

Ethically Speaking

*News from The International
Center for Ethics, Justice and
Public Life at Brandeis University*

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Struggle for Equality Hits Home

For more than 30 years, Americans have behaved as though discussion of “rights” and “equality” belonged, more properly, somewhere else. After the legal and legislative victories of the 1950s and 1960s, many Americans were content to let “rights” language be applied to unsavory regimes overseas. As for the rhetoric of equality, Americans have preferred to let it remain, unexamined, in the founding documents of the republic.

In the wake of September 11, human rights came home. In 1948, Americans, led by Eleanor Roosevelt, played a leading role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the 21st century, the detention of suspected terrorists, the increasing surveillance of citizens and non-citizens alike, and the treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay have stimulated a national

debate. One starting point for this debate is the Constitution and the protections it provides. But, hearteningly, Americans have also begun to depend on the language of human rights and take into account the principles and practices that have served to advocate for freedom around the globe.

Hurricane Katrina, like no other event in recent memory, has dramatized American inequality. Of course, you would have to be dense or in denial not to be aware in some fashion of the widening gulf between the rich and the poor in the United States. Americans, however, have grown expert at hiding the evidence of that gulf from themselves, through residential segregation and lavish renderings of the language of “opportunity.” The storm and the floods – with vivid images of the poorest residents of New Orleans stranded on

■ **continued on page 3**

First Slifka Fellow Selected

Amit Sa’ar, one of 12 students who began the 16-month Coexistence and Conflict master’s program this fall, is the first-ever recipient of the Brandeis University Slifka Fellowship. The award includes full tuition and \$10,000 toward living and other expenses for the 2005-06 academic year.



Sa’ar is on study leave from the Israel Defense Force, where he is responsible for producing comprehensive research and analysis papers on issues of conflict, peace, and security in the Middle East.

The master’s program is designed for early and mid-career professionals who work or aspire to work within governments, international agencies, or business. It involves an academic year-in-residence at Brandeis followed by a three-month field placement and completion of a master’s paper by December.

The program provides students with a solid grounding in both the theories of contemporary coexistence work and the professional skills to design and implement successful interventions that enable divided peoples to live together more equitably, respectfully, and peacefully. ■



■ *Mingus Mapps, a post-doctoral fellow in Politics, addresses the crowd during a day-long teach-in at Brandeis on September 26 designed to weigh the lessons of Hurricane Katrina.*

The International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life

The mission of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life is to develop effective responses to conflict and injustice by offering innovative approaches to coexistence, strengthening the work of international courts, and encouraging ethical practice in civic and professional life.

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■ IN THE NEWS

Staff Highlights

In May, **Marci McPhee** inspired the Class of 2005 as the Baccalaureate Observance guest speaker, reflecting on the power of hope and individual action in the face of both natural and man-made disasters.

■ In response to the July 8 subway bombings in London, an article in the Christian Science Monitor featured **Dan Terris** speaking on the difficulties of finding courage in the 21st century.

■ The Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence was well represented at the U.N. Global Conference "From Reaction to Prevention: Civil Society Forging Partnerships to Prevent Violent Conflict and Build Peace" held in July in New York City. **Jessica Berns** participated in a working group on civil society networks, **Cynthia Cohen** participated in a panel on arts and peacebuilding, and **Mari Fitzduff** presented on a panel that discussed strengthening partnerships for conflict prevention.

Master's Program Enters Second Year

The 12 students in the inaugural class of the Coexistence and Conflict master's program have completed their academic coursework at Brandeis and are currently engaged in field placement projects around the world. Three students received Mellon-MIT grants to stimulate their research on policy issues affecting refugees and internally displaced populations. All 12 students collaborated on the formation of a scholarship fund to support a Coexistence and Conflict master's candidate from one of the tsunami-affected conflict areas. ■ The Center also welcomes the 2005-06 master's students to Brandeis for the beginning of their yearlong

academic residency. The current group of 12 students hails from Israel, Nigeria, Romania, Tajikistan, the United States, Uruguay, and Uzbekistan.

Changes to the Center's Undergraduate Fellowship

The Ethics and Coexistence Student Fellowship has been renamed the Ethics Center Student Fellowship to reflect the newly expanded focus of the program. Beginning in the summer of 2006, students will focus on projects of their own design at organizations of their choosing, rather than apply for existing internships as in previous years. Coexistence remains an option, but students may also concentrate on a variety of issues relating to ethics and social justice, including international law, hunger relief, gender equity, AIDS prevention, and more.

The Center Welcomes Christopher Moore and Kristin Williams

Christopher Moore joins the staff as the communications specialist. He comes to the Center after working as a newspaper reporter for two years. He holds an M.S. in journalism from Boston University and a B.A. in Slavic and East European Linguistics from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. ■ **Kristin Williams** joins the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence as the administrative assistant for Coexistence International (C.I.). She is a recent graduate of Northeastern University, where she majored in international affairs with a minor in cultural anthropology. She has also studied in Ireland and has had internships with Oxfam America and the Parliament of the Republic of Ireland. ■



Sitoramo Saflova, Amit Sa'ar, Angela Nicoara, Yohan Gonen, Olajide Olàngugu, Clementine Lue Clark, Shelly Ross, Anya Maria Mayans, Jennifer Ludwig, and Amanda Daly. Not pictured: Benjamin Bolger and Sukhrob Khalilov.

Visiting Scholar from Jerusalem Marks Beginning of Partnership

In July, the Center welcomed Imad Abu Kishek to the Brandeis community as the University formally began its two-year partnership with Al-Quds University, a Palestinian institution in Jerusalem. Abu Kishek, the assistant to the president for Administration and Finance at Al-Quds, is spending a year in residence at Brandeis to take management courses and to observe some of Brandeis's administrative offices.

His visit is the first phase in a partnership expected to last at least until June 2007. The partnership, two years in the making, is designed to provide educational and cooperative opportunities for students and to build the teaching, planning, and communications capacities of Al-Quds. The partnership is supported by a generous grant from the Ford Foundation.

In addition to Abu Kishek's residence, small-scale faculty exchanges are presently taking place in four academic areas: Women's Studies,

American Studies, Public Health/Social Policy, and Science Education. In each exchange, a pair of faculty members is developing proposals for joint activities.

Undergraduate students from both universities will also have a chance to meet their counterparts and learn about their lives and surroundings. These academic exchanges will help foster communication and understanding among all students at Brandeis and Al-Quds, not just those who get the opportunity to journey overseas.

Such cooperation not only improves the administrative and educational capacities of both schools; it also increases intercultural understanding, expanding the worldview of faculty,



(Above) Al-Quds University President Dr. Sari Nusseibeh and Brandeis University President Jehuda Reinharz at a meeting during the opening stages of the partnership between the two universities. (Left) Imad Abu Kishek, the assistant to the president for Administration and Finance at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, was the first to participate in the ongoing exchange of staff and students between Al-Quds and Brandeis.

staff, and students. In a time of conflict, this forward-thinking partnership sets an example for other institutions and agencies by reaching out to form a collaboration based on common goals and a shared vision. ■

From the Director

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rooftops, abandoned in hospitals, and rounded up in the Superdome – have vividly exposed the hard truth that the most vulnerable Americans have vastly unequal protection from suffering.

Quickly invoked by those in need, quickly abandoned by those in power, equality is a difficult and demanding aspiration. Its meaning is so contested and its promise so distant that even the fiercest social critics often prefer to arm themselves with other principles. Yet without a frank and open discussion of equality, the other achievements of American life ring hollow.

The events of recent years have forcefully countered the myth of American exceptionalism. The devastation of Katrina mirrors the destruction of the Asian tsunami. Violence against civilians has

“The storm and the floods – with vivid images of the poorest residents of New Orleans stranded on rooftops, abandoned in hospitals, and rounded up in the Superdome – have vividly exposed the hard truth that the most vulnerable Americans have vastly unequal protection from suffering.”

touched and implicated the United States. Racial division is not simply a historical artifact.

The world's problems are firmly entrenched on American shores. With this recognition comes the opportunity to bring universal debates about human rights and equality into the center of American national discourse. Grand as the Constitution may be, American law benefits from the wisdom of judges and courts from very different legal traditions. The American discussion of race and diversity is enriched by the perspectives and experiences of those who have tackled issues of

coexistence in divided societies on every continent. Human rights language invigorates the national debates about justice and fairness. Americans will not make headway against their problems until they are genuinely willing to test their cherished principles against standards and ideals articulated and embraced by men and women around the globe. ■

Daniel Terris, Director

Telling the Story: Power and Responsibility in Documenting Human Rights Violations

Whether reporting on genocide in Rwanda or remembering victims of lynching in the American South, documenters of human rights abuses must navigate a complex web of conflicting motives and differing truths. *Telling the Story*, a two-day conference held by the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life, brought together 17 journalists, artists, activists, scholars, and human rights professionals to discuss the difficulties and decisions that go into the production of human rights stories. The forms of documentation included text, photographs, film, textiles, painting, art installations, and sound.

From Sept. 15 to 16, *Telling the Story* drew an estimated 250 audience members and provided a forum to discuss conflicts and abuses in the United States, South America, Africa, and the former Soviet Union. The 14 presentations, as well as exhibitions by two visual artists, touched on every aspect of



■ Participants in *Telling the Story* (left to right): Zolani Ngwane, Sally Engle Merry, Mark Auslander, Deirdre Giblin, Rosalind Shaw, Adueli Riak, Leigh Swigart, Sanji Monageng, Angela Nicoara, Susannah Sirkin, Corinne Dufka, Joshua Rubenstein, Kevin Sipp, Florence Graves, and Maria Cristina Caballero.

a human rights violation, from the beginning to the aftermath – and even addressed the attempts at healing that take place in the years that follow. *Telling the Story* was supported in part by grants from the Curtis International Council Fund of the Boston Foundation and the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities.

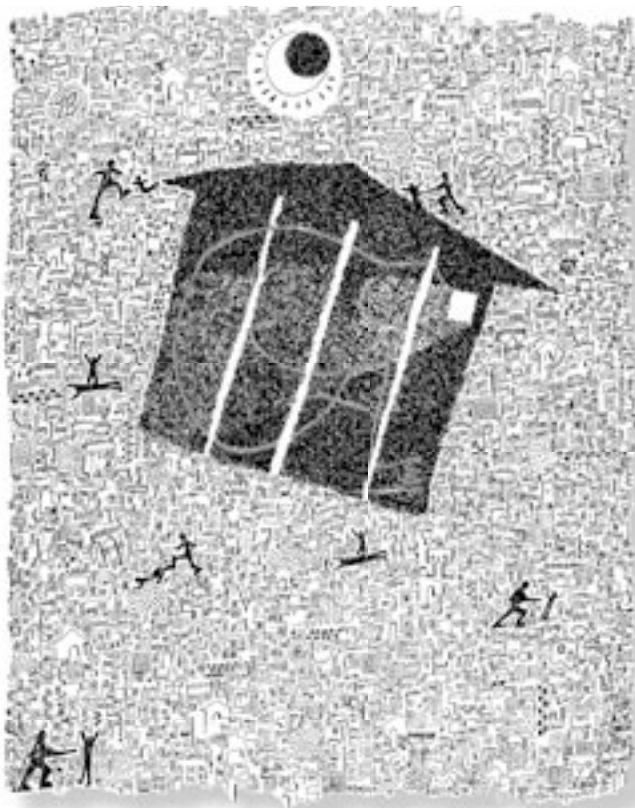
The goals of the conference were to promote an awareness of what goes into documenting human rights violations and to provide an opportunity for documenters to explore these processes and decisions across the disciplines.

However, looking at how stories are told was just the beginning. A goal of the conference was to consider

not only the choices that are made, but also the implications of these choices for the victims, the audience, and the documenters themselves. Human rights documentation, unlike other kinds of reporting, has a critical ethical dimension; as such, it must address issues of both moral and legal consequences and accountability.

Despite the broad array of violations that were discussed, there was a common thread running through all of the presentations: voice. Whether spoken aloud, painted on a canvas, or woven into fabric, every story told has a voice of its own. When that voice is heard and acknowledged, it can go far in bridging the gap between grief and healing.

An online publication detailing all of *Telling the Story* will be available soon on the Center's website, www.brandeis.edu/ethics. A summary of "Bringing to Light," one of three panels held on the second day of the conference, can be found on the following page.



■ "Prisoner of Conscience" by Victor Ekpuk, Nigeria





Young fighters with the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) sit on a street corner during a lull in the fighting in April 1996. Many fighters from Sierra Leone fought in Liberia both with the NPFL and, after 1997 when NPFL leader Charles Taylor became president, as Liberian government militias. © 1996 Corinne Dufka

Bringing to Light

Three human rights documenters present differing perspectives on the challenges and obligations of their work

Western media often report on human rights abuses strictly from a judicial perspective, detailing the accusations against perpetrators. But to tell a complete human rights story, one must examine the origins as well as the outcomes. If the intent is to bring about understanding, documenters must listen carefully to the voices of all involved – including those who may wish to remain silent.

In the panel “Bringing to Light,” one of several held on the second day of *Telling the Story*, three human rights documenters discussed the differing angles from which they approached specific abuses.

Maria Cristina Caballero, a journalist from Colombia, wrote a series of articles that saved a missionary named Bruce Olson from execution. Olson had been kidnapped by a guerilla group and condemned to die for “exploiting” the Mutilones, an indigenous tribe in the mountain jungles of Colombia.

Her articles revealed that Olson had been living with the Mutilones for 30 years, helping them receive education and medical care. “They began to

see him as their main support in Colombia,” said Caballero. “He was the only white man who was helping them for decades.”

Maryam Elahi, founding director of the Human Rights Program at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, showed a video produced by the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children to illustrate that, even when the intent is to help, human rights documenters must exercise care when working with victims.

The video was filmed during a trip that Commission members took to assess the needs in a refugee camp in Darfur, Sudan. Underage rape victims were interviewed, on camera, while surrounded by other residents of the camp.

“There should be a line drawn when you have children who are exploited,” said Elahi. “They don’t know what they’re consenting to, they have no clue

what’s going to happen, how this will transform their lives forever.”

When the Special Court in Sierra Leone was building a case for war crimes, Human Rights Watch researcher Corinne Dufka took a year’s sabbatical to help. She interviewed 60 young men who candidly described their actions as mercenaries, as well as their histories as young boys inducted into a world of violence at early ages.

“The world that they presented was a world as full of brutality as it was devoid of hope. They were absolutely obsessed with the struggle for survival. The possibility for looting was their most promising economic opportunity.”

In writing her report (found at www.hrw.org/reports/2005/westafrika0405/westafrika0405text.pdf), Dufka detailed the trajectory of each man and the factors that led him to become a mercenary. Her intent was not to excuse brutality, she said, but to “humanize a population that had been dehumanized.”

“It’s a way of looking at accountability – not just individual accountability, but at various levels: their own governments for betraying them, as well as the international community.”

Whatever forms they take, those who produce human rights documents – as well as those who consume them – must not forget the complexity of the conflicts behind them. To reduce the events or the players to black-and-white terms is to risk telling an incomplete, and ultimately ineffective, story. ■

“The world that (the young fighters) presented was as full of brutality as it was devoid of hope. Looting was their most promising economic opportunity.”

HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT EVENTS

MAY

Massachusetts Supreme Court Chief Justice Margaret Marshall (*below*) urged graduates at the University's 54th commencement to uphold the legacy



of Justice Louis Brandeis by actively working to overcome the increasing threats to an independent judiciary in the United States.

JUNE

The Lesotho College of Education was led in an all-day seminar by Jane Hale, Brandeis professor and long-time facilitator in the Brandeis Seminars in the Humanities and the Professions (H&P) program. Thirteen professors of Sesotho, French, and English from LCE participated in the H&P seminar entitled "Student-Centred Teaching of Language and Literature."

JULY

The Global Conference "From Reaction to Prevention: Civil Society Forging Partnerships to Prevent Violent Conflict and Build Peace" at the United Nations in New York was attended by staff members Jessica Berns, Cynthia Cohen, and Mari Fitzduff from the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence. (*See page 2.*)

AUGUST

Al-Quds University, a Palestinian university in Jerusalem, began a two-year partnership with Brandeis that will involve exchanges of students, staff, faculty, and information. (*See page 3.*)

SEPTEMBER

Henry David Thoreau and the Ethics of Place, an interpretive walk around Walden Pond led by Kent Curtis, an environmental historian and former education director of the Thoreau Institute. The walk was a follow-up event to a talk he gave introducing the literature and philosophy of Henry David Thoreau and their implications for today's world.

Telling the Story, a two-day conference hosted by the Center, examined the complex array of decisions that go into producing narratives of human rights violations. (*See pages 4-5.*)

Sanji Mmasenono Monageng, a commissioner from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, spent a nine-day residency at the University. While in the Boston area, Monageng participated in the Center's *Telling the Story* conference, addressed a number of student groups on campus,

spoke at the African Studies Center at Boston University, and spoke at Physicians for Human Rights in Cambridge. Her visit was sponsored by the Curtis International Council Fund of the Boston Foundation.

Creative Approaches to Coexistence and Reconciliation: A Playwright Collaboration, in which three theater artists of Iranian and Israeli origin participated in a series of lectures, presentations, and discussions about their work in Middle Eastern theater. (*See page 7.*)

Slifka Program Launches Creative Resources for Coexistence and Reconciliation

Creative Resources for Coexistence and Reconciliation (CRCR), a virtual resource center for artists, cultural workers, and peacebuilding scholars and practitioners, is one aspect of the new website for the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence. CRCR houses the working papers and portfolios prepared by participants in "Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts," the 2003-04 Brandeis International Fellowship Program.

By focusing on conflicts in Burundi, Cambodia, New Zealand, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and South Africa, the Fellows examined the roles that music, ceremony, theater, and visual arts can play in bringing about reconciliation. Their work can now be found online at www.brandeis.edu/go/createcoexistence.html.

The virtual resource center will also house updates to our inquiry into creative approaches to coexistence, as well as syllabi, chapters and articles, and reports on programs and events. It is searchable by genre, author, region, and theme. ■



■ A photograph showing a ceremony from Pchum Ben, a two-week tradition in which Cambodian Buddhists give offerings to those who have passed away. Pchum Ben is the subject of a working paper written by Ly Daravuth.



■ The 2004-05 Brandeis International Fellows (Left to right) Back row: Kim Berman, Lisa Kois, Lena Slachmujilder, Ly Daravuth, Jenny Hutt, Ingrid Muan. Front row: Stompie Selibe, Iffat Fatima, Bev Hosking, Nicholas Djanie

Creative Approaches to Coexistence and Reconciliation: A Playwright Collaboration

“From the time I remember people asked me ‘What are you: Moslem or Christian, Iranian or American?’ I am human, why is that not enough?”

– Torange Yeghiazarian, from *Abaga (The Future)*

From September 6 to 9, Iranian and Israeli artists joined the Brandeis community for a series of lectures, presentations, and discussions about their work in Middle Eastern theater, their burgeoning collaboration with each other, and ways to use their creative work to initiate dialogue and challenge stereotypes.

Mahmood Karimi-Hakak, a director and native of Iran, Motti Lerner, an Israeli playwright, and Torange Yeghiazarian, an Iranian writer of Armenian heritage, came together for four days to explore their personal narratives and their relationships to the political situations from which they emerge. Through reflection on their own successes and struggles, they invited students, community members, faculty, and staff to delve into their own conceptions of the Middle East, representation, conflict, and reconciliation.

The three began their residency by talking about how they came to theater as a medium for

expression – not just artistic but political as well. Not one of them began in theater: Lerner studied math, Yeghiazarian the sciences, and Karimi-Hakak studied religion. All three talked about the need to question their place, their heritage, and the history of their home. This quest brought them to the stage as they explored their own identities and grappled with complex social and political situations. They explored the idea that the theater is a reflection of current circumstances; that actors in life must also be given light on the stage.

The artists explained how they use theater to confront difficult issues. For Yeghiazarian, growing up in Tehran from a mixed Iranian/Armenian family and moving as an immigrant to suburban Massachusetts has given her much of the creative fuel she has used in her own work. Lerner has used writing to explore the Other and give light to controversial issues surrounding Israel/Palestine. Karimi-Hakak was forced to leave Iran a second

time after his production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These challenges have fortuitously brought them together to explore how their narratives coincide and differ. They have opened the doors to reconciliation by finding a medium that supports nuance, paradox, diversity, and creativity to guide them through this process.

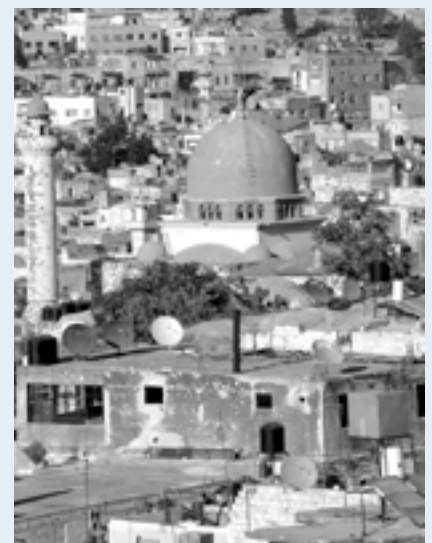
During their time at Brandeis, the artists had a chance to brainstorm the ways in which their collaboration can be part of the ongoing cultural and academic offerings of the University. Their mission, to create a joint original full-length piece in the next two years, has given rise to the possible links between Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, Theater, Coexistence and other fields. Their willingness to break down personal, ethnic, and political boundaries through art initiated tough and fruitful dialogue within the Brandeis community. ■

This Moment in the Middle East: *A Perspective from Nablus*

There are big changes taking place in Israel and Palestine these days, and Center partner Mohammad Sawalha is witnessing them from his home in Nablus, the largest city in Palestine. In September, he sent his first report on how recent events appear from his perspective, and he plans to send an update every month. You can read his reports on the Center's website at www.brandeis.edu/ethics/Nablus/index.html.

Sawalha is a professor of Linguistics and Translation at An-Najah University in Nablus. He is the founder and director of the Palestinian House of Friendship, a non-governmental organization that is focused on developing constructive activities for young people in Nablus and engaging in democracy and human rights education among university students.

The Palestinian House of Friendship was one of four institutions that, along with Brandeis, collaborated on a project called Community Histories by Youth in the Middle East (CHYME). CHYME brought together Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian youth workers to enhance communication among young people from the three communities. Though the project concluded in June 2004, its network of practitioners remains active. To view the digital stories created by CHYME participants please visit www.brandeis.edu/ethics/partnerships_and_projects/chyme ■



■ SAVE THE DATE

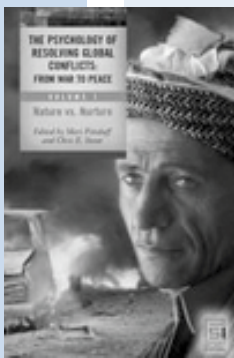
December 1–2, 2005

Coexistence International Event in New York City

Coexistence International is inviting leaders in the coexistence field to a small gathering at Brandeis House in New York City. This two-day event will provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on the field of coexistence and the ways it can be strengthened, as well as the core principles of coexistence work. It is the first in a series of gatherings that will take place over the next three years. Write to coexistenceintl@brandeis.edu for more information.

■ NEW CENTER PUBLICATIONS

Local Action/Global Impact chronicles 11 of the 14 sessions that made up the February 2005 forum of the same name. The event brought together students, staff, faculty, activists, artists, and a variety of other speakers to examine the mechanisms through which social change takes place. The main body of the publication comes from session summaries and conclusions, written by some of the over 500 undergraduate students who attended the five-day forum. The publication is downloadable from the Center’s website at www.brandeis.edu/ethics/resources/publications/LocalGlobal.pdf.



The Psychology of Resolving Global Conflicts: From War to Peace, edited by Coexistence Professor Mari Fitzduff and Christopher E. Stout, is a forthcoming three-volume set that considers issues of war, conflict resolution, and stable peace around the world. Contributing experts explain how neighbors become sworn enemies and address the way issues of religion and gender contribute to violent conflict. “Creative Approaches to Reconciliation,” a chapter written by Coexistence Research Director Cynthia Cohen, explains the important role that arts and cultural programs can have in rebuilding war-torn communities. To obtain a copy of

the book, visit the Greenwood Publishing Group’s website at www.greenwood.com.

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