

READING

Nazi Telegram with Instructions for Kristallnacht, November 10, 1938

SECRET!

Copy of Most Urgent telegram from Munich on November 10, 1938, 1:20 a.m.

To all: Headquarters and Stations of the State (Political) Police

To all: Local and Regional Offices of the Security Service (SD)

Urgent! For immediate attention of Chief and his deputy!

Re: Measures Against the Jews Tonight.

Because of the assassination of Legation Secretary vom Rath in Paris, demonstrations throughout the Reich are to be expected tonight — November 9 to 10, 1938. The following orders are issued for dealing with these occurrences.

1) Upon receipt of this telegram, the chiefs of the political police [Gestapo] stations or their deputies must immediately contact the appropriate political authorities for their district [the local Nazi Party leaders] . . . by telephone to arrange a discussion about the conduct of the demonstrations. This discussion should include the competent Inspector or Commander of the Order Police. . .

[The local] political authorities are to be informed that the German police have received from the Reichsführer SS and the Chief of the German police the following orders to which the actions of the political authorities should be correspondingly adjusted:

a) Only such actions may be carried out which do not threaten German lives or property (e.g., burning of synagogues only when there is no threat of fire to the surroundings).

b) Stores and residences of Jews may only be destroyed but not looted. The police are instructed to supervise compliance with this order and to arrest looters.

c) Special care is to be taken on commercial streets that non-Jewish businesses are completely secured against damage.

d) Foreign citizens, even if they are Jewish, may not be molested.

2) . . .demonstrations in progress should not be prevented by the police but only supervised for compliance with the guidelines.

3) . . .existing archival material is to be impounded by the police in all synagogues and offices of the Jewish community centers to prevent its destruction in the course of the demonstrations. . . . [This material] is to be turned over to the . . . offices of the SD.

4) The direction of Security Police [both political and criminal divisions] operations relating to the anti-Jewish demonstrations resides with Political Police authorities except when orders are issued by Security Police inspectors. Officials from the Criminal Police as well as members of the Security Service (SD), of the SS paramilitary units, and of the general SS may be called upon to carry out Security Police operations.

5) As soon as the course of events during this night allows the assigned police officers to be used for this purpose, as many Jews—particularly affluent Jews—are to be arrested in all districts as can be accommodated in existing detention facilities. For the time being, only healthy male Jews, whose age is not too advanced, are to be arrested. Immediately after the arrests have been carried out, the appropriate concentration camps should be contacted to place the Jews into camps as quickly as possible. Special care should be taken that Jews arrested on the basis of this instruction are not mistreated.

6) The contents of this order are to be passed on to the competent Inspectors and Commanders of the Order Police and to regional and local sectors of the SD. . . .

The chief of the Order Police has issued the corresponding instructions to the Order Police including the fire brigades. Close coordination is to be maintained between the Security Police and the Order Police during the implementation of the ordered actions

signed: [Reinhard] Heydrich

SS-Gruppenführer

[SS-Major General, Nazi Chief of Security Police]

[3051 PS]¹

¹ "Telegram to Headquarters and Stations of the State (Political Police)," November 10, 1938, National Archives, trans. U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.