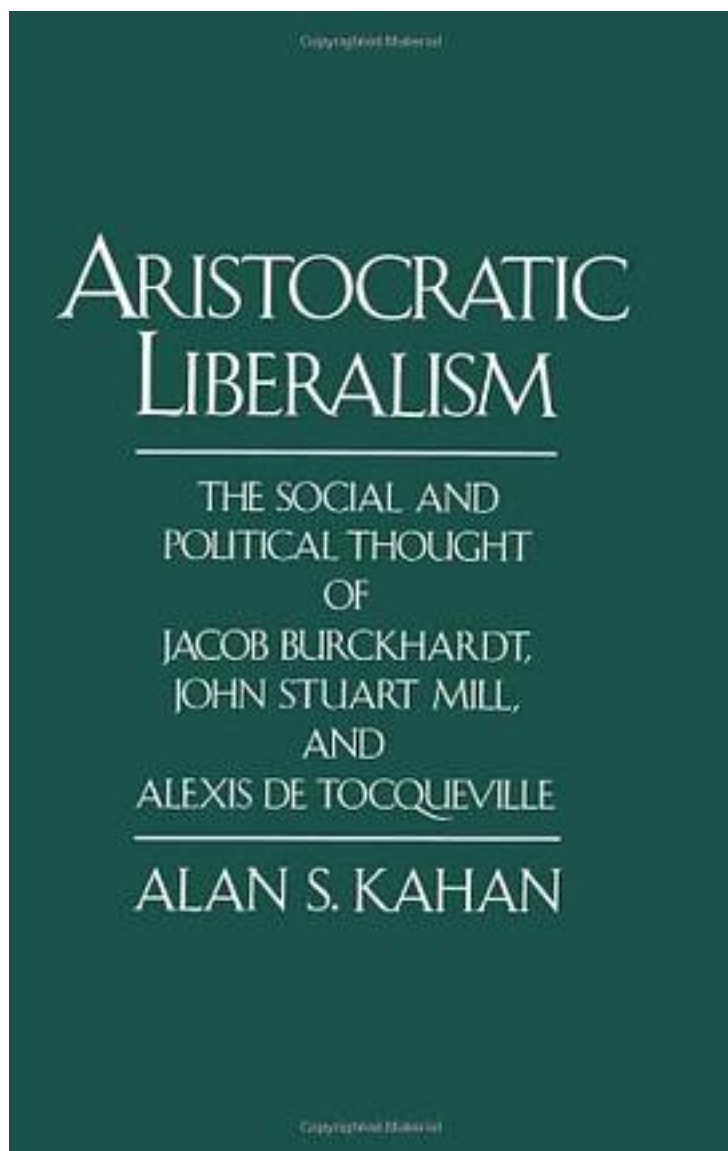


# Aristocratic Liberalism



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Although the term "liberalism" is widely used to describe a variety of social and political ideas, it has been an especially difficult concept for historians to define. Kahan makes significant progress toward a general definition, and illustrates a strategic type of liberalism by linking three great nineteenth-century thinkers in a single intellectual and ideological tradition, for which he has coined the term "aristocratic liberalism." Ignoring the national boundaries that often confine intellectual history, Kahan finds similarities in the thought of Burckhardt, Mill, and Tocqueville. Though none of these thinkers came from aristocratic backgrounds, Kahan shows how they shared a distaste for the masses and middle classes, a fear and contempt of mediocrity, a suspicion of the centralized state, an opposition to the commercial spirit, and a pessimism of varying degree about the possibility of implementing their goals in the near future. Kahan concludes his study by correcting prevalent misconceptions about nineteenth-century liberalism and by discussing a typology of liberalism that will undoubtedly spark much scholarly debate.

作者介绍:

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