

**Philosophische Schriften**

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**Band 3**

**John Locke und/and Immanuel Kant**

**Historische Rezeption und gegenwärtige Relevanz**

**Historical Reception and Contemporary Relevance**

**Herausgegeben von / Edited by**

**Martyn P. Thompson**



**Duncker & Humblot · Berlin**

**MARTYN P. THOMPSON (Hg./Ed.)**

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to the memory of**

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## PREFACE

This volume contains the papers and prepared comments delivered at an international symposium held in Tübingen towards the end of 1989. The symposium was designed to bring together leading authorities from the English-speaking and the German-speaking worlds to reconsider the origins, transmission and contemporary legacies of the political philosophies of John Locke and Immanuel Kant. The reasons for linking Locke and Kant were self-evident: both occupy major positions in the history of western liberal thought and the contemporary revival of political theory is explicitly indebted to both. The apparent fact that the Anglo-American liberal tradition owes more to Locke than to Kant and that the German liberal tradition owes more to Kant and next-to-nothing to Locke added point to bringing together Anglo-American and German scholars specializing in both thinkers and traditions. Finally, it was something of a happy coincidence that 1989 was the occasion of a double anniversary: that of the English Revolution of 1688-89, with which Locke's name is so readily associated; and that of the French Revolution of 1789, a revolution of dramatic and obvious importance for the work of Kant.

Thus the symposium addressed a number of issues that are central to one of the main streams in contemporary political thought. At its broadest, the symposium was concerned with the historical and theoretical roots of modern liberalism. Less broadly, it was concerned with the relationships between the historical Locke and subsequent Lockeanisms and between the historical Kant and subsequent Kantianisms. Given the nature of the central questions and the diversity of the contributors, a number of other issues of considerable importance to current debates in the study of political thought were likely to emerge. At the very least, one could expect some significant exchanges on the question of the interconnections or otherwise of historical interpretation on the one side and contemporary philosophical analysis on the other. Furthermore, disagreements were pre-programmed about the very idea of theories claiming to be foundations of political traditions or political practices. And finally, and most generally, one could expect some attention to be focussed directly on basic questions concerning the academic study of any political thinking whatsoever. Indeed, the final session in the symposium was explicitly devoted to such questions.

These expectations were amply fulfilled in the papers, comments and discussions. Originally, I had hoped to publish transcripts of the discussions in the present volume. But it soon became obvious that for reasons of space this would not be feasible. The transcripts and summaries are, however, available for anyone interested. They have been edited by Dagmar Mirbach and myself. The papers and comments that are published here are, with very few exceptions, substantially the same as they were when first delivered. The main reason for avoiding significant revisions was to retain the relevance of comments to papers commented upon. But this decision had one disadvantage that will become immediately apparent to the reader. In some cases, commentators who were originally intended to comment upon two papers received only one of them sufficiently far in advance to draft an appropriate commentary. In the interests of the commentators and in order to limit delays in publishing the rest of the proceedings, I have decided to leave matters as they are. Furthermore, in editing the contributions for publication, we have not insisted on reducing each to a single stylistic form. The result is a certain variety, even inconsistency, at a formal level. But the gains in terms of retaining as much as possible of original authorial styles seem to us to outweigh any of the costs involved.

The symposium served a second purpose in addition to its academic theme. It was the foundation conference of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Erforschung des politischen Denkens*, the German-speaking section of the *Conference for the Study of Political Thought*. In preparing both aspects of the work of the symposium, my debts to others were enormous. Without the advice, help and friendship of Roman Schnur (Tübingen) nothing would have happened. Without the constant support of Klaus Hartmann (Tübingen) everything might well have collapsed. Many others, in correspondence and meetings, offered invaluable advice and support. In particular, I would like to thank Melvin Richter (City University of New York), Ernst Vollrath (Köln), Henning Ottmann (Basel), Volker Gerhardt (Köln), Karl Graf Ballestrem (Eichstätt), Gerhard Göhler (Berlin), Michael Stolleis (Frankfurt), Nikolaus Wenturis (Tübingen), the late Alexander Schwan (Berlin) and the late Dolf Sternberger (Heidelberg) and all of my colleagues on the Executive Committee of the *Conference for the Study of Political Thought*. The President of the University of Tübingen, Dr. Adolf Theis, was very generous in his support for the project. Dr. Hannelore Gerstein and Sabine Fath were extremely helpful in their advice about the symposium. The English Department was generous in absorbing so much of the initial preparatory costs.

The academic discussions during the symposium were eased enormously by the skillful direction of the very experienced chairpersons: Melvin Richter (City University of New York), Hella Mandt (Trier), Michael Stolleis (Frankfurt), Richard Saage (Göttingen), Gerhardt Göhler (Berlin), Klaus Hartmann (Tübingen), Dietmar Willoweit (Würzburg) and Maurice Cranston (London School of Economics). I am grateful for the chance to acknowledge my considerable debt to them all.

On a day-to-day basis, my greatest debt was owed to Marcus Steinhübel. The smooth running of the symposium was due entirely to the commitment and organizational skills of Dagmar Mirbach, Ute Reusch, Mary Ann Kenney, Regina Becker, Marcus Steinhübel, Walter Van Hoven and Volker Dreier. Special thanks are due to Susan Nurmi-Schomers and Wolfgang Herrlinger who, in the most difficult circumstances, tirelessly offered their considerable skills as simultaneous translators.

Without financial support, neither the symposium, nor the *Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Erforschung des politischen Denkens*, nor this book would have been possible. My considerable thanks are due to the generosity of the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, the Ministry for Wissenschaft and Kunst of the state of Baden-Württemberg and the Friends of the University of Tübingen. Lufthansa AG was very generous in providing essential conference material.

For help in preparing this volume, I would like to thank Dagmar Mirbach for her translation of John Dunn's paper and for the transcripts of the symposium discussions. I would also like to thank Susanne Zeyse for her very efficient help in preparing, proof-reading and correcting the manuscript for publication. Finally, I owe the greatest debt of gratitude to Susan Nurmi-Schomers for her careful and committed work as editorial assistant.

Tübingen, January 1991

Martyn P. Thompson