

“A LAND TWICE PROMISED” - LEADER’S GUIDE

Written and performed by Noa Baum

SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM

Israeli storyteller Noa Baum began a heartfelt dialogue with a Palestinian woman while living in the United States. By weaving together their memories and their mothers' stories, she creates a moving testimony of the history and emotions that surround Jerusalem for Israelis and Palestinians alike. Through the voices and different perspectives of four women, using her animated dramatic style, Noa brings the stories to life and offers the experience of “being there.” She allows audiences to deepen their understanding of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and gain insight into its complexity and human dimension.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Noa Baum was born and raised in Jerusalem. Since 1982 she has captivated and inspired children and adults nationwide performing and teaching in schools, libraries, festivals and many other settings. Ms. Baum received a BFA in Theater Arts from Tel-Aviv University, was an actress with the Khan Repertory Theater of Jerusalem, studied acting with Uta Hagen in NY, and received an MA in Educational Theater from NYU. She was awarded a Graduate Assistance Fellowship with C.A.T., the Theater in Education Company of NYU, and worked in inner city schools combining storytelling and drama. Since 1990 she has been living in the US, and her performance highlights include: The Kennedy Center, The World Bank, US Department of Defense, Mayo Clinic for Humanities in Medicine, Stanford University and The Jewish Museum of New York City.

Noa Baum is a recipient of Individual Artist Awards of Maryland State Arts Council, and The Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County. Her multicultural audio recording of stories: “Far Away and Close to Home” won a Parents’ Choice Recommended Award. Ms. Baum is a member of the National Storytelling Network and lives in with her husband and two children in Silver Spring, MD.

BACKGROUND

You may want to share some of the following information and concepts with group members so they may better understand and appreciate the performance:

◆ **THEMES AND ARTIST’S STATEMENT**

The struggle between the Israelis and the Palestinians is one of the most enduring and explosive of all the world's conflicts. The two sides see events and issues so differently that peace seems far beyond reach. How can they reach agreements for the future when they can't even agree on what happened in the past?

From infancy, every human being builds a mental framework that allows us to make sense of the world and our place in it. This framework is formed from our previous personal experiences, as well as from what society has taught us is true. Each day, each time something happens to us, we automatically use this framework to decide how we are affected, and whether and how we should react.

Societies operate in a similar way. They create **narratives** to define their history and what they are like as a people. For instance, the idea of “The American Dream” means different things to different people. But the idea that an American Dream exists—that the United States is a place, or should be a place, where people can pursue their highest aspirations for themselves and their families—is so widespread that we can call it part of America’s national narrative.

In turn, these narratives influence how individuals in a society view events. Different sides in a conflict may have very different narratives. Nowhere is this as true as in the Arab-Israeli conflict. What one side calls a terrorist, the other calls a patriot or freedom fighter. What one side sees as a riot, the other sees as a revolt by heroes.

These views are reinforced by one-sided **rhetoric**. On each side, political speeches and big bold headlines oversimplify issues. They automatically dismiss what the other side says, demonizing the enemy. Side A makes demands that seem entirely right and reasonable, based on their narrative. But because the narratives are so different, Side B sees the demands as arrogant, unreasonable and dangerous. Peaceful

coexistence seems impossible. The only way to improve Side A's situation, it seems, is to wipe Side B off the map.

The Palestinian and Israeli peoples sincerely want peace, but there can be no peace without trust, and after so many decades of violence, there is little trust to spare. Rhetoric and narratives stand in the way of progress like an impenetrable wall.

Perhaps, however, there is a way to leap over the wall—to have a dialogue with the other, rather than hurling threats and blame. The first step is, simply, to listen. By listening to individual and personal stories, rather than to rigid narratives saying who's right and who's wrong, we begin to see our "enemies" as human beings. We begin to realize that the same events can be seen in very different ways, and that an account can change dramatically depending on who is telling it and where they start the story. We see that the statements of leaders and politicians can be over-simplified, misleading, one-sided, and unproductive.

Noa Baum says, "I believe that once you really get to know people and hear their story – they can no longer be your enemy. This performance stems from my experience as an Israeli having a **dialogue** and friendship with a Palestinian woman. It was not an easy process. Building trust took many years. We spent hours arguing and disagreeing, struggling with the voices we grew up with, the accounts we believed were The Truth. We learned that a little **compassion** can go a long way. It is my sincere hope that this performance will encourage viewers to seek out 'others' and listen to their story."

◆ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: CENTURIES OF CONFLICT**

Understanding the history of the Middle East is vital to understanding and resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. But because each side sees events so differently, presenting an objective history is extremely difficult.

A brief overview of the conflict has been provided in Appendix I. However, if at all possible, leaders should take group members through the detailed timeline at www.pbs.org/pov/pov2001/promises/timeline.html. Developed for the PBS documentary, *Promises*, this timeline gives both Palestinian and Israeli views of key events.

A different historical timeline is offered at <http://www.justvision.org/timeline/timeline.php>. This is a subjective history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict composed of historical and personal events named by Palestinian and Israeli grass roots peacemakers.

Leaders should also read and present ideas from the excellent paper by Deborah L. Flick, Ph.D., "Toward Understanding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." This lecture can be found at <http://traubman.igc.org/two-narr.htm>

BEFORE VIEWING THE DVD or ATTENDING A LIVE PERFORMANCE

- ◆ **DISCUSSION:** Ask group members what they already know and think about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict? Do they have opinions? Do they have any mental picture of an Israeli or a Palestinian?
- ◆ **MAP IT OUT:** Consulting encyclopedias or atlases, create a physical map of the Middle East. Where is the River Jordan? The Golan Heights? The West Bank? The Gaza Strip? The Sinai Peninsula? Jerusalem? The Mediterranean?

Next, mark the borders of present-day Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel. Where are the borders still under dispute? What territories have moved back and forth over the century? Seth Ackerman's article "Losing Ground," from *Harper's Magazine*, Dec. 2001, may help. Link to it from www.pbs.org/pov/pov2001/promises/timeline.html.

- ◆ **OPTIONAL: CURRENT-EVENTS COLLAGE (PART I):** As a large group or in smaller groups, check newspapers and news magazines for the past several weeks. What are the latest developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict? Cut out headlines and photos dealing with the conflict and make a large poster by arranging them into a collage. (This collage will become one focus for group discussion after viewing the DVD/performance.)

VOCABULARY

Anti-Semitism – prejudice or oppression targeted against Jews because they are Jews. Literally, prejudice against all Semitic peoples, but has come to mean Jewish oppression.

Compassion – Sympathy or understanding for another's distress, often accompanied by a desire to help. From roots meaning literally, "to suffer along with."

Crusades – military expeditions undertaken by Christian powers in the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries in an attempt to win the Holy Land from the Muslims. Many Muslims as well as Jews were killed during these exploits.

Curfew – a government or military order requiring a group of people to be off the street between certain hours, usually at night.

Deportation – removing a person from one place and sending him to another by government order.

Dialogue – A process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn.

Holocaust – literally, a massive devastation or destruction, especially by fire; a burnt sacrifice. The word refers to the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Six million Jews were murdered; other groups such as Roma (Gypsies), communists, homosexuals and disabled people were also targeted.

Intifada - Arabic word for *uprising*. The first **Intifada** 1988 to 1993 - Palestinians in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza staged an uprising with widespread non-violent demonstrations, strikes, riots, as well as stone-throwing and other violent activity. The second **Intifada** started in **2000** more violent than the previous one. The Israeli measures in response have also been harsher.

Israel -- 1) the surname of Jacob and his descendants 2) the ancient northern Jewish kingdom 3) the modern Jewish state, located in what used to be called Palestine.

Jews -- People whose religion is Judaism or who identify themselves as Jews. The central tenet of Judaism is the belief in one God, and the primary religious texts of Judaism are the Torah (five books of Moses) and the Talmud.

Narrative -- a story; used here to refer to broadly held beliefs that a society has of itself and its history. The idea of the "American Dream" is part of America's narrative.

Nazi - a follower of the National Socialist German Workers Party, the anti-Semitic German political party led by Adolf Hitler, whose policies led to the Holocaust and World War II.

Occupy – in military terms, to seize and hold a foreign territory by force.

Palestine – 1) geographical term for southern Syria; 2) name of the British-controlled territory from 1922 to 1948; 3) term preferred by many Arabs for some or all of the lands currently governed by the State of Israel.

Palestinian – inhabitant of Palestine; now the term used for Arabs who live in Palestine, came from there, or descend from emigrants from that land.

Refugees or **Palestinian Refugees** - Arabs who were forced or who chose to leave their homes in areas now part of Israel, during the 1948 or 1967 wars.

Rhetoric – the art of speaking or writing effectively; often used to imply an impressive or overbearing style of speaking that does not permit discussion or dialogue.

Shavu'ot – Hebrew name for the feast of Pentecost, celebrating the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai

Torah – Hebrew name for the five books of Moses in the Bible.

Wailing Wall (or Western Wall) - a remnant in Jerusalem of the ancient **Temple** still revered by Jews. (The temple was built by King Solomon 961-922 BC, destroyed in 586 BC by Babylonians; rebuilt and destroyed again 70 AD by the Romans: This marks the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora, or dispersion).

West Bank – the area of Arab Palestine annexed by Jordan in 1948 and captured by Israel in 1967. Called "Judea and Samaria" by some Israelis; partly governed by the Palestine Authority since 1996.

AFTER VIEWING THE DVD or THE PERFORMANCE

Noa Baum offers in-depth, interactive workshops on storytelling as a peace-building tool. For more information on how to include her work in your organization please call 301-587-3558 or visit www.noabaum.com

➤ **DISCUSSION**

A note to leaders: After viewing "A Land Twice Promised", a discussion can be very helpful to allow group members to process and deepen the experience. It is important to explain to group members that this is a personal perspective that focuses on how people feel and think and how they remember certain moments in their lives. Ask:

1. What were your emotional reactions to the performance?
2. What did you notice about the performance? What "pictures" or images do you remember? What touched or moved you?
3. Have any of your perceptions of the conflict changed?
4. How do we form opinions? What is "history"? Who decides what goes in and what stays out? Can we ever know the "whole story" about anything?
5. The following quotations are very important to Noa Baum. Discuss each one with reference to her performance and to your own experiences:

"An enemy is one whose story we have not heard." --*Gene Knudsen-Hoffman*

"People become the stories they hear and the stories they tell." --*Elie Wiesel*

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." --*Gandhi*

➤ **CURRENT-EVENTS COLLAGE (PART II)**

After discussing the show and taking part in the activity "Telling the Story of the Other," look at the collage you made of recent events in the Middle-East. Are you looking at the headlines in a different way now? How?

➤ **FOCUSED RESEARCH: JERUSALEM**

(From <http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2001/promises/intheclassroom.html>)

The following Web sites provide information on the history to Jerusalem:

- ◆ http://www.geocities.com/jim_lancaster.geo/archaeology.html
- ◆ <http://www.al-bushra.org/jerus/hst-pal.htm>
- ◆ http://www.inisrael.com/tour/jer/more_his.htm
- ◆ <http://jeru.huji.ac.il/>
- ◆ http://jeru.huji.ac.il/open_screen2.htm
- ◆ <http://www.owl.net.rice.edu/~arch343/lecture2.html>
- ◆ http://www.bibletap.es.com/tape1_1.htm

SUGGESTED READING AND OTHER RESOURCES:

City of Oranges - An intimate History of Arabs and Jews in Jaffa by Adam LeBor

English journalist LeBor (the Times) constructs his "intimate history" from extensive personal interviews, memoirs, private and national archives. He creates vivid portraits of six families -- two Christian, two Muslim, and two Jewish-- rooted in the ancient port city now part of Tel Aviv to illustrate the narrative of twentieth-century Arab-Jewish and Palestinian-Israeli relations.

The Lemon Tree - An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East by Sandy Tolan

The history of the conflict told through personal narratives. Powerful and touching story about realities surrounding post-1948 life about a difficult friendship in the Middle East. (See also below under: **AUDIO AND VIDEO RESOURCES**).

The Enemy Has a Face, by Glorid Miklowitz. (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2003. Fiction/ age 12 and up.) Thoughtful and suspenseful: explores issues of Middle-Eastern relationships through the eyes of young people on both sides of the age-old conflict. The surprising conclusion will leave readers with renewed understanding of other people's needs, fears, and beliefs.

The Middle East - Opposing Viewpoints, edited by Mary E. Williams. (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2000. Non-fiction/ young adult.) An excellent resource for youth and adults, providing a wide diversity of opinions and stimulating readers to do further research for group discussion and individual interest. Selections - by experts, policy makers, and concerned citizens - include complete articles and speeches, long book excerpts, and occasional cartoons and boxed quotations.

Habibi, by Naomi Shihab Nye. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. Fiction/ age 12 and up.) Fourteen-year-old Liyane Abboud and her family move from St. Louis to Jerusalem, where her father was born. They face many changes and must deal with the tensions between Jews and Palestinians. Poetically written and full of compassion.

Neveh Shalom = Wahat Al-Salam = Oasis of Peace, by Laurie Dolphin. (New York: Scholastic, 1993. Nonfiction/all ages.) Presents the lives of two boys, one Jewish and one Arab, who attend school in a unique community near Jerusalem where Jews and Arabs live together in peace.

A Concise History Of The Middle East, by Arthur Goldschmidt Jr. (Westview Press, 2002. Nonfiction/college students.) Widely acclaimed comprehensive introduction to the history of the Middle East from the beginnings of Islam to the present day. Written for college students, it assumes no prior knowledge of Middle Eastern history. Detailed chronology, maps, glossary and bibliography.

Cradle & Crucible - History and Faith in the Middle East. (A National Geographic book. Nonfiction/ High school and adults.) Concise, richly illustrated text offering historical depth through a diverse range of viewpoints from some of today's most well-known authorities on the region. Compelling photographs and maps.

The Middle East, by Dilip Hiro. (Oryx Press, 1996. Nonfiction.) A discussion of major regional themes starting with monotheism and exploring the internal dynamics of the region beginning with the history of the Arab-Jewish conflict. The author is a journalist and frequent commentator on the region for BBC, CNN and NPR.

The Israeli-Arab Reader - A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict, edited by Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin. (New York: Penguin Books, revised edition 1995.) Arranged chronologically and without bias, covering the full spectrum of the Israel-Arab conflict, this comprehensive and thorough book presents speeches, letters, treatises and reports dealing with all the major interests in the area.

AUDIO AND VIDEO RESOURCES:

Encounter Point - 85-minute feature documentary film that follows a former Israeli settler, a Palestinian ex-prisoner, a bereaved Israeli mother and a wounded Palestinian bereaved brother who risk their lives and public standing to promote a nonviolent end to the conflict. The film explores what drives them and thousands of other like-minded civilians to overcome anger and grief to work for grassroots solutions. It is a film about the everyday leaders in our midst. <http://www.encounterpoint.com/index.php>

Promises - 2001 PBS documentary (102 min.) - An Oscar-nominated, Emmy-winning look at the Middle East conflict and quest for peace through the eyes of seven Palestinian & Israeli children living in and around Jerusalem. Each child offers dramatic, emotional, and sometimes hilarious perspectives on issues that lie at the heart of the Middle East conflict. Order from www.promisesproject.org/dist.html or 1-800-343-5540.

The following recommendations can be purchased through the individual web sites or rented from The University of Missouri-Columbia

Academic Support Center

505 E. Stewart Road, Columbia, MO 65211-2040 (573) 882-3601

www.missouri.edu/~ascwww/medialib.html

Peace of Mind: Coexistence Through the Eyes of Palestinian and Israeli Teens (VHS color video; 1999 documentary; 57 min.) Seven Palestinian and Israeli youth who met at the Seeds of Peace summer camp joined forces to produce this unprecedented film, marking the first time that youth from both sides of the conflict have come together to create a documentary. Video and 40-page educator's guide: www.global-action.org or Transit Media (800) 343-5540.

Crossing the Lines (VHS and PAL video; 2002; 88 min.) Gives a deeper, more compassionate level of understanding of the many sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Interviews with 15 truly diverse Israelis and Palestinians filmed during Compassionate Listening delegations in 2001 and 2000. (360) 297-2280 or www.compassionatelisting.org/order.html.

The Lemon Tree (Audio tape or CD; 1998; 43 min.) Powerful and touching story about realities surrounding post-1948 life about a difficult friendship in the Middle East. Told in the voices of Bashir Al-Khayri, a Palestinian forced out of his home in Ramle, in old Palestine, in 1948 when six years old, and Dalia Landau a Bulgarian Jew, who arrived in Ramle four months later, in the shadow of the Holocaust. It won a 1998 Overseas Press Club Award for "best radio news or interpretation of Foreign Affairs.;" The Gold World Medal from the New York Festivals, and the 1999 Gold United Nations Award. Aired several times on NPR. To order phone Homelands Productions, 978-282-1387

OTHER WEB RESOURCES:

Noa Baum's web site: www.noabaum.com

Just Vision www.justvision.org

Information and interviews with Israelis and Palestinians who refuse to succumb to apathy, militancy or despair and continue to work for peace.

PRIME (Peace Research Institute in the Middle East) <http://vispo.com/PRIME>

Pursuing mutual coexistence and peace- building through a joint Palestinian and Israeli Curriculum Development Project in Israeli and Palestinian Schools: "Learning Each Other's Historical Narrative".

The Public Peace Process: Resources and Inspiration <http://traubman.igc.org/peace.htm>

Offers a wealth of links and other information dedicated to promoting peace through dialogue and relationship-building.

The Coalition of Women for Peace www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org - One of the leading voices in Israel of Jewish and Palestinian women (all citizens of Israel), promoting coexistence, advocating for a just and viable peace between Israel and Palestine.

The Parents' Circle www.theparentscircle.com - Israeli and Palestinian parents who have lost sons and daughters in the violence work to bring their message to both societies. Motto: "Better Have Pains Of Peace Than Agonies Of War".

Seeds of Peace www.seedsofpeace.org - Brings Palestinian and Israeli youth for seminars and camps in the US to create relationships and dialogue, with a center in Jerusalem where families can meet as well.

Neve Shalom / Wahat A(l)-Salam www.nswas.com - A community of Jews and Arabs living in peace near Jerusalem. Offers many educational programs and forums for dialogue and building bridges of understanding.

Friends of the Earth Middle East www.foeme.org - (EcoPeace) Joint Palestinian-Israeli-Jordanian Environmental Forum.

The Interfaith Encounter Association www.interfaith-encounter.org

APPENDIX I: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The struggle between the Arabs and the Israelis has brought violence and unrest to the Middle East for over a century. Although the problem has ancient roots, the modern conflict stems from the return of the Jewish people to their historic homeland, beginning in the late nineteenth century. Tensions between the Jews who settled Palestine from Europe, and the Arabs who were living there, as well as the surrounding Arab countries, has led to numerous wars and loss of lives for the peoples involved in the conflict.

For 1400 years, except for a few decades during **the Crusades**, the region had existed under Muslim rule as part of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. In World War I, the Ottomans sided with Germany against Britain, France, and America. After the war, when Germany and the Ottoman Empire were defeated, the League of Nations split the Middle East between France and Britain. Britain took control of the area called **Palestine**.

During the war, Britain had made two contradictory pledges. In 1915, Britain promised the Arabs independence if they would revolt against the Ottomans. In 1917, however, the Prime Minister promised that Britain would work towards “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

ONE LAND—TWO PEOPLES

Palestine had long been home to Arabs, living in rural communities as well as cities. Many Palestinians were laborers or struggling farmers, working fields owned by wealthy Arabs or Ottomans who resided elsewhere. But many Jewish people around the world also considered Palestine their “home”—the place where their forebears had lived in Biblical times, before they were driven out by the Romans around 70 A.D. Although a few Jews were allowed to remain, most were forced to scatter all over the world, primarily in Europe, but also in North Africa and other places in the Middle East. As a religious minority, they often faced prejudice. In many cases, they were violently persecuted, driven away, and even killed. As part of the religious mythology, they believed in returning to their homeland, which they called the “land of Israel.”

In the late 19th century, in response to growing **anti-Semitism** in Europe, Jews began to call for the establishment of a modern state for the Jewish people in Palestine—a nation of their own, where they could live without fear. By the beginning of World War I, (1914 – 1917) some 65,000 Jewish immigrants had moved to Palestine, where they lived alongside about half-a-million Palestinian residents of the Ottoman Empire.

After the war, Britain took the place of the Ottoman rulers, governing over both Arabs and Jews in the territory for nearly thirty years. The British failed to honor either of their promises completely, although they did set aside part of the region to create the Arab nation now called Jordan. Throughout the area, repeated clashes erupted between Jews and Arabs. Then came **World War II (1939-1945)**, when the German leader Adolf Hitler and his Nazi followers succeeded in murdering about six million European Jews. To the survivors of this genocide, a safe haven in their ancient homeland became even more important.

In 1947, the United Nations recommended that British-governed Palestine be partitioned into two separate states, one for Jews and one for Arabs. The Jewish leaders accepted the proposal, but the Palestinians felt that the division did not fairly represent the way Arabs and Jews were distributed in the region. They, and all the surrounding Arab nations, rejected the proposal. Nevertheless, as British troops were leaving the area, Jewish leaders proclaimed the State of Israel.

Immediately, Israel’s Arab neighbors attacked the new nation. The war is known by Israelis as “Milhemet Haatzma’ut,” or “War of Independence”. Israel gained control over large tracts of land, including some five hundred Palestinian villages. Some 700,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled from their homes becoming **refugees**. Palestinians know the war as “al-Nakbah” or “the Catastrophe”. About 150,000 Palestinian Arabs managed, by chance or by choice to stay in their homes within lands controlled by Israel. They became Israeli citizens, an Arabic-speaking Muslim and Christian minority within a Jewish state.

The Arab nations of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan took over other parts of Palestine. For twenty years, the skirmishes continued. Then, in 1967, days before a planned attack by several Arab nations, Israel launched what became known in that country as the “Six Day War.” In less than a week, it had tripled the size of its territory by seizing Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank from Jordan. 300,000 Palestinians are displaced from the West Bank and Gaza, many becoming refugees for a second time. Israel began to move settlers into these **occupied** territories, even though they were already populated with Palestinians.

THE LONG SEARCH FOR PEACE

The United Nations responded to the Six Day War by calling for Israel's withdrawal from the captured territories. In return, all sides were to cease hostilities and acknowledge the right of each nation to exist in peace within definite borders. This trading of "land for peace" has been the basis for all attempts at ending the conflict ever since. But peace has been hard to achieve. In the late 1970s, United States President Jimmy Carter helped Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin establish the Camp David accords, where Israel handed back the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in return for a peace treaty. By signing the treaty, Egypt became the first Arab state to acknowledge that Israel actually existed as a country. Many Arabs reacted with anger. Egypt was expelled from the Arab League, and Sadat was assassinated by three of his own soldiers.

Official peace between Egypt and Israel has held. Still, bloody attacks have remained all too common between Israel, the Palestinians, and other Arab states. Most Arab countries refused to recognize Israel's right to exist at all. Israel, in turn, refused for many years to acknowledge that the Palestinians were a distinct national group. In protest, from 1988 to 1993, Palestinians in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza staged an **Intifada** or "uprising" with widespread nonviolent demonstrations, strikes, as well as stone throwing, riots, and other violence. Israel responded with measures such as arrests, shootings, **deportations**, **curfews**, closing of universities, and economic restrictions.

By 1993, more than 20,000 people had been killed or injured during the Intifada. In that year, based on peace talks in Oslo, Norway, Israel recognized the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinian people and gave the PLO limited self-government within the occupied territories. In return, the PLO recognized Israel, gave up claims to the State of Israel within its pre-1967 borders, and pledged to end the Intifada. Both sides finally agreed that the other had a right to exist, and both promised to work step by step to resolve all the disputes between them.

NO EASY ANSWERS

Sadly, progress toward a final peace has stalled in the decade since Oslo. In 2000 the peace talks collapsed, and a new Intifada was launched, more violent than the previous one. The Israeli measures in response have also been harsher. Palestinians send suicide bombers into the heart of Israel killing civilians, Israelis respond with house demolitions, targeted assassinations and complete closures. Between September 2000 and January 2007 more than 5000 Palestinians and Israelis died in mutual hostilities and violence.

Hard questions remain:

- ◆ Who will control the important town of East Jerusalem, including the old city, which is home to ancient religious sites sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims?
- ◆ Will the Palestinians ever be permitted to establish a free state, independent of Israel? What will be its borders?
- ◆ What will happen to Palestinian refugee families, some of whom have now lived in camps for generations? Will they be allowed to return to a Palestinian State? Will any be allowed back into Israel, or will they be compensated economically?
- ◆ What will happen to the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories?

Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority insist that they have offered reasonable compromises, but that the other side will not accept them. Meanwhile, the violence continues. But citizen to citizen exchanges also continues, and the hope for reconciliation and peace is still alive in the hearts of many Israelis and Palestinians.