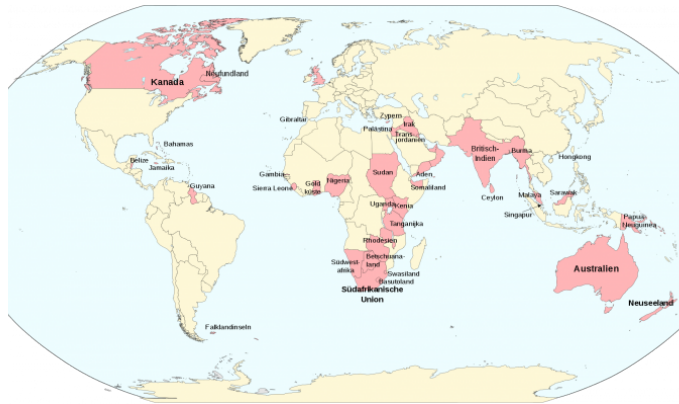




## WORKSHEET: UNITED KINGDOM

You are the representatives of the United Kingdom at the Evian Conference. Prepare and deliver a speech with the help of the following information. Consider which of the following points can be made public in the speech, and which should better be kept hidden.



UK and colonies on the globe

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Flag of the UK

wikipedia

### Background information

- Population in 1938: about 47.5 million, including approx. 340.000 Jews.



- The UK is a world superpower. It is a very prominent country in Europe, a world leader, and has been proud of its political achievements, heritage and values. The United Kingdom has a colonial empire and rules vast territories especially in Africa, the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, and on the Indian Subcontinent.
- As a democracy, it has an obligation for human rights, and cannot accept the anti-Semitic policies of Nazi Germany.
- It is very concerned by Hitler's aggressive policy and intentions. Some British officials claim that appeasement towards Nazi Germany is the most suitable approach to prevent this aggression and the escalation of the situation into war.

### Major points by the British delegation in the Evian Conference

- It has been a British traditional policy to offer asylum to persons who had to leave their countries because of political, racial or religious reasons.
- At the same time, the UK is not a country of immigration. It is highly industrialized, fully populated and faces the problem of unemployment.
- In a many cases, the refugees would eventually have to proceed from the UK to another destination overseas. The UK can offer such people education or industrial training.
- It is important to assimilate the refugees who can fit into the British social and economic life.
- Accepting refugees to the British territories around the world is complicated by consideration of climate, race and political development. Many of these territories are already overcrowded, or unsuitable for European settlement.
- *"It has been represented in some quarters that the whole question, at least of the Jewish refugees, could be solved if only the gates of Palestine were thrown open to Jewish immigrants without restriction of any kind. I should like to say [...] that I regard any such proposition as wholly untenable. (...) First, Palestine is not a large country, and apart from that there are special considerations arising out of the terms of the mandate and out of the local situation which it is impossible to ignore."*
- The UK will not be able to accept people who were deprived of their means of subsistence, and cannot support themselves. Nazi Germany should allow the immigrants to have enough means to start their lives in their new country.



## Factors that influenced the position of the UK

- Historically, there has been a British tradition of humanitarianism and accepting victims of political persecution in their countries.
- Some British officials raise the concern that admitting a large number of Jewish refugees would lead to anti-Semitic uproar in the UK. Others suggest that the forced immigration of Jews from Nazi Germany is a German plot aimed to increase Antisemitism and social problems in the UK.
- There is a concern that the refugees who will come would become a burden on the public dole. The British Jewish community announced in the early 1930s that it will support the refugees, but now, in 1938, it is clear that it will not be able to provide the financial resources needed to support all of them.
- Some British officials raise a security concern: that accepting a large number of immigrants in a short time would pose the risk of admitting enemy agents.
- There is a concern that admitting Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria would lead to a wave of Jewish immigration also from Poland, Rumania and Hungary.

## Sources

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