



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Holocaust

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Holocaust

House of Commons Debate

Preventing Future Mass Atrocities Around the World

col 567 Sarah Champion (Labour): ... Next week we mark Holocaust Memorial Day. The horror, loss and trauma of Nazi genocide and crimes against humanity are still felt by survivors, descendants and communities today. But mass atrocities have not been relegated to history. We see these horrors in Ukraine today, where Putin's indiscriminate bombing subjects civilians to endless misery, death and destruction—appalling crimes that we all condemn.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina last year, my Committee met organisations still grappling with the hurt and havoc wreaked by the genocide and crimes against humanity more than 25 years ago. But right now, while the media sometimes forget, the same horrors are being played out in Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia, China and Myanmar, for example. The promise, made in the wake of the holocaust, of "Never again" has been broken again and again. Genocide and crimes against humanity are never inevitable, and they can often be prevented. To do so, however, we need to be prepared, we need to co-ordinate, we need resources, and we need political will.

As a flourishing democracy, major economy and permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the UK has a particular power to act. That is why my Committee [the International Development Committee] decided to launch an inquiry into whether the UK is doing all it can to prevent mass atrocities. ...

col 568 ... there is now a new team at the heart of Government: a mass atrocity prevention hub. ...

Following our inquiry, the Government are now reviewing the training and resources they offer our diplomats, to ensure that our embassies can spot and act on the early warning signs of identity-based persecution and violence. ...

Most of all, this emerging model needs political leadership. Acting to prevent mass atrocities must be part of our national security decisions. We must use the latest intelligence to prevent and prepare. ...

col 569 I want to see the Home Secretary ensuring that our asylum and immigration policies match our commitments to honour the lessons of the holocaust and stand with

those fleeing atrocity crimes today. ...

col 570 Fiona Bruce (Conservative): ... Does the hon. Lady agree that adopting the road map outlined in her Committee's report would not only fulfil this recommendation but would mean that, when we say "never again" on Holocaust Memorial Day next week, the Government can match their words with concrete action?

Sarah Champion: I fully support the hon. Lady's comments. ...

col 571 Dave Doogan (SNP): ... Reflecting on where we are in Europe, we seek never to forget the holocaust and to ensure that it never happens again, yet it was only in the 1990s that those same practices happened again. It was bizarre to observe those horrific scenes on colour television, with the victims wearing Nike clothing. ...

Navendu Mishra (Labour): ... Does my good friend, the Chair of the International Development Committee, agree that preventing mass atrocities not only is a moral imperative, but delivers wide-ranging security benefits for Britain?

Sarah Champion: ... Absolutely, obviously, it is the right thing for us to do morally, but early intervention preventing this has wide-ranging benefits for our national security. People do not realise that terrorist groups are looking to radicalise the unrest that is happening. We are looking at the murder, which leads to refugees and asylum seekers coming to this country, making it impossible for them to go back home again. So, absolutely, early intervention and prevention has to be both morally, economically and in terms of human cost the best thing to do. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-01-19/debates/97103CBD-19B5-4905-BB80-626842E53E36/InternationalDevelopmentCommittee>

The Committee report referred to above can be read at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/30270/documents/175201/default/>

and the Government response can be read at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/33607/documents/182968/default/>

House of Lords Debate

International Holocaust Memorial Day

col 1944 Lord Pickles (Conservative): ... I start the debate in some sadness as, yesterday morning, a friend of many of us in this Chamber, Zigi Shipper, passed away, on his 93rd birthday. He survived the ghetto, concentration camps and the death march. He devoted the latter part of this life to telling his story. ... He will be very much on my mind when I light my candle on Holocaust Memorial Day. I will particularly remember his motto: "Do not hate". ...

The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day is "Ordinary People". I think all of us in this Chamber could imagine ourselves being victims of the Holocaust, but few of us could imagine ourselves being perpetrators of the Holocaust. Unless we understand that both victims and perpetrators were ordinary people who led ordinary lives, we run the risk ourselves of Holocaust distortion. The Holocaust turned ordinary people into monsters.

col 1945 The Nazis had a powerful propaganda machine, which was deadly effective, but curiously, from small villages nestling in the Pyrenees to the impenetrable forests of Belarus, the Nazis never needed to explain to anyone what Jew hatred was. Nor would it have been possible to murder 6 million Jews, hundreds of thousands of Roma, people with a disability, homosexuals or political and religious dissidents without the active collaboration of others. Thankfully, there were of course many ordinary men and women willing to stand up to this hatred. Ordinary people often showed extraordinary bravery to save victims of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. But we delude ourselves if we

think this is the norm.

Across Europe today, we see collaborators rehabilitated as national resistance leaders. History is being rinsed, and countries are recasting themselves as Nazi victims. ...

The destruction wrought by the Nazis and their collaborators was so great that, for hundreds of thousands of victims, the only reminder of their existence in this world is a very ordinary item of clothing: a shoe. ...

These shoes were not bought to board cattle-trucks to travel to death camps; they were bought as expressions of optimism and of the future: maybe they were bought for a wedding, a promotion, the first day at school or a summer picnic. Within the shoes were often hidden objects: money, love letters and photographs of children and spouses. ...

I remember a small pair of shoes, where a carefully folded piece of paper was found in the heel. It was a maths test. Can you imagine how precious this piece of paper was to a child? It symbolised, despite the conditions, that there was still hope and the prospect of survival and a future. ...

col 1946 The memories contained in shoes and other footwear remains important in remembering other genocides. In Rwanda, in the absence of DNA and dental records, shoes and clothing were used to identify the dead found in mass graves following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. ...

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of Holocaust denial and distortion. Today, we still see people who actively deny the historical reality of the Holocaust and seek to minimise the extent of the atrocities committed against the Jewish people by the Nazis and their collaborators. They cast doubt on the existence of the gas chambers and the mass shootings, and on deliberate working to death and starvation being used as a tool of government policy. The simple goal of Holocaust denial is to recast history to erase the legacy and reality of the mass murder of Jewish people.

Holocaust distortion is more mainstream and just as pernicious. It casts doubts. ...

Contemporary events are compared to the Holocaust. ... Holocaust distortion can be found at all levels of society and is far from a fringe phenomenon ...

We are obviously concerned about the growth in the number of anti-Semitic incidents being reported on our university campuses. ... I welcome the Tuck report into anti-Semitism, published last Thursday. This important report includes details of some quite shocking episodes and illustrates how prevalent anti-Semitism is within the ranks of the National Union of Students. ... This was further underlined by today's report from the Community Security Trust, which saw a 22% rise in anti-Semitic incidents on campus in the last two years.

The Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression against Ukraine have further fuelled the soaring levels of online anti-Semitism. ...

col 1947 Close to 80 years since the Holocaust, there are still people waiting for justice and recognition of their property that was stolen by the Nazis. It has been 13 years since 47 countries signed the Terezin Declaration in June 2009. ... However, sadly, only Serbia has put together legislation on heirless and unclaimed property. Poland, the anvil of the Holocaust, is the only democracy refusing to address the concerns of dispossessed Holocaust survivors and their heirs. Time is running out; it has a moral obligation to ensure that Holocaust survivors and their families receive justice.

I co-chair with Ed Balls the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation. Our role is to oversee the British promise to remember and to build a striking and prominent new national memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens. I am most encouraged by the pledges from the Government and the Official Opposition to introduce a Bill to facilitate the memorial's construction. ...

We are clear that the learning centre will adopt a warts and all approach. Our narrative will be balanced, addressing the complexities of Britain's response to the Holocaust, avoiding simplistic judgments and encouraging visitors to reflect critically on whether more could have been done by both policymakers and society. ...

Finally, I thank Olivia Marks-Woldman, the CEO of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, for her marvellous work in delivering the UK's national Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony and thousands of local activities. I also pay tribute to Karen Pollock, the CEO of the Holocaust Educational Trust, which is the driving force behind Lessons from Auschwitz. Professor Stuart Foster and Associate Professor Ruth-Anne Lenga from the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education have ensured that the UK leads the way in teaching and learning about the Holocaust. ...

The Holocaust and subsequent genocides show that ordinary people have choices. It is up to all of us to ensure that the choices that we make today and tomorrow ensure that our statement of "Never again" is not a single empty pledge.

col 1948 Lord Kestenbaum (Labour): ... Dina Eisenman, an 80 year-old grandmother, was dead within a week of arriving at Bergen-Belsen. Her death at the hands of the Nazis was not the end of our family tragedy. Two of her children and two of her children-in-law were murdered. Ten of her grandchildren were murdered too, the youngest of whom—Lottie, who was 16, and Herbert, who was nine—were gassed to death in Auschwitz. In total, 26 members of my extended family were among the millions of victims of humanity's greatest ever state-sponsored crime. ...

col 1949 It was the late Lord Sacks who said: "To be a Jew is to carry the burden of memory without letting it rob us of hope". I am sure he would have agreed that this imperative now falls on us all, irrespective of background. ...

Baroness Brinton (Liberal Democrat): ... This year's theme of ordinary people who let genocide happen is extremely important for all of us at a time when we hear and see rises in anti-Semitism and other discrimination. ...

For me, what happened to the Roma and Gypsy community in the 1930s was appalling. The Porajmos, or the Devouring, started in 1933 with prejudice and discrimination. Tens of thousands of Romani men, women and children across Germany and occupied Europe were first badly treated, and then killed. ...

The human rights commissioner for the Council of Europe ... commented on addressing the increasingly toxic discourse against trans people. That, too, is how genocide started against the LGBT—particularly the "T"—community in May 1933, when the Nazis raided and looted the Institute for Sexual Science. ...

col 1950 If Martin Niemöller were alive today, he would be asking us to look at and think carefully about all we see and do. It is not just about the horrific end of lives; it is about the slow and gradual movement towards othering particular communities and feeling that they are not part of us and that this is acceptable. He said: "We preferred to keep silent. We are ... not without guilt/fault, and I ask myself again and again, what would have happened, if in ... 1933 or 1934 ... 14,000 Protestant pastors" had intervened? He believed that millions of lives would have been saved. We all need to heed that challenge and speak up. ...

The Lord Bishop of Carlisle: ... Our central Christian act of worship, the Eucharist, originated in Christ's participation in the Jewish ceremony of Passover. We note the huge contribution that Jewish people have made to British society through the centuries, which is a great expression of the significance of faith in public life.

However, the Christian Church has not always behaved in ways that have honoured Jews—in fact, quite the opposite, as the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury made clear in a statement just last week. This is something we now deeply regret. As we remember today all those who suffered and died in the Holocaust, we are glad to confirm our absolute commitment to remembering those victims, opposing anti-Semitism, and helping to educate people about the Holocaust and against anti-Semitic hate crimes, which are still not entirely absent from our culture. Indeed, the Church of England's vision for education has at its heart a theme of community and living well together. It is that for which we and our Jewish colleagues work in our shared endeavour

to build community relationships which enable the people of this country to flourish, mindful of the Prayers offered each day in your Lordships' House, for the "uniting and knitting together of the hearts of all persons and estates within the" realm, "in true Christian Love and Charity one towards another".

col 1951 Lord Polak (Conservative): ... I join the noble Lord, Lord Kestenbaum, in quoting the late Lord Sacks. He wrote this in his book, *The Dignity of Difference*: "The Holocaust was an attempt to destroy the dignity of the Jewish people. It failed. Those who suffered and died in the concentration camps, ghettos and death camps left a legacy of human dignity and moral greatness that continues to inspire and uplift the Jewish people and all humanity."

Today, we should not focus only on the persecution of those who were murdered in the Holocaust. We should be emboldened by Lord Sacks' words and be uplifted by the brave and resilient actions of those such as Mordechai Anielewicz. As we approach Holocaust Memorial Day, in memory of Mordechai and all victims of the Holocaust, let us pledge to do our part and build a better future for all ...

col 1952 Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent (Labour): ... This is, I believe, the first time noble Lords have had a debate to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. ...

I wish that this debate could be solely one of reflection and commemoration; that we could stand here today and consider the issues of anti-Jewish hate and fascist ideology as consigned to the dustbin of history; and that the bulk of today's debate could be historical comment ...

This debate should be a celebration of the life of Zigi Shipper, an Auschwitz survivor who sadly passed away yesterday. It should be an opportunity for us to honour the work of my noble friend Lord Dubs, who has used his own story to inspire so many others. We should be sharing the testimony of Janine Webber, a Holocaust survivor whom many of us were privileged to hear last week at the Holocaust Educational Trust. ...

I wish that today's debate was anchored in the past and that anti-Semitism was not a contemporary matter that required noble Lords' attention—but I am afraid it is. The Holocaust should have been a unique moment in our global history. It should have shaken the world to its core. ... Holocaust Memorial Day provides us all with a moment of reflection to remind us of where political rhetoric and hate can lead. It gives us an opportunity to challenge our own behaviour and asks us to recommit to challenging racism, hate and bigotry everywhere we see them. ...

Noble Lords have already touched on the scourge of anti-Jewish hate that seems far too prevalent in modern society. In recent weeks, we have seen the National Union of Students forced to accept that its culture is hostile to Jewish students. We have seen numerous stories about the antics of Kayne West and his attacks on the Jewish community. It is 2023 and this ancient hatred is in the newspapers nearly every day.

col 1953 This morning, CST, the Community Security Trust, published a new report detailing anti-Semitic incidents on university campuses across the UK. The past two years have seen a 22% increase in anti-Jewish hate incidents. There have been 150 verified and reported anti-Semitic incidents on British campuses in the past two years. For context, there are only 271,000 Jews in the UK of all ages, so this is a terrifying level of hate. ... I want to put on the record my heartfelt thanks to Mark Gardner and his team at CST, who work tirelessly to keep the Jewish community safe both on campus and in wider society. ...

Baroness Altmann (Conservative): ... It is increasingly important to remember that terrible, dark time. My mother, born in Berlin, and my father, born in Vienna, fled to the UK in the 1930s but most of our families were not so lucky. ...

The main message she feels we need to learn is the importance of tolerance and respect for all other people, not forcing our own views on others—indeed, Jews have never been a proselytising nation—or looking at people with preconceived ideas about race, religion or colour. ...

Despite the horrific events of the Holocaust, which we remember today, I believe that there are still memories of the anti-Semitic acts that happened in Europe in the 1930s. For example, just this week, anti-Semitic taunts were used against a Jewish football supporter and her friends in a London pub that was showing the Arsenal v Spurs match. When she asked fellow Arsenal supporters not to use the word Yid, which was one of the Blackshirt Nazi taunts against Jews, she was told to take off her Arsenal shirt and 30 people shouted this at her: "You are a dirty fucking Yid". Findings this week, which reported the harassment, anti-Semitism and hostility towards Jews in the National Union of Students, remind us that we must not forget where hatred and prejudice can lead.

col 1954 In 1940, one-third of Warsaw's population was rounded up and forced into a ghetto comprising 2.4% of the city's area. How could this have happened? What lessons can we learn? One lesson is that we must not stand by silently while dreadful things are done around us. Death camp survivor Simon Wiesenthal, perhaps adapting from Edmund Burke, said: "For evil to flourish, it only requires good men to do nothing."

Yehuda Bauer said: "Thou shall not be a perpetrator", but above all, "thou shall never ... be a bystander." This is what we must remember. ...

Baroness Thornton (Labour): ... Holocaust Memorial Day ... highlights things such as the choice of language. ... When a Holocaust survivor asks us to consider the effect of our use of language to describe asylum seekers, she tells us that it is the language that was used to dehumanise and justify the murder of her family; in this case, words such as "swarms" and "invasion". That echoes the remarks of the noble Lord, Lord Pickles, who said that, when the Nazis moved into certain parts of Europe, they did not have to argue the case for anti-Semitism because it had already been made. That places on all of us the need to be careful of the language that we use. ...

col 1955 I married into a family half of which is missing, because they were lost in the Holocaust. ... What it really tells me is that the story of the Holocaust for my family is about the need to make sure that our children and great-grandchildren never forget. ...

Baroness Deech (Crossbench): My Lords, around the world there are over 300—some say thousands—of Holocaust memorials, and in the UK at least six. All the while, anti-Semitism is growing rapidly and fearfully, not least amongst the young—for example, the National Union of Students. Yet these students have had compulsory Holocaust education at school. It seems to have taught them nothing, except that one can attack Jews most hurtfully by using Nazi symbols. This is why: it is taught as an event of the past—over there, all done with, nothing to do with us. The dotted line is not drawn between remembering the Holocaust—which we have done in many recordings by survivors and in museums—and the anti-Semitism of today. As the late Lord Sacks said, first it was our religion they hated, then our race, and today our nation state, Israel. Israel is the focus of today's anti-Semitism. One cannot separate Holocaust remembrance from anti-Semitism, because that is to deny the centrality of the Jewish experience and the unique nature of the Jew-hatred that drove it. Also, it is because in part there might have been many fewer deaths if the allies had not been so reluctant to take refugees and had not kept Palestine closed to them.

Holocaust remembrance has to mean three things. First, the fate of the Jews has to be set in context, as Lord Sacks explained. Jewish history, culture and traditions have to be taught, the Jewish contribution to the world before the Holocaust, the hatred inculcated by teaching and preaching over the centuries, and the revival afterwards, including Israel and the attachment of the Jews to their land from biblical times onwards. The noble Lord, Lord Mann, set this out in his report on anti-Semitism. He said that schools must teach contemporary anti-Semitism coming from the left, the right and from Islamists.

col 1956 Secondly, anti-Semitism is not over and done with. Generalities about hatred and intolerance miss the point. Too many politicians strike a pose by a memorial and declare themselves to be without a racist bone in their bodies. As the American Dara Horn said, they love dead Jews—not so much the living. Building memorials is superfluous: they

portray Jews only as dead and victims, and that is not the image we want at the centre of our political life. ... To claim that the vision of the Palace of Westminster as one emerges from a Holocaust memorial is some sort of epiphany and redemption only engenders complacency. ... It will be ineffective and essentially not about the Holocaust, not a memorial, and not fitting for my relatives who died. ...

Thirdly, the lesson to be learned from the Holocaust is that Jews could not survive without a state of their own as a refuge. Now that we have that safe haven, it has to be kept safe. Politicians need to combat anti-Semitism here and now, and, however uncomfortable it is, they must stand up for the 7 million Jews in Israel under existential threat from their neighbours. It is only Jewish self-defence and self-determination that will ensure “never again”. ...

col 1957 Lord Shinkwin (Conservative): ... I have heard it said that, “It is terribly sad what happened to the Jews, but it was a long time ago.” Was it, and can we ever truly afford to consign a crime of such unconscionable depravity and magnitude to the distant past? ...

Hugo Gryn speaks of the duty of Holocaust survivors “to impress our fellow men with our terrible knowledge, lest we or our children or our children’s children be doomed to suffer the agonies of its recurrence.”

We have a duty too. We have a choice. We can choose to ignore irrefutable evidence of genocide in Xinjiang, or we can promise today that what Hugo Gryn describes as “the deafening silence of decent bystanders”, whose passivity allowed the Holocaust to happen, will never apply to us. ...

Lord Watson of Wyre Forest (Labour): ... When I met [Susan Pollack], she had a twinkle in her eye, but in a very polite and courteous way she asked me why my party allowed people who hate Jews to join it. ... I wrestled with the question of how liberal-minded people can be anti-Semitic. How can campaigners for a more equal society and a peaceful world be anti-Semites? I came to understand that at the heart of this question, to some people on the liberal left, the problem was psychological. Not wanting to be seen or thought of as anti-Semitic or to feel anti-Semitic, the campaigner becomes anti-Semitic to the degree that they could not forgive their fellow members for troubling their conscience and making them consider whether they were indeed anti-Semitic.

The author and public intellectual, Howard Jacobson, extrapolates this argument and applies it to anti-Zionists, saying that many liberal thinkers operate on a false syllogism: “Not all critics of Israel are anti-Semites. I am a critic of Israel. Therefore I am not an anti-Semite.”

I saw too often that when certain members were challenged on anti-Semitic behaviour, rather than trying to understand the feelings of the members expressing hurt, their reaction was a kind of insolent denial, a closing down of the mind to the possibility that the offence being felt was legitimately held. Yet in all other areas of their life, the member would try to understand the lived experience of a complainant. ...

col 1958 The worst calumny against the Jews is to say that, despite the Holocaust, Jews have not emerged from it as better people. The people who express this view often hold up their so-called proof of this failure as whatever the policy of the current democratically elected Government of Israel is. ...

As we mark Holocaust Memorial Day, it is important that people, particularly those in my own party, do not pay tribute to those murdered without paying equal respect to the living. ...

Lord Weir of Ballyholme (DUP): ... The Holocaust was the most horrific example of genocide in the history of mankind, with a range of groups targeted by the Nazis and in particular an attempt to wipe from the face of the earth the Jewish population. ... We are often faced with mind-blowing statistics about the numbers involved in the Holocaust, but we should always remember that behind every statistic involving the Holocaust lies an

individual family, an individual person, an individual tragedy. ...

However, it is not simply for that reason that we should do this. We live in an era in which truth, particularly historic truth, is under attack. This is an era in which information is more readily available and in greater quantity than it has ever been in the history of mankind, yet we also live in an era where misrepresentation, misinformation and conspiracy theories pass around the world like wildfire, an era when facts can simply be dismissed as fake news and where history can be twisted and rewritten according to the purpose of those who are prepared to spread those lies. We live in an era in which, very sadly, the Holocaust did not mark the end of genocide on this planet. ... We live in an era in which anti-Semitism is still all too rife. Almost unbelievably, we live in an era in which some still try to deny the Holocaust. ...

col 1959 **Baroness Hardin of Winscombe (Conservative):** ... It is so important that we remember that it was ordinary people ... who were victims of the Holocaust, but that we also acknowledge that it was ordinary people who let the Holocaust happen and who themselves became perpetrators. We need to learn that we too could be those ordinary people: those victims, but also those bystanders and, God forbid, those perpetrators. ...

col 1960 We must remember that we cannot be passive bystanders and cannot turn a blind eye to evil, because even the most seemingly progressive societies can turn very sour very quickly. ...

Lord Griffiths of Burry Port (Labour): ... my wife and I attended an early showing of “Schindler’s List” in the local cinema. In the darkened interior of the cinema, we were a small minority of non-Jews. The sighing and the sobbing were searing: I have never forgotten that, and it has posed the question of how I as a non-Jew respond to this in its most radical way.

First, it made me aware of the depth of the suffering, and the continuation of that suffering. But it also asked a question of me about what happens to the memory of such an important event when it is handled in a way that is basically entertainment. Groups of children were going to Auschwitz as part of their education; once again, Auschwitz turned into a visitor centre. My own capacity to say smooth words, which I am a professional at, raises the possibility of using my very gifts to go towards trivialising what is such an inexpressible event. ...

There are two things that have challenged my Christian faith more than anything else. One is the Holocaust; the other—again, something with which I have had close connections and involvement with over many years—is slavery. ...

col 1961 **Baroness Jones of Moulsecomb (Green):** ... It is hard to speak of the Holocaust, simply because it was such a shameless and industrial-scale systematic perversion. ...

col 1962 ... Germany was a nation known for its cultural richness. It was a country that produced intellectuals, yet it conceived and operated a system of slavery and murder in the most horrific and distorted way. ...

The Holocaust was a brutal manifestation of ethnonationalism—a form of identity politics built on normative and biological difference. We have to ensure that it must for ever exist as an exceptional event. But only last year our security services warned of a sharp rise in far-right extremism here in Britain. The far right in Britain shares some clear common political logic that underpinned 1930s Nazism. ...

If we understand that the Holocaust must be an historical, appalling exception, never to be repeated, we have to watch for socially unhealthy indicators. ... The resurgence of global far-right networks poses a continuous and dangerous threat. We must endeavour to challenge racism and hold those who perpetuate it online to account. ...

Lord Robathan (Conservative): ... First, I pay tribute to Karen Pollock and the Holocaust Educational Trust, which took me to Auschwitz some 17 years ago. ...

My second point is about anti-Semitism, which other people have talked about and know

much more about than I do. It is unbelievable that it exists in the UK today. ...

I went to school on the edge of north-west London and, because of the catchment area, I should think that one in five or six of the children were Jewish. There was a lot of name-calling, but I can promise noble Lords that there was no anti-Semitism. There was anti-Semitism in Britain some 80-odd years ago. We think of Moseley, the Blackshirts, the battle of Cable Street, et cetera; it was a very different situation.

col 1963 But after the war, for various reasons—a generation had passed, the shocking understanding of the Holocaust and the concentration camps, and the amazing contribution given to society in Britain by Jewish refugees from Europe, be it in medicine, academia, politics, business or the law—I thought it had gone. ...

My third point will be less welcome to some noble Lords. It is not anti-Semitic at all—indeed, I think it will be supported by a large proportion of the Jewish community in London. Building an education centre in Victoria Tower Gardens is a very bad idea. It has been thrown out by local people, the city council and the High Court, and it has been criticised by Historic England and many others. ... I ask proponents of this very foolish idea to think again and accept that it is a foolish idea ...

Lord Cashman (Labour): ... The overture to horror is mundane, ordinary. It begins as a whisper. In 1933, approximately 9.5 million Jews lived in Europe, and that number represented more than 60% of the world's Jewish population at that time. By 1945, most European Jews, two out of every three, had been killed—murdered. Others murdered by the Nazis were millions of Soviets, 250,000 disabled people, up to 400,000 Gypsy and Romani, approximately 200,000 intellectuals, communists and freemasons, and more than 55,000 homosexuals. It happened a stone's throw away in time, and it could happen again. Just when we think we have passed an inhumanity too far, memories and fears fade, complacency sets in and evil triumphs in the silence of ordinary people who say nothing and walk away. ...

col 1964 We have not learned the lessons. Hatred is still with us. Since 2016 and year on year, hate crime has been on the rise. Anti-Semitism, racism, Islamophobia, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, rampant xenophobia, anti-migrants and anti-Roma—hatred that connects. Prejudices that were silently housed are now spoken aloud. ...

Such casual dehumanisation affects every single one of us. If we stand back in silence or look away, we are complicit, so Holocaust Memorial Day is a time to remember. Think of the millions of lives and then think of each one of them and how they could have changed this world for the better. Remember them not as numbers but as one would remember one's own loved ones. Remember them and recall how minorities are still today misrepresented as a threat when all they want to do is live their lives according to the same laws as everyone else. ...

Lord Anderson of Swansea (Labour): ... We talk of 6 million Jews. That number is too vast to comprehend. Far more relevant is to look at the suffering of individuals. ...

col 1965 Two examples come quickly to mind. One is the woman who was clutching her toddler sister at the gates of a camp when the cane of a camp guard came down and separated them; she never saw her sister again. The other is the woman who was forced to go into the Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz and had to play, tearfully, as many Jews arrived and waved welcomingly to her. She knew the fate they would have. ...

Why do and should we remember? Because anti-Semitism is still alive today. The Stockholm declaration asked us not only to commemorate the victims but to honour those who stood against it. There are remarkable stories of those who were the righteous among the gentiles, such as Sir Nicholas Winton, the prime mover of the Kindertransport, who told me that his great regret was that there was a last train standing in Prague station, full of Jewish children who were ready to leave, having said their goodbyes to their parents, with their satchels and their parcels of food, but at that very moment the SS guards arrived and the train was stopped. ...

We gentiles must ask ourselves: what would we have done in those circumstances? Would

we have turned a blind eye, said it was just too much and chosen a quiet life? ...

Baroness Greenfield (Crossbench): ... My father, born into an Orthodox Jewish family, married out, and early on I learned that I was not “actually” Jewish. However, had I been born 10 years earlier and on the other side of the Channel, my fate would probably have been no different from that of those individuals whom we commemorate today. ...

col 1966 In the Holocaust, ordinary individuals who were extraordinary to their loved ones, their friends and their colleagues, and who would have made a unique contribution to the world, were prevented from doing so. What of those who did the preventing—the ordinary perpetrators who were “just obeying orders”? They too would have had unique, individual minds, but they shut them down in favour of conformity to the Nazi regime. They made themselves ordinary. ...

Only by respecting, curating and celebrating the extraordinariness of the human mind can we be sure that the horrors of the Holocaust will never be repeated. ...

col 1967 **Lord Glasman (Labour):** ... President Putin says that the goal of the war is denazification; I would say that a small footnote of the war is that it is the end of the Jewish community in Ukraine. They have left and it is abandoned. A community that in 1941 was more than 2 million and that gave us Jabotinsky, Leon Trotsky, Isaac Babel and the Baal Shem Tov is decimated. That incredible centre of Jewish civilization has gone, and that is the reality of the Holocaust. There are now no longer any Jews in Ukraine. When I was in Odessa, on Friday night I went to the synagogue, where a man just stood there and said to me, “All gone—Jews all gone”. That is the reality of what we are looking at. ...

col 1968 **Lord Young of Norwood Green (Labour):** ... My family were Jewish immigrants from Holland, Odessa, and Lithuania or Poland—the borders were porous, so it is difficult to know exactly where. ...

I was deeply ashamed of our party being found to have practised anti-Semitism by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. It was one of the times in my life in which I thought very carefully about whether I wanted to belong to a party that allowed that to happen and tolerated it. ...

There are sections of our society in which Holocaust deniers and those who believe that 9/11 was a Jewish conspiracy are still prevalent, unfortunately. That emphasises the need for interfaith co-operation. I am a critic of the current Israeli Government—I certainly would not be voting for Benjamin Netanyahu—but I believe in a two-state solution and, following the Balfour Declaration, Israel’s right to exist. I hope that does not make me in any way anti-Semitic. It makes me a critical friend of Israel, and I think that is important in today’s circumstances. ...

Lord Sandhurst (Conservative): ... Holocaust denial is essentially, but not only, an anti-Semitic conspiracy theory. It falsely asserts that the Nazi genocide of Jews and others, known as the Holocaust, is a myth, a fabrication, or an exaggeration. The danger of what happened lies now in the mundanity of so much. For example, I happened by chance upon platform 17 at Grunewald station in Berlin, from which so many left to their doom. ...

col 1969 In this context, we need to fight against so-called historical revisionists, or worse, who deceive and distort the truth. ... We must argue against those who seek to introduce false equivalence with individual occasions in war of wrongdoing. Often, these are advanced under cover of apparent balance and objectivity. Perpetrators thereby lessen the truth of the genocide which was at the core of the Holocaust. ...

In this context, the Imperial War Museum in Lambeth is to be congratulated on its brand-new galleries dedicated to the Holocaust and the Second World War. ...

Visible memorials remind and teach, but I hope that the Government will think again about putting such a very big memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens ...

Holocaust denial is a poison. We must strive continuously to eradicate it. That is why this memorial day is so important. We must educate our young so that they and the generations who follow cannot ignore, let alone deny, the horrors of what happened. ...

Lord Liddle (Labour): ... The most moving thing was when I paid my first trip to Israel in my 30s and went to Yad Vashem. I will never forget it; to be quite honest, I could barely cope with it. It is one reason why I just cannot come to terms with the anti-Semitism that still exists in our society. Having visited Yad Vashem, I will defend the State of Israel and its right to exist all my life, even though I object to some of the policies of the present Government and some of the people in that Government. Israel has that right to exist. I reject anti-Semitism in my own party; that was one of the things that brought me almost to resignation from the Labour Party, as a result of what was happening prior to 2019. ...

col 1970 **Baroness Whitaker (Labour):** ... The primary focus has always been on the 6 million Jews who perished. I would be the last to say that this should not be mourned, remembered and understood—none of my grandfather's family who remained in Poland survived it. But it was not only Jewish people who were the victims. It was people who were different—different from a concocted so-called norm of what a nation essentially was. ... people who were gay; people with disabilities; people with learning difficulties and mental illness; and, in great numbers, the Roma and Sinti population of eastern and central Europe. ... Usually only a passing mention is made of these groups, when they feature at all in the accounts. We nevertheless find this kind of discrimination repugnant now—or do we?

Many countries have passed legislation outlawing discrimination and successive Governments are to be commended for that. Discrimination in jobs, for instance, against some groups is decreasing. But that is not the same as no longer considering those who are different as inferior. Homophobic and racist bullying continues; children with learning difficulties or physical disabilities have a much worse time in school than others; and, as a recent television programme by David Baddiel and the play by Jonathan Freedland have shown, hate speech against, or derogatory stereotyping of, white minority ethnic people is not regarded as anything out of the ordinary. Those two thoughtful events concerned Jews, but they are also intensely applicable to Gypsies, Travellers and Roma people, whose life chances are so severely damaged by prejudice. ...

White minority ethnic groups are very small populations, but you can still hear words such as “plague”, “swamped”, “taking over power”, “conspiracy” and so on. ... prejudice is a spectrum and toleration of hate speech and stereotyping opens a door in the climate of opinion that can lead, especially through international social media, to which my noble friend Lord Kestenbaum referred, to much more violent action. It is as if people need a “them” to be confident of being “us”.

col 1971 It is time that we welcomed difference, because that is how we adapt, innovate and grow creatively, as well as finding our common humanity. That would be the best way to respond to the past terror of the Holocaust and the present terrors of persecution and annihilation still poisoning our world. ...

col 1972 **Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat):** ... I want to add two little stories of my own. The first relates to when I was a new Member of Parliament. My first caseworker was a Scottish girl, newly married with a strong Glaswegian accent, which stood her in good stead because it gave her an air of maturity that belied her years. I also had an elderly constituent who wanted to come and see me to ask what I was going to do about “all these immigrants”.

She had a clear picture in her mind of what “these immigrants” were like—it was not like this hijab-wearing young Muslim woman. When the old lady walked into the surgery and set eyes on Bara, she quickly said, “Oh, I didn't mean you, dear”. But she did, because all racism stems from ignorance. Ignorance permits all kinds of beliefs and leads to actions—actions that my caseworker knew all about: the catcalls, the insults on the bus, the bullying and the violence—that may, one day, lead right down to the thickest edge of the thickest wedge and, eventually, to the final solution. We should never believe that it cannot happen here.

My final story, which I will finish with, is another true story. It happened less than a week

ago and has already been referred to by a couple of noble Lords. It is about another elderly lady expressing her views. This was a lady called Joan, who had been a child survivor of the Holocaust and whose family had all been murdered, asking a question of the Home Secretary of the United Kingdom. Joan called Suella out in a meeting for the use of the terms “swarms” and “invasion”, which had also been “used to dehumanise and justify the murder of my family and millions of others.”

Braverman replied: “I won’t apologise for the language that I’ve used to demonstrate the scale of the problem ... I will not shy away from saying that we have a problem with people ... breaking our laws and undermining our system.”

She certainly did not say, “I didn’t mean you, dear”. She should beware the thin edge of the wedge, as should we all. ...

col 1973 **Baroness Merron (Labour):** ... Many thousands of parents showed unimaginable courage in letting their beloved children go unaccompanied to England on the Kindertransport, with no idea what would lie before them. These were ordinary people doing extraordinary things. ...

“Genocide is facilitated by ordinary people. Ordinary people turn a blind eye, believe propaganda, join murderous regimes. And those who are persecuted, oppressed and murdered in genocide aren’t persecuted because of crimes they’ve committed—they are persecuted simply because they are ordinary people who belong to a particular group”. ...

col 1974 It was a profoundly shaping experience for me, as an MP, to first go to Auschwitz-Birkenau with the Holocaust Educational Trust on its “Lessons from Auschwitz” project. I thank the Holocaust Educational Trust for its work and influence over many years. The project allows young people to pass through the infamous “Arbeit macht frei” gates and through the rooms filled with tonnes of human hair, prosthetic limbs and glasses seized from the victims, to walk along the train lines and to stand at the site of the former crematoria. It has an unparalleled impact on understanding the past, and through reflective assemblies on their return, it often ignites in them a determination to speak out against the anti-Semitism and hatred that allowed the Holocaust to happen.

For me, the most powerful impact of being immersed in this experience was when I saw a wall of black and white photos of ordinary people doing ordinary things: young women having a laugh with each other; families strolling on the beach; people getting married; or toddlers taking their first steps. These ordinary people were condemned to persecution, inhumane cruelty and extermination on an industrial scale just because they were Jews and were inferior and expendable in the eyes and minds of some—as were the Roma and Sinti people, gay men, disabled people, political opponents and others.

As these murderous events soon pass from living memory and leave us without the first-hand testimony of survivors, it is all the more necessary that we tell the individual stories of some of the 6 million Jewish people who were murdered. I want to pay tribute to the survivors, as many noble Lords have done—those ordinary people who have done and do the extraordinary without even seeing it as such. Their strength, testimonies and very existence present not just an inspiration but a reminder. ...

... let us remind ourselves that the underlying issues have not gone away. The Community Security Trust recorded 786 anti-Semitic incidents across the UK in the first six months of 2022. ... The world’s oldest hatred is alive and kicking, and this is shameful. This year, 2023, is a particularly poignant anniversary for genocide commemoration as we mark 20 years since the start of the genocide in Darfur, while also remembering those affected by genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda and Bosnia. With misinformation so often leading to hatred and prejudice, we all have a responsibility not just to remember but to act, and to identify the warning signs of genocide today.

col 1975 The UK needs a national memorial to the Holocaust, and there is no site more appropriate than next to the mother of Parliaments—this Parliament. ...

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (Baroness Scott of Bybrook): ... The United Kingdom can be proud of

its record when it comes to Holocaust remembrance and education. We were one of the first signatories to the Stockholm declaration of 2000, which called on countries to recognise 27 January, the day Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated, as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. We hosted our first Holocaust Memorial Day in 2001. The Stockholm declaration is also the founding document of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance—IHRA. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the IHRA's working definition of Holocaust denial and distortion, which will be a key focus for the IHRA member countries in 2023. The United Kingdom has the honour of chairing the IHRA in 2024. ...

The Holocaust may have reached its barbaric climax in Treblinka, Auschwitz and Belzec, but it started in the hearts of ordinary men and women. We have seen it again: a madness that takes hold of individuals and then sweeps through peoples and whole nations. As we have heard, the killings in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur shock our conscience, but they are the awful extreme of a spectrum of ignorance and intolerance that we see every day; the bigotry that says another person is less than my equal—less than human. These are the seeds of hatred that we cannot allow to take root in our hearts.

We are all familiar with the stories of the ordinary people who were involved in extraordinary acts of bravery to save Jewish people. In the United Kingdom we have recognised 44 British Heroes of the Holocaust—15 of whom were women—who went beyond the call of duty to save members of the Jewish community and others. Jane Haining was one of them. Born on a farm in Dunscore in Dumfriesshire, Jane was deeply committed to her faith and sacrificed her life for her ideals. ...

col 1976 But ordinary people also planned and executed the Holocaust. We do ourselves a disservice when we think they were all monsters: they were ordinary men and women like us—mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers, with choices. Soldiers who participated in mass shootings of Jewish people in the east were not forced; they were not punished if they declined to participate. There was another group of ordinary people: bystanders—people who raised no objection to the horrors that befell their neighbours, who had no qualms when they bought the neighbours' furniture and crockery or took over their homes. We all like to think that we would have stood up as one of the extraordinary, but it is important to realise that we all have the capacity to look the other way—or worse.

This will be one of the key themes explored in the planned UK Holocaust memorial and learning centre next to the Houses of Parliament. ... We plan to provide visitors with what we believe to be a genuinely unique perspective by addressing the Holocaust through a British lens. While relating the whole story of the Holocaust in continental Europe, the exhibition will look particularly at what was known in Britain—far more than most people think—and what was done, or was not done, with that knowledge. ...

col 1977 We do Holocaust remembrance a disservice if we remember the dead and forget the present persecution of Jewish people across the world. The Community Security Trust—the CST—which we have heard about, particularly from the noble Baroness, Lady Merron, and which monitors anti-Semitism in the UK, recorded, as she said, 786 anti-Semitic incidents from January to June. May 2021 saw a record high of such incidents, partly due, we think, to the Middle Eastern war. Without that conflict or influences of other factors such as the pandemic, the latest figures show that the base level of anti-Jewish hatred remains far too high and may even be worsening among young people. ...

The latest figures on anti-Semitic incidents underscore the need for government to continue working with the Jewish community to ensure that synagogues, Jewish schools and communal buildings are afforded maximum protection, and we have already supplied over £14 million of government funding to make sure that that work happens. However ... we need to do more.

Like many previous speakers, I pay tribute to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and its CEO, Olivia Marks-Woldman OBE, and her team, who delivered the annual Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony and thousands of other local activities across the country.

Similarly, like many other noble Lords I thank the CEO of the Holocaust Educational Trust, Karen Pollock CBE, who as we have heard works tirelessly to ensure that the next generation learn of the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust and can visit Auschwitz-Birkenau as part of the very successful Lessons from Auschwitz programme. I want also to mention the UK Holocaust Map, an ongoing joint project with the Association of Jewish Refugees. The interactive map allows users to explore places relating to the victims, survivors and refugees of Nazism, as well as the rescuers, the liberators and the aid givers. ... We need to remember the survivors, the witnesses who have never given up, who continue to share their testimonies today. We owe it to all of them to remember.

col 1978 Lord Pickles: ... This is the first time the House of Lords has had an opportunity to debate Holocaust Memorial Day ...

I was around when Holocaust Memorial Day began. It was essentially three men and a dog to start with, but gradually, we managed to get something going nationally. Now, there is not a community in the United Kingdom that will not have a commemoration involving schools. We do this not just because the Holocaust framed the latter part of the 20th century and the beginning of this century, but because the Holocaust speaks to us all. ... It is why the definitions that IHRA has put together, both in terms of anti-Semitism, Holocaust distortion and anti-Roma sentiment, are so important. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-01-19/debates/D6F710F4-4FB5-401F-BD6A-DAED7F063486/InternationalHolocaustMemorialDay>

The Tuck report, referred to above, can be read at

[https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471780/Independent Investigation into Antisemitism Report NUS 12 January 2023.pdf?1673471780](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471780/Independent%20Investigation%20into%20Antisemitism%20Report%20NUS%2012%20January%202023.pdf?1673471780)

The CST reports referred to above can be read at

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/4/a/Campus%20Antisemitism%202020-2022.pdf>

and

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/3/b/Incidents%20Report%20Jan-Jun%202022.pdf>

Lord Mann's report, referred to above, can be read at

<https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/PDF-Antisemitism-Report-2023.pdf>

TOP

Israel

Department for International Trade

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Israel

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1129344/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2023-01-20.pdf

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Occupied Palestinian Territories

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1129423/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2023-01-20.pdf

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Bill of Rights Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

Online Safety Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes today**

Assisted dying/assisted suicide (closing date 20 January 2023)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/81/health-and-social-care-committee/news/174845/mps-launch-new-inquiry-on-assisted-dyingassisted-suicide/>

**** closes in 7 days**

NUS UK Antisemitism Action Plan (closing date 27 January 2023)

https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471793/NUS_Antisemitism_Action_Plan_Jan2023.pdf

Draft guidance: charities use of social media (closing date 14 March 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-guidance-charities-use-of-social-media>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438