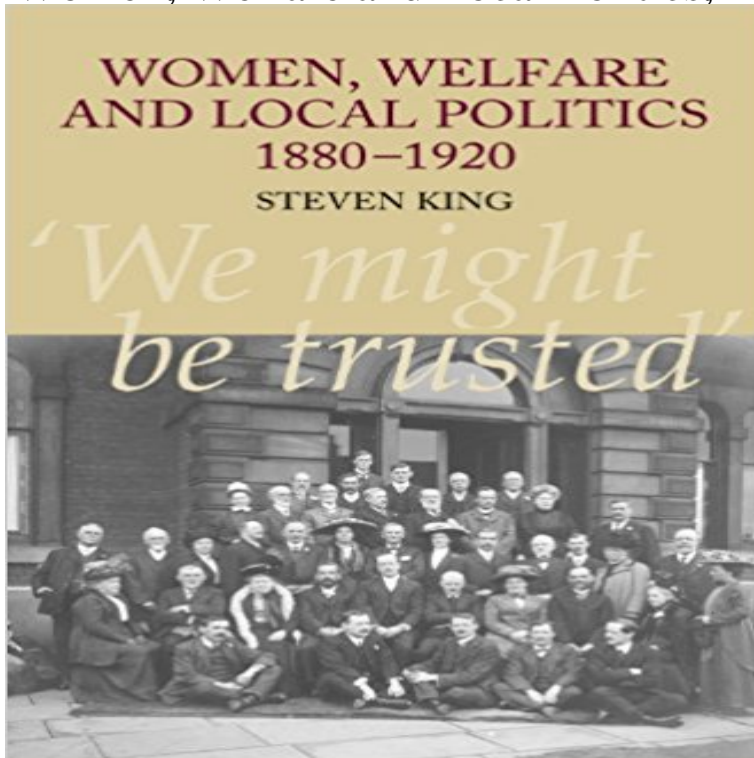


Women, Welfare and Local Politics, 1880–1920: We Might Be Trusted



Offering a reappraisal of the role of women in the politics and practice of welfare in late Victorian and early Edwardian England, this book focuses on the Lancashire mill town of Bolton, tracing the emergence of a core of female social and political activists from the 1860s. It analyzes their achievements as they rose from the humble origins of a workhouse visiting committee to become pivotal players in the formulation and implementation of local welfare policy after 1894. Using a unique working diary written by the activist and female poor law Guardian Mary Haslam, the book portrays these Bolton women as sophisticated political operators. The author challenges established notions that women involved in local welfare administration were resented and achieved little, showing their importance in the process by which Bolton Poor Law Union moved from being one of the most backward and obstructive to one of the most progressive and dynamic in the country, adopting best practice from Britain and overseas and revolutionizing the material and psychological fabric of the poor law.

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