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.

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

Frankfort-on-Main, December 14, 1938.

Sir,

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 detained 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.