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# 1. 2016

## 1.1 March

### **It's time for you to leave, Jew. (2016-03-08 15:16)**

Hello! My name is Jessica and this is one of my first times blogging. I chose a topic that is important not only because of my heritage but also because it changed the course of history. Along this blog, I will be posting about Jews in the diaspora, and how did they become a strong force worldwide after being persecuted.

Let's begin by defining diaspora, this being the movement of a population from its original homeland. So, why did Jews had to expand to other parts of the world if they were comfortable were they lived? Well, they weren't comfortable; in fact, the majority of the population in most places did not want them there and I keep asking myself why. Just because they were Jewish? It seems like it.

Let me clarify that this blog is not intended to talk about the history of Judaic persecution in what was called Palestine at the time, but rather it will focus on events prior to the start of WWII and the development of hate towards Jews causing a forced migration to places Jews from Europe never thought they would put a step on.

It all started with what is referred as "Pogroms" which is a word in Russian translated as "an attack followed by a destruction, looting of property, murder and rape". Worldwide, the word is employed to understand the time when Christian Russians attacked Jewish communities between 1881-1921 because Jews were against the law of converting to Christianity causing the Russians to get upset and start attacking them, setting on fire synagogues, burning prayer books and physically attacking people. The "reasons" behind each pogrom may be justified by the other side but what is crucial to mention is the fact that Jews were seen as a minority in Russia and this idea began to expand to other parts of Europe including Poland and Ukraine.

What was the Jewish population doing wrong besides trying to develop a Jewish heritage with the traditions they carried from their ancestors?

With all the craziness and amount of deaths that Pogroms left, Jews from all over started to realize that the definition of equality was not on the dictionary for them. What could they do? None could have pictured that the worst was yet to come; A Zionist movement calling for the necessity of a Jewish homeland was created named "He-Halutz" followed by a

wake up

call in Israel, which had its own issues at the time.

What was the escape route? Was this necessary? No Jew thought the situation could get to the extreme that we know today. No Jew thought the world would be against them. No Jew thought the word "diaspora" will attribute to them in the future and the escape of what they use to call home. No Jew wanted to die.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/pogroms.html>

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### **Where can I find a new Home? (2016-03-13 15:31)**

Tired of the feeling of inequality, Russian Jews decided it was time to leave and start a life somewhere else. How sad and frustrating it is for me to think that non of them knew that the hate for Jews was starting to spread around Europe and most of the destinations to create a new home were within this area.

As dreamers and pioneers, some young Russians decided that Palestine (Today the state of Israel) was the place to go. But it wasn't that easy. The problem in Palestine under the British regime was still very uncertain and Jews were not very welcomed to the future land of honey and milk. But that did not stop them. They created a youth Zionist movement called He-jalutz Lamerjav which its ideal was to build a land for the Jewish people in the Holy Land, no matter the cost.

Other Russians tried to spread out and begin a life in different countries but the hate increased as the emigration increased. A lot of them landed in Germany, the lucky ones got to the United States and a minority arrived at South Africa.

But life wasn't as magical as Cinderella's fairy tale. Sooner than later, the famous Adolf Hitler took control over Germany and begun to establish all type of rules against minorities, specially the Jews. It's important to clarify that Hitler had bigger ideas than the termination of Jewish "race". This included a war with Russia to gain raw materials like oil to fight against the United States in the future, as well as a easy war against Czechoslovakia followed by one with France and Britain. Let's STOP for a second to analyze how crazy a person could be to try to fight with the most powerful countries knowing how World War I ended. But that' not even the fact that shocks and amazes me the most; he was able to convince every person to become an allied for death. Most people remained silent under the terrible circumstances their neighbors where living just for the fact of having other religious beliefs. Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933 with the thought that this marked the beginning of the last Jewish existence.

The first official law focused on limiting the participation of Jews in German public life. The argument of the Nazi party was that they were "unreliable citizens". REALLY? how could this lie have a little truth in it's lines if Jews handled many powerful business that helped the economy of the country? Maybe Hitler thought Jews were a threat. If he lived today, he could see with his own eyes that rather than a threat, Jews have the power of embracing the economy of many countries and have the capacity of creating new technologies that don't do anything else than benefit the population.

In 1935 the "Laws of Nuremberg" became active which "excluded German Jews from Reich citizenship and prohibited them from marrying or having sexual relations with persons of "German or German-related blood." ...Jews were disenfranchised (that is, they had no formal expectation to the tight to vote) and could not hold public office. The Nuremberg Laws did not identify a "Jew" as someone with particular religious beliefs. Instead, the first amendment to the Nuremberg Laws defined anyone who had three or four Jewish grandparents as a Jew, regardless of whether that individual recognized himself or herself as a Jew or belonged to the Jewish religious community." (Holocaust Encyclopedia)



Endless laws and events continued to happen in the next years in Germany and Poland giving the Jewish people more

reasons to leave but making it more impossible day after day. Stay tuned to know what broke the glass of desperation for Jews and everything they had to do to escape and survive the unfair world they were forced to be a part of. All this and more in my next post!

<http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/adolf-hitler>

<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005681>

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### **A night of Broken Glass or broken hearts? (2016-03-26 23:11)**

The night of November 9th 1938 changed the history of the Jewish people. Also called "Kristallnacht" or the Night of the Broken Glass, in this night the biggest pogrom against Jews occurred changing the game and entering a new stage of what would end up in World War II.

The name comes from all the broken glass that was left after the attack happened; many synagogues were attacked, Torahs ripped and burned, Souls of hundred Jews destroyed. The beginning of the so called "Holocaust" had officially began. The numbers of things that happened varies across historians, but what cannot be denied, is that in one single night at least 50 Jews were murdered just for the sake of being Jewish, other 30,000 were arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps lead by the Nazis.

At this point, the segregation was so marked that Jews had their own hospitals, business and places where they could live "in peace". All this "peace" came to an end and transformed in fire when the Nazis decided to attack, burn, destroy and damage every place that the Jewish people frequented...but the harm wasn't only physical; hearts of thousands broke in pieces while watching their relatives get arrested, killed, punched or all of the above.

"The Nazis managed to achieve in Kristallnacht all the theoretical targets they set for themselves: confiscation of Jewish belongings to provide finances for the military buildup to war, separation and isolation of the Jews, and most importantly the move from the antisemitic policy of discrimination to one of physical damage which began that night and continued until the end of WWII. (1)

There was no turning point now. The hate towards Jews was publicly declared and the fear only continued to grow. What was the next step? the "final solution" plan was on the table and the Jews had no where to go. Soon, it was clear who was a Jew, the yellow star sued to their clothes... or should I say their heart? Till this day, those who survived remember the alienation and hate towards them just because, just because they believed in G-d, just because they called themselves Jews, just because they were people, just because they were the same as you and me.



[#Kristallnacht \\_as\\_a\\_turning\\_point](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kristallnacht)

## 1.2 April

### War is Knocking the door...Where to go? (2016-04-06 13:27)

The holocaust was starting. Every Jew feared the steps of the Nazi army all day every day. What was there to do? No Visas were handed, no escape was viable. Russia, Germany and Poland where the most affected countries in regards to the Nazi regime; so the Jews here had to figure out a way of leaving their homes or follow the path of death.

Many managed to escape in boats believing that their final destination would be the "American Country" (the U.S) but due to the period of Great Depression the majority of Jews between 1930-1950 where rejected leading the boats to shift their direction to South America where Jews settled communities that remain active till today. Large amounts of families arrived at Mexico, Brasil, Argentina and Colombia. Still with hope, others moved to Romania and other Europe destinations believing war wasn't going to hit there. Oh how wrong and naive were these lovely Jews.

Of course, it is crucial to mention that plenty of people tried to arrive to their so called "homeland" at that time named "Palestine" which wasn't entirely easy due to the British mandate. This last one limited the immigration of Jews to Palestine to 75000 in five years by a policy paper called "The white papers". That is a very small number if we compare it to the amount of people that were risking their lives to get out of the oppression to live a happy and stable life in the place they considered home.

With all these impediments, what were the chances of closing the door to war and keep believing that the storm will pass soon? Not a lot of hope remained in the Jews hearts and only the lucky, wealthy or risky people managed to get out of the nightmare they were calling life.

You may ask the reason of me being vague about numbers and statistics regarding the amount of people that escaped, survived or changed their names before, after or during the war. The numbers mean nothing when each soul means so much. The numbers are worthless when the amount of tears exceeds the space. The numbers are pointless when my family adds up to get to the million. I don't want to count, I don't want to be Hitler and revoke each persons identity changing it for a number, a simple number that has nothing simple in it.

[http://www.ijs.org.au/Jewish-Immigration-after-the-Second-World-War/default.a\\_spx](http://www.ijs.org.au/Jewish-Immigration-after-the-Second-World-War/default.a_spx)

[http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Population\\_and\\_Migration/Migration\\_since\\_World\\_War\\_I](http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Population_and_Migration/Migration_since_World_War_I)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White\\_Paper\\_of\\_1939](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Paper_of_1939)

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### Post War, post trauma...Where is home? (2016-04-10 23:14)

War came and so did concentration camps, ghettos and murders. Millions of souls were left un-buried and when the American and Soviet troops ended the war, they not only faced the reality of the Nazi Ideology but also hundreds of people that didn't know where to go, lost individuals crying silently for a piece of bread that possibly (not) filled their empty heart.

Many Jews feared to go back to what they use to call "home" due to antisemitism. Consequently, a lot of them emigrated to Eastern Europe hoping to get a new beginning while others decided Europe was not for them and the best thing to do was to run somewhere else. Where to go? Many took boats without knowing their destination, or believing they were landing in the U.S; some of them did and some of them arrived at places where they didn't even know how to ask for a bathroom. The cultural shock was unbelievable and that combined with post war trauma wasn't the great combo.

A big group emigrated to Israel with the help of the "Jewish Brigade Group" ( a Palestinian Jewish unit of the British army) which enabled an illegal migration, but the biggest attempt with a ship called "exodus 1947" was intercepted by British and sent back to Germany; 4500 survivors were denied the entrance to the land of Palestine.



### **So, how is it that the Jewish people became a prestige group within society years later if at this time they were seen as the lowest class with no rights?**

Let's begin by explaining that one of the most beautiful things about Judaism is the sense of community. When survivors arrived at this foreign countries the first thing they did was either look for a Jewish community or establish one with the few people that arrived with them. "Luckily", in most of the places there were some Jews that managed to escape from the war or that arrived in the 19th and 20th century and opened their arms to the devastated ones.

At the beginning it was hard. Imagine yourself in a foreign country, with no family, not knowing a single word of their language and having to start a new life. But the Jews did not wait to apply their knowledge to every field and started little by little building connections among locals.

Throughout history, Jews have had the stereotype of being merchandisers, traders and sears. Well, not much time passed for the Jews to make sure the nickname was still on point.

The biggest communities in the diaspora include the U.S, Canada, Argentina, Brasil and Mexico. Stay tuned to know how these communities switched their reputation to being people from the higher class as well as attributing themselves with the stereotype of smarties!!

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_in\\_Latin\\_America\\_and\\_the\\_Caribbean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Latin_America_and_the_Caribbean) #Colombia

<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005129>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish\\_diaspora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_diaspora) #American\_Jews

### **Smartie Pants Jews (2016-04-13 11:53)**

Leaving Israel aside for a moment, let's focus on those Jews who were trying to organize communities in the called "diaspora" and were trying to gain the status of "power force" again. There were certain steps that Jewish people followed to establish a community, these includes:

1. *Governmentlike institutions*, whether umbrella organizations or separate institutions serving discrete functions, that play roles and provide services at all levels (countrywide, local, and, where used, intermediate) which, under other conditions, would be played, provided, or controlled, whether predominantly or exclusively, by governmental authorities (for instance, services such as external relations, defense, education, social welfare, and public, that is, communal, finance), specifically:

- a more or less comprehensive fundraising and social planning body;
- a representative body for external relations;
- a Jewish education service agency;
- a vehicle or vehicles for assisting Israel and other Jewish communities;
- various health and welfare institutions.

2. *Local institutions and organizations* that provide a means for attracting people to Jewish life on the basis of their most immediate and personal interests and needs, specifically:

- congregations organized into one or more synagogue unions, federations, or confederations;
- local cultural and recreational centers, often federated or confederated with one another.

3. General purpose mass-based organizations, operating countrywide at all levels, that function to: (a) articulate community values, attitudes, and policies; (b) provide the energy and motive force for crystallizing the communal consensus that grows out of those values, attitudes, and policies; and (c) maintain institutionalized channels of communication between the community's leaders and "actives" ("cosmopolitans") and the broad base of the affiliated Jewish population ("locals") for dealing with the problems facing the community, specifically:

- a Zionist federation and its constituent organizations;
- fraternal organizations.

4.

*Special interest organizations* which, by serving specialized interests in the community on all planes, function to mobilize concern and support for the various programs conducted by the community and to apply pressure for their expansion, modification, and improvement.

<http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles2/classicdias.htm>

So as you see from the data above, Jews didn't take long to arrange and prioritize their needs and sooner than later the impact of their organized community started to hit all the world.

People started to realize and place the Jews in the old stereotype of "merchandisers" but this time it was different: Jews were no longer seen as nomads who were going to be kicked out when new laws emerged against them; it was time for them to stay wherever they were, growing not only in numbers but also in reputation.

We cannot forget that Antisemitism will always be a factor that puts Jewish people in risk specially because the cause of "hating Jews" comes from the idea that Jews are a threat for society which is ridiculous based on all the advances Jews had brought specially in the past years.

Coming back to Israel, the Jewish nation and the place that all the Jews feel safe to call "home" it is easy to see how people from the outside at one point felt or still feels that the Jews somehow threat the economy wherever they go. The interesting thing is that this threat is not (or should not be seen as) negative!! Seeing the history of Israel -or Palestine before it's establishment in 1948- it is clear that as soon as the Jews returned to their land and were finally free from hater and persecution, they didn't take long to push their country to the best, creating the most amazing technological gadgets, achieving to get water in the dessert and building one of the most advanced countries and the only democracy in the middle east in a very short time. So, when we understand that Jews have the mind and power to make great things, we should understand that there is no threat but instead it should be an advantage to have Jews residing in ones country.

The combination between the love and necessity to have a Jewish state combined with the intelligence of the Jewish people not only in terms of the importance of community but also in their ability to make business placed the Jews in a very high status within society and often when people are asked how many Jews reside in their countries the numbers are way higher than reality, demonstrating that the impact Jews have in the world is huge, so big that once a crazy man decided to erase all of them from the map... Not only he didn't succeed, but his intentions left the strongest thought in every Jewish mind: JEWS WILL LIVE FOREVER AND SO WILL ISRAEL!

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