

A Burning Synagogue in a Small Town in Hesse (November 9, 1938)

Abstract

This image depicts the burning of a synagogue in the small town of Ober-Ramstadt in the province of Hesse. Local residents set the building ablaze the morning after the Kristallnacht pogrom on November 9, 1938. In a pattern of behavior repeated throughout Germany on that day, the local fire department ensured that no surrounding “Aryan” buildings were destroyed and allowed the fire to continue in the synagogue, thereby ensuring its destruction. A local Jew and life-long resident of Ober-Ramstadt, Julius Berndorf, twenty-three years-old on the day this photograph was taken, recounted to a reporter for the Jewish Journal in the postwar years that he remembered watching the flames engulf the building from his home nearby. The pogrom in 1938 occurred all over Germany; the hatred and violence that erupted and damaged Jewish homes, shops, and religious sites and intimidated thousands of Jewish families was not isolated to major cities like Berlin, Munich, and Frankfurt. As this photograph proves, small towns and neighborhoods willingly took part in these attacks, too.

Source



Source: Photo of burning synagogue in Ober-Ramstadt, Hesse, November 9, 1938. Photo: Georg Schmidt. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Trudy Eisenberg.

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