



Book Review by Simon Rosenblum

**Pathways To Peace:
America and The Arab-Israeli Conflict**
DANIEL C KURTZER [ED.] Palgrave Macmillan. 2012. 237 pages

Daniel Kurtzer, a former American ambassador to both Israel and Egypt, has assembled a valuable collection of new essays by very experienced Middle East analysts and foreign policy officials. It has been reported that this book was widely read last year in the White House and may have even influenced Washington to proceed with its current Israel-Palestine peace initiative. It is most definitely worth one's attention.

This is not a Pollyannaish book. Former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and former National Security Adviser Samuel Berger write in their foreword that "There should be no illusions. Peace may be more difficult now more than ever. Indeed, Kurtzer himself introduces the book by acknowledging that "A dispassionate assessment of the readiness of the parties and the region for a serious peace effort would conclude that the chances of actually making peace, or even making serious progress toward peace, are minimal at best under present circumstances."

But - and this is a big but - as former Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher says in his contribution: "A lasting solution will not come about by waiting for a better time, which facts suggest is not on the near or distant horizon."

By now you are getting the picture. Firstly, the authors hold significantly divergent views, not regarding the desirability of a peace agreement or the content of a negotiated settlement, but rather concerning the possibility of such an agreement and the desirability of an American-led peace initiative at this time. The book rotates on the horn of a dilemma which can be summarized as follows.

All of the contributors recognize that the two-state solution is on life support. The reasons are obvious: Israeli settlements, which slowly but surely make the "land for peace" option less possible; and the increasing radicalization of the Palestinians.

Robert Malley, a senior official at the International Crisis Group and a former U.S. government expert, makes the point that Mahmoud Abbas is the "last Palestinian, for some time to come, with the history, authority and legitimacy to sign a deal on behalf of all Palestinians that could end the conflict." That said, Abbas is far from ready today to make the necessary concessions needed to secure a peace settlement. Nor, of course, is Netanyahu.

Aaron David Miller, another former American negotiator, writes that the two-state solution is "beyond the capacity" of the current Israeli and Palestinian leaderships. He goes on to say that "the fantasy scenario -- you put a plan on the table and, after some tough negotiating, Benjamin Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas sign it in the presence of a dozen heads of Arab states - remains just that." Israeli analyst Yossi Alpher concurs: "Even with active American support, a return to full-fledged final-status negotiations on all outstanding issues will not succeed. Indeed, it could deepen the Israel-Palestine divide by adding to current frustrations."

So there we have it -- a bona fide conundrum. As Kurtzer says in his conclusion, "we are in a race against time to rescue and implement the two-state solution. But while time is of the essence and delays can probably no longer sustain an untenable status quo, the parties themselves are so far apart as to make progress highly doubtful."

The Obama administration deserves credit for resuming the challenge but merely restarting talks is also not without costs. Alpher, in his chapter, hints at an alternative to all-or-nothing negotiations and has recently spelled out his idea of negotiating at this juncture only the 1967 issues and leaving the 1948 issues to be resolved later, i.e. negotiating borders and security issues now while putting off refugee and Jerusalem matters. But it takes an enormous leap of faith to believe that the Israeli public would be willing to make the necessary geographical concessions without all issues being resolved in an "end of conflict" agreement.

So where are we left after pondering the issues so well laid out in this collection? It has been frequently said that nobody ever lost money betting against Israeli-Palestinian peace. Sadly, this is likely to continue to be the case for the foreseeable future. Let's hope the odds-makers are wrong.

Simon Rosenblum is a board member and former Chair of CFPN Toronto.

FRIEDMAN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and former (and current) Israel negotiator Tzipi Livni, went a long distance toward doing exactly that.

Finally, recent reports of a single poll notwithstanding, polling has shown, year after year, that both peoples want peace and would support the compromises necessary if packaged together as an end-of-conflict-end-of-claims agreement.

Lara Friedman is Director of Policy & Government Relations for Americans for Peace Now.

PEACEMATTERS
CURRENT AFFAIRS FROM CANADIAN FRIENDS OF PEACE NOW



SEPTEMBER 2013

Committed to Peace with Justice

By Soryl Rosenberg

Soryl Rosenberg is the recently elected Chair of CFPN Montreal

I have been involved with Peace Now and other social justice groups in Israel for over 25 years. The platform and actions of Peace Now -- beginning in 1978 with its support for negotiations between Israel and Egypt, to its mass protest against Sabra and Shatilla, to the ongoing Settlement Watch program and its vocal advocacy for two states - matched my needs for involvement in issues that I care about deeply.

Our family owns a small apartment in Jerusalem, where I spend each summer and reaffirm my commitment to a democratic and peaceful Israel. I have travelled the country from Kiryat Shmona to Eilat, eaten injera at an Ethiopian home, visited institutions helping undocumented refugees and migrant workers and other organizations combating sexual violence. I have also witnessed long hours of Palestinian frustration at IDF checkpoints with my friends of MACHSOM WATCH, and travelled to the Negev and West Bank with Rabbi Arik Ascherman of Rabbis for Human Rights.

Yet with all of these experiences, my particular passion is being with the Palestinian shepherds and farmers in the South Hebron Hills of the West Bank.

On Saturdays during the summer months, I accompany a group of Israelis from Ta'yush ("Co-existence") a non-violent activist group. In order to join the shepherds and the farmers on

Saturday mornings, we have to leave Jerusalem at 6:00 a.m. in a van. The sun is intense, and it will be too hot after 11:00 a.m. for the goats to graze or for the farmers to tend their land. Every Saturday, a different situation presents itself regarding the Israeli army and Jewish settlers.



The land is hilly, rocky and thorny. The army awaits us as we arrive at the farthest perimeter of where the goats can graze without igniting the ire of the settlers from Otniel, which sits on land stolen from Umm al-'Amad.

If the shepherds go beyond the imaginary line, two or three settlers rush down and start to kick the animals. Immediately, Ta'yush activists surround them, so that they cannot

touch the shepherds. The soldiers step in and move the settlers to the side on to a dirt path which is an artificial boundary the Palestinians cannot cross.

I have been there when a shepherd was arrested for insulting a Druze IDF officer who said he does not fast during Ramadan. The shepherd was released, without a fine, soon after the intervention of his parents and Dr. David Shulman, an Israeli professor, Sanskrit scholar, poet and activist.

But I have also been there when it was lovely -- the goats grazed, the shepherds sang, no settlers showed up, no clashes occurred with the army, and we concluded with tea at a shepherd's home.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CFPN Supports Heart to Heart Program



For the second consecutive summer, CFPN has been a generous donor and supporter of the Heart to Heart Program, in which Givat Haviva and Hashomer Hatzair partner to bring a group of young Israeli Palestinians and Jews to Ontario for a summer camp experience in which they can share their hearts and their minds.

The participants spend 2 ½ weeks with the youth of Camp Shomria in eastern Ontario, where they learn, play, swim, and build lasting friendships as they teach one another about themselves, their visions for the future, and how they can work together to accomplish those dreams. HTH participants also visit Ottawa and Toronto.

Tamar Ishaky, a member of the CFPN Toronto board, joined the Steering Committee of the HTH program earlier this year. "Meeting these young men and women was like a ray of warm sunshine," she says.

"They were enthusiastic and seemed genuinely happy to have had the experience of camping Canada style and getting to know the 'other.' Some from both 'sides' were already talking of returning next year as regular campers.

"It was a pleasure contributing my time as a CFPN board member to the 'future.' I know that every young heart that we help open will have an effect on those around them."

ROSENBERG CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

I would like the Palestinian children to have other experiences than those that occur so frequently – of Israeli soldiers making nighttime incursions into a village, breaking down doors, some

times turning a house upside down in search of weapons, with the possibility of arresting a male and placing him under administrative detention without charges or a trial.

In the town of Joyyous, the mayor's son refused to collaborate with the IDF and was taken away in the middle of the night, ostensibly "for a few hours" for throwing stones. He had been a student finishing his bagrut (matriculation). Instead, he was held for four months, enduring harsh treatment in jail. He now hates his father "even more than the Israelis." Because if his father were a collaborator the son would not have been arrested and made to endure harsh punishment in jail.

My friends in Canada, many of them unconditional defenders of Israel, cannot believe that many of the army's actions are not security measures but only acts of harassment. I have seen one Palestinian village divided by concrete blocks. This has resulted in a circuitous 23-km drive to reach the schools, shops and clinics--instead of what was formerly a six-km drive. I was there when the blocks were temporarily removed by a Palestinian resister using a tractor. This caused great joy among the villagers until the IDF fired tear gas and rubber bullets and Palestinians had to be rushed to medical aid.

Although the locations of the weekly protests change, the cause remains the same – the occupation. For example, Ni'lin, has lost 90% of its land through theft, settlements and the wall. The settlements of Hashmona'im, Mattityahu, Menora, Shilat, and Mod'in Illit were built on Ni'lin's land. Then, with the building of the separation wall, Ni'lin lost 620 more acres

There are weekly protests by local Palestinians, Israelis and internationals after Friday prayers. The Palestinian youths wrap their heads and faces with their keffiyehs, leaving only a slit for their eyes. This is to protect their lungs from the inevitable tear gas canisters fired by the soldiers. The day I was there, it was difficult to discern whether the stone-throwing begins before or after the tear gas.

I was just happy that there were no injuries on the day I was there, but five people, including a ten-year-old boy, have been killed at Ni'lin. It was serendipitous that standing next to me was the principal of the local high school, a man who studied

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Gandhi's non-violence and civil disobedience tactics for five years in Agra, India.

Mitzpe Yair is an illegal Jewish settlement. Its occupants are violent, and have prevented the farmers of Umm al-Ara'is from tending their land, which lies in the valley between the two groups. The army sometimes tries to prevent us from joining the Palestinian farmers as they sit on the ridge overlooking their farmland. There is pushing and shoving as we make our way up. I let my friends get involved in these "matches" and follow behind.

The IDF soldiers leave me alone, perhaps because I remind these 18- or 19-year olds of their grandmothers. I was confronted by an IDF officer who told me that where I was head-

Defying Cynicism about Negotiations

by Lara Friedman

Let's be clear: The current Kerry-backed peace effort is probably the last, best hope for achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace in this generation. The situation on the ground -- code mainly for settlement expansion -- is nearing a tipping point after which a two-state solution will no longer be available (many settlers gleefully argue the point has already been passed).

The end of the two-state solution doesn't then magically create some new alternative -- it just plays into the hands of zero-sum extremists on both sides, with devastating implications for everyone else. Until eventually, perhaps after another generation or more of Israeli-Palestinian mutual bloodletting and mutual efforts at delegitimization, both peoples come to a realization, as they did in the 1990s, that their respective aspirations for peace, security, self-determination and a better future for their children will only be realized at the negotiating table. For anyone who truly cares about Israel and Israelis -- as opposed to those who prioritize land over peace, settlements over security, and Greater Israel over Israel's good standing in the community of progressive, democratic nations of the world -- must recognize that the stakes today are too high to give in to self-indulgent cynicism and self-protective defeatism.

Yes, there are reasons for skepticism about the current peace effort. The provocative and self-defeating march of Israeli settlements goes on. The release of Palestinian prisoners is reopening painful wounds for Israelis across the political spectrum. And rhetoric that is inconsistent with a commitment to peace and coexistence continues to emanate from both sides.

ing was a "closed military zone". Brazenly, I demanded twice that he show me the papers to prove that. When he could not, he threateningly took handcuffs from his pocket. I extended my wrists. He then shooed me on my way.

My mission is to let these Palestinians know that they are not alone in confronting the physical brutality and moral and legal injustices that they suffer as a result of the occupation. As a Canadian Jew, along with my Israeli friends, we want to reassure them that there are Israelis and others who care. Accepting the position of Chair of the Montreal chapter of Canadian Friends of Peace Now affords me the opportunity to promote the goals I believe in: two states for two peoples living in security and peace.

At the same time, there are compelling reasons to believe that this new peace effort can succeed, starting with the personal investment of President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry, backed by power-hitters like Special Envoy Martin Indyk, leading negotiations, and Gen. John Allen, focusing on Israeli security issues. The Quartet and Tony Blair remain active, focusing on economic issues, and the European Union and the Arab League are playing positive supporting roles.

Likewise, there are solid reasons to believe that this effort is serious. Both sides have publicly committed to negotiating for nine months. Neither side wants to be the one that walks away and is blamed for destroying the process -- creating a negotiations-preserving dynamic. Moreover, the parties have agreed to secrecy, insulating the effort from destructive real-time "crowd testing." And finally, these negotiations are taking place in the context of unprecedented recognition of both the fact that the window is closing on the two-state solution and that achieving the two-state solution is a vital U.S. national security interest.

It is also clear that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu can deliver if he wants to. He has the trust of the majority of the Israeli public, strong Knesset support for entering talks, and, if cornered by right-wing members of his coalition, he has a new pro-peace coalition available.

Likewise, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas can deliver if he wants to and if the agreement on offer from Israel is indeed serious. Abbas is a founder of the Palestinian national movement, committed to nonviolence, and has long experience negotiating with Israel. He ran for president of the Palestinian Authority on a platform that centered on his commitment to negotiate a two-state agreement with Israel, and, according to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4