



Nation of Devils: Democratic Leadership and the Problem of Obedience

By Prof. Stein Ringen

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Oxford University political theorist Stein Ringen offers a thought-provoking meditation on the art of democratic rule: how does a government persuade the people to accept its authority? Every government must make unpopular demands of its citizens, from levying taxes to enforcing laws and monitoring compliance to regulations. The challenge, Ringen argues, is that power is not enough; the populace must also be willing to be led. Ringen addresses this political conundrum unabashedly, using the United States and Britain as his prime examples, providing sharp opinions and cogent analyses on how the culture of national obedience is created and nurtured. He explores the paths leaders must choose if they wish to govern by authority rather than power, or, as the philosopher Immanuel Kant put it, to "maintain order in a nation of devils."

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Editorial Review

Review

“This is a terrific book that I can imagine readers turning back to again and again. It is a major contribution to the literature of political science. One of Ringen's greatest accomplishments here is that he reminds readers why this field was interesting in the first place.”—Alan Wolfe, Boston College
(Alan Wolfe)

“*Nation of Devils* crackles with dry epigrams. It reminds readers of how the supply-side of politics—law and government—is often neglected for the noisy demand-side that is the purview of voters and lobbyists”—The Economist

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“Cast[s] fresh light on a tired subject. . . . *Nation of Devils* crackles with dry epigrams. It reminds readers of how the supply-side of politics—law and government—is often neglected for the noisy demand-side that is the purview of voters and lobbyists. Demanding and idealistic, yes. But also a democracy for grown-ups.”—*The Economist*

(*The Economist*)

“.. lively and thoughtful .. crisp and no-nonsense. Ringen's thesis is that better political leadership is possible.”—Mark Mazower, *Financial Times*
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About the Author

Stein Ringen is professor emeritus of sociology and social policy at Oxford University. He lives in London.

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