31 From diagnosis to treatment

Towards new shared principles for Israeli–Palestinian peacebuilding★

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Introduction

This chapter synthesizes research and evaluations of peacebuilding work among Israelis and Palestinians since the beginnings of the Oslo peace process in 1993. It incorporates interviews with activists from both sides, as well as personal experiences of the authors. Therefore, the chapter's generalizations, conclusions, and recommendations are inductively arrived at and specific to this case study. Nonetheless, they may be relevant to other ethnopolitical or identity-driven contemporary conflicts

Given the inability of the Israeli and Palestinian ruling elites to move decisively out of the current impasse, priority should be given to an enlargement of the ranks of the peace camp by attracting as many components of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professional groups, social movements, charitable associations, intellectuals, and artists as possible (Hassassian and Kaufman 1999). The guiding principles that we suggest are shared values of human rights and the desire for democracy and peace. We must forge a link between the currently introverted peace and justice camp and the larger sphere of civil society (Kaufman and Hassassian 1998). For, in the absence of government action, it becomes the province of the public to affect the course of events to bring about a just and lasting peace (Hassassian and Kaufman 2002).

The challenge is to seize the opportunities and channel efforts into proactive work for a two-state solution, which has consistent support by approximately 70 percent in both societies. We have closely witnessed the Oslo peace process and subsequent attempts to achieve a final status peace treaty (Clinton parameters, Geneva Initiative, Ayalon/Nusseibeh Agreement, the Saudi and Arab League's Initiative). These processes, however, have enjoyed only limited success (Enderlin 2003). But they have produced substantial inroads in thinking in both societies – intellectual groundwork that may yet provide the springboard for a lasting peace agreement.

For years, both sides have agreed on a vague interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 242 calling for a just and lasting peace. But Israelis have been stressing "lasting" in terms of security, and the Palestinians "just" in terms of recognition of their grievances.

As much as these two locutions may appear to be at odds with each other, as a practical matter they have been translated in numerous track two diplomacy meetings into concrete and detailed peace plans. Can we find a wide common ground that could translate such efforts into a dynamic process that can revamp meaningful peace negotiations and ensure trust-building among the two societies at large? No less important, can we produce a code of conduct that will encourage cooperation within Palestinian and Israeli communities, which is essential for transforming their shared universal principles of human rights, democracy, and peace into a common experience?

This chapter is structured in three sequential parts, employing terminology borrowed from the medical profession when dealing with an alarming situation. First is a diagnosis of "what went wrong" in the existing relationship between Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilding organizations; this covers the Oslo process from 1993, the failed 2000 Camp David summit meeting, and the subsequent militarized Intifada. Second, in a prognosis toward "an uncertain future," it summarizes the stumbling blocks impeding forward movement in the peace process: macro events that limit the top-down stimulation of peacebuilding cooperation. Third, focus is placed on the need to find remedies to address problem root causes, as opposed to symptoms. We examine peacebuilding interactions between the two civil societies (as illustrated in Figure 31.1) within the wider context of their overall actions. Rather than stressing the upward impact on official negotiations (e.g. track two diplomacy) or analyzing shortcomings in people-to-people activities (e.g. peace education), we focus in depth on the constraints on the full development of the relationships between people like us both, usually of middle class, highly educated cosmopolitan people sharing similar universal values. We develop a set of guiding principles for constructive cooperation to promote civil societies and to assist the peace and justice camp in particular (see Figure 31.2). Such guidelines could be a basis for a negotiated consensus document that could transcend today's meager number of cross-community ties, expanding them into a broader spectrum of intercommunication that would join the civil societies of both nations. Eventually, when common ground has been established, the main challenge will be execution of the fourth stage of our planned course of action, the inculcation of these universally accepted normative values.

We recommend a spectrum of building blocks for the hundreds of NGOs, professional associations, social movements, and charitable organizations already now actively at work in their respective Palestinian and Israeli communities (Hammami 1995). It is to be hoped that they will all eventually enjoy opportunities to share in a joint effort at peacebuilding over the next two decades. However, now is the time for organizations already schooled in peacebuilding to further the peace process and to make their voices heard.

Introspection in retrospect: what went wrong?

Before joining a chorus of self-criticism, we must remind ourselves that peacebuilders in both civil societies have already made major contributions to advancing mutual recognition, and to limiting the effects of some endemic human rights violations. Further, they have provided creative ideas that further the resolution of a number of permanent status issues (e.g. Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, borders, settlements, water), and that foster movement from an untenable status quo to confidence-building measures (e.g. prisoner release, non-violent action, limiting the damaging effect of checkpoints in the Occupied Territories).

PALESTINE   **ISRAEL**
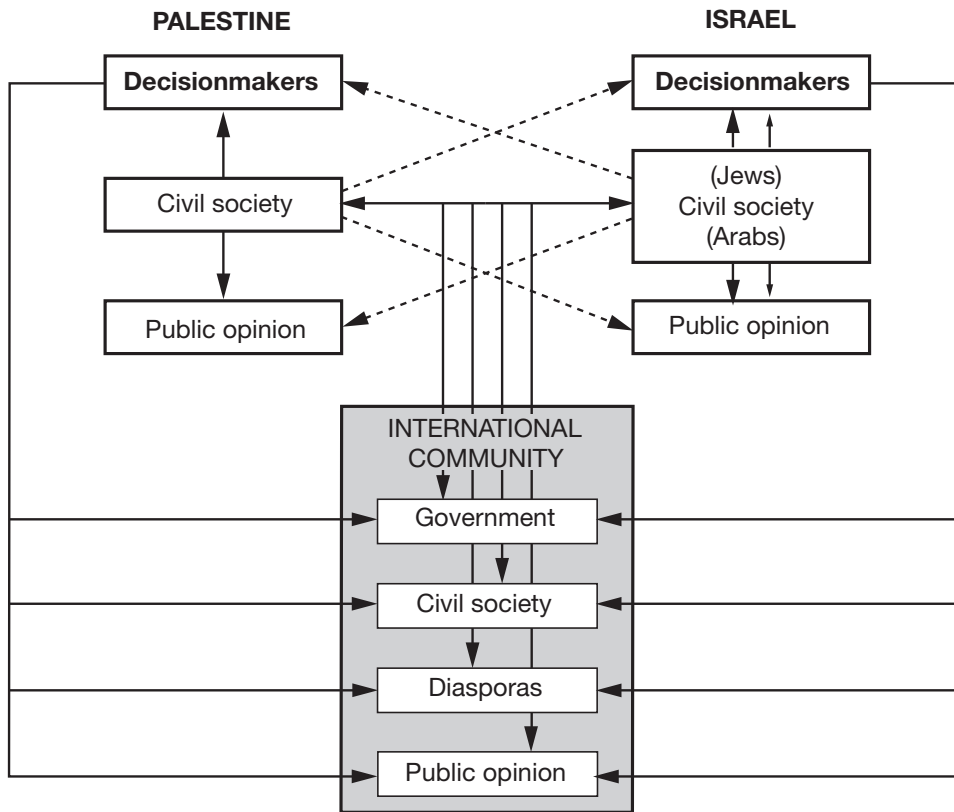
In the Peace NGOs Forum website there is information about 135 organizations. Other lists are available from a recent UNESCO Mapping of Peace Organizations report; and in the Appendix of Kaufman et al. (2006).

Figure 31.1 Peacebuilding interactions between Palestine and Israel.

Meanwhile, peacebuilders work within an occupier/occupied relationship and a hostile environment. Violence breeds counterviolence: this vicious cycle makes peace work extremely difficult and often physically dangerous. When civilians are targeted, the resulting trauma becomes a fact of life. Such vulnerability generates feelings of uncertainty, threat, and stress, which leads to an accumulation of reciprocal hostility. Sadly, peace work has enjoyed far less success at reducing the gulf between Palestinian and Israeli than destructive action has at creating it. This is not altogether surprising: do we not learn early in childhood that it is considerably more difficult to assemble building blocks into a recognizable whole than it is to casually demolish what was so carefully assembled?

The following propositions are based on a thorough analysis of several critical studies and post-facto evaluations of NGO cooperation in the past and studies that have highlighted many of the current obstacles (Hassassian and Kaufman 1999, 2002; Kaufman and Hassassian 1998; Kaufman *et al.* 2006). We move from the more general propositions affecting society at large to those more specifically related to achieving a just peace. Many considerations are asymmetric. Therefore, some matters of concern in one community may not find resonance in the other. We specify the group, either Israeli or Palestinian, to which the concern applies.

The transition from what was essentially a confrontation between Zionist and Palestinian national movements to what is now primarily a religious conflict points to an inherent difficulty: members of secular liberal democratic blocs have yet to develop a requisite common vocabulary to facilitate communication with devout individuals on either side. The texts of the three monotheistic religions are replete with well-known injunctions that encourage peace, non-violence, and tolerance (Gopin 2002). Yet the agents of secular democratic civil society are often ignorant, either willfully or for want of education, of these religiously inspired imperatives, thus precluding their incorporation into peacebuilding efforts. Indeed, liberal democrats have mostly seen religion as a threat to secular peace activism instead of dealing with the challenge of reaching the religious believers, and addressing them on the basis of their faiths' teachings about peace, tolerance, and non-violence.

An important ongoing concern is that the region's youth, a numerically large and actively engaged sector of society, is overrepresented among both victims and perpetrators of violent conflict. Despite this, over the years, a significant minority of young Palestinians has participated in joint activities with like-minded Israelis. A few have continued to work for peace with their Israeli and other Middle Eastern peers, even in the face of increasingly difficult circumstances. However, many have become frustrated by intermittent border closures, daily killings, and an overall absence of any hope for their future. On the other side, only a few young Israelis continue to participate in joint activities, active participation still predominantly being in the hands of older Israelis. Meanwhile, many young Israelis gravitate to the nationalist right of the Israeli political spectrum.

Many on both sides support a "land for peace" solution based broadly along the pre-1967 borders, no doubt a step toward a lasting resolution of our conflict. However, the same public is adamant in its preference for violence as an appropriate response to aggressive acts by the other. Thus, the main challenge is the backtracking from a long-term shared vision into the present. Further, we must provide answers to the question: how do we move from the here-and-now toward a desirable future, and break the ongoing cycle of violence? Various recent polls demonstrate that public opinion on the one hand supports a two-state solution while at the same time supporting punitive strategies. This points to a significant shortcoming in peace work. Although peace activists have contributed to the public acceptance of a two-state solution, they have been unable to overcome, or at least diminish, calls for retaliation.

Most Israelis rationalize their violence against the Palestinians as being no more than a justifiable reaction to threats to their citizens' security. Conversely, Palestinians valorize violent activity as being legitimately responsive to a protracted, repressive occupation (Kaufman 1993). That such a strategy might objectively be a right or wrong choice in ending the occupation is largely beside the point. The lack of progress in official Palestinian–Israeli negotiations, and the shift in the priorities of some politicians and even some peace activists from how to make peace to how to stop the war, is blatant. This factor has generated a prevailing pessimism and a pragmatic shift from pursuing reconciliation to tacitly encouraging separation. Indeed, in significant circles in the Israeli peace camp, this has become an acceptable strategy. Meanwhile their Palestinian counterparts have become increasingly frustrated with this new approach to conflict management that postpones statehood and brings into question the validity of the Palestinian right to self-determination.

Typically, Israelis cite concrete acts of violence, such as the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier by an extremist paramilitary group. Palestinians insist that violence includes "structural violence," such as the expansion of settlements and the building of the separation

barrier, affecting the integrity of Arab East Jerusalem. Constraints on access to health care, food supplies, employment opportunities, and decent shelter exacerbate the suffering and deprivation of the entire population now under occupation. This has resulted in premature death, reduced life expectancy, and post-traumatic stress disorders. Whereas Palestinians blame the occupation, Israelis as a whole avoid facing such unpleasant realities, preferring to attribute the cause to the "other's" violence.

Even Israelis who recognize the damage of reciprocal violence are often unable to see that Palestinians pay with greater numbers of causalities, if only because of the efficiency of Israeli army attacks. For example, many Israelis compared their victims with the Lebanese in the Summer 2006 war while tending to ignore the fact that more than 500 Palestinians, mostly innocent civilians, were killed in the Gaza Strip following the kidnapping of one Israeli soldier. This asymmetry is interpreted differently within the respective Israeli and Palestinian contexts. Palestinians, defining themselves as victims, emphasize the prevailing inequality between the occupied (Palestinians) and the occupier (Israel), and seek international solidarity and withdrawal, if only to redress the negative power balance. Israelis feel uneasy about calling for international intervention for the resolution of the conflict, preferring to see themselves as a small state surrounded by hostile Arab and Islamic regimes and masses.

We must recognize that existing asymmetries provide more freedom of action and means to implement ideas on the Israeli side, in contrast to Palestinians under occupation and domestic turmoil. These differences place a higher burden on the side of the occupier's civil society. Therefore, a major social responsibility for peace work resides in the Israeli camp. Simultaneously, a measure of sensitivity is required so that such undertakings will not be perceived as paternalistic or autocratic.

Different perceptions of asymmetry produce different realities (Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998). Most Israelis conduct their daily lives oblivious to the occupation. Most Palestinians daily confront the impediments and ordeals of the occupation's restrictions to their freedom of movement and living conditions. The recently erected separation barrier or Apartheid Wall, roadblocks, and checkpoints (i.e. structural violence) prohibit West Bank and Gaza Palestinians from meeting Israelis in Israel. For the same reason, Israelis are not allowed to meet Palestinians on their own turf. As a result, most peace activities of Israelis are now confined to interaction with Palestinians from East Jerusalem. Ineffective, humiliating requests by Israeli NGOs for individual "single day" access permits, instead of a global campaign for pressurizing the Israeli government to guarantee an unrestricted policy for peacebuilding, has produced insignificant results.

Israeli civil society activists find themselves in a post–nation-building phase in an established state functioning under democratic rules of the game. Not unexpectedly, many potential peacebuilders today prefer the individual pursuit of happiness and better living standards to the rigors of promoting intercommunity reconciliation (Kriesberg 2002). By contrast, Palestinians remain saddled with the task of constructing a state from scratch and a national ethos that restricts individual freedom of action. Frustration related to lack of personal advancement further alienates them and discourages interaction with Israeli counterparts, persons visibly enjoying a much higher standard of living.

Some joint initiatives have enjoyed considerable support in both communities – for example, the Nusseibeh–Ayalon Accord, the Geneva Initiative, and field actions against the occupation. However, generally both Palestinians and Israelis saw these initiatives to be declaratory in nature and largely devoid of popular participation. Given that general perception, it follows that the importance of building bridges was not fully understood,

appreciated, or even tacitly rejected by most government leaders. People-to-people pro-grams, even when officially endorsed for a short period, never became normative. On the Palestinian side, public exposure was limited, participant names remained undisclosed, and often meetings were held abroad. Thus insufficient media coverage was not the only reason for the general ignorance concerning the scope of these activities. Participants also failed to widely promote the "good news" message that concluded such activities. The lesson here is to concentrate more on projects that are more publicly oriented rather than inward-looking.

Palestinian peace groups can be criticized for their failure to advocate effectively with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) for their peace projects or to create public support for their work. The same criticism applies to Israeli peace groups. Nonetheless, Palestinian peace groups should be credited for the large amount of media and public rela-tions work performed on issues relating to criticism of the second Intifada's militarization, chaos on the streets, violation of human rights, and the courage of a few in the face of anti-normalization, boycotting discourse (Salem 2005). The failure of peace organizations' advocacy contrasts with the at least moderate successes of human rights organizations' efforts in advocating democracy and monitoring human rights violations. Importantly, the lack of intrasocietal cooperation between human rights and peace/conflict resolution NGOs in both societies remains to be overcome. Whereas the expectations of Israelis for cooperation focused the dialogue on professional, educational, humanitarian, or academic topics, the expectations of Palestinians were fixed at the political level, seeking changes to their currently intolerable sociopolitical reality.

Israelis want a permanent status solution that meets Israeli security needs; Palestinians want a permanent status solution that brings, at least, a sense of justice. Palestinian activists seek a political outcome that assures security for both sides instead of the current one-sided security regime. Without a permanent status solution, Israelis accept minimalist conflict management whereas Palestinians believe such an approach is no more than a recipe for continued occupation, one conducted at the expense of their rights.

Establishing joint Israeli–Palestinian organizations could demonstrate that Palestinian–Jewish coexistence is not merely a slogan, but also as a relationship grounded in reality. However, only sustained and trustworthy relationships can endure the rigors of confronta-tional times. Because binational cooperation is a prerequisite for their continued existence as NGOs, such organizations have both a greater role to play and better built-in prospects of surviving such difficult moments. Yet, sadly, there are few such common enterprises, a number of which are in financial or organizational crisis.

Civil society organizations on both sides have often failed to understand and appreciate the dilemmas of peace-oriented organizations and individuals endeavoring to work across the national divide. We need to respect alternative priorities, and take into consideration concerns of marginalization faced by peacebuilding groups from opponents within their own constituencies. The minuscule population segment actually involved in peace work, in contrast to the large and vibrant Palestinian and Israeli civil societies, testifies to the majority's preference for looking inward and the commensurate failure to adopt an out-reach posture.

Normalization (*Tatbie'a*) has been defined among Palestinians as the process of building open and reciprocal relations with Israel in all fields, including the political, economic, social, cultural, and educational realms. Palestinians are divided in their stances vis-à-vis normalization. Supporters see it as a process to integrate Israel into the larger Middle East community of nations or to restructure Israel through a bottom-up peace process.

Many others, however, oppose normalization if only because it implies a willingness to accept, and perhaps legitimize, past injustices experienced in the course of occupation. Thus, they hold that ending occupation must be a precondition for normal relations with Israelis. This anti-normalization stance has led to such Palestinian initiatives as the boycott of Israeli academics (understood as an act of non-violence against occupation), which has brought a great deal of unwanted pressure on those Palestinians willing to cooperate across the ethnic divide (Salem 2005).

Among mainstream Israelis, there is the growing idea of, in so many words, "getting rid of the Palestinians." By putting them behind the wall, "they will be there, and we will be here, and we will not have to see or interact with them any more." This separatist idea is gaining popularity in Israeli public opinion, even among heretofore peace activists. This idea is a mirror opposite of the "humanization of the other" and likewise opposed to a basic human security principle, one that presupposes that everyone should enjoy unencumbered access to all citizens' rights.

Reciprocity, the idea of holding both sides of the conflict responsible and accountable for their actions, is frequently the focus of Israeli liberals who are critical of unconditional solidarity efforts with Palestinians. However, this quest for reciprocity is often most evident in its negative form, blaming the other for beginning the cycle of violence and hence relieving themselves of any obligation to initiate a process of change. The insularity of most concerned Israelis is what often blocks any proactive peace commitment. It transcends any "lack of knowledge" of Palestinian suffering and, in addition, precludes internalizing the Palestinian situation, which would require as a response taking commensurate corrective action (what is termed "act-knowledge" similar to acknowledgment).

On the Israeli side, peace groups are severely limited by the middle- and upper-class nature of their membership, which has tended to deter other social organizations from supporting this work. Further, given its predominantly Ashkenazi membership, the Israeli peace movement remains vague about the need to incorporate a Middle Eastern identity as a significant aspect of its goal agenda (Bar-On 1996). The general lack of enthusiasm for Arab culture and language has been an obstacle to the perception of Israel as an integral part of the region into which it ostensibly wants to be popularly accepted. Simultaneously, we need to be wary of the claim that, unless Israeli society becomes more overtly Middle Eastern, there can be no peace. Although peace can be fostered by such a trend, it is by no means contingent upon achieving it.

One related problem is the limited effect of efforts to connect the cost of militarism and occupation to the increasing hardships of the welfare system within Israel and the impoverishment of large segments of society. On the Palestinian side, a few organizations have increased training in non-violent action as an alternative, but they still need to develop a corpus of dominant non-violent strategies, and, within it, a major campaign that includes the PNA, grassroots organizations, NGOs, the media, influential leaders, international participation, and the Palestinians of the diaspora. This campaign needs to succeed at least in minimal cases in order to develop the belief and confidence in reliance on non-violence as an effective tool to counter violence.

Shared gender identities can be a strong bond for continuous cooperation. Despite some ups and downs, the few women's peace and justice organizations are more likely to have continued to cooperate within the general decrease in the level of joint activities during the second Intifada.

Work with university students, schoolchildren, and their teachers is an important aspect that has been relatively neglected in the last years since the Intifada Al Aqsa. Development

and production of Palestinian educational textbooks began in earnest after the formation of the PNA. It is important to note that the new curriculum generally includes textbooks that focus more generically on tolerance, civil rights, and other civic issues. The polarized debate focuses on the still negative image toward Israel and Zionism, but one needs to take into account that daily realities inevitably trump textual terminology. A traumatic personal experience at a checkpoint can condition a child far more than a book's positive description of Jews as prospective good neighbors. We need to recognize that books alone are not a remedy when there is a gap between the promised peace and the daily reality of an ugly confrontation with the "other." This reality often proves stronger than the text, and teachers themselves, as the socializing elements, may feel the same sense of victimhood as their pupils (Caplan 1999). Hence, there must be a focus on human rights education, peer mediation, and conflict-transformation programs in the classroom, along with changes in the lives of Palestinians. A personal transformation may grow into an eventual acceptance of a new relationship between Palestinians and Israelis. This process needs greater encouragement from peace organizations than is presently the case, rather than being limited to monitoring by Jewish groups averse to Palestinian rights.

Those Israelis who believe in solidarity with the Palestinians continue their supportive activities in the absence of much needed intensive parallel work with Israeli public opinion. A commensurate latter effort is essential to the realization of any two-state solution. On the other hand, those who believe in project-driven, professional joint activities, continue their work, but likewise fail to advocate for change in public opinion in both societies. A third group chooses to continue working for healing, reconciliation and forgiveness, reaching out to schools or smaller, marginal groups in both societies. Still a fourth group tries to recruit the grassroots, and to reorganize mass movements in support of peace, based on a two-state solution, but these movements are likewise marginalized.

On the Palestinian side, there are several types of restrictions to cooperation. For example, there are those who favor a two-state solution immediately and without any gradualism, if only to physically separate each side from the other. This group is not interested in cooperation in the near future, a prescription that leaves the door open alternatively to future reconsideration or, equally likely, to backsliding. The majority within the skeleton Palestinian peace-oriented organizations consists of those who think that it is still possible to have joint activities. Israelis often want to externalize and publicize the joint activities, whereas Palestinians mostly want to minimize publicity, thinking that the time for exposure to the public is still not ripe. They think that some factions might use this type of publicity as an argument that everything is fine between Israelis and Palestinians and, therefore, that there is no occupation and no suffering on the ground. For many, it may be acceptable that Israelis come to participate in solidarity activities with them. It is possible to have joint non-violent actions against occupation, but other activities will be considered as normalization activities. Finally there is the Palestinian group that believes that normal joint activities can take place only after peace is reached and two states have been established for the two peoples; this despite the evident truth that there is good reason for both sides to struggle non-violently and separately for an end to the occupation, after which reconciliation becomes a reasonable prospect.

In summary, we can imagine a wide highway, the road to peace, in which cars of different models, sizes, and power are running in parallel lanes at different speeds, all toward the same destination. Facing them is a bulldozer, driven mostly by strongly committed and determined religious fanatics, which has successfully derailed many cars, and risks causing permanent damage to the peace road. The bulldozer drivers do not respect the

traffic regulations and they are destructive and dangerous. Those of us who are driving in the same direction forward are faced with a serious question of how to avoid collision with the bulldozer, as we all maneuver along the road without hurting and bumping into one another.

Prognosis: stumbling blocks towards an uncertain future

Many peace activists seem confused when confronting the stumbling blocks in the way ahead. In this section, we identify eight stumbling blocks to peacebuilding.

1   Mutual legitimacy is not prevailing. Each side's position towards the "other" and their collective rights to the same land is an issue rife with problems when it comes to the Israeli recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination in the remaining 22 percent of their historic land, namely within the pre-1967 borders; or Hamas's rejection of Israel as a Jewish state of any size. A significant number of polarized misperceptions need to be addressed constructively by the peace and justice camp.

2   National security trumps human security. Each side still conceives security as a zero-sum game; any increase in security for one side must occur at the expense of the other. The thinking is that one side's security can be increased through killing and punishing the other side's people, or through the building of walls that separate "us" from "them." This situation is aggravated when targeted killings become normative, and state-sponsored terror affects lives of innocent civilians. This issue is most salient when the cessation of terrorism is presented as a precondition to any movement towards peace instead of developing peace negotiations and confidence building measures that could, in turn, lead to the ending of terrorism.

3   Statehood is delayed. Democracy and reform have often been presented as preconditions for Palestinian statehood, but the Hamas parliamentary victory has not been recognized. This implies that democracy building can occur in the absence of freedom, a condition further restricted by an oppressive occupation.

4   Conflict is managed rather than transformed. These last two stumbling blocks lead to a fourth, which is giving priority to conflict management that sustains moderating occupation at the expense of conflict transformation. One of the models of this conflict management approach was trying, without negotiating, to secure a long-term ceasefire with the Hamas/Fatah government as a condition for an Israeli partial withdrawal from the West Bank. But, now that Hamas has been ostracized and confined to Gaza, the Kadimah-led government is no longer speaking about an Israeli unilateral or negotiated pullout. Other models include getting to a final status declaratory agreement rapidly while leaving the implementation of it to a later stage when the Palestinian violence stops. Finally, there are all the models for small cosmetic steps on the ground such as the symbolic lifting of a few checkpoints and the release of a small number of prisoners.

5   Religiosity serves conflict rather than peace. Both sides have failed to develop a strategy for the encouragement of the moderation and the democratization on the part of the Islamists. The religiosity of a large segment in both societies does not need to express itself in antagonism toward the other faith but in humane behavior toward all human beings. Leading such an effort presents a real challenge but also presents an opportunity to increase public support for an inclusive peace process.

6   The global community marginalizes the conflict. Upon analysis of the conflicts in

Iraq, Darfur, Lebanon, and others in the region, some observers began to think that the status of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict has become marginal, and therefore, it can be safely neglected or at least postponed for several years. This viewpoint is now at least temporarily redressed by the worldwide and regional attendance to the Annapolis Peace Conference of November 2007, but the translation of its overall goals into resolutions to the pending permanent status issues remains to be seen.

7   Palestinians' democratic resources are not fully recognized. Ongoing Palestinian internal armed clashes can be interpreted as organic evidence that Palestinians cannot run a Palestinian state. This perception is reinforced by the tragic distancing between Gaza and the West Bank, each area ruled by competing political elites separated by two contending worldviews. Rather, these clashes should be recognized as major political rifts to be bridged instead of constituting evidence that Palestinians are inherently unable to govern themselves. There is a body of concerned Palestinian citizens with a deep adherence to democratic values who may emerge with a new generational leadership.

8   The interlocutor is questioned. Over two decades of PLO willingness to negotiate unconditionally, most of the Israeli leadership heightened popular Israeli skepticism about the very existence of a partner on the other side. And at this time, while Prime Minister Olmert is reviving his partnership with Chairman Abu Mazen, the construction of the security barrier or Apartheid Wall and settlements continues in the West Bank while people are fully aware that no one in Fatah can agree to such unilateral imposed facts on Palestinian land.

Since the 2006 Lebanon war, a still popular interpretation in Israel is that constant withdrawals or concrete concessions are inefficient and, in many cases, counterproductive. Many Israelis think that the sudden removal of all troops from Lebanon encouraged Hezbollah's establishment of new strongholds and soon thereafter these sites began to pummel the north with rockets and mortar rounds. Also they think that, after the pullout, Qassam rocket attacks, originating in Gaza, began to fall on the south. As the cycle of violence continues, the Israeli right wing has experienced an increase in public support, which advocates only the use of force in the reconstruction of Israel's capacity to deter its enemies and "teach them a lesson."

This thinking ignores the need to share responsibility for the outcome of Lebanon's withdrawal not being accompanied or followed with a peace agreement that solves the few outstanding issues with Lebanon. It ignores, as well, that the pullout was from inside Gaza only, keeping the Gazans effectively caged and disconnected from their West Bank brothers and sisters.

Civil society in search for common ground: ground rules for peacebuilding

This section is also inspired by the tradition of physicians and health care workers, who, over the centuries, have developed ethical codes that are observed at all times, including times of emergency. Concern for the lives of the wounded, the sick, or for those in life-threatening situations is universal and transcends community borders. There is a deep-rooted sense of inherent justice in providing equal treatment and respect for the ill in hospital environments. Even at this time of violent confrontations, the Palestinians have appreciated the medical treatment granted to them by Israel, and Palestinian physicians
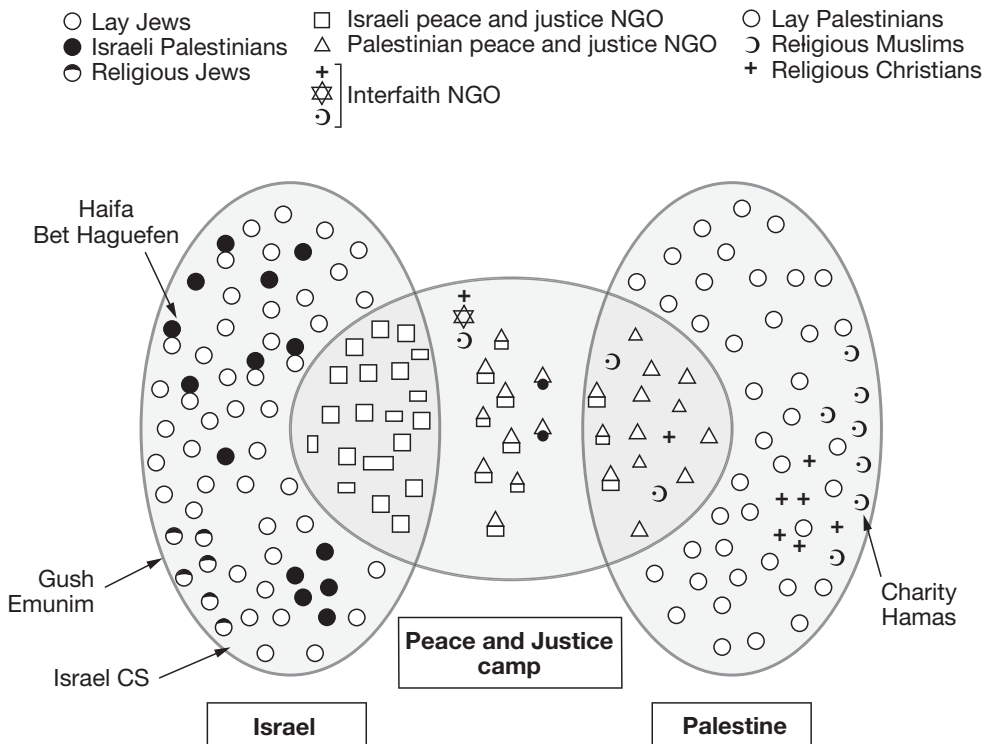
have been willing to cooperate, putting their humanitarian values above political consideration. The challenge is to expand such a code of conduct into one in which the general populace participates in the promotion of peace as members of organized groups in society. We genuinely believe that most of our fellow citizens are keen to find a peaceful resolution to our conflict. However, it is likewise incontrovertible that they do not see themselves playing any affirmative roles in advancing such a goal.

Although it would be easier, perhaps, to envision peace being imposed by higher authorities, the lack of progress in official negotiations effectively puts an increased burden on ordinary citizens to take the initiative in building peace in our own habitat, asking ourselves what can be done by our own organization or association. We have used the term *sectorial peace*, with the understanding that we are referring to small steps that can be undertaken within our own society and/or across the divide with associations that share similar professional or other characteristic with our own. Once we have identified what our own functional groups could modestly do for peace, there could be a concomitant requirement to generate ground rules for cooperation, a set of principles providing a framework facilitating the translation of social responsibility into action. One possibility open to those of us who have had privileged access to higher education and who can affect important sectors of our communities is to develop a formula for combining professional work with an overall adherence to the seemingly shared commitment to human rights, democracy, and peace values.

There is a need to (1) come to some consensus about the realistic and yet daring effort to engage most civil society organizations in peace-oriented activities and (2) develop some ground rules for effective cooperation in support of the much reduced, and now peace and justice camp, bodies functioning both within Palestinian and Israeli communities and across the divide that separates them (see Figure 31.2).

In reference to (1) above, we propose some minimal guidelines to govern the peace work of civil society organizations at large, with specific illustrative examples to be fleshed out first by the members of a given profession, gender, or other affinity group, and, thereafter, in conjunction with comparable entities across the national divide. Normally, it should be possible to encourage the board and members of such organizations to discuss the notion of a "vision statement," namely what they can do themselves within the confines of their own institutions to advance peace in accordance with their own tools and ethical principles. An excellent example is the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which for decades has had a Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility and, within it, an extremely active human rights program. If so inclined, such organizations should determine to what extent they might be willing to cooperate with the "other" in specific operational areas. Within wider civil society circles, more or less vibrant and sizable social movements and NGOs exist, but only a minority of them focus on a just end of war and amity as a primary or even secondary goal. As one can see in Figure 32.2, the peace and justice camp on both sides comprises a rather modest fraction of the larger civil society sphere.

Before suggesting guidelines for groups within this inner circle, it may be worth explaining their positioning: a comprehensive list is published in the last part of our joint book (Kaufman *et al.* 2006). We can paint a real picture of a peace camp as a special place with dwellings of different sizes, and shapes: some tents with radical or utopian tendencies, others down to earth, some conventional looking, others less so. This metaphor, more appropriate for the Israeli side, was used in an article published two decades ago in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* mentioning tents built by women, lawyers, humanitarians,

○ Lay Jews
● Israeli Palestinians
◑ Religious Jews

□ Israeli peace and justice NGO
△ Palestinian peace and justice NGO
✡ Interfaith NGO

○ Lay Palestinians
☽ Religious Muslims
+ Religious Christians

Haifa
Bet Haguefen

Gush
Emunim

Israel CS

Peace and Justice camp

Israel

Palestine

Charity
Hamas

Peace and justice camp Israel:
Adalaha; Peace Now; Making Peace, Machsom [Checkpoint] Watch; Peace Child Israel;
Newe Shalom/Wahat Al Salam; The Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF); Peres
Peace Center; Yesh Gvul; Israel's Council for Israeli/Palestinian Peace; Interfaith
Encounter Association; Gush Shalom ('The Peace Bloc'); Courage to Refuse; Bat
Shalom

Peace and justice camp Palestine:
Panorama, the Palestinian Center for Community Development and Democracy; Peace
and Democracy Forum; Palestinian Center for Research and Cultural Dialogue; The
Palestinian Center for Alternative Solutions; Palestinian Center for Conflict Resolution
and Reconciliation; Middle East Non Violence and Democracy (MEND); Library on
Wheels for Non-Violence and Peace; International Peace and Cooperation Center;
Holyland Trust

Peace and justice camp Israel/Palestine:
Tantur; Chefs for Peace; The Family Forum/Parents Circle; Palestine/Israel Journal:
Middle East Citizens Assembly (MECA); IPCRI (Israel/Palestinian Center for Research
and Information (IPCRI); Coalition for Women for Just Peace; Bringing Peace Together;
Geneva Peace Initiative, Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME); Friends of
the Earth Middle East; One Voice; Palestinian Center for Peace and Cooperation;
ALLMEP, Alliance for Middle East Peace; Alternative Information Center; Combatants
for Peace; People's Campaign for Peace and Democracy (Ayalon/Nusseibeh Initiative)

Figure 31.2 Civil society groups.

religious people, ethnic groups, professionals, and other groups (Kaufman 1988: 66–80). However, there is an asymmetry justified not only by the large number of Jews in comparison with Arabs, but also given the greater freedom for mobilization within Israel. Hence, one may find more tents dedicated explicitly to the advancement of peace. Many among them act separately from those of Palestinians and very few work across the divide. We also have tents of Arabs citizens of Israel, which express solidarity together with a few Jewish groups with the Palestinian cause. But since then some tents have fallen or deteriorated while only a few others were added in the last decade (e.g. Chefs for Peace, which is a group of committed Israeli and Palestinian cooks; the Bereaved Families Forum, which brings together the close relatives of those killed by the "others"). On the Palestinian side there is a "just peace" camp that stresses human rights, democracy, and transparency. Among all of them we find hardly any tents that carry the term "peace" alone in their title, and a few more using "conflict resolution," working predominantly inside the Palestinian society, but to a certain extent with Israeli counterparts. A few Palestinian peace activists have opted to work hand in hand with Israeli counterparts in one organization such as the Israeli/Palestinian Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) and the *Palestine/Israel Journal*. During the Oslo process there were more peace tents, sadly reduced now to a very few. All in all, we find fewer individuals committed to sharing joint tents. And not many NGOs wish to join in action campaigns.

As much as we are looking for a unifying code of behavior, we should nonetheless stress the benefits of diversity and of making the best of realities on the ground as we find them. Varying perspectives have contributed to ideological or strategic differences within the peace forces on both sides. These different preferences are often genuine. Some groups demand an understanding of the root causes of the conflict, whereas others call for strategies that focus on consensual criteria for resolving that conflict. Some focus on research, whereas others anticipate immediate action. It should be recognized that there are some who put greater emphasis on means (non-violence, human rights protection) whereas others prefer to concentrate on ends (peace planning, research on final status issues). There are also those who prefer to work on a uninational basis rather than jointly, those more interested in affecting policy (track two), and those oriented toward working with the masses (people-to-people) (Agha *et al.* 2003). So too there are more radical groups who focus more on solidarity with the weaker side, and there are those who are moving on a slower path, incrementally exploring dialogue in hopes that it may eventually translate into action. Pluralism may thus prove be a positive fact of life, providing room for a variety of perspectives in the peace camp. Peace activists often develop consensus more effectively when working face-to-face with a small nucleus of people rather than in large hierarchical structures. Consequently, such NGOs are limited in what they can achieve, given restrictions of scope. Therefore, the more groups the better as long as they positively cooperate more than they negatively compete with each other. Above all, it is essential to understand, formulate, and endorse a commitment to accept the pluralistic nature of the movements.

How does one limit the perimeters of the smaller "peace and justice" and larger "civil societies" circles? How does one increase the overlap, while accepting that full congruence will never be achieved? Later in this section we have gathered from interviews and an analysis of previous documents an inventory of principles for cooperation. A good idea, perhaps, is to create a peace menu from which the different components of the peace and justice camp can pick and choose the relevant items. It includes, perhaps, more the goals than the practice of many of the small and larger tents within it. After interviewing many

civil society activists and reading many evaluations of people-to-people activities, we have collated a compendium that includes a significant number of practical and principled ideas for peace work. The suggested differentiated set of ground rules, based on many shared universal values, is intended to show how to translate them into our own lives, with an objective of concrete implementation. Although not necessarily agreeing on all points, we understand that the propositions are normally not mutually exclusive. We posit that agreeing on a wide minimal common denominator can be a fertile ground for growing into a more committed and action-oriented stage.

For civil society cooperation (general)

As a starting point, we can provide some suggestions. But, as a practical matter, each civil society organization should engage in development of its own agenda, one consonant with a shared vision of its peace-oriented tasks. The guidelines to be submitted for discussion to all civil society organizations should be more limited and generalized, obviously, than those that commit those NGOs that identify themselves as members of the peace and justice camp. Some of the few all embracing common principles could be:

1   Each civil society organization should brainstorm on the question of how it can best advance peace within its own mandate and ethical principles, and then share this with similar organizations in the other's society. We agree that trust building between both organization staff and participants is an essential initial stage in the cooperation process.
2   Once a shared peace vision of our organization is built, we should translate it into concrete initiatives and disseminate them among our own members and society at large.
3   We all stand firm in our support for freedom of thought, freedom of opinion and of expression. Hence, we all defend the principles of pluralism and cooperation among different schools of thought and approaches, and between different approaches of action.
4   We all agree to defend the right to work with or independent from official bodies. We will defend our own and our colleagues' independence of thought against any attempts to isolate them from the official bodies.
5   Such freedom of expression should not include any right to personal defamation or incitement to violence. We should challenge together and separately the expressions of prejudice and stereotyping.
6   We denounce all types of violence against innocent civilians, and we defend the right of the other side to act non-violently. And we all show solidarity with the other side against attacks on its innocent civilians.
7   In our own work, we endeavor to be factual and objective rather than rely on generalities, and undertake to improve systematically our understanding of the "other." Eventually, we should strive to translate such knowledge into an appeal to "act-knowledge," a *sui generis* expression coined to mean moving from just knowing to acknowledging, internalizing our social responsibility to engage in redressing injustices.
8   We all support all levels of dialogue with like-minded organizations of the other side as necessary conditions for mutual understanding. However, dialogue should be not an end in itself but, rather, a first step in the development of concrete actions that can help build peace at the grassroots level (e.g. people-to-people dialogue should aspire

to extend beyond getting to know one another, however beneficial that first step might be).

9   When working together, we agree to defend equality in our relationships, and reject patronizing, controlling, maneuvering, and subordinating. We agree that trust building between organizational staff and participants is an essential first step in the cooperation process.

10   Whereas many criticize fragmentation as inherently contrary to the principle of cooperation, we respect those organization that opt to work separately within and across the divide in support of principles that are comprehended within this document.

11   We must ensure that our peace work is truly inclusive, particularly with regard to gender. Women as individuals as well as in organizations have demonstrated a strong commitment to non-violence and dialogue. We should recognize that, in order to provide access that can guarantee equality, there is an urgent need to promote fair channels for women's participation in civic society.

12   We all recognize the humanity of the "other(s)," their attachments to this land, and their concern over the voicelessness, the fears, the needs, and the motivation of this currently all too silent majority.

13   We will review and systematically confirm the accuracy of our facts, while using our collective vision as a guide in that direction. We will initiate, encourage and/or endorse peace initiatives and disseminate information about them.

For the peace/justice camp cooperation (specific)

In addition to the above list applicable to civil society organizations at large, there may be a higher level of commitment by those organizations that have dedicated all or a significant part of their action to peacebuilding. As mentioned earlier, this longer menu was drawn from documents and discussions with many peace activists. In addition to the wider set of principles mentioned the following complementary goals selected from different projects, dialogues and writings could be included:

1   We endorse the right of self-determination for all nations. In our case, we need to reaffirm the principles behind the two-state solution, including ending the occupation that impedes the fulfillment of this aspiration.

2   Adherence to the principle of freedom of association implies a concomitant requirement that we should stand up against the closure of civil society institutions, often as a result of political motives.

3   We all defend the right of citizens from both sides for dignified life that at the least addresses basic tangible and intangible needs.

4   Our objection to racist and discriminatory statements and laws should be the natural outgrowth of our understanding of the universality of rights, a cornerstone for civil society organizations.

5   We should not confine our actions to influencing the ruling elites, but direct our main efforts towards the grassroots within our organizations and our respective societies at large.

6   We understand that joint cooperation needs to be based on the principles of reciprocity, dignity, tolerance, and mutual respect; that, in the pursuit of such principles, we should avoid all forms of harassment, exploitation, intimidation, discrimination, and any abuse in violation of ethical commitments to fairness and justice.

 7 We recognize the existing asymmetries between occupier and occupied as well as the need to bridge the gap. We should stress in our work that the ties are to be based not on dominance but on equality, mutual assistance, and solidarity.

 8 We engage in separate or parallel activities within the respective societies rather than exclusively in full joint cooperation with the "other" as an integral and important part of the overall peacebuilding drive. For effective promotion of intercommunal cooperation, it is necessary first to complement it with dialogue within each society and across the entire spectrum of social actors, including those marginalized in previous such processes. At the same time, no negative energy and criticism should be expended against those Israelis and Palestinians who are committed to working together.

 9 We should in each society seek legitimacy both from our constituencies and from our government, because this provides guarantees for freedom of action. In education work, for example, this legitimacy may be gained by working through the Ministry of Education.

10 We acknowledge the human suffering of both our peoples, promise to work towards redressing injustices, and commit ourselves to working towards mutual forgiveness.

11 We are committed to the promotion of non-violence within our own societies while accepting the legitimacy of the struggle against occupation and dominance.

12 We value and encourage wide participation, social openness, and the willingness to cooperate with a diverse range of people having differing opinions.

13 We recognize the difficulties in the history of our relationship with each other. Nonetheless, and in spite of this history, we are committed to addressing the problems inherent in the power asymmetry now prevailing between occupier and occupied. At the same time, we anticipate that expectations of reciprocity in such areas as violence against innocent civilians will be fulfilled.

14 We promote constructive competition but at the same time will act against isolation, hearsay, and conspiracies against fellow peacebuilders.

15 We are committed to working together in order to discuss openly to try and resolve areas of disagreement now dividing so many of us, such as: (1) the issue of the Palestinian refugees' right of return; (2) the issue of recognition of Israel's right to exist, in conjunction with the collective right of the Palestinians to exist in this land; (3) the concept of security in light of the building of the security barrier wall, the targeted killings, and the closure and prohibitions on the rights of the Palestinians' freedom of movement; (4) acknowledgment of the high incidence of "structural violence" inherent in the occupiers' policies; (5) the distinction between terrorism and legitimate resistance; (6) more specific to our current debate, the cause and effect of military occupation.

Conclusions

The importance of consensus building from within, and of the reaching out of the peace and justice movement, should be self-evident to sober-minded analysts. As spelled out in Figure 31.1, most peacebuilding efforts have been either targeted vertically upwards to influence policymakers or projected downwards focusing on people-to-people and other activities, intending to make an impact on public opinion. At present, the priority now appears to be horizontal action. The remains of the peace-and-justice camp has now moved into a cooperative rather than competitive mood. Expanding the peace and

justice movement to encompass a wider segment of both civil societies can be feasible if a minimalist strategy is pursued. Our protracted conflict is not only a government-versus-government confrontation, but also has within it complex and deep-rooted nation-versus-nation negative feelings, leading to a mutual lack of trust. Should we fail to expand it, the small but committed peace and justice movement is likely to continue to be overshadowed by acts of extremists. Avoiding the return to the previous inward-directed protest of the type that does not connect misery and suffering is a needed paradigm shift from violent conflict to negotiation.

In view of all that has happened, we can amend the former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban's one-sided aphorism "The Palestinian leadership have never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity" and include the Israeli leadership in the same sarcastic expression. The latest episodes of the Fatah split that opened the door to the Hamas government, and Kadimah's launching of the Lebanon War and abandoning its own unilateral withdrawal schemes, qualify as legitimate additions to the historian Barbara Tuchman's (1985) list of tragic mistakes. She states that one of the criteria for such a listing is that such policy "has been perceived as counter-productive in its own time, not merely by hindsight" or post-facto by later generations (ibid.: 5). It has been the case most of the time that individuals or groups within the peace and justice camp have cautioned their respective regimes to avoid shortsighted and rash decisions. Furthermore, in the post-Oslo situation, on the one hand the expectations of Palestinians for their wellbeing and independence and of Israelis for their security grew while, on the other hand, the reality saw their objective and subjective situations deteriorate. In such a situation, when the "relative deprivation gap" foreseen by Ted Gurr (1970) expanded immensely, it was only to be expected that people would rebel against a concession imposed from above. However, because of fear of the "other," people are reluctant to antagonize authorities that, at the same time, lack those leadership qualities essential for ending the occupation and implementing a viable two-state solution. Facing such a vacuum, whether civil society organizations can grow to play such a role remains to be seen.

Whereas these guiding principles can thrive in the context of shared values of human rights, democracy, and peace as common denominators, we still need to translate expected realistic dialogue into action in a way that can overcome the mentioned current obstacles. If we can all agree to minimal and realistic ground rules for engagement with each other, we can widen the peace and justice camps within the larger civil society spheres. We need to strengthen this link between the currently introverted and moribund peace and justice camp and the still vibrant civil society sphere, making that effort a priority, this notwithstanding the importance of the upward efforts to affect policy and a concurrent commitment to involve the public at large in support of a just and lasting peace built on the two-states solution. Although the political nature of the principles that govern cooperation within the peace and justice camp may be more salient, we should nonetheless strive to expand the acceptance and understanding of such positions to all civil society organizations. This may be seen as a naïve and unattainable goal, given that one is first appealing to them to define their own peace vocation, based on their specific ethical principles. But engaging in a gradual process to revamp and expand the peace camp into a mass movement should be seen as the final objective, even as small steps in that direction are being taken.

We are not alone, and coalitions are being built within and across the divide. Even if limited resources have been a source of friction, lobbying donors to expand the pie before slicing it can be done if a new horizon is shown. Information should be shared and work divided among the many organizations seeking support. In short, this joint endeavor must

be recognized as a work in progress. Its efficacy requires the integration of the comments of active members in the peace and conflict resolution organizations on both sides, as well as incorporation of a feedback process involving those same organizations. Particularly importantly, each community's youthful peace activists must be encouraged to greater participation. They are the hope of the future but, to date, far too many have been relegated, or have relegated themselves, to the fringes of most peace and conflict resolution organizations.

Although acknowledging the separate and often adversarial narratives of the past, we sense that, once a common ground for cooperation is established, disagreements about the present can be bridged. There is already a large number of consensual innovative and outside-the-box ideas. Expanding the numbers of people dealing with them and acting upon them with their peers, even in a modest way, can and must be done. We fervently wish that the main message in this chapter will be disseminated among a wide variety of civil society associations and social movements, and strengthen those of us already committed to spreading the idea of peace beyond the realm of the "usual suspects." This time we have focused not on what *they* should or could do, but on what *we* can and should do. It is in our hands, hearts and minds to act according to shared principles to bring about the peace that for so long has eluded the people of Israel and Palestine.

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