Would you engage in long-term illegal activity to save a persecuted and despised group of strangers – knowing some in power wanted you *assassinated*? Carl Lutz, a seemingly ordinary Swiss man, did. He displayed the ultimate moral courage by acting on his deeply held personal values and upholding his integrity by using his position as a Swiss diplomat to save approximately 62,000 Hungarian Jews during World War II ("Carl Lutz").

As a Jew, I have visceral gratitude toward Carl Lutz, and all the Righteous Among the Nations, for saving some of our people; without these heroes, many of today's Jews would not exist. As a human being, I am simply in awe of the thousands of non-Jews who risked their lives to save even one Jew. But, as a Jew today, living without the imminent threat of extermination, I grapple with whether anything I can do will ever rise to the level of moral courage Carl Lutz exhibited.

Carl Lutz was a Swiss Diplomat during the Nazi invasion of Hungary. With a Methodist Christian background, he was known to have a strong moral compass and compassion towards others. While those around him were corrupted by the stereotypes about Jews propagated by the Nazi party, Lutz used his influence to help the persecuted group in every way he could. First, he worked with the Jewish Agency for Israel and issued documents allowing 10,000 Hungarian Jewish children to emigrate to Palestine (Barnett). Next, after Germany invaded Budapest, Jews were to be sent to concentration camps, where they would be tortured and killed. Lutz masterminded a plan to save them. He had struck a deal with Hungary and England for 7,800 emigration certificates to Palestine for Jews fleeing Budapest. He instead allowed 7,800 *families* to emigrate ("Carl Lutz"). In addition, Lutz oversaw separate "Swiss diplomatic offices" in Budapest, where he housed and fed thousands of Jews during the occupation. The Swiss were aware of his dishonest, yet humanitarian actions, and allowed the program to continue until the end of the war (Rozett). Without Swiss intervention, led by Carl Lutz, tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews would have been sent to concentration camps and the majority would have perished.

Lutz demonstrated moral courage to the largest degree. Not only did he take extraordinary actions to protect the Jews, but he placed his career and his life in jeopardy to aid the humanitarian crisis. Lutz was faced with the spite of high-ranking Nazi officials, such as Adolf Eichmann, who attempted assassinations after uncovering his fraudulence. "He was in very grave danger of assassination for at least 18 months and for seven weeks he and 30 of his helpers held out desperately in the basement of his home" (Lees). Despite threats to his safety, even after the Jews were placed in Ghettos, Lutz still found ways to "care for the Jews' day-to-day needs" (Rozett). Exceptionally, Lutz lacked any exterior motivations for his vast efforts in saving the Budapest Jews. "Unlike Schindler, he wasn't payed" (Lees). Lutz was not recognized for his achievements until many years after WWII had ended, when he was recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations" at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem ("Carl Lutz"). Importantly, he was also a role model for other countries, who used his strategies of fabricating visas to help other Jews fleeing the Holocaust (Barnett). By jeopardizing his life to save thousands of Jews in need and inspiring others to follow his lead, Carl Lutz became arguably one of the most morally courageous leaders in history, despite the lack of acknowledgment he received during his life.

Over the past years, with the rise of hate-related crimes in America, I began experiencing more anti-Semitism. The little comments from classmates related to Jewish stereotypes escalated. With this, and the images of Charlottesville in my mind, I felt less safe, and removed a Hamsa necklace I always wore so as not to draw attention to my Judaism, despite my knowledge that I should never feel ashamed of my culture. I quickly realized that not only did I owe it to moral heroes like Carl Lutz to stand up for what was right, I owed it to myself and my personal beliefs to take affirmative action on behalf of the Jewish community.

This year, I founded the first Jewish Student Alliance at my school. Our group gave a presentation educating the school about hate-symbols in America now, as well as about the history of hate against various marginalized people in society. We provided faculty with prompts to use during their mandatory meeting times with the students, which created a conversation at the school about these pressing issues. A joint trip with the Student Diversity Leadership Club to the New Mexico Holocaust and Intolerance Museum is in the works so that we may further educate ourselves and bring that knowledge back to our community. I believe that with enough educational programs that instill into the minds of youth the notion that any form of hate and persecution is unacceptable, we can end the vicious cycle of hate globally.

Carl Lutz has inspired me to chase after what I believe is morally right, despite consequences that may come. As a student senator who cares deeply about her position on the student government and is planning on running for class president, vocally expressing my political views could cost me potential votes. Yet, I continue to advocate for minority groups, because I learned from Carl Lutz that if I want to stand up for the rights of others as my sense of morality dictates, I will need to make personal sacrifices in return. Although I will never be able to save the lives of thousands, and I don't have my life on the line, as Carl Lutz, I hope that by speaking out against hate and educating others, I will make an impact on society, uphold my integrity and the integrity of Jews around me, and stop history from repeating itself.

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