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Mark Mazower. *Governing the World: The History of an Idea*. New York: Penguin Press, 2012. ISBN: 9781594203497 (hardcover, \$29.95); 9780143123941 (paperback, \$18.00).

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Mark Mazower's *Governing the World* surveys the evolution of internationalism over the last two centuries. Mazower's history provides a rich description of how the concept of internationalism has been contested, altered, and manipulated since the early nineteenth century. After reviewing some of the key points in Mazower's historical narrative, my review makes two points. First, *Governing the World* could have benefited from a deeper engagement with theories in the field of international relations that seek to explain the rise and fall of institutionalized international cooperation. Second, Mazower's arguments about the ways in which contemporary internationalism is eroding state sovereignty are underdeveloped, and, ultimately, unpersuasive.

Mazower's narrative begins by surveying different manifestations of internationalism in the nineteenth century, starting with the Concert of Europe system that followed the defeat of Napoleon. Mazower describes how this first effort at managing relations among the great powers operated primarily through intergovernmental cooperation and regular meetings. These chapters describe how a diverse set of ideas, movements, and organizations arose in reaction to the Concert system, all animated by different visions of the principles that should guide internationalism, such as free trade, nationalism, communism, international

law, or scientific progress. Mazower describes the creation in the twentieth century of more formal international organizations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations system. A recurring theme is that internationalism has been shaped by the interests and preferences of powerful states. Following World War I, leaders in powerful liberal democracies such as Britain and the United States sought to create a permanent, universal international organization in the form of the League of Nations. The United States did not join the League, but took an active role in the creation of the United Nations system, designing an organization in which U.S. allies and the victors of World War II held disproportionate influence.

In the second half of the book, Mazower surveys the post-World War II trajectory of international cooperation and global governance. In the economic sphere, Mazower details how the United States promoted trade and financial liberalization in response to new economic demands made by the global South beginning in the 1970s, and steered institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization to advance this ideological agenda. In the international security sphere, Mazower traces the rise of United Nations peacekeeping operations, the International Criminal Court, and the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine. According to Mazower, these new forms of international action have been used by powerful states as tools for intervening in the domestic politics of smaller and weaker states, enabling them to frame these violations of sovereignty in the language of universal moralism and international law while exempting themselves from these provisions. A common thread in each of these areas, Mazower’s narrative suggests, is how powerful states such as the U.S. selectively embraced or marginalized different international organizations as it suited their interests.

Mazower’s history of internationalism touches on a number of interesting themes. The chapters on the growth of internationalism in the nineteenth century provide a rich description of often overlooked individuals, intellectual movements, and professional organizations that worked toward the goal of greater international cooperation, and the ways in which they laid the foundation for the creation of more ambitious international organizations in the twentieth century. Mazower’s discussion of the League of Nations notes that while it may have failed as a collective security organization, historians often overlook the success of its technical bureaus in areas such as public health, humanitarian relief, and economic reconstruction. Mazower’s description of the role of U.S. Republican Party internationalists such as Secretary of State Elihu Root and Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft in promoting the international arbitration movement might surprise those who associate the Republican Party with an unyielding opposition to multilateral cooperation.

There are three aspects of *Governing the World* that I think could be further developed. First, the book could have benefitted from a deeper engagement with the body of international relations theory related to international institutions. A central question in *Governing the World* is why Britain, and then the United States, successively embraced the project of building international institutions at the height of their respective global power (p. xv). Yet a number of international relations scholars have addressed precisely this question. These accounts attempt to explain why powerful states find it in their interest to

build or work through international organizations or cooperative ventures in some periods but not others, have favored some forms of institutionalized cooperation over others, or have at times accepted some constraints on their power in exchange for the benefits of multilateral cooperation.¹ In the U.S. context, others have attempted to explain why liberal internationalism prevailed following World War II, and whether support for this strategy is now declining.² Mazower mischaracterizes – and unnecessarily dismisses – this literature when he suggests that its “chief function” is to “counsel those in power in Washington” (xvi). By not grappling with the arguments made by these scholars, Mazower’s power-centered narrative does little to advance the debate over the forces driving the rise and fall of institutionalized international cooperation.

Second, Mazower discusses – but never seems to fully endorse – the idea that recent institutional developments such as the International Criminal Court and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine represent a dangerous new form of Western imperialism. According to Mazower, these developments have become “the instrument of a new civilizing mission” (379) and “R2P looks like nothing so much as the return of the civilizing mission and the ‘humanitarian’ interventions of previous centuries” (395). He notes historical parallels between past imperial actions and recent military interventions, such as Italy’s invasion of Libya in 1911 and NATO’s intervention in Libya in 2011 (396).

Mazower is correct to highlight the tension in liberal internationalism between state sovereignty and the rights of the individual, but there are a number of problems with this account. First, Mazower misunderstands the source of these changes, asserting that the Responsibility to Protect doctrine was adopted for instrumental reasons in order to preserve the relevance of the UN, but presenting no evidence to support this claim (388-9). In fact, the one possible source cited by Mazower for the idea that “R2P” was adopted by the UN for political rather than ethical reasons, Anne Orford’s *International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect*, appears to make exactly the opposite argument – according to Orford, “This book concludes that...the articulation and embrace of the responsibility to protect concept represents one of the most significant normative shifts in international

¹ See, for example, Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); and John Ruggie, *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

² In the political science literature, see Charles A. Kupchan and Peter L. Trubowitz, “Dead Center: The Demise of Liberal Internationalism in the United States,” *International Security* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2007), pp. 7-44; Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Jeffrey Legro, *Rethinking the World: Great Power Strategies and International Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Brian C. Rathbun, *Trust in International Cooperation: The Creation of International Security Institutions and the Domestic Politics of American Multilateralism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and John Ikenberry, “Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order,” *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 1 (March 2009), pp. 71-87.

relations since the creation of the UN in 1945.”³ Second, Mazower’s arguments against this new standard for intervention remain suggestive and incomplete. According to Mazower, “A world in which violations of human rights trump the sanctity of borders may turn out to produce more wars, more massacres, and more instability,” yet he presents no evidence for any of these claims. In the example of Libya, Mazower suggests the historical parallel, but does not actually make the case that effects of the 2011 NATO intervention will be similar to those of Italian colonization. Mazower notes the double standard in intervention to stop some ongoing atrocities and not others, but then presents no reason not to believe that in cases of mass atrocities, as he writes, “a little intervention is better than none” (395).

Third, Mazower’s discussion of ‘humanity’s law’ misses an opportunity to explore the intersection of the contemporary shift toward a more conditional view of sovereignty and earlier nineteenth century conceptions of internationalism. For earlier liberal internationalists in the era of multi-national European empires, strengthening the norm of sovereignty went hand in hand with the goals of national democracy and self-determination. However, the consequences of a strong sovereignty norm have changed: rather than protecting populations in small, independent nation-states from foreign domination, unconditional sovereignty can now shield perpetrators of state-sponsored violence or large-scale human rights abuses from accountability. It’s plausible that a Mazzinian nationalist would therefore support both the core conception of sovereignty that underpins the Responsibility to Protect doctrine – sovereignty resides in the public, not state leaders – and the harnessing of international cooperation to prevent abuses of state power. Indeed, according to a recent examination of the Italian nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini’s political thought, Mazzini supported foreign military intervention to halt state-sponsored violence against religious and ethnic minorities.⁴ Mazower’s argument that this type of intervention can come at the expense of “the empowering of states” and “securing international stability” (395) therefore strikes me as being more consistent with Klemens von Metternich’s vision of internationalism than Mazzini’s.

Finally, Mazower describes how international organizations whose claim to authority rests on neutral expertise are eroding democratic control and the strength of national political institutions. According to Mazower, international organizations are now “hollowing out representative institutions and curtailing their capacity to act” (421), and “international institutions and norms have developed into means of curtailing sovereignty rather than enhancing it” (424). As a result, the “the institutions of international governance stand in urgent need of renovation” (424). Yet there is a tension in this argument. Democratic publics and their representatives have certain policy goals that can only be achieved by giving up some measure of policy autonomy. In many of the policy areas Mazower

³ Anne Orford, *International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 41.

⁴ Stefano Recchia, “The Origins of Liberal Wilsonianism: Giuseppe Mazzini on Regime Change and Humanitarian Intervention,” in Stefano Recchi and Jennifer Welsh, eds., *Just and Unjust Military Intervention: European Thinkers from Vitoria to Mill* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

identifies as being in need of international action, such as climate change and financial regulation, effective international cooperation will require national governments to give up some freedom of action. Mazower doesn't suggest how the balance between effective international action and democratic control can be restored in the context of any specific issue area. He is critical of two of the most durable and successful contemporary international institutions, the World Trade Organization and the European Union, but doesn't suggest how they can be reformed in a way that both preserves the strength of national institutions and the organization's effectiveness at the international level. He writes that "the fundamental nineteenth-century insight that effective internationalism rests on effective nationalism remains pertinent" (424), but does not elaborate on what this might mean in the modern context or how it can be implemented in the context of specific international organizations. In my reading, this potentially interesting line of argument remains too underdeveloped to contribute to the debate on how internationalism can be revived and strengthened to meet pressing global problems.

Governing the World provides a good overview of the history of international cooperation and in the process raises a number of important questions. Why did internationalism incrementally expand over the last two centuries, and why has this expansion slowed? When will powerful states find it in their interest to support the growth of internationalism? How can the internationalist project be revived in a world in which global power and authority are becoming more decentralized? How can we strike a balance between national democratic accountability and the need to strengthen international bodies? Mazower's book gives historical context to a number of important questions, but interested readers will need to go elsewhere for the answers.

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