

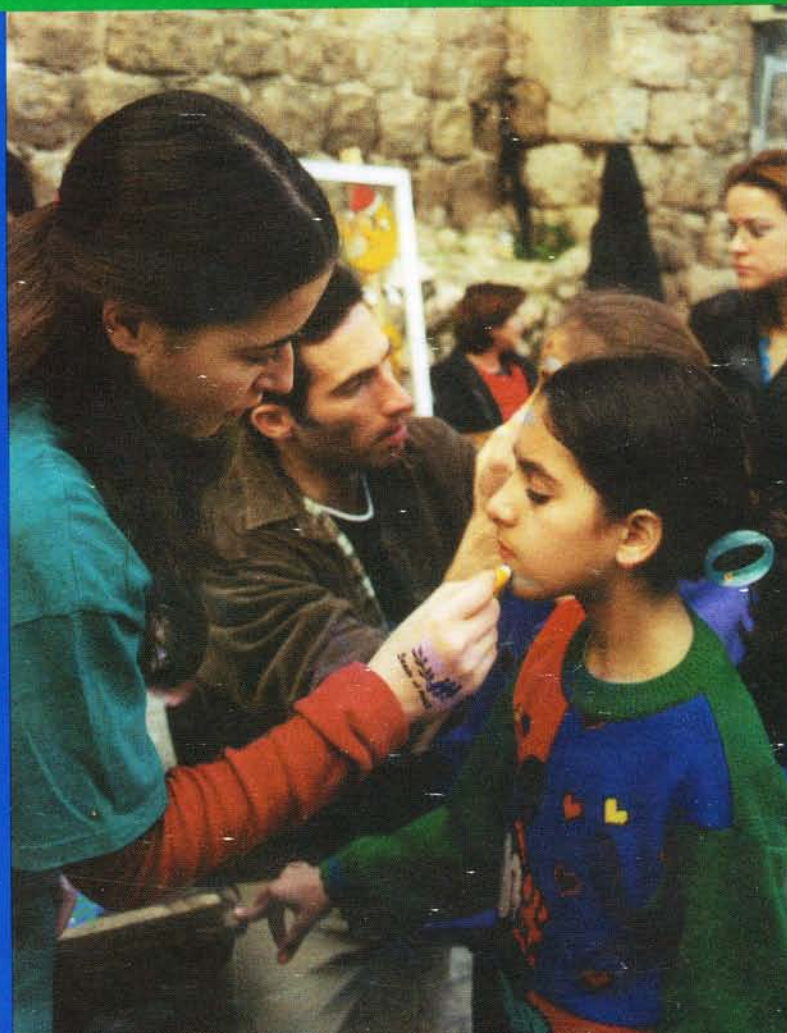
THE OLIVE BRANCH

Youth Magazine of the Seeds of Peace Program | Volume VI, Issue II | Winter 2002

REMEMBER THE



Future



■ UPROOTING HATRED, VIOLENCE
AND TERROR: SEEDS OF PEACE
SUMMIT IN NEW YORK CITY

■ IN THE SERVICE OF PEACE:
PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI SEEDS
WORKING FOR THE COMMUNITY

■ HAIFA'S HOLIDAY OF HOLIDAYS:
THREE RELIGIONS CELEBRATE IN
THE STREETS

■ TEN YEARS' TRAGEDY ON TRIAL:
BALKAN SEEDS ON MILOSEVIC IN
THE HAGUE TRIBUNAL

■ FROM SOMALIA TO MAINE:
ONE GIRL'S JOURNEY OF HOPE

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THE OLIVE BRANCH

The Olive Branch is a quarterly youth magazine written and edited by youth from Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, FYROM, Greece, India, Israel, Jordan, Kosovo, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Pakistan, Qatar, Romania, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, Yugoslavia and the United States, who are part of the Seeds of Peace program.

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Seeds of Peace is a non-profit, non-political organization that helps teenagers from regions of conflict learn the skills of making peace. Set at our own camp in Maine, a safe environment is created where youngsters can air their views and learn the leadership and conflict resolution techniques

Letters

We Will Never Forget

My father passed away on January 30 in a terrible hit and run car accident. In the name of my family, I thank all of you who sent your support and condolences, to the Israeli Seeds who visit us in our hard times, and the Center staff bringing them from all sides of the country, I don't know how to thank you enough. I'll tell you that I'll never forget you guys for what you did.

Tarek and the Arow family (Jatt)

Opening the Road for Our Journey

Hi everyone, In case you don't know me, I'm Joo-joo from Seeds of Peace 2000 first session. I read your magazine. It was incredibly beautiful. I loved the way you put the stories and the things in the stories truly reminded me what Seeds does to us: it makes all the roads in front of us so smooth and shows us that our friendship is the best thing we could hold on to in our journey to peace all over the world in our one way. By giving the magazine to people and friends I realize what it does to the way they think of everything.

Jamila Liqanieh (Beit Iksa)

Time to Fight for Peace

For nearly two years Palestinians and Israelis have been bombing and destroying each other. In spite of all the losses, human, economic and political, they are continuing. This fighting affects negatively the neighboring countries.

This war is not necessary. Without it the area would have a healthier economy. If both parties give in, there will be a chance to solve all the problems. War makes things worse.

As a Seed Of Peace, who has friends from both sides, I believe the only way to get somewhere is not fighting with mortars or guns, but fighting to get peace. I hope we Seeds will put our will together and fight for peace.

Yazeed Samain (Amman)

Romanian-Style Seeds

I was very glad to receive The Olive Branch. I was impressed by all the messages worldwide about September 11, and antiterrorist attitudes, which I subscribe to totally. I want you to know



John Wallach speaks before the Maine State Legislature

that in my city Brasov, six ethnic populations live together: Germans, Hungarians, Greeks, Jews, Gypsies and Romanians. In spite of some conflicts in the past, now the interethnic relations are good and peaceful.

Every two years the local university organizes an intercultural event, which means that every ethnic group prepares a program with dances, songs, choirs, exhibitions and more. As a Seed of Peace I was deeply involved: singing with the Jewish choir, and playing the panpipes and dancing with the Greeks. A Romanian potpourri was included too. It was a great experience for me because each group assimilated me very quickly and easily, as if I was a native. I'm very happy because now I have new friends and our collaboration and friendship will go on.

In my opinion, ethnic groups in our city are living in peace, tolerance, and even harmony, which is desirable for the whole world. I gave an Olive Branch to my father who is a city councilor involved in twin cities relationships, and one to my brother to show in his school. I think that Seeds of Peace is doing a great job especially now, and I'm proud to be one.

Georgia Gulea (Brasov, Romania)

Hi with a Heart Full of Sadness

Hi all Seeds! We really miss all of you, the camp and the counselors. We are writing to you because we know you are suffering as well as us. We as Palestinians are living in a very hard situation. We feel frightened to go to school or out with my friends, because of the shelling. Life has turned miserable without sleeping, whenever we hear the sound of airplanes breaking the sound barrier, because they have bombed places surrounded by homes, causing damage and death.

We are all humans; we all must live safely and securely like every teenager in the world without the killing or destruction which have become a routine for us. This situation has a bad effect on our feelings and beliefs. We are still thinking about John Wallach's words, to make one friend from the other side.

Maya Al-Alami and Enas Kandil (Gaza)

Living in Orwell's 1984

I don't really know why I'm writing. If you don't know why you're reading, read this.

Wherever I go it's the same. In this country, if you don't hear the news for 3 hours, you are no longer up to date. However, today's news is the same as yesterday's news. Nothing is better, everything's just getting worse.

In the midst of all that, life in Seeds is as usual. Discussions go on about past, present and future. Some heated, some cool. Nothing new. Same topics, same arguments, same responses.

We're repeating ourselves. We're caught in a cycle we can't get out of. Action and reaction, each side thinks it knows what came first. The world is divided into good and evil—and that doesn't solve the problem; it makes it worse.

Maybe it's all in my head, but I sense as days and tears go by we go deeper into despair. Of course, one does what one must do. It's unfortunate people are dying, but as always, some people's lives are more valuable.

Sometimes I open a newspaper and feel like I've just opened 1984, by George Orwell. Read it—it's very contemporary. My newspapers are lying, my prime minister is gaining more power than should be in a democracy, everyone is unemployed, life sucks, yet no one thinks of changing the government, which meanwhile is destroying houses of innocent people, and thinks it can lie and say it didn't happen.

We are brainwashed, both sides, and it gets worse. If you look at your classmates, maybe your parents, maybe yourselves, you'll see the results. Everything is blurred, no end in sight, and we lower our heads, crawl behind our defenses and try to be as little as possible—as if there's no war outside, or it's legitimate. Why? Because that's the way to keep sane.

In the meanwhile, we are losing our goal, purpose and conscience. It's no wonder we don't see the end of the road, when, in the darkness, we chose another one, which is going in circles to the same point again. The only comfort is, that if the road is going in circles, we have a chance to come back to the same point and choose the right road this time.

I wonder though; will anyone recognize it this time, dare to raise their head and say something different? Dare to risk a comfortable silence for the truth to come out or justice to be heard?

I wonder.

Netta Corren (Haifa)

From the Editors

Things fall apart, the center cannot hold. Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. The blood-dimmed tide is loosed...The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.

W.B. Yeats wrote these words as Europe plunged enthusiastically into the senseless slaughter of the First World War. But they could have been written in Cyprus in 1963 or '74, in the former Yugoslavia as Slobodan Milosevic rose to power, in Kashmir or the Middle East equally in 1948 and yesterday--in any situation where leaders incite neighbors to hate and kill each other, to avoid compromising over territories in which both "sides" clearly have and will continue to live.

The poet Yeats was prophetic. His words did not stop the war; the masses of that day followed their leaders into a war whose causes they couldn't understand, whose outcome millions never survived to see. Europe's generals designed strategies that spent thousands of lives fighting inconclusive battles over a few kilometers of territory. The leaders feared more for their reputations than for the lives of their soldiers, whom they continued to send to the front lines long after their failure was clear and thousands of deaths a foregone conclusion.

Generations later, it is obvious to us that Yeats saw more clearly than the experts, leaders, and masses of his time; he was right, and had they followed him, they would have saved millions of lives. Yet when he wrote, he was nearly alone against crowds clamoring for war.

Such isolation is no stranger to many Seeds of Peace, who stand for the simple recognition of common humanity at a time when leaders are recklessly dividing the world into good and evil. In this OLIVE BRANCH, courageous young people refuse to close their minds and hearts to each other, despite the popular opinion, fed by government propaganda, that "there is no one to talk to."

This OLIVE BRANCH is filled with examples of the consequences of irresponsible political leadership on the lives of innocent children. Israeli and Palestinian Seeds count another season of suffering from terrorism and military occupation; Indian and Pakistani Seeds describe the massive mobilization of military forces around them. Seeds from the Balkans watch Slobodan Milosevic on televised trial, defending the years of havoc and destruction that he wreaked upon their countries and his own. Cypriot Seeds congratulate their leaders for deciding, after decades, to attempt to reunite their island through serious negotiations. In each conflict, before ever attempting to compromise, leaders engaged in economic and military aggression, assuring their own people that despite the terrible costs, there was "no other way" to deal with the enemy.

Seeds of Peace have diverse backgrounds and beliefs, but share the understanding that there is another way, a better way. In this OLIVE BRANCH, Arab and Jewish Seeds of Peace describe working together in each other's communities, exploring each other's religions, and celebrating each other's holidays. 120 Seeds of Peace from countries ravaged by war accomplished in one week what the UN failed to do in response to the attacks of September 11: They agreed on a shared vision addressing the root causes of the hatred, violence, and terror that have plagued all of their countries.

Seeds, your work and your words may not be enough to stem today's blood-dimmed tide. You are like Yeats in his day, as you strive to free your peoples from cycles of conflict. Years later, people will marvel at your wisdom, and shake their heads at the spectacle of today's leaders attempting in vain to justify the chaos they caused. You inspire the best in humanity with your conviction and your passionate intensity for peace.

Statement from John Wallach, Founder and President of Seeds of Peace

Now, in the middle of February, the warm summer days in camp must seem like a distant memory. For many of you, life has become unbearably more difficult this year. Young men and women your age are being killed at faster and faster rates in the Middle East, the Asian subcontinent has not only witnessed the war in Afghanistan, but finds India and Pakistan on the brink of war again. In the Balkans, Milosevic has reappeared as a subject of polarization and hatred. Yet each of you has experienced what it means to come together, to live together, to live in peace.

That is what makes each of you so very special. While your societies do not have the courage to face each other as human beings, you had the strength to sleep side by side. While politicians hide behind slogans, you bared your hearts to each other, sometimes you even cried. Do not be ashamed of this. Be proud.

My belief when I founded Seeds of Peace was that if we can share some of the basic human emotions that separate and divide us, we can break the cycles of violence. So there is a lot of raw emotion at Seeds of Peace, almost as if we are indeed going back to the universe before creation and starting all over again. I remember walking into a coexistence session and seeing everyone crying. Real wet tears rolling down their cheeks. I felt like I had walked into a funeral.

But there was something uplifting. These young adversaries, the offspring of mothers and fathers who were sworn to kill each other, were unafraid to display the most noble human emotion of all - the courage to appear weak, indeed to cry in front of your enemy. What could be more cleansing to the soul?

Seeds of Peace is a de-toxification program for the hatreds that all of us possess. It is these hatreds that fuel misunderstanding and that often culminate in violence and terrorism.

I'm often asked what is the mission of Seeds of Peace? It is simple. The same rights one side has, the other side deserves. Indeed all those things we demand for ourselves - namely human, political and civil rights - we have an obligation to seek for our adversaries. When you came to NY City for the Conference on "Uprooting Hatred and Terror" you said this more beautifully than I ever could. What could have been more moving than hearing support from Lauren Rosenzweig (see p. 31), whose husband was killed on September 11th, and then joining together with her in the Seeds of Peace song, Americans, Israelis, Palestinians, Cypriots, former Yugoslavians, Indians and Pakistanis.

There is nowhere else in the world where this is happening. Our success has attracted many new nations. This summer Afghanistan will be among the 22 nations with delegations at Seeds of Peace. In the past few months, we were honored by the State of Maine and by Americas First Freedom Foundation, an honor won previously by The World Bank and PM Tony Blair. Each of you deserves these honors.

You have already made me proud of you. Simply keeping your head up amidst this violence is a test of your strength and character. But you have done more. You have acted with your heart. Israeli and Palestinian Seeds have begun anew their communication through a video project, proving that their desire to work together can transcend all the boundaries that other people try to set. In India and Pakistan, Seeds meet weekly for chatting through the Seeds of Peace website. In America and Cyprus, Seeds are speaking on television and through the radio. If your principles, energy and compassion were implemented by your leaders, there would be a lot less tension and warfare than there is today. You are shining examples of a better world. Keep it up, it is your spirit and vision which will emerge the victor in the long run. You are inspiring us all.

FOCUS ON OUR FRIEND

Two Seeds of Peace dedicate a documentary to telling the truth about the life and death of Asel Asleh

by **Eli Shteinberg,**
Ron Roman (Haifa)

On the 2nd of October 2000, Asel Asleh, a Palestinian citizen of Israel and one of the most active members of Seeds of Peace was shot dead by police at a demonstration outside of his village, Arabeh, in the Galilee. Asel's death took everyone by surprise, but it wasn't only the fact that he had died, but the way he died that has shocked us all.

A few months later, together with our friend Jerry Choukroun, we decided to commemorate Asel's life and activity in Seeds on film.

We went to camp two years after Asel, but knew him from Internet chat and Seeds of Peace events. For our first film, we interviewed his friends among the Seeds and Seeds staff members. Back then we were all still in shock, the memory of Asel's death fresh in our minds. That movie documented reactions to Asel's death, and memories of his activities in the organization.

After a while we felt something was missing. We had not interviewed Asel's parents, to have a closer look at his life, and the people with whom he spent his life.

Therefore we decided that another movie must be made. While the first film dealt with the shock from Asel's death, this one should be an opportunity for the family to say what they want without being silenced or distorted by media, and an opportunity to understand how Israel and the Palestinians in Israel are dealing with the killings of thirteen Arab citizens in October 2000.

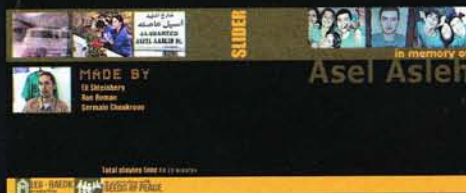
The new film is in the making

right now, and will be finished by the beginning of April. It is a collection of interviews and visuals of Asel's family, his parents Hassan and Jamila whom we interviewed in their home, in Asel's room, in Arabeh.

The film also includes an interview with Nardin, Asel's older sister who is a medical student here in Haifa, and also interviews with various reporters from the Israeli news channels who covered the story when Asel was killed, and can provide a less personal point of view. We also hope to interview the doctor who treated Asel when he arrived at the hospital in Nahariya, to provide a medical point of view to what exactly happened to Asel, and what fatal injuries he suffered.

We decided to take a more critical approach this time. Through the interviews with the family and various people who had to do with Asel's last days and moments, we hope to paint a full picture of the events of October 2nd 2000, the last day in Asel's life.

We wish to portray the events as they were, and we believe that whatever will come out of our project will definitely speak for itself, and help open people's eyes to understand the terrible and unjust killing that took place in the North of Israel. We hope that the results of the Or Commission, appointed by the Israeli government after the events to investigate what happened in October 2000, will bring the truth to light and those guilty to justice, for the sake of the families of all the people killed.



UPROOTING

In November, 120 youth from 22 nations gathered in New York City for the Seeds of Peace Conference "Uprooting Hatred, Violence and Terror." From India and Pakistan, The Middle East, The Balkans, Cyprus and the United States, the Seeds used their experiences at camp to discuss life-threatening issues with honesty and vision that world leaders have not equalled. They put aside enmity to create a thirty-page Charter addressing the root causes of the violent conflicts that plague their countries and the world.

We, Seeds of Peace, young people representing 22 war-ravaged nations, hereby declare that we are tired of hatred, violence and terror.

At Seeds of Peace camp, we ascended together to the peak of appreciation that peace is possible. We entered camp full of stereotypes and prejudices against our enemy; after three exhilarating weeks of coexistence, we returned home with an understanding of the other side and acceptance of our common humanity. We learned that we are strong together.

In our home countries, by contrast, we have grown up in tense, fearful environments. We have lost loved ones and seen our sense of security and normality in life shattered. The sight of humanity reduced to rubble on September 11 served as a terrible reminder of the tragedies we have witnessed in our lives. In the wake of so many tragedies, we have come together to search for enduring solutions to hatred, terror and violence.

We define hatred as the wish that another human being or human group not exist, or that their existence be filled with suffering. The common physical expression of hate is violence, the intentional use of aggressive force to inflict pain upon other human beings. Terror is the organized implementation of violence against civilians in order to spread fear and achieve political or ideological goals.

In order to achieve a society free of hatred, terror, and violence, we must establish and follow basic principles of human interaction which create an environment of security, absence of fear and respect for one another's

opinions and ways of life. Highest among these are the sanctity of life and the preservation of human rights and basic freedoms as recorded in the Charter of the United Nations. The greatest possible level of social equality, coexistence and compassion are guidelines to which we must aspire, with our ultimate goal to live in harmony, recognizing our uniqueness and difference in culture and religion but acknowledging our mutual humanity. In politics, we advocate the eradication of policies which undermine these principles, which value land or money above human life or turn citizens into the tools of government. In society, we move to eradicate all forms of racism, sexism or extremism which deny the equality and humanity we have learned to recognize in each other.

Do not dismiss this as youthful idealism. Many of us live in places where killing and humiliation, poverty and homeless refugees are commonplace. We are surrounded by an atmosphere of hatred created by unjust realities. Violence does not begin when a gun is pointed or a rock is thrown, but in the hate-filled graffiti and political posters decorating the walls of our cities. When this hate takes physical expression in acts of terror, the victims often call for revenge, perpetuating a cycle of violence.

Yet at Seeds of Peace, we have experienced real equality, unity, understanding and joy. Having faced this stark contrast, we now refuse to accept what is when we know what can be, if we truly implement these principles in our homes and our hearts. We refuse to be victims. We know it is possible to redirect human passions, even calls for revenge, toward the positive goal of creating peace.



The Safety & Security Committee presents their vision

In order to address in depth these issues, we have created seven committees to analyze elements of society that have in the past been used as catalysts to spread hate, violence and terror: Education, Religion, Media, Pop Culture, Safety & Security, Economic Disparity, and Principles of Government. Each committee worked to identify the ways in which these elements of society can be changed to create an environment which fosters peace.

There are people who call us traitors because we recognize our enemies as equal human beings; but we are true patriots. Instead of creating dead-end situations for our nations, we are putting an end to an endless cycle of suffering. We are working together for peace, the only way to achieve optimal living conditions for our own countries and people.

We were raised in societies which taught us to hate each other. Despite that, we have united here to fight together for a better future for us all, in the name of the dead and the generations to come. In succeeding here, we prove to ourselves and our governments that a solution exists and peace is not impossible.

HATRED VIOLENCE *and* TERROR

*T*he following are excerpts from the Charter on Uprooting Hatred and Terror agreed to by youth delegations from twenty-two countries.

Education: The absence of education often leads people to resort to terrorism...In order to uproot hatred, violence and terror, we feel it is imperative that our textbooks be rewritten in a neutral manner. That the content be presented in unbiased language and the facts be accurate, and that we have the opportunity to be exposed to and evaluate a variety of sources of information.

Economic Disparity: All people are responsible for each other. Therefore, we call on all countries to join in a global effort to minimize the economic disparities within human society. It is our duty, as well as privilege, as citizens of the world, to cooperate in order to bring prosperity to each other.

Media: Only a free and independent media with integrity and humanity can assure the credibility and efficiency of this institution and show a fair and truthful picture of this world.

Pop Culture: The producer, distributors, and marketers of the global pop culture mainstream often leave out the voice of the third world. This can cause a sense in the citizens of the third world that their culture is on the verge of destruction. This also causes a separation between the two cultures, as the third world feels rejected and shunned. The citizens of the third world therefore often feel the need to defend their culture and to retrieve their pride, even violently.

Principles of Governing: Every individual has a right to be represented in the govern-

ment through a fair elective system. Representation is the path to fulfill the people's personal and collective needs. If a government lacks...integrity, the ability to eliminate corruption, representatives who are qualified by having knowledge of governmental systems, an understanding of the people's needs, the ability to listen and translate ideas into actions...and accountability...[it will lead to] frustration and anger which are likely to build up and erupt into violence.

Religion: Clergymen are significant, because they effect billions of people, especially those in whose lives religion plays a great role. Clergy should promote tolerance, peace and respect for all social groups through holy texts and in other ways...Clergy should spread constructive religious educa-

tion that does not restrict the freedom of others, in order to prevent manipulation and misinterpretation.

Safety and Security: Every human being has the inherent right to feel secure and safe without the fear of discrimination...Hatred is the root of violence, and introduces fear into communities. As soon as the seeds of hatred get into the hearts of thousands, the safety and security of people is threatened by uncontrollable acts of violence from the powerful majority.

Participating Delegations: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, FYROM (Macedonia), Greece, India, Israel, Jordan, Kosovo, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Tunisia, Turkey, Yugoslavia, USA.

Queen Noor joins Seeds at The UN Church Center



UPROOTING HATRED VIOLENCE and TERROR

Secure Together

by Elad Shaffer (Givat Ze'ev)

These days, it is rare to see a Palestinian and an Israeli working together to achieve a shared goal. It becomes even harder when the two hold different views of the conflict and tend to disagree on whichever subject they address. I got to see Tamer, a Palestinian Seed from Hebron, only a few times since I joined SOP, and never got to get to know him personally. Our real "meetings" were on email debates, where we both got to argue on various topics, while exhibiting diametrically opposed views. We both come from different hometowns, with a totally different present. To conclude, we didn't have the best first impression of one another.

As someone who absorbs terror daily, and who has a clear opinion of the need to condemn terrorism, the conference was something I was eagerly expecting. One of the questions that rose in my mind was how would the Arabs, mainly the Palestinians, react, especially after September 11th.

I was wondering if we could actually find common ground on this neverending debate, and reach a joint document condemning and exploring hate, violence and terrorism.

Motivated and nervous, I arrived and found out I was placed in the "Safety and Security" committee, which was exploring the causes of insecurity of people over the world, and ways to prevent this feeling which brings people to hate and to the use of terror. The group consisted of many talented and creative Seeds, though the ones I was working

where we do agree upon issues. It was not easy at first, but as we continued I was surprised by the amount of understanding we could reach. We touched everything, and did not run away from the painful points. We discussed terror, and occupation, and did everything so every word we printed would fit and reflect our opinion as one body.

I was sitting alongside a Palestinian guy, whose past with me had consisted mostly of harsh debates, and we got to understand and agree upon so many points. This was something I never thought would be possible.

As a result of a lot of joint work, we got to spend a lot of time with each other outside of the committee meetings, while having fun with the rest of the group, and in personal talks, getting to know each other better.

It was not my first time meeting a Palestinian, and Tamer is not the first Palestinian friend I have had. But I saw that me and the guy I was always arguing with are so much alike, in all aspects. We got closer, and when I was feeling down, and had that new friend with me — I knew I had something special, something that will last.

After almost a week of discussions, we had to present our committee's conclusions. We spent a long night getting the document done, tired but satisfied.

For me, being able to discover this understanding, and reach such a level of cooperation with Tamer and Musa, planted hope and motivation inside.

Being able to reach a common ground with a guy who was in many ways an opponent, especially in this time of war, was inspiring.

I learned a lot about the situation and about myself, but perhaps the best thing I got from the conference was friendship with Tamer.



Elad (Israeli) and Tamer (Palestinian) worked together on the Safety and Security Committee

About two months ago, I was invited to the Seeds of Peace "Uprooting Hatred and Terror" Conference in New York. Excited though unsure, I attended this conference along with Seeds from 21 other countries. The name, "Uprooting Hatred and Terror," seemed big and confusing. Coming from a region where terror plays a big role, I was looking forward to having discussions and exploring its causes and ways of prevention, and moreover — to discover more of the "other side's" view.

closely with in our sub-committee were Tamer and Musa, a Palestinian-American. Going through many speeches, events and talks within the group, we got to explore deeper and deeper the causes of insecurity, and through this process I got to befriend both Tamer and Musa.

But befriend someone can be a lot easier when done without politics involved, and here politics was obviously deeply involved.

We started discussing different topics, trying to find a common ground and to see

**We touched everything,
and did not run away
from the painful points.
We discussed terror and
occupation, and did
everything so every
word would reflect our
opinion as one body.**

A Long Term Solution To Defeating Terror

by Siddharth Seekond (Mumbai)

The ugly head of terror is a harsh reality. We know that this evil has no boundaries. We can no longer say their terrorism or our terrorism. It's a problem that affects humanity as a whole. Thus it is a fight that all of us have to fight together.



While nations fight terror with bombs and bullets, will that root out the problem? I believe not. Terror thrives because of poverty, lack of education and unemployment.

Desperate people seek desperate solutions. Poor people who have no education or means of filling their stomachs become easy targets to get misguided. There are people with warped minds who have their own agendas in life. They, however, cannot fulfill their agendas without the help of others. They will recruit these soft targets to achieve what they want. When vulnerable people are given hope, they will cling to whatever they can. For them it is a question of survival. While I do not justify their actions, these are harsh realities. People who have their backs against the wall

will do what they can to get what they need. They get taken in by fanatics. Religion is an easy way of stirring up sentiments. This is true for all religions.

While nations will try and control the problem with guns and bullets, that will never be a long-term solution. That is like cutting off the plant and leaving the roots intact. The root will resurface. The matters that need to be addressed are the elimination of poverty, lifting the lot of society in general, and trying to ensure that people get employment. If they do not, frustrations build up and things can go very wrong.

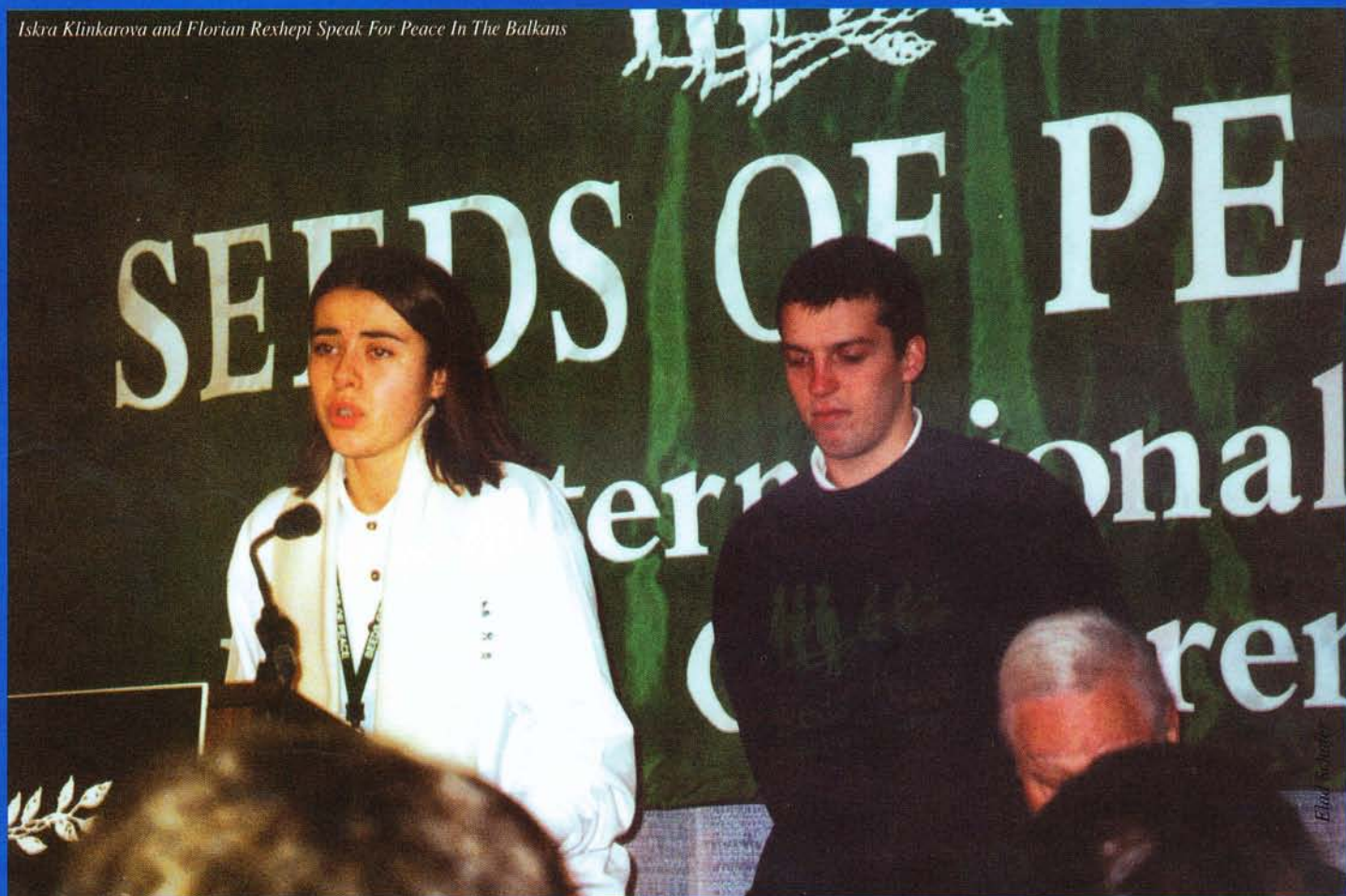
There is no such thing as his terror or my terror. It's a worldwide problem and needs to be tackled by all of us. It's not me as an Indian or some one else as an American, Pakistani, Israeli or Palestinian but all of us as people. As humanity. For this resources will have to move across borders. We have to create a seamless world where people address those problems of humanity.

Recently, after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, events have happened which have resulted in thousands of jobs being lost across the world. Companies, which were doing well, suddenly felt pinched and had to lay off workers. While the chief executives of these companies are answerable to their board of directors and shareholders, there seems to be no feelings for workers. They are just laid off. While there are unemployment benefits in developed countries like the US, there are no such benefits in very large parts of the developing world. This laid off work force is again a prime target that can get recruited by unscrupulous elements.

It is clear that we have to collectively make decisions that benefit the vast majority of have-nots, and not the minority who have. If we are to make the world a safer place for the generations that will inherit the earth, we have to address the problems of poverty, education and unemployment.

The ugly head of terror is a harsh reality. While nations will try and control the problem with guns and bullets, that will never be a long term solution. The matters that need to be addressed are the elimination of poverty, lifting the lot of society in general, and trying to ensure that people get employment.

Iskra Klinkarova and Florian Rexhepi Speak For Peace In The Balkans



UPROOTING HATRED VIOLENCE and TERROR

Starting from Ground Zero

by Rina Onur (Istanbul)

Standing on a platform, looking at a ruin. Ground Zero. In the place of the huge buildings of the former World Trade Center now stood something unrecognizable. With the blink of an eye, the twin towers of sand were devastated forever with the gigantic waves brought by two planes. The voice of the guide echoed in my ears, "Sometimes parts of bodies are found, pieces of skin. We treat them as we treat dead bodies. Fold them in our flag and treat them with respect as they deserve." I felt a sudden



spasm in my stomach. I feared I was going to pass out. I couldn't take it anymore. I just found my way out of the crowd of faces looking blankly, with drops of tears on unknown cheeks, unrecognizable words dropping from strange mouths. Standing in the middle of the empty street, I tried to imagine what this place once looked like. Yes once, because it is gone now. There was nothing, no one. Under my feet was the road, that was crossed a thousand times by those innocent people who were gone. The walls of "hope and remembrance" full of pictures with that familiar phrase: "missing."

For the first time in my life, I felt a true feeling of responsibility on November 9-15, 2001--just 58 days after the events of September 11. A pressure on my shoulders moved me day and night for a week in New York City. It was different than the camp experience. It was different than anything

I've ever seen or been through. In Seeds of Peace camp, we learned to understand the other side, we learned that we could make a change. But during New York Conference, we were asked to accomplish a task in a week that the diplomats of our worlds couldn't achieve for decades. We were given importance.

No way, I thought. No way, 120 high school students can find a solution to uproot hatred and terrorism. But as usual I was proven wrong. Day by day, as we listened to the distinguished speakers, as we looked into the eyes of the people who trusted us, we believed. We believed in each other. We did it once in Maine; we could do it once more.

So the week began by our discussions on the topics of media, pop culture, education, religion, principles of governance, economic disparity, and safety and security. The tension was always high in my committee, which

was safety and security. The tension was high, because none of us knew what to say or where to start from. We kept looking at each other, feeling the silent power in the crowd. I tried to imagine what we could do with the hope we had. How many lives we could rescue, how many families we could save from poverty, how many chances we could create for peace.

The week went on with speakers, questions, discussions and the drafting of the solutions. Finally the day came when we were asked to present our charter, which was made up of our time, energy, effort, hope and belief. A solution, a vision of where we need to go, was created by our own minds. A voice fighting for peace would reach the ear of the United Nations. Maybe we were beginning to make the change we have been dreaming of since the beginning of camp. Maybe... Maybe it was the time to cry for peace.

Ground Zero - Where The Twin Towers Stood in NY City



I just found my way out of the crowd of faces looking blankly, with drops of tears on unknown cheeks, unrecognizable words dropping from strange mouths. Standing in the middle of the empty street, I tried to imagine what this place once looked like.



Seeds catch rare moments of sleep on the bus to NY



And when it was all over, it was time to celebrate

We need leaders devoted to peace and progress. Leaders that understand pain and suffering and want it to stop. That's what the world is lacking. That's what every Seed should try to become, so one day these conflicts can be finally shut down.

The Best Way to a Solution

by Endrit Yzeiri (Tirana)

The New York Conference was a great chance to share experiences and to learn about each other's lives. I must admit that I didn't know much about the other conflicts included in the program. I made up for that during the week, and I have to thank the other members of my Declaration of Principles Committee and especially my American friend, Tarek. He had the patience to sit down and explain a lot of things to me. What really struck me was that conflict in the Balkans could be compared in so many ways to the Middle East. I am sure that you can find similarities in the Pakistani-Indian conflict too.



In both conflicts, there is an historical background. Albanians have fought for centuries with the Serbs over the land. The same can be said for the Arabs and the Jews. These sectarian conflicts have also created hatred whose roots can be tracked in the depth of time. This is what we the Seeds try to acknowledge and overcome. The main cause of conflict has always been land and the fight for control over it, though the conflict has been fueled by other sources. The best known is religion — which itself has been manipulated in order to control the minds of people and lead them to war, even though religions should promote peace and respect. Another main cause of conflict is the access to essential resources. In the Middle East, the water problem is well known, while the northern part of Kosovo is rich in different kinds of rare metals. Whoever controls these resources doesn't want to give them up easily.

The astonishing part is that the way to a solution is very similar also. The first thing is that every government has to understand that 99% of the victims are civilians who can't be associated in any way to militia troops or terrorists. Once everybody realizes this, the way to a solution is much easier. I personally believe that the best solution is the political one, where you try to satisfy everyone. And even if this can't be achieved it's always better than the military one. But a political solution requires leaders that are devoted to peace and progress—leaders who understand pain, and suffering and want to stop it. That's what the world is lacking right now. That's what every Seed should try to become so that one day these conflicts can be finally shut down.

Taking up the Challenge

by Omar Alami (Amman)

The roundtable. The podium. The full schedule. The distinguished speakers. And most importantly, the participants. The conference is here.

I, among one hundred Seeds of Peace, was carefully chosen to attend the Seeds of Peace International Youth Conference for Uprooting Hatred and Terror in New York. After the disastrous September attacks, we were all determined to give our full effort. We refuse to let our children live in such savage conditions. This is our chance. Armed with our determination and resolution, we take it. Full force.



Together with my fellow Seeds, a hundred and twenty of them, from twenty-two different countries, we worked hard through long days and long nights. In our eight committees, we sat down, thought, wrote, discussed, laughed, and sometimes cried. It was all worth it. Each committee produced part of a charter. We touched on every aspect of our lives today, and how those accelerate or decelerate violence, hatred, and terror in regions of conflict.

In between those hours of solid dedication, we enjoyed ourselves. Whether on the bus, or in the theater in the middle of Manhattan, our friendships and understanding grew to shape our hearts and minds.

As the conference came close to an end, we went into the voting process on the charter, before presenting it to the United Nations Secretary General. John said, "All those approving of this document say 'Aye'." "Aye!" "All those disapproving, say 'Nay'." Silence. We did it.

Who knows whether or not our stubborn leaders will approve of what we, the youth, have agreed upon. But in a world of war and inequality, perhaps our naiveté is our only weapon.

I left New York satisfied with our monumental achievement. Now, I can return to my country and play basketball and hit my drums with my sticks firmly, believing that my generation can and should have a role to play. We are the future. Someone once said, "You can complain because roses have thorns, or you can rejoice because thorns have roses." While others complained, we rejoiced.

FRONT LINE: MIDDLE EAST

Not What Someone Wants to Hear

by *Raya Yusuf (Ramallah)*

There are a lot of things going on in Palestine that you don't know about, so I'm going to tell you what I think. I'm going to be honest, and tell you what I believe and not what I think you want to hear. I feel like the world's gone crazy, that the meaning of some words have been changed for the good of the strong that control everything. That's why I started ignoring some of the things I hear and read, and instead believe in what I think, feel, and experience.



Every day, when I go to university I go through a checkpoint. My mom goes through at least three each day. Why are there checkpoints? I'm sure you think that they're in order to protect Israelis. It seems to me, however, that they don't care for Israeli safety as much as humiliating us. Why don't they check every car, or even the bags, the right way? All I see is Israeli soldiers aiming their guns at us or making fun of us.

On my way to university, the soldiers make us walk on foot, don't ask me why. One week, they wouldn't let us pass. They made us walk from the mountains. In front of me I saw an old lady with her husband. Both could hardly walk. The soldiers didn't let them pass either. I couldn't bear it, so I asked the soldier "Why wouldn't you let us pass?"

"There is a closure around Ramallah," the soldier said.

"That's not true," I protested. "People leave Ramallah in front of you and you know it," (you can see people walking beside the checkpoint).

"I don't care, and I don't see them, because I only look in front of me. The important thing is that they're not walking on the road," he said.

"They are leaving Ramallah anyway, so let them use the road. At least old and sick peo-

ple," I pleaded.

"You are terrorist," he replied.

Think of the word "terrorist" and how people interpret it. It seems that for the American and Israeli governments, a terrorist is an Arab or Muslim or anyone against them, and an innocent person is a person who is strong who is an American or Israeli. Israeli troops have killed in the past year and a half more than 900 Palestinians and injured twenty-eight thousand, not to mention the shellings, closures, and humiliation. I am against killing Israeli or any civilian. The same way, I believe we have to defend our own civilians as well. I am not violent or a terrorist; I am an innocent person who desperately wants to live in peace.

When I went down the hill next to the checkpoint to go to university, the soldier threw a sound bomb to scare us. He thinks these little things still scare us. He doesn't know if I see a tank in front of me I keep on walking, because it's a normal thing, and I'm not afraid of anything. I know that what I want is right: To stop what they are doing to us, and to live with all my people in a country at peace.

Echoes of the Explosion

by *Ariel Tal (Givon Hahadasha)*

Until recently I listened to the radio and read the paper, and I didn't stop there. Whenever someone started spreading his nasty point of view about the situation, said that war was the only way to solve our problems, or made an unkind remark about Arabs, I made it my goal to make him change the way he thinks.

Two months ago my friend David and I went downtown after watching a movie. We went down Ben Yehuda Street towards Zion Square, where everyone hangs out in the center of the



city. I saw several friends from my town on the street. David and I went into an ice cream shop, and just before we left an explosion shook the ground so terrifyingly that we could not move for minutes afterwards. The blood all over the street, the crowds screaming and running, and the thick smell of gunpowder made it hard to concentrate. When we came to our senses we realized that the shop wall had saved us from being the people the ambulances took away. We ran from downtown as fast as we could. On the way home we heard another explosion. I was confused, and wearing my Seeds of Peace sweatshirt did not help me realize what will come next.

My entire family and the whole community became worried about me from the minute I got home. Everything looks different since then. One of the kids from my town was killed immediately, and the rest were hospitalized until 2 weeks ago. The funeral took place the day after and everyone came. Seeing people cry over dead relatives is always the hardest thing, but this time the screaming of the mother for her child was even more intense for me because in my head I knew it could have been me. Since then the house of that particular family had been filled with the youth of the village almost every day. The mourning was not regular because the child that had been killed was 14 years old, and everyone felt like the same, that it could have been them.

This experience changed us in different ways. You probably expect that my friend David

To end this stupid war, we have to make the people in charge understand that by playing chicken and waiting for the other side to drive off the road we will get nowhere. So make your voice be heard, we can't keep living like this.

became right-wing and that I forgot about Seeds, but it was not the case. David became more active in left-wing movements, being beaten by police while demonstrating against house destructions in East Jerusalem.

I was different; I became apathetic to whatever is going on. I tried to move on with my life without freaking out all the time because of warnings of another attack. But pushing aside and inside what I hear on the news can't last forever. I went to the Seeds Open House in Haifa, and after seeing old friends I started to get back to myself. Now I'm trying to listen to the news once in a while, though I usually can't keep at it and turn the radio off. Wherever I go I try to avoid conversations about the situation, because they brings back awful feelings.

I oppose this apathy that I see taking over me and everyone around me. The people of Israel have to stop denying and pushing aside everything or this horrible situation will never end. We have to take responsibility. People have to leave their houses and call for a cease-fire, not to stay in fear. The situation has gone on so long because people are not trying to make a difference. I can't say that this is easy, or that I've been working day and night for it, but there is no other way. To see this stupid war end, we have to make the people in charge understand that by playing chicken and waiting for the other side to drive off the road we will get nowhere. So Israelis and others, please make your voice be heard, we can't keep living like this.

Elect a Leader Ready to Make the Change

by Ibrahim Shikaki (Tulkarem)

I don't think that Ariel Sharon can understand the Palestinian intifada. Everyone has a country to live in, but we Palestinians have a country that lives inside of us. Whether they kill us, or close every road in the West Bank and Gaza, this will not do anything. The love and the need for our country lives inside every Palestinian. Violence cannot change that.

We are going straight to hell here. When Ariel Sharon was elected, he said that in 100 days everything would be over. Now it's almost a year and for both Palestinians and Israelis, the violence gets worse and worse. I can't say that this is only the Israelis' fault, and it's not our fault. Everything that happened led us to this situation and I don't think anybody wants this to go on.



We live in fear, so do they. They don't want their children killed, neither do we. Military occupation has made people think violence is the only way. We need to show people it's the wrong way. We all want to live in stability, so we need leaders who think and act that way.

In my opinion, to want peace is to love your country and to want the best for it. Who wants killing, blood and F-16's? I know there are a lot of Israelis who believe in peace, some are friends of mine, and they need to know that these aggressive policies are destroying their dream and producing the opposite. The problem is that people are overwhelmed with anger. Almost every Palestinian has suffered in this last year and a half. Personally, the hardest thing is that friends of mine from Tulkarem were killed, along with Asel from Seeds. I still imagine that one day we are going to have a reunion and I can't believe that they won't be there. If you got hit physically, you could be OK after a while, but to lose a life that disappears from yours is more than I can bear.

I know this is absolutely the wrong way. We must return to negotiations, but how? President Arafat is locked in a building which Israeli helicopters fired on today, so how can he do what they are demanding? This Israeli government is not aiming to have negotiations with Palestinians. How can Israelis still believe in a leader like this? And since September 11, the American government is blaming only Arafat, and that makes it unequal. We need American involvement but we need a different American policy. We need them to understand us, and to not blame us for everything, and we need our rights to live like any other country and not under military occupation.

If I were the leader, I would have a meeting of all the Palestinian movements to declare that we can't live this way. We have to talk with the Israelis. Whether we like it or not, there is an Israeli state and we have to live with them. I would say to the Israeli people that they need a leadership who can bring peace. We live in fear, and so do they. They don't want their children killed and neither do we. Military occupation has made violence a routine, has made people think it is the only way. We need to show people that this is the wrong way. All of us want to live in stability and calm, so we need leaders who think and act that way.

Recognize Our Right to Exist Once & For All

by Gil Peleg (Haifa)

How to solve the problem?! This bothers many minds these days. I realize that it isn't easy and that there is no magical solution. Therefore, I would like to discuss what I, as an Israeli, see as one of the biggest obstacles for reaching a solution. In my opinion, before even starting to discuss an agreement the first step for reaching common ground must be an acknowledgment by both sides of the others' right to have a country.



I feel like, throughout the entire conflict the Israeli side has been willing to reach an agreement. The U.N partition plan in 1947 and Barak's Camp David proposal, in which the Palestinians were offered more than 90% of the West Bank and Gaza and a sovereign state. Israel openly and officially declared the right of the Palestinian people to have a country, yet the Palestinian side did not compromise.

The Palestinian Covenant, the PLO's founding charter, says that the Jews are only a religion and do not deserve a country of their own, that the Palestinian people must destroy Israel by armed struggle alone and that they do not accept any foreign involvement.

In my eyes, this statement must be removed immediately and unconditionally from all documents and textbooks because I, as an Israeli, cannot support or have any involvement with a country that doesn't recognize my right to exist or show any signs of willingness to compromise. The thing I want to emphasize is that if we want to have peace, none of us can teach our children to want war.

To understand Israel's side one must understand that I don't believe we have any territorial goals. Our aim is to preserve our safety. I have a brother who is serving in the army. I have no interest in my brother getting killed, and it is possible that he could. Any not just my brother— its friends, its family it's so many people. What do I have to gain from this war? Nothing.

We want to have peace. Up to now many Palestinians have felt that Israel is the enemy— mentally, that is the easy choice. To accept the challenge that we Israelis deserve a country is the hard thing to do. Now it is up to the Palestinian Authority to take up the challenge.

FRONT LINE: INDIA & PAKISTAN

On the Brink of War

by Radhika Lalla (Mumbai)

"Please tell me what's going on!"

I called up a fellow Seed on December 13, 2001, and asked him just that. The Indian parliament had just been attacked. From what I could gather from the news, some gunmen had got past the security and opened fire in the grounds of the parliament building, killing security guards and themselves in the process. One of them blew himself up on the steps of the



It affected me even more because I was scared, not only of the war, but also for the wonderful people I knew on the other side of the border. My best friends couldn't believe I was still talking to my Pakistani friends...

parliament house. The other four were shot by the security guards. Their car had enough RDX explosives in it to blow the whole place up. All that stuck in my mind was that the Indian parliament had been attacked.

As soon as the word got out, Pakistan was dragged into the matter. There were rumors flying all over that the gunmen were shouting pro-Pakistan phrases whilst they carried out the attack, and that it was all the work of Musharraf and the terrorist outfits working in Kashmir.

The attack on the parliament brought an onslaught of demands to the government. People demanded immediate retaliation to what

was a tremendous breach of the sense of safety and security of the nation. Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee ordered a severance of all diplomatic ties with Pakistan once it was ascertained that the terrorists responsible for the attacks were based there. He demanded that General Mushharaf hand over the responsible people as well as those charged by India with the acts of terrorism committed in Kashmir. Mushharaf began to shut down the terrorists based and operating in Pakistan, arresting the leaders and freezing their accounts, but refused to hand over the people wanted by India. Many Indians felt that Mushharaf's attempts were superficial, and that the outfits were still functioning and the people responsible were going scot-free.

The situation soon escalated to scary levels. It was actually threatening to break out into a war! I couldn't believe it. I was reading everyday that tanks were moving to the Pakistani border. Indo-Pak flights were stopped. The papers said that more and more troops were preparing for a war, and that the attack had already been planned. I was scared. I've never experienced a war and I never want to. If India was attacked, I knew that Mumbai would be one of the first cities to be targeted.

My friends were all telling me, "We told you, you can't trust Pakistanis," and "How can you still talk to those Paki 'friends' of yours, look at what they've done!" Everywhere, people were talking about how India should give up on negotiations and just attack and run over Pakistan, and that they were sick and tired of India's hesitancy to do something concrete. They said that all Pakistanis deserved to die. So many of the people actually wanted bloodshed.

It affected me even more because I was scared, not only of war, but also for the wonderful people I knew on the other side of the border. My best friends couldn't believe that I was still talking to my Pakistani friends, and they just didn't want to listen to what I had to say. I found it pointless trying to convince some people that the people I knew were not out for India's blood, that they didn't want war and that all Pakistanis were not bad people. It has been tough enough to try and convince

people about this anyway, but after December 13, it seemed impossible.

Thankfully, with time the furor died down, and people continued with their lives as if we hadn't been on the brink of another war. I am grateful that war didn't break out, though the situation is still very unstable. Life goes on, and the issue seems like a bad dream, but one that shows all the signs of becoming reality if not dealt with wisely, keeping the best interests of the people and the future of the subcontinent as a whole in mind.

Caught in the Middle

by Rabia Cheema (Lahore)

Pakistan is about 400 miles wide, give or take a few. But in times like these, with pressure turned on full blast on both sides of the border, it seems a lot less than that. Pakistan is caught in the middle of two horrendous conflicts.

One is the endless Kashmir dispute with India, a fight as much for political supremacy and saving of face as for delivering the Kashmiri people. The other is the struggle with Afghanistan, alternately helping and harming the ravaged souls of this barren country. There is a separate battle being fought on either side, and when the day's fighting and bloodshed is done, Pakistan is left to pick up the pieces.

I live in a city called Lahore, which is on the eastern border, about 20 to 30 miles from India. Since the December 13 attack on the Indian parliament, we have been holding our breaths in dread of a war with India. I think the worst part of these last few months has been the apparent inevitability of war. Every day I would see tanks passing by my house and every night my mother and I would sit up and count the planes that were flying overhead. The night of January 3rd, we counted 21 planes. Seeing the tanks go by, seeing the truckloads of soldiers, sitting



silently and at attention, made me feel queasy and cold inside. It was like a slap in the face. It was no longer something to be talked about in hushed whispers, no longer something to be read about in the papers or watched on television. This was real...and all we could do was wait and watch, watch and wait.

At the very same time, we have had a flood of refugees from the West as people have fled for their lives from the stricken country of Afghanistan. My mother is a doctor, and she has treated a lot of these people. One incident in particular is imprinted vividly upon my memory. One of the people my mother treated came to her hospital, desperate for help for his daughter. I happened to be volunteering there that day. When I saw this poor broken man, I nearly cried myself. He had fled from his village in Afghanistan in the dead of the night,

have come to accept these things as a part of everyday life, as part of their lot. It's when I see things like this that I have an overwhelming hatred for the people who did such things. Not necessarily for the Americans, because I have come to see that they too have suffered at the hands of evil, but at the perpetrators of violence on innocent people. All I want is that they experience what these people have gone through, no more, no less. But I know it's wrong of me, and knowing this, I realize that perhaps the reason for such conflicts is the hatred that is nurtured and the inherent need to strike back. This man I saw described how he was going to kill as many Americans as he saw. It's these kind of people that become Taliban and start the vicious cycle once more, people who have been hurt and now want to hurt back.

Pakistanis therefore can't help believing that India, disappointed to see Pakistan becoming an ally against terrorism, exploited this incident to malign Pakistan.

To counter the Indian threat, Pakistan also mobilized its troops. This led to a complete evacuation of border areas. Villagers had to leave their homes and hearths in the dry and harsh winter. To be battle-ready, the government evacuated patients waiting their operations from their hospital beds, in order to make room for casualties in case of war. Pakistani soldiers couldn't celebrate the most sacred religious festival, Eid Al-Fitr, after a month-long fast.

Situated just 17 kilometers from the border with India, the cultural hub of the country, my home city of Lahore is quite vulnerable to any Indian attack. India invaded it in 1965 too. My



My mother is a doctor. When I saw a man she treated, I nearly cried. He had fled his village in Afghanistan in the dead of the night, carrying his infant daughter on his back. She was in terrible condition, and he had carried her from city to city, hospital to hospital, in order to find a way to cure her.

carrying his infant daughter on his back. She was in terrible condition, and he had carried her from city to city, hospital to hospital, in order to find a way to cure her. They had sent him to Lahore.

Since he had fled with nothing but what he was wearing now, he had no money, and had walked the whole way. His feet were cracked and bleeding, and he was hot, dusty and starved. He had become separated from his family and did not know where his wife and two other daughters were, or if they were alive. He was in extreme shellshock, and all he could repeat over and over was "bumbari, bumbari, aur main bhaga aur bhaga" (all I could hear were bombs and bombs, and so I ran and ran). The most terrible thing was his eyes. They were empty and unseeing, and indeed, he had seen a sight no one should be subjected to. Afterward, when he got a bit better, he described how he had woken to a thunderous noise, and after shaking awake his wife and children, he had picked up his little girl and run. And that was the last he had seen of them.

Perhaps the most saddening thing of all is the cynical attitude of these Afghani people. They

India Pakistan Standoff

by Bilal Mahmood Khan (Lahore)

Just when things were settling down in South Asia after the horrific events of September 11 and the War against Terrorism in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India locked horns. And it all happened in the blink of an eye. On December 13, five gunmen attacked India's parliament. It didn't take India very long to blame Pakistan for what it calls the attack on its democracy. Soon after India began a massive troops buildup across its border with Pakistan.

To every Pakistani, the Indian allegations seemed ridiculous. Already facing a warlike situation on its Western borders, Pakistan could never afford opening another front. Moreover, despite repeated requests from the Pakistani government, India didn't share any evidence or information with Pakistan.



father was a schoolboy at that time. He can still vividly recall the air raids in the dark of night and making for the trenches, trembling at the dogfights and sound of supersonic MIG warplanes.

India is keeping her forces at the borders despite repeated attempts by Pakistan to dissuade her. Clouds of war are hovering over the most dangerous standoff between two newly nuclear states. It is horrifying when I think if a war is triggered by somebody's mistake, it will be doomsday for the South Asia.

Not many people think an all-out war would break out between India and Pakistan this time. The poor economies of the two countries keep them from doing so. They simply cannot afford it. Besides, both the countries have nothing to gain from a war. Therefore, we may not see an all-out war in South Asia in the near future.

But at the same time, there are no prospects for peace either. The troops at the border won't withdraw soon and the war of words won't cool down in the foreseeable future. Peace is not yet in sight.

HOLIDAY *of* Celebrating Ramadan, Christmas

by Liav Harel (Haifa)

My hometown Haifa is often known as the city of co-existence, because its population of Arabs living among Jews is larger than that in any other city in Israel. I believe that this is the reason that, for years now, the city holds a big event every year around the time of Christmas, Hanukah and Ramadan. This event is known as the Holiday of Holidays.

The Holiday of Holidays festivities take place in Wadi Nisnas, which is in Hadar, a neighborhood where both Arabs and Jews live. This year, the festivities were spread over four Saturdays, from December 15th to January 5th. During these four Saturdays, Wadi Nisnas was full of performances by various artists, parades, stands selling food, gifts and crafts, and a general atmosphere of celebration. The event is co-sponsored by the Haifa Municipality and Beit Hageffen, an Arab-Jewish Culture Center in Haifa that invites people from all across the country to visit Haifa. The event includes street displays of artwork by local artists, Jewish, Christian and Muslim, based on a given theme. This year's theme was Weddings.

This year, for the very first time, Seeds of Peace officially participated in the Holiday of Holidays. The Center staff and the Haifa Seeds put up a stand that provided information about the organization and our activities throughout the year, and we handed out Olive Branches to all who were interested (and to those who weren't interested, as a matter of fact!). In addition, Jethro's guitar group and Mike's singing group performed a few numbers; some new ones and some that might be familiar to Seeds, such as "Father & Son," "Winds of Change" and, yes, the Seeds of Peace song. We even went up to the central stage and sang a bit. To keep the crowds coming, we face-painted

Michael Wallach



Jethro accompanies Seeds singing "The Winds of Change"

Michael Wallach



Hitting the streets at Hag Ha'Hagim

Jethro Berkman



Liav, Gitit and Orly sport the Seeds holiday spirit, especially Orly

HOLIDAYS

and Hanukkah together in Haifa

and applied Seeds of Peace water tattoos on dozens of children. By the end of the day, the streets were full of kids with peace signs and hearts on their faces and Seeds of Peace signs on their shoulders. We were also very proud to have Nardin Sbait, a Haifa Seed, participate in the official opening ceremony of the festival, along with the mayor of Haifa, Amram Mitzna, and other officials. During the festivities, TV camera crews roamed the crowds and interviewed several Seeds and staff members, who later appeared on local and national news broadcasts.

Many people walked up to our stand and were interested in learning more about the organization. Also, Seeds from every session and from all over the country came to visit us at the festival.

I particularly enjoyed the Holiday of Holidays because, even though I live in Haifa, it was the first time I ever attended the festival. I had great times at the stand with all the other Seeds, singing and painting faces. In Wadi Nisnas there were no signs of the conflict between Jews and Arabs. The hundreds of visitors gazed in awe at the colorful Christmas decorations, enjoyed tasting the authentic Middle Eastern delicacies and appreciated the artwork on display and the lively music that filled the streets.

Altogether, the event was a success — for the city, for co-existence, and especially for the Seeds.



Jen Marlowe

Let's hope his mom loves peace



Jen Marlowe



Jethro Berkman

*Raya "Picasso" Abu Rukam
paints with love*

Jethro Berkman



RELIGION

Fifty Arab and Jewish Seeds spent a December weekend with scholars of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, searching for the connections between religion and peace. Seeds describe the faith they have found.

Judaism Interpreted

by *Michal Tal-El (Jerusalem)*

This past year forced me and my friends to think not only in terms of a political conflict, but also of a conflict between religions. The intifada is called "Intifada Al-Aksa", referring to a holy place of Islam. The idea of martyrdom has shaken me this year, after many suicide bombings in Israel. When I came to the Religion Seminar in December, I was relieved and pleased to find out that Islam is based on many beautiful ideas, and is in fact a peaceful religion. It interested me, as well as Christianity and the Druze religion. In the seminar I found myself trying to represent Judaism, but Judaism is made out of a lot of sectors and interpretations. I can only represent myself and how I see Judaism.

Judaism is not only a religion. It means being part of a nation, sharing a culture, a history, and a language. There are many ways of being Jewish. I find that Judaism is a very open religion and is based on personal interpretation, and part of Judaism is to question, to search for your personal meaning and interpretation. In fact, Judaism has actually been based on interpretation throughout the generations.

The Jewish People strive for peace. In our culture, there are many songs wishing for peace. We pray for it. At the end of the Amida, maybe the most important prayer in the traditional Siddur, or prayer book, we pray for peace: "Oseh shalom bimromav, hu yaase shalom aleinu, veal kol yisrael, veimru amen- He who makes peace on high, he will make peace for us and all of Israel and let us say, Amen".

Throughout history, the Jewish people was a peaceful nation. We never forced anyone to convert to Judaism. We believe in pluralism- that each individual should do as he believes, and believe in whichever religion he chooses. It makes the world interesting and diverse. It gives us more from which to learn.

In my synagogue, Kol Haneshama, a Reform



synagogue in Jerusalem, we end every service with a special prayer for peace, including a sentence in Arabic: Allah into a-salaam, minnak a-salaam-God, you are peace, and peace comes from you. The seminar helped me separate current events from religion. By learning about other religions, I learn more about my own.

Tolerance in Islam

by *Tarek Arow (Jatt)*

My name is Tarek Arow and I'm a Muslim. At the Seeds of Peace religion seminar in Haifa, one of the subjects that seemed to interest a lot of people is the relation between Islam and other religions. Since many people think that jihad means that Islam is against everyone else, they think that Islam is not tolerant of other religions. In this article I will explain about the concept of jihad, and about the treatment of non-Muslims in a Muslim state.

First I would like to talk about is the wrong understanding of the concept of jihad. A lot of people think that jihad in Islam means fighting any other nation or religion, but Jihad is not only fighting physically, but can also be accomplished through words. Individuals should try to persuade non-Muslims to become Muslim, and this is called jihad. Muslims are obligated to try and call everyone to join Islam, but only by peaceful means. An important rule in our religion is that it's against the will of God to push someone by force who doesn't want to join the Islamic religion, and it is forbidden to do so. As it says in the Quran: "There should be no coercion in religion."

Regarding peace between religions, Islam has never wanted to destroy any other nations, and when the Muslims did go to war at the time of our prophet, they were commanded during the war not to kill a woman, a child or an old person, or to cut a tree without a purpose, or to destroy any houses.

What about Islam's treatment of non-Muslims in an Islamic state? According to traditional

Muslim law, non-Muslim people who might live in an Islamic country are divided into three parts: people who claim to be Muslims, but who are not; people from the other two holy book religions (Judaism and Christianity); and any people from other religions that Muslims believe were not sent to humans by God. In an Islamic country, all three of these groups are left to live according to their beliefs they can marry and divorce according to their religion, and the country provides them a judge from their religion to rule in the matters of marriage and divorce according to their religion.

At the same time they have to dress and act in public among other religions and people in a way that doesn't contradict Islam's rules. In the matter of punishment they have to be judged by Islam, but in Islam there is no discrimination towards anybody. This means that these people have to live according to the civil laws of Islam, but that they get to live their religious life as they desire.

It should be added that the country is obligated to defend all of its citizens including these three groups of non-Muslims. Since they don't serve in the army they have to pay an annual amount of money, and if anyone decides to serve, then he doesn't have to pay this tax anymore.

I hope I answered your questions, especially the ones that concerns other nations, and if there is anything you didn't understand, I'll be happy to hear about it and try to answer.



Rona Harari



AND PEACE

A Christian and a Seed

by Mesheline Shehade (Haifa)

To be a Christian, and to be a Seed are two similar things. To be a Christian, you need a lot of love and forgiveness, and this means to step down and to forgive like Jesus, when he was on the cross. But at the same time he asked us to say the truth, and not to hide it. He asked us to show the truth to everybody. To be a Seed, means to look for peace and brotherhood, and to do whatever it takes to fulfill peace and justice, and to say the truth without being angry at the ones who don't agree with me.

To be a Christian is not only to belong to a Christian family or to go to the church on Sunday. It's way beyond that. It's a big responsibility. Christianity believes that holy places are important, but not more important than people's lives. Christianity doesn't believe that people should die because of the holy places. The emphasis of Christianity is more a human thing—how to behave with people, to forgive, to love the other, even if they don't love you.

For me, to be a real Christian is to be an ambassador for my people and my religion, and to show the good faith that the others don't

know. Every act I do and every word I say has to be said or done in a polite and good way. I try to act like a human. That's how I can be an Arab, a Christian, and a Seed.

Now we have to always remember Jesus' request. He said, "I ask you to love each other, the way I loved you." Christianity is love, and Seeds of Peace is love. With this love, we can make miracles.



My First Christmas

by Hila Meller (Atlit)

My first Christmas was also the best one I could have had. The Christmas party at Mesheline's house consisted of every possible good thing I could think of: great company from Seeds of Peace from the city of Haifa; great food made by Mesheline, her sister and her mom; a great house, all decorated beautifully, which really brought the spirit of Christmas to everyone; and above all the hospitality and the great atmosphere Mesheline's family created. The few hours I spent there filled my heart with joy for so long and left me smiling for the week to follow.

Everywhere I went, Santa was with me, on the bathroom towels, on the candles and on the plates. And then all of a sudden, we heard a bell, and the next thing we

knew we were trying to convince Santa (also known as Mesheline's dad) that we've been good this year. He pulled out his red sack and everyone got a Christmas mug.

It was great sitting down with everyone, we talked and we laughed, and we ate. And then we moved to Mesheline's room to dance to the sounds of Arabic rap and Tupac, and then we ate.

The party ended after we finished eating some more tabule and other amazing delicacies.

This Christmas was something I will remember and cherish as one of the greatest times of my life. It was definitely one of those moments that make the rough everyday life look so much better, and that gives you something to hold on to when things are not so good. My first Christmas will always be something I will look back at to brighten up my day, and I want to thank Mesheline and her family for that.



Majeda Shehade



Two dozen Arab and Jewish Seeds celebrated Christmas at Mesheline's

IN THE SERVICE

Friendship's Way

by Lana Mansour (Tira)

"Thank you" were the words that I heard at the end of my visit with other members of the Community Service Team last Thursday to "Friendship's Way." Friendship's Way is a warm place located in Jaffa that provides high quality educational and cultural activities for Arab and Jewish children in need. Once every two weeks, along with seven other members of the Seeds of Peace Community Service Team, I go there to volunteer.

The cooperation and respect of Seeds of Peace combined with the good manners and equality in Friendship's Way together form a brilliant constellation in the sky of peace. Each experience that I had in Friendship's Way was a separate and very special star within this constellation. I can still remember the names of all the kids I have worked with, starting from Shai-li, and finishing with Samar. Samar, however, was the most special.

Samar's optimism was what made me decide she's the most special. She never stopped smiling back at me, even when I told her she was wrong about something. She really had problems in studying Hebrew, but she constantly asked me for another chance, so she could try by herself. I was amazed of the way she handled things despite her young age. Whenever

she had to leave, she gave me a hug and said, politely, "thank you." She was full of gratitude.

I can't be sure about the existence of any well-managed place in Israel, other than Friendship's Way, that serves so many important goals at the same time: bringing Arab and Jewish children together, helping to build a constructive future based on brotherhood, assisting children to advance educationally by doing their homework with them, clarifying difficult issues for them, and most importantly, encouraging them psychologically. For these reasons, we are lucky to find such a good place to volunteer at.

I am filled with happiness for having this great opportunity to make an effort for these kids, and to help them grow. So, thanks.

Teaching Respect, Getting Love

by Shirlee Yehudai

On the 29th of January, the Arab and Jewish Seeds of the Education Team got together for our first school presentation way up in the North. On the night before, we had a sleepover at my house. We had a midnight meeting and rediscussed our goals - to break the circle of stereotypes, to treat people with respect and tolerance and of course to help the next generation see beyond what their society dictates.

In the first school, "Nof Galilee," a Jewish school it was easy for all of us because we all understand Hebrew, and we were surprised at how maturely the kids spoke, how deeply they understood the situation, and how excited they were to meet the class from "the other side". At one point, in order to spark discussion about stereotypes, we put up drawings of Arabs and Jews on the board and asked for thoughts from the kids. "What do you know about the Arabs," the team asked. All of the stereotypes came out — they're terrorists, they're rock throwers, they're dirty. Then Bashar cut in, "hey, I'm sitting right here, and I'm an Arab. Am I those things?" The kids thought for a moment and looked at Bashar. When they'd had a minute, he began telling stories from camp. Elad and I chipped in. It wasn't long before the kids felt they had been part of something special. As the class ended, they all rushed Bashar to tell him they like him. Soon they were climbing on top of him. "One of the best



Lana, Itai and Sahar from the Community Service Team at Friendship's Way in Jaffa



Photos by Jethro Berkman



OF PEACE

This winter, Seeds have responded to tragedy by hitting the streets. Arabs and Jews created a Community Service Team to help kids in need, an Education Team to bring together Jewish and Arab children, a Bring-A-Friend Program to introduce their friends to "the other side," and a Palestinian Seed traveled around her devastated homeland with the U.N. — all in the service of peace.

days of my life" said Bashar, and he showed us two bracelets on his arm — "they gave these to me."

On the 19th of February, we went to the parallel class in the North, a Christian-Arab-Israeli elementary school in Nazereth. It was harder because not all of us know how to speak Arabic. But the kids were just as amazing. They too were excited to meet new kids and I think I speak in the name of all of the Education Team when I say that we are very much looking forward to our next job: bringing these two schools together.

Service Under Siege

by Ruba Nabulsi (Nablus)

Seeds of Peace is one of the international organizations that are able to give great help to international society by preparing leaders for tomorrow. Organizations like Seeds of Peace have the chance to break walls and cross borders between countries to establish a new future. I have been a Seed since 1996, and since then the years of peace and prosperity we enjoyed from 1993 until September 2000 have changed to the tragedy we face right now. Despite these changes, I am still proud that I am a Seed.

In September 1999 I was given the chance to volunteer for the United Nations. I study banking, which has allowed me to help the UN with its financial matters and investments in the Palestinian economy. After September 2000 my job has changed. Instead of visiting UN investments in some Palestinian places we have to check places of damage. Once I had the chance to visit the Gaza Strip, just a few days after the Israeli tanks destroyed more than 70 houses there, leaving families homeless under rain. They had to take camps as shelter to live in. That sight reminded me of what happened in 1948.

Maybe that site and other places I had the chance to visit around the Palestinian cities are the secret of that inner motive inside myself. The UN helps by continuing to work during this unbelievably hard atmosphere, and gives us the power to reach a lot of people in different places and to help them. Together we help people to get across checkpoints, and give people medical help and food.

Over the last few months I had a mission in Jericho with a friend of mine. As we were on our way back to Nablus, we faced a checkpoint. We had to stay there three hours. Soldiers did not allow us to get in or even to go back and look for another road. Their only condition for us to leave was to clean their cabin!

It is not unusual to have this kind of treatment, but the UN is a protected organization, so some kind of respect should be shown. Some soldiers

around the checkpoints have a good knowledge about the nature of the UN job so they stop the staff or create difficult conditions. At Beit Rima when Israeli soldiers killed six Palestinians, they did not allow the UN or the Red Cross to get in.

Usually, when I leave home to go on duty I say goodbye to my Mum as if I am going to see her for the last time, and it's the same thing for all of my friends. We do our duties holding our spirits between our hands, but we still are there any time to give any kind of help. That's the importance of these international organizations in the Middle East, to be a witness to our tragedy.

I'm sorry to say that they do not have a big opportunity to change the reality right now. But if they had the opportunity, I think Seeds of Peace and the UN could change the whole world, each in its own way. It is time now to give them that turn. Who knows? Maybe life will start a new way this time.

Radio Portland: Voice Of The World

by Sam Peisner (Portland, Maine)

The city of Portland is one of the largest refugee resettlement locations in the country, so problems arise among the different groups. These conflicts are similar to the wars taking place all over the world, but on a smaller scale. This is why the Portland Project was formed. Our near thirty members have all attended Seeds of Peace summer camp. We have all learned, or are in the process of learning, how to deal with the cultural problems that arise. Using these skills and our experience, we have done various things in Maine to help enrich and teach people. A college radio station offered us our own radio show. We interviewed people in Portland High School about why they thought these disputes existed. Many people said that it was because of fear. Our Seeds Winnie Kasa (originally from Sudan), Naima Margan (originally from Somalia) and Man Ho (who is originally from Vietnam) all spoke. Our goal is to open the eyes of the Portland community to what is really going on. One day, hopefully many of our problems will be solved. Until then, the Portland Project will be here guiding the way.

THE BALKANS

SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC IN THE HAGUE TRIBUNAL: TEN YEARS OF TRAGEDY ON TRIAL

Time to Change the Channel in Serbia

by Marko Aksentijevic (Belgrade)

As Serbia is a poor country, with politics full of intrigue, and as the TV programs here are boring, shows dealing with political issues have grown extremely popular over the past ten years. Our parliament, compared with the Hague tribunal, looks like a B-production movie, and the issue that the tribunal is dealing with is very sensitive for people here, so TV broadcasts from the Hague are very popular and everyone has their own point of view. Opinions are of course divided, just like they always were. Beliefs range from those giving Milosevic support at Main Square in Belgrade to those feeling that his place is in prison.

The belief which is most common here, however, is the one that considers the Hague tribunal illegal. Right now most of the prisoners are Serbs, although war criminals from other nationalities are all over the Balkans, and the same countries that bombed us 3 years ago are now the prosecutors as well as the judges. All this does not give a sense of credibility to Hague tribunal for the people here. What's more ironic is that exactly the same countries made him the hero of the nation. They put sanctions on us and he convinced people that the world does not like Serbs. Then they bombed our country, and thus put the whole blame for the bad situation on themselves, and took the blame from Milosevic.

Milosevic knew how to manipulate a crowd, and he still knows to manipulate the facts. He's skilled in turning truth around, but today when he's far away from us and his position of power, many Serbian people do not find the things he says at the tribunal troubling. But on the other



side, today on Seedsnet I saw a letter from a friend from Croatia who finds what Milosevic said very offensive. I can only imagine the feelings that rise in families of victims who died in the crimes he is accused of. But she also wrote that Croat war criminals are prosecuted in their own country. Why is the Hague tribunal for war crimes committed only by Serbs? Why can't we have a trial for Milosevic here? Didn't we suffer the most by having him as leader? Feelings about these questions are very hard to settle. For me the idea of the Hague tribunal as an institution doesn't fit. On the other hand, the idea of Milosevic as a victim is disgusting as well. His guilt for the things he did to us could be bigger than the crimes committed in wars in which leaders on all sides were leading people with similar goals in mind.

Is this trial going to bring more peace in the Balkans? That's hard to say. People on the non-Serbian side could see the trial as a Serbian move towards Europe and peace. But is that going to truly bring all the Balkan nations closer together? Only time will tell.

What scares me is the opportunity that is given to Milosevic once again to be a hero on the trial that people here find illegal. He will not have an opportunity to use that popularity. But what bothers me, knowing how many people suffer during his rule, is hearing people who suffered making him a hero. The outcome of this trial, which I find uneasy to watch, is easy to predict. It sounds paradoxical, but he will be declared guilty for crimes he really did commit, but without any strong evidence. I just hope that soon, after 15 years, I will not have to watch Milosevic's face every time I turn on the TV.



Milosevic, Master of Media Manipulation

by Neva Bulovec (Zagreb)

Slobodan Milosevic is in The Hague, being prosecuted for the terrible crimes committed during the Serbo-Croatian and the Bosnian wars from 1991 until 1995, and for crimes committed by the Yugoslav National Army and Serb paramilitary groups in Kosovo for which he was responsible as President of Yugoslavia. But what is also being prosecuted is the idea of "Greater Serbia." His trial is well covered by media, both Croatian and international, as a result of great interest in the process. And that gives him another chance to try and twist the truth.

In the past, the idea of the war as a civil war was formed in the international media by well-developed Serbian diplomacy. That created international confusion, so the guilt for the war was equally divided between Serbs and Croats. That the war was led on Croatian territory and Croatian towns were devastated by the JNA (Yugoslav National Army) was overlooked. I experienced it personally; I had to spend years of my earliest childhood in the basement with my mother and sister, not knowing where my father was. Many of my friends were Croat refugees from Vukovar, Petrinja and Vinkovci, children who lost their homes, their friends and even their parents.

Milosevic's war stemmed from his belief in the idea of Greater Serbia. During the Communist years, the idea of Greater Serbia became popular among Serb politicians and -intellectuals, and shortly after the death of



Tito, they openly declared their intentions by publishing the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art. They supported uniting all ethnic Serbs in one state, even though millions of these people lived inside the territory of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, mixed among millions of Croats and Muslims. The proposed border of Greater Serbia took away much of the territory of Croatia. Milosevic stated that all Serbs should live in the same country. When Slovenia and Croatia moved for independence from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, Serbs living in Croatia rebelled against the Croatian government. They attempted to form a new country of Krajina that was actually a puppet country of Milosevic himself, but after years of fighting and ethnic cleansing, he left those same Krajina Serbs out to dry.

The prosecutor in the Hague is describing all the horrifying details of the destruction of Croatian towns that involved liquidation and massacres of the non-Serbian civilian population. Everything the prosecutor stated was supported by evidence that included videotapes and photos, and their credibility is going to be assured by testimonies of the victims. This will individualize the suffering of the people that were killed and cannot speak today on their own behalf, but need to be heard.

Milosevic's defense strategy was not surprising. He is an experienced manipulator of the truth. From the beginning, Milosevic encouraged hate against Croats. Serbs believed his propaganda and now he is pulling the same trick in his trial. He showed pictures of dead

I just hope that soon, for the first time in my life, I will not have to see Milosevic's face every time I turn on the TV.

bodies but stated that all were killed by NATO bombings. Surely some were, but did he mention Serbian massacres of the civilian population in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo? No. In short he is stating that Croats and Bosnians attacked themselves and each other, that the UN and NATO killed Albanians, all to portray Serbia badly in the international media. He wants to make it seem that all the world conspired against Serbia.

What does this trial mean for Croatian people? At last the truth of the crimes committed in Croatia is going to be recognized, and the main architect of that horror will be brought to justice, no matter what his defense. Nothing can justify the suffering and horror that was brought to the people of Croatia, no matter if they were Croats or Serbs.

Mixed Feelings in Bosnia and Kosovo: Hope, Outrage, Grief, Relief, and Turning off the TV

Don't Be Fooled

Watching Milosevic's defense, we are asking how someone can lie like that and be convinced by his own words? In my country, we look at that differently than people who didn't survive what we did. We are taking the trial as the way to show the world what happened here. Nobody, especially not Serbs, should let Milosevic delude them that all Serbs are on trial here. It's Milosevic's trial for his own crimes. Everybody should take responsibility and we should hope that they have a fair trial, for all the innocent victims, and for the next generations with hope that war like this will never happen again anywhere.

Lejla Ahmetas (Visoko)

No One Wants to Watch

What surprises me most is how little people in Sarajevo seem to be interested in the trial. There's a live transmission of the trial on national TV, but no one at university mentions it. People don't talk directly of the past, but unfortunately, everything you talk about in Bosnia and Herzegovina is entrapped by the past. Milosevic's arrest is a great symbolic step toward peace, but in reality he is just an atom in the sea of war criminals and problems people face every day because of what Milosevic and his friends did. If I lived somewhere else I would appreciate changes in Serbia, but since I'm so close it leaves a bitter taste because Milosevic was elected more than once by millions of people who thought like him. Milosevic's deeds are still impacting people and they are legalized every day Bosnia-Herzegovina is divided in territory and in people.

Dzemila Helac (Sarajevo)

Guilty of Playing God

All criminals, regardless of their creed, race or color, have to be responsible for their crimes, and justice has to be satisfied at least partly. I say partly, because complete justice will never be possible, no one will ever be able to bring the dead back, take them to their families, return to the maimed their full bodies. Only God can do it. Those who played God, and took innocent people's lives, must be convicted.

Aida Popovac (Sarajevo)

The Beginning of the Sunrise

The past for Kosovar Albanian people is a wound that will last generations. This is the day that Kosovar people waited for since the 1980s when the war started--to see Milosevic on trial yelling and screaming, and putting himself face-to-face in front of the world with the trick that he doesn't want to speak English in the Hague. Every one who is guilty needs to pay sooner or later, especially Slobodan Milosevic, the person I see as responsible for killing Albanian people in Kosovo, in the roads, schools, houses, everywhere. I am sure that this is the end of his war career.

This is a big step for the Balkans for peace and freedom, because Milosevic is the reason for the conflict in the Balkans. There are still some of Milosevic's partners in Serbia trying to support him and his policies. The Serbian people need to see these partners as the criminals that they are and send them to the tribunal in The Hague. This will begin the next sunrise for the Serbian people and all the people of the Balkans, to live in democracy and freedom.

Nita Himaduna (Pristina)

Ideology is the Real Problem

The trial is important because the world can get a clear picture of the war, but there is a question how important that is for us now. Justice is not satisfied until his ideology is dead, in Republica Srpska (in Bosnia) where the same nationalist party that was in power during the war rules today, and in Yugoslavia.

Merrima Spahic (Sarajevo)

Like Normal Countries

The trial is important, but most important for me is that my country is about to stand again on its legs. We want to be a country with a future. When I saw TV reports from Belgrade, I realized that many Serbs now are not against the trial. They said they had many problems with Milosevic as a leader, so they agree that he should be on trial. They also want to join Europe, and that's why we can live in peace. We don't have to forgive or forget, but we need to listen, understand, and accept each other. That way we can finally live as normal countries.

Zlatan Gackic (Sarajevo)

A NEW DAWN FOR CYPRUS

Finally Facing Reality

by Anna Pieridou (Nicosia)

I was thrilled to hear about the negotiations between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders, Rauf Denktash and Glafkos Clerides. It seemed a solution was close! I believed if Mr. Clerides was having dinner at Mr. Denktash's home on the 'other side' in December, I might have dinner at a Turkish Cypriot friend's home this summer and the other way around! The leaders' statements were positive though both expressed concerns. They decided to meet three times a week at the buffer zone that has divided this island with barbed wire and armed guards since 1974.

One theory about the sudden need for a solution is that as Cyprus becomes a candidate to join the European Union, the future of the Turkish regime in the North, which is recognized only by Turkey and not by Europe, would be uncertain. Its economic situation is getting from bad to worse and Turkey has its own issues, such as trying to become a member of the EU itself.

A lot of Greek Cypriots didn't know what to think about the negotiations. Many people irresponsibly thought the problem solved, since everything seemed OK. Any solution would turn our lives upside-down. Everyone says they want to "free our land" but when there is a chance people freeze. Most Greek Cypriots will tell you they want a united, pre-1974 Cyprus, the way it used to be. If you tell them this cannot happen they will call you a traitor and stop thinking about the matter at all.

Lately people are more open-minded since they realize that if a solution is coming soon, we must be ready to deal with it. Most of our political parties meet with Turkish Cypriots often and that is positive because the message of coexistence gets through all the supporters of the parties and therefore to a lot of our people.

The leaders are discussing if the country should or should not be divided, how it will be



ruled and by who and of course the big issue of Cyprus entering the European Union.

Problems began when the Turkish side demanded a divided island of two independent countries--something that the Greek Cypriot side cannot accept. Our side can compromise on two communities with separate local governments but one common government--in other words a federation. Cyprus cannot recognize an independent Turkish republic. Nobody knows if the two sides will realize that both can't 'win'; sacrifices must be made in order to find a liveable solution.

Nobody knows how the negotiations will end. The odds of a solution seem low but perhaps the leaders will find common ground. Politics can be unpredictable and we have the right to hope.

Now more than ever, Cypriots of both communities must develop trust and understanding in order to influence the leaders to make a decision that assures human rights and secures a good future for all the Cypriots.

U. S. of Cyprus

by Nisan Gursel (Lefkosa)

War and tensions just make people live with tears and fear. Instead of protecting their country, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots divided their island into two parts to join with their motherlands Greece and Turkey. Neither side is innocent. All wars and tensions end with peace agreements. In 2002 this will hopefully be the same in Cyprus. After having a settlement on the island, Cyprus will become a member of the European Union under the possible name "United States of Cyprus." People at last will smile, because the two communities are not happy living separately. They want to live in a peaceful country with no fear and no tears, with financial opportunities and time for a better life.

At the European Union Summit in Helsinki in 1999, Turkey demanded to solve the Cyprus Problem and Turkish-Greek tensions. It was also decided that Cyprus would be a member of the EU if the problem would not be solved. As a result, the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders, Mr. Denktash and Mr. Klerides, started

meeting on 16th January 2002. These meetings should have started years ago. If they had, we would have been living together now.

Mr. Denktash and Mr. Klerides didn't come together to show they had changed their ideas. It seems to me that again Mr. Denktash wants to divide the island and join Turkey and Klerides wants to join Cyprus to Greece. Mr. Denktash and Mr. Klerides are responsible for the situation in Cyprus. But the world is changing the Cold War is over, and it is the time of the European Union. Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots and Turkey all want to be members of the EU. That means peace, human rights, development, law, and democracy. Finally Mr. Denktash and Mr. Klerides must understand that they should work toward these goals.

Before December, Mr. Klerides was planning to be a member of the EU as Cyprus. He was planning to struggle with Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, using the EU as a sword. Klerides was glad to hear Mr. Denktash say he would negotiate only if the Turkish-controlled North was recognized as a country, because it gave him an excuse to avoid the meeting. But articles that were written about that sentence made Denktash meet Klerides, because all the articles opposed Denktash's opinion.

After December 2001, he had 12 meetings with Klerides just in one month. Everyone in Cyprus wants peace. People have started to smile again. Our hopes have ended with disappointments many times. I hope this time is different. If we have peace, many people, especially Turkish Cypriots, won't have to immigrate to other countries to find jobs. We will have high living standards. Cypriots, Turkey and Greece, the EU, the UN, the USA and the UK, all support these meetings and they are hopeful. In the first round, they exchanged ideas on territory, freedom, security, settlers, and governmental issues. In the second part, which will start March 1, 2002, they will have to negotiate, because they divided our country and they have to reunite it. I wish Cypriot Seeds had a chance to sit next to them in these meetings. Maybe we could find a solution more easily. I hope we won't be upset at the end of these meetings. Peace is the most beautiful thing in the world. I hope there will be peace in Cyprus and in all other countries. Leaders should not have any right to make decisions that make people cry.



FROM SOMALIA TO MAINE WITH HOPE

A Lifetime's Experience in Fourteen Years

by Naima Margan
(Portland, Maine)

There's so much I want to share about my life. You name it, I have been through it. Funny don't you think, a girl like me, only fourteen, says she has seen it all. But the unbearable truth is I have. I have been to the ends of the earth and back and you know what? I'm glad. After all, I am who I am because of my past.

In Somalia, where I grew up, the history of the undying conflict is a bit different from what you normally hear at Seeds of Peace. It's not two nations fighting each other; it's a war within. They fight there for power and control, but over what I don't know, because they have destroyed everything already. One thing I know for sure is that the innocent people are left to suffer the consequences every day. They are the ones who are lost in the middle and forgotten, and I'm just among those who made it out.

I remember one day back home in Somalia. My cousin was young then, and she was playing along the back side of the house. She happened to stumble upon something, thinking she has found a toy. She was holding it in her hand playing with it when my other cousin saw her and she screamed. It turns out that that something was a bomb. There was another day when the fighting was happening so close to my house. We decided to take refuge in a friend's house and as we were walking away from the chaos this bullet with such massive velocity missed me by an inch and went right into a red gate by the side. Yeah, we had many days like that.

Lucky for us, we escaped the chaos and came to Kenya. It was a different atmosphere there. We no longer had to endure bullets flying by, and all that other stuff. There were new problems, however. We were refugees, and we lived in fear of crooks who called themselves police, who would rip off from us what little shred we had. There were also lots of sicknesses in Kenya, like malaria, so we were

always fearing for our health.

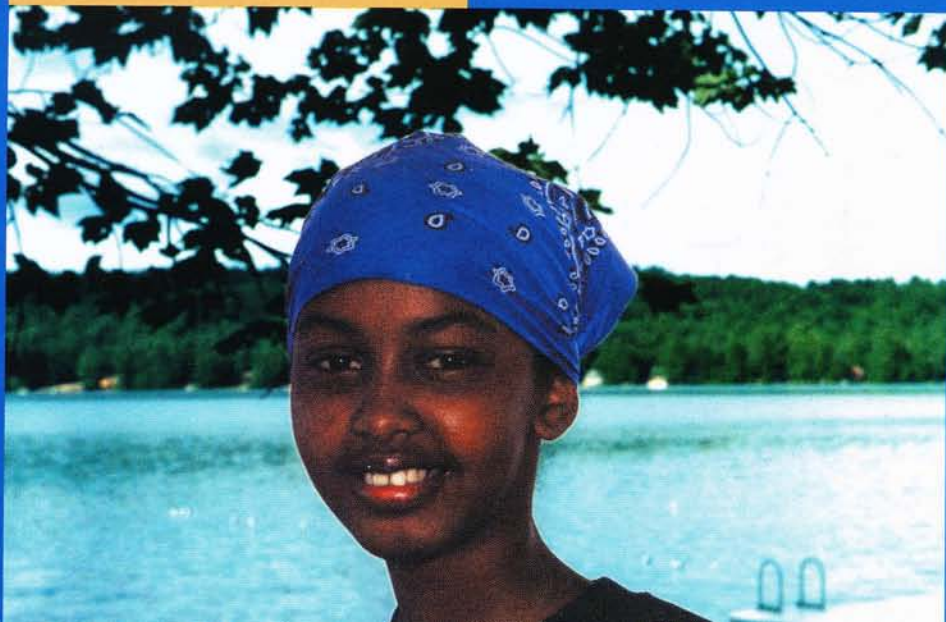
Finally, after a long process, my family came to America when I was 10 years old. Now I am here in America in one piece with my family. America is not really what I had hoped it would be. Don't get me wrong, I'm grateful, I mean, I get my education, I live in a somewhat safe

neighborhood, and I'm happy to some extent. But every day here it's like another type of battlefield, and I'm fighting for my rights--for diversity and equality. I actually never experienced discrimination based on my race or religion until I came to America. Although I've met a lot of great people in America, sometimes I am labeled and discriminated against by other people.

Two years ago I struggled to get some order in my life. It was really hard to adjust to living in a new country. When I first went to the Seeds of Peace camp in the summer of 2000, I found out that it's not just me who's going through these things in America, and I was really inspired by meeting other kids from war-torn countries who still had a lot of energy and hope. This experience built my confidence, and my view of the world got bigger and bigger. I guess you can say I am fighting the good fight for unity, peace, understanding, and tolerance, and I'm proud that I am on the right road.

For my friends who are going through a similar conflict that I went through: Don't lose hope. I know it's easier said than done, but really, we are the Seeds, and we are the future generations, and it's up to us to clean up the mess that was left by the older generations. In the future I hope for true unity, without any borders to keep us apart.

*It's not two nations
fighting; it's a war within.
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Who Am I? IDENTITY

Four teenagers, born in different countries, live an hour's drive but worlds apart, sharing a connection to Seeds of Peace, and a struggle just to be who they are in a land of conflict.



BASHAR BORN/RESIDENCE: TIRA
RELIGION: MUSLIM NATIONALITY:
ARAB PASSPORT: ISRAELI



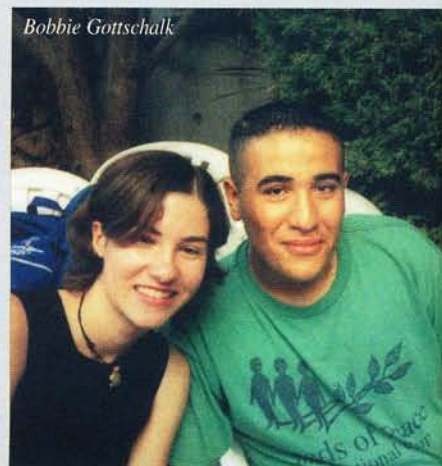
JULIA BORN: USSR RESIDENCE:
JERUSALEM RELIGION: JEWISH
PASSPORT: ISRAELI



HANNAH BORN: WASHINGTON, D.C.,
USA RESIDENCE: JERUSALEM RELI-
GION: JEWISH PASSPORT: USA



HIBA BORN/RESIDENCE: BEIT JALWA,
WEST BANK NATIONALITY: PALESTIN-
IAN PASSPORT: DENIED



Bashar with friend Inbal Lebovitz in Haifa

Arab, Palestinian, Israeli—and a Peacemaker

by Bashar Iraqi (Tira)

I know that my life is different from others, that there are events and experiences that are unique to me, a Palestinian Arab Israeli who feels that his state doesn't respect him. There are many questions that my identity causes me to ask: Why do the two sides, Jews and Arabs, fear each other so much? Why can't they bridge the gap by meeting, getting to know each other, discussing their problems, and getting along? And most important to me: What should be the identity of a Palestinian living in Israel?

In October 2000 I lost a close friend who was protesting the discrimination that Arab citizens of Israel feel in their daily lives, and the threats to their culture and roots. My friend was exercising his right to expression, not engaging in any violent behavior. But in the eyes of three Israeli soldiers, he threatened the security of the country. They chased him and shot him from point-blank range.

Soldiers killed my friend, but in reality, to me, the package of hatred, misunderstanding, and prejudices that each one of us carries is what killed him. What has happened here in Israel is that people have ceased communicating with each other, have forgotten each other's humanity and are being dragged to the battlefield.

Arabs and Jews are all suffering from the

violence. A Jewish mother lost her hope when her son was killed in a bus bombing. A Palestinian sister lost her brother in clashes with the soldiers. And many lose hope based on what they hear and see in the evening news. The situation is deteriorating and people continue to die from both sides, the Palestinian and the Israeli.

I too almost lost hope when my friend was murdered. The day after I heard he was killed, I felt angry towards everyone. I went to the streets where Arabs were demonstrating seeking revenge for my friend's death. A soldier pointed his rifle at me and cursed. I picked up a stone and at that moment I felt like throwing it at him.

Just then I got a call on my cell phone from a Jewish Israeli friend from Seeds of Peace. She begged me to leave before I got hurt. I started to walk away, still holding the rock. That day I received more calls from my friends from all over the world: Americans, Jordanians, Egyptians, and Israeli Jews, that I had met through the Seeds of Peace camp. They were calling to find out if I was okay after my friend's death, and warned me not to do anything that could end up harming me.

The fact that Israeli Jewish friends were calling me, crying and begging me to think twice before I took any action in a moment of anger, made me pause and think. It was ironic that they were expressing concern about my safety while an Israeli soldier had been threatening me with his gun.

I was so affected by the caring shown by these Jewish friends that it made me decide to return home and rethink what I want to do with all the anger that was inside of me. I concluded that my values as a peacemaker prevent me from throwing stones. Instead, I discovered that I could translate this anger into a powerful weapon by using words to convince people to oppose the violence that is breaking us apart.

A few days later, I decided to go to a peace tent near my city in which there were representatives from both sides, Palestinian Israelis and Jewish Israelis. There they faced each other, and shared their points of view in a

peaceful way. This was more in keeping with my identity as a peacemaker.

It is confusing, frustrating, and nowadays, scary to be a Palestinian Arab Israeli. But maybe these three parts of my identity are the most powerful weapons a peacemaker could ever have. My identity as a Palestinian Arab Israeli allows me to be a bridge between both sides and to help each side discover the reality of each other's humanity.

By translating between the two sides in coexistence activities sponsored by Seeds of Peace in which Jews and Arabs, I have learned that I can make a difference in the world. Now I am able to make them see beyond the hatred, bloodshed, stereotypes, and misunderstandings that have divided the two sides. I have learned the art of coexistence and the magical steps that teach you how to reach the minds of your future partners in peacemaking.

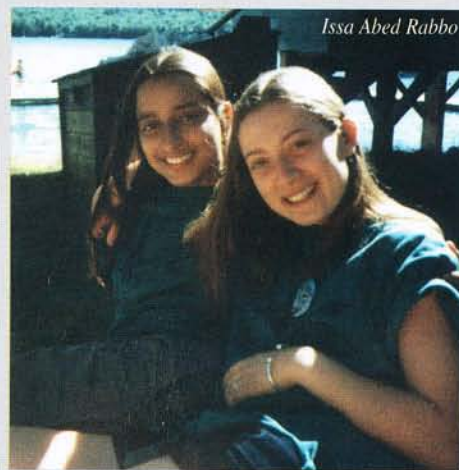
These steps are listening to the other side and trying to understand their point of view regardless of whether you agree or disagree. By doing this we have the opportunity to share our sadness and happiness with each other, and can develop friendships with the other side.

I live here abhorring the nightmare and anxiety in which we live every day. I want to stop it and make the changes that are needed. I want to see the real face of peace, a smile on children's faces. I know that with the help of my friends from the other side we can do this and translate words into actions.

I know that I can be the bridge between the minds of both sides, that until now have led to hate and war. I may not be able to change everyone's minds, but at least I can give them another way of thinking, a way that will lead to a future worth living. I want to stop the tears of mothers and sisters mourning their losses.

I will use my experience of coexistence to teach people to talk and compromise, keeping in mind our common humanity, so that they won't have to experience war.

I have learned to be Palestinian, Arab and Israeli—to accept and appreciate the conflicting identities within me. I will work the rest of my life to bring Palestinians and Israelis to the peace I have reached within myself.



Issa Abed Rabbo

Julia and Seeds counselor Yasmin Peer

Fighting Racism in Russia and in Israel

by Julia Resnitsky (Jerusalem)

Imagine you are alone in this world. There is no one to understand you, no one to care. You live far from your home and family, and all that you have to deal with, you have to deal with it on your own.

I was born Jewish in Russia, and until the age of seven I was raised in a Christian society. I experienced racism and discrimination, just because of my nationality and religion. I know what it's like to be hated, and that is why I could never hate.

I don't want to bore you with my life story. I just want to tell you how I feel: I feel alone. Since the beginning of the Intifada I've been confused, scared and alone. I lost two friends in terror attacks, and my friend lost his mother and his sister. I am surrounded by death and I cannot escape it.

My school is very unsupportive. Most of the people are very right-wing and hate Arabs—actually it seems like they hate everyone who is different from them. Last time a political argument was held in class, I had to leave the room because it was actually dangerous to stay. No one even tried to understand me. All they wanted was to hate.

They said I'm a dreamer, that I'm too naïve. They are right, I am naïve, but I have to be. I am surrounded by death. I hear shootings all the time. I'm scared to go on busses or anywhere outside. Every week when I leave home to go to school, I'm afraid I'll never see my family again. So in order to go on and live my life the way I want to, I have to be naïve, or I go insane!

My parents are also being very unsupportive. They don't agree with what I do. They don't understand why Seeds of Peace is so important to me. They don't like the fact that some of my best friends are Arabs and Palestinians. It is so ironic that my parents, who most of their lives suffered from racism, are being racist toward

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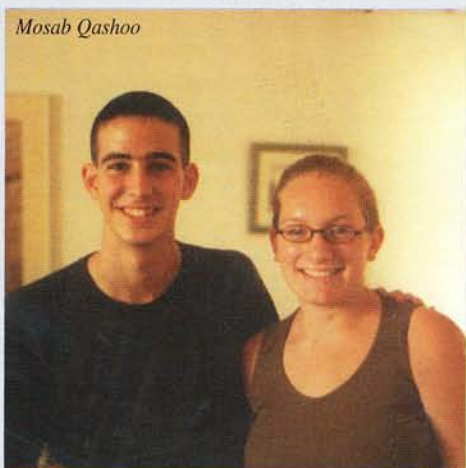
Who Am I? IDENTITY

others. It is really sad because I don't know if I could ever bring my Arab friends to my house, whenever my parents are around. I don't know if it makes me a bad friend or a bad Seed, but it makes me feel useless.

No matter how hard I try, I can't explain to them--my parents, my classmates, even my friends--what Seeds of Peace means to me. It is where I belong, where I feel most at home, where people understand me and can relate to what I feel.

I don't know when it became so hard, or when my optimism became a negative thing to those who refuse to believe. They are scared to believe that what we are fighting for, peace and coexistence, is possible. But it is possible.

I live in a place where no one understands me or my ideas, but I live two busses from a place where people do (the Seeds Center for Coexistence in Jerusalem). I refuse to lose hope or any part of my naivete. I guess all I want is to reach out and get an answer. I want not to be misunderstood, not to be scared, and not to be confused or alone.



Mosab Qashoo
Hannah Lantos and Israeli Seed Dor Kaidar.

American and Jewish in Jerusalem

by Hannah Lantos (Chicago)

I have always thought of myself as an American Jew: American in nationality and Jewish in religion. They went together. Neither came first and I didn't choose between them. Sometimes people wanted to make me choose, but I maintained my combined identity. This

year, I decided to come to Israel. Most of my friends were going to college, and could not understand my decision. "Why this year? You will be careful, won't you? Don't you think college is important?" they asked.

As a Jew I thought this will help me learn what it is to be Jewish. And after two years at Seeds of Peace, I was interested in the Middle East. I wanted to live here, to see what reality is and if our American images were all wrong.

Right now I am studying in Jerusalem. I don't think any of my questions have been answered. As a Jew, my questions have become even more complicated. My classes are about the history of Jerusalem, Zionism, and Diaspora Jews (Jews outside Israel). They are all about my basic questions: What does it mean to be Jewish? Am I an American Jew or a Jewish American? What is a Jewish state—is it a state that follows the laws of Orthodox Judaism, or a state where the majority is Jewish? And why is it necessary for the Jews to have a state?

Zionism is the national strain of Judaism. It is the belief that Jews need a country because we are a nation and not only a religion. We were spread around the world and should come back together. I do feel a connection to Jews around the world. I followed along with Passover prayers in Spain and Yom Kippur and Shabbat prayers in Israel. So many of the traditions, prayers, and tunes are the same. We have so much of the same history. But at the same time, I feel very different from, say, the Ethiopian Jews who live here. They look different; have different practices; and have a different history. Is it enough for them to have similar, though not the same, traditions? Does that connect us and make us a nation? And if so, how traditional do they or I have to be? Do I have to observe Shabbat? Do I have to fast on Yom Kippur, to marry a Jew, to live in Israel?

I often feel that in America I'm "more" Jewish because I have to choose to be Jewish. Here I don't have to make a choice about riding a bus on Shabbat or going to school on Rosh HaShanah (the Jewish New Year); I can't. At home, I need to make a conscious decision that makes me different from the majority of people. I need to decide to not to go to school or not ride a bus on Jewish holy days. I do it not because it's the law, but because I think it's right, because I have the choice. At home, I

won't go to school on Rosh HaShanah, but I will ride a bus on Shabbat. I made that decision because I think that it's right for me.

My optimistic ideals of a peaceful Jewish state have been uprooted. I believe that peace has to happen, but am depressed by the ongoing escalation of violence. I have found it easier to just not read the paper. At the same time, I have also come to understand the dire need for a solution as soon as possible, for the good of both Israelis and Palestinians.

I spent this afternoon at Yad VaShem, the Holocaust memorial museum in Jerusalem. Every time I go through the memorial to the 1.5 million children who were killed my eyes begin to water. Today, two of the children named as I walked through were named Hannah. One was three and the other was five. I didn't know what

I often feel that in America I'm "more" Jewish because I have to choose to be Jewish. As a Jew at home, I make a conscious decision that makes me different from the majority of people.

to think about that. They both had my name. And they were both so young. What kind of person could have killed those two little girls? I can't imagine most of the atrocities that occurred during the Holocaust and I don't know if any of these justify the creation of the state, but I do know that it makes me so sad that so much of my culture is gone. The language, the politics, the religious rituals, and the community of the Shtetl (small rural Jewish community of Eastern Europe) are all something of the soon to be forgotten past. They're completely gone.

I don't know if this state will prevent that from happening again, but it makes me happy to see the Jewishness still alive here. It makes me want to go home and keep up my community and my family in those traditions.

The morals behind this country are ones that I believe in. I believe in Judaism and the community that comes from that connection. I love that I can go to synagogue here and it's the

same basic service as it is at home. I love that we sing Jewish songs at soccer games. I love that Hammentashen (traditional holiday cookies for Purim) are being sold in all stores now. I love that when I say Talmud (one of the Jewish holy books), people know what I'm talking about. I love that my traditions are alive here. But does that mean I can't be Jewish in the U.S.A.?

I believe in this state, but as a Jew some of the military actions that are done in my name shock and disturb me. It scares me that after 50 years we have not been able to move out of the frame of mind that we are still in a fight for our existence. We exist, we're the strongest state in the region, and yet we're still stuck in survival mode. The Tanach (Hebrew Bible) says that Israel is supposed to be "a light unto the nations" and right now I don't see that happening.

As the year has progressed the idea of making aliyah (moving to Israel) has repeatedly come up. I used to think that just like the ideological reasons for moving here, I had ideological reasons for not. I was an American Jew.

I will always be an American. Even if I lived here people would always hear my accent and see me as an American. Also, I can never get rid of the American ideals that were instilled into me. It drives me crazy that Israel still doesn't have a constitution after 54 years! I believe in the ideals of freedom that America was built upon. I believe in the freedom of speech, to assemble (protest), and to practice religion among others. Americans have struggled with these and how to make our system work, but we're well on our way. Israel has most of these freedoms, but only to some degree. I don't think I actually have the freedom to practice my Judaism here. I can only get married under a Rabbi from the strictest stream of Judaism. Israel doesn't recognize rabbis from the liberal Judaism that is the norm in America.

However, my connection to other Jews has increased. My connection to my history has increased. I understand the historical and religious significance of the Temple Mount. I understand everything that has happened in Jerusalem. I understand the history of the land, both modern and biblical. I am beginning to understand the pride that a Holocaust survivor has when he sees the flag and knows that he can now defend himself. I understand that for thousands of years my ancestors have faced towards Jerusalem as they pray with their communities.

So, in my year here, my questions have become more complicated and the answers less clear. I don't think I have answers for the ideas that I started the year out with, but I do know how to start to think about them. I have a stronger connection with this land, but I don't know if I need to live here to be Jewish. And, finally, I do think that for the State of Israel to get back to the moral code that has defined Judaism since the beginning we need to make peace. Then we can be a light again.

COEXISTENCE HOTLINE

The author of this letter faces a dilemma. THE OLIVE BRANCH asks your support and guidance. Respond to olivebranch@seedsofpeace.org

Existence Denied: Life without I.D.

by Hiba Darwish (Beit Jala)

I'm a human being. I do what normal people do. I eat, sleep, breathe, laugh, cry. I have a family, friends, hopes and dreams. I have a life. But at the same time, I don't exist.



I am a Palestinian girl, 19 years old, and I study journalism and politics at Bir Zeit University. I went to Seeds of Peace in 1997 and I won the Color Games for the Green team, and had a great time. I love sports and I was one of the top basketball players in my city. I am a person, and I have an identity. But I can't get any official document to prove that I am me.

I have no ID card or number. I am not recorded in the computer of any country. My dad has an Israeli ID, my mom has a Palestinian one. When I was born, they didn't get me a birth certificate because they were confused about which to get. When the Palestinian Authority was established, it became more important to have an ID, but harder to get one. I tried to get Israeli ID, but couldn't because I live in Palestine. I tried to get Palestinian ID, with no result—they say that I don't exist.

I'm lost now. I can't go out of the country. I can't get a driver's license. I can't even marry. I think if someone kills me, they won't even be taken to court, because I never officially existed.

As a Palestinian in the West Bank, I have to cross Israeli checkpoints every day. They always ask for my ID, and I have to explain, and they say "It's not our problem." Last time I was going home, the soldiers told me I was rude because I said their government refused to give me ID, and they made me wait more than an hour. It made me feel desperate. Imagine that every day, people ask you to prove who you are, and you can't prove it's you.

Before I turned 16, I could still travel. Because I was underage, the Interior Ministry gave me a laissez-passer, a temporary travel document, so I could go to the US with Seeds of Peace. But now, I watch people come and go and do things I can't do, all for the same reason. My girls' basketball team was invited to play in the Arab school championships in Lebanon. It was my dream to play there. I tried so hard to get some kind of papers to leave the country. I sat in offices for hours. In the end, I sat in my house and watched them play on TV.

Now, I am volunteering in the public relations office at my university. I was offered chances to study and work abroad, for conferences and internships. Every

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time, they invite me, I get letters, but every time I watch the opportunity pass away from me for the same reason.

I am not just sitting around and waiting for God to give me an ID. I have been trying for years. People have tried to help, Seeds of Peace first among them. I have all kinds of documents, school records, report cards, pictures, all sitting on a shelf in a file somewhere in the Palestinian Interior Ministry. I have met with politicians and organizations, and seen them try to help and go. No one in that office seems to move. And I don't even blame them, because they don't have the power—in the end, the Israeli government has to approve everything. I am still here, living, eating, breathing, studying, and trying to keep some hope that one day I will officially exist.

Poems

Homesick

Often called a small place
With her gorgeous problems
And the target of all living room jokes
I hear the smashing panes

But she's where I'm born
Yeah, this is my home

Hey Mr. Trouble-Maker
Is she a sting on your chair
Stop brushing off her pretty flower
You just do this in a caring way
That as if it's your whole job
You put so many souls in her
Then resonate all the passions on them
Needed to make her insane!

Hey! Stop abusing her!
She's my only home
All the beings hurting her
Even if you're unconscious
Now just awaken yourself
With my screams of rebel!

Get all the hammers and sickles
Out of my house
Say 'No' to
Bloody and snaky moonlights
Yeah this is my home
And she's where I'm born

Home! Hear Me!
Your children under beloved
Or even in oppression
They only need to learn
To be happy from so-called little things
And it's happening
We're strong and we won't let them
Make you insane, torn, broken and dead

Your dream still is on
You're my all love
Loving you is the only gun
And it's inside us all
Now I'll arouse that
With my screams of rebel!

And you're why I'm born
Yeah! You're the home
Home sweet home
My home... My home...

by Mehmet Ratip (Lefkosa)

Right Now

Somewhere in the world
Right now
Some people are crying
Together all their tears
Could make a river
A river of sadness and despair
Somewhere in the world
Right now
Some people are hoping
Together all their hopes
Could create a cloud
A cloud of dreams not lived
Somewhere in the world
Right now
Some people are trying
Together all their tears
and hope and commitment
Can give us a better world

Changes

One blink of an eye
And the whole world can change
You don't know what's hit you
Or what you can do

One moment familiar
The next so unknown
What shall the world be like?
A position not traveled

I want things to change
But the change also frightens
I want to move on
But it makes things unclear

Still the world is moving
And all of us inside it
So stand up greet the world
Beware, be scared, but still stand

by Yona Kaplan (Jerusalem)

by Tim Bak (Portland)



You only need one friend....

You Are Our Hope

Lauren Rosenzweig's husband was killed in the attacks of September 11th. She felt there was nothing more important to do than share her story and her support with Seeds Of Peace participants in New York.

Sunday, November 11, 2001

The morning of September 11th was an ordinary "travel" morning in the Rosenzweig household near Boston. Phil, my husband, came in to wake me and kiss me goodbye before going on a flight to Los Angeles, California. Normally I'd give him a quick peck on the cheek and go back to sleep, but on our new schedule I had to get up anyway. So I pulled Phil toward me and said give me a good kiss, and he did.

That was the last time I saw him. Phil was on American Airlines Flight 11, which terrorists seized control of and flew straight into the World Trade Center North Tower.

I know for many of you terrorism, death, and destruction are something that you've had to live with every day. For our family, this was not something we ever thought would happen. When Phil and I were growing up, we wore buttons that said, "War is not healthy for children and other living things." We believed all the words of John Lennon's song "Imagine." Phil wouldn't work for any companies that made weapons or built computer systems for defense. He worked in a large computer company that employed people from all nationalities and religions. He made sure that all the religious and cultural needs of the people in his group were met. When they went back to visit family, they'd bring Phil presents. While cleaning out his office, I found items from India, Pakistan, and China that people had brought him. It seemed so unfair that my Phil was killed in such an act of hate.

When it became apparent that most likely Phil was dead, we decided to go ahead with the Memorial Service and obituary and all the things you need to do in these situations. Phil didn't have a favorite charity. What I wanted to give to was an organization that would make this not happen again to anyone, anywhere. Just three weeks prior, I had seen campers from Seeds of Peace accept an award by Colin Powell on TV. I remembered the hope I felt, and the warmth as campers talked about their experiences in getting to know people from the other side. I cried because I was touched so deeply by their words.

I decided to list Seeds of Peace as the organization to donate to in Phil's memory. But what happened in our community wasn't just the raising of money. Most people had never heard of Seeds of Peace, but because of us they learned about it, and told others. What you are doing has a huge impact – you are making a difference. I was afraid to come here – I fear everything. But I overcame it to tell you what a difference your organization has made to our family, our town, and our friends all over the country who have learned about you. Getting to know each other is the answer.

In this whole event, what I found most telling was that the written materials they found in the terrorist's suitcase warned them not to talk or make eye contact with the other passengers. And I wonder what might have happened if they had. Probably, Phil, who was tall, would have offered to help Mohammed Atta put his briefcase in the overhead compartment. Perhaps he might have asked him what he did for a living, and Mohammed Atta could have told him he was in urban planning. Perhaps Phil then would have told him his wife was on the planning board in their town. Perhaps, then it would have been just a little harder to drive that plane into the World Trade Center.

Getting to know each other is the antidote. Peace is a choice. Peace is a decision. You first decide Yes, Peace. Then you must do the work, because peace is harder than war and terrorism. Peace means work, it means compromise. It means saying death and destruction ruin the world. We must seek first to understand, and what has come out of the World Trade Center disaster is that we really don't understand. Many people think that what I would want after my husband's death is justice and revenge. But really what I wanted was for no one else to be killed anywhere, ever again. For everyone that dies, the people left behind have their hearts broken just like ours. Every death of innocent civilians, every death of soldiers, makes me sadder and leaves our world colder. Every time I hear one of you campers keep your commitment to peace I am encouraged. There will always be people out there who want to ruin peace. I am not sure why. But the more of us there are, the harder this will be. Keep up your work – do not be discouraged. You are our hope.

“Do not dismiss this as youthful idealism... We refuse to accept what is when we know what can be... we refuse to be victims. We know it is possible to redirect human passions, even calls for revenge, towards the goal of creating peace.”

*Declaration of Principles by Israeli, Palestinian, Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, Albanian, Macedonian, Kosovar, Indian, Pakistani, Turkish, Greek, American, Jordanian, Egyptian, Moroccan, Tunisian, and Cypriot
Seeds of Peace, New York City, November 2001*

