

Madison Ryan – First Place Elementary, Cornerstone Learning Community

Shattered Dreams

Kristallnacht, November 9th-10th, 1938, was the night of broken glass and shattered dreams. It was a night of horror for Jewish families and it was the beginning of the Holocaust.

On November 7th, 1938 a seventeen-year-old Jewish boy, Herschel Grynszpan, went to the German Embassy in Paris and shot Ernst von Roth, a German embassy official. Ernst von Roth was admitted to the hospital and later died from his wounds. After the shooting, news that a Jewish boy had shot a German official was released by propaganda filled newspapers and radio stations. The Jewish press was barred from printing the story.

The Nazi propaganda ads announced that all Jews were responsible for the shooting of von Roth making the Secret State Police (S.S.) and some Germans very upset. This information started an intense fury towards the Jewish people. On November 9th, 1938 mobs of civilian dressed S.S. Soldiers and anti-Jewish Germans broke into and destroyed Jewish stores, homes and synagogues. The synagogues prayer books were burned, personal items were broken or stolen and Jewish stores were vandalized and burned. At the end of the brutal pogrom, many Jewish men were taken away from their families. The life as many Jewish families had known, had come to an end.

The morning after the pogrom 7,500 Jewish businesses and 275 synagogues had been destroyed or burned. Ninety-one Jews died that night. The S.S. arrested up to 30,000 Jewish men and moved many of them to concentration camps of Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsehausen. In the aftermath of Kristallnacht a massive number of Jews wanted to leave Germany as quickly as possible. Unfortunately many neighboring countries stopped allowing the entry of almost all Jews. Also, obtaining a visa from another country was very difficult and if one was granted it

was very costly. Many Jewish merchants could not afford one because of the expenses they had spent to repair their businesses after Kristallnacht.

It is important to remember Kristallnacht so we do not repeat this horrible night. It is also important to remember not to judge people by religion and that people are humans too, they have feelings, families, and dreams just like everyone else. It is not fair that people take away these things just because their religions and beliefs are different from our own.

Sources

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