

The Bermuda conference on refugees : documents and essays.

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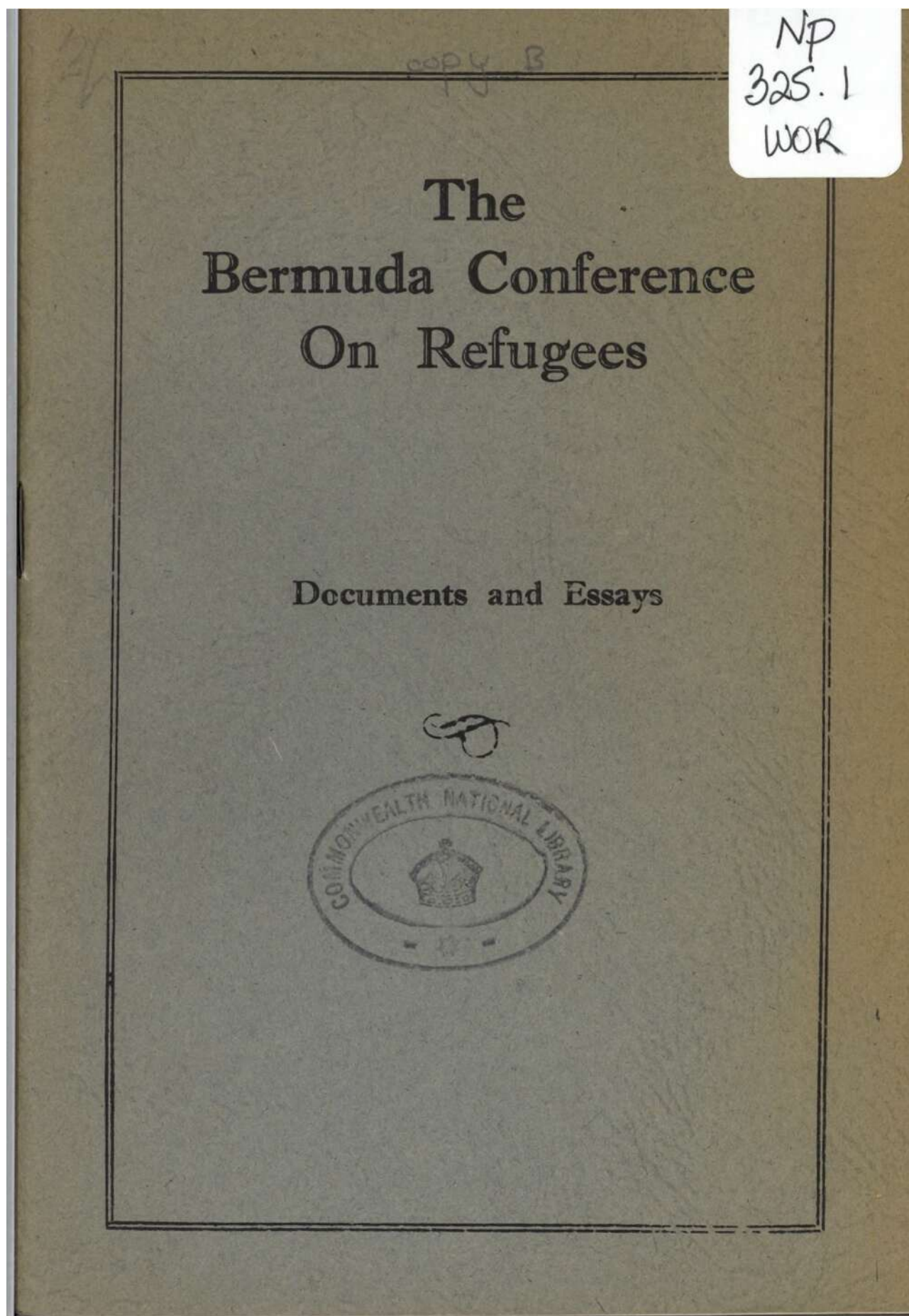
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The
Bermuda Conference
On Refugees

Documents and Essays



Issued by the World Jewish Congress (Australian Section)

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Introduction

The Anglo-American Conference on Refugees opened at Hamilton, Bermuda, on April 19, 1943, and deliberated for ten days. The American Delegation of four, headed by Dr. Harold Willis Dodds, President of Princeton University, included Representative Sol Bloom, Senator Scott Lucas, of Illinois and R. Borden Reams, of the State Department. The four British Delegates were all Parliamentary Under-Secretaries, with Richard K. Law, as their leader.

Only the opening and the closing of the Conference were public. Its deliberations were held in complete secrecy. Its decisions remained confidential with the exception of an indication that all aspects of the refugee problems, including the position of "potential refugees," were thoroughly discussed. The delegates were able to agree to a number of concrete recommendations as regards the relief of a substantial number of refugees of all races and nationalities, according to the official statement which added that some of the measures involving military considerations must remain confidential.

An enlarged Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees will be one of the results of the Conference. Neutral countries will be invited to participate in that body. The financing of the plans drafted in Bermuda is a question still under consideration.

The following statement was published by the American Associated Press:

New York, April 30th (A.A.P.)

The Anglo-American Refugee Conference at Hamilton, Bermuda, ended yesterday with an announcement that an agreement had been signed making joint recommendations assigned to relieve a substantial number of refugees of all races and nationalities.

The Associated Press states that a confidential report is understood to include:

Firstly, the impossibility of large-scale evacuation of Jews and other oppressed persons from occupied Europe because of the transportation problem and the difficulty of negotiating with the enemy.

Secondly, a recommendation temporarily to relocate in Africa 80,000 refugees now in neutral countries until peace permits their return to their homelands.

Thirdly, provisions for feeding and caring for refugees in neutral countries through an Inter-Governmental Committee including Spain and Portugal.

(“Sydney Morning Herald,” May 1st, 1943.)

The attention of all civilized nations, especially of all Jews of the world, was focussed upon the deliberations and the decisions of the Bermuda Conference. The curtain rose, the curtain fell. The result was the above laconic statement published by the Associated Press. “The mountain has brought forth a mouse.”

Even now, 2½ months after the Conference, nothing has transpired to the effect that efficient measures have been taken to check the frightful slaughter of Jewish men, women and children which is continuing in the charnel-houses of Poland, with the accuracy of a scientific experiment, at the rate of 6,000 persons per day—unfortunate human beings who are guilty of one crime only: that of being Jews.

It is therefore of utmost importance to emphasize that the Bermuda Conference was amply informed of all the angles of the Jewish problem. It is necessary to prove that practical measures for the rescue of Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe were duly laid before the Conference.

The Memoranda and material submitted to the Bermuda Conference by the Jewish organisations were received in Sydney only at the end of June. The World Jewish Congress (Australian Section) resolved immediately to publish same, in conjunction with some essays written before and after the Bermuda Conference and with statements made by some Australian leading citizens in connection with the results of the Conference.

The Bermuda Conference was a failure much more depressing and discouraging than that of the Evian Conference of 1938. It revealed in all its horror the incredible state of selfishness, indifference and callousness in which mankind is

being plunged after nearly four years of present World War. There is, however, one consideration. We have had a long and pathetic history of four thousand years, a history of profound suffering, but also of highest acts of idealism and heroism. This history has taught us, never to lose faith and courage, even in the most crucial hour. We know that Governments come and go. We know that the Bermuda Conference will not be the last word in the tragic problem of European Jewry. But we are also fully aware of the fact that had there been a genuine will to rescue as many as possible of the remnants of Jewry in Europe, hundreds of thousands who are now doomed to perish would remain alive.

We face the present Jewish tragedy, the certain disaster for thousands of our kinsfolk in Europe, in profound grief and mourning, but without despair. We believe that the fate of the Jews still surviving in Europe is a matter not for Jews only, but for Christians too, and in fact, for the whole civilized world. And we are strengthened in this belief by the words of encouragement and of understanding coming from prominent men and women outside the Jewish people, from Church leaders, statesmen, leaders of the working class, scientists, writers, journalists, artists, community and social workers, etc.

We have no right to let our hands fall down. We must continue to appeal, to demand, to claim, to shout until our voice is heard. This is our only weapon. We must not relax our efforts until those who are proclaiming to the world inspiring and lofty ideals embodied in great and eternal Characters, will have resolved to transmit their words into deeds.

Sydney, July, 1943.

While the Jews Die

FREDA KIRCHWEY

Jews in Europe are being killed because they are Jews. Other innocent people are being killed too—hostages, men and women who resist oppression, old people who consume food needed by German soldiers and workers. But only Jews are being killed without other excuse or cause than the fact that they belong to a single religious-racial group. Hitler has promised their total liquidation, and he is carrying out that promise as fast as his Mobile Extermination Squads can work. They work fast. Seven or eight thousand Jews a week are being massacred. The ghetto of Warsaw, two years ago the dumping ground for Jews from all over occupied Europe, is now depopulated. Every Jew is dead. In Cracow, where 60,000 Jews lived, 56,000 have been killed.

The ways in which these slaughters are conducted have been reported. The numbers have been verified. The story is old. But the killing goes on. And as Hitler's armies are forced step by step back into Europe, the tempo of extermination quickens. He must hurry now lest the liberating armies arrive in time to rescue some fragment of the doomed race. It is not fantastic to believe that even when Hitler is overthrown, he will find profound compensation in leaving behind him a Europe "cleansed" of the hated Jew.

If this happens, no one living today will escape retribution for the crime. For the purge of the Jews is only positively a Nazi crime. In this country, you and I and the President and the Congress and the State Department are accessories to the crime and share Hitler's guilt. If we had behaved like humane and generous people instead of complacent, cowardly ones, the two million Jews lying today in the earth of Poland and Hitler's other crowded graveyards would be alive and safe. And other millions yet to die would have found sanctuary. We had it in our power to rescue this doomed people and we did not lift a hand to do it—or perhaps it would be fairer to say that we lifted just one cautious hand, encased in a tight-fitting glove of quotas and visas and affidavits, and a thick layer of prejudice.

Today we hear something is going to be done. Secretary Hull has suggested a meeting at Ottawa of the executive committee of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees appointed at the Evian Conference in 1938.

By all means let's have the conference. But let's remember that it wasn't called because our government felt impelled to do something about the greatest crime committed in our generation. Not a move of any sort was made until a delegation of prominent Jews called on Secretary Hull and the President of the United States on December 8 and presented them with verified accounts of the massacres in Poland which were simultaneously released to the press. The President and Mr. Hull promised action. But nothing happened until more than a month later, when Lord Halifax presented an aide-memoire to Secretary Hull expressing the "concern" of the British government over the killings. And then it took another month for Secretary Hull to reply. Hundreds of thousands of Jews fell into their self-dug graves while our government, with glacial slowness, moved toward a proposal to confer and to explore. And in view of this record of delay it is fair to wonder whether even this modest step would have been taken if a great mass-meeting of protest had not been called for March 1 in Madison Square Garden in New York—a meeting organized by the American Jewish Congress and sponsored by a group of important labour and liberal organizations.

Whatever the sequence of events, we must be glad that some voices were loud enough to penetrate the official armour. But let us not bank too much on the new "Evian" conference. The first one was held in 1938 while it was still possible to save the Jews of Europe. But Hitler is still busy with the job of exterminating 5,000,000 of them. Let us be hopeful—but not sanguine.

And let us also acknowledge the uncomfortable fact that if a group of American Jews had not demanded action, nothing, not even a conference, would have resulted from the horrors in Europe. Let us acknowledge that in shame. And let us ask ourselves what has come over the minds of ordinary men and women that makes it seem normal and indeed inevitable that this country should stolidly stand by and do nothing in the face of one of the world's greatest tragedies until the Jews themselves press for action.

But what on earth could we have done more than we did do? . . .

One answer is that we could have cut down those barbed-wire defenses strung along our shores. We could have sus-

pended the immigration quotas for the duration of Hitler. We could have raised funds to support refugees who couldn't bring out any money. We could have chartered ships to bring them from Europe. We could have offered an example of decency and humanity to a world hungry for evidences of good feeling.

We could have done all this. We could have made the resolutions of the Evian conference a reality instead of a hollow gesture. We could have entered into an agreement for common action with the other anti-Axis nations—an agreement to absorb all the victims of Hitlerism who were physically able to escape—each nation taking a quota decided upon with due regard to its size and wealth and capacity to absorb immigrants. If the United States had taken the lead in such a move, I am certain that no nation would have refused its co-operation. And under such a scheme, the burden on each would have been insignificant.

But nothing was done. Every nation established its own restrictions, the United States admitting no more immigrants than in the days before the persecutions began. And so we come to the horrifying present . . .

One thing is certain. If the representatives of the Anti-Axis powers meet in a mood of impatience, prepared to deal on a minimum basis with a difficult and irritating problem—if, in short, the mood of the past prevails—nothing will happen at Ottawa or after. Europe's remaining Jews will be saved only if their anguish has become unbearable to men and women who live in safety at a distance. They will be saved only if we recognize their fate as inextricably linked with our own.

(“The Nation,” New York, March 13th, 1943.)

Documents submitted to the Bermuda Conference

Programme for the Rescue of Jews From Nazi Occupied Europe *Submitted April 14, 1943, to the Bermuda Refugee Conference by the Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs of*

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS
B'NAI B'RITH
JEWISH LABOUR COMMITTEE
AMERICAN EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
FOR ZIONIST AFFAIRS
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA
UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS OF AMERICA
SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA

The systematic mass extermination of Jews in Nazi-occupied territories as a programme of German state action was revealed as early as September, 1942. The authenticity of the extermination programme was established by the directed investigations of consular agents of the United Nations in neutral lands.

By the end of 1942, it was estimated that more than two million Jews had been killed. The extermination programme of the Nazis was achieved through mass deportations in caravans, where the victims died of suffocation or starvation; through extermination centres where the victims died of asphyxiation by gas in gas chambers; by fumes from sulphur mines; by carbon monoxide from army trucks; through mass cremation; through mass machine gunning; through planned starvation.

Four months ago, in response to the appeals of an aroused humanity, to which the voices of great leaders of

religious thought and statesmen of vision gave their support, the United Nations issued a denunciation of the Nazi policy of mass murder, and pledged themselves to take practical measures. Since that declaration was issued, months have passed, and its implementation has yet to be achieved.

But the holocaust of murder continues unabated. As the failure of Total War is driven home to Nazi leadership, the frustration of their hope of world conquest turns them in fury to the murder of all Jews who are helpless in their grasp. In addition to the Jews who already have been done to death, total extermination threatens all those who remain in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to all peoples suffering from the hardships of Total War, and especially to those peoples of all denominations suffering under the heel of the Nazi oppressors. But it is our duty to point out that **of all the peoples who have suffered and are suffering under the oppression of the Nazi aggressors, the Jews are the only people who have been singled out and marked for total extermination by Nazi Germany.**

The daily accounts of mass murders accumulate in all their heart-rending details. These accounts have shaken the Jewish community to its depths.

Those who linger in helpless captivity, awaiting the dreadful call for departure to ghetto or concentration camp where death awaits them, are thrown into the depth of unutterable despair by the thought that they are regarded as merely the wastage of a cruel world, that they are unclaimed and unwanted, that their kinsmen from afar are unable to aid them, and that there seems to be no shadow of hope for them anywhere.

The threat of retribution after the war and the excoriation of their horrible deeds have not served to turn the Nazi leaders from their determined policy of mass murder. The condemnation of the civilized world has not arrested the mounting tragedy. It is submitted, therefore, that the United Nations cannot afford to close their eyes to this appalling situation.

So far as is known, the United Nations have as yet taken no decisive action to rescue as many of the victims marked for death as could be saved. Public opinion is far ahead of Government decision. The moral indignation of great

American communities, of their religious and labor leaders, was climaxed by an appeal for action by the United Nations on March 1, 1943, in New York, at a mass demonstration of mourning and an appeal for action.

At this meeting, a detailed programme of rescue was submitted and approved and forwarded to the Government of the United States. What was registered at the meeting on March 1st was endorsed by similar demonstrations which followed in other cities. The American press and assemblies of Christian religious organizations have joined in the demand upon the Government for action. Elsewhere throughout the democratic world the public clamors for immediate action.

The Bermuda Conference was in a measure prompted by all these public manifestations of humanitarian interest. It is submitted, therefore, that it becomes the duty of the United Nations to turn to a planned programme of determined action, looking toward the release of a substantial number of Jews from Nazi Germany, the creation of Sanctuaries for them in Allied and neutral countries, and the feeding under appropriate guarantees of those who are compelled to remain imprisoned within Nazi-occupied countries.

In the belief that it may contribute to such a programme, the following proposals are respectfully submitted:

I. The United Nations should approach the German Government, and the governments of the states it now partly dominates or controls, through the Vatican or neutral governments like Switzerland, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Argentine, with a view to securing their agreement to the release of their Jewish victims and to the emigration of Jews to such havens of refuge as may be provided.

II. The United Nations should, without delay, take steps to designate and establish a number of Sanctuaries in Allied and neutral countries to accommodate substantial numbers of Hitlers' victims and to serve as havens of refuge for those Jews whose release from captivity may be arranged for, or who may find their way to freedom through efforts of their own.

III. The procedure that now prevails in the administration of the existing immigration law in the United States, which acts as a deterrent and retardation of legal immigration under the established quotas, should be revised and adjusted to war conditions, in order that refugees from Nazi-occupied territories, within such quotas, may find Sanctuary here.

IV. Subject to provisions for its national security, England should be asked to provide for receiving a reasonable number of victims escaping from Nazi-occupied territories and to provide for their accommodation for the duration.

V. The possibilities in several British territories, both in Africa and in the Caribbean, should be explored without delay. Sanctuary has already been afforded to thousands of refugees in these territories and there is room for many more, if not for permanent settlement, at least for the duration.

VI. The United Nations should urge the Republics of Latin America to modify such administrative regulations that now make immigration under the law extremely difficult, and to endeavour to find temporary havens of refuge for a substantial number of refugees.

VII. Overriding pre-war political considerations, England should be persuaded to open the doors of Palestine for Jewish immigration and the offer of hospitality made by the Jewish Community of Palestine should be accepted.

VIII. The United Nations should provide financial guarantees to all such neutral states as have given temporary refuge to Jews coming from Nazi-occupied territories and provide for their feeding and maintenance and eventual evacuation. The neutral states should be guaranteed that the refugees will not become a public charge and that they will be transferred to permanent Sanctuaries as soon as possible.

IX. In order to do away with the lack of identity which many stateless refugees present, and to give them sponsorship and protection, an arrangement similar to that which existed under the League of Nations should be established and the Stateless refugees should be given identification passports analogous to the "Nansen" passports.

X. In view of the fact that mass starvation is the design of the Nazi regime, the United Nations should take appropriate steps without delay to organize a system for the feeding of the victims of Nazi oppression who are unable to leave the jurisdiction and the control of the Axis.

XI. It is submitted that the United Nations undertake to provide the financial guarantees that may be required for the execution of the programme of rescue here outlined.

XII. The United Nations are urged to establish an appropriate inter-governmental agency, to which full authority and

power should be given to implement the programme of rescue here outlined.

In support of these proposals an **aide memoire** is appended.

In the name of humanity and of the ideals which the Armed Forces of the United Nations have arisen to defend, we respectfully submit this appeal in the hope that effective action will be taken without delay.

Appendix to the Programme

For the Rescue of Jews from Nazi Occupied Europe

A.

THE RECORD OF EXTERMINATION.

The total extermination of the Jewish population of Europe is now proceeding at a rapid pace. Through deportations to Eastern Europe, forced labour, planned starvation and outright murder this clear-cut Nazi programme had already taken at least 2,000,000 Jewish lives by November 1942, it is reported. In the five months that have since passed, it is believed several hundred thousand Jews have perished at Axis hands. Today there still remain perhaps 3,500,000 Jews in Axis-occupied Europe. The fate that awaits them is no secret. In every public address since last summer Hitler has reiterated his threat to destroy them completely. That threat is being carried out day by day. The statistics that are available prove that unless drastic steps are taken immediately, Hitler and his lieutenants will achieve their goal.

The Need for Evacuation.

Of the still surviving Jews in Axis Europe, it may be assumed that some 600,000 are children. Of these, about 380,000, it is believed, are less than 11 years of age, and the remainder between 11 and 15. Some 230,000 of these children, it is estimated, are now in Polish ghettos; about 130,000 are in occupied Soviet territory; nearly 100,000 are in Axis Hungary; about 55,000 are in the Balkan Peninsula, and the rest are scattered throughout occupied Europe. All face im-

minent death unless immediate, forthright action is taken to save them. Civilized society's duty to check the mass extermination of 600,000 children and of several million adults as well is clear. Their only hope for life lies in evacuation. Those who can be evacuated in time must be evacuated and sanctuary must be provided for them. The aged, the infirm and all others who cannot be removed from Axis Europe must be fed now before starvation destroys them.

B.

SANCTUARIES.

1. A number of neutral countries have already expressed their willingness to do their part to save some of these human beings. Tiny Switzerland has earned the undying admiration of all freedom loving peoples by providing haven for thousands who escaped deportation from France to annihilation centres in Eastern Europe. Switzerland has done this despite her precarious position as an oasis of liberty within Axis Europe and, it is believed, would be ready in addition to accept thousands of children for temporary asylum. In Sweden, a committee of prominent Christian leaders has been established to help save Jews from deportation, starvation and death. In the words of a prominent Swedish churchman, spoken in connection with the deportation of Jews from Norway:

Sweden cannot remain silent when such things happen close to our frontiers. If we keep silent, the very stones will cry to high heaven.

Effective action on the necessary scale is, however, quite impossible without the concerted and resolute efforts of the United States and Great Britain, as the leaders among the United Nations. They and they alone are powerful enough to secure the evacuation of Jews from Axis Europe and to establish and maintain the necessary havens of refuge for the victims of Axis terror. They and they alone possess the moral force to stir other countries to action.

2. Great Britain, which has already given aid to thousands of refugees, has found them to be useful in war industry, in scientific research directly connected with the war, and in many other branches of the war effort. Its hospitality could be further extended to its own advantage as well as for humanitarian reasons. Furthermore, such action on the part of both Great Britain and the United States would at once have favourable repercussions elsewhere.

3. A number of countries have formally and informally indicated that they are prepared to receive children. Among these, in addition to the United States and Great Britain, are Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Paraguay and Chile. Needless to say, Jews of Palestine are most anxious to receive as many as possible. Probably other neutral and friendly countries such as Australia and Cuba, as well as other Latin American states, could be prevailed upon to admit Axis victims, and especially children.

This temporary sanctuary could be assured where governments are given adequate guarantees that (a) the children and others whom they admit will remain for the duration only, and (b) that the necessary food and financial assistance will be forthcoming during the war. The leading United Nations, and primarily the United States and Great Britain, should be willing in this tragic emergency to furnish these assurances.

4. In the United States, the present method of administering the immigration procedure is a serious deterrent to the admission of many thousands of persons legally admissible to the United States under the quota. It is a matter of common knowledge that the failure to take prompt action and the present high percentage of rejections on purely technical grounds have left many worthy and admissible emigrants to the mercy of the Nazis. Under the present procedure only a small fraction of the 153,000 persons admissible to the United States annually by quota actually enter this country. For the fiscal year ending June, 1942 only 39,389 persons were admitted. Although the quotas for Nazi dominated countries within the total of 153,000 are relatively limited, the relaxation of the present administrative procedure would permit the lawful admission of many thousands now facing death. It would undoubtedly lead to the liberalization of the immigration procedures of Latin American countries.

5. Palestine is the country closest to Europe which is eminently suited to serve as a haven of refuge. It has already proved its ability to absorb large numbers. It assures to Jewish victims of the Axis the most hospitable reception, and it is close enough to the scene to reduce transportation problems to the minimum. For the Jews of the Balkans particularly it is the closest sanctuary. It is possible to provide for the transit of Jews from Poland and Southwestern Europe, via Bulgaria and Turkey to Palestine, both by rail and by

Swedish, Turkish or other neutral ships. In Palestine employment possibilities directly connected with the war effort are available for those adults who are admitted, and adequate care is assured for children.

A substantial number of refugees now in Spain and Portugal can be evacuated to Palestine, provided transportation facilities are made available beyond Lorenzo Marques.

6. Additional numbers can readily be moved to North Africa. Facilities exist there for their reception and for their employment.

The evacuation of refugees from Spain and Portugal to North Africa and elsewhere would make room in these countries for admission of others now trapped in France. It is estimated that there are now between 14,000 and 15,000 refugees of all nationalities and faiths in Spain.

7. Camp Gibraltar, Jamaica, is another haven with immediate facilities to accommodate several thousand persons, provided additional food is sent there.

Transportation Facilities.

It is of the utmost urgency that the United Nations explore every possibility to make available shipping facilities to rescue hundreds of thousands of human beings from death. In this connection it would appear that many neutral vessels of Swedish, Turkish, Spanish, Portugese, and other registries, might be utilized. In addition, there are thousands of cargo vessels returning from Europe with empty bottoms. If safe conduct is provided, these ships, flying neutral flags or the emblem of the Red Cross, could do the job that must be done as the only alternative to the mass extermination of the Jewish people.

C.

STATUS FOR THE STATELESS.

Victims of Axis terror who are stateless or deprived of documents of identity must be provided with the necessary protection through the issuance of identifying and travel documents, similar to those created in 1922 and known as the Nansen passport. Experience with the Nansen passport for stateless persons and with the 1935 Convention which gave similar documents to early victims of Nazi terror, has proved these are effective.

D. FEEDING.

Jews who cannot be removed from Axis Europe face imminent death from starvation. Under the present German rationing system they receive only a small fraction of the food allotted to other subjugated peoples. They are expressly denied all meat, fish, milk, vegetables and fruit. They are not permitted to buy any unrationed foods. They are limited almost entirely to a pound of bread per week and a few potatoes, it is reported. The present diet of the Jewish population concentrated in the ghettos of Poland yields only about 400 calories a day, or about one-sixth of the required minimum, and about 200 calories a day less than the starving population of Greece. As a result of planned starvation, the 1941 death rate in the Warsaw Ghetto was nearly 10 times as high as in Holland; more than 7 times that of the Czechs; nearly 7 times greater than in Belgium; and more than 4½ times that of the neighbouring Polish population of Warsaw. The Jewish death rate in Vienna between June 15 and September 15, 1942, was 10 times as high as for a comparable three months period before the war.

Both the British Government and our State Department have expressed their willingness to allow limited quantities of food indigenous to neutral European countries to be sent to Jews in the Polish ghettos. But if we are to prevent the complete extermination of the Jewish people, action on a different and enlarged scale is necessary. The experience in the case of Greece, to which considerable food supplies were sent by the United Nations, and where effective supervision was introduced to keep the Germans from appropriating these supplies for their own use, is proof that there is an answer to German organized starvation. Medical supplies, emergency medicinal and concentrated foods could be obtained for this purpose in the United States and South America and perhaps elsewhere.

The International Red Cross or the Red Cross Societies of several neutral countries should be entrusted with the supervision of the distribution of such food and supplies, as in the case of Greece.

E. JEWS AS PRISONERS OF WAR.

Jews who remain in Europe are de facto prisoners of war. They are confined in ghettos and penal labour colonies

under the pain of death. They are imprisoned in "Jewish towns" (Poland), reservations (Terezin, Czechoslovakia and Rumanian occupied "Transdnistria"). Within these concentrated areas, Jews are prisoners of war to all intents and purposes, and, therefore, should be entitled to the Red Cross aid which goes to war prisoners.

The jurisdiction of the International Red Cross should, therefore, be broadened to empower it to render to Jews in ghettos and similar concentration areas the same services as are rendered to prisoners of war. The victims should, therefore, be permitted to receive food packages sent from belligerent or neutral countries.

F.

MACHINERY FOR PROGRAMME OF RESCUE.

The existing machinery for rescuing the victims of Axis oppression is wholly inadequate. The tragic circumstances are so overwhelming, the need so imperative, that it is believed indispensable to confer large powers upon an inter-governmental committee. Furthermore, the present Inter-governmental Committee is not an organization of the United Nations. It is, therefore, essential that an agency should be established by the United Nations, vested with full power to carry out the necessary programme of evacuation and rescue.

G.

FINANCIAL RESCUE PROGRAMME.

The financial obligations necessarily arising in connection with the evacuation of these victims of Axis persecution must come from the governments of the leading United Nations. Private organizations are in no position to meet the full burden involved, although they are ready to continue to contribute up to the limit of their resources. Maintenance for those who are evacuated in countries of temporary asylum whose own resources are limited must be guaranteed by the leading United Nations.

World Jewish Congress Memorandum

The following Memorandum to the Bermuda Refugee Conference was submitted by the World Jewish Congress over the signatures of Dr. Stephen S. Wise, chairman of its Executive Committee, and Dr. Nahum Goldmann, chairman of its Administrative Committee.

1. THE DESTRUCTION OF JEWISH LIFE IN EUROPE.

The Nazis have never concealed their determination to destroy European Jewry. As late as March 14, 1943, Dr. Goebbels, in an interview given to foreign press representatives, declared:

Germany is firmly convinced that the Jews are an international disease which must be exterminated in Europe.

In his broadcast to the German people on February 18th, when he exhorted them to "total mobilization," Dr. Goebbels made this reference to protests of the United Nations:

If hostile foreign countries raise a sanctimonious protest against our anti-Semitic policy and shed hypocritical crocodile tears over our measures against Jewry, that cannot prevent us from doing what is necessary. Germany in any case has no intention of yielding to this Jewish threat, but intends rather to exercise against Jewry our prompt and if necessary, our complete and most radical suppression.

In his New Year's Message (1943) to the German People, Hitler made clear his intentions:

. . . And if furthermore I gave assurance that the hope of international Jewry to destroy the German and other European nations by means of a new World War will be the gravest error committed by Jewry for thousands of years, that it will in any case not destroy the German nation but will exterminate itself.

Starvation has probably been the most effective method of destroying the Jews. Many ways are employed to prevent Jews from eating their daily bread. Restrictions against them are such that Jews, unlike others, find it almost impossible to obtain anything except their allotted rations, even when these are not available. Segregated behind urban ghetto walls they cannot search the country-side for food. The barbed wire of

the ghetto prisons as well as their systematic pauperization deny to them, except in rare cases, the food of the black market.

There exists a number of anti-Jewish food decrees and practices which spell in the aggregate slow death. Shopping hours for Jews are, in all Nazi-controlled countries, limited to two hours in the afternoon, when the shops are practically empty. Moreover, the ban on the delivery of food to Jewish homes made it impossible to circumvent the shopping-hour restrictions with the aid of Gentile friends. In addition, stamping ration cards with the letter J, or issuing cards of a distinct colour, have been other devices to insure discrimination against Jews. Furthermore, mass expulsion of Jews from villages, and expropriation of all rural Jewish property, made it impossible, at least for one section of the population, to enjoy the fruits of their toil. The deliveries of food in the ghettos depend entirely on German transfer offices; the Jews are forbidden to buy or even to accept gifts from outside of the ghetto. Finally, in this connection, it may be recalled that leaving the ghetto is punished by death.

Even worse is the situation with regard to the character of the food and the rations themselves. The Jews receive practically none of the essential protective and vitamin foods. They get no meat, fish, poultry, milk, dairy products, fruit or vegetables. They may purchase none of the foods which are still unrationed, none of the items which are distributed on the basis of the consumer lists, none of the semi-rationed items. More and more rationed staples are entirely denied to them; and of such rationed food as they may still receive, they are allotted not more than half of the normal rations. As a rule, the weekly rations for Jews in Polish ghettos amount at best to a pound of black bread, two ounces of so-called jams or marmalade, one ounce of sugar, and perhaps a few potatoes. They receive no other food. 400 calories is the daily ration of a ghetto-Jew as compared with a nutritional minimum of 3,000.

The result of these starvation rations is a decimation unparalleled in any other group. So, for instance, in the Warsaw ghetto alone, during the year 1941, 47,428 Jews perished. This would amount to about one out of ten. Spotted typhus and tuberculosis are rampant.

Most terrible is the situation of the children. In 1941, the death rate among Jewish children in the Warsaw

ghetto was estimated to be thirty times as high as among the Polish children.

A Swedish journalist who visited Warsaw in 1941, wrote:

Hunger in the ghetto is frightful. The inhabitants seem to be living corpses. Their faces and eyes are sunken . . . Jewish life in ghettos is tragic, gloomy and hopeless. The Jews wait and long for a new Moses.

A Hungarian visitor in 1942 described in the following words the German capital:

The Jews of Berlin are very pale. Their faces are waxy as if already wearing a death mask. When I pass by one of these Jews, I could hear his bones softly rattling.

What has happened since is cloaked in darkness and horror. Last summer Hermann Backe, German Food Minister, was said to have proposed the mass extermination of Jews as a food conservation measure.

The practice of large scale deportation has proved a no less effective instrument of extermination. Under the impact of a fanatical hatred and a migromania which does not stop even before his own kinfolk, Hitler is moving hundreds of thousands of Jews in overcrowded and locked cattle-cars, with little if any belongings, with insufficient food, for long journeys, to discover at the arrival at the "unknown destination" how many of them have perished en route. There is on record an official statement made last summer by Himmler's special expert for deportations Obersturmfuehrer Hiege to the effect that thirty per cent. of the deportees perish en route. The Jews are permanently on the move: from Germany, Austria, and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to the fortress reservation of Terezin, from there to Poland, from Poland to the Soviet Nazi front.

The greater part of these people may be used by the Nazis for their war effort as long as they can serve this purpose. There is no doubt that they are destroyed as soon as they are no longer of any use to the Nazi war machine. In the meantime, conditions of living, housing, and labour are such that the process of destruction continues automatically.

As a consequence of this policy, many ancient Jewish communities have disappeared, and there are today in Europe a number of countries which have practically no more

Jews. The Jewish population of Germany has been reduced from half a million to 25,000; in Austria, from more than 200,000 to 5,000; in Slovakia, from 80,000 to 15,000. Estonia and Danzig are completely *Judenrein*; and the same is virtually true also of Yugoslavia. What Jews remain in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, are, with few exceptions, concentrated in the so-called reservation of Terezin.

The great Jewry of Poland has been reduced from three and a quarter million souls to several hundred thousand. The remainder, with the exception of some half million who fled during the Polish Campaign and at the beginning of the Soviet-Nazi war to Asiatic Russia, have perished. Warsaw, the greatest Jewish community in Europe, was first concentrated in a small ghetto where living conditions were such that the death toll was appalling. And in February 1943, a German newspaper, *The Donauzeitung* of Belgrade, confirmed the reports current throughout the world to the effect that the community had practically disappeared and the ghetto area was made accessible to the general population.

II. THE ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

The leaders of the United Nations have from time to time denounced in unequivocal terms the outrages which the Nazi authorities have perpetrated on the Jewish populations in the countries under Axis control, and they have made it clear that they propose at the conclusion of the war to bring the Nazi criminals to justice. The most important of these pronouncements was the following joint statement of the United States and the European members of the United Nations, published on December 17th, 1942:

The attention of the Belgian, Czechoslovak, Greek, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norwegian, Polish, Soviet, United Kingdom, United States and Yugoslav governments and also of the French National Committee (Fighting French) has been drawn to numerous reports from Europe that the German authorities, not content with denying to persons of Jewish race in all the territories over which their barbarous rule has been extended the most elementary human rights, are now carrying into effect Hitler's oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe.

From all the occupied countries, Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality to eastern Europe.

In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughter house, the ghettos established by the German invader are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries.

None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labour camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions.

The number of victims of these bloody cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women and children.

The above mentioned governments and the French National Committee condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of coldblooded extermination.

They declare that such events can only strengthen the resolve of all freedom loving peoples to overthrow the barbarous Hitlerite tyranny.

They reaffirm their solemn resolution, to insure that those responsible for the crimes shall not escape retribution and to press on with the necessary practical measures to this end.

The reading of this statement by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons was followed by a demonstration of sympathy with the Jewish victims of Nazi oppression without precedent in the history of the House.

The legislature of the United States expressed its sympathy in the following resolution, adopted by the Senate on March 9th, 1943, and concurred in by the House of Representatives on March 18th, 1943:

Whereas the American people view with indignation the atrocities inflicted upon the civilian population in the Nazi-occupied countries, and especially the mass murder of Jewish men, women, and children; and

Whereas this policy of the Nazis has created a reign of terror, brutality, and extermination in Poland, and other countries in eastern and central Europe: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that these brutal and indefensible outrages against millions of helpless men, women, and children should be, and they are hereby, condemned as unworthy of any nation or any regime which pretends to be civilized;

Resolved further, that the dictates of humanity and honourable conduct in war demand that this inexcusable slaughter and mistreatment shall cease and that it is the

sense of this Congress that those guilty directly or indirectly, of these criminal acts shall be held accountable and punished in a manner commensurate with the offences for which they are responsible.

On March 23rd, 1943, the House of Lords adopted the following resolution on the motion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which has since been placed on the Order Paper of the House of Commons by nearly three hundred of its members:

That in view of the massacres and starvation of Jews and others in enemy and enemy-occupied countries, this House desires to assure His Majesty's Government of its fullest support for immediate measures, on the largest and most generous scale compatible with the requirements of military operations and security, for providing help and temporary asylum to persons in danger of massacre who are able to leave enemy and enemy-occupied countries.

Particular attention is drawn to the following excerpts from the speech made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, as reported by the Associated Press:

He said that it was inevitable to contrast the solemn declaration made by the United Nations last December 17th with the very meagre action that had followed. Difficulties were great but the Government should be spurred on to greater rapidity of action.

He urged that steps be taken to carry out a promise given by the Colonial Secretary that Bulgarian, Hungarian and Rumanian Jewish children and accompanying adults would be admitted into Palestine; he proposed that visas be granted for Great Britain at least to all those refugees able to reach this country who have husbands, wives or children already here; he suggested that blocks of visas be granted British Consuls in Spain, Portugal and perhaps Turkey for issuance at their discretion to refugees reaching those countries; and he asked that neutral nations be encouraged to admit additional refugees by guarantees from the United Nations to relieve them of a stipulated proportion of the refugees after victory or sooner, and by offers of supplies and financial aid for their care.

The Archbishop said that there was a suggestion he would put forward more tentatively, but that he thought ought to be seriously considered; that through some neutral power an offer should be made directly to the German Government to receive Jews in territories of the British Empire, and other Allied Nations if they agreed, on a basis

of so many a month. Such an offer would very likely be refused and then Hitler's guilt would stand out all the more clearly.

In conclusion, he declared that his chief protest was against procrastination, asserting that it had taken five weeks after December 17th for the British Government to approach the United States, and then six weeks for the American Government to make the reply in which it had suggested a meeting of representatives for preliminary exploration. The Jews were being slaughtered at the rate of tens of thousands a day, and it should at least be urged that when this meeting occurred it should be not only for exploration but to reach decisions.

It had in the meantime become abundantly clear that the declarations and statements of governments and legislatures have no effect on the determination of the German Government to carry out its policy of extermination and that the only hope for the surviving Jews of Axis-occupied Europe was their removal to places of refuge, whether temporary or permanent, provided by the United Nations or neutral countries.

On January 20th, 1943, more than a month after the publication of the declaration of December 17th, Lord Halifax expressed in a note to the United States the concern of the British Government over the situation. It was not until five weeks later, on February 25th, 1943, that Secretary of State Cordell Hull proposed that British and American representatives should meet in Ottawa to undertake a "preliminary exploration" of the problem, the place of meeting for this Conference being subsequently changed to Bermuda. This note was made public on March 3rd, 1943 following the great public demonstration held at Madison Square Garden, New York, on March 1st, 1943 under the auspices of the American Jewish Congress in conjunction with national church and labour bodies.

III. THE NEED FOR ACTION.

Many months have elapsed since it became apparent that the Nazi Government was determined to carry through its policy of extermination to its bitter end, and it is four months since the United States and the European members of the United Nations gave public and formal expression to the feelings of horror with which the destruction of a whole people was being watched by the civilized world. It cannot but be regretted that hundreds of thousands of Jews have been allowed to perish while the leaders of the democratic nations

have been in the process of formulating a policy which even now has got no further than "preliminary exploration."

The warnings of retribution uttered repeatedly by the most authoritative spokesmen of the democratic world have had no deterrent effect on the enemy. There remain only two ways in which the total destruction of the Jewish population on the continent of Europe can be prevented: 1. The sending of supplies under proper safeguards to places of detention and remnants of Jewish communities which survive, and 2. To remove as many Jews as possible from Nazi-controlled areas to places of refuge.

All the Jewish organizations concerned with the problem, whether in the United States, Great Britain or elsewhere, have worked out plans for submission to the Conference, and the substance of these several proposals is virtually the same. The programme submitted by the Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs, a copy of which is appended, represents the views of all the major Jewish organizations in the United States. A similar Joint Committee in Great Britain has drafted a virtually identical programme. The World Jewish Congress urges the Conference most earnestly to give the closest study to these proposals.

If the gravity of the problem is not recognized, and action not taken immediately, the victory of the United Nations may mean nothing to the worst victim of Nazi barbarism. Dead communities cannot be restored to life.

Memorandum of the Jewish Agency for Palestine

PALESTINE AND THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

The following Memorandum was submitted to the Bermuda Refugee Conference by the Jewish Agency for Palestine over the signature of Dr. Chaim Weizmann, President.

I. In submitting this memorandum on behalf of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, we desire in the first instance to offer some observations on the scope and character of the Bermuda Conference.

II. In the light of the overwhelming tragedy which faces the more than four million Jews which, it is estimated, still survive in the Nazi occupied countries, it was hoped that the governments of Great Britain, the United States and other

members of the United Nations, would be ready to undertake practical steps commensurate with the vastness of the problem. Unhappily the statements of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Anthony Eden, and of United States Secretary of State Mr. Cordell Hull, give little support for this hope. The terms of reference for the Bermuda Conference are severely limited in scope and are intended apparently to deal only with the fringe of the problem rather than with the problem itself. While the Jewish Agency for Palestine is grateful for any measures which may be calculated to save the lives of at least some of Europe's Jews, it would be failing in its most elementary duty were it not to call attention to a situation which, overriding all ordinary political considerations, calls for a plan conceived on the broadest possible lines for the rescue of these four million Jews who are in imminent danger of physical annihilation.

III. The Jewish Agency for Palestine is deeply conscious of the fact that the sufferings occasioned by the war are part of the burden which every people must carry and that the Jews are not the only people subjected to such suffering. But it must be borne in mind that of all peoples, the Jews have been singled out for utter and complete destruction by the enemy. Should the announced policy of the enemy continue unchecked, it is not impossible that by the time the war will have been won, the largest part of the Jewish population of Europe will have been exterminated. In these circumstances it is inconceivable that the democracies, engaged as they are in a struggle for world liberation, should fail to take fullest cognizance of the plight in which the Jews in Nazi occupied countries find themselves.

IV. The Jewish Agency for Palestine is fully aware of the enormous difficulties, military and other, involved in this problem, yet it dares to hope that farsighted statesmanship on the part of the United Nations will find a way to meet it without in any way weakening the prosecution of the war against the enemy.

V. The memoranda submitted to the Bermuda Refugee Conference by the American Joint Emergency Committee on the European Jewish situation, and by the British Joint Emergency Consultative Committee contain a number of proposals for dealing with various aspects of the problem. In presenting this memorandum we address ourselves to the great possibilities of rescue and rehabilitation offered by Palestine. We do so in the belief that in any plans that may be adopted for

coping with this situation, the contribution of Palestine can and should be a major one.

VI. In the memorandum submitted by the Jewish Agency for Palestine to the Inter-Governmental Conference on Refugees called at Evian in July 1938 on the invitation of President Roosevelt, attention was drawn to the possibilities offered by Palestine for large-scale resettlement of Jewish refugees. It was pointed out that the capacity of Palestine to absorb new immigrants was not a matter of speculation but was based on the experience of several decades of colonization and the demonstrable possibilities of its rapidly developing economy. As was there emphasized too, Palestine is unique amongst the countries of possible Jewish immigration in that it is the one land to which Jews come, with international sanction, "as of right and not on sufferance." As the Jewish National Home it is the country above all to which Jews are entitled to claim admission.

VII. In the intervening years the situation of the Jews of Europe has immeasurably deteriorated and now presents a spectacle of unbroken horror. Unhappily too, the possibilities of large-scale rescue, by emigration to and absorption in countries other than Palestine, have been shown for political and other reasons to be limited in the extreme. The statement that the world is divided into countries in which the Jews cannot live and countries which they must not enter has proven only too true. So far as Palestine is concerned, however, despite great obstacles, in spite too of the outbreak of war and the closing of the Mediterranean, there has been continued and rapid development, and a further substantial immigration has been absorbed. The Jewish population which numbered about 65,000 at the end of the last war has grown to about 550,000 today, and, in the years since the rise of Hitler, Palestine has absorbed more immigrants from Germany and German-occupied Europe than any other country. It is urged that both as an ad hoc reception centre to which Jewish refugees may be brought and for the time being kept and maintained, and also as a place where in the long run the refugees may be absorbed into the general economy, Palestine should for the following reasons be given principal consideration:

- (a) As Jews coming to the Jewish National Home they would be welcomed in every possible way by their fellow Jews there. The spirit which animates the Jewish community of Palestine in this regard was given expression in a recent manifesto in the course of which it was stated that "the Jews of Palestine solemn-

ly declare their willingness and readiness to extend shelter to all Jews who are leaving or who have left occupied territories, to share their bread, to open their houses and to give their garments, as everything else, to save their brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, from being led like sheep to the slaughter house." So far as the refugees are concerned, they would feel themselves not exiles, but persons returning home. It would constitute the first step in their psychological rehabilitation.

- (b) From the practical point of view, Palestine by reason of its proximity to the Balkan countries has important geographical advantages. Transportation there from South Eastern Europe would be possible overland or by a relatively short sea-route, thus eliminating the need for large-scale shipping and greatly simplifying the transportation problem.
- (c) Once in Palestine the gradual absorption and integration of these refugees into the economic life of the country could in due course be effected. It is estimated that for 50,000 there would be immediate possibilities of absorption within the framework of the present economic structure. The very great expansion of Palestine's agriculture and industry since the outbreak of the war, and the fact that 30,000 Palestine Jews are today serving in the armed forces of the United Nations, has produced an acute shortage of labour which is in no degree met by current immigration. As regards the ultimate absorption of much larger numbers, an aide memoire is attached marked "A" and dated February 1, 1943 which has been previously submitted to the British Ambassador in Washington and to the United States Department of State. Very many of the refugees will, unquestionably, after all they have been through, be reluctant to return to the countries of their origin. It can hardly be intended to return them there against their will if an alternative course is open, and the great majority will almost certainly wish to remain and settle in Palestine. Thus by bringing them to Palestine in the first place, not merely is a second and wasteful transfer avoided, but the refugee is immediately placed on the road to a permanent solution of his problem.

VIII. We desire at this point to refer to the announcement of His Majesty's Government on February 3, 1943 of its

intention to allocate 29,000 Palestine immigration certificates primarily for refugee children from the Balkan countries. The efforts of His Majesty's Government to arrange for the evacuation and transportation of these children to Palestine are warmly appreciated and it is our earnest hope that everything will be done to press forward with these arrangements with all possible speed. In this connection we would point out however the necessity for increasing the proportion of adults, since efforts to arrange the emigration of children alone would undoubtedly encounter much greater difficulties than would that of children with parents. Moreover, the knowledge that adults are almost entirely excluded from the possibility of such evacuation plans, places them, as events have already shown even in the Balkan countries, in much greater jeopardy than might otherwise be the case. It is to be added, that in any event the immigration and maintenance of the large numbers of children contemplated, involving as it would the expenditures of great sums of money, should fall within the framework of any general scheme for financing refugee emigration which the consulting governments may be ready to undertake.

IX. The major proposal set out above for a large-scale transfer of Jews to Palestine is premised of course on the abandonment of the policy adumbrated by the British Government in the White Paper of May 1939, in terms of which Jewish immigration to Palestine is limited to approximately a further 30,000 immigrants and is to cease altogether after April 1944. That policy was a part of and at one with the discarded programme of appeasement in international relations which characterized the period immediately prior to the War. The policy of the White Paper was declared by the Permanent Mandates Commission to be out of accord with the obligations accepted by Great Britain and internationally approved in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine. It cannot stand the test of time or of justice, and it should be abandoned forthwith.

X. In this hour of grim tragedy for the Jewish people it is our fervent prayer that the great democratic nations whose conscience has been stirred even in the midst of a terrible war by the sufferings of the Jewish people in Europe, will seek to get to the root of the problem of European Jewry as it now manifests itself. It is a problem essentially of the homelessness of a people. Twenty-five years ago, also in the midst of a war, the first great promise of redemption by giving them back a home of their own was made. No greater contribution can be made to that problem at this time, than by doing everything possible to give practical effect to that historic promise.

Text of Final Communique of the Bermuda Conference on Refugees

The United States and United Kingdom delegations examined the refugee problem in all its aspects, including the position of those potential refugees who are still in the grip of Axis Powers without any immediate prospect of escape.

Nothing was excluded from their analysis and everything that held out any possibility, however remote, of solution of the problem was carefully investigated and thoroughly discussed.

From the outset it was realized that any recommendation that the delegates could make to their governments must pass two tests: would any recommendation submitted interfere with or delay the war effort of the United Nations and was the recommendation capable of accomplishment under war conditions?

The delegates at Bermuda felt bound to reject certain proposals which were not capable of meeting these tests.

The delegates were able to agree on a number of concrete recommendations which they are jointly submitting to their Governments and which it is felt will pass the tests set forth above and will lead to the relief of a substantial number of refugees of all races and nationalities.

Since the recommendations necessarily concern governments other than those represented at the Bermuda Conference and involve military considerations, they must remain confidential. It may be said, however, that in the course of the discussion the refugee problem was broken down into its main elements. The questions of shipping, food and supply were fully investigated.

The delegates also agreed on recommendations regarding the form of inter-governmental organization which was best fitted, in their opinion, to handle the problem in the future. This organization would have to be flexible enough to permit it to consider without prejudice any new factors that might come to its attention.

In each of these fields the delegates were able to submit agreed proposals for the consideration of their respective governments.

(“Congress Weekly,” May 14th, 1943.)

Avoidance of The Issue

The Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs is properly withholding judgment over the results of the Bermuda Conference until its complete report is received and studied. What the Conference has accomplished or failed to accomplish by way of concrete steps for the rescue of those on whose behalf it was called will point the course of future action for the Emergency Committee. However, the psychological atmosphere in which the Conference met and the political course which it followed is indicative of the general attitude of the United Nations toward the Jewish problem, and it would be folly to ignore it.

With the exception of the messages of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill to the Madison Square Garden Meeting in July 1942, and the Declaration of the United Nations on the mass-massacres, the tendency has been to avoid direct reference to the Jews. This must be regarded as part of a military strategy. Hitlers' propaganda which blamed the war on the Jews was the principal weapon in his psychological warfare on the democratic nations. The ground for his offensive had been prepared by years of anti-Semitic propaganda prior to the war. But the democracies did not regard this Hitler attack as part of the general warfare. Instead of meeting the barrage of lies with a counter-attack aimed at shattering the prejudices and hatreds the Allied leadership seemed to have decided on a strategy of total retreat and gave up position after position. Anti-Semitism within the free countries was tacitly recognized as an inevitable consequence of the war and the policy of ignoring the Jews and playing down the Jewish tragedy was adopted as the most "realistic" method of meeting the situation.

This was and continues to be a decisive Hitler victory. When the United Nations' Declaration on the mass massacres was issued it seemed as though the policy had been changed and a powerful offensive in the field of propaganda was to take the place of the constant retreats. But no sooner was the Declaration issued that the previous course was resumed. That was evident from the exchange of letters between Secretary Hull and Lord Halifax on the then proposed Ottawa (later Bermuda) Conference in which the word Jew was deliberately omitted. In line with this attitude the terms of reference of the Bermuda Conference sidetracked the problem

of the millions of potential Jewish refugees threatened with extermination, and limited the deliberations to the problem of the few thousand refugees now in Spain, Portugal and Switzerland.

The Bermuda Conference, to quote the Manchester Guardian and other organs of the liberal press, "sprung from the horrors of Nazi extermination of Jews." Yet the proposals of various organizations and groups dealing with the rescue of the Jews were brushed away as soon as the Conference opened. The idea of negotiating for the release of the Jews and finding ways of feeding those who must remain in Hitler captivity was rejected immediately for "military considerations." Granted that negotiations with Hitler are contrary to the spirit of total warfare it is still impossible to overlook the great moral consideration that could be placed vis-a-vis the military consideration: Is the saving of the lives of several million people who are certain to perish worth bargaining for with the enemy? This moral question did not arise. Although a way had been found by the United Nations to ease the blockade when it was necessary to feed the Greek people, it seemed to be inapplicable in the case of the Jews in the Polish ghettos. Again one must come to the conclusion that in addition to military considerations there was also the fear that looking for a way to feed the Jews might give the appearance of substantiating Hitler's charge that this is a "Jewish war."

When all this is coupled with the fervent defense of the Giraud decrees by our own State Department and the fact that the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem still dictates the policies of the British colonial office from his Rome or Berlin headquarters, one sees the Hitler created phantoms hovering over the policies of the United Nations, with respect to the Jews. All the appeals of religious leaders in the name of human conscience, and all the demands for rescue action on the part of members of Parliament and the press have had little effect upon the strategy of a government which is intimidated by the fear of the effects of the Axis and anti-Jewish propaganda. It is true that whenever possible a few thousand refugees will be admitted here or there, that a word of sympathy will be uttered for those who perish, and some vague reference will be made to the restoration of the rights of Jews as equals with all others after the victory. But in no fashion will the governments commit themselves to the recognition of the particular Jewish tragedy, the unparalleled Jewish martyrdom, the

unique and exclusive victimization of the Jewish people and the specific conditions that must be created for Jews after the war in order that their future free existence as a people be secured.

We have no other friends in the world but the United Nations. Upon the victory of the democracies our very life depends. For that victory we work and gladly give our lives. But while working for victory we must also be mindful of the fact that up to this moment our friends have gone only so far and no further in acknowledging our suffering, our contributions and our problem.

("Congress Weekly," Editorial, No. 18, May 7th, 1943.)

Bermuda Failure

ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN.

Those who are not wise in the ways of State Departments and Foreign Ministries expected that the British and American delegates at the Bermuda conference would address themselves not only to the periphery of the problem but to the centre of the problem, not only to the question of the 30,000 or 40,000 refugees who have already escaped Hitler's clutches and are now in neutral countries such as Switzerland, Turkey, Spain and Portugal, but to the question of how to rescue additional numbers from the charnel houses of Hitler's Europe.

On the face of it, it seems a difficult task and is indeed a difficult undertaking, involving as it does negotiations with the enemy through neutral intermediaries. But there are ample precedents, as was pointed out in the memorandum submitted on behalf of the whole of American Jewry and endorsed by numerous non-Jewish bodies. There have been negotiations which resulted in the consent by the British Government and the Nazi Government to have food brought into Greece and distributed under the auspices of the International Red Cross. There have been negotiations going on continuously with regard to the exchange of prisoners and the safe conduct of certain vessels.

Our programme proposed negotiations through the intercession of neutral countries, the Vatican and the International Red Cross to the following ends, namely:

1. Food for the remaining Jews of Poland who are re-

ceiving a small fraction of even the miserable rations being allowed the rest of the population.

2. Release of numbers of Jews from Bulgaria, Hungary, and Rumania, satellites of the Axis who still have a remnant of self-government and who, now that the tide of war is turning, might see the wisdom of laying up a few credentials with the inevitable victors.

3. Undertakings by the United States and England to finance the wartime maintenance in the adjacent neutral countries of all who can be rescued, and to guarantee their repatriation or their emigration to permanent havens after the war.

4. Offers by the United States and England to settle numbers of refugees in accessible territories under their possession, particularly in Palestine where the Jewish community eagerly awaits and is ready to share all they have with the newcomers.

Of course, we are grateful for even the small measure of help which may eventuate from the Bermuda Conference. The saving of even one life and the rehabilitation of even one family is an act of decency. Yet the fundamental disappointment remains that the proposals dealing with the centre of the problem have been ignored by the Bermuda conference. Reasons are offered which do not carry even surface conviction. The real reason was adumbrated by Lord Cranborne in Parliament some weeks ago when he said that there was no sense in trying to rescue large numbers of Nazi victims because there was no place to put them. No place to put a few scores of thousands or even hundreds of thousands in the vast territories controlled by the British Commonwealth or by the United States? Palestine alone needs 50,000 more hands for its war industry and agriculture.

Here then is the root of the difficulty. Victims are not being rescued because the democracies do not want them; and the job of the Bermuda conference apparently was not to rescue victims of Nazi terror but to rescue our State Department and the British Foreign Office from possible embarrassment. It is a sad commentary upon the disparity between our professed war aims which speak in terms of humanitarianism and our actions which are motivated by timidity and by catering to the forces of reaction in our midst.

The Bermuda Conference has been adjourned but the problem cannot be so readily adjourned. Our State Department and the British Foreign Office must not be permitted to rest at ease merely because a conference has been held.

There are enough men and women of goodwill and of conscience in the United States and in England to lift their voices in the name of humanitarianism and religion.

Sunday, May 2nd, was designated by the Federal Council of Churches as a "Day of Compassion." In the Catholic Church prayer and compassion have been the theme on many occasions. Christian compassion with Jewish suffering,— what a potent witness that the heart of humanity is still athrob and the glow of God in man is still alive!

If the message of this Christian Day of Compassion were to reach any of the tragic company of Jewish survivors in Nazi Europe who have survived only to await their turn to be exterminated it would give them new strength and new hope. If they could speak for themselves, they might say, "Brothers across the sea, we can meet our fate with less bitterness of soul when we know that somewhere in the world there are Christians who understand our plight and who want to help."

To understand the plight of Jews in Hitler's Europe is to understand that they are not merely another page in Hitler's voluminous catalogue of terror, like the Yugoslavs, the Greeks, the Poles, but that unlike all the others, their appointed lot is total and complete destruction. The other peoples, however decimated, will live to see the day of victory. As for the Jews, if a way is not found to rescue numbers of them, the victory of the United Nations will come too late. They will be dead.

We, their fellow-Jews, who have the good fortune to be American Jews, would be the last to make unreasonable requests of our government. But is it unreasonable to say to our government, "What would you do if four million American citizens were trapped in the Nazi charnel houses of Europe? Would you be content to let formal barriers stand in the way of exercising every resource to rescue some if not all of the victims? You would find a way to get food to those who are starving as has been done in Greece under the auspices of the International Red Cross. A Bermuda conference dealing with four million American or British victims, would find a way to save many of them."

In the name of compassion this is what we ask for the Jews who are trapped in Hitlers' domain. We have a right to ask it in the name of compassion. For unless there is a feeling of self-identification with the victim, nothing deeper than lip-service to humanitarianism can be expected. Compassion is the identification of one's self with a brothers' affliction.

Bermuda will go down in the record as an unfortunate sequel to Evian. If the Evian Conference to consider the plight of the refugees was a failure, Bermuda was a mockery. It was a mockery because it had before it the ghastliness of the Nazi horrors and the imminence of Jewish extermination, which the Evian conference might have apprehended but did not yet encounter. Yet the name "Jew" was not permitted to pass the lips of the conferees. This kind of make-believe is another evidence of the escapism which was the leitmotif of the Bermuda Conference. Conceived reluctantly, brought to birth grudgingly, straitjacked from birth, its chances for worthwhile results are meagre indeed.

Open the Gates of Palestine

Pierre van Paassen Calls on Christian England and Christian America to Put an End to Jewish Tragedy.

That Palestine presents the only solution for the Jewish refugee problem was advanced by Pierre van Paassen, author, in a sermon delivered last Sunday at Carnegie Hall. Mr. van Paassen after reviewing the tragedy of the Jewish people in Europe said:

They scanned the horizon at Bermuda as they did at Evian, and they found no place for the Jew to go.

But there is a place of refuge for the weary wanderers of Israel, whose footsteps have left a trail of blood through all the centuries and all the lands of Christian civilization. There is a home awaiting them in Palestine, in their own land, the land of Israel. There the social, economic, cultural and religious framework for the reception and integration of millions of Jews has been put in readiness by the pioneers at an immense cost in treasure and devotion and blood. There you have a land that has undergone a transformation in the last quarter century that is truly amazing.

Both the Evian and the Bermuda conferences have shown conclusively that no nation on earth would welcome mass immigration of "refugees from racial persecution," as the Jews are called in those official communiques whose authors think it the better part of valour not even to mention the Jews by their name.

The Jews of Palestine cannot do otherwise but stick to their soil and go on building, for behind them is the nameless, desperate pressure of the martyred Jewries in the Fortress Europe, who cannot go anywhere else either but to that same country of Palestine.

What the Jewish pioneers in Palestine have accomplished thus far is not a finished product, an historical achievement that can be roped off at a moment's notice by a fiat of the British Government. It is the homeland of the Jews of the world that is under construction in Palestine . . .

The Palestinian pioneers have so far laid down only the framework of an economic-social-cultural and national structure that shall be able to take in and absorb the remnants of the Jewish people which survive the anti-Semitic holocausts of Europe. To that end alone the work was undertaken. . .

Palestine is the cup of grace offered to Christendom. It is the proffered opportunity for Christendom to redeem itself from the blood-guiltiness of ages of Jewish persecution. None knows this better than the statesmen of Protestant England. None knows this better than the countrymen of Archbishop Temple, who in speaking of Israel's agony, reminded his people and government in April 1943: "We stand before the bar of history, of humanity and of God!"

Of course Britain may disregard the moral rights of the Jewish people in Palestine. Britain is mighty, the Jews are weak.

It will still be an injustice. . .

She may call a dozen more conferences on refugees and make a show of humanitarian principles. But so long as Palestine is surreptitiously excluded from consideration at these international confabulations they are a hollow mockery. . .

The injustice goes on.

America may approve this course of action, accept the sophistry of the imperialistic deductions.

It will still be an injustice. . .

I cannot be optimistic. I cannot bring a message of cheer to the Jewish people in this hour which is the darkest in their long melancholy history. I can only say this: For the Jews all depends on whether the Christians, Christian America and Christian England, will change from being Christians in name to being Christians in deed.

(Excerpts of "Congress Weekly," May 7th, 1943)

The Gentlemen at Bermuda

Bermuda is a pretty place, especially at Easter time. There are lilies, sunshine, and fine sea bathing. It is the ideal vacation spot, and lives up fully to its reputation.

The gentlemen at Bermuda have had their vacation. They were blessedly undisturbed by any "pressure group." They were guarded from the representatives of Jewish organisations who had worked out concrete plans for the possible salvation of the remaining human beings marked for murder in Hitler's slaughter house. They were protected from representatives of American labor who indicated their desire to participate in the humanitarian enterprise of the Conference. Both Philip Murray of the C.I.O. and William Green of the A.F.L. have made public the refusal of the Government to admit officers of these great American labor organisations to the deliberations. The gentlemen in Bermuda were hedged in by the fragrant Easter lilies even from the spokesmen of the Christian churches and from the members of the vast non-sectarian relief organisations which have had practical experience in the work of rescue. They were at peace behind closed doors.

One voice from which the individuals who participated in the Refugee Conference were particularly careful to insulate themselves was that of the hundreds of thousands of helpless men, women and children doomed to be murdered in cold blood by the Nazi executions. While the Bermuda Conference was in session, the secret Polish radio appealed for help in an underground broadcast from Poland. The broadcast pleaded: "The last 35,000 Jews in the ghetto at Warsaw have been condemned to execution. Warsaw again is echoing to musketry volleys. The people are murdered. Women and children defend themselves with their naked arms. Save us . . ." At this point, the station went dead.

"Save us . . ."—that cry did not reach Bermuda. Even before the Conference made its report, consisting of a "number of concrete recommendations," none of which has been made public, it was obvious that no serious rescue program was under consideration. This was plain from the outset. It was

plain from the locality selected for the deliberations, from the exclusion of the representatives of those most concerned, and from the secrecy. Above all, it was plain from the funereal croakings which accompanied the deliberations. The delegates chosen for a mission to save lives in the most literal sense went at their task in the spirit of undertakers.

No one disputes the fact that the successful prosecution of the war is the first objective of the United Nations, and that nothing must be done to impede victory. However, none of the detailed rescue programs presented by responsible organizations to the Bermuda Conference could in any way be viewed as conflicting with the primary purpose. Would opening the gates of Palestine beyond the restrictions of the White Paper harm the war effort? Would the granting of havens in neighboring countries hurt any one except the Nazis? Would the adequate utilization of the United States immigration quotas permitted by law "postpone the day of liberation?"

If cargo vessels which now return from their destinations with empty bottoms were to be used for the transportation of human beings each one of whom, depending on age and sex, would be a passionate worker and fighter for democracy, would that be injurious to the cause of the United Nations?

The questions answer themselves. The trouble with the gentlemen at Bermuda was not that they were too martial, but that they were not martial enough. They were afflicted not only with inhumanity, but with timidity and the fatal appeasement blindness for which the world has already paid so dearly.

Hitler has won another victory at Bermuda—a moral and political victory in which Nazidom rejoices. Every reactionary who wants the purposes of the United Nations defeated has triumphed in the failure at Bermuda. The so-called Refugee Conference has made a mockery, not only of the agony of millions of helpless human beings, but of the great cause of liberation to which the democratic world is committed, and which alone makes the horror of our time understandable and endurable.

("Jewish Frontier," New York, May, 1943.)

Statements of Leading Australians

**From The Right Reverend E. H. Burgmann, M.A., Th.Soc.,
Bishop of Goulburn.**

The Nazi massacre of the Jews is one of the most horrible deeds in all human history. It is a deliberate and sustained persecution and not the result of sudden passion. It presents the civilized world with one of the most acute problems imaginable. Civilized nations cannot pass this problem by and retain any claim to moral sensitiveness or human justice. It is a question that stands in the way of history to-day and there can be no forward movement for man unless the right answer is found.

The Jew is in the middle of human history. He cannot be taken out of it and he cannot be by-passed. Until a just place is found for him and his abilities, there will be no peace.

The Jew may be massacred but he also stands as a test to the Nations. If we are not with the Nazis we must do everything in our power to save their victims. And everything means everything. Having saved what Jews it is humanly possible to save, we must seek out and give them their place in the world. If we do that successfully and justly we shall have solved many other human problems on the way.

We cannot escape this question. However preoccupied we are, we should not wish to escape it. It will remain a test case for modern civilization. Until the Jew no longer has reason to fear, and the Gentile has good reason to be grateful for the service of a free Jewry to the world, there can be no peace.

12th July, 1943.

E. H. Burgmann.

**From P. J. Clarey, M.L.C., President, Australasian Council of
Trade Unions.**

The bestial treatment of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe is a challenge to all the ideals of humanitarian civilization for which the Democratic countries are striving. The history of Mankind is pitted and scarred with the persecution of minorities and brutal repression arising from racial prejudice. Never, however, have such outrages reached the pitch of ferocity and grim ghastliness as has been witnessed during the last three years in Poland and adjoining countries. That in such a brief period 2,500,000 of Poland's 3,300,000 Jews should have perished by torture, starvation and other fiendish methods, that only the Nazi mind could conceive. This is unparalleled in world history.

These things have happened and apparently will continue to happen notwithstanding the wonderful part played by the Jewish race in world progress. In the fields of Industry, Science, Literature, Art, Music, Culture and Research and in the realms of all those professions which have assisted in mankind's advance, this race now so mercilessly persecuted has more than played its part. As a people, they possess the same human qualities of love, of race, of home, of family, the same aspirations, hopes and fears that the peoples of all nations possess. What a tragedy for this generation that a fanatical and methodical plan for the extermination of such a race can be carried out without check.

The Australian Trade Union movement is appalled at the calamity which has fallen upon the Jewish people. In no unmeasured terms at the Congress of the Australasian Council of Trade Unions held in Melbourne on June 21st to 25th, 1943, Trade Unionism expressed its horror and condemnation of the unbridled persecution of the Jews. Along with the organised workers in Allied and other countries who have also expressed similar horror and condemnation, the Trade Unionists of the Commonwealth demand justice for the Jewish people and prompt action by the Allied Nations to save the remnants of the race still in Europe.

Action much more decisive and far-reaching than the recommendations of the Bermuda Conference is imperative. That Conference cannot and should not be accepted as the last word in the solution of the tragic Jewish Question. The Trade Union Movement expects, further insists on immediate and energetic measures.

10th July, 1943.

P. J. Clarey.

From Rev. E. J. Davidson, B.A., Rector of St. James' Church, King Street, Sydney.

The appalling mass murder of the Jewish people, so systematically and relentlessly pursued by the Nazis, must surely horrify everyone who is acquainted with the facts. This crime against humanity beggars description. It is plainly the concern of all those who call themselves Christians or who acknowledge the Christian ideal of brotherhood to urge upon the Allied Governments the necessity of doing something more than issuing mere protests. This is not a matter confined to the Jewish community. It is the concern of the civilized world, the concern of all men and women who detest tyranny and hate cruelty and, above all, the concern of those whose Master calls upon them to exercise the widest charity and exhibit the deepest sympathy. It is Christianity, not only common kindli-

ness, that bids us take up the cause of the oppressed and the tyrannized. Some sanctuary must be found for those who can be saved from the European slaughter-house. Palestine seems at least one such place.

E. J. Davidson.

From Miss Aileen Fitzpatrick, B.A., Director of Social Research.

The conference at Evian led the world to expect that the democratic countries were undertaking immediate and continuing responsibility for the settlement or what was even then the greatest refugee problem that had ever faced the world.

When the conference at Evian was held, the Nazi rulers had already begun to work out their declared intention of disuniting and breaking up the democratic world by invoking anti-semitism, persecuting and driving into exile millions of Jews. One of Germany's declared war aims is the total extinction of the entire Jewish people.

While, since the outbreak of war conquered populations have gone down before the German war machine and the Japanese conquests, Hitler and the other Nazi leaders have ruthlessly pursued this aim. In January 1942, Hitler said in a speech to the Reichstag: "We know full well that war can end only by the extermination of the Germanic people or by the disappearance of Jewry from Europe. The Aryan people will not be removed from Europe and this war will see the destruction of Judaism."

In September 1939, there were about 8½-million Jews in the countries now in the control of the Axis, in July 1942, about 5-million were still alive. It is, therefore, quite plain that in the total refugee problem, the plight of European Jewry is most urgent and desperate.

And so when a further inter-governmental conference was proposed as a follow-up to Evian, it was fondly hoped that at long last the democracies would begin to plan actively, not only for postwar rehabilitation of the refugees of the world, but would also take immediate steps on behalf of European Jewry which had been and was still being so sadly decimated. There has been no let-up in the barbarous campaign of cruelty and extermination.

Unfortunately these hopes do not appear to have been realized. A conference has been held at Bermuda. But the voice of the Jews does not appear to have been heard and there seems to have been a total absence of realism in the approach to one of the sorriest and darkest problems in human

history. There seems even to have been an undemocratic approach in the remoteness of the location and absence of representation of those most vitally concerned and best able to suggest practical plans for immediate action to save life now, and to lead to later and continuing rehabilitation.

The Conference at Bermuda raised many hopes only to dash them again.

Perhaps there is something ironic that by strange fortune Bermuda was first settled in the seventeenth century by British refugees who fled from:

“. . . prelates' rage
. . . Unto an isle so long unknown
And yet far kinder than our own.”

Even now it is possible and practicable to save some of those who still live by using the means already available. The will and determination to act will find the means.

Each day that passes without action is too late for thousands of fellow human beings. We must act before it is finally too late, or it will appear that it is not lack of understanding but lack of will that prevents action. Future action will not restore life already lost, but will still save some of the survivors, in which the flame of life remains.

Aileen Fitzpatrick.

From J. J. Maloney, M.L.C. President Labour Council of N.S.W.

The ruthless treatment of members of the Jewish fraternity by the forces of the Hitler regime has been such that has shocked the peoples of the whole world.

Resolutions of protest have been carried by organisations and bodies representing all shades of political and religious thought against this inhuman treatment of innocent men, women and children whose only crime has been to have been born of Jewish parents. Unfortunately, those Jewish people still within Hitler's reach have not—and will not—benefit from mere resolutions of protest. They are still being massacred to satisfy the maniacal desire of ruthless savages who are devoid of all sense of fair play or Christian teachings.

Something more than resolutions are needed if the lives of these unfortunate people are to be spared. Hitler should be told in no uncertain terms “Hands off the Jews,” and every effort should be made by all peoples regarding themselves as Christians to force the rescue of those Jews that are left in Europe and to assure their persecutors of adequate punishment for their barbaric crimes.

J. J. Maloney.

**From The Right Reverend C. Venn Pilcher, M.A., D.D.,
Bishop Co-adjutor of Sydney.**

Hitler has declared his intention of murdering all the five million Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. He already is executing his third million. In face of this unexampled tragedy the Bermuda Conference of representatives of Britain and the United States, called to consider possible action, could only reply in effect: "We can do nothing for the Jews in Nazi Europe. We may, however, remove those who have already escaped to Switzerland and other neutral countries, out into the inhospitable solitudes of the African desert."

Such a decision is a mockery. The only solution is the immediate opening of the Gates of Palestine.
8th July, 1943. C. Venn Pilcher.

**From Mrs. Katharine Susannah Prichard, leading Australian
writer.**

That the Bermuda Conference was a farce must be apparent to all intelligent men and women who understand something of the tragic problems which confront the Jewish people today. Its proposals offer no constructive solution to any of these problems. They savour rather of pre-war appeasement policies.

Why is this so?

Because there are fascist tendencies in all countries where the Capitalist system strives to maintain social and economic power by inflaming national prejudices. These tendencies are always associated with anti-semitism.

The only way for the Jewish people to achieve an equitable solution of their problems is for them to unite with the most progressive and democratic forces in any country where they may happen to be. Only these forces are opposed to racial discrimination and religious persecution. Only these forces can bring pressure to bear on governments for the inauguration of a scheme of social justice for all peoples.

The Bermuda Conference has indicated what is to be expected from conservative statesmen.

But the agony of the Jews in the occupied countries of Europe continues, and demands united action on the part of Jewish people of the Allied nations with all democratic organisations, so that effective measures of relief may be immediately arranged and a sanctuary provided for these helpless victims of Fascist barbarism.

Katharine Susannah Prichard.

From Professor Ian Clunies Ross, D.V. Sc., Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science in the University of Sydney.

That the civilized world, unmoved, has regarded the spectacle of the unparalleled martyrdom of the Jewish people, is explicable only by the inability of the human mind to picture suffering and death on this vast scale.

So it is that, as days lengthen into months and the months into interminable years, thousands, millions even, of the aged and sick, the fathers and mothers, the helpless children have found, not the swift and honourable death of the battlefield, but a shameful, lingering death by cold, by torture, and starvation.

Time grows short to save even the remnant of the condemned host. But even now it is in our power to offer succour and sanctuary to those who yet remain. To fail to hold out our hands, to raise our voices, to stab the sleeping Christian conscience to action, while one child can be rescued from unspeakable terror, is to count ourselves accomplices in a crime, the stain of which time itself will not erase.

I. Clunies Ross.

From Sir Robert Wallace, K.B., M.A., LL.D., Vice-Chancellor, University of Sydney.

It is understandable that the outcome of the Bermuda Conference has been a keen disappointment to all interested in the tragic situation in which the Jews in Europe find themselves. High hopes were entertained that something definite and tangible would emerge, but, so far as I can gather, the result has been to plunge the Jewish people into still greater despair. No one can afford to be indifferent to the catastrophe which has befallen millions of their fellow men. The tragedy is of such magnitude that it baffles the imagination. I trust that the documents here printed will bring home to people still more vividly the essential aspects of a problem which clamours for some sort of solution—a solution which ought not be long delayed.

July 12th, 1943.

R. S. Wallace.

From The Hon. Camilla Wedgwood, M.A., F.R.A.I., Principal of the Women's College within the University of Sydney.

When Hitler first achieved power in Germany, he declared himself to be the implacable enemy of the Jews. During the past ten years, he has showed that his intention to do his utmost to make his enmity effective was not an idle boast.

For ten years he has persecuted them with ever increasing vindictiveness; for the past nine months he has avowedly set out to exterminate them from Europe. When his campaign began in 1933 the people of the democratic nations were shocked and incredulous; the progressive ruthlessness of the Nazis stirred them and efforts were made to save the victims. Alas for human idealism! As the numbers of those who must escape or suffer the horrors of a concentration camp increased, the democracies became anxious, afraid of the mounting flood of would-be immigrants. Many refugees sailed from port to port seeking permission to land and permission was refused. A conference was held at Evian: sympathy with the plight of Hitler's victims was expressed, but pitifully little was done to make that sympathy effective. Then came the war; the horrors of the German occupation of Poland; the collapse of France. Those who thought that they had escaped from the Gestapo were trapped again. If we had not become familiar with horrors during the last four years, we should surely be roused to vigorous action by what is taking place today in occupied Europe. True, the people of the democracies have protested against the mass extermination of European Jewry, and as a result there has been—the Bermuda Conference! And while representatives of the governments talk, the Jewish death roll mounts daily. Some die most horribly at the hands of the Nazis; others wandering without hope die by the wayside; others die as did those on the **Struma**.

All great achievements require for their performance two things: faith and courage. In our approach to the terrible problem of what to do for the Jews of Europe, I am afraid that we, the people of the democracies, have shown ourselves weak in both: expediency has seemed more important than justice; and we have offered sympathetic words instead of active mercy. Even today during the war there is one country to which many, many Jews could escape to begin life anew, if we had the will to open the doors wide instead of keeping them cautiously ajar. What has been achieved in Palestine by the Jewish immigrants during the past twenty years should be known to all; in truth the desert has been made to blossom as the rose.

It is an earnest of what may be done in the future.

But while we dream of the future we must keep our minds on the present. We are much exercised in these days with post-war planning. Do we realise I wonder, that for perhaps some sixty thousand Jewish children alone, there may be no post-war period to plan for, unless we act and act swiftly.

C. H. Wedgwood.

The WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS is an association of Jewish Communities and Organizations throughout the world, whose sole purpose is to defend those rights and interests which Jews have in common.

Such a defense of the Jewish position has never been more necessary than in these critical times. Never have Jewish rights and interests been more closely identified with the rights and interests of all liberty loving peoples.

“The main idea underlying the World Jewish Congress is, like all constructive ideas, very simple. It is so simple that one should hardly be called upon to defend it. The idea is that the Jews of the world ought to join in a common effort to defend their common rights.” (Dr. Nahum Goldmann, Chairman of the Administrative Committee of the World Jewish Congress.)



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