Relocation and resettlement from colonisation to climate change: the perennial solution to ‘danger zones’

Jane McAdam*

Planned relocation has gained recent prominence as a tool for reducing vulnerable communities’ exposure to the impacts of climate change and disasters. This article situates the phenomenon of cross-border relocation within a history spanning the 18th century to the present, connecting resettlement programmes with legally-sanctioned population transfers and exchanges.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on community relocation and resettlement as a strategy to reduce vulnerable communities’ exposure to risk.1 In particular, the Cancun Adaptation Framework, adopted during the 2010 international climate change negotiations, invited states to consider planned relocation as a measure to ‘enhance action on adaptation’.2 Since that time, a

* Scientia Professor of Law and Director of the Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, University of New South Wales, Australia. Email: j.mcadam@unsw.edu.au. This research was funded by an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship. Thank you to Professor Alison Bashford for the rich discussions about some of the ideas developed in this article and to Professor Guy S Goodwin-Gill for suggested additional sources. Thank you also to Rebecca Zaman for research assistance relating to the ‘M’ Project. Any errors or omissions remain, of course, my own.

1 Relocation and resettlement describes ‘the permanent (or long-term) movement of a community (or a significant part of it) from one location to another, in which important characteristics of the original community, including its social structures, legal and political systems, cultural characteristics and worldviews, are retained. The community stays together at the destination in a social form that is similar to the community of origin’: J Campbell, ‘Climate-Induced Community Relocation in the Pacific: The Meaning and Importance of Land’, in J McAdam (ed.), Climate Change and Displacement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives (Hart Publishing, 2010) 57, 58-59. For the purposes of the present article, the terms are used somewhat interchangeably, even though it is important to appreciate that their meanings can be distinct.

2 Para. 14(f) invites states to ‘enhance action on adaptation’ by undertaking ‘[m]easures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement,

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number of international initiatives have sought to explore the concept of relocation as a permanent mechanism for moving communities out of harm’s way in the face of disasters and the longer-term impacts of climate change. The starting assumption among scholars and policymakers has been that past relocations have occurred almost exclusively within countries, rather than across international borders. The analytical analogue has been the experiences of the development sector over the past 50 years in internally relocating communities to make way for large-scale development projects, such as dams. Indeed, the only examples of cross-border relocation that have been noted are three historical cases from the Pacific from the mid-20th century, thought to be relatively isolated instances.

This article, however, situates the phenomenon of planned relocation within a much longer, and broader, genealogy. Drawing in particular on Alison Bashford’s recent work on global population, it posits a revisionist history of relocation and resettlement—both as intellectual constructs and tools for population management. By widening the lens through which these phenomena are viewed, the article seeks to do three things.

First, and primarily, the article re-conceptualises the history of relocation and resettlement. It positions it as an 18th-century innovation, which, in part stimulated by the writings of Malthus, gained especial academic and political traction from the late 19th century through to the mid-20th century in response to concerns about a burgeoning global population that could not be sustained unless redistributed across under-utilised land. The core premise was that if

migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at national, regional and international levels.’


3 These are: the relocation of the Banabans from present-day Kiribati to Fiji in 1945; the partial relocation of the Vaitupuans from present-day Tuvalu to Fiji, beginning in 1947; and the relocation of Gilbertese (most of whom had been part of an ‘internal’ resettlement scheme to the Phoenix Islands which began in 1937) to Gizo and Wagina in the Solomon Islands between 1955 and 1964. There are many other examples of internal relocation. At least three other cross-border relocations were mooted but not carried out. For a detailed discussion and related literature, see J McAdam, ‘Historical Cross-Border Relocations in the Pacific: Lessons for Planned Relocations in the Context of Climate Change’ 49 Journal of Pacific History (2014) 301.

populations could be transferred from high-density ‘danger zones’ to low-density areas, then land could be used more efficiently and conflict over limited resources could be avoided. Over the long 19th century and into the mid-20th, relocation was understood both as a pre-emptive solution to anticipated over-population and resource scarcity, and as an answer to existing displacement. Thus, when resettlement was proposed as a solution to the Jewish refugee problem in the 1930s and 1940s, this was evolutionary rather than novel.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, German, Japanese, US, French and British scholars and statesmen regarded the relocation, transfer and exchange of communities, and the identification of ‘empty’ areas to resettle ‘surplus populations’ from the world’s ‘danger zones’, as key to international peace and security. Building on this approach, in the 1930s and 1940s, resettlement was regarded as a solution for groups of displaced refugees—including by US President Franklin D Roosevelt, who established a secret project to scour the world for possible resettlement sites (a ‘rational colonization of the world’). At that time, and in contrast to today, refugee resettlement was envisaged precisely as a group-based solution—the re-establishment of an ethnic community (e.g. Jews) elsewhere—rather than a strategy pursued by individuals or households. Arguably, it was the political failure of proposed large-scale resettlement schemes that caused post-war refugee resettlement to become an individualised solution. Although not explored in detail here, there is an interesting secondary story: refugee issues were incorporated into existing deliberations about resettlement, rather than refugee populations stimulating the notion of resettlement as a possible solution, which tends to be the common assumption.

Secondly, the article draws a unique connection between planned resettlement programmes, on the one hand, and legally-sanctioned population


6 Modern scholars have under-appreciated the historical linkages between refugee resettlement and community relocation. In fact, they are cut from the same cloth. The ‘M’ Project, discussed below, represented the convergence of Roosevelt’s concerns from the previous two decades about finding solutions to surplus populations generally, with his concerns about finding solutions for displaced Jews in particular. It was only because prospective receiving states were unwilling to offer large-scale resettlement to refugees as communities that ‘resettlement’, in post-war refugee practice, came to refer to the movement of individuals and families—that is, as essentially individualist rather than group-based, and the opposite of Roosevelt’s notion of group resettlement. Indeed, Robinson explains that in responding to Indochinese asylum flows in the 1970s—the first post–Second World War attempt by the US to absorb a large ethnic group—Indochinese refugees were deliberately dispersed across the country in small family groups. The government’s strategy of dispersal—even blocking the collective resettlement of family groups beyond immediate family members—was based on hindering the growth of ethnic communities in order to avoid a “Vietnamese problem”. G Robinson, After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics (University of California Press, 2012) 29.
transfers and exchanges, on the other. While this article only begins to tease out
the implications of conceiving these forms of population management as two
sides of the same coin, it starts to bring questions of international law into
sharper focus—especially in relation to the protection of group identity and
(ultimately) the right to self-determination.7

Thirdly, the article provides insights into why many past cross-border
resettlement schemes failed, even when they had powerful political champions.
Discussions today about relocation raise remarkably similar themes, challenges
and ideas. Understanding the present within a broader historical context pro-
vides important context and perspective, which can reveal poignant lessons for
any future relocations that might be contemplated.

A comprehensive survey of all international population relocations and
transfers since the 18th century is too ambitious for an article of this length.
Thus, the article alights on several illustrative relocation ‘moments’ in the
modern period. It situates the Pacific island cross-border relocations within a
longer historical trajectory in which they become emblematic of, rather than
aberrations in, global understandings of space, land, resources and population.
This history encompasses 18th- and 19th-century colonisation—‘largely migra-
tions by organised groups, usually under direct political authorisation essen-
tially for government purposes’8—and settler colonialism in particular, which
was understood as a form of group movement that was clearly distinguishable
from individual or family migration. It also takes in 20th-century population
transfers and exchanges, and ambitious resettlement plans intended to distrib-
ute the world’s people more equitably. Though intensely political and ideolo-
gical, by the interwar period the concept of population transfer had become
‘normative’.9 It was also in the 20th century that it became internationalised,
both as an intellectual concept (on the world stage) and as a ‘solution’ requiring
international cooperation.

Of course, while 20th-century resettlement was a powerful intellectual idea
and rhetorical device—especially for President Roosevelt, whose own country’s

7 This is the subject of on-going research by the author, but see, e.g., McAdam (2014).
8 Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, Evian, July 6th to 15th, 1938: Verbatim Record of the
Plenary Meeting of the Committee, First Meeting (6 July 1938) statement by Myron C Taylor (USA)
12. See also HL Feingold, ‘Roosevelt and the Resettlement Question’, in MR Marrus (ed.), Bystanders
9 M Levene, ‘Book Review: No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of
the United Nations’ 13 Journal of Genocide Research (2011) 519, 520; ED Weitz, ‘From the Vienna to
the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced
restrictive immigration laws precluded any large-scale resettlement there—its practical realisation was far less grandiose. As a solution to resource scarcity and unemployment, it was many times mooted but rarely successfully carried out. Indeed, even the proponents of large-scale resettlement were well aware of its inherent challenges. While some dreamed that an international migration authority might be created with the power to redistribute global population along more equitable lines, others saw this as a political impossibility. Thus, the intellectual history of resettlement is a rather different story from its actual implementation: there is a large gap between theory and practice.

Finally, different aspects of this article will appeal to different audiences. It is, in part a scoping piece that raises intriguing and unusual connections that warrant further exploration. It stakes out new foundations on which layers of understanding and research may be built—from a number of perspectives, including that of international law. Primarily, the article is an intellectual history of population relocation and transfer, which will contribute to the emerging literature on planned relocation in the context of disasters and climate change. It will perhaps also prompt contemporary scholars and policymakers in this field to reflect upon their work within a broader socio-historical and politico-economic context.

**RE-CONCEIVING THE STARTING POINT**

In the 1930s and 40s, there were three cross-border relocations in the Pacific. Each occurred for a different reason—to facilitate phosphate mining (Banaba/Rabi), to safeguard against future overcrowding on the home island (Vaitupu/Kioa) and to overcome resource scarcity on account of poor environmental conditions (Phoenix Islands/British Solomon Islands Protectorate). Until now, they have been virtually unknown beyond the realm of Pacific peoples and scholars. However, in the context of adaptation to climate change and disasters, they have recently gained wider attention as rare examples of community resettlement across international borders that may provide insights into the social, legal and political challenges of group movement. My own research has been part of this. While its lessons remain valid, it appears now that underlying assumptions about the presumed rarity of such cross-border relocations require re-thinking.

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10 From a statist perspective, the long-term ‘success stories’ were the resettlements of Empire—the settler colonies.

11 See McAdam (2014).
Indeed, far from being novel or isolated experiments, these three Pacific relocations were reflective of an intellectual and political Zeitgeist from the late 18th century to the mid-20th century that regarded population transfer and redistribution as a legitimate means of addressing problems of overcrowding and resource scarcity—and, in turn, conflict. ‘Population caused war, because it was about land, and it was about land, because it was about food.’12 The relocation of the Banabans from Ocean Island in present-day Kiribati to Fiji in 1945 was, in a sense, the ultimate embodiment of this thinking, since their relocation would facilitate much more extensive phosphate mining on the island. ‘Looking at the matter from the Imperial point of view’, wrote the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific as early as 1919,

it appears to me that, if it is to be the policy of His Majesty’s Government, in order to meet the demand for food supplies, to turn to account all the available resources of the Empire, and to ensure the maximum extent of cultivation, only the very strongest reasons can be allowed to impede the working of a deposit which possesses so great a value for fertilising purposes as the phosphate on Ocean Island. Indeed the interests of the Empire seem to demand that the process of development on Ocean Island should be allowed to continue until the whole island is worked out.13

The notion that the Banabans could legitimately be relocated to facilitate food production for the Empire reflected the thinking of the time, when scholars and statesmen alike were concocting theoretical and practical schemes to address concerns about global population. As Bashford has explored in her recent seminal work, Global Population: History, Geopolitics, and Life on Earth, the phenomenon of global population was a preoccupation of intellectual and political leaders during the first half of the 20th century, with Malthus’ ‘Essay on the Principle of Population’ their ‘intellectual and political touchstone’.14 The notion of Lebensraum—the search for inhabitable space—typically understood as a Germanic expansionist policy, was in fact a logic shared by Anglophone, Asian and Continental scholars. The idea that the world’s population could be


13 Letter from CH Rodwell, High Commissioner, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies (25 March 1919) para. 5, AU Microfilm 78-346, 2273/1918 (Question of Banaban Removal) Special Collections, University of Auckland Library.

redistributed from densely populated regions to low-density areas or ‘empty’ parts of the world through migration, population transfers and colonisation (also described as ‘migration for settlement’\textsuperscript{15}) was advocated by multiple proponents from the late 19th century onwards, and during the 1920s in particular.\textsuperscript{16}

The idea of ‘surplus’ population had taken hold in late 18th-century Britain when, for the first time, there were insufficient jobs for those of working age. With ensuing poverty, some believed that if the excess population could be moved, then pressure on resources would be eased. Although Malthusian ideas inspired resettlement as a solution to overpopulation, Malthus himself was not convinced that group migration would resolve population growth and the attendant problems of unemployment and poverty. In his view, while it would create more space for a time, the gap would eventually be refilled and resettlement would only ever be a temporary solution at best.\textsuperscript{17} Furthermore, he perceived immediately the psychological impediments to resettlement that were manifested time and time again, writing emotionally about the wrench of removing people from their kith and kin.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15} See the work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on this topic: ‘The Organisation of Migration for Settlement’ 37 \textit{International Labour Review} (1938) (‘Organisation of Migration for Settlement’) 561.


\textsuperscript{17} Several experts at the 1937 Peaceful Change conference shared this view. They questioned whether emigration really could alleviate overcrowding, with one noting that ‘emigration does not lessen the difficulties of the countries of origin so long as the stimulus to population is on the same lines as before’: JT Shotwell, \textit{Peaceful Change: Procedures, Population Pressure, the Colonial Question, Raw Materials and Markets} (Proceedings of the 10th International Studies Conference, Paris, 28 June to 3 July 1937) 402-03, cited in FC Wright, \textit{Population and Peace: A Survey of International Opinion on Claims for Relief from Population Pressure} (International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, 1939) 198. Another declared that while ‘the co-existence of certain cases of overpopulation and under-population, accompanied by economic and political difficulties, is generally recognised, there is a conflict of opinion over the fundamental question of the necessity and desirability of international migration’: J Legouis, \textit{Migration: An International Problem: Difficulties and Suggested Solutions} (mimeographed document no K.83.1937) cited in Wright (1939) 199.

\textsuperscript{18} See TR Malthus, \textit{Essay on the Principle of Population}, 2nd ed. (J Johnson, 1803) 392, and his involvement in the 1826-27 Select Committee on Emigration. By the end of his life, given how extreme the situation in Britain had become, Malthus acknowledged that resettlement might provide a partial solution but only if it were accompanied by measures at home to stop the population from growing again. Indeed, by the late 1820s, some communities, such as out-of-work Scottish artisans, were petitioning the Select Committee for their own relocation. Thank you to Professor Alison Bashford and Professor Joyce E Chaplin for sharing their research on Malthus from their draft book manuscript, \textit{Malthus and the New World}. 
Yet, colonisation as a form of resettlement became a commonplace understanding and mode of political economic organisation in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was the most widespread and systematic form of relocation the world had ever seen, although it has not generally been conceptualised in this way by migration scholars. Colonisation was a means of alleviating unemployment by providing an outlet for ‘surplus’ population, where practicable, by moving people as agricultural settlers to cultivate unused land. The government (or sometimes private authorities) ran resettlement schemes that typically paid for the settlers’ voyage and a year’s supply of provisions. Settler colonialism, in particular, was about territorial occupation and the establishment of a new community. As an exercise in empire-building, it was essential to securing power bases in far-flung corners of the globe.

The touting of resettlement as a solution to overpopulation in the 19th and 20th centuries was a variant of settler colonialism, albeit one in which the driving force of imperialist expansion featured less prominently. It was also distinguished from traditional settler colonialism by the idea that resettlement could be to any part of the globe, rather than just to territories already within the sending country’s imperial domain.

Thus, although birth control is often seen as the favoured measure by which population was to be regulated during this period, Bashford argues that the history of global population control must be understood as ‘a history

19 See JS Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, vol. 2 (Little & Brown, 1848) 550, cited in Bashford (2014) 133. Even in the 20th century, this terminology was sometimes used where resettlement was contemplated: see, e.g., ‘Christmas Island, Suitability for Colonisation by Gilbertese with reference to American Claims, 1952’, WPHC 11, 10/3/1, Records of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1942-59, MSS & Archives 2003/1, Special Collections, University of Auckland Library.

20 Interestingly, in ecology, ‘managed relocation’, ‘assisted colonisation’ and ‘assisted migration’ are terms often used interchangeably to describe attempts ‘to save species from the effects of climate change by purposefully transporting them to areas where they have not previously occurred’, although there are debates about which terminology is most appropriate in that context. See, respectively, DF Sax, KF Smith & AR Thompson, ‘Managed Relocation: A Nuanced Evaluation is Needed’ 24 *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* (2009) 472, 472; J Hellman, ‘Why “Managed Relocation” and Not “Assisted Migration” or “Colonization”’, 18 August 2011, available at http://gain.org/content/why-managed-relocation-and-not-assisted-migration-or-colonization (last visited 28 November 2014).

21 See L Russell (ed.), *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous–European Encounters in Settler Societies* (Manchester UP, 2001) 2. For scholars such as Patrick Wolfe, its organising principle was the ‘logic of elimination’ (the destruction of the indigenous population): P Wolfe, ‘Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native’ 8 *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006) 387. See also E Kolodner, ‘Population Transfer: The Effects of Settler Infusion Policies on a Host Population’s Right to Self-Determination’ 27 *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* (1994) 159. See also the discussion in Wright (1939) 124 about a British attitude that colonies were ‘material objects which can, by a mere stroke of the pen, be transferred from the ownership of one person into the ownership of another’, and opposing viewpoints.
of migration and settler colonialism’. As argued in 1927 by A Koulisher, Russian professor of Slavic studies in Paris, the world’s ‘optimum population’ had to be calculated in global terms, since ‘the whole area within which migration is possible is a [single] unit’.

A RIGHT TO RESETTLE?

At the 1927 World Population Conference, population growth was posited as the most important problem confronting the world. Since land was finite, and most was now occupied, the challenge was to determine its optimal carrying capacity. This prompted wide-ranging discussions about international migration, food security, underpopulation and overpopulation. Australian census statistician George Knibbs argued that there ought to be a systematic stocktake of the world’s land—a census of land and people. ‘Must it not take into account the migration and settlement possibilities of the earth, and the adjustment of the normal rights—if there are such rights—of races and nations?’, he asked.

A list of ‘waste lands’ was compiled and endlessly studied: Australia, Canada, Argentina, Siberia and Southern Africa. These were countries that were vastly underpopulated and sometimes even described as ‘empty’—a notion linked less to human habitation and more to a lack of cultivation. Two explorers were even commissioned to identify areas for possible resettlement. As Bashford explains:

An entire generation of geographers was busy mapping global limits and new human–natural frontiers: world wheat lines, rice lines, and maize lines; lines of rainfall; latitudes and altitudes where average temperatures fell beyond the possibility of cultivation or even

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22 Bashford (2014) 7. Bashford suggests that the difficulties inherent in population transfers ultimately led to birth control becoming the dominant policy approach to population control in the latter part of the 20th century: ibid 18-20.


24 Bashford (2014) 87, 92.


26 See Bashford (2014) 134, 144. Reporting on the outcome of the conference on 2 December 1927, Australia’s The Canberra Times quoted Commonwealth statistician CH Wickens lamenting that too much emphasis was placed on ‘our vast empty spaces and too little attention is paid to the conditions existing in much of the area embraced in those vast areas’: ‘Population: Migration Problems: Australia Vitaly [sic] Interested’, The Canberra Times, 2 December 1927, 8.

27 John Walter Gregory and Vilhjalmur Stefansson. See ibid 135-38. On the question of indigenous land, see ibid 144-46.
habitation. How far had humans actually cultivated land, and how far could they?  

Albert Thomas, Director of the ILO, even proposed the creation of a ‘supreme supernational authority which would regulate the distribution of population on rational and impartial lines, by controlling and directing migration movements and deciding on the opening-up or closing of countries to particular streams of immigrants’. It would have ‘the power of deciding the right of overpopulated countries to populate other territory’.  

While appreciating the sentiment, many viewed it as wholly impracticable. As explained by British geology professor John Walter Gregory (one of the explorers mentioned above): ‘I think it would be doomed to failure, as none of the great emigration countries would support it.’ While this was undoubtedly true, Bashford notes that the existing League of Nations mandate system was ‘entirely concerned with the reallocation of territory and people’, and ‘adjusting and rethinking global lands and peoples shaped international relations in the decades after World War I’. Proposals such as Thomas’s were, therefore, hardly radical.

Some scholars suggested that states might in fact have an obligation to provide territory to people who needed land (and food) if their own citizens were not cultivating that land (an idea echoed a decade later at the Peaceful Change conference on population and resources). Thinkers such as US demographer Warren Thompson, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, Harold Cox, and Indian economist and ecologist Radhakamal Mukerjee argued that immigration restrictions and economic necessity justified Japan’s imperial expansion even if it violated international law—an idea sometimes expressed at the time as a special Japanese ‘right to live’. This was based on the idea that countries

29 A Thomas, ‘International Migration and Its Control’, in Sanger (ed.) (1927) 262. It was also discussed at the 1927 Institute for Pacific Relations Conference in Honolulu: ibid 270.
30 A Thomas, ‘Discussion’, in Sanger (ed.) (1927) 269. This was supported by Warren Thompson: see, e.g., WS Thompson, *Plenty of People* (Jaques Cattell Press, 1944).
32 Bashford (2014) 143.
33 ‘No nation has made the land it occupies, or has the right to prevent its adequate use’: JW Gregory, ‘The Principles of Migration Restriction’, in Sanger (ed.) (1927) 302.
35 Bashford (2014) 73, 140; CW Young, *Japan’s Special Position in Manchuria* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1931).
with low populations kept those in high-pressure areas ‘pent up within their present boundaries indefinitely’.36

It is my contention that if plans are made to use these thinly settled lands, as well as to provide for much freer trade between the nations of the world at all times, the inevitable increase in the world’s population during the next few decades can be cared for and thus the danger of armed conflict can be lessened, possibly conflict can even be avoided.37

Thinking along the same lines, Thomas asked:

whether a people has a natural right to reproduce beyond the limits of its own economic resources and to overflow into foreign countries and whether, on the other hand, a people has a natural right to maintain a hold on territory which it does not exploit and from which it is incapable of extracting the maximum yield.38

He recalled the views of the Brazilian delegate at the 1921 meeting of the International Migration Commission that it was urgently necessary to ‘discipline migration in the higher interests of mankind’.39

Knibbs suggested that each state ‘should recognize its obligations to mankind as a totality’,40 implying a kind of erga omnes idea about responsible use of land and the common heritage of mankind. Indeed, the international neo-Malthusians adopted as their formal aim: ‘To remove the international rivalries caused by the pressure of overpopulation, and thus give opportunity for the establishment of international law leading to federation and permanent peace.’41 Immigration law was acknowledged as an obstacle blocking the right to freedom of movement, and, in turn, international peace.42 Thus, writes Bashford: ‘Land was both the problem and the solution.’43

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37 Thompson (1944) 110.
38 A Thomas in Sanger (ed.) (1927) 262.
39 Cited in ibid.
43 Bashford (2014) 105. The issue went beyond whether or not land had been cultivated. There were also racial and physiological dimensions that boiled down to determinist views as to whether white men had the right constitution to cultivate land in the tropics. See, e.g., A Balfour, ‘Problems of
These ideas were not without precedent. In the 18th century, international law scholar Emmerich de Vattel had argued that new territories could be claimed by occupation if the lands were uncultivated, for Europeans had a right to bring lands into production if they were left untilled by the indigenous inhabitants. By the 20th century, however, this was no longer the accepted position in international law, and the fundamental principles of state sovereignty and the right to self-determination meant that states would not defer to the idea that they should cede unused land.

A number of these arguments resonate with contemporary discussions about ‘climate justice’: the idea that the states most affected by anthropogenic climate change are those that have contributed least to greenhouse gas emissions, and that the large emitters should be forced to compensate them in some way. Implicitly, they recall these earlier 20th-century contemplations: why should growing populations ‘sit quietly by and starve’ when others acquired their wealth and land when the globe was open?

RESETTLEMENT AS A POPULATION MANAGEMENT TOOL

While individual or household migration could ease demographic tension, it could not alone resolve the problem of resource scarcity. Population transfers and colonisation were needed. In 1937, the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation brought together 150 scholars for the ‘Peaceful Change’ conference to examine the idea of ‘international decrowding’, premised on arguments by countries such as Japan, Italy and Germany that ‘demographic congestion’ could be relieved by ‘distributing this excess population over underpopulated territories’. Granted, some states in this period were motivated by racial and eugenicist ideologies and ‘resettlement’ in such contexts assumed a particularly

Acclimatisation’ 202 The Lancet (1923) 243, cited in Bashford (2014) 147; Thompson (1994); RG Bowman, untitled memo (4 November 1938) in Robert G Bowman personal holdings, Lincoln, Nebraska, now part of Bowman Papers at Johns Hopkins University, cited in N Smith, American Empire: Roosevelt’s Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization (University of California Press, 2003) 296; and, in particular, the work of Radhakamal Mukerjee. The government brief to the new Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine was ‘Is White Australia Possible?’: Bashford (2014) 148.


46 G de Michelis, ‘Organisation of Security and Processes of Peaceful Change with Their Application to Specific Cases’, in Preparation and Short Record of the Meetings on the Peaceful Solution of Certain International Problems held at Madrid on May 27-30, 1936 (International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, 1936) 203, cited in Wright (1939) 35. The Peaceful Change conference discussions were striking for their interdisciplinarity.
menacing character. Many Jews bound for Auschwitz thought they were being ‘resettled’ in Eastern Europe, for instance.47 Speaking in 1944, Viscount Cranborne reminded the House of Lords that the ‘meaning attached by Hitler to the word “resettlement”… was nothing less than the conquest by force of arms, and subsequent occupation by German settlers, of the territory of his neighbours’.48

While fascist governments implemented relocation policies in particularly brutal and explicitly racial ways, racial motivations per se did not underlie all resettlement proposals. There was broad agreement across Europe that relocation was a global imperative. ‘Resettlement’ was a term used, and a practice implemented, by the Allies as well.49 The highly restrictive immigration laws of certain settler countries were recognised as ‘the key factor that rendered the population problem one of international relations’.50 Ironically, such laws necessitated, but simultaneously blocked, the very solution of mass movement that some were proposing, with French political economist, Etienne Dennery, describing them as keeping people ‘shut within their own territories’.51

Writing in the 1940s, Russian demographer Eugene Kulischer saw ‘migratory and colonizing movements’ as the only solution to Europe’s overpopulation.52 However, along with geographer Isaiah Bowman, President of Johns Hopkins University, who became a key adviser to President Roosevelt,53 he was doubtful that colonisation could be realised given the lack of available land and the many failed schemes ‘that proved the futility of states trying to organize migration’.54

Bowman, the leading US expert on resettlement, had analysed over 300 million square miles across the globe with a view to identifying

resettlement havens. On the whole, he was pessimistic about resettlement offering a solution to Europe’s socio-economic pressures. In his 1937 book, *Limits of Land Settlement*, he set out his thesis as follows:

> In our present nationalized world, in which the best lands have been occupied, and restrictive measures are in force, migration is no answer to economic and social strain induced by so-called overpopulation. Nor is military conquest either a practical or rational answer. The struggle for additional territory as a step in empire building can be understood; the hope that it will furnish an offset to a high birth rate is based upon an illusion.55

He observed that any resettlement projects would need to take account of transport, markets, local attitudes towards the newcomers and ‘the economic and social adaptability of migrants and their willingness to accept, for a time, standards of living below those of the home country’.56 Most remaining pioneer lands were ‘marginal’ in terms of their climate, land fertility and transport.57 Planning was crucial.58 Above all, each resettlement proposal was context-specific and would raise a unique set of challenges: ‘No ready-made scheme of settlement can be set up that nicely balances the factors of race, region, climate, diet, and trade.’59

Even if land could be found, population experts noted other impediments to resettlement: its high costs, incompatible skill-sets (merchants and professionals moving to rural areas, for instance), absence of adequate transportation facilities, concerns about adaptability to tropical climates, questions about disease and insects, states’ disinclination to accept ‘groups large enough to resist absorption’ and slow development.60

Yet, everyone, it seemed, was talking about resettlement. ‘Virtually every refugee group had its favorite resettlement scheme’, perceived as the key to their own safety.61 Newspapers and periodicals of the time carried maps and plans for

56 Ibid 1. See also ibid 3.
57 Ibid 2.
58 Ibid 3.
59 Ibid.
resettlement prospects all over the globe.62 The New York Times agitated for a massive refugee resettlement programme on the grounds that the ‘self-respect’ of democracies was at stake.63 President Roosevelt’s Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, created after the 1938 Evian Conference, collected files on possible resettlement opportunities and received daily suggestions from a variety of sources. By December 1938, it had screened 50 possibilities.64 Even Albert Einstein submitted a proposal to resettle refugee intellectuals in the Belgian Congo and other ‘unsettled’ parts of Africa.65 Although unrealistic, the prospect of resettlement provided ‘a ray of hope in an otherwise almost totally dark picture’, uniting a wide range of disparate groups.66

THE PRACTICAL CHALLENGES OF RESETTLEMENT

In February 1938, the ILO held a conference on the Organisation of Migration for Settlement, noting the ‘very lively interest’ in the topic.67 It emphasised the socio-economic importance of group movement, and focused on the problem of securing international technical and financial cooperation to facilitate it. ‘Migration for settlement’ was described as different from other types of migration, especially because of the high degree of organisation required.68 Whereas labour migration required only a ‘reasonable expectation’ that the migrant would find work in the new country,

for a group of settlers it is, as a general rule, impossible to leave home unless there is in the immigration country an official or a private body to receive them and establish them on the land. This body must have chosen and prepared the site, drawn up a settlement scheme, and attended to all the questions involved—the supply of capital, the division and improvement of the land, the plan of production, the method of finance, the terms to be offered to the settlers, etc.69

62 Wyman (1968) 58.
64 ‘Report on Special Meeting of the PACPR’ (8 December 1938), Stephen Wise Papers, Goldfarb Library, Brandeis University, cited in Feingold (1970) 93.
65 Feingold (1989) 279, citing J McDonald to A Einstein (30 May 1935) McDonald MSS (Leo Baeck Institute).
66 Wyman (1968) 58.
67 ‘Organisation of Migration for Settlement’ 561, 582.
68 Ibid 565.
69 Ibid 565-66.
The Conference concluded that for any proposed resettlement, prospective settlers would need information about a wide range of elements, including: conditions for admission; customs duties and taxes; maintenance during the different stages of the journey and on arrival; the location of the land; access to communication and transport; information about land law that might affect settlement; information about establishment costs, price and yield of land, and prospects for marketing the settlers’ products; general conditions of life in the district; the extent of development works already carried out in the district; and ‘any other data for arriving at a better idea of the settler’s chances of success’.  

These were the same kinds of concerns that Bowman was contemplating in his studies of group refugee resettlement. In December 1938, he explained to President Roosevelt that the number of settlers was important; they could only be absorbed ‘in limited numbers here, there, and elsewhere’ so that there would be ‘no shock to the economic structure of the receiving country’.  

The absorption must be on such a limited scale in any one area that the people already established in the area will welcome the new settlers. That welcome will be greater in proportion as the new settlers are economically well founded, backed up by capital, and able to supply new skills that are desired in the area. All of this means special study of many areas, wise selection of groups to fit particular areas, and economic backing that will make each settlement project a sound business undertaking.

The ILO Conference suggested that a formal body was needed to organise resettlement schemes, and that purely commercial settlement would not necessarily offer sufficient security to newcomers, especially since business interests might not ‘coincide with the social objective which all colonising activity should seek to attain’. Attention was drawn to the need for very detailed preparation, consultation with both the sending and receiving countries, and special assistance to facilitate integration and relieve financial stress. The Conference also

70 Ibid 568.  
71 Bowman to Roosevelt (10 December 1938) in Robert G Bowman personal holdings, Lincoln, Nebraska, now part of Bowman Papers at Johns Hopkins University, cited in Smith (2003) 297 (emphasis added).  
72 Ibid.  
73 ‘Organisation of Migration for Settlement’ 571.  
74 Ibid 573-78. ‘A socially, economically and financially sound settlement scheme is not drafted over-night. It requires preparation in every detail, and patient negotiation in order to ensure harmonious co-operation between the various elements involved. Repeated study, consultation, and adjustment, must take place in co-operation with the technical services and administrative authorities both of the
recommended the creation of a Permanent International Committee on Migration for Settlement, but with the outbreak of war in 1939 this never eventuated.

TRIAL RESETTLEMENT SCHEMES

Meanwhile, the growing number of persecuted Jews in Europe added to concerns about population pressure and stability. The idea that resettlement could be a solution for refugees was a natural progression from existing deliberations about resettlement and population transfer more generally. Many public and private refugee organisations emerged and sought land for refugee settlement, such as the Refugee Economic Corporation that even tried to establish a small colony in Van Eden in North Carolina. As noted above, resettlement became the popular and populist solution—at least in theory, if not in practice.

Shocked by the events of Kristallnacht and the Germany’s annexation of Austria, Roosevelt called an emergency conference at Evian in July 1938 to address the emerging refugee crisis. As a US, rather than a League, initiative, it was thought that the conference might create a more neutral space and that cooperative opportunities could be widened ‘because the initiative comes from an immigration country, not from an emigration country or a country anxious to rid itself of resident refugees’. Roosevelt confided to Myron Taylor, the US representative at the conference, that, in the absence of major political changes in Europe, ‘the problem in its larger aspects appears almost insoluble except through a basic solution such as the development of a suitable area to which refugees would be admitted in almost unlimited numbers’. While the immediate focus of the Evian Conference was the refugee crisis in Germany and

emigration and of the immigration country, as well as with financial institutions and private persons and groups in both countries’. Ibid 580.

75 Ibid 581.

76 Feingold (1970) 94. The terms ‘settlement’ and ‘colonisation’ seem to have been used interchangeably in this context: see, e.g., Smith (2003) 297.


78 FD Roosevelt to M Taylor (8 June 1939), Franklin D Roosevelt Papers, Official File 3186, Franklin D Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York (FDRL/OF 3186), cited in Feingold (1970) 82. Scanned copies of this file can be found at http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/collections/franklin/?p=collections/findingaid&sid=505 (last visited 28 November 2014). At this time, the refugee concept encompassed those who had already left Germany, as well as those who desired to do so (in
Austria, Roosevelt told Taylor that a further objective was ‘to undertake the formulation of long-range plans for the solution in years to come of the problem presented in those European countries where there exist excess populations’. Roosevelt envisaged settlements of 50,000 to 100,000 people each, and some 10 to 20 million people altogether—figures that sent the State Department and advisors like Bowman into apoplexy. Indeed, Roosevelt’s ambitions, both in terms of scale and scope, were not shared by the State Department which stressed that its focus was limited to refugees ‘suffering persecution in Germany and Austria’.

In July 1939, the Coordinating Foundation was established to facilitate the ‘orderly emigration of involuntary emigrants’. Though ostensibly a private organisation, it relied heavily on the State Department and the British Foreign Office for support (the latter believing it should receive at least partial government funding). Disagreements between the British and US governments as to how the Foundation should operate stemmed in large part from their very different approaches to resettlement: ‘The Administration envisaged one or two massive resettlement schemes which would give new homes to millions. London aimed at dozens of small ventures to resettle thousands.’

The practical impossibility of the former meant that the Foundation’s head, Paul van Zeeland, former Prime Minister of Belgium, was forced to work on the latter. He proposed small, relatively inexpensive industrial and agricultural projects to maximise opportunities for refugee rescue, effectively

79 FD Roosevelt to M Taylor (26 April 1938), Folder: ‘Political Refugees, Jan–May 1938’, Box 1, FDRL/OF 3186, cited in T Sjöberg, The Powers and the Persecuted: The Refugee Problem and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (Lund UP, 1991) 69. See also the influential article by Dorothy Thompson, which she claimed convinced Roosevelt that something had to be done: D Thompson, ‘Refugees: A World Problem’ 16 Foreign Affairs (1938) 375.

80 Smith (2003) 295, 298. A background note prepared for the Evian Conference suggested that the primary purpose of the Conference was to adopt plans for a large emigration of around 200,000 Jews and 60,000 non-Aryans from Greater Germany, including Austria, over four years. Council for German Jewry, ‘Notes on Talks of Professor Norman Bentwich with Mr Myron Taylor’ (Florence, 3/5 June 1938) para. 2 in Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, Evian Conference: Records, 1938, Document collection 503, Wiener Library, London.


83 Feingold (1970) 72.
creating an ‘alien enclave within an established nation’. Roosevelt regarded this as unimaginative and far removed from his grand resettlement narrative of nation-building. He wanted to captivate the world’s imagination to leverage support, and believed that ‘planning on an enormous scale is essential’. He called on the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGC), established after the Evian Conference to coordinate refugee relief, to think beyond the short-term problem of those already displaced within Europe, and initiate a serious and probably a fairly expansive effort to survey and study definitely and scientifically this geographical and economic problem of resettling several million people in new areas of the earth’s surface.

We have been working, up to now, on too small a scale, and we have failed to apply modern engineering to our task. We know already that there are many comparatively vacant spaces on the earth’s surface where from the point of view of climate and natural resources European settlers can live permanently.

Neither the IGC nor Jewish leaders were taken with Roosevelt’s suggestion, not least because it lacked specificity. The British and French argued that there would be no refugee problem at all if the Allies won the war, and the British Foreign Office disapproved of any efforts that might encourage an exodus of Jews, since many of them would likely wish to go to Palestine if offered the prospect of resettlement. Britain had imposed strict limits on Jewish immigration to Palestine, an area of key strategic importance, so as not to antagonise the Arab world. A committee was formed to examine Roosevelt’s suggestions, but in the end it took no action.

84 Verbatim transcript of trans-Atlantic telephone conversations between J Dunn and M Taylor (17 July 1939), Cordell Hull Papers, Container 44, Folder 18, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC, cited in Feingold (1970) 77. Lord Winterton, Chairman of the IGC, argued that the US was more prone to think along the lines of mass relocation precisely because it was not party to the 1919, Minority Treaty, which sought to protect ethnic groups in situ. Cited in Feingold (1970) 87.

85 FD Roosevelt Memorandum to S Welles (4 December 1939), President’s Secretary’s File, Box 24, Franklin D Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, cited in Feingold (1970) 114.


87 Feingold (1970) 86.

88 See Sjöberg (1991) 72, referring to Foreign Office minutes of 22 August 1939 and 20 September 1939, FO 371/24078, PRO; 24 November 1939, FO 371/24079, PRO.

89 Sjöberg (1991) 72.

90 Pierrepont Moffat Diary (18 October 1939), cited in ibid.
Even Roosevelt’s own advisors regarded his plans as overly ambitious. Bowman, who between 1938 and 1942 coordinated a study on resettlement for Roosevelt, was sceptical about the possibility of resettling large groups of people in the 20th century. In his view, the best lands had already been occupied, restrictive immigration laws hindered movement and ‘[n]o discernible or predictable stream of migration [could] keep pace with the birth rates of conspicuously overcrowded countries.’

A number of other resettlement schemes were contemplated in the lead-up to war. Few proceeded, and those that did were certainly not on the scale Roosevelt had contemplated, as the brief discussion below illustrates.

**Alaska**

As a large, ‘empty’ territory, Alaska was seen as ripe for settlement. A US State Department-commissioned report found that Alaskans ‘want to see their land populated and it makes little difference whether this population comes from the United States or from abroad.’ An elaborate refugee resettlement-development proposal received widespread public support for its ‘imagined confluence of needs’ and mutually advantageous outcomes for the resettled and host communities. Over 388 newspaper editorials were overwhelmingly positive. Yet, despite in-built guarantees that 50 per cent of new jobs would go to US citizens, political opposition was widespread, especially from those who regarded it as letting refugees into the US via the back door. Roosevelt was counselled not to support the scheme because it ‘would lead to a breakdown in our whole system of protective immigration laws’.

**The Philippines**

Compared to the Alaskan idea, a resettlement initiative in Mindanao in the Philippines held more promise for the US administration—perhaps precisely because it did not directly encroach on US domestic politics. It was partly a
geopolitical ‘settler infusion’ strategy to introduce up to 10,000 Europeans to counteract the influence of the island’s 30,000 Japanese inhabitants. 97 While it received initial support from the Philippine authorities, public opposition mounted as concerns spread that local Filipino agricultural markets would be glutted. In response, the Philippines insisted that any settlers would be restricted to farming citrus, rubber and vegetables (rather than the staple crops of coconut and hemp). These concerns were accommodated and it seemed that the resettlement would proceed. Indeed, in his address to the IGC in October 1939, President Roosevelt said:

I am glad to be able to announce today that active steps have been taken to begin actual settlement, made possible by the generous attitude of the Dominican Government and the Government of the Philippine Commonwealth. This is, I hope, the forerunner of many other similar projects in other nations. 98

However, delays in selecting refugees to settle, problems with shipping and ultimately the outbreak of war in the Pacific put an end to the plan. 99

Africa

The US Administration’s focus shifted to Africa. Initial discussions centred on the creation of a ‘United States of Africa’—a British protectorate that might encompass parts of Rhodesia, Kenya and Tanganyika, and provide a home for ‘tens of millions’ of refugees, whether Jewish or not. ‘How many non-Jewish people in Russia, Germany and Italy do you think would be glad to get out of those countries if there was some place to which they could go?’, asked financier Bernard Baruch. 100 They would ‘be the best, the strongest and the most courageous people because they are anxious to get away from these over-regulated, goose-stepping civilians of Russia, Germany and Italy’. 101 Indeed, ‘the broad plan here outlined would be a solution of the over-population question of all of Europe’. 102

While it would cost a great deal, it was suggested that (mainly) Jews could tithe themselves to raise $300 million to establish the republic. It was thought

98 Roosevelt (1939) 20.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid 115.
they would start an economic revival, even ‘a rebirth of freedom and liberty’.\textsuperscript{103}

They had in mind the subscription of a number of millions of dollars to the capital of a central bank to be located in the new country. The bank would be the bank of issue for a local currency to be based on sterling, and it would also issue loans in the United States, England, France, and elsewhere. The proceeds of financing would be used to develop the roads, utilities, and other services of the new country.\textsuperscript{104}

Roosevelt dubbed the African initiative the ‘big idea’,\textsuperscript{105} but once again his ambitions were not realised. First, the British were reluctant to provide land from their colonial territories for resettlement, in part because of opposition from white residents in the region who feared their own livelihoods would be impacted by an influx of European Jews. Secondly, the Zionists were opposed to the scheme.

Attention then turned to Angola, at that time a Portuguese colony. Proposed by Bowman, Roosevelt attempted to sell the prospect to the Portuguese government by focusing on the increased prosperity that resettlement would bring both to Angola and Portugal.\textsuperscript{106} Angola had been the site of a small settlement by the Boers in 1900, and Jewish territorialists had ‘eyed it hopefully’ in 1912.\textsuperscript{107} In 1931, some German Jews had sought to establish a colony there but were denied permission by the Portuguese government—as were similar proposals by Warsaw and Bucharest.\textsuperscript{108} The British government opposed Roosevelt’s Angola proposal as ‘utopian’ and ‘unrealistic’. These sentiments may in part have reflected Britain’s discomfort that Portugal was being asked to offer up a colony when it had refused its own, but likely also related to British concerns about any territory offered as a ‘supplemental Jewish homeland’.\textsuperscript{109} While surveys of the area were conducted, in the end the project ceased for a number of coinciding reasons: the outbreak of war, insurmountable transport problems and concerns of the Jewish community.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{104} Strauss (1962) 113.

\textsuperscript{105} Feingold (1970) 102-03.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid 106; Smith (2003) 297.

\textsuperscript{107} Feingold (1970) 106.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.

Italy considered the possible resettlement of Italian Jews in Ethiopia, an option also pursued by the US and Britain.  

Indeed, Roosevelt wrote to Mussolini to see whether Italian-occupied Ethiopia might be a suitable resettlement location. Mussolini rejected it but proposed open areas in Russia and North America instead.

Madagascar was a focus for resettlement by Germany, Japan, Poland and France. In February 1939, the Nazis announced a plan to resettle 15 million Jews either there or in Guiana, but it was little more than a ‘giant concentration camp’.

**Latin America**

Latin America was another area on which the US focused its attention, although states from this region made clear at the 1938 Evian Conference that they were not prepared to be primary areas for resettlement.

However, in 1939, President Trujillo of the Dominican Republic offered part of his personal estate (Sosúa) to accommodate up to 100,000 refugees as agricultural colonists—an opportunity seized upon by Roosevelt. The US State Department had concerns that Trujillo was motivated largely by racial ideology and a desire to increase ‘European blood’, and doubted that any settlement could be as large as he suggested. Nevertheless, given the lack of other possibilities, it continued to pursue it. In March 1939, the US sent a commission to survey the area, which reported that around 29,000 families could be accommodated but recommended a trial settlement of 200 families. The Dominican Republic Settlement Association (DORSA) was established and a contract was concluded between it and the Dominican Republic assuring citizenship and full civil and economic rights to those who relocated, and tax-exempt status to the colony (provided it did not seek to compete with local businesses).

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111 Wyman (1968) 58.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid 112.
115 See, e.g., Secretary of State (Hull) to the Ambassador in France (Rublee) (18 January 1939) in FRUS 70-71.
116 Wyman (1968) 61.
In March 1940, the relocation of an initial contingent of 500 people began. By mid-1942, it was clear that the project would never exceed this number. 'Despite hard work and a degree of progress, Sosúa scarcely proved to be the example that would open other doors. Aside from its small size, problems of discipline and administration, as well as of refugees using the Sosúa opportunity as a steppingstone for immigrating to the US, hurt the colony.'

**British Guiana**

Wary of mass resettlement, British officials supported an experimental ‘resettlement haven’ in British Guiana in 1939. A telegram from the US Ambassador in London to the US Secretary of State welcomed the effort, but complained that it would place the British ‘in a strong moral position of which they plan to make full use in the international press, and [enable them] to place the responsibility for any failure to extend the work in [sic] behalf of refugees, both as regards financing and resettlement, on the other principal governments’—namely, the US.

A survey and report on the area was released in May 1939, in which resettlement was described as ‘feasible’. Nevertheless, an experimental small-scale settlement would be needed initially, and planning began to send 5,000 young settlers (at a projected cost of US$3 million). In the House of Commons, Prime Minister Chamberlain explained the longer-term vision: the land would be leased to the settlers on generous terms, although ‘subject to the preservation of, or reasonable compensation for, existing rights, and, in particular to the preservation of the rights and interests of aboriginal Indians’.

Given that ‘large scale settlement, if successful, would result in the establishment of a new community of considerable size’,

its status and position would clearly become such as to warrant the grant of a large measure of autonomy in local government and the necessary provision for its adequate representation in the Government of the Colony as a whole. Subject to the general control of His

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118 Wyman (1968) 62.
119 Ambassador in the UK (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State (Hull) (11 July 1939) in FRUS 130.
121 Wyman (1968) 60.
Majesty’s Government and of the Colonial Government, His Majesty’s Government would be ready at all times to give sympathetic consideration to any proposals of this character, but the general colonial services such as Customs and Revenue Services, Currency, Post and Telegraph, Security Services and Law and Order would necessarily remain under the control of the Colonial Government. 123

Thus, the relocated group would have a measure of internal self-governance.

At the IGC meeting in October 1939, the scheme was strongly opposed by the US administration and the Zionists. In his memoirs, US official Lewis Strauss described the land as ‘swamp and jungle’, noting that settlement possibilities there had been canvassed by the League of Nations some four years earlier in relation to Assyrians, ‘with totally discouraging results’. 124 Nevertheless, a contingent of 500 settlers was retrained and sent to British Guiana in June 1940, before the scheme was halted. With the outbreak of war, attention turned to other matters. 125

THE ‘M’ PROJECT: 1942-45

In May 1942, Roosevelt invited the Smithsonian’s chief anthropologist, Dr Ales Hrdlicka, to the White House to discuss the problem of post-war migration. Hrdlicka, a specialist on skull measurement (then still a respected aspect of anthropology), proposed the creation of an expert body on migration to ‘chart the problem from the anthropological, medical, and economical points of view’, ‘determine the countries that will have to discharge their surplus peoples, and those that might receive them’ and ‘lay foundations for rational selection and direction of the migrants’. 126

President Roosevelt appointed a small committee of three—Hrdlicka, Bowman and Henry Field—to find places suitable for post-war settlement and identify what kinds of people might be relocated there. Considerable differences of opinion resulted in Hrdlicka’s withdrawal from the group late in the autumn of 1942. 127

123 Ibid column 864.
124 Strauss (1962) 117.
125 Feingold (1970) 111.
On 1 November 1942, Roosevelt decided formally to establish Bowman and Field’s research as a top-secret project financed by allocations from the President’s Special Funds. The ‘M’ Project (‘M’ for migration) represented Roosevelt’s most ambitious attempt to scour the world for resettlement sites. As Roosevelt explained to Bowman: ‘What I am looking for is the possibility of uninhabited or sparsely inhabited good agricultural lands to which Jewish colonies might be sent.’ The ‘M’ Project was to create systematic and comprehensive ‘world-wide studies on areas with surplus population, their racial and religious composition, and their nationals’ potential skill and adaptability as emigrants’.

Although the ‘M’ Project was conducted in secret, Roosevelt’s views on resettlement were, of course, already widely known. He had been a vocal advocate of resettlement for many years, concerned both about Europe’s general demographic problems and the plight of Jewish refugees in particular. While the ‘M’ Project might seem like an eccentric Presidential folly, especially in the midst of a world war, it grew quite naturally out of previous decades’ thinking about land usage and population distribution. For Roosevelt, it represented the solution to existing surplus population and future mass displacement. Acutely aware of the impediments caused by US immigration restrictions in the 1920s, and domestically impotent to increase migration quotas, he sought ‘solutions that would simultaneously pacify Europe and promote economic development and civilization in the rest of the world through organized colonization and settlement’. The ‘M’ Project thus represented the culmination of Roosevelt’s vision, not its inception.

The ‘M’ Project team was asked to address four questions:

(i) Who are the people in need of resettlement?
(ii) Where are they?
(iii) Where could they go?
(iv) What is required to make their resettlement a permanent success?

128 Cited in ibid: see Memo from John Franklin Carter to President Harry Truman (7 May 1945), John Franklin Carter File, Harry S Truman Library, Independence, Missouri. By the time the ‘M’ Project was formally established, Hrdlicka had withdrawn owing to differences in approach. There are also differing accounts as to the extent of Bowman’s involvement. Robinson (2012) 21 says that Bowman declined to serve formally and instead agreed to an advisory role; Smith (2003) says the ‘M’ Project was led by Bowman.


At the Project’s conclusion in November 1945, over 660 land studies, spanning 96 volumes, had been compiled. It drew upon and refashioned much of the knowledge amassed by geographers and demographers over the previous two decades, traversing themes as diverse as prior resettlement attempts, immigration laws of possible host countries, land surveys, the viability of industries in different regions and so on. Studies covered the globe, with Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Australia’s Northern Territory, Canada and Manchuria identified as the best prospects for settlement. Reports ranged across subjects as varied as ‘Emigration of Korean Farmers to Japan’, ‘Short Outline of the Geography of the Soils of the World’ and ‘Jewish Colonization in the Argentine Republic’.

On one view, the ‘M’ Project represented an attempt to secure a fairer distribution of world population to maximise resources and thereby enhance security. On another view, it was a means of bolstering economic bases and power across the globe by redistributing a predominantly white, European population throughout the developing world. Significantly, it found that the ultimate success of resettlement was almost solely dependent on ‘adequate financial aid to provide environmental conditions to which the resettlees were previously accustomed. The failure of former resettlement projects was attributed to the usual disregard for this essential pre-condition.’

In the end, the ‘M’ Project ground to a halt after Roosevelt’s death when President Truman declined to continue it. Its main recommendation had been that one million families would require resettlement after the war, at an average cost of $25,000 per family, and that this should be administered by a UN

134 Robinson (2012) 28. Accounts of the precise number vary from 647 to 677 studies. The special collections catalogue for the M Project at Johns Hopkins University records 163 reports, 122 translations, 345 memoranda and 47 lectures. Smith (2003) says there were 8-10 permanent staff plus 20-30 researchers and consultants, at a cost of US$180,000. Research findings were typically distributed to a variety of government departments, including the War Department, Army, Navy and the White House. According to Sjöberg (1991) 75, its existence was first disclosed in 1947 in Farago (1947).

135 Bashford (2014) 131-32. Most of the information acquired was simply a collation of existing studies, rather than original research, leading the historian Tommie Sjöberg to query the insistence on extreme secrecy: Sjöberg (1991) 76. Each employee took an oath of secrecy and was security-checked by the FBI.

136 See Field (1962).

137 Smith (2003) 301.


139 Farago (1947) 376.
International Settlement Authority with an annual budget of $1 billion.\textsuperscript{140} Overall, its findings were never acted upon, not least because they were classified until 1960.\textsuperscript{141} But beyond that practical impediment lay a more fundamental obstacle: ‘The scientific will to study refugee resettlement was severed from the will to do anything about it.’\textsuperscript{142} Arguably, part of the problem was Bowman’s own attitude towards the task at hand: he regarded the ‘M’ Project as being less about developing a workable resettlement policy, and more about the thrill of the intellectual inquiry. As his colleague Strausz-Hupé explained, the ‘M’ Project was a ‘scholarly investigation of land settlement’ rather than a resettlement programme.\textsuperscript{143}

\textbf{POPULATION TRANSFERS: REALISING MOVEMENT}

For all the talk of resettlement, very few schemes were realised in practice. On the whole, the only large group movements that did materialise were population transfers designed to redistribute ethnic minorities (created by the redrawing of boundaries after the First World War) to territories where they had a greater affiliation.\textsuperscript{144}

Population transfer was considered to be an orderly means of solving territorial and ethnic conflict through ‘the organized removal of an ethnic group from its country of residence, and its subsequent resettlement in territories under the sovereignty of its ethnic homeland, an operation generally based on interstate agreement’.\textsuperscript{145} The idea was to create peace

\textsuperscript{140} Smith (2003) 303.
\textsuperscript{141} Wyman (1968) 59.
\textsuperscript{142} Smith (2003) 303.
\textsuperscript{143} Interview with Strausz-Hupé (13 March 1996), cited in Smith (2003) 304.
\textsuperscript{145} Schechtman (1946) x. ‘Population transfer was understood to imply a process intended to be orderly and regulated, involving a minimum of human suffering or economic disruption, with international sanction and financial and logistical assistance’: Frank (2007) 8-9. Professor of Ethnology, George Montandon, is sometimes credited with inventing the idea of population transfer: see Schechtman, \textit{Postwar Population Transfers in Europe, 1945-55} (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962) 389, noting Montandon’s 1915 memorandum published in connection with the first Conference des Nationalités (Lausanne, 27-29 June 1918) entitled \textit{Frontières Nationales: Determination objective de la condition primordial nécessaire à l’obtention d’une paix durable}. However, Frank traces the term back as far as 1898: Frank (2007) 16.
through homogeneity. Rather than making frontiers fit around populations, why not make populations fit the frontiers?\textsuperscript{146} ‘Transfers’ encompassed both unilateral movements and exchanges of population between states—essentially, reciprocal group migration of ethnic minorities. These were based on a very different rationale from population redistribution necessitated by overcrowding and resource scarcity, although the end goal of both was to reduce conflict.

A series of early treaties had facilitated exchanges between Bulgaria and Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece, and Turkey and Greece,\textsuperscript{147} and more followed during and after the Second World War.\textsuperscript{148} According to legal scholar Alfred de Zayas, population transfer came to be seen as ‘a legitimate solution of demographic problems’, even ‘a panacea’.\textsuperscript{149} Similarly, Umut Özsu argues that the creation of exchange treaties lent a formality and ‘international legal legitimacy to a set of movements that redistributed land and capital’, such that population transfer became ‘a distinct mode of nation-building through “modern” international law’.\textsuperscript{150}

Whereas the ‘M’ Project provided the vehicle for testing President Roosevelt’s visions for relocation, the British Foreign Office established its own academic research group to examine (among other things) the feasibility of population transfer. Based at Balliol College in Oxford, the Foreign Research and Press Service was commissioned in 1940 to prepare a factual paper on whether population transfer, on a case-by-case basis, was ‘desirable, workable and durable’.\textsuperscript{151} The resulting report (and subsequent studies undertaken

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\textsuperscript{147} Convention concerning the Exchange of Populations (Bulgaria/Turkey, signed at Adrianople, November 1913); Greco–Turkish Agreement of 1914 (for discussion of both, see SP Ladas, \textit{The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey} (Macmillan Company, 1932) 18-23); Convention concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations (Treaty of Lausanne, 30 January 1923). See also Convention concerning Reciprocal Emigration between Greece and Bulgaria (27 November 1919) 1 LNTS 68 (Convention of Neuilly).

\textsuperscript{148} On which, see Schechtman (1946); Schechtman (1962); and the works cited in U Özsu, “‘A Thoroughly Bad and Vicious Solution”: Humanitarianism, the World Court, and the Modern Origins of Population Transfer’ 1 \textit{London Review of International Law} (2013) 99, 126.

\textsuperscript{149} AM de Zayas, ‘A Historical Survey of Twentieth Century Expulsions’, in AC Bramwell (ed.), \textit{Refugees in the Age of Total War} (Unwin Hyman, 1998) 20. He may be invoking Leonard Woolf’s concerns that transfers were being perceived as a ‘panacea’: L Woolf, \textit{The International Post-War Settlement} (Fabian Publications, 1944) 16-17.

\textsuperscript{150} Özsu (2013) 101, 103, respectively.

\textsuperscript{151} ‘Note on a Meeting Held to Consider Mr JD Mabbott’s Paper on the Transplantation of Minorities’ (20 May 1940), Royal Institute of International Affairs, RIIA/20/11, cited in Frank (2007) 47. The committee consisted of Arnold Toynbee, Research Professor at the Royal Institute of International Affairs and Director (Asia Minor/Greece), Shiela Grant Duff (Czechoslovakia), John Hawgood
between 1940 and 1942) revealed three important insights into academic attitudes at the time:

First, it was inevitable that some transfers of German population would have to be undertaken at the end of the war. Second, it was recognized, even by those strongly opposed on principle to compulsion, that such transfers would be necessary as a policy of ‘last resort’. And, third, if transfers of German populations on strategic grounds...were to have a lasting contribution to peace in Europe they would have to be limited in scope.  

In November 1943, the Foreign Office created an Interdepartmental Committee on the Transfer of German Populations and tasked it with writing a detailed feasibility study on the transfer of Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia. Once again, the committee proceeded on the basis that such transfer was ‘prima facie desirable’, and examined Germany’s ability to absorb relocated groups, the necessary conditions to ensure minimal suffering to those who moved (and the sending and receiving states), the cost of transfer and the possibility of settlement outside Germany.

Joseph Schechtman, a Ukrainian Zionist who migrated to the US and co-founded the Bureau for Study of Population Migration, was fascinated by the concept of population transfer. In his seminal works, he documented the many population exchanges within Europe between 1939 and 1955, and within Asia (predominantly India, Armenia and Assyria) immediately after the Second World War.

In essence, Schechtman’s work on European population transfers was a critique of the legal regime of minority protection established by the League of Nations after the First World War. In his view, peace would not come through formal, legal mechanisms, but rather by transferring minorities into ‘larger ethnic groups whose language they speak, to whose customs they have least.

(Germany), Robert Laffan (Yugoslavia), CA Macartney (Hungary), David Mitrany (South-East Europe), Herbert Paton (Poland/Baltic States), Robert Seton-Watson (South-East Europe) and Sir John Hope Simpson (refugees).

152 Frank (2007) 52.


154 Frank (2007) 76-77.


156 Schechtman (1946); Schechtman (1962); JB Schechtman, Population Transfers in Asia (Hallsby Press, 1949). There were references to colonisation in this context, even though it was not true colonisation, in the sense of annexing territory. See also Bashford (2014) 130.
antagonism, and to whom, spiritually, they owe allegiance’. At its heart, his extensive study was about restoring equilibrium for groups that had never moved but had been rendered minorities by virtue of changed national boundaries. Population transfers (or exchanges, in many cases) would enable them to live in the state with which they had ethnic links, rather than the one ‘artificially’ created around them.

Like many other studies of the period, Schechtman identified the practical, legal and emotional challenges for group population movements, including the need for consultation, consent to be transferred, transport, property rights, reception by the new community, economic opportunities and so on. He recognised that even in carefully planned transfers of the past, ‘the grand total of suffering and hardship involved in the displacement—compulsory or voluntary—of millions of people was undoubtedly tremendous in scope and intensity’. It is for this analysis that his studies are most relevant to the contemporary context of planned relocation.

Yet, in spite of these considerable difficulties, Schechtman regarded resettlement as ‘an instrument of the greatest importance in eliminating the most explosive danger spots in Europe and in securing the future peace of the Continent and the welfare of its peoples’. Although resettlement was ‘a painful operation for the persons concerned’ and could cause ‘serious difficulties in the economic life of the country of departure and the country of resettlement’, there might ‘be situations where the alternatives are even less desirable’. It was ‘not an ideal solution, but...a necessary evil’. He quoted a former Director of the Pan-European Union: ‘To cut the cancer from a sick body is not cruel, it is necessary.’

157 Schechtman (1946) 454.
158 Cf. Thompson (1994) 185, who argued that the ‘ideal solution’ to the minorities problem would be ‘a broader tolerance of differences so that only a very few points of general conformity would be needed to assure essential unity in national groups’.
160 Schechtman (1962) 368.
161 Schechtman (1946) 24.
162 Ibid 467.
163 Ibid 468.
Schechtman primarily championed relocation as a ‘preventive’ strategy for solving minority problems, and used his studies to support his call for an Arab-Jewish population exchange in Palestine. One cannot help but read his ultimately favourable take on population transfer in light of this political position. He argued that: ‘A transfer scheme loses its point unless it is applied before matters have come to an explosive climax and unless it has a scope commensurate with the magnitude of the problem.’

In this way, his work was reminiscent of Zionist Ze’ev Jabotinsky, who in 1940 pronounced the minorities system dead. For Jabotinsky, only the mass, organised transfer of Jews to Palestine, and the creation of a separate state, would lead to peace.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS WITH RESPECT TO POPULATION TRANSFERS

Since the period canvassed in this article pre-dates the emergence of the international human rights treaties after the Second World War, it is perhaps unremarkable that deliberations about the feasibility of resettlement focused primarily on practical matters: the availability and quality of land and livelihoods, organisation of transport, transfer of property and assets, funding and so on.

However, some scholars and statesmen did identify the underlying human rights concerns implicit in group population movements, most notably in the context of minority population transfers. These related to questions of forced versus voluntary movement; linguistic, cultural and religious identity; and self-determination. The psychological, economic and practical barriers to uprooting people from their homes were constantly raised. While discussions about relocation today (in the context of climate change and disasters) resonate more

165 Schechtman (1949) 84.
166 Discussed in Mazower (2009) 119–20. Interestingly, there was no public discussion of Palestine at the Evian Conference, with Norman Bentwich noting in private correspondence that the British were ‘pointedly silent’ about it: ‘Report on the Governmental Conference at Evian’ (no date), 2, in Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, Evian Conference: Records, 1938, Document collection 503, Wiener Library, London.
strongly with the historical conception of resettlement as a strategy to alleviate overcrowding and resource scarcity, the human rights concerns inherent in ethnic population transfers are especially relevant to the protection of community, identity and belonging today.

Even though most of the population-exchange treaties included an individual right of option to remain (which many people exercised),\(^\text{168}\) many transfers were in practice compulsory and carried out under the threat of force.\(^\text{169}\) Indeed, Balladore Pallieri argued that there was no such thing as an entirely voluntary population exchange. This is why they were sometimes described as mass expulsions, since arbitrary transfer without consent is unlawful under international law.\(^\text{170}\) Indeed, it is interesting to note that early English usage of the term ‘refoulement’—the prohibition on returning individuals to persecution—referred to ‘the forced relocation of a group of people’.\(^\text{171}\)

Reflecting on the 1923 population exchange between Turkey and Greece in his 1928 lectures at the Hague Academy of International Law, Stellio Séféridiæstated that, from the perspective of those who moved, ‘the exchange, even when carried out under the best conditions, was more than a misfortune’. Indeed, he argued, it was ‘criminal’.\(^\text{172}\) In the *American Journal of International Law*, Josef Kunz stated that the exchange was ‘overwhelmingly condemned as cruel and inhuman’.\(^\text{173}\) Similarly, John Hope Simpson, the author of many reports on refugees, noted that population transfer was an ‘inhumane, indeed a cruel, remedy, entailing much suffering and hardship on the unfortunates to whom it is applied’.\(^\text{174}\) And Schechtman, in 1946, noted that ‘the fundamental question of authority versus individual rights’ had to be considered in any relocation.\(^\text{175}\)

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\(^{168}\) Schechtman (1946) 473-74. Indeed, Schechtman proposed the reverse of this: a clause that people would have to invoke if they wanted to remain, rather than if they wanted to move: ibid 477-78.

\(^{169}\) See, e.g., the compulsory exchanges between Czechoslovakia and Hungary (27 February 1946), Poland and the Soviet Union (July 1946), and Hungary and Yugoslavia (September 1946), discussed in Henckaerts (1995) 128.


\(^{171}\) *Oxford English Dictionary* online (last visited 7 August 2014) (emphasis added), referring to examples from 1846 and 1925.

\(^{172}\) Séféridès (1928) 430, cited in Schechtman (1962) 459.


\(^{175}\) Schechtman (1946) 473.
By and large, leading jurists and students of minority problems agree that unconditionally compulsory transfer is wholly inconsistent with democratic concepts of human rights. There is something deeply shocking in the idea that human beings may be indiscriminately transferred or exchanged like goods or cattle, without having any legal right to protest or appeal. Among the prospective evacuees there are certain to be some for whom the abandonment of their homeland and resettlement in another country entail insupportable tragedy. In such cases, irrespective of their number, it would be needlessly cruel and a violation of the principle of individual self-determination to compel departure, withholding all legal means of obtaining exemption from the transfer.176

Writing in 1944, Leonard Woolf urged ‘the greatest caution’ with respect to population transfers being ‘so freely canvassed as a panacea for international problems’.

They spring from the same kind of political philosophy as that of the Nazis—namely that anything can be accomplished by grandiose and violent measures. The whole conception is false. In politics—and particularly in international politics—grandiose schemes which can only be realised by ruthless violence and which disregard the rights and happiness of large numbers of helpless ordinary people are incompatible with prosperity and peace and therefore with civilisation.177

Despite some considerable support for population transfer—including from British Prime Minister Winston Churchill178—debates in the House of Lords revealed deep concerns about its human consequences. Reflecting on the 1923 Greek-Turkish exchange, Lord Strabolgi, formerly a Liberal but, by 1944, a Labour politician, stated: ‘You cannot uproot families who live for centuries in a certain part of Macedonia and ship them off to Asia Minor, or vice versa, without causing distress and suffering of all kinds.’179

176 Ibid 474. ‘Moreover, to the public opinion of the world the idea of the compulsory exchange of populations was offensive’: Ladas (1932) 340.
In relation to such humanitarian objections, Stephen B Jones, Associate Professor of Geography from the University of Hawaii, argued that while the resettlement of minorities was not easy, and that even ‘if accomplished in a humane fashion, resettlement is costly’, ‘the trouble and cost are . . . vastly less than the trouble and cost of war’.  

Similarly, Viscount Cranbourne in the House of Lords reluctantly observed that:

[T]he suffering caused by a week’s war would be more than the suffering caused by the efficient resettlement of these populations whose present situation is liable to endanger future peace. If, therefore, transfer, and transfer alone, seemed likely to ensure peace, I should personally take the view that the humanitarian argument must not be given more than its proper weight in the balance of considerations.

Nevertheless, he remained convinced that this ‘drastic’ measure should be used ‘only if all other methods are likely to fail, and if the minority problem in question is likely seriously to endanger peace. The saving of peace is the crucial point.’ The considerable gap between transfer as ‘a clean theoretical solution’ and ‘its messy practical application’ was, however, becoming all too apparent.

By the late 1940s, the idea of universal individual human rights had started to take priority over community-based minority rights. According to historian Matthew Frank, this shift fundamentally reoriented attitudes towards population transfer: ‘The rhetoric and legal framework of human rights, which henceforth became a salient feature of the postwar settlement, helped militate against the revival of grand schemes for internationally sanctioned population transfers that had characterized Europe’s mid-century crisis’.

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182 Ibid.

183 Frank (2007) 276; see also Cranbourne (1944) 39.

184 Frank (2007) 278.
CONCLUSION: THE LIMITS OF SUCCESS

Given the high level of governmental and scholarly interest in resettlement throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, why was its practical success so limited? Even with the strongest champions—the President of the US, no less—achievements were muted.

As US Holocaust scholar Henry Feingold explains, while Roosevelt’s ideas were visionary, and he had a keen understanding of the need to capture the public imagination, they were also ‘totally impractical’. In reality, by early 1939, it was clear that ‘the lack of resettlement havens rather than German recalcitrance would be the chief stumbling block to extricating the Jews from Germany’. Even in the face of impending annihilation, the political will required to make resettlement (as a form of rescue) a reality was simply not forthcoming.

Feingold’s analysis leads one to conclude that collective political self-interest encouraged the involvement of Britain and France in the resettlement question, with ‘the hope held forth by the Evian idea of ridding themselves of their refugee burden’ and looking like they were doing ‘something’. The US was searching the world for resettlement locations, but was not prepared to offer any of its own territory. Feingold suggests that Roosevelt’s 1939 speech to the IGC, calling for large resettlement havens, raised questions about his own sincerity in finding solutions, since only months earlier he had opposed large-scale resettlement in Alaska.

The brinkmanship between Britain and the US meant that each side ‘seemed to wax enthusiastic when the projected haven was in the sphere of the other nation’. ‘There was no other practical solution on the horizon and at least the search for resettlement lessened the imagined pressure for modifying the immigration law’—a sentiment with which even those opposed to domestic immigration could agree.

One might well be tempted to argue that similar problems impede action today to address mobility relating to the impacts of climate change and

186 Ibid 108.
188 Ibid 91; see also Wyman (1968) 57.
190 Ibid 105.
191 Ibid 103.
disasters. Governments now, as in the past, commonly cite the need for more research before they can take concrete steps, despite a plethora of targeted evidence. It is true that there remain gaps in the knowledge base, but there are already clear priorities for policy development.192

There are other broad parallels as well. Discussions about planned relocation in the context of climate and disasters change in many ways echo deliberations a century before about surplus population: concerns about the ‘carrying capacity’ of land, ‘resource scarcity’, ‘overcrowding’, ‘danger zones’ and conflict. There are questions about when ‘tipping points’ are reached. There are common concerns about whether the benefits of movement outweigh its significant psychological and practical challenges. There are precedents for cataloguing the many considerations to be taken into account in any proposed move: the ILO’s Conference on the Organisation of Migration for Settlement in 1938, for example, compiled a long list of practical and legal issues required to facilitate group movement and settlement.193 And there are similar methodological debates about how to identify who may need to move, and over what time frame. For instance, a standard technique in the 1920s was to predict population ‘danger zones’ based on the habitability of land,194 a method criticised by some as too rudimentary because it failed to take account of technological or agricultural advances. Seventy years later, sociologist Norman Myers’s suggestion that 150 million people would be displaced by climate change by 2050 was similarly critiqued for its crude methodology, based on the assumption that the total population of areas vulnerable to sea-level rise and increased extreme weather events would need to move.195 This overlooked people’s adaptive capacity, resilience and other mitigating factors.

In 1940, Oxford academic and member of the British Foreign Research and Press Service, Carlile Macartney, lamented that population transfer happened to be ‘the present fashionable panacea for all difficulties connected with national minorities’. While it was a potential solution to the minority problem, it was ‘a last resort, a desperate remedy’. His concern was that it had gained prominence and popularity because of ‘the impatience of long-term, careful work and the preference for speedy and specious action generally characteristic

192 See, e.g., the emerging findings of the Nansen Initiative on Disaster-Induced Cross-Border Displacement, available at www.nanseninitiative.org (last visited 8 December 2014).
193 See ‘Organisation of Migration for Settlement’.
194 Bashford (2014) 35.
of our age’, and ‘despair’ at finding alternative solutions.\textsuperscript{196} Such concerns are not out of place today. Deep, rigorous scholarly research takes time, and is typically published in lengthy academic journals or book form. This does not sit easily with 24-hour news cycles or the highly condensed nature of government briefing notes. As rich and nuanced scholarship gets whittled down into bland, generalised bullet points, so the very detail required for considered decision-making disappears.

Rethinking relocation through an historical lens helps to situate contemporary ideas within a much longer intellectual framework, revealing unexpected connections and salutary lessons. There is much we can learn—substantively, procedurally and conceptually. The history of relocation and transfer is characterised by a gulf between grand theoretical possibilities, on the one hand, and the challenges of practical implementation, on the other.\textsuperscript{197} The political and practical obstacles that stood in the way of relocation in the past remain today, and those experiences reinforce the findings of modern scholarship that resettlement is a fraught and complex undertaking, rarely considered successful by those who move.\textsuperscript{198} In particular, it is sobering to recall the ‘M’ Project’s conclusion that an ‘essential pre-condition’\textsuperscript{199} for resettlement is adequate funding to enable people to restore their livelihoods and communities—an aspect that has been disregarded all too often in the past, and which will require enormous political will to be safeguarded in the future.

\textsuperscript{196} See Frank (2007) 50-51, referring to the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Macartney papers, MS Eng c. 3281, fos 169-83, Macartney (with marginal comments by Mabbott and suggested modifications by Toynbee), ‘Transfer of Populations’ (April 1940) SEW/13/1/1; Macartney, ‘The Transfer of Populations as a Solution of Minority Problems’ (Annex to Mabbott’s report) (29 May 1940).

\textsuperscript{197} This explains why, for example, British debates about the possible mass transfer of German populations during the Second World War ‘seldom revolved around whether it was desirable but instead focused on whether it was feasible’: Frank (2007) 15.


\textsuperscript{199} Farago (1947) 376.