

Annina Zheng-Hardy  
East Amherst, New York

In the words of philosopher George Santayana, "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it." The systematic extermination of Jews as well as homosexuals, the elderly, weak and non Aryan counterparts of society, most commonly referred to as the Holocaust, is a prime example of what happens when the abhorrent depravity of man coincides with international apathy. It is contemptible that such extreme calculated acts of moral repugnancy could be allowed to transpire, especially in such devastating numbers. While it is true that history has been one bloody circumstance after another, never before had history seen such cruelty as the attempted, and nearly successful, methodical annihilation of peoples that happened during World War II. The mind numbing statistics of the Holocaust make it hard for any sentient person to even begin to estimate the loss of life; measure the individual pain inflicted. 11 million people were killed in the Holocaust of Eastern Europe alone, and of these, 6 million were Jews; two thirds of the Jewish population in Europe at that time. The analytical building of ghettos and concentration camps, the sheer horror of the fact that the arrangements for mass genocide were economical business transactions, all this paired with invidious persecution as well as the general aloofness of the public makes the Holocaust an historical event that should never be forgotten. Survivors and witnesses of these inhumane abominations still breathe and walk among us. How can we afford to ignore their experiences and turn the other way as these

atrocities continue to happen under different circumstances in other parts of the world?

The international community vowed after the Holocaust that such barbarity would never again happen, not on our watch. And it is the responsibility of those fortunate enough never to have faced such unimaginable torture to use history as a lesson.

I first came upon knowledge of the Holocaust at a relatively young age. I have always been an avid reader, books taking me to locations and eras that I could only have dreamt of. From the age of five onwards, I listened to NPR every Saturday morning when my mother drove me to Chinese class. I buried myself in National Geographic, subscribed to Time and Newsweek magazine, read everything I could. I ventured to the library religiously every week. It was there at age nine that I stumbled upon Anne Frank's diary. The diary appealed to me at first because it was an intimate insight into the psyche of a teenager, a stage in my life that I impatiently awaited. I read it day in and day out, staying up late to read it, reading it behind my textbooks in class. When I was finished, three days later, I had scrutinized every page, and cried at the end when I found out that Anne Frank died in captivity. Before my age had even reached the double digits my eyes had been opened to crimes against humanity, the many cases of moral bankruptcy that plagues our past. From then on I perused several libraries, reading whatever I could get my hands on about the Holocaust, the Rape of

Nanjing, the Khmer Rouge regime, the Rwandan massacre. Each revelation brought to light a new facet of the blood that soaks generations of humanity.

As Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor once said, to forget is to kill twice. It was he that also said that the opposite of love is not hate, its indifference. These two quotes completely embody the genocides of the twentieth and twenty first centuries. So many have died in terrible ways because of bureaucracy, or simply because those who had the power to stop it turned away instead of facing the awful truth. To forget the plights of those who died, to forget the conditions of the ghosts who haunt us even though they're still alive, would be another tragedy. Though now we cannot prevent the Holocaust from happening, we can prevent it from slipping from new generations' concern. We can strive for a better future, one that may not subject the Earth and her inhabitants to such immense calamity.

I am the product of open mindedness, throwing pre-conceived notions aside is what conceived me. My mother is Chinese and my father is a Caucasian American. Throughout my life, I have looked with kind eyes upon those who can see past color to embrace culture. Every relationship I will ever be in will be multiracial; I am never going to be singularly ethnological. Through personal experiences as well as studying history I have realized that there will always be

those who use others as a scapegoat, a craven excuse for everything from personal failings to failures of the government. History has shown me that people are more willing to organize massive world efforts to wage war than to show children the meaning of peace. Amicable coexistence does not happen overnight; this has been proven time and time again. Hate is built upon generations of ill will and injustice. Seeds of hate sown into the minds of young people will eventually sprout into thoughts that other people are weeds to be ripped from the Earth. Violence breeds violence; not everyone is resilient enough to rebound from a soul scarred by enmity enough to "love thy neighbor," a sentiment that every major religion echoes. However, simple things unite us. Younger generations bear the prodigious obligation of turning the other cheek for the sake of those who sacrificed their lives, willing or otherwise, in the hope that those who came after would remember and appreciate it. My generation and the generations after have to reconcile hopes for a better past in order to aspire to a better future. I believe that when we realize that the glorious ties that bind us, as humans, together are stronger and more powerful than the divergences that tear us apart, when we can understand the uniting forces that bring us together, we can work towards overlooking disparities that breed resentment to use all the power we usually place in the hands of bitterness to instead place in the open arms of change.

I have studied the Holocaust, I know the statistics, and I also know what I can do to make the world a better place. Those who say that one person cannot change the world know nothing about history; Hitler singlehandedly gained support for his "Final Solution," changing the world as we know it. But I know how to say I love you to people who will never say it back. I can scrape away the rust to remember how to shine and I don't believe in miracles because that is the impossible coming true and I know that nothing is impossible. For those who know that the mathematics of war has always been subtraction, the world can work towards living as an action of addition. I know that doubt can become faith, we can fall from grace and climb back up because the gold that shines from our hands when we hold each other is far stronger than hate. It is up to us, the next generation, to prove that philosophy to the world.

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