

For Immediate Release

Contact: Michael Kaminer, 212-260-9733
press@yum.cjh.org

**FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK, AN ILLUSTRIOUS LEGACY IN NUMBERS
AS LEO BAECK INSTITUTE AND YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM SHOWCASE JEWISH MATHEMATICIANS**

***“Transcending Tradition: Jewish Mathematicians in German-Speaking Academic Culture”
Showcases Astonishing Contributions of Jews in Math before WWII***

WHAT:	<i>Transcending Tradition: Jewish Mathematicians in German-Speaking Academic Culture</i>
WHEN:	Through January 5, 2014
WHERE:	Leo Baeck Institute and Yeshiva University Museum, 15 W. 16th Street, NYC, 212-294-8330
COST:	Adults: \$8; seniors and students: \$6. Free for members and children under 5
WEB:	www.lbi.org yumuseum.tumblr.com/TranscendingTradition www.gj-math.de

New York City, September 25, 2013 – The people of the book have an illustrious legacy with numbers, as a fascinating new exhibition co-presented by the Leo Baeck Institute and Yeshiva University Museum reveals.

Transcending Tradition: Jewish Mathematicians in German-Speaking Academic Culture showcases the astonishing contributions of Jewish thinkers to mathematical culture in Germany before the Nazis decimated their ranks.

An opening program for the exhibition will take place on September 30, 2013 at 6:00 pm at the Center for Jewish History, featuring Peter Lax, a Budapest-born mathematician who has made significant contributions in the areas of pure and applied mathematics.

Yeshiva University Museum (YUM) and the Leo Baeck Institute (LBI) are partners at the Center for Jewish History in the Union Square neighborhood of New York City. YUM is dedicated to the presentation and interpretation of the artistic and cultural achievements of Jewish life. LBI is a research library and archive that contains the most significant collection of source material relating to the history of German-speaking Jewry.

As *Transcending Tradition* makes clear through a wealth of photographs and documents, much of mathematical life pre-1933 was in fact a German-Jewish mathematical life. For decades before their expulsion and extermination by the Nazis, Jewish mathematicians played key roles in the vibrant German-speaking mathematical world.

Transcending Tradition highlights their pivotal roles in teaching and research, in professional organizations, and throughout mathematical culture, from academic to popular.

The narrative traces many moving lives: Young researchers who helped shape modern mathematics and physics, scholars who went beyond mathematics and made their mark in literature or philosophy, and the story of Emmy Noether, the most important female mathematician of the 20th century. It explores the places and historical contexts, and presents the actors and their contributions with scholarly precision and a

compassionate eye for individuals and their fates. Among the legendary mathematicians spotlighted: Richard von Mises, Max Dehn, Richard Courant, Otto Blumenthal, Felix Hausdorff, Hermann Minkowski, and John von Neumann.

The exhibition highlights two points in particular. First, during the period in question, there was probably no part of the academic culture of mathematics in which Jewish mathematicians were not actively involved. In the Wilhelmine Empire and the Weimar Republic Jewish mathematicians worked in research, teaching, and publishing, they were active in professional organizations like the German Mathematical Society, and they participated in the public discourse on mathematics. They contributed to shaping the German-speaking mathematical culture of their time. Second, their activities were so varied and multifaceted, that every stereotype of a “Jewish” style in mathematics is immediately refuted.

“The Leo Baeck Institute is pleased to be a part of telling this important story here in New York City,” said Dr. William Weitzer, Executive Director of Leo Baeck Institute. “The exhibition stands as a wonderful example of how German-speaking Jews, once given opportunities in society that were previously denied them, made outstanding contributions in fields that helped define the future.”

“It’s eye-opening and moving,” said Dr. Jacob Wisse, director of Yeshiva University Museum “to see how engaged Jews have been in the field of mathematics; but also the breadth of their reach beyond the academic field, and into what other disciplines and practical endeavors mathematicians ventured and had impact.”

The exhibition was produced by the History of Science Group at Goethe University, Frankfurt/Main in cooperation with historians of mathematics, the Jewish Museum Frankfurt/Main, and the German Mathematical Society. *Transcending Tradition* premiered at Beit Hatfutsot - The Museum of the Jewish People at Tel Aviv University. It is adapted from an exhibition that premiered at the annual conferences of the German Mathematical Society in autumn 2006 in Bonn and in spring 2007 in Berlin.

ABOUT THE LEO BAECK INSTITUTE

The Leo Baeck Institute, New York (LBI) is the foremost research institute devoted to the history of German-speaking Jews. Its 80,000-volume library and extensive archival and art collections represent the most significant repository of primary source material and scholarship on the Jewish communities of Central Europe over the past five centuries.

ABOUT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

Yeshiva University Museum is dedicated to the presentation and interpretation of the artistic and cultural achievements of Jewish life. The Museum, founded in 1973, is distinguished by its wide-ranging and intellectually rigorous exhibitions and, as the cultural arm of Yeshiva University, by its strong educational mission. As a partner in the thriving Center for Jewish History and a participant in New York’s lively downtown cultural scene, Yeshiva University Museum makes a distinctive and important contribution to Jewish life and to the world of culture and the arts. The Museum’s rich and diverse collections preserve Jewish artifacts, art, texts and material culture for posterity, making objects accessible through exhibitions, educational programs, and research and conservational initiatives.

#