

## ***Kristallnacht* information sheet**

On 9 and 10 of November 1938, the Nazi regime and their collaborators conducted a series of attacks called 'pogroms' against the Jewish population in Germany and the other occupied territories. Pogrom is a Russian word meaning 'to wreak havoc, to demolish violently'. This event became known as *Kristallnacht* or 'Night of Broken Glass' because of the shattered glass that filled the streets after the vandalism and destruction of synagogues, Jewish-owned businesses and homes. As you will hear in the audio clip from an oral history interview with former Welsh resident Julius Weil, who was a young child in Germany at the time, schools were also targeted and destroyed.



*Interior view of the destroyed Fasanenstraße Synagogue, Berlin, burned during the November Pogroms, November 1938.*

*Image: Center for Jewish History, New York City.  
Courtesy of Leo Baeck Institute.*



*Germans pass by the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business that was destroyed during Kristallnacht, 10 November 1938.*

*Image: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives # 86838.  
Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.  
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During *Kristallnacht*, at least 91 people were murdered, and many others took their own lives. Around 30,000 Jewish males were taken to concentration camps, particularly those at Buchenwald, Dachau and Sachsenhausen. Concentration camps were areas where large numbers of people were imprisoned and subjected to forced labour (in WW2, they were also places to await deportation to death camps). This was the first time that Nazi officials made large-scale arrests of Jews simply because they were Jews.

Following *Kristallnacht*, the Nazi regime forced the Jewish community to pay a 1 billion Reichsmark 'atonement tax' and quickly passed many anti-Jewish laws. *Kristallnacht* was the trigger for many Jews to flee Germany if they could. Julius Weil came to England with his school and later moved to Merthyr Tydfil, becoming an active member of the local Jewish community.



*Arnold Weil, Köln, April 1936.*

*Image: Jewish History Association of South  
Wales/Cymdeithas Hanes Iddewig De Cymru  
(JHASW/CHIDC).  
Courtesy of Julius Weil.*