

*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.*

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*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.