

## The *Kristallnacht* Night of Terror against Jews

Rioting and terror directed against Jews throughout Germany and Austria on the night of November 9 and 10, 1938 — called *Kristallnacht* ("Crystal Night" or "Night of Broken Glass") — followed the assassination of German diplomat Ernst vom Rath in Paris by a 17-year-old Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan. In a mass frenzy orchestrated by leading Nazis, synagogues were destroyed and burned, shop-windows of Jewish-owned stores were smashed and the stores were looted, dwellings were raided and pillaged. Although officially described by the Nazis as a spontaneous outburst of revenge, the event actually culminated more than five years of legal discrimination and violence directed against Jews. As early as July of 1938, the major concentration camps — Dachau, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen — had been readied for a large influx of Jews. Using previously prepared lists of especially influential and wealthy Jews, some 30,000 were arrested and sent to the camps.



On this November 18, 1938, formular post card from Dachau, "preventive detention Jew Gottrf. Schwab" sent his first message to his wife, notifying her of his fate. After writing the required, "I am well and hopefully you can tell me the same thing," he urged her to "pay exact attention to the regulations on the face of the card."

