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Recollections of the November Pogrom of 1938

09 Nov 2017



The “November Pogrom”, “Kristallnacht” or “Night of Broken Glass”, are all terms used to describe the pogrom carried out against Jews on the territory of the German Reich during the night of the 9-10 November 1938. The pogrom was portrayed as a spontaneous outburst by the population in response to the assassination of the German embassy official Ernst von Rath by the 17-year-old Jew Herschel Grynszpan in Paris on 7 November 1938.

Jewish businesses, apartments and synagogues were plundered, decimated and confiscated; thousands of Jews were arrested and, in part, deported to concentration camps, where many of them were murdered. In Vienna alone 40 synagogues were destroyed.

In his recollections Friedrich Zawrel describes the transition from the discrimination of the Jews to their systematic persecution, which ultimately culminated in the Holocaust. “During the night of the 9-10 of November the synagogues and temples were ablaze. In Vienna the persecution of the Jews commenced. Their businesses and apartments were plundered. They were driven out of the schools and universities and completely excluded from public life.”

Lizzi Jalkio, whose life story was published in volume 1 of the series “Recollections”, describes her experiences: “I lived through the tenth of November in Vienna, and even if it should be terrible in the foreign land, children, after this day nothing can seem terrible and intolerable.”

Many eyewitnesses refer to this notorious date in their recollections and describe the events of the November Pogrom against the backdrop of their own family’s experiences.

- Life stories related to the "November Pogrom" in German
- Life stories related to the "November Pogrom" in English