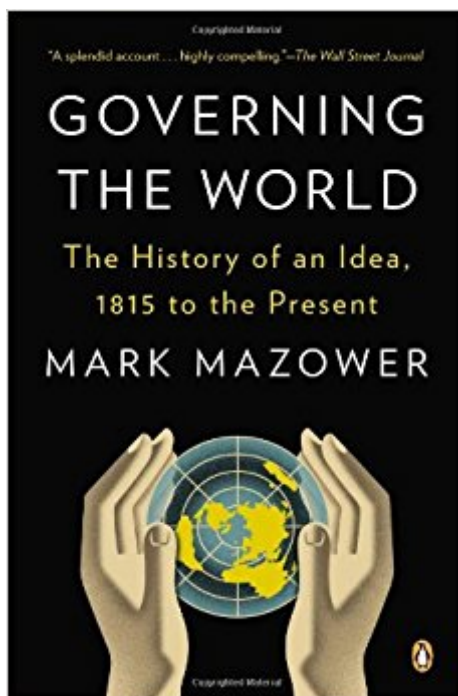


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# Governing The World: The History Of An Idea, 1815 To The Present



## Synopsis

A majestic narrative reckoning with the forces that have shaped the nature and destiny of the world's governing institutions. The story of global cooperation is a tale of dreamers goading us to find common cause in remedying humanity's worst problems. But international institutions are also tools for the powers that be to advance their own interests. Mark Mazower's *Governing the World* tells the epic, two-hundred-year story of that inevitable tension—the unstable and often surprising alchemy between ideas and power. From the rubble of the Napoleonic empire in the nineteenth century through the birth of the League of Nations and the United Nations in the twentieth century to the dominance of global finance at the turn of the millennium, Mazower masterfully explores the current era of international life as Western dominance wanes and a new global balance of powers emerges.

## Book Information

Paperback: 496 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books (August 27, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0143123947

ISBN-13: 978-0143123941

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 1.1 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #49,566 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #31 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Diplomacy](#) #380 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Political Science > History & Theory](#) #1647 in [Books > History > World](#)

## Customer Reviews

A Financial Times Best Politics Book of 2012 “A splendid account—highly compelling.” —The Wall Street Journal “Impressive—a significant contribution to historical scholarship.” | Simply for giving us this lucid account, Mazower deserves our gratitude. But *Governing the World* is also an intriguing read because of the strong argument he places within it: that it may be that this grand idea, with all its variants, is coming to an end. —Paul Kennedy, Financial Times “Fascinating—a well-articulated, meticulously supported study.” —Kirkus Reviews “Mark Mazower has

strengthened his claim to be the preeminent historian of a generation. On rare occasions, a work of history emerges that not only fundamentally refashions our understanding of the past, it enables us to reassess the present and, with luck, influence our future. I advise everyone who is concerned about our precarious situation to learn from and absorb Mazower's remarkable achievement. Misha Glenny "A dramatic, novel account of ideas and institutions in collision with hard realities. Indispensable also for its full and subtle account of American policies since 1917, always with a fine touch for the hitherto neglected person or little noticed moment that illuminates historic processes. Profound, relevant, and morally instructive and a pleasure to read." Fritz Stern

Mark Mazower is the Ira D. Wallach Professor of History at Columbia University. He is the author of *Hitler's Empire* and *The Balkans: A Short History*, winner of the Wolfson Prize for History, among other books. He lives in New York City.

You will enjoy this summary of human dreams, hopes and plans for global peace as they were pursued during the past 200 years. It is moving to sense the heartfelt yearning and the earnestness displayed by good-will people so long ago. Of course, the pressing need to find a political home devoid of warfare erupted during the horrifying world wars, which resulted in the presumed remedies of the League of Nations and the United Nations. Today's reader is confronted by the surprising fact that after a century of serious effort we are still far from success. Why did all these hopes, plans and organizations fail? A successful world federation would rest upon the four pillars seen in any community enjoying law and order: there must be a judge, a mayor, an armed police force, and an unarmed populace. Surveying the various scenarios described in this book will show that none of them satisfied these four criteria and that regretfully includes the League of Nations and the UN. The creation of world federalism would not be all that difficult. A group of nations most likely in Europe will abandon their national armies and replace them with federal forces. They also establish a federal court of law, utilizing laws wise enough to be applicable around the globe. None of this is too exotic or extraordinary. Their administration will govern the federation under the umbrella of enforceable law, the way it is handled in the United States and the way every city is governed. This seminal structure is then able to expand eastward into Asia, eventually to reach the Pacific. They will be attracting forever new members because they carry forth a message, a gospel, a lure of peace, modernity, prosperity and justice. The benefits would be immeasurable. There is nothing to prevent us from

accomplishing this, not in the 21st century and it is the right thing to do.

A comprehensive review of the history of the institutions that were supposed to be world governments

A scholarly work connecting the dots of the growth of our civilization from the perspective of the development of the law. Every high school senior should have to read it, if you can find a teacher in each school to teach it.

VERY GOOD

Excellent book.

'Somewhere between world government and no government', writes Mark Mazower, 'lies a vision of organized cooperation among nations'. He goes on to credit such a vision with the inspiration of the United Nations, the EU, and other multilateral organizations. They all have in common, he asserts, the vision of a better future for mankind, one that promises our collective emancipation. The declared aim of his book is to explore the historical evolution of such institutions, to show how some of them have shaped realities, and to ask what is left of them today. Thus he embarks on a journey that begins with the Concert of Europe, set up following the 1815 defeat of Napoleon; continues to the League of Nations, established after the First World War; The United Nations, whose genesis began even whilst the Second World War was still being fought; the European Union, begun modestly in 1956 but even then with the definite aim of making war between its founder members unthinkable; and concludes with a discussion of some of the financial, global warming and other problems with which we wrestle today, that seem not to be susceptible to effective solution by the international institutions as they are at present constituted. Mark Mazower is a historian, but his book also has a lot of content relevant to readers whose primary interest is in politics, even economics. In fact, some prior knowledge in all those areas is almost a pre-requisite to reading the book. A huge range of historical figures and events is referred to, usually with half a line of biographical or other information about the more obscure attached, but, if the great majority are entirely new to you, you are likely to find the book hard going. That being said, for me, an economist with a lifelong interest in European and American history and politics, the book is a major treat. In essence, it's an extended essay; a romp that takes in two Russian Tsars, Metternich, Woodrow Wilson, Lenin, Stalin, Franklin

Roosevelt, Churchill, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Kissinger, and a great many more. The United Nations and its agencies (WHO, ILO, IMF, World Bank, WTO, etc., etc.) take up around half the book. Mazower is not impressed by the showboating that passes for the annual September General Assembly, but has great respect for the work of many of the agencies other than the last three named above. Interestingly, he is cautious of philanthropic foundations such as that of Bill and Melinda Gates that target their own agendas, with little or no reference to established UN agencies already working in the same areas. Pleased as many of us are to see some of the money we pay for Microsoft products (or of which George Soros in 1992 relieved the British Government) go to good causes, Mazower's critique of the philanthropists' activities is worth reading. That being said, Mazower is very appreciative of the support that both John D and David Rockefeller have given the UN. He ends on a note of sadness that the WTO's Doha round is 'paralyzed', the World Bank 'chastened', the IMF 'incapable of helping to rectify the global imbalances that threaten the world economy', and no single agency able to coordinate the response to global warming. No doubt disappointingly for many, he offers no quick fix for the various messes into which we have got ourselves. Instead, he soberly concludes that 'the institutions of governance stand in urgent need of renovation'. Having got that far with him, you are likely to agree, and to be uncomfortably aware of the importance of the word 'urgent' in that sentence. The book has a detailed index and many notes.

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