



LEO BAECK INSTITUTE –  
NEW YORK | BERLIN  
for the Study of German-Jewish  
History and Culture



Auswärtiges Amt

## CALL FOR CONFERENCE PAPERS

### “Shared” History? An international conference on 1700 years of Jewish life in German-speaking lands

Berlin, December 7-9, 2020

Leo Baeck Institute – New York | Berlin (LBI) in cooperation with the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/bpb) and co-sponsored by the German Foreign Office is pleased to announce a call for papers for a three-day interdisciplinary conference to kick off the Shared History Project (<https://www.lbi.org/projects/shared-history/>) and year-round events planned for 2021. The conference will be held in Berlin on December 7-9, 2020. **Paper proposals are due by August 15, 2020 (details below).**

2021 marks the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a Constantinian edict that for the first time granted Jews offices in the municipal administration of Cologne, thus providing the earliest evidence of a Jewish community in the German-speaking world. To commemorate the event, the Leo Baeck Institute – New York | Berlin (LBI) is undertaking a project to document the multifaceted narratives of Jewish history titled ***Shared History: 1700 Years of Jewish Life in German-speaking Lands through 52 Objects***. The goal of the project is to illuminate the long and rich history of Jewish life in German-speaking lands through an online presentation of 52 unique objects. Each object, accompanied by an essay and visual representation, will serve as the basis for telling a story of one historical aspect over the past 1700 years.

The goal of the *Shared History Project*, including the conference, is to convey the relevance of historical events to the everyday here and now and to make history useful in educational settings, intercultural contexts, and for public audiences. Shedding light on the long history of Jewish life in German-speaking areas and presenting German-Jewish voices that have shaped this rich cultural heritage over the centuries, the *Shared History Project* communicates important messages about migration, acceptance, inclusion, acculturation, prejudice, exclusion, persecution, success, and resilience in order to make an important contribution against ignorance, increasing distortion of history and growing antisemitism with the help of historical facts and dissemination of knowledge.

The conference will be divided into 7 panels:

- Flight: *From the Exodus to modern times*
- Migration: *From refugees to citizens*
- Withstanding the Pressure: *Resilience and self-assertion in times of discrimination*
- A Rupture in History: *Talking about the Holocaust*
- The Search for Belonging: *The ongoing struggles for minority identity*
- Shared Spheres and Cultural Exchange: *Acceptance as challenge and opportunity for multicultural societies*
- Memory and Commemoration: *Historical narratives of minorities within discourse of the majority society*

While numerous organizations, including LBI, prepare to celebrate this upcoming anniversary, the contemporary situation is ominous: right-wing populist, reactionary fundamentalist, and extremist movements are gaining ground across Europe and around the world today, loudly and vehemently challenging the foundations and values of democracy. The recent increase in antisemitic, racist, and xenophobic attacks is a source of concern not only for Jewish communities but for our society as a whole.

LBI welcomes proposals for presentations from scholars, educators, multipliers, graduate students, and journalists that build on these topics. While the conference is focused on the German-speaking world, these themes provide numerous points of contact for the whole of Europe, making the conference an ideal platform for international exchange among scholars from different disciplines. By involving various institutions, the organizers of the conference also intend to ensure that the proceedings of the conference are reflected in the academic world, in educational practice, and in the public sphere.

Please submit the following to the *Shared History* Project Assistant, Milena Rinck at [mrinck@lbi.cjh.org](mailto:mrinck@lbi.cjh.org):

- **Your name, title, and contact information**
- **Paper proposal (250 words or the equivalent of 1800 characters including blanks)**
- **Short answers (one paragraph each) to the following questions:**
  - **For which panel of the conference (topics listed above) is your paper relevant?**
  - **How is your paper connected to the concept of *Shared History*?**

Submissions will be accepted in English or German. Presentations are limited to 15-20 minutes and will be possible in English or German with simultaneous translation. The accepted papers will be published on the *Shared History* website in 2021.

Deadline for proposal submission: **August 15, 2020**

Announcement of accepted proposals: **September 17, 2020**

Conference: **December 7–9, 2020 in Berlin**

The organizers will provide accommodation and reimbursement for travel costs (economy class only). The conference is planned to be held in-person. Given the uncertain situation due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, if in-person meeting restrictions apply or international travel is not permitted by early October 2020, the conference will be switched to a digital format.