

EINLADUNG

SIMON WIESENTHAL LECTURE

PIERRE BIRNBAUM

A POLITICAL MYTH: LÉON BLUM

Donnerstag, 19. Februar 2015, 18.30 Uhr
Dachfoyer des Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchivs
1010 Wien, Minoritenplatz 1

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GEFÖRDERT VON:



In his lecture, Pierre Birnbaum demonstrates how Léon Blum's (1872–1950) Jewishness was central to his milieu and mission from his earliest entry into the political arena in reaction to the infamous Dreyfus Affair, and how it sustained and motivated him throughout the remainder of his life. As Prime Minister of France, he wrote many times that he was proud to be a Jew, at the time courageously facing a violent antisemitic movement. Furthermore, from the turn of the 20th century he showed a deep interest in Zionism, became a close friend of Chaim Weizmann, and beginning in the 1930s continuously helped him with the creation of the State of Israel, thus showing for the first time in history that it was possible for a Jew to be at the head of the French State while remaining dedicated to the faith of the Jewish people.

Pierre Birnbaum is a professor emeritus at the University Paris 1. He wrote several books on the theory of the state and also on the French state seen as a crucial variable in Jewish comparative history like *The Jews of the Republic*, Stanford 1996 and – together with Ira Katznelson – *Paths for emancipation*, Princeton 1996. He also wrote several books on political antisemitism as a reaction against the involvement of Jews in the State like *The Anti-Semitic Moment: A Tour of France in 1898*, New York, 2003. Recently, he published a book on *La république et le cochon [The Republic and Pork]*, Paris 2013, on the relation between republican universalism and Kashrut, the Jewish dietary laws. His forthcoming books are *Sur un nouveau moment antisémite. Jour de colère*. Paris 2015 and *Léon Blum: Prime Minister, Socialist and Zionist*. Yale 2015.

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