

PLENARY LECTURE “PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS”

Presenter: Julius H. Schoeps, Moses Mendelssohn Center for European Jewish Studies

Title: **“Philosophical Hypocrisy And Ethical „Correctness“ In Public Discourses On Israel”**

In recent decades, anti-Semitism has significantly changed its face and manifestations, at least in Europe and other parts of the Western World. The so called “antisemitism of the street” lost parts of its meaning and affects, while other manifestations and varieties did constantly gain prominence. Jewish tradition, religion and the State of Israel in particular are nowadays object and screen of a rather “educated”, culturally justified enmity. Long ago, such trends have also entered the fields of philosophy and ethics – and the outcome of current open disputes and discourses taking place now among intellectuals, artists, human rights activists and self-appointed moralists might also get crucial meaning when it comes to future imaginations and attitudes towards Jews, Jewish religion, culture and Israel. Fortunately, Jews themselves are important protagonists in the field of ethics and philosophy, so they are part of the dynamics, and they might contribute with their own courage, knowledge and ideas. My panel will reflect both: anti-Jewish trends among philosophers, intellectuals, artists and other parts of civic society – and their specific forms of “rationales”. At the same time, we will reflect and discuss how Jews interfere and argue when parts of the population look for – and find – “reasons” to discredit, or at least to challenge Jewish tradition and culture. A final part of the panel might be the discussion on how to counter such trends by applying Jewish philosophic schools and experiences of thought.