

**November 1938:**

**A Police Report from Bebra, Germany**

During the night, groups assembled and continued the destruction. One group gathered around 3 a.m. and destroyed the furniture in Jewish homes. Acts of stealing and plunder occurred, *if one is to believe the Jewish complaints*. In the course of destruction, damage was caused to property that had been Jewish in the past, but was recently transferred into Aryan hands. The destruction went on until dawn. In the morning, once it had been established that property had been stolen from the sites that were broken into, the police went into action. Signs were posted on the Jewish houses forbidding entry, and measures were taken to avoid looting. There were curious school children and youngsters. The children and youth caught stealing or destroying property were removed from the scene and their spoils were confiscated. The Jews living in town left in the course of November 8. To prevent plunder during the coming night, police reinforcement units were positioned and police rounds were increased. During November 9, 1938 entrances to Jewish homes were sealed off with wooden planks and police presence was reinforced....

## **Nov. 1938: A Letter by a Firefighter from 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...

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 were ordered not to use any water until the whole synagogue was burned down. Only after one of the Nazi 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 marshals 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...Everyone seemed rather quiet and subdued. We had to stand watch at the Synagogue to make sure there were no more smoldering sparks. 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?

## **We Remember Kristallnacht** (Mayor)

We remember that night as a moral obligation to the victims and the survivors as well as for ourselves, for the sake of our children, and for our community.

We remember that communities collaborated with the Nazis and therefore recognize our responsibilities to care for others in our midst who might be overlooked or victimized in their circumstances.

We remember that individuals exercise choice when perpetrating evil on their neighbors.

We remember so that individuals may refuse to become perpetrators, bystanders, or collaborators.

We remember knowing that how a society cares for and maintains its historical memory reflects its compassion toward the living.

Therefore, we remember *Kristallnacht* to remind ourselves and others to care for one another and be a community in which respect and justice thrive.