true limits faced by us, the sovereigns, is the degree of our passion to achieve peace and justice through one world democracy.

The point then is to simply get started; the process will gain its own momentum and will sooner or later converge with allied efforts that will inevitably culminate in the convening of a world constitutional convention—or more likely, a movement to substantially reform the UN Charter.

The ultimate goal of this grand project would be nothing less than universal planetary suffrage—generalized universal direct elections or possibly elections to world electoral colleges. We envision that the greatest political minds on the planet will convene to devise the best means to reach that final goal. We see a scenario in which, with mounting excitement, global civil society will increasingly commit itself to this essential project in humankind's evolution. Forums will appear in which historic debates will ensue over questions such as these: How should representation be apportioned? Shall there be two houses, or three? What standards must be met by a country before it can send representatives? Should the world body be parliamentary in form, or a “republic” (as in the US)?

This process of inventing a world democracy could be the most extraordinary political mission ever attempted. It could inspire millions of youths and adults throughout the world who would otherwise remain disengaged. As the world embarks on this political adventure, inspiring cultural changes

will inevitably arise along with it. In his online book *World Democracy*, Troy Davis writes:

I am certain that if we called on young volunteers to help we would witness a tidal wave of volunteers from all countries. What young person would not want to participate in the process of establishing a political system that can finally bring peace to the world? It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Seeing millions of people working at this remarkable joint project will inspire creative people of all walks of life, singers, filmmakers, writers, journalists, philosophers, spiritual leaders, and many others, and their contributions will instill momentum to the project. To conclude, the project of establishing World Democracy can be a great means of revival for civil society and popular enthusiasm. It will finally give young people an ideal and reason for hope, and give electors new faith in democracy, faith which is necessary to maintain democracy.²

There is nothing grandiose about putting out a call for getting under way. The idea of one world democracy makes supreme sense; this chapter demonstrates that plenty of great minds have grappled with the means and manner of getting there; indeed, the only missing ingredient is *leadership*.

Let's start by examining the European Parliament, a sitting multinational legislature that now represents the popular will of all of the peoples of the European Union.

The European Parliament is a prototype for a world parliament

The European Parliament was established in 1957, starting out as an advisory body to what was then called the European Economic Community (EEC). In the first few decades of the EEC, delegates to the Parliament were simply appointed by national parliaments. But in 1979, the citizens

of all member-states were empowered to elect their representatives, which they now do every five years. With this profound change in procedure, the Parliament's prestige began to grow because of its ability to directly reflect the views of the European citizenry.

Meanwhile, new developments that began in the late 1980s turned the EEC into the world's largest trading region, as the EEC nations agreed by treaty to permit the free movement of goods, capital, people, and services across their borders.

In the next phase, the European Community was created by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, which led directly to the formal introduction of the European Union by a new treaty signed in 1993. Since then, Europe has seen increasing cooperation in foreign affairs as well as full economic and monetary integration, culminating in the introduction of a single currency, the euro, in 2002.

The European Parliament has evolved in parallel with Europe's economic integration, although often lagging behind. Additional democratic powers are envisioned for the Parliament in the new constitution for the EU.

Most observers project a similar pattern for the evolution of a world parliament. The experiment would likely be spurred on by the same two large forces that motivated the creation of the EU: inexorable economic integration, and the ever-present demand of civil society for improved forms of democratic participation. Seen in this light, the demand for world democracy should be on the top of the agenda of progressive activists in today's global justice movement.

Regardless of how the new world democratic union evolves, the example of the European Parliament will no doubt be a major inspiration to its framers.

Inspired citizens' efforts for global democracy have already borne fruit

Aside from the solo work of Garry Davis and his immediate followers, two non-governmental initiatives—*the peoples' assembly movement* and the ongoing efforts of the World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA)—are widely considered to be among the most significant grassroots efforts of global citizens for global democracy. These two exemplars represent decades of foundational and irreplaceable experience in the evolution of the struggle for a governed world. This approach to the task is what world democracy pioneer Dr. Lucile Green has called the “low road” to world government: the specialized focus on the issue of democratic participation through grassroots activism.³

A worldwide peoples' assembly was first proposed as far back as the 1920s during negotiations to create the League of Nations; similar calls were made at the time of the founding of the United Nations. But it required another three decades before a sustained movement had gathered around this crucial idea. The rising sentiment for grassroots global activism was especially reflected in the founding of a key organization in San Francisco in 1975, the Association of World Citizens (AWC)—now with branches in fifty nations. And San Francisco has remained the center of this movement to this day. Between 1975 and 1995, ten “World Citizen Assemblies” were held in a wide variety of locations around the world, convened by Lucille Green and by Douglas Mattern, who is currently the president of AWC. These assemblages ended where they began, in San Francisco.⁴

During this period, a milestone was reached when, during the second UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1982, a formal proposal was presented for a UN “Second

Assembly.” In essence, the proposed new additional assembly would become an integral part of the UN system. Such an innovation is possible under Article 22 of the UN Charter, which states that “the General Assembly may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.” It should be noted that Article 109 also provides that the Charter itself can be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the member nations along with the approval of all permanent members of the Security Council.

According to the 1982 proposal, a peoples’ assembly would meet alongside the General Assembly of the UN, but seats would be allocated according to population and other measures; delegates would be non-governmental and unaffiliated with political parties. In a later elaboration of this approach, the plan for the direct election of delegates involved the nomination of candidates by community councils comprised of local branches of non-governmental and community-based organizations, rather than through national jurisdictions. These councils would then engage in public education and other activist projects that would continually feed grassroots ideas and sentiments back to their Second Assembly delegates.

A simpler proposal circulated by Lucille Green called for the direct election of a single delegate by each participating nation. Green conceived this to be a more pragmatic way to start; democratic nations would only need to add one special slate of candidates to their existing procedures for national elections. In time, this one-state one-vote approach would be amended to reflect population—and then eventually evolved toward the creation of a world legislature. But the body would initially serve in an advisory capacity to the UN, proposing issues and debating resolutions from a people’s perspective.

The many Second Assembly initiatives of this era led to a series of annual conferences that culminated in 1995 at the 50th anniversary of the United Nations in San Francisco, where a symbolic “United People’s Assembly” was convened. By 1997, ten follow-up “world peoples’ assemblies” had met in cities like Perugia, Italy; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Wellington, New Zealand; and Los Angeles. In what appeared to be a response to these and many related efforts, in 1998 UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for a “Millennium People’s Assembly parallel to the UN General Assembly.” Thereupon, in 1999, about thirty delegations of world democracy activists from nations around the world attended the so-called Hague Appeal for Peace. This event, probably the largest peace conference ever held, convened at The Hague in the Netherlands and provided an open forum for every conceivable peace and justice organization; its program was explicitly focused on the abolition of war. Against this backdrop, people’s assembly delegations organized themselves into a founding convention for a permanent global assembly. The first such assembly thereupon met in April of 2000 at the island nation of Samoa in a historic event marked by considerable fanfare. About 150 people from over fifty countries, cities, and supporting organizations met together to lay the groundwork for a permanent organization. Since then the movement has continued on a number of fronts, with much of the work focused around the San Francisco People’s Assembly (SFPA)⁵ and the Association of World Citizens.

The work of the peoples’ assembly movement may have slowed somewhat in the post-9/11 era, though new initiatives are in the works at the time of this writing. But an important precedent has been created. The venerable history of this movement demonstrates the existence of considerable

grassroots support for a functional world democracy by committed activists in nearly half the countries of the world.⁶

The other major rallying point for world democracy activists has been The Constitution for the Federation of Earth, a prototypical document that was created through the efforts of world citizens, politicians, civil society leaders, and international lawyers over a period of thirty-three years beginning in 1958. Under the leadership of the World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA), founded by Professor Philip Isely of Lakewood, Colorado, a series of open meetings throughout the world culminated with a provisional constitutional convention in 1968 that attracted 200 delegates from twenty-seven countries. Collaborative work on drafting a viable world constitution thereupon commenced. At the second session of what was now called the World Constituent Assembly that met at Innsbruck, Austria in 1977, an initial draft of the Constitution was debated paragraph by paragraph and the final document personally signed by those present.

This draft was then sent to all members of the UN General Assembly and to all national governments, and distributed to citizen activists worldwide for additional debate and possible revisions; the final document was completed in 1991.

Under the authority of Article 19 of this proposed Constitution, world citizens who had personally ratified it began holding "Provisional World Parliaments" to elaborate a framework of global law, which continue to this day. To date, the group has held six such meetings at locations all over the planet and a considerable body of proposed statutes has evolved.

The Earth Constitution, as it is often called, is being

promoted worldwide by the WCPA and the Institute on World Problems based in Sri Lanka and Radford, Virginia. Its many elaborate provisions describe a federation of nations, a universal bill of rights, a world administration, and a separation of powers based on the parliamentary model. The chief feature, a tricameral world parliament, is our main concern here; it is designated as the highest authority of the government. Briefly, the three houses bear the following descriptions:

1. The House of the Peoples provides for proportional representation by universal suffrage in elections from 1000 electoral districts worldwide, not unlike the model of the House of Representatives in the US Congress.

2. The House of Nations consists of one to three representatives from each nation, depending on population. This approach is weighted more toward population than the model of the US Senate.

3. The House of Counselors would be comprised of 200 members elected at large who are intended to represent the public interest of the world's people as a whole. They provide expert advice to the other two houses; vote to break deadlocks; initiate legislation or proposals that the other houses must act upon; and nominate candidates for the Presidium, a committee of five executives who head the world executive branch.⁷

In a world marked by a wide variety of cultures in widely varying stages of evolution, the innovation of providing for a House of Counselors is significant. These are the men and women most likely to represent a "worldcentric" approach to global legislation, as opposed to what is likely to be the more parochial points of view of the representatives elected to the other two houses—some of whom may even represent ethnocentric or even tribal points of view. The structure of the

WCPA's Constitution appears to ensure that the members of the key echelon of leadership for the planet represent the highest possible evolution of consciousness on the planet.⁸

The movement around the WCPA, including the successive meetings of its Provisional World Parliament, represents a substantive expression of global democracy at work. Writes Dr. Glen Martin, current Secretary-General of the WCPA: "We are all already citizens of the Earth Federation. In the darkness of these times, we know that tomorrow is too late, and the time is now. A new dawn is rising for the world. Liberation for humanity is at hand. Citizens of the world unite!"⁹

A world parliament could be launched as an autonomous body

Another workable approach to creating a world parliament or legislature has been circulated in prestigious foreign affairs journals in recent years by two eminent thinkers: Richard Falk, professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University and author of dozens of books, and Andrew Strauss, professor of international law at Widener University School of Law. We examine this plan more closely than other initiatives because it has recently garnered attention at the highest levels of today's foreign policy establishment.

The vision of Falk and Strauss is not encumbered by its association with a particular constitutional framework (as is the case of the movement piloted by the WCPA), or by an affiliation with the UN system (as with the peoples' assembly movement). Instead they envision that a world parliament could be established, even within this decade, as an autonomous body and a rallying point for new efforts to develop a world constitution or a reformed UN.

However, if not arising from within an existing

institutional structure, who then would initiate the global parliament, and how? Ideally, a core group of national governments would lend the prestige of their support. Falk and Strauss write that a people's world forum could best be launched as a special initiative by such a pioneering group of democratic governments, supported especially by a worldwide grassroots campaign led by NGOs: "As few as twenty to thirty geographically, culturally, and economically diverse countries would be enough to credibly launch this experiment in global democracy."¹⁰ A vanguard group of this sort would create an experimental body about the size of the European Parliament—that is, if in fact NGOs could be persuaded to do most of the organizing and persuading, and if in addition a sufficient number of visionary politicians could be recruited from many nations.

It is a fact that a myriad of NGOs and numerous other business, labor, media, human rights, cultural, and religious organizations already engage in activities whose scope is international. All such groups constitute "a highly visible globalized citizenry that now has the capacity, perhaps with the help of some forward-looking governments, to organize such an assembly."

Falk and Strauss indicate that the lack of strong governmental support would not be the most decisive factor in this scenario, and would not be a legal requirement. (It should be noted that the WCPA's appeals over many decades to national governments were largely ignored.) So what other steps could bring this assembly into being? This is what the professors wrote in the *International Herald Tribune*:

Perhaps the most effective initial move would be to issue an appeal endorsed by moral authority figures (religious leaders, Nobel Peace Prize laureates) that calls on the peoples of the world to bring about such an assembly.

If well-executed, this appeal would probably succeed in raising needed organizing funds.

As a second stage, meetings could be arranged throughout the world with the goal of forming a citizens' committee that could organize and administer global elections. A voting formula based upon one person, one vote would probably be acceptable and fairest. Elections could then be held, monitored by respected observers. . . . Global voter rolls would have to be generated. A system of campaign finance and other election rules would need to be established, and attempts to manipulate or undermine elections would have to be effectively guarded against.¹¹

If all this could be accomplished, the process of electing the very first delegates to this body would be a momentous step. From there, one can imagine that the self-expression of the people's inherent sovereignty would naturally and dynamically unfold. Each election cycle in a democratic nation pushes forward the evolution of that nation's civic culture as it is expressed through polls, punditry, political parties, a watchdog press, political campaigns, and all the rest. One can expect the same to occur in the ongoing articulation of a world citizens' global political culture, once initiated.

In time, a distinctive institutional identity would emerge—the people's world parliament! Allowed for the first time to participate in creating global law, one might also imagine the exuberance of an organized world citizenry and how it would become institutionally committed to the parliament and invested in its success. Starting from humble beginnings, the global assembly would become an unstoppable force, expressing the long pent-up demand for the political enfranchisement of the world's people.

In the Falk and Strauss model, the global parliamentary assembly would at first follow the example of the European

Parliament; its function would initially be advisory. But once in place, it probably would gradually increase in influence and reputation as the needs of an increasingly interdependent world come to the fore through the voices of its enfranchised citizens. One can only imagine the huge array of citizen groups and NGOs that would line up to petition the global parliament to pass resolutions supportive of their positions.

But what would happen, in the meantime, to those elites and business groups who brought us the IMF, the WTO, and the World Bank, and who stand to lose power because of the democratization of the planet? This is how Falk and Strauss answer:

Those opposed to the policy preferences of these citizen groups, whether industrial lobbies, labor unions, states or other citizen groups, would likely be unwilling to concede to their opponents the legitimacy of the only popularly elected global body. Instead, they would likely come to participate as well. It is even possible that nationalistic critics and policymakers hostile to global democracy would be inclined to participate and put forth their own views. As groups found in the parliament a transnational civic space in which to work out their differences, the center of political gravity could subtly shift in the parliament's favor.¹²

A further step would be that of expanding the parliament's membership. Falk and Strauss believe that just as soon as the world parliament begins functioning, citizen groups from countries around the world would themselves exert pressure on their governments to join in the venture. Eventually, a critical mass of membership would be reached. Even the most authoritarian governments would at some point find it embarrassing to deny their citizens the right to be represented.

According to the authors, one possible outcome of this unfolding would be the incorporation of the parliament into the UN system, instituted as a "lower house" of a "World

Congress” alongside the General Assembly; this would make it part of a bicameral legislative system that would supplement or hopefully supplant the Security Council. Another path would be to link this independent effort toward world democracy with an independent call for a world constitutional convention, perhaps with delegates from the world parliament.

Any act of launching a global parliament would give hope and inspiration to the world’s people; it would also begin to offer aggrieved groups a genuine alternative to terrorism or civil war. The authors state:

Those alienated by perceived injustices or by global silence about their grievances would no longer have to choose between surrender and the adoption of desperate tactics. Instead, they would have a legitimate international forum in which they could at least be heard and perhaps find enough support to achieve peaceful redress. Citizens would be able to stand for office, champion candidates and form coalitions to lobby the parliament, a process that would bring those with diverse or opposing views into a give-and-take setting that would improve the chances for compromise and reconciliation. Those whose views did not prevail would likely be more inclined to accept defeat out of a belief in the fairness of the process, and with an understanding that they could continue to press their cause on future occasions. . . . Of course, the Osama bin Ladens of the planet will never accept the legitimacy of a global parliamentary process. But their ability to attract a significant following might well be substantially diminished by the presence of such an institution, especially if the legitimate grievances of peoples around the world were being consistently addressed with an eye toward the realization of global justice and the promotion of the rule of law.¹³

A constitutional global democracy is needed now

It is worth repeating that a world parliament could operate at first in an advisory capacity, prior to the creation of

a world constitution or a reformed UN. It was many years before the European Parliament was formally incorporated into the European Union, which then conferred upon it the power to write binding legislation through a constitution that was proposed decades after the advisory parliament was created. In the same way, the advisory world legislature would at a later point converge with—and derive final legitimacy from—efforts to create a new constitution for a federal world government, and would be further shaped by this larger endeavor. One can imagine that this “latter-day” constitution (or UN Charter review conference) would extract the best lessons learned from the ongoing experiment of the global parliament and blend these with what the planet’s finest minds would devise for a new world executive and judiciary system.

There would be much to draw from. Many proposals for a constitution for a world federation exist aside from the WCPA, many of which were first promulgated in the golden age of thought about world government in the late 1940s and 1950s. The first and boldest was the Preliminary Draft of a World Constitution (1948), created by the University of Chicago’s Committee to Frame a World Constitution, an effort that was led by the eminent scholar and educator Robert Maynard Hutchins and professors Mortimer Adler and G. A. Borgese. Another was enunciated in *World Peace through World Law* (1958), a detailed book by Grenville Clark and Louis B. Sohn, two Harvard professors, which essentially offered a substantive reform of the United Nations Charter. These two draft constitutions span the range between “maximal” and “minimal” concepts, respectively. The maximalist approach would vest the world government with broad powers to achieve peace and justice; the minimalist approach would restrict it primarily to powers involving the

maintenance of international security. Like any government, a global government is a balancing act; it should be set up so that it is not too powerful (thus avoiding tyranny) and not too weak (thus avoiding ineffectiveness).

In addition to the Chicago committee's draft and the Clark-Sohn plan, there have been well over fifty other model world constitutions. To this day the best known among these is the Constitution for the Federation of Earth, noted earlier, which has two key advantages: It has been translated into twenty-two languages and widely distributed, and it was created through a process of four constituent assemblies of diverse membership over a period of twenty-three years, lending it a democratic authenticity that other proposed constitutions lack.

There have also been countless proposals for UN reform, though none quite on the scale of the Clark-Sohn plan. These include the Binding Triad proposal of Richard Hudson, and the fourteen-point plan of the Campaign for UN Reform. These various proposals show, at the least, that a lawful federation of the modern world is conceivable, and most could easily serve as draft negotiating documents for a realistic program of political action.

In a world federation, the issue of democratic representation is considered one of the most challenging problems. Should representation be proportional to population—the strictly democratic principle? This would obviously give predominance to poorer, more populous, and less “politically experienced” countries. We’ve seen how WCPA’s Constitution addresses this matter. Or should representation be weighted somehow to make active participation more attractive to the world’s great powers? Clark and Sohn advocated that the UN

General Assembly should be reorganized according to a system of weighted representation, scaled with respect to population, wealth, education, and traditional great-power ranking. Thus the US, Russia, China, and India were to each be allocated thirty delegates; mid-sized powers such as Britain, France, West Germany, and Japan, sixteen delegates; smaller nations, eight; and so on down through seven steps to the smallest states, which jointly would be granted one delegate. This scheme produced a total of 625 world representatives. Clark and Sohn urged that the representatives be directly elected by the people wherever possible, so that they develop a sense of responsibility to their constituents instead of to national governments; elsewhere, appointment by parliaments or national monarchs would have to be allowed.

The Chicago committee proposed a rather different scheme—more on the “republican” model of the US Constitution. It provides for regional popular elections and nine electoral colleges, thus eliminating the cumbersome weighting scheme. Representatives to the world legislature would be elected by all the electoral colleges sitting in plenary session. Through this technique, each representative would, in principle, reflect the public interest of the whole world. In stark contrast with other plans, the Chicago approach would result in a world legislature of only ninety-nine delegates!

More recently, Professor Joseph E. Schwartzberg’s widely distributed approach developed in conjunction with the Institute for Global Policy, a think tank operated by the World Federalist Movement, has devised a system of weighted voting that could be used by a reformed General Assembly of the UN. This system uses a mathematical formula based on population, financial contribution to the UN, and membership. This system, if in place today, would give the US a weighted

vote of 9.1 percent, China 7.7 percent, Japan 7.3 percent, India 6.0 percent, Germany 3.8 percent, etc. Schwartzberg also made the following suggestions as to the minimal requirements for launching a global assembly:

- (a) At least twenty nations must agree to the basic conditions.
- (b) Nations from at least four continents must be included.
- (c) Participating nations must account for at least 15 percent of the world's population.
- (d) Participating nations must account for at least 15 percent of the UN's budget.¹

Whatever the technical arrangements might turn out to be, the almost sacred work of creating a global democratic body is the best insurance that humankind could ever devise against global crises such as terrorism, world wars, and environmental destruction. It will be a forum for permanent political dialogue of all peoples and for the adoption of laws that reflect their sovereign will. As the one world democracy evolves, old notions of an inevitable "clash of civilizations" will become a relic of the past. Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and the secular-minded Westerners alike will grow to treasure this forum for peaceful deliberation. And for the first time in history, it will elevate world commerce and global politics by putting these under the aegis of enforceable global law.

A World People's Assembly [could] become an integral part of a reformed and democratized United Nations, modified and strengthened to defend the common interest of humankind so aptly stated in the Preamble to the UN Charter. The time to begin is at hand.

—Lucille Green