

Kristallnacht is one of the most significant events in modern history, and it also holds particular significance for New Zealand. Its causes included the assassination of Ernst vom Rath and long-term tensions stemming from the Treaty of Versailles. Although the event itself lasted only four hours, its consequences, such as forced Aryanization and the expansion of concentration camps, had devastating and long-lasting impacts on Jewish communities and their descendants. The significance of Kristallnacht is also felt in New Zealand today, as we are home to the descendants of 29 Jewish children who were rescued and brought here in the years that followed.

The Assassination of Ernst vom Rath is an immediate cause for Kristallnacht because it provided the Nazi leadership with a politically useful incident to justify violence they had long been preparing for. On November 7th, 1938 Herschel Grynszpan brought a gun and went to the German embassy in Paris and shot the young German diplomat Ernst vom Rath 5 times. Herschel Grynszpan was 15 when he and his family fled from their home in Poland to France due to the rise of Hitler. When he was 17, Herschel found out his family had been forced from their home in Germany and dropped at the Polish border. This enraged Grynszpan and he wanted to get revenge, so on November 7th 1938 he brought a gun and went to the German embassy in Paris with no particular target in mind. He was escorted to Ernst vom Rath's office, the current German diplomat, to calm him down but when entering he shot Rath 5 times without even realising who he was. While he was being arrested he was yelling and shouting about the treatment of Jews in Germany. Nazi leaders quickly reframed the shooting as a deliberate attack by "international Jewry" on Germany. Goebbels in particular used the assassination as propaganda, presenting it as evidence that Jews were enemies of the German state. It gave the Nazis the opportunity they needed to launch a coordinated, state-sanctioned attack on Jewish communities across Germany and Austria.

Another cause for Kristallnacht is the Treaty of Versailles which created the political, economic, and social conditions that allowed extreme antisemitism to grow in Germany. The Treaty of Versailles was a document created by the four western powers; United Kingdom, France, Italy and the United States, also known as the Big Four to end the war and prevent another that brought great humiliation and antisemitism to Germany. The original armistice for WWI was signed November 11th 1918, in January 1918 Woodrow Wilson published a statement about "Fourteen Points", each a principle of peace. Germany expected this treaty to be based around those points but France, having suffered considerably throughout the war, wanted to be harsher on who they saw as the root problem, Germany. Many harsh clauses in the Treaty were directed at Germany such as the demilitarization of the Rhineland, a western area of Germany bordering the Rhine, the 13% land loss; Eupen-Malmedy to be given to Belgium, Hultschin district to Czechoslovakia, Pozan, West prussia and upper silesia to Poland, the return of Alsace and Lorraine to France and referendums being made for Danish-Germany and the massive reparations to be paid out to the Allied forces, around 6.6 Billion pounds or 1 Trillion Marks. None of these clauses were seen as more humiliating as the War Guilt clause of Article 231, it called for Germany to take full responsibility for starting the war and therefore giving them reason to cut the Army back to 100,000 men and the Navy to 15,000 sailors. These terms caused widespread humiliation and economic hardship, leading many Germans to feel angry and betrayed. As expected, Germans were outraged and called the Treaty "diktat" or dictated peace, Hermann Müller and Johannes Bell, the German diplomats who signed the Treaty, were labelled "The November Criminals" by right wing and nationalist parties that opposed the signing. When the Allies took 48% of Germany's Iron and Coal production land, limiting their economic power and making everything extremely expensive the "Stab-in-the-Back" myth was created and fed by Nationalists, Antisemites and Anti-

communists. It was saying that the German Jews sabotaged Germany from the inside leading to them surrendering and therefore all the damage that had been done to their beloved country, because antisemitism was rife throughout Europe from decades before most people believed this myth and others who just needed someone to blame went along with it. This is a long term cause because it happened 19 years prior to the event, it caused Kristallnacht by amplifying the antisemitism already in Germany from previous years and giving them a person to hate and blame for this dishonor to their esteemed country.

On the night of November 9th, all across Germany, Austria and Sudetenland, SA and Hitler Youth units took to the streets posing as civilians to carry out orders given from the top. At 11:50pm Heinrich Müller transmitted 3 orders to the Gestapo offices; Do not interfere with the actions taking place against Jews and their synagogues, they were to secure important archives from the synagogues before setting them alight especially the material in Cologne, and preparations for 20,000 - 30,000 Jews to be arrested should commence. 200 synagogues were set fire to and 1,000 others were damaged, Jews were beaten in the streets and forced into public acts of humiliation, 7,500 commercial establishments and many Jewish homes were broken into and vandalized, china and crystal smashed, many took to desecrating Jewish cemeteries and according to Gestapo records 91 Jews died, although many think it's more in the hundreds. This event took place in all of 4 hours but had many severe consequences and lasting significance.

A long term consequence of Kristallnacht is the concentration camps. On the night of November 9th the order was given to arrest 20,000 - 30,000 well to do, healthy Jewish men between the ages of 16 and 60, then deliver them to the available prison spaces and contact was to be made with the "appropriate concentration camp regarding the quickest committal of the Jews to the camp." Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen were the most finished and working concentration camps at the time therefore the ones who bore the brunt of the imprisonment. They were held for 3 months forced to work in horrendous conditions and hundred perished due to it. This was the first time a wide roundup had happened and led to imprisonment in concentration camps. Just 3 years after this event in 1941 the first extermination camp would be built, Chelmno in Poland, which on 8th of December 1941 would carry out the first murders of the 320,000 murders to be done there and in 1942 the biggest concentration camp turned into the biggest and most famous camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau, which killed 1.1 million Jews including 200,000 children and young people. The long term impact this had on the Jewish population is that of the 9,500,000 Jews living in Europe before the war there was little over $\frac{1}{3}$ left with around 6 million being murdered during Nazi reign and it still has impact on the survivors and their families who take their families to the remaining camps in a reminder and celebration of surviving.

Another consequence of Kristallnacht was Aryanization of Jewish businesses. Aryanization was the selling of Jewish businesses to German or non Jewish people. From 1933 till summer of 1938 it was voluntary, usually Jews who faced economic and social discrimination were encouraged to sell, in 1933 there were 100,000 Jewish businesses throughout Germany, half were small retail mostly dealing with clothes and footwear and the other half were factories/workshops/professional offices, lawyers, physicians and independents. After Kristallnacht, Aryanization became forced with new regulations prohibiting most economic activities to Jews, the remaining Jewish businesses were given a non-jewish trustee to oversee the immediate sale to a non jewish German. Majority of the sale money went into paying the wage of the trustee and the rest went to the Office of the Four Year Plan, which was led by Hermann Göring and was preparing Germany's economy for war. Jews who were attempting to emigrate were forced to forfeit most of their property and were charged a "Flight Tax" while any of the Jews who had decided to

stay tried to claim their insurance money for the damages had it confiscated from them. Aryanization is a short term consequence as it only affected the Jewish population of Germany for a few months, although did have lasting impact continuing after the war. This consequence was significant as it started to really have an impact on Jews by taking away their source of money which would lead to them having difficulties emigrating or providing for their families and getting sent to ghettos.

The significance of Kristallnacht on New Zealand was the 9 kids that entered the country via the Kindertransport project and the 20 who were saved independently. Between December 1938 and May 1940, there was a project to rescue 10,000 Jewish children under 17 and transport them to Great Britain and into children's homes safe and away from the Reich. There were 9 children that got transported from Great Britain to New Zealand during the 2 years that Kindertransport was still running. 3 years before Kindertransport was a global thing, Annie and Max Deckston who were originally from Belarus came to New Zealand in 1900, they were originally farmers but during the early 1930's they decided to set up an orphanage on a large property in Wellington for Jewish children. They ended up bringing 20 orphans to New Zealand, 8 in 1935 and 12 in 1937. This made New Zealand one of the few countries willing to take Jewish children at a time when most nations were closing their borders. These rescue efforts established an important humanitarian precedent for New Zealand. All of the children who went into the Deckston Orphanage all survived, some stayed in New Zealand for their lives and some moved to Australia where there were large Jewish communities. New Zealand had no qualms surrounding Jewish people so there weren't any real objections to this, but it was the first time we took in refugees leading up to and during a war. This has continued to the present day as we take in many refugees a year from various wars going on around the globe and this creates a diverse culture which people find safe and inviting to emigrate here.