"But the Story Didn't End that Way..."

This Educational Kit was Originally Produced to

Commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Kristallnacht Pogrom

The International School for Holocaust Studies
Yad Vashem Information Systems

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Kristallnacht was a series of riots that took place throughout the German Reich (Germany and Austria) on the 9th and 10th of November 1938, and represented an important turning point in the history of the Jews of Germany. Over 1,000 synagogues were destroyed during the pogrom throughout Germany and Austria. A great deal of damage was done to Jewish property, and for the first time, tens of thousands of Jews were sent to concentration camps simply because they were Jews.

The International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem considers the production of an educational kit to promote familiarity with the fate of German Jewry in the 1930’s, to be of great importance. The kit is meant to provide teachers and students with up to date and readily available didactic tools, adapted for educational needs.

**Target audience:**
Middle school and high school students in formal and informal educational frameworks.

**The kit is composed of three sections:**

- 18 posters which tell the story of German Jewry from the Weimar Republic through the late 1930’s. The posters are arranged in chronological order and allow the observer to understand the process by which anti-Jewish policy in the German Reich was crystallized, reaching a peak in the vast pogrom of 9-10 November 1938. The pictures incorporate quotations from some of the period’s central figures – Jews and non-Jews – which provide the viewer with a further level of understanding. The combination of pictures and quotations aids in a comprehensive and in-depth view of the human drama and its participants. The posters can be used on their own, as an exhibition, or as an educational tool for the study of the period in formal and informal educational frameworks.

- A didactic booklet which includes:
  1. A historical survey and overview
  2. Short readings to accompany each poster
3. A visit to the exhibition “And the Story Did Not End There…” with suggestions for activities with young participants. The activities take place as a guided tour through the exhibition, with a discussion of the meanings which arise from the Kristallnacht pogrom.

4. A chronological table of events for the years 1933-1938

5. A bibliographical list of recommended reading.

- A documentary video movie which focuses on the events of Kristallnacht and its implications. The film, which is based on survivors’ testimonies and documentary visual materials from the period itself, contributes to an understanding of the events and allows disparate groups to relate to the survivors’ stories.

This kit can contribute to a greater familiarity with the unique history of German Jewry in the 1930’s, with an emphasis on the events preceding the Kristallnacht pogrom. The 9-10 November pogrom constitutes a turning point and in many senses the climax of a process. It therefore cannot be understood separately from the historical context in which it took place.

The kit can also be used on Holocaust Memorial Day, and as a helpful tool for history teachers teaching about the history of German Jewry during the first half of the twentieth century.

The posters can be divided into four topics:

A. Posters 1 and 3 relate to the Jews of the Weimar Republic: questions of identity, legal, economic and social status, and the appearance of a racist antisemitic movement in the form of the National Socialist Party on the Republic’s political scene.

B. Posters 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 14 relate to Nazi policy in Germany, 1933-1938.

C. Posters 8, 9, 11, 13 relate to the Jewish response to Nazi policy.

D. Posters 15-18 relate to the events of Kristallnacht, 9-10 November 1938.
The Jews of Germany 1870-1918

Throughout the nineteenth century, Jews in the various German states gradually advanced toward greater equality and emancipation. This process was completed with the establishment of the unified German state in 1870. As early as the late eighteenth century, thinkers associated with the German enlightenment had expressed views calling for the incorporation of Jews into the political and social life of the state in return for Jewish willingness to forego their differences and their separation from the society around them, and their transformation into productive citizens. The Jews agreed to this principle in large part: They adopted the German language and strove to be integrated into German culture. They took part in the general processes of modernization, and above all – viewed Germany as their homeland.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Jews of Germany underwent a process of accelerated urbanization, found their way into the German middle class, and some even became central figures in German economic life – bankers, merchants, owners of department stores, industrialists, etc. The Jews’ successful integration into German economic life did not go unnoticed by their opponents, and contributed to the formulation of antisemitic stereotypes.

Based on their desire to be integrated into German society, the Jews were willing to make changes in their religious life and to modify their tradition. Some of the new religious trends in modern Judaism began to mature in Germany toward the mid nineteenth century. The Reform Movement sought to make far-reaching changes in Jewish tradition. Its members believed that it was only by defining Judaism in exclusively confessional terms, devoid of any nationalistic elements, that Judaism would be able to continue to exist in the modern world. The neo-Orthodox also supported modernization and integration into the German state, but sought to preserve a commitment to halacha – Jewish law.

The process of Jewish integration into German society was complex and multifarious. Alongside a weakening of religious bonds, conversions and inter-
marriage, which became increasingly ubiquitous during the first three decades of the twentieth century, modern Jewish cultural creativity blossomed, as is reflected in the Jewish press and in Jewish literature of the period. The economic success of many German Jews was also expressed in their strength as a community, and could be seen in the lavish synagogues that were built in the large cities, most notably in Berlin.

One phenomenon which had a profound impact on the Jews of Germany was the immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe, which began to take place in considerable numbers in the late nineteenth century. The presence of these Eastern European Jews was seen by many German Jews as posing a threat to their own integration in their homeland, and as a potential catalyst to antisemitism. German Jewish organizations sought to encourage the Eastern European Jews’ emigration overseas, or, alternatively, to encourage their “Germanization” so as to minimize their conspicuousness.

New patterns of organization began to appear among German Jews in the late nineteenth century. Jews organized in order to counter the antisemitic movements that had appeared. The “Central Organization of German Citizens of the Mosaic Faith” was established in 1893, and quickly became the largest Jewish organization in Germany. The organization called for a deepening of Jewish equality and emphasized that, in the eyes of its leaders, Judaism was a religious belief only, which does not conflict with the Jews’ profound sense of belonging to their German homeland.

The Zionist Organization of Germany was established in 1897. German Zionism represented a different kind of reaction to German antisemitism. At first, the organization’s activity focused on assistance to the Jews of Eastern Europe, the victims of Czarist Russia’s antisemitism and pogroms. However, it also sought to redefine the status of German Jews. The Zionists claimed that Jews, and the Jews of Germany among them, were not only members of one religion, but a people as well. They therefore saw their integration into the German state in a more limited manner – loyal citizenship, but not integration into the German people. Zionism had but very limited influence on the Jews of Germany.

With the outbreak of the First World War, the vast majority of German Jews, including most Zionists, joined in the German patriotic fervor. Kaiser Wilhelm’s pronouncement that all citizens constituted a unified national body, whose different sections must live in peace with one another echoed loudly among the Jews of Germany. Many volunteered to serve in the German army even before being called to
service, and approximately 12,000 Jews fell in the line of duty on the battlefields of the World War. Nevertheless, the war led to a resurgence of antisemitic stereotypes in Germany, and to an escalation in the vehemence of that antisemitism. In late 1916, accusations according to which Jewish soldiers shirked their duty and avoided combat service led to a census of Jewish soldiers in the German army. For German Jews, This was a profoundly humiliating experience. The results of the census were never made public.

The Jews of Germany in the Weimar Republic
The Weimar Republic, which was established in November 1918 in the wake of the German defeat in the war, was seen by many Germans as a form of government imposed upon them from the outside. The fact that Jews could be noted among the founders of the republic led anti-liberal and antisemitic political movements and trends to identify the republic with the Jews.

Jews were also conspicuously present among the leaders of the radical left, who also did not support the republic. The presence of such Jewish leftist leaders as Rosa Luxembourg, Kurt Eisner and Ernst Toller contributed to the image of Jews as a subversive element.

The Weimar period was the first time Jews were given nearly full equality. They began to make their way into many of the state’s organizations which had previously been closed to them – public service, universities, the legal system, and even the German government itself. Their contribution to German culture reached unprecedented heights: Jews stood out in literature and the arts, in philosophy and in science (scientists such as Albert Einstein). Their numbers among German recipients of the Nobel Prize was far beyond their proportion in the population. On the other hand, this period, which was rife with economic crises, was also characterized by new peaks of antisemitism. Walter Rathenau was assassinated in 1922, a few months after having been appointed to Foreign Minister. The assassins were motivated in large part by the fact that Rathenau was a Jew. Radical antisemitic parties grew in strength, and the activities of extreme nationalist organizations often reached the point of open violence.

The Weimar period was witness to a new Jewish cultural efflorescence, and there are those who see it as a veritable renaissance. Young Jews, some of whom were
influenced by their intense encounter with the Jews of Eastern Europe during the First World War, sought to rediscover their Jewish roots. Writers, poets and painters turned to Jewish subject matter. Broad sections of the public expressed an increased interest in Jewish studies in a variety of associations established for this purpose, and in the free school for Jewish studies which operated in Frankfurt in the 1920’s under the management of Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber.

Alongside the achievement of full equality of rights and the creative cultural vitality that characterized the Jews of the Weimar Republic, the Jewish community was in the midst of a long-range crisis which posed forbidding economic and demographic threats. Demographically, this was a Jewish community in a process of decline, characterized by a death rate which was larger than the birth rate. The direct cause of this phenomenon was the “reversed age pyramid” of German Jewry, with its large proportion of elderly. Economically, this was a structural crisis in which the majority of Germany’s Jews remained stuck in the “old middle class” without fulfilling the paths to promotion and advancement that had been opened up to the general populace by the processes of industrialization. A particularly large percentage of Jews had suffered economic blows during the war years and the general economic crises of 1923 and 1929, which hit the middle class, to which most Jews belonged.

**Anti-Jewish Policy, 1933-1938**

There were approximately 525,000 Jews living in Germany in 1933, when the Nazi party attained power and put an end to the Weimar Republic. The Nazi party was guided by a racist and antisemitic ideology, which served to mold its policies in general, and its anti-Jewish policy in particular. The anti-Jewish policy developed gradually. It was forced to contend not only with ideological considerations, but also with political and economic factors, which impacted upon the fulfillment of ideological goals.

The first directed anti-Jewish action, which represented the initial steps toward implementing a nation-wide anti-Jewish policy, took place in April 1933. Hitler’s government, motivated principally by Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbbeles, decided to initiate a boycott of Jewish businesses in response to the anti-German “atrocities propagand” supposedly being disseminated abroad by Jews. Responsibility for the action was not placed on a governmental body, but rather on a Nazi party
body, and was headed by Julius Streicher, editor of the antisemitic journal Der Stürmer.

A gradual process of anti-Jewish legislation followed the boycott, with the aim of removing Jews from most fields of life, such as the public service, arts and culture, the media and the press in particular. It was decided at this stage not to touch private Jewish businesses since this might result in damage to the German economy. One important law was the “law for the restoration of the professional civil service”, which was aimed at removing all civil servants who were not Aryan – i.e. Jews. The civil service included hospitals, universities, government offices and all areas of public service.

The height of anti-Jewish legislation was reached on September 15 1935, with the ratification of the Nuremberg Laws. This set of laws was a considerable step further, as it defined Jews as members of a separate race, of a different blood, who can in no way belong to German society or be citizens of the German state.

In the spirit of this legislation, a Jew was defined as anyone who had three grandparents who were racially pure Jews. A Mischling, or member of a mixed race, was defined as anybody who had either one or two Jewish grandparents. Notwithstanding the Nazis' belief in pseudo-scientific racial doctrines and their insistence that Jews are to be defined racially rather than religiously, in practice they were forced to revert to an individual’s belonging to the community when attempting to identify who is a Jew.

Many Jews hoped that the Nuremberg Laws might bring the process of anti-Jewish escalation to an end, since they provided a legal foundation for the Jews’ status as second class citizens. In contrast with popular notions, the number of Jewish emigrants from Germany in the wake of the Nuremberg Laws decreased rather than increased.

Anti-Jewish policy, which was characterized by rising and falling violence at different times, had a profound impact on patterns of Jewish emigration from Germany. Approximately 37,000 Jews emigrated from Germany in 1933. In 1934, some 24,000 Jews emigrated, and in 1935, 21,000 Jews emigrated.

A relative lull in outward expressions of antisemitism was felt after the Nuremberg Laws, and in preparation for the 1935 winter Olympics and 1936 summer games. Anti-Jewish slogans disappeared from public places and there was a decrease in anti-Jewish attacks.
Germany’s improved international position and the crystallization of the “four year plan” – the economic plan designed to prepare Germany for war – led to an economic assault on the Jews, which had been avoided previously. This policy was expressed in an accelerated process of “Aryanization” – takeover of Jewish property by Aryans. The process of Aryanization coincided with German foreign policy: the more aggressive Germany grew in its foreign policy, the greater the force given to Aryanization practices.

In 1938, anti-Jewish policy in the German Reich reached a peak. The policy of Aryanization was accelerated. The SS, which had become the leading factor in the implementation of anti-Jewish policy, orchestrated a number of actions – most notably the forced emigration of the Jews of Austria, which had been annexed to the Reich. The atmosphere of anti-Jewish violence, which intensified from day to day, was given full expression in the November pogrom, known as *Kristallnacht*. 