

COLLOQUIUM: MILTON, LOCKE AND MILL ON LIBERTY

APRIL 1–4, 2004, SAN DIEGO
ALAN KORS

This colloquium will study three of the foundational essays on political liberalism. Milton's *Areopagitica* was a response to the Licensing Order of 1643, which reinstated the pre-publication censorship once exercised by the Star Chamber and other earlier censors, royal and ecclesiastical. Milton did not argue for free and unregulated speech or printing, but simply that books should not be suppressed before publication.

In an intolerant era, John Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration* addressed the question of religious toleration. Locke argued that all religious practices should be permitted unless they threaten the state, as he thought Catholicism did. Locke's argument for toleration is also applicable to broader questions of personal liberty.

John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* is the classical defense of personal liberty, and remains as fresh and relevant as it was in 1859. On Mill's "harm-to-others" principle, the state is not entitled to interfere with personal preferences except to prevent harm to others. The colloquium will examine the breadth and limits of this doctrine.

Alan Kors is a professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania. He has published extensively on the conceptual revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and he is editor-in-chief of the four-volume *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*.

All participants will be expected to have read all of the materials before the colloquium begins. If you do not think your schedule would permit this, please decline this offer and we will try to include you in a subsequent program.



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