

## **Description:**

### **Phenomenology and Political Philosophy**

The relation between phenomenology and political philosophy can be ranged among the least investigated themes of the phenomenological tradition, to the point that it is legitimate to claim that the potentialities of this field of study have barely begun to be explored. The reasons for this widespread and persistent forgetfulness are often deemed to be rooted in the history of phenomenology itself, which has been marked by the predominance of foundational issues revolving chiefly around the theory of knowledge (Husserl) and the problem of being (Heidegger). Indeed, although a number of prominent authors belonging to this tradition have produced a considerable amount of work on social and political philosophy, and have, for better or worse, actively participated to the political life of their time, it is not always clear to what extent their contribution to the reflection on social and political issues stems from their phenomenological outlook, rather than being just juxtaposed to it. This is true both of Heidegger's tragic proximity to Nazism, and of the Marxist creed predominant among some post-war phenomenologists. Subsequently, the so-called end of ideologies and the predominance of an apolitical academic style of philosophy have widened the gulf between a highly technical discipline such as phenomenology and the reflection on the surrounding political and social context. Ethical and broadly existential issues have thus replaced the strongly political and practical concerns of authors such as Jean-Paul Sartre in France, Enzo Paci in Italy or Ludwig Landgrebe in Germany, to name a few. Yet, more recently, a number of works has renewed the interest in the way in which phenomenology can give a valuable contribution to issues fundamental to political philosophy: intersubjectivity, life-world, the constitution of social and cultural objects, the concepts of state and democracy, power, authority and technology, the reflection on the meaning of history and on the philosophical idea of Europe. Consequently, it has now become possible to highlight an underlying political motive that permeates 20th Century phenomenology since its inception (from Husserl to Patocka, from Heidegger to Arendt), reassess the judgments of its most prominent critiques (from the Frankfurt School to various post-modern appraisals) and, further, to pave the way to new original phenomenological investigations in this area, as well as to a confrontation with other major trends in political philosophy.