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*Cambridge Texts in the History of
Political Thought*



KANT
Political Writings

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KANT

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EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

HANS REISS

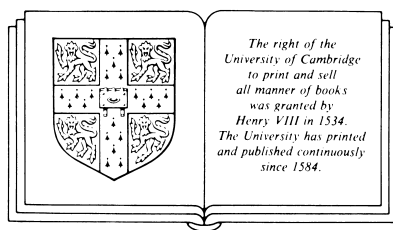
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To Thomas, Richard, Arnold and Marcus

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Preface to the Second Edition

The Cambridge University Press and the editors of the new series of Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought have kindly invited me to produce a second edition of *Kant's Political Writings*, of which the first edition first appeared in an earlier series almost twenty years ago. They also agreed that the volume might be enlarged by three additional texts. To decide on the most suitable texts presented me with anything but an easy choice. The three suitable pieces chosen, the reviews of Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, *Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History* and *What Is Orientation in Thinking?*, are not 'political' writings in the narrow sense of the word. They do, however, supply a context for the strictly political writings published in the first edition; for all of them illustrate Kant's critical approach to reasoning and his attitude to the public use of reason without which political justice could not, in his view, be achieved. *What Is Orientation in Thinking?* does so particularly clearly. It also introduces the reader to the moral basis of Kant's politics, while the other two texts illustrate Kant's conception of history, another pillar of his political thought. I greatly regret that there was no space to include the other pieces relating to politics mentioned in the preface to the first edition. Perhaps one day the constraints on space will be less pressing and all writings by Kant which refer to politics, including the whole of the *Theory of Right*, can be printed in a later edition.

In order to keep down printing costs and make the volume affordable by students the text of the first edition could not be substantially altered. For this reason, it has unfortunately not been possible to revise and enlarge my introduction itself. I have, however, been able to add a postscript in which I take up issues raised during the discussion of Kant's political thought over the past two decades. I have also provided a more extensive bibliography and a new index.

My thanks are due to Barry Nisbet for translating the additional texts and for giving me invaluable help by commenting on and checking my manuscript. I should like to thank Jeremy Mynott of the Cambridge

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

University Press and the editors of the series for asking me to produce the volume; and also Richard Fisher and Susan Beer for seeing the manuscript through the Press. I am also indebted to University of Bristol colleagues William Doyle, Stephan Körner and Niall Rudd, to Peter Nicholson (University of York), Onora O'Neill (University of Essex) and Lewis White Beck (University of Rochester) for their helpful advice. The German Academic Exchange Service provided me with a grant to work in the libraries of Heidelberg University, for which I am duly grateful. I am also conscious of my debt to the whole corpus of Kant scholarship, and I regret that I have been able to acknowledge only some of the many writings on Kant in the notes and bibliography. For all shortcomings I myself am alone responsible.

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H. S. REISS

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Preface to the First Edition

This volume, to the best of my knowledge, is the first in English to contain all the political writings of Kant which the author himself had published. There have been earlier translations of almost all the pieces which make up this volume; Dr Nisbet has asked me to acknowledge his debt to these, particularly to Professor John Ladd's translation of *The Metaphysical Elements of Rights* (*The Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, Indianapolis, New York, Kansas City, 1965). The aim of this volume is to introduce English-speaking readers in general and students of political theory in particular to Kant's Political writings. The bibliography in the present volume may serve as a guide for further reading. For a general introduction to Kant, the student can do no better than read Stephan Körner's *Kant* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1955), easily available in a pocket edition.

Only those writings which deal explicitly with the theory of politics and which were published by him have been included. I have omitted other essays, such as the *Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History* (*Mutmasslicher Anfang des Menschengeschlechts*), *The End of All Things* (*Das Ende aller Dinge*) and Kant's review of J. G. Herder's *Ideen*, which touch only marginally on politics. I have, however, included a brief but essential passage from the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*). In accordance with the aims of the series, I have not included any extracts, unless they form self-contained wholes. A few passages in other writings published by Kant are excluded, since they do not add anything of substance to his theory of politics. I decided to include the first part of *Theory and Practice* (*Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis*), which is devoted to ethics. Since this volume does not set out to be a definitive critical edition of Kant's political writings I did not follow this precedent in the case of *The Metaphysics of Morals* (*Die Metaphysik der Sitten*) and *The Contest of Faculties* (*Der Streit der Fakultäten*). To print both works in full would inevitably have distracted attention from the main purpose of this volume. I hope that the brief summaries of what was omitted will

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

give the reader some means of orientation. Except for the appended passage from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, I have also excluded all passages on politics from any other of Kant's larger works, such as the *Critique of Judgement* (*Kritik der Urteilkraft*) and *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (*Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*). I have even excluded a brief appendix attached to *The Metaphysical Elements of Right* (*Die metaphysischen Anfangsgründe des Rechts*). In neither case is anything of substance omitted. Kant is simply repeating points which he has made elsewhere. Those readers who wish to study the omitted parts of *The Metaphysics of Morals* should consult John Ladd's commendable translation in *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice*. For the second part of *The Metaphysics of Morals*, *The Metaphysical Elements of Virtue* (*Die Metaphysischen Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre*), they should consult the German text, which they will in any case have to do for *The Contest of Faculties*. To consult the original is naturally always the best course, even if it involves learning German; for all translations fail, in some degree or other, to do justice to the original.¹ I also decided not to include either Kant's preliminary studies for his published works on politics as found in volumes XXII and XXIII of the *Akademieausgabe* of his works and in *Kant-Studien* LI, 1959/60, or his notes on politics and law, as found in volumes XIX and XX of the above edition. These writings were published posthumously and Kant did not intend them to be published. They do not offer anything substantially different from what is found in his published writings. They are often repetitive since many of them are rough notes, comments on the textbook which he was using for lectures on the theory of law (Gottfried Achenwall's *Ius naturae*, Göttingen, 1755–6) and notes for lectures or (probably) later publications. It will always be difficult to decide how much weight should be given to material of this kind; for it could easily contain views later rejected by an author on mature consideration. In Kant's case, the notes may occasionally clarify some of his views. Furthermore, they can give us some insight into the origin and development of his political thought. This latter aspect has been exhaustively discussed by Georges Vlachos in his full-length study of Kant's political theory (*La Pensée Politique de Kant. Métaphysique de l'ordre et dialectique du progrès*, Paris, 1962, pp. xx and 590). However, the development of Kant's political ideas will always

¹ The translations in this book follow the style and substance of the original texts as closely as possible, except that we have not reproduced the indentation (possibly used for emphasis in the original texts) of some passages on pp. 135, 138–140 and 164.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

present problems; for although the work of the editors of the *Akademieausgabe* has been dedicated and painstaking, they have found it difficult to date many of the notes exactly.

Finally, I should like to thank all those friends and colleagues who have helped or encouraged me in my work for this volume. I am indebted to my former colleagues and friends at the London School of Economics and Political Science: Ernest Gellner, Morris Ginsberg, the late Harold Laski, William Pickles, Julius Gould, Donald Macrae, Michael Oakeshott, Sir Karl Popper, the late William Rose, K. B. Smellie and J. O. Wisdom. I have profited considerably from the advice of Stephan Körner and Peter Bromhead of the University of Bristol, who were good enough to read the introduction. David Eichholz of the same University kindly translated Kant's Latin quotations for me. I have also greatly benefited from conversations on Kant with Dieter Henrich of the University of Heidelberg. I have to thank Denis Donoghue of University College, Dublin, Irvin Ehrenpreis of the University of Virginia, Raymond Klibansky of McGill University, George Levine and Irving Massey, both of the New York State University at Buffalo, and Philip Harth of the University of Wisconsin for generously helping me to trace some quotations. Above all I must thank Dr H. B. Nisbet, who not only undertook the formidable task of translating Kant, but has also spent much time in checking the notes and bibliography and has offered many valuable suggestions on scrutiny of my introductory essay. He has also helped me in seeing the whole manuscript through the press. I have in turn scrutinised his translation. Mrs M. L. Taylor, Mrs Rosemary White and Miss B. Gertsch have had the unenviable task of typing the manuscript, for which we owe them sincere thanks. Much of my work on Kant was done when I had a year's leave of absence from McGill University in 1962–3 on award of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. I am grateful to both institutions for making it possible for me to have leave in Europe for the purpose of study. It is a happy coincidence that, as I conclude my work on this volume, I am once again at McGill, this time as Visiting Professor on leave from the University of Bristol.

For any errors that remain I am alone responsible.

H. S. REISS

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Abbreviations

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- AA* Immanuel Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften* (generally called *Akademieausgabe* since first published by the Prussian Academy of Sciences), Berlin, 1900ff.
- AIKK* *Akten des 4. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses in Mainz 6.–10. April 1974*, ed. Gerhard Funke. Berlin and New York, 1974.
- APP* ‘La Philosophie de Kant’, *Annales de Philosophie Politique*, IV, Paris, 1962. Published by the Institut International de Philosophie Politique.
- CLR* *Columbia Law Review*.
- EGerr.* Gerresheim, Eduard (ed.). *Immanuel Kant 1724/1974. Kant as a Political Thinker*. Bonn–Bad Godesberg, 1974.
- JHI* *Journal of the History of Ideas*.
- KS* *Kant–Studien*.
- KSE* *Kant–Studien*. Ergänzungshefte.
- RdA* *Rechtsphilosophie der Aufklärung* (Symposium Wolfenbüttel 1981), ed. Reinhard Brandt. Berlin and New York, 1982.
- SW* Johann Gottfried Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan. Berlin, 1877–1913.
- PTh* *Political Theory*.
- ZwBat.* Batscha, Zwi (ed.). *Materialien zu Kants Rechtsphilosophie* (suhkamp taschenbuch wissenschaft, 171). Frankfurt/Main, 1976.