

countries have demonstrated our inability to learn from the blood-soaked past. Auschwitz, the symbol of absolute evil, is not only about that past, it is about the present and the future of our newly enflamed world, where a coupling of murderous ideologues and means of mass destruction can trigger new catastrophes.

When the ghetto liquidation in Bialystok, Poland, began, only three members of our family were still alive: my mother, my little sister and I, age 13. Father had already been executed by the Gestapo. Mother told me to put on long pants, hoping I would look more like a man, capable of slave labor. "And you and Frieda?" I asked. She didn't answer. She knew that their fate was sealed. As they were chased, with the other women, the children, the old and the sick, toward the waiting cattle cars, I could not take my eyes off them. Little Freida held my mother with one hand, and with the other, her favorite doll. They looked at me too, before disappearing from my life forever.

Their train went directly to Auschwitz-Birkenau, mine to the extermination camp of Majdanek. Months later, I also landed in Auschwitz, still hoping naively to find their trace. When the SS guards, with their dogs and whips, unsealed my cattle car, many of my comrades were already dead from hunger, thirst and lack of air. At the central ramp, surrounded by electrically charged barbed wire, we were ordered to strip naked and file past the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele. The "angel of death" performed on us his ritual "selection"—those who were to die immediately to the right, those destined to live a little longer and undergo other atrocious medical experiments, to the left.

In the background there was music. At the main gate, with its sinister slogan "Work Brings Freedom," sat, dressed in striped prison rags like mine, one of the most remarkable orchestras ever assembled. It was made up of virtuosos from Warsaw and Paris, Kiev and Amsterdam, Rome and Budapest. To accompany these selections, hangings and shootings while the gas chambers and crematoria belched smoke and fire, these gentle musicians were forced to play Bach, Schubert and Mozart, interspersed with marches to the glory of the Führer.

In the summer of 1944, the Third Reich was on the verge of collapse, yet Berlin's most urgent priority was to accelerate the "final solution." The death toll in the gas chambers on D-Day, as on any other day, far surpassed the enormous Allied losses suffered on the beaches of Normandy.

My labor commando was assigned to remove garbage from a ramp near the crematoria. From there I observed the peak of human extermination and heard the blood-curdling cries of innocents as they were herded into the gas chambers. Once the doors were locked, they had only three minutes to live, yet they found enough strength to dig their fingernails into the walls and scratch in the words "Never Forget."

Have we already forgotten?

I also witnessed an extraordinary act of heroism. The Sonderkommando—inmates coerced to dispose of bodies—attacked the SS guards, threw them into the furnaces, set fire to buildings and escaped. They were rapidly captured and executed, but their courage boosted our morale.

As the Russians advanced, those of us still able to work were evacuated deep into Germany. My misery continued at Dachau. During a final death march, while our column was being strafed by Allied planes that mistook us for Wehrmacht troops, I escaped with a few others. An armored battalion of GIs brought me life and freedom. I had just turned 16—a skeletal "subhuman" with shaved head and sunken eyes who had been

trying so long to hold on to a flicker of hope. "God bless America," I shouted uncontrollably.

In the autumn of their lives, the survivors of Auschwitz feel a visceral need to transmit what we have endured, to warn younger generations that today's intolerance, fanaticism and hatred can destroy their world as they once destroyed ours, that powerful alert systems must be built not only against the fury of nature—a tsunami or storm or eruption—but above all against the folly of man. Because we know from bitter experience that the human animal is capable of the worst, as well as the best—of madness as of genius—and that the unthinkable remains possible.

In the wake of so many recent tragedies, a wave of compassion and solidarity for the victims, a fragile yearning for peace, democracy and liberty, seem to be spreading around the planet. It is far too early to evaluate their potential. Mankind, divided and confused, still hesitates, vacillates like a sleepwalker on the edge of an abyss. But the irrevocable has not yet happened; our chances are still intact. Pray that we learn how to seize them.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted "aye" for rollcall vote 9, on H. Res. 39—Commending countries and organizations for marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and urging a strengthening of the fight against racism, intolerance, bigotry, prejudice, discrimination, and anti-Semitism.

Over 6 million Jews were exterminated in Nazi camps, and millions of others including Poles, Soviet prisoners, Romanies, members of the Resistance, and clergymen were among those killed, imprisoned or used as slave labor within the confines of these brutal camps. It is estimated that between 1.2 and 1.6 million of these victims perished at Auschwitz alone; and—as a result—no single word in modern language has a deeper symbolic meaning for pure evil than the word Auschwitz.

Auschwitz symbolizes the dark side of human nature, and serves as a lasting reminder that our civilized world must remain forever vigilant in the defense of human rights and human dignity. For Jewish people throughout the world, Auschwitz is a reminder of an unprecedented tragedy, the extreme expression of Hitler's Nazi regime's hatred of the Jewish people and their determined attempt to annihilate the Jews through genocide.

By passing this bill tonight, and through the numerous ways other countries and organizations have marked the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, we collectively and emphatically demonstrate the world's awareness of the terrible wounds inflicted by the heinous crimes committed at the hands of Hitler's evil regime, and the need to keep the memory of these tragic events alive so as to protect the victims from suffering a second great tragedy—that of being forgotten.

Mr. HYDE. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 39.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 26 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1833

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON) at 6 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.

JOINT SESSION OF THE CONGRESS—STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE

Mr. BEAUPREZ. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 20) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 20

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the two Houses of Congress assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Wednesday, February 2, 2005, at 9 p.m., for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE TWO HOUSES

Mr. BEAUPREZ. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 21) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 21

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Wednesday, January 26, 2005, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, February 1, 2005, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the Senate recesses or adjourns on Wednesday, January 26, 2005, or Thursday, January 27, 2005, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until noon on Monday, January 31,