

ARTHUR AND ROCHELLE BELFER

**Exemplary
LESSONS**
i n i t i a t i v e

**BRINGING THE
HOLOCAUST UNIT
TO CLOSURE:
IMPLICATIONS FOR
THE FUTURE**

HANDOUT 2

EXCERPTED REMARKS BY AFRICAN AMERICAN LIBERATOR LEON BASS

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But in the final analysis, my friends, if we want to avoid another Holocaust, if we want to make sure that this doesn't happen again, we have a personal responsibility to do something about it. I know it's nice to say that you're going to give a large sum of money to the NAACP or you're going to give a large sum of money to B'nai Brith. But that's the easy way out.

... the tough part of the program is when you walk out of here and you go back to where you live and where you work. When you're on the job and your boss tells an anti-Semitic joke, do you laugh...? When you're sitting around the bridge table and somebody talks about the dirty niggers or the spics moving in down the street, do you sit there quietly and never say anything? If so, you are contributing to another Holocaust.

It was James Baldwin who said, "God gave man the rainbow sign/No more water, the fire next time." You are throwing fuel on that fire when you keep your mouth shut.... Trying to love the unlovable is the challenge, my friends. When we ignore the disinherited, the dispossessed, and the poor among us, we are contributing to another Holocaust...

If we're going to survive, if we're going to make this world a better place, when we leave here we'll take the message back with us. We'll move out into the forefront where the battle happens to be waging and that's with the disinherited and the dispossessed. I would like to remember again the words of James Baldwin who said,

Either we love one another
Or the seas will engulf us
And the light will go out.

From *The Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camps 1945: Eyewitness Accounts of the Liberators* (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 1987).