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Anne Orford. *International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 246 S. ISBN 978-0-521-19999-5; ISBN 978-0-521-18638-4; ISBN 978-0-511-86089-8.

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A. Ordord: International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect

Over the past decade much has been written about the concept of the âResponsibility to Protectâ (R2P) and the International Communityâs alleged obligations resulting thereof. In this recent publication, Anne Orford provides some well awaited, and at times brilliantly argued chapters, concerning the historical origins of R2P. These good chapters are, however, contrasted by other significant portions of the book which, while well-written, provide for some distorted, superficial, and at times outright wrong arguments. The result is an uneven book, superb in many parts, yet hampered by its other mediocre portions.

In the first two chapters, Orford explores the idea of âInternational Authorityâ through the lens of the UNâs early steps into military-type interventions, in the Suez Canal crisis of 1956, and the Congo in 1960. The conundrum here is clear. The UN charter does not contain any references whatsoever to Peace-keeping, nor to military forces under UN leadership. As Orford so pertinently demonstrates, todayâs reality of UNDPKO (Peace-keeping Operations), being by far the largest of all UN activities (in budgetary terms), is a misnomer. As she shows, it should be dutifully attributed to UN Secretary General Douglas HammarskjÃ¶ld. âInternational authorityâ that is; the legal right and military might of UN mandated administrations, was HammarskjÃ¶ldâs exclusive brainchild. Based upon primarily sources, Orford proves how HammarskjÃ¶ld single-handedly carved out the âInternational Authorityâ concept, and then tailored it around the UN structure. Using and abusing the pretexts of Suez and Congo, HammarskjÃ¶ld established the ideological and organizational bedrock for all UN interventions to come, culminating in the semi-permanent UN rule and tutelage of societies in areas such as Kosovo and East Timor.

Following this genealogical reconstruction of âInternational Authorityâ, Orford begins to investigate the concept of R2P as it was articulated in the ICISS report of 2001, later adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2009. After an explanation of the grounds for it from Rwanda to Srebrenica, Orford unpacks its main crux, of sovereignty as responsibility. She undertakes this unpacking through an examination of the historical intellectual antecedents linking sovereignty and the provision of security for people. It is here that Orfordâs brilliance and mediocrity as a thinker collide, as she chooses her subjects of inquiry: Thomas Hobbes and Carl Schmidt. While the choice of Hobbes is both merited and well presented, the choice of Carl Schmidt is mediocre at best. At worst, it could expose her to undeserved criticism of loss of intellectual integrity.

Orford wishes to consider the problem of *legitimacy* of the âInternational Authorityâ concept. Who granted this authority? By who is it recognized, and who ought to be its validating agent? Orford convincingly shows how Hobbes believed authority stemmed from the provision of security to the people by the sovereign, a provision against which all other rights were to be traded, and all freedoms mortgaged. She admirably frames the

deep-rooted ideological problem of justifying sovereign legitimacy with the responsibility for the provision of security alone. Her description of the historical circumstances surrounding Hobbesâ writing of the *Leviathan*, of anarchy, regicide, and civil war, are important to the issue at stake. Like it or not, Hobbesâs absolutist and anti-liberal views did indeed partially serve as the midwifeâs cradle, for the birth of HammarskjÃ¶ldâs âInternational Authorityâ, four centuries later. After reading Orford, one is left with no choice but to concede the very problematic absolutist origins of R2P, thus questioning the entire legitimacy of International Authority as such.

In order to link Hobbes to current day realities of the 20th Century, the author chooses to examine the totalitarian concepts of the sovereign as envisaged by Carl Schmidt. It is this part of the book which I find poorly argued, and its corollary outright wrong. Schmidt was one of the ideologists of the Nazi regime and the pet thinker for Herman GÃ¶ring. His concepts were in large part premised on Nazi pretexts. If Orfordâs point was to demonstrate that R2P includes considerable totalitarian genetic roots, then her exposition of Hobbes as one of its ancestors would have been definitely sufficient. The usage of Carl Schmidtâs theories, evidently equating some aspects of his totalitarianism with R2P, amounts to a gross intellectual âoverkillâ. When Orford then takes the next step, accusing the international community of deliberately manipulating the circumstances of R2P, so as to gain lawful legitimacy for an open-ended International Authority regime over certain areas, she already submerges deep into the waters of intellectual dis-integrity (p.134). By the time she surfaces in the last chapters of the book, to demonstrate the libertarian origins of R2P, with thinkers like Marsiligo of Padua, she has already lost some of her credibility vis a vis her audience.

The pitfall here is partially a methodological one. While Orford takes the time to explain the personality and historical circumstances surrounding the father of International Authority- HammarskjÃ¶ld, she does not afford the same treatment to the founding father of R2P. Mohamad Sahnoun who coauthored the R2P report, was himself the biggest opponent to any military intervention during his tenure as the UN SRSG in Somalia. His refusal to accept the insertion of American militarized forces into Mogadishu, brought him into a direct confrontation with the then UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali, resulting in his immediate resignation. Had Orford taken the time to accredit Sahnoun the same academic treatment she gave HammarskjÃ¶ld, she would have discovered her mistaken reading of the origins of R2P. And lo and behold, the Clinton administration did just that. After the military fiasco of Mogadishu (recreated in the movie âBlack Hawk Downâ), Clinton vetoed a second term as UNSG for Boutros Ghali, reinstating Sahoun, as the UNSG Special advisor on Africa. Upon Sahnounâs explicit recommendation, the international community appointed for the first time an internal UN candidate as its Secretary General, and probably its best since HammarskjÃ¶ld: Kofi Annan. Sahnoun was by no means less critical of military interventions then Orford. Yet after Srebrenica and Rwanda, even he â the ultimate interventionist skeptic, conceded that some fundamental shift needed to take place, if we were to avoid another Rwanda. It is not least thanks to Sahnounâs skeptical footprint upon R2P that the concept received an overwhelming endorsement at the UN General Assembly. To accuse him of the rhetorical abuse of R2P, later carried out by Rumsfeld for Machiavellian ends such as Iraqi oil, would be unfair. If anything, we ought to thank Sahnoun for his skepticism which facilitated the current French intervention in the Central African Republic, thus preventing genocide there. Would Orford rather prefer to deliver yet another Clintonian apology Ã¡ la Rwanda, for standing idle by in todayâs Bangui?

Ultimately, the book âInternational Authority and the Responsibility to Protectâ provides for many unique insights and an invaluable body of academic work not to be found elsewhere. Anybody interested in the mechanics of UN interventions, and the principles guiding them, would do well to read this book, with the caveat of not succumbing to certain unjustified criticisms it sometimes entails.

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