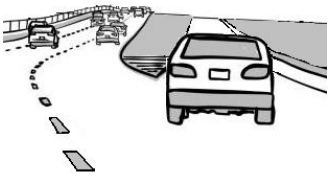
Jewish Congregation of Marco Island



OFF-RAMP TORAH

A JUDICIOUS DEPARTURE FROM THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION

November 14, 2026

"Fostering diverse modes of attention to textual details cultivates correlative forms of attention to the world and divine reality"

Michael Fishbane (1943-), *Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לַעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה׃

TO START: *Parashat-haShavu'a* Stats

Weekly Portion: *Tol'dot* Genesis 25:19-28:9

Sequence in Torah cycle: 6th of 54

Sequence in CHUMASH: 6th of 12



WHERE WE'RE GOING INSTEAD, and why

Last Monday, November 09, commemorated the 1938 "spontaneous demonstration" against Jews of the German Reich that is known in retrospect as Kristallnacht, *"The Night of Broken Glass."*

We devote our study today to the circumstances and significance of that long-ago event, that marked a significant turning-point leading up to World War II and the German campaign of extermination against World Jewry.

1938 – *Das Schicksalsjahr* ("The Year of Destiny")

March 13 *Anschluss*, unilateral **annexation of Austria** as part of Germany.

Hitler appropriates the lancehead of Longinus from the Hofburg Palace in Vienna, as a mystical talisman of power to be "The Spear of Destiny."



March 31 Polish government promulgates "Law on **Deprivation of Citizenship**."

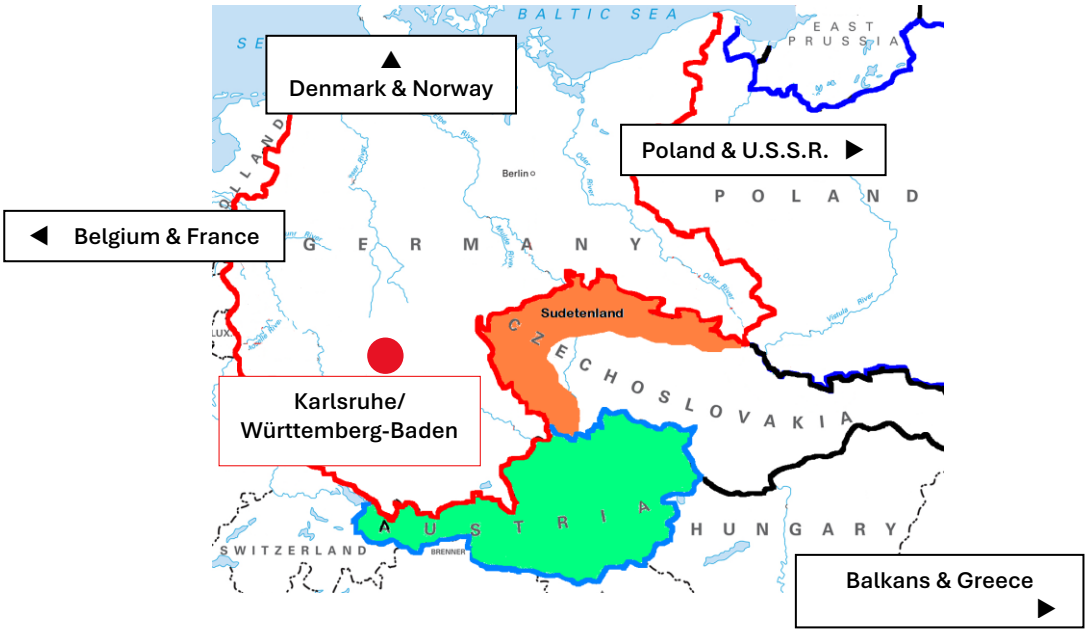
Summarily **revokes the passport of any Pole** who, subsequent to the 1919 establishment of the Republic, continued residence abroad for more than five years.

August 17 The German "Law Regarding Changes of Family Names and Given Names" also **nullifies residence permits** for foreigners.

Poland agrees to restore Polish citizenship to Jews living abroad, but only for applications made on Polish soil before the end of October.

- more over

September 30 Germany **acquires Sudetenland** region of Czechoslovakia.
Ceded by British Foreign Minister Chamberlain in conference at Munich to guarantee "Peace In Our Time."



October 26 Germany **initiates *Polenaktion*** to repatriate all resident Polish Jews before the end of the month.
17,000 Polish Jews are deported to the Polish frontier.

A) Arolsen Archives of the International Center on Nazi Persecution, #11200770 - The designated file consists of a detailed documentation of the **state persecution of Jews of Polish nationality** in the Karlsruhe/Württemberg-Baden area for the period from October 18, 1938 to December 29, 1939, focusing on **the ban on residence directed against them**; their arrests carried out **in this context**; and **the deportation of the male prisoners to the German-Polish border on October 28 and 29, 1938**, as well as associated political decrees.

With regard to the latter so-called *Polenaktion* of October 1938, this file contains, among other things, **a directory with information on the names, dates of birth, and addresses of the 63 male Jews** concerned from that specific region.

This collection of documents includes decrees and correspondence of the *Reichsführer* S.S. and Chief of the German Police in the Reich Ministry of the Interior in Berlin, addressed to the Gestapo *Karlsruhe*; to various district offices and police headquarters in Baden; to *Stapo* (leading) offices; **and to non-Prussian state governments**, **as well as to the German Border Service** in Neu-Bentschen [= Zbąszynek, west Poland].

B) Cyryl Skibiński, Jewish Historical Institute - In March of 1938 the Polish government, fearing for a massive return to their country of Polish Jews being persecuted in Germany, passed a law which deprived persons of citizenship if they had been living abroad for more than five years. The following August, German authorities annulled all permanent residence permits for foreigners, essentially rendering stateless Polish Jews living on German soil. In

- continued

response to this German decree, the Polish Senate agreed to restore to Polish citizenship any Jew who applied within the borders of Poland **before the end of October— and thus began the rush, late that month, for the Germans to locate and deport** them before the deadline.

On October 26, the Gestapo was given an order to immediately arrest the Jews of Polish descent living in Germany and deport them immediately to Poland. Over the next few days, the homes of Jews were invaded and their residents removed in short order, allowed to take only one piece of luggage. By October 30 this *Polenaktion* had relocated seventeen thousand Jews in sealed wagons to the Eastern border of the Reich.

The majority of resident Polish Jews still within Germany were interned in concentration camps. Of the still significant number of those shipped to the frontier, only some of the refugees processed by harried government officials were readmitted to Polish citizenship. **More than twelve thousand others**, prevented from entering Poland, and shot by the S.S. if they tried to cross back into Germany, **formed a squalid encampment in a no-man's land** on the Polish side at Zbąszyń, near Posen, where they subsisted in appalling conditions.

C) October 29 postcard from Zbąszyń, to Herschel Grynszpan in Paris -

Zindel Grynszpan = Riva Levinger
(1886-1963?)
tailor in Hanover since 1914

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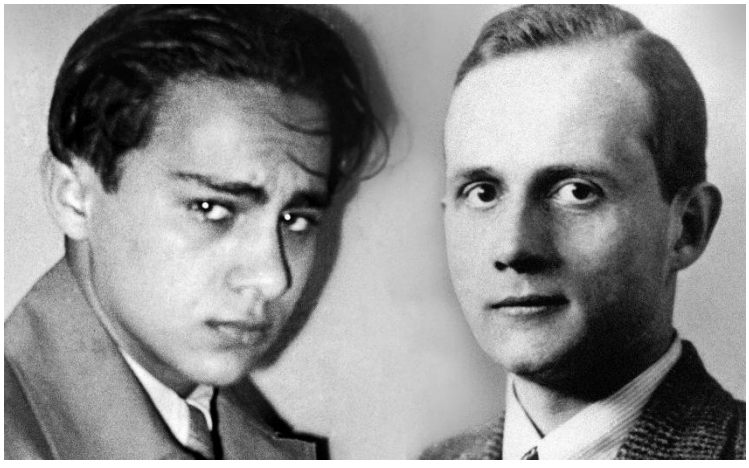
Herschel Feivel Grynszpan
(1921-1945?)

As they rounded us up, here in Hanover, and hustled us away with whatever we could carry, no one told us what was going on— but we clearly understood that it's all over for us.

Now we are stuck at the border, with not even a *pfennig* left. Can you manage to send us something?

Herschel Feivel Grynszpan
German expatriate,
in Paris since 1936

Ernst Eduard vom Rath
Third Secretary,
German Embassy, Paris





D) Humphrey Bogart as Rick Blaine in *Casablanca*, 1942 -

Those couriers got a lucky break. **Yesterday, they were just two German clerks; today, they're "the Honored Dead."**

- more over

E) Paris police report on the arrest of Hershel Grynszpan – November 08, 1938 - The accused reported to the interrogator that he had shouted at the German official "You want my documents? You are a *sale Boche* [filthy Kraut]— and, **in the name of twelve thousand persecuted Jews**, here are your documents," before shooting the man five times.

F) Lucy Dawidowicz (1915-1990), *The War Against The Jews, 1933-1945* - **The incitement against the Jews began on November 8th, with the first news report that vom Rath had been seriously wounded** and an accompanying incendiary editorial in the *Völkischer Beobachter* ["The People's Observer", official Nazi Party organ published by propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels]. In many small towns, meetings were called on November 8th and 9th at which the Party leader and the local mayor agitated the assembled mob, which then went into action, setting fire to the local synagogues; destroying Jewish businesses and homes; and manhandling individual Jews.

At that moment in German history, with war fever running high and the Jews already clearly identified as enemies, the rank-and-file National Socialist was eager for a little action on his own. Many times, in the past, the NSDAP had bridled these anti-Semitic enthusiasms, in the interests of broader goals, but **now Goebbels became the advocate of mob violence and the architect of a mob action program**.

Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
National Socialist German Workers' Party
(abbreviated "Nazi")

Early in the evening of November 9th, it was learned that vom Rath had died of his wounds. That very evening the NSDAP's leaders were congregating in the Old Town hall in Munich for the anniversary celebration of the *putsch* [1923 beer-hall brawl that had led to Hitler's arrest, launching him on the road to national leadership]. Hitler had dinner there with his old comrades, and was seen in prolonged conversations with Goebbels.

Hitler usually delivered the main speech on this occasion, but this evening he left early. He had been overheard to say that "the S.A. [*Sturmabteilung* "storm-trooper" brown-shirts] should be allowed to have a fling." Hitler had apparently decided, at Goebbels' suggestion, that **"spontaneous" demonstrations, manifestly not initiated or organized by the Party, were "not to be discouraged."** His absence from the festivities was planned to exculpate him— and the government— from responsibility for the subsequent events.

G) Telegram from Richard Heydrich - November 10, 1938 – 1:20 a.m. -

FROM: S.S. *Obergruppenfuehrer* Richard Heydrich.

TO: All Headquarters and Stations of the State Police;
All districts and Sub-districts of the SD.

Urgent - for immediate attention of Chief or his deputy.

Re: Measures against Jews tonight.

Following the attempt on the life of Secretary of the Legation vom Rath in Paris, **demonstrations against the Jews are to be expected in all parts of the Reich in the course of the coming night**, November 9-10, 1938. The instructions below are to be applied in dealing with these events:

a) Only such measures are to be taken as do not endanger German lives or property (*i.e.*,

- continued

synagogues are to be burned down **only where there is no danger of fire in neighboring buildings**).

The Great Synagogue in Hanover
aflame on November 09, 1938



The "Neue" Synagogue in Berlin
still on Oranienburgerstrasse today



b) Places of business and apartments belonging to Jews **may be destroyed, but not looted**. The police are instructed to supervise the observance of this order, and to arrest looters.

c) In commercial streets, particular care is to be taken that **non-Jewish businesses are completely protected** against damage.

d) **Foreign citizens**, even if they are Jews, **are not to be molested**.

As soon as the course of events during the night permits the release of the officials required, **as many Jews in any district as can be accommodated in existing prisons are to be arrested, with priority being given to wealthy Jews**. For the time being, only healthy male Jews who are not too old are to be detained. After those detentions have been carried out, **the appropriate concentration camps are to be contacted immediately** for the prompt accommodation of these Jews in those camps. Special care is to be taken that **the Jews arrested in accordance with these instructions are not to be ill-treated**.

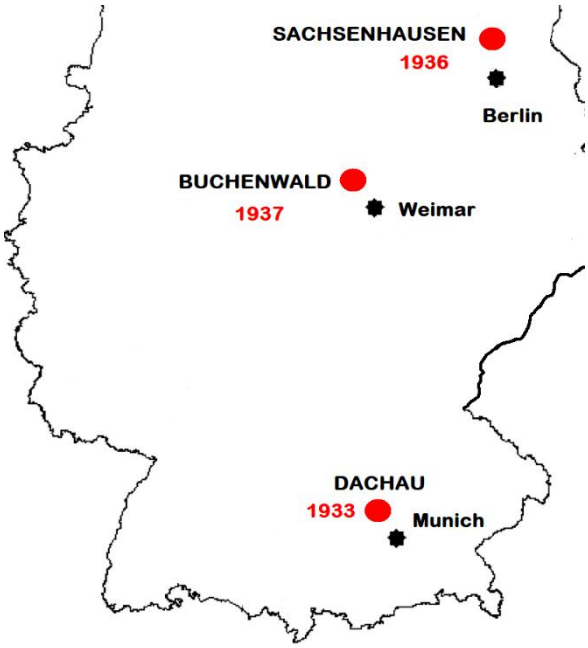
H) Lucy Dawidowicz (1915-1990), *The War Against The Jews, 1933-1945* - That night, fires were ignited all over Germany, and **the shattered plate glass that was to give the pogrom its name littered the streets of German towns and cities**. (It was later estimated that the amount of plate glass destroyed equaled half the annual production of the plate glass industry of Belgium, from which it had been imported).



Synagogues and Jewish institutions were burned to the ground. Over seven thousand Jewish businesses were destroyed. **About thirty thousand Jewish men were arrested** and incarcerated in

- more over

Buchenwald, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen. Nearly a hundred Jews were killed, and thousands more subjected **to wanton violence and sadistic torments**.



I) David H. Buffum (1895-1941), United States Consul General in Leipzig – report to the State Department on November 11, 1938 -

Having demolished dwellings and hurled most of the movable effects to the streets, **the insatiably sadistic perpetrators threw many of the trembling inmates into a small stream** that flows through the Zoological Park, commanding horrified spectators to spit at them, defile them with mud, and jeer at their plight.

J) Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), Letter to Hermann Göring – November 11, 1938 - These spontaneous popular uprisings against them, **furnish us with the opportunity to proceed with the total expropriation of the Jews** and the complete removal of their freedom.

I am therefore requesting that the **Jewish Question** be now, **once and for all**, coordinated and **solved**, one way or another.

Endlösung der Judenfrage
The Final **Solution** to the Jewish Question

K) Abram Leon Sachar (1899-1993), *The History of the Jews* - In the wake of the pogrom, **the impoverished Jewish community was then ordered to pay the incredible fine of 4 billion marks** (400 million dollars [= $9.6 billion in today's money]), a fine assessed upon every Jew who still owned more than $2,000. When the Second World war began in 1939, the *coup de grâce* was administered: every able-bodied Jew left in the country was drafted for manual labor as part of the military program of the Nazis.

Jewish Population in Germany		
1925 census	564,973	= .9% of total
1939 census	259,000	= **.3% of total**
1945 estimate	25,000	= .03% of total

Hitler had vowed before he came to power that he would exterminate the Jews of Germany. He was unable to keep most of his economic and political promises, but he succeeded beyond the wildest fears in **completely annihilating one of the most cultured and valuable Jewish settlements of the Western world**.

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L) Guy Miron (1966-), *Space and Time under Persecution: The German-Jewish Experience in the Third Reich* - The events of November 9-10, 1938 were **a turning point in both Jewish and non-Jewish memories**.

Until the pogrom, we still had a Jewish public sphere in Germany. Jewish organizations were active, and in some places in Germany Jews could still feel safe in public life. Moreover, in terms of what the public witnessed, it never happened again. German public opinion did not like the street violence; they were not in favor of the Jews, but **law and order were very important to them**.

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As such, **as the ensuing Nazi campaign of genocide escalated, so did the secrecy**. Most deportations took place under cover of night. But the November Pogrom had taken place in broad daylight, or visibly illuminated at night by flames.

M) Toby Axelrod, "In Germany, Kristallnacht Goes By a Different Name," in *The Times of Israel* – November 9, 2022 - This week, Jewish communities across the United States are commemorating the anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, the anti-Jewish riots that marked a brutal turning point in the Nazi campaign of persecution.

In Germany, they refer to the events of November 9-10, 1938, as *Das Novemberpogrom* "the November *Pogrom*," or variations on that term. That's became, to many in Germany, the term "*Kristallnacht*"— night of faceted glass— sounds incongruous. "It has a pretty sound," said Matthias Heine, a German journalist whose 2019 book examined the role of Nazi terms in the contemporary German vernacular. "**When you know that it was a very serious and bloody and violent event, then this term isn't acceptable any more**."

In Germany, the terms "*Novemberpogrom*," "*Pogromnacht*" or "*Reichspogromnacht*" were slowly introduced in the late 1970s, when **Germany's postwar generations began challenging their parents' sanitized version of history**.

pogrom - Russian погром "wreaking havoc; rioting"

Whatever its source, Heine said, "**there are good reasons to reject the term**." All else being equal, it might distract from a speaker's point: "You can interrupt any serious conversation in Germany, by saying your counterpart used a Nazi word."

The evolution of the terms used to describe the same events, **speaks to nuances in the culture of remembrance** in Germany and around the world. "*Kristallnacht* is a much too pretty word for something so terrible, and I don't use it anymore," said high school principal Jessica Ohletz. Her colleague Christiane Walesch-Schneller, chair of the Blue House educational institute, says: "I personally believe that **all the terms create false associations**. For me, **there is no term yet which I feel is adequate**."

Wednesday, November 09, 1938 = 15 Cheshvan ט״ו חשון

Thursday, November 10, 1938 = **16** Cheshvan **ט״ז** חשון



ט״ז חשוון שורש-השואה

TaZ Cheshvan – Shursh haSho'ah 16th of Cheshvan – Taproot of the Tragedy

די הויפטוואָרצל פֿון די חרבן

Di Hoyptvorts'l fun si Churban

- more over

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים

O God, full of compassion, dwelling On High:

המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה לנשמותיהם של כל התמימים מבית ישראל אשר ויתרו על נשמתם בפוגרום הנורא ב-9 בנובמבר 1938, ובשואה שבאה לאחר מכן, אשר הייתה האירוע היסודי עבורה

grant perfect rest in Your sheltering presence to the souls of all the innocents of the Household of Israel who relinquished their souls in the terrible pogrom on November 9 of 1938, and in the ensuing *Sho'ah* for which it was the foundational event.

כשם שכל אחד מהם בנה את הקהילה שבה היה מרכיב מכונן (ואשר נגזלה מהם יחד עם חייהם) כך גם הקדשנו את חיינו לבניית קהילתנו כסניף מקומי של בית ישראל

As each of them built up a vibrant community, of which they were themselves integral components (and which was stolen from them, along with their lives), even so do we dedicate our lives to building up our own community, as the local branch of the Household of Israel.

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