



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Speaker's Statement

Mr Speaker: Before we start today's business, I want to note that tomorrow is Holocaust Memorial Day. I know the whole House will agree with me about the importance of remembering the 6 million Jewish people murdered during the holocaust, alongside the millions of other people killed as a result of Nazi persecution, as well as those killed in more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. I know also that colleagues will want to join me in thanking the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust for the important work it does. This important event will be marked by a talk from survivors of the holocaust and of genocides in Darfur and Bosnia in Speaker's House at 1 pm today, and a ceremony in Portcullis House Atrium at 4.15 pm, at which you are all welcome.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-26/debates/5FB5C756-42FB-4C2F-B0E9-7B055C80495A/Speaker'SStatement>

House of Commons Debate

Holocaust Memorial Day

col 1224 Sajid Javid (Conservative): ... Tomorrow will mark the 78th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau—a place of evil, atrocity and inhumanity; a place where more than 1 million men, women and children arrived but never left. More than 6 million Jews and others lost their lives during the holocaust, and countless more would carry the burden of their persecution.

Genocide is a dark stain on the conscience of humanity, and the hatred that drives it is a disease of the heart. After the holocaust, we vowed, "Never again," but the killing fields of Cambodia, the butchery of Rwanda, the deathly silence of Srebrenica and the suffering of Darfur show that the disease of hatred lives on. Although those dark stains can never be washed out, it is our duty to shine a light on them in this House.

It is also an honour for me to be the first Muslim to lead this debate from the Back Benches. My late friend, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, once said, "The test of faith is whether I can make space for difference. Can I recognise God's image in someone who is not in my

image, whose language, faith, ideal, are different from mine? If I cannot, then I have made God in my image instead of allowing him to remake me in his." ...

The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day is ordinary people, but I will first mention a group of extraordinary people—the survivors of the holocaust.

col 1225 I have been privileged to know many of them ... When I was Chancellor, I invited 12 survivors to have dinner in 11 Downing Street; it was an evening that I will never forget. That night, my family was joined by the late, great Zigi Shipper, who was full of energy, enthusiasm and optimism. ...

Zigi saw the horrors of Auschwitz-Birkenau first hand, but as the theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day reminds us, we should not forget that the crimes of that place were committed by, and to, ordinary people. As the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has said: "Genocide is facilitated by ordinary people. Ordinary people turn a blind eye, believe propaganda, join murderous regimes", and ordinary people are persecuted "simply because they...belong to a particular group".

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op): I would like to speak about one ordinary person—my great-grandfather David, who was in Lviv, Ukraine during the war. To survive, he needed a job, and to get a job, he needed a life number. He worked in a hairdresser's, but he had to bribe the hairdresser and he did not have enough money to bribe them. His valuable belongings were hidden in a safe house and the person who owned the safe house would not give them up, so he could not afford the bribes. He lost his job, he lost his life number, and he was sent to Belzec extermination camp and killed. He was an ordinary person doing ordinary things, but betrayed by ordinary people.

Sajid Javid: ... we should also reflect on our role as policymakers, because we know the familiar, sickening pattern of atrocities all too well. We are right to reaffirm our commitment to "never again", but we as parliamentarians must also do more to prepare the political foundations and the policy framework to prevent the next atrocity. Our commitment to the truth must also be reinforced at home, including in how we counter misinformation and conspiracy theories. In the UK, we have seen a rise in anti-vaccine protesters carrying signs reading "vaccine holocaust" and wearing the star of David, and I must say that it angers me that any Member of this House would seek to connect the holocaust with UK public health policy. ...

Research from the Community Security Trust shows that in the first half of 2022 alone, 782 incidents of anti-Jewish hate were recorded in the UK. As so often, that hatred is fuelled by the online world.

col 1226 **Christine Jardine (Liberal Democrat):** ... Recently, I visited a Jewish school in London where 10-year-old children told us stories about the antisemitism that they had faced. Does he share my concern that we are still overlooking the potential for that sort of problem to exist and grow in our society?

Sajid Javid: ... I very much share her concern ... She rightly talks about young children, but a recent independent report that was done for the National Union of Students also found antisemitism ...

Recent research shows that every day in the UK, more than 1,300 explicitly antisemitic tweets are posted ... It is no wonder that many British Jews are becoming increasingly frustrated at hearing words of condemnation alone when it seems that the perpetrators of that hate too often do not receive the punishment that fits the crime.

The fact that the Community Security Trust needs to exist should be a cause of deep sadness ... When Jews in this country have the freedom to pray behind high walls and security guards, can we call that freedom at all? ...

Matthew Offord (Conservative): ... many of my constituents were threatened by protesters who drove all the way down from Bradford with signs saying that they were going to rape and kill Jews, but the CPS decided it would not prosecute, for reasons unknown to me or, indeed, the Home Secretary. Does he agree that these kinds of actions

send out a terrible message, and that if these perpetrators are not brought to justice, people will continue to act in such a fashion?

Sajid Javid: Yes. ... Another thing that certainly helps to reduce antisemitism and hatred of all types is education, which is crucial in the effort to tackle persecution and hatred. For example, the Anne Frank Trust reached something like 46,000 schoolchildren last year alone. The Holocaust Educational Trust does fantastic and excellent work with visits for schoolchildren from across the UK to the Auschwitz Museum. ...

I was personally delighted with the news from my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister yesterday about the new Holocaust memorial, which will have cross-party support. It has been a long road, but that memorial will make an immense difference. ...

col 1227 Margaret Hodge (Labour): ... Holocaust Memorial Day has been a national day of commemoration for 22 years. ... Ordinary people were involved in all aspects of the Holocaust. Ordinary people were victims, but they were also perpetrators, bystanders and witnesses. Ordinary people allowed this to happen, but some ordinary people also became extraordinary during the war. They acted in brave, dangerous and extraordinary ways to save Jews from the fate of extermination.

Roza Robotka, imprisoned in Auschwitz in 1942, helped to smuggle explosives to members of the Jewish underground in the camp. When they blew up one of the crematoria in 1944, Roza was identified, horrifically tortured and then hanged on 6 January 1945. She was 23 years old.

Captain Frank Foley was a British spy in Germany. After Kristallnacht, he risked his life obtaining papers, forged passports and visas to help Jews escape. He visited concentration camps with batches of visas to get Jewish prisoners released. He hid Jews in his home in Berlin. He made it possible for an estimated 10,000 Jews to get out of Germany. ...

My family were just ordinary people. As I prepared for today, I thought about my mother, whose own mother was murdered. ... She never, ever talked about our grandmother's murder. ... My mother's silence was not uncommon. ...

col 1228 My aunt survived the war in the Ardèche, protected by local people. My memories of her in the 1950s were of her waiting for her beloved husband to return. She convinced herself and us that he was still alive. Only when we were clearing her flat in Paris did we find papers with his Auschwitz number and confirmation that he had been gassed and killed. She had known that for years, but had never stopped hoping. She never admitted to his being a victim of the Holocaust. ...

Despite my parents' silence, my refugee Jewish identity has always been there, equipping me to fight the racist British National party and helping me to fight antisemitism in my own party. ...

We know how vital remembering the lives of ordinary people in our history is to understanding and fighting hatred and racism today, whether it is in our attempts to help the Uyghurs and the Rohingya Muslims, acting to support the Ukrainians—the documented incidents involving potential war crimes, vicious attacks on civilians and the shocking death of children horrify us all—or ... the condemnation from us all when a Member of this House compared the vaccine roll-out to the Holocaust as equivalent crimes against humanity.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust recently found that 5% of UK adults do not believe the Holocaust ever took place, and over one in 12 believe its scale has been exaggerated. That shocking finding should make us all redouble our efforts to keep the Holocaust history alive. ...

col 1229 Peter Bottomley (Conservative): ... I have spoken before about the places where some of my grandfather's extended family died. The list sadly gets longer as research shows more and more people who were involved: Sobibor, Auschwitz, Mauthausen, Belsen, Ravensbrück, Dachau, Seibersdorf and Bytom. ... they matter. ...

Every time I take people around the Palace of Westminster, I try to take them past the Kindertransport plaque by the admission order office. I show it to them to illustrate that what people may have disapproved of at the time, they are now proud of. It was not unanimous that those 10,000 children should have been able to come to this country from stations such as Prague, aged 5, 6, 7 or 8. ...

I wish to disagree with the Government about the location of the national holocaust memorial. ...

I commend to everybody, whatever their views on the proposed location of the memorial and learning centre, that they visit the holocaust galleries in the Imperial War Museum, which reopened in the past two or three years. ...

My last point is that the tributes to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Holocaust Educational Trust are genuine. Those people do mighty work, and they allow people to understand what is happening. We must ensure that that does not happen just on Holocaust Memorial Day, but on every day of every year in every way, and that people understand the horrors of what we stood against, with the victims ...

col 1230 One of the most difficult questions for people to answer is when would have been the right time to stand up, with force, against Adolf Hitler's Nazis in Germany. Should it have been in 1933 when he was elected Chancellor and was thought to be pliable by the bigger parties? Should it have been in 1935 or '36 when he started invading? Should it have been in 1938? It happened in 1939, although some people did not think that was right, but should it have been later, or ever, or never? The reason I am not a pacifist is because of the holocaust.

col 1232 **Stephen Crabb (Conservative):** ... I also want to put on record my thanks and pay tribute to the tireless work of the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and other organisations that work in this area, as well as the remarkable survivors who are prepared to recall the tragic and unimaginable experiences that they endured to ensure that the horrors of the past are not repeated and that lessons continue to be learnt. ...

col 1233 There is nothing ordinary about that period of history; nothing ordinary about the scale of the suffering or the depth of the evil visited on Jewish people at the time. As we have heard, what really comes out from listening to the testimony of the survivors and listening the stories about family members ... is that these were all ordinary individuals from ordinary families living in ordinary communities. ...

We in this House have an extraordinarily privileged position and it is right that we mark Holocaust Memorial Day with debates such as this. It is right that we attend events, light candles and wear badges. That is all part of the collective remembering and marking of the event. It is our responsibility, I believe, to ensure that this is not just a one-day affair, but that every day that follows we try to use our extraordinarily privileged position to ensure that the horrors of the past are never repeated, and to face down and tackle antisemitism.

... I would encourage [the Minister] to press ahead with the work on legislation to clamp down on boycotts, divestment and sanctions and the pernicious use of those avenues, because I believe they can be antisemitic. ...

col 1234 I do believe that the national holocaust memorial and learning centre should be built in Victoria Tower Gardens. There is a very strong cross-party consensus that that should be done.

There are other issues. Iran has effectively declared war on the Jewish people in Israel, and we should be doing everything we can with our international partners to ensure that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon. ...

Christian Wakeford (Labour): ... I would like to thank and pay tribute to the Holocaust Educational Trust, as many Members have, and the Antisemitism Policy Trust for their vital work. I also thank the Community Security Trust, in particular Amanda Bomsytk and Jonny Newton, for continuing to provide protection to the Jewish community not just in my

constituency, but across the country. ... I pay particular tribute to Karen Pollock and Danny Stone, whose counsel is widely sought and respected across this entire Chamber, and indeed across both Houses. Their impact on me and my education should not be underestimated. ...

Genocide is facilitated by ordinary people. Ordinary people turn a blind eye, believe propaganda and join murderous regimes. Those who are persecuted, oppressed and murdered in genocide are not persecuted because of crimes they have committed, but simply because they are ordinary people who belong to a particular group. This is true of genocide the world over, but particularly in the case of the holocaust.

col 1235 During the rise of Nazi Germany, ordinary people had choices. Many ordinary people were in positions of power, using Jewish people to advance their disgusting ideology and taking advantage of the economic circumstances following the first world war. Many of those in power believed this ideology, but many others were ordinary people obeying orders given to them by evil people. ...

Those who were persecuted were ordinary people too, whether Jews, Soviet civilians and prisoners of war, disabled people, Romani people, gays or many, many others. Like us, they all had families, hopes and dreams, and a want and need to get on in life, find opportunities, be happy, and to give and feel love. ...

Ordinary people also stand by as genocide happens around them. They do not partake, but they also do not speak out, preferring to turn a blind eye and pretend they have not seen it. They were keen not to get involved in case they were next, watching as Jews were snatched from their homes, with anxiety heightened and thoughts swirling around their head: "I hope they don't come for me next." What the holocaust showed is that they will. Never in this Chamber or out there must we walk on the other side when it comes to racism and injustice. ...

I imagine Jews around the world would agree that antisemitism is the oldest racism and that it needs all of us here today to lead from the front and stand against those who wish to fan the flames of hatred and division to enhance their racist agenda. ...

When Sir Nicholas Winton rescued 669 children from Czechoslovakia and brought them to the UK, thereby sparing them from the horrors of the holocaust, he simply said: "Why are you making such a big deal out of it? I just helped a little; I was in the right place at the right time." ...

col 1236 Earlier this week I visited the Terezín ghetto in Prague with the European Jewish Association. While there I heard at first hand from Gidon Lev, a survivor of Terezín, about how it was the site of the original propaganda from the Nazis. When media gathered to the ghetto, the Nazis were keen to stress that while, yes, it may be a ghetto, people were actually being looked after, and children were being educated and fed. Of course, this was all a front for the despicable treatment that was really happening to Jewish people. ...

Fake news is something we must stand shoulder to shoulder against with our Jewish brothers and sisters ... Ordinary people are still duped by fake news about the number of people murdered in the holocaust. Decades-old theories—in some cases, centuries-old—that Jewish people are somehow puppeteers of the world's events, that they run our media, music industry and our sport and are somehow plotting against us, continue to put Jewish lives at risk.

We must never lose sight of the story of the holocaust and how ordinary people in power systemically dehumanised Jewish people so that other ordinary people could murder them on a scale that is simply hard to fathom. In short, we must always remember, and never forget. It must never happen again—not to Jews, not to anybody, not on our watch. ...

Fiona Bruce (Conservative): ... Still, in the 21st century, we see further atrocities where elements of the definition of genocide are present, including targeting of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, of the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, and of the Hazaras in Afghanistan. ... One way we can act is by formally recognising the genocide against the Yazidis and Christians in Iraq and Syria by Daesh, as the lower house in Germany did just

last week. Recognition of genocide is one of the most significant things we can do as part of the UK's atrocity prevention strategy. Another is to identify where there is risk of genocide. ...

col 1237 ... we must do more work on educating the next generation about the importance of freedom of religion or belief, so that "never again" becomes a reality for their generation in a way that, sadly, as I have said, it has not for ours. ...

It is vital that we teach even the youngest children about the importance of not discriminating against others on account of their beliefs, just as they understand so well the importance of not discriminating against others on account of disability. ...

col 1238 As the years go by and our brave, inspirational holocaust survivors, with their testimonies, diminish in number, we must ensure that their voice is sustained, not least with young ambassadors. I pay tribute to the Holocaust Educational Trust for the excellent work that it does in that regard. ...

Charlotte Nichols (Labour): ... This Shabbat, Jews in synagogues around the world will be reading Parashat Bo, a Torah portion described by the former Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks of blessed memory, as "among the most revolutionary in the entire history of ideas" and "one of the most counterintuitive passages in all of religious literature."

In the passage—Exodus 10 to 13:16—Moses is addressing the Israelites before their release from Egypt. But his address is not about the freedom they will soon see, or the society they will have to build, but—repeatedly—about education and the duty of parents to educate their children about what they experienced in Egypt. The passage reads: "Vayomer Moshe el-ha'am zachor et-hayom hazeh asher yetzatem mi Mitzrayim". That is: "And Moses said to the nation: Remember this day, when you went out from Egypt".

col 1239 What does "zachor"—to remember—mean? The Jewish concept of remembering is not passive, but active. We tell the Exodus story to our children. We re-experience it and understand it through the elaborate rituals of the Pesach Seder. We reflect on it in our recitation of the central daily prayer, the Shema, in the laying of tefillin—a physical ritual with which to commemorate liberation from Egypt daily—and in the mezuzah, which we hammer to our doorframes. To truly remember is to act. That is as true for the story of the Exodus as it is for the genocides that we come together to commemorate today. ...

We reflect on the fact that its victims were ordinary people, each with their own inherent human dignity, loves, hopes, fears and aspirations ... We reflect that those who committed these genocides were ordinary people, that this capacity for evil is indeed in all of us, and it is a choice, just as courage is a choice. And we reflect on the indifference of ordinary people who stood by while it happened, which was necessary for that kind of industrial-scale murder and the mechanics of genocide to be sustained. There are, of course, stories of bravery, with the kind of heroics that we see commemorated at Yad Vashem by the "righteous among the nations", but what makes these people extraordinary is the very fact that the vast majority of people—the ordinary people—did not care enough to stop genocide taking place. ...

col 1240 We cannot remember without justice, and a full and true accounting of all the decisions before, during and after a genocide, to learn, to change, and to ensure that "never again" is not an empty maxim, but a series of actions to which we can all commit ourselves. We know of cases—such as that of the "butcher of Slomin", Stanislaw Chrzanowski—in which war criminals have evaded justice because of active collusion by the British police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the security services, who protected them and allowed them to live among the rest of us as "ordinary people". It is time for an inquiry: the Board of Deputies of British Jews has called for one, but the Government have so far ignored its call. ...

The holocaust is rapidly fading from living memory, and so too, one day, will the genocides that followed it. The testimony of survivors, which the sterling work of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Holocaust Educational Trust allows so many to access and experience, is an important part of our collective memory, but the survivors cannot be

expected to bear this responsibility themselves and to bear this burden alone. ...
It is in education that a good society is won or lost. ...

Julian Lewis (Conservative): ... it was fully 10 years ago that I last told the story of two ordinary people caught up in the holocaust. ... I have the permission of my researcher, Nina Karsov.

col 1241 Some people may see Nina around the Estate, not particularly noticing anything about this petite lady that would ever make them think that, at the age of two, she was thrown by her parents from a train on its route to Treblinka in an attempt to save her life. Somehow the three of them leapt from the train. There was deep snow. Nina, a toddler, landed in it and was badly frostbitten. Her mother was killed instantly in leaping from the train, and it took her father some time to find her in the snow. They got back to Warsaw, and were taken in by separate gallant Polish non-Jewish families.

When the Nazis were closing in on the part of Warsaw where the father was in hiding, he, in order to protect those people who would have been killed if they had been caught with him in hiding, made his way across the square to the top of another building and threw himself off it so that he could not be forced to divulge where he had been kept. Nina, however, was kept safely through the war, and many years later, was able to secure for the lady she called her Polish mother recognition amongst "the righteous", which was clearly an honour richly deserved. It has to be said that both her Polish mother and Nina herself were then persecuted by the communist regime, Nina spending two years of a three-year sentence in a communist jail before Amnesty International successfully campaigned for her to come to this country. So that is one ordinary person whom one might bump into on the Commons Estate without knowing much about her. ...

col 1242 **Steve McCabe (Labour):** ... I can well remember my first visit to Auschwitz with the Holocaust Educational Trust and a group of sixth formers ... It was a cold, bitter February day and a totally chilling experience, as I struggled to answer questions from these young people and keep my own emotions under control. ...

The bravery of Witold Pilecki, a Polish underground resistance leader who volunteered to be sent to Auschwitz and report on what was happening, should leave us in no doubt that the allies did receive reliable intelligence reports on the scale of the horrors. Britain also accepted about 10,000 mostly unaccompanied children through the Kindertransport scheme, which is something those who make light of the plight of unaccompanied refugee children today might do well to remember.

col 1243 In 1991, at the behest of the Holocaust Educational Trust, the holocaust became part of the English national curriculum. We need to remember these horrific events because still today there are those who would deny and distort the reality of the holocaust. Some seek to minimise the numbers killed and others try to blame the Jews for causing their own genocide. ... Of course, too many people fail to understand why Israel remains so important to Jews today. ...

Last year, I was privileged to visit Poland with colleagues from across this House on the "march of the living". It reminded us that for 1,000 years before 1939 Poland was the great heartland of Jewish life, but by the end of the war, it was reduced to having a handful of Jewish people. One of the most powerful memories of that visit was hearing the harrowing testimonies of holocaust survivors. But the march also teaches us that the reality is that despite its grotesque scale, the holocaust failed, and since 1945 Jewish people have survived and thrived in Israel, the region's only democratic state.

So let us continue to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, to be active and vigilant in the face of antisemitism and to be robust in our challenge of those who would seek to destroy the state of Israel or challenge its right to exist. ...

Bob Stewart (Conservative): ... In April 1993, I was the British United Nations commander in Bosnia and I had been there for about five months. My job was to help deliver humanitarian aid, but the best way to do that is when there is no fighting, so I spent

a lot of time trying to stop the fighting. ... On 22 April, I led about six armoured vehicles up into the mountains, above the Lasva valley, to try to do just that. ...

col 1244 The first people I met were Bosnian Muslim soldiers on the mountains. When I asked them to please stop fighting because a ceasefire was meant to be in place, they said, "No, no, in the village of Ahmići, women and children have been massacred." I said, "No, that can't be. People don't do that in 1993." They said that it had happened. I said, "If I go there, look, witness and come back and tell you that it hasn't happened, will you stop fighting?" They said yes. I took myself off the mountains. It took me about an hour to get to Ahmići. I approached it from the south, from the main road. The first thing I saw was a mosque with its minaret toppled—it looked like a rocket pointing to the sky. The rest of the village of Ahmići was largely destroyed. Houses were burned down. ...

There were a few houses that had not been touched. Later, I discovered that they were houses owned by Bosnian Croats. ...

A third of the way down, we went into a house and saw the remains of a man and a boy burned at the doorway. The soldier said, "Come round the back, sir." We went in the back of this house and there was a charnel—it was like a charnel house. When I first saw it, I did not understand what it was. Then the smell hit me. I was horrified. It looked to me like a couple of women and a few children. They were burned and on their backs. They had obviously died in agony. One had an arched back and their eyes were still there ... We went on and found the skull of a baby further down. Mostly, though, people were hidden because, after being shot, killed or burned, the roofs had come down on top of them ... A day or so later, I found a whole family: mother, father, son and daughter, all dead in a row. The daughter was holding a puppy. She was killed by the same bullet that killed the puppy. ...

I have given evidence in the war crimes trials—five trials, to be honest—and I am still in shock that it happened. ...

I will finish by saying two things. If the theme this year is ordinary people, it is dead right, because ordinary people suffer, and ordinary people carry out some of these atrocities. Strange circumstances make ordinary people do very vicious things. ...

col 1245 **Lyn Brown (Labour):** ... I will speak about the 1943 uprising at Treblinka, where very ordinary people with very little hope rose to destroy the machinery of death and to escape. Treblinka, as we know, was created for the sole purpose of exterminating the Jewish people. ...

The people who fought back had personally seen tens or even hundreds of thousands of innocent people being murdered. They had been forced to cut off the hair of their fellow victims just before they entered the gas chambers and sort through the clothes of the newly dead. They had to pick through the ashes from every day's thousands of corpses to remove fragments of bone, which were crushed and burned again so that no evidence of this enormous evil would be left. ... All the prisoners knew of the immediate brutality that would be inflicted upon resisters if they were caught. But it was more than that. The Nazi regime sought to break the very spirit of the prisoners—not only their hope, but their solidarity among themselves. ...

In the summer of 1943, news came to the camp of the Warsaw ghetto uprising a few months earlier, so against enormous odds, plans for an uprising to destroy Treblinka began. ... The uprising began on 2 August 1943. Those brave, brave young boys smuggled guns out from the armoury underneath the rubbish in their carts. The barracks were set alight, and the main gate was attacked, but the towers could not be captured and the guards fought to maintain their brutal control. All that could be done was to run and hide.

col 1246 Of the 840 people in the camp that day, only 200 fully escaped the pursuit, and just 100 survived the rest of the war. Let us remember that those who rose up in Treblinka were ordinary people willing to die that day so that others would have a chance to live. ...

David Mundell (Conservative): ... When Jane Haining was arrested by the Gestapo at the school where she worked in Budapest one morning in April 1944, she told the children in her care: "Don't worry. I'll be back by lunch." She did not come back. Instead, from one of Budapest's police stations, Jane was taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Unlike the 12,000 Hungarian Jews who were arriving daily to the horror of Auschwitz, Jane's journey started not on the cobbled streets of Budapest or the Someşul Mic side town of Cluj but in the rolling farmland of my native Dumfriesshire. Her so-called crime, unlike the Hungarian Jews she arrived with, was not her ethnicity but her faith and courage. Like almost all who arrived at the camp at that time, Jane died within a few weeks ... She was the only Scot to die in the holocaust. ...

col 1247 From June 1932, Jane was the matron of the Scottish Mission School in Budapest, a boarding house for Jewish and Christian girls. Life and work at the school was overtly Christian, but Jewish parents were keen to see their daughters attend the school not only because of the quality of the education but because of how the girls were accepted. As one commentator noted: "Jewish girls who came here were not seen as second-class pupils. They were just welcome." ...

Jane was rightly recognised in 1997 by Yad Vashem as one of the righteous among the nations. She is also recognised as a national hero in Hungary. ...

Here in the UK, Jane is remembered with a cairn outside Dunscore parish church, and an informative exhibition within it. ...

col 1248 Navendu Mishra (Labour): ... I pay tribute to the Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester and Region, as well as the Jewish Leadership Council, and in particular Marc Levy, for all the work they do in celebrating the Jewish community ...

In Greater Manchester the Jewish community is thriving and outward-facing but, like Jewish communities in the rest of the country, it has to deal with appalling hate crimes, both in person and online. ...

col 1249 Saqib Bhatti (Conservative): ... I pay tribute to the Holocaust Educational Trust for all its work, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Community Security Trust. I also visited a school in north London and got to see at first hand the sad situation of our children—and they are our children—who are struggling to be educated without fear. ...

col 1250 "Never again." So many times we have heard that phrase, and when speaking not only of the holocaust but, sadly, of subsequent genocides, such as those in Rwanda, Cambodia and Srebrenica ...

I want to speak about the extraordinary Paul Oppenheimer, who settled in my constituency after the war ... He was born in Berlin in 1928 and lived in my constituency after the war for over 40 years. In 1940 his family moved to Amsterdam and, within six months of the German invasion, the persecution of the Jewish communities in Holland had started. He was only able to complete one term in the local grammar school before the Nazis banned Jewish children from attending non-Jewish schools. In January 1942, it was decreed that Jews could only reside in Amsterdam, and from April 1942 it was decreed that Jews must wear a Jewish star. The Nazis then went block by block, clearing Jewish families and taking them by train to the Westerbork transit camp, before they were sent on to other camps such as Auschwitz, Sobibor and Bergen-Belsen.

The Oppenheimers were exempt from wearing the yellow star by virtue of a small piece of fortune. In 1936, Paul Oppenheimer visited England with his parents. During their visit, his sister, Eve, was born, and therefore she had entitlement to recognition as a British subject. It was due to Paul's father's foresight in registering Eve as a British citizen that the whole family were treated differently, with blue exemption cards. They were kept in the slightly—slightly—better star camp, where they did not have to shave their heads, could wear civilian clothes and would often be protected from the random beatings and shootings, by virtue of that citizenship.

But they were not safe from the unsanitary conditions, and disease was rife. Paul lost his mother and father to disease in 1945, but he and his brother and sister eventually survived

and found their way to England. Later in life, Paul checked to see what happened to those who were sent on transit trains to camps from Westerbork. Of the 34,143 people who left Westerbork for Sobibor camp, only 19 survived. Of the 58,380 who left for Auschwitz, 854 survived. ...

col 1251 As I conclude, I wonder about all the Pauls who did not survive and all the Oppenheimers who did not make it to a place of safety, all the engineers who did not make it, all the doctors, intellectuals and artists, and all the great contributions that could have been made. They were not just a loss to their families; they were a loss to humanity, at the hands of a warped and evil ideology. ...

Fleur Anderson (Labour): ... My experience of working in Bosnia during the war and speaking to the relatives of those who died in Srebrenica drove my work with refugees before I became a Member of the House and drives my work now on the prevention of genocide, to ensure that when we say, "Never again", we mean never again. ...

col 1252 I join hon. Members in remembering the 8 million people killed during the holocaust and all the survivors ...

Last year, I visited the Srebrenica memorial ... Some 8,000 people, mainly young men, were herded together, taken for a long walk and murdered. Their shoes and clothes were left and are displayed at the memorial, which is a chilling memory of each of them. I saw the video footage of the young men leaving on that walk—they looked like a group of young people going off with bags on their shoulders to walk through the forest for a picnic, not knowing where it would lead them. ...

Last September, I visited Kyiv where, on 29 September 1941, the 33,800 Jewish residents of Kyiv were gathered together near a train station and told that they would be taken to safety by train. Instead, they were taken to the edge of the Babi Yar ravine and shot. It was the largest massacre in the history of the holocaust up to then—33,771 people were killed and only 29 survived. Last year, I also visited the memorial to the holodomor, which was another horrific crime of state murder that aimed intentionally to wipe out the Ukrainian people. ...

Every year, we rightly stand here and say, "Never again," but right now, around the world, atrocities are being committed in Ukraine, against the Rohingya people, against the Uyghur people, and in Tigray. ...

col 1253 We need to build peace every day. There are words in the playground or on the bus, there is discrimination in the workplace and there is antisemitism online. ...

Bob Blackman (Conservative): ... it is important to remember that the holocaust was not an isolated event. It was systematic state-sponsored persecution by the Nazi party and its affiliates. It began in 1933, when the Nazis came to power in Germany, and went all the way through to 1945, when the second world war concluded. ... if we ask how we can understand how ordinary people could do such atrocities to ordinary people, we need to understand what led to it in the first place.

Antisemitism is not new, and it was not new in the 1930s. Jewish people have been subjected to antisemitism throughout Europe since the middle ages. The hatred escalated significantly after the great war, when the reparations on Germany and its allies were extreme, and we had the Wall Street crash and the depression, which led to rampant inflation in Germany and the collapse of the Weimar republic. This led to the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party as he assumed control of Germany.

It is unclear to me what was behind Hitler's hatred towards Jews. Why did this man decide that he hated Jews? However, it is quite clear that Hitler held the Jewish community responsible for the defeat of Germany in world war one. Why? It is because someone had to be to blame. That was clearly what we now call fake news —vicious propaganda, enabling the national feeling to be against the Jewish population of Germany and beyond. It was completely wrong, given that Jews were fighting on the side of Germany in defence of their country during world war one, including Otto Frank, who fought at the battle of the Somme.

col 1254 After Hitler came to power, he wasted no time in using the Government to target and exclude Jews from German society, claiming they were inferior. ... By 1935, the anti-Jewish movement had gained momentum. Jewish newspapers could no longer be sold, and Jews were stripped of their citizenship and other basic rights. In September 1935, the Nuremberg laws were passed by the German Parliament, which meant that many of the Nazis' radical theories were institutionalised, and legal grounds were created to justify the prosecution and persecution of the Jewish community.

It is unimaginable in this day and age how the vast majority of Germans were coaxed into believing that Nazi ideology, but members of the general public were clearly unaware of the growing indoctrination until it was too late. They had adopted a strong stance against the entire Jewish community, and therefore could justify Hitler's actions. ...

On 9 November, Kristallnacht, or the "night of broken glass", took place. That was the terrorisation of Jews throughout Germany and Austria, which had recently been annexed by the Nazis. Hundreds of synagogues were destroyed and thousands of Jewish-owned businesses ransacked. The deaths of nearly 100 Jews took place on that dreadful night, which is often seen as the turning point in the persecution of German Jewry. ... By 1940, the Nazis had begun deporting German Jews to Poland, where they were forced into ghettos and concentration camps. They were brutally tortured and their human rights completely violated. ...

The situation became graver and graver, and in 1942, the Nazis' discussions were centred around their "final solution", a despicable plot to kill every European Jew. ...

col 1255 Once Hitler took control of Hungary, a year before the end of world war two, he began deporting 12,000 Jews to Auschwitz every day to be killed. ...

But before we get too comfortable, we should remember what was going on in this country. The British Union of Fascists was around before world war two, led by Oswald Mosley, an MP in this House, and he modelled it on Nazi Germany. The BUF was fuelled by antisemitism, inspired by the Nazis, and Mosley held huge rallies in this country, pushing a strong nationalist and fascist agenda. Unemployment was very high, poverty widespread, and homelessness rising. Someone had to be to blame, and Mosley blamed the Jews. It could have happened here. Sensible action took place by the Home Secretary, and once war broke out the BUF was banned and its members became enemies of the state. But we must never be too comfortable that this could not happen again, even in this country. ...

Margaret Ferrier (Independent): ... It was ordinary people who stood by and allowed the holocaust and other genocides to happen, taken in by propaganda or too frightened to speak up. They share some degree of responsibility. It is ordinary people who grow up to become authoritarian leaders or parts of the machine that perpetrates these massacres. It was ordinary people who fought back at great risk to their own lives, who provided shelter to the persecuted Jews, Roma, disabled and LGBT people, who resisted the regime in Nazi Germany and occupied Europe. It is ordinary people who have overturned corrupt regimes, fought for change for themselves and others. It is ordinary people who are the victims of genocide and who are the survivors. Nothing sets victims apart from survivors other than some chance set of unique circumstances that allowed them to survive or unfortunately put them directly in harm's way. ...

col 1256 Dorrith Sim, who passed in 2012, was born Dorrith Oppenheim in Kassel, Germany in 1931. Her early childhood was happy, comfortable and carefree. It was Kristallnacht, or night of the broken glass, in Kassel that marked the beginning of a difficult road for the young girl. Dorrith was seven and a half when she boarded the Kindertransport and made her way to a new life in Scotland, having to leave her parents Hans and Trude behind. The only English she knew was "I have a handkerchief in my pocket."

Hans and Trude were deported to Auschwitz in October of 1944. They were never reunited with their daughter. ...

Rita Strassmann, later McNeill, was another Rutherglen resident who arrived in Scotland

with the Kindertransport. She was born in 1930 in Hanover and was just nine when she was arrested by Nazis, alongside her mother. She was able to escape, with the help of her aunt, but unfortunately her mother was left behind. It was the last time Rita saw her. ...

col 1257 Theresa Villiers (Conservative): ... Before turning to the appalling events of the holocaust, I want to speak about another European genocide that took place in Europe in the 20th century: the holodomor. ... With the return of Russian aggression towards Ukraine, surely now is the time for us to formally recognise the holodomor for what it was: an attempt at genocide directed against the Ukrainian people.

Turning to the holocaust, I want to talk about my constituent, Mala Tribich. She was born in 1930 in Poland. In 1939, her family were forced into a ghetto, but she and her cousin Idzia were taken in by a Christian family in another town. ... Her mother and sister were taken away and imprisoned in a synagogue. They were brutalised, starved, shot at, and then taken away and murdered in nearby woods. ...

col 1258 My 92-year-old constituent told her story to a gathering in Woodside Park synagogue at the weekend, as she has in hundreds of other settings over many years. She told it with incredible poise, dignity, courage and resilience. ...

col 1259 Jim Shannon (DUP): ... Whenever I speak as chair of the APPG for international freedom of religion or belief, I speak equally for those with Christian faith, those with other faiths and those with no faith. ...

... the youngest member of my staff ... came to London with her boyfriend for a birthday present. They did a tour of Westminster through the tours office here and then they spent some four hours in the Imperial War Museum in Lambeth. ...

... when she regaled us with what she did during that weekend away, she became fixated on the museum. She told us that ... almost three hours of her time was spent in the section that commemorated the holocaust. ... she said that she had gone in expecting to see a focus on Anne Frank, but instead was struck by the mountains of, in her words, “ordinary people”. ... She studied history at school, but she said that looking at these “ordinary people’s stories” had a greater impact on her than her history GCSE course. ...

For me, that has reinforced the importance of taking children to museums and showing them displays of this kind, to allow them to feel the repulsion and the revulsion and to understand exactly what the figure of 6 million—the 6 million who were murdered—means in an individual setting. ...

Earlier, I said to the hon. Member for Rutherglen and Hamilton West (Margaret Ferrier) that to get an idea of what that figure means, she could imagine walking from Stranraer to Orkney without meeting anyone. The population of Scotland is 5.6 million. It is like walking across Northern Ireland three times and a bit without seeing a single person. That encapsulates what it means to have 6 million people no longer here. ... Our young people need to understand that no man is an island, and that we all bear a responsibility to stand up for what is right against what is morally wrong. ...

col 1260 We need to ensure that every child is educated, not just in the facts and figures, but in the individual stories that touch people’s hearts and change their outlook. ... we must continue to fund educational visits to Auschwitz, and also arrange visits to the Imperial War Museum here in London. ... There, people can see and touch the atrocity, and build the determination that it will never be repeated.

I have that determination, as, I think, has every other Member who has spoken today, but do our children have it? Do our grandchildren? ...

Nicola Richards (Conservative): ... Nobel laureate and holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel famously said “whoever listens to a witness becomes a witness”. ...

As a society, we have taken the incredible work of organisations such as the Holocaust Educational Trust for granted. The trust and its incredible staff have worked day in and day out for the past 30 years to ensure that as many people as possible have the honour of being able to sit in awe and listen to a holocaust survivor tell their testimony. ...

It is sad but true that we are the last generations who will know the holocaust not as a historical period but as something that happened to someone we met or knew.

col 1261 With holocaust survivors now in their 80s and 90s, we, the people who have heard their testimony, have become their witness. We must now carry the mantle of continuing their legacy.

If holocaust denial and distortion can thrive when there are survivors as proof, what will happen when there are none? If antisemitism and hatred can thrive even while survivors warn where it can lead, what will happen when there are none? And when individuals say that Jewish people should not have their own homeland, when survivors are still retelling how no other country would accept them, what will happen when there are none?

In the past month, we have seen the release of two shocking reports. First, two weeks ago, the Tuck report on antisemitism in the National Union of Students found that it was a hostile environment for Jewish students. I have heard stories from my Jewish staffer of what he and his friends experienced at NUS conferences, and it is truly shocking. Secondly, just last week, we received the campus antisemitism report from the Community Security Trust, which found that antisemitism at UK universities has risen by 22% to its highest recorded total. Put simply, Jewish students on UK campuses are receiving death threats and abuse while the National Union of Students, their supposed representative, invites an accused antisemitic rapper to its conferences. ...

I was recently at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and saw a Nazi-era antisemitic book that is currently on sale online. Just last year, we were reminded again that antisemitism is alive and kicking thanks to Kanye West, the now disgraced rapper turned Hitler fan. ... He has more followers on social media than there are Jews in the world, which puts this debate starkly into context.

The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day is ordinary people. It is strange to use the word "ordinary" in the same sentence as the word "holocaust." There is nothing ordinary about the unprecedented attempt to murder all European Jews and to extinguish their culture, history and traditions. ...

It was ordinary people who met at the Wannsee conference to discuss the need for the final solution, which is the term given to the extermination of the Jewish population. It was ordinary people who rounded up the Jews of Europe and forced them into ghettos. It was ordinary people who drove the trains on their journey to the camps. It was ordinary people who thought of their work at death camps as just that—nothing more than work. ...

col 1262 Most importantly, it was ordinary Jewish people who had their humanity stripped away for the crime of being Jewish.

As the late Rabbi Lord Sacks said: "Jews were hated in Germany because they were rich and because they were poor, because they were capitalists and because they were communists, because they kept to themselves and because they infiltrated everywhere, because they believed in a primitive faith and because they were rootless cosmopolitans who believed nothing. Hitler believed that Jews were controlling both the United States and the Soviet Union. How could they be doing both? Because they were Jews."

I end this speech by paying tribute to Zigi Shipper BEM, who sadly passed away last week. I am proud to be, as Elie Wiesel put it, his "witness." I had the pleasure of meeting Zigi many times and I will never forget his charisma, strength and big smile ... I witnessed the eruption of applause when he finished delivering his testimony, having transported students in a school in London through time, painting a picture of the fragile child who was lucky to survive this all, not least the death march where he developed typhus. ... He was one of the many capable of condensing the pain of those involved into a service to better the world. ...

Robin Walker (Conservative): ... As Chairman of the Select Committee on Education, I wanted to join so many Members who have spoken today, from so many parts of the House, in paying tribute to the work of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Holocaust Educational Trust, as they make a profound difference in our schools. The work

they do in bringing the testimony of survivors directly to children in schools is vital in informing our understanding of one of the most terrible examples of human behaviour in history, but it is so much more than that; done to it inspires an understanding not just of history—my subject at school and university—but of poetry, literature, music and so much more that children can benefit from. The work they have make sure that the voices of that generation of survivors that we are sadly now losing are perpetuated and protected for the future is essential, as we all recognise the importance of educating about the holocaust and dealing with the difficult issues it raises for the students of today.

col 1263 The trips that those bodies have organised to take students directly to Auschwitz, to see for themselves the reality of the horror undertaken there, are also an important part of their work. ... this is something that should matter to people of every religion and every community. ...

I wish to touch on a recent event we had in Worcester, which was a reminder that although the holocaust was a peak of the terrible antisemitism and mistreatment of Jewish people, it was not isolated in history as an incident of antisemitism, bias and appalling behaviour against them. We recently held an event to commemorate the expulsion of the Jews from Worcester in 13th-century England. We brought representatives of Jewish communities from across the midlands together in Worcester, at the site of the former Jewish ghetto, to unveil a plaque, and to hear a profound speech and an apology from the Bishop of Worcester for the role that the Church played in that incident. It is important to remember that context and the long history of antisemitism that built up to the terrible events of the holocaust. ...

col 1264 Kirsten Oswald (SNP): ... We can all visualise these ordinary people—ordinary people living ordinary lives in ordinary places, until their world turned and suddenly they were snatched away and thrust into unimaginable horror. However, that did not happen overnight, and we have heard that very clearly today. These things creep up. There is a growing intolerance and a deliberate othering of groups until the tide has set. The uncomfortable truth that we need to confront is that these ordinary people were not only the victims of the holocaust; they were also the bystanders—the people who watched what was happening—and the people who carried out and facilitated these murderous acts of genocide.

Holocaust survivor and author Primo Levi said: “Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions.”

That is what we need to guard most against, as that intolerance creeps forward. We need to be frank about that. There is a growing tide of intolerance, a growing enthusiasm for conspiracy and a growing denial.

We have heard today about the other genocides, which we must recognise and must remember. We also need to remember the plight of the Uyghur Muslims, who are so horrifically treated in China, and the Daesh genocide against the Yazidis, Christians and other minorities in Syria and Iraq.

... I am privileged to live in a constituency where the majority of the Jewish population in Scotland lives, and our vibrant, diverse community in East Renfrewshire is far the better for it.

During a holocaust memorial event hosted by East Renfrewshire Council in Calderwood Lodge—the only Jewish school in Scotland, based on a joint campus with St Clare's Primary School, which means it is part of the only Jewish-Catholic joint campus in Europe—in that exceptional place, we heard from some exceptional young people, including the host, Kirsty Robson, who has worked very hard on holocaust remembrance ...

col 1265 We also heard from Gillian Field, one of the daughters of Henry and the late Ingrid Wuga, East Renfrewshire residents who have lived lives very far from ordinary.

After both arriving, separately, on the Kindertransport, they later fell in love and married,

and they dedicated their retirement to talking to young people about their experience. The testimony of Henry and Ingrid Wuga has shaped many young lives all over Scotland, and their daughters Hilary and Gillian are now continuing that work, making sure that their testimony and lived memory are still spoken. ...

Rabbi Moshe Rubin, the Senior Rabbi of Scotland, talked about a visit he had made to Auschwitz and the photographs he saw there—so many photographs, he told us, of ordinary people whose lives had been wiped out simply because of their identity. It was utterly devastating for us in the audience to hear from him that he looked at those photos wondering whether any of them were members of his family, who he knew had been murdered there, but then realised that he would just never know. ...

col 1266 I make no apology for concluding my speech by speaking once again this year about the life of the only Scot to be remembered as righteous among the nations. ... We could all do with listening to more contributions about Jane Haining and reflecting on the way she lived her life. ...

She was a brave and principled woman; an ordinary woman who displayed extraordinary love and courage at the very worst of times. She deserves to be remembered ... That is how we best halt creeping intolerance and hatred, and prevent it from happening again. ...

Alex Norris (Labour Co-op): ... It is our intergenerational duty to tell future generations the truth about man's inhumanity to man, so that we can fight to prevent it from being repeated. ...

col 1268 The numbers can overwhelm you: 6 million Jewish people murdered, more than a quarter of a million disabled people murdered, up to half a million Romani murdered, more than 1.5 million people in Cambodia murdered, and 1 million people in Rwanda murdered. As the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) said, those are overwhelming numbers, but each number is a real person: a mother, a father, a son or a daughter. They were people who loved and were loved. They would have been people who would have become their nation's Picasso or Byron; young people who did not yet know that they loved science but who would have made discoveries that would have transformed humanity; political leaders who would have fought for hope and inclusion; and people who would have started businesses that would have enriched the lives of thousands. All those lives and all that potential was taken away in the name of hate. ...

It gave me pause to reflect on my visit with friends to Dachau as an 18-year-old and contrast our freedoms as we travelled around Europe with the names and pictures of boys of a similar age who never had the same chances. ...

I turn to the national holocaust memorial and learning centre, which is a crucial way in which we can appropriately memorialise the holocaust and cascade our knowledge down the generations. The project has been challenging to say the least, but I reiterate the commitment that I made in an urgent question on the matter in July on behalf of the Opposition and the commitment made yesterday and previously by my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the Opposition. We support the project wholeheartedly. We were encouraged and cheered to hear what the Prime Minister said yesterday during Prime Minister's questions about imminent legislation for the memorial. ...

I and hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of others have seen such work done well in this country already. Beth Shalom, the National Holocaust Centre and Museum in north Nottinghamshire, houses the country's only dedicated holocaust museum. It was born of the Smith brothers—Stephen and my good friend James—who visited Yad Vashem some 30 years ago and identified the need to better understand, discuss and teach issues relating to the holocaust in this country. ...

col 1269 When the other place debated the matter last week, it was said that it would be nice to think of this as a debate that we are having in the past tense, with antisemitism consigned to the dustbin of history; with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities facing no prejudice; and disabled people living without hate. But that simply is not the world that we live in. As colleagues have said, the Community Security Trust's findings were stark,

with 786 antisemitic incidents across the UK in just the first half of 2022: the joint fifth highest it had ever recorded. In addition, there was a 22% increase in university-related incidents to a total of 150 in the last two years. I reflect with pain that we have seen that hate in the Labour party, and I restate our commitment to tearing it out by its roots. We also see that hate crime against disabled people has increased by nearly 45% and that hate crime against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities remains under-tackled and rarely understood in this country. ... When we memorialise the holocaust, we talk about the past, but we feel the echoes in the present day. ...

I will finish with my reflection on the theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day, "ordinary people". It is a reminder that while those who author murderous regimes are history's most evil people, their work is reliant on the mass participation of significant numbers of ordinary people—people who participate, people who turn a blind eye, people who share in the propaganda and people who stand by. ... I think about bystander training, because there are increasing levels of hate in our community. Having that bystander training means that people know what to do for the best. ...

col 1271 The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Felicity Buchan): ... on Holocaust Memorial Day, we remember the 6 million Jewish men, women and children murdered during the holocaust. We remember hundreds of thousands of Roma and Sinti; the 250,000 disabled people who were murdered, and many more sterilised; the 10,000 to 15,000 men accused of homosexuality who were sent to concentration camps, and up to 40,000 more who were brutally mistreated in prison. We also remember the 1.5 million to 2 million murdered in Cambodia; the 8,000 Muslim men and boys murdered in Srebrenica; the 1 million Tutsi murdered in Rwanda; and the 100,000 to 400,000 men, women and children murdered in the ongoing conflict in Darfur ...

Thankfully for all of us, there have been and are so many ordinary men and women willing to stand against hatred, and those who demonstrated extraordinary bravery in their efforts to protect and save Jews. Their selfless acts represent the best of humanity. Two women who epitomised that selflessness were Ida and Louise Cook. Between 1934 and 1939, these two women were regular visitors to the opera houses of Germany and Austria. But they also went there to save Jewish lives. They said, "The funny thing is we weren't the James Bond type. We were just respectable Civil Service typists." When asked why they did it, they replied, "because it was the right thing to do, nothing more, nothing less." ...

col 1272 I am delighted to say that the UK Government are committed to the creation of a new national memorial and that, at Prime Minister's Question Time yesterday, the Prime Minister confirmed that the Government intend to bring forward legislation to remove the statutory obstacle to the memorial being built in Victoria Tower Gardens. We will do that as soon as parliamentary time allows.

It would be remiss of me not to mention antisemitism in this debate. Antisemitism and hatred did not end with the defeat of Nazi Germany. We have heard that just last week, the Community Security Trust—the UK's leading organisation monitoring antisemitism—published a report outlining a 22% increase in antisemitism on university campuses in 2020 to 2022 compared with the two years prior to that. That is truly unacceptable.

I pay tribute to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and its CEO, Olivia Marks-Woldman, to the Holocaust Educational Trust and its CEO, Karen Pollock, and to their teams. I should add that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, of which the UK was a founding member, conducts vital work to strengthen, advance and promote holocaust education and remembrance. The Government are proud to have backed the IHRA's working definition of holocaust denial and distortion in 2013, its working definition of antisemitism in 2016 and, more recently, its working definition of anti-Roma racism in 2020. ...

Charlotte Nichols: ... In 1988 the Conservative Government set up the Hetherington inquiry, which led to the War Crimes Act 1991. That meant that for the first time, Nazi war

criminals living in the UK could be prosecuted for war crimes, but those prosecutions have rarely taken place. I gave evidence in my speech of cases where the police, the CPS and British intelligence services covered up Nazi war criminals living in the UK. Could the Minister commit to making representations to His Majesty's Government for an inquiry into this, as called for by the Board of Deputies, as one of the actions to take away from today, so that we can learn from this and ensure it never happens again?

Felicity Buchan: ... I suggest that we sit down and talk about that following the debate.
col 1273 We cannot allow one of the darkest chapters in history to be forgotten. I am reminded of the words of the Spanish philosopher George Santayana, who said in 1905: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Mr Deputy Speaker (Nigel Evans): ... may I say what an honour it is to have chaired this debate? ... A few years ago, I went to Poland to visit Auschwitz. I cannot hear the haunting but brilliant theme music to "Schindler's List" without reflecting on that visit and the possessions of those who had their lives brutally cut short in that concentration camp by acts of extraordinary evil. We remember them on Holocaust Memorial Day today, and we remember the extraordinary acts of courage of people who helped to defeat that regime and of people today who suffer at the hands of other rotten regimes around the world.

col 1274 **Sajid Javid:** ... Clearly reflected in all hon. Members' contributions was the theme set by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust: the role of ordinary people in the holocaust and subsequent genocides. The 6 million people murdered in the holocaust and the millions murdered in subsequent genocides were ordinary people, but many of the people who facilitated and perpetrated those murders were also ordinary people who were somehow corrupted. ...

Many hon. Members also rightly referred to the extraordinary people—the survivors—many of whom are thankfully still in our midst. As was said, however, with the passing of each survivor, we can see that the responsibility on all of us in this House grows. Having listened to this excellent debate, however, I am very hopeful for the future. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-26/debates/70BC5F54-2219-4355-8BF6-93B81D821A3B/HolocaustMemorialDay>

The report into the NUS, 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>

The Prime Minister's comments at Prime Minister's Question Time, referred to above, can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-25/debates/CC1C6066-E0E7-4BF6-84D4-BB5C11BC1EBA/Engagements#contribution-7CA63DD0-DC87-40EA-B12B-66031660E5F2>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-25/debates/CC1C6066-E0E7-4BF6-84D4-BB5C11BC1EBA/Engagements#contribution-843FA7F4-78DF-4EAC-BE38-12A16E8100FD>

House of Commons Oral Answers

Business of the House

col 1173 Penny Mordaunt (Conservative): I am sure the whole House will want to recognise that we have Holocaust Memorial Day this week. Let me place on the record my thanks, in particular, to all the survivors who help us and new generations to understand what happened and, of course, to redouble our efforts to tackle antisemitism wherever it appears. I also thank the Holocaust Educational Trust. I know that many Members will have relied on it to take them to Auschwitz and elsewhere, and that will have had a huge impact on all Members of this House. ...

col 1174 Deidre Brock (SNP): I, too, pay tribute to the work of the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and all organisations and individuals who contribute so much to keeping alive the memory of the millions who were so shamefully murdered. ...

col 1190 Jim Shannon (DUP): As we know, tomorrow is Holocaust Memorial Day, but the promise of “never again” is often broken—Mr Speaker reminded us of that at the start of business, and it is important that we focus on it. Around the world, religious minorities are the target of genocidal activity, including in Myanmar, China, Nigeria and Afghanistan. Will the Leader of the House join me and other Members in making a statement to acknowledge the vulnerability of those groups, and to emphasise the urgent need for action?

Penny Mordaunt: I thank the hon. Gentleman for again raising that vital issue and mentioning some of the countries where it is a particular concern. He will know that the Foreign Office takes such matters incredibly seriously. That is why we have an envoy, why this is baked into the core work, and why there is activity in our embassies and high commissions in those nations. ... we will always keep our eyes on what people are having to endure, and we will always stand up for freedom of religion. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-26/debates/082F924E-AC9E-4990-A35B-88B25AEE441C/BusinessOfTheHouse>

Downing Street

UK Prime Minister Tonight we #LightTheDarkness [*memorial candle*] remembering the six million Jewish men, women and children systematically murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators, all victims of Nazi persecution and the victims of subsequent genocides. #WeRemember [*memorial candle*] #HolocaustMemorialDay [*memorial candle*]
<https://twitter.com/10DowningStreet/status/1619011194060410881>

Rishi Sunak An enormous honour to meet Arek. His message is a powerful reminder of our duty to remember the truth of the Holocaust and to fight antisemitism and hatred of all forms. This #HolocaustMemorialDay [*memorial candle*] please listen to his words.

Arek Hersh was just a boy when the Nazis invaded Poland. During the next 5 years, he lost nearly all his family in the Holocaust. Arek survived, and later settled in Britain. On #HolocaustMemorialDay [*memorial candle*] we share his reflections.

[*video*]

<https://twitter.com/RishiSunak/status/1618950261216792577>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Holocaust Remembrance Day 2023: UK statement to the OSCE: Ambassador Neil Bush marks International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and stresses the need to stand against antisemitism in all its forms.

Tomorrow we will mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day, to remember and honour the lives of the six million Jewish men, women and children as well as, Roma, Sinti and others who lost their lives at the hands of the Nazi regime during World War II. This was one of the darkest moments in human history.

The UK's theme for this year highlights the role of "ordinary people" - as perpetrators, victims, and rescuers. These people actively had choices to make – whether or not to perpetrate genocide; whether or not to stand by and actively ignore what was going on around them. There were those who took a stand against hatred, by coming forward to help those in need – whether by hiding people, providing food, or helping people to escape. They were ordinary people too... doing extraordinary things. It remains an extraordinary and uplifting fact that ordinary people in Denmark managed to save almost all of their countries Jewish populations. They were hidden in churches, hospitals and family homes, and spirited to coastal towns, from where they were taken to safety in Sweden. Sadly, there were also many who stood by silently and did nothing.

We will soon reach a point when the march of time means that the Holocaust will no longer be part of our living history. With that comes a growing concern about the rise of Holocaust denial and distortion – recasting history to erase the devastating horrors faced by the Jewish people. We have a duty to remember them and keep their testimony alive for future generations.

Holocaust distortion feeds the despicable scourge of antisemitism, which has no place in any society. We must continue to stand against it in all its forms, and to reject any attempts to deny the facts of the Holocaust. History is too important to be politicised.

We will continue to drive international efforts to promote Holocaust education, and counter Holocaust denial and distortion when the UK takes the Chairpersonship of IHRA in March 2024. To ensure we never forget the horrors, or forget the hard lessons we learnt – the UK has committed to building a new national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in London, expected to open in 2027.

As we mark this poignant day, Mr Chair and the six million people who were not saved during World War II – let us reflect. Let us remember. And let us never forget.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/holocaust-remembrance-day-2023-uk-statement-to-the-osce>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Today we remember the 6 million Jewish people murdered during the Holocaust. @JamesCleverly met survivors this week, who do so much to educate the next generation. Antisemitism is evil; we must continue to combat this abhorrent ideology. #HolocaustMemorialDay *[memorial candle]* #HMD2023 *[memorial candle]*

<https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1618997645426692096>

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon On #HolocaustMemorialDay *[memorial candle]* we remember one of the darkest moments in history - 6 million Jewish people killed by the Nazis during WWII. We stand with the Jewish community & will never waver in our relentless fight against the despicable scourge of antisemitism.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1618884254636843010>

Holocaust Memorial Day 2023

12.48 Fergus Ewing (SNP): ... It was ordinary people who facilitated the chilling final solution devised at the Wannsee conference, with its despicable memorial, to which Mr Carlaw referred in his remarks last year. It was ordinary people who stood by and did nothing in the early years of the Nazi regime, from Kristallnacht right through to Auschwitz, Belsen, Sobibor and the rest. It is the harsh and incontrovertible truth that the killing of 6 million people took place because ordinary people permitted it, perpetrated it or did not prevent it.

However, we also remember the ordinary people who were the rescuers: the famous, such as Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg, through to the anonymous—the thousands of ordinary people in Poland who lived in the areas surrounding the Auschwitz camps and helped to harbour, and make good the escape of, the very few people who were fortunate enough to get out of that ghastly place. Those ordinary people put their own lives at risk by harbouring prisoners and helping them to make their escape to liberty.

We remember, too, the genocides that have taken place since the second world war in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and, sadly, many other places throughout the world. Each genocide starts with the abandonment and disregard of human rights, with people being punished for who they are or for what their identity is. People are punished for being Jewish, or disabled, or Sinti, or Roma, or gay. It starts in that way, but it ends up in the gas chambers because ordinary people have allowed or enabled it or, in fact, helped to carry it out.

I want to ... remember one person in Scotland—one rescuer who, I believe, made an extraordinary contribution that has not yet been sufficiently recognised. They made a contribution to the cause of humanity and human rights through helping to secure the release of prisoners from hideous Russian gulags—Russian prison camps. That person is my old boss, Leslie Wolfson.

In the days of Solzhenitsyn, the Russian regime detained many people simply for the crime of expressing their views—the so-called prisoners of conscience. ... Leslie Wolfson decided to use his considerable expertise as a lawyer and successful businessman to help to extract those prisoners from Russia. He set himself a task that, at the time, looked utterly impossible or even absurd. ...

He sought to hire lawyers in Russia to act in the defence of those who were incarcerated or who faced incarceration. That was much easier said than put into practice. ...

He invited 20 Russian lawyers to visit his Glasgow home. He established many relationships with lawyers who could help. He hired them, met them, cajoled them and persuaded them. ...

Leslie's success bred success, and he was then showered with cases, which he doggedly pursued. ... He was instrumental in securing the release of prisoners, who regained their liberty as a result. ...

Leslie was a man of indomitable optimism, and he was hugely warm, intelligent and civilised. Above all, he was thraven and determined to take on a seemingly impossible task. ...

The theme this year is "Ordinary People", including rescuers who did extraordinary things. Leslie Wolfson was a leading member of the Jewish community in Scotland—a community that is so greatly valued and that has achieved so very much. I hope that I have, in this speech today, done justice to an extraordinary man whose work deserves to be remembered and respected. ...

12.58 Alexander Stewart (Conservative): ... it is vital that we continue to impart the lessons of the Holocaust to each and every future generation. ... The true horrors of the Holocaust, along with subsequent genocides and persecutions across the world, must never be erased from the public psyche. ...

... genocide is facilitated by ordinary people. The individuals who are persecuted, oppressed and murdered in genocides often are not persecuted because of crimes that they have committed; it is because they are ordinary people who belong to a particular group. ...

Every June, as part of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history month, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust remembers and commemorates the richness that Gypsy and Traveller communities bring to our everyday lives through their many and varied academic and artistic achievements.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust reminds us that, throughout the truly horrendous and hideous circumstances during the 1930s and 1940s, the Jewish people were, tragically, not the only ones to be under the inhumane sway of the Nazi regime. ...

... it is too easy for society to put labels on particular groups. The reality is that these are all individuals with the right to learn, the right to be heard and the right to survive. Indeed, they are ordinary people whose efforts deserve and require acknowledgement.

It is with that in mind that we should commit to ensuring equality of opportunity for every one of us in our communities. We should talk about understanding particularly marginalised groups. We should also never forget the horrors that many groups have had to endure to get to where they are today.

13.02 Paul O’Kane (Labour): ... we rededicate ourselves to saying, “Never again”. Yet, all too painfully, we know that, in the years since the Holocaust, genocide has happened again—in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur—and that, in our world today, identity-based persecution continues against Yazidi people, Rohingya Muslims and Uyghur Muslims. ...

Genocide is facilitated by ordinary people: people who turn a blind eye, believe propaganda or join murderous regimes. Genocide is perpetrated against ordinary people: people who were neighbours, colleagues and friends. Identity-based persecution can also be challenged by ordinary people: those who stand up and speak out, or those with great courage who hide and save people in the darkest of times. Thus the ordinary can become extraordinary. ...

I have had the honour over many years of meeting Holocaust survivors and hearing their testimony at first hand. What always strikes me is the normality of people’s lives before they were shattered by the Nazis coming to power or invading their homeland. They lived lives that we would recognise, had dreams and ambitions that we would recognise, and loved and were loved in a way that we would all recognise, yet all that basic humanity was torn apart as the Nazis dehumanised and othered them. ...

As time passes, and the living survivor memory declines, it falls to each of us to tell their stories. We, ordinary people, must tell the story, call out hatred and light the darkness. We do not do that alone; we stand together with amazing organisations such as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Anne Frank Trust, the Gathering the Voices project and many more custodians of Holocaust remembrance.

Kemal Pervanic, a survivor of the Bosnian genocide, whom I have heard speak, said: “People may think that they have nothing to do with my story. But what happened to me, could happen to them—to people like yourself. It may sound too hard to believe but this doesn’t happen to strangers who live far away. I’m just an ordinary person. These terrible things can happen to people like us.” ...

13.07 Stephanie Callaghan (SNP): ... Our world is scarred by genocide and we seek to learn the lessons of the past, recognising that genocide does not just take place on its own; it is a steady process that begins with discrimination, racism and hatred that grow and spread when left unchecked. Therefore, it is the responsibility of ordinary people—every individual—to challenge discrimination on their own doorsteps. ...

13:12 Maggie Chapman (Green): ... As the decades pass and the generations of survivors and witnesses pass, too, it becomes more important than ever to remember not

only the scale of the horror, but that each person who suffered or died was a particular, unique and irreplaceable individual.

So, we remember specific people, and we mourn their loss, not because those we can name are any more important than those whose names are lost to us, but because, as humans, we respond to human stories—to stories of specific people in specific places, carrying out particular and often extraordinary acts of courage, truth and love. ...

13:16 Kenneth Gibson (SNP): ... In the 12 months since the Parliament last debated the Holocaust, we have witnessed reports of ethnically motivated atrocities being committed in western Tigray in Ethiopia; the murder of Ukrainian civilians and prisoners of war by Russian forces during the fight for and occupation of the Ukrainian city of Bucha, among other locations; and soldiers in the Myanmar military admitting to killing, torturing and raping civilians following an armed uprising. ...

That is why it is so important that, every year on Holocaust memorial day, this Parliament plays its part in remembering and discussing the systematic, bureaucratic and state-sponsored persecution and murder of 6 million Jewish men, women and children by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. To put that into perspective, that would be equivalent to more than Scotland's entire population being murdered within a few short years. In addition, according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 11 million other people were murdered during the era of the Holocaust. ...

It is 60 years since Hannah Arendt published "Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil" after witnessing the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a major figure in the implementation of the Holocaust. Arendt found Eichmann to be an ordinary and rather bland bureaucrat, who, in her words, was "neither perverted nor sadistic" but "terrifyingly normal". ...

That is exactly why Holocaust education remains of critical importance. It allows us to examine warning signs that indicate the potential for mass atrocity while raising questions about our own behaviour when faced with situations of prejudice, discrimination and dehumanisation. ...

... the Holocaust also teaches us about the capacity of ordinary people to take extraordinary risks to save others from being murdered. Those honoured as the "righteous among the nations" at Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, are non-Jews who protected Jews, including people sometimes unknown to them, when hostility and indifference prevailed and the penalty for harbouring Jews was the execution of one's entire family. Unlike others, they did not fall into a pattern of acquiescing to the escalating measures against Jews. ...

Teaching young people about the Holocaust enables them to develop an awareness of not only how violence and hatred can take hold but the power of solidarity and resistance. ...

The Holocaust lays bare the darkest recesses of human behaviour, and that should be recognised in our school curriculum. We must acknowledge that education is one of the most powerful weapons in the prevention of mass atrocities happening over and over again. It helps us to understand the circumstances under which it becomes possible for ordinary people to commit extraordinary acts of evil and for enough people to be indifferent bystanders to enable it to happen. ...

13.21 Beatrice Wishart (Liberal Democrat): ... My mother spoke of seeing the stark images that began to appear in cinema newsreels after the liberation of the camps. She described seeing those horrific images on the screen for the first time and how they were so shocking and vivid. Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald—those names are forever associated with dehumanisation, never to be forgotten.

Generations since have been taught of the near destruction of a culture and images of horror, and they have been taught through the important work of the Holocaust Educational Trust and others ...

As Pastor Niemöller reminds us, it was not only Jewish people who were subjected to the

worst treatment of fellow humans but people from groups that were different—those who had different opinions and those of a different race and sexual orientation. The liberal democratic structures that we have built in the post-war era are vulnerable and fragile and need to be cherished.

Since the Holocaust, we have witnessed genocides in the killing fields of Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. Today, humanity is still inhumane to humanity. ...

13.25 The Minister for Equalities and Older People (Christina McKelvie): ... I commend ... the Auschwitz memorial Twitter page, which every day remembers all those names. ...

... this year's theme for Holocaust memorial day, "Ordinary People", is particularly poignant. It shines a light on the measurable and devastating impact that the Holocaust and later genocides had on the ordinary lives of the ordinary people who were persecuted and murdered. As we are so painfully aware, the victims of genocide were singled out for no other reason than who they were or the group that they belonged to: Jews, disabled people, Gypsy Travellers, Roma, Sinti, LGBTI, black people and others. History has taught us that the Nazis and their collaborators targeted anyone who they perceived to be different, thereby claiming the lives of millions and millions of people.

Ordinary people facilitated those genocides. Ordinary people participated and turned a blind eye. Yet, in the darkest period of the atrocities ... ordinary people, at great risk to their own lives, helped to rescue others and went to extraordinary lengths to provide safety to those who were most at risk. For those acts of immense courage, we should all be forever indebted. ...

We think of all the human rights defenders—past, present and future—who have faced and are facing atrocities around the world. It is understandable that we wish to contain those abhorrent tragedies to the past and to think of them as something that could never conceivably happen again. However ... regrettably the hateful attitudes that people drew on to sow the seeds of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides continue to blight our society. ...

It is for that reason that we remain absolutely resolute in our commitment to tackling hatred and prejudice in all its forms, whenever it may arise. That is why we will shortly be publishing our new hate crime strategy, which sets our priorities for tackling hatred and prejudice in Scotland. Lived experience has been, and will continue to be, at the heart of our approach to tackling hate crime. We are grateful to those who have shared their experiences of prejudice and hate crime in order to help to inform the development of our strategy. Our vision is for a safe, resilient and inclusive Scotland, where everyone lives free from hatred and prejudice, and our new strategy will set out how we will work collectively towards that goal. ...

I know that we will all agree that education to ensure that we can effectively tackle hatred and prejudice in Scotland is incredibly important. ...

This evening, alongside the First Minister, I will attend an event that is being organised by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and hosted by Paul O'Kane here in the Scottish Parliament. I very much look forward to the valuable opportunity to commemorate the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, as well as to demonstrate our commitment to tackling present-day hatred and prejudice. I thank the organisers for their tireless dedication in ensuring that the victims continue to be honoured. Yesterday, Paul O'Kane and I were reflecting on the immense work that Kirsty Robson does, so I think that we should give her a shout-out for that. ...

Genocide does not come out of nowhere ... It is a result of years of unchallenged prejudice and hatred. As we reflect on this year's theme, if we take away only one thing, it should be the recognition of the responsibility that we all have to challenge prejudice and hatred wherever and whenever it occurs. Let the Holocaust and other genocides be stark warnings that what happened before can happen again, and let us make sure that it does not.

To read the full transcript see

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=14115&i=127886#ScotParlOR>

Jackson Carlaw's remarks during last year's Holocaust Memorial Day debate, referred to above, can be read at

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13545&i=122947&c=2374657#ScotParlOR>

An audiobook of the Hannah Arendt report referred to above is available free from amazon.com

<https://www.amazon.com/Eichmann-in-Jerusalem-audiobook/dp/B004VNXBVC>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answer

Holocaust Memorial Day

Fergus Ewing (SNP): Tomorrow, 27 January, is Holocaust memorial day, which marks the anniversary of the liberation, 78 years ago, of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. Does the First Minister support the great work that is done by the Holocaust Educational Trust, our schools and others in teaching successive generations of our children about the atrocities that saw millions of people murdered and slaughtered, including 6 million Jews and many other minorities? Does she agree that that educational work is essential, so that we never forget the lesson that atrocities and oppression must be fought, wheresoever they occur?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I associate myself whole-heartedly with Fergus Ewing's comments on Holocaust memorial day. Indeed, throughout the year, I am very proud that the Scottish Government strongly supports the excellent work of the Holocaust Educational Trust to enable young people across Scotland to continue to learn from the atrocities of the Holocaust as we challenge the oppressions of the present.

I know that some members will have had the privilege this week of hearing directly from the Holocaust Educational Trust's young ambassadors about the impact of Holocaust education on their lives. That is a privilege that I have had in previous years. Indeed, I had the opportunity a few years ago to visit Auschwitz with the trust. That was one of the most profoundly moving experiences of my life.

I think that we all agree that education has a key role to play in building a society that actively challenges discrimination, hate, intolerance and prejudice in all its forms and advances equality. We should do that all year round. However, Holocaust memorial day gives us the opportunity every year to rededicate ourselves to that very important responsibility.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=14115&i=127869#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Government

First Minister To mark #HolocaustMemorialDay [*memorial candle*] First Minister @NicolaSturgeon signed @HolocaustUK's Book of Commitment to remember all victims of genocide and ensure the lessons of the past are not forgotten, by challenging all forms of hatred and prejudice wherever they occur. #HMD2023 [*memorial candle*]

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1618904220085747714>

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Greater efforts to counter Holocaust distortion needed to combat hate and protect democracy, OSCE says on International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Greater international co-operation is needed to counter Holocaust denial and distortion, not only to combat hateful ideologies but also to defend democracy ...

“Today we honour the memory of the six million Jews and all other victims brutally murdered in the Holocaust for who they were, what they believed or even who they loved. The past year has represented yet another bone-chilling reminder that Europe in the 21st Century is not immune to new mass atrocities when the Holocaust is distorted, the UN Charter violated and the Helsinki Final Act disrespected,” said OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, Bujar Osmani. “The Holocaust was about millions of men, women and children murdered for not fitting into fascist ideas. Holocaust remembrance and education must continue to focus on people when addressing anti-Semitism in all its forms,” Osmani added ...

The phenomenon of Holocaust distortion seeks to minimize the crimes and impact of the Holocaust. As well as fuelling an increase in anti-Semitism, it threatens our democracies by spreading disinformation and undermining the mutual trust, respect and tolerance that are among their founding principles. ...

“Holocaust denial and distortion have dire consequences for our societies and our democracy,” said Matteo Mecacci, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). “Trivializing, diminishing and misappropriating the Holocaust not only diminishes the suffering of its victims, but also hampers our ability to understand the causes of genocide and prevent it from happening again. By spreading disinformation, it undermines trust and respect between people and therefore also the quality of democratic participation.”

ODIHR recently joined other international organizations including the United Nations and the European Commission in [#ProtectTheFacts](#), a global awareness-raising campaign created by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance that focuses on countering Holocaust distortion.

“Today we face the dual challenge of politicians who distort the reality of the Holocaust to fit nationalist and populist narratives and a growing number of young adults who are ignorant of the most basic facts of the Jewish genocide,” said Rabbi Andrew Baker, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism. “On this Holocaust Remembrance Day, we must redouble our education efforts as the very future of democracy depends on an informed electorate.” ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.osce.org/odhr/536521>

United Nations

Marking International Day, Secretary-General Honours 6 Million Holocaust Victims, Stressing ‘Never Again Remain Silent in the Face of Evil’

... Today, we honour the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. We remember the 6 million Jewish children, women, and men, as well as the Roma and Sinti, the people with disabilities and countless others who perished. We reflect on the millions of individual lives cut short; the millions of futures stolen away.

As we mourn the loss of so many and so much, we also recognize that the Holocaust was not inevitable. No genocide ever is. It was the culmination of millennia of antisemitic hate. The Nazis could only move with calculated cruelty from the discrimination of Europe’s Jews to their annihilation because so few stood up, and so many stood by. It was the deafening silence — both at home and abroad — that emboldened them.

The alarm bells were ringing from the very beginning. Hate speech and disinformation. Contempt for human rights and the rule of law. The glorification of violence and tales of racial supremacy. Disdain for democracy and diversity.

In remembering the Holocaust, we recognize threats to freedom, dignity, and humanity — including in our own time. Today — in the face of growing economic discontent and political instability, escalating white supremacist terrorism, and surging hate and religious bigotry — we must be more outspoken than ever.

We must never forget — nor allow others to ever forget, distort or deny the Holocaust. Today and every day, let us resolve to never again remain silent in the face of evil — and to always defend the dignity and rights of all. Thank you.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21669.doc.htm>

'Let Us Forever Keep Memory of Past Alive — and Never Let Others Forget Either,' Says Secretary-General at Holocaust Remembrance Event

... I want to thank Yad Vashem for bringing this deeply moving exhibition to the United Nations, which goes to the heart of your vital mission: to give the millions who perished “an everlasting name”: a “yad vashem”.

Among the first actions the Nazis took in their campaign of discrimination, exclusion and ultimately annihilation of European Jews was to target names.

In the 1930s, German Jews were forced to adopt an additional name: For men it was “Israel”, for women “Sarah”. And when a prisoner arrived in Auschwitz, their name was erased and replaced with a number burnt on the forearm.

First robbed of their names, then of their lives. No cemeteries, no headstones, no traces remain. The 6 million Jewish children, men, and women are lost forever. But their memory — and their names — shall never be forgotten.

This exhibition is a call to action: some 1 million victims remain unidentified, and we are racing against time. It is a call to remembrance: as fewer and fewer can bear direct witness, we will have to find new ways to carry the torch of remembrance forward. Within families and across generations. Within classrooms and across geographies.

And this exhibition is a call to reflection: to see in each child, woman, and man who perished, a human being with hopes and dreams — not a faceless, nameless victim. And it is a call to all of us: our world today is not immune to the poison of hate — the hate that says another person is less than my equal, less than human.

Together, let us stem the tide of human cruelty and fight antisemitism and all forms of racism wherever and whenever it manifests itself. Let us forever keep the memory of the past alive — and never let others forget either. ...

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21667.doc.htm>

Recommit to Stand against Evil in All Its Forms, Work for World of Peace, Says Secretary-General at Holocaust Victims' Remembrance Ceremony

... Ninety years ago this year, the Nazi party came to power in Germany. Within months, they dismantled fundamental constitutional rights and paved the way for totalitarian rule.

Members of Parliament were swiftly arrested, freedom of the press abolished. In Dachau, the first concentration camp was built. In Berlin, books were piled on bonfires. And all over Germany, virulent antisemitism became official Government policy.

Discrimination and exclusion — codified in law — began almost immediately. Open, organized violence — most notoriously the terror of the Kristallnacht — followed soon after, alongside widespread theft and plunder. And then the systematic mass murder started. By the end of the war, 6 million children, women, and men — nearly two out of every three European Jews — had been murdered.

The rise of National Socialism in Germany was made possible by the indifference — if not connivance — of so many millions. We now know the terrifying depths of the abyss into

which Germany would plunge. But, the alarm bells were already ringing in 1933. Too few bothered to listen, and fewer still spoke out.

Today, we can hear echoes of those same siren songs to hate. From an economic crisis that is breeding discontent, to populist demagogues using the crisis to seduce voters, to runaway misinformation, paranoid conspiracy theories and unchecked hate speech, to growing disregard for human rights and disdain for the rule of law, to surging white supremacist and Neo-Nazi ideologies, to attempts to rewrite history, deny the Holocaust and rehabilitate collaborators, to rising antisemitism and other forms of religious bigotry and hatred.

At its essence, Holocaust remembrance is a call to be on constant alert. Never to be silent in the face of hate. Never tolerant of intolerance. Never indifferent to the suffering of others. After all, hatred does not start in a vacuum. The Nazis did not invent antisemitism, eugenics or notions of racial supremacy.

The Holocaust was the culmination of millennia of antisemitic hate. Throughout history, the hatred that begins by declaring: “You have no right to live among us” sooner or later says: “You have no right to live.” The painful truth is: anti-Semitism is everywhere. In fact, it is increasing in intensity. ...

Survey after survey arrives at the same conclusion: anti-Semitism is at record-highs. And what is true for antisemitism is true for other forms of hate. Racism. Anti-Muslim bigotry. Xenophobia. Homophobia. Misogyny.

Neo-Nazi, white supremacist movements are becoming more dangerous by the day. In fact, they now represent the number one internal security threat in several countries — and the fastest growing. ...

We know how easily hate speech turns to hate crime, how verbal violence breeds physical violence, how diversity and social cohesion are undermined — as are the values and principles that bind us together. ...

We all have a role to play. We can never let hate have the last word. We cannot allow old hatreds to find new outlets and impunity on digital platforms. Together, we must confront falsehoods with facts, ignorance with education, indifference with engagement. Because “never again” means telling the story again and again.

We must tell the stories of the persecuted. The mass murder of the Roma and Sinti. The torture and murder of other victims targeted by the Nazis: persons with disabilities. Germans of African descent. Homosexuals. Soviet prisoners of war. Political dissenters and countless others. And above all, we must tell the stories of all the children, women and men who were systematically murdered and who together made up the rich and vibrant mosaic that was Jewish life in Europe.

We must remember the Holocaust not as the history of 6 million deaths; but as 6 million different stories of death. We remember people like Janusz Korczak, the Polish doctor, educator and head of an orphanage in Warsaw. He refused offers to escape the Warsaw Ghetto and stayed with the 200 children under his care — all the way to Treblinka, so they would not die alone.

We remember Friedl Dicker-Brandeis who taught art to children in the Theresienstadt Ghetto — encouraging them to paint or draw so that, if only for a moment, they might feel safe. In 1944, Friedl and her students were murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. ... Our responsibility to honour the memory of those who perished.

To learn the truth of what happened, and to ensure that neither we, nor future generations, ever forget. To refuse impunity for perpetrators anywhere. To stand against those who deny, distort, relativize, revise or otherwise whitewash their own complicities or that of their parents or grandparents with regards to the Holocaust.

And our responsibility to intensify our efforts in prevention — to discredit prejudice, to resolve conflicts and settle disputes before they erupt. Today and every day, let us recommit to stand against evil in all its forms and work for a world of peace, human rights and dignity for all.

To read the full transcript see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21668.doc.htm>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Holocaust Remembrance Day: Statement by the High Commissioner

Today, we remember and honour the victims of the Holocaust. The six million Jews. Roma and Sinti people. Slavs. People with disabilities. LGBTI people. Prisoners of war. And the members of anti-Nazi networks across Europe whose voices of resistance were forever silenced.

Auschwitz-Birkenau – where brutal and abhorrent crimes were committed – was liberated 78 years ago today.

It is an acutely painful day of remembrance as we recall the deep abyss of torment, heartache and human suffering.

This year, we reflect on the theme of ‘home and belonging’ - two notions of safety that were callously destroyed by the state-sponsored, widespread ideology of hatred, persecution and murder perpetrated by the Nazi Party and their collaborators.

Home and belonging forever transformed as millions faced deportation and incarceration.

Home and belonging gone as they were tortured and murdered.

But amidst the horrors, I am moved by the countless stories of resilience and courage.

From the victims who forged deep friendships with others in the concentration camps.

To the individuals who bravely risked their lives to share their homes and shelter people in hiding.

To the survivors of the Holocaust, who rediscovered beauty and meaning in life after enduring the worst of humanity. Who built families, careers and futures in the face of profound trauma. Who reestablished the sense of safety, home and belonging that had been ripped away from them.

Emerging from history’s darkest hours and healing from profound pain takes extraordinary strength. ...

The world said “never again.”

Yet anti-Semitism continues to escalate, with increasing attacks and violence against Jewish communities around the globe. Online and offline, hate speech is intensifying.

And the ongoing Holocaust denial and distortion of facts – the attempted rewriting of history - deeply undermines the suffering of generations.

I welcome the Holocaust denial [resolution](#) adopted last year by the UN General Assembly, a crucial milestone in the fight against anti-Semitism.

Now, as ever, we must also invest in education, the most important antidote to any form of intolerance and xenophobia. ...

We cannot erase the horrors of the Holocaust, but we must stand together against hate now and in the future.

We owe nothing less to the victims and the survivors.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/01/holocaust-remembrance-day-statement-high-commissioner>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Wera Hobhouse (Liberal Democrat) [126759] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made representations to the Israeli Government over settlement expansion and demolitions of Palestinian homes and other buildings.

David Rutley: The UK urges the Government of Israel to permanently end its settlement expansion and settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. Our opposition to the demolition of Palestinian property and the evictions of Palestinians from their homes is long-standing. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. The Minister for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon reinforced this message during a visit to a UK donor funded school facing demolition on 12 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-18/126759>

Palestinians: Human Rights

Wera Hobhouse (Liberal Democrat) [126760] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in Palestinian territory.

David Rutley: Human Rights is a crucial element underpinning the UK's foreign policy. This is why we regularly raise Human Rights issues with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, where they exist. We call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. The UK remains committed to a two-state solution, as the Minister for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, made clear during his visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 10-13 January. The UK's Permanent Representative to the UN, Dame Barbara Woodward, urged the parties to demonstrate, through their policies, a genuine commitment to peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians at a UNSC open debate on 17 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-18/126760>

The UNSC speech referred to above was made by Fergus Eckersley, and the debate in question took place on 18 January. The speech can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-uk-opposes-all-unilateral-actions-that-will-make-israeli-palestinian-peace-harder-to-achieve-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Religious Freedom

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL4594] To ask His Majesty's Government what representation they have made to the government of Israel to safeguard and protect religious minorities in that country following the desecration of graves at the Protestant Cemetery on Mount Zion, Jerusalem.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As a defender of freedom of religion or belief for all,

the UK urges respect for all burial and holy sites, which must be treated with dignity. The UK is committed to promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities and condemns all attacks on the right to freedom of religion or belief. Israel has made clear its commitment to freedom of religion and we are grateful for the Israeli authority's swift condemnation of these acts. As Minister for the Middle East, I reinforced this message during a visit to a UK donor funded school facing demolition on 12 January, in Masafer Yatta.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-09/hl4594>

Jerusalem: Religious Buildings

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL4764] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Jewish right to visit the Temple Mount (Haram al-Sharif) under the terms of the Status Quo arrangement.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK continues to be supportive of the Status Quo arrangements which enable all three Abrahamic faiths to worship in the Old City of Jerusalem. I reiterated this position during my recent visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and Consulate General in Jerusalem regularly raise issues of religious freedom with the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority. We continue to call on all sides to uphold the historic status quo at the Holy Sites.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-16/hl4764>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL4572] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported use of lethal force by Israeli forces in occupied territories to dispel civilian demonstrations.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK has repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding opposition about the manner in which the Israel Defence Forces use lethal force, particularly in the policing of non-violent protests and the border areas. We encourage them to carry out swift, transparent and thorough investigations and, if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. We will continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, as I made clear during my visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 10-13 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-09/hl4572>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

James Cleverly Appalling reports of a terror attack in Neve Yaakov this evening. To attack worshippers at a synagogue on Holocaust Memorial Day, and during Shabbat, is horrific. We stand with our Israeli friends.

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1619073333806632961>

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon Shocked by the terror attack in Neve Yaakov tonight. Such senseless violence against civilians, particularly on Holocaust Memorial Day & during Shabbat, is appalling. My thoughts & prayers are with the families of the victims & those injured. The UK condemns terror in all forms.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1619069200861122560>

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon Deeply concerned about events in Jenin today, including Palestinian fatalities. Israel has a right to self-defence but security operations must be in line with International Humanitarian law. I urge Israel to show restraint in use

of live fire & ensure medical access.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1618710372353208321>

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon Constructive meeting with Ambassador @TzipiHotovely. We discussed my visit to Israel/OPTs, joint priorities such as our FTA, & events in Jenin today. I reiterated the need for a peaceful resolution between Israelis and Palestinians & the UK's commitment to a two state solution.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1618712814906126336>

United Nations

Secretary-General, Condemning Terror Attack at Jerusalem Synagogue, Increasing Violence in Israel, Stresses 'This Is the Moment to Exercise Utmost Restraint'

... The Secretary-General strongly condemns today's terrorist attack by a Palestinian perpetrator outside a synagogue in Jerusalem, which claimed the lives of at least seven Israelis and injured several others.

The Secretary-General extends his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a prompt recovery to those injured.

It is particularly abhorrent that the attack occurred at a place of worship and on the very day we commemorated International Holocaust Remembrance Day. There is never any excuse for acts of terrorism. They must be clearly condemned and rejected by all.

The Secretary-General is deeply worried about the current escalation of violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This is the moment to exercise utmost restraint.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sqsm21761.doc.htm>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel/Palestine: UN experts condemn renewed violence and Israeli killings of Palestinians in occupied West Bank

... "We deplore the Israeli army's latest violent attack against the Jenin Refugee Camp, and the killing and wounding of Palestinians on Thursday. It shows a dangerous trajectory of violence in the occupied West Bank, continuing the alarming upward trend from 2022," the experts said.

"None of this violence would occur if Israel were to end its illegal, half-century old occupation immediately and unconditionally as required by international law," they said.

On the morning of 26 January, Israeli forces conducted a raid in the Jenin Refugee Camp in the north of the occupied West Bank. They fired live ammunition, killing at least nine Palestinians, including one elderly woman and two children. Over 20 people were reportedly injured and four of them remain in critical condition.

While circumstances of the raid and the number of persons killed and injured are still being verified, UN experts noted that this was the highest number of people killed in a single operation in the West Bank since 2005. So far this year, 28 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces and two more by settlers in the occupied West Bank. This brings the death toll to more than one Palestinian a day, the experts said.

"The international community cannot and should not tolerate what appears to reflect Israel's deliberate policy and practice of using lethal force without regard for limits set by international law," they said. ...

Jenin Refugee Camp, often portrayed by Israel as the hotbed of Palestinian resistance, has been subject to frequent incursions and raids by Israeli forces, resulting in arbitrary arrests, killings and collective punishment of many among its 14,000 residents. During the second intifada, Israeli forces killed at least 52 Palestinians, destroyed more than 400

homes and damaged hundreds more, rendering more than a quarter of the population homeless. The experts noted that none of this violence has been accounted for.

“We recall once again that Israel, as long as it remains the occupying Power, has an obligation to ensure the protection, security and welfare of the Palestinian people living under its occupation,” the experts said.

“What we see is the contrary. Dehumanisation, demonisation and collective punishment of Palestinians, the latter of which is specifically prohibited under international humanitarian law and constitutes a war crime,” they said.

“We urge the international community to react without delay and take action as recommended by international law including the UN Charter,” the UN experts said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/01/israelpalestine-un-experts-condemn-renewed-violence-and-israeli-killings>

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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>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Equality and Human Rights Commission Statutory Review (closing date 1 March 2023)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-statutory-review>

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