

Kurt Fuchsl, 7 years old

'What happened, as recounted to me by Mother, was that an interior decorator had taken a picture of our beautiful living room and displayed this picture of our apartment in his shop window. A Frau Januba saw the picture and heard that we were Jewish. She came around to the apartment and asked if it was for sale. She was told it wasn't, but a few days later, on the morning of Kristallnacht, she came back with some officers and said, "This apartment is now mine." ...we were told we had to leave by six that evening. When my mother protested to the officers that she had a sick child at home who was already asleep they told her, "All right...but you have to get out by six in the morning."

Oskar Prger, Furth, 9

'In the night, at about 2 a.m. I was rudely awakened by a man in brown uniform whom I recognized as an S.A. man. He shouted at me to get up and get dressed quickly. I was stunned at his tone, and whilst dressing I saw him throw my wristwatch, which I had got for my ninth birthday, on the floor – and with his heel he ground it into the floor. Then I saw him take my books, tear them up and throw them around the room. They were not Hebrew books but standard German reading books which children had at the time.'

Rita Braumann, Nov. 10 was her 12th birthday, Cologne

'My girlfriend Helga, who lived nearby, came to wish me a happy birthday and was still at our place when the doorbell rang at 10:30 a.m. My father, who had meanwhile pinned his wartime decorations to his lapel, opened the front door. There stood several storm troopers, who asked politely: "Are you Braumann, is this house your property and is this your family?" When he told Helga was my friend they turned to this blonde and blue-eyed girl and said, "You couldn't be Jewish too?" When she nodded they yelled, "Get yourself home." She burst into tears and ran. To us they said politely: Go upstairs to your bedrooms... We heard the systematic destruction of all our furniture with tools they must have brought up from the cellar, because they were not carrying anything when they arrived. The noise was terrifying. We went on the balcony, neighbors were on theirs and wanted to know what was happening, but we were too frightened to reply. Finally there was silence. The sight that awaited us downstairs was unbelievable. Absolutely everything had been demolished...Suddenly the telephone rang...it was the mother of one of my school friends to enquire whether my scheduled birthday party was still taking place that afternoon!! In all this debris stood my new three-speed bike, only slightly damaged but never to be used by me.'

Esther Ascher, Breslau, 14

'The evening of November 9 1938 was not different from any other evening. My two older brothers were reading, my younger brother and I sat around and talked. We went to bed around 10:30. Suddenly we were awakened to the sound of shattering glass and loud shouts...we quickly retreated to the room, shaking our heads, attempting to guess the meaning of what we were witnessing. Our mother was not only afraid of what would happen to us, she was also a woman of action. She gave each one of us twenty marks, which was not a great deal of money, but I suppose that was all she had. She gave us instructions to hold this money in case we were separated...After a few hours, relative quiet returned to the street...I must admit, that I, a 14 year-old girl, even though I deep down knew what had happened could only mean disaster perpetrated against Jews, speculated about what I would be able to do with the sudden windfall of twenty marks...there was not much time for daydreaming. The phone began to ring...'

Edith Trzeciak, Stuttgart

Her stepfather told her to get dressed, 'and we took the streetcar to as close as we could to downtown. I remember a lot of fire and smoke and it scared me. All the big stores had broken

windows and fire and smoke. I had never been near a fire before. There was a lot of noise. Shouting and screaming and some "bad" words I had never heard before. There were men in uniform, and Dad told me not to be scared. He was crying, and I vaguely remember seeing some other people cry to. But a whole lot were cheering and yelling "Heil Hitler."...I had one fear, 'that some kids I knew would see me and laugh at me, because my Dad was carrying me like a baby and hugging me close to him. And I do recall seeing some kids whom I knew in Hitler Youth and Bundesmaedel uniforms. Not being one of them was the great tragedy of my life at that age, and now they would see me like a baby. Little did I know how lucky I was.'

Henry Stern, Stuttgart, 14 years old

On the morning of Nov 10: 'I was on my way to school when I saw the flames and the smoke rising from the big synagogue (which was adjacent to the Jewish school). The fire engine stood by but did nothing. There was a huge crowd of people standing there and I remember clearly that there was complete silence. (Not a jubilating crowd, as was generally reported in the German press.) I, of course, was in shock and ran home crying.'

A Letter by a Firefighter

This letter was written by a retired fireman, who remembered "Crystal Night" in Laupheim (Germany)

The alarm went off between 5-5:30 A.M., and as usual, I jumped on my bicycle towards the firehouse. I had a strange feeling when I got there and saw many people standing in front of it. I was not allowed to go into the firehouse to take the engines out, or even to open the doors. One of my friends, who lived next to the Synagogue, whispered to me, "Be quiet - the Synagogue is burning; I was beaten up already when I wanted to put out the fire."

Eventually we were allowed to take the fire engines out, but only very slowly. We were ordered not to use any water till the whole synagogue was burned down. Many of us did not like to do that, but we had to be careful not to voice our opinions, because "the enemy is listening."

Only after one of the party members was worried that his house was going to catch fire, were we allowed to use water. But, even then, we just had to stand and watch until the House of Prayers was reduced to rubble and ashes.

In the meantime, the marshalls rounded up the Jews and dragged them in front of the Synagogue, where they had to kneel down and put their hands above their heads. I saw with my own eyes how one old Jew was dragged down and pushed to his knees. Then the arsonists came in their brown uniforms to admire the results of their destruction.

....Everyone seemed rather quiet and subdued... We had to stand watch at the Synagogue to make sure there were no more smoldering sparks. My turn was from 10-11 and 2-3 P.M. The brown uniforms paraded around to admire their work.

As I was watching the destroyed Synagogue and the frail old Jews, I wondered whose turn would be next!... When would it be our turn? Will the same thing happen to our Protestant and Catholic Churches!

Mrs. Aaron

Source: Martina Klinner-Fruck , *Es ging Ja Ums Leben*, (Frankfurt/Main 1995). pp. 88-89.
Our apartment was raided during the night...At first they rang repeatedly. We did not open. Then they hammered on the door, so that we eventually opened it. The SS men were standing there and immediately beat my husband. They told me: Please go inside. We have an account

to settle with this gentleman'. They took him outside... The noise woke up the janitor... He went outside and found my husband lying on the sidewalk, unconscious. He carried him inside and I called our doctor. She said to me over the phone: please call a Jewish doctor. I will not come to you anymore'.

Susan's story : Nuremberg, 1938 16

...then came the dreadful 9th November, when my life changed dramatically. That night I woke up to noise, shouting and screaming. About 8 young storm troopers, drunk or crazed in some other way, smashed up our home. By the time they came into the bedroom I shared with my younger sister, they had done a lot of damage to other rooms and had locked my parents into their bathroom. My parents were terrified for their children and I could hear them screaming and shouting and then I became very frightened. I could not imagine what was happening to them. When the storm troopers came into our room, they pulled me out of bed and tore my night-dress to shreds. As a 15-year old, I was above all embarrassed. They then told me to get dressed and to get my clothes out of my wardrobe. This was of the heavy, continental type. When I stood in front of it, the 8 young men threw it over. No doubt this was to kill me and they left the room. Luckily there was so much destruction in the room, that a table, previously turned upside down, held the wardrobe at an angle long enough for me to wriggle out from underneath. The memory of that event will stay with me forever.

My concern was also for my little sister. She had crawled under her blankets, and her bed was completely covered with broken glass, but she was all right. The men departed to do more damage in other houses, and we were able to release our parents and survey the wreck which had been our home. Our elderly maid could not believe that Hitler, whom she admired, could be responsible for anything like this! ("If only our Führer knew about this!") A friend of mine, who was staying with us, was hiding on the balcony; she was freezing cold in her night-dress on a cold November night. She had told me the day before that she did not know whether to accept what her much loved Jewish step-father had explained about the Nazis, or what she had been told by her aunt, who was an ardent Nazi supporter and whom she had just been to visit. After that night she knew. When I took her to the station the next day, she begged me to come and stay on their farm near Munich with my family, so that no harm would come to us.

Joseph Wohlfarth, 6 years old, Frankfurt, morning of Nov 10

"There must have been a rumor or warning that Hitler Youth were breaking into Jewish homes, because my mother took me and my brother upstairs into my uncle's flat, where we hid in the bathroom. Eventually they broke in and there was a lot of noise, the sound of broken glass and furniture being thrown about. They came up into the apartment where we were hiding and found us, but because there were no men there they left us alone. After they left we went back down to our flat and found the place ransacked. I remember the first thing I saw was a wardrobe lying across the floor in the hall with my train set scattered over it and the engine without any wheels. I think this upset me more than anything else. I suppose the natural reaction of a child of my age."

Dr. Arthur Flehinger, Baden-Baden

All Jewish men in town were ordered to assemble on the morning of Nov. 10. Towards noon they were marched through the streets to the synagogue. Many non-Jews resented the round-up. 'I saw people crying while watching from behind their curtains. One of the many decent citizens is reported to have said, "What I saw was not one Christ, but a whole column of Christ figures, who were marching along with heads high..."