SPEECH BY GENERAL MORGAN.

(1) K7 Speaker -- "Your Grace, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, Pray silence far Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Morgan." (applause)

Morgan gets up and speaks - "Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen. First and foremost my heartfelt thanks to our hosts, The News Review World Forum not only for their princely hospitality which we have enjoyed, but also personally, from me for giving me this opportunity to put before a very distinguished gathering audience some of the fruits of my recent experiences in relation to what, I personally am convinced, is a problem of the utmost significance."

(2) SY - "Now, the Displaced Persons in Germany number still something of the order of something between half a million and a million probably. Now straight away you will say why is it not possible to get more accurate statistics than this. Well, I haven't time to explain on this subject, but you must believe me that there are lots of very good reasons why accurate statistics have never been obtained and are unobtainable. Now, in the main these figures consist in their major groupings of Poles, Balts, Ukrainians, Yugoslavs and, of course, those of a vast variety of origins who are classed, in the United States zone of occupation as Jews."

SCU - "Now for the rest, what have we done? Our occupation administration in Germany has given to these Displaced Persons food, clothing, such shelter as could be spared, transportation and in fact the basic necessities for existence, and I would have you mark that these basic necessities have been supplied by the occupation administration, not by UNRRA. Well, over and above that we subscribe to UNRRA who are given certain duties and responsibilities in relation to the respect of Displaced Persons. You may think that's enough. We've done our bit we may say we want our money for so many other things. We may say that the cost of occupation of our zone of Germany which is already very absurdly high and must be cut down. In the popular conception UNRRA has failed, and
failed most notoriously in relation to its displaced persons
Now
operations. /What better means of economising in Germany, you may
argue are than to withdraw our help from the Displaced Persons
and will let them fend somehow for themselves. However, remember
that these people have no governments at their backs and are liable
to become a nuisance. Now, have I overdrawn the picture?

Maybe I have, but maybe I haven't. Let me say first of all that
it is my belief that any failure on the part of UNRRA, and God
knows there have been failures, is not to be laid at the door of
UNRRA-itself not so much of UNRRA itself but the authorities that
set UNRRA up and failed to give it the power that should have
accompanied the responsibility that was placed upon it because you
cannot have ........

(4) CU - "Now, why is it that we cannot grasp this problem? And
deal with it? The problem is one of the absorption
amongst our teeming millions of this very small fragment that
remains in Germany. And remember that they owe their misfortunes
very largely simply to the fact that they are our friends - that's
a horrid thought. Now what's stopping us? A rapid and positive
solution is needed from so many points of view of what I've said.
We in this country are shouting out for labour. Well, here's labour
in quantity at our very door ready and willing."

(5) SV - "Now, how can we deal with it? And I am going to make a
suggestion and say to you bluntly roundly that it is incumbent
on us, the British, to set an example in the matter. We can go on
arguing and discussing this thing for ever. Let us set the world
an example, and the example I suggest that you should set is to deal
quickly, rapidly, fearlessly, with this problem by bringing our
share of the Displaced Persons, so-to-speak, out of the British
zone of Germany over to this country. (hear, hear) Now we have the
priceless advantage of ........"
SY Morgan speaking - people listening in foreground.

"Because these Displaced flocks are so utterly defenceless and so pathetically easily misled. Now the least we can do is, I suggest, poor to give these people some hope, hope - they have no hope. And most particularly does this apply May I say to the Jewish displaced persons. But it is the same with all of them. We may say... so much where they can't go and what they can't do. (Track only cant London do better than merely speculate? (Lens change to SCU - Morgan speaks cant London do better than merely speculate upon future in the Antipodes? Can Washington do better than merely speculate on the.....of South America? Is our Western World really overpopulated? Now I appeal to your help - help to helpless bodies of deserving human beings each of whom we believe has a certain human rights (hear, hear)"

LV speaks - Now in conclusion one more last grim thought. We've heard so much about the horrors and ghastliness of the German concentration camps and yet you know nearly all of the victims in those camps had something - they had a hope that somehow some day somebody would come and liberate them. Now look at these Displaced Persons camps for which we are responsible - what hope have they got? Has anybody given them hope? Are we going to stand for it? I don't think it's like us if we do. Well, as I tried to point out we have this duty laid upon us, and in my humble belief the means of discharging it. Is it right to leave these people as they are? with nothing done. 'I don't believe it is, and in my humble belief it will never be wrong to do right. (loud applause) sits down.}
World Forum Luncheon
Savoy Hotel, London.
February 7th 1947

Speakers:

- Lt.Gen. Sir Frederick Morgan, K.C.B.

Chairman:

The Bishop of London

Guests:

- His Excellency M. Rene Massigli, K.B.E., the French Ambassador
- His Excellency Viscount Alain Obert de Thieusies, the Belgian Ambassador
- His Excellency Jonkheer E. Michiels Verduynen, the Netherlands Ambassador
- His Excellency Dr. Chong Tien-Hsi, the Chinese Ambassador
- The Duchess of Atholl, D.B.E., Hon.D.C.L., Hon.LL.D.
- The Most Hon. Marquis of Donegall
- The Dowager Marchioness of Reading, G.B.E., D.B.E.
- The Viscountess Simon, D.B.E.
- Rt.Hon. Lord Winster, J.P.
- Rt.Hon. Lord Strabolgi
- Rt.Hon. Lord Brabazon of Tara, P.C., M.C.
- Rt.Hon. Lord Hyndley, G.B.E.
- Lady Rhys-Williams, D.B.E.
- J.W. Dulanty, Esq., C.B., C.B.E., LL.D., High Commissioner for Ireland
- Major-General W. Brooke-Purdon, D.S.O., C.B.E., M.C., High Commissioner for Northern Ireland
E.K. Scallan, Esq., Acting High Commissioner for Union of South Africa
Hon. M.F. Troy, Agent General for Western Australia.

Sir Stanley Marchant, C.V.O., M.A., D.Mus., F.S.A., F.R.A.H.,
F.R.C.M., F.R.C.O.,

Sir Harold Bellman, M.B.E., LL.D., J.P.


Dame Sybil Thorndyke, D.B.E., LL.D.

Dame Irene Vanbrugh, D.B.E.


The Venerable S.J. Marriott, M.A.

The Venerable C.E. Lambert, M.A.

The Rev. Prebendary Hubert H. Treacher

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Major-General John Hay Beith, C.B.E., M.C.

Major J.L. Wickham, M.V.O.

Lt. Col. C. Frank Byers, O.B.E., M.P.


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First and foremost my heartfelt thanks to my hosts, the "News Review" World Forum, not only for their hospitality, but for giving me the opportunity to put before so distinguished a gathering some of the fruits of my recent experiences in relation to what, I am convinced, is a problem of the utmost significance. It is significant not only to those primarily and most obviously concerned but to all of us here, all of us in this country of ours and a very great many of the world's inhabitants besides. I refer to the problem of those poor homeless wretches dubbed "Displaced Persons", especially those still languishing in Germany.

What a distressingly typical symptom of our rising tide of bureaucracy it is that has wished upon these unfortunates the label "Displaced Persons". This unhappy term, carelessly, or perhaps even cleverly used, has come to be associated in most peoples' minds with shiftless mendicancy, even with criminality. How wrong this is.

I should like, if I may, to take a few minutes to remind you of a few facts that are sometimes forgotten, maybe in some instances for convenience's sake. But though most of you know why these Displaced Persons became Displaced, it is not strikingly evident why they remain Displaced, and why it is so vitally urgent that something be done now to help them. They cannot help themselves. It is in the earnest hope that you who listen may be moved to use your immense influence in every walk of life to cause action to be taken, action as distinct from discussion and argument, that I make my attempt to enlist your sympathetic understanding.

The Displaced Persons in Germany number now roundly half a million or so. Accurate statistics it has never, for a variety of reasons, been possible to obtain. They consist of groups of Poles, Balts, Ukrainians, Yugoslavs and, of course, those of a variety of origins who are classed, in the U.S. Zone of Occupation, simply as Jews.
On broad lines one may say they are the flotsam and jetsam of the fluctuating tides of this last war wherein the enemy, for his own fell purposes, deliberately set about exaggerating the inevitable chaos of battle. For in addition to the refugee movements that are the ghastly accompaniment of all armed conflict, there were engineered huge movements of whole populations to act as hostages, as slave labour. In the case of the Jews, of course, the Nazis put into practice all the inhuman beastliness of mass elimination that had been tried and perfected in the African colonies of the former German colonial empire by the students of race culture.

So much for broad lines and round terms. Now let us look rather more closely at the picture. In 1939 the Baltic States, which had only recently re-emerged as separate entities, were forced to conclude so-called treaties of non-aggression with their Eastern neighbours. They were duly non-aggressed, and to such purpose, as I have learned from some of them, that those who survived the process have lived to envy their dead compatriots.

During the years when the Soviets were in alliance with our German enemies, the Baltic States remained in a state of non-aggressiveness until the arrival of what seemed, by comparison, salvation from the West. When in due time the German tide turned at Leningrad and Stalingrad, the remaining Balts were confronted by the choice of two evils. Can you imagine their plight? Some chose the West. They are now DPs in Germany. They cannot go back home. Where do they go?

In that same year, 1939, it will be remembered, Poland was invaded, not only from the West, but from the East. Poles were scattered to the four winds, to the East as well as elsewhere, and the eastward movement was, from all accounts not entirely voluntary. In the years since then we have heard something of what has happened in Poland, including a complete reshaping of the country’s social structure. And so many of the expatriated Poles cannot go back to the new Poland. Where do they go?

For the Displaced Yugoslavs the picture is similar. For those
known as Ukrainians it is even worse. What was once the autonomous Ukraine now lies partly in the U.S.S.R., partly in Poland, partly in Czechoslovakia. There have always been tendencies towards separatism in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic apparently, and these have been fostered by the happenings of recent years. There are powerful forces tending in both directions, Ukrainians outside the Iron Curtain, and others within. In the middle sit these unhappy Ukrainian DPs. Where are they to go?

In all that I have said so far, you will notice, there is the shadow of this Iron Curtain. And believe me it is indeed a substantial phenomenon that can and does throw the shadow of the pit upon these homeless souls, all of them. For where can they look with any hope of any lightening of their darkness? There has been only a feeble glimmer in what little we of the West have done for them; but even this is fading now.

Just what have we done, and what are we doing? We have so many, and so many apparently bigger, problems to tackle. It is true that those DPs who now remain Displaced are but a small proportion of the vast hordes who were in this unhappy position when Germany was defeated, ten or fifteen millions or more. The vast majority presented a small problem. Many repatriated themselves, others were willing to accept what was coming to them at home. We, in our comparative security and luxury, fail at times to realise how much lower in many respects are standards acceptable to the bulk of less fortunate races.

For the rest, what have we done? Our occupation administration in Germany has given to our DPs food, clothing and as good shelter as could be spared. Over and above this we have subscribed to UNRRA, which was allotted certain duties in relation to DPs. You may think this is enough. You may say we want our money for so many other things; that the cost of occupation of our Zone of Germany is absurdly high, and must come down. In the popular conception UNRRA has failed, and failed most notoriously in its DP operations. What better means of economising, you may argue, than to withdraw our help from the DPs and let them fend, somehow or other, for themselves. They have no
Governments at their backs likely to complain.

Have I overdrawn the picture? Maybe, maybe not. I say that any failure on the part of UNRRA - and, God knows, there have been failures - is to be laid at the door not so much of UNRRA, but of those who set it up and failed to give it the power that should have accompanied the responsibility placed upon it. One cannot have one without the other and obtain any sort of success.

Similarly, we are prone to blame our administration in Germany for faults which, I believe, are more rightly those of the authority which directs, or fails to direct, that administration from above.

Well, what is to be done now? Must anything be done? It must indeed. For whether we like it or not we are committed to succouring these homeless people. Have we helped them so far merely to turn round upon them now and tell them we intend to do no more? God forbid. Do we tell them to get back behind the Iron Curtain and take their medicine?

We know, from the experience of many of our own people, what that would mean. We know the penalty that attaches to the offence of being caught out of bounds without proper authority for those deemed citizens of the great Soviet Union.

Why is it that we cannot grasp this problem, of the absorption among our own teeming millions of this small remnant of misery that owes its sufferings so much to the fact that it has friendship towards us?

What is stopping us? A rapid and positive solution is so much to be desired from every point of view. We, in this country, are crying out for labour. Here it is at our door in quantity, ready and willing. Of undesirable quality you may say. But is it? Are you not thinking too much of the many sensational reports of the misdemeanours of a small minority of these people which has achieved newspaper notoriety to the detriment of the vast, patient bulk of them?

Their patience in adversity is a model for us all. They won't work, you say. The truth is, they have never been given the chance, and cannot be so long as they are kept in Germany.

Would you work voluntarily for those whose slave you have been
for years? I tell you that the chief anxiety of most of these people is that their long enforced idleness will undermine the wonderful skill that so many of them possess.

From the humanitarian aspect there should be no need for me to speak - unless, of course, you have been misled into believing these people to consist of mobs of counter-revolutionaries, re-actionaries or other allegedly undesirable types unworthy of our aid. Believe me, they are in reality men, women and children remarkably like ourselves with hopes, desires and ambitions uncommonly similar to our own.

But to follow this line of thought brings us to contemplation of what is a very real danger to the security of Europe. Unscrupulous parties may seek to exploit them for nationalistic purposes, for these people constitute expatriated minorities, and we have been recently reminded how such bodies can be used by those who see advantage in so doing. On this score alone it behoves us to deal quickly with this problem.

What of the future? How can we deal with this menace? I say roundly that it is incumbent on us, the British, to set an example in the matter by dealing quickly and fearlessly with our share of the problem, with the quarter million or so DPs in our British Zone of Germany.

We have the priceless advantage of being able to quote a precedent. (One knows from experience not to suggest innovation when quick action is needed). It was in 1685, I think, that we accepted into England from Europe a flood of refugees as big or bigger in proportion than that with which we are now concerned. And how immeasurably we were blessed in so doing. How many of us here at this table, I wonder, trace our connections back to Huguenot stock. I, for one. At a blow we could settle both a humanitarian and economic question and at the same time go far to ease the awful brooding tension that lies over Germany even in defeat.

If it is too much that we should at once offer them the full hospitality of naturalisation, can we not, at least, let them come here
in their present status, remove them from the ghastly atmosphere of mental, moral and physical ruin wherein they have to struggle so hard to preserve their humanity.

Let us bring them here, I say, not as expatriated minorities, but as the families of our friends, for such they are. We have, it is true, admitted a few individuals but this has been done, as I see it, more for our own convenience than anything else. The break-up of a family group may not seem to us very important. To these DPs it would be like the end of their little world, they have left. You may adduce difficulties of feeding or of housing. But we feed them now in Germany.

To them, I assure you, the veriest pigsty in England would be a palace in comparison with what they have had to inhabit these many years. And there seems to have been, to be, little difficulty in housing and feeding many thousands of our enemies and ex-enemies - Prisoners of War.

Is this too much to ask? Are we, by any chance, afraid to face up to it for fear of what are called repercussions? If so, let us just remember that the obstacles which exist are man-made. Man made the restrictions, man can unmake them if he wills.

Will he? If we cannot face this approach to the problem, and if we feel that a more indirect one is desirable or necessary, we must make assurance doubly sure that this indirect means is indeed a means to a definite end not merely a salve to our national conscience, an alibi. That is what it inevitably will become if what we do now bears much relation to what we have done in the past.

We have seen all too plainly the deficiencies of international sets of initials which, without both adequate means and adequate authority can, in practice, become but a happy hunting ground for those whose intentions have no bearing on the real task in hand. It must be made impossible for the unscrupulous or incompetent individual, under cover of a flood of crocodile tears, or bogus oratory, or armed merely with self-awarded recommendation, to cash in on human misery. We must ensure that all transactions take place above the counter. Above all must it be ensured that those who hire the labour are adequately instructed in penetrating disguise, however thick the outer fleece
These displaced flocks are so defenceless and so pathetically easily misled.

The very least we can do is to offer some hope where now there is none - some real hope. Most particularly does this apply to the Jewish DPs. It is inconceivable that they should be expected to stay on the scene of their desolation among the people who have butchered their nearest and dearest. As with them, so with all these homeless. Can't London do better than merely speculate upon future possibilities in the Antipodes? Can't Washington do more than consider the receptiveness of South America? Is the Western world suffering from over population?

I appeal for your help, help for a helpless body of deserving human beings each of whom has certain human rights. We have just poured out our blood and treasure in support of this belief. The immediate danger has, thank God, passed at any rate temporarily from us, but there are still all these people sitting helplessly and patiently in the valley of the shadow, waiting for us to help them. We have the means and by applying them we shall help not only them, but ourselves. It can never be wrong to do right.

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