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University House,
17, Victoria Park Square,
London, E. 2

28th April, 1938.

The Under-Secretary of State,
Foreign Office,
Downing Street, S.W. 1.

Confidential.

Sir,

1. I have the honour to submit the following brief report of a visit recently paid by me to Berlin and Vienna to enquire into the situation of the Jewish Community in the latter place. Although the report contains information which will already be known to the Foreign Office, I find it difficult, after my experiences there, to maintain silence about them.

I should explain that I have for many years been closely associated with Jewish affairs, and on this occasion I was requested to go to Vienna in order to enquire into the situation of the Jewish Community there, with special reference to the possibility of emigration.

2. The plight of the Jewish Community in Vienna is extremely grave. The Community (Kultus-Gemeinde) is roughly estimated at 176,000 persons, of whom about 56,000 were already 'on relief' before the advent of the present régime. Jewish organisations have undertaken the charge of providing soup kitchens for some 8,000 persons daily, but, if present conditions continue, this number is likely rapidly to increase.

3. A very great number of Jews in Vienna and the provinces have been arrested without any reasons being given. About 2,000 (the exact number being unknown) are kept in two prisons in Vienna, of whom sixty Jews are reported to have been sent to the concentration camp in Dachau. Great fear is entertained with regard to the treatment and fate of the latter, whose speediest release is being urgently demanded by the Community.

4. As is known, the Jews in Vienna are reported to have raised, at the request of the Schuschnigg régime, a sum of 800,000 Schillings, and, as a penalty for this act, the Kultus-Gemeinde has had a

further fine of 500,000 Marks imposed on it by the Vienna Branch of the Secret Police (Gestapo), towards which up to date a sum of some 230,000 Marks has been raised. In addition to these "official" levies, individual members of the Community are being daily subjected to domiciliary perquisitions by (allegedly) unauthorised persons, uniformed members of the S.A. and S.S., when members of families are being forced to surrender whatever they possess down to the last shilling and household possessions. In addition, Jewish businesses are being 'Aryanised' by being taken over from the Jewish owners by the Aryan employees without compensation, Commissars are being placed in charge, and the process of liquidation in terms which spell ruin to the owners is proceeding apace.

I was indeed informed by the ^Bürgermeister of Vienna that it was his intention that this liquidation should proceed in a systematic and orderly manner, but there is no evidence of this as yet. With regard to other such incidents as have been reported in the Press, they were still continuing while I was in Vienna, and men and women were being subjected to ill-treatment and to various forms of forced labour of an indescribably humiliating kind.

5. While I was in Vienna the activities of the Kultus-Gemeinde were still suspended, and, although there is no authority for it, ritual slaughter has been stopped; on the other hand, the synagogues had again been opened.

6. With regard to the neighbouring districts, I understand that the small Jewish Communities there also have been victimised, and the most notorious cases are those of Frauenkirchen and Deutschkreuz in the Burgenland. I interviewed three or four members of these small Communities and heard from them of the manner in which they had been told to leave by the local gendarmerie, set upon by uniformed members of the S.A. or S.S., despoiled of their goods and personal possessions, forced to sign a declaration to the effect that they were leaving of their own free will and were voluntarily giving up their possessions, and finally obliged to leave the locality in which, in most cases, their families have

resided for hundreds of years. One hundred and thirty of these villagers have taken refuge in Vienna, while the remainder are either under notice to quit or stranded somewhere on the frontier between Austria and the neighbouring countries. Their condition is in the last degree tragic.

7. I should add that the ill-treatment and perquisitions of property above referred to both in and outside Vienna appear to be the work, in all cases, of members of the S.S., S.A. and Gestapo. No complaints were made against either the Vienna Police or the members of the regular Forces.

8. Such then, in brief, is the condition of the Jewish Community in Austria, terrorstricken, despoiled and fearful of what the morrow will bring forth.

9. The points emphasised to me as being of immediate urgency were the following:-

(a) The release of those imprisoned, especially of the three leaders of the Community, Dr. D. Friedmann, who is reported to be in Vienna, and Robert Stricker and Dr. Jacob Ehrlich, detained in the Dachau concentration camp.

(b) The effective stoppage of the unauthorised acts of confiscation of Jewish property in homes and businesses and of ill-treatment of various forms practised in Jewish homes, in cafés, streets and barracks.

(c) The opening of the offices of the Kultus-Gemeinde and other Jewish organisations.

(d) The Burgenland Jewish problem.

While I pointed out to them that neither I personally, nor, as far as I knew, any foreign Government, could intervene, I none the less undertook to bring it to the notice of the Foreign Office.

10. I turn now to a broader aspect of the question. The statement repeatedly made to me in Vienna by officials and others was that the Jews must leave Austria 'bag and baggage', or words to that effect, and when it was pointed out that it was impossible for them to do so if in the meanwhile they were robbed of their possessions, the reply was invariably made that "the Viennese

Jews are rich". It would almost seem as if the manner of their going, whether by the process of emigration to other countries or of starvation in their own, was of little consequence to those in authority. It was also impressed upon me that the case of the Viennese Jews was only part of a much larger problem. The Bürgermeister of Vienna, for example, said that the same fate would shortly befall the Jews of Hungary, Poland and Roumania, and he hoped that this "world question" was receiving the attention of the Powers. (That Germany was in any way responsible, or had a constructive contribution to make, would seem to be ignored.)

11. The facts and incidents which I have briefly reported are, for the most part, public knowledge, and there may seem to be little point in again narrating them. But they form the background to one grim fact to which none but those who intentionally avert their faces can any longer be blind. There is in Middle and Southern Europe a Jewish Community of some four million souls divided between a number of different countries as follows:-

200,000 in Austria; 500,000 in Hungary; 300,000 in Czechoslovakia; and 3,000,000 in Poland. The treatment accorded to the members of this Community by the peoples amongst whom, and the Governments under which, they reside, varies, although it is a variation only of the same theme - bitter hostility; which may take the form in one place of social ostracism and economic boycott, in another of persecution and cruelty naked and unashamed.

And these minorities, which are not "Minorities", have no court of appeal, no diplomatic support, no quarter to which to turn for shelter against the storm, which, having expended itself with fury in the Third Reich for the last three years, now bids fair to break upon these neighbouring countries as well. It seems evident that this question cannot be treated piecemeal; a long-term policy, a comprehensive scheme, the best brains, and ample finance are needed in order adequately to meet the case of oppressed Jewry. Those who have this question on their consciences are earnestly waiting to see what effect will be given to the invitation issued

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by the Government of the United States of America with
regard to facilitating emigration from Austria and Germany.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,