

Final Draft: Summative Writing Assignment

Kristallnacht was a horrible event that set a new standard for Jews living in Nazi-occupied Europe and changed the social atmosphere by affecting relationships between Jews and non-Jews. Nazis changed the atmosphere by discouraging Jewish sympathy and making sympathizing with the Nazis more appealing. The Nazis tried to isolate the Jews and make them want to move as far away as possible, even though they made it nearly impossible to do so. Anyone who sympathized with Jews was treated as though they were a Jew, sent to Dachau, or killed. One thing was certain: life as people knew it would never be the same.

The poem *Fugue for Kristallnacht* by William Heyen connects to the change in atmosphere in several ways. By repeating phrases and using sudden changes in the themes of his sentences, the poet emphasizes how shocking, terrifying, and confusing the event was. He shares how he lost some of the most important things in his life due to Kristallnacht. The first thing he mourns is the synagogue near which he lived. In the beginning of the poem he writes “Around the corner where I lived a beautiful synagogue was burning.” When his father comes home, he tells us, “ ... I didn’t recognize him. He didn’t talk and didn’t want to talk what happened to him.” Not only did he lose his synagogue, but he also lost his father, or at least the father he knew. Later in the poem Heyen writes, “We packed the little things that we could carry. My father said we didn’t know where we were going...” This phrase shows that not only did they lose their home, but they also had to leave behind the entire life they knew, including many of the memories they could not take with them. At this time, many Jews in Europe went through this tragedy, as well, and had to leave everything they had behind in order to move somewhere else and start a new life. Even scarier, in the beginning, many Jews did not understand why so many people were being killed. In the poem, to illustrate this point, the poet writes, “My father

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said we didn't know where we were going who will live who will die." In making public acts of violence against Jews acceptable for the public, Kristallnacht had a huge impact on the social atmosphere in Europe, creating a new atmosphere of fear for the Jews and a common "enemy" for everyone else.

The book *The Devil in Vienna* by Doris Orgel is about the friendship between a Jewish girl, Inge, and the Christian daughter of a Nazi officer, Lieselotte, living in Vienna in early 1938. The book shares their feelings and experiences during the beginning of the Nazi occupation of Europe, and the ways their lives changed because of the events of that time. In the book, an event that closely resembles Kristallnacht occurs at the jewelry store belonging to Evi's father, Herr Fried. The police break a hole through his window and take all the valuables, both the jewelry and the cash from the register. This incident is only the first in a series of Nazi anti-Semitic attacks on Jews or Jewish sympathizers in public. It embarrasses the Jewish community and contributes to the new social atmosphere of anti-Semitism. These events become more frequent, and soon public shamings (like forcing Jews to clean the streets with toothbrushes and ammonia) and anti-Jewish graffiti was common in the city. It was the beginning of the first stage, which would soon spread throughout Europe. Later, there would be ghettos, as well as concentration and death camps (the second stage).

Reflecting and writing journal entries about these events were valuable experiences, because I had the opportunity to write my opinion and the way I felt while reading these events. Writing my feelings down helped me deepen and understand my thoughts about these events. I was able to approach these two sources using various methods. When I was reading *Fugue for Kristallnacht* by William Heyen, I tried putting myself in his shoes. While I was reading, I

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thought of how terrifying, depressing and confusing Kristallnacht was. Reading the poem made me enraged in response to what was happening and would have made me lose faith in people. I also read the poem aloud as though I were him. I read in a frightened voice, stopping every time there was a period. The first time I read the poem I was confused. But, I feel as though I was supposed feel this way, since the events in the poem were so confusing.

When reading *The Devil in Vienna* by Doris Orgel I felt empathy for both Inge and Lieselotte. When I was reading as Inge, I felt worried about being separated from my family like Evi was, having my family's business attacked, and memories being stolen and taken away from me. I would have been scared of getting killed or injured as well as my family and friends. I would also be confused and nervous about what is happening and what is going to happen next. When I was reading as Lieselotte, I felt scared and nervous because of all the lives I was risking being friends with Inge. I also felt lonely, because all the people living in my community were Nazis, when I did not want to be a Nazi. I felt terrified of being punished and hated by everyone in my community, including my family.

Every time I came across a sad event in the book, I would take a short break to share the event happening in the book with someone. Since, in the beginning, the Nazis weren't allowed to harm the Jews, what suddenly changed? Why did they start? This was part of the Nazi plan. They grew anti-Jewish sentiment to the point where nobody would care if they started trouble and forced Jews to do horrible things that were against their will. Things didn't change suddenly, they just felt like they did. This was one of the first major signs of greater change to come.