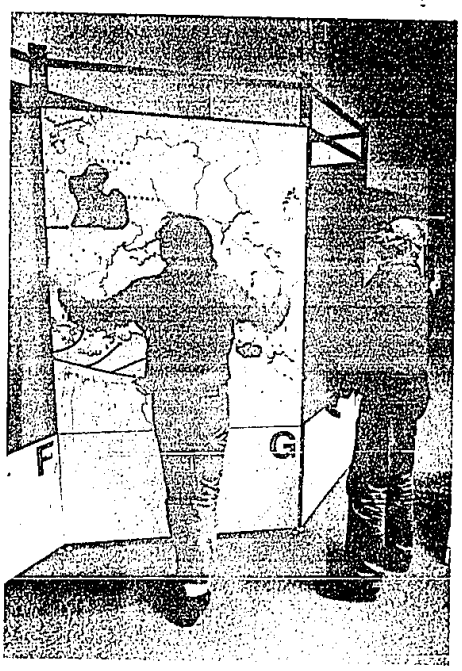
Exhibit tells story of Jews in Germany



GARY CASKEY/staff photographer

Konrad Zuingmann, left, and Dr. Roland Klemig start assembling the exhibit which depicts the Jewish influence in Germany. It opens on Sunday.

By Dan Vecchioni
staff writer

An exhibit, depicting the 900-year history of the Jewish influence in Germany, will be displayed for the first time outside Germany from Sunday through Wednesday, March 28, at the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple, west of Drake, in West Bloomfield Township.

"Jews in Germany under Prussian Rule," the first major undertaking of the yet-to-be-opened Holocaust Memorial Center, uses art, documents, photographs, films, music and speakers to relate the contributions made by Jews in Germany — from the time of the Crusades to the fall of the Third Reich.

"It's a major coup for us," said Rabbi Charles Rosenzveig, the center's director, who explained the exhibit later will be displayed in New York, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Baltimore and Pittsburgh. "It's a remarkable exhibit, the most important this community has had."

According to Rosenzveig, the exhibit covers the interaction between Jews and Germans from 975, when the first reference was made of Jews in Germany, to the Holocaust of the early 1940s. It shows the contribution of Jewish authors, composers, philosophers, doctors, scientists, artists, athletes and politicians.

"It's an amazing reading," Rosenzveig said. "It shows how far back German anti-Semitism goes and how, in spite of it all, the Jewish contribution flourished and succeeded in enriching its own culture immensely and Germany generally."

THE EXHIBIT was conceived and assembled by Roland Klemig, the director of picture archives in Berlin. Klemig, a non-Jew who served in the German army during World War II, was commissioned to develop an exhibit on the Prussian culture in general, but became convinced the Jewish contribution deserved major treatment, Rosenzveig said.

The exhibit was brought to the United States through the cooperation of the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany and Lufthansa German Airlines.

In addition to more than 1,000 blowups and montages that will be on display in the Jewish Community Center lobby the next few weeks, the exhibit will feature:

- "Our Time in the Garden," a 15-minute film that relates the true story of a young Jewish woman growing up in Berlin at the time of Hitler's rise to power. It will be shown on the hour from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.
- "Jakob the Liar," a 1976 award nominee for best foreign film. It will be shown at 1 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tuesday. Admission is $2 for adults and $1.50 for students and senior citizens.
- "The Art of the Holocaust," a presentation by Sybil Milton, chief archivist of the New York Leo Baeck Institute, a repository of the German Jewish Heritage. She will speak at 8 p.m. Thursday, March 8.
- "David," the 1979 Berlin Film Festival winner which deals with life in Berlin from a child's perspective. It will be shown at 1:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. Sunday, March 11. Admission is $2 for adults and $1.50 for students and senior citizens.
- "The Distorted Image — Jews in *the Weimer Republic," a presentation* by Sidney Bolkosky, professor of history at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. He will speak at a lunch at 12:30 p.m. Monday, March 12. Reservations are required.
- A Kurt Weill review, showcasing the music and theater of Weill as produced by local entertainer Phil Marcus Esser. It will be presented at 8:15 p.m. Thursday, March 15. Admission is $5.
- "Religious Changes in 19th Century Germany," a presentation by Rabbi Gunther Plaut, senior scholar of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto. He will speak at 8 p.m. Monday, March 19.
- "Science vs. Government in Germany between the Wars," a presentation by Abraham Liboff, chairman of the physics department at Oakland University. He will speak at 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 21.
- "Luther and the Jews," a presentation by the Rev. Eric Gritsch, professor of church history and director of the Institute for Luther Studies at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pa. He will speak at 8 p.m. Thursday, March 22.
- A program of German Jewish music, presented by Jason Tickton, professor of music at Wayne State University, accompanied by soloists Annette Chajes and Helen Rowin. The program will be at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, March 25.
- A recounting of experiences in Germany prior to World War II by Rabbi Ernst Conrad, Ernest Gans, Erna Butzel Herz and Alex Roberg. It will be at 8 p.m. Monday, March 26.

THE EXHIBIT, Rosenzveig said, is an example of the type of projects that will be sponsored by the Holocaust Memorial Center, which currently is under construction on the grounds of the Jewish Memorial Center.

The Holocaust Memorial Center, which is expected to be complete in July and opened in September, will be "a world class institution and will make Michigan a major area of the world," he said. It will remind people of what happened and allow them to learn from the positive actions of others, he added.

Further information on the exhibit or the center may be obtained by calling Rosenzveig at 661-0840.

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