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THE LIMITS OF HUMANITY: GEORGE BELL, THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, AND GERMAN REFUGEES 1933-1939

by

Heather Blumenthal, B.J.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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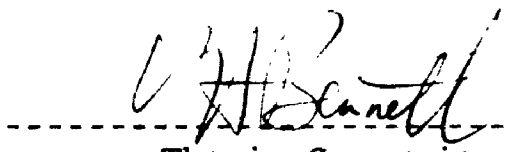
"THE LIMITS OF HUMANITY: GEORGE BELL, THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, AND GERMAN REFUGEES 1933-1939"

submitted by

Heather L. Blumenthal, B.J.,

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts



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Abstract

The Church of England could have played a significant role in assisting refugees from Germany between 1933 and 1939. That it did not illustrates an essential conflict at the heart of the Church's identity — between the religious Church, committed to morality, untrammelled by national borders, and the established Church, closely linked to England's secular elites.

The Church's response to the refugee issue provides a prism through which to better understand the limited English response. Fear of war and support for appeasement, concerns about unemployment, and anti-Semitism, were the constraints that prevented a more positive response.

George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, rose above these constraints to assist the refugees, particularly the "non-Aryan" Christians. His attempts to awaken English Christians to the needs of refugees, particularly the "non-Aryan" Christians, failed in 1933 and 1936, but were successful in the aftermath of *Kristallnacht*, in November 1938.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of several individuals and institutions. In particular I would like to express my appreciation to the Lambeth Palace Library for permission to examine the Bell, Lang, and Headlam papers; the Dean and Chapter of Durham, for access to, and permission to quote from, the Henson diary; and the Bodleian Library at Oxford for access to the papers of the Christian Mission to Jews (formerly the Church Mission to Jews) and the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning.

The Reverend Richard Gutteridge kindly gave of his time and the wealth of his knowledge and greatly enriched the content of the thesis. Dr. Arnold Paucker of the Leo Baeck Institute in London directed me to Reverend Gutteridge, and for this, and for other assistance, I thank him. Dr. Brenda Hough, Archivist at the Church of England Records Office was helpful in directing me to relevant sources. Professor Raymond Jones read the paper in an earlier draft, and his comments were of great help.

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Contents

Introduction

The Church of England was in a position between 1933 and 1939 to play a significant role in assisting refugees, first from Germany, later from Austria and Czechoslovakia. As the established Church, the "moral arbiter" of English national life,[1] the position of the Church of England "placed it far above the other churches in its engagement with temporal questions."[2] It could have exercised moral leadership on the refugee issue, urging both government and public support for the hapless refugees, and it could have mobilized its membership, through the existing diocesan and parish organization, to provide practical help to the refugees themselves. Yet, for the most part, it did neither. The Church was prompt in words when they were needed, less so in deeds. Reactions to the refugee issue ranged from concerns about the proper role of the established church when an issue touched so closely on government foreign policy, to a belief that there was no reason for a Christian Church to extend itself to help Jews — indeed, almost anything except a belief that a large group of people needed help, and that it might be the Church's role to provide assistance.

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[1]The phrase is Andrew Chandler's, in A.M. Chandler, "The Church of England and Nazi Germany 1933-1945" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1990), 3.

[2]E.R. Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770-1970: A Historical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 7.

There has not been, to date, any sustained or substantial examination of the Church's role in the refugee crisis of the 1930s.[3] Those historians that have paid some attention to the issue have been generally contemptuous of the Church's efforts. Adrian Hastings[4] is particularly scathing in his indictment of the bishops' inaction, while Owen Chadwick[5] has concluded that the majority of the bishops were appeasers whose beliefs hindered their effectiveness. The Church's involvement with refugees has not, however, been placed into a wider context, and this is not merely a function of its limited involvement. It also reflects a more general tendency among historians to concentrate on Church history and to disregard the Church *in* history. As a result, "scholars have overlooked an important opportunity to approach history from a new and vital direction," and the voice of the Church in the world has gone unheard.[6] Archbishop Randall Davidson, for instance, is nowhere mentioned in two well-known political histories of England in the twentieth century.[7]

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[3]Some theses have examined the question briefly as part of a larger issue, for instance, Chandler, "The Church of England and Nazi Germany"; Charles Henry Croker, "The British Reaction to Refugees from Germany, 1933-1939" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1973); and M. Daphne Hampson, "The British Response to the German Church Struggle, 1933-1939" (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1973). Published works which have touched even more lightly on the issue include Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1985* (London: Collins, 1986); P.W. Ludlow, "The refugee problem in the 1930s: The failures and successes of Protestant relief programmes," *The English Historical Review* XC (July 1975): 564-603; and Alan Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1986). Biographies and memoirs of Church leaders from the period discuss the issue briefly.

[4]Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, Chapter 22.

[5]Owen Chadwick, "The English Bishops and the Nazis," *Friends of Lambeth Palace Library Annual Report, 1973*, (London: Friends of Lambeth Palace Library, 1973), 9-28.

[6]Chandler, "The Church of England and Nazi Germany," 1.

[7]So Hastings notes in *A History of English Christianity*, 62. The two histories he mentions are A.J.P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* and W.N. Medlicott, *Contemporary England 1914-1964*. Lang, also, does not appear in the index for the Taylor history.

There are, however, important reasons for examining more closely the Church and refugees. First, the Church of England plays a central role in English national life:

> England is a larger and more diversified country and the relation between religion and the national consciousness is less straightforward and unqualified, but abundant evidence exists to indicate that here also it is very close. . . much of what is distinctively national in the English heritage is expressed in religious forms. The tower or spire of the parish church is an integral part of the ideal picture of their country which most loyal Englishmen carry in their minds, and it is to the church that they repair on great national occasions, just as it is in their cathedrals that they place their national memorials.[8]

The centrality of the Church in English life means that its response to the refugee issue provides a prism through which to better understand why the response of England, while generous in comparison with that of other countries, was essentially unwelcoming. Like much of the population, the Church leadership felt genuine abhorrence of the persecution of Jews and "non-Aryan" Christians[9] in Germany; why their reactions were limited to protests against the persecution and did not extend to support of those who fled it is a study in constraints, constraints shared by England's secular leadership.

Even more importantly, however, the refugee issue illustrates an essential conflict at the heart of the Church's identity. As a Christian Church, it was committed to a concern for all humanity, untrammelled by national borders. It recognized the existence of evil and the necessity of fighting it. Yet, as the established Church, its leaders were closely linked to England's secular elites; both inevitably shared the same preoccupations, beliefs, and attitudes. The Church of

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[8]Daniel Jenkins, *The British: Their Identity and their Religion* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1975), 11-12.

[9]I use this term in quotation marks to refer to those people who were considered Jews or part-Jews by Nazi racial definitions, but who would not otherwise identify themselves as Jewish. Its use is controversial, because it is a term created by the Nazis, and not one which this group would have applied to itself. I have followed the practice of other historians in choosing to use the term in this paper because of the frequency of references to it, but placing it in quotation marks to convey the artificiality of its designation.

England was thus in a difficult position — humanity and morality dictated a sympathetic response; its position as the established Church, its agreement with prevailing foreign policy, and its relations with the German Church inhibited that response.

Forced movements of peoples across international boundaries because of war or persecution have existed as long as boundaries themselves. Yet, "only in the twentieth century have European refugees become an important problem of international politics, seriously affecting relations between states."[10] From the end of the First World War to the beginning of the Second World War, some four million people had to leave their homes because of political persecution.[11] Among them, Germany's Jews bear an importance out of proportion to their relatively small numbers.

When the National Socialist Party assumed power in Germany in 1933, Jews constituted less than three quarters of one per cent of the country's population — 503,000 of a total 66 million.[12] Yet, in the words of the *Church Times*, the Nazis were "obsessed with the belief that the Jewish race [was] responsible for all the miseries of their country."[13] The persecution of Germany's Jewish population that began in early 1933 created an unprecedented situation — a government using its legislative powers to disenfranchise and remove from national life a

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[10]Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3.

[11]Figure from Dorothy Thompson, *Refugees: Anarchy or Organization* (1938), cited in ibid., 3.

[12]Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy Toward German Jews 1933-1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 38.

[13]*Church Times*, 23 October 1936.

segment of its population, while condoning, if not actively encouraging, violence against that group. German Jewry,

> from being the proudest, most assimilated and apparently most secure of all the European-Jewish communities, now became, almost overnight, a harried minority struggling for unity and dignity under almost impossible conditions.[14]

The policy of persecution and forced exile that the Nazi government embarked upon resulted in a predicament for other western European countries, including Great Britain The refugee crisis that was created was different than those previously experienced in the twentieth century. It was not that these countries were unfamiliar with refugees — indeed, refugees had become one of the signal problems of the interwar period — but it was the first time that refugees had originated from a country so central to European affairs and, therefore, the first time they had impinged so directly on international relations. Their existence provoked a significant test of Britain's long-standing tradition of giving asylum to the persecuted,[15] and much has been

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[14]Naomi Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel: German Jewry's Secret Ambassador* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 77.

[15]Although by 1933, the tradition was honoured primarily in the breach. There had been open access to the ports of Britain without restriction from 1826 until 1905, when the *Aliens Act* was passed, marking the beginning of restrictions on the entry of non-British citizens into the United Kingdom. Designed specifically to stem Jewish immigration, the Act's initial impact was limited, but it was a harbinger of subsequent legislation and regulations that would continue to restrict the ability of strangers to enter the country, and eventually would become the basis for modern British immigration law (Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 38; Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture 1840-1914* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994], 6). The 1905 Act made it illegal for any alien to enter the country, except temporarily, without a permit from the Ministry of Labour or some visible means of support. It did, however, permit review and appeal of decisions on immigration matters; in the frenzy of emotions which accompanied the outbreak of the First World War, these rights were removed by the *Aliens Restriction Act* of 1914. After the war ended, aliens were further defined as "separate" by the *Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act* of 1919, and the Aliens Order of 1920. The new system exemplified by the 1919 Act and the 1920 Order providing the detailed regulations for its administration was even more comprehensive than the 1905 Act it replaced. The 1905 Act had placed controls only on the poorest class of passengers arriving at British ports; the 1919 Act placed controls on all aliens. Protective measures included in the 1905 Act, such as Immigration Boards to hear appeals, were abolished. The much-vaunted tradition of asylum was rapidly eroded; no legal right of asylum existed, only the exclusive right of the state to grant asylum where it saw fit.

written on the British government's failure to meet the challenge.[16] As John Fox has described, the bright spots in the history of the British response to the persecution of the Jews are the actions and attitudes of ordinary people; the gloomy shadows conceal the feeble response of the British government, with its fear of offending Germany.[17] Many German Jews expected Britain to take the lead in protesting the persecution either through diplomatic channels or through the League of Nations, and to relax existing restrictions to permit the entry of refugees.[18] At no time, however, did the government consider a comprehensive refugee policy, and at all times, even when it finally did liberalize its admissions policy, it reacted to the initiatives of others, rather than acting on its own. Despite a pledge by the leaders of Britain's Jewish community to support all refugees from Nazi Germany who required assistance, and that no refugee would become a charge on the public purse[19], the number of refugees permitted to enter Britain remained small until late 1938 — only 11,000.[20] The vast majority of the 78,000 refugees who eventually

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[16]An indication of the low priority placed on the problem of refugees is given by Viscount Templewood (Samuel Hoare) in his memoirs of the 1930s, when he describes the whole question as one of the "sundries" of his period as Home Secretary (1937 through the outbreak of war in 1939). In a memoir of more than 400 pages, the entire topic merits only two pages. His self-proclaimed humanitarianism aside, the sole focus in these pages is on intellectual and professional refugees who could have been of benefit to Great Britain. Viscount Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years* (London: Collins, 1954), 239-40.

[17]John P. Fox, "Great Britain and the German Jews 1933," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* XXVI, nos. 1/2, new series nos. 26/7 (1972): 46.

[18]Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 86.

[19]In a letter to the Home Secretary, April 7, 1933. This pledge, based on the assumption that the total number of refugees would be no greater than 3,000 to 4,000, was nevertheless kept until the outbreak of war, at an eventual cost of £3 million. A.J. Sherman, *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 30; Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 277.

[20]Louise London, "Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy, 1930-40," in *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, ed. David Cesarani (London: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 165. It is difficult to arrive at an exact number of refugees in Britain, since the Home Office did not distinguish between refugees and other immigrants. Most estimates come from the records of the voluntary organizations which existed to assist the refugees. According to Naomi Shepherd, author of a biography of Wilfred Israel, a British-born German Jew who was a key link between refugee organizations in Britain and the German-Jewish community, refugee organizations centred in Bloomsbury House, at the request of their former

found a haven in Britain, arrived only after that date.[21] Government efforts "fade into insignificance"[22] when compared with the commitment and effort of voluntary organizations, both Jewish and non-Jewish, in lobbying the government, soliciting public support, and carrying out relief work among the refugees who arrived in Britain.

Contemporary critics of government inaction described British policy as exclusion tempered by the admission of relatively tiny numbers as an "act of grace."[23] The fault was held to be one of excessive commitment to legality at the expense of humanity:

> The Immigration Laws make it exceedingly difficult for aliens to settle in this country, and Great Britain has given refuge to pitifully few of the refugees who have escaped from Bolshevist or Nazi tyranny.[24]

The first historians to examine Britain's record in some depth, in the 1970s, assessed British policy toward refugees from Nazi Germany in a generally favourable light.[25] They

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clients, destroyed all their files but for a small cache in an old people's home in North London. Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 9.

[21]Idem, "British Government Policy and Jewish Refugees 1933-45," *Patterns of Prejudice* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1989-1990): 30.

[22]Arieh Tartakower and Kurt R. Grossman, *The Jewish Refugee* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress and World Jewish Congress, 1944), 495.

[23]Norman Angell and Dorothy F. Buxton, *You and the Refugee: The Morals and Economics of the Problem. The Truth about Unemployment, Migration and Depopulation* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Limited, 1939), 11-12.

[24]"From a Journalist's Notebook," *Church Times*, 19 February 1937.

[25]The two primary works in this area, Sherman, *Island Refuge* and Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979), both conclude that the British government acted with generosity, especially compared with the efforts of other governments (e.g. Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, 9). A.J.P. Taylor appears to misread the situation entirely, saying that the refugees received a warm welcome in Britain, especially since they were not poor, but rather tended to be famous authors, musicians, bankers, and scientists. A.J.P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 419.

ascribed the failure of the British government to be more welcoming to refugees to a narrow-minded interpretation of bureaucratic rules and regulations. While acknowledging the initially "sluggish" government response, the administrative muddling, and the refusal of bureaucrats to apply regulations more imaginatively, they applauded the relatively large number of refugees who eventually found refuge in Britain.[26] Recently, historians have examined the evidence more critically[27] and have concluded that the British response to Jewish refugees was motivated as much, if not more, by anti-Jewish prejudice as by limited bureaucratic thinking.[28] This has contributed, to a significant degree, to the more measured assessment of British efforts in this area. The other area in which they depart from their predecessors is in their assessment of the Jewish community's response to the refugee crisis. Sherman and Wasserstein gave full credit to the crucial work of the voluntary organizations, and paid less attention to important factors that limited the Jewish community's response. Their successors have found that the community was much more divided on the issue, and their response much more complex, than the earlier portrayal of a simple commitment to assist their fellow-Jews with an outpouring of financial and practical assistance.

Despite these differing interpretations, one historian opined more than a decade ago that "it is doubtful whether future research will be able to add very much of significance to the

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[26]Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 264.

[27]Primary among the newer generation of historians are Louise London, "British Immigration Control Procedures and Jewish Refugees 1933-1939," in *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* ed. Werner Mosse (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 485-517; "British Government Policy and Jewish Refugees"; and "Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy"; and Geoffrey Alderman, *The Jewish Community in British Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); and *Modern British Jewry*.

[28]Louise London, "British Government Policy and Jewish Refugees," 26.

general picture."[29] Herbert Loebl admitted, however, that there were particular aspects still remaining which had not been adequately examined. The Church's failure to act, as well as the circumstances in which it did act, is one of the "particular aspects" of the refugee crisis of the 1930s that, 11 years later, still merits closer study.

Although the authority of the churches generally had waned in the early part of the twentieth century, and a significant percentage of the nation did not adhere to the Church of England,[30] Church leaders were looked on, nonetheless, as providers of moral leadership to the British nation. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the bishops who served under them together provided the "official" voice of the Church. At the same time, however, they were also seen as reflecting the voice of the government. Bishops and archbishops were appointed by the prime minister of the day, and often considered his political allies. The weekly *Church Times*, the largest Anglican newspaper in England and one of the bishops' harshest critics, maintained that "few of them are capable of standing up publicly to any Government on behalf of the moral rights of the Church."[31] Randall Davidson, Cosmo Lang's predecessor as Archbishop of Canterbury, had been a "skilful, wise, cautious, and adroit politician" whose policies were "simply such as commended themselves to his fellow members of the Athenæum Club" and who formed a link between the Church and the government of the day because he "shared so largely

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[29]Herbert Loebl, "Refugee Industries in the Special Areas of Britain," in *Exile in Great Britain: Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld (England: Berg Publishers; New Jersey: Humanities Press for the German Historical Institute, London, 1984), 220.

[30]In 1934, there were only 2.3 million communicants in the Church of England, compared to almost three million Roman Catholics, 1.9 million Free Church members, and 1.3 million members of the Church of Scotland; the total population of the United Kingdom was 46,000,000. (Andrew Thorpe, *The Longman Companion to Britain in the Era of the Two World Wars 1914-45* [London: Longman, 1994], 48, 75.) It is, of course, impossible to state the total number of people who, if questioned, would claim to be members of the Church of England, but it would, presumably, be many millions more.

[31]*Church Times*, 21 February 1936.

the governmental point of view."[32] In different ways, and in varying degrees, the *Church Times* observed, what was true of Davidson was also true of the entire State-appointed episcopate — "They cannot rid themselves of the idea that they are organs of the commonwealth."[33]

More generally, the Church leadership tended to be selected from the same "pool" as leaders in other areas of English life. Twenty six bishops sat in the House of Lords,[34] and participated in its wider life of club memberships and social events. The bishops were at home in this world "because they belonged to it by birth, education and relaxation"; 41 of the 93 bishops appointed between 1900 and 1939 had been at the ten leading public schools and, with a few exceptions, they had all been to Oxford or Cambridge.[35] Adrian Hastings describes how, "one summer afternoon in the thirties," William Temple, the Archbishop of York, and Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin sat together talking on Temple's terrace, an indication of the personal, casual friendship shared by the two men, and notes that:

> The ease, the informality as well as the formalities of an interlocking relationship at every level between civil and religious authority was what Establishment meant. England's secular establishment was riddled with ecclesiastical woodworm in such a cunning and natural way that it displeased almost no one.[36]

The social and educational background that Church leaders shared with political leaders was a potent constraint on a Church's ability to criticize national policies from a moral point of view.

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[32]The Athenæum Club is the most elite of all London's men's clubs. It was founded in 1823 for "scientific and literary men and artists," and most prime ministers, cabinet ministers, archbishops, and bishops have belonged to it.

[33]*Church Times*, 15 May 1936.

[34]The two archbishops and the bishops of London, Durham, and Winchester were permanently represented; the remaining seats were held by the 21 senior diocesan bishops.

[35]Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 55.

[36]Ibid., 663-64.

Church and State alike were agreed on the desirability of avoiding war. The need to reach some sort of accommodation with Germany to ease escalating fear of war, and the general acceptance of appeasement as the means to reach an equilibrium, meant that openly criticizing Nazi policy toward the Jews posed a threat to improving relations; welcoming the refugees created by that policy presented an even greater threat. As Alan Wilkinson notes, it is hard to remember from today's perspective that until 1939, appeasement had a "noble, hopeful ring":

> To most people of the Christian tradition appeasement seemed the embodiment of the gospel — penitence for past sins by the allies and the offer of reconciliation and forgiveness to the outcast: the equivalent in international affairs of the ecumenical vision of international Christian reconciliation.[37]

Indeed, the trajectory of public involvement in the refugee cause can be clearly traced in inverse proportion to public support for appeasement. For a short period after November 1938, public opinion was mobilized on behalf of the refugees, and this played a significant role both in relaxing government restrictions on the entry of refugees and in providing hospitality for those refugees who arrived. In this instance, public opinion overwhelmingly meant Christian public opinion — the Jewish community had been mobilized since 1933 — and the support given was frequently manifested through the Church.

If fear of war and support for appeasement constitute the topography against which support for refugees must be measured, then anti-Semitism forms the undercurrent of belief that militated against a more positive response.[38] Church leaders, no more or less than political

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[37]Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?*, 139.

[38]For an overview of English anti-Semitism, see Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society 1876-1939* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1979); Tony Kushner, *The persistence of prejudice: Antisemitism in British society during the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989); and Gisela C. Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1978). All three authors attribute the failure of the British government and public to respond more positively to refugees to underlying anti-Semitism as much as to other factors such as appeasement or unemployment.

leaders, shared in the anti-Semitism that, while essentially social in nature, permeated all levels of English society, and efforts to arouse a sense of Christian responsibility for refugees ultimately foundered upon it.

Just as the Church's ties with the government in Westminster and their shared beliefs circumscribed the Church's ability to respond to the refugee issue on a purely moral basis, so did its ties with international Church government. Church leaders in England were reluctant to intervene in questions concerning refugees, especially the "non-Aryan" Christians who were the Church's particular concern, without the prior involvement of the German Confessional Church. This lead was not forthcoming, primarily because, in the conflict between nationalism and international humanitarian principles, nationalism had won the day, and the German Churches, with few exceptions, were silent on the question of Nazi Jewish policies.

The leaders of the Church of England of the 1930s were forced by the times in which they lived to consider more closely than their predecessors the appropriate role for the church in relation to the larger world. The refugee issue illuminates the debate on how a Church that believes it must address the affairs of the world[39] reacts when actually confronted with such an affair. The roots of the debate lie in the Victorian church in which contemporary Church leaders received their training. The Victorian era was characterized by a new ethic of service and responsibility for others, and clergymen led the way in its development. From their pulpits, they

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Lebzelter and Kushner both note the beginning of ties between the Christian and Jewish communities arising in response to the tensions created by anti-Semitism during the 1930s.

[39]Chandler, "The Church of England and Nazi Germany," 2.

promoted values which were calculated to avert class warfare, by instilling a spirit of *noblesse oblige* in the middle class:[40]

> It would be unwise for any historian to underestimate the power and influence of the Victorian pulpit. Christian preachers succeeded in feeding both the hearts and minds of generations of earnest believers, however lacking in refined rhetoric, philosophy, or theology their discourses may have been. . . . They were listened to by a vast and earnest audience of privileged and socially powerful people. . . . however sentimental it was, Victorian worship was popular worship.[41]

The men who by the 1930s had assumed leadership roles in the Church had come of age in this era. They had been influenced by, and served under, bishops who were vitally interested in questions of social reform, and had adopted the credo of service whole-heartedly. Where the Church leaders of the 1930s differed from their predecessors was in their willingness to address political issues, and to take their campaigns for reform out of the parishes and into the political realm. Most Victorian clergy and bishops believed it was one of their duties to keep the church free of political involvement.[42] Many of their interwar counterparts believed that the Church could not shirk its responsibilities in this area. Partisan involvement was not desirable, but comment on political issues was both desirable and necessary. They took their tone on this from Randall Davidson, who paid close attention both to politics and to the politicians of the day.[43] Arthur Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester, was one of the few bishops who opposed the Church's

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[40]Desmond Bowen, *The Idea of the Victorian Church: A Study of the Church of England 1833-1889* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1968), viii-ix.

[41]Ibid., 139.

[42]Norman, *Church and Society in England*, 167.

[43]David L. Edwards, *Leaders of the Church of England 1828-1944* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 240.

involvement in the temporal issues, believing that the Church should not "meddle" in politics.[44] He opposed the formation of the World Council of Churches for the same reason. Headlam aside, however, the responsibility of the Church to speak out on public issues had become generally accepted by the 1930s. The question was which Church would speak out — the establishment Church or the universalist Church?

In the charged political atmosphere of the 1930s, the establishment Church could have carried the day. But one of its leaders, George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, managed to rise above the constraints binding others to become the defining force behind all of the Church's efforts to assist the refugees. His moral position that persecution must be met with assistance to its victims was at the basis of his Herculean work, primarily on behalf of "non-Aryan" Christians.

Bell was, above all, a man for whom morality was the primary determinant of his positions. His principles were firmly rooted in his religious belief. Thus he believed that "Christian theologians are bound by the very principle of the Incarnation, to make an effort to enter into the world's affairs."[45] Unlike those who espouse morality only nominally, Bell not only stated his principles; he made all possible efforts to put them into practice. His clear and uncompromising vision "saw to the heart of what was happening in our century and unremittingly

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[44]Ronald C.D. Jasper, *Arthur Cayley Headlam: Life and Letters of a Bishop* (London: Faith Press, 1960), 290.

[45]Cited in Gordon Rupp, *'I seek my brethren': Bishop George Bell and the German Churches*, Mackintosh Lecture in the University of East Anglia, 1974 (London: Epworth Press, 1975), 10.

called men to a very costly Christian obedience as they faced it."[46] For Bell, "there was only one way of maintaining Christian principles, and that was by applying them."[47] Thus, in the case of the refugees, Bell believed that:

> If we trust the teachings of our faith, if we believe in the universality of the Church, we must express our conviction of that universality by relieving suffering of those of our faith, though they are not of our own Church nor of our own nation.[48]

The Reverend Richard Gutteridge first encountered Bell in late 1937, when he wrote asking for a parish in Bell's diocese. At their first meeting, they sat together on the floor as Bell showed Gutteridge the materials he possessed about the plight of the "non-Aryan" Christians. Over the next several years, Gutteridge worked closely with Bell, in part because with his knowledge of German, he could assist Bell (who never learned German) in translating the secret German government documents that came into his hands. In later years, Gutteridge also became one of the few to examine the record of the Church of England on the refugee issue.[49] In an interview, Gutteridge spoke of Bell's "combined gentleness and determination," and, at times,

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[46]Kenneth Slack, *George Bell* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1971), 19. A measure of Bell's stature is that this short biography is one of a series of biographies on "six christians," the other five being Martin Luther King, Simone Weil, Karl Barth, Teilhard de Chardin, and Sun Yat-sen. In its thematic treatment of Bell's life, and its emphasis on his public persona, his role in the ecumenical movement, and his positions regarding the German Church struggle and the conduct of the war, it provides a better measure of the man than does the "official" biography by Ronald C.D. Jasper, *George Bell Bishop of Chichester* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

[47]Jaakko Rusama, *Unity and Compassion — Moral Issues in the Life and Thought of George K.A. Bell* (Helsinki, 1986), 56-57, excerpt in author's possession.

[48]Quoted in "Do Christians Care? The Misery of Non-Aryan Refugees: An Interview with the Bishop of Chichester," *Church Times*, 14 October 1938.

[49]Among his works are: Richard Gutteridge, "The Churches and the Jews in England, 1933-1945," in *Judaism and Christianity Under the Impact of National Socialism*, eds. O.D. Kulka and P.H. Mendes Flohr (Jerusalem: The Historical Society of Israel and the Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1987), 353-78 ; and idem, "Some Christian Responses in Britain to the Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945," typescript of paper delivered at Remembering for the Future Conference, Jerusalem, in author's possession.

his "great obstinacy," the "love, interest and compassion" he could express as well as the "steely" disapproval.[50]

Bell was relentless in his quest to assist the refugees. He knew that "continuity of purpose [was] at least as important as the original vision."[51] At first, he was viewed by many as "rather like Churchill. . . as a scaremonger and a man who had lost all sense of proportion."[52] Given the opportunity, for example, he managed to "corner" Gutteridge's father, an international lawyer and law professor at Cambridge and the London School of Economics, on behalf of a young refugee lawyer. For Gutteridge, the fact that Bell once wrote 127 letters to help one Rumanian refugee typifies his spirit — his commitment, his desire to help, his attention to the smallest detail, his refusal to miss any possible opportunity, above all his belief that "there are millions of refugees, but they are all persons."[53] Franz Hildebrandt, one of the "non-Aryan" Christian pastors Bell personally sponsored to England, assisted Bell in his work with refugees. At one point, he suggested to Bell that, because of the large number of refugees

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[50]Interview with Reverend Richard Gutteridge, 30 December, 1991, Cambridge, England. The disapproval could be seen clearly in Bell's eyes. Indeed, Bell's blue eyes, capturing and intimidating at the same time, recur over and over in personal remembrances. A "non-Aryan" Christian who arrived in England in March 1939, older, with poor English, and unable to find a job, later wrote that, "his huge warm blue eyes reflected his love and inner peace and I felt a personal contact which made me lose all my fear and nervousness" (Werner Simonson, cited in Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?*, 163). After his death, one obituary recalled that in Germany, "this Englishman with his clear blue eyes has been an emblem of Christian truth, justice and compassion, a gentle knight in shining armour — 'a champion of Christendom'" (Gordon Rupp, obituary tribute, in author's possession).

[51]Ulrich Simon, *Sitting in Judgement 1913-1963: An Interpretation of History* (London: SPCK, 1978), 86.

[52]Slack, *George Bell*, 71-72.

[53]Bell, *The Kingship of Christ*, cited in Richard Gutteridge, "The Churches and the Jews in England," 358; interview with Gutteridge. The story of the 127 letters surfaces more than once throughout the literature on Bell; whether so accurate as to impress itself on people's memories, or apocryphal, it aptly captures Bell's efforts on behalf of refugees.

writing to him, some formal printed acknowledgement be sent. Bell "turned on him with a look of horror, insisting that each be sent a personal reply."[54] His approach forms the basis of what later came to be called "Christian Aid" — focussing not only on causes, but on individual men and women, possessing names and faces.[55]

In his work for refugees, as in the positions he took during the war on civilian bombing and food relief, Bell was ". . . ready to be critical of political policies and social mores in order to be true to the subversive character of the biblical message . . . . the paradigm of creative religious dissent in England in the first half of the twentieth century."[56] By their very position, Church leaders were involved in political and social issues; the question was how overtly should they attempt, as representatives of the Church, to take a public stand on these issues? Bell insisted on the necessity of speaking out publicly on those policies that were immoral. His actions were important not only for their practical results, but for their symbolic significance, since, while "Jews and non-Jews cooperated closely in refugee work,...non-Jews were seen as more effective advocates for Jewish refugees in Britain."[57]

In acting as he did to assist refugees, Bell had to resist the powerful pressure to conform to prevailing mores — be they the necessity of maintaining good relations with Germany, for instance, or the anti-Jewish prejudice that was quietly pervasive in English society. The

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[54]Gordon Rupp, *'I seek my brethren,'* 16-17.

[55]Ibid., 17.

[56]Alan Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?*, xiii. In Wilkinson's formulation, a creative dissenter contrasts with both conformers and uncreative dissenters, eternal opposers who criticize those in power without being able or willing to exercise power themselves.

[57]London, "Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy," 172, n. 46.

constraints implicit in belonging to any establishment, not least the established Church, were considerable.[58] In this sense, Bell's dissent was an illustration of one man's courage in breaking free of the constraints that continued to bind others. Throughout the period under consideration, Bell's beliefs were constants, dictating his responses to events. The response he received, from other Church leaders and from the public, was more fluid. Bell's attempts to awaken English Christians to the needs of refugees, particularly the "non-Aryan' Christians, failed in 1933 and 1936, but were successful in the aftermath of *Kristallnacht*, in November 1938, reflecting how, for the majority of people, the press of events alters responses to moral questions.

Many churches and religious groups in England played roles of varying importance in the refugee issue of the 1930s, primarily, of course, the Jewish community and the Quakers. While some overlap is inescapable, given the nature of voluntary organizations, this study is concerned only with the role of the Church of England. Moreover, in examining the Church of England and national issues, one must inevitably focus on the church leadership — the two Archbishops and the leading bishops of the day. It was, first of all, these men who were presumed to represent the Church to the nation. More practically, it is their voices that have been preserved, in collections of their personal papers and in the columns of the press, both secular and religious. Thus, in this context, references to "the Church" are to the Church leadership. Although the press must be treated with caution as a primary source, much can also be gained from a study of the Church press, in this case, the *Church Times*, the Anglican weekly with the largest circulation.[59]

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[58]These same factors, however, also assisted Bell's dissent, which was "inseparable from his membership of the House of Lords and his familiarity with Government ministers and departments." Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?*, xv.

[59]Or so its masthead claims; no circulation figures are given.

The term refugees also requires further clarification, although defining categories of refugees is never easy. Many people fled (or were "encouraged" to flee) Nazi Germany between April 1933 and the outbreak of war in September 1939. The vast majority — between 80 and 90 per cent[60] — were Jewish. The remainder were all non-Jewish. Of this minority, some were political refugees, primarily Social Democrats whose left-wing affiliations put them in danger, while others were "refugees of conscience" whose opposition to the Nazi regime would have endangered their lives. The majority of the non-Jewish refugees, however, were "non-Aryan" Christians — ordinary citizens, born Christian or converted at some point in their lives, who would not have considered themselves Jewish but who were, nonetheless, considered Jewish according to Nazi racial laws, and who suffered persecution accordingly.[61] The terms "non-Jewish" and "non-Aryan" Christian refugees were used interchangeably by refugee assistance organizations. It was this last group of refugees who were the direct concern of Bell, and who were the primary focus of Christian assistance.

Finally, this paper is concerned only with the English experience. Some refugees obviously would have found refuge in other parts of the British Isles, but the majority remained in England. Further, the Church of England can only truly be measured as a presence in England, where it was the established Church. The record of the churches in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales is unique to each country, and outside the scope of this paper.

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[60]Exact statistics are not available, since the Home Office only recorded country of origin of aliens in Great Britain, not their religion or whether they were refugees.

[61]That these people were also known as baptized Jews or Hebrew Christians indicates that their status was suspect not only according to Nazi racial laws, but also among Christians.

Chapter 1: The Early Years 1933-1935

The early period of Bell's involvement in the refugee issue was characterized by lack of organization, *ad hoc* measures, and an inability to generate interest in, or a sense of responsibility for, refugees, particularly the "non-Aryan" Christian refugees. Several factors lie at the basis of this lack of interest. The new National Socialist regime in Germany benefitted from the general belief, shared by Church leaders, that the Treaty of Versailles was unjust, and that redress was required on the part of the Allies for mistakes made, as well as from a horror of war arising out of the experience of the First World War. These beliefs, coupled with the desire to maintain positive relations with Germany, meant that there was a general willingness to pardon the transgressions of the regime and to mute criticisms in the interest of keeping Germany an active and peaceful participant in European affairs. Domestic conditions, particularly unemployment, also conspired to ensure that the welcome given to refugees was lukewarm, at best.

Insofar as Church leaders were able to break free from the constraints of appeasement in these early years to protest National Socialist policies, they focussed primarily on the German Church struggle. This was the case not only among Church leaders, but also among government, press, and the public, since the conflict appeared to deserve an unequivocal response. This focus not only deflected attention from the refugees; it also had a detrimental effect because of the

reluctance of the German church to take a strong stand on Nazi anti-Jewish policies, except as they intruded upon the Church's domain.

The last factor that exercised a limiting force on work for refugees in this early period was public opinion. The flurry of protests against Nazi policies against Jews quickly diminished, to be replaced by widespread public apathy. To the extent that refugees garnered much public attention at all, their plight was dismissed as being solely a Jewish issue not of relevance to Christians. A general anti-Semitism saw the majority of the British public, including much of the Church leadership, ill-disposed to take a strong stand on refugees.

The newly established National Socialist government lost little time in tackling what it termed Germany's "Jewish problem." It began in April 1933 with the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, legislation that excluded, or set quotas for, Jewish state-regulated professionals, including civil servants, doctors, lawyers, and teachers and students.[1] By the time of its defeat just 12 years later, Germany's 1,600-year-old Jewish community was destroyed[2] and six million European Jews exterminated.[3]

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[1]A common theme in German (not only Nazi) anti-Semitism was the disproportionate number of Jews in the professions. This was, in fact, the case: 16 per cent of lawyers, 10 per cent of medical doctors, and 3 per cent of university teachers were Jewish (Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz*, p. 41). The reason lies in the greater percentage of urban Jews relative to the German population as a whole. One third of German Jews lived in Berlin, while 40 per cent lived in other large cities (Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945* [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975; reprint, Bantam Books, 1986], 170-71).

[2]Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, (New York: Franklin Watts for the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, 1982), 16.

[3]The degree to which the path from legislation to annihilation was direct and foreseen has been the subject of fierce debate between proponents of two main schools of thought. The intentionalist school, of which Dawidowitz, *The War Against the Jews* is a primary exponent, stresses the continuity from Hitler's early anti-Jewish rhetoric to the Final Solution and the centrality of Hitler himself to its implementation. The functionalist school emphasizes the chaos and lack of coherency of the Third Reich and the widespread

Germany's Jews were caught by the ascension of the Nazis in "a real, tragic tension between genuine feelings of patriotism and loyalty to Germany and the need to evaluate realistically their position as aliens in their own land."[4] The community prided itself on its loyalty to Germany: 100,000 Jewish soldiers had served during the First World War — one-fifth of the country's Jewish population — of whom 12,000 had died, while another 35,000 had been decorated for bravery.[5] The majority was at first committed to staying in their homeland and attempting to maintain the Jewish community's position in Germany as best they could[6] — the alternative, emigration, appealed mostly to younger people or those with wealth, for whom the prospect of learning new skills and languages and the loneliness of living in alien societies were not as intimidating.[7] The belief that the situation would stabilize and that legality would be restored continued to bolster Germany's Jews; it seemed impossible that Hitler's rule could last,

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nature of decision-making; it portrays the path to the Final Solution as one strewn with improvisations and local initiatives. According to this school of thought, the Final Solution was not premeditated; it was only gradually, in early 1942, that Himmler and the SS established the coherent structure of the Final Solution throughout Europe. The first major work in English to espouse this view was Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz*. For a discussion of the varying interpretations of the development of the Final Solution, see Michael R. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Publishers, 1987), 34-46; and Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), who note that historical scholarship is slowly reaching a consensus that borrows from each school (96). They also make the important point that in these debates, too often the victims are obscured: "Both the comprehensiveness of racial policy and, regrettably enough, what those measures involved in terms of individual human tragedy are sometimes missing from the intellectually elegant syntheses devoted to debates concerning the bureaucratic chaos of the Nazi regime." Burleigh and Wipperman, *The Racial State*, 2-3.

[4]Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, 119.

[5]Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 78; Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 26.

[6]There was some thought of protest against the discriminations and persecutions heaped upon German Jews, such as the belief of Wilfred Israel that the Jews should close their businesses, go out into the streets, and refuse to go home, even if fired on by the storm troopers. Only through such a united action in a hopeless situation would the world's conscience be aroused (Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 67). His, however, was the minority view; the majority far preferred to attempt to exist within Nazi strictures.

[7]Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 108-9.

and the community believed that "the country of Goethe and Schiller, Beethoven and Schubert would soon shake off the barbarians who had temporarily gained control."[8] They expressed their loyalty through gestures such as a letter from Berlin's Jewish community to the Chief Rabbi in Britain protesting anti-Nazi propaganda outside Germany.[9] Supporting German Jews in their own country was the primary goal of Jewish community organizations in Britain and other countries, much more important in the early years than assisting emigration and settlement.

Many Jews concluded, however, that there was no place for them in the new Germany being created by the Nazi state. Estimates of the number of Jews who left Germany in 1933 range from 37,000 to 51,000. Even the smaller number, however, constitutes the largest number of Jews to leave in any one year until 1938, and these numbers do not include those who might have emigrated but for discouraging reports about the possibilities for immigration and work in other countries.[10] After the initial panic subsided, the number of emigrants dropped dramatically, to 23,000 in 1934 — when the relative quiet acted as a "dangerous sedative,"[11] lulling the community into a false sense of security — and to 21,000 in 1935, when some 10,000

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[8]Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, 101.

[9]Ibid., 120. No date is given for the letter, but the period under discussion is 1933-1935; presumably it would have been written in the first flush of an anti-German boycott, in 1933.

[10]Dawidowitz, *The War Against the Jews*, 189, and Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz*, 199, cite 37,000; Sir John Hope Simpson, in *The Refugee Problem: Report of a Survey* (London: Oxford University Press, 193), 140, cites 51,000 Jewish refugees as well as 9,000 non-Jews. Joseph Tenenbaum ("The Crucial Year 1938," *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance* II [1958], 52) agrees with Hope Simpson. Yehuda Bauer claims 53,000 emigrants, of whom 16,000 later returned, bringing him in line with the 37,000 net emigrants (*A History of the Holocaust*, 123). Dawidowitz estimates the number of people inquiring about emigration in 1933 at 14,000, which may account for the discrepancy in numbers.

[11]Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, 101.

Jews who had left in 1933 returned to Germany, convinced that the worst had passed.[12] Indeed, until 1935 more refugees left Germany for political than for racial reasons.[13]

Not all the refugees were Jewish. On August 4, 1933, Wyndham Deedes[14] forwarded to Bell a letter from Helen Bentwich of the German Refugees Hospitality Committee about "non-Aryan" refugees who were coming to the Committee's attention. Bell wrote back asking for more information.[15] So began Bell's involvement in what was to become one of his central concerns for the next twenty years.

The assistance the British Jewish community rendered to their fellow-Jews in Germany was remarkable by any definition; its 350,000 members raised more than £3 million between 1933 and 1939, and gave another, unquantifiable, amount through private support of individual refugees.[16] Numerous community organizations sprang up to oversee matters of emigration, training, settlement, maintenance, and relief for the refugees. Indeed, the main impetus to help German Jewry came from Britain. Anglo-Jewry contributed more money than the Jewish communities of other countries, and more was done to help Jews to emigrate and find refuge,

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[12]Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz*, 116.

[13]John P. Fox, "Nazi Germany and German Emigration to Great Britain," in *Exile in Great Britain: Refugees from Hitler's Germany* ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld (England: Berg Publishers; New Jersey: Humanities Press for the German Historical Institute, London, 1984), 37.

[14]Deedes, who continued to be involved, with Bell, in the refugee issue throughout the 1930s, had served in Palestine in the 1920s, and, following his return to England, was a social worker and a supporter of the Zionist movement. These two areas of interest provided a context for his interest in refugees.

[15]Exchange between Deedes and Bell, Bell Papers, Lambeth Palace Library, London, vol. 27, ff. 1-4.

[16]Norman Bentwich, "German-Jewish Refugees in England: 1933-1943," *Contemporary Jewish Record* VII, no. 5 (October 1944): 530.

particularly when compared to the size of both Britain and its Jewish community.[17] Through the Jewish Refugees Committee (later the German-Jewish Aid Committee, to remove the stigma of the word "refugee"[18]), British Jews supported all needy Jewish refugees in Britain until the end of 1939, despite the fact that 40 per cent of these refugees had been admitted to Britain without consultation with the committee.[19] By the outbreak of war, there were 60,000 names on the Committee's register, and 600 full- and part-time employees to carry out its work.[20]

In addition to help to refugees inside England, British Jews sought to remove the problem at its source, by improving the situation of German Jews in Germany, and to provide training and assistance for emigration elsewhere, preferably to Palestine. This would have been the most effective solution to the refugee problem.[21] It also would have eased the concerns of British Jewry about its own position in England. The Anglo-Jewish community was marked by its desire to assimilate into the larger body of British society, to not be seen as different in any way.[22]

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[17]Ronald Stent, "Jewish Refugee Organizations," in *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, ed. Werner Mosse (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 583.

[18]Vivian D. Lipman, "Anglo-Jewish Attitudes to the Refugees from Central Europe 1933-1939," in *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, ed. Werner Mosse (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 520.

[19]Central British Fund for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation, *Report for 1933-43* (London: Central British Fund for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation, 1944), 4.

[20]Stent, "Jewish Refugee Organizations," 584.

[21]Lipman, Vivian D., *A History of the Jews in Britain since 1858* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), 190; Louise London, "Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy," 168.

[22]Naomi Shepherd memorably describes Hermann Marcus, the chief rabbi at the turn of the century, as wearing "the robes of an Anglican prelate" as he presided at the marriages of the Anglo-Jewish merchant elite. Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 12.

It was considered "bad form" for the Jewish community to call attention to itself.[23] Its reaction to the refugee crisis of the 1930s was very much conditioned by its experience of the influx of Jews fleeing "a particularly intense tsarist government assault"[24] between 1880 and 1914. The addition of between 120,000 and 150,000 refugees to the Jewish community was primarily responsible for the growth of Britain's Jewish community from 60,000 in 1880 to 300,000 in 1914.[25] It also "dismayed and terrified" British Jews and created alarm about the existing community's standing.[26] The immigrant Jews represented an older, tribal, pre-modern, "ghetto" type of Judaism that was considered incompatible with the emancipated state of western European Jewish communities,[27] and along with the strong commitment to their assistance among Western Jews was an equally strong desire for them to go somewhere else.

This earlier ambivalence presaged that of the 1930s, when the same fears existed: too many foreign Jews, with different languages, different customs, different appearances, would put the hard-won integration of British Jewry into British society into jeopardy,[28] while too much agitating on their behalf could put the patriotism of the community in question. Conscious of their precarious position in British society, the leaders of the Jewish community were unwilling to publicly disagree with government policy. Any pressures to increase the numbers of refugees

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[23]Stephen Brook, *The Club: The Jews of Modern Britain* (London: Constable, 1989), 211.

[24]Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 29.

[25]Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 1, 141.

[26]Geoffrey Alderman, *The Jewish Community in British Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 52.

[27]Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 294.

[28]Such were the fears of the community that the German Jewish Aid Committee issued a handbook for refugees in January 1939, urging them not to make themselves conspicuous, to talk in loud voices, or to involve themselves in political activities. Brook, *The Club*, 211.

being admitted to Britain were to be made privately and quietly, through meetings with politicians and officials. Indeed, the first public Jewish protest meeting on behalf of refugees to be organized by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the governing body of the Anglo-Jewish community, was not held until December 1938.[29]

Despite this ambivalence, the Jewish community exerted itself to the utmost to help the Jewish refugees. But there was one category of refugee for whom no specific aid existed. Through her work, Helen Bentwich became aware of the "non-Aryan" Christians, whose assistance was properly the responsibility of the Churches. In September 1933, she wrote to Bell that:

> Their position seems almost more tragic than anyone else's. The Jews belong to a community and are assured of the practical help and sympathy of Jews all over the world. The Pacifists and Left-Wing politicians have the stimulus of a cause that unites them, and which, in itself, makes it easier for them to bear their martyrdom. But these non-Aryans are veritable pariahs and belong to no corporate body which unites them and have no political convictions in common to stimulate them. And up till the present they feel that there is no organized body of opinion in England, or elsewhere, to whom they can turn for sympathy and, even more, for material help.[30]

With characteristic dedication, Bell took the cause of the "non-Aryan" Christians as his own. He began canvassing the various organizations within the Church of England which he thought might be able to assist the "non-Aryan" Christians, such as the Jewish Missionary Societies, and negotiating with existing organizations for refugee assistance to include the plight

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[29]Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 275.

[30]Helen Bentwich to Bell, 19 September 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 9-11. This description of the "non-Aryan" Christians as in a "no-man's land" bereft of all organized assistance would persist throughout the 1930s, both as a description of their plight and as a means of directing Christian attention specifically toward them.

of the "non-Aryan" Christians in their appeals. He also brought the issue to the attention of the bishops at the October bishops' meeting, emphasizing the special responsibility of Christian people to assist the "non-Aryan" Christian refugees.[31] For his efforts, he received the approbation of the *Church Times*, whose columns "welcomed the Bishop of Chichester's plea for German Christians of Jewish descent" and regretted that English Christians of similar descent "had [not] before this expressed corporate sympathy with their brethren in Germany."[32] By the end of October, Bell's involvement in the issue was sufficiently well-known that he received a direct plea for help from a Dr. jur. Gerhard Salomon, a "non-Aryan" in Leipzig who had lost his position and did not know where to turn.[33] This was the first of what would become hundreds of letters asking Bell's assistance over the next six years.

Bell's activities were not limited to England. Bell was a leader of the ecumenical movement both in Britain and on the continent, primarily through his involvement in the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. His biography "is to a very large extent the biography of the ecumenical movement of the churches," from his participation in the first meeting of church leaders after the First World War at Oud Wassenaar in Holland, to his involvement in the creation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, of which he served as its

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[31]Meeting of 18-19 October 1933. Bishops Meetings, Lambeth Palace Library, London, BM-10, f. 89.

[32]*Church Times*, 6 October 1933. Dark, who called himself a socialist, described his work as editor of the *Church Times* as "urg[ing] the Christian case for radical social changes," despite the dislike of his employer for his opinions. Sidney Dark, *The Church, Impotent or Triumphant?* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1941), 6.

[33]Bell's response was to refer him to the High Commission for Refugees from Germany. Salomon to Bell, 30 October 1933, Bell to Salomon, 13 November 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 134, 145.

first chairman.[34] The conference inaugurating the Life and Work movement was held in Stockholm in 1925. His participation in the conference "marked the emergence of Bell as an ecumenical leader in his own right"[35] and permitted Bell to develop an extensive circle of international contacts. In 1932, he became president of the Christian Council, and led it throughout the 1930s. As president, he brought the case of "non-Aryan" Christians to the agenda of the annual meeting of its Executive Committee at Novi Sad, in Yugoslavia, in September 1933. The Committee passed a resolution expressing its anxiety at the "severe actions taken against persons of Jewish origin"[36] and decided to support an international organization to be formed in Holland, the European Central Office for Inter-Church Aid, for the

> special purpose of relieving the very large numbers of Christian men and women, most of them entirely non-political and many of them pastors or Church officers who, because racially of Jewish origin, are being dismissed from their posts and expelled from their country.[37]

Bell's letter to Helen Bentwich informing her of this decision is dated only one week following her original letter to him.[38]

Another foundation for Bell's future work was also laid during this period, and, once again, Helen Bentwich was the catalyst. She alerted Bell to the formation of a fund in aid of refugee children — the Save the Children Fund — asking permission to use his name on the list

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[34]W.A. Visser 'T Hooft, "Bishop Bell's Life-Work in the Ecumenical Movement," *The Ecumenical Review* XI, no. 2 (January 1959): 135.

[35]Slack, *George Bell*, 46.

[36]Bell, "Church and State in Europe: The Jewish Question," Letter to the editor, *The Times*, 4 October 1933.

[37]"From the Bishop's Window," *Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XIV, no. 10 (October 1933), 354-55.

[38]Bell to Helen Bentwich, 26 September 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, f. 14.

of vice-presidents.[39] Children were to become a major focus of Bell's efforts on behalf of refugees in the coming years.

The 1933 Christmas Appeal

A report on the position of Christian refugees from Germany in mid-October, prepared for the Church Council on Foreign Relations, identified financial relief as the most pressing need for "non-Aryan" Christians, whether in Britain, other countries, or still in Germany.[40] How to seek financial assistance was a difficult problem. There was, as of yet, little or no awareness among the general public of the existence of this particular sub-group of refugees, and, other than in specific groups such as academics, little public interest in assisting refugees of any sort outside of the Jewish community. The 1933 Christmas Appeal was developed as a means of raising both funds and public awareness; it was successful in neither goal.

The German Refugee Assistance Fund (GRAF), an umbrella organization consisting of the Academic Assistance Council,[41] International Student Service, Refugee Professional

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[39]Helen Bentwich to Bell, 18 October 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 108-9; Bell to Bentwich, 21 October 1933, vol. 27, f. 115.

[40]Rev. H.W. Fox, *Report on the Position of Jewish and Other Christian Refugees from Germany*, Lang Papers, Lambeth Palace Library, London, vol. 38, ff. 73-78.

[41]The Academic Assistance Council was among the most important of the non-Jewish voluntary organizations. It was founded in 1933 by Sir William Beveridge, Director of the London School of Economics, to help academics excluded from teaching or conducting research in Germany, six hundred and fifty of whom — more than the entire academic staff of Cambridge at the time — had left Germany in the first two years of the Nazi regime alone. About half of these came first to Britain. By 1938, about one third of the entire research and teaching staff of German universities had lost their posts because of Nazi measures, and 2200 had emigrated, including 24 Nobel Laureates. The AAC, by then renamed the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (under which name it continues in existence today) had found permanent positions for 524 scholars, 378 in academic institutions and 146 in industry or general research by the end of 1938. Many scholars, however, particularly the less well-known, were unable to find

Committee, and the Society of Friends Germany Emergency Committee, was organizing an appeal for the beginning of November, and Bell at first considered the possibility of adding a committee dealing with "non-Aryan" Christians to their number.[42] Bell had reservations about this plan, though: ". . . the question as to the place of Christians of Jewish origin in any funds that the public subscribe wants very careful consideration," he wrote to Lang.[43] The GRAF appeal was targeted toward professionals and academics, but Bell was convinced that any Christian appeal had to deal with all classes.[44] In the end, therefore, he rejected the plan to involve the "non-Aryan" Christians in the GRAF appeal, although Lang did write a letter supporting it, and calling on Christian support, not only because the restrictions in Germany applied to non-Jews as well as Jews, but because "these people are suffering under the policy of a Christian State."[45]

A more acceptable alternative to Bell was to participate in a world appeal to be carried out by the High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany. The High Commission for Refugees (Jewish and Otherwise) Coming from Germany was created in October 1933 by the League of

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positions, and ended up emigrating to America because of the greater opportunities there. The first president of the organization was Lord Rutherford; upon his death in 1937, William Temple, then Archbishop of York, became president. For details of the AAC/SPSL, see Norman Bentwich, *The Rescue and Achievement of Refugee Scholars: The Story of Displaced Scholars and Scientists 1933-1952* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1953); and Walter Adams, "The Refugee Scholars of the 1930s," *The Political Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (January-March 1968): 7-14. Adams was secretary of the AAC/SPSL in the 1930s.

[42]Bell to Fox, 16 October 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, f. 100.

[43]Bell to Lang, 13 October, 1933, Lang Papers, vol. 38, f. 70.

[44]Bell to Fox, 23 October 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, f. 117.

[45]*The Times*, 21 April 1934.

Nations.[46] The first High Commissioner, James McDonald, himself a "devoted Christian and humanist,"[47] was satisfied that the Jewish community was doing all possible to assist refugees. He devoted much of his energy to attempting to raise Christian awareness of and participation in relief efforts for refugees:

> As a class those refugees who have no special claims upon their fellow religionists or who indeed have no religious associations will require special efforts on their behalf from the High Commissioner and those associated with him.[48]

Explaining McDonald's plan for an appeal to the Archbishop of York, Bell wrote: "The Christian Churches could thus make their appeal for the whole body of refugees, Jewish, political, and non-political, but would secure that a proper regard is paid to Non-Aryan Christians."[49] The plan, however, was not realized as McDonald decided that it was best to work through existing agencies for appeals, and leave the High Commission to concentrate on refugee settlement.[50]

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[46]The Commission was weakened from the beginning by the decision to make it autonomous of the League, in a bid to lessen German resistance (quite unnecessarily, as Germany withdrew from the League within a month of the Commission's creation). McDonald resigned in December 1935, after only two years, frustrated with the inability of the Commission to act effectively to assist the refugees and the weakness created by its separation from the League of Nations. In his letter of resignation, he acknowledged the work of private organizations in assisting refugees, but said that efforts had to be directed to the reasons the refugees are created in the first place, a political function that rightly belonged to the League (Oscar I. Janowsky and Melvin M. Fagen, *International Aspects of German Racial Policies* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1937], 133). His letter, commented Henson, "is painful reading, and makes it almost impossible to regard Germany as any longer entitled to be regarded as a civilized country." Henson Diary, 2 January 1936, Dean and Chapter Library, Durham.

[47]Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 162.

[48]"Statement of James G. McDonald, High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming From Germany Made at the Opening Session of the Governing Body at Lausanne, December 5, 1933 (for Press)," Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 10-23.

[49]Bell to William Temple, Archbishop of York, 9 November 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, f. 141.

[50]Henri-Louis Henriod, Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, to Bell, 16 November 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, f. 162.

McDonald did encourage Bell, however, to broach the subject of a Christmas appeal from the churches to Lang, and promised to seek to broaden the appeal to Europe and the United States through the High Commission. Bell, in turn, urged Lang to consider a special collection in the churches for refugees — Jewish, political, and "Christians of Jewish descent" — on the Sunday after Christmas, or, if that were to prove impossible, a general appeal to be made in connection with the Christmas season.[51]

The approval of Lang, as Archbishop of Canterbury, was central to the success of any scheme promulgated through the Church. Yet he does not emerge entirely favourably from examinations of the 1930s. His love for the dramatic, his infatuation with the monarchy, and the appearance he gave of courting the rich and powerful did not serve him well in the minds of the population. He is remembered, if not favourably, for his radio broadcast two days after the abdication of Edward VIII, in which he castigated the King and his circle to a degree considered unnecessary by most — "hitting a man when he was already down" was the description in one letter sent to Lambeth Palace in the aftermath.[52] Christopher Isherwood memorably described him as a "slimy old hypocrite" for purporting to oppose the marriage because Mrs. Simpson had been divorced.[53] More temperately, it can be said that Lang had a strong sense of history, and a belief that his own place in history, as Archbishop, should be carefully preserved for

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[51]Bell to Lang, reporting on conversation with McDonald, 20 November 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 170-171.

[52]Edward Carpenter, *Cantuar: The Archbishops in their Office* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd. 1971), 462-63.

[53]Christopher Isherwood, *Christopher and His Kind 1929-1939* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1976), 260. Isherwood believed the real reason the King had been encouraged to abdicate was because of his Nazi sympathies.

posterity,[54] and he tailored his actions accordingly. Bell, who was an admirer, still regretted that, "as a primate, he had no 'policy'; that is not to say a foreign policy, but a churchmanship based upon a considered foundation and consistent in its principles and purposes."[55] His uncertainties and *ad hoc* responses were not well-suited to the needs of the extreme domestic and international situations of the 1930s. "He provided no effective leadership in either its ecclesiastical or its social dilemmas"[56] is the verdict of one Church historian. Sydney Dark of the *Church Times* noted that despite his intelligence and charm, Lang was essentially of the old order, and had conviction, "but no great courage."[57]

In regard to refugees, Lang appeared to be in a constant struggle between his own instincts, which were true about the nature of the Nazi persecutions and the need for action, and his official position as Archbishop. Thus, on the one hand, throughout his entire career as Archbishop of Canterbury, he wrote merely two letters to *The Times* about the German situation over his signature only, and both were about the persecutions of Jews.[58] On the other hand, he consistently emphasized the necessity of speaking with great care upon national issues such as the refugees because of the perception that he spoke for the government.[59] Possibly because he was

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[54]Norman, *Church and Society in England*, 344.

[55]Chandler, "The Church of England and Nazi Germany," 226.

[56]Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 251.

[57]Dark, *The Church, Impotent or Triumphant?*, 85.

[58]One was in May 1934 to protest against Der Stürmer, the other was after *Kristallnacht*, in November 1938. Chandler, "The Church of England and Nazi Germany," 86.

[59]This perception was accurate. A U.S. clergyman noted that the dictators of the 1930s attached great importance to what Lang said; since he had been appointed by the Prime Minister, they assumed that his words were "governmentally inspired and represented what the British cabinet would like to say but preferred to have said indirectly." Thomas Parker, "Religion and Politics in Britain," *Journal of Contemporary History* 2, no. 4 (October 1967): 123.

aware of this, possibly because of his own inclinations. "Lang was always careful to work in accord with the Foreign Office."[60]

As a result, Lang was "not altogether impressive," in Gutteridge's description, in his performance on the refugee issue. He would say, at times, how intolerable the situation was, and express his "righteous indignation", but his more common position was that it would not be in the interests of the victims to say too much on the subject.[61] His ambiguous position is more than partly responsible for the poor reputation the Church of England has received in evaluations of its work for refugees in the 1930s. For good or ill, "the Primate of All England is a representative figure. What he is many assume the Church to be."[62]

True to his cautious approach, Lang did not feel it appropriate to authorize a specific day for collections, but agreed to promote a Christmas appeal to the churches, and to seek the support of other British Christian leaders.[63] The German Refugees Assistance Fund undertook to accept the money raised by the appeal and keep it in a special account. Lacking any organization to administer the monies raised — as Bell pointed out, the non-Jewish side of the refugee issue, apart from the professions, was totally unorganized[64] — it was decided that a committee comprising all the participating churches would decide how to allocate the money.[65] The appeal

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[60]Hampson, "The British Response to the German Church Struggle," 255.

[61]Reverend Richard Gutteridge, interview with author.

[62]Carpenter, *Cantuar*, 467.

[63]A.C. Don (Lang's chaplain) to Bell, 28 November 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff 207-8

[64]Bell to Henriod, 20 November 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 172-3.

[65]Memo from Fox, 26 November 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 190-92.

as drafted by Bell, sought funds to provide immediate assistance to destitute refugees — those in France, where the majority of refugees had fled, were considered most in need[66] — until schemes for their resettlement could be developed. It asked that, where possible, special collections be held for German refugees at regular Church services the Sunday after Christmas. Signatories to the appeal included Lang, the Archbishop of York, William Temple,[67] and leaders of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, the Congregational Union of England and Wales, the Methodist Conference, the Presbyterian Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Wales.[68] A similar appeal was issued by the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work to the European Churches; signed by Bell, as president of the organization, it asked

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[66]Bell to Norman Bentwich, 29 November 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 28, ff. 80-81.

[67]Temple's involvement in the refugee issue in the 1930s was limited, although he became president of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning in 1938. In the early years of the Hitler regime, he collected all the evidence he could find about concentration camps, had it examined by a Judge of the High Court, and wrote a personal appeal to Hitler, also signed by Gilbert Murray, John Maynard Keynes, G.M Trevelyan, and others. In December 1934, the letter was sent to Ribbentrop, who suggested a meeting, which never took place, with Temple next time he was in London (F.A. Iremonger, *William Temple Archbishop of Canterbury: His Life and Letters* [London: Oxford University Press, 1948], 384). Nevertheless, Temple was cautious about speaking out, warning the Church Assembly "how easy it was to do damage to the friends it desired to help by the vigour of the support given to them." (*Church Times*, 25 June 1937, regarding the debate over a report on the Confessional Church in Germany.) As Archbishop of Canterbury during the war, however, he worked to secure better treatment for refugees in Britain and whatever assistance possible for the Jews left in Europe. During a radio broadcast in July 1944, for instance, he urged Christians in Hungary to save Jews from daily deportation to Auschwitz. In March, 1943, he moved a resolution in the House of Lords calling for government action to assist those Jews able to escape Nazi Europe (Gutteridge, "The Churches and the Jews in England," 356). Upon his death in 1944, the World Jewish Congress issued a statement that, "the premature death of Dr. Temple will be particularly mourned by the Jewish people whose champion he was. . . . Profoundly conscious of the physical suffering of the Jews, and acutely sensitive to its spiritual significance, he was at all times ready to make every contribution to the alleviation of the great tragedy that had befallen a great people." Iremonger, *William Temple*, 567.

[68]Text of appeal in Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 246-47. The appeal appeared in *The Times*, 12 December 1933.

for the same effort to be made by the continental churches.[69] Yet, despite Bell's efforts, the results of the Christmas appeal were negligible, raising only £1,100.[70]

1934-35: The Dormancy of Christian Responsibility

The failure of the Christmas appeal brought home the necessity of arousing a sense of "Christian responsibility" for refugees. Of the 65,000 refugees who had left Germany by the spring of 1934, about 13,000 — one fifth — were non-Jews.[71] While the intellectuals among them were being assisted by organizations such as the Academic Assistance Council and the International Student Service, no adequate effort had been made to mobilize the general population to assist refugees who did not fall under the mandates of these organizations. Certainly the churches were not playing a role; "of Christian bodies, the Friends alone have made a continuous and sustained effort in England, France, and other countries,"[72] one report concluded. Members of the House of Lords were told that, even though only 80 per cent of the refugees were Jewish, fully 95 per cent of the funds raised to help them came from Jewish sources, to which Lord Noel-Buxton replied that,

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[69]Text of appeal in Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 255-57.

[70]Total cited in "Meeting to Consider Christian Responsibility for the Refugees from Germany, July 5, 1934," Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 37-46.

[71]Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 129. Marrus points out that the proportion of non-Jewish refugees was highest in this early period, because of the large numbers of academic and left-wing refugees, and likely dropped significantly as the Nazi regime stabilized and persecution increasingly came to be aimed at the Jewish population.

[72]Note on non-Jewish refugees from Germany (author unknown; enclosed with letter from Norman Bentwich, 23 June 1934), Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 331-33.

> [I]f there is a responsibility felt by the Jewish community for their fellow religionists, it would be equally fair that those who claim to be Christians should feel an equal responsibility for their fellow Christians.[73]

On July 5, 1934, McDonald told a gathering of Christian leaders that they had a responsibility toward the 20 per cent of refugees who were not Jewish. Of the many difficulties, disappointments, and failures of the past several months, "none had struck him so discouragingly as the failure to stir the Christian conscience, the failure of the Christian conscience to assume its share of responsibility to the refugees."[74] Speaking at the same meeting, Norman Bentwich emphasized the need for immediate assistance, but also the more long-term need of assistance to help people emigrate, the only permanent solution to the refugee problem. He said that while two to three hundred Jews were emigrating each month, there was very little emigration among non-Jews because of the lack of organized assistance and money for them. Ironically, he pointed out, the non-Jews were better suited for emigration than the Jewish emigrés, because a greater proportion of them were trained in manual labour.[75]

McDonald repeated his appeal for assistance from the churches in a statement issued 1 November 1934, on the occasion of the third session of the High Commission's Governing Body. He called attention to the increasingly desperate plight of the refugees because of new German regulations limiting the transfer of funds outside the country, and concluded that, for the problem to be solved, there needed to be cooperation from Germany regarding property; relaxation of

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[73]6 February 1935, *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 5th ser., vol 95 (1935), cols. 822, 836.

[74]"Meeting to Consider Christian Responsibility for the Refugees from Germany, July 5, 1934," Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 37-46.

[75]Ibid.

restrictions on the right of residence and work; continuation of Jewish charity; and "an enlargement of funds from Christian sources" for relief, retraining, and settlement.[76]

McDonald's efforts notwithstanding, the two years following the 1933 Christmas appeal were characterized by little action. Bell continued to do his utmost to assist individual refugees, as testified to by the many letters in his papers, some asking him for assistance, others thanking Bell for efforts made.[77] Indicative of the extent to which he became personally involved with the plight of individuals is a letter from Marie-Louise Schutte thanking Bell and his wife for their help to her, particularly while she was staying with them,[78] and several letters regarding a German painter, from whom Bell requested photographs of his work so that he could show them to his artist friends and seek their advice.[79] He continued to press the issue of refugees on the Council for Life and Work. At the autumn meeting of its Administrative Committee, he solicited suggestions as to how best to get help for non-Aryan refugees. The main suggestion, he reported to McDonald, was to concentrate on individual cases, because they tend to elicit a greater response, and to set out a definite plan in any appeal.[80]

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[76]"Statement of James G. McDonald, High Commissioners for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany made at the Third Session of the Governing Body at London November 1, 1934," Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 54-83.

[77]See, for example, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 282-88, 290-94, 297-303.

[78]Marie-Louise Schutte to Bell, 22 October 1934, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 358-9.

[79]17, 19 November, 6 December 1934, Bell Papers, vol 27, ff. 374-6.

[80]Bell to McDonald, 26 October 1934, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 362-3. This strategy of concentrating on individuals has continued to be a mainstay of movements to assist victims of persecution — witness the work of Amnesty International in publicizing the plight of individuals in [illegible] countries, and the movement among North American Jewish communities in the 1970s and 1980s to "adopt" Soviet Jewish families who wanted to emigrate. The "adopters" would maintain contact with that family to raise their morale while pressing the Soviet government to permit their emigration.

This more limited approach reflected the fact that refugees in the years 1933 to 1935 were overwhelmingly an issue of interest to few beyond the Jewish or, secondarily, academic communities. Part of the problem was that there was little public awareness of the "non-Aryan" Christians as a sub-group of refugees. Among those who were aware, nobody knew the extent of the problem; the only available approximation of the numbers involved came from Walter Adams, the secretary of the German Refugees Assistance Fund, who estimated that of the 120 refugees he had interviewed over the summer and early fall of 1933, about 20 per cent were baptized.[81] There was also, not surprisingly, no organization specifically geared toward the "non-Aryan" Christians. They obviously did not fall under the mantle of the Jewish organizations, but neither did they come under the mantle of a specific professional or academic organization (since they came from all sectors of German society), a union, or any other organization, such as those aimed at political prisoners. Very early — in November 1933 — Bell pointed out the dilemma of the "non-Aryan" Christians in his *Diocesan Gazette*:

> As a rule they know nothing at all of Jewry or of Jewish tradition, and have no claim on Jews practising the Jewish religion. Nor have they the inspiration of the political faith which unites pacifists and communists, similarly persecuted, to one another.[82]

Nevertheless, a few were beginning to be aware of the Christian dimensions of the refugee issue. The Reverend James Parkes[83] was one of these, writing that "there is no question

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[81]Fox, *Report on the Position of Jewish and Other Christian Refugees from Germany*, Lang Papers, vol. 38, ff. 73-78.

[82]*Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XIV, no. 11 (November 1933), 395.

[83]Parkes was a leader in Christian-Jewish relations who became aware of the dangers of anti-Semitism while working for the International Student Service in Europe during the early 1930s. Parkes wrote extensively on anti-Semitism throughout his life; his books include *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (1934); *The Jewish Problem in the Modern World* (1939); *An Enemy of the People: Antisemitism* (1945); and *Antisemitism* (1963). The Parkes Library at the University of Southampton is one

but that at the present time there is grave need for [e]nergetic action on the part of non-Jewish bodies, and not merely of "non-Jewish" bodies, but definitely of Christian bodies."[84] Protest meetings, in which the Church was acquitting itself well, were not sufficient. Parkes pointed out that the Jewish bodies were doing all possible for those coming to them for help, but warned of the inevitable resentment if non-Jewish bodies were not willing to shoulder their share of the burden. This early awareness, however, was rare; rarer still was an inclination to act on this awareness.

The sincerity with which the leadership of the Church of England pronounced its disgust at Germany's anti-Jewish policies was part of a long-standing awareness among church members of the evils of racial discrimination. The editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*[85] had "a watchful eye and an attentive ear for Christian expressions of manifest prejudice or animosity."[86] The paper's editorial columns gratefully recounted the willingness with which the Church of England took to the platforms to condemn the persecutions: Reverend Spencer Carpenter, the chaplain to the King, was happy to be allowed to associate himself with the protest against what was happening to the Jews in Germany, while the Bishop of London sent a message with one of his clergy that he (the Bishop) would remember in his prayers every Jew who suffered for his faith. At a meeting of 3,500 people in Manchester, the Bishops of Manchester and Salford respectively

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of the most important collections for the study of the relationship between Jews and non-Jews in Britain.

[84]Parkes to Henriod, 15 November 1933, forwarded to Bell by Henriod, Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 167-69.

[85]The *Jewish Chronicle*, founded in 1841, is the oldest continuously published Jewish newspaper in the world and a participant in, as much as a chronicler of, Anglo-Jewish history. David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) tells the story of the paper from its beginnings until the present day.

[86]Gutteridge, "The Churches and the Jews in England," 353.

proposed and seconded a resolution condemning the persecution and appealing to the German government to take action to stop it. And on 27 June, the Archbishop of Canterbury himself spoke at a meeting at Queen's Hall.[87] He moved the resolution condemning the persecution, claiming it impossible in any part of the civilized world for citizens to keep silent. "They are bound to speak out if only for the relief of their own conscience."[88] In October, it was Temple's turn to speak at a meeting in York.[89] Among those Anglican speakers who participated in protest meetings was Sidney Dark, the editor of the *Church Times*[90]; under his guidance, the *Church Times* would become a strong advocate of assistance to the refugees throughout the 1930s. Indeed, the *Church Times* provided a forum for those who believed that the Church had a Christian responsibility to speak out against the persecution, not only in its editorial columns, but in its letters as well. One writer, identified only as W.N.S., wrote in early 1933 that prayers and protest meetings were not sufficient, that action by Church leaders was required:

> [S]till more required is the voice of Christian authority, speaking as it has, but even more plainly and sternly, to warn that none can call himself Christian who gives way to racial hatred, that far from being Christian, he is denying his Lord."[91]

Writing both as the voice of Christian authority and in his own right, Lang protested the publication of the May 1934 issue of *Der Stürmer* for its articles on ritual murder and Jews. He

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[87]*Jewish Chronicle*, 7 April, 5 May, 30 June, 1933.

[88]Cited in Janowsky and Fagen, *International Aspects of German Racial Policies*, 246.

[89]*Jewish Chronicle*, 27 October, 1933. The protest meetings that were so common in the early years of the Hitler regime were noteworthy not only for the range of persons who spoke at them, but for their ecumenical aspect. The presence of representatives of the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Free Churches, often with representatives of the Jewish community as well, had not happened often before this. Reverend Richard Gutteridge, interview with author.

[90]*Jewish Chronicle*, 21 April 1933.

[91]Letter to the editor, *Church Times*, 5 May 1933.

condemned the publication for raking up "legends and lies" about this alleged custom, and called on the German government, if it wished to secure the respect and goodwill of the English people, to disown the issue and its "odious incitement to religious bigotry."[92] The fiery tone of his condemnation attests to the revulsion with which English church leaders viewed Nazi excesses. Further evidence of this revulsion is the fact that some non-Jews were contributing to the appeal issued by the Central British Fund for the Relief of German Jewry; the bulk of the letters sent with the donations showed widespread sympathy with the Jews and horror and disgust at the brutality of the Nazis.[93]

The most significant expression of Church opposition to the persecution of Jews in Germany was the resolution moved by Bell in the Church Assembly in November 1935 sympathizing with the German Jews and expressing the belief that continuing persecution would be a hindrance to good relations between Germany and other nations. The impact of the subsequent debate spread far beyond the Church, in no small part due to the impassioned, and off the cuff, "superb exhibition of oratory"[94] by the Bishop of Durham, Herbert Hensley Henson.

If bishops played set roles within the Church, Herbert Hensley Henson, the Bishop of Durham, was the Church curmudgeon. He had the reputation of keeping "the most caustic diary"

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[92]*The Times*, 16 May 1934.

[93]*Jewish Chronicle*, 16 June 1933.

[94]*Church Times*, 22 November 1935.

ever written by a Christian bishop.[95] As Temple drily observed, in marking Henson's final appearance at the Convocation of York before his retirement,

> He won the sincere respect of those who differed from him, and that description, if we consider all the subjects in which he has expressed his mind, must include almost everyone in England.[96]

One of the subjects on which he expressed his mind quite firmly from the very beginning was the barbarity of the Nazi persecution of the Jews. His biographer has commented that "an extraordinary thing about Henson was the rapidity, even the instantaneousness, with which he reached moral decisions that took other men years of anxious meditation,"[97] and he did not differ in this case. He believed that, "we do Germany ill service if we refrain from speaking from the housetops with the utmost strength at our command, of the horror with which what we witness is inspiring us."[98] He first spoke out against the persecutions at a meeting in Sunderland on May 7, 1933, and while he was otherwise publicly silent until the Church Assembly debate of November 1935, his speech on that occasion was worth waiting for — "an outburst of fierce and righteous anger"[99] that was not planned, but only decided upon after hearing another member of the Assembly oppose the motion. Henson was scathing in his indictment of those who did not speak their minds with equal vigour, calling Bell's speech on that occasion"mealy

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[95]Owen Chadwick, *Hensley Henson: A study in the friction between Church and State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 5.

[96]*Church Times*, 20 January 1939.

[97]Chadwick, *Hensley Henson*, 262.

[98]Cited in Janowsky and Fagen, *International Aspects of German Racial Policies*, 244.

[99]*Church Times*, 22 November 1935.

mouthed."[100] In his outspokenness he demonstrated the moral fervour of the Church at its best. He told the Assembly that when he read the news from Germany,

> of one base device added to another to degrade, to wound, to injure, and finally to destroy, those ancient and gifted people, he felt a kind of blind rage within him that they could not draw the sword and go to the help of the low against the mighty.[101]

For his efforts, Henson received the thanks of the Chief Rabbi, the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and individual Jews living as far flung as Vienna and New York, invitations to speak on refugees — and a host of "angry denunciations from German Anti-Semites and Italian Fascists."[102] To his surprise, he found that, for once, "I actually 'voiced' the general sentiment!"[103] The Assembly as a whole earned the praise of the the *Church Times* for stepping out of its usual role:

> 'I am my brother's keeper.' The Assembly is, for the most part, concerned with the *minutiae* of ecclesiastical government. But on occasion it demands the right to speak the mind of the Church on great moral issues. . . . The denunciation at the autumn session of the persecution of the Jews in Germany was [such an] occasion.[104]

From the beginning, though, there had been no question of the Church's ability to express its opposition to the persecution of Jews in Germany. What was lacking was action. The strength of the Church's opposition to the persecution of German Jews contrasts painfully with the Church's willingness and ability to provide practical assistance to the victims of these policies,

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[100]Reverend Richard Gutteridge, interview with author.

[101]Church Assembly, *Report of Proceedings. Autumn Session 1935*, 475.

[102]Henson Diary, 22 November to 14 December 1935.

[103]Ibid., 21 November 1935.

[104]*Church Times*, 22 November 1935.

even though a significant percentage were themselves Christian, or to bring home to the mass of English parishioners the Christian nature of the problem. Indeed, despite the cautiousness of the Jewish community in pressing the refugee issue outside its own boundaries, the *Jewish Chronicle* noted, somewhat acerbically, that, while British Jews were grateful to the way in which the press was reacting against Nazi barbarities, "they would be grateful if British Christendom would accept the hint of the *Church Times* and vent its 'indignation and horror.'"[105]

British Christians, however, had other preoccupations. In the words of A.J.P. Taylor, the 1930s have been characterized as the "devil's decade," and its popular image expressed by the words "appeasement" and "mass unemployment."[106] Both of these issues were of widespread concern throughout the decade, and contributed to the lukewarm reception given to refugees in England.

It became quickly obvious to British observers that the new National Socialist government would make the already delicate question of Anglo-German relations yet more complicated. By October 1933, after just six months in power, the Nazi German government had already withdrawn from the League of Nations and the disarmament conference, an indication of its attitude to collective attempts to maintain peace. Thus, the Jewish and non-Aryan refugees of the 1930s had the somewhat dubious distinction of being part of "the complex political equations of the age of appeasement."[107] Unlike previous refugee movements of the twentieth century,

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[105]*Jewish Chronicle*, 24 March 1933.

[106]Taylor, *English History*, 317.

[107]Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 123. Marrus provides one of the few comprehensive examinations of refugee movements in the twentieth century, treating them as phenomena in and of themselves, as opposed to simply evaluating them in the context of Great Power relations.

which had tended to originate in countries on the margins of Europe, both geographically and politically, the refugees from Germany created an issue with reverberations for European peace and security.

Throughout the decade, the refugee issue was seen either as separate from, or subordinate to, the achievement of good relations with Germany through the policy of appeasement. Early in 1933, when it became apparent that many of the Jews fleeing Germany were turning to Britain for assistance, the Cabinet decided, at a meeting on 12 April 1933, that no special commitment to providing asylum for the refugees would be made, but that existing immigration regulations would apply.[108] At the same time, the Cabinet suggested, somewhat opportunistically, that Britain should try to attract "prominent" Jews with high reputations in their fields since, not only would the country benefit from their contribution, but Britain would receive credit for taking them in.[109] The Home Office described its policy as one of "rigid but sympathetic control" according to the provisions of the *Aliens Act*. The relevant sections of the *Aliens Act*, however, were based on the belief that those seeking asylum would be individual political activists, and did not envision the groups of impoverished and persecuted immigrants who would be arriving in the 1930s.[110] A collective response was, therefore, precluded, and each case would have to be evaluated on its own merits; German refugees would be treated no differently than any other potential immigrant, and any special treatment was to be based on considerations of Anglo German relations. For instance, the instructions given to Lord Cecil, the British representative

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[108]The following account of British policy is based primarily upon London, "British Government Policy and Jewish Refugees" and Sherman, *Island Refuge*.

[109]Fox, "Great Britain and the German Jews," 44.

[110]Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 37.

on the Governing Body of the High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, were to use his influence to avoid discussions or recommendations that would be likely to provoke resentment in Germany.[111] Even if it were agreed that Germany's treatment of its Jewish population was not solely a matter of internal German policy, there was still a general agreement that this was an issue that in no way should stand in the way of Anglo-German understanding:[112]

> Above all, there hung the sword of Damocles threatening diplomatic efforts for an appeasement of European animosities if the United Kingdom broke with international convention and made official protests about the Nazi treatment of the German Jews.[113]

A variant on that argument, that the persecutions were an expression of the "rebellious spirit" of the German revolution, and that the way to help the Jews was through more appeasement, was expressed in the early years by Lord Lothian and Clifford Allen, both of whom had travelled to Germany and met with Hitler in the early years of his regime.[114]

One of the few exceptions to the prevailing views on appeasement was the *Church Times*, which observed as early as April 1933 that the persecution of Germany's Jews was abhorrent not only in its own right, but also as an expression of Hitler's nationalist goals, which were a threat to the peace of Europe.[115] The more usual tone used when making connections between the persecutions of the Jews in Germany and foreign policy was one of resignation. Henson, for

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[111]Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 42.

[112]Kushner, "Beyond the Pale? British Reactions to Nazi Anti-Semitism, 1933-39," in *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain*, eds. Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1990), 155; Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 15.

[113]John P. Fox, "British Attitudes to Jewish Refugees from Central and Eastern Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, ed. Werner Mosse (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 481.

[114]Cited in Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 104.

[115]*Church Times*, 28 April 1933.

instance, wrote that "One despair[s] of ever fitting Germany into a civilized order. Yet we seem to be driven by the coercion of a cruel situation to seek alliance with Germany."[116] Some, like James McDonald, believed that remaining silent was an immoral position:

> When domestic policies threaten the demoralization and exile of hundreds of thousands of human beings, considerations of diplomatic correctness must yield to those of common humanity.[117]

As a Christian, McDonald was aware that concerns of humanity transcended national borders. Others, such as Henson and the Labour Member of Parliament, Josiah Wedgwood, shared his views, and countered the belief that the treatment of Jews and "non-Aryans" in Germany was outside of British concerns and should not impinge on foreign policy on both moral grounds and on practical grounds:

> There are, however, limits to the application of this reasonable argument. Nations cannot live in isolation: and their membership of the comity of civilised peoples imposes on them some obligations, which they cannot be suffered to repudiate. The oppression of the German Jews and other "non-Aryans" is raising formidable difficulties for Germany's neighbours.[118]

> When persecution of minorities becomes a matter of declared national policy an international issue is raised. The world's moral judgment is required.[119]

Their voices were lost, however, in the din of those for whom positive Anglo-German relations were paramount. Indeed, the refugees arriving in Britain were baffled by the lack of concern

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[116]Henson Diary, 7 July 1936.

[117]Letter of resignation of James McDonald, first League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Otherwise) Coming from Germany, reprinted in Janowsky and Fagen, *International Aspects of German Racial Policies*, 141.

[118]Henson, introduction to *The Yellow Spot: The Extermination of the Jews in Germany* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1936), 7.

[119]Josiah C. Wedgwood, "Postcript," in Janowsky and Fagen, *International Aspects of German Racial Policies*, 259.

with which the British appeared to view Nazism, and the degree to which the desire for peace and sympathy for the German position appeared to be prevalent.[120]

The primary cause of sympathy among Church leaders for Germany, as among so many other sectors of society, was the deeply rooted belief that the Treaty of Versailles had been fundamentally unjust, and that some measure of redress was due Germany. Thus, most condemnations of the Nazi government's persecutions of the Jews were prefaced, as was the case with the protest meeting organized by Bishop Barnes of Birmingham early in 1933, with expressions of sympathy for the German people as a whole and statements deploring the treaty.[121] Barnes spoke out against the actions of "misguided men" who had shown their hostility to the Nazi regime and claimed that this was "no time for threats or violent reproaches. We must be content to appeal to that better spirit which, though at the moment silent, had not vanished from Germany."[122] Lang, in moving the resolution at a protest meeting against the persecution of German Jews, prefaced it with the statement, "that this meeting, while disclaiming any right or desire to interfere in the internal affairs of another country, . . . [desires] . . . the most friendly relations between Great Britain and Germany should be preserved . . ."[123] In a similar vein, during a debate in the House of Lords, Lang entreated the government to give assurances of its action to express the concern of the English people about the German government's anti-Jewish policies, "not least, the concern of those among them who are animated

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[120]Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-9* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1980), 10-11.

[121]John Barnes, *Ahead of His Age: Bishop Barnes of Birmingham* (London: Collins, 1979), 301.

[122]*The Times*, 16 May 1933.

[123]*Jewish Chronicle*, 30 June 1933.

by feelings of sincere friendship for the German people."[124] Even the *Church Times*, that most outspoken and clear-sighted opponent of Nazi policies, editorialized that anti-Semitism in Germany was not a basis for breaking with Germany, and that the Nazi revolution would never have happened had old enemies been prepared to make concessions five years before.[125] Indeed, Bell even drew a connection between German anti-Semitism and Versailles:

> One feels it is essentially the task of the Church and its Pastors to stand up against this outcrop of Anti-Semitism, which I feel is due in a large measure to the sufferings brought upon the German people through the War, and the terrible so-called 'Peace' Treaty of Versailles.[126]

Another force driving Church leaders to their support of appeasement was the horror they felt at the possibility of another war. The First World War had been the war of their youth; the expected quick war had dragged out for more than four years, and they had watched the ranks of their friends and families become decimated. Bell lost two brothers to the battlefields within a few days of each other;[127] others fared similarly. Death rates for Oxford and Cambridge students of all ages, who had "volunteered with such enthusiasm in the early months"[128] were well above the national figures and the social group that suffered the greatest losses was the most privileged.[129] It was from this group, of course, that by far the majority of the Church leaders had come. They felt the horror more than most, and, as a result, "no Christian leader wanted

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[124]30 March 1933, *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 5th ser., vol. 87, col. 225.

[125]*Church Times*, 21 April 1933.

[126]Bell to Dorothy Buxton, n.d. (March 1935?), Bell Papers, vol. 27, ff. 396-97.

[127]Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?*, 174.

[128]Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 19.

[129]J.M. Winter, "Britain's 'Lost Generation' of the First World War," *Population Studies* 31, no. 3 (November 1977): 463, 465.

to be accused of crusading for the sacrifice of more young men after what happened between 1914 and 1918."[130]

Their support for appeasement presented Church leaders with a dilemma — how to reconcile their revulsion at German anti-Semitic persecutions with their sympathy for the German cause and their willingness to "give the benefit of the doubt to continental dictators."[131] One of the ways they managed this was to remind themselves how much blame had to be laid at their own door. Lang, for instance, told the Convocation of Canterbury that, while they might resent the methods by which Germany was asserting its right to equality, "we had to remember that other Powers were not without blame in this matter."[132] Another way was to separate those committing the persecutions from the rest of the German population. As with many other commentators, Bell was at pains to differentiate between the Germans carrying out such atrocities and the "other" Germans, the ones he was sure were the majority — much in the same way that German Jews took refuge in the thought that the Germany of Goethe and Schiller would eventually triumph over Nazi barbarians. Thus, in the same breath as Bell informed members of his diocese of the Universal Christian Council's resolution condemning the persecutions in Germany, he confided that,

> the situation was full of embarrassment, and the [Executive] Committee knew well that there were hundreds of thousands of fine high-minded Germans to whom the cruel methods adopted to enforce the revolution were distressing in the extreme.[133]

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[130]Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?*, 181.

[131]Hastings, *History of English Christianity*, 327.

[132]*The Times*, 6 June 1935.

[133]*Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XIV, no. 10 (October 1933): 354-55.

Similarly, in accepting a request to become a vice-president of a fund for the relief of refugee children, he asked to see the official statement of the new organization's aims before publication, "so that I may know how the criticism, explicit or implied, of the Nazi regime is framed. I am ready to be critical, but not to be outrageously or indiscriminately fierce against all things German."[134] His frequent *apologias* on behalf of the finer Germany which he believed was only dormant earned him the epithet of "the most appeasing bishop of all" from one Church historian, who has concluded that all the Church's bishops, with the possible exception of Henson, were appeasers;[135] contemporary judgments of Bell by the *Church Times* were equally harsh about his "facile sentimentality" about Germany's "great awakening."[136]

This question is problematic, and important. Bell obviously had definite sympathy for the German nation, if not the present state. He also frequently voiced his desire for good relations with Germany. He was far from alone in expressing these sentiments, however; they were shared by the majority of Church leaders. Despite criticisms, whether contemporary or historical, the important question is the effect of his views on his work for refugees. The conclusion that his views about Versailles, German rights to restitution, or Anglo-German relations in any way diminished the strength of his support for "non-Aryan" Christian refugees throughout the 1930s is unfounded. He could be as uncompromising about his oppposition to Nazi policies as he was sympathetic to what he perceived as their underlying causes, as, for instance, in 1936, when he likened anti-Semitism to a poison or a contagious disease:

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[134]Bell to Helen Bentwich, 21 October 1933, Bell Papers, vol. 27, f. 115.

[135]Chadwick, "The English Bishops and the Nazis," 18.

[136]*Church Times*, 12 January 1934.

> We wish to say in the clearest terms that it is an intolerable poison, and that all Christians in this country ought to set their faces in the most resolute way against it.[137]

Refugees came to be an issue, however, just three months after unemployment in Britain reached its peak — almost three million workers were registered as unemployed in January 1933.[138] Even though the crisis began to ease soon after, and half a million workers found work within the next year, the fear that refugees would take jobs away from English workers was a significant factor in official hesitancy about refugee admissions. The Earl of Lucan, speaking on behalf of the government in the House of Lords, cited the unemployment situation as the primary reason it was impossible to adopt "a policy of unrestricted admission and to open the door to all German nationals who think that life will be easier in England."[139] Even persistent supporters of the refugee cause, such as Lord Noel-Buxton, admitted that government reluctance to admit refugees was understandable, given the unemployment situation.[140] In its response to McDonald's resignation as High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, *The Times* cast its argument against viewing the plight of refugees as Germany's business solely in economic terms: "At a time of great economic hardship Germany is driving into the markets of other countries labour and skills which cannot earn a living."[141]

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[137]*The Times*, 4 September 1936.

[138]Thorpe, *Britain in the Era of the Two World Wars*, 88. The incidence of unemployment varied sharply between regions, with the north suffering far higher unemployment rates than the more prosperous south.

[139]25 July 1933, *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 5th ser., vol. 88 (1933), col. 1100. The wording in his reply betrays a curious sense of why refugees were coming to England, and a lack of appreciation of the fact that they were fleeing persecution.

[140]6 February 1935, *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 5th ser., vol. 95 (1935), col. 836.

[141]*The Times*, 30 December 1935. The leader does not mention the humanitarian aspect of the refugee issue.

Fear of greater unemployment arising from an influx of refugees was not just a product of the Depression, but was more deeply rooted. It originated in the migration of Eastern European Jews at the turn of the century, when there was growing concern about the impact the immigrants were having on conditions for the working poor. The "overstocked labour market" that they created was seen as contributing to low wages, long hours, and overcrowded conditions in London's East End, long an area of Jewish immigrant settlement.[142] The alien was seen as "a figure who damaged the material and moral well-being of the native working classes," and the interests of Jewish immigrants were placed in opposition to the interests of "labour and the working man."[143] In the earlier period, legislation restricting immigration was seen then as a means of improving the conditions of the working class; in the 1930s, the legislation restricting refugee admission to England was seen as a way of finding employment for the non-working working class.

Church leaders were trenchant in their analysis of unemployment. They were fundamentally aware of the huge toll unemployment had exacted in England, and parish priests had been intimately involved in attempting to assist their parishioners in dealing with the economic crisis. "At the local level, churches of all traditions worked hard to alleviate the harshness of unemployment and played their part in sustaining communities."[144] It was clear to them, nevertheless, that the problem was much more than simply a lack of jobs related to the current economic situation, but structural in nature, and that significant social changes were

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[142]Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 270.

[143]Ibid., 278.

[144]B.G. Worrall, *The Making of the Modern Church: Christianity in England since 1800* (London: SPCK, 1988), 252.

required in order to deal with the issue. Henson, for instance, found that the many expresssions of good will and gestures of kindness toward the unemployed were counterproductive, because they did not attack the root of the problem; that would require state action. He enjoined those who wanted to help the unemployed to put their resources toward supporting those who would support such action, as opposed to individual acts of charity toward the unemployed.[145] Temple took the same view. He pointed out, in a letter to *The Times*, that the average number of unemployed in the ten years before the First World War was never far short of one million, and that some adjustments to the social structure would be required to deal with this perennial problem.[146] The demand for state intervention made by both these men reveals the extent to which state encroachment in areas that had hitherto been considered matters for philanthropy had become widely accepted.[147]

That same month, the Church Assembly debated the interim report of the Social and Industrial Commission on Unemployment. It is, of course, significant that such a Commission should be established at all. Equally important is the general acceptance of the idea that the Church was justified in participating in the nation-wide debate on unemployment. The Assembly's rejection of the Bishop of Jarrow's contention that it was not the business of the Assembly to concern itself with "economic remedies and reconstruction policies" or "to make

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[145]Speaking to the Durham Diocesan Conference. *The Times*, 27 November 1934.

[146]*The Times*, 5 February 1935.

[147]This transition from philanthropy to a social welfare system is noted by Peter Cahalan. He describes how the relief movement for Belgian refugees had begun as a completely voluntary effort, but that within a few months, government financial assistance became necessary to provide the means to meet the needs of the refugees. This development, he says, "suggests how the philanthropic community became part of the new system of social welfare in the twentieth century." Peter Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England During the Great War" (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1978), v.

society fit for man"[148] bespeaks a widespread belief about the place of the Church in the wider world.

For the Church, the wider world extended beyond the boundaries of England, through its ties with other churches. Inter-church relations was another obstacle to greater activity by Church leaders on the refugee issue. One of the common characteristics of Church leaders in the 1930s was their commitment to ecumenicism, whether expressed, as in the case of Temple and Headlam, through the Faith and Order movement, or, as with Bell, through the Life and Work movement. After 1933, relations with the German church became at once more delicate and more crucial. More delicate because the German Protestant church, like the Church of England, was an established Church and had, therefore, a connection with the state that could not be ignored. More crucial because, at a time when Christian principles seemed to have disappeared from the German government, it was considered even more important to preserve them, through the churches, in the country as a whole. This was rendered more difficult for English Church leaders by the fact that the German Lutheran (or Protestant) church has been noted for the degree to which it did *not* concern itself with the larger issues surrounding Nazism, preferring to concentrate on theological issues and specific questions regarding the separation of Church and State.[149]

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[148]*The Times*, 7 February 1935.

[149]The primary work in English on the German Church struggle is by J.S. Conway, who describes the struggle as "a struggle between rival theological parties within the Church." J.S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches 1933-45* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), xviii. A more recent work by Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler* (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 1992) also provides important perspective on the degree to which the Confessing Church reflected the German status quo, and its members the views of the general population, on issues such as the German government's Jewish policies. Karl-Dietrich Bracher, "Problems of the German Resistance," in *The Challenge of the Third Reich: The Adam von Trott Memorial Lectures*, ed. Hedley Bull (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 57-76 is useful on the place of the Church in the larger debate on German resistance to Hitler. Daphne M. Hampson, "The British Response to the German Church Struggle, 1933

The Church in Germany, like many other of the country's institutions, responded favourably to the new Nazi government. Its clergy, as a group, were conservative and patriotic, and supported the newly restored order and international assertions Hitler brought. Divisions arose only around Hitler's attempt to achieve greater control over the Church by combining the 28 provincial churches into a single Reich Church under a Reichsbishop. Thus, the Civil Service Reconstruction Law of April 1933 became an issue for the Church only when the Aryan paragraph that limited Jewish participation in the civil service was applied to pastors, and not because of its anti-Semitism, but rather because it was seen as interference in Church affairs: "Protestant leaders were ominously silent with respect to the significance of the 'Aryan paragraph' for 'non-Aryans' and to Nazi racial laws in general."[150]

Even the leaders of the Confessional Church, created in April 1934, saw themselves as "the loyal opposition,"[151] not as the leaders of a political protest:

> Neither in 1934 nor at any time afterwards was it the aim of the Confessing Church to become the spearhead of political opposition to the Nazis. . . . Nor did they take a stand in the early years against such crimes as the murders of 30 June 1934, the persecution of the Jews or the erection of concentration camps.[152]

Martin Niemöller, the symbol of Church resistance to Nazi attempts to control the Church, still professed his loyalty to Hitler's "political leadership of the German nation," and, in September

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1939" (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1973) is a close examination of how the German Church struggle was perceived and responded to in Britain. This discussion focusses only on the Protestant church in Germany; the experience of the Catholic church was quite different, and, insofar as the Catholic church remained apart from the ecumenical movement of the 1930s, is not relevant to this paper.

[150]Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 35; Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, 9.

[151]Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 58.

[152]Ibid., 84.

1939, offered, as a former U-Boat commander, to serve the Navy in any capacity.[153] If this was the attitude of the leader of the "resistance," how difficult it must have been for others to feel otherwise:

> The troubling historical evidence suggests that the churches refrained from criticizing the Nazi regime, not just because they wanted to remain "apolitical" but because they often agreed with it.[154]

Nazi policies against Jews was one of the areas of agreement. "There can be no doubt that particularly among conservative élites and the official churches, latent anti-Semitic 'resentments' led to a deplorable moral indifference."[155] Protests against persecutions of the Jews were few. Like the English Church, the German Church was primarily concerned with Jewish Christians, but even support for these, many of whom were church members, was weak, and, as in the English Church, limited to individuals as opposed to being seen as the church's collective responsibility.[156] The small number of "non-Aryan" pastors in the church — estimated as between 33 and 90 of a total 18,000 — made inaction easy, and the inclination of both Church leaders and the pastors themselves was to yield to Nazi pressure, usually by resigning.[157] If the church failed to stand by its pastors, how much more alone were ordinary Jewish Christians, who had only their churches to turn to for help, and who found that help

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[153]Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, 433, n. 24.

[154]Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 72.

[155]Hans Mommsen, "Anti-Jewish Politics and the Implementation of the Holocaust," in *The Challenge of the Third Reich: The Adam von Trott Memorial Lectures*, ed. Hedley Bull (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 123.

[156]Another point of similarity was the reluctance of pastors of the Confessing Church to speak out against the euthanasia campaign from their pulpits, but rather to intercede on behalf of individual patients with those who were to take them away to be killed. They feared that speaking out from the pulpit might harm the cause of the actual patients. Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986), 90.

[157]Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 133-34. Most of them ended up in England, in no small part due to the personal guarantee Bell provided in 1938.

lacking. "The Evangelical Church's (and the Confessing Church's) defense of the Jews and Jewish Christians (baptized Jews) was confused, ambivalent, and intimidated by Nazi pressure."[158] The idea of a separate church for Jewish Christians, which came up periodically, is an indication of the degree to which racial anti-Semitism was part of Protestant thinking. Indeed, at the 1935 Confessing Church synod, one delegate advised colleagues to leave the difficult question of intermarriage between baptized Jews and Christians to the Nazi State.[159]

In England, where it was characterized most frequently as a struggle of good against evil, of the Confessing Church against Nazi storm-troopers and racial policies,[160] the German Church struggle received a great deal of support from Church leaders.[161] To the frustration of English observers, however, German Church leaders confined their activities to ecclesiastic questions. Their eyes

> remained intensely focused upon the theological intricacies of 'the Church struggle' but were . . . too blind to the strident nationalism, the suppression of

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[158]Ibid., 126.

[159]Ibid., 126-27, 129.

[160]Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, xviii.

[161]The notable exception is Arthur Cayley Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester. His position in the German Church struggle was the most controversial aspect of his career as chair of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Church body created in 1932 to conduct relations with other Churches. Headlam believed that a united national church was a desirable institution for any country, and that Russian Communism was the real enemy. He erred in not recognizing that the church in Germany was not an independent church, and in failing to take the dangers of National Socialism sufficiently seriously. He further erred in refusing to change his views despite growing evidence against them throughout the 1930s. Unfortunately, his position as chair of the Council on Foreign Relations meant that his public statements on the German Church struggle were seized on by the Nazi government as evidence that opposition to their policies did not run as deeply as it appeared. For more on Headlam and the German Church struggle, see Ronald C.D. Jasper, *Arthur Cayley Headlam: Life and Letters of a Bishop* (London: Faith Press, 1960), Chapter 20; and Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 321-22.

> personal freedom, the growth of concentration camps, the penetration of anti-Semitism into every area of life [162]

Their "apparent complaisance . . . embarrassed their English brethren who watched, puzzled and sometimes resentful," and their silence "cut away vital ground beneath the feet of European Church leaders who wished to speak out themselves."[163] The work of Bell for the refugees, for instance, "had to be carried out quite separately from [his] involvement in the Church issue; any idea of working for these other causes through the Church in Germany was out of the question."[164] Bell himself, "feared to say more . . . than his German pastor friends as a whole would wish. And this in some way diminished the power of his witness."[165]

The imbalance between British opinion on the church persecutions and on persecutions of the Jews was also not lost on the Nazi government. Three reports written after the biennial meeting of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work in August 1934 (to the German Foreign Office, the Auslands organization of the Nazi party, and the Auswärtiges Amt) all shared the common point that the church issue was seen as more important in Britain than the Jewish question in terms of alienating British opinion, and not only the opinion of government and diplomats, but of the public at large.[166] This imbalance was motivated, as was so much else throughout the decade, by the desire for good relations with Germany. Speaking out against the

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[162]Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 342.

[163]Chandler, "The Church of England and Nazi Germany," 77.

[164]Hampson, "The British Response to the German Church Struggle," 152.

[165]Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 342.

[166]Hampson, "The British Response to the German Church Struggle," 82 83.

persecution of German Jews would not forward that goal; speaking out against the oppression of the Church would:

> Ecumenical leaders saw it as their duty, through influencing Christian opinion and public opinion in general, to promote peace and good relations with Germany. The persecution of the Church in Germany was to be abhorred, not only on its own account, but because it prevented those friendly relations with Germany on which they thought the peace of the world so largely depended.[167]

Once again, appeasement was the prism through which other issues were evaluated.

The constraints preventing a more active response to the refugee issue that have been described so far were externally imposed — by foreign relations, by domestic considerations, by ecumenical interests. Another equally important constraint arose from a deeper source — the attitudes and beliefs, often so profoundly embedded as to be unconscious, that conditioned responses to the refugee question. Most important among them was the "parlour anti-Semitism,"[168] or the "anti-semitism of tolerance"[169] that existed in British society. That anti-Semitism existed is without question. It was, in fact, an earlier wave of Jewish immigration that was the catalyst for the 1905 *Aliens Act* limiting the admission of aliens to Great Britain; one hundred thousand of the 247,758 aliens counted in the census of 1901 were Jews who had immigrated in the past two decades. For many Britons, this was their introduction to the phenomenon of "refugees,"[170] and it helped to give birth to a "tradition of anti-semitism."[171]

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[167]Ibid., 3.

[168]Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right*, 65. The very description alerts the reader to the fact that this sort of anti-Semitism was most common among those who actually had parlours — the middle and upper classes, rather than the working classes, where anti-Semitism took on more virulent forms. Nevertheless, it is the anti-Semitism of the parlour that is of most relevance to this paper, given the social origins of the Church leadership, and of the majority of Church members.

[169]Kushner, "Beyond the Pale?," 144.

[170]Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 35.

Social surveys of the 1930s and 1940s suggest that most people viewed Jews, even those born in Britain, as somehow foreign.[172] A despatch from the German ambassador in London in July 1939 noted that anti-Semitism appeared to be growing, in part due to the increase in Jewish immigration, and that the belief that the Jews were driving Britain to war with Germany was common. It also noted that the average "man in the street" had exaggerated ideas about the extent of the immigration, believing that 30,000 refugees were arriving each month, instead of the 40-50,000 who had been admitted to date.[173] Still, "vague" and "amorphous," as well as "unsystematic" and "apolitical,"[174] British anti-Semitism was in no way as virulent or violent as German or Eastern European anti-Semitism. Because of this, British anti-Semitism is not always considered a crucial issue in how the British government and the British people responded to the refugee crisis. Yet it had an impact in two important ways.

First, the apparently benign nature of British anti-Semitism — such that Harold Nicolson could claim in 1945 that he loathed anti-Semitism but disliked Jews[175] — meant that the British government and the British people were, for the most part, unable to grasp the truly different way in which anti-Semitism was being manifested in Germany, and, therefore, the urgent need of its

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[171]Bernard Wasserstein, "The British Government and the German Immigration," in *Exile in Great Britain: Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld (England: Berg Publishers; New Jersey: Humanities Press for the German Historical Institute, London, 1984), 63-64.

[172]Kushner, "Beyond the Pale?," 145.

[173]"British Antisemitism was Hitler's Hope: London Envoy's Revealing Despatch," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* XVI, no. 1 (1962), n.p.

[174]Kushner, "Beyond the Pale?," 144.

[175]Geoffrey G. Field, "Anti-Semitism with the Boots Off," *Wiener Library Bulletin*, 50th anniversary special issue (n.d.), 32.

victims for assistance.[176] Nazi Jew-hatred was "outside the experience of a world which still saw itself as civilized, and neither the Jews nor their non-Jewish friends could comprehend it."[177] Instead, there was an unwillingness among the public to believe that the brutality described in the press was occurring, and a readiness to ascribe it to press exaggeration.[178]

Second, even when the nature of German anti-Jewish persecutions was recognized for what it was, British anti-Semitism assisted in discouraging a strong British response, leading to Britain's failure to come to terms with the first stages of the Final Solution.[179] Thus, within the Home Office, for example, latent anti-Semitism played a role in limiting bureaucratic options regarding refugees. They were at once treated as all other immigrants, on the basis that it would be wrong to discriminate in their favour, yet singled out as a group in terms of the political risks entailed in helping them.[180] The Home Office already had a history of poor relations with the Jewish community, arising from the efforts of the Jewish community to persuade the Home Office to take a broader approach to interpreting the 1905 *Aliens Act*. Relations between the two bodies at that time were "not friendly" and Home Office officials saw the Jewish complaints as a sign of the Jewish community's failure to identify with the general public good.[181] This hostility, present at the start of the twentieth century, could not have failed to impress itself on

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[176]Kushner, "Beyond the Pale?," 155.

[177]Yehuda Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945* (Jerusalem: The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), 19.

[178]Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right*, 72.

[179]Kushner, "Beyond the Pale?," 156.

[180]Louise London, "British Government Policy and Jewish Refugees," 26-7.

[181]Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 354-58.

those officials, junior at the time, who would be the senior officials in charge of policy 30 years later; it is not unlikely that this latent hostility could have influenced the way in which the Home Office dealt with the Jewish refugees of the 1930s. Another significant disincentive to welcoming German refugees too liberally was the spectre of the 4.5 million Jews in Poland, Rumania, and Hungary — 3.1 million in Poland alone — whose situation was, in many respects, substantially worse than that of the German Jews,[182] and whose governments might be encouraged to seek a similar solution if they saw German refugees being welcomed.

Anti-Semitism was as common among Church leaders as it was among the general public. Sidney Dark believed that the lack of Christian action for refugees was due, in part, to lack of moral courage on the part of Church leaders, but "even worse than this was the deplorable half sympathy with anti-Semitism in certain influential Christian circles."[183] It is instructive to look more closely at Henson in this regard. For at the same time that he opposed anti-Jewish persecutions with all his might, he recorded in his diary the "social" anti-Semitism that he shared with so many others and that, while not in any way comparable to the anti-Semitism of Germany or the Eastern European countries, had a definite impact on how the refugee crisis was perceived. While acknowledging the almost religious fervour of anti-Semitism, he noted that,

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[182]The *Jewish Chronicle* gives a preponderance of attention between 1933 and 1939 to the plight of the East European Jews compared to that of German Jews, both in editorial columns, and in appeals for funds to assist them. From its pages, one must conclude that the dangers facing the East European Jews were considered far greater and far more immediate than those facing the German Jews. In the 1930s, for instance, one third of Poland's Jews were on the verge of starvation "or beyond" (Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, 61).

[183]Dark, *The Church, Impotent or Triumphant?*, 17.

> its hold is strengthened by the odour which everywhere attaches to these strange people, and which is instinctive. I feel a certain repugnance when talking with Jews, even when they are people whom I respect. Why is this?[184]

His descriptions of the Jews he encountered reek of stereotypes, again, not in any way comparable to the stereotypes bruited about in Nazi literature, but, all the same, far from benign. After noting that a fellow-guest, a "sharp little Jewess," ate bacon for breakfast he observed that:

> The little Jewess made an early departure — chattering, gesticulating, gleaming, watching (after the manner of a trapped animal — the authentic Ghetto mark) to the last! There can be no doubt that the Jew is inexorably, even in the most liberal modern environment, an alien, an exile, and (consciously) a pariah.[185]

Yet Henson was the first to condemn those who, like his old friend Headlam, would excuse German policies toward the Jews:[186]

> He is curiously wrong-headed about the Jews, whose treatment in Germany cannot be excused by any objections to their international character, anti-social activities, and general unpopularity.[187]

Bell, like Henson, combined a rejection of anti-Semitism with ambivalence about Jews. He never hesitated to speak out against the persecutions of Jews in Germany, and was in close

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[184]Henson Diary, 18 August 1937.

[185]Henson Diary, 10, 11 October 1937. Compare this to Chamberlain's statement to his sister that "No doubt Jews aren't a lovable people; I don't care about them myself" (although his correspondence does indicate some sympathy with the plight of German Jews). Cited in Sidney Aster, "'Guilty Men': The Case of Neville Chamberlain," in *Paths to War: New Essays on the Origins of the Second World War*, eds. Robert Boyce and Esmonde M. Robertson (London: Macmillan, 1989), 267, n. 62.

[186]In 1933, Headlam wrote to Geoffrey Dawson, editor of *The Times*, that, ". . . the German revolution has stirred up against Germany a whole crop of enemies, who do everything they can to injure her and to disseminate false or one-sided news about her. First, there are the Jews, who are clever, malicious, and untruthful, and they have an excessive influence on the press of Europe." (27 October 1933, Headlam Papers, Lambeth Palace Library, London, MS 2643, ff. 58-9.) In 1935, Headlam wrote that he "recognize[d] the difficulties that have arisen through the excessive influence that they [Jews] had obtained in Berlin, and through their unfortunate activities in village life, and personally I am not inclined to be too severe a judge." (Headlam Papers, MS 2643, ff. 150-56.)

[187]Henson Diary, 14 November 1933.

contact with the leading members of the Anglo-Jewish community's efforts to assist them. But, in his first effort to raise money to assist the "non-Aryan" Christians in 1933, Bell preferred to collaborate not with the primary Jewish refugee organizations, but with the professional and academic organizations under the umbrella group, German Refugees Assistance Fund. Remarks such as that in a letter of October 1933, to the effect that Jews, as a rule, prefer their money to go only to Jews,[188] betray a somewhat grudging spirit. Five years later, that same hint of censure appears in an interview with the *Church Times*, when Bell referred to the Jews as "notoriously clannish."[189] Although Bell continues by extolling the efforts made by Jews around the world for their co-religionists, the word "clannish" has connotations of deliberate exclusion, and, without reading too much into one word in a lengthy interview, his choice of it is, nonetheless, revealing.

The emphasis on Christian refugees that characterized Bell's, and later the Church's, work for refugees is a function of the fact, outlined earlier, that these refugees had no other source of help. Other factors were also at play. It is difficult to estimate the degree to which the concentration on Christian refugees was a function of the implicit anti-Semitism of the Church leaders who were the catalyst behind the action, or of a sense of realism that recognized that the broader Church membership was unlikely to respond to a call to aid Jews. This latter point was well-recognized. At the July 1934 meeting to consider Christian responsibility for the refugees, McDonald reminded participants that, while he objected to distinctions between Christians and

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[188]Bell to Fox, Bell Papers, vol. 27, f. 76. The letter was with regard to whether a Christian appeal for aid for Christians should be carried out in conjunction with a national appeal being planned for that autumn.

[189]"Do Christians Care? The Misery of Non-Aryan Refugees: An Interview with the Bishop of Chichester," *Church Times*, 14 October 1938.

Jews, he believed that an appeal to the Churches would be more effective if it were confined to the relief of Christians.[190] Henson, for instance, was ambivalent about the Church's attempt to assist refugees. He believed that the true responsibility of the Church was toward its brother churches in Germany and Russia, more than to the German Jews.[191] Thus, he considered the 1933 Christmas appeal by the Archbishops to be both improper in its organization, and "a very astonishing proceeding, for (so far as I know) there was no similar appeal made for the Russian refugees, who were fellow Christians."[192] Henson was far from the only member of the clergy to have reservations about the "Jewish" focus of Bell's work. The 1935 Church Assembly resolution, that condemned the persecution of the Jews in Germany, prompted F. Edmond of Derbyshire to write to Bell of his disappointment that the Assembly had not included the persecution of the German Churches, both Evangelical and Roman Catholic, in its resolution, "as they are our fellow Xtns [Christians] in a way that the Jews are not."[193]

The *Church Times*, however, appeared to have little of this conflict. Despite the views of one writer of a letter to the editor (who had a hard time understanding why people were livid

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[190]"Meeting to Consider Christian Responsibility for the Refugees from Germany, July 5, 1934," Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 37-46.

[191]See, for example, his diary entry of 12 June 1935: "There was far more display of moral indignation in England over the ill treatment of the Jews by Hitler's stalwarts, than there is now over the hideous persecution of the Church in Russia, and the barbarous oppression of Lutherans and Papists in Germany. Nobody seems really to care, and as to acknowledging any personal responsibility for the situation of fellow-Christians on the continent, men almost laugh at the suggestion."

[192]Henson Diary, 8 December 1933.

[193]F. Edmond to Bell, 25 November 1935, Bell Papers, vol. 28, f 68. Bell replied that not every question can be dealt with at once, and that to have added the churches to the discussion of the "extremely urgent question of the persecution of the Jews would have been a "great blunder." Bell to Edmond, 28 November 1935, Bell Papers, vol. 28, f. 77.

over the persecution of the Jews in Germany, but not of the Christians in the Soviet Union[194]), the newspaper frequently used its editorial columns to condemn German persecution of the Jews and to remind its readers about the continuing persecution, even when there were no immediate events to make it "newsworthy." It was, as well, generally supportive of the Jewish community in England and of Jewish efforts in Palestine. Its editor, Sidney Dark, drew a link between German policies regarding Jews and its policies in general, calling the persecution of the Jews the first part of a movement ultimately aimed at the destruction of the fundamentals of Christian society.[195] Its rather questionable success in fostering an understanding of the Christian dimensions of the problem is apparent, however, in its letters column.

All of these factors played a role in the apathetic response of the Christian public toward the plight of refugees from Germany, as reflected in the poor results of the 1933 Christmas appeal. While effort on behalf of refugees was never enthusiastic during this period, even the heartfelt protests against the German persecutions were disappearing as early as June 1934, pushed to the background by other events.[196] Anti-Semitism, and a belief that the refugee problem was an exclusively Jewish problem meant that the public failed to understand the Christian dimensions of the refugee issue, despite Bell's repeated efforts to raise their awareness, through statements such as the one in his *Diocesan Gazette* of September 1935, in which he called attention to the isolation of the "non-Aryan" Christians:

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[194]Letter from J.G. Lockhart, *Church Times*, 13 April 1933. It is not clear if this is the same J.G Lockhart who was to become Lang's biographer.

[195]*Church Times*, 30 June 1933.

[196]The *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 June 1934, noted that "it is useless to disguise the fact that the wave of indignation at the anti-Jewish abominations in Germany has long since spent itself."

> They have no home in Jewry — for they have nothing in common with the Jewish life and the Jewish system as such. Their links and ties and friendships and faith have been with Christians. And now, because the State disowns them, their lot is doubly hard. For while not a few Christians in Germany, do, in fact, show them sympathy and help, they have only too often to give them their sympathy in fear of the greatest official discouragement and often at great cost to themselves. And the sense of spiritual and social isolation which the Non-Aryan Christians feel in Germany is deep indeed, as I know from conversations with such Christians myself.[197]

The truth of much of the 1930s, however, was that the average English man or woman "resolutely refused to be unduly perturbed by the ideological battles of the continent."[198] And for the small group of those who permitted themselves to be perturbed, the most important factor was, and would continue to be, the press of international events. When momentous events were taking place on the continent on what seemed to be an almost daily basis, and when these events seemed, even as early as 1933, to be harbingers of the end of European peace, the case of a small group of people comprising a disliked minority was unlikely to excite public attention or to distract public attention from the more important cause of avoiding war with Germany.

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[197] *Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XVI, no. 9 (September 1935): 319-20.

[198] Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 244.

Chapter 2: The Middle Years 1936-1938: Committees in the Wilderness

The middle years of the 1930s were a period of retrenchment. In Germany, the imposition of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935 set the criteria — ironically on a religious, rather than scientific basis — for determining who was a Jew or a part-Jew.[1] This put the civil status of German Jews on a par with their position prior to their emancipation in 1871,[2] but they were willing to accept their second-class status in the belief that now they would be able to establish the "tolerable relations" referred to by Hitler in his speech to the Reichstag on September 15, 1935[3] and that "legislation and institutionalized discrimination were . . preferable to a return of the 'wild actions' of the Storm Troopers."[4] This, together with the slowing pace of anti-Semitic legislation meant that in 1936 and 1937 — the so-called "quiet

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[1]A German engineer "invented" a pendulum which would swing over Aryan blood as over precious metals, while over non-Aryan blood it would swing as over tin or lead (*The Yellow Spot*:, 130). *The Yellow Spot* was "the most complete documentary record so far issued of the persecution of the Jews in Germany" (publisher's phrase, in Henson Diary, 7 February 1936). Henson was warned by Leonard Montefiore, a prominent member of the Anglo-Jewish leadership, against having anything to do with the publication, because of possible Communist involvement in its writing and the possibilities of errors, but participated anyway because he felt the book was essentially accurate, and because he had given his word His final judgment on the book: "[It] is horribly vulgar in appearance, and its contents are repulsive enough. Nevertheless, I incline to think that it may do something to bring home to the public the grim meaning of German Anti-Semitism." Henson Diary, 12 February, 16 March 1936.

[2]Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 45 82.

[3]Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, 121.

[4]Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 106-07.

years"[5] — the number of refugees remained relatively low: 25,000 in 1936 and 23,000 in 1937.[6] The Nuremberg Laws were a watershed, however, as Jewish community organizations, both in Germany and in other countries, changed the emphasis of their work from attempting to ameliorate conditions for Jews inside Germany to attempts to facilitate a controlled and orderly emigration.[7]

In England during this period, a sense of Christian responsibility for refugees became slightly more widespread than it had earlier been. The cause of "non-Aryan" Christian refugees could not be called popular by any definition. But a small core of dedicated men and women laid the groundwork for the much greater public enthusiasm that was to develop after November 1938. They did so in a time-honoured manner — they formed committees. One seemed to give rise to the next. The Inter-Aid Committee for Children, the Chichester Scheme, the Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians had overlapping personnel, mandates, and goals; their actual work was so closely intertwined as to be almost inseparable. In addition to these central committees, the Church of England was involved in appeals by the International Student Service to assist refugee students,[8] while in January 1938, Temple was named president of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning. All of these organizations were a part of the effort to facilitate orderly emigration. And in all these organizations, as in the multitude of

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[5]Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 84.

[6]Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz*, 199.

[7]Dawidowitz, *The War Against the Jews*, 345.

[8]Lang and Temple were two of the four signatories of a letter to *The Times* supporting the appeal. Reprinted in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 13 November 1936.

others that existed, the "Anglo-Saxon genius for voluntary association for public works found its fullest expression."[9]

Led by Bell, those who dedicated themselves to the refugee cause were following in the path of many others before them. The English upper classes had a long tradition of working for the betterment of others: "Philanthropy was the preserve of the upper and middle classes, a badge of rank, an assertion of social superiority, a form of self-imposed taxation."[10] The method of choice for carrying out this work was through a committee. At the start of the First World War, for instance, when Belgian refugees streamed into England — almost a quarter of a million by the war's end — the War Refugees Committee was struck to deal with their welfare Lady Flora Lugard was the moving force behind the committees:

> Her first moves showed the instincts common to all organisers of new charities at that time. She sought patrons . . . It was a sensible move and an illuminating one: an energetic, philanthropic entrepreneur seeking the blessing of official circles before going about her task.
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> In the close-knit world of Edwardian 'society', one could not move far without the blessing of some eminent figures, and it helped if these were in positions of authority.[11]

The precedent set by the War Refugees Committee carried on after the First World War That conflict had created a stream of refugees — there were estimated to be no fewer than 9.5 million European refugees in 1926.[12] In this case, international action proved to be both feasible and

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[9]Bernard Wasserstein, "Intellectual Émigrés in Britain, 1933-1939," in *The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation 1930-1945*, eds. Jarrell C. Jackman and Carla M. Borden (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), 251.

[10]Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," iv.

[11]Ibid., 30.

[12]Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 51-52. They included 1.5 million forcibly exchanged between Greece and Turkey, 280,000 exchanged between Greece and Bulgaria, two million Poles, more than two million Russians and Ukrainians, 250,000 Hungarians and 1 million Germans expelled from various parts of

effective. That there was any action at all, however, was due to the extraordinary efforts of private organizations whose work involved "unheard of" sums of money and an unprecedented scale of relief operations. By keeping so many refugees alive, particularly during the immediate post-war period when disease and starvation threatened their existence, the private organizations helped to maintain the pressure of a refugee crisis, finally eliciting a response from governments and the League of Nations.[13]

Many things had changed since the First World War and its aftermath; the tendency to work through committees and the advisability of seeking the patronage of public figures had not. Indeed, the tendency to form a new organization to meet each new crisis was "difficult if not impossible to overcome,"[14] and overlapping effort was one of the three problems endemic to philanthropy.[15] What is particularly striking in this regard, however, is not the range of committees that arose to deal with refugees in the 1920s, but the rapidity with which, their work done, they disappeared. Indeed, signs of continuity between the refugee relief organizations of the 1920s and those of the 1930s, either in names or personnel, are few. Nevertheless, the "old patricians" who were the leaders of the Victorian Church had been replaced by a new "professional elite" of accomplished bureaucrats, including Bell, who sat on committees, wrote

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Europe. Some were fleeing revolution or civil war; others had been cast out by rival national groups. Almost all were victims of the national aspirations released by the collapse of the Russian, Austrian, Turkish, and German empires in the aftermath of the war.

[13]Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 82-86.

[14]Ludlow, "The refugee problem in the 1930s," 565.

[15]Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 454. The other two, according to Cahalan, were extravagance and fraud.

memos, and became involved in the *minutiae* of Church policy.[16] The refugee cause was well-served by this change.

The most public expression of Christian support for refugees in this period was the international effort to assist destitute "non-Aryan" Christian refugees initiated through the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and carried out primarily under Bell's leadership. In terms of planning, the project was flawlessly conceived, from identifying the problem -- that of 2,500 destitute "non-Aryan" Christian refugees desperately in need of assistance -- to outlining solutions, including group settlement, individual emigration, and establishment in Europe, estimating costs for the solutions; and setting up an international structure to raise the necessary funds. In terms of execution, the project was flawed. It was based on an inaccurate count of the refugees requiring assistance; an idealistic view of the possibilities, in particular, of group settlement; poor cost estimates; and, most importantly, unrealistically high hopes about the response the appeal would win. Carried out throughout most of 1936 and early 1937, the appeal raised less than one quarter of the hoped-for £125,000.

Nevertheless, the appeal was not completely the embarrassing failure that some have called it.[17] Refugees deeply in need of assistance received help. Despite the problems associated with it, a group settlement was established in Colombia. Many individuals, families, and couples were assisted in emigrating outside of Europe, and some to settle within Europe. In the end, however, the appeal serves as an illustration of the great distance between the

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[16]David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, revised edition (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1992), 262.

[17]Chandler, "The Church of England and Nazi Germany," 90

commitment of those who felt the responsibility of caring for non-Jewish refugees and the indifference and/or ignorance of the vast majority of the population.

The experience of the 1936 appeal encouraged its organizers to change their approach to assisting "non-Aryan" Christian refugees. Aware as they had not been before of the difficulty of solving the problems of individuals in a collective manner, Bell and his colleagues turned their energies to assisting individual refugees. This was the only approach permitted by existing financial resources. More importantly, they had learned that, even with sufficient financial resources, individual "infiltration" was much more likely to succeed than was group resettlement. The common thread binding together the work of the rank of committees that carried on after the 1936 appeal ended was assistance to children and youth. Various projects were aimed at bringing young people to England and providing them with the education or training that would permit them to re-emigrate successfully to other countries. Small programs, such as the Chichester scheme, gradually grew in size, and the Church of England Committee for "non-Aryan" Christians, established in 1937, took as its mandate the assistance of children

The 1936 appeal also illustrated the degree to which a solution to the refugee problem, both Jewish and non-Jewish, was impossible without some form of government assistance. This position was arrived at reluctantly — pressing the government on an issue with such implications for British foreign policy seemed unduly forward — but the years 1936-1938 saw an increase in pressure brought to bear on the British government and, through their High Commissioners in London, the Dominion governments, to admit more refugees to England and to the British Empire.

Finally, despite the evidence of a growing willingness to consider the issue of "non-Aryan" Christian refugees, it remains clear throughout this middle period that as relations with Germany became more precarious, any concern about refugees was to become even more subordinate than it had been earlier to fears of war and support for appeasement. Further, any increase in public concern appears significant primarily in the context of the total lack of concern exhibited in the early period. The Christian public remained largely unmoved by the plight of the refugees and apathy continued to reign.

The 1936 Christian Appeal for Refugees

The 1936 Christian appeal had its genesis in an initiative of McDonald before his resignation as High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany. McDonald had been bitterly disappointed by the lack of response from Christians to the plight of the refugees. The statement he issued to mark the first anniversary of the Commission's work concluded, "I cannot close this report without again calling special attention to the desperate needs of the non-Jewish refugees."[18] His work, which was to stimulate and coordinate the work of private organizations, had been met with a ready response from the Jewish community but "unfortunately found no parallel in the Christian World."[19] Attempts in Britain to mobilize Christian opinion in favour

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[18]"Statement of James G. McDonald, High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany made at the Third Session of the Governing Body at London November 1, 1934," Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 54-83.

[19]High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany, "Plan of an International Appeal for Refugees from Germany," Document A/152, n.d. (January 1936?), Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 5-25.

of the refugees "have not yielded the hoped-for results,"[20] and the imperative need now was for a new effort to concentrate primarily on non-Jewish refugees.

According to the High Commission's figures, the lack of adequate assistance for non-Jewish refugees had resulted in a large increase in the proportion of non-Jewish refugees, from a ratio of seven Jewish refugees for every non-Jewish refugee in the early years to estimates that as many as 50 per cent of refugees who had fled to Czechoslovakia, and 30 per cent of refugees who were in Austria were not Jewish. Of the 80,000 refugees who had fled Germany, McDonald said, 12-14,000 were not Jewish. Six to seven thousand were "non-Aryan" Christians, another five or six thousand were political refugees, and the remainder, fewer than 1,000, were Christians who had left Germany because of the denial of their freedom of conscience. Of these, at least 2,500 were destitute and in need of assistance.[21]

McDonald's concern for non-Jewish refugees was shared by the the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, of which Bell was President. The Council had been instrumental in the creation in October 1935 of a committee to consider the problem of non-Jewish refugees. Its members were convinced of the necessity of an initiative directed specifically at "non-Aryan" Christians, as "this category suffered more than other groups of refugees because no adequate organization dealt with them in a comprehensive way."[22] On 31 January 1936, its members met

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[20]"Statement of James G. McDonald, High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany made at the Third Session of the Governing Body at London November 1, 1934."

[21]High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany, "Plan of an International Appeal for Refugees from Germany."

[22]Adolf Keller, "International Committee of Churches non-Jewish Refugees from Germany" 22 January 1936, Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 1-4. Keller was the director of the European Central Office for Inter-Church Aid, an organization created at the end of the First World War with American funds, intended to

in London to formally establish the International Christian Committee for German Refugees (ICC).

The ICC's goal was to raise £125,000 within the next year. National committees in Great Britain, the United States, and European countries would carry out the actual appeals for funds; Britain was expected to raise £50,000,[23] the United States another £50,000, and the remaining £25,000 would come from the other participating countries. The ICC would coordinate the various appeals, advise on the allocation of funds, and facilitate the execution of the settlement plans.[24] The national appeals would carry out the actual appeals, collect funds, and decide what proportion of the funds raised would go to the ICC and what proportion it would grant either directly to refugees in need of assistance, or to local refugee organizations to provide that assistance.

More than half the funds raised — £70,000 — was to be used for group colonisation of up to one thousand people on agricultural settlements in Colombia and Brazil. Another 500 refugees would be assisted to emigrate on an individual basis, at a cost of £50 per person, or £25,000 total. The last 1,000 of the 2,500 destitute refugees would be established in Europe at

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aid the churches and the starving people of Europe.

[23]This amount was small compared to the £2 million raised by the Jewish community in Britain to this point, but it was still significant. As a comparison, in 1926, ten years earlier and prior to the Depression, an appeal to buy and removate housing in one of the worst London slums — a cause that earned strong support — had set a goal of raising £27,500. By the end of the year, £41,000 had been raised, and more than £160,000 was raised by 1930. (Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1985*, 180.) Ten years *after* the 1936 appeal, the Church Assembly appealed to the dioceses to contribute £250,000 to the national appeal for £1 million for Christian reconstruction and refugee work in Europe (Wilkinson. *Dissent or Conform?*, 309.)

[24]International Christian Committee for German Refugees, "Half-Yearly Report, January-July 1936," Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 28-39.

a cost of £20,000 — assuming that governments could be persuaded to relax restrictions on work permits. Finally, £10,000 was required for immediate relief, particularly for children.[25] The plan was entirely in place by the beginning of the year. All that was lacking, McDonald wrote Bell, was the money, and someone to organize an appeal.[26] Three weeks later, McDonald was writing to Bell to thank him for accepting the chairmanship of the executive committee of the International Christian Committee.[27] As well as serving as Chair of the executive committee of the ICC, Bell was also the Vice-Chair of the National Christian Appeal for Refugees in England, thus becoming the central link between the two organizations. Lord Bessborough, who was chairman of the board of finance of the Chichester Diocese,[28] served as Chair of the English committee. Further linkage between the two organizations was provided by J.H. Adam, the secretary of the British National Appeal, when he took on the same role with the ICC in August 1936.

The British appeal, under the sponsorship of the Archbishop of Canterbury, had two very specific aims beyond that of simply raising funds — first, to increase awareness of the peculiar plight of the non-Jewish refugees and second, to stimulate a sense of Christian responsibility for the well-being of those who were "alone and helpless in misfortune."[29] It was as far-ranging in its approach as it was specific in its goals. Pamphlets and/or special letters were sent to

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[25]High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany, "Plan of an International Appeal for Refugees from Germany."

[26]McDonald to Bell, 1 November 1935, Bell Papers, vol. 28, f. 1.

[27]McDonald to Bell, 22 November 1935, Bell Papers, vol. 28, f. 53.

[28]He had just returned from his post as Governor-General of Canada from 1931-1935.

[29]"From a Journalist's Notebook," *Church Times*, 22 January 1937.

20,000 Church ministers and Councils of the Church of England, Church of Wales, and the Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, Unitarian and Presbyterian Churches; members of the Church Assembly; all bishops and deans, with a second letter sent to all rural deans; more than 12,000 individuals who the organizers believed might help; firms dealing in furs and garments, etc. (frequently Jewish-owned); all public schools in England and Wales; and all Lord Mayors in England and Wales. In addition, the appeal was extended to the YMCA the Salvation Army, the Rotary Clubs, while the BBC and all the London newspapers, provincial newspapers, Church papers, and weeklies were kept informed of the appeal, its goals, and its progress.[30]

Typical was the letter by Bell that appeared in the *Church Times* in March, 1936. He pointed out that while German persecution of the Jews was well-known, it was not so well-known that between 12 and 14,000 of the 88,000 refugees who had fled Germany were Christians. Commensurate with this state of gnorance, the Jewish community in the United Kingdom and the United States had raised nearly £2 million to aid the victims, but "there has been nothing approaching such a response from the Christian public to meet the needs of non-Jews, in spite of their great claims on Christian compassion." Now, however, an international committee had just been formed "with the special purpose of arousing the interest and securing the help of Christian people all over the world."[31] Bell took his message to a wider audience in a broadcast on the BBC in which he exhorted his listeners to acknowledge their responsibility to care for these isolated and miserable refugees. He drew a portrait of "Christian outcasts" with no claim on Jewish generosity or protection, and no homeland such as Palestine:

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[30]List of those contacted in Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 430-31

[31]*Church Times*, 13 March 1936.

> But — and it ought to be a very big *but* indeed — they are Christians. Christianity is a bigger thing than race, a bigger thing than nations. And if the Christian Church of ou. generation is to be true to the spirit of Christ, then Christians of all countries, and of all denominations, must recognize their suffering fellow-Christians as brethren — and come to their rescue, just because they are brethren."[32]

The propaganda material developed by the appeal was calculated to invoke simultaneously a sense of outrage and of pathos for the conditions under which the "non-Aryan" Christian refugees existed. A fairly typical pamphlet read as this one:

Refugees in 1936?

No Country. No Passport. No Homes. No Money.

No Work. Very little hope left.

Just Refugees through no fault of their own.

It outlined the "desperate plight" of the refugees, living in fear, without money to pay the fare to leave Germany and with no country to go to, and described the unbearable pain for parents watching their children "ill-fed and cold, with no chance of education and no hope for the future." Much has been done, the pamphlet continued, particularly by the Jews and the Society of Friends. But, "[c]ivilization today demands that: — **CHRISTIANS** should help to solve this most unexpected and depressing problem." Recipients, moved by their plight, were then told that their donations could,

> — **Cover** debts, pay rent, obtain confiscated things again when leaving the country, such as bedding, clothing, and tools for possible work, their only fortune left

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[32]"The Tragedy of the Christian Outcasts," 24 September 1936, Bell Papers, vol. 28, ff. 160-165.

> — **Money** to provide stamps to write applications which may never be answered; to buy medicine if sick; to buy soap so that they can wash their clothes; something to heat themselves with.[33]

And, if recipients still were not sufficiently moved, there followed details of individual cases to stir the conscience. On the whole, however, recipients did not respond as hoped.

As a Christian appeal, its organizers naturally focussed first and foremost on the Churches, and, particularly, on the Church of England as the single largest church in the country. But the response was disappointing. Lang had sponsored the appeal, and the letter sent to the press announcing the appeal's inauguration was over his signature. In a clear and uncompromising tone, he urged readers to support the appeal:

> I write this letter to you . . . in the hope that it may meet the eyes and, it may be, touch the hearts of many who may not be reached through the Christian congregations.
>
> Sir, this is no begging letter. It is rather a call to the compassion of the British people to come to the aid of hundreds of their fellow-Christians, their fellow-beings, who, through no fault of their own, have been cast adrift into the world bereft of home and of hope.[34]

Despite this letter, Lang's support for the appeal appeared, at times, lukewarm. He had grave reservations as to the likelihood of raising the contemplated sum — "a sum far beyond possibility."[35] He produced a statement directed to all clergymen, together with a pamphlet outlining the details of the Appeal in which he said that the appeal "ought to receive an immediate and ready response from Christian people in this country," but was more diffident in urging the

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[33]*Refugees in 1936?* Pamphlet issued by the National Christian Appeal for Refugees from Germany, Papers of the Christian Mission to Jews (formerly Church Mission to Jews), Bodleian Library, Oxford, c. 104 (emphasis in original).

[34]*The Times*, 25 April 1936.

[35]Lang to Headlam, 7 May 1935, Lang Papers, vol. 319, ff. 102-03.

clergy to respond, asking them only "if they can possibly do so" to give the members of their congregation an opportunity to contribute during Lent or after Easter.[36]

The clergy took their cue from Lang's diffident support of the appeal, and responded in much the same manner. This obviously weakened the strength of the appeal, prompting one churchman to write to Bell:

> I am aware of your Lordship's deep personal interest in the sufferings of foreign Churches and do not doubt that it is shared by many individual members of the national Church. The disquieting fact seems to be that it is not shared, — as far as appears — by a considerable number of the parochial clergy and consequently, not by the main body of church-people. Were it otherwise, one would think such an appeal as the present one would hardly need pressing.[37]

Indeed, the majority of the funds raised through the appeal was not collected through the auspices of the Church. By August, 1936, only £824 had been collected from the dioceses; one quarter of that amount had come from two dioceses alone, London (£108.12.3) and Chichester (£103.7.10, of which £50 was a donation from Bell himself).[38] By October, the National Appeal was able to report that £7,800 had been collected to date.[39] The largest donation received was a cheque for £1,000; the smallest was one farthing.[40] Although the appeal continued for another year, its attraction was spent. By its closing, the appeal's final accounts showed that £9,[illegible].17.½ had been collected — less than one fifth of its £50,000 goal.[41]

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[36]Statement from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bell Papers, vol. 28, f. 145.

[37]Denes' House, Burwash, Sussex to Bell, 21 October 1936, Bell Papers, vol. 28, f. 166 (signature illegible).

[38]Summary of donations as of 6 August 1936, Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 348-9.

[39]Draft of letter approved by Committee of the National Christian Appeal, Bell Papers, vol. 34, f. 402.

[40]"National Christian Appeal for Refugees from Germany: Its purpose and what has been achieved," n.d., Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 411-14.

[41]Minutes of Committee meeting, 15 November 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 434-35.

Much of the money raised by the national appeal was given directly to the ICC to fund the group settlement. The British appeal also provided much assistance directly, both to individual refugees and to existing relief organizations. For instance, at its meeting of October 1936, the organizing committee of the National Christian Appeal approved grants to 12 individuals, to assist with emigration to Argentina, Sweden, South Africa, and Chile. It also approved grants to the International Student Service to assist a man in setting up a clinic as a chiropodist, to the *Einheitsverband*, a refugee assistance organization in Prague, to assist a family of three and a couple in emigrating to Bolivia, to the *Demokratische Flüchtlingsfürsorge*, another continental refugee assistance organization, to help a man emigrate to Australia, and to the Dutch Jewish Committee, to reimburse them for assisting six Christians to emigrate.[42] The majority of its funds, however, were funnelled through the Germany Emergency Committee of the Society of Friends — £1844 as of the end of October, 1936.[43] Of the total £9,284.17.½ collected by the appeal, £1,309 was spent on expenses; £3,399 was given in grants to relief committees; and £4476 went to the ICC to help finance the Colombia settlement and individual emigration.[44]

If the national appeal was experiencing difficulty meeting its goals, it was, nonetheless, faring better than the appeals in other countries. The ICC had received only £4,000 by July 1936, and, of that, £3,450 had come from the British appeal alone. The American appeal, which had actually been launched in the autumn of 1935, had forwarded only $250 to the ICC, and

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[42]Minutes of the 10th meeting of the Committee of the National Christian Appeal, 22 October 1936, Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 399-400.

[43]Statement of accounts to 20 October 1936, Bell Papers, vol. 34, f 403.

[44]Minutes of Committee meeting, 15 November 1937 (error in addition is in original)

appeals in other countries were, for the most part, still in the organizing stages.[45] Thus, the ICC's first half-yearly report in July 1936 observed that while the number of refugees appeared to be smaller than originally believed, it was also likely that the yield of the Appeal would be "considerably less" than £125,000 originally envisioned. Its members were discouraged, particularly when they dared to consider the possibility of increases in the number of Christian refugees in the future:

> . . . in view of the possibility that not even the total number of 2,500 existing refugees could be helped, there unfortunately seems to be no justification for the hope that also future refugees might benefit from this action. If a new exodus of non-Jewish emigrants from Germany were to take place, the present methods of appealing to the goodwill and the generosity of the public would obviously be insufficient to cope with an enlarged problem.[46]

The ICC was committed to continuing with the appeal, if for no other reason than that the successful establishment of a group settlement would capture the public's imagination and spur greater contributions. Bell captured the dejection of the Committee's members, however, when he dispiritedly observed "how difficult it is to bring home to the ordinary church members their responsibility in this respect."[47] And even though more money had been collected by the time of the ICC's second half-yearly report — £12,800[48] — only £121.6.3 remained to be spent, and the Committee was not counting on any more funds being received, since the national appeals were not raising funds on the hoped-for scale.[49] Against their expectations, the ICC had

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[45]International Christian Committee for German Refugees, "Half-Yearly Report, January-July 1936," Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 28-39

[46]Ibid.

[47]Minutes, Executive Committee meeting of the International Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany, 19 August 1936, Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 51-61.

[48]International Christian Committee for Refugees, "Half-Yearly Report, July 1936-February 1937," Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 92-102.

[49]International Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany, Minutes of Executive Committee meeting, 17 February 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 88-91.

collected £27,550 by July 1937. While far from insignificant, this represented just over 20 per cent of the Committee's original goal. The Dutch committee had already shut down, after raising only £600, and several other committees, the British among them, had suspended their appeals because of the poor response.[50] Yet while the need continued to grow — according to estimates from the High Commissioner's office, there were now 33,000 refugees, of whom 20 per cent were non-Jews; of this number, 40 per cent, or 2,640, were in need of financial assistance[51] — by August, the ICC had to turn down a request for a £20 grant for individual assistance because it was in a debit situation, with "little immediate prospect" of funds from either the British or American National Committees.[52] Further, the £10,000 budgeted for emergency assistance turned out to be more than a third of the money raised, much higher than the original estimate of slightly less than 10 per cent, but all desperately needed.[53] Adam resigned that month as secretary of the I.C.C.. His letter of resignation did not cite any reasons, but suggested the need for someone with more enthusiasm about the whole question, a possible indication of just how discouraging it was for those few labouring in isolation to assist the "non-Aryan" Christians.[54]

The Christian community has been criticized for its failure to respond to the plight of refugees,[55] and the financial results of the 1936 appeal bear out this criticism. Its problems,

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[50]Report of the Secretary for the Executive Committee meeting, 29 July 1937, Bell Papers, vol 35, ff. 103-118.

[51]International Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany, "Minutes of Executive Committee meeting," 29 July 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 119-27.

[52]Adam to Bell, 12 August 1937, Bell Papers, vol 29, ff. 49-50.

[53]Minutes, Executive Committee meeting of the International Christian Committee for Refugees, 19 August 1936.

[54]Adam to Bell, 24 August 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 87.

[55]See, for instance, Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, particularly 344.

however, were not limited to the area of fundraising, and the difficulties the ICC encountered provide an instructive glimpse into the similar complications that virtually all refugee assistance organizations in the 1930s encountered.

Group settlement as a solution to refugee problems was not a new idea. Resettlement had been one of the most common proposed solutions to the refugee problems that had arisen after the First World War:

> One of the most durable assumptions about refugee questions in the interwar period was that solutions might be found by establishing rural communities, preferably in thinly populated parts of the globe.[56]

One scheme bruited about in the mid-1920s, for instance, was for the settlement of Armenian refugees in the Armenian Soviet Republic in the Caucasus. It could not be realized, however, because of the large sums of money that would have to be raised, and the reluctance of European countries to subsidize settlement that would ultimately benefit the Soviet Union. The population exchanges that took place in the mid-1920s between Greece and Turkey, involving 1.5 million people, the largest such exchange to that date, and between Greece and Bulgaria, involving some 80,000 refugees could also be considered resettlement programs. The outstanding example of this type of resettlement was in Palestine, where Jewish immigration was seen as the means to a Jewish homeland. Palestine continued to be a focus of resettlement in the 1930s; by the end of 1937, 43,000 Jewish refugees had settled there.[57]

The success of group resettlement in Palestine may seem superficially an example of the suitability of this type of solution. When examined more closely, though, the analogy breaks

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[56]Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 114.

[57]Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, 142.

down. In the case of Jewish refugees emigrating to Palestine, there existed first, a desire on the part of the refugees to go there; second, a welcoming community ready to assist the new arrivals in their settlement; and third, a continuing commitment on behalf of the international Jewish community to finance the settlement. Indeed, most of the proceeds of the first appeal issued to the English Jewish community went toward retraining and resettlement of German Jews for settlement in Palestine.[58] The more common proposals for group resettlement in the 1930s involved a destination both unfamiliar and unpromising, often some under-populated corner of the British Empire completely unsuited to the primarily urban refugees; no previously established community able to help the settlers with the benefit of their wisdom and experience; and no prospect of continuing financial assistance for the resettled community to tide it over until it was able to establish itself securely. Still, those working in the area believed that group resettlement would cost less, help in promoting settlement of rural areas, and proceed a great deal more quickly than individual infiltration, the other method open to settling refugees. The group settlement organized by the ICC was the first such settlement to be established outside Palestine.[59] Its experience belied all of those beliefs, and gave reason to pause to others contemplating such settlements.[60]

The problems associated with the group settlement existed on both sides -- with the organizers, and with the settlers. As originally planned, the ICC would raise the funds, and the

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[58]Information in this paragraph, unless otherwise noted, is from Joan Stiebel, "The Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief," *Jewish Historical Society of England Transactions* XXVII (1982), 51-60.

[59]Charles Henry Croker, "The British Reaction to Refugees from Germany, 1933-1939" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1973), 262.

[60]The scheme that came closest to realization -- which is to say, not very close at all -- was one to establish group settlements in British Guiana in 1938-39. For details, see Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 208 ff.

High Commissioner's office would organize the Colombia settlement. McDonald's resignation, however, and the disbanding of his office left the Executive Committee of the ICC in a role it had never envisioned for itself and one it was ill-prepared to take on — that of directly administering and executing the project. Instead of being the fundraising arm of the High Commission, the ICC had become the Commission's substitute. Yet, as Keller said, the churches were not well-suited to efforts toward resettlement, but were much better at emergency aid.[61]

Nevertheless, the committee engaged an administrator, Mr. Sloos, to direct the settlement plan on-site and, on February 16, 1937, 50 people — 27 men, 11 women, and 12 children - set sail aboard the S.S. Virgilio to establish the ICC's first group settlement.[62] The group included three agriculturists, as well as butchers, carpenters, masons, mechanics, and a doctor — an apparently useful combination of skills and experience. The majority, 34, were Protestant, another 9 were Catholic, and 7 were non-religious — political refugees rather than "non-Aryan" Christians.[63] Trouble began even before the ship landed in Colombia, with the party splitting into two factions, the religious and the non-religious. The organizers attributed it, somewhat hopefully, to shipboard tension, and hoped the situation would improve when they settled down to work.[64] Upon arrival, however, nine of the 27 men left with their families; apparently they

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[61]Adolf Keller to Henry Leiper, 2 March 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 28, ff. 241-49. Indeed, despite his excellent record of cooperation in appeals to assist refugees and of help to individual refugees, Keller believed that only intergovernmental action could provide an effective answer to the refugee problem, and that Church leaders should spend their energies lobbying governments and the League instead of organizing inadequate international efforts of their own. Ludlow, "The refugee problem in the 1930s," 51.

[62]Passenger list in Bell Papers, vol. 28, f. 213.

[63]International Christian Committee for Refugees, "Half-Yearly Report, July 1936 February 1937 "

[64]Adam to Bell, 31 March 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 33, ff 15-16.

were not suited for either settlement on the land or for communal life.[65] The remaining settlers, Adam wrote to Bell, were hard-working, and had "community spirit."[66] In the circumstances, Sloos suggested not sending out any more settlers until the position and prospects of success of the first group were more certain. He also suggested that the settlers spend time together in Europe before leaving for Colombia, as the problems with the original group of 50 stemmed from the fact they had been strangers to one another before embarking on their voyage, and held conflicting political and social views.[67]

The departure of the malcontents and assurances of renewed commitment from the remainder notwithstanding, the situation was unsettling for those in England. After hearing from Sloos, Adam wrote in June that:

> I personally have the feeling that these people will never make good on the land. The right spirit is not there. This result may make it impossible to send any more people for land settlement in Colombia. It is a great disappointment and it should make one think twice before advising anyone to leave Germany.[68]

Plans to send a second group of about 20 people to join the first group, which had been postponed in light of the conflicts, were now completely abandoned, and the group's sponsors in England began to get impatient: "The people have been in the country six months now and if they don't get down to serious work soon they never will do so."[69] Settlement, long preached

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[65]Report of the Secretary for the Executive Committee meeting, 29 July 1937.

[66]Adam to Bell, 21 April 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 33, f. 22.

[67]International Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany, "Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting," 29 July 1937.

[68]Adam to Bell, 6 July 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 33, f. 24.

[69]Adam to Bell, 26 August 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 91.

but seldom practised, had turned out to be far from a panacea, and the adventure ended "in violence and bankruptcy."[70]

Individual settlement proved to be as troublesome as group settlement. Emigration overseas was made difficult by restrictive immigration laws in receiving countries. And laws against foreign labour made it difficult to establish refugees in European countries.[71] As Adam observed in 1937, even if the appeals had been successful in meeting their financial goals, the field for useful expenditure was limited, and, in the face of difficulties created by governments, private organisations were helpless.[72] In this situation, any effective help had to remain "illusory."[73] South Africa, for instance, which had been a primary destination for many refugees, had recently tightened its regulations, making immigration impossible for destitute refugees. In Europe, an intergovernmental conference held in July 1936 under the aegis of the League of Nations dealt only with the legal status of the refugees, even though the original recommendation had been to include consultations with governments on the possibilities of receiving and placing refugees. The British government's goal of keeping the focus as narrow as possible and its opposition to consultations because it did not want to be put in the awkward position of having to give negative replies, no doubt contributed to the omission of this second objective.[74] The provisional agreement reached was a step forward, the ICC agreed, in that

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[70]Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 119.

[71]International Christian Committee for German Refugees, "Half-Yearly Report, January July 1936."

[72]Adam, "Report on efforts to assist non-Aryan refugees," n.d. (January 1937?), Bell Papers, vol 28, ff. 110-114.

[73]Adolf Keller to Henry Leiper, 2 March 1937.

[74]Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 66-67.

refugees without passports would be assisted in obtaining identification papers (it also defined refugees' personal status in lands of refuge so that they could wed, divorce, acquire property and have certain civil rights[75]). But the agreement lacked any mention of the economic or social position of the refugees, especially their right to work. This was considered a major gap in need of rectification,[76] while work permits remained the problem they had been in 1933, with little progress made.[77]

Meanwhile, the public's attention, ever fleeting, was turning in other directions, such as to appeals for the relief of Spanish refugees (who were much more newsworthy subjects at that time, as the Spanish Civil War was at its height, than were the German refugees, whose situation had not changed substantially since the imposition of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935 — a full two years before). Adam questioned "the wisdom of continuing to spend £75/month to raise £150."[78] He felt strongly that the churches might have reached the limit of what they were able to do, and, in view of the large number of committees in the political field, that it might be wise for them to withdraw.[79] His concerns were echoed by Lord Bessborough at the committee

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[75]Ibid., 70-71.

[76]Minutes, Executive Committee Meeting of the International Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany, 19 August 1936; International Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany, "Memo on the League of Nations and Refugees Coming from Germany," 1 September 1936, Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 62-66.

[77]International Christian Committee for Refugees, "Half-Yearly Report, July 1936-February 1937."

[78]Adam to Bell, 12 January 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 28, f. 178. Bell had suggested that the establishment of the settlement, scheduled for March, could provide a catalyst for increased contributions, a possibility Adam viewed with wariness (Bell Papers, vol. 28, f. 174).

[79]J.H. Adam, "Report on efforts to assist non-Aryan refugees."

meeting of 25 February 1937.[80] The hope that publicity around the arrival of the settlers in Colombia provided justification for the appeal's continuation, albeit in skeleton form, but the hope was not realized. The National Christian Appeal was officially closed in November 1937, the International Christian Committee remained in existence a little longer, because of issues that still needed to be dealt with regarding the Colombia settlement.[81] The members of the executive committee of the National Appeal comforted themselves with the thought that the Church was not completely abandoning the refugee cause, that the recent formation of the Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians simply meant that Bell and his colleagues would be attacking it on a smaller scale.[82] It must have been small comfort, however, compared with the optimism with which they set out to raise £50,000 a year and a half before.

Still, the organizers of the 1936 Christian appeal had reason to be proud. The appeal was an attempt to bolster the words of protest that had so far formed the mainstay of Church reaction to the persecutions in Germany with deeds, and to respond to McDonald's claim that:

> the apparent indifference of the western world to the victims of the persecution in Germany has undoubtedly made things very much worse in that country. The platonic protests by non-Jews abroad made little impression on the present German leaders, who believe in action rather than in words.[83]

The action which resulted from the appeal could not have had any major impact in Germany, except to reinforce prevailing views about the lack of seriousness with which the Churches

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[80]Minutes and notes from the 12th meeting of the National Christian Appeal Committee, 25 February 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 34, ff. 432-35.

[81]Bell to Adam, 16 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 140.

[82]Minutes of Committee meeting, 15 November 1937.

[83]High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Otherwise) Coming From Germany, "Plan for an International Appeal for Refugees from Germany."

viewed the persecution of non-Aryans, Jewish or otherwise. But it is important not to underrate the significance of the 1936 appeals. Refugees, disheartened by the ever-increasing difficulty of their situations, were bolstered by the selection of even a few people to settle overseas, while refugee organizations, used to having their plans fail to materialize at all, were encouraged by the appeal's at-least-partial success:

> In the past, so many settlement schemes have been proposed but have never materialized that the action of the International Christian Committee in formulating and carrying out a practical scheme of settlement in South America has been greatly appreciated by those organizations which have the interests of German refugees at heart.[84]

Inter-Aid Committee for Children from Germany/The Chichester Scheme

With the proliferation of committees, each new one had to find a justification for its separate existence. The unifying feature of those helped by the Inter-Aid Committee for Children from Germany, established in May 1936, was not religion, or professional or academic status, but age — "no society in this country . . . has been able to devote its attention exclusively to the children who are suffering because of their race or because of the political views of their parents."[85] The Committee made arrangements for the education and maintenance in England of these children. It enlisted the cooperation of school authorities in providing places free or at reduced rates and obtained hospitality from local families for children in day schools and others while on holidays. When their education was complete, the committee would help advise the children on their future. The committee was unique among the refugee assistance organizations

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[84]Report on the visit of Mr. Sams to Europe to make arrangements for group settlement in Colombia, n.d. (January 1937?), Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 69-74.

[85]"The Save the Children Fund Inter-Aid Committee for Children From Germany," n.d., Papers of the Christian Mission to Jews (formerly Church Mission to Jews), c. 104.

to date in that it was inter-denominational — 55 per cent of the children it brought to England were Jewish, 45 per cent non-Jewish.[86] On its Council were members of the Church of England, including Bell and Henson,[87] as well as representatives of the Jewish community, including Simon Marks, the Marchioness of Reading, Sir Herbert Samuel, and Mrs Israel Sieff.[88] The Committee worked in close association with the Save the Children Fund, which had existed since 1933, but which devoted most of its efforts and finances to helping children in Western Europe. By November 1938, the Inter-Aid Committee had brought close to 500 children to be educated in England.[89]

In Bell's desire to ensure that his own diocese played a specific role, he appointed an honourary secretary for Chichester, Gladys Roberts.[90] The Chichester Scheme, while separate from the Inter-Aid Committee, had the same goals, and followed the same methods of operation. Bell and Roberts raised almost £500 for the Scheme from residents of the diocese, and in 1937,

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[86]Mary Ford, "The Arrival of Jewish Refugee Children in England, 1938-1939," *Immigrants & Minorities* 2, no. 2 (July 1983): 150.

[87]Henson continued his outspoken opposition to anti-Jewish policies in Germany. In 1936, he spearheaded a largely successful effort to dissuade British universities from sending representatives to the 550th anniversary celebration of Heidelberg University, to protest against the treatment of Jewish and "non-Aryan" professors and students. "Is it not a case for a rocket in the 'Times' from the Bishop of Durham?" wrote Bell (Henson Diary, 1 February 1936) and Henson agreed; his letter was published on the leader page in *The Times*. In it, he said that, "the appearance of British representatives at the Heidelberg celebration, and the presenting by them of congratulatory addresses, could not but be understood everywhere as a public and deliberate condonation of the intolerance which has emptied the German universities of many of their most eminent teachers, and which is filling Europe with victims of cynical and heartless oppression." *The Times*, 4 February 1936.

[88]"The Save the Children Fund Inter-Aid Committee for Children From Germany."

[89]Mary Ford says the committee brought 471 children to England, while Barry Turner claims 431. Mary Ford, "The Arrival of Jewish Refugee Children in England," 150; Barry Turner *...And the Policeman Smiled: 10,000 Children Escape from Nazi Europe* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Limited, 1990), 101.

[90]*Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XVII, no. 11 (November 1936), 318-19.

10 children were being maintained in Sussex schools. The average cost per year was £45, due to reduced tuition fees and offers of holiday hospitality, but to maintain the existing numbers for a second year was going to require another £450-500 before September 1938.[91] The following school year (1938-1939), 17 children were being supported in the Chichester Diocese.[92]

The Chichester Scheme was, in some ways, the ideal refugee assistance plan. It was, first of all, feasible. The sum required to help each child was not large, so that the scheme was not reliant on large public donations. In addition, financial donations were not the only way that people could participate — reduced fees and offers of hospitality were also welcome. And children were guaranteed to elicit a desire to help in a way that adult refugees did not — beyond the general appeal of children over adults to the public imagination, it was a rare child who was going to take a job from an unemployed worker. Finally, while the number of children helped may not have been large, they were tangible, and their small numbers meant that the assistance rendered by others could be tied to a specific child, which elicited a much stronger public response than assistance for faceless, nameless individuals in another country. Bell was so pleased at the results of the Chichester Scheme that he wanted to extend it throughout the Church of England. The two interlinked plans, the Inter-Aid Committee and the Chichester Scheme, became the motivation for, and the primary beneficiaries of, the Church of England Committee for "non-Aryan" Christians.

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[91](Gladys Roberts), "Memo on "non-Aryan" Christian children from Germany," n.d., (October/November 1937?), Bell Papers, vol. 34, f. 198.

[92]*Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XIX, no. 11 (November 1938), 338-39.

The Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians

The Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians had its roots in a discussion in mid-1937 with the Church Mission to Jews about an appeal for "non-Aryan" Christians in Germany on behalf of the Church of England.[93] While it incorporated the rump of the ICC, its priorities were to raise money for the education of Christian children. As Wyndham Deedes told a conference on "non-Aryan" Christians in Germany, he had come to the conclusion, shared by others, that little could be done for the adults, but that it should be possible to salvage the lives of some of the children,[94] and this remained the focus of the Committee's work. Its emphasis was at all times on the individuals helped, and the Committee members felt,

> a heavy responsibility in caring for these boys and girls, finding schools for them, supervising their education and watching their mental and physical development. We try to get to know each one individually and to give them all a sense that it is not merely a Committee which is helping them but friends who are personally interested in their welfare and to whom they can turn in any difficulty.[95]

Bell, not surprisingly, was the chair of the committee, while its daily work was conducted by its secretary, Ruby Cleeve. The majority of the funds raised was to be used to assist children, through the Inter-Aid Committee, with the remainder going to other organizations for individual assistance.[96] Even closer links with the Inter-Aid Committee were forged through the presence

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[93]Bell to Rev. C.H. Gill, Secretary of the Church Mission to Jews, 3 July 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 28, ff. 417-420.

[94]Proceedings of the Conference on "Non-Aryan" Christians in Germany, 1 February 1938, Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 132-36.

[95]Church of England Committee on "non-Aryan" Christians, *Second Annual Report* (typescript), Papers of the Christian Mission to Jews (formerly Church Mission to Jews), c. 104.

[96]Bell to Wyndham Deedes, 16 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 141-42.

of Wyndham Deedes, chairman of the Inter-Aid Committee, on the three-member allocation committee (the others were Bell, and Rev. C.H. Gill, of the Church Mission to Jews, who was also a member of the Executive Committee),[97] yet another illustration of the interconnectedness of the various committees involved in work for "non-Aryan" Christian refugees. Chastened by the experience of the 1936 Christian appeal, the Committee planned to avoid large-scale public appeals for funds, and, instead, concentrate on approaches to parishes and individuals by correspondence and advertisements in carefully selected newspapers.[98]

The Committee differed from the National Christian Appeal in that it was aimed at all "non-Aryan" Christians, not solely those who were refugees. When the ICC found that the number of destitute "non-Aryan" Christian refugees was lower than at first believed — a survey conducted in May 1936 found only 1,051 non-Jewish refugees on the books of the various refugee organizations, fewer than half the number originally estimated[99] and the proportion of non-Jewish refugees who were "non-Aryan" Christians, as opposed to political refugees much lower than the 60 per cent originally thought[100] — attention turned toward the possibility of assisting the much larger number of "non-Aryan" Christians still in Germany, whose condition was rapidly worsening. This was a much more contentious issue, however, as taking such a step would require criticism of what were seen as domestic affairs of another country.

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[97]Statement re Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 309.

[98]Bell to Gill, 22 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 166.

[99]International Christian Committee for Refugees, "Half-Yearly Report, July 1936-February 1937."

[100]Memo on the International Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany, n.d. (January/February 1937?), Bell Papers, vol. 28, ff. 211-212.

Bell, whose connections in Germany meant that he was aware of the deteriorating conditions inside Germany for the "non-Aryan" Christians, believed by early 1937 that the appeals should revise their objectives to cover those still in Germany "whose need is infinitely greater."[101] Henry Leiper, secretary of the American appeal (as well as a colleague from the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work), summarized the crucial problems with this revision of the appeal's goals: to raise money to take people out of Germany would be "illegal and irregular," while to raise money for administering relief inside Germany would simply give rise to the accusation that the Churches were giving Germany the foreign exchange she so badly needed to buy armaments."[102] If this succinct observation was not enough to put paid to the issue of extending the appeal to the "non-Aryan" Christians inside Germany, Neill Malcolm, who had been appointed as the new High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany to replace McDonald, wrote to Bell to inform him that the High Commission was not permitted by the League of Nations to be of assistance in any scheme to help "non-Aryan" Christians in Germany.[103] The members of the Executive Committee had already decided in August 1936 that they must not take part in protests against internal German matters.[104] Now, in early 1937, they arrived at a formulation that, no doubt, reconciled their disinclination to move ahead of the British government by speaking out on "internal" matters with their evident distress over conditions in Germany; they decided that the committee had to work for the present refugees,

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[101]Bell to Leiper, 2 February 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 28, ff. 201-204.

[102]Leiper to Bell, 19 February 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 28, ff. 217-18.

[103]Neill Malcolm to Bell, 22 February 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 28, f. 226.

[104]Minutes, Executive Committee meeting of the International Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany, 19 August 1936.

while being ready to help future refugees when they left Germany.[105] These attitudes informed the work of the Church of England Committee as well, and meant that, despite the Church of England Committee's goal of rendering assistance to "non-Aryan" Christians still in Germany, the majority of its work was focussed on refugees.

The involvement of the Church Mission to Jews in the Church of England Committee was a sensitive topic from the beginning; mixing up missionary work and relief work raised "political problems."[106] In a letter to Lord Cecil asking him to be President of the Committee, Bell referred to the wish of the CMJ to do all possible, "though owing to Jewish sensibilities one must not use their office or their name."[107] Reverend Gill's involvement as vice-chair, for instance, was criticized, and in the end, he served simply as a member of the Executive Committee.[108] Similarly, while reasons of economy favoured the two organizations sharing an address, it was decided that the Church of England committee should maintain a separate address, mainly because the two organizations had to be distinct in the eyes of the Jewish community.[109] Gladys Skelton, of the Inter-Aid Committee, was even stronger, pointing out that cooperation with the Jewish community would be almost impossible to retain if Gill were to be named chair (which

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[105]Bell to Leiper, 10 March 1937, Bell papers, Pol. 28, ff. 265-66.

[106]Bell to Gill, 19 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 156

[107]Bell to Lord Cecil, 23 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 170. Cecil turned down the invitation, citing a lack of time and energy, but invited Bell to use his name in a non-effective capacity if it would be helpful. Lord Cecil to Bell, 26 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 188.

[108]Criticism came from Wyndham Deedes; Gladys Roberts to Bell, 19 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 159-60. The press release announcing the Committee's formation, which was issued by the Save the Children Fund, omitted Gill's name entirely. Press release, 10 November 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 310

[109]Ruby Cleeve to Bell, 20 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 161-62.

was not contemplated).[110] If this was a relatively minor issue, it foreshadows a much more serious problem, that of the relations between the Churches and the thousands of children, mostly Jewish, who were brought to England in the last year before the war, many of whom were cared for in Christian homes and by Christian organizations.

Among the Committee's activities was a conference on "non-Aryan" Christians in Germany, held in February 1938 to inform people of the persecutions of the past two years in Germany, and to bring home to English Christians their responsibility toward their fellow-Christians suffering in Germany. The lack of Christian responsibility, said Reverend James Parkes meant that "there had never been a time when Jewry looked upon Christendom with so much longing and with so much contempt as today . . . . We send missions to convert the Jews and we leave them to look after refugees who are members of our own faith."[111] Other activities ranged from the conventional — a public meeting held in Central Hall, Westminster, in June 1938, at which Bell appealed for increased support for the Committee's work — to the more enjoyable — a series of violin recitals, for instance, held in four cathedrals, which raised £360 by July 1938.[112]

The Committee's work, on a much smaller scale than that of the Christian appeal, ironically proved to be almost as successful. In its first year, the Committee raised £6,291, of which all but £330 was allocated directly for relief. The money was used to assist 60 children

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[110]Gladys Skelton to Bell, 25 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 184-85

[111]Proceedings of the Conference on "Non-Aryan" Christians in Germany, 1 February 1938, Bell Papers, vol. 35, ff. 132-36.

[112]Letter from Bell, *Church Times*, 22 July 1938

to be educated in England and 43 adults and 11 families to emigrate to other countries. In addition, the Committee gave three special grants for relief committees working in Prague and Paris and one grant for nursing training. The committee also supported a pastor and his wife to work with the Christian refugees in London, and a refugee working with one of the relief organizations in London.[113]

Nevertheless, the need remained great, and the Committee's first annual report asked for practical as well as financial assistance. Those who wished to help could do so by providing guarantees of maintenance for refugees, perhaps to be shared among a group or by a parish, that would permit the Home Office to give permission to the refugees to enter England; providing training to equip refugees with the skills to re-emigrate; offering hospitality for refugees in temporary need, or to assist those who are bearing the main burden by providing a guarantee; and employing refugees in some capacity where British labour will not be displaced, primarily in domestic service.[114]

One method of raising funds that the Committee considered was a film about the plight of the refugees. An American film had been made, featuring McDonald and one other speaker. It had been brought to Britain, and, under the leadership of Dorothy Buxton, a prominent pacifist and Quaker who had been closely involved in protests against the German Church struggle, there were attempts to find a British speaker to replace one of the Americans. The remade film would then be used as a means of raising funds for the Church of England committee. The tale of this

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[113]Church of England Committee for Non-Aryan Christians, *Annual Report 1937-1938* (London: Central Office for Refugees, 1939), 2.

[114]Ibid., 4-5.

film exemplifies the degree to which the leadership of the Church was divided over its proper role regarding refugees and relations with Germany.

Buxton had approached Bell to seek his advice on a prominent Anglican who could appear in the film.[115] Bell's initial response was favourable, and when Temple, who had been approached by Buxton about appearing in the film, sought his counsel, he advised Temple that the film was quite good, and that he would be grateful if Temple could give it his support.[116] Others, however, were considerably more skeptical about the film. Gladys Skelton, the honourary secretary of the Inter-Aid Committee, wrote to Buxton on 25 October to say that, after consultations with Gladys Roberts, Wyndham Deedes, and others,[117] they had come to the conclusion that to proceed with the film would be undesirable, as it was unpopular with the German government and would be ineffective propaganda for an English audience.[118] Buxton immediately appealed to Bell for assistance, saying that not proceeding with the film because it would be irritating to the German government was an untenable position,

> for in the nature of things one *cannot* draw an adequate picture of the sufferings of non-Aryans, which cause them to become refugees, without saying things which are unpleasant to the German authorities, who have themselves directly created the situation.[119]

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[115]Buxton to Bell, 19 August 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 70-71.

[116]Temple to Bell, 14 September 1937, Bell to Temple, 29 September 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 107 and 110.

[117]It is interesting to note the degree to which the same people are involved in the various issues relating to "non-Aryan" Christian refugees. It illustrates both the close and intertwined nature of the refugee movement, and the small number of people who were willing to donate their energies.

[118]Gladys Skelton to Buxton, 25 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 180-81.

[119]Buxton to Bell, 27 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 193.

Bell, disagreed, writing to Buxton that he had been convinced by Deedes of the correctness of not proceeding with the film, and that he did not consider this "bowing down to the devil." Rather, he said, if to have a film circulating throughout the country would actually hurt the "non-Aryan" Christians themselves, would this actually help the cause?[120]

The controversy over the film demonstrates the degree to which concern for relations with Germany and for appeasement played a role in making decisions about refugee issues.[121] In the end, caution won the day, not only for fear of offending the German government, but for the very practical fear of endangering work being done to bring children to England. This conflict, between idealism and practical politics, shows up time and again, not least because of the genuine belief of many of the Church leaders in appeasement as the means of averting war. It is tempting to feel an instinctive sympathy with Buxton, and her righteous indignation; it is understandable, however, why others tempered their indignation.

Lobbying Governments

The *Anschluss* with Austria in March 1938 added a new dimension to the refugee crisis. What had taken years in Germany, and was not yet complete, took only months in Austria. Under the direction of the SS, one quarter of Austria's 200,000 Jews emigrated within 6

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[120]Bell to Buxton, 28 October 1937, Bell Papers, v. 1, 29, f. 198.

[121]The same controversy did not exist, for instance, regarding a film to assist Abyssinian refugees who had found homes in British African colonies. Lang spoke at a luncheon supporting the campaign, and said he hoped the film would be shown in cinemas across the country to help raise £8,000 for the refugees' needs. *The Times*, 27 October 1938.

months.[122] This success led to the adoption by the Nazi regime of emigration as the objective of its Jewish policy. By the end of 1938, there was a centrally directed and coordinated Jewish policy focussing on emigration, and overseen by the Central Committee for Emigration, created in January 1939, under Gestapo head Reinhard Heydrich. Suddenly, the crisis erupted Still bound by their 1933 guarantee to support all needy Jewish refugees admitted to Britain, the exhausted volunteers sought a way to bring order to the chaotic situation. On March 14, 1938, the Home Office was informed that the Jewish pledge would be honoured only for refugees admitted after consultation with the German-Jewish Aid Committee.[123]

Britain's response to the increase in the numbers of refugees and the self-imposed reduction in the scope of the refugee organizations' mandate was to introduce a visa requirement, after nearly a decade without one, for immigrants coming from both Germany and Austria. Jewish community organizations were among those who pressed for a visa requirement as another way to try to contain the chaos. The visa requirement did provide greater control over the refugees arriving in Britain, and avoided the requirement to turn back refugees at British ports, but its introduction was not accompanied by any additional resources to deal with the increased workload it created. By the time of *Kristallnacht*, in November, there was a backlog of 10,000 visa requests.[124] On October 29, Otto Schiff, leader of the German Jewish Aid Committee, had

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[122]Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz*, 230.

[123]London, "Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy," 175. Sherman also points out the limiting effect of the guarantee, but concludes that the refusal of the Jewish community to support those whose admission it had not approved "hamstrung" the Home Office, which would otherwise have been able to issue many more visas (*Island Refuge*, 266-67). It is not at all clear that, without this inhibiting factor, this would have been the case; it is a great deal more clear that without the guarantee, very few refugees would have been admitted in the first place. Sherman's conclusion, while curious, is in line with his position that Britain was relatively generous in its response to the refugee crisis.

[124]London, "Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy," 180.

notified the Home Office that the Committee was on the point of collapse, and was driven to suggest that the time had come to put a temporary halt to the admission of refugees until those already in Britain had either assimilated or emigrated.[125] The escalation of the refugee problem to the level of a crisis also drove those involved with refugees to take the step they had hitherto rejected — asking for government involvement and assistance.

In 1935, Bell had stood before the Church Assembly to tell the world that the Church condemned the persecution of the Jews in Germany. In June 1938, he once again stood before the Assembly, this time not only to once again express the Church's abhorrence of the persecutions in Germany, but to request help for the refugees that resulted. He moved:

> That this Assembly records its deep distress at the sufferings endured by "Non-Aryan" Christians, as well as by members of the Jewish race, in Germany and Austria, and urges that, not only should everything possible be done by Government aid to assist their emigration into other countries, but also that Christians everywhere should express their fellowship with their suffering brethren by material gifts as well as by personal sympathy and by prayer.[126]

This resolution is particularly significant because it expressly invokes the necessity of government assistance. The Jewish community, because of its vulnerable position in English public life, had refrained from exerting public pressure on the government. Bell, in a much more secure position, did not feel the same compunction.

As part of the National Christian Appeal, Bell had written to the Foreign Office to suggest the government make a £5,000 grant and sponsor the issue of a special stamp with a surcharge for the settlement of non-Jewish refugees, in the interest of "that final solution of the

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[125]Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 158.

[126]*Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1938.

German refugee problem which everybody must desire".[127] To Bell's disappointment, the government refused, claiming it could not deviate from the principle of no public funds for refugee settlement.

Bell was to become yet more convinced of the need for government assistance, and, in his mind, he linked it clearly to appeasement. Unlike some Church leaders, for whom the cause of appeasement was above all others, Bell made it clear that assisting the refugees was an inextricable part of that policy. In July 1938, in his maiden speech to the House of Lords, he said that the plight of the refugees is now "quite beyond the resources of private organizations," and that the governments of the world should "act and act together if the work is to be done." Specifically, he called on the non-German governments to pressure the German government into allowing refugees to take a proportion of their personal property with them upon their departures from Germany, and suggested that this be made an item for settlement in any plan of general appeasement. Bell also asked the government specifically to increase facilities for training and apprenticeships for young German and Austrian refugees in Britain, and to be more clear about the degree to which it was willing to facilitate colonial settlement or to press the Dominions to permit greater immigration.[128]

The government's response, delivered by the Earl of Plymouth, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was not promising. He conceded the need for cooperation from the country of origin, but would not commit the British government to working to gain this

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[127]Bell to Lord Cranborne, Parliamentary Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, 24 February 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 28, fl. 230. The irony of his phrasing would become apparent only much later.

[128]27 July 1938, *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 5th ser., vol. 110, cols. 1210-12.

cooperation. He could not say anything about settlement in the African colonies other than that the matter was under consideration. He completely ignored the question of the Dominions. And he concluded by saying that the policy of an open door for refugees "did not commend itself" to the government.[129]

Bell's was not a lone voice in the wilderness. Others, too, were coming to the conclusion that the refugee problem was insoluble without some government involvement. By the summer of 1938, Sir John Hope Simpson, who was conducting an international survey of refugees, had concluded that the situation was beyond the resources of private organizations to deal with, and that the need for a comprehensive response by governments was becoming more evident. He called on the governments of European countries to permit refugees to work in their countries and to provide camps for sanctuary for the refugees pending their absorption into the labour market or their re-emigration.[130] Other prominent politicians joined in the lobbying efforts to convince the government to admit greater numbers of refugees, including Labour MPs such as Josiah Wedgwood,[131] Philip Noel Baker, and Eleanor Rathbone.[132]

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[129]27 July 1938, *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 5th ser., vol. 110, cols. 1243-47.

[130]Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, 147.

[131]Wedgwood had personally sponsored 222 refugees by 1939 (Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 149), and his outspokenness on behalf of all refugees earned him tremendous gratitude. *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, coordinating ed. Werner Mosse (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991.), a compilation of essays that deals with many aspects of the refugee crisis of the 1930s, is dedicated to the memory of Wedgwood and Eleanor Rathbone for their work on behalf of refugees.

[132]Francis L. Carsten, "German Refugees in Great Britain 1933-1945: A Survey," in *Exile in Great Britain: Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld (England: Berg Publishers; New Jersey: Humanities Press for the German Historical Institute, London, 1984), 14-15.

Bell held particular hopes for the settlement of non-Jewish refugees in Australia and Canada. He believed that the British Empire bore particular responsibility for the settlement of refugees, because the colonies and Dominions covered such a large proportion of the globe, and found, in their reluctance to assume that responsibility, yet another source of disappointment. While the possibility of a western state treating its citizens as Germany was treating its Jews and "non-Aryans" seemed incredible only a few years ago, "it is almost as hard to understand the seeming apathy with which the fate of the Jews and the non-Aryan Christians is being regarded by the people of the British Empire."[133]

> I myself believe that this pressing question would be one of Imperial policy — England, Australia, and Canada consulting together to see how many hundred thousand of these fellow-Christians can be admitted into the British Empire; for the problem is so vast as to be beyond the scope of a voluntary organization."[134]

In this belief, Bell spent much time and energy attempting to create a welcome for "non-Aryan" Christian refugees, particularly in Australia and Canada.

His involvement in the possibility of Australian immigration began in May 1937, with a meeting with Australia's High Commissioner to Britain. Initially optimistic about the possibility of Australian immigration, within a month he was not as sanguine. He had been told, in meetings both with the High Commissioner and with officials at Australia House, that there were no possibilities for group settlement, and that while individual applications would be considered, the individuals would have to have sufficient money and employment prospects before being given permission to immigrate. The sole ray of hope was that some individual provinces might

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[133]*Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XIX, no. 9 (September 1938), 271.

[134]"Do Christians Care? The Misery of Non-Aryan Refugees: An Interview with the Bishop of Chichester," *Church Times*, 14 October 1938.

be more receptive to immigration and that Bell should go through the Primates in each province. The door was not wide open, he said, but it was not a "hopeless case."[135] In August, based on his own soundings, Wyndham Deedes wrote to Bell that there was no use in thinking of emigration to Canada, but that Australia remained a possibility.[136]

Bell persisted, nevertheless, in attempts to settle refugees in Canada. In a letter to the Archbishop of Toronto, he introduced a member of the American Friends Service Committee, who wanted the Archbishop's assistance in gaining assistance from Canada toward the refugees, or even in winning permission for some to settle there.[137] Bell also had a friend at Canada House, Frederick Hudd, whom Bell had asked to sit as a member of the Church of England Committee,[138] and with whom Bell planned his approaches to the Canadian High Commissioner, Vincent Massey.

Bell also attempted to work through the Dominions Office in seeking settlement for "non-Aryan" Christian refugees overseas, although without much success. In August 1937, he first approached the Dominions Secretary, then Malcolm Macdonald, asking whether MacDonald would be willing to make informal approaches to find out which, if any, Dominions, would be willing to accept German Christian refugees and under what conditions.[139] Macdonald agreed

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[135]Bell to Archbishop of Perth, 9 June 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 28, ff. 362-63.

[136]Deedes to Bell, 12 August 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 52-53.

[137]Bell to Archbishop of Toronto, 27 August 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 90.

[138]Hudd was the Chief Canadian Trade Commissioner in the United Kingdom. He turned down the request because of regulations governing employees of Canada House. Hudd to Bell, 1 November 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 216.

[139]Bell to Macdonald, 18 August 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 66-68.

to do so,[140] but the results of his inquiries were not hopeful. He rejected the idea of making representations to the Dominions, even semi-officially, on behalf of "non-Aryan" Christian refugees, saying that his predecessor had done so in 1933 regarding the settlement of Jewish refugees in the Dominions without success; the Dominions had simply responded that interested individuals should go through the regular channels. MacDonald further pointed out that, while there was no change in policy in Canada and New Zealand, South Africa had adopted a new and more restrictive Aliens Act. Even though the economic situation in these countries had improved, the governments still had reservations about resuming assisted migration. He suggested that Bell contact the High Commissioners in London directly, and offered to send a note to each of them saying they might be hearing from Bell and suggesting they take the matter up with their governments.[141]

Bell immediately set about planning the suggested meetings, writing to Deedes that the Church of England Council of Empire Settlement could collaborate with the Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians, and setting up a meeting with Hudd to discuss the best way to approach the Canadian High Commissioner.[142] There is no evidence of the results of these meetings; it is easily apparent that Bell would not have had much success. By March 1939, only 2,000 refugees had been admitted to the Empire outside of Palestine.[143] The attitude of the Dominions was best characterized by the Australian representative to the Evian conference,

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[140]Macdonald to Bell, 30 September 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 121.

[141]Macdonald to Bell, 27 October 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 195-97. Lang had received a similar message from the Dominions Office in response to an inquiry he had made. Hankinson, Dominions Office, to Lang, 27 March 1937, Lang Papers, vol. 38, ff. 131-33.

[142]Bell to Deedes and Hudd, 2 November 1937, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 219 and 223.

[143]Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 189-192; Carsten, "German Refugees in Great Britain," 19.

who stated, in "the most depressing speech of the conference"[144] that "since we don't have a real race problem, we have no wish to import one."[145]

The role of the British Dominions and colonies and of other countries in settling refugees came under particular scrutiny, first at the Empire Migration and Development Conference in October 1937, and then at the Evian conference in July 1938. In a leader commenting on the former, the *Church Times* acknowledged the problem of the British Empire becoming less British because of the migration of non-British peoples, but called on policy makers to think, not only of Britain's interest, but of the interests of the world. The British colonies had open spaces, but closed doors, and persecuted peoples in the world, particularly Polish Jews and "non-Aryan" Christians, were suffering as a result of those closed doors.[146] Later, commenting on the increase in refugees caused by the *Anschluss*, the *Church Times* decreed the impossibility of Britain, with its army of unemployed, being an asylum, but claimed that, not only could the "thinly populated" Dominions provide such an asylum, but that it would be to their own advantage.[147]

The *Church Times* continued on this theme in discussing the upcoming Evian conference of July 1938. While Palestine was the obvious solution for Jewish refugees, it was obvious, the

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[144]"None to Comfort the Persecuted: The Failure of the Refugee Conferences," *Wiener Library Bulletin* XV, no. 3 (1961), 43.

[145]Australian quote in Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 145; for a review of Canada's dismal record regarding refugees from Nazi Germany, see Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, Publishers, 1983).

[146]"The Problem of Migration," *Church Times*, 15 October 1937.

[147]Ibid., 14 April 1938.

paper said, that this did not affect the "non-Aryan" Christians "with whom we are most directly concerned." For this group, it was vital to consider the under-populated areas of the world, most of which were part of the British commonwealth. "The world crisis gives the Dominion Governments a splendid opportunity for Christian charity."[148]

The Evian Conference, held in July 1938 at the initiative of President Roosevelt, was a response to the intensification of the refugee crisis created by *Anschluss*. Its creation was met with great hope by all those working to help refugees, including Bell, who wrote that "non-Aryan" Christians, more than anyone else welcomed Evian, and hoped that, for their sake, and for the sake of the Jews, that the opportunities opened by the conference would be "seized to the fullest."[149] On the contrary, however, the conference underscored the unwillingness of the western democracies to receive Jewish refugees. Representatives of 32 states and 39 voluntary organizations (21 of them Jewish) gathered to examine ways of helping Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria. The terms of reference specified that emigration would continue to be financed by private organizations, and that no country would be expected to admit more refugees than allowable by legislation. The focus, instead, would be on Germany, and how to end the persecution of the Jews there.[150] The British government, for its part, was torn between its wariness of any international attention which might require it to accept greater numbers of refugees and its desire to encourage any American initiatives that might signal a renewed interest in European affairs.

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[148]Ibid., 8 July 1938.

[149]*The Times*, 8 July 1938.

[150]Shlomo E. Katz, "Public Opinion in Western Europe and the Evian Conference of July 1938," *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance* IX (1973): 117, quoting the Swiss newspaper *L'Impartial*.

At the public sessions, delegation after delegation stood up to state their sympathy for the plight of the refugees, and, in the case of the European countries, their inability to take any more refugees, or, in the case of the Dominions and South American countries, their inability to change their immigration laws and practices. Governments appeared to care more about "preserving proper relations with the German Reich than about the lives of the individual refugees, however numerous these latter may be."[151] Any government that may have been tempted to indulge any charitable impulses at Evian would have been inhibited by the explicit questions from the Polish and Rumanian governments' representatives about whether, while "the Jewish question was on the agenda," their own surplus Jewish population could be transferred elsewhere.[152] Reflecting the conference's seemingly greater concern with convincing the German government to permit refugees to take more capital with them, delegates at the closing session unanimously supported the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGC), with implied authority to negotiate directly with Germany on this issue.[153]

Contemporary assessments lauded the positive step taken by governments in recognizing their responsibility in helping to organize the emigration of potential refugees and the absorption of those who had already emigrated,[154] and spoke of the conference beginning in pessimism and doom, but ending in a twilight of "hope."[155] It is clear, however, that these assessments were

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[151]Ibid.

[152]Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 207.

[153]Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 172.

[154]Norman Bentwich, "The Evian Conference and After," *The Fortnightly*, no. 861 (September 1938): 287-88.

[155]Jonah B. Wise, "Impressions of Evian," *Contemporary Jewish Record* 1, no. 1 (September 1938): 40.

written at least partially in the interests of encouraging governments to act and of boosting the morale of those working in the voluntary organizations. Seen at a greater distance, the conference was ultimately a failure — a "public relations exercise."[156] It had not managed to find desperately needed places for refugees to go, it had used its energies to create another organization instead of rescuing victims of Nazi persecution, and it had, by demonstrating the lack of true international concern for the refugees, paved the way for escalation of Nazi anti-Jewish policies — earning it the title of the "Jewish Munich."[157]

The experience of the various committees and appeals operating throughout this "middle period," with the obvious exception of the Inter Aid Committee, underscores the vast gulf separating Jews and Christians in England. In the mind of the Christian public, all refugees from Germany, save perhaps the high-profile political and academic refugees, were Jewish, and organizers of the various appeals took great pains to maintain distinctions between Jewish and "non-Aryan" Christian refugees. Thus the pamphlet inaugurating the National Christian Appeal was at pains to state that the funds raised by the appeal were intended **for those not of the Jewish faith**.[158] William Simpson, honourary secretary of the Youth Council on Jewish and Christian Relations and a Methodist minister, felt it further necessary to draw attention to the

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[156]Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 133.

[157]Katz, "Public Opinion in Western Europe and the Evian Conference," 105. For more on the Evian conference, see Sherman, *Island Refuge*, Chapter 5; "None to Comfort the Persecuted"; and Joshua Stein, "Great Britain and the Evian Conference of 1938," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* XXIX, new series nos 37/38 (1976): 40-52.

[158]The National Christian Appeal for Refugees from Germany (Non-Aryan Christians), Christian Mission to Jews (formerly Church Mission to Jews), c. 104 (emphasis in original).

Christian nature of the appeal because of the danger of its suffering because of this confusion.[159]

Similarly, in a letter seeking funds for the Church of England Committee, Bell appeared to indicate that the Jewish refugees were well-taken care of, while the need was greatest among the non-Jewish refugees, asking whether there has not been unintentional underestimation of "what the Jews themselves have already done and are continually doing?" Bell went on to advise that "the needs of the "non-Aryan" Christians are as grave as, and their position more lonely and more tragic than, the needs of those who are Jewish both by race and by faith," and asked that any who "can be moved by the tragic realities of the situation for Christians of the Jewish race in Germany" to contribute to the Committee's work.[160] As has previously been observed, Bell was attempting to rouse a specifically Christian response to the refugee issue, which he thought could be most effectively done by pointing out the Christian dimensions of the problem. But the language in this letter, with its implications of the relatively comfortable position of Jewish refugees in comparison with that of the "non-Aryan" Christian refugees — which was far from the truth — foreshadows a tendency that became more pronounced after November 1938, a "Christianizing" of the entire refugee movement.

The failure of the Christian community to respond to the needs of their fellow Christian refugees was matched by a tendency to fault the Jewish community for drawing distinctions between refugees, and for not assisting those who were not Jewish. Early in 1936, the *Church*

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[159]Letter to the editor, *Church Times*, 26 June 1936.

[160]*The Times*, 11 January 1938. Draft of letter, dated 29 November 1937, is in Bell Papers, vol. 29, f. 311.

Times received a letter castigating Jewish relief organizations for applying "that policy of discrimination which is always a feature of Jewish thought when Christian Jews are in question" and for "entirely and blankly" ignoring the "non-Aryan" Christian refugees. Such an accusation was both uncalled for and untrue. One of the leaders of British Jewry, Leonard Montefiore, was quick to respond by pointing out that about one-fifth of the relief for the refugee community coming from the Jewish Central Fund has gone to "non-Aryan" Christians. "To suggest that assistance to refugees from Germany has been refused, on any other grounds than that of diminished and diminishing financial resources, is so complete a travesty of fact that a reply appeared to me necessary." His "official" reply was buttressed by a letter from a "non-Aryan" Christian emigrant, who, from his own experience and observation, was able to say that "[w]orld Jewry has helped not only its persecuted co-religionists, but also non-Jews and Christian Jews who were compelled to emigrate owing to German National Socialism."[161] Both Sir John Hope-Simpson and Bell paid public tribute to the "astounding" generosity of the Jewish community at a public meeting to establish the Christian Council for Refugees.[162]

The grudging attitude toward the Jewish community that some displayed must be seen in the context of an increase in anti-Semitism on the European model in England, exemplified by Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, formed in 1932, whose members regularly paraded

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[161]Letters to the editor, Olga Levertoff, 3 January; Leonard Montefiore, 10 January; and Otto Lehmann-Russbüldt, 17 January 1936, *Church Times*. The letter from Montefiore also appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 January 1936.

[162]*Jewish Chronicle*, 14 October 1938. The phrase is Hope Simpson's.

through London's East End to antagonize the Jewish community living there.[163] The group did not elicit much public support,[164] but Bell was driven, nonetheless, to warn that,

> Anti-Semitism, like a poison, like a contagious disease, is spreading in countries where a few years ago it would never have been dreamt of. Even in England there have been ominous signs. We wish to say in the clearest terms that is is an intolerable poison, and that all Christians in this country ought to set their faces in the most resolute way against it.[165]

The constant references to the isolated state of the "non-Aryan" Christians also underscores the frustration felt by Bell and others at the disinclination of the German Church to speak out on behalf of their persecuted members. A strong statement on their behalf by the German churches might have made a significant impact on public awareness of their plight, not only in Germany, but in England as well, where the German Church struggle was still a matter of grave concern. This statement was not forthcoming. In May 1936, the Confessional Church did protest to Hitler against the suppression of the Protestant Church and the "dechristianization" of the nation, as well as, almost incidentally, the "anti-semitic attitude" of Nazi ideology. The protest was made privately, however, only to Hitler, and, when it was smuggled out of Germany and published abroad, the Church's response was to retreat. On 23 August, the Confessional Church released a watered down version of its protest in the form of a pastoral letter, which did

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[163]In 1936, in the "battle of Cable Street," thousands of protesters prevented the BUF from marching through the East End; the Public Order Act which followed forbade the wearing of political uniforms, retiring the party's black shirts. Thorpe, *Britain in the Era of the Two World Wars*, 30.

[164]The Chelmsford Diocesan Conference, for instance, condemned the Jew-baiting, and moved that the government be urged to take "immediate and drastic steps" to put an end to it. Similar action was urged by the London and Southwark Diocesan Conferences. And in January 1937, Lang included remarks condemning anti-Semitic prejudice in his New Years message to the Diocese of Canterbury (*Jewish Chronicle*, 16, 30 October 1936, 8 January 1937). The membership of the BUF dropped from 50,000 in mid-1934 to 5,000 by the end of the year, in part because of its increasing anti-Semitism. Thorpe, *Britain in the Era of the Two World Wars*, 30.

[165]*The Times*, 4 September 1936.

not refer at all to Nazi anti-Semitism, but was limited solely to attacks on the Protestant Church.[166]

The predominance of the Church struggle in the minds of Church members, including Bell, is evident in the continuing attempts to excuse Germany's actions (and, by implication, the failure of the German Church to speak out more strongly) with reference to Versailles. Thus, at the 1937 Oxford Conference on Life and Work,[167] Bell spoke on familiar themes, reminding his audience of the many tribulations Germany had passed through since the end of the war and of the mistakes made by the other Powers:

> There are darker shades in the picture of Germany which cause sorrow to its friends, but let us not forget the self-sacrifice and the devotion to the common good which are also evident, and let us do everything we can to encourage the return of Germany to the full enjoyment of the spiritual and material life of the world of nations in a spirit of comradeship and trust based upon the acceptance of a common moral and spiritual standard. Above all, let us not forget the repentance for our own shortcomings of many years, the cowardice and the selfishness, the silence and the indifference to others' needs which are a reproach to the Churches.[168]

Also evident during this period is Bell's increasing despair at the likelihood of ever assisting the vast numbers of "non-Aryan" Christian refugees to find new homes, and his increasing outspokenness about his disappointment. He castigated his audiences in no uncertain

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[166]Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, 162-64.

[167]The conference, held in July 1937, had the theme of "Church, Community and State." Its thinking "represented the most mature ecclesiastical approach to social and political problems of the inter-war years." (Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 304-05.) In the context of National Socialism and Hitler's efforts to turn the Church into a department of state, "the Conference's stress on the freedom of the Church and its responsibility to take a prophetic role, rebuking secular rulers where necessary and upholding the dignity of man as created by God, was quite impressive." Worrall, *The Making of the Modern Church*, 210.

[168]*The Times*, 20 July 1937.

terms for the lack of help Christians had given to the Christian victims of racial persecution, as in the foreword he wrote to a pamphlet by Dr. Charles Singer on "The Christian Approach to the Jews":

> It is humiliating, but it is true. The plight of non-Aryan Christians is grievous in the extreme. The Jews have rendered them no small measure of help in spite of their difference in religion. But Christian Churches in England and elsewhere have made the minutest response. There have been individual Christians who have been generous. But the Churches as a whole are silent and, it seems, unconcerned. There is no distress deeper in Germany than that of the non-Aryan Christians; and none which makes a stronger appeal on Christian fellowship and on Christian charity.[169]

Most Christians in England did not see any cause for feeling humiliation. Bell's was a lone voice lost in the din of other, louder voices on other issues. Refugees were "old news" with no new jolt or disaster to bring the issue to the public's attention.[170]

It was characteristic of Bell that he worked quietly, behind the scenes, through personal contacts and private talks. It is an indication of his despair that in June 1938, in asking the members of his diocese to help "by refusing to be indifferent," he took his struggle into the public domain by telling his readers to urge upon Members of Parliament,

> the absolute necessity of finding room in other countries and in the Dominions, for these many thousands of men and women and children, who have such fine qualities of citizenship, and are treated so cruelly in their native land.[171]

Around the same time, speaking to a public meeting to raise funds for the Church of England Committee, Bell spoke of the need for Christian action, not only to help individual refugees, but to spark government action, both in Britain and in Germany. "Governments were not inclined

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[169]Bell Papers, vol. 28, ff. 473-75.

[170]Chandler, "The Church of England and Nazi Germany," 89-90.

[171]*Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XIX, no. 6 (June 1938), 181.

to do anything unless there was a strong public opinion," he said, "and it must be expressed in alms and material help."[172]

Despite Bell's despair, however, there is a sense, beginning in mid-1938, of public opinion turning and of Christians becoming more alive to the problem of "non-Aryan" Christian refugees. This is seen primarily in the letters column of the *Church Times* where the occasional letter began appearing from those attempting to help refugees, seeking others' assistance. For instance, one writer was able to rescue a small group of refugees from Vienna, two of whom had Christian wives, whom he would train in domestic service at his home, and for whom he would welcome all offers of assistance or employment.[173] While the letter raises some questions — such as whether he was seeking help for all the refugees, or saw his role as limited only to helping the two Christian women — it is the first such letter to appear in the *Church Times* since 1933, and, as such, is significant. It did not presage a flood of such letters, but others continued to appear throughout the year,[174] indicating a greater number of people becoming involved in caring for refugees, on the very individual basis that was so important to Bell.

The softening of public opinion notwithstanding, the threat of impending war hung over discussions of the refugee issue, as it did over much else by the late 1930s, and the conflict between support for appeasement and assistance for the refugees becomes more pronounced in

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[172]"The Church and Non-Aryan Christians: The Bishop of Chichester's Appeal," *Church Times*, 24 June 1938.

[173]L.F. Wilshin Morris, *Church Times*, 24 June 1938.

[174]For instance, a letter appeared on 2 September 1938, from Robert Doble, Vicar of Great Chesterford, Essex, seeking to act as a liaison between refugees in Switzerland and those able to offer domestic employment to them in Britain. On 28 October, the *Church Times* carried a notice about the opening of a hostel for Jewish Christian refugee students in East London.

this period.[175] *The Times* set the prevalent tone with its declaration that "nothing but freedom for peaceful evolution can rid the world of the reproach of the refugees."[176] In 1936, an interdepartmental committee meeting of the Foreign and Home Offices and the Treasury agreed, on the advice of the Berlin Embassy, that it would be best to avoid, as far as possible, any discussion of German refugees at that fall's League of Nations Assembly, because such discussion could have a negative impact on negotiations with Germany on rejoining the League.[177]

Church leaders shared the common commitment to appeasement[178] as well as the fear that overemphasis of the refugee issue would harm Anglo-German relations. At the Bishop's meeting announcing the formation of the Christian Council for Refugees, an umbrella organization of refugee relief organizations, Bell appealed for the support of the bishops for its work, and received a mixed response. The Bishop of Birmingham expressed his hope that the appeal would not be seen as implying any criticism of Germany "with whom above all things we

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[175]Ironically, Bell, the "great appeaser," appeared to be one of the few who was able to keep appeasement in perspective. On March 13, 1936, in reaction to the German occupation of the Rhineland, Bell wrote in *The Times* that, "it is tempting to accept Herr Hitler's offer to return to the League. It is very greatly to be desired that the German Government should take its place at the Council table, and play its full and equal part in the comity of nations. But the League — if it is a real League — stands for law. And it is a short-sighted view which bids us ignore the violation of a solemn pledge by which the offer to return is accompanied." In comparison, Lang comes off poorly with his declaration to the Canterbury Diocesan conference that "no diplomatic formalities must be allowed to prevent the immediate entry of this country into conversations with Germany so that it was possible to reach some understanding." (As reported in *The Times*, 15 July 1936.)

[176]*The Times*, 10 June 1937. In other words, the refugee problem was not seen as a hindrance to successful appeasement, but rather would be ameliorated by its success.

[177]Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 72-73.

[178]Hastings, for instance, believes that, "in 1938, at least within the Church, both the right wing and the left, both the Establisment and the radicals, were appeasers. Only the odd man out questioned the wisdom of Mr. Chamberlain." Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 349.

want peace."[179] He, in turn, was countered by the Archbishop of York, who was of the opinion that "Germany would be impressed by a really strong body of public opinion in this matter." Lang, characteristically, refrained from either position, saying simply that all present had been impressed by Bell's words, and that their consciences had been stirred.[180] By June 1938, however, Lang's chaplain responded to a request for Lang to speak at a meeting sponsored by the Jewish Board of Deputies, by saying that the Archbishop would not associate himself with any platform that might be deemed "political" and might embarrass the government in the "present delicate international situation."[181] The degree of caution that Lang had adopted compared to his willingness to be more outspoken in 1933[182] illustrates the extent to which the crises of the intervening years — the reoccupation of the Rhineland, the Abyssinian war, the Spanish Civil War — had created a significantly greater fear of war and a corresponding increase in support for appeasement.

Such was the fear of war, and the belief in the need for appeasement, that even the *Church Times*, which had been as staunch an opponent of Nazi policies toward the Churches and the Jews, was willing to tone down its concern about these issues in favour of supporting the government's increased efforts in early 1938 to form closer relationships with both Germany and Italy. The choice was narrow — either to come to terms with the dictators or go to war with

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[179]Bishop Barnes epitomized the tendency among pacifists to minimize the evil of Nazi Germany and to stress the reasonableness of Hitler's claims in the light of Versailles in order to sustain their belief that they could prevent war and aggression. See Hastings' discussion of the role of pacifism in *A History of English Christianity*, 334.

[180]Bishop's meeting, 19-20 October 1937, BM-10, ff. 406-09.

[181]Cited in Vivian D. Lipman, "Anglo-Jewish Attitudes to the Refugees," 525.

[182]See above, Chapter 1.

them, and, of the two, the *Church Times* preferred the former. Thus, the inclusion of all German-speaking peoples of Central Europe in the Reich was both a "reasonable ambition" and "inevitable"[183] Lang, in his address to the Convocation of the province of Canterbury, had called the continued oppression of the Churches a "hindrance,"[184] but nothing stronger, and in this, by its silence, the *Church Times* concurred. Without wanting to excuse or defend the harsh methods of the totalitarian states,

> the business of the moment is to stave off war, which would mean that, while a few men are suffering to-day in Germany, tens of thousands of men, women and children would be dying and suffering to-morrow all over Europe . . . . At this critical time, restraint would be patriotic.[185]

Late 1937 and early 1938 marked the apogee of endorsement of the policy of appeasement at all costs, on the part of both the Church and the public. *Anschluss*, at the end of March 1938, began to tear at the fabric of appeasement. This undercurrent of dissatisfaction, which increased following Munich, may have penetrated some of the public apathy around the refugee issue and contributed to the outburst of public support for refugees following *Kristallnacht*, 9 November 1938.

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[183]*Church Times*, 25 February 1938.

[184]Ibid., 21 January 1938.

[185]Ibid., 11 March 1938.

Chapter 3: The Turning Point: November 1938-September 1939

On November 9, 1938, the most brutal attack yet on Germany's Jews took place, "an almost unprecedented outburst of sadistic cruelty."[1] *Kristallnacht* — the night of broken glass — was in many ways a traditional pogrom, albeit writ large.[2] As police and bystanders watched, three hundred synagogues were burned, hundreds of shops were plundered, and 25,000 Jews were arrested. Property damage was estimated at several hundred million marks — the value of the broken glass alone was 24 million marks.[3] Despite all the persecutions of the past five and a half years, violence on the scale of *Kristallnacht* had not been experienced in National Socialist Germany, and it created an increased sense of urgency among the 350,000 Jews left in Germany and in the Jewish organizations around the world dedicated to their assistance. It also resulted in an outburst of public indignation in other countries at the actions of the German government that translated into practical support for refugees of the kind for which Bell had been pleading for almost five years. The support found its most manifest expression in the *Kindertransport*, the removal of 10,000 children from Germany and Austria to England, there to be educated and maintained by a newly vitalized and centralized refugee movement.

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[1]*Church Times*, 18 November 1938.

[2]This kind of organized violence was not part of the experience of German Jews in the way that it was for the Jews of Eastern Europe, where, in the words of Neville Laski, "history is calculated from the date when the synagogue was last burned down." Shepherd, *Wildred Israel*, 64.

[3]Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz*, 239-40.

The newfound desire to help the refugees touched even the Church of England. As a corporate body and as a religious group, its leadership and its members had been, for the most part, apathetic when confronted with the plight of the refugees, whether Jewish or "non-Aryan" Christian. Within days of *Kristallnacht*, however, a request from Bell for £5,000 from the Church Assembly's Board of Finance to assist the refugees escalated into an enthusiastic appeal that raised close to £70,000, with members of the Assembly rising on the floor then and there to pledge money for the refugees.[4] Individual Christians demonstrated tremendous generosity in providing material assistance and hospitality to the destitute refugees.

Suddenly, Bell's was not the voice in the wilderness; rather, his was the rallying cry, to which thousands willingly responded. The constraints that earlier had inhibited public response to his appeals for help for the refugees had loosened considerably. Unemployment, while remaining a significant issue, was easing, and would continue to ease over the year before the war. Appeasement, while still actively pursued by the government, was nearing its end as a feasible policy, and there was less public willingness to accept the premise that all other issues had to be subordinated to the need to prevent war with Germany. The refugees' plight had moved to the fore as a result of the publicity given to *Kristallnacht*. Starting in December, the pages of the *Jewish Chronicle* contain long accounts of protest meetings against the persecution of Jews in Germany and calling for assistance for them, with speakers both Jewish and non-Jewish, for the first time since 1933. The refugee cause had not enjoyed this degree of prominence for many years.

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[4]Church Assembly, *Report of Proceedings. Autumn Session, 1938*, 503-14.

Much had changed in the intervening years. The refugees at the end of the decade were far more destitute than those who had preceded them and, generally, older,[5] while the options open to them were far narrower. Indeed, by the outbreak of war, those who remained in Germany were those who were "too old, sick, or poor to leave."[6] In his 1939 survey of the refugee situation, Sir John Hope Simpson starkly outlined the desperate situation of these refugees: in 1933, frontiers were open, democratic countries were sympathetic to the their plight, and those leaving Germany could take about 75 per cent of their resources with them (after paying a 25 per cent flight tax). By 1938, neither people nor money could move freely — democratic countries were unwilling to receive the former, fearing a flood of refugees, and the German government prevented the movement of the latter. Early in 1938, refugees were able to take less than 10 per cent of their resources with them, and by 1939, they could take only six per cent of their cash and no personal belongings.[7] As percentages shrunk, so, too, had the personal resources of the Jews remaining in Germany. On April 1, 1938, there were 39,000 Jewish businesses still in operation; one year later, 80 per cent of them had disappeared, either Aryanized or liquidated, in either case usually at a small fraction of their true value.[8] In 1935, 52,000 Jews were on welfare, while in 1938, 100,000 of the 380,000 Jews remaining in Germany received relief.[9] The greater impoverishment of the refugees of the late 1930s meant that

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[5]By 1938, almost three-quarters (73.7 per cent) of the Jewish community remaining in Germany was over 40. Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 6.

[6]Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 110.

[7]Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, 127, 135; Andrew Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 156. In 1933, individuals leaving Germany could take RM200 in foreign currency; in 1937, they could take RM10 (Tartakower and Grossman, *The Jewish Refugee*, 34).

[8]Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz*, 221; Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 86.

[9]Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, 124.

countries of refuge were rarer for them than for their better-off predecessors. Nevertheless, 150,000 refugees left Germany between November 1938 and the outbreak of war — as many as had left in the five and a half years preceding.

The transformation of the refugee issue from one of limited, parochial interest to one of wider public involvement meant that thousands, particularly children, were saved, and its importance cannot be minimized. It also resulted, however, in a decided "Christianization" of a refugee assistance movement that, until this point, had been predominantly Jewish. To examine this issue requires an understanding of the organizational developments that occurred in the last year before the outbreak of war.

Jewish refugee organizations had long been united under the Council for German Jewry. The Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, established "on the initiative of the Bishop of Chichester"[10] on October 6, 1938 — just narrowly preceding the chaos created by the events of November 1938 — was intended as its Christian counterpart. It brought together "all sections of the Christian community" to stimulate Christian interest in the plight of "non-Aryan" Christians and to raise funds for their assistance. Its membership, both lay and clerical, was distinguished, bringing together all those who had to date been involved in the cause of "non-Aryan" Christian refugees: Sir John Hope-Simpson, who had recently completed an international survey of the refugee problem, served as chair, with Sir Neill Malcolm, formerly the High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, as Honourary Treasurer

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[10]Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, *A Five-Year Survey* (London: Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, 1943), 5.

and Viscount Cranborne[11] as vice-chair. All the British churches were represented: the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, and the Moderator of the National Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches served as presidents. Members of the Council included the Archbishop of York, Viscount Cecil, Sir Wyndham Deedes, Miss Bertha Bracey of the Society of Friends, Rev. Dr. James Parkes, and Mrs. Gladys Skelton of the Inter-Aid Committee. Bell served a central role as vice-chair of the Board of Management, a position he retained until the Council completed its work in 1951.[12]

Christian and Jewish refugee organizations came together in the establishment of the Coordinating Committee for Refugees in April 1938 (at the suggestion of the Home Office, in order to facilitate the coordination of their work and their communications with Home Office officials). Its founding brought a degree of coherence to the mass of voluntary organizations seeking to assist the refugees. Organizational integration that had occurred much earlier in the Jewish organizations meant only one body represented Jewish interests on the committee. Because, however, the Christian Council did not achieve its goal of integrating all the Christian organizations, it meant the balance on the Coordinating Committee was weighted toward non-Jewish affairs.[13] Given the far greater number of overtly Christian or secular organizations

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[11]Lord Cranborne was Parliamentary Undersecretary in the Foreign Office until February 1938, when he resigned with Anthony Eden. He was also on the Executive of the League of Nations Union.

[12]Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, *Annual Report 1938-1939* (London: Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, 1940), inside front cover. After the war, the Council's emphasis changed to dealing with problems of naturalisation, particularly of children whose parents had been killed, repatriation, re-emigration, and the special care of old and infirm refugees. In its 13 years of existence, it provided more than £180,000 in grants to refugee welfare organizations and for assisting children. Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, *Final Report and Survey 1938-1951* (London: Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, 1951), 3, 10, 18.

[13]See, for instance Barry Turner, *...And the Policeman Smiled: 10,000 Children Escape from Nazi Europe* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Limited, 1990), 72.

which had to be accommodated — not only the Christian Council for Refugees, but the Germany Emergency Committee of the Society of Friends, the SPSL, the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, and the Church of England Committee[14] — the skewed balance was inevitable.

The relative ease with which the Jewish and Christian refugee assistance organizations came together in the year following *Kristallnacht* is a testament to the links that had been forged informally over the previous five years. The Jewish Refugees Committee, for instance, was in "daily touch" during this period with the RCM, the Germany Emergency Committee, and the Church of England Committee in order to evaluate refugee applications.[15] Nevertheless, as the refugee issue entered the mainstream, Christian organizations took an increasingly leading role where once they had been notable primarily for their absence, and, in doing so, demonstrated the "peculiar advantages" of the churches as sponsors of relief work.[16] This was manifested most directly in the *Kindertransport*, where the RCM was persuaded to adopt a more interdenominational role than was justified by the proportion of non-Jewish refugee children, on the grounds that there was a better chance of gaining public support by playing down the Jewish character of the refugee issue.[17]

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[14]List from an inventory of refugee organizations, *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 December 1938.

[15]Central British Fund for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation, *Report for 1933-1943*, 8.

[16]Ludlow, "The refugee problem in the 1930s," 603.

[17]Turner, . . .*And the Policeman Smiled*, 72.

Kristallnacht: The Immediate Aftermath

The Church Assembly has stood accused of being concerned solely with the *minutiae* of ecclesiastical government.[18] The Autumn 1938 session belied that accusation. Lang opened the session by calling on the assembled members of the Church to use the opening prayer to

> lay before God the still disordered condition of the world and the continuing violations of His will, such as . . . the recent outbreak of a renewed and fierce persecution of the Jews in Germany. Let them commend those suffering from that oppression to the mercy and protection of God, and pray that He might stir up a heart and will of compassion towards them in British governments and peoples.[19]

Two days later, the majority of the Assembly's business completed, Bell stood to move that

> the Assembly welcomes the formation of the Christian Council for Refugees from Germany. . . ; and, desiring that the Church of England should set an example in generous giving, requests the Central Board of Finance to consider ways and means of making a grant of £5,000 to the Fund now being raised by the Christian Council for the help of Christian Refugees.[20]

Previous experience had taught Bell not to expect too much; £5,000 may have been a drop in the bucket compared to the vast sums that had been raised by the Jewish community, and the yet vaster sums that were still needed, but, given the past record of the Church, Bell could be forgiven for keeping his expectations modest. For once, though, he was not to be disappointed The Church leadership had aroused itself from its earlier apathy, aware, finally, of the need for action. "To be content with passing resolutions of horror and sympathy and to do nothing more

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[18]As, for instance, in a *Church Times* editorial, 27 December 1935, referring, in this instance, to the November 1935 Church Assembly debate on German persecution of the Jews (see above, Chapter 1)

[19]Church Assembly, *Report of Proceedings. Autumn Session 1938*, 424.

[20]Ibid., 503.

was to lay themselves open to the just accusation of hypocrisy," said the Earl of Selborne, the chair of the House of Laity, in seconding the motion.[21]

Enthusiasm swept the Assembly; ideas flew. The Dean of Chichester quickly moved an amendment asking the Board of Finance, instead of giving money outright, to take the lead in finding ways to raise, not £5,000, but £50,000, from the entire Church. Canon Bullard of Ripon, a parish priest for 45 years, suggested that, if each of the 500 members of the Assembly were to give £10 "before the luncheon adjournment," the problem would be dealt with. Lord Grey, head of the Central Board of Finance, suggested that the Board initiate and carry out a scheme to raise the £50,000, and to make, if possible, an initial grant of £5,000 from its corporate funds. In addition, Grey announced, the Board's chief accountant was sitting outside the room to receive donations, and he had been told that two cheques for £100 each would be received by the end of the day. The Bishop of Portsmouth arranged for slips for a special Church Assembly Refugees Fund to be printed during lunch, and available for members to sign during the afternoon, after Canon Bullard's suggestion;[22] £1,748 was raised by the end of the day.[23] Bell's motion, as amended by Lord Grey, was carried unanimously. Bell had "asked for a mouse and had been given a mountain."[24]

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[21]Ibid., 504.

[22]Ibid., 509-14.

[23]*The Times*, 17 November 1938.

[24]Church Assembly, *Report of Proceedings. Autumn Session, 1938*, 514.

The Assembly, in this case at least, indeed spoke for the members of the Church. By the time the appeal wound up, it had raised "rather more than £68,000."[25] Donations from Bell's Chichester diocese alone, as of January 1939, had surpassed £2,000, and, a month later, had passed the £3,000 mark[26] — more than three times the money raised throughout the entire Church of England in the 1933 Christmas Appeal. In Salisbury, the diocese raised £2,000 for the appeal — 1/25 of the £50,000 asked for from all 42 dioceses, as was proudly announced in the columns of the *Church Times*.[27] These developments caused Bell to rejoice that:

> the whole attitude of the Christian people in England has undergone a great change since the middle of November. There is a great desire everywhere to help the refugees, and the amount of goodwill and generous giving now available will make the whole difference.[28]

This changed attitude was further reflected in the public response to the Lord Baldwin appeal. The former prime minister was invited by the Christian Council for Refugees and the Council for German Jewry[29] to make a radio broadcast to ask for funds to assist the victims of Nazi persecution.[30] His acceptance of the invitation was an indication of the newly minted respectability of the refugee assistance movement, and his broadcast on December 8 (reprinted

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[25]Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, *Final Report and Survey*, 6. The appeal raised more money than the goal set for the 1936 Christian appeal, just two years before. In response, Louis Gluckstein, a Jewish Member of Parliament, made a donation to the Church of England Pensions Board for wives and daughters of the clergy, "out of gratitude for the kindliness and understanding which your Church has displayed to all the victims of the persecution in Germany." *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 February 1939.

[26]*Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XX, no. 1 (January 1939): 5; *Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XX, no. 2 (February 1939): 32.

[27]"Diocesan News and Notes," *Church Times*, 3 March 1939.

[28]*Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XX, no. 1 (January 1939): 5.

[29]Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, *Annual Report 1938-1939*, 2

[30]Taylor, *English History*, 420, records that this was Baldwin's only radio speech after his retirement.

the next day in *The Times* together with a leader strongly supporting the appeal), marked the first time in five years — or since the beginning of the refugee crisis — that a united appeal had been made for all present or potential refugees, regardless of religion.[31] The response was tremendous: Lists of donors appeared daily in *The Times*, often taking up to a page of columns of increasing smaller type (matching the smaller size of the contribution). Donations ranged from £5,000 to sixpence.[32] The appeal brought in a quarter of a million pounds by the end of the month, and £550,000 by the time it wound up in July 1939.[33]

Responses came from a variety of sources. An exhibition of paintings by Venetian masters was held at a London gallery in aid of the Baldwin Fund.[34] And a committee of representatives from the film industry and stage decided to hold a "Baldwin Fund Day" in every cinema, theatre, music hall, and concert hall. Collections would be taken, and 10 per cent of total receipts for that day would be given to the fund.[35] The "Stage and Screen Day," held on 14 January 1939, raised £31,193.[36] Lang's agreement to appear in a short "talkie" film to be shown in all cinemas, albeit after first indulging in "a variety of snorts and protestations,"[37] stands in stark contrast to the contentious debate over the production of a similar film just two

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[31]*Chichester Diocesan Gazette* XIX, no. 12 (December 1938): 379. The leader in *The Times*, 9 December 1938, observed that the appeal "unites Christian and Jew in one campaign of giving."

[32]First list of subscribers, *The Times*, 13 December 1938. By the evening of 12 December, £43,619 had already been collected.

[33]Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, *Annual Report 1938-1939*, 2.

[34]*The Times*, 16 February 1939.

[35]Philip Voss to W.W. Simpson (both members of the Baldwin Fund committee), 6 December 1938, Lang Papers, vol. 38, f. 269.

[36]*The Times*, 9 February 1939.

[37]Don to Bell, 8 December 1938, Lang Papers, vol. 38, f. 270.

years before, and provides yet another example of how the refugee issue had shed its aura of controversy.

Without the money raised by the Baldwin Fund, the refugee movement would not have been able to continue operating in the last crucial months before the war. The fund's success meant the success of the *Kindertransport*.[38] It also provided money for the Christian Council for Refugees and the Council for German Jewry, who were responsible for its further allocation to casework organizations, and for the operation of Bloomsbury House, which, as headquarters of all the refugee organizations, further facilitated the coordation of their work.

The *Kindertransport*

The *Kindertransport* was the main recipient of the funds raised by the Lord Baldwin appeal (£220,000 of the total £550,000). The transports themselves were made possible by the decision of the British government to issue block visas for unlimited numbers of children to enter Britain on a temporary basis, based on lists of names provided by the refugee organizations.[39] Far from stemming from altruism, the British government's decision was calculated to use "charity to refugees as reassurance to American opinion after the pogroms had made appeasement

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[38]Mary Ford, "The Arrival of Jewish Refugee Children in England, 1938-1939," *Immigrants & Minorities* 2, no. 2 (July 1983): 138-39.

[39]Besides the *Kindertransport*, the British government has relaxed its restrictions on entry into Britain and permitted the entry of indigent refugees without any formalities only 3 other times since 1918: Basque refugees in the 1930s, Poles after the end of the Second World War, and Hungarians in 1956. Francesca Wilson: *They Came as Strangers: The Story of Refugees to Great Britain* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1959), xviii.

unpopular,"[40] another example of the impact of foreign policy on the refugee issue, albeit, for once, in its favour. Regardless of motive, the first transport docked in Harwich on December 2, 1938, carrying 200 children, mostly survivors from a Berlin orphanage that had been burned by storm troopers. It was followed 10 days later by a second transport of another 200 children, this time from Vienna. The transports continued, an average of two per week, peaking in the summer of 1939, when they arrived daily.[41] The last transport left Berlin on 31 August, 1939 — literally, the eve of war. In its 10 months existence, the *Kindertransport* brought 9,354 children to England, of whom 7,482, or 80 per cent, were Jewish. To this number can be added the 431 children who had been sponsored by the Inter-Aid Committee before *Kristallnacht*, 700 who came under the auspices of the Youth Aliyah, a Zionist organization dedicated to settlement in Palestine, and 100 rescued by the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations — in all, more than 10,000 children, or more than 1,000 each month.[42]

While overwhelmingly successful in its work, the *Kindertransport* created tensions between the Jewish and Christian refugee organizations. The creation of a new body — the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, or the Refugee Children's Movement (RCM), as it became known — initially caused some hostility within the Inter-Aid Committee, whose members saw the new body as a Jewish takeover of what had been till then a non-

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[40]Maurice Cowling, *The Impact of Hitler: British Politics and British Policy 1933-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 282; see also Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 173.

[41]Turner, *...And the Policeman Smiled*, 2.

[42]Ibid., 101. In comparison, between 1933 and November 1938, an average of 13 children had come each month to Britain (Mary Ford, "The Arrival of Jewish Refugee Children in England," 137). Only 433 children who left Germany without their parents emigrated to the United States, many of them before *Kristallnacht* (Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 149). It is impossible to calculate the exact percentage of children arriving in Britain who were non-Jewish, since the religions of those who came under auspices other than the *Kindertransport* are not available. However, it is likely between 10 and 20 per cent.

denominational body.[43] But despite the fears of the Inter-Aid Committee, the RCM very quickly took on decidedly Christian overtones — much more than was justified by the proportion of non-Jewish children.

As originally structured, the RCM had two co-chairs, one Jewish (Lord Samuel) and one Christian (Wyndham Deedes, chair of the Save the Children Fund). But Samuel did not consider his position a long-term commitment. He was willing to participate until the organization was off the ground, and then would withdraw, leaving the bulk of the work to his Christian colleague.[44] In March 1939, when Deedes was succeeded by Lord Gorell, Samuel signalled that he, too, might be withdrawing soon, leaving the RCM under Christian leadership.[45] Further, the readiness of the RCM to accept help wherever it was offered upset the Jewish community, particularly its more Orthodox elements, who felt that it "was putting at risk the interests of the Jewish faith by its readiness to enlist help from the Christian community."[46] Lord Gorell was, in fact, appointed by the Home Secretary to be the official guardian of all those children who did not have sponsors, Jewish or not.[47]

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[43]Turner, ...*And the Policeman Smiled*, 46. Despite this initial mistrust, the Inter-Aid Committee was amalgamated with the RCM shortly after its formation. Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, *Final Report and Survey* , 19.

[44]Grey to Don, 2 December 1938, Lang Papers, vol. 38, f. 259.

[45]Samuel to Lang, 29 March 1939, Lang Papers, vol. 38, f. 368.

[46]Turner, ...*And the Policeman Smiled*, 75.

[47]The Jewish community was not immune to feelings of resentment about the Christian "takeover" of an issue that until recently had been of little or no concern. The Board of Deputies of British Jews, for instance, was told of letters to the Baldwin Fund from Christian sympathizers who "spoke of the extent to which they had been chilled and repelled by 'the rudeness and discourtesy' with which offers of help had been met." *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 June 1939.

In addition, attempts to raise funds from Christian sources continued to emphasize the greater need and fewer options of non-Jewish refugees compared to their Jewish counterparts, who had the benefit of "wealthy and influential organisations."[48] For instance, the *Church Times* reminded its readers that the Lord Baldwin Fund was "concerned with the salving [*sic*] of Christian unfortunates even more than with Jewish unfortunates," and that the "non-Aryan" Christians, whose numbers were far larger than those of the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, had "none of the help, pitifully insufficient as it must be, from Jewish charities and Jewish organizations,"[49] a statement that at best can be characterized as misleading, at worst as false.[50]

There was also concern that the "proper proportion" of non-Aryan children be included in the *Kindertransport*.[51] As early as November 1938, questions in the House of Commons focussed on this issue. Home Secretary Samuel Hoare, for instance, was asked to ensure that the ratio of non-Jewish to Jewish refugees would be adhered to in admitting both children and adult refugees.[52] In March, 1939, Sir Charles Stead took over as organizing secretary of the Children's Movement, continuing, as a member of the Church of England, the trend toward

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[48]Wing Commander A.W.H. James, 24 November 1938, *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 341 (1938), col. 1929.

[49]*Church Times*, 6 April 1939.

[50]Despite the concerns raised about the neglect of "non-Aryan" Christian children to the benefit of Jewish children in the *Kindertransport*, and despite the ongoing appeals to meet the particularly desperate needs of the "non-Aryan" Christian refugees, it is clear that the Christian nature of many of the refugees remained an advantage. For instance, the Australian government, which had been so opposed to admitting Jews, was willing to admit "non-Aryan" Christian girls for domestic work, in a program effected by the Church, and funded by the Christian Council for Refugees (as reported in the *Church Times*, 17 March 1939).

[51]J.D. Walker, Secretary of the Central Board of Finance, to Don, 18 February 1939, Lang Papers, vol. 38, ff 339-40.

[52]Wing-Commander A.W.H. James, 24 November 1938, *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol 341 (1938), col. 1929.

behalf of the refugees was advertised in the regular feature, "Diocesan News and Notes." The Diocese of Ely provided a home for seven non-Aryan pastors and their families, while in the Diocese of Manchester, a hostel for 600 Jewish and "non-Aryan" Christian boys — the hardest to place in individual homes — was to be opened.[72]

Other individuals went beyond what could have been considered necessary by almost any measure. The Reverend J.C. Hawthorn, for instance, who had 500 Jewish children refugees in his parish, learned about dietary laws and explained them to parishioners, and provided accommodations for the Jewish Sabbath and holidays, with Kosher food. The Vicar's wife and the Bishop in Ely established a Jewish Boys' Home, and made possible a strictly orthodox life for 50 refugee boys with their own synagogue, the first in Ely since 1290.[73] Canon Guy Rogers of Birmingham and his wife donated the use of a rectory as a hostel and as the regional headquarters of the RCM.[74] Mrs. Kathleen Freeman, herself half Jewish, ran a house for 12 "non-Aryan" Christian children in Hertfordshire, while a Mr. and Mrs. Wood ensured that a 16-year old Jewish girl in their care maintained her Jewish background, taking her to synagogue as often as possible.[75] Indeed, in many cases, "it seemed that the Christians, especially the Quakers and Christadelphians, understood the psychology and strain of the persecuted minorities better than their co-religionists."[76]

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[72]Ibid., 17 February, 24 April 1939.

[73]Gutteridge, "The Churches and the Jews in England," 372.

[74]Zoe Josephs and members of the Birmingham Jewish History Research Group, *Survivors: Jewish Refugees in Birmingham 1933-1945* (Oldbury: Meridian Books, 1988), 77.

[75]Ibid., 92-3, 128.

[76]Ibid., 174.

Thus, at the same time as the Baldwin Fund was generating unprecedented sums of money from the English public, the members of its Executive Committee felt obliged to ask Lang to help dispel "the opinion that is widely held and often expressed that this problem is essentially a Jewish one, and should in the main be dealt with by the Jewish Community."[56]

Lang complied with the committee's request in a letter to *The Times*, also signed by the leaders of the Roman Catholic, Free, and Scottish Churches. In the letter, they made the oft-repeated points that the refugee problem had included "non-Aryan" Christians since 1933 and that they had been helped by the Jewish community and not by Christians. The letter made the further point that,

> apart from the fact that so many of the sufferers are Christian, though this by itself should be enough, the refugee problem, by its very nature, makes the most insistent demand upon the charity of all Christian people.[57]

Lang's efforts were both necessary and not completely successful. Their necessity is illustrated by a letter he had received less than a month before. In her letter, an indignant church member asked why the Church was devoting so much energy to the cause of Jewish refugees, when there had been no such appeals for the kulaks who had been murdered in the Soviet Union:

> What I would ask you is whether I am wrong in thinking that Christian charity should be extended to all who are persecuted and oppressed, irrespective of creed or nationality, or should it be extended only to Jews?[58]

In his reply, Lang's chaplain, Alan Don, provided a strong rationale for support for the Jewish refugees on the basis that the persecution had been undertaken solely on religious and racial

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[56]Nicholson to Lang, 22 December 1938, Lang Papers, vol. 38, ff. 285-86.

[57]*The Times*, 5 January 1939,

[58]Elsie F. Ludovici to Lang, 28 November 1938, Lang Papers, vol. 162, f. 402.

grounds[59] — yet he did not take the opportunity to point out that many of the refugees were Christians. The Christian Council did feel it important to take this opportunity, indicating the problem's persistence. In July 1939, the Council decided on a four-month scheme of editorial publicity for the refugee cause that would focus on the Christian victims, and on the Christian churches and groups involved in relief work:

> I need hardly say that there is no desire on the part of the Christian Council to minimize the seriousness of the Jewish aspect of the problem nor to make capital out of denominational differences. Our concern is rather to counter that kind of propaganda, so insidious in its effects, which is based upon the quite unjustified charge that this is a purely Jewish problem and is therefore of importance only to the Jewish community.[60]

A more serious aspect of relations between Christians and Jews and the whole "Christianization" issue was the religious treatment of German children in England. The evidence is largely anecdotal, based on the comments of the children themselves, but it is clear, nonetheless, that a significant number of Jewish children who were lodged with Christian families became Church members.

A benign form of this controversy first arose with the necessity to decide the religious identity of the German "non-Aryan" Christian children brought to England. Bell began wrestling with this issue in anticipation of the greater numbers of children who were to due to arrive as part of the *Kindertransport*. Given the large numbers involved, their young ages, and, most importantly, that their future most likely lay in Britain and their chances of being connected with

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[59]Don to Ludovici, 1 December 1938, Lang Papers, vol. 162, f. 403.

[60]W.W. Simpson to Walter Adams, Secretary, Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, 7 July 1939, Papers of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Man. 106/2, ff. 155-56.

the Lutheran Church slim, Bell felt that it would be best to give them the opportunity to become confirmed in, and members of, the Church of England. He first proposed, however, further discussion with the German Church authorities.[61]

The question of the religious upbringing of Jewish children was more difficult. Between 80 and 90 per cent of the children brought to England under the *Kindertransport* were Jewish. Yet the majority of offers of assistance were coming from the non-Jewish community, whose members were newly awakened to the need for assistance. Of necessity, many Jewish children were placed with non-Jewish families (usually with the full consent of their parents or guardians). Many families did all possible to continue to foster a sense of Judaism in the children staying with them. Nonetheless, many children did end up following the traditions of their host families.

The *Jewish Chronicle* makes reference, without further details, to the "predatory activities" of certain missionary societies among Jewish children."[62] Karen Gershon, herself one of the *Kindertransport* children, collected the stories of many of her compatriots in what she calls a "collective autobiography."[63] In it, many of the children, now adults, told of great kindness at the hands of the Christian families who had taken them in — but also of unsettling attempts to make them part of all the family rituals:

> I went to my first foster home as a boy of eleven, together with my cousin. . . . on Sunday she took us to church and just as soon as I realised where we were going I protested strongly shouting loudly 'Jude, Jude'. Not understanding what

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[61]Bell to Pastor Franz Hildebrandt and R.W.D. Stephenson, 24 December 1938, Bell Papers, vol. 29, ff. 349 and 350.

[62]Editorial, *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 July 1939.

[63]Karen Gershon, ed., *We Came As Children: A Collective Autobiography* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1966). None of the children quoted in the book are identified.

> I said, the lady thought that I was ill and called for a doctor. I was confined to bed and as I could hardly be left on my own there was no church for any of us that day.[64]

Even in cases where there was no overt pressure on the children to abandon their Jewish faith for Christianity, it was inevitable, in many cases, that this would happen:

> As a girl of nine, I went to foster parents who were members of the Church of England, and from then on my Jewish faith seemed to recede further and further from my mind. They made no attempt to influence me — from an early age I had to decide for myself. When I was a child, two local Jewish families befriended me and always made a point of inviting me to their homes on special Jewish festival days. However, gradually I seemed to lose touch with them, and over the years became closer to the C. of E.
>
> I came as a girl of nine and shared my foster home, a vicarage, with two other Jewish refugee girls. The Jewish Children's Committee tried on several occasions to remove us to a Jewish hostel. We fought like mad to stay and were eventually left alone. Having at last found some security in our lives we were reluctant to give it up. I was fourteen when we were all three baptised.[65]

Sometimes, it seems, conversion was considered part of the package to be offered to the refugee children:

> The vicar gave me evening employment as his gardener for which he paid me quite well, supplied a substantial evening meal, threw in haphazard English lessons, and tried very half-heartedly, and unsuccessfully, to convert me [66]

The refugee organizations were conscious of this problem. For instance, one local refugee committee wrote that:

> . . . the remaining thirty-two, who are listed as Jewish, are scattered about the country and it is not easy to get at them for instruction. . . . Among the remainder there is a general tendency, supported in every case by the approval of parents or near relatives, to postpone decision, and study both Jewish and

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[64]Ibid . 61.

[65]Ibid., 65-66.

[66]Ibid., 105.

> Christian outlook. Our invariable principle is that each child shall be treated as an individual, and that no child's conscience shall become a battleground.[67]

To imagine, however, that Jewish children, scattered about the county without any access to Jewish instruction, would be able to, in the first place, study both Jewish and Christian outlook, and, in the second place, actually make a choice themselves, was at best naive. The overwhelming tone is not that of respecting Jewish heritage, but rather assimilating the Jewish children in the right way:

> It is a little difficult to know what would be the best course to take as there have been some unfortunate instances which have made the Jewish committees very anxious to safeguard the Jewish children from being " Christianized. . . . As a result a very difficult situation has arisen within the Children's Movement. . . . It is entirely a question of the way things are done."[68]

Significantly, the only child who reported resisting assimilation into the Church was also the one "older" refugee, obviously a teenager, rather than under ten.

Conversion of Jewish children appeared to be a widespread response among some clergymen. A speech to the London Diocesan Conference in June 1939 by Sir John Hope Simpson sparked concerns among the listening clergymen about the threat posed by Jewish families, with one schoolmaster observing that Jewish children were well ahead of English children in intelligence, and that he was alarmed at the thought of the country being ruled by Jews in a few years time. One clergyman's response was that while he agreed about the intellectual and athletic superiority of Jewish children, he would not want them banished, "but attracted to the Christian faith."[69]

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[67]Ibid., 64.

[68]Ruby Cleeve, Secretary, Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians to Gill, 18 April 1939, Papers of the Christian Mission to Jews (formerly Church Mission to Jews), c. 104.

[69]*Church Times*, 9 June 1939.

That the refugee children would turn to Christianity is understandable, given the lack of knowledge that existed about Judaism, the dearth of resources available even for those families committed to supporting the children's Jewish identity, the assimilated nature of many of the children in the first place, and the long period of time for which these children stayed with their sponsoring families at an impressionable time of their lives. Nevertheless, the issue was a painful one for the Jewish community.

It is also an issue that must be seen in the context of the tremendous generosity with which many English Christians extended themselves to assist the refugees after November 1938. Again, the evidence is mostly anecdotal, to be found in the press and in the memories of the refugees themselves. The *Church Times* regularly recorded contributions to various appeals that were made through the newspaper; those to aid Jews and "non-Aryan" Christians appeared regularly, and contributions tended to be far larger than those to other appeals. To take one instance, on 5 May 1939, the paper recorded contributions to the China Relief Fund, the Korean Mission, the Zululand Mission, and the Windward Islands Fund, with amounts ranging from 2s 6d to £1. In contrast, the two donations for persecuted Jews and Jewish Christians were both for £5.[70] The newspaper's letters' column served as a forum in which hospitality and assistance could be sought. A typical example was a letter calling attention to a hostel being opened in the parish of St. Augustine's, to be furnished and equipped by the congregation, for the support of destitute refugees, and seeking any donations, financial or material.[71] Diocesan activity on

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[70]Ibid., 5 May 1939. The entire scale of the Church of England fund was greater than that of other appeals. The same issue of the *Church Times*, for instance, records that the Curates Augmentation Fund, which assisted indigent curates, distributed a total of just over £3,000 in 1938. On the other hand, £30,000 was raised in 1938 for the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society, which had 4,692 children under its care in that year (*Church Times*, 26 May 1939).

[71]Ibid., 10 February 1939.

behalf of the refugees was advertised in the regular feature, "Diocesan News and Notes." The Diocese of Ely provided a home for seven non-Aryan pastors and their families, while in the Diocese of Manchester, a hostel for 600 Jewish and "non-Aryan" Christian boys — the hardest to place in individual homes — was to be opened.[72]

Other individuals went beyond what could have been considered necessary by almost any measure. The Reverend J.C. Hawthorn, for instance, who had 500 Jewish children refugees in his parish, learned about dietary laws and explained them to parishioners, and provided accommodations for the Jewish Sabbath and holidays, with Kosher food. The Vicar's wife and the Bishop in Ely established a Jewish Boys' Home, and made possible a strictly orthodox life for 50 refugee boys with their own synagogue, the first in Ely since 1290.[73] Canon Guy Rogers of Birmingham and his wife donated the use of a rectory as a hostel and as the regional headquarters of the RCM.[74] Mrs. Kathleen Freeman, herself half Jewish, ran a house for 12 "non-Aryan" Christian children in Hertfordshire, while a Mr. and Mrs. Wood ensured that a 16-year old Jewish girl in their care maintained her Jewish background, taking her to synagogue as often as possible.[75] Indeed, in many cases, "it seemed that the Christians, especially the Quakers and Christadelphians, understood the psychology and strain of the persecuted minorities better than their co-religionists."[76]

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[72]Ibid., 17 February, 24 April 1939.

[73]Gutteridge, "The Churches and the Jews in England," 372.

[74]Zoe Josephs and members of the Birmingham Jewish History Research Group, *Survivors: Jewish Refugees in Birmingham 1933-1945* (Oldbury: Meridian Books, 1988), 77.

[75]Ibid., 92-3, 128.

[76]Ibid., 174.

Coinciding as it did with a crucial period in Anglo-German relations, the wellspring of public support for the refugee cause was more than just innate aversion to acts so outrageous that their victims could no longer be ignored.[77] *Kristallnacht* came just over a month after the signing of the Munich agreement. In the subsequent months, the policy of appeasement met its end,[78] to be replaced by the British guarantees to Poland and Rumania at the beginning of April 1939.[79] While this is generally considered the point at which the government repudiated appeasement, evidence is strong that public opinion, in this instance, was well ahead of government policy. By early 1938, a "sizeable body of opinion was critical of Neville Chamberlain's foreign policy."[80] Polls conducted by the British Institute of Public Opinion as

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[77]With the benefit of hindsight, of course, it is obvious that *Kristallnacht* was but a forerunner of even more heinous acts to come. Still, observers in 1938 had no way of knowing that a pogrom would come to seem but a diversion, or, indeed, that governments would be capable of ignoring the victims not of violence, but of mass murder on a hitherto unheard of scale — for details of which see Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies* (London: Mandarin Paperbacks, 1981) and Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*. Malcolm Muggeridge little realized the prescience of his words when he wrote in 1939 of "despairing Jews [who] had resorted to gas ovens," in the earlier part of the decade. Muggeridge, *The Thirties: 1930-1940 in Great Britain* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1940; reprint, London: Collins, 1967), 67.

[78]On March 15, the day of the Nazi march into Prague, Chamberlain told the House of Commons that, since the Czechoslovak state the British government had sworn to guarantee no longer existed, "His Majesty's government cannot accordingly hold themselves any longer bound by this obligation." Chamberlain was caught, however between "the exogenous force of Hitler . . . and the endogenous force of a resentful British public" (Paul Kennedy, "Appeasement," in *The Origins of the Second World War Reconsidered: The A.J.P. Taylor debate after twenty-five years*, ed. Gordon Martel [Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986], 146-47). Two days later, he delivered a speech in Birmingham with a markedly different tone. He warned the German government that while "I am not prepared to engage this country by new unspecified commitments . . ., no greater mistake could be made that to suppose that . . . this nation has so lost its fibre that it will not take part to the utmost of its power resisting such a challenge [world domination by force] if it were ever made." *The Times* 18 March 1939.

[79]Colonel Josiah Wedgwood suggested that the guarantees be somehow linked to the governments of those two countries agreeing to refrain from adopting German tactics with regard to their Jewish populations (6 April 1939, *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 345 [1939], col. 3058). In doing so, he addressed in a constructive way the fear that behind the German refugees lurked millions of Eastern European Jews, a fear that underlay much discussion of the refugee issue.

[80]Anthony Adamthwaite, "The British Government and the Media, 1937-1938," *Journal of Contemporary History* 18, no. 2 (April 1983): 281.

early as February and March of 1938 found that only 26 per cent of those surveyed favoured Chamberlain's foreign policy, while 58 per cent opposed it. In the aftermath of the Munich agreement in September 1938, the BBC broadcast accounts of the fan mail that Chamberlain had received — while, at one public meeting alone in a provincial town, 800 letters of protest were written, paid for, and sent to Chamberlain by those in attendance. "It used to be thought that Hitler's Prague coup [in March 1939] produced a sudden and lasting change in British opinion towards Germany. Now it is generally conceded that this change was under way in the winter of 1938-1939."[81]

After several years of tacit agreement that overemphasis on the refugee issue was to be avoided for fear of jeopardizing Anglo-German relations, the strength and sincerity with which the English embraced the refugee cause was a direct challenge to the government, an indication that appeasement was not a policy to be followed at all costs, that there were limits beyond which German sensibilities were no longer to be spared.[82] For many, the morality of the refugee cause outstripped considerations of politics. As Bell observed in his lecture "Humanity and the Refugees," the refugee problem did not exist somewhere outside politics, but was "inextricably bound up" with maintaining peace.[83] Even the errors of Versailles were no longer seen as an

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[81]Ibid., 291-92.

[82]Neville Chamberlain continued, however, to pursue appeasement, even after the "barbarities" of *Kristallnacht*. "The only thing I care about is to be able to carry out the policy I believe, indeed *know* to be right," he wrote on 4 December 1939 (cited in Sidney Aster, "'Guilty Men': The Case of Neville Chamberlain," in *Paths to War: New Essays on the Origins of the Second World War*, eds. Robert Boyce and Esmonde M. Robertson [London: Macmillan, 1989], 252. The emphasis in Chamberlain's).

[83]George K.A. Bell, *Humanity and the Refugees: Fifth Annual Lucien Wolf Memorial Lecture* (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1939), 29.

inhibition on action, but rather as a reason to act. At a protest meeting held 1 December 1938 at the Royal Albert Hall, Temple observed that,

> Things were done after the War of which we could only think with shame. . . . We are told that a recognition of this should keep us silent. I say that it should make us speak out, lest we become accomplices in the effect as well as in the cause.[84]

At the start of the First World War, assistance to Belgian refugees had provided the first practical opportunity for those at home to express their patriotism and support of the war effort.[85] Assisting refugees from Germany and Austria played a similar role in 1938-39, permitting ordinary citizens a means of expressing their support for a strong stance against Germany and their unwillingness to submerge moral and humanitarian issues to the chimera of appeasement.

Changed attitudes to appeasement also resulted in increased pressure on the government to act on behalf of refugees, particularly on the part of those who, involved in the refugee issue long before *Kristallnacht*, had become convinced of the insolubility of the refugee crisis without the assistance of government. If even half of the refugees were to find places to live in security, "governments that profess to care for decency and freedom must back private benevolence. . . . Denunciation is valueless. . . . What is wanted is prompt international action."[86] Governments were called on to recognize that

> the whole question should be treated no longer as a humanitarian matter but as one of urgent, political and economic importance to Europe as a whole with

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[84]*The Times*, 2 December 1938.

[85]Cahalan, "The Treatment of Belgian Refugees in England," 176-77.

[86]*Church Times*, 18 November 1938.

> which the Governments in their own interest and the interest of their own people, must now deal.[87]

This pressure on the government was found both inside and outside Parliament. Inside Parliament, debates in both the House of Commons (6 April 1939) and the House of Lords (14 December 1938 and July 1939) focussed on the need for government assistance for refugees. During the House of Commons debate, each participant acknowledged the impossibility of the voluntary organizations continuing their work without financial assistance from the government and the necessity of government involvement, financial and organizational, in colonization and settlement schemes.[88] The debates in the House of Lords focussed on the need for a place of permanent settlement for the refugees. With this in place, questions of transportation and temporary accommodation would be easily solved; without such a destination, the problems were insoluble. And without government intervention, the likelihood of finding such destinations was small.[89] During the first debate in the Lords, Lang emphasized the desperate need to find somewhere the refugees could go:

> I only wish to emphasize how necessary it is that while we are willing to bring in a considerable number of refugees, we must at the same time very zealously be addressing ourselves to the problem of how soon it may be possible to enable some of them to go out into a permanent refuge. If it be not so, I foresee the difficulty that the burden may become much heavier than it is possible for voluntary organizations to bear. The government will have to step in. . .[90]

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[87]Philip Noel-Baker, 6 April 1939, *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 345 (1939), col. 3044.

[88]6 April 1939, *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 345, cols. 3043-87. Participants included Philip Noel-Baker, who moved the resolution, Colonel Josiah Wedgwood, and Godfrey Nicholson.

[89]5 July 1939, *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 5th ser., vol. 113, (1939), col. 1018.

[90]Ibid., 14 December 1939, vol. 111 (1938), col. 588.

During the second debate, in July, Bell said that state action was justified on two grounds, one moral, one practical: that the refugee problem was a direct result of the policies of various governments, and that present governments therefore had to accept some responsibility; and that the settlement of 500,000 refugees in countries outside Europe was beyond the resources of private charity. While the Dominions, the Empire, and the South American countries all offered possibilities for settlement, they were unlikely to open their doors without "vigorous Government action. . . . Whatever was the case a year ago, the refugee problem is now entirely beyond the scope of private charity and private organisation."[91]

> The problems are great but they are not insoluble. The answer depends on the answer we give to the two questions which I asked when I began: First, is it right to leave the refugee problem unsolved? Second, do you wish that it should be solved? If you wish that it should be solved, then the governments are bound to act.[92]

The Parliamentary Committee on Refugees, formed in January 1939, provided another opportunity to pressure the government on refugees from within Parliament. The Church of England was well-represented on the committee — the Bishops of Chichester, Liverpool, Worcester, and Ipswich were all members from the House of Lords, as were lay leaders Lord Gorell and Lord Cecil.[93] The committee's objective was to influence government and public opinion in favour of a generous refugee policy. More specifically, its members sought to gain government assistance for settlement and financial aid to the voluntary organizations, and

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[91]Ibid., vol. 113, (1939), cols. 1034-1040.

[92]Ibid., col. 1040.

[93]List of members of the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees, Lang Papers, vol. 38, ff. 352-53.

pronounced themselves ready to work on questions of policy as well as on individual cases that were referred by members of parliament.[94]

Calls for government action were not limited to Parliament alone. In February, 1939, as part of the 5th Lucien Wolf Memorial Lecture,[95] Bell declared that the refugee movement was a challenge to humanity, and that to despair, or refuse to do anything, was to "sin against the Almighty." States, he said, have the right to intervene on the grounds of humanity, wherever conditions create refugees, and the duty to do all they can to succour the victims.[96] The refugee problem was on a scale that the State could not escape; governments working together, using their financial resources, was the only possible cure for the refugee problem.[97]

Others were coming to the same conclusion. In the flood of enthusiasm that pervaded the November 1938 Church Assembly, the Earl of Selborne called on Empire governments to "act now and consult afterwards":

> [A]ll governments and parliaments of the British Empire should greatly dare and do a great thing, and he meant nothing less than the suspension of the immigration laws, the suspension of all the long-drawn-out paraphernalia of getting passport visas in Berlin or Vienna. Do not let them wait until they had found a plan agreed upon by all the governments and parliaments of the Empire; if they waited for that the Jews would all be dead before the time came to give effect to it.[98]

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[94]Victor Cazalet and Eleanor Rathbone, Chair and Honourary Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees, to Lang, n.d. (January 1939?), Lang Papers, vol. 38, ff. 331-35.

[95]Lucien Wolf (1857-1930) was the founder and seven times the President of the Jewish Historical Society of England.

[96]Bell, *Humanity and the Refugees*, 20, 23-4.

[97]Ibid., 28.

[98]Church Assembly, *Report of Proceedings. Autumn Session, 1938*, 506.

A conference on refugee organization held by the Oxford Refugees Committee, passed a resolution urging the government to initiate schemes of colonisation and settlement, to be financed by loans guaranteed by the various governments involved.[99]

Lang, like Bell, did not confine his calls for action to Parliamentary precincts. In a letter to *The Times*, Lang, along with the leaders of Britain's other Christian churches, called for Christians to give money or practical assistance to refugees, but appealed to "our own Government and to the Dominion Governments to give a lead to the world" in adopting more liberal emigration policies, as the ultimate solution to the refugee problem.[100] In January 1939, he told the bishops at their quarterly meeting that the problem "was of such dimensions as to necessitate the active intervention of the Government."[101] Six months later, he was "not sanguine" about fresh appeals for funds "until the Government had really addressed itself to the question of where these immigrants are ultimately to go."[102]

There remained a certain reluctance to criticize Germany too harshly, in part to avoid causing trouble for the remaining Jews and "non-Aryans" in Germany, in part to avoid angering the German government too much. After *Kristallnacht*, for example, the Foreign Office advised the government that any interventions or public protests would simply make matters worse both

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[99]As reported in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 March 1939.

[100]*The Times*, 17 November 1938.

[101]Bishops' Meeting, 16-17 January 1939, BM-11, f. 14.

[102]Bishops' Meeting, 28-29 June 1939, BM-11, ff. 40-43.

for German Jews and for British Jews with interests in Germany.[103] The *Church Times*, too, took an uncharacteristically cautious tone in commenting on *Kristallnacht*:

> The Nazi position is clear. Official criticism of the German Government's internal policy is regarded as an unfriendly act which will justify trouble-making for the critics, while unofficial criticism — the British protests, the strong language of the American press, the demonstrations outside the German consulates in the United States — is denounced as gross impertinence which aggravates national arrogance and will do nothing to alleviate the hard lot of the unhappy German Jews.[104]

The summary continued by laying the blame for Europe's present discontents squarely on the French, and specifically on Poincaré's policy of attempting to use the League of Nations to establish French domination in Europe. Because of this, "Nazi-ism cannot tolerate international interference in its conduct of affairs."[105] The newspaper's cautious attitude toward Germany was not permitted, however, to dilute the strength of its voice on the refugee issue. A review of *You and the Refugee* called its economic argument on behalf of refugees "unanswerable," and said that if the British government leaves those who might settle in the Empire to perish outside in the cold, then "Great Britain will almost sink to the Nazi level."[106] Sir John Hope Simpson, too, "deeply regretted the exclusion of refugees from Great Britain, refusing to believe that their admission would increase unemployment."[107]

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[103]Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 170.

[104]*Church Times*, 18 November 1938.

[105]Ibid. While most other commentators had ceased to mention Versailles as a justification for German actions, the *Church Times* continued to do so, as, for instance, in a summary article on the dispute between Germany and Poland over Danzig that took the position that Danzig was a Germany city whose people desired to return to the Reich. It noted that "we have always regarded the creation of the corridor as one of the major blunders of Versailles." *Church Times*, 5 May 1939.

[106]*Church Times*, 19 May 1939.

[107]In a speech to the London Diocesan Conference, *Church Times*, 9 June 1939.

In fact, the opposite was the case. In November 1938, Sir Samuel Hoare confirmed that the 11,000 German refugees who had been admitted to Britain since 1933 had created more than 15,000 jobs in businesses they had started. More than 185 factories had been created by aliens, mostly refugees, between April 1935 and July 1938 — more than 300 by February 1939.[108] The official count, however, did not include factories with fewer than 25 employees, and Sir John Hope Simpson calculated that the true number of jobs created was closer to 25,000.[109] *The Economist* magazine estimated in mid-1938 that German-Jewish refugees had invested £12 million in Britain.[110]

The government, however, continued to hold to the argument that refugees threatened English jobs and avoided "any sign of concrete response."[111] In December 1938, replying on behalf of the government in the House of Lords debate on refugees, the Earl of Plymouth (Parliamentary Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs) defended the British record with regard to the admission of refugees while rejecting the possibility of financial assistance. He claimed that the government was doing its share, and more, to help the refugees, but that people who criticized it for not organizing and financing immigration were unaware of the magnitude of the

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[108]Loebl, "Refugee Industries in the Special Areas of Britain," 221.

[109]Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 180-181; Loebl, "Refugee Industries in the Special Areas of Britain," 221.

[110]Tartakower and Grossman, *The Jewish Refugee*, p. 387.

[111]*Jewish Chronicle*, 14 July 1939. Another common response was to cite the responsibility of the German government to ensure that refugees did not create a burden for other governments by permitting them to take a greater proportion of capital with them upon emigration. Many complicated schemes were considered, some of them promising, to convince the German government of this necessity, but none came to fruition. The story of these negotiations is beyond the scope of this paper, but has most recently and comprehensively been told by Yehuda Bauer, in *Jews for Sale? Nazi-Jewish Negotiations from 1933-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

problem and of its consequences for the United Kingdom, with its high unemployment.[112] While it is true that unemployment rates were increasing in early 1939, the overall trend was downward. In January 1933, there were almost three million unemployed workers in Britain; that year, almost one-fifth of insured workers were unemployed. By 1937, the unemployment rate was down to 10.8 per cent, and, in July of that year, there were only (a relative term, of course) 1,400,000 unemployed workers. In January 1939, slightly more than two million workers were unemployed, but by July of that year, the number of unemployed was down to 1,300,000.[113] While areas of the country continued to be devastated by unemployment, it is clear that the restrictions on refugees based on unemployment could not be justified in the same way as they had been in 1933. Nevertheless, reference continued to be made in the House of Commons to:

> the growing public indignation against the policy of admitting further refugees into this country, in view of the fact that there are already nearly 2,000,000 unemployed on the live register. . .[114]

Despite its concerns, the government did make some policy changes which permitted the admission of large numbers of refugees to England on a temporary basis, for which the criteria were less stringent.[115] As well as the elimination of the visa and passport requirement for children, blocks of visas were provided for domestics (who, at 21,000, comprised the largest

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[112]14 December 1938, *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 5th ser., vol. 111 (1938), cols. 599-600. It apparently did not occur to him that those calling for that type of assistance were precisely those who were *most* aware of the magnitude of the problem, and, indeed, had refrained from making their call until it was absolutely impossible to proceed otherwise.

[113]Thorpe, *Britain in the Era of the Two World Wars*, 88.

[114]Question by Major John J. Stourton, *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 353 (1939), col. 20.

[115]London, "Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy," 181.

category of refugees[116]), trainees, those over 60, those bound for the Kitchener transit camp in Richborough, Kent (opened in February 1939 for men in transit), and other emigrés in transit. In addition, the government reduced its emphasis on individual selection, and, over the remaining year before the war, turned over more and more of the refugee selection process to the refugee organizations. At first, the organizations evaluated individual applications on behalf of the Home Office; later, they simply providing the Home Office with lists of names of those who were to be admitted. In doing so, the refugee organizations functioned, in essence, as an "unpaid annex" to the Home Office.[117]

Despite the substantial concessions made by the government in these areas, it continued its restrictive stance for all other refugees. Indeed, regulations published in January 1939 that laid down conditions for the admission of refugees were dismissed by the *Church Times* as being so severe that "there is not chance of a foreigner ousting a Briton from his job or of obtaining a job when a Briton might have been employed."[118] This response did not go unnoticed in Germany, where, in a speech on 30 January 1939, Hitler called it "a shameful spectacle to see how the whole democratic world is oozing sympathy for the poor tormented Jewish people, but remains hard-hearted and obdurate when it comes to helping them "[119]

Such efforts as the British government was willing to undertake focussed on the possibility of large-scale resettlement, most prominently in British Guiana. A joint Anglo-

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[116]Carsten, "German Refugees in Great Britain 1933-1945: A Survey," 13.

[117]Angell and Buxton, *You and the Refugee*, 230.

[118]*Church Times*, 10 February 1939.

[119]Cited in Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?*, 164.

American report at the end of April 1939 was generally favourable to the proposal, but the government would not provide financial support for the venture, which was expected to cost £3 million for the first 2 years of settlement. It was, however, willing, to lease lands in the interior suitable for settlement on generous terms, and would be prepared to meet the cost of communications from the coast to the interior. The Jewish community in Britain declared itself unable to finance such a scheme, and said the burden would have to fall on American Jewry. The discussion of the problems continued until the outbreak of war, with no resettlement ever being achieved.[120]

Meanwhile, Bell continued his active work on behalf of refugees, primarily through the Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians. The committee's particular focus was the needs of children, old people, and students and scholars, to whom it provided "the personal touch and building up individual interest of a more permanent character and not for the moment only."[121] It continued its work in these areas until 1949, at which time the Christian Council for Refugees took over its few outstanding responsibilities. The Christian Council itself was not a case-work body, and its activities were primarily related to fund raising and the allocation of funds to the actual case-work bodies. It was directly involved, however, in the religious welfare of the non-Jewish refugees. In an attempt to ensure that their spiritual needs were being met, the Council took the responsibility of writing to incumbents in parishes where a Christian refugee was known to be residing, asking his help in finding the refugee a home in a church that most closely resembled the traditions of his own church. At the same time, it

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[120]Details in Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 231-35.

[121]Cleeve to Lang, 5 December 1938, Lang Papers, vol. 38, f. 262.

would write to the refugees telling them of the steps that had been taken, thus doing all possible to ensure a link was created between the English and German Christians.[122]

The Church of England Committee became responsible for the welfare of 170 children over its lifetime, in all of whom Bell took a personal interest:

> We have a heavy responsibility in caring for these boys and girls, finding schools for them, supervising their education and watching their mental and physical development. We try to get to know each one individually and to give them all a sense that it is not merely a Committee which is helping them but friends who are personally interested in their welfare and to whom they can turn in any difficulty.[123]

Many of the children under the care of the Church of England Committee had come to England before *Kristallnacht*. After November 1938, the Committee continued to bring children to England, independent of the *Kindertransport*. For instance, in April 1939, the Committee issued an appeal for £1,000 to bring 25 children to England for a period of four years. The appeal noted that "the Church of England Committee takes a PERSONAL INTEREST in the welfare and future plans of the children whose maintenance it undertakes."[124]

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[122]Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, *Final Report and Survey*, 16-17.

[123]Church of England Committee on "Non-Aryan" Christians, *Second Annual Report* (typescript), n.d. (March 1940?), Papers of the Christian Mission to Jews (formerly Church Mission to Jews), c. 104. In 1947, in a 10-year retrospective of the Committee's work, Bell wrote that, "I wish it were possible to . . . introduc[e] you to the splendid group of young people whose education we have provided and who are now launching out into adult life. Most of them have completed their schooling up to matriculation standard; nine have taken University degrees; eleven boys have served or are still serving in the British army, three having already obtained commissioned rank; three girls have been in the A.T.S.; two boys have qualified as engineers, another is a research chemist working for an industrial firm. Four boys and five girls are teaching, ten girls are training for hospital nursing and three of these have already passed their State examination. I could go on adding to the list, but further evidence is scarcely needed to prove that our "children" have taken full advantage of the opportunities which we were able to give them " Church of England Committee for Non-Aryan Refugees, *After Ten Years: A Letter from the Bishop of Chichester* (London: Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians, 1947), 1.

[124]Leaflet, Lang Papers, vol. 38, ff. 372-73 (emphasis in original).

A second group directly assisted by the Church of England Committee were "non-Aryan" German pastors. In the wake of the increased upheavals in Germany, Bell had taken the initiative in inviting 40 non-Aryan pastors and their families to England, and had secured visas for more the 89 people who eventually came — 33 men with their wives and children — by personally guaranteeing their maintenance to the Home Office. Bell envisioned providing temporary hospitality pending the pastors' removal to positions in other parts of the world.[125] By early 1940, the Committee had spent more than £4,000 on their maintenance, including their children's school expenses, and tuition fees for those continuing their theological studies. The money was granted to the Committee by the Christian Council for Refugees, from the funds raised by the Church Assembly appeal.[126] Almost half of the pastors (16 of 33) eventually became ordained in the Anglican Church, the Church of Scotland, or the Free Churches, and eventually found work either in parishes or carrying out missionary work with the Church Mission to Jews. Others, who maintained their connection to the German Lutheran Church, worked with German congregations in England, while some scholars carried out research in British universities with the help of grants from the World Council of Churches. Yet others emigrated overseas, or, after the war, returned to Germany. By 1947, 13 pastors were still receiving assistance from the Committee, but plans were being made to enable them to become self-supporting.[127] True to Bell's commitment to ecumenicism, he was pleased to write, in 1942, that,

> some eminent Churchmen from neutral countries, with whom I have recently been able to discuss this part of our work, have been impressed by it as a most

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[125]Minutes, Bishops' Meeting, 16-17 January 1939, BM-11, f. 14.

[126]Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, *Annual Report 1938-1939*, 5; Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians, *A Message from the Bishop of Chichester* (London: Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians, 1942), 4; Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians, *Second Annual Report*.

[127]Church of England Committee for Non-Aryan Refugees, *After Ten Years*, 2-3.

> striking example of the strength and reality of the Oecumenical movement in Great Britain.[128]

Finally, the Church of England Committee also concerned itself with older refugees, for whom it organized hostels and convalescent homes. Some required only temporary assistance, while others needed continued support, and were still in need of assistance even after the war's end.[129]

Bell's continued activity was of tremendous value, but not surprising. More interesting, however, during this short period before the start of the war, was Lang's increasing outspokenness on behalf of refugees. He clearly did not feel the same constraints he had felt earlier in the decade, and became most vocal in his calls for government assistance to the refugees. That Lang held strong views on the persecution of the Jews in Germany is indisputable; his letter to *The Times* following *Kristallnacht* is clear evidence of his feelings, and entirely consistent with other such statements in the years preceding. In it, he said he spoke for the Christian people of England in expressing his indignation at the cruelty and destruction that had taken place:

> Whatever provocation may have been given by the deplorable act of a single irresponsible Jewish youth, reprisals on such a scale, so fierce, cruel and vindictive, cannot possibly be justified. . . .[T]here are times when the mere instincts of humanity make silence impossible.[130]

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[128]Church of England Committee for "Non-Aryan" Christians, *A Message from the Bishop of Chichester*, 5.

[129]Church of England Committee for Non-Aryan Refugees, *After Ten Years*, 3.

[130]*The Times*, 12 November 1938. The *Jewish Chronicle*, in its coverage of *Kristallnacht*, paid special tribute to the "great lead" taken by the Christian churches in expressing their horror at the event. In addition to Lang's letter to *The Times*, the paper cited in particular the prayer added to the Armistice Day service at Westminster Abbey on behalf of the Jewish people; the resolution passed by the Durham

There had been many other times, however, when, regardless of his true feelings, his instincts had made not silence, but words, impossible. For instance, on November 5, just four days before *Kristallnacht*, Lang's chaplain, Alan Don, responded to a request for the Archbishop's support for a public protest against the German persecutions by saying that the Archbishop

> is not at all certain that public protests, however well-justified or emphatic, are likely to bring about any real improvement in the situation. Things might be said and probably would be said which would come to the notice of those who are responsible for the ill-treatment of the Jews and which might merely serve to irritate and annoy with unfortunate results for the Jews themselves.[131]

For Lang, *Kristallnacht* appears to have been a true turning point. His willingness at this point to speak out and to demand action of the government was remarkable. It reflects the degree to which the refugee cause had become "institutionalized" and had taken its place as one of those issues on which it was those who did not speak out, rather than those that did, who were conspicuous by their absence. Thus at the Convocation of Canterbury in January 1939, Lang called on the government to not only seek out places of settlement for the refugees, but to "undertake the surveys necessary to see that these spheres may be suitable, and arrangements necessary to make them suitable."[132] The prominent role he took in the two debates held in the House of Lords on the refugee question between *Kristallnacht* and the onset of war has already been described. His concern for the refugees themselves was made apparent during the second debate, when he called on the government to state openly whether it was facing the possibility of the refugees in England being forced to stay there because of the lack of places for them to

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Diocesan Conference expressing outrage and conveying sympathy to the Jewish people; and Bell's statement that the conscience of the world was appalled. *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 November 1938.

[131]Don to Gooch, General Secretary of the World Evangelical Alliance, 5 November 1938, Lang Papers, vol. 38, f. 214.

[132]*Church Times*, 20 January 1939.

go. While this would make the lot of the refugees even worse, it would, at least "lift the burden of anxiety" as to their immediate futures.[133]

His outrage notwithstanding, Lang did manage to retain some residue of his customary caution. While willing to suggest action to the government, he remained reluctant to press his point too sharply. He suggested to Bell, for instance, that a sentence in an appeal issued by the Christian Council for Refugees be changed so that, instead of asking the government to receive refugees, it would ask the government to open its doors generously to refugees, as the former phrasing "would seem to imply that they were willing to receive all and sundry."[134] Lang was still caught in the dilemma of whether speaking out would do harm or good:

> In truth, he never resolved this particular dilemma, and while he obliged his conscience at moments of especial distress, he even then took care not to over-indulge it. He never ceased to fear that the more he said the less weight his word may carry [135]

The degree to which the Church's involvement in the refugee issue after November 1938 ceased to be the mission of the few, and began to be the responsibility of the entire Church is reflected in this account of the year preceding the war. No longer is it a tale primarily of one man's doings; rather, it delineates a complex network of initiatives, involvement, and responsibility involving both the Church leadership and the general public.

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[133]5 July 1939, *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 5th ser., vol. 113, (1939), col. 1025.

[134]Lang to Bell, 14 November 1938, Lang Papers, vol. 38, f. 221.

[135]Chandler, "The Church of England and Nazi Germany 1933-1945," 120.

It would be a mistake to assume a wholesale change of heart about refugees. Concerns about their admission to England continued, in part because of unemployment and the issue of whether an island nation could afford to admit large numbers of aliens, in part due to the anti-Semitism that had conditioned much of the public reaction to the refugee question since 1933. Indeed, the strongest recollection of one man, a child when his parents took in a family of four Jewish refugees in 1939, is the reception with which their action was met:

> I remember the sense of disapproval which seemed to surround my parents at that time, on account of the fact that my father was parish priest of that area, and therefore an identifiably Christian household. The idea that patriotic Christian English people could accept German-speaking Jewish people into their home was evidently highly unpopular.[136]

Such disapproval was expressed more publicly as well. In December 1938, for instance, Member of Parliament Howard Gritten wanted to know whether, in the admission of aliens, "the Government intend to continue its special favours to its friend the Jews?"[137] As a backbencher, Gritten's comments carry some distasteful connotations, but he was unlikely to receive much attention for them. Godfrey Nicholson, on the other hand, was a much more prominent member of Parliament, as well as holding leading positions in both the Baldwin Fund Committee and the Christian Council for Refugees. His remarks during a House of Commons debate in April 1939, therefore, are much more significant. He warned of the danger of creating anti-Semitism through the lax admission of all Jews who apply to come to England:

> An influx of Jews from Eastern Europe would naturally arouse anti-Semitism in this country, but the finest type of German Jew, or, to accept Herr Hitler's terminology, of "non-Aryan" German, will not cause anti-Semitism. . . .
>
> The way in which we have to face this refugee problem is to do so from the point of view of our duty as Christians and as Englishmen and, at the same

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[136]Rt. Revd. John D. Davies, Bishop of Shrewsbury to author, 9 May 1991.

[137]15 December 1938, *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 342 (1938), col. 2172.

> time to remember that Jews in large numbers are very difficult to assimilate into our civilisation all at once.[138]

His warnings may have been well-meant, but they betray a great deal of the very anti-Semitism he worried about creating.

It is also clear that, while genuinely meant, the publicity given to the refugee cause, and the reaction it sparked from the public, was short-lived, and, as in 1933, was to be crowded off the front pages by other conflicts, other crises. To take just one example, the *Church Times* of December, January, and February devotes considerable coverage to the refugee issue, and its record of donations to various appeals contains frequent reference to refugee assistance; by the summer, the issue had faded in importance, making little impression in the news, editorial, or letters pages. It was a cause of the moment, and its moment quickly ended. The index for *The Times* for October-December 1938 contains 6 columns under the entry for refugees; six months later, in the index for April-June 1939, refugees occupy only 2 columns. The frustration of those working so hard, to so little apparent avail, to rescue the endangered Jews of Germany and Austria was captured in April 1939 by Eleanor Rathbone, who, along with Josiah Wedgwood, was the Member of Parliament most active in the refugee issue:

> But never...have I dwelt in such a Heartbreak House as the refugee problem. It is just as though one stood hour after hour, day after day, with a small group of people outside bars behind which hordes of men, women and children were enduring every kind of deliberately inflicted physical and mental torture. We scrape at the bars with little files. A few victims are dragged painfully one by one through gaps. And all the time we are conscious that streams of people are passing behind us unaware of or indifferent to what is happening, who could if

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[138]6 April 1939, *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 345 (1939), cols. 3068-69.

> they united either push down the bars and rescue the victims or — much more dangerously — stop the torturers.[139]

Rathbone's feelings of helplessness and frustration notwithstanding, the accomplishments of the voluntary organizations were huge. Without the little files they wielded, it is safe to say that very few refugees would have reached a safe haven in Britain. Their willingness to participate in refugee policy and to cooperate with Home Office controls were vital in persuading the Home Office to take the risks inherent in liberalizing refugee policy in 1938.[140] Even more important was their willingness to take over the duties of the Home Office, becoming, in essence, the refugee division that advocates believed the government should have established itself. The achievements of the last 10 months before the war were considerable, and they could not have been achieved without the wholehearted commitment of the leaders and members of the Church of England.

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[139]Eleanor Rathbone, "A Personal View of the Refugee Problem," *New Statesman and Nation*, 15 April 1939, cited in Mary D. Stocks, *Eleanor Rathbone: A Biography* (London, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1949), 258.

[140]London, "Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewish and British Government Policy," 189.

Conclusion

The accomplishments of the *Kindertransport* and the embrace of the refugee cause by the Church and the Christian populace were indisputably valuable. By the time the public recognized, however, that the refugee issue was an integral part of relations with Germany, rather than an obstacle, and came around to adopting the moral position that Bell had espoused since 1933, the war was less than a year away. Although noteworthy feats of rescue were accomplished, particularly with children, hundreds of thousands of Jews and "non-Aryan" Christians did not escape.

Historical writing is a product of its times, and any history of the response to Germany's anti-Jewish policies of the 1930s is inevitably influenced by the knowledge of what was to follow.[1] Given the tumult of the 1930s, however, the response to German refugees was understandable — concerns were elsewhere. Hitler's assumption of power threatened the peace of Europe and made the achievement of positive Anglo-German relations paramount. A forceful stance against Germany was rejected in favour of appeasement, in part because the latter was seen as the only possible way to achieve an equilibrium and maintain peace in Europe, in part because

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[1]For a detailed examination of the way historical writing about the Second World War has both signalled, and been influenced by, changes in political trends of the years after 1945, particularly the Cold War and the demonization and then destruction of the Soviet Union, see R.J.B. Bosworth, *Explaining Auschwitz and Hiroshima: History Writing and the Second World War 1945-1990* (London: Routledge, 1993).

of the belief in the justice of Germany's grievances. In England, people were concerned about jobs, and refugees were seen as threats to unemployed workers, a view that was not dispelled despite recognition of the numbers of businesses and jobs created by refugees.

Apart from the Jewish community and a few concerned individuals, the response to the refugee issue was, for the most part, apathy. This arose in part from the primacy of other preoccupations, but it was also due to the anti-Semitism pervasive in English society. Compared to its continental counterpart, English anti-Semitism was relatively benign, but it played, nevertheless, a central role in determining reactions to refugees. Its non-violent nature meant that its more extreme German manifestation was almost impossible to comprehend. Even where the severity of the situation was recognized, however, anti-Jewish prejudices meant that there was a reluctance to provide a haven for Germany's Jews, and a tendency to view the refugee issue as only affecting, and solely of interest to, Jews.

Church leaders, for the most part, differed little from their secular counterparts. They, too, wanted to maintain peace and see Germany's grievances redressed; they, too, were concerned about the unemployment they witnessed in their parishes and dioceses; they, too, had been influenced by the culture of anti-Semitism in which they lived. The Church's position was further complicated, moreover, by the German Church struggle. In their desire to come to the assistance of their fellow-Christians in Germany, with whom they had close ties through the ecumenical movement, English Church leaders permitted German churchmen to decide the issues that merited strong action. The failure of German Church leaders to speak out against Nazi policies toward Jews meant that their English counterparts lost their own perspective:

> The German Church struggle was by no means unimportant, the Confessing pastors deserving all the support they could get, and the preoccupation with them

> of sensitive British Christians both then and since is understandable enough. Nevertheless it is still more important to remember that far more terrible things were going on in Germany at the same time about which the churches there were unforgivably silent, and that in regard to them most English Christians, clerical and lay, maintained prior to 1939 a most unjudgmental respect for their political neighbour, while they looked decently the other way from their true neighbour in his desperate need.[2]

Given the strength of these obstacles, it is appropriate to validate the achievements of the Church in this area, rather than concentrating, as have previous historians, on its shortcomings.[3] The awakening to the plight of the refugees required a propitious set of circumstances. The violence of *Kristallnacht* focussed public indignation on the plight of persecuted Jews and "non-Aryans" in Germany, as opposed to all the other conflicts and crises that clamoured for attention in that "unusually eventful" decade.[4] The violence alone, however, while shocking, would not have been sufficient to spark the outpouring of assistance. Without the influence of other, underlying, factors, their indignation might have passed, much as it did in 1933.

The most important of these factors was the public's increasing disillusionment with the policy of appeasement. The growing list of German transgressions — first *Anschluss*, then the Sudetenland — convinced many people that Hitler's ambitions were not the redress of grievance, but European domination.[5] War could only be averted, if at all, by a strong stance against Germany. The increase in support for the refugees that corresponded with the decrease in

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[2]Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 345.

[3]Hastings, Ibid., is among the harshest in his evaluation, but see also Ludlow, "The refugee problem in the 1930s."

[4]The term is Muggeridge's, in *The Thirties*, 24.

[5]Sidney Aster, "'Guilty Men,'" 244.

support for appeasement was an expression of dissent from government policy. Evidence of the economic benefits of the refugees — the jobs they had created and the businesses they had established — was available to those who were interested in the refugee cause, if not widely known to the general public. As well, England had had its first introduction to the continental variety of anti-Semitism, in the British Union of Fascists, and was incensed by it. It is not possible to draw direct links between this experience and any alteration in views about the Jewish nature of the refugee issue or Christian responsibility for it, but it is not unlikely that public repugnance at the activities of the BUF would have made people more sympathetic to the victims of continental anti-semitism. When the crisis escalated in November 1938, the combination of these factors ensured that the Church and the Christian public were ready to respond.

Before this critical juncture, however, Bell stood alone. He was subject to the same constraints as were other Church leaders. He shared their fear of war, their belief in the inequities of the Versailles system, and their desire for positive relations with Germany that resulted in support for appeasement; he knew of the depredations caused by unemployment; he spoke out against the German government's interference in the German Church; and he opposed Nazi policies against the Jews. Yet, almost alone among Church leaders, he overcame his sympathy for Germany and his desire to promote Anglo-German relations; he did not let his advocacy on behalf of the German Church diminish his work in other areas; and, more important, he translated the general protests against the persecutions of German Jews into work on behalf of those who sought refuge from the persecutions in other countries.

His work in the 1930s, on behalf of refugees, the German Church, and peace, had a significant impact on his life:

> Bell [in 1934] sought to be the interpreter of the best mind which a most diverse company of men exhibited. He was by nature a reconciler. He was a very good listener. He was loved by many because they felt themselves understood by him. He moved unobtrusively at the centre of the movement [Life and Work], ready always to take suggestions. But he also gave it leadership.
>
> Bell a decade later was different. The experience of the thirties changed him. He was more radical. He was ready to take up unpopular causes. The dramatic nature of the times demanded a dramatic and radical response. He came to sense himself to be an isolated and at times unpopular figure. It is this Bell perhaps who is more widely known to the British public.[6]

In dealing with the refugees, Bell was "at his best — a man of immense compassion and obstinate consistency in clinging to a cause, with a superb heart well in advance of his rather more mediocre head."[7] But his very strengths carried within them some of his weaknesses. He could be autocratic, primarily out of his desire to make the right decisions, and thus "achieved the almost impossible, namely, being disliked by quite a number of people. In the diocese of Chichester, as in London, there were not a few who opposed him."[8] Bell's response to such opposition was calculated to increase the determination of those who opposed him:

> He was by no means easy to work with. He was a vigorous man of peace, and such men like to have their own way. If he did not secure it, he would go off on his own, ignore his colleagues, and navigate his own canoe, sometimes landing on the rocks."[9]

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[6]Hampson, "The British Response to the German Church Struggle," 173-74.

[7]Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 341. The supremacy of Bell's heart over his head is well-demonstrated by a resolution passed by a relief committee he led urging Britons to economize on food and drink, in view of the sufferings of those under Nazi rule. The resolution prompted one Jewish activist to write back to Bell questioning whether there was not "too great a discrepancy between the form of sacrifice you suggest and the great tragedy on the Continent?" (Shepherd, *Wilfred Israel*, 202.) The incident took place in October 1942, at a time when the extermination of Jews of Eastern Europe was becoming common knowledge.

[8]Simon, *Sitting in Judgement*, 85.

[9]Sir Kenneth Grubb, cited in Slack, *George Bell*, 104.

He has been described as sharing the "hard, potentially partisan quality of leadership" of Churchill,[10] because of his strength in taking an unpopular position and maintaining it in the face of public and private opposition. Unlike Churchill, however, Bell was not a talented speaker, and lacked the charisma or oratorical power needed to draw others to his cause.[11] Ultimately, this detracted from his work:

> George Bell was the most Christian bishop of his age, but had little idea how to commend the points which he wanted to press; and this lack was important historically, for his causes were always the best, and yet he could not make men listen unless they wanted to listen.[12]

His sympathies for Germany left Bell open to the accusation of being deceived by Germany and "[s]ome of Bell's greatest admirers were aghast at how little he comprehended, they thought, the temper of National Socialism."[13] But deceived he was not.

> Bell, who could so easily have been duped by Nazi gestures or bribed by their blandishments before the war, or driven to despair by Headlam and his sympathizers, lived and worked as if no exterior forces could move him. Perhaps he was the last Christian bishop in England who combined all the privileges of the upper class with a classless identity of the pilgrim on the road to an unknowable and probably dreadful terminus.[14]

George Bell's ability to overcome the constraints that existed among Church leaders stemmed from two complementary threads in his life: his insistence on a moral basis for his

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[10]Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, 257.

[11]Gutteridge, who served as a curate under Bell in the 1930s, recalled how he and other curates always sighed when Bell arrived to preside at children's confirmations, because they knew they were about to be bored (Gutteridge, interview with the author).

[12]Chadwick, *Hensley Henson*, 255-56.

[13]Hampson, "The British Response to the German Church Struggle," 331.

[14]Simon, *Sitting in Judgement*, 86-7.

actions, and his belief that the Church had a responsibility to speak out on the national issues of the day. There is little hesitation today about the responsibility of the church with regard to public issues:

> It is one of the main public functions of a church which receives widespread popular support in a nation, and especially of a church which is prepared to accept the position of being part of the state establishment, to call the attention of that nation to the need for . . . self-criticism.[15]

Few recognized that responsibility in the 1930s with the clarity of Bell, and the degree to which the Church should take a position on public issues was a matter of some contention. Further, criticism requires distance, and "the English churches are . . . too close, both in geography and culture, to the ruling establishment of London to be able to put government into a critical perspective."[16] This was certainly the case in the 1930s, when the links of birth, education, and social life bonded the secular and religious elites to a degree that made independent political stances on the part of the Church leadership highly unlikely, and Bell's departures even more remarkable.

Because of the Church's unique position in English national life, there was an opportunity to provide moral leadership on the issue of refugees, to understand, and to lead others to understand, what George Bell so clearly understood: the importance of a moral basis to public stances. Had that leadership been provided, it is far from unlikely that the Church could have wielded considerable influence on behalf of the refugees, convincing the government of the need

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[15]Jenkins, *The British: Their Identity and their Religion*, 64.

[16]David Perm .., *Change and the Churches: An Anatomy of Religion in Britain* (London: The Bodley Head, 1977), 19.

for a more generous policy, and the public of its Christian responsibility toward refugees of all religions and nationalities.[17] Sidney Dark believed that,

> If the Church had possessed the moral courage and fervour of a Gladstone, it could. . . have aroused public indignation to such a pitch that Governments might have been impelled to break off diplomatic relations with the Nazis. . . . If it had been done against Berlin seven years ago, with its certain economic consequences, the persecution would have been radically modified, and there would probably have been no war.[18]

Just as one might argue that a firmer stance against Germany from the beginning may have averted war, so one can posit that effective international censure might have derailed Nazi anti-Jewish policies. Certainly the Church was an effective advocate for the Confessional Church in the German Church struggle. A Foreign Office report of June 1934 gave details of reactions to the Church struggle, including an interview conducted by the German ambassador in London with Bell,

> who had declared that Müller's [Hitler's choice for Reichsbishop] acts of arbitrary repression had caused very great concern throughout all the European Protestant Churches, and indeed throughout the whole Ecumenical Movement.[19]

And in late 1934, for instance, pressure on the Church was eased because international opinion threatened foreign acquiescence in German rearmament.[20] The Church was effective because the German government believed its leaders exerted influence. According to Joachim von Ribbentrop, the then-ambassador to Britain, Lang "combined the roles of prince of the Church

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[17]Of course, that lack of moral response was not limited to the Church. One participant in international affairs of the 1930s has observed that, "it appears today more clearly than anyone could have seen it in 1939 that the insufficiency of prewar diplomatic efforts (efforts, however, which were devoid of neither good will nor persistence) was largely due to the absence of a deep moral reaction against the absurd and sacrilegious Hitlerism." Grigore Gafencu, *Last Days of Europe. A Diplomatic Journey in 1939*, trans. E. Fletcher-Allen (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1970), 5.

[18]Dark, *The Church, Impotent or Triumphant?*, 16.

[19]Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, 83.

[20]Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe 1933-1936* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 56.

and statesman," and the Church of England itself was one of the "political foundations of the British Empire."[21]

"The Sermon on the Mount is the last word in Christian ethics. . . . Still, it is not on these terms that Ministers assume their responsibilities of guiding states."[22] So observed Winston Churchill about ministers of state. Too frequently, however, ministers of God confused themselves with their secular counterparts. That Lang, as Archbishop of Canterbury, had access to policy makers is indisputable[23] — he and Chamberlain were personal friends, and Owen Chadwick, for one, believes that his influence on public affairs has been greatly underestimated.[24] Yet he appeared to use this access to bring the government view to the bishops, rather than the reverse. On one occasion, for instance, Lang advised the Bishop of Southwark about the inadvisability of writing a letter to *The Times* protesting the treatment of

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[21]Cited in Chadwick, "The English Bishops and the Nazis," 12-13. Chadwick notes that the German archives leave little doubt that the German government believed that the bishops could speak to, and be heeded by, the English public.

[22]Winston S. Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1948; Bantam Books, 1961), 286.

[23]An example occurs in an exchange in his papers between Neville Laski, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and Don. Prior to the coronation of George VI, Laski had met with Don to request Lang's intervention at the Foreign Office, to encourage the German government to send someone such as Foreign Minister Constantin von Neurath, whose presence would not arouse animosity, to the ceremonies. The Jewish community feared hostile demonstrations might result if someone like Goering were sent, and that the German government would inevitably attribute such demonstrations to the Jews. Lang agreed to "take some opportunity of putting in a word about it with the Foreign Office authorities if a suitable occasion presents itself." (Memo by Don re interview with Neville Laski, 24 February 1937, and Don to Laski, 27 February 1937, Lang Papers, vol. 38, ff. 109, 124.) There is no further indication of whether Lang did, indeed, take the opportunity, but Field Marshall Werner von Blomberg, the German Minister of War and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, represented the German government at the coronation.

[24]Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?*, 137-8. Chadwick has carried out central work on the Victorian Church, as well as being the biographer of Hensley Henson. In his opinion, the entire bishop's bench of the Church in the 1930s was guilty of being appeasers, none more so than Bell (see "The English Bishops and the Nazis").

German pastor Martin Niemöller[25] on the basis of "the confidential communication sent to the Foreign Secretary by our Ambassador at Berlin."[26] In the conflict between the 39 Articles (the legal basis for the Church's establishment) and the Sermon on the Mount, it was understandable to choose the former; courageous to choose the latter.

Bell, like all bishops, owed his appointment to the government of the day. Yet his loyalties were clear; his was the moral ground, regardless of popularity.[27] Some believed he had betrayed the establishment from within by letting his German "obsession" overrule his judgment and even his loyalty.[28] His establishment credentials notwithstanding, there is no question that Bell's outspokenness on the refugee issue, as well as in opposing the mass bombing of German cities and the policy of unconditional surrender, had repercussions for his career in the Church — Bell himself believed that there was a deliberate decision not to advance one who had irritated "the powers".[29] When the Bishop of London retired in 1939, Bell was one of two considered likely to succeed him, but Lang was not comfortable with Bell's appointment, in part because of his role as chaplain to Davidson.[30] Upon William Temple's death, in 1944,

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[25]Niemöller, a German pastor and central figure in the Confessional Church, was arrested in July 1937, and acquitted at his trial in February 1938. He was immediately rearrested, and spent the next eight years in a concentration camp. He became a symbol of German resistance to the Nazi government, despite his openly voiced support for Hitler, for whom he had voted.

[26]Memo re meeting with Bishop of Southwark, 11 April 1938, Lang Papers, vol. 320, f. 149.

[27]Chadwick notes that it is impossible to read Bell's speeches in the House of Lords "without being grateful that, on all the most difficult moral issues of that difficult time, the Christian voice was represented in the highest counsels of the nation." Chadwick, "The English Bishops and the Nazis," 28.

[28]Slack, *George Bell*, 124.

[29]Ibid., 122.

[30]Ronald C.D. Jasper, *George Bell Bishop of Chichester* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 85.

Churchill is known to have excluded him from his list of possible successors to become Archbishop of Canterbury.[31] Some have maintained that "it is a reflection of the period that Bell lessened his chances of promotion within the Church due to his refugee and Jewish sympathies."[32]

Whether Bell's activities for refugees and in other unpopular causes would have had the same negative impact after 1945 is unknown. What is clear is that the Church of England, and most churches, have come to recognize the morality of human rights issues, and the irrelevance of national borders to intervening on behalf of the persecuted, and that this arises, in no small part, from their experiences with the refugees of the 1930s.[33] As Church leaders learned of the Final Solution, they could not but be aware that an opportunity had been lost; it was a direct trajectory from this realization to the passage of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.[34] Since 1945, the churches have been at the forefront of the human rights movement in many countries, their leaders conscious that their responsibilities extend far beyond their diocesan borders.[35] The Church's confrontation with National Socialism was of "decisive

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[31]Perman, *Change and the Churches*, 142.

[32]Kushner, *The persistence of prejudice*, 184. Others have pointed out that Bell's reputation, in England at least, has been primarily achieved posthumously, and that it is only in retrospect that Bell's claim to high office within the Church becomes evident — at least within England. In much of the rest of the world, his reputation was already well-established (Slack, *George Bell*, 11, 19).

[33]See especially Ludlow, "The refugee problem in the 1930s," 565, who emphasizes the importance of the refugee issue as the first step to the major role of religious organizations in post-war refugee work

[34]For a discussion of the impact of the Second World War and the Holocaust on attitudes toward the treatment of civilians in wartime and the greater acceptance of the right of intervention in another country's internal affairs in cases of human rights, see Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Wartime* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), especially 216-330.

[35]This is an example of the "profound and pervasive influence" of the Second World War cited by Richard Bosworth. Bosworth claims that questions about the "apparent incompatibility of 'liberty' and the 'nation state'" ("Auschwitz") and the technological triumph of "Hiroshima" with all it implies about the

significance" in the emergence of the churches as a major force in the world community's development of a machinery to deal with refugee problems in this century.[36] The present Bishop of Shrewsbury, for instance, was only 11 when his parents took in four Jewish refugees, a mother and her three grown children. Yet he found the experience to be formative.

> The effect on me, personally, was quite deep, because it came to the surface when I started to be a minister myself and got involved in matters of racial prejudice and injustice, first of all in this country, and then in South Africa.[37]

The study of the Church of England and refugees in the 1930s is one of the "particular aspects" of the refugee issue that has merited closer examination. It is a study of the constraints that inhibited greater involvement with the refugees and of the strength of those who overcame these restraints to act on the basis of morality. It is valuable not only for the perspective it provides on English policy of that era, but for the insight it grants into the conflict faced by an established Church when morality intersects with national interest, and for the perspective it contributes to the roots of modern Christian activism. It is, in the end, a study of the choices individuals and institutions make when confronted with moral dilemmas, and of one man who tried to extend the limits of humanity.

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power relations of imperialism, mean that the Second World War has resonated throughout all historical discussion that has followed. See Bosworth, *Explaining Auschwitz and Hiroshima*, 5.

[36]Ludlow, "The refugee problem in the 1930s," 564-65. Ludlow claims that the development of this machinery is one of the "more remarkable, though least adequately described, consequences of the proliferation of governmental and non-governmental international organizations in the present century."

[37]Rt. Revd. John D. Davies, Bishop of Shrewsbury to author, 9 May 1991.

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