

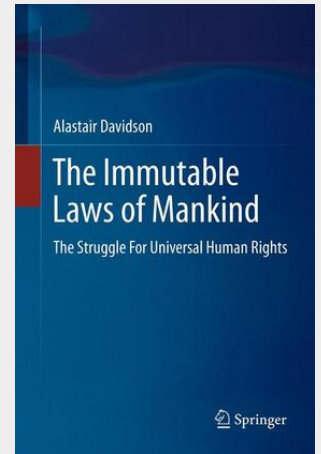
Davidson

The Immutable Laws of Mankind

The Struggle For Universal Human Rights

The key question for the history of universal human rights is why it took so long for them to become established as law. The main theme of this book is that the attainment of universal human rights required heroic struggle, first by individuals and then by ever-increasing numbers of people who supported those views against the major historical trends. Universal human rights are won from a hostile majority by outsiders. The chapters in the book describe the milestones in that struggle. The history presented in this book shows that, in most places at most times, even today, for concrete material reasons a great many people oppose the notion that all individuals have equal rights. The dominant history since the 1600s has been that of a mass struggle for the national-democratic state. This book argues that this struggle for national rights has been practically and logically contradictory with the struggle for universal rights. It would only be otherwise if there were free migration and access to citizenship on demand by anybody. This has never been the case. Rather than drawing only on European sources and being limited to major literary figures, this book is written from the Gramscian perspective that ideas mean little until they are taken up as mass ideologies. It draws on sources from Asia and America and on knowledge about mass attitudes, globally and throughout history.

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