

**COMMITTEE FOR BASIC RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY  
and  
BOSNIAN-INITIATIVE**

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## **Request for Donations for "Vacation from War" Summer 2001**

For eight years the „Committee for Basic Rights and Democracy“ has coordinated "Holidays from War" for orphans and refugees from all parts of Former Yugoslavia. Over the years and with the help of our sponsors more than 12 000 children-victims have spent two weeks of vacation time with their so-called enemies, playing, painting, learning to swim, and talking about their problems. They came from Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and all parts of Bosnia. The most difficult problem last year was planning the camps for Albanian and Serbian groups in Kosovo, but finally even these children enjoyed their holidays. Early this year the conflict in Macedonia worsened. But last summer it was possible to take Albanian and Slavic Macedonian children together to the Ohrid Sea. We hope this can happen again in 2001 and that with your support our peace efforts can continue.



*Idriz lives in an orphanage in Banja Luka (Serbian Republic). Nermis lives in an orphanage in Tuzla (Bosnian Federation). The two boys became close friends in Zivogosce. Although they are the same age, Nermis is smaller because of a hormonal deficiency. Six years ago, when he was a young child, his condition could have been treated. However, during the war, noone had the money or cared about the future of a little boy without parents. Now it is too late for treatment. His future will be hard in a poor society with lots of prejudice. Nevertheless he will take part in this year's camp and enjoy life this summer.*

We sincerely request your help for "Holidays from War, 2001" which continues its humanitarian aid and reconciliation of former enemies. A full sponsorship is about \$150, but we appreciate any contribution and urge you to ask for support from friends, families, school groups, etc.

Many thanks and friendly greetings

Helga Dieter  
Courage against Racism

Pastor Elke Klee  
Peace Initiative

We can send you a new Tuzla Travel Report, 2001, about the Peace Center in Simin Han to which some of you contributed last year. We can also send a brochure with many photographs and a videotape, both in German.

Please send your contributions to the Bosnian Initiative to Katha Pollit, c/o The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003 or directly to us in Frankfurt.

## Excerpts of the children`s letters

"I want to live the rest of my life in peace and freedom and not on the run." - Jelena, age 14, from Banja Luka.

"The town I come from, Gornji Vakuf, has been almost destroyed and is divided into two sections where either Croatians or Moslems live. I wish my childhood had been different. Everything seems frightening and dead after the war. Seldom does one see a smiling face, as if we lived on the planet 'mourning.' It's nice here in Zivogosce, and I am enjoying myself very much. I've met kids from Banja-Luka and Tuzla...I hope we'll hear from eachother." - Zlata, age 13, from Gornji Vakuf.

"At last someone has realized what we have been through and decided to send children from the different ethnic groups together on a great summer vacation." - Ivana, from Banja Luka.

"Things are going well for us here, especially me. I'll keep these memories for the rest of my life." - Naida, age 11, from Gornji Vakuf.

"I'm having a wonderful time here, playing with kids from everywhere and making friends with them too." - Sandra, age 12, from Banja Luka.

"I have chronic rheumatism. I feel a lot better here." - Jasmin, age 12, from Tuzla.

"My father has been missing since 1995, and my mother is very sick. People wanted to drive us out of Banja Luka. I have lost trust in mankind, but the Bosnia Initiative showed me that people can be good. I have always dreamed of going to the seaside and never thought it would happen. Thank you so much, it's great here!" - Kata, 14, from Banja Luka.

"Before the war our town was the most beautiful in Bosnia. Now it has been burned down and divided. I had to flee to another part of the city. Here, we are again together and even with children of other nationalities. The name 'Zivogosce' sounds great to me!" - Lelja, age 13, from Gornji Vakuf.



"From day to day I feel better here, and if this keeps up I won't want to return home. I send you a big kiss and wish you a good life." - Zarko, age 15, from Banja Luka.

"It helps a lot to know that someone cares about me. I have made Serbian and Croatian friends here. These children didn't kill my father...whoever it was couldn't know what he did." - Alma, from Tuzla.

"Someday I want to be the one who can help others like you are doing now. Then I'll contribute money for kids who have lived through an awful war so they can recuperate like we are doing here." - Adnan, from Banja Luka.

"During the war we spent most of the time hiding in a cellar. When I hear loud noises I become afraid and think immediately of the war and the explosions. I had a lung infection, and the sea air here has helped me. My family and I are very thankful to you." - Elvisa, age 12, from Tuzla.

"I am very happy to have made friends from other towns." - Almir, age 11, from Gradacac.