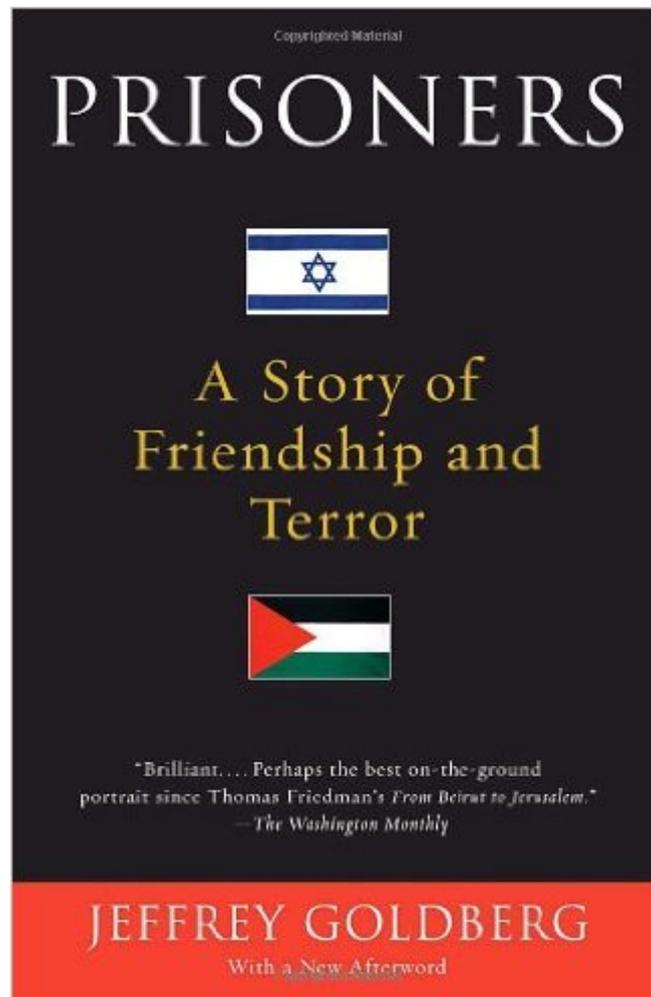


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Prisoners: A Story Of Friendship And Terror



Synopsis

During the first Palestinian uprising in 1990, Jeffrey Goldberg — an American Jew — served as a guard at the largest prison camp in Israel. One of his prisoners was Rafiq, a rising leader in the PLO. Overcoming their fears and prejudices, the two men began a dialogue that, over more than a decade, grew into a remarkable friendship. Now an award-winning journalist, Goldberg describes their relationship and their confrontations over religious, cultural, and political differences; through these discussions, he attempts to make sense of the conflicts in this embattled region, revealing the truths that lie buried within the animosities of the Middle East.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Self-categorized on the book jacket as "Current Affairs," this book had me expecting an analysis of Israeli-Palestinian relations, the word "prisoners" in the title no more than a metaphor. In fact, a large part of the book takes place in an actual prison, and while it has much to say about Israeli-Palestinian relations, it is more correctly a memoir of an American Jewish journalist attempting to understand the nature of the conflict that has prevailed in that part of the Middle East since 1948. Finding the political in the personal, he tells of his own beginnings as a youthful Zionist living on Long Island and his years in Israel as his ideals are put to the test working on a kibbutz and then serving in the military police at a desert prison, where he first meets and attempts to befriend a Palestinian prisoner, Rafiq. Later, working as a journalist based first in Jerusalem and then in Washington DC, the author travels often to Gaza and the West Bank to talk with Palestinians, many

of them released prisoners, including his friend Rafiq. His conversations with Rafiq become a commentary on an accompanying account of the interlude of hope for resolution in the Oslo talks, the eventual collapse of the peace process, and the rise of suicide bombings. On both levels, it is a search for common ground that is as elusive as peace itself. The author clings to the hope that where friendship is possible between two men who cannot agree on anything else, coexistence is possible between Arabs and Jews. This is a well written book that immerses the reader in the deeply bitter and violent conflict that has raged in this corner of the world for decades.

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