

We often hear the phrase “never again” applied to the Holocaust. Those important words express the laudable goal that humanity will not repeat the horrors of the Shoah. However, aspirations alone will not engender a just world. We also need to be very clear about and committed to what we as individuals can do to ensure that any Holocaust is not reprised.

In her testimony, “March to the Ghetto,” survivor Barbara Fischman Traub recounts how her neighbors hid behind their curtains as gendarmes marched her family through the streets to a ghetto. No one uttered a word. There were no protestations, no objections, no questions asked. These were not enemies of Mrs. Fischman Traub’s family. The neighbors who watched as she and her family were herded like cattle were friends of the family and customers of their business. Yet they did nothing.

Today, we live amidst Holocaust deniers and those who minimize the atrocity of the genocide of millions of Jews. These are not just trolls in dark-web forums. These are people we know, sometimes our own neighbors or colleagues.

We cannot respond to this enmity and historical revisionism with antipathy. Nor is it enough to silently decry anti-Semitism. We cannot stand by idly while others spew hate and attempt to rewrite history. If we merely denounce heinous acts of anti-Semitism under our breath, we are complicit. By choosing to overlook the prejudice underlying a Jewish “joke” or stereotype, we become part of the problem. As Mrs. Fischman-Traub’s story demonstrates, omissions and indifference have consequences. Therefore, we must be proactive and vocally and unqualifiedly condemn anti-Semitism in all its forms. Only by acting affirmatively and not shirking our moral responsibility can we fulfill the pledge of “never again.”