

genocide, torture, and other gross violations of human rights and international law. Had the United States government not ignored the plight of the *St. Louis* refugees sixty years ago, had it substituted compassion and empathy for bureaucracy and rigidity, the children of that ship might still be alive today.

While we cannot rectify the wrongs of generations ago, we can apply the lesson of the *St. Louis* to the crises of today. In the Europe of 1999, innocent civilians are once again being deported, abused, raped and murdered. While the scale of Serbian atrocities in Kosovo does not approach the enormity of the Holocaust, the precedent that would be set by ignoring this ethnic cleansing cannot be tolerated. As Benjamin Meed, one of America's most prominent Holocaust survivors, noted at the Days of Remembrance ceremony: "All of us must remain vigilant—always aware, always on guard against those who are determined to destroy innocent life for no other reason than birthright."

Benjamin Meed was born in Warsaw, Poland. He worked as a slave laborer for the Nazis, survived in the Warsaw Ghetto, and was an active member of the Warsaw Underground with his wife, Vladka. A member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council since its inception, he chairs the Museum's Days of Remembrance Committee. He is President of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and a leader of a number of other organizations. Mr. Meed founded the Benjamin and Vladka Meed Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors permanently housed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the full text of Mr. Meed's Days of Remembrance address to be placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

REFUGEE DENIED: THE VOYAGE OF THE SS *St. Louis*

Members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, members of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, distinguished guests, fellow survivors and dear friends,

Welcome to the 20th national Days of Remembrance commemoration.

For at least a decade, the magnificent flags that surround us now have been part of our annual observance here in the nation's Capitol. Every time the American flag and the flags of the United States Army that liberated the concentration camps are brought into this hall for this commemoration, a special pride as an American citizen sweeps over me, as I am sure it must for all Holocaust survivors. These pieces of red, white and blue cloth were the symbols of freedom and hope for those of us caught in the machinery of death. Discovery of the Nazi German concentration camps by the Allied armies began the process that restored our lives. Although we have many dates this month to remember, we recall with special gratitude the date of April 11, 1945, when American troops, in their march to end the war in Europe came across the Buchenwald concentration camp. We will always remain grateful to the soldiers for their bravery, kindness and generosity. We will always remember those young soldiers who sacrificed their lives to bring us to liberty.

Many revelations over the last half-century have unveiled the Holocaust as a story of massive destruction and loss. It has been

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shown to be a story of an apathetic world—a world full of callous dispassion and moral insensitivity with a few individual exceptions. But more, it has been shown to be a tale of victory—victory of the human spirit, of extraordinary courage and of remarkable endurance. It is the story of a life that flourished before the Shoah, that struggled throughout its darkest hours, and that ultimately prevailed.

After the Holocaust, as we rebuilt our lives, we also built a nation—the State of Israel. This was our answer to death and destruction—new life, both family and national life—and Remembrance. Minister Ben David, please convey to the people of Israel our solidarity with them as they, too. Remember on this Yom Hashoah.

Today, our thoughts turn back sixty years. On May 13, 1939, the SS *St. Louis* sailed from Hamburg bound for Cuba with more than nine hundred passengers, most of them Jews fleeing Nazism. For these passengers it was a desperate bid for freedom that was doomed before it began. Politics, profit and public opinion were permitted to overshadow morality, compassion and common sense. It is so painful now to realize that not only Cuba but our own beloved country closed their doors and hearts to these People of the Book who could see the lights of Miami from the decks of the ship but were not permitted to disembark. This group of over nine hundred could have been saved, but instead the voyage became a round-trip passage to hell for many of them. Less than three months after the *St. Louis* docked at Antwerp, the world was at war. And, in less than three years, the "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem" in Europe was fully operational.

Could this happen today? Hopefully, not. But we—all of us—must be vigilant—ever mindful that once such a course of destruction of a people has been chartered, it can be followed again, and again, and again.

And what lessons did we derive from these horrible experiences? The most important lesson is obvious—it can happen again. The impossible is possible again. Ethnic cleansing, a genocide, is happening as I speak. It can happen to any one or to any group of people.

Should there be another Holocaust, it may be on a cosmic scale. How can we prevent it? All of us must remain vigilant—always aware, always on guard against those who are determined to destroy innocent human life for no other reason than birthright.

There are some passengers of the unfortunate voyage of the SS *St. Louis* who are with us here today. Like most of us Holocaust survivors, they are in the winter of their lives. Even so, all of us look toward the future, because we believe that, in sharing our experiences—by bearing witness—there is hope of protecting other generations who might be abandoned and forgotten, robbed and murdered. The telling and retelling of the stories of the Holocaust with their profound lessons for humanity must become a mission for all humankind. In this way, future generations—particularly future generations of Americans—can Remember and use the power of this knowledge to protect people everywhere.

In these great halls of Congress, we see symbols of the ideals that this country represents. It was the collective rejection of these ideals by many nations that made the Holocaust possible. Today, let us promise to keep an ever-watchful eye for those who would deny and defy the principles of liberty, equality and justice and for those who would defy the rules of honorable and peaceful con-

duct between peoples and nations. Together, let us Remember. Thank you.

May 11, 1999

### TRIBUTE TO MS. KATHERINE PHILP

#### HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Katherine Philp from Woodland Hills School District. Katherine is the top winner of the 1999 18th Congressional District High School Art Competition, An Artistic Discovery.

Katherine's colored pencil still life entitled "Tissue and Fruit" was chosen from an outstanding collection of entries. Katherine is a young woman of considerable talent and is sure to have many successes in her future.

I look forward to seeing Katherine's artwork displayed along with the artwork of the other competition winners from across the country. I am pleased to be associated with Katherine's artistic talents.

Congratulations Katherine. I wish you all the best of luck in the future.

### COMMENDING THE REVEREND JESSE L. JACKSON, SR., ON SECURING THE RELEASE OF U.S. SERVICEMEN FROM CAPTIVITY IN BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

SPEECH OF

#### HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American leader, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr. He is one of our true leaders in civil rights and the protection of freedom for those around the world. Having already proven his leadership during the Civil Rights movement, Reverend Jackson has been instrumental in gaining the release of prisoners in several instances. Most recently, he secured the release of three U.S. servicemen, including S. Sgt. Steven Gonzales from my home state of Texas, captured in Macedonia and held captive in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. On April 29, 1999, Reverend Jackson led a delegation of religious and civic leaders to Yugoslavia to achieve this successful mission.

This is only one of many delegations Reverend Jackson has led to free prisoners from Iraq, Syria and Cuba over the past two decades. These missions have enhanced his reputation as a leader in humanitarian and civil rights efforts around the globe. Reverend Jackson's diplomacy and skill in negotiation serve as a model to all. I stand today to pay tribute to his accomplishments.