

*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. Under-clothing 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.