

Over there, behind the black gates of Auschwitz, the most tragic of all prisoners were the "Muselmannen," as they were called. Wrapped in their torn blankets, they would sit or lie on the ground, staring vacantly into space, unaware of who or where they were, strangers to their surroundings. They no longer felt pain, hunger, thirst. They feared nothing. They felt nothing. They were dead and did not know it.

Rooted in our tradition, some of us felt that to be abandoned by humanity then was not the ultimate. We felt that to be abandoned by God was worse than to be punished by Him. Better an unjust God than an indifferent one. For us to be ignored by God was a harsher punishment than to be a victim of His anger; Man can live far from God—not outside God. God is wherever we are. Even in suffering? Even in suffering?

In a way, to be indifferent to that suffering is what makes the human being inhuman. Indifference, after all, is more dangerous than anger and hatred. Anger can at times be creative. One writes a great poem, a great symphony, have done something special for the sake of humanity because one is angry at the injustice that one witnesses. But indifference is never creative. Even hatred at times may elicit a response. You fight it. You denounce it. You disarm it. Indifference elicits no response. Indifference is not a response.

Indifference is not a beginning, it is an end. And, therefore, indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor—never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees—not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity we betray our own.

Indifference, then, is not only a sin, it is a punishment. And this is one of the most important lessons of this outgoing century's wide-ranging experiments in good and evil.

In the place that I come from, society was composed of three simple categories: The killers, the victims, and the bystanders. During the darkest of times inside the ghettos and death camps—and I'm glad that Mrs. Clinton mentioned that we are now commemorating that event, that period, that we are now in the Days of Remembrance—but then, we felt abandoned, forgotten. All of us did.

And our only miserable consolation was that we believed that Auschwitz and Treblinka were closely guarded secrets; that the leaders of the free world did not know what was going on behind those black gates and barbed wire; that they had no knowledge of the war against the Jews that Hitler's armies and their accomplices waged as part of the war against the Allies.

If they knew, we thought, surely those leaders would have moved heaven and earth to intervene. They would have spoken out with great outrage and conviction. They would have bombed the railways leading to Birkenau, just the railways, just once.

And now we knew, we learned, we discovered that the Pentagon knew, the State Department knew. And the illustrious occupant of the White House then, who was a great leader—and I say it with some anguish and pain, because, today is exactly 54 years marking his death—Franklin Delano Roosevelt died on April the 12th, 1945, so he is very much present to me and to us.

No doubt, he was a great leader. He mobilized the American people and the world, going into battle, bringing hundreds and

thousands of valiant and brave soldiers in America to fight fascism, to fight dictatorship, to fight Hitler. And so many of the young people fell in battle. And, nevertheless, his image in Jewish history—I must say it—his image in Jewish history is flawed.

The depressing tale of the *St. Louis* is a case in point. Sixty years ago, its human cargo—maybe 1,000 Jews—was turned back to Nazi Germany. And that happened after the Kristallnacht, after the first state sponsored pogrom, with hundreds of Jewish shops destroyed, synagogues burned, thousands of people put in concentration camps. And that ship, which was already on the shores of the United States, was sent back.

I don't understand. Roosevelt was a good man, with a heart. He understood those who needed help. Why didn't he allow these refugees to disembark? A thousand people—in America, a great country, the greatest democracy, the most generous of all new nations in modern history. What happened? I don't understand. Why the indifference, on the highest level, to the suffering of the victims?

But then, there were human beings who were sensitive to our tragedy. Those non-Jews, those Christians, that we called the "Righteous Gentiles," whose selfless acts of heroism saved the honor of their faith. Why were they so few? Why was there a greater effort to save SS murderers after the war than to save their victims during the war?

Why did some of America's largest corporations continue to do business with Hitler's Germany until 1942? It has been suggested, and it was documented, that the Wehrmacht could not have conducted its invasion of France without oil obtained from American sources. How is one to explain their indifference?

And yet, my friends, good things have also happened in this traumatic century: the defeat of Nazism, the collapse of communism, the rebirth of Israel on its ancestral soil, the demise of apartheid, Israel's peace treaty with Egypt, the peace accord in Ireland. And let us remember the meeting, filled with drama and emotion, between Rabin and Arafat that you, Mr. President, convened in this very place. I was here and I will never forget it.

And then, of course, the joint decision of the United States and NATO to intervene in Kosovo and save those victims, those refugees, those who were uprooted by a man whom I believe that because of his crimes, should be charged with crimes against humanity. But this time, the world was not silent. This time, we do respond. This time, we intervene.

Does it mean that we have learned from the past? Does it mean that society has changed? Has the human being become less indifferent and more human? Have we really learned from our experiences? Are we less insensitive to the plight of victims of ethnic cleansing and other forms of injustices in places near and far? Is today's justified intervention in Kosovo, led by you, Mr. President, a lasting warning that never again will the deportation, the terrorization of children and their parents be allowed anywhere in the world? Will it discourage other dictators in other lands to do the same?

What about the children? Oh, we see them on television, we read about them in the papers, and we do so with a broken heart. Their fate is always the most tragic, inevitably. When adults wage war, children perish. We see their faces, their eyes. Do we hear their pleas? Do we feel their pain, their agony? Every minute one of them dies of disease, vi-

olence, famine. Some of them—so many of them—could be saved.

And so, once again, I think of the young Jewish boy from the Carpathian Mountains. He has accompanied the old man I have become throughout these years of quest and struggle. And together we walk towards the new millennium, carried by profound fear and extraordinary hope.

BUILDING TRANSPORTATION ASSETS FOR AMERICA

HON. TILLIE K. FOWLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, improvements to our nation's state and local infrastructure are necessary and long overdue. Economic growth and vitality hinge on a region's ability to accommodate commercial and commuter traffic both safely and efficiently. I am proud to say that last year's TEA-21 legislation, which I cosponsored, has begun to address these critical transportation needs, through honest, off-budget funding. I rise today to submit for the record an editorial that appeared last month in the Tampa Tribune. This editorial illustrates how local concerns are being met under the new funding formulas.

[From the Tampa Tribune, Mar. 3, 1999]

BUD SHUSTER'S WORDS OF WISDOM

U.S. Rep. Bud Shuster, chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, made a field trip to Tampa the other day to see our port, airport and highways.

There is general agreement here on the importance of air and sea transport, but the community is divided on ground transportation—whether to continue to depend entirely on roads or to augment them with a commuter rail line that would largely follow existing freight rail rights of way.

Shuster's advice: If you can, build rail.

"When you have right of way, you're halfway there," he told us. "Light rail seems to be pretty darn efficient."

This from a solidly conservative congressman representing a Pennsylvania mountain district that has been Republican since 1860.

Shuster helped deregulate trucking and has consistently pushed to give local governments more say in how federal transportation money is spent. Now up to half the federal gasoline tax revenue in any one category can be diverted to another, which means some highway money can be spent on transit and vice versa. This flexibility gives state and local governments more power, which puts them under more pressure to make intelligent choices.

The new transportation law is sending Florida about \$440 million more per year, a sum that partially corrects the old funding formula that for years shortchanged fast-growing states.

Shuster argues convincingly that all federal gasoline taxes should be spent on transportation and that all airline ticket taxes should be spent on aviation improvements. If the money isn't needed, reduce the tax rate. But the money is desperately needed, so Congress should invest it to improve the national economy and public safety.

He dismisses as ill-informed the often repeated criticism that Congress loaded the

latest highway bill with pork. High-priority congressional projects account for 5 percent of the spending, and all those projects required the written support of the state departments of transportation. Even if all these special projects are unnecessarily fat, which they aren't, the remaining 95 percent of the money is going back to state and local governments.

Shuster, a veteran of the endless tug of war over limited revenues, conceded. "These decisions are not made by angels up in heaven."

They are made largely by men and women here at the local level, and the better informed they are, the more wisely they will invest tax-payers' money. It should interest them that the neutral advice from conservative Bud Shuster, who is neither campaigning here nor speculating in local real estate, is to seriously consider rail.

ST. ALOYSIUS CENTENNIAL

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Saint Aloysius Church, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, on the occasion of its Centennial Celebration. I am pleased and proud to bring the history of this fine parish to the attention of my colleagues.

Thirty-four families came to Father Richard McAndrew in 1899 with the request for their own church in South Wilkes-Barre. Father McAndrew petitioned Bishop Hoban for a new parish and on April 29, 1900, the Bishop came to lay the cornerstone for the new church building. As founding pastor, Father McAndrew helped in the first months until the parish's first official pastor was named, Father Thomas Brehony. Father Griffin, who was named as Father Brehony's assistant, later became the church's second pastor.

In 1913, Father McCarthy was installed as the church's third pastor and would serve the parish for thirty-two years. By the end of World War I, the church had outgrown its original building, so a beautiful new gothic church was constructed and dedicated by the Archbishop of Philadelphia in 1927. Father McCarthy continued the expansion with a new rectory in 1938.

When Father McCarthy died and Father Monahan took over St. Aloysius, he undertook the huge task of founding a school for the parishioners of St. Aloysius. Beginning with just a kindergarten, each year the school expanded a grade until there were eight grades. With the new school staffed by the Sisters of Mercy, the expansion of the school necessitated the expansion of the convent, so a new convent was dedicated in 1963.

Tragically, Tropical Storm Agnes swelled the Susquehanna River in June of 1972 until it spilled its banks and flooded all of Wyoming Valley, including St. Aloysius Church and its parish buildings. The interior of the church was totally ruined and the parish was devastated. The Pastor at that time, Father Padden, undertook the task of restoring the buildings after the disaster. Over a million dollars were spent on restoration, using loans

from the disaster relief programs in place at the time. The last payment on that money was made in 1992.

In 1982, with Father Padden's retirement, Msgr. Donald A. McAndrews, the Director of Catholic Social Services, was appointed as sixth Pastor of St. Aloysius. Throughout his tenure, Msgr. McAndrews has continued the expansion and modernization of the parish. The parish's school, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1998, now has an all-day faculty and provides a quality education to 265 students.

Mr. Speaker, St. Aloysius Church is part of a tradition of strong religious faith which is synonymous with the Wyoming Valley. Founded by thirty-four families, the church serves eighteen hundred families today. Its proud history is a testament to the importance of faith in our daily lives in Northeastern Pennsylvania. I am proud to join with the parishioners and with the community in wishing St. Aloysius Church the very best as it enters a new century and a new millennium.

HONORING PASTOR RODNEY H. TRAVIS

HON. JAMES M. TALENT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with the honor and pleasure of recognizing Pastor Rodney H. Travis of the First Baptist Church in Ellisville, Missouri. Pastor Travis will open today's session of the United States House of Representatives with the invocation. Pastor Travis is a generous and eloquent man, and he offers a moving invocation.

Pastor Travis is an outstanding member of the St. Louis community. Pastor Travis and his wife Karen Sue and their children Shawn Renae and Tiffany Hope have been in Missouri since 1982, serving at the First Baptist Church in Jackson, Missouri before coming to Ellisville in 1995. Over the last four years, he has diligently served his congregation and the community.

Pastor Travis has served God in many ways since receiving his Master of Divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1979 and later his Doctor of Ministry from Vanderbilt University in 1979. He has served as Trustee of Missouri Baptist College and has held numerous positions with the Missouri Baptist Convention, including serving as President from 1991-1992. He has volunteered as chaplain in Tennessee prison system and as a Police Department Chaplain. His words have served as inspiration to thousands through the Sunday School lessons he wrote for the Baptist publication World and Way and for the Baptist Sunday School Board "Listening in Prayer." He also has been named to the International Mission Board Trustee and will serve in this capacity until 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be able to introduce Pastor Travis to the United States House of Representatives, and I am moved that he has accepted this honor and will share with us his blessing.

IN SUPPORT OF THE MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTION

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, today is April 15th, tax day. It's a good day to take a thoughtful look at our tax policy.

Yes, we must reduce our tax burden, bring more fairness to our tax law, and simplify the tax code. But today we must also be very wary of gimmicks, schemes, and risky proposals.

I am particularly concerned about proposals like the flat tax that would eliminate the mortgage interest deduction.

This tax policy has greatly improved the quality of life for millions of middle class families across our nation. It has enabled countless families in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties to raise their children in stable, secure neighborhoods. Home ownership is on the increase across America, and with this increase comes better schools, less crime, and more civic participation.

Owning a home contributes enormously to the financial security of our families. Nothing symbolizes the American dream more than owning a home. For this reason, I am the proud cosponsor of a Congressional resolution expressing strong support for the protection of the home mortgage interest tax deduction. On tax day, let's commit ourselves to making the ideal of home ownership a reality for all Americans.

EXPOSING RACISM

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in my continuing efforts to document and expose racism in America, I submit the following articles into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES ARRESTS IN INDIANA CHURCH BURNINGS

(By Rex W. Huppke)

INDIANAPOLIS (AP).—A man charged with seven Indiana church fires may be responsible for up to 50 such arsons across the Midwest and South, including Mississippi.

Probable cause affidavits accompanying the formal charges brought against Jay Scott Ballinger paint a picture of a 36-year-old who burned churches at random while traveling with his girlfriend, an exotic dancer.

The U.S. Department of Justice announced Tuesday that Ballinger had been arrested and charged with setting seven Indiana church fires dating back to 1994. The Yorktown man was being held in federal custody in Indianapolis while a multi-agency investigation continues.

Charged with one count each of arson are Angela Wood, 24, of Atlanta, Ga., and Donald A. Puckett, 37, of Lebanon, Ind. Wood is in federal custody in Macon, Ga., and Puckett is being held in Indianapolis.