

## **PLENARY LECTURE “POLITICAL STUDIES”**

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Title: **“The fight against antisemitism: challenges and contradictions in the light of Adorno’s categorical imperative.”**

In 1966 Adorno wrote about a new categorical imperative that has been imposed by National Socialism “upon unfree mankind: to arrange their thoughts and actions so that Auschwitz will not repeat itself, so that nothing similar will happen.” Starting from this I will tackle the question what it means to grasp society from the viewpoint of this categorical imperative and what its challenges are for today’s fight against antisemitism? What would be “similar” to Auschwitz and how does the state of unfreedom affect the fight against antisemitism?

According to Critical Theory the critique of antisemitism is only possible in the context of a general critique of modern society. What does this implicate for the academic approach towards antisemitism, e.g. regarding the distinction between antisemitism on the one hand and racism on the other hand? And what are the political consequences of Adorno’s demand to use all power at disposal without any sentimentality against the antisemites?

I will elaborate on the political consequences to be derived from Adorno’s categorical imperative by raising the following issues:

- The necessity (and the difficulties) of the development of mature individuals who are able to conduct self-reflection (that would be one of the most important antidotes against the antisemitic worldview.)
- The necessity to outlaw and ostracize *all* forms of antisemitism in Europe, be it from the political Right, Left or in the Mainstream, be it from Christians, Muslims or people from any other religious background.
- The necessity to fight against the European appeasement towards Islamic antisemitism and against the European cooperation with antisemitic regimes.
- The necessity to overthrow antisemitic regimes like the one in Iran.
- The necessity to support the military self-defense of Israel against all forms of antisemitic threats.