85 YEARS TO THE NIGHT OF THE BROKEN GLASS

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THE WIENER LIBRARY FOR
THE STUDY OF THE NAZI
ERA AND THE HOLOCAUST
On the 9th of November 2023, we mark 85 years to the Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass or The November pogrom).
The Kristallnacht occurred between the 9th and the 10th of November 1938, in Germany and in Austria.
On that night, the Nazi party initiated violent riots. Jews were murdered and synagogues, Jewish shops and houses were demolished.\(^1\)
The November Pogrom was one of the major anti-Semitic occurrences, which aimed to exclude the Jews from the German economy. The cause given for these anti-Semitic and violent outbursts was the assassination of the German diplomat Ernst vom Rath by a 17 year old Jewish boy named Herschel Grynszpan, on the 7th of November in Paris.  

Hundreds of synagogues, Jewish shops and homes were burned. The firemen were ordered to prevent the fire from spreading to the other buildings but not to extinguish the fire. The S.A and the Hitler youth across the nation, smashed the windows of more than 7,500 shops, and looted their merchandize. The Night of Broken Glass got his name due to all the shattered glass from the Jewish shops, synagogues and homes.

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3 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

4 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
The pictures are from:
After the pogrom, the Nazi government made an announcement that the Jews are the ones to blame for the violent riots, thus they will have to pay the tremendous fine of billion Reichsmark. Moreover, the Reich forbade the German insurance companies to help the Jews who were also forced to clean all the debris off the streets.  

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The pictures are from:
Shops in Berlin after the pogrom

The pictures are from:
ARTICLES FROM NOVEMBER 1938 ON THE POGROM

FROM THE WIENER ARCHIVE
PRESS CUTTINGS COLLECTION
An article from The Daily Telegraph, November 15th 1938

An article from The News Chronicle, November 23th 1938
The denial of Goebbels upon harming the Jews
CHAPEL BURNT DOWN

It now becomes clear that less care was taken in the provinces to conceal the official condonation of the recent acts of anti-Semitic violence than was the case in Berlin. In some places the private flats of Jews were broken up before the eyes of the owners by Black Guards in uniform.

In Hanover, not only was the synagogue in the old town destroyed by fire, but a special expedition was made to the Jewish cemetery outside the city. The beautiful funeral chapel, which was built only a few years ago, was burnt down.

Conversations in Berlin and in the provinces show that the great mass of decent-thinking Germans are astounded and disgusted at the manner in which the wave of anti-Semitic hooliganism has been carried through.

Four or five times Aryan Germans, who are politically by no means opposed to the Nazi régime, have said to me: “For the first time in my life I am ashamed to be a German!”

Conservative Germans in Berlin were particularly disgusted by the sight of German soldiers in uniform taking part in the looting of the fashionable Dobrin Café on Thursday afternoon. The soldiers spear cakes with their bayonets and waved them round their heads.

An article from the Daily Telegraph
November 15th 1938
The burning of synagogues and Jewish homes
An article from the Daily Express
November 15th 1938
Goebbels:”Poor Jew is doing well”
Testimony of
Rosten P.
about the pogrom

In the following pages I shall describe, in the whole, only my personal experiences, what I have seen with my eyes or have heard with my ears. Should I mention events I have been told by other people I would make it quite clear.

In the night of November 9th to 10th 1938 — the night following the mysterious death of one of the German secretaries to the German Embassy in Paris, shot at by a young Jew — at Brunsau, the town where I lived, like in all the other towns in the whole of Germany the biggest Jewish Synagogue, a large building in the middle of the town, was set on fire by the SS and all Jewish shops were destroyed. In the morning I got the news by phone from my sister and went to see with my own eyes what I couldn’t believe. It was really true: the large building, situated next to the Police H.Q. was ablaze and walking home I saw the shattered windows in Jewish shops. I met many of the Gestapo lorries; giving the special hunting signal of the Gestapo, loaded with Jews who were brought to the Police H.Q. I went home to carry on with my practice. Very soon friends of ours whose husbands had been arrested by the SS called on us telling how it happened and asking advice. The whole day long I got news that acquaintances of ours had been taken to the Police, even a boy of 16. Jews walking in the streets were arrested; it was clear that the Gestapo was rounding up the whole male Jewish population, it was a real pogrom. From 11 o’clock in the morning my phone did not work, and I was awaiting the SS during the whole day. But at 6 o’clock next morning 3 SS-men came to fetch me and to bring me to the next Police Station. I was the first man arrested in our district on this day (November 11th). About 6 men in plain clothes were sitting in one room there with long lists, apparently checking the list of the Jews in that district, who had to be arrested. Every few minutes one or more newcomers arrived, all Jews or of Jewish origin, very many of them, of course, acquaintances of mine. None of us knew what happened to the men arrested the day before. I was rather sure that they were kept still at Police H.Q. In the middle of the morning we were brought by a lorry there, where we had to remain the whole day in a courtyard standing without any possibility of sitting down. Till the late afternoon more Jews arrived. From time to time we
ACT OF COURAGE

THE SAVING OF THE SYNAGOGUE IN WÖRLITZ ON NOVEMBER 10TH, 1938
ACT OF COURAGE - THE SAVING OF THE SYNAGOGUE IN WÖRLITZ ON NOVEMBER 10TH, 1938

This summary is based on an article in the *Jüdische Allgemeine*, from November 1st, 2011.

The little synagogue in Wörlitz had been built by Duke Leopold the III in 1789/90 and gifted to the local Jewish community of 140 members.

The German comedian Dieter Hallervorden recounts the story of what his grandfather Hans, a garden inspector in the royal park of Wörlitz, did on November 10th, 1938. Hans had just returned from a long and exhausting trip and wished to go to sleep. Since he was a dutiful person, he did his nightly round in “his” park. What he discovered left him with an uneasy feeling. It was 11 pm and the light was still on in the synagogue. He went to investigate and found two suspicious looking men inside. He immediately understood what they were up to – the day before, the synagogue in Dessau had been burned down during the pogrom. Preparations have already been made: wood pieces were on the floor and gasoline containers stood ready for use.

Hallervorden shouted at them and tried to force them out. A brave woman from the neighborhood came to his help. Together, they managed to chase them away and the synagogue remained unharmed. For the rest of the night, Hans stayed in the synagogue to guard the place.

Two weeks later, due to pressure by the Nazis, he was fired from his position.