When Violence Went Public

Trace the causes, effects, and international response to the November pogrom.

SS24.HOS.8 "Analyze the causes and effects of the November pogrom (Kristallnacht) and how it transitioned the Nazis' antisemitic activities from targeted persecution and antisemitic policy to open..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the pretext and Nazi choices behind the attacks, circle two effects on Jewish religious or community life, and number each country's action and its limit as a pair.

The November Pogrom of 1938

1 On November 7, 1938, a Jewish teenager shot German diplomat Ernst vom Rath in Paris; vom Rath died two days later. Nazi leaders used the shooting as a pretext to attack Jews, blaming an entire community for one person's act. On the night of November 9 and into November 10, Nazi Party activists and others smashed Jewish shop windows, burned synagogues, and attacked Jewish people across Germany and annexed Austria. Authorities often stood aside, and police were told not to stop attacks on Jewish property. This violence was organized and publicly visible, not a spontaneous protest.

2 Before the pogrom, laws such as the 1935 Nuremberg Laws had stripped Jews of citizenship, and earlier attacks had already threatened them. The pogrom did not begin Nazi violence, but it made coordinated assaults on Jewish lives and institutions unmistakable in public. Hundreds of synagogues were burned or damaged; prayer books and Torah scrolls were destroyed. Losing these places and objects disrupted worship, community gatherings, and the passing on of traditions. About 30,000 Jewish men were sent to concentration camps. The regime then imposed a huge fine on Jews for the destruction, adding financial pressure to terror.

3 News of the attacks reached other countries quickly. President Franklin D. Roosevelt condemned the violence and recalled the U.S. ambassador to Germany for consultations. Yet the United States did not raise its immigration quotas to admit more Jewish refugees. Britain allowed thousands of mostly Jewish children to enter through the Kindertransport, beginning after the pogrom, but most parents could not accompany them. Many governments voiced outrage while keeping barriers to refugees. These mixed responses offered some children safety and signaled disapproval, but they left many families with few routes out of Nazi-controlled lands.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why was the diplomat's shooting a pretext rather than a justification for the pogrom? Include one Nazi choice that helped turn it into widespread violence.

2. How did the pogrom change the form of Nazi persecution without being the start of violence against Jews?

3. How could the destruction of synagogues and religious objects affect Jewish communities beyond the night of the attacks?

4. Compare the U.S. and British responses. What did each country do, and what limit reduced its help to Jewish refugees?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four- or five-sentence museum label about the November pogrom. Explain how Nazi actions turned a pretext into public violence, describe one lasting effect on Jewish cultural or religious life, and judge the help offered to refugees using an example from both the United States and Britain.

ANSWER KEY

When Violence Went Public

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the pretext and Nazi choices behind the attacks, circle two effects on Jewish religious or community life, and number each country's action and its limit as a pair. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why was the diplomat's shooting a pretext rather than a justification for the pogrom? Include one Nazi choice that helped turn it into widespread violence.	**Nazi leaders blamed all Jews for one person's act. Party activists attacked Jews and their property, while police were told not to stop attacks on Jewish property.**
2	How did the pogrom change the form of Nazi persecution without being the start of violence against Jews?	**Laws and earlier attacks had already persecuted Jews. The pogrom made coordinated attacks on people, businesses, and synagogues widespread and publicly visible.**
3	How could the destruction of synagogues and religious objects affect Jewish communities beyond the night of the attacks?	**Damaged synagogues disrupted worship and gatherings; destroyed prayer books and Torah scrolls made it harder to practice and pass on traditions.**
4	Compare the U.S. and British responses. What did each country do, and what limit reduced its help to Jewish refugees?	**The United States condemned the attacks and recalled its ambassador but did not raise immigration quotas. Britain admitted children through the Kindertransport, but most parents could not accompany them.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Nazi leaders used a diplomat's death as a pretext for organized public attacks on Jews in Germany and annexed Austria. Burned synagogues and destroyed Torah scrolls deprived communities of places to worship and objects central to religious life. The United States condemned the attacks but did not raise immigration quotas, leaving many refugees with few ways to enter. Britain admitted children through the Kindertransport, yet most parents could not join them, so its help remained limited.

Accept other passage-supported effects on Jewish community life and judgments that distinguish public condemnation from practical aid. Do not accept claims that the pogrom was the first Nazi violence against Jews or that immigration barriers ended after it.