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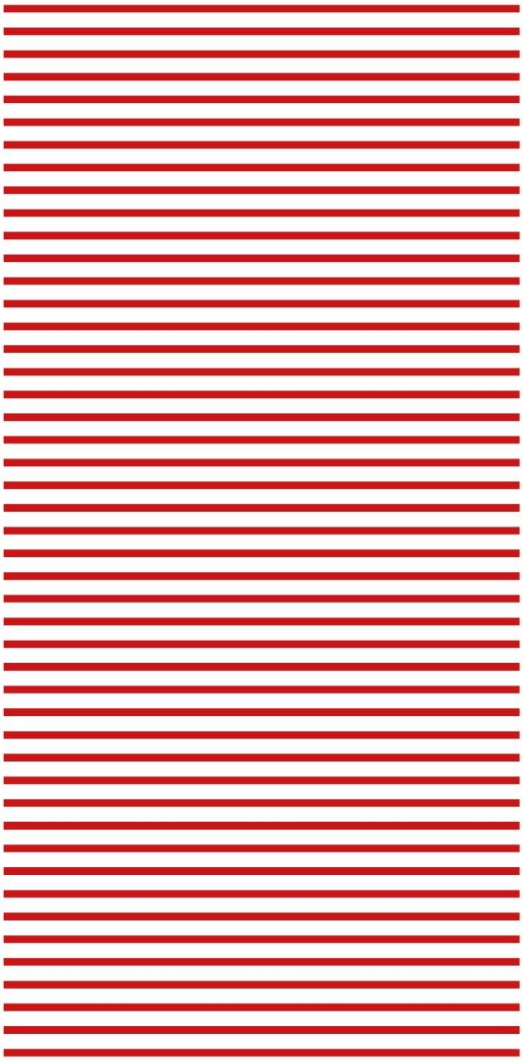

Antisemitism as a Field of Political Action

Samuel Salzborn

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Abstract

Combating antisemitism is a young policy field with regard to structured state action. The article presents the relevance of combating antisemitism and its emergence as a decided state task in order to show exemplarily, using the Berlin model of combating antisemitism as an example, how it is concretely implemented in state action. Berlin is chosen for three reasons: First, the state of Berlin is the first and only federal state to have a cross-departmental concept for combating antisemitism. Second, the Berlin model is based on integrative cooperation between state and civil society agencies. Third, looking at Berlin allows for the perspective of interlocking different vertical differentiations of administration, since the state of Berlin is at the same time a large city, which with its twelve districts has administrative dimensions that correspond to those of other large German cities, in each case and in themselves. In the absence of a federal comparative perspective, the focus of the article is descriptive-explorative.

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Antisemitism as a Field of Political Action:
The Berlin Model for Fighting Antisemitism as an Example of State Efforts against Antisemitism

By Samuel Salzborn

The history of antisemitism in Germany is long, but the history of state efforts to systematically fight antisemitism is quite short. That is to say: antisemitism has always been the subject of ad-hoc debates in parliamentary, legal, and media contexts, and there are numerous examples in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany of state representatives taking clear positions against antisemitism. But it is only in the last five years or so that the fight against antisemitism has become the focus of institutionalized state efforts.

This article begins by outlining the relevance of fighting antisemitism and its history as a task that is decidedly a responsibility of the state. It then analyzes the Berlin model for fighting antisemitism as a paradigmatic example of how state efforts are concretely pursuing this aim. I have chosen Berlin as an example here for three reasons. First, the state of Berlin is the first and only German federal state to have a plan for fighting antisemitism that spans all departments. Second, the Berlin model is based on integrative cooperation between state agencies and civil society actors. And third, examining Berlin makes it possible to consider the perspective of intermeshed vertical levels of administration, since the state of Berlin is not only a major city, but one whose twelve districts each independently have administrative dimensions comparable to those of other major German cities.

1. The Specific Characteristics of Antisemitism and the Prehistory of State Efforts to Fight Antisemitism

Looking at current research on antisemitism, it can be said that this is not simply one form of discrimination among others; antisemitism is not simply a prejudice like many others (Rensmann/Schoeps 2011; Schwarz-Friesel/Reinharz 2013). Even though antisemitism certainly occurs in conjunction with other forms of discrimination such as racism, sexism, or homophobia, it constitutes a fundamental attitude toward the world that is essentially distinct from them in its constitution. Antisemitism is a combination of worldview and passion, as Jean-Paul Sartre wrote in 1945, a fundamental attitude toward the world, which those who share it use to make sense of everything in politics and society that they cannot or do not want explain and understand. Antisemitic attitudes are characterized by an interpenetration of certain resentments directed against Jews and an extremely strong level of affect, consisting mainly of projection and hatred. Antisemites believe in their worldview not *in spite of the fact* that it is false, but *precisely because* it is false: the point is the emotional added value that antisemitism affords them.

This is one difference between antisemitism and racism and other prejudices, expressed not least in the Shoah. But another, qualitative distinction from racist prejudice and its mechanism for attributing power to the Other in concrete, i.e., material and sexual terms, is the abstract nature of this attribution in antisemitism. Antisemitism is often fantasized in terms of a "mysterious intangibility, abstractness, and generality" (Postone 1982: 15). As a cognitive and emotional system, antisemitism aims for a total claim to explain the world through its own worldview. As a worldview, it offers an all-encompassing system of resentments and conspiracy theories whose concrete articulation has changed, and continues to change, over time. And since antisemitism is based on projections, these resentments and myths are always directed against Jews. The real behavior of Jews has no influence on the antisemitic worldview, just as this worldview constructs itself specifically around the emotional needs of

antisemites. Antisemitism is to be understood as a combination of worldview and affect, that is to say, as a specific way of thinking and feeling. Strictly speaking, modern antisemitism is the *inability and unwillingness to think abstractly and feel concretely*. Antisemitism confuses the two: it expects thinking to be concrete, and feeling to be abstract, projecting the ambivalence of a modernity that it finds intolerable onto what the antisemite labels as Jewish (Salzborn 2010).

This is why one must also examine antisemitic insinuations, which always create a distorted image of Judaism that ultimately constitutes "the rumor about the Jews" (Adorno 1951: 110). These rumors have constantly changed throughout history, and antisemites have adapted – for example, after 1945, when the openly racist Nazi antisemitism with its declared aims of extermination had become politically discredited, and antisemites reacted by developing a new defense mechanism to shield themselves from any culpability in the Shoah. This mechanism now held the victims responsible for themselves disrupting German national memory: the Nazi mass murder was followed by its denial and the rejection of remembrance in the form of an antisemitic reversal of the roles of perpetrator and victim.

An important turning point in the history of antisemitic resentment was the Islamist terrorist attacks of 9/11, which were avowedly directed not only at the United States but at the entire free world and enlightened modernity (Salzborn 2020). Yet as Osama bin Ladin and other Islamist terrorists have always emphasized, these were also, in a crucial way, antisemitic attacks – because for the Islamists, Jews stand for everything they despise. Especially in the Arab world, 9/11 was thus also understood as the initial spark for a worldwide antisemitic mobilization, which, however, was not limited to radical Islamic groups. The development of antisemitism since 9/11, combined with the political reassessment that took place in Germany following the arson attack on the Düsseldorf synagogue in 2000 and the "revolt of decent people" proclaimed at the time by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD), was the background to the belief that the Federal Republic should commission regular reports on antisemitism in order to track and report current developments and develop measures for prevention and intervention.

In November 2008, the German Bundestag resolved to "enhance the fight against antisemitism and further promote Jewish life in Germany"; and with this goal in mind, it furthermore called on the federal government to commission a report on antisemitism (Fraktionen CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen 2008). The resolution called for this report to be updated regularly and written by an independent panel of experts. Its task was expressed defined, on the one hand, as taking stock of the development of antisemitism in Germany and, on the other, as developing and refining plans and programs to fight antisemitism.

The first report on antisemitism was presented in November 2011, and the second in April 2017, although the composition of the expert panel differed for the two reports. With the two previous reports on antisemitism, the Federal Republic broke new ground for several reasons. Both reports are innovative in being situated at the intersection of scientific research, political-pedagogical practice, and official policy. Moreover, the second report on antisemitism formulated five concrete recommendations for action in addition to a systematic examination of the topic: the appointment of an antisemitism commissioner and the continuation of an independent circle of experts; the consistent tracking, publication, and punishment of antisemitic crimes; the permanent funding of antisemitism prevention organizations; the creation of a permanent federal-state commission; and long-term research funding on antisemitism. All of these demands directly affect government actions, while being addressed at different though sometimes overlapping levels of national, federal, regional, and local authority.

The federal government and almost all of the states have appointed antisemitism commissioners (Bremen decided against this recommendation in consultation with its Jewish community). But the specifics of these positions vary considerably. They are located in different ministries (state chancelleries; ministries of the interior, of justice, and of education). Their competencies and financial and personnel resources differ

considerably, as does their (non)affiliation with a specific government coalition. Their work is cross-linked and coordinated on key issues by a "Joint Federal-State Commission to Fight Antisemitism and Protect Jewish Life" (Gemeinsame Bund-Länder-Kommission zur Bekämpfung von Antisemitismus und zum Schutz jüdischen Lebens, BLK) chaired by the federal commissioner and cochaired by the state that holds the chair in the Conference of Minister-Presidents (MPK). Yet the general situation of fighting antisemitism at the state level is highly disparate across Germany, which may also have something to do with the fact that so far only one federal state has adopted its own interdepartmental plan for fighting antisemitism, namely, the state of Berlin.

2. The Berlin Model for Fighting Antisemitism

A significant number of German states are now following the Berlin model, but nowhere is the system for fighting antisemitism as well developed as it is in Berlin: its *Berlin Plan to Advance Antisemitism Prevention* represented the first, and remains the only, state-level, interdepartmental program of its kind. On May 31, 2018, following an initiative proposed by the parliamentary groups of the SPD, the CDU, The Left Party, the Greens, and the FDP, the Berlin House of Representatives passed a motion "Against All Antisemitism! Protecting Jewish Life in Berlin" and called on the senate to develop a state plan for antisemitism prevention. The Berlin senate adopted this plan on March 12, 2019, under the title "Berlin against All Antisemitism! Berlin Plan to Advance Antisemitism Prevention." (*Berlin gegen jeden Antisemitismus! Berliner Landeskonzept zur Weiterentwicklung der Antisemitismus-Prävention*) To justify the decision, it cited the working definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) that is now widely used at the federal and state level:

"The working definition of antisemitism of the International Alliance for Holocaust Remembrance, as expanded by the federal government, is the basis for the actions taken by Berlin's administration to deal with antisemitism. It is thus the starting point for prevention programs and for continuing education and measures to train those working in public service in Berlin. Individual administrative units of the city are encouraged to develop guidelines with practical examples for applying the working definition in cooperation with engaged civil society actors and with Jewish organizations.
This working definition states: 'Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. Manifestations might also include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity'" (Senat von Berlin 2019: 4).

The *Berlin Plan to Advance Antisemitism Prevention* comprises five fields of action: "education and youth: early childhood education, youth work, schools, and adult education"; "justice and internal security"; "Jewish life in Berlin's urban culture"; "science and research"; and "antidiscrimination, victim protection, and prevention". The aim is to integrally link the plan's three central pillars of fighting antisemitism – prevention, intervention, and suppression – and to build, in its conception of antisemitism, on the current expert understanding discussed above. To this end, it was deemed important to include not only academic experts, but also to consult with Jewish organizations and institutions, as well as with civil society actors working in Berlin in the field of antisemitism prevention. The senate furthermore posited that the effectiveness of this plan would depend upon a coordinated approach by all stakeholders, to be established by creating a position to serve as a point of contact for the state of Berlin on all matters related to antisemitism. The position was initially filled on an interim basis in May 2019, and as of August 2020 by permanent appointment.
In addition to this coordinating function, the task of the contact person is to identify further opportunities to advance the prevention of antisemitism in Berlin; to coordinate a group of experts from academia, education, and civil society; to implement regular exchange between Jewish organizations, state government officials, and civil society actors; to foster cooperation with existing prevention networks, organizations with expertise in antisemitism, and counseling

centers; to consolidate data and results from the various sources that track and report antisemitism in Berlin; and to prepare a regular status report on the intervention and prevention of antisemitism in the state of Berlin (the first status report was published on August 14, 2020; the main status report was published on April 05, 2022). In addition to the group of experts, the plan also aimed to systematically network the administrative units of the Berlin state government, with a similar body at district level to coordinate and expand antisemitism prevention measures within each of Berlin's twelve city districts.

The close interlinking of state and civil society work against antisemitism represents an important component of the Berlin model, in that one key aspect is also to build trust. This trust is crucial. As the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has shown, in an empirical comparison of state and nonstate reporting of antisemitic acts in EU member states from the period of 2009 to 2019, the main problem is that antisemitic hate crime is unreported or unrecorded. And in this regard, the trust that Jews place in state actions plays an important role. In Germany, it is not only a history of not coming to terms with National Socialism and the Shoah that undermines such trust, but also present-day actions taken by judicial and governmental officials. High-profile verdicts such as those rendered against the perpetrators of the attacks on the Wuppertal synagogue in 2014, for instance, in which the court ignored the attackers' antisemitic motives, have repeatedly shattered the trust of Jews in Germany's courts. And events such as the antisemitic terrorist attack in Halle, where the local police failed to protect the synagogue on the highest Jewish holiday, and the internal German intelligence service apparently had no advance knowledge of a right-wing terrorist, result not only locally but nationwide in a lasting erosion of the trust that Jews have in investigative authorities and thus in German government officials and courts.

2.1 The Level of German States

Against this background, the Berlin model pursues the basic idea that is essential to strengthen civil society actors, which is reflected in the establishment of Berlin's "State Program for Democracy, Diversity, and Respect." This program annually funds around sixty civil society projects dedicated to "preventing right-wing extremism, racism, and antisemitism," fifteen or twenty of which on average are specifically focused on antisemitism. Strengthening civil society is another central plank of the program because the process of gaining trust must not be carried out solely top-down, but crucially also bottom-up: through actors who enjoy trust within the Jewish community, so that "the voices and perspectives of Jewish victims of antisemitism are taken into account more than has been the case" (Poensgen/Steinitz 2019: 26). To this end, the state of Berlin funds numerous agencies in the field of antisemitism prevention work, while itself also acting in numerous areas at the state level with clearly defined measures in the fight against antisemitism.

The basis for this is the reporting and documentation of antisemitic attitudes among those who live in Berlin and of antisemitic acts and crimes. The Berlin Monitor – a representative survey Berlin residents financed by the state that was focused in 2019 on the topic of antisemitism – showed that antisemitic attitudes are overall less pronounced among all Berlin residents than in Germany as a whole, but that the proportion of Berliners who hold antisemitic views is significantly higher among those without German citizenship than among those who hold it (Pickel/Reimer-Gordinskaya/Decker 2019). As a follow-up to the Berlin Monitor, the views of those affected by antisemitism were also surveyed in 2020 in a qualitative study, the first of its kind in Germany (Reimer-Gordinskaya/Tzschiesche 2020). This follow-up study showed that Jews experience antisemitism in Berlin in all areas of life, as well as a lack of solidarity from non-Jews in taking a stand against antisemitism and bolstering Jewish life. The central deficit perceived by Berlin Jews, according to the study, is that they do not feel able to live without limitations, without discrimination, and thus that they don't feel able to live self-determined lives. They experience antisemitic aggression from almost all segments of the population,

ranging from nonverbal gestures, comments, and insults, to physical attacks.

Antisemitic acts and crimes are the overall focus of the section on "justice and internal security": in this area, the Berlin General Prosecutor's Office (GStA) was the first nationwide to appoint an antisemitism commissioner in September 2018 (Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg followed). The same is true of the antisemitism commissioner of the Berlin police (in office since August 2019), and with the Research and Information Center on Antisemitism (RIAS), a civil society organization that has been working since 2015 to illuminate this dark field and raise awareness about antisemitic acts that may not reach the threshold of being a crime. Many federal states are now taking this as a model and have established their own RIAS offices or are planning to do so. The work of RIAS in documenting and reporting antisemitic acts is complemented by the consulting services offered by OFEK. RIAS focuses on antisemitic acts that are below a criminal threshold, while also supporting, with its project Regishut, efforts in training and continuing education to make the Berlin police more aware of antisemitism. OFEK Berlin, by contrast, is a counseling center for antisemitic discrimination and violence that advises victims of antisemitic incidents, along with their relatives and institutions who might be looking for guidance and information. These organizations are examples of how reporting and documentation, in addition to sensitivity training and advising, are being carried out by civil society actors that enjoy a high level of trust in the Jewish community, which is crucial for regaining and strengthening trust. To foster exchange between civil society, Jewish communities, and the senate administration, the senate Department for the Interior and Sports (SenInnDS) has established a Round Table against Antisemitic Violence that has been meeting regularly since September 2019. The civil society initiative "Solidarisch gegen Hass" (Solidarity against Hate), founded on the initiative of Chabad Lubavitch Berlin, the Jewish Community of Berlin, and Jehi 'Or, the Jüdisches Bildungswerk für Demokratie – gegen Antisemitismus 2019 in the wake of attacks against Berlin rabbis, is financed by the state of Berlin and supported by the mayor. The contact person of the state of Berlin for issues of antisemitism also belongs to the supporting members of the initiative "Solidarisch gegen Hass" (Solidarity against Hate), which aims to strengthen civil society engagement in the case of antisemitic attacks and other violence.

In addition, the antisemitism commissioners of the Berlin Police and the Berlin General Prosecutor's Office have developed a guideline that serves as a practice-oriented recommendation for actions to be taken by investigating authorities in prosecuting antisemitic crimes. This is being combined with ongoing efforts to raise awareness among the police and the courts around the topic of antisemitism. For the police, this means that all situations or reports related to antisemitism are subject to mandatory reporting, in addition to criminal offenses, public gatherings or assemblies, and protective measures. The Berlin GStA also affirms "in principle a public interest in prosecuting such acts" to the extent they are antisemitic, rather than leaving it up to private individuals to file civil suits (Vanoni 2021: 8).

Awareness-raising measures also include ongoing checks on the protection of Jewish institutions – a responsibility that was clearly established in the state treaty that Germany concluded with the Jewish community of Berlin on November 19, 1993 – along with increased vigilance on high Jewish holidays. However, there are also ongoing training measures on antisemitism for judges and public prosecutors who deal with antisemitically motivated criminal offenses, as well as for legal trainees, in contexts that include the Justice Academy in Königs Wusterhausen and advanced training courses at the German Judicial Academy, as well as in the area of police training and continuing education at the Berlin School of Economics and Law (HWR) and the Berlin Police Academy. In addition to regular participation in commemorative events as part of historical-political education, the Berlin police will turn its attention to the topic of "Jewish Life and the Police: Past Meets Present" (JLUP)" in 2021 with a research project of its own. Part of this project will be a traveling exhibition and commemorative plaque, complemented by the initiation of regular exchanges between police students and young Jews in Berlin.

Efforts to strengthen the perspective of those affected by antisemitism have also been seen at the legislative level in the Berlin State Antidiscrimination Act (LADG) passed in 2020, which for the first time in Germany added "antisemitic attributions" to the kinds of discrimination prohibited by state laws (LADG, Section 2), separate from the federal German criminal code. Moreover, the new version of the law on freedom of assembly in Berlin (2021) was supplemented by a passage that simplifies the prohibition of assemblies referring to international campaigns inciting hatred (Section 14, para. 2), which may become relevant for the large-scale antisemitic rallies on the occasion of the so-called Quds Day that are registered annually in Berlin.

Complementary to the area of justice and internal security, the monthly newsletter "Prevention of Antisemitism in Schools" published by the senate Department for Education, Youth, and Family Affairs (SenBJF), which also refers to events, educational offerings, and new educational materials, and which covers both historical and contemporary topics, is used for continuing education of teachers on the topics of antisemitism and Jewish life in the context of schools and extracurricular education. Public schools are supported in this endeavor by special financial resources in a program for political education, which can also be used explicitly in the area of antisemitism prevention. Furthermore, a handout for teachers on antisemitism prevention at elementary schools was developed. Berlin schools are required to report antisemitic incidents. The state also supports schools in organizing and conducting field trips to extracurricular learning sites such as memorials, and it conducts training trips for Berlin teachers to the Yad Vashem International Memorial.

Additionally, the state of Berlin supports the civil society project "ACT – Acceptance, Commitment, Training" of the Center of Expertise for the Prevention and Empowerment of the Central Welfare Office of Jews in Germany (ZWST), which aims to raise awareness of how to deal with antisemitism in the context of schools, youth welfare, and youth social work. This is supplemented in the area of youth work by funding for the Action Office for Antisemitism and Race-Critical Youth Work (ju:an) of the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, which works across Berlin districts in aiming to help pedagogical professionals gain expertise and skills. In the area of adult education, further training for course instructors is being designed at Berlin's *Volkshochschulen*, or adult education centers, to sensitize these institutions to the topic of antisemitism, and a workbook on the topic of "Places of Remembrance – Memorial to the Destroyed Lindenstrasse Synagogue and Jewish Museum Berlin" is being published by the Berlin State Center for Political Education (LpB) with the support of the Jewish Museum Berlin and the adult education centers in Berlin Mitte and Neukölln, as teaching material for integration and orientation courses. A plan to increase the visibility of Jewish life in Berlin's adult education center programs is also being developed among these institutions in Berlin. The topics of antisemitism and Jewish life are moreover the focus of publications by the LpB and are continually being addressed in events.

In the field of antisemitism research, Berlin supports the Arthur Langerman Archive for the Study of Visual Antisemitism (ALAVA) at the TU Berlin, which holds the most extensive collection of antisemitic images in the world. From 2017 to 2019, Berlin also financed a visiting professorship for antisemitism research at the Center for Research on Antisemitism (ZfA) at the Technical University of Berlin. This professorship was the first in the history of the Federal Republic to focus on research in political science on antisemitism and augmented the historical orientation of the ZfA with expertise in analyzing contemporary events, though this perspective is once again underexposed now that the position has expired.

Digital antisemitism prevention has also been an area of focus. In addition to specific programming and support offered by administrative departments of the senate, such as the contact person of the state of Berlin on antisemitism, the GStA antisemitism commissioner and the antisemitism commissioner of the police, as well as civil society projects such as "Civic.net - Aktiv gegen Hass im Netz," run by the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, or "Online gegen Antisemitismus" of Bildung in Widerspruch e.V. It is also providing support for the fight against antise-

mitic structures on the Internet or in social networks by expanding the resources and organizational capacity for police investigations.
Berlin also provides regular support to the Jüdischen Kulturtage, an annual festival devoted to Jewish cultural life, and to the Stiftung Neue Synagoge – Centrum Judaicum, the foundation and cultural center housed in Berlin's New Synagogue. As part of the 2021 celebration of 1700 years of Jewish life in Germany, which also coincides with the 350th anniversary of the Jewish Community in Berlin, Berlin is also supporting the activities of 321–2021: 1700 Jahre jüdisches Leben in Deutschland, a registered association in Germany which has received applications from around sixty projects in Berlin.

2.2 The Level of City Districts

Because of how Berlin is administratively structured, its approach must respond to the fundamental challenge posed by the fact that it is both a federal state and a city with twelve districts, each of which has administrative dimensions comparable to those of other major German cities. The city is furthermore made highly heterogeneous by differing social structures, sociocultural traditions (themselves often significantly influenced by the neighborhoods within Berlin's ninety-seven city subdistricts, as an official level of administration below the level of the twelve districts), and East-West histories that are still evident today. This heterogeneity also includes the fact that the districts face different challenges depending on how antisemitism is expressed. In eastern districts, especially those on the outskirts of the city, antisemitism motivated by right-wing extremism plays a stronger role. In Neukölln, by contrast, Islamic antisemitism is more pronounced. And although the number of antisemitic incidents is often highest overall in Mitte and Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf in a district-to-district comparison, this is influenced by factors such as relevance for tourism or the location of transportation hubs where many Berliners and non-Berliners often pass through.
The work of Berlin's districts can be tracked based on the categories found in the *Berlin Plan to Advance Antisemitism Prevention*, while taking into account that certain tasks are the responsibility of the state and not of city districts (such as justice, internal security, education). These are primarily in the fields of basic work to fight antisemitism, historical education and remembrance, education and youth, and Jewish life in Berlin's urban culture, in addition to work that crosses over between areas, such as efforts in antidiscrimination and victim protection. The following account can only be taken as an overview, especially considering that a number of civil society actors are active in the ninety-seven subdistricts of Berlin's city districts, all of whom cooperate in various ways with district agencies. But it is not possible to provide a systematic and complete account of their efforts. To take an example from the field of education: a film screening about the history of antisemitism might take place at an adult education center, accompanied by a lecture, with a book table organized by a local bookstore to present related titles, and the event might be sponsored by an organizing alliance of several organizations.
In the overall view of the district's work against antisemitism, it is clear that this work already existed in numerous places before the *Berlin Plan* was adopted. But this plan has nevertheless had a crucial effect in initiating and coordinating state efforts at the level of city districts. This can be seen most clearly by looking at the basic work being done to fight antisemitism: the Berlin district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, for example, implemented the state plan directly at the district level in a resolution passed by the district council for a "District Strategy against Antisemitism" (2019). This strategy includes appointing a district antisemitism commissioner and establishing a district alliance against antisemitism with actors from the districts, the Jewish community, and antisemitism prevention. In addition to Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, the district of Tempelhof-Schöneberg has also initiated such an alliance, and the district of Neukölln is planning one. All Berlin districts have assigned the topic of antisemitism to specific departments within their area of responsibility. In some cases, there are also explicit plans to establish a position of antisemitism commissioner (Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg), or this has already been done

(Lichtenberg, Pankow, Steglitz-Zehlendorf). Independent district reports on the development of antisemitism and antisemitism prevention are being planned in several districts, although one must also note that established structures already exist in Berlin at this level to document the development of antisemitism and to coordinate work with the state-level actors RIAS and OFEK. These include the district-level Partnerships for Democracy, funded by the federal program "Live Democracy!" and supported by the Berlin State Center for Democracy at the senate Department for Justice, Consumer Protection, and Anti-Discrimination; and the district registration offices, which document and track discrimination and violence.

The field in which the most extensive work has been done at the district level, well before the *Berlin Plan*, is that of historical education and remembrance. All districts hold events to mark historical events, such as International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, Day of Liberation on May 8, or the Kristallnacht on November 9; in 2020, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the surrender of the Wehrmacht, May 8, was even declared a one-time public holiday in Berlin. There are also extensive visits to remembrance sites, as well as education events, with the purpose of keeping alive a historical memory of National Socialism and the Shoah, and the districts maintain or support historical sites of remembrance. Examples include the Janusz Korczak Library at the Jewish Orphanage in Pankow, the SA Prison Papestraße memorial in Tempelhof-Schöneberg, the Eichborndamm and Krumpuhler Weg historical memorials in Reinickendorf, and the geodatabase "Map of Remembrance Sites" in Treptow-Köpenick. Sites of Nazi persecution are made quite visible in Berlin by memorial plaques, and there are more than 8,400 *Stolpersteine* – small brass cobblestones remembering victims of the Nazis – throughout the city. Districts are often responsible for their maintenance, often in cooperation with schools. And in the Pankow neighborhood of Weißensee, which also contains the largest preserved Jewish cemetery in Europe, there is an exhibition that includes information on the story and purpose of the *Stolpersteine*, which originated in an idea from the artist Gunter Demnig.

The renaming of antisemitic street names or the proactive naming of streets or squares after locally significant Jewish personalities also falls within the responsibility of city districts, as part of their work in historical remembrance. Berlin is known nationwide in this regard primarily because of the recurring debates about Treitschkestraße or Pacelliallee – two streets named after a virulent German nationalist and antisemite, and the pope who signed a treaty with Nazi Germany in 1933, respectively, that continually provoke calls for renaming. Less well known are successes in renaming city streets and squares, such as the decision to rename the square in Spandau in front of the former prison holding war criminals – where neo-Nazis often gather for demonstrations named after Rudolf Hess – as "White Rose Square," commemorating the resistance group in Munich; or the naming of Edith-Kiss-Strasse in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg to commemorate the artist who became known in the 1990s for sketches of her experiences in concentration camps, which she completed shortly after she was freed at the end of the war. Since the renaming of street names is the responsibility of the district councils and there have long been significant hurdles for changing a name that already exists, the Berlin senate amended Section 5 of the Berlin Street Law to create a legal framework making it easier to rename streets that carry the names of antisemites.

The thematic area of education and youth primarily concerns work outside of schools, since the responsibility for education within schools lies with the senate. At the district level, this means that work in this area is focused more on interconnected issues that arise in determining what is needed in specific fields in the school's wider milieu (Salzborn/Kurth 2021: 34f.). That said, district-level efforts are mainly focused on implementing training against antisemitism. This work is carried out in several Berlin districts in cooperation with the ju:an project mentioned above, with the aim of training educators who can act as multipliers in their own schools. It is augmented by thematizing antisemitism in working groups dedicated to building shared social space and in educational networks at the level of the district youth welfare offices. The work of Berlin's twelve adult education centers in

the area of general adult education, which has already been addressed at the senate level, is pragmatically structured to include wide-ranging educational course offerings on both antisemitism and on Jewish religion, culture, and history, in addition to Israeli regional studies and Hebrew. It has also included exhibitions such as "L'Chaim – To Life!" at the Volkshochschule Marzahn-Hellersdorf; city tours through neighborhoods with Jewish history and cultural life today, for example, as organized by the Volkshochschule Pankow; or guided tours of Jewish cemeteries organized by the Volkshochschule Mitte. With a focus on aspects of international education and exchange, the extensive twinning projects of the Berlin districts with Israeli cities should also be mentioned here. Eight of Berlin's twelve districts maintain such partnerships, and one district even has partnerships with two Israeli cities (Spandau with Ashdod; Reinickendorf with Kyriat Ata; Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf with Karmi'el and with Or-Yehuda; Steglitz-Zehlendorf with Sderot; Pankow with Ashkelon; Mitte with Holon; Tempelhof-Schöneberg with Nahariya; and Neukölln with Bat-Yam).

Jewish life in Berlin's urban culture is often practiced by the districts in the context of Jewish holidays, in addition to cooperation with the Jewish community and the communities of Berlin's synagogues. Examples include setting up Hanukkah menorahs on Pariser Platz (at the Brandenburg Gate) in Mitte or on Bayerischer Platz in Tempelhof-Schöneberg for Hanukkah; joint celebrations of Hanukkah or Sukkot with accompanying activities organized by local neighborhood organizations, as is being intensively pursued in Treptow-Köpenick with the project "TKVA – Treptow-Köpenick for Diversity against Antisemitism"; the development of an audio tour "Jewish (Hi)stories in Prenzlauer Berg" in Pankow; the joint celebration, by district politicians and the Jewish community in Marzahn-Hellersdorf, of "Mitzvah Day"; or even temporary projects, such as in Spandau, where the district is supporting the Jewish theater ship MS Goldberg in its search for a permanent mooring.

As a challenge that cuts across various fields of work, levels of government administration, and differences between public and private actors, efforts in the area of "antidiscrimination, victim protection, and prevention" also touch upon numerous thematic areas at the district level and cooperation with civil society actors. The PfDs and the district register offices have already been mentioned here. But at least since the explorative study carried out in Berlin accommodations for refugees by the American Jewish Committee on the topic of "Attitudes of Refugees from Syria and Iraq toward Integration, Identity, Jews, and the Holocaust" (Jikeli 2017), this issue has also manifested itself as an important field for action in two respects. First, there is a clear need to protect refugees from antisemitic discrimination. And second, there is a need for continued vigilance against antisemitic discrimination on the part of refugees. This is an issue that Pankow, among other districts, is explicitly addressing by offering intercultural remembrance projects for refugees in German and in Arabic, and through workshops on antisemitism organized by the district's Integration Advisory Council.

3. Summary

Focusing especially on *descriptive-explorative* moments, this article has presented the development of state efforts to fight antisemitism by examining the *Berlin Plan for Fighting Antisemitism*. Systematic efforts to fight antisemitism on the part of the state and the city administration still constitute an extremely young field of policy, and Berlin is the only federal state so far to have developed a systematic administrative plan to do so. This means that it would be extremely helpful to have comparative research – but also that this is not yet possible inasmuch as no real points of comparison exist. Questions about how effective these policies are or how they are being steered thus cannot be conclusively answered at this point. The *Berlin Plan* can nevertheless serve to demonstrate the potential range of state efforts to fight antisemitism, in various fields of state-level policy (in the traditional sense of actions taken in a number of state-level departments and policy fields). Furthermore, actions to integratively network state and civil society actors, as a potential condition for successful antisemitism prevention, at least hints at a multilevel perspective. The intermeshed structure of Berlin's state and city district governments and

administrations is undoubtedly a specific feature of the Berlin model. One first indication for later comparative research, however, is that in the German states extending beyond a single metropolitan area a purely top-down policy that does not reflect the level of urban-rural differentiation could significantly impede administrative efforts to fight antisemitism.

Moreover, the crucial issue for advancing antisemitism as a field of political action remains an area of tension. The actual development of antisemitism in Germany unmistakably shows that antisemitism commissioners are needed institutionally in order to have an ongoing grasp of this set of issues as a structural challenge in German politics – rather than just reacting on an ad hoc basis (in response to antisemitic incidents) in the short term and thus in a way that tends to lack any long-term efficacy.

"Over the past two years, a lot has happened in the field of antisemitism prevention in Germany, including work initiated by its federal antisemitism commissioner. Examples include supporting civil society actors to improve the tracking and reporting of antisemitic incidents; creating advisory structures; convening expert panels and writing reports; and establishing a federal-state forum to advance and maintain a focus on the prevention of antisemitism as a consistent topic in government efforts at the federal and state level" (Korgel 2020: 149).

Lorenz Korgel, who served on an interim basis for a bit more than a year as the point of contact for the state of Berlin in matters relating to antisemitism, before the position was permanently filled, emphasizes quite clearly that a distinctive function of this work consists of "naming antisemitism in all its forms and making sure it is condemned" (ibid.). This is without a doubt a task that requires work at the level of public communication and the media. But it also has an effect internally, on administrative structures, where it can spur or support changes at the level of policy, administration, and the law.

The flip side of this, however, is that the process of critically addressing antisemitism in Germany is now – finally – a process that has come to be understood as a political challenge. Nonetheless, social resistance to the issue remains extensive, and the potential for antisemitic violence is also growing: "in the long run, the warnings of antisemitism commissioners will not be enough; what is needed, rather, is a stance across all parts of society that condemns antisemitism in all its forms and stands in solidarity with the Jewish community" (ibid.: 153).

Translated by Michael Thomas Taylor

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