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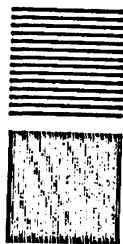
Futures Past

On the Semantics of Historical Time

Reinhart Koselleck

translated by Keith Tribe

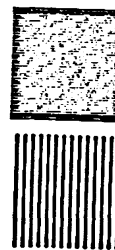
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KOSELLECK
FUTURES PAST



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Translator's Introduction

The essays collected here were written between 1965 and 1977, chiefly as contributions to symposia or academic occasions, and were first published together under the title *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* in 1979. Koselleck's two previous books were his doctoral dissertation, published as *Kritik und Krise* in 1959, and *Habilitationsschrift*, published as *Preussen zwischen Reform und Revolution* in 1967. His chief scholarly activity since the 1960s has been the organization and editing of a massive dictionary of "historical concepts"—*Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*—which had by the mid-1980s reached the fifth of six volumes. For any other scholar, such facts might lead one to expect a form of writing dominated by pressures of the moment and the less stimulating aspects of occasional literature. Koselleck is an exception. His published work, and indeed his professional career, has depended to a great extent on a curious dialectic of chance and obligation. His writing is, however, marked by an originality and clarity that belie the manner in which it comes into existence. The essays printed here, whether read separately or together, display a combination of scholarship and coherence which transcends the diverse nature of their origins.

One thread drawing these essays together is their coincident relation to the planning and organization of *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. Indeed, some were written expressly for meetings organized in association with the project. As such, the essays can be read as so many variations on the systematic themes being developed by Koselleck and others for this project. Thus, a clearer understanding of these essays requires