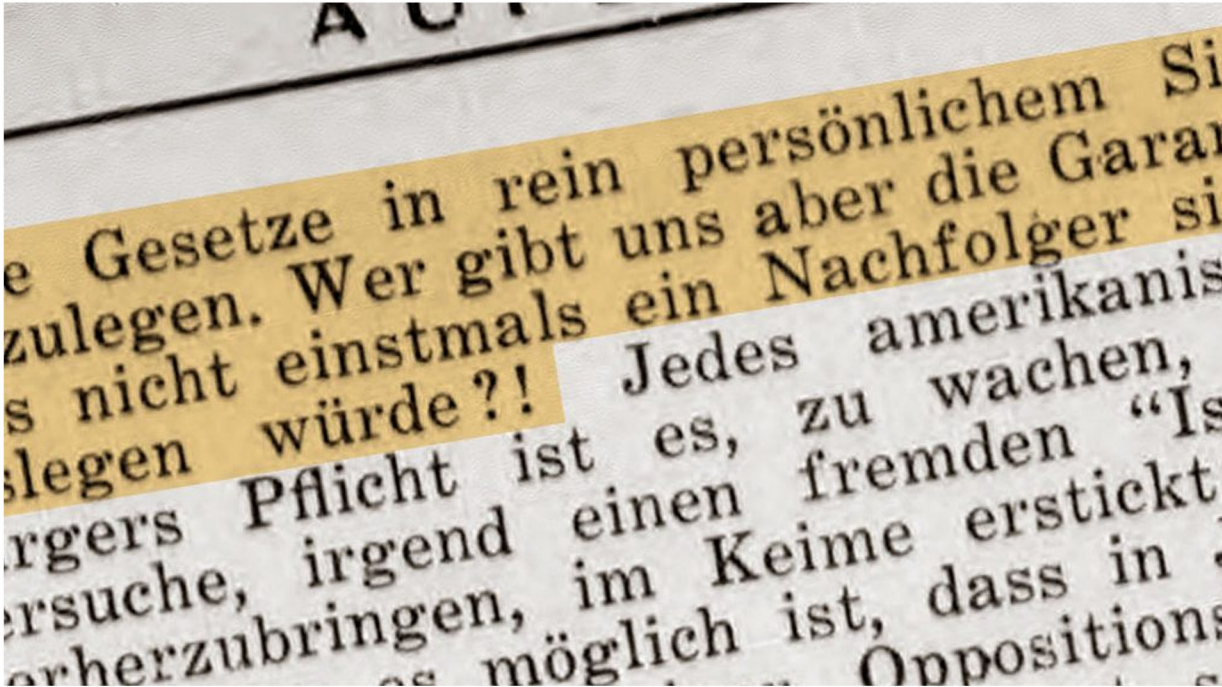


THE FUTURE OF HISTORY / 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN, BUT I KNOW WE MUST GET OUT'

## Online 1938 Projekt immerses pupils in turning-point year for German Jews

Real personal documents bring readers in direct contact with the struggles, hopes, and even bureaucratic hurdles of Jewish Europeans trying to escape an unforeseeable genocide

By RENEÉ GHERT-ZAND | 10 June 2019, 9:23 am



November 1, 1938: 'Protest By Ballot.' Editorial in Aufbau (a Jewish newspaper in New York) exhorted the newcomers to acquire knowledge about the workings of American politics in order to be able to prevent developments similar to those that had brought the present government to power in Germany. (Courtesy of Leo Baeck Institute – New York | Berlin)

1 2 3 4 5 6

Earlier this year, teacher Adam Steinmetz's students at Fremont Middle School in Fremont, Ohio, published a class newspaper. But instead of containing local, national, and international stories from today, the tabloid was filled with "news" from Germany in 1938.

Steinmetz used the writing exercise as a way of immersing his 7th graders in that decisive year for Jews in Nazi Germany, a method of trying to help them understand the Jews' growing desperation as persecution by the Nazi regime increased, while at the same time options for emigration decreased.

To show his students how rapidly things were deteriorating on a daily basis for German and Austrian Jews in 1938, Steinmetz used selections from 365 primary documents. He found them at "[1938 Projekt: Posts from the Past](#)," an online initiative in both English and German of the [Leo Baeck Institute](#) (LBI).

The Leo Baeck Institute is the most significant repository of primary source material and scholarship on the Jewish communities of Central Europe over the past five centuries. LBI is based in New York and Berlin, and 30% of its budget is funded by the German government.