



Prof. emeritus Arnold Friedmann: November 9th 1938 - 1989 - 2009 in Germany



(graphics: *rijo*)

On the occasion of the manifold celebrations of German reunification twenty years ago, Nuremberg born Prof. emeritus Arnold Friedmann now living in the U.S. remembered another November 9th which was scarcely covered by the media in 2009. This is what came to his mind:

To me the date brought back another November 9th - 71 years ago. I was thirteen at the time but I vividly remember everything that took place on that date:

It was an ordinary day at school in the Jewish high school Fürth (I had been expelled from the Gymnasium in Nuremberg two years earlier). It was also my last day in high school - ever.

I spent the afternoon studying for a geography test scheduled for November 10th. Some time between midnight and 1 o'clock we - my parents and my sister - woke up from very loud and angry banging on the door of our apartment. Seven or eight men in SA uniform stormed in and ran into every room of our large apartment. They shouted "Haussuchung" (house search) and never uttered another word. After about ten minutes they left.

We were upset and wondered what this was all about when the telephone rang 20 minutes later, one of several calls, and some neighboring Jewish families asked whether they could find refuge with us. Many came covered in blood from beatings they received from the invading SA men. They reported that much of their homes were destroyed. We were horrified when my mother's aunt with her two teenaged children came and reported that our great-uncle had been beaten to death in front of the family.

That night was the well organized pogrom which the Nazis staged all over Germany. All Jewish stores were targeted, as well as Jewish homes. The vast amount of broken glass gave that night the name of *Kristallnacht* (crystal night / night of broken glass).

We were puzzled and indeed grateful that we were spared. We thought that it was due to the fact that my father was a twice-wounded officer in World War I, the holder of the Iron Cross for bravery, and known to the authorities through his work as a lawyer who specialized in helping other Jews to leave the country legally.

My father had felt that due to his war record the Nazis would leave him alone. He found out otherwise when he was picked up by the Gestapo a few days after *Kristallnacht* and mistreated in their cellars for several days. Through his considerable knowledge about emigration laws and perhaps a stroke of luck we were able to leave Nuremberg legally and arrived penniless but as a family in Palestine early in 1939.

On the morning of November 10th the doorbell rang. My mother and I were shocked when a man in SA uniform stood there. It turned out that he was the fiancé of our former maid (a 1935 law prohibited the employment of Gentiles by Jews). He brought us a bag of fresh, warm rolls and warned us not to go out that day. Then he left. Perhaps he was not one of the "righteous" to be honored by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem but to me it meant a lot. Not everybody was evil.

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