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ICCI INSIGHTS & INFORMATION

8 Shevat 5769

February 2, 2009

6 Safar 1430

Dear friends,

I write this message as I am still in the first month of mourning for my beloved mother, Lillian Kronish, of blessed memory, who passed away on January 10th in Lake Worth, Florida. She was a remarkable woman—the matriarch of our family-- who led a deeply Jewish life all of her 91 years, and she was a committed Zionist and a lover of Israel. Along with my 3 daughters, I fulfilled the mitzvah of eulogizing her at her funeral, which took place at her synagogue of more than 60 years, Temple Beth Sholom in Miami Beach, Florida, the synagogue where my father, Rabbi Leon Kronish, of blessed memory, had been the founding senior rabbi and had served for 52 years, from 1944 to his passing in 1996.



Among the major aspects of her life that I talked about in my eulogy was her commitment and love for Israel. Here is what I said:

"Wow, did my mother love Israel!! I admit that she would have preferred that Israel be located in Dade County, or Broward County, or maximum in Palm Beach County, so that her children and grandchildren would have lived right next door. Nevertheless, she was a devoted and committed Zionist. Now where could she have gotten the Zionist bug from? From all her trips with 'The Rabbi' to Israel in the years before I moved there with my family, and in the years afterwards, to visit me, my wife Amy and our children.

"She read every article that I wrote about life in Israel—every newspaper article and every newsletter --and she often had suggestions on how I could have done it better, and you know what, she was usually right! Moreover, she followed the development of the organization that I have led for the past 18 years—the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI) with tremendous interest and introspection. And she always asked me about my work—how could I keep up the hope and yearning for peace, in the face of so many obstacles and so much adversity? How could I continue to promote peaceful relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel in the midst of an ongoing conflict in the region? She was my greatest fan, my greatest supporter, and my most serious critic, and I will always be indebted to her for her encouragement of my work for peace through dialogue."

I know that my mother would be grateful to anyone who wants to invest in peace by supporting the pioneering work that I do in Israel through interreligious dialogue for peace. You can do so by sending a check for ICCI to the Temple Beth Sholom Mitzvah Fund (c/o Temple Beth Sholom, Kronish Plaza, 4144 Chase Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33140. Attention: Alice Miller), and be sure to write “**designated for ICCI**” on the bottom left of the check (or via the PEF ISRAEL ENDOWMENT FUNDS --see the box at the end of this newsletter for details.)

After the war in Gaza, and following the inauguration of President Barack Obama in the USA, now is the time to renew our commitment both to the political peace process -- to be led by the Obama administration and a new government in Israel (to be elected next week) -- as well as to the people-to-people peace processes which bring Jews, Christians and Muslims in Israel and in the region to learn how to live together in peace.

L'shalom (In peace),

Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish
Director, ICCI

UPCOMING EVENTS

Face to Face/Faith to Faith Event at the Jerusalem Cinematheque

A special festive opening of a photography exhibit entitled "Face to Face Perspectives in Jerusalem" will take place at the **Jerusalem Cinematheque** on **Thursday, February 5, 2009 at 17:30**. The program includes opening remarks by Face to Face/Faith to Faith representatives, a screening of short films dealing with shared lives in Jerusalem (please purchase tickets through the Jerusalem Cinematheque for this part of the program). A festive opening of the exhibit will begin at **19:00** (this part of the program is free). ICCI's youth planned this exhibition in the weeks before and during the recent war.



SPECIAL EVENTS

Leaders of Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding meet with Face to Face/Faith to Faith Participants, Alumni, and Parents

On January 18, 2009, the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, based in New York, held a public event at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute on the topic of "Religion as a Force for Reconciliation," including a panel discussion with international guests featured in Tanenbaum's case study collection *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*. Greetings were brought by **Prof. Gabriel Motzkin**, director of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, and Ms. **Georgette Bennett**, President of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding. The participants of the panel included **Jose "Chencho" Alas** (El Salvador), **Friar Ivo Markovic** (Bosnia), **Rev. William Lowrey** (Sudan and the USA), **Pastor James Wuye** (Nigeria), **Imam Muhammad Ashafa** (Nigeria), and **Rabbi Prof. Naftali Rothenberg** (the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute).

Before this public event, there was a very special opportunity for participants, parents and alumni of **FACE TO FACE/FAITH TO FAITH** to meet in a private session with the Tanenbaum leaders active in the field of religious peace-building from other parts of the world and to share some of their own experiences from the region with them.

ONGOING YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS

Jerusalem Interreligious Young Adult Forum (JIYAF) members attend Emergency Meeting in Paris

In January, the two facilitators and some of the participants of the JIYAF group attended a special three-day emergency dialogue meeting in Paris to discuss the repercussions of the recent war in Gaza and its implications for continued dialogue in the region. The meeting was hosted by the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP), represented by Rev. Kyoichi Sugino, Assistant Secretary General and Director of Inter-religious Council Development and Field Coordination for WCRP in New York, and Rev. Koichi Matsumoto, Special Advisor to the Secretary General for Youth Affairs, WCRP in Japan.



ICCI's JIYAF program met twice during the recent war in Gaza: the first meeting of the group took place during Hannukah, on the first day of the war, at the home of one of the Jewish participants. The group had planned to light candles together and celebrate Christmas by exchanging gifts. During this meeting, JIYAF members decided that despite the war, and the difficulties of the time, that it was important for them to continue meeting. During the height of the war, the group held its second meeting of the month wherein the participants discussed how they felt about the war, and what it meant for them to engage in interreligious dialogue at such a time of conflict. The fact that this group was able to meet during the war demonstrates their commitment to dialogue, even when the going gets rough.

ICCI IN THE PRESS

U.N Observer and International Report: An Independent Journal of International Affairs, January 7, 2009: <http://www.unobserver.com/layout5.php?id=5521&blz=1>

VISITING GROUPS

- On January 6, 2009, the Director of ICCI's Center for Interreligious Encounter with Israel, Mr. Ophir Yarden, met with members of an interreligious study group from **Jackson, Mississippi**. Mr. Yarden gave a general briefing to the group about interreligious relations in Israel and ICCI's peace-building activities in the region.
- On January 7, 2009, Mr. Ophir Yarden, Rev. Samuel Fanous, and Mr. Issa Jaber spoke to a group of 90 Australian students in Israel with **Taglit Birthright** at Mercaz HaMagshimim on the topic of interreligious relations in Israel.
- On January 9, 2009, a **Delegation of Lutheran Bishops from the U.S.** led by Bishop Munib Younan was welcomed to Friday evening worship services at Kehilat Kol Haneshama by

Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman, a member of the ICCI Board of Directors, and was briefed by Sarah Bernstein, Director of ICCI's Women's Dialogue Programs about the work of ICCI in the field of interreligious dialogue for peace in Israel and the region.

- ICCI's Center for Interreligious Encounter with Israel partnered with **Williams College of Massachusetts** to bring 10 students of various religious backgrounds to Jerusalem for a 10 day program entitled "Jerusalem: One City, Two Nations, Three Religions, Many Narratives." One of the highlights of the program was a meeting with the students' peer group of young adults at ICCI (the Jerusalem Interreligious Young Adult Forum). This is the second time ICCI and Williams College have conducted this program which was led by **Cantor Robert Scherr**, Jewish Chaplain at Williams. We're looking forward to the Williams Alumni group which is planning to visit Israel in June for a similar program.
- Recently, ICCI leadership met with **Hamline University** law students about interreligious relations in Israel. The group of students was in Jerusalem for a short period of time studying at a special program, led by **Professor David Cobin**, at the Hebrew University about "Conflict Resolution from Religious Traditions." In addition, ICCI's Ophir Yarden organized special meetings for this group with religious leaders active in interreligious dialogue in Israel such as Rabbi David Rosen, Sheikh Abdul Bukhari, and Ms. Margaret Karram.
- Students and facilitators from ICCI's Youth Forum met with Rabbi David Sandmel and a group of 14 Catholic seminarians and priests from the **Catholic Theological Union of Chicago** at Knight's Palace in East Jerusalem for an informal discussion on the challenges and problematics of interreligious dialogue in a time of conflict.

ICCI STAFF

Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish, Director

Sarah Bernstein, Director of Women's Programs

Ophir Yarden, Director of ICCI's Center for Interreligious Encounter with Israel

Avigail Moshe, Director of Youth and Young Adult Programs

Rebecca Keys Miller, Communications and Development Coordinator

Yael Yechieli, Project Coordinator and Facilitator, JIYAF

Mariam Abad Alda'im, Project Coordinator and Facilitator, JIYAF

Ya'ala Cohen, Project Coordinator and Facilitator, Face to Face

Buthaina Ayad, Project Coordinator and Facilitator, Face to Face

Hiba Alayan, Program Coordinator, Youth Programs

Zuzanna Radzik, Student Intern for Special Programs

Rebecca Russo, Student Intern, Youth Program

ICCI serves as the Israel chapter of Religions for Peace (WCRP) and is a member of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ).

Interreligious Interactive Educational Programs For Visiting/Long-Term Groups in Israel

ICCI's Center for Interreligious Encounter with Israel is offering programs to participants of visiting and long-term groups/programs in Israel.

For High School and University Students:

ICCI offers interactive programs to both high school and university student groups in Israel and works with you to arrange a program fitting your group size and needs. All programs involve a short presentation, informal conversation, and group discussions. Meet with alumni and current students from ICCI's Youth & Young Adult programs:

Face to Face/Faith to Faith: ICCI's leadership and dialogue program for Israeli Jewish and Palestinian (Christian/Muslim) high school students. The program includes attending a summer intensive experience in the U.S and a full-year follow-up program of dialogue and social action projects.

Jerusalem Interreligious Young Adult Forum (JIYAF): ICCI's JIYAF program brings together Jewish, Christian, and Muslim university students from different colleges and universities from both East and West Jerusalem to change the tenor of public discourse and improve relations between Palestinians (Christian and Muslim) and Jews at their universities and in the city of Jerusalem as a whole.

■ *Dinner & Dialogue:* Meet local Jewish, Muslim, and Christian alumni and current students of ICCI Youth & Young Adult programs for informal discussions, dinner, and dialogue. Depending on the size of your group, 2, 4, or 6 students will share experiences and personal stories of what it means to be involved in interreligious dialogue in a conflict situation.

■ *Round Robin Discussion:* This program enables groups to have a more intimate encounter with alumni and current students active in interreligious dialogue.

The exact methodology of each program will be tailor-made to your group's needs and schedule. To accommodate the schedules of our students, however, all programs must begin no earlier than the late afternoon.

Also Available to Visiting/Long Term Groups:

Lectures & Traditional Panel Discussions

■ **Interreligious Relations in the Service of Peace – Briefing or lecture by ICCI Director, Dr. Ron Kronish**
Panel Discussion with Local Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Religious Leaders

For more information and/or to book a program, please contact:
communications@icci.org.il or 972-2-561-1899.

INVEST IN PEACE – SUPPORT ICCI

To support the groundbreaking and innovative programs of ICCI which bring people together from many sectors of Israeli and Palestinian society to learn to live together in peace, to engage in reconciliatory dialogue and education, and to prepare the way for a better future for all citizens of Israel and the surrounding region,

Friend: \$180-499

Sponsor: \$500-999 Patron: \$1,000-4,999

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Send a donor-advised donation to:*

The PEF ISRAEL ENDOWMENT FUNDS
317 Madison Ave., Suite 607, NYC, NY 10017

Or

The New Israel Fund, 1101 14th St. NW, 6th Floor, Washington D.C. 20005-5639

Or

New Israel Fund, 26 Enford St., London W1H 2DD, England

*Checks should be made out to PEF or NIF, and one writes "for ICCI" on the bottom left side of the Check!

Kindly send ICCI a fax to let us know that you have made the contribution. Fax no: 972-2-563-4148 or

communications@icci.org.il