What is the History of Political Thought for?

20th April 2015

at the British Academy, London

A SEMINAR ARRANGED BY
AXEL AND MARGARET AX:SON JOHNSON FOUNDATION
WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT FOR?

This seminar is part of a series of seminars which we have been arranging at the British Academy which is, as it were "an enquiry into the state of the Humanities in British Universities".

This seminar is to look at the growing interest in the "History of Political Thought", and to ask the simple question, what is it for, in order to elicit interesting answers about the relevance, the historical context, and the inspiration which historical texts provide. Is the History of Political Thought worth studying simply for its own sake? Does Quentin Skinner's view that historical thinkers need to be understood as part of their particular historical context make those thinkers more or less relevant? Is it legitimate – or useful - to take ideas from historical thinkers to throw light on the present?

Is the economic realm impinging too much on the political realm, making people feel that politics is less important to know about than economics. Does this matter?
The Ax:son Johnson London Seminar Series

Monday 12th March 2015

5.15 pm   REGISTRATION & DRINKS

5.30 pm   Opening by Bella Thomas

What is the History of Political Thought for?

Moderated by Jeremy Jennings

Michael Freeden  Towards an alternative Political Thought
Robert Cooper  Shakespeare, Hobbes, Rousseau: our contemporaries
Monica Brito Vieira  Why Study the History of Political Thought?
Johan Tralau  The Ongoing adventure of Political Thought
Angus Gowland  History, Self-Understanding, Imagination

6.30   Discussion

7.15 pm   DRINKS & DINNER
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