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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

OFFICIAL REPORT

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The first time a Member speaks to a new piece of parliamentary business, the following abbreviations are used to show their party affiliation:

Abbreviation	Party/Group
CB	Cross Bench
Con	Conservative
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind LD	Independent Liberal Democrat
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Ind UU	Independent Ulster Unionist
Lab	Labour
Lab Co-op	Labour and Co-operative Party
LD	Liberal Democrat
LD Ind	Liberal Democrat Independent
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

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House of Lords

Thursday 20 June 2019

11 am

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Leeds.

Northern Ireland: Inter-party Talks

Question

11.06 am

Asked by **Lord Lexden**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made in the inter-party talks in Northern Ireland.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office and Scotland Office (Lord Duncan of Springbank) (Con): We are now six weeks into talks aimed at restoring power-sharing, devolved government. The issues on which the parties are focusing include language, identity and sustainability. These are complex and sensitive matters, but the parties have approached them in a spirit of engagement and with a willingness to find solutions. However, there remain significant gaps between the parties that still need to be bridged if we are to secure an agreement.

Lord Lexden (Con): Is it not the case that none of the parties in Northern Ireland is, at the moment, expressing optimism about the talks? A few days ago, the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party said:

"It's time to get the political leaders together for some hard political graft".

Why on earth has this not happened already? Is it because Sinn Féin is once again putting forward impossible demands, instead of negotiating constructively?

While the impasse drags on and on, will the Government now get on and provide compensation for the victims of institutional child sex abuse in Northern Ireland? The Northern Ireland parties are united on this issue and the Northern Ireland Office's inaction, in defiance of their wishes, is a complete disgrace.

Lord Duncan of Springbank: My noble friend raises two points. On the first, it is important to strike the right language. This is a positive time in the talks; I believe that progress is being made. It would be premature to say that we are at the final moment, but right now the conversations are being conducted in the most positive language that we have heard in some time. I answered a Question on institutional abuse last week. I note again that a number of issues need to be resolved, as a result of matters raised by the parties themselves. Once these have been examined, analysed and converted into the next step, progress will be made.

Lord Morgan (Lab): My Lords, are the Government not in a hopelessly impossible dilemma? On one hand, they are supposed to be keeping the ring at a time

when Northern Ireland does not have a Government. On the other, they are propped up by a small group of pro-Brexit Ulster unionists, even though Northern Ireland voted strongly to remain. Therefore, is the loss of unity of the United Kingdom one of the many aspects of the catastrophe that Brexit is likely to impose on this country?

Lord Duncan of Springbank: My answer is categorically no. Unity is not in question; unity is not in doubt. Matters in Northern Ireland must be resolved by the parties in Northern Ireland. Only they can reach the consensus required to deliver a sustainable Executive.

Lord Bruce of Bennachie (LD): Does the House recognise that the upturn in support for the Alliance Party in the recent elections demonstrates that there is a mood in Northern Ireland for reconciliation and compromise, to which the political parties need to respond? In what way will the Government be prepared to ensure that these talks continue until a conclusion is reached, bringing in outside agencies if necessary, and to legislate in this place if that helps to take pressure off some of the difficult issues? These things can all bring a solution and the people of Northern Ireland have expressed a wish to get a result.

Lord Duncan of Springbank: No stone will be left unturned in the effort to secure a restored Executive. The talks going on now are conducted in the most positive of times. It is important that, during this period, we make hay while the sun shines.

Lord Bew (CB): My Lords, one thing delaying progress in these talks is uncertainty about the outcome of the judge-led inquiry into the renewable heating scandal. Is the Minister in a position to give any information on when the judge will finally report? All parties are waiting to see what the fallout will be before they commit themselves further in the talks process.

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The noble Lord raises a question to which I do not have the answer, but when I have it I will ensure that he and the rest of the House know exactly when the report will be published.

Lord Cormack (Con): My Lords, we have repeatedly raised two points in your Lordships' House. First, could we not have the Assembly summoned? There is nothing to prevent the Assembly meeting without an Executive. My noble friend Lord Trimble has raised this on a number of occasions. Secondly, could we please have some progress on the appointment of a so-called facilitator? It has gone on for month after month. I pay tribute to my noble friend, but speed is of the essence and we are not seeing any speed.

Lord Duncan of Springbank: My noble friend raises points he has raised in the past. It is important to stress that we are witnessing, I hope, a progressive step, out of which will emerge resolution of the issues that both he and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland passionately care about.

Lord Hay of Ballyore (DUP): My Lords, we all want talks re-established at Stormont in the hope that the political parties in Northern Ireland can come to an agreement that allows the Assembly and the Executive to get up and running. But does the Minister agree that any agreement reached at the talks at Stormont must be balanced and fair, so that both communities—every community—can buy in and take ownership of that agreement? We cannot have a situation where one side takes over.

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The noble Lord is absolutely right: it must be balanced, fair and, importantly, sustainable.

Lord Hain (Lab): My Lords, does the Minister agree that it will be a shameful betrayal of the fine memory of Lyra McKee if the parties—both the DUP and Sinn Féin—do not bear in mind what she stood for and reach an agreement? In facilitating that, does he agree that the personal involvement of the next Prime Minister, whoever that is, is critical, as my noble friend Lord Murphy, the Labour Leader and I have repeatedly urged? He must get directly involved and convene a summit, because that is sometimes the only way to crack these problems.

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The noble Lord is right to raise the sad death of Lyra McKee. I think that has added momentum and impetus to the current talks and it would be a betrayal of all she stood for if we do not finally secure a restored Executive. I can assure the noble Lord that the Prime Minister has taken an active interest and even last night was in direct contact with the Taoiseach to discuss these matters and give, as best we can, a favourable momentum to the ongoing talks.

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Lab): I thank the Minister for referring to the Prime Minister. I have to say that this week has not been an encouraging one for the NIO. It started with the NIO trying to hold an event that all MLAs refused to attend. It moved on to rumours that vital talks are to be paused over the summer, and at the last count we had four possible Conservative Prime Ministers who all think that no deal is an acceptable outcome, given the implications for Northern Ireland. It is essential that the Government engage better, the point made by the noble Lord, Lord Lexden, in his Question. The Minister told us that the Prime Minister had a conversation with the Taoiseach last night. How many times has the current Prime Minister met with all the Northern Ireland political parties? Will the Minister commit to doing everything he can to ensure that the next Prime Minister meets every party from Northern Ireland as soon as possible after he enters No. 10?

Lord Duncan of Springbank: The noble Baroness raises several points. The important thing to stress is that the resolution of this issue rests not in London but in Belfast between those parties. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach have sought, by their various offices,

to engage directly with that. As to the future Prime Minister, I do not know whether he will ask my advice, but I will be very happy to give it to him.

Brexit: Discussions with the European Union *Question*

11.14 am

Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in discussions with the European Union about the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

The Minister of State, Department for Exiting the European Union (Lord Callanan) (Con): My Lords, the UK and the EU have agreed a deal that works for the UK's economy, security and the union. As noble Lords will be aware, the House of Commons has rejected this deal on three occasions. It is now for the next Prime Minister to seek a way forward that honours the result of the 2016 referendum.

Baroness McIntosh of Pickering (Con): My Lords, I am grateful to my noble friend for that reply. As he is aware, there are effectively only three months remaining in which to negotiate a variation of the deal that will get past the House of Commons. Will my noble friend take this opportunity to tell the House what discussions are taking place at the level of officials to see what leeway can be achieved regarding the political declaration? We are mindful that each of the remaining candidates is in favour of a deal, and it would be shameful if it fell through because of lack of time to negotiate.

Lord Callanan: Informal discussions are always going on. The Prime Minister is in Brussels today for the European Council, where she will be having bilateral meetings with several other European leaders.

Baroness Ludford (LD): My Lords, the various backers of Boris Johnson, such as Dominic Raab and David Davis, have backed him on the basis that we must leave the EU on 31 October. However, in the debate on Monday the putative future Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, refused to give such an absolute guarantee. He thought that leaving on 31 October was only "eminently feasible". Could the Minister tell us what precisely is the Brexit policy of the person who looks likely to be the next Prime Minister?

Lord Callanan: No. [*Laughter.*]

Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town (Lab): I wish it was that funny. Could the Minister undertake to explain to Mr Johnson that if there is no deal, there will be no transition period? If he does nothing else, he will have earned his place here as a Minister if he takes this message back, because Mr Johnson does not seem to understand it.

Lord Callanan: I am fascinated by the degree to which the Opposition want to comment on Conservative leadership elections—I note that nobody is commenting on the Liberal Democrat leadership election at the moment. I and other ministerial colleagues have had discussions with a number of the candidates. We have had some fascinating discourse on the possible options for the new Prime Minister to take forward.

Baroness Tonge (Non-Affl): My Lords, in the absence of any progress on a deal with the European Union and, concurrently, of any progress on the re-formation of a Government for Northern Ireland, when will we put the women of Northern Ireland out of their misery and allow our abortion laws to apply there?

Lord Callanan: As the noble Baroness will be well aware, that is really not a policy responsibility of my department, so I will pass on that one.

Lord Hamilton of Epsom (Con): Can my noble friend tell us when the EU will take responsibility for half of this deal, which has been turned down by gigantic majorities in the House of Commons?

Lord Callanan: My noble friend is well aware that the deal was agreed jointly between the UK Government and the EU. Any solution will also need to be agreed jointly.

Lord Pannick (CB): Can the Minister assure the House that Parliament will not be prorogued to prevent it expressing a view on the appropriate way forward before 31 October?

Lord Callanan: Parliament has expressed its view on these matters many times, both in the other place and in this House. I am sure that both Houses will continue to express their views in the future.

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Lab): My Lords, the Minister expressed some surprise in an earlier answer at the interest that was being shown in the Conservative Party leadership. I am sure he will not be surprised to learn that the interest is due to this being an election for not just the Conservative Party leader but the next Prime Minister. Could he therefore give a slightly better answer on what he anticipates the policy of that upcoming Prime Minister to be?

Lord Callanan: I take the noble Baroness's point: I was being slightly facetious in my answer. Of course there is interest in what the policy of the next Prime Minister will be, but I do not know who that person will be yet and therefore I do not know exactly what that policy will be.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op): My Lords—

Lord Mackay of Clashfern (Con): My Lords, might there be an opportunity for the House of Commons to indicate what alteration to the present agreement it is seeking? I have not yet seen a detailed amendment

proposed in the House of Commons to the existing agreement in the hope that a modification of it could be agreed.

Lord Callanan: As always, my noble and learned friend makes some wise points, but an amendment was agreed in the House of Commons: the so-called Brady amendment on alternative arrangements to ensure no hard border. That remains the one positive amendment passed, indicating where support in the House of Commons might lie, but of course we need to persuade the EU of the merits of that.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I am always happy to give way to the noble and learned Lord, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, for whom the House has the greatest respect. However, as even this House seems to be exhausted by this issue and as discussions appear to be in limbo, what is the Minister doing with his day?

Lord Callanan: This morning, answering the noble Lord's question. My time is gainfully occupied. I was in Portugal last week to sign a treaty on reciprocal voting rights to ensure that UK citizens in Portugal and Portuguese citizens in the UK can participate in local elections. We are pursuing a number of such treaties. We are also getting on with no-deal preparation because, as I have repeated many times, that remains the legal default.

Catalytic Converter Thefts

Question

11.21 am

Asked by *Lord Berkeley of Knighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent increase in thefts of catalytic converters; and of the impact of these thefts on (1) motorists, and (2) the insurance industry.

Baroness Barran (Con): My Lords, we know that a rise in the value of metal may be a driver of recent increases in metal theft. We do not have specific data on the theft of catalytic converters. However, recorded offences of metal theft in March 2018 were still 73% lower than in March 2013. We absolutely recognise the distress, disruption and potential cost that this crime can cause victims.

Lord Berkeley of Knighton (CB): I am very grateful to the Minister for that Answer, which amplifies the point I wish to elucidate, which is that we do not know how widespread this crime is. I declare at this point that my interest was piqued when I was, shall we say, catalytically bereaved, but it is no laughing matter, because it costs £2,000 to replace a converter, some motorists have lost two or even three, and a gang is going round armed with a metal bar to deter people who would stop their malfeasance. Does she have any idea, perhaps from speaking to motor manufacturers, how motorists can best protect their converters—perhaps mechanically—both now and in future?

Baroness Barran: I regret the noble Lord's catalytic bereavement—it sounds unpleasant—but he asks a helpful question to which there are two answers. First, practical advice is available from police forces and easily accessible online. They advise installing what is known as a Thatcham-approved alarm, which goes off if a vehicle is lifted or tilted. One can also buy protection devices for catalytic converters as a form of guard, there are marker systems and, obviously, the police advise parking in a well-lit garage. Secondly, my honourable friend the Minister in the other place has set up a vehicle theft task force, which is working with the motor and insurance industries on longer-term solutions.

Earl Attlee (Con): My Lords, does the Minister agree that this is neither a technical nor a policing issue but, at its root, a social one? In particular, our prison system is not configured or resourced to reprogramme, educate and train our errant youngsters so that they can engage exclusively in legitimate economic activity.

Baroness Barran: My noble friend speaks with great knowledge of the prison system—

Noble Lords: Oh!

Baroness Barran: I should clarify; his knowledge does not come from personal experience, as I understand it. He makes a fair point. There are many reasons, including social ones, behind crime. Of all types of crime, this is one where a technical solution is relevant. Metal theft is down by 73% since the scrap metal Act was introduced in 2013. In this industry, technical innovation has helped to reduce crime.

Lord Paddick (LD): My Lords, Antonia Grey, the public affairs manager for the British Metals Recycling Association, said:

“It is highly likely that these stolen catalytic converters are finding their way into the recycling system here by being taken to illegal scrap metal dealers who are openly offering to pay cash for materials. This is happening because there is now no enforcement of the law at a time when the budgets of police and local authorities have been eviscerated”.

Does the Minister agree?

Baroness Barran: I am aware that if you go online—there is no end to the research one does in your Lordships' House to find out about these things—you find a number of dealers advertising cash for scrap metal, as the noble Lord mentions. Often, however, when you go on to the site, it offers delayed payment, so the dealers may be using a cash offer as a hook. The noble Lord makes a fair point. Obviously, the rise in metal prices has an impact on the attractiveness of this crime type but the scrap metal Act was reviewed in 2017 and found to be working well. We believe that part of the increase in recorded metal thefts is due to better police recording. I repeat: overall crime in this area is down by 73%.

Lord Faulkner of Worcester (Lab): My Lords, next Wednesday, I will ask the Government a Question on the theft of metal more generally, not just catalytic converters; I think the noble Lord, Lord Henley, will answer. I was interested in the Minister's figure relating to the drop in metal theft since the 2013 Act. That certainly occurred to begin with; one reason for that was the work of the metal theft task force. However, that task force was abandoned; the latest figures, some

of which I will bring to the House next week, show that since it was scrapped, the incidence of metal theft has gone up again. Does the Minister agree?

Baroness Barran: I can only apologise that I am not familiar with the details of the task force but I agree that metal theft has increased by 30% over the past year. I look forward to the noble Lord's Question.

Lord Hogan-Howe (CB): My Lords, does the Minister agree that crime was generally coming down until about three years ago? One of the principal reasons for that was design. Two things have happened: car design has not kept up with thieves' ability to steal cars and, sadly, car manufacturers have not continued to prevent catalytic converters being removed and still being useful as converters or scrap metal. Surely that is where the Government ought to aim their attention. It is a long-term project because changing the type takes a while in Europe and, for the manufacturer, the lead time to change a design is long. However, I see no efforts to change car design or catalytic converters yet.

Baroness Barran: The noble Lord is right that car theft has gone up by about 7% in the past year. In particular, the theft of cars less than a year old, which I think the noble Lord referred to, has increased over the past five years from a fairly steady 5% to 10% to closer to 20%. The vehicle theft task force will look at these exact areas, working with the motor and insurance industries to improve vehicle security standards.

Youth Violence Question

11.29 am

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address youth violence.

Baroness Barran (Con): My Lords, with the leave of the House, before I respond to the right reverend Prelate I am sure that the Chamber will join me in feeling profound regret at the recent tragic events and note that our thoughts are with the families of those who have been affected on our streets. The Government are taking steps to address all aspects of youth violence, from prevention to enforcement. Diverting young people away from crime is at the heart of our approach, which is why we are investing more than £220 million in early intervention schemes to steer children and young people away from serious violence.

The Lord Bishop of St Albans: My Lords, last weekend at least four people were killed through serious violence on the streets of the capital, and on Tuesday a young person in Luton, in my own diocese, was stabbed more than 20 times. Among all those who are trying to work on this problem, the churches have been involved, and indeed one church has produced a public statue of a phoenix made from 500 knives that had been reclaimed through a knife amnesty—a question of turning swords

into ploughshares. Can the Minister tell us whether Her Majesty's Government have made an assessment of the effectiveness of weapons amnesties in reducing the number of weapons on the streets, and whether more such initiatives are being planned?

Baroness Barran: The right reverend Prelate paints a powerful image of the phoenix made from knives. On amnesty initiatives, individual police forces can use amnesties and surrender bins whenever they want; those are operational decisions that can be taken at a local level. Such initiatives are a key component of Operation Sceptre, and the most recent week of co-ordinated national action took place in March, during which time more than 10,000 knives were surrendered, including in surrender bins. We are expecting another week of action in the autumn. However, we cannot look at any of these initiatives in isolation; it is a combination that will make the difference.

Lord Rosser (Lab): My Lords, I share the Minister's words on the recent tragic events. In 2010, there were 3,600 Sure Start centres offering childcare and play sessions, parenting advice and employment coaching. Up to 1,000 centres have closed since then, with a cut of some 62% in council early years service spending since 2010, and the trend is continuing. Over just the four years to 2017-18, the number of children using Sure Start in the 30 most deprived authorities was down by 22%, and by 12% in the 30 least deprived councils. What is the Government's analysis of the impact that the austerity-driven reduction over nearly 10 years in the number of Sure Start centres, and the level of service that they can continue to provide, is already having and will continue to have on the level of youth violence?

Baroness Barran: The Government response to the question put by the noble Lord is again to say, as was set out in the report of the Children's Commissioner published in February this year, that many factors influence youth violence. We do not help young people if we try to pin it exclusively on one. The noble Lord makes a fair point about changes in provision for early years, but significant changes have also occurred in the drugs market which have had a significant influence. The Government's focus is to move away from a purely criminal justice response towards a public health response and a long-term commitment in this area.

Baroness Manzoor (Con): My Lords, the violence and the deaths of young people on our streets are nothing short of a national emergency on a national scale. Can my noble friend the Minister say exactly what the Government are doing now to address this issue, particularly in relation to police visibility on our streets, youth funding and school exclusions?

Baroness Barran: Well, I have with me a copy of *Hansard* from Monday, when my honourable friend the Minister in the other place gave a list of what we are doing. I fear that time does permit me to read it, but it runs to more than half a column. So this really is an area where the Government are doing a great deal.

In response to my noble friend's specific questions, police funding is increasing by over £1 billion this year, as your Lordships are aware, and we are aware of plans to recruit of a further 3,500 police officers and

staff. With youth services, we are particularly proud of the Youth Endowment Fund that the Government have announced, which will be delivered over 10 years. Those of us who have worked in the charity sector know how valuable 10-year funding is. The figures on school exclusions are not entirely clear about the impact of exclusions, but 21% of young people convicted of possession of a knife were excluded from school, 50% of them after the event.

Lord Paddick (LD): My Lords, I appreciate that the noble Baroness said that the Government were doing a lot, but their so-called Serious Violence Strategy is actually an underfunded collection of unconnected existing initiatives and various piecemeal pots of money that have been indiscriminately thrown at the problem over recent years. When will the Government take youth violence seriously by setting specific goals based on a coherent and comprehensive strategy to address both the symptoms and causes of youth violence?

Baroness Barran: I think the noble Lord is a little harsh. The Government absolutely recognise that a huge culture change is required and that for too long the police have been the service of last resort in addressing youth violence. That will never get to the root of the problem unless we are able to engage other services—education, health and so forth. So just two days ago, as the noble Lord may be aware, my right honourable friend the Home Secretary announced funding for the initial establishment of 18 violence reduction units, which I hope will produce exactly the results the noble Lord aspires to.

Arrangement of Business

Announcement of Recess Dates

11.37 am

Lord Taylor of Holbeach (Con): My Lords, I am sure it will be for the convenience of the House if I rise at this point to make a short statement about recess dates for the summer. The dates will be available as usual in the Printed Paper Office. Of course, the following dates are provisional and subject to the progress of business. But noble Lords might like to note that we will rise at the conclusion of business on Thursday 25 July and return on Tuesday 3 September.

Digital Economy Act 2017 (Amendment) Bill [HL]

First Reading

11.37 am

A Bill to amend the Digital Economy Act 2017 in respect of TV licence fee concessions by reference to age.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op): My Lords, this Bill would amend the Digital Economy Act 2017 in respect of TV licence fee concessions by reference to age, and shift the responsibility from the BBC back to the Government, where it belongs.

The Bill was read a first time and ordered to be printed.

**Sentencing (Pre-consolidation
Amendments) Bill [HL]**
Membership Motion

11.38 am

Moved by The Senior Deputy Speaker

That, as proposed by the Committee of Selection, the following Lords be appointed to the Special Public Bill Committee on the Sentencing (Pre-consolidation Amendments) Bill [HL]:

Bassam of Brighton, L, Berridge, B, Falconer of Thoroton, L, Faulks, L, Garnier, L, Judge, L (Chairman), Keen of Elie, L, Kirkhope of Harrogate, L, Thomas of Gresford, L, Whitaker, B.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records;

That the evidence taken by the Committee be published, if the Committee so wishes.

Motion agreed.

Anti-Semitism
Motion to Take Note

11.38 am

Moved by Baroness Berridge

To move that this House takes note of the incidence of anti-Semitism worldwide.

Baroness Berridge (Con): My Lords, I am grateful to all noble Lords who are speaking in today's debate, which is the second on anti-Semitism within a year in your Lordships' House—perhaps evidence that this is a light sleeper, to borrow a phrase. Of course, I am not Jewish, but I co-chair the APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, and anti-Semitism is a denial of such freedom. I am also a professing Christian who attends Protestant churches but has Catholic lineage.

When first preparing for this debate, I was struck by the origins of the word “anti-Semitism”. To use “ism” makes it sound to ordinary people like an ideology or a religion such as Hinduism, pluralism or capitalism. Of course, “Semitism” relates to the Semite people, who, according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, include,

“Arabs, Akkadians, Canaanites, Hebrews, some Ethiopians and Aramaean tribes”.

Modern usage does not include all those people, but it does definitely tell us that what we are talking about is hating people, not a religion or an ideology. That is a vital distinction that enables us to maintain freedom of speech. But the use of “ism” was deliberate, as the term was first used in 1879 by the German agitator Wilhelm Marr to make the anti-Jewish campaign seem more reasonable, rational and perhaps more like the European Enlightenment. It is a great shame that the

term has stuck as it is anything but rational. I fear that using “anti-Semitism” today could make it seem like a concern of the liberal elite.

My initial instinct is supported by the recent survey by the *Jewish Chronicle* that fewer than half the people in Britain know what anti-Semitism means, so using the substance of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition—“hatred of Jews”—makes things simple and clearer, and I commend it.

Globally, we are seeing in Europe, America and even Argentina a resurgence of hatred, threats of violence, harassment, vandalism and even murder and kidnap of Jews because of who they are. The hatred that led to the Holocaust and 6 million dead Jews in Europe is a lesson from history that is not being taught in enough history lessons. From Berlin to Buenos Aires, incidents of Jew hatred have increased drastically in recent years. According to the Kantor Center of Tel Aviv University, in the last year alone, Italy saw a 60% increase in recorded incidents, South Africa a 25% increase, France 74% and Australia 59%. The number involving violence or the threat of violence also rose globally by 13%. The US had the largest number of violent cases—more than 100—including of course the tragic shooting in a Pittsburgh synagogue in October that claimed 11 lives.

In the city of Rosario in Argentina as recently as last week, a local rabbi was attacked by three men who shouted anti-Semitic words at him before removing his rabbi's hat, trampling it on the ground and assaulting him. That attack is the third physical attack and anti-Semitic assault in Argentina in less than two months. Similarly, the UK last year recorded a record high of anti-Semitic incidents for the third year in a row.

One key feature of this trend is the increasing prevalence of materials online. According to Tel Aviv University, in Argentina last year complaints of anti-Semitic incidents doubled compared with 2017, and 80% were online. All of Belgium's 101 documented cases were online in what mostly involved the spread of conspiracy theories and Nazi rhetoric. In a CNN/ComRes poll, 15% of all people surveyed in Poland and 19% in Hungary said that they had unfavourable views of Jews and about 10% of all respondents in seven European countries said the same. That is quite an admission even in a confidential poll.

The nature of Jew hatred includes imposing false stereotypes and conspiracy theories. In Poland and Hungary, about four out of 10 people said that Jews had,

“too much influence in business and finance”,

around the world, and 20% of British respondents thought that the global Jewish population was 20%. Those figures are deeply concerning and it is not a surprise that when 16,500 Jews from 12 European countries were interviewed by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights last year, 85% said that the community's main concern was anti-Semitism. Less reported was that 72% of those Jews surveyed also expressed concern about the increasing intolerance towards Muslims. Hatred of the other does not usually stay with one category of “the other”. The main threat

in Europe is neo-Nazi far-right views which extol hatred of Jews, not predominantly extreme Islamist views on Jews.

In her recent book, *Antisemitism: What It Is. What It Isn't. Why It Matters*, the noble Baroness, Lady Neuberger, references research by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research that put the rates of emigration from France, Belgium and Italy to Israel beyond that which would normally be found due to economic factors. Jews leaving Europe because they do not feel safe—who ever thought we would be saying that in the 21st century? Jews are not asking for special treatment. The atrocities of the Second World War led not to a UN declaration on just Jewish religious freedom but on freedom of religion or belief for all. Jews are not saying we cannot criticise the Israeli state and its policies. As the noble Baroness, Lady Neuberger, says in her book:

“It is one thing to deny Israel a right to exist at all. But arguing about Israel’s borders, or criticising its treatment of its Arab population, or of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, is another thing entirely. The argument is about policies, not about a right to exist. And though many Israelis, and the Israeli government, would not agree with me in saying this, those are legitimate issues to raise”.

She also says that,

“it must be legitimate to criticise Zionism as a political philosophy”.

I hope this deals with the myth that Jews do not believe in freedom of speech and that you will be told you are anti-Semitic if you criticise Israel per se. When I visited Israel it seemed to me that free speech between Israelis and criticism of their Government were alive and well on talk radio.

There are hundreds of images and posts on the internet, let alone on the dark web, by white supremacists, neo-Nazis and the far right claiming Christian inspiration for their views. If only we could say that this is a new phenomenon. This is why I outlined my own faith at the start. In 2017 there was a muted celebration of 500 years since the Reformation. With the state of Europe’s attitude towards Jews, celebrating a man for his undoubted doctrinal brilliance but whose views on Jews moved from warmth to hatred and wrath was difficult. Martin Luther’s 1542 treatise *On the Jews and their Lies* is staggering. He refers to “whoring and murderous people” and “a rabble of snakes”, saying:

“Even if they were punished in the most gruesome manner that the streets ran with their blood, that their dead would be counted, not in the hundreds of thousands but in the millions”.

Did this pave the way for Hitler and the views posted today? In a talk given at St Aldate’s Church, Oxford, the Reverend Simon Ponsonby persuasively outlined that Hitler, some of the German Church, the Nazis, the populists, the Jews and the English Church all made the link. After all, Kristallnacht was on Luther’s public birthday. William Temple, then Archbishop of York, said:

“It is easy to see how Luther prepared the way for Hitler”.

Time does not permit similar analysis of the struggle within Catholic thought, but the comment of Cardinal Maridiaga, who was a papal runner-up, is quoted in the book written by the noble Baroness, Lady Neuberger. He blames the “Jewish-controlled media”—namely, the *Boston Globe*—for the sex scandal of the Catholic Church. That is the kind of comment that Vatican II

at the very latest thought to make a thing of the past. It is at such moments that I have put down many of my reading materials this week and said “What? These are intelligent people”.

I am not responsible for the collective views of the Church of the past, but due to the rise of Christian imagery once again I want Jews to know that I am convinced—and distressed—that without these awful teachings at the time of the advent of the printing press it is hard to think that Jew hatred would have taken root in Europe in the way it did. Aggressive nationalism and assertions of Christian Europe, particularly in eastern Europe, are feeding on this history and putting at risk anyone considered other—Jew, Muslim and, potentially, Roma, alike.

Today we have the advent of the internet. We have a virtual oil slick, like the pollution streaming out into the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. It is not merely a conduit, as European law would like us to believe. It connects people to spread their hate-filled views. Thankfully, in the past few weeks there seems to be a new wave of contrition from ISP executives, with Instagram’s Adam Mosseri saying,

“We can’t solve bullying on our own”,

and Apple’s CEO Tim Cook saying only last Sunday at Stanford University to graduating students that the tech industry,

“is becoming known for a less noble innovation: the belief that you can claim credit without accepting responsibility ... If you build a chaos factory, you can’t dodge responsibility for the chaos”.

While the internet is undoubtedly bringing immense good, parts of it are a verbal cesspit which we all must clear up. The next generation want us to clean up the ocean, but they have good cause to ask us why, when ISPs have all that money—with more cash reserves than most nation states—we did not make them use it to clear up the internet and spread the message, for instance, that there is no “other”—we are all human; that the individual’s mistakes or crimes are not the fault of the collective group; and that you can hate my views, my behaviour and my politics, but verbal or physical violence or threats are unacceptable and often unlawful.

National Governments must pool their authority. The world is watching us here in the UK as to how we deal with online harms. Our leadership is important as a nation that respects free speech within the law. Generally, our law makes an important distinction between the hatred of ideas, philosophy or opinions, and words or actions expressing hatred of people. Our law applies to everyone and should be so enforced. I have a quote:

“I have some Jewish friends, very good friends. They are not like the other Jews, that’s why they are my friends”—

these are the words of the Prime Minister of Malaysia at the Cambridge Union a few days ago, and the audience laughed. Is this what we expect of a visiting Commonwealth Head of Government—that he should think this is appropriate, and lawful? I will use an analogy to force home the point: “I have some black friends, very good friends. They are not like the other blacks, that’s why they are my friends”. This is unacceptable. UK law and its enforcement have to get

[BARONESS BERRIDGE]

this right, stamping out safe spaces for hatred. Obviously, we have the Metropolitan Police talking to Jo Brand. We have to get the enforcement right; we have to do this together. So I ask my noble friend the Minister: what mechanism will be used supranationally to bring ISPs to book? Is it on the agenda of the G20? I am not hopeful that the United Nations really has the clout to deal with this.

It is always an honour to speak in your Lordships' House, but preparing this speech was not a pleasure. It was not a healthy diet for my mind, so goodness knows what it is like living any of the experiences that I have outlined. I hope noble Lords will forgive me, but I am looking forward to returning to the different echo chamber in which I live.

11.52 am

Lord Harris of Haringey (Lab): I am grateful to the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, as I am sure the whole House is, for securing the debate on this important subject. Quite rightly, she has highlighted shocking examples around the world. The re-emergence of hatred of Jews—to use the phrase she prefers—in continental Europe less than 75 years after the Shoah ended is a stark warning of the fragility of our post-war norms. Surveys show that, in many parts of Europe, Jews feel unsafe and insecure while far-right parties that unashamedly parade anti-Semitic tropes gain significant numbers of votes.

However, I want to focus nearer to home, on this country; with a deep sense of shame, I want to talk about the party I have been a member of for almost 50 years. Labour has a proud history of combating racism and discrimination, and of opposing fascism and anti-Semitism. It is therefore profoundly shocking for those of us brought up in that tradition to find our party now the subject of a formal investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This is nothing short of humiliating for those of us on these Benches, it is causing dismay among party members outside this House, and is deeply alienating for those we might hope would vote for us, whether they are from the Jewish community or not.

It undermines the Labour Party's whole ethos, the values of equality, decency and solidarity that brought so many of us on these benches into the Labour Party in the first place. Over three months ago, I wrote as chair of the Labour Peers' group to Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the party. That letter expressed our dismay—no, worse than that, our alarm—at the continuing failure to remove anti-Semites from our party. I have not had the courtesy of a reply. Last week, I met two women who had been verbally and physically harassed at a meeting of their local Labour Party because they were Jewish.

I wish I could say that this was an isolated instance but, alas, it was not. The process of dealing with complaints of anti-Semitic behaviour within the party has been slow, tortuous and frequently inconclusive. Too often individuals are suspended only when their cases receive external publicity. Action was taken against one member of the party's National Executive Committee

only after a second anti-Semitic rant was recorded and publicised; he had been let off with a warning after the first one.

Too often those who have complained about anti-Semitism have been dismissed as being apologists for, or even in the pay of, the Israeli Government or Mossad, or we are told that the cases are few and far between. Any anti-Semite in the Labour Party is one too many. The party's abject failure to deal effectively with anti-Semitism over the last three years cannot be ascribed to inadequate resourcing of the complaints and compliance function in the Labour Party head office, or blamed on inadequate or outdated processes. The failure is a political one; it is a failure of leadership.

Those of your Lordships who have been responsible for major organisations know that the tone, style and ethos of such organisations are set at the top. That is what leadership means. Leadership is not about hiding behind procedure, blaming more junior officials or allowing your acolytes to dismiss legitimate complaints as the spite of those who disagree with your political approach. We on these Benches must take on the task of cleansing our party of anti-Semitism and those who condone and foster it. If this debate tells us anything, however, it is that this is a global problem as well. Parliamentarians both here and elsewhere in the world need to make a stand. The lessons of the millions who died in Europe must never be forgotten—never.

11.56 am

Baroness Ludford (LD): My Lords, I congratulate strongly the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, not only on securing this debate but on an excellent speech. Like her, I am not Jewish, but I am very sensitive to anti-Semitism not only as the oldest hate, but also as a bellwether for other types of hate. I declare my interest as a vice-president of the Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel and a supporter of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Jews.

The fact that this debate is more necessary than ever in my lifetime shows how anti-Semitism is becoming pervasive, as was brought out in the report last year by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, which was mentioned by the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge. The report found that negative stereotypes are being reproduced and ingrained and that this pervasive anti-Semitism is undermining Jews' feelings of safety and security throughout Europe, such that they and their family and friends cannot live lives free of worry. I am deeply ashamed that this is happening to my fellow citizens. I do not want to live in a society in which they are afraid and subject to prejudice, discrimination and hate.

The same survey found that anti-Semitism is not only pervasive but has also become normalised. The report states,

“people face so much antisemitic abuse that some of the incidents they experience appear trivial to them”.

That is totally shocking. One clue to this sense of normalisation is that the range of perpetrators is wide, spanning the entire social and political spectrum. Like the noble Baroness, I was truly outraged not only that the Malaysian Prime Minister made the remarks he

made at the meeting in Cambridge, but that they were apparently followed by a round of laughter. I find that incredible.

I talked earlier of stereotypes. A poll by the news organisation CNN last September showed that three in 10 adults said that Jewish people have too much influence in finance and business; one in five said they have too much influence on the media; and three in 10 said that Jewish people use the Holocaust to advance their own position.

Some of your Lordships, like me, will have heard Allan Little's recent series for BBC Radio 4 called "A History of Hate", covering events in Rwanda, Bosnia, apartheid South Africa and other places. His first programme was about pogroms in Russia a century ago. Anti-Semitism originated as traditional religious prejudice, but it transformed into what a historian called "modern anti-Semitism": visions of Jews conspiring to take over all the main institutions of the state, encapsulated in the fake news *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Interestingly, Professor Deborah Lipstadt saw the origins of that Jewish lobby stereotype in ancient times, in perceptions of a small group of Jewish money changers persuading the mighty Roman Empire to kill Christ because he threatened their lucrative business in the temple. These prejudices are very ancient.

This is, of course, a debate on anti-Semitism, but people who hate on the basis of faith often hate on the basis of other features—other faiths, race and gender. I know that we are all conscious of that fact. I do not have time to talk about Islamophobia, but I think it noteworthy that the candidates for the Conservative leadership have pledged to look at Islamophobia in their own party. As the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, said, we need a step change in education. That is the top priority.

Noon

Lord Pickles (Con): My Lords, I draw attention to my entry in the register of interests as a member of organisations involved in post-Holocaust issues and countering anti-Semitism. I congratulate my noble friend Lady Berridge on securing this debate. It comes at a very apposite time, in that it coincides with the first joint meeting on Monday of special envoys on anti-Semitism, organised in Bucharest by the Romanian President of the Council of the EU and the World Jewish Congress. I represented the UK at the event and spoke during one of its plenaries on how the UK had implemented the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. The noble Lord, Lord Harris, spoke of the need for international effort to counter anti-Semitism, and these are the first tentative steps.

The meeting concluded with a four-point action plan. The first is on the security of Jewish communities, and states that public authorities—central and local—have a responsibility to ensure the security of the members of the Jewish community and the institutions, and to support and protect the victims of anti-Semitic and hate crimes. The German ombudsman on Jewish issues, Felix Klein, has been rather misquoted in some of the briefing, with his worries about Jewish people wearing outward signs of their religion on the street. This is a misrepresentation; he was expressing a worry.

I have seen this with my own eyes at the Conservative conference in Manchester a couple of years ago, when a young man wearing a kippah was abused by a very well-dressed, middle-class, left-wing crowd. The Y-word, the C-word and the F-word were used. There were references to the smoking chimneys of Auschwitz. He was spat upon and, to their eternal shame, the police stood by and did nothing. A true test of a civilised society is that outward signs of someone's religion should be able to be displayed openly and without fear.

The second action point was the endorsement of the non-legally binding working definition of anti-Semitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. It is a matter of some pleasure that the UK was the first to adopt that definition.

The third action point was financing Holocaust research, education and remembrance in an efficient way to combat existing threats to the remembrance of the Holocaust, such as Holocaust denial and distortion, together with encouraging academic research and protecting academic freedom from undue influence. The Holocaust Educational Trust, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the memorial planned for outside this building are a good example. I met with a prominent objector to the memorial yesterday. At first we talked about views, trees and open spaces. He said that it was a good idea but in the wrong place, going on to say, "I don't see why we should have a monument outside Parliament to the so-called Holocaust". I queried the qualification "so-called". He said, "Holocaust means 'burnt offering', and most of them were gassed". Leaving aside the victims of the Nazis who were starved, worked to death, hanged or shot, pedantic semantics is no real defence of casual anti-Semitism.

Fourthly, the recording and collecting of hate crime data should be improved, including that on combating anti-Semitism. Compared to other countries our figures are high and, I suspect, underreported. Some countries feel smug by comparison, because they do not record those figures, but ignorance is not bliss. If you do not record, you do not know.

In conclusion, why are we fighting anti-Semitism? Why is it so important? The US envoy, Elan Carr, put it far more eloquently than I could:

"Antisemitism is not just about Jews. Every society that has drunk anti-Semitism has rotted from the inside".

12.05 pm

The Lord Bishop of Chester: My Lords, I echo the excellent opening speech by the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, by saying that I view anti-Semitism as perhaps the greatest tragedy and disgrace in the history of the Christian Church.

Christian complicity arose after the break between the Church and the Synagogue in the late first century of our era, and with the emergence of the view that the Christian Church had replaced the Jews as God's chosen people. The properly New Testament view that Christians had been graciously grafted into Israel to share its promises and inheritance reasserted itself only in the 20th century, after nearly two millennia. This was partly the result of renewed biblical scholarship and partly due to the efforts of a small but distinguished

[THE LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER]

group of continental Christian theologians led by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth, who saw the evil of Nazism.

The Bonhoeffer-Barth view, with its rejection of the previously well-nigh universal belief that the Christian Church had replaced the Jews was expressed in its own terms by the Second Vatican Council, and is now widely accepted across all the Churches. I had hoped—naively, no doubt—that these changes would come to exert a downward pressure on anti-Semitism. I have been shocked and deeply disappointed by the contemporary re-emergence of anti-Semitism. What are the underlying causes? Further research into this question is still needed, but clearly today there is a connection with opposition to the current policies of the State of Israel—which so easily becomes falsely associated with the belief that Israel itself has no right to exist. This seems to be the crux of the problems that have beset the Labour leadership in recent times.

I have taken a keen interest in these issues, and have visited Israel seven times in my time as a bishop, taking around 500 people from my diocese there over the years. One cannot but be deeply impressed by modern Israel in many ways—its economy, its cultural life, its protection of ancient archaeology and its commitment to democracy and the rule of law. Anyone who thinks that the modern State of Israel should somehow disappear is tilting at the moon from every possible angle. Quite beyond the facts on the ground, including the military facts, there is another reason why the State of Israel is here to stay. Studies of Jewish life on the continent before World War II have demonstrated that, paradoxically, Zionists who wanted a new Jewish state in Palestine shared this hope with many anti-Semites, who wanted large numbers of Jews to leave Europe. Continental anti-Semitism wanted Jews expelled or destroyed, and their influence curtailed. Zionists could in this sense agree that Jews, like everyone else, must have a national home which would be open to all Jews, as is still the case today. It is largely forgotten that in the late 1930s, Nazis could assist Zionists to organise the departure of Jews to Palestine, before the dark reality of the Holocaust took over.

There is a sense in which the appalling and tragic anti-Semitism of the Holocaust itself helped to achieve the Zionist hope. In the great sweep of history—and, I would add, from my perspective, the providence of God—it is hardly an accident that the modern State of Israel was founded just after the most systematic attempt in history to erase Jewish people from the earth. The challenge for us today is to do our best, in every way we can, to erase anti-Semitism from future history.

12.09 pm

Lord Leigh of Hurley (Con): My Lords, I too congratulate my noble friend Lady Berridge on securing this debate. As your Lordships will see in the register of interests, I am somewhat involved in the Jewish community and am constantly deeply moved by, and in awe of, those people from outside that community who clearly care about and are prepared to fight anti-Semitism, as opposed to others who just walk away.

What is anti-Semitism? When I was 15, Sir Bernard Waley-Cohen, a former Lord Mayor of London, told me that it was disliking Jews more than was strictly necessary—but that was a while ago. I pay public tribute to my noble friend Lord Pickles for his incredible work in securing the internationally recognised definition in the UK, which has eventually been adopted even by those who fought against it, including the recently elected Labour MP for Peterborough.

The Anti-Defamation League's survey in 2014 really is an extraordinary piece of work; I speak as president of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, which was mentioned by my noble friend Lady Berridge. The ADL interviewed 53,000 people in 96 languages in 100 countries. Sadly, it found anti-Semitic attitudes in around a quarter to a third of all global citizens, even though 27% of people had never met a Jewish person. Somewhat reassuringly, it found that 99% of people in the UK had heard about the Holocaust, although this dropped to under 10% in certain other countries. Perhaps not surprisingly, 70% of people in the Middle East had heard about the Holocaust but chose to dismiss it as a myth, or as having been greatly exaggerated. It is, of course, not surprising that we see such anti-Semitism in the Middle East. Most Arab countries expelled their Jewish populations without notice or compensation some 60 years ago. It is estimated that some 800,000 people were simply expelled from the countries in which they had lived—not for decades but for millennia—simply because they were Jewish.

We need to challenge those who do not enjoy our enlightened approach to anti-Semitism much more rigorously, particularly when it invades our shores. My noble friend Lady Berridge quoted the Prime Minister of Malaysia, who spoke at Cambridge last weekend. Malaysia is the country that would not allow disabled athletes to swim in the Paralympic Games to be held in Malaysia, simply because they were Israeli. What action do the Government propose to take in speaking to the Prime Minister of Malaysia?

Considering our own country, I am sure we have all asked ourselves how it is possible that a political party with strong Jewish roots, which prides itself on compassion for the underdog, social justice and an abhorrence of racism, has become so mired in anti-Semitism that it faces an investigation by the EHRC. This question was posed most eloquently by the noble Lord, Lord Harris of Haringey. All the surveys consistently show that the UK is one of the world leaders in its abhorrence of anti-Semitism because citizens in the UK are tolerant, open, and welcoming, so how has this been completely reversed by some political leaders? Has left-wing anti-Semitism risen because antagonism to Israel has made it a rallying cause? I am aware that I speak in the presence of the noble Lord, Lord Sacks, but do not forget that my ancestors left the slavery of Egypt—seeking to live in peace in Israel—well before they became Jews. Tragically, the slur that Zionism is racism has taken hold.

I have not the time to examine the depressing path down which otherwise good people were led by lies and misinformation about Israel and who, like Mr Abdullah Patel recently, may have allowed this misplaced hatred of Israel to morph into anti-Semitism.

But no one can deny that it exists, and it is left to the bravery of speakers such as those in today's debate to try to change this flow. Even more parochially to this House, I am sorry to say that many members of the Jewish community were hugely disappointed in the Chakrabarti report, which missed a golden opportunity when it could so easily have changed the attitudes and direction of the Labour Party. The worldwide fight against anti-Semitism is a very noble one, but for us it must start in this country. Let us hope that it is reinforced by this debate today.

12.14 pm

Lord Parekh (Lab): My Lords, I come from a country with no history of anti-Semitism, namely India. In the 11th century, the maharajah of Travancore-Cochin made a declaration to Joseph Rabban, who was leading Jews from Syria into India, offering him all the facilities of a local potentate. He could collect taxes and ride in a palanquin, and his people could follow their own customs. As a result, Jews have flourished in India, and I was taught by a Jew who was a professor of English literature. In business they have flourished too.

There are Jewish characters in the literature, and they are always represented as decent, well-behaved, clean and tidy, good at making money and loyal to the country. These views of what it is to be Jewish spread, and it is also striking that Mahatma Gandhi's closest friends were Jewish—Polak and Kallenbach. In the 1930s, he even suggested that several Jewish refugees could come to India as, he said, "In a population of 300 million, what is a few hundred thousand?" The British Government said they could not come because they needed work permits. Anyway, this was my brief history, not having been exposed to the history of the Holocaust and systematic Jewish persecution. I heard about that when I came to England about 45 years ago, and I have been very bothered about this whole question.

This systematic persecution of a whole people lasted over 2,000 years, culminating in the Holocaust, when millions were humiliated, despised, made into the objects of stupid experiments and dehumanised. The question that I have asked myself is: why is there anti-Semitism? What are its causes? From where does it spring? Some light was thrown on this in the 1980s, when people said that Indians will have a Jewish future and Afro-Caribbeans will have an Irish future. That set me thinking about whether the Indian experience of being thrown out of four countries—Sri Lanka, Myanmar and all that—can throw some light on what happened to the Jews. In trying to understand this, I will submit a few observations that I have made over the years.

Anti-Semitism springs from a variety of factors. Some are specific to a particular historical period; some are common to all historical periods. As the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Chester said, the Jews have been accused of killing our Lord—deicide—and this is not assuaged by simply talking about Judeo-Christian tradition, because to talk about Judeo-Christian tradition is to reduce Judaism to a mere precursor to Christianity. It is to assimilate it into Christianity and not to appreciate its autonomy and identity.

There is also the intolerance of difference. Jews, in my view, were the first multicultural people who asked for their laws, dress and other things to be respected. In a society where multiculturalism was resented, obviously, the Jewish community was resented. Then, of course, a highly successful community, in all walks of life, is resented for obvious reasons. There is also a deep sense of guilt about what happened in the Holocaust. Every European nation was involved in this, not just Germany. Other countries also co-operated in rounding up Jews and treating them abominably. There is a sense of guilt—every time they think of the Jews, they think of the Holocaust and they note there is a sense of guilt. Nobody likes to be reminded of a horrendous period in one's history.

There is another factor that is specific to our age, which is Israel's treatment of Palestinians, which should not go unmentioned. The relationship between the two is basically that between the lion and the mouse. What are Palestinians? If Israel wanted, it could snuff them out in a few seconds. Here is a country with enormous soft power and enormous strength. It should have the sense of security and self-confidence to say to helpless people, "You send out rockets and do silly things, but we are prepared to be magnanimous and forgiving. Let us open a new chapter in a peaceful relationship". Such an act of generosity and self-confidence would do a great deal. A community that has suffered so much could easily turn its suffering into a signal of sympathy with suffering elsewhere.

12.19 pm

Lord Alton of Liverpool (CB): My Lords, the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, deserves the thanks of the whole House for securing this important debate and for the eloquent way in which she introduced it. No one, as a consequence of their beliefs or who they are, should have to live their life in abject fear of racial or religious hatred, yet, as we have been reminded, recent research and reported instances of attacks show that far too many people do.

The rise in anti-Semitism, sometimes incubated within the walls of this Palace, is completely unacceptable. I have watched with incredulity and dismay as Luciana Berger, who inherited some of my former Liverpool constituency, has been hounded and vilified. It is truly shocking to read reports of Jewish homes being daubed with offensive graffiti and of the desecration of Jewish cemeteries, along with the promotion of hatred on university campuses and through social media. In 2018, the Community Security Trust logged 1,652 anti-Semitic incidents, a 16% increase.

I attended the recent launch of the ComRes polling data on anti-Semitism commissioned for CNN and referred to earlier. It was abundantly clear that we have become far too complacent about this cancer. Forty per cent of those surveyed said that anti-Semitism is a growing problem in this country today; 41% said that Jewish people are at risk of hate speech, while 49% thought that the Government should do more to combat anti-Semitism.

To the question why people were hostile to Jews, the answers ranged from the usual canards about Jews having too much influence, to antagonism towards Israel.

[LORD ALTON OF LIVERPOOL]

It was striking that half of the adults surveyed were unaware of ever having socialised with a Jewish person. Absurdly, one in five thought that more than 20% of the world's population is Jewish. Disturbingly, less than half thought that Israel had a right to exist as a Jewish state.

Earlier this year, some of us heard Helen Aronson, a survivor of the Lodz ghetto in Poland, tell parliamentarians:

“It is vital that we do everything in our power to ensure that these things never happen again, anywhere in the world”.

To do that, we need much better teaching resources and, as the last survivors die, interactive learning hubs where their stories go on being told to future generations. We can also do far more to promote religious freedom, using initiatives such as the newly created United Nations International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief—there will be an event here in the House on 23 July to mark its creation.

In 1933, the Jewish writer, Franz Werfel published *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, a novel about the loss of 1.5 million lives in the Armenian genocide. Those mass murders led to Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish lawyer, 43 of whose family were murdered in the Holocaust, coining the word “genocide” and framing the genocide convention. Werfel's books and those of Stefan Zweig were burnt by the Nazis. Zweig's *The World of Yesterday: Memoirs of a European* charts the rise of visceral hatred and how scapegoating and xenophobia, cultivated by populist leaders, can morph into the hecatombs of the concentration camps. Zweig described how university professors were forced to scrub streets with their bare hands, how devout Jews were humiliated in their synagogues and how apartments were broken into and jewels torn out of the ears of trembling women. And the world remained largely silent.

The haunting question remains: can we do better and act more decisively in our own generation?

12.23 pm

Lord Finkelstein (Con): My Lords, I declare my interests as a member of Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue, a columnist on the *JC* and a consumer of the products of B&K deli in Hatch End. I thank many noble Lords for wonderful speeches: the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, the super-magnificent noble Lord, Lord Pickles—that is his official title—the noble Lord, Lord Harris, for his superb speech and the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Chester. On one occasion, I ran into the Peers' Writing Room, smashed my leg on the table and, I am rather ashamed to say, exclaimed, “Jesus!” very loudly. The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Chester looked up and said, “Can I help you?” Today, he did exactly that.

I will start with one of the most interesting books I have read this year, *The Communist Party of Great Britain: A Historical Analysis to 1941*. Published in 1995, it was written by Andrew Murray, one of the closest friends and advisers of the leader of the Opposition. Mr Murray defended the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and described the fall of the Berlin Wall as an, “historic setback for human progress”.

This was not the end to the illumination that his book provided. The most useful parts were those that explained the centrality to his thinking of Lenin's theory of imperialism. This genuinely opened the door to me: I felt that I finally understood the mystery that I had been puzzling over. I have so many wonderful, lovely progressive friends, and great admiration for Labour Members of this House. I know that, like me, they puzzle over how so many progressive, compassionate, humane people can be prey to anti-Semitism.

I think I do get it now—at least a little bit—and, necessarily briefly, I will share it with the House. Lenin argued that capitalism is economically sustainable only because companies seek profits abroad. They then need Governments to protect their foreign investments through military adventure. So imperialism protects capitalism, and to bring down capitalism you have to bring down imperialism. So anti-colonial resistance movements—Iran, Chávez, Hezbollah—are the core of the anti-capitalist movement. Why does this lend itself to anti-Semitism? First, because anti-imperialists such as JA Hobson have always seen Jews as the owners of finance houses on whose behalf racist imperialism is conducted. In other words, these particular anti-imperialists are anti-racists who blame Jews for racism. This is an explanation of the mystery of how people who claim that they are anti-racist can in fact be anti-Semitic. It is the Jews' fault.

Secondly, anti-imperialists now see the great world empire as the United States, see the Middle East as the centre of this empire and see Israel and Zionism—the Jews, in other words—as the great creators and symbol of this imperialism. In other words, left anti-Semitism is not a few stray tweets and a gaffe or two. Nor does it belong to all members of the Labour Party. It is a system of thought that belongs to a strand of progressive thinking which can only be eradicated by challenging the central tenets of that thinking.

12.27 pm

Lord Dykes (CB): My Lords, it is a great pleasure to follow Daniel Finkelstein—the noble Lord, Lord Finkelstein—who is considered to be the main *Times* journalist with a sense of humour. He has shown it again today and we thank him for his wise words. I am also looking forward to listening to the noble Baroness, Lady Warsi. I am sandwiched between two very intelligent people who will contribute enormously to this debate. I am also very glad that the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, is the Minister replying. He is greatly respected in all parts of this House.

I will speak, briefly, from the heart. I tried to follow the complicated description of anti-Semitism given by the noble Lord, Lord Finkelstein, but it is still a mystery for someone such as me. I was close to many Jewish friends and other Jewish people in my constituency. I was informally and unofficially an honorary member of at least five synagogues and went regularly to shul whenever I had the opportunity. I still cannot understand anti-Semitism, and that is why this debate is so important. The horrific examples described by the noble Lord, Lord Pickles, and other noble Lords are so grotesque and horrible that they are very difficult to believe. That is why we have to keep reminding people that

anti-Semitism exists in this world. The contribution of the Jewish community in Britain—what they have done for this country—has been truly magnificent. I am glad that there is less of that feeling, at least among people who are intelligent enough to study these things closely. Perhaps many people do not bother, but those who do would feel that to be the case.

I live in France as well, which also has a great connection with the Jewish community, which is slightly bigger than the official number in the United Kingdom. There is anti-Semitism in France as well, which is a terrible thing. I can understand why Labour Peers are deeply upset about what is happening in their own party; I feel very sympathetic towards them as well. On many occasions when I was in Harrow I noticed that people were fearful, even in the safe environment of a wealthy area of north-west London, because of their background and history.

I am very closely connected with Germany: I speak German, I go there frequently and I admire the way the Germans faced up to the sense of guilt that they have all accepted—with a few peculiar exceptions. They have done that in a way that fills me with great pleasure when I think of what happened in that country—unbelievable things that are still difficult to believe. That is why there are still so many books written about the Holocaust and the Third Reich, not only in Germany but elsewhere. It is interesting to note that in Berlin there is now a huge, or at least relatively large, Jewish community of young Israelis, for example, who have gone there to work or study and who live in Berlin or Düsseldorf or other cities. That is an example of what we all need to do, to really get to know the details of all this tragedy over the years, to make sure that it is never repeated.

I agree with what the noble Baroness, Lady Neuberger, was quoted as saying in one of her recent books. None of that has anything to do with me wishing to criticise the present Government of Netanyahu in Israel. That is a perfectly legitimate thing for anyone to do, be they Jewish or not: there are many Jewish critics of Netanyahu's Government, both in Israel and outside. That is a totally separate subject; it cannot be confused with this deep, huge ur-psychological disease of anti-Semitism. We all need to work together to make sure that we eradicate it for ever from our world society.

12.31 pm

Baroness Warsi (Con): My Lords, I am rarely here on a Thursday now, because the Whips have not obliged us to be here. I have been tempted back to the wonderful place known as Yorkshire, surrounded by the amazing vibrancy of a factory making beds; even more so during this time when cricket also beckons. However, when I saw this debate listed on the Order Paper I felt it was necessary for me to be here, to give support and lend my voice to the efforts to highlight the rising challenge of anti-Semitism. I am grateful to my noble friend Lady Berridge, who so powerfully and in such a detailed way opened this debate and set the scene for the tremendous contributions we have heard so far and I am sure will continue to hear until the end of the debate.

Racism, as we have heard, is not found just in the kind of circles we would have found it in in the past. It is in very respectable circles; it is rooted in liberalism. There is also faith-based racism: it is not true that people of faith are welcoming of other people of faith. Therefore, I felt it was important, as a Muslim, to lend my voice to this fight against anti-Semitism. It is something I have spoken about before. In 2013 in a speech at Georgetown, speaking about the exodus of Christians from the Middle East, I said that it should not be left to Christians to speak for Christians, for Muslims to speak for Muslims and for Jews to speak for Jews. As a Muslim, this is a fundamental part of my faith. The teachings I grew up with said that everyone in humanity is my brother or sister in faith, or my brother or sister in humanity, and it is therefore right for us to speak when anyone is persecuted.

After all, in the past we have defeated intolerance only when we have come together. Apartheid was defeated in South Africa only when people of all backgrounds held hands to ensure that it was challenged. The American civil rights movement received the boost it needed when the international community—black, white and brown, people of all backgrounds—came together. Here in the United Kingdom, gay rights were truly established only when the wider community got on board. Anti-Semitism will stop rearing its ugly head only when all of us, of whatever faith we belong to or of none, oppose and challenge it.

The rise of anti-Semitism is real and deeply disturbing. The briefing from the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, which all noble Lords will have received, paints a very grim picture: Jews in Europe attacked and threatened for wearing skull caps; attacks on Jewish religious practices such as dietary requirements and circumcision; and the tragic loss of life during the Tree of Life synagogue terrorist attack in Pittsburgh, where Jews were gunned down in their place of worship. There is also the demonisation of a community by politicians such as Viktor Orbán in Hungary, who chooses to use tropes and conspiracy theories—which sadly we have too often heard before—and attempts to revise history to downplay the horrors that led to the Holocaust.

The time restrictions in this debate simply do not allow us to do justice to this subject, but it does allow me, as a Muslim, to stand and speak in solidarity against the racism that Jews around the world face and to ensure that British Jews hear very clearly that they do not need to fight this battle alone: this is a fight for all of us.

12.35 pm

Lord Campbell-Savours (Lab): My Lords, my concern is the dilution of the term “anti-Semitism” and the resultant public response. The line between legitimate criticism of Israel's actions in the West Bank and Gaza as against real anti-Jewish prejudice has become blurred. The danger in blurring is that the public will set a high bar for the treatment of accusations of anti-Semitism. I find that deeply disturbing, and the international definition is not resolving the problem.

Equally strongly, I reject accusations that my party is institutionally racist. I accept that there is a problem in my party—as, indeed, in all parties—but what is

[LORD CAMPBELL-SAVOURS]

happening is that many in my party are deeply concerned and confused by Netanyahu's attitude to the settlements and calls for annexation. There is a particular problem in Labour-supporting ethnic minority communities, who join with Palestinians in feeling targeted as fellow Muslims, and a small minority of whom are clearly anti-Semitic. The treatment of the Palestinians is being used by racists across Europe to foster prejudice against Jews. It is all very frightening, and Israel needs to reflect.

This brings me to Corbyn. I do not believe that Corbyn is prejudiced; caught in the headlamp of public outrage, he is agonising over how to respond. He needs to fight back by repeatedly clarifying where he draws the lines and by leading the attack in ridding my party of any anti-Semitic elements which have infiltrated it. I suspect that he is not responding adequately because he is wary of being trapped in a dialogue, defending questionable and sometimes ill-conceived past actions which have on occasion been interpreted, quite reasonably, as anti-Semitic.

However, I firmly believe that, had Corbyn been in Parliament in the 1930s, given his current record on human rights—his lifetime cause has been human rights, often taking positions with which I have profoundly disagreed—he would have been the British politician championing calls for Jewish immigration into the United Kingdom while others across the parties were battenning down the hatches and blocking the pre-Holocaust movement of Jews in flight from Nazism. People simply do not understand what Corbyn is all about. He is obsessed with human rights and sometimes he gets the nuances completely wrong.

Finally, I will comment on anti-Semitism on the internet. As the Janner case unravels, we and IICSA will have to face up to the truth: we will find a strong link between anti-Semitism and the accusations. Equally, we will find that the lead accuser, repeatedly named in the media in November 1991 as Paul Winston, who has not been linked in any way to anti-Semitism but who has a substantial criminal record arising from problems in his childhood, is now being used by anti-Semites to foster hatred of the Jews.

I am troubled by the blurring and dilution of the debate, and by online racism. We need to act now.

12.38 pm

Lord Harries of Pentregarth (CB): The Runnymede report on anti-Semitism had as its title some very telling words of Conor Cruise O'Brien—*A Very Light Sleeper*. Sadly, since that report was published in 1994, particularly in the past two years, there has been a terrible increase in anti-Semitic incidents and verbal abuse. This has been well set out with facts and figures from other noble Lords and I will not repeat what they have said, except to stress that I find this deeply disturbing and totally unacceptable.

For nine years, I had the privilege of being chairman of the Council of Christians and Jews, which continues to do so much good work to combat anti-Semitism and put the State of Israel in proper, true perspective. However, there is no doubt that the historical link of churches in this country with those in the Middle East,

and the fact that many Christian aid agencies work there, mean that the State of Israel is, as we know all too well, a source of continuing tension.

My starting point is some words of an American scholar, Paul Van Buren, who surveyed all the Protestant church documents on the subject of Israel since World War II and concluded:

“Because the state of Israel is in part the product of the ancient and living hope of the Jewish people and is of deep concern to almost all Jews, disregard for its safety and welfare is incompatible with concern for the Jewish people”.

That, I stress, is the bare minimum: disregard for the safety and welfare of Israel is incompatible with concern for the Jewish people.

In this connection, I find it very disturbing that the word Zionist has become so tendentious in modern times. The hope of returning to Jerusalem has been part of the soul of Judaism ever since the first century, when the Jews were expelled from their country. It gathered pace in the 19th century with the emergence of what we think of as Zionism, a noble movement expressing the legitimate desire of the Jewish people to return to their historic homeland with the freedom to create a society of their own. The word Zionist should not be used as a term of abuse. When it is, we have to ask why.

The excellent new book by the noble Baroness, Lady Neuberger, is entitled *Anti-Semitism: What It Is. What It Isn't. Why It Matters*. She is quite clear that there can be legitimate criticisms of the policy of particular Israeli Governments without these being anti-Semitic. It is always important to note that the fiercest critics of particular Governments come from Israel itself and are often echoed by Jews in this country. There is, however, no doubt in her mind—or the minds of many of us—that legitimate criticism has too often recently morphed into an anti-Zionism tinged with anti-Semitism.

It is clear, as the Government repeatedly state, that the settlements are illegal under international law, but that criticism must not be allowed to detract from the legitimacy of the State of Israel. Whatever criticism there may be of recent legislation on the position of Arab citizens in Israel—and the noble Baroness is very critical—it is not true that Israel is a racist state. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism contains 11 examples. One states:

“Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour”.

We are right to hold Israel accountable to the high standards of David Ben-Gurion, who said:

“The State of Israel will prove itself not by material wealth, not by military might or technical achievement, but by its moral character and human values”.

If we judge that particular policies sometimes fail that test, we need to bear in mind that Israel safeguards fundamental human rights not even acknowledged in some of the surrounding countries.

The present increase in anti-Semitic attacks and verbal vitriol, both in the UK and abroad, is deeply worrying, totally unacceptable and must be countered at every opportunity.

12.43 pm

Lord Polak (Con): My Lords, I refer the House to my entry in the register of interests and pay tribute to my noble friend Lady Berridge for her thoughtful, wide-ranging and somewhat sad speech. I prepared for this debate by typing “anti-Semitism” into the Google bar and clicking on “News”. On 18 June, the *Jerusalem Post* reported on a panel at a conference under the headline:

“Key to Fighting Anti-Semitism? Encouraging Jewish Communities”.

The Jewish community of the US is now exploring what is done in Europe to protect synagogues, schools and other Jewish communal buildings. Cited in that article, the journalist Caroline Glick put it rather well when she said that anti-Semites are not such because of what Jews do:

“Their hatred defines them ... They are beyond our control. They are not antisemitic because of what we are, but because they are bigots and they attach their bigotry to the Jewish people”.

Also on 18 June, another *Jerusalem Post* article reported John Cusack’s retweeting of a picture. He later admitted that the image was not just critical of Israel but anti-Semitic. On the same day, CBS News reported António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, warning that the world is “in danger of forgetting” the lessons of the Holocaust, saying that,

“we are dealing with something that has spread ... and we are facing a massive phenomenon”.

On 4 June, Eva Cossé, a Human Rights Watch researcher, produced an article entitled “The Alarming Rise of Anti-Semitism in Europe”, citing the 2018 survey mentioned by my noble friend Lady Berridge. On 5 June, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency quoted the Volkswagen CEO saying that he had an “obligation” to fight anti-Semitism, stating:

“We have more obligation than others. The whole company was built up by the Nazi regime”.

Significantly, he is not just talking but taking action: a couple of weeks ago, the car manufacturing giant announced that it was funding the return of the Anti-Defamation League in Europe. This is just a snapshot of the past few days. Where are we and how did we get here? I respectfully disagree with the noble Lord, Lord Campbell-Savours, and pay tribute to the noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries, for his clear and honest speech. I have said it before and I will repeat it again: when Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader of the Labour Party, I argued that his views and opinions, which had been confined to the far-left corner of our society, would gravitate to the centre of British politics. Sadly, that has happened. His views and friends have become mainstream.

The few examples of the results of my Google search are shameful and unacceptable, as is the singling out of the one Jewish state—even in this House, our House of Lords, where scores of hostile Questions attacking the democratic Jewish state are tabled daily, with little evidence of questions being posed on dangerous totalitarian or despotic regimes across the globe. Just this week, two highly respectable mainstream institutions in British society have shown poor judgment, to put it mildly: the Cambridge Union, in hosting the

Malaysian Prime Minister, and the BBC, which clearly has many questions to answer about Abdullah Patel from Bristol.

The time has come for action, not words—in fact, the time for action came a few years ago. I welcome the fine words of my noble friend Lady Warsi. It is time for great British institutions like the Cambridge Union, the Labour Party and the BBC to act and clear out those who seek to divide us. This sort of hate must not be tolerated and must be called out. As I said after the tragic Pittsburgh shooting last October:

“It is often said that anti-Semitism is a problem for the Jewish community ... but does my noble friend agree that it should be seen as a grave threat to British values and British decency and to all that we hold dear?”—[*Official Report*, 29/10/18; col. 1122.]

12.48 pm

Lord Mitchell (CB): My Lords, I, too, thank the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, for introducing the debate, and in particular for starting off by referring to the Prime Minister of Malaysia. He may be 93 years old, but Mahathir Mohamad has given us a powerful backdrop for the debate. Addressing the Cambridge Union a few days ago, he said:

“I have some Jewish friends, very good friends. They are not like the other Jews, that’s why they are my friends”.

He even said that some of his best friends were Jewish. Well, with friends like him, who needs enemies? Malaysia is 5,000 miles away from the Middle East. It has no Jews and few Christians, yet 72% of its population have strong anti-Semitic views. Come to think of it, its record on gay rights is not that great either.

In 2015, the Anti-Defamation League in the United States updated its periodic analysis of anti-Semitism around the world. While some of the results surprise, others do not. At the top, 71% of Turks hold strong anti-Semitic views, as do 67% of Greeks, while 60% of Iranians have the same. These countries are followed by the usual eastern European countries, all hovering around 30%. As my own family background bears witness, eastern Europe has been a hotbed of anti-Semitism for many centuries, and old habits die hard. That said, Ukraine, which has a high rating of 32%, not only has a Jewish Prime Minister but a Jewish president. As they say in Brooklyn, “Go figure”.

The lowest scores are also predictable, with the Netherlands at 11%, the United States at 10% and Denmark at 8%. Where does our country stand? We are at 12%, which is not great but not too bad either. The ADL and Jewish policy review surveys both report that Jews are well regarded in the UK. However, these sentiments are not reflected or shared in the opinions of British Jews themselves, who feel that anti-Semitism is a major and growing threat. In the UK, attitudes towards Jews have also been analysed by political leaning. Hostility from the far right is centred around ancient anti-Semitism: Jews have too much power, they have different loyalties from the rest of the population and they get rich at the expense of others. From the far left, the vitriol is centred more on Israel. Israel is an apartheid state, it is committing mass murder in Palestine and it has too much control over global affairs. These attitudes are strongly prevalent in the circles that control the Labour Party and it is why I reluctantly

[LORD MITCHELL]

resigned three years ago. Here I must pay tribute to the noble Lord, Lord Harris of Haringey, for his powerful and emotional speech. I will reflect on what he had to say.

We have just celebrated the 75th anniversary of the D-day landings, an event that marked the beginning of the end of the Third Reich. Over the next 10 months we will commemorate the liberation of Europe as well as its death camps. Noble Lords will probably be aware that there is a well-developed project for a Holocaust remembrance centre to be constructed next to these Houses of Parliament in Victoria Gardens. It has been backed by all five past and present living Prime Ministers. In Berlin, the German Holocaust Memorial is sited opposite the Bundestag. How fitting it would be for our own national memorial to the world's greatest crime to be built here, alongside the Mother of Parliaments.

12.52 pm

Lord Sheikh (Con): My Lords, I have spoken on several occasions in your Lordships' House against all types of discrimination. As human beings, we have the right to be judged as individuals, irrespective of ethnicity, nationality or religious beliefs. The number of recorded anti-Semitic incidents, which range from vandalism to physical violence, has risen. The charity, Community Security Trust, counted 1,652 such incidents in 2018 which is the highest annual total since the charity was founded in 1984. The Anti-Defamation League also states that there has been a sharp increase in the number of anti-Semitic incidents. There is a correlation between the rise of populism and bigotry. The United Nations Secretary-General has spoken about the corrosive impact of populism in fuelling,

“racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or Islamophobia”,

in our societies. We as parliamentarians have a duty to challenge and reject the inflammatory rhetoric used by populists to sow division within our communities. Social media have proven to be an aggravating factor in the fight against all forms of discrimination. I should be grateful if the Minister informed noble Lords about any discussions which have taken place with social media providers about their obligations in this matter.

As your Lordships are painfully aware, anti-Semitism has deep roots in Europe. The number of anti-Semitic acts in France rose by 74% in 2018, and 1,646 instances of anti-Semitism were recorded in Germany last year. A united approach is needed to tackle anti-Semitism in Europe, which is why I wholeheartedly support the action plan of the European Jewish Congress. This plan urges the EU's 28 member states, individually and collectively, to allocate greater resources for monitoring and measuring anti-Semitism. European leaders have since pledged to work together to make life safer for European Jews. I would be grateful if my noble friend the Minister informed your Lordships' House as to the steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to honour this pledge.

One of the greatest tenets in British society is an individual's right to freedom of speech, but this freedom must be exercised with care. I am concerned when

those in positions of influence wilfully spread conspiracy theories about particular groups in our society. I was therefore greatly concerned to learn that the Equality and Human Rights Commission felt it necessary to launch a formal investigation into reports of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party. Any such behaviour in a political party is totally unacceptable.

Unfortunately, anti-Semitism is not limited to Europe. The Pittsburgh synagogue massacre and Charlottesville clashes in the United States were bleak reminders of the threat facing innocent people from hateful ideology. Those who harbour such views do not limit their bigotry to one group but discriminate against anyone who is different from them in any way. It is vital that we as parliamentarians show leadership in our communities when it comes to fighting anti-Semitism or any form of bigotry. Let us all get together to fight anti-Semitism.

12.57 pm

Baroness Tonge (Non-Aff): My Lords, I felt a little like Daniel in the lions' den at the beginning of the debate today; I just trust I will be spared, as he was, at the end of the debate. I congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, on an excellent, informative and interesting speech. I also single out the speech from the noble Lord, Lord Campbell-Savours, and endorse what he says about Jeremy Corbyn. He is not anti-Semitic; he is a man who feels passionately about human rights and, like me, does not always express it in the right sort of way. Nevertheless, he cares deeply about human rights.

I was born during the Second World War, and stories of the Holocaust haunted my childhood—and I mean haunted. We heard them at church, Sunday school and home; it was a dreadful time.

I have seen the statistics and accept that there has been a rise in anti-Semitic incidents over the last three years, but I also note—from reports by Tell MAMA and the recent report from the all-party group led by the noble Baroness, Lady Warsi—that there has been a much greater rise in Islamophobic incidents over the same period and that they are more frequent and severe. I am therefore saddened that we cannot discuss the rise in prejudice generally and—this is very important—the actions of the far-right political movements fanning the flames and poisoning our society. It is a very worrying development indeed, and we should have a debate at some stage.

However, according to the Kantor Center, which produces reports on anti-Semitism annually, there was a surge in violent anti-Semitic activity during and after Operation Protective Edge in 2014—a vicious and deadly attack on Gaza by the Israeli armed forces, in which thousands of Gazans were killed and injured. The killing and maiming continue, of course, with further attacks on Gaza and at the Friday protests.

These events are not quickly forgotten, and I suggest that some if not many people who commit anti-Semitic acts do not distinguish between ordinary Jewish people—I know that noble Lords hate that phrase—and the Zionist Israeli Government of what is now called the Jewish State of Israel. It is too difficult a distinction for many people to make.

I have said harsh things about the Government of Israel and their cheerleaders in this country over the years—I know that. But I am sick of the filthy abuse that I get online, sick of the accusations of anti-Semitism being levelled against me and appalled that I never get any apology, even when the accusations are found to be fabricated, as they were two years ago.

Finally, I wish noble Lords to know that I am not anti-Semitic. I have never been anti-Semitic, and I never will be anti-Semitic. I have Jewish and gentile friends who will vouch for me. But I am anti-injustice, and I think that the people of Palestine have suffered a terrible injustice over the last 100 years at the hands of the Zionist movement—I apologise if noble Lords do not like that phrase—and presently by the Israeli Government. On that I shall not be silenced.

1.01 pm

Lord Sacks (CB): My Lords, I am exceptionally grateful to the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, for tabling this debate, and to the many speakers who have conveyed to the Jewish communities here and elsewhere that we are not alone—that we have friends. At this time, that is very important.

I have just returned from a conference in Warsaw. It is a city that I do not know well, and I was shaken to discover that the Warsaw ghetto, which existed between November 1940 and May 1943, was pretty much in the centre of town. With its nine-foot-high walls topped by barbed wire, holding 400,000 Jews, its existence must have been known by everyone in Warsaw.

It was there that Jews were systematically starved and enslaved. In the summer of 1942, 254,000 of them were sent by train to their deaths by gas in the extermination camp called Treblinka. In April and May 1943, the Germans set about the destruction of the ghetto and the extermination of its population—300,000 were killed by bullet or gas, and 92,000 died through typhoid and starvation. That happened in open view in the centre of one of the great cities of Europe and no one protested. Try to imagine 400,000 Hindus or Sikhs imprisoned within ghetto walls in the middle of London. Imagine people passing those walls every day, knowing that behind them thousands were dying or being sent to their deaths, and no one saying a word. How did it happen?

It happened because in the 19th century, in the heart of emancipated Europe, anti-Semitism, once dismissed as a primitive prejudice of the Middle Ages, was reborn, mutated, promoted and tolerated throughout Europe. By no means was it confined to Germany. If you had been asked at the turn of the 20th century what were its epicentres, a reasonable answer would have been the Paris of the Dreyfus trial and Vienna under its mayor Karl Lueger. People who should have known better gave it respectability. They created the climate for a great crime against humanity.

That is where we are today. Within living memory of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism has returned, exactly as it did in the 19th century, just when people had begun to feel that they had finally vanquished the hatreds of the past. Today, there is hardly a country in the world, certainly not a single one in Europe, where Jews feel safe. It is hard to emphasise how serious that

is, not just for Jews but for our shared humanity, and not just for what it represents now, but for the danger that it signals for the future. A society, or for that matter a political party, that tolerates anti-Semitism—that tolerates any hate—has forfeited all moral credibility. You cannot build a future on the malign myths of the past. You cannot sustain freedom on the basis of hostility and hate.

1.05 pm

Baroness Altmann (Con): My Lords, it is an honour and a privilege to speak in this debate and to follow the noble Lord, Lord Sacks. I pay tribute to my noble friend Lady Berridge for introducing this debate so passionately. What can one say about the rise in global anti-Semitism within living memory of the Holocaust? That far-right extremism is increasing, and its traditional nationalist hatred of the other is worrying. But even more disturbing is that the far left has taken over mainstream political leadership with its own version of anti-Jewish rhetoric about the arch-capitalists, bankers and enemies of the working class. Those anti-Semitic sentiments are not about the situation in Israel: they predate the Jewish state, as so brilliantly explained by my noble friend Lord Finkelstein.

Across the globe, there are signs of increasing intolerance and normalisation of verbal acts of hate. Politicians perhaps believe that tapping into fear or hatred wins elections. Some support hatemongers perhaps hoping for support for another cause that they believe in or for a quiet life, or sometimes their own self-interest. As human beings, there are reasons to tremble at the current political landscape.

Exploiting hatred as political currency has its price, and I briefly build on the example already cited by the noble Lord, Lord Sacks, of Karl Lueger, who founded the Austrian Christian Social Party in the 1890s. His political support was drawn largely from petit-bourgeois tradespeople. Lueger discovered that anti-Semitic rhetoric was a vote winner. Historian Léon Poliakov, in his book *The History of Anti-Semitism*, noted,

“in Vienna any political group that wanted to appeal to the artisans had no chance of success without an anti-Semitic platform”.

Lueger is often cited as one of the first politicians who made use of populism as a political tool. Although his Jewish friends at the time considered that it was just a pose to get votes, exploiting the popular sentiment for his own purposes, it had dire consequences. His style of politics inspired right-wing Austrian leaders in 1918 to 1933, which began to undermine the cohesion of the Austrian state and, more importantly, inspired Adolf Hitler, who paid enthusiastic tributes to Lueger in *Mein Kampf*.

As parliamentarians, we must stand up against the fires of hate. The flames cannot be deployed strategically and remain contained. Conspiracy theories that shrug off facts, promulgation of propaganda or anti-Semitic tropes can unleash uncontrollable forces. What is the appropriate response? Do we follow our instincts for a quiet life and hope that it will all go away, even as it creeps further into the mainstream? Do we stand by and read one more book on the Holocaust believing that it is a way of standing up against the evils of hatred? No, we must speak out. We must consistently

[BARONESS ALTMANN]

reject denial, dissembling and diversion and claims that anti-Semitic sentiments were apparently endorsed accidentally, unwittingly and unknowingly. We must keep speaking up against anti-Jewish hyperbole spread by left-wing racist ideology whether masquerading as anti-Zionism or anti-capitalism. Those views are lapping at the shores of Governments across the globe, not just in the Middle East but here in Europe and beyond.

Therefore, I am enormously grateful to parliamentary colleagues who have stood up against the rising anti-Semitic tide—for the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group against Antisemitism and other APPGs that support tolerance and respect, to the leadership of the Conservative Party and to Conservative Friends of Israel, to Labour Friends of Israel and Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel, and to my noble friend Lord Pickles and Ed Balls, who have pushed for the Holocaust memorial to be established in the heart of Westminster, as well as many others whom I do not have time to enumerate.

Will the Minister detail which European programmes to combat anti-Semitism the Government will withdraw from or continue to support after Brexit? Has he had discussions with others in government about the effectiveness of the German approach to outlawing Holocaust denial and whether there are any plans to discuss such measures in the UK? Doing nothing must not be an option. Jews must not be sheep again. We promised we would never let it happen, and we must live up to that commitment.

1.10 pm

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (CB): My Lords, I, too, thank my noble friend Lady Berridge for obtaining this important debate. I have many wonderful Jewish friends, none more so than my good noble friend Lord Sacks and his wonderful family. We share the same family values and quirky sense of humour.

I have visited Auschwitz and seen something of the horrors that thousands of Jews—innocent men, women and children—suffered. In the collective madness of the 1930s and 1940s, Jews were vilified not only in Germany but across much of Europe, including this country. As child I was frequently called a Jew by those who wished to hurt me. However, I believe that talk of a worldwide anti-Jewish conspiracy is misleading and, importantly, takes us away from the real problem which is the way in which unprincipled politicians play on ignorance and majority bigotry, regardless of the consequences suffered by others, to achieve their ends. In Germany, Hitler blamed the Jews. In the India of 1984, it was the tiny Sikh minority. The killing of innocents in gas chambers is evil, but is it any more evil than dousing men, women and children with kerosene and burning them alive? In Hitler's Germany, Jews were made to wear distinctive clothing to show their inferior status. More recently, a decimated Sikh community in Afghanistan has been made to wear distinguishing patches and to fly a yellow flag outside their homes to make them an easy target for majority bigotry. Majority bigotry knows no boundaries and, as my noble friend Lord Sacks reminded us, has no constraints.

We like to believe prejudice is found in only a few. Sadly, it is far more widespread. We are all, in effect, hard-wired to be wary of difference. Unacceptable but understandable prejudice is easily manipulated to become irrational hatred. Since the Second World War, we have seen unspeakable acts of violence against targeted groups in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Bosnia, and I could go on. Special sympathy-seeking terms such as anti-Semitism or Islamophobia are understandable, but they take us away from the real problem, which is combating the more widespread bigotry suffered by all faiths. To borrow from Shakespeare, if Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others are cut, do we not bleed? Taken to an extreme, this giving of special consideration to some groups at the expense of others is, at best, unintended racism. Bigotry will continue to flourish until, in the closing words of the Sikh daily prayer, we look beyond ourselves and our group to the well-being of all members of our one human family.

1.14 pm

Lord Shinkwin (Con): My Lords, I congratulate my noble friend Lady Berridge on securing this debate, and I draw the House's attention to my entry in the register.

Before today's debate, I asked some Holocaust survivors for their thoughts on the increasing incidence of anti-Semitism. Survivor Manfred Goldberg told me:

"I recall politicians from right across the political spectrum committing themselves to policies which would ensure that such an avalanche of hatred could never, ever recur. I remember again and again hearing them utter emphatically 'never again' in their speeches. I truly did not dream that in my lifetime there could be such a thriving industry of Holocaust deniers. It is unbelievable while survivors are still alive. I just cannot comprehend how this denial momentum developed".

Fellow survivor Mala Tribich MBE speaks at schools and organisations to pass on the message, which she insists each new generation has to understand, that racism, discrimination and intolerance have to be challenged by us all or we have learned nothing from history. She told me that at the end of World War II,

"when I was liberated from Bergen-Belsen, the revelation of what had been happening in the occupied countries to Jews brought about such worldwide revulsion that I thought anti-Semitism would be a thing of the past. Sadly, the irrational hatred of Jewish people has not disappeared, and the rise of anti-Semitism makes me fear for the future once more. As a Holocaust survivor, I am especially concerned that young people understand what prejudice and discrimination can lead to".

Child survivor Eve Kugler told me:

"I am hugely concerned about the rise in anti-Semitism. For me, what began with signs everywhere in our German city warning 'Jews forbidden here' ended with the pogrom of Kristallnacht, the night when half a dozen Nazis invaded my home, arrested my father and consigned him to the concentration camp of Buchenwald. I cannot stress enough the fact that the increase in anti-Semitism is a danger not just to Jews but to everyone, a danger we ignore at our peril".

That was the message I gave at the various Yom HaShoah ceremonies that I was recently honoured to address as a guest of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. I put on record my thanks to the board for its kind and generous hospitality and also my admiration for the wonderful work that its national director Wendy Kahn and her colleagues do to promote the Jewish community and its continuing and significant

contribution to South Africa. I also thank the high commissioner to South Africa, Nigel Casey, for his support.

Like other noble Lords, I applaud the excellent work done to counter anti-Semitism in the UK by organisations such as the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Holocaust Day Memorial Trust and the Council of Christians and Jews. In conclusion, we must listen to survivors. As my noble friend Lord Polak reminded us, how we respond to the resurgence of the racist poison that is anti-Semitism says so much about our values. Only by standing in solidarity can we, together, defeat it.

1.19 pm

Lord Gold (Con): My Lords, I too thank my noble friend Lady Berridge for initiating this important debate and congratulate her on such a powerful opening speech. Most disturbingly, the existence of anti-Semitism remains, as we have heard, a major worldwide problem in 2019, when in so many ways we are a more liberal and tolerant society than ever before. We have heard horrific statistics of increased anti-Semitic incidents, which are not just verbal but violent. More Jews were killed in anti-Semitic violence around the world in 2018 than during any other year in decades. The number of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in the UK alone in 2018 was the highest ever. As we have heard, anti-Semitism is no longer confined to the activities of the far left or the far right but has become mainstream; it is seen in public forums, debates and discussions and manifested in all media channels, including most notably the social networks.

The Jewish population today feels increasingly insecure. In Europe, a survey conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency reported that more than 40% of Jews surveyed feared that they might be physically attacked, and almost 47% feared becoming victim to anti-Semitic verbal insult or harassment. Often, anti-Semitism is hidden—loosely, I might add—behind criticism of the State of Israel. That was an excuse recently used by students at Essex University to vote against the creation of a Jewish society there—a decision happily now reversed after media outcry.

We can speculate as to why anti-Semitism has been increasing but, as other noble Lords have said, there can be no doubt that social media is making it easy for hate groups to find each other and join up to spread their hatred. Just earlier this week, two young men were convicted at the Old Bailey of encouraging acts of terrorism after describing Prince Harry as a “race traitor”. These two blatant anti-Semites had used a social media platform to link up with like-minded individuals in the USA through a frightening neo-Nazi group which I will not give publicity to by naming.

How can we stop this rise in worldwide anti-Semitism? I shall make four suggestions, as there is clearly no one answer. First, as other noble Lords have said, there is a need to control social media. Here in the UK, the Government have promised measures to regulate companies over harmful content, including through fines and blocking services. If these companies cannot self-regulate, however, action must now be taken without delay. Will the Minister let us know what plans the Government will be unveiling in this respect?

Secondly, the justice system must come down hard on those who perpetrate anti-Semitic hate material; they must know that there will be serious consequences. But it is also clear that we need far better education to make people realise that everyone should be treated equally and nobody, including Jews, should be demonised. That education must spread to our universities, too. The Government should support those universities that stand up to fight anti-Semitism, ensuring that teaching staff do not spread hatred and that anti-Semitic guest speakers such as the Prime Minister of Malaysia, whom we have heard about, are not welcome in our universities or on these shores.

Next, we must call out all incidents of anti-Semitism. We must not be afraid to speak up when we witness anti-Semitic acts or hear anti-Semitic statements. I have tremendous admiration for those brave people in the Labour Party who have stood up against the anti-Semitism they have seen perpetrated in their party. I listened to the noble Lord, Lord Harris of Haringey, with such admiration, and I thank him. Action has been promised by the Labour leadership but it remains elusive. I am not equipped to say whether Jeremy Corbyn is anti-Semitic, but if he is not, let him demonstrate that fact by his actions.

Finally, as my fourth idea, I want to mention role models—especially for young people—who should stand up and denounce anti-Semitism. Recently, the Building Bridges campaign at Chelsea Football Club, which has been working with children and young people in schools, demonstrated what can be done. The club has teamed up with the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Jewish Museum London and others to raise awareness of anti-Semitism, as well as its impact on the Jewish community and society as a whole. It is action of this kind that we must encourage; we must never give in or give up.

1.25 pm

Lord Palmer of Childs Hill (LD): My Lords, I first thank the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, for introducing this debate in such detail. I declare my interest as president of the Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel; having heard the noble Lord, Lord Finkelstein, I must also declare my shopping habits in Golders Green.

The Motion asks the House to take note of anti-Semitism worldwide. A strange feature of anti-Semitism is that it occurs even in areas where there are no Jews. Anti-Semitism is possibly the original source of fake news. This can cover many areas. The most popular appears to be blaming Jewish bankers, the favourite being the house of Rothschild due to the difficulty in finding other so-called Jewish banks. The lie is to portray these bankers as aiming for world domination. They also falsely accuse George Soros. I am grateful to my noble friend Lady Ludford and the noble Lord, Lord Alton, for giving all the statistics so that I do not have to repeat them.

Then there is the preposterous fake news blaming the Jews, the Zionists and the Israelis for the disaster of 9/11 and the Twin Towers. This is despite documented proof that these were a series of co-ordinated terrorist attacks by the Islamic terror group al-Qaeda. None of this fake news on anti-Semitism is new. Still quoted in

[LORD PALMER OF CHILDS HILL]

some countries is the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which was briefly mentioned earlier. This is a fabricated anti-Semitic text purporting to describe a Jewish plan for global domination. This hoax—yes, it was a hoax—was first published in Russia in 1903 and translated into many languages. It is still widely available and presented as a genuine document. In the 1920s, Henry Ford funded the printing of 500,000 copies to distribute throughout the USA, and it was, of course, widely read in Nazi Germany. A translation appeared in Cairo in 1929 and again in 1951.

The third-largest Jewish community in the world is in France. That country has suffered from anti-Semitic murders, including in Toulouse and Paris. Last year, more than 3,000 Jews emigrated from France to Israel; the numbers for earlier years are similar. In 2015, 6,628 Jews emigrated from France to Israel—of course, this does not count all those in France who emigrated elsewhere. The noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, identified many countries; let me add a couple. A survey identified Hungary as the most anti-Semitic country in eastern Europe; incidents included phone threats, vandalising Jewish tombstones and vandalising a Holocaust memorial. Let us look further afield: in Venezuela—loved by dear Mr Corbyn—under Chavez and Maduro, the Jewish community has declined from 20,000 to less than 7,000. In the Middle East, outside Israel, Jews are not welcomed. Jews have difficulty entering Saudi Arabia and it is forbidden for religious minorities openly to practise their religion there. In the United States, the most shocking incidents were when 11 were killed at a synagogue in Pittsburgh and four killed in Poway, California. This is against a background of anti-Semitic cartoons in the *New York Times* and a supremacist march in Charlottesville with chants of “Jews will not replace us”.

Mention has been made of the Prime Minister of Malaysia; I will not repeat that. I thank the noble Lord, Lord Sacks, for mentioning Poland because it gives me an opportunity to say—I had not thought to say it—that my late maternal grandmother never left Poland. She was never heard of after the end of the Second World War. This affects many of us in this country personally; we are still alive remembering our close relatives such as my maternal grandmother.

Having set the worldwide scene, let me be more parochial. I am pleased to say that, as an Orthodox Jew born and living in the UK, I had not until recently seen a growth of anti-Semitism. I will, however, relate how I experience anti-Semitism, which some may not recognise as such. My noble friend Lady Ludford said that many of these things are often thought of as trivial, but they are not.

In 1997 I was a candidate in the general election, having fought four previous general elections. The Labour Party canvassers had a doorstep patter along the lines that they were calling on behalf of the Christian gentleman. The clear implication was that I qualified as neither a Christian nor a gentleman. At all public meetings one of the first questions from the audience was whether the candidates, including me, subscribed to Christian values. My reply was that I agreed with Judaeo-Christian values, which sort of got me out of the hole. It was the election in which I

was stopped and told—believe it—“Jew, go home”. Has the modern, Corbyn-led Labour Party changed other than to get worse? I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Harris, for his very brave comments about the Labour Party and I am proud that he said them. I do not agree with the noble Lord, Lord Campbell-Savours, or the noble Baroness, Lady Tonge, that we do not understand what Jeremy Corbyn is about. I understand what he is about and I do not approve of it. It is as near to anti-Semitic as one can get.

We have not heard a lot of campus stories. What happens to students on campus is sometimes quite horrific. At a prominent UK university, a Jewish student went out for the evening without locking the door to his room. When he returned, he found that a swastika had been etched into the pinboard on his wall. That is a genuine story. A lecturer at a Midlands university recently hosted and spoke at an event titled “Palestinian Rights, Prevent and the Misuse of Antisemitism”. Three Jewish students attended the event and afterwards went up to talk to the lecturer who had hosted the meeting to disagree with some of the points made. The net result was that the lecturer made an official complaint against these Jewish students, accusing them of intimidation for approaching her at the end of the meeting and of having recorded the meeting, which they had not. Some of those who attended may have done so but these students did not. The Jewish students spent three months worrying about this until they were eventually told that it had been dealt with.

I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Warsi, for her speech because it gave me great comfort. If we have a debate in this Chamber on Islamophobia, which is also a problem, many of us will rise to speak in that debate as well.

The modern manifestation of anti-Semitism is the way in which Zionism is portrayed. Wikipedia, always a good source, states that Zionism is the notion of creating a sovereign, self-ruling homeland for the Jewish people in the land of Israel. Zionism is a nationality as well as a religion, and these people deserve their own state in their ancestral homeland, Israel. I welcome the right reverend Prelate’s comment that it would be tilting at the moon for Israel to disappear—I think I have got that right. I take that as a blessing, and maybe it will help Israel in the future. I fail to see how a desire for a homeland for Jews can be seen as apartheid or racist, but it is so portrayed. Why is this anti-Semitic?

I stress that in Israel all religions are accepted; apostates, those who change their religion, are not harmed. LGBT people are accepted, and the country has one of the largest Gay Pride marches in the world. I thank the noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries of Pentregarth, for what he said about religions in Israel. Who knows what is happening in Israel with its politics at the moment—it could be anything, including another general election in September. The interesting thing is that in the most recent general election in Israel, the third-largest group in the Knesset was made up of the Arab parties. In the previous Knesset, when they stood as one group, they formed the second-largest group. This hardly sounds like an apartheid state. Compare this with Israel’s neighbours and near neighbours.

Such accusations are anti-Semitic because no such accusations are made—nor should they be—of countries in which the official religion, often the only religion accepted, is Islam, Hinduism, Christianity in all its forms or Buddhism, or even of atheist countries. I stress that criticising certain actions of the Israeli Government is not on its own anti-Semitic. In fact, criticism of that Government is a very popular sport among Israelis. However, when someone attacks Israel, homeland of the Jewish people, and attacks no other country, that is anti-Semitic.

1.34 pm

Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab): My Lords, I, too, thank the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, not only for securing this debate but for her excellent and powerful introduction. Like her, I found it difficult to prepare for the debate. I thank the APPG for its briefings because they told us how horrific the situation is. It is a wake-up call.

My parents—not my school, sadly—taught me never to forget the evil crimes of the Nazis, as passionately described by the noble Lord, Lord Sacks. Yet as we have heard in the debate, more than 70 years after the Shoah we see the repeated use—in the US by senior politicians and elsewhere—of anti-Semitic tropes reminiscent of the words of Goebbels. This is a demonstration that the evil of anti-Semitism is still present and remains a real threat to the lives and welfare of Jewish communities throughout the world. In the US, as we have heard, we saw the massacre at the Pittsburgh synagogue. We have heard about the increasing levels of violence across Europe, including in this country.

The noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, the noble Lord, Lord Alton, and other noble Lords have referred to the CNN polling by ComRes. Like them, I was particularly shocked by its findings. We have been too complacent about this rise of anti-Semitism. The key findings of the survey are that 28% say that Jewish people have too much influence in finance and business across the world compared with other people; 20% say that Jewish people have too much influence in the media across the world compared with other people; and, what is worse, 31% think that Jewish people use the Holocaust to advance their position and to achieve certain goals. That is horrific. Also, 44% of adults in the European countries surveyed see anti-Semitism as a growing problem in their countries. However, their answers to other questions suggest that they may think this is happening somewhere else: someone else is doing the bad thing, somewhere else.

In his speech at the end of last year, the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, argued that the rising tide of anti-Semitism and,

“the issues of rising religious hate crime against minority communities”,

posed a real challenge in the UK and abroad. He said that “divisive voices and actions” could be defeated,

“only through collective and collaborative action”.

That is what today’s debate is about—what we, not others, do together. At the General Assembly of the United Nations, the noble Lord stressed the commitment to stamping out anti-Semitism and called on the international community to combat it in all its forms.

Here I pay tribute to the work of the noble Lord, Lord Pickles, the UK’s envoy for post-Holocaust issues. He has done a tremendous job in promoting internationally the call for other countries to adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. That has been critical. Of course, the Minister has been working at the General Assembly and with UNESCO at a high-level meeting, focusing on the importance of education. That is certainly a vital ingredient in challenging this evil.

The noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, and the noble Lord, Lord Gold, highlighted the feeling among the Jewish community, particularly in Europe. They feel at risk. We have certainly heard about the surveys that have been conducted: 90% of those surveyed by the FRA, for example, felt anti-Semitism was growing in their country. We have heard reference to the 2014 ADL survey, which stated the Hungary was the most anti-Semitic country in Eastern Europe, with 41% of the population holding such views. That was highlighted in its elections, with Jobbik, a far-right party, receiving 17% of the vote. Its vice-president and vice-chairman proudly refer to themselves as Nazis and anti-Semites. That is in an EU country, a member of our family. We should be concerned about that and how we address it.

The Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s choice of language about the investor and philanthropist George Soros reflects the age-old conspiracy theories about Jewish wealth and power. I quote him—this is a leader of an EU country:

“We are fighting an enemy that is different from us. Not open, but hiding; not straightforward but crafty; not honest but base; not national but international; does not believe in working but speculates with money; does not have its own homeland but feels it owns the whole world”.

Today’s debate is about what we are doing to challenge such attitudes and how we are meeting our commitments. I hope the Minister will be able to address the commitments he has made and what progress we have been making.

One plea I would make is about what we do not just as a Parliament and a Government, but in civil society, our churches, our trade unions and, of course, just as importantly, our political parties when we hear anti-Semitism.

I will conclude by addressing the remarks of my noble friend Lord Harris. In April last year my honourable friend and trade union sister Ruth Smeeth said in a Commons debate:

“There have always been racists and anti-Semites in our country, lurking on the fringes of our society—both left and right—and I dare say there always will be. What is so heartbreaking is the concerted effort in some quarters to downplay the problem”.—*[Official Report, Commons, 17/4/18; col. 273.]*

I heard the noble Lord, Lord Finkelstein, and I certainly agree with his analysis. Sadly, like him, I have read many of Andrew Murray’s books. One thing I disagree with him on is that Leninism is not progressive trend. It is anti-democratic and its tradition has no place in a party that believes in parliamentary democracy. We on this side firmly believe that.

In my party, the process of dealing with complaints of anti-Semitic behaviour by individuals, as my noble friend Lord Harris said, has been too slow and far too often individuals are suspended only when their cases receive publicity. As Tom Watson, the party’s deputy leader, made clear, the reforms made by the party to

[LORD COLLINS OF Highbury]

address this have not been adequate. But this is not an administrative failure; it is, as my noble friend said, a political one. Addressing it requires leadership, which Jeremy Corbyn, working together with Tom Watson, must provide.

1.44 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) (Con): My Lords, I join all noble Lords in thanking my noble friend Lady Berridge, not only for securing this debate. I have known her for a long time. I think we entered your Lordships' House more or less at the same time. I was struck not only by her speech but by her excellent summary. I hazard a guess that everyone in this Chamber could relate to the sentiments and emotions she expressed in her introduction. I congratulate her on setting off this incredible debate robustly and insightfully.

In doing so, I also thank all noble Lords. This has been one of those debates where not only is it appropriate that a Minister answers from the Dispatch Box on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, but it is my immense honour to do so because it recognises the importance of this issue, not just as a country and in terms of what we are doing but as a collective, as the noble Lord, Lord Collins, so aptly put it. I stand by that. He and I work on these issues collectively. It requires that collective and collaborative response.

In introducing the debate, my noble friend asked whether it is right to attach "ism" to anti-Semitism. On a slightly lighter note, I was struck by how many isms we got through. There was Zionism, capitalism, Leninism, imperialism—the list went on. Most of those were contained in the four-minute contribution of my noble friend Lord Finkelstein.

Lord Collins of Highbury: He could pronounce Leninism.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: He could, yes. I tripped somewhat on that one.

On a serious note, this is deeply disturbing. The noble Lord, Lord Palmer of Childs Hill, and all noble Lords made the point that in the same month that we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Normandy landings, which marked the beginning of the end of the Holocaust, we still have to hold this debate on anti-Semitism. As the noble Lord, Lord Harris, reminded us in his powerful remarks, it shows the need to continue to act on this important issue. It is also clear to me that this old evil continues to blight the lives of Jewish communities throughout the world.

At this point, I pay tribute to two of my noble friends from when I took on my first ministerial job in the Department for Communities and Local Government. I of course refer to my noble friend Lord Pickles—should I call him my noble chum?—and my noble friend Lady Warsi. They encouraged me to go to Auschwitz-Birkenau as one of my first trips as Communities Minister. I travelled with a group of students. I am proud of the commitments that Governments have made, both at that time in the coalition Government and subsequently in the Government I now serve in, to continue on the platform of education that the noble Lord, Lord Collins, referred to. I deliberately went with those schoolchildren because I saw for myself

what that history would mean to their lives, and the importance of investing in their education early so that tomorrow, when they take leadership of our great country and all the different industries and sectors that define the modern, diverse United Kingdom, they do so with a recognition of the horrors of the past, but having learned from them so they build that cohesive, collective, progressive country we all desire to see. I am grateful to both my noble friends in that respect.

As we have heard from the noble Lord, Lord Palmer, and the noble Baroness, Lady Ludford, looking around the world and right here in the UK in 2018, the Community Security Trust logged a record high of more than 1,600 anti-Semitic attacks. The USA has suffered appalling fatal shootings in synagogues. People have been attacked simply for practising their faith. In Australia vandalism and intimidation have afflicted Jewish communities, and in the Middle East and elsewhere tensions remain high.

Several noble Lords, including my noble friends Lord Leigh, Lord Polak, Lord Gold and Lady Berridge, the noble Baroness, Lady Ludford, and the noble Lord, Lord Mitchell, mentioned Malaysia. As many noble Lords will recall, Malaysia is a member of the Commonwealth. I am a Minister of State for the Commonwealth and assure them that we were the first to object most vociferously to its holding of the Games, since it sought to ban athletes who wanted to participate, because they were from Israel. I am proud that we did. In response to the recent statement by Malaysia's Prime Minister, I will digress with a personal anecdote. Many years ago, as I undertook political life and people got to know me, after a while one came forward and said, "You know what, Tariq? You are just normal". I did not take that as an insult. What they alluded to was that, yes, I was of Indian-Pakistani heritage and Muslim by faith but those things that impacted me as a citizen of this country—as a proud Brit—were exactly the issues that mattered to anyone else. However, when Prime Ministers of other countries come to our country and try to disturb, divide and then dismiss these important issues, we need to stand up and make it clear that they may express those views, but we will oppose them bilaterally. It is important that our institutions also recognise that wherever they find any form of bigotry or—yes—anti-Semitism, they must reject it in its entirety.

My noble friends Lord Leigh and Lord Sheikh and other noble Lords talked of tackling global anti-Semitism. In a couple of weeks' time it will be a year since I was appointed the Prime Minister's special envoy on freedom of religion. It is a great honour, but it would be remiss of me not to recognise, as many noble Lords have also, the important work of the UK's special envoy, my noble friend Lord Pickles. He raises the subject of anti-Semitism directly with other Governments, many of whom recognise, as we do, the need for specific and collaborative action. Earlier this week, as we heard from my noble friend, he attended in Bucharest the first international meeting of special envoys tackling anti-Semitism, along with members of the World Jewish Congress. In March he was in Poland, in discussion with community leaders.

I did not expect a Brexit question, but my noble friend Lady Altmann managed to weave one in—congratulations on that. I assure her, and my noble friend Lord Pickles,

that I am working very closely with Ján Figel, the European Commission's FoRB envoy. We continue to raise these issues, and will continue to collaborate in post-Brexit Britain.

These channels of communication are vital, because we must never retreat into fearfulness. We must step forward. If we ignore this issue, it will not go away. The theme of next January's Holocaust Memorial Day is "stand together". That is what we all must do and the Government are determined to do: stand with people of all faiths and none. As we heard from the noble Lord, Lord Sacks, the worst humanitarian crimes of history have occurred when groups were singled out, marginalised and scapegoated. I am delighted that he has joined us for this debate today, although when he was sitting next to the noble Lord, Lord Singh of Wimbledon, I felt that on those Benches we had our own little "Thought for the Day" going on.

The fundamental democratic values of individual liberty and mutual respect must at this juncture in 2019, as we have heard from many noble Lords, lead us to collectively stand together with our neighbours to call out marginalisation of any community, wherever we see it. I note very carefully the challenges that the Labour Party has faced, which the noble Lord, Lord Harris, spoke about. Equally, as I look towards my party, I pay tribute to my noble friend Lady Warsi, and her campaign to ensure that if there are bigots in our party, there are people calling out instances of Islamophobia for what they are. They must be investigated fully.

I absolutely agree with the noble Lord, Lord Singh. It is important that we act collectively on this issue. He referred to more recent examples, but the history of the Holocaust teaches us that if we ignore these crimes, they become crimes against humanity; therefore, we must stand together to defeat any kind of prejudice, wherever we see it. The UK Government have been at the forefront of calling out prejudice and discrimination in all its forms. The noble Lord, Lord Collins, referred to my speech at the UN General Assembly last year. Education is so important. Interestingly, I was interviewed afterwards and the journalist said, "Minister, despite being a Muslim, you're very strong on anti-Semitism". I corrected him, saying that it is because I am a Muslim that I am strong on anti-Semitism because of the common humanity that unites people of every faith. As we have heard time and again, and as my noble friends Lady Warsi and Lord Sheikh have said, the greatest test of an individual is standing up not for the rights of yourself but for the rights of others. Through our diplomatic activity, we actively promote freedom of religion or belief. Indeed, in my role as special envoy I have prioritised the need to tackle discrimination on the basis of religious or ethnic identity in all our posts, wherever we find it—be it through collaborative work at the United Nations, through our work at the OSCE or with the EU. Ministers and senior officials regularly raise individual and community cases with Governments directly, and challenge practices and laws that discriminate on the basis of a person's belief or religion.

Let me say a word about Israel. I have visited Israel as a Minister, but I have also visited Israel privately, with my family. As we were rightly reminded by the

right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Chester, Israel is a country that brings together communities of all faiths, as I saw when we visited Jerusalem. As I saw when I visited Haifa, it is a country that protects those minorities who are often persecuted elsewhere. I say to the noble Baroness, Lady Tonge, that because of the strength of that relationship, when it comes to those challenges—when it comes to some of those questions she has raised with me—we are able to raise them bilaterally. We will continue to do so, because being a democracy means being transparent and responsive in defence of any challenge that may be posed, but it is a strength of the relationship that the United Kingdom—

Baroness Tonge: My Lords—

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In the interests of time, I will not give way, but I am happy to meet the noble Baroness, as she knows.

This relationship is an important one, as with any country—I mentioned Malaysia earlier. We must stress in our bilateral exchanges that where we disagree with a country, we will raise it. We will continue to invest in our relationships worldwide. It is the strength of those relationships that allows us to challenge on certain issues.

I turn to the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. As my noble friend Lord Pickles reminded us, the UK was among the first to adopt the working definition of anti-Semitism in 2016. We value the definition because it illustrates specific examples of behaviour that may be anti-Semitic. This means that while it is not legally binding, it is a useful tool for criminal justice agencies and other public bodies in understanding how anti-Semitism manifests itself in the world today. It also helps combat Holocaust denial, in an age of indifference to objective truth. For these reasons, we are lobbying others to adopt the definition. My noble friend Lord Pickles has been especially active in this area, recently mentoring Australia on its journey to join this alliance.

My noble friends Lord Sheikh and Lord Gold raised specific questions about online abuse. I agree that religious intolerance spreads quickly and globally online. The Government recognises the extent of this threat. I assure noble Lords that we are working with internet providers and other Governments to regulate social media, shut down hate speech and protect users. For example, in November 2018, we supported an international experts' conference which looked at anti-Semitic abuse online, particularly against women. We are currently working with the Antisemitism Policy Trust on this very issue.

My noble friend Lady Berridge asked about the G20 agenda for the meeting which will take place later this month in Japan. The specific issue of online harms is certainly being looked at. I will also raise the issue that she raised about anti-Semitism, which I am sure will feature in the margins of that meeting.

My noble friend Lord Polak asked a simple question about how we come together on collective action. He will know from our conversations that I have a simple answer to his question: yes, of course I agree. In his powerful contribution, he talked about how communities can achieve the outcomes that we desire only by acting together.

[LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON]

The noble Lords, Lord Harris of Haringey and Lord Campbell-Savours, talked about the domestic challenges. We must acknowledge the global nature of the problem, while knowing that there are actions we can take at home. The Government have maintained a close relationship with Jewish communities through the cross-government working group to tackle anti-Semitism. We have committed £14 million to the protective security grant to keep Jewish schools and institutions safe. I hold regular faith round tables, at which Jewish and other faith leaders join me to discuss current issues and emerging concerns.

I am sure I speak for many in your Lordships' Chamber when I pay particular tribute to our Prime Minister, Mrs May. When my right honourable friend was Home Secretary, I saw the passion and conviction she had for ensuring that those funds were not just protected and sustained but strengthened. I am sure that, in time, history will judge her for the important role that she played in tackling anti-Semitism.

Noble Lords: Hear, hear!

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The noble Lord, Lord Alton, and the noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries, talked about the importance of the evidence base and statistics. It is shocking when we see the challenges that we face here in 2019. Again, those underline the importance of acting together.

Reference was also made to the new Holocaust memorial. I am delighted, honoured and proud, as I think we should all be, that the UK is leading in this respect. The additional £25 million in government funding will go a great way towards it. I say to my noble friend Lord Shinkwin that one thing which has struck me—I am sure this will touch the hearts of many, including the noble Lord, Lord Mitchell, who referenced it—is that as we see those Holocaust survivors pass on, would it not be incredible if those survivors were the ones laying the first bricks as we break ground on that site? This is one area I am looking at, including in my most recent discussions with the Chief Rabbi. I hope noble Lords will agree that we should work together in pursuit of that aim.

There is much I could say but in the limited time I have, I wish to thank again every noble Lord who has taken part in this extremely important debate. As our Prime Minister, Mrs May, said in May, through that Holocaust memorial we must,

“ensure that every generation understands the responsibility that we all share—to fight against hatred and prejudice in all its forms, wherever it is found”.

In the words of the revered and respected Rabbi Hillel, who said in the Babylonian Talmud 2,000 years ago:

“That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary”.

We have reflected on these words, which stay true to this day.

The next Holocaust Memorial Day marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. It also marks the 25th anniversary of the genocide of the Bosniak Muslims in Srebrenica. Only yesterday, I returned from Sarajevo, the capital of a country which is building from its past. I was very heartened by the interreligious council that I met there. There were Muslim and Christian

representatives, including Orthodox and Catholic representatives. But the chairman of that council is Jewish and this showed how, in a country that only 20-odd years ago was torn apart by conflict, faith communities and faith leaders are coming together collectively to address the issues, including the priority of bringing justice to the victims of sexual violence in conflict.

I have never felt that faith is to blame. In all faiths and beliefs, collectively, lies the answer; that is what brings us together today. Perhaps I may end with the wise words of my mother, which define my own ideology thus. One day when I returned, as a Muslim attending a Christian school, from learning about Judaism, she said very sweetly to me: “Tariq, there is no confusion. When we build, we build with the foundations and the foundations of our faith are Judaism. After those foundations, the walls of Christianity were erected and after that, the roof of Islam completed the house of Abraham. The other windows and doors represent other faiths and beliefs, which together constitute the house of God”.

2.05 pm

Baroness Berridge: My Lords, I thank noble Lords for their contributions today but in my passion, I think I have caused a little confusion to *Hansard*, whose staff have been sending me some notes. I hope that I did not confuse your Lordships but when I mentioned Jo Brand, I was endorsing the work of the Metropolitan Police: when people are already throwing milkshakes, to suggest battery acid is inappropriate. To be fair to her, I think she corrected herself immediately afterwards and realised that she had stepped across the line. When I referenced the quote from Luther, I did not put a subject in the sentence, which begins:

“Even if they were punished in that most gruesome manner”.

I will provide the full quote to *Hansard*, which is from a public lecture in Oxford last year.

There are of course too many speakers to mention everyone individually, but I am sure that all your Lordships wish the special envoys all the best for their meeting on Monday. I hope that theirs will be a meeting of the super-magnificents, as my noble friend Lord Polak described them. I draw attention briefly to my noble friend Lady Warsi's comment that we should speak on behalf of others; many people in today's debate have exhibited that quality. I was very inspired by the comment of the noble Lord, Lord Sacks, that freedom cannot be built on the basis of hostility and hate.

The theme throughout has been that if our citizens, or European citizens, are listening to this debate and have problems, their problems may be the fault of their Government or of the EU; their problems, perish the thought, may even be their own fault. But what they are not is the fault of the Jews.

Motion agreed.

Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Bill

First Reading

2.07 pm

The Bill was brought from the Commons, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Age Verification Statement

2.07 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Lord Ashton of Hyde) (Con): My Lords, with the leave of the House I will repeat a Statement made by my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for DCMS in the other place earlier today. The Statement is as follows:

“Mr Speaker, I would like to make a Statement in relation to the implementation of age verification for online pornography. As the House knows, the Government announced that age verification for online pornography, under the Digital Economy Act, would come into force on 15 July 2019. It has come to my attention in recent days that an important notification process was not undertaken for an element of this policy, and I regret to say that this will delay the commencement date. I wanted to take the opportunity to come to the House as soon as possible to apologise for the mistake that has been made and explain its implications.

In autumn 2018, we laid three instruments before the House for approval. One of those instruments, the *Guidance on Age Verification Arrangements*, sets out standards that companies need to comply with. This should have been notified to the EU Commission in line with the technical standards and regulations directive, and it was not. Upon learning of this administrative oversight, I have instructed my department to notify this guidance to the EU and re-lay the guidance in Parliament as soon as possible. However, I expect that this will result in a delay in the region of six months.

As the House would expect, I want to understand how this occurred. I have therefore instructed my department's Permanent Secretary to conduct a thorough investigation. That investigation will have external elements to ensure that all the necessary lessons are learned. Mechanisms will also be put in place to make sure that this cannot happen again. In the meantime, there is nothing to stop responsible providers of online pornography implementing age-verification mechanisms on a voluntary basis, and I hope and expect that many will do so.

The House will also know that there are a number of other ways in which the Government are pushing our objective of keeping young people safer online. The *Online Harms White Paper* sets out our plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. Alongside the White Paper, we also published the social media code of practice under the 2017 Digital Economy Act, which gives guidance to providers of social media platforms on appropriate actions they should take to prevent bullying, and insulting, intimidating and humiliating behaviours on their sites. We will also publish interim codes of practice detailing steps that we expect companies to take to tackle terrorist content and online child sexual abuse and exploitation. These will pave the way for the new regulatory requirements.

We set out in the White Paper our expectations that companies should protect children from inappropriate content. We will produce a draft code of practice on child online safety to set clear standards for companies to keep children safe online, ahead of the new regulatory

framework. During the consultation on the White Paper, we heard about the technical challenges associated with identifying the specific ages of users, and so I have commissioned new guidance, to be published in the autumn, about the use of technology to ensure that children are protected from inappropriate content online.

The new regulatory framework for online harms announced in the White Paper will be introduced as soon as possible, because it will make a significant difference to action taken by companies to keep children safe online. I intend to publish the Government response to the consultation by the end of the year, and to introduce legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows after that, but I recognise that many Members of this House and people beyond it have campaigned passionately for age verification to come into force as soon as possible to ensure that children are protected from pornographic material they should not see. I apologise to them all for the fact that a mistake has been made which means that these measures will not be brought as soon as they and I would like.

But there are also those who do not want these measures to be brought in at all, so I make it clear that, although my Statement is an apology for delay, it is not a change of policy or a lessening of the Government's determination to bring these changes about. Age verification for online pornography needs to happen, and I believe that it is the clear will of the House and those we represent that it should and that, in the clear interests of our children, it must”.

2.13 pm

Lord Stevenson of Balmacara (Lab): My Lords, I am grateful to the Minister for repeating the Statement made earlier. I have come, as is probably obvious from my dress, from a memorial service for the late Jeremy Heywood, former head of the British Civil Service and Cabinet Secretary. The theme of that wonderful event was the quality of the British Civil Service. Its skills and expertise are unparalleled in the modern world, and it is a true legacy of his work in that period. It is therefore rather sad to come from that to this, which appears to be an apologia for the work of civil servants. I assume that it is civil servants we are talking about here and not Ministers, although the Minister did not say that in the Statement. Honest mistakes happen, and I do not suggest that anything other than that is at stake here.

Having said that, it would be helpful to know more about what has been happening and how it will be progressed to make sure we learn from the mistakes. When was this error discovered? I note that the issue is about the Technical Standards and Regulations Directive; it does not say this in the Statement, but that was brought in in 2015, so we have had some four years of experience of it. I cannot believe that the Minister will say in response that the department has had no experience of that regulations directive, because it has passed a large number of regulations over the last few years, which we have enjoyed going through together. But it certainly means that the department is aware of the structure under which this regulations directive operates. It is therefore surprising that it was unable to meet the standard for the age verification for online pornography SI that we are talking about.

[LORD STEVENSON OF BALMACARA]

Secondly, as it does not say this in the Statement, I would be grateful if the Minister could confirm when the Secretary of State learned of this error. Could he give us some more details about how it came to pass?

The Statement says there is going to be a review. That is obviously right. There are two things I want to ask about that. First, it says, rather interestingly, that there will be “external elements”. I assume that does not mean they are going to meet outside in the park and do it in the sun, but could the Minister flesh that out a little? Are we talking here about a mixed group, including external independent persons, who will be able to bring objectivity to the arrangements? It would help if he could make that clear. Secondly, will the review be published when it is completed? With an error of this magnitude, which is going to cause so much difficulty, there is a case for that, so I would be grateful if the Minister could respond.

Behind all this, is there not a bigger question? The Statement hinted that there are those who feel that the way the Government are progressing in this matter is not right. It is based on an assumption that technology will operate in a way that it probably will not, and is based on an old-fashioned view about how technology will help us get to the point that we all want across this House and wider society, which is where children should not be exposed to pornography. The truth is that, although the Statement says that this set of regulations was due to come into force on 15 July, in fact that is a later date than was originally proposed, which was much earlier in the year. This is probably because the issue of the technology itself has not yet been clarified.

There is a wider question about that. The Statement falls into the mistake of equating age verification with action to prevent pornography coming before children. As the latter part of the Statement makes clear, a lot more needs to be done here. This particular regulation—although in no sense do I want to dilute our support for it—may prove not to be the most important element of what we are talking about. The draft code of practice on online child safety, engagement with companies and the new guidance that has been published are all very well, but the online harms White Paper, with its requirement for a duty of care to be placed on companies providing material for the internet, will be the one major step forward that surely will break the dam on this issue. We must focus on that.

Therefore, we should perhaps take time to reflect on whether we are pressing too hard for something that may not turn out to be the long-term solution, without giving the body—even though I think the BBFC is the wrong body—the powers to carry out the work of closing down sites and stopping money flowing to them. Nevertheless, we support the general aim and objective set out in the White Paper and wish to see it brought forward. Age verification is a surrogate for what we are trying to do. It will not solve the problem by itself. It has already been proved that it is easy to get round. Can the Minister confirm that he takes the broader point that there is more here than this particular issue?

Lord Clement-Jones (LD): My Lords, I too thank the Minister for repeating the Statement. This is unfortunate to say the least, and it means these AV requirements will be put in place nearly three years after the original Digital Economy Act was passed. If the Minister does the maths, he will find it has been three years since they were incorporated into the Act.

The noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, asked all the right questions and made a comment about the professionalism of our Civil Service. But I find it staggering that, if you recall, we had exactly the same situation with the Video Recordings Act when notification did not take place. We all had to come back here and re-pass aspects of that Act because that notification had not taken place. I do not understand why that experience was not engraved on every heart in the DCMS or Home Office. I think it was a Home Office requirement at the time, but I dare say the people themselves transferred to the DCMS subsequently. In those circumstances, will compensation be available to companies that have developed age-verification solutions and gone through the voluntary certification and assessment process in anticipation of the guidance going live this July? I would expect nothing less.

During the passage of the Digital Economy Act, we on these Benches agreed in principle with the concept of age verification for pornographic sites for the purposes of child protection, but we wanted greater safeguards in the Bill in terms of third-party verification and privacy. Sadly, that did not happen. My noble friend Lord Paddick and I argued in 2017 for statutory third-party age verification and queried that last year when the regulator was nominated as the BBFC.

What is the current level of voluntary operation of age-verification methods, in response to the guidance or as an independent action? Does any site operate a voluntary age-verification process? If so, are such processes now exclusively third party, which was the essence of our original amendment and why we felt that that was an important privacy aspect? Explicitly, what will be the procedure for the re-approval of the guidance? Will it be by the negative or the affirmative procedure?

My noble friend Lord Paddick argued last year for a much greater commitment to compulsory age-appropriate sex and relationship education for all children, including telling children what they should do if they encounter online pornography. That is an important other side of the coin. What resource is devoted to this increasingly important aspect of sex education? What difference will the new DNS over HTTPS protocol make to the eventual ability of the BBFC to enforce these requirements or to force internet service providers to comply?

The Secretary of State refers in the Statement to the implementation of the online harms White Paper, which is strongly related to the age-verification agenda. The Minister knows that we have reservations about over-hasty legislation; we believe that pre-legislative scrutiny would be wise and would iron out some of the scope and definitional problems. There are conflicting views about the width of the duty of care and, on the other hand, the dangers of being over-prescriptive.

There are many voices still to be heard before we can be sure that the legislation will be sound. Is not a draft Bill the way forward?

There is no reason, however, why Ofcom should not be designated early after the end of the consultation—after all, it has the clout, the technological understanding, and experience in regulating content where it converges with technology, in using enforcement and information-gathering powers and in co-operating with other regulators. It could draw up the first code of practice on online safety, mentioned in the Statement.

There is some concern that current policies are driving us into a world where age verification will be required for all kinds of access other than to pornography. That seems to be the implication of the Secretary of State's remarks about technical challenges associated with identifying the specific age of companies' users. Is that the intention? We need to be extremely wary of the consequences of that. That must be fully debated before we go further on age-verification requirements.

Lord Ashton of Hyde: My Lords, I thank both noble Lords for their sensible comments and repeat our apology. The noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, commented on the memorial service for Lord Heywood and the quality of the Civil Service, so I agree that it is unfortunate that we are today bringing forward this Statement. I want to make it clear that Ministers, not civil servants, are responsible for the department. Both the Secretary of State and I take our responsibilities seriously. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the civil servants—nearly all the time, though not in this case—and to say that they work extremely hard to protect children. They are absolutely committed and work flat out—I shall come to the online harms White Paper—so the responsibility lies fairly and squarely with Ministers.

The noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, asked how we learned and when. We were informed early last week—on 11 June, I think. A letter from the BBFC was written on 11 June; the Secretary of State was informed on Friday 14 June. Earlier this week he asked civil servants to tell him what the implications were and whether we could do anything to get age verification in place earlier. He then came before the other House today, as soon as possible, to apologise and explain what had happened.

The noble Lord rightly said that we have had experience of the technical standards and regulations directive. The department notified the Act but not the regulations that fell under it. Again, it was a mistake and we are making sure that it will not happen again.

In connection with making sure that it does not happen again, the noble Lord asked about “external elements”. By that, we mean that the review will include people from outside the department to make sure that there is an independent view. I cannot confirm whether it will be published—I will have to go back to the department to ask that.

As for technology, there have been delays. We need to make sure that the technology is effective and that privacy is taken into account. Obviously, the third-party age verifiers are subject to the new privacy law under the GDPR. One reason for the delay was to make sure that the additional voluntary certification scheme is up and running. I say in answer to the noble Lord,

Lord Clement-Jones, that sites were expecting to have to be ready to comply with the requirement on 15 July. There has been no voluntary compliance before that; I am not surprised by that. With sites having been prepared to do it on 15 July, we would expect them to bring it in within the timescale of roughly six months—to which I shall come in a minute. We do not anticipate any compensation being paid, because sites were expected to do it on 15 July. They may have a little more time, but our intention is that they should do it as soon as possible. We will bring back the same regulations, because we have to bear in mind that this is about protecting children who accidentally stumble on pornography that they would not be able to stumble on in the offline world. We are concerned to get this in place as soon as possible, which is why we are very disappointed with our mistake.

The broader point made by both noble Lords was that this is a limited measure. We have always acknowledged that; it is for commercial sites. There are other areas in which children can come across pornography, such as social media sites, even though that is not their primary business. That is where online harms will come in. The noble Lord, Lord Clement-Jones, asked about pre-legislative scrutiny. We are very much in a cleft stick here. We of course understand the benefits of pre-legislative scrutiny, but we have to move as quickly as we can to correct some of the problems, particularly in respect of things that are already illegal such as child sexual exploitation and terrorism. However, the noble Lord would not expect me to make a commitment on that when the consultation has not even finished; no doubt, he will respond to the consultation to make his point.

The noble Lord, Lord Clement-Jones, mentioned the Video Recordings Act, where it is true that notification did not place under the old technical services directive. That was 25 years ago, in 1984, and it was corrected in 2010. So the noble Lord is right that there was a similar mistake 25 years ago. We will take measures to ensure that, whether in 25 years, two years, or one year, it will not happen again. I acknowledge that this has happened before, albeit some time ago.

The procedure on the guidance now is that it has to be laid before the EU for three months in draft form. If the EU makes some comments on it, it may have to stay for another month. After that period, it will have to be laid before the House, under the negative procedure, as the House has already agreed. That means we have to allow 40 days for any noble Lord to pray against it. It will take roughly six months to get through both Houses at the end of the up-to-four-month period.

There are several technical issues about the enforceability of the policy—not the policy itself. We also have to take this into account for the online harms White Paper. A suite of enforcement options is available. For example, the regulator can use payment providers and ancillary service providers to enforce the regulations, but these have to come in first and that is what we have had to delay.

2.31 pm

Baroness Benjamin (LD): My Lords, the Minister is well aware of my long-standing support for this age-verification regime and will not be surprised to learn

[BARONESS BENJAMIN]

how disappointed I am to hear about this delay. This means that more innocent children will be able to accidentally stumble across pornography, which, research has shown, will have harmful effects on their well-being. This is a huge price to pay for an unavoidable mistake. While I accept the Minister's assurance that this is a DCMS administrative error, I would be grateful for confirmation that, as soon as the necessary processes have been undertaken with the Commission, the Government will announce the entry into force of this new regime.

It is important that we know that the Government intend to resolve this issue as soon as possible. We need to hear that time and time again. I would also be grateful for reassurance that this delay is in no way related to underlying privacy concerns that I know are being put forward by groups opposed to age verification in principle. I have met the BBFC and age-verification providers and believe that their additional protections are robust. Will the Minister confirm that the BBFC still has the full support of the Government for this certification, which was developed with the support of the department? Can the Minister please reassure me, all the people who have supported this regime and the children who will suffer, that he will take action to protect them as soon as possible?

Lord Ashton of Hyde: Yes, we will take action as soon as possible. As I explained, after the three or four months with the EU in draft are up, we will immediately proceed with laying it before Parliament. The delay is then the 40 days that it has to lie. As soon as it gets through both Houses of Parliament, it will be in force. We certainly intend to go through with it as soon as possible. The noble Baroness might like to check *Hansard*. She said that it was an "unavoidable mistake"; I have to confess it was an avoidable mistake. We should have avoided it and should avoid it in future. I also confirm that this was a mistake and the delay is in no way related to privacy concerns. That does not mean we are not taking privacy seriously. The additional voluntary certification scheme is important. We take privacy seriously, but that was not the reason for the delay.

The Earl of Erroll (CB): I also regret this and am very sad about it. We have already been waiting for two years. Talk about dragging feet on this; I cannot believe it takes so long. I do not understand what the problem is with the guidance on age-verification arrangements. I have read it again and it does not contain anything technical. It lays out some fairly obvious things in plain English; it talks about various aspects of this and ends up saying that the Government would like to set up a voluntary certification scheme. That is about it; there is no technical stuff in there at all, so I am not sure why this is being used as an excuse to delay further. Could it possibly be because the BBFC has just launched a certification scheme that is really only about data protection? That is not its job; it is deliberately excluded from the Digital Economy Act. Data protection is the job of the Information Commissioner's Office, which can levy huge fines. The BBFC is meant to be worrying about age verification and the protection of children online. Why is its certification scheme not about that? Its scheme is very

heavyweight on the GDPR—or DPA 2018—stuff. Does it, therefore, think it needs more time? Was this just an excuse to delay it a little further?

If the Government are to issue new guidance in the autumn, I hope they will look at the British Standard. I also hope they will talk to the age-verification providers. They know how to do this, and how to do it anonymously. This is why, looking at the guidance, the BBFC says that the websites should not do it themselves. People bounce off, get verified elsewhere and get an anonymous, encrypted token back to prove they have done it. There is no problem or technical glitch with this. The Home Office may need to start talking to people who know how to do it; this really worries me.

The certification scheme is a good idea, so the websites know that the age-verification providers are all covered correctly. You need the GDPR stuff in there, but can it please be primarily about age verification and not be ridiculously expensive? At the moment, we are looking at £20,000 a pop for the scheme that the BBFC is proposing. A proper scheme, using the BEIS guidance, through the UK Accreditation Service, would have done a proper accreditation for certification providers for a quarter of the price or less. The Government have wasted a lot of money setting this scheme up and a lot of other people will waste a lot of money trying to get certification. As it is not really for age verification, it gives no guarantees of safety. Why are the Government doing it this way? As the whole thing is voluntary anyway, and certification not compulsory, why are they still delaying. Why does the BBFC not just start enforcing on 15 July? People are not going to put in age verification. Why disadvantage yourself, at extra cost, when you have no reason to do so? The websites will not do it until the last minute. In the meantime, the age-verification providers, which are all ready to go, are suffering economically very badly as a result of this delay.

Lord Ashton of Hyde: First, this is not an excuse for delaying. The legal advice that the BBFC has received, confirmed by the legal advice that my department has received, is that the guidance needs to be notified to the EU under the technical standards and regulations directive. The other two measures do not, so we are laying only the ones that we need to. I cannot give the noble Earl chapter and verse about the legal reasons today, but I can assure him there was no doubt about it. It was not even 50:50; it was absolutely correct. If there was any other way that we could have done it, without delaying it for this long, we would have done so.

We do not believe that money has been wasted in preparing this: we think that age verification is what Parliament asked for and what the majority of Members of both Houses want. That is the way it has been set up. Although it is technically quite difficult, it is not incompatible with the regulation of the ICO. The ICO, as the noble Earl rightly said, is responsible for data privacy and personal data breaches. The age-verification system is set up to comply with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act. The additional voluntary certification scheme—which is voluntary—is a further reassurance to users that even higher standards than the minimum standards of the GDPR apply. So I think it is correct that we continue with it.

As for why we are having to delay this measure, if we bring in age verification now, it will be unenforceable in UK law, because it will have been incorrectly proceeded with against EU law and against the technical standards and regulation directive. Unfortunately, we have concluded that there is no choice but to delay it.

Export Licences: High Court Judgment Statement

2.41 pm

The Earl of Courtown (Con): My Lords, with the leave of the House, I shall now repeat a Statement given earlier today by my right honourable friend the Secretary of State. The Statement is as follows:

“Today, the Court of Appeal handed down its judgment following Campaign Against Arms Trade’s appeal against the Divisional Court’s decision, in July 2017, to dismiss CAAT’s claim for judicial review of licensing decisions about military exports to Saudi Arabia for possible use in the conflict in Yemen. The case was heard by the Court of Appeal from 9 to 11 April this year. The original judicial review and the appeal relate to decisions made between December 2015 and February 2017.

Since the Divisional Court’s judgment in July 2017, the Government have continued to apply the rigorous and robust multi-layered process of analysis in making their licensing decisions, as highlighted in that judgment. We have, in the words of the 2017 judgment, engaged in, ‘anxious scrutiny—indeed ... what seems like anguished scrutiny at some stages’.

The Government have always taken their export control obligations very seriously and continue to do so.

There were three grounds of appeal. The judgment found in the Government’s favour on two of these grounds and against on the other, referred to as ground 1. We disagree with the judgment against the Government on ground 1 and will seek permission to appeal the judgment.

Today’s judgment is not about whether the Government made the right or wrong decisions about granting export licences, but concerns the rationality of the process used to reach decisions. The process was upheld by the Divisional Court in July 2017. The central issue in relation to military exports to Saudi Arabia in the context of the conflict in Yemen is Criterion 2c of the *Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria*: that the Government will,

‘not grant a licence if there is a clear risk that the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law’.

These criteria provide the rules for assessing military exports. Among other things, they cover concerns about human rights and international humanitarian law; the development of weapons of mass destruction; international obligations, including sanctions and treaty commitments; and risk of diversion. They provide a thorough and rigorous risk-assessment framework for reaching licensing decisions.

As the judgment makes clear, the Secretary of State responsible for licensing decisions has,

‘to rely on advice from those with specialist diplomatic and military knowledge’.

In relation to Criterion 2c, this means advice from the Foreign Secretary. Before the establishment of DIT in July 2016, the decision-maker was the then Secretary of State for Business. From July 2016, the responsibility passed to me.

How have decisions been made under Criterion 2c? We have used six strands of information and analysis to inform decisions: analysis of all allegations of IHL breaches known to us; an understanding of Saudi military procedures; continuing engagement with the Saudis at the highest level; post-incident dialogue, including with respect to investigations; Saudi public commitments to IHL; and regular IHL assessments based on developments in the conflict in Yemen. Each of these strands takes into account a wide range of sources and analysis, including those of a sensitive nature to which other parties, such as NGOs and the UN, do not have access. Taken together, these strands of analysis and information, which are reviewed regularly by the FCO in comprehensive reports to the Foreign Secretary and which engage continuously with the record of the Saudis in relation to IHL, form the basis of the Foreign Secretary’s advice to the Secretary of State making licensing decisions.

Given all this, why did CAAT appeal the 2017 judgment? The ground on which we lost in the Court of Appeal judgment concerned whether we were under an obligation to make some overall assessment of whether there had been historic violations of IHL, including whether a pattern of violations could be discerned. Our approach is in line with the EU common position. It has therefore focused on a predictive evaluation of risk as to the attitude and future conduct of the Saudi-led coalition and recognises the inherent difficulties of seeking to reach findings on IHL for specific incidents where we do not have access to complete information. Indeed, the Divisional Court pointed to the “self-evident impracticality” of doing so. Even so, we have fully and robustly engaged with incidents of concern and sought to test and understand the risk of future incidents. We have all along considered the historic record of Saudi Arabia in respect of IHL. Our whole assessment has been infused with IHL considerations. Everything was looked at through the prism of IHL.

Today’s judgment is clear that the context is not one in which the Government are sitting like a court adjudicating on alleged past violations, but rather, in the context of a prospective and predictive exercise, as to whether there is a clear risk that exports might be used in the commission of a serious violation of IHL in the future. In this context, past incidents are only part of the picture. The judgment emphasises that government advisers were keenly alive to the question of possible violation of IHL. It also acknowledges that the processes used to advise the Secretary of State responsible for licensing decisions were rigorous and robust, upon which the decision-maker could rely and had to rely.

Nevertheless, the judgment concludes that CAAT succeeded in the central argument advanced in relation to ground 1 of its appeal. In the court’s judgment the question of whether there was an historic pattern of breaches of IHL was a question which was required to be faced. Even if it could not be answered with reasonable

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confidence for every incident, at least the attempt had to be made. Because we have not reached findings on IHL for specific incidents as part of our assessment of clear risk, under Criterion 2c, the Court of Appeal concluded that our decision-making process was irrational and therefore unlawful. The consequence is that we are remitted to reconsider our decisions in accordance with the correct legal approach.

As I said earlier, we disagree with this judgment and will seek permission to appeal. Alongside this, we are carefully considering the implications of the judgement for decision-making. While we do this, we will not grant any new licences for exports to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners which might be used in the conflict in Yemen. As the Court of Appeal makes clear, different people may or may not approve the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia. The judicial review is not an appeal against the Government's decisions on their merits.

Once again, I stress that this judgment is not about whether the Government made the right or wrong decisions, but whether the decision-making process was rational. The judgment emphasises that there would not be only one answer on future risk if historic violations were found to have taken place. In other words, changing the process, as set out by the court, does not necessarily mean that any of the decisions would be different. The context is a complex and ever-changing conflict. The Court of Appeal judgment does not undermine the UK's overall framework for export controls as set out in the consolidated criteria. These criteria have stood the test of time and are shared by EU member states. The court's judgment is about how decisions were made in relation to one element of one of these criteria in a specific context. I commend this Statement to the House".

My Lords, that concludes the Statement.

2.49 pm

Lord Stevenson of Balmacara (Lab): My Lords, I am very grateful to the Minister for repeating the Statement made in another place. I recognise that it is a complex area for which he may not have the full briefing at his fingertips, and I shall not be pressing him too hard on some of its more exotic elements, including the question of whether or not the Ruggie principles have been adapted and successfully applied in this case.

The Statement ends with a rather interesting point:

"The Court of Appeal judgment does not undermine the UK's overall framework for export controls as set out in the",

EU consolidated criteria. These criteria have been there for some time and are,

"shared by EU member states".

I put it to the Minister that that cannot be quite correct, because I understand from reading press reports that Germany and Denmark, which are both members of the EU, have in fact decided to withdraw sales of arms to Saudi Arabia. So, in a sense, different decisions have already been reached; this is not a universal position. Does he have any thoughts on that?

Secondly, as the Minister rightly points out, this is a judicial review. It is not a test of whether or not the policy adopted by Her Majesty's Government is correct.

We follow entirely on that point of view, but it leads to roughly the same position, which is that the Government have been given a pretty severe blow to their current workings. Errors in the process, to the legal mind at least, have been pointed out and will need to be looked at again. I am glad to hear that the granting of export licences has now been cancelled until such time as this is resolved. The issue of course will be uncertain until such time as any appeal is launched and heard. Could the Minister say a bit more about that? It is being reviewed, but this will obviously affect how things go forward, so does he think that it is likely?

The key factor in the finding is that the Government, "made no concluded assessments of whether the Saudi-led coalition had committed violations of international humanitarian law in the past, during the Yemen conflict, and made no attempt to do so".

Irrespective of whether or not the end result would be the same, the fact that the Government have no concluded assessments is the reason why the judgment has been overturned in the Appeal Court. In a sense, that is probably all that needs to be said on that, except that there is a question of whether it raises any issues about the broader context in which these decisions are reached.

We had a number of amendments down in Committee and on Report for the Trade Bill when it recently passed through your Lordships' House which probed some of the issues being raised in the judgment today. It is, as the Minister said, a complex situation involving the Ministry of Defence, the Department for International Trade and the Foreign Office—it has recently been revamped following the formation of the separate department DfIT; previously BEIS was the lead body on the trade element. We received assurances that this was not only a very efficient and effective system but that it was effectively best in class in comparison with the rest of the world. Could the Minister confirm that that is still the view of Her Majesty's Government on this issue, irrespective of the judgment, and that he is content that the present arrangements are robust and reliable?

Turning to the actual impact of the judgment, I have touched on the question of whether or not arms sales should be suspended if they are likely to be used in the Yemen conflict. The Minister has confirmed that that has happened. Therefore, could he follow up, given that that is the situation and there is an issue at stake here, on whether it might be appropriate to establish a public inquiry so that we can better understand the issues and make sure that lessons are learned? Will he comment on that?

My third point is a more complex one, and I will fully understand if the Minister does not have the information with him; he may wish to write to me. In press reports there is wide evidence of air strikes on non-military targets in Yemen. I refer to a recent *Guardian* article—it may not be his regular reading, but it is available on the web. It says that the British Government have in recent years,

"deployed RAF personnel to work as engineers, and to train Saudi pilots and targeteers—while an even larger role is played by",

the private company,

"BAE Systems, Britain's biggest arms company, which the government has subcontracted to provide weapons, maintenance and engineers inside Saudi Arabia".

There is also a quote from the Channel 4 programme “Dispatches”, in which a BAE employee said:

“If we weren’t there, in seven to 14 days there wouldn’t be a jet in the sky”.

We are clearly supplying matériel not just to Saudi Arabia for the use of the coalition in the battles in Yemen; we are also supplying it to individuals, who are performing acts which might be considered to be in support of the work which has now been found to be illegal by the Court of Appeal. If that is the case and there are British personnel actively carrying out this work, is there not a danger that they might be prosecuted for what they are doing in the International Criminal Court? If so, could he confirm what Her Majesty’s Government’s position on that would be?

Baroness Northover (LD): My Lords, I too thank the Minister for repeating the Statement.

The judges concluded that it was “irrational and therefore unlawful” for the Government to have made the export licensing decisions without making adequate assessment of whether past incidents amounted to breaches of international humanitarian law and whether measures subsequently taken meant that there was no longer a “clear risk” that future exports might breach such law. They said:

“The question whether there was an historic pattern of breaches of IHL ... was a question which required to be faced”.

Does the Minister agree that this clearly and obviously must be the case? The pattern of serious violations did not simply need to be “taken into account”, as the Divisional Court found; the Court of Appeal ruled that the pattern has to be properly assessed and considered. In other words, the question of whether Saudi Arabia has breached international humanitarian law has to be answered. Does the Minister not regard this conclusion as an extraordinary indictment—that the Government had not properly made such assessments, despite all the pressure on them to do so, not least in Parliament?

Does he note that the US Senate will be voting on more than a dozen resolutions today aimed at blocking the Trump Administration’s sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia? What is the view of the UK Government on that? Indeed, they say that others may come to other conclusions, but some of the same evidence may be available to them as well as to us.

The Government imply in the Statement that they are making adequate assessments—in which case, as part of that wider consideration, have they looked at what happened, for example, to Jamal Khashoggi? Are they taking note of the UN report, for example, which states that the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia should be investigated over his murder because there is “credible evidence” that he and other senior officials may be liable for the killing? The UN special rapporteur says that the death of the journalist was “an international crime”. She says:

“It is the conclusion of the special rapporteur that Mr Khashoggi has been the victim of a deliberate, premeditated execution, an extrajudicial killing for which the state of Saudi Arabia is responsible under international human rights law”.

We are here looking at international human rights law and the extent to which Saudi Arabia adheres to it.

Have the Government also noted the imprisonment and execution of dissidents, including minors? Have they noted that Saudi-led forces have hit civilians,

hospitals, schools and school buses in Yemen? We have asked questions about these attacks and have been assured that the Government did not think that international humanitarian law was broken. How could they say that if it was not properly assessed?

Like the noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, I note the decision of Germany and Denmark not to sell arms to Saudi Arabia. Again, I point to the evidence that they will be looking at, which will be similar to the evidence that we can see.

The Government are signing up to agreements on human rights—work led by the Dutch in the EU. How does this square with that? Does he recall that the International Relations Committee concluded that the UK Government were, if only just, on the wrong side in this matter—I note that the noble Lord, Lord Howell, is in his place?

Astonishingly, one strand to which the Government pay attention is Saudi Arabia’s public statements about its commitment to adhere to international humanitarian law. Surely the time has come to examine the evidence properly and in a disinterested way. If this is done, does the Minister not believe that the time has come to ban the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia?

The Earl of Courtown: My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, and the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, for their questions. First, I correct one point he made. We have said that no new licences will be issued while we examine the findings of the judicial review. He mentioned a number of issues in the overall framework of the situation and drew attention, as did she, to what is happening with our colleagues in Europe, particularly Germany and Denmark. They have both introduced specific policies over and above the EU common position. Our view is that the common position provides us with a sufficient basis for decision-making. The noble Lord also mentioned the Trade Bill, which went through the House last year—and this year as well. I cannot take account of factors such as the UK’s strategic economic and social interests in reaching licensing decisions. Decisions are made on the basis of the consolidated criteria, which I listed in the Statement.

The noble Lord and the noble Baroness both referred to non-military targets. Any loss of civilian life must be abhorred in the strongest terms. With our close relationship with the Saudi Arabian Government, we can make those comments to them. We have regular meetings at many levels of government where our views on these matters are forcefully made. The UK military personnel in Saudi Arabia are not involved in the conflict. UK engineers are present under contract to maintain aircraft for the Royal Saudi Air Force. Our assistance is limited to addressing the specific threats faced by the Saudis. We are providing information, advice and training to help Saudi Arabia to respond to those threats. We have also shared with the Saudis techniques to minimise civilian casualties. The UK has a range of personnel deployed across the region, but all remain under UK command and control. The noble Lord also asked a specific question about UK personnel there. I will write to him with further detail.

The noble Baroness drew attention to arms sales by the United States of America. We will of course keep a close watch on what eventually happens in the

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United States—as will my colleagues in the department. She also mentioned the dreadful incident of the death of Mr Khashoggi. It is an appalling state of affairs that Mr Khashoggi died, but it has no relationship to the criteria for export sales. She asked me a number of other questions to which I shall reply to her in writing, if that is sufficient.

3.05 pm

Lord Howell of Guildford (Con): My Lords, the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, reminds us that this judgment has similarities with the recommendations of your Lordships' International Relations Committee when we examined the subject some months ago. We then argued, as is implicit in the judgment, that this is a matter not of suspension but of process. In our report, we argued that there needed to be more rigorous checks on export licences in future, given particular horrific incidents in Yemen of a kind which, sadly, continue and have shocked the entire world. We also argued in that short report that we needed to be less reliant on Saudi and local sources for verification and inspection of incidents. In the Statement, the noble Earl mentioned the processes by which decisions are reached when terrible things happen on whether British armaments could be in any way involved. We took evidence to the effect that there was a rather heavy reliance on local reports from the Saudi region and the Saudi authorities, and suggested that that was too great and that other sources of checking and verification would be an improvement. Can the Minister assure me that, whatever the legal outcome of this process, with the appeal and all the rest, those common-sense moves for much more rigorous checks on export licences and less reliance on the say-so of authentication coming from Saudi Arabia itself will be made?

The Earl of Courtown: My Lords, I thank my noble friend, who has extensive knowledge of the subject, and specifically for his committee's report. He asks the Government to look again at the whole question of the issue of licences. We will look carefully at that, as well as at the court judgment, which we will consider in particular over the next few weeks. As I said, we will also consider existing licences. We will review all the licences in the light of the court judgment, but the points he made are well taken and I will ensure that the department is aware of them.

Lord Judd (Lab): My Lords, does not the Minister agree that it is at the very least unfortunate that, although we welcome the suspension of arms sales, the Government do so with ill grace and reluctance, instead of making it a positive part of policy in the overall context? Events in Yemen have been terrible, and we should be at pains to make it clear that we do not associate ourselves, even indirectly, with a regime which has played such a questionable role. Does not he further agree that this again underlines the point that arms are not just another export, with which we go ahead unless there is a very special reason not to? Arms are lethal. They are highly dangerous in an unstable world and we should embark on arms sales only where they further our foreign policy objectives in very specific and accountable terms.

The Earl of Courtown: My Lords, the noble Lord may remember that, in another guise, I was the Whip in both the FCO and the Department for International Development. I had to respond to a Question on the present conditions and the availability of relief in Yemen. The loss of life touched me deeply; what happened there is appalling. I note the noble Lord's very good points but we are not standing still. This morning I spoke to the Minister, my noble friend Lady Sugg, about our activity in Yemen; she reminded me that, on 24 February 2019, my right honourable friend the Prime Minister announced that the UK would provide an additional £200 million in response to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Our total commitment is now £770 million. That is important because it provides vital food, water and medicine to those who need them most. Conditions are a little better than they were—for example, there is more access to the ports—but the logistics could not be described as perfect, to say the least.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (CB): My Lords, can the Minister be a little clearer about the impact of the Government's decision not to enter into new contracts while the court case continues? Can he say whether that means that they will not make deliveries under existing contracts while the case is pending? That is rather important. After all, a number of these contracts are colossal and not all of them are delivered at the same time.

Secondly, will the Minister admit that your Lordships' International Relations Committee was rather closer than the Government were to what turned out to be the ruling of the Court of Appeal? It would be helpful for the Government to say when your Lordships' House gets something right. Will the prevention of further action on sales mean that we will not negotiate sales, instead waiting until after this case finishes to conclude and deliver them? Further clarification on those points would be rather helpful. I hope that the Minister will be able to do something about that.

Finally, will the department look carefully at the Minister's response to the debate on our report and the two subsequent government written responses, and if any points in them are no longer true, will the Minister perhaps refresh them?

The Earl of Courtown: My Lords, I thank the noble Lord for his questions. He refers to the report from my noble friend's committee; I was aware of it but I have not read it. I know that reports from such committees are highly regarded throughout the country and further afield. I will take back to the department his points on the report, particularly regarding any possible changes to Her Majesty's Government's response to it.

The noble Lord also mentioned the position on extant licences. As I said, we will review all licences in the light of the court's judgment. He went further, asking about entering into more sales contracts; I do not have an answer for him on that, so I will have to write to him. We are not issuing any new licences but, as the noble Lord will be aware, these licences last for between three and five years, and many licences could have been issued some time ago. Also, many licences do not end up in arms sales.

Lord Burnett (LD): My Lords, I want to take the issue a little wider than the noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, and my noble friend Lady Northover did. Does this judgment—or this case, for that matter—have any impact or bearing on British troops or advisers who are in Yemen or have been, or may be, deployed there? They could well be using equipment exported by virtue of the authority of these licences. If the noble Earl wants to write to me about that, I would welcome a letter.

The Earl of Courtown: I thank the noble Lord for his question. I will write to him on some of the finer details. As he is aware, and as I said, our assistance is limited to addressing the specific threats faced by the Saudis. We are providing information, advice and training, as well as sharing techniques, to help Saudi Arabia to respond to the threats. A range of UK personnel has been deployed in the area, as I said; I underline the fact that they all remain under UK command and control. The noble Lord asked a number of specific questions relating to our personnel; I will ensure that he gets a correct reply.

Lord Bates (Con): My Lords, I thank my noble friend for the Statement. I draw particular attention to his saying:

“We have all along considered the historic record of Saudi Arabia”,

on international human rights law. That was backed up in an International Relations Committee report. The Minister gave evidence, saying that the Government believed that they were on the “right side” of international humanitarian law, but the committee concluded that they were,

“narrowly on the wrong side”.

What sources were used to arrive at that judgment?

The international Human Rights Council commissioned a group of eminent experts to look at incidents. It looked at 110 attacks, including 11 on marketplaces and five on weddings and funerals, and concluded:

“Individuals in the Government and the coalition, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, may have conducted attacks in violation of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution that may amount to war crimes ... Individuals in the Government and the coalition, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have committed acts that may amount to war crimes, including cruel treatment and torture, outrages upon personal dignity, rape and conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15”.

So, when Her Majesty’s Government concluded that they were on the “right side” of international humanitarian law, what sources did they use to arrive at that conclusion, and what was the veracity of those sources?

Finally, many of us have praised fully the role that Her Majesty’s Government have taken on as “penholder” in the UN Security Council negotiations on the peace process in Yemen. Martin Griffiths and Mark Lowcock are out there; Charles Garraway is part of a group of eminent experts. We have given £570 million in humanitarian aid. We feel immensely proud of all that. We feel that the perpetuation of the granting of these licences, against all the verifiable evidence, besmirches our reputation internationally. Does my noble friend accept that?

The Earl of Courtown: My Lords, I thank my noble friend for his question and for giving me prior warning of it. We have assessed the report and the judgment of the Court of Appeal does not accept that the UK military and other analysts and advisers wrongly discounted the evidence coming from NGOs and the UK panel of experts. The judgment accepts that the evidence was considered in each case as a whole, and concerns were raised. My noble friend went into more detail and asked how these allegations are monitored. The Ministry of Defence monitors incidents of alleged IHL violations arising from air strikes conducted by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen using all available information. This in turn is used to form an overall view on the approach and attitude of the coalition to IHL. That informs the risk assessment under which the licensing criteria are set out. Where there is a clear risk that the items to be exported might be used for the commission of serious violations of IHL, we consider a range of information from government sources, foreign Governments, the media and international non-governmental organisations.

However, at the heart of all this are the peace talks, which are a top priority. There can be no military solution to the conflict. A political settlement is the only way to address the worsening humanitarian crisis and the UK is encouraging the parties to continue to engage constructively with Martin Griffiths, the UN special envoy and the head of the UN mission in Yemen, in support of the Hodeidah agreement.

Baroness Donaghy (Lab): My Lords, the Statement refers to the EU common position. Did the UK Government play an active part in drawing up that common position and did they make any attempt to weaken it before it was published?

The Earl of Courtown: I am afraid that I cannot answer the question put by the noble Baroness, but I will ensure that she receives the correct information by letter.

Policy-making: Future Generations' Interests

Motion to Take Note

3.21 pm

Moved by Lord Bird

To move that this House takes note of the case for better protecting and representing the interests of future generations in policy-making.

Lord Bird (CB): My Lords, I should like to begin this discussion about future generations with an observation about myself. I started my social intervention work very much in the world of emergency responses to a social crisis called homelessness. I spent an enormous amount of time working on trying to perfect my ability to be a damn good intervener in the crisis of homelessness as it presented itself on the streets of London and other cities, and subsequently in other parts of the world. I began at the sharp end of things,

[LORD BIRD]

where the problem presented itself at its most acute. People were on the streets for myriad reasons. I would say, "Let's remove them from the streets but, first of all, let's stop them committing crime". We had to get them away from wrongdoing through shoplifting, prostitution or aggressive begging. That is where I started, and that is important because I want to take the House on a journey to show why I ended up with the future when, at one stage, I was very much in the present.

To some extent, the only reason I was in the present was because the past had failed. The people you met on the streets were those who had accumulated all sorts of problems in their pasts. That presented itself as an inability to find a place to live and an inability to function in the economy, have a family with children and to lead a rich and healthy life. The crisis was where I began: in a very myopic, small-minded but essential place to be, because that is where the crisis is. You could say that I was a kind of one-man Médecins Sans Frontières. I revolted against many other people who were working with the homeless as though they were very difficult—almost as though they represented a cocktail of social failure. They were dealing with that, but I said that the first thing we had to do was get them out of the sticky stuff. We had to get them away from crime and wrongdoing. We had to take them away from violating other people to violate themselves because many of them had drink and drug problems.

As I reported in the article I wrote for *House* magazine, I was asked by the *Times* what I was going to do after 10 years of the *Big Issue*. I said that I was kind of sick of continuously mending broken clocks. What I wanted to do was to prevent those clocks breaking in the first instance. That is a bit of rhetoric because it was so difficult to talk to anyone about prevention. It was very difficult to talk to Her Majesty's Government, of whatever political shade, when you said, "Why do we not move more towards prevention? Why do we not put an enormous amount of money and effort into prevention? Why do we not try to prevent the problem happening so that we do not have to clean it up?"

Anyway, after many years I developed a methodology called PECC—prevention, emergency, coping and cure. It was the simplest and dumbest methodology; all it meant was that when you encountered a social intervener, you could say, "What are they? Are they a preventer, are they emergency, are they coping or are they cure? Or are they all of those?" Very few organisations cover them all. Some 80% of the money spent on social intervention goes on emergencies. Human beings are brilliant when things go wrong. We are so clever, but our entire philosophical thinking is based on responding to the horse when it has suddenly left the stable.

I am sorry about this rather long and turgid introduction—noble Lords will know all this about me—but I was cheesed off by that. When I entered the House of Lords I said that I had come to this place to dismantle poverty. That is a bit like saying that I came here to give us a permanent summer and we will all live wonderful lives. I came here to prevent poverty and to dismantle it. I can tell noble Lords that no Administration has ever got that one right. Most

Administrations are always ducking and diving, bobbing and weaving. I sit on the Cross Benches and take my Cross Bench-ness very seriously. All my friends are rank Tories—sorry—or divine Labourites. I mix and match with everyone. I do not really care about the nomenclature of people's political positions, largely because in my work I have been hurt and helped by the right and hurt and helped by the left. It comes and goes, but I came here to dismantle poverty.

If you analyse the work of this House and the other place, you can see from the figures, which are not mine, that around 70% of our time, effort, energy and resources goes into the question of poverty. When we look at poverty, in this country we might be talking about between 20% and 22% of adults and 33% of our children. We are talking about a minority, but an incredibly large one. The world works for quite a number of people, certainly the majority, but that section—we are hyper-ventilating about how large it is—takes up 70% of our work. It ties every one of us up in one way or another. We worry about the size of that minority.

I do not think we can find a way of doing anything about poverty unless we reinvent the future and bring it forward to today. Unless we can find a methodology and the laws to go with it, I do not think we are going anywhere. If anybody asks me, "Having started in poverty, why do you now go on about climate change and all sorts of erudite things for the person on the streets suffering?", I say that if we want to stop having our streets filled up with the most needy, we need to embrace tomorrow now as well as doing the Médecins Sans Frontières thing—creating brilliant emergency responses. We have to engage with the future.

I was blessed by wandering around on many occasions and sleeping—rough, I have to say—in virtually all the shires. That is how I got to know Great Britain, as it was then, before it became the United Kingdom. I spent quite a bit of time in Wales. I like Wales, because—

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (LD): Hear, hear!

Lord Bird: You cannot but love the noble Lord, Lord Roberts. I have spent a bit of time in Wales. Just after the Brexit referendum, I heard that the Welsh Assembly was interested in looking at what we were doing on PECC and considering whether projects were about prevention, emergency, coping or cure. If somebody wanted to invest their money, they would do so on the basis of wanting to get people out of poverty rather than making them comfortable. The Welsh Assembly was looking at this on the basis of wanting to save money, because it realised that after Brexit there would possibly not be so much money around, considering that it gets a shedload of money from Europe. I was touched by that, because it took it on and talked to me as though I were a grown-up—and that is wonderful when you are not a grown-up.

The other thing is that all this information started to come down about the idea of future generations legislation. It was passed into law, and there is a future generations commission. We started to work with it and to look at what it was doing. Every one of my questions about preventing our need to spend 70% of our time and energy on handling the problems of maybe 20% to 30% of the people in this country was

answered by the future generations legislation and commission in Wales. Wales is leading the way in the world, I have to say—

Lord Wigley (PC): Hear, hear!

Lord Bird: Please, can we throw out some of these Welsh people? One of the countries of the United Kingdom—I describe it as a bijou economy—had the space, time, energy and desire to change the way it encountered the future by creating the future generations legislation. This was everything I wanted to do. I could actually go home; all I needed to do was turn the UK Welsh. How about that?

Lord Roberts of Llandudno: Excellent.

Lord Bird: Excellent. That is my thinking. I hope we open a debate today. I am really pleased that we have such a long list of people who will begin to talk about how we need future generations legislation and how we need to change the way we budget, change the way we supply our children with education, and stop doing ridiculous things such as closing libraries or making it impossible for our bookshops. We are destroying the intellectual space on our high streets; what are we going to do about that? Preventive spending on future generations is the way forward.

In a way, I have come here today only to start the ball rolling. I will be inaugurating a Private Member's Bill. I had one a few years back about the need to give honesty and integrity to people in need who were paying so much for their credit. What I really want to do now is move the argument on. Let us embrace the future and not be frightened of it. If we do not do what we have to do—embrace the future and look carefully at the legislation carried out in Wales, the commission and its first four or five years—we are missing a major chance.

We have a real problem: we are not the only ones hyperventilating about the future. The public is hyperventilating more. My 12 year-old daughter, who has organised strikes about the environment, is hyperventilating. My 14 year-old son, my 43 year-old son, my 53 year-old daughter and my 42 year-old daughter—everyone around me—are hyperventilating and getting excited about the possibility of changing the future, and that means we have to bring the future nearer. The best methodology is to adopt a future generations Act.

3.36 pm

Baroness Jenkin of Kennington (Con): My Lords, the noble Lord, Lord Bird, is not only a damn good intervener but a hard act to follow. I thank him not only for initiating this debate but for another powerful speech. As a member of the recently reported ad hoc Select Committee on Intergenerational Fairness and Provision, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak. Given the subject matter, I am rather surprised that the noble Baroness, Lady Greengross, and I are the only ones from that committee.

Younger and older generations have always been politically different. The old saying that, "If you are not a socialist when you are young, you have no heart, and if you are not a conservative when you are old,

you have no head", is by no means a new concept, but today this alignment of political intentions has reached extraordinary extremes. Some 83% of Conservative voters are now said to be over the age of 45 and apparently just 4% are under the age of 24. The age at which you are more likely to vote Conservative than Labour is apparently 51. Before the 2017 election campaign, this was just 34. In two years the tipping-point age has increased by 17 years. This is not a problem just for the Conservative Party, though. A sizeable proportion of older voters will now not even consider voting Labour, imposing a hard electoral ceiling and threatening that party longer term as the population ages.

This is a dramatic shift and a reflection of the disillusionment young people feel with politics today. As we uncovered in our recent *Tackling Intergenerational Unfairness* report, the millennial generation is likely to end up worse off than their parents—the first such generation—as may the generations that follow. The concerns and interests of young people have never been more important, just as their prospects have never looked quite as challenging.

As a House with plenty of wisdom but rather lacking in younger voices, including in today's debate—although I am glad to see some younger viewers in the Gallery—we must seek to represent them by listening and learning from them, as we did when taking evidence. In the few minutes that I have, I will look at the economy, education and the environment and I will lean on the research report, *Generation Why?*, published by the think tank Onward.

Members on the Benches opposite may claim that they stand up for young people's interests. Noble Lords may say that young people want an interventionist state with high public spending and high taxes. However, polling evidence shows that 18 to 24 year-olds are most in favour of keeping taxes low—more than any other age group. Some 58% of 18 to 24 year-olds want the Government to balance public finances and to live within their means. Those of the next generation, and Generation Z in particular, are not some homogenous lefty block, but a complex and thoughtful section of the electorate who largely, even if they do not know it, support centre-right policies.

When Tony Blair set the 2001 target for over 50% of young people to go to university, many saw it as a bold and positive vision. However, as shown by another Onward report, *A Question of Degree*, a decade after graduation a 10th of current undergraduates will earn less than £25,000, and 83% of student loans will never be paid back in full. The system not only saddles young people with debt that can loom over them for decades, but the lack of income return from many university degrees means that the taxpayer bears the brunt of this broken system. It is therefore no surprise that 44% of people think that too many people go to university, as opposed to 25% who say not enough. University is not for everyone and, as our report recommends and as evidence we took showed, we should prioritise apprenticeships and retraining. The importance of skills and vocational education was one of the key conclusions. The labour market is changing and much more investment is needed in both vocational education and lifelong learning to prepare younger generations for a 100-year life.

[BARONESS JENKIN OF KENNINGTON]

As we have seen from the recent Extinction Rebellion protests and the visit of Greta Thunberg to the UK, protecting the environment is crucial. For us Conservatives, there should be a clue in our name. It is no surprise that 18 to 24 year-olds rate concern about environmental issues in the top three challenges facing Britain today. We are the first major economy to make a commitment to a net zero emissions target, which follows our impressive record on emissions reduction since 2010. However, a target must be followed by a clear plan of actionable and affordable policy which will allow us to achieve this. We cannot protect the interests of future generations if we cannot protect the natural world in which they will live.

As a country, we are at a critical moment in our history. We must listen to what young people are saying and find out what they are thinking. We must prioritise jobs, housing, the environment and education, because if we do not grasp this opportunity to win over the next generation with a positive vision for the future, our political system will not survive, and nor will it deserve to.

3.42 pm

Lord Giddens (Lab): My Lords, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Bird, on having secured this debate and on his characteristically forceful introduction. My approach is a bit more macrocosmic than his, but I hope that it slots in.

The American satirist Yogi Berra once said:

“The future ain’t what it used to be”.

It was intended as a flippant remark, but it actually pinpoints crucial aspects of our society today. Throughout 99% of the human past, the future was indeed mostly what it used to be. For thousands of years, through the rise and fall of numerous civilisations, the vast majority of people lived much the same as their forefathers had done. Only about 200 years ago, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, it all changed, and it has progressively speeded up. In the 21st century, we live in a world of dizzying transformation. Do not believe those who say that globalisation has come to a halt. Especially with the advent of digital communication, this is far and away the most connected and interdependent world ever.

There are two sides to this. The opportunities are huge. Think of the example of China, which has moved not far short of 1 billion people out of grinding poverty in some 40 years. The risks, however, are at least as great and some of them are truly global. Moreover, most of these cannot be assessed or responded to in terms of the accumulated knowledge of the past, because they are too new. Here indeed, the future ain’t what it used to be. They include humanly induced climate change, nuclear war, global population increase, economic crisis on a global level and others, plus of course the overlap of all of those. By any reckoning, that is pretty awesome stuff.

What a distance and distinction there is between all of this and the evanescent nature of day-to-day politics. When David Cameron became the leader of his party, in his opening speech he said:

“I want to talk about the future”.

He pointed to Prime Minister Tony Blair, saying:

“He was the future once”.—[*Official Report*, Commons, 7/12/05; col. 861.]

Only a few short years later, leaving the political cockpit for ever, he was to remark:

“After all, as I once said, I was the future once”.—[*Official Report*, Commons, 13/7/16; col. 294.]

Of course, there are some mechanisms in place to counter the short-termism of everyday democratic politics. What the populists deride as the “deep state”—an impartial and effective Civil Service—is one key way in which continuity is sustained and long-term planning is carried out. It has often been effective; the UK has a good record in reducing climate emissions since the last Labour Administration through to the present. Yet far more radical thinking is needed and, in my view, global activism.

There have to be several planks to such a strategy. One is to draw local and national politics away from its concentration on the here and now. The same, however, has to be true of markets, and that cannot be emphasised too strongly. Markets are driven by short-term pursuit of profit on a global level. The other is to shore up international collaboration. That is crucial and inescapable in an interdependent world such as ours. It is not stretching it too far to say that democracy across the world is in crisis, but crisis very often promotes rethinking and renewal. There are many initiatives in different countries designed to think about the future. They include the Think Long Committee for California, the Future Design movement in Japan and the youth-led organisation Our Children’s Trust. Here I understand that there is an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Future Generations, set up, I gather, with the support of the noble Lord, Lord Rees. He is the guru of the future, as I am sure noble Lords know. On an economic level, impact investment is crucial. Impact investment is more long-term investment, and can counter one of the most noxious things in our world, the short-termism of global economic markets.

Perhaps the greatest problem as the future increasingly bites into our present is the unstable nature of the international system, which is riven with conflicts just when global co-operation is so urgently needed. The year 1989 was supposed to mark the end of history, but it has ceded its place to a world that is in some ways even more unstable. Nationalism has returned in full force at a time when global interdependence is at its highest level ever. Humanly induced climate change, once again a Yogi Berra-type phenomenon for which there is no historical precedent, is an existential threat for future generations. In the light of the recent IPPC report, that threat is no longer distant. Some of the world’s most powerful leaders today are active climate change deniers. The counterforces are none the less strong and global. Who is going to come out on top: Greta Thunberg or two well-known, prominent, populist world leaders? Noble Lords will know where my sympathies lie and where my expectations are heading.

3.48 pm

The Lord Bishop of Leeds: My Lords, I, too, am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Bird, for bringing this debate to us. Despite wanting to say one or two things,

I hope to listen and to learn from the wisdom of others. This debate is particularly pertinent at a time when phrases such as “the will of the people” are being bandied around, without specifying which people. If we are going to take this seriously, it must include people who are not people yet: future generations. Too often that term is used as a static term. It references the past. It does not create any vision for the future. It takes today seriously at the expense of tomorrow.

I recognise that others in this debate are going to speak on the detail, so I will focus on what I think are more fundamental questions to do with political culture. I had not thought of them in terms of the word “macrocosmic”, but perhaps they are. I shall make three points. First, long-term policy-making demands maturity, wisdom and leadership. It must transcend the short-termism that the noble Lord, Lord Giddens, has just spoken about. In our own generation, Sure Start made a massive difference and was aimed at influencing the lives of families, children and young people as they grew. Where is it? Killed.

Secondly, we cannot indulge in tokenism when we talk about young people—but there is quite a lot of that about. I am very grateful to the staff of the Library for the briefing for this debate, which drew attention to a number of very imaginative initiatives on listening to and engaging with the voices of young people, but they are limited and they must not be tokenistic. Greta Thunberg has been referenced several times as the voice of young people, but am I the only one who feels that sometimes the response, particularly from politicians, is patronising? They say you have to listen to young people, but I say that you should not ask for the views of young people if you do not want to hear what they say. If you say that you are listening but do nothing about it, you will create an even bigger problem in the future, which is rank disillusionment.

Thirdly, and finally, what has run through many debates, particularly over Brexit, is the idea that human beings are economic commodities or consumer targets. Almost the entire Brexit debate has been framed in terms of economics and trade. I keep asking the question: for whom does the economy exist? It is for the good of human beings and wider society; it is not an end, it is a means. We must consider the language we are using and the anthropological assumptions we are making about what a human being is. We are seeing in our education sector a diminution of arts and humanities because they do not guarantee a particular training for a trade or a particular economic return, yet they are crucial to what it means to be human beings either individually or in society. From the expansion of the imagination comes the imagination of a different way of being and a different world. So we need our young people to frame the future narrative and not just inherit the past. This is an issue that we face across the board. I come back to Brexit and the future of Europe. If we are constantly referring back to what our young people are inheriting from the middle of the 20th century, in another 20 or 30 years that does not create a vision for the future.

We have to ask ourselves what future our children are building. I used to visit Kazakhstan—as you do. I have been there a number of times and watched the

development of that country as an independent state and the building of its institutions and even its cities—Astana in particular. What used to strike me coming back from Kazakhstan, central Asia, to Frankfurt, Amsterdam or London, was that in Kazakhstan so many of the young people were proud of what they were building, even though there were issues of corruption and lots of other questions about what was going on. They were building something for the future, and that captured their imagination, their energy and their will. When you come back to western Europe and ask what young people are building—what is firing their imagination and energy—the answer is, nothing, because they are simply expected to inherit something that has been handed on to them, and then protect it. This is not good enough. Our young people are the only ones who can write the narrative that will guide the future. If we are going to listen to their voice, we have to be prepared for what they are going to say.

3.54 pm

Lord Wigley: My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Bird, for facilitating this fascinating debate. I identified with most of his comments, although I cannot claim his personal involvement.

I will speak briefly from our experience in Wales, as the National Assembly four years ago passed the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act with cross-party support. The objective of that Act is to put sustainable development at the centre of decision-making so as to ensure that we in Wales meet the needs of today in a manner that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs in the context of their own time; in other words, to ensure that we do not build hostages to fortune in the way we conduct government at all levels.

For the purposes of the Act, sustainable development is identified as the,

“process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales”,

by acting in line with the,

“sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving”,

seven specific “well-being goals”. These are defined as,

“a prosperous Wales ... a resilient Wales ... a healthier Wales ... a more equal Wales ... a Wales of cohesive communities ... a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving language ... a globally responsible Wales”.

Most of these are self-explanatory, but I will expand on two. “A resilient Wales” is defined as a nation which,

“maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change)”.

“A globally responsible Wales” is,

“a nation which, when doing anything to improve the ... well-being of Wales, takes account of”,

the effect that has on global well-being.

The Act places a well-being duty on public bodies, including local government, to establish their own well-being goals to comply with the Act. The Act requires such public bodies to take into account five principles: balancing short-term and long-term needs; prevention measures to limit adverse factors; integration

[LORD WIGLEY]

to ensure that its well-being goals do not undermine those of other public bodies; collaboration with other bodies to meet objectives; and involvement, encouraging individual citizens to help meet those goals.

The Welsh Government in 2017 adopted 12 well-being objectives to achieve the Act's basic aims as the foundation of government strategy. It also created public service boards for each local authority area, to ensure co-ordination between central and local government functions, other public bodies and the voluntary sector. Sophie Howe has been appointed the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. Her job is, *inter alia*, to advise public bodies on whether their policies are conducive to achieving their well-being objectives. Public bodies are required to take all reasonable steps to follow her recommendations.

The Welsh Government have produced a suite of statutory guidance for public bodies to take into account when fulfilling their legal duties. An in-depth study of current generation attitudes in every county has sought to identify policy priorities regarding that which is important about the environment, social issues, the economy and the culture of the area, which need to be safeguarded or improved for future generations. In my home county, Gwynedd, some of the issues raised should serve as a wake-up call for government, such as the "loss of educated people" and how "lowering levels of anti-social behaviour increases self-confidence"—an interesting dimension. The strongest negatives relate to poverty, the strongest positives to the beauty of our environment.

I realise that this approach has been seen as bureaucratic and that it is one thing to adopt high-minded ideals as objectives; the challenge is to turn them into practice. Successive Welsh Governments have excelled at producing ambitious objectives—economic, environmental and cultural—but been less effective at turning those aims into reality. So is this legislation making any difference? It is early days, but there is evidence that the Welsh Government's financial priorities have changed to take account of the Act. The Wales Audit Office notes that local authorities are "working differently" as a result of the Act. There are micro-policy examples, such as how wildfires are being prevented and how public authorities recycle office fixtures and fittings—it is as micro as that.

The law has its critics. It has been accused of being toothless, as in the case where parents in the Neath Port Talbot area resorted to the Act to challenge the closure of Cymer school. Mrs Justice Lambert dismissed the case, saying that the Act could not trigger a judicial review. Swansea Council has been accused of selling foreshore land in violation of the Act. Similarly, Bridgend Council has been criticised for selling a school playing field.

There is also criticism of decisions apparently taken in line with the Act's requirements. The Welsh Government recently rejected the proposed M4 improvements at Newport, and it is believed that the future generations Act contributed to that decision, for better or worse. Only yesterday Dr Dai Lloyd AM questioned in the National Assembly how our Government tracks the implementation of the Act's principles.

It is too easy to shrug off our individual and collective responsibilities for sustainability, biodiversity and global warming. It is easy to forget that our actions may undermine the well-being of others around the globe and jeopardise the world that our grandchildren will inherit.

Wales's Act should be relevant to rolling out the UK Government's aim to be carbon neutral by 2050. It can accelerate this rollout and help formalise methods of consultation to carry local communities in support of such government decisions, and help those decisions to reflect local aspirations.

The fact that these aims are challenging is no excuse for turning our backs. We as individuals, communities and nations have a responsibility in all parts of these islands to open our eyes to the threats implicit in our actions and to take the necessary action to safeguard the well-being of others.

I welcome this debate and the fact that legislators at Westminster are seriously addressing this matter and will consider how such policies are working out in Wales. Policies adopted in Wales have already commended themselves to other Governments on these islands. Our smoking ban, our plastic bag charge and our organ transplant legislation are just three examples.

The United Nations has commented, in the context of the Welsh future generations Act:

"What Wales is doing today the world will do tomorrow".

In that spirit, I am delighted to support the noble Lord, Lord Bird, in his endeavours.

4.01 pm

Lord Layard (Lab): My Lords, I welcome this debate about what is a central issue of our time. It is an ethical issue because the starting point of ethics is that every human being matters equally. This means that future generations are of equal importance to our own. However, they are not in a position to speak for themselves, so we have to act for them and invest in their future as if it were our own. In that context, I want to discuss two of the most important legacies we will leave to the future: the climate and social infrastructure.

For reasons that are well known, we cannot allow the temperature to rise by more than 1.5 degrees centigrade above the pre-industrial level. How can we achieve this? We must have regulations, and these involve an element of sacrifice. Surely, however, the most important thing is to invest in research and development because, once clean energy is cheaper to produce than dirty energy, the problem is solved at no further ongoing cost. This requires a scientific effort similar to that needed to win a war, produce the atom bomb or land people on the moon. We need such an effort that is internationally co-ordinated.

Interestingly, this is exactly what has been happening in the field of semiconductors. The astonishing pace of cost reduction in this field was no accident; it was achieved by a major international division of research effort co-ordinated through the International Technology Roadmap for Semiconductors, which had much public money behind it. We now need the same effort in the field of energy research. We have the existing Mission Innovation, which was influenced by six Members of

this House and Sir David King, but it has very little profile and no clear target. What we now need is an international effort with a high profile, a clear target and very powerful funding. Britain is well placed to play a leading role. We already have the Faraday Institution on energy storage, and Cambridge has launched a major research centre for climate repair under Sir David King. I urge the British Government once again to take a lead and to propose to the G20 a high-profile, well-funded, well co-ordinated, green research programme with a target—this is the key point—to produce clean energy in every country at a lower cost than from fossil fuels by 2030. We need a clear target and a race to solve this problem; otherwise, the climate will not survive in a way that maintains our existing way of life.

I turn to national infrastructure. I believe the most important infrastructure we leave to future generations is social infrastructure. This was conclusively illustrated in Germany after the Second World War, when the country's physical infrastructure was shattered but its social infrastructure was largely intact. It recovered rapidly. I find it quite upsetting when it is assumed by, I think, probably most Members of this House that we now need a lot of investment in physical infrastructure and that that is our problem. No: our main problem is our social infrastructure.

The case for this has been compellingly made in the recent report of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Wellbeing Economics concerning the principles that should guide the next spending review. I strongly recommend that report to your Lordships and I will say a little about it. It is based on key findings from the new science of well-being, which are influencing our friends in the Welsh Government and throughout the world. This is the new way of thinking about public policy.

What are some of these findings and implications? First, the single biggest cause of misery in a rich country is mental illness, so the NHS should have a separate budget for mental health, which should go twice as far as the budget for physical health. Secondly, looking ahead, as the noble Lord, Lord Bird, did, the best predictor of a happy adult life is mental health in childhood, so we should make child well-being a major goal of our schools. We should encourage schools to measure child well-being and use well-tested ways of promoting it.

The next key thing for young people is when they leave school. We must have equal treatment for the 50% of people who do not go to university. This was said earlier, but what is not recognised clearly is that there is one single key to achieving that, which was not even mentioned in the Augar report: just as people going to university have uncapped automatic per capita funding if they go on, we absolutely have to have that in the system of further education and apprenticeships. Finally, we must invest better in social care for when we reach the end of life.

I applaud the Welsh initiative. It is the right way of thinking. The noble Lord, Lord Bird, is absolutely right. We must think more of the future, we must use science to save our climate, and for goodness' sake, let us give priority to social infrastructure.

4.08 pm

The Lord Bishop of Oxford: My Lords, I too welcome this debate and thank the noble Lord, Lord Bird, very warmly for bringing it. I welcome his proposals. As the noble Lord, Lord Layard, said, the foundation is a moral and ethical case. That moral case has shifted in recent years because of the realisation of the effects of the Anthropocene era. Humanity's effect on the environment means that the interests of not just the next generation but every generation beyond that need to be protected in our policy-making and debate.

As a number of noble Lords have said, the world is living through a deepening environmental catastrophe. The impact of change on our climate is already severe. It will become worse with each decade and every generation. The world is currently heading for average global warming of 2 degrees and more by 2050. Global net carbon emissions continue to rise. The risks of unforeseen and catastrophic compound effects on the environment increase with every year.

The two Biblical images of hell are a burning planet, too hot to sustain life, and a rubbish dump. We are in danger of bequeathing both to our children, our grandchildren and every generation that follows. It is hugely irresponsible to take short-term decisions in the interests of only the current generation or the current economy, and so, as other noble Lords have done, I warmly welcome the Government's historic commitment to a net zero carbon economy by 2050, and congratulate the Prime Minister on naming this goal as a vital part of her legacy. I welcome the Government's international leadership and the bid to host the vital 2020 climate summit. These goals need support across Parliament, and the voice of those future generations needs to be strengthened in that debate.

Future generations also need to be protected in the rapid pace of technological change. Here I speak as a board member of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation. The pace of change and the effects of technology on the mental health of the young are significant. I warmly commend the Information Commissioner's Office, and its recent guidelines on age-appropriate design, which aim to protect the most vulnerable from the predatory technology companies. I also warmly commend the Government for bringing forward the online harms White Paper. I hope both will be turning points in the development of new technologies which protect rather than exploit the most vulnerable. In the coming years we will need agility and public leadership in responding to new technologies and data in the areas of health, education, the labour market, smart cities, algorithmic decision-making, facial recognition and the regulation of the mining of personal information for commercial gain. The interests of future generations will also need a voice.

Finally, these proposals are so helpful in that they address a decrease in social cohesion taking place across the generations, which noble Lords have noted. The All-Party Group on Social Integration recently published a comprehensive study of intergenerational connection and its decrease. The generations have become increasingly segregated. We can either allow that process of drift to continue, with serious social

[THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD]

consequences, or we can exercise leadership to build and protect social capital between the generations. Families and faith communities have a vital role to play, and are part of the glue which binds generations together. Local government has a role, as do business and the third sector, but national government must play its part. It has been hugely instructive in this debate to hear of the lessons being learned in Wales.

The proposals to give a structured voice to the interests of future generations are warmly to be welcomed. I warmly support the proposals of the noble Lord, Lord Bird, and hope that they will attract support across the whole House.

4.13 pm

Baroness Massey of Darwen (Lab): My Lords, the House owes a great debt to the noble Lord, Lord Bird, for securing this important debate, and for introducing it with such passion. It is important because what could be more essential than ensuring that future generations have a say in what will be their future, whatever it may bring? I was much struck by the quotation from the excellent Library briefing:

“the standard approach to policy making is to prioritise the interests of current generations”.

I would like to offer some comments on the importance of involving children and young people in decision-making, about their lives now and the lives of their generation and beyond.

I too have worked with young people in Kazakhstan. In the UK and other countries, there are excellent examples of involving young people, but we have no co-ordinated strategy. As the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states, children—this means up to the age of 18—have the right to be heard. This not only gives them respect and self-confidence; children and young people can also contribute to better laws, policies and strategies. They have a fresh eye and experience policies and strategies for themselves. I have seen this happen time and again.

Today, I want to give some examples of how young people participate in the UK. All the initiatives I shall describe have made an extreme effort to involve children from vulnerable and diverse backgrounds, not just the elite in a tokenistic way. One positive involvement is of course that of school councils: children from the youngest age give their views on all aspects of the school, be it school meals, toilet facilities or, on a higher plane, teaching programmes. Our brilliant charity sector often involves children at local and national levels in strategies on projects, as do the UK's Children's Commissioners.

All the nations of the UK have youth parliaments. Our own Parliament here has an exciting education department, which involves children in visits to Parliament and in conducting their own debates in your Lordships' Chamber. I have experienced two of those and they were absolutely superb. The Lord Speaker's Peers in Schools programme involves peers addressing school audiences up and down the country. We also have an APPG on future generations.

As a further example from sport, the young people's cricket charity Chance to Shine recently held an open day at Lord's cricket ground where 450 children—boys

and girls from around the country—took part in a range of activities, including an assembly in celebration of cricket. I should declare an interest as a Lady Taverner. The children talked about the values of cricket, focusing on teamwork, perseverance and fair play. There are many lessons there for future policymakers. Chance to Shine focuses mainly on inner-city schools; maybe one of these children will one day be president of the MCC.

The message is clear: first, inspire and engage children; then develop their skills and self-confidence, listen to them and involve them in planning for the future. In Scotland during May delegates from East Lothian Council, the Scottish Government, the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland and representatives from the NGO sector joined 13 members of the Children's Parliament, a local partnership and a youth centre to consider how to embed a children's rights approach across services and facilities in Tranent. The local MP, Martin Whitfield, took part and gave me this information. I know that similar initiatives have taken place in Wales and Northern Ireland.

There are examples of police forces consulting and involving children and young people. I was most impressed a few years ago, when chairing the APPG for Children, that the police took part in an inquiry—with children—to discuss policies such as stop and search and the holding of vulnerable children, sometimes with mental health problems, in police cells overnight. Things changed then because Ministers listened to young people.

Ministers have also listened to young people in forming a joint Council of Europe/UK Parliament seminar on child mental health and child-friendly justice. The seminar worked in mixed groups of children and adults, where one girl said, “We are experts by experience”. These young people have since developed dialogue with Ministers and expanded their group. Jackie Doyle-Price and Edward Argar have been particularly enthusiastic.

The recent NHS long-term plan involved consultation with the NHS Youth Forum, while the British Youth Council ran an engagement event for seldom-heard young people. The Association for Young People's Health, of which I am a patron, ran a survey of young people as part of the Young People's Health Partnership; it then held a stakeholder event for 14 young people, working alongside 57 professionals. It was an excellent collaboration with young people, using their experience.

I have given but a few examples of protecting and representing the interests of young people and future generations in policy-making. Would the Minister be prepared to pull together all this excellent practice and look at what could be shared and acted upon? Perhaps she could call together a group from those debating today to suggest ways forward: for example, a House of Lords Committee to take evidence and form a strategy on the involvement of young people in their future. I look forward to her response.

4.19 pm

Lord Crisp (CB): My Lords, I welcome this debate and I welcome the thinking that is starting to happen on this topic around the world. Like my noble friend Lord Bird, I am attracted to the Welsh model and

support his call for a UK equivalent. I am also grateful to him for giving me the opportunity not only to talk about this but to be made to think and read about it in advance, and bring it to top of mind.

There is a clear set of problems here, as noble Lords have said. Climate change and national debt epitomise this clearly. We are passing a burden to future generations, and we should not underestimate or neglect that. As has been argued in the papers that the Library has produced, our current means of economic analysis of future costs tends towards more short-termism. This is aggravated by the political cycle, which encourages short-termism and, at the moment, is further aggravated by the lack of political vision in the country. It seems that maybe my noble friend Lord Bird has got his timing absolutely right: where there is a lack of vision, there is also an opportunity. Maybe this is the sort of opportunity that an incoming Government—assuming that we have another stable Government in due course—might see as something that could help unify the country. Bring people together to think clearly about the future, as the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Leeds mentioned about Kazakhstan, where I too have dropped in occasionally, as one does. In countries such as Kazakhstan they focus on the future and think about what is coming, whereas we perhaps concentrate more on the past.

There is also a problem today, as noble Lords know and have said, that younger people as a whole are disadvantaged compared with older generations such as mine, in matters as radical and important as life expectancy—which seems to be going down—opportunity, access to owning their own homes and student debt. Some people feel completely left out of society and its benefits, and many are becoming cynical, not least about politics. Here I note the point of the noble Baroness, Lady Jenkin, that it is dangerous if people, particularly the young, lose trust in our political system.

Maybe there is another way to look at this. It could appear as if we in the older generations are being asked, reluctantly, to give up some of our power and privilege for future generations. But what do we stand to gain by doing so? Is it not in our interests as well? Generations are different, as has been said. It is interesting, from talking to employers with major workforces, that there are four or five different generations, with different needs, expectations and ways of working today. Different generations are different. They are different from us and see life in different ways. I am conscious of this in working with a lot of young nurses and doctors. They have different needs, different skills and different talents. They have an enormous amount to offer. Here I echo the noble Baroness, Lady Massey.

It always seemed an enormous paradox that most planning is done by the over-55s, and they promptly retire five years later. As I have learned today from the noble Baroness, Lady Jenkin, most planning is done by people who have just decided to become Conservative voters—if I understood what she said. Could we not do something different? Is it not better now, instead of just representing the interests of young people, to engage and involve them? There is a simple point here: should that not be good practice in all our planning mechanisms, not just in a single commission? I know

we now try to organise ourselves to have gender and ethnicity balance, but should we not always engage younger people and make sure that our planning programmes always have some people aged 35 or under?

A common-sense new-normal way of thinking about the future and planning things should engage young people in every location where planning is underway. This adds to the richness of the debate. I know, because we have done that deliberately in the last two commissions I chaired. We have not had a youth group to advise us but people who actually have a seat at the table. On a good day, we in the older part of the committee or commission add a bit of wisdom and experience, and they add some new insight and energy, though we both have our bad days as well, when different qualities come to the fore.

It is worth noting that young people tend to create the future. This is not a new thing about tech pioneers. I mentioned I am working with nurses a lot at the moment, and it is interesting to reflect that, when Florence Nightingale was in the Crimea and doing the sorts of things that started to change the world of nursing, she was in her early and mid-30s. This is not a new phenomenon. Young people have a great deal to offer us, and those of us over 55 need perhaps to create a few more spaces at the table.

That is perhaps more directly relevant to the debate on Monday in the name of the noble Lord, Lord Holmes of Richmond, when we will look at the composition of public bodies, so let me return to the point about a commission and a real focus from policy nationally on future generations. I agree with the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity, which proposes a UK commissioner, reform of the National Infrastructure Commission and imposing statutory duties on Ministers and public bodies to publish the implications of policy. Those need to be worked through, but they seem a good starting point for the future. How do the Government plan to think about these things and respond to such proposals?

Finally, action related to the future generations along the lines that we have talked about today could be one of the great unifying issues for a new Government. I commend this point to the Minister.

4.25 pm

Lord Bethell (Con): I join others in offering profound thanks to the noble Lord, Lord Bird, for bringing forward this thoughtful debate and asking how we might get away from “presentism” and instead figure out how to prevent ourselves, as people and as a society, harming one another. It is in an incredibly honourable cause in which I want to try to help. However, I shall start by sharing with the House some of my reservations about the approach being suggested.

I worry about political interventions that seek to speak on behalf of people who are not present and do not have a vote at the time. I worry about political groups that claim to have some more profound insight into the human condition than the voting man or woman. I worry about anyone who feels that they somehow care more about the world than the mother, father, son or daughter in the voting booth on election day.

[LORD BETHELL]

A commissioner for future generations or a future generations Act has been spoken about persuasively and fondly, but I confess to the House that I come from a political tradition that was cast from radical liberalism and fired in the Cold War and that such words send shivers down my spine. To quote Dennis Thompson of Harvard University, who has spoken powerfully on this subject, I worry about,

“utopian idealists, religious zealots, or radical revolutionaries”, who claim to speak on behalf of future generations, but who,

“call for great sacrifices from the present generation”.

I do not want to be too vivid about it, but a commission for future generations creates for me images of autocrats whose cold logic, divorced from the disciplines of the ballot box, leads to extreme decisions.

I also question some of the assumptions made in this debate: that our democracy is uncompromisingly short-termist, populist or self-indulgent. How else would we, Britain, have stood alone in 1941 and mobilised a citizens' army or, more recently, enshrined in law a commitment to spend 0.7% of our gross national income on foreign aid, or reduced our carbon emissions by 40%—or any number of policy commitments that sacrifice present benefits for future generations or those living in other lands?

Instead of disrupting our democratic institutions and traditions, we should look to bolster the traditional sources of challenge and insight that we have in our country already. I would guide the conversation away from bureaucratic mechanics such as impact assessments, officeholders such as commissioners or legal structures such as future generations Acts. For instance, I am sceptical about whether we need more bureaucracy such as a Committee for the Future, as in Finland. The excellent briefing note put together by the Library contains an incredibly persuasive but worrying list of examples from other countries. I am also sceptical about intergenerational impact assessments. In my experience, the much less complicated impact assessments that are already in place do not shed much light and are probably an unnecessary burden on our overstretched civil servants.

I am very open to the idea of strengthening the capabilities of this House. Having read the thoughtful report from the Intergenerational Fairness and Provision Committee, mentioned by my noble friend Lady Jenkin, I support the idea of a standing House of Lords committee to study such threats; that would be a sensible development.

There are three others that I endorse and will direct the attention of the House towards, to ensure that my four horrible children are protected and their interests taken into account. The first is a cultural point. To meet the challenge of climate change, which is probably a stand-out example of where future generations' interests should be considered, we have to overcome the partisanship of modern times and refind the spirit of cross-party consensus building that is necessary for long-term solutions. How can we possibly find a solution to UK issues such as the housing and social care crises, or major international ones such as migration and climate change, if we do not tackle the political

culture and learn to work together? We will just lurch around ineffectively instead of building strong solutions. I am concerned that Acts of Parliament and commissioners will not necessarily contribute to that.

Secondly, we absolutely have to break the electoral stranglehold of Britain's gerontocracy by making a much greater commitment to civics and ethics in the curriculum. The lesson of Extinction Rebellion is not to create a new bureaucracy around future generations but that the kids are interested in politics when there is something they care about. We are just not talking to them in an engaging way.

Lastly, we need to bring the public back into Parliament. It is great that we have the TV cameras here, and I thank those who are watching us from above. However, it saddens me that we are talking about the challenge of future generations and the balconies are half empty. As part of the refurbishment of Parliament that is on the horizon, I would like to see a massive investment in opening it to people. Let us clear out the ground floor and make it wide open to people. In particular, I would like to see every schoolchild in Britain visit Parliament as part of the curriculum, partly so that they have a bond with their future and partly so that we can see them there, watching our decisions as we talk about their future.

4.32 pm

The Earl of Listowel (CB): My Lords, I support the noble Lord, Lord Bethell, in his wise words. We clearly have to rebuild the spirit of cross-party consensus and ensure that the public thoroughly understand the workings of Parliament. The buck does stop here. I am a little concerned that, if we farm out responsibility to commissioners and others, we might not work so hard to build consensus on the way forward—although I can also see virtues in the other approach. I am most grateful to my noble friend for securing this important and highly stimulating debate. I noted what the noble Lord, Lord Layard, said about the social infrastructure. Back in the 1950s in Stepney, families were facing the outcome of the Blitz on low incomes and with insecurity. But grandmothers, and their daughters, held those extended families together. When those families began to move out, they became less resilient and began to break down.

In protecting the interests of our children in the future, we would do well to consider how we make the best possible childhoods for them. What can we do now to ensure good childhoods for our future children? Part of that is being more coherent and consistent in policy and more consensual in what we do. We make up and then undo; we build and unbuild; we invest and disinvest. We cannot build a good future for our children if we cannot find a more consensual approach. Most basically, children need stable relationships. In the earliest days, they need a strong attachment to their mothers. They need important people in their lives who stick around. They need secure housing and schools that they can rely on not being moved away from.

This is thoroughly recognised in the care system. So many times over so many years I have heard young people in care saying that the most important thing to

them is a stable, long-term, benign relationship. This is recognised in policy: it is called permanence. So there is a push towards more adoption and longer-term foster placements. There is a push towards staying put—allowing young people to remain with their foster carers until the age of 21. There is a push towards staying close—allowing young people to remain near their children's homes when they move out of them. We recognise that. The trouble is that in our culture as it plays out today, everything seems to militate against the stability that we need for our children. The law in this country, for instance, is based on an adversarial system; politics is based on an adversarial system. This is very different from many of our continental neighbours, who are far more willing to compromise. In this country, "compromise" is a dirty word—but on the continent any politician realises that one should never get all one wants; it is not helpful always to get all one wants.

I will give an illustration. Sure Start was announced by Gordon Brown and launched by Tessa Jowell in 1998. To paraphrase her words, the first three years of life are so important, I believe we should invest in this way. It was a very welcome introduction, yet a parliamentary briefing tells us that between 2015 and 2017 a large number of children's centres—I think it may have been 308—closed down. I spoke to health visitors earlier this week who were bemoaning the fact that there are few clinics that are easily accessible to mothers. They have responded to that by developing telephone services, which is a way of responding, but it is certainly not as good as being able to see mothers face to face. On the other hand, there is the situation with health visitors. There was a rapid decline in their numbers in the 2000s, a rapid building up in the early 2010s, and now they are declining by a quarter. This investment and disinvestment is so unhelpful: our children need stability but our political system does not give it to them—not as it currently stands.

If we look to Germany, we see a country with long-term, stable coalition Governments, which I think is very helpful. We can look abroad and try to learn lessons. I cannot give any answers as to how we can change, but I can tell noble Lords that I was present when the research evidence on Sure Start was presented at the Institute for Fiscal Studies two weeks ago. Naomi Eisenstadt and Leon Feinstein, important researchers and practitioners, were also present. The main theme was that it is not any particular Government; whenever there is a change in Minister or a change in Government, everything is turned upside-down again. So if we want stable lives for our children, we need stable policies and we must work harder to co-create policies so that when one party comes in, it does not undo what the others have done.

In Finland decades ago there was a political consensus that education was important and that the best way to give children a good education was to recruit and retain the best teachers. Finlanders were not even aware of how good they were, but in 2000 PISA discovered that they were the best in maths, the best in literacy and the best in science. They just stuck to their guns and recruited and retained the best teachers. If we are to do better for the children of the future, we need to be more consistent.

4.38 pm

Lord Judd (Lab): My Lords, when I am buying my copy of the *Big Issue* on a wet and windy winter's day in the car park of Sainsbury's in Cockermouth, of course I think about the young person selling it to me and the life behind them. These days, I find myself thinking about the noble Lord, Lord Bird, as well. I always think, here is the evidence of a man who does not just say, but does. We were privileged to hear his introduction today. I am glad that the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Leeds mentioned the Library note. I am always deeply impressed by the quality of notes produced by the Libraries for our debates.

It strikes me that behind what we have been talking about today is the fundamental issue of whether we regard the globe as just part of our consumer society, to be consumed and enjoyed in our immediate lives, or whether we have and engender a sense of stewardship and responsibility for what we have inherited and what, hopefully, we will pass on. This sense of stewardship of the globe and all its realities is crucial.

When I came out of government in 1979, I remember my young children asked me very bluntly, "But, dad, what have you learned from your ministerial experiences?" I remember saying then, "What I have learned is that tactics are the total enemy of strategy". Everybody is so busy managing and dealing with the immediate crisis, difficulties and challenges that no one is really looking at things in perspective and thinking strategically. The list of issues which we hand on from the past is immense; therefore, the list of issues that will affect the next and future generations is also immense.

There is the issue of education and libraries, which the noble Lord, Lord Bird, mentioned. I liked the way he mentioned that they enable young people to have space in which they can discover themselves, grow in confidence and the rest. One major tragedy of our society is that we have confused training and education. Training is desperately important to enable people to do jobs efficiently, but education is indispensable, enabling youngsters to discover their potential—what they could be—not going to their graves never being what they might have been but having had a chance to discover who they are, what their talents are and how to develop them.

There is also the issue of climate change, to which noble Lords have referred. Here, of course, we are challenged by the younger generation itself; it has taken over and is challenging us, demonstrating that this is the key issue for it. Then there is Brexit, and the immense disillusion and disappointment among so many of the young. I had it put to me, "You've deprived us of our future—we wanted to belong to the world, and you seem hell-bent on going in the opposite direction". Therefore, if we have another referendum, I pray that it will follow the example of Scotland and bring the 16 to 17 year-olds in, which worked so well in the Scottish referendum.

There are so many other specific issues: the PFI, for example—all Governments are responsible for this. They are just handing it on to future generations, burdening them with the expenditure rather than facing up to what we could really afford. Then there is the collapse of social services and the burden this will

[LORD JUDD]

place on future generations. There is also the issue of nuclear waste, which often preoccupies me; if we are going into another generation of nuclear energy, which I am not against, we have to find a solution for the waste. That solution must be the safest possible, which means making sure that we look at every corner of the UK to find the best and safest place in which to put it.

The noble Lord mentioned Wales, where there is a powerful story, which the Library note mentions. There is the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Future Generations Commissioner and the Auditor-General for Wales, who has responsibility to ensure that public bodies are meeting their sustainable development objectives. Other countries have taken the lead over us—Finland, Hungary, Singapore and Israel.

We must wake up. The future belongs to future generations, and we must ensure that they are in the driving seat.

4.45 pm

Lord Rees of Ludlow (CB): My Lords, we should indeed be grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Bird, for inspiring this debate. Young people in this country face the future with foreboding as well as hope. They confront radical disruption to the nature of work, unequal opportunities and social fragmentation. However, my remarks will focus on concerns that are more global: environmental degradation, unchecked climate change and unintended consequences of advanced technology. I declare an interest as co-founder of a centre in Cambridge with that focus, and I am half-Welsh.

Climate change is a prominent concern. Under business-as-usual scenarios, we cannot rule out, later this century, catastrophic warming and tipping points triggering long-term trends such as the melting of Greenland's ice. A child born today has a high chance of living beyond 2100. If you care about that generation and those beyond, you should deem it worth paying an insurance premium now to protect against those worst-case scenarios. As economists such as Stern and Weitzman have argued, these are contexts where it is inappropriate to discount the future at the standard rate that a developer planning an office building with a 30-year lifetime would use. As a parenthesis, stimulated by the noble Lord, Lord Judd, I note that there is one policy context where a zero discount rate is applied: to radioactive waste disposal, where the depositories are required to prevent leakage for at least 10,000 years. That is somewhat ironic, given that we cannot plan the rest of energy policy even 30 years ahead.

And another thing: if humanity's collective footprint gets too heavy, the resultant ecological shock could irreversibly impoverish our biosphere. A UN report this year claimed that 1 million species were risk of extinction. That is 10% of the total estimated number of species—many are not yet identified. We are destroying the book of life before we have read it. To quote the great ecologist E. O. Wilson,

“mass extinction is the sin that future generations will least forgive us for”.

However, politicians will not gain much resonance by advocating sacrifices now when the benefits seem to accrue mainly to distant parts of the world decades

in the future. Even within our own country, there is reluctance to spend enough on disaster mitigation—vaccines, flood defences, et cetera. Unless there is a clamour from voters, manifest in politicians' inboxes and the press, Governments will not properly prioritise measures crucial for future generations. Sustaining that clamour needs effective campaigning, not just experts, and enlisting charismatic individuals to change the public mindset. To quote the great anthropologist Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has”.

I give two examples. The papal encyclical *Laudato Si* eased the path to consensus at the Paris climate conference in 2015. The Pope got a standing ovation at the UN. He has 1 billion followers, mainly in Latin America, Africa and East Asia. There is no gainsaying his impact nor the Church's global reach, long-term vision and concern for the world's poor. More parochially, I doubt that Michael Gove would have become exercised about non-degradable plastic waste had it not been for the BBC's “Blue Planet” programmes, fronted by our secular Pope, David Attenborough—especially the footage of an albatross returning to its nest and regurgitating plastic debris, an image as iconic as the polar bear on a melting ice floe is for climate campaigners. As many noble Lords have emphasised, it is encouraging to witness more activists among the young. They hope to live to the end of the century. Their campaigning is welcome and their commitment gives grounds for hope.

I close with a thought that strikes me when I visit the great cathedral at Ely, near where both I and my noble friend Lord Bird live. Its builders essentially knew of nothing beyond Europe. Many thought that the world was a few thousand years old and might not last another thousand. Despite these constricted horizons in both time and space, despite the deprivation and harshness of their lives, and despite their primitive technology and meagre resources, they conceived a glorious building that they never lived to see finished and which still elevates our spirits centuries later. What a shaming contrast it would be if, despite our far greater resources and wider horizons, we pursued policies that denied future generations a fair inheritance. Our perspectives should be global and stretch at least a century ahead. Our responsibility to our children, to the poorest and to preserve life's diversity surely demands nothing less. That is why we need institutional changes to enshrine long-term thinking more firmly in decision-making.

4.51 pm

Baroness Watkins of Tavistock (CB): My Lords, I thank my noble friend Lord Bird for securing this important debate. It is an honour to follow my noble friend Lord Rees and the other noble Lords who have spoken with such vision on how to include young people and enhance their involvement in public policy planning.

It is clear to me that the current structures for public consultation on a range of issues neither involve enough representation of the younger members of our society nor consider fully the impact of policy-making on future generations. Rather, we get into a cycle,

associated with our electoral cycle, of short-term solutions to long-term problems. The excellent Library briefing for today's debate states:

"Some theorists have suggested that future generations should not be explicitly represented in policymaking".

Such theorists argue that "family and institutional ties" take cognisance of future generations' interests when formulating policy. I believe, however, that hearing younger voices and responding to their ideas is vital. If countries such as Singapore, Israel and Hungary have introduced formal representation for future generations into policy-making, surely the UK should develop an equivalent. As has been acknowledged, there is a Future Generations Commissioner in Wales, where I did my master's degree, and a Futures Forum in Scotland.

Without a more formal approach to involving young people in decision-making, I suggest that policy-making will continue to favour the current generation of policymakers. Thompson, a Harvard academic, suggests that,

"presentism is not entirely unwelcome",
in a democracy. He further states:

"Compared to other forms of government, democracy is not disposed to sacrifice".

I suggest that this is true in this House as well as in wider society. We as a body have very few, if any, Members under the age of 40. We are appointed based on a variety of skills and expertise, but we are appointed for life, making it difficult to refresh and renew our membership. We are trying hard to reduce our numbers: we voted in favour of new appointments to this Chamber being for a fixed term of 15 or 20 years—but not to apply that principle to those of us fortunate enough to sit in this House already.

I can submit further evidence of recent policy that has adversely affected younger generations rather than the generations making up the cohorts of parliamentarians in both this House and the other place. The decision to introduce and then to increase university fees rather than a graduate tax is one such example. Young people who have recently been at university have large debts charged at higher interest than most mortgages at present. Those earning over £25,000 a year are in effect paying basic rate tax and 9% on top of that in loan repayments. They also pay national insurance and in the public sector pay into occupational pensions that will be calculated on lifetime earnings rather than final salaries, unlike my own generation.

Priority issues that concern the younger generations raised through school councils, higher education student bodies and other networks include, as other noble Lords have outlined, the environment, employment, education, housing and homelessness, health and access to care and treatment services. If we are to hear and respond to their voices in developing policy, I believe that there needs to be a more formal structure in each of our four countries and a UK-wide body to democratically develop a greater emphasis on young people's rights to inform and develop policy. This should ensure that we put the needs of future generations at the heart of policy development.

I believe that a "young people's parliament" would be able to identify key areas where they wish policy to change. If there were a formal mechanism for Parliament

to be held accountable not only for receiving and listening to these concepts but also a duty to formally respond, this would make our democracy truly democratic. Parliamentarians would become more accountable to future generations and avoid the notion outlined by Thompson that,

"democracy is not disposed to sacrifice".

For example, if young people place significant value on building more homes, what would our response be? Let me postulate that building new homes rapidly would reduce homelessness and children being brought up in bed and breakfast accommodation but might also result in a reduction in the value of some properties owned by older people. Would we as policymakers accept that the benefits for younger generations outweigh a reduction in the value of some of the homes already purchased by older generations? I wonder, in this slightly utopian vision of younger generations informing policy, whether they might wish to raise a graduate tax and stop student loans? Would they want to ensure that our tax system encourages saving, increases funding for social care and reduces means-tested benefits for older generations? I am sorry but I may have said that the wrong way around: introduce means-tested benefits for older generations. I do not know, but I am certain that we should be consulting them more widely. What plans do HM Government have to work further to ensure that they protect and represent the interests of future generations in policymaking and what plans do they have to further expand and strengthen this work?

Finally, I end on a note referred to earlier: does the Minister think that this House would benefit from a range of new Members who were considerably younger than our current membership and could this be achieved by all of our current Members agreeing to a fixed period for our own tenure?

4.57 pm

Lord Addington (LD): My Lords, we have listened to a reliable tour de force from the noble Lord, Lord Bird, to start the debate, and now we have to ask ourselves a series of questions, many of which have been heard before. What are we supposed to do about tomorrow? This question has been raised throughout the debate. We all think that change should happen as long as we do not inconvenience ourselves. It should be done by somebody else. Nimbyism is the greatest enemy of recycling plants that use incineration, which is a great way of getting rid of plastics, and of having a windmill that generates clean energy. Nimby's say, "We do not want new houses if mine will go down in value"—because anybody who has a mortgage has to know that there is something there. We have to try to counter all these things, and the only way we will do this is if we allow ourselves to be reminded that we are only the caretakers. That was probably the last really important speech by Lady Thatcher, in which she pointed out the green agenda. We are the caretakers of the planet. That probably proves that no one party has ever had a monopoly on virtue. Everybody has to approach it and go through.

How we are reminded—the noble Lord, Lord Bethell, was the most strident against institutions reminding us—is a question that we will have to engage with.

[LORD ADDINGTON]

The great praise that goes to those across Offa's Dyke today, which is probably justified, means that it is a model. The Government must be looking at this. It is important to know when they will have an idea of how it works and how they would like to change something in this way. Having something here that does not work to remind us of the future is really just another useless bit of legislation—and let us face it; we have all seen plenty of those. How many bits of legislation have we had in this House that have not even been used? How many hours of our lives have we given to those?

Will we have something effective that does this? How will we bring in the young—the group that do not vote en masse? When they do, political calculations are destroyed; I refer in evidence to the 2017 election. When you actually get down and try to engage, how do you make sure they know what is going on and give them an issue? If you are voting against something, you are back to populism: “No, you can't do that to me; you can't interfere with my life”. You have to get some process of continuous engagement.

The environment is clearly the one subject on which we have had consistent pressure, for many decades now, to look at the future. What are we prepared to give up and restrict ourselves on, to make sure that we deliver there? How are we prepared to do it? How much tax do we want to pay? How much money are we prepared to sacrifice somewhere else? It comes together with housing, which I have already mentioned. Are we prepared to pay for slightly more expensive housing that is cheaper to run and does not affect the environment as much? How are we prepared to bring these together?

I am sitting even closer to the noble Lord, Lord Bird, than I am to those on my own Benches today. He spoke about investing in human capital. I thought that this might be one speech in which I did not mention special educational needs and dyslexia—but what the hell. If we are going through on this, not properly engaging and identifying problems in the education system means that we will have a poorer society and more people who cannot interact with it. This means that we are carrying more burden than benefit. In a modern world where you need many skilled workers, if you do not identify people who need extra help in the education system, you have problems. I am an example that you can get through, with a little adjustment—it is easier now.

I have a computer that 40 years ago was pure science fiction; I talk to it and it writes stuff. There are dozens of other things that talk back to you; it is pure “Star Trek”, is it not? We are there. But there are other ways that bring in other groups and make them productive. We have knowledge and interaction. At the moment we have a dysfunctional situation in which there are laws that say you should be helped but insufficient money to do it, and it is mainly falling on those areas. We will have to invest to get the best out of this group. If you do not, you have a burden. This is just another example of having to make a sacrifice or restructure now to get a future benefit. We all know that unless we get some reason or prod to do it, the easy answer is to take today's cake, not to invest for tomorrow and to go forward.

The young will be a good way of encouraging us to do this. The noble Lord, Lord Crisp, talked about getting a few under-35s involved. If I remember correctly, I had 17 and a half years as the under-40 representative in this House. Those days are gone. It was a case of, “It's jolly nice to have you in the room, but you're actually saying something?”. That is in us all. We have to institutionalise a way of getting them to come in and be listened to and interacted with. Groups that have input from outside will say something new.

To mention the things that I am interested in, if you put political parties and sporting groups in a darkened room where they can comfortably talk shop to each other in language that they have always used, they will come out with exactly the same answers as they have always done, because that is what we are like. We have to make sure that there is action and that we are challenged. That is why the institutional challenges are helpful. There is no other way of guaranteeing to make sure that it is there. We have to make sure that you come in, challenge and turn it all around and say, “There has to be something else”.

There also has to be a long-term objective and it has to be more solid than just, “We must do something at some point”—because you rapidly run out of road there. On the environment, we are rapidly coming to the end of the road. We are in emergency measures. It is time to stamp your brake down hard and hope you have judged it correctly—not, “Let's slow down and see if we can do it”. We are going to hit those barriers: it is probably just a matter of how hard. What do we do?

I will try to draw my comments and those of everyone else who has spoken in the debate to a conclusion. To guarantee the future we have to make sure that we continue to listen to those outside the normal groups, particularly those who are not included, and the young. The young are busy living their lives and instructing themselves, so we must encourage them in. It is no use saying, “Why don't you go and talk to a group of 45 to 55 year-olds who are running a political party, a pressure group or a residents association?”. You have to introduce them in.

We know this in sport. When there is a world cup in rugby or netball, you get new people into that group once they become interested in it. You prepare somebody to welcome them. Politics can learn something from sport. You have to have somebody who is interested on the door. We know from experience that if they turn up and all they see is a bunch of people doing their normal thing and saying, “We might get round to dealing with you in a minute”, they will leave. We must find ways of bringing them in and making sure that they are listened to, talked to and shown a path. If we do not do that, we will merely end up going over the same stuff again, except that it will be a slightly tweaked version of the same thing and the accepted wisdom. We do not have time for that slowness of change.

5.07 pm

Lord Davies of Oldham (Lab): My Lords, this has been an excellent debate and I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Bird, on the subject that he chose and on

his speech. As ever, he identified those who have had some of the worst deals from society and deserve not just our sympathy but our aid. At the same time, he succeeds in being optimistic about what we can do. That is a real virtue. I was very pleased, having been born in Tredegar, that he should choose Wales as the home of optimism today. He made a strong case indeed for the Welsh legislation that is making some real changes with regard to Welsh political culture. There is absolutely no reason why all the home countries cannot learn from that and make aspects of our legislation that much more relevant.

This debate was bound to range very widely. I am all too well aware that my noble friend Lord Giddens is really happy only when people are responding to global economics and the challenges presented by what is, after all, one of the greatest problems of resource allocation that one can conceive of. We are always very grateful when he comes along with his lucid arguments on these points. But today we should probably have a narrower focus, if only to pay due respect to the pitch made by the noble Lord, Lord Bird, in his opening speech.

That is why I appreciated the speech by my noble friend Lord Layard; unfortunately, there have been speeches in this debate to which I am now not able to pay sufficient regard. He said that the first issue is climate change. That was echoed by many speakers in this debate. Of course, it is the first issue. Unless we get all our resources devoted to guaranteeing the future of the planet, our hopes for any improvement in society will be as naught. We all know that we are running out of precious time. That is why we are at the point where really significant responses need to be made by the nations of the world. Of course, Britain has a special responsibility to play some leading part in this as we led the Industrial Revolution which created the circumstances in which our present problems abide.

My noble friend Lord Layard also mentioned energy. Without doubt, it is crucial; first, because lots of the energy we use at the moment is the most polluting of the problems that we have with regard to the climate; and, secondly, because we can make breakthroughs. We can see the science and technology which will make breakthroughs in cheaper, more efficient and, above all, safer energy, which can guarantee that we can expect our societies to flourish.

My noble friend's third point was about the health of the individual. We all respect the fact that the more we can improve the health of our nation, the more we will increase the level of happiness that our people enjoy. There is no doubt that the area we have neglected in the past has been mental health or that at present we need strategies that ensure that mental health gets the biggest bang for the buck. We must find the resources to make improvements there. That helps also to bring the totality of this debate into some concern about the welfare of our fellow citizens.

We should not underestimate the challenge that we face. I have to confess the significance of this point. I remember when the Club of Rome produced *The Limits to Growth* in the early 1970s. The whole world was aghast not because it was talking about limits to growth in terms of the dangers to the planet which we

are looking at now but simply because we would run out of the resources which we would need to translate into economic goods and benefits to society. The Club of Rome continues to produce work and is still active, but I do not think it figures with the degree of prominence that it had for a decade or so in the 1960s and 1970s when it identified the threat. In a sense we have overcome aspects of the physical threat because we know how to garner our resources to make improvements, although certain resources are becoming increasingly scarce. Our problem is the climate, which is a much greater problem than the shortage of resources because we are poisoning our inheritance.

The importance of change was recognised in the UK at the beginning of this century, in two ways. First, we began to address, through the Stern review—behind that, of course, was not just a British citizen but a Member of this House—which played a significant role in identifying the threats of climate change. Secondly, we started to look with a view to the future in perhaps a more significant way than at any time since the 18th or 19th century, when England was the world's oyster with respect to technological development. At that time, you could build a railway line wherever and as fast as you wanted, provided you had the resources. Our equivalent—there will not be total agreement on this—is HS2.

We have made a commitment to long-term investment in our infrastructure; the rewards for HS2 are still more than a decade away, and there are still doubts about its final structure. Governments always feel that democracies have desperately short-term aspects, but HS2 indicates that democracies can commit themselves to long-term allocation of resources. We are doing that in this instance, and we need to. I do not agree with the point that democracies cannot engender sacrifice: people responded to the sacrifices demanded by democracies from 1914 and again from 1939. People knew they and their families were paying a terrible price when young men went off to war, but they were responding to the democratic impulse that their country needed them.

We are capable of facing up to the greatest challenges of our society. We have to recognise that our progress can be quite significant. Recent reports indicate the way we can go forward. The institute of accountants has indicated that intergenerational relationships are under strain, and we have had enough evidence in this debate to recognise that. It is true that people in generations with the poorest deal are resentful. We have to face the facts. I have a quote here from the chief executive of the Resolution Foundation, Torsten Bell. He said that certain people are dealt a poor deal. By the age of 30, young people are, "earning no more than those born 15 years earlier"; the resources going to them are the same 15 years on. On housing, young people today are paying more, owning less and commuting further. That is a pretty poor deal, which brings me to the other two themes that I want to talk about.

To produce a good society, we need two priorities to get past this generational block. We have to concentrate resources on housing, to give our young people the chance to get and rent houses at reasonable cost, where they are currently being exploited. The other

[LORD DAVIES OF OLDHAM]

thing we must do is to provide lifelong education. We have to create a structure whereby young people, as they go through their work in a rapidly changing technological environment, can develop the skills to match up to it. These are two of the greatest challenges that we face. My party is working hard at the present time on how we will generate the resources to produce lifelong education and a vast improvement in housing policy.

5.19 pm

Baroness Stedman-Scott (Con): My Lords, I hope that everybody will join me in saying what a great debate this has been. The contributions have been excellent, and emotions have quite rightly been stirred on various issues. I thank the noble Lord, Lord Bird, for instigating the debate. He is persistent and consistent in his drive for prevention and all the issues that go with it. I can safely say that all noble Lords love prevention and would love to dismantle poverty—and that we all love Wales.

It is apt that we are discussing this issue when just last week the Prime Minister announced that the Government would reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050, protecting the future of the planet for future generations. The UK is on track to become the first G7 nation to legislate to reduce net emissions to zero. Germany has also recently come out in support of a net zero 2050 EU goal following an intervention from Chancellor Merkel last month.

The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Oxford, the noble Lords, Lord Rees of Ludlow, Lord Layard and Lord Davies of Oldham, and others have all drawn our attention to the issue of tackling climate change. Between 1990 and 2016, as referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Giddens, the UK reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 42% while still growing the economy by more than two-thirds. The UK is a centre for clean growth and innovation. Low-carbon technology and clean energy contribute £44.5 billion to our economy every year. As these actions show, this Government are committed to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Leeds, my noble friend Lady Jenkin and others reminded us that young people have never been so important to us as they are now. Indeed, this Government have consistently recognised the need to think about future generations in the policy of today. In the most recent Budget, for instance, the Chancellor announced a £200 million youth endowment fund, which will be run independently by the charity Impetus, working in partnership with the Early Intervention Foundation and Social Investment Business across England and Wales. This focus is on long-term early intervention, exactly the intervention needed to protect and support young people and future generations by investing early, recognising, as we all do, that prevention is better than cure.

Let me read a paragraph from a letter on mental health that our Prime Minister sent recently:

“Much of our work over the last three years has rightly focused on those suffering from mental ill-health. But I also believe that the next great revolution in mental health should be in prevention—because we should never accept a rise in mental health problems as simply inevitable”.

We are investing in the education of our future generations through our reforms of apprenticeships and technical education. In 2017 our reforms fundamentally changed what apprenticeships are, to improve their quality and the long-term opportunities they can provide. We have invested nearly £7 billion this year alone in education for 16 to 19 year-olds, but we know we need to go further. That is why we are transforming technical education through T-levels so that young people have the knowledge to get the high-skill, high-wage jobs of the future. We are backing these reforms with an extra £500 million per year once the new T-levels are fully rolled out. As many noble Lords will know, the founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, said, “That and better will do”.

On debt reduction, thinking about future generations is also reflected by the Government's fiscal responsibility. Our public sector debt is now falling as a share of GDP, reducing the debt interest burden on future generations, meaning that today's taxpayers are not creating costs that will have to be met by those yet to be born. We must stick to that.

Part of fiscal responsibility is also about targeting spend so that it is deployed most effectively. This means looking at benefits and costs to current and future generations of policies, programmes and projects. To do this, government policy professionals find support in the policy profession unit, which promotes professional standards in policy-making. It also adheres to government guidance, known as the Green Book, which sets out a way to help us make effective decisions. It calculates the costs and benefits of spending on today's and future generations. Included in this guidance are a number of steps to take so that the impacts on future generations of a policy or investment are fully captured. The Green Book approach has been exported far and wide, from Wales to New Zealand. This means that when we consider investments in our infrastructure, in roads, rail, hospitals and schools for the future, we consider the costs and benefits consistently, so we seek to invest the marginal pound with maximum impact.

The Government have invested in infrastructure at record levels. Public sector net investment is set to reach its highest sustained levels for 40 years—today's generation investing in the future. It is through economic growth, promoted by investment in capital, that the resources available to society are increased. These can be used to increase social value, such as improving public services, tackling poverty or protecting the environment.

Many noble Lords mentioned social capital, but while we have a good understanding of the costs and benefits of our investment in infrastructure, as the noble Lord, Lord Giddens, reminded us we also need to understand the impact of our investment in people, which is so important, so that future investment can be better targeted. To improve this understanding, the Government have asked the Office for National Statistics to develop a more sophisticated measure of human capital. The noble Lord, Lord Layard, challenged us to invest in social capital and that we must do.

Many people say that we must have prevention rather than cure. Sometimes we give ourselves the impression that we have not made any progress in this way, but I know that we have. I would be the first

person to stand here and say that there is more to do in our welfare reforms and that there are areas that we have to sort out. I am not going to argue with that at all. Sort them we will, but universal credit replaces six benefits with one to simplify the system and make work pay. As a result, people claiming universal credit move into work faster, stay in work longer and spend more time looking to increase their earnings.

When I ran an organisation that helped people get and keep a job, we said all the time that you get a job and then sometimes you lose it. You then had to requalify for benefit. I think it took a month to requalify before you could sign on again. You would then get another job. This would repeat itself for some people, especially those on the margins. We now have a system in which staff in Jobcentre Plus can help someone get a job and, if the person then loses that job, they get hold of them again straightaway to help get them their next job. The person does not leave the system. Also, if, in discussions with your work coach, you say that you need to earn more money, they will help you progress to the next job. This is prevention, and while there is more to do, it is working. Our reforms have made welfare fairer for claimants and taxpayers, and encourage people into work by making sure that work always pays. There are 3.7 million more people in work now than in 2010, resulting in the lowest rate of unemployment for 40 years.

I will answer some of the specific issues noble Lords have raised. If I run out of time, I give you my word that I will write with the answers. The noble Lords, Lord Bird, Lord Addington and Lord Wigley, and other noble Lords, raised the issue of the Welsh system. I know that the noble Lord, Lord Bird, is very keen to see if we can do something like this in England. We are looking very carefully at the Welsh system. The noble Lord shared with me that there is a five-year review. We too will wait and see what that review brings about and consider the findings and our response very carefully.

My noble friend Lady Jenkin, the noble Lord, Lord Crisp, and the noble Baroness, Lady Watkins, raised the issue of student debt and student loans. An expert panel led by Philip Augar published a review that was carried out last month, and the Prime Minister welcomes its findings. It says that there are overwhelming strengths to our education system, but the Government will carefully consider the panel's proposals and engage further with stakeholders before finalising their approach at the spending review.

The noble Lord, Lord Giddens, does well to challenge us and remind us that we must confront the problems that no other era has had to. The future is not what it used to be, so we must work together to try to find solutions to the problems we face. Believe me, they are bigger than anything we may have seen before.

The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Leeds challenged us on the Sure Start centres. I am advised that before closing any children's centres, local authorities must ensure that children and families—particularly the most disadvantaged—will not be adversely affected. This Government are supporting parents with record levels of childcare support and funding. If noble Lords have particular cases involving Sure Start which they

wish to write to me about, although I would not be pleased to receive them, I certainly will look at them. I sent somebody in my village to a Sure Start centre this week, and they have been helped.

I thank the noble Lord, Lord Wigley for so eloquently outlining the work of the Welsh Government, and I compliment Sophie Howe and her team on their excellent work. We have talked about mental health, but I wish to inform the noble Lord, Lord Layard, that the Government are committed to achieving parity of esteem between mental and physical health services. Funding for mental health services will grow as a share of the overall NHS budget over the next five years, as set out in the NHS's long-term plan.

The noble Lord, Lord Layard, raised the issue of national productivity. We are committed to providing high-quality infrastructures to support economic growth and prosperity across all regions of the UK. The Chancellor has set out how over £24 billion of the NPIF was allocated; it includes £740 million for digital infrastructure, £7 billion for research and development and £6.5 billion for transport. Noble Lords will see that those numbers do not add up to the total, but I will not read all the details out now.

The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Oxford talked to us about hell. You do not hear much about that in church now, so he is right to remind us that it is hot, and that climate change is a hot subject. He also reminded us of the challenge of technological change and the way that it could affect the most vulnerable, which is why they need education and skills to ensure that they can compete in the labour market.

I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Massey, for the time that we were able to spend together. Yesterday, she was able to enlighten me on the excellent work she has been doing and I was really impressed. She asked whether Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to support a group that pulled all the excellent work together to share good practice. I give her my word that I will go back to the Minister and ask whether that is a possibility. I will do my very best for her.

The noble Lord, Lord Crisp, reminded us that there is a lack of political vision. I am reminded that where there is no vision, the people perish. To have a vision for our country and our politics is very important. Florence Nightingale was in her mid-30s when she did some of her best and most important work, so we must listen to and make space for our young people.

I thank my noble friend Lord Bethell for his challenge. I am not sure what I can do about making sure that the refurbishment of Parliament is accommodated in line with his vision, but I will have a go. I will certainly pass on his challenge. I was delighted by his endorsement of the intergenerational fairness report. We await the Government's response with anticipation, but I am glad that he is supportive of a standing committee in the House of Lords.

As ever, the noble Earl, Lord Listowel, was a champion for the children. He said that we need stable policies for them. We need stable lives and stable relationships for children, and there is great work going on to achieve that, but some very sad cases come to us by the day. I hope that all noble Lords will do their best to try to improve policy and stop the invest/divest situation.

[BARONESS STEDMAN-SCOTT]

The noble Lord, Lord Judd, again gave us an excellent contribution. On voting I say to him, in the most pleasant way that I can, that the Government do not have any plans to lower the voting age and were elected on a manifesto commitment to retain the current franchise. The House has debated lowering the voting age in a number of contexts and repeatedly voted against it. For example, during the passage of the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill in 2016 there was an attempt to lower the voting age in local elections; it was confidently defeated. My noble friend Lord Bethell also raised the issue of young people's involvement in politics.

I have some good news for the noble Lord, Lord Judd. At the Budget in 2018, the Chancellor announced that PFI will be "retired"—I think that is the polite word—for new projects on the basis that it is inflexible, overly complex and a potential risk to government finances.

There was a wonderful contribution by the noble Lord, Lord Rees of Ludlow. We are in awe of his understanding of the issues. As we are the first country to legislate for long-term climate targets, we can be truly proud of our record in tackling climate change. Standing by is not an option and we have set targets to do better.

In reply to the noble Baroness, Lady Massey, the noble Lord, Lord Crisp, and my noble friend Lord Bethell, last year the House appointed a Select Committee on Intergenerational Fairness and we await the outcome of its report. The noble Baroness, Lady Watkins, asked whether we would benefit from having young people in here. I consider myself young at 63 and I imagine that we would. It takes some time to change things here, though, so in that sense perhaps we had better get on with it.

The noble Lord, Lord Addington, was another endorser of looking at Welsh policy and seeing what happens there. I have given an answer to that. He is persistent and consistent in his quest for better services for dyslexia, and the benefits that technology can achieve. To the noble Lord, Lord Davies, I say that we are committed to providing high-quality infrastructure to support economic growth. The national product investment fund is going to deliver additional money for that, and we remain committed to HS2.

I thank all noble Lords for their contributions. I thank the noble Lord, Lord Bird. I always find his interventions refreshingly honest; they stimulate great debate. I will close with a quote from his article in the *House* magazine:

"If we don't want to be the generation who knew what needed to be done, but fiddled while Rome burned, we need to take action. After all, the best way to predict the future is to create it".

I thank all noble Lords.

5.40 pm

Lord Bird: I really enjoyed that and am glad the Minister has said she will look closely at the Welsh commission and legislation. That was a good way of describing it. I do not know if I got there in the end, but I was trying to bring poverty into the future generations debate, along with climate change and other things. I was trying to explain that I arrived at future generations from my work in poverty, as opposed to considering other wider issues. I am glad we are doing this.

The Minister has pointed out all the work being done, and it is great. There is nothing not being done. Some 80% of social provision in this country—maybe a little more or less—is very good and we should be proud of that. But the 20% or 22% is why we need something more forward-looking for future generations. The 22% are always left behind, and they are the people who take up 70% of the political and social actions of both Houses, and all sorts of local authorities and charities. We are obsessed with and besotted by what is about 20% to 30%. I wanted to mention that.

I also mention the contribution from the noble Lord, Lord Bethell, because he was the only one who said it is not worth a candle—in the nicest possible sense. At one stage, I was the printer of the Victorian Society and spent a long time getting into Victorian history. I was often in this House measuring, because the Victorian Society had many plans to open up and save the buildings. This was 40 years ago; of course, there was no response, the money was not spent and here we are having to spend billions in the future.

It is interesting to look at the year 1885 and the Great Stink. What did it lead to? The Great Stink led to Bazalgette's northern and southern outfalls. Who commissioned that? A commissioner did, the public works commissioner. They could not get the partisans together. Who were the partisans? They were not just political, but the local authorities that did not want to invest in drainage and get rid of all the nasty smells. It was the parish councils and business. Business wanted more of the same. It wanted to put all its trash into the river. It was a commissioner, not very different from commissioner Sophie Howe. I say to the noble Lord, Lord Bethell, if he really wants to look at the development of this country, look at the occasions when the commissioners stepped in and said, "Enough is enough. We have to do something". I thank all noble Lords for a very exciting debate. You have been very generous to me.

Motion agreed.

House adjourned at 5.45 pm.