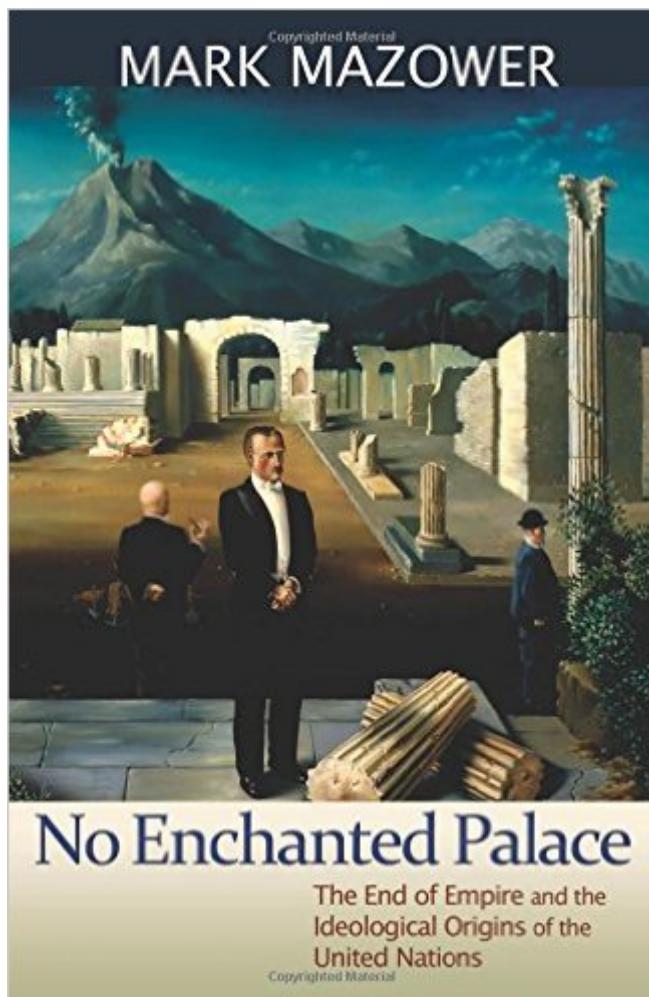


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No Enchanted Palace: The End Of Empire And The Ideological Origins Of The United Nations (The Lawrence Stone Lectures)



Synopsis

No Enchanted Palace traces the origins and early development of the United Nations, one of the most influential yet perhaps least understood organizations active in the world today. Acclaimed historian Mark Mazower forces us to set aside the popular myth that the UN miraculously rose from the ashes of World War II as the guardian of a new and peaceful global order, offering instead a strikingly original interpretation of the UN's ideological roots, early history, and changing role in world affairs. Mazower brings the founding of the UN brilliantly to life. He shows how the UN's creators envisioned a world organization that would protect the interests of empire, yet how this imperial vision was decisively reshaped by the postwar reaffirmation of national sovereignty and the unanticipated rise of India and other former colonial powers. This is a story told through the clash of personalities, such as South African statesman Jan Smuts, who saw in the UN a means to protect the old imperial and racial order; Raphael Lemkin and Joseph Schechtman, Jewish intellectuals at odds over how the UN should combat genocide and other atrocities; and Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, who helped transform the UN from an instrument of empire into a forum for ending it. A much-needed historical reappraisal of the early development of this vital world institution, No Enchanted Palace reveals how the UN outgrew its origins and has exhibited an extraordinary flexibility that has enabled it to endure to the present day.

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Customer Reviews

To most people the United Nations was created after World War II to provide an international organization that would help prevent armed conflicts throughout the world. After suffering through two world wars and the failure of the League of Nations, the United Nations was to provide the vehicle to prevent these catastrophes from happening again. The above scenario describes the so-called sanitized version of the forming of the United Nations. What Mazower brings to the table is something very different. The Author goes into the imperialistic ways of the League of Nations with an in depth look at the thoughts and politics of Jan Smuts whose perception of an international organization would resemble the likes of the British Commonwealth. In essence the victors of World War I, along with the demands of The Treaty of Versailles created the League of Nations which was nothing more than a vehicle to dictate terms to the vanquished. In essence the very European imperialistic attitudes prevailing in the League of Nations caused its failure. It was ineffective.

Mazower goes into depth on the political thoughts and actions of Alfred Zimmern whose interests also included Commonwealth ideas which still leaned toward European imperialism. When the United Nations finally came to fruition the controlling old remnants of empire still were prevalent with the Security Council commanding the most power. The five permanent members holding veto power were the main victors of World War II. Mazower continues his thesis of the death of all European empires with the fall of Nazism as explained in his book "Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe".

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