

**Paul Merkley: The Latest ME “Peace Process”, Doomed**  
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**Blog, September 23, 2013**  
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**This Letter to the Editor was rejected by three Canadian newspapers but was published by the Jerusalem Post and appears in the International Edition, August 1-22.**

**RE: "Wanting it more than the parities themselves," Jerusalem Post International edition, July 26, 2013.)**

**BY Paul Merkley**

***Dr.Merkley is a retired Professor of History from |Carleton University and author of American Presidents, Religion, and Israel , Praeger, 2004.***

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**Yet another President of the United States - the fifth since Jimmy Carter launched the Camp David Peace Process in 1978 — has sought to redeem a record made up mainly of disasters by solving, with one brilliant stroke, all those ancient intractable difficulties that have kept “the Middle East” from enjoying the level of happiness that is general throughout the rest of the world.**

**The undertaking is hopeless — and the best key to that conclusion is in the title by which the *Citizen*, like every other newspaper in our world refers to Prime Minister Netanyahu’s adversary in this contest: “President Mahmoud Abbas.”**

**Mahmoud Abbas himself has absolutely no right under the Basic Law of Palestine to refer to himself as President of anything. The term of office to which he was elected by democratic vote ran out over five years ago. The office is vacant, and if constitutionality meant anything in Arab circles he should be judged a usurper; and if legitimacy meant anything in our media or in the minds of our own rulers, he should have been shown the door long ago. It is exactly as though Paul Martin**

were still strutting around as Prime Minister of Canada or George W. Bush as President of the United States .

It was not Abbas’s party (*Fatah*) but *Hamas* that won the mandate of January, 2006, after which the leader of *Hamas*, Ismail Haniyeh, was appointed Prime Minister of the Palestine Authority by President Abbas (February, 2006.) But the ensuing round of assassinations of *Hamas* figures by *Fatah* figures and vice versa led *Hamas’* leaders to conclude that more could be gained by quitting Ramallah, the administrative capital *pro tem* of Palestine, seizing all of Gaza, liquidating the leading *Fatah* figures there, and proclaiming themselves to be the rightful rulers of Palestine. Haniyeh continues to call himself Prime Minister of Palestine although much of our media is under the impression that Gaza is a sovereign entity or at least a Province and that Haniyeh is Prime Minister (or something) of that. He has no more right, of course, to any of his titles than Abbas has to the title of President, as the tenure of the Parliament elected in 2006 has also run out.

This embarrassing truth is never hinted at by our governments - not by the Government of Canada, not by the Government of the United States , and, most incongruously of all, not by the Government of Israel. Our elected politicians go on wining and dining “President Abbas” out of a Machiavellian calculation that if anything is ever to be rescued from the long-collapsed Peace Process we have to *pretend* to have a “Partner for Peace” who once got himself elected. It is all one patronizing fantasy - this notion of an emergent Palestinian democracy, embodied in the courageous, beleaguered leadership of the Palestine Authority, embodied, in turn, in the Mayor of Ramallah. It is Orwellian double-think, kept alive by the agreement among media, politicians and opinion-elites that titles can have whatever meaning it is convenient to give to them so long as the cause of achieving peace through democracy is served.

The latest breakthrough in the PA’s propaganda offensive has been its success in establishing in the minds of our scholars, our leaders of opinion and, with truly resounding success, our churchmen the counter-factual theorem that Palestine is a ancient and distinguished while Israel is a fraud.

**Here is the syllogism:**

**Palestine is real; Palestine has always been here; the Palestinian People have always been here.**

**Israel is not real. Israel is an invention of the mid-Twentieth century AD, the product of European imperialism, foisted upon the world by a Zionist conspiracy in control of international diplomacy.**

**The contempt for Zionism in the company of opinion elites in the West, where all lines of argument that belittle Israel 's right to exist are accepted as authentic without examination, explains the great success that Abbas and his fellow Palestinian statesmen have encountered with this syllogism.**

***Palestinian Authority TV News* hews consistently to the PA policy of denying the history of Jewish presence in Jerusalem and in particular the existence at any time of a Jewish Temple. Palestinian “historiography” (if sheer assertion without reference to any documentary or archaeological evidence can be dignified by such a term) asserts that until the day before yesterday the Jews, or Israelis, call them what you will, *never* resided in this area, *never* had a Kingdom, *never* had a temple. Among recent lunatic examples are: “Moses was a Muslim who led Muslims in Exodus from Egypt [which was]... the first Palestinian liberation through armed struggle to liberate Palestine ” ... and “There never was a Temple ” (all quotations from recent proclamations of Palestinian imams on *PATV*.)**

**Keen as they are on siding with “the victims of Israeli aggression,” our cultural elites and, most distressing of all, our church leaders today indulge these knuckle-dragging assertions about Palestine and Palestine’s history for tactical purposes:**

**they believe that polemical solidarity with the Palestinian victims will make it possible for us to keep Palestine’s “elected leaders” in the great cause of moving towards the Day of Peace.**

**There is no hint anywhere in recent newspaper coverage of this dramatic turning-point that the *Hamas* movement which won that last Parliamentary election back in 2006 - a few days before Stephen Harper became Prime Minister -has been challenging Abbas ever since to call new elections, which Haniyeh feels confident of winning and Abbas *knows* that he cannot. If that should come about - that is, if democracy miraculously should return to the Palestine Authority, everything that Mr. Kerry imagines can be accomplished by his benign initiative would be repudiated - and the violence would start up all over again, with Israel’s sovereign domain shrunken further and her present strategic thrown away.**

**Save your prayers for a better cause than the triumph of the Washington Peace Process.**