

Chicago Tribune

Letters

Voice of the People

Heed the warning signs of rising anti-semitism

August 28, 2014, 10:14 AM

The recent and severe spike in anti-semitism is a warning to people everywhere. Where prejudice and hatred reign unchecked, violence soon follows. Sadly, we have seen that recently here in the United States, in Europe, and throughout the world. Synagogues and cars have been vandalized with swastikas in southern Florida; eight synagogues were also attacked in one week in France; in Italy, graffiti on walls and shop windows declared “Jews – your end is near;” and in Germany, chants of “Gas the Jews” are heard on the streets. Such brazen and pervasive acts of hatred should gravely concern all of us.

In the almost 70 years since the liberation of Auschwitz, what has humanity learned? After all, the Nazis did not start by killing. They started with words.

Holocaust museums across the U.S. and around the world show the dire consequences of what happens when hatred and prejudice are met with silence and indifference. They help people remember the past in order to transform the future. They inspire people to become “upstanders” instead of bystanders – to celebrate our shared humanity through values of individual responsibility, empathy, respect, diversity, community and a willingness to speak up for what is just.

If we are to be unwavering against the hatred and anti-semitism that still plagues our world, then we must resolve collectively, as a constituency of conscience, to demand action against acts of anti-semitism or hatred. We must join together to raise our voices, stand up against discriminatory prejudices, advocate and tell our politicians that the need to confront such hatred is in the interest of all who value humanity.

All of us have a responsibility to be the light that drives back darkness, illuminating a better world for tomorrow.

-- *Susan Abrams and Kelley Szany, Skokie*

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