

SELF-EVIDENT TRUTHS? HUMAN RIGHTS & THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Enlightenment is thought of as the defining moment for human rights. In George Orwell's 1984, Winston Smith explains that there is one phrase that it is impossible to translate into Newspeak, namely Jefferson's 1776 Declaration of Independence - a key Enlightenment text - which begins: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...'. Critics have often questioned the universality of human rights. This series will invite speakers to explore both the historical contexts from which rights emerged, and their status as truths, today.

Wednesday 10 February

JAMES TULLY

Rethinking Human Rights and the Enlightenment: A View from the Twenty-First Century

James Tully is Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Law, Indigenous Governance and Philosophy at the University of Victoria.

Wednesday 17 February

KARMA NABULSI

'That the General Will is Indestructible': From a Citizen of Geneva to the Citizens of Gaza

Karma Nabulsi is Fellow in Politics, St Edmund Hall, Oxford.

Friday 26 February

ADAM PHILLIPS

My Happiness: Right or Wrong?

Adam Phillips is a psychotherapist and writer.

Wednesday 3 March

JONATHAN ISRAEL

Basic Human Rights: the Enlightenment Battle over the Place of God and Religion (1770-89)

Jonathan Israel is Professor of Modern European History at the School for Advanced Study, Princeton.

Wednesday 10 March

ROBIN BLACKBURN

From Natural Rights to General Liberty: Slavery, Emancipation and the Origins of Human Rights

Robin Blackburn is Professor of Sociology, Essex, and Editor of New Left Review.

Wednesday 17 March

SEYLA BENHABIB

Cosmopolitanism since Kant: Claiming Rights Across Borders in a New Century

Seyla Benhabib is Eugene Meyer Professor of Political Science and Philosophy, Yale.

Wednesday 12 May

JEREMY WALDRON

Dignity, Defamation and Rights: What does a Well-Ordered Society Look Like?

Jeremy Waldron is Professor of Law and Philosophy, New York School of Law.

Held in collaboration with the Besterman Centre for the Enlightenment.

www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/bestermancentre/index.html

All lectures start at 5.30pm at the Taylor Institute, St Giles, Oxford OX1 3NA.

Tickets cost £8 (£5 concession) Available from The Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2LW.

Tel: 01865 305305

online booking:

www.ticketsoxford.com

Tickets also for sale on the door, if available.



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