Kristallnacht

What Is Kristallnacht?

- Means "Night of Crystal" in German
- Two-day wave of violent anti-Jewish attacks throughout Germany and German-occupied Austria
- Took place on November 9 and 10, 1938

How Did Kristallnacht Start?

- 17-year-old Polish Jew shoots German diplomat in revenge for his family's persecution
- Josef Goebbels, Nazi Germany's Propaganda Minister, gives inflammatory speech, stating it would not be surprising if the Germans took the law into their own hands and attacked the Jewish community.
- Within hours, Kristallnacht began.

What Happened?

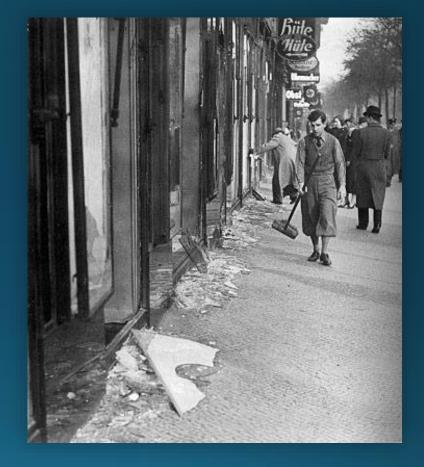
- 1,668 synagogues ransacked
- 267 synagogues burned
- 7,500 storefronts of Jewish-owned businesses shattered
- Jewish cemeteries desecrated in many regions
- Approximately 30,000 Jewish men arrested and deported
- At least 91 Jews killed during Kristallnacht

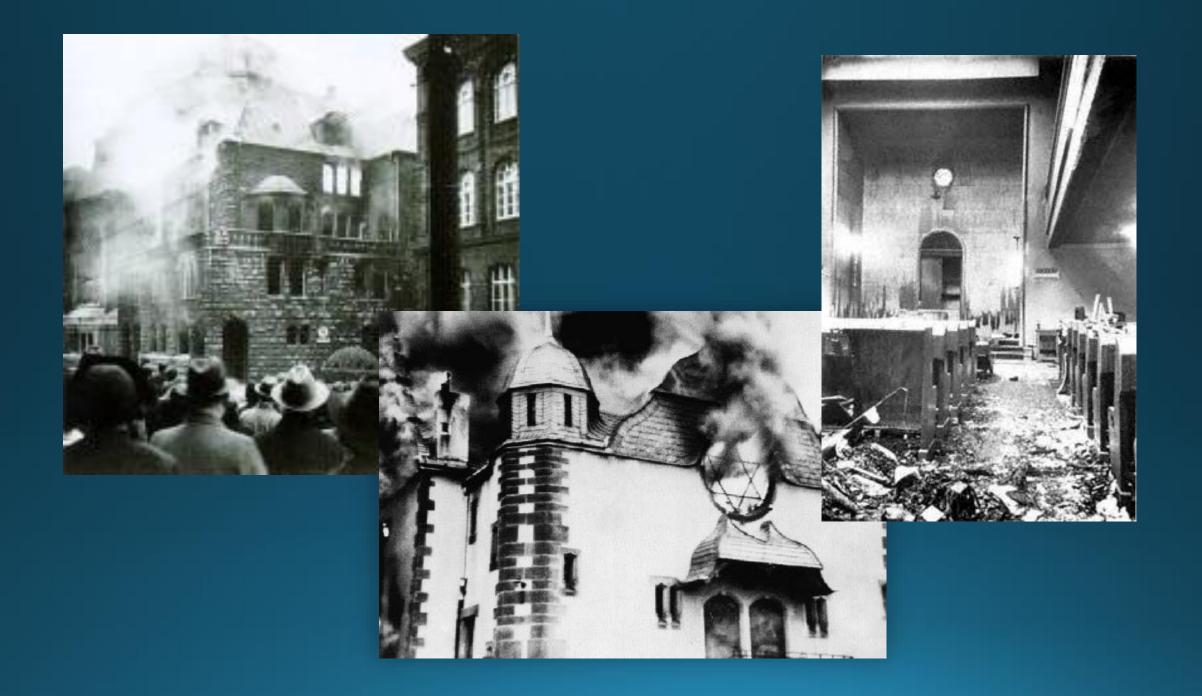


What Happened? (cont.)

- Attacks were especially destructive in Berlin and Vienna, home to the two largest Jewish communities in the German Reich.
- Mobs of *Nazi* paramilitary men roamed the streets, terrorizing and beating Jews they encountered.







Aftermath of Kristallnacht

- Top Nazi leaders meet to access damage and place responsibility for it.
- Nazis announce that "the Jews" themselves were to blame for the attacks.
- Huge fine (millions) is imposed on the German-Jewish community.
- German government confiscates all insurance payouts to Jews who lost their homes or businesses.



In the Weeks That Followed...

- Dozens of laws depriving Jews of their property and their means of making a living
- New laws barring Jews from practicing most professions
- Decrees removing Jews from public life

Significance of Kristallnacht

- Turning point in Nazi Germany's persecution of Jews
- Lack of response by the German people signaled to the Nazis that public was prepared for more radical measures
- Jews removed entirely from German economic and social life
- Nazi policies of forced emigration and, ultimately, deportation of Jews to death camps

Who Spoke Out Against Kristallnacht?

- President Roosevelt recalled the American Ambassador in Germany in protest.
- Widespread condemnation in the US press but little concrete action
- For the most part, the world was silent and did not act to save the Jews.