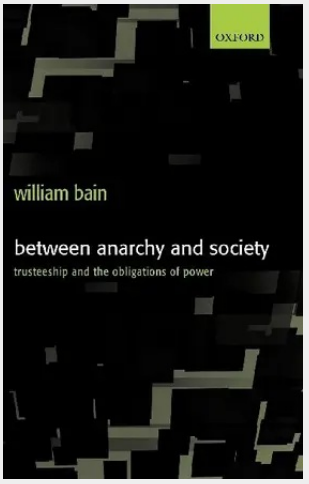
Bain

Between Anarchy and Society

Trusteeship and the Obligations of Power



The international administration of troubled states - whether in Bosnia, Kosovo, or East Timor - has seen a return to the principle of trusteeship; that is when some form of international supervision is required in a particular territory in order both to maintain order and to foster the norms and practices of fair self-government. This innovative study rescues the normative discourse of trusteeship from the obscurity into which it has fallen since decolonization. It traces the development of trusteeship from its emergence out of debates concerning the misrule of the East India Company; its internationalization in imperial Africa; its institutionalization in the League of Nations mandates system, and, then, in the United Nations trusteeship system; and the destruction of its legitimacy by the ideas of self-determination and human equality. No other book brings this rich historical experience to bear on the dilemmas posed by the resurrection of trusteeship after the end of the Cold War. It is with a view to contemporary world problems that this book explores the obligations that attach to preponderant power and the limits that should be observed in exercising that power for the sake of global good. The book concludes by arguing that trusteeship remains fundamentally at odds with the ideas of human dignity and equality.

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84,10 €
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Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9780199260263
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-0-19-926026-3
Verlag: OUP Oxford
Erscheinungstermin: 01.10.2003
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2003
Produktform: Gebunden
Gewicht: 508 g
Seiten: 226
Format (B x H): 161 x 240 mm

Kundenservice Verlag Dr. Otto Schmidt KG
Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)