

aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

I am pleased that we are making progress on this legislation, and I appreciate all of the work that has gone into the bill by all of the parties involved. I particularly want to thank Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic Leadership for helping to coordinate and focus our efforts. I am aware that more work remains to further refine the bill, but we are well on our way to finalizing an excellent piece of legislation that will help thousands of victims of the September 11 attacks. I am hopeful that Congress will be able to act swiftly to move this bill by the seventh anniversary of the attacks, and that the bill will be signed into law before the end of this Congress.

HONORING BENJAMIN DYE

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and express my pride in Mr. Benjamin Dye for winning first place in the 2008 Holocaust Remembrance Project essay contest with his essay, "Choices." I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Dye success in his future endeavors.

Mr. Dye resides in Modesto, California and is a recent graduate from The Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut. As a high school student, Mr. Dye was an involved and passionate young man who excelled in many activities, but above all, committed himself to academic excellence.

In the award-winning essay, "Choices," which is printed below, Mr. Dye discusses the Holocaust and its effect on three individuals, author and Holocaust victim Elie Wiesel, newspaper editor-cum-rescue organizer Varian Fry, and a young Jewish man who would become the (former) United States Ambassador to Denmark, John Loeb.

This fall, Mr. Dye will begin a new chapter of his academic career as an honors student at University of California at Irvine. He will study political science and economics, in preparation for his goal of one day continuing his education in law school.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Benjamin Dye for winning the Holocaust Remembrance Project essay contest. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Dye continued success.

CHOICES

(By Benjamin Dye)

One Saturday night in fall 1944, a crowd of boys packed into the auditorium of their boarding school for the weekly movie, preceded as usual by a newsreel. But this week's footage was not just another montage of Allied victories; tonight, it contained some of the first publicly-released photos of the Holocaust, taken by Soviet soldiers liberating the Majdanek concentration camp. Tonight, the boys saw heaps of skulls, rows of genocidal crematoria, and processions of emaciated survivors. How did they react? John L. Loeb, Jr., one of the few Jewish students present, remembers with painful clarity: "[i]t's hard to believe, but when they first showed those terrible pictures, the entire school cheered." (Kolowrat, 265)

As these teenagers cheered, another teenager thousands of miles away lived in con-

stant terror on the brink of starvation. In fall 1944, sixteen-year-old Elie Wiesel struggled to maintain his humanity in the Auschwitz III-Monowitz labor camp as he subsisted on meager rations, endured arbitrary beatings, and watched his father's health deteriorate. (Wiesel, 66-78) After the Red Army took Warsaw in January 1945 and its resumed race to Berlin, the S.S. force marched Wiesel, his father, and 66,000 other prisoners to Gliwice (Gleiwitz), Poland, where they were herded into cattle cars and taken to the Buchenwald camp. (Wiesel 82) Shortly thereafter, Wiesel's father—whom Elie believed was his last living relative—died. When liberation finally came a few months later, Wiesel found himself utterly alone, his family, his possessions, and his faith incinerated by Nazi hatred. He had one thing left: a choice. How would he respond to his horrific experience? Would he despair and bury his ordeal as society tried to forget its nightmarish past? Or would he hope, remember, and speak out?

Wiesel chose the latter. As he recalls in the preface to the new translation of *Night*, in postwar Europe, "[t]he subject [of the Holocaust] was considered morbid and interested no one"; even in the Jewish community, ". . . there were always people ready to complain that it was senseless to 'burden our children with the tragedies of the Jewish past.'" (Wiesel xiv.) Nonetheless, he chose to bear witness, concluding that ". . . having lived through this experience, one could not keep silent no matter how difficult, if not impossible, it was to speak" (Wiesel x.) And he spoke of his ordeal without succumbing to despair; as he noted 41 years later in his Nobel lecture, "Because I remember, I despair. Because I remember, I have the duty to reject despair." (Wiesel (2)) The consequences of his choice have been far-reaching; by calling attention to the Holocaust Wiesel has likely done more than any other individual to promise the children of tomorrow that "his past [will not] become their future." (Wiesel xv.)

Five years before Wiesel's liberation, Varian Fry arrived in France, 14 years after leaving the aforementioned school. He had been sent to Marseille by the Emergency Rescue Committee (ERC), a private American organization established in 1940 to secretly evacuate 200 intellectuals sought by the Nazis. Immediately upon arrival, Fry realized that there were many more than 200 people in imminent danger. Like Wiesel, Fry had a choice to make.

As Elie Wiesel rejected despair, Varian Fry rejected indifference. His original mission called for three weeks in Marseille, but he chose to stay as long as possible saving as many as possible. With only \$3000 from the ERC and no clandestine operations training, Fry set up a latter-day underground railroad, helping Jews and dissidents intellectuals escape into Spain, on to Portugal, and by boat to the U.S. By the time the Gestapo expelled Fry in September, 1941, his choice had saved nearly 4000 lives.

Wiesel's and Fry's stories show that we must remember the Holocaust above all for its lessons about human nature. While we may know that the Nazis killed 6 million Jews, accounts like Wiesel's *Night* personalize and sharpen this statistic. And though putting individual faces on the victims helps us emphasize with victims of current crimes against humanity, it is perhaps even more important to humanize the perpetrators. It is easy to think of the Holocaust as a uniquely terrible deed committed by "them"—ruthless incarnations of evil, with sinister black uniforms and totenköpfe on their caps—but if we are to avert the Holocausts of the future, we must remember that the men responsible for the slaughter were once as human as their victims. If men born

into one of the world's most "civilized" societies could become genocidal automatons, so could we.

However, the Holocaust also reminds us of humanity's tremendous capacity for good. Varian Fry was a normal newspaper editor before the war, but confronted with evil, he became a hero, rising above the anti-Semitic conditioning of his high school years and risking his life to act "beyond himself." (Isenberg, ix.) And Elie Wiesel's commitment to raising awareness of humanitarian issues—a commitment forged as a direct result of the Holocaust—is equally heroic, although it is impossible to calculate how many lives he has saved. While the Holocaust is generally seen as a grim reflection on humanity, we must remember it also as a reminder that ordinary individuals can choose to rise above any evil.

Examining Wiesel's and Fry's experiences and choices, we see that we too have a profound choice to make. We can choose the path of least resistance, or we can follow Elie Wiesel in rejecting despair and Varian Fry in rejecting indifference, and in doing so empower ourselves to combat prejudice, discrimination, and violence today's world. In order to make a difference, however, not everyone needs to be a Wiesel or Fry. In the long term, the subtle choices we make to fight indifference and despair within our immediate communities are crucial in ensuring that "never again" is not an empty promise. We must, of course, stand up against modern day atrocities like the genocide in Darfur, but for deeper change, we must work in our everyday lives, doing what is right before crisis strikes.

A final example demonstrates the power of this focus. John Loeb, after witnessing the callous anti-Semitism that night in 1944 at his and Varian Fry's alma mater, ultimately became the United States Ambassador to Denmark and a delegate to the United Nations. Despite his high profile work for peace, Loeb never forgot the seeds of hatred and indifference sowed that Saturday in the auditorium. So in 1993, he subtly helped uproot them by establishing the John L. Loeb Jr. prize, awarded annually at his former school for the best essay on tolerance and mutual respect. We will never know how much bigotry Loeb's action prevented, but quiet aggregation of such contributions brings about immense change to places like the Nazi-applauding prep school—change evident to me as a current student at this institution. I recently participated in a school sponsored trip to Poland, touring the camp where Wiesel thought his life would end and seeing ruins of the crematoria that had turned his mother and sisters to ash. A few weeks later, I saw Wiesel in person as he addressed the student body that 60 years earlier would have cheered his death, but which now empathized deeply with his suffering.

HONORING SERGEANT SAMSON
AUGUSTO MORA, U.S. ARMY

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the bravery and service of Army National Guardsman Sergeant Samson Augusto Mora. SGT Mora, from the village of Dededo, was assigned to the 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 294th Infantry, deployed to Babo Kehyl, Afghanistan. He was killed in action when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device on July 10, 2008. He