

Kristallnacht Eye-witness accounts

Eye-witness accounts held by the Wiener Library (<http://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk>) taken immediately following the state-sanctioned campaign of hatred against Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe on the 9/10 November 1938 were translated for the first time to mark the 70th anniversary of *Kristallnacht* (The Night of Broken Glass).

Extract from Account B8 - 16 November 1938

When we arrived at the camp, first of all our names were called and entered in a register, then we were made to line up in the courtyard from about five in the morning till about two in the afternoon. Anyone who moved was kicked or punched in the face. Our requests to be allowed to relieve ourselves were denied, and the guards responded with the most coarse abuse. Finally at about midday a senior officer agreed that we could be taken together to the latrine. The first food was not distributed until 24 hours after our arrest. The food was good.

We had to hand over all our clothes, and received in return ragged concentration camp clothing, consisting of threadbare army uniforms, overalls and the like. Jews are completely forbidden to smoke in Oranienburg and are not allowed to cater for themselves, or buy anything in the canteen.

The next day we had to do drill. It was bearable for the younger ones, as many of us had been front-line soldiers. The older men collapsed, and were kicked, punched, slapped in the face and hit with rifle butts, always accompanied by the most vulgar and obscene insults. Among the prisoners in my section was H., a businessman from H., over 70 years old, and former lawyer J., also over 70. Both were mistreated in the manner described above. When people returned to the line after individual drill, they were kicked so that they fell flat on their faces, and then without provocation the guards trampled on their backs and buttocks with their hobnailed boots.

The camp Commandant inspected the ranks at roll-call. Sometimes he stopped and insulted one of the prisoners in a very coarse manner, which cannot be repeated. He said without provocation to a man next to me, 'Now I've got to take my glove off especially for you, you filthy Jewish swine', and after he had calmly done this, he struck the unfortunate victim several times in the face and on the chin.