

Bewilderment and Fear

SHORTLY AFTER the September 11, 2001 tragedy, world-renowned author and scholar Umberto Eco wrote an article for an Italian publication, *La Repubblica*, titled “The Roots of Conflict.” The article concludes with the statement, “it is at times of bewilderment that the weapon of analysis and criticism comes into its own, to be applied to our own superstitions and those of others.”

Here Eco referred not only to the most common concept of ‘superstition,’ but to all of the cultural baggage that every person in every culture carries. This baggage includes all of the kinds of prejudice—in the broadest sense of that term—that can affect our world view.

In places with a long history of discord and profound feelings of insecurity and mistrust—such as pervades the Israeli/Palestinian conflict—bitter vehemence run so deeply that dispassionate reasoning can be a

very rare commodity indeed. Yet, deploying the ‘weapon’ of analysis and criticism may be the only hope of ever reaching true accord.

In the second in our series of articles on higher education in lands in conflict, Dana Wilkie examines some of the ways in which educators are working together in Israel and the lands under the Palestinian Authority to help bring reasoned thought to a conflict that includes religious, political, economic, and personal fear and desperation on both sides.

Despite the enormity of the divide between the two sides, there is still much hope to be found in the work that educators are doing in this troubled region.

Also in This Issue

Iranian Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi was the final plenary speaker at the 2006 NAFSA Conference in Montreal, Canada in May. In this issue, Elaina Loveland’s interview

allows us a chance to hear from this courageous woman in her own words about her struggles toward achieving democracy in her home nation and human rights for women and children, in particular.

In our latest installment in our year-long series in honor of the Year of Study Abroad, Alan Dessoif takes a look at how institutions of higher learning are dealing with record high demands for education abroad programming while continuing to assure that quality remains a top priority.

And finally, in this issue you’ll find our second annual listing of books and other publications for the international education field. You may not find these appropriate reading for the beach this summer (I might suggest one of Umberto Eco’s books for that purpose), but the listed publications will undoubtedly prove very useful as you prepare for the coming academic year. **IE**

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