

WORLD

Human Rights and Genocide

The Church and the Holocaust

by Charles Finocchiaro, Cold Spring Harbor High School, NY

Historically, Christianity's relationship with Judaism has verged on the genocidal, in a manner basically ignored by modern society. The first recorded pogrom occurred in Alexandria circa CE 425, and the Jews of Europe might have been exterminated if not for Saint Augustine, who decreed that the Jews should survive. Augustine's motives were less than humanitarian though, as he

Concordat, a treaty that would give the Pope total spiritual authority over Germany's Catholics. Pacelli's vision of a Church removed from mundane concerns like politics and totally subservient to the Holy See dovetailed with Hitler's need to nullify political Catholicism. During the Kulturkampf, Bismarck's war on Catholicism, the faithful resisted vigorously, and Hitler knew that Catholic resistance to his regime could cripple it. If not



The Vatican, Rome

also stated that the Jews should be beaten down and oppressed, made to suffer for their purported responsibility for the execution of Jesus. His reason was that they should live so that they might face despair after the Second Coming, when, as he reasoned, Christ would condemn them to hell. Until Vatican II in 1965, it remained Church teaching that the Jews had murdered Jesus. The numerous pogroms perpetrated by Christians against Jews during the Spanish Inquisition, the Crusades and elsewhere are a matter of historical record, and yet Christianity's, more specifically Catholicism's, role in the Holocaust is only now coming to light.

During the Holocaust, the Church was led by Eugenio Pacelli, Pius XII. During his time as Papal Nuncio in Germany, Pacelli sought to solidify the Papacy's power through a Reich

immobilized by Pacelli, the Catholic community could likely have scuttled Hitler's regime before it even began. However, after years of dealing with a fractured or nonexistent political consensus in Germany, Pacelli approved of the idea of a dictatorship. As Heinrich Brüning, German Chancellor from 1930-1932, described Pacelli's plan, "Rigid governments, rigid centralization, and rigid treaties were supposed to introduce an era of stable order, an era of peace and quiet."

Nowhere was the Church more damningly and pervasively involved in the Holocaust than in Croatia. Yugoslavia initially declared itself opposed to the Axis, only to be invaded and partitioned by the Fascist countries. Croatia was granted independence as a Fascist state run by the Catholic Croats, who

proceeded to murder Orthodox Serbs and Jews with equal ferocity. It was from the beginning a pogrom driven by religion, the Catholics intent on eliminating all other sects. As stated by John Cornwell in his book *Hitler's Pope*, detailed information on the conduct of the Croats was available almost from the beginning, and the atrocities committed by the Ustashe government were such that even the hardened German troops stationed in Croatia were horrified. The archive at Rome is full of photographs of the bodies of tortured and murdered Orthodox Serbs. Still, Pacelli repeatedly met with figures from the Croat government, notably Pavelic, the head of state, who he gave de facto recognition of the Ustashe government. Pacelli was not alone in his collaborationism. The Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac, met with Pavelic, who told him that he would "not show tolerance toward the Orthodox Serbian Church", a phrase Stepinac considered memorable enough to write in his diary. Soon after, he had a letter read at all pulpits in his diocese, calling on clergy and faithful to obey the government. Later, he wrote a letter to Pavelic enthusiastically describing the mass conversion of Serbs trying to escape the Ustashe, in which he declared that there "was never such a good occasion as now for us to help Croatia to save the countless souls." His only complaint is that the government often murdered his converts, and he describes in detail several cases. Many priests, the majority Franciscan, actually took a leading role in the murder of the Orthodox, heading bands of Ustashe, often urging them forward with their crucifixes. After the war the Church was heavily involved in assisting the escape of Ustashe and Nazi war criminals and the valuables they had stolen from murdered Jews and Serbs. This effort was led by a Croatian priest, Father Krunoslav Dragonovic, who had close ties to Pavelic. Dragonovic most notably sheltered Klaus Barbie, the Butcher of Lyon, in the Vatican for over a year before his escape to Bolivia. The priest remained in his position at the Vatican until Pius' death in 1958, which strongly suggests that he was under the personal protection of the Pontiff.

It can be argued that Pacelli could have done little to stop the aforementioned atrocities, that to denounce the Axis would be a purely symbolic act that would destroy his ability to arbitrate, that during most of the war to denounce the Nazis would mean the occupation and potential destruction of the Vatican. However, there is one case in which the Pope could have had a very real and direct effect, in which he could have saved lives without putting himself at a significant risk: the deportation and murder of the Jews of Rome. By September of 1943 the Fascist government of Italy had fallen. Rome was under Nazi occupation, but it was widely regarded as simply a matter of time before the Allies took the city. At the beginning of the German occupation, not one Jew had been deported to the camps. Italy, despite the Church's intermittent policy of harassment, did not have the kind of ingrained culture of anti-Semitism found in Germany, and many Italians actively tried to hamper the process. SS Major Herbert Kappler, who was charged with the deportation, initially sat on it, fearing that any action against Rome's Jews would bring a violent reprisal from the rest of the population. Adolf Eichmann ultimately overruled Kappler and the deportation began. Many within Italy asked Pacelli to denounce the deportation, a group that ironically enough included the German authorities, led by German consul Albrecht von Kessel. The Germans made their appeal not out of humanitarianism, but because they remained afraid of the people

of Rome, and thought that the Pope's opposition would stop the SS. By October 17, more than 1060 people were imprisoned at the Collegio Militare, only blocks from the Vatican. A number of stories circulate to this day, to the effect that Pius negotiated for the release of a hundred prisoners, according to some sources paying a ransom to do so. None of these stories hold up under scrutiny. The Pope was begged by all involved, even many Germans, to denounce what was happening, and he still did nothing. The next day, the Jews were herded into cattle cars, bound for Auschwitz. The Vatican was informed at every stop of the condition of the prisoners and the progress of the train. After the train stopped in Padua, the local bishop begged the Pope to take action. After Vienna, the Pope was told the prisoners were begging for water. Of the 1060 people deported from Rome, sixteen survived the war. After the initial deportation, the Nazis sent another 1,084 Jews to the camps, although there was never another mass deportation. The courage of individual Italians in hiding members of the Jewish community has been noted, and is evidenced by the fact that while 2144 Jews were sent to the camps, the antebellum Jewish population was over 7,000. Although many hid in religious institutions under the auspices of individual priests, the Church itself never acted. Many petitioned the Pope to denounce the Nazis, but deprived of his support, the popular uprising the Nazis feared never materialized. Of the sixteen survivors in the initial group, all were men except for one young woman, Settimia Spizzichino, who was tortured by Dr. Mengele in the name of his perverted science. After her camp was liberated, she was found in a pile of corpses, where she had been sleeping for two days. She had this to say about Eugenio Pacelli: "...he was an anti-Semitic Pope, a pro-German Pope. He didn't take a single risk. And when they say the Pope is like Jesus Christ, it is not true. He did not save a single child. Nothing."

The story of Pius XII is in many ways the story of the Church's reaction against democracy and liberalism in the wake of the Syllabus of Errors. Pacelli, born into a family of Church lawyers during a period of profound anti-clericalism, was a product of the backlash that made democracy into an "outrageous treason." The quest for social justice and increasing local autonomy that had been developing among the more progressive clergy gave way to a fanatical crusade against Communism. A series of purges and Concordats guaranteed absolute Papal primacy. Pacelli was the architect of this edifice of Papal power and isolation. In trying to divest the Church from political control and crush local autonomy, he destroyed the Catholic Center Party of Germany, the last barrier to the Enabling Act, and abdicated his moral authority, thus playing directly into Hitler's hands. A paranoid and reactionary Church led by an authoritarian Pope dovetailed nicely with Hitler's plans for an absolute Fascist state. Today the Pope speaks of reconciliation and has apologized for the Church's treatment of the Jewish people. These laudable acts are lessened, however, by his attempts to canonize Eugenio Pacelli and halt the reforms of Vatican II, made in reaction to the Holocaust. His behavior is representative of that of the Church at large; much genuine regret accompanied by very little real reform. The Church still refuses to release its secret files on the Holocaust, and the tradition of Papal absolutism that strangled popular Catholic resistance to Fascism remains strong. Sources: *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*, by John Cornwell; *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews*, by James Carrol

Point and Counter-Point

We have received two points of view on the disputes between India and Pakistan. The first article discusses the disputes based around Kāshmir, and the other article brings together two friends who want peace in our world.

Point

By Krystle Shyam Kaul, Cold Spring Harbor High School, NY

The state of Jammu and Kāshmir (Kāshmeer) is the northernmost part of India. The state comprises of three main provinces- Jammu, Kāshmir, and Ladakh. Jammu is predominantly Hindu; Ladakh foredominantly Buddhist; and Kāshmir has a mixed population of Kāshmiri pundits and Kāshmiri Muslims. Most Kāshmiri Muslims are converted Hindus. In fact many Muslims and Hindus share the same last name. Kāshmir is the seat of Hinduism, and some of the holiest shrines of India are located in Kāshmir. It was once a beautiful region bountifully filled with orchards, farms, lakes, valleys, and abundant wildlife.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan or simply Pakistan is a southern Asian country that neighbors India. It was originally a part of India until the 1947 split when the British left India. It gained its independence on August 14, 1947. It is inhabited mostly by Muslims. Pakistan always coveted Kāshmir, a Himalayan paradise, and thus attacked it in 1948.

In 1947, Jammu and Kāshmir (commonly referred to as just- Kāshmir) were an independent state. The Maharaja Hari Singh of Kāshmir signed agreements with both Pakistan and India to remain neutral, and not join either country. India honored that agreement, but Pakistan did not. Pakistan violated this agreement signed with the Maharaja (Ruler) of Kāshmir. Pakistani raiders attacked the state in 1947 butchering thousands. They deliberately violated a treaty which should have called for immediate attention by neighboring countries; however, that did not happen. Families were forced to flee in the middle of the night. Young children had guns put to their heads, and were forced to watch this horrific event.

Jammu and Kāshmir, being a peaceful state with a weak army, was unable to defend itself. The Maharaja was then forced to flee to India for help. India agreed to defend this state under the condition that Jammu and Kāshmir agree to join India. This single act has been a thorn in Pakistan's side ever since, and they have continuously tried to try to grab Kāshmir and foment trouble. It was thus made a legitimate Indian state. Indian troops were flown into Kāshmir, and managed to drive away most of the Pakistani raiders from the state; however, a large portion was still under the control of Pakistani soldiers.

The fighting ended in 1949 because India did not want the war to drag on. India went to the United Nations and stated that Pakistan had violated an agreement, and attacked a neutral state, which is now a part of India. They wanted Pakistan to withdraw its troops from Jammu and Kāshmir. They also told India to ask the people of Jammu and Kāshmir whether they wanted to be a part of India or of Pakistan. India agreed to this plebiscite, but Pakistan did not, and refused to vacate the area. Because of this a plebiscite could not be

held. Powerful countries such as the United States and Britain did not force Pakistan to withdraw their troops from Kāshmir. They simply deemed the entire state a "Disputed Territory." All of this was a part of the "1948 Resolutions."

This "dispute" continues today because Pakistan refuses to negotiate with India. Pakistan said that the only solution they will agree to is if they get the Kāshmir Valley. Jammu and Kāshmir are legally a part of India. When the British left in 1947, they said that both India and Pakistan had to agree on one basic principal- every piece of land must go either to India or Pakistan. However, Jammu and Kāshmir was an exception. The Maharaja of the state wanted time to decide whether or not Kāshmir should join Pakistan or India. But the rulers of Pakistan did not give him the opportunity to decide, and instead attacked his state slaughtering thousands, severely damaging the territory. The Pakistani action forced the Maharaja to join India. The Hindus of Jammu, and the Buddhists of Ladakh did not want to join Pakistan.

The genocide committed against Kāshmiri Brahmins goes back hundred of years. Islamic rulers from Afghanistan butchered the local Hindus for refusing to convert to Islam. This persecution continued until 1989. In this same year when the current unrest started all Hindus were forced to flee the valley. Pakistani terrorists killed thousands of Hindus who refused to leave the valley or convert to Islam. My father's family, who has been living in the Valley for centuries was forced to leave at gunpoint, their estates confiscated and occupied by local Muslims.

Thousands of moderate Muslims have also fled the valley. The unrest has now taken the shape of kidnappings for ransom, forced marriages, abduction, and rape. Mercenaries trained in Pakistan came from Sudan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and several other countries. This uprising in Kāshmir is funded by Islamic countries, and Pakistan is its base camp. Ironically, all their terrorists were originally trained by the CIA to fight against Russian occupation of Afghanistan.

Islamic fundamentalism is in the forefront in an effort to grab Kāshmir. International players such as China, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the entire Islamic world want to see India destabilized. There is much chaos occurring in Kāshmir to date. Several native Jammuites and Kāshmiris are frightened by the Pakistani terrorists, and continue to live in constant fear.

The currently elected Chief Minister of Kāshmir's political party, the National Conference, is Dr. Farooq Abdullah. He has clearly stated that Kāshmir does not want to join Pakistan, and has pledged full support to the Indian government to fight against the terrorists and the traitors who want to break away from India. He has promised to end terrorism in his state with the help of the Indian government. However, this

resolution seems somewhat idealistic.

The violence continues in Jammu and Kāshmir because the terrorists fighting there are aided by Pakistan. The Pakistani government refuses to reconcile to the fact that Jammu and Kāshmir are a part of India. The Pakistanis also do not want peace to return to Jammu and Kāshmir. They are adamant about fighting for land which is not right fully theirs. Other countries have, and still are, acting indifferent to this horrid genocide. Foreign leaders can help simple by telling Pakistan to face reality and admit defeat. The government of India should also withdraw their troops from the state and accord it the autonomy promised by the late Pundit Nehru (1st Prime Minister of India).

Pakistan currently illegally owns a large chunk of Jammu and Kāshmir. They rule it as a dictatorship. The people living there have no freedom of choice, and must succumb to converting to Islam. The locals can not elect a government, and can not even speak out against the Pakistanis for fear of losing their lives. This is the reason a plebiscite can not be held today. Also, ever since the autocratic Dogra ruler signed the instrument of accession and annexed the state of Jammu and Kāshmir to India, it has been denied basic rights, which are being enjoyed by other states.

The current Prime Minister of Jammu and Kāshmir is Dr. Farooq Abdullah. In the article entitled, "Error! Bookmark not defined.(Mar. 30th, 2001)," from the Kāshmiri Observer, Dr. Abdullah stated that- "the problems in Jammu and Kāshmir would not end until Pakistan reconciles with reality that they can't get even and inch of the state." Another event which occurred on this same day was, Pakistan dismissed India's annual foreign policy report which accused Islamabad of stepping up "cross-border terrorism."

Amidst this suffering, leaders of the APHC have displayed a shocking indifference towards people who have made tremendous

Counter-Point

"We should not decide the future over the past"

Manal Ahmad, Pakistan and Maitreyi Doshi, India

Bombing, Bombing, Bombing....Killed, Killed, Killed.... War, War, War--nowadays only these words, only these thoughts echo in our minds. Everyday, each day, we rise from our beds in the morning not without a quiver of fear, apprehension, fright in our hearts. What if a full-scale war breaks out that very day? What if a strike is declared on all the markets and stores, and we have to go without food for days? What will happen, what will we do, if we are awoken one night from deep sleep by the ominous sound of the dreaded war siren?

No, this is not a passage out of a fiction novel...it is the truth. The truth that is actually happening at this very moment at the border of neighboring countries, Pakistan and India. Both are at loggerheads with each other, keen to devastate and annihilate completely the other's army, forces and camps. However, during the bombardments and artillery shellings, do they know what the citizens, the children of both the countries are going through? What they don't realize is that what they are destroying

sacrifices in order to rid Jammu and Kāshmir of its political uncertainty. The United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan, from the South Asian region, arrived in India a few days ago. Upon his arrival, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said in the parliament on Monday, "that talks on the future of Kāshmir would be started soon." He has, in fact, sought mandate from the nation for initiating a dialogue on the future of Jammu and Kāshmir. The statement is also the first where the Prime Minister has spoken about holding talks on the future of Kāshmir. Yet another significant aspect of the statement is that for the first time there are no embargoes such as asking Pakistan to stop "cross-border terrorism" or "to prevent Jehadi Organizations from sending Mujahideen across the Line of Actual Control" before holding talks. According to the Kāshmiri Observer, "That the United Nations has abandoned its role as peacemaker, particularly in the South Asian region, was proved by its secretary general, Kofi Annan, on his visit to Pakistan." Also, President George Bush nominated Robert D. Blackwill as new Ambassador to India. "Bob Black," as he is known, is considered an expert in Asian affairs.

Suffering of 1.5 million Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians who fled Kāshmir continue to be subjected to this massive inhumane slaughtering. According to Shyam Kaul, author of *Agony In Kāshmir*, "Presently the Kāshmiri community is living as exiles, and are spread everywhere because of the increasing Islamic fundamentalism." This statement holds true because almost 300,000 native Kāshmiris are currently living as fugitives in other countries. This conflict will never conclude until the day Pakistan realizes that Kāshmir officially belongs to India, and they have no right in taking it away from them. Pakistan has violated treaties, broken the code of moral conduct, and taken innocent lives. Even today, the people of Jammu and Kāshmir continue to be subjected to this genocidal

is not simply land and equipment. It is the entire future of the youth. Our future depends on the consequences of this aged battle over the state of Jammu and Kashmir: either a bright, friendly, peaceful future or a dark, broody, quarrelsome future. When will they learn? When will they learn that it is not necessary to resort to war and violent measures even in the severest of situations? And that every problem, every crisis, CAN be solved by peaceful talks and discussions?

Why is it that WAR is always the one and only 'solution' for them? It is probably the easiest way out of a dispute for them, but is it the same for us? Don't they care about us? Don't they care about what the innocent civilians of Kashmir are undergoing and have been undergoing for the past 50 years? They are humans, they have feelings and emotions. Do they think that it's good news for them when they learn that another of their family members has been killed by gun fire, or that their relative's house has been bombed or their children beaten and murdered? Do they think they enjoy it when they witness their mothers being raped by soldiers, or when they see their fathers whipped, butchered and shot and then thrown



into the river? Do they honestly think its funny to bomb their mosques and temples and schools and hospitals? Have they no compassion? Have they no morals? Have they no families and friends of their own? Can't they even try to put their feet in a Kashmiri's shoes and experience the pain, the suffering, the heartache? Have they no heart?

It's a sad, sad world we're living in today. People don't seem to feel, to sympathize, to understand anymore. What's wrong with them? Are these so-called world leaders blind? Can't they see the reality? How can they veil their eyes against the pathetic, pitiful, mortifying videos aired on TV 24 hours a day? How, we ask you HOW can they have peace of mind and conscience when they glibly say that no crimes and no human rights violations are being committed in the region?

How can they simply ignore the fact that ethnic cleansing and genocide IS being carried out on a tremendous scale in the territory? What more proof, what more evidence do they need?? Can't they see the misery, the plight of the Kashmiris? Can't YOU see?

Why can't they, two sides so close and yet so distinct, just ignore the differences between them for once, only once, to settle an ancient, heart-rending dispute that has destroyed the lives of millions and left this Heaven on Earth nothing but a grave of fire?

The breeze stood still. A big black cloud was hovering over the sky. That moment was unforgettable. That day every thing was going wrong. That was the longest day in their lives. It all happened very fast. The plane came and the coffin was removed with great respect. Marching on both sides the soldiers brought the coffin towards the house. The mother was in a bad state. Her eyes were swollen red. Seeing the coffin arriving, her eyes were again filled with tears. The sister had just fond memories of her brother in front of her eyes. Right then she was beside her mother trying to console her and tell her that everything would be all right. However, everyone knew that things would not be right. The wife knew that she now had to live alone all her life. The little son who was not more than 5 or 6 years old never even knew that he would never ever see his father again. All he knew was that his father had gone far away to a heavenly land. Do not ask how his father's condition was. His one and only beloved son had gone forever. Their hearts felt very heavy. It felt as if it were about to burst. The time had come to bid the final good-byes to the beloved son.

The soldier's body was taken to the crematorium. It was covered with the national flag. Then in that very moment the last shots were fired, and the bugle sang its last tune. Everyone saluted the soldier, and then the flag was lifted. Now the son had to burn/bury the body of his father. Imagine the plight of that weak little thing knowing that he was burning/burying his father. With nervous hands the body of that soldier

was burnt/buried. Now the soldier was on his own.

Can you all picture this in your mind for a minute? Think if it happened to you? How would you feel? In the same way just think how his family would have felt? What was his fault? Nothing, his only fault was that he fought in the war and was killed in it. So do you think war is bad? We do and so we are writing this article.

So many people have lost their lives. These people were not more than 30 years old. These years are the prime time of their life. However, before they have a chance to live in the real sense of the world, they die. Isn't it unfair on their part?

When there is peace in both the countries, then the money, which would have been used for war, will be saved, and that can be used for developing both the countries. Both the countries can help each other being developed. The money can be used for education, communication, industry, and development of natural resources.

So the question is, why do we fight -can't we stay in peace? Why follow the same path our ancestors followed or are following? What do we get from all these wars? Have you ever thought of how the soldier's wives would live? All their dreams were shattered, and dreams remained dreams. Not only is it an emotional strain but a mental, physical, economical and social strain. Due to the war the economy of the country is hindered, and tension prevails in the whole country.

Why can't we stop wars? Why? Isn't there any way we can stop wars? We think the main thing is that we should understand each other, let go, not keep remembering the past, the old facts, forget them and start a new life. And one important thing is not getting carried away with all those people who promote hatred towards each other. It is rightly stated that "We should not decide the Future over the Past". Okay, sometimes things are hard to forget. However, we need to try to forget them. We need to build an effort to forget them.

Sometimes we wonder why we fight for just a piece of land. Is it all worth it? Shedding so much blood, money and time. Instead of fighting why do we not use this same money to develop our nation? Why do we not use this money to educate our fellow citizens? Help the starving children? To develop our industry?

We think we need to think seriously over this. We are waiting for that day to come when we can proudly say: "Hey, you know, she is my best friend and guess what? She is from Pakistan, and I am from India.", and vice versa. So what? We are like any other friends. The time has come to tell the elders that we do not like this and will never support them in any way if they continue going all the same way.

Last but not the least we just want to say one thing: "Why live in the shadow of History, when we can create tomorrow's History."



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Doctors Without Borders also known as *Medecins Sans Frontieres*, is an organization of doctors and other volunteers who travel to war zones and other areas in crisis to care for refugees and displaced persons. The organization was founded in 1971 and currently has sections in eighteen different countries and programs in eighty countries. In 1999, Doctors Without Borders was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work with people in danger.

The mission of *Doctors Without Borders* is to deliver emergency medical aid to victims of armed conflict, epidemics, natural and man-made disasters, and ethnic or social marginalization. Recently, the organization set up an exhibit called, "A Refugee Camp in the Heart of the City" so that students, teachers, doctors, and others could learn about life in a refugee camp and about the conditions under which millions of people are forced to live.

Sleeping Sickness is one of the many diseases which poses a constant threat to people living in African countries which have been ravaged by war. If this illness goes untreated, it will inevitably be fatal. Rebecca Golden who was a volunteer in Angola describes the treatment. "The treatment is a form of arsenic and is extremely painful, I was visiting some children receiving their medicine and was amazed at their courage and strength. When the arsenic entered their bloodstream, they curled their toes, turned their heads and closed their eyes tightly. Their choice was to die or take the treatment. They accepted it with such clam. After 20 years of war and lost family members, they seem to accept this as just another part of the survival process."

The Armenian Genocide

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In 1915, the Ottoman Turks blamed all of their problems on the prospering Armenians who inhabited Turkey at the time of the Ottoman Empire's decline. An April 24th, 300 Armenian leaders, writers, and thinkers were brought together and killed. While this was occurring, 5,000 impoverished Armenian people were slaughtered in the streets and in their homes. The murders of these innocent people were committed in part by "Young Turks." They formed the Committee of Union and Progress. The directors of this horrible event were the Teshkilati Mahsusa. The Teshkilati Mahsusa was a group of very angry, criminals who were let out of jail for the purpose of killing the Armenians. The Turks were never able to fully assimilate the minorities of Turkey so they proposed having a pure national state. Any common Turkish individual who helped the Armenian people was killed. The remaining Armenian population was marched off to concentration camps in the deserts where they would either starve or burn to death. Many of the Armenians did not even make it to the camps. They died on the marches because of the lack of food and water. The "guards" would sometimes beat them to death. Not all of the Armenians were killed this way. In a different area, they were crowded onto barges that purposely sunk to the bottom of the sea.

During World War I, 1,500,000 Armenians were killed. Almost

In 1994, *Doctors Without Borders* was called into the Javari Valley in a remote area of the Brazilian Amazon. Due to an outbreak of Malaria, tribes indigenous to the region were facing extinction. Upon the arrival of *Doctors Without Borders*, the tribes did not have access to the only medication that is effective in treating the disease. *Doctors Without Borders* trained local health care workers to diagnose and treat Malaria as well as other diseases. According to the organization, since 1996, no Malaria related deaths have been reported in areas where they worked. Thanks in part to the work of this organization, in 1999 the Brazilian government developed Special Indigenous Health Districts, a health care system designed and managed by indigenous peoples. Project coordinator David Kaisel says "We are proud to have had such an important role in assuring that these isolated and threatened people are getting the appropriate and differentiated health care that is their right."

When *Doctors Without Borders* goes into an area of crisis, their immediate goals are to secure shelter, food, water, sanitation, and health care for those in need. Staff members are admitted into almost every country because they are not partial to any political or military groups. The only thing that the organization demands is that all staff members remain safe during their stay. The organization strongly emphasizes the fact that refugee camps are not designed to be permanent solutions to the plights of misplaced persons, and that the ultimate goal is to either relocate refugees or allow them to return to their homes. Because the living quarters in refugee camps are often close and sanitation is often marginal, the longer people remain in refugee camps the higher their risk for contracting serious diseases. However, it is often impossible for refugees to return to their homes, and finding places for refugees to relocate can be difficult. For these reasons, there are currently fourteen million refugees and up to twenty-five million internally displaced persons in the world today. For more information, check out their website at:

www.doctorswithoutborders.org

every imaginable method of murder was put to use. Some of these include oppression, hunger, thirst, walking without stop, rape, fire and cold. Watching in amazement from a far, Adolf Hitler got many ideas for his Holocaust from the Ottoman Turks.

Today, the Turkish Government denies that there was ever a genocide against the Armenian people. Their claim is that the people were merely removed from their living situations because they were located in a "war zone" when in actuality, only a fraction of the people killed were in a so-called "war zone." The Government has yet to convene a trial for these actions. Many leaders of other nations, some allies of Turkey, have testified that the genocide did in fact occur. To this day, only one Turkish government has recognized the killings and has had war crimes' trials where the people who were the leaders of these events were persecuted.

In Israel, many students are starting to learn more about this genocide. The Yad Vashem newsletter, *Martyrdom and Resistance* (May 2000) states that Israeli schools will be adding the Armenian Genocide to the curriculum. The curriculum will be based on *The 40 Days of Moussdag*, a story of Armenian refugees in Damascus. For more information, check out <http://imia.cc.duth.gr/turkey/armenian.html> and, for more information: <http://www.umd.umich.edu/dept/armenian/facts/genocide.html>

The Taliban and Afghanistan

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The history of Afghanistan is one of constant change in the government. In recent history, the ruling government of Afghanistan was displaced by the Taliban movement. The Taliban is an Islamic fundamentalist group which now claims control of about 95 percent of the country. The Taliban has implemented a strict code of Islamic justice which involves public executions and floggings among other things. The Taliban follows a harsh version of Islam that does not allow women to work or be educated, forces men to wear beards and pray in mosques without fail, and outlaws all forms of light entertainment, which include music, movies, and television other than religious songs. Young girls must remain partially covered and women must completely conceal themselves, who usually shroud themselves from head to toe in burqas. The Taliban are Sunni Muslims and mostly Pashtun- the majority ethnic group of Afghanistan. The Taliban is opposed by religious and ethnic minorities consisting of the Shiites, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks. The Taliban is now fighting these minorities on several different fronts across Afghanistan in order to gain complete control of the country.

The Taliban Islamic Movement of Afghanistan is a grass roots movement that draws its power and support from the masses of Afghan people. People who support the Taliban agree with the paramount goal of the Taliban, which is to collect weapons from the hands of irresponsible individuals, groups, and warlords. During the first two years of the Taliban's existence (1996-1998), they were able to restore peace and security to more than 80 percent of Afghan territory. After the Taliban succeeded in driving away the corrupt forces of Rabani and his military from Kabul in September 1996, the Taliban was able to establish a central administration in the capital which was run by people of supposed good faith and intention. The Taliban has been in control of the country ever since this military victory.

The Taliban government is currently only recognized by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The U.N. Security Council in December 2000 gave the Taliban one month to surrender Osama bin Laden, a terrorist, and close "terrorist" training camps or suffer new economic sanctions. The U.N. has also deemed the Taliban of putting its people through countless human rights violations. The United States, Russia, and other members of the U.N. Security Council have been working on an arms embargo against the Taliban unless it stops harboring terrorists, ends the illegal drug trade going on within the country, and gives over Osama bin Laden. These sanctions and others have been put into action against Afghanistan and have driven up the prices of essential food items for citizens. Osama bin Laden, the leader of his organization Al Qaida, has been linked to the 1998 bombings of the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which resulted in the deaths of 234 people. He is also suspected to be linked to the October 12, 2000 USS Cole bombing in Yemen which resulted in the death of seventeen sailors. Another part of a draft resolution by the UN calls for a ban on all air travel to and from Afghanistan

with an exception for humanitarian flights. Taliban officials would be unable to leave the country except to participate in religious activities or for U.N. sponsored peace negotiations.

In recent developments in the Afghanistan region, the Taliban ordered U.N. political offices in Kabul to be shut down, an action highly criticized by the United States. This action was made in retaliation after the Taliban closed their only office in the United States. The United States is now beginning to airlift tents and blankets to the thousands of Afghan refugees who have fled to Pakistan to escape decades of civil war and the worst drought in 30 years. Afghans are struggling to live through the winter of 2000-2001 with temperatures that plunge to -25 degrees centigrade at night with little shelter. Since September of 2000, 160,000 refugees (and the number is still rising) have escaped to Pakistan and an estimated two million people have fled the Afghan war since 1979. Pakistan can barely handle any more Afghan refugees and may begin to take stricter measures to make its borders less accessible to Afghans. The U.N. now also estimates that more than 1 million Afghans may be at immediate risk of starvation.

Buddha statues within Afghanistan have been destroyed including statues dating as far back as the 3rd and 5th centuries. The Taliban has ordered these statues to be destroyed because they are idolatrous and "un-Islamic." The Taliban has said 80% of the statues measuring 120 to 170 feet have been demolished. Most of the country's ancient Buddhist relics were also destroyed by Afghan troops including 6,000 statues in the Kabul museum, and now the Taliban will not allow anyone to enter the museum. By Afghanistan trying to erase its Buddhist past through statue and relic destruction, international outrage and condemnation has been sparked. The Taliban has also recently cracked down on the heroin trade within their country and has received little international support for this action. Other nations seem skeptical of Afghanistan since it does produce 75% of the world opium.

Recent statistics show that Afghanistan's female literacy rate is now a dismal 4%, which is not much worse than the 7% rate of 20 years ago. This is evident since schooling is forbidden for all girls beyond age eight. The Taliban has even imposed the measure that anyone who converts from Islam to another religion will receive the death penalty and any non-Muslim trying to win converts will also be killed. A five year jail term will be placed on any bookstore owner within Afghanistan trying to sell material critical of Islam or materials about other religions. "In Afghanistan, we cannot have special hopes about the future," says Suraj Begum, 35, a widow who supports her three girls on 30 cents a day by washing clothes. Women still face beatings, rape, forced marriage, and even death despite lowered crime rates within the country.

The ruling Taliban since 1996 has changed the structure of Afghanistan dramatically to different policy measures, religious beliefs, and the social practices of its people. The developments in Afghanistan and the Taliban keep unfolding further everyday and we can only wait and see what the future has in store.

Belarus Students Make Valuable Contribution to the HGP

The Tragedy of Jews from Skidel

Here's the article for HGP that is a result of the work of three students - Kate Suvorina, Max Rybalchenko and Alexander Petriaev for two years. There are some changes in our small HGP group as Kate is a student of Grodno State University now. Still she contributed so much to the work, and we feel obliged to mention her as one of the authors of the article we are sending you now. Besides there's a message from a student of Grodno School # 10 that shows a very short but so tragic scene seen by his Grandpa more than 50 years ago. Now we are preparing a meeting with an old man who saved a Jewish family during WW II and hope to make an interview with him. We plan to place this interview on the web-site of our school later, but first we should get the agreement of this man for a meeting. Please, find enclosed the articles written by the students.

Best regards,

Natalia Petriaeva, School # 14, Grodno, Belarus

The Tragedy of Jews from Skidel (a little town 20 kms from Grodno) began at the very first moment of the fascist occupation. The attack of the fascists on 22 June 1941 was so unexpected, their movement forward into the territory of the USSR was so quick that only a few citizens of Belarus managed to evacuate.

The center of the town of Skidel (Grodno Region, Belarus) was ruined during bombardments, though there were no military objects in it. The center was inhabited mainly by Jewish families, so many of them lost their homes. They found a shelter in the families of Belarussians, Russians, Ukrainians and Poles. They didn't know that severe trials were waiting for them, the trials that would lead them to the gas cells of Auschwitz and Treblinka. Long and full of moral and physical tortures this way was!

Some days after the occupation of Skidel fascists and their devoted servants - local policemen gathered all the Jews of the town in the central square of Skidel where a monument to Vladimir Lenin was traditionally erected by the Communist powers. The fascists dumped the monument down with the help of a tank, and then under the threat of execution Jews were to break it into smaller pieces. After that, they were ordered to take a small piece each and to carry it to the river Skidelka. When everybody took a piece of the monument, they were formed in a column and ordered to move on. A minute later a new order was made, "Everybody must sob bitterly. Those who wouldn't do it, would be shot immediately."

Some months later, all Skidel Jews were driven into a ghetto. There were only two, two-storied wooden buildings of the former barracks of a detachment of the Red Army on the territory of the ghetto. So not all people got places under a roof. Trying to protect themselves from rain and cold they built mud-huts. Still some people were to live in open pits. The ghetto was surrounded

by several lines of barbed wire. Those who tried to escape were shot without any warning. The ghetto people were tragically short of food. They could get only those little supplies which were brought from time to time by local people. Besides they were to work hard for the fascists. After a very short period of time all people were completely worn out. During the winter of 1941-1942 people suffered a lot from cold and hunger. As there were no medical help, hundreds of people died from different diseases, exhaustion and hunger. Many prisoners tried to escape,

to run away to the forest and to join a partisan detachment. Some of them succeeded in their run-away and fought heroically against fascists till the end of the war.

Many local people, forgetting about the danger of being shot, helped the ghetto prisoners as much as they only could. We may mention the family of Anna and Jacob Paray from the nearby village Glinyany who supported Jewish families with food and clothes. But we also should mention that there were people from the local population who voluntarily joined fascists and helped them to taunt the ghetto prisoners.

In the Grodno State Archives they still keep documents about rewarding the policemen "of Slavic nationality for excellent service in the period of 1941-1944." Their "excellent service" as we got to know

reading the papers on was persecuting Jews, executing them. The policemen got medals or higher military ranks for killing defenseless kids, women and old people in the Skidel Ghetto. How many of their victims were buried on the territory of the ghetto? Nobody knows the exact number.

At the beginning of 1942 all the prisoners of the Skidel ghetto were gathered in the central square. They were ordered to take all their things with them. Fascists explained to them that they would be taken to some other place with better living conditions and easier work. Those who couldn't walk were put

My Grandfather's Story

I would like to retell you a story that my grandfather told me when I was a young boy. This is a story about World War II. My grandfather was a young boy then and lived in a village. It was a usual day and he was running around his house playing with his friends. And suddenly he saw a cart with a horse. A middle-aged well-dressed man was sitting on it. He was driving slowly. And what was strange was that there was a group of men dragging behind the cart. They were tied together with a rope, and the rope was tied to the cart so they couldn't escape. When this strange procession left the village, my grandfather ran to his father and asked him about this procession. The answer was so striking, he still remembers it very vividly. It appeared that one of the local inhabitants caught a group of Jews and was taking them to the nearest fascists post to receive a reward for capturing Jews.

Igor Grigus
Dmitri Kalesnikov - English teacher

on the peasants' carts. All the things were also placed on the carts. The rest of the people were formed in a column which was divided into several groups. Each group was tied-up by a rope on the level of a dropped arm. The rope was carried by the people who stood at the beginning and at the end of the group. Thus the column started for the concentration camp Kolbasino. Every attempt to leave the column or even to cross the border of a group marked by a rope was considered an escape and the guilty were shot immediately. Those who fell down having no strength to move on were shot. The 40-kilometres long road from Skidel to Kolbasino was covered with dead bodies of old people, women, and children from the Skidel ghetto.

Life in the concentration camp was not easier at all; people died from hunger, numerous diseases, hard work and tortures. At the beginning of 1943, prisoners learned they would have to move to a new place again as it was too cold to spend the winter in the Kolbasino concentration camp. They were packed into carriages for

cattle and brought to the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Treblinka. There, practically all of them found their death in gas cells, in the stoves, and in barracks where they lived and worked. This was the tragic end of millions of Jews from Belarus, Poland and other European countries occupied by fascists.

Two thousand and thirty Jews from Skidel seem to be a little drop in this boundless sea of sufferings, humiliation, cruelty on one hand, and the undying spirit to fight, desire to live, to defend the weakest, to help and to survive, on the other hand. But we are to remember everyone who perished in those cruel times. Only then we shall be able not to allow something like that to revive, to return into our life.

The material is gathered and translated into English by HGP members - students of Secondary school # 14 with the Intensive Learning of English Kate Suvorina, Max Rybalchenko, and Alexander Petriaev with the assistance of English teacher, Natalia Petriaeva.

Bearing Witness: A New Project

compiled by Merissa Prianti, Cold Spring Harbor High School, New Yorks

This is the project template developed by Honey Kern (USA), Liron Dorfman (Israel), Andrew Greene, Jr. (Sierra Leone) and myself, Lynne Harriton (USA) in Beijing. We are just getting started ourselves. Work on this project is a subset of the Holocaust Genocide Project and will also (I think it should be shown on the iearn.fhao forum as the work is project-based work that develops from students involvement with Facing History and Ourselves.

Brief Description of Project:

This is a proposed project for T.A.L.L., a Middle College High School Consortium initiative that combines Facing History and Ourselves, and I*EARN (The International Education and Resource Network.) This project applies procedures/processes developed in Holocaust Studies to current situations occurring in the world today. The intention is to begin with two groups of students, the tenth grade TALL class at R.F. Wagner, Jr. Secondary School for the Arts and Technology (S.S.A.T.) in Long Island City, Queens, and a group of similarly aged students in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Full Description of Project:

Using interview techniques developed by the Shoah Visual History Foundation, students in the west will work with students from other backgrounds who have been victims of genocide, war, ethnic cleansing, racism, and bigotry. These western students, who are using FHAO curriculum materials* in the classroom and who are therefore involved in deep reflection of ethics/values/choices, will become "virtual witnesses" for those young survivors' stories. They become "witnesses to the witnesses," shouldering the responsibility entailed in the term 'to bear witness'.

*Involving in-depth study of the events that lead to the Holocaust

Students affected by genocide/intolerance experience empowerment and release, becoming detraumatized in the cause of telling their stories. Additionally, they gain the intellectual skill of participant-observation, separating observation from emotional response. They work with the student/those students who are have taken responsibility for their stories, ensuring that each is well-told. Together, students will create real records, the real documentation necessary for future archives, the information that is so often and sadly, missing. Students in the west must present these stories. In a sense, they become 'one' with their witnesses. They gain journalistic skills involving how one gets, organizes, and presents information in a delicate, sensitive and very real setting. The students become friends in the process. The students gain technical skills (computer hardware & software, internet/interactive).

Expected outcomes/projects: Archival records, dramatic readings, presented in public. Articles to be published in An End To Intolerance, the magazine of the Holocaust/Genocide Project produced by Honey Kern's students at Cold Spring Harbor High School in Cold Spring Harbor, NY. Students can create a virtual 'Valley of the Communities,' commemorating the communities and ways of life that are irrevocably lost in war.

Age Level of Participants: 14 - 18 years. Grades 9 - 12. Timetable for the 2000-2001 year: September - November, 2000.

The Way Sierra Leone Affected Me

Abu Bakarr Jalloh, Sierra Leone Grammar School, Senior Secondary School 2, Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leone War which started in March 1991, has lasted for nearly a decade and has affected many people including myself. It first started in the east of Sierra Leone and I never knew it would affect me in any way. When the army took over in 1997, they invited the rebels in the bush to come and join them so that they could come up with some deal to stop the fighting but everything turned to the opposite side.

The rebels came to town and they had a share in the government. After two weeks of looting, raping, and destruction, my father decided that we should leave the country for the neighboring country of Guinea to seek refuge for some weeks hoping that things would return to normal. When we left for Guinea, I was very worried about how I was going to continue my schooling, since the country we were going to was a French speaking country. So I waited anxiously for normalcy to return to my country for two weeks since I was about to take my promotional examination to (Junior Secondary school 3) J.S.S.3 at the end of May 1997. I was also worried because I had left my Mother behind.

After a month had gone by, my mother also decided to join us in Guinea because of the molestation and destruction rendered to people by both the soldiers and rebels. Three weeks after my mother's arrival, I started feeling relieved thinking about what I was capable of doing for my

education and also my mother was with us. After spending some months in Conakry, Guinea some Sierra Leoneans who went there also to seek refuge, decided to conduct a school for the Sierra Leonean children to attend at a cost of 5000 Guinea francs per month. After spending some months in the school, the school authorities issued a report to each pupil who was attending the school, and I did extremely well with fourth position of out of 50.

After some weeks, my Father decided to take us to another school and I did well there also until we returned to Freetown Sierra Leon in April with my cousins and mother after the Economic Community Monitoring Group's troops of west Africa had driven the rebels out of the capital city and the surrounding areas. When we came back, I was hoping that I would be promoted to J.S.S.3 school considering that they would recognize my result for the J.S.S.2 second term but to my surprise, I was repeated in J.S.S.2 again after wasting one good year without any progress.

In a way the rebel war has dwindled my progress in school but it has also affected the overall educational system in that teachers have little time to spend in the classroom because they are not well paid. As a result, things we are supposed to know at a particular time are left unattended. Besides, it took me a long time to get over the psychological trauma especially when I came back from refuge and saw all the destruction. Till now, I do have nightmare of the invasion of Freetown.

A Teacher's Story

Mohamed Dumbuya, Teacher, Sierra Leone

I just noticed x-mas slipped through like it has never been there before. The goodies of the x-mas 1998, were gone, with high expectations of good life in everyone's dream. Was this dream ever going to come with the dawn of a new rebel invasion in 1999? On Tuesday, 5th January 1999, most students adored their new books and stationery for the new school year. I was part of those who really was determined to show -off the pleasant books to my friends and companions at the college. My mind was sweet, wishing to see my friends the next morning; friends I have missed throughout the long vacation. As registration was due the next morning, I had high hopes of this possibility to meet my friends again.

Midnight came with threats of gunshots that could jolt even a giant soldier. I guessed something was going wrong for it was unusual for such rapid firing of gunshots to occur during curfew. I peeped through the window even though my aging mother repeatedly urged me to keep it close. She feared stray bullets would get rid of me. I was curious to know what was going on outside. The flicker of moonlight afforded me the chance to see the harsh reality. We had power cut that night, and we expected no electricity light. Was it all a planned attack against a dark Freetown city? The hum of truck loads was largely unexpected at such hours of midnight. It has lost of people in it whilst others choose to walk along the streets. These were indeed the rebels who were not used to boarding vehicles, but known to walk endlessly through the bushes just to attack armless and innocent villagers. Now they were in the city, and we were doomed!

At two a.m., most of the Eastern part of Freetown was under rebel control. They sang peace songs but they were determined to put the people to pieces. The awful gunshots went on till day break. We could not wink an eye to sleep, as if we were

on guard. Morning showed on and we had a rebel calling people to join them, calling everyone "our brothers and sisters" come out of your houses for we are all one and one people. We are not against you but fighting on your course. We want peace and we are tired of fighting, killing, maiming and raping our people". All the rebels joined him shouting, "We want peace now"!

It was a nightmare, thinking of it all and how they actually ended up dragging people out of their homes and chopping their hands with crude cutlasses, burning their houses, shooting some on the spot. No one could trust their assurances that they kept on giving people and so many fled their homes, families and friends, to seek refuge in the western part of the city. My family and I were equally not quick to accept the rebel's deceitful cajoling, even though they assured us our safety. Nothing change for the better as they continued to rape, maim, and loot people's homes that have been abandoned. Out in the streets, my family and I jumped piles of corpses that have been a result of the brutal havoc of the rebels. At a point when the firing became so unbearable, I had to separate from my mother's grasp for we can no longer escape together even as her only son. She cried pleading..."Please Mohamed, don't leave me alone... we must die together... if that is the only option." I knew that our being together would be disadvantageous for it hard to escape from the rebels twinning. I told her, "Mother, please don't be afraid, for I am heading for the west, where it is safer, where thousands of fleeing people are." I pleaded with her to further allow me crawl up the mountains, and by-pass the rebels zones and reach ECOMOG'S stronghold. The Economic Community Monitoring Group, (ECOMOG), was there to put an end to our misery and forestall anymore brutality by the rebels.

She pleaded saying, "please my dear one, do not go or else, I won't survive the shooting and death threats! Please let's go together".

"No mama, we just can't go together, it will be so

dangerous for us!" I again pleaded with her in turn. She persisted like the gunshots that came audibly into our ears. "But you know your papa have fled together with your sisters, using this same mountainous route, why can't we do the same?" Her shivering low pleading tone caught me with regret. But I felt alas, I would be leaving my mother for good, alone at the foot of the mountain

David's Story

Karen Lawson, RF Wagner Secondary School, New York

This is the story of one courageous boy, a student in our school who is only fifteen, and who is the victim and survivor of more ordeals than most of us could imagine in a lifetime. His name is David Conteh, and he is in the Ninth Grade.

David escaped the terror and madness of a brutal civil war in his homeland of Sierra Leone in West Africa.

This is his story as told to his classmates in Lynne and Galen's classes. David lived with his family in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, a city that had been founded long ago by American slaves who had returned to Africa, a city that had been founded with the highest ideals. David grew up in an atmosphere of civil war, a war that involved government troops fighting troops of rebels. This war had broken out when he was seven.

"Every year our education would be disrupted. It was so dangerous on the streets that parents would be fearful of letting their children go outside and the schools would close. One area or another was always at war." Last January the war entered his house. The rebels were losing; they had to retreat to the countryside and needed more young men. Knowing that he and his cousin were there, they broke down his family's door in the middle of the night intending to kidnap David and his cousin, to force them to join the rebels as a soldier. The family was terrified. His father tried to break David away but was swiftly killed, shot dead in front of David's eyes. Outside of the house, his cousin tried to resist and David watched as he was stabbed to death. The rebels did not care how David felt. They kidnapped him and eight more boys, friends from his neighborhood, and dragged them on, dragging them further and further east through the city, retreating from Government forces.

The rebels held him captive for a month. During this time he witnessed first-hand the death of all eight of his friends. Many had tried to run for it under cover of the sound of an airplane that passed overhead on a regular daily schedule. They were caught. Their hands were tied behind their backs. They were laid on the street and shot. David knew what would happen if he tried to run away. So, he stayed with the rebels. He did not

as another prey to the rebels. As I trekked a foot or two upwards, I turned around to see my mother sobbing in despair. I instantly changed my mind and reversed my ungrateful steps back to the foot of the hill where my mother stood. The gunshots grew thicker and came nearer as we hauled each other towards the steep hills of 'Mount Aureol and 'Kortright'.

fight on their side. "I began not to care about death. Death had no meaning for me anymore. It just did not matter." Meanwhile, his nineteen-year old brother, who had been on the other side of the city the night David was captured, decided to act. He had been held captive by the rebels at an earlier time, and knew their hiding places. He decided to act like a rebel so he could free his brother. One night, he woke David up and said, "Come on." They escaped. And ran. But they could not run far enough. They were caught by another band of rebels, a different group from those



Left to Right: Standing: Mohamed Kuteh, Julis Mannah, Rashid Peters, Ernest Foday Mannah, and Andrew Greene

who had previously held them. When this group of rebels found out that his brother had faked his loyalty in order to free David, they chopped off his right arm.

So, David was alone with this new group of rebels. He still wanted to get away. Feeling that it did not matter whether he lived or died, he formulated a desperate plan, and one dark night he got up the courage to carry it out. Masked by total darkness, he stood up and tiptoed out.

"I ran and ran and ran. I had never been in this part of the county. I had no idea where I was or in what direction I was going. I walked for two weeks stopping only to eat wild mangoes on the side of the road. Others were running too. I went in that general direction.

"One day I saw a broad road. I joined the other fleeing people on it. Suddenly, I saw a sign. 'Welcome to the Republic of Guinea.' I had walked forty-five miles. I had walked to the border, to freedom." David soon came to a refugee camp. Amazingly, his sister was there. Before he could join her, he had to enter a hospital. Walking forty-five miles in two weeks had completely torn up his feet. The people in the refugee camp helped David and his sister connect with their mother who was already here in New York City. Today, David is living a better life and is living it to the fullest. He is an 'A' student who is kind to all the people he comes in contact with. His mother and two sisters are here with him, living quietly in Brooklyn. He looks forward to the day when he can bring his brother out of Sierra Leone. His brother and one cousin still live in Freetown, which is safely in the hands of the government, but David would still like to see them come here. David still has memories of all the terrors he encountered. To his classmates he seems older, probably because of all he has faced. But David isn't older. Like his classmates, David is fifteen.

The Horror of Genocide: A Query from Thailand

My name is Yuki Luisiri and I'm attending International School, Bangkok, Thailand. I would like to discuss the topic of the Holocaust Genocide Project. Throughout history, during war and other terrible times, mass killings of men, women, and children had occur. The fact that make these killings so terrible is that these people were usually innocent and helpless. Most people have heard about the Jewish Holocaust in Europe during World War II. It is well known that over 6 millions Jews were killed by the German Nazi government. Other groups of people are also killed during this time. The Gypsies, a cultural group of people found all over Europe were also killed in the thousands by the German Nazis during this time. Although all this happen over 50 years ago, it is still happening today. Genocide has occur in Africa and again iurope, during the war in Yugoslavia, just in a last few years. I believe we must set up some kind of plan to stop genocide that might happen in the future. They must be a way to stop genocide before it happens. We are much luckier today than the people that lived in the past because when genocide begins to happen, the whole world can hear about it. If the news gets out that something bad is happening another country, we can all see and hear it on the TV. If we can all see that genocide is about to occur, concerned government can try to stop it. We can never let genocide happen again in the world, we must always try to be aware of what is happening in the world around us so we can response to it. The internet will also help in this project because many can communicate with one another and keep each other informed. Do you have any idea of how to stop genocide?

Dear Yuki,

My name is Becky Thaler. I am a 15 year old student at Cold Spring Harbor High School in New York. In response to your letter it is a very horrible thought to know so much hate is still present in our world. Genocide occurs today, though so many people are educated on its horrors. I feel education is the key way to stop genocide in our world. The more people know about the events of our past the more aware they will become to the fact these actions must stop. People must be taught to tolerate on another. Different ethnic groups and religions have to be acknowledged by our youth. Children must grow up with the ideas that differences are not a bad thing. So, possibly you could organize a group to go to the younger schools and lecture on the horrors of our past. The Holocaust Genocide Project raises awareness of the killings of the Jews during World War II. It educates others on the dangers of hate and how it is necessary to tolerate others. The Internet is another important way to educate people. It allows enormous amounts of information to be obtainable by large numbers of people in little time. Mass killings are tragic and we must try to prevent them. Every person counts and I am sure if you talk to people they will become aware of the dangers of genocide.

Dear Yuki,

My name is Sarah Marx and I am a 17 year old student at Cold Spring Harbor High School on Long Island in New York. In response to your message, I have to say that there is no certain way

to stop the genocide that is present in our world. As long as people are different, there will be hate. As long as there is hate, there will be genocide. It is a sad fact of human nature that we fear those who are different from us. You have expressed in your message a desire to prevent the genocide that may occur in the future. The only thing that I can suggest to you is to educate yourself, as you apparently have started doing already, and then spread your knowledge to others. People need to know more about the horrors and dangers of genocide. If they are educated then they will want to try and stop it. If people also are educated about different cultures and ethnicities then they will not be so afraid of those who are different. Some things you yourself can do include starting an awareness campaign in your school and community through things such as a club in which the topic of genocide is discussed as well as making posters and announcements to tell people all that you know and have expressed in your message. If you are good with computers you can even make a website about genocide and the like so that people can visit it and become aware and educated. There may not be a sure way to stop genocide, but there are steps that we as educated and aware people can do to make the effects of genocide as little as possible.

Sarah Marx

My name is Jenna Newmark. I am 15 years old and I go to Cold Spring Harbor High School in New York. I read your letter, and I can see that you are very concerned about the terrible events that have occurred in the past that many people should be ashamed of. I strongly agree that these mass killings are so tragic. Most people tend to concentrate on one instance of genocide, the Holocaust. That was one of the most terrible events in world history, and not only Jews were killed during this time. History tends to repeat itself. Like you pointed out in your letter, mass killings have recently happened in Yugoslavia and Africa. What makes it even more terrible is that innocent people are put to death because of their ethnic background. I also agree that something must be done to prevent genocide. I think that everyone needs to be aware of what's going on in other places. The younger generation especially needs to learn that when they are going to soon lead the world, they will have to prevent genocide. I think that a proper education is essential to helping to prevent such tragedies. People need to be taught to tolerate others, even if they have a different color skin, or they speak a different language. The Holocaust Genocide Project does just that. It is aimed to increase people's awareness of these horrible events so that they will hopefully never be repeated. Technology today does a great deal to spread awareness of upcoming genocides, so that they can be kept under control. I think the United Nations needs to constantly be on top of current events around the world so that they can join together to prevent mass killings. Do you think more powerful countries should contribute a little more to prevent genocides (such as the United States when troops were sent into Yugoslavia?) Do you think the Holocaust Genocide Project will have a large impact on education of the younger generation about the horrors of genocide?

Jenna Newmark