

The siting of the UK National Holocaust Memorial & Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens Case ref
- APP/X5990/V/19/3240661

The UK National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre - Rebuttal Statement

Impact of proximity on national significance

- 1.1** This document is intended to be a broad rebuttal to proofs of evidence submitted on behalf of a number of parties to the inquiry (including the City of Westminster, Baroness Deech, the Thorney Island Society, Save Victoria Tower Gardens and the London Gardens Trust) that have either underplayed or dismissed the contention in our Statement of Case at §3.2a.1 that “...the location of this project is precisely what elevates its status to that of ‘national significance’.”
- 1.2** Its close proximity to the building at the heart of British democracy affords the proposed Memorial and Learning Centre with a significance that no other location can rival.
- 1.3** Momentous set-piece Parliamentary debates determined policies which defined Britain’s close connections to events *prior to*, *during* and *after* The Holocaust, resulting in both action and inaction – having lasting ramifications on thousands of lives.
- 1.4** What went on in the corridors, committee rooms and debating chambers of the Houses of Parliament reflect the complexity of Britain’s responses to Nazism – which is the primary focus of the proposed Memorial and Learning Centre.
- 1.5** Appended to this rebuttal are Hansard records which highlight how the results of the deliberations of British policy-makers, in the place adjacent to the intended site for the Memorial and Learning Centre, are intrinsically woven into the fabric of the proposed narrative of this new institution.
- 1.6** These appendices are grouped in the manner referred to in **1.3** above –

 - i. “*prior to*” The Holocaust.
 - ii. “*during*” The Holocaust.
 - iii. “*after*” The Holocaust.
- 1.7** *Prior to* The Holocaust, British Parliamentary responses to Nazism grappled with competing voices that highlighted the dangers of the increasingly draconian and discriminatory policies of the German Government (based on information from sources such as the embedded British intelligence officer Frank Foley – one of this country’s official

British Heroes of the Holocaust) and those who were wary of revisiting the horrors of war that caused so much devastation to the continent two decades earlier.

1.8 Considerable Parliamentary time was devoted to this country's responses to the rapidly growing number of displaced Jews seeking refuge from Nazi persecution. The appendices to this rebuttal highlight two seminal events to illustrate this.

1.9 App 1 Evian Conference Debate is the debate that took place in Parliament, in July 1938, immediately after the international conference that tried to establish a Worldwide coordinated response to the refugee problem. It reveals so much – that the world was fully aware of the impact of Germany's policies on its Jewish populations, that the numbers of refugees was substantial and growing exponentially and that international coordination to this problem was vital. The exchanges also record a range of concerns about the economic and social impacts of absorbing refugees, a markedly contemporary discussion about the long-term societal benefits to granting asylum and a spirited discussion about the practicalities and benefits of relocating refugees in the "colonies". Most strikingly, the self-congratulatory tone on the conference's achievements stand in stark contrast to what we now know to be true – that few tangible solutions were found. As Lord Marley presciently explains – delegates to the conference "*had to avoid giving support to suggestions or decisions which might encourage a growing pressure on Jews in Poland and Rumania, who might be forced out of those countries if too great ease were shown in receiving masses of refugees*" (rebuttal appendix 1, p. 23 / 207).

1.10 App 1a Update on Evian Debate is a record of a short exchange held minutes prior to the Kindertransport Debate that is intended to connect the significance of **1.9** above and **1.11** below. It reveals that, with Evian failing to elicit a coordinated international action, it was left up to individual governments to decide to what extent they would respond to the plight of the displaced Jews of Europe. As this record reveals Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain expresses the desire to re-home Jewish refugees in Tanganyika (now Tanzania) or British Guyana in order to ward off fears from the British public that the refugees would take their jobs.

1.11 App 2 & App 2a The Kindertransport Debate (*App 2 is the unabridged debate and, for a quicker read, App 2a contains the selected extracts that were read out at the 80th anniversary Kindertransport commemorative event held in Parliament in 2018*). This impactful debate, held four months after the Evian Conference Debate in **1.9**, on 21 November 1938 discusses whether Britain would be prepared to accept more Jewish refugees from Germany, including unaccompanied children. Sir Samuel Hoare, the Home Secretary, confirms that he has received assurances from the Jewish community that funds would be provided to support this scheme and that the Home Office has agreed to waive visas so that child refugees could be brought to Britain. This poignant account includes an impassioned speech from Philip Noel-Baker MP, who later won the Nobel Peace Prize, on the dire situation for Jews in Germany.

1.12 During The Holocaust British Parliamentary responses to Nazism inevitably reflected the overwhelming importance of prioritising the war effort. Debate in both Chambers of

the House were necessarily curtailed by the need for secrecy – as can be seen by comments in **App 3** and **App 4** that refer to expounding on certain issues in “Secret Sessions”. Despite this, the awareness of how dire the plight of Europe’s Jews was is revealing.

1.13 The debate in **App 3 United Nations Declaration** took place in December 1942. As the focus on the complexity of Britain’s responses to Nazism in the proposed UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will no doubt demonstrate – context is everything. Days prior to this Parliamentary exchange Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, had met with the Polish Emissary Jan Karski (representing the Polish Government in Exile which had relocated in London) who related first-hand detailed accounts of conditions in The Warsaw Ghetto and Belzec Extermination Camp. This is the document referred to in the phrase *“a note from the Polish Government, which was also communicated to other United Nations and which has received wide publicity in the Press”*. As this Hansard report records, while Treblinka was erasing all traces of hundreds of thousands of murdered Polish Jews and the gas chambers of Auschwitz -Birkenau had been operational for almost a year, the following was said in the British Parliament -

“In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German invaders are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labour camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions. The number of victims of these bloody cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women and children.”

1.14 ...context is everything. The debate in **App 4 Refugee Problem** took place in May 1943. By now the Germans had started to level Treblinka to the ground in a bid to hide the heinous crimes that took place there. A week earlier Szmul Zygielbojm, a Jew who had escaped Warsaw to persuade the allies to do all they could to save Polish Jewry, in response to the quashing of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, gassed himself in his London flat, writing in a suicide note that was published in the British Press – *“by my death, I wish to give expression to my most profound protest against the inaction in which the world watches and permits the destruction of the Jewish people”*. Throughout this Hansard report we are repeatedly reminded of how cognisant the allies were of what was happening to Jews all over Europe. This is a lengthy document that is far too dense in detail to do justice to in this summary. Perhaps the main take-away is the oft repeated sentiment, reflecting the *“what could have been done”* debate which rages on today. Namely, that retribution for these crimes against the Jews will come in the form of overwhelming military victory.

1.15 *“After The Holocaust”* is an unsatisfactorily imprecise term. **Apps 5, 5a, 5b, 5c and 5d** have been included to highlight Britain’s responses to Germany and its collaborators’ crimes against the Jews in the years immediately following the war – but equally it could be said that we are currently in, and will always be in, the post-Holocaust era. Perhaps

there is no better illustration of this than the *vigour of debate* surrounding the very proposal this inquiry is considering.

1.16 **Apps 5, 5a, 5b, 5c and 5d** are all extracts from debates that revolve around the establishment and outcomes of the Nuremberg Trials. Britain's responses to Nazism now that the war was won have to be viewed within the context of a country that was eager to move on from the constraints of war and faced with massive economic, social and physical-reconstruction challenges. But it is nonetheless revealing to consider the extent to which the firm assurances that victory-in-war provided redress for Nazi crimes against the Jews were adhered to.

1.17 It is vital, first, to acknowledge the pivotal role played by the British Judiciary in establishing and participating in the Nuremberg Trials. The concepts of "genocide", "crimes against humanity" and "universal human rights" are all rooted in this year-long process.

1.18 Nonetheless these submissions reveal how this country's relationship with The Holocaust became even more complex after the war. We see examples of the validity of the entire process being called into question, complaints that the trials were "vengeance dressed as justice", an eagerness to quickly transfer responsibility for these matters into "West German hands" (despite full knowledge that many of those hands bore the same bloodstains as those of the defendants) and the over-ambitious naivety of the "denazification programme". (It's hard to conceptualise what the term "ex-Nazi" was meant to convey when used in November 1945...).

1.19 This inquiry is being asked to consider a plethora of objections to the proposed location of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre – most of which Learning from the Righteous has neither the intention or expertise to address. What we do contend, and hope to have illustrated in this document and its appendices, is that its proximity beside the Houses of Parliament is a vital component to the overall project – making it of national significance.

Impact of proximity on future educational provision

2 In our proof of evidence we said –

“Does the future of Holocaust commemoration and education in the UK depend upon the establishment of the UKHM&LC alongside the Houses of Parliament? Of course not. Irrespective of the outcome of this enquiry, dedicated educators across the country will continue to teach this subject in as inspiring, engaging and relevant a way as possible. But would the influence that such an institution could have on the way the UK's relationship with the Holocaust is perceived and understood by future generations be diminished if it was to be built in a less significant location, or worse, cancelled all together? Undoubtedly. Failing to honour the commitment made by government to

provide the nation with a memorial and learning centre befitting of the significance of this subject, would constitute a missed opportunity that would deleteriously effect the future of Holocaust education and commemoration.”

2.1 Learning from the Righteous is one of a range of educational organisations in the UK dedicated to helping teachers and their students engage meaningfully with the complexity of The Holocaust. While we each have our own focus and tailor-made programmes, we all strive to disseminate knowledge about the facts while provoking our students to respond empathetically and reflect on the subject’s contemporary resonances. A herculean, perhaps impossible task. Those who work in this field do so with a drive and passion that makes it hardly surprising that so many vastly experienced and eminently well-informed practitioners (many who I have had the pleasure of learning from and working with...) have submitted apparently conflicting evidence to this inquiry. I would contend that there is more that unites than divides us. While the importance I attach to the establishment of the UKHM&LC in this precise location is clearly not shared by all my colleagues, I would contend that we all share the same desire to ensure that the future of this country’s Holocaust Education provision is a fitting legacy to the contribution made by the remarkable survivors whose testimony has been the beating heart of all that we do.

2.2 From the moment I first heard about the proposal to establish this memorial and learning centre in this prestigious location, I was convinced that its prominence and status as a national monument would provide an opportunity to bring a momentum and cohesion to the sector that will ensure its relevance and secure its future. I sincerely hope that turns out to become an opportunity taken, not an opportunity missed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Antony Lishak". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Antony Lishak

Chief Educational Consultant

Learning from the Righteous

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APPENDIX 1

Evian Conference Debate, 27th July 1938

i House of Lords data for 16 June 2020 is currently being processed. Data for this date may temporarily appear incomplete.

i The text on this page has been created from Hansard archive content, it may contain typographical errors.

Refugee Problems

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27 July 1938

Volume 110

THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER

had the following Notice on the Paper: To call attention to the serious international problems created by the plight of post-War refugees, and to ask for information as to the outcome of the Evian Conference, and the policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to the refugee question generally; and to move for Papers. The right reverend Prelate said: My Lords, I have asked leave to call attention to the serious international problems created by the plight of post-War refugees, for two reasons: first, the increasing gravity and importance of the subject; and secondly, the recent holding of the Evian Conference, which is to be resumed next week. My Motion deals with refugees in general terms. The scale of the post-War refugee problem, including refugees from Russia, Turkey, Armenia, Syria, Spain and many other places, is one of the most extraordinary phenomena of post-War years. The whole subject, including the great work of Dr. Nansen, has been brilliantly and most thoroughly treated by the Report, the preliminary Report of Sir John Hope Simpson, which was published by Chatham House. Sir John Hope Simpson points out that amongst other causes or concomitants of the refugee situation is the pandemic national exclusiveness now current, as both causing expulsion from a territory and militating against absorption in any other territory. He also calls attention to the general exchange of rigidity of population for the pre-War fluidity, and of a closed economy within the nation for a comparatively free economy.

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But, while we recognise the immense variety of refugees, and the complications and difficulties which that variety causes, there is a particular department of the problem which, by common consent, is more urgent than any other at the present time. It is that which was caused by the inauguration of the National-Socialist State in 1933 and its extension to Austria last March. I wish to avoid rhetorical language in speaking of the actual facts and the overriding cause of the German refugee problem, but it is necessary to call attention to the basic element—namely, the figment of an Aryan race. The word "Aryan" has some relation to language but has no relation to biology, and it is a pure fantasy for which there is no scientific justification whatever. But the result of this fantasy is that those who are called non-Aryan, especially those of the Jewish race, cannot be counted as Germans, cannot be members of the German State, and must be deprived of every part in the German State and in many cases expelled.

I think your Lordships will agree that there is something terrifying in this attack on a tiny minority of non-Aryan people in the country. The total population of Germany is 66,000,000. Taking the Jews only, for the moment: at the beginning of 1933 there were just over half a million of Jews—that is, less than 1 per cent. of the whole population. It is not denied, of course, that, as in any section of any population, there were some unsatisfactory elements, but for the most part the Jew was a healthy, industrious and wealth-producing partner in the common life. It is, however, important to notice that the question is not only a Jewish question. There are and will be religious and political refugees, and in particular I wish to emphasize the importance of what are called the non-Aryan Christians—that is to say, the Christians who, according to this racial theory, lack German blood. They are of various categories. Those Christians with three Jewish grandparents or one Jewish parent are disqualified as though they were Jews. There are other categories which are less disqualified, but for some parts it is required that a man be possessed of full German blood back to 1800.

The non-Aryan Christians are worse sufferers than the Jews. While the Jews have the great Jewish community behind them, the non-Aryan Christians are neither German nor Jews from this point of view, and their claims on their fellow-Christians throughout the world have not, I am sorry to say, been brought home in the way they should be brought home to the Christian Churches. Their number is large, but there are no full statistics and accuracy is therefore impossible. I am told, however, that 500,000 is a modest estimate.

The persecution of the non-Aryans of all kinds has become increasingly severe. It began with a disorderly victimisation in 1933; it was continued in a kind of codification in the Nuremberg laws of 1935. But, since the *Anschluss* with Austria, the events of five years in Germany have been concentrated into five weeks in that country, and it would be difficult to exaggerate the terror for racial and political nonconformists in Vienna during the last few months. I know and have seen those who have lately lived in Vienna as well as those who have been there as visitors, and the situation is so cruel that it is commonly said, not by S.S. and S.A. men but by Governors and Ministers of State, that all must go and go at once, that if non-Aryans cannot find a country that will receive them there is always the Danube, and there are plenty of camps to be filled by December.

I do not argue that this is against the spirit of Christianity, because such an argument would presuppose some sympathy with the Christian religion; but I speak as an Anglo-Saxon simply, and in terms of the ideals of honour and courage which are held in common by Northern people. I cannot understand—and I know many Germans—how our own kinsmen of the German race can lower themselves to such a level of dishonour and cowardice as to attack a defenceless people in the way that the National Socialists have attacked the non-Aryans. I do not think there is any period in civilised German history where German rulers have acted in such a spirit. Such conduct must remain a blot on the honour of the German race.

I happened to be staying in Germany in 1935 when the Nuremberg laws were passed, and National Socialist friends told me that they would not work out quite as badly as I feared, for under the Nuremberg laws the non-Aryans would become a minority, with the rights of a minority, and as a minority would be entitled to protection. I would only say, in comment on that, that it is strange that a nation which oppresses a minority within its own territories in this way should be so zealous in claiming rights for a minority in another State—namely, in Czechoslovakia, which could not by any stretch of imagination be thought to have grievances comparable with the grievances of the non-Aryans in Germany.

I have already said that the question is a limited one, and it is limited in my mind, at this moment, as an urgent question of the existing or potential refugees from Germany and Austria, that is to say, those German or Austrian refugees, whatever their religion, to whom residence in Austria or Germany has become impossible or intolerable. The question which we have to ask is, what can we do to help them? The League of Nations has, as your Lordships know, taken an active interest in the welfare of the refugees all these years, and the two High Commissioners, Mr. James McDonald and Mr. Malcolm, have done excellent work for which everyone is grateful, but the High Commissioners and the League of Nations are powerless to deal with the source of the problem, and the functions of the High Commissioner have been lately defined as mainly juridical. There have also been, and there are, private organisations, the Society of Friends, the Academic Assistance Committee, and some smaller committees, and I would especially speak of the unparalleled generosity of the Jews. But the plight of the refugees in Austria and Germany is quite beyond the resources of private organisations, especially now that Austria has been added.

It is vital that the Governments of the world should act, and act together, if the work is to be done. That is why the initiative of President Roosevelt and the American Government is so welcome, and it is expected that the Permanent Organisation which commences next week in London will have the full support of the Governments. The Evian Conference was a beginning, and there are certain tangible gains already manifested. First, the United States is publicly committed to an active part in international work for the care of refugees. Secondly, the Inter-Governmental Committee is competent to deal with the refugees before they have left Germany and Austria, and therefore is in a position to convert the exodus from a disorderly flight into a planned migration. Thirdly, Inter-

Governmental machinery has been set up with a specific task, whereas previously, for the most part, the refugees service was incidental to the general work of the League of Nations, and the direct responsibility of the Governments was not immediately engaged.

But this beginning must surely be vigorously followed up, if the gains are to be of use, by positive and energetic action by the Governments concerned. Those who have given the deepest and longest thought to the refugee problem are of one mind on the point that there must be German collaboration, that there must be, naturally, a willingness to allow machinery to work in Germany for all grades of refugees, the non-Jewish as well as the Jewish. The fundamental point may be put in this way, that the refugee problem of Austria and Germany cannot be solved unless the non-German Governments can secure some concessions from the German Government, by which the refugees can take a proportion of their property with them into emigration. At present the German Government both expels its unwanted subjects and robs them of their goods. That is an action that cannot be justified on any ground of morality or honour. Thirty nations came together at Evian to try to devise plans by which the "involuntary migrants from Germany" can establish themselves elsewhere. It is surely asking little of Germany that she should co-operate in these plans, to the extent of allowing those migrants to take with them some property which will give them a fair chance of starting life anew in a fresh country.

I would ask for the very particular attention of His Majesty's Government to this point. I would ask that His Majesty's Government should declare at the proper time in unmistakable terms that it regards this as one of the items calling for settlement in any plan of general appeasement in Europe, and I would make an emphatic point of German co-operation here. The American initiative was responsible for the Conference at Evian. The French Government offered hospitality to the Conference and has already sheltered an immense number of refugees. The Committee meets in London next week. It is not too much to say that on the constructive and practical co-operation of the British Government at this stage the future of the Austrian and Germany refugees in a very large measure depends.

Everyone is grateful to the Government for what they have already done and for the concessions or arrangements announced by Lord Winterton at Evian. I note especially (1) the decision of the Government to ratify the Convention of 1938 defining the juridical position of the refugees; (2) the promise to endeavour to absorb the refugees already in England; (3) the promise to allow a limited number of fresh refugees from Austria; and (4) the promise of consideration for settlement of refugees on the land in certain East African Colonies. I also take the opportunity of expressing gratitude for the notably humane and sympathetic administration of the laws regarding aliens by the Home Office officials. But by themselves these things only touch the fringe. Something more ample is required, something to indicate what new things the British Government are prepared to do. It is not an exaggeration to say that in this particular department all eyes are on Britain. If the British Government give a generous lead and show that they really mean to find a solution, the British Government will get far more from America than America has yet offered, and many other countries of Europe will respond accordingly.

What does giving a lead involve? There are two points on which I hope the Government will be ready to declare their willingness to go further on present lines: first, increasing facilities for training and apprenticeship of younger Germans and Austrians in this country; and, second, more precision regarding the distance to which the British Government are prepared to go in opening the door in Colonial territory, something more than a purely general statement about Kenya or Northern Rhodesia. Are the Government prepared to facilitate the settlement, not of a few hundreds but—what I am told on excellent authority, Northern Rhodesia is able to bear in the way of European settlers—a considerable number of thousands—50,000 or 100,000? The question of Palestine is a different question and a very difficult question, no doubt. That also comes into the picture.

But there is another point, which I believe to be a very important point for non-German Governments generally. In my humble opinion the passing out of Germany of an appreciable stream of industrious, intelligent, able-bodied Germans ought to be a great positive gain to other countries. They could bring in new wealth and new work, and they could help to check the alarming fall in the net reproduction rate from which the principal countries of Western and Northern Europe are suffering, as also the United States, Australia and New Zealand. The refugees can be considered as a special kind of migration. I should like to quote a passage from a leading economist who has written upon population trends and international migration. He says:

“There are, of course, only two ways of increasing the population in a given area. People may move in, or those already there may have large families. We know, however, that even in the New World, where the opportunities for additional workers are undoubtedly most promising (if we take a fairly long view), the population is already barely reproducing itself. Using the measure suggested by Dr. Kuczynski in the present volume, we know that mothers in Australia and New Zealand are not producing enough girl children to keep up the number of future mothers, and that they are barely doing so in the United States, and that in Canada only those of French extraction are reproducing themselves at that rate. Unless the trend of the birth-rate is reversed, migration alone will make possible the development—in so far as it depends upon a larger labour force —of these regions which offer the human race—both those who settle and those who trade with them—a better life.”

The noble Duke who represents the Dominions in this House last Wednesday called attention to the serious fall in the birth-rate of this country, and he said that unless the present tendencies are reversed there must be a sharp drop in the total population. And I quote from the Report of the Oversea Settlement Board:

“Both in the United Kingdom and the Dominions the birth-rate of the British stock shows a downward trend, and the population is growing older in its composition. The seriousness of this situation is obvious from the point of view of the social and economic life of the community and of defence.”

That, I suggest, is a good reason in itself for facilitating migration into this country of suitable younger men and women of an assimilable stock, and I do not hesitate to say that a reinforcement of our population from younger able-bodied refugees of both sexes from Germany and Austria on a pretty large scale would be to the great advantage of this country. The argument that the number of immigrants necessarily increases unemployment is not to be sustained. A well known economist says that:

“The notion that a bare reduction of the number of residents would serve to reduce the number of unemployed, and an increase to increase unemployment has always been regarded as crude in the extreme by those who have given any thought to the problem involved.”

And I am informed on excellent authority that the existing German refugees in this country have provided employment for a number of British workmen at least quite as large as the number of refugees.

I realise that the manner of bringing them in needs care, and that there must be a proportion between the Jewish and non-Jewish sections, but there is no reason, I suggest, why a real opening of the doors should not be welcomed by the public provided it is made clear by the Government that it is part of a farsighted and therefore patriotic policy. After all, these Germans are good men and good women—they are not vagabonds. I would also point out that a reinforcement of British stock by foreigners has been part of the tradition of British policy until comparatively recent years, and I hope we shall not yield to any racial heresy which may prevent us from renewing it. Any one who will take

the trouble to read such a work as Cunningham's *History of Alien Immigrants into England*, knows how great is the British debt. He says:

“It is clear that for the whole of our textile manufactures, for our shipping, for numberless improvements in mining, in the hardware trades, and in agriculture, and for everything connected with the organisation of business we are deeply indebted to the alien immigrants. Their influence on other sides of life is less easy to assess and trace; but it is none the less real.”

And may I add as regards the origin and character of the non-Aryans, when we remember that the largest part of European civilisation is derived from non-Aryan sources, it is impossible to pretend that the so-called non-Aryans are not a part of European humanity.

My last request to the Government concerns consultation with the Dominions. I realise that the whole responsibility for migration into the Dominions is a matter for each self-governing Dominion itself, but the change in the centres of pressure of population throughout the world is of deepest significance for the British Commonwealth. Russia's population is growing rapidly—175,000,000—and the net

reproduction rate is enormous. Other countries in Southern Europe are growing, and there is pressure from Asia. But the birth-rate in the Dominions is falling rapidly. The population composition is steadily ageing, and if the position is to be strengthened by migration from suitable stock—I quote the Report of the Oversea Settlement Board—there is no time to be lost. Last Wednesday, several members of your Lordships' House recalled an extract from that Report dealing with reinforcement by foreign settlers, not as separate colonies—that would be hopeless—but by absorption:

““The incorporation of assimilable settlers, whether of Northern or other European extraction, would itself be not only a source of permanent enrichment to the life of the Dominions, but would at the same time increase their capacity for absorbing migrants from this country. It should, moreover, lead to increased trade between the countries from which the migrants go and the countries in which they settle, and should thereby make a contribution towards what we regard as the urgent need of the world to-day, the more open door to trade and population.””

Whatever may be thought of certain sweeping statements concerning great empty spaces, it is commonly agreed that each of the overseas Dominions is capable of supporting a substantially larger popu-

lation than at present. Professor Carr-Saunders, a specialist in world population, estimates a population based on corresponding rainfall areas in the Western States of America of 29,000,000 in Australia. I may be told that this is quite unreasonable. The present population is 6,500,000. It may well take a century (and why not?) to quadruple it. But the population of England and Wales was quadrupled in little over a century. It was 9,000,000 in 1801. If anyone living then had been told that it would be 41,000,000 in 1938, he would have said it was incredible. I should like to quote from the present Prime Minister, who as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his Budget speech in another place in 1935, referring to the birth-rate, said:

““I have a feeling that the time will not be far distant when the countries of the British Empire will be crying out for more citizens of the right breed and when we in this country will not be able to supply the demand.””

Finally, there was a dinner at the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House on June 21 at which the noble Viscount, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, made an important speech. He was followed by a very distinguished Cabinet Minister from Australia, the Right Hon. R. G. Menzies. In his speech Mr. Menzies spoke of the importance of the representatives of the Dominions keeping in constant touch with one another, and said that the Foreign Secretary is the guiding hand in foreign

policy for the British Commonwealth. He said that foreign affairs were not European but world affairs, and there should be one voice of the British people and not six voices. I call special attention to these words in his speech:

“From time to time there is a great deal to be said for the English statesman who said, many years ago, that he had 'called the New World in to redress the balance of the Old.' I should like to think the people in these islands more frequently turned their eyes outward to that New World and said to themselves more frequently, 'What is the consequence in the affairs of the world of this new British world which is to be found in all the Seven Seas?'”

I suggest that one great world matter in which this new British world, found in all the Seven Seas, may redress the balance of the Old World is this problem of the refugees.

Accordingly my request to the Government is to ask whether they will announce at the proper time that they have decided to call the Evian representatives into consultation, either before or at the next meeting of the Inter-Governmental Committee in London, so that the Committee can be informed in some detail as to what share the British Empire will take in receiving refugees from Germany and Austria. The whole problem of refugee work is vast and difficult, and I realise that its handling requires immense care and immense patience, but I claim that it may be solved if the Governments of the world will act. On the British Government, in particular, because of its position in the world, lies a great responsibility. I beg to move the Motion which stands in my name.

VISCOUNT SAMUEL

My Lords, the right reverend Prelate in his sympathetic and cogent speech has taken a comprehensive survey of this wide question. For my own part I propose to limit myself to only a section of it. During the last two or three years I have been closely connected with one of the voluntary organisations which have been endeavouring to cope with this problem, and I will offer to your Lordships a few observations based upon that experience. I think, however, I shall be speaking in the name of all the voluntary organisations in this country and elsewhere when I express the gratitude which we all feel to the President of the United States for his initiative in summoning the Conference at Evian, and also to Mr. Myron Taylor, the principal American delegate, for the energy and efficiency with which he conveyed that initiative at Evian. Further, we feel a great debt to Lord Winterton, the principal Government delegate, for his efficient and useful service.

The chief value of the Evian Conference perhaps is this, that it has brought out clearly before all the world the fact that this question of the refugees is not merely a matter of domestic moment to Germany, but is also of importance to all countries which may be directly or indirectly affected by the flood of humanity that has been poured out from Central Europe. At the beginning, when the persecution started in Germany five years ago, there was a headlong flight of about 50,000 people who

threw themselves upon the hospitality of the neighbouring countries, and since then there has been a more gradual emigration of about 100,000 people from Germany. Now the events in Vienna have pressed out a further great body of people. Indeed, the German administrators in Vienna seem to have deliberately endeavoured to create a feeling of panic and terror among the Jewish population in Vienna and the smaller population in the Provinces, in order to compel a speedy emigration and to arouse such feelings of sympathy in the rest of the world that the emigrants will be accepted. Hundreds, indeed thousands, of arrests have been made in the last few weeks, quite indiscriminately, amongst the Jewish population of Vienna. People have been in prison for short periods or sent to concentration camps, and pledges have been extracted from them that they will leave Austria within a fixed number of months, or even of weeks. The Consulates of Britain, the United States and other countries have been surrounded by crowds of hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of people in the streets clamouring for visas to enable them to escape from this terror.

This, as I say, and indeed it is obvious, constitutes not merely a local problem but affects all the countries of the world that may be countries to which these people would go, for they are placed in this dilemma: are they to harden their hearts and shut their doors against these people who are seeking refuge, which will be contrary to their own feelings of humanity; or, on the other hand, are they to throw open widely their doors and allow in perhaps a great flood of indiscriminate emigration, numbering tens or hundreds of thousands, with perhaps serious effects upon the economic situation of their own people? It is quite true, as the right reverend Prelate has said, that emigration, if it is gradual and if it is of persons carefully selected, would not embarrass but would enrich the country which accepted it. It may not cause increased unemployment, but may diminish existing unemployment. As the right reverend Prelate has said, here in England this present emigration has unquestionably given fresh employment in certain trades to British people. Exact statistics are difficult to obtain, but an answer given by the Government in another place some time ago shows that undoubtedly immigrants from Germany have succeeded in founding a number of new industries that have employed British people certainly to the extent of thousands, though how many thousands it is difficult to ascertain. And similar information points to a like result in Holland, where some statistics have been obtained.

Furthermore, among these refugees are a number of men of eminence in science, in medicine and in other walks of life who are of value to the countries to which they go. There has been some discussion recently whether this country would be wise to open its doors to doctors from Vienna. Well, it is well known that some of these men have world-wide reputations. People from all over the world go to specialists, sometimes in Germany or Austria or Switzerland. Many of these belong to the Jewish race, and if we can attract some of these people to London surely that is not a disadvantage to London.

Rather it will be of value to our population in improving the facilities given here for the highest skill in

medical and surgical science. Do not let us, out of excessive patriotism, be like the character in the play who said that he had so much confidence in his own doctor that he would rather die under his care than be cured by anyone else.

And, indeed, all through history there are many examples of countries deriving great advantage from immigration of this character. One of the chief dates in the history of European civilisation is 1453, when Constantinople was captured by the Turks, with the result that men of learning and of science were driven out of the Byzantine Empire to other countries, to give an immense stimulus to the progress of human thought and human activity. To-day, by a strange coincidence, some of those who are now being driven out of Germany have gone back to Turkey, where they have been welcomed in the universities and in the professions. And so we have the converse of the movement of five centuries ago. To India also, and other parts of the British Empire, individuals have gone, and to the advantage of those countries. Here, also, a number of emigrants have come who will be of great service to this community. I would endorse what has been said by the right reverend Prelate as to the sympathetic attitude that has been adopted by the present Home Secretary, and by the Home Office generally, in dealing with the difficult problems that arise in this connection.

But after all, my Lords, those who can be accepted in these various categories in European countries are only a fraction of the whole body who are being driven out from Central Europe. We must consider in addition other ways of handling the problem. Of course the principal and simplest remedy would be if the persecution were to be stopped, but that perhaps is too much to hope for. Germany in this matter has quite deliberately and consciously stepped down to a lower level of civilisation. We have the strange phenomenon of the publication of that newspaper *Der Stürmer*, which brings so much disgrace, not upon the Jews, but upon Germany, the publication of which is not only permitted but is officially encouraged, special frames being placed in the various towns for its exhibition in order that the public may read it freely. The publisher, Herr Streicher, has been given the place of honour at the right hand of Herr Hitler at important public ceremonies in Germany. Indeed, it is not only the Jewish community in Germany and Austria which is subject to persecution. As the right reverend Prelate said, there are the so-called non-Aryans who number some hundreds of thousands, and there are those like Pastor Niemöller who stand up for religious liberty and free expression of the faith which they hold, who also are subject to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment.

I have been reading lately a book which some of your Lordships may have seen, called *Germany Speaks*, which contains statements, by many of the leaders of different departments of the German State, of the Nazi point of view. While it has a section in which it points out that Germany under the new *régime* has respect for the principle of law, and that courts function and are bound by the Statutes of the country, it does not mention, it says no word of the concentration camps and of the arbitrary arrests and

imprisonment without trial. Pastor Niemöller, for example, having been acquitted and released by the court of law to which he was subjected and before which he had open trial, was immediately re-arrested without charge and without trial and has been in prison ever since. In those circumstances we cannot hope or expect that persecution will stop at the source. The only remedy is emigration, so far as that can be effectively organised. About forty thousand of the Jews who have left Germany have gone to Palestine, but in Palestine now, owing to events with which we are all too unhappily familiar, there is a refuge for only an exceedingly small number.

This is not the occasion on which your Lordships would desire a general discussion of the Palestine situation. Perhaps such a discussion might be desirable a little later in the year, when the Report of the Boundary Commission has been published and the political situation has thereby been clarified. May I be permitted, however, to make a very few observations with regard to the present situation in Palestine? I revisited that country last March and came away with a somewhat pessimistic impression. I felt it my duty to communicate to the Secretary of State for the Colonies my view that the situation there was very bad—which was obvious—and that it was not likely to show improvement but more likely to deteriorate. That, unhappily, has proved to be the case in recent months. I fear that the present situation offers little prospect of early improvement. When this matter was debated in your Lordships' House a year ago on the Report of the Peel Commission, I ventured to express my view that the main recommendation of that Commission for partition was a wrong one and would not bring peace to Palestine. I very much regret that it should have been precipitately adopted by the Government without any opportunity being given for either of the two great communities concerned to express their views and say whether they were prepared to accept or reject that solution. The results during the past year have been most lamentable.

For my own part, I am still convinced that the present policy is not one that will be successful, and I still adhere to the alternative which I ventured to lay before your Lordships' House in some detail a year ago. I am convinced that it is essential that both sides should make some sacrifice—that the Jews should realise that in the presence of Arab opposition they cannot obtain 100 per cent. of their demands, and that the Arabs must realise that they cannot stop the movement to establish a Jewish home in Palestine, but may be able and are entitled to safeguard their own legitimate position. An accommodation therefore is called for between the two sides. Mean- time there is great loss and great suffering in that country. British soldiers and policemen are called upon to sacrifice their lives and abominable crimes bring death and mutilation to many innocent people. The whole situation in the Eastern Mediterranean is adversely affected by the present situation. In this connection the result has been almost, though not entirely, to close that outlet for the persecuted Jews from Germany and Austria.

I have had opportunities of seeing many of these persons—manufacturers, merchants, shopkeepers, doctors, architects, scientists, men of irreproachable character, intelligent, efficient, who had added to the resources and welfare of the community to which they belonged. Now their families are broken up, their sources of livelihood are closed, an honourable existence is denied to them, and they are cast upon the world, forced out indiscriminately. In the endeavour to cope with this situation, the Committee with which I am connected and its allied organisations have raised in this country by voluntary subscription a sum which now exceeds £1,000,000. In other countries similar organisations and other sources have collected further sums, the combined total being estimated at more than £5,000,000 during the past five years. In addition to that sum these people have been able to bring out some of their own resources, and many of them have received financial help from friends and relatives in America or in other countries, so that in general the sum that has been raised is very considerable. All this has been done during the last five years.

These moneys, so far as voluntary organisations are concerned, have been devoted, first, to urgent questions of relief in Germany, in Austria or in countries of immediate refuge; to retraining people for other occupations where they belong to professions already crowded in which there is no demand for their services, and to the expenses of emigration, and of settlement on the land or in industry in other countries. Many people ask why an effort should not be made to bring out the people wholesale by the hundred thousand and plant them in some one country. Many countries have been suggested in different parts of the world. No doubt here and there some measure of collective emigration might be permitted, but our experience is that the cost of such measures is enormous and renders these schemes impracticable. To settle a family on the land in a country which is not already prepared for colonisation costs on the average at least £700 per family and even more than that. Consequently, if you have £1,000,000 you can only settle fourteen hundred families or thereabouts. No doubt something can be done in this direction. The right reverend Prelate mentioned Kenya and Northern Rhodesia. These schemes have been and are being carefully explored, and I believe something can be done in that direction; but I fear his estimate that it may be a matter of fifty thousand or of one hundred thousand is, on account of the cost, excessive. You would need many, many millions for an undertaking of that character.

At the most the immigration into countries of Europe or land settlement in other countries can only deal with hundreds of cases, whereas our problem is a question of hundreds of thousands of cases. Consequently the conclusion to which those of us who have been devoting our time and attention to the problem in the last few years have come is that the main resource must be found in the possessions of these people themselves. A good many of them fortunately have been in fairly comfortable circumstances. They are eager now to find new lives in other countries. If only they were allowed to

take with them the property that belongs to them, they would be able to make homes and new livelihoods for themselves in other countries. The poorer classes could be helped partly by them and partly also by voluntary organisations in other lands. The main difficulty of the situation arises from the fact that in Germany that is precisely what has been stopped.

At first people who left the country were permitted to take 75 per cent. of their property, leaving behind 25 per cent. as a special tax. Then the proportion that they were allowed to take out was reduced to 30 per cent., and then to 10 per cent., and now in effect it is reduced to nothing at all. First they are stripped of their possessions, and then, in effect, they are ejected from the country. Those countries to which the emigrants may go are surely entitled to protest against a policy such as this. Indeed, the Conference at Evian, in its final act there, included this paragraph:

““Considering that if countries of refuge or settlement are to co-operate in finding an orderly solution of the problem before the Committee they should have the collaboration of the country of origin, and are therefore persuaded that it will make its contribution by enabling involuntary emigrants to take with them their property and possessions and emigrate in an orderly manner.””

That at least may be demanded. If persecution is not to be stopped, at all events let the conditions be such as to enable people to leave in an orderly fashion and with some prospect of being able to be accepted in other countries and to make a livelihood there.

The matter was well summed up in a sentence in a leading article in *The Times* a few days ago:

““A policy of merciless confiscation is unworthy of a great country, and the unloading of forced migrants in a destitute condition is an offence against humanity and the community of nations.””

If that concession should be made by Germany, then perhaps this problem can be solved. If it is not made, I am bound to say that in my judgment the problem is absolutely insoluble. The Evian Conference, I think, came to a wise conclusion in providing for the establishment of an organisation to be set up here in London to continue its work and to give it practical application. I should have preferred that this organisation should have been under the auspices of the League of Nations had it been practicable; but in view of the fact that America is supplying the initiative and driving-power in this matter, and that Germany is the country with which it will be necessary to have negotiations, and in view of the fact that neither America nor Germany is a Member of the League, it must reluctantly be admitted that some fresh organisation is necessary. I think that all of us who are concerned in this matter are glad to know that the new organisation will have a distinguished American as its chairman, and an American, also of experience and capacity as its director.

That is all that I wish to address to your Lordships. Strangely and unexpectedly in this modern age, the spirit of persecution has again lifted its monstrous head. Governments and peoples of nations where justice is still regarded as a supreme principle, and good will among men as an object worthy of pursuit, if they cannot stop the persecution that is now proceeding, may at least do much to soften and palliate its most cruel effects.

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LORD ALLEN OF HURTWOOD

My Lords, I have asked permission to be included in the list of those who address your Lordships on this subject this afternoon for a quite specific reason, which I will explain in one moment. But first I think it worth while noting the significance of the fact that this debate on the Motion of the right reverend Prelate precedes a debate on the wider issues of foreign policy. I for one believe that this subject of the persecution of the Jews in particular and the problem of refugees in general may well turn out to be one of the most influential topics governing the whole subject of the pacification of Europe. It is quite right and proper that the debate should be used for the purpose of submitting to His Majesty's Government constructive proposals, both with regard to finance and with regard to the technique of migration, so far as these unhappy refugees are concerned. But I venture to hope that it will not be thought unseemly if I use the occasion of this debate for a slightly different purpose.

The Evian Conference, as was quoted by the noble Viscount who has just sat down, referred to the necessity of some collaboration in this matter from what are called the countries of origin. I venture to hope that it will not be thought improper if I use the debate in your Lordships' House to make an appeal to the German Government that they will consider to what extent it is possible to modify their procedure in this matter and to collaborate so far as the solution of this terrible problem is concerned. I venture to make that appeal, because I happen to be among those in this country who for nearly thirty years have been under the indictment of being pro-German. I make the appeal not merely on humanitarian grounds; I make it for reasons of political wisdom. I believe that this issue will have repercussions in the very near future upon the negotiations towards a new peace settlement that are taking place in Europe. If this country and Germany should ever drift apart again and should ever find themselves upon the brink of war, I personally do not believe it will be due to some breach of contract or breach of law. It will be due to our discovery in the course of the negotiations that there is a disparity of outlook between our two countries, so far as humanity and cruelty are concerned, and because of the discovery of that disparity of outlook there will be an absence of confidence which will make it exceedingly difficult to carry through to success those negotiations which both Germany and this country so ardently desire.

It is for that reason, the reason of political wisdom, that I venture to urge the German Government to respond to the Evian Conference, and become a collaborator in solving this terrible problem. One has no right, when appealing to Germany, to forget that this problem of the post-War refugee is by no manner of means confined to troubles which have originated in Germany. Russia, a country which we believed was building up a new social order, based upon social idealism, has been the country which has been foremost in bringing back into Europe the evils of persecution and has been one of the principal obstructors of attempts to deal with the problem of refugees.

I look back to the various stages of Anglo-German relationships. I can remember that before the War some of us were admiring and extolling the culture and achievements of the German people. I can remember that we pointed to the geographical position of Germany, situated as she was in the very centre of Europe, and we realised that that geographical disability had affected her history in the past, and must affect it in the future. We realised that Britain, situated as she was, protected by the sea, had been able, because of that security, early to achieve mature political wisdom, and to gather round herself a commonwealth of free peoples. We realised that Germany had desired what we in this country had desired, but had faded in that achievement. Consequently, when the War came I can well remember that under the leadership of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald some of us protested against the proposition that the sole responsibility for that War rested upon the German nation. In 1916 we pleaded for a peace by negotiation, rather than a peace by a knock-out blow, and at the time of the Versailles Treaty we protested, not merely against the terms included in the Treaty, but against the manner in which the Treaty was being negotiated, for we realised that you could not build up the peace of Europe upon the foundation of a humiliated nation. Thereafter when the War was over we pleaded for the inclusion of Germany from the beginning in the family of the League of Nations, instead of five years afterwards, as was the case; and at stage after stage of the Disarmament Conference, in your Lordships' House, some of us begged most earnestly for the end of the discrimination and of the inequalities that were imposed upon the German people. Finally, even when Herr Hitler introduced into Germany a *régime* which some of us found difficult to understand, and which if I may say so was contrary to our British way of looking at the art of government, we have continued to plead for good will and understanding between Germany and this country.

I have ventured to say these few words about the past, simply in order that I may shape my contentions with regard to appealing to Germany about the present. I believe that if Germany continues the policy which she is now pursuing with regard to the Jews and other refugees she will bring about an impediment to that peace which we all desire to see established. The moment at which she is carrying on that policy is strangely unfortunate. During the last few years there has grown up amongst every grade of opinion in this country a longing for conciliation with Germany. The British people have

realised, and realised with some measure of shame, their part in the responsibility for the last few tragic years, and just at that moment, when good will was apparent, Germany has seen fit to impede that growing good will by this new barrier of misunderstanding. America was the principal agent in bringing about the calling of the Evian Conference. That reveals the attitude of American opinion, and it will be indeed a misfortune if American and British opinion should be driven away again from Germany.

Germany is not only impeding friendship but bringing dishonour upon herself. Perhaps there I should check myself, because no country has a record, so far as minorities are concerned, which is entirely a clean one. Even our own nation, not in the remote past but as recently as the period of the Black and Tans in Ireland, has upon its record incidents of which it is ashamed, and I have already referred to Russia as the country standing for social idealism which again has a record much to be deplored. It does seem to me infinitely tragic that Germany should start upon a course of persecution which is dishonourable. Why do I venture to use that word "honour"? It is because it is a word which to a German means a very great deal. Germany is peculiarly sensitive in her conception of honour, but the persecution which she is now carrying on has a peculiar quality of wickedness about it. We all understand that every Government, every nation, will at times impose suffering and persecution upon its political opponents, particularly upon opponents who may seem to it to be guilty of a violent and seditious policy. Persecution of political opponents is something common to all countries. I have myself known what it is to be the guest of His Majesty's Government in this country for quite a considerable period of my life, and therefore I have reason to understand that all Governments see fit at a certain time to consider certain members of the community to be out of order. But the persecution which is being carried on in Germany is not that of persecuting opinion, but of persecuting blood.

I have known myself, as a guest of the German Government, what it is to be taken through the lovely countryside in Germany, and then to feel the profound discomfort which comes from seeing those placards of hatred against the Jews which encounter you as you pass through that country. Some of us have known in Germany, even when we have been the guests of the German Government, what it is to have in our hands the hand of a little German child, a child which in school has been compelled to sit upon benches separate from its school-fellows, an object of contempt, for no other reason than that it is the child of its Jewish parents. I cannot conceive anything more cruel than to try to stir up hatred between child and parent. That is not a persecution of opinion, that is not an attempt to put down sedition, that is persecution of blood, from which there is no escape; and, for a child to be brought under that form of persecution, I think must stir the heart of anyone who has passed through that experience in Germany.

Germany has said that British democracy is degenerate. Well, I for one was never more proud of British democracy than when Professor Freud, that great scientist, aged and infirm, became an exile from his

country and was welcomed within our shores. There was taken to him as an invalid the register of the Royal Society in order that he might inscribe his name therein, an act which I believe has never been carried through in this country except for members of our Royal Family; and thus degenerate democracy linked an exiled and distinguished Jewish scientist with members of our own Royal Family. That seemed to me a cause of pride, and not a sign of degeneracy. I hope I have not spoken too unrestrainedly, but this whole attitude of the Germans, with whom we are so longing to see a peace settlement, is affecting issue after issue which comes directly within the purview of any settlement that will have to be made.

Take the question of German Colonies. I think most British people realise that when those Colonies were taken from Germany they were taken not strictly in accordance either with the spirit or the letter of the Fourteen Points of President Wilson. I believe that most schools of thought would be eager and anxious to bring about some readjustment of the Colonial problem as part of an all-round peace settlement. But do not our German friends realise that just as we have become conscious of an old wrong they now confront us with the dilemma of facing a new wrong, and that we cannot overlook the consequences upon native populations in those Colonial areas when we see the tragic evils which are being perpetrated in Germany so far as German minorities like the Jews are concerned. And so I have ventured to use this debate to plead that there may be some response from Germany to the desire of the Evian Conference for collaboration.

May I say, in conclusion, one word so far as our own Government are concerned? I join in the words of gratitude which have been addressed to the Government, not only for their efforts at the Evian Conference, but for the humanity of administration which all of us who have had contact with the Home Office know to exist under the guidance of the present Home Secretary. I feel quite confident of this, that this new problem of our time, the refugee problem, is going to grow in scale rather than to diminish. I have my doubts—and I hope that the noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, will forgive my expressing them to one who is so much more experienced than myself—as to whether so vast a problem is likely to be solved by what is called infiltration. I believe that we are going to be faced not only with the problem of refugees from Germany and Austria, as we have been in the past from Russia, but possibly by a problem extending into other countries in South-East and Central-Eastern Europe, and the scale may become immense. I cannot therefore but feel that it will have to be dealt with as a problem of resettlement rather than as a problem of infiltration, and that there will have to be set up a conference or committee representing the Governments of many nations, who will deal with this subject from the point of view of settlement rather than from the point of view of infiltration.

But whatever may be the rights and wrongs of that complicated issue, the British Empire is vitally involved. We cannot avoid our history. We are the owners, directly and indirectly, in this

Commonwealth of ours of one quarter of the whole of the earth's surface, and we cannot continue to talk about law and the protection of law and of law-abiding procedure and remain in possession of a quarter of the earth's surface, unless we begin to think of how we can collaborate internationally to use that vast area to meet a problem such as that which we are discussing this afternoon. It must impose sacrifice upon us in some shape or form. We, the British Commonwealth, will be compelled, as I think, to share some part of the suffering which at present rests upon the shoulders of the unhappy Jews and other minorities. The Jewish people are returning right back to the centre of the world stage, and I believe that that problem of the Jew is going to affect the geography of the British Empire, the economic prosperity of the Empire, and also the morality of our Empire.

The Jewish people are a people to whom civilisation owes an enormous debt of gratitude. They are a people who can bring, with their genius, great gifts in return for great understanding; and I feel that, far from our losing as an Empire, we should gain in the end by restoring to the Jew the dignity which he ought to possess by liberating his spirit with some measure of happiness after these centuries of persecution. And I believe that if the Empire will respond, despite all the difficulties, we shall have cast our bread upon the waters and it will be returned to us a thousandfold. I hope I have not spoken too unrestrainedly in making that appeal both to the Government of Germany and to our own Government.

Share

THE MARQUESS OF READING

My Lords, I should have hesitated to follow in this debate my noble friend Lord Samuel who has given so much time, experience and wisdom to seeking a solution of this problem, if it had not been that perhaps I too in a different way have had contacts which may enable me to make some small contribution to your Lordships' debate. In any event, I confess that I should have found it difficult to be silent in a debate upon this particular topic. For, after all, the reason why this problem of refugees is occupying your Lordships' minds to-day is to found in the propagation of a doctrine, systematically conceived and ruthlessly applied, which seeks to degrade Jews without distinction below the status of citizens of their country, and almost to expel them from the category of human beings. The Jewish community in this country has, as my noble friend has pointed out, striven to make its own contribution to the work of alleviation, and it has been my task to be Chairman of the special appeal which was made earlier in this year on behalf of Austrian Jewry. Ever since that fact became known in such little as survives of the Jewish Press in Germany and Austria, I am not exaggerating when I say that it has been with dread that I have turned at each post to my letters, knowing as I do that infallibly there will be amongst them appeals as poignant as they are genuine, to most of which, unfortunately, we are impotent to reply.

I do not propose to harrow your Lordships or take up time by giving individual instances. As to the circumstances which have produced this situation I say no more than this, that an ancient, proud, and gifted community such as was that of Vienna does not clamour to be uprooted in a state bordering upon destitution from what has been its home for generations unless conditions of life in that country have been made intolerable. Further than that, if perhaps Jews may claim one virtue for themselves, it is that they have a strong sense of family life. Yet you have now the spectacle of parents begging that their children may be taken away from them, realising that they themselves cannot get out of the country, begging that their children may be taken away, that their family life may be shattered, so that at least their children may be enabled to start a fresh life, albeit in a strange land where they will lack the guidance and protection of their parents just at the age when they are most in need of them.

Your Lordships will not perhaps wonder if those of us who are intimately concerned with this problem feel sometimes that it is, perhaps to a disproportionate extent, over-clouding and obsessing our lives. But there are brighter spots. Reference has been made to the attitude of the Home Office in this matter, and I only desire from my own personal experience to add a word of gratitude. Realising as we do that the paramount duty of that Office is to preserve the interests of the people of this country, at the same time we deeply appreciate their efforts, consistent with that duty, to adopt a sympathetic attitude to those who apply to them. May I also, in all sincerity and humility, say that we have been deeply and gratefully moved by the action of the most reverend Primate in setting aside a recent Sunday, with a gesture transcending all barriers of creed, to be a day of intercession for those who are persecuted? Memory of action of that kind does not quickly pass.

And then there is Evian itself, and the humanity and idealism which promoted its calling together. May I say one word—and it will be a very brief one—on one aspect of Evian? There were not a few countries, largely South American ones, which laid emphasis upon their willingness only to take such immigrants as were prepared to work upon the land, and there may have been some amongst your Lordships who thought that that restriction would operate largely to exclude those who were Jews. If illustration were required of the inaccuracy of that view, it would not be necessary to look further than Palestine, where some 25,000 Jews are actively working on the land and, together with their dependants, constitute an aggregate of 56,000 persons directly dependent on the land for their livelihood, or almost one in seven of the Jewish population of that country. Nor is it confined to Palestine. In addition to agricultural communities in Poland, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia, there have been established by a body with which I happen to be connected, acting as trustees and administrators of a large sum of money left now many years ago by a Jewish philanthropist, seven colonies in the Argentine Republic where there are now some 15,000 persons—Jewish immigrants into the Argentine—working on the land, and some 10,000 engaged in supplying the needs of these colonies, staffing the co-operatives, and generally

indirectly connected with that work. Something like half of the colonists have, in the course of years, purchased their own land and are independent landowners to-day.

With the repayment that they have made it has been possible to establish other persons on the land, and it is not too much to say that these colonies, established as they were in remote and virgin territory, have been a striking success and give no little hope and promise for the application of such schemes as we have had adumbrated for Kenya or Northern Rhodesia. We have striven with all our power to see that there should come out from Germany and from Austria, not untrained and haphazard refugees, but trained and organised emigrants. But the cost of establishing families upon the land is enormous. In the Argentine experiment to which I have just referred the cost of one family is little under £800—half for the purchase of the land and half for the provision of the necessary livestock and implements. These figures are, as has been pointed out already, obviously far beyond the sphere of any private benevolence; nor can we in fairness ask those Powers who were represented at Evian themselves to furnish the necessary funds.

Therefore I come back to the only solution that presents itself again to me, the solution of persuading, even now, the German Government to reverse their policy of confiscation, and thereby to withdraw the officially authorised presumption upon which that confiscation is based—namely, that any money in Jewish hands must have been criminally acquired. It is perhaps singular that during past generations the taint upon that money has escaped all those non-Jews in Germany and Austria who have worked happily for Jewish employers and who have benefited from Jewish charity. Evian has in my view realised all but the most extravagant hopes. It was admittedly only a beginning; it could be nothing else; but it has already had the result of establishing this permanent Committee in London. It has, I believe, built enduring foundations of hope in many countries, and it has at least demonstrated that the conscience of mankind neither slumbers nor sleeps.

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LORD MARLEY

My Lords, I speak with some discomfort this afternoon because I am aware that a great many of your Lordships are anxious to get to the further stage in this afternoon's proceedings which has been arranged by those in authority. I am not unaware of the difficulties of arranging business in your Lordships' House, but I am inclined to think that we are supercharged, so to speak, this afternoon in those aspects of international affairs which we are assembled to consider. It is only my knowledge that the discomfort of the refugees is greater even than our discomfort this afternoon that leads me to intervene in this debate. I shall, however, confine myself entirely to the subject of the Motion and not stray into other international matters which will be dealt with subsequently in this House. The Lord

Bishop of Chichester, I think, does deserve gratitude for the very moving way in which he spoke this afternoon in bringing forward his Motion, and I would join with those who have thanked him as well as with those who have expressed gratitude to President Roosevelt for yet another humanitarian move in a distracted world.

The reason for my intervention is that I happen to be the only member of your Lordships' House who attended the Evian Conference. I propose to confine myself, therefore, mainly to the actual occurrences in that Conference in order that we may see what the Government have done in co-operation with other Governments, and what they still might do to further the problem before us. That Conference, as has already been pointed out, was attended by representatives of about thirty Governments, and, in addition, a large number of private organisations sent delegations. The object of the Conference was to deal with Jews and non-Aryans who are still in Germany and Austria but who are being compelled to leave. The attempt was made to secure that that should be the only consideration of the Conference, and that those who have already left Germany and the other types of refugees who have been referred to should continue to be the object of the organisations already in existence, such as the Nansen Office dealing with Russians and Assyrians and Armenian refugees, and the League High Commissioner for refugees who deals with non-Jews and Jews who have left Germany.

That High Commissioner's work, which was referred to by the Bishop of Chichester, has been done with very limited resources, and has consequently not been as great a success as we should have hoped. Many of your Lordships will recall the retiring letter of Mr. James G. McDonald, the first High Commissioner. He said his task was hopeless because he had no resources. The Nansen Office, dealing as we have been reminded, with Russians, Assyrians, Armenians and others, has itself deteriorated very seriously since the death of Nansen. There was a very interesting letter by Major Johnson in *The Times* of July 14. Major Johnson was the League Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees and the Secretary-General of the Nansen International Office for Refugees. He pointed out that after Nansen's death political considerations were allowed to dominate the refugee work, and refugee factions controlled the direction and even the day-to-day administration of the Nansen Office, with the result that Governments antagonistic to those elements insisted on the liquidation of the Office. Now the fact of the matter is that that has gone on, and there has been considerable friction. There is now a proposal to amalgamate the High Commissioner and the Nansen Office.

I am particularly anxious that the noble Earl, Lord Plymouth, should deal for a moment or two in his reply with the proposals for this amalgamation. What is needed is a person of the outstanding personality of Dr. Nansen, a person of international authority who will command the respect of the whole world. Secondly, we want to avoid this refugee control in future; I mean avoid the putting in of the refugees themselves into the various offices in different cities and countries, so that we shall avoid

this antagonism which has been referred to by certain Governments who are involved. I think it is most desirable also that we should recognise the temporary character of the work of the High Commissioner and of the Nansen Office, because in the course of nature many of these refugees die, and many of them become absorbed, and, particularly in the countries where most of these refugees are, their children no longer are refugees because they take up the nationality of the country in which they are born. That then is the position with regard to other refugees.

As regards the Evian Conference the difficulty it had to face was that it had to avoid giving support to suggestions or decisions which might encourage a growing pressure on Jews in Poland and Rumania, who might be forced out of those countries if too great ease were shown in receiving masses of refugees. That was one of the factors behind all the deliberations, and it is very necessary to realise in this country the pressure of what I might call potential refugees who will burst out if it is too easy to find a place for mass or large-scale settlement. The other factor that has to be watched is the possibility of such large-scale settlement causing a rise in anti-Semitic feeling in the countries for which the suggestion of settlement is made. There is no secret of the fact that many people are perturbed by the rise of anti-Semitic feeling in a large number of countries at the present moment, and nothing should be done in my opinion to exacerbate or cause a rise in that very dangerous state of mind.

The speeches of most of the delegates were very guarded. They were not exactly optimistic, yet I am inclined to agree with the noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, that the mere existence of the Conference did raise hopes of increased efforts. The British Government are to be congratulated, I think, on being the only Government which sent a full-fledged Minister as head of their delegation, certainly the only Government that sent a Cabinet Minister, and I believe he was the only actual Minister who attended. That gave the British delegation a position of considerable advantage in dealing with the problem. Lord Winterton made a very good survey of the general position, and I thought that if it was not exactly constructive at least it was sympathetic. His reference to East Africa was valuable. Perhaps I might remind a previous speaker in this debate that Britain does not own a quarter of the world. It is a common mistake to imagine that we own the Dominions. We do not. The Dominions are autonomous regions of precisely equal sovereignty with Great Britain. We do not own a quarter of the world, and therefore we are not in a position to dictate to the Dominions what they shall do as regards those they desire to receive or not to receive inside their areas.

The problem was first of all the countries immediately bounding on Germany and Austria, what I would christen "transit" countries—countries where a very large number of refugees come in, not for the purpose of settling, but for the purpose of being translated, so to speak, into another country.

Particularly, of course, France, Switzerland and Holland are in that category. The next type of country was the highly industrialised country, rather like Great Britain, which is clearly not a country of large-

scale immigration, and of course the third category was the countries of settlement, such as the largely undeveloped countries of South America and other parts of the world.

I attended this Conference not for the purpose of supporting quantitative settlement, of large numbers, but of what I may call "qualitative" settlement, which means what has already been referred to by a number of speakers in this debate: the raising of the quality of the refugees so that, instead of being useless persons coming into a country unable to do anything, they shall have been trained and shall be fully capable of contributing something to the industrialisation or the agricultural development of their country. This type of work has another effect, because if these training schools, industrial and agricultural—in which I am particularly interested—are established in large numbers in the countries of what I might call potential emigration, such as Poland and Rumania, they will have the effect of dealing with the refugee problem at its foundation—namely, of preventing people from becoming refugees. That, after all, is a most important factor, because Poland and Rumania together have some 4,000,000 potential refugees as compared with the mere 500,000 which we have heard is the total in Germany. Therefore the training of these people in the industrialisation which is growing in these countries should, I think, be encouraged by the Government in every way possible by doing what they can to secure support for the organisations which are doing that work, because it kills at the base this potential refugeeism, which will add so enormously to the problem in the world and, in fact, make its solution, as the noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, said, impossible.

Then, of course, these training schools must be established in countries where the emigrants go—training schools in industry, training schools in agriculture in transit countries such as France, where they have already been established; training schools in the countries to which the refugees will go, such as the Argentine, and training schools, in so far as is possible, in Germany and Austria. Already one such school is doing excellent work in Germany, training in industry these young boys so that they will become welcome immigrants wherever they may end. Sir Neill Malcolm, the High Commissioner, made a very masterly survey to the Evian Conference, and in the course of his remarks he used these words. He said it would be far easier for both the Dominions and other countries to receive considerable numbers of aliens if they were introduced as individuals capable of finding occupation and becoming affiliated. Infiltration was therefore likely to produce better results than a mass migration. That means that the quality of these immigrants is more important than the consideration of quantity, because good quality diminishes the opposition to the immigration of future refugees after the earlier refugees have become valuable settlers in the country.

Finally, in this connection let me say that I consider that the mere existence of the Conference was an indictment of what is going on in Germany and Austria. The human problem has already been referred to, and we were particularly moved by the stories told to us by the representatives from Vienna,

particularly Professor Heinrich von Neumann, that famous specialist, who had himself undergone a suffering almost incredible if he had not told us of it. The problem in these countries has been made worse by the thousands upon thousands who are applying for visas to get out of the country. The American, the British, the French Consulates are overrun with these applicants for visas; so much so that it is interesting to know that the authorities in Vienna have established offices for the issue of forged visas to France for which the refugees are being asked to pay. I do not know whether there are forged visas for this country, but certainly that has been done as regards France.

What can the Government do in this matter? In the first place I should like to ask Lord Plymouth whether it is possible to do anything in connection with the Oversea Settlement Board. I see that the Board, which was appointed in February, 1936, was asked to consider and advise on any matter relating to oversea settlement which may be referred to it by the Secretary of State. Is there any reason why this Oversea Settlement Board should not have referred to it some of the aspects of the problem which we are discussing this afternoon? I hope that we may have some sort of assurance on that matter. Earl Winterton in his speech said that the Government intended to ratify the 1938 Convention. I should just like to ask Lord Plymouth to confirm that that Convention, the gist of which is in Command Paper 5780, will be ratified at the earliest possible date—namely, August 9. One other point: I turn to page 30 of that document and I see this recommendation:

“The Conference recommends that countries which have not yet taken any steps of this kind, should consider the institution of an advisory committee to examine the situation of refugees, or should put into practice an appropriate method of co-operation with private organisations assisting refugees.”

I should particularly welcome a statement from the noble Earl, Lord Plymouth, as to whether in fact such an advisory committee has been set up or will be set up, and, if so, who will be in charge.

Another point which Lord Winterton raised was in these words. In his speech to the Conference he said:

“Facilities have been freely given to young persons to undertake a course of education or enter industrial enterprises for training or retraining.”

I should like to ask the noble Earl, Lord Plymouth, if the Government, considering this country as a transit country, will in future increase these facilities, and particularly will the Government allow training in agriculture? We heard from Lord Reading a few moments ago that some of the South American countries wanted their recruits to be trained in agriculture. Will the Government do

something to ensure the possibility of the training in agriculture in this country of these transit refugees who will arrive here and then leave to settle in some other country?

I should also be interested to have from Lord Plymouth some information as regards the attitude of the Government to certain problems facing the new Inter-Governmental Committee. I would like to know whether the Government have any ideas with regard to the measure of co-operation between that Committee and the League of Nations. I should also like to know whether the Government are consulting with the United States Government so that they may have a common policy on the Inter-Governmental Committee. I believe that to be very important. I quite agree with the noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, that a separate Committee was inevitable, for the reasons which he gave, and I also agree with him with regard to the possibility of bringing some capital out of Germany.

Let me remind your Lordships of a very touching letter written by a Conservative Member, Commander Locker-Lampson, which appeared in *The times* a day or two ago. He said:

“The exiles have been stripped and despoiled of their possessions by a policy of plunder. But there is one form of capital of which even Nazi extortion has been unable to rob them—the capital of the creative mind.”

That is the capital which makes it advisable and necessary that this country should do all in its power to aid the refugees. Earl Winterton recognised this in his speech when he said the traditional policy of Great Britain

“has been to offer asylum to persons who for political, racial or religious reasons have had to leave their own countries.”

And he went on to say:

“The United Kingdom has never yet had cause to regret this policy, and refugees have often enriched the life and contributed to the prosperity of the British people.”

Bearing this in mind, I hope the Government will make a far greater contribution in the future than was outlined at the Evian Conference. I am certain that, if the Government are able to do rather more on these lines, it will not only be a help to the refugees but will have far-reaching results as an example to other countries in the world who may be persuaded by that means to do more in this matter.

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THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (THE EARL OF PLYMOUTH)

My Lords, the subject which has been raised by the right reverend Prelate is one in which we know he takes the very deepest interest. It is a matter of the very greatest and immediate importance. At all times the people of this country have shown a very great concern in regard to it. I think it will also be admitted that His Majesty's Government have always approached this problem of post-War refugees with the very greatest sympathy and with a whole-hearted desire to do everything they could to assist in its solution within the limits of what appeared to be possible. The difficulties that stand in the way are only too obvious and have been referred to by a number of speakers. I wish to say this before I go any further, that I do not think that anybody who had the privilege of listening to the speeches we have heard this afternoon, could have failed to be very deeply moved by them. Because we feel that this is a difficult problem, and at the same time one with regard to which the people of this country feel very deeply, I can assure your Lordships that His Majesty's Government will give the very closest attention to what has been said by various speakers this afternoon in a desire to help to solve it.

I had thought it possible, after having perused the actual terms of the right reverend Prelate's Resolution, that he might have referred in greater detail to the more general question of the post-War refugees than he actually did. He did make a passing reference to the work of Dr. Nansen in this direction, and quite rightly paid a warm tribute to him with which I, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, would wish to associate myself very closely indeed. The noble Lord opposite, Lord Marley, made reference to the work that was being done by the League of Nations on this matter and he asked me if I could confirm what he understood to be the position there. I can most certainly do so. The position at present is that both the Nansen Office and the mandate of the High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany and Austria will terminate at the end of this year. As a result of the Soviet Government withdrawing a difficulty which they raised at one time—action which we certainly appreciate—the Council of the League of Nations have proposed that one single organisation should be constituted after the end of this year in order to take the place of the two existing organisations. That matter will come before the Assembly in September, and it will be for the Assembly to reach a final decision and to make final proposals.

But in view of the fact that this aspect of the question has only been lightly touched upon, I feel I can perhaps more profitably make use of the comparatively limited time which I consider to be at my disposal, by referring to the more immediate aspects of the situation and the situation which has been created as the result of what has developed in Germany and Austria mainly in recent months. I think, therefore, that being so, I had better, in the first place, give His Majesty's Government's version of what actually occurred at Evian. I do not think there is much misconception about it, but I think for clarity's

sake it would be advisable that I should do that. Your Lordships naturally know that the meeting was called by President Roosevelt to consider the question of emigration from both Germany and Austria. When he made this proposal His Majesty's Government very warmly welcomed the initiative that he had made and expressed themselves as desirous of co-operating most wholeheartedly and fully with work to give effect to that proposal. I think it might be as well if I remind your Lordships of this point.

This invitation to a meeting at Evian was given on three separate conditions. First of all, it was made clear that, as the result, the countries who participated in that meeting should not be asked to modify their existing legislation in regard to the question of immigration. Then there was a second understanding, and that was that the finance of any new action that was taken—that really requires qualification: financing any new schemes, I think, puts it more correctly—should remain the concern of private organisations, as I think it was almost entirely in the past. Thirdly, the United States Government wished to make it quite clear that it was not their intention or desire to interfere in any way with the work of existing agencies, such as those referred to, who were concerning themselves, under the auspices of the League of Nations, with aspects of this problem. There were actually present represented at this meeting thirty-two delegates from different countries. The Chairman, as we know, was Mr. Myron Taylor from the United States, to whom tribute has already been paid to-day for the extremely sympathetic and efficient way in which he carried out his duties. His Majesty's Government were represented, very ably, as I think it will be recognised, by the Chancellor of the Duchy, Lord Winterton, and Sir M. Palaret. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland sent delegates to the meeting. The Government of the Union of South Africa sent an observer.

The meeting ended on July 15, and, as your Lordships now know, complete agreement was reached on the subjects under discussion. The meeting had two principal objects in view. The first was to put in motion machinery which would in the long run alleviate the gravity of this problem, and it arranged for the regular meeting in the future of representatives from those countries who had sent delegates to Evian. The second object was to enlarge the facilities for the admission of emigrants from Germany and Austria to countries of permanent refuge and settlement. May I be allowed to say a word about the second point first? The meeting appointed a technical sub-committee to exchange in confidence statements on the immigration laws and practices of participating Governments, and to consider statements of the number and types of immigrants which it was prepared to receive and the question of administration. As a result of the deliberation of this committee, the meeting was able to adopt a resolution which noted with satisfaction that the report held out prospects for increased reception of refugees qualifying for admission under the immigration laws and practices of receiving countries; that certain countries had indicated their desire to consider plans for settlement of refugees in their

territories when such plans were presented by an official or private organisations; and that countries

bordering on Germany, while unable, in existing circumstances, to make any substantial addition to their present efforts, might continue to make an important contribution to the solution of the problem by affording facilities for vocational, technical, or agricultural training to refugees to whom temporary asylum had been given. The committee recommended that the Governments should continue to study, in a generous spirit, the problems raised in their sub-committee's report.

Then, as Lord Samuel has already pointed out, a general resolution adopted by the Committee, after drawing attention to the serious problem created by involuntary emigration of large numbers from their countries, laid down the principle that if the countries of refuge were to find orderly solution of this problem, they should have the collaboration of the country of origin, and that involuntary emigrants should be enabled to take with them their property and possessions. The right reverend Prelate, as well as other speakers, has laid particular emphasis on this question, and I admit that I am not surprised that he has done so. I think it is quite obvious that unless collaboration in this direction is forthcoming, the problem, already difficult, becomes immeasurably complicated and is possibly rendered insoluble. It is perfectly clear that no thickly-populated country can be expected to accept persons who are deprived of their means of subsistence before they arrive; nor can resources of private societies be expected to make good losses of emigrants. We therefore greatly hope that countries of origin will assist in creating conditions in which emigrants can start life in other countries with some prospect of success. I can assure your Lordships that this particular aspect of the matter will be one which will be constantly kept in mind in dealing with the whole problem by His Majesty's Government.

The resolution then made a series of recommendations. In the first place, it recommended that the persons coming within the scope of the activity of the Committee should be persons who had not yet left their country of origin—Germany, including Austria—but who must emigrate on account of their political opinions, religious beliefs, or racial origin, and persons so defined who had already left their country of origin but who had not yet established themselves permanently elsewhere. That is a point of importance, because it enlarges the scope of similar activities beyond what they had been before. A second recommendation was to the effect that the Governments participating in the Inter-Governmental Committee should continue to furnish it, for its strictly confidential information, with details regarding such immigrants as each Government might be prepared to receive under its existing laws and practices, and details of these laws and practices. Thirdly, that the Governments of the countries of refuge and settlement should not assume any obligations for the financing of involuntary emigration. A recommendation was also made in regard to the provision of documents for persons desiring to emigrate.

The Committee also recommended the establishment in London of an Inter-Governmental Committee consisting of representatives of Governments who sent delegates to Evian. Broadly speaking, the

function of this Committee was to continue and to develop as quickly as possible the work that had been commenced at Evian. This Committee is to have a Director, a man of standing and authority, whose chief duties will be, first of all, to undertake negotiations to improve present conditions of emigration and to replace them by a system of orderly emigration; and, secondly, to approach the Governments of the countries of refuge and settlement with a view to developing opportunities of permanent settlement. It was further laid down that the Committee should co-operate with the refugee services of the League of Nations and the International Labour Office, whose work His Majesty's Government recognise as having been so valuable in the past. As your Lordships know, this Committee is to meet on August 3 here in London.

I would merely like to say, after this short review of what occurred at Evian, that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom accept the recommendations of the Evian meeting, which your Lordships may take to imply an obligation felt by them fully to co-operate and to assist the work of this Committee in the future. I ought now to add that in the course of the meeting the United Kingdom delegate gave some indication of the contribution which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom might be able to make, both in respect of the United Kingdom and of the Colonies, to the solution of the problem before the Committee. In regard to the Colonies, he referred in particular to the possibilities which might exist in certain of the East African territories for the settlement of a limited number of refugee families. He mentioned the case of Kenya, where plans for the acquisition of land for the purpose of small-scale settlement are actually under consideration at the present time. He made it clear that, whatever plans might ultimately take shape, the process of settlement must in any event be a gradual one, and that there could be no question of mass immigration or of disturbing land allotted for native occupation.

I cannot go into these matters in any detail, but I may say in general terms that the United Kingdom delegate made it quite plain that there was every desire on the part of His Majesty's Government and of the Colonial authorities concerned to render any assistance that might be found practicable. I am not at the moment in a position to give more precise information in regard to the prospects of settlement in East Africa, but, as I said, the matter is under active consideration, not only in regard to Kenya but also in regard to Northern Rhodesia. I think your Lordships, however, will agree that reasonable time must be allowed for the consideration of what obviously is a complicated problem, and one that means very much to the inhabitants of those particular countries.

Then, as the noble Viscount said, the United Kingdom delegate also referred to the question of Jewish immigration into Palestine, and explained why in the opinion of His Majesty's Government that question stood upon a footing of its own and could not usefully be taken into account at the present stage in connection with the general problems before the Evian meeting.

The right reverend Prelate made reference to the position of the Dominions, and laid stress on the importance of the closest co-operation between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Governments of the Dominions. As the right reverend Prelate himself admitted, the question of the admission of immigrants into the Dominions and of their subsequent employment there is entirely a matter for the Governments of the Dominions concerned, to be considered in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time in the community for which they may be responsible. But I can certainly assure your Lordships that, both in the preparations for the Evian meeting and at the meeting itself, His Majesty's Government have acted in the closest consultation with the Dominion Governments. This close consultation will certainly be continued in regard to the Committee which is to meet shortly in London. I might add that the four Dominion Governments who were represented at the Evian meeting will be asked to send representatives to the London Committee.

Then again, the right reverend Prelate referred to other matters, such as the facilities which are provided for training emigrants in this country, and also the effect upon the general problem of the falling birth-rate in this country and elsewhere. During the course of the discussion of these problems a tribute was paid to the liberal attitude which had been adopted by the Secretary of State for Home Affairs in regard to the administration of the immigration laws, and therefore I think it is only right that I should be guarded in my statement in regard to these particular aspects of the problem, which are chiefly the concern of the Secretary of State for Home Affairs. I can say, though, that His Majesty's Government are anxious to do everything within their power to assist refugees from Germany, including Austria, who come to this country to enter factories, workshops and business enterprises for the purpose of receiving technical or business training to fit them for emigration to some other country where they can be permanently settled. The noble Lord opposite raised specifically the question of training in agriculture, but I am afraid that at the moment I am not able to say whether facilities of that kind can be provided or not. I will note the point and inquire into it.

A considerable number of refugees have already had a course of training of this kind, and have been successful in finding openings overseas, and His Majesty's Government will continue to afford facilities to refugees of this type. His Majesty's Government are also prepared to agree to the employment of suitable refugees in this country, but owing to the unemployment situation it is obvious that the number of such persons who can be placed must be limited. I do not wish to pursue that question further. The right reverend Prelate has expressed certain views which for my part I can only say that I accept with a good many reservations, but it is an aspect of the problem which clearly has to be taken into full account in formulating a final policy. The extent to which refugees can find employment must, in the first instance, depend upon the work of the Co-ordinating Committee for Refugees, whose

constituent committees must find places in industrial and commercial enterprises which are not already overcrowded and competitive.

The policy of the open door is not one which would commend itself to His Majesty's Government, and I understand that even the voluntary organisations are opposed to the unrestricted admission of refugees from Germany, including Austria. It was with the object of substituting an orderly for a disorderly exodus from Germany and Austria to the United Kingdom that His Majesty's Government set up in May last a system of visa control whereby persons who, for political, racial, or religious reasons wish to come to this country from Germany and Austria, can be admitted in such numbers as circumstances permit and within the ability of the voluntary organisations to deal with the persons so admitted. The number of visas granted in Vienna during May and June reached a total of approximately 2,800, and the most recent advices from the Passport Control Officer in Vienna indicate that the number of visas granted in July has been maintained at the same level as in May and June.

The question of the falling birth-rate and the possible need of encouraging immigration to meet the situation of a smaller population, which the right reverend Prelate raised, is obviously a very large and very complicated one. It certainly raises issues of a much wider character than are contemplated in the terms of the actual Motion, and would, if pursued, undoubtedly carry the debate into fields which are not perhaps immediately relevant to this refugee problem. In the circumstances I merely feel unable to say anything on that aspect of the situation at the present stage.

There are, however, one or two points I wish to emphasize in my closing remarks. First of all, I should like to draw attention to the harmony and good will in which the proceedings at Evian were conducted. There was a complete identity of views and purpose on the part of the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and indeed all other delegations as well. I want also to point out a matter which I know the right reverend Prelate feels is of importance. That is that the meeting concerned itself not only with Jewish refugees, but of course with all refugees, both actual and potential, from Germany and Austria. Then great emphasis was laid during the meeting on the fact that, if an orderly solution was to be found, it was essential that the country of origin should enable intending emigrants to take their property and possessions so that they could start life in another country with some prospect of success. It was specifically laid down that there should be the fullest cooperation between the London Committee and its Director on the one hand, and the refugee services of the League of Nations on the other.

I should like to sum up by saying that the Evian meeting was not only able to lay down a method of inter-governmental action which promises practical results, but also was able to record a general willingness on the part of the participating Governments to place a liberal interpretation on their

immigration practice with the object of admitting a greater number of refugees from Germany and Austria than they have been prepared to do in the past. This problem of involuntary emigration, even in the case of Austria and Germany, is not one that can be solved in a few days or indeed in a few weeks, but I venture to claim that the results of Evian are a good augury for the future. Undoubtedly the collaboration of the United States Government will lend incalculable prestige and authority to the work of the London Committee. This work, while breaking fresh ground, will at the same time reinforce and supplement the work which the League of Nations has done and intends to continue to do in regard to this problem. I can assure the House that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will, as far as circumstances permit, continue to promote and encourage both in London and in Geneva inter-governmental action to mitigate the sufferings and unhappiness to which this problem inevitably gives rise.

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THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER

My Lords, I should like to thank the noble Earl for the sympathetic answer he has given and for the careful consideration which his speech shows of the various aspects of the refugee problem. I am very grateful to him indeed, and I beg leave to withdraw my Motion.

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Motion for Papers, by leave, withdrawn.

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**The UK National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre -
Rebuttal Appendices**

APPENDIX 1a

**Evian Conference Debate update, 21st
November 1938**

UPDATE ON EVIAN DEBATE

REFUGEES (GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS).

HC Deb 21 November 1938 vol 341 cc1313-7[1313](#)

[Mr. Lipson](#)

asked the Prime Minister what progress has been made by the International Commission set up after the Evian Conference to deal with the problem of refugees?

[Mr. Butler](#)

Perhaps my hon. Friend will be good enough to await the statements which will be made at the end of Question Time and during the course of this evening's Debate.

Later—

[The Prime Minister](#)

In conformity with the recommendations of the Evian meeting in July last, His Majesty's Government have had under constant examination the contribution which they could make, in respect of the United Kingdom and of the Colonial Empire, to the international effort to facilitate the admission and settlement of involuntary emigrants from Germany. They have also had in mind the view expressed by the Evian countries that the country of origin should make its contribution to this problem of migration by enabling intending emigrants to take with them their property and possessions. The extent to which countries can be expected to receive emigrants must depend very largely upon the conditions in which they are able to leave their country of origin. His Majesty's Government have been greatly impressed by the urgency of the problem created by [1314](#)the anxiety to migrate overseas of sections of the population in Germany and of individuals who, in consequence of recent events in that country, have found temporary asylum in countries of first refuge.

In the light of these circumstances and of the recommendations of the Evian meeting, His Majesty's Government have again reviewed the situation.

With regard to the United Kingdom, the number of refugees which Great Britain can agree to admit, either for a temporary stay or for permanent settlement, is limited by the capacity of the voluntary organisations dealing with the refugee problem to undertake the responsibility for selecting, receiving and maintaining a further number of refugees. His Majesty's Government are keeping in close touch with the Committee which has been set up to co-ordinate the activities of the voluntary organisations engaged upon this task. The United Kingdom has, since 1933, permitted about 11,000 men, women and children to land in this country, in addition to some 4,000 or 5,000 others who have since emigrated overseas.

As regards the Colonial Empire, it must be remembered that, although covering a great extent of territory, it is not necessarily capable of the immediate absorption of large numbers of refugees. Many of our Colonies and Protectorates and our Mandated Territories in East and

West Africa contain native populations of many millions, for whom we are the trustees, and whose interests must not be prejudiced. Many large areas, which at present are sparsely populated, are unsuitable either climatically or economically for European settlement. The Colonial Governments could only co-operate in any schemes of large or small-scale settlement provided the schemes were formulated and carried out by responsible organisations.

As was indicated in this House by Lord Harlech on 30th March, and as was subsequently made clear by the United Kingdom representative of the Evian meeting, His Majesty's Government consider that there is no territory in the Colonial Empire where suitable land is available for the immediate settlement of refugees in large numbers, although in certain territories small-scale settlement might be practicable. The Governors of Tanganyika and British Guiana have, however, [1315](#) been asked to state whether, without detriment to native interests, land could be made available for leasing on generous terms for the purpose of large-scale settlement to the voluntary organisations concerned with refugees, provided they undertake full responsibility for the cost of preparing the land and of settling refugees of suitable types as the land is made available.

The Governor of Tanganyika has replied expressing his readiness to co-operate in any schemes of settlement of the refugees so far as existing obligations will permit. While he has not yet had an opportunity of consulting the Legislative Council, the Governor has expressed the view that the only suitable areas for large-scale settlement are likely to be found in the Southern Highlands and in a part of the Western Province, but a thorough investigation will be required before a definite indication of the available areas can be given. He would welcome a mission from the refugee organisations, and would readily give them all facilities for inspecting the areas and forming an opinion of the possibilities. The area that might be available comprises about 50,000 acres of land.

In addition, a scheme of small-scale settlement up to a total of 200 settlers is being considered.

A small experimental private scheme in Kenya, devised by one of the Jewish organisations in London, has been approved by the Governor after consultation with the Legislative Council, and young men who have undergone a course of training at one of the agricultural training centres established by Jewish organisations in Germany have already been selected for this scheme. These men will be settled on farms purchased by the Jewish organisations, after a further period of training in the Colony, and, if the scheme proves successful, they will be joined by other members of their families.

Inquiries have been made of the Governors of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland as to the possibility of small-scale settlement in those territories also, and I am glad to say that the replies received from both Governors indicate that this may be possible.

I turn now to British Guiana. In the interior of this Colony there are extensive [1316](#) tracts of sparsely occupied land, consisting mainly of forest and savannah. These areas include certain Indian reservations, but the Governor states that ample space is available to provide fully for all possible needs of the Indian tribes and still leave large areas worthy of examination as to

their suitability for refugee settlement. Agricultural development of these areas has hitherto been prevented by unfavourable conditions and lack of communications. It would, therefore, be essential that careful surveys by experts should be made before any definite scheme can be formulated, and His Majesty's Government propose to invite the voluntary organisations to send out their own representatives as early as possible to conduct such surveys on the spot. They will be given all facilities for this purpose by the Colonial Government, and His Majesty's Government would also be ready to send out some experienced official to advise and co-operate with them. Provided that the results of the surveys are satisfactory, His Majesty's Government contemplate the lease of large areas of land on generous terms under conditions to be settled hereafter. It is not possible at this stage to give exact figures of the total area which could be made available to be leased for this purpose, but it would certainly not be less than 10,000 square miles, and possibly more.

Finally, I must mention Palestine. It is generally recognised that that small country could not in any case provide a solution of the Jewish refugee problem; but Palestine has been making its contribution. No less than 40 per cent. of the Jewish immigrants entering the country during the last 12 months have come from Germany.

His Majesty's Government hope that the other countries represented on the Intergovernmental Committee to continue and develop the work of the Evian meeting, will also endeavour to make what contribution they can to the urgent need of facilitating emigration from Germany and from the countries of first refuge.

In conclusion, I must emphasise that, however great may be our desire and that of other countries to assist in dealing with this grave situation, the possibilities of settlement are strictly limited.

[Mr. Cocks](#)

The right hon. Gentleman has said nothing about the Dominions.

[1317](#)

[The Prime Minister](#)

No, I spoke only of conditions which we can control ourselves.

[Mr. Lipson](#)

While thanking the right hon. Gentleman for his statement, may I ask whether the Government will be willing to consider favourably the admission into this country of young children from Germany, who will not be competing in the labour market?

[The Prime Minister](#)

We shall be having a Debate on this subject later in the day, and perhaps the matter could be discussed then.

[Mr. Sandys](#)

Is my right hon. Friend in a position to say what plans there are to cover the intermediate period while the final plans are being made?

[The Prime Minister](#)

That, also, might be discussed to-night.

[Sir Percy Hurd](#)

Are any approaches being made to the German Government by the Powers unitedly in order to induce them to facilitate the exodus of these people?

[The Prime Minister](#)

My hon. Friend knows that approaches have been made.

Miss Rathbone

Would the Government not consider the possibility of granting a revolving loan for the maintenance of these refugees, in view of the fact that private organisations might not have the money?

[The Prime Minister](#)

That would be a little premature at this stage.

[Mr. Noel-Baker](#)

Is the area of 10,000 square miles in British Guiana the same as that considered by the League of Nations for Assyrian settlement three years ago, and condemned?

[The Prime Minister](#)

It includes that area, but it also includes other areas besides.

[Mr. Burke](#)

With regard to young children, if there are persons in this country who will undertake the responsibility for them and for their education, will the Home Office grant facilities for their speedy admission?

[The Prime Minister](#)

My right hon. Friend will deal with that this afternoon.

[Mr. Levy](#)

May I thank the Government for their interest in this matter?



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**The UK National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre -
Rebuttal Appendices**

APPENDIX 2

**Kindertransport Debate, 21st November
1938**

SPEECHES FROM PARLIAMENT THAT LED TO THE KINDERTRANSPORT

HANSARD – November 21 1938 – evening session

RACIAL, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL MINORITIES.

HC Deb 21 November 1938 vol 341 cc1428-831428

7.33 p.m.

Mr. Noel-Baker

I beg to move, That this House notes with profound concern the deplorable treatment suffered by certain racial, religious and political minorities in Europe, and, in view of the growing gravity of the refugee problem would welcome an immediate concerted effort amongst the nations, including the United States of America, to secure a common policy. I hope that this is a Motion with which the House will agree. I shall try to support it in no party spirit, and I hope I shall say nothing that will add, or will be said to add, to the difficulties with which the Government are to-day confronted. But I know the House will recognise that this Debate can serve no useful purpose unless we speak the truth, unless we face the facts and review the situation as it really is. What are the facts? On 7th November, a Polish Jew, Grynspar, a boy 17 years of age, entered the German Embassy in Paris and attacked a member of the staff, Herr Vom Rath. Two days later Herr Vom Rath succumbed to the wounds he had received. 1429He was the victim of political assassination. We have been told, here and elsewhere, that his action was a detestable crime. No one would dispute that. By our national standards political assassination is always detestable and always wrong. It is not less detestable when it is the method by which a party climbs or clings to power. There are people who, when they hear the name of Vom Rath, will remember also the names of Rathenau, Erzberger and Dollfuss, to whom the act of Grynspar will recall the night of 30th June, 1934.

What followed Grynspar's act in Germany? Every hon. Member knows the main outline of the facts... Dr. Goebbels has described it as the justifiable and comprehensible indignation of the German people. Let hon. Members think of that. Here is the "Daily Telegraph's" first summary of what occurred: The entire Jewish population of Germany was subjected yesterday to a reign of terror. The pogroms started simultaneously all over Germany. No attempt was made by the police to restrain the savagery of the mob. Almost every synagogue in the country was burnt to the ground. Scarcely a Jewish shop escaped being wrecked. Looting occurred on a great scale. Parts of the fashionable district of Berlin were reduced to a shambles. Jews of all ages, of both sexes, were beaten in the streets and in their homes. Numbers were lynched. The caretaker of a synagogue is believed to have been burnt, with his family, to death. Let me give the House some details, which I can guarantee as facts. ...As part of the general destruction of Jewish institutions, a boarding school at Caputh, near Potsdam, was invaded and utterly demolished at 2 a.m. The young children were driven, without adult guidance or protection, into the night. At Bad Soden, the only Jewish home for consumptives in Germany was destroyed and sacked. The patients were driven away, wearing nothing but the shirts in which they slept. At Nuremberg the inmates of the Jewish hospital were forced to line up on parade. Some had just had serious operations, and one of them, my informant

says, dropped down dead. At Ems, an asylum for aged Jews was raided, and the old people were driven out. A paralysed old man was driven from his bed, and his wife refused to leave his side. She was assaulted with an axe and her crippled husband was dragged away; at Bernsdorf, in Silesia, the boys in a Jewish camp were summoned to parade, and some were 1430missing. A storm trooper, so says my informant, at the point of the pistol, asked a young Jew if he knew the whereabouts of the others. The young Jew was either afraid to answer or really did not know anything about it, and he was shot dead immediately. As he was lying on the ground the storm trooper kicked him with his heels.

In a concentration camp at Buchenwald, near Weimar, 70 Jews were killed during the night of 8th-9th November. That is to say, before it was known that Vom Rath was dead. Dr. Goebbels tells us that these acts were the spontaneous outbursts of national anger. In our view there would be no justification if that were true, but there is too much evidence not to think that the attacks were organised, and that they were organised in advance... In all the raids on Jewish institutions a common plan was followed, such as the cutting of the telephones, the disconnecting of the electric current, and the smashing of the central heating system before the actual assaults on the buildings were begun. British journalists are unanimous in their testimony that the attacks were not spontaneous, but, as the "Times" said, all the indications point to centralised direction. Everywhere the police allowed them to go on. In the Fredrichstrasse district of Berlin traffic was diverted half an hour before the looting actually begun.

Not least among the mass of evidence which I could give to the House is the Government action which followed. If these acts had been the spontaneous excesses of the mob, the Government might have been expected to condemn them, to punish the offenders and make reparation to the victims. That was not what happened. Millions of pounds worth of damage has been done, and the Government proceeded to complete the work by decrees which ordered the Jews to pay a collective fine of £84,000,000 and to repair the damage done to their business premises at their own expense. That was accompanied by an order to the insurance companies not to pay them what was due.

By another order it was decreed that after 1st January no Jew may take part in any economic activity of any kind. In the meantime, they are not allowed to open their own shops nor even to go to the shops of Aryans. Most sinister of all, the Government began to arrest 1431all the Jewish men. All Jews of the male sex, from the age of 16 to 60, have been driven off to concentration camps, and in 80 per cent. Of the cases I understand their families do not even know where they are. Every Jewish charitable and social organisation has been broken up. Be it noted, for this is very important, some of these decrees at least must have been discussed before the attack on Herr Vom Rath had ever been made. On 3rd November, an article appeared in the "Schwarze Kaps," the official organ of the S.S.,... the Black Guard by which the concentration camps are conducted and by which other secret police activities are carried on. In that article the editor said: Out of the hoarded wealth of the Jews we must compensate ourselves for the economic damage done to us by world Jewry. The article indicates very plainly that something such as that which has occurred was even in official contemplation. I stress that quotation because I believe it gives the clue to the real character of events in

Germany in the last few weeks, which were not the spontaneous vengeance of the people for a Jewish crime but the consummation or, more correctly, the penultimate stage of a long-term plan, the spirit and purpose of which are all too plain.

Dr. Goebbels would like us to think that nothing had happened to the Jews before Grynspan fired his fatal shot, yet it is five years or so since Jewish children in schools were compelled to ask for milk in order that the milk might be publicly refused; it is five years or more since Jews were humiliated in the streets and since posters "Jews not wanted" appeared at swimming pools and other public places; it is five years or more since for every Jew, as for the Liberals, Socialists, Catholics and others, the concentration camp has been a haunting thought that has never left them day or night; for five years or so we have forgotten what a concentration camp is like.

I am not going to pile up horrors, but it is vital that we should know what is going on. We should have a living picture of what people are enduring in Germany to-day. I have an account of a British observer, Mr. Arnold Forster, well known to hon. Members of this House, which is based on his own personal observations in a camp in 1933. If I were to read extracts from that report, which has been published, hon. Members would feel physically sick. Things have not improved in concentration camps since 1933. I have with me an account written by a victim who in June of this year was in the camp at Buchenwald, where conditions were worse, I believe, than in Dachau. He tells of their ghastly convict work on the road, 17½ hours a day upon their feet with not enough food to keep a child in health. He describes the nameless tortures given as punishment for the most trivial offence. He says that of his batch of 2,000, 105 died on their feet in the first five weeks.

When we remember that this physical and spiritual torture has been going on for nearly six long years we can understand a little better, even if we do not excuse, the desperate act of a Jewish boy who was driven crazy by the fearful persecution of his parents and the people to which he belonged. We can understand, too, that these last drastic measures were not in any significant sense the result of Grynspan's act. They were part of a long and deliberate campaign moving with gathering and terrible momentum to its predestined end. That campaign was not ordained and it is not supported now by the German people. The Jews are the first to say that it is un-German. Germany was the cradle of Protestantism, the home of Kant, of a great trade union movement and a great free Press. Those who know it best—I do not—speak most warmly of the generous human spirit of the small post-war army which Germany was allowed to have. There is widespread testimony—I had it from an Englishman who returned here to-day—that the German people now are helping the Jews whenever they dare to do so. He tells me that even the police confess to him their shame and their disgust.

What have the Jews done to bring down this vengeance upon them? Sir Norman Angell has said: It is inflicted for one reason only; in their veins may run the blood of the race which gave us Jesus Christ, His Mother and His Apostles. Nothing is more certain than that it is no crime, no disloyalty, no treason of the Jews which has brought this fate upon them. We have good cause in this country to know the great services which the Jews have rendered to our nation. Hon. Members will not forget the Jewish contribution to the building of the Empire, and no one will forget their five Victoria Crosses, their 49 Distinguished Service Orders, their

263 Military Crosses and their 329 Military Medals won in the last War, an amazing record for so small a section of the population. Their services to Germany were certainly not less. There, as well as throughout the world, they have made an unmeasured and an unmeasurable contribution to art, science, medicine, music, knowledge, literature, and all that makes civilisation worth while. Indeed, it was only when they were driven from their posts in 1933 that we saw clearly how great a part of what we called the German genius was really the genius of the Jews.

Perhaps Dr. Goebbels has forgotten what they did for Germany in the War. I have here a record of those who fell—12,000 Jews gave their lives in a population of 500,000; a proportion one and a-half times as high as that of those who fell among the white population of the British Commonwealth for our cause. In this book Field-Marshal Hindenburg salutes his Jewish comrades who had fallen for the Fatherland, and the German Minister of War says that they were true saries of the German nation. Certainly it cannot be said that the Jews have given any cause for the treatment they have received since 1933. They have shown in Germany as in Palestine a self-restraint which is almost super-human, almost beyond belief. They have met their affliction with an international effort of co-operation of which the greatest living authority on refugee assistance, Sir John Hope Simpson, says: I do not think in the history of the world there has ever been such well organised, co-ordinated effort for humanitarian purpose as has been shown by the Jewish organisations in this crisis. And he went on to say: The Jews have not confined themselves to helping Jews. It is probably true to say that more Jewish money than Christian money has gone to help Christian refugees. I stress these facts because I think they make it plain that this martyrdom of the Jews in Germany is not a national vengeance on a disloyal race. However it started, it has become a part of the Nazi party's plan to disrupt and dominate the world. I think it is now quite plain what Dr. Goebbels means to do. He is not condemning the Jews to death; he is making it impossible for them to live. He means to rob them of all their worldly possessions, first for his party funds, and, secondly, for the bankrupt budget of the State. For years he has been stirring up anti-Semitism in other countries in order to increase the forces of disorder in the world, and now he is planning to drive out the Jews, in his own picturesque phrase, with one suit and a handbag, and leave them on the charity of the democratic world. And he is preparing to send them all. Consider his speech reported in the Press to-day: We only want the world to be sufficiently pro-Jewish to take all our Jews from our shoulders. What does that announcement mean? There are already at least 160,000, I think 200,000, refugees from Germany and Austria, Jews, Aryans, Socialists and Catholics together. There must still at least—I am taking bottom figures—be 400,000 Jews in Germany to come. There are somewhere between 300,000 and 1,000,000 non-Aryans, half-breeds as Dr. Goebbels calls them. There are many Aryans against whom persecution is still continuing, or has begun; Socialists, Liberals and Catholics, in an increasing degree. The programme of expulsion can be indefinitely extended at Dr. Goebbels' will. If he successfully executes his threats against the Jews in Germany can we hope that only Germany will be affected? Before 1933 anti-Semitism caused a certain amount of social discomfort in Germany at times of economic slump, but in Poland and Rumania it was an endemic malady, breaking out in violent pogroms from time to time. At the present time, to the honour of Poland and Rumania, their Governments are holding their anti-Semites in

check, but if the Dr. Goebbels' plan succeeds, if he drives half a million penniless Jews upon the world, will not Poland, will not Rumania, say perhaps now is our chance to send away our 4,500,000 Jews and rid ourselves of this problem for good and all.

Where is this thing going to end? What is it going to mean to us before it is ended? Dr. Goebbels would like us to think that it is a domestic question, that it is no concern of ours how his Government treats the racial and religious minorities within their state. If the treatment of minorities is a domestic question 1435 by what right did Germany concern herself with the fate of the Sudeten Germans two months ago? Certainly by no treaty rights. The treatment of minorities has always been a matter of international concern, and even if that had not been so, it is still true, as the Secretary of State for India said on Saturday and we thank him for it, that anything is international which stirs the conscience of mankind. But, alas, it is also an international question of a more material kind. We shall have to keep these unhappy human beings if Dr. Goebbels drives them out. There is not a Government in Europe to-day which is not already faced with cruel and urgent questions concerning refugees.

Let the House consider the prospect before us against the background of the refugee problem as a whole. There are still roughly 500,000 Russian, Armenians, Assyrians and others who have been refugees for 20 years, of whom we cannot yet say that they are settled. There are 250,000 Stateless persons for whom, as Sir John Hope Simpson says, no one is doing anything. There are 96,000 refugees, Czechs, Germans and Jews in Czechoslovakia to-day, and there will be many more. There are 25,000 Spaniards in France, apart from children. If Dr. Goebbels completes his programme, and if Poland and Rumania join in, what are we going to do? The outside world must have a programme also and it must have it now. I venture to suggest that that programme must comprise two parts. In the first place—here I speak in a most tentative manner, and I do not expect the Home Secretary to give any definite answer to-night—it must comprise action of some kind designed to check the persecution and the expulsion or penniless new hordes of refugees.

What can we do in that order of ideas? I believe that other Governments, like the Government of the United States, could protest in Berlin. There would be nothing new in such action. Our own Government protested in St. Petersburg in 1906 against the Jewish pogrom, and the present Archbishop of Canterbury was one who helped to see that the protest was made. The whole history of Nazi Germany shows that even verbal protests are worth while. In the second place, we can make it clear in Berlin that there can be no cordial relations between the German 1436 Government and the British people while the martyrdom of the Jews, the Socialists, the Protestants and the Catholics goes on. It is hypocrisy to pretend that in present conditions a feeling of confidence and trust can be pursued. No British Government has the right to leave Berlin with such a hope. In the third place, we may have to consider—I do not say more than that—whether we should not take measures of active self-protection. If foreign exiles are to be thrust upon us we may be driven to seek measures by which we can make room.

Dr. Goebbels maintains what is called a "Foreign Organisation," and in a recent remarkable and well documented article in the "Quarterly Review," the author says that this foreign organisation is carrying on an insidious and provocative agitation by tens of thousands of

agents. Every Government, even our own—perhaps most of all our own—is disturbed by the activities of Dr. Goebbels' agents. May the time not come when the number who receive our hospitality will have to be reduced? It was by threatening such action that Poland, two weeks ago, stopped the mass expulsion of Polish Jews; and there is another Government, which I will not name—a smaller country—which has successfully taken similar action by threatening the expulsion of German subjects. Dr. Goebbels' plan also creates a grave financial problem. Private and public money is now being poured out, and the time may come when we shall have to think of economic measures—taxes on German products, the control of German assets here—by which this grave financial problem which Dr. Goebbels is forcing on us can be solved

I have spoken of such self-protective measures, as I call them, in a tentative way. I shall be more positive, if I may, about the second part of our programme. We must certainly try to stop the persecution, to stop the flood of exiles who come, and at least ensure that they come with the men, with the breadwinners, and with some part of their possessions. But whether we succeed or fail in that, it is urgently necessary that we should have a positive plan to settle the hundreds of thousands of people with whom we know we have to deal. That plan is needed now. Charity is running everywhere to waste. I was told yesterday of £50,000 raised in Switzerland to keep 3,000 Austrian refugees. Those £50,000 are already exhausted in keeping them alive. With a plan, most of them would have been settled for good and all.

What can the plan be? When we think of the vast numbers involved, it seems very difficult to hope for any real result. I remember thinking that when stood with Dr. Nansen, in 1922, beside the camps at Constantinople, of which the Home Secretary knew something and in the relief of which he played an honourable part, the camps where 100,000 Russians were living in conditions of unimaginable squalor. I thought the same a little later, when I stood by a stream in Eastern Thrace and saw the camp fires of flying families of refugees stretching away through the night to the very horizon. I thought it still more when I saw those same families on the quays of Salonika in the midst of winter.

Yet those 100,000 Russians were dispersed and settled throughout the world. If you go to Greece to-day, you will see the new towns and the new villages where the 1,000,000 refugees who came from Asia Minor have been settled in a new life, and have brought new strength to the nation to which they came. By that same machinery, after the War, in those early years of the League of Nations, Dr. Nansen's High Commission settled, or helped to settle, 200,000 refugees in Bulgaria, 40,000 in Syria and Erivan; and by other means assisted hundreds of thousands of Russians to travel and to find work. Far greater numbers were then dealt with than all we are now confronting, and I believe our present problem can quite certainly be dealt with if the same energy and the same methods are used to-day. I speak with some assurance, because for several years it was my task to watch these schemes being carried through, and I think I know—indeed I have excellent cause to remember—all the difficulties and obstructions that are likely to arise.

Broadly speaking, what can be done falls under two headings—infiltration and large-scale settlement. Infiltration means dealing with people by individual cases or by smaller groups. If a specialist in surgery is driven from Germany and a new Chair is made for him in a

Scandinavian university, that is infiltration. If a Russian count—I am speaking of cases I know—gets a permit to drive a taxi in Athens, if a Russian engineer walks from Bagdad to the Nansen Office in Geneva and is given a job in a railway in South America, that is infiltration. There are great possibilities in infiltration, provided you have a strong and authoritative international machine to carry it through. It was by infiltration that the 100,000 Russians in Constantinople were dealt with. There are many ways, of which I will mention only one—the use, perhaps, of Jewish doctors in building up our health services in the Colonies, where the health standard is far too low. There are many ways by which we, through an international organisation, could use infiltration to a successful end.

More important is settlement, both in agriculture and in industry. It was by settlement that more than 1,500,000 people were given new means of livelihood in Greece, Bulgaria and other places I have mentioned, in the To years that followed the War. Of course, there is the problem of land, of which the Prime Minister spoke this afternoon. I admit that it is more difficult, perhaps, than it was in those cases, although in those cases it was not very easy; but I am bound to say that I am convinced that if the Governments bring good will to the matter, land can be found. Of all the countries that the Prime Minister mentioned this afternoon, I thought Palestine by far the most hopeful, and I hope that the Government are not excluding the principle of large-scale settlement in Palestine, where there is work ready to be done. I hope at least they will give permits now for the 10,000 children whom the Jews are eager to welcome. I hope Canada will take in, perhaps in British Columbia, on virgin soil, the Sudeten Germans. I know the Sudeten Germans. Canada would not find better settlers or more all-round settlers in any country in the world. The land is a big question, but it can be solved if other elements of a constructive programme are there. I was not quite sure this afternoon, as I listened to the Prime Minister, that they were.

I am sure that there are four conditions which must be fulfilled. First, there must be a real identity of purpose and co-ordination of policy between the different Governments. Let me give one example. A refugee—this is an actual case—was impounded as a vagrant, because he had no permit, in a certain 1439European country. He was tried and put in gaol. Then he was expelled to another country, where the process was repeated, and again he was re-expelled. In a year, £200 were spent upon the trials and imprisonment, while his family was a charge on the public funds. For half the money, the Nansen Office could have settled him for life. That is what happens—it is happening now—when you do not have a co-ordinated Government plan. There is misery and waste to all concerned.

But a co-ordinated plan means a strong international administration to carry it through. Dr. Nansen had his staff, he had the help of the Secretariat of the League, he had his own agents and offices in 20 countries. That was how we worked. Without it, we should have done nothing at all. It happens that, thanks largely to the efforts of the Noble Lord the late Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and his French colleague, M. Grumbach, the last Assembly of the League of Nations decided to appoint a new High Commissioner for refugees, with the same powers, the same budget, the same staff as Dr. Nansen had. I hope he will be used as Dr. Nansen was used, and I hope he will be encouraged to use his powers as Dr. Nansen used his.

Thirdly, there must be money, ready money for urgent needs, and long-term loans for settlement plans. Millions of pounds are needed. What disappointed me in the Prime Minister's statement this afternoon, as I understood it—I hope I am wrong—was that he is still relying on private charity alone. Private charity cannot solve the problem now. The Government need not be alarmed at the prospect of guaranteeing loans. They will not lose their money. These refugees are not like the Greeks and Bulgarians who were settled; they are very able, resourceful, educated people—one of the best investments in the world. If the Government can guarantee a loan for arms to Turkey, I think they ought to guarantee a loan to save these unhappy people. If they do, I think they will do quite as much, pound for pound, to make the British Empire strong and safe as they did by giving the loan to Turkey.

Lastly, there will be little hope of practical results—and perhaps here some hon. ¹⁴⁴⁰Members will think I touch more controversial ground—without the regular, pitiless publicity of the Council and Assembly of the League of Nations. I know the difficulties to be overcome, the obstructions that will be made, and the vested interests that will interfere. Only the power of vigilant and instructed opinion will break those obstructions down. If our Government will rely upon that power, if they will use the High Commissioner of the League, if they will guarantee the loans he will require—in common, of course, with other Governments—if they will give to this matter the drive that was given to it 15 years ago by the late Lord Balfour, Lord Cecil and those who worked with them on the British Delegation, then I am very certain they can obtain the same results.

I think they might in some measure stay the tyrant's hand in Germany by the means I have suggested. Certainly they can gather the resources, human and material, that are needed to make a new life for this pitiful human wreckage. That wreckage is the result of the mistakes made by all the Governments during the last 20 years. Let the Governments now atone for those mistakes. The refugees have surely endured enough. Dr. Goebbels said the other day that he hoped the outside world would soon forget the German Jews. He hopes in vain. His campaign against them will go down in history with St. Batholomew's Eve as a lasting memory of human shame. Let there go with it another memory, the memory of what the other nations did to wipe the shame away.

8.15 p.m.

Mr. Hammersley

I cannot claim that tolerance which the House invariably gives to a maiden speech, but I can ask for some indulgence in view of the fact that this is the first occasion on which it has been possible for me to address the present House of Commons. It seems to me that there are three moods in which this refugee problem may be considered. We may, like the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker), who has given us a speech full of incidents of the brutal and inhuman treatment which the Germans are meting out to the Jews, consider that every feeling of decency has been violated and in that mood we are apt to look upon these events in an atmosphere of indignation and resentment. Then there is the mood of intense ¹⁴⁴¹sympathy in which one is inclined to dramatise the record of human torture to be found in the tragic history of the persecution of the Jews throughout the centuries, and in

the emotions aroused by that mood, we may forget the need for practical and effective action. There is a third mood which it is difficult for us to adopt, but which, I think, we ought to adopt. That is the mood in which we refuse to have our senses stimulated by sentiment, or our judgment darkened by indignation, and in which we look upon this problem of 500,000 refugees in Germany as just another practical problem which British statesmanship is called upon to consider and to solve.

It is because I think this last mood is the mood which will be most helpful to the settling of the problem that I propose to keep to it, in my brief examination of the position. We find that 500,000 men and women of Jewish race, but not all of Jewish religion, are looking round the world for a home and appeal to the British Government for help. Is there something in that problem which defies solution? Is its magnitude so vast, are its difficulties so complex, that we must recoil abashed from it and come to the conclusion that it is beyond human attainment to solve it? I do not take that view. Like the hon. Member for Derby I think that when we view this subject through the perspective of history, we see that a task of similar, or even greater magnitude, has been shown to be well within the capacity of a nation much poorer in possessions and wealth than ours. I refer to Greece. Looking at it in that light and recalling the fact that over 1,000,000 penniless, starving, homeless Greeks found refuge in that poor country, we must come to the conclusion, in confronting this problem, that the resources of civilisation are by no means exhausted. Many hon. Members are probably familiar with the masterly history of Europe which was written by a former Member of this House, Mr. H. A. L. Fisher. Referring to the defeat of the Greeks in Asia Minor in 1922 when the victorious Turks entered Smyrna, fired the city and massacred all of Greek blood whom they could find, Mr. Fisher writes: Mere than 1,000,000 Christians fleeing that terrible wrath were rescued from Asia Minor in Allied ships, and by a great feat of benevolent organisation distributed through Greece and its Islands. 1442 Later, referring to those refugees he says: Greece became by reason of its industrious Asiatic immigrants richer, stronger, more populous than before. A task which when undertaken, under the wise guidance of Nansen, in reference to 1,000,000 friendless Christians, proved to be successful, should not, in relation to 500,000 assisted Jews, prove insuperable. I hope I have made my first point, namely, that the objective of settling these Jews in other countries is well within the capacity of the world to achieve. I turn to my second point: Is Parliament, is the British Empire, in a position materially to help the achievement of this objective? Undoubtedly it is. Responsible as the British Empire is for a quarter of the surface of the globe, it is absurd to suggest that we cannot give great help. I am aware that this House cannot speak for the whole Empire, but it can speak for a substantial part of it, and it is from the Government that money can be obtained and should be forthcoming.

The most obvious way in which immediate help can come is from Palestine. There should be the immediate increase of the available immigration into Palestine. That will afford the assistance which is most necessary and most urgent. Palestine could, according to those who are qualified to express an opinion, take some 50,000 additional immigrants. I do not wish to dwell at length on this question of Palestine, because the House will be debating it on Thursday, and I turn to some other parts of the Empire where the immediate prospects are not perhaps so favourable, but where, in my opinion, a great deal can be done. We have read

of what the Italian Government are doing in connection with settlers in Libya. British Somaliland, Kenya, Tanganyika and, in a smaller way, British Guiana will greatly benefit from the immigration of intelligent, industrious individuals whom Germany, having first dispossessed, is now driving out.

I know there are colonists who may say, that if we increase considerably the number of immigrants to those parts of the British Empire we shall intensify the problem of unemployment there and, alternatively, it may be argued that the present economic development of those parts of the world admits of only a very 1443small additional amount of immigration. I reject those arguments for two reasons. First, we can learn from what has happened in Palestine. I well remember being in this House when the present Opposition formed the Government of the country and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Sidney Webb—now Lord Passfield—told us that an increase of the immigration of Jews into Palestine by some 3,000, would upset the economic balance of that country. What has happened since? Over 200,000 Jews have gone into Palestine and the economic balance of the country has not collapsed. The proof of that lies in the fact that, great as the immigration of Jews into Palestine has been, the growth of the Arab population in Palestine has been greater. Therefore, it appears to me that a great deal of exaggeration may take place when one tries to assess what is the economic absorptive capacity of a country. These views are borne out by the last report which we have had, the Woodhead report, where, on page 31, it says: So far as concerns the non-agricultural settlement, it would seem that economic conditions in Palestine are by now so closely bound up with Jewish immigration, both actual and prospective, that the Arabs in Palestine would be faced with the prospect of greater economic hardship if Jewish immigration should be completely closed down, than they would be even if it should be allowed to continue. The argument that I am rejecting is that these various parts of the Empire have reached the limit of their absorptive capacity. Surely there is an urgent necessity for a greater development of our Colonial Empire. I am not trying to suggest that all these stricken Jews in Germany should be dumped in our Colonial Empire—that would not be right or possible—but I do say that if the Government base their views on what can be done on the conservative estimates of Colonial Governors—General, swayed by councils of settlers, then the estimate that the Government will give will be a long way from the real absorptive capacity of the British Empire, and a unique opportunity of relieving a heartrending human tragedy and restoring to Britain some of its waning prestige will have been lost.

There is another practical and important aspect which should not be overlooked. We are not dealing with a completely 1444friendless people. They may be destitute, but they have friends, and the financial assistance which organised Jewry can give is great. It would be impossible to suggest that these refugees should be dumped on various parts of the Empire without previous preparation and without capital, but the capital which is at the disposal of Jewry is great, and Jewry should be called upon to provide a great deal of capital. What it cannot provide, the great British people will endeavour to assist in providing. In my view, it is much better to lend to the Jews to build up our Empire than to lend to the new Czech Government in order to help to destroy it. Inevitably, when one thinks of these problems, one's mind turns to the United States of America, with its large Jewish population. What opportunities for cooperation lie here. Is it a dream to think that this German refugee problem

and the American debt problem might find a simultaneous settlement? Certainly in working out the financial aspect of some of these schemes, that is an aspect of the matter which should not be overlooked.

To sum up, in my opinion, on severely practical grounds, the German refugee problem is a solvable problem, which the British Empire can materially assist to solve. It is more. It is a challenge to the inherent humanity of our race, it is a challenge which Britain, the champion of the oppressed, cannot ignore.

8.30 p.m.

Mr. Mander

Surely the hon. Member for East Willesden (Mr. Hammersley), although he is not entitled to any congratulations, thoroughly deserves them for the speech which he has just made. I think we must have a feeling of universal disgust at the horrible brutality of what is going on in this exodus from Germany at the present time. It is nothing but a reversion to paganism and a repudiation of all those ideals for which Christianity and all other religions too, for that matter, stand. The hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker), in his interesting speech, gave a number of individual examples of cases of persecution. I should like to state one case that came under my observation of a rather different kind.

A month ago, just after the crisis, I was in Prague, and I went to the frontier one 1445 evening in order to see the situation there. I found in the schools and in a waiting room at the station large numbers of refugees, lying down on their straw, overcrowded, and in a great state of terror and excitement. I inquired from them why they had come. It was surprising to find that these people, who were German by race, had fled from the Reich. It was at first sight an extraordinary situation, but the explanation was that between the retirement of the Czech troops and the arrival of the German troops there was, unfortunately, a gap. All reports show that when the German army arrived in the Sudeten areas they behaved with consideration and kindness to all these unfortunate people, and even distributed the cigarettes that they had for themselves. They do represent a body of persons in Germany who have certain standards of conduct. But during that gap, during those 24 hours or whatever it was, you had the real terror of Hitlerism at work. There was no one to keep order, and they were let loose, these troops of young Henleiners, who had been trained in Germany in terroristic methods, and they went all round the Sudeten areas, beating, shooting, killing, setting fire to their fellow citizens and the property of their fellow citizens. That shows the contrast between the better element in Germany and the more horrible element which unfortunately has control of the Government of the country at the present time.

Between the years 1933 and 1938 there have come out of Germany something like 150,000 refugees, mostly Jews, but, as has been said, there are potentially well over 500,000, again mostly Jews, in Germany who are capable of being sent out. In addition to those, there are a great many Catholics and Protestants who may be driven out, because it is clear that this terror is not being confined to one race or religion, but is going to be applied also to those who adhere to the Christian faith. We have to consider the reflex of all this on the nations to the East, because, if you take together such countries as Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Rumania,

Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece, there are something like 5,000,000 Jews living there, and in some of those countries, particularly in Poland, the Jewish question is becoming very serious indeed, and we may have very large numbers of these persons on our hands as well.

1446I understand that the Inter-Governmental Committee as it is called, before the recent crisis in Germany, estimated that there would be something like 500,000 Jews to be disposed of, and they planned that there should be the emigration of 100,000 a year for each of the five years. I am sure they now realise that these numbers will, unfortunately, have to be considerably added to. The question is where they can go. I understand that since the Evian Conference there has been some rigidity among certain non-European countries, particularly South America, where they have rather got the impression that there may be an attempt on the part of European countries to unload upon them a large number of persons who are unwanted here. It is essential, therefore, that in any action that is taken in Europe it should be made clear to these other countries that we are prepared to play our part to the full, and that there is no foundation for the suggestion that they are being asked to make all the sacrifices. It is most important that Great Britain should firmly and strongly take the lead and make it a major part of British policy to see that action is taken. If we were willing to undertake to find places in the Empire for, say, one-quarter of the numbers, and the United States another quarter, it might well be that South America and other countries would be prepared to absorb the other half.

Where would they go? The question of Palestine has been mentioned, but whatever we do to Palestine it must be recognised that it can deal with only a portion of the problem. We cannot solve the problem by sending all these Jews to Palestine. At the same time, it is absolutely our duty to see that order is restored and maintained at the earliest possible moment, that the mandate entrusted to us is carried out to the full, that emigration in accordance with the economic absorptive capacity is restored, and that we do not spend too much time consulting with other countries who really have no right to be consulted except as members of the League of Nations. I venture to hope that in considering the possibilities of Palestine, the great area of the Negeb will not be overlooked, because it is established that without creating the sort of difficulties among the Arabs which there are in other parts of Palestine, there are large areas which might be placed at 1447the disposal of the Jews for settlement in that part where a good deal of study has been given to the problem during the last year or so. The main problem is with regard to some part of the British Empire, either in the Dominions or in the Colonies. It really will not do for us to tell other nations, possessing the enormous Empire that we do, that we are very sorry but we cannot find any room in the British Empire. I am sure that that will not be the attitude taken by this country. The Prime Minister has made certain indications of territories where emigration might take place. I must say that I am particularly attracted by the idea of Tanganyika. It is a first-class suggestion for reasons which, I think, are obvious to us all, and there is no need to dilate upon them.

Let me turn to the question of finance, because it is no good pretending that this problem can be dealt with by private finance. It is far beyond that. Many of the organisations that are dealing with refugees at the present time are finding the greatest difficulty in carrying on. In dealing with these hundreds of thousands of persons no one would argue that the problem

can be dealt with otherwise than through the Government. I understand that the chairman of the Inter-Governmental Committee has been unsuccessful so far in obtaining any response from the German Government in the negotiations for obtaining from Germany some portion of the property of the refugees when they come out. It is an intolerable thing that Germany should be in a position to throw out large numbers of her citizens and rob them of the whole of their property, and then expect the rest of the world to finance them and to look after them. Exasperated as we may be by a feeling of that kind, we must put humanity before money. If it does happen, we have to do the best we can for these unfortunate people.

I would like to make one or two suggestions rather on the lines of those made by the hon. Member for Derby as to the steps that might be taken, although I do not say that all of them are practicable. I venture to think that certain pressure might be applied to Germany. I do not want to use the word "sanctions," because that is not popular in these days, but certain pressure might be applied. There is pressure, first, of a diplomatic 1448kind. The United States Government have withdrawn their Ambassador, temporarily at any rate. If all the principal nations were together to withdraw their diplomatic representatives as a demonstration against this kind of thing, I should think that it might possibly make some impression. Then there is the financial pressure that might be applied, such as refusal of financial support, although I do not suppose that Germany is getting very much at the present time. Then there is economic pressure, for which there is an analogy in connection with a country not far from here. I should have thought that there was a case for imposing a pretty high tariff upon German goods exported to this and other countries, the proceeds to be used for looking after the refugees who are being expelled.

I agree with the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Derby that consideration should be given—I have put it to the Home Secretary before in the form of a question—to the possibility of sending back to Germany a considerable number of Nazi Germans who, I am sure, could be identified and isolated if it were necessary. They should be sent back to the Reich, where they would be so much happier than being engaged on propaganda and agitation here and taking the place of refugees who could otherwise come to this country and be very much happier here. I hope that that is a problem that will not be overlooked. We ought not to rule out altogether the possibility of making a register of the property of all Germans in this country with a view to seeing whether, if Germany is going to rob the Jews of all their property in Germany and send them out, we should not appropriate some of their possessions here and use them for the help of the refugees. There are obvious difficulties, but I do not think that that is a matter that should be ruled out.

If we cannot do any of these things, we must go in for an international loan guaranteed by the central banks of issue for this purpose. I do not see any alternative to that. I hope that something will be done, on the lines suggested by the hon. Member for Derby, by making use of the machinery of the League of Nations. I know that our Government are not enamoured of certain functions of the League, but they maintain, I believe, that they would like to use to the full its humanitarian side, and here is an 1449opportunity, through that magnificent sounding board the Council and the Assembly of the League, of focussing and expressing the public opinion of the world in a way that would be entirely appropriate and effective and in

accordance with the views that persons of all parties have as to the possibilities of the League of Nations.

With regard to immediate steps—and some steps of an immediate nature will have to be taken—I hope that the Home Secretary will be able to say something about the camps which, as one reads, are being set up in Belgium, and perhaps in Holland, and tell us whether there is any idea of establishing temporary camps in this country in order to receive these refugees.

Mr. Maxton

It is hardly camping weather just now.

Mr. Mander

There are camps and camps. Further, I would ask the Home Secretary whether he does not think there is a case for amending the Aliens Act. I appreciate to the full the human sympathy which he, and the Home Office under him, have shown in dealing with the refugees. I believe they have tried to do all they can under the law as it is at present. But the Aliens Act was not passed to deal with a situation like this. It was never intended to exclude political exiles, and I should have thought there was a case for making it very much easier for refugees who have something to come to this country without enforcing all the rules and regulations which exist at present, which include getting people to guarantee them here for the rest of their lives. There might with great advantage be a relaxation of the rules. Another point is this: Refugees who have been admitted for a month or three months get a notification naturally when the time is up, and have to take steps to get the period extended, and of course it is extended, because there is no idea of sending them back, but the letters sent to them are of rather a formal nature and very often sound somewhat alarming to the persons who receive them, because they appear to intimate that the recipient must clear out of the country as rapidly as possible. I know that that is not the intention, and if some consideration could be given to the way in which the matter is put, it would relieve a good deal of anxiety.

1450I should also like to mention the possibility of the setting up of Czech factories here. Czechs in Sudetenland did a good deal of trade with the United States, and the good will they created with the people in the United States still exists, but it does not exist between the United States and Sudetenland, and those Czechs, with all their knowledge and experience are now leaving and setting up factories in France, as I know. I hope that encouragement may be given to them to set up factories here. Those factories will employ British labour and increase our export trade to the United States. It has been proved that more persons are employed by refugees at the present time than the number of the refugees themselves who have actually come in. Finally, I hope that the horrible sufferings of these people, whose only crime is that they belong to a particular branch of the human family, and one of the most distinguished branches of it, will so touch the hearts of mankind that immediate, practical and resolute steps will be taken by this Government, in conjunction with the other Governments of the world, to solve the problem.

8.50 p.m.

Mr. Butcher

Those of us who listened to the account of the appalling happenings in Germany recently which was given by the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker) must have felt that behind the happenings themselves was a principle even still more sinister, and that is the deliberate prosecution, of a set policy of intolerance, in a country many of whose people desire to maintain the most friendly relations with this country. I believe that if such a policy of intolerance is allowed to flourish unchecked it will spread, and that in place of the present trickle of refugees there will be an enormous number of human beings who will beat themselves against the barriers which prevent them from seeking refuge in freer and happier lands. **Civilisation as a whole must oppose against this spirit of intolerance some nobler and higher principle. It must recognise the inherent worth of ordinary men and women, and recognise that in God's world there is a place for each and everyone of us.** In recognition of that principle the hospitable lands of the new world have offered asylum to those who were persecuted in their native countries, and in settling there they have enriched the countries in which they have made their permanent home.

1451We welcome the pronouncement that the Government are willing to assist, and I am sure that such an announcement will give much encouragement to those who are now enduring suffering, tribulation and persecution. But I think we must do a little more. We must make up our minds as to why we are offering this help. Either the refugees are a burden which, for very shame of our common humanity, we are compelled to shoulder, or, alternatively, they are a definite and positive asset, the value of which is temporarily forgotten in certain countries, the rulers of which are blinded by fear, by untenable and untested theories of race and political culture and the true position that religion should occupy in the State. Each refugee has a value not only as a producer but as a consumer, and **the refugees may permanently enrich the life of the country which shelters and succours them, and that is the view which is held by those who have most carefully examined the problem.** Is it unreasonable to suggest that a translation of that principle into vigorous action by this Government, in conjunction with the other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the United States of America and the other free Powers, would do much to check the extension of what is going on? It might cause the present rulers in Central Europe to review their present position in the light of their own crude self-interest.

The extent to which assistance can be offered must vary from country to country. In this country we must be careful to safeguard the interests of our own workers, both as regards employment and the standard of living, but I am sure that the members of the trade unions and co-operative societies, who have not been behindhand in extending help to people in Spain, will be equally willing and eager to extend help and assistance to people from other parts of the world. While I welcome the statement of the Prime Minister this afternoon I confess that I have some feeling that the burden which the refugee organisations may be called upon to shoulder may prove to be too heavy for them, and I hope that the Government will see to it that those organisations receive all possible assistance in the way of skilled personnel and advice in the heavy task **1452**which they are so honourably striving to carry out.

A reference was made by the hon. Member for Derby to relief by means of infiltration. That is an extremely valuable suggestion which may have great potentialities for increased prosperity and employment inside our own country. As he said, in dealing with a problem so large the method of assistance to be envisaged is something in the nature of mass settlement, but **before we are able to contemplate such mass settlement we must have a short-term plan of rescuing those who are most in danger and who are, at the same time, most likely to be readily absorbed in the countries of eventual settlement.** A short-term plan would include the establishment of camps. The hon. Gentleman opposite objects to camps because the present time of the year is inclement. I would, therefore, call them places of refuge.

Mr. Maxton

Would not the hon. Member use the word "home"? "Camp" always seems to suggest something cheap and nasty.

Mr. Butcher

I will use the word "home," if the hon. Member appreciates that I refer only to a temporary home. **It would not be unwise if we were to allow 10,000 of these people to make their temporary home among us. They could be selected** in the country of origin and after selection promptly given the necessary visas to enable them to travel to this country. Obviously such permission could not be given without examination. Certain requirements would have to be fulfilled. We must, of necessity, select those whom we are most able to help. **They could be selected from age groups capable of being self-supporting over a considerable period of years, and most likely to become loyal citizens in the ultimate country of their adoption.** Good character should be one pre-requisite and robust good health another. Thirdly, there should be some technical skill. Such a plan would require finance, and I believe that a certain amount of it could be raised.

While the obligations of our common humanity rest on each and every one of us, they must rest on two classes in particular—first, on those who, having escaped from peril, now make their homes among us in freedom and liberty. Then, the class on whom the burden should rest 1453 will be the citizens and sympathisers of the country which causes this immense amount of human suffering. We should not be doing any great injustice if we were to say that most citizens of German or Austrian origin fall into one or other of those two classes. Therefore, I would like to suggest an annual impost on the earnings of such citizens while in this country. I cannot imagine anything more likely to check this persecution than letters arriving home from ordinary Nazis in this country saying that incomes earned here are liable to increased taxation because of the increased demands made upon refugee organisations. Such a thing would probably penetrate right into the minds of those who are able to check this persecution.

We can thus raise a substantial fund, but the probability of a long-term settlement will require heavy and substantial finance. I suggest that a loan be guaranteed both as to principal and as to interest by such countries as are represented on the inter-governmental committee dealing with these refugees. The noble Lord the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, speaking on this subject just before the summer Recess—since which so much has

happened— said: it is largely public opinion which must be the determining factor in this matter. We think that we have, as the result of the meeting at Evian, done much to focus the eyes of the world on this problem, as being urgent and being one which requires the utmost sympathy of treatment. That is quite true. Since then recent events have caused public opinion to move forward with a leap. The action of the Government has shown that they are prepared to keep in step.

I hope and trust that His Majesty's Government will set an example and will secure for this country the lead in relieving the suffering that is going on, and that they will demonstrate by their action that while in some quarters, falsely I believe, we may be thought not to hold our old lead in diplomacy or even perhaps—and, again, I believe falsely—our old lead in armed force, in the question of relieving and succouring the suffering this country will never yield her place to any nation.

I will end on a personal note. Last year His Excellency the American Ambassador was in the town of Boston which 1454 have the honour to represent. He was paying a tribute to the men who left Boston as refugees some 300 years ago. Have we the courage to realise that, in assisting these refugees to-day, we may be sowing seeds which, in the years to come, will enable these people to return from the settlements abroad to which we have helped them, in peace and amity to Germany and Austria?

9.30 P.m.

Mr. Logan

I speak to-night in the British House of Commons to voice my opinion upon the terrible happenings in another country. Not one Member of this House but recognises from the statement made by my hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker) how difficult is the proposition before us and how urgent. It must be dealt with immediately. I speak as an orthodox Catholic, feeling to the depth of my heart the sincerity of the cause of the Jew. The oppression is all-powerful, but the exodus from Germany should take place in such a way as to give the refugees an opportunity for a fuller life. I do not wish to say anything adverse to the people of Germany, but this is my first opportunity of speaking upon an international problem after being in this House for nine years I feel that I should be unjust to the body to which I belong if I did not do so, especially as a great gathering is taking place to-night in Liverpool at which the Protestant Bishop of Liverpool and the Catholic Archbishop are on one platform together dealing with this great problem. Coming from the Scotland Division, I feel that it is essential that I should express my views in the House of Commons.

I am aware of what civilisation owes to the Jews. I remember well, only a few years ago, when one of the most illustrious men that Germany ever produced came into the corridors of this House and when I had the privilege of speaking to him, Professor Albert Einstein. What a great character, and what a commentary on a country which, with all its great wealth, will never allow men of that calibre to go back to it again. The deification of the State has brought them to a menial position, where neither talent nor even service is recognised.

We are asked in this Motion, and I am sure that no hon. or right hon. Member of the House will disagree with it, 1455 to do our proper part as a British nation in the restitution, if that be possible, of a happier life for these refugees. I hear mention made of the question of money. If we cannot have civilisation contented, if we cannot bring sunshine into the lives of people, without being concerned with the question of money, civilisation is doomed. To-day an opportunity is offered to the British nation to take its proper stand among the nations of the world to protect a minority that deserves well of all the nations of the world. That may appear strange, coming from me, but I lived for 12 years among the Jews in the city of Liverpool. I knew them well; I traded with them, went into their family life, was at their christenings and their weddings. I know them well, and, because I know them well, and what we owe to them, I ask this Government to take its courage in its hands. Personal friends of mine are suffering great difficulties in Germany to-day, and my heart goes out to them when I learn of the terrible incidents which have been recorded and which have been so graphically described by the hon. Member for Derby.

No man in any part of the world can look upon the desolation that Jewry is undergoing in Germany to-day without wondering when the day of retribution will come for those who pretend to govern a totalitarian State in the interests of the German people. I am fully convinced, from my knowledge of the Germans with whom I have come in contact, that that is not the conception of life even in Germany. To me it is not the ethics of Christianity. In fact, humanitarian ethics are thrown to the winds. The totalitarian State wants all to be subservient to it. The conscience of man is to be destroyed. Because I believe that humanity has a right to a conscience irrespective of Governments, and a right to express what is inherent in it, I ask the Government to take courage and go on and do their right and proper part. America, in conjunction with this country, can play a wonderful part. The power of the British race is not decadent. Let the English-speaking peoples, with the power that they have, concert and come together in a work of this kind.

I feel that from the gloom of Jewry a regeneration for mankind is about to come. I feel that some of the incidents 1456 of the past three weeks have brought about a different point of view in the whole English-speaking race, and that we people will be able to recognise and bring about in this House a common unity which we could never achieve under any conditions of political partisanship. Common humanity appeals to the British House of Commons to play its part. I am not unaware of the strategic value that may come about through the dispossession of the Jews in Germany, of the various vulnerable points in the British Empire that can be made secure, of the wonderful power of these people giving expression, in prayer to God, of their thankfulness at having been saved from their terrible plight. I am sure that, if we appeal, not to material things, not to dividends and so on, but to something higher and more spiritual in us, we shall be able to conceive some method whereby a regeneration of the community of mankind may be brought about.

In my humble opinion, we are at the turning of the roads. The nations are beginning to unite; combines are being made; a spiritual regeneration is coming about among mankind, even through the old dispensation. I am one of the new dispensation, and I believe that that blending is about to take place. I ask the Government to take into consideration the views

that have been expressed. We are spending millions of pounds upon armaments for war; here is the opportunity for peace; here is the power to blend nations together; here is the chance of a revival of the Covenant of the League of Nations, of bringing about a forum where matters of this kind can be redressed, where an appeal to the best of mankind can be made. For these reasons I make my humble appeal in this tribunal of the British race. We could never set our hands to a better thing. To-morrow may be a hard day for us, but I feel that, by doing the things that are morally right, we shall achieve something which is worthy of the name of the British nation. I beg to support the Motion.

9.12 p.m.

Commander Sir Archibald Southby

I do not think there is a Member of this House or a person in this country who was not horrified at the senseless crime which was committed in Paris recently, or who does not feel sympathy with the relatives of the victim of that crime. Equally, there is no Member of this House 1457 or person in this nation that is not filled with shocked horror at the treatment of the Jews in Germany. I do not believe that the vast majority of the German people are a consenting party to that treatment; I do not believe that the rulers of Germany themselves are unanimous in their support of that policy. I think the saddest thing which has emerged from the events of the last few days in Germany is that they tend to make an understanding between the peoples of the two countries more difficult to arrive at. This country and this House, irrespective of faith or party, have always been sympathetic to the sufferings of persecuted people, whatever their race or faith may be. Whatever our past history may have been, we have learned tolerance of those strangers in faith and race who live among us. For that reason I welcome the statement which the Prime Minister made in the House this afternoon.

I quite agree with the hon. Member who opened the discussion from the Front Opposition Bench that a place of refuge must be found for these people. It is our duty to help to find that place. I believe it is our duty to help in collaboration with other nations; I believe it can only be properly done if there is successful collaboration between the nations of the world. We are a sentimental people, but I venture to say to the House that we cannot be swayed by sentiment alone in this matter. Perhaps the most terrible problem of the times in which we live is the problem of refugees—the awful train of pitiful people who, for one reason or another, are the result of wars and differences of opinion and clashes of ideals in various parts of the world. We in this country have always offered asylum to the afflicted and the distressed. I venture to say that we have always gained by offering that asylum. I have no Jewish connections, nor one drop of Jewish blood, but I believe—and I think the House will agree—that no nation has ever prospered which has persecuted the Jews.

There are obvious difficulties in the way of a solution of this problem. The Dominion Governments are the only people who can decide questions of immigration into the Dominions. We can work in collaboration with them, but the ultimate decision must rest with those Governments. I am sure they are sympathetic, but, of course, there are limitations 1458 on what the Dominions can do. As the Prime Minister said this afternoon, the

Colonies are restricted in space. There is a very great deal to be done when you consider the problem of refugees, quite apart from Jewish refugees. Space can be found in the world to accommodate these people; but, in our desire to help this stream of refugees, we must not lose sight of the fact that there exists in the minds of many of our own people a very real fear lest there should be a tremendous influx into this country of refugees who are unable to maintain themselves and who would have to compete with our own citizens for a livelihood. After all, many of our own people are hard put to it to find work and a means of livelihood, and our primary duty in this House of Commons is to those we represent. Our first duty is to our own people. We have other duties, international duties, duties to the rest of the world, as well; but we must realise the apprehensions that are bound to exist in the minds of the people of this country. Our taxpayers and our ratepayers are already shouldering heavy burdens—shouldering them uncomplainingly and cheerfully. We cannot shoulder entirely by ourselves the financial burden of looking after the refugees. We have to be fair to our own people. The question of those refugees who are self-supporting and of good character—because that is important—is an administrative problem with which the Home Secretary can deal quite simply. The real problem is concerned with those who are not self-supporting, for whom some means of livelihood must be found, or for whom some possibility of advancement must be found elsewhere.

Colonel Wedgwood

Does the hon. and gallant Member include in that category those who are lucky enough to obtain affidavits from responsible persons in this country that they will not become a charge on the public funds?

Sir A. Southby

Certainly. I said that the question of those who are self-supporting is a simple problem which does not offer any great difficulty in its solution. World Jewry has always been generous and mindful of its duties, not only to its own afflicted but to the afflicted of other creeds. I suggest not only that Jewry throughout the world will help in this matter, but that it must help.

1459I welcome the Prime Minister's statement, particularly that part of it with reference to the desirability of refugees being allowed to bring with them their possessions and their money. The strongest possible representations should be made, in collaboration with other Governments, to see whether something may not be done to ameliorate the existing conditions, so that these people may bring something upon which they can live. We cannot allow any nation to rid itself of its liabilities at the expense of our taxpayers. Our taxpayers are sufficiently harassed at the present time, and we cannot allow any responsibility which should be shouldered elsewhere to be placed on them without at least some protest. We must safeguard the occupations of our own folk. We can do it best by providing opportunities for refugees which will not injure our own people, while they will, at the same time, offer hope and a livelihood to the refugees themselves. I listened with great interest to the moving speech of the hon. Gentleman on the Front Opposition Bench, and the thing which struck me most was his insistence on the fact that assistance to these refugees must be planned. Haphazard, sentimental dealing with the question would not be right; nor would it find

acceptance with the people of this country. If help to refugees is to be successful, it must be planned in such a way that it cannot merit adverse criticism.

I do not agree with what was said as regards Palestine offering even a partial solution of this problem. There are sufficient difficulties in Palestine at present without desiring to add to them. I think that in that connection the Prime Minister's statement met with general acceptance in the House, as it certainly will throughout the country. It is in parts of the world where there exist ample space and opportunity that the future of these people and the future of other refugees can best be secured. It should be remembered that there are in London alone about 250,000 Jews. One of the difficulties in finding a solution of the problem is that many of the people from Germany are, as I understand, not suitable for work on the land. They are people of business occupation. Great assets they will be, I believe, to the countries which are able to absorb them.

1460I would suggest that, not only the Government but this House also, should bear in mind that it is outside this country—other, of course, than in the case of asylum given to those who will not be a charge on this country—in parts of the world where there is space and where these people can find a means of livelihood, that a solution will be found which will not only be something of which we can be proud but which will be of lasting benefit to the world itself.

9.24 p.m.

Mr. Maxton

I do not feel it necessary to speak at length on this matter, because I am tremendously pleased at the great unanimity that has been shown in all quarters of the House. I particularly want to congratulate the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker) on the tremendously fine survey he made of the whole problem, and on the general spirit he displayed in his approach to the matter. But while I say I do not feel the necessity of saying much, I would not like to let the occasion pass without saying something. The spirit that has animated the speeches of other spokesmen to-night has expressed the sentiments that we in this part of the House feel on the subject. There are, I think, three aspects of it. One is an immediate one—it seems to me to be a matter of handling in days, and not in weeks or months—that is, the getting of the people away from the danger point where they are now. I think that should be done at once, and it is angersome to me to have case after case brought to me concerning people who have got all the qualifications for getting away, but who are delayed in getting a visa.

Surely the spirit of this House and of the country is not one of quibbling about office details, and I am particularly referring to one case. I will send it to the Home Secretary to-morrow. I think it is a particularly cruel thing for a man to be granted a visa and then have it withdrawn. I know that things could be said about him. He is a Jew, he is a Socialist, and he is a Socialist of a line not different from my own. I see my hon. Friend the Member for Seaham (Mr. Shinwell) smiling; he knows just how popular that fellow will be in Czechoslovakia at this particular juncture. The Home Office in their approach to this question of granting visas should not 1461allow trivial little things to determine their decision. The getting of these people away from the danger point is a matter of urgency, and the merit of the individuals can be looked into after their bodies are safe.

That is one thing. The second thing is their temporary accommodation. I agree at once that this is not a matter of days, but a matter of weeks or months, and one can be a little more leisurely about it. And I agree with the hon. Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Mander) that either the short-term settlement or the long-term settlement of these refugees is not a matter for private finance; although, mind you, I am surprised at that coming from the hon. Member, because if I were a defender of capitalism and private enterprise of his standing I would say that an international corporation for the settlement and exploitation of the Jewish people would be one of those profitable enterprises that would show a very reasonable return on the capital invested. I think, however, I would take the term "exploitation" out of the title of my company. I would give it a more benevolent name.

But I do certainly think that if private enterprise and international capitalism believed in their own system they would say: "Here is a crowd of people as skilled, as intelligent, as hard working, as pertinacious, and as docile as any body of workers that you would get in the world. What more do you want?" But I think that international capitalism has not got the courage for that type of enterprise, and I am glad that it should be so. I prefer that the type of problem that we are confronting just now should not be confronted from the point of view of how we can exploit the Jewish people, but of how we can give them the same opportunities in the world as we have ourselves. That is perhaps not a guarantee of perfect security or of the certainty of being able to earn a livelihood.

Colonel Wedgwood

Will you allow them to work?

Mr. Maxton

Surely the right hon. and gallant Gentleman knows my political philosophy perfectly well—that while I do not share the general enthusiasm for work, I am always delighted to let anyone who wants to go ahead. I believe 1462 that any one of the great countries of Europe could accommodate all the 500,000. I believe that Scotland could accommodate 500,000. [An HON. MEMBER: "There is no chance of that."] That is a matter which has to be considered. I believe the Highlands of Scotland could accommodate 500,000. I believe that 500,000 Jews could make a better job of the Highlands of Scotland than the Highlanders ever did. But I know perfectly well that our industrial system cannot fit them in just now. I know that you have 2,000,000 people of your own that you cannot find work for, and I am not so foolish as to suggest that we should attempt to push a new group of that magnitude into the middle of an industrial economy that cannot utilise their services. But I say that there is a great vast territory over the control of which we have the last word, and that it is possible to place all the people involved in this immediate problem at some point in those territories, for a temporary period at least, without putting undue burdens on the district in which they are placed, and without causing additional suffering to the population that is already there. And I say that that should be done and done speedily.

I hope that the Government, in conjunction with other Governments, are looking for a more long-term solution of this problem. And here I think the Secretary of State for the Dominions and Colonies in his forthcoming conference on the Palestine situation has to give very earnest

consideration as to whether the failures up to now in that country have been due to the fact that the problem has been looked at in too small a way. I am not going into that—that will be debated here on Thursday, the 1st December. But it may have been conveyed to the right hon. Gentleman that I protested against the idea of his holding the two positions of Dominions Secretary and Colonial Secretary at the same time. I still protest. I think it is bad. But I think the fact that he holds both offices throws on to his shoulders on this particular issue a bigger responsibility than rests on the shoulders of anybody else, and I shall watch with very great interest to see whether he is worthy of the responsibility that is involved. I expect from him through the offices that he holds the immediate solution of this particular problem, and I expect from the office 1463 which he holds a big proportion of the long-term solution as well. These are the few words that I wanted to say on this matter. I and my friends are anxious that in the kindest and best and speediest way everything shall be done to give these people a chance to live, in the same way as the rest of us.

9.35 P.m.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sir Samuel Hoare)

There is no page in our lifetime which is so tragic as that of the sufferings of the refugees in the last 20 years. Wave after wave of refugees has drifted across the world, uprooted from their homes, penniless, destitute, no country found ready at hand to receive them, separated from their families and their surroundings and, as it seems to me, most tragic of all, many of them have been men of intellectual eminence who felt that their life's training had been wasted, and that there was no future for them to carry out the professional work in which they held so eminent a place. I speak with some feeling upon this subject. As the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker) reminded the House this evening, he and I at one time were directly connected with this problem, he more eminently than myself. While he was working continuously with Dr. Nansen, I was called in upon only one occasion to help Dr. Nansen in dealing with the Russian refugees in Constantinople and in the Balkans.

How well I remember this tragic experience, these thousands of men and women stranded upon the streets of Constantinople without means of livelihood, upon the verge of starvation, in a no-man's land which did not wish to receive them, and with no future, so it seemed, before them. I am glad to think that we were able at that time, as the hon. Member reminded the House this evening, to find a home for a great number of those refugees. I remember very well that I was instrumental in placing, I think, 45,000 of them in various parts of Eastern Europe. Since that time I have followed with the closest interest and keenest sympathy the tragedies of this problem. On the top of these waves of post-war refugees, Czechs, Armenians, Turks, Russians, Spaniards, comes the appalling problem with which 1464 we have been faced in the last six months, and, in particular, in the last 10 days.

I rise at this stage of the Debate to explain the policy of the British Government upon this last phase of this tragic problem. Before dealing with the details that have been raised in the course of the Debate, I wish to make it clear to the whole House that the Government accept this Motion. No useful purpose would be served by repeating what the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on behalf of the Government, said at Rhyl on Friday last. We all condemn the

senseless crime that led to the death of the German diplomat in Paris. We should not, however, be honest with ourselves or with the world if we concealed the depth of our feelings at the suffering inflicted upon thousands of men and women as the result of a crime with which they had no connection whatever.

I speak as a convinced believer in the possibility of Anglo-German friendship. I speak as a staunch supporter of the Munich Agreement. Indeed, it is because I am so anxious to see a complete and permanent settlement of the questions that divide our two countries that I frankly and unreservedly state my views this evening. I am opposed to all attempts to intervene in the domestic affairs of other countries, but the issue that has been raised in these last few days by the measures against the Jews in Germany, and the way in which it has been raised, forces it upon the attention of other countries. How can a question remain exclusively domestic when it involves scores of thousands of men, women and children, destitute and penniless, seeking admission into other countries?

Faced with this problem, let me explain to the House the policy that His Majesty's Government intend to adopt I will begin by stating as clearly as I can that, however deep may be our sympathies, this problem is, and must remain, an international problem. No single country can hope to solve it. While we are perfectly prepared to take our full share in any attempt to solve or mitigate it we must state, and state categorically, that it is a problem for all the countries who are at present members of the Evian Inter-Governmental Committee. Believing it to be an international problem. His Majesty's Government were grateful when the 1465President of the United States took the personal interest that he has taken in it and for the invitations that he gave some months ago to the Governments of the world to take part in the Evian Conference.

The House will remember the steps that then were taken. They will remember that a very distinguished citizen of the United States, Mr. Myron Taylor, at the invitation of the President came over to Evian and presided at the Conference. Thirty-two countries were represented at it, and as a result of its meetings a committee was formed representative of these various Governments, with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy as its chairman. Another distinguished public man from the United States, Mr. Rublee, is the director of the organisation. Since then my right hon. Friend and his colleagues have been making active inquiries among the States that comprise the representatives called together at Evian to see how the problem could be dealt with, and which of the Governments were prepared to take refugees, and to what extent. Although no very definite action has yet resulted, these inquiries have proved useful, and I hope that a further step will be taken, in the immediate future, when the officers of the committee meet in London, I understand in 10 days' time, when Mr. Myron Taylor, who is at the moment leaving the United States, will be present and will be able to consult with my right hon. Friend and his colleagues as to what steps should immediately be taken.

I give the House this information to show that, first of all, His Majesty's Government are very conscious of the responsibility that rests upon their shoulders, and, secondly, that the international organisation is acting with a sense of the urgency of the problem. I hope that in the near future we shall be informed of the decisions that will be taken after their meeting in

London. I agree with everything that has been said in the Debate as to the need of the fullest co-operation between all the Governments concerned. I do not think that this problem is insoluble, but I do take the view that it is insoluble unless there is the kind of international effort to which the hon. Member for Derby referred, in which all the Governments concerned will co-operate actively, with an effective organisation, 1466 for dealing with this very complicated problem.

I pass from the international organisation to the part that we, the United Kingdom, and we, the British Empire, ought to play in this co-operative effort. We are prepared to play our full part and to take our full share with the other nations of the world. We accept the responsibility that is on our shoulders, from the fact that we possess a great part of the surface of the world and that, owing to our wealth and other resources, we can play an important part in any attempt to deal with this tragic problem.

The Prime Minister, in his statement to-day, gave a picture of the way in which we propose to give our help. He said, and said purposely, nothing about the Dominions, and for this reason, that the Dominions were themselves represented at the Evian Conference, and they must speak for themselves. It is not for us in this House to speak for them. But let me say this in passing, without entering into any details, that I think the several Dominion Governments are giving very urgent attention to this question and that a substantial number of refugees have been already admitted into one or other of the Dominion territories.

I come next to the Colonial Empire. The Prime Minister described our willingness to place territory at the disposal of the refugees and, quite rightly, said a word of caution as to the difficulties that must be surmounted if settlement upon a large scale is to succeed. It sounds very easy when one points to the immense territories that are possessed by the British Empire, and one asks the question: "Is it not easy to settle so many hundreds or thousands in these millions of acres of undeveloped territory?" The fact, however, is that the greater part of this territory can only be settled after careful survey and after adequate preparation. It may well be that, with the best will in the world, some time must elapse before substantial numbers of refugees can be satisfactorily settled in the Colonies and Dependencies.

That, however, does not mean that His Majesty's Government are not taking active steps, as the Prime Minister described this afternoon, to expedite a survey of this kind in certain of the Colonies, to see how many and how quickly we can settle in one or other of these territories. 1467 He mentioned several territories, Tanganyika, Kenya, Northern Rhodesia, British Guiana, and so on. When he mentioned British Guiana, the hon. Member for Derby asked him whether he was referring to the same territory that had proved unsuitable for the settlement of 5,000 Assyrians a few years ago. Some of the territory is the same. There is, however, another block of territory that we contemplate. In any case, there were special features connected with the Assyrians that made it difficult for them to settle in British Guiana. For instance, it was necessary to settle them all at once. I am told that many of them, owing to years of exile, had got out of touch with agricultural and pastoral pursuits. [Interruption.] It is not a smiling matter; it is a fact.

I want to suggest to the House, without exaggerating the possibilities, that the problem of the Jews is somewhat different. It is not necessary to settle them all at once. We might find temporary homes for them whilst they were being trained. Moreover, we are given to understand that if territory, either in British Guiana or some other Colonial Dependencies can be placed at their disposal, it is quite possible that large sums of capital would be provided by their co-religionists to support them for a considerable time. I would, therefore, ask hon. Members not to set aside the possibility of an experiment of this kind upon the ground that a particular territory in the past was found unsuitable for a particular type of emigration. What we wish to do is to test out all these possibilities, and test them with the definite intention of trying to find territory where immigration on a large scale is likely to succeed. As to Palestine, I propose to say nothing. Questions connected with Palestine are to be debated on Thursday, and the Prime Minister, while he gave the House to-day a figure to show that there has been considerable immigration of German refugees into Palestine in recent months and years, was right to lay stress on the peculiar difficulties which lie in the way of anything like mass immigration at the present time.

I pass from the Colonial Empire to a part of the problem for which, as Home Secretary, I am directly responsible—the problem of the United Kingdom. It may be for the convenience of the House if 1468I give hon. Members a full and detailed description of the position. Many of them, as I know from the correspondence I have had, are deeply interested either in the problem in general or in the fortunes of particular refugees, and I think it would be useful at this stage if hon. Members on all sides of the House were given further information about the problem in the United Kingdom and about the way in which the Home Office is attempting to deal with it.

Let me begin by reminding the House of some of the difficulties. In this country we are a thickly populated industrial community with at the present moment a very large number of unemployed. Competition is very keen with foreign countries, and it is difficult for many of our fellow-countrymen to make a livelihood at all and keep their industries and businesses going. It is quite obvious that there is an underlying current of suspicion and anxiety, rightly or wrongly, about alien immigration on any big scale. It is a fact, and we had better face the fact quite frankly, that below the surface—I know it from my own daily experience at the Home Office—

Colonel Wedgwood

Fascists.

Sir S. Hoare

I know it from my own experience that there is the making of a definite anti-Jewish movement. I do my best as Home Secretary to stamp upon an evil of that kind. That is the reason why I have prohibited demonstrations in certain parts of London where inevitably they would stimulate this evil movement. Faced with a fact of that kind, while I think very few hon. Members look upon this problem with greater sympathy than I do, I have to be careful to avoid anything in the nature of mass immigration which, in my view, would inevitably lead to the growth of a movement which we all wish to see suppressed. That means that we must

keep a check upon individual cases of immigrants. I agree with the hon. Member for Bridgeton (Mr. Maxton) that we must have as little red-tape about it as possible and as little delay as possible, but none the less, it is essential, if we are to avoid an influx of the undesirable behind the cloak of refugee immigration, that we should keep a check upon individual cases, and inevitably a check of that kind must involve a certain measure of delay.

1469We try at the Home Office to work in the closest co-operation with the various organisations that are directly engaged on the refugee problem. We have, for instance, the invaluable assistance of what is called the Co-ordinating Committee, a committee upon which are represented the principal Jewish organisations, the Quakers, and organisations of the Christian Churches. The procedure we adopt is to refer cases to these organisations and almost invariably we accept their recommendation. With our help they make the necessary inquiries, and when they tell us that an immigrant has either a friend who will keep him in England or can keep himself, almost invariably—I think I may say invariably—we see that the refugee gets a visa and is allowed to enter this country.

Colonel Wedgwood

Does the right hon. Gentleman say that they must get a guarantee?

Sir S. Hoare

What I said was that the Committee finds out whether his friends can keep the refugee or whether the refugee is likely to be able to keep himself. Further than that, we work in the closest co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, and where we see a chance of settling a refugee without damage to British employment or British industry we do everything we can to facilitate the settling of the refugee, and it is interesting to note that while during the period in which large numbers of refugees from Austria and Germany have been arriving, 11,000 German refugees have been settled in this country, the information at my disposal goes to show that they have been instrumental in employing 15,000 British workmen in the industries which they have set up, without, so far as I can gather, any damage to British employment or to British labour. Let the House remember that this is due to the very careful selection that has been made by the Co-ordinating Committee, the Home Office, and the Ministry of Labour. If there had been anything in the nature of mass immigration I think the story might have been very different.

Carrying this description of our machinery a stage further, the Foreign Office has in Germany two passport control offices which deal with the issue of visas to the applicants. [Horn. MEMBERS: "Where are they?"] In Berlin and Vienna. I admit that during the 1470last 10 days the machinery has been strained to breaking point. I admit also that my organisation at the Home Office has been strained to the breaking point. What else could you expect, with an organisation that hitherto was based upon a limited number of immigrants that could easily be controlled and now is faced with applications running into thousands a day? I can tell the House that we have already made considerable extensions to the machinery in Germany, at the ports here and in London. We admit it is still inadequate to deal with this great mass of applicants, and accordingly we are in the act of making a much greater expansion of the

machinery, and I hope that by this means we shall avoid some of the delays that have inevitably taken place in the past.

The curious feature about the visas is the large number of visas that have been given and the comparatively small number of immigrants who have hitherto reached these shores. As the Prime Minister stated this afternoon, about 11,000 refugees have been allowed to reside in this country, but that is by no means the tale of the visas that we have given on the Continent. We have given visas on the Continent running into 50 or 60 or 70 a day, and when I have asked the reason for this disparity, I have been told that a good many of the refugees probably stopped somewhere en route and have not yet arrived here. None the less, there is the fact that we have given a much larger number of visas than would appear from the figure of 11,000 given by the Prime Minister in his statement this afternoon.

One should also remember that, however much we improve the machinery, in the nature of things there are bound to be delays, and in the nature of things there are bound to be failings. I have had innumerable letters from my fellow countrymen—I might also say innumerable letters from hon. Members of this House—and with the best will in the world often it has been difficult to identify the individuals about whom they have written to me, and even if they could be identified, to arrange that they should go to the passport offices in Germany and obtain their visas. I am afraid it often happens that a German about whom I have received some communication leaves his address, or it may be is taken off to a concentration camp, and we lose touch with him, and although 1471 we are prepared to give the visa allowing him to enter this country, there is no means of making contact with that particular individual. I hope the facts which I have given to the House will enable hon. Members to see that I am attempting to deal as sympathetically as I can with individual cases and that I am attempting to make the machinery, both in Germany, in the passport offices in Berlin and Vienna, and in this country, at the ports and in London, adequate to deal with this mass of applications.

Mr. Bellenger

Must the individual travel to Berlin or Vienna?

Sir S. Hoare

Yes, Sir. It is only there that we have offices for visas.

Mr. Maxton

If the person is hundreds of miles away, has he to appear personally either at Berlin or Vienna, or can he write to the office in one of those towns for his visa?

Mr. Henderson Stewart

How do the passport offices in Germany, at Berlin or Vienna, get into touch with the persons for whom visas have been granted in this country? What is the machinery?

Sir S. Hoare

The machinery is that the individual himself gets into touch with the passport office. Further to that, I was not correct when I said that there were only these two passport offices at which

visas can be obtained. Visas can be obtained at any British Consulate. The central offices in Germany are at Berlin and Vienna. The individual would have to get into touch with the nearest British Consul. I think that is the only way in which it can be done.

Mr. Stewart

One knows that there are long queues, hundreds and thousands of people, waiting to approach these Consulate offices. Sometimes it is physically impossible for them to reach the door. Would it not be possible for the persons in charge somehow to notify individuals for whom visas have been granted?

Sir S. Hoare

We must get the particulars on the spot. The hon. Member will see at once that we are in an awkward dilemma in all these things. The dilemma with which we are faced in this particular instance is that of not making sufficient inquiries on the spot and the man then arriving at the port here and having to 1472be turned back. The object of the visa system is to make inquiries on the spot, where they can be adequately made, so that when a man has a visa he is not turned back from a British port. We are attempting to improve the machinery. For instance, I was told to-day that where there have been long queues outside the Consulate, we are attempting now to communicate with the people who have been turned away on a particular day and giving them priority the next day. The House will see the gigantic scope of the problem with which we are faced. Those consulates which hitherto dealt with perhaps half-a-dozen visas, are now faced with hundreds and perhaps thousands of people outside their doors. All I can say to the House is that we are most anxious to deal with these cases, both as expeditiously and as sympathetically as we can.

Captain W. T. Shaw

Is the right hon. Gentleman putting a limit to the number of people whom he is going to allow in?

Sir S. Hoare

No, Sir, I have no such intention, and I hope the House will approve the policy which I am trying to carry out. I am opposed to anything in the nature of a quota. I think a quota is bound to have one of two bad effects, and possibly two bad effects. Many people might think it was too big and many people might think it was too small. I think it is much safer for the Home Secretary working in the closest possible touch with the Co-ordinating Committee, to treat individual cases on their merits and not to be bound down by a numerical figure.

Mr. Woods

Is the right hon. Gentleman making any special provision to expedite and facilitate the coming in of children?

Sir S. Hoare

I will cover all these various questions, if the House will allow me to deal with them in order. I pass now from the individual cases to a class of case which we can deal with en masse. Those

are cases in which individual inquiries will not be essential. I begin with the cases of trans-migrants, that is to say, men, women and children for whom we might provide a temporary home here, upon the understanding that, at some time in the future, they will go elsewhere for their permanent home. We 1473are prepared to look sympathetically and favourably upon proposals of this kind. While the absorptive powers of this country might be limited as far as permanent residents are concerned, we certainly could take in a larger number of refugees for a temporary period, provided they were eventually to be settled in some other part of the world.

For instance, if we take as an example settlement in various parts of the Colonial Empire we shall undoubtedly find that the refugees, if they are to make good in those undeveloped parts of the Empire, will need an intensive course of training. I can say to the House that we shall look most favourably upon proposals for keeping refugees in this country during their period of training. An interesting experiment has already been started under the auspices of the Co-ordinating Committee for the training of Jewish boys for agriculture and Jewish girls for domestic service. The experiment is still in its early days, but I can tell the House to-night that, so far, it has succeeded satisfactorily. A number of boys and girls, running into some hundreds, have already been trained. A number of older men have also been trained here under the auspices of the Co-ordinating Committee; I believe to the number of several thousands, and have left this country after their training and are already beginning to make good in other parts of the world. We shall encourage and facilitate other experiments of this kind.

I come next to the very important question of the non-Aryan children. I think here again we can deal with a problem of that kind very differently from the way in which we have to check in detail the individual positions of the older refugees. I think there will be children with whom we could deal in large numbers, provided they were sponsored by responsible bodies and responsible individuals.

Colonel Wedgwood

By "non- Aryan," does the right hon. Gentleman mean Jews and half-castes?

Sir S. Hoare

Yes. I had, only this morning, a very valuable discussion with Lord Samuel and a number of other Jewish and other religious workers who were co-operating together in attempting to mitigate the sufferings of their co-religionists. They came to me with a very interesting proposal about the non-Aryan children. They pointed back to 1474the experience during the war, in which we gave homes here to many thousands of Belgian children, in which they were educated, and in which we played an invaluable part in maintaining the life of the Belgian nation. So also with these Jewish and non-Aryan children, I believe that we could find homes in this country for a very large number without any harm to our own population. The Co-ordinating Committee and the other organisations told me that they would be prepared to bring over here all the children whose maintenance could be guaranteed, either by their funds or by generous individuals, and that all that will probably be necessary will be for the Home Office to give the necessary visas and to facilitate their entry into this country. I told Lord Samuel, without a moment's hesitation, that the Home Office would certainly be prepared to

provide facilities of that kind, and I venture to-night to take the opportunity of commending this effort to my fellow countrymen in general. Here is a chance of taking the young generation of a great people, here is a chance of mitigating to some extent the terrible sufferings of their parents and their friends.

I could not help thinking what a terrible dilemma it was to the Jewish parents in Germany to have to choose between sending their children to a foreign country, into the unknown, and continuing to live in the terrible conditions to which they are now reduced in Germany. I saw this morning one of the representatives of the Quaker organisations, who told me that he had only arrived in England this morning from a visit to Germany and a visit to Holland. He inquired of the Jewish organisations in Germany what would be the attitude of the Jewish parents to a proposal of this kind, and he told me that the Jewish parents were almost unanimously in favour of facing this parting with their children and taking the risks of their children going to a foreign country, rather than keeping them with them to face the unknown dangers with which they are faced in Germany. He went on to Holland and found that Dr. Colijn, the Prime Minister of Holland, was prepared to give a temporary refuge to children and trans-migrants of this kind, provided there was a hope of our receiving them into this country. I can give Dr. Colijn the assurance to-night that we shall put no obstacle in the way of children coming here and living in the 1475 conditions that were described to me by Lord Samuel and his colleagues on the Co-ordinating Committee this morning.

As to the question of a still greater effort, of some international loan, as was suggested in the course of the Debate this evening, these are essentially questions that can only be dealt with internationally. I can imagine that they are questions that will have to be considered by the representatives of the Evian Conference. All I will say to-night is that we are prepared to take our full part with other nations of the world. I hope that the House will see from the figures that I have given and from the attitude that I have adopted towards the future that there will be no Government among all these Governments more sympathetic than the Government of the United Kingdom, no Government more anxious to solve this problem, if it can be solved, and, if it proves to be insoluble in its entirety, at any rate, to mitigate to the utmost the suffering that is now inflicted on hundreds of thousands of unfortunate people.

Let my last word be a tribute to the representatives of the Jewish community in this country and of other religious bodies which have co-operated with them. Already they have done an immense amount of valuable work in helping their co-religionists. They have provided large sums of money, sums running into many thousands of pounds. Let us wish them every success in their mission of mercy. Let me assure them as Home Secretary that I will do my utmost to facilitate their work, to extend its scope and to show that we will be in the forefront among the nations of the world in giving relief to these suffering people.

Mr. Harold Macmillan

May I ask a question on a point on which my right hon. Friend has not touched? There are a certain number of people for whom we have a very direct responsibility, namely, Germans in the area which has been handed over from Czechoslovakia to Germany. The Home Office has granted 250 visas, and these people who are coming to this country are being supported by

private charity. There is a belief that about 1,500 people are in direct and immediate danger of punishment, imprisonment or even execution if they return to Germany. May I ask my right hon. Friend to say a word as to the 1476 policy of the Home Office in granting to the Sudeten Germans the additional visas which are desperately needed?

Sir S. Hoare

Our policy would be exactly the same towards the Sudeten Germans as it would be towards Germans generally. We must treat the cases on their merits, we must deal with individual cases, but, as my hon. Friend probably knows, I have dealt with several of them as matters of great urgency and in those cases, at any rate no charge of delay can be made against the Home Office.

Mr. Macmillan

Does the right hon. Gentleman not feel that we have a rather different responsibility for the Sudeten Germans, because they are the people whose danger is the direct result of the Munich Agreement? Some of us feel that there is a greater and more direct responsibility for rescuing them from their peril, a consideration apart from humane considerations affecting the general question of the refugees, and would he not be prepared to expedite action in their case, because as he knows it may be a question of days as to their chances of survival?

Sir S. Hoare

I can only answer again by permission of the House. As far as I know, we are dealing with all the cases that have been brought to our attention. If my hon. Friend brings any cases to my attention I will see that they are dealt with at once.

10.31 p.m.

Mr. David Grenfell

The House this evening has shown a wonderful unanimity of sentiment and feeling, which must gladden the hearts of Members in all parts of the House. Within the framework of a feeling of common humanity and a common standard of civilisation Members in all parts of the House have filled in a picture which shows the House of Commons at its very best. The sentiments which come to the surface of our national life on great occasions have been displayed with a clearness and a vigour which must have an influence on all countries which are to co-operate with us in this great task. We owe the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker) a debt for his magnificent opening speech, in which he put on record much of the tragedy and injustice associated in all lands with the history of the Jewish 1477 people. Other hon. Members have shown a sympathy which is representative of the feeling of the mass of the people for whom we speak in this House. I must also pay a tribute to those hon. Members who are of the Jewish race and religion for the restraint they have displayed in refraining from taking up the role of special pleaders and, instead, reposing their confidence in a House of Commons where we are all free to speak without regard to race or religion.

In announcing the acceptance of the Motion the Home Secretary made reference to the various categories of refugees, and I was particularly glad that he included not only the Jews,

who form the most compact and the largest body of refugees, but the Czechs, and I am glad also that he referred to the case of the Spaniards. Spain has a tremendous refugee problem, which we here may be tempted to forget because of the more sensational reports from other parts of Europe. I am particularly grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for having just mentioned with the others the refugees in Spain. I want to pay a tribute, also, to the description given by the Home Secretary of the machinery and the procedure for granting permits. I realised that he would be unable, even though he devoted the whole of his speech to the subject, to portray faithfully and fully the tremendous work done by his staff in this country and abroad. I have had the privilege of seeing his staff at work in this country. I have seen two passport control stations abroad within the last few months. I have seen queues of destitute people. I have seen the plight of those people, their nervous condition, their apprehension and their despair when they have come to the passport control offices in Vienna, Berlin, Prague and elsewhere. They have come as though they were facing the tribunal which was to decide life and death for them. Many of them, on account of the unavoidable delay, have given way to despair and have taken their own lives because they could not stand the strain of waiting for the relief that might have come had they been able to wait.

I have seen the passport control officers—it is due to them that I should say this in this House—discharging their duty in those circumstances, and I have never witnessed a single sign of discourtesy or impatience on their part. They have talked with courtesy to every applicant 1478 who came along and who, because of sheer nervousness, might not be able to make the best of his case. The passport officers have helped such people to make their case. I have been thrilled by it, and filled with very deep gratitude indeed to the men who were thus serving the cause of humanity.

I may be pardoned if I choose to pay tribute to the Jewish people, the race which we know better than we know any other race. We have known of this race from the beginning of our days when we have heard Scriptural lessons and have read the texts and the stories of this race in olden times. We have learned very much about the names and characters of the great leaders of the Jewish people, and subconsciously we have learned to cherish in our hearts great respect and veneration for many of the people who have been the object of persecution. In most nations and lands, century after century, has the Jew been singled out for persecution. Nobody has suffered as much. Anti-Jewish propaganda and persecution, pogrom, confinement, limitation, the Ghetto and the cell of punishment are more familiar to this people than to any other. Political, social and religious disabilities have been heaped upon them, with all the contumely and contempt which other nations could muster in their discrimination against this unfortunate people.

They have survived, and what a tremendous thing it is that they have survived. After centuries of suffering the Jews have never failed, when the opportunity has been given to them, to make a handsome and generous contribution to the life of the community in which they have been allowed to participate. We are glad to know that in recent decades in the last century, and during the last 60 years in particular, a new attitude towards the Jew has grown up in all the countries of the world. The process of enlightenment has been gradual and slow, and

subject to reservations and disturbances from time to time, but the Jew was improving his status by merit and by the common recognition of those with whom he lived. The emancipation of the Jew brought to the Jew himself a problem. I never quite understood this problem until I met a very learned Jew, who was an emigrant. I accompanied him on a journey from Zurich to Vienna. We 1479travelled all night, and talked the whole night. This man, who was unable to return to his native country, Germany, told me what contribution he thought the Jew could make. The Jews, only recently escaped from the limitations of the ghetto into the political conditions that surround them to-day, had a contribution to make to the citizenship of the world. I came to understand the Jew better, and to understand the problems of Jewry better, after that interview, and my sympathy was not diminished by what this very wise Jew had to say about himself and his people.

I felt distressed by the growing reaction in Germany. I saw its beginnings in 1928 and 1929. Then I saw simple little leaflets urging people not to buy of the Jews. They seemed very small and ridiculous, but they grew into big posters and cartoons, with distorted pictures. I have seen the weekly publication of Dr. Streicher week after week, and have been horrified at the possible results of the continuation of propaganda on these lines. We have seen bitter attacks upon the Jewish race. They have become a part of the propaganda stock-in-trade of some of the largest and most powerful countries in the world. This constant malicious propaganda has had its result. In Germany, in 1933, there were 600,000 Jews, and in Austria at the same time 200,000 more. They amounted to about one per cent. of the German population of the two countries; one in every 100 persons was a Jew. I have asked myself time and time again why should the 99 show such malevolence against the one? Why should not the 99 so order their lives that it was possible for the one to live in peace among them? I have never been able to understand why that could not be done. When I saw the measures which were described at the Refugee Conference as involuntary emigration, I saw what I feared might be the beginning of a vast compulsory exodus of these people from the German-speaking countries, an exodus due to the propagation of an admiration for the one race and a detestation for the other which was thoroughly unjustified and unwarranted by the history of Germany herself. The Jews have done much to enrich that country, and not merely by money. Money is not all to the Jews. The Jew is sometimes charged with being a very acquisitive person, but nobody gives 1480more readily of the fruits of his genius than the Jew does when he gets the opportunity. He has given much to Germany and has given much to the world in the arts, in literature and in science.

Now, at this time of involuntary emigration, 40,000 German Jews have found a home in Palestine alone. It was a blessing that the Mandate was taken in Palestine before this crisis came upon Europe. Altogether, nearly 300,000 Jews have gone to Palestine since 1920, and 40,000 in the last three years. The absorptive capacity of Palestine has been very much in the picture to-night, as it always is in connection with this question of dealing with the Jews. I would urge the Home Secretary and the Government, if they need urging, to lend the weight of their influence in the conference which is to be held in about a week's time in London, and so to arrange affairs in Palestine as to allow of a free flow of emigration to that country at the maximum rate of absorption of which it is capable. I feel quite sure, from what I know of Palestine, that there will be no difficulty, given peace in that country, in settling 50,000

emigrants per year in that country. If that were done over a period of five years, tremendous relief would be given. This problem is increasing in magnitude, approaching very grave proportions indeed; and I agree with the Home Secretary that there is immediate need for prompt international measures. The Home Secretary pledged this country, and I was very glad to hear him do so. I believe him to be sincere in that. It will give this House much confidence; it will give Jewry much confidence; it will give the people of the world much confidence; and I hope the leadership, once assumed in this matter, will not be dropped by this country but that we shall maintain the leadership until the day of freedom for these people has arrived.

I want to speak of the contribution due from Germany towards the solution of this problem. This large and powerful nation of nearly 80,000,000 people cannot be allowed to pass these Jews out, stripped of everything, dump them over the frontier, and say, "I do not want the Jews in my country; you must take them." Why should the Germans be allowed to do that? Why should they assume that, because they do not like 1481these people, they will be allowed to dump them on somebody else? I agree that there is no need to offend anybody, but an offence has been committed against the whole world by the action Germany has taken. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, speaking either at Evian, or after Evian, said: Evian may offer a palliative. It cannot lake from the shoulders of Germany the consequences that will follow the relentless persecution and segregation of a large element of its population. The right hon. Gentleman should not be ashamed of such a statement.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Earl Winterton)

I am not in the least ashamed of it, but I do not recollect it.

Mr. Grenfell

I may have picked up the wrong cutting, but it is at least a statement worthy of the right hon. Gentleman himself. There is something far greater—and I do not think Hitler would object to this statement—than Hitler's Germany. There is a large humanity which surmounts and overrides these petty vanities of small peoples wherever they may be. Sixty or seventy years ago, the great Sage of Chelsea, Thomas Carlyle, this man who was so wise and dissatisfied with the rest of the world, who grumbled and scolded us severely, said, in "Sartor Resartus": Man's unhappiness is, I construe, because of his Greatness. It is because there is an infinite in him, which with all his cunning he cannot quite bury under the Finite. Will the whole Finance Ministers and upholsterers and confectioners of modern Europe undertake in joint stock company to make one shoeblack happy. They cannot accomplish it above an hour or two, for the shoeblack also has a soul quite other than his stomach, and would require, if you consider it, for his permanent satisfaction and saturation, simply this allotment, no more and no less: God's infinite universe altogether to himself, therein to enjoy infinitely and fill every wish as fast as it lose." There is something far more than the mere ambitions of small-minded men. There is in this humanity of ours an irresistible force working for freedom and largeness and generosity of mind, and no dictator can set the limit to that force. If Germany cannot let Jews live in peace, she should let them take means of starting afresh in other parts of the world, where Jews may be more welcome, and where the Jew has a right to be welcome.

1482Someone has said to-night—and I do not think there is any offence in saying this—that if Herr Hitler will cast out the Jews, does it not occur to him that there might be an exchange in this transaction? There are 20,000,000 or 30,000,000 Germans in other parts of the world, and if the soil of any one part of the world is peculiarly destined for the use of one people and the Jews have no right of domicile in Germany, Herr Hitler might find a transaction, where people are driven out on his terms, in which 50 Germans may have to go back to Germany for every Jew driven out. That is a fundamental of civilisation—a principle of give-and-take which is the very basis of civilisation itself. I am convinced this physical problem is quite easy of adjustment. This is only a very small problem for the world. But there is a great moral question. How is it to be solved? We must try to learn to understand and, with understanding, to tolerate and to make accommodation for it. That is the problem for the nations of the world in the years ahead of us in which toleration reigns. There is not much difference between Jew and Gentile. There is not an unbridgeable gulf between German and Briton, or between German and Frenchman. We have simply ignored the lessons of history and refused to understand the forces which operate in our own times. History cannot be undone in a day, even by dictators. It has taken a very long time for man to write his history up to date—a painful effort, much of it mere scrawling and scribbling, but it has been written. It is folly for any one person to attempt to unwrite that which has been written, and if we are not satisfied with the conditions of to-day then we must all of us learn to write better.

And in this let the example be once again given by a Jew. I would remind the House that on 4th June, 1922, Dr. Walther Rathenau, German Minister for Foreign Affairs, was assassinated while driving through Berlin on his way to work. He was a very important statesman in Germany. Rathenau was a world figure in his day, but he was a Jew. His assailants were young Nationalists. One of them was 17 years of age. What was the reaction of the German people on the day of the murder, a Sunday? Great processions of workmen, hundreds of thousands strong, and four abreast, 1483marched solemnly and silently in mourning through the streets of Berlin, mourning for a Jew. At the funeral on 27th June President Ebert said: This atrocious crime has struck not only at Rathenau the man, but at the whole German people. The reports in the paper I have before me said that the last word on the human side of this tragedy came from Rathenau's mother. She wrote this letter to the mother of Ernest Techow, one of the accused: In my unspeakable grief I stretch out my hand to you most suffering of women. Tell your son that I forgive him in the name and spirit of the murdered man as may God forgive him if before an earthly justice he makes a full and open confession and repents before the justice of heaven. Had he known my son, the most noble that the earth has borne, he would sooner have turned the murderous weapon on himself than on him. May these words give your soul peace.— Mathilde Rathenau. That is the spirit of the Jew mother who has lost her dear son at the hands of a Nationalist in Germany, an Aryan, a member of the German race. Would that these words and the spirit of these words be brought into play in Europe, suffering Europe, perplexed Europe, distressed Europe. Should not these words of forgiveness, toleration and understanding be spoken once again, loud and clear enough for the whole of the world to notice? If these were given response to in some countries in Europe to-morrow this problem of dealing with the refugees would be taken from our hands. While we have waited for the response to that message spoken by one country to-day, by another country

to-morrow, increasingly I hope, by a larger number of people of all sections and all races, by this message of understanding, toleration and forgiveness, we have a splendid opportunity of raising our own level and rising to be worthy of our own standards in carrying out this task of relief and salvation and providing refuge and security which men need because of the follies of mankind.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That this House notes with profound concern the, deplorable treatment suffered by certain racial, religious, and political minorities in Europe, and, in view of the growing gravity of the refugee problem, would welcome an immediate concerted effort amongst the nations, including the United States of America, to secure a common policy.



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The siting of the UK National Holocaust Memorial & Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens Case ref
- APP/X5990/V/19/3240661

**The UK National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre -
Rebuttal Appendices**

APPENDIX 2a

**Kindertransport Debate – extracts read at
80th anniversary event**

THE KINDERTRANSPORT DEBATE – EXTRACTS READ OUT AT 80TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

These selected extracts from the Hansard record were read out at a ceremony commemorating the 80th anniversary of the debate held in Parliament on 21st November 1938 that enabled The Kindertransport scheme to take place. At the event these words were spoken by the following present-day British Parliamentarians – James Brokenshire MP, Luciana Berger MP, Ian Austin MP, Ruth Smeeth MP, Tulip Siddiq MP, Baroness Ruth Deech, Dame Louise Ellman MP, Oliver Dowden MP, Dr Matthew Offord MP, Yvette Cooper MP, John Mann MP, Counsellor Jo Roundell Greene, Lord Ian Livingstone and Lord Eric Pickles

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John Noel-Baker MP for Derby

I beg to move, That this House notes with profound concern the deplorable treatment suffered by certain racial, religious and political minorities in Europe, and, in view of the growing gravity of the refugee problem would welcome an immediate concerted effort amongst the nations, including the United States of America, to secure a common policy. I hope that this is a Motion with which the House will agree. I shall try to support it in no party spirit, and I hope I shall say nothing that will add, or will be said to add, to the difficulties with which the Government are to-day confronted. But I know the House will recognise that this Debate can serve no useful purpose unless we speak the truth, unless we face the facts and review the situation as it really is. What are the facts? On 7th November, a Polish Jew, Grynspan, a boy 17 years of age, entered the German Embassy in Paris and attacked a member of the staff, Herr Vom Rath. Two days later Herr Vom Rath succumbed to the wounds he had received.

What followed Grynspan's act in Germany? Every hon. Member knows the main outline of the facts... As part of the general destruction of Jewish institutions, a boarding school at Caputh, near Potsdam, was invaded and utterly demolished at 2 a.m. The young children were driven, without adult guidance or protection, into the night. At Bad Soden, the only Jewish home for consumptives in Germany was destroyed and sacked. The patients were driven away, wearing nothing but the shirts in which they slept. At Nuremberg the inmates of the Jewish hospital were forced to line up on parade. Some had just had serious operations, and one of them, my informant says, dropped down dead. At Ems, an asylum for aged Jews was raided, and the old people were driven out. A paralysed old man was driven from his bed, and his wife refused to leave his side. She was assaulted with an axe and her crippled husband was dragged away;

Dr. Goebbels tells us that these acts were the spontaneous outbursts of national anger. In our view there would be no justification if that were true, but there is too much evidence not to think that the attacks were organised, and that they were organised in advance...

On 3rd November, an article appeared in the "Schwarze Kaps," the official organ of the S.S.,... Out of the hoarded wealth of the Jews we must compensate ourselves for the economic damage done to us by world Jewry.

I stress that quotation because I believe it gives the clue to the real character of events in Germany in the last few weeks, which were not the spontaneous vengeance of the people for a Jewish crime but the consummation or, more correctly, the penultimate stage of a long-term plan, the spirit and purpose of which are all too plain.

I think it is now quite plain what Dr. Goebbels means to do. He is not condemning the Jews to death; he is making it impossible for them to live. He means to rob them of all their worldly possessions. For years he has been stirring up anti-Semitism in other countries in order to increase the forces of disorder in the world, and now he is planning to drive out the Jews, in his own picturesque phrase, with one suit and a handbag, and leave them on the charity of the democratic world.

If Dr. Goebbels completes his programme, and if Poland and Rumania join in, what are we going to do? The outside world must have a programme also and it must have it now. I venture to suggest that that programme must comprise two parts. In the first place—

—it must comprise action of some kind designed to check the persecution and the expulsion or penniless new hordes of refugees.

But whether we succeed or fail in that, it is urgently necessary that we should have a positive plan to settle the hundreds of thousands of people with whom we know we have to deal. That plan is needed now.

I think they might in some measure stay the tyrant's hand in Germany by the means I have suggested. Certainly they can gather the resources, human and material, that are needed to make a new life for this pitiful human wreckage. That wreckage is the result of the mistakes made by all the Governments during the last 20 years. Let the Governments now atone for those mistakes. The refugees have surely endured enough. Dr. Goebbels said the other day that he hoped the outside world would soon forget the German Jews. He hopes in vain. His campaign against them will go down in history with St. Batholomew's Eve as a lasting memory of human shame. Let there go with it another memory, the memory of what the other nations did to wipe the shame away.

* * * * *

Samuel Hammersley MP for Willesden East

It seems to me that there are three moods in which this refugee problem may be considered. We may, like the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker), who has given us a speech full of incidents of the brutal and inhuman treatment which the Germans are meting out to the Jews, consider that every feeling of decency has been violated and in that mood we are apt to look upon these events in an atmosphere of indignation and resentment. Then there is the mood of intense 1441sympathy in which one is inclined to dramatise the record of human torture to be found in the tragic history of the persecution of the Jews throughout the centuries, and in the emotions aroused by that mood, we may forget the need for practical and effective action. There is a third mood which it is difficult for us to adopt, but which, I think, we ought to adopt. That is the mood in which we refuse to have our senses stimulated by sentiment, or

our judgment darkened by indignation, and in which we look upon this problem of 500,000 refugees in Germany as just another practical problem which British statesmanship is called upon to consider and to solve.

It is because I think this last mood is the mood which will be most helpful to the settling of the problem that I propose to keep to it, in my brief examination of the position. We find that 500,000 men and women of Jewish race, but not all of Jewish religion, are looking round the world for a home and appeal to the British Government for help. Is there something in that problem which defies solution? Is its magnitude so vast, are its difficulties so complex, that we must recoil abashed from it and come to the conclusion that it is beyond human attainment to solve it? I do not take that view.

in my opinion, on severely practical grounds, the German refugee problem is a solvable problem, which the British Empire can materially assist to solve. It is more. It is a challenge to the inherent humanity of our race, it is a challenge which Britain, the champion of the oppressed, cannot ignore.

* * * * *

Herbert Butcher MP for Holland with Boston

Those of us who listened to the account of the appalling happenings in Germany recently which was given by the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker) must have felt that behind the happenings themselves was a principle even still more sinister, and that is the deliberate prosecution, of a set policy of intolerance,

Civilisation as a whole must oppose against this spirit of intolerance some nobler and higher principle. It must recognise the inherent worth of ordinary men and women, and recognise that in God's world there is a place for each and every one of us.

1451We welcome the pronouncement that the Government are willing to assist, and I am sure that such an announcement will give much encouragement to those who are now enduring suffering, tribulation and persecution. But I think we must do a little more. We must make up our minds as to why we are offering this help. Either the refugees are a burden which, for very shame of our common humanity, we are compelled to shoulder, or, alternatively, they are a definite and positive asset, the value of which is temporarily forgotten in certain countries, the rulers of which are blinded by fear, by untenable and untested theories of race and political culture

the refugees may permanently enrich the life of the country which shelters and succours them, and that is the view which is held by those who have most carefully examined the problem.

before we are able to contemplate such mass settlement we must have a short-term plan of rescuing those who are most in danger and who are, at the same time, most likely to be readily absorbed in the countries of eventual settlement.

It would not be unwise if we were to allow 10,000 of these people to make their temporary home among us. They could be selected They could be selected from age groups capable of being self-supporting over a considerable period of years, and most likely to become loyal citizens in the ultimate country of their adoption.

I hope and trust that His Majesty's Government will set an example and will secure for this country the lead in relieving the suffering that is going on, and that they will demonstrate by their action that while in some quarters, falsely I believe, we may be thought not to hold our old lead in diplomacy in the question of relieving and succouring the suffering this country will never yield her place to any nation.

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David Logan MP for Liverpool Scotland

I speak to-night in the British House of Commons to voice my opinion upon the terrible happenings in another country. Not one Member of this House but recognises from the statement made by my hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker) how difficult is the proposition before us and how urgent. It must be dealt with immediately. I speak as an orthodox Catholic, feeling to the depth of my heart the sincerity of the cause of the Jew.

We are asked in this Motion, and I am sure that no hon. or right hon. Member of the House will disagree with it, 1455to do our proper part as a British nation in the restitution, if that be possible, of a happier life for these refugees.

To-day an opportunity is offered to the British nation to take its proper stand among the nations of the world to protect a minority that deserves well of all the nations of the world.

No man in any part of the world can look upon the desolation that Jewry is undergoing in Germany to-day without wondering when the day of retribution will come for those who pretend to govern a totalitarian State in the interests of the German people. Because I believe that humanity has a right to a conscience irrespective of Governments, and a right to express what is inherent in it, I ask the Government to take courage and go on and do their right and proper part.

Let the English-speaking peoples, with the power that they have, concert and come together in a work of this kind.

For these reasons I make my humble appeal in this tribunal of the British race. We could never set our hands to a better thing. To-morrow may be a hard day for us, but I feel that, by doing the things that are morally right, we shall achieve something which is worthy of the name of the British nation. I beg to support the Motion.

* * * * *

Commander Sir Archibald Southby MP for Epsom

I do not think there is a Member of this House or a person in this country who was not horrified at the senseless crime which was committed in Paris recently, or who does not feel

sympathy with the relatives of the victim of that crime. Equally, there is no Member of this House 1457 or person in this nation that is not filled with shocked horror at the treatment of the Jews in Germany.. This country and this House, have always been sympathetic to the sufferings of persecuted people, whatever their race or faith may be.

but, in our desire to help this stream of refugees, we must not lose sight of the fact that there exists in the minds of many of our own people a very real fear lest there should be a tremendous influx into this country of refugees who are unable to maintain themselves and who would have to compete with our own citizens for a livelihood. After all, many of our own people are hard put to it to find work and a means of livelihood, and our primary duty in this House of Commons is to those we represent. Our first duty is to our own people. We cannot shoulder entirely by ourselves the financial burden of looking after the refugees. We have to be fair to our own people.

We must safeguard the occupations of our own folk.

It is in parts of the world where there exist ample space and opportunity that the future of these people and the future of other refugees can best be secured.

1460 I would suggest that, not only the Government but this House also, should bear in mind that it is outside this country—other, of course, than in the case of asylum given to those who will not be a charge on this country—in parts of the world where there is space and where these people can find a means of livelihood, that a solution will be found which will not only be something of which we can be proud but which will be of lasting benefit to the world itself.

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The Secretary of State for the Home Department Sir Samuel Hoare

I rise at this stage of the Debate to explain the policy of the British Government upon this last phase of this tragic problem. Before dealing with the details that have been raised in the course of the Debate, I wish to make it clear to the whole House that the Government accept this Motion.

I think it would be useful at this stage if hon. Members on all sides of the House were given further information about the problem in the United Kingdom and about the way in which the Home Office is attempting to deal with it.

Let me begin by reminding the House of some of the difficulties. It is quite obvious that there is an underlying current of suspicion and anxiety, rightly or wrongly, about alien immigration on any big scale.

Faced with a fact of that kind, while I think very few hon. Members look upon this problem with greater sympathy than I do, I have to be careful to avoid anything in the nature of mass immigration which, in my view, would inevitably lead to the growth of a movement which we all wish to see suppressed.

I come next to the very important question of the non-Aryan children. I think here again we can deal with a problem of that kind very differently from the way in which we have to check

in detail the individual positions of the older refugees. I think there will be children with whom we could deal in large numbers, provided they were sponsored by responsible bodies and responsible individuals.

Yes. I had, only this morning, a very valuable discussion with Lord Samuel and a number of other Jewish and other religious workers who were co-operating together in attempting to mitigate the sufferings of their co-religionists. They came to me with a very interesting proposal about the non-Aryan children. They pointed back to 1474the experience during the war, in which we gave homes here to many thousands of Belgian children, in which they were educated, and in which we played an invaluable part in maintaining the life of the Belgian nation. So also with these Jewish and non-Aryan children, I believe that we could find homes in this country for a very large number without any harm to our own population. The Co-ordinating Committee and the other organisations told me that they would be prepared to bring over here all the children whose maintenance could be guaranteed, either by their funds or by generous individuals, and that all that will probably be necessary will be for the Home Office to give the necessary visas and to facilitate their entry into this country. I told Lord Samuel, without a moment's hesitation, that the Home Office would certainly be prepared to provide facilities of that kind, and I venture to-night to take the opportunity of commending this effort to my fellow countrymen in general. Here is a chance of taking the young generation of a great people, here is a chance of mitigating to some extent the terrible sufferings of their parents and their friends.

I could not help thinking what a terrible dilemma it was to the Jewish parents in Germany to have to choose between sending their children to a foreign country, into the unknown, and continuing to live in the terrible conditions to which they are now reduced in Germany. I saw this morning one of the representatives of the Quaker organisations, who told me that he had only arrived in England this morning from a visit to Germany and a visit to Holland. He inquired of the Jewish organisations in Germany what would be the attitude of the Jewish parents to a proposal of this kind, and he told me that the Jewish parents were almost unanimously in favour of facing this parting with their children and taking the risks of their children going to a foreign country, rather than keeping them with them to face the unknown dangers with which they are faced in Germany. He went on to Holland and found that Dr. Colijn, the Prime Minister of Holland, was prepared to give a temporary refuge to children and trans-migrants of this kind, provided there was a hope of our receiving them into this country. I can give Dr. Colijn the assurance to-night that we shall put no obstacle in the way of children coming here and living in the 1475conditions that were described to me by Lord Samuel and his colleagues on the Co-ordinating Committee this morning.

I hope that the House will see from the attitude that I have adopted towards the future that there will be no Government among all these Governments more sympathetic than the Government of the United Kingdom, no Government more anxious to solve this problem, if it can be solved, and, if it proves to be insoluble in its entirety, at any rate, to mitigate to the utmost the suffering that is now inflicted on hundreds of thousands of unfortunate people.

Let my last word be a tribute to the representatives of the Jewish community in this country and of other religious bodies which have co-operated with them. Already they have done an

immense amount of valuable work in helping their co-religionists. They have provided large sums of money, sums running into many thousands of pounds. Let us wish them every success in their mission of mercy. Let me assure them as Home Secretary that I will do my utmost to facilitate their work, to extend its scope and to show that we will be in the forefront among the nations of the world in giving relief to these suffering people.

* * * * *

David Grenfell MP for Gower

The House this evening has shown a wonderful unanimity of sentiment and feeling, which must gladden the hearts of Members in all parts of the House. Within the framework of a feeling of common humanity and a common standard of civilisation Members in all parts of the House have filled in a picture which shows the House of Commons at its very best. Our national life on great occasions have been displayed with a clearness and a vigour which must have an influence on all countries which are to co-operate with us in this great task. We owe the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Noel-Baker) a debt for his magnificent opening speech, in which he put on record much of the tragedy and injustice associated in all lands with the history of the Jewish 1477 people. Other hon. Members have shown a sympathy which is representative of the feeling of the mass of the people for whom we speak in this House.

I may be pardoned if I choose to pay tribute to the Jewish people, the race which we know better than we know any other race. We have known of this race from the beginning of our days when we have heard Scriptural lessons and have read the texts and the stories of this race in olden times. We have learned very much about the names and characters of the great leaders of the Jewish people, and subconsciously we have learned to cherish in our hearts great respect and veneration for many of the people who have been the object of persecution.

We have seen bitter attacks upon the Jewish race. They have become a part of the propaganda stock-in-trade of some of the largest and most powerful countries in the world. In Germany, in 1933, there were 600,000 Jews, and in Austria at the same time 200,000 more. They amounted to about one per cent. of the German population of the two countries; one in every 100 persons was a Jew. I have asked myself time and time again why should the 99 show such malevolence against the one? Why should not the 99 so order their lives that it was possible for the one to live in peace among them?

I would remind the House that on 4th June, 1922, Dr. Walther Rathenau, German Minister for Foreign Affairs, was assassinated while driving through Berlin on his way to work.. Rathenau was a world figure in his day, but he was a Jew. His assailants were young Nationalists.

The reports in the paper I have before me said that the last word on the human side of this tragedy came from Rathenau's mother. She wrote this letter to the mother of Ernest Techow, one of the accused: In my unspeakable grief I stretch out my hand to you most suffering of women. Tell your son that I forgive him in the name and spirit of the murdered man as may God forgive him if before an earthly justice he makes a full and open confession and repents before the justice of heaven. Had he known my son, the most noble that the earth has borne,

he would sooner have turned the murderous weapon on himself than on him. May these words give your soul peace.—. That is the spirit of the Jew mother who has lost her dear son at the hands of a Nationalist in Germany, an Aryan, a member of the German race. Would that these words and the spirit of these words be brought into play in Europe, suffering Europe, perplexed Europe, distressed Europe. Should not these words of forgiveness, toleration and understanding be spoken once again, loud and clear enough for the whole of the world to notice? If these were given response to in some countries in Europe to-morrow this problem of dealing with the refugees would be taken from our hands. While we have waited for the response to that message spoken by one country to-day, by another country to-morrow, increasingly I hope, by a larger number of people of all sections and all races, by this message of understanding, toleration and forgiveness, we have a splendid opportunity of raising our own level and rising to be worthy of our own standards in carrying out this task of relief and salvation and providing refuge and security which men need because of the follies of mankind.

We resolve that this House notes with profound concern the, deplorable treatment suffered by certain racial, religious, and political minorities in Europe, and, in view of the growing gravity of the refugee problem, would welcome an immediate concerted effort amongst the nations, including the United States of America, to secure a common policy.



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**The UK National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre -
Rebuttal Appendices**

APPENDIX 3

**UN Declaration Debate – 17th December
1942**

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United Nations Declaration

HC Deb 17 December 1942 vol 385 cc2082-7

Mr. Silverman (by Private Notice) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any statement to make regarding the plan of the German Government to deport all Jews from the occupied countries to Eastern Europe and there put them to death before the end of the year?

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Eden). Yes, Sir, I regret to have to inform the House that reliable reports have recently reached His Majesty's Government regarding the barbarous and inhuman treatment to which Jews are being subjected in German-occupied Europe. They have in particular received a note from the Polish Government, which was also communicated to other United Nations and which has received wide publicity in the Press. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have as a result been in consultation with the United States and Soviet Governments and with the other Allied Governments directly concerned, and I should like to take this opportunity to communicate to the House the text of the following declaration which is being made public to-day at this hour in London, Moscow and Washington:

"The attention of the Governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Yugoslavia, and of the French National Committee has been drawn to numerous reports from Europe that the German authorities, not content with denying to persons of Jewish race in all the territories over which their barbarous rule has been extended the most elementary human rights, are now carrying into effect Hitler's oft repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe. From all the occupied countries Jews are being transported, in conditions of appalling horror and brutality, to Eastern Europe. In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German invaders are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labour camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions. The number of victims of these bloody cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women and children.

The above mentioned Governments and the French National Committee condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination. They declare that such events can only strengthen the resolve of all freedom loving peoples to overthrow the barbarous Hitlerite tyranny. They re-affirm their solemn resolution to ensure that those responsible for these crimes shall not escape retribution, and to press on with the necessary practical measures to this end."

Mr. Silverman While thanking the right hon. Gentleman for that statement, in which he has given eloquent expression to the conscience of humanity in this matter, might I ask him to clear up two points: First, whether the phrase, "those responsible" is to be understood to mean only those who gave the orders, or is it to include also anybody actively associated with the carrying-out of those orders? [An HON. MEMBER: "The whole German nation."] Secondly, whether he is consulting with the United Nations Governments and with his own colleagues as to what constructive measures of relief are immediately practicable?

Mr. Eden The hon. Gentleman and the House will understand that the declaration I have just read is an international declaration agreed to by all the Governments I mentioned at the outset. So far as the responsibility is concerned, I would certainly say it is the intention that all persons who can properly be held responsible for these crimes, whether they are the ringleaders or the actual perpetrators of the outrages, should be treated alike, and brought to book. As regards the second question, my hon. Friend knows the immense difficulties in the way of what he suggests, but he may be sure that we shall do all we can to alleviate these horrors, though I fear that what we can do at this stage must inevitably be slight.

Mr. Sorensen Having regard to the widespread abhorrence of all people regarding these crimes, could attempts not be made to explore the possibility of co-operation with non-belligerent and neutral Governments to secure the emigration of Jews, say, to Sweden or to some other neutral country?

Mr. Eden My hon. Friend will see that it is only too clear, from what I have said, what is going on in these territories occupied by Germany. Naturally I should be only too glad to see anything of the kind, but the hon. Member will understand the circumstances.

Mr. Sorensen Am I to understand that the right hon. Gentleman is exploring that possibility?

Mr. de Rothschild May I express to the right hon. Gentleman and this House the feelings of great emotion—the really grateful feeling that I am certain will permeate the Jewish subjects of His Majesty's Government in this country and throughout the Empire at the eloquent and just denunciation which has just been made by the right hon. Gentleman? Among the Jewish subjects of His Majesty there are many to-day who have been in this country only for a generation or so. They will feel that, but for the grace of God, they themselves might be among the victims of the Nazi tyranny at the present time. They might be in those ghettos, in those concentration camps, in those slaughter-houses. They will have many relations whom they mourn, and I feel sure they will be grateful to the right hon. Gentleman and to the United Nations for this declaration. I trust that this proclamation will, through the medium of the B.B.C., percolate throughout the German-infested countries and that it may give some faint hope and courage to the unfortunate victims of torment and insult and degradation. They have shown in their misery and their unhappiness great fortitude and great courage. I hope that when this news goes to them they will feel that they are supported and strengthened by the British Government and by the other United Nations and that they will be enabled to continue to signify that they still uphold the dignity of man.

Sir Percy Hurd Can my right hon. Friend say whether Canada and the other Dominions were asked to share in this declaration?

Mr. Eden In the first instance, this, as my hon. Friend will realise, is a declaration organised by the European countries who are suffering, and it was necessary that the three great Powers should get together quickly about the matter. We thought it right, and I am sure the House will think it right, that the principal victims should sign this paper as rapidly as possible. I think the whole House fully understands that, and I know that the Dominions Governments very fully understand it. Perhaps I should state that arrangements are being made for this statement to be broadcast throughout Europe from here, and, of course, it is being done from Moscow and Washington also. I may also say that all the information we have from the occupied countries is that the peoples there, despite their many sufferings, trials and tribulations, are doing everything in their power to give assistance and charity to their Jewish fellow subjects.

Mr. Lipson May I associate myself with everything that has been said by my hon. Friends the Members for the Isle of Ely (Mr. de Rothschild) and Nelson and Colne (Mr. Silverman), and ask my right hon. Friend whether if this protest is broadcast to the German people, it will be made clear to them that this is not war but murder and that they must be held in some measure responsible, if they allow the German Government to carry out their horrible intentions?

Mr. Eden Yes, Sir, that is precisely what was in the minds of His Majesty's Government when we took steps to set this declaration in motion.

Mr. Silverman Would the right hon. Gentleman consider in the broadcasts which are made not limiting the question of responsibility to the negative side of punishment but expressing the appreciation which we all feel for the numerous acts of courage done all over Europe by individuals who take enormous risks in order to render what help they can to those who are suffering; and would it not be right, in the broadcasts, to promise those individuals that what they are doing now will not be forgotten but will redound to their credit and benefit when the time comes?

Mr. Eden Yes, Sir.

Mr. McGovern May we take it from the right hon. Gentleman's statement that any persons who can escape from any of these occupied territories will be welcomed and given every assistance in the territories of the United Nations?

Mr. Eden Certainly we should like to do all we possibly can. There are, obviously, certain security formalities which have to be considered. It would clearly be the desire of the United Nations to do everything they could to provide wherever possible an asylum for these people, but the House will understand that there are immense geographical and other difficulties in the matter.

Miss Rathbone Will this declaration be addressed also to the Governments and the peoples of Hitler's unwilling allies, the other Axis countries, who might be able to do much to secure the rescue of these victims?

Mr. Eden That has already been arranged.

Mr. Cluse Is it possible, in your judgment, Mr. Speaker, for Members of the House to rise in their places and stand in silence in support of this protest against disgusting barbarism?

Mr. Speaker That should be a spontaneous act by the House as a whole.

Members of the House then stood in silence.



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APPENDIX 4

Refugee Problem Debate – 19th May 1943

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REFUGEE PROBLEM

HC Deb 19 May 1943 vol 389 cc1117-204

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a further sum, not exceeding £70, be granted to His Majesty, towards defraying the charges for the following services connected with the Refugee problem for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1944, namely:"

	£
Class II., Vote 1, Foreign Office	10
Class II., Vote 2, Diplomatic and Consular Services	10
Class II., Vote 4, Dominions Office	10
Class II., Vote 7, Colonial Office	10
Class II., Vote II, India and Burma Services	10
Class III., Vote I, Home Office	10
Class X., Vote 6, Ministry of Health (War Services)	10
	£70."

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peake). For some time past there has been a desire in many quarters of the House to have a Debate on the refugee problem. The date of the Debate has been postponed from time to time while the Bermuda Conference was sitting, and I understand that it is now the desire that the Debate should be on the widest possible footing, and for that reason all the relevant Votes have been put on the Paper. I regret very much that my right hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who led the British Delegation at Bermuda with great ability, is detained on the other side of the Atlantic by important Government business. I am, however, glad to have not very far from me my right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, whose personal qualities endeared him not only to his British colleagues but to our American counterparts, and whose wide knowledge both of shipping and of Colonial problems was of outstanding value to our discussions.

For many years the refugee problem has been a matter of deep concern, and has received the most earnest attention from His Majesty's Government. Before the war, apart from the situation in China, it was, from the advent of the Nazi regime until October, 1938, mainly if not exclusively a Jewish problem and a problem confined to Europe. After 1938 there was added the exodus from Czechoslovakia and from Poland. The Committee are, of course, aware of the admirable work done in the refugee field by the League of Nations High Commission. In 1938, on the initiative of President Roosevelt, a meeting was summoned at Evian, and the Inter-Governmental Committee was formed, first under the chairmanship of Mr. Myron Taylor, who was shortly afterwards succeeded by my right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Earl Winterton). The Inter-Governmental Committee was designed to take effective action under the circumstances existing when it was formed. It was an executive body. It had an executive director. Its mandate, however, which was adopted at Evian, restricted its scope to refugees from Germany, Austria and the Sudetenland, and it acted under the stipulation that the maintenance and transport of refugees was not to be at the cost of Member Governments. In these circumstances it was natural and inevitable that its efforts should have come to a conclusion on the outbreak of war.

I shall have something more to say later with regard to this Committee, which represented some 32 nations interested in the refugee problem. I would only at this stage express the debt of gratitude which we owe to its executive director, Sir Herbert Emerson, who combined with this office the position of High Commissioner for Refugees under the League of Nations organisation. He has been untiring in his efforts on behalf of refugees, and many fruitful suggestions have come from him from time to time. He has a unique knowledge of the refugee problem, and the memoranda which he furnished for our use at Bermuda were of the greatest possible value. It will, I think, be for

the convenience of the Committee if at the outset I make a few introductory observations on the refugee problem, particularly as it affects the British Empire, in order to supply the necessary background. I will then pass on to give some account of the Conference of Bermuda, and to state the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards the Report and recommendations which the Conference made.

The refugee problem to-day is worldwide. No one can estimate the number of actual refugees, and the infinitely greater number of would-be refugees, resulting from the aggression of Germany, Italy and Japan in all quarters of the globe. If anyone desires to get a picture of the part played by Great Britain, India and by our Colonial and Mandated territories in contributing to the solution of this problem, I would refer them to the lengthy statement made by the Prime Minister in a written answer on 7th April to a Question by my hon. Friend the Member for East Willesden (Mr. Hammersley). It will there be seen that India—I begin my survey in the Far East—has received and supported over 400,000 refugees. Moving westwards, they will see there set out the contribution made by Palestine, where 300,000 persons, Jewish immigrants, have been received since 1919. The East African Colonies have also given accommodation and relief to a large number of war refugees. They will find in that statement also a reference to the Polish refugees who arrived in Persia last year, numbering some 40,000 persons who have come directly under our wing, and who are seldom, if ever, mentioned by those who continually strive to belittle the part which we are playing in this refugee problem. Finally, turning to Europe, there are in the enemy-occupied territories alone some 120,000,000 people in countries which have become the victims of Axis aggression and who would, for the most part, if they could, escape from the territories in which they are held prisoner.

I need not stress the barbarous character of the Nazi régime in Europe. According to a recent speech by our Ambassador in Washington, no less than 8,000,000 people in Poland since the outbreak of war have suffered barbarous punishment or death. Similar conditions apply in other occupied countries. There can be no doubt that the policies of labour conscription, of deportation and of extermination, are being applied, not only to the Jews, but to other large sections of European peoples. It is impossible not to feel burning indignation at these horrors, and it is natural that civilised people should desire every possible step to be taken to bring them to a conclusion and to punish those responsible. We must, however, recognise that these people are for the present mostly beyond the possibility of rescue. It is not a question of the unwillingness of neighbouring countries to receive them. They are hemmed in, and the frontiers over which they would cross are constantly patrolled by the Gestapo and by Nazi armed forces. The avenues of escape from this reservoir of suffering humanity are few and dangerous. I trust that nothing said in the course of this Debate will have the result of interfering with them. As hon. Members know, there are considerable numbers of Greek and Yugoslav refugees in the Middle East. There are refugees who find their way into various European countries. There are others who arrive directly at our shores. The rate of outflow varies at different times and in different places. The total number who have made their escape is of course infinitesimal in proportion to the size of the problem as a whole.

We must, I think, recognise that the United Nations can do little or nothing in the immediate present for the vast numbers now under Hitler's control. He is determined not to let those people go. The rate of extermination is such that no measures of rescue or relief, on however large a scale, could be commensurate with the problem. Every week and every month by which victory is brought nearer will contribute more to their salvation than any diversion of our war effort in measures of relief, even if such measures could be put into effect. In another place, on 23rd March, the Archbishop of Canterbury, following the lead of Mr. Victor Gollancz in his pamphlet, "Let my people go," put forward a suggestion of what he described as a direct offer to the German Government. There is no indication whatever that any such offer, if made, would meet with anything but a negative response. (An HON. MEMBER: "Make it.") Everything points in exactly the opposite direction. The House will remember that on 3rd February, my right hon. and gallant Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies announced an arrangement under which 4,000 children would be sent from South Eastern Europe to Palestine accompanied by a smaller number of adults. Even in this measure of humanitarian relief delays and difficulties have arisen, not of our making, which have so far prevented this arrangement being carried into effect. If obstacles are placed in the way of a comparatively small measure for the relief of Jewish children from South Eastern Europe, what hope could be expected from a much larger proposal addressed to Germany for the relief and rescue of adults? I am glad to see that the hon. Lady the Member for the Combined English Universities (Miss Rathbone) has not repeated in her latest pamphlet the Archbishop's suggestion.

Our glorious victories in Africa have brought substantially nearer the day of ultimate victory. Any slackening of our war effort or any delay to shipping in the attempted rescue of refugees could only delay the day of victory and result in the infliction of greater suffering on the subjugated peoples of Europe. I do not think there will be any doubt on this issue in the minds of reasonable people, but some fantastic suggestions have been put forward. For example, it has been suggested that we should exchange, or endeavour to exchange, prisoners of war and civilian internees in our hands for would-be refugees now under Axis domination. I do not think our Armies would thank us if we offered to hand back to Germany the 100,000 or 150,000 prisoners which they have just taken in North Africa. As regards civilian internees, of whose cause the hon. Lady has been such an active protagonist in the past, some have already been repatriated. Of those still remaining interned, it would be the sheerest cruelty to return some of them into Axis hands, and as regards the few hundreds of others, there would be security objections of the most formidable character to sending them back to Germany.

The aspect of the matter with which we have endeavoured and can endeavour to deal is the assistance of refugees who have already reached neutral or Allied territory. Hon. Members will realise that neutral countries in Europe are subject not only to pressure from the United Nations on behalf of refugees but also to pressure from the Axis Powers in the opposite direction. The effectiveness of our diplomatic representation has no doubt been greatly enhanced by our recent victories. It is, therefore, most important that nothing should be said in the course of this Debate which would cause these countries embarrassment. I would, however, say that the number of refugees now in the countries which we might describe as countries of primary refuge probably does not exceed 50,000 to 60,000. Of these 50,000 a considerable number, of course, are in Switzerland, whence no further transfer is geographically possible without re-entering Axis-controlled territory. As regards the remainder the man in the street may well ask what object is to be achieved by the transfer of refugees from neutral countries to more distant places of refuge? Why, of all places, he may ask, should refugees be transferred from a place of temporary safety to a country like Great Britain, which is subject to attack from the air, where accommodation is limited and which is dependant upon our gallant Merchant Service for a large part of its necessary supplies.

There are, I think, two answers to this question. In the first place, the burden on these neutral States who have generously received these people may become unduly heavy if the refugee population continually increases. It is desirable to show them that other countries are prepared to give them help. Secondly, many of these people are anxious and willing to assist the Allied war effort. Seeing that we are all agreed that final victory is the only sure solution it really cannot be wrong to give priority in the work of rescue to those who will contribute to this end. Of those who are unable, for various reasons, to make such a contribution, many are refugees from various parts of Europe who found their way to safety in the early days of the war, or who have moved more recently after spending the time intervening between the fall of France in June, 1940, and its complete occupation in November, 1942, in unoccupied French territory.

In the three years 1940, 1941 and 1942, 63,000 refugees were admitted to Great Britain, and that, of course, excludes the large number of British refugees from the Channel Islands, Gibraltar and elsewhere. In the last five months, the period in which it is alleged that nothing has happened and there has been unnecessary delay, a further 4,000 people have arrived here. Our diplomatic and consular representatives have been working day and night, often under great difficulties, upon this task, and the very greatest credit is due to them for their untiring efforts. This country has a unique record since December last in the admission of 4,000 refugees. No hon. Member can point to any other country which has a record which can be compared at all with that figure. I doubt if any other country has admitted a quarter of that number in the corresponding period, but if I mention it with some pride I trust I shall not be taken to make the slightest reflection on any other country whose geographical situation has been less favourable and to which transport has not been available to the same degree.

I must pass for a moment to say a few words, and to dispel, if I can, a few illusions, in regard to the grant or refusal of visas, for which the Home Office is responsible. A visa, or even the promise of a visa if a refugee reaches neutral territory, is apparently regarded as giving an assurance of safe conduct to this country. That is a misunderstanding which would be pitiful if it were not so mischievous. Visas are regarded as something like railway tickets which must be obtained in every case by refugees seeking admission to this country and which are only granted after weeks and months of delay. It is suggested that these imaginary tickets might be made available in blocks to our consular representatives abroad who could issue or promise to issue them to all corners. The facts are very different. A visa is

not a ticket, nor is it a condition precedent in every case to entry into this country. A visa is an endorsement placed on a passport or other document of identity by a diplomatic or consular officer who acts under instructions which involve reference to this country of cases falling outside certain categories. It is only prima facie evidence to the Immigration Officer that leave to land may be granted under the Aliens Order.

This procedure, however, of granting visas has been very largely suspended in the case of refugees, and the suggestion to put at the discretion of consular officers a certain number of visas, described as a "block," which he could grant without reference home, would be a limitation rather than an advance upon the existing practice. In addition to the persons who obtain visas under existing conditions, many thousands of refugees from enemy-occupied countries have arrived, and are still arriving, without visas, and no refugee who has reached this country without a visa has been turned back.

I hope this statement of the plain truth may remove some serious misconceptions, and I hope I have made it clear that there is no machinery in existence nor is any conceivable in present circumstances for giving visas or the promise of visas to persons in enemy or enemy-occupied territory. The suggestion that visas should be promised to such persons is really asking the impossible. We should be pledging ourselves in advance to receive persons about whom we know nothing and whom we could not identify. There is no evidence that even if it were possible to communicate such a promise to the individual for whom it was intended, it would in any way assist him to escape from enemy territory. On the contrary, it would be an additional element of difficulty and danger if it came to the knowledge of the enemy from whom the refugee was trying to escape.

I have here a pamphlet, which no doubt, has had a very wide circulation and has found its way into the hands of hon. Members. The pamphlet is entitled "Rescue the Perishing," and it is written by the hon. Lady the Member for the Combined English Universities (Miss Rathbone). It is issued under the auspices of the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror. This organisation has a long and distinguished list of vice-presidents, including the two Archbishops, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, the Very Reverend the Chief Rabbi, Sir William Beveridge, Professor Brodetsky, Dame Elizabeth Cadbury, and so forth. No doubt we shall hear more about it in the course of the Debate. The pamphlet is, as I say, written by the hon. Lady the Member for the English Universities, and an appeal is made to readers to show their feeling on this matter by all the usual methods of democratic expression, including letters to their Members of Parliament and letters to the Press and letters to various Ministers whose addresses are supplied. Under the heading of Chapter 7, "Examples of the harsh working of the Home Office Regulations," is mentioned the case—it is the first case—of "Refugees still in enemy-occupied territory," which the hon. Lady has given me notice she intends to raise in this Debate. I will, if I may, read it to the Committee: "Aged Jewish couple in Berlin had a son in Istanbul, a naturalised Turk. On January 4th the son cabled to his sister in London, saying he could get Turkish visas for parents if London told its Consulate in Istanbul that a United Kingdom visa would be given. Asked for immediate reply, as parents in danger. The sister [that is the sister in this country] by advice of the Home Office cabled her brother that British visa impossible while parents in enemy territory. She has just heard from her brother that her parents were deported to Poland on February 28th (i.e., about eight weeks after refusal of British visas which might have saved them). This confirms her belief that her brother had secret means of communicating with parents and helping their escape. Even if this belief illusory refusal is a bad example to Turkey. She writes: I just cannot bear it. I would feel better if England had tried to help even without success." The hon. Lady's comment on that is that the case "illustrates the value—denied by the Home Secretary—of United Kingdom visas in helping escape from enemy territory." I shall be very sorry, but I shall also be very surprised, if this aged couple are deported to Poland. Many readers of the paragraph which I have quoted must have thought that the Home Secretary was devoid of all decent humanitarian feeling. Knowing the facts—which, of course, are never known in full to the person who puts forward a case such as this—what does not surprise me is that this gentleman in Turkey has secret means of communicating with his parents in Berlin. The fact is that the gentleman who makes this appeal is a naturalised Turk, who occupies an important position in a firm at Constantinople which has the agency of the leading German armament manufacturers—Krupps, of Essen. He claims to have negotiated very large sales of armaments to Turkey, and, no doubt, part of his business, when he is not engaged in selling arms, is to obtain information about the arms supplied by other countries and to forward this information to his masters in Germany. He asks us to promise visas to this country for two persons whom we have never seen and whom, if they came here, we could not identify. I must mention this case, which the hon. Lady has continually thrown at our heads and has referred

to in speeches and pamphlets. It is said to be a hard case and one in which we ought to have promised visas to these persons who are now in Berlin. Really, the only possible result of granting a visa in that case would be the moral certainty that the persons who reached our shores would be German secret service agents.

Miss Rathbone (Combined English Universities): I do not want to interrupt the Under-Secretary, but may I say this? I was not aware of the position of that man in relation to Germany, but even supposing the facts to be as alleged, the man appealed for his parents, and he has got an assurance from the Istanbul authorities that he could get Turkish visas, if he first got British visas. Suppose that he had got his parents into Turkey and that then they were passed on here. The facts mentioned by my right hon. Friend being known here, could not they have been straightway put into an Isle of Man internment camp? [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] Why not? It would be a great mistake to argue from this one case. If there are certain facts about this man of the kind suggested, I am fully convinced that the sister, at any rate, is ignorant of all that, and that they were really anxious about the aged parents. If the aged parents were so safe in Berlin, why was he anxious to get them into Turkey; and anyhow, how can you argue from the facts of a particular case—

Hon. Members Speech.

Mr. Peake I do not want to get into a dispute with the hon. Lady. I have stated the facts to the Committee. We at the Home Office cannot bring ourselves to believe that the parents of a man occupying an important position in a firm which acts for Krupps in Constantinople are in serious danger, or that we ought to facilitate their escape from German territory by promising them visas to this country.

I want to deal now with the question of the issue of visas to persons in those countries which are now neutral. As regards persons who have reached countries of primary refuge, there is no evidence to show that if visas had been issued more freely, more refugees would have arrived here. Transport is an overriding difficulty in the whole of the refugee problem. The grant of visas, in order not to cause widespread disappointment, has, therefore, been made dependent upon some advantage resulting to one national interest and to our war effort. The classes of persons who are at present eligible for visas are certain specially qualified technicians and doctors; officials of Allied Governments and their wives; persons willing to serve in the Allied Forces and their wives and children and also the wives and children of persons already here and so serving, and in certain cases their fiancées. Visas are also granted in other cases to children of persons already here or of persons who are not already here, but are entitled to visas. Finally visas are available to children who have a near relative in this country.

As regards children, I should like, once and for all, to make it clear that throughout this difficult period there have been more offers of visas available for children from different parts of the world, than there have been children able to avail themselves of them. It is inevitable, under any policy of definition such as I have described, that some hard cases will arise. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has given most careful consideration to these cases, and he proposes from henceforward, as some contribution towards meeting them and as an earnest of our good will, to make the following extensions of the categories of individuals who are now eligible for special consideration:—

- (i) Parents of persons serving in His Majesty's or Allied Forces, or in their Mercantile Marines.
Persons of other than Allied nationality willing to join His Majesty's Forces and who are certified to be fit and acceptable for them.
- (iii) Parents of children under 16 who are already here and who came here unaccompanied.

In regard to these extended categories, it should be made clear that they are only of persons eligible and that, of course, security considerations will in all cases be paramount. Furthermore, it should be emphasised that all or any of the persons coming in under the present policy may be subject to internment on arrival here, pending a full security examination of their cases. Nor can it be taken, of course, that the grant of a visa at the present time implies that the person to whom it is granted will be able to remain here after the termination of hostilities.

I am afraid I am detaining the Committee rather long, but it is necessary that I should deal adequately with some of the charges made against the Government during the past five months. There has been a regular spate of propaganda issued by people who feel very deeply upon this matter, people whose minds are haunted and tormented by visions of what is going on in Germany and Poland. Some of this propaganda is unfair. We at the Home Office are not

unaccustomed to propaganda which we, at any rate, consider unfair, and we try to remind ourselves that we must regard this sort of activity with toleration. I recall what Macaulay said in one of his speeches on the Reform Bill, about the effect of distress on the human mind. He said: "We know what effect distress produces, even on people more intelligent than the great body of the labouring classes can possibly be. We know that it makes even wise men unstable, unreasonable, credulous, eager for immediate relief, heedless of remote consequences. There is no quackery in medicine, religion or politics, which may not impose even on a powerful mind when that mind has been disordered by pain or fear." That quotation gives me some comfort when I read such a letter as that which the Bishop of Chichester addressed to "The Times" yesterday morning. The Bishop said: "It is quite certain that if the British and American Governments were determined to achieve a programme of rescue in some way commensurate with the vastness of the need, they could do it." He makes no attempt to indicate what is the programme of rescue which he suggests. It is quite true that we have our programme of rescue, and that programme is victory, and we are equally sure we can achieve it, but that, I think, is riot the programme which the Bishop has in mind. I wish he would tell us what his programme is, because in the first two paragraphs of his letter he makes a subtle suggestion that nothing has happened since 17th December when he says: "It will be almost exactly five months after the declaration of December 17." I wish he would tell us what his solution is, because we have waited for five months, and there has been no suggestion from the Bishop as to what his programme of rescue is. I have searched Hansard for the House of Lords ever since that date and have failed to find any speech by the Bishop on this subject at all. The hon. and gallant Member for Chippenham (Colonel Cazalet) rushed into print on the second or third day of the Bermuda Conference, and in a letter to "The Times", published that day, he suggested that there would be widespread indignation unless the Conference initiated immediate measures of rescue on a scale adequate to the need. He really does seem to me, if I may say so, to have misunderstood the purpose of the Conference. Conferences do not take executive decisions. The purpose of the Conference was to confer, to analyse the facts, to examine possible methods of relief and to reach agreed conclusions and recommendations between the United States and British Governments as a preliminary to wider international collaboration.

I now turn, if I may, to the statement which has been the subject of agreement with the United States authorities on the outcome of the Bermuda Conference. I should like to express our appreciation of the cordial spirit of co-operation shown by the United States Government Delegates. They approached, as I think I may say the British Delegation did also, this complex and difficult problem with realism but at the same time with constructive suggestions. After an exhaustive examination of all its aspects, we were able to agree on a Report which makes a considerable number of definite practical recommendations. This agreed Report involves military questions and has other aspects which make it necessary that it should be kept strictly confidential, but I can reveal in general outline what the two Delegations set out to do and indicate, so far as is in the interest of the refugees themselves, what it accomplished.

The basis for discussions at the Conference is to be found in the United States Government's Note of 26th February, which was published in the Press. The points set out there may be summarised as follow: Firstly, the refugee problem should not be considered as being confined to persons of any particular race or faith; secondly, international collaboration should endeavour to provide arrangements for temporary asylum for refugees as near as possible to the areas in which they are to be found at the present time; thirdly, plans should be considered for the maintenance in neutral countries in Europe of refugees whose removal cannot be arranged; fourthly, the possibilities of temporary asylum, with a view to repatriation upon the termination of hostilities, in countries other than neutral countries, should be explored, together with the question of the availability of shipping for transport and supply; and, fifthly, examination of the precise method of organising concerted action and providing the necessary executive machinery. It was on this basis that the Delegations settled their agenda, and determined the scope of their discussions.

At the outset they agreed in rejecting, as contrary to the settled policy of both Governments, and calculated to injure the United Nations war effort, any proposal for general negotiations with the German Government to release potential refugees. They also rejected the suggestions made in some quarters that military prisoners in Allied hands should be exchanged against civilians, and that food should be sent in to selected groups of potential refugees. On the positive aspect of the problem, they agreed that shipping was of crucial importance. Accepting the principle that winning the war in the shortest possible time was the best service which their respective Governments could render to the refugees and to all those who are suffering under German tyranny, they concluded that it would be a grave disadvantage not only to the Allied, but to the refugee, cause to divert shipping from essential war needs to the carriage of refugees.

There were, however, other possibilities, and though I cannot at this stage describe them in detail, I can assure the Committee, that they are being actively studied with a view to practical results.

One thing which the delegates established was that, in spite of the contrary impression given in certain quarters, Great Britain and the United States are regularly accepting a continuous flow of refugees for admission to home and Colonial territories. A thorough and systematic study was made of the position of refugees who have reached and are still reaching neutral countries. It was recognised that alternative destinations must be found for these as far as possible, and that all those countries who had so generously received, and were continuing to receive, refugees were entitled to some assurance that they will not be expected to shoulder unaided and indefinitely a burden in the carrying of which there should be the fullest measure of international co-operation. This presupposed an efficient machinery of international consultation, collaboration and action. Precise recommendations on this subject were agreed to by the Delegations and made to their respective Governments. His Majesty's Government are in fullest agreement that the most effective way of planning the rescue and settlement of persons who have had the opportunity of escaping the horrors of deportation, and, it may be, death, in Europe would be through an Inter-Governmental Committee, constituted on the widest basis and with all possible means of action at its disposal.

Side by side, however, with this project for the establishment of effective and permanent machinery, the two Delegations carefully examined all the contributions which their respective Governments could individually make to a solution of the problem. The general conclusions of both Delegations were, that while it would be creating a cruel illusion to hold out any hope of a solution commensurate with the terrible seriousness and complexity of the problem, other than speedy and final victory, far more was being done for the refugees by both countries than was generally appreciated, and that within the limits imposed by the inexorable demands of the war effort there were a number of hopeful possibilities for the future. His Majesty's Government are now studying these with the greatest care, and the United States Government, whose active and sympathetic interest in the refugee problem dates back so many years, are doing the same. Progress in this humanitarian but immensely difficult enterprise is in large measure dependent upon the widest and most complete measure of understanding between the British and American Governments.

I regret that, in dealing with so vast a subject, I have kept the Committee so long. In some respects it would have been an advantage, and certainly I could have spoken much more freely, had the Debate been held in Secret Session. But the House and the country, with good cause, I think, dislike Secret Sessions. Moreover, there has been widespread public interest in this problem, and much has been written and spoken about it, not always with great discretion, and by no means in every particular calculated to advance the cause which the authors, equally with His Majesty's Government, have at heart. I think, therefore, that some fuller statement in public was necessary. I only hope that nothing I have said will have any unfortunate effects. I hope, also, that what I have said, in regard to our own contribution, more especially in recent months; secondly, in regard to the extension of the classes of persons who may be considered for admission to the United Kingdom; and finally—and most important of all—in regard to the establishment of permanent and effective international machinery, will do something to convince the Committee and the country that the Government are, and always have been, in earnest on this matter; and that, while the United Nations press on to the day of retribution and victory, the Bermuda Conference was not an expedient for delay, but a real step forward on the road that leads to liberation.

Mr. Silverman (Nelson and Colne): Now that the fuller statement which the right hon. Gentleman thought it desirable to make in public has been made, is it his intention to have a Secret Session, to enable him to say those other things that he says could have been said in Secret Session?

Mr. Peake That is a matter which will have to be taken up, through the usual channels, with the Leader of the House

Miss Rathbane (Combined English Universities): It is clearly difficult for me to follow my right hon. Friend, because there has been so much that he has not been able to tell us and so much which he hinted it would be dangerous to discuss in public. We feel like the schoolboy who was asked to write an essay on snakes in Ireland, and who could only say that there were no snakes in Ireland. There is so much that we are debarred from saying, and so much that it would be imprudent to say. We can all say, however, that we are glad to see my right hon. Friend and his colleagues who went to Bermuda with him, back from that dangerous journey—because all journeys are dangerous nowadays. That is the only pleasurable emotion that we can have on this subject. My right hon. Friend's whole speech seemed to

be a plea for gratitude for what the Government have done in the past and for what they vaguely foreshadow may be done under the decisions of the Bermuda Conference. That is to ask for gratitude for very small mercies.

Let me first deal with the positive side. It is difficult to deal with the points at all fully, as they were stated in such vague terms, but we gather that some effort is to be made to draw off the overflow from those neutral countries which are receiving refugees. My right hon. Friend explained that that is a really necessary concession, because those countries into which the refugees first get are not safe countries. We all know the possible dangers, and I am not going to enlarge upon them. Also, although he mentioned that in many cases the frontiers are closed, we all know that it makes all the difference in the world to the chances of refugees slipping over those frontiers if the burden is not going to be too heavy on the neutral countries and they feel that they have some chance of passing on the overflow.

We should all like to hear a great deal more about whatever help is to be given to neutral countries. So much will depend upon how many refugees they will perhaps not formally admit, but may allow to slip in. We should like to know whether the neutral countries themselves are satisfied with what has been offered to them. Are the proposals of the Conference going to achieve their purpose, which is not to relieve the burdens of neutral countries for their own sakes—they have not the burdens that we have to bear in fighting a terrible war—but to encourage them to take in refugees? I stress the point because a great deal was said by the United States representative—it might have been at one of the opening sessions of the Conference—about repatriation after the war. We all hope that the great majority of the refugees will then be repatriated, but we know that for a great many repatriation is not going to be possible, even when the country of origin is an Allied country and wants to take back its refugees, because of the economic disorder which is going to prevail in those countries which have suffered so long from Nazi oppression. Are the United Nations going to take responsibility, collectively or individually, for the burden, of resettlement, of course under specified conditions? I believe that to a large extent it will depend upon the answer to that question whether the decisions, of the Bermuda Conference are going to be as useful as they should in stimulating the generosity of neutral countries. Obviously, Palestine is the natural country of settlement for Jewish refugees. We are not thinking only of Jews, although Jews are the objects of greatest persecution. But we have a special responsibility for Jewish refugees, because of our responsibility for Palestine, the place to which they naturally turn.

Then again I do not think my right hon. Friend said anything about the financial question. That Evian Conference, that inter-Governmental Committee to which he referred, led, as we all know, to very little. We all know what a poor reputation it had for generosity, courage or speed. The Conference was not to blame; the nations who constituted it were to blame. They sought to throw the whole financial cost of refugee settlement upon the refugees themselves or upon philanthropy. The American document implied that that was so. The Jewish population has been extremely generous, not only to Jews but to other refugees. Sir John Hope Simpson, in his famous book, says something to the effect that more Christian refugees have been saved by the Jews than by the Christian churches. But at this stage this enormous problem is far too heavy for philanthropy or for the refugees themselves. The countries of Christendom have a great responsibility for the refugee problem, and only the forces of the United Nations will be able to shoulder the burden. Was any guarantee given that any substantial sum of money was to be made available?

In thinking of the neutral countries I sometimes wonder whether enough effort has been made to mobilise those of them which are not in danger, especially the wealthy and great Argentine Republic—the one country which has kept completely out of the war, and has perhaps a certain influence over the enemy countries because of its commercial facilities, and which has a tradition of Catholic christian-ity behind it. Has every effort been made to see what contribution they may be willing to make?

There is another thing about which I was disappointed to hear so little. We thought that we might have heard more about machinery, as so much depends upon machinery. First, on the question of machinery of action abroad, we only had a reference to the Inter-Governmental Committee. I do not gather quite whether the whole matter was to be referred to that Committee or not, but if it has been referred to that body, it will have to have very much better staff and finance and have more authority behind it than the Evian Conference ever had. And at the very best, the Inter-Governmental Committee will not deal quickly enough with the immediate problem. The very essential of that is the need for speed. It is just that reflection which has so maddened those of us who have been occupied day and night pondering over this problem; that the Government seem to have shown very little sense of urgency. I am not going to refer to all the months through which the preliminary arrangements for the Bermuda Conference have dragged on, that

all the time that has been wasted in regard to those children who were to be got to Palestine, as we were promised, on 3rd February, of whom, as far as we know, not one has been moved. The opening speeches at Bermuda—those dreadful speeches—breathed the very spirit of defeatism and despair. If ever there was a case of "When the trumpet sounds an uncertain note who will repair to the battle?" this was it. And there was no sense of urgency at Bermuda.

We should like to know what is being done to hurry up this matter. That is the thought that possesses my mind night and day just now. We all know—do not imagine that we do not—the difficulties. We know that one of the greatest difficulties is transport and shipping. I have been asking myself why shipping has been so impossible to get. We have not apparently been able to get one group of people across the Mediterranean, or those children to Palestine for whom we were promised that they should go to Palestine. If shipping has been difficult in the past, it may be easier now for the very good reason that, temporarily, the Mediterranean is open. It is far less dangerous for shipping than it was before the great victory of last week. But how much longer will that be? When an invasion in any part of Europe begins, what chance shall we get of shipping then? That is why we feel that speed is so enormously important. How do the Government achieve speed when they really care about a problem, and think it of first-class importance? They do not do it through conferences in Bermuda or through the lengthy method of the ordinary diplomatic channels, but they do it through inter-communication on the spot. Why is the Prime Minister at this moment in Washington? Why has he undertaken so many of these dangerous journeys? Is it not because he finds that a few hours heart-to-heart talk on the spot do more than months of communication?

Well, then, in regard to this smaller problem—a problem which, nevertheless, concerns the possibilities of saving, if not millions, possibly hundreds of thousands, and if not hundreds of thousands, ten of thousands, and if not tens of thousands, then thousands of human beings—would it not have been worth while long ago sending people to the spot who could make a whole-time job in the key places? We all know what the key places are; they are the neutral countries, and the countries under our own control. There has been correspondence with our diplomatic agents—and I admit that some of them have done a very good job of work where they are—but they have to depend on diplomatic communications at home, and they have other preoccupations. What we want, surely, are people on the spot who can make a whole-time job of negotiating, considering, planning and executing with the Governments of the countries which they are visiting, very much in the way that Nansen did after the last war. It is true that the war was then over. When reading a biography of Nansen recently I found that it was astonishing how close the analogies were. One sentence alone was, "Shipping was the great difficulty." Somehow Nansen managed to find the ships. [An HON. MEMBER: "But the war was over."] But shipping was the difficulty even though the war was over. What matters is that of caring enough and of giving your whole time and thought to doing the thing, and yet not in the spirit of sentimental enthusiasm which the Under-Secretary seemed to impute to us. Heaven knows that we have had enough experience to make us realists. In a spirit of realism, months ago, we put across the suggestion of "a new Nansen"—for someone who could travel by air from one country to another and consider the problem on the spot. It has not been done, and we have not been told of any likelihood of its being done.

Again, as to machinery of home action. Some of us, I am afraid, make ourselves a nuisance sometimes to our hon. and right hon. Friends by the way we pester them in the Lobby, by Parliamentary questions, by letters and by our suggestions. Believe me, we are not really so unmindful of their difficulties as they may sometimes think us. I sometimes ask myself how much attention I would be able to give to this question if I were Foreign Secretary and also Leader of the House, or the Home Secretary, or the Colonial Secretary. Perhaps not much more than they have given, given their preoccupations. But there is the rub. That is the question which is troubling us. Need those problems, on which depend the chance of saving tens of thousands of people and which are so terribly difficult, continue to be left entirely to men who can only give them a few fag ends and tag ends and scraps and leavings of their already overburdened minds? It may be necessary for the Cabinet to take the burden of the final decisions, and they have their underlings behind them now to help them. But that is not the same thing as having even one man of really first-class standing with authority behind him, who could co-ordinate this whole difficult class of planning and find a way out of difficulties. that concern at least half a dozen different ministries in this country alone, to say nothing about communications with some 30 Allies.

I should like to see a Ministry for Refugees. It is a big enough problem. We have had a lot of new Ministries lately. Do any of them in any Ministry tackle anything more difficult than this frightful problem of refugees not only in its present but in its post-war aspects? The post-war settlement of refugees is going to be a very big problem. If the

Government cannot give us a Minister, let them give us at least one man of really first-class standing who can make a whole-time job of this question. I am going to make a boast. We outsiders do not pretend to know all the factors upon which decisions must depend. Yet we never leave the presence of Ministers when we have managed to secure a few hurried moments of discussion with them without thinking not only that we care more, which is natural, but that in a sense we know more about it. We know the possibilities and sometimes feel that we know even the difficulties better than [they do, because we have lost no opportunity of making contact with everybody — with visiting foreigners, with responsible diplomats, with returned refugees, with anyone and everyone who we think can throw any sort of light upon all these difficulties. Nowhere can we see traces of that kind of consideration by Ministers which, we feel sure, the Government would have given to this problem if they had cared as much as we do and if they were not merely trying—I put it bluntly—to buy off public agitation as cheaply as possible.

I must say this. Our experience is most depressing when we approach the Home Secretary from whom we feel that we might perhaps expect something, because he has a field of administration directly under his control. I must say a word or two on one of the criticisms of my pamphlet in my right hon. Friend's speech, but I do not want to waste time with details. As to the particular case he cited. How could I have known that that particular man—that naturalised Turk—might perhaps have been a suspicious person? If it were so, no great harm could happen. Turkey is an Ally, though a non-belligerent. Would they want to pass on a spy to us; and was there any danger from that elderly couple in Berlin, whose poor daughter believes them to be dead? If we found out they were suspicious people, we might have helped them, to get into Turkey and to be passed on here and then put them, where we put all other suspicious people, in an Isle of Man internment camp, and the daughter would have rejoiced to see them anywhere out of Germany. What about all those other people to whom the Home Secretary boasted that we had been so generous? The Home Secretary really does seem sometimes to be trying to have it both ways. He is always telling us, when we approach him, how very generous this country has been already to refugees, and I deal with that claim in the pamphlet to which the right hon. Gentleman referred. I felt terribly alarmed when he referred to it. I wondered how many inaccuracies and wrong facts he might have found out in spite of the care taken. He did not point out a single inaccuracy.

Mr. Peake If I had begun to try and deal with all the inaccuracies in that pamphlet, I should still be speaking.

Mr. Cocks (Broxtowe) We do not swallow that sort of thing.

Miss Rathbone Then if there are inaccuracies, I hope he will point them out. To come back to the broad aspects of the question, why need the Home Secretary always have told us, when we approached him, that he must await consultation with other nations before he could do anything or even make the concessions which have been announced to-day, such as the acceptance of parents of men in the Allied Forces and several other small concessions like that? These may amount together to 10, 200 or 300 cases, but perhaps not so many, I am not sure. Anyhow, the Home Secretary really cannot at one and the same time claim how generous we have been and yet lay down regulations which show that nearly all the people brought in hitherto were admitted because we wanted them for our own purposes.

Earl Winterton (Horsham and Worthing): As the hon. Lady has already attacked a body engaged in this work, I must correct one inaccuracy. Her last statement is totally devoid of any foundation. The people who were brought in before the war by the Committee of which I am Chairman had nothing whatever to do with the war effort, and but for the action of that Committee 10,000 people at present in this country might never have been brought here.

Miss Rathbone I am at this moment criticising the Home Secretary. He was not in office before the war, and I am not talking now of what was done before the war. As to the numbers brought in before the war, I commend to my right hon. Friend the few comments I made in my pamphlet on the claim of the great generosity of this country in the shape of quotations from Sir John Hope Simpson's book. I was saying that the people brought in lately had been brought in because we or our Allies needed them badly for the war effort. They cannot therefore be claimed as proofs of our generosity. Then he told us that he could not send visas direct into enemy territory and that it might endanger refugees if he communicated with them. Does he believe that I need telling that? For months past every letter I have written to refugees has reminded them of these two facts. Does the Under-Secretary really mean to deny that refugees do not sometimes have secret ways of communication with their relatives in enemy territory? I do not know how they do it, but they do do it through one channel or another, through neutral channels perhaps. But whether that is so or not in

any particular case, does he tell me that it does not make a difference when a refugee arrives at the border if the authorities of that country have been informed beforehand that a visa is awaiting the refugee? It is common sense that it makes a difference. In the correspondence which I sent the Home Secretary last week I cited the case of a neutral country which said it would give a visa if Great Britain would give one, and I know of many instances like that. The right hon. Gentleman also mocked at the suggestion that block visas would make any difference. Of course, they would make a difference. The Bermuda Conference has admitted that action in neutral countries depends on the possibility of passing people on. Will they not be more in a position to pass people on if Great Britain has in the hands of the Consuls some hundreds of unnamed visas available for Palestine or Great Britain or some[...] camp under their control in North Africa or elsewhere, if the United States has another block of such visas and any other friendly country also has a block of such visas?

I do not want to detain the Committee much longer but I must say that in one respect this country excels. There is no other country where public opinion so much favours a strong and generous policy. Yet when we approach the Home Secretary we are made to feel that pressure from public opinion has not merely helped but has hardened his attitude. It seems that he wants to show that he is a strong man by refusing to make even the smallest concession and that his attitude has been influenced sometimes less by the merits of the case than by his dislike of yielding anything to his critics. He has made some concession to-day, and I will say no more about that, but why does he always make us feel in his Parliamentary answers, and even in our approaches to him privately, as if the whole question of refugees was becoming a bore and an irritation to him and that he was transferring to refugees the dislike which he quite openly feels for ourselves? We feel a terrible responsibility in this matter; it is a responsibility which rests upon all countries but it rests more peculiarly on this country, partly because it is so largely a Jewish problem. In the days when the Home Secretary was merely the Member for South Hackney he felt that responsibility more keenly. Let me read a quotation from a speech he made on 24th November, 1938, during a Debate on Palestine: "... We must not let our horror of the German persecution warp our reasonable judgment,... we were making a contribution in Palestine by permitting the immigration of 10,000 Jews a month or 12,000 a year. But that is no contribution whatever in the circumstances which have arisen out of the German persecution in recent weeks. There is no change in the number of Jews that are permitted to go to Palestine. Therefore, the net Palestinian contribution to meet the difficulties which have arisen out of recent persecutions is precisely nil. The Government are not permitting one additional Jew to enter Palestine as a consequence of the terrible events which are happening in Europe." Every word of that might have been written about the situation to-day except that the persecutions in Europe are incomparably more terrible. Then the present Home Secretary followed that by saying: "Is it not an onus upon us now to lift the restrictions upon: Jewish immigration so far as they now exist and permit a much greater number of Jews to go to Palestine?... —[OFFICIAL REPORT, 24th Nov., 1938; cols. 1998 and 2005, Vol. 341.]" I heartily agree. I know that the Colonial Secretary and not the Home Secretary has the responsibility under the Government for Palestinian policy. But it is a Cabinet responsibility, and if for reasons whether good or bad—and I think some of them are bad—we have shut the door to Palestine except for the few who are now able to get there, does not that enormously increase our responsibility. I admit, again, that it is a shared responsibility, and although it is not for us British people to criticise the United States, I cannot admit the claim that America has been very generous towards refugees. Some of their procedure about granting visas and so on has been even more difficult and slow than our own. But no country really has clean hands in this matter. If we had all shown greater wisdom, foresight, generosity and, above all, courage before the war, there would have been no isolationism on the other side of the Atlantic and there would have been no appeasement here. Hitler would not have dared to try to exterminate European Jewry, and the war itself might even have been averted.

I wonder whether it has ever occurred to us how much more sensitive than ourselves were our Elizabethan ancestors. Think of Lady Macbeth and "Hamlet" and their agonies of remorse over the death of one old king. Think of the hundreds of thousands of millions of lives which have been sacrificed in Europe. If our rulers and those of other nations had shown greater courage, unselfishness and generosity in the pre-war days, they would not have died. If the blood of those who have perished unnecessarily during this war were to flow down Whitehall, the flood would rise so high that it would drown everyone within those gloomy buildings which house our rulers. What is past is past. But the future is still within our control. How many more who might be saved will perish in these 20th century massacres if the problem is not approached not in the spirit of the Bermuda Conference, but in the spirit of determination to do everything possible?

Have I sounded too bitter? I tell you, Major Milner, there is not one who would not feel bitter if he or she had my postbag and read the letters I receive by every post from agonised people who feel that the one chance left for their relatives is slipping from them and that they may soon have to take that awful journey to the Polish slaughter-house and who beg me to rescue them, not realising how impotent I am. I shall be told that in these dreadful days, anxiety is the common lot. There is not one of us who does not suffer it, more or less. Many have already suffered cruel bereavement. But there is a difference. The sacrifices which British people and our Allies are asked to make and for the most part are making so bravely are worth while sacrifices for a great and noble end, They are the only means of ridding the world of a monstrous tyranny and of opening up a brighter future for mankind. We must not and dare not grudge them. But then deaths, of which we are thinking to-day, are so utterly useless, squalid and unspeakably cruel. They serve no purpose, except to gratify one man's lust for cruelty, for wrecking vengeance on the weak when he cannot reach the strong. Only victory will put an end to it all. But meantime let no one say: "We are not responsible." We are responsible if a single man, woman or child perishes whom we could and should have saved. Too many lives, too much time has been lost already. Do not lose any more.

Mr. Ridley (Clay Cross): I should not have contemplated saying anything in this Debate, but I thought it a little cowardly that a back bencher like myself, who has taken no part in this matter, should not say with what great regret and disappointment we listened to the Under-Secretary's speech to-day. Indeed, I think a statement in Secret Session would have given the country more satisfaction and could hardly have given it less. I am not usually cast in the role of critic, but I have come to that mood to-day, after great consideration, to say that the Under-Secretary's statement has justified the fear that the Bermuda Conference was made an occasion for discovering difficulties and not for providing solutions to them. I heard with some astonishment the right hon. Gentleman say that the two Governments concerned were seriously considering the problems which had been discovered by the Conference. I always assumed that the two Governments, especially our own, had been considering these problems for a long time. Here I would like to say that I cannot associate myself with the very severe personal attacks made by the hon. Lady the Member for the Combined English Universities (Miss Rathbone) on my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. I think some of her remarks were unjustified in the light of my right hon. Friend's personal career and well-known spirit.

The House in this matter has run through a gamut of emotions. First of all, there was the emotion of revulsion and horror when we realised—as many in this country still do not realise—the real character of the Hitler method of trying to suppress the human race. Secondly, there was the feeling almost of exultation at the speech made by the Foreign Secretary in December—a speech which seemed to give assurance of positive action in the face of the problem as we then understood it. Then followed most profound disappointment at what appeared to be—and still in some senses appears to be—the inactivity of the Government, especially as it is related to the specific assurance of help contained in the Foreign Secretary's answer to a recent Supplementary Question put to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. Silverman).

I am in no mood to make irresponsible charges against the Government in view of what this country has already done. The Home Secretary failed to distinguish between the general problem as it was before the pogrom commenced and the special problem as it now exists, but the size of our contribution to the general refugee problem is warmly recognised by the leaders of world Jewry, and we may well be, as the Under-Secretary rather assumed, proud of our figures in that connection. But, whatever our history may have been, we must not cover ourselves with too much altruism: We are inclined to consider the refugees as though they had been and will continue to be a burden on this country. That assumption is entirely contrary to the facts. Many of them are engaged on work of national importance, sometimes very vital national importance. In any case we are in the presence of an altogether new and terrible situation, terrible because it has revealed the unbelievable capacity of modern man for sadistic cruelty, terrible because of the consequences of that cruelty to the victims, most of whom are charged with only one crime—the crime of being Jews. It is enough to contemplate for a moment the process of mass electrocution to realise what a chapter of horror is being written in our history. My plea to the Government is to recognise that those horrors impose upon us an inescapable responsibility, and we should endeavour to write a compensating chapter of magnificent deliverance in the same history. This responsibility falls hardly less on other countries, but their inactivity would not excuse us.

I plead that those who can come here should be allowed to come here, where we can save them from the torture chamber or from the horrible contemplation of the fate that awaits them. I plead also that we should fling wide open the doors of Palestine. The absorptive capacity of modern Palestine is undoubtedly high. The Jews there have turned

the desert into a fertile country, and the absorptive capacity of that fertile country has been lifted in consequence. I am assured that there is a man-power shortage and that Palestine would gladly take about 30,000 families or 70,000 people. The Palestinian has his father, mother, sisters and brothers, in the hell's cauldron that we call Europe; he waits feverishly to receive them. Whatever we can do to unite them we should regard it as our fundamental duty to do. The White Paper quotas, which seemed to mean so much five years ago, now mean little, and we ought not to be limited in a period of grave crisis by figures which were fashioned in other circumstances. There must not be another Struma disaster. I should hope that, these things having been accomplished, or at least attempted, we could turn with renewed assurance to the task of trying to induce other free countries to make their maximum contribution. This is not an occasion for unrestrained criticism. Our record of general refugee asylum is not one of which we need be ashamed, and it would be foolish to ignore some of the difficulties which must be met if our contribution is to be enlarged, but I plead most earnestly for such further action as will enable us to say with pride that we have left nothing undone which it was within our power to accomplish, or even to attempt.

Colonel Sir A. Lambert Ward (Kingston-upon-Hull, North:West): I cannot help feeling that the Committee will be conscious of a very definite sense of disappointment that the Under-Secretary has not been able to say something more definite with regard to the decisions and discussions that have taken place at Bermuda. It might have been very difficult for him to do so, but he certainly gave us very little information with regard to what has taken place there, and, from what he has told us, it does not seem as if anything very definite has emerged from those decisions. Of course, very little has been done since the beginning of the war in the way of helping these unfortunate people who are now suffering from Nazi tyranny, but I realise the difficulty that has stood in the way, and it has not been made any easier from the point of view of the Home Office by the propaganda that has been going on ever since this question arose. The Home Office has to a large extent ignored that propaganda and has allowed rather incorrect statements to get abroad and to get a long start and has taken very few steps to overtake and correct them. We have had an example in this Debate of incorrect statements which the Home Office has allowed to spread abroad. The hon. Member for the Combined English Universities (Miss Rathbone) said that, had it not been for the action of the Government, millions and millions of Jews would have gone to Palestine.

Miss Rathbone I do not think I can have said millions and millions could have gone. That would be an exaggeration. The point was that, if the door had been opened to Palestine before the war, far larger numbers could have got in, and that increases our responsibility for doing something now.

Sir A. Lambert Ward The hon. Lady actually used the word "millions," which I was going to point out was absurd in the case of an agricultural country, if anything rather smaller than Wales. Statements of that kind have made additional difficulties for the Home Office and for the Government. Of course, there has been a situation which we can only describe as an impasse. Neutral countries would not accept refugees until they were assured of a visa which would enable them to come to Great Britain, and Great Britain would not grant that visa until the refugee was actually in a neutral country, and nothing further could be done. From what we have heard to-day it does not seem as if anything has been done that will make matters easier in that direction. One of the great difficulties in admitting large numbers of refugees to this country is the fact that a very considerable proportion of the population does not want them. It has been said—I should not like to say whether it is true or not—that to admit a large number of refugees of the Jewish religion might easily fan the smouldering fires of anti-Semitism which exist here into a flame. Many people regard that as absurd, but from my own experience I am not at all sure there is not something in it. From almost exactly this date three years ago until the beginning of the year I was working with the Home Guard in the East End. The zone for which I was responsible comprised the Boroughs of Bethnal Green, Stepney and Poplar and some of the outlying districts of their boroughs. There was undoubtedly in existence a very definite anti-Semitic feeling. When it came to the selection of officers, or non-commissioned officers, one was always up against that problem. One heard it said directly anything went wrong that the Jews were to blame—quite untruthfully. If there was any question of a black market, it was said, untruthfully, that the Jews were largely doing it. When that terrible disaster took place at a shelter three or four months ago the rumour was put about that it was panic on the part of the foreign Jews. It is quite untrue, as was shown by the fact that only something like 5 per cent. of the casualties were members of the Jewish religion.

Another reason why it is difficult to admit refugees in any large numbers is that it is almost certain that a great many of them would automatically gravitate towards the East End. Apart from anything else, the housing accommodation there is a very serious difficulty. During the blitz of 1940, something like 30 per cent. of the housing accommodation

was either completely destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. It did not matter so much then, because the great desire of the people was to get away. To-day they are trying to come back, and to allow refugees to crowd in would simply turn the accommodation difficulty into an accommodation impossibility, and, should we decide to bring any large number of, these unfortunates into the country, I cannot help feeling that that area should be debarred to them. I admit that it is rather like the system of concentration camps, but really it is not worse than not allowing our own citizens into areas where by reason of military necessity it is considered better that they should not be. Although it may be preferable that those refugees should not come here, I cannot help feeling that it is absolutely essential that we should do something to endeavour to help in this terrible problem. The hon. Lady suggested a largely increased quota for Palestine. The difficulty there is that one has always been up against the antagonism of the Moslems, and a largely increased immigration would probably increase the friction.

One cannot get away from the fact that the long-range part of the refugee problem is largely a Jewish one. We have in this country a large number of refugees from Czechoslovakia, Poland and other countries, and there are people only too anxious to get away from the occupied parts of Russia. We hope, when the war is over, those refugees will want to get back to their own countries. With regard to the Jews, that is not so certain, because I cannot help feeling that it is very doubtful whether the German Jews would ever wish again to live among the people who have treated them so abominably in the past. It is fantastic to say that their treatment has been entirely due to the Gestapo. They may have been the active agents of that treatment, but these Jews know perfectly well that that treatment has been upheld by a large number of their neighbours. I cannot conceive that in the future they will wish ever again to live among those people.

We must try to do something, and I have a suggestion to put forward that has not, so far as I am aware, been discussed. Our glorious victory in Tunisia has thrown open to us 4,000 miles of coastline, the entire coastline of North Africa, the Southern shores of the Mediterranean. A large part of that is open and ready for immigration. It is true that 1,800 miles of that 4,000 miles is in the hands of the Free French, and we do not know yet what attitude they are likely to adopt with regard to assisting in the refugee problem. The Jewish population of North Africa is to-day quite considerable. It varies from something like 2 to 2½ per cent. in the rural districts to something like 12 to 15 per cent. in the urban districts. A great part of that country is suitable for colonisation. It is true that if we start from the Nile Delta, for the first 500 or 600 miles the desert practically abuts on the ocean, and there is little cultivable land available. When we get somewhere in the neighbourhood of Tobruk the country improves, and at Derna, where we get to Cyrenaica, the country is high, the vegetation is reasonably luxurious and there is ample though not excessive rainfall. As we go on there is further desert, and then we come to the Tripoli neighbourhood, where there is again opportunity for colonisation. The town of Tripoli has its full quota of 10 per cent. Jews, so that any Jews who were admitted there would not be breaking fresh ground, for they would have their co-religionists there already to help them. The same conditions apply right through Tunisia, where there is again a considerable percentage of Jews, in Algiers and right across Morocco including Tangier and Casablanca. In all these places a migrating colony of Jews would find their co-religionists, who in many cases would stand by them and help them.

It is in Cyrenaica that the greatest opportunity exists for the settlement of these unfortunate people. As many people are aware, Mussolini, in the days before the war, conceived the idea of settling at least 100,000 Italians in Cyrenaica. At the beginning of the war 20 or 30 village settlements had been built and cultivated. Those settlements had houses, social amenities, wells and practically everything that was necessary for an agricultural community to start with. Many of those Italians will no longer wish to live there. Many of the least desirable ones, those with the strongest Fascist sentiments, can be sent home. I cannot conceive for a moment that Cyrenaica will ever be returned to Italy. I cannot imagine even a peace conference being responsible for such a policy. We can, therefore, look forward to Cyrenaica becoming a settlement such as Palestine has proved to be. A great deal of the spade work has already been done. It is true that probably the houses have been looted and damaged by the soldiery and the native population, but I should think that it is certain that the structure is still there, and in the days immediately after the war it should be possible to settle a large number of these refugees on that land. Of course, I am assuming that it will be possible to get these people away from the German-occupied territories, to get them into neutral countries and to bring them across. I cannot help feeling that it will not be impossible to do it to a small extent during the war, but after the war it should not be difficult. The shipping requirements will not be great, for the distance they will have to travel by sea is comparatively small. It seems to me that here lies, if not a solution, at any rate, an amelioration, of the conditions that

exist in so many parts of Europe, and I cannot help feeling that if something like that can be done, it will go far to solve one of the most urgent problems of the present moment.

Mr. Mack (Newcastle-under-Lyme): The Committee will agree, I think, that nothing less than a generous tribute of appreciation and profound respect should be paid to the hon. Lady who opened this discussion for the fine sentiments, the truly Christian sentiments, which were embodied in her remarks. I have perhaps an advantage, albeit a psychological one, of having succeeded a gentleman, Lord Wedgwood, whose great work for the persecuted peoples and the minorities of all lands was indeed a striking one and one which will endure for many centuries to come. Moreover, I have the privilege—and I use the word advisedly—of being a direct representative of the harassed people to whom many allusions have been made and to whom many expressions of sincere sympathy have been extended. Furthermore it has been my lot to speak on behalf of the Zionist Federation of this country, and in that capacity to address large numbers of people not only of the Jewish persuasion, but non-Jews who have supported the policy of that organisation and who are anxious to find a practical and concrete solution to this terrible calamity which has visited mankind and sent a shock of horror through the pulses of all. About ninety years ago an outstanding statesman, John Bright, said in this House: "The angel of death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings." There is another monster who is stalking the land to-day and of him it may be said one can almost feel the heat of his breath angrily spurting from his nostrils.

The most unfortunate elements of the world are surely the refugees of Europe, and particularly the Jewish people because their conditions are different from all others. I would not be so narrow in my conception as not to say, as every enlightened person would want to say, that all refugees of whatever religion and state who are enduring the horrors of the Hitler regime are entitled to have the fullest consideration. The Jews, however, are unlike others in that they have no Government to speak for them, they have no consul and no flag. They have no status in any land and they are not likely to have a place at any future peace conference. Our hearts go out to them because of their hopeless plight. We have had the Bermuda Conference. It has been shrouded in mystery and no publicity has been allowed to percolate from it. I hope I do not misquote the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty when I say that he stated that the position of the White Paper on Palestine of May, 1939, would not be considered by the Bermuda Conference. That White Paper was a calamitous document, which caused consternation and sorrow in the hearts of the Jewish people. It restricted immigration into Palestine to 75,000 certificates for five years. On 3rd February the Secretary of State for the Colonies made a statement to the effect that 29,000 of these certificates would be available. Mr. Philip Murray, President of the Congress of Industrial Organisations of America, speaking on behalf of a vast number of organised American workers, said that they were not allowed to attend that Conference in any capacity, and then spoke of the indignation of American workers in particular and of workers all over the world at the fact that they should be excluded. My hon. Friend must not complain if since we are kept in the dark as to the findings of that Conference and, indeed, of its discussions, we have to forage about in an endeavour to ascertain what is behind the minds of the gentlemen who conceived this Conference which has proved so abortive, and in spite of the protestations of the hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench, has given us so little to hope for.

I would say that as a positive solution, the Government of this country should announce to the world a statement that refugees who can escape by whatever means should be granted temporary asylum in Britain, subject of course to adequate safeguards for security reasons. They could be utilised in the war effort; indeed they are anxious to participate in it. They could be used in a military capacity where their age and sex permitted. They could be used in an agricultural and scientific capacity. Indeed, I believe that the brains and intelligence of a large number of these refugees would enrich the war effort of this country. Palestine alone of any country in the world has absorbed, can absorb, and is anxious to absorb, as many refugees as it is physically possible to rescue from Europe. It can take in 27,000 heads of families with 70,000 wives and dependants, making a total of 97,000 refugees within the next six months. If it were necessary, those efforts could be trebled and quadrupled. As a matter of fact, in 1933 to 1939 Palestine absorbed 200,000 refugees, of whom 170,000 came from Nazi lands or lands which were under Nazi control. An important factor has intervened. That is our great and glorious victory in North Africa, which has reverberated throughout the world. No one can pay sufficient homage and honour to our wonderful troops who have brought about that victory. I believe that if the troops could become vocal on this issue, they would say, "We would be proud if the Government of this country would make it possible for the very people we are fighting for, those hopeless victims of Hitler's régime, to escape their enemies." The result of that victory has reduced considerably the strain upon

our shipping, although I am not unmindful of the grave difficulties which confront shipping at the present time. There is the consequent enormously increased prestige for this country in Africa and throughout the world, particularly in Arab lands, and although allusion has been made to the Arab reaction which might take place, I believe it is not as formidable an obstacle as has been suggested. It has been grossly exaggerated, and behind that exaggeration there is a certain amount of Nazi controlled propaganda. We must relax that White Paper. We must say that if Jews can get into Palestine in excess of the numbers in that White Paper every facility will be afforded them to do so, because, searching the four corners of the earth, I bid fair to say, that this country and the United Nations will find no more noble and gallant allies than the brave Jewish people who are making their splendid contribution to the cause of which we are so proud.

May I say in all humility and with deference that I am not regardless of the fact that, like all other peoples, they have their faults and shortcomings. One cannot persecute a people for thousands of years and expect them to be the embodiment of all the virtues, and, as Shakespeare said: "Be thou pure as ice and chaste as snow, Thou shalt not escape calumny." Were the Jews to be as perfect as human beings could possibly be, I still believe that a tinge of anti-Semitism would be directed towards them. I ought to say in parenthesis that there are some Jews in this country who take the view that if they emphasise their English ancestry, the fact that they have had their roots in this country for many generations, in the event of some subsequent wave of anti-Semitism in this country they will be immune. I would give a clear refutation of that fallacy. In Germany and elsewhere, Jews who wanted to be more German than the Germans, and who, in this country, have tried to prove that they are more English than the English have been given the treatment which in my opinion they richly deserve, because while the Jews are rightly and properly loyal to the country in which they live, as I know they always will be, at the same time their eyes are directed and have been directed for many centuries to Palestine, to that land from which their culture spread. They are the people of the Book. They are the creators of the Bible. They have given to the world the great Nazarene whose most noble contribution was a tender sympathy for the poor and innocent, and if I may say so with great respect, for I know the Committee are kindly in their dispositions, were those precepts of Christianity to be practised to-day, there would be no Jewish problem, no problem of persecution. There would be no problem of a tiny fragment of people being immolated on the fires of hate and exorcised from the midst of mankind.

It has been said that attacking the Jews is driving a wedge, militarily, diplomatically and ideologically, into the ranks of Hitler's opponents prior to piecemeal subjugation and annihilation. If there be any truth in that, I trust that one outcome of this Debate will be to bring about a kindlier and warmer feeling between the Jewish people and the great non-Jewish community and to expand that kindness and understanding. May I also pay a tribute to those very noble Christian men and women who, in spite of taunts and derision, have upheld the principles of democracy as we conceive it in this country? It is not too much to say that the greatness of England, the triumph of this little island in this most vital period of its history is to a large extent due not only to the expanding power of its arms, but to the power of its spiritual influence, that noble and tender consideration for the weak and the refugees of all countries of the world. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for North West Hull (Sir A. Lambert Ward), who immediately preceded me, referred to over-congestion which might occur if numbers of Jews were to come into this country. I realise that there are practical difficulties. I recognise that the intermixture of a people of different roots and habits must inevitably create difficulties, but I believe that if the Government were bold enough and courageous enough to give a lead to the country, and say that racial hatred and antagonism is anti-British and against the well-being of the country, and if we were to devise legislation which should root out anti-Semitism, I am positive that a great number of people in this country would recognise the value of such an act on the part of the Government, and to a large extent that antagonism would no longer exist. In Russia anti-Semitism has been reduced to negligible proportions.

The Deputy-Chairman (Mr. Charles Williams) We really must give up referring to the position in Russia. This is a very wide Debate, but I do not think we ought to refer to the position in other countries.

Mr. Mack I bow in deference to your Ruling, Mr. Williams. I had ventured to interpolate one sentence as an illustration of how this great problem has been effectively dealt with by Russia. However, I will not pursue that point. I would say to my hon. and gallant Friend to whom I have been alluding, that I do not think the problem would be so difficult as he imagines. I think it was Macaulay who in a wonderful essay, speaking as an Englishman, a great parliamentarian, and a great historian, said: "An acre in Middlesex is better than a principality in Utopia." I would paraphrase that for the Jews and say: "A Dunam of land in Palestine is better than a province in Cyrenaica." Whilst we

appreciate the kindly interest taken in the Jewish people with a view to solving their present territorial and economic problems I want to say, that from the religious, the historical, and economic point of view, the Jews regard Palestine, and Palestine alone, as the land in which they are prepared to make sacrifices and to which they are prepared to send their suffering brethren.

It would take too long, and I do not want to weary the Committee by telling them of the magnificent and munificent contributions Jewry all over the world has made to the war effort and the large sums of money which those in this country have contributed, totally out of proportion to their relatively small numbers, a mere third of a million. But I would quote a statement which Captain J. Helpern, of the Anglo-American Community for the Jewish Army, made in a speech in Manchester recently. He said that up to the present in this war, the Jews had paid with 2,000,000 lives for the distorted picture of themselves which arose from the policy of ascribing their achievements to other nations and giving them credit only for the "vices" of their black sheep. More than a million Jews were serving in the armies of the United Nations, a large proportion of the Free French defenders of Bir Akim were Jews of the Foreign Legion, and over 16,000 of General Mihailovich's Forces were Jews. But the story of their sacrifices would take far too long to tell. May I say, and this is vitally true, that it is very difficult for a race to show all their finer qualities when they are largely treated as pariahs.

The Jews are a courageous people. That can be said With great truth of the Jews who fought with Judas Maccabeus and the Jews in the Ghettoes of Warsaw who, completely unarmed, fought with wonderful heroism against their Nazi murderers. May I give one further example? The whole of the Jewish population of Palestine, a bare half million, rose in righteous wrath and indignation at the advance of Rommel. They said to the Government, "Give us an army, give us a flag, give us an identity, give us arms, and we, men, women and children, will fight against the invader. Indeed, if you do not give us arms, rather than let the tanks of Rommel ravage our fair country, we will tear down those tanks with our bare naked fingers." That was a magnificent gesture, and one which would have been translated into reality had the opportunity arisen.

I am trying to avoid the emotion which every one of us must feel in greater or lesser degree at the sheer, stark spectacle of a whole race being liquidated. The details of the murders are too horrible for the mind to contemplate. When we think that in the 20th century, in a so-called era of civilisation, such things can be perpetrated upon a people, no matter who that people may be, I say that if this world were not to be altered as a result of the war I would throw up my hands in utter despair, disavowing my faith in the whole future of mankind; but I believe that mankind can, and indeed will, regenerate itself. I believe that if this country is bold and courageous, if this country is prepared above all other countries—and its record is as great as that of any other country—to say to the Jews of the world, "Come ye into this country as a temporary refuge, and those Jews who temporarily take refuge in this country will be able after the war to go to Palestine," the very German Jews themselves would be glad of the opportunity of going to Palestine. If the Government will recognise that to be its true policy, it will be not merely carrying out a great eleemosynary principle, but will perform a deed which will preserve the name of this country for time immemorial as the greatest and most wonderful benefactor of all mankind.

Colonel Cazalet (Chippenham): I greatly appreciate the eloquent appeal that we have just heard, and I should like to join with the hon. Member in offering a sincere tribute to the hon. and noble Lady—I use those adjectives not in the Parliamentary sense, but in the ordinary sense—the Member for the Combined English Universities (Miss Rathbone). I have been associated with her for over 10 years in this problem of refugees, and it is impossible to exaggerate the complete disinterestedness, the great personal generosity and the unquenchable importunity which she has shown in matters dealing with it. If those characteristics and qualities have not always made her popular with Government Departments, I can assure her that they have earned her the deep admiration and affection of a great many friends, and thousands of friends, many of whom owe their lives to her work.

The Under-Secretary of State made a speech which, quite clearly, pleased the Committee. From a Departmental point of view it was admirable for what it said, and for what it left unsaid. I have only one comment to make about it. Speaking of the Committee of which I have the honour of being Chairman, he seemed to convey the impression that we were rather naughty boys and girls because we were taking so much interest in this subject. We ought to be leaving it to that efficient and benign Government Department to which he belongs. I would remind him that he will find a good number of the members of his own party on that Committee. He almost implied that it was Wrong for us to take

such an active interest in this question. What would be wrong and deplorable, at this moment in the history of Europe, in view of the appalling problems presented by the treatment of the refugees, would he if there were no committees of this kind and if there were men and women of every party and every religious creed throughout the country devoting their time and their lives to finding a solution to the problem. We would indeed be acting contrary to the very best traditions of our country.

To-day's Debate has been called a Debate upon refugees generally. If by "refugees" we mean those who desire to escape from Nazi rule, it indeed covers a very wide area. All Europe to-day is a prison house. The best part of 100,000,000 people are longing to be delivered from Nazi rule and persecution. It is true to say in that sense that overwhelming victory alone will solve that problem. I want to concentrate my few remarks upon a smaller section, namely, the Jews of Europe, those people whom we have been told by Goebbels only recently it is the German policy to exterminate. Just before I came into the Committee I was given a document in which there was information that came from Poland only a few days ago. All I can say is that that threat of Goebbels is no idle boast. The Jews are being exterminated to-day in tens of thousands. The stories of the horrors of the massacres at a camp called Treblinka would put to shame the massacres of Genghis Khan or the sufferings of the Albigenses in the past.

We have often heard of the tragedies of the Jews in Poland and Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. The other day there came to my notice certain facts in regard to the Jews in Belgium. They are a comparatively small number, but their sufferings are illustrative of what is going on elsewhere. In pre-war days there was no Jewish question in Belgium. The Germans have created one. Just over a year ago orders were given for the extermination of the Jews in Belgium. They were forbidden to leave the country. They had to wear a distinctive badge. I wonder how many of us realise the humiliation imposed on the Jews in Europe by having to wear the yellow armband? Happily that humiliation is mitigated by the kindness of the people of the country towards those who have to wear it. All Jews in the country were put under the curfew. They were excluded from the medical profession. They were only allowed to live in certain areas. One night 2,000 of them were rounded up in Brussels and sent off to some concentration camp in Germany. The result is that to-day, out of some 50,000 odd Jews in Belgium, 25,000, that is to say, all the young men and young women, have been deported to concentration camps in Poland or in Germany. This gives only one example from one little country. Multiply it a hundredfold. We then have an idea of the extent of the tragedy in Europe to-day.

I have never been one of those who attributed to the Government on this question an extra dose of original sin, and I appreciate that they feel on this question of refugees very much the same as we all do. I get a little tired, however, of being told time and time again how wonderful this country has been. We may have a good record—quite true—but what does that mean? We have simply done an act of ordinary Christian duty, of which we ought to be proud of having had the opportunity. It does not give us a reason for putting an extra halo of sanctity on our heads. Before the war we allowed something between 60,000 and 70,000 German and Austrian Jews into this country. In the first place, they were allowed in by no means because of any action on the part of the Government, but largely because of the generosity of individuals who were prepared to take them into their homes or to put up personal guarantees for them. Practically every one of those people are now doing useful and in many cases vital war work, and we certainly have not lost as a country by admitting those people into our midst. In any case, some 50,000 or 60,000 lives have been saved. We had an opportunity just before the war of bringing to this country some 100 Jewish doctors, and had we done so we might have deprived the German military machine of much of its effectiveness. I am not suggesting that all those doctors should have been allowed to practice. We did our best to persuade the Government to allow them in, but we failed.

I recognise that every member of the Government feels as deeply in his heart of hearts and as sincerely about this problem as do any of us, but I sometimes ask myself whether any of us, living in comparative safety and enjoying the large measure of toleration which exists in this country, quite realise what is going on in Europe, unless we have just heard of some new and appalling instance of massacre, or seen a play like "Watch on the Rhine," or a film or read a book describing what has happened in Europe. I am confident that if any of us were brought face to face this very minute with one of those incidents, which are not isolated but are going on almost every hour of the day and night in every part of Europe, we would be much more active about it. If we could hear the Gestapo knocking at the doors in the middle of the night, taking members of the family off never to be heard of again or seen, old men and women being beaten or kicked, children taken from their parents or men and women being hung up at the end of the street in which we live, I am certain, no matter what our views might be and whether we were anti-Jewish or not, the reaction

would be identical in every one of us. We would say, "Of course, we will do what we can." Everyone would say to the Government, "Go on and do what you can to open the doors. Take a risk, do something, something must be done."

The Under-Secretary of State made play with a case that was put forward, an individual case by my hon. Friend the Member for the Combined English Universities. She may have made a mistake in the details. We have all taken up cases of refugees of which we have not been able to know all the facts, but were we wrong to take them up, even though the Home Office eventually found out all about the case? If it were a question of our own mothers or near relatives who were in Germany or Austria who wanted to get out, or of anyone in the satellite countries like Hungary or Rumania, or in a neutral country, who might be in danger of being sent back to Germany, would we not go on raising the case time and time again? We would not be influenced by any frown from the Treasury Bench. One of the troubles is that despite an immense amount of good will on the part of the Government and everybody else, little can be done. There are the difficulties of transport and food and of the overriding requirements of the war. All those must, of course, come first, and we realise it. I do not suppose that the Government are in any doubt about the wide support throughout the country which is behind their efforts. One of the most pleasing and refreshing things we have experienced who are interested in these problems is the overwhelming response in the last few months and the offers of hospitality that have come from all sections of the community, and from none more than what might be considered the poor in this country.

Among the arguments against admitting into this country any considerable number of refugees is that people are afraid, so they say, of anti-Semitism. I know there is anti-Semitism in this country, but I am ashamed of it. The fact that anti-Semitism is increasing is a measure of the victory of Goebbels. Unless our final victory includes the defeat of anti-Semitism it will be a sham victory. I know that the Jews have been implicated in the black market, but so have Christians. It seems that whenever Jews are implicated in black market transactions it is news and that it is not such news when Christians are implicated. That is a curious sidelight and commentary upon existing affairs. When Jews are massacred in tens of thousands in Europe, it ceases to become news, but when half a dozen Jews are implicated in a black market transaction that is almost headline news. We should remember that for centuries, in every country, including our own, the Jews have been relegated to be money changers, bankers and middlemen. Is it really any wonder that there is a larger percentage of Jews to-day occupying those positions which lend themselves to illegal practices than of other races? I am not saying that as an excuse, but only as an explanation. What can be done?

Mr. Silverman I do not know whether my hon. and gallant Friend has been misled into saying something which I know he does not mean, but his words might be interpreted to mean that there were more Jews than others in this market. I am sure he does not think so.

The Deputy-Chairman I do not think we need go any further into that question. It is getting very irrelevant.

Colonel Cazalet I was only dealing with an argument which has been used, and I do not want to pursue the matter. I appreciate that the Under-Secretary was prevented by the requirements of security from stating all that the Bermuda Conference has done or has decided to do, and I hope that as months go by we shall see many things developing from the decisions taken at Bermuda. Some of us have drawn up a 12-point programme. I do not want to go into the whole of that programme, but I hope that the Bermuda Conference may result in some of the points being implemented.

I only want now to say something on two points. The first is the regulation dealing with the admission of refugees. Here may I say that I welcome and appreciate the changes which have been announced? We have been accused of not being grateful for small mercies. We are grateful, but I cannot help remembering that a few months ago when through letters and deputations to the appropriate authorities we asked for some such changes we were met with a stony refusal. However, I am delighted that the Government have seen their way to make some concessions, even though they only affect a few hundreds. I have felt at times that what the hon. Lady said about the Home Secretary is true. I know he is a strong man, and when he says "No" it stays put. There is no characteristic I more admire in a man than the capacity to say "No" and go on saying it, but there is a point where this admirable characteristic degenerates into sheer obstinacy. I think at times that the Home Secretary says "No" for the love of saying so and out of sheer habit. We do, however, thank him now for the concessions he and his colleagues have made, and I can only hope they are the beginning of greater things to come.

The only other thing I want to say about the 12 points is on the question of machinery. I hope that the Bermuda Conference has planned international machinery and that there will be at the head of it somebody who will qualify for the title of "the new Nansen." I think it is essential that there should be at the head of the organisation a man as independent as possible of any Government control, a man able to go to neutral States and take decisions of his own. I realise how generous many of the neutral States have been. Personally, I believe the solution of the problem on any adequate scale must mean opening doors in South America, where alone there is sufficient food and supplies for any appreciable number of refugees. I would like also to take the opportunity of expressing appreciation of the action of our ally Mexico, which for many years now has played a magnificent part in admitting refugees of every religion and every nation to its hospitable shores.

Refusal to admit Jews to this or any other country is not going to solve the Jewish problem, any more than Hitler's method of extermination is going to solve it. I believe that by helping to get out of Europe even a small number we shall be doing something not only right in itself but something to right the wrongs of 1,500 years. No country has ever lost by admitting refugees into its territory. We in this country certainly have gained. The Government now have an opportunity of pursuing a policy not merely in keeping with the best traditions of our past but also in keeping with the highest tenets of the Christian religion. It is after all part and parcel of the battle we are engaged in we are fighting— justice, decency and toleration. If we win that battle, we shall have done more to solve the Jewish problem than by any other method. To-day we have a cause about which everybody in this country feels deeply and sincerely. There is no division of opinion. Whatever the Government are able to effect will in any case fall far short, I believe, of what the mass of the people would like to see done. Therefore I say they should not be alarmed by any cry of anti-Semitism. Let them take risks, greater perhaps than they think they should take. In answering this cry for help which comes to us from millions of persecuted people in Europe, they and we will gain not only in this world but the next.

Mr. Mander (Wolverhampton, East): I should like to join in the tribute which my hon. and gallant Friend has just paid to the hon. Member for the Combined English Universities (Miss Rathbone) for the noble work she has done for so many years past. I think the hon. and gallant Member himself should be associated with that, because of the unselfish, devoted way in which he has worked on problems of this kind. It must be a source of great satisfaction to both of them that the Government are adopting a policy now which is going to be really helpful. As a result of the emotional scene in the House in December, as the result of the publication of the passionate plea by Mr. Victor Gollancz, "Let my people go," and of other appeals, the people of this country have been stirred up and are anxious, I believe, to see as much done as can possibly be done in the present difficult circumstances to rescue refugees. It is difficult to know all that is going on, because, for reasons of security, secrecy has to be observed about the Bermuda Conference, but my impression is that that conference has been a success and that as a result steps are to be taken and machinery established which will mean real progress. Those who are interested in this question know they cannot be given precise details of all arrangements, but they ought to be encouraged and gratified that the Government, under the very proper pressure of public opinion, have taken a line which I think is substantially in advance of anything they have done up to the present time.

Some suggestions have been put forward which I would like to comment upon. It has been suggested that we should enter into negotiations with Hitler and with Laval. I believe that would be an entirely wrong policy. These people are never moved by any dictates of humanity, and any such negotiations would only be used by them as blackmail against us. I noticed only yesterday in the newspapers a statement to the effect that the German Director of Labour had told Laval that he should stop the removal of children from areas endangered by air raids. That is typical of the type of mind with which we should have to negotiate if that suggestion were adopted. There is not the slightest hope of progress along any such lines. The only thing is unconditional surrender, and I hope that demand will be maintained.

It is agreed that the best way to help the refugees is to win the war in the shortest possible time. Every day saved means the saving of a considerable number of human lives. If we are to help refugees, we must not allow anything to interfere with the war effort. Ships should not be used for the transport of refugees if they are needed for the purpose of carrying troops and ammunition. But at the same time I think we all want to see refugees helped when that first priority has been satisfied. I felt rather alarmed when a suggestion was put forward that we should bring refugees here and put them in concentration camps, for reasons of security. It is an alarming prospect and shows the extreme difficulty of the problem. We must keep our sense of proportion in dealing even with this terrible problem and not allow the trees to deprive us of the sight of the wood.

Unfortunately in the course of war operations sometimes we are obliged to take steps which may kill some of our friends in occupied Europe, but we none of us would wish to abstain from taking action which is going to advance the war to a successful conclusion because incidentally it may have that effect. I only mention that in order to emphasise that we must have everything in view in the frightful situation which exists. At the same time that should not prevent our doing everything we can to help those who can be helped to escape from Nazi tyranny. I would like to make a comment, if I may, on one of the cases mentioned by the hon. Lady the Member for the English Universities on page 20 of her pamphlet. It is case 3, and the reference to it is as follows: "High official in the French Fighting Force applied for visas for Jewish family, escaped from France into Portugal. Visas granted for two sons to join the French Forces, but refused for their parents (60–70 years old)." I do not see any great injustice there, because the parents have been rescued from France and are in Portugal. Surely that is an enormous advance on what was the situation before them previously. I think it is going rather far to suggest that it was a gross act of injustice and a great hardship that a person should be left in Portugal and not brought into this country.

Something has been said about the fact that this is not a purely Jewish question. Of course it is not, and it is a very great mistake and a great disservice to the cause to talk too much as if it were. It affects people of all races and of all kinds. Not only Jews are being exterminated; the Poles are being exterminated in very large numbers, and other races are threatened and are being treated in the same way. I am afraid it is the case that the Jewish problem will not be so difficult to settle after the war as might have been the case, because the number of Jews will have so greatly decreased by the inhuman massacres that have taken place that there will not be so many alive in Europe.

Something has been said about anti-Semitic propaganda, and I entirely agree with the view that to take any notice of it, to be influenced by it, is to fall into the trap of Nazi propaganda. That is exactly what they want us to be animated by—anti-Semitic feeling—and I hope that the public will be extremely careful not to be taken in by this propaganda that, in one form or another, is being continually put forward by our enemies. I do not believe there is a very great danger of anti-Semitic feeling. I believe that the people of this country, in the main, would support action by the Government to help refugees who are Jews, and I give just this one example. In my constituency from the important town of Willenhall there came quite spontaneously, and, was sent to me, a petition signed by a large number of the leading citizens of all parties and creeds urging very strongly that the Government should take action, and making it quite clear that they did not intend to be animated by any fears that appear to exist in some parts of this country. The Motion put down on the Order Paper by a number of hon. Members indicates the same thing. I hope that the Government can feel reassured that the House will support them in any action they may take.

The Government have announced today some important new points. I think they have made it clear that something is going to be done to relieve the situation so far as the neutral States are concerned in regard to whatever they may do for refugees. They have spoken about the new international machinery which is to be set up. I believe that is of enormous importance. It ought to have a proper status given to it, to be given money and have placed at its head some man of outstanding prestige and influence who can go about and deal with statesmen in different parts of the world and get things done without delay. I imagine that is what the Government, or the Governments represented at the Bermuda Conference, have in mind. I hope we may hear before long that some refugee camps have been set up, possibly in North Africa. Then the extended categories of persons to be admitted here are an advance too. Reference has been made to the fact that we are really doing a good deal, that something like 10,000 a year is the rate at which refugees are being allowed in here. Furthermore, we have undertaken to admit 34,000 into Palestine. I am afraid that very few have gone, and the difficulties in the way of transport are great but I hope it will be pursued with the utmost vigour. My hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mr. Mack), who spoke just now, referred to the great possibilities of Palestine in the future. This goes outside what we are considering at the present moment, but personally I feel that the White Paper policy adopted before the war should be scrapped and that the policy of the National Home for the Jews should be prosecuted properly after the war. There is no substitute of any kind from the Jewish point of view. Finally, I would say that I hope the Government will be kept up to the mark by public opinion, by this House, and that we shall expect to see results flowing from the Bermuda Conference. But never let us forget that the best hope of all people, whether refugees or anybody else, is more Tunis victories, more Stalingrads, more R.A.F. raids. Let us use to the utmost our terrible, swift sword, terrible for the Nazis, arid swift to save the refugees and those who are suffering in all parts of the world.

Sir Austin Hudson (Hackney, North): I am very glad to have this opportunity of speaking very briefly in this Debate, because this subject of refugees is one which has been very close to my mind for some time past, the reason being that in my constituency about 60 per cent. of the electorate are Jewish, and of that percentage a very large number actually have relatives and friends—having come themselves to this country in comparatively recent years—who are in this grave danger, or who have already suffered from the Nazi terror. I want to support and add my word to the plea that everything possible—everything possible, I say—should be done by us to help these unhappily fortunate people. The Under-Secretary of State, in opening this Debate, seemed to think that the Government had been rather hardly used because of the fact that they were attacked, and that people were saying that they were doing nothing while in effect they had done, and were doing, a great deal. If I may say so, I think the Government are very largely to blame for that state of affairs. They seem to have acted in this matter very much in the way in which they acted in respect to the Beveridge Report—

The Deputy-Chairman We must not have anything to do with the Beveridge Report in this Debate.

Sir A. Hudson I respect your Ruling, of course, Mr. Williams. The analogy was that they were not making the best of a good case. In this case I think they have a very good case, but they have the whole time stressed the difficulties and never emphasised the fact that they are going to do everything in their power to overcome those difficulties, however hard that may be. If only they would, in winding up this Debate, or whenever they make their next statement about the refugee problem, tell us frankly what they would like to do, I am perfectly certain that if what ultimately transpires falls short of their desires, this House would be the very last to blame them for that. But it is because there is widespread anxiety among certain people that we should do all we possibly can and the fact that the Government appear to be hedging makes them anxious lest the Government do nothing. Those of us who have the advantage of being able to talk to members of the Government responsible for this important matter know they are doing their very utmost, but they really cannot blame the country for suspecting them if they do not put in the shop window the goods they have. I know what is the reason for it. It is what I might call the Civil Service attitude, which I suffered from myself, particularly when I first became a Minister. One has a difficult problem and has to speak about it in the House. You ask the head of that Department what you are to say. He says, "You cannot say anything about it; it is far too complicated." The result is that a very good case often goes by default.

The Under-Secretary mentioned a Committee of Members of this House called the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror, and seemed to have some suspicion of it. I can assure him that he need not be in the least suspicious of that Committee. It was set up for a very simple reason. We found that a large number of organisations and members of this House were interested, and were all wanting to do something, and an endeavour was made to bring all those people together in one organisation, that is, this organisation with the rather long name. Surely it is an advantage to the Government that we should try to crystallise movements of this kind into a proper committee than that they should go unco-ordinated and thereby waste a great deal of their initial energy. As one or two Members have said, this organisation has tried to put its general ideas into the form of 12 points and these points have, I think, been distributed to all Members. I am, on the whole, generally in agreement with these points, because I happen to be a vice-president of the organisation. But there is one particular point, No. 1, on which I wish to say a word, because I think it is being stressed too much. The problem we are facing is one of gigantic size. If we are really to help, we have got to get out of enemy-occupied country very large numbers of people, and I do not believe that we can do that by admitting any large number more of refugees to this country. I think we have done a good deal; the figures were given by the Under-Secretary, and I do not believe we can do very much more in that way. We heard with gratitude the fact that there are certain small classes extra which are to be admitted to this country.

I want to stress to the Committee that in my view the greatest danger, I might almost say now the only danger, before this country in this war is the danger of U-boat warfare. In my opinion, therefore, we must not do anything, however small, to increase that danger. If we are to bring large numbers of refugees to this country, and particularly if they are what I might call old refugees, that is, refugees of a certain age who cannot be of help to the country, then we are, in my view, increasing the danger in two ways. First of all, we would be using ships which ought to be bringing in food and munitions. Secondly, it would be increasing the number of useless mouths in this country. The Government, ever since the war, have had, and must have, a definite policy as regards aliens, and that must be governed by common sense and not by sentiment. The policy has been only to admit, with certain exceptions, useful aliens to this country, and incidentally when I say aliens there is no discrimination made by the Government, and rightly no discrimination is

made, as to whether those aliens are Jewish or of any other faith. That policy may be, and is, disappointing to a certain number of people who have aged relatives whom they hoped might come here. I cannot help saying, in spite of the many friends I have to whom this is disappointing, that I am perfectly certain that such a policy is right, and if it is right we must back the Government up in applying it. We cannot afford to be sentimental in total war. To lose the war would be the one thing which would finally destroy any hope for these unfortunate people. Nothing would suit Hitler better than to be able to send every useless alien to this country, because he would be giving us a problem to solve which would be practically insoluble, and, at the same time, relieving himself of an obligation which he is finding it very difficult to carry out.

Mr. Lipson (Cheltenham): Is the hon. Member aware that the Under-Secretary said that it was no use approaching the German Government because they would not let these people go?

Sir A. Hudson I am perfectly certain that what I say is true. It is common sense. If every useless person could be sent to this country, thereby relieving the Germans and giving us the most awful problem to solve, it would assist them in the war. But, in my opinion, we cannot look to this country for the large numbers of people that we want to see rescued from the Nazi terror. We must look for some alternative plan, which has not the disadvantages of increasing our danger from U-boat warfare. I think we can devise such a scheme if we use the empty ships which must be returning from Europe after bringing munitions, troops, or supplies. To do that we must set up settlements in foreign countries. I believe that there is great hope for such settlements in North Africa, where there seem to be just the circumstances which are necessary. I believe, although I have not had this information actually from the Government, that this is in the mind of the Government. They are always telling us that they have to consult other countries. It is a fact that if you put these camps down in other countries, you have to consult them as to the best places to use. I ask the Government to proceed on those lines with the greatest possible boldness.

I want to say a word about that extraordinary letter in the "Times" newspaper yesterday, from the Bishop of Chichester. I think that it is one of the cruellest letters I have ever seen, because it raises hopes which it is quite impossible to fulfil. I am going to quote that sentence which I think is so cruel: "It is quite certain that if the British and American Governments were determined to achieve a programme of rescue in some way commensurate with the vastness of the need, they could do it." Anybody reading that would say "The Bishop lives in a palace, and obviously is a man of wisdom. He must know something that we do not know. He knows that the Government could rescue our friends and relatives if only they had the will." The Under-Secretary has said that he challenges the Bishop to produce a plan. If he cannot do so, I hope that yet another of these political priests will hold his tongue on subjects of this kind.

I would like to say a word about anti-Semitism. I know something about this subject, in view of the peculiar composition of my own constituency. I am aware that there is ill-feeling between the Jews and the Christians in my constituency. There is no doubt about that. But I am convinced that that ill-feeling is not political in any way. It arises from the fact that in the last decade or so, large numbers of people, who have only recently come from the Continent, have come to live in that neighbourhood. Their customs, their ways of living, are different. I know, from the letters I have received, asking whether it is true that many more aliens are coming, that some of the old inhabitants have found the position very difficult. A lot more toleration is required. The one question which crops up all the time in my correspondence on this matter is the question of Sunday observance. In every letter there is a complaint from the Christian that the Jew is doing something on a Sunday which is repugnant to the Christian inhabitants, who probably lived there long before the Jew came. Once you get the religious element brought in, you will have very strong feeling. We in this House know that this country is very deeply religious, although some people may not think so. You have only to remember the Prayer Book Debates, the controversy about Sunday opening of theatres, and that sort of thing. I have done my best to make things easier, and certainly anti-Semitism in a constituency such as mine is not a matter of world wide importance. What we want is greater toleration, not only from the Gentile for the Jew but also from the Jew for the Gentile, particularly on questions of religion.

I have spoken on this important question of refugees. I have tried to show why I do not believe it can be solved by bringing great numbers to this country, partly because of the danger to the country, and partly because the number could never be so great as we would wish. I have tried to show how the problem could be dealt with by having camps in other countries, particularly in North Africa. I would appeal to the Government to be over-bold rather than over-cautious. Then they would find the whole country behind them.

Sir Richard Acland (Barnstaple) want to dispose, briefly, of two small points. On the question of security, I entirely understand the Government's view, but I would say this. If, taking the thing to its ultimate conclusion, it should be necessary to put every refugee who is rescued into internment, I do not believe that, either on moral or on practical grounds, one should object. There is no refugee who would not prefer internment, outside Hitler's control, for the duration of the war, to remaining where he is. On the whole problem of food and transport, I would say that you can do it if you care enough about it. In the last few weeks we have had thrown into our hands something like 200,000 extra people, whom we have to feed. They are our prisoners in Tunisia. Nobody suggests that that cannot be done. There are ships enough to transport and feed those refugees, whom the right hon. Gentleman himself said would be in far smaller numbers, if you care enough about it. The doubt which has alarmed me in common with many others in all this business is whether this Government care enough. The hon. Member for North Hackney (Sir A. Hudson) said that you cannot afford to be sentimental in total war. I agree; but I would put the thing the other way round, and ask, "Does this Government understand that, even in total war, moral forces produce their results"? It is this fact which we are afraid is not understood on the Government Benches. People have been told it for 2,000 years. Moral forces, if you use them courageously, produce material results, here and now.

Mr. Magnay (Gateshead) rose—

Sir R. Acland I promised to be brief. I will not undertake to answer the hon. Member.

Mr. Magnay Does the hon. Member suggest that these things will happen by return of post? He says that 2,000 years have past, and they have not happened yet.

Sir R. Acland I do suggest that it would actually produce a physical shortening of the war if Government policy revealed, more clearly than it does at present, a moral basis, in all sorts of ways.

Mr. Magnay Even though you voted against armaments.

Sir R. Acland I will not be drawn into arguments of that kind, but I say, flat out, that I did not do so. In view of my promise to the Chair, I will not be interrupted any more. I say that if you care enough, these things can be done. The right hon. Gentleman, insopening this Debate, said that there was a great deal of human distress in this country on this subject. There is. It is caused not only by contemplating the indescribable sufferings of other people, but by wondering whether we have not the atmosphere in Government Departments that at one time we thought we had got rid of. We do not find in our Government men who say, "Being the Government, and having been selected by you, presumably, because you think we are the people best fitted to do the job, we will show you how the Government can do more than ordinary people expect." On all sorts of questions, such as the distressed areas, non-intervention, the Beveridge Report, and now this matter, we find that instead of that, we get a Government who seem to think it is their business to explain, so logically, but oh so timidly, just why these things cannot be done.

I know that this is not solely a Jewish question. It concerns many other races, and many other peoples. But I think that most people will agree that it is a Jewish question in a different degree from the degree in which it is a question of any other race. That difference in degree is so great as to amount to a difference in kind. This is what I want to say to the House; and I wish I had time to develop the argument, which I confess I have only recently become aware of myself. Anti-Semitism, which is a world force, is not simply an attack on the Jews; it is the supreme attack on Christ. That may seem a strange statement, but I believe it to be true. The united powers of world evil dare not attack Christ and Christianity direct, and, in their frustration, they are psychologically distorted, and emerge in this demoniac form of anti-Semitism. Those who are wrestling with the problem of anti-Semitism I would beg to read the book where this argument is set out—and it was a revelation to me—I refer to the book by Marcus Samuel, "The Great Hatred." If anti-Semitism is seen as the attack on Christ, it becomes the more terrible that it may be doubted—as it is being doubted—whether this Government care enough.

I will give three reasons which seem to me to prove unmistakably that this Government do not care enough. First, the Government have not appointed one man of outstanding character and given him responsibility, as a full-time job, for putting dynamic energy behind all the things which are being done. The second proof, a small one, I take from one of the so-called concessions that have been announced to-day. A man who is prepared to fight in the Fighting Forces is to be granted a visa provided he is fit. The only reason for putting in that qualification as being a qualification which will

entitle a man to a visa is that, if the man does not satisfy the qualification, he will not be entitled to the visa. Therefore if you get a man who is willing to fight in the Allied forces who is unfit to do so, you say, "No, you cannot have a visa." The evil of this is that men may be, for that reason, left behind in neutral countries, and it is our ability to take these men out of neutral countries which increases the ability of neutral countries to take them in. You may say that it will only affect a very few, but you should remember— "Inasmuch as you did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren..." If the concession that a man should be willing to fight for the country is to stand, we should wipe out the question of his being physically fit. Take in these men if you can get them whether they are physically fit or not.

The final reason why I say the Government do not care enough is heranse they have not made the declaration which they could make—that the British Empire, subject to security, of course, will give sanctuary and succour to every Jew who can reach any British frontier or any port where any British ship can call. You could make that declaration and you could back it by action. The Government themselves have given the evidence that only a very few could be involved. Or is it perhaps the case that they are afraid? If they made that sort of declaration it might be something rather more than a benefit to a few. Is it perhaps because they are afraid, that if we did our all in this matter it might not be a question of a few but a question of many thousands? The Government are disappointing the forces of moral decency in this country over this business. There is no doubt about that. The forces of moral decency in this country have only themselves to blame if they are perpetually disregarded because they have organised themselves so ineffectually for political action. I believe they are now beginning to organise themselves more effectively, and those who stand against these forces will not sit on those benches very much longer.

Mr. David Grenfell (Gower): I am bound to confess that I too feel a sense of disappointment with the Debate we have had to-day. Circumstances may have dictated the conditions under which we were to debate, but it would have been an advantage if the Debate had been held in Secret Session. There are so many things about which we really cannot talk in the hearing of the world public, and I have therefore every willingness to accommodate myself to the official reticence in these matters. I would like to see evidence of a little greater warmth of feeling and a greater realisation of this tremendous problem with which we are now faced and which will grow in intensity and importance as the time passes. I see very little sign of any preparation for what I believe to be the possibilities of a first-class catastrophe in Europe when the circumstances fully develop. I would have been content today if I had been assured by what the right hon. Gentleman said and by what we have heard in other Debates. I would like the House to be assured that the Government are fully seized with the importance of this terrible pending calamity which has already alarmed the world. I do not remember an expression of spontaneous feeling in this House rivalling that which we witnessed when the right hon. Gentleman read an account of the proceedings in Poland and Middle Europe and an hon. Friend behind me, moved by what the right hon. Gentleman had said, rose to his feet and carried the House with him, lifting everybody in this House to a standing position, to express our abhorrence and our deep concern at what the right hon. Gentleman had disclosed in Europe. That feeling was not confined to this House. The outside public welcomed that sign of warmth by hon. Members.

We have great virtues in this House and in this country, and, while we do not parade our feelings, we know how to give way to our feelings at the right time. I am sure that hon. Members expressed the feelings of the House. We do not know sufficient of the facts. It is difficult to get information from the prison which Europe is to-day, and it is difficult to visualise the conditions which convey the picture of Europe as it is. Our people have an instinctive regard and capacity for right judgments and they applauded and approved of the gesture on that occasion. I have had letters from my own division. I did not know how same things, freely circulated in some parts, get so widely known throughout the country. I have had correspondence from people I have never met and with people in my own division quoting from the "Manchester Guardian" report, and from the statement which the hon. Member read to-day and from written and spoken words of bishops, who are not discounted in this country. I was really disappointed on this point in regard to the people who started the Committee with a long name and of which I am a member also. I thought by the derisive note that I was fortunate in not being named in that company. I am a member of that Committee, and I find that it represents the religious and the best moral forces of this country. They brought me in simply as a Member of the House of Commons in a minor capacity. They tried their best to organise something in this country which would give practical effect to the feeling of the House as manifested a few months ago.

What is the kind of problem with which we are faced? Germany is suffering and has been suffering for years from a kind of mania movement based on anti-Semitism, which is anti-Christian, and anti everything which is not Nazi,

looking for culprits in every corner of German society, and getting the Germans to hate the Jews. One hears in this House and sometimes in the country that Jews are a formidable branch of the human race and are out-numbering everybody else and usurping the ordinary man whether in London, Berlin or elsewhere. The contrary is the fact. The Jews are a very small proportion of the German Reich; they are less than one per cent. of the German Reich, and less than one per cent. of the population of this country. I have often asked myself and the German people in the days before the war, What is wrong with 99 Germans when they cannot look after one Jew? Why should 99 Englishmen be induced to hate one Jew? There is something wrong when they cannot order their joint lives so that everyone plays his proper part in society. There is a pernicious moral element at work in Europe, the effects of which are not confined to the atrocities now being committed there. We are witnessing the degeneration of Europe, not of the Jews, under the stress of this propaganda movement which is being directed against them. We have witnessed in Germany a return to the executioner's axe, freely employed upon political as well as racial opponents. We have seen in recent months the Germans resort to mass murder with deadly, lethal weapons and with electricity and gas—a terrible thing which makes decent-minded people despair of the humanity that is capable of condoning such happenings without expressing a deep sense of revolt and shame.

I think it would be a very unhealthy sign if we in this country and in this House were to regard this matter as a mere nuisance, as a complication of the international situation, that we could not get on quite as well with America if we said this or that. We must take our responsibility of removing these people from the dangers which threaten them and transfer them to some other safe place in the world. Safe places are not many nowadays but we are blessed inasmuch as we have safer places of refuge than any other country. I am quite prepared to agree that there are difficulties, because we have not enough shipping or transport, that there are political complications and the like, but I very much deplore any indication that this House is prepared to accept that position as the last word and assume that nothing can be done because of the difficulties which are standing in the way. I do not want to judge the Bermuda Conference yet, because I do not know enough about it. There are two sides to a conference. We were parties, and there were other parties. I do not know which were more willing to do the things which I would like to see done, and I do not know who stressed the difficulties most. I do not know whether we attempted to persuade the Americans to come forward, or whether we found we could not do so because evidence of unwillingness may have been displayed. I do not know, and at all events I do not think it would be wise to discuss this in public, because it would lead to dangerous controversy.

I would, however, like to get an assurance that these mass murders in the East and South-East of Europe, these revolting crimes, this terrible destruction of human life and human morality will not be allowed to pass without our having something to say, and that as an indication of our interest we are prepared to build up an organisation to give succour and relief to as many as can escape. We cannot get into the heart of Poland to take them out or ask the Germans to release them, but we should say to those who come within reach of our hands that we will help them. Are we prepared to do that? If so, we ought to say so in this House. Our people should know. If there are impossible difficulties, they should know, and if there are temporary difficulties which cannot be spoken about, a clear hint should be given. I understand that there are about 40,000 people in Persia. Possibly the reservoir has been partly drained there but they might go in greater numbers to Palestine. After all, it is the Jewish home. Whatever can be said about that ancient place, the Jewish race have built up a new life in that country. May I read a telegram I have received from people who sent it to me when they heard that I was to speak in this Debate? Here it is: "Received now new reliable reports Nazis mass murdering Jews. Personally carefully investigated new witnesses who left Poland January, 1943. Absolutely confirmation, most horrible details. Daily murder 1,000 Jews, including women and children under 12. From Holy City in most critical hour. For whole democracy on behalf humanitarian religious workers' organisations. Raise your voice public opinion. Create special organisation. Necessary practical measures to save remnants. Exchange Jews for Germans. Allied countries open gates refugees. Act immediately. Deadly danger." Those are expressions of opinion from people in Palestine. The Palestine Jews will open the door themselves to take their racial kindred into their own homes. I do not know what the number may be, but we are now in complete charge of North Africa, and I believe we shall remain in full charge until the end of the war. [An HON. MEMBER: "What about the French?"] A lot of work has to be done before it is finally decided who is to be the custodian of public affairs in that part of the world. But for the moment that part of Africa is accessible. We have sufficient authority to invite people who can escape from Europe.

Earl Winterton May I ask the hon. Gentleman a friendly question? It has nothing to do with refugees, but, as he referred to it, I presume it is in Order. Surely he does not suggest that we or the Americans have a free hand in North Africa? It would be most serious if the suggestion went out from this bench that the French Government that has been set up has no say in the matter.

Mr. Grenfell The French Government never had authority over the whole of North Africa. Cyrenaica and Libya were never French. I know what I am speaking of. We want to make use of whatever accommodation we have in the world, and that may be the most likely immediate place of accommodation for these people. I know how difficult it is, with the best will in the world, to move people for thousands of miles to a place of security and safety, but I should not like every idea that is put up to be deprecated and scorned. The Under-Secretary said it was not possible to give block visas. We should have to check everyone and communicate with the Home Office and see whether we could in advance vouch at both ends for every single person who was to be supplied with a visa. That is not quite true. [Interruption.] I thought it was. If it is not, I withdraw it. But the point is that it is not an insuperable obstacle. In 1938 there were people round about Prague who were suffering from Nazi ill-treatment and did not know how to get away. The right hon. Gentleman's predecessor gave me authority to go to Prague and make out a list, with the assurance in advance that 400 visas would be granted in a block, and we began an exodus of refugees. I myself took the first two parties to Gdynie and afterwards established a courier system which resulted in thousands of people being brought away. I do not think it is impossible to supply facilities. I will not name any independent country which is now receiving some of these refugees, and I am careful not to do anything which will offend, not the susceptibilities but the necessities of the Foreign Office. I should like to dismiss much of this complaint and bickering against the Government, but the Government are not bold enough in my opinion. In striking this attitude they are not satisfying the expectations of the world. We are still held in very high esteem throughout the world, and that esteem is invaluable to us. It will be a factor in settling the problems that will remain after the war is finished.

I think the problem of the refugees will become far more intensified when Europe cracks up. What are we to do then to relieve Europe not only of the persecuted Jews but of political victims and refugees of all kinds? With the help of the Allied Nations, we may have a great opportunity of giving succour and security to hundreds of thousands. There have been refugees after every violent change of Government, every revolution and every war. This terrible problem of the Jews is assuming worse and worse forms day by day. It may suddenly, almost overnight, assume overwhelming proportions of a dreadful character. My proposal is that there should be appointed a person of high authority, under whatever Department you like, co-operating with representatives of other countries in forming contacts and links in all the enemy-occupied countries and in friendly countries. I believe the time has come when we should be making contacts inside enemy countries with the victims of persecution. If the right hon. Gentleman could give that assurance, he would carry the Committee with him and he would earn the gratitude of the people of the country, who want the right and decent thing done. The right and decent thing is to adopt bold measures and to plan for giving relief and security to those who have lost their homes in the course of the war. A master plan should be prepared to put into execution when the time comes.

Mr. Butcher (Holland with Boston): I hope the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I suggest that there is some tendency at present to mix feelings with facts. If feelings were all that were required, there would have been no refugee problem, because the doors of the country would have been opened wide to receive people of all races and from all quarters. But we are faced with inescapable facts and we are doing a disservice to refugees of all kinds unless we are prepared to face them freely and frankly. The first is that Hitler is unwilling in the main to allow these people to go, therefore the chances are that those who present themselves in neutral countries before our consular agents are either people who have evaded the clutches of the Gestapo, or who have reached that point with the connivance of the German authorities. The second fact is that this is not a Jewish problem. The Under-Secretary said that there are in Europe at present 120,000,000 potential refugees. I can conceive nothing more likely to create anti-Semitism in this country than to let the feeling get abroad that every Jew or Jewess is to have a special measure of relief which is not open to the Norwegian pastor, the Dutch politician or the French trade unionist. There must be perfect equality of treatment for every race and every creed.

Commander Locker-Lampson (Birmingham, Handsworth): The Jews are the only people who have not a home. The Poles have a home.

Mr. Butcher I am not going to argue on those lines. At all costs, we must not allow anti-Semitism to increase, and it is going to increase if Jews receive special treatment. It is increasing and I regret it very much, but the arguments of the hon. Lady the Member for the Combined English Universities (Miss Rathbone), sincere as they are, will not work. Let us look at the arguments which have been developed on this problem. I speak as one who has great sympathy for refugees. My right hon. Friend the Under-Secretary knows how I used to worry him in the days before the war. I have had Jewish refugees from Austria and Germany in my own home and were the same circumstances to occur again the same door would be open to them. Before, the hon. Lady was right and the Home Office was wrong, but at the present time the Home Office is right and the hon. Lady is wrong because circumstances have been entirely reversed by the war. What was the position? First, these people—I speak now of the Jews in the main—came to this country as refugees from Nazi oppression. Then the claim was made that if they could not be received into the community we should establish an internment camp as was established at Richborough, which the Noble Lord and I had the privilege of visiting. They were established there in order to secure some remnants of the Jewish race. Then the war broke out. The third claim was that the refugees interned in this camp and people elsewhere in this country to whom we had given refuge should have the restrictions on the conditions on which they were permitted to enter this country removed, and also that they should have an opportunity of making a choice, which was not available at that time to ordinary Englishmen and women, whether they should serve or not serve. As soon as that point had been conceded the next claim was that, having elected to serve, they should as a right secure British nationality. Finally, the claim is being made that because they are serving and assisting the war effort in that way their relatives should as a right be brought into this country.

I say, frankly, that we can only deal with this matter if we deal with it on a strictly factual basis. The facts remain, and the fact which impresses itself on me more than any other is that in view of the unwillingness of the German authorities to release these people and in view of the fact that nothing we can do can touch but a fringe of the problem, the only way to bring relief to Europe as a whole is by achieving victory at the earliest possible moment. How much shipping are we willing to divert at the risk of delaying that victory? If we divert only a ship or two we make no contribution whatever to this appalling problem of rescuing from German terror not a few thousand Jews, but the whole continent of Europe, with tiny exceptions. If, on the other hand, we divert an enormous amount of shipping, together with the organisation which controls and handles shipping, we shall delay victory and the chances of ultimate rescue recede.

I therefore say to my right hon. Friend the Under-Secretary, "You were very slow at the Home Office before the war. I believe you could have done a great deal more when it was a question of allowing people into this country on transit visas and putting them into camps. At the present time I believe that were much more to be done you would only do it at the risk of impeding the war effort. Nevertheless, the fact remains that these people are getting into certain neutral countries and I hope the decisions that were made at the Bermuda Conference will be implemented." The criticisms made in various quarters of the Committee that there is a time lag between decision and performance are justifiable; they are inherent in any Government action. I beg that in cases where no question of security arises, cases of children and so on, the most immediate measures will be taken so far as the Government can take them. Similarly, in cases where it is decided that security questions operate I hope that the Government will deal with these things in the most speedy manner possible. Do not let these questions of security wait a moment longer than can be helped.

I ask any hon. Gentleman who does not agree with everything I have said to accept my assurance that I regard this appalling problem of the refugees with the same sympathy and deep feeling that they do. But I hope that they will be able to share my view that only by the complete overthrow of the Hitler power can any solid, real hope come to the people on the continent of Europe. Do not let us bring such pressure on the Government that will cause them to divert any of the means that are necessary to achieve victory.

Professor A. V. Hill (Cambridge University): I do not agree with all that the hon. Member for Holland with Boston (Mr. Butcher) said, but I do agree cordially with his thesis that nothing we do must be allowed to hinder our efforts in bringing the war to an end. That is the one condition above all else in this matter and I hope to develop that point later on. I could not agree more than I do with the hon. Member for North Hackney (Sir A. Hudson) on what he referred to as the magnitude of the failure of the Government to put across their own case. That was referred to in another form by my hon. Friend the Member for Gower (Mr. Grenfell), who said that there had been a failure in the warmth of feeling and that the need for a more generous expression on the part of the Government had not been realised. I am

glad that the hon. Member for Gower does not believe that things are impossible merely because he is told they are impossible. I am convinced, with him, that if this matter were approached rather in the spirit in which he said he would approach it, more could get done. I think that the hon. Member for North Hackney possibly exaggerates the numbers who could be brought here. The possibilities of bringing large numbers are extremely small. As he said, we must look for an alternative solution.

There is a deep moral significance in the widespread public concern of which this Debate is a manifestation. The Committee will have listened with the greatest interest and will have been moved by the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for Chippenham (Colonel Cazalet) who, except for the hon. Lady the Member for the Combined English Universities (Miss Rathbone), has done more in the cause of refugees than any of us. He can speak on this subject with more feeling than I dare allow myself to do. If I speak more coldly, perhaps more arithmetically, I do so the less reluctantly because he has already said much better than I could what I should have liked to say. I would like to join with the hon. Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Mander) in the tribute which he paid both to the hon. and gallant Member for Chippenham for what he said and for his work and to the hon. Lady, whom we might call the patron saint of refugees.

The deep moral significance of this Debate explains the impatience and concern with which the attitude, or rather the apparent attitude, of the Government has been seen by the public. The impatience and the concern may have been foolish and misguided, but they were a reality and based upon very genuine feeling. Some of that impatience will have been dissipated to-day, but not all of it, I am afraid. We still have a little too much of the elderly school mistress telling off her naughty pupils. It is all too easy for us to get used to horrors, to any horrors. Men, like doctors, can be put into two classes, those whose contact with suffering make them more sympathetic and those whom it hardens. The hon. Lady who spoke earlier is certainly in the first class. In the years of isolation and non-intervention, too many of us learned, like the Pharisee, to pass by on the other side. We recognise now the futility as well as the cruelty of that attitude. We realise that an assault upon decency and justice anywhere is an assault upon decency and justice everywhere, and the average Englishman wants to have done with what he regards, perhaps wrongly, as the evasion that occurred in the years of non-intervention and to get on with the attempt to salvage what we can of the human wreckage thrown up by the Nazi terror. Perhaps he is wrong in feeling there is evasion here, but at any rate he feels it.

The Under-Secretary referred to the wide variety of refugees that exist in the world. In the widest sense, covering all those who have been driven from their homes, there must be tens of millions. In the narrower sense of those who would gladly get out of their homes if they could to somewhere where there is less danger, there must be, I should say 100,000,000 or more. And in the narrower sense we are dealing with to-day, those whom we can hope to save from their imminent danger, there are not millions, and perhaps not hundreds of thousands, but certainly tens of thousands. The major problem will tax to the utmost all the resources of goodwill and statesmanship of which the Allied Nations are capable. The main object of this Debate is to discuss the minor problem, if one may call it that, of providing immediate help to those in imminent danger, but it is a very suitable preface and introduction to the much more difficult problem which some day we shall have to face. If the Home Secretary were to see a drowning child in a pond he would jump in at once to save it, regardless of his clothes. He would not argue that he had saved other children already, or that the shipping position made it necessary for him to be careful of his trousers, or that it was essential first to call a conference of all those others who might equally well jump in, or even say that some people do not like children anyway. He would forget his dignity and his past virtues, he would forget his trousers, he would forget other people's obligations, he would forget his rich uncle who does not like children, and would go straight into the pond.

A shipwreck or an accident in a pit calls up at once the same kind of intuitive impulse to go to the rescue. That is an impulse which is not to be despised. To count the probable cost too closely or too long is to deny the common humanity which no community, great or small, can afford to give up if it is to hold together. If the major problem of refugees and the restoration of the desolated world are ever to be successfully tackled, it would be disastrous now to deny whatever practical expression is possible to this moral impulse to offer help at once to fellow beings in peril.

The Under-Secretary and others have urged us to-day, and I have urged myself, that in anything we propose to do in rescuing the potential victims of the Nazi terror we must bear in mind the dominant consideration of bringing the war at the earliest possible moment to a final issue. It is no use to make a quantitative estimate of the total suffering and loss in the world as a whole due to the present state of war. The loss of life due directly to military action is only a

fraction of that from other causes—famine, exposure, disease, disorder and massacre. That in its turn is only a small part of the total loss of human values—health, security, order, education and prosperity which the war has involved. In Europe as a whole the civilian death-rate may very well be increased by a half in the war. That is probably a moderate estimate. That would mean 3,000,000 or so extra deaths per annum. Adding those in China and in countries now occupied by the Japanese, and including direct military losses, I imagine that in the world as a whole there are between 5,000,000 and 10,000,000 people dying annually owing to the war, that is, between 100,000 and 200,000 per week. This is altogether apart from the other losses in human values.

The only way to save those lives and those values is to bring the war as soon as possible to a victorious end. Nothing we can conceivably do otherwise to help the potential victims of Nazi misery can compare with what would be saved by shortening the war even by a fortnight. I think it is very necessary to be clear about that. Unthinking sentimental people in comfortable England—I get many letters from them—write saying that if it means prolonging the war we must do all we can to save these victims. They forget that the war is injuring not them alone but the whole populations of Europe and Asia. The prime consideration therefore in anything we do in helping these threatened victims of Nazi savagery is that everything that can be used shall be used in our offensive effort to bring victory quicker. That may sound like a counsel of despair.

What, then, can be done? I fear it is pitifully small. It would be impossible on the one hand to exaggerate the misery and the crime; enough has been said about that already, and were it ten times greater, or less, it would make no difference to one's estimate of it. Appeals to common humanity and justice would be exactly the same. But it is possible, at any rate it is usual and frequent, to overestimate what we can do. The numbers who will be able to get away is very small, tens of thousands perhaps, certainly not hundreds and thousands. It is commonly said that our shipping difficulties are so great that we cannot take on the obligation of feeding another 10,000 people in this country. Can it really be argued that we are so near to the absolute limits of our capacity that if each of us had to give up two ounces of food per annum it would make all the difference to us?

Is transport really so difficult? Are not ships returning in ballast to this country and America from North Africa? In asking other countries to bear their share of the burden and the privilege of saving these people, should we not demonstrate our own willingness forthwith to bear an appropriate, not an exaggerated, part of the burden? Will the United Nations find any fundamental difficulty in dealing with the problem of the 2000,000 prisoners from North Africa? The total number of refugees that we can possibly hope to save is only a fraction of that number.

It is not sense to say that we cannot tackle this tiny job, if we want to. There are some who imagine that we can do much more by negotiating with the Nazis. Most people feel that it would be about as useful to negotiate with Hitler as with a professional blackmailer on this or on any other subject. We have learned too much about him. Before we knew where we were some more victims for blackmail would be put on the spot. All we can possibly do is to offer help and asylum to those who are able, in one way or another, to get out, and to offer that help quickly. If we were to relieve neutral countries as soon as practicable of the burden of responsibility and hospitality for refugees from enemy occupied countries on their borders, those neutral countries would, perhaps, be the readier to accept and help those who wish to escape. That is all that we can do. Let us look at the practical problem, the limitations and dimensions of which can put no strain on our capacity for waging offensive war, and will not encourage fresh Nazi threats of savagery against a new class of victims. We know very well that the Government, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs particularly, are sympathetic and want to do whatever is possible in this matter, but they are busy people. A great deal of impatience has been felt about the Government and I should have felt more impatience myself had I not believed in the good intentions of the Government and had I not known, as a biologist, that the period of gestation increases with the size of the animal, from a few weeks in the case of a rabbit to 18 months in that of the elephant—and His Majesty's Government is a great deal bigger than a rabbit.

The hon. and gallant Member for North-West Kingston-upon-Hull (Sir A. Lambert Ward) referred to the alleged danger of anti-Semitism here, and so did the hon. and gallant Member for Chippenham (Colonel Cazalet) and other speakers. It has been urged on the Home Secretary that a danger of anti-Semitism will exist, if more Jews are introduced here. This, again, is the argument of the last straw. Are the Jews so powerful and baneful an influence that one extra Jew among 5,000 Englishmen will make the whole mixture unstable? That is the proposition. To those who prefer arithmetic to magic, the whole thing is pure moonshine, but Hitler has managed to put his own pet obsession

across among an otherwise sensible people. We hear wonderful stories about the number of Jews in Great Britain who have arrived here in the last ten years. An hon. Member asked me recently what on earth we were to do with the 40,000 Jewish doctors who were now in this country. As a matter of fact he had got the number 50 times too large. The Jews are said to be living in luxury while others fight; but the records of the last war and of this one show that this insult is completely unwarranted, either as to the number of those serving, or the number of distinctions for gallantry. The country is said to be flooded with Jewish refugees; in fact 60,000 or 70,000 have come in since 1933, and of that number between 10,000 and 20,000 came in as children, of whom many are still children. That is one to 700 of our population, which seems to make a funny sort of flood, not comparable with the one which has just been made by the R.A.F.

It is said that the danger to our national traditions from having so many Jews here must be regarded; but our national traditions must be pretty weak things if people who make up rather less than one per cent. of the whole can produce so great an effect. One is forced to regard anti-Semitism as a sort of contagious mental disease upon the victims of which facts and arguments are completely without effect. Ridicule, not reason, is the only form of treatment. To suggest, as responsible people sometimes do, that there is serious danger of anti-Semitism here if an extra 10,000 Jews are introduced from Europe, one in 5,000 of our people, is a gross insult to the intelligence, good nature and commonsense of the normal citizen and is to confess oneself the foolish dupe of Nazi propaganda. The success of that propaganda shows that there is little chance for the human race being able to settle its affairs sensibly if it does not learn to examine critically and quantitatively what it is told.

The task of rescue from Nazi massacres is only the beginning, or the end of the beginning. The much greater task lying before us is of restoring shall we say 50,000,000 refugees to their homes all over the world and of bringing back order and civilisation to a distracted world. In that task, the British Commonwealth and the United States should be working together. Presumably the Bermuda Conference discussed not only the immediate problem but the major long-term problem of refugees in general. One of the chief hopes of the future lies in close and friendly co-operation between the Commonwealth of Nations and the United States. That collaboration is easiest and most effective when we are actually doing an honest job of work together, in science or in medicine or in exploration or, as now, in fighting a common enemy, or in trying to rescue and sustain the victims of an almost universal shipwreck. In trying to do an honest job together we can learn to understand and appreciate each other better than by arguing politics or anything else around the conference table. By working together on a common job it becomes unthinkable that we shall not continue to co-operate. As the British delegates to Bermuda have pulled off this new form of disinterested co-operation with the United States, in trying to solve a problem which is bound to tax all the resources of statesmanship, we are deeply in their debt. The public concern of which this Debate is a climax has indeed borne fruit of a different kind. I, for one, shall forget my impatience during the last five months and the ungenerous attitude—I say so flatly—of the Home Office, and reflect that after all the greater animals have the greater period of gestation.

Mr. Colegate (The Wrekin): I think my right hon. Friend the Under-Secretary will, on the whole, have appreciated the tributes that have been paid to him during the Debate. His speech was extraordinarily balanced. I must confess, however, that I was disappointed in some of the critics of the Government, for this problem is not one to be solved by emotion. It is one which has to be solved by difficult administrative measures carried out in a world of unparalleled chaos. I listened with great care to hear what suggestions were put forward which the Government might adopt but have not adopted. What did they amount to? Very little. We all of us—I say this without exception—sympathise to the very utmost with the horrible sufferings of all classes of refugees, but that does not help when we come to practical remedies. One remedy suggested by the hon. Member for Barnstaple (Sir R. Acland) was moral force. He accused the Government of not using sufficient moral force and said that if they had that, the problem would have been solved without difficulty. What a lack of imagination that shows. If moral force and prayer could solve this problem, what about the tortured mothers and fathers in Germany, and in the whole of Europe? Have they not been praying for years? If moral force could solve this problem, it would have been solved months and years ago. The fact is that the evils which have to be met must be dealt with by administrative measures and not moral force.

Another remedy suggested was that some man should be found who would be another Dr. Nansen. People who say that cannot realise what Dr. Nansen did and what were the difficulties at that time. Conditions at this time are not those of the last war. They are far more difficult. The Junior Member for the University of Cambridge (Professor Hill) talked about the Under-Secretary as a kind-hearted man who, if he saw a baby in a pond, would immediately jump in

to rescue it. But the baby is not in the pond. It is in the middle of Germany, and one cannot jump in and get it out. Until we realise the practical difficulties, all similes of babies in ponds just fall by the way.

I must say a word about anti-Semitism. Honestly, I think that the Jews to-day in this country are suffering from the over-zealousness of their friends. Some of the propaganda simply repels me and puts me absolutely against the Jews, although I have many good and dear Jewish friends and no feeling of anti-Semitism. Some of the propaganda and some of the things that are being done are really dangerous. Let me give the Junior Member for Cambridge University an illustration. He says we are supposed to fear anti-Semitism coming into this country because of the introduction of another 10,000 Jews, or one in 5,000 of the population. I quite agree that that could not bring about anti-Semitism, but I will give him a direct instance from my own constituency which does tend to bring about anti-Semitism. In an agricultural county like Shropshire there are very few Jews, but there is one hostel for Jews who have come here as refugees. They were asked to do agricultural work. I have sent full particulars of this case to the Minister of Agriculture. The Jews in that hostel had been received handsomely, they have been fed and housed and clothed, but they refused to milk cows after 4 o'clock on Friday. [An HON. MEMBER: "That is their Sabbath."] Yes, but let me finish. Agricultural labourers who had been working hard had to go in and do their work.

Commander Loeker-Lampson Scottish farmers will not milk on Sunday.

Mr. Colegate This case has caused a great deal of prejudice. I have tried to help to get the matter cleared up, because I do not want anti-Semitism to be created. It is a small point, but it is not merely a question of 2 ozs. of food per head of the population. There is a difference of custom, but it is a very awkward difference, and friends of the Jews should exercise great care to try to prevent such things happening. The farmer himself is naturally very indignant about it.

Mr. Levy (Elland): May I interrupt to say that I think my hon. Friend misrepresents the case? People here are free to follow their religion, as we all agree. Jews start their Sabbath on Friday evening and carry it on until Saturday evening, and therefore just as Scotsmen will not work on Sunday—

The Deputy-Chairman Order. I thought that we were getting rather wide of the subject, and now we are getting on to Scotsmen as well. The hon. Member should be allowed to finish his speech. There are others who want to speak.

Mr. Colegate I think it is up to the friends of refugees to see that incidents of this kind are smoothed out, because such cases create prejudice. The Government have given ample pledges of their sincerity in this matter, and I do not think it is wise to question them. People who carry the matter too far do harm in another direction. The hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mr. Mack) talked about another 300,000 Jews going to Palestine. That would be a gross violation of the pledges of this country and would mean grave injury to a very friendly race who have provided considerable support in this war. It does harm to the cause of this country if suggestions of that kind are put forward without regard to the sentiments of the Arabs whose land and houses would have to be taken. That cannot possibly help the cause of the Jews or of any refugees. Therefore I think that the Under-Secretary, as far as he could tell us, provided a basis of the utmost that we can do in the present circumstance to help to remedy this distressing problem. More cannot be hoped for. It must be worked with good will, and that I do not believe anyone in the Committee seriously doubts is present.

Mr. Lipson (Cheltenham): May I say very briefly in reply to my hon. Friend that we have all at times suffered from our friends, and every cause has suffered from some of its advocates? I am quite sure that the Government are far too generous in judging a problem of this magnitude and importance, and a tragedy of this kind, to be influenced by minor considerations. What is true of the Government is true of the people of this country. My knowledge tells me that. Representations have been made to me from my constituency, all from non-Jews, urging me to impress on the Government the need for action in this matter, and I may say I appreciate those representations all the more because those who have made them know, as I am a Jew, where my sympathies are. The fact that they have felt impelled to urge me, to prod me, to go further in this matter, shows how very strongly they feel. Quite frankly, their conscience has been roused, their sense of common humanity; in spite of personal losses and the tragedy of this war, they feel that this tragedy of the victims of Nazi persecution is something which is even bigger than all these other matters.

May I make this perfectly clear? No Jew asks for special treatment for Jews. They recognise that this is a problem which applies to all the victims. They are perfectly aware that the Jews have been singled out for particularly cruel

and vindictive treatment. So far as rescue is concerned, they do not say: "Take the Jew and leave the non-Jew" or "Give preference to the Jew." Secondly, they agree with everybody who says that the main thing is to win the war first, and they do not ask for a single measure to be taken which is likely in any way to interfere with the war effort. They are grateful—and I think would be more grateful if they had all the information which has been given to us to-day by the Under-Secretary as to what has been done even in the last five months—for everything which this great country has done to help the victims of Nazi aggression. What they say, and I think they are right in saying, is that we should not emphasise only what we have done, though credit must be given for that, but we must ask ourselves: "Have we done all that we can?" Perhaps I might remind the Committee, since it has been mentioned, of the Parable of the Priest and the Levite. Though they may have been good men in their private lives—they may have had much to their credit—all that history has had to say of them, and will have to say of them, is that on one occasion they passed by on the other side. Therefore I would appeal to the Government to do everything they possibly can. We do not ask the impossible. We know the limits within which relief can be given, but we do urge, with all the force at our command, Within those limits do all you possibly can; because there are only a few that can be saved do not say: "We will not save them."

Mr. Silverman (Nelson and Colne): I do not share the view expressed by the hon. Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Colegate) that moral forces are impotent. I think that the history of this war has shown that they are not—

Mr. Colegate I did not say that—

Mr. Silverman I am sorry I have not time to give way. [Interruption.] I am not intentionally misrepresenting the hon. Member. If I do misrepresent him, I will apologise to him afterwards. I think that those who heard him when he spoke will share my view of what he said. I say that the whole history of the war shows that moral forces are by no means impotent, and that the translation of our weakness materially at the beginning of the war, and later into our present growing might, and the prospect of certain victory growing nearer day by day, arise directly out of the fact that we are right and the Axis wrong. I wish to make just a passing reference to matter. I am not a religious man. I am a Jew; I do not keep the Sabbath myself. I have not kept it for many years, and I doubt whether I ever shall again. Would not the hon. Member, whose sympathy is beyond dispute, and whose imagination is vivid when he chooses to exercise it, try and think what the keeping of the Sabbath means to those refugees? They have given a good deal for their religion, they, their fathers and their grandfathers, generation after generation, for thousands of years. If they are a little fanatical, will he not forgive it to them, and will he not himself be their spokesman and interpreter in the area where he has such influence?

I do not want the Debate to devote much of its time, and I am glad it has not done so, to the nagging sort of spirit in which some of these discussions are sometimes conducted. I hope it is not out of Order to say that the whole nation is rejoicing now in victory, the very first victory which has cleared a Continent of the Axis forces. We are going to return thanks for it. It is not unfitting that this Debate should take place on that day. Would it not have been a very fine gesture if the Government had felt themselves able to say that the very first land that had been freed of the Nazi terror, of the Nazi scourge, should become the first land to offer temporary sanctuary to the first victims of that tyranny? There are a great many things about which we are in complete agreement. It has been said that the quickest and surest way of rendering help is to win the war. I know nobody who would save a single life by methods that prolonged the war for a single minute. I would go further than has been gone so far. I would say that these hundreds of thousands—millions—of threatened victims all over Europe would gladly offer themselves as a willing sacrifice if the shedding of their blood and the sacrifice of their lives ensure that now, at last, an end should be made of all those evils and oppressions out of which their misery grew.

No one wants the Government, no one wants any Government, to take a single step which will impede them in their task or postpone the victory which alone can bring salvation to the victims, Jew and Gentile alike. But short of that there is a widespread feeling in this country and all over the world that without in any way weakening our war effort, although large-scale rescue may be beyond our power, although any attempt at large-scale rescue might only cause in the end greater misery than it saved by prolonging the war, still tens of thousands could be given temporary sanctuary now if only the Government were not over-dominated in their minds by the admittedly immense difficulties that stand in their way. What are the things that we would have liked to see them do that they have not done? I will try to summarise them in the few minutes that I have. The whole task of statesmanship is to find out how moral forces may

be translated into constructive measures. I should have thought that the very first thing the Government would do would be to try and organise some international concerted action, to see who could be saved without danger to our major purpose. It is true that there has been the Bermuda Conference between this country and one other country. They discussed what they could do themselves. They have pooled in a way their own resources. But ought there not to have been—ought there still not to be, belatedly, a conference of all the Powers which are interested? There are many other nations who have a part to play. The right hon. Gentleman said something about an inter-Government committee. We would like to know, inter-what Governments? The two Governments represented at the Bermuda Conference, or others as well? It is left in doubt. If that committee is intended to be representative of a great number of nations, perhaps the right hon. Gentleman who is to reply will clear up what ambiguity there may be?

I hope I shall not be accused of being a mischievous advocate for my cause if I refer again to Palestine. When it is said that this country has done a great deal, I know no one who would deny it. When it is complained that nothing that the Government have done has saved any lives since 17th December last which would not otherwise have been saved, I think it is an unfair statement. But in the case of Palestine, it is literally true, because it was made perfectly clear that the action which the Colonial Secretary announced that Palestine would take goes only to the limit of the White Paper of 1938. The Government are asked, "You take into Palestine, as a result of all the new circumstances, as a result of the efforts you have made, as a result of the declarations to which you have committed yourselves, how many?" The Colonial Secretary tells us, "Just as many as we would have taken had there been no war, no Nazi attack on the Jews, no mass extermination of the people threatened, no declaration of 17th December, no Bermuda Conference—just as many as we would have taken if nobody had thought of anything at all." It is literally true that Palestine, the guaranteed homeland of the Jew, makes no contribution at all. That cannot be right. It is very doubtful—I say "doubtful" because I do not want to overstate my case, but I think it is quite certain myself—whether the White Paper of 1938 was not, itself, a breach of the Mandate with which His Majesty's Government was entrusted. The present Prime Minister said so at the time, and he has said nothing since to indicate that he does not think so still. To limit the emigration then was a serious blow to the Government's obligations, but to say that, in these circumstances, we still allow people to go into Palestine only up to that number, is to demonstrate that the charge of doing nothing at all is literally true so far as Palestine is concerned.

Even the promise that was given has not been kept. Even those who were to go in have not been taken. It is said that that is due to matters over which the Government have no control; but four or five ships of 3,000 or 4,000 tons each would take the whole of that number in a month from where they are to Palestine. There are other things that I would like to say, but I know that the Committee has other things to do. I will only say that everybody appreciates the difficulties by which the Government are confronted. The day will come—it may come soon—when the great dams that the Nazis and the Fascists have built around their countries to keep the cleansing waters of civilisation out will be burst, and the great tide of human civilisation will flow again into those waste and arid, tyrannised places, where murder and oppression have done their worst for so many years. Shall we, when the day of triumph comes, be easy in our hearts, our minds, and our consciences if we see the dead bodies of thousands of people—a small proportion of the whole maybe, but still thousands of human lives—whom we could have saved, but whom we were not sufficiently strong, or courageous, or determined to rescue?

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Eden). I have felt as I listened to this Debate that all hon. Members of this Committee were keenly conscious of the difficulties of the discussion, of the limitations that were placed on what they wanted to say by considerations which were present in their minds. There was something to be said for the point of view expressed by the hon. Member for Gower (Mr. Grenfell), that we might have done better to have had this discussion in secret. I had thought of that—in point of fact, we discussed it at the Cabinet, but we came to the conclusion that, although there were many advantages from the point of view of the House in telling lion. Members what we could in secret; they were outweighed by the advantages to the public of telling them what we could publicly. I think we were right. I would like to preface my remarks by thanking every hon. Member who has spoken for the care with which he has avoided the pitfalls that lay before him. We hope that we shall have contributed some good by this discussion; I am pretty confident that we have not done any harm—which, in discussing this subject, is quite a considerable achievement.

I think it is quite right and proper that hon. Members in this House and people in this country should feel strongly about this subject. There would be something wrong with the British character if we ceased to feel strongly about this

kind of thing. It has been in our tradition, I think, to practice racial and religious tolerance. One of the things we are fighting this war about is to create conditions in this world where a man is free to speak, free to think, free to practice worship as he would. I should feel myself that this House had fallen on evil days if hon. Members did not speak their mind on these subjects, however strongly they felt and even if in the course of them a certain amount of blame fell upon His Majesty's Government. On that score I think we can have no complaint at all. I think we are also agreed that the only real solution for this problem that can be found is a solution of final and complete Allied victory, and clearly none other. I listened carefully to my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridge University (Professor Hill) just now, and I do not think I was in disagreement, as far as I could judge, with anything he said, not even with his description of the Government, but I would like to give just one example of the problem as, in fact, it presents itself.

I do not think hon. Members are quite fair when one or two of them suggest that the Government themselves are too preoccupied to do anything about this problem. That really is not true. We have, as a matter of fact, a Cabinet Committee which has been dealing with this matter for some time past which includes three members of the War Cabinet. We have done what we can to tackle this problem. We have devoted a considerable time to it. I have at the Foreign Office a most expert staff of really devoted people who do nothing else but try to assist this problem through our diplomatic and consular representatives abroad. If the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved, it is not because not enough time has been devoted to it or not enough time given to it by the Cabinet Committee. I can assure the Committee that it is much more difficult even than that.

I want to take the example that the hon. Member for Nelson and Come (Mr. Silverman) has just given in his speech. He took the example of what has just recently happened in Palestine, and I think it is a fair example to take. Let me tell him that we have in this House divergent views about the White Paper, and we could have a very interesting discussion on that subject all over again, like we did a few years ago, but that has nothing at all to do with the problem now. There is nothing in the White Paper to prevent the vacancies which are at present available being filled. The hon. Gentleman said rightly that my right hon. and gallant Friend the Colonial Secretary announced some time ago, actually on 3rd February, that there were these 30,000 vacancies available in Palestine. The hon. Member says, Why limit them to 30,000? I would be quite willing and eager to discuss that if there was the slightest prospect of the 30,000 vacancies being filled. What happened is that we got into negotiation through the neutral Power, which is the only way we can do it. I cannot think, if I were prepared to have direct negotiations with the enemies, which is a fruitless affair, it could be done, as I remember many years ago. The only way to do it is through the neutral Power. We tried that, and we reached what in fact was an agreement with one of the belligerents that they would let a number of children go, and though transport arrangements were difficult, they were not the overwhelming difficulty or the difficulty that stopped it. The difficulty was that the country which made that agreement appears to have had second thoughts, and having first of all said "Yes" and accepted somebody to go there and make the necessary arrangements, are now saying, if not "No," something which is nearer "No" than "Yes." That is a deplorable state of affairs, and it is not a state of affairs that I or His Majesty's Government or any of us can control.

Mr. Silverman Are there not a great many available in Allied countries?

Mr. Eden Not that I am aware of, in order to be taken to Palestine. A certain number of Poles have lately been moved from Persia to Palestine, but as far as I know there are no Allied countries to which to move them. I merely give that example to show the Committee the actual position. We have 30,000 vacancies in Palestine. We want to get the children there, and despite the transport difficulty we would like to make special efforts to do so, but we cannot get them out without Sofia and Berlin. That is the blunt fact. I have no control over either Sofia or Berlin.

Let me come to another point which has been raised. I want to mention the position of the Poles, to show that we can say positively that action has been taken, however great the difficulties of transport and the limitation of shipping. About 40,000 Poles have been moved to Persia. They were brought from Russia to Persia. Every ounce of food they consume has to be imported by us. We have to supply the shipping and supply the food, and it is the focus of our war effort, but it has been done, as a contribution to our Polish Allies in the war. It is true to say that great as the difficulties are, we would not allow this to stop us or any other cause, but there are many cases where it is the action of the enemy Power that stops our effort. So I think I might say to the hon. Lady that she was not quite fair when she said earlier in the Debate that the Government had tried to buy off criticism by a few concessions now and again. That is

really not our position. It would be easy for me to get some quite good cheers even from the hon. Lady if I could recount exactly what had been done by us in certain neutral countries.

Miss Rathbone I never really doubted the right hon. Gentleman's good will. But I do rather doubt the good will of some of his colleagues. What has worried us all along is the lack of the sense of urgency. We do believe that in the Palestine case something might have been done.

Mr. Eden I am sure the hon. Lady realises that she must not differentiate among the excellencies of the various Ministers. Our decisions are taken together. We are a band of brothers, and there is no distinction. Honestly, I do not know—I should like to be told—whether it is the fact that, if we had acted with more rapidity, we could have got better results. I have had many conversations with the hon. Lady on the subject, and I hope that I shall have many more, but my own conscience does not tell me, "If you had done this more rapidly, you would have got better results." My own conviction is that you will not get any result of any kind out of Germany or of any other satellite country that is really objective, and I do not believe that until the war is over we can deal with more than the fringe, and it is the fringe with which we have to deal.

Let me come to a few of the points. As to visas, I think there is still some misunderstanding on this position. There are no numerical limits on the number of visas a consul can issue, but there is a limitation of certain categories. A consul for some time past has been allowed to issue visas for volunteers who come to join Allied Forces. The only condition of that is that the volunteers are to be approved by representatives of their own Government. That is natural and indeed almost an obvious precaution, but subject to that there is no other limitation.

I would like to say a word more about the three categories referred to by the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department to-day, because they are important. The parents of those persons serving in His Majesty's or Allied Forces or the Mercantile Marine will be allowed to come here. That means that visas will be available for these persons for them to come. In the second place, visas are available for persons other than Allied nationals willing to join His Majesty's Forces, and in the third place, parents of children under 16 who are already here. There are wider categories in respect of which there must be reference home. There again the Committee will understand that that is an elementary precaution in view of the risks we run in taking some of these people from enemy territory. The difference in the situation is that whereas heretofore any national of an Allied country coming to join our Forces could come now, under the new regulation any national of an enemy country, or a Stateless person, will be able to come and join the Allied Forces as well. Some hon. Members feel that nothing has been done and that nobody has been allowed to come here, but the figure which my right hon. Friend the Under-Secretary gave early in the Debate, showing that 4,000 people have arrived during the last five months, does show that there is, in fact, a continuous flow. We have not advertised that flow, and it is much wiser not to do so, if I may be allowed to make that observation.

I would like to say a few words about the Bermuda Conference. Unfortunately, it is true that all the recommendations of the Conference cannot be made public now. The two Delegations agreed—and I think rightly—among themselves as to how much they would make public at this time, and they agreed that certain recommendations must remain confidential for the time being. Having seen those recommendations, I think that is a wise precaution. The War Cabinet have approved that report, the recommendations and the steps to be taken to put them into force. Let me say what I can about the recommendations which have been published. There is, first, the question of the position of neutrals. It is true that some of the smaller neutrals who are neighbours to this Nazi tyranny bear a heavy burden just now and feel that they should have an assurance that when the war is over they will not be left to carry their burden alone. His Majesty's Government are ready to take their part in sharing the burden, and we want that assurance to be given to neutral countries by the United Nations as a whole. At any rate, we are prepared to take our part in giving such an assurance. It is important that the neutral countries themselves should feel rather less anxiety than heretofore. In respect of that report, the question of finance was mentioned. We are prepared to make—and we have been making already—very considerable Government contributions. Again, we have not advertised this, but we have been helping some countries financially with this particular task and the handling of it, and we contemplate that under the scheme we shall continue to do so and to make contributions with other Governments to the financing of this work.

I would like to say a few words about the Inter-Governmental Committee. We thought that it would be as well if we and the United States talked the matter over between ourselves before approaching other Governments. Complete

agreement has been reached in this difficult question, and despite the temptations of one side, as it were, to try and look better before the public than another, there has been nothing of that kind; both Delegations have co-operated with complete loyalty. One of the proposals is the reestablishment of an Inter-Governmental Committee on a wider basis, carrying much greater authority. It is not the fault of the Evian Committee that its terms of reference were limited. In this case it is contemplated that wider powers shall be given. I am satisfied that the machinery which this Inter-Governmental Committee will have to operate is well suited for this purpose. They will have as good a staff as we can provide for them—a staff which will be paid by the Government. That is our intention. We believe that this committee should be on the right basis for the work of the Conference and the refugee problem, not only now but also after the war.

I would like to conclude with this assurance to the Committee. I know some hon. Members think that the Government are perhaps insensitive in this matter. I can assure them that we are not. It is quite possible to be on this bench and to have quite as sensitive and deep a feeling as anybody in any other part of the House. I do not know whether Ministers can contribute to the problem if they wear their hearts on their sleeves for the daws to peck at, but I believe they will do all that is humanly in their power to help the matter forward, short of any major interference with our war effort. That is the policy we are trying to carry out. It is the policy on which the Cabinet Committee are working. I hope the Bermuda Conference will give us the machinery we need. I think it will. Some of the steps we are taking will ease the burden for the neutrals. We shall do what we can, but I should be false to my trust if I raised the hopes of the Committee, because I do not believe that great things can be achieved. I do not believe it is possible to rescue more than a few until final victory is won. The Government will use their authority and any exertion they possess. They will not be bound by red tape. They want to help these people as much as any hon. Member in this Committee and to do as much as they can within the limits of our war effort and our strength.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again," [Captain McEwen]—put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon the next Sitting Day.

Whereupon Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER, pursuant to the order of the House this day, adjourned the House, without Question put.



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The siting of the UK National Holocaust Memorial & Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens Case ref
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**The UK National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre -
Rebuttal Appendices**

APPENDIX 5

**Nuremberg Trials Debate – 16th October
1946**

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Nuremberg Trials (Acquitted Prisoners)



 Share

16 October 1946

Volume 427

43.

Mr. Skeffington-Lodge

asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of their acquittal at Nuremberg, he will take steps to ensure that Schacht, Papen and Fritsche are given safe conduct to, and sanctuary in, a place where their victimisation by their own fellow-countrymen or others will be impossible.

 Share

Mr. Bevin

These three men are understood to be at present in the American zone of Germany, and His Majesty's Government have therefore no responsibility for their disposal.

Mr. Skeffington-Lodge

Yes, but would not the Minister use his very vital influence to secure that these men are not chased up on new charges until passions have died down, this being both vindictive and, in my judgment, indecent?

Mr. Bevin

I think we must leave it to the American authorities.

Mr. McKinlay

Would the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that he will place nothing in the way of the persons mentioned joining their fellow countrymen in hell?

Mr. Stokes

Is it not in fact the responsibility of the four Powers to protect people whom they have already tried and acquitted, and that they cannot shed their responsibility?

Mr. Bevin

I do not think there is any accusation that the American Government, who are responsible for the zone in which they are residing, are doing anything else.



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- APP/X5990/V/19/3240661

**The UK National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre -
Rebuttal Appendices**

APPENDIX 5a

**Nuremberg Trials Debate – 9th February
1948**

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Nuremberg Trials (Official Record)



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09 February 1948

Volume 447

47.

Mr. Teeling

asked the Attorney-General how many copies of the volumes already published of the Nuremberg trials documents were printed; how many have been sold; where they can be obtained; what steps have been taken to advertise these volumes; what is proposed to be done about those not sold; and how many copies are being printed of the later volumes.

 Share

The Attorney-General (Sir Hartley Shawcross)

I must apologise for the length of this reply. I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the official record of the proceedings of the International Military Tribunal which are being

published at Nuremberg in English, French, Russian and German, by the Tribunal's direction.

Six volumes out of 35 have so far been published. Of the first five volumes, 10,000 copies were printed in English; 5,000 of these were allocated to this country and the Commonwealth. This allocation was found to be greatly in excess of demand. Accordingly, it was reduced to 1,600 copies for the sixth volume, the latest to be published, and correspondingly fewer copies were printed. The same allocation and printing will be made of subsequent issues. A number of copies of the first five volumes are therefore surplus. As they form part of a broken set, they are of no value and it is therefore proposed to pulp them.

A wide official distribution of this Nuremberg edition has been made both here and overseas. The volumes can be purchased by members of the public at any branch of His Majesty's Stationery Office or through booksellers. So far, between 100 and 200 copies of each volume have been sold to the public, and 650 officially distributed. I understand that the volumes were advertised in the usual way in the Stationery Office catalogues.

 Share

Mr. Teeling

Does not the right hon. and learned Gentleman realise that there is a very large number of people in Universities, colleges, and so on, who really know nothing about these volumes, and who would greatly like to have copies of them for future purposes; that they were not sufficiently advertised; and that, if the number of copies of the later volumes is to be reduced, it will be a bad mistake, because, in the years to come, they will be badly needed?

 Share

The Attorney-General

The hon. Gentleman is obviously unaware that, in addition to the official record published by the tribunal itself, His Majesty's Stationery Office published, and are continuing to publish, a verbatim report. A large number of copies of that report has been circulated to Universities and other institutes. The publication of this report was widely advertised in the Press, and there is no difficulty whatever in obtaining copies, either through the Stationery Office or booksellers.

Mr. Teeling

Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman say whether the Dominions have applied for and received any of these volumes?

The Attorney-General

Yes, Sir. Included in the figures I have mentioned was a wide allocation in respect of the Dominions.

Mr. Skeffington-Lodge

Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the reason the public have taken up so few of these publications is probably because history will condemn the Nuremberg Trials altogether, and is this not clear evidence that that will be so?



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APPENDIX 5b

Ex-Nazis Debate – 11th July 1949

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Ex-Nazis



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11 July 1949

Volume 467

48.

Mr. Ellis Smith

asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will give the names and positions of ex-Nazis who have been appointed members of the I. G. Farben disposal panel or in the management of the steel industry.

 Share

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Mayhew)

One of the six members of the I. G. Farben dispersal panel, Freiherr Von Ritter, and three of the 12 persons to whom invitations have been sent to accept appointments to the German Steel Trustee Association, Messrs. Deist, Dinkelbach and Von Valkenhausen, were members of

the Nazi Party. All four have, however, been cleared by de-Nazification panels, as have all other members and prospective members of these bodies.

 Share

52.

Mr. Skeffington-Lodge

asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will give an estimate of the number of Germans who were Nazi leaders and members of Hitler's General Staff and who have gone underground; and what steps are being taken to trace them.

 Share

Mr. Mayhew

One hundred and twenty-eight prominent members of criminal organisations declared illegal at the **Nuremberg Trials** are still being sought in Germany. The German authorities are responsible for tracing them. All leading members of Hitler's general staff were found after the collapse of Germany.

 Share

Mr. Skeffington-Lodge

Is my hon. Friend aware that only about 40 out of 150 of the permanent guard of Buchenwald concentration camp had been apprehended? Is it not a menace to security that these and many others like them, who have changed their names, should be at large in Germany today?

 Share

Mr. Mayhew

Yes, I would agree with that, but from time to time arrests are made; we have had one or two recently.

 Share

Mr. F. Noel-Baker

Can my hon. Friend say how many Nazi leaders and European Quislings are still being given

asylum in Franco Spain?

 Share

Mr. Mayhew

Not without notice.

 Share

Mr. Paget

Can my hon. Friend say when we shall have an Act of Indemnity and stop chasing these men?

 Share

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**The UK National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre -
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APPENDIX 5c

**Genocide Convention Debate – 18th May
1950**

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Genocide Convention

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18 May 1950

Volume 475

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—[*Mr. Kenneth Robinson.*]

7.55 p.m.

Mr. Janner (Leicester, North-West)

I am very glad of the opportunity to bring to the notice of the House a matter which, in my view, is of very considerable importance. I hope that will be a view which will be generally held after I have had an opportunity of explaining a little about the subject with which I wish to deal.

The question of the Convention on Genocide is something which strikes at the very root of the problem which is facing the world at present. It is a problem which is bound up not only with

the interests of one person or a set of persons, but with the interests of groups throughout the length and breadth of the world who hold different religious or political points of view. It is particularly bound up with the future possibility of peace being established in the world. I put it on that level because the contentions that take place from time to time with regard to the use of weapons, the increased volume of weapons, the terrible nature of the weapons and the use of instruments of destruction will not alone prove effective in producing peace, in my opinion and in the opinion of those who have any reasonable hope for the world at all.

On the other hand, the United Nations, which exists for the specific purpose of trying to get the nations of the world together to argue out their cases and to iron out their difficulties, in my opinion and in the opinion of most reasonable people who understand the objects of the United Nations organisation, is the only effective method of eventually destroying the scourge of war. The General Assembly of the United Nations, on 9th December, 1948, adopted a convention to outlaw genocide. None of its members raised a voice in dissent; on the contrary, that Convention was accepted unanimously.

Genocide is the most horrible crime that can be committed. It is the crime of the destruction of a group of people solely on the ground that they happen to belong to that particular group. The Genocide Convention was universally applauded as a historic and important event in the attempt by civilised peoples to develop international law so that the law which must be built up to safeguard the international community should be consistent with civilised national laws which protect the ordinary man and woman in their daily lives. The conscience of the world has been wounded by the unspeakable brutalities that have been inflicted on innocent men, women and children within our own time. This historic Convention is a step forward which clearly indicates the determination to avoid, so far as is humanly possible, the excuses hitherto advanced by tyrants and tyrannous Governments who have had millions of men and women literally at their mercy.

All too often, sections of mankind have inflicted cruelties upon groups living within their sole and absolute control, and no means of escape has been afforded to those groups. The peoples of the civilised world, stricken with horror when they realised the glaring truth of these inhumanities, have stood helplessly by, on the assumption that they have no legal right to interfere. The vastness of the number of victims involved and the unspeakable measures taken against these victims have frequently been of such a nature that the human mind of the

common man in other countries has been incapable of believing that such atrocities were actually taking place. Thus, honest accounts of those horrors have often been dismissed as exaggerated rumours and often, too, when the true nature and extent of these crimes have been revealed, it has been too late for any intervention to be made at all, even if other peoples desired to make that intervention.

It took two years of hard work for the United Nations to draw up the Convention. The Social and Economic Council discussed the matter frequently at its meetings. Special committees were constituted, some of them consisting of very learned and experienced international lawyers. I would refer, for example, to the French Judge of the International Military Tribunal, the President of the International Association for Penal Law and a former adviser to the United States Prosecutor at the **Nuremberg trials** who were consulted. Every point raised was carefully and minutely considered before the Convention was adopted.

Until the Convention was adopted, many different points of view had to be expressed, and were expressed; and as far as possible these were met in order that the Convention could be adopted unanimously and made as effective as possible. But to understand the importance of the Convention and of the fact that it was adopted unanimously, I think we ought to remember that genocide, although it has only recently been given that name, is a crime which has been committed throughout the centuries. It was stated in this House at one time—I think flippantly; and it is a pity that a word of that nature should be dealt with by any person or any body of persons in a flippant manner, because of its extreme seriousness—that the word itself could perhaps be improved, but it was accepted by the United Nations as a suitable term to describe what was meant by the crime to which I have referred.

It is a new name for an old crime. It means the deliberate destruction of whole groups of people just because they belong to particular groups. The group may be racial, national or it may be religious, and in some cases it may be political—trade unions and so on. It may be a particular ethnical or racial group. The destruction of the group may take the form of massacres, of executions, of subjecting the group to such conditions, for example, as lack of food or housing or not allowing it the right to work, that it cannot continue to live.

It may take the form of restricting its birth rate by, for instance, the segregation of the sexes. It may take the form of destroying the special characteristics of the group by such means as

the forced transfer of its children. We have had illustrations of that in recent times. We have had the illustration of the Greek children and children of the Jewish faith who have been taken for some years and who are not being restored to the faith to which they were originally attached.

These were all techniques used by the Nazi Government of Germany as part of its deliberate policy. They were used particularly against the racial and religious group, the Jews, and against the national linguistic group, the Poles. Although this destruction was practised in a much larger and more systematic way by the Germans after the coming into power of Hitler, it was nothing new; although, of course, the scale on which it was practised then was a terrible one. Throughout the centuries, since the destruction of Carthage by the Romans, the crime of genocide has been practised. Right through the Middle Ages there were Jewish pogroms, mass killings, in various countries of Europe; more recently, in the last century, the massacres of the Armenians and the destruction of the Hereros in Africa; and in this century the persecution of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

Although individuals and groups in other countries, and even foreign governments, were often roused to protest against such massacres—and I remember that on one occasion this House stood in silence, I think for the first time in its history, when it became known how terrible was the destruction of Jewish people in Germany—hitherto there was no action short of war they could take to prevent them. What action the Government of any country took, or permitted other groups in that country to take, against its own citizens was, according to some interpretations of international law, its own affair, but the systematic brutality practised by the Nazi regime shocked the conscience of the 20th-century out of this exaggerated respect for matters within domestic jurisdiction. It was recognised at **Nuremberg** that there were crimes against humanity for which those countries should be held responsible, and that these crimes must be punishable by law.

In its Charter the United Nations declared as one of its main purposes the achievement of international co-operation. These were the words:

“in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.”

It became clear that international law would have to be developed to deal with the

international crime of genocide. There are already examples of laws for dealing with certain international crimes—the slave trade, the illegal production and trade in narcotics, piracy, trade in women and children. International Conventions have been signed on these crimes and anyone guilty of them can be tried and punished not only in his own country but in whatever country to which he escapes, provided that country has adhered to the convention in question.

It was thought that the same procedure should apply to genocide. I have said that the question was brought before the General Assembly of the United Nations. It was first brought before them in November, 1946. A draft resolution was at this time submitted jointly by certain delegations. This resolution drew the attention of the Economic and Social Council to the crime of genocide and invited it to study the problem and report on the possibilities. These were the points which were raised: one, declaring genocide an international crime; two, ensuring international co-operation for its prevention and punishment; and three, recommending that it should be treated by national legislatures in the same way as other international crimes.

The matter was discussed by the Assembly's Sixth Legal Committee and certain suggestions were made by other delegations. For instance, it was proposed that the Assembly should itself declare that genocide was an international crime for which those concerned should be punished. Another proposal was that the Assembly should call on members to see that their national laws treated genocide on an equal footing with piracy, traffic in women and children and slaves, and other crimes violating the dignity of human beings.

It was suggested that a draft protocol should be drawn up defining genocide, enumerating the cases which fell within that definition and including provisions for ensuring the prevention and repression of genocide. It was also proposed that those responsible for the propagation and dissemination of hatred against nations, racial or religious groups, as a step preparatory to the crime of genocide, should be punished.

I would point out at this stage that there is ample cause even at the present time, for urgency in this matter. In Germany today there is a recrudescence of Nazism, a recrudescence of anti-Semitism which is horrible and which tends towards repeating tragic and brutal incidents similar to those which occurred during the Nazi regime. Apparently the Allies, the occupying

Powers, have not been able to suppress it, and there are strong statements—indeed, very strong statements—coming from persons visiting Germany today to the effect that the Streicheresque element is raising its ugly head again.

Even in this country from time to time we have had raised in this very House questions in respect of meetings which are held by men who have no hesitation in going into districts and advocating that the same bestial kind of thing that happened in Belsen and Buchenwald should be once again brought into effect, and urging the people of this country to take that point of view. It is true that all of those who listen at these meetings do not realise what is meant by Belsen and Buchenwald, otherwise they would hound the speakers out of the streets; but unfortunately this kind of gutter propaganda is prevalent in some districts of London, and other parts of the country. We get that Fascist element who utilise anti-Semitism as almost the only argument they have got. They try to incite men and women to commit the very acts which ultimately lead to genocide, and which are not only revolting to the national conscience in a particular country but are revolting to the conscience of the world as a whole.

Now on the basis of these proposals to which I have referred, a sub-committee drew up a resolution which was accepted —unanimously accepted: I want to bring this again to the notice of my hon. Friend —by the Committee and by the General Assembly in plenary session on 11th December, 1946. That means that the resolution to introduce this convention was agreeable to everybody who was present, including our own representatives; and it was unanimously adopted.

In this resolution the General Assembly affirmed that genocide was a crime under international law which the civilised world condemned, and that those guilty of it, whoever they were and for whatever reason they committed it, were punishable. The Assembly invited the Member States to enact national legislation for the prevention and punishment of this crime, and recommended that international co-operation should be organised for its speedy prevention and punishment. It requested the Economic and Social Council to undertake the necessary steps for drawing up separate conventions for submission to the Assembly at its next regular session.

Well now, it is clear that the legal implications—and I should like to have my hon. Friend's

attention to this, because I gather there is some legal quibbling about what can or cannot be done—it is clear that the legal implications of the convention must have been known by us when the convention was agreed to and signed. I understand that the main arguments which were used against, the convention were, first, that genocide was already a crime under international law, following the precedent of the **Nuremberg trials**; and secondly, that if the government of any State were resolved to commit genocide no convention could deter them. In answer to these—and I anticipate the possibility of their being raised—I would point out that the **Nuremberg** judgment—and this has been held by highly important and knowledgeable legal authorities—did not and could not establish genocide as an international crime. The **Nuremberg** law applied only to crimes committed during or in connection with war. It is very doubtful whether precedent can create international law. It must be considered that large numbers of countries do not accept precedent for creating law whether international or national. The **Nuremberg** Tribunal has been criticised by some eminent lawyers on the principle—"No punishment without law."

It is correct that no convention can prevent a Government from committing genocide if they are so determined, but the same argument could be brought forward against any convention. If a person is determined to commit piracy, to trade in women or children, in drugs or obscene publications, the existing conventions will not prevent his committing the crime, but the convention would give any country the right to apprehend and try the criminal wherever the crime is committed. The knowledge of this fact may deter the criminal from committing many crimes, though no convention, or criminal law for that matter, will prevent crime.

I hope I am not detaining the House too long, but I think it is important that the country should understand this matter and I do hope that my hon. Friend will try to help this very great and humane object which the United Nations are trying to bring into effect. The Convention itself—this Convention that has now been signed by us—contains a Preamble and 19 Articles, and I have tried to compress into as small a space as possible the gist of the Preamble and Articles. In the Preamble the contracting parties referred to in the previous declaration—to which I have already referred— by the General Assembly in December, 1946, declare that genocide is a crime under international law, recognise that humanity has suffered great losses by these crimes, and believes that international co-operation is

necessary to liberate mankind from it.

Article 1 states that genocide is a crime whether committed in time of peace or war. Article 2 attempts to define this crime. It lists five kinds of acts aimed at destroying a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. These are killing members of a group, causing them bodily or mental harm, inflicting conditions on a group with the effect of its destruction, the prevention of births and the transferring of children forcibly from one group to another group. It states that certain steps directly lead to the crime, for example, stirring up people or inciting others to do so. This is one of the things I have referred to in the earlier part of my speech.

 Share

Mr. Emrys Hughes (Ayrshire, South)

Can I ask my hon. Friend a question? Can we simplify this matter? Would it not be right to use the word "war" instead of the word "genocide"?

 Share

Mr. Janner

Genocide takes place, I am sorry to say, in times of peace as well as war. I should, perhaps, say a word or two on that point. I have already said, as my hon. Friend knows, that, in my view, a convention of this sort would help very considerably towards the elimination of war—if the peoples of the world only understood its implementations. They do not understand. They just take it for granted that there must be war. They ridicule, unfortunately, those organisations which are created by themselves in order to guard against war.

When the League of Nations was formed, instead of grasping the opportunity and the occasion firmly with enthusiasm, hon. Members in this House—I remember it—were asking questions such as, "Was it right that we should pay our share towards keeping up the League of Nations when China was not doing it?" And our share was in the nature of £1,000,000 or so. The same thing is happening in regard to the United Nations organisation. Instead of the people in this land—and every land—being encouraged to support it, and to support its conventions—instead of that, very often—all too often—they are induced to ridicule them.

It is an intricate Convention, but I should like to try to explain its terms, and I hope the House will bear with me. I have described the crimes. The attempt to commit genocide is also listed,

for example, just as we have in our own country a law that the attempt to commit murder, or the fact of being an accessory to murder, is a crime which is punishable by the State. Article 4 makes it clear that persons guilty of these crimes are to be punished. It states that guilty persons—and these are the words used:

“shall be punished whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.”

These have all very great bearing in view of what happened under the Nazi regime and prior to that. Under Article 5 the countries, which accept the Convention, undertake to pass the necessary laws to give effect to it, and, in particular, to provide effective penalties for those guilty of genocide. Article 6 lays down that persons charged with genocide will be tried in the country in which the act was committed by an international tribunal, the jurisdiction of which has been accepted by the countries concerned.

Article 7 makes it clear that genocide is not to be considered a political crime and—this is extremely important to a country like ours with the great traditions we have of giving asylum to people in consequence of political persecution—that those charged with committing these crimes are not to be given the right of asylum. The States signing the Convention pledge themselves to grant extradition for genocide. Article 8 lays it down that those states accepting the Convention should be ready to call upon competent bodies like the United Nations to take appropriate action under the Charter to prevent genocide. Article 9 provides that any dispute relating to the Convention shall be submitted to the International Court of Justice. Other articles of the Convention cover such matters as signature and ratification as well as an invitation to non-members of the United Nations to subscribe to it.

It was stipulated that the Convention would come into force—this is important and it is why I cannot understand why we are standing aside—90 days after 20 countries have signed and ratified or acceded to it. No fewer than 43 nations have signed it so not only did we agree, in the first instance, to the resolution which was carried unanimously, but the Convention itself was carried unanimously with our assent. Up to now only eight nations, one of which I am happy to say is the Dominion of Australia, have ratified the Convention. It requires 20 nations to ratify it before it becomes international law, and when it becomes international law it will remain in force for 10 years and thereafter for five year periods for those countries which do

not denounce it. It will cease to have effect if the countries adhering to it fall below 16.

I have tried to give a picture of what it has taken years in the United Nations to bring to a head. I have been present watching the work of the United Nations on many occasions. Every argument which has been brought forward by any nation is carefully considered. The House may be assured that the Convention had been accepted after the delegations that were present had decided whether certain proposals were legally possible or not. They agreed to sign the Convention and the question of ratification in my opinion ought to be a matter of very simple procedure.

Why should not we in this country take a lead as we have done for very many years in humanitarian directions. Taking it by and large a lead has been taken on many occasions to try to prevent that kind of brutality to which I have referred. Why should our nation not take a step which other nations of the world rightly expect us to take. We have not yet ratified this Convention, and that means that other nations, particularly those of smaller dimensions, seeing us stand aside will not sign it either.

I would ask my hon. Friend the Minister of State not to regard this matter as being something which ought to be set aside because of legalistic quibbles. It is not a question for legalistic quibbling. If some improvement of the terms have to be made in a legal sense let us take the lead in setting this right. Let us amend the wording, if that be the cause of delay, so that the Convention can be brought into operation. Do not let us stand aside and say that we are a country which shrinks with horror at the gruesome acts and then refuse to sign the Convention because we cannot cast our eyes further. Look what we could have done if there had been a Convention of this sort when six million people were being done to death. It may be said, "Yes, we could not have prevented that, there would have been war," but if the League of Nations had had a Convention of that sort, we should at least have been able to persuade other nations to take action with ourselves to rescue people living and dying in those conditions.

This is a matter which cannot be set aside by question and answer in the House. It is a long time since 1948. The Convention was accepted in that year but there is no ratification in 1950. I with some of my hon. Friends have raised the matter from time to time in the House. We received sympathetic answers but were told that there are difficulties in the way. If there are

difficulties let us sweep them aside, and, taking our courage in our hands, give the world a lead on this. I may be speaking with some emotion, but it is because I have heard and seen some of the things with which this Convention deals. I have seen the victims of these happenings. I have met and know men and women whose whole families have been sent to gas chambers, and who have seen them tortured and afflicted. These men and women will carry with them to the grave what they have seen of their relatives' distress. We cannot tolerate that kind of thing again.

I hope that my hon. Friend will not regard what I have said as being in the nature of censure. I hope he will regard it more in the nature of an appeal which will rouse his Department, the House and the country into action which is so imminently needed, bring respect of a great nature to the name of our country and enable us to take a lead in something which will redound not only to our credit but to the credit of civilisation as a whole and to the benefit of mankind.



8.30 p.m.

Mr. Emrys Hughes (South Ayrshire)

I am sure that hon. Members who are present will agree that my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-West (Mr. Janner) has done a national and international service by drawing attention to the question of genocide. "Genocide" is not a word which people usually understand. I gathered that my hon. Friend defined it as "the deliberate destruction of whole groups of people because they belong to those particular groups." This became an urgent question of international importance and consideration as a result of the deliberate attempt by the Nazi regime in Germany to destroy the Jews.

One can understand the emotion and intense feeling of my hon. Friend in raising this question, but I believe I understand the attitude of the Government in refusing to ratify the Convention. If we are to outlaw genocide we have to outlaw war, for we cannot conduct war without deliberately destroying whole groups of people because they belong to certain groups. As far as we can understand the policy of this country, we are committed to a policy of international genocide. The foreign policy of this country and the policy of all Governments at present is the mass destruction of groups and nationalities with which they disagree.

I can quite understand the attitude of the Government. If genocide is to be considered an international crime and if, after another war, we are to have another **Nuremberg** trial, there might be in the dock not German statesmen but our own statesmen. We might find ourselves, as a result of the Convention, committed to trying the statesmen of all the world. If we had had this international Convention on genocide, with the very wide definition given by my hon. Friend, the people who decided on the dropping of the atom bomb would be in the dock, charged with genocide. We might have had a state of affairs in which we had to put President Truman in the dock charged with an international crime against humanity. We might have had the Leader of the Opposition in an international dock charged with crimes against humanity, because, according to this definition, anybody who connives at the deliberate destruction of whole groups of people because they belong to particular groups is an international criminal. We might have had the ironical situation of some of the people with the greatest international reputations in the world being looked upon as international criminals.

What could be expected of this Government, which is committed to a policy of international genocide? It is impossible to carry on a modern war without the deliberate destruction of whole groups of people, because they belong to particular groups. I understand that we are spending nearly £800 million this year in preparing for this kind of crime—and we are all involved because genocide is, in these days, a crime against humanity.

This respectable Convention, which met on the eve of victory in the last war, now comes up against this international contradiction, and we realise that the hopes of the United Nations to end war are regarded by many people in the world as international delusions. My hon. Friend has talked about us listening to the United Nations; some of us listened to the proceedings at the League of Nations. After every great war there is a mood of revulsion against war which results in an attempt to frame an international policy. The United Nations has not achieved the building up of a new international organisation which is to end the international crime of genocide.

 Share

Mr. Janner

I am sorry my hon. Friend is diverting this Debate into channels which, obviously, are not the

proper channels. I understand why he does it, of course, and I dare say the House will, but the work of the United Nations should be looked upon and acted upon seriously and then he would have the answers to all his questions about war and the conduct of war.

 Share

Mr. Emrys Hughes

I am carrying the argument of my hon. Friend to its logical conclusions.

 Share

Mr. Janner

Oh, no, my hon. Friend is not.

 Share

Mr. Emrys Hughes

I am pointing out to my hon. Friend that if he wishes to outlaw genocide he should be prepared to outlaw war. That should carry him on to demanding the abolition of the atom bomb and the H-bomb and the ending of the enormous expenditure of all nations on preparations for another war. Far from depreciating the United Nations, I believe it is a great organisation with wonderful potentialities. My criticism is that we do not take the United Nations as seriously as we might and that at present we are not giving the backing that should be given to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his demand that the United Nations should work as it was meant to work. The United Nations has ceased to express the post-war hopes and aspirations of those who thought it would bring international peace; it has become the venue of conflict of international ideologists, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations is arguing, quite rightly, that the time has come when a great effort should be made to bring back the United Nations to its original purpose, which means working out a plan for the complete abolition of war.

I am concerned that His Majesty's Government have not treated this effort with the earnestness and seriousness it really deserves. How many of us really knew that Mr. Trygve Lie was in this country during his recent visit?

The Minister of State (Mr. Younger)

Anybody who read the newspapers.

Mr. Emrys Hughes

The newspapers did not give a great deal of attention to his mission. The visit of Mr. Lie was dismissed summarily, in a small paragraph. When I ventured to ask the Prime Minister what encouragement he would give to Mr. Lie, I received no answer.

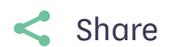
Compare that with the reception which Mr. Lie is getting in Moscow. Judging by the international Press, his mission to Moscow is being received there with great consideration and respect. Let us hope that he will succeed in bridging the gulf between East and West. I say to my hon. Friend, therefore, that if he wishes to defend any particular nation, or any section or race within a nation, he has to carry this argument to its logical conclusion and demand the abolition, not only of genocide, but of the atom bomb, the H-bomb and all the infernal instruments of modern war.

It may be said that other nations are preparing in this way and that we must be prepared, and as a result the old conflict will continue. This country will be piling up expenditure on armaments and saying that that is defensive policy. People on the other side of the Iron Curtain will argue in the same way; thus we shall head for the greatest international catastrophe in the history of humanity. We are asked to consider what is, I think, a very great step towards outlawing the impending conflict. All that those of us who can express an opinion on this matter can do is to support very strongly the attitude of my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-West, who criticises the action of the Government in refusing to go even a very small part of the way on behalf of common humanity. If Australia has ratified the Convention, why cannot Great Britain do so?

I want to see a greater initiative from the British Government in the present international crisis. I do not want to see the foreign policy of a Socialist Government in Britain dragging on miserably behind the policy of the United States of America. We want to see the sentiments which have been voiced by my hon. Friend expressed in a new international policy which will

avoid, not only the minor catastrophes, but the great major catastrophes that threaten civilisation.

The Prime Minister of India made a very interesting statement following the negotiations between India and Pakistan. He said, "We have gone right to the precipice, we have looked over it, and we have decided to turn back." If the other statesmen of the world, if the Americans, the British and all those who are now lining up behind so-called defence policies, do not go to the edge of the precipice, look over it and then retreat, the outlook for humanity is very dark indeed.



8.44 p.m.

Mr. John McKay (Wallsend)

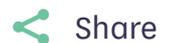
I have listened with interest to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-West (Mr. Janner) who opened the Debate, and I have been stimulated in thought by my hon. Friend the Member for Ayrshire, South (Mr. Emrys Hughes), who spoke next and who, I thought, was very logical. Whatever hopes and ideals we may have with regard not only to genocide, but to any other things, the central factor which will help us to achieve these things will be the maintenance of peace. It is true, of course, as my hon. Friend the Member for Ayrshire, South has said, that if we allow ourselves to develop into war, many of these things will of necessity die.

Therefore, it is wise, when we are considering these matters, to get at their fullest depth. The United Nations, of course, have been considering these things and my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-West has brought us to a very important part of their activities. There is no doubt that his desire to bring the public gaze of this country on to this matter is very wholesome and we all applaud him in that respect. When what he spoke of so emphatically and sincerely was taking place, the whole world considered it something almost beyond the thought of humanity.

The whole question develops into this. However far we may believe ourselves to be progressing, once we get into war our viewpoint, our attitudes, our whole personalities seem to change. Therefore, if we can argue, as my hon. Friend the Member for Ayrshire, South has argued, that whatever hopes we have of developing personality, developing fuller liberties,

developing religious tolerance and developing also political liberty throughout the world—all these things depend, if we hope to maintain them, on maintaining the fundamental one of all, and that is universal peace.

How far we can succeed in obtaining that is one of the problems of today. Nevertheless, while we have that great problem before this nation and before the world, it should not in any way neutralise or weaken our efforts to put our own personalities, our own nationhood and our own rights and liberties into what we think are the right courses to develop. With my hon. Friends, I want to try to publicise the idea and bring it more into the light of day and emphasise that these two problems are inter-related. We cannot hope to maintain all of these things, or any of our ideals, until we can really solve that great world problem and get some foundation for future peace.



8.47 p.m.

Mr. Hector Hughes (Aberdeen, North)

I suggest to my hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend (Mr. Mackay) that he has put the matter too high in attempting to argue that the implementation of this Convention would bring about, or even tend to bring about, universal peace. I also think that my hon. Friend the Member for South Ayrshire (Mr. Emrys Hughes) put the matter too high when he suggested that genocide and killing in war are one and the same thing. Indeed, I think he knew he was putting it too high because he said that he was not actually stating the fact but carrying the matter to its logical conclusion. I do not agree that he was carrying the matter to its logical conclusion. He was simply omitting to give effect to certain words which occur in the Convention, particularly those words where genocide is actually defined.

It is right for the sake of accuracy, as this matter is before the House, that we should see what genocide means. It is defined in both a general and a particular manner in Article II. The general words are:

““In the present Convention genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole, or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such.””

Then the Article gives five sets of details. Genocide and killing in war might mean the same thing if the words "as such" were not there, but my hon. Friend the Member for South Ayrshire gave no weight at all to the words "as such." The Convention says that genocide means killing:

“a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:”

We all know that that is not a definition of war, that war is very different indeed. I do not think that my hon. Friend the Member for South Ayrshire or my hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend have helped the cause they seek to aid by approaching it in the way in which they did.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-West (Mr. Janner) has, on the other hand, performed a most useful service in bringing this matter before the House. It is right that the people of Britain, and indeed the people of the world, should know where Britain stands on this question. Britain occupies a position of leadership in international affairs and in this matter in particular Britain should clearly express and define her position so as to give leadership to any other nations which may be reluctant about implementing this Convention. It is good that publicity should be given to this matter, especially in view of the horrors of genocide in the Second World War, which we hope will be the last world war. Indeed, it is right that those horrors should be brought prominently before the people of the world, that every effort of the United Nations to reduce those horrors should be made present to our minds and that those efforts should if possible be implemented.

This Convention on genocide was discussed by the General Assembly of the United Nations during five meetings. It was fully and amply discussed. It was passed on 9th December, 1948, by 55 votes to none. Not only were there no dissentients, but there were no abstentions. The Convention now awaits ratification or accession by the nations of the world.

Under Articles 11 and 12 the position is that the Convention was open to signature until 31st December, 1949, and since that date it

“may be acceded to on behalf of any Member of the United Nations or any non-member State which has received an invitation. ...”

The great question now is, should Britain accede to it? Should Britain ratify it? One has only to read Articles 1 to 3 to see that the answer is, "Yes." Article 1 defines genocide as an international crime. It states:

“The contracting parties confirm that genocide whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and punish.”

Why should Britain not undertake to prevent and punish this international crime? Why should Britain not play her part in giving leadership to the nations of the world in this crucial matter, which affects not only the peace and happiness but the very existence of civilisation itself? It is provided that the Convention shall come into force on the ninetieth day after 20 states have deposited with the Secretary-General their instruments of ratification or accession. I can see no reason either in war, or politics or humanitarianism why this Convention should not be acceded to promptly.

I do not rely on my own views of this Convention. I would like to refer to what was said by Dr. Herbert Evatt, the President of the General Assembly about this Convention. He said:

“In this field relating to the sacred right of existence of human groups we are proclaiming today the supremacy of international law once and for ever”

Then, again, he said:

“Today, we are establishing international safeguards for the very existence of such human groups.”

Again, he said:

“Our approval of this Convention marks a significant advance in the development of international criminal law.”

Those are the words of Dr. Evatt, President of the General Assembly, a great world leader.

I would, with respect, add that we all know that formerly the basic human We all know that the civilised nations of the world have advanced greatly during the past 50 years. If ever any

good thing comes out of war one of the good things that came out of the two world wars was a higher and nobler conception of human rights, of national rights and of group rights. This convention expresses that higher and nobler conception with regard to the duties of human beings, and nations, towards groups.

This is a great step. As I have said, Britain occupies a position of leadership in international affairs and here is an opportunity for her once again to demonstrate that leadership. I hope she will do so, and I hope that my right hon. Friend, when he replies, will be able to give us an assurance that that implementation will take place at an early date.

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8.58 p.m.

The Minister of State (Mr. Younger)

Since my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-West (Mr. Janner) raised this question of the Genocide Convention in a very sincere and moving speech we have ranged a very long way. I hope the House will not expect me to follow up all the points which have since been made. I wish to deal, I hope in a way which will give my hon. Friend some satisfaction, with the matter of which he gave me notice. I do not wish to go into the very much wider question of international peace raised by subsequent speakers.

There is one thing which was said by the hon. Member for South Ayrshire (Mr. Emrys Hughes) which I really cannot allow to go by unchallenged. It is by no means the only thing which he said with which I disagree but, I think it is one which I cannot allow to go by unheeded. He said that when Mr. Trygve Lie, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, recently passed through here on his way to visit other places in Europe very little notice was taken of him, very much less notice than was taken of him in Moscow.

The hon. Member asked how many people knew that Mr. Lie was here, and I interjected, "Anybody who read the newspapers." I think everybody who was interested in this subject knew perfectly well that Mr. Lie was here. In fact, Mr. Lie saw a number of important people. He saw the Prime Minister. I think he had long conversations with everybody he wished to see, and I would remind my hon. Friend that there are few people in political life of any party complexion in this country whom Mr. Lie does not know. He saw everyone he wished to see,

and he had private discussions.

If there was not much comment in the Press about this it was partly because these were confidential talks, and partly because we are well known to have been supporters of United Nations in the past and to be in broad agreement with Mr. Lie, among others, about the way in which United Nations should function. Therefore, talks of this kind do not make news in the same way as it makes news when Mr. Lie goes to Moscow and is known to be discussing the future of the United Nations, whose progress has been so signally obstructed over the past five years by the Government of the Soviet Union.

From a journalistic point of view it was, perhaps, a matter of greater interest to try to ascertain what sort of reception Mr. Lie may have had in Moscow. Even there, I would point out to my hon. Friend that these conversations, too, are still confidential, and all that is known about them is what Mr. Lie has seen fit to say. I really could not let go by a comment which seemed to suggest that we were more backward in our support of the United Nations and all that it stands for than any other Government. The contrary is the case.

 Share

Mr. Emrys Hughes

rose—

 Share

Mr. Younger

I cannot give way to my hon. Friend. He took up a very long time in discussing a matter which most of us did not think was to be discussed. We respect his views, he has given them to us, and I do not think I need give way at this stage.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-West, described the Convention. He gave some indication of what it contained and how it came into existence. I assure him that the Government share, and always have shared, his abhorrence of the type of crimes which this Convention is designed to meet. It was for that reason, of course, that His Majesty's Government and our delegation supported the original resolution quite soon after the war, when it was proposed that something of this kind should be devised. We also took our full part throughout all the discussions in the United Nations which led up to the adoption of this

Convention by the General Assembly in December, 1948.

I would point out to him that in the Legal Committee, where the working out of this Convention had taken place before it was finally presented to the Assembly, we had very many misgivings about the practicability of some of the legal provisions of this Convention. Many of our suggestions were accepted, but not all of them, and so far were we from being reassured—not about the purpose, on which we had no dispute with anybody, but about the effectiveness of this instrument—that in the final vote in the Legal Committee we felt obliged to abstain. When the matter went to the Assembly it was much more a broad political than a legal issue.

 Share

Mr. Janner

rose—

 Share

Mr. Younger

My hon. Friend will please allow me to explain, because, clearly, he does not understand this part of the argument. On purely legal grounds in the Legal Committee we expressed our misgivings, but when it came to the General Assembly, as we were in complete accord with the purpose for which this Convention was designed, we voted, as did everybody else present, for the convention; but we were obliged even then to accompany our vote by the reservation that we could not, without further examination, be taken to be committing ourselves to changes in our own domestic law. In particular, we said that we could not commit ourselves, at that stage, to action which would prejudice our long-established and traditional right to grant asylum to persons who were charged with political offences.

That was the position at the time when this Convention was voted unanimously by the General Assembly. The conditions in which it will come into effect shortly after 20 ratifications have been lodged, have been described by my hon. Friend. I think that the fact that, despite that unanimous resolution in which we took part, only seven ratifications and three accessions have so far been received, indicates that other countries besides ourselves have found that there are difficulties when we come to the legal application of this

Convention, and that they, like ourselves, feel the necessity for very careful study. I will not put it higher than that, but it is significant that out of the whole body of nations who voted as we did, so far there are only that small number of ratifications.

I now come to the legal aspect, because it is—and I should like to assure my hon. Friend of this—the legal difficulties which have so far held up our ratification and, I should imagine, that of many of the other States who also have not ratified. Genocide, as such, has not previously been known to the British criminal law, but it is, of course, in most of its aspects, already covered by existing law. The great part of the crime of genocide would be covered, either by the law relating to murder or by the law relating to grievous bodily harm, and by various aspects of the existing criminal law. The terms in which the definition of genocide is expressed are terms which are, in certain of the clauses, unfamiliar to English law, and it is a matter of some difficulty to be quite sure how far they are covered and how far, on the other hand, they are perhaps too vague even to be readily put upon the Statute Book as criminal offences in this country.

This is a matter which has given us very considerable difficulty. We have not felt it right to rush the studies of the legal experts in this matter because—and I think my hon. Friend will agree with me —there is really no danger of the crime of genocide being committed in this country and we feel that our law in the spirit is generally adequate to deal with this matter.

 Share

Mr. Janner

I hope my right hon. Friend has not misunderstood me. I have not suggested that the law in our country requires much alteration to cope with anything that happens in this country. The important matter is that we should take a part in stopping this from happening elsewhere, and not merely say that it is the internal affair of the other country. It is happening today.

 Share

Mr. Younger

If my hon. Friend will just wait and let me explain this, I am coming to precisely that point. I think that the importance of this Convention from the point of view of British accession is not for any effect it might have in relation to offences of this kind committed in this country. With

the exception of certain phrases which, as I say, are very vague, and which I would hesitate to say could be readily put upon the Statute Book as crimes, it is broadly true that the English criminal law is already well adapted to deal with most crimes of genocide.

The practical importance turns, firstly, upon the obligation which this might impose upon us in respect of genocide committed abroad, and also of course, on the estimate of the effectiveness which we think this instrument would have in preventing genocide abroad. On that last point I take a much less optimistic view of the effect this Convention would have upon the sort of offences my hon. Friend enumerated than does my hon. Friend, but the main point I want to make is the obligation which might be imposed upon us in respect of genocide committed abroad.

That brings me to the Article to which my hon. Friend referred and quoted as being especially important. It is Article 7, which relates to extradition, and reads:

“Genocide and the other acts enumerated in Article 3”

which is the definition of genocide—

“shall not be considered as political crimes for the purpose of extradition.”

“The Contracting Parties pledge themselves in such cases to grant extradition in accordance with their laws and treaties in force.”

It is particularly the first part of that Article to which I draw attention:

“Genocide and the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall not be considered as political crimes for the purpose of extradition.”

That Article is in direct conflict with our own Extradition Act of 1870, which precludes the surrender of a fugitive criminal if the offence in respect of which his surrender is demanded is one of a political character. The question whether or not it is of a political character is open to decision either by the courts or, in the last resort, by the Secretary of State. What we are required to do under Article 7 is to lay down by Statute that in no case is it open to the courts or to the Secretary of State to refuse the surrender of the person accused of genocide on the

ground that the offence is political. Therefore, I think there can be very little doubt that if we were to accept that as it stood we should have to amend our existing law. I think there is very little doubt indeed that that would be the case.

 Share

Mr. Janner

rose—

 Share

Mr. Younger

Perhaps my hon. Friend will let me continue. He had a very good innings, if I may say so.

That perhaps would not matter if, in the definition of genocide as it stands in the Convention, it was on the face of it clear that genocide could not be a political act, and if the definition was such as to make it quite obvious that in no circumstances could there ever be this particular difficulty arising. I do not think that this is the case. I think that one could easily conceive cases where the surrender of a person on the ground of having committed genocide was demanded, and where under our Extradition Act a court or the Secretary of State might well decide that this was an offence of a political character.

I am sure that everybody will agree that it is most important that we should look at this matter with the utmost care. We have had cases quite recently, and they have happened from time to time during the last 50 years, in which we have been asked to surrender people who were fugitives from their own countries as the result of disturbances, civil war and all sorts of disputes. There have been cases when we refused to do this under this part of the Extradition Act of 1870, because we were not prepared to give up a political refugee to the other side in his political quarrel. I do not think anybody on either side of the House would wish me to suggest that we should lightly decide this without being quite sure where we stand on the matter. If it were really the case that genocide could not in any circumstances be a political crime, there would not have been any need for Article 7. It is precisely because there is a danger that it might have political implications that Article 7 has been put in, in the hope that, in that way it would not be possible for the State to refuse extradition on that ground.

I am not saying that this is a matter which is yet quite clear, but that it certainly is the most important of the rather numerous legal points which arise and which require to be very fully studied. There is one other fairly recent complication which we had not anticipated and which must come under discussion with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with the other persons who took part in framing this Convention. The Soviet Union has now purported to sign this Convention with reservations, and that, I understand, raises an exceptionally difficult question of international law—the question whether we, were we now to ratify it, would be taken to accept the Soviet reservations. I understand that the balance of opinion is that we should be taken to have accepted it, and this would affect the position of the International Court in this matter. That comes under Article 9, and the possibility under the Convention of referring disputes and questions relating to the responsibility of statesmen or parties is, in fact, almost the only part of the Convention which contains any teeth.

It is perhaps one of the inevitable effects of a Convention like this that whereas it might well prove to be fairly effective in cases where private citizens commit genocide, it is certainly very much less effective, though not wholly ineffective, where it is a State or a Government that is concerned. It has usually been a Government, because, in the nature of things, it has nearly always been a question of a State or Government being guilty of this offence. Article 7 of this Convention sets up an international authority which could exercise some useful if not direct control over a State conniving at or responsible for these offences, but this, is the very Article upon which this reservation has been lodged.

We are entering into discussions upon this question with the United Nations and other parties, and it is not unreasonable to ask that we should have some time to consider this. As I said in my opening remarks, we have always agreed with those who put forward this Convention in the purpose they have in mind, and we share their detestation of the crime of genocide and have many times expressed it. We believe in a principle, in relation to international Conventions, which, I may say, is not by any means universally accepted—that if we ratify a Convention, we mean to implement. We do not think we should ratify this Convention until we are satisfied how it is going to affect, in particular, this right to grant asylum to which we attach very great importance as, I am sure, does my hon. Friend, and until we are quite sure, in regard to the question of these reservations, just what it is we are ratifying. That does not seem to me an unreasonable point of view. I hope we will be able to

clear up this matter.

I would repeat to my hon. Friend that all but a very few States who were just as keen about it as anyone else, are finding something of the same difficulties. These legal difficulties are not, as he seemed to think, just legal quibbles. If he were a refugee, I am sure he would not regard asylum as a matter of a legal quibble. Therefore, I would only ask him to preserve a little patience in this matter, and I give him the assurance that if we can solve these difficulties, as we hope to do, we then hope to be able to ratify this Convention.

 Share

Mr. Janner

Would my hon. Friend answer two points? First, how much longer does he think it will take before this matter will be sufficiently considered so that we may be able to discuss it in this House again if there happens to be any difference of opinion on the legalistic side? Second, on the question of political asylum, will he say—

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Mr. Deputy-Speaker (Major Milner)

I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but he is not entitled to make another speech; he is only entitled to ask a question.

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Mr. Janner

What I was saying was in the nature of a question. With the greatest respect, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I was asking my hon. Friend whether he would say, on the question of political asylum, if he thinks that asylum should be given to a person or persons who have been accused, and against whom there is a *prima facie* case, or a case of genocide?

 Share

Mr. Younger

I must say I am rather surprised that a lawyer should think it possible for me to say when lawyers will reach a conclusion. We are, as I say, in discussion. We have been considering the

question of our own domestic law for a rather long time, as my hon. Friend knows, but this question of Soviet reservations is a matter which affects all the other parties, including those who have ratified, and whose ratification might be brought into doubt thereby. We are in communication with them and with the organisation itself. That is, I think, a recent development, so I cannot give my hon. Friend a promise on that matter.

His second question was whether I would expect anyone to get political asylum if a *prima facie* case has been made out against them. I thought I made it clear that the definition of genocide may well include cases which have a political nature, and which are of the type for which, traditionally, we have always given asylum. One thing which might amount to genocide is the causing of serious mental or bodily harm, or, indeed, killing members of a national group with intent partly to destroy the group. That is something which might arise in many a civil war, not to mention the international wars to which my hon. Friend has referred. I think he will see that it covers just the sort of case in which, in the past, we have always insisted on withholding the surrender, as it might be, of the defeated party to his enemies in his own country. I think that answers my hon. Friend's question.

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Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at Nineteen Minutes past Nine o'Clock.

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**The UK National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre -
Rebuttal Appendices**

APPENDIX 5d

**German War Crimes Trials Debate – 5th
May 1949**

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German War Crimes Trials



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05 May 1949

Volume 162

5.20 p.m.

THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER

rose to call attention to the present situation in Germany in relation to war crimes **trials**; and to move for Papers. The right reverend Prelate said: My Lords, the Motion which stands in my name raises issues of justice, humanity and political wisdom. It affects the Germans, for the future of the new West German Republic, and indeed of Germany, depend in no small part on the question whether or not it develops in an atmosphere of confidence; and the war crimes **trials** are among the deepest troubles of the German people. But still more this Motion affects ourselves, and our reputation for justice and humanity; and on that ground in particular I plead against a further continuance of **trials** in any form, including the prosecution of the three German Generals, and I ask for a review of the sentences of all war criminals who have

been already convicted. This subject has been much discussed in this House and elsewhere, and there is general agreement on the magnitude of the atrocities perpetrated by the instruments of Hitler's domination in the occupied countries, and on the legal rightness of punishing the main criminals. But it has been recognised from the start, first, that the important thing is to establish a proper idea of the international rule of law and to make examples, and, next, that the dealing with the criminals should be just and prompt.



Now, my Lords, it is four years since the end of the war, and the War Crimes Commission was itself deliberately wound up in March, 1948; and, whatever we may think of the ultimate principle involved in the whole system, the longer it continues the more difficult it is to defend, and to carry the conscience of the enemy with us. We have to remember that nothing like it was instituted before on such a scale—and note the gravity and the vulnerability of the position of the President. No one could have presided over the International Military Tribunal in a more masterly or more fair manner than did Lord Oaksey; but the law imposed upon the Tribunal was a very rigid law, in some respects novel; and the making of a special Charter at all opens out all sorts of dangers in circumstances different from those which were under our control.

There are three main points of criticism. First, the Charter deals only with the crimes of the vanquished; but it is very difficult for a defeated foe to appreciate the justice of punishing such crimes as the deportation of civilian populations in occupied territory, looting, murder of prisoners of war and devastation not justified by military necessity, when similar charges could be brought against one or more of the Allies, but are not brought. The second point of criticism is that the Charter makes war of aggression a crime against peace. I can at least safely say, as an amateur, that this is much disputed among international lawyers; and the History, just published, of the United Nations War Crimes Commission gives a very interesting and full account of this disputability—not in morals but in international law. It points out that the majority of the Special Sub-Committee and of the Legal Committee of the War Crimes Commission regarded it as by far the most important issue of substantive law before taking the view that aggressive war, however reprehensible, did not represent a crime in international law, and that this position was not altered by the Kellogg Pact. The arguments at **Nuremberg** and Tokyo agreed with the Charter. All I would say is that the issue is highly controversial, and that **Nuremberg** made a new enactment.

The third point of criticism concerns the rule about superior orders. Article 8 of the **Nuremberg** Charter runs thus:

“The fact that the defendant acted pursuant to order of his Government or of a superior shall not free him, from responsibility, but may be considered in mitigation of punishment.”

Law No. 10, under which all subsequent proceedings took place, defines that responsibility much more precisely. Article II of this Law says that:

“... any person without regard to nationality or the capacity in which he acted, is deemed to have committed a crime ... if he was (a) a principal or (b) was an accessory to the commission of any such crime or ordered or abetted the same or (c) took a consenting part therein or (d) was connected with plans or enterprises involving its commission or (e) was a member of any organisation or group connected with the commission of any such crime.”

I do not see how anyone, however remotely connected, could under these provisions be free from responsibility. The principle *respondeat superior* must be recognised as important in law—and all the the more when we remember that Germany was a military, and indeed a police, State, and that a man was likely to be shot if he disobeyed.

Again, so far as war crimes proper are concerned, this Article in the Charter goes much further than the manuals of military law in force when the war broke out. I have studied some of the actual texts of

these; and I find that the German, the French, the Russian, the American and the British manuals all allow superior orders to be a valid defence on a charge of war crimes. The British Manual, up to April, 1944, was the plainest of all. Paragraph 443 of the British Manual of Military Law includes these words:

“It is important however to note that members of the armed forces who commit such violations of the recognised rules of warfare as are ordered by their Government, or by their commander, are not war criminals and cannot therefore be punished by the enemy.”

This paragraph, and a similar paragraph in the American Manual, were drastically altered in April, 1944; but that was the rule from 1914 to 1944. It was the rule at the time of the Moscow Declaration on atrocities of October, 1943.

All these points have a bearing on the general issues. But the last point of criticism deals with a principle of the greatest importance, concerning the responsibility of individuals in the case of all types of war crime—crimes against peace and against humanity, especially where administrators, diplomats and naval and military chiefs are concerned. The ultimate guilt lies with the makers of policy. It is the originators of the policy—men like Hitler, that man of diabolical power, and his most intimate political accomplices—on whom the gravest responsibility lies. I think we ought to have distinguished, far more radically than any Government have yet distinguished, between the primarily and principally guilty men and the rest.

The last **Nuremberg** trial took place under three American judges, and ended in April. It is, I believe, their last trial. It tried diplomats and civil servants. Some of these were deeply involved in policy; others were diplomats and administrators only. Von Weizsacher, the Permanent Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, was the most important of the diplomats. Two judges sentenced him on certain counts to seven years' imprisonment. Judge Powers gave a dissenting judgment that he was not guilty at all, but the majority opinion includes this surprising statement:

““While admitting that many things passed over his desk and received his initials of approval as to which he harbored mental reservations and objections, he states he remained in office for two reasons: first, that he might thereby continue to be at least a cohesive factor in the underground opposition to Hitler by occupying an important listening post, maintaining members of the opposition in strategic positions, distributing information between opposition groups in the *Wehrmacht*, the various governmental departments, and in civil life; and, second, that he might be in a position to initiate or aid in attempts to negotiate peace. We believe him.””

That phrase "We believe him" is extremely important. We may wish that he and many others had refused to co-operate, but many diplomats, including Permanent Under-Secretaries of State in other Foreign Offices, have disapproved the policy of their Prime Minister or Foreign Secretary and have yet not resigned. I hope that there may be a radical revision of the majority verdict.

The case is hardly less strong in connection with naval and military chiefs. I personally greatly regret the weakness and timidity of the Generals in failing to stand up against Hitler, both before and during the late war. Many of their actions or their failures to act merit strong moral condemnation. But we must beware lest the ultimate result of the policy

adopted by the victors after the war has this result, as described by Brigadier-General J. H. Morgan, K.C., in his examination at **Nuremberg**. He says:

“It may be that in the wars of the future, the belligerents, confronted with the possibility of losing them and, in that event, of being predestined, if vanquished, to be accused of 'aggression,' will wage them with all the greater fury and inhumanity, on the principle that it is as well to be hung for a sheep as a lamb.”

Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery in Paris, at the Franco-British luncheon on July 8 of last year, said that the **Nuremberg trials** made the waging of unsuccessful war a crime, for the Generals of the defeated side would be tried and then hanged. I shall come to the two Field-Marshals and the one General in a moment, but with this background I urge that the time has come to bring all prosecutions to an end and grant a general amnesty.

Let us just look at the figures. The History of the United Nations War Crimes Commission states that on March 31, 1948, there were 34,270 German individuals listed, of whom 22,409 were war criminals proper, 9,339 were suspects, and 2,522 were material witnesses. If we add 1,677 war criminals proper of other European nationalities, we arrive at a total of 23,086 war criminals proper listed by the War Crimes Commission. Of these, on March 31, 1948, a year ago, 3,470 had been brought to trial in Europe and 2,857 had been convicted. Lord Wright, the Chairman of the War Crimes Commission, said in your Lordships' House on March 30, 1945, that if 10 per cent. of the war criminals were apprehended and dealt with, it would be more than satisfactory.

Let us see who now await trial in the British zone. I know there are not many left. A great many have been tried and convicted and some have been acquitted; but there are three classes awaiting either trial or consideration for surrender. First—as I believe; I do not know now the exact figure because it varies—there are twelve Germans accused of crimes against humanity. There may be grave offenders among them. I do not know any of their names but, in view of the time that has elapsed, I think we should be prepared to risk now that some criminals escape punishment. The second category is the category of those two Field-Marshals and one General to whom so much attention has been directed. Field-Marshal Von Rundstedt and General Strauss are old and ill. Field-Marshal Von Manstein, younger, aged 61, is not so ill, although I understand his eyes are very bad. The answer to the question which the noble and learned Viscount on the Woolsack put last November: "Are these men fit to stand their trial?" may be "No" in the case of two, and "Yes" in the case of one. But, in my opinion, to allow any **trials** to proceed is to miss the main principle, which is one of justice at this date.

The circumstances of their removal from Britain are well remembered. It is sufficient to say that the first formal notice that they would be tried by a military court was received on August 28, 1948, three days before the last day for deciding on further prosecutions at all, but no precise details were given as to charges or facts. Last November the noble and learned Viscount on the Woolsack spoke of the immense amount of work to be done and of papers in the United States. On January 1, so-called holding charges of war crimes were delivered to these three survivors. I have seen them. They consist of short sentences describing the type of crime without giving any details enabling the defence to prepare its case. Up to the end of last week—I do not know what the position is to-day—no detailed statement of the case for the prosecution together with copies of documents had been handed to them. Supposing that indictment is handed to them next week, the defence must be given sufficient time to prepare their answers, and they should surely have access to the files of the military establishments which were under their command. The noble and learned Viscount in November hoped that the trial might be staged in March, though he gave no promises. It will be June or July, or even August, before the trial is likely to be staged now; and my question is: how shall we be able to justify to history the trial of any, in these circumstances, at this date?

I do not dispute that the charges may be very grave. Nor do I dispute that their subordinate, Lieutenant-General Carl von Rogues, was sentenced by an American tribunal in October last to twenty years' imprisonment, and Lieutenant-General Otto Wothler, von Manstein's Chief of Staff, to seven years' imprisonment. We know that both von Manstein and von Rundstedt were asked in July, to give evidence in these cases. Important facts regarding them must surely have been known at that time. Important facts regarding them must surely have been known in March, 1948, when the Russians pressed for the delivery of these two Field-Marschals. It is the delay that is the crux of the matter. After all this time, at this distance from the Moscow Declaration, after four years of imprisonment, let them go. Incidentally I would like to ask whether they and other war criminals, after they have served their sentences or after they have been set free, are subjected to denazification in German Courts if they want their funds unlocked or for any other purpose.

There is the third category—namely, the much larger class of alleged war criminals in British custody whose surrender is asked to the Governments of the countries in which the crimes were committed, in accordance with the Moscow Declaration. The method of deciding what is *prima facie* evidence justifying surrender has been greatly improved since the tribunals were established in 1947, but we can understand the terror of surrender to certain Eastern countries. I need only remark

that, according to the history of the War Crimes Commission, up to May, 1947, Yugoslavia had tried seventy-nine war criminals, sixty-three of whom were sentenced to death and none acquitted. A recent order has been given that no fresh applications for surrender will be entertained except on charges of murder. But murder charges are often an excuse for the interrogation of such persons about the politics of other people in the country to which they have been surrendered. A death sentence passed in absence on a person who was a boy of fifteen when the war broke out—and there are such cases—can hardly be regarded as adequate *prima facie* evidence. I have much correspondence on these matters and I am grateful to the Foreign Office for the trouble they have taken in them, and I know personally many cases of a most tragic character, many suicides in different camps, after the order of surrender has been given. They have chosen suicide rather than go to certain torture or death in particular countries. So I would urge an end to the surrenders.

I have spoken of the Field-Marschals and the General; I have spoken of those charged with crimes against humanity and of those demanded for surrender. As I have no doubt the noble Lord will tell us in his reply, there are many signs of a general closing down of these war crimes trials, in the British zone as well as elsewhere. So in my plea for a general amnesty I ask for a reconsideration of the sentences already passed. In the American zone last year charges were made, to use the words of the American judge, Judge van Roden, "of atrocities committed by American investigators in the name of American justice at the United States Court in Dachau." The American Army Department accordingly appointed a Commission consisting of Judge Simpson, Judge van Roden and Colonel Lawrence, to investigate 139 confirmed but unexecuted death sentences, and their circumstances. The Commission's Report was published in January of this year. They found that no general charge of improper methods could be sustained but that in the Malmedy Case—and here I quote:

““The propriety of many of the methods employed to secure statements from the accused is highly questionable and, we conclude, cannot be condoned.””

They recommended the commutation of death sentences in altogether twenty-nine cases. They also recommended—and this is my point—that the Commander-in-Chief should establish as soon as practicable a permanent clemency programme for the consideration of the sentences of prisoners convicted in war crimes cases. So I would ask His Majesty's Government to establish a similar permanent clemency programme, with machinery for

reconsideration of all sentences of persons convicted. It is only too well known that some prisoners who were sentenced earlier in a rather severe way would not to-day have been prosecuted.

I have one final point before I sit down. I would ask His Majesty's Government to look at the conditions in which the major war criminals are imprisoned at Spandau Prison in the British sector of Berlin. I am not speaking of the merits or, rather, the demerits of the major war criminals, but I would call attention to this point. All these major war criminals at Spandau are completely isolated from the outside world and forbidden to read newspapers or to get any news. Their relatives are allowed to visit them for a quarter-of-an-hour every other month. Correspondence between prisoners and their families is so delayed and so heavily censored at times that it is often stopped for weeks, and so defaced as to be unintelligible. And the severity of the confinement is such that the chaplain is able to administer spiritual counsel only in the presence of a sentry. Probably the decision a year ago to terminate the Allied Control Council, which decision is now to be reversed, has made it impossible to secure consideration of individual cases.

My Lords, I have put the general situation before you. I ask for an amnesty at this stage; no more prosecutions; no more surrenders to other Governments, and a reconsideration of all sentences passed. I do it, not because I am under any illusion as to the gravity of the crimes or as to the terrible part so many have played in bringing misery and suffering to millions, but because a time comes when an end ought to be put to the penal process. The noble and learned Lord, Lord Wright, in the course of some words upon the United Nations War Crimes **Trials**, stated:

“Once it is felt that the idea of an international rule of law, and its suitable endorsement, have been established, with the support of sufficient precedents, humanity is glad to be relieved of the nightmare of the past ... The majority of the war criminals will find safety in their numbers. It is physically impossible to punish more than a fraction. All that can be done is to make examples.”

The rule of law has been demonstrated, many examples have been made, and exactly a year ago—on May 5, 1948—the noble and learned Viscount who sits on the Woolsack said in this House, in a debate on the United Nations Commission on Human Rights:

“I look forward to the day when at long last these **trials** can come to an end. I think that the indefinite prolongation of the **trials**, although of course there may be

exceptional cases where delay is necessary, is no longer performing a useful or a desirable task. If justice is spread out over too long a period it begins to look like vengeance, which is very different from justice.””

He closed with the remark that, in saying what he had said, he had the support of an overwhelming body of opinion among all Parties. With the proviso that after one more year it can no longer be necessary to maintain even one exception, these words of the noble and learned Viscount are truer than ever to-day, and I ask His Majesty's Government to act upon them. I beg to move for Papers.

5.54 p.m.

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (LORD HENDERSON)

My Lords, I would like, first of all, to thank the right reverend Prelate for his courtesy and readiness in responding to the requests of the Government which led to his Motion being postponed from the original date to that of the present debate. It has enabled certain matters to be dealt with this afternoon in more definite terms than might otherwise have been possible.

I believe it will be for the convenience of your Lordships, and helpful to the course of the debate, if I make an immediate statement about the two Field Marshals and the General to whom the right reverend Prelate referred.

I can announce to your Lordships' House that the Government have decided, in the light of medical evidence, that Field-Marshal von Rundstedt and Colonel-General Strauss are unfit to stand trial: proceedings against them are to be dropped and they are to be released. The medical evidence regarding Field-Marshal von Manstein is that he is fit to stand trial, and accordingly he is to be tried. The noble and learned Viscount the Lord Chancellor will deal with this decision in full detail when he speaks later in the debate.

But there is also the general policy of His Majesty's Government regarding war criminals, and I will deal with the present position and outline the Government's future policy in this matter. As noble Lords have been reminded, the acts listed and defined as crimes by Article 2 of Control Council Law No. 10 were crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity and membership of a group or organisation declared criminal by the International Military

Tribunal at **Nuremberg**. As regards the first category, crimes against peace, no occasion has arisen to bring to trial persons accused of these crimes in the British Zone of Germany. Persons in the British Zone accused of war crimes—by which I mean crimes against the laws or customs of war—have been tried before military tribunals, and for the greater part the crimes alleged against them have been offences against British troops or troops of Commonwealth countries—chiefly prisoners of war. No **trials** have started since September 1, 1948, and none will be started in the future, apart from that of Field-Marshal von Manstein. All those started before that date have now finished, and the sentences have been put into execution.

The third category is crimes against humanity. In the British Zone of Germany these crimes have fallen into two classes. Where the victims were German citizens or stateless persons, the accused are being tried in German courts. Where the victims were members of the United Nations, the accused are being tried in Control Commission Courts in the British Zone. Of the latter category, there are outstanding nine cases, affecting eighty-four persons. His Majesty's Government have decided that these and any future cases will without exception be left to the German Courts to try under the German penal code. So far as the **trials** of Germans accused of offences against Germans or Stateless persons are concerned, the question of the continuation or cessation of such **trials** is entirely one for the German authorities, and it is no part of His Majesty's Government's policy to interfere with a responsibility which has been handed over to the Germans.

The fourth category is membership of a group or organisation which has been declared criminal by the International Military Tribunal at **Nuremberg**. Organisations so declared were the Leadership Corps of the Nazi Party, the S.D., the Gestapo and the S.S. It was decided, in agreement with the German legal authorities in the British Zone of Germany, that the offence of being a member of one of these four organisations should be tried by special German tribunals. Accordingly, the cases of some 27,000 persons were investigated, and 203 are still under investigation. Over 20,000 of them have been brought to trial, of whom about 75 per cent. were found guilty and sentenced. There are 168 known cases awaiting trial, and 285 awaiting the hearing of appeal or retrial. Again, since the responsibility in this matter has always been with the Germans, the question of bringing to trial any persons accused of being members of such organisations who may be apprehended in the future is one which must be

left to be settled by the German authorities.

The right reverend Prelate referred to the surrender of Germans to other countries for trial there, as had been determined at Moscow in October, 1943. He urged that extradition should be brought to an end, even though the alleged offence was that of murder. There have been four successive stages in our extradition policy. The first was that of virtually allowing extradition merely on the application of the claimant country. Then, in the light of this early experience, it was decided by the United Nations Assembly in October, 1947, on British initiative, that requests for alleged war criminals should be supported with sufficient evidence to establish that a reasonable *prima facie* case existed as to identity and guilt. In order that such *prima facie* evidence might be the better examined by the Military Governor, and possibly rebutted by the accused, an extradition tribunal was established in the British Zone on February 28 last year. As I informed your Lordships on June 23 last, all applications for the surrender of alleged war criminals were being examined in the first instance by that tribunal.

About the same time, His Majesty's Government gave consideration to the question of the offences for which surrender of alleged war criminals should still be granted. The British Military Governor was ultimately authorised to announce, on June 1 last year, that he wished to receive by September 1 all applications for surrender, and with regard to applications made after that date, that he would grant only such as showed a clear *prima facie* case of murder. That was the third stage. The effect of this latter decision was that it removed from many German homes, more than three years after the war, the shadow of retribution for less grave offences than murder. But murder is an offence for which no statutory limitations exist, either in this country (as was pointed out by the noble and learned Viscount, Lord Simon, on November 2), or in Germany. The fourth stage has now been reached. His Majesty's Government intend to continue, in exceptional cases, to allow the extradition of persons to the countries where their crimes were committed. There must now be not only *prima facie* evidence of murder but also a satisfactory explanation why this application for extradition was not made before September 1, 1948.

I should make it clear to noble Lords that there are a few applications for surrender of alleged war criminals which are still being examined in Germany where the offence alleged is not murder. These applications were made before September 1 and are, therefore, not

covered by the Military Governor's announcement of June 1. Two factors have caused this delay. The first is that the claimant country had not originally supported its application with adequate evidence to convince a tribunal acting in the British principles of evidence, and has had to ask for an adjournment in order to produce such evidence, which very often exists. The second cause of delay has been that the accused, when confronted with the evidence against him, has asked for an adjournment in order to obtain rebutting evidence. Your Lordships will agree, I am sure, that it is only right that we should give the accused persons reasonable time if there are genuine grounds for believing that they have witnesses who can testify on their behalf.

There is one other surrender or extradition class—namely, traitors and collaborators of various countries occupied by the Germans. In 1945 we informed our Allies concerned that such persons would be regarded as traitors to the common cause, and the Military Governor was instructed to hand over to their Governments for trial such persons found in the British Zone of Germany. It has lately been decided however that after nearly four years from the end of the war, sufficient time has been granted to discover such persons as might be resident in the British Zone. The Military Governor, therefore, was authorised to announce in January that he would accept no more applications for the surrender of alleged traitors and collaborators after March 1, 1949.

My Lords, I will summarise the future policy of His Majesty's Government by the following announcement:

(1) His Majesty's Government do not intend to bring to trial in the British Zone of Germany any further persons accused of crimes against the laws and usages of war, apart from **trials** already begun, and that of Field-Marshal von Manstein.

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VISCOUNT SIMON

When will that trial begin?

 Share

LORD HENDERSON

If the noble and learned Viscount will be good enough to wait until my noble and learned friend the Lord Chancellor deals with this matter, as I said at the beginning of my speech, he will be informed.

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VISCOUNT SIMON

I do not wish to disturb the noble Lord, but I think the noble and learned Viscount the Lord Chancellor is going to speak last. Presumably, the Foreign Office know the anticipated date.

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LORD HENDERSON

I still must request the noble Viscount to be good enough to await the speech of the noble and learned Viscount the Lord Chancellor.

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THE LORD CHANCELLOR

My Lords, I will gladly intervene at any time, if my noble friend does not mind. I have seen the indictment. It has had to be translated into English, and the last page or two are still in a draft form and written in ink. It is anticipated that the indictment will be served within the next ten days, and thereafter, of course, we must give the accused such reasonable time as he wants to meet the matter. Subject to that, we shall be able to start the trial as soon after as may be.

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VISCOUNT SIMON

I am much obliged, and apologise to the noble Lord for having interrupted him.

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LORD HENDERSON

The announcement goes on:

(2) His Majesty's Government have already handed over to the Germans the responsibility for

trying persons accused (a) of crimes against humanity where the victims were Germans, or (b) of being members of organisations declared criminal by the International Military Tribunal.

(3) In the case of crimes against humanity involving an Allied or United Nations victim, His Majesty's Government intend that all future cases shall be tried by German courts under the German penal code.

(4) His Majesty's Government have long been anxious to reduce to a minimum the number of cases of extradition of war criminals. The Military Governor announced in June last that, save in certain specific cases, no further applications for extradition for war crimes would be accepted after September 1, 1948. In view of their obligations under the Moscow Declaration of 1943 and the Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1947, and of the strong feeling still existing in France and certain other Allied countries which were occupied by the Germans, His Majesty's Government intend to continue in exceptional cases to allow the extradition of persons to the countries where their crimes were committed. This, in His Majesty's Government's view, means cases where there is *prima facie* evidence of murder, and where there is a satisfactory explanation why application for extradition was not made before September 1, 1948.

(5) In regard to crimes against peace, it is intended to continue the present policy of bringing no trials before Control Commission Courts.

(6) In the matter of extradition of traitors and collaborators, no further applications for extradition are being accepted by the British authorities since March 1, 1949.

My right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary has been very anxious, in the light of the recent Allied agreements in Washington about Germany, to reach agreement with the French and United States Governments on this vexed question of war crimes policy as well. The attitude of the American Government is similar to that of His Majesty's Government, and I understand that the statement which I have made expresses their position, as well as our own. The position of the French Government is different, and we appreciate the reasons for this. France and other countries of Western Europe, which were overrun and occupied for years by the Germans, have suffered more than the United States and the United Kingdom from these war crimes. We appreciate that the Governments of these countries should wish

to retain the right to bring to trial persons who may yet be found to have been guilty of these serious offences. It is for this reason, as I have mentioned, that both His Majesty's Government and the United States Government propose to retain the right to hand over war criminals in exceptional cases. Subject to these exceptional cases both Governments intend to accept no further applications for extradition.

It will thus be seen that His Majesty's Government have virtually brought to an end trials in British courts of persons accused of all forms of war crimes. The power of extradition exercised under international obligations to our Allies and the United Nations has been brought to an end, apart from exceptional cases. Lastly, my Lords, we have handed over to the German authorities responsibility to try their own nationals accused of crimes against humanity and of membership of criminal organisations.

I will take only two or three more moments to deal with two points to which the right reverend Prelate particularly referred. He suggested that all sentences passed upon German war criminals should be reviewed, and reduced or cancelled. Before sentences of imprisonment are finally put into execution they are most carefully reviewed by the confirming officer. In addition, my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for War has established a Review Board to consider all such sentences of imprisonment, and in due course, when all cases have been reviewed, the Board will make recommendations for the reduction of sentences where the circumstances make it seem proper. It is, of course, possible that such recommendations may result in the cancellation of the rest of the sentences where the term of imprisonment finally recommended coincides with the term already served. The only ground, however, for cancellation in any other sense would be wrongful conviction. All verdicts have already been exhaustively examined, and further review could be justified only by fresh evidence. In addition, it is probable that remission of sentences for good conduct will be allowed according to normal English practice. A final decision on this has not yet been taken.

As regards Spandau Prison, a number of improvements were introduced in September last, following discussions on this subject. In particular, I would mention that increased rations have been authorised, and that visits at monthly intervals, and in some case of one hour's duration, are now permitted. The prisoners have always been permitted to write and receive one letter every month, and no increase in the number of letters which may be sent and

received has been authorised. As a result of the censorship regulations there is now, however, a less strict scrutiny of the contents of letters. I should be glad to look into any detailed allegations of delays. As regards the provision of newspapers, I must point out that in the English prisons it is only during the final stages of a sentence that prisoners are allowed newspapers. I have had prepared a comparative table showing the original and present regulations for Spandau prison and those for English prisons, and if the right reverend Prelate wishes I shall be glad to send him a copy.

There were a number of other points of which the right reverend Prelate gave me advance notice, and I have a good deal of information which I had hoped to be able to give him this afternoon. But, in order not to occupy any further time, I will, with the permission of the right reverend Prelate, communicate this to him by letter. Finally, may I say that I hope the statements of future policy, and the information on specific points which I have given, will give some measure of assurance to the right reverend Prelate and to noble Lords generally?

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6.15 p.m.

VISCOUNT SIMON

My Lords, at this hour I will not keep the House by any speech of mine for more than a very short time. I intend to be quite definite in what I say. We are all, I am sure, sincerely grateful to the noble Lord opposite for the detailed information he has given. I shall not deal with it at all; I think my noble friend Lord Bridgeman may have something to say about it a little later. I have only two or three respectful observations to make about the decision just announced: that of the three German Generals whose fate was discussed in this House some six months ago, two are now to be released, but the third is to be prosecuted. I apologise sincerely to my noble friend opposite if I at all incommoded him by interrupting and asking a question. It did not seem to me a very difficult question for him to answer, and it is useful to know the answer. I did not interrupt him further, but it may be important to know when the decision was reached by His Majesty's Government that two of these Generals who have been in custody for four years should be released.

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THE LORD CHANCELLOR

Would the noble and learned Viscount like me to answer that?

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VISCOUNT SIMON

Yes, I should.

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THE LORD CHANCELLOR

I went into this matter myself and got all the doctors over to see them on Monday afternoon last. I reported to my colleagues this morning, and the decision was taken this morning.

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VISCOUNT SIMON

I am glad, at least, that the House is informed as soon as the decision is reached. I must say I am sorry that the right reverend Prelate was prepared so often to postpone his Motion. Who knows whether, if he had said he felt it his duty to press his Motion earlier—a very important part of which was to determine whether these people were to be tried or released—some portion of this decision might not have been arrived at sooner? However, it was arrived at this morning and was based, I gather, on inquiries which my noble and learned friend the Lord Chancellor has been good enough to make quite recently. There it is. I do not say a single word in defence of any wickedness that any of these three German Generals may have perpetrated, but I venture most respectfully to express the view which I hesitated to express six months ago, that if one were to consider this matter from the point of view of policy, it is very question able indeed whether it is the wise course to prosecute the third General now. Our sitting earlier in the day was interrupted by a most important Statement made by the Leader of the House, which was also made in another place, holding out prospects for improvement in the future of Germany. With the greatest respect to others who may know more about it, I do not see what object is going to be achieved by, for the first time, serving at some date in the future—I dare say in the near future—an indictment on this remaining General, after he has been in custody for four years.

It cannot be that you hope to punish everybody who has been guilty of wickedness. It has been elementary, ever since this conception of war crime trials was set up (it was set up when I was Lord Chancellor, and carried through in the same spirit by my successor) that we were to establish what we thought to be justice and law in a limited number of cases, as an example. I recollect very well that President Roosevelt, when he assented to the announcement I had the duty of making in this House, stipulated in terms that the prosecutions must be limited to a few, for the sake of example. Are you going to add anything to the realisation of the world that wickedness must be punished, by saying: "Here is another General whom very shortly we hope to be able to charge with a war crime"? In due course, when he is given proper opportunity for his defence—which, of course, he must be given—he will be tried, and if he is found guilty he will then be punished.

What are you going to gain by that? We are not here dealing with the administration of our own domestic criminal law where, quite rightly, everybody is prosecuted whom the authorities find on sufficient grounds ought to be made the subject of a criminal proceeding. That is not the need of these international tribunals at all. They exist for the purpose of establishing a principle which, whatever the right reverend Prelate may think, I regard as a justified and established principle—that, on proper proof, it is right to make an example of terrible wickedness committed in war in breach of every conceivable decent standard of conduct. I cannot myself see what advantage is to be gained by this additional case, whatever be the gravity of it, and I feel that there are certain disadvantages which a wise and far-sighted policy might feel weighed heavily upon it.

I must refer to one or two of the introductory remarks of the right reverend Prelate, because although I warmly agree with his concluding appeal, I found some of his early observations rather difficult to accept. If I understood him rightly, he attacked what I may call the Charter of Nuremberg. I must say, for my part—and here I am sure the Lord Chancellor agrees with me—that I believe the principles laid down in that Charter were in themselves perfectly just and were in accordance with international law. I am sorry that anybody, least of all a member of this House, speaking from the Bishops' Bench, should throw doubt upon that.

Then, if I understood him correctly, the right reverend Prelate told us that the view widely held, and which he did not challenge, was that in all the circumstances a soldier was to be excused because he was obeying superior orders. I would venture respectfully to remind the

House that not only is that not the law, but it is recognised in Germany not to be the law. There are no doubt cases in which a serving soldier, ordered by his Commander to do a particular thing, like firing a volley, may well suppose that he is merely discharging his duty. But the British Manual of Military Law has never laid down that a man who knows that he is committing a monstrous wickedness is to be excused by saying, "Well, I was ordered to do it." It surprises me very much that the right reverend Prelate should even for a moment entertain the idea that, if a soldier were ordered by his officer to go and rape a woman, he would be guilty of no sort of crime because he had just received superior orders to do it.

 Share

THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER

I do not want to be misunderstood. I do not at all take the view which the noble and learned Viscount attributes to me. I was quoting—and I did no more than quote—the British Manual of Military Law. I did not embroider it in any way.

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VISCOUNT SIMON

Let us deal with the British Manual of Military Law. In point of fact, there never was, so far as I know, in the British Manual of Military Law in earlier days any statement such as the right reverend Prelate quoted. It is true that there was an insertion which was derived from an edition of the writings of a distinguished international lawyer. Mr. Oppenheim. Shortly afterwards he published his next edition, and very properly, realising that he had made a mistake, he corrected the statement. I have the book before me now. Perhaps the right reverend Prelate has the same book. If he would turn to page 455 he will find a useful little note, and he will see whether the German view is that a soldier is excused acts because he obeys a manifestly wicked order. After the war of 1914–18 there were certain **trials** in Leipzig for war crimes. Rightly or wrongly, the Government of that time thought that they could entrust the trial of certain German war criminals to German courts. My noble friend Lord Cecil will remember it well. One of the most important of the Leipzig **trials** had to do with the shocking conduct of German sailors who, under orders, shot unarmed individuals shipwrecked from a vessel which had been torpedoed by the Germans.

If the right reverend Prelate would remind himself, he will see that this is what is stated in Mr. Oppenheim's own book, and it is perfectly well known to anybody who has studied the subject. He says:

“The German Supreme Court held in 'the Llandovery Castle' case, a case decided in the course of the so-called Leipzig trials, that the defence of superior orders would afford no justification where the act was manifestly and indisputably contrary to international laws as, for instance, in the case of killing of unarmed enemies or of shipwrecked persons who have taken refuge in lifeboats.”

I do not wish to delay the House, but it would be a pity if we left on our record a suggestion from any quarter of the House that that is not a proper statement of the law.

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THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER

My Lords, I am extremely sorry to intervene again, but I have here the official *History of the United Nations War Crimes Commission and the Development of the Laws of War*. I would ask the noble and learned Viscount to look at page 281, where it says:

“At the outbreak of the First World War, in 1914, parts of the British Military Manual were revised and amplified. In Chapter XIV, relating to the *Laws and Usages of War on Land*, the principle was declared that military personnel acting upon superior orders were not penally liable for offences committed under such orders, and that liability lay only on the superior. It was couched in the following terms: 'Members of the armed forces who commit such violations of the recognised rules of warfare as are ordered by their Government, or their Commander are not war criminals and cannot therefore be punished by the enemy. He may punish the officials or commanders responsible for such orders if they fall into his hands, but otherwise he may only resort to other means of obtaining redress....’”

Then it says:

“During the Second World War opinion developed strongly against these rules, and criticism was repeatedly expressed in the international bodies. ... English writers, such as

Professor Lauterpacht, observed that the British Military Manual had no statutory force and could, therefore, be amended in the face of new developments.””

The only point I made was that what the Charter says in the words in which it states the rule, differs in a rather important respect from the British Manual of Military Law. I have no wish whatever to say that atrocities and brutalities, committed with the knowledge that they are atrocities and brutalities, must go unpunished by whomsoever they are committed.

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VISCOUNT SIMON

I thought that must be the right reverend Prelate's conclusion. It is perfectly true, as I thought I said, that there had been inserted in our Manual of Military Law, the proposition to which he has just referred, but it is also true—I have the passage before me—that the author of that view, realising it was wrong, said so in his next edition. As a matter of fact, the Manual of Military Law was corrected accordingly.

There may well be cases where a man, acting under orders, has no reason to doubt that the orders are lawful orders. Indeed, the Manual of Military Law used to talk about "lawful orders." But I do not think it has ever been laid down in terms by any reputable authority—and I am sure the right reverend Prelate would not think so—that, supposing the action be of a monstrous character which nobody can possibly regard as lawful but must regard as wicked and abominable, it is a complete defence to say: "That makes no difference: I am only an automaton; I do as I am told." The true view is that while it is a very material circumstance that the man has been under military orders, and it is a great reason for consideration and mitigation, it would be a shocking thing if it were suggested at this time of day, in any quarter, that because a man is under military orders he is at liberty to do just whatever he sees fit.

I hope the right reverend Prelate will not think I am wishing to saddle him personally with any reproach; but it does seem to me that if any noble Lord is going to support an issue in your Lordships' House it is important that he should come out quite definitely. I myself think that the Charter of **Nuremberg** was a well-drawn Charter. It has already been defended by one noble Lord. But on one point I feel the gravest doubt. I have no illusion as to the gravity of

some of these war crimes. It may be that the noble and learned Viscount the Lord Chancellor is going to reveal, as he did before, some shocking incident; but the question remains, as a matter of political wisdom four years after the war: Are you doing any good by pursuing these prosecutions? The Americans have washed their hands of them; they will have nothing to do with them. We ourselves have wound up our organisation, and people have had to be recalled for the present **trials**. Even now the indictment has not been served, and it is not for me to estimate how long it may be before the matter is finished.

I am sorry to express what may seem to be a dissenting note. I restrained myself last November, though my own view then was that it would be better to abandon these **trials**. I do not find it consistent with my duty, to say to-day that I think it is a wise decision to proceed with these prosecutions.

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6.33 p.m

LORD HANKEY

My Lords, I came here to-day to support to the full the Motion of the right reverend Prelate. When the statement was made from the Government Bench, I hoped at first that it was going to give the right reverend Prelate considerable satisfaction, but I am sorry to say I am very disappointed now. Apart from the trial of Von Man-stein, there seem to be **trials** still going on all over Germany. I entirely agree with what my noble and learned friend Lord Simon has just said, that these **trials** ought to be stopped and that His Majesty's Government ought to set the example in the matter. Still, I congratulate the Government on having made some advance in that direction, and I hope that when I raise the question of Japanese **trials** a fortnight hence I shall find a greater advance.

To appreciate the position, I think we have to review it rather broadly. These **trials** began with the **Nuremberg trials**; they are really all offshoots in one way or another. **Nuremberg** was born in a bad year, 1943; a policy of virulent threats was adopted in 1943 and has bedevilled the world ever since. That policy, in which, so far as I am aware, no Commander-in-Chief or Chief of Staff had any concern, was inaugurated by the announcement by President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill, but not by Mr. Stalin, who was not present, of "unconditional surrender" at Casa Blanca on January 20, 1943. That was a great gift to Goebbels' propaganda, rallied the

disillusioned German people to Hitler, strengthened the resistance of the enemy and greatly prolonged the war by making it impossible for the Allies to offer peace on less humiliating terms in either the West or the Far East. Then, on November 1, nine months later, came the announcement from Moscow of the intention of the Allies to punish the Nazi leaders. That threat, like all threats, stimulated retaliation and again postponed peace *sine die*, because it threatened everybody who could make peace; they were told that they were all to be killed or imprisoned. Even today we have no German Treaty. Moreover, as a result of the bitterness engendered, the war became a fight to a finish and, through no fault of the Allied Service chiefs, degenerated into a sadistic orgy of competitive frightfulness—V1 and V2 weapons, U-boat warfare and frantic war crimes on one side, and, on the other, unlimited bombing, culminating in the crowning catastrophe of the atomic bomb.

I think history will attribute to this ganglion of desperate policies the following consequences: first, the prolongation of the war to a point where we were bled white while Russia was extending her grip over all Eastern Europe and accomplishing Stalin's published aims; secondly, the failure to make peace with Germany for four years or more after the end of hostilities; thirdly, the replacement of German tyranny by Russian despotism, the estrangement from the Western Allies of Germany and Russia, the disappearance of the historic frontiers between Eastern and Western Europe and of the balance of power for their defence; and fourthly, a legacy of bitterness, confusion and hatred which stifled the United Nations from its birth and still continues.

So much for the wider policy and its results, in which the **trials** of war criminals had, and unfortunately still have, their place. Of the **trials** themselves it can already be said that, besides starting new **trials** all over Germany, they have been imitated all over Europe, resulting in the judicial persecution and often death of countless and often innocent people—kings, statesmen, cardinals, politicians, generals, diplomats and I know not whom—and that again will continue until the German and Japanese **trials** are brought to an end. Secondly, it can be said that a deplorable precedent has been set for future wars. At both **Nuremberg** and Tokio, as the right reverend Prelate has said, the victors tried and judged the vanquished. The tribunals were established by and derived their powers from the victors alone, for the trial of the vanquished and of no one else. It was by the victors alone that the Charter and the Code of International Law were drawn up. There was something cynical and

revolting in the spectacle of British, French and American judges sitting on the Bench with colleagues who, however impeccable as individuals, represented a country which before, during and since the **trials** has perpetrated half the political crimes in the calendar. And in spite of the specious arguments on page 38 of the **Nuremberg** Judgment, I do not see how anyone can deny that under a cloak of justice these **trials** were just the old, old story—one law for the victors and another for the vanquished. *Vae victis!*

To grasp the political danger of the precedent, let us imagine that the countries of Eastern Europe have over-run many of the countries of Europe. Can you imagine that they would not follow the **Nuremberg** precedent faithfully, writing their own charter, defining and creating their own "international" laws and establishing their own tribunals? The employment of the atomic bomb would be decreed as a breach of the laws of war—which is an arguable proposition—and everyone they could lay hands on who had ever been concerned in its use in any war would be tried and hanged. The Atlantic Pact has already been denounced by Russia and her satellites as a breach of international law, and those who have aided and abetted it and been concerned in its military planning would be advised not to fall into Russian hands. From Sir Alexander Cadogan's remarks at the United Nations a day or two ago, we know how their **trials** are conducted:

““The official view of the administration of justice in these countries is that it should not be impartial, but must serve the ends of the régime in power. One of the few certain things we know about the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty is that the judge was not independent because he was told what verdict he was expected to give, and knew that his job depended upon his giving it.””

If we were to get some of the judges from **Nuremberg** in a corner and ask them in private what was the attitude of one of their colleagues, I wonder what they would say.

Another dangerous precedent created by this trial is in connection with defensive planning. There are, or will be, defensive planners with the United Nations, regional organisations like the Atlantic Pact, or individual nations. Upon the discipline and loyalty of the planners, whether military or civilian, to the supreme control of their respective Governments the whole safety of the nation or of any group of nations will depend. But those primitive virtues of discipline and loyalty seem to have been forgotten by the pedants who devised Article 8 of

the Charter, which has already been mentioned. That lays down that:

“... the fact that a defendant acted pursuant to an order of his Government or of a superior shall not free him from responsibility.”

That confronts the individual planner with an impossible dilemma between duty and conscience. Shall he obey the order, or shall he seek the shelter of some international law—as it will be interpreted, not necessarily by his own fellow countrymen, not necessarily by the **Nuremberg** Charter (which we are told was so good), but by the victor in the war, who may be his enemy, with a totally different ethical standard? It is just placing a premium on cowardice and escapism in the proper carrying out of orders.

Contrary to general belief, the history on which the **Nuremberg** judgments and findings were based is not accurate. I have made a careful comparison between the invasion of Norway, as described in the judgments, and the description of it in Mr. Churchill's memoirs *The Gathering Storm*. Of course, those memoirs were not published at the time, but that evidence was available if the tribunal had thought it worth while to get it, but their judgment was based entirely upon the evidence that they obtained from the Germans. They did not and out what was going on in the Allied countries. At this late hour, I am not going to burden your Lordships with the elaborate survey that I have made on that subject, but I will just mention one or two points. Had the judges called for that evidence, they would have discovered that the planning of aggression first began in this country. It was on September 29, 1939., four days before Admiral Raedar's memorandum, which is always quoted as being the first step in German planning, that Mr. Churchill called for plans here. That was the start of the plans for what was eventually carried out, namely, the mining of the Norwegian leads which Mr. Churchill described a little later on as ranking as "a major operation of war." He then discussed the extreme probability that, if it was carried out, Germany would spread the war to Norway and Sweden, which he thought would be to our advantage; and towards the end he put in a plea for anticipating them, even though it meant a violation of neutrality. Those are all just the things that the Germans were doing and thinking about, *mutatis mutandis*.

Then the judges would have had their memory recalled to the "Altmark" incident, which was actually the first breach of international law, apart from the sinkings of neutral ships. The Norwegians protested violently against this as a breach of international law and, as Mr.

Churchill comments, it no doubt gave the Germans "a spur to action." All those things were overlooked by the judges because they took no evidence from the other side. In my opinion, the result is that their summing-up is quite incorrect—namely, that "in the light of all the available evidence, it is impossible to accept the contention that the invasions of Denmark and Norway were defensive and in the opinion of the tribunal they were acts of aggressive war." The very important operation of the mining of the Norwegian leads actually took place on April 8 and was criticised by the Norwegians. German retaliation was just coming but, all the same, they protested against it, and the Germans came in the next day—April 9. So both in the planning and in the execution we were beforehand. I think that was a very good thing. I think it showed great foresight on Mr. Churchill's part. But we did actually begin the planning and we actually committed the first aggression, though by a very short head. If the judges had obtained that evidence, the judgments would have been different.

But, if the tribunal's account of the Norway campaign is wrong history, that is equally true of the even more important introductory review of the rise of Hitler and his gang with which the Judgment opens for the purpose of showing the background of the aggressive war and the war crimes charged in the indictment. That is a serious statement to make. It is true that there are very few errors of commission. It is a perfectly correct account, if you look through it. But the sins of omission—they really make one's hair stand on end! Here is a great historical account of the fall of a nation to an abominable system and leader, and there is hardly a single word on what was the provocation. It is true that they do just mention one point—namely, Hitler's aim of removing "the disgrace of Versailles." That appealed naturally to the German people, as have all appeals for freedom. But not a word appears of such provocations as the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 which, rightly or wrongly, was denounced at the time by the leaders of every British Party and in every Dominion as a flagrant aggression. There was not one word of the use of black troops in the Rhineland garrison, which was very irritating to the Germans; nor of the attempts to detach Bavaria and Saxony from Germany; nor of the endless pinpricks over reparations up to 1932.

There is another great cause of the Second Great War which is not even mentioned—namely, the failure of the Allies who had both the right under the Treaty and the force, though they lacked the will, to stop German rearmament. Mr. Churchill mentions that point at the very beginning of *The Gathering Storm* in this caption:

“Theme of the volume: How the English-speaking peoples through their unwisdom, carelessness and good nature, allowed the wicked to rearm.”

It was not only the English people; it was others too. But by slackness and by such things as the British Ten-years' rule, they did allow the Germans to rearm. The Allies were gradually reduced to such a state of moral and physical disarmament that in the 'thirties they had neither the will nor the power to halt the Germans. Those are some of the major causes of the war. It will be said, in the 'twenties the Allies goaded the Germans beyond endurance, and in the 'thirties they did not stop them as they ought to have done; the feeble protests that were made were almost a condoning of German aggression.

I am always told that all the convicted persons were judged and convicted of war crimes, as well as of political crimes, and that the sentences imposed were not affected by the judgments on crimes against peace. That is a most unsatisfactory answer, because to my mind it is clear that before history a cardinal error has been committed in indicting a whole nation of political crimes, without including any extenuating circumstances such as those I have mentioned. I do not confess to any great affection for the Germans but I admit that I am very jealous of our reputation for fairness, and I am horrified at the idea of future Anglo-German relations being poisoned by false history, which will also give the Germans an excuse for making martyrs of Hitler and his gang. These defects were due to two causes. One was that the tribunal never took any evidence of what was being done by other countries; and secondly, that at the time they had no expert assessors with them.

Summing up, I cannot see that we gained anything by the Nuremberg trials, and I shall seek to show in a fortnight's time that we have gained nothing from the Tokyo trials. Therefore, I most cordially support the right reverend Bishop's proposals. The most urgent thing is to bring all these trials to an end, and if other nations will not agree, to decline any further British co-operation. We must not be too mealy-mouthed about it. It is four years after the war. As I said on February 18, 1948, from this Box:

“As a first step, trials and prosecutions of war criminals should be dropped and there should be a universal amnesty. 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' saith the Lord. Let us leave it at that. It is not by fear and threats that the world can be won to decency and

kindness, but by charity.””

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6.56 p.m.

THE EARL OF CORK AND ORRERY

My Lords, I rise to support the Motion, but so much that I had hoped to say has been better said that I shall cut short my remarks, which, consequently, may appear rather disjointed. Before I come to the first part, I must say that I think the noble Viscount was very severe on the Bishop. I have in my hand an extract, which I took two hours ago, from the British military manual, and what was said is perfectly correct. That was the law until April, 1944, and—

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VISCOUNT SIMON

Perhaps my noble and gallant friend would excuse me. I did speak with a greater tone of censure than I ought to have done, and I am sorry. I was very anxious to put as clearly as I could, that it really is not the case, and I do not think it has ever been the case, that because a man is given orders therefore he is completely innocent whatever he does. I was very anxious that that should be maintained. I apologise to the right reverend Prelate. I think I did speak with more harshness than I should have done.

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THE EARL OF CORK AND ORRERY

My Lords, my principal object in rising is to ask that the British rule may be re-established, except, of course, in the sort of crimes that have been mentioned—namely, crimes against humanity. But there is a borderline, and it is extremely difficult to decide whether a crime is a crime against humanity or is a war crime. I am not going to speak about the higher grades, because that point has been ably dealt with, but I am going to take your Lordships a little lower down the scale. We have heard about the planners and so on, and I want to recall to your Lordships that some months ago I spoke on behalf of some German officers who were going to be tried for firing on Greek seamen from a steamer they had sunk. That trial was held, and the following evidence came out.

The captain, who was a lieutenant-commander of some standing, had told his officers that he was going to destroy all traces that might, give away to an Allied air patrol the presence of his submarine; and with that object he ordered them to fire on the wreckage. He knew and accepted the fact that seamen survivors of the ship were clinging to the wreckage, but he said that he considered the carrying out of his mission, combined with the safety of the ship he commanded and the crew he commanded, took first place. I feel myself that it may have been a severe view to take, but that it is a view which every officer in such a position ought to take. His first consideration must be to achieve the objective which he has been set, and the second to do that with the minimum of risk to his ship and the men under his command. That principle will hold good for any Service. At the time when he expressed this view and stated that he was going to do this, the officer had on the bridge with him a sub-lieutenant—a boy only twenty or twenty-one years of age. This young officer was making his first voyage in a ship on active service. It was his first experience of the excitement of firing against an enemy. He was ordered by the captain, who, as I have said, was a man of long experience, to open fire. He complied, and he took other measures—though these were not with the object of firing on the wreckage. We have killed that boy for doing that. I say that he was doing his duty. I believe that in the view which I take on this matter I shall have the support of a great number of officers in all our Services. The boy received an order, and he had no time to consider or discuss whether or not what he was ordered to do was legal.

May I, in this connection, read your Lordships an extract from the Manual of Military Law:

“... undoubtedly a court confronted with the plea of superior orders is bound to take into consideration the fact that obedience to military orders is the duty of every member of armed forces, and that the latter cannot in conditions of war discipline be expected to weigh scrupulously the legal merits of the orders received.”

I thought to myself, when I saw the noble and learned Viscount opposite holding up that great tome, that I have never seen that book on any ship or submarine, in any camp or anywhere else connected with the Forces. That Manual of Military Law was their guide at the time, and it is made in a convenient size for carrying in an officer's pocket.

So far, in what I have told your Lordships about this episode of the submarine I have not come

to the worst part of it. I have stated that the captain was shot, and the boy was also killed. The court found the boy guilty, though I think that many people may feel there was a great deal to be said for him. However, on the principle of divided responsibility the sub-lieutenant was tried and shot—I should call it something more than an execution; I should call it something else altogether. But to continue with the story of the episode. Among the group on the bridge of the submarine was a leading seaman—he would correspond in rank to a lance-corporal in the Army. He was only nineteen years of age, and he, too, was ordered to fire on the wreckage. In obedience to the order, he fired two short bursts; that was all he did. What did we do to that boy in justice? We gave him fifteen years penal servitude.

I think that this and similar cases ought certainly to be revised. This watering down of the responsibility for the giving of an order, and holding responsible those who carry it out, seems to me to weaken the whole chain of mutual confidence which binds together all in a Service. Everyone should be able to trust his superior and to carry out without question an order from him. And the superior ought to be able to depend on implicit obedience. If the superior gives a wrong or inhuman order, well, you can shoot him afterwards—I am not defending inhumanity. But there are cases, of course, in which it is very hard to judge.

I have in mind such a case as that of a military patrol which was told to carry out a certain operation and, in doing so, over-ran a place where there was a number of enemy troops. This episode, of which I am thinking, took place in Burma. The patrol could not take the twenty or thirty Japs whom they encountered with them, and still less could they leave them where they were, for they would have given away the presence of the patrol in the area and that would have had disastrous results. In this instance, the Japs were taken by surprise, and without weapons. Doubtless, if they had not been, they could not have been taken at all. In the circumstances, the only order which the officer in command felt that he could rightly give was to eliminate them by shooting. And that was done. In my opinion that was correct, but you could have tried that officer and found him guilty if he had tortured or flogged the prisoners to death. There are a number of eminent legal authorities in this House now, and I should like to be told whether that officer was or was not guilty of a war crime, or of an offence against humanity, in having those twenty-odd prisoners, who were unarmed and taken by surprise, executed.

I say that this easing of the strict rule of the full responsibility for an order by one party and of

unquestioning obedience by the other does weaken the bond between superiors and inferiors in a Service. To my mind that is a very serious thing. I may be told that it will not make any real difference. Superficially, it might appear that it would not. But I think that what may well happen is that just at the time when you want the bond to be at its strongest—as, for example, when it appears probable that you may meet with defeat and the utmost effort on the part of everyone is called for—the juniors will lose confidence; when they get an order they may say: "I do not think I will do this, because if we are captured I shall have to answer for it." Thoughts and impulses of that kind, when the circumstances are very difficult, can spread very rapidly. When such sentiments once begin to be expressed among the members of an organised body in the Service, general mistrust follows, and defeat is not far off.

I urge His Majesty's Government that when these matters are reconsidered, we should go back to our old-fashioned British law and so do all we can to reestablish implicit trust between all ranks throughout all our Fighting Services. If we do not do so, we may find that just at the time when we are placing most dependence upon it, discipline will break; there may be a disintegration of forces and men may seek to ensure their own safety, with results which can readily be imagined.



7.8 p.m.

LORD AILWYN

My Lords, I desire in the briefest manner possible to say something about the case of the one remaining Field-Marshal—Field-Marshal von Manstein. I am glad I have not to speak on behalf of all three of the officers in question. To me this seems to be one of the most difficult anti intractable problems that have ever been debated in your Lordships' House. I think it goes to the very roots of the meaning and definition of justice. This question of what is justice, considered in the particular circumstances with which we are concerned this evening with regard to this Field-Marshal, is only a shade less perplexing to me than the question, "What is Truth?" which was posed some 2,000 years ago, and is still being asked by the human race to-day. As I see it, there is no political issue here. In that, with the greatest humility, I differ from the noble and learned Viscount opposite, who spoke of the political wisdom of this issue.

To me this is a question which each one of us has to decide according to the dictates of his conscience. For my part, I have given this matter all the thought of which I am capable. I listened to every word of the debate in your Lordships' House in November last, and I read and re-read the reports of the speeches made that day. Those of your Lordships who listened to the grave and solemn pronouncement of the Lord Chancellor on that occasion will not easily forget that moment in his very powerful speech when he raised a corner of the curtain and revealed something of the horror that lay behind. In common with the great majority of your Lordships on that day, I, personally, found the case which he made for going forward with this trial to be unanswerable. That was six months ago. This Field-Marshal is still languishing in prison, as were the others, I understand, until this morning.

No projected date has yet been given for this trial. No doubt there are good and sufficient reasons for all this protracted delay and, not knowing the circumstances, I shall certainly make no criticisms of this matter, but I have come to the definite opinion that what would probably have been justice a year ago, what might possibly have been justice six months ago, can no longer be justice to-day, in view of the inordinate delay in bringing this man to trial. I believe that a decision to pursue this trial in existing circumstances would be repugnant to the feelings of all thinking men and women in this country and in all other Christian countries. I believe that the fair name of British justice might be damaged irretrievably. I have the greatest possible sympathy with the noble and learned Viscount the Lord Chancellor in the extremely difficult task with which he has been, and still is, faced. I am one of those who believe that it is a task to which this country should never have been entrusted. I should have supposed it was clearly an American responsibility. The evidence in support of this contention appears to me to be overwhelming.

I should like to say a further word about treaty obligations. I venture to suggest to your Lordships that the Soviet Government have placed themselves beyond the pale of association in the comity of nations and that their behaviour justifies a repudiation of whatever obligations we may have entered into at a time when we had no reason for believing that they were going to behave in the utterly abominable way in which they have behaved. We know to what grim fate we should be handing over this man, if we did hand him over—a fate even worse than that to which he and the other Generals were going to condemn our men in handing them over to the Gestapo. I venture to suggest that the Government would do well to

heed what I believe is the intensity of feeling among all shades of opinion over this projected trial. I believe it would be wrong and not in accordance with Christian principles or the British code of justice if the Government were to decide to proceed with this trial. Equally I believe, for the reasons I have given, that it would be a hideous crime to hand this man over to the Russians. Therefore I plead with the Government to revise their present policy and announce the abandonment of this trial.

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7.13 p.m.

VISCOUNT BRIDGEMAN

My Lords, I have reached the conclusion that the time has come, and had come long since, to bring an end to the war crimes **trials**. In reaching that conclusion I travelled a rather different road from that travelled by the noble Prelate who moved this Motion and from that travelled by some of my noble friends. At the time when the war crimes **trials** were being planned, in 1945, I had a good opportunity of judging the question, because I was officially concerned with some of the administrative problems which surrounded the **trials**. I was not concerned with legal problems, but with administrative problems, but that gave me an opportunity of seeing something of the quality of the evidence likely to be offered when these **trials** took place. I formed the view then, and I still hold the view now, that in essence these **trials** were just and right. I formed that view having some knowledge of the Manual of Military Law and the doctrine of what is a lawful order and what is not.

As the same time I formed another view, from which again I have had no reason to depart—the view that whereas it was right to bring war criminals to swift justice (and I think I am right in saying that the words "swift justice" are used in the Moscow Declaration), there would come a time when, if these **trials** were still continued, the effect would not be that which was hoped for but one which would be harmful to what was bound to be the policy of the victorious allies—namely, to build up a new and sounder Germany. I think that is the state of affairs to which we have come. These **trials** have been going on far too long, and therefore we are running a risk of seeing the efforts which we are bound to make to put Germany on her feet, and which have become all the more necessary since the welcome news given to the House this afternoon, interfered with. That was why all my noble friends and certainly I

myself were very glad to hear what the noble Lord, Lord Henderson, said to us a few moments ago. His statement meant that no further war crimes trials would take place under British tribunals, and that a similar state of affairs would exist in the American zone.

Only three classes of trials remain to be dealt with. The first are trials which the Germans see fit to bring. If the Germans see fit to promote trials against their own nationals, no one can claim that it interferes with the rehabilitation of Germany. The second class are those trials which the French may see fit to bring. Here one would hope that by this time the French would have brought to book the majority of those who should be brought to book. Although one sympathises very much with the French and realises that they are in a different position from the countries which were not invaded, nevertheless one hopes that it will not be long before they, too, can close this chapter. In practice the position is one in which we are left to consider only the question of the trial of von Manstein. Unfortunately, this debate has been so arranged that the question of this trial has had to wait until the end. We are all waiting to hear what the learned and noble Viscount who sits on the Woolsack will tell us in giving the reasons why this trial should go forward. Until he does, it is not for me to say whether it is right or wrong. All I can say is—and here I am much in agreement with my noble friend Lord Ailwyn—that every day the trial is delayed makes the arguments against the trial stronger and the arguments for it weaker. If we are to be offered good and convincing reasons why it is still right to try von Manstein, then I sincerely hope that we shall be given a better assurance than we were given last year and that this trial will really be conducted in such a way as to make a belated attempt to live up to the ideal of swift justice laid down in the Moscow Declaration.



7.20 p.m.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR

My Lords, this debate was to call attention to the present situation in Germany in relation to war crimes trials. Though your Lordships, perhaps fortunately, are not bound by strict rules of order, I doubt whether the irrelevancies relating to this matter have ever, certainly not in my time, reached the heights, or perhaps I should say depths, which they have reached to-day. I had a chance of talking to your Lordships about this matter in November last. It is not my

intention today to go over the ground I then covered, or to discuss in any way the details of this case, because I think that to do so would be unfair. But I want to say this at the outset. For the last six months I have found this whole matter one that has been a source of great worry to me. I do not withdraw a single word I used which the right reverend Prelate quoted earlier. But when I hear a discussion raised as to the responsibility for superior orders, and that sort of thing, I wonder what on earth that has to do with the case.

Incidentally, may I take this opportunity of asserting what the law is, and always has been? It is that acting on superior orders is no defence to a charge for committing a crime. Any lawyer will learn that in his first year of study. There can be no doubt about it at all. But it would be a most relevant factor in determining punishment, and a most relevant factor for me to consider in determining whether I should give the advice that a particular trial should go on. Obviously I have to consider these factors. The first factor is: What is the nature of the offence of which the man is accused? If it be a case where he was carrying out orders imposed upon him by some superior, be it a political or a military superior, obviously I might come to a wholly different conclusion from the one I might feel bound to come to were it a case where a man, on his own responsibility, was said to have committed a series of crimes of the most frightful nature.

The first proposition I would enunciate, therefore, is this. In making up my mind as to what advice to give, I must have regard to the gravity of the crime. If the accusations are true, this man is one of the major war criminals of the whole war. The second matter I must have regard to in making up my mind concerns the treaty question. It is the fact that von Manstein has been asked for both by the Russians and by the Poles; and it is the fact that his offences are alleged to have been committed largely in those areas. I think it is only fair to say this in regard to the Polish **trials**: that we have had experience of the Polish **trials** and they have been quite fairly conducted. There is no doubt about it. I am not saying anything about any other **trials**, but I am saying that the Polish **trials** have been fairly conducted. Here is a case of a man who is accused of having committed the most frightful crimes against Polish nationals, and the Poles have asked that he should be handed over.

In November of last year I discussed this matter with your Lordships and told you that we had reached the conclusion that it was our duty to put these three men on trial. Reports reached me in due course indicating that two of the men were not fit to stand trial. Unhappily, like

everything else in this very difficult case, even those reports were not unanimous, and I came to the conclusion that the best course I could take—with the approval of all my colleagues concerned—was to get the doctors concerned over here to see me. I asked the Attorney-General to come and sit with me, and I was fortunate in being able to secure the services of Professor Sir Henry Cohen who, as your Lordships probably know, is one of the greatest physicians in this country. Naturally, many of the reports were technical and really conveyed nothing at all to my mind. Having heard the doctors (we heard seven or eight of them) ultimately we came to the unanimous conclusion—the doctors, Professor Cohen and ourselves—that the health of von Rundstedt and the health of Colonel-General Strauss was not such as to justify us in exposing them to the ordeal and strain of a trial which must last, I suppose, six to eight weeks. But, equally, everybody was unanimous—including one of the eye doctors who saw von Manstein, and including Professor Cohen—that von Manstein was perfectly fit to stand his trial.

I deplore the delay, of course. But do not let us talk about four years. It was not until August, 1947, that we knew anything about the criminality of these people. Then, I think, we were quite right to press the Americans to take on this work. They were then actually engaged in trying the subordinates—the subordinates received sentences of some twenty years' imprisonment—and I sincerely hoped that they would be able to extend their trial to this man. That caused further delay. I am quoting from memory, but I think it was on December 23 that the matter came to me. We decided, rightly or wrongly, weighing the delay against all these other matters, that we would embark upon this trial. By that decision we must stand. I regret that I then said I hoped—and I expressly stated that it was only a hope—that we should be able to stage the trial by March. The immensity of the task has been far greater than I anticipated, and there has been—I deeply regret it—a further delay of some months. But, as I said just now, the indictment is almost ready. I myself have seen it. I am not going to discuss it further, but I tell your Lordships that it is a very grave document. As I have said, it will be served upon this man in ten days, or something like that time, and then—always bearing in mind, of course, that we must give him whatever time is proper and reasonable for him to make his defence—we must stage the trial as quickly as we can. Your Lordships may rest assured that we shall conduct that trial in accord with our great traditions.

Here I feel that I must say a word about the speech of a noble Lord for whom we have a great regard and affection, Lord Hankey. I should be proud to think that I could ever render to this State one-hundredth part of the service he has rendered. Yet I did not think that in his speech to-night he was rendering a service to his State. I regret very much that, without giving any indication to me or to the noble and learned Lord, Lord Oaksey, he should make these attacks on the **Nuremberg** Judgment—on the inaccuracy that was shown, and so forth. Of course, I am not in a position, without having had the slightest notice, to reply to the charges he made. For myself, I regret very much the way he seemed to speak in one breath of two things which are poles asunder—namely, the **Nuremberg** trial, on the one hand, and the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty, on the other. I regret that he found it possible to say that she thought it revolting for our judges to sit on the **Nuremberg** trial. I believe the **Nuremberg** trial performed a great service. I believe, although the right reverend Prelate does not, that not the least of its services was the laying down of the doctrine that the waging of aggressive war is a crime. But that has nothing to do with the present case of von Manstein's trial. He is not accused of anything of that sort. He is accused of breaches of the usages of war, with the murder on a huge scale of vast numbers of people.

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LORD HANKEY

I should like to explain to your Lordships that I could not give notice of the line I was taking because I was on duty in Paris, and I returned only late yesterday. I was still getting together the case which I have made. I would like to say this: I was not speaking on a legal point, but on a political point, to show that from start to finish—though unfortunately they have not finished—this policy of **trials** has bedevilled the situation in Europe. That was why I was supporting the right reverend Prelate in his case for abolishing them.

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THE LORD CHANCELLOR

I understood the noble Lord to make special reference to the conclusions of the **Nuremberg trials**—for instance, about the Norwegian invasion, suggesting that we had started it. Quite obviously, the Germans had planned for days and weeks before they ever went there; and with the greatest respect to the noble Lord, it seems to me idle to say that we had done

anything, either in that or in the invasion of the Ruhr in 1923, or in the use of black troops, which in any way justified Hitler in the policy he followed. Those are utter irrelevancies to this debate, and for my part, having made, most humbly and respectfully, to the noble Lord the protests which I felt I ought to make, I desire to say no more about it.

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LORD HANKEY

I do beg the noble and learned Viscount to read Mr. Churchill's book and to compare it, as I have done, with the account of the Judgments of the **Nuremberg** tribunal. I think he will have to arrive at the same conclusions as I have.

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THE LORD CHANCELLOR

I shall certainly take the opportunity of reading the documents to which the noble Lord has referred, and if he will do me the favour of re-reading again his own words, I think he will understand why I—and I think I am not alone in this view—rather regretted the way in which he expressed himself. That is all I have to say. I was glad to hear the announcement which the noble Lord, Lord Henderson, made as to our general policy, which I hope will go some way towards satisfying the right reverend Prelate. But for my part, having come to this conclusion in November, and having regard to the circumstances of the case (and, after all, I am in a slightly different position from that of any of your Lordships, because I am the only one who knows something of the circumstances), I venture to think that if your Lordships were in my position you would probably agree with the line that I am taking.

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7.33 p.m.

THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER

My Lords, I am sure that the whole House is grateful for the debate as it has pursued its course, and especially for the full statement made by the noble Lord, Lord Henderson. I think the point of his statement is to be summed up in this way: that from now on there is to be in

British courts a complete cessation of prosecutions and **trials** that have not been begun, with the single exception of von Manstein. The noble Lord also said that a programme of review was already in operation, though new evidence would be required before cases that had been reviewed would come up for further consideration. I think I may take it from what the noble Lord has said that the spirit which animates the programme in the American Zone will in future animate the programme in the British Zone. It is a satisfaction that America and the United Kingdom go hand-in-hand in this total policy of clemency where possible, and in the cessation of prosecutions.

I do not want to trespass further in the controversy about the law relating to superior orders, but I am grateful to the noble and learned Viscount, Lord Simon, for the kindly words in his last remarks, when he did me the honour of making an apology. What I thought was a little harsh was obviously due to some misunderstanding. All that I wished to say in my introductory observations was that there were points of criticism of the law under which the judges actually did their work.

With regard to the excepted case of Field-Marshal von Manstein, I am sure that everybody has appreciated very much the spirit in which, from start to finish, the noble and learned Viscount on the Woolsack has considered this matter. It has been a matter of painful anxiety and troubled conscience to him throughout. I only wish that it had been possible for him to fall in with the wishes expressed from so many quarters of the House, that in all the circumstances at this stage von Manstein should be set free. It is, of course, impossible, and would be entirely wrong, as the noble and learned Viscount said, to say anything for or against the trial itself. I know nothing about the circumstances of the indictment; I express no opinion on the charges, though I have seen them. But I still wish that the trial was not to take place. I am glad that the **trials** of Rundstedt and General Strauss have been abandoned. I appreciated the noble and learned Viscount's assurance—though none of us needed it—that when the trial comes it will be conducted in accordance with the best tradition of British justice, both in spirit and in letter. With that remark, and thanking your Lordships for the patience with which you have attended to my poor remarks, and the interest with which you have followed the whole debate, I beg leave to withdraw my Motion.

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Motion for Papers, by leave, withdrawn.

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