



**EASTER CONFERENCE APRIL 2020**  
**MAIN HALL: HAMPSTEAD OLD TOWN HALL, LONDON NW3 4QP**  
**Freedom and its Consequences**

Tuesday 21 April	13.00	Registration	
	13.45	Introduction: Chairman, Naomi Stuart	
	14.00 – 15.00	<b>Literature: When Literature Became Free.</b> <i>Patronage and poverty in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.</i>	<b>Susanne Kord</b>
		15.00 – 15.20 Tea	
	15.20 – 16.20	<b>Philosophy: The Fear of Freedom.</b> <i>Erich Fromm argues that insecurity, isolation and a sense of meaninglessness make freedom unbearable and some turn to an authoritarian leader to escape it.</i>	<b>Sam Rodin</b>
Wednesday 22 April	10.30 – 11.30	<b>Environment: Our Planet, Spirituality and Responsibility</b>	<b>Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg</b>
		11.30 – 11.50 Coffee	
	11.50 – 12.50	<b>Art: How do we apply the word FREEDOM to the subject of the history and practice of art? Freedom from bondage and freedom of expression.</b>	<b>Michael Baum</b>
		12.50 – 14.00 Lunch	
	14.00 – 15.00	<b>Medicine: Freedom in Medical Science.</b> <i>Concerns and costs of technology. We need public discussion around the ethical and health risks created by some scientific and technical advances.</i>	<b>Tony Dayan</b>
		15.00 – 15.20 Tea	
	15.20 – 16.20	<b>History: Liberalism and its Enemies since the Enlightenment: Reflections on the origins and development of political liberalism from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present, mainly in Europe, including Great Britain.</b>	<b>Christophe Dean</b>
Thursday 23 April	10.30 – 11.30	<b>Music: How music can be a potent force in expressing dissent, motivating social reform, ending oppression and throwing off the yoke of subjugation.</b>	<b>Herbie Goldberg</b>
		11.30 – 11.50 Coffee	
	11.50 – 12.50	<b>Politics: The Four Freedoms</b> <i>Lessons from the 1930s.</i>	<b>Thomas Harris</b>
		12.50 – 14.00 Lunch	
	14.00 – 15.00	<b>Society: Curtailment of Freedom.</b> <i>Indefinite detention of immigrants to the UK.</i>	<b>Caroline White</b>
		15.00 – 15.20 Tea	
	15.20 – 16.20	<b>Science: Overcoming prejudice and “traditional” roles. How women won the fight for educational freedom, especially in the physical sciences.</b>	<b>Amalia Michaels</b>
	Conclusion		

**Speaker Biographies**

### **Susanne Kord:**

Susanne Kord is a cultural historian and Professor of German at UCL. She has written on many aspects of cultural and social history, with a focus on international film and the history and reception of writers, particularly women. She has received seven major awards for her writing. She has also published poetry in several anthologies and journals, won a poetry award, and offered readings in various venues, including the German Embassy in Washington, D.C.

### **Sam Rodin:**

Sam studied sociology and social sciences at the London School of Economics and has a Ph.D. from the University of Sheffield. He taught sociology and social theory for many years at universities in New Zealand, the UK and the USA. He has published and researched on the sociology of religion, social theory, ethics, loneliness and Jewish Studies.

“In this talk, I discuss *The Fear of Freedom* by Erich Fromm, published in 1941. Erich Fromm was a prolific German Jewish sociologist and psychoanalyst who emigrated to the US in 1934. In his book he analyses the psychological and sociological forces of modernisation and individualisation that enabled the rise of fascism and Nazism. Fromm argues that Germans attracted to Nazism exhibited an ‘authoritarian character’. This is a personality type common in modern society where rapid social and economic change open up freedoms for the individual but at the cost of casting him or her adrift from a sense of belonging and rootedness in traditional society. The consequent insecurity, isolation and sense of meaninglessness make freedom unbearable for many who then turn to an authoritarian leader to escape it. I shall argue that Fromm’s thesis throws light on the socio-economic and psychological forces that have produced the current rise of Trump and other demagogues”.

### **Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg:**

Jonathan Wittenberg was born in Glasgow to a German Jewish refugee family. After reading English at Cambridge and teacher training at Goldsmiths, he studied for the rabbinate at Leo Baeck College, London, and in Israel, following family tradition. He was appointed Rabbi of the New North London Masorti Synagogue in 1987 and Senior Rabbi of the Assembly of Masorti Synagogues UK in 2008. He is a President of the Council of Christians and Jews and a member of the Council of Imams and Rabbis. He is a co-founder of Eco-Synagogue and deeply engaged in environmental issues. He is closely involved in supporting refugees. Further interests include pastoral work, hospice care, and literature, especially poetry. He teaches and speaks widely, including on Radio 4’s *Thought for the Day*. His publications include: *The Eternal Journey*:

*Meditations on the Jewish Year (2001); The Silence of Dark Water: An Inner Journey (2008); Walking with the Light (2013); My Dear Ones: One family and The Final Solution (2016)* and most recently: *Things My Dog Has Taught Me* – about being a better human. He is married to Nicola Solomon; they have three children and a dog. He loves plants, animals, people, and woodland and mountain walks.

### **Michael Baum:**

At the age of 67 I retired as a Professor of Surgery at UCL and retrained as an artist. I apprenticed myself to a distinguished portrait artist, Israel Zohar, who taught me the techniques of the classical masters such as Rembrandt and Vermeer. Much as I loved and venerated these giants of the history of art, I felt myself imprisoned within their embrace and unable to express myself. Over the passage of 15 years I have travelled the road of the history of art via the Impressionists, Post Impressionists, the Nabis, the Symbolists, the Expressionists and recently the abstract schools of painting. Sadly I started too late to develop a style of my own but I have learnt a lot about the history of art along the way. I will illustrate this lecture with examples of my own work alongside the masters that have inspired me.

### **Tony Dayan:**

I qualified in Medicine just before the ever-accelerating technological revolution hit us. Throughout my 4 careers as a hospital pathologist, a toxicologist in the drug industry and academia and general busybody, I have tried to keep up with what our children and now grandchildren accept every day and I still worry might be science fiction. I will raise some ethical and practical problems in life and health we now face in weighing the benefits, costs and harms created by what is now or soon will be possible.

### **Christopher Dean:**

Christopher Dean read history at university and taught it at a London school for 37 years. His main interests lie in European history (including English and British history), international relations and cultural history, from the 15th to the 20th century. A Co-ordinator at the U3A in London since 2013, Chris has given talks at previous Easter Conferences, in 2008 and 2019. He has also led seminars at the national U3A Summer School.

### **Herbie Goldberg:**

Having spent 24 years with IBM as an engineer and instructor in hardware and software, Herbie became an independent IT consultant specialising in database design. He has had a lifelong interest in classical music of all

kinds and enjoys exploring the works of lesser-known composers as well as the established masterpieces. Since 2016, he has run a fortnightly class in Classical Music Appreciation for U3A in London as well as being a guest speaker for other organisations.

### **Thomas Harris:**

Thomas Harris is a former British diplomat who served in Japan, Washington, New York, Nigeria and as ambassador to Korea. He also spent ten years in the private sector working for a major international bank.

### **Caroline White:**

Caroline is a social anthropologist who lectured and did research in South Africa. She chairs the Management Committee and volunteers for *Detention Action*, a charity which supports people detained by the Home Office for immigration purposes. *Detention Action* also campaigns for a time limit to the detention of immigrants.

### **Amalia Michaels:**

Amalia studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge University specialising in Physics. Her first job was in crystallographic research at British Non Ferrous Metals, but when the laboratory moved out of London, she thought she would “have a go” at teaching as a stop-gap until she found another job. However, finding she really loved teaching, she spent 41 years at the chalk face in various schools, eventually becoming Head of Science in a large comprehensive.

She managed to juggle her career while coping with a husband and four children. When she retired, she joined our U3A and the rest you all know about!