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Alan E. Steinweis

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Alan E. Steinweis : Kristallnacht 1938 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Kristallnacht 1938:

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Broken GlassBy woganThis is a small book that contains much information that does not seem to be readily available about this incident in history. There are 32 pages of notes, the book itself seems to be well researched and documented. The post war trials and even Goebbels' diary were sources. It starts with a fascinating introduction that explains the German aversion to the word Kristallnacht. The main focus of

the book unlike many others is not on the victims but on the perpetrators. There is much help to understand the German society's inclination to accept the events and actions against the Jewish population. Most Germans were not involved in any of these actions but there is a chapter that is worth the price of the book alone; dealing with the response and opinions of the German population. There are attempts to explain the violence and why so many fell into it along with the SA, including the policemen and firemen that stood by watching the brutality and humiliations heaped upon the Jewish citizens. The book concludes with a chapter dealing with the legal trials after the war and the problems in prosecuting those that committed these crimes. The writing is detailed, even to the extent of descriptions of the weather for Kristallnacht. The book is written in an easy to understand style but the subject matter makes for very hard reading in this case in point of man's inhumanity to man. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An Important Book By Beatlesfan This exhaustive account of the night of broken glass is a must-read for anyone who wants to know what really happened to the Jews in Nazi Germany before the horror of the Holocaust. Kristallnacht was the opening battle in Hitler's sick racist crusade against the Jews, and this is unpleasant, but necessary, reading. The author has uncovered so many strange details in addition to the ones that are already well-known. For instance, the thugs did not only burn down and trash shops, homes, and synagogues--some even took the time to defecate into the shoes in Jewish shops. What kind of human being does that? A Jewish student tries to attend his usual class and is greeted by objects being thrown at him by his fellow students. Bewildered, he's told outside the door by his teacher, "leave Germany. Good luck." There are so many simply heartbreaking stories here. A great piece of scholarship. 9 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Excellent scholarly study of the Kristallnacht By John Sollami This book examines how, on the night of November 9, 1938, Adolph Hitler and the Nazi bureaucracy ignited all of Germany, from Berlin to the tiniest of hamlets, and set loose two days of lawless ramage, rape, murder, and mayhem against a hapless German Jewish population. These events were instigated by a shooting on November 7 in Paris of a low-level German diplomat by a Jewish teenaged boy who was distraught because of the treatment his family was receiving in Germany. Convinced that this incident was just another part of World Jewry's plot to destroy the Reich, Goebbels pushed Hitler to put his stamp of approval on teaching the Jews a lesson. That lesson was administered by the SA (Storm Troopers) and SS, who were given the green light "at the highest level" to break the law, burn every synagogue in Germany, destroy Jewish shops and property, and harass the Jews themselves. Local police were explicitly told to stand down. What the author points out in details taken from subsequent testimony after the event and from post-war trials, is that many ordinary Germans participated in the torture, beatings, rapes, and murders of their Jewish neighbors, including German school children, women, and the Hitler Youth party. Those Germans who disapproved were cowed into silence. Many of those who did disapprove did so only for the economic damage the riots caused, not because they felt Jews were innocent. In addition, 30,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps, many for as long as a month, and hundreds perished there, a harbinger of things to come. What's interesting is how Goebbels fought back against British, French, and American condemnation of this orchestrated barbaric event. He accused them of hypocrisy. All of them had their own histories of genocide, and all of them refused to take the Jews in as immigrants. One feels frustrated at the truth of this and wishes those immigration policies were different, but in America anti-Semitism certainly was no stranger in the halls of Congress. This book is well documented, clearly written, and deserves to be read by anyone seeking to understand how the worst event in the history of the human race, the Holocaust, came to be. Its origins were clearly evident in the Kristallnacht of 1938.

On November 7, 1938, a Jewish teenager, Herschel Grynszpan, fatally shot a German diplomat in Paris. Within three days anti-Jewish violence erupted throughout Germany, initially incited by local Nazi officials, and ultimately sanctioned by the decisions of Hitler and Goebbels at the pinnacle of the Third Reich. As synagogues burned and Jews were beaten in the streets, police stood aside. Men, women, and children many neighbors of the victims participated enthusiastically in acts of violence, rituals of humiliation, and looting. By the night of November 10, a nationwide antisemitic pogrom had inflicted massive destruction on synagogues, Jewish schools, and Jewish-owned businesses. During and after this spasm of violence and plunder, 30,000 Jewish men were rounded up and sent to concentration camps, where hundreds would perish in the following months. Kristallnacht revealed to the world the intent and extent of Nazi Judeophobia. However, it was seen essentially as the work of the Nazi leadership. Now, Alan Steinweis counters that view in his vision of Kristallnacht as a veritable pogroma popular cathartic convulsion of antisemitic violence that was manipulated from above but executed from below by large numbers of ordinary Germans rioting in the streets, heckling and taunting Jews, cheering Stormtroopers' hostility, and looting Jewish property on a massive scale. Based on original research in the trials of the pogrom's perpetrators and the testimonies of its Jewish survivors, Steinweis brings to light the evidence of mob action by all sectors of the civilian population. Kristallnacht 1938 reveals the true depth and nature of popular antisemitism in Nazi Germany on the eve of the Holocaust.

From Booklist In November 1938, supposedly in response to the shooting of a German diplomat by a young Jew in Paris, an orgy of violence against Jews erupted across Germany. Synagogues burned, shops were looted, Jews were murdered in the streets and more than 30,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps. Historical accounts have

generally stressed the top-down nature of the attacks, emphasizing that the attacks were planned and organized by top Nazi officials and carried out with the incitement and participation of party members at the local level. In this compact but riveting study, Steinweis acknowledges the fundamental role of the Nazi hierarchy. However, Steinweis also convincingly maintains that much of the extreme violence perpetrated upon Jews was a spontaneous expression of the rabid anti-Semitism that permeated German society. Utilizing primary sources, including the voices of both victims and victimizers, he illustrates that ordinary Germans gleefully took part in what amounted to a pogrom against their fellow citizens. This is an outstanding re-examination of a seminal event along the road leading to mass murder. --Jay Freeman Illuminating...To capture the full significance of Kristallnacht, it is necessary to see the pogrom not in hindsight, but through contemporary eyes and that is the achievement of Steinweis's short but revelatory book. Knowing what came after, we tend to see the pogrom of November 1938 as a prelude to genocide; but to those who lived through it, it was precisely the unprecedented quality of Kristallnacht that made it so momentous. (Adam Kirsch The Tablet 2009-11-10)A great deal has been written about these appalling events, but Alan Steinweis makes excellent use of a hitherto untapped source, namely the documentary record of more than 1,000 separate trials, involving some 7,000 perpetrators, conducted in Germany and Austria in the years following the end of the war, to tell the story again. His account adds fresh and often illuminating depth and detail to the familiar picture, and for anyone looking for a readable and accurate portrayal of the pogrom, its origins and its aftermath, this book is now the best place to go... Deliver[s] a powerful, nuanced and detailed account that should be required reading for everyone concerned with the history of Nazism and indeed more generally with the place of racial hatred in the modern world. (Richard J. Evans Times Higher Education 2010-03-11)In this brief but searing book, Steinweis provides a vivid retelling, buttressed by numerous accounts of individual incidents and also provides a new slant on what actually happened in those terrible days. (Martin Rubin Washington Times 2009-11-29)Steinweis analyzes newly released internal memos and court documents from the trials of the pogrom's perpetrators, enabling us to better understand the day that set the stage for the murder of the Jews of Europe. (Jewish Book World 2010-06-01)Utilizing primary sources, including the voices of both victims and victimizers, he illustrates that "ordinary" Germans gleefully took part in what amounted to a pogrom against their fellow citizens. This is an outstanding re-examination of a seminal event along the road leading to mass murder. (Jay Freeman Booklist 2009-11-15)Masterful, wise, and utterly convincing. This judicious and moving book depicts a conflagration that both continued the assault on Jews in Germany since 1933 and turned sharply toward unprecedented destruction. (Doris L. Bergen, Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Professor of Holocaust Studies, University of Toronto)Steinweis has radically changed our perspective on Kristallnacht, contributing new insights to the ongoing discussion of the extent and limits of popular anti-Semitism in Germany. (Peter Hayes, Professor of History and German, Northwestern University)A powerful, clearly written and convincing account of the range of human motivations that led a hate-filled minority to violently attack their neighbors and fellow citizens. Kristallnacht 1938 is an important advance in our understanding of the relationship between the Nazi regime and the German public in the years preceding World War II and the Holocaust. (Jeffrey Herf, author of The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust)Kristallnacht 1938 offers chilling insight into just how far, on the eve of the Shoah, members of the German public supported and encouraged radical policies designed to eliminate Jews from German society forever...It yields unexpected insights into the nature of a regime and society whose actions continue to unsettle the conscience of humankind. (Gordon J. Horwitz, author of Ghetto: The Making of a Nazi City)A subtle yet powerful account of the "Night of Broken Glass," perhaps the first national pogrom in history. Steinweis' probing yields a far more damning picture of complicity on the part of ordinary people than we are accustomed to. An important contribution, a much-needed corrective, and a disturbing book. (Richard S. Levy, Professor of History, University of Illinois at Chicago)A remarkable new look at the German pogrom of November 1938 that includes both clear local detail on the massive participation of Germans in assaults on their neighbors and also a balanced and thoughtful analysis of the whole event, its development, and its repercussions. (Gerhard L. Weinberg, author of A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II)About the AuthorAlan E. Steinweis is Professor of History and Director of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont.