

Sonia Gollance
Hanno Loewy
Lisa Schoß
Moshe Zimmermann
Tobias Ebbrecht-
Hartmann

Leo Baeck Institute
London
Lecture Series 2022

Popular Culture,
Politics and Jews

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This season's lecture series *Popular Culture, Politics and Jews* delves into the rich world of German-Jewish and European-Jewish popular culture, examining its diverse manifestations, forgotten origins, creative adaptations, mass appeal and political dimensions and motivations in history. It explores the topic by looking at a cross section of its expression in film, television, theatre, dance, music and literature.

*Please note that lectures shall be held as Zoom events online should Covid-related restrictions be reintroduced. Kindly check our individual lecture announcements via email, social media and on our website (www.leobaeck.co.uk) closer to the date of each event for more information, Zoom links to participate in online talks and to register your booking.

Lectures will be held at:
German Historical Institute*
17 Bloomsbury Square
London WC1A 2NJ.
Places at the GHI 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.

Sonia Gollance
University College London, UK
Dangerous Attractions: Mixed-Sex Dancing and Jewish Modernity
6.30pm, Thursday, February 3rd 2022

Contemporary popular culture often portrays Jewish mixed-sex dancing as either absolutely forbidden or as the punch line of a dirty joke. Fictional portrayals of women who leave Orthodoxy sometimes use transgressive dancing to underscore the temptation of secular society – and gentile men. Yet long before the Netflix miniseries *Unorthodox*, Jewish writers used partner dance as a powerful metaphor for social changes that transformed Jewish communities between the Enlightenment and the Holocaust. Scandalous dance scenes in German and other literatures are part of a larger conversation about acculturation and courtship norms, allowing writers to convey their concerns with Jewish modernity while simultaneously entertaining their readers.

Sonia Gollance is Lecturer in Yiddish at University College London. She taught previously at the University of Vienna, The Ohio State University, and the University of Göttingen. She is the author of *It Could Lead to Dancing: Mixed-Sex Dancing and Jewish Modernity* (Stanford University Press, 2021). Dr Gollance is Managing Editor of *Plotting Yiddish Drama*, an initiative of the Digital Yiddish Theatre Project.



Hanno Loewy
Jüdisches Museum Hohenems, Austria
Jukebox? Jewkbox!
6.30pm, Thursday, March 17th 2022

The history of 'Pop' is a history of music, migration and transcultural exchange. Following the invention of recording technologies and the worldwide production and distribution of records at the end of the 19th century, the new music industry created a new global culture. Jews were prominently involved in that process on all planes, from the creation of the Shellac record and the Gramophone by Emil Berliner, to the pioneers of the music industry and Tin Pan Alley. They were composers of musicals and popular songs and popularized 'Jewish culture' through cantorial music, Yiddish theatre or the invention of the iconic 'Jewish humour'. All this was often the product of disturbing and painful experiences of migration, uprooting and newly 'invented identities'.

Hanno Loewy, PhD, is a scholar of literature and film, an exhibition curator, and, since 2004, the Director of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, Austria. He is the author and editor of several books on film theory, Holocaust, Jewish history and popular culture.



Lisa Schoß
Selma Stern Centre for Jewish Studies
Berlin, Germany
A Story of Ambivalences. Jewish Topics and Characters in East German Television
6.30pm, Thursday, May 5th 2022

In general, East German television attempted to combine so-called 'political-operational cultural work' with attractive programming. The same balancing act can also be observed in the presentation of Jewish topics and characters on TV. This talk covers so-called anti-fascist films about the Nazi era; campaign films against the West, e.g. courtroom dramas and crime movies; the aspect of 'Jewish heritage'; Yiddish music; and Jewish contributions to entertainment shows.

Dr des Lisa Schoß is a scholar of film and literature. Her monograph *Von verschiedenen Standpunkten. Die Darstellung jüdischer Erfahrungen im Film der DDR (From Differing Perspectives, The Representation of the Jewish Experience in GDR Film)* is forthcoming. She is associated with the Selma Stern Centre for Jewish Studies Berlin-Brandenburg and a member of the DFG network 'German-Jewish Film History of the FRG'.



Moshe Zimmermann
Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
Post-Holocaust German-Jewish Symbiosis: Ephraim Kishon and the Germans
6.30pm, Thursday, October 13th 2022

The *bon mot* 'A German joke is no laughing matter' is attributed to Mark Twain. Improvising on Adorno's dictum 'writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric' one might consider writing humour in the German language after Auschwitz a contradiction in terms. Yet, this was the gap into which the Israeli author Ephraim Kishon, a Holocaust survivor from Hungary, stepped. The most successful humourist of the Federal Republic, his humour was rooted in the everyday life of Israeli Jews, his writing tradition belonged to Central-Europe, his Hebrew-German translator was a well-known Austrian author and his German audience was the generation of the perpetrators and the post-war generation. The lecture will examine explanations for Kishon's success in Germany.

Moshe Zimmermann is Professor emeritus for German History. Formerly Director of the Richard-Koebner-Center for German History, Hebrew University, Jerusalem (1986-2012), he held many Visiting Professorships around the world and has won numerous academic prizes for his work. He is the author of several books and involved with curriculum planning at the Ministry of Education.



Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann
Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
In Our Image: Meeting our Ultraorthodox Other on Netflix
6.30pm, Thursday, November 17th 2022

In recent years, streaming networks have offered new encounters with the lives and traditions of ultraorthodox Judaism through means of pop cultural representations. While some praised the accuracy with which series such as *Shtisel* (2013-2021) or *Unorthodox* (2020) presented ultraorthodox customs, others identified problematic anti-Semitic stereotypes in those depictions. This lecture examines how far the representations in either series serve as a distancing mirror of our own societies and looks at them in comparison to modes of classical serial storytelling in television as exemplified by series such as *Dallas* or *Dynasty*.

Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Communication and Journalism and the European Forum at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has published on visual history and memory of the Holocaust and on German and Israeli film history. He is a consortium member in the Horizon 2020 research and innovation action *Visual History of the Holocaust: Rethinking Curation in the Digital Age* (2019-2022).



The Leo Baeck Institute
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Leo Baeck Institute
2nd Floor
Arts Two Building
Queen Mary
University of London
Mile End Road
London E1 4NS
t: +44 (0) 20 7882 5690
www.leobaeck.co.uk



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