



SETTLEMENT PROJECT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

West Bank from its northern part, thus impeding territorial contiguity for a future Palestinian state.

The Israeli government has argued that some of the 2,610 units will be available for Arab housing. Shalom Achshav has expressed great scepticism that this indeed will be the case. S.A. points out there is no private Palestinian land in the plan, only state lands that would be tendered for development. Experience has shown that such tenders in East Jerusalem are awarded to Israelis, almost never to Palestinians.

## CFPN Signature Ad Protests Bethlehem-area Land Grab

In late August, Israel's Civil Administration in the West Bank announced the appropriation of 988 acres (3,799 dunams) of land belonging to five Palestinian villages between the Etzion settlement bloc and Jerusalem. The move clears the way for construction of a new settlement named Gvaot. Canadian Friends of Peace Now has placed an ad in the Canadian Jewish News deploring this latest move to expand Jewish settlements in the Bethlehem area of the West Bank. The ad is signed by 20 prominent members of Canada's Jewish community. The purpose of the ad is to call attention to what our organization views as a very misguided initiative. The text is as follows:

"The military conflict in Gaza is seemingly over – at least for the time being. This should be a time for reflection by all concerned on what might improve relations between Israel and the Palestinians. It is in this respect that we – as friends of Israel – are extremely disappointed with the Netanyahu government's recent action of appropriating some 1,000 acres of Palestinian land in the Bethlehem area. This is the largest Israeli West Bank settlement expansion in a generation and makes it ever more difficult to someday reach a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Such a land grab sends a message of intransigence to the Palestinians and the rest of the world, and creates additional, problematic "facts on the ground." Even though a peace agreement may be a distant prospect at present, it is very wrong for the Israeli government to put new hurdles in the way of eventual negotiations. We therefore call on the Israeli government to reverse its recent decision and immediately end further settlement expansion. It is in Israel's own best interests to preserve a chance for a future peace."

SETTLERS TAKE OVER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

are denying any such sale occurred and have begun legal procedures to get the settlers out.

This latest influx of Jews into Silwan is the largest settler operation in the area since 1991. The six buildings consist of approximately 25 housing units, which could expand the settler presence by about 100 people, an increase of about 35%.

The incursion of Jewish residents into Silwan – legal or not – is prompted by the very questionable agenda of Judaizing a traditionally Palestinian neighbourhood. It adds fuel to tensions in Jerusalem, which have been high since the murder of four teenagers – three Jewish and one Arab – nearly three months ago.

## Film Explores Contested History in Palestinian and Israeli Schools

The Toronto chapter of CFPN plans to team up with J-Space this fall to show a thought-provoking new documentary on the conflicting national narratives in the Israeli and Palestinian education systems. Called *This is My Land*, the film takes us inside classrooms in Israel and the occupied West Bank to look at how teachers convey the history of a contested region. The film follows Israeli and Palestinian teachers in six very different schools that reflect the complex demographics of the region. Viewers thus gain insight into how the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is transmitted to the next generation.

CFPN will notify supporters about the details for the show.

Visit <http://www.tamaraerde.com/films/this-is-my-land/> for the trailer.

**WE NEED YOU!**  
**CFPN can't exist without the financial and volunteer support of people like you. If you would like to help or donate, please get in touch: online, by phone or by mail. Donations are tax-creditable in Canada.**

# PEACEMATTERS

CURRENT AFFAIRS FROM CANADIAN FRIENDS OF PEACE NOW



FALL 2014

## Settlement Project Draws Sharp U.S. Rebuke Peace Now Blows Whistle

BY GABRIELLA GOLIGER [NATIONAL CO-CHAIR OF CFPN]

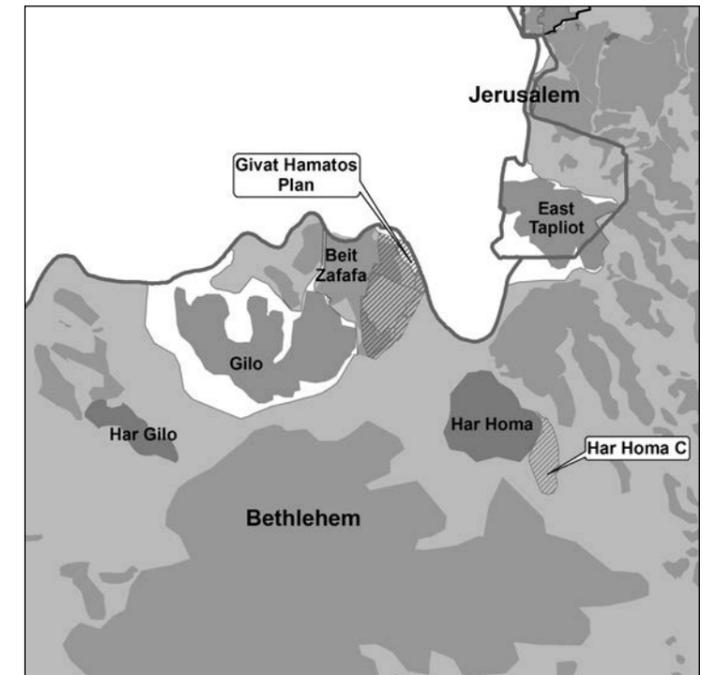
On the eve of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Oct. 1 meeting with President Barack Obama, Shalom Achshav (Peace Now in Israel) issued a release protesting an extensive new settlement project in a sensitive area of East Jerusalem. It was the sort of statement the movement makes regularly in its ongoing fight against "facts on the ground" that destroy prospects for eventual peace with the Palestinians. But for once, Netanyahu was unable to ignore Peace Now's protest since it was promptly echoed by his Washington hosts. The White House condemned moves it said would "poison the atmosphere" between Israel and the Palestinians and the Arab states and would call into question Israel's commitment to a two-state solution. Netanyahu's reaction was to attempt to shoot the messenger. He lashed out at Shalom Achshav, accusing it of sabotaging his visit with Obama and of lacking "national responsibility."

Of course, it is the Netanyahu regime itself that is responsible for this latest debacle with Washington. The approval of 2,610 housing units in East Jerusalem comes on the heels of a land grab in the Bethlehem area and the occupation by settlers of some 25 apartments in Silwan. (See our related articles.) In light of such actions, it is hard to see how anyone could believe Israel is willing to leave the door open to a future Palestinian state. Washington was just stating the obvious. And Shalom Achshav was merely calling attention to an announcement that had already been made in the Israeli press as part of the planning approval process.

### Strategic Location

The new Jerusalem development is problematic not so much because of its size, but because of its strategic location. Most, if not all, of the 2,610 units would form a neighbourhood called Givat Hamatos in southeast Jerusalem and be part of a ring that includes Har Homa and Gilo. The ring would cut the southern

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



### PeaceMatters is Changing

This will be the last issue of PeaceMatters in the current format, as we move to an electronic version that is more timely, cost-effective and direct. The new version will be sent to our contact list via email. We urge anyone who is not receiving email communications from us at the moment and would like to do so, to send us their email address. Also, if your email address has changed, please let us know. If you do not have email or prefer to receive our communications by regular mail, you will still be hearing from us. We are committed to sending you PeaceMatters bulletins and updates in whichever form suits you best.



## Gazing back on Gaza

By Simon Rosenblum

Simon Rosenblum is a former national co-chair of CFPN

Hamas has been quick to declare itself the winner in the recent war in Gaza. Who knew? One has to wonder just how many such victories it can afford to win. Yet, remarkably, Hamas' popularity – not only in Gaza but also in the

West Bank – has increased significantly following the 50-day war with Israel. A recent poll conducted by the respected Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research indicates that support for Hamas has grown by about 50% and that 79% of Palestinian respondents believe Hamas won the war. An astonishing victory to be sure – especially considering that Palestinian leaders, including President Abbas, are accusing Israel of having waged a "war of genocide". Go figure.

So how does one reflect back on this war in Gaza? Let me begin by doing something that doesn't come easily for me: agreeing with Prime Minister Netanyahu when he said that "We're using missile defence to protect our civilians, and they're using their civilians to protect their missiles." Yet Hamas has the chutzpah to portray itself as the good guys because they killed fewer than one hundred Israelis (thanks in good part to Israel's Iron Dome defences) while approximately two thousand people in Gaza lost their lives.

What is somewhat more surprising is how many people around the world have been so quick to strongly criticize Israel for its actions in Gaza. Their argument usually goes like this: yes Israel has the right to defend itself, but its strikes against Hamas and the loss of civilian lives in Gaza were excessive. Many who express such views are not anti-Zionist and may even be people of good will. Their argument, though, has a gaping hole.

There can be no question that Israel had both the right and the responsibility to respond forcefully to Hamas' rockets and the dangers posed by its tunnels. How forcefully and exactly how are legitimate questions given the enormous loss of civilian lives. However, so many of those who pose this question fail to provide a clue as to what an appropriate Israeli response to Hamas' actions should have been. Instead, they have been all too quick to condemn Israel for committing "war crimes". Were/are they suggesting that a vigorous Israeli military response was not justified? One should not forget that the

Israeli military could easily have been much more destructive if so instructed. At the same time, it may well be that some of the IDF's actions were not absolutely necessary to defeating Hamas nor were they always politically wise with respect to moving forward.

Moving forward? Not much good news here. The one-month ceasefire is expiring and a more permanent ceasefire seems unlikely. The Israeli peace movement is quite active in campaigning for the Netanyahu government to do everything in its power to prevent another Gaza war. Lightening the blockade so that it strictly relates to only military items is a key issue. But a permanent ceasefire also, of course, requires Hamas to agree regarding demilitarization and inspections matters. Don't hold your breath.

That said, a return to military engagement does not seem to be likely in the short term. Small blessings. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority is making a lot of noise about the time for talking being over and that peace talks must now have a firm timetable. Or else. No mention of the PA's ending its insistence about the "right of return" for Palestinian refugees. Not missing a beat, the Netanyahu government is actively accelerating its settlement expansion in the West Bank. Those committed to an honourable two-state solution have surely got their work cut out for them. All we can do is to continue our efforts and not get unduly depressed.

## Settlers Take Over Six Houses in Silwan

On Sept. 30, 2014, Jewish settlers entered six buildings in Silwan, a predominantly Arab neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. They thus created a new reality in this sensitive area, which is just few meters from Jerusalem's Old City and Temple Mount (includes the Al-Aqsa Mosque). According to Ha'aretz, the well-financed right-wing organization Elad is behind the purchase of the properties through a company registered abroad. The company appears to have been able to find Palestinians who were willing to "betray" their own families by selling to Jews. However, some Palestinian property owners

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## Peace Now Key Partner in Massive Anti-war Rally

Some 15,000 people poured into Rabin Square on August 16th, 2014, for a mass demonstration under the theme "Changing direction: toward peace, away from war."

The rally, the largest of its kind during the Gaza war, was organized by Shalom Achshav (Peace Now in Israel), along with the Meretz Party and other organizations. The purpose was to send a message to the Israeli public and its leaders that the next round of fighting could be prevented. After witnessing a month of war and death, along with mounting waves of incitement and hatred, participants wanted to stand up for peace, democracy and a political solution.



Signs held aloft among the sea of demonstrators said, among other things: "Yes to political solution," "Now, peace," (word-play on Peace Now) and "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies." The Aug. 16 demonstration took place a week after another demonstration organized by a similar coalition had been cancelled due to police restrictions. The demonstration received coverage across all major Israeli print and broadcast media. Speakers included MK Zehava Galon, author David Grossman, and Peace Now's settlement expert Lior Amihai.

Addressing the crowd, Grossman said:

"We have come and gathered here this evening...to remind those who negotiate in our name with the Palestinians in Cairo that even if the people of Gaza are enemies today, they will always be our neighbours...We will always live beside one another, and this fact has meaning, because my neighbour's downfall is not necessarily my victory, and my neighbour's welfare is in the end my welfare... Dear friends, the time has come to wake up."

## An upbeat film for troubled times

The violent conflict between Israel and the Palestinians gets a lot of media coverage, but less well known are the more hopeful stories about efforts to bridge the divide.

One of these is documented in a sensitive, entertaining film, *Dancing in Jaffa*, about a project to help Jewish and Arab Israeli children overcome deep-seated prejudice through – of all things – ballroom dancing. Ottawa audiences had a chance to see the film on September 14, 2014 when the Ottawa Chapter of CFPN showed it as a fund-raiser.

The upbeat film clearly struck a chord. Advance ticket sales were brisk, and about 250 viewers filled the Mayfair Theatre the day of the show. Approximately 300 tickets were sold in total and gross revenues came to about \$4500. The audience was mostly Jewish but also included many Christians and Moslems, and it was a mix of young and old. From the applause at the closing credits and comments afterwards, it was clear the film was a hit.

*Dancing in Jaffa* tells of how a charismatic teacher, Pierre Dulaine, goes back to the city of his birth to fulfil a lifelong dream of bringing Israeli and Palestinian children and communities together through the magic of dance. Pierre was born in 1944 of an Irish father – a soldier in the British army – and a Palestinian mother. The family fled Jaffa in the 1948 war that created Israel. When he grew up, Pierre became an internationally renowned ballroom dancer and, in New York City, developed a unique program that teaches children of conflicting racial backgrounds to cooperate through dance.

Due to popular demand, the Ottawa Chapter plans a second showing, though at a smaller venue. The Montreal chapter is also considering bringing the film to its city. CFPN supporters will be informed as soon as details become available.

Visit <http://www.dancinginjaffa.com/> for the trailer.

