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In 1941, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler called for a "final solution to the Jewish question". His "solution" was to exterminate millions of European Jews in the form of large-scale and systematic genocide collectively known today as the Holocaust. Thankfully, the Nazi campaign of the 1940s to rid Europe of its Jews was undercut in the aftermath of World War II by Western forces. As a result, hundreds of Holocaust survivors live today to tell of the persecution and massacre that they had witnessed. The survivors of the Holocaust constantly remind the human race that violent persecution existed in the past, exists presently, and can continue to ruin scar humankind in the future.

It has been over sixty years since the Holocaust ended and many historians, philosophers, and interested individuals are still determining its long-term ramifications and lessons for humanity. Although the Holocaust has taught mankind much, one major lesson of this horrible event remains significant for future generations: history is bound to repeat itself.

In 1905, the famous author George Santayana wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Santayana's message could not be truer today. Genocide inflicted by a government on its own people, as in the Holocaust, may sound like a rarity in today's developing and modernizing world, but unfortunately it persists. The death toll numbers make this easier to understand. During the Holocaust, approximately 5.93 million Jews were slain (Dawidowicz 403). About 1.8 to 1.9 million Polish civilians (non-Jews) were victims of German Occupation policies and the war ("ushmm.org"). Up to 1.5 million Romani people perished during the Nazi Era (Hancock). An estimated 200,000 to 250,000 of the mentally and physically disabled were murdered under "Aktion T4", or Nazi euthanasia programs (Ryan, and Schuchman 62). At least 80,000 Freemasons were killed (Hodapp 85). The Nazis inflicted 5,000

to 15,000 deaths on German homosexuals ("ushmm.org"). Around 2,500 Jehovah's Witnesses were killed (Baumel 346-350). Thus, a conservative estimate of the Holocaust's death toll is approximately 9.5 million.

This is comparable to the estimated 800,000 Rwandans killed by their own government from April to July of 1994 (BBC News). From 1992 to 1995, 200,000 Bosnians were killed, 50,000 Bosnian women were raped, and 2.2 million were forced to flee their homes (Siladjic). Ethnic conflict in Sudan has led to 450,000 deaths, more than 2 million people being displaced, and some 234,000 Sudanese refugees since 2003 (Dagne 15). These are a select few instances of modern genocide, ethnic cleansing, and sectarian violence that closely model the atrocities of the Holocaust. Unfortunately, the future does not look too bright for humankind. Historical injustices and brutalities such as those committed in the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, and American and European slavery practices seem to be muted by the growing violence of this age. Some intellectuals have even deemed the twentieth century the "Age of Genocide". This label is based not only on the "massive scale of systematic and intentional mass death, but also on the unprecedented efficiency of the mechanisms and techniques of mass destruction." (Wallimann, Dobkowski, and Rubenstein ix). The genocide of the Holocaust has not come to a halt because mass violence is now an essential aspect of ethnic, religious, ideological, and racial cleavages.

This harsh reality leaves mankind to ask: what can we do? In order to stop prejudice, persecution, and mass violence the protestors of present and future generations must proactively mitigate the violence perpetrated modern civil conflict. Protest is a universal language of political participation among young people. In order to stop future inhumanity, there must be more activism; something that was lacking in the Holocaust period and is more acceptable today.

Many would say the Holocaust was the most horrible event in recorded history. Even more horrible is the fact that nearly nobody in German-occupied Europe tried to stop these atrocities. A German professor of the time said the following of this frightening phenomenon: "Pastor Niemöller spoke for thousands and thousands of men like me when he spoke (too modestly of himself) and said that, when the Nazis attacked the Communists, he was a little uneasy, but, after all, he was not a Communist, and so he did nothing; and then they attacked the Socialists, and he was a little uneasier, but, still, he was not a Socialist, and he did nothing; and then the schools, the press, the Jews, and so on, and he was always uneasier, but still he did nothing. And then they attacked the Church, and he was a Churchman, and he did something-but then it was too late." (Mayer 168) It is up to this generation to teach its children to speak up and act to prevent an ongoing wrongdoing. Albert Einstein said it best when he said that, "The world is too dangerous to live in, not because of the people who do evil, but because of the people who sit and let it happen." Since the Holocaust, many new mediums of interconnectivity and communication have been created. The expanded access to information via the internet, television, radio, or telephones will help spread the word about barbarities that occur in this increasingly modern and technologically-oriented world. Social networks such as Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter can be used as a public forum for the recurrences of Holocaust-like genocide. Grassroots movements for nonviolence and peace can go a long way in getting the attention and support of governments and international organizations who promote peace. As the developing world enters into postmodernism and post-materialism, it will begin to proactively intervene in crisis situations,

whether it is the Darfurian genocide by the Janjaweed, or the persecution of religious groups by the Taliban.

Moreover, it is vital to pass on the lessons of the Holocaust because if this generation does not educate its youth, then we will be nowhere in the future. In 1990, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization published its "World Declaration on Education for All". It holds that "education is increasingly seen as one means to reduce and overcome the effect of violence. It can prevent emergencies from occurring and can bring a sense of normalcy and stability into an otherwise chaotic situation." This notion is further evidenced by the fact that 82% of the 113 million children around the world reported to be out of school live in countries in crisis or emerging from crisis (Walker-Keleher 35). Education is the essential key to the survival of the human race. If the children of tomorrow are educated about the mistakes of the past, they are less likely to those same mistakes. As important it is for the young people of the future to actively oppose genocide, social injustice, and denial of human rights, it is just as crucial for them to learn history and teach it to those who are less fortunate and may never have the chance to learn historical error otherwise.

At the end of the day, it might be impossible to stop innate hatred and differences between different religions, ethnicities, races, and ideologies. However, it is definitely possible to mitigate and even thwart violence as a result of these divisions. The Holocaust was the real and terrifying example of a lack of information and activism and it should not reoccur. Its lessons should not just be put in a history book, but applied to everyday life for every generation because the existence of humanity depends upon them.

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