

HANDBOOK FOR GERMAN TEACHERS

In 1937 a German educator, Fritz Fink, published a handbook for German teachers which directly discussed the importance of racial instruction and the teaching of the “Jewish Question” to all German children. Following is the author’s introduction to the text which demonstrates how Nazi-anti-Semitism was a very natural and explicit means of communication among German educators, forming the basis for large scale educational reform.

The Jewish racial question is the central issue of the National Socialist world view. Finding a solution to this problem guarantees the survival of National Socialism and with it the survival of our people for eternity. The monumental significance of the Jewish question is almost unanimously recognized by the German people today. In order to acquire this recognition, our people had to endure great suffering; to spare future generations such suffering; we German educators want to drill into the minds and hearts of German youth from early childhood on the knowledge of the true nature of the Jews. No one among our people must be permitted to grow up without being fully aware of the devastating danger which the Jews pose for Germany.

As a prerequisite for this, the German educator must himself be totally familiar with racial issues and the Jewish Question. In the education camps and teacher training seminars of the National Socialist Teacher’s Union¹ many worthwhile activities have been undertaken in this direction. Experience has taught us, however, that many educators have not been able to apply their acquired knowledge on racial matters in such a way that our youth can profit from their teaching for their entire lives. He who dedicates one hour a week in his school teaching racial science and the Jewish Question in an independent, separate subject area has chosen an unnatural path. The insight into racial issues must be a theme central to the instruction of all age groups. There isn’t any subject taught at school which would not lend itself to the presentation of valuable knowledge in unexpected, meaningful ways regarding the Jewish Question.

The following text, The Jewish Question in Education has evolved from a desire to demonstrate some of these possibilities . . . The book . . . in a straightforward fashion wants to show the German educator how the Jewish Question may be naturally integrated into the classroom. He who knows his way along the main road will discover for himself thousands of side streets, and will soon gain new insights.

From Fritz Fink, Die Judenfrage im Unterricht (Nuremberg: Der Stürmer, 1937) pp. 5-6

QUESTIONS

1. What is the writer’s argument against offering specialized courses in Nazi racial philosophy?

¹ During two week summer camp programs and many after school and weekend workshops sponsored by the National Socialist Teachers’ Union, a teacher was instructed in Nazi racial theories and political philosophy. Through lectures, group discussions, physical education, and many evenings of “folk-celebrations,” an instructor lived in the kind of political atmosphere to which his pupils were exposed in both school and the Hitler Youth.

The German educator was specifically trained to teach racism in the classroom. In a tone which is frightening in its matter-of-factness, author Fritz Fink instructs the classroom teacher in the “how to’s” of racial indoctrination:

From educators everywhere the question is raised” “How should we portray the Jew to our pupils? There is only one answer: In his total monstrosity, frightfulness and dangerousness. Just as he is.

Another question is posed: “How do we arrive at this picture of the Jew? How did we adults, we National Socialists arrive at this image of the Jew? We have observed the Jew and compared him to ourselves. We have observed his way of thinking and acting and have compared his thinking, feeling and acting with that of our own. We have followed him through the path of centuries. We have studied the secret books of the Jewish people. We have noted what the great men of all nations and all times have said about Jews. We have complimented this acquired image with eye-witness accounts, historical treatises and chronicles. This is the way in which we National Socialists have come to learn about the Jew. The German educator must take exactly the same path in the schools. Step by Step! In the elementary schools, in the trade schools, in the universities.

Because the primary, educational principle should be visual clarity, let us carefully look at the Jew. Let’s first look at his outward appearance. That is the easiest thing to do. We put pictures of Jews on bulletin boards. . . Next to them, we place pictures of Germans. Then we spend a few minutes looking and comparing the pictures of the Jews with those of the Germans. It won’t take long until there will be a rush of answers: “The Jews have other noses, other ears, other lips, another chin, a completely different face, as we do.” The teacher has the children write down all these observations in their newly required Jewish Notebook. Children trained in racial observation will be able to recognize a Jew at first glance even out of a crowd of a thousand people. . .

We then make the transition from the purely external view to the inner essence of the Jew. . . The physical difference of the Jew is not the most dangerous. We must teach the child that the Jew who immediately appears to us as alien has a soul which every movement and expression is, in its deepest roots, different from our soul. We must emphasize that the Jew thinks, feels and acts differently than we do; that his thoughts, feelings and actions are in crass opposition to our morality, and to our laws.

Translated from Fritz Fink, Die Judenfrage im Unterricht, pp 13-18.

QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the use of a Jewish Notebook in the classroom.

