

The Politics of World Federation

By Joseph Preston Baratta

Review by Ronald J. Glossop

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World Federalists who would like to know more about their roots have a new treasure here. The first sentence of this new two-volume work by a professional historian (who knows the movement from within as well as through intensive study) succinctly describes the whole: "This book is a history of the practical, political efforts to establish a constitutionally limited, democratically representative, federal world government in order to effectively abolish war." In a sentence which could readily be used to support the recent name change to Citizens for Global Solutions, Professor Baratta says (on page 2): "The view here, like that of Grenville Clark and the organizers of United World Federalists, is that until world federation becomes a matter for domestic politics, it will remain an idle dream." [If the names "Grenville Clark" and "United World Federalists" are new to you, you definitely need to read this book.] It is worth mentioning that the excellent Foreword is written by John Anderson, the last President of the World Federalist Association, who strongly supported the organization's name change.

The first volume covers the historical period up to the beginning of the Cold War in 1947, but it also contains the very valuable "Introduction to Both Volumes." This introduction not only provides a summary overview but also some valuable analytical comments about implementing the world federalist ideal. For example, on pages 12 to 17 Baratta addresses "Major Problems in Constructing World Federation." He mentions four of these issues on which world federalists differ among themselves.

- (1) Should membership in the world federation at first be limited to democracies, or should it be universal from the beginning?
- (2) Should representation in the legislative body of the world federation be proportional to population, or should it take account of other factors such as economic or military power?
- (3) Should the world federation be granted just those powers needed to stop wars (and thus tend to preserve the status quo) [the minimalist view], or should it be granted wider powers so it could address issues of justice and equitable distribution of wealth [the maximalist view]?
- (4) Should the transition from the existing state of affairs be revolutionary and moved by populism from below, or should it be gradual and evolutionary, relying on trying to influence the policies of those who have power?

In both this introductory chapter (p. 17) and in his concluding chapter of Volume 2 (p. 534), Baratta distinguishes between three possible alternative approaches to world politics which lead to three alternatives for the structure of the U.N.

- (1) The international system continues to be a basically national-government-to-national-government (balance-of-power) system with the U.N. being brought in only when necessary to facilitate multilateral diplomacy.
- (2) The international system based on collective security continues to evolve very gradually as basically a non-hierarchical collection of various international agencies (functionalism) with possibly some minor modifications in the U.N. Charter to give countries such as Japan and Germany permanent seats on the Security Council.
- (3) A very gradual transformation of the U.N. toward a federal system (rule of law) where the national governments retain much of their sovereignty but a democratically representative world legislature is developed perhaps on the model of the evolving European Union. In looking at the present situation, Baratta concludes (p. 534) that "a world federal government that would remain democratic and truly protective of world citizens is almost everywhere regarded as something for the far future." "But," says Baratta on page 536, "from our perspective, to speak of [global] governance, not

[world] government, is to speak only of the product, not the producer. . . . Federalists want world government . . . not as a good in itself but as the necessary instrument to establish peace and justice. Not to talk of government is not to face squarely the issue of willing the means for the end."

In this review I have focused on the theoretical and analytical insights to show that this work is not only historical. At the same time, it is basically a historical work filled with facts, names, dates, documents, quotations, and details about how some actions and events led to other events in quite unpredictable ways. The reader sees world federalists and their opponents involved in real political battles with real outcomes. One learns, for example, about the extent to which the Soviet Communists viewed world federalists as representing the cosmopolitanism being advanced by West even as they were being treated as Communist sympathizers in the United States. The reader also learns about the details of the battles between particular federalists who had differing ideas about what the movement should do and what ideas should be stressed. The interesting collection of 17 relevant photographs and cartoons between pages 436 and 437 is an unexpected bonus.

This two-volume set with its \$150 price-tag is obviously designed primarily for libraries and very serious students of world federalism. But its quality, including the exhaustive documentation, appendices of relevant documents, extensive bibliography, and thorough index makes it definitely worth the price. All world federalists must extend our gratitude to Professor Baratta for making this important material available to us.

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Ronald J Glossop is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Peace Studies at Southern Illinois University and a World Federalist Institute Fellow and Steering Committee Member. He is also author of *Confronting War and World Federation?*

Joseph Baratta is a member of the Center for Global Community and World Law. He is also a World Federalist Institute Fellow.