



Institute of African American Affairs
New York University
presents

Common Ground: the intertwined relationship between Blacks and Jews



Cover painting from book *Causes Communes: des Juifs et des Noirs* by Nicole Lapierre
(Victor Brauner, *Septième Sens*, 1948 © Adagp, Paris, 2011)

a conversation with

Nicole Lapierre

Walter Mosley

David Levering Lewis

Thursday, April 11, 2013 / 6 pm

Silver Center-NYU, room 405, 4th floor
100 Washington Square East
(enter at 31 Washington Place)

This program is supported by
Institute of French Studies-NYU
The Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic
Studies-NYU and The Taub Center for Israel
Studies-NYU

Common Ground: the intertwined relationship between Blacks and Jews

In her book, *Causes Communes: Des Juifs et des Noirs* (2011, Éditions Stock), Nicole Lapierre vigorously advocates empathy, recommends convergence over competition, and solidarity over rivalry. She traces how, in the twentieth century, the intertwined relationship between Blacks and Jews emerged from ideals of freedom, equality and dignity. She takes her examples from different countries and contexts, from New York to Warsaw, from Mississippi to Uzbekistan, Lithuania to South Africa, and Harlem to Paris, via the West Indies. She reminds us how the Black experience was re-examined through the prism of Jewish experience, and vice versa, by individual men and women of conscience who found the oppression and humiliation of others unconscionable. For mystical, progressive, conceptual or sentimental reasons, these outstanding individuals refused to be consigned to their ethnic pigeonholes. Among them were political leaders, philosophers, writers, poets, musicians and unknown men and women.

The premise of this research is resolutely rooted in the opposite camp of the tendency towards “competing victims” which is to divide two equally struggling communities. The tensions that sometimes set these communities against each other involve all of society: they are primarily the result of social inequality and of the level of recognition that history grants to discriminated, oppressed or persecuted people, whoever they may be. This program will have the opportunity to recall these "common causes," discuss and examine how these examples drawn from the past may serve as beacons for the present.



Nicole Lapierre is professor of socio-anthropology at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in France. She is also director of research at the French National Center for Scientific Research, co-director of the journal *Communications*, and runs a collection of books in the humanities titled “An order of ideas.” Lapierre is the author of *Causes Communes: Des Juifs et des Noirs* (2011, Éditions Stock), which traces the relationship between Blacks and Jews in the 20th century over a range of contexts and regions. Her other books include: *Changer de nom (Change name)* (Paris, Folio Essais, 2006); *Le nouvel esprit de famille (The new spirit of family)* with C. Attias-Donfut and M. Segalen, (Paris, O. Jacob, 2002); *Le livre retrouvé (Found book)* (manuscript in Yiddish translation of Simha Guterman) (Bibliothèques, 2001); *La famille providence. Trois générations en Guadeloupe (Family welfare. Three generations Guadeloupe)* (Paris, La Documentation française, 1997).



Walter Mosley is one of the most versatile and admired writers in America today. He is the author of more than 37 critically acclaimed books, including the major bestselling mystery series featuring Easy Rawlins. In his most recent, *Twelve Steps to Political Revelation* (2011), Mosley outlines a guide to recovery from oppression. First we must identify the problems that surround us. Next we must actively work together to create a just, more holistic society. And finally, power must be returned to the embrace of the people. His work has been translated into 23 languages and includes literary fiction, science fiction, political monographs, and a young adult novel. His short fiction has been widely published, and his nonfiction has appeared in *The New York Times Magazine* and *The Nation*, among other publications. He is the winner of numerous awards, including an O. Henry Award, a Grammy and PEN America’s Lifetime Achievement Award.



David Levering Lewis is the Julius Silver University Professor and Professor of History at New York University. Lewis’s field of teaching and research is comparative history with special focus on 20th century US social history, 19th century Africa, 20th century France, and Muslim Iberia. Lewis is the recipient of many awards and fellowships including the Ford Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Humanities Medal. Lewis has authored eight books including *King: A Biography* (1970, 1978, 2013); *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (1980); and *The Race to Fashoda: European Colonialism and African Resistance in the Scramble for Africa* (1988). His two volume biography on W.E.B. Du Bois received the singular honor of being awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Biography for each volume (1994 and 2001). Lewis's most recent book is *God’s Crucible: Islam and the Making of Europe, 570 to 1215* (2008), which has been translated in to several languages, and he is currently at work on a biography exploring the life and times of Wendell Willkie.



New York University
A private university in the public service

Institute of African American Affairs

14A Washington Mews, 4th floor, New York, NY 10003

The **Institute of African American Affairs (IAAA)** at New York University was founded in 1969 to research, document, and celebrate the cultural and intellectual production of Africa and its diaspora in the Atlantic world and beyond. IAAA is committed to the study of Blacks in modernity through concentrations in Pan-Africanism and Black Urban Studies.
<http://africanastudies.as.nyu.edu/page/IAAA>

