



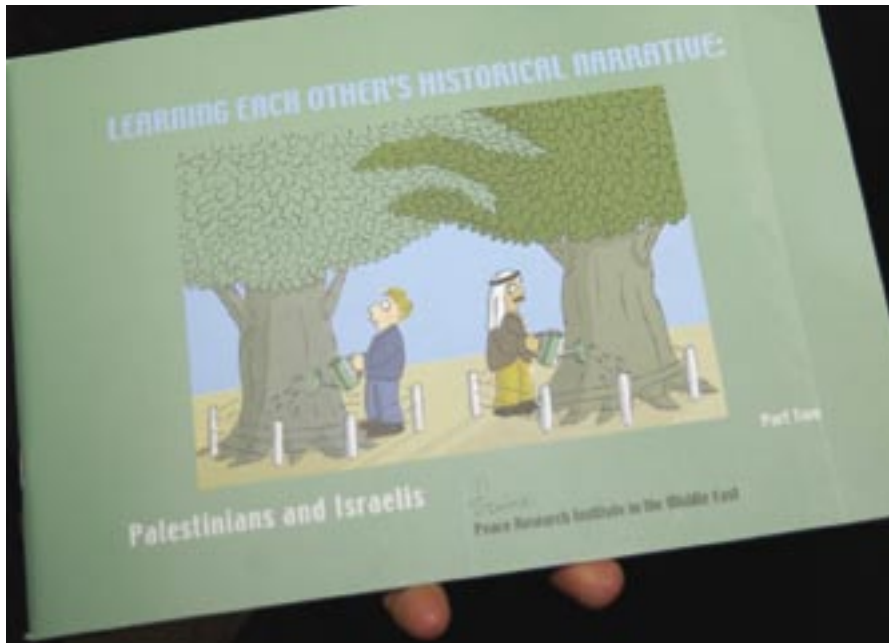
# CAN A UNIVERSITY HELP CHANGE THE WORLD?

FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS SHARE VISION FOR PEACE

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY'S FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS-IN-RESIDENCE, ISRAELI PSYCHOLOGIST DR. DAN BAR-ON AND PALESTINIAN EDUCATOR DR. SAMI ADWAN, ARE PEACE BUILDERS WORKING TO CHANGE DEEPLY ENTRENCHED AND INCREASINGLY POLARIZED ATTITUDES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT.

BY MICHAEL MAIDEN

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Thanks to a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence grant written by Dr. Saliba Sarsar, Drs. Bar-On and Adwan are bringing their shared vision for peace to the campus of Monmouth University. The scholars have enhanced Monmouth's curriculum in global education through their teaching and co-teaching of courses, and active engagement with the Global Understanding Project.

Monmouth University President Paul Gaffney said the Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence program was "a unique opportunity to bring together peacebuilders from a chronically troubled region." According to Provost Thomas Pearson, "Monmouth University each year strives to bring a faculty member from abroad to bring his or her professional expertise and to broaden our students' understanding of the world and their place in it."

"With our Fulbright Scholars-in-Residence we are doubly fortunate to bring our students two outstanding teachers and leaders committed to a vision of peace and partnership in the Middle East," he added.

As co-directors of the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME), Drs. Bar-On and Adwan developed a "Shared History Curriculum Project," a joint effort among Israeli and Palestinian teachers to write and test a new history curriculum for

use in both Israeli and Palestinian schools. The project engages teachers on both sides in a "dual-narrative" approach to teaching the history of both national communities.

Bar-On and Adwan recognize that given the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is not enough common ground between the communities to create a single shared historical narrative. The Shared History Curriculum Project instead exposes students on each side of the conflict to the other's narrative about the same set of events.

"The goal is to get to know and respect the narrative of the other, even if we don't agree with everything it says," Bar-On says. Adwan agrees, saying that since the project began, "school children are coming home with different information about the conflict than what they grew up with."

"Even if the people at home don't agree with the material, they are starting discussions," he added.

Just as individuals can have very different perceptions of the same historical event, societies in conflict develop narratives that are morally superior and exclude the "other." "Examples of such narratives are all too abundant," said Political Science Professor and Associate Vice President for Academic Program Initiatives Dr. Saliba Sarsar who cited conflict narratives in Rwanda, Ireland, South Africa, and the Canadian province of Quebec.

The text for the jointly developed Shared History Project gives teachers and students the opportunity to learn the other's narratives in a unique format. It was designed so that on each page, in between the Palestinian and Israeli narratives, there is space for students to write their own comments. Each section is of equal size, and the narratives have been translated into Arabic, Hebrew, and English.





Assemblyman Sean T. Kean congratulates Drs. Adwan and Bar-On following a resolution by the General Assembly honoring their work for peace.

L-R Assemblywoman Jennifer Beck, Assemblywoman Amy H. Handlin, Assemblyman Sean T. Kean, Senator Ellen Karcher, Dr. Sami Adwan, Dr. Dan Bar-On, President Paul Gaffney, Dr. Saliba Sarsar.

Aimed at an audience of 9th and 10th grade students, the work is based in part on Bar-On's pioneering research on methods of reconciliation between the children of Holocaust survivors and children of Nazi perpetrators. Dr. Bar-On's work on the lasting effects of the Holocaust extends to the third generation and has been featured in a BBC documentary "TimeWatch," and in several books.

Adwan and Bar-On hope that by exposing Palestinian and Israeli students to each other's narratives, the process of building peace can work from the bottom-up. The scholars agree that peace building is a separate but necessary complement to peacemaking. Peacemaking, they argue, largely occurs from the top-down between governments, while peace building is the responsibility of free people everywhere.

Both men also speak openly about the need for active engagement from the United States and the United Nations to

"The nonviolent approach does not immediately change the heart of the oppressor. It first does something to the hearts and souls of those committed to it. It gives them new self-respect; it calls up resources of strength and courage that they did not know they had. Finally it reaches the opponent and so stirs his conscience that reconciliation becomes a reality."

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

push forward the peace making process in the Middle East. The two professors also support a two-state solution for the conflict based on 1967 borders.

But they aren't waiting for the conflict to end before developing the building blocks for a future when Israel and Palestine co-exist peacefully as independent

nations. Drs. Bar-On and Adwan hope the Shared History Project will provide cornerstones to construct a new understanding of national identity in the future.

"A peace agreement is not enough; it has to be substantiated at a grassroots level. Both sides have to respect each other, said Dr. Adwan. "Eighty percent



Dr. Sami Adwan



Dr. Dan Bar-On

of Palestinians are under the age of 40,” he continued, “so focusing peace efforts at children makes sense.”

The first Shared History textbook begins with the Balfour Declaration in 1917. The third ends with the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, seven years ago.

Other historical events covered in the Shared History texts include: Jewish immigration to Palestine, the events of World War I, the British Mandate over Palestine, the impact of the Holocaust on shaping Palestine and Israel, World War II, the 1948 war, Palestinian refugees, the 1967 and 1973 wars, 1976 Land Day, invasion of Lebanon, the Intifada, and the Oslo and Wye River Peace Talks.

Dr. Adwan and Dr. Bar-On have received many awards for their efforts to build peace in the Middle East, including the Alexander Langer Foundation Peace Prize in 2001; the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) Prize and the Victor J. Goldberg Prize for Peace from the Institute of International Education (IIE) in 2005. More recently, the pioneering peace builders were honored in March

with a Joint Resolution from the NJ State Senate and General Assembly.

Dr. Bar-On is an Israeli psychologist born in Haifa in 1938 to Holocaust-survivor parents. He was a member of Kibbutz Revivim for 25 years where he served as an educator, farmer, and Secretary of the Kibbutz. He completed his B.A. in 1972 at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, M.A. in psychology in 1975, and Ph.D. in 1981, both at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In addition to being a co-director of PRIME with Dr. Adwan, Dr. Bar-On is a full professor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

Bar-On’s field research studying the generational effects of the Holocaust on the descendants of survivors and perpetrators led him to issues of reconciliation. Losing a friend in the Six-Day War engaged him in the work of reconciliation and peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Dr. Adwan is a Palestinian educator born in Sourif, a small town northwest of Hebron, Palestine. After graduating with a B.A. in educational administration from Jordan University in 1976,

he received an M.A. from San Francisco State University in 1982 and earned a Ph.D. from the University of San Francisco in 1987. In addition to serving on numerous academic councils and international boards, Dr. Adwan is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at Bethlehem University.

A former campus activist with the Palestinian Fatah movement, Dr. Adwan was imprisoned in 1991 for five months in an Israeli desert jail. Strangely, it was being jailed as a member of a political group declared illegal by Israel that actually set Adwan on the path to peace building. An encounter with a respectful Israeli prison guard made him realize that “they weren’t all the same.”

Despite their differences in upbringing, culture, and religion the two scholars work together seamlessly and seem to communicate on an almost psychic level. Bar-On and Adwan say they’ve become close friends through their collaboration on the deeply personal Shared History Project.

At Monmouth University, the two share one office and teach together. The arrangement is meaningful, says



“International education exchange is the most significant current project designed to continue the process of humanizing mankind to the point, we would hope, that nations can learn to live in peace.”

—J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT

Dr. Sarsar because Adwan and Bar-On “aren’t on opposite sides of the campus; they are working together every day and seriously committed to building peace.”

During their stay at Monmouth University, the Fulbright scholars have been busy. In addition to co-teaching a class on the Middle East with Dr. Sarsar, each teaches his own global-issues class. The scholars have also been asked to bring their vision for peace to a number of prestigious academic and international forums.

A workshop at the United States Institute of Peace, conferences in Denver, Washington and San Francisco and presentations at Harvard University, Manhattan College, Butler University, Misericordia College and Stockton College have helped to not only share the peace building vision of PRIME, but to highlight Monmouth University’s increasing commitment to global issues.

“What they are teaching is what we all should be teaching: how to be open-minded,” said Monmouth University President Paul Gaffney.

Can a University change the world?

The Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence program has already shown that education can change attitudes.

Erin Sullivan, a senior majoring in Communication, said that the Fulbright Scholars have raised student awareness of the situation between Israelis and Palestinians. “Having the professors teach us in class has turned out to be really great,” adding, “they bring more than a historical perspective, they bring a human perspective.”

Open minds, critical thinking skills, and a belief in the responsibility of every individual to work as a peacebuilder also brings change. As Bar-On and Adwan say, “never doubt that a small group of committed Palestinian and Israeli teachers can change the world when the time is ripe.”

Dr. Sarsar believes that the time is ripe for higher education to embrace responsibility for helping to bring peace to conflict areas throughout the world. “Just imagine,” says Dr. Sarsar, “if 50 universities hosted scholars from other conflict areas, the possibility to embrace peace building is tremendous.”

Even before the Fulbright Scholars depart, Dr. Sarsar is working to extend the important message of peace building nourished by Drs. Adwan and Bar-On. Sarsar is putting the finishing touches on a high quality 30-minute documentary, “Crossing the Border,” that he anticipates will have a wide audience.

Drs. Bar-On and Adwan have also set their next goals for continuing the work of peace building in the Middle East. They hope to increase the number of Israeli and Palestinian teachers using the Shared History Project texts, and to publish the three texts together as a single volume. Further on the horizon is a website that will include a teacher’s guide, feedback from students and teachers, and additional lesson plans.

The Fulbright Program, the U.S. government’s flagship program in international educational exchange, was proposed to the U.S. Congress in 1945 by then freshman Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. In the aftermath of World War II, Senator Fulbright viewed the proposed program as a much-needed vehicle for promoting “mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries of the world.” His vision was approved by Congress and the program signed into law by President Truman in 1946.

Since the inception of the Fulbright Program over 46,100 overseas academics and professionals have conducted research or taught in U.S. universities, and more than 44,400 U.S. faculty and professionals have engaged in similar activities abroad. **MU**