

**A Call for Donations for the Campaign**  
**Vacation from War 2009**

**Steps toward the Concrete Utopia of a Peaceful World**  
**Sponsoring Vacation Camps for Refugee Children and Youth**  
**from the War Zones in the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East**

**Dear Benefactors and Friends,**

Eleven years ago for the first time Katha Pollitt asked in her column for support of the campaign "Vacation from War", initiated by peace activists from the "Committee for Fundamental Rights and Democracy" and supported by the Bosnian-Initiative in Germany. Since our American friends contributed \$ 230000 from about \$ 8 000 000 in total since 1994. Please be proud with us of this enormous effort without any States money or big foundations in the background. The administration costs are below 4% (printing and stamps) because the German team works voluntarily and the guides or professional peace-moderators just get a pocket-money.

More than 20.000 young people from the Balkan and more than 1000 from Israel and Palestine could escape their fear and misery for two weeks and encounter with their so called enemies in a lovely and secure area. They lived under the same roof, listening, mourning, discussing and joking - with the result: "We can live together. We refuse to be enemies any longer!"

In the beginning UN-officials and NGOs – even peace-activists – didn't give the grassroots-initiative "Vacation from War" any chance . Meanwhile it is the greatest and intensest reconciliation-project that we know.

In the summer 2009 again more than 300 young people from Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo and Mazedonia are invited for summer-camps in the area. 90 young adults from Israel will come to Germany in order to meet the "terrorists" from the other side of the fence. The same number of Palestinians will hopefully reach the Jordan border for the flight to Germany in order to meet their "occupiers, who sometimes just live around the corner – but behind the wall.

In addition 100 children will recover during the holiday games in the "Smile and Joy Camp" in Nablus (Westbank). As soon as possible children from Gaza will be invited for "Vacation from War" to Egypt. Please support this unique peace-making and humanitarian grassroots project.

**Please donate a sponsorship of \$150 or collect shares in schools, congregations, etc.**

**We can send you additional information ([www.vacation-from-war.com](http://www.vacation-from-war.com)).**

**Please copy this call for donations, and distribute it!**

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**Please make out a check to Vacation from War and send it to**

- **Helga Dieter, Flussgasse 8, D- 60489 Frankfurt / Germany or to**
- **Katha Pollitt, c/o The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003**
- Your bank can also transmit your donation to the account: Receiver's correspondent: BIC: BKTRUS33, Deutsche Bank Trust Company Americas, NYC, FW: 021001033, Intermedia Bank (field 56a) GENO-DEFF, DZ Bank AG, Frankfurt, Germany, Beneficiary Bank (field 57a): GENODE51MIC. Volksbank Odenwald eG, Frankfurter Str. 1, 64720 Michelstadt, Beneficiary (field 59) Account No. DE34 5086 3513 0008, Komitee f. Grundrechte, 60489 Frankfurt, Germany

**Most US-donors succeed in having their donations recognized as tax deductions for charitable giving with the German certificate which we will send in spring 2010.**

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PS Last year we invested some money for a leaflet with coloured photographs to inform our American friends in an attractive way. We sent it from Germany with a reduced postal fee – but it didn't reach many of the adresses - therefore we send it again. In case you received it twice please pass it on.

In order to save money this time a friend of ours is posting all letters in the US.

If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact Helga Dieter.

**For more information see our website: [www.vacation-from-war.org](http://www.vacation-from-war.org) and [www.ferien-vom-krieg.de](http://www.ferien-vom-krieg.de)**

Young women from Israel and Palestine met in Germany for a very intense dialogue-process: "It was really amazing to see how every day someone else felt frustrated and hopeless and even more amazing to see that change completely a day later. Once barriers were broken, something real and powerful happened. This year's seminar was not only breaking barriers, but also breaking points and breakthroughs. It was full of challenges, unexpected developments and in depth work. Every Israeli should go to this seminar – each and every one!" (Israeli woman, 25 years old)



In the name of God, the Merciful. I have learnt a lot about myself and about my society. I Have come across many aspects and faces of the conflict for the first time here. I have learnt to listen, to dispute and to enter into a dialogue. I feel that the others want to do something to solve our problems. They are not comfortable with the situation Thanks to the Israeli group showing us dignity and respect.. (Palestinian woman, 22 years old)



Again hundred children from Nablus could recover in holiday games. "As key in the Smile and Joy camp is to alleviate the pressure on children and support their creativity such as painting ,narrating stories, free expression, sponges, siremaic carvings and sports. Many films concentrated on non-violence values have been shown to the children. All these activities showed the children's feelings and expressed their suffering."

During the summer-camps in the former Yugoslavia nearly 300 young people from Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo and Mazedonia ignored the new Borders and prejudice and also the taboo lasting over the violence in the war. They visited the exhibition „Blood and Honey“ with war-photographs from Ron Haviv in Dubrovnik. A boy writes: "In these days for the first time I was forced to think about the violence in the war. Facing all the crime and victims I wanted to condemn one side. But for the first time I saw that perpetrators can also be victims and victims can become perpetrators. What is the result of all the hell we went through? Prejudice and hatred like before the war and new borders between us! I am proud that all of us here can say: We make a contribution that war has no chance any more.

