

The Morning after the Night of Broken Glass in Kassel (November 10, 1938)

Abstract

The Nazi leadership immediately seized upon Grynspan's crime and exploited it for its own ends. The National Socialist press presented the incident as part of a plot fomented by "international Jewry," and the regime used it as a pretext for the final expropriation of Germany's remaining Jews and their subsequent expulsion from the Reich. On November 7 and 8, scattered eruptions of antisemitic acts of violence took place at Goebbels' command. These outbursts were officially described as signs of the German people's outrage. After learning of Ernst vom Rath's death on the afternoon of November 9, Hitler authorized Goebbels to stage a nationwide pogrom. That evening, Goebbels spoke to a group of party leaders who had gathered in Munich for the 15th anniversary of the Beer Hall Putsch and instructed them to launch a seemingly spontaneous retaliation against Jewish individuals and institutions. The party and the SA were to direct the action but were not to be seen as its organizers. At the same time, Heinrich Müller and Reinhard Heydrich instructed all German police authorities not to interfere with these acts of violence. The sole task of the police was to carry out mass arrests of Jews, to protect "Aryan" and foreign persons and property, and to prevent looting. During the night, an unprecedented wave of violence and destruction engulfed Germany's Jews. Their apartments, houses, businesses, and factories were devastated and looted. Jewish cemeteries and graves were desecrated. Nearly all of Germany's synagogues and its more than 1,000 Jewish places of worship were destroyed. According to later insurance estimates, the losses amounted to 39 million Reichsmarks for fire damage, 6.5 million for broken windowpanes, and 3.5 million for stolen property. Photo by Carl Eberth.

Source



Source: The Jewish community center in Kassel, looted and destroyed. Date: November 10, 1938. Photo: Carl Eberth.

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