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5-6 - NOV. 18

Democracy Today ! La démocratie aujourd'hui

Dialogues Between French & Israeli Intellectuals
Philosophy-Sociology-Political Theory

- Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem (CRFJ)
- Institut Français, Israël
- Ambassade de France en Israël
- With The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

November 5 & 6, 2018
The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute
Beit Maersdorf, Conference Center
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem Mount Scopus

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Democracy Today !

Democracy Today will enable us to consider democracy first as a concept, building primarily on 20th century political theory and on different readings by leading French, Israeli or Palestinian thinkers and specialists in their respective fields. Democracy is pivotal in the writings of critical and social thinkers (Foucault, Rancière, Bourdieu, Deleuze) and is a time honored theme in French political thought. The recent transformations of nation-states and societies—in France, Europe and Israel—requires also rethinking the concept of democracy and its institutions, which seem today either updated, malfunctioning or threatened. In France as in Israel, it appears that new forms of governing replace democratic traditions and institutions, as mercantile rationalities and security cultures are on the rise, transforming our societies into “societies of control” and the states into authoritarian-liberal States. At the same time, contemporary societies overflow with minorities’ requests for inclusion, justice and social rights, and citizens reclaim vigorously to be integrated into the political sphere. Ultimately, democracy is fragilized when it favors religious or ethnic identities and becomes debatable when it embraces calls for ethnic and national unity while abandoning its inherent pluralism. In so doing we intend to scrutinize the different vocabularies of democracy—representative democracy, participatory, or radical democracy, or “wild democracy” populism, authoritarianism. Nonetheless, the conference will also constitute an intellectual scene questioning democracy’s current political and sociological realities through critical and situated analyses. Examining democracy in France and in Israel with a critical approach, we will take into account democracy’s current immersion in mercantile rationalities, its non-inclusive social order and the dominance of its repressive institutions. Yet, struggles for democracy seem to express democracy’s ethical dimension, radicalizing, transforming or surpassing democracy when it is imprisoned within the dialectic relationship between citizens and State. The conference will constitute a vibrant intellectual scene questioning democracy’s current political and sociological realities through critical and situated analysis.

Language of communication: English

Monday, November 5 – Day #1: Reconsidering Democracy

Dialogue #1 The crisis of the democracy and its critic

In this dialogue democracy will be contemplated through different angles, with a special focus on the so-called States' decline and on the current fears expressed by public opinions (Bauman, Appadurai, Walzer, Fraser). How the concept of democracy is changing in Europe and in Israel? How can we understand anti-democratic discourses? How to understand the voices in favor of direct or participative democracy? An increased distrust in democracy goes together with a "brutalization" of public debates on migration, racism and xenophobia. However, the perceived renouncement to democratic ideals triggers as well creations of intermediary spaces of civic commitment, enabling citizens to find new ways to politically express themselves.

Speakers: Yves Sintomer (University Paris 8), Gayil Talshir (HUJI), Yaron Ezrahi (HUJI), Hadas Cohen (Bar Ilan University)

Dialogue #2 Democracy overwhelmed: Violence, disobedience & resistance

Democratic grammar of equality, representation, justice and pluralism competes with an increased « marketization » of lives, at the benefit of neo-liberal and also authoritarian or ethno nationalist regimes. In the critical tradition, those shifts are captured by terms such as de-democratization and de-civilization (Elias). Power struggles between dominants and the margins (youth, activism) participate of a general questioning of social order. Authoritarian States are relying on policies of « securitization » of their societies, as well as repressive prevention targeted on groups asking for their emancipation.

Speakers: François Cusset (University Paris 10), Michael Sfar (HR lawyer), Yael Berda (HUJI), Dahlia Schneidlin (TAU)

Dialogue #3 Being governed, being pacified (complete #2)

Governmentality in "advanced democracies" is defined by attempts of "containment" towards voices of dissent. Prevention, lawfare, use of armed force in demonstrations are among those techniques of government.

Speakers: Guillaume Le Blanc (University Paris 7), Ariel Handel (TAU), Eitan Daimond (TAU),

Dialogue #4 Naming the democracy: Democratic multitudes, democracy as form of life.

In Israel as well in Europe, sociology of groups and individuals inform the democratic crisis by demonstrating that popular classes are more likely to vote for populists. Political discourses that are less democratic, more nationalist and neo-liberal and close to identity politics meet an increasing public support. European and Israeli democracies are overwhelmed by their fringes. Renewed demands of feminists, antiracists, human rights advocates and « counter-movements » (Polyani) claim that democracy is a form of life best captured by the « democratic multitude » or democratic pluralism.

Speakers: Estelle Ferrarese (University of Amiens), Yofi Tirosh (TAU), Shlomo Fischer (TAU)

Tuesday, November 6 – Day #2: Transforming Democracy

Dialogue #5 Naming Democracy : historical regimes of democracy (19-21e centuries). From collective emancipation to Eclecticism at liberal age

This panel is dedicated to the emancipation literature. The Labor movement developed its own identity, borrowing from revolutionary thought and communism. Contemporary social movements try to implement a new grammar, not necessarily in connection with this history. To interrogate democracy from an historian perspective highlights the evolution of concepts such as social class, people, nation. It also allows to challenge the conceptual tension between individual freedom and democracy, as shown by recent literature questioning race and gender.

Speakers: Michèle Riot-Sarcey (University of Paris 8), Olivier Razac (University of Grenoble), Alexander Yakobson (HUJI)

Dialogue #6 Populism, subalternism, subjectivities in democracy

How can we understand the wave of protests for popular sovereignty? The pathologies of democracy (Gramsci) can help to rethink counter-movements emerging in a post-liberal democracy against neoliberal dystopia. In Europe as well as in Israel, political subjectivities express a resentment against poverty and a renewal of the national myth. Those movements challenge the current understanding of the relations between society (or people) and politics.

Speakers: Federico Tarragoni (University of Paris 7), Motta Kremnitzer (HUJI), Dan Avnon (HUJI), Efraïm Podoksik (HUJI)

Dialogue #7 Intellectuals, and the role of Critique in the democracy (Europe, Israel)

Does universalism belong to the past? Is there a divorce between collective and specific intellectuals (Bourdieu, Foucault) and the "people" in Israel and in Europe? Who are the public intellectuals, and what is their impact on democracy?

Speakers: Jean-Louis Fabiani (EHESS), Ronit Peleg (TAU), Yvan Segre

PROGRAM

Monday, November 5 - Day #1: Reconsidering Democracy

9.am - 5.30 pm

The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute (Conference Hall)

9.00 am Welcome

9.15 am Opening and greetings: Shai Lavi, Director of The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Sebastien Linden, Scientific and Academic Cooperation Attaché, French Institute in Israel

Chair: Nicole Hochner (HUJI), moderator: Amélie Ferey (TAU)

9.30 am Dialogue #1 : The crisis of the democracy and its critics

Yves Sintomer, Gayil Talshir, Yaron Ezrahi, Hadas Cohen

11.00 am Break

11.30 am Dialogue #2 Democracy overwhelmed: Violence, disobedience & resistance

François Cusset, Michael Sfard, Yael Berda, Dahlia Schneidlin

1.00 pm Lunch at Van Leer

Afternoon - moderator: Gilad Halpern (TLV 1)

2.00 pm Dialogue # 3 Being governed, being pacified

Guillaume Le Blanc, Ariel Handel, Eitan Diamond

3.30 pm Democracy in acts. Conversation with Aziz Abu Sarah: entrepreneur (Mejdi tours), ex-candidate to the Mayor elections

4.00 am Break

4.45 pm Dialogue # 4 Democratic multitudes, democracy as form of life

Estelle Ferrarese, Yofi Tirosh, Shlomo Fischer

6.00 pm End of session

Tuesday, November 6 – Day #2: Transforming Democracy

Hebrew University of Jerusalem Mount Scopus, Beit Maersdorf Building, Room 405

9.00 am Welcome

Chair : Manuela Consonni (HUJI), moderator: Yossi Harpaz (TAU)

9.30 am Dialogue # 5 Conceptual and historical regimes of democracy

(19-21th. centuries), From collective emancipation to eclecticism at liberal age

Michèle Riot-Sarcey, Olivier Razac, Alexander Yakobson

11.00 am Break

11.30 Dialogue # 6 Populism, subalternism, subjectivities in democracy

Federico Tarragoni, Motta Kremnitzer, Dan Avnon, Efraïm Podoksik

1.00 pm Lunch at Maersdorf Restaurant

2.00 pm Dialogue # 7 Intellectuals, and the role of critique in the democracy (Europe, Israel)

Jean-Louis Fabiani, Ronit Peleg, Ivan Segré

4.00 pm End of session

