Places are strictly limited and must be reserved in advance by contacting the Leo Baeck Institute, London e: info@leobaeck.co.uk t: +44 (0) 20 7882 5690

Admission is free. Lectures will begin promptly at 6.30pm. Latecomers may not be admitted.

Lectures will be held at:
German Historical Institute, London, 17 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 1NJ

Organised by the Leo Baeck Institute London, the Jewish Museum and the Fritz Bauer Institut, Frankfurt am Main, in cooperation with the German Historical Institute London

Jewish Museum Frankfurt am Main Untermainkai 14-15 60311 Frankfurt am Main t: +49 (0) 69 3123 0000 www.juedischesmuseum.de

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Susan James
Gareth Stedman Jones
Vivian Liska
Douglas Morris

European Leo Baeck Institute Lecture Series London, 2012

Jews and Justice
This season’s theme is Jews and Justice. The Lecture Series aims to explore their concepts of justice, how they are related to the different political and cultural environments they lived in, as well as the potential juridical and political conflicts that arise from these concepts.

Drawing on the work of his contemporary, Thomas Hobbes, Spinoza argues that law and the norms of justice around which it is organised are an entirely human creation. Communities make laws, and in doing so make justice. But how do they develop understandings of justice that do more than reflect the interests of the powerful, and provide standards for assessing and criticizing social arrangements? This lecture explores Spinoza’s account of the philosophical, theological and political processes through which communities learn to live justly.

Susan James is Professor of Philosophy at Birkbeck College London. Her most recent book, Spinoza on Learning to Live Justly (2003), Theological and Political Treatise is published by Oxford University Press in January 2012. Among her other works are Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy (1997) and The Political Writings of Margaret Cavendish (2005).

In his lecture Gareth Stedman Jones will discuss the biography of Heinrich Marx, Karl Marx’s father. He will examine his relation with the French Revolution, Napoleon and the Prussian takeover of the Rhineland and then contrast his experience at the end with that of his son. He suggests that father and son represent a contrast between two different views of the French Revolution, that of 1789 (emanation in a liberal sense) and 1792 (Rousseau, the Republic and the disappearance of all special routes).

Gareth Stedman Jones joined Queen Mary, University of London in 2010, where he is Professor of the History of Ideas. He has been, since 1991, Director of the Centre for History and Economics, Cambridge. His publications include the books An End to Poverty? (2004); Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifestos (2002); Religion and the Political Imagination, co-edited with Ira Katznelson (2000). He has in addition recently co-edited with Gregory Claeys the Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought (2011).

References to the law pervade Kafka’s writings, but their meaning remains elusive. It is precisely because it is uncertain whether the law in Kafka’s work is to be understood in juridical, religious, literary, or more generally ontological terms that it has elicited numerous and often contradictory interpretations, which shed light on the relationship between these different realms. The lecture will explore how this indeterminacy and its effects have inspired concepts of justice in modernist thinkers from Scholem and Benjamin to Jacques Derrida and Giorgio Agamben, as well as the relationship between law and narrative and its correlation with Jewish approaches to the interaction between Halacha and Agadah.

Vivian Liska is Senior Professor of German literature and Director of the Institute of Jewish Studies at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. Her research focuses on modernist literature, German-Jewish literature and culture, and literary theory. She is the author of Das Nacht der Hymnen and Das schelmische Erhabene. Her most recent book is Friede Gemeinschaft. Deutsch-jüdische Literatur der Moderne (2011).

Douglas G. Morris, PhD., J.D. is a legal historian and practicing criminal defense attorney with Federal Defenders of New York, Inc. He is author of Justice Imperial: The Anti-Nazi Lawyer Max Hirschberg in Weimar Germany (University of Michigan Press, 2005). In 1998 he received the Thurgood Marshall Award from the Association of the Bar of the City of New York for serving “as pro bono counsel to a human being under a sentence of death.”

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