SCoJeC
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland

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Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Home Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answers

Business of the House

Bob Blackman (Conservative): … On Sunday 23 February … the renowned hate preacher Mohamed Hoblos is due to speak in this country. He has been banned in Germany and Holland. The shadow Home Secretary has written to the Home Secretary asking that he be banned from this country. Given that antisemitism is at its highest peak ever and that anti-Muslim hatred is at a peak, it is clear that the last thing we want is someone coming along stirring up racial and religious hatred. Will the Leader of the House use her good offices to encourage the Home Secretary to issue a banning order to prevent this man from coming to this country?

> **Lucy Powell:** … The hon. Member for Harrow East (Bob Blackman) raises a serious matter, as he often does, about how we tackle antisemitism and hate speech, and how we take action to ensure that those who are spreading hate and antisemitism are prevented from doing so. I shall certainly raise the matter with the Home Secretary and make sure that he gets a full response.

Dawn Butler (Labour): This week I was visited by some constituents as part of the Board of Deputies of British Jews parliamentary advocacy day. We talked about how great our local multi-faith forum is, and it was suggested that we should have a British-Jewish culture month to celebrate all the multicultural elements and diversity in the Jewish community. One constituent said to me, "You could have two Jewish people in the room and three different opinions." Would it not be wonderful if we could have that culture month, and could we perhaps spend some Government time discussing it?

> **Lucy Powell:** I am very pleased that my hon. Friend had such a good meeting with the Board of Deputies, and I thank her for all the work that she does—along with other Members on both sides of the House—to organise multi-faith gatherings and bring people together. She is right to refer to the fantastic contribution that the Jewish community have long made, and continue to make, at the heart of our country, and I am sure that others will support her call for a British-Jewish culture month.

To read the full transcript see

https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2025-02-13/debates/55FF4B68-08DC-42DB-8473-DD048EC88ABB/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-10C50383-677E-4D7F-9E1B-01DA122857AE

House of Commons Written Answers

Antisemitism

Kevin Hollinrake (Conservative) [28993] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether her Department plans to reconvene the cross-Government working group on tackling anti-Semitism.

Alex Norris: Announcements will be set out in the usual way.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-05/28993

Antisemitism

Kevin Hollinrake (Conservative) [28995] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which Department is responsible for policy on tackling antisemitism; and what role the Home Office plays on that issue.

Alex Norris: The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is responsible for addressing racial and religious hate crime, including antisemitism.

Tackling antisemitism in all parts of our society requires a cross-Government effort. The Home Office provide funding of £18 million per year for the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant which provides security measures for synagogues, Jewish educational establishments and community sites. The Department for Education is providing £7 million of funding to educate people about antisemitism and better equip schools, colleges and universities to stamp out antisemitic abuse.

The Government is absolutely committed to rooting out antisemitism wherever it manifests.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-05/28995

Information about the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, referred to above, can be read at
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/jewish-community-protective-security-grant

Islamophobia

James McMurdock (Reform UK) [28839] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 22 January 2025 to Question 23915 on Islamophobia, what her planned timetable is for providing further detail on the Government's approach to tackling Islamophobia.

Alex Norris: Ensuring that British Muslims are safe, and feel safe, and standing up to Islamophobia is a top priority for this Government. Careful thought and continued community engagement is required to achieve this.

We will set out further plans in due course.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-04/28839

The answer referred to above can be read at
https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-01-14/23915

Islamophobia

Phil Brickell (Labour) [29189] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to tackle Islamophobia.

Alex Norris: Islamophobia is completely abhorrent and has no place in our society. Rooting out this appalling form of hatred is a priority for this Government, and we have already taken a number of steps to achieve this.

The Government works closely with the police and community partners monitor and combat hate crime. This year, MHCLG has made over £1 million available to monitor incidents of Islamophobia and provide support to victims. We also fund True Vision, an online hate crime reporting portal designed so that victims of hate crime do not have to visit a police station to report.

In response to public disorder in August which targeted Muslims and mosques, the Government introduced a rapid protective security response process for places of worship. We have provided security to more than 700 additional places of worship during this period. Protective security continues to be a priority, with up to £29.4 million per year being made available for protective security at mosques and Muslim faith schools from 2024/25 to 2027/28.

We are finalising our renewed, more strategic approach to tackling Islamophobia, working in partnership with communities, and will provide further updates shortly.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-05/29189

The True Vision portal, referred to above, can be accessed at https://www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force

Information about the protective security response scheme referred to above can be read at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protective-security-for-mosques-scheme

Non-crime Hate Incidents

Peter Bedford (Conservative) [30028] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many non-hate crime incidents have been recorded in (a) the United Kingdom, (b) Leicestershire and (c) Mid Leicestershire constituency since 5 July 2004.

Diana Johnson: The Home Office does not currently centrally collate information on the number of non-crime hate incidents (NCHIs) recorded by individual police forces – this data is held by individual forces.

The Home Secretary has been clear that a consistent and common-sense approach must be taken with NCHIs. The Government has also been clear that its top priority for policing is delivering on the safer streets mission to rebuild neighbourhood policing, restore public confidence, and make progress on the ambition to halve knife crime and violence against women and girls.

The Home Office has agreed that the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), supported by the College of Policing, will conduct a review on the use and effectiveness of NCHIs, which is currently underway.

The Government welcomes this review and will work closely with the NPCC and the College as they develop their findings and any proposals on this issue.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-07/30028

TOP

Holocaust

House of Lords Debate

Holocaust Memorial Day

col 1372 … **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Lord Khan of Burnley):** …This year marks the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. … while we rightly remember that 6 million Jews were murdered during the Holocaust, we often miss that 1.5 million were Jewish children.

col 1373 The history of the Holocaust provides lessons for the whole world. It shows us

what can happen when hatred takes over a society, when barriers are created and fellow humans are treated as something different—something to be despised.

Nazi ideology can be hard to comprehend. It was ruthless and fearsome. … Nazi Germany and its collaborators murdered not only 1.5 million Jewish children but tens of thousands of Romani Gypsy children, 5,000 to 7,000 German children with physical and mental disabilities living in institutions, as well as many Polish children and children residing in the German-occupied Soviet Union. …

People over 50 years of age, pregnant women and young children were immediately sent to gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau and other killing centres. Until mid-1943, all children born in Auschwitz, regardless of origins, were murdered, usually by phenol injection or drowning. Later, non-Jewish newborns were allowed to live. They were entered in the camp records as new arrivals and tattooed with a prisoner number.

Due to woeful conditions in the camp, few lived long. Children born to Jewish mothers were routinely murdered. Thousands of Jewish children survived this brutal carnage, many because they were hidden. With identities disguised, and often physically concealed from the outside world, these youngsters faced constant fear, dilemmas and danger. Theirs was a life in shadows, where a careless remark, a denunciation or the murmurings of inquisitive neighbours could lead to discovery and death.

Of course, none of these stories could be preserved without the men and women with the courage to tell them—women such as the remarkable Lily Ebert MBE, who died at home in London in October last year, aged 100. Her life after Auschwitz showed that, even in the face of unspeakable evil, the human spirit can triumph.

Ann Kirk BEM died earlier this year, at the age of 96. She arrived alone in London aged 10 on the Kindertransport. She dedicated her life to raising awareness about the horrors of Nazism. Anne was married to Bob Kirk BEM, who also came to the UK on the Kindertransport and died late last year, aged 99. …

col 1374 It was not until 1992 that they told their sons about their background, after being invited to speak at an event commemorating Kristallnacht at Northwood synagogue. It was during the couple's speech that their children discovered the truth of their upbringing. …

I want also to take a moment to debunk the idea that we did not know what was happening. From 1942 onwards, reports of the mass murder of Jews in continental Europe began to reach Britain. As the tide of the war turned against Germany and its allies, the British Jewish community started to plan for post-war relief work. Jewish aid workers began, after the liberation, to report that some children had survived the Nazi concentration camps.

In May 1945, Leonard Montefiore, a well-known philanthropist, travelled to Paris to meet with the heads of Jewish organisations. Before returning home, he wrote to Anthony de Rothschild, chairman of the Central British Fund—now World Jewish Relief—outlining a scheme to bring "a few hundred children from Bergen-Belsen or Buchenwald" to Britain. …

The British Government approved his proposal and granted permission for 1,000 child survivors to be brought to the UK. …

That said, the offer of help from the British Government was not without conditions. The children had to be aged 16 years or under and would be granted permission to stay in the UK for only two years. They were not to cost the taxpayer a penny and the Central British Fund was to be financially responsible for the entire cost of looking after them. …

In the end, just over 700 children came to Britain. They were known as the boys, even though there were girls too, and they arrived in five groups. …

col 1375 Their story is less well known than that of the Kindertransport, through which 10,000 Jewish children were saved in the aftermath of Kristallnacht in 1938. The boys set up the '45 Aid Society in 1963. They wanted to say thank you and to give back to the society that had welcomed them. …

I want to … say a special word to the survivors. Every day that you have lived, and every child and grandchild that your families have brought into this world, have served as the ultimate rebuke to evil and the ultimate expression of love and hope. …

The individuals who are the victims of such unspeakable cruelty make a claim on our conscience. They demand our attention: that we do not turn away; that we choose empathy over indifference; and that our empathy leads to action. That includes confronting the rising tide of anti-Semitism around the world. We have seen attacks on Jews in our streets and in the streets of major western cities. We have seen public places disfigured by swastikas. Some foreign Governments continue to rinse their history, and some are not willing to recognise that the Nazis could not have done this alone; they needed willing partners. It is up to each of us, every one of us, to forcefully condemn any denial of the Holocaust. It is up to us to combat not only anti-Semitism but racism, bigotry and intolerance in all their forms, here and around the world. We cannot eliminate evil from every heart or hatred from every mind. What we can and must do is make sure that our children and their children learn their history so that they might not repeat it. We can teach our children to speak out against a casual slur. We can teach them that there is no "them", there is only "us". …

col 1376 IHRA is important because it holds each and every one of us to account. … Year on year, we see countries rinse their history and rehabilitate people. Well-known anti-Semites morph into nationalists or become heroes in the fight against communism. It was only in 1995 that the French Government accepted responsibility for the deportations and deaths of over 70,000 Jews and Austria finally dispelled the myth of being Hitler's first victim and made amends to Austrian Nazi victims.

In the United Kingdom and the United States, we need to come to terms with the fact that we did not open our borders and accept Jews fleeing the Nazis. … In the case of the UK, we accepted children but not their parents. Most of the children never saw their parents again.

The work of the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Association of Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to ensure that we never forget is more important than ever, especially as the number of Holocaust survivors is dwindling. Each and every one of us who has had the privilege of hearing first-hand testimony has a duty to keep their memory alive.

That is why we remain determined to create the UK national Holocaust memorial and learning centre in Victoria Tower Gardens—a place where we can learn about the Holocaust, a place which will ensure that we never forget where hatred can lead. …

It has been 80 years since the Soviet Army liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Americans liberated Buchenwald and the British liberated Bergen-Belsen. We owe it to those who were murdered, those who survived and those who liberated the camps to never forget and to ensure that every generation knows where hatred and indifference can lead. …

As a man of faith and as the Faith Minister, I think it is only fitting that I end with the following words penned by the late Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks—may his memory be a blessing:

"We know that whilst we do not have the ability to change the past, we can change the future. We know that whilst we cannot bring the dead back to life, we can ensure their memories live on and that their deaths were not in vain". …

col 1377 **Baroness Scott of Bybrook (Conservative):** … It is on Holocaust Memorial Day that we remember the unique evil of the Holocaust: the killing of Jews because they were Jews, as part of the Nazis' plan to wipe out the entire Jewish people. The history of the Holocaust is a bitter truth, and we must never shy away from repeating that truth. …

Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen were just two of over 1,000 concentration camps operated by the Nazi regime for the mass persecution and murder of Jews and its other victims. Eighty years ago today, on 13 February 1945, Soviet forces liberated Gross-Rosen concentration camp. By 1945, there were no Jews left at Gross-Rosen because, on 2 December 1941, the head of the camp, Anton Thumann, gave the order that "no Jew is to remain alive by Christmas".

On 12 October 1942, the last 37 living Jewish prisoners were sent to Auschwitz.

Isaak Egon Ochshorn, a Jew who was in Gross-Rosen from June 1941 to October 1942,

before being transferred to Auschwitz, gave evidence after the liberation of the camps that showed the appalling treatment of Jews at Gross-Rosen. He said: “The sport of Commandant [Thumann], favoured in winter, was to have many Jews daily thrown alive into a pit and to have them covered with snow until they were suffocated”.

We must never forget. …

Holocaust Memorial Day was intended to be a reminder of the suffering of the Jewish people in the past, but we sadly know that Jewish people are still not free from persecution. As we heard from the Minister, since 2023 we have seen a shocking rise in anti-Jewish racism on our streets, online, and in our schools. In 2024, the Community Security Trust recorded 3,528 anti-Semitic incidents in the United Kingdom, the second-highest total ever reported to the CST in a single year, second only to the 4,296 recorded in 2023.

col 1378 Anti-Semitism in this country is growing, and it is shaming that the spike in anti-Semitism we have seen over the past year has directly followed the worst massacre of Jews since the fall of the Nazi regime. …

The deaths of the 1,200 people who were murdered in the 7 October pogrom, as well as the ongoing suffering of the hostages and their loved ones, remind us that the work of organisations such as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Holocaust Educational Trust has never been more important. …

… we must not merely ensure that the Holocaust is never forgotten; we must remember, actively reflect on and learn about the unique suffering of the Jewish people in the Holocaust. We must teach it to our children and remind our neighbours of the insidious threat of anti-Semitism. We must never forget—and we must hold to the promise, “Never again”. Only by keeping our covenant to remember may we hope to end anti-Semitism for good. …

Baroness Deech (Crossbench): … For some of us, every day is Holocaust Remembrance Day. My earliest memories are of my mother weeping over my bedside because of her inability to get her mother out of Poland and into this country. She blamed herself for her mother’s death.

On my father’s side, he lost his mother and two siblings. His tiny ancestral village on the border of Poland and Ukraine lay during the war in the path of the Russians coming one way and the Germans coming the other. When the Germans arrived, they summoned all the Jewish women to the village square with their valuables. Next door to my family lived a Polish painter, Eugeniusz Waniek, who subsequently went to Kraków and became very well known.

col 1379 On her way to the square, my aunt Helena rushed next door to him and thrust a set of silver cutlery wrapped in a linen cloth into his hands. “Keep this”, she said, “until we get back”, which, of course, she and her children never did. He did a brave thing, which would have cost him his life had it been discovered: he hid the silver in the cloth in a box in his garden. At the end of the war, he took it with him to Kraków. There was no internet then and he never knew what had become of my family.

I happened to speak about my origins to Norman Davies, the distinguished historian of Poland. In 2008, he wrote in a Kraków newspaper about my trip to the family village. Waniek, the painter, by then 102, was read this by his carer. He declared that he had something for me and, to cut a long story short, I returned to his flat in Kraków, where, in the presence of the media and after a glass of schnapps and some reminiscences, he presented me with the cutlery in the same linen cloth. They are the only artefacts I have that were touched by my lost family. What a tribute it is to the bravery endemic in such small acts in those terrible times. He died three months later.

So it is with some pain that I wonder what Britain’s politicians and leaders mean when they support Holocaust remembrance. What do they mean by remembering it and by “never again”? What I see is ignorance of the history of anti-Semitism and the mistaken framework that treats the Holocaust as consigned to the Nazi past, not the preceding 2,000 years and today. Perhaps with good intentions, the Holocaust has been globalised. That makes it

seem as though Jews were just one of many casualties—and it is therefore exceptional to focus on them or on anti-Semitism—and that the notion of genocide can be spread far, wide and thin.

Jewish scholars will tell you that to assemble the Holocaust with other genocides reduces its meaning to that vague word: hatred. It dilutes and avoids the centrality of anti-Semitism. Restricting the Holocaust to the Jewish tragedy—as it should be—does not mean that the loss of Jewish lives is worth any more than any others. But the record in recent years shows a marked reluctance to acknowledge the specificity of Jewish suffering. The Holocaust is entirely different from the other genocides we remember—in history, continuation, manner of execution, worldwide extent, collaboration and result. The Government, by going along with the structure that the Jewish Shoah should not be commemorated on its own, but always in tandem with other Nazi-targeted groups and more recent genocides, have opened the door to generalising the Holocaust. This enables the Jews to be forgotten and not mentioned by "Good Morning Britain" or Angela Rayner when marking Holocaust Remembrance Day. Sadly, it leads on to comparisons between the Holocaust and the Gaza war, most shockingly by the Irish President.

col 1380 For half a century, it has been assumed, without evidence, that learning about the Holocaust prevents lapses into anti-Semitism—but it does not. That is in part because the Holocaust has been detached from the rest of Jewish history and because it has been used as a lesson in morality and democracy. It is easy enough to portray the Nazis as evil and the Jews as innocent victims. The lessons go on to indicate that it was not this generation that committed those crimes and that we are not bystanders. That must not be allowed to become an absolution. It should not be allowed to place anti-Semitism firmly in the past … There is too much politicisation, de-judaisation and universalisation demonstrated at Holocaust remembrance ceremonies. …

If Israel had existed in 1938, rather than 1948, and had been able to take in refugees rather than being blocked by the British, how many thousands or millions of lives might have been saved? In the 1940s it was able to take in the Jews thrown out of other Middle Eastern states whose persecution we should also remember.

In 2023, we saw the new Holocaust threats from the invaders into Israel from Gaza, and their desire to repeat it. This Government are rightly keen on Holocaust remembrance, but they should accept that they have a special responsibility for the protection, safety and understanding of the State of Israel. …

The Lord Bishop of Lichfield: … as each year goes by, the number of living people who have their own personal accounts of surviving the Holocaust diminishes. It is the responsibility of us all to ensure that their lives do not simply become statistics in a history book but that they are remembered as people, each with their own stories and experiences.

col 1381 In that regard, I commend to your Lordships the Forever Project, an interactive experience that I visited at the Beth Shalom National Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire. This project gives people the opportunity to hear from and to have a question and answer session with a hologram of a Holocaust survivor. Through the use of AI and voice recognition, it is an innovative way to preserve their memories and to enable future generations to learn about their experiences. …

It is a matter of fact and a matter of shame that, through a distortion of Christian theology, the Church in almost all its branches has historically contributed to the immense suffering and injustice experienced by Jewish people over the ages. It follows that the Church must have a vital role and duty, in partnership with others, in actively standing against anti-Semitism. …

One persuasive analogy of anti-Semitism is that of a virus which mutates over time and reinfects society in different forms. The most recent statistics published by the Community Security Trust … underline the dimensions of the resurgence of anti-Semitism in our own time, in our own country. The use of social media has only fuelled this, exposing more

people to hateful content and enabling anti-Semitism to spread further and faster.

This is preventable. We can choose to shape a better future, built on our shared humanity and on strengthening the fabric of our communities through mutual understanding and trust. We cannot afford to be complacent bystanders. We must actively challenge anti-Semitism and all discrimination wherever we see it, to seek understanding rather than fearing those who are different from us. We must personally question the small remarks, whether they be so-called jokes or throwaway comments, which can appear insignificant but can so easily build to destructive hate on a greater scale. …

col 1382 **Lord Katz (Labour):** … Research from the Claims Conference published last month found that 52% of those surveyed in the UK did not know that 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. Nearly a third could not name any of the camps or ghettos established in World War II. Those figures underscore the scale of the challenge, in the face of social media misinformation which seeks to downplay, distort and even deny the reality of the Holocaust, one of the most documented events in world history. Our truth is indeed under attack. This is our responsibility too. Debate is coarsened and conspiracies fed when senior politicians compare their opponents with Nazi collaborators or doubt their loyalty to this country. …

col 1383 Sadly, the tolerance and generosity of this nation, which helped so many immigrants to settle and thrive, was not to be found for Jewish people in the Labour Party between 2015 and 2019. As chair of the Jewish Labour Movement, a socialist society affiliated to the Labour Party since 1920, I and my colleagues found ourselves defending our members, who faced the vile toxin of left anti-Semitism, which had been allowed to enter, and fester in, the party's bloodstream. Inaction and passivity from the then party leader sent a clear signal that this discrimination was tolerated. …

col 1384 The impact on the wider Jewish community in this country was even greater, considering that at the height of the Labour Party's membership then, it had a membership of well over 400,000 and there are but 300,000 Jews in this country. I will never forget tear-streaked conversations with people in Hendon and Mill Hill—lifelong Jewish Labour voters telling me they simply could not trust the party, our party, any more. …

Anti-Semitism, to paraphrase Conor Cruise O'Brien, is the lightest of sleepers. Any excuse will stir it to life. On our campuses, on our streets, around our homes, our synagogues and our schools, the levels of anxiety and fear that British Jews feel is palpable—the worst I have seen in my lifetime. The Prime Minister has been clear that this spike in anti-Jewish hate is intolerable, just as he has been clear that the remaining hostages taken by Hamas on that fateful day and being held in Gaza still must all be brought home now.

It surely cannot be difficult for us all to grasp that we must not blame British Jews for the actions of the Israeli Government, just as we do not blame British Muslims for the actions of Hamas. From this basic proposition, surely all else must follow. …

col 1385 **Lord Dubs (Labour):** … There are not many of us left … who came to this country on the Kindertransport, and even fewer, sadly, who survived the horrors of the camps. …

On the words "never again", what happened in Israel on 7 October was an appalling tragedy, and with some of the events in Gaza, Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur and Syria—and what has happened to the Yazidis—I am afraid it seems that we as a world are not learning what we should.

col 1386 I shall refer again to Nikky Winton, who organised the Kindertransport that brought me to this country. … He was a marvellous example of a human being who devoted himself to helping other people. He got to Prague in 1938-39, he saw what was happening and, unlike other people who say, "This is awful" and walk away, he said, "This is awful. I'm going to do something about it" …

Some time ago, I was invited to a school in east London. It was a maintained school, but it was all Muslim boys. The project they were working on was Kindertransport and the Holocaust. I did my little piece about refugees and the Holocaust. The first question in the Q&A came from a 14 or 15 year-old boy, who said, "What do I say to somebody who denies

the Holocaust ever happened?" That was such a powerful question. It was a sign that the school was doing a good job and the message was getting home. This was a statement he wanted to be able to repudiate if somebody mentioned it to him elsewhere. Whenever I have spoken to schools about these issues, they really get it. They understand what is going on …

col 1387 If anything is going to come out of the tragedy of the Holocaust, it is the next generation who will carry this forward when those of us who were closer to it are no longer here. That is why I was so shocked when Elon Musk was photographed doing a Hitler salute. Maybe he did not mean it; maybe he did not understand, but it is quite shocking when these sorts of things happen.

I sometimes wonder whether decency and the values we uphold are a thin veneer and these things can even be swept aside. I remember reading some years ago about a German soldier who was working, I think, in Auschwitz and who wrote to his wife back in Germany saying, "Make sure the children clean their teeth". What a contrast between somebody who was murdering Jews—gassing them, day in and day out—and yet was worried about whether his children were cleaning their teeth. I find that difficult to understand. …

col 1388 **Baroness Ludford (Liberal Democrat):** … I recognise the special pain for the Jewish community, but as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust said: "The Holocaust threatened the fabric of civilisation … prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by us all. Holocaust Memorial Day is for everyone". …

This was a seam emphasised by His Majesty the King, who said: "As the number of Holocaust survivors regrettably diminishes with the passage of time, the responsibility of remembrance rests far heavier on our shoulders, and on those of generations yet unborn. The act of remembering the evils of the past remains a vital task and in so doing, we inform our present and shape our future". …

I was struck by a comment by the Prime Minister about how in Auschwitz he saw, "photographs of Nazi guards standing with Jewish prisoners staring at the camera – completely indifferent – and in one case, even smiling".

The Prime Minister said: "It showed more powerfully than ever how the Holocaust was a collective endeavour by thousands of ordinary individuals utterly consumed by the hatred of difference".

The Holocaust was not only a crime wider than the SS; it also did not come out of nowhere. Preceding it there were years, centuries and millennia of discrimination and persecution of Jews, both as groups and as individuals. As my colleague, Vikki Slade, said, before the Holocaust there was, "a decade of dehumanising a whole community".—[*Official Report*, Commons, 23/1/25; col. 1163.]

col 1389 Dehumanisation of people—which has been called the fourth stage of genocide—is the key to enabling not only persecution but extermination. …

Within weeks of the appalling attacks by Hamas on 7 October, graffiti was daubed on the Wiener Holocaust Library. The noble Lord, Lord Finkelstein—still, like me, tweeting—understandably reacted, tweeting as @Dannythefink: "I'm so upset by this graffiti attack on my grandfather's library. Alfred Wiener had a PhD in Islamic studies and cared deeply about Arab people. To see his Holocaust archive vandalised in this way suggests an attack on Jews not a critique of Israel. It's dismaying".

I will finish, as I must, by saying that since 7 October we have seen a distressing rise in anti-Semitic speech and attacks, with hostility to the very existence of the State of Israel. When people chant, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free", this is a call not for two states but for the destruction of Israel, based on not only anti-Zionism but anti-Semitism. We have pledged "Never again", but political developments around the world, not least in Germany, are deeply troubling. Our vigilance must be constant, vocal and vigorous.

col 1390 **Lord Pickles (Conservative):** … A couple of weeks ago, I stood close to the

railway arch at Auschwitz-Birkenau, close to where, over 80 years ago, my friend Ivor Perl last talked to his mother. On the separation ramp, he jumped lines to join her and his little sister, saying, “I want to be with you, mum”. She replied calmly, “No, Ivor, go and be in the other line with your brother”. He obeyed. They would never see each other again. By the time he was allotted a hut, both mother and daughter were dead and cremated, their ashes cooling. Ivor remembered that it was a beautiful warm spring day. …

Within a few short years, Holocaust survivors will move from contemporary memory into history books. How we deal with the loss of witnesses has been vigorously debated for the last few decades. When I took up the role of special envoy 10 years ago, the feeling among some was that empathy was the key, and that everything would fall into place naturally. I had my doubts. Unsupported empathy is fragile and fickle. If there is any doubt about that, consider the indifference the world has shown to the Israeli hostages. Consider the reaction by humanitarian agencies to the three emaciated men who were released—one of whom was hoping to be reunited with a family long dead. Not a single word of comfort came from any of the self-described humanitarian agencies. …

… the IHRA has adopted the safeguarding sites charter, which sets out guidelines for the preservation of murder and detention sites. The UK played a pivotal role in drafting the charter. Across the killing grounds of the Holocaust, sites are deteriorating with the passage of time, neglect and wilful destruction. The charter lays down a set of advice aimed at preserving the sites with dignity.

col 1391 Complementary to the charter are reminders through people, buildings and places. Our presidency is keen to engage young people, and we did this through the remarkably successful “My Hometown” project. The project invited schools across IHRA member countries to look at what happened in their hometown during the Holocaust. Schools in former occupied countries and those receiving victims of Nazis and their collaborators produced original and moving projects. …

On archives, the presidency has worked with the Association of Jewish Refugees on our legacy project, the Holocaust Testimony portal, which pulls together for the first time testimony from UK Holocaust survivors and refugees who made their home here. This includes testimony from the AJR’s Refugee Voices initiative, the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, the Shoah Foundation and many more archives. …

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the camps, the IHRA broadcast over social media “80 Objects/80 Lives”, a digital project of one-minute clips which features 80 objects from filmed testimony of British Holocaust survivors and refugees. The objects represent the personal histories and experiences of Jewish Holocaust survivors, during and at the end of the Second World War. Such objects as teddy bears, a doll, a watch or a spoon take on special meaning. A passport with the letter “J”, a yellow star and a bowl from Bergen-Belsen are bittersweet reminders of a lost world. I thank the Association of Jewish Refugees for its creative help with the 80 objects. …

col 1394 **Baroness Levitt (Labour):** … why make my maiden speech as part of the Holocaust Memorial Day debate? I said a few moments ago that I would come back to my other supporter: my noble kinsman Lord Carlile of Berriew. He and I, as some noble Lords will know, have been married for nearly 20 years. Some of you may have assumed that, because of my family’s surname, I am Jewish, but in fact I am not. He is—at least, his family were. My husband’s parents were both Holocaust victims and survivors: his father’s entire family—first wife, parents, sister, niece—were murdered in Poland by the Nazis. … My husband’s mother and her family survived in Poland between 1939 and 1945 by ducking and diving and assuming non-Jewish noms de guerre. For our family, this is the most terrible, up close and personal reminder of what happens when a society forgets why the rule of law matters. …

This is not my story to tell, it is my husband’s, but there is one reason why I wanted to speak of it today. His grandparents, who survived the Nazis but were then trapped in Poland by the Soviet regime, had got through the war by selling a few diamonds, which

was all they had managed to salvage of their earlier comfortable life. After the war, they came across a remaining diamond ring, which they then smuggled out of Poland by baking it into a cake and sending it to my mother-in-law, who by now was living in Burnley, Lancashire. This bit of the story my husband cannot illustrate, but I can. This is the ring. I wear it every Holocaust Memorial Day, and I am wearing it today because it conveys this simple message: they survived. They are still standing, right here in the UK House of Lords. So, I too say: never forget; never again.

col 1395 **Lord Carlile of Berriew (Crossbench):** … the Shoah, the Holocaust, was the event of the most unnatural scale and horror in the history of humanity. It brought the end of six million lives, some my own close relatives: people who had no interest in politics, no interest in government, no interest in how their country, Poland, was ruled.

I was denied meeting one pair of grandparents because they were murdered. My half-sister's mother died in Auschwitz, after spending three years there. On her death certificate it says typhoid, but we know that she became ill and was shot against a pole outside a shed in Auschwitz. …

In my view, what happened to those people has left an indelible mark on the living. I want to talk a little—nobody has yet—about what is generally referred to as survivor's guilt. …

I do not know how many of your Lordships have seen the remarkable BBC series, "The Last Musician of Auschwitz". It is required viewing. It tells the story of brilliant musicians, among the best in the world, who faced the moral dilemma of whether they should play music while others in the camps were marching to their deaths as slave labourers. What happened is that survival won the debate, and that is what survivor's guilt is about: survival often wins the debate and they were right to do what they did, but it did not go away after they had done it.

col 1396 I have seen it at close quarters. All my father's family died of murder, except my beloved sister …

Until I was 10 years old, I knew nothing about that background. My parents converted to Christianity while my father was a general practitioner in Burnley. My mother walked into Manchester Cathedral and demanded to see the bishop, and that is how that happened. …

Another example from my family is my cousin, Willy Verkauf. He left Poland when he was 17, just before the war. He went to Israel, came to Europe and became an art dealer in Basel. How did he express his survivor's guilt? He discovered a painter called André Verlon, who you will see referred to in books about paintings of the Holocaust. André Verlon became a reputed Holocaust painter and artist. The survivor's guilt is that André Verlon and my cousin Willy Verkauf were the same person: he invented an alter ego through which he could express his earlier experiences and the loss of his family in the Holocaust. …

Then there is my cousin Ewa …

Ewa told me that she was in a concentration camp with her mother and her baby. The baby died and she helped her mother to commit suicide. One day, she was sitting in a room with a number of women in the concentration camp and a Nazi guard came in. He took a 13 year-old girl by the hair and dragged her out of the room. A few minutes later, the girl returned, weeping, saying, "He raped me, he raped me". A few minutes later still, the guard came back into the room, stood the girl up against the wall in front of all the other women in the room and shot her dead in the back of the head. …

col 1397 The importance of memorialising the Holocaust is that we must make sure that the rest of society lives with these experiences. …

My real point is that Holocaust Memorial Day is not merely a day in which we remember, but it is very much part of the present. We who carry the sort of history that I have appreciate the huge public support that comes through Holocaust Memorial Day. The day stands as a memorial and a reckoning for all of us who celebrate the innocence of our grandparents and other close relatives and commemorate their death. It is also for those of us who suffer the benefit of survival, as my parents and my cousins did and as I do to a

lesser extent in coming to terms with the past, of which I knew nothing until I was 10 years old. …

Lord Weir of Ballyholme (DUP): … The Nazis inflicted great atrocities across a wide range of communities, many of which have already been mentioned today. It is right that we acknowledge and remember all of those. Evil is evil, but it is particularly true that the Holocaust, the infliction of an attempt to wipe out the entire Jewish community off the face of the earth, stands alone as the greatest act of evil in the history of mankind. The murder of 6 million Jews—it is Jews, not just people—is something that we must commemorate at all costs.

When we mention the 6 million people, it is sometimes difficult for us all to get our heads around what that means in practice. Stalin once said that the death of a single person is a tragedy; the death of 1 million people is a statistic. We cannot afford the deaths of the 6 million Jewish people in the Holocaust simply to become a statistic.

col 1398 First, it is clear that humanity has not learned the lessons of the atrocities of the Holocaust. Since 1945, a range of genocides—a word that is sometimes overused and perhaps wrongly used—have clearly been inflicted throughout the world, from Cambodia to Rwanda, and from Darfur to Bosnia. Therefore, ensuring that we learn the lessons of history is critical to ensure that it does not repeat itself.

Secondly, and even within this country itself, it is clear that anti-Semitism did not simply begin with the Holocaust—and, even more sadly, that it did not end with the Holocaust. The last 18 months in particular have seen a heightening of anti-Semitic behaviour across the United Kingdom. We have seen it in our streets, in our schools and across our community as a whole, with the terrible statistic that 2024 had the second-highest number of anti-Semitic attacks in recorded history.

I was struck by a speech that the noble Lord, Lord Wolfson, gave in this House some time ago. He contrasted his greater concern for his young daughter, who lived in London, whenever she would go into the city on a Friday or Saturday night to socialise, with that for his son, who served with the Israel Defense Forces. That, for many Jewish people, is an all too commonplace experience in our society. The poison and cancer of anti-Semitism is still with us, which is why we need to ensure that we constantly confront it and do everything in our power to eradicate it.

Thirdly, we need to understand and know the Holocaust to ensure that we learn the lessons from it and are vigilant to make sure that it does not happen again. There is a dangerous and historically mistaken belief that the Holocaust was a one-off terror perpetrated by a few evil fanatics at the top of the Nazi regime. Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth. The Holocaust was the most extreme example, but it was built upon centuries of anti-Semitism across Europe. While we think of it as a terror, what is perhaps most chilling about the Holocaust were the efforts made by the Nazi regime to make everything appear as ordinary and normal as possible. That was done for the purposes of trying to make sure that the Jewish victims of the Holocaust went to their death as compliantly as possible. To the extent to which the fictions were created of, for example, the showers in the concentration camps, they were not purely built on terror but on trying to create a sense of ordinariness and a belief that nothing unusual was happening.

Fourthly, it was not just the actions of a handful of people; the Holocaust was brought about by both the active participation, and often the acquiescence, of tens of thousands, if not millions, of people who helped facilitate it. They were people who, in other walks of life, we would simply regard as being ordinary and unremarkable. …

col 1399 While acknowledging the evils perpetrated by so many during the Holocaust, it is also appropriate that we acknowledge the bravery and dedication of many other people in Europe during that decade or so. Many people acted with bravery and risked their own lives in sheltering and protecting members of the Jewish community and others, often directly at the expense of their lives. …

col 1400 **Lord Evans of Sealand (Labour):** … Hatred in politics was alive and well when

I was cutting my political teeth in the 1980s, with the National Front on the rise. In 1988, I visited the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where many of the mechanics of the Holocaust were developed before implementation in the larger camps. It was a profound experience which lives with me today: the mundane, everyday things in the well-preserved huts; living quarters, not statistics.

Those who perpetrated the atrocities were people as well. As Steven Pinker has said: "We have to be prepared … to see that evildoers always think they are acting morally".

col 1401 Yesterday, in advance of going on a delegation to Israel next week, I witnessed raw footage collected by the IDF of the 7 October atrocities, which are still happening today. Were they monsters? Maybe, but they were also people like us, which is difficult for us to concede. Despite technological, economic and social advances, we are still constantly rocked and astonished as atrocities are committed today. It is too easy to demonise perpetrators as simply evil. …

col 1402 David Baddiel has said that anti-Semitism is unique in its ability to shapeshift. It exists in both the far right and the far left, in conspiracies, in populism and even among those who claim to fight racism. No party represented here is immune. I am proud to be a Member of your Lordships' House, but we need to do more. We are the doorkeepers of our democracy. If we allow democracy to fray and decay—and it is doing exactly that—on our watch, we could open the door again to the kinds of atrocities we are marking today. We must simply never let it happen.

col 1403 **Baroness Eaton (Conservative):** … Eighty years ago, the world bore witness to the liberation of Auschwitz—a name etched in infamy for its wickedness, a place where a million souls perished. But we must be clear: Auschwitz was not an anomaly, nor was it the whole story. It was but one in a network of extermination camps which sought to systematically eradicate 6 million Jews in Europe. We must resist the temptation to speak of the Holocaust as a horrific event that took place during the Second World War. To do so would be to diminish the full scale of atrocity which spanned nations, years, and generations of suffering.

col 1404 Although today is a day of reflection, it must also be a day of reckoning, because the hard truth is this: anti-Semitism did not die with the fall of the Third Reich. It was not buried in the rubble of Berlin, nor was it erased by the words "never again". It persists, it is alive, and it is growing. We have all heard that the Community Security Trust documented the highest number of anti-Semitic incidents in a six-month period. It is no wonder that the CST also uncovered that merely one-third of British Jews believe they have a future in this country and that a staggering 50% have considered leaving altogether. …

We rightly place great importance on the memorialisation of the Holocaust. It is an opportunity to educate, to remember, and to honour those whose lives were stolen, but remembrance alone is not enough if it comes at the expense of acting against contemporary anti-Semitism. What is the point of solemn words and candlelit vigils if we fail to confront the anti-Semitism of today? …

Let us be honest: the pervasive nature of this problem indicates that we are beyond easy solutions. It cannot be resolved overnight, but that must not deter us. We need a patient, sustained effort—an approach that acknowledges the scale of the issue while refusing to accept it as inevitable. We have skirted around this subject for too long; it is time to take it seriously and, as we do so, we must ensure that Holocaust Memorial Day remains firmly rooted in the historic reality of what happened. We remember all victims of hatred, but let us not shy away from the fact that the Holocaust was first and foremost the attempted extermination of the Jewish people. This is not a mere historical detail; it is the very essence of why this day exists. To obscure or generalise this fact is not only a disservice to the past but a dangerous mistake for the future. …

col 1405 **Lord Parekh (Labour):** … I want to share a few thoughts on … the Holocaust memorial. However, before we talk about it, we need to ask: why do we want to remember the Holocaust? What do we wish to remember? What is our assessment of it? …

Is the Holocaust in some sense unique in human history, or have there not been cases of collective killings and mass suffering? The first thing therefore to ask is: what is the specificity, the uniqueness, of the Holocaust? I suggest that it is not merely a question of a large number of people being killed—6 million, 4 million or whatever. What is unique about it are the following four things, and never before or after have these four things come together in the way that they did in the 1940s. First, the Holocaust was articulated through the agency of the state. It was not a question of people going berserk and killing each other, or ethnic tribes springing upon each other; it worked through the state, systematically aiming at particular groups and wanting to eliminate them.

Secondly, the state did it because it was guided by a particular ideology, the ideology of racism—the Aryan race, the pure race, the white race. There are different races, and particular races must be eliminated. Thirdly, race acts as a navigator. It helps you to identify groups that you should get rid of. Fourthly, when you do get rid of them, theirs is not an ordinary death. It is a death that is bureaucratised and treated simply as an impersonal event in the life of the state.

Given those four elements—using the state and mobilising its resources, being based on a particular ideology, using that ideology to identify particular groups and then mobilising the state to kill people whom you have identified as undesirable—the question is often asked in many circles: why are you taking the Holocaust as in some sense unique? Why not see it as simply representative of other kinds of suffering? Slavery, for example, has been a long-lasting feature of human life. Why do we not memorialise slavery? Likewise indentured labour or, if we are considering genocide cases, there have been other genocides in history. Why are we concentrating on the Holocaust?

I think I have already answered that question, but I suggest that the kind of suffering involved in the Holocaust was unique for the following reasons. In the case of slavery, there is human contact; the state is not involved. Death comes rarely and when it does it is generally incidental and not planned. There is a human relationship between the slave owner and the slave. A kind of humanity is there in almost all forms of suffering, except when you come to the Holocaust, where humanity disappears and the individual is not just dehumanised; he is “inhumanised”. The language used is the language relevant to animals—cockroaches, worms and so on. In no accounts of suffering of any kind that I have read or heard about have I seen human beings referred to in that inhuman way. This phenomenon of “inhumanisation” is very peculiar to the Holocaust.

col 1406 If that is so—and I hope this is so—the questions that we have asked about other forms of suffering, and the lessons we have learned, cannot be applied to the Holocaust. For example, in the common attempt to understand why the Holocaust occurred, people say, “Well, the Nazis hated Jews”. It is not as simple as that because there were Nazis who did not hate Jews; they had Jews as friends or as mistresses. Others have said that they did not just hate Jews; they hated human beings as a whole and were misanthropes. That is not true either, because they had good friends. Or it is said that they were evil, wicked persons. That is not quite right either because the “evil” they display is shallow and superficial. It is not born out of the deep layers of the human soul.

That leaves us puzzled. How do we explain the behaviour of a man who has dogs, loves animals, has friends and a mother and a father going to the concentration camp and knocking off a few people and returning home as if nothing has happened? It is this that needs to be understood. In order to be understood, it is this that needs to be questioned. What kinds of human beings are attracted to this or turn into machines of death? …

To these simple questions—why and how—what answer would you give? Hannah Arendt had to invent a new concept: the banality of evil. She had made a massive study of concentration camps and ultimately came to the conclusion that these people were shallow. There was nothing there. You expect wicked people to have depths of an evil kind, but there was no such thing. My suggestion is simply that we have not even started learning lessons from the Holocaust. If these questions remain unanswered, what are we

learning from the Holocaust memorials being set up all over the world?

I want therefore to end with a very simple conclusion. There are many others that follow from this. When we say, for example, the Holocaust is evil, we are making a moral judgment on it. It is evil, yes, but what else? Is that enough for us as a lesson to learn? … We judge it, as in all our discussion today, as being in terms of the Jewish people. Is the Holocaust entirely the moral property of the Jewish people? Is it not an indictment of the entirety of mankind and should it not be seen as a human problem, which addresses all human beings anywhere and not just Jews? Of course, Jews were the primary and intended targets, but so were lots of Poles and others. …

col 1407 The other question is of a slightly different nature. The Holocaust has happened, but what are the moral consequences? Does this mean that the Holocaust was the price Jews had to pay to win the State of Israel? How glibly we slip into a certain way of thinking and certainly of talking; "Look, they have suffered so much and therefore the Jewish people have a right to Israel" or "Whatever they do is forgiven". In that case, we do injustice to other people—namely the Arabs and the Palestinians. The simple thing is that we have a lot to learn, and we have not yet started learning it. …

The Lord Bishop of Manchester: … I now live in Salford, in the midst of the largest Jewish community outside of London. The boundary of the eruv, which permits many of my Jewish neighbours to undertake tasks such as pushing wheelchairs and prams on the sabbath and other holy days, is my garden wall.

This year, I have been delighted to see the success of the Holocaust Memorial Day schools exhibition held in Manchester Cathedral. It features the work of Church of England primary schools across the whole of Greater Manchester from many culturally, racially and religiously diverse communities. …

col 1408 Meanwhile, local authority Holocaust Memorial Day events in Greater Manchester, including one that I attended in Manchester Town Hall, had local speakers who were Holocaust survivors or from their families. Respect was shown to them at these events by members of all our main faith communities: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Jain. …

The Church of England teaching document, *God's Unfailing Word*, which was published in 2019, speaks of attitudes towards Judaism over many centuries as providing, "a fertile seed-bed for murderous antisemitism", and of the need for Christians to repent of the "sins of the past" towards our Jewish neighbours. It notes the part played by flawed Christian theology in promoting negative stereotypes of Jewish people. …

There can be no overlap between the truth of our witness to Christ, which it is the task of theology to articulate, and the darkness of anti-Semitism. We have a duty as Christians to be alert to the continuation of such stereotyping and to resist it. …

Remembering the Holocaust serves as a bulwark against the ever-present forces across the world that seek to resurrect vile, violent and murderous anti-Semitism or to perpetrate fresh genocides against other targeted groups. This year marks 30 years since the Srebrenica massacre, when more than 8,000—mainly men and boys—were killed in just a few days by the Serb forces. …

col 1409 As others have said, with each anniversary, the memories of the Holocaust slip away from living memory. If we are to hold firm against the evils of fascism and other extreme ideologies—as indeed we must—as each generation of survivors passes on, it is incumbent on all of us to remember the past. …

Viscount Eccles (Conservative): … I was 14 at the end of the war. I was at boarding school in Winchester, and my memory tells me that we did not know about Auschwitz. However, we were told about Belsen …

This was so far beyond our 14 year-old experience, knowledge and imagination. …

Then, we thought to ourselves, "How could people be found to run such a system—who would be the guards, bookkeepers, managers and commandants?" We found it very difficult to cope with that. Then there were the misfortunes, the betrayals and the

widespread collaboration—all these aspects came out, stage by stage. Then we got to hear about the text of the final solution. Again, that was quite beyond our comprehension. All we could conclude was that it was unattainable and massively evil.

col 1410 Time goes by and our nature is such that we have to learn to cope. At that time, we did not have the 6 million label. We came to cope by somehow thinking that it was individuals to whom these things had happened. We thought of it as a whole series of individual tragedies and the effect they had had upon their close families and relations. This is probably still the way I think about the Holocaust—as a massive list of individual stories.

Eighty years later, there are two other ways in which we might usefully accept the challenge of thinking about the Holocaust. How did Europe come to create the conditions where the Holocaust was mounted …

There is a second journey about which we need to think very carefully, and that is what has happened since 1945. During my national service, some of my colleagues had come recently from Palestine, which was still briefly in its mandate condition before the creation of Israel. They told pretty wild, difficult and dangerous stories of the Stern Gang and the PLA. It behoves us to consider what part the Holocaust has played in geopolitical outcomes since 1945 and, indeed, up to today. What part does that appalling event play in the way in which we think about where we are now and where we are going? …

Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury (Crossbench): My Lords, when the Nazis came to power in 1933, my father was dismissed from his job as a medical researcher because he was a Jew, and he made his way to this country, where he was taken in, made his home, raised a family and became a distinguished scientist. Historically, this is a reminder that although—or perhaps because—the Holocaust originated in Germany, many German Jews had time to leave before the final solution was initiated, whereas the Jews in subsequently Nazi-occupied countries did not have that opportunity, with the disastrous consequences that we all know and that have been described in a number of speeches today. …

Personally, my father's reception in this country has made me for ever grateful to the United Kingdom and made me, for a while, very suspicious of Germany, a suspicion reinforced by the fact that a number of members of my mother's family died in concentration camps. However, subsequent experiences, particularly my contact with German judges, have given me two insights.

col 1411 The first is respect for the way in which Germans have come to terms with what happened and have tried to take steps to make sure it does not happen again. Let us hope that the rise of the AfD does not represent a signal of retreat from that.

The second is a realisation that while it was, as has been said more than once today, unique in history, the Holocaust could have happened anywhere. We delude ourselves if we think that lessons can be learned so that nothing like it will happen again. I am afraid that history shows us that racial prejudice, racially motivated violence and even—fortunately, only rarely—genocide have been features of human existence as far back as records go, and that anti-Semitism has been prevalent, sadly, for more than 2,000 years.

Of course, that is not to say that everyone is racially prejudiced or anti-Semitic, or has a predisposition to racial violence, let alone to committing genocide. But one has only to read about how many otherwise apparently decent German soldiers were prepared to massacre helpless Jewish women and children simply because they were ordered to do so by their officers to realise how skin-deep civilisation is …

It is noteworthy how democracy, the constitution and the courts in Germany all crumbled very quickly in the face of ruthless Nazi aggression, thereby setting Germany on course for the Holocaust. The rise of Hitler shows that democracy is not enough: the Nazis came to power through the ballot box. Had there been humane laws enforced by an independent judiciary, I suggest that the story would have been very different. …

Of course, the judges cannot stand on their own …

Education and research are therefore key. It is through education that we seek to ensure that future generations are encouraged and enabled to recognise and combat racism in general, and anti-Semitism in particular. It seems to me essential that young people are both taught to disavow racism, anti-Semitism and intolerance and educated about our constitutional system and the rule of law.

col 1412 Some 10 years ago, I would have said that this country had, by international standards, a reasonably good record on anti-Semitism. Recent events … show that things have deteriorated, but that people are doing their best to reverse this disturbing development. …

Lord Balfe (Conservative): … I have not intervened in these debates in the past. Part of the reason is that I have no family history to relate such as the harrowing stories we have heard today. Also, because I am a Roman Catholic, I have not felt that our religion's performance allowed me to say much about the Holocaust.

col 1413 I was in the Foreign Office as an official during the Six Day War. I saw the way in which the Foreign Office reacted, and it was very interesting. The Arabian departments did not want anything to do with it. Frankly, had it not been for Harold Wilson, we would probably have made a lesser contribution to the Six Day War and its aftermath than we did. … One of the things I noticed … was an inability of some people to see both sides of the story. …

I fully support the Conservative Friends of Israel and I have been horrified by the Hamas attack, and in particular the failure, it seems, of the British press to realise that it was Hamas that attacked Israel. Israel did not do any attacking; Hamas attacked. When I look at the three released hostages last week and the gloating of the Palestinians around them, I am sorry, but I cannot feel much sympathy for them. I just wonder at the damage they are doing to their own population. It is absolutely astounding. What is quite saddening to me is what I perceive as the bias in reporting in the British press. I do not see it as being even-handed; it is all, "on the one hand, this; on the other hand, that". The people of Israel were attacked. They have a right to defend themselves—full stop, as far as I am concerned. …

The fact of the matter is that many Germans blanked themselves out from what was going on. If you want to know what I mean, it is the way in which we blank ourselves out from what is going on in British prisons this very day: rats running around, atrocious overcrowding. No one knows about it. No one writes about it. No one deals with it.

Talking to many of my German colleagues, I am afraid it was quite clear that many of them had just blanked it out. They had lived, or their parents had lived, through the terrible 1920s, when the Weimar Republic was frankly unstable, and Germany was a horrible place to live—with massive inflation and the like. Then, along came this little man, who nobody particularly liked and who was not from their class, but, somehow, the country became richer. Things started happening. We often overlook the fact that the dispossessed effects of the Jewish community were distributed largely to the remaining Germans. Many Germans got better flats; they got more furniture; they got all sorts of things. They turned their face to the wall. They pretended they did not know, because they did not want to know. They blanked it out.

col 1414 That also applies to my own Church. The Pope at that time, Pope Pius XII—Eugenio Pacelli was his name—came from one of the most established families in the Roman Catholic hierarchy. He was probably the most upper-class Pope that we have had in the last 200 years. He cut his teeth, so to speak, as papal envoy in Germany. … He also blanked out what was going on. He was looking for Jews who had been baptised as Catholics who could be saved. The rest were cast aside.

When I was a little boy at a convent school, I was quite firmly told that we should not be sorry for the Jews because they killed Jesus. That was in 1953, so that was what was going on then.

My final plea to the Minister is that, if we need one good thing, apart from Holocaust lessons

in schools, it is education. People do not understand the different religions, and we need some education so that people understand what the Jewish, Muslim and Christian religions are. That is needed because the base of tolerance is knowledge and education.

Baroness Fox of Buckley (Non-affiliated): … One word that is increasingly becoming unmoored from its meaning is "Holocaust". The Holocaust is now used as a free-floating catch-all to describe every violent geopolitical event or even general human evil. But my plea is that words matter. … we must insist that the "Holocaust" word refers to a particular unique event in history. The Nazi death camps were not generic; they were part of what camp survivor Elie Wiesel explains: "The Holocaust was conceived to annihilate the last Jew on the planet".

Despite this, even Auschwitz—a death camp designed for the genocide of the Jews—has been turned into an all-purpose symbol of human cruelty. UNESCO describes the world heritage site as a universal "symbol of humanity's cruelty to its fellow human beings in the 20th century". In this way, the Holocaust is being ripped out of its historical context.

col 1415 Meanwhile, celebrity social justice activist Naomi Klein said the quiet bit out loud in an essay in the *Guardian* last year. She wrote that we are entering a new intellectual era, one in which people are openly asking if the Holocaust should "be seen exclusively as a Jewish catastrophe, or something more universal".

Klein goes on to argue that perhaps the Holocaust was not "a unique rupture in European history" but rather "a homecoming of earlier colonial genocides".

This anti-western decolonising lexicon should be a red flag. Remember, in the decolonisation narrative, Israel has been identified as the epitome of the colonial settler state and Jews branded as the embodiment of white supremacy who deserve our ire and Hamas's actions.

Klein also notes that increasingly, people are demanding greater recognition for other groups targeted for extermination by the Nazis, as though this was in any way on a par with the targeting of the whole Jewish race for extermination.

Beyond the *Guardian*'s comment pages, it seems that, because we live in an era which treats victimhood as a virtue and confers moral authority on it, a queue of identity groups is laying some claim to the Holocaust experience. There even seems to be resentment in that, when Jewish voices demand that we recognise that it was they who were central to the Holocaust, it is treated as though they have been driven by narcissism.

Gradually, this has expanded into demands that any reference to the Holocaust must also mention victims of other international atrocities, whether it is Rwanda, colonial era massacres or, inevitably, contemporary events in the Middle East. The Islamic Human Rights Commission wrote to UK town halls asking them to boycott this year's Holocaust Memorial Day on the grounds that it is "morally unacceptable" that Gaza is not considered a genocide alongside the Holocaust.

The problem is that wrenching the Holocaust from its historically specific context, in which all are victims, relativises and almost normalises it and renders it banal. One of the most devastating consequences is that it makes it difficult for the public, especially new generations, to understand the true nature of this industrialised act of anti-Semitic barbarism, and to even remember at all that the Jews were the targets. … The noble Baroness, Lady Deech, reminded us that a whole swathe of commentators and politicians forgot even to mention the Jews, listing almost everyone else who was killed, apart from the victims: the Jews.

col 1416 I am not suggesting such errors of omission are conscious acts of erasure. It somehow feels even more chilling that they are more likely examples of unconscious bias and careless forgetting. The problem with relativising the specific Holocaust is that it makes a mockery of "lest we forget"—and we can expect a lot more forgetting if we are not careful. In my mind, the consequences of this dejudification of the Holocaust is that increasing numbers, especially of young people, do not even recognise when the iconography and language of historic Nazi period Jew hatred rear their ugly heads today. It is always so

jolting when I talk to students involved in BDS campaigns and critique their calls for boycotts of Israeli foodstuffs as they wrench them off supermarket shelves, or their demands to blacklist and censor entire countries' academics, artists, scientists and sportspeople. When, looking at scenes of blood-like red paint daubed on shop fronts, I mention that it echoes 1930s Germany, they look at me blankly. …

Whole swathes of young activists I know have been queuing up to denounce [Elon Musk's arm gesture] as a Nazi salute, seeing far-right fascists around every corner. But when the same people see starving, emaciated Jewish hostages paraded, jeered at and humiliated by Jihadi baying mobs, or when they see political activists standing outside UK synagogues screaming "baby killers" at Jews—and those activists are my tribe—suddenly, they get a blind spot and they cannot see any Nazi salutes, symbolism or anything. They do not recognise the dejudification trends of the Holocaust past and their re-emergence today, and that is worrying.

So, how do we counter this fake news of a Jew-light Holocaust? We all reach for more education, but it bodes badly for the educational boasts that the new Holocaust memorial museum next door to Parliament is going to solve it all when, shamefully, our very own Parliament banned a Holocaust memorial exhibition from Westminster Hall because it was too political. …

Our urgent educational and political task must include exposing the rise of the newly powerful forces which are acting to exterminate the Jews now—"Never again" is now. Yes, I mean Hamas, Iran and the Houthis, but closer to home there are the radical Islamists and their numerous apologists, who, if we are honest, are influential in many political, cultural and media institutions. Too many of us look the other way, bite our lips, and will not name and shame. It is about time we spoke up, loudly.

col 1417 **Lord Shinkwin (Conservative):** … I ask myself what "Never again" means. Does it, for example, simply mean no more concentration camps, crematoria or gas chambers—the physical structures which the Soviet troops stumbled upon in disbelief 80 years ago? Does it mean no more Nuremberg laws …? Mercifully, both are very unlikely in today's world.

So I ask myself another question: how do we counter the challenge that remains? How do we perform the task of eradicating what the Minister described in his poignant opening remarks as man's darkest impulses? Does that insidious and poisonous prejudice—which informed, by osmosis and within a remarkably short period of time, the culture underpinning the abomination that was the Holocaust—still exist? …

… it is not enough for me to say, "We will always remember you and the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust". In an age of pernicious poison spread via social media, we need to acknowledge the racism still in plain sight on the streets of our capital most weekends. I refer of course to the demonstrations in central London, the first of which—the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign—unbelievably started organising while the 7 October pogrom was under way.

As well as being the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, 2025 is the 60th anniversary of Labour's Race Relations Act receiving Royal Assent. As noble Lords will know, the Act made the promotion of hatred on the grounds of race, colour and ethnic or national origins an offence. The vile vitriol being visited on our Jewish communities clearly runs counter to the Act. This is racism, pure and simple, and it is happening in plain sight. …

col 1418 I take one common, supposedly innocent chant as an example. Now, I know what is meant by "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free"—survivors certainly do. It means the destruction of Israel. It means the mass murder of Jews for being Jews, as we saw Hamas perpetrate on 7 October. It means a one-state, not a two-state, solution.

It is understandable that, in our desire to see peace in the Middle East, some want to believe that we are dealing with a peace-loving entity in Hamas. Yet if there is one organisation that has shown time and again that it is absolutely against peace and that it

does not want a two-state solution, it is Hamas; rather, it wants to kill Jews and destroy the State of Israel. I refer noble Lords to Hamas's statements of 24 October 2023, 30 January, 14 June and 24 October 2024. Its racist, genocidal hatred on grounds of race is in plain sight. …

Baroness Brown of Silvertown (Labour): … Generation 2 Generation is a charity that enables descendants to tell their family Holocaust stories to a range of audiences across the UK. It currently has 41 speakers and is recruiting more. This academic year to date, the speakers have been booked to deliver their family stories to more than 390 audiences, reaching over 45,000 people. …

Last Sunday, I was privileged to speak to some fabulous volunteers who wanted the stories of their families to be told and not to be forgotten, to be an education to a world where propagation, propaganda and misinformation is rife. So, let me tell your Lordships about Sabina Miller.

col 1419 Sabina was born in 1922. She was Jewish, one of five, and she grew up in a warm, comfortable, loving and happy home in Warsaw. When the Nazis invaded in 1939, their home was taken from them and the family was forced to relocate to the ghetto. Some 400,000 people were crammed into just over one square mile. Hygiene was impossible, food was so, so scarce, and disease was rampant. Like many, Sabina contracted typhus. She was overwhelmed with the disease and was unconscious for 18 days. She remembers her mum standing at the end of her bed saying, "You've got to live. You will live. You must survive". But when she awoke, both her mother and her father had died.

The situation in the ghetto was desperate, so Sabina covered her star of David and effected an extraordinary escape. She found illegal work alongside other Jewish girls on a farm—20 years old, digging potatoes, cleaning out stables and forced to sing anti-Semitic songs while they worked. While she was there, she received a postcard from her beloved sister Esther. It said, "I'm on a train. I don't know where I'm being taken. If anyone finds this card, please send it". Esther must have thrown that card from a train, and someone, in a simple act of kindness, delivered it. Those were the last words that Sabina's sister would ever address to her. …

That was just the beginning of Sabina's amazing story of survival. She spent the winter of 1942 living in an ice-cold, small ditch, warily begging for food. She changed her identity many times, was imprisoned, was interrogated on four separate occasions by the Gestapo and was eventually sent to a forced labour camp in Germany, where she remained until the war's end. I cannot do justice to quite how unbelievable Sabina's story is, and how unlikely it was that she would survive.

But survive she did …

col 1420 We know, in this place, that anti-Semitism, racial hatred and genocidal violence are still with us. I hope—and I know that the volunteers from Generation to Generation also hope—that by sharing these stories from survivors, one day people will no longer be dehumanised, treated as other, humiliated, terrified or murdered because of their race, creed, nationality or religion. Let us remember the horror and the evils of the Holocaust, and let us not rest until justice is done for the victims in our world where genocide again threatens our humanity.

Lord Gold (Conservative): … Unless we continue to remember the Holocaust, and the wickedness shown to the Jewish minority and other minorities across Europe, there is no guarantee this will not happen again. The photograph of released hostage Eli Sharabi captured by Hamas on 7 October 2023, looking so gaunt and emaciated, reminded so many of us of the liberation of Belsen in 1945 and the horror discovered there. We say "Never again", but the rise in anti-Semitism here—3,528 cases reported by CST in 2024—across Europe and in Australia, Canada and the USA, makes the risk of repetition a real possibility. Particularly worrying is the rise of anti-Semitism in our universities. Although much can be done to inform and educate those born after the war… hearing from survivors

who experienced the horrors of the Holocaust is the best way of achieving this.

If this cannot be done face to face, giving our children the opportunity of hearing from survivors remotely is the next best thing. Therefore, it is commendable that at a recent Holocaust Educational Trust dinner, our present Prime Minister announced a national ambition that every schoolchild should hear the recorded testimony of a Holocaust survivor. …

col 1421 All this is excellent, but to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive and to inform and educate today's and tomorrow's generations, the creation of Holocaust centres and memorials all around the world is so important. …

Let the world know that in this wonderful United Kingdom, our home, we will always stand against tyranny and prejudice, wherever they raise their ugly heads. The 2015 Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission report recommended the building of a "striking and prominent" new national memorial, to be located in central London. There can be no more striking and prominent location than right here in Victoria Tower Gardens. Objections have been raised to this location. It is argued that there are security and traffic issues, that the atmosphere of Victoria Tower Gardens will be changed, that access may be restricted, that too many people might visit the memorial—3 million visitors a year are expected, and I hope that we increase on that number—and that there are alternative sites. Frankly, I do not believe that these objections stack up. Security and traffic issues will arise wherever the memorial is located, and we will sort them, as we always do. …

col 1422 **Lord Sahota (Labour):** … As we all know, the word "Holocaust" is most commonly associated with the Nazi genocide of Jews in Europe during the Second World War. It is one of the darkest and most horrific episodes in human history and highlights man's inhumanity to man. Six million Jews were murdered—not 1 million or 2 million but 6 million. How could it happen? When I watch the grainy black and white footage of the concentration camps, it feels as though it happened yesterday—not in some distant medieval time, not 100 years ago, but yesterday and as if I could almost touch it. How could anyone conceive of the idea that they could eradicate an entire race of millions of people from the face of this earth and not be held accountable by future generations?

Where were the voices of reason, of right-minded men and women in Germany at that time? How could a nation that gave the world great literature, philosophy and classical music descend into such barbarity? …

The German playwright and anti-Nazi activist Bertolt Brecht wrote: "When crimes begin to pile up, they become invisible. When sufferings become unendurable, the cries are no longer heard".

In 1948, the United Nations established the genocide convention, which remains the main international legal instrument for preventing genocides. Yet, tragically, this has not prevented further atrocities being committed. In July 1995, right in the heart of Europe, 8,000 men and boys were murdered in cold blood by Bosnian Serbs … Back in 1995, the Turkish army systematically murdered well over a million Armenians …

In 1968, American troops slaughtered hundreds of unarmed civilians in a village in Vietnam and gang-raped women and girls in what became known as the My Lai massacre. …

col 1423 In November 1984, after the assassination of the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, we witnessed the planned massacre of many thousands of innocent Sikh men, women and children in Delhi. …

In India, at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar on 13 April 1919, during the British Raj, General Reginald Dyer ordered his troops to open fire on an unarmed crowd of over 20,000 people, killing hundreds. …

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar (Conservative): … In this debate, as the annunciators remind us, we are asked to "take note of" Holocaust Memorial Day. Although that is the traditional form of the question for such debates in your Lordships' House, I suggest that a debate asking us to take note is particularly appropriate for this topic. The Holocaust happened because people did not take note. They did not take note of what was being said on their

streets, of what was being decided in their Parliament or when extremists marched through their streets, shops were boycotted and Jews were discriminated against in public services, in professions and in the public square. They simply did not take note. As my noble friend Lord Balfe said, they blanked themselves out.

The Holocaust did not happen overnight … It was planned, and the plans were made public. It was actually founded on and in law. … The murders in the gas chambers were preceded by concentration camps, the concentration camps by ghettos and the ghettos by discrimination, and that discrimination was rooted in law and upheld by the German courts, their lawyers and, yes, their judges. … why did people not take note? Where were the protests?

col 1424 Like others, I miss the presence of the late Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks, especially on days like this. As he pointed out, there were no protests when, on one day in 1933, all Jewish lawyers in Germany came to their offices and cleared their desks—under compulsion of law, let us remember—nor was there a protest when doctors had to do the same, and then all the other professions. There was simply silence, indifference. No one took note. Nor was there any protest in Austria when, on one day in 1938, one-sixth of Vienna's population, the Jews, were banned from owning property. That was one-sixth of a city, but there was not a single protest.

If Holocaust Memorial Day is to mean anything, it must encourage us to speak out and call out injustice. We have a duty to take note. …

Let me make three points. First, let us be clear about the unambiguous aim of the Holocaust. It was the systematic and industrial murder of Jews with the aim that there would be no Jews left in the world. The Holocaust was put into effect by means of laws which explicitly referenced Jews and made special provision for them. The Nazis had no trouble using the word Jews. They knew who their victims were and, just as importantly, why they were the victims. The Jews were to be murdered simply and only because they were Jews.

… I ask: why do so many organisations seem to find it so difficult to use the words Jews or Jewish when commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day? The Royal Free Hospital referenced "millions of people killed during the Holocaust"—no mention of Jews. Barnet Council referenced the "victims of the Holocaust"—no mention of Jews. Cambridge City Council is another entity for which the word Jews appears to have become verboten. This is not a party-political point, so let me single out for praise Islington Council, with its solid Labour majority, which referred to "the 6 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust".

If Islington Council can do it, so can everybody else.

Of course we can, should, will and must remember other victims and why they were victims—because they were gay, or Roma, or had mental or physical disabilities—but the overwhelming majority of the victims of the Holocaust were Jews because they were Jews, and they deserve to be remembered as Jews.

col 1425 We do not remember the victims of the Holocaust by denying who the victims were or why they were the victims.

Secondly, let us be clear about the uniqueness of the Holocaust. Just as we do not remember the victims by denying why they were victims, we do not commemorate the victims by lumping the Holocaust together with other genocides and tragedies. We must not globalise the Holocaust, as the noble Baroness, Lady Deech, put it. … To recognise the uniqueness of that appalling enterprise the Holocaust in terms of its numbers, its industrialised systems of murder, and its use of entire state apparatus for one purpose only—to rid the world of Jews—is not to denigrate, demean or ignore other genocides, whether in Bosnia, Rwanda, Sudan, or anywhere else …

Thirdly, we certainly do not remember the victims by denying that there was a genocide at all or by using the murdered Jews of the Holocaust in some perverted form of inverted history to attack living Jews. We are used to the ramblings of Holocaust deniers and those who refuse to confront the reality of the Nazi genocide and we rightly ignore them, but

denial comes in many forms. To give the most egregious example, the President of Ireland, in his speech at a national Holocaust commemoration event, began by saying that the Holocaust started with the “manipulation of language” and then, astonishingly, referred to the Holocaust an as “attempted genocide”, twice. If you talk about an attempted genocide, you are denying that it was a genocide.

The President of Ireland also used his speech—at a national commemoration event for the Holocaust, let us remember—to deliver his views on Israel and Gaza. … His words were so incendiary that Irish Jews who protested the president’s use—or, I should say, misuse—of that sacred platform were forcibly removed from the venue. … It happens because there are too many people who are only too willing to attend and speak at events commemorating dead Jews but who are nowhere to be seen when it comes to protecting living Jews. …

For all the talk of a Jewish diaspora, living Jews today —the Jewish community—are overwhelmingly based in two locations only: North America and Israel. The former, at least for the moment, can look after itself, but the latter needs and deserves our support. It is not just that Israel was born in the shadow of the Holocaust; it is that if there had been an Israel, there would not have been a Holocaust. It really is that simple.

col 1426 As in 1945, so also in 2025: the simple fact is that Israel and Zionism, which is no more and no less than the right to Jewish self-determination, is essential for the future of the Jewish people as a nation. We do not have to like modern Israel any more than we like or do not like modern Greece. We can agree or disagree with its Government, its policies and its actions. However, we cannot commemorate Jews, who were victims in the Holocaust because they could not defend themselves, if we deny Jews today, whether individually or collectively, the right and the means to defend themselves. …

The noble Lord, Lord Shinkwin, asked what is meant by “Never again”. … It means that we will not stand by silently at a time when pictures of starved and emaciated Jews—who have been starved and are emaciated only because they are Jews—which we saw as black and white pictures in our history books, have reappeared as colour images of released Israeli hostages on last night’s TV news. …

Family trees, such as mine, are shorn of many branches because they were consumed in the fire and the horror of the Holocaust. … Eighty years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we must loudly and confidently proclaim: “Am Yisrael Chai”—the people of Israel lives.

col 1427 **Baroness in Waiting/Government Whip (Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent):** … As we have heard, this year’s Holocaust Memorial Day marked the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is an especially poignant occasion: the last major anniversary when we can expect to have significant numbers of Holocaust survivors able to share their testimony. It was attended by His Majesty the King, a symbol, if ever there were one, to the Jewish community and the world of the importance of this date and the place that the Holocaust shares in our collective history. This is the last major anniversary where it is the words of survivors, not ours, that touch our hearts. …

col 1428 It is also incredibly important on days like today to remember those who liberated us, because they too had to live with what they saw. …

My story, too, is a personal one. When I spoke in this debate last year, I spoke about my family arriving in the UK in the 1890s, having fled the pogroms of Tsarist Russia. As far as we know, not one of those who chose to remain in the shtetl survived the Shoah. … For my family, anti-Jewish hatred is not an academic exercise; it is formative to my understanding of my place in the world. … My family knows only too well, as do the families of many in your Lordships’ House, where hate can lead and the importance of security and freedom—and the requirement, the duty, to fight for the core human rights we take for granted at our peril. …

We are here today to remember those who were murdered because of who they were, not what they did. They were apparently easy targets for ideologues and dictators who sought to gain and abuse power by scapegoating communities, amplifying tropes and embracing

hate and fear over hope, building on thousands of years of hatred towards my community. …

At a time when my community and many others are once again scared, I want to find some hope in this horror—some light in the darkness. …

col 1429 On Holocaust Memorial Day, people across the world came together and lit candles to remember the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered during the Holocaust and the hundreds of thousands of others killed for being gay, disabled, Roma and Sinti, black, trade unionist, a Jehovah's Witness—anyone considered a threat to the Aryan people. … this Government are clear on the unique evil that the Holocaust was and the specific, devastating impact on the Jewish community. In 1933, there were nine and a half million Jews living in Europe; in 1945, there were not.

Language matters, but so do symbols. When we talk about lighting the darkness, the candle's flame represents the human soul and serves as a reminder of the frailty and beauty of life. As we remember the appalling acts of the Holocaust, it has become so much more than that. This frailty and beauty are ever present at the children's memorial in Yad Vashem, which represents one and a half million Jewish children murdered in the Holocaust. In the underground chamber, the flame of a single candle is reflected by countless mirrors, while the names, ages and home towns of children who were murdered are read out in Hebrew, English and Yiddish. Each reflection reminds us of a life not lived; a child who was murdered before they could make a mark on the world; a family that was never going to grow. …

Yad Vashem allows us to see the depravity to which man can sink when we begin to see our fellow human beings as somehow less than us, less worthy of dignity and of life. We see how evil can triumph when good people do nothing; how silence led to one of the most appalling crimes in history; how people were targeted for who they were, how they prayed or who they loved. But Yad Vashem is more than just a memorial and museum to remind us of man's capacity for evil: it also provides us with hope—the stories of the righteous among the nations who refused to be bystanders. …

col 1430 As many Members of your Lordships' House have said, we cannot ignore what is in front of us, and what is in front of us, as reported by the CST this week, is shocking levels of anti-Semitism on our streets, which are scarring our towns and cities. The report released by CST yesterday recorded 3,528 anti-Semitic incidents in 2024. There are only 250,000 Jews in the UK. There will not be a Jewish family who was not touched by an anti-Semitic incident in the last year. Ten are being reported every day. This is the second highest number on record, surpassed only by the appalling figures of 2023, when there were 4,296 incidents, the majority of which followed the pogroms of 7 October. As my community grieved about events abroad, where they were worried about their families in Israel, they were being targeted at home. Their only crime was to be Jewish. This is not acceptable in 21st-century Britain. …

However, while it is easy to be disheartened, that is not the approach I am prepared to take. The work of the CST, the Anti-Semitism Policy Trust, the Holocaust Education Trust, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Association of Jewish Refugees ensures that they are all lights in the darkness; as is Generation 2 Generation …

I, for one, am very aware that I owe my safety and security to the dedicated team of professional staff and volunteers at the CST, who have protected me when I have been in the middle of a racist storm. CST, HET, HMDT and AJR are out there every day, actively tackling anti-Jewish hatred, educating about the dangers of where hatred can lead and remembering that crime of crimes, the Holocaust. Their work also shows that we all have choices. We can choose to be the light; we can call out those who hide in dark places. We have the choice to ignore what happens to others or to act on behalf of others. It is much easier when someone stands in front of you if you are targeted than having to fight for yourself.

col 1431 This is our obligation: not simply to bear witness but to act … What does this

mean today? It means confronting bigotry and hatred in all its forms. It has no place in the classrooms of children, on the campuses of our universities, in our hospitals or in the corridors of power. Nor does it have any place on the streets of the United Kingdom.
We must never forget that our children are not born to hate; they are taught to hate. …
This year, Holocaust Memorial Day has reminded us that our freedoms are all too fragile. There is a responsibility on all of us to do everything we can to protect and cherish them. …
Today, we reflect on where we are, where we were and where we are going. I will give the final word to a Holocaust survivor, the late Sir Ben Helfgott, who said: "My Holocaust experiences may have hardened me, made me more realistic about human nature, but I was repelled by the evil I witnessed. I despaired, but I did not let cruelty and injustice break my spirit. I refused to poison my life with revenge and hatred for hatred is corrosive. Instead I was left with a dream—to live in a world of understanding, compassion, fraternity and love for my fellow man". …

To read the full transcript see
https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2025-02-13/debates/337BE768-2DFA-4403-A990-7D42A97676B1/HolocaustMemorialDay

The CST statistics referred to above by Baroness Scott of Bybrook and others can be read at https://cst.org.uk/research/cst-publications/antisemitic-incidents-2024

Lord Wolfson's speech referred to above by Lord Weir of Ballyholme can be read at https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-10-24/debates/17465F6F-4705-40A0-9250-0939AA74444B/IsraelGaza#contribution-B14C5E00-0D07-4D41-A7C3-308CA276EF20

God's Unfailing Word, referred to above by the Bishop of Manchester, can be read at https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/godsunfailingwordweb.pdf

The Guardian article referred to above by Baroness Fox of Buckley can be read at https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/mar/14/the-zone-of-interest-auschwitz-gaza-genocide

The Prime Minister's comments referred to above by Lord Gold, can be read at https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-at-the-holocaust-educational-trust-16-september-2024

The Holocaust Commission Report, referred to above by Lord Gold, can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7e51c1e5274a2e8ab47401/Holocaust_Commission_Report_Britains_promise_to_remember.pdf

The Genocide Convention, referred to above by Lord Sahota, can be read at https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf

The President of Ireland's speech referred to above by Lord Wolfson of Tredegar can be read at https://president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/speech-at-national-holocaust-memorial-day-commemoration

Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent's previous speech, referred to above by herself, can be read at https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2024-02-02/debates/531837EA-BBC6-4A45-BDDD-E66866BFA66F/HolocaustMemorialDay#contribution-82844C7B-F181-432A-9242-4E7AC4DE0B80

House of Lords Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL4207] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to

the Written Answer by Lord Khan of Burnley on 20 January (HL3595), whether there has been any further expenditure on the planned UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre since the £138.8m estimate of March 2023; and if so, how much has been spent and what does the additional spending relate to.

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL4243] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 22 May 2024 (HC Deb cols 975–6) that £18 million had already been spent on the planned UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, how much they have spent since that date and what the additional spending relates to.

> **Lord Khan of Burnley:** From 1 April 2023 to 22 January 2025 £2.71 million has been spent on project costs, including work on the Holocaust Memorial Bill, preparations for redetermination of the planning application and preparation for the commencement of construction. £1.66 million of that money has been spent since 22 May 2024.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-01-20/hl4207
and
https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-01-21/hl4243

The question referred to above can be read at
https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-12-18/hl3595

The Minister's remarks referred to above can be read at
https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-05-22/debates/3C6046EB-8967-4852-8889-4886B4DEF2ED/HolocaustMemorialBill#contribution-48042303-E536-4214-8EBA-649F93B494C0

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Visas: Palestinians

Tim Roca (Labour) [29239] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of a visa scheme for Palestinians.

> **Seema Malhotra:** Palestinians who wish to come to the UK can already do so via the existing range of routes available which allow a person to apply to work, study, settle or join family in the UK. More information on all routes available for a person to apply to work, study or settle/join family in the UK can be found here: Visas and immigration

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-05/29239

Trade Promotion: Israel and Occupied Territories

Andy Slaughter (Labour) [30065] To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what the (a) role and (b) responsibilities are of the trade envoys to (i) Israel and (ii) the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

> **Gareth Thomas:** Trade Envoys support HMG export and investment services already provided in a market. Each Trade Envoy role is tailored according to the requirements of their respective markets and the Trade Envoys to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories will align with the Departmental priorities identified for those markets.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-10/30065

Ministry of Defence: Israel

Joshua Reynolds (Liberal Democrat) [29341] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what was the most recent date on which Israeli officials entered the Department's buildings on Whitehall.

Luke Pollard: The last visit by Israeli officials to the Ministry of Defence Main Building took place on Wednesday 5 February 2025.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-05/29341

Palestinians: Schools

David Reed (Conservative) [30000] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 3 February 2025 to Question 27041 on Palestinians: Schools, what the timeline is for the full implementation of the recommendations of the Colonna report on the neutrality of educational materials in UNRWA-run schools in (a) Gaza and (b) the West Bank; and whether he has had discussions with UNRWA on replacing the current curriculum.

Hamish Falconer: The UN conducts quarterly progress reports on UNRWA's implementation of the recommendations made in the Colonna report, with the latest having issued in January 2025. This includes eight recommendations relating specifically to education. As noted in the answer to PQ 27041, on 28 January, the Minister for Development informed the House that she had discussed the issue of neutrality with UNRWA's leadership, including directly with Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-07/30000

The answer referred to above can be read at
https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-01-28/27041

The Colonna Report, referred to above, can be read at
https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf

The Quarterly Report referred to above can be read at
https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-implementation-of-colonna-report-quarterly-report-january-2025/

Hamas: Hostage Taking

David Reed (Conservative) [30489] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the International Committee of the Red Cross on its role in hostage handovers conducted by Hamas.

Hamish Falconer" We are in regular contact with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which is facilitating the handover of hostages and the delivery of aid into Gaza. The UK reaffirms its support for the ICRC as the only humanitarian actor with the experience, capability, independence and mandate to carry out its important responsibilities. We believe it is critical that the ICRC is given regular access to the hostages, to fulfil its independent visiting role, as enshrined within the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-10/30489

The Geneva Conventions referred to above can be read at
https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/geneva-conventions-1949additional-protocols-and-their-commentaries

Gaza: Politics and Government

Siân Berry (Green) [29269] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of comments by President Trump on Gaza on the (a) Camp David Accords and (b) Wadi

Araba Treaty.

Hamish Falconer: The Egypt-Israel (Camp David) and Jordan-Israel (Wadi Araba) peace treaties were historic achievements. The US played an integral part in facilitating negotiations between Israel, Jordan and Egypt that has resulted in lasting peace. That is why we support a negotiated two-state solution between the Palestinians and Israel, that agrees a sovereign Palestinian state including the West Bank and Gaza, alongside a safe and secure Israel, with Jerusalem as a shared capital. The UK will continue to work with the US and regional partners to build consensus and identify solutions towards this aim that will deliver long-term peace and security for Israelis, Palestinians and the wider region.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-05/29269

UNRWA: Finance

David Reed (Conservative) [29999] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 4 February 2025 to Question 27042 on UNRWA: Finance, what mechanisms are in place to ensure that UK funding to UNRWA is not used (a) directly or (b) indirectly to support Hamas activities; and what assessment he has made of UNRWA's compliance with these safeguards.

Hamish Falconer: A Memorandum of Understanding governs UK financial support to the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and we monitor UNRWA's activity through due diligence and annual assessments. The UK is also providing £1 million to support implementation of the recommendations in Catherine Colonna's Independent Review of Mechanisms and Procedures to Ensure Adherence by UNRWA to the Humanitarian Principle of Neutrality. UNRWA plays a vital role in delivering humanitarian assistance in Gaza and enabling the broader international response through its logistics and distribution network. We reiterated this position in our E3 joint Foreign Ministers' statement of 31 January, alongside France and Germany.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-07/29999

The answer referred to above can be read at
https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-01-28/27042

The Memorandum of Understanding referred to above can be read at
https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/D0002894.odt

The Colonna Review, referred to above, can be read at
https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf

The E3 statement referred to above can be read at
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/e3-foreign-ministers-statement-on-the-implementation-of-legislation-against-united-nations-relief-and-works-agency-for-palestine-refugees-in-the-near

Gaza: Ceasefires

Tom Morrison (Liberal Democrat) [29636] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to ensure a lasting ceasefire in Gaza.

Hamish Falconer: We welcome the agreement to end the fighting in Gaza. It is the first step in ensuring long-term peace and security for Israelis, Palestinians, and the wider region, bringing much-needed stability, but we have always been clear that an immediate ceasefire is just the first step towards a lasting solution to this crisis. The UK is ready to play a leading role with international and regional partners, in securing a permanently better future for the Israeli and Palestinian people, based on tangible progress towards a Palestinian state, with Gaza and the West Bank united under one government. Palestinians must be given a credible route to a

Palestinian state, which is the right of the Palestinian people. We will continue working with partners to support a path to long term peace and stability with a two-state solution: a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-06/29636

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Joint G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement: February 2025

The G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union, met on the margins of the Munich Security Conference …

The G7 members discussed political, security and humanitarian issues in the Middle East, including in Israel, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Iran, and their commitment to advancing regional peace and stability. They underscored the importance of a durable, Israeli-Palestinian peace. They reaffirmed their support for the full implementation of the ceasefire reached between Israel and Hamas, including for the release of all hostages and the expansion of humanitarian aid in Gaza. The G7 members stand behind the ongoing efforts of Egypt, Qatar and the United States in continuing to work towards a permanent ceasefire. They reiterated their unequivocal condemnation of Hamas and the need to ensure that Hamas neither reconstitutes militarily nor participates in governance. They recognized Israel's inherent right to self-defence, consistent with international law. …

The G7 members unequivocally condemned Iran's destabilizing actions, including its rapid advancement of uranium enrichment without credible civil justification, its facilitation of terrorism organizations and armed groups across the Middle East and Red Sea, its proliferation of ballistic missiles and drones, and its transnational repression and violation of fundamental human rights. …

To read the full statement see

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-g7-foreign-ministers-statement-february-2025

David Lammy Relieved to see the release of three more hostages in Gaza today – their ordeal has been unthinkable. It is vital that the ceasefire deal holds. I urge all parties to continue working together to implement it in full, to release all the hostages, ensure vital aid is able to reach Gaza, and work towards a lasting peace.

https://x.com/DavidLammy/status/1890769609755939008

Hamish Falconer The UK supports every effort to ensure the ceasefire holds. The release of three hostages today is welcome news for families who faced such anguish this week. I urge all parties to stick to the terms of the deal and ensure all three phases of the ceasefire are implemented.

https://x.com/HFalconerMP/status/1890787715076993417

European Parliament

European Parliament President Metsola visits Israel, Gaza and West Bank

… "At this critical moment for the region and the world, I wanted to come here to underline and witness first hand Europe's critical role in getting humanitarian aid into Gaza. Europe is ready to step up our engagement and do what we can to help the ceasefire-hostages release deal to hold, to provide a path to increased aid and a building block to a sustainable

peace", said President Metsola.
During her visit, the President is underlining Europe's willingness:

- to engage constructively with all partners in the region,
- to ensure the current ceasefire and hostage deal holds,
- and to provide a path to a sustainable peace in the region that can ensure security for Israel and a real perspective to the Palestinian people. …

On Thursday, the President … travelled to the Kerem Shalom Border Crossing Point to visit the humanitarian operations.
From there, President Metsola entered into Gaza, the first European leader to do so in more than a decade, where she was able to witness humanitarian aid entering from the Israeli side. She was also able to highlight the EU's critical role in supporting humanitarian efforts in Gaza … and the EU's commitment towards the ceasefire and hostage exchange deal.
Following her return into Israel, President Metsola was briefed by the European Union Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing (EUBAM Rafah) on their mission and ongoing efforts to support humanitarian aid in Gaza.
She also visited the Site of the Nova Festival in Re'im, and … will be holding talks with the President of Israel, Isaac Herzog. …
In recent weeks, EP President Roberta Metsola focused on promoting stability and peace in the Middle East. She has had several meetings and telephone conversations with leaders from Israel, Palestine, the Arab countries and US representatives. She has held talks in Cairo with Egyptian President, met with King Abdullah II of Jordan, received the Palestinian Prime Minister in Brussels and spoke to the Israeli Foreign Minister as well as the Speaker of the US House of Representatives. …
In a resolution adopted on 18 January 2024, the European Parliament became the first European institution to formally call for the immediate release of all hostages, the dismantling of the terrorist organisation Hamas, the resumption of the two-state solution and the relaunch of the peace process.
To read the full press release see
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20250213IPR26920/european-parliament-president-metsola-visits-israel-gaza-and-west-bank

UNRWA

The West Bank: Israeli Security Forces use UNRWA Health Centre as temporary detention site in southern West Bank in violation of international law
Israeli Security Forces (ISF) used the UNRWA Arroub Camp Health Centre (near Bethlehem) as a temporary detention site during a search and arrest operation on 12 February. The ISF forcibly entered the health centre and used it for the detention and interrogation of tens of Palestinian residents rounded up in the camp.
This is a new development in the blatant disregard for the inviolability of United Nations facilities. Unfortunately, this recent incident follows a pattern of forcible entries into UNRWA installations in the West Bank since October 2023, by both Israeli security forces and Palestinian armed groups.
All UN premises are inviolable and are protected under international law.
Since 30 January and the implementation of Knesset laws, including a no-contact policy between UNRWA and Israeli authorities, the Agency is no longer able to engage with Israeli officials and directly report and deconflict such incidents as they occur.
https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/west-bank-israeli-security-forces-use-unrwa-health-centre-temporary-detention-site-southern-West-Bank

Press Conference Remarks by UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini at the Munich Security Conference 2025

… Our teams are staying and delivering amid exceptional challenges in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Our work in Gaza has contributed to the success of the ceasefire …

In the occupied West Bank, our staff remain on ground. We are providing education for 50,000 boys and girls in UNRWA schools. Our health centres are open and running.

Concerted efforts are ongoing to dismantle the agency including through the spread of disinformation. UNRWA is a casualty of this war. …

Billboards and ads accusing UNRWA of terrorism have appeared in major cities around the world.

They were paid for by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Google ad campaigns re-direct those seeking information about the Agency to websites replete with disinformation.

This puts the lives of the UNRWA personnel at risk, especially in the West Bank and in Gaza, where 273 UNRWA staff have been killed.

The objective of these attacks on the Agency is to strip the Palestinians of their refugee status.

The rights of Palestine Refugees to protection and assistance are not derived from UNRWA's mandate.

They exist independently of the Agency.

If UNRWA ceases to provide services and assistance to Palestine Refugees, their rights will remain.

There will be much greater emphasis on durable solutions like return or resettlement which UNRWA is NOT mandated to deliver.

Bottom line: Dismantling UNRWA will only deepen the suffering of Palestine Refugees, it will not cancel their refugee status. …

To read the full press release see

https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/press-conference-remarks-unrwa-commissioner-general-philippe-lazzarini

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Relevant Legislation

** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Arms Trade (Inquiry and Suspension) Bill

https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3922

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill

https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3741

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3909

** Education (Assemblies) Bill

https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3769

House of Lords Library Briefing

https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2025-0010/LLN-2025-0010.pdf

Exemption from Value Added Tax (Listed Places of Worship)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3847

Holocaust Memorial Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421

Marriage (Prohibited Degrees of Relationship) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3907

Meat (Information About Method of Killing) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3843

Non-Domestic Rating (Multipliers and Private Schools) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3887

Palestine Statehood (Recognition)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3771

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) (No. 2)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3796

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) (No. 3)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3831

Public Body Ethnicity Data (Inclusion of Jewish and Sikh Categories)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3901

Registration of Death (Religion) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3876

Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3803

Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3774

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3765

Scottish Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill
https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/s6/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill

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Consultations

** new or updated today

***** closes in 2 days***

Commission on Antisemitism call for evidence (closing date 18 February 2025)
https://bod.org.uk/bod-news/commission-on-antisemitism-call-for-written-evidence/

Have Your Say on the Future of Inter Faith Week (closing date 28 February 2025)
https://faithbeliefforum.org/inter-faith-week-questionnaire/

Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill (closing date not stated but "You are strongly advised to submit your written evidence as soon as possible")
https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/january/terminally-ill-adults-end-of-life-bill-call-for-evidence/

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