

Articles

“Critical Legal Thought: An American-German Debate” An Introduction at the Occasion of Its Republication in the *German Law Journal* 25 Years Later

The Legacy of Critical Legal Thought and Transatlantic Endeavours

By Christian Joerges, David M. Trubek and Peer Zumbansen

Precisely 25 years ago, two of us, namely CJ and DT, initiated a conference project on “American and German traditions of sociological jurisprudence and critique of law” which was in fact realized in July 1986 in a somewhat romantic castle near Bremen where we had intense discussions which remained alive in the minds of the participants from both sides of the Atlantic. The conference proceedings were after considerable editorial efforts published in 1989 in the volume we are re-issuing now. The only contribution to the volume we have left out is the introduction by the editors, which reflected on the problems and accomplishments of our endeavors. We continue and renew these reflections in two, now separated, introductions, which are preceded by the remarks of the co-founding editor of the *German Law Journal*, Peer Zumbansen. We believe that the objectives our project require, and indeed deserve, to be explained more fully than this was done in the original joint introduction. We now add some reflections on the objectives of our endeavors, on what we believe we accomplished and also our disappointments with, or failures of, the project. There is no reason to gloss over failures or to camouflage disappointments. The very fact that the *German Law Journal* undertakes this reissue after so many years and that all the contributors from 1989 have supported this idea signals that our project was meaningful. It is up to a new generation to determine and evaluate its impact.

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