

# INTERNMENT OF ALIENS

## SIR J. ANDERSON'S REPLY TO THE PRIMATE

### A POLICY MODIFIED

Correspondence has taken place between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Minister of Home Security on the subject of the internment of aliens. The Archbishop's letter, dated July 8, states:—

No one realizes more fully than I do the circumstances which have compelled the Government at this time of grave emergency to intern all aliens of enemy origin. But I am concerned, as doubtless you are yourself, about the position of the German and Austrian refugees who have themselves suffered such cruelties and indignities from the Nazi rulers that they detest that rule, greatly desire that their own country should be liberated from it, and that they might have opportunity to render any service permitted to them to this country in its trouble. Although they had thankfully found freedom in this country from their sufferings and had already satisfied the authorities as to their attitude towards the government of the countries of their birth, they feel keenly that they should be interned in the same way as those who may be suspected of being supporters of the system which they have every reason to detest.

I believe that they recognize the difficulties of his Majesty's Government and submit to their hard lot. But it would give them some relief if you could give your assurance that the Government, while obliged to take every step to secure the safety of the State, views their special position with understanding and sympathy. It would still further alleviate their lot if you could arrange, so far as may be possible, to keep such refugees during their internment apart from those aliens whom they regard as their enemies as well as ours.

### POLICY MODIFIED

In reply Sir John Anderson writes:—

Since the date of your letter there has been, as you are aware, a debate in the House of Commons, when Mr. Peake, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, made a full statement explaining the reasons for which his Majesty's Government felt compelled to modify their original policy relating to the treatment of Germans and Austrians in this country. On the outbreak of war those Germans and Austrians were interned about whose reliability, from the point of view of national security, the authorities had reason to feel any doubt. Thereafter, the case of every German and Austrian who had been left at large in this country was reviewed by local tribunals set up throughout the country.

Subsequently, I decided to appoint advisory committees for each Civil Defence Region to give me a second opinion about the cases of all Germans and Austrians who had been exempted from internment but not from the special restrictions applicable to enemy aliens; and also about the case of any individual German or Austrian, exempted both from internment and from the special restrictions, about whom the police felt any doubt from a security point of view.

This policy had to be modified mainly owing to the exigencies of the military situation. The invasion of Holland and Belgium and the overrunning of France by the enemy brought the danger of invasion close to our shores, and I was advised by those responsible for the military defence of this country against invasion that, on grounds of military necessity, further measures of internment were required. It has also been urged on me from several quarters that internment was in the interests of the refugees themselves who were finding it increasingly difficult to obtain, or to retain, employment, and who might be exposed to hostile demonstrations or might incur suspicion, however unmerited, that in the event of invasion of this country they had assisted the enemy.

In these circumstances the Government felt that they had no alternative but to order the

internment of large numbers of male Germans and Austrians. This policy of general internment does not imply that the Government regard refugees who have taken asylum in this country in the same light as Nazi sympathizers and supporters of the system which had oppressed them. No one could fail to sympathize with the former class, but, in times of crisis, considerations of national security must take precedence over all other considerations. I feel sure that the vast majority of the refugees who have been interned recognize that their internment makes no reflection on their individual loyalty to this country and realize that general measures of precaution are bound to operate harshly in individual cases.

I fully share your desire that arrangements should be made to segregate, in separate internment camps, refugees from those whom they regard as their enemies, and every effort will be made to give effect to this policy as circumstances permit. It is much regretted that in the early stages, when large numbers of persons were interned rapidly, it was not practicable to make so careful a classification as would be desired.

## T.U.C. AND ALIENS

### CONSULTATION SUGGESTED BEFORE INTERNMENT

FROM OUR LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

The National Council of Labour (representing the Trades Union Congress, the Labour Party, the Parliamentary Labour Party, and the Cooperative movement) met yesterday at the House of Commons, and Mr. Atlee and Mr. Greenwood, members of the War Cabinet, and Mr. Hugh Dalton, Minister of Economic Warfare, were among those present. Mr. Dalton gave an informative account of the work of his Department.

There was a discussion on the internment of aliens, and from representatives of the T.U.C. there was criticism of the absence of consultation before the Home Secretary decided on his new policy and on the constitution of his advisory committee. The T.U.C. and also the Labour Party, because of their relations with foreign Socialists, maintain that they have special knowledge on the general subject and particular acquaintance with individuals which should be helpful to the Home Office.

The council also discussed the claim of the cooperative movement to representation on the consultative committee of the Ministry of Food.

## L.C.C. AND ENEMY ALIENS

### EMPLOYMENT ENDED

The employment of aliens was discussed at yesterday's meeting of the London County Council. Mr. A. Emil Davies presided.

MR. CHARLES LATHAM informed Lord Manvers that under Government instructions of May 30 the employment by the Council of German, Austrian, and Stateless aliens was terminated forthwith. That instruction was extended to Italians on June 11. By reason of specific Government instruction it was not possible to employ enemy aliens in any hospital or institution where Service patients were treated. Any matter for investigation was not for a committee of the Council, but for the appropriate Government authorities.

DR. SOMERVILLE HASTINGS, chairman of the Hospitals and Medical Services Committee, replying to Mr. DAN FRANKEL, said that the Government were responsible for securing facilities for the treatment of casualties both in the Council's hospitals and in other hospitals in London. This responsibility was exercised through the emergency hospitals scheme. The contemplated transfer of patients from in-county to out-county hospitals involved the transfer of staff and equipment to hospitals outside the county.

SIR HAROLD WEBBE, Leader of the Opposition, moved the rejection of a recommendation to pay an extra ½d. an hour to the mechanical engineers and labourers on the staffs of some 30 establishments in recognition of rearranged hours to secure constant attendance at the establishments.

MR. LATHAM said that higher railway fares involved by change of shifts would mean that many men would not have much left out of their 1s. 11½d. extra a week.

The proposal was adopted by a large majority.