

**The Evolution
Of An
Abolitionist**

A Personal Essay

by
Stanley K. Platt

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***“If you don’t
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how you gonna
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As Oscar Hammerstein put it in *South Pacific*, “If you don’t have a dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?”

I have a dream that within the lifetime of people now living, the nations of the world will decide to eliminate war for settling disputes, and that this will be done through international institutions with the capacity to insure peaceful settlements.

The 67-year evolution in my thinking came about through a wide range of influences. My first awakening occurred in 1919, when I was attending Irving grade school in St. Paul, Minnesota. The entire student body was recessed to walk one block north to Summit Avenue to watch President Woodrow Wilson ride by in his long black touring car, waving his high silk hat as he passed us. He was campaigning for U.S. membership in the League of Nations — for “generations yet unborn,” as he later said.

My three older brothers had just returned from Europe, where they had served in World War I. Our whole family was proud and happy (and relieved) when they came home unharmed. So I concluded then that President Wilson had a good idea when he proposed that nations settle their differences through this new world organization.

However, the next impetus to my thinking didn’t occur until many years later, after World War II. My nephew’s bomber, on which he served as navigator, had been shot down over Germany. A German officer saved his life from the angry crowd, and he was held prisoner until the end of the war. Later, we had a young German guest of our church to dinner, and my nephew joined us. We learned that our German visitor served in a German anti-aircraft division when he was a 15-year-old-boy, and he may have been one of those who shot down my nephew’s plane. Our children were amazed at this discovery, and I concluded again that the world must find a better way to settle international disputes.

Both world wars resulted in the creation of new international institutions to “end the scourge of war.” But even with the benefit of experience through the League of Nations, the United Nations

was not given the authority necessary to fulfill its peacekeeping responsibilities.

Although it was Albert Einstein who first envisioned splitting atoms to produce tremendous power, it was also Einstein who was the first to realize that atomic power must be brought under international control. He advocated world government as the only reliable response.

In 1945, the year when the two atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a group of individuals formed an organization that is known as the World Federalist Association. I joined the Federalists in 1947 after hearing a talk by Cord Meyer, a veteran of World War II, who had lost a brother in the war and had, himself, been gassed and almost lost his life.

Federalist membership jumped to over 48,000 in the early years, but the concept didn't become generally popular. To most, it seemed a visionary and even dangerous idea; and it lacked specifics about how it could keep peace without sacrificing the freedom of member nations. Nevertheless, World Federalism spread around the world, notably in Northern Europe, England, and Japan — countries that had experienced the adversities of war, whose citizens were seeking a better way. This resulted in the formation of the World Association of World Federalists, now called the World Federalist Movement. Martha and I have attended Federalist assemblies in such diverse cities as Paris, Tokyo, Oslo, and Washington DC, and they have strengthened my belief that the federal principle of delegated powers can be used to abolish war and insure freedom and independence.

On United Nations Day, October 24, 1950, a coincidence drew me into a more active participation in the peace movement. I read a full-page advertisement in the *Minneapolis Star* that pictured a man with his arm around the shoulders of a boy who was asking, "What did you do between the great wars, Daddy?" I had four small children, and I couldn't answer that question myself. The ad made me realize that any actions to prevent war must be taken before war starts.

That evening, I had a call from Clare Mc Laughlin, the wife of an Air Force veteran who had had the difficult assignment of reporting deaths to the next of kin. She asked me to serve on the Minneapolis Council of the World Federalists. Remembering the ad, I agreed. Later, I became Minnesota chairman, and then a member of the National Council — along with such leaders as Norman Cousins, Alan Cranston, Max Stanley, and Pierce Butler, Jr., of St. Paul.

Following the premature death of Pierce Butler, a foundation was set up in his memory under the name "Pierce Butler, Jr., Foundation for Education in World Law," and I became Vice President. Much later, in 1967, Randolph and Dorothy Compton of New York — who had lost a son in World War II — asked to take over the Pierce Butler, Jr., Foundation in order to channel major funds through it for peace education; and the name was changed to The Fund for Peace. I asked that my status be reduced to trustee, and I have been attending board meetings for 20 years.

Recognizing the need for law as a remedy for world anarchy, many of the world's lawyers became interested in the concept of world peace. In 1957, under the leadership of Charles Rhyne, an organization of lawyers was formed as the "World Peace Through Law Center," and they held world assemblies each year in different locations around the world. Because I was not a lawyer, I became an associate member, and I attended assemblies in Washington, DC and Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

The assembly in Washington, in 1964, was notable because Chief Justices from many countries were invited to attend, with expenses paid. Martha and I helped make it possible for Chief Justice H.T. Lee of Taiwan to come, and he stayed with us. One evening I asked Judge Lee how the People's Republic of China might become part of a world system to abolish war. He said he'd like to think about it overnight; and the next morning he told me that bringing the People's Republic into the world community was the first

step, and this would happen through open communication of every form: social, cultural, economic, and diplomatic. If the world is to cooperate to insure peace, he said, we must first develop understanding and trust.

It was Grenville Clark who convinced me that world peace through world law is a practical as well as a desirable goal. He was a prestigious New York lawyer who came to the aid of his country in war and in peace. In 1950 he published a small book called "A Plan for Peace." The Ford Foundation took notice and awarded him a major grant to flesh out his concept in greater detail, and he invited Louis B. Sohn, a Professor of International Law at Harvard, to work with him on the project. Clark and Sohn produced a work of great significance in the march of history toward a warless world: *World Peace Through World Law*, first published in 1958. They analyzed the United Nations charter in principle and detail, and suggested many changes to make it more effective. The Soviet Union flatly rejected the Clark-Sohn plan, and the U.S. military-industrial-government complex ignored it. Nevertheless, I believe that when a plan for lasting peace is finally drawn and approved, the basic principles set forth in that epic book will be included.

Clark had a home in Dublin, New Hampshire, and his phone number was Dublin 1. In 1965 he held a retreat in Dublin that came to be known as "Dublin 2," and he invited a wide range of knowledgeable people, including Kingman Brewster (chairman), Louis Sohn, Norman Cousins, and Erwin N. Griswold, Dean of Harvard University Law School. Martha and I were there because I'd had some correspondence with Clark while he was writing *World Peace Through World Law*. In one spirited exchange between Grenville Clark and Dean Griswold about the timing of the adoption of a plan for peace, Griswold said such a plan must be preceded by a greater sense of world community. But Clark pointed out that the realization of peace requires a clear concept of where you want to go, why, and how to get there. A road map is necessary, he believed.

Near the end of Grenville Clark's life, he set up a fund to carry on his work. This became the World Law Fund — later called the Institute for World Order and, more recently, the World Policy Institute — and it produced the first textbooks on peace studies. In 1973, with the help of Michael Washburn and Harry Hollins of the Institute for World Order, I arranged a dinner meeting in Minneapolis, hosted by Irene and Wheelock Whitney with Senator Charles Mathias as guest speaker. Funds totalling \$117,000 were raised to start 16 courses on world order at the University of Minnesota. Some of these courses have since become a regular part of the University's curriculum.

Over the years, the individual other than Grenville Clark who has most influenced my thinking about the necessity and feasibility of world peace through world law is Norman Cousins. His stimulating editorials in the *Saturday Review* strengthened my conviction that this goal is attainable through persistence, improved communications, and the march of history.

In 1974, a number of people decided that Norman Cousins was a worthy candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, and they wanted to ask Mayor Yamada of the City of Hiroshima to make the first nomination. Cousins had helped bring medical aid to Hiroshima after the bomb was dropped, and he also arranged to bring a group of young Japanese women to the United States for plastic surgery. The Mayor had named Norman Cousins an honorary citizen of Hiroshima.

Since nobody else seemed to be available, I volunteered to go to Hiroshima to ask Mayor Yamada for his nomination. I cabled him, and he said he would welcome my visit. Late in December of 1974, I arrived in Hiroshima and went to the City Hall to see the Mayor. I was met by Mr. Ogura, Chief of the Foreign Affairs Section of the Mayor's office. After a warm greeting, he told me that he was sorry to inform me that Mayor Yamada was very ill and in an oxygen tent. However, he assured me that the Mayor would be happy to sign the nomination of Norman Cousins as soon as he

recovered from his illness; though under the circumstances, I would have to assume responsibility for any further nominations.

Then Mr. Ogura escorted me on a tour of the demolished area of the city that is preserved as a memorial. Next we went to an auditorium where I sat alone to watch a Japanese film of the destruction, the instant death of 100,000 men, women, and children, and the suffering of those condemned to live a while longer. This was the most shocking experience of my life, and it convinced me that everything possible should be done to prevent the use of atomic or nuclear weapons any time, anywhere, in the future.

I returned to Minneapolis on January 8th, where a cablegram from Mr. Ogura informed me that Mayor Yamada had died, but that the last thing he did was to authorize the use of his signature on the nomination of Norman Cousins for the Nobel Peace Prize. I had until February first to deliver any additional nominations to Oslo, and I worked around the clock to acquire an impressive number of qualified nominations and supporting documents by that deadline.

It was Andrei Sakharov of the Soviet Union — the scientist who had enabled the USSR to produce nuclear bombs, and who, having done so, had the courage to advise the Kremlin not to compete with the United States in either the military or the economic spheres — who won the 1975 Nobel Peace prize. He was nominated by Linus Pauling, who had won two Nobel prizes — first in physics, and then for peace.

I wrote to Norman Cousins expressing regret that he had not been named, but praising the Sakharov award because of his courage and its worldwide political significance. Norman responded with the most touching and encouraging letter I have ever received — a letter that I treasure highly.

Signs are now beginning to surface that a world movement to abolish war is in its early stages and can become decisive before the end of this cen-

tury. Following Pope John's 1963 encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, organized religions have become increasingly concerned and vocal about the killing, deprivations, and misery caused by wars. The American Catholic Bishops challenged us all to new thinking and action to create a world at peace in 1982, and the Methodist Bishops went even further in their call for action in 1986.

Two Canadian members of Parliament decided in 1978 that the best way to speed up peace building is through the direct influence of members of the parliaments of the world. The result was the formation of an organization now called Parliamentarians - Global Action. About 650 members of parliaments now belong to this group, including Congressman Tom Downey (one of its four Vice Presidents), Congressman Jim Leach of Iowa, and Senator Paul Simon of Illinois. Aided by Parliamentarians - Global Action, six heads of state have joined in what they call the "Five Continent Peace Initiative." The six nations are India, Greece, Sweden, Argentina, Tanzania, and Mexico; and they have petitioned the two major nuclear powers to eliminate nuclear weapons and to improve world peacekeeping. So finally the world has a way for people to pressure their representatives to push the major powers to end the threat of nuclear war.

In May 1985, a conference of Soviet and American citizens was held in Minneapolis to discuss ways for improving relationships between our two countries. Martha and I hosted a home dinner for two of the Soviets and several American participants and a few non-participants. The talk during dinner brought out a coincidence that again illustrates the stupidity of using military force to solve international disputes.

One of the guests was Feodor Burlatsky, the author who had been a speech writer for Khrushchev at the time of the Cuban missile crisis. Marcus Raskin, head of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, was also a guest; and he had been on the staff of the National Security Council under President Kennedy. They discovered that, during that time of great tension when a nuclear response

by President Kennedy was certain unless Khrushchev agreed to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba, each of them had been warned to get their families out of Moscow and Washington as a realistic precaution. We also learned that a U.S. nuclear bomber was headed across the Atlantic, but was called back shortly before it would have reached its target. So this was a good example that nations with nuclear weapons will be tempted to use them in times of crisis.

In July 1985, Martha and I attended the Decade for Women forum in Nairobi, Kenya. There I learned that the greatest losers in war are the women and children of the world; and that the resources, time, and talent devoted to war are preventing or slowing down the solution of many vital problems, such as hunger, pure water, disease, and environmental deterioration. This is a reaffirmation of the often-quoted observation of President Eisenhower that:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in a final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, from those who are cold and are not clothed.

A year later, in July 1986, Martha and I were among the 127 Americans who traveled with 47 Soviet citizens aboard the paddlewheel boat "Delta Queen" on the Mississippi Peace Cruise. The desire for peace was demonstrated strongly at all six stops and most of the 27 locks between St. Paul and St. Louis. During one of the group discussions, a Soviet veteran of World War II, General Mikhail Milshtein, said that "There cannot be isolated security any more — only common security." That truth is the key to a world beyond war. We and the Soviet Union can be secure only when all nations are secure.

The United States is now celebrating the 200th anniversary of the adoption of the U.S. Constitution. Just as our Constitution has served us well for two centuries, we can also apply its democratic principles to the abolition of war and terrorism through a reformed and strengthened United Nations. The

13 original states had their own armies and currencies. They had many conflicts of interest that threatened peace and tranquillity. They lacked a common foreign policy. Through the new Constitution, they joined together to serve their common interests, but retained the rights of self-government for local affairs.

The movement toward the abolition of war is marked by its advocacy of the same federal principles of delegated powers to solve the problems of war, militarism, and common international interests — without delegation of the broader powers of government, which would be reserved for the individual nations.

Clearly, the abolition of war is in the common interests of humanity, and of each nation. The key is to find the right lever to mobilize American and world public opinion. Perhaps that lever is:

- 1) to clarify and emphasize the common interests of humankind in a world beyond war;
- 2) to agree on common goals and the basic requirements of a reliable "peace system"; and
- 3) to organize a strategy to abolish war through international institutions capable of insuring peace.

When that happens, the world will emerge into a wonderful new sunlit age of peace and wellbeing.

Stanley Platt was born in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1906 and graduated from Dartmouth College in 1929. Following a career in investment management, he founded Investment Advisers, Inc. in 1946. He retired in 1976. Stan and his wife, Martha, live in Minneapolis, where he is currently trying to raise funds for an international Convocation for a Safer and Better World.



Stan and Martha Platt in 1983, as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.