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PRESS RELEASE

Lecture at Library to Spotlight Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

On Wednesday August 23, 2017 Professor Gershon Shafir will speak at the Benjamin Hooks (Central) Branch of the Memphis Public Library at 5:30 pm.

The title of the lecture is “Peace is Possible”. It will examine the current status of the conflict and suggest a way forward toward a two-state solution.

There will be an opportunity for comments from the public, both before and after as well as a discussion following.

It was as a result of the Six Day War that the West Bank and Gaza came under Israeli military administration. Palestinians there are still subject to military, rather than civilian governance today. This contrasts with Palestinians who reside inside the pre-'67 borders of Israel.

Israelis have built settlements in the West Bank and currently about 400,000 Israelis live

in these settlements. Israel justifies some of the settlements as temporary measures to support the military, whose presence is also claimed to be of finite duration. An end to the military occupation would entail the dismantling of settlements, except as agreed to by the parties.

It is Professor Shafir's thesis that a negotiated two-state solution holds the best prospects for peaceful coexistence between the parties. He will discuss why neither side has been able to move forward in the last decade and the changes in both societies that would be necessary for further negotiations to be fruitful.

Professor Gerson Shafir was born in Hungary in 1947 and emigrated to Israel in 1956, just after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

He served in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) during the time of the Six Day War in 1967.

He has studied at Tel Aviv University, UCLA and UC Berkeley (or Cal, as it is known in the Pac-12), where he received his PhD.

Professor Shafir is currently a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, San Diego, and the founding director of its Human Rights Program. He has served as President of the Association for Israel Studies and is the author or editor of ten books. His most recent book "A Half Century of Occupation" will be available for purchase thanks to *novel*, the new bookstore in Laurel Village on the site of the former and much-beloved Booksellers. This book sale will be one of the first events for that new enterprise.

Professor Shafir's visit is sponsored by Partners for Progressive Israel and the History

Department of the University of Memphis. It is mostly underwritten by Charlie Belenky, who recently relocated to Memphis from California.

Partners for Progressive Israel (formerly Meretz USA) is a non-governmental organization and registered 501(c)3 devoted to civil rights in Israel, and human rights throughout the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. The organization advocates a two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, social justice, human rights(especially for ethnic and sexual minorities), religious freedom, and environmentalism. It is based in New York City.

In explaining why he has chosen to underwrite this event, Mr. Belenky states:

“Discourse can be clouded by extremism on both sides. This lecture presents an opportunity for people with varying points of view to convene in a neutral space and hear the perspective of an academic with unique insight earned from years of research.”