



Germany No. 2 (1939)

PAPERS

concerning the

Treatment of German Nationals in Germany

1938-1939

*Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
to Parliament by Command of His Majesty*

LONDON

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PAPERS CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF GERMAN NATIONALS IN GERMANY, 1938-1939.

INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE the war and ever since its outbreak the German Government have almost daily put out propaganda accusing Great Britain of atrocities in South Africa forty years ago. A press message from Durban of the 27th September, 1939, states :—

“The Nazis now employ a woman announcer who tells grim stories of alleged atrocities committed by the British in the Boer War. Afrikaners are urged to revolt and are pathetically asked whether they intend to submit to the rule of those who put powdered glass in the food of their children in concentration camps during the Boer War. Many other outrageous falsehoods are told in an effort to stir up passions. Fantastic stories are also circulated of brutal treatment of Germans by the Allies in the present war.”

In view of this shameless propaganda, which is wholly devoid of any foundation, His Majesty's Government think it opportune to publish some of the reports they have received of the treatment accorded in Germany itself to German nationals. In 1933 members of the opposition parties were arrested wholesale and consigned to concentration camps where they were subjected to the most barbarous treatment. Flogging and torture were the order of the day, and it was common knowledge in Germany that the National Socialist movement was taking terrible vengeance on those who had the temerity to oppose it.

During this period the violence and brutality of the Nazis did not spare foreigners. His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin, in a despatch of the 29th November, 1933, reported that he had learnt from the Czecho-Slovak Legation that since the advent of the new régime there had been 344 cases of attacks on or arrests of Czecho-Slovak citizens. British subjects, including a member of the staff of His Majesty's Embassy, were wantonly assaulted in the streets by uniformed S.A. men on duty. Other victims of the S.A. included a foreign Consul-General, who was severely injured by a number of uniformed men who left a marching column in order to attack him.

The attitude then adopted by the German Government was that they regretted and would put an end to excesses against foreigners, but regarded them as unavoidable in the first ardour of revolutionary fervour.

This plea cannot be put forward to excuse events which occurred five years after the advent to power of the National Socialist party. It is evident from the published documents, which cover only the period from 1938 onwards, that neither the consolidation of the régime nor the passage of time have in any way mitigated its savagery.

These documents were not written for publication, and, indeed, so long as there was the slightest prospect of reaching any settlement with the German Government it would have been wrong to do anything to embitter relations between the two countries. Even after the outbreak of war His Majesty's Government felt reluctant to take action which might have the effect of inspiring hatred. But the attitude of the German Government and the unscrupulous propaganda which they are spreading compels His Majesty's Government to publish these documents so that public opinion both here and abroad may be able to judge for itself. The German Government has complained of the maltreatment of German minorities in foreign countries and of the "Macedonian conditions" reigning there. It will be seen from the published papers that under the present régime the conditions in Germany itself and the treatment accorded to Germans are reminiscent not of Macedonia but of the darkest ages in the history of man.

No. 1.

Sir N. Henderson to Viscount Halifax.

My Lord,

Berlin, March 3, 1938.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that according to an official communiqué of the 3rd March judgment in the trial of Dr. Martin Niemöller, which began on the 7th February, was delivered on the 2nd March. Dr. Niemöller has been sentenced to seven months' confinement in a fortress ("Festungshaft"), and fines totalling 2,000 reichsmarks for endangering the peace, misuse of the pulpit and incitement to disregard the laws of the German Government. Non-payment of the fine will entail a further term of imprisonment of three months.

2. This is the only mention of the case which has yet appeared in the press, and all persons who have been present at the trial have been placed under an oath of secrecy.

3. In the ordinary way Dr. Niemöller would have been released on payment of the fine; but I learn that Dr. Niemöller was taken into protective custody by the secret police primarily because he had made it clear during his trial that he intended to continue his activities. It was feared, therefore, that he would lay himself open to a new charge, similar to the last, within a short time.

4. I am informed that Dr. Niemöller has not been transferred to a concentration camp but is being detained for the present in a Berlin prison.

I have, &c.

NEVILLE HENDERSON.

No. 2.

Sir N. Henderson to Viscount Halifax.

(Telegraphic.)

Berlin, March 7, 1938.

THERE is an uneasy feeling in the air here, and every kind of rumour is circulating in Berlin, such as that General von Fritsch has been shot, that mass-arrests have been made, that a big political trial is impending, &c. I have no confirmation of any of these rumours and have no reason to believe in their truth except in so far as it is a fact that Herr Hitler is in a highly nervous and excitable state. I gathered the impression during my conversation with him on the 3rd March that he was dissatisfied with result of Niemöller trial. The man, he declared, was a traitor and those who sympathised with him would accordingly find themselves in a concentration camp. England, he added angrily, could not criticise for it was Englishmen who had invented concentration camps. Niemöller enjoys much

sympathy in many quarters and officers in uniform have attended services for him. It is possible that there have been arrests of persons known to be his supporters.

No. 3.

Sir N. Henderson to Viscount Halifax.

Dear Secretary of State,

Berlin, May 25, 1938.

I HAVE received a letter on the Church question, in which the writer asks that you should be apprised of her views.

As the letter is of some interest as reflecting the attitude of many German parents, I am enclosing a translation in case you have time to look at it when these alarms are over.

Yours ever,

NEVILLE HENDERSON.

Enclosure in No. 3.

(Translation.)

Your Excellency,

May 21, 1938.

In the following letter I am undertaking something which I myself feel to be a very difficult task :—

1. I appeal to a foreign Power for help in a matter which is the private concern of the German people.
2. I write without mentioning my name.

Anonymous letters should by rights be consigned to the waste-paper basket, but since you are aware of the state of affairs in Germany as regards the censorship of letters, moral compulsion, concentration camps, and so on, I hope that you will lend a willing ear to this appeal in spite of its anonymity.

The object of my petition is that England, the country which is still the strongest in Europe, and which is trying to preserve its Christian character, will make all future negotiations with Germany conditional upon the cessation of hostility towards Christianity in Germany.

The first condition upon which the end of this conflict depends would be the release of our imprisoned pastors, especially the pastor Martin Niemöller, whose lot must be a source of the greatest bitterness to all fair-minded people.

But almost more important still, it seems to me, is the demand that the systematic alienation of our youth from Christ shall be stopped.

We parents must surrender our 10-year-old children to the control of the Hitler Youth, the League of German Girls, and later on the Labour Service. Our exceptionally gifted boys must attend the Adolf

Hitler Schools and afterwards pass on to the National Socialist Schools of Political Training ("Ordensburgen"), there to be prepared for future leadership in the State and the party. In all these institutions a great deal that is excellent, and which we parents welcome with joy and gratitude, is offered to youth. But they one and all serve as well to exert upon our youth an influence hostile to Christianity! Perhaps it may be possible to forward this letter, which expresses every Christian mother's way of thinking, despite its anonymity to your revered Queen. She, as a Christian and a mother, will understand our anxiety for our children.

It is not, however, quite correct to say, as I have done above, that the question at issue is the private concern of the German people; for, if in the heart of Europe a rising generation is brought up not only in indifference to Christianity but all too often in hatred of it, the future will be fraught with disaster not only for Germany but for Europe. At the present time the ancient Christian traditions of grandparents and parents have a restraining influence still—but woe to Germany, and woe to Europe, when these traditions shall have passed away!

Your Excellency, many German mothers would be grateful to you from the bottom of their hearts if you could bring these lines to the notice of your Foreign Minister, Lord Halifax, who has been brought up in the spirit of Christianity, and, if at all possible, of your Christian Royal couple as well. We hope for England's help in our hard fight against the forces hostile to Christianity which are threatening our pastors and our youth.

A GERMAN MOTHER,
WHO IS OF ONE MIND WITH VERY
MANY CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

No. 4.

Consul-General Gainer to Viscount Halifax.

His Majesty's Consul-General at Vienna presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit to him a copy of his despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador, Berlin, dated the 10th October, respecting the Catholic and anti-Catholic demonstrations in Vienna.

Vienna, October 10, 1938.

Enclosure in No. 4.

Consul-General Gainer to Sir N. Henderson.

Sir,

Vienna, October 10, 1938.

I HAVE the honour to report that a sermon was preached on Friday evening, the 7th instant, in the Cathedral Church of St. Stephen in Vienna by Cardinal Archbishop Innitzer. After the sermon a large group of young persons demonstrated outside the cardinal's palace shouting "Heil, Christus!" "Heil, Innitzer!" The cardinal appeared several times upon the balcony of the palace and received the greetings of the demonstrators.

2. This is the first occasion since the *Anschluss* that any kind of public Catholic demonstration has taken place in Vienna, and, as was to be anticipated, a counter-demonstration was promptly organised. This counter-demonstration, however, assumed so violent an aspect that a very serious situation has resulted.

3. On Saturday evening, the 8th instant, at about 7.30 P.M., groups of young men belonging to the S.A. and H.J., but not in party uniform, began to arrive in the Stephansplatz in parties of five, armed with ladders and bludgeons. The ladders were planted against the cardinal's palace and the lads entered the first floor of the building after smashing in all the windows. Once inside, they destroyed every religious picture to be seen, leaving other pictures untouched, smashed the busts of several Popes, stole valuable chalices and three episcopal rings, and collected the robes, and even the personal wardrobe, of the cardinal, which they threw into the courtyard with several articles of furniture and set fire to them. The cardinal fled to an attic, protected by his servants, and remained undiscovered. A priest of the cardinal's household who endeavoured to restrain the attackers was mishandled and an attempt was made to throw him out of a window. He was badly cut about the hands and arms by broken glass. A similar attack was made upon the residence and officers of the dean of the cathedral, and a priest there was actually thrown out of the window and both his legs were broken.

4. The police were telephoned for seven times from the palace and arrived three-quarters of an hour after the first telephone call. On their arrival, the leader of the mob blew a whistle, the attackers formed a column and marched off the square in procession, unmolested and undetained by the police, whose efforts were confined to controlling an angry crowd which had gathered. The fire brigade was summoned to put out the bonfire and an ambulance was sent to collect the injured priests and members of the cardinal's household. The S.A. are to-day in occupation of the palace, where the cardinal remains, and no one is allowed to enter. The leader of the assault was a 16-year-old boy.

5. The above facts were given to me by a priest who to-day visited the deanery and took stock of the damage done.

6. It is reported that the Papal Nuncio arrived at Vienna from Berlin yesterday to enquire into the matter, but has not been given access to the cardinal.

7. A meeting of all the parish priests in Vienna has been summoned for 5 o'clock this afternoon, and it is expected that instructions will be given to read a letter of protest in all the parish churches next Sunday.

8. Strong protests have been made to Gauleiter Bürckel, who has conveyed his regrets to the cardinal and has promised that energetic action will be taken against those responsible, but this will merely lead to further difficulties for Herr Bürckel with the local party organisations.

I have, &c.

D. St. CLAIR GAINER.

No. 5.

*Statements communicated to the Foreign Office on October 28, 1938,
by a Charity Organisation working in Germany.*

(a) *Statement by Jewish ex-Prisoner; August 1938.*

(Translation.)

HERR X, a well to do Jewish business man, was for six weeks in the concentration camp at Buchenwald. In order to preserve a semblance of legality, police records are searched through and the slightest bad mark against a Jew, sometimes a trifling offence of forty years ago, is made the excuse for the arrest.

Herr X said that the working hours were sixteen per day, Sundays and week-days alike. During these hours it was forbidden to drink, even in the hottest weather. The food in itself was not bad, but quite insufficient. Weak coffee at dawn and a half litre of soup at midday; bread allowance for the whole day 250 grammes. (Men who had any money could sometimes buy condensed milk, &c., from the canteen.) While he was there the work of Jewish prisoners was doubled, and their rations halved. The work, of course, consists in moving heavy stones, often far beyond the strength of even a normal well-fed man. The Jews were sneeringly told by their guards that they were only experiencing the same treatment as their forefathers in Egypt, and that Pharaoh had not gone half far enough.

The men were kept standing at attention for many hours on end. Floggings were very frequent, for such small offences as drinking water during working hours. The usual punishment was twenty-five strokes given alternately by two guards. This often produced unconsciousness, but the Jews were told that the Führer had himself given orders that the Jews might receive up to sixty strokes.

Herr X was in a group of 480 men who had only one tap at which to wash and drink for a quarter of an hour on getting up. Later even this was stopped. During the six weeks he was in the camp Herr X saw neither soap nor tooth-brush.

There were about 8,000 men in the camp when he was there, but it was rumoured that the number was shortly to be increased to 20,000. There were 1,500 Jews and 800 Ernste Bibelforscher (International Bible Students). The rest were politicals, so-called criminals and gypsies. Each man wore a badge—Jews yellow with the star of David, Bible Students violet, &c. The Communists and others who were prisoners of long standing, acted as sub “warders.” Jewish prisoners wrote and received letters twice a month. The Bible Students were allowed no communication with the outside world, but on the other hand, their rations were not cut down. Herr X spoke with the highest respect of these men. Their courage and religious faith were remarkable, and they professed themselves ready to suffer to the uttermost what they felt God had ordained for them.

Deaths took place daily in the camp. (Their relatives were often first informed of this by a call from an official who said they could have the ashes on payment of 3 marks.) Herr X—a man in the sixties—had a complete collapse after his release, and was three weeks in bed. Another man was taken to the City Hospital with such high fever that he was not expected to live, and another, released at the same time, was in such a state of nerves that he could not cross a road.

Herr X made the statement, which was fully confirmed on enquiry that no Jewish prisoner is ever released unless he can produce evidence that he is able to leave Germany. There appears to be no release from this system of deliberate torture of mind and body but death. Herr X entreats that some way may be found by which these men could be released *en bloc* and placed in some kind of humane concentration camp in another country while their ultimate destination and fate was being decided. He realises that such a proposal is quite beyond the scope of any private Refugee Committees, and needs international planning, but he begs that it may at least receive careful and sympathetic consideration.

(b) *Statement by a Jewish-Christian Prisoner.*

(Translation.)

Herr Z had a small business in Germany (with three employees). Arrested in June 1938 in a “round-up” in the streets of Berlin without any cause or pretext. No order of arrest (and later no papers of discharge). Brought to the Alexander Place prison; put in cell where there were thirty-two men, too small for it to be possible to lie down. Took it in turns to sit down during the night. One bucket

for sanitary purposes. (Awful stench.) Stayed two days there. Previously in the police quarters everyone had been asked for their life history, and forced to sign their approval of being put into "protective custody." All belongings taken away. About 3,000 prisoners collected from fifteen different police quarters. Transportation in lorries to station, and put in special trains with no mention of the final destination. Prohibition to talk. Arrived 6.30 A.M. at Weimar. Reception by S.S. men with insults and blows: "Jew-dogs, blackguards, now we have got you!" &c. Some 3-4 per cent. Aryans and a few gypsies. Taken away in lorries under Camp Commandant Schneider. One-and-a-half hours to Buchenwald. Awful condition of camp. Filth and mud up to the knees in places. Many trees had been cut down but stumps left. Almost impossible to walk. A man with heart trouble who cannot walk is dragged along by the feet by other prisoners (S.S. men do not touch Jews). The flesh is torn from his face. He is so disfigured as to be unrecognisable. (Other examples similar to this.) Three hundred and fifty of the new arrivals lodged in the basement of the barracks. (In the whole camp there were about 10,000 men, 100 straw sacks and no other furnishings.) Three men to each straw sack in four rows. Obligated to lie on our sides; and crosswise over sack so as to make room; packed like sardines; lying on the back forbidden or blows given with a club ("Knuppel"). The men directly in charge are older prisoners. The "Black Superiors," themselves "professional criminals," sleep with us. Their word is absolute law.

On our arrival a roll-call lasting for hours with address by the commandant, who has given all instructions for our "reception."

Camp-orders: this is no prison or place of correction; here there are other methods. Any attempt at escape or attack (mere talking or gesticulation can be taken as such) is stopped by the 1,000-volt charged wire. Every sentry is to use his rifle without warning if anyone moves in his direction. Every bullet costs 12 pfennigs, and that is just what a Jew is worth, neither more nor less. All this interlarded with words of abuse—"Jewish swine," "the Chosen People, God's People, Jewish muck, dirty swine," &c. (but after a few days one gets used to it). The commandant's representative calls the roll and appoints the officers. The first days are occupied with roll-calls, clothes distribution (military boots, trousers and coat, but no underclothing). The things are worn over the naked body. Everyone shivers with cold. Buchenwald lies high. After ten days we get underclothes.

Time-table: 3.30 A.M., get up (bed about 10 P.M.), very bad air; smell appalling; water drips down the tiny cellar windows. Form ranks at 4.30. Coffee distribution at 4.45 on the square where the gallows stand and the blocks (for flogging). Before the time of this report, the body of the murderer of an S.S. man hung there. The hangman is a professional criminal who has now become a "veteran." Ordinary German salute strictly forbidden in the camp. The salute means standing to attention with the cap off, while

commands are repeated. 5.30 A.M., end of roll-call; until then stand stiffly to attention. Those who have reported sick now come forward, are separated off and inspected by the commandant. He at once treats the "fit" with his riding whip, in their face, in the presence of the others; "Jews do not fall ill." The commandant decides by sight who is "ripe" for the doctor. These number 6 or 7 per cent.; the others have to go back into the labour gang. No differentiation of the sick in the labour gang; they are helped on by kicks and riding whip. The doctor declares the sick as either "ill" or "fit"; in the latter case they are punished in the evening for "lies." In the end no Jews were accepted as sick; there could only be "well or dead." In the roll-call many are unable to continue standing; they have to be forcibly held up by their companions in misfortune, so that they can be seen from the front, even those who are completely collapsed; the ranks must be complete. The work consists of stone-breaking a quarter of an hour away from the road which is to be built. It is outside the camp, but within the charged wires. Attempts at flight occur, but all end with shooting. Many end their sufferings by feigning flight in order to be shot down. Everywhere sentries are posted around. A colony of "cripples," men with wooden legs, ruptures (sometimes if their belts are lost the ruptures break out again), are obliged to carry massive stones at the will of the guard. They included old men of 70 who were utterly unequal to the work. In one instance a guard prodded with his bayonet a man who was ill and who kept on collapsing. After this had happened repeatedly, the man rushed to the wire to put an end to himself, and was shot down. The quarter of an hour's stretch to the road is done twelve to fifteen times in the morning and eight times in the afternoon by those who are really able to work; the "cripples" do half this. Every four men of the former have to deal with a barrow loaded up with great boulders, and often have to do it running. Woe to anyone who trips! Anyone who is unfit gets blows from the club by the overseer, and after him the guards with the butts of their rifles follow suit. All parties are thorough in their inflicting of punishment for fear of their own superiors. Any drinking of water is expressly forbidden. For false reporting of being sick, for "lies," or being "work shy" the penalty is the whip. At 11.30 comes the midday pause (although sometimes work is enforced till 7 o'clock without food). 12.30, work resumed till 3.30. 4 P.M., roll-call. This generally lasts till 5.30; for many of the "Jew people" till 10. How "Non-Aryans" are distinguished from Jews is not clear. Woe to the non-Aryan who by mistake gets among the Aryans. Jews have to wear the "David Cross" with the sign: red for "professional criminal," black for the "work shy," lilac for the "Bible bug." One is compelled to sign oneself as a "professional criminal," and it goes on the card index. (On the other side of the card one's real profession is stated.) Woe to him who refuses to sign the statement! Yellow is the sign for a Jew and has to be added to the other.

The floggings take place at the afternoon roll-call, the individuals having to step forward. The penalties are read out (being fixed beforehand). Normal punishment is twenty-five strokes on the seat, carried out by two guards standing on each side with riding whips. The prisoner is lashed to a board. If he cries out the strokes are increased up to thirty-five. The guards use all their force, sometimes springing into the air so as to bring the arm down with increased momentum. Few days pass without cases of flogging, and the number may be from two to ten. After the flogging the men have to stand to attention with face to the wall to the end of the roll-call. Then the sanitary officer comes round and puts ointment on the wounds.

The other punishment is hanging up 3 metres from the ground by the arms, which are violently bent back for the purpose. This is done by express orders from the commandant given through a microphone. Special men are employed to carry out these punishments and they do nothing else. The hanging lasts for ten to twelve hours and is in public. Another form of it is to have the arms round the trunk of the tree with wrists handcuffed. The feet are off the ground, but it is regarded as milder punishment and the S.S. men can inflict it at any time.

In the evening there is no sort of free time but things are easier. There may be examinations by the State Police but no mishandling; once in fourteen days a letter home, if it has not been forbidden. But, of course, it is impossible to say anything about the real circumstances and the families know nothing of it. Herr Z. was only in the camp fourteen days, but he gives the following individual instances happening in this short period: A man who had been condemned to stand with his eyes to the wall, at the end of three hours or so—as is inevitable—began to droop slightly thinking he was unobserved. But a rigid position is demanded all the time. A guard saw that the prisoner was not standing properly. He seized the prisoner and beat his head repeatedly against the stone wall (the stones were rough with sharp edges). The blood gushed out and streamed down the wall. Then renewed fury seized the guard: "You swine to make that mess on the wall!" Now he threw him on the ground and beat him mercilessly. Herr Z. thought the man would surely be dead, but he survived.

An even worse case was that of a middle-aged man who received an affectionate letter from his wife. He was an educated man of a sensitive type and unable always to maintain the degree of self-control and outward hardness which is demanded. He gave way to a moan. For this he was tied up to a tree and left fourteen hours. He became unconscious. Two guards passed: "Ahah! he is already dead!" They loose him and throw his body on the ground. Then they jump on to his body and stamp on him in their heavy boots. He moves slightly. "Ahah! he is not quite dead!" Herr Z. had to pass on, but next time he saw the man his breast and face were a mass of clotted blood, his eyes swollen and purple. Moreover, he

had gone mad. At the roll call he had to be helped up by a man on each side. But his head hung forward and he made spasmodic convulsive movements. At night he suddenly started up screaming wildly, and tried to run away over the bodies of the men lying packed together. The order was then given that in future the two men lying next to him at night were to be responsible for his keeping quiet, and if he screamed again they would themselves get twenty-five lashes.

The S.S. men employed in the camp were mostly very young men of 17 to 20 who had been specially "trained" for the purpose. But they were already so brutalised and sadistic that it was a constant wonder to Herr Z. how it could have been brought about (and what would their mothers think?). They seemed to revel in inflicting torture. One instance of it was the tickling of a prisoner's face with a straw, and then when the face twitched giving him a terrific blow. The sadistic amusements of the guard shows itself, *e.g.*, in their treatment of an old man, a lawyer by profession, whose Jewish features were rather specially marked. He was made to stand like a statue on the top of a wall for six to eight hours on end as a "monument." All the passers by laughed heartily at this good joke. On another occasion a guard asked him whether he was feeling the heat, and when the lawyer assented, ten buckets of water were poured over his head. Herr Z. himself fared relatively well in the camp. He attributes this to prayer by which he was able to overcome fear. It requires much physical strength and nerve power to carry out briskly all the exorbitant demands that are made upon one, and to get through the heavy labour and other physical ordeals without faltering or flinching. Signs of weakness evidently excite the sadistic instincts of the guards. Thus when a man was on the ground at their feet they would habitually kick him in the face. Herr Z. used to pray and beseech God to let the victims die, as one bout of torture simply led on to another one. It would have been so much simpler and more merciful to shoot them than to allow a life, which for all practical purposes had already been destroyed, to drag on to the prolonged infinite agony of the victim.

The camp held 10,000 prisoners, about half of them Jews (and some "Bible Seekers"). There were many deaths daily.

Herr Z. was only fourteen days in the camp. He was one of a small number who were released because all arrangements were ready for their emigration. For any prisoner, however, who bore scars release was impossible.

They were strictly threatened that if a word was said as to what they had seen or experienced in the camp they would immediately be put back. Herr Z. had asked leave to stay a few weeks before leaving the country in order to finish selling his possessions. It was made clear to him, however, that he would be rearrested. A German pastor pleaded his case with the English Consul at the port and Herr Z. received his visa to leave the country at once. The sale of his car had paid for his ticket to South America. But his business had to

be closed down and the 100 per cent. tax on all possessions bought since 1933 prevented him taking away most of his belongings (expensive professional instruments, &c.). He finally came away with just 10 marks in cash.

Herr Z. had fought through the war. But life in the trenches compared to that in a concentration camp, was a "sanatorium."

No. 6.

Consul-General Gainer to Viscount Halifax.

HIS Majesty's Consul-General at Vienna presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit to him a copy of his despatch to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, Berlin, dated the 11th November, 1938, respecting the anti-Jewish demonstrations in Austria following the death of Herr vom Rath, secretary of the German Embassy at Paris.

Vienna, November 11, 1938.

Enclosure in No. 6.

Consul-General Gainer to Sir G. Ogilvie-Forbes.

Sir,

Vienna, November 11, 1938.

I HAVE the honour to report that the anti-Jewish demonstrations in Vienna, the occasion of which was the murder of Herr vom Rath, secretary to the German Embassy in Paris, assumed very alarming proportions on the night of the 9th instant and during the whole of the 10th instant.

2. The action was undertaken by the Austrian S.A., most of whom were in full uniform, and the police had obviously received instructions not to intervene. A very large number of shops and houses owned or occupied by Jews were wrecked and numerous arrests took place. Yesterday morning Jewish prayer houses and synagogues were set on fire in considerable numbers; the *Völkischer Beobachter*, indeed, gives particulars of no less than nineteen synagogues which were completely destroyed by fire. Another in the Leopoldgasse was destroyed by a bomb, which did considerable damage to near-lying buildings. All the fire brigades of Vienna were fully employed, as at one time there seemed to be grave danger of a serious and widespread conflagration involving large sections of the city.

3. The press openly rejoices at these manifestations and congratulates the people on the fact that the Jews "can now no longer hatch plots against the State under cover of religious services."

4. In addition to this orgy of destruction, all Jewish shops were forced to close and may not yet reopen. In many cases plate-glass

and other windows were broken and the shops were openly looted by the mob. Gauleiter Bürckel endeavoured to give some appearance of legality to this anti-Jewish action by issuing instructions that houses occupied by Jews should be searched for weapons and illegal literature. In the course of the search numerous arrests were made.

5. The immediate consequence of these demonstrations was that hundreds of Jews formed even larger queues than usual outside this consulate-general and that of the United States. On the 9th instant already at 6.30 P.M. a large number of Jews lined up outside this consulate-general prepared to wait all night until the Passport Office opened the next morning. They were dispersed by the police that evening and three times again before 8.30 A.M. on the 10th and every Jewish man was taken into arrest, only the women and children being left. At the United States Consulate-General the S.A. began beating the crowds with rope-ends until the United States Consul-General, unable to bear the spectacle, insisted on police intervention, which was eventually granted.

6. The Vienna correspondent of *The Times* was arrested by the S.A. as he was taking notes of the demonstrations in the Leopoldgasse and was taken to the police station. On revealing his identity to the police, he received an apology and was allowed to go. Ten minutes later he was again arrested and again released. He informed me that on his arrival at the police station he observed a number of Jews cowering in corners, so terrified that they were unable even to remember their names, while an old Jew with white hair and beard was lying on the floor being brutally kicked by an S.A. man while the regular police looked on.

7. This morning the public manifestations have ceased, but arrests continue to be made. The Jewish population is terrified and I am besieged with applications for help and by persons wishing to relate their experiences. I fear that several British subjects have suffered damage, and individual reports on these cases will be transmitted as soon as full particulars are available.

8. Last night Vienna presented an extraordinary spectacle, with fires raging all over the city and Jews were being hustled along the streets, cursed at and assaulted by crowds of hooligans whose pride it is to belong to one of the greatest and most civilised nations of the world.

9. The anti-Jewish demonstrations were not confined to Vienna. Thus a synagogue at Linz was burnt to the ground; the synagogue at Salzburg was wrecked and its contents thrown into the street; Jewish shops were also looted. At Hallein and at Bad Gastein the Jewish hotels and pensions were sacked, including the Hôtel Bristol, the Kurhaus Cäcilia, a further Kurhaus and a large villa owned by a Jew.

I have, &c.

D. ST. CLAIR GAINER.

Consul-General Bell to Sir G. Ogilvie-Forbes (Berlin).

British Consulate-General,

Cologne, November 14, 1938.

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram of the 11th instant, reporting anti-Jewish manifestations in Cologne, I have the honour to state that additional reports indicate these to have been very thorough and systematic throughout my consular district. In Cologne itself, there have been suicides of German Jews actually known to me, though this unfortunately is nothing new in my experience. Four hundred Jews have been taken into "preventive arrest" ostensibly for their own protection. I hear, however, that they are unlikely to be set free until they have been financially bled. The Jewish synagogue in Cologne has been damaged by fire, and it is said that the local fire brigade took no action save to prevent the spread of the flames to neighbouring houses. The Jews are in a desperate plight. The offices of the consulate-general have been overrun with them, and though I do the best I can with a small staff it is frequently necessary to close the doors to the public to enable us to attend to those already in the office. One German Jewess pestered a member of the staff to take her husband into his small flat over the night of the 11th. The man actually arrived at the door with his pyjamas. There is nervousness amongst middle-class Germans, who in general disapprove. They dare not, however, voice their disapproval. One German woman who voiced her disapproval in a tram car which runs past my house was arrested at the first stop by Nazi guards. The industrialists say that they have no influence with the party, who have made such a point of racial purity that the Führer must carry his theories to their logical conclusion. Everyone agrees, however, that last week's events have considerably complicated international relations. Personally, I have been more shocked by the coldblooded and calculated manner in which action was taken than by anything else about the recent events. Yet I am inclined to think that the Führer knows his Germans. Amongst the masses of Germans who have nothing at stake there is observable a certain amount of "Schadenfreude" ("Joy in Mischief"). Our German cook, for instance, observed to me a few days ago that it was high time a certain neighbouring Jew was "washed up." In short, an abnormal situation exists in Cologne, as it does in the rest of my consular district. In Düsseldorf and elsewhere reports indicate that anti-Jewish measures have been even more drastic than in Cologne.

2. No attacks have, as far as I know, been made on British subjects of Jewish race. There are one or two ex-service men of the Jewish persuasion who are normally resident in my district. I have the impression that they have either left Cologne or are keeping off the streets.

3. A complaint and demand for protection of property was received on the 10th instant from a Herr Schwarz, who holds a power

of attorney for the firm of Kleinwort and Co., Fenchurch Street, London, owners of three houses in Cologne occupied by German Jews whose windows had been broken. The local police were immediately informed. They promised to safeguard the properties. Herr Schwarz was asked to furnish details in writing. I should be glad to have instructions as to the general attitude to be adopted to such claims.

4. I venture to transmit herewith translations of two anonymous letters which I have received to-day, one from a person who describes himself as a "Beamer," the other from a person who describes himself as a judge. I make it a rule to ignore anonymous letters, but the writers have so well stated the views of many Germans that I think them worth transmission.

I have, &c.

J. E. BELL.

Enclosure 1 in No. 7.

(Translation.)

To the Herr Generalkonsul,

Cologne, November 12, 1938.

I FEEL the urge to present to you a true report of the recent riots, plunderings and destruction of Jewish businesses, dwellings and incendiaryisms of synagogues.

The German folk have had nothing whatever to do with these riots and incendiaryism.

Since the incitements of the party members had not had the least effect on the man in the street, there came from the police wireless on the morning of the 10th November, 1938, at 0.45 A.M. (a quarter to 1 in the morning) the following orders:—

- (1) At 4 A.M. the synagogues and chapels of the Jews were ordered to be set on fire.
- (2) At 6 A.M. the destruction and looting of shops and houses was ordered to begin in the city.
- (3) At 8 A.M. the same was to happen in the suburbs.
- (4) All action was ordered to cease at 1 P.M. midday of the 10th November, 1938.

Whilst the "angry and excited folk," as the newspapers so well expressed it, still slept and had no idea of these orders, the police supplied all available young and newly enlisted S.A. men, strengthened by a mob of riff-raff, with axes, housebreaking tools and ladders at the police headquarters. A list of the names and addresses of all Jewish shops and flats was furnished, and the mob proceeded to do their work under the leadership of S.A. men.

The police had strict orders to remain neutral. At 8 o'clock in the morning of the 10th November, 1938, revolting fights amongst this mob over the booty were still to be witnessed, *e.g.*, one of the robbers was carrying away eight suits of stolen clothing which he was refusing to share with his dear German comrades. In Cologne alone seventeen shops have been so far completely looted.

The population of Cologne had absolutely nothing to do with this murderous arson and condemns it, as does also the whole German nation. These actions were ordered by the Government in Berlin.

A certain police commissioner who intervened to save a shop from looting, has been placed on leave and relieved of his functions.

Please take information amongst the Cologne people, and you will convince yourself that the German nation had nothing to do with these crimes and disassociates itself from this action of their Government.

(Signed) EIN BEAMTER.

Enclosure 2 in No. 7.

Translation of a Copy of the Original sent to the Reichsminister for Justice.

THE events of the 10th instant, with their anti-social crimes, such as incendiarism, looting, bodily violence, robbery and murder, in all towns and villages of Germany cause German judges to beg you for guidance in the forthcoming legal processes.

Since these crimes against the social order have been staged by the Government itself, it would be advisable to quash all legal proceedings arising therefrom, since the public knows very well that no judge dare dispense justice without exposing himself to severe reprisals for his acting according to his conscience. More than 50 per cent. of the judges under your jurisdiction must do violence to their conscience, since the events which have happened are such as to make one ashamed of being German. Such ideas could only come from the narrow, criminal brains of a Hitler, Hess, Goebbels, Rosenberg, &c., and must carry the conviction abroad that they are the same incendiaries who formerly set fire to the Reichstag, and who were responsible for the deeds of the 30th June, 1934. It would be better if you recommended all German judges to retire. It cannot be expected that German judges should do hangmen's work.

The events of the 10th instant have unmistakably and clearly proven to all the world that a judiciary no longer exists in Germany.

You, Herr Reichsminister Dr. Gürtner, are also responsible for what has happened, and you may depend upon it that we will bring you to book perhaps quicker than you think. Make sure of your own retreat by giving all right-thinking judges an opportunity to liquidate their services in a humane manner and by bringing the true situation before your friend Hitler, for the verdict that will be pronounced by all honest judges on you and your bandit friends will be death.

(Signed) JUDEX.

No. 8.

Sir G. Ogilvie-Forbes to Viscount Halifax.

HIS Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin presents his compliments to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit to him a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General, Frankfort-on-Main, dated the 14th December, respecting anti-Jewish persecution.

Berlin, December 15, 1938.

Enclosure in No. 8.

Consul-General Smallbones to Sir G. Ogilvie-Forbes.

Sir,

Frankfort-on-Main, December 14, 1938.

WHILE the German Government has somewhat half-heartedly put it about that the action against the Jews, the burning of the synagogues, the smashing of shops and private residences, the assaults and looting were the work of the populace, incensed by the death of Herr vom Rath, it will be difficult to disclaim responsibility for the systematic treatment on a large scale by S.S. and regular police of the persons arrested. I therefore venture to report on the treatment of some of those who were arrested. I am afraid this despatch will make unpleasant reading, but I consider it my duty to call a spade a spade. Those who have been released from the camps have been threatened with dire consequences if they divulge what happened there. The facts which I am reporting have been related by a great number of people independently of each other and they could not all invent the same lies, at the same time, about the same events.

2. I have served in Germany for some eight years. I have known the Germans, when I was stationed at Munich, in the hour of their humiliation after the war, and I have been at this post since 1932. I flattered myself that I understood the German character, and I have worked for an Anglo-German understanding to the best of my ability. Recent events have revealed to me a facet of the German character which I had not suspected. They seemed to me to have no cruelty in their make-up. They are habitually kind to animals, to children, to the aged and infirm. The explanation of this outbreak of sadistic cruelty may be that sexual perversion, and in particular homo-sexuality, are very prevalent in Germany. It seems to me that mass sexual perversity may offer an explanation for this otherwise inexplicable outbreak. I am persuaded that, if the Government of Germany depended on the suffrage of the people, those in power and responsible for these outrages would be swept away by a storm of indignation if not put up against a wall and shot.

3. The following is a recital of what happened to a Jew, who was in the trenches during the war, who had a good business here, and who is a well-educated man. His statements correspond in detail with what has been told to us by other persons who went through the same experience : He was rung up by the secret police on the 11th ultimo and ordered to stay at home. He was fetched at 3 P.M. He asked for permission to take a change of linen and some warm underwear with him. This was refused, but he was told to bring some money. He was taken to the nearest police station and was kept there until a sufficient number had collected to fill a motor lorry. He was then driven to the Exhibition Hall, a large building used for fairs and also for political meetings. It holds on such occasions well over 20,000 people. Outside the building a large crowd had gathered, which hurled abuse and invective at each convoy as it arrived. (Mr. Dowden passed there twice on the day in question and observed that the crowd consisted chiefly of youths and women. He was under the impression that the women did not have their heart in the demonstration, and that they had been ordered to attend, in the same way as their menfolk had been ordered to bait the Jews and to work destruction.) Once inside the hall my informant was made to turn out his pockets, and their contents, including his handkerchief, were put into an envelope, and he was told that he would get his property back on his release. He was then made to line up with the others, some of whom had been there since the night before without sleep, food or water to drink.

The S.S. and police now had sport with their charges. They made them kneel down, cross their hands behind their backs and lean forward until they touched the ground with their foreheads. Those who could not perform this feat were assisted by the guards, who kicked them in the back of the neck. Others were made to run round the building. Some were sick. The guards removed the vomit by taking the culprit by the scruff of the neck and wiping it away with his face and hair.

5. About 5 P.M. motor lorries manned by S.S. men drove up and the prisoners were driven into them with blows and kicks. They were taken across the town to a suburban railway station. When unloaded they had to go down some steps leading into a dark viaduct giving access to the platform. The guards rained blows and kicks on all they could reach. When in the viaduct they were halted and ordered to face the walls. They thought they were about to be shot and some became hysterical. The guards passed up and down behind them kicking and beating them. Some men in mufti joined in this sport. They were then entrained for Buchenwald, near Weimar. During the journey, which took several hours, the guards passed up and down knocking out teeth, bashing in heads and doling out black eyes. At Weimar they were detrained and forced with blows and kicks into over-crowded lorries. During the lorry journey they were told to keep their heads between their knees and in that position they were belaboured with sticks.

6. On arrival at the camp they were driven with kicks and blows into a wire enclosure. (This was charged with an electric current and many were badly burnt who tried to escape. This comes from other sources.) They were then addressed by the commander of the camp, who told them what he thought about the Jews. Then every man had his hair cropped and his moustache clipped off. They had great sport with the rabbis whose religious tenets do not allow them to have their beards touched with the scissors. My informant, who was one of a party of about 500, was assigned to shed No. 1, the one nearest the gate. It was about 200 feet by 80 and about 2,500 people were forced into it. This on the face of it appears impossible. The explanation is that there were tiers of bunks in the shed reaching to the ceiling, in each of which three men had to lie. (A friend of mine had to sleep for sixteen nights in one of these bunks between two cattle-drovers. They had to lie sideways and when they wished to turn over in order to relax, they had to do so in unison.)

7. The camp at Buchenwald was at that time under construction and this added to the discomforts. No water was laid on and there were no latrines. The prisoners were given no water to drink the first day and never any water for washing. (My friend above referred to went for sixteen days without washing except when he collected some rain water.) On the second day my informant was given a drink of hot water, flavoured to represent coffee, and some bread. The prisoners by then were half crazy with thirst and hunger.

8. During the first night guards came in and picked out men at random and took them outside to be flogged. Fixed on the ground were two footplates to which the man's feet were strapped. He was then bent over a pole and his head was secured between two horizontal bars. Men were given up to fifty strokes, except in the case of promiscuous flogging inflicted for sport, and each guard was only allowed to inflict ten lashes lest his strength gave out. (Flogging was ordered for trifling offences such as not jumping to attention quickly or not obeying an order. A rabbi was flogged because he refused to sign his name on the Sabbath. He was then threatened with a second flogging. His spirit was too weak and he signed.) Some died stretched between the poles. Those who survived were kicked back into the shed. In the day-time the floggings took place in public as a warning to the others. Some went mad. They were then chained up and a sack tied round their heads to stifle their shouts.

9. During the first night men were not allowed to leave the shed to relieve nature. They used their hats.*

10. My informant has false teeth and suffers from pyorrhoea. He applied for an extra glass of water a day to clean his teeth and rinse his mouth. The lack of water and his thirst were so great that he drank this water after using it.

* Six lines have been omitted here owing to the unprintable character of the further details given.

11. One other case has to be related : a former Prussian officer was ordered to kneel down and say : " I am a dirty Jew and a traitor to my country." He refused and he was beaten until he did as he was told.

12. Among the prisoners were famous surgeons and doctors and they worked miracles of skill and devotion. They even performed operations in urgent cases. The rabbis also proved themselves worthy of their calling. One rabbi when offered his release declined to leave the camp before the last of his flock. I have heard of no instances that any of the guards showed any signs of Christian charity or common humanity.

13. When the prisoners were released they were first examined by the camp doctor and none with open wounds were allowed to depart. The others were shaved and then reported to the political officers, who warned them that if they divulged anything they had seen in the camp, they would do so at their peril. He added that the party would be able to strike them down even after they left Germany and wherever they might be. They were then handed back what was left of their belongings. Most articles of value had, however, disappeared and the money they had had on them was sadly reduced in amount. They were told that to complain meant accusing the S.S. of theft and that such an accusation would be punished with a flogging. As a final insult they had to contribute to the Winter Hilfs Werk (" Collection for the Winter Help ") of the party. Nearly every person released has had to sign an undertaking to leave Germany within a specified time, usually from four to six weeks, under pain of being again interned. In most cases they have signed an impossible undertaking.

14. When the recent action started few knew what imprisonment meant. A number, however, committed suicide, others hid in the woods, some went to a friendly doctor and had their stomachs opened so as to be in hospital. One man in Stuttgart whom I know considers that he has had a lucky escape. He was roused at 4.30 on the fateful day and his wife answered the bell. When she saw the S.S. guards she became hysterical. He went to her assistance. He was knocked down and kicked in the mouth. He lost some ten teeth and had his jaw broken. He bravely demanded to see the order for his arrest. The guards went to fetch this, and in the meantime he was able to gain admittance to a hospital with his broken jaw.

15. I hear from many sides that another drive against the Jews is imminent in January, and the 16th of that month is given as the date of the proposed fresh action. It is anticipated that on this occasion also Jewish women will be placed in the concentration camps. Jews have been warned by their friends, who claim to have inside information, to get out of Germany before that date. At Obenrode, near Dieburg, in the Darmstadt district, a concentration camp, I learn, is being built by the " Arbeitsdienst " to house some of the victims of the contemplated drive.

16. As far as it is possible to mitigate the plight of the Jews in Germany, I venture to think that the policy indicated at present is

not "women and children first," but men first; they are in the concentration camps and in imminent danger of death, and they are the potential bread-winners. If they die the problem of dealing with their families will be all the more formidable.

17. I gather that some of the Quakers wish to put up an organisation in Germany to feed and clothe non-Aryans, and that they contemplate gradual evacuation spread over a number of years. Unless the German Government agrees to such a scheme it is difficult to calculate what percentage of these people will survive their enforced stay in Germany. Lord Forrester, who has been here also on behalf of the Quakers, seems to contemplate the creation of camps outside of Germany, where the emigrants would be trained before being transplanted to their future homes. This would probably reduce the wastage of life.

18. I regret that I have to submit that the information contained in this despatch may be treated as confidential. The facts if broadcast and if not already known would probably rouse world opinion to a higher pitch of indignation. But the rulers of Germany appear at present to be contemptuous of world opinion. The only likely reaction would be to try and ferret out my informants for individual punishment or to inflict collective punishment if they cannot be found. Also if my name were mentioned it might lead to an incident. It might, however, be useful to bring the facts reported to the confidential notice of those Governments which contemplate doing something towards the solution of this problem.

I have, &c.

R. T. SMALLBONES.

No. 9.

Consul-General Carvell to Viscount Halifax.

My Lord,

Munich, January 5, 1939.

I HAVE the honour to report that, notwithstanding the threats of dire penalties which would fall on those released from the concentration camp at Dachau if they did not keep silence about their treatment, sufficient information has leaked out to enable some account to be given of the treatment extended to Jewish prisoners since the 9th November last.

2. The Dachau Camp appears to have been the place of concentration for all Jews arrested in South and West Germany as far as Neuss and in Austria. According to some estimates, the maximum number of Jews in confinement was 14,000. Some 200-300 were released daily during December, and it is thought that above 5,000 still remain in custody. It is understood that all over 65 years of age and all ex-service men who served at the front have now been released. Boys of 17 from the Jewish seminary at Würzburg and professional men between the ages of 50 and 60 are still without hope of early release.

3. Apparently the first day of captivity was one of indescribable horror, since no released prisoner has been able or willing to speak about it. It may be imagined that the prisoners, herded together like cattle in a stockyard, were tortured by the fear of the slaughterhouse.

4. On entering the camp every prisoner had his head shaved, and was given a coarse linen prison suit with a "Star of David" stamped in yellow upon it. It seems that no other clothing was provided, even after the onset of extreme winter weather. Underclothing could, however, be bought at the canteen at a price. Two hundred to 300 persons were crowded together in huts originally built for sixty to eighty persons. Some prisoners appear to have slept on the bare boards, but most had straw. At first each person had only one thin blanket, but now some have two. The food is of the roughest kind, and the Jews receive only half the quantities allowed to the Aryan prisoners. Six persons eat out of the same dish. Hot drinks, cheese, and also butter may be bought at prohibitive prices at the canteen. Each prisoner is allowed to receive 15 marks a week pocket money from his family. The delay in distributing this money was such that among those in the sixth week of confinement some had only received their second week's allowance.

5. The prisoners are awakened at 5 A.M. each day. They are paraded at 6 A.M., and are often kept on parade for five or six hours on end without being allowed to leave the ranks for any purpose. They are made to do a great deal of marching and physical exercises, and are kept standing to attention in their thin suits answering repeated roll-calls. Generally speaking, prisoners are on their feet almost continuously from 5 A.M. until 7 P.M., and being unaccustomed to heavy military boots the majority suffer from sore and festering feet.

6. Accounts of brutal treatment at the hands of the guards are too consistent to have been mere fabrications. Prisoners have been buffeted, kicked, and even beaten and bastinadoed with steel birches. Some guards never speak to prisoners without hitting them across the mouth with the back of the hand. The medical attendants are particularly callous in their disregard for prisoners requiring medical attention. Sixty sufferers from frost-bite were dismissed without treatment on being told that their affliction would eventually cure itself.

7. The day of release is a veritable ordeal. The prisoners about to be liberated are paraded in the open at 5 A.M., and are kept standing stripped to the waist until about 10 A.M., when the chief medical officer inspects them for evidences of ill-treatment. After the inspection a stream of ice-cold water from a hose-pipe is turned on them. Before leaving the camp they are addressed by the commandant, who advises them to leave Germany as soon as possible, since should they return to the camp they would never be released. They are also warned that if they should spread "atrocity stories" abroad it would not be to the advantage of their co-religionists

remaining in Germany. They are then required to sign a document stating that they have not been ill-treated, have acquired no infectious disease, and have received all their personal effects intact. They are then free to walk to the station and pay their own fares to their homes. Many are unable to walk and some have been carried to the station unconscious.

8. It is not known how many have died in camp or shortly after reaching their homes, but there must have been many. The names of ten Munich Jews who died at Dachau between the 9th and the 25th November are known.

9. The foregoing account has been based on a series of isolated scraps of information, and so, while there is no reason to doubt that the incidents described actually happened, the account should not be read to mean that the treatment meted out was throughout so bad as it would appear. Some of those released have said that their treatment was "not so bad," and that the camp was efficiently managed. It is probable that the treatment of prisoners varied considerably with the character of individual guards.

I have, &c.

J. E. M. CARVELL.

No. 10.

Consul Shepherd to Sir G. Ogilvie-Forbes (Berlin).

Sir,

Dresden, February 2, 1939.

I HAVE the honour to transmit for information notes made of conversations regarding conditions in the concentration camp at Buchenwald with German Jews who were sent there after the murder of Herr vom Rath on the 10th November.

I have, &c.

F. M. SHEPHERD.

Enclosure in No. 10.

Memorandum.

Jewish Persecution.

HERR H.E.B., who is an apparently respectable fur merchant in Leipzig, told me that after the murder of vom Rath in Paris his shop windows were broken, and that when he went home members of the Secret Police were waiting for him outside his house and told him to go with them. His wife protested, but the police said it would be all right and that Herr B. would be back that evening. He was taken to the railway station, and he said that: "I cannot tell you how they treated us there." He was taken to a concentration camp (Buchenwald, near Weimar) where there were about 10,000 Jews confined in wooden barracks fitted with narrow bunks, into which they had to crawl. They were given no coverings and were unable to wash or

have a change of clothing, so Herr B. said, during a whole month in which he was confined there. For fourteen days his wife did not know where he was or what had happened to him. There were in the camp men of all ages up to 78, including professors and other leading Jewish men. Herr B. was allowed out because it was noticed that he wore an emblem showing that he had fought in the war. He was fortunate in being released before the sudden cold spell, and he tells me that many people died of cold after it began. The camp of 10,000 where he was confined was a small one compared with that devoted to Austrian Jews which exists in the neighbourhood. The men in his camp came from many parts of Germany, including Frankfurt and Hamburg. In addition to his confinement in the concentration camp he has, of course, been presented with a demand for an amount of 20 per cent. of the estimated value of his entire property as a fine for the vom Rath murder.

Concentration Camps.

Herr H. V. was in the Buchenwald camp for three weeks under very severe conditions. There was not even enough water to drink, and there were only twenty lavatories for 10,000 men. He saw many beaten, and saw one arrive at the camp dead. On his release he was told that, if he spoke about his experience, he and his family would be imprisoned for life, and if he spoke of it after he had gone abroad, he was told that there were "Vertrauensleute" who would finish ("erledigen") him off. The men in charge were young S.S. men and a few of the regular Weimar Police. Conditions were incredible, and they had no change of clothing or washing facilities.

Herr V. said that to the people in charge of this camp there were two classes of people, alive or dead, and that no consideration was paid to people who were old or sick.

On the other hand, I heard from a Jewish doctor, who was also in the camp, that he was employed in looking after people who were ill or who had been injured. This doctor had seen people beaten with barbed-wire birches, and his particular occupation was to see that his patients, as far as possible, were healed of the scars caused by their ill-treatment. He knew of sixty-seven deaths, and thought there were until recently about 350 in the Buchenwald camp.

*British Consulate, Dresden,
February 2, 1939.*

No. 11.

Statement of a Former Prisoner at the Concentration Camp at Buchenwald.—(Communicated to the Foreign Office on February 18, 1939.)

(Translation.)

In present-day Germany no word strikes greater terror in people's hearts than the name of Buchenwald. Only a few miles

from Goethe's Weimar, situated in the midst of a pleasant beech forest, ringed round with barbed-wire fences, guarded by S.S. detachments and machine guns, lies the new City of Sorrow, the concentration camp of Buchenwald.

I was arrested at my home in Berlin at 5 o'clock in the morning of the 13th June, 1938, taken to police headquarters, and there informed that, as a Jew with a previous "criminal record," I was now under preventive detention and would in due course be sent to a concentration camp. In the over-crowded police prison to which I was first taken I recognised many acquaintances among the other prisoners, who were for the most part reputable people, business men and university teachers. Former convictions, the excuse for all the arrests, often dated back to a decade or more, and related to such crimes as breaches of traffic regulations, or childishly unimportant escapades of one kind or another.

More and more prisoners were brought in till the police officials themselves were at a loss to find room for the stream of new arrivals. In the course of these two days, the 13th June or 14th June, every male Jew with any sort of police record was arrested. Some of the prisoners were over 70 years of age and were brought to gaol from the almshouses where they were living.

In Berlin the number of arrests reached about 4,000; for the whole country the figure was probably between 10,000 and 15,000. These prisoners were all sent to concentration camps, Dachau, Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald. At police headquarters each prisoner was informed that he could expect his release only if and when he should have procured, somehow or other, documents permitting him to leave the country. It is therefore apparent that the arrests were a purely political measure, and that this typically Nazi device had been decided upon with a single view to hurrying along the tide of Jewish emigration, which, in the Nazi view, was flowing too slowly. Nevertheless, the carrying out of the arrests was entrusted to the ordinary criminal police, and not, as might have been expected, to the Gestapo. Hence, the Berlin newspapers reported merely that a "number of Jewish criminals have been taken into preventive custody."

During the night of the 14th June 2,000 of us were transported from prison to the concentration camp. Before leaving the prison we were examined by an extremely youthful doctor, who passed everyone as physically fit for the rigours of concentration camp life, including the septuagenarians and a tubercular prisoner who was continually spitting blood.

The Anhalt Station, from which we left Berlin, was closed to the public at 2 A.M., the time of our departure, and a strong force of police with rifles in readiness was on guard. At about 6 o'clock in the morning on the 15th June we arrived at Weimar, to find a "Death's Head" detachment of the S.S. waiting for us at the railway station. We hardly reached the platform before a hail of kicks and blows from fist and rifle butt drove us along to the subway

leading out to the road. Here we were greeted by the then superintendent of the camp, Rödl, in the following terms :—

" Among you are some who have already been in gaol. What you tasted there is nothing to what you're going to get here. You're coming inside a concentration camp, and that means you're coming into hell. Any attempt at opposing the authority of S.S. guards and you'll be shot out of hand. We've only got two kinds of punishment in this camp, the lash and the death penalty."

The entrance to the camp was guarded by machine-gun posts, and over the gate itself was written the slogan : My Country Right or Wrong ! Every prisoner entered the camp by "running the gauntlet" between two rows of guards. More kicks and blows.

Immediately after this reception, which is more or less usual in all concentration camps, our heads were shaved, as is done with all dangerous criminals. Next our civilian clothes had to be given up in exchange for convict uniform. The dress of every prisoner is marked with a special symbol. Political prisoners wear a red stripe, bible students a lilac stripe, the so-called "work-dodgers" carry a black stripe.

Our loose convict jackets were marked with the Star of David in black on a yellow patch : this indicated "work-shy Jew." It is worth mentioning that most of us were independent business men, and the rest workers who had been forced out of their ordinary employment. Our group also included a dentist and several lawyers. Each of us was given a number, sewn into our prison clothes, and henceforward these impersonal numbers were substituted for our names.

After the preliminaries just described, we were led off to our new quarters. While the 6,000 Aryan prisoners were housed in wooden barracks each holding about 140, we were quite literally packed into a number of cattle sheds, 500 in each shed. The sheds contained no tables or chairs. Not even beds. At night we dosed down on the bare floor, unable to stretch out and rest owing to the lack of space. Each prisoner received two thin (and often torn) blankets. There were no arrangements for washing. Not one of us was able to wash during the first week. Afterwards, eight wash-basins were provided for each group of 500. Water had to be fetched from a pump ten minutes' journey away. What was most difficult to bear, however, was the fact that, in accordance with orders given by the S.S., a group of professional criminals was introduced into each shed and charged with the task of "maintaining order." These criminals also under detention in the camp, were set over us as "n.c.o.s.," and were given full authority to punish the other prisoners. The criminal in full charge of our shed was a particularly brutal specimen, who continually and shamefully mishandled us.

We were all too much afraid to try and protect ourselves from these inhuman brutes, as answering back would have been treated

as mutiny and punished by death. A peculiarly horrible incident sticks in my memory. One of the older prisoners had, during the day, while we were at work, been so knocked about by the S.S. guards that, at night, in the shed, he kept up a continuous moaning. The brute in charge of the shed hit this man in the face repeatedly, telling him to stop the noise. By morning the old man was dead.

During the first two days in the camp we were given no food whatever. In spite of that we were exercised hard enough. A whole week was occupied in attending to the various formalities connected with our entering the camp; only afterwards were we assigned to regular work. Among these formalities was the signing of a declaration that we had been taken into preventive custody because we were Jewish "shirkers," unwilling to work. It was printed on the form that this admission was made voluntarily by the person signing. One of the prisoners, a lawyer from Breslau, refused to sign the form. This unhappy man was visited with every punishment in the repertory of our captors. He steadily maintained his refusal to sign the documents. After the fourth day of his torture, already a dying man, his body bruised and broken, only half-conscious, he signed his name. I must now describe some of the punishments inflicted upon us by the S.S. Even slight offences—drinking some water during working hours—were punished with loss of midday meal and with having to stand to attention for four hours during the short "free period" normally allowed on Sundays. But the main punishment was the lash. A public flogging was given for minor offences, for instance, if a prisoner was caught smoking at work. At the end of the afternoon roll-call, the numbers of the prisoners sentenced to be flogged were read out—there would be several every day—and the men were led out and bound fast to the whipping-block. The usual punishment, twenty-five strokes with a raw hide whip on the buttocks, was carried out by two hefty S.S. guards, taking turns with the whip. A third S.S. man held the victim's jaws together to stifle any cries. Some of the older prisoners, unable to work fast, were flogged in this inhuman way for laziness. After the flogging the victim was made to take down his trousers and display his bloody stripes to an S.S. man, whose business it was to judge whether the lash had been strongly enough laid on. Twenty-five strokes was the favourite punishment at Buchenwald, but there were others. The "sweat-box" for example. It often happened that the prisoner was already dead before the "sweat-box" was opened to release him.

Another punishment was that known as "tree-binding," and the guards showed great inventiveness in developing the possibilities of this torture. If only a slight offence had been committed, the prisoners would be bound to the tree in such a way that they stood facing it, and as if embracing it, their hands pinioned together. The straps that bound them would be pulled so tight that they could barely move. The guards would now play "merry-go-round" with them, that is, they would force them to make their way round and

round the tree. If they could not move quickly enough it was usual to help them by kicking their ankles.

This was only the less severe form of "tree-binding." Another form of the same punishment often ended fatally. The victim would be strapped to the tree, facing outwards, his arms pulled back and round the tree trunk and then bound together. The thighs and feet, the latter only just touching the ground, would also be tied, sufficiently tight to stop the circulation of the blood. The prisoner would be left hanging in this position for hours at a time. It must not be thought that these barbaric tortures were exceptional. At Buchenwald these things were of daily occurrence.

A week after our arrival we were set to regular work. Our working day in the concentration camp of Buchenwald was regulated as follows: we were awakened at 3.30 in the morning, roll-call followed from 4.30 to 5.30, then we marched off to work, which started a little before 6. We worked without a break until noon. At midday there was a half-hour's pause to drink the acorn-coffee that was given us. Work recommenced at 12.30 and continued till 3.45. From 4 o'clock till 5.30 a second roll-call was taken, followed by the public floggings decreed for the day. Between 5.30 and 6 we ate our main meal of the day, and then worked again till 8, when supper was had. The day ended at 9 o'clock. On Sundays we were made to work from 6 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. No festivals were observed in the camp, not even (as I was told by prisoners of longer standing) that of Christmas. We were on our feet seventeen and a half hours a day, rain or shine. This time-table applied to the older as well as the younger prisoners; the sick, in so far as they were able to stand on their feet, as well as the healthy. Dressed in our convict clothes of "substitute cloth" we were forced out into every kind of weather from storm and heavy rain to the burning heat of summer.

Now as to my first day at hard labour—a day which I will never be able to forget as long as I live. Several of the older prisoners in our working party died in the stone quarry on that blazing hot June day. After the morning roll-call we had been divided into labour groups each a hundred strong. To each group a foreman was assigned, chosen almost invariably from the habitual criminals, whose right it was to knock us about as he thought fit. We were accompanied by an S.S. detachment of guards, not one of whom could have been more than 18 years old. They were nevertheless quite competent at manhandling and beating us. Our column, which included several prisoners over 65, marched off, or rather we were hounded along by the S.S. men, all of whom were armed with clubs, till we reached the stone quarry where we were to work. Eighty out of our hundred had never done manual labour before. Nevertheless we were expected to carry stone blocks so heavy that the effort of lifting them would have seemed considerable even to a navvy in good training. Many of the stones were so heavy that it took several men to lift the block on to the shoulders of the man who was to carry it.

These stones had to be carried to the site of a new road, a little over a mile away, which was being built by "convict" labour. The way leading to the new road was fairly steep, and on the last third of the journey we were helped along by kicks and blows from the rifle butts of the S.S. men stationed along the route. The elderly prisoners, who found it physically impossible to fulfil their tasks, came off worst. From the road we went back to the quarry to pick up a fresh load, and then the process would be repeated. The sun rose higher in the heavens, and the day got hotter and hotter, the fast-travelling S.S. cars raised clouds of white dust on the road (it was closed to all but "official" traffic). Close to the quarry was a spring, bubbling with fresh, clear water. Prisoners who tried to approach the spring for a drink were driven away by the S.S. guards. By afternoon thirty out of our original hundred had collapsed, some of them with sunstroke, and not even the brutal onslaughts of the guards were able to bring them back on to their feet to resume work. We had to carry them back in the end to the camp hospital. All but two that had died.

In addition to our work in the quarry, we also had to carry tree trunks from one place to another. No more than eight men were allowed to tackle even the heaviest load. Along the route S.S. men were stationed at intervals. We were continuously under observation. The shout, always accompanied by blows on head and shoulders from the clubs of the guards and kicks from their jackboots, "Move along, blast you, get along"—still rings in my ears. It occasionally happened that a more than usually energetic S.S. man would order us to do knee-bending exercises while we were carrying our load. This was not without danger, for if one or more of us collapsed the heavy trunk was liable to crush the others.

One day, before we were marched off to work, an announcement was made. We were told that "the Jews had been throwing away their bread ration." A measure was therefore to be taken to which no parallel existed, not even the annals of the Dachau concentration camp. Henceforward we were to receive half a litre of soup (all the others received a litre) and 250 grammes of bread (compared with the normal ration of 625 grammes). An unending régime of hard labour was demanded of us, and at the same time our food rations were fixed at the following amounts: a quarter of a litre of acorn-coffee in the morning, half-litre of soup at midday, and 250 grammes of bread with a smear of margarine and a little brawn in the evening. For three successive Sundays, though we were, of course, required to work as usual, we received no food at all.

Relatives were allowed to send money to us from our homes. Parcels of food, however, were forbidden as "everything could be bought in the camp." We will see in a moment how this system worked in reality. For the families of the poorer prisoners, every pfennig sent to the camp represented a real sacrifice. By reason of the mass arrests, it happened that many households had been deprived of their chief breadwinner. A number of instances are also known to me personally in which the Public Assistance Authority refused to

allow or continue relief to a family the head of which was in prison. Those who actually received money were far from being able adequately to supplement their meagre rations. Part of the sum sent would be withheld to pay railway fares in the event of the prisoner's release. This regulation was especially hard on the poorer prisoners, as the whole of a small sum would be "set aside" for this purpose. If more money was sent, it was doled out in weekly instalments of 5 marks. This sum, it is true, could be spent at the prison canteen, where very high prices were charged. The canteen was extremely badly stocked. It was always impossible to buy bread there, and it often happened that the only thing on sale would be lemonade powder. In addition, it must be remembered that we had to buy and pay for soap, tooth paste and the like, out of our own money.

In Buchenwald the number of deaths, both of Jews and of Aryans, was far greater than in any of the other camps. The Aryan death roll was at least one a day. Out of the 2,000 Jewish prisoners that arrived on the 15th June, eighty died in the first four weeks and thirty more in the fifth week. The authorities did all in their power to hush up these figures, and the Committee of the Berlin Jewish Community was officially informed of only thirty-nine out of the 110 deaths.

How did it happen that these men died? A famous phrase—"shot while attempting to escape"—must supply the answer. Here I must give evidence that, at least during the period of my detention, there was no single case of a prisoner being shot in the course of a genuine attempt at an escape.

The camp is surrounded by a wire fence, electrically charged at night. At intervals there are look-out posts with machine guns, manned by S.S. detachments. The prisoners are forbidden to approach the wire. If they do, the S.S. are instructed to fire on them. Newly arrived prisoners were often ignorant of this regulation, and the S.S. men, bored at their enforced idleness on look-out duty, often amused themselves by calling a prisoner over to the fence. New prisoners would obey the order, and, as soon as they approached, the S.S. machine gun would open fire. This form of "joke" was quite frequently indulged in. Every now and again, some prisoner, driven half insane and unable to bear the hellish conditions of the concentration camp any longer, would run like mad towards the fence. The S.S. invariably opened fire, and at once, although they were obviously aware that their victim was crazed, and not trying to break out of the camp.

But most of the prisoners who die at Buchenwald die in the stone quarry. Round the quarry a chain of S.S. posts were also established which it was death to approach. It frequently happened that one of the older or weaker prisoners would be ordered to carry a stone block which it was physically impossible for him to manage, even though he exerted every ounce of his limited strength. The S.S. guard would try again and again to force the prisoner to carry his load. Naturally the unhappy man would fall behind his

companions. After a short while those who had filed past him would hear a shot. The prisoner had been driven out of the line by the guard and over to the S.S. post, who had shot another victim "while attempting to escape." One particularly tragic story deserves to be told. Among the Jewish prisoners was a youngster, 22 years of age, called Erich Löwenberg. He had been cantor in a synagogue, had married young, and his wife was expecting a child two months later. Erich Löwenberg—it happened about the 15th July, 1938—was driven by an S.S. guard on to the highway near the quarry and forced in front of a heavy lorry driven by another S.S. man. An hour and a half later the young man was dead.

The physical maltreatment normally experienced by prisoners sometimes led to apoplexy and death. Cause of death would then be stated by the doctor as "weak heart." Coffins were made by the prisoners themselves in the carpenter's shop. The bodies were usually taken to Weimar crematorium and burnt. Relatives would receive official notification of the prisoner's death by open unfranked postcard from the office of the Camp Commandant.

Many also died because of the lack of medical service in the camp. In the early weeks the ambulance helpers were strictly forbidden to give medicine to the Jews, a ruling which was also responsible for its quota of deaths. Later it also quite often happened that the doctor in charge of the hospital refused to accept Jewish patients. One case is known to me of the doctor throwing out a sick man, declaring that he was faking his symptoms: the man was dead within two hours.

In the sheds at night we had no means of helping a dying companion. We could not even lay our hands on a glass of water, much less obtain any medicine. We were also unable to leave the shed and go for medical assistance, for the S.S. guards were instructed to open machine gun fire on anyone seen leaving the building at night.

Four weeks after our arrival a hospital shed was opened for the Jews. This had to be paid for by the Jews themselves. It lacked even the most rudimentary equipment. There were no thermometers. Not even a chamber pot.

And yet in this hell one came across human beings. There were S.S. men, a very small minority, who did not maltreat us. Some of the S.S. explained to us that they could do nothing about conditions in the camp. They received their orders from "higher up." This higher authority was Herr Standartenführer Kock, infamous as the perpetrator of nameless brutalities at the Kolumbiahaus in Berlin, and at the camps of Esterwege and Sachsenhausen, now in charge of the Buchenwald camp. How many deaths of defenceless prisoners has this man on his conscience?

There were also some among the foremen who, at the risk of their own lives, attempted to help us. Some of them were denounced as "Jew-lovers" by other prisoners, and publicly flogged. Our worst time followed the arrival of a detachment of young Austrian

S.S., who were sent to Buchenwald from Wöllersdorf. The tortures inflicted upon us by those men are beyond the power of any pen to describe.

How is the population of a concentration camp in present-day Germany brought together? From what elements is the camp made up? In Buchenwald there were 8,000 of us, 2,000 Jews and 6,000 non-Jews. It is now proposed to extend the camp and make it, with a population of 25,000, the largest in Germany.

Our 8,000 prisoners included first of all the "politicals" (as, for example, the Communist members of the Reichstag: Neubauer, Saefkow, Weitinski and others), many of whom have been in various concentration camps ever since 1933. Another prisoner was the well-known Berlin defence lawyer, Hans Litten. His leg was broken in the stone quarry at Buchenwald recently. It had not completely healed from an earlier wound. In addition to the genuine political prisoners, there were many poor devils at Buchenwald accused of having spoken abusively of the sacred person of the Führer. Most of these were sent to the concentration camp (under positive arrest) after the expiration of their prison sentences. The period of detention in these cases is left indeterminate.

One of the hellish features of concentration camp imprisonment is precisely this nerve-shattering uncertainty. Protective arrest may mean detention for three months. It may easily mean detention for three years. No rule, no law, determines the length of the sentence.

After the "political," the category of the so-called "work-shy" is the largest. Anyone who imagines that this group has anything to do with tramps and vagabonds is grossly deceived. An example. A business employee lost his position and applied for unemployment relief. One fine day he was informed at the Labour Exchange that he could obtain employment as a navvy on the new motor roads. This man, who was looking for a commercial post, turned down the offer. The Labour Exchange then reported him to the Gestapo as being "work-shy," and he was arrested and sent to a concentration camp. Technical workers leaving low-paid employment to seek higher wages often meet with the same fate.

The next group were the "Bibelforscher," a religious sect taking its doctrine from the Bible and having a considerable membership in every part of the country, but proscribed by the Gestapo since its members refuse military service; these unhappy people were almost as badly treated as the Jews.

The fourth category consisted of the homo-sexuals, or at least of those against whom the Gestapo thought fit to bring charges of homo-sexuality. To charge those it dislikes with this offence is a favourite tactic of the secret police. At the time I was there Buchenwald contained no representative of this group.

The last class of prisoners were the professional criminals. From their ranks, as I have said, our "overseers" were drawn. Those of them who were set in authority over us were allowed to manhandle us as much as they wanted to. Many of them tried to curry favour

with the S.S. by maltreating us or by making us "exercise" on Sundays during the rest period or forcing the older prisoners to roll back and forth in the wet mud.

When it happened that a prisoner was actually to be released, he had first to submit to a medical examination, to see if his body still carried the mark of the lash, or was in any way bruised. A prisoner who still bore traces of his beatings was not allowed to leave until every mark was healed. In this way the authorities attempted to prevent any knowledge of the physical maltreatment of prisoners reaching the outside world. That these preliminary and precautionary measures are at all successful is to be doubted. The truth slowly seeps through the barriers.

At the time of my release—I was one of the very few who left the concentration camp without having obtained a visa for abroad—I was warned by a high S.S. official that even a whisper concerning my life in the concentration camp would be punished by death. The actual words of the S.S. leader are worth recording. "National socialism," he said, "has no reason to fear the truth. But it will not tolerate the spreading of fantastic atrocity stories."

After my release I received notice that I had to quit the country within five weeks, and that I should not be allowed to re-enter it.

During those five weeks I would be under police supervision, and would have to report daily, first at the Berlin police headquarters, and then later in my own district. The first time I reported at the police headquarters, something happened that seems to me typical of present conditions in Germany. When I arrived I found myself surrounded by a group of officials of the regular force, who eagerly questioned me about Buchenwald. Remembering the threats that had accompanied my departure from the concentration camp, I at first refused to answer. They showed me their identity documents to allay my suspicions, and again urged me to tell them what conditions in Buchenwald were really like. They would see that no harm came to me. Then I told them of the things I had seen. They were so shocked that they could not help interrupting me. Such conditions, they said, were revolting and a scandal. Frick and Himmler were responsible. No one else. They were at pains to impress upon me that they had no control whatsoever over the concentration camps, where, in fact, the S.S. had supreme and exclusive authority.

I have myself lived and experienced the things that are here related about Buchenwald. I was in the camp for six weeks only, and my account can therefore lay no claim to completeness. I know from trustworthy sources that the majority of those who were arrested in June at the same time that I was are still prisoners, and that the death-roll among them still mounts.
