Psychological Aspects of Ethno-Political Conflict

-Morton Deutsch

*International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution
Teachers College, Columbia University*

I want it to be clear that I do not have specific expertise related to ethno-political conflict. My discussion is from the perspective of a theorist concerned with the general ideas of conflict resolution that, I hope, have some relevance to ethno-political conflict rather than from a specialist who has studied many such conflicts.

However, I do not pretend to be an innocent with respect to ethnic and racial conflicts. As a kid, growing up on the streets of New York in the 1920’s, I was not infrequently called a "kike," "yid," "yidcock," "christ-killer," or other derogatory names by Irish or Italian kids with, whom we Jewish kids, traded insults. Sometimes the insults led to fights and bloody noses but fortunately, rarely to serious injuries, due to the lack of the easy availability of deadly weapons.

Although I have done no relevant research. I suspect that there is considerably less Irish-Italian-Jewish intergroup baiting and conflicts now than when I was a child: not that it has completely disappeared. One might consider this a kind of success story in inter-group conflict: relations have improved rather than gotten worse. What is the reason for this "success" story? I speculate that there are two major reasons. The first is that many people from all three groups were able to rise from their low-status positions of newly arrived poor immigrants "to a middle-class status. The initial competition and hostility among the immigrant groups diminished as their opportunities expanded and their economic situations advanced. The second reason is, I believe, that the institutional barriers were relatively weak against the advancement of these

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white immigrant groups in the mainly democratic, legal framework of the United States. Although prejudices had to be overcome, they were not legally or otherwise excluded from active participation in the political and economic affairs in their communities.

Let me contrast this with my personal experience with blacks. When I was about 3 years old, my best friend was a black kid of about the same age. I don’t know what happened but apparently he had a sudden tragic death. I only remember his mother comforting me and my feeling a deep hurt and loss, which I can still feel. When about a year or so later, we moved from the Bronx to an up-scale neighborhood in Manhattan and I started going to public school, I don’t recall having any black classmates, friends or neighbors. This was also the case in high school, in the summer camps I went to and worked in, and also largely true in undergraduate college, my experiences in the Air Force during WW2, and in my postgraduate work. However, during these years I was sometimes exposed to signs at motels and resorts, as well as in words, indicating that "Dogs, Jews, and Niggers are not welcome here." This reinforced my feeling that in the 1930's the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany and the treatment of Negroes in the United States were not so dissimilar: in the case of the Jews, the required wearing of a yellow star led to systematic discrimination and brutality; in the case of the Negroes, it was skin color of oneself or one's family that produced these results.

Thus, although Negroes had been in the U.S. much longer than the immigrants from Ireland, Italy, and Eastern Europe, and although presumably freed from slavery during the Civil War, it was largely impossible for them, in contrast to more newly arrived immigrants, to eat in restaurants, go to hotels, live in residential areas, and use bathroom facilities, that were for whites only prior to World War 2 in most parts of the U.S. As a result of social forces let loose by the war: the need for Negro workers in the war factories in the North, the increased emphasis on the
democratic ideology in the war against nazism, and fascism; the excellent performance of Negro soldiers and their welcome acceptance by people in Britain, France, and Germany; the increased prosperity of the U.S. during and after the war, and so on— the condition seemed ripe for an onslaught against the laws which legalized segregation.

An alliance of mainly Negro and Jewish civil rights groups prepared legal attacks against segregation. They were helped by the research of many social scientists whose work collectively showed how segregation perpetuated prejudices and worsened the life chances of Negroes. My own work, comparing integrated and segregated interracial public housing projects, published in 1951, demonstrated how "stateways can influence folkways" or in other words, how public policy could affect interracial attitudes and behaviors. I remember how Kenneth Clark, the distinguished Negro social psychologist, chaired a SPSSI committee which had many of us summarizing the social science research that buttressed many legal beliefs challenging segregation: including the one presented to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954 in the Brown vs. the Board of Education, which outlawed racial segregation in schools and other publicly supported facilities.

Since the 1954 Supreme Court decision, gradual ending of legally enforced segregation in public facilities has occurred and, now (45 years later), there is a profound change in the legal situation of African-Americans and in their opportunities. There has also been a marked diminution of the overt forms of white racism and discrimination. Anyone of my age should be able to testify to the remarkable positive changes that have occurred during the past 60 years or so in interracial relations in the United States. Yet, it is also evident that despite the removal of legal barriers for African-Americans, their situation is mainly much worse off than that of the Euro-American or even Asian-American groups who voluntarily immigrated to the United States.
Why is this so? In my 1973 book, The Resolution of Conflict, I discussed this question at considerable length. I quote a portion of this discussion (pp. 107-109).

"There can be little doubt that the character of the relations between blacks and whites in the New World has largely been determined by the fact that the Africans came involuntarily, as slaves with neither rights nor resources, arriving under conditions that typically destroyed their families, their group identities, and their self-esteem. In contrast, other low-ranking minorities such as the Italians, the Irish, the Polish, and the Jews came to the Americas voluntarily with rights and social resources, under conditions that enabled them to preserve their group identities and families and to maintain their self-respect. Their political bargaining power in relation to the dominant group was enormously higher than that of the enslaved Africans because of the cohesiveness of their own internal communities.

"As the Italians, the Irish, and the Jews rose from the impoverished low-status positions of "newly-arrived immigrants," their skin color could not be used as a reliable mark of social inferiority. As a consequence, members of these initially low-ranking groups could more readily move into the vacant positions in the rapidly expanding socioeconomic frontiers of the New World than could the descendants of the African slaves. The greater opportunities available to the European immigrants kept the hopes with which they came to the New World alive. These opportunities also motivated them to persist in sustained attempts to better their social positions. In addition, it provided them with the resources and circumstances, such as money, successful experience, group pride, and education, to improve their capabilities for making progress in the socioeconomic sphere. The progress itself, in a self-reinforcing benevolent spiral, served to make further progress easier. It did so by reducing their objective "social inferiority" and thus
diminishing the prejudice and discrimination against them; it also did so by increasing their motivation and capabilities to achieve further progress in the social and economic spheres.

The African slaves, on the other hand, came to the New World with no hope and few resources, and their circumstances, as slaves were not conducive to the development of either the motivation or the capabilities for advancing themselves socially or economically. The abolition of slavery raised hopes, but the lack of resources of the former slaves and their descendants – in education, in experience as freemen, in community and family organization, in material possessions – gave them little possibility of overcoming the barriers of prejudice and discrimination. The few who were able to advance themselves despite the stigma of color were never sure of the permanence of their step forward, nor could their enhanced resources wipe out for themselves or for their children the stigma of social inferiority embedded in their skin color. Thus, for the former slaves and their descendants, a vicious cycle existed: their lack of progress lowered their hopes and their motivation to advance themselves, and it limited their resources for overcoming the barriers that kept them in a socially inferior status. These consequences of the prejudice and discrimination against them, in turn, served to provide rationales (such as “they are lazy and incapable”) for the perpetuation of the racial barriers erected by the dominant white group. Thus, because dark color serves as a mark of racial inferiority as well as of group membership, it makes the prevalent social and economic barriers imposed against low-status groups more difficult for blacks to overcome than for whites.

In addition to the extra difficulties imposed by their skin color and their legacy of social deficits from their experience in slavery, blacks have not been as lucky as white immigrants. When white immigrants were arriving in large numbers, America was becoming an urbanized, industrial society that needed great pools of unskilled labor. The European immigrants were
easily able to gain an economic foothold and to help their children move up the socioeconomic ladder. In contrast, the black migrants from the rural South have, since the end of World War II, found that there is little demand for the unskilled labor they possess. America's urban-industrial society requires more and more skilled labor in its technologically advanced industries but provides few opportunities for advancement for those with inadequate education and skills."

Some Propositions About Intergroup Conflict

I have provided the preceding discussion at a context for making some general statements about intergroup and interethnic relations. Hopefully, some will be controversial and stimulate discussion.

I. The study of intergroup relations has been characterized by an overemphasis on destructive conflicts as though this is the predominant, or even inevitable, consequence of different groups interacting. Although I have not made a census, I believe that destructive intergroup conflicts are the exception rather than the rule. Most intergroup relations (e.g. among the various subgroups within community, educational, industrial, medical, military, sports, or social institutions) are more or less cooperative otherwise the institutions, which they compose, would fall apart. I suspect that even inter-ethnic conflicts are not as frequently destructive as we commonly assume. They take a destructive form only under rather specific conditions.

II. The conditions under which intergroup conflict is likely to take a destructive course include the perception by members of one or more of the interrelated groups that their individual or group survival, their physical or psychological security, their power, their economic well-being, their reputation and esteem, or their opportunities for growth and development are being threatened by another group. The sense of threat may arise from unregulated competition for scarce resources, power, ideological supremacy, dominance, or superiority.
III. The potential for destructive conflict decreases, even when the intergroup relations are not cooperative, if the members in the various different groups perceive that their well-being is improving. It is also decreased if the members of the different groups perceive that the competition for status, economic well being, and the like, is taking place under fair rules. Fair procedures are most likely to exist in democratic societies in which there are strong, legitimate political institutions whose procedures do not favor one ethnic group over another (Harris and Reilly, 1998). Of course, unfairly disadvantaged groups are less apt to engage in open conflict with the more advantaged groups if the latter have predominant and overwhelming power.

IV. The distinctive character of ethnopolitical conflicts arises largely from four characteristics: (A) ethnic groups are social races; (B) their conflicts are mainly over control of the state; (C) they have a history; (D) and self-identity is strongly involved.

(A) The relatively strong impermeable boundaries of ethnic groups, particularly during intense ethnic conflicts, make it difficult to leave such groups. They may be considered to be “social races.” In a “social” as well as “biological” race, only becomes a member by descent rather than by choice and hence, it is difficult to “join” or “leave” one’s ethnic group voluntarily.

Social races are socially defined groups; that may, in fact, differ little or not at all in their biological or genetic characteristics from other groups. Similarly, rules of descent are socially defined codes that vary from society to society and from time to time. Thus in Nazi Germany people who had one or more Jewish grandparents were defined as “Jews” even though their parents and they, themselves, were members of the Catholic Church. Similarly, in the United States many people with white skins are considered “black” because one or more of their ancestors were classified as “Negroes.”

(B) As the term “ethnopolitical conflict” suggests such conflicts are often about
control of political power—that is, which of the contending ethnic groups will control the various institutions of the state. These institutions typically control the allocation of land, economic resources, education, civil rights, and so on: they also control the armed forces, the media, language usage, religious practices, and the reigning cultural customs and norms. Ted Gurr (1993), in his comprehensive survey of ethnopolitical conflicts throughout the world points out that ethnopolitical conflicts may vary in their focus: some primarily center on “cultural”, others on “political”, and still others on “economic” issues. Most, however, involve a combination of all three types of issues. The resolution of such deeply rooted and entwined issues requires much more than a change of attitudes, such as reduction of intergroup prejudices; it often requires a fundamental restructuring of society to enable the power sharing necessary to the elimination of ethnic injustices.

(C) History. Many of the prominent ethnopolitical conflicts have endured for a considerable period of time. In other words, they have a history. Typically, the different groups involved in such conflicts have dissimilar versions of this history. Commonly, the more advantaged or dominant group will have developed a version, which justifies their advantages. Past events will be recast and emphasized so that they justify their own claims to moral, cultural, political, economic, and psychological superiority; myths will be created for this purpose. In a parallel process, they will be interpreting their history so as to justify the subjugation of the other group; selecting events to emphasize the other’s moral, intellectual, and character deficiencies.

As recent ethnopolitical conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, and elsewhere have indicated, unscrupulous political leaders, through their control of the mass media, can manufacture incidents of ethnic violence. Through the media, they can stir the latent emotions of fear, hatred, and rage bred into the recesses of one’s psyche from childhood on by repeated
exposure to the symbolic traumas, vengeance, and victories in the "history" of one's ethnic group.

For a subjugated ethnic group, the problem of creating history is more difficult than that facing the dominant group. On the one hand, it can not create an overt public history involving images, myths, symbols, celebrations, etc... which challenge and discredit the history created by the dominant group. Doing so could lead to punitive action from the dominant group. This fear often leads the subjugated group to publicly accept the dominant groups version of history and, in some instances, to internalize this acceptance leading to what Kurt Lewin called "self hatred." On the other hand, the need for self-esteem and group cohesion will require the development of a different version of the reasons for the subjugation. It may take the form of "the meek shall inherit the earth", "pie in the sky by and by;" or in other words, the ennobling ability to endure present suffering is the passport and prelude to heavenly happiness. The two preceding versions lead to a passive acceptance or resignation to one's subjugation. A third version is necessary to activate the sense of injustice, to awaken self-confidence to foster group cohesion, and to mobilize effective action to eliminate oppression experienced by their group. Elsewhere (Deutsch 1985), I have discussed in some detail, the processes involved in "Awakening the Sense of Injustice": I do not have the time to discuss this here.

(D) *Identity* is the fourth characteristic often linked with ethnopolitical conflict. In my view, self-identity is involved in all non-trivial conflict since identification with one's group is usual, most ethnopolitical conflicts evoke one's identity as a group member, it is evident that these groups are particularly important to self-identity because in one's early years one is typically immersed in one's ethnic group through one's family, neighbors, friends, school, community, etc. If one's ethnic group is denigrated or attacked, it is an attack on one's whole
world. To feel good about oneself and to feel secure, it is necessary to feel this way about your ethnic group, since most of your primary groups are embedded in it.

Unlike some social identity theorists, I do not subscribe to the notion that to feel good about oneself and one's group identity, one must be able to feel that your group is superior to other comparable groups. This is frequently true in situations of competition or in competitive societies where individuals and groups are often ranked in relation to one another. However, not all societies and not all, or even most, group relations are competitive. It is not necessary to assume that to achieve self-esteem through one's group membership, one's must derogate other groups.

**The Scope of Justice**

Let me now turn to a topic that Professor Opotow, on your faculty, has done much original work on.

The scope of justice refers to who (and what) is included in one’s moral community: who is and is not entitled to fair outcomes and fair treatments by their inclusion or lack of inclusion in one’s moral community? Albert Schweitzer included all living creatures in his moral community and some Buddhists include all of nature. Most of us have a more limited moral community.

Individuals and groups who are outside the boundary in which considerations of fairness apply may be treated in ways, which would be considered immoral if people within the boundary were so treated. Consider the situation in Bosnia. Prior to the break-up of Yugoslavia, the Serbs, Muslims, and Croats in Bosnia were more or less part of one's moral community and treated one another with some degree of civility. After the start of the civil strife, initiated by power-hungry political leaders, the vilification of other ethnic groups became a political tool and this led to the exclusion of the others from one’s moral community. As a consequence, the most barbaric
atrocities were committed by the various ethnic groups against one another. Similarly, for the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi.

At different periods in history and in different societies, various groups and individuals have been treated inhumanly by other humans - slaves by their masters, natives by colonialists, blacks by whites, Jews by Nazis, women by men, children by adults, the physically disabled by those who are not, homosexuals by heterosexuals, political dissidents by political authorities, one ethnic or religious group by another, etc. Three central psychological questions arise with regard to moral exclusion: What social conditions lead an individual or group to exclude others from their moral community? What psychological mechanisms enable otherwise moral human beings to commit atrocities against other human beings? What determines which individuals or groups are likely to be excluded from the moral community? The existing knowledge to answer these questions adequately is limited and their seriousness deserves fuller answers than time allows here.

**Social conditions.** Studies of political, ethnic, and religious violence have identified several social conditions which appear particularly conducive to the development or intensification of hatred and alienating emotions that permit otherwise nonviolent members of a society to dehumanize and kill victims (Gurr, 1970; Staub, 1989). The first of these conditions is the emergence of or increase in difficult life conditions, with a corresponding increase in the sense of relative deprivation. This may happen as a result of defeat in war, economic depression, or even physical calamity. The resulting decrease in living standards often leads to a sense of insecurity and a feeling of being threatened by potential rivals for scarce jobs, housing, etc. The second condition is an unstable political regime whose power may be under challenge. In such situations scapegoating may be employed by those in power as a means of deflecting criticisms
and of attacking potential dissident and rivals. Third, there may be a claim for superiority-national, racial, gender, cultural, religious, etc. - which justifies treating the other as having an inferior moral status. The fourth condition is when violence is culturally salient and sanctioned as a result of past wars, attention in the media, or the availability of weapons. Fifth, there may be little sense of human relatedness or social bonding with the potential victims because there is little in the way of cooperative human contact with them. The sixth condition is social institutions that are authoritarian: there, nonconformity and open dissent against violence sanctioned by authority are inhibited. Finally, hatred and violence are intensified if there is no active group of observers of the violence, in or outside the society, who are strongly objecting to it and serving as a constant reminder of its injustice and immorality.

**Psychological mechanisms.** There are many mechanisms by which reprehensible behavior toward another can be justified. One can justify it by appealing to a higher moral value - e.g., killing physicians who perform abortions will discourage abortions, with less killing of unborn children. Or one can rationalize by relabeling the behavior - e.g., calling the physical abuse of the child, "teaching him a lesson" or one can minimize the behavior by saying the behavior is not so harmful - "it hurts me more than it does you." Or one can deny personal responsibility for the behavior - e.g., your superior has ordered you to torture the prisoner. Or one can blame the victim; it is because they are hiding the terrorists in their village that the village must be destroyed. Or one can isolate oneself emotionally or desensitize oneself to the human consequences by delegitimizing the others - as many do in relation to the beggars in urban areas.

**Selection of targets for exclusion.** We are most likely to delegitimize others who we experience as a threat: the threat may be to anything which important to us: our religious beliefs, economic well-being, public order, sense of reality, physical safety, reputation, ethnic group,
family, moral values, institutions, etc. If harm was experienced from the others in the past, there is apt to be an increased readiness to interpret ambiguous actions of the other’s threats. A history of prior violent ethnic conflict predispose each group to be suspicious of the other’s intentions. We also deligitimize others who we exploit, take advantage of or otherwise threat unfairly because of their deviance from normative standards of appearance or behavior.

**Prevention, Intervention, and Reconciliation in Ethnopatalitical Conflict**

I now would like to discuss briefly some issues relating to **prevention** of destructive ethnopatalitical conflicts, **intervention** in them when they are occurring, and the process of **reconciliation** and **healing** after such a destructive conflict has occurred.

(A) **Prevention.** Under this heading, I wish to stress four major components of prevention efforts: (1) elimination of injustices in the relations among ethnic groups; (2) the development and strengthening of the democratic institutions so that the members of different ethnic groups have, in practice, equal civil and legal rights in all areas of community life—elections, education, jobs, housing, police protection, courts, and so on; (3) development of the knowledge, attitudes, skills, opportunities, and experiences which promote diverse, successful cooperative endeavors among the conflicting ethnopatitis groups; and (4) development of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills-throughout all levels and areas of society—which promote constructive rather than destructive resolution of the inevitable conflicts which occur in interpersonal, intergroup, international relations. We want to foster lively controversy and inhibit deadly quarrel.

Justice, democratic institutions, successful cooperation, and constructive dialogue about issues in conflict are, all, important in the prevention of conflict. In a book to be published in March that I have edited with Peter Coleman there is much related discussion which I do not
have the time to present now (Deutsch and Coleman, 2000). Here, I simply want to emphasize that "prevention" involves more than individual change, it requires societal change: the reduction of injustice and the development of strong democratic institutions. Such societal change is, I believe, facilitated by and also facilitates the development of orientations which encourage cooperative relations and constructive conflict resolution. The causal arrow between individual and societal change is bi-directional.

(B) **Intervention.** It is truism that the best way to manage destructive, intractable, ethnopolitical conflicts is to prevent them. However, it is not reasonable to assume that all such conflicts are preventable. For the foreseeable future, we can expect that evil, irrationality, religious fanaticism, fear, hatred, overwhelming power, basic conflicts of interest, and/or profound misunderstandings will continue to give rise to such conflicts.

Let me first say a few words about the extreme cases of conflicts involving evil, irrationality, religious fanaticism, or hatred before discussion of the more typical ones. In such instances, it may be true that no approach to managing the conflict constructively will be successful. However, as I have indicated in a paper, "On Changing the Devil" (Deutsch, 1964), even if you are being threatened by a devil who possesses invulnerable H-bombs, it is more sensible to assume that the devil is corrigible than not. Assuming the devil is incorrigible, whether or not it is, inevitably leads to destructive conflict; if you assume that it is corrigible and it is, constructive possibilities may exist.

The devil could be corrigible in one or more of several ways; it could be (1) deterred by making salient the inevitable negative consequences for it of attacking you; (2) reassured that you will not initiate hostile action; (3) helped to recognize that the benefits of a constructive resolution of conflict would be greater than those that could be obtained through destructive
action; (4) encouraged to recognize that the assumptions and motives underlying its hostility may no longer be appropriate or may obstruct the realization of its more important objectives; or (5) helped to refocus its attention and energies to more benign areas. In addition, it may be possible to enlist allies or friends of the devil or dissident elements within it to restrain its destructive behavior.

Of course, if the devil does not have weapons of mass destruction and you can bring to bear overwhelming power, you may be able to restrain it form engaging in destructive behavior even if it is temporarily or permanently incorrigible. Law enforcement agencies typically have as one of their main functions the restraining of those who seek to engage in destructive behavior. They are successful in doing so when they can amass the overwhelming power necessary to restrain even those who are incorrigibly intent on destructive action.

When dealing with perceived devils, particularly at the international level, there is often too much emphasis on deterrence as a means of influencing them to desist from destructive behavior. The retaliatory threat involved in deterrence, unless accompanied by strong reassurance, is often experienced as offensive rather than defensive in intent and this may contribute to a spiral of mutual hostile misunderstanding. Moreover, without the use of methods aimed at changing or redirecting the motivations of the "perceived devil," successful deterrence will only "freeze" the hostile relations and restrain destructive actions only until the deterrence can be outwitted, circumvented, or overcome.

Based upon the proceeding, I wish to make several points.

1. During the course of intense destructive conflict there is a tendency to view the
adversary as a "devil" and to justify one's own immoral actions as due to the other's evil behavior. As each side does this, a malignant spiral develops in which increasingly destructive actions toward the other is justified by the evil actions which the other inflicts on you.

2. I would suggest that third-party intervention, into such conflicts are likely to be most productive, prior to the onset of open hostilities and the emergence of the malignant spiral or after the two sides have reached a stalemate and each side recognizes that they can not impose a solution to the conflict, which is acceptable or satisfactory to oneself, unless the other side also finds it acceptable or satisfactory. Intervention that is too late can allow a conflict to escalate into an embittered, malignant conflict in which many people are slaughtered. There is a need to develop early warning systems, which can alert the international community of potential ethnic catastrophes. Intervention, which is too early, may freeze a conflict before the combatants recognize that their best alternative is a negotiated settlement and simply provide each side the opportunity to regroup and prepare for the next round of hostility.

I am not an expert on international affairs but most experts, I believe, would agree that the timing, and strength of the interventions by the UN, NATO, or the U.S. in various ethnopolitical conflicts - e.g. in Rwanda and Bosnia - were far from optimal. Many would also criticize the lack of clear goals in the interventions. Although I agree with these criticisms, I also feel that one must recognize that the UN has had only meager financial, political, and military support for interventions and the substantial internal political diversions within NATO and the U.S. make it difficult to achieve effective policy and action on interventions in ethnopolitical conflicts.

I have not the time to discuss different types of interventions: military (peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace building), economic (the use of positive as well as negative means)
political, or social psychological (facilitating dialogue and problem solving, mediation). Well-rounded interventions will usually involve the variety of types.

Forgiveness and reconciliation

After protracted, violent conflicts in which the conflicting parties have inflicted grievous harm (e.g., humiliation, destruction of property, torture, assault, rape, and murder) upon one another, the conflicting parties may still have to live and work together in the same communities. This is often the case in civil wars, ethnic and religious conflicts, gang wars and family disputes which have taken a destructive course. Consider the slaughtering which has taken place between the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi, between the blacks and whites in South Africa, between the "bloods" and "crisps" of Los Angeles, between the feuding Hartfields and McCoys of Kentucky, and among the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in Bosnia. It is possible for forgiveness and reconciliation to occur and, if so, what fosters these processes?

There are many meanings of "forgiveness" in the extensive and growing literature concerned with this topic. I shall use the term to mean the giving up of the rage, the desire for vengeance, and the grudge toward those who have inflicted grievous harm on you, your loved ones, or the groups with whom you identify. It also implies the willingness to accept the other into one's moral community so that he or she is entitled to care and justice. It does not mean one has to forget the evil that has been done, to condone it, or to abolish punishment for it. However, it implies that the punishment should conform to the canons of justice and be directed toward the goal of reforming the harm-doer so that he or she can become a moral participant in the community.

There has been a rich discussion in the psychological and religious literature of the importance of forgiveness to psychological and spiritual healing as well as to reconciliation (e.g.,
Shriver, 1995). Forgiveness is of course, not to be expected in the immediate aftermath of being tortured, raped, or assaulted. It is unlikely, as well as psychologically harmful, until one is able to be in touch with the rage, fear, guilt, humility, hurt and pain which has been stored inside. However, nursing one’s hate keeps the injury alive and active in the present instead of permitting it to take its proper place in one’s past. Doing so, consumes psychological resources and energy which is more appropriately directed to the present and future. While forgiveness of the other may not be necessary for self-healing, it seems to be very helpful for it as well as an important ingredient in the process of reconciliation.

There is a well-developed psychological and psychiatric literature dealing with "posttraumatic stress disorders" - that is, with the psychological consequences of having been subjected or exposed to grievous harm - as well as growing literature emerging from workshop experiences centering on forgiveness and reconciliation.

The treatment of post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) essentially involves: (1) providing the stressed person with a supportive, safe, and secure environment; (2) in which he can be helped to re-experience, in a modulated fashion, the vulnerability, helplessness, fear, rage humiliation, guilt, and other emotions associated with his grievous harm (medication may be useful in limiting the intensity of the emotions being relived); (3) helping him to identify the harm occurred and to distinguish the present realities from these past realities; (4) helping him to understand the reasons for his emotional reactions to the traumatic events and the appropriateness of his reactions; (5) helping him to acquire the skills, attitudes, knowledge and social support which would make him less vulnerable and powerless; and (6) helping him to develop an everyday life which is characterized by meaningful, enjoyable, and supportive relations in his family, work, and community.
The treatment of PTSD requires considerable professional education beyond that involved in training in conflict resolution. However, it is well for students of conflict to be aware that exposure to severe injustices can have enduring harmful psychological effects unless the post-traumatic conditions are treated effectively.

Forgiveness and reconciliation may be difficult to achieve at more than a superficial level unless the post-traumatic stress is substantially relieved. However, it is well to recognize that the processes involved in forgiveness and reconciliation may also play an important role in the relief of PTSD. The causal arrow is multidirectional; progress in "forgiveness," "reconciliation," or post-traumatic stress reduction facilities progress in the other two.

There are two distinct but interrelated approaches to developing forgiveness: one centers on the victim and the other on the relationship between the victim and the harm-doer. The focus on the victim, in addition to providing some relief of the PTSD, seeks to help the victim recognize the common human qualities of the victim and victimizer. In effect, various methods and exercises are employed to enable the victim to recognize the "bad" as well as the "good" aspects of herself, that she has "sinful" as well as "divine" capabilities and tendencies. In other words, one helps the victim to become more aware of herself as a total person - with no need to deny her own fallibility and imperfections - whose life long experiences in his family, school, community ethnic and religious groups, and at work have played a key role in determining her own personality and behavior. As the victim comes to accept her own moral fallibility, she is more likely to accept the fallibility of the harm-doer as well as to perceive both the "good" and "bad" in the other.

Both victims and harm-doers are often quite moral toward those they include in their own moral community but grossly immoral to those who are excluded. Thus, Eichmann who
efficiently organized the mass murder of Jews for the Nazis, was considered a good family man. The New England captains of the slave ships, who transported African slaves to the Americas under the most abominable conditions, were often deacons of their local churches. The white settlers, of the United States, who took possession of land occupied by native Americans and killed those who resisted, were viewed as courageous and moral within their own communities.

Recognition of the good and bad potential in all humans, the self as well as the other, facilitates forgiveness of the harm-doer by the victim. However, it may not be enough. Forgiveness often also requires interaction between the victim and harm-doer to establish the conditions for forgiveness. The interaction sometimes takes the form of negotiation between the victim and harm-doer. A third party representing the community (e.g., a mediator or judge) usually facilitates the negotiation and sets the term if the harm-doer and victim cannot reach an agreement. It is interesting to note that in some European courts such negotiations are required in criminal cases, before the judge sentences the criminal.

Obviously the terms of an agreement for forgiveness will vary as a function of the nature and severity of the harm as well as the relationship between the victim and the harm-doer. The victim may seek one or more of the following from the harm-doer: full confession, sincere apology, contrition, restitution, compensation, self-abasement and self-reform. She may also seek some form of punishment and incarceration for the harm-doer. Whatever the conditions forgiveness is most apt to occur if the harm-doer as well as the victim accept them.

Reconciliation goes beyond forgiveness in that it not only accepts the other into one’s moral community, it also establishes or reestablishes a positive, cooperative relationship among the individuals and groups who have been estranged by the harms which they inflicted upon one another. Reconciliation is the end of a process which forgiveness begins.
1. **Mutual security.** After a bitter conflict, the tendency is for each side to be concerned with its own security without adequate recognition that the security of neither side can be attained unless the other side also feels secure. Real security requires that both sides have as their goal, mutual security. When weapons have been involved in the prior conflict, mutually verifiable disarmament and arms controls are important components of mutual security.

2. **Mutual respect.** Just as true security from physical danger requires mutual cooperation, so does security from psychological harm and humiliation. Each side must treat the other side with the respect, courtesy, politeness, and considerateness that is normatively expected in civil society. Insult, humiliation, inconsiderateness by one side will usually lead to reciprocation by the other and decrease in physical as well as psychological security.

3. **Humanization of the other.** During bitter conflict, each side tends to dehumanize the other and develop images of other as an evil enemy. There is much need for both sides to experience one another in everyday contexts as parents, homemakers, school children, teachers, merchants, etc. which enable them to see one another as human beings who are more likely themselves than not. Problem-solving workshops, along the lines developed by Burton (1969) and Kelman (1972), are also very valuable in overcoming the dehumanization of one another.

4. **Fair rules for managing conflict.** Even if a tentative reconciliation has begun, it is inevitable that new conflicts will occur - over the distribution of scarce resources, procedures, values, etc. It is important to anticipate that conflicts will occur and to develop beforehand the fair rules, experts, institutions, and other resources for managing such conflicts constructively and justly.

5. **Curbing the extremists on both sides.** During a protracted, bitter conflict each side
tends to develop extremists who are committed to the processes of the destructive conflict as well as its continuation. Attainment of much of their initial goals may be less satisfying than continuing to inflict damage upon the other. It is well for both sides to recognize that the extremists on each side stimulate extremism on the other side. Both sides need to cooperate in curbing extremism on their own sides and by restraining from actions, which stimulate and justify extremist elements on the other side.

6. **Mutual trust and cooperation develop gradually.** It takes repeated experiences of successful and varied mutually beneficial cooperation to develop a solid basis for mutual trust between former enemies. In the early stages of reconciliation, when trust is required for cooperation, the former enemies may be willing to trust a third party (who is willing to serve as a monitor, inspector, or guarantor of any cooperative arrangement) but not yet willing to trust one another if there is a risk involved if the other fails to recuperated cooperation. Also, in the early stages, it is especially important that the cooperative endeavors be successful. This requires a careful selection of the opportunities and tasks for cooperation so that they are clearly achievable as well as being meaningful and significant.

**Conclusion**

Let me conclude by stating that we are in urgent need of knowledge about the successes as well as the failures in ethnic relations. I believe we know much about "failures": the conditions, which give rise to them and their consequences. We need to know much more about successes: successes in developing cooperative relations, successes in intervening into destructive conflict, and successes in forgiveness and reconciliation.
References


