In an event that chairman Theodore C. Sorensen called an “historic occasion,” the international advisory board of the Center convened for the first time on March 7, 2000 in New York City.

Fifteen distinguished leaders and activists have joined the Board, which is charged with advising and shaping the Center’s work. Representing politics, law, scholarship, activism, the arts, and other fields, the board members’ extraordinary diversity of experience promises to give the Center a unique opportunity to develop ideas that cross usual professional and disciplinary boundaries.

At the inaugural meeting, board members discussed the history, mission, current projects, and future prospects of the Center. Citing the need for sustained attention to ethical issues in the international arena, the board recommended that the Center remain focused on conflicts and crises arising within and between countries. The Board further recommended that the Center examine the “ethics of intervention” as a principal focus in the coming years.

Board members also laid out an ambitious series of possible programs for the Center to undertake and suggested criteria by which the Center’s success could be judged after a three to five year timespan.

The Board is scheduled to meet formally on an annual basis, but informal meetings may take place between sessions in conjunction with Center conferences and other events.

(See Board List on page 2)

As part of the Center’s partnership with the Jerusalem Foundation, Brandeis University professor and former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich is delivering two public lectures in Israel in the spring of 2000.

The first, “Ethics, Public Service, and Income Inequality,” is being given at the Laromme Hotel in Jerusalem on May 28. The second, “Globalization and Its Discontents,” is being delivered at Tel Aviv University on May 30. The Center will publish the Jerusalem lecture later in 2000.

The lectures are part of the series, “Ethics and Human Values,” under the auspices of Mishkenot Sha’ananim. The Center has worked with Mishkenot Sha’ananim to provide ethics seminars for Israeli professionals in law, medicine, and the military.
Violence and suffering wrack a distant land. Those unaffected watch from afar. When are they obligated to act to relieve the suffering? What kinds of actions should they take? If they act, will they do more harm than good?

These questions roiled the international community during the 1990s. Action and inaction influenced events in troubled regions of the world. Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, Kosovo, East Timor. We are still sorting out the interventions and non-interventions of the past decade, and wondering whether there is a firm basis for more principled and more effective courses in the future.

The question of the “ethics of intervention” will govern the work of the Center over the next several years. The Center’s advisory board has recommended that we look both backward and forward, in search of ways that scholarly analysis and the insights of practitioners can provide a stronger basis for decision making and a greater public involvement in those decisions.

Some of this work involves an examination of recent conflicts. Board member Richard Goldstone is chairing the Independent Commission on Kosovo, whose work will point to lessons for the future. The debate over these issues is intense, and we intend to consider a variety of viewpoints. The excerpts in this newsletter from recent talks by Michael Ignatieff and Kevin Clements—who were on opposite sides regarding the NATO intervention in Kosovo—illustrate the divide.

But we should also cast a wider net in search of fundamentals. As we consider this theme, we plan to draw on the insights not only of political theorists and actors, but on a wide range of disciplines and professionals. We need the insights of moral philosophers to place intervention in its philosophical context. Historians will help us to compare the events of recent decades with the actions of men and women in earlier eras. We will draw upon the experience of professionals in fields like law and medicine who deal with intervention on a smaller scale in their daily practice. And we will look to the ways that writers and artists have explored this theme in their creative work.

The world is too complex for simple rules of conduct that could govern every situation. Instead, our goal is to provide the tools for informed and reflective decision making for actions in the public sphere. Intervention is a matter not only for leaders but for the citizens of their commonwealths.

As we move forward, the theme of the “ethics of intervention” will complement our ongoing work on the Brandeis Initiative in Intercommunal Coexistence. To the extent that many of the international interventions of recent years have revolved around ethnic and racial conflict, the connection is a natural one for our work.

We welcome your thoughts and suggestions as we plan the activities that will bring these questions to life.
The mandate of the Brandeis Initiative in Intercommunal Coexistence is to engage Brandeis students, faculty, and staff in the theory and practice of coexistence and, in the process, to contribute to the emerging field of coexistence.

Considerable attention has been devoted this year to the development of a leadership team for the Brandeis community. The six undergraduates, three graduate students, five members of the staff, and two members of the faculty met for a two-day retreat in January. Supported by facilitators and a consulting artist, they shared stories about the aesthetic inheritances they bring to Brandeis. Leadership team members also practiced listening skills and explored issues of power in relation to their various roles in the institution. Since the retreat, the group has continued to meet on a weekly basis and will develop an action plan for the next two years.

Scholarly work on coexistence questions has continued to explore the theme "Human Rights and Conflict Resolution: Reconciling Two Approaches to Coexistence." Following this year’s faculty seminar series, the Center will begin work on a publication that illustrates the tension between human rights and conflict resolution positions and that offers models of work integrating elements from the two fields. In addition, members of the faculty have been awarded stipends to pursue the questions raised by the seminar series through scholarly work that links their own disciplines to coexistence literature. Among those to receive stipends from the Brandeis Initiative are:

1. Dessima Williams, Sociology, for a project engaging Grenadian citizens in exploring structures and processes for reconciliation in the aftermath of the U.S. intervention nearly twenty years ago
2. Avigdor Levy, Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, for a work reviewing coexistence literature in light of his research on Turkish-Jewish-Ottoman relations
3. Andreas Teuber, Philosophy, for developing a coexistence and conflict resolution component in his Human Rights course

The Brandeis Initiative in Intercommunal Coexistence is supported by a generous grant from the Alan B. Slifka Foundation.
Michael Ignatieff, journalist, historian, novelist, and television commentator, spent three days at Brandeis in January as a Distinguished Visitor of the Center and of the Andrei Sakharov Archive and Human Rights Center. The following is excerpted from “Human Rights Culture: The Political and Spiritual Crisis," a lecture given in Andrei Sakharov’s honor on Tuesday, January 25, 2000. The Center will publish the lecture in its entirety later in 2000.

The real human rights crisis of the last fifteen years has followed from the collapse of states into civil war and ethnic conflict. These are the situations of war of all against all which produce most of the human rights abuses of the present day. These abuses cannot be stopped by international human rights activism alone, but by institution building, by creating states strong enough and legitimate enough to recover their monopoly over the means of violence, imposing order and creating the rule of law. And let us be explicit: democracy alone is no solution, for democracy too often becomes simply a legitimization of ethnic majority tyranny. See Croatia. See Kosovo.

We need to promote not just democracy, but constitutionalism and the rule of law and, to be frank, we may have to choose between constitutionalism and democracy. Authoritarian order which provides some measure of procedural fairness and due process is better than either anarchy or pure tyranny of the majority.

Where all order has disintegrated, when ethnic groups are fighting for their very survival against a repressive state, it is fruitless to dispatch human rights monitors or to expose the violators to international condemnation. The only effective action is military intervention.

Looking at the interventions we have taken since the end of the Cold War, who can say that we have been successful? We promised to create safe havens for the Bosnian Muslims. Because we did not deploy our peace-keepers with sufficient armor, with robust rules of engagement, and with a chain of command capable of delivering timely close-air support, tens of thousands of civilians in Srebrenica who had entrusted their lives to us—“the international community”—perished at the hands of Serbian execution squads. What defenseless civilian in his right mind will ever trust the international community again?

Rebuilding the credibility of human rights intervention means getting human rights activists to talk to the military, and for both of them to devise credible forms of military deployment which can reliably protect civilians in ethnic wars. The mutual distrust between human rights activists and military people must be overcome if peace-keeping in any form is to be salvaged.

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**Selected Highlights of Spring 2000 Events**

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<td>January 26</td>
<td>“Virtual War: A Public Conversation” with writer Michael Ignatieff and respondents Thomas Doherty (Brandeis University) and Andreas Teuber (Brandeis University)</td>
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<td>March 14</td>
<td>“Traditional Ethiopian Approaches to Reconciliation” by Tsehai Berhane-Selassie, Visiting Scholar and anthropologist</td>
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<td>March 22</td>
<td>“Dislocating Selves and Cultures: Perspectives from a South Asian Feminist” by Dr. Uma Narayan, Professor of Philosophy, Vassar College</td>
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<td>March 29</td>
<td>“The Japanese American Internment: Monuments and Memories” with Valerie Nao Yoshimura, Japanese American Citizens League; Kanan Makiya, Brandeis University; and Jennifer Clark, Facing History and Ourselves</td>
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<td>March 29</td>
<td>“Strangers and Neighbors: Contemporary Issues Between Blacks and Jews” with John Bracey and Maurianne Adams, UMass, Amherst and Jyl Lynn Felman, Women’s Studies Program, Brandeis University</td>
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<td>April 5</td>
<td>“Modern Griot and Storyteller: An Evening of Traditional Stories and Dance” with Dr. Raouf Mama, Master Storyteller, Benin, West Africa</td>
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Kevin Clements, Secretary-General of International Alert and former director of George Mason University’s program in conflict resolution, came to campus for two days in February. He led one of the Coexistence Initiative’s faculty seminars, met with students, and gave a public talk. The following is excerpted from his public lecture, ‘NATO’S Decision to Bomb: Revisiting Kosovo One Year Later,” given on February 14, 2000.

The question that needs to be asked is, could anything have been done differently to have prevented this catastrophe? In other situations when you have clear indications that gross violations of human rights are going to occur, what should you do? Michael Ignatieff, as we know, is inclined to suggest that the only thing that groups that are intent on committing gross violations of human rights are likely to understand is the deliberate and rapid application of superior force. I think that is a kind of counsel of defeat, and I would like much more effort to go into heightening and expanding the culture of prevention and a range of preventive mechanisms, and expand the latter for non-coercive, non-violent responses to signs of incipient tension. So all of those mechanisms can be exhausted before you even contemplate sending troops. . . .

Revisiting the Kosovan experience one year later, it seems to me that none of the fundamental underlying problems have been resolved. Indeed, new ones have been created. Far from engendering heightened respect for the international rule of law, there is now heightened disrespect for the international rule of law because it seemed to benefit the strong and disadvantage the weak. Far from heightened respect for the United Nations as the central body capable of adjudicating such issues, the Kosovan intervention undermined and challenged the authority of the United Nations and left Kofi Annan floundering. Far from being a good example of humanitarian intervention, it represents a bad example of military intervention. Far from preventing ethnic cleansing and the scourge of racism, it has sent the message that with sufficient determination groups that are interested in eliminating minority populations from certain areas can do so with relative impunity as long as they can appeal to the international community in different kinds of ways.

So it seems to me that the decision to bomb and the whole Kosovan experience is a challenge to international order and has not in fact provided a good basis for thinking about such interventions in the future. We need to develop a whole new way of conceptualizing of what a culture of prevention might look like if we are to avoid such interventions in the twenty-first century.
"Doing Justice and Loving Mercy"

In November 1999, Dr. Hizkias Assefa presented a series of talks during his week-long residency entitled “Doing Justice and Loving Mercy: Perspectives on Coexistence and Reconciliation from an African Peacebuilder.” Dr. Assefa is coordinator of the African Network for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation in Nairobi. The following is taken from his first lecture, entitled “Conflict in Africa: Causes, Dynamics and Implications for the Emerging Global Order.”

Under colonialism and slavery, African traditional institutions of governance disintegrated and disappeared. The glue of African societies became loose. Ethnic groups were pitted against each other for the purpose of weakening them in favor of the colonial master. In some instances, an ethnic hierarchy was created, in which some ethnic groups were made to rule over the others.

Then, toward the end of colonialism, came the modernization process. The economic, political and educational systems that were put in place destroyed whatever was left of the systems that African societies had evolved over generations. Education was used as an instrument to supplant everything that was African, instead of enhancing it, or adapting it to the emerging needs of African societies. This is not at all to imply that nothing good has come out of the modernization process, or anything that is traditional is good. No. There are many bad things about African traditions, and a lot of good things have come out of the modernization process. However, let me emphasize that prior to the colonial period, all traditional societies in Africa had developed values and institutions that enabled them to make sense of their lives, to coexist with each other, to cope with their environment, and to manage their resources, slowly, over time.

When a system such as this is brutally dismantled as during slavery and colonialism, and then what is left is discredited and denigrated, then a deep trauma and disorientation happen. This trauma has significant impact on conflicts at a personal, psychological, and social level.

I also want to touch on the global context in which African conflicts play out, and the role it plays in contributing to or generating conflicts... The affluent society that constitutes 25% of the world population controls over 75% of the world resources, and dominates the global political and military power. There are some policies that are emerging from the prevailing global order that are fomenting or feeding conflicts in Africa, specifically structural adjustment and privatization policies that are being pushed on the poor and conflict regions in Africa. Even though the long term benefit of these policies can be debated, what we are observing is that it is generating an increasing gap between the rich and the poor.

So we see that some of the causes and problems that underlie conflicts in Africa seem to emerge out of unique African situations, while others seem to be shared by all of us, as members of the global order, or the human race. I have told stories of slavery and colonialism, not to point accusing fingers, or inculcate guilt, but to warn all of us of the immense capacity that we all have for evil. I want to challenge us to hold hands together, to examine our conscience to dismantle the values, practices, and institutions that we still have today that enslave people and colonize their minds, even if they may not be called slavery or colonialism. If we do not use the tale of this suffering that we share to challenge us to bring about this transformation, then indeed, the experience of African suffering has been in vain.

There is increasing evidence that the polarization between rich and poor is also happening within industrially advanced states. Maybe therein lies hope for global partnership across borders -- among those that have been alienated by the emerging order -- to contribute to the creation of a much more compassionate and inclusive global system.

Hizkias Assefa with Forsan Hussein, 1998 Ethics and Coexistence Student Fellow

The Japanese American Internment: Contemporary Questions

Between January and March Brandeis University faculty and students, area school teachers, and members of the Japanese American community gathered to discuss the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

The seminar series represents a collaboration between the International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life and Facing History and Ourselves, a nationally regarded organization dedicated to training teachers to explore issues of prejudice in their classrooms. The project was initiated by Professor of Romance and Comparative Literature, Erica Harth, who is editing a book about the internment and the issues that emerge from it.

Led by university scholars and teaching specialists, each seminar focused on a different multi-layered theme. The insights gathered as a result of the seminar series will be incorporated in a symposium about the Japanese American internment to be held in 2001. That event will bring together contributors to Professor Harth’s book, educators, scholars, and members of the community to further discuss what we have learned about such subjects as loyalty, bearing witness, and historical memory.
Dumla Gobodo-Madikizela, a psychologist who served on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, has been with the Center and the Coexistence Initiative as a Visiting Faculty Associate during 1999-2000. During the spring term, she offered a course for undergraduates and graduate students, entitled “The Rupture of Silence: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.” Ms. Gobodo-Madikizela’s recent work has focused on the complex nature of empathy in post-apartheid South Africa. The following is an excerpt from a talk entitled “Hearing the Cry of Apartheid’s Crusader,” delivered on the Brandeis campus on February 10, 2000. It describes her first encounter with Eugene De Kock, the architect of some of the most brutal violence perpetrated by the apartheid regime.

As I approached the prison gate I parked the car and pondered the implications of being face to face with this murderous man, “Prime Evil,” who was the personification of evil in the eyes of so many South Africans, black and white. After a briefing by the head of the maximum-security prison, I was taken to a small consulting room where de Kock was waiting for me.

When I entered into this consulting room de Kock was dressed in orange overalls. I was seeing him for the first time. I had seen his face many times in newspapers, and I had always wondered about the boyish fear on his face. As I entered the door, this again was the impression that I got of him. He got up and kind of balanced himself against the wall. His legs were chained. I remember feeling very offended or very uncomfortable about the idea of interviewing someone in chains. Already I was beginning to feel for this person. And I couldn’t understand what was going on with me. Why wasn’t I angry? Why wasn’t I feeling the feelings of repulsion about this man called Prime Evil?

When I asked him to tell me about the meeting with the women whose husbands were killed by a bomb put together through his instructions, his face immediately dropped. Sitting directly across from me, his heavy glasses on the table that separated us, he shifted his eyes uncomfortably. His feet shuffled, and I could hear the clatter of his leg chains. His mouth quivered, and there were tears in his eyes. As he started to speak his hand trembled, and he became visibly distressed. With a breaking voice he said, “I wish I could do more than just say I’m sorry. I wish there were a way of bringing their bodies back alive. I wish I could say, ‘Here are your husbands.’”

As he said this, he was demonstrating with his hands, demonstrating a desperation expressed with a feeling of needing to bring their bodies back alive. He was gesturing with his arms outstretched, but he said, “Unfortunately I have to live with it.” As he said this, the table between us seemed to collapse. And reaching to him the only way one does in such human circumstances seemed natural.

When I touched his clenched hand, it was cold and rigid. I felt as if he were holding back. This caused me to recoil for a moment and to reflect on the spontaneous act of humanity: something incompatible with a circumstance with a perpetrator of such serious atrocities. However, other than his clenched fist I could find nothing incongruous between his show of emotion and my response.

I had held back tears but let go of them the moment I entered the car for the drive back to Johannesburg. I was angry, but I wasn’t de Kock who was the object of my anger, but white people. Why did they continue to enjoy the fruits of apartheid and the oppression of black people, instead of speaking out against it? Why did they allow humanity to be destroyed in the way that de Kock’s was? That moment of shared humanity between de Kock and myself seemed to open up a window into the kinds of human possibility that would have been possible for de Kock had he not been brought up under a system that encouraged human corruption. Throughout the drive, frightened, angry, and confused, I blamed white society. I put myself in de Kock’s shoes and turned his experience in my head over and over again, wondering where I would be had our roles been reversed.
An ambitious new project that aims to shape public policy debate on education in Massachusetts began under the Center’s auspices in January 2000. “A New Public Education” is designed to engage educators, politicians, and the public in a disciplined and deliberative process to renew public education in Massachusetts.

The project brings together a unique and talented leadership team: director Jay R. Kaufman, a sitting Massachusetts state legislator; associate director Sarah Cannon Holden, a lawyer/mediator with extensive local school committee experience; and associate director Theodore R. Sizer, founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools and one of the best-known thinkers and practitioners in American education today.

At a time when questions of quality, governance, and finance raise serious doubts about the preparedness of schools and school-aged children for the 21st century, the project proposes to rebuild the foundations of public education to better reflect the values and social realities of our time. Unlike other recent efforts at education reform, which have focused on fine tuning the current system, this three-phase project seeks to address a set of fundamental and critical pedagogical questions.

Work on the project began this spring, focused on a new Brandeis Course, ED 150, “Public Schools and Democracy.” Undergraduates and graduate students have assisted with research on designing new public education systems for the 21st century. Over the course of the next twelve months, the project staff will be conducting conversations and public meetings around Massachusetts, with an eye towards developing specific policy recommendations.

“A New Public Education” is funded by the Leo and Julia Forchheimer Foundation. ■

For more information: check our website www.brandeis.edu/ethics

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