



Alex Port

is a junior at Solon High School. Alex loves art and music and plays piano and violin in his school orchestra, the Solon Philharmonic Orchestra, Opera per Tutti, and The Temple Tifereth Israel's Klezmer Band. He has considered majoring in music education and getting a minor in English in college.

In January of 1942, at the Wannsee Conference in Nazi Germany, a plan for the massacre of six million Jews was devised. This bloodbath, known as the Holocaust, was one of the vilest acts of human indecency the world has ever seen. And so we celebrate Yom Hashoah annually so we never forget the atrocities committed against us by a people blinded by hatred. Today the scars of that hatred still burn in our hearts. Fortunately, however, we live in a country, where we are safe and free from these hideous acts of injustice. Sadly, however, another massacre like the Holocaust is taking place halfway around the world right now, and very few are doing enough to prevent it. This neglect, however, is not the result of indifference. The acts of violence and hate in Darfur persist because not enough people know about the anguish there, and the conscious few feel overwhelmingly helpless to make a difference.

Today in Darfur, there are hostilities between the Janjaweed - a militia group recruited mostly by Arab Abbala tribes - and several other 'Liberation' groups. These Arabic-speaking Africans raid non-Arab villages and viciously rape the women, after which they scorch the villages, either immolating the inhabitants, or driving them from their homes, all because of the differences in the way they believe and pray. It is estimated that, so far, the merciless Janjaweed have seared millions of homes and more than 200,000 innocent lives. But, like the Holocaust victims, sufferers of the racism in Darfur have yet to see the righteousness of humankind as innumerable people remain ignorant to the genocide. The sad truth is that few people in the United States know the realistic impacts of such a senseless slaughter of thousands and fewer still can locate Darfur on a map.

Like countless people, I have been blissfully ignorant of the murder half-a-world away. When I discovered the horrible truth, however, I was dumbfounded and petrified. But I soon realized that, even though the sheer reality of this upheaval terrifies me, the evil of intolerance cannot be surmounted by simply waiting and hoping for another's actions. Therefore, I would like to educate my fellow students as well as my community. I would like to bring a speaker to my school to talk about the catastrophe in Darfur as well as its potential solutions. I would like this speech to be filmed and broadcasted so unawareness and helplessness in my community can be overcome. And once my classmates are more familiar with this new Holocaust in Sudan, I would like to organize a fundraiser within my school that will include both my school and my entire city. The money that we raise would then be used to aid the weak and desperate victims in Sudan. After all, these people are suffering now, but if we learn all that we can about the agony of our fellow human beings, then there is still hope that we can stop the fighting and stop the hate in Darfur.