

INTRODUCTION

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

RABAH HALABI

This book presents an educational approach developed at the School for Peace at Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam to address the Jewish-Arab conflict in Israel. In this introduction I begin by clarifying a few of the relevant concepts that my colleagues and I use in our work and by describing both the ongoing reality in which we live and our frame of reference. I refer briefly to nationality, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and relations between Jews and Arabs within Israel. I then address cross-cultural encounter as an educational approach employed to cope with conflicts around the globe. Finally, I describe the book, explain the rationale behind its writing, and survey its contents.

Contrary to the classic notion once common among political scientists and sociologists, collective identities do not fade with increasing progress and development. In fact, we have been witnessing just the opposite: a resurgence of national, ethnic, and religious identities that appears to be gaining momentum (Hobsbawm 1995; Smith 1998). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the matter of nationality is a major and focal influence on our world. Most countries today are national entities, and liberation movements are overwhelmingly national movements. In addition, national tensions and schisms threaten the integrity of old-line European countries like Spain, France, and the United Kingdom, not to

speak of the nations of Eastern Europe and the Third World (Hobsbawm 1995). Indeed, many conflicts and wars have an ethnic, national context: in the Sudan, the Kurdish struggle, the conflict in Northern Ireland now moving (perhaps) toward resolution, and likewise the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with which our book is concerned (Smith 1992; Isaacs 1989).

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is among the most longstanding and intractable of the modern era. It is an outcome largely of the national re-awakening around the globe, a direct outgrowth of the Second World War and the Holocaust, to which the Jews were subject. This conflict is between two peoples. It began at the end of the nineteenth century as a struggle between two national movements, the Zionist and the Palestinian, over the same bit of land. The decisive juncture in this conflict was the year 1948, when the Zionist movement won the war and established the State of Israel; this fulfillment of Zionist aspirations came about at the expense of the Palestinian people, for whom the same date is remembered as *Al Naqba*—the Catastrophe.

The Zionist fulfillment tore the Palestinian people in two and created the particular reality with which we are still contending today. During the 1948 war, some 750,000 Palestinians lost their homes and became refugees; the Palestinians then found themselves divided between those who had remained in Israel and those who were now outside Israel (Morris 1987). That moment was a turning point for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, sundering it into two channels. The first, the external conflict, was led on the Palestinian side by the Palestine Liberation Organization, which, beginning in the 1960s, fought in the name of the Palestinian people for the right to self-determination and the right of return to their homeland. Today these issues are at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian agenda. In the late 1990s, they appeared to be on their way to eventual resolution, with the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

The second channel is the internal conflict, which involves those Palestinians who remained within the State of Israel and were transformed almost literally overnight from a majority controlling most of the land and resources of an extensive territory to a small minority dispossessed of most of its land, bereft completely of national rights, and broadly discriminated against in terms of civil rights. Before 1948 approximately 1.4 million Palestinians and approximately 620,000 Jews lived in the territory of Palestine, while immediately after the war approximately 120,000 Palestinians remained in the territory of the State of Israel. This remnant was like a body without a head because the elite—virtually the entire social, commercial, and political leadership—had emigrated or had been exiled

(Morris 1987; Kimmerling and Migdal 1999). It was a frightened minority, lacking everything, at the mercy of the Israeli establishment.

Israel, finding itself “stuck with” all these Palestinians inside its boundaries, didn’t know what to do with them initially. Once recovered, the state ruled with an oppressive hand over the Palestinian minority in every possible way. Beginning in 1948 and continuing through 1966, a military administration governed the areas where the Palestinians lived; it limited the Palestinians’ freedom of movement and of expression and thwarted any exercise of their freedom to organize (Kimmerling and Migdal 1999). Most of the Arab lands were expropriated, and allotments of water were so minuscule that the Palestinians were forced to give up agriculture, the primary source of such livelihood as remained to them. En masse, they rapidly switched to working for wages for Jewish employers and thus became economically dependent on the establishment (Kimmerling and Migdal 1999; Lustick 1985).

Israel’s policy was not limited to subjugating the Arabs by force; it aspired to rule them by constructing their collective identity in a manner different from, cut off from, that of the rest of the Palestinians. The state thus attempted to subdivide the Palestinian minority ethnically and religiously—in other words, divide and rule, a system favored by imperialist nations in the early 1900s (Lustick 1985). Another, perhaps primary instrument for achieving this objective was the state’s control of the Arab educational system, which the establishment tried to manipulate so as to inculcate Arab schoolchildren with an indistinct, rootless identity that elided their Palestinian selfhood (Al-haj 1996; Mar’i 1985). This was an identity of obedience, estranged from its own history and culture, which were sacrificed in favor of strengthening the children’s identification with their Israeliness and with the state in general (Peres, Ehrlich, and Yuval-Davis 1968).

This massive policy has had an impact on the Palestinian minority in Israel but only within certain limits and not for the long term. The first study of Palestinian identity in Israel, on the eve of the 1967 war, revealed that the Israeli component was strong and deeply engrained. The subjects saw themselves as Israelis first and as Arabs and Palestinians only to a lesser degree (Peres and Yuval-Davis 1969). Many similar studies have been conducted since then. Over the years, the Palestinian component has grown persistently stronger until it has become the dominant element in the identity of Arabs in Israel, and, at the same time, the Israeli component has consistently weakened (Suleiman and Beit-Hallahmi 1997; Rouhana 1984, 1993; Smootha 1983; Tessler 1977).

Smootha (1988) found that 40 percent of the Arabs in Israel describe

their identity as combining Palestinian and Israeli components. He ascribes this phenomenon to the “new Arabs,” who have succeeded in integrating these two strands of identity within themselves: they feel solidarity with their people, the Palestinian people, on the one hand, and, on the other, loyalty to the State of Israel. Rouhana (1993), by contrast, argues that the Palestinian identity is the core identity, while the Israeli civic identity is secondary and exists on a formal, instrumental level only. Suleiman (1999) attributes Palestinians’ ability to encompass within themselves both these seemingly opposing identities, the Palestinian and the Israeli, to their marginal status in both these worlds. This marginality glosses over the contradictions and enables the Palestinian to be, as Suleiman puts it, in two places at once.

The duality inherent in the identity of Palestinians in Israel and its implications for their position within the state have been extensively studied and written about. One of the explanations given for discrimination against Palestinians in Israel is their “double identity” and alleged lack of loyalty to the state. Rouhana (1993) argues that the problem lies not with the Palestinians but rather in the structure of the state and its ideology. He says further that the very definition of the state as Jewish places the Palestinians who live there on the outside and precludes their identification with its symbols, ideology, and narratives. In recent years, the situation of the Arabs in Israel has improved in every way with respect to standard of living, level of education, and civil rights, but the discrimination they confront and the considerable gap between them and Jewish Israelis remains. Discrimination continues in the allocation of public resources and social wealth; the State of Israel continues to be Jewish in its foundations and its agenda; and the Arabs do not enjoy collective rights as a national minority. Within the context of the improvement in their condition in economic and civic terms, the question about their political voice and degree of “Israelization” is merely thrown into sharper relief. Bishara (1999) observes that the Israelization of the Arabs in Israel has become a fact. He contends that the transformation was initially coercive but that social-political circumstances have transformed it into an inseparable part of the existing culture, particularly in light of the concurrent improvement in living conditions.

The questions are whether the State of Israel wants the Palestinians who live in it to be full partners, and, concomitantly, how it is that a group suffers discrimination based on ethnicity in a state that defines itself as democratic. Smooha (1990) solved this conundrum by defining the State of Israel as an ethnic democracy. In this model, the state is an instrument in the hands of a national majority, with members of the minority enjoy-

ing civil rights as individuals and theoretically able to aspire to the attainment of collective rights as a national minority.

Bishara (1999) called this model “flawed democracy” and termed it a distortion of reality and an emasculation of the concept of democracy, a temporary phenomenon that would exist in Israel as long as the Arabs living there were resigned to less than full equality as individuals and less than full national rights as a group. The moment the Arabs ceased being resigned to this situation and embraced more radical demands, he reasoned, the model would crash.

Bishara could not have foreseen how quickly he would be proven right. In October 2000, at the start of the second intifada, Palestinians in Israel took to the streets to demonstrate. Their frustration with continuing discrimination and their despair in the face of the domestic and external situation fanned the flames of protest. Israel’s police reacted with disproportionate severity and killed a demonstrator at Umm al Fahm; this incident prompted masses of people to come out and join the protests in the streets. The police response escalated further; in the process, thirteen Palestinians (from Israel) were shot to death.

Relations between Jews and Palestinians in Israel have not been the same since. The fracture is not mended and is unlikely to be mended in the near future. Jews have all but disappeared from Arab towns and villages, Arabs have begun avoiding contact with Jews, and an atmosphere of anxiety has taken hold on both sides, tinged with a fear of the unknown.

The explosion of October 2000 was the outcome of a conflict that had been building between Palestinians and Jews in Israel over a period of years and was clearly, sooner or later, going to reach its peak. As already noted, the Palestinians who remained in Israel after 1948 were initially submissive and fearful. As time went on and the next generation grew to maturity, it recovered to some degree from the trauma, developed an understanding of its identity, reclaimed its pride, and stood tall again (Rabinowitz and Abu Baker 2002). This invigoration presented a challenge to the longstanding policy of institutionalized discrimination and to the very structure of the Jewish state, which was unable to make space for the figure of a proud Palestinian with civic and national aspirations. Several struggles ensued over the years, notably on Land Day in 1976, when six Palestinian demonstrators were killed. The explosion in October 2000, a quarter of a century later, was of broader dimensions. At this writing, there is as yet no clear answer to the question of where the relationship may be headed.

The status of national and ethnic minorities in a modern democratic

state is of considerable interest to sociologists and social psychologists. Numerous models have been proposed that offer optimal integration of minorities while affording them their own social-political space. Models dealing with the cultural and practical integration of immigrants into a host state range along a continuum from assimilation into the majority culture at one pole to segregation behind the ramparts of the culture of origin at the other. These models deal mainly with immigrants' mechanisms of survival (see, e.g., Hutnik 1991; Birman 1994; Berry 1997). The Palestinians in Israel are original residents, although they sometimes suffer from something like immigrant syndrome—as if they had migrated into Jewish-Western culture rather than vice versa. That being the case, it seems appropriate to examine models dealing with oppressed minorities discriminated against within their own state on account of their ethnic-national identity. These models argue that the optimal way for the minority to deal with the conflict is to construct and reinforce a positive collective identity encompassing ethnic, cultural, and racial components while, at the same time, preserving the ability to communicate and function within the broader society (Phinney 1989; Helms 1989).

One of the leaders in this field has been Helms (1990a), who addresses the racial identity of whites and blacks in the United States. She proposes two models for developing a positive ethnic identity, for both whites and blacks, as the basis for building a healthy, just society. The central tenet of Helms's model is that identity is constructed in the encounter with oneself through the encounter with the other. This is not the ordinary day-to-day encounter but rather a meeting of significance that awakens the individual through a confrontation with reality that cannot be denied and cannot be ignored. (The Helms model is treated in detail in Chapter Five.)

Like whites and blacks in the United States, Arabs and Jews in Israel live together without really meeting in the sense that Helms intends. Arabs more commonly have contact with Jews than vice versa, but this is an instrumental kind of meeting and typically involves an Arab worker with a Jewish boss. In general, Arabs in Israel are "present absentees," in the words of Grossman (1992). Today about a million Palestinians live in Israel, and they constitute about 20 percent of the state's citizens. The vast majority live in their own villages and cities in the Galilee, the Triangle (an area in the north-central coastal plain), and the Negev. A much smaller proportion live in cities that have become "mixed" by force of circumstances: cities like Acre, Jaffa, Ramla, and Lod, which were Arab cities until the establishment of the State of Israel, when Jews came to live there in place of the Arabs who had been expelled. In any case, the Jew-

ish and Arab residents live separate lives for the most part, even in the mixed cities, and this separation obtains in education as well. Arab youngsters study in their own schools, and Jewish youngsters in theirs. For the most part the two peoples have virtually no contact with one another outside official frameworks like government offices or places of employment. This lack of contact is particularly evident on the Jewish side because Jews rarely need to come, and rarely do come, into contact with Arabs in ordinary daily life.

As in all situations involving a majority and a minority, the Arabs have always been the ones with more interest in a relationship and have sought ways of breaking through the barriers to reach out to Jews. Initially meetings were held between Arab intellectuals and Jewish intellectuals, but these were sporadic and not systematic. The most significant contact was via the Israeli Communist Party, a Jewish-Arab party that tried to reach beyond national affiliation and to unite around the themes of social justice and fraternity between peoples. In the early 1970s, the boundaries were breached to some extent, and a number of organizations began holding planned meetings between Jews and Arabs. The approach to these encounters, imported from the United States, was naïve and romantic, and the value of the meetings was essentially that they took place. They met the need of Arabs to pursue contact with Jews and stroked the liberal leftist ego of a marginal Jewish group.

One group of Arabs and Jews went further and decided to conduct an ongoing encounter: by living together. They set up a joint Jewish-Arab village in 1972 and called it Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam (“Oasis of Peace”). From a small group consisting of a few couples, the village grew and developed over the years and today has forty resident families, half of them Arab, half Jewish. With development came a certain sobering effect: the original handful of revolutionaries intent on breaking down the contemptible barriers of nationality became a complex, multihued community with a diversity of opinion and outlook. The initial attempt to gloss over national origin made way for an engagement through ongoing dialogue between national identities.

Ongoing contact between the two peoples sharpened identities, brought people a high level of awareness, and sometimes caused tension but, overall, stabilized their identities and their social and political outlooks and immunized them against reality—an ever-present reality that intrudes into the community and precludes the option of building a self-contained utopia. Thus, for example, the reigning language in the community is Hebrew, just as in the rest of the state; and in the binational, bilingual school located in the village, the dominance of Hebrew

is beyond doubt. The Arab students have complete mastery of Hebrew; the Jewish students are far from mastering the Arabic language.

From this richness and complexity of experience grew the School for Peace, founded by the community in 1976 to reach out beyond the village to a wider public. Since then, the School for Peace has conducted hundreds of encounter activities for young people and adults in which some twenty-five thousand secondary school students, teachers, university students, and others have participated.

Like the community and like other organizations involved in encounter work at the time, the School for Peace began with a naïve outlook. The encounter itself was the object; the magic words were “reduction of stereotypes” and “bringing people together.” Over the years, learning from the experience of the village as a whole and from their own work, the staff of the School for Peace developed a more critical way of looking at the encounter. We understood that stereotypes are only the visible, superficial symptom and that, as such, they can reveal the much deeper underlying conceptions held by both Jews and Arabs. These ideas are hard to eradicate: they are formed by the conflict and also reinforce it. We came to see that cordial contact, as contact (“eating hummus together”), may provide a good feeling for the moment but solves nothing; rather it helps preserve the status quo and even fortifies it.

After considerable trial and error, we created an approach to this work that sees the encounter as one between two national identities; the goal is to examine and construct one’s own identity through the encounter with the other. The utopian alternative would have been to build bridges beyond nationality and aspire to a universal human society; this approach, alas, does not work in reality. Despite progress, despite technology, fragmentation along ethnic and national lines not only does not disappear but sometimes even intensifies, as we have seen. Hence in the existing reality, our aspiration is to unravel and then reconstruct participants’ identities because only an encounter between confident identities can lead to a genuine meeting of equals and permit the option of building a more humane and just society. Our considerable accumulated experience on the subject indicates that only when the Arab group becomes strong, shaking off the sediment of inferiority feelings and uprooting the internalized oppression, can it also help the Jewish group to free itself from being the oppressor; the ensuing dialogue between the two groups is more authentic and egalitarian. Such a process is painful because it involves letting go of a familiar situation and a stable, clear reality, however dreadful; but it is also full of hope for a better future. If the encounter can teach us anything useful about the wider reality, as we believe it can, then

a collectively stronger Palestinian minority in Israel and the rehabilitation of its national identity are not only not a threat to the Jewish majority but indeed represent the most reliable road to healthier relations between the two peoples.

While refining our approach to this work and perhaps as an outcome of that effort, we at the School for Peace have revised our view of Jewish-Arab encounter in general. We consider encounter work a profession and believe those who facilitate it should enjoy professional status on a par with that afforded social workers, psychologists, and group facilitators in other fields. To this end, we conduct special training for people wishing to work in the field, and we maintain links with academia in two principal ways: by grounding our work in the existing body of relevant theory and via courses on the Jewish-Arab conflict that we teach at the major universities in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, and Beersheva. These courses give an academic imprimatur to the School for Peace, historically a grass-roots institution, thereby greatly enriching our work. The partnership is also nurturing a new generation of scholars.

In this book, we attempt to portray our approach to encounter work as vividly and richly as possible. We hope in this way to contribute to moving the field another step closer to full professional recognition. The writing style, partly academic and partly experiential, and the content symbolize the duality in which we find ourselves today. The book was written by members of the staff of the School for Peace in cooperation with faculty members from the universities with which we work. Some of the chapters are more descriptive and experiential, and others are more academic in character. We hope that this combination will give the book a special flavor and emphasize that which is different and special in the encounter work that we do.

The book has ten chapters. The first two, by Arie Nadler of Tel-Aviv University and Ramzi Suleiman of the University of Haifa, respectively, provide a theoretical foundation for the overall subject of groups in conflict and for the Jewish-Arab conflict specifically. The third chapter, by Rabah Halabi and Nava Sonnenschein, describes the approach used at the School for Peace with reference to the two preceding chapters and to other theories in this field. The fourth chapter, written jointly by Halabi, Sonnenschein, and Ariella Friedman of Tel-Aviv University, tells the story of the university courses we are teaching via a detailed description of the course at Tel-Aviv University. In the fifth chapter, Halabi describes the training offered by the School for Peace to facilitators who want to do this kind of work professionally.

The sixth chapter, by Michal Zak, Halabi, and Wafa'a Zriek-Srouf,

describes our project for young people, the school's flagship program and its largest. The seventh chapter, by Halabi and Zak, addresses the subject of language in Jewish-Arab encounter—a central issue. In a special way, via a dialogue between two facilitators, Zak and Halabi, the eighth chapter considers the subject of facilitating with a partner, a fascinating issue in group facilitation generally and in facilitation with groups in conflict in particular. The ninth chapter, by Sonnenschein and Ahmad Hijazi, deals with the uninational forum, its special nature and characteristics. And finally, the concluding chapter, by Gabriel Horenczyk, reexamines the encounter as described in the book in light of more recent contributions to the theoretical literature.

The writing of this book extended over three years, and the outcome is a product of the insight and experience accumulated by both Arabs and Jews at the School for Peace over more than two decades. We found the actual task of writing to be instructive, enriching, and enlightening.

We were unable, in this one volume, to cover every aspect of the encounters we facilitate. We do not, for example, refer to the issue of gender nor to meetings between Israeli Jews and Palestinians from the Palestinian Authority. These and other subjects will, we hope, be addressed in the next book we write.

Finally, we hope that this book will be of help to all those working to bring together Arabs and Jews in Israel and to all who facilitate encounters between groups in conflict anywhere in the world. And it is our hope that the book will contribute to the transformation of our work into a bona fide profession, entitled to the recognition any profession deserves, rather than being considered a well-intentioned hobby, as if the Jewish-Arab conflict could be adequately dealt with during one's spare time. For us, this work is a great deal more than that: not only our life's work, but a matter of life and death.

This book was published in both Arabic and Hebrew in 2000. On October 31 of that year, I was on my way to pick up the first copies of the Arabic edition from the printer in Tel Aviv. En route, I heard that the police had killed a Palestinian demonstrator from Umm al Fahm. Later that same week, another twelve Palestinian demonstrators were killed by the police, and I found myself going from one funeral to another.

The severity of these events was such that, even now, I have yet to fully digest what is going on around me. When the first vivid impressions had paled somewhat and the dust of battle had more or less settled, I sat down with my colleagues at the School for Peace to discuss how to proceed. The outcome was quick and forthright: we decided to strike for a

month in mourning and in protest, and we published a declaration to that effect in the newspapers.

This was an extraordinary and, in retrospect, a rather brave step. A few stood with us; others criticized us, arguing that dialogue was more appropriate than ever at such a time. All the other organizations working in this field chose the second option and went on with business as usual. A few even went further and set up ad hoc gathering places—"peace tents"—at major roadside intersections, where Jews and Palestinians could meet and talk. The reality was simply too overwhelming for such gestures, however, and most people realized soon enough that no peace tent could mend what had been shattered in the relations between the two peoples.

Even when we returned to work, the situation was not as it had been. The facilitators, especially the Arabs, had trouble functioning, the more so because the killing did not stop but was escalating to new levels in the Palestinian Authority. Hence most of the work during that period focused on sustaining and strengthening the staff. We held several meetings, most of them uninational, and discussed the options available to us for dealing with the terrible period we were living through. We opted to take action and began organizing contributions and collecting food and medicines for our brothers and sisters over the border.

That year, organized encounter activity was low, particularly in programs involving school-age youngsters. Most such meetings already scheduled were cancelled by the Arab and Jewish schools involved. We facilitated five student encounter workshops during that year, compared with twenty-two during the prior year. Adult encounters, especially institutional ones like the university courses we teach and the facilitators course, met as scheduled. The sessions held immediately following October 2000 were difficult: Voices were raised, and sometimes it was impossible to deal with the level of aggression being expressed, to the point where we began to wonder how useful the encounters were under such conditions. In the few youth encounters that were held, however, the atmosphere was more comfortable. The facilitators were surprised and even resentful—especially the Arab facilitators, who anticipated that the Arab students, after the painful events of October, would evince pride and confidence and possibly a desire to "avenge" our brothers who had been shot by the police.

Even now, we know that we are still far from understanding precisely how the events of October 2000 have affected the encounters we facilitate; we need more time. One immediately obvious outcome, however, was that after October 2000 requests by Jews seeking to participate in

such encounters rose, compared with a clear drop in the motivation of Arabs to meet with Jews. From the standpoint of the dialogue and the overall dynamic in the encounter itself, we still have not been able to pinpoint clearly what is different. Apparently more time and greater perspective will be required before we can hope to comprehend how our relations have changed in the wake of the shattering events of October 2000.

1

INTERGROUP CONFLICT AND ITS REDUCTION

A SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

ARIE NADLER

I am a social psychologist by profession; hence the study of conflict between groups is central to my professional identity. Researchers in social psychology have always been actively engaged in studying the roots of intergroup conflict, prejudice between groups, and stereotyping of the other. Kurt Lewin, considered by many to be a founding father of the field, published his collected essays under the title *Resolving Social Conflicts* (Lewin 1948). The book still stands as a brilliantly written analysis of conflicts between individuals and groups.

The field has moved a long way since then; yet, although themes have changed and emphases have shifted, one thing has remained constant: the centrality of the psychological aspects of intergroup conflicts and their resolution. Beyond that, however, theoretical concepts and research methodologies vary. Thus approaches focusing respectively on cognitive processes, social identity, and objective conflict have all been used to explain conflict between groups and the resolution of such conflict. This diversity has not resulted in a lack of clarity or in ambiguity but is rather a testament to the complex and multicausal nature of these phenomena; it has led to a more sophisticated social-psychological analysis of intergroup conflict and has pointed the way toward its resolution.

Another aspect of my identity is that I am an Israeli and a Jew. I am

the offspring of parents who survived the Holocaust and came to Israel more than half a century ago to build a new life. I have lived all my life in Israel and have witnessed firsthand all the changes that this society has undergone. Through all these years one reality has remained unchanged—the reality of war, tension, and animosity between Arabs and Jews. I have always felt personally threatened by this reality and have seen and experienced its unbearable costs in human suffering. I remain convinced, however, that this conflict is not a God-given burden that we all must bear. Things can be different.

My personal identity as an Israeli Jew and my professional identity as a social psychologist converge in my efforts to understand Arab-Jewish relations and in my thinking about ways to better them. One of these professional activities has been my involvement, together with friends from Tel-Aviv University and the School for Peace, in the running and observation of the graduate course titled “Intergroup Conflict.” In this course, seven or eight Israeli Arabs and an equal number of Israeli Jews meet weekly for the whole academic year. In the first semester, the group is led by experienced and trained group moderators from the School for Peace. During this time, several social psychologists (of whom I am one) observe the group processes taking place and subsequently analyze them jointly with School for Peace colleagues. The second semester is dedicated to a conceptualization of the issues that were discussed and processes that were observed in the first—“experiential”—semester. This involves introducing social-psychological theory and research on intergroup conflicts, cognitive mechanisms of stereotypes and prejudice, social-identity theory, and general knowledge about group processes. Our goal is the integration of academic knowledge with personal experience. The basic assumption that has guided our efforts is that learning of the kind we are seeking to promote occurs only when personal experiences can be understood and conceptualized within the framework of sound theory.

This chapter represents such an integrative effort. I shall consider relevant key concepts and research findings from social psychology against the background of the work that my colleagues from the School for Peace and Tel-Aviv University are doing. In my opinion, their work demonstrates persuasively that an integration of experience and knowledge along the lines described here has great potential for helping lead us—students and faculty, facilitators and participants, and readers of this book—toward a better understanding of intergroup conflicts. Before proceeding, I should emphasize that I do not propose to provide the reader with exhaustive coverage of what social psychology knows about intergroup conflict and its resolution. This task is beyond the scope and pur-

pose of this chapter, and the interested reader is referred elsewhere for this (Brown 2000). My aim is to introduce key concepts and findings that are relevant to the work of the School for Peace.

THE ORIGINS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN GROUPS: “REAL CONFLICT” OR “SOCIAL IDENTITY”

It is said that people are social animals. Generally we begin our life in a small group called a family, grow and develop in small groups of friends at school and work, and find satisfaction of our deepest human needs in the families that we ourselves establish. Beyond this, we are all part of larger groups. These groups are the countries, nations, ethnic groups, and religions to which we belong. Yet, regardless of the breadth or size of the group, social living is often characterized by intergroup conflict, prejudice, and animosity. In extreme cases, of which we in the Middle East are only too aware, such intergroup conflict takes the shape of armed conflict and loss of human life.

What are the origins of this enduring characteristic of social life? Is conflict between groups so common because it is part of our human nature? Or is it perhaps a result of particular circumstances or situations? Numerous philosophers—Thomas Hobbes, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Sigmund Freud come to mind—have offered provocative and illuminating thoughts on this question, but those writings are beyond the scope of the present chapter. My focus here is on the thinking of modern social psychology on the origins of intergroup conflict and its resolution.

In the early days, a powerful tradition developed within social psychology that viewed hatred of, and aggression toward, the other as an aberration of the soul. Human beings were viewed as basically empathic and benevolent. When they behaved differently, the behavior was considered to be contrary to human nature. Hating the other was viewed as a reflection of the “sick mind.” The proponents of this approach included J. W. Adorno and his colleagues (Adorno et al. 1950), who, at the end of World War II, were baffled and alarmed by the atrocities reported from the killing fields in Auschwitz. They continued in their quest for understanding by defining the “authoritarian personality.” Individuals with such a personality are said to be predisposed to hate and ultimately to hurt the other. This view was common and influential in the 1950s and 1960s but continued to stimulate research interest through the 1980s (e.g., Altemeyer 1988). Yet, by placing the blame for hatred and aggression toward the other on the “sick mind,” we distance ourselves from such

phenomena. None of us would admit to being in that loathsome category of people whose warped personality predisposes them to hate. It is always the “them.” We all want to maintain a positive self-image, and it is therefore the other who is viewed as having a “hateful,” “obnoxious,” or “aggressive” personality. Such negative attribution is facilitated if the others belong to a different national or ethnic group. Then it becomes a matter of their “national” or “ethnic” character. “We” remain blameless and in the clear. This externalization of blame for prejudice and conflict is a problematic proposition.

The pervasiveness of social conflict does not support the view that prejudice and hatred are relatively rare and arise because they are part of the maladjusted personality. Rather, such phenomena seem to be part and parcel of group life, as are the phenomena of cooperation, helpfulness, and empathy. The question therefore remains: Why are we so often intolerant of and prejudiced and openly aggressive toward the other? To this there are two main “socio-psychological” answers. One is subsumed under the heading of the “real- (or realistic-) conflict” explanation, and the other under the heading of “social-identity theory.” Both these approaches accept the inevitability of conflict and hatred between groups. But while the real-conflict approach centers on the causal role of the situations we live in, the social-identity approach tends to put the onus on our human nature.

Realistic-Conflict Theory: An Optimistic View

The most influential proponents of the realistic-conflict approach were a group of researchers led by Muzafer Sherif (Sherif et al. 1961). Their position was that real conflict between groups over objective and scarce resources precedes the phenomena of prejudice and hatred of the other. Hatred is caused by competition. Introduce competition, and you create intergroup conflict. Take it away, and you eradicate prejudice and hatred. To demonstrate the validity of their ideas, Sherif and his group conducted what they termed the robber’s cave experiment. The experiment was conducted at a youth summer camp set up and supervised by the researchers. In most ways this was an ordinary summer camp, but the activities were organized and overseen by the researchers, and the children’s behavior was carefully monitored and recorded.

On their arrival, the campers were arbitrarily divided into two groups. Each group chose a typical summer-camp-style name for itself: one became the Rattlers and the other, the Eagles. For a while, the groups

were cordial and pleasant toward one another. Then the researchers introduced deliberate competition between the two groups. In these contests (tug of war etc.), the prizes were “scarce resources” that the children coveted (pocket knives etc.). As the competitions progressed, prejudice toward and hatred of the other emerged. The children engaged in name calling, and fistfights ensued. Children who only recently had been “nice kids” who happened to belong to the Rattlers or the Eagles were suddenly viewed as “lazy,” “bums,” and “cowards.” Hostility, intolerance, and prejudice reigned. Indeed it would seem, based on these outcomes, that competition over scarce resources (even pocket knives) precedes hatred of the other.

In the next phase of the study, the researchers attempted to reduce the prejudice that they had created. They tried preaching to the children about the importance of brotherly love and the dangers of intolerance. These, and other common techniques, did not work. Hatred toward the other continued unabated. Yet, one technique did work to reduce prejudice and hatred. The researchers called this technique the creation of superordinate goals.

The idea was simple. Instead of competing to obtain a coveted resource, the groups would now need to cooperate to achieve it. The researchers created situations that would force children from the two warring groups to join forces in order to secure a goal of importance to everyone. If they wanted to see a movie, for example, children from both groups had to cooperate and “chip in” to cover the necessary cost. The telling point is that after only six successive days the atmosphere had changed completely. Animosity decreased, expressions of prejudice disappeared, intolerant behavior vanished, and cross-group friendships developed.

The point to be drawn from this tale is that prejudice and intolerance, on the one hand, and tolerance, on the other, are associated with the existence of, or lack of, competition over resources. Real competition precedes conflict and hatred, and cooperation is the king’s road to its elimination. This is an optimistic view of social life because it tells us that prejudice and hatred of the other are not part of human nature but rather are part of the existing circumstances: change the situation, and hatred and prejudice evaporate.

This position—that intergroup attitudes and behavior tend to reflect group interests—was labeled the “realistic group conflict theory” (Campbell 1965). Its validity was demonstrated by other investigators. Thus, for example, Seago (1947) found that Americans’ stereotypes of

the Japanese became less positive after the attack on Pearl Harbor. In a similar line, Brewer and Campbell (1976) reasoned that geographical proximity should be associated with competition over scarce resources and therefore it should precede hatred of the other. In support of this they found in a study that investigated intertribal perceptions in East Africa that the closer tribes were geographically the higher the tendency to negatively stereotype the other.

These and other findings portray an objective-rational model of intergroup conflict and hatred. Why is there hatred between social groups? Because people need resources, which are scarce, and groups compete with each other over these resources. How does one remedy the situation and restore intergroup harmony? Two routes seem possible. The first is to increase needed resources and do away with scarcity. In an imperfect world this route is unrealistic because we cannot live in everlasting abundance. A second answer was demonstrated by Sherif et al. (1961). Conflict between groups and hatred of the other can be reduced if members of the two groups join forces to obtain the resource coveted by all. By creating a superordinate goal, Sherif and his colleagues forced the competing groups to cooperate; on an ongoing basis, such cooperation did decrease hatred. Overall, this is an optimistic view of intergroup hatred and our ability to control it.

Social-Identity Theory: The View of the Pessimist

A second position, which turns out to be a more pessimistic one, is known as social-identity theory. It rests on the observation that a central part of our personal identity is made up of our group affiliations. When asked to respond to the simple question—“Who am I?”—people reply with group identities. The individual may respond with “Jewish,” “Muslim,” or “Christian.” Alternatively the response may be “Israeli,” “Palestinian,” “a student,” or “a professor.” Regardless of their specific contents, all these are social categories. They denote affiliation with social groups. Thus, a central part of our sense of personal identity is our social identity.

This axiom has guided Henry Tajfel and his colleagues in their formulation of the social-identity theory (Tajfel 1978a). Although Tajfel’s thinking has undergone revisions and reformulations (as described by, e.g., Turner and Reynolds 2001), I shall limit myself to the original theory because of its conceptual clarity, pioneering status, and relevance to

the present analysis of the School for Peace model of dialogue between adversarial groups.

*Intergroup Favoritism:
"Stepping on the Other to Raise Oneself"*

We human beings are motivated to uphold a positive view of ourselves. We need to feel esteemed and appreciated by ourselves and others. Because a major part of our sense of self is anchored in the groups to which we belong, an easy way to enhance our self-esteem is to view the social groups to which we belong as better than other social groups. If my group is better, I am better. Our tendency to downgrade the other, rather than being predicated on competition for scarce resources or other objective external circumstances, is rooted in a basic human motivation to have feelings of personal worth and positive self-esteem.

Numerous studies in social psychology have lent empirical support to this position. Tajfel has demonstrated that random assignment to a group is enough to generate this phenomenon. Such studies typically divide people arbitrarily into two groups (e.g., the A's and the B's or the Greens and the Blues). When individuals are then asked to distribute resources between members of the ingroup (their own group) and members of the outgroup (the other group), a consistent ingroup favoritism is observed. "Their own" people get more than do "others." Furthermore, members of the ingroup are viewed as "better" than members of the outgroup. Bear in mind: these are not Arabs rating a Jew, or Israelis sharing resources with Palestinians. Despite the trivial and arbitrary nature of the group affiliation, it is enough to create a relatively more positive perception of one's own group and favoritism toward its members. It is no coincidence, therefore, that this body of research has come to be known as the "minimal group paradigm" (Bourhis and Gagnon 2001). The inference is that hatred and devaluing of the other are not uncommon or abnormal, nor are they the product of objective circumstances; rather they are a natural and normal part of social life. These studies and their theoretical underpinnings are thus relatively pessimistic about the feasibility of reducing conflict between groups.

What conclusions are to be drawn from this analysis? One choice is to surrender to despair: if prejudice, hatred, and conflict are natural to the human condition, it would seem that little can be done to combat them. An alternative conclusion is that, given the pervasiveness of such phenomena, we should constantly guard against them. Adopting this

position implies a responsibility to invest effort and resources in an ongoing fight against prejudice and hatred. Indeed, perhaps one hallmark of a civilized society is to acknowledge the endemic and pervasive nature of our tendency to be prejudiced against the other, while maintaining a never-ending struggle to overcome it.

Outgroup Favoritism: The "Paradox" of Low-Status Groups

The research just mentioned discusses an exception to the rule of ingroup favoritism. When one of the groups is a high-status group and the other is of relatively lower social status, an outgroup rather than an ingroup favoritism was observed. More specifically, members of the low-status group adopted the prevailing view of their ingroup as less worthy and evaluated the high-status outgroup more favorably than they evaluated their own group. A classic study has demonstrated this phenomenon (Clark and Clark [1947] 1955). In this study, black and white children played with black and white puppets. The black children correctly identified the black puppet as being more like themselves but showed a clear preference for playing with the white puppets. Later studies replicated this finding and found that black children view white puppets as nicer and better than black puppets (Asher and Allen 1969).

In the context of social-identity theory, the phenomenon of outgroup favoritism leads to the somewhat untenable conclusion that individuals from low-status groups willingly adopt a negative view of the self. How can this be reconciled with the universal motivation for positive self-evaluation? Social-identity theory suggests a number of ways to resolve this apparent motivational conflict. I will briefly describe two solutions that may be of particular relevance to Arab-Jewish dialogue groups.

One way to maintain a positive self-evaluation under such circumstances is by lowering the intensity of one's identification with one's ingroup. Thus, individuals may choose personal upward mobility to satisfy their need for positive self-evaluation, while at the same time weakening emotional ties to their lowly evaluated ingroup. An Arab citizen in Israel, who belongs to a relatively low-status group in Israeli society, may adopt this solution by dissociating himself or herself from the Arab ingroup and climbing the more universal professional social ladder. By taking this route, the person leaves his or her national group behind and moves as an individual outside the boundaries of the low-status group. This solution is possible only if the boundaries between the low- and high-status groups are relatively permeable and allow such personal movement.

The second solution occurs when individuals in the minority group reject outgroup favoritism in favor of working to change the low status of their group. When this occurs, members of low-status minority groups openly challenge the existing social structure. In contrast to the first solution, which revolves around the individual, this solution revolves around the group.

When is group mobility likely to be sought? The theory suggests that confrontation with the high-status group—an open attempt to change the status of one's own group—is more likely when the existing social order is destabilized or viewed as illegitimate or unjust. Among the many and various factors that can promote such a change: external delegitimation of the social order (e.g., the international community's denunciation of apartheid in South Africa) or a significant internal sociopolitical change (e.g., the effects of the intifadas on Arab-Jewish relations within Israeli society).

Realistic Conflict or Social Identity?

Which of these two approaches (realistic conflict or social identity) is more valid? There is probably no final answer to this question. Both real-conflict elements and identity considerations are important in explaining conflict and its resolution, although their relative relevance may vary from conflict to conflict and also is likely to change over time with respect to a particular conflict. What begins as a competition between two groups over scarce resources may later be transformed into a conflict over whose social identity is more legitimate or worthy. In the complex social world in which we live, then, both identity and objective-reality considerations should be taken into account on the road to conflict resolution.

Before considering the social-psychological principles of reducing intergroup conflict, let me briefly allude to the manifestations of real conflict and social identity in the Arab-Jewish dialogue groups that are the focus of this book. These comments are based on my personal observation of these groups. Conflict over scarce resources seems to be the essential face of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The resources are not pocket knives at a summer camp but land, water, and budgets. Discussions of the justifiability of land confiscation and of the relative availability of government budgets to Israeli Jews and Arabs, among other issues, were quite common in the dialogue groups I observed. Yet beneath all of that ran the deeper current of social identity. Participants were continuously engaged in presenting their own identity as more worthwhile and legitimate

than that of the other. For example, in many of these groups the issue of the “legitimate victim” was always present. The Jewish members often referred to the Holocaust to bolster their case for legitimacy. The Arab members kept referring back to the uprooting of the Arab population in 1948 and 1967 as evidence in their quest for legitimacy. By trying to achieve legitimacy, the groups were actually engaged in moral ingroup favoritism. Each was attempting to attain a relatively higher moral justification. Further, in such meetings, one group (Israeli Jews) was of relatively higher social status in Israeli society than the other (Israeli Arabs). These encounters have resulted in demonstrations of the phenomena described in the preceding sections. We have observed instances of outgroup favoritism, as well as confrontations with the existing power relations within Israeli society. These phenomena and processes are the focus of subsequent chapters.

REDUCING CONFLICT: THE EFFECTS OF CONTACT

The wealth of data and theory on conflict reduction and resolution is vast and beyond the scope of this chapter. Given the focus of the whole volume, I will concentrate here on the effects on conflict reduction of contact between members of two conflicting groups and will focus my discussion on what is known as the contact hypothesis.

The Contact Hypothesis

The term *contact hypothesis* was coined by Gordon Allport. In his pioneering book, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), Allport suggests that one of the best ways to reduce tension between members of conflicting groups is to simply bring them into contact with one another. In its simplest form, the contact hypothesis suggests that interpersonal contact between members of groups in conflict is all that is needed to reduce tension and hatred. No one has said it better than Allport himself. In trying to capture the spirit of this hypothesis, he describes a conversation between two people (quoted by Brown 1995):

“See that man over there?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I hate him.”

“But you don’t know him.”

“That’s why I hate him.”

The contact hypothesis is based on the view that lack of knowledge is the father of all evil. It is predicated on the idea that people in a conflict just need a chance to get to know each other and that once this happens, individuals will soon discover that beneath the mantle of group identity (e.g., Israeli or Palestinian) rests a much deeper and common identity—that of a human being. In somewhat extreme terms, this hypothesis suggests that once people get to know each other as individuals rather than as members of groups, all barriers will fall, intergroup conflict will disappear, and interpersonal harmony will reign. This idea is the basic rationale behind many social programs. It is one of the major rationales for creating ethnically integrated schools or racially mixed neighborhoods. It is also the logic that has driven many dialogue groups in countless spheres of life (e.g., religious and secular, men and women, Arabs and Jews).

Although intuitively appealing, the simplistic version of the contact hypothesis, that all you need is to meet and get to know, does not fare well empirically (Pettigrew 1998). One major issue here is the problem of generalizability. Even when the effects of interpersonal meetings are positive, are these effects generalizable? Will the reduced hatred between Mohamed and Yossi, who participate in an Arab-Jewish dialogue group, generalize to less prejudiced perceptions of Arabs and Jews in general? The social-psychological research on prejudice suggests a negative answer because of the process of subtyping (e.g., Weber and Crocker 1983); in this process prejudiced individuals create a distinct social subcategory for the people they meet in the dialogue group: “Mohamed is a nice person, but he is not a typical Arab. Arabs in general are cruel and inhumane.” Moreover, there is the issue of generalizability of effects over time. Even if the effects of contact were proven to be positive and generalizable beyond the specific context in which contact occurred, are these effects durable? One study, for example, suggests that positive effects of intergroup contact wear off after a period of about one year (Hamilton and Bishop 1976). These questions regarding generalizability over context and time point to the complexity of the issue. It seems that contact may “work” only under certain specified conditions.

When Does Contact “Work”?

What do social-psychological research and theory tell us about the conditions that are conducive to positive interpersonal contact? I shall briefly enumerate some of these conditions and expand on one of them (equal status) that is particularly relevant here (Brown 1995). Four basic

conditions are said to promote positive contact: institutional support, acquaintance potential, cooperative atmosphere, and equal status.

Institutional Support

Contact between members of conflicting groups does not take place in a void. It occurs within a larger social context that may support or oppose such encounters. It seems that a supportive social atmosphere is crucial in order for contact to have positive effects on the reduction of prejudice and hatred. If the society at large creates laws and takes steps to reduce discrimination and intergroup hatred, it creates a normative atmosphere that encourages tolerance. Antidiscrimination laws or forced busing cannot by themselves change attitudes and rule out hatred of the other, but they create an overall normative atmosphere that supports this direction. Intergroup contact in such a normative atmosphere is more likely to yield positive results than if the normative atmosphere does not lend support to such efforts.

These effects of broader social context on the outcomes of intergroup contact were quite clear in the Arab-Jewish dialogue groups that I observed. Political shifts, terrorist attacks, or the signing of peace treaties and agreements—all strongly affected the quality of the contact within the small groups. When external conditions were supportive of Arab-Jewish contact (e.g., around the time of the signing of the Oslo Accords), the contact between group members was less conflicted than during other, more strained periods (e.g., after a time of violence between Israelis and Palestinians).

Acquaintance Potential

A second condition that positively affects intergroup contact is what Brown (1995) labels “acquaintance potential.” Brief meetings are of no consequence from this perspective. Only contacts that are close and durable can be expected to have a positive impact because such contacts are likely to result in reduced fear of and increased knowledge of the other and, crucially, in the discovery of elements of interpersonal similarity. In light of numerous studies in social psychology that show that interpersonal similarity breeds liking (Byrne 1971), the opportunity to learn about interpersonal similarities (in interests, hobbies, professional aspirations) is extremely important in this regard.

This principle was also at work in the Arab-Jewish groups I observed. The encounter was durable, with meetings taking place over a

period of several months and marked by a high level of interpersonal exchanges. The number of group members was relatively small (fifteen to twenty), and the facilitators encouraged an atmosphere of interpersonal closeness.

Cooperative Atmosphere

A third condition that seems to facilitate the positive effects of contact between groups is the cooperative or competitive nature of these meetings. In line with Sherif's idea of superordinate goals, cooperation breeds tolerance. The term *superordinate* may be somewhat misleading in this context. I am not referring here to a monumental task that the groups aim to achieve. Cooperative contact is made up of a succession of small tasks in which cooperation between the two groups is instrumental. There were many such cooperative encounters in our dialogue groups.

Equal Status

A further condition is that of equal status. Contact between members of groups in conflict often occurs between members of groups of unequal status. Whether the contact is between blacks and whites, men and women, or Arab and Jewish Israelis, one group is usually higher in social status than the other. In many societies, men and whites still hold a higher social status than do women and blacks, respectively. In Israeli society, Israeli Jews have a higher social status than Israeli Arabs. If the encounter preserves these traditional status relationships, interpersonal contact will not have positive effects on intergroup relations. Yet, in numerous daily encounters this is exactly what happens. In these the high-status person teaches, gives, or supervises, while the low-status person listens, receives, or is being supervised. Such encounters reinforce existing inequalities and prejudicial perceptions, rather than diminishing them.

If intergroup dialogue is to prove successful, the encounter needs to take place between individuals who are certain of the equality of their social identity. In too many dialogue groups this is not the case. Well-intentioned third parties encourage people of conflicting groups to come into the dialogue group as individuals. They implicitly ask them to leave their robes of social belongingness and social identity outside the room. The operating assumption is that a "pure" interpersonal meeting between members of conflicting groups is possible and advisable. Yet, as emphasized throughout this chapter, our sense of who we are is embedded in the groups to which we belong. Moreover, the elements of our social

identity become more salient in situations of conflict with another group. Thus, the simplistic adoption of the contact hypothesis, in which people can easily transcend their sense of social belongingness and meet as human beings, is neither feasible nor instrumental for decreasing conflict. This may account for the somewhat dismal appraisal of the effects of dialogue groups on the reduction of hatred, prejudice, and conflict.

Achieving Equal Status and Generalizability: Emphasizing Social Identity

The importance of equality of status and of social identity, taken together, suggests a different route toward the reduction of hatred and prejudice. It suggests that instead of trying to erase feelings of group belongingness, one should try to nurture and encourage members to identify with their respective groups. Only contact between individuals who feel that they belong to a worthwhile and esteemed group is likely to generate less prejudice and hatred toward the other group. A meeting of this kind is a meeting of individuals who belong to different and unique groups that have equal status.

Building a sense of worthwhile social identity is crucial in creating a sense of personal self-respect and individual self-esteem. Attempting to short-circuit the process is unwise. People who belong to two conflicting groups need to interact as members of two equally esteemed, yet unique and different groups. Recognizing the importance of social identity in people's lives leads to what may sound like a counterintuitive suggestion: to decrease hatred between individuals from two conflicting groups, one needs to strengthen members' identification with their respective groups.

There is a second rationale for this approach. As noted previously, one of the open questions regarding the contact hypothesis is that of generalizability—going beyond the statement “Fatma, whom I met, is a decent person” to “Arabs are decent people.” It seems only logical to assume that the more Fatma is viewed as a representative of Arabs in general, the more my changed perceptions of her are likely to be generalized to changed perceptions of the group (Arabs) to which she belongs.

The idea that making group affiliations more salient is an effective vehicle for lessening conflict has not been extensively tested in social psychology. One study is particularly illuminating in this context. Wilder (1984) examined the effects of the typicality of the outgroup member in an intergroup encounter on the perceptions of the outgroup. For the sake of brevity and clarity of presentation, I shall describe here only the procedures and findings relevant to the present discussion.

In this experiment, individuals who were students at a university in the United States met another student from a rival college. As the two colleges were competing institutions, perceptions of members of the outgroup were not flattering. To vary the typicality of the outgroup member, Wilder introduced two experimental conditions. In one, the student supposedly from the other college acted pleasantly but deemphasized his affiliation with the outgroup. His clothes did not bear any insignia associating him with the outgroup, and he presented himself in words and action as “just another student like yourself.” In the other situation, the outgroup member behaved pleasantly but made efforts to emphasize his group affiliation. His shirt bore the insignia of the other college, and his speech and behavior emphasized his belongingness to the rival group. In fact, he presented himself as a typical member of the outgroup. His self-presentation proclaimed, “I am a nice person, but I am not just another student like yourself. I am a member of the rival group.” Following these interactions, the experimenter measured perceptions of the rival group.

If my earlier comments about the importance of emphasizing group identity in an intergroup encounter are valid, we might predict that only when the other person was pleasant and also presented himself as typical of his group would meeting him alter perceptions of the rival group. Wilder’s findings fully support this position. When the student was pleasant and nice but did not present himself as a member of the other group (“I am a student like yourself”), perceptions of the rival group remained negative. However, when the student was pleasant and emphasized his affiliation with the rival group, perceptions of the rival group became significantly more positive. These results imply confirmation of the need to nurture and emphasize respective group identities if we want intergroup encounters to be effective in reducing hatred and prejudice.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY FOR THE WORK OF THE SCHOOL FOR PEACE: A GENUINE DIALOGUE BETWEEN SECURE IDENTITIES

In the preceding sections, I attempted to highlight some basic concerns that dominate the discussion of intergroup conflict and its resolution in the context of the work of the School for Peace. In this concluding section, I want to summarize by extracting three basic dilemmas from the foregoing discussion and suggesting how they are reflected in the answers provided by the work of the School for Peace.

The first dilemma emanates from the discussion on the origins of

intergroup conflict. The real-conflict perspective suggests that conflict is due to the difficulties that two groups face when they need to divide scarce and coveted resources and that it will end when they agree on a formula for the division of these resources. This is a rational-economic model of conflict and its resolution, and it has been fundamental to much of the theoretical and empirical work on conflict resolution in social psychology (Carnevale and Pruitt 1992). The social-identity perspective highlights the emotional needs that fuel and maintain conflict. It focuses on the relative inequality and powerlessness of group members as constituting the psychological component that underlies intergroup conflict. The work at the School for Peace reflects a perspective that is closer to the social-identity approach. It is predicated on the view that unequal power relations between Jews and Arabs are the key factor in understanding the conflict between these groups within the Israeli context and beyond. The work within the parameters of this model aims to lead Arabs and Jews to genuinely and openly address the inequality and the power differences that exist between them. Thus, both the social-identity perspective and the School for Peace model view relative power as the nexus through which greater understanding of the conflict between groups can be achieved.

A second dilemma that is relevant here emanates from the two courses of action that members of low-status groups can take to better their underprivileged situation. As noted in the previous discussion of outgroup favoritism, one such course of action is individual mobility—people downplay their ties to an underprivileged ingroup while attempting to better their personal position in the general society. The second course is group-based and consists of working for social change. Here members of low-status groups confront the privileged group and attempt to change the social structure. The tension between effecting change through personal or group action is echoed in the work of the School for Peace. Although much work within the tradition of the contact hypothesis stresses the positive impact of constructive contact between members of adversarial groups on participants' perceptions of and behavior toward the "enemy," the School for Peace model views a significant dialogue between Jews and Arabs as one that occurs between two adversarial groups and not simply between individuals who come from two adversarial groups. This work focuses on the inequities that exist between the two groups in the Israeli social context and the possibility of creating greater equality and relative harmony between the two groups. From that perspective, this book focuses on work that asserts that a significant dialogue

that will lead to change in people's perceptions and behavior is a dialogue that occurs between conflicting groups.

A third dilemma refers to the content of the dialogue. As noted previously, some approaches in social psychology have asserted that intergroup conflict is reduced when there is an emphasis on the commonalities between the groups and a deemphasis on their differences. This is reflected in the classic work of Sherif et al. (1961), which highlights the importance of superordinate goals, and in the more recent work of Gaertner et al. (1999), which indicates that a process of recategorization can produce a new social identity that includes the separate identities of the two rival groups. This, for example, occurs when Israelis and Palestinians are asked to redefine themselves as Middle Easterners. A different line of research and theory has proposed that only a meeting between groups that are fully aware of their own and their adversary's identity can lead to a lowering of intergroup tensions (Wilder 1984). This approach holds that a constructive intergroup dialogue is one that takes place between separate and clearly demarcated identities. The work of the School for Peace has a similar emphasis. It tells us that when people have a clear and demarcated ingroup identity, they are better equipped to conduct a genuine intergroup dialogue, which in turn is a necessary condition for coexistence between equal social groups. Dialogue in the spirit of this model in fact creates a process that helps participants to solidify their ingroup identity.

In summary, the School for Peace model makes clear choices with respect to three major dilemmas that have been identified by extant social-psychological research and theory on intergroup relations. First, it is not aimed at promoting a calculus of interests between rational decision makers—the conflict-resolution—perspective, but rather aims to promote a genuine and direct dialogue between Arabs and Jews in Israel concerning the inequities and inequality that characterize the situation of Arabs in that country. Second, this model emphasizes that a genuine dialogue that may produce social change is one that occurs only between two conflicting groups and not between individuals who happen to belong to groups in conflict. Third, the model is predicated on the assumption that only a genuine meeting between two confident, aware, and demarcated identities can lead to a constructive and mutually respectful coexistence between Jews and Arabs in Israel. This work aims to promote an encounter between secure identities. It represents an emphasis on interidentity dialogue about power and equality between Jews and Arabs, rather than a personal meeting between Jewish and Arab individuals or a simple airing

of the contents of the intergroup conflict. Finally, although the work that is described in this book focuses on Israeli Jews and Arabs, its implications extend to other intergroup dialogues. The central assertion here—that amelioration of intergroup conflicts involves a dialogue between defined and demarcated social identities that discuss their relative power and inequality—is true of any intergroup dialogue.

2

JEWISH-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS IN ISRAEL

THE PLANNED ENCOUNTER AS A MICROCOSM

RAMZI SULEIMAN

Planned group encounters between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis have been the object of considerable attention by researchers. Some have focused on the empirical study of variables involved in the encounter, such as prejudice (Bizman 1978) and readiness for relations (Amir 1976). Other studies have taken a holistic-theoretical approach in an attempt to analyze the interaction processes that take place in the encounter (e.g., Katz and Kahanov 1990; Sonnenschein, Halabi, and Friedman 1998).

A satisfactory classification of the types of encounters held between groups in prolonged conflicts was suggested by Katz and Kahanov (1990). According to this classification, planned encounters may fall into one of three categories: (1) workshops in the spirit of the “human relations” tradition; (2) workshops emphasizing cross-cultural learning; and (3) workshops based on a conflict-resolution approach.

Workshops that emphasize the human relations approach are typically characterized by a focus on the here-and-now psychological aspects of the encounter experience. Facilitators of groups of this type encourage participants to freely express their thoughts and feelings about other group members and about the group as a whole. Psychological methods and techniques employed in moderating group dynamics are frequently used to “reflect” and analyze the intra- and interpersonal process. The

emphasis in such meetings is on personal and interpersonal processes. Their primary goals are to raise awareness of and sensitivity to the personal experiences of outgroup members and to encourage empathy toward them. The facilitators of these groups tend to emphasize commonalities between members of the conflicting groups and to shunt aside “problematic” political issues in the hope that this may lead to a humanization of the other—a member of the rival group—and to a weakening of stereotyped attitudes toward him or her. The expectations are that such change may encourage participants to develop trust in outgroup members and to improve their relations with them and that these positive changes will be generalized to other outgroup members.

The second approach mentioned above emphasizes cross-cultural learning as a means of helping individuals to understand the influence that culture has on perceptions of the self and of the other (Triandis 1983). According to this approach, intergroup tensions in many cases are the result of cultural differences in norms of behavior. Understanding the cultural characteristics of the other group and exposure to them should bring members of the two groups closer together (cf. Brislin 1981; Argule 1982).

The third approach is based on conflict resolution and conflict management. It assumes that the conflict between two groups is mainly a realistic one (Levine and Campbell 1972) and that ameliorating conflict requires searching for ways to bridge differences between the goals of the two groups. The emphasis here is more on seeing the participants as representatives of their groups and less on their psychological world or on their interpersonal relations. Jewish-Arab encounters using this approach have usually been simulation games in which participants from the two groups represent their respective group’s interests.

Another typology was proposed by Ben-Ari and Amir (1988), who classified the encounters in accordance with three different models: the contact model, the information model, and the psychodynamic model. The contact model contends that the meeting, or contact, in itself is sufficient to generate a positive change in the attitudes toward the outgroup members and to improve the relations between the two groups. This assumption is in fact refuted by a number of studies showing that under certain conditions the contact can worsen relations instead of improving them (Amir 1969; Cook 1978). According to the contact hypothesis, the encounter between group members must meet certain conditions in order for positive outcomes to be achieved. These conditions include giving an opportunity for interpersonal and intimate contacts between members of the two groups, equality in status between the groups, institutional sup-

port for the meetings, and setting common goals for members of the two groups (Amir 1969).

The information model has characteristics in common with cross-cultural learning. It assumes that the development of stereotypes and prejudice arises from insufficient information or from misinformation regarding the outgroup and its members. According to this model, the encounter provides an appropriate opportunity for clarifying faulty preconceived stereotypes and modifying them in light of more accurate information. This model ignores the motivational-functional component of stereotyping. It focuses on the stereotypes per se instead of viewing them as an additional cognitive structure that supports a whole complex of attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. Moreover, contrary to the model's assumption that unmediated exposure to information has the power to reduce stereotypes, empirical evidence shows that the opposite may also occur—new information is likely to get a twisted and slanted interpretation in a manner that is consonant with existing stereotypes (Darley and Gross 1983).

The psychodynamic model assumes that the individual's negative attitudes toward the outgroup and its members are loaded with projective contents and may often reflect his or her intrapsychic world. Improvement in these attitudes, according to the model, is contingent on raising the individual's awareness of his or her own deep emotional problems and improving ways of coping with them.

In evaluating group encounters between individuals from different ethnic groups in Israel, Ben-Ari and Amir (1988) note that "the quality and scientific merit of this work are far from satisfactory. Many programs for 'change' have been designed, but in most of them the goals have not been well defined, and their theoretical foundations are not always clear" (50). I may add that a flawed characterization of the goals and a faulty understanding of the processes that took place in the group and of what is necessary for generating the desired changes have all led to irrelevant considerations in determining the nature of the group and the facilitation style. Because most encounter programs have been run within the framework of the educational system, conventional educational views have influenced the goals set for these meetings and the style of intervention. Moreover, in the absence of other methods and styles of facilitation, psychological facilitation has predominated. In fact, this was a natural outcome because most facilitators have been psychologists, consultants, social workers, and educators with a background in psychology. The process of adapting the facilitation style to the specific characteristics of encounter

between ethnic groups was developed quite slowly, through trial and error. Hence, one may contend that this process was not comprehensive and that sufficient effort has not been made to transfer accumulating experience to new facilitators.

Another factor that has significantly affected the nature of the encounter groups relates to the fact that virtually all the initiatives and funding for these encounters have come from state institutions, such as the Ministry of Education, or from nongovernmental Jewish organizations. This fact invariably had a decisive influence on setting the boundaries between what was permissible and what was not permissible within the group and clearly slanted the objectives to meet the expectations and needs of the Jewish participants. Michelovitch (1986) has similarly noted that because these encounters were mainly a Jewish effort, potential “blind spots” may have been created, given the limited ability of a particular group to respond to the needs and sensitivities of members of a different group.

The hegemony of the psychological facilitation style, which emphasizes personal experiences and interpersonal communication in the here-and-now, mandates a symmetrical view of the relations between members of the two groups. This implies, among other things, an expectation of similar behaviors on the part of the Jewish and Palestinian participants. In addition, the characteristics of the structure and the process of a group created according to a psychological model are more suited to patterns of personal and interpersonal behavior and less suited to political and intergroup behavior. Hence a basic contradiction exists between the structure of the encounter group and its potential for advancing intergroup contents and processes.

Nevertheless, the “squeezing” of most encounters into a psychological and interpersonal model has not prevented intergroup processes from occurring. The purposeful playing down of political and intergroup components by facilitators has not been successful in suppressing such processes. One might say that despite the existence of a variety of goals and styles of facilitation, the encounter groups have always been a microcosm in which salient intergroup processes have indeed occurred, along with intra- and interpersonal ones.

In the remainder of this chapter I shall utilize a number of theoretical ideas derived from Social Identity Theory (SIT) in order to better understand common intergroup processes that take place in Jewish-Palestinian encounter groups. This theory, proposed by Henry Tajfel (Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1986), views the group itself as an entity that is qualitatively different from the sum total of all the individuals con-

stituting it. The basic unit of analysis according to SIT is the group and not its individual members. Rather than discussing various hypotheses that can be derived from SIT concerning intergroup relations, I shall focus here on two aspects related to the theory and utilize them to analyze common interpersonal and intergroup processes in group encounters. These two aspects are the dimensions of the interaction and the asymmetry in power between the groups that are involved in the encounter.

DIMENSIONS OF THE INTERACTION

Researchers and facilitators working with Jewish-Palestinian group encounters in Israel distinguish between interactions occurring on an interpersonal level and interactions occurring on an intergroup level (e.g., Hoffman and Najar 1986; Amir and Ben-Ari 1987; Katz and Kahanov 1990). Katz and Kahanov contend that the tension between these two levels reveals one of the central dilemmas in Jewish-Arab encounters. They describe this dilemma as “the tension between the outlook of ‘the political man’ and that of ‘the psychological man’” (36). The continuum hypothesis proposed by Tajfel and his colleagues (Tajfel 1979; Tajfel and Turner 1986) provides a fruitful theoretical framework for understanding these two dimensions of interaction. Based on this hypothesis, one may view any interaction between two or more individuals as if it were taking place along a continuum: at one end the entire interaction is determined by interpersonal relations and individual traits and is not influenced by the social groups or categories to which the individuals belong, while at the other end interaction between two or more individuals (or between groups of individuals) is determined entirely by the affiliation of the individuals to various social groups and categories and is not influenced by personal or interpersonal relations (Tajfel and Turner 1986, 8).

The importance of the continuum hypothesis is that it provides a model encompassing the two levels of interaction and allows one to hypothesize about different variables involved in group interactions. For example, Tajfel hypothesized that in situations of conflict the two groups will operate closer to the intergroup pole. Moreover, he assumed that under such conditions, intergroup relations will be characterized by two qualities: (1) members of the outgroup will be perceived as resembling one another or, in Tajfel’s terms, as “unidentified elements within a unified social category” (1981, 243); and (2) ingroup members will show a high degree of uniformity in their attitudes and behaviors toward members of the outgroup. In Tajfel’s view, phenomena like depersonalization,

dehumanization, and stereotyping are particular cases of the more general phenomenon of “nondifferentiation.”

Encounter groups between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis provide almost laboratory conditions for examining the continuum hypothesis and predictions derived from it. Given the intensity of political conflict between the two groups, one may predict that individuals from both groups will tend to operate near the intergroup pole. This prediction does not accord with experience in various encounter groups in which Palestinian participants prefer to shift the interaction to the intergroup level, while Jewish participants prefer to shift it to the level of interpersonal communication. Following the warm-up stage in the first meetings, the Palestinian participants usually try to raise issues of a collective and political nature, like discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel, expropriation of land, Israel’s occupation policies. Often, a Palestinian participant will turn to a Jewish participant or to the group as a whole with a question such as “Why don’t you expropriate land from Jews for development purposes in the Arab sector?” or “Why can’t I live in Carmiel in the framework of a government settlement policy?” It would seem that with queries like these, and many similar ones, the Palestinian questioner is relating to his or her Jewish colleague or to the Jewish group as a whole as a “representative” of the ruling majority group or even of the establishment. However, in their responses Jewish participants generally reject attempts to provoke a political dialogue in an effort to keep the group focused on personal and interpersonal experiences. These experiences are typically related to occasional meetings with Israeli Palestinians (“the worker who came to paint my house,” “the student who sat next to me in class”), some of which have been positive, but most of which have been laden with anxiety. For the Jewish participants these personal experiences evoke thoughts and emotions linked to basic feelings of trust and mistrust.

The main point here is that while the Palestinian participants relate to the Jewish participants as representing the Jews in general, the Jewish participants prefer to relate to their Palestinian colleagues as exceptions and to focus mainly on the here-and-now interpersonal encounter with them:

But I have a problem. . . . Not that I’m saying that there aren’t two identities here, or two groups, but . . . the dichotomous division into two groups, all the time repeated, I have a problem [with that], and I remember this song all the time . . . , “Don’t Call Me a People.” Why . . . push it in this direction of two identities [when] maybe

that's really what we don't want to end up reaching. Maybe there's something that's kind of shared, maybe universal.

Similar observations are presented by Katz and Kahanov (1990), Amir and Ben-Ari (1987), and Sonnenschein, Halabi, and Friedman (1998). Katz and Kahanov note that they found a greater tendency among Arab participants toward a political-group emphasis, along with a relative avoidance of exposing differences of opinion within their camp. In contrast, they found that personal self-disclosure, confession of weakness, and admission of doubt were much more common among Jewish participants (34).

In light of the above observations, two remarks—one theoretical and the other pragmatic—seem in order. On the theoretical level, the validity of the continuum hypothesis in relation to situations of asymmetry, such as encounters between members of a majority and of a minority, may be challenged. As originally formulated, the continuum hypothesis is a symmetrical argument. It does not distinguish between the responses of members of the respective groups. It seems that this hypothesis needs to be modified to take into account the characteristics of asymmetry embedded in interactions between minority and majority members. The preceding observations suggest a possibility—not accounted for by the continuum hypothesis—that the two groups engaged in an interaction need not operate around the same point on the interpersonal-intergroup continuum. For example, in a given interaction, most members of one group might operate near the intergroup end of the continuum, while most members of the other group—during the same interaction—might operate near the interpersonal end. Moreover, the findings of Levy and Guttman (1976) and of Adar and Adler (1965)—regarding the absence of a correlation between the attitudes of Jewish youth on interpersonal subjects and their attitudes on national-political subjects—raise the possibility of an additional extension according to which the interpersonal and the intergroup levels of an interaction need not be diametrically opposed. A modified model of the continuum hypothesis might assume that the two levels of interaction are represented by two bipolar and orthogonal dimensions. An individual could have an interaction with an outgroup member that is positive on both dimensions, negative on both, or positive on one and negative on the other, and at different degrees of intensity of positivity and negativity.

Another theoretical weakness of the continuum hypothesis lies in its ambiguous definition of the nature of the interaction. Specifically, the

hypothesis—as originally stated—does not distinguish between individuals' perceptions of the situation (evaluative dimension), their behavioral intentions (intentional dimension), and their actual behavior (behavioral dimension). The distinction between the evaluative dimension and the intentional and behavioral dimensions throws light on situations in which individuals choose actions that do not reflect their real thoughts and feelings. Such situations are fairly common in the behavioral repertoire of Jewish participants in encounter groups, who will nearly always prefer to shift the interaction away from the intergroup level and toward the interpersonal level. The possibility for a disjunction between the individual's perception of the level of interaction (interpersonal/intergroup) and his or her behavior enables individuals who so desire to avoid political questions and difficulties raised by individuals from the other group and to emphasize personal and interpersonal experiences. Katz and Kahanov (1990) give validity to this analysis in stating that, "according to the advocates of the political model, the psychological model is manipulative. As if to say that when there is a reality involving a horse and rider, it is the rider who will say, 'No politics!'" (43).

Thus far I have mainly addressed the theoretical aspects of the relationship between the interpersonal and intergroup levels of communication. Another problem, pragmatic in nature, relates to the degree to which the group-dynamics format of encounters is suitable for generating a process that enables a productive "flow" between the two levels of interaction. In their comparative evaluation of the "political-man" conception as against the "psychological-man" conception, Katz and Kahanov (1990, 34) point out that "the transition from the level of personal relations (the psychological model) to that of intergroup relations (the political model) can be very instructive concerning external social processes, but is also liable to seriously impede the resolution of dilemmas raised by them. The moment the speakers become spokespersons for their groups, the possibility for the creation of a common denominator is diminished."

Similarly, Amir and Ben-Ari (1987) rely on the findings of Levy and Guttman (1976) and of Adar and Adler (1965) concerning the lack of correlation between personal attitudes and political-national attitudes to conclude that "the interpersonal aspects at the micro level of intergroup conflict may be addressed, without necessarily addressing intergroup aspects on the macro level"; they immediately add (313):

This is, in fact, the source of hope for successful encounters between Jewish and Arab youth in Israel. It must be understood that in whatever concerns Jewish-Arab relations, action on the micro level is a

tangible possibility. In contrast, action on the macro level is simply not under our control. Moreover, structured techniques and psychological approaches are likely to bear fruit in working with problems and conflicts the source of which is psychological. But on the macro level, other factors—political, economic, religious and cultural—are likely to be the basis of the conflict, and thus to limit the effectiveness of the psychological tools in solving problems.

Although I concur with the contention of the authors that “structured techniques and psychological approaches are likely to bear fruit in working with problems and conflicts the source of which is psychological,” I disagree with their conclusion that the source of hope for successful encounters lies in addressing interpersonal aspects and not intergroup aspects. My nearly opposite conclusion is that because most issues addressed in these encounters are essentially not psychological, the effectiveness of encounter groups in addressing such issues is bound to be limited. Put differently, I contend that the psychological nature of the encounter group limits its ability to cope with conflict problems and contents related to intergroup aspects.

The deflection of focus arising from the psychological character of these groups, in favor of interpersonal relations, is clear and self-evident. In the absence of other rules, it is the prerogative of any individual (not less so any group) to strictly clarify that he or she is not prepared to discuss political issues and thereby to set the boundaries of what is permitted and what is not in the encounter. The Jewish participants in such groups can demand (as they usually do) that the Arabs relate to their emotional pain and distress as a condition for continuing the encounter. The road to intergroup content is evidently by way of interpersonal paths, and Arab participants who are interested in the continuation, and success, of the encounter are prone to be responsive to this type of demand. It follows that the symmetrical nature of a psychologically oriented group is likely to be the source of an asymmetry that inclines the group in a psychological and interpersonal direction, far away from the political and intergroup dimensions.

ASYMMETRY IN POWER

Interestingly, the research on Jewish-Palestinian encounter groups in Israel has almost entirely disregarded the power dimension of the encounter. No serious regard has been given to the fact that the majority

and minority groups participating in such encounters differ significantly in their social status. The organizers of such groups invest considerable organizational effort in neutralizing status variables, usually by nominating two facilitators, a Palestinian and a Jew, and by securing numerical parity between participants from the two national groups. One might contend that understanding the social process of majority-minority relations is essential for making inferences about the intra- and interpersonal processes, as well as the intergroup processes, that take place in Jewish-Palestinian encounter groups. This is especially true given the fact that the dialogue in these groups is focused on the relations between the majority and minority groups to which the participants in the meetings belong.

In this section I attempt to pinpoint different psychological responses on the part of majority- and minority-group members within the encounter group. Before doing so I wish to emphasize two principal characteristics of the asymmetrical relations between majority and minority. First, the majority (the high-status group) holds most of the material resources common to the two groups and thus holds the reins of power and control in the state. This implies that, whereas the majority can discriminate against the minority—and indeed it does so extensively—the minority cannot practice substantive discrimination against the majority. Second, the majority is represented by a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental institutions through which it enforces its control over common resources, and it acts in various ways against any tendency on the part of the minority to change the discriminatory status quo. In contrast, the minority's own institutions and organizations are of limited effectiveness.

The gap between the two groups on the level of institutional organization dictates that individuals from the respective groups will have different modes of “conflict-oriented behaviors.” Although members of the majority can rely on many institutions to address matters related to the conflict, members of the minority cannot. This asymmetry obliges minority members to have a greater degree of involvement in issues related to the intergroup conflict. As a substitute for institutional activity, the minority must base its struggle on noninstitutionalized, grass-roots activities. This requires a highly salient group identity and the enlistment of people's emotions to bolster the group's unity and increase individuals' readiness to involve themselves in behaviors relating to the conflict. This asymmetry implies a difference between minority- and majority-group members concerning the relation between attitudes and behavior vis-à-vis the conflict. The minority's noninstitutional organization and action

and the need for a high degree of involvement on the part of minority-group members render a stronger attitudinal-behavioral link more crucial for the minority than for members of the majority. This asymmetry likewise implies that members of the two groups will have different perceptions of the degree of centrality and importance of their group identities. One might conjecture that members of an unorganized minority would tend to ascribe more weight to their collective identity, given its focal role for group cohesion.

As stated before, despite the importance of power and status differences in determining individual and group responses in situations of intergroup contact, these variables have not earned the attention they deserve in the research on encounter groups or in the broader research on intergroup relations. An important contribution in this regard is provided by SIT, especially the ideas proposed by Turner and Brown (1978) concerning the social and psychological responses of minority- and majority-group members in asymmetrical interactions. According to Turner and Brown, the responses of members of the high-status and the low-status groups are dictated, among other things, by their perceptions and evaluations of the conflict on two central dimensions: the degree of stability of the status quo and its degree of legitimacy. Combining these two factors as dichotomous variables yields four theoretical possibilities: legitimate-stable, legitimate-unstable, illegitimate-stable, and illegitimate-unstable. For the sake of brevity, I will not discuss all four possibilities. Instead, I shall focus only on those that seem most relevant to the case at hand.

Regarding members of the Palestinian minority (low-status) group, one may contend that, in general, they will evaluate the status quo as illegitimate and will try to narrow the “social distance” between themselves and the majority (high-status) group. It follows that minority members will perceive the situation as unstable in addition to evaluating it as illegitimate. The main prediction made by Turner and Brown regarding this situation is that minority members will act in one of three possible ways: (1) they might try to cross borders—as individuals—and “pass” to the high-status group (i.e., by individual mobility); (2) they might use cognitive styles characterized by social creativity, either by changing their value system so that negative comparisons become positive or, alternatively, by changing their referent outgroup and engaging in downward—rather than upward—comparisons; or (3) they might challenge the status quo by competing, as a collective, with the outgroup (i.e., through social competition with the outgroup).

Although actual mobility is not a real option in planned encounters, some behaviors on the part of Palestinian participants in such encounters

may be interpreted as attempts to close the social distance between themselves and the majority group or even to “cross boundaries” (Sonnenschein, Halabi, and Friedman 1998). Examples of such behaviors are expressions of “understanding,” on the part of the Palestinian participants, of the Jewish majority’s reasons for oppressing the minority. Sonnenschein, Halabi, and Friedman (1998) quote cases in which Palestinian participants expressed some “understanding” of the fact that Palestinian travelers are obliged to undergo strict security checks at Ben-Gurion Airport and even of the cries “Death to the Arabs!” sometimes heard on the Jewish street. The authors point out, based on their observations, that the Jewish group usually expresses great interest in Palestinians who attempt to cross borders in manners similar to the ones described above.

Other responses by Palestinians participating in encounter groups may be classified as “creative” ways of enhancing their own group’s esteem (for example, by emphasizing their pride in the richness of the Arabic language and traditions): “I want to speak Arabic. When I speak Hebrew, they take it as weakness on my part. I am an Arab [woman] so I have to express myself in Arabic; they are Jews, they speak Hebrew. I represent the Arabs here and I have to represent them in every aspect, and language is one of the important things in that identity. It makes me proud to speak my own language.” But for the most part minority members’ responses to intergroup contact are characterized by an increase in ethnocentrism and in intergroup tension. A clear expression of this tension is the attempt of minority members to focus the group discussions on political issues, while avoiding intimate conversations of an interpersonal nature. The typical process in these encounters is a relatively rapid transition from the stage of “good intentions” (in which the group—under pressure from the Jewish participants—settles into a pleasant atmosphere with an emphasis on what the two groups have in common) to the stage of intergroup confrontation: “In high school, I participated in a workshop at Neve Shalom. At first we only talked and got to know each other, and we had fun. After that, everything blew up, and we couldn’t stand each other. It wasn’t easy, especially after a few days of being friends and feeling close. We went home, each of us with his burden, but not as friends.” The process of consolidation as two national groups and the pressure to divert the dialogue toward the intergroup course are always initiated by the Palestinian participants (Sonnenschein, Halabi, and Friedman 1998).

Alongside the overwhelming majority of Palestinians in Israel who see the status quo as illegitimate and unstable, a small minority among them see it as illegitimate but stable. The general characteristics of this fraction resemble those of the “assimilating” group in the typology pro-

posed by Smootha (1980). The need to diminish the cognitive dissonance experienced by such individuals can cause them to justify the discrimination against their own group, which they see no way of changing.

Applying the typology offered by Turner and Brown to the majority group seems more interesting. One could contend that in general the majority would evaluate the status quo as stable or at least as stable enough to render the minority group unlikely to seriously change it. Under this assumption, the alternatives proposed by Turner and Brown are reduced to two: that majority members will evaluate the status quo as legitimate and stable, and that they will evaluate it as illegitimate and stable. Turner and Brown do not formulate a clear prediction regarding the first possibility, although one might suppose that majority members who perceive the status quo as legitimate and stable will continue to discriminate against the minority and will not demonstrate sufficient sensitivity concerning the existence of such discrimination. The prediction made by Turner and Brown concerning the second possibility is quite interesting. They posit that majority members who perceive the existing situation as stable but illegitimate will engage in discriminatory behavior toward the minority but, at the same time, will attempt to justify their behavior by utilizing cognitive strategies that are self-confirmatory. As the theory of dissonance posits, majority members who experience the cognitive dissonance between the discriminatory behavior of their group and their sense of the injustice being done will try to reduce this dissonance by changing their attitude toward the minority-group members in a manner that justifies the discrimination against them.

The range of justifications expressed by majority-group members in Jewish-Palestinian encounters is quite broad. They may be simple and overt or complicated and covert. Three types of justifications that are common in such encounters are stereotyping, rationalization, and delegitimization. The use of negative stereotyping is a simple and direct tactic for justifying discrimination toward members of the Palestinian minority. Claims like “Arabs are not capable of adopting Western technologies” or “educational problems in the Arab sector are mainly an outcome of cultural differences” are examples of commonly used justifications.

Rationalization in the present context refers to the use of pseudo-rational arguments to justify discrimination. A common claim in this category is the justification of denying full rights for Palestinian Israelis by arguing that they do not fulfill their obligations as citizens of the state: “I am bothered by the issue of not serving in the army. I’m interested in hearing your response. It bothers me that every time something about national security comes up . . . maybe you feel a divided loyalty. The sense

of oppression comes from obstacles that were always there and that will remain. We have to get to a situation of assimilation and not two separate groups.”

Finally, delegitimizing the minority group is often used as a rationale for justifying discriminatory actions toward its members. A common claim made in encounters to delegitimize the Palestinian minority is that “this is a Jewish state and so it is natural that Arabs can’t have equal rights.” Another related example holds that “this is the only state we [the Jews] have, whereas you [the Arabs] have more than twenty states.” Yet another example is the claim that “if you define yourselves as Palestinian, you can’t also be Israelis.”

These three strategies do not exhaust the possibilities, nor are they necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, majority members sometimes try to delegitimize minority members by means of negative stereotyping. Stigmatizing Arabs as “primitive” or reiterating that they lack a democratic tradition are common examples of how negative stereotyping is used to increase the social distance from the minority as a way of delegitimizing its members: “The problem is your leaders. They’re extremists. They’re demagogues and instead of moderating the situation, they inflame it. The anger and all those things are a product of education and leaders who want to get political power for themselves at the expense of this thing. All this kind of stuff, that fans the flames of these things.”

Throughout the preceding discussion I assumed that the groups involved in the interaction behave as unified and coherent entities. But this assumption does not hold in all cases. In fact, accumulated experience with encounter groups reveals that intergroup processes are often utilized for achieving intragroup goals. An outstanding example is the excessive extremism shown by members of disadvantaged subgroups within the majority (e.g., Jews of Sephardic origin). By widening the distance between themselves and members of the Palestinian minority, some Sephardic Jews seek to narrow their own social distance from other members of their own group.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I used a number of theoretical ideas from the realm of social psychology to analyze common processes that take place in planned encounters between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis. In the distinction made between the interpersonal and the intergroup dimensions of inter-

action, I emphasized the existence of a clear bias toward interpersonal communication. This bias, arising from the psychological character of the encounter, has greatly limited its capacity to address political issues. It also creates another difficulty in that it forces a symmetrical structure onto the encounter; as a result the relations of dominance between the majority and minority are ignored, and the ability to cope with the various ramifications of the asymmetry embedded in these relations is limited. The theoretical analysis in the final section highlighted some aspects of the differential responses of minority and majority based on the differences in their respective power and relative status. An important difference, worth emphasizing here, is the centrality of national identity for members of the Palestinian minority and its importance for increasing group cohesion and mobilizing the group for collective activities. The same does not hold for members of the majority, who can rely fairly well on the existence of an organized institutional infrastructure designed to control and manage the conflict with the minority.

The asymmetry in majority-minority relations produces different responses from majority and minority members. The analysis provided in the previous section underlined a number of different behavioral and attitudinal responses by members of each group. As described, these differences are determined mainly by the power relations between majority and minority and by the perceived stability and legitimacy of these relations.

Can planned encounters—despite their structural bias toward psychological and interpersonal communication—serve as a platform for political dialogue between Jews and Palestinians? Rather than attempting to provide a definitive answer to this question, I prefer to emphasize two elements the existence of which seems necessary if encounter groups are to be applied effectively for political interventions.

First, the encounters must be managed in a way that ensures that interpersonal communication will be invested in favor of cultivating intergroup dialogue. Maintaining the intergroup dimension at the center requires that facilitators not yield to pressure coming from Jewish participants who try to impose a “veto” on political and conflictive aspects. It also requires the development of facilitation techniques that are suitable for group interactions that are political in nature and the encouragement of expressions of group cohesiveness and group identity. The technique recommended by Sonnenschein, Halabi, and Friedman (1998), in which separate group meetings are held, appears to be effective in encouraging group members to assert their collective identities and in legitimizing these identities in the eyes of outgroup members. This is especially

important for members of the Palestinian minority, who have a greater need to assert their national identity.

Second, group members should be provided with relevant historical and political information and informed about the research literature on groups of differing status. The sociological research on majority-minority relations and the social- psychological research on the effects of status and power differences on intergroup relations are especially relevant for this purpose. Basic knowledge of this research, along with appropriate facilitation approaches, can improve the participants' understanding of their own attitudes and behaviors, as well as of those of other ingroup and outgroup members. This, in turn, can improve the effectiveness of encounter groups in achieving their objectives.

3

AWARENESS, IDENTITY, AND REALITY

THE SCHOOL FOR PEACE APPROACH

RABAH HALABI AND
NAVA SONNENSCHIN

Before we present the approach we have adopted in our work at the School for Peace, we will give a brief overview of the various working models that exist in this field around the world. (A more thorough survey may be found in Chapters One and Two; here we refer only to highlights).

The theoretical and practical approaches to work involving meetings between groups in conflict are characterized by two major axes.

Individual Orientation

Group Orientation

Continuum 1: human relations conflict resolution

Continuum 2: contact hypothesis . . . intergroup encounter

The first of these is a continuum defined by workshops in human relations at one end and workshops in conflict resolution at the other. In human relations workshops, the main emphasis is on the psychological aspects of the encounter experience. The goal of this approach is to emphasize what participants have in common and to relegate conflictive subjects to the sidelines. Conflict-resolution workshops, in comparison, assume that there is a basis in reality for the conflict between the two groups and that resolving it requires a search for ways to build bridges between the

disparate goals of the two groups. This approach emphasizes seeing the participants as representatives of their respective groups, with less emphasis on their inner psychological world and on their interpersonal relations (Abu Nimer 1999).

The second major axis generally addressed in studies of groups in conflict is a continuum defined by the contact-hypothesis approach at one end and the intergroup approach at the other. The contact-hypothesis model assumes that simply bringing together people who belong to groups that are in conflict and creating interaction between them on a personal basis, when they are cut off from their group affiliations, can reduce both their hatred for one another and the preexisting stereotypes they have about one another. The assumptions of this approach are that interpersonal conflicts are the outcome of a lack of information on the part of one group about another group and that a personal connection can correct the distortions and regularize the relations. The intergroup approach, by comparison, contends that the encounter will be useful and will reduce stereotypes not when the group identity of the participants is minimized but rather when it is emphasized and when the interactions taking place are primarily of a group nature. Only in such a case, according to this approach, may one generalize from the personal experience in the encounter to the external reality as it is lived outside the group (see Chapter One).

The two continua are similar in that each of them, at one pole, relies on deconstructing the group dimension in favor of individual contact, while at the other pole each relies on strengthening the group dimension and on intergroup interaction. The approach we use at the School for Peace is close to the second pole—that is, our emphasis is on the encounter between Jews and Arabs, on the conflict, and we relate to the participants as representatives of their groups. But our approach is not exactly identical to any of those described above. We have developed our model over a number of years through trial and error, and only in hindsight, and sometimes even during work in progress, have we formalized its basis in a number of theories that we will discuss in detail below.

As our point of departure, we began working from the other end of both continua, from the human relations and contact-hypothesis end. This kind of model, imported from the United States, was the only one that was known and available in our field at that time in Israel. The goals we set for the meetings we conducted back then were to develop individual and group awareness in the Jewish-Arab context, to decrease stereotyping, and to encourage development of empathy for the other. The encounter was constructed on an individual rather than a group basis. We

stressed that participants spoke for themselves and not in the name of a group and that they should direct what they said to someone specific within the group. When a participant spoke in the first-person plural (“We . . .”), we corrected him or her, noting that he/she was not the spokesperson of a group.

Because encouraging good communication between the participants was important, we employed a variety of interpersonal communication techniques. The meetings revolved mainly around the expression of feelings, and the maxim of the facilitation was that there is no arguing with feelings, that one may try only to understand. Thus, for example, when a Jew said that he was afraid of Arabs, the Arabs were supposed to understand this fear and empathize with it. We came to see over time, however, that this approach made it difficult to get to the roots of the fear and the reasons behind it and to try to argue with the conception of reality that underlay it.

Both participants and facilitators, especially the Arabs, were frustrated and dissatisfied with this model. They experienced the meetings as artificial and inauthentic on the one hand and as representing the interests of the Jewish participants on the other. This impelled the staff of the School for Peace to undertake an ongoing quest to improve and perfect our model for encounter. The changes were dictated above all else by our own instincts and our own thinking. Only later did we become acquainted with theories relevant to the approach we had developed in our work, theories on which we can now base our model and by means of which we can also conceptualize and describe this model.

THE GOAL OF THE ENCOUNTER

In our work, the vision of a humane, egalitarian, and just society is always present in our mind’s eye. Our goal for the encounters we facilitate is to develop the awareness of the participants about the conflict and their role in it, as well as to enable them to explore and evolve their identity through interaction with the other. Awareness gives people the option to choose their path according to their understanding and consciousness; having a clear and mature identity equips a person to build reciprocal and egalitarian relationships (Phinney 1990; Helms 1990a). In pursuit of this common goal, the task of each of the groups is a little different because the reality in which they live is asymmetrical. The Arabs must deal with being the controlled, the minority group, with all the ramifications of that. And the Jews must deal with being the rulers, the majority group. Meanwhile

both groups need to investigate the oppressive patterns in which they are caught and move toward liberation from these patterns through the search for their humanity (Freire 1972).

Our main assumption is that the conflict between Arabs and Jews is between two peoples, two national identities, and not between individuals. Hence we think that the goal of the encounter can be achieved only by sharpening these identities and by facing up to the reality of the conflict between the two peoples as it is reflected in the two groups engaging in the encounter (Wilder 1984; Stephan and Stephan 1984; Tajfel 1978b). Thus we treat the encounter as an intergroup meeting—both structurally and in the world-view that informs the work of the facilitators.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MEETING

The encounter takes place in small groups of fourteen to sixteen participants. We try to have an equal number of Jews and Arabs in each group. Each small group works with two facilitators, one Arab and one Jewish. Discussions within the group take place in two forums: one is the full binational setting, and the other is the uninational forum, during which the Arab group sits with the Arab facilitator, and the Jewish group sits with the Jewish facilitator. As well, the two languages, Arabic and Hebrew, are official languages of the meeting, and we encourage each group to speak in its own language, with the facilitators offering translations.

In this manner, the message is conveyed to the participants that the encounter is between two groups, two peoples, two identities. This makes possible a dialogue between these two identities; a discussion of all the aspects of the overall conflict, including the political; and the clarification of the most difficult and most painful issues that stand between the two groups. Interventions by the facilitators complement this structure and flow from the same premise.

BASES OF FACILITATOR INTERVENTIONS

The role of the facilitators is to help the participants achieve the goal of the encounter. They do this by analyzing and clarifying the processes occurring between the two groups and by linking these processes to reality, through ongoing dialogue with the participants. Four basic assumptions are always at the forefront of their awareness and their understanding of the relations between Jews and Arabs.

First, the conceptions and beliefs on which a person's identity and behavior are constructed are stable and deep-seated. We are generally unaware of them, and they are generally resistant to change. Statements, opinions, and stereotypes are only the outward indications of these conceptions. Thus we aspire in the encounter to enable the participants to behave freely, as closely as possible in line with reality, so that through this behavior they can examine and comprehend their deeply held conceptions and attempt to deal with them (Bion 1961; Burton 1991). One of the principal conceptions is a feeling of superiority or inferiority, both of which flow from the asymmetrical reality influencing our thinking and behavior within the conflict (Libkind 1992; Tajfel 1978b).

Thus, for example, during the meeting a Jewish participant may declare that the interaction with the Arabs has made him a nationalist and an extremist, while outside he is a total leftist. We will interpret this to mean that the meeting has caused him to encounter his feeling of superiority, which he doesn't like to see in himself and which he has worked hard outside the encounter to suppress in order to be seen as liberal and enlightened. And so he is angry at the Arab, who is serving as his mirror, about what he sees within himself.

Second, the encounter is between two national groups and not between individuals. We see the group as essential, as more than the sum of the individuals who constitute it; and we believe that the interactions between individuals are shaped by their national affiliation and that they relate to themselves and to others as representatives of these groups. Hence we treat individuals as spokespersons for the national groups to which they belong, and we treat the group as representing the collective unconscious of its members (Bion 1961; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Brown and Hewstone 1986).

For example, when there is an argument between Jews and Arabs over the subject to be discussed, and two of the eight Arabs support a political discussion, we treat that as the stance of the Arab group. Sometimes when only one participant from a group expresses a particular opinion, we treat it as the position of the group. Our assumption is that when a position is expressed in the group and no one challenges it, the group sees that position as representative. Because the people are sitting in a group and talking, a great many personal interactions occur among participants. From our point of view these interactions are outside the target area, and we treat them as "noise in the system." As facilitators we are focused on what happens between the two groups as it relates to the conflict, and that is where we try to concentrate the attention of the participants.

Third, the group is a microcosm of reality—despite the fact that the

encounter takes place in small groups and between single individuals from each people. We also assume that all the elements existing in the larger society may be found in some form within each one of us (Yalom 1975; Lewin 1948). Thus, for example, regardless of the actual numbers of Arab and Jewish participants in the meeting (even if there are more Arabs than Jews), the phenomena of majority and minority groups are manifested intact.

Hence, for instance, the Jewish group—at least at the outset of the meeting—demonstrates openness, and a variety of opinions are expressed by its members, whereas the Arab group offers a united opinion and does not allow itself the luxury of pluralism. We relate this to the sociopolitical structure in the outside reality and assume that for the Arab group, as the minority, it is important to be united and thereby gain strength; in contrast, the Jewish group, as the majority group and the stronger group in the room, can permit itself to be pluralistic and to express diverse opinions.

Likewise from what happens in the meeting we try to make deductions about reality and sometimes to observe what perhaps could happen in reality in the future. Consider the power relations within the meeting, for example. Over the years we have seen that these tend to change only when the Arab group becomes stronger and forces the Jewish group to change accordingly. We therefore conclude, likewise, that the asymmetrical relations on the outside will be prone to change only if and when the Arabs in Israel become stronger and force these changes to take place.

Fourth, we treat the participants in the meeting as an open group that is linked to—that comes from and returns to—external reality (Lewin 1951). Thus we try to understand what goes on in the group in the context of events happening outside, and we hope that the changes we observe in the participants during the meeting may later influence their surroundings and the society in which they live. When a report reaches the group, for example, that one side or the other has suffered a violent incident involving injury and death, the dialogue in the room becomes more moderate, turns softer, and shows consideration for the side on which there were victims.

When toward the end of the meeting the Arab participants become pessimistic, they report feelings of despair and sense a lack of utility in the encounter. We try to understand what they say not only in the context of what has happened in the meeting itself but also in relation to the fact that the participants will be parting soon and the Arabs will be left to face the difficult reality outside—which has not changed in the smallest measure during their encounter at the School for Peace.

Although the interactions and the processes we are investigating in the meeting are at the group level, the changes in the end are individual and occur within individuals in the group as a result of what happens in the group and between the groups. From this standpoint each group acts as a mirror for the other group. Thus each may see itself rightly, standing face to face with its truth and obliged to cope with that truth, and even to change accordingly if the individual has an inclination and a willingness to change. Because reality is asymmetrical, however, the change is not the same, not identical, for everyone. The Jews, as the dominant majority group, must cope throughout this encounter with being the rulers, with their feelings of superiority, with their patronizing attitudes—as against their desire to be liberal and egalitarian and humane. The Arabs, as the weaker group, must cope throughout the encounter with being oppressed, with their feelings of inferiority, with the internalization of their oppression—as against their desire to be free of that oppression and their aspiration for full equality. It would seem that everyone must change, if in a different direction; indeed the changing must be shared by both sides if they are to break free of the situation of oppression in which both are partners, albeit from different sides of the barricade.

Generally the Jews report on the changes that happen to them during the encounter. Typically they are proud of these changes and see making them as a courageous act deserving of recognition by the Arab group. They even expect that those in the Arab group will change in the same way and demand that they do. The Arab group tends not to report on the changes it undergoes; generally it even reports a complete absence of change. Maybe the Arabs' sense is that to change would signify weakness, or perhaps they feel that in the situation as it stands the group that should change itself and thereby change reality is the Jewish group, the strong group. In these circumstances, the facilitators must be alert and must direct the attention of the participants to the different space occupied by the two groups, a difference that causes them to respond differently.

The Jewish group generally opposes our approach, especially at the start of the process. Whereas we see the facilitation as relating to the Jews as a group, its members demand to be treated as individuals because each is a separate human being. They likewise resist the facilitation approach that contends that the group is a microcosm of Israel. The Jewish participants see themselves as liberal and leftist and believe that the racist Jews are elsewhere, on the outside. By contrast, the Arab group accepts our approach, even behaves supportively toward the facilitation, and urges a political discussion by the group.

Despite the differences between the two groups, at least on the level

of declarations, we think that both want a political discussion, as do any two groups that find themselves in a situation of conflict (Tajfel 1981). But the Jews try to steer things in another direction once they begin feeling distress, as they stand facing reality and find that their humanity is called into question and their hegemony as a group is in jeopardy. Indeed, avoidance of conflict is known to be one of the strategies employed by the majority group in cases like this to perpetuate its control of the situation (Lukes 1974). Then, toward the end, the situation is reversed as the group returns to everyday reality. The Jewish group at that point feels less threatened; it feels pride in the changes it has undergone and thinks that it has done so for the sake of equality. The Arab group sometimes feels frustrated and disappointed because reality has not changed. On the contrary, reality is now perhaps worse, given the changed awareness of the Arab group toward it. An Arab participant expressed this quite clearly when he said, “That means that the encounter makes possible the creation of a slightly different reality from outside, making it possible to protest against the way things are and against the status quo. The Jewish group doesn’t like this situation, and so things are very hard for it in the meeting. But, for the Arabs, things are better within the meeting than in the reality outside.” And, in truth, that is the reality, with all its complexity and all that is so insufferable about it. These meetings cannot, and are not intended to, change reality. What they can and do change is the participants’ awareness of the conflict and their social and political identity. From the Arabs’ point of view, this change is insufficient; what truly cries out for change is the oppressive and discriminatory reality in which they live day after day.

DILEMMAS AND CHALLENGES

All of the foregoing calls into question the effectiveness of bringing these groups together: Is it, or is it not, right and worthwhile to do so? This is a legitimate question, especially against the backdrop of the reality that we are living through in these times. But if an encounter is going to be held, our model seems to us to provide a professional and profound approach—given that it treats reality as a whole, addresses the differing needs of the two groups, and gives all the participants the opportunity to take a look at themselves, to open up their awareness, to look at their ethnic identity. This is not to say, however, that we have found the optimal model—that we have reached our goal and can rest on our laurels. The work is constantly giving rise to dilemmas and problems, and we are al-

ways working on changing and improving. To conclude the chapter, then, we will address some of the dilemmas with which this working model of ours presents us.

The first and principal dilemma relates to the very act of bringing groups together and the degree to which doing so is effective, an issue already mentioned in passing. To this dilemma there is no quick and easy resolution. At the School for Peace, among our goals are to raise consciousness and to promote the development of identity. Through the encounters we conduct, these objectives are achievable, and indeed are achieved, with respect to both the Arab and the Jewish participants. But if we view the subject more broadly in light of the external reality and of the different aspirations and goals of our participants, the dilemma is not simple and in any case cannot be resolved at the School for Peace.

Encounter, any encounter, does not in and of itself change reality. In the best case it may alter the insight of the participants and thereby change the way they experience reality. The Arabs as a minority group often aspire to change the oppressive reality in which they live, and indeed in many cases that may well be the primary motivation for their participation in meetings of this kind. As we have already noted, such a goal is not realistic and cannot be achieved in any such meeting, regardless of the approach taken. Hence, the disappointment and frustration of the Arab group in the encounter are a result of the asymmetry of reality and of the fact that they are the weaker group in the conflict. In addition, the more authentic the encounter and the more it exposes the participants to an unblinking confrontation with their reality, the greater will be the frustration felt by the Arabs. In contrast, meetings that attempt to blur reality, to prettify it, could probably reduce those feelings of frustration by encouraging participants to stay cocooned in their illusions. That, obviously, is not our mission. In any case the most effective path to changing reality is social and political action. The encounter we conduct is an educational activity and as such is limited in its ability to change the face of society.

The second dilemma comes from the approach we use in our work. With our model, we concentrate on the relations between two groups and on the conflict that exists between them. In this context, the national voices of the two sides are the most authentic voices within the group. This is doubly reinforced because the participants themselves pay more attention to their comrades who speak in this voice. As one Jewish woman said in one of the meetings, "I respected the militant side more; although it was hard, it was more authentic. This is not an issue of opinions because there wasn't a lot of difference in the positions, but rather it concerns the ability to go all the way with things, to bring up the hard things that are

unpleasant to say and unpleasant to cope with.” In this situation the legitimacy of other voices in the group is likely to be negated, and a further complication arises if the personal gets mixed up with the national, as it sometimes does. Participants who need attention, who have to be at the center of the discussion, sometimes seize on this principle of the primacy of the national voice: they adopt the “appropriate positions” that will bring them to center stage. Given that our goal in a meeting is to investigate the totality of existing relations between Jews and Arabs, the facilitators must be alert to this trap—which is not simple to spot—and try to cope with it. The subject is further complicated when we take into account that in general the facilitators, like the participants, tend to have more respect for the national voice.

The third dilemma lies on the continuum between the individual and the group. In our work we focus on intergroup interactions and processes. We do not relate to interpersonal interactions, and at times we even see them as interfering in the attempt to gain a better understanding of the relations between the two groups. Sensing this, participants may feel that the facilitation is not respectful of individual differences and does not give them expression but instead uses these differences as an instrument in the service of a goal that, at least at the outset, seems veiled and unclear. And this feeling can intensify in the wake of the pain and distress participants experience during the encounter.

The goal of the facilitation is not to abuse the participants or to manipulate them or their feelings for any reason whatsoever; this is a potential unwelcome byproduct of the collective focus. We remain convinced that the advantages of our approach far outweigh its disadvantages. Tajfel (1978b) related to this dichotomy between individual and group when he said, “The point of departure (and of arrival) was, however, firmly kept in the arena of intergroup relations because of my conviction that it is only when this is explicitly done (at some risk of neglect of other issues) that we have, as social psychologists, a good chance of making a contribution to the understanding of social processes at large.”

We close with two additional comments. First, we are in a continual process of learning and experimenting so as to improve our working model. Dilemmas and challenges keep us open as long as we remain prepared to deal with them and to make changes. And, second, we have evidently chosen for ourselves the hardest and most complicated way of working on the Jewish-Arab conflict. Our path requires of participants that they confront the conflict courageously and in depth, an approach that involves pain and frustration and disappointment. These feelings are projected onto the facilitators and onto the entire staff at the School for

Peace, and they themselves become discouraged and feel burned out even though at the same time they get profound satisfaction from doing serious work. We could be holding fun encounters that would lift the spirits of the participants and the facilitators alike. But that would be a sin against truth, perpetrated by us in collusion with the participants. We know full well that a heightened awareness of the hard reality in which we are living brings people to a far-from-easy confrontation with themselves and with the larger situation; it disturbs their peace of mind and the sense of comfort that hiding one's head in the sand can bring. Between these two options, the path we ought to follow is absolutely clear. In awareness, however painful, is embodied one of the most important human values: the right to have a choice and the option to change and to be changed.

4

LIBERATE THE OPPRESSED AND THEIR OPPRESSORS

ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

RABAH HALABI, NAVA SONNENSCHIN,
AND ARIELLA FRIEDMAN

In 1990, we introduced a year-long course as a joint project of the School for Peace and the Department of Social Psychology of Tel-Aviv University. The course is intended for students in the master's degree program in the department of psychology and other departments in the social sciences, and it ideally has an equal number of Jews and Arabs participating. The goal of the course is to learn about groups in conflict through study of the Jewish-Arab conflict.

The program combines experiential learning and lectures about theory. In the experiential part, participants are brought together for a series of Jewish-Arab meetings to learn about the nature of the conflict and the processes that characterize it. This part of the course is led by two facilitators (an Arab and a Jew) from the School for Peace, while the instructors for the theoretical part observe the process through a one-way mirror. The other segment comprises theoretical lectures about group process, social identity, and especially groups in conflict. The significant challenge in this part is to tie participants' experience from the first part to the insights of theory. Over the years, we tried to deal with this challenge in a number of ways without success. We came to the conclusion that aspiring to integrate traditional lectures with group processes and personal experiences is overly ambitious. The course in its present format

is an experiential workshop throughout the year, with every fourth meeting beginning with a theoretical component. The hope is that the students will use the theoretical material they are exposed to during the course to work through and enrich what they are experiencing.

The style of group facilitation is open; participants are asked to discuss any subject they find interesting or troublesome that relates to the Jewish-Arab conflict. The facilitators attempt to point out or bring into sharper focus the processes occurring between the two groups in the room. The discussion is carried out mostly in a binational forum, although the first hour of every third meeting is devoted to a uninational forum. This uninational format divides the group in two; the Jewish students continue their discussion with the Jewish facilitator, and the Arab group has a separate discussion led by the Arab facilitator.

The theoretical component includes the following lectures (subject to changes and additions as the need arises):

- Group conflict: concepts, terms, and models
- Stages in group process
- Individual and social identity
- Stereotypes
- Cognitive maps of conflict
- Theories of the development of ethnic identity

We began a similar course at Ben-Gurion University in Beersheva in 1994, another at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1996, and another at the University of Haifa in 1997.

This course, in its various venues, provides a unique and innovative study of conflict in an academic setting in that it creates a link between experiential, hands-on learning and theory. This integration is successful both for the students who participate in this enriching and unusual (according to reports) experience and for the instructional staff, for whom the integration of professionals specializing in Jewish-Arab encounter with academics dealing with theories of groups in conflict creates a rewarding cross-fertilization.

Since 1997, we have added to the program a joint workshop for all the students in the various university-level courses offered by the School for Peace. At this workshop, held at Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam for two days, all the students who are enrolled in these courses meet together and continue their dialogue. These discussions open up new options for

understanding the conflict because the much larger size of the group enables participants to play different roles than those they have been accustomed to in their own class meetings during the year.

THE COURSE AT TEL-AVIV UNIVERSITY IN 1996–97

The 1996–97 course at Tel-Aviv University was the sixth such course we have offered since 1991. The course was documented (verbatim) in writing by observers who had taken a similar course the previous year. Below we describe and analyze what took place in this course, attempting to utilize it to understand the processes typical of encounters for adults that we offer at the School for Peace, particularly the university-level courses. The course had sixteen participants—eight Arabs and eight Jews. In the Jewish group, six were from the department of psychology, one from the program for excellence in B.A. studies, and one from the law school. In the Arab group, four were social-work students, two were from the law school, and two were psychology students.

The group met for the entire academic year; there were twenty-two meetings of three hours each. The group also participated in the two-day, interuniversity Jewish-Arab meeting (mentioned above) toward the end of the year. Names used in the descriptions that follow are not the real names of the participants.

The first meeting opened with a presentation of the method of facilitation, the world-view behind it, and its concrete characteristics. After this explanation there was a brief round of introductions, and then the group embarked on an open dialogue that continued for the entire academic year.

An analysis of the written documentation on this group, as well as our accumulated experience working with Jewish-Arab encounters, points to a dialogue between two identities as being the central characteristic of the dialogue between the two groups. The encounter develops as a conflict between two identities until the point at which each identity acknowledges the existence of the other, in mutual acceptance. Or, more precisely, the Arab identity struggles for its existence as an equal identity, given that it is the weaker of the two and hence its existence may not be taken for granted.

At the beginning of the process, the Jewish group had trouble accepting the Arab identity, of which it had no awareness before the meeting, although in the end this approach changed and the Arab identity

received legitimacy in the room. Acceptance of the Arab identity and conscious recognition of its existence enabled the beginning of a dialogue of equality.

The process in reality is more complicated and dialectical than can be conveyed in this chapter. The meeting creates interaction and reciprocal influence between the two identities. The intergroup struggle has its ups and downs over the course of the encounter, with different participants finding themselves at different life stages of the group. The changing character of the group process is manifest both in content (conveyed by means of verbal “language”) and in behavior (“language” in its non-verbal sense).

For the purpose of recounting the process here, we simplify by subdividing the description of one particular group’s meetings over two semesters into five distinct phases that are typical of many Jewish and Arab groups in the encounters we have run. The five phases are:

- Initial explorations and declarations of intent
- Strengthening of the Arab group
- Resumption of power by the Jewish group
- Impasse
- A different dialogue

All the direct quotes are excerpts from the documentation of this group and appear here, in translation, exactly as recorded. This kind of partial portrait cannot wholly convey, in all its complexity, what takes place in reality; but we believe this is the only way to enable the reader, in a reasonably brief and orderly fashion, to get a sense of the spirit of what happens in the group.

Phase One: Initial Explorations and Declarations of Intent

The first phase for this group extends over three meetings, more or less, and is characterized by caution, politeness, and an attempt to check out the rules of the game in the group. The boundaries between the two national groups are not clear yet, either from the standpoint of the discussion or in seating patterns, which are mixed. Identity does not receive a full and clear emphasis. Individuals from the Jewish and from the Arab group identify with stands taken by the opposing group while neglecting to present their own attitudes and identities. Participants at this stage dis-

cuss mainly the nature of the encounter and to what degree it is connected to reality.

At first the discussion is about the nature and character of the group. The Arab participants contend that the group is artificial and doesn't allow for real dialogue. One Arab participant, a man, says: "It's impossible to get to a real situation in which everyone talks and says what he thinks; the group is artificial." An Arab woman adds: "The question is whether this reflects what is on the outside; the manner of sitting is artificial; the question is whether it's possible to go beyond that; in the beginning it will surely be artificial."

The Jewish group thinks that it will be possible to hold a real dialogue although they agree with the Arabs that the group as a whole does not reflect the external reality. A Jewish man says: "I disagree, we came with the goal of talking. The arguments will be realistic because that's how we are. On the outside they are usually different; it is impossible to generalize from dozens to hundreds to thousands. The goal of generalizing from groups to people is mistaken." A Jewish woman supports that argument, adding: "The question is whether we can be a microcosm."

Thus, the Jewish group tries to narrow the dialogue to the framework of the group itself, irrespective of any implications for or influence on the reality outside; by contrast, the Arab group describes this as a fake dialogue, shrunk to the boundaries of the group—not significant or valuable, artificial. The meaning of the term *real dialogue* turns out to be different for the Jewish group and the Arab group. For the Arabs, the dialogue is real only if it is representative and hence has wider implications; for the Jews, the dialogue is real even if it does not represent reality as long as the participants bring to it realistic arguments.

From this point, a negotiation develops between the two national groups over the content of the group dialogue.

JEWISH WOMAN: It bothers me that this is an intergroup rather than an interpersonal dialogue. That is, like, almost impossible. It's insoluble. The best chance for talking is at the personal level.

ARAB MAN: I have a friend who is a Likudnik; that solves something?

JEWISH WOMAN: Our level is the interpersonal level, to move beyond slogans.

ARAB WOMAN: On the personal level, everyone can connect. The conflict is between groups and the personal level cannot solve it.

JEWISH WOMAN: The question is, what do we want? I have no pretensions about solving the conflict. I want to clarify my feelings and my attitudes.

ARAB WOMAN: I am new at this university, I came here as Nasreen, now when I go out for a break or when I go home, I go as an Arab [woman]. From a personal standpoint there are differences between me and the rest of the Arab group here. But I already feel that I am part of the group and not alone here.

ARAB WOMAN: We experience the conflict on different levels apparently; I, since I belong to a minority, live my identity as an Arab woman every day and every minute. I cannot turn it off.

We see here a vast and significant difference between the expectations and needs of the respective groups. The Arab group as a minority wants a national, political discussion and hopes for concrete results. The Jewish group as the majority is, at this stage, still not making the connection with its group identity. There is a diversity of expression on the part of its members, and they do not speak in the name of the group (although, for the sake of highlighting the disagreement between the two groups, the Jewish statements we have quoted thus far have been fairly uniform). It is our contention that the Jewish group's desire to avoid the political dimension and the intergroup conflict and their preference for talking on the personal level come from an unconscious wish to continue to protect the overall status quo as it exists in microcosm in the majority group—that is, to protect the dominance of the Jewish group.

At this stage reference is made to political issues in the discussion but in only a superficial way, as in headlines: a Jewish state versus a democratic state, service by Arabs in the Israeli army, benefits given to army veterans, the Arab identity in Israel, the language to be spoken at the meeting, land confiscation. There is rapid transition from one subject to another; and no in-depth, basic clarification of these issues develops. These indeed are the heart of the conflict but, at this stage, they are glossed over quickly as if they constitute an abstract of the tale yet to be written by the participants over the course of their encounter.

Phase Two: The Strengthening of the Arab Group

After the stage of courtesy and exploration, the Arab group begins to solidify and to unite around an emergent leadership that takes it through a series of measured steps. This process happens slowly and continues over a number of meetings; it demands of the Arab group effort, courage, and

inner strength. During the initial meetings about half the Arab participants have not joined in the discussion, and the talking is done by two or three spokespersons.

As the dialogue progresses, additional Arab participants take courage and begin expressing themselves: "I felt strong in this meeting, in spite of my frustration and powerlessness on account of the situation; I was able to talk and express my difficulty and my anger." The Arab participants draw this security and strength from one another, mainly during the uninational meetings: "In the uninational meeting, I felt safe. The meeting was very fruitful. I felt very included, very much that I belonged, . . . with the hope that maybe if we are united we can change things." And indeed the Arab group has unified and its members are expressing similar ideas and attitudes, leaving their differences to be thoroughly clarified in the uninational meetings rather than bringing them up in the presence of the Jewish group. The Arab group's uniting around strategic leadership has strengthened the group; its positions are now being expressed sharply and clearly, and it is setting an agenda that deals with the issues that are in conflict. The group has done this in the knowledge that political dialogue has the potential to change reality by changing the balance of power between the two groups.

During the next several meetings, beginning with the fourth, the Arabs express their identity clearly and unequivocally, knowing that a blurring of identities only weakens their standing in the room. The change is also expressed by the way the participants are now sitting: in two groupings, one Jewish and one Arab, with the facilitators in-between.

ARAB WOMAN: What is troubling is that the State of Israel is the state of the Jewish people and not the state of all its citizens; that's where the problem arises. I define myself as a Palestinian Arab with an Israeli identity card—formally, a citizen. I don't feel myself to be an Israeli. I don't include myself in the category of Israeli, don't identify with the Israeli team. In the recent incidents at the Tomb of Joseph [in Nablus], my first identification was with the Palestinians. I am a part of that people. I don't at all feel the Israeli part within me. And the state doesn't let me feel a part of it.

The issue of the State of Israel as a Jewish state, as this defines the identity of the Arabs in Israel, becomes the focus of the discussion in the group throughout the year. The two groups hold a lengthy negotiation over the options for changing the definition of the state so that it will be the state of all its citizens and thus enable the Arabs to be included in it.

Another subject by means of which the Arab group expresses its identity in the room is discrimination.

ARAB WOMAN: In Israel, 20 percent are not Jews. Their home, their identity is not Jewish; they have an identity, and they have a culture. If you go to a village in the Triangle [an Arab area in Israel] or in the Galilee, citizens of the State of Israel are living there and you see streets from the previous century. That's how people are living in Israel. And there are the unrecognized villages. People who have no running water, no electricity, they are not recognized by the government. There's no point in talking on the theoretical level; let's talk about the situation now.

ARAB MAN: Why does an Ethiopian Jew have the right to come here, yet an Arab who was here in 1948, living here and making his living here, why doesn't he have the right of return? That is a lack of equality that bothers me.

The Arab identity comes also from the suffering that was the lot of the Arabs as a people and as a nation, as a result of the founding of the State of Israel.

ARAB WOMAN: In the massacre at Kufr Kassem, soldiers shot at civilians. The problem is, how to reach a point where it is possible to live in equality. The option of living in humiliation is like death.

And arguments are made concerning the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the Palestinian diaspora: "To place a closure on an entire people, this is humiliating and tramples the honor of another people. Each day of the closure is house arrest. How would you feel if someone came and put a closure on you, so you are forbidden to come out of the house to get food. A humiliating situation, disgraceful, one that makes it impossible to understand any ambivalence or guilt feelings on your part."

These arguments come mostly from a few participants. At this stage the Arab group is uniting, and they express themselves in a firm and assertive manner, as a demand for rights to which they are entitled and not as a request or in supplication. This gives a lot of stature and power to the Arabs in the room, and there is a feeling that they are becoming the dominant group, dictating the dialogue and the agenda. The Jewish group finds the experience of this power difficult, as we shall see further on, because this is a situation that the Jews are not familiar with in their day-to-day lives.

At first the Jewish group accepts the arguments of the Arab group

and supports the contention that they are entitled to absolute equality of rights, so that for a moment it appears as if there is no conflict at all between the two groups. As they proceed further it turns out that the situation is more complex.

After the Arab group raises the issue of discrimination and oppression, the Jewish group feels distress. This distress is expressed in various ways. The Jews have difficulty with the gap that has been revealed to them between their self-concept as liberals and their image as it is reflected in the way the Arabs perceive them. The Arab group serves as a mirror for the Jewish group, and the reflection the Jewish group sees does not accord with their view of their own image.

JEWISH WOMAN: There is a gap between how I want to paint myself and what I am. I feel sentimental toward my grandfather and grandmother's generation, who were pioneers, but on the other hand [there is] the price paid by another group. I wouldn't want to know that I had caused this. This touches on my identity as a human being, as a state.

The Jewish group finds that it cannot run away to some tranquil place rather than face the criticisms of the Arab group.

JEWISH MAN: I have a nice quiet world; I'm doing everything I can to run away. Yasmeen knocks on the door and puts a projector in front of me, and I want to ignore it.

The distress is so strong that it feels like an explosion. The Jews experience this loss of being on the side of justice and the loss of their power as the erasure of their identity.

JEWISH WOMAN: They said "the Jewish people," and they expressed very hard attitudes toward the Jewish people. The way I see it my desire to be a people was trampled on here. I had a hard week after last week's meeting; what Ahmad did to me was very hard. What is going on in the room is the obverse of reality. Ahmad wiped out my identity in the room, and on the outside they are wiping out the Palestinian identity. I felt that I have to struggle; I usually fight people who are wiping out an identity.

The distress expressed by the Jewish group alarms the Arab group, who may also be frightened at the strength they themselves demonstrated, something unknown in reality. This evokes an internal dialogue among the Arabs and reflections as to whether they had exceeded the bounds of the permissible or of good taste.

ARAB MAN: I want to get the message across in a moderate way . . . after having been extreme in the first few meetings.

ARAB WOMAN: Extreme or not extreme is a relative thing. It depends on whom you are dealing with.

ARAB MAN: The framework here provides the opportunity for expressing one's opinion, . . . and I didn't think of wounding the other side.

These expressions of concern come up repeatedly among the Arab participants, mainly in the uninational meetings. The young people talk of an inner struggle over "whether to express yourself openly and authentically, given the price you are likely to pay for it," and between "whether to be yourself as a Palestinian Arab or to be an Arab as defined by the Jews."

Phase Three: Resumption of Power by the Jewish Group

The preexisting identity of the Jewish participants has been undermined: the Arab group has undermined the status quo that exists in the real world outside, and the Jews, as the dominant group, experience this as an eradication of their identity, a loss of control and a loss of power.

JEWISH WOMAN: It seems to me that the power game here is inverted; here the Arab group has the power. Here, to be right is to be strong. The weak side by definition is moral, and so, in the room, you are the strong ones.

The Arab group is perceived as strong in the room, a phenomenon that does not exist in reality, and the Jews do not know how to cope with it: "This is a little like arm-wrestling; it takes away the will to fight. They (the Arabs) are a very strong group; they have a lot of power. We tried to come to terms and they are always fighting us."

The Jewish group finds itself in distress and expresses feelings of frustration and even of despair.

JEWISH WOMAN: For me it is a feeling of frustration, pessimism. Maybe it's enough, I don't want to be here in this state, . . . but to leave here is not an option for me.

This may also be a message to the Arab group that the meeting has become unbearable, and the Jewish group expresses thoughts and reflec-

tions about leaving the course if the situation continues to be so frustrating. But the Jewish group emerges from this situation through a struggle to bring back the prior situation and return control in the room to itself, as is the case in reality. The group does this in all kinds of ways, the object of which is to undermine the situation that the Arab group has created and to thoroughly subvert the legitimacy of the Arab identity.

One method is to control the dialogue in the group and try to set the agenda. The Jews demand that political subjects be put aside; they are to be neglected in favor of talking about personal issues: “Sometimes things have to be put aside. Maybe it’s worthwhile to make this a meeting between human beings. Maybe we’ll decide to agree with everything in order to put aside this endless dispute.” And when this request finds no response from the Arabs, there is a more blunt and forceful demand: “Are we going to talk for another twelve meetings about hunger in the [occupied] territories? Nothing will come of this. I have the feeling that there are human beings in this class who are just like parrots [parroting slogans]. For sure everything exists, and we have to deal with identities. That has to come up, but when that’s all there is, then from my standpoint it’s an impasse.” Attaching the label of *parrots* to the Arab participants is an attempt to delegitimize the political arguments raised by the Arab group during the meetings. The Arabs strenuously oppose this attempt and fight a stormy battle to continue the political dialogue.

ARAB WOMAN: I sympathize with you personally, but the problem is between groups. Here we sit and talk, but then I go back to my village, and the sewage is running in the streets and the schools [buildings] are shacks. We can connect on the personal level, but this will not solve the conflict.

What the Jewish group doesn’t succeed in doing in the group it succeeds in doing outside the group when the Jews are invited home by an Arab participant for lunch. This event becomes significant for the group, and in its wake the Jewish group is in a wonderful mood and the Arab group is frustrated.

ARAB WOMAN: I didn’t like that; it’s very much a stereotype. . . . Talking about Arab culture, no one thinks about going to a lecture by an Arab poet, what they think about is going to eat at an Arab’s house. This whole discussion is like a game—as if we are playing at becoming closer.

The Arab group experiences this incident as an Arab participant’s unconscious collaboration with the Jewish group and is angry about it.

The group had aspired to a different relationship, knowing that to have a plate of hummus together doesn't change the relations between oppressor and oppressed. The Arabs feel they are shooting themselves in the foot and that the incident has served only to weaken the Arab position. The Jews by contrast feel that they have been strengthened and that relations are back to normal.

The Jewish group goes on with this task when it adopts two additional strategies, the first of which is to blur the distinction made by the Arab group between the good guys and the bad guys in the conflict by joining the Arabs in the position of the victim in the story: "Personally I am uncomfortable with the conflict, with the Jewish state, and so on, and with discrimination. We are not totally bad, unethical rulers. We also have a complicated stature here; it's not all black." And another Jewish participant offers a personal example to support this argument: "I was a pilot, and we did a lot of damage to the other side. This has cost and continues to cost highly in terms of health. . . . With you, there's no dialectic. . . . This is very strongly so for me. For you, the Jews are either good or bad. . . . The situation is much more complicated." This is the first time that this participant has mentioned that he is a pilot; this lends power to his position and that of the Jewish group.

At this point the Arab group feels weak; the Jewish group has taken over the dialogue in the group and continues to hit the Arabs where they are most vulnerable by alluding to the degree of sensitivity and humanity of the Arabs: "I ask myself, the pain over the soldiers who were killed this week, the soldiers at the Tomb of Joseph, the family that was murdered near Beit Shemesh—will the Arab side find room for this pain, will it be the same kind of pain for them?" A Jewish woman continues, bringing the point into sharper focus: "I don't identify with the terrorist, but I can understand his position; I don't see that kind of understanding toward the soldier on your part."

In fact the Jewish group is trying to portray the Arab group as lacking in sensitivity, and deficient in its ethical values, in contrast to the Jews who, according to them, have only the most noble values. This contention is rejected emphatically when the Arabs put the behaviors into the context of the conflict: "I can understand the difficulty you expressed about hearing how bad you are all the time, but it's also important to say that to ask the ruled to understand the pain of the ruler, who so thoroughly humiliates me, and to understand that he is doing this for reasons of security—that's just about impossible. You bring this up as if you understand us and we don't understand you. There is an asymmetry here,

in the situation in reality, from my standpoint a humiliating asymmetry, so your argument is not relevant.” The Jewish group does not concede this point and raises the argument of murder for the sake of family honor among the Arabs: “Murder ‘for the sake of family honor’ says something about attitudes toward human life. Damage to the honor of the family does not justify murder among Jews. With us, human life is the highest value.”

This struggle over who is more humane is the second weapon generally utilized by the Jewish group to overwhelm the Arab group and win the struggle. Indeed at this stage the Arab group feels great distress. Their sense is that all their efforts have been for nothing, and that what has been is what will be. The Jewish group feels that it has regained power and control in the room.

Phase Four: Impasse

In this phase, during the course of a number of meetings, the dialogue is mired down; the reigning atmosphere in the room is one of exhaustion on both sides, especially in the Arab group, which expresses frustration and despair. The Arabs have concluded that the situation cannot be changed, that all the energy and all the talking they have invested to change the Jews and the situation have been in vain.

This situation emerges toward the end of the first semester and continues at the beginning of the second semester. The first meeting of the new term opens with an unequivocal announcement by one of the Arab women: “There is no point in continuing this dialogue; talking will not help. At most you can say that you understand us; what good will that do?” An Arab man expresses his disappointment in a different way: “For me, and I think for the rest of the Arab group, there has been no change in the group. In fact the change that has taken place in me has been a result of things that have happened outside the group.” Another Arab woman gives voice to her despair and her sense of being detached from the situation: “Since the age of nineteen I have studied with Jews, and I see that I am not finding a place for myself—not because I don’t want to, but because no place is left for me.” There is disappointment and frustration because the Arabs are rejected and not accepted as citizens and as Israelis, although they have made a decision to be a part of that world: “I am really sick of proving my loyalty; you can see that the Arabs have long since done all they can; the Arabs have made their decision.”

At this juncture, the atmosphere is difficult and depressing. The

contentions of the Arabs meet with silence on the part of the Jews or, in the best case, with a comment to the effect that this is the way things are and not much can be done to change it. "I can't totally commit to changing; I have a need to talk in this room about my fear." The group feels that it has reached impasse, that it can no longer engage in discussion, that the dialogue has been wrung dry and that the course itself should have been limited to one semester. A Jewish woman expresses this feeling: "I don't see where this is going now, the dialogue between us; it doesn't appear that we can move on to anywhere." In these meetings there are a lot of absences and the feeling is of a physical disintegration of the group. An Arab man gives a metaphorical description of this sense of the group's end: "They say that at the end of the world there will be a bloodbath, and that will be it; that the Jews will be gathered in from all over the earth and that will cause a great conflagration and a terrible and devastating bloodbath. We can sit here and wait until it happens or we can do something to prevent the disaster."

This last comment gives expression to the transition from complete despair to action, from the disintegration of the group to the continuation of its existence. And indeed a transition takes place at this point from a lost-cause situation, in which the dialogue has completely broken down and everyone is talking about the end, to the beginning of a different dialogue. The change has come in the wake of movement on the part of the Jewish group away from its fortified position and its acceptance of the change in the balance of power that the Arab group had dictated earlier in the process.

Phase Five: A Different Dialogue

After both groups exhaust one another and after it seems impossible to move forward to anywhere at all, there is a breakthrough, and a different dialogue commences, one the group has not known thus far: this is a more egalitarian dialogue, with the talking taking place eye to eye and in mutual respect. This breakthrough is made possible by the Jewish group's acceptance of the new situation created by the Arab group: a situation that undermines the status quo so familiar outside the room, that of a dominating group and a dominated group. It happens when the Jewish group acknowledges the situation as it exists outside and takes responsibility for its part in that reality: "You talk about power. I take advantage of my power; I am in control, and I can ignore that. I can close the door and that's it. I am not being discriminated against; I am not under suspicion."

Other Jewish participants talked of the changes they experienced within the group:

This is the first time that I am taking part in a meeting with Arabs, and during the vacation I thought about it and got some insight into what was happening in the meeting, and I want to share it with you. When the tragedy of the helicopters happened [in which Jewish soldiers died], I felt that there is hypocrisy on the Israeli side; in the media they allotted so much [time] to national mourning, compared to almost nothing when the tragedy of Kfar Kana happened [in which Lebanese civilians died]. It is hypocrisy not to feel sadness when Palestinian children are killed and in contrast to feel so much sadness when the soldiers were killed in the helicopter tragedy.

This revealing of their cards on the part of the Jewish group and their being willing to talk about themselves as rulers, as the strong group, and about the meaning of that open the dialogue afresh. The Arab group feels more comfortable, feels itself a partner in the dialogue and senses a new opening for the hope for change in the group and perhaps in reality. The Arabs begin to share what they have been experiencing and the insights they have had in the wake of the encounter: "I remember in the early meetings they said we were very strong, and the feeling was that the Arab group had power. Now I am laughing at myself a little; it's not clear to me where we got that feeling of power from. I am here as an Arab woman and despite that there are still power relations, relations of oppressor and oppressed, someone who has rights and someone whose rights are denied."

At this stage the dialogue flows; participants share the awareness they have reached. The struggle between the two groups is still there, but it is not central, as it was in the previous phase.

Arab man: I want to be without feelings of humiliation and a sense of impotence. I want to exist and to belong, but I walk around with a terrible feeling of lack of honor, of fear, inferiority. . . . Not that I go around feeling resentment, a need for revenge, but it's inside me. Life is a kind of social game between a dwarf and a giant.

JEWISH MAN: I think that we here have given them that feeling because we behave toward them in a power-oriented way and in that sense we are responsible. . . . I and maybe all of us Jews are relating in a power-oriented way toward Arabs, and maybe the key to changing the situation

is for us to acknowledge that. We are not the only ethical ones, and by putting responsibility on the other side we don't get ourselves anywhere.

JEWISH MAN: After we acknowledge that, what is important is what we do because otherwise it's not a sensational discovery that we oppress [Arabs].

It is a sensational revelation for Jews to confess to being oppressors and to admit the significance of this control vis-à-vis the Arabs. It is especially meaningful to the Arab group, which has been struggling to hear this fact since the first meeting; but it is also significant for the Jewish group because this allows them to look at their identity as the group that is strong and in control.

Toward the end of the year, the dialogue returns to practical questions about how to live together and specifically about the nature of the state—Jewish or for all its citizens—a discussion that has been with the group throughout the year. But this time the dialogue is not argumentative; rather, it flows from a sincere desire to find a way to live together in equality and mutual respect.

JEWISH WOMAN: It had seemed to me that I understood that if we concede on the Law of Return [an Israeli law granting automatic citizenship to immigrant Jews], you will concede on the right of return [the claim to the automatic right of Palestinians to return to Palestine/Israel]. There is a state that we are all living in and whoever is here has right of way over someone living elsewhere.

ARAB WOMAN: The ideal and optimal solution is for two autonomous entities in the state because it is just not possible for this to be a state for all its citizens.

JEWISH WOMAN: The question is whether or not this distinction will solve the problem. It is possible to go on hating Arabs in an autonomous entity as well. We need to build something in common. . . . The question is whether it is possible to build a social order that will end the matter of discrimination, of oppressor and oppressed, aside from the matter of national identity.

ARAB WOMAN: I think that, as an oppressed minority within this state, I have no possibility of expressing myself within the collective, so I want autonomy in order to express myself.

At the start of the encounter the Arabs demand a state of all its citizens, and when they find that this is impossible and will not come about, they demand autonomy instead. Meanwhile some of the Jews, having agreed

to a state of all its citizens, feel that this autonomy threatens the togetherness and the partnership.

This discussion and dialogue continue until the end of the year. Naturally the group does not arrive at a solution, but each person takes away something from this encounter. From the reports of participants one may infer the changes they underwent and sense how different these changes were for the Jewish group and for the Arab group. The Jews report insights into the complexity of the conflict and the difficult situation of the Arabs as a minority and about their own awareness of themselves as the majority: "At the start of the encounter, I wanted to prove that we aren't the bad guys and that no one is 'more right' in this conflict. After what I have heard from the Arab group, I understand now what it is to be an oppressed minority, twenty-four hours a day." Another Jewish participant adds: "There is something essential that is different between us, the struggle, the discrimination. . . . I feel that the conflict doesn't affect me as much as it does you; it becomes a part of your personality. At first I thought that we are alike, but I have reached the conclusion that we are not, and that frustrates me."

The Jews in fact are proud of the changes they have undergone and report this with a feeling of satisfaction, a good feeling. The Arabs are left with an ambivalent feeling and with questions as to the usefulness of this sort of meeting.

ARAB WOMAN: "I live here with Jews and I have a lot of Jewish friends, and I get along with them great; and whenever the Arab participants in the group talked about discrimination, I didn't feel it. But now the more I am in this group, the more I begin to get in touch with the discrimination, and my Arab identity is strengthened.

ARAB MAN: I feel that the encounter weakened me. It has made more tangible to me just how much I cannot behave as I like on the outside. Not that I lie on the outside; I say things that are more or less me, but I compromise. The group hasn't strengthened me but instead has weakened me; it has shown me my own weakness and has not helped me start to behave outside the way I behave in this group.

A Jewish woman aptly describes the distinctive influence this encounter exerts on Arabs and Jews when she says: "What in fact has happened to the Jews and to the Arabs is that they have become more aware, but the Jews are glad and proud of their awareness, whereas the Arabs have become fairly pessimistic in light of this awareness." This description hits the mark in expressing the asymmetry that exists between the two

groups. After the meeting, each person returns to the respective reality from which he or she came. Reality has not changed in the wake of the encounter; what has changed is the awareness we have of it. Jewish participants feel proud of the awareness they have developed as a result of the meeting and of the changes they have undergone in this respect. This gives them a feeling of accomplishment, along with satisfaction. The Arab participants go home after the encounter to the same difficult reality, with an amplified awareness of that difficulty. Thus a new awareness does not, in and of itself, satisfy them—and may even frustrate them, further exposing them as it does to their weakness as Arabs and as part of a minority group in the face of the oppressive reality in the real world.

DISCUSSION

While the problem of humanization has always been man's central problem, it now takes on the character of an inescapable concern. Concern for humanization leads at once to the recognition of dehumanization, not only as an ontological possibility, but as an historical reality. . . . Within history, in concrete, objective contexts, both humanization and dehumanization are possibilities for man as an uncompleted being conscious of his incompleteness. But while both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is man's vocation. This vocation is constantly negated, yet it is affirmed by that very negation. It is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors: It is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity.

In Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), from which the quote above is taken, Freire discusses the nature of oppression and of freedom, the spiritual mechanisms of oppressor and oppressed, and the path to the liberation of humanity. His central contention is that a situation of dehumanization negates the humanity of the oppressor and the oppressed alike and that the task of liberation is laid on the shoulders of the oppressed: "This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task for the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors . . . cannot find . . . the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both. Any attempt to 'soften' the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity."

According to Freire, *awareness* is the key word. As far as he is concerned, the key to change is through “praxis”—awareness and action intertwined with one another. Some will claim that the situation between Jews and Arabs does not resemble a state of oppression, but it is impossible to deny that in the Jewish-Arab conflict there is a ruler and a ruled; there are those who have rights and those whose rights have been partially denied them. What happened in the group whose story we have presented here in many respects resembles a process of liberation as Freire describes it: the Arab group gained strength and shed the pattern of internalizing its oppression; it came to express itself and its reality in a manner that was clear, sharp, and sometimes even assertive. The Arab group forced the Jewish group to confront that reality, a reality of oppression in which the Jews themselves have a part. Coping with this was difficult and painful and sometimes even intolerable for both sides in that it brought them out of their usual and familiar roles and upset the existing social order; on the road to building a new order, it created a feeling of anarchy. The Arab group grew stronger and more powerful but didn’t wholly feel a connection to its newfound strength; sometimes it even drew back from this new situation, retreating to the cozier and more familiar refuge of being the weak and discriminated against. The Jewish group, meanwhile, felt that it was losing control and experienced the Arab group as dominant to the point of negating and wiping out the Jewish group’s identity. This phenomenon is well-recognized in the literature. These effects are often observed as strongly in the “superior” group as in the “inferior” group, perhaps because destabilizing and delegitimizing status relations present a threat to the higher-status group’s identity and that group reacts with enhanced attempts to defend their now-fragile superiority. (See Branscombe et al. 1999.)

At that point in our group, the Jews’ identity as powerful rulers was negated. That identity had been central for them, and they experienced its being challenged as a threat to their existence. Although it was an identity they may have disliked, it was also one that they had not rushed to relinquish voluntarily. Only under pressure from the Arab group was the Jewish group freed from the weight of this burdensome identity by their acknowledgment of their status as rulers and hence of having partially denied the Arabs their rights. The inexorability of this fact, for the Jews and for the Arabs, plus the Jews’ assumption of responsibility for the situation, released the oppressors from their burden—liberating them from the need to be defensive about an identity in which they did not believe and that they did not want. Thus, according to Freire, the Arab group liberated itself and the Jews from a situation of dehumanization and

replaced it with one of liberty and equality, which restored the humanity of both sides.

For the group we have been discussing, this description of reality fits as long as we see the four walls of their meeting room as the group's boundaries. In other words, liberation happened to these individuals among themselves and through their interaction with the other within the group. The situation is more complicated when we break through these boundaries to the reality outside the group, which is unchanged. Outside, the awareness of individuals and their internal liberation are caught fast in the unyielding bonds of an oppressive reality. Because we assumed that the group was a microcosm of reality, our hope was that what happened in the group symbolized what is to come in a changing of reality. That change, as we learned, will take place by means of the changing awareness of the Arab group; the Jewish group will be obliged in turn to become more aware and to let go of a little of their power for the sake of offering more equality and more humanity to both sides.

However, the situation is not at all simple, and, in particular, the process of change is not necessarily unidirectional. Strengthening the Arab minority is likely to cause the majority to become more extreme and more oppressive, as we saw with the group described in this chapter. Participants felt frustrated and disappointed, and reality is likely to intensify those feelings further. Awareness on the part of the minority group is a necessary but not sufficient condition for change because, for change to occur, both the minority group and the majority group must perceive the existing situation as not legitimate and not stable (Turner and Brown 1978). This situation apparently came about in our group. The question is whether a similar situation can come about in the larger reality. Outside our meeting room, the group involved is impressively more numerous than that of our sixteen participants, whose quest for dialogue arose out of their dissatisfaction with reality as it stands today.

IDENTITY PROCESSES IN INTERGROUP ENCOUNTERS

GABRIEL HORENCZYK

Despite its vagueness, the notion of identity is gradually emerging as a central component of the discourse on intergroup relations and intergroup conflict. Burton (1986) and Azar (1986), for example, suggested that identity-related conflicts dominate the contemporary world scene and that any attempt to resolve these conflicts must acknowledge and address the basic human needs associated with group identities. The approach to intergroup intervention proposed and discussed in this book gives a prominent role to social identities (particularly, but not solely, to national identities) and to the processes of identity construction and negotiation.

Some of the contributors to this book have found the “intergroup-interpersonal continuum” (Tajfel 1981) useful both in conceptualizing the intergroup strategy adopted and refined by the School for Peace and in analyzing and interpreting the group and intergroup processes taking place at the School for Peace encounters. In Chapter Two Ramzi Suleiman insightfully suggests that the two interacting groups are frequently located at different points on the continuum: typically, the Arab group positions itself close to the intergroup end, whereas Jewish participants strive for interpersonal contact. Suleiman further proposes conceptualizing the two options—the intergroup and interpersonal—as two orthogonal dimensions.

In this concluding chapter, I locate social identity within a broader sociopsychological framework. A broader context can take us beyond the theoretical role of identity as a central factor in the analysis of strategies for intergroup contact and permit us to view identity-development processes themselves—participants' examination and reconstruction of their own identity—as an important and implicit goal of intergroup encounters. Use of this framework assumes that the intergroup encounter can serve, and in fact it often does serve, as an optimal arena for the exploration, construction, and reconstruction of group and cultural identities.

I argue that some strategies for intergroup encounters are likely to put more emphasis on identity-development processes than are others. The “categorized” group-contact approach, during which group categories and identities are kept clearly defined and salient, seems most effective in promoting change in—and development of—ethnic and national identities on the part of the participants. The approach to intergroup encounters developed and implemented at the School for Peace can be clearly classified as “categorized” contact.

Hewstone (1996) distinguished three types of outcomes that intergroup interventions might seek to achieve: (1) A “change in attitudes toward the social category” may ensue when mutual perceptions are improved within the contact situation and group members come to feel differently about the out-group social category. In other words, more positive attitudes toward out-group individuals participating in the intergroup contact may be generalized to the out-group as a whole. This is the outcome that is most frequently associated with the idea of the intergroup encounter, and it is based on the assumption that negative attitudes are generally a result of lack of contact and of mutual ignorance. (2) Growing familiarity with out-group members gained in the intergroup situation may lead to more differentiated interaction within that setting. Such interaction is likely to result in “increased complexity of intergroup perceptions.” If this complexity is achieved, following intergroup interaction the out-group will be perceived as more heterogeneous, comprising people with diverse traits, beliefs, and attitudes. (3) In “decategorization,” a third potential successful outcome of intergroup encounters, there is a change in a social category's perceived usefulness for interpersonal contact. Individuals may realize that other, more personal, attributes should be preferred for identifying and classifying people within the wider intergroup context rather than the social categories that tend to lead to hostile relationships.

For decades, structured and unstructured intergroup encounters have aimed primarily toward outcomes of the first and third kind—the

fostering and enhancement of positive intergroup attitudes and a reduction in the use of group (racial, national, ethnic) labels. These are the types of goals participants themselves generally have when entering the intergroup situation. This book provides some evidence that change in group perceptions or concepts is indeed achieved during the encounters at the School for Peace. According to Michal Zak, Rabah Halabi, and Wafa'a Zriek-Srour in Chapter Six, for example, Jewish participants report a change in their image of the Arab as a result of their intergroup experience.

Aside from such changes involving the perceptions of and the relationship with members of the other group, intergroup contact can also set in motion valuable processes that touch on the individual view of the self and on participants' own group identities and identifications. This is a central goal of School for Peace activities. The intergroup encounter can be a powerful context in which people can explore, define, and redefine their own group identities and affiliations. The dialogue with the other, sometimes calm and sometimes challenging, impels the participant to examine his or her own cultural and national identity.

The belief that the intergroup encounter can and should help foster development of a positive and healthy cultural identity rests on certain assumptions and arguments. First, identity processes are often seen as necessary steps toward the attainment of higher intergroup goals. In the Introduction, Halabi argues that only an encounter between clear, confident identities can lead to an authentic encounter of equals and thereafter, perhaps, to the creation of a more humane and just society. This assumption is particularly relevant to national and ethnic conflicts, which involve a struggle for the legitimization and recognition of group and cultural identities.

Second, psychologists have also argued for the positive effects of a healthy ethnic identity on personal well-being. Much research evidence suggests that both strong attachment to group identities and higher levels of ethnic-identity development are related to psychological and sociocultural adjustment, especially among minority individuals (Phinney 1995). Thus if the intergroup encounter has the potential to promote the development of healthy group identities, indirectly it could exert a positive influence on the minority individual's self-esteem and well-being. In addition, as noted throughout this book, the structured intergroup encounter may be even more important for members of majority or dominant groups, who typically have little contact with minority individuals in their daily lives. According to various racial-identity models, such as the one formulated by Helms (1990b), intergroup contact is essential, although

not sufficient in and of itself, for the development of group identity among both minority and majority group members.

Third, promoting an enlightened and growing awareness of participants' group and cultural identities is deemed, by many observers, an inherently valuable goal all by itself, obviating the need for any further sociological or psychological rationale on that score. Many scholars have proposed that education should include among its aims the fostering of identity development, primarily—from an Eriksonian perspective—through the processes of exploration and commitment (Archer 1989; Marcia 1989).

Structured intergroup encounters can serve as powerful educational interventions that can contribute significantly to identity development in general and to group (cultural, ethnic, national, racial) identity in particular. Hewstone's (1996) insightful analysis also classifies strategies of intergroup interventions according to the way in which they deal with the group identities involved; he arrives at four types of intergroup contact: (1) In "decategorized" contact the intergroup interventions should be "differentiated" (allowing for distinctions to be made among out-group members) and "personalized" (allowing for perceptions of the uniqueness of out-group members). (2) The intergroup ("categorized") strategy argues that positive contact between groups must be defined as an intergroup, and not an interpersonal, encounter. (3) The "crossed-categorization" model suggests introducing into an encounter (such as Arab-Jewish) additional group identities (such as gender) in order to reduce the importance of any one category. (4) The intervention model of "common in-group identity" argues that intergroup attitudes and behavior can be improved by "recategorization," by transforming individuals' perceptions of group boundaries from "us" (for example, Jewish) and "them" (Arabs) to a more inclusive "we" (Israelis, youngsters).

How does each of these intergroup encounter strategies deal with group identities? Briefly, both decategorized contact and interventions based on common in-group identity tend to ignore, or attempt to overcome, the group identities brought by the participants to the encounter situation. Decategorization aims at dissolving these group identities in favor of personalized contact, whereas the model of common in-group identity suggests superseding other existing but divisive categories with one superordinate (but still group) identity. Cross-categorization does not ignore potentially colliding group categories but suggests reducing the level of conflict by adding a crossed-group category. Only under categorized intergroup contact do the initial group categorizations and identi-

ties brought by participants remain central to the encounter, even as they evolve over the course of the interaction.

The approach developed by the School for Peace is mainly an intergroup one, although the chapters of this book clearly show the complexity of the intergroup processes: aside from categorized intergroup processes, elements of decategorization, cross-categorization, and recategorization emerge at various stages and demand careful attention. The categorized intergroup approach has the highest chance of bringing about generalized change in intergroup perceptions, precisely because participants are perceived as representatives of their respective groups.

As to the identity-related goals so central to the approach developed at the School for Peace, these are more likely to be achieved when group identities are accorded legitimate visibility during the meeting instead of being regarded as interfering factors to be ignored. In encounters based on the intergroup approach, such as those held at the School for Peace, group identities and boundaries are indeed central subjects of discussion and objects of negotiation.

Notes on the Contributors

Ariella Friedman was born in Haifa in 1940. She earned her B.A. in social work from Hebrew University in 1963 and her Ph.D. in psychology from UCLA in 1970. She is an associate professor of psychology in the department of psychology and School of Social Work at Tel-Aviv University. She is the author of *Coming from Love: Intimacy and Power in the Female Identity* (1996) and coauthor of *Women in a Bind: On the Status of Women in Israel* (1982) and *Sex, Gender, Politics* (2000).

Rabah Halabi was the director of the School for Peace from 1998 to 2002. Today he is the head of the Research Center at the School for Peace. He is currently working on his Ph.D. in the Department of Education at Hebrew University and also lectures there. He has published more than ten articles about the dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

Ahmad Hijazi was born in 1967 and has been involved in Arab-Jewish encounters since 1987. He has been a resident of Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam and a member of the School for Peace management team since 1992. Ahmad codirects adult and facilitation-training programs locally and abroad and speaks at international conferences. From 1995 to 1997 he also served as general secretary of Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam.

Gabriel Horenczyk is a senior lecturer at the School of Education at Hebrew University. His teaching and research areas include the psychological study of cultural and ethnic identity; education and immigration; and cultural identity processes during intergroup contact. He has coedited

two books: *Language, Identity, and Immigration* (2000) and *National Variations in Jewish Identity* (1999).

Arie Nadler has been a professor of psychology at Tel-Aviv University since 1988. His research interests include the study of cooperation and conflict behavior, bargaining situations, and computer simulation of social phenomena. He served as the dean of social sciences at Tel-Aviv University and is currently the incumbent of the Argentina Chair for Research on the Social Psychology of Conflict and Cooperation there.

Deb Reich is an author, editor, translator, and freethinker. She was born in Manhattan, raised in Westchester County (New York), and educated at Barnard College. A mother of two, she lives and works in Karkur, a small town in Israel.

Nava Sonnenschein is one of the founders of the School for Peace and is currently its director. She has trained hundreds of people to facilitate groups in conflict in Israel, Palestine, and in other areas. She is working on her Ph.D. at Hebrew University.

Ramzi Suleiman is currently chair of the Department of Psychology at the University of Haifa. He is cofounder and coeditor of the *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation*. He has edited two books and published more than forty articles and book chapters. His research interests include the study of social dilemmas, social identity, and intergroup behavior.

Michal Zak is a manager at the School for Peace and editor of its annual report. She has a master's degree from Hebrew University in the role of language in the Arab-Jewish conflict and is a member of Neve Shalom / Wahat al Salam. Michal is Jewish and a mother of three.

Wafa'a Zriek-Srouf is a senior staff member of the School for Peace, where she is a manager and the director of the women's department and the youth-programs department. She is a trainer of new facilitators for groups in conflict and is teaching a joint course for the School for Peace and Hebrew University.