

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 B30, 11 November 1938

Krakow, 11 November 1938

My dears!

At 5.30 on Friday morning, two officers came from the local police station and instructed me to accompany them at once – there was to be a passport inspection. You can imagine the apprehension we felt. I saw what was happening at the police station, and since I lived next door, I asked the Captain if he would fetch me a few things, as I had nothing; he flatly refused. I rang Papa at once, so that he could inform Netti. They hastily brought me some clothes and some food. We were taken together in goods lorries to A. Straße, and from there to the station; there were about 2,000 of us.

We left at about 2.30 or 3pm, and at midnight we were at the border. No-one was allowed to go to the window or leave the train; everything was locked. If we went to the window, we were threatened with loaded rifles and pistols. The officials at the border post were greatly astonished, as they had not been notified of the transport; all at once the German police officers who had escorted us (about 200 men) had vanished. During the journey we were all treated like criminals; it is a disgrace that such a thing should be allowed to happen at all.

Until three in the morning our passports were examined and stamped. No-one had made any arrangements for accommodation. 2,000 people had to stay in two small rooms; we were at the border post from Friday to Monday. No-one can imagine what it was like there. A suffocating atmosphere; four people died in two days; it was a pity that no-one had a camera, so as to send pictures abroad.

We were all without money, and we had no food; we were obliged to take remedial action as quickly as possible, as people were becoming ill from exhaustion.