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Das mehrsprachige Webportal publiziert fortlaufend Informationen zur historisch-politischen Bildung in Schulen, Gedenkstätten und anderen Einrichtungen zur Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Schwerpunkte bilden der Nationalsozialismus, der Zweite Weltkrieg sowie die Folgegeschichte in den Ländern Europas bis zu den politischen Umbrüchen 1989.

Dabei nimmt es Bildungsangebote in den Fokus, die einen Gegenwartsbezug der Geschichte herausstellen und bietet einen Erfahrungsaustausch über historisch-politische Bildung in Europa an.

This Orientation Framework on German-Jewish history will hopefully stimulate the teaching of Jewish history in other countries as well and help to prevent it from being reduced to only the Holocaust, and instead being treated as an integral part of national history.

Teaching German-Jewish History in Schools

An Orientation Framework for Curriculum and Text Book Development and for Teachers' Training

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Jews in
Germany after
1945

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Teaching German-Jewish History in Schools

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Preface

The treatment of German-Jewish History in schools still suffers from regrettable deficiencies. While German-Jewish history has found its place in universities and scientific discourse, it is still presented in an incomplete and one-sided manner in schools, including curricula, text books and actual teaching. With few exceptions, Jews are perceived as objects, victims of persecution and the Holocaust. Positive aspects and the active role of Jews in the long-lasting Jewish-Germany history remain out of sight.

However, German-Jewish history is an integral part of German history without which German history remains incomplete.

The Leo Baeck Institute has been serving German-Jewish history studies and teaching since 1955. It has now set up a Commission to remedy the deficiencies earlier described and give fresh impulses for a change of perspective long overdue. This Commission has analyzed curricula and text books and now come up with an orientation framework or a core syllabus on German-Jewish history to be used for schools.

The Georg Eckert Institute for International Text Book Research, the German Association of History Teachers and the Central Council of Jews in Germany co-operated in the work of the Commission.

Having been submitted to the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (KMK) and presented to the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder*, this Orientation Framework is now being published. It will be accompanied by more initiatives on the side of the Commission for the Dissemination of German-Jewish History.

The Leo Baeck Institute would like to express its gratitude to all those who cooperated in the work or supported it.

Prof. Dr. Michael Meyer	Georg Heuberger	Dr. Joachim Schulz-Hardt
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Members of the Commission for the Dissemination of German-Jewish History at the Leo-Baeck-Institute

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Introduction

Teaching German-Jewish history in schools is still largely incomplete, one-sided and therefore biased. On the other hand, considerable progress has been made in universities through the establishment of new chairs or institutes and through research work in the field of German-Jewish studies. Teaching in schools remained mostly unaffected by this development. This is especially true for the training of the older generation of teachers, in particular in the new *Länder*, and for the insufficient opportunities of in-service training.

With few exceptions, curricula, text books and classroom teaching still focus on anti-Semitism, the history of persecution and the Holocaust. Although the continuous remembrance of the persecution of the Jews and the breach of civilization by the Holocaust in school teaching are of paramount importance, it is didactically wrong to reduce German-Jewish history to that dimension. It causes Jews to be perceived as objects and victims of German history, not as active bearers of their own culture and co-shapers of the modern world. Jews are primarily presented from the perspective of the society surrounding them; statements of Jews about themselves are seldom to be found. Such perspective gives a one-sided, incomplete and therefore wrong historical picture, oblivious of all positive features of German-Jewish history. Jewry, Christianity and the heritage of Athens and Rome are the pillars of European and German culture. Jews have been living in Europe since Roman times; they are not a newly immigrated minority, but an integral part of German history since its beginnings. This fact has not been adequately honored in school teaching until the present day.

The 1985 German-Israeli recommendations for text books in schools had already realized these deficiencies and called for amendments. A subsequent study of 2000 showed that the recommendations had not been satisfactorily implemented. While indeed more space was given to German-Jewish history in text books and more original Jewish sources were included, again most of these largely dealt with the topics of persecution and the Holocaust. Departing from these analyses, the Leo Baeck Institute, dedicated to German-Jewish history studies and teaching since 1954, in cooperation with experts from the Georg Eckert Institute for International Text Book Research and other educational scientists and school practitioners, took stock of curricula and text books and came up with the finding that a CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE is required in the perception and presentation of German-Jewish history in the following respects:

- 1 In the course of history, Jews were not just objects and victims of persecution but active subjects, citizens and creative co-shapers of history, culture and economy in Europe. There is no ongoing persecution of the Jews from the Crusades through National Socialism.
- 2 Since late antiquity, Jews and non-Jews have been living together in Europe. These two thousand years of common history distinguish German-Jewish history from that of other minorities. They require appropriate consideration.
- 3 German-Jewish history has to be presented in its European context. Enlightenment, emancipation of Jews and anti-Semitism were also European phenomena. Moreover, due to their persecution, the Jewish population in Germany was characterized by a strong European and transatlantic mobility.
- 4 Jewry is part of the historical foundations of our culture. Jewish culture in general and the great cultural achievements of German Jews since their emancipation require adequate consideration.
- 5 German-Jewish history does not end with the Holocaust. A new Jewish community has developed in Germany over the past 60 years; its existence and importance has not found entry into school teaching at all.

In order to show how these fundamental considerations could be integrated into the curriculum, the Leo Baeck Institute, in coordination with the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the German Association of History Teachers, has compiled the following ORIENTATION FRAMEWORK for the development of syllabi and standards, text book conceptualization and teachers' pre-service and in-

service training. The Orientation Framework refers to the respective epochs, topics and issues of German-Jewish history which are relevant for schools. It is complemented by a compilation of sources and a bibliography.

Jews in the Middle Ages

Guiding Concepts: The history of human settlement shows that the Jewish minority has a long lasting history in Germany. This fact distinguishes it clearly from other ethnic or religious minorities it is sometimes compared to. Studying the history of Jews during the Middle Ages will provide students with a differentiated historical picture. During the High Middle Ages, Jews were granted civil rights in many towns and therefore did not belong to a legally segregated group. Jewish ghettos are a phenomenon of the 15th

century! There is no direct line leading from the religious persecutions in the Middle Ages to National Socialism.

The following basic content should be taught in schools:

Jewry, Christianity and the heritage of Athens and Rome are the pillars of European and German culture. The monotheism of Jewish faith, the relationship between Jewry and Christianity and the importance of the Jewish religion for Islam are of particular relevance in religious history.

There have been Jewish settlements in Germany since Roman times, at first in Cologne (321), then in many other cities, e.g. Speyer, Worms, Mainz and Frankfurt.

For several centuries, Jews lived in relative peace within Christian society, and not just in subordinate positions, before persecutions and expulsions started.

Due to their contacts across regions in the Diaspora, Jews played an important role in medieval economic life and the development of scientific knowledge (e.g. Arabic medicine).

Jewish communities had their own autonomous bodies (e.g. lower courts of law). Centers of Jewish scholarship were set up in Germany and developed their own comments on Torah and Talmud.

Persecutions during the Crusades and the time of the Plague are a decisive turning point. The religious, economic and social roots of anti-Jewish attitudes have to be explained, especially Christian anti-Judaism, which survived the Middle Ages and was efficient far into modern history.

In the course of the 15th century, Jews were expelled from most cities and many of the large territories. Where there was no expulsion, there was ghettoization.

As political and social conditions were rather favorable for the Jews living on the Hispanic peninsula since the beginning of Muslim reign, theology, philosophy, science and the arts could develop there. This led to the development of Sephardic Jewry (from Hebrew *sefarad*=Spain) in Spain. After their expulsion from Spain in 1492, Sephardic Jews settled in many European countries, e.g. in Hamburg, Amsterdam and London.

Jews in Early Modern History and Absolutism

Guiding Concepts: History lessons should teach learners a differentiated view of historical events. This becomes possible through the discussion of Court Jews, Jewish Regulations (*Judenordnungen*) and the social situation of the majority of Jews. At the same time, the stereotype of Jews having occupied upper social positions throughout history can also be proved wrong.

The following basic content should be taught in schools:

After their expulsion from most cities, Jews are only allowed to settle in small towns and villages, where the authorities grant them permission in order to gain additional income through protection money paid by the Jews.

"Jewish Regulations" (*Judenordnungen*) issued by territorial rulers confine Jewish occupations to money business and trade and do not permit them freedom of domicile. Territorial rulers utilize Jews for their mercantile economic policy and admit them to their capitals, provided they are rich enough. Starting from 1671, Jews are admitted again in Prussia, but their numbers are limited by the strict Jewish Regulations of 1750.

After the War of Thirty Years, a Jewish upper class of "Court Jews" develops who supply the newly emerging rulers of Absolutism with capital, army supplies and luxury goods.

The Court Jews, who are often advocates of the Jewish communities at the same time, become dependent of their rulers and strengthen their power vis-à-vis the orders, who subsequently turn hostile to them (example: the court case against the Jew *Joseph Süss Oppenheimer*).

Contrary to the Court Jews, the majority of Jews live in utter poverty before emancipation and

make their living in the rural areas through hawking, cattle trade, pawn shops and small scale loans.

Jewish Enlightenment and Emancipation

Guiding Concepts: "Enlightenment" and "emancipation" are central terms in political education. The idea of emancipation results from the idea of equality and the concept of tolerance developed by the Enlightenment. Tolerance is a central value in education and the basis of social relationships in a democratic society. School lessons must show that Jews were not just objects of the teachings of non-Jewish enlighteners or even of reformed absolutism, but that they were contributing actively toward their emancipation through Jewish Enlightenment. The topic will show that tolerance and equity have to be "fought" for, tolerance does not come by itself.

The following basic content should be taught in schools:

For centuries, not only the German Jews lived segregated from the culture surrounding them. A fundamental change took place during the second half of the 18th century, and Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) was a crucial figure in this process. Therefore, the treatment of this epoch should focus on his person.

Having been brought up in the traditional Jewish way in Dessau, he moves to Berlin at the age of 14. There, he is supported by progressively minded Jews and gets into contact with the culture of Enlightenment. His works of literary criticism and his aesthetical and philosophical treatises put him on one level with other important enlighteners and earn him the acknowledgement of great minds like Immanuel Kant. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing will raise a monument for his Jewish friend Moses Mendelssohn in his drama "Nathan the Wise".

Mendelssohn becomes the leading figure in Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah), which is part of European Enlightenment. He advocates enlightenment towards the interior, opposing Jewish education which is only motivated by religion and demanding its opening up to European culture, but he also calls for enlightenment towards the outside, demanding tolerance for the Jews.

The first generation of the Haskalah strives to introduce Jewish society to the language and culture surrounding them - the aim being acculturation, not assimilation. Mendelssohn's translation of the Bible into German, printed in Hebrew script, is shows the endeavor to "rescue" the text for an audience that becomes increasingly alienated from the Hebrew language and at the same time promote the knowledge of German.

Mendelssohn's case is also very suitable to study the legal situation of the Jews. In the best of cases, they were "Protected Jews" (*Schutzjuden*) without any civil rights. Mendelssohn receives his own "Protection Letter" (*Schutzbrief*) only in 1763. While their legal discrimination makes the Jews long for equal civil rights, some sensible non-Jewish intellectuals recognize that the emancipation of the Jews is also in the best interest of the state. The debate on emancipation is triggered off by a book written by Christian Wilhelm Dohm in 1781, "*Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden*" [On the civic improvement of the Jews], going back to a suggestion of Mendelssohn's.

From then on, Jews were granted civil rights step by step in all German territories. As many governments regarded the emancipation of Jews as a reward for assimilation, this process was rather tedious. Although the Prussian "*Judenedikt*" (Jews' Edict) of 1812 granted civil rights to the Jews, they were still excluded from, e.g., becoming civil servants. The Jews continued to struggle for their emancipation, led by the Hamburg advocate Gabriel Riesser. He became member of the 1848 National Assembly and served as its vice-president for some time.

Jews During the 19th Century

Guiding Concepts: The 19th century is regarded as the cradle of Modernity, and this is especially true for Jewish history. The societal changes brought about by the 19th century are a European phenomenon. Emancipation, embourgeoisement, migration and anti-Semitism include a European dimension of high importance for European integration processes. The intensive study of the 19th century is of paramount importance for the understanding of long-term structures and mentalities (for example: anti-Semitism as a root

of National Socialist ideology). Guiding questions leading to historical explanations and orientations could be: What is anti-Semitism, and how did it develop? How was Jewish life changed by their raised social status? The 19th century saw a religious differentiation of the Jews in Germany. Knowing this development is important to gain an adequate perspective of Jewry as it contradicts the wide-spread concept of "the Jews" as a secluded homogeneous minority.

The following basic content should be taught in schools:

In the course of the French Revolution, Jews became citizens with equal rights overnight in 1791. In the German territories, the development of emancipation from "Protected Jews" (*Schutzjuden*) to equal citizen drags on for more than 80 years until the constitution of the German Empire of 1871. The question whether the Jews were "mature" enough to become citizens was brought up again and again.

Legal emancipation does not imply social integration. The latter was only partly granted by the German society. Jews were still kept away from leading positions in universities, law and army.

During the 19th century, the German Jews gain access to the middle classes and the bourgeoisie. This became possible through the legal emancipation of the Jews, their great desire for education and the new opportunities opened up by the Industrial Revolution for Jewish merchants and entrepreneurs.

During the German Empire Jews gain access to the educated elite and become creators of German culture, art, literature and science. While they had been reproached of ignorance at the beginning of the century, they were now suspected of "undermining" German culture. They were perceived as "strangers" while they saw themselves as Germans.

Already during the 1870ies an anti-Semitic movement of hitherto unknown strength develops and gains momentum especially in the middle classes. Its goal is to reverse the achievements of Jewish emancipation. In 1879, Wilhelm Marr coins the term "anti-Semitism"; racial ideologists proclaim the inferiority of the Jewish race, and the movement becomes organized in anti-Semitic parties with representatives in the German Parliament (*Reichstag*). As a reaction to organized anti-Semitism, the "*Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*" [Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith] is founded in 1893 as a defense measure.

The Jewish community takes a very diverging religious, political and social development in 19th century Germany. Liberal Jewry emerges as a new religious direction in sharp opposition to orthodox Jewry. The majority of German Jews belong to this new direction. Many Jews have stopped defining themselves through religion. A new form of Jewish identity is offered by Zionism, which can, however, only attract a small minority of mainly young Jews.

The pogroms in Tsarist Russia cause two million mainly poor Jews from Eastern Europe to migrate to the USA. Until 1919, about 80,000 of them stayed in Germany and formed a Jewish proletariat.

Jews in the First World War and in the Weimar Republic

Guiding Concepts: While most Jews had shared in the general enthusiasm when war broke out, the "counting of Jews" (*Juden-zählung*) in 1916 contributed to their alienation like no other act performed by the regime and reminded them that their status was still that of step children. At this occasion, the degree and success, but also the limitations, of the integration of the Jewish minority into mainstream society should be discussed and summed up. Jews contributed a considerable share towards the cultural blossoming and the scientific achievements of German language culture. This topic is especially suitable for projects across subject borders. The two subjects political science and history should make it clear that Jewish influence in politics was marginal and that the resistance against anti-Semitism mainly failed because it did not come from the center of society.

The following basic content should be taught in schools:

When war broke out in 1914, the enthusiasm of most Jews was hardly different from that of their

non-Jewish compatriots. A survey conducted by the War Ministry on the Jewish participation in military services at the front ("*Juden-zählung*", i.e. counting of Jews) in 1916, the results of which were never published, led to a sweeping defamation of the Jews and the cementation of anti-Semitic prejudice.

While the majority of the Jewish population kept their distance towards the Revolution of 1918/19, a vast majority welcomed and supported the free and democratic Republic of Weimar.

During and especially after the First World War, anti-Semitism became more radical. The so-called stab-in-the-back legend and the assassination of Minister of Foreign Affairs Walter Rathenau in 1922 are examples for this development.

The resistance against anti-Semitism failed as the Jews did not find adequate strong and committed allies in society.

Science, culture and the arts in German speaking countries would not be what they are and cannot be understood without the contributions made by German Jews, in particular during the Weimar Republic. A short list of important personalities will not do justice to the great variety of their achievements, but it provides an impression of the dimensions: Sigmund Freud - psychology; Albert Einstein – physical science, Max Liebermann – painting, Franz Kafka – literature, Else Lasker-Schüler – literature, Arnold Schönberg – music, Max Reinhardt – theatre, Fritz Lang – film, Alfred Kerr – theater criticism, and many more. The persecution, expulsion and murder of the Jews during the National Socialist regime brought a cultural loss that is felt in Germany until the present day.

Persecution and Self-Assertion During National Socialism

Guiding Concepts: There are manifold didactical reasons for this topic. Learners should understand the process of discrimination, persecution and annihilation. History should not appear to be the result of the actions of great personalities. It is important to show different attitudes and actions in the population (culprits - victims - onlookers) and to raise the question of responsibility for the crimes of National Socialism. Coming to terms with the National Socialist past should enable the learners to perceive the importance of preserving and developing democracy and the rule of law as an ongoing task and realize the responsibility imposed on every German due to the country's special history.

While studying the topic, special attention should be paid to the development of linguistic awareness.

National Socialist and racist terminology must be clearly identified and critically assessed. Events should on no account be described mainly from a Nazi perspective; perspectives should change and include experiences and views from inside the Jewish population on an equal level.

The following basic content should be taught in schools:

Anti-Semitism was a crucial element of National Socialist ideology and of the party's program. It therefore became a government policy principle in 1933. The exclusion of the Jews from Germany's political, cultural and economic life was a first aim.

The abolishment of emancipation happened gradually (discrimination, economic expropriation, legal deprivation, persecution). Physical extermination stood at the end. Certain key events belong to the standard knowledge of historical and political education: the boycott of Jewish shops on April 1, 1933; the "Law for the Reestablishment of the Civil Service" of 1933; the Nuremberg Laws of 1935; the November Pogroms of 1938; the Wannsee Conference of 1942.

Auschwitz stands for the ultimate breach of civilization. The Shoah is a unique, industrially organized mass murder. Almost the whole of European Jewry fell victim to persecution and annihilation, not just German Jews.

The change of perspective mentioned above could take place with the help of the following five topics:

There were forms of Jewish self-assertion, e.g. the founding of the Reich Representation of German Jews in 1933, headed by Rabbi Leo Baeck.

Biographical testimonies show that until 1938, Jews were faced by the dilemma "Go or Stay?" and provide insight into the dramatic consequences of such a decision.

Stories of Jewish children and young people are especially suitable to provide school children with a vivid picture of the growing state-approved discrimination and exclusion that their age mates had to endure, e.g. in schools.

The existence of a Jewish resistance should be shown at the example of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

There were a few people in Germany and the occupied territories who found the courage to help Jews and to rescue them.

Jews in Germany after 1945

Guiding Concepts: Sensitizing pupils for the situation of today's Jews in Germany is didactically important, lest their perception remains restricted to the Jews as victims of Nazi persecution. It has to be stressed that there could not possibly be a continuity of the earlier German Jewry after the Holocaust, the most decisive event in the entire Jewish history. It is astonishing indeed that after 1945 any Jews at all returned to Germany, the "country where the murderers came from"; there was little normalcy for them as they were permanently confronted with the past.

The following basic content should be taught in schools:

The first Jewish communities after the war developed from two totally different roots: from the few surviving German Jews, most of them married to non-Jews, and from the majority of Jews that had fled from East Europe, the so-called displaced persons. All but 20,000 of those continued to emigrate to the USA and Palestine later on.

Many of the Jews in the FRG were physically and psychologically broken and lived withdrawn from their surroundings, sometimes believing for decades that they were going to leave Germany soon. They did not see themselves as "German Jews" but founded their own representation, significantly called "Central Council of Jews in Germany". For a long time, Zionism and Israel provided a surrogate identity to the Jewish communities. Only the third generation began to show some hesitant signs of accepting life in Germany.

Mainly Jewish communists returned to the GDR to take part in the construction of a Socialist Society. They played quite an important role in the politics and culture of the GDR, but did not see themselves as Jews and did not belong to Jewish communities. During the anti-Semitic agitation against "cosmopolites", many members of Jewish communities fled to the West, leaving the communities with only 400 members in 1989, most of them of old age.

Following a decision by the GDR government freely elected shortly before the reunification, the Federal Republic of Germany allowed about 120,000 Jews from CIS countries to immigrate to Germany. Due to Soviet Union policies, these new immigrants had all but lost their connection to Jewry, which in combination with linguistic barriers, made their integration into the communities very difficult. Today, their share of all Jews in Germany amounts to 70%.

The Federal Republic of Germany has actively supported the development of Jewish communities and the immigration of Jews and has reaffirmed this policy for the future in a state contract with the Central Council of Jews in Germany. It has been following a policy led by historical responsibility towards Israel. This policy was based on the Treaty of Luxembourg of 1952 about "*Wiedergutmachung*" (restitution and compensation). It contributed to the building of the state of Israel and laid the foundation for a long-term political, economic and cultural cooperation between the Federal Republic of Germany and Israel.

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